Strategy in Born Global enterprises in a peripheral region of Sweden

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Abstract

The purpose of this research study is to explore how decision-makers at Born Global enterprises form their strategies during the pre-internationalisation phase. In this study the researcher has combined theories from two academic fields, namely the strategic management field and the international entrepreneurship field. The main theories inherent in this study are: the strategic lenses and the strategic schools of thought (theories that belong to the strategic management field) and Born Global (theory that belongs to the international entrepreneurship field). These recently mentioned theories has been combined, which has led to a depiction of a general theoretical framework, illustrating for how the researcher has made use of the chosen theories in the study.

In order to fulfil the study’s aim, the researcher has conducted a qualitative and multiple-case study, where seven different case companies (Algoryx Simulation AB, CodeMill AB, COS Systems AB, North Kingdom Design & Communication AB, Oryx Simulations AB, Prediktera AB and Xore AB) from a peripheral area of northern Sweden (Umeå and Skellefteå) have been investigated through semi-structured interviews. After performing the seven interviews, the obtained empirical data has been analysed by using the analysis strategy theoretical propositions and the analytical technique cross-case analysis.

From this study, the researcher has found out that in the pre-internationalisation phase decision-makers at Born Global enterprises form their strategies in accordance with the configuration school, where these individuals alternates by different strategic making procedures along the process. This in turn implies that these individuals make use of a mixture of proactive and reactive strategy making procedures along the process, where the character of the strategy is determined by their respective applied procedures. Moreover, the research findings have showed that the selection of strategy making procedures is highly dependent on the company’s context. Additionally, the research findings indicated that legitimate key individuals such as the company’s founder/-s or entrepreneur/-s are highly involved and thus influential in the companies’ strategy-making process during the pre-internationalisation phase.

Keywords: Strategy, Born Globals, Strategy making process, Strategic lenses, Strategic schools of thought
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1. Introduction

In this first chapter, I introduce the current research study by providing background information to Born Global enterprises, strategies and strategy making process. This is followed by a problem discussion, in which I identify and present a research gap that this study intends to fill by answering the posed research question. By the end of the chapter I declare for the study’s contributions, limitations, as well as provide a list including important definitions and concepts. Lastly, a disposition of the entire study is offered.

1.1 Background

“Born Global firms are the most extreme examples of the potential significance of small and medium-sized enterprises for a nation’s export growth” (Rennie, 1993, p. 47).

In a world that is becoming increasingly globalised and economically interdependent internationalisation is becoming more and more crucial for companies (Ruzzier et al., 2006, p. 477; Zain & Ng, 2006, p. 183). The process of internationalisation, i.e. a firm’s geographical expansion of economic activities across national borders, is nowadays perceived as a significant competitive advantage (Ruzzier et al., 2006, p. 477; Zain & Ng, 2006, p. 183).

To participate in internationalisation in a rapid manner to multiple countries simultaneously soon after the company’s founding is fully possible and more and more prevalent in contemporary international business (Cavusgil & Knight, 2014, p. 3; Hagen & Zucchella, 2014, p. 497-499; Rennie, 1993, p. 45). This is precisely the case for a number of companies such as Logitech, Eye View and many others, which are being referred to as Born Globals (Oviatt & McDougall, 1995, p. 30; The Economist, 2009). Logitech, for example, today a global computer equipment company, had a global vision from its inception and was, rapidly after the company’s creation represented in numerous countries around the world with several established sales offices (Logitech, 2015; McDougall, 1995, p. 30).

Oviatt & McDougall (1994, p. 49) define Born Globals as “a business organization that from or near inception seeks to derive significant competitive advantage from the use of resources and the sale of outputs in multiple countries”. These companies are characterised as small and medium-sized companies (SMEs\(^1\)) which despite their young age and constrained resources succeed surprisingly well in competing against large well-established rivals in niche markets on the global arena (Cavusgil & Knight, 2014, p. 3-4; McDougall et al., 2003, p. 59; Rennie, 1993, p. 45; Rialp et al., 2005, p. 135; Oviatt & McDougall, 1994, p. 32; Zahra, 2005, p. 23).

\(^1\) In accordance with EU definition, SMEs are companies that do not exceed 250 employees with an annual turnover not exceeding 50 million EUR annually (European Union, 2013).
Several studies conducted on Born Globals have witnessed their increased involvement in the international business arena, which eventually have laid the foundation for the emergence of a new research field, namely international entrepreneurship, hereafter expressed as IE (Cavusgil & Knight, 2014, p. 3; Jones & Coviello, 2005, p. 284; McDougall & Oviatt, 2000, p. 902-903). Oviatt & McDougall (2005, p. 539) define IE as “the discovery, enactment, evaluation and exploitation of opportunities across national borders to create future goods and services”. This definition involves according to Jones & Coviello (2005, p. 284) an intersection of two research disciplines, namely international business and entrepreneurship. This intersection refers to the combination of the general interpretation of internationalisation as a firm-level activity beyond national borders with entrepreneurial orientation features such as innovativeness, proactiveness and risk seeking behaviour.

Jones et al. (2011, p. 636) and Madsen (2013, p. 67) mention that one of the main streams within the IE field is related to international new ventures, a concept which by some scholars is used interchangeably with the one of Born Globals. Scholars argue that the emergence of these enterprises has been driven by several factors that have reconstructed the international business landscape (Cavusgil & Knight, 2009, p. 6-7; Cavusgil & Knight, 2014, p. 3-4; Madsen & Servais, 1997, p. 565). Factors such as globalisation, liberalisation and homogenisation of markets, as well as the appearance of new technological innovation in various areas (production, communication and transportation) have enabled and facilitated for Born Globals to engage in international business (Cavusgil & Knight, 2009, p. 6-7; Cavusgil & Knight, 2014, p. 3-4; Madsen & Servais, 1997, p. 565).

Conventionally, the competitive landscape in international markets was the empire of major and well-established multinational enterprises, which were the only ones that could overcome the high barriers associated with the entrance into new foreign markets (Cavusgil & Knight, 2009, p. 7; Oviatt & McDougall, 1994, p. 45). Nowadays, SMEs are no longer considered to be passive international victims limited to national boundaries, but rather seen as active players (Ruzzier et al., 2006, p. 477). Their increased international involvement has led that they possess a significantly important role in contributing to a nation’s growth, innovation and employment (European Commission, 2015).

The appearance of Born Global businesses has questioned the traditional interpretation of internationalisation, as advocated by the Uppsala Internationalisation Model (Andersen, 1993, p. 212; Johanson & Vahlne, 1977; Johanson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 1975). Traditionally, firms needed to have a prior well-established and solid presence in the domestic market before venturing into new challenges in foreign markets (Cavusgil & Knight, 2009, p. 9). Moreover, firms internationalised gradually, through a various numbers of steps, where every step further involved increased resource commitment as well as extended knowledge compared to the previous step (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977; Johanson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 1975). The incremental increase in commitment could be explained by the absence of foreign market knowledge, avoidance of risk as well as to mitigate the exposure of uncertainty (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977; Johanson & Wiedersheim-Paul, 1975).
In turn, Born Globals do not take the aforementioned sequential internationalisation process advocated by the traditional internationalisation model into consideration (Madsen & Servais, 1997, p. 577; McDougall et al., 1994, p. 475). Instead, these enterprises stand for an accelerated internationalisation during the company’s establishment and the internationalisation process occurs simultaneously in several divergent countries at once (Madsen & Servais, 1997, p. 577; McDougall et al., 1994, p. 475). This has led to some criticism being directed towards the traditional internationalisation model, mainly in regard to its limited applicability to explain a company’s internationalisation behaviour (Turnbull, 1987, cited in Madsen & Servais, 1997, p. 562).

Apart from the accelerated internationalisation behaviour, Born Globals are distinctive enterprises in many ways (Hennart, 2014, p. 117-119; Knight & Cavusgil, 2004, p. 124-125). Firstly, their origins and orientation is strongly international, where they perceive the entire world as their market place from the company’s inception (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004, p. 117; Cavusgil & Knight, 2014, p. 4). For this reason, Born Globals do not limit themselves to individual countries or view the foreign markets as a supplement to their domestic market (Rialp et al., 2005, p. 138). International markets are seen as providers of opportunities rather than obstacles (Madsen & Servais, 1997, p. 567). Secondly, these companies are characterised by their innovativeness and specialisation, usually placing them in the forefront of technological advancements within their industries (Cavusgil & Knight, 2009, p. 12; Hagen & Zucchella, 2009, p. 499; Hennart, 2013, p. 118; Madsen & Servais, 1997, p. 564; Rennie, 1993, p. 48). Hence, they often target niche markets and compete through offering superior value and quality (Cavusgil & Knight, 2009, p. 12; Hagen & Zucchella, 2009, p. 499; Hennart, 2013, p. 118; Madsen & Servais, 1997, p. 564; Rennie, 1993, p. 48). Thirdly, Born Globals are highly entrepreneurial firms, where both their establishment and growth depends on distinctive entrepreneurial skills championed by their founder/-s or manager/-s (Chetty & Campbell-Hunt, 2004, p. 62; Cavusgil & Knight, 2014, p. 4; Madsen & Servais, 1997, p. 580-581). Fourthly, these companies are more reliant on hybrid structure governance, i.e. close personal relationships to overcome their liability of smallness and recourse scarcity (Gabriëlssson & Kirpalani, 2005, p. 556; Madsen & Servais, 1997, p. 563). Fifthly, Born Globals possess an ability to be very flexible, facilitating rapid adaptation to external circumstances (Rennie, 1993, p. 48; Rialp et al, 2005, p. 141).

To be able to navigate in today’s complex and competitive business environment characterised by dynamism and uncertainty firms must formulate and implement strategies (Knight, 2000, p. 13; Meyer & Heppard, 2000, p. 32). Strategy is defined as “… the fundamental pattern of present and planned objectives, resource deployments, and interactions of an organization with markets, competitors, and other environmental factors” (Kerin et al., 1990, p. 39). Strategies are of great importance for businesses, since they possess different roles within an enterprise either as a decision, coordination or intention mechanism (Grant & Jordan, 2012, p. 25-26). Additionally, scholars argue that crucial factors for reaching business success, such as achieving substantial profits, can be traced to the ability of organisations to establish strategies (Knight & Cavusgil, 2009, p. 49). Chetty & Campbell-Hunt (2004, p. 73) mention that strategy plays a central role for Born Global enterprises. According to the authors, the theory of Born Globals “emphasizes the role of strategy in internationalization, because both the focus and the pace of internationalization
are dictated by competitive imperatives to seize a leading position in niche or emerging markets”. Thus, becoming a Born Global seems to represent a strategy in itself, as the company’s chosen strategy is one of rapid expansion on international markets.

Strategies can be created in many different ways through a so-called strategy making process (Grattan, 2011; Mintzberg, 1978, Mintzberg et al., 1998), i.e. “the methods and practices organisations use to interpret opportunities and threats and make decisions about the effective use of skills and resources” (Lumpkin & Dess, 1995, p. 1387). The practical process from which strategies are crafted is considered to be an extremely complex organisational activity (Grattan, 2011, p. 25, 31; Ginsberg & Venkatraman, 1985, p. 428). This process is typically directed by the organisations’ top management team, since these individuals are the ones that makes strategic decisions (Grattan, 2011, p. 25, 31). However, when it comes to small business or start-ups strategic development is normally carried out by the organisation’s founder/-s or the entrepreneur/-s him/-herself (Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40). Scholars argue that strategy creation is most critical in conditions of change and uncertainty (Gavetti et al., 2005, p. 691). Such context is in turn characteristic to the one in which Born Global enterprises operate.

1.2 Problem discussion

Recently, Born Global enterprises have appeared more frequently in scientific articles and received an overall greater attention around the world (Cavusgil & Knight, 2014, p. 5; Rennie, 1993, p. 45). By seeking to become global shortly after their founding, these firms are exposed to greater risks (Cavusgil & Knight, 2014, p. 5; Rennie, 1993, p. 45). In the pre-internationalisation phase of Born Globals, one can argue that they are the subjects of both great opportunities and ambitions - but also of substantial challenges. These firms’ young age, liability of smallness and relative resource scarcity adds up to an uncertain and unfamiliar setting (Madsen & Servais, 1997, p. 564; McDougall et al., 1994, p. 470). The challenges Born Globals are exposed to are evident when looking at the number of state-funded incubators, accelerators and aid programmes that exist in many countries to assist these companies in their journey to become global (Born Globals, 2015).

In circumstances marked by a great degree of uncertainty, where companies are constantly struggling with unforeseen threats, it is of even greater importance to possess a well-defined strategy (Grant & Jordan, 2012, p. 18; Meyer & Heppard, 2000, p. 32). This, since strategies are seen as vital elements in assisting businesses to navigate through turbulent situations (Grant & Jordan, 2012, p. 18; Meyer & Heppard, 2000, p. 32). Having that said, one can argue that strategies are important for all kinds of companies independent of their size.

By concluding that the context in which Born Globals are enmeshed is unique and distinctive, the question of how these enterprises manage to form their strategies is certainly intriguing. Knight & Cavusgil (2009, p. 41) argue that Born Global enterprises are in need of a clearly defined strategy, since the lack of such will limit the likeliness of substantial profits, which in the long run might have a negative impact on the companies’ viability. Nevertheless, scholars argue that we still do not
know much about how Born Global enterprises form their strategies (Andersen, 2004; Jantunen et al., 2008; Knight & Cavusgil, 2009, p. 41). Hence, scholars ask for researches that integrate strategy-making theory with the theory of Born Global enterprises (Andersen, 2004; Jantunen et al., 2008).

Several scholars have called for studies that address the potential interrelations between entrepreneurship, strategy and internationalisation theories (Bell et al., 2004; Madsen, 2005). Keupp & Gassmann (2009, p. 608, 618, 619) mention that studies which combine strategic management theories with entrepreneurship theories can help the advancement of the IE (international entrepreneurship) field. Ireland et al. (2003, p. 964) argue that this is because these fields are complementary and mutually supportive even though they practically are two distinctive scholarly fields. Further, the authors argue that the relationships between the two fields may enrich the understanding of rapidly growing new ventures, i.e. Born Globals (Ireland et al., 2003, p. 964). This, since the strategic management field addresses the question of how companies develop a sustainable competitive advantage, while the entrepreneurship field addresses the question of how companies discover and exploit new profitable opportunities (Ireland et al., 2003, p. 964-965). Thus, scholars argue that the integration of these two fields is crucial for advancing the understanding of how wealth is created in new enterprises (Ireland et al., 2003, p. 966; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000, p. 217).

By taking into consideration strategic management theory such as the strategy making process and (international) entrepreneurship theory such as Born Globals, the current study contributes to the development of the IE field, as well as to the integration of two different scholarly disciplines; consequently leading to an enrichment of the understanding for Born Global enterprises and how these enterprises create wealth. Moreover, it addresses the requests made by researchers to integrate strategy making theory and Born Globals theory, contributing to a better understanding for how this kind of enterprise forms their strategies.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to investigate how decision-makers at Born Global enterprises form their strategy in the international arena, specifically in their pre-internationalisation phase. The reason for particularly choosing the pre-internationalisation phase is because there is so much going on at the same time for these companies in this phase. Namely, at the same time Born Globals is being founded, these companies choose to internationalise in a rapid and expanding manner to several countries simultaneously. Hence, in order to fulfil the aforementioned purpose, the current study aims to answer the question:

• How do decision-makers at Born Globals form their strategy in the pre-internationalisation phase?

This research incorporates two research fields; namely the strategic management field and the international entrepreneurship field. Strategy and strategy making process are theoretical concepts that belong to the strategic management field, while Born Globals is inherent in the international entrepreneurship field. The strategic
management field will be used in this study to specifically address the process this study aims to examine, i.e. the process on how strategies can be created. On the other hand, the international entrepreneurship field covers Born Global enterprises, which in turn counts for the specific content this study deals with. While, the context of the study, in which the process and the content exist, is in a peripheral area of northern Sweden.

### 1.4 Contributions

**Theoretical contributions:** This study aims to contribute to the IE field and particularly the area of Born Global enterprises. By offering an intersection study of this character, combining theories (strategy and strategy making process from the strategic management field and Born Globals from the IE field) from two scholarly fields, the current study contributes to the advancement of the IE field by enriching the understanding for Born Global enterprises and their respective strategic behaviour. Hence, this study also responds to the request made by researchers to integrate strategy making with Born Global enterprises (Andersen, 2004; Jantunen et al., 2008).

**Practical contributions:** By examining how decision-makers of Born Globals form their respective strategies, this study could help small businesses and start-ups, operating in a similar context to that Born Globals are, that is characterized by a high degree of uncertainty, to understand the possible impact of such an environment have on strategic decisions. Moreover, it also enables decision-makers that are facing similar circumstances to gain an understanding of what strategy making approaches are more or less suitable to utilise in such situations.

**Societal contributions:** As mentioned in the background subchapter (see section 1.1), radical transformations that have taken place lately have changed the international business landscape (Cavusgil & Knight, 2009, p. 6-7; Cavusgil & Knight, 2014, p. 3-4; Madsen & Servais, 1997, p. 565). This has led that SMEs are nowadays seen as active international players, contributing massively to country’s economic conditions (European Commission, 2015; Ruzzier et al., 2006, p. 477). To possess knowledge on how to act and make strategic decisions under uncertain conditions, can affect a company’s longevity (Knight & Cavusgil, 2009, p. 41). The results from the current study reveal information in regard to how to make strategic decision during uncertain circumstances. The disclosure of such information can provide SMEs with knowledge in regard to the issue in question, and thus have a societal impact, contributing to a society’s socioeconomic progress.

### 1.5 Limitations

A limitation in the current study concerns the choice to not include the theoretical work of entrepreneurial decision-making logics such as causation and effectuation (Sarasvathy, 2001). These theories could be included in the study and assist the author in responding to the study’s research question. However, as the author of this study aims to focus on the actual strategy making process, i.e. the various ways in which strategy can be formed, the entrepreneurial decision-making logics have not per se been addressed. Instead the author argues that the theories of causation and
effectuation are inherent within the entrepreneurship strategic school of thought, which in turn is one of Mintzberg’s ten strategic schools of thought, which have been used to address the different ways on how strategies can be formed in the current study (Mintzberg et al., 1998).

Another limitation in the current study refers to the selection of case companies from which empirical information will be derived. All case companies included in the current study are situated in a peripheral area, more specifically in the northern part of Sweden in the Västerbotten County (Umeå and Skellefteå). This implies that the expected results of this study are restricted to peripheral areas. Peripheral areas are distinctive and different to metropolitan areas, meaning that some aspects illuminated in this study by the investigated case companies might not be existent in metropolitan areas and thus not relevant to take into consideration for companies active in those areas.

An additional limitation is that this study focuses solely on a specific phase of the strategy-making process, namely the pre-internationalisation phase. This implies that the author does not take into consideration the strategy making process within Born Globals beyond the pre-internationalisation phase. To investigate the process, beyond this point would not be feasible within the time frame to complete this study.

1.6 Key definitions and concepts

Born Globals: “a business organization that from or near inception seeks to derive significant competitive advantage from the use of resources and the sale of outputs in multiple countries” (Oviatt & McDougall, 1994, p. 49).

International Entrepreneurship: “the discovery, enactment, evaluation an exploitation of opportunities – across national borders – to create future goods and services” (McDougall & Oviatt, 2005, p. 539).

Strategies: “the fundamental pattern of present and planned objectives, resource deployments, and interactions of an organization with markets, competitors, and other environmental factors” (Kerin et al., 1990, p. 39).

Strategy making process: “the methods and practices organisations use to interpret opportunities and threats and make decisions about the effective use of skills and resources” (Lumpkin & Dess, 1995, p. 1387).

1.7 Disposition

The illustration below discloses the current study’s disposition (see figure 1. Thesis disposition).

I. In the first section, the researcher introduces the entire research by providing background information about Born Global enterprises, strategy and strategy making process. This is done in order to familiarise the reader with key concepts inherent in the study. Moreover, this initial section
specifies the current study’s research question and purpose, as well as it declares the expected contributions and limitations.

II. The second section concerns a thorough literature section, where theories on strategy, strategic lenses, strategic schools of thought and Born Global enterprises are presented. These theories are combined and portrayed into a model, i.e. a theoretical framework, which discloses how the researcher has made use of the chosen theories in the study and how these will assist him in answering the study’s research question.

III. In the following section, the methodological choices made by the author along the research process are presented. This section starts with a discussion in regard how research philosophies have influenced the current study, where a subjectivism ontological stance and an interpretivism epistemological orientation stance have been applied. This is followed by a discussion for the choice of a deductive research method, a qualitative research design and multiple case studies as the research strategy. Subsequently, an argumentation for the choices of data collection methods (semi-structured interviews) and data analysis (theoretical propositions and cross-case analysis) is offered. Finally, this section ends with a discussion about quality criteria and ethical considerations.

IV. Next, empirical data that have been collected in the current study through semi-structured interviews on a seven case companies (Algoryx Simulation AB, CodeMill AB, COS Systems AB, North Kingdom Design & Communication AB, Oryx Simulations AB, Prediktera AB, and lastly Xore AB) is revealed. The empirical data comprises information regarding the case company’s strategy making process.

V. Subsequently, in the analysis and discussion section, the obtained empirical data is analysed through the utilisation of theoretical propositions as the analysis strategy and cross-case analysis as the analytical technique, against the composited general theoretical framework in order to find eventual parallels or inconsistencies in the obtained findings.

VI. The final step is a concluding step where the current study’s research question is answered with the help of the obtained findings from the previous step. This is followed by a discussion about how the expected contributions have been fulfilled. Finally, a discussion about limitations and suggestions for future research is offered.
Figure 1- Thesis Disposition. Source: Author's own depiction
2. Literature review

In this second chapter I present an insight into previous researches that has been conducted within the area of strategy, the process of strategy making and Born Global enterprises. By outlining theories such as the strategic lenses, strategic schools of thought and Born Globals, I provide the reader with a better understanding for the concept of strategy, how strategies can be formed, as well as what Born Global enterprises are, including characteristic features of these. These recently mentioned theories make up the theoretical foundation this study is based on, and thus also function as guidance for the current study. The study’s theoretical framework, which illustrates how I have used the selective theories in this study, is gradually developed along the chapter and presented at the end of it.

2.1 Definition of the term strategy

There are a variety of definitions of strategy, which in turn leads to a multiple meanings of the concept. As a consequence of this there is no single commonly accepted universal definition of strategy. For this reason, the definition of the term has been a longstanding debate among scholars (Chaffee, 1985, p. 89; De Wit & Meyer, 2004, p. 50; Johnson et al, 2014, p. 3-4; Mintzberg, 1978, p. 935; O’Regan & Ghobadian, 2006, p. 606-607; Quinn, 1980, p. 7-8).

Nonetheless, Mintzberg (1978, p. 935) claim that scholars usually agree on a joint theme, where strategy is seen as a deliberate set of guidelines that determine a company’s forthcoming decisions.

Before acknowledging the definition of the concept strategy this study will assume, three different definitions of three leading strategy theorists are presented. Chandler (1962, p. 30) defines strategy as: “The determination of the basic long term goals and objectives of an enterprise and the adoption of the courses of action and the allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals”. Chandler’s definition refers to strategy as a plan of action, which according to Mintzberg (1978, p. 935) is not comprehensible enough to capture the full meaning of the complexities of the term. Thus, the definition advocated by Mintzberg (1978, p. 935) is “a pattern in a stream of decisions” (Mintzberg, 1978, p. 935). The word “pattern” in Mintzberg’s definition recognizes that strategy does not always follow a deliberate and logical plan, which the author calls for an intended strategy (priority guidelines). But strategy may also arise in more ad hoc ways in the form of an unintended strategy (posteriori). Further, in his book, The Rise and Falls of Strategic Planning, Mintzberg (1994, p. 23-27) expresses that a strategy can be viewed as a (1) plan, (2) pattern, (3) position, and last but not least (d) perspective. This various views expressed by Mintzberg (1994, p. 23-27) implies that strategy could be seen as something more than just planning. Lastly, Porter (1996) cited in Johnson et al (2014, p. 4) defines a competitive strategy, as “competitive strategy is about being different. It means deliberately choosing a different set of activities to deliver a unique mix of value”. In turn, Porter’s definition of strategy emphasizes the significance of consciousness, distinctiveness and competition.
This research study aims to examine how decision-makers at Born Global enterprises form their strategies in the pre-internationalisation phase. Based on the study’s purpose it is favourable to define the term strategy broadly in order to be able to capture the full complexity of the concept. Thus, it is necessary to consider both the intended and unintended nature of the strategy. Moreover, it is also important that the applied definition consider a broad scope of factors that could influence strategy. Hence, the definition the author has chosen for this research study is the one offered by Kerin et al. (1990, p. 39), where the authors define strategy as “the fundamental pattern of present and planned objectives, resource deployments, and interactions of an organization with markets, competitors, and other environmental factors”. The “present pattern” in the definition refers to the evolving and unintentional nature of strategy, while the “planned pattern” concerns the rational and deliberate nature of it. Moreover, the author believes that the aforementioned definition captures the dynamic and responsive sense of strategy. Lastly, the complexity of the concept is addressed by embracing a broad scope of factor within the definition, i.e. markets, competitors and environmental factors.

2.2 The importance of strategy for businesses

An overwhelming number of researchers argue that strategies are important for businesses independently of their size (Beaver, 2002, p. 175; Nandakumar et al., 2010, p. 908; O’Regan & Ghobadian, 2006, p. 607). Strategies fulfill many key functions within organisations and thus occupy significant roles for these (Beaver, 2002, p. 175; Hofer & Schendel, 1978, p. 5-6; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 15-18; Nandakumar et al., 2010, p. 907-908; Porter, 1980, p. 3-5; Quinn, 1980, p. 19). Nooraie (2008, p. 642-643) mentions that strategic decisions are the most important and challenging decisions that can be taken within an organisation, as they affect an organisation’s total welfare and ultimately determines an organisation’s failure or success.

Ross & Kami cited in David (2011, p. 3) argue that “without a strategy, an organisation is like a ship without a rudder, going around in circles. It’s like a tramp: it has no place to go”. The quotation indicates that strategies can serve as a direction plan of action, providing guidance and orientation for organisations and its members making sure that all involved individuals “row in sync” - towards the same direction in order to meet pre-made commitments (Beaver, 2002, p. 175; Hofer & Schendel, 1978, p. 6; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 15; Quinn, 1980, p. 7-8, 19). The provision of direction is fundamental in order to attain organisational effectiveness, as not knowing where to go may result in a misuse of resources, which consequently may threaten the effectiveness of the organisation (Hofer & Schendel, 1978, p. 6; Kraus et al., 2006, p. 334).

Further, scholars argue that strategies enable complex organisations to focus effort, promote coordination and integration of activity (Andersen, 2000, p. 188-189; Hofer & Schendel, 1978, p. 6; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 15-16; Quinn, 1980, p. 15). Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 15-16) mention that the absence of focusing an organisation’s activities may result in chaos. Quinn (1980, p. 6-7) argues that the absence of integration is likely to result in a situation where individual units,
divisions, and departments concentrates on their respective individual objectives, which in turn might precedence the organisation’s total objectives.

Additionally, strategies define organisations, enabling individuals to understand their own organisation and how it differs from others (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 17; Quinn, 1980, p. 11). This, since strategies disclose the set of goals and objectives an organisation strives for, which in turn stipulates the actual purpose of the organisation (Chandler, 1962, p. 30; Hofer & Schendel, 1978, p. 11, 16; Jennings & Beaver, 1997, p. 64; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 17; Nandakumar et al., 2010, p. 907; Quinn, 1980, p. 7, 19). Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 17) mention that the determination of organisational objectives and goals conveys consistency, which consequently reduces ambiguity and distraction, while providing order, facilitating action and decision-making within organisations.

Moreover, strategies can help to extend an organisation’s time horizons, by forcing organisations to escape from the daily focus to a longer-time perspective (Jennings & Beaver, 1997, p. 64; Kraus et al., 2006, p. 334; Quinn, 1980, p. 19). This in turn implies that strategies can assist in protecting an organisation’s long-term commitments (Jennings & Beaver, 1997, p. 64; Kraus et al., 2006, p. 334; Quinn, 1980, p. 19). However, some scholars argue that during highly uncertain and turbulent circumstances, where change is constant, organisations should relegate the long-term commitments and instead adapt its actions to the current setting (Alpkan et al., 2007, p. 153,155-156; Bhalla et al., 2006, p. 526-527; Dreyer & Gronhaug, 2004, p. 484-494; Perrott, 2008, p. 27). This as in such situations it is more favourable with a flexible and adaptive strategy, which allows the organisation to easily adapt and reconfigure anticipated strategic intentions in relation to the present circumstances (Alpkan et al., 2007, p. 153,155-156; Bhalla et al., 2006, p. 526-527; Dreyer & Gronhaug, 2004, p. 484-494; Perrott, 2008, p. 27).

Contrariwise, other scholars argue that in such conditions as described above, formal strategic practices – in form of more careful analyses – are required as it helps organisations to better understand and master the dynamic environment (Eisenhardt, 1989; Goll & Rasheed, 1997, p. 584; Miller & Cardinal, 1994, p. 1652; Wiltbank et al., 2006, p. 985).

Based on the above, one can conclude that strategies are generally important for businesses, from many different aspects and independently of the company’s size. Furthermore, it is apparent that there is an ambiguity among researchers regarding the contribution of strategies in a dynamic environment, i.e. whether a rational and more formal strategy or a flexible and more adaptive strategy is suitable. This underlines the contrast between formal planning and an action to strictly adhere to pre-made commitments, with a more flexible action that enables reconfiguration of strategic intentions to present circumstances is applied. Considering the centrality of strategy formation within the context of Born Globals, who operate in highly turbulent settings, the contrast between formal planning and flexibility in the strategy process is both interesting and analytically valuable as a part of this research.
2.3 The process and the content of strategy research

The strategic management field is an extensive academic field that comprises a wide range of theories, methods and level of analysis (Furrer et al., 2008, p. 14-16; Herrmann, 2005, p.125-127; Hoskisson et al., 1999, p. 447-448; Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 39-40). This has led to the research that has been carried out within the strategic management field having taken many different directions (Furrer et al., 2008, p. 14-16; Herrmann, 2005, p.125-127; Hoskisson et al., 1999, p. 447-448; Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 39-40). When conducting strategy research scholars usually distinguish between strategy process and strategy content research (Herrmann, 2005, p.114-117; Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40; Mellahi & Sminia, 2009, p. 2-4; Schendel, 1992, p. 1-4).

The strategy process tradition focuses on strategy determination placing attention on the various approaches and interpretations on how strategies can be formed over time (the doing of strategy) (Herrmann, 2005, p.114-117; Kraus & Kauranen, 2008, p. 40; Mellahi & Sminia, 2009, p. 2-4; Schendel, 1992, p. 1-4). Thus, strategy process research specifically deals with the questions as why and how strategies are shaped (Herrmann, 2005, p.114-117; Kraus & Kauranen, 2008, p. 40; Mellahi & Sminia, 2009, p. 2-4; Schendel, 1992, p. 1-4). Maitlis & Lawrence (2003, p. 111) argue that to examine the doing of strategy from a process perspective entails several advantages. For example it highlights the dynamic of the actual procedure, as well as it recognises a wide range of factors and practices that might influence strategic action, which in turn allows a more overall understanding of the entire procedure (Maitlis & Lawrence, 2003, p. 111).

On the other hand, the strategy content research tradition focuses on the strategy itself, i.e. its content (Herrmann, 2005, p. 111, 114-115; Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40; Mellahi & Sminia, 2009, p. 1-3; Schendel, 1992, p. 2). This perspective opposed to the previous one places attention on strategic “outcomes, positions, scope of firms and ways of competing” (Herrmann, 2005, p. 112). Hence, the strategy content research specifically aims to answer what questions, i.e. what the strategy is or ought to be in a certain condition of a company and its environment (Herrmann, 2005, p. 111, 114-115; Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40; Mellahi & Sminia, 2009, p. 1-3; Schendel, 1992, p. 2).

Due to this research aim, i.e. to investigate how decision-makers at Born Global enterprises forms their strategies in the pre-internationalisation phase, it is the questions how and why strategies are shaped that is of more interest for the current study. As mentioned in the background subchapter (see section 1.1) Born Globals seem to represent a strategy itself, thus being a Born Globals can be seen as the result crafted from a strategy making process, i.e. the content. This research study will focus on the process, i.e. the doing of strategy and not with the outcomes of that process, i.e. the content. Moreover, the choice of focusing on the strategy process entails that this research will not deal with different levels or kinds of strategies such as corporate-level, business-level and functional level strategies, which belongs to the strategy content research (Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40).

Scholars have proposed numerous distinctive explanations to the procedure on how strategies can be formed (Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40-41; Mintzberg, 1978, p.
935; Mintzberg et al., 1998; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985, p. 269-272; Wooldridge et al., 2008, p. 1190-1191). The question why strategies are shaped will be discussed hereinafter with the help of the four strategic lenses, which offers four different perspectives to the concept of strategy. While, the question how strategies are shaped will be further discussed latter in this chapter with the help of Mintzberg’s 10 strategic schools of thought, a theoretical work that describes ten different ways on strategy formation (Mintzberg et al., 1998).

2.4 The four strategic lenses

Strategies are complex and therefore it is essential to look at strategies from different perspectives (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 174-183). By doing so, one captures a fuller picture of the issue in question where new and different insights could be revealed. Furthermore, through looking at a single problem from different angles one can avoid partial and biased understanding. These different angles are recognised as different strategic lenses. Each lens offers a distinctive approach to explore strategic issues, where each emphasizes their specific set of concepts and frameworks, as well as individual implications for practice (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 174-183). Johnson et al. (2014, p. 174-183) mention that there are four strategic lenses, which are referred as; the design lens, the experience lens, the variety lens and lastly the discourse lens.

As a consequence that every single lens is distinctive and unique, they will score differently (high-low) in three key dimensions of managing strategy referred as: rationality, innovation and legitimacy (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 175). Rationality refers to the level of rational deliberation that it is exercised during the development of the strategy. In turn, innovation concerns the probability that strategy allows the development of an open-minded and innovative organisation. Lastly, legitimacy refers to the level of coherence between the expectations of important stakeholders and the strategic choices made by the management team. A high level of coherence between the two gives the managers increase legitimacy in the organisation (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 175).

As strategy are complex and can arise from a variety of sources it is essential to use a broad conceptual work that explains what can be meant by the term strategy. By exploiting the four lenses and their different perspectives they offer, it also enables one to recognise the reasons why enterprises use strategies. In order to understand how decision-makers at Born Globals form their strategies, it is essential to understand what can be meant by the term strategy, as well as the underlying cause to why organisations form them. This can be achieved with the help of the various lenses. Hereinafter, every single lens will be further discussed in more detail.

2.4.1 The design lens

The design lens conceptualises a strategist as a designer detached from the realities of action, instead simply constructing detailed strategic blueprints (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 175-176). The design lens employs a rational mind-set by using available information and a logic of consequence to draw preference-based conclusions in the decision-making process (Hough & White, 2003, p. 482; Johnson et al., 2014, p. 175-176; March, 1994, p. 1-3). The design lens has its roots in neo-classical economics’
rational expectations and the rule of perfect information (Jarzabkowski, 2005, p. 2; Johnson et al., 2014, p. 175; Ramirez & Selsky, 2015, p. 2). The design lens puts forward three central assumptions for the strategy making process (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 175-176). Firstly, it stresses the significance of conducting formal strategic analysis before taking action. Secondly, the construction of a detailed blueprint requires extensive and systematic analysis in order to predict an organisation’s future performance. Ultimately, objectives should be clearly predefined leaving little space for potential adjustments during the process. These assumptions contribute to the image of organisations as high hierarchal, mechanical and rational entities (Ansoff, 1965; Hough & White, 2003, p. 482; Johnston et al., 2014, p. 175-176; March, 1994, p. 1-3; Miller, 1987; Porter et al., 2002, p. 46).

The major focus on a rational viewpoint implies that the design lens scores high on the rationality dimension (see figure 2. The design lens). In addition, its major focus on optimising operation effectiveness tends to make the strategy coherent with the ambitious of owners and other key stakeholders, implying that the designer within this lens reaches a high level of legitimacy. Hence, the lens will also score high on the legitimacy dimension. However, the obedience to analysis and logics creates less space for intuition and passion, which means that the level of innovation is low, thus its low score in the innovation dimension (Johnston et al., 2014, p. 175-176).

The design lens is preferable when dealing with circumstances characterised by uncertainty and complexity, as well as when one aims to meet stakeholders expectations (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 176). On the other hand, its limitation concerns underestimation of intuition and experience, as well as it does not allow space to unplanned and bottom-up initiatives, which in turn is a direct effect of the great focus on thorough strategic analysis (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 176).

Based on the above, one can argue that the design lens applies the classical traditional view of strategy, i.e. a formal plan of action that is intentionally executed for achieving desirable objectives in the future. This lens emphasise a structured and rational course of action, where systematic analysis takes place before taking action. This implies that the design lens puts a high emphasis on prediction, where one tries to foresee the future, to latter base strategies on obtained projections. This in turn implies that the design lens perceive strategies to be of a conscious and deliberate nature. The lens major emphasis on legitimacy and its perceived image of
organisations as rational entities implies that the lens sees the top management as strategists, being the only ones within the organisation that have a say regarding strategic decisions. In comparison with the other lenses, the design lens is the one that advocates the most stringent perspective of strategy, as it simultaneously emphasizes the highest degree of rationality and legitimacy. If one would place the design lens in a spectrum, where a deliberate and an emergent perspective of strategy were found on opposite ends, the design lens would be placed in the extreme of the deliberate side (see figure 6. Placing the strategic lenses in a spectrum of a deliberate/emergent view of strategy).

2.4.2 The experience lens

The experience lens, unlike the design lens, does not perceive strategies as deriving from objective and rational analysis but rather as influenced by manager’s prior experience and their respective ways of doing things (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 177). History and culture are believed to be important elements that influence strategy, and are therefore taken into consideration in this lens (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 177). The experience lens maintains that strategies are formed by individual and/or collective perceptions of how things should be handled, i.e. the cumulative wisdom of experiences (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 177-178).

The experience lens has its roots in the so-called Behavioural Theory of the Firm, which is based on the actual behaviour of the managers (Argote & Greve, 2007, p. 337-338; Gavetti et al., 2012, p. 3; Johnson et al., 2014, p. 177). According to Argote & Greve (2007, p. 337-339) and Gavetti et al. (2012, p. 4-5) the behaviour of the manager is only boundedly rational, as complete knowledge about options and consequences can never be obtained. Moreover, the choices made by the managers do not always reflect the best possible option available, but is instead only a satisfactory solution. Further, the past experiences and cognitive bias may lead to the managers preferring some options over others, although they may not be ideal. These sum up to the managers cognitive foundation, which operates in the present but is highly influenced by learned patterns from the past (Argote & Greve, 2007, p. 337-339; Gavetti et al., 2012, p. 4-5).

The experience lens acknowledges the value in experienced managers and their respective instincts, which might produce very effective solutions without having to engage in costly and incomplete analyses (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 178; Khatri & Ng, 2000, p. 59, 64). Further, the lens view strategies to be built upon on what has been done earlier, thus limiting change and innovation (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 178). Concerning the limitation of the experience lens, Johnson et al. (2014, p. 178) mention the problem of routinized responses to future issues that according to the authors derives from long experience and rigid cognitive patterns, which might lead to path dependency and lock-in effects. Therefore, the challenge for the experience lens is to realize that experience is important, but sometimes it is also important and necessary to change (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 183).

Based on the discussion above and as also shown in the figure 3, the experience lens scores high on the legitimacy dimension, while scoring low in the other two-remaining dimensions (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 177). This due to the fact the lens stresses the importance of managerial prior experience, organisational routines and
culture to the formation of strategy (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 177). Moreover, it recognises that it is practically impossible to gather all information needed to conduct comprehensive analysis, as it is difficult and nearly impossible to precisely predict an uncertain future (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 177; Khatri & Ng, 2000, p. 64).

The experience lens unlike the design lens does not advocate a strict and rational view of strategy. Instead the lens advocates a perspective suggesting that future strategies are based on past experiences and influenced by the wisdom and culture inherent in an organisation, which in turn articulates how things should be done/or have been done within the organisation. This implies that strategies according to this lens’ perspective are developed by patterns of behaviour and not from deliberate and conscious planning, which is the case of the design lens. Strategies in this case reflect a more emergent nature, as the course of action is mainly guided by ad hoc deliberations and choices. This implies that the experience lens view strategies as something that evolves over time. Even though taken-for-granted ways of doing things influences future strategies, the final objective of the strategy within this lens’ perspective is not planned and clearly stated, hence strategies in this case cannot be considered as fully intended. In comparison with the other lenses the experience lens does not advocate the most emergent and flexible view of strategy, this due to the reason that ready-made solutions on the basis of past experience and circumstances will be applied in similar forthcoming strategic decisions. This implies that if one would place the experience lens in a spectrum, where a deliberate and an emergent perspective of strategy was found on opposite ends, the experience lens would be placed in the emergent side of the spectrum. However, not in the extreme of the emergent side (see figure 6. Placing the strategic lenses in a spectrum of a deliberate/emergent view of strategy).

![Figure 3 - The experience lens. Source: Johnson et al., 2014, p. 177.](image)

2.4.3 The variety lens

Unlike the two previously mentioned lenses (the design and experience lens) that provide limited scope for innovation and change, the variety lens put much more emphasis on it (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 179). The variety lens rejects the deliberate and planned decision-making through systematic analysis advocated by the design lens (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 179). Likewise, it also dismisses the conservatism approach that builds upon the old, i.e. manager’s prior experience advocated by the experience lens (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 179). Instead, the variety lens advocates spontaneity and perceives strategy to arise from the various expressed ideas from individuals within and around an organization (Barnett & Burgelman, 2007, p. 15-16;
According to Johnson et al. (2014, p. 179) the variety lens is shaped on the basis of two theoretical perspectives from the natural science, both stressing spontaneity, and these are; the evolutionary theory and the complexity theory. Barnett & Burgelman (2007, p. 6) mention that an evolutionary approach permits the arising of many varieties of a phenomenon in a somewhat randomly process. Depending on their fit and adaptation to the environment, varieties perish or remain for the long run.

According to Anderson et al. (1999, p. 233-234) and Johnson et al. (2014, p. 179) the complexity theory builds on the same foundation of spontaneity, by arguing that patterns of order can emerge from seemingly chaotic circumstances. The interaction of elements within a scene of chaos may in fact produce a comprehensible behaviour that can be understood through formal models (Anderson et al., 1999, p. 233-234; Johnson et al., 2014, p. 179).

Based on the discussion above, and also visible in the figure 4, the variety lens scores low on both the rationality and legitimacy dimension (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 179-181). This as the variety lens does not employ a rational view on strategy, as well as it emphasizes less top-down direction comparable to previously lenses. Instead the management team encourages untried and novel ideas deriving from all parts of the organisation and then determine which ideas to follow up. Hence, managers are seen as creators of context. Furthermore, the arising of ideas from the bottom to the top of the hierarchy is believed to promote innovation. Thus, the variety lens scores high on the innovation dimension (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 179-181).

In comparison with the other lenses the variety lens is the one that stresses the most emergent and flexible view on strategy. One can argue that the variety lens stresses the importance in promoting diversity within and around organisations, which in turn is believed to generate in new spontaneous ideas. The variety lens rejects the rational and conscious view of strategy advocated by the design lens, as well as the conservatism approach and the great involvement of top management team in strategic decisions advocated by the experience lens. Unlike previously mentioned lenses, the variety lens considers that strategies are developed incrementally from ideas derived in or outside the organisation as a response to cope with uncertain and changing circumstances. This implies that this lens dismisses the logic of prediction advocated by the design lens, as the lens does not support the execution of thorough and careful analysis to serve as a basis for strategies. If one would place the
experience lens in a spectrum, where deliberate and an emergent perspective of strategy was found on opposite ends, the experience lens would be placed in the extreme of the emergent side. This means that both the design and variety lens would be placed in the extremes end of the spectrum, but on opposite sides (see figure 6. Placing the strategic lenses in a spectrum of a deliberate/emergent view of strategy).

2.4.4 The discourse lens

The discourse lens views strategy in terms of language (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 181). This perspective implies that strategies are developed through the managers’ linguistic competence, which they use to acquire influence, power and legitimacy within organisations (Hardy et al., 2000, p. 1229-1231; Hardy & Thomas, 2014, p. 322-324; Johnson et al., 2014, p. 181; Mantere & Vaara, 2008, p. 343). Spee & Jarzabkowski (2011, p. 1217-1220) state strategy is constructed by discursive components, i.e. communicative interactions involving both talk and text in different types of media such as board meetings, disseminated texts as emails and formal papers. The authors state that traditionally communication took place after the development of the strategic plan was elaborated. However, nowadays the strategic plan is perceived to be an "emerging text that shapes and is shaped by the communicative process" (Spee & Jarzabkowski, 2011, p. 1219). Hence, the discursive component is placed central to strategy within the discourse lens.

Barry & Elmes (1997, p. 431) state that managers through using a narrative approach could convey the meaning of their strategy to other staff in the organisation. By doing so they can shape the understanding and convince personnel. Mantere & Vaara (2008, p. 343) mention that discourse “construct specific subject positions for social actors”. This means that the way managers’ discourse about strategy influences their respective position, identities and legitimacy as strategists within organisations (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 182; Mantere & Vaara, 2008, p. 343). Hardy & Thomas (2014, p. 322) mention that the tendency to place managers in the centre when it comes to the creation of strategies entails that these individuals are the ones that are in charge for important tasks in the organisation.

This lens high emphasis on discourse as a resource to shape strategic objectives in accordance with the manager’s personal views to gain influence, power and legitimacy promotes the manager’s identity and legitimacy as strategists (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 181-182). Consequently, this is the main reason why the discourse lens scores high on the legitimacy dimension, while scoring mediocre on the reaming two dimensions, i.e. innovation and rationality (see figure 5. The discourse lens) (Hardy & Thomas, 2014, p. 322; Johnson et al., 2014, p. 181-182).
In comparison with previous mentioned lenses, the discourse lens is after the design lens, the lens that notes the second highest score on the rationality dimension. The discourse element used by managers to gain influence and power over strategic decisions implies that managers are considered to be legitimate participants in the strategy process. This means that they have the competence to use the rational analytical language to get influence over strategic decisions. Thus, the reason why this lens applies a mediocre rational perspective on strategy. Furthermore, one can argue that the discourse element used by managers to communicate strategic decision with other members of the organisation, implies that they will get others view and ideas during the communication process, which consequently will affect their own perspective on things. Hence, the reason why the discourse lens also applies a mediocre innovative view of strategy.

One can argue that there is an ambiguity in regard whether the discourse lens applies a deliberate or emergent view of strategy. Both perspectives may occur depending on the circumstances on how strategies arise. If managers manage to make an impact of their intentions in strategic decisions, it will represent a conscious perspective of strategy. On the other hand, if modifications occur during the process, it is more like an emergent view of strategy. However, as the discourse lens put high emphasis on manager’s power and influence in strategic decisions, as well as, its mediocre rational view of strategy, which is higher than both the experience and variety lens advocates, this lens will in this study lean towards the deliberate side of the spectrum. Another argument for placing the discourse lens at the deliberate side of the spectrum is the high emphasis of power the school stresses, which consequently leads that the one that has most power will get their strategic intentions through. In this sense one can argue that this lens applies a more deliberate perspective on strategy. This implies that the discourse lens will have the design lens to the further side of the deliberate end of the spectrum, and the experience and variety lens in sequential order towards the emergent side of it (see figure 6. Placing the strategic lenses in a spectrum of a deliberate/emergent view of strategy).

Additionally, based on the discussion above one can argue that the discourse lens view strategy in terms of language, something that is associated with power and supremacy that is executed by top managers. Hence, managers are very attentive to the language they use when they communicate and frame strategic issues and decisions.
The figure above (see figure 6. Placing the strategic lenses in a spectrum of a deliberate/emergent view of strategy) will help the researcher to categorise the different perspectives of strategy (strategic lenses) depending on their respective deliberate or emergent view of strategy. By doing so, the researcher will be able to interpret what kind of strategy the different perspectives gives rise to.

2.5 Mintzberg’s ten strategic schools of thought

Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 4-5) put forward different views on how the process of strategy making can occur, i.e. how strategies can be formed. According to the authors strategies can be shaped in ten different ways by following the so-called “ten strategic schools of thought”, where each represent a distinct approach in regard to the content, process and the context of strategy formation. The different schools are named; the design, planning, positioning, entrepreneurial, cognitive, learning, power, cultural, environmental and last but not least the configuration school (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 4-5). The schools are in turn divided into two parent groups, namely, in a prescriptive and a descriptive group (Bhimani & Langfield-Smith, 2007, p. 6-7; Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40-41; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 5-7). The former group is characterised by its focus on how strategies should be formulated, where one places great emphasis on the various alternative methods/techniques an organisation should use in order to compose a strategy. On the other hand, the latter group focuses more on describing how organisations actually form, in fact make their respective strategies (Bhimani & Langfield-Smith, 2007, p. 6-7; Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40-41; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 5-7). Stonehouse & Pemberton (2002, p. 854) mention that the prescriptive and the descriptive approach are often presented as contradictory, where each approach stresses distinct characteristics of the strategy formulation process.

Bhimani & Langfield-Smith (2007, p. 4) argue that the normative-prescriptive approach adopts a rational perspective of strategy formulation, putting a great emphasis on “[...] the formulation of structured and formal statements of intent and the application of predefined instrumental controls”. Furthermore, Bhimani &
Langfield-Smith (2007, p. 6) mention that the prescriptive approach perceives strategy to be “[…] consciously identified, proactive and formulated prior to decisions and action”. This since they are formed on the basis of information extracted from purposively and preformed formal analysis. In turn, this implies that the prescriptive approach assumes the environment to be predictable and determinate (Bhimani & Langfield-Smith, 2007, p. 6-7; Stonehouse & Pemberton, 2002, p. 854).

The descriptive approach opposes the rational and formal approach of strategy formulation (Bhimani & Langfield-Smith, 2007, p. 5; Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 41). The descriptive approach assumes that the environment is complex, instable and relatively unstructured, which implies that strategies cannot be developed in beforehand (Bhimani & Langfield-Smith, 2007, p. 5; Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 41). Bhimani & Langfield-Smith (2007, p. 5) state, “[…] the interplay between strategic pursuits and accounting information production and use is viewed as being influenced by a diversity of contextual, organisational, political and environmental factors”. Kraus & Kauranen (2009, p. 41) argues that the descriptive approach perceives strategy to be a reflection of “[…] the dynamic changes in the outside business economy”. Thus, the descriptive approach advocates a more reactive approach, with continuous adaptation and alteration in relation to external conditions.

The design-, planning- and the positioning school belong to the prescriptive parent group, while the entrepreneurial-, cognitive-, learning-, power-, cultural- and the environmental school belong to the descriptive group (Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40-41; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 5-7). The last remaining school, the configuration school, does not belong to any of the parent groups, as this school is rather viewed as a combination of all the other schools (Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40-41; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 5-7).

Based on the study’s purpose, i.e. to investigate how decision-makers at Born Globals form their strategies in the pre-internationalisation face, one can argue that it is beneficial to use a conceptual basis that comprises a broad view on how strategies can be made. Mintzberg’s ten schools of thought can be interpreted as such one, since it highlights ten different perspectives on how strategies can be formed. These ten different perspectives on strategy formation provide different view of the concept strategy. The different views of the concept strategy have been previously discussed in this study with the help of the four strategic lenses. After discussing every single school in more detail, the different schools will be sorted to the various lenses in accordance to the similarity view of the concept strategy (see figure 7. Sorting the strategic schools of thought to the strategic lenses). Hereinafter, the different schools will be discussed in more detail.

2.5.1 The design school

The design school states that strategies emerge from an informal conception process (Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40; Mintzberg, 1990, p. 171-173; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 24-25). This school proposes that grand strategies are designed through a matching or congruence of an organisation’s internal abilities, and the opportunities deriving from their surrounding external environment. Mintzberg (1990, p. 172) mentions that “captur[ing] success [through] find[ing] out what you are good at and match[ing] it
with what the world wants and needs” should be classed as the motto of the design school.

According to the design school, strategies initially emerge through an assessment of an organisation’s internal and external situations (Bhimani & Langfield-Smith, 2007, p. 6; Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40; Mintzberg, 1990, p. 173-174; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 25-27). The internal evaluation reveals the organisation’s potential strengths and weaknesses, while the external evaluation discloses the threats and opportunities deriving from the external environment. This implies that such analysis reveals an organisation’s respective internal distinctive competences, as well as the external key success factors. Hence, SWOT is considered a relevant tool within this school for the formation of strategies, since the concept assesses an organisation’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (Bhimani & Langfield-Smith, 2007, p. 6; Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40; Mintzberg, 1990, p. 173-174; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 25-27).

Further, the design school stresses that the individual placed in the top of an organisation’s hierarchy possesses a central role in the strategy making process (Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 27, 30-31). This since the school argues that there is only one strategist and consequently his/her beliefs and preferences, as well as the perception in regard to social responsibility will very much affect the strategy output. Hence, within the design school, the highest placed individual is seen as the strategy architect and thus possesses all the responsibility and control for the process (Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 27, 30-31). Hayes (1985, p. 117) cited in Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 31) mention that when “command-and-control mentality” is concentrated at the top of an organisation, which is the case of the design school, all the major decisions land in the hands of the top management team, which in turn implies a top-down steering.

In addition, the design school considers strategies to be one of a kind, explicit, and simple (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 30-33). The simplicity advocated by this school is to ensure that the process becomes controllable for the mind of an individual (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 31). In accordance with this school “simplicity is the essence of a good art” and “a conception of strategy brings simplicity to complex organisations” (Andrews, 1971, p. 554, cited in Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 32). Furthermore, this school proposes that strategies should be fully formulated before implementation (Bhimani & Langfield-Smith, 2007, p. 6; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 30-33; Nollet et al., 2005, p. 132). This in turn implies that this perspective leaves little room for adjustments and corrections along the process (Bhimani & Langfield-Smith, 2007, p. 6; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 30-33; Nollet et al., 2005, p. 132).

Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 32) mention that central to this school is the notion that structure must follow strategy. The authors demonstrate this by mentioning, “Until we know the strategy we cannot begin to specify the appropriate structure” (Mintzberg et al. 1998, p. 32). Moreover, the design school proposes that all what matter to tailor a strategy are specific conditions, and not any system of general variables (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 31-32). For that reason, this school perceives that strategies are created to individual cases (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 31-32).
Concerning the critique towards this school, scholars mention among other things the school’s assumption of simplicity, which may distort the reality and particularly simplify the process of strategy formulation, which is characterised to be highly complex involving many variables (Brinckmann et al., 2010, p. 27; Gruber, 2007, p. 785; Jarzabkowski, 2005, p. 2; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 33-42). Further, the rigidity and inflexibility originating from the notion of making strategy explicit, leaves little room for organisations to cope with conditions of rapid change and uncertainty. Moreover, the separation between the strategist and the “doers” could also be included as a critique. Here scholars refers to the division of work within an organisation, where top-positioned individuals remain in the headquarters formulating strategies, and thus excluded from the daily operations, where the real information exists (Brinckmann et al., 2010, p. 27; Gruber, 2007, p. 785; Jarzabkowski, 2005, p. 2; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 33-42). Nollet et al. (2005, p. 132) mention that additional drawbacks of the design school are that the process in which strategy come about is time consuming, procedural and requires consolidation. Additionally, Bhimani & Langfield-Smith (2007, p. 6) argue that the design school together with the other two prescriptive schools (planning- and positioning school) forces organisation to make strategic choices within the constraint of limited information, as it is impossible to precisely foresee future events.

It is apparent that the design school perceives strategies to be formalised prior to decisions and actions, as the school supports the notion that systematic analysis of an organisation’s internal and external situation should serve as a basis for strategies. Hence, it can be argued that this school view strategies as intentionally identified and proactive leaving little space for potential adjustments during the formulation process. This implies that this school supports a rational process of strategy formulation, where thorough analysis is executed to predict an organisation’s future performance. The view of strategy advocated by the design school is consistent with the vision applied by the design lens, i.e. where a rational and logic course of action in strategy making entails a deliberate and conscious view of it. Furthermore, the design school and the design lens share the assumption in regard to the role of top management within the strategy making process, where these individuals are seen as strategic decision-makers. Moreover, both the school and the lens view organisations as a highly hierarchal entity, which may inter alia be confirmed by the choice of a top-down steering. Based on that, it can be argued that the design school, similar to the design lens, puts a great emphasis on rationality and legitimacy in the strategy formulation process. Thus, the reason why the design school will be sorted out to the design lens (see figure 7. Sorting the strategic schools of thought to the strategic lenses).

2.5.2 The planning school

The planning school argues that strategies are derived from a very strict, formal, controlled and conscious process (Brinckmann et al., 2010, p. 27; Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 47, 58; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985, p. 259; Wiltbank et al., 2006, p. 985). This school puts a great emphasis on formal procedures such as structured analysis, planning and training when designing strategies (Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 47, 58). The strategy making process advocated by the planning school is characterised by a range of separate steps, and backed up through formal control and various checklists and techniques to ensure the execution of the plans with minimal distortion (Landrum, 2008, p. 128; Mintzberg et
In this case the exercise of strategy making process resembles a mechanical process, where one produces the individual components as specified, then assemble it in accordance to the blueprint before leading to the final product, i.e. the strategy itself (Landrum, 2008, p. 128; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 57). Thus, Dibrell et al. (2014, p. 2001) mention, “the firm's formal strategic planning process is concerned with defining, determining, and implementing the strategic initiatives of the firm”.

Scholars argue that the planning school relies largely on prediction (Brinckmann et al., 2010, p. 27; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 51; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985, p. 259; Wiltbank et al., 2006, p. 983). Wiltbank et al. (2006, p. 983) mention “[that] planning looks at prediction from a natural sciences standpoint, where prediction is quite valuable [as it] enables control, allowing us to choose the appropriate means to proceed toward desired outcomes”. Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 51) mention that the high emphasis on planning and prediction within this school implies that its motto can be articulated as “predict and prepare”.

Spee & Jarzabkowski (2011, p. 1218) argue that planning assigns different strategy and power roles to members within an organisation. Within the planning school the overall responsibility of the strategy making process rests on the organisation’s chief executive (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 48, 57-59; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985, p. 259). This means that the chief executive is in principle seen as the architect of strategy. However, peculiar to the planning school is that this individual in practice is not involved in the actual design of the strategic plans, but his/her main task is to accept or reject the plans. This as the planning school believes that the ones that in practice are in charge for the actual development of strategic plans is a smaller group of specialised individuals. These individuals are called for planners and possess a position in the organisation’s strategic planning department, which in turn holds a direct access to the organisation’s CEO (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 48, 57-59; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985, p. 259).

The planning school advocates that planning contributes to better allocation of resources among organisations; this as planning activities enables organisations to effectively use their resources (Brinckmann et al., 2010, p. 25; Delmar & Shane, 2003, p. 1167). Furthermore, scholars argue that planning provides an organisation with clear direction, by setting pre-defined and concretise objectives for the future, planning activities assistance organisations to develop specific steps in order to achieve the objectives (Delmar & Shane, 2003, p. 1167; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 58; Spee & Jarzabkowski, 2011, p. 1218). Additionally, some scholars argue that strategic planning is important for communicating strategic intentions within and external the own organisation (Beer & Eisenstat, 2000, p. 35; Spee & Jarzabkowski, 2011, p. 1218).

Concerning the criticism directed towards this school, scholars mention the difficulty in predicting the future in order to be able to plan (Grant, 2003, p. 493; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 66-68; Wiltbank et al., 2006, p. 985). Hogarth & Makridakis (1981, p. 122) argue, “[that] long range forecasting is notoriously inaccurate”. As a consequence of the inability to predict the future, scholars argue that organisations make strategic decision with limited information, which in turn is out-dated and inaccurate (Bhimani & Langfield-Smith, 2007, p. 6; Delmar & Shane, 2003, p. 1167).
Scholars argue that in such situations, when predictability is difficult, strategists can use scenario planning as a tool, in order to speculate upon a variety of assumptions about the future (Grant, 2003, p. 493; Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 58-59). Hence, scenario planning accounts as one of the main instruments within the planning school (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 58-59).

Rigidity and inflexibility to react to uncertain events, which is a direct consequence of formal planning undermines the value of formal planning and thus can count as an additional critiques to the planning school (Brinckmann et al., 2010, p. 25; Delmar & Shane, 2003, p. 1167; Dibrell et al., 2014, p. 2001; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 68-89; Spee & Jarzabkowski, 2011, p. 1218). Moreover, scholars argue that planning is time consuming and removes organisation’s focus on the “reality”, since planners over-commit to future prognoses (Brinckmann et al., 2010, p. 25; Delmar & Shane, 2003, p. 1167; Nollet et al., 2005, p. 132).

One can argue that the planning school perceives strategies to be of a deliberate nature. This since the school advocates a strategy making process that is characterised by a formal, stepwise and controllable process in order to ensure that the predefined intentions are correctly translated into action and implemented with minimal possible distortion. By supporting such a strict execution, one can argue that the planning school follows a perfect rational approach, where strategies are developed through a logical process of deliberation. The view of strategy as rational plan of action is consistent with the perspective applied by the design lens. The design lens is the one of all the four lenses that puts the greatest emphasis on rationality in its vision of the concept strategy. Further, the top-down direction and the legitimate involvement within the process, is also evident and equal in both the planning school and the design lens. Moreover, the great emphasis on planning and prediction stressed by the planning school leaves no room for unplanned and emergent initiatives. This is believed to hinder innovation, as it removes all the eyes from anything else expect the plans. Even in this aspect, the planning school shares its perspective with the design lens. The equal perspective on rationality, legitimacy and innovation implies that the planning school will be sorted out to the design lens (see figure 7. Sorting the strategic schools of thought to the strategic lenses).

2.5.3 The positioning school

The positioning school argues that strategies are formed in a systematic manner on the basis of an analytical process (Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 81-85). This school recognises that an analysis on the competition situation in the marketplace and the industry in which the company is active, underlies the selected strategic position (Bhimani & Langfield-Smith, 2007, p. 6; Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 81-85; Porter, 1996, p. 68; Stonehouse & Pemberton, 2002, p. 854). Such an analysis results in a set of hard facts, which in turn are analysed, calculated and deliberated, ultimately leading to a recommendation of the optimal strategies for the specific situation (Bhimani & Langfield-Smith, 2007, p. 6; Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 81-85).

The positioning school is the only one of the prescriptive schools that focuses on the actual content of strategies and not only in the process in which they are formed (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 82-83; Stonehouse & Pemberton, 2002, p. 854). This
school has triggered the road and opened up the prescriptive side of the field, enabling the study of specific strategies that is available for organisations, as well as the respective context they fits best in (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 82-83; Stonehouse & Pemberton, 2002, p. 854).

In contrast to the previously mentioned prescriptive schools (the design and planning schools), which do not specify the limit of possible strategies for a certain situation, the positioning school proposes the existence of only a few main strategies that are appropriate for certain industries in certain situations (Bhimani & Langfield-Smith, 2007, p. 6; Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 83-84, 103; Porter, 1985, p. 11-12; Stonehouse & Pemberton, 2002, p. 854). These strategies are referred to as the generic strategies and consist of cost leadership, differentiation and focus strategy (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 83-84, 103; Porter, 1985, p. 11-12).

In accordance to the planning school, the chief executive is also in the positioning school considered in principle to be the strategist and thus possess the official control over the process, as well as the final decision (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 84-85). However, within this school, it is the analysts that are considered to be the actual source of power. These since these individuals are perceived to be the calculators and therefore possess the knowledge to give recommendation concerning the ideal strategies. The analysts do not dedicate themselves to either design or formulate the strategies, but rather select the most appropriate one (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 84-85). Hence, the positioning school as the other two previously mentioned prescriptive school, also supports a top-down approach within the strategy making process (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 84, Scott & Barett, 2005, p. 51).

Concerning the criticism directed towards the positioning school, scholars mention the impossibility in calculating future events (Grant, 2005, p. 493; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 164-165; Wiltbank et al., 2006, p. 985). This criticism is similar to the one that is directed towards the other previous discussed prescriptive schools, i.e. the difficulty in extrapolating what will happen in the future (Grant, 2005, p. 493; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 164-165; Wiltbank et al., 2006, p. 985). Additional criticism directed towards this school is related to the narrow focus on quantifiable hard data to serve as a basis for strategy making, neglecting or giving scant attention to other important aspects/variables such as social, cultural, political etc. (Jarzabkowski, 2005, p. 2; Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40-41; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 112-113; Scott & Barett, 2005, p. 51).

Likewise the preceding prescriptive schools, the positioning school also supports the notion of rational and conscious strategy. This as the strategy making process within this school follows a logic process that comprises of analysis and evaluation. Quantifiable hard data that is obtained through analytical analysis of a company’s position within a certain industry serve as a basis for strategies. This implies that strategies that are extracted from such process will be considered as deliberate. The perspective on strategies applied by the positioning is thereby consistent with the one advocated by the design lens. Furthermore, the high emphasis on legitimacy advocated by the design lens is also visible within the positioning school’s strategy making process, where a top-down approach with chief executives and analysts, which are those that have a say in the process. Additionally, one can argue that the high focus on analytical data and legitimacy within the positioning school hinders
innovation. Even in this aspect, the positioning school shares the assumption of the design lens in regard to innovation, since strategies in this case do not contribute to develop innovative and change oriented organisations but rather rigid and locked ones. Similar view on rationality, legitimacy and innovation implies that the positioning school, as the two previous prescriptive schools will be sorted to the design lens (see figure 7. Sorting the strategic schools of thought to the strategic lenses).

2.5.4 The entrepreneurial school

The entrepreneurship school argues that strategies emerge through a visionary process, which takes place within the mind of a single individual, i.e. the organisation's leader (Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40-41, 43; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 123-125, 143; Ruvio et al., 2010, p. 144-146). Scholars argue that vision is central to entrepreneurship, since it guides an entrepreneur through its journey to the establishment of new businesses (Gupta et al., 2004, p. 242; Ruvio et al., 2010, p. 144). Ruvio et al. (2010, p. 144) mention, “At the incubation stage, all the entrepreneur has is a mental image of what the venture should look like, its place in the business world, and a roadmap for reaching the goal”. Hence, vision is commonly seen as an idealised long-term goal to be accomplished in the future (Elenkov et al., 2005, p. 668; Kirkpatrick et al., 2002, p. 139-140; Ruvio et al., 2010, p. 145). Kirkpatrick et al. (2002, p. 140) argue that vision is considered to be an effective and important component in strategies.

The entrepreneurship school emphasizes that strategies are personalised and driven by the organisation’s leader, in which their respective perspective on things, as well as their personal “intuition, judgement, wisdom, experience [and] insight” (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 123) influences strategic outcomes (Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 43; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 123; McCarthy, 2003, p. 328). Hence, within the entrepreneurship school the organisation’s leaders and in particular their respective perspective on things possess a central role in the strategy making process (Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40-41, 43; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 123-124; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985, p. 260).

In this school, the leaders are perceived to be strategists and decision-makers (Alvarez & Barney, 2007, p. 19; Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 43; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 123-124; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985, p. 260). This implies that he/she exclusively holds the control of action within the organisation, as well as they are in charge for the development and implementation of strategies. This means that organisations are responsive and subordinate of their respective leadership. Wiltbank et al. (2006, p. 990) mention that characterised for a visionary approach is the construction of “an organisation and its environment by imagination future possibilities and proactively bringing them to fruition”. Hence, the visionary approach simultaneously stresses high control and high prediction (Wiltbank et al. 2006, p. 990).

Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 132) mention that within the entrepreneurship school, strategy making is dominated by the entrepreneur’s active exploration of opportunities. Scholars argue that the searching for opportunities is central for entrepreneurship, since without opportunities entrepreneurial activities cannot take
place (Ardichvili et al., 2003, p. 105-106; Busenitz et al., 2003, p. 297; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000, p. 218; Short et al., 2010, p. 40-41). Alvarez & Barney (2007, p. 19) mention, “The strategy making process, can vary significantly depending on the context within which an entrepreneur is operating, be it discovery or creation”. In a discovery context, entrepreneurs operate under risky circumstances (Alvarez & Barney, 2007, p. 19). In such setting there is usually enough ex ante information, which in turn enables entrepreneurs to apply different risk-based data collection methods and analysis techniques in order to foresee, estimate and calculate possible assumptions and outcomes of a particular strategic decision (Alvarez & Barney, 2007, p. 14, 18). In this case, ex ante information allows entrepreneurs to make correct predictions in regard to the nature of an opportunity, as well as how the opportunity can be exploited (Alvarez & Barney, 2007, p. 19; Sarasvathy, 2001, p. 245, 251). Hence, once a strategy is created in a discovery context, it is not necessary to alter or modify it, as it is from the beginning intentionally designed to reflect a particular pre-defined purpose (Alvarez & Barney, 2007, p. 19; Sarasvathy, 2001, p. 245, 251).

On the other hand, Alvarez & Barney (2007, p. 19) mention that conventional risk-based data collection and analysis technique cannot be efficiently used in a creation context, which is characterised by an uncertain setting. In such setting, entrepreneurs make strategic decision through an inductive and incremental process (Alvarez & Barney, 2007, p. 18, Sarasvasthy, 2001, p. 245, 251). Strategies that are created in a creation perspective are developed through a more flexible, experimental and learning approach that recognises that every step throughout the process of enacting an opportunity is seen as unique (Alvarez & Barney, 2007, p. 19-20; Sarasvathy, 2001, p. 245, 251). Hence, strategies in such setting may disclose the general direction but the path is not clearly defined, leaving space for experiment and fundamental changes along the process (Alvarez & Barney, 2007, p. 19-20; Sarasvathy, 2001, p. 245, 251).

The criticism directed towards this school originates among other things from the school’s reliance of one single individual (the organisation’s leader) in the strategy making process (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 144). Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 145) argue that to rely on a single individual may cause certain risks for organisations, for example in case of losing such a crucial individual may wipe out the organisation’s entire strategic knowledge. Further, criticism derives from the school’s focus on visions, which may lead to fixation towards a single direction and thereby the exclusion of other possible options (Fern et al., 2012, p. 427; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 145). Moreover, the authors mention that visions may put an unrealistic burden on a single individual, while the rest of the organisation enthusiastically follows the given directions (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 145).

In comparison to previous mentioned prescriptive schools, it is apparent that the entrepreneurship school put more emphasis on subjective elements of leadership. This since this school supports the notion that strategic decisions will be reflected by an entrepreneur’s subjective orientations and attitudes. The entrepreneurship school offer this study another dimension to how organisations actually form strategies, i.e. by focusing on the organisation’s leader depicted image and sense of direction, namely this individual’s vision. One can argue that the entrepreneurship school stresses a mixture of a rational and emergent process of strategy making. This since the vision that has a central place in this school is not a fully static formalised plan of action, but not fully emergent as well. Instead the vision may comprise of some in beforehand-
defined strategic intentions, but these could in turn be adjusted and revisited along the process. Hence, one can argue that the entrepreneurship school stresses a semi-conscious view of strategy.

By recognising the entrepreneur’s subjective characteristics in the process of strategy making, where the leader’s past experience and intuition (inherent in his/her vision) will influence forthcoming strategic decisions, one can argue that strategies that derives from the entrepreneurship school is consistent with the view of strategy applied by the experience lens. This as the experience lens is the only lens of the four lenses that views strategy as an outcome of people’s past actions and taken-for-granted assumptions. By giving the organisation’s leader a central position in the strategy making process, one can argue that the entrepreneurship school recognises this individual as legitimate. A high emphasis on legitimacy is also evident in the experience lens, which recognizes the value and the importance of managerial experience in strategy making as these individuals are seen as the enactors of experience. The above-mentioned similarities between the entrepreneurship school and the experience lens, implies that this school will be sorted out to the experience lens (see figure 7. Sorting the strategic schools of thought to the strategic lenses).

2.5.5 The cognitive school

The cognitive school argues that strategies derive from a human cognition process, taking place inwards the mind of the strategists (Gary & Wood, 2011, p. 569; Gavetti & Levinthal, 2000, p. 113; Gavetti & Rivkin, 2007, p. 420; Kaplan, 2011, p. 666-667; Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40-41; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 149-150). In this school one sees the individual strategists as the unit of analysis, more particularly one seeks to better understand the human mind and brain, in order to understand how strategists think when shaping strategies (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 149-150). Hence, the cognitive school has its roots in cognitive psychology and tries to explain how individuals perceive patterns and process information.

The cognitive school stresses that strategists are self-taught individuals (Fern et al., 2012, p. 428; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 150). These individuals form their respective knowledge structures and thinking processes through direct experiences. In turn, these knowledge structures shapes the strategist’s perceptions and behaviour, which consequently influences their forthcoming decisions, as these individuals are keen to repeat their learned behaviours (Fern et al., 2012, p. 428; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 150).

Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 150) mention that the cognitive school comprises of two inherent wings, which in turn are considered as central characteristic of the school. These wings relate differently to how strategists perceive inputs from the environment (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 170). The first wing applies a more positivistic approach where the processing and structuring of knowledge is treated as an attempt to construct an objective picture of the world (Gavetti & Levinthal, 2000, p.113-114; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 150-151). Scholars argue that in this case, one puts a great emphasis on experiential wisdom, which is a result of an accumulation and reinforcement of trial and error learning process of prior behaviours (Gavetti & Levinthal, 2000, p.113-114; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 150-151). Gavetti & Levinthal (2000, p. 113) mention that in this wing, “bounded rationality is manifest primarily in
the limited or imperfect cognitive representations that actors use to form mental models of their environment”. Fern et al. (2010, p. 430) mention that due to the strategist’s cognitive limitation, they are incapable to contemplate all possible alternatives, thus only those that are contiguous to earlier experiences will be considered. Hence, Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 151) mention that this wing acknowledges cognition as a re-creation of the world.

The second wing emphasises a more subjective approach and perceives strategies as an interpretation of the world (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 151). This wings focuses on how individual takes inputs from the visible environment, i.e. what exists out there, and tries to interpret what they see. Hence, this wing acknowledges that cognition creates the world (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 151).

Concerning the critique directed towards this school, Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 172-173) mention that the school has been recognised more by its potential than its real contribution. This criticism refers to the school’s focus on elusive elements that has been recognised as significant and impacting, but hard to grasp and manage.

In comparison to the other schools, the cognition school is the one that focuses most on psychological elements in the strategy making process. This implies that this school offers this study a more psychological dimension to how strategies are developed, through trying to understand how strategists think when making strategic decisions. The cognitive school stresses that strategists are cognitively constrained, and therefore cannot consider all the possible alternatives when making decisions. This implies that these individuals’ subsequent strategic decisions will be restricted to past learned behaviours. In this case it is the specific situation that will reveal the possible alternatives to assume. This implies that strategists do not plan its decision in beforehand; instead they act in accordance to prior learned behaviour when similar circumstances arise. Hence, one can argue that strategies that are created in accordance to the cognitive school are of a more emergent nature, as they are not formalised in advance in form static plans.

By taking into account an individual’s cognitive foundation, as well as focusing on strategists as the unit of analysis, thus giving these individuals a legitimate position within the strategy making process, one can argue that the cognitive school should be sorted out to the experience lens (see figure 7. Sorting the strategic schools of thought to the strategic lenses). This since the experience lens is the only lens that takes into account an individual cognitive foundation in the strategy making process. Furthermore, the lens also scores high on the legitimacy dimension, whilst scoring very low in the innovation dimension. Finally, one can argue that the strategists cognitive constraints and just acting upon previous learned behaviours, implies that one dismiss a lot of possibilities that might be better but that one haven’t even considered. Even in this aspect the cognitive is consistent with the experience lens, which stresses that decision-makers may prefers some options over others, although they may not be the ideal.

2.5.6 The learning school

The learning school argues that strategies originate from an emergent strategy formation process (Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40-41; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p.
This school claims that the environment in which organisations are surrounded by is far too complex and thus impossible to predict (Jett & George, 2005, p. 387-388; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 178; Wiltbank et al., 2006, p. 983). The learning school suggests that in such situations, when it is difficult and almost impossible to unite in a clear ex ante strategy, one should instead focus on a learning process, a flexible and adaptive approach that permits the organisation to react to the evolving reality step by step and not having to wait to completely determined strategies (Ghezzi, 2013, p. 1327; Jett & George, 2005, p. 388; Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 41; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 228-229; Wiltbank et al., 2006, p. 985-986). This implies that this school advocates a perspective where strategies are developed incrementally, as the organisation learns (Jett & George, 2005, p. 388; Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 176-178, 208-209; Wiltbank et al., 2006, p. 985-986). This view differs from the vision that considers strategies to be formed all at once, as in the case of clear rigid plans.

Scholars argue that the incrementalism and iterative strategic approach supported by the learning school enables the organisation to get feedback of action, to retrospectively evaluate the action taken and then to incorporate the lessons learned into the subsequent strategy (Jett & George, 2005, p. 388; Wiltbank et al., 2006, p. 985-986). This in turn permits the organisation to play and experiment rather than pursue. The learning school stresses that strategic initiatives may come from any individual anywhere within the organisation who possess the capacity and the resources to learn (Ahearne et al., 2014, p. 68-69; Burgelman, 1983, p. 67; Noda & Bower, 1996, p. 160-161; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 178, 186-189, 208; Wooldridge et al., 2008, p. 1194). Opposed to other schools, the strategy making process within the learning school is not strictly intended to top-managers, since individuals placed lower down in the hierarchy, which possesses the actual knowledge may very well generate strategic ideas. Thus, an organisation can consist of many potential strategists. However, top managers still have the possibility to exercise influence of the strategic initiatives by setting up structural guidelines and mechanism that reflects their intentions and thereby manipulate the initiatives coming from the bottom of the hierarchy. Thus, this school recognises that the role of the top management is not to form deliberate strategies in beforehand, but rather to manage the overall process of strategic learning, from where new and fresh strategies can emerge (Ahearne et al., 2014, p. 68-69; Burgelman, 1983, p. 67; Noda & Bower, 1996, p. 160-161; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 178, 186-189, 208; Wooldridge et al., 2008, p. 1194).

In regard to the criticism towards this school, Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 223-224) mention that a learning process might not lead to any strategy. Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 225) argues that “constantly nibbling instead of a good bite” might lead to tactical manoeuvring instead of a clear strategy and direction. Furthermore, scholars argue that incremental learning is not always appropriate for all conditions, such as conditions characterised by an increasing uncertainty, for example during crisis (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 225, Wiltbank et al., 2006, p. 985). In such settings organisations should rather engage in more precisely analysis in order to be able to predict the future (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 225, Wiltbank et al., 2006, p. 985). Additionally critique refers to the assumption that constantly learning and changing
might lead to a point where organisation drifts themselves from established strategies (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 226-227).

The proactive and learn by doing characteristic features of the strategy making process advocated by the learning school provides this study with an additional dimension on how strategies can evolve. Strategies that are crafted through such an approach can be argued to be of an emergent and incremental nature, as they are not seen as static but rather as adjustable. This view of strategy is in turn consistent with the one applied by the variety lens, which perceives strategies to be a response to cope to the uncertain and ever-changing environment. By stressing the involvement of a variety of actors in the strategy-making process, and not only the legitimate top-manager or strategist, the learning school advocates more diversity. Diversity in the strategy making process is also evident in the variety lens, which comparable to the other lenses is the one that scores less in the legitimacy dimension. Additionally, one can argue that the great prevalence of diversity stressed by this school, promotes innovation as individuals that possess the actual knowledge in the lower-levels of an organisation’s hierarchy are taken into account. Furthermore, the diversity contributes to more spontaneous organisations, which in turn also can be argued to promote innovation. The aforementioned similarities between the learning school and the variety lens will result that the school will be sorted out to the variety lens (see figure 7. Sorting the strategic schools of thought to the strategic lenses).

2.5.7 The power school

The power school argues that strategies arise from a negotiating process (Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 233). Balogun et al. (2014, p. 188) mention that strategizing usually involves competing ideas and expressions, where some becomes crystallised while others not. The authors argue that the reason of why some are institutionalised is because they are argued in a convincing way (Balogun et al., 2014, p. 188). This implies that the language of strategy has led to power implications within organisations, constructing power relations and structures between actors that engage in strategizing (Balogun et al., 2014, p. 177; Mantere & Vaara, 2008, p. 342-343). Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 235) mention that these power relations “surround organisations, [but] they can also infuse them”. Thus, the authors distinct between two branches of the power school; one that deals with the play of politics inside the organisation (micro power) while the other one deals with the use of power by the organisation (macro power) (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 235). Hence, the power school puts a great emphasis on how individuals and organisations use power and politics to negotiate strategies of self-interest (Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40-4; McCabe, 2010, p. 154; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 23).

The micro power wing stresses a battle of power between power holders within the own organisation, i.e. members of the organisation conflicting with each other out of self-interest (Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40; McCabe, 2010, p. 154; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 233-235, 260). Strategy making is seen in this case as an interaction of negotiating, persuasion and sometimes even direct confrontation process between the various individuals, interest groups, and coalitions that comprises an organisation. Thus, the power school stresses the existence of disparities within an organisation, where different conflicting individuals and groups play different kind of political
games to get their particular interests and agendas through (Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40; McCabe, 2010, p. 154; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 233-235, 260).

On the other hand, the macro power wing focuses on how organisation acts out of its own self-interest with external actors, which in turn influence or have an impact on the organisation (McCabe, 2010, p. 154; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 248, 260). The organisation can in this case either engage in a conflict or choose to cooperate with these external parties through strategic manoeuvring, networks or different kind of strategic alliances (McCabe, 2010, p. 154; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 248, 260).

The power school rejects the notion of a single strategist, and instead supports the notion that a plurality of actors that exercise power participates in the strategy making process (McCabe, 2010, p. 152-153; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 233).

Scholars argue that politics not merely brings positive effects for organisations, such as giving people the possibility to exert influence and express and insert their interests, as well as stimulating necessary alteration that might be impeded by legitimate sources of influence (Collier et al., 2004, p. 69; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 260-261). However, too much politics may cause negative effects as well, such as distortion, undermining of effective decisions, and to some extent it can also be a resistance factor to strategic change (Collier et al., 2004, p. 69; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 260-261). Additionally, Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 260-261) highlights that the great emphasis of power within this school, could lead to fragmentation in organisations.

By stressing the factor that strategies can evolve through a bargaining process, where both individuals and organisations use politics and power to craft strategies of their own-interest, the power school gives this study an additional dimension to how strategies can be crafted. In turn, this implies that strategies that is created through such a process advocated by the power school can be argued to be more of a deliberate nature, however this school leaves some room for modifications along the process. This since the bargaining process, which is a central characteristic for this school, will revise the strategic intentions along the process. Hence, one cannot characterise strategies as fully deliberate, as they are not fully strict formalised in beforehand. However, one can argue that they cannot be categorised as fully emergent either. This since the characteristic power and politics elements that constitutes this school will entail that those individuals that possess most power and influence will certainly have more to say about in the outcome. Hence, their intentions will be more reflected in the strategic outcome. Of that reason, one can say that this school do not apply a fully deliberate perspective view of strategy as the prescriptive schools do. However, one can argue that of all the descriptive schools, the power school is the one that apply the most deliberate view of strategy.

The high emphasis on power and politics advocated by the power school entails that this school view organisations as an arena of power. This in turn is consistent with the view applied by the discourse lens. The discourse lens view strategies as language, where managers are tentative to their linguistic competence, which they use to acquire influence, power and legitimacy within organisations. Having that said, one can argue that the discourse lens also stresses some aspect of power, as individuals’ linguistic capabilities are believed to emit power. Moreover, the discourse lens puts a high emphasis on legitimacy, since it is those individuals that posse’s power within an
organisation that also make the decisions. This is also the case in the power school. To engage in a bargaining strategy making process may lead that some new insights and ideas reveals along the process, since one must be receptive to others alternatives in order to reach a compromise. One can argue that the scope that the power school offers is not the most innovation friendly atmosphere, however it is not completely unfriendly either. Even though the discourse lens is so legitimate, the lens does still scores mediocre in the innovation dimension. Even in this aspect, both the power school and the discourse lens share their perceptions in regard to innovation.

Finally, by supporting the notion of a bargaining strategy making process where individuals that excise power negotiate strategic outcomes, the power school shares the perspective of strategy advocated by strategies, i.e. a linguistic composition that is powerful and superior. Due to the above-mentioned similarities between the power school and the discourse lens, the power school will be sorted out to the discourse lens (see figure 7. Sorting the strategic schools of thought to the strategic lenses).

### 2.5.8 The cultural school

The cultural school argues that strategies stems from a collective and cooperative process deeply rooted in an organisation’s shared beliefs and values, i.e. culture (Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40-41; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 263-264). In contrast to the previous school (the power school) that focuses on self-interest and fragmentation, this school put a great emphasis on the opposite, i.e. common interest and integration (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 263-264).

The cultural school rejects the recognised individualism approach in the development of strategies manifested by some schools (design, entrepreneurship, cognitive), where strategic intentions originates from one specific centre and then is passively accepted by the rest of the organisation (Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 276-277, 283; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985, p. 262). Instead this school advocates a more collectivist dimension, where strategic intentions that stem from the past (traditions and precedents) tend to be preserved and further build upon the initial values and behaviours (Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40; O’ Regan & Ghobadian, 2005, p. 1109; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 276-277, 283; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985, p. 262). This entails that they are positively embraced of all individuals within the organization.

Scholars argue that the resistance and the unwillingness to change are seen as one of the major critique directed towards the cultural school (O’ Regan & Ghobadian, 2005, p. 1109; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 280-282). This critique refers to the notion that culture is perceived to be heavy, set and rooted on traditions, which in turn impede the insertion of novelty. This together with the perception of change for being something complex and difficult leads to a resistance to change, which may result in stagnation of organisations. Another critique towards the cultural school is that the school focuses on what already exist, and thereby moves the eyes from the future and what can come into being (O’ Regan & Ghobadian, 2005, p. 1109; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 280-282).

By stressing the fact that strategies are formed collectively through a strategy making process deeply rooted in an organisation’s shared beliefs and values gives this study
an additional dimension to how strategies can be created. The great focus on historical
and cultural events that serve as a basis for individual’s beliefs and values implies that
history and culture are key elements within the cultural school. One can argue that
this is also the case within the experience lens, since the lens supports the notion that
individuals’ experience, assumptions and taken for granted ways of doing things
develop strategies. In comparison to the other lenses, the experience lens is the only
one to support the previous mentioned argument, and since these elements are central
for the cultural school the school will be sorted out to the experience lens.

Due to the fact that the cultural school recognises that strategic intentions stem from
the past and that subsequent strategies is built upon and can be traced back to original
beliefs and values, one can argue that forthcoming strategies is not fully spontaneous
and emergent. This since original intentions is believed to the preserved, and only
small modifications along the process are possible within the context of the original
overall perspective. Of that reason strategies that are created through the process
advocated by the cultural school cannot be considered as fully deliberate either, since
the strategies are not completely build ex ante facto. Hence, one can argue that the
cultural school apply a view in between deliberate and emergent. In comparison to the
view applied by the remaining descriptive schools, the cultural school applies a less
emergent perspective on strategy compared to the environmental and learning
school. But a more emergent view applied by the power school. This since the power school
with its high emphasis on power and politics gives rise to power structures within
organisations, resulting in situations where individuals that experience power can in a
more deliberate way plan and manipulate strategic intentions. While the learning and
the environmental school sees strategies to be formed incrementally either through the
lessons learned during the strategy making process or through a reaction to occurred
events. Because of that, the cultural school will be sorted out to the experience lens,
the lens placed between the discourse (which from the cultural school view applies a
too deliberate view of strategy) and variety lens (which from the cultural school view
applies a too emergent view of strategy) in the spectrum of a deliberate and emergent
view of strategy (see figure 7. Sorting the strategic schools of thought to the strategic
lenses).

2.5.9 The environmental school

The environmental school sees strategy formation as a reactive process (Kraus &
Kauranen, 2009, p. 40-41; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 285-286). This school places the
environment in the centre of strategy formation process and argues that strategies
should be viewed as a response to the challenges an organization is exposed from a
set of forces deriving from the external environment. Thus, the environmental school
unlike others view the environment as an actor, rather than a factor in the strategy
formation process (Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40-41; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 285-
286).

Scholars argue that the perspective advocated by the environmental school implies
that organisations are perceived to be passive entities, constantly reacting to the
external environment, which in turn sets the agenda (Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40-
41, Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 286-287). This is turn is similar to a purely adaptive
approach, which Wiltbank et al. (2006, p. 985) describe as the avoidance of “defining
future event spaces, and instead position the firm for quick responses to uncertain and

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unpredictable events as they emerge”. Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 286-287) mention that the consequence of such approach is that both leadership and organisations becomes subordinate to the environment. Thus, within the environmental school it is the environment that takes the command over the process, and not a single individual or a collective group, as in the case of other schools (Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 40-41; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 286-287).

In accordance to the environmental school organisations are forced to adapt to the external conditions deriving from the environment, and discover its specific optimal position, i.e. a niche, if not they will be “selected out” (Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 41; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 286-287).

Concerning the criticism directed towards the environmental school, scholars point out the fact that the environment is vague, abstract and aggregated, which in turn makes it difficult to solely rely on it when creating strategies (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 288).

By stressing the fact that strategies can be formed entirely in response to external events through a reactive strategy making process, this school offers this study another dimension to how strategies can be created. In comparison to other schools that have been discussed so far, this school is the one that advocates the most flexible and emergent approach to strategy making. This since strategies that are crafted through such a strategy making process advocated by this school are perceived to be created in response to cope with occurred external circumstances. Hence, strategies are perceived to be created ex post facto, i.e. retroactively to the action, which implies that they are of an emergent nature.

The view of strategy expressed by the environmental school is consistent with the one applied by the variety lens, where strategies are perceived to create in response to cope with uncertain and changing circumstances (ex post facto view of strategy). The variety lens compared to the other lenses is the one that express the most flexible view of strategy. This since the lens scores the lowest score on both rationality and legitimacy dimension, while scoring the highest on innovation. As argued before comparable to the other schools, the environmental school is the one that advocates the most flexible and emergent approach of strategy making.

Moreover, the variety lens is the only lens that supports the notion of external factors in the periphery to influence the strategic outcome. As the environmental school puts the environment in the centre and perceives it be an actor in the strategy making, one could argue that both the variety lens and the environmental school share the perception of the significance of the external environment to strategy making. Due to the above-mentioned similarities between the environmental school and the variety lens, the environmental school will be sorted out the variety lens (see figure 7. Sorting the strategic schools of thought to the strategic lenses).

2.5.10 The configuration school

The configuration school sees strategy formation as a process of transformation, where organisations convert between different types of decision-making structures (Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 41; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 301). Scholars mention
that the configuration school stands out in relation to the previous presented schools in the aspect that it allows organisations to integrate messages from the other schools (Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 41; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 302). For this reason, the school put much emphasis on integration and transformation, thus the motto of this school could be disclosed as; “to everything there is a season” (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 302).

Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 302-303, 305-306) mention that the configuration school possess two main sides; namely a configuration and a transformation side. The configuration aspect refers to a period of stability in which the organisation is fully adapted to the environmental factors in terms of strategic action. Thus, the role of strategy is to maintain stability in organisation while keeping the business adapted to the needs of the context it operates. However, as the circumstances change and the factors influencing the business are altered; the firm needs to adapt. As this occurs, the strategy enters a stage of transformation. In the transformation phase, the firm’s strategy changes its configuration to fit the new surroundings.

The configuration school stresses the key of strategic management is to support stability, but as well as to recognise that periodic and drastic transformation is needed sometimes (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 303, 305).

In regard to the critique directed to this school, Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 344) mention the quantum of change. This critique refers to the notion that the school addresses that organisation is either static entities or involves in drastic changes. This implies that the school rejects incremental changes, which according to Donaldson (1996, p. 122) is the most the frequent type of change for organisations. Further criticism directed towards the configuration school is that it is general and simplistic, where one tries to include everything, and as a consequence fails to examine anything well (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 345).

By putting forward the possibility to mix and convert between the messages of several schools, the configuration school offers this study a broader and diverse dimension to how strategies can be crafted. Since the configuration school recognises that organisations convert from one decision-making structure to another, it is impossible to determine a specific view the school has on the concept strategy. Due to that reason, this school will not be sorted out to any specific lens as it is the case of the others schools. Instead this school will border to all the lenses (see figure 7. Sorting the strategic schools of thought to the strategic lenses). The configuration school will be used in this study to cover the possibility for organisations to mix and convert between different methods and decision-making structures along the process of strategy making.
2.6 Born Global enterprises

This subchapter will specifically deal with Born Global enterprises. Since Born Globals account for a main component in this study, it is essential to review literatures that deal with these kind of enterprises in order to develop our understanding for these. Thus, hereinafter I will present literatures that describes Born Globals and their characteristic features.

2.6.1 Definition of Born Globals

Ever since Rennie’s discovery of Born Global enterprises in 1993, scholars have used a broad range of terminology to classify companies that engages in an early and rapid internationalisation process (Cavusgil & Knight, 2014, p. 4; Luostarinen & Gabrielsson, 2006, p. 776; Madsen, 2013, p. 65; Rialp et al., 2005, p. 149; Svensson, 2009, p. 1311). For example, terms such as Born Globals (Cavusgil & Knight, 2014; Knight & Cavusgil, 1996; Madsen & Servais, 1997; Rennie, 1993; Sharma & Blomstermo, 2003), International New Ventures (McDougall et al., 2003; Oviatt & McDougall, 1994), High-Technology Start-Ups (Jolly et al., 1992), Global Start-Ups (Oviatt & McDougall, 1995) and Early Internationalisation Firms (Rialp et al., 2005) has been used throughout the years.

Svensson (2009, p. 1312) claims that a wide and inclusive terminology has led to a disharmony and disagreement among scholars. This inconsistency complicates possible comparison of studies that have investigated the phenomenon, which consequently prevents the understanding of the phenomenon in it’s entirely (Cesinger...
et al., 2012, p. 1817; Madsen, 2013, p. 66). Svensson (2009, p. 1312) mention that the diverse terms have been used interchangeably within research, although scholars intend to refer to the identical phenomenon. These since researchers tend to use their own terms instead of aiming to reach a common agreement of terminology (Svensson, 2009, p. 1312).

As the table below shows (see appendix 8.1. Definitions of Born Globals) the definitions used for the concept Born Globals have been many throughout the years. Some scholars disclose that this kind of business differs from others in the sense that they are more technology oriented (Knight & Cavusgil, 1996, p.11). Notwithstanding, other scholars state that Born Global enterprises are not specifically restricted to any particular industry or economic sector (Madsen & Servais, 1997, p. 580; Oviatt & McDougall, 1994, p. 48; Rennie, 1993, p. 49).

Additionally, some scholars also choose to include a specific time span between the firm establishment and the initiation of conducting international activities, i.e. export commencement (Chetty & Campbell-Hunt, 2004, p. 65; Knight & Cavusgil, 1996, p. 11; Moen & Servais, 2002, p. 69; Rennie, 1993, p. 46). Furthermore, other scholars include the company’s export intensity in their definitions (Chetty & Campbell-Hunt, 2004, p. 65; Knight & Cavusgil, 1996, p. 18; Moen & Servais, 2002, p. 69; Rennie, 1993, p. 46). Oviatt & McDougall (1997, p. 91) mention, “that the existence of a significant amount of sales coming from foreign countries is the key defining dimension”. Finally, another aspect that has been debated among scholars is the geographic scope of international operations, i.e. the extent number of international markets a Born Global must serve (Cavusgil & Knight, 2014, p. 4; Gabrielsson & Kirpalani, 2004, p. 557; Knight & Cavusgil, 2004, p. 124; Melén & Nordman, 2009, p. 246). The below examples demonstrate that scholars have arbitrarily defined the concept Born Globals through implementing stricter and broader definitions.

Among the diversity of definitions, Madsen (2013, p. 67) mention that lately scholars have been more united in regard to the theoretical definition of the phenomena, where most uses the definition that once was formulated for International New Ventures, namely; “a business organization that from or near inception seeks to derive significant competitive advantage from the use of resources and the sale of outputs in multiple countries” (Oviatt & McDougall, 1994, p. 49). Thus, the reason why the current study will also apply this definition.

### 2.6.2 Characteristic features of Born Globals

Born Global enterprises are typically categorised as SMEs companies (Cavusgil & Knight, 2014, p. 4; McDougall et al., 2003, p. 59; Oviatt & McDougall, 1994, p. 32; Rennie, 1993, p. 47; Rialp et al., 2005, p. 135). Further, these enterprises are characterised for being highly entrepreneurial (Cavusgil & Knight, 2014, p. 4; Chetty & Campbell-Hunt, 2004, p. 62; Madsen & Servais, 1997, p. 580-581). Cavusgil & Knight (2014, p. 4) mention that these enterprises establishment and growth are very much dependent on the support of distinctive entrepreneurial skills, usually championed by their founder or managers. For this reason, Madsen & Servais (1997, p. 580-581) mention that Born Globals are strongly influenced by their founders, primarily in the form of their prior experience, ambition level and motivation.
Zahra (2005, p. 23) mention that the nature of Born Globals implies that these companies are exposed to three kinds of liabilities. The first liability is inherent in the company’s size (Zahra, 2005, p. 23). Several scholars share this perception and express that these enterprises small size entails a constrain in regard to source of resources, and thus resources as well (Cavusgil & Knight, 2014, p. 4; Moen & Servais, 2002, p. 52-53; Oviatt & McDougall, 1994, p. 32; Zahra, 2005, p. 23).

Further, Zahra (2005, p. 23) mention that the second liability concerns the company’s newness and inexperience. Scholars argue that Born Globals young age might impede their availability to resources as well as their access to already established networks (Oviatt & McDougall, 1994, p. 32; Zahra, 2005, p. 23). Because of that reason, scholars argue that Born Globals are heavily dependent of the support of their founders or managers (Cavusgil & Knight, 2014, p. 4; Madsen & Servais, 1997, p. 577-578). These individuals function sometimes as a mitigating factor since they minimise the risk and the uncertainty these enterprises are exposed to (Madsen & Servais, 1997, p. 580-581). Zahra (2005, p. 23) mention their newness in turn might impede funding, as this questions the company’s credibility and viability.

The last liability stems from Born Globals’ foreignness (Zahra, 2005, p. 23). Foreignness is related to the uncertainty these firms are exposed to when entering new foreign markets. According to the author, Born Global enterprises must be able to overcome this foreignness in order to succeed. For example, these companies must be able to gain acceptance and build connections to an international audience (Zahra, 2005, p. 23).

Further characteristic feature is that Born Globals perceive the entire world as its marketplace from the company’s inception (Cavusgil & Knight, 2014, p. 4; Gabrielsson et al., 2008, p. 386; Knight & Cavusgil, 1996, p. 18; Madsen & Servais, 1997, p. 563; Moen & Servais, 2002, p. 49-50). This implies that these companies origin as well its fundamental orientation is highly international (Cavusgil & Knight, 2014, p. 4). This is turn is very unique and different to other firms that usually follows a traditional and more incremental internationalisation process (Moen & Servais, 2002, p. 49-50). Rialp et al. (2005, p. 138) mention that Born Globals do not limit themselves to individual countries or view foreign markets as a supplement to the domestic market. Instead Born Globals perceive international markets as providers of opportunities waiting to be exploited rather than obstacles (Madsen & Servais, 1997, p. 567).

In addition, another characteristic feature for Born Globals is that they typically holds some form of internal distinctive and unique intangible asset (Oviatt & McDougall, 1995, p. 36-37). These intangible assets, as for example tacit knowledge, could be seen as a source of competitive advantage (Oviatt & McDougall, 1995, p. 36-37). Oviatt & McDougall (1995, p. 36-37) state that novelty usually attracts rivalry and imitation, however the possession of intangible assets enables Born Globals to resist from it. This since this kind of asset is hard to copy and imitate (Oviatt & McDougall, 1995, p. 36-37).

Moreover, Knight & Cavusgil (1996, p. 18) mention Born Globals’ innovativeness, which according to the authors in comparison with other enterprises is out-standing. The authors state that Born Globals usually use the latest available technology in
order to do something different than the existing or to develop unique novelties (Knight & Cavusgil, 1996, p. 18). By constantly being in the technological forefront, Born Globals are able to offer unique solutions and thereby attract attention from a broad audience (Knight & Cavusgil (1996, p. 18). Hence, according to Madsen & Servais (1997, p. 565) these companies usually target niche markets and compete through offering superior value and quality. Further, Madsen & Servais (1997, p. 565) mention that the uniqueness and the innovativeness enables Born Globals to distribute their goods all over world, since such goods is demanded globally.

Another characteristic feature of Born Globals is their dependence on supplementary competences from external parties (Madsen & Servais, 1997, p. 568). Apparently this in more evident in the case of Born Globals, since the limited resources implies an incapability to handle all the necessary operations internally (Madsen & Servais, 1997, p. 568). Furthermore, Gabrielsson & Kirpalani (2004, p. 556, 558) mention that the lack of resource obliges Born Globals to utilise alternative governance structure. McDougall et al. (1994, p. 478) mention that the reliance on hybrid structures preserve scarce resources. Finally, Knight & Cavusgil (2009, p. 12) mention that the reliance on intermediaries to orchestrate foreign activities leads to flexibility, which according to Rialp et al. (2005, p. 141) enables Born Globals to adapt in a relative manner to changing external circumstances.

There is no doubt that Born Global companies are unique both in terms of their behaviour and characteristic features. One can argue that these companies have managed to turn their vulnerability from being a constraint to rather being a driver for rapid internationalisation. Of course their peculiar characteristics and the changes that have occurred and revolutionised the international business landscape have facilitated for these kinds of enterprises to become a serious player internationally and a significant contributor for a society's development.

### 2.7 Theoretical framework

In this subchapter the study’s complete general theoretical framework will be presented. The theoretical framework will serve as a basis for the empirical data collection. The obtained findings from respective case companies will later be analysed against the general theoretical framework below in order to be able to uncover how decision-makers at Born Globals form their strategies during their pre-internationalisation phase and thereby answer this study’s research question.

As the literature review demonstrates strategies appear to be complex and multifaceted, thus the concept may develop different meanings (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 174-183). The four strategic lenses capture the different viewpoints of the concept strategy, where each of lenses is unique offering a distinctive approach to explore strategic issues (Johnson et al, 2014, p. 174-183). These lenses can be placed in an axis depending on their attitudes regarding deliberate and emergent development of strategies (see figure 8. Theoretical framework). The consciousness refers to a rational course of action to meet pre-determined intentions, while on the other hand the emergent side sees strategies to emerge in response, i.e. as a reaction, to a happened action (Mintzberg, 1978, p. 935; Mintzberg, 1994, p. 23- 27). Mintzberg’s ten schools can be seen as a classification that describes ten different ways on how the strategy
making process may occur (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 4-5). Each of these schools is unique as they advocate distinctive techniques/methods to how companies can proceed on when forming strategies (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 4-5). The different procedures advocated by the various schools imply that the outcome extracted from it, i.e. the strategy, will be different and correspond to different views of the concept, depending on the applied procedures during the strategy making process. This implies that the various strategic lenses and the schools are interlinked to each other, where the various schools discloses the techniques/methods used to form strategies, i.e. the way, while the various strategic lenses discloses why enterprises form strategies and enables one to interpret the different strategies. Thus, by utilising both the theoretical work of the strategic lenses and the different strategic schools of thought will assist the researcher to examine how decision-makers at Born Globals form their strategies during the pre-internationalisation phase.

As the figure below demonstrates, the various schools have been sorted out to the different lenses (see figure 8. Theoretical framework) in accordance to the similarities of the view of strategy applied by the lenses and the kind of strategy that arises from the strategy making process expressed by the various schools.

The high emphasis on rationality and legitimacy expressed by the design lens implies that the lens sees strategy to be formed by high positioned individuals within the company, as well as that strategies intentions are concretised in beforehand grounded on information extracted from different kind of systematic analysis, leaving little space for possible rearrangement along the strategy making process (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 175-176). Furthermore, the lens stresses that strategic actions is followed by a logical process, where action is made in compliance to predetermined strategic goals (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 175-176).

The prescriptive schools (the planning-, design- and the positioning school) adopts a rational perspective of strategy formulation, where statements of intent is pre-defined based on information extracted from either internal, external, industrial and positional analysis (Bhimani & Langfield-Smith (2007, p. 4-6). Moreover, the planning school decomposes strategic intentions in plans, where the plans constitutes of small actions to comply with the overall strategic goal (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 47). This implies that the prescriptive schools form explicit and rational strategies, which in turn is consistent with the view of strategy applied the design lens (Bhimani & Langfield-Smith, 2007, p. 4-6; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 175-176). The view that strategies are formed in beforehand and once at time, giving no possibility to rearrange and adopt intentions along the process implies that they are of a fully deliberate nature. Thus, the reason why the prescriptive schools have been sorted out to the design lens, and why the design lens have been placed to the extreme of the deliberate side of the spectrum (see figure 8. Theoretical framework).

The high emphasis on legitimacy, while applying a moderate focus on rationality and innovation stressed by the discourse lens implies that strategies are seen to be formed by legitimate individuals that possess powerful positions within companies (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 181-182). The power superiority towards others in the company entails that these individuals can manipulate strategic intentions, thus complying these in accordance with their respective intentions (Mantere & Vaara, 2008, p. 343; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 233). One can argue that when strategies are formed in
accordance to the powerful individual’s depiction, intentions can be traced in beforehand leading to a rational and deliberate view of strategy. Nevertheless, when power structure is not clear existing within a company and power is not concentrated to particular individual/s or group/s of individuals implies that strategies are a result of a bargaining process between individuals/or group of individuals. In this case the process might give rise to new intentions, of which pre-defined intentions must take into account and conform. Thus, the reason of a mediocre emphasis on innovation and a possible opportunity to escape from original pre-determined strategic intentions. In comparison, to the design lens and the schools inherent within that lens, the discourse lens does not emphasize a fully strict and logical process of strategy making, this due to the possibility of change of course of pre-defined strategic intentions.

In comparison to the other lenses, the discourse lens is the only one that focus very much on power, which in turn implies that in this study, as it is visible in the figure 8, the lens will be placed in between the design and the experience lens. This since power will most likely lead that individuals that possesses power will have an impact on strategies. However, the discourse lens is not fully rational as the design lens, and not that emergent as the experience lens, giving a less deliberate view of the concept strategy compared to the design lens, but a more deliberate view of it compared to the experience and variety lens. Due to the high emphasis of power expressed by the power school (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 235), which in turn is the only school that put such much effort on power and its meaning to manipulate and determine strategies, the school will as demonstrated in the figure below (see figure 8. Theoretical framework) be the only school to be placed under the discourse lens.

By putting a high emphasis on legitimacy, while stressing less focus on rationality and innovation, the experience less believes that strategies are formed through legitimate individual’s experience or taken for granted assumptions (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 177-178). This implies that the experience lens consider that earlier experience, culture, traditions, and customary behaviour and habits influences subsequent strategies (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 177-178). Even though the lens does not consider strategies to be fully made in beforehand, the abovementioned factors are believed to have an impact on it, meaning that strategies cannot be considered to be neither fully deliberate nor fully emergent (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 177-178). This implies that lens applies a semi-conscious view of strategy, where one puts more emphasis on emergent elements than earlier discussed lenses (design and discourse lens), but on the other hand not fully emergent compared to the variety lens. Hence, the reason of placing the experience lens after the design and discourse lens, but before the variety lens in the spectrum of a deliberate/emergent view of the concept strategy (see figure 8. Theoretical framework).

After taking into consideration the view of strategy applied by the experience lens, one can argue that the entrepreneurship-, the culture-, and finally the cognitive school should be placed under the lens. This since these schools put much emphasis of the legitimate individual earlier experience, habits and intentions, as well as traditions and customary methods and ways of doing that have earlier been applied within a company (Mintzberg et al. 1998, p. 123-125, 149-150, 263-264). The entrepreneurship school puts much focus on the entrepreneur, where it’s individual possess a central position and determines strategic intentions (Mintzberg et al. 1998, p. 123-125). The cultural school, does not specifically puts an individual in the centre,
but rather a whole group, where culture and traditions are widely recognised and accepted by the group, influencing subsequent strategic actions (Mintzberg et al. 1998, p. 263-264). This implies that strategies are built on the past, however modifications is allowed as long as they are within the scope of the overall strategy that is influenced by past events and leaders (Mintzberg et al. 1998, p. 263-264). The cognitive school, on the other hand focus again on the legitimate leader, and more specifically how this individual process information and thinks where forming strategies (Mintzberg et al. 1998, p. 149-150).

The reason why the variety lens is placed on the extreme side of the emergent side of the spectrum is simply because this lens contradicts the perception that strategies are built in beforehand through a logical process based on information extracted from different kind of analysis (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 179). Hence, the reason of the lens’ lowest focus of rationality in comparison to other lenses (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 179). The high emphasis on innovation, while the less focus on legitimacy and rationality is unique and distinguishes this lens from the others (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 179). The focus on innovation implies that the variety lens sees organisation as open entities, where individuals independently roles within the company, as well as external actors can have an influence on strategies, thus ideas can derive from a variety of individuals, which in turn in believed to promote innovation (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 179). Furthermore, the low focus on legitimacy implies that the variety lens opposes the conservatism and hierarchal approach on strategies (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 179), which on the other hand is very much evident within other lenses, in particularly within the experience and the discourse lens.

The reason for placing the learning school and the environmental under the variety lens is because both schools stress the notion that strategies are not made in beforehand but rather incrementally along the process either through a learning and iterative process (learning school) or through a reaction to events occurred in the external environment (the environmental school) (Mintzberg et al. 1998, p. 175, 285-286).

Born Globals literature states that these enterprises from start rely very much on their founder/-s or entrepreneur/-s (Cavusgil & Knight, 2014, p. 4; Madsen & Servais, 1997, p. 580-581). These individuals’ earlier experience, intentions, motivations, and customary habits will very much according to Born Globals theory affect the company’s action (Madsen & Servais, 1997, p. 580-581). Furthermore, the theory discloses that establishment and growth of these enterprises depend very much on these individuals’ distinctive entrepreneurial skills (Cavusgil & Knight, 2014, p. 4). Based on that, one can conclude that these individuals are likely to have much influence in the way the company choose to shape its strategies during the pre-internationalisation phase. This statement is in turn consistent with what the theory of the entrepreneurial strategic school of thought say, namely that the company’s founder/-s and entrepreneur/-s are the ones that exclusively holds control of the company’s strategy making process, and that their respective experience and intentions will be very much reflected in the company’s strategies (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 123-125).

By following the techniques/procedures expressed by the entrepreneurial school during the strategy making process implies that Born Globals apply a perspective of
strategy consistent with the experience lens (see figure 8. Theoretical framework). This since the experience lens is the only lens that stresses the possibility of strategies to be personalised by key legitimate individuals’ earlier experiences and customary habits (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 177-178). In accordance with the entrepreneurship school, the theory suggests that Born Globals would then apply a semi-conscious process of strategy-making, where some pre-defined strategic intentions originated from the legitimate founder/entrepreneur might be realised, while in the same time they also have the possibility to alter course along the process (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 123-124). This since strategic intentions is just imaginary depiction (in the form of visions), and nothing that is set in stone (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 123-124). Because of it, one can then argue that the theory leaves room for modification of intentions along the strategy-making process, which eventually means that Born Globals possibly could also form their strategies in accordance with the strategic learning school of though, which in turn is the school that permits the possibility to change or adjust course along the process, as it stresses an iterative and incremental process of strategy making (Mintzberg et al. 1998, p. 175, 285-286). In that case, and as it could be visible in the figure 8, Born Globals could then apply also a perspective of strategy in accordance with the variety lens.

Based on the discussion above, one can then determine two theoretical propositions on how decision-makers at Born Globals form their strategies during the pre-internationalisation phase. Namely that;

1. Strategies are personalised and driven by the companies’ founders and entrepreneurs, which implies strategic-making procedures in accordance with the entrepreneurship school. And a perspective in accordance with the experience lens.

2. Strategies are formed incrementally and iteratively along the process, which would imply strategy-making procedures in accordance to the learning school. And a perspective of strategy according to the variety lenses.

This in turn would imply that Born Globals shape their strategies through a more reactive process, since both the experience- and the variety lens is placed in the emergent side of the spectrum (see figure 8. Theoretical framework).
Figure 8. Theoretical framework. Source: Author’s own depiction.
3. Methodology

In this chapter I present the various methodological choices I made in order to answer the study's research question. In sequential order I discuss how research philosophy has influenced the current research, followed by an argumentation for the different choices in regard to research approach, research design and research strategy. Subsequently, I present the collection of data, as well as how the collected data have been analysed. At the end of the chapter a discussion regarding quality criteria and ethical considerations is offered.

3.1 Research philosophy

Research philosophy refers to the development of knowledge and the nature of it (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 127). Saunders et al. (2012, p. 5, 127-128) mention that when performing a research, i.e. creating new knowledge by systematically exploring and examining a phenomenon the research departs from a set of assumptions regarding how the researcher perceives the world – what reality consists of and how knowledge about it is produced. These assumptions will in turn influence the execution of the research, since it shapes how the researcher formulate the study’s research problem and the subsequent question/s, as well as how the researcher intends to gather the necessary empirical data to answer the posed issues (Creswell, 2013, p. 18-19; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 127-128). Social research focuses on human beings and their respective life contexts, thus involving a completely different dimension of complexity and unpredictability compared to natural sciences due to human beings behaviour (Somekh & Lewin, 2011, p. 2). Scholars argue when conducting social research the discussion of research philosophy derives from three philosophical concepts, namely ontology, epistemology and lastly axiology (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 129-132; Somekh & Lewin, 2011, p. 2).

3.1.1 Ontological assumptions

Ontology concerns the representation or the nature of reality, simply what the world around us consists of (Bryman, 2012, p. 32; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 131; Somekh & Lewin, 2011, p. 2). The ontological position depends on what degree of importance is put on the spectator in the construction of reality, i.e. whether social units should be viewed as objective and thus having a reality independent of social actors, or whether they should be viewed as subjective, being constructed by the perception and action of social actors (Bryman, 2012, p. 32; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 131; Somekh & Lewin, 2011, p. 2). Bryman (2012, p. 33) mention that a subjectivism perspective emphasises that social phenomena are constantly being reshaped by its spectators, which requires the detailed study of the phenomena and the social actors in order to understand reality. Briefly, one can say that objectivism emphasises a perspective of reality to exist independently of the mind, while subjectivism contemplates reality to be a product of one’s mind (Bryman, 2012, p. 32; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 131; Somekh & Lewin, 2011, p. 2).
The current study has applied a subjective ontological orientation. This choice can be argued in the study’s objective that seeks to explore how individuals (decision-makers) at Born Globals went about to form their companies’ strategies during their pre-internationalisation phase. In order to do so, the researcher seeks to get an understanding of the “reality”, i.e. the process of strategy making, on the basis of these individuals subjective experiences and perceptions. This in turn is line with the subjectivism perspective, which according to Burrell & Morgan (2005, p. 3) focuses on “understanding of what is unique and particular to the individual rather than of what is general and universal”. As previously mentioned Born Globals are characterised for being highly entrepreneurial oriented enterprises that dependent very much on their founder/s or top manager/s (Madsen & Servais, 1997, p. 580-581). It is believed that these individuals’ prior experience (actions) affects very much their subsequent decisions (Madsen & Servais, 1997, p. 580-581). Hence, the current study point of departure is grounded on the postulation that decision makers, which is seen as the social actors constructs a reality, since their prior experiences (actions) influences an organisation’s strategic decisions and ultimately also their definite strategies (social phenomenon). Having that said, the researcher agrees on the assumption that the reality is socially constructed and constantly being reshaped, and is not existent independently of social actors actions and perceptions. To apply an objectivism perspective in this study would imply that the empirical evidence underlying the analysis exists independently and external to the individual, which obviously is not the case here, since reality is rather seen a product of individual consciousness. This implies that the subjectivism stance is this study’s apparent ontological stance, since the author agrees on the view of a social constructed and ever-changing reality, which in this case is seen as a product of the decision-makers mind.

3.1.2 Epistemological assumptions

Epistemology concerns what is considered acceptable knowledge, thus, where ontology defines what reality consists of, epistemology tells us how to collect truth about that reality (Bryman, 2012, p. 27-28; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 132-133; Somekh & Lewin, 2011, p. 2). Bryman (2012, p. 27-28) mention that a main issue in respect of epistemology is whether the social world should be studied following a scientific model in form of equivalent principles, practices and ethos advocated by natural sciences or through a social sciences model that is receptive to capture meanings of human interaction. Saunders et al. (2012, p. 134-137) mention that the first assumption is related to the philosophical perspective of positivism, while the second is in line with interpretivism. Characteristic for the positivism philosophical stance is the acceptance of hard data as knowledge, where empirical data is collected and analysed in hope to find regularities and causal relationships (Saunders et al., 2012, p.134-135). Creswell (2013, p. 20) argues that the interpretivism stance is more oriented towards subjective evidence (soft data) based on personal perceptions and attitudes. Thus, the author argue that in order to collect these kind of information the researcher must get in close contact to the phenomenon intended to be studied (Creswell, 2013, p. 20).

Since I have already proclaimed for a subjectivism ontological stance within the current study, the subjectivism tendency will also be evident in the following choice of epistemological stance. In order to be able to answer this study’s research question,
the researcher must get in contact with individuals (decision-makers) that have been or are direct involved in Born Globals strategy making process, and get these individuals’ perspective on how they went about in forming strategies during the pre-internationalisation phase. To act in such a way, Burell & Morgan (2005, p. 5) mention is typical for an anti-positivist, according to the authors “for the anti-positivist, the social world can [...] only be understood from the point of view of the individuals who are directly involved in the activities which are to be studied”. This implies that what the current study sees as accepted knowledge is the study’s subjects’ perspective (soft data) ascribed to social or human problem. Subjective perceptions (soft data) are as described above in line with an interpretivist epistemological stance (Creswell, 2013, p. 20).

Moreover, as this research do not agree on the postulation that knowledge is obtained external to the individual, as well as one do not aim to seek regularities or casual relationships, which according to Burell & Morgan (2005, p. 4-5) is characteristic for the positivist ontological stance. But one instead seek to understand a social phenomena from the “inside”, i.e. from the ones that have experienced it, one can say that the interpretivist stance is this study’s apparent epistemological stance.

### 3.1.3 Axiological assumptions

Axiology concerns the study of values and their consequence on research, i.e. in what way the researcher’s own values effects the research and its credibility (Creswell, 2013, p. 20; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 137-139; Somekh & Lewin, 2011, p. 20). Scholars argue that values are the guiding motive for human action (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 237; Heron, 1996, p. 286; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 139). In order to show axiological competence, scholars argue that researchers should actively articulate their values as a basis of decision-making throughout the entire research process (Creswell, 2013, p. 20; Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 237; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 137-139). This includes actively reporting of how the values have affected the choice of research area and topic, research method and strategy, as well as data collection technique (Creswell, 2013, p. 20; Denzin & Lincoln, 2013, p. 237; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 137-139). Simply, this means a researcher recognition that researches are value-laden and that biases are existent (Creswell, 2013, p. 21).

The research study’s main research areas are strategic management and international entrepreneurship. The internationalisation component inherent in the current study has been strongly influenced by the author’s personal interest and his academic focus. Beside my bachelor degree in international business and the current focus on internationalisation within the master programme in which I am currently enrolled (master in business development and internationalisation), internationalisation has always been something that has fascinated me. Entrepreneurship has in turn been a well-discussed and often mentioned topic within the master’s programme, which in turn has contributed to a greater understanding and an increased personal interest for the topic. Subsequently, the strategic element inherent in this study has been selected due to the relevance to current studies, since business development has much to do with strategies. This implies that the author’s knowledge within the topics of internationalisation, entrepreneurship and strategy, mediated from academic studies at the university, has brought a pre-understanding for theories within these areas, enabling him to evaluate their respective relevance in the context for the current study.
The quest to combine internationalisation, entrepreneurship and strategy, has led to the choice to study strategy making within Born Global enterprise (highly entrepreneurial firms that engage in internationalisation shortly after their founding) in this study. Personal interest and relevance to current studies have very much influenced the author’s approach in the identification for a potential research gap, which the current study aims to fill. Thus, the final choice of research topic for this study has also been influenced by the author’s own values and interests.

Additionally, the choice to study a real life phenomenon in a deeper manner and to learn about the specific rather than to provide general knowledge and relationships, have affected the overall research process. The author’s subjective judgments in regard to the studied phenomenon and empirical evidence are impossible to escape from when executing a qualitative research. Thus, my own interpretations concerning the collected data constitutes a natural element in the research process and will very much be evident in the conclusions drawn within this study. This implies that this study has not been executed in an objective and value-free way – instead my own values have been incorporated in it. Scholars argue that this is typical and representative for qualitative researchers, since they are value-laden, where the researcher and its subjective judgements possess a central position (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008, p. 17-18; Denzin & Lincoln, 2014, p. 89; Merriam, 2009, p. 5).

### 3.2 Research approach

Saunders et al. (2012, p. 143) state that every research project will in some way involve the use of theory. The way in which the researcher chooses to approach the theory will determine the study’s research approach (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 143). Scholars argue that there are three different kind of approach to take into consideration, namely inductive, deductive and lastly abductive (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008, p. 54-55; Engel & Schutt, 2014, p. 31; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 144).

Scholars argue that characteristic for an inductive research approach is the starting point on the collection of real word data (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008, p. 54; Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 26; Engel & Schutt, 2014, p. 31, 34; Gummesson, 2000, p.63-64; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 144, 146). On the basis on the gathered data from a variety of observations, one induces general theories explaining patterns in the data. Hence, an inductive approach is associated with theory generation and building.

On the other side, the deductive research approach has a theoretical starting point (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008, p. 55; Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 24-25; Engel & Schutt, 2014, p. 31; Gummesson, 2000, p. 63; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 144-146). Based on existent theories one deduces a set of hypothesis, which is later empirically tested against the collected data from specific case/s. Hence, deduction leads either to theory falsification or verification.

The third and final research approach, namely abduction, implies that the researcher does not lock him/her in a linear process between theory and empirical evidence, which is the case of induction (empirical evidence and then theory) and deduction.
(theory and empirical evidence) (Dubois & Gadde, 2002, p. 555; Kovács & Spens, 2005, p. 138; Patel & Davidsson, 2003, p. 24-25). Instead the researcher systematically alternates between theory and empirical data and works in a planned “back and forth” direction during the research process. Dubois & Gadde (2002, p. 559) argue that the adductive approach differs from previous approaches since this approach permits a successively modification of the original theoretical framework either due to anticipated empirical findings or because new theoretical insights has emerged during the research process. Because of that reason, scholars highlights that an abductive approach is not simply a combination of induction and deduction (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008, p. 55; Dubois & Gadde, 2002, p. 559).

The current study has been conducted through a deductive research approach. This choice can be argued by the application of an approach originating in existing general theories concerning strategy, strategy making process and Born Global enterprises. The choice to originate in theories can be argue by the importance for the researcher to have a general pre-understanding for the different aforementioned theoretical concepts inherent in the current study before collecting primary data. A starting point in theories has enabled the researcher to gain a general level of pre-understanding for the nature of Born Global enterprises, the environment these enterprises find themselves in, as well as different views on how strategies can be created. A prior understanding in the above mentioned areas have been fundamental in order for the researcher to be able to execute the current study, i.e. to find out how Born Global enterprises form their strategies in the pre-internationalisation phase. Through reviewing theories, the researcher has identified general theories that can be used to answer the current study posed research question. In turn, these theories have together assembled a general theoretical framework, which later will serve as a basis for the development of interview questions through which empirical data will be collected. On the basis of the reviewed theories, the researcher has formed an idea on how Born Global enterprises form their strategies during the pre-internationalisation phase. This general idea will be tested in relation to the collected primary data, subsequently leading to a modification of it. By applying such a procedure, the researcher has in this study followed a process consistent with a deductive approach.

3.3 Research design

Scholars mention that a research design demonstrates the researchers’ overall plan for how he/she will proceed in order to answer the study posed research question/-s (Denzil & Lincoln, 2014, p. 29; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 159-160). This according to Saunders et al. (2012, p. 159-160) includes the choice of either a quantitative or qualitative study. Further, it also comprises the nature of the study, i.e. if the study is either of an exploratory, descriptive or explanatory character. Moreover, it also involves the time horizon and the timing of the research project, i.e. if the project should be studied either from a snapshot time horizon (cross-sectional) or from a diary perspective over a certain period of time (longitudinal). Finally, it also involves the choice of research strategy, the particular method used for gathering empirical data (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 159-160).
3.3.1 Quantitative or Qualitative study

Researchers usually distinguish between *quantitative* or *qualitative* research methods (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008, p. 17-22; Denzin & Lincoln, 2014, p. 89; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 162-164). Patel & Davidsson (2003, p. 14) argue that the choice between these two methods depends on how one “chooses to generate, process and analyse the information one have gathered”.

Scholars argue that a characteristic feature of the qualitative study is to discover and describe the study’s subjects’ perspective ascribed to a social or human problem (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008, p. 17-18; Creswell, 2013, p. 19, 44; Denzin & Lincoln, 2014, p. 89; Merriam, 2009, p. 5). In a qualitative research method researchers study the participants in their natural setting, i.e. by either active conversation (interviews) or observations in order to find out how they act or behave in their natural context (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008, p. 17-18; Creswell, 2013, p. 19, 44; Denzin & Lincoln, 2014, p. 89; Merriam, 2009, p. 5). For this reason, Alvesson & Sköldberg (2008, p. 17-18) argue that a qualitative method put a great emphasis on the researcher presence and its interpretation. Furthermore, scholars argue that a qualitative research is recommended in conditions when more profound and detailed descriptive information on a few events is desired (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008, p. 17-18; Denzil & Lincoln, 2014, p. 19-20; Flick, 2011, p. 12; Merriam, 2009, p. 16; Patel & Davidsson, 2003, p. 14). This since the research method is appropriate to use on open and non-standardised research situations, leaving room for interpretations of the data.

On the other hand a quantitative research method is associated with very structured data collection techniques such as surveys, characterised by closed and ready-made response alternatives (Bryman, 2012, p. 35-36; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 162). For this reason, Holme et al. (1997, p. 78) argue that a quantitative research method provides limited information, since it restricts the respondents’ flexibility to express themselves, resulting in an impossibility to capture the participants subjective perceptions. The authors continue by mentioning that such a research method is recommended when the researcher focuses on many study units (Holme et al., 1997, p. 78). The focus on many study units entails superficial and standardised data, which is a direct consequence of focusing on the width rather than the depth (Holme et al., 1997, p. 78). Finally, scholars mention that the quantitative method focuses on numeric data, which enables researchers to examine relationship among variables and draw precise conclusions through statistical analysis (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008, p. 17-18; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 161-162).

The current study has applied a qualitative research method. The choice of research method can be argued in the study’s objective, which is to investigate how decision-makers at Born Globals form their strategies in the pre-internationalisation phase, i.e. to explore a social reality in the study’s subject’s natural environment. Moreover, Ahrens & Chapman (2006, p. 822) mention that a qualitative research is regularly utilised when a subjective ontological stance and an interpretive epistemological stance has been applied. As I earlier proclaimed for a subjectivism and an interpretivism perspective, is Ahrens & Chapman (2006, p. 822) statement in line with the study’s prior choices. Additionally, on the basis of the data required to answer the study’s research question, where detailed and profound information is needed, the researcher needs to utilise a data collection method that allows a flexible

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and open technique in order to be able to obtain descriptive information of a deeper and detailed character. This can only be achieved by utilising a qualitative research method. This since, the quantitative method is “deliberately unconcerned with such descriptions because such detail [information] interrupts the process of developing generalizations” (Denzil & Lincoln, 2014, p. 20). Based on this study’s objective and the requirement of the data, a qualitative method is considered to be the most appropriate research method.

3.3.2 The nature of the research design

Saunders et al. (2012, p. 170-172) explain that a study can either have an exploratory, explanatory or descriptive purpose. The authors mention that what will determine the nature of the study research design is in what way the researcher chooses to formulate the study research question/-s, as well as what the research aims to achieve with the research (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 170-172).

Characteristic for an exploratory study is the researcher determination to discover and clarify a particular problem that he/she might be unsure regarding its origin (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 171). The authors continue by mentioning that an exploratory study is often executed through in depth unstructured interviews where flexibility and adaptation is a natural element (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 171). In this case the researcher relies on the study’s participants, where the quality of the data depends very much on their respective knowledge in regard to the issue in question (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 171). Moreover, such studies typically begin with a broad focus, which along the processes becomes narrower (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 171).

On the other hand, an explanatory study focuses on the study of relationship between variables (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 172). Thus, the emphasis here is on statistical analysis that can in a clearer way explain the relationship among a set of variables.

In turn, a descriptive study refers to an extension study, where the purpose is to further describe in more detail a certain problem (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 171). By doing so one can fill the missing parts and thus extend the overall understanding for the issue in matter.

This study aims to explore a complex social phenomenon the researcher is unsure about, i.e. to gain an understanding for how decision-makers at Born Globals form their strategies during the pre-internationalisation phase. This implies that the aim of this research goes beyond statistical interferences and the search for possible relations among variables, which is more in line with an explanatory and a quantitative research method. Further, as mentioned in the problem discussion (see section 1.2), the current study has been requested by researchers, since the combination of subjects in the study has not been enough researched upon. Having that said, the current study is also not in line with a descriptive approach, since the focus is on extension studies. Consequently, an exploratory approach is more line with the current study, since one aim to explore a complex phenomenon, where limited information about the specific area is available. Moreover, the exploratory approach is in line with a qualitative research method, which the current research earlier has proclaimed for.
3.3.3 The choice of time horizon

A research horizon refers to the time frame during the researcher undertakes the research (Ritchie et al., 2014, p. 60-63; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 190-191). Scholars put forward two possible alternatives of time horizons for researcher to choose among, either a cross-sectional or a longitudinal (Ritchie et al., 2014, p. 60-63; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 190-191).

A cross-sectional design is characterised by its focus on data collection at a single point in time (Bryman, 2012, p. 53-54; Ritchie et al., 2014, pp. 60-61; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 190). Saunders et al. (2012, p. 190) uses a metaphor of a camera and a snapshot for explaining a cross-sectional design. Ritchie et al. (2013, p. 61) mention that a cross-sectional design do not put so much emphasis on time, but rather on the manifestation of the research object. Bryman (2012, p. 51) state that such a design is favourable when the researcher is interested in variation, where more than one case is intended to be studied.

In contrast, the longitudinal is characterised by its focus on more than one episode of data collection (Ritchie et al, 2014, p. 62; Saunders et al., 2012, pp. 190-191). Such focus implies that this design possess the ability to study change and development over a longer time period (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 190). Thus, Ritchie et al. (2014, p. 62) mention that this design is favourable when a process of change is a central element of what is being studied. In this case, Saunders et al. (2012, p. 190) uses a metaphor of a diary perspective to describe a longitudinal design.

The current study has used a time horizon that is in line with a cross-sectional design. The choice of it can be argued in this study intention to interview participants (decision-makers) that originates from different case companies and compare their respective perceptions in order to gain an overall insight about how the strategy making process in the starting phase occurs within Born Global enterprises. Furthermore, the various interviews is going to take place at a single point in time within a shorter time period, which in turn is consistent with the cross-sectional design. As the current study gathers the empirical data in accordance to a snapshot view, i.e. just at pre-internationalisation phase, the researcher will just be able to gain an insight and an understanding for the process that occurs within the confines of the taken snapshot. This implies that the researcher will not be able to consider what happens after it. However, to consider what happens after the snapshot is not necessary for fulfilling this study purpose, since the author does not focus on a process of change or to understand the overall strategic process of Born Globals, but rather on a single specific point of time, i.e. during the pre-internationalisation phase. To examine a process of change or to investigate the entire process would not be feasible within the given time frame for the current study. Hence, the choice to focus at one single point at time during the pre-internationalisation phase.

3.3.4 Research strategy

Research strategies refer to the researchers’ plan of action he/she will undertake to approach the empirical world, and thus go on about in answering the study posed research question/-s (Denzil & Lincoln, 2014, p. 29; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 173). For this reason, research strategy is seen as the methodological linkage between a
study chosen philosophy and subsequent method used for gathering and analysing empirical information (Denzil & Lincoln, 2014, p. 29; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 173). Scholars argue that there are several research strategies for the researcher to choose among, where each one is unique offering a distinctive focus in what they are trying to accomplish with the studies (Creswell, 2013, p. 103-105; Denzil & Lincoln, 2014, p. 29; Merriam, 2009, p. 21-22, 38; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 173).

Yin (2009, p. 8) mentions that the choices between the various strategies are grounded on three different conditions; (I) the type of research question/s posed in the study, (II) the grade of control the researcher possesses over behavioural events and lastly (III) the focus on either a contemporary or historical events.

The current study posed research question is a how question, namely:

How do decision-makers at Born Globals form their strategies in the pre-internationalisation phase?

The appropriate research strategy to choose when such question as above (how-questions) is posed is an experiment, history or a case study research strategy (Yin, 2009, p. 8).

An experiment research strategy requires control of behavioural events, which implies that “an investigator can manipulate behaviour directly, precisely and systematically” (Yin, 2009, p. 11). Saunders et al. (2012, p. 173) mention that the experiment research strategy is close associated with a quantitative research method.

Since I have already proclaimed for the current study research philosophy and method, where a subjectivism philosophical stance and a qualitative method has been selected, stressing the importance of collecting the study subjects subjective perceptions on the issue in matter, an experiment research strategy is not in line with previously made assumptions. Hence, an experimental research strategy is not considered to be an appropriate strategy for this study.

Yin (2009, p. 11) mention that the distinctive contribution of the historical research strategy “is in dealing with the dead past – that is, when no relevant persons are alive to report, even retrospectively, what occurred and when an investigator must rely on primary documents, secondary documents, and cultural and physical artefacts as the main sources of evidence”. The current study aims to interview decision-makers at Born Globals companies to get an insight on how this kind of firms form their strategies during the pre-internationalisation phase. In this case the interview participants are alive and able to provide their respective views on the issue in matter. Hence, the main sources of evidence in this study will be the inquired participants’ statements, which imply that a historical research strategy is also not adequate for the current study.

Yin (2009, p. 11) mentions that case study research strategy “is preferred when examining contemporary events, but when the relevant behaviours cannot be manipulated”. Furthermore, the authors mention that a case study enables the researcher to conduct direct observations or interviews with participants that are
directly involved in the case/s to be studied, resulting in the collection of descriptive, in-depth and detailed information (Yin, 2009, p. 11). Having that said, case study research strategy is more appropriate for the current study, since it will assist the researcher to collect the necessary data in order to answer the study posed question, and thereby accomplish the study’s purpose. For this reason, the next subchapter will specifically address case studies.

### 3.3.4.1 Case study

Scholars argue that a case study research strategy is recommended in situations where the researcher intends to study a complex social phenomenon within its real life context (Creswell, 2013, p. 103-104; Merriam, 2009, p. 40; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 179; Yin, 2009, p. 4). Case studies are characterised by its feature in providing rich descriptive understanding of the case/s being studied (Creswell, 2013, p. 104-105; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007, p. 25; Merriam, 2009, p. 43-44; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 179).

Yin (2009, p. 17) mentions that another characteristic feature of case studies is that they are able to explain the entire process, from why a set of decisions were taken, how they were carried out to the consequences thereof, including the achieved results within a particular case. Scholars point out that case study is an appropriate research strategy to use in exploratory research, where limited research has been conducted in a particular research area (Graziano & Raulin, 2013, p. 131; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 179). Moreover, Merriam (2009, p. 45) and Saunders et al. (2012, p. 179) mention that case study is commendable to utilise when *why* and *how* questions are intended to be answered.

The choice of a case study as research strategy can be argued by the current study aim to study a complex real-life social phenomenon. As mentioned earlier the strategy making process is considered to be a complex organisational activity (Grattan, 2011, p. 25, 31; Grinsberg & Venkatraman, 1985, p. 428). In order to be able to study such a complex phenomenon and thus be able to answer this study’s research question it is necessary to gather rich descriptive data in regard to the issue in question, which is possible by utilising a case study strategy. The choice of research strategy can be further argued by the nature of the current study, which is exploratory, as well as by the aim to answer a *how* question.

Scholars mention that there are different kinds of case studies (Creswell, 2013, p. 97; Merriam, 2009, p. 46; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 179; Yin, 2014, p. 18). A distinction is made between single- and multiple-case studies (Creswell, 2013, p. 97; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 179; Yin, 2014, p. 51-52). As it sounds a single case study refers to when one single case (single experiments) is studied (Merriam, 2009, p. 49). On the contrary, a multiple case study refers to when several cases are being studied (Merriam, 2009, p. 49). In such case, data is collected from all the cases separately, and then a cross-case (transboundary) conclusion on the basis of the diverse cases findings is made (Yin, 2014, p. 18).

Scholars mention that a multiple case study is recommended over single cases studies when the researcher aims to investigate, analyse and compare multiple cases (Creswell, 2013, p. 99; Yin, 2014, p. 56-57). Further, Merriam (2009, p. 49) claim
that by examining similar multiple cases enables a more compelling interpretation of the issue in question, which in turn “strengthen the precision, the validity and the stability of the findings”. Yin (2014, p. 63) mention that when the researcher possess the choice, the resources and the possibility to conduct a multiple case design, the researcher should do it, since the chances to conduct a better case study is greater than applying a single case design. This since single case designs sometimes might be vulnerable “[since] you will have to put all your eggs in one basket” (Yin, 2014, p. 64).

The current study choice to apply a multiple case study research is rooted in the aim to analyse and collect data from multiple case companies in order to be able to understand and interpret a complex phenomenon. By doing so, the researcher will be able to analyse the various findings obtained from each single case company, and later analyse and compare the different findings against each other leading to the establishment of cross-case conclusions, which in turn implies a more comprehensive and compelling understanding for how Born Globals form their strategies in their pre-internationalisation phase. This would certainly not be possible if one applied a single case design, since the information would only relate to the storytelling of one case company, i.e. a single experiment.

Yin (2009, p. 15, 38) mentions that a general concern in regard to case studies is that they provide little base for generalisation. Generalisation within case study occurs differently, since in this case generalisation is done in relation to theoretical propositions (analytic generalisation) and not based on empirical data gathered on a limited sample representing a population or universe (statistical generalisation) (Yin, 2009, p. 15, 38). Hence, Yin (2009, p. 38) mentions that the biggest challenge for a researcher when conducting a case study is to distinguish between these two types of generalisations (Yin, 2009, p. 38).

As it will be discussed under the sampling technique (see section 3.4.1.2), the case companies selected in this study cannot be considered to represent a sampling unit for an entire population, thus, it is not possible to statistically generalise the findings obtained from this study to an entire population. As such, generalisation within case studies resembles generalisation from experiments, in which empirical results are used to support theoretical notions (Yin, 2009, p. 38-39). When performing multiple case studies, analytic generalisation is made more potent when several cases demonstrate similarities in relation to the theory (Yin, 2009, p. 38-39). As this study applies a multiple-case study, the mode of generalisation will be driven by the previously developed template (the theoretical framework) in which the obtained results from the various case companies will be compared. Such analytic generalisation is according to Yin (2009, p. 38) fully possible when applying a multiple case study research strategy. Hence, this study aims not to statistically generalise the obtained findings on an entire population, but rather to analytically generalise within the theoretical framework. By addressing the generalisation question within case studies in this subtitle the researcher has demonstrate for the reader his understanding and ability to distinguish between the two types of generalisation, and more specifically how the issue of generalisation is processed in multiple case studies. After investigating seven case companies, the researcher could identify some replicability in the gathered empirical data across cases, which felt satisfactory and enabled him to say something on how decision-makers at Born
Global enterprises in a peripheral area forms their strategies during their pre-internationalisation phase.

3.4 Data collection

Creswell (2013, p. 146) mention that data collection includes a series of interrelated activities intended to collect the required information to answer a research study issue. These activities concerns how the researcher locates and gains access to a site or individual to examine, as well as to the selection of a way in which the empirical facts will be gathered. In other words these choices reflects sampling technique, selection of case companies and how empirical facts have been collected (Creswell, 2013, p. 146). Hence, the following subsections will specifically deal with these issues.

3.4.1 Sampling technique

Scholars mention that when it is impracticable to gather data from an entire population, the researcher must utilise some kind of sampling technique in order to select a sample to study (Neuman, 2011, p. 240; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 260). Neuman (2011, p. 240-241) mention that sampling is used differently in quantitative respective qualitative studies. In quantitative studies, the key meaning of sampling is to select a representative sample that reproduces or corresponds a larger collection of cases, implying that if the sample is correctly selected the findings can be generalised to an entire population (Neuman, 2011, p. 241). Saunders et al. (2012, p. 261-262) mention that in order to select a representative sample, the researcher must undertake accurate sampling procedures that rely on mathematics or probabilities, where the chance or probability to select a particular case from the entire population is known and equal for all the cases. Scholars name this kind of sampling for probability sampling (Neuman, 2011, p. 241; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 261).

On the other hand, Neuman (2011, p. 241) mention that in qualitative researches a sampling technique is used in order to deepen the researchers understanding for a larger complex issue. Here the key goal of sampling is to disclose new aspects or valuable information that enriches and accentuates the researcher understanding in regard to individuals or social settings involved in complex situations (Neuman, 2011, p. 241). Flick (1998, p. 41) cited in Neuman (2011, p. 241) says “in qualitative research it is their relevance to the research topic rather than their representativeness which determines the way in which the people to be studied are selected”. Scholars name such sampling technique, when the probability or the chance of each case to selected from the entire populate is not given and known for non-probability sampling (Neuman, 2011, p. 242, 267; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 262, 281).

A purposive sampling refers to when the researcher selects case/-s of inclusion based on their respective intention to contribute to an understanding for the research issue (Creswell, 2013, p. 156; Neuman, 2011, p. 267-268; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 287). This means that the case/-s of inclusion depends very much on the researcher's judgment concerning what/which case/-s will in the best way answer the study research issue and thus also contribute to achieving the objectives of the study (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 287; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 287). This implies that the
cases selected in a purposive sampling seldom represent the entire population, since subjective perception underlies the choice (Neuman, 2011, p. 268).

Saunders et al. (2012, p. 288) mention that characteristic for a homogenous sampling is the focus on a specific identical subgroup such as occupation level or hierarchical position within an organisation, which in turn is applicable for all the sample members.

The selection of cases within the current study is not made from a sampling frame, i.e. a complete lists including all the cases within an entire population. This implies that the selection of cases in this study is not known and equal for all the cases within an entire population, instead the choice is made on the researcher subjective judgement in regard to their (case companies) relevance for the study. Hence, the current study applies a non-probability sampling of a purposive and homogenous character.

The choice of a purposive sampling technique within this study can be argued by the researchers own judgment concerning the selection of case companies based on their respective relevance for the current study. The current study aims to study how decision-makers at Born Globals went about in forming strategies during their pre-internationalisation phase. As previously mentioned these individuals are typically the founders or the top-managers of these companies, which in turn holds the highest position within the hierarchy. Based on that one can argue that the current study targets a homogenous subgroup of individuals. Hence, the choice for the selection of purposive homogenous sampling technique. Moreover, as described in the literature chapter, Born Globals to some extent could also been seen as a homogenous subgroup.

### 3.4.1.1 Sampling size

Saunders et al. (2012, p. 283) mention that when utilising a non-probability sampling technique the question regarding how many samples to include in a study is rather ambiguous and no set rules to assume exists. Yin (2009, p. 58) backs up Saunders et al. (2012, p. 283) above-mentioned argument, by stressing that in a qualitative study the criteria for determining the inclusion of cases should instead reflect the number of case replications the researcher finds necessary or desires to have in a study. Creswell (2013, p. 157) points out that within a case study research, the number of sufficient inclusion of cases is between 4 to 5 cases, which according to the author is satisfactory to provide an opportunity to recognise themes of the cases, as well as to perform cross-case analysis. Further, Saunders et al. (2012, p. 283) mention that the simple size depends entirely to what the researcher aims to find out.

The current study aims to get a deeper understanding and interpretation of a complex phenomenon, the strategy making process within Born Globals and particularly how these firms went about in forming their strategies in the pre-internationalisation phase. Because of this it is necessary to select a number of case companies that enables the researcher to conduct cross-case analysis, which in turn is believed to offer a more comprehensive and enriching understanding for the issue in question. However, the researcher has a limited time frame to pursue this research, which in turn implies that he cannot include an endless number of case companies, the number must be practical feasible within the predetermined time schedule. After interviewing a certain amount
of case companies, the researcher started to detect some replications and differences in the data obtained from the participating companies, which in turn felt satisfactory to perform cross-case analysis and to find out how strategies are formed within Born Global enterprises during the pre-internationalisation phase. Thus, the number of inclusion of cases in this study has purely depended on how much relevant data it has been extracted from the cases studied, which in turn enabled the researcher to understand what he aims to investigate. In this case, the number of cases studied landed on seven.

3.4.1.2 Selection of case companies

As mentioned in the sampling technique subheading (see section 3.4.1) the case participants in the current study have been selected purposively by the researcher depending on their respective relevance for the current study. However, to be able to select case companies that are of relevance for this study, it is necessary to determine a target population, which will be used as a basis for the selection of participants. The criteria that have been applied for the selection of case participants are;

I. Companies must fulfill the conditions of being a Born Global enterprise in accordance to the chosen definition for this study (for the definition, see section 1.6).

II. Companies must fulfill the conditions of being a SME in accordance European Union’s definition (for the definition see section 1.1).

III. Companies must have initiated to internationalise within two years of inception.

IV. Finally, they must be active in Sweden and in a peripheral area.

The requests of participation were sent to various companies that fulfilled the above-mentioned criteria via e-mail (see appendix 8.2. Interview request e-mail English/Swedish). Through this e-mail a first contact with potential case companies were established. The e-mail contained of a short personal presentation of the researcher, a briefly presentation of the intended study, the reasons behind it, the purpose of the current study, as well as an attached interview request letter (see appendix 8.3. Interview request letter) written by the researcher’s supervisor. In such way, 14 companies were contacted. In total seven companies (see table. 1. Participating companies) accepted to participate in an interview session that underpins the empirical data gathered in this study. For interested participants a second e-mail (see appendix 8.4. E-mail for participating companies English/Swedish) containing a more detailed description of the study, themes about what the interview would be about, as well as, a reminder about the agreed time and location for the interview sessions were sent.

Scholars argue that it is important to inform and provide all the participants that in some way will be included in a study with what kind of information you as a researcher is interested in (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 385; Yin, 2009, p. 83). This since you give the participants an opportunity to prepare for the interview sessions, which in turn promotes a study validity and reliability. By sending the second e-mail to the case companies that will participate in this study, the researcher has followed the guidelines expressed by the above-mentioned authors.
The case companies that have been studied are the following:

Table 1. Participating companies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the company</th>
<th>Industry sector</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Algoryx Simulation AB</td>
<td>Computer software</td>
<td>Umeå, Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CodeMill AB</td>
<td>IT and computer software</td>
<td>Umeå, Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COS Systems AB</td>
<td>IT and computer software</td>
<td>Umeå, Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Kingdom Design &amp; Communication AB</td>
<td>Graphic design</td>
<td>Skellefteå, Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oryx Simulations AB</td>
<td>Hardware simulators for machinery operations</td>
<td>Umeå, Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prediktera AB</td>
<td>Computer Software</td>
<td>Umeå, Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xore AB</td>
<td>Mining peripherals</td>
<td>Skellefteå, Sweden</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4.2 Primary and secondary data

Saunders et al. (2012, p. 210) mention that the researcher capability to get primary or secondary data depends of his/her access to appropriate source/-s. Depending on the access, scholars argue that researcher can use two kind of data when conducting research, namely **primary** and **secondary data** (Bryman, 2012, p. 13; Collis & Hussey, 2014, p. 59; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 304). Primary data refers to data that has been collected by the researcher itself for a particular purpose, while secondary data have been gathered from other researchers (an outsider) to fulfill their objectives, meaning for other purposes (Collis & Hussey, 2014, p. 59; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 304). This implies that primary data is generated from one own executed experiments, interviews, surveys, focus group etc. (Collis & Hussey, 2014, p. 59). While on the other hand secondary data is accessed from already existing sources via libraries or online platforms in the form of publications, databases and internal records (Collis & Hussey, 2014, p. 59).

Saunders et al. (2012, p. 317-318) mention that the benefits of using secondary data are that these kinds of data are less resource-intensive and smoother and quicker in comparison to gathering the data itself (primary data). However, the disadvantage is that these kinds of data have been gathered for a different purpose that may differ from your own (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 319).
Neuman (2011, p. 480) mention that the benefits of using primary data are the realism and authenticity, while the practical drawbacks involves the effort and resource intensity that characterises the collection of this kind of data.

The amount of secondary data used in the current study is limited. At such occasion, the researcher has been cautious and careful with the selection of secondary sources. This to make sure that the secondary data is used in a correct manner, i.e. that it meets an intention, as well as that it is in line with the study’s purpose. The secondary data used in this study comes from the case company’s own websites as well as from a business database. Information from the case companies’ respective websites have been used to supplement basic background information. While information from the business database Retriever Business, accessed through the student account at Umeå University, have been used to substantiate the companies’ key ratios. Having that said, the current study relies mostly on primary data that have been gathered through semi-structured interviews with individuals originating from seven different case companies (purposively selected) that have been involved in these company’s strategy making process in the pre-internationalisation phase.

In some of the cases the participating companies, where the primary data will derive from, will have passed the phase, which this study intends to focus, i.e. the pre-internationalisation phase. This implies that the primary data gathered will comprise the respondents’ subjectively interpretation of what happened in the pre-internationalisation phase, meaning the primary data will be very much of a retrospective character, since it relies on the respondent’s memory of a past event. This will inevitably give rise to some quality issues, which will be discussed in more details under the section 3.6 (quality criteria). The next subtitle will specifically deal with semi-structured interview, which is the data collection approach used to gather empirical data within the current study.

### 3.4.3 Semi-structured interview

Merriam (2009, p. 87) mention that in qualitative research, some part or occasionally the entire empirical data is gathered via interviews. DeMarrais & Lapan (2004, p. 54) define an interview as “a process in which a researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study”. Consequently, DeMarrais & Lapan (2004, p. 54) mention that these questions concern a participant’ “thoughts, opinions, perspectives, or descriptions of specific experiences”. Merriam (2009, p. 88) argue that interviews are particularly important when the researcher is incapable to observe the comportment, feelings and individuals’ interpretations of the world they are surrounded by.

Scholars argue that there are different kinds of interviews, namely structured, semi-structured and lastly unstructured interviews (Creswell, 2013, p. 163-164; Merriam, 2009, p. 89; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 374-375). Alvesson & Torhell (2011, p. 16-17) mentions that the appearance of different types of interview is because they vary in their respective structure, which refers to the level of detail of predetermined questions, as well as how strict the sequence of questions asked follows (see table 2. Differences between structured-, semi-structured-, and unstructured interviews).
Table 2. Differences between structured-, semi-structured-, and unstructured interviews. Source: Merriam, 2009, p. 89.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structured interview</th>
<th>Semi-structured interview</th>
<th>Unstructured interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Wording of questions is predetermined</td>
<td>• Interview guide includes a mix of more or less structured interview questions</td>
<td>• Open-ended questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Order or questions is predetermined</td>
<td>• All questions used flexibility</td>
<td>• Flexible, exploratory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interview is oral form of a written survey</td>
<td>• Usually specific data required from all respondents</td>
<td>• More like a conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In qualitative studies, usually obtained to obtain demographic data</td>
<td>• Largest part of interview guided by list of questions or issues to be explored</td>
<td>• Used when researcher does not know enough about phenomenon to ask relevant questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No predetermined wording or order</td>
<td>• Goal is learning from this interview to formulate questions for later interviews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The empirical data in this study were gathered through semi-structured interviews. The choice to apply semi-structured interviews is because this kind of interview is preferable when the researcher undertakes to study an exploratory phenomenon in-depth (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 378), which is the case of the current study. Further, Saunders et al. (2012, p. 378) mention that semi-structured interview provides the researcher with an opportunity to probe the interviewee answers leading to the disclosure of rich and detailed data. This is seen as advantageous for the current study, which aims in an in-depth and detailed manner study a complex phenomenon, namely, the strategy making process within Born Global enterprises. This in order to gain an overall insight for how these types of companies acts when forming their strategies.

Additionally, the choice of semi-structured interviews can further be argued by the researcher necessity of a certain degree of flexibility which enables him to ask follow-up questions that allows clarifications, as well as the permission of pre identifying themes and formulating key questions in advance that are of vigorous importance for the study, which in turn needs to be explored and covered during the interview sessions. Scholars argue that a certain degree of flexibility, the permission of asking follow-up questions, the possibility of identification of themes in advance, as well as the ability to formulate key questions in advance that encourages participants to talk about key topics of interest counts as key features of semi-structured interviews (Collis & Hussey, 2014, p. 133-134; Merriam, 2009, p. 89; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 374). Since the key issue (strategy making within Born Globals) in this research is categorized for being a complex phenomenon, to have a certain degree of flexibility,
as well as to have prepared some key question in advance is perceived to be of huge importance and necessity to make sure that relevant and sufficient data is gathered, which in turn enables the researcher to answer the study posed question and ultimately achieving the research purpose. Having that said, one can conclude that a semi-structured interview is the most suitable type of interview based on the demand of the type of data that needs to be collected, the exploratory character and the purpose of the current study.

3.4.3.1 Interview guide and data collection protocol

Prior to the interview sessions, Saunders et al. (2012, p. 385-386) recommend a researcher to identify different themes that he/she aims to explore or seek explanations for in order to establish a clear sense of direction and purpose during the empirical data collection. Saunders et al. (2012, p. 386) mention that these themes are usually derived from the theories the researcher considers in the study. These themes do not only function as guidance, but it also assists the researcher in the development of relevant questions to be posed during the interview sessions. Thus, the themes ensure that sufficient information about the subjects intended to be studied is collected (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 386).

Saunders et al. (2012, p. 389, 397) mention that a semi-structured interview should start with an introduction stage, where the researcher briefly presents him/herself, introduces the research and its purpose, declares the structure of the interview, as well as inform the participants about their rights, preferences in regard to safety aspects and lastly ask their approval for recording the interviews. The followed stage is according to Saunders et al. (2012, p. 397) characterised by its focus on key questions, while the following and lastly phase is a closing phase, where the researcher rounds off the interview by thanking the participants for their collaboration.

Yin (2009, p. 79-81) mentions that when conducting a multiple case study it is essential to establish a so-called data collection protocol. Such a protocol strengthens the research reliability since it determines the procedures and the general rules to be followed by the researcher during the data collection process. Yin (2009, p. 86) mentions that such protocol reflects the actual line of inquiry used by the researcher. Yin (2009, p. 81) mentions that such a protocol should comprises lots of information including a briefly presentation of the study, the reason behind it, the research objectives, procedural reminders, specific questions the researcher must keep in mind, as well as what group of information the questions are intended to address.

The interview guide that has been used in this study has been the same for all the executed interviews. The interview questions have been based on the different themes (theoretical subjects) inherent in this study theoretical framework. By doing so the researcher ensures that necessary empirical information about the different subjects inherent in this study can be collected. Furthermore, the interview guide (see appendix 8.5. Interview guide and protocol English/Swedish) follows a similar structure advocated by Saunders et al. (2012, p. 397), at first an introduction phase opens up the interview session, followed by a lighter section that focuses on respective interviewee and company background, to further move on with more
detailed and in-depth questions in regard to how respective company handles their strategy making process, to latter round of the interview with some general questions.

A data collection protocol (see appendix X.4. Interview guide and protocol English/Swedish) has also been formed. This in order to show the readers how the data collection process has been structured and which proceedings the researcher has applied. Due to a limited period of time and scope to complete the current study, the researcher has not applied all the features Yin (2009, p. 81) points out that a protocol should contain. The focus has rather been on the structure, procedural reminders, key questions and what kind of information these questions were intended to address. This since these elements prove how the semi-structured interviews within this study have been executed.

3.4.3.2 Implementation of interviews

All of the interviews conducted in this study have been performed individually and face-to-face with individuals that were involved in the strategy making process of Born Globals during the pre-internationalisation phase. When establishing a first contact with the participating companies, the author explained the purpose of the current study for the companies, in order to find the most optimal and knowledgeable individuals in regard to the issue to be studied within respective companies. As it can be seen in the table 4 (Detailed information about the performed interviews), most of the interviewed participants were either the founder or the CEO of the companies. There is an exception in the case of COS Systems AB, where the interviewee have been the company’s chief marketing officer. In this case this individual have been employed by the company since the company’s internationalisation initiated, and has since then been the responsible individual for internationalisation questions within the company. Thus, this individual is considered to be knowledgeable about the specific subject this study aims to investigate.

Scholars argue that interviews can either be performed individually or in groups (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014, p. 183; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 374-375). Saunders et al. (2012, p. 400) argue that group interviews are preferable when the researcher seeks and focus to obtain interactive opinions, dynamics and discussions from a group of participants. Nevertheless, Saunders et al. (2012, p. 402-403) mention that a disadvantage with group interviews is that the presence from several participants might impede some participants to open-up and to say whatever they wish in regard to the issue intended to be studied. This in turn according to Stokes & Bergin (2006, p. 35) have an impact on the data generated from such interviews, which according to the authors might not be of an in-depth and detailed character. On the other hand, one-to-one interviews are limited to the interviewer and interviewee, which in turn according to Stokes & Bergin (2006, p. 28) have an ability to yield more comprehensiveness and in-depth information.

As the current study aims to investigate a topic (strategy making) that might be a bit sensitive to discuss between a group of people, as well as, the author aims to get a deeper and detailed understanding for how Born Global enterprises form their strategies in the pre-internationalisation phase, it is from this study’s perspective more appropriate to conduct one-to-one interviews.
Scholars argue that it is favorable to perform face-to-face interviews where the interviewer and interviewee are physically present, since the interviewer have access to non-linguistic information in the form of gestures and facial expressions and in such way interpret how the interviewee responds to questions in a physical sense (Bryman, 2012, p. 488; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2014, p. 190). Saunders et al. (2012, p. 404) mention that interviews that do not enable the interviewer to get hold of non-linguistic information may lead to reduced reliability.

Further, Saunders et al. (2012, p. 386) mention that the appropriateness of location during an interview session might influence the collected data. The authors mention that it is important to select a convenient location for the interview, where the interviewee feels comfortable and where the interview can take place without any impediment and disturbance (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 386).

To conduct the interviews face-to-face and in the interviewee’s natural environment, i.e. in the respective participants’ head office, was the researcher’s intention from the beginning. This since it would bring more trustworthiness for the collected data, as well as it would enable the author to interpret non-linguistic information. All the participating companies were located in nearby areas, which from a practical viewpoint facilitated the performance of such interview mode. Further, the various participants suggested their head office as the location for the interviews to take place. Thus, the reason why all the interviews in this study have been executed face-to-face and at respective companies’ head office, a natural place for the participants.

As it can been seen in the table below (see table. 3. Detailed information about the performed interviews) all the interviews were audio recorded. Saunders et al. (2012, p. 396) argue that to record an interview is favorable since it allows the interviewer to concentrate on the questioning and listening during the interview session, as well as, it enables the researcher to re-listen to the interview and in that way avoid the loss, bias and misinterpretation of information. Since I conduct this study by myself, to record the interviews with the participants’ approval, have been crucial and important. This since it is nearly impossible for me to take comprehensive notes at the since time that I have to ask questions, pay attention and listen to what is said during the interview sessions. Moreover, the audio record have enabled me to use direct quotes from the interview, which in turn enables the reader to follow and make their own interpretation of what really have been said during the interview sessions. This, in turn is something that according to Saunders et al. (2012, p. 193) strengthens the quality and reliability of the study, since it allows other to judge for themselves and re-analyse the collected data.

Further, all of the interviews were held in Swedish. As the author feels more confident with the Swedish language, and after some of the participants requested to do the interviews in Swedish, the author decided to conduct all the interviews in its entirely in Swedish. To translate all the obtained primary data to English, which is the used language in the current study report, gives rise to some possible quality issue. This issue will be addressed in more detail under the section 3.6 (quality criteria).

Moreover, as it can been seen in the table 3 (Detailed information about the performed interviews), due to time constraints and request from one of the participants, the author agreed on to do a compressed interview with one of the
participating companies (North Kingdom Design & Communication AB). In order to make sure that there were enough time to ask the more important questions in order to obtain the necessary data, the author send all of the questions that belongs to the background session in the interview guide in advance to the interviewee via e-mail. This in order to make sure that the time during face-to-face interview session would be sufficient to go through the most specific, deeper and detailed questions that dealt with the company’s strategy making procedure. Saunders et al. (2012, p. 232-235) mention that the use of electronic interviews raises a number of issues in regard to the management and the safety of data, where the data in an e-mail interview might be sent and accessed by other people. According to Saunders et al. (2012, p. 232-235) the usage of electronic interviews leads to reduced reliability. In turn, this issue will be treated in more detail under the section 3.6, quality criteria.

Finally, all of the interviews where transcribed after they were performed and the transcript were sent to respective participant via e-mail. Bryman & Bell (2015, p. 493-495) mention that to transcribe an interview is seen as an advantage since it helps the researcher to clear out and correct natural limitations of human memories. Furthermore it also enables the researcher to perform more thorough examination of what have been said during the interview sessions, thus limiting biases, values and misinterpretation of data. When the transcript were sent to respective participant, the researcher took the chance to ask for further clarifications and explanations where it was needed. This in order to make sure that data information was understood correctly.

Table 3. Detailed information about performed interviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Interview Mode</th>
<th>Interview Length</th>
<th>Audio Recorded</th>
<th>Participant Position</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Algoryx Simulations AB</td>
<td>2015-10-15</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>1h</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>CEO/ Co-founder</td>
<td>Head Office, Umeå</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CodeMill AB</td>
<td>2015-10-07</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>1h</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>CEO/Co-founder</td>
<td>Head Office, Umeå</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COS Systems AB</td>
<td>2015-10-07</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>1h</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>CMO (Chief Marketing Officer)</td>
<td>Head Office, Umeå</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Kingdom Design &amp; Communication AB</td>
<td>2015-10-08</td>
<td>E-mail + Face-to-face</td>
<td>40-45 min</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>CEO/ Co-founder</td>
<td>Head Office, Skellefteå</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oryx Simulations AB</td>
<td>2015-11-10</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
<td>30-35 min</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Founder/ Former CEO/ Business</td>
<td>Head Office, Umeå</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5 Data analysis

Saunders et al. (2012, p. 546-547) mention that the analysis of qualitative data may entails some implications for the researcher. This due to the characteristic nature of such data, that are non-standardised, often resulting in a massive volume and complex nature of the data. The researchers mention that in order to make sense of the obtained data, the researcher must undergo a process where the data is condensed, categorised into themes, and then linked to each other through a specific structure that provides one to answer the study’s posed research question (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 548). Eriksson & Kovalainen (2008, p. 129-130) mention that a researcher commence its analysis of the obtained data through using either a deductive or inductive approach of analysis. As I already have proclaimed for a deductive research approach in the current study, where I have used existing theories and combined these to a general theoretical framework, which in turn have been used as a basis for the formulation of interview questions, this study in order to be consistent with previous choices will use a deductive approach to analyse the data. In this study I have utilised existing theories in order to develop a theoretical framework (see section 2.7). On the basis on the portrayed theoretical framework and the theories inherent in it, I have developed two theoretical propositions that could be seen as an explanation for what I suppose to find out from analysing the empirical data, namely that decision-makers at Born Globals form their strategies in the pre-internationalisation phase through following:

1. The entrepreneurship school and thus applying a perspective of strategy in accordance with the experience lens.
2. The learning school and thus applying a perspective of strategy in accordance with the variety lens.

By predicting patterns of outcome based on the above-mentioned theoretical propositions, where these in turn guide the study’s analysis, Yin (2009, p. 130-131) mention that the researcher follows an analysing strategy named theoretical propositions.

Yin (2009, p. 136) mentions that a researcher can choose among five different analytic techniques, namely pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, logic models and lastly cross-case analysis. In this study I have chosen to analyse the data through a cross-case analytic technique. The reason for it, is because I have chosen to conduct a multiple case study, where I have investigated several case companies in order to find out a cross-case outcome that reflects how decision-makers within these companies have formed their strategies during the pre-internationalisation phase. Yin (2009, p. 156) mentions that such an analytic
technique is favourable when a study consist of two or more cases. Further, Yin (2009, p. 156) mention that characteristic for an analytic technique is that every single case is treated as a separate study, but the researcher aims to discover an “aggregating finding across a series of individual cases”. Based on what this study aims to accomplish and on the study’s research question, a cross-case analytic technique is seen as the most suitable alternative to meet the established demands with the current study.

The interview protocol (see appendix 8.5. Interview guide and protocol English/Swedish), which discloses what kind of information the various questions address, have assisted me in order to condensed and categorised the obtained empirical data to the various themes and their respective subthemes (strategic lenses that constitutes of the design-, experience-, variety- and the discourse lens and the strategic schools of though that constitutes of the design-, planning-, positioning-, entrepreneurship-, cognitive-, learning-, power-, cultural-, environmental-, and finally the configuration school) inherent in the study’s theoretical framework. When the categorisation of the data was done in accordance to the themes and their respective subthemes as mentioned above, the researcher could in a clear manner see how the various case companies formed their strategies, and in so way also identify commonalities across cases, ultimately leading to an answer for the study’s research question.

3.6 Quality criteria

Scholars argue that it is important for a researcher to assess the quality of any empirical social research (Creswell, 2013, p. 243; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 292; Saunders et al., 2012, p. 191-192; Yin, 2009, p. 40). This, in order to establish whether “Did [I] get it right?” or “Did [I] publish a wrong or inaccurate account?”, thus ensuring the production of reliable and valid knowledge (Creswell, 2013, p. 243). In order to answer these questions and to ensure the quality of an empirical social research, Yin (2009, p. 40) mentions that researchers should discuss the quality of a research on the basis of two classic evaluation criteria, reliability and validity. Some scholars argue that in qualitative research these classic evaluation criteria should be replaced by a broader term, trustworthiness, developed to better accommodate the philosophical starting points in this kind of research (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 294-295; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Eriksson & Kovalainen (2008, p. 294) mention that trustworthiness comprises four aspects, namely credibility, transferability, dependability and lastly confirmability. Since I have applied a qualitative research method, the quality of the current study will be discussed on the basis of these four above-mentioned terms.

Credibility refers to the degree of confidence others can have on a research study’s findings, i.e. how well the obtained empirical data and processes of analysis address the study’s intended focus (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004, p. 109; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 294). Eriksson & Kovalainen (2008, p. 294) specify that credibility concerns whether the collected empirical data is sufficient to merit the claims made within the study, i.e. the trustworthiness of conclusions drawn in the study. Since the current study has studied Born Global companies that have internationalised in different ways (through piggybacking, acquisition, as a response
to external inquiries or by themselves), I would argue that this study includes a broad variation of how Born Globals have chosen to form their respective strategies during the pre-internationalisation phase. This implies that with the results obtained from the studied case companies, I can disclose some information on how-decision makers at these companies situated in a peripheral area of northern Sweden have formed their strategies during the pre-internationalisation phase, subsequently leading to a fulfillment of the study’s intended focus. By doing so, I am actually able to provide information on how the process of strategy making has occurred within Born Globals in a peripheral area of northern of Sweden at the specific phase.

Moreover, I have in this study utilised a strategy, called member checking, which according to Morse (2015, p. 1212) can be used to strengthen a study’s credibility. Morse (2015, p. 1216) states that member checking refers to when the researcher gives back the transcripts to respective respondent, in order to ask for feedback on the emerging findings and to ensure that interpretations have been made in a correct manner. Since the conducted interviews in this study were made in Swedish and the current paper is written in English, the translation process might possibility represent an obstacle to credibility. This, since the translation of a text into another language might entail some manipulation of the content, due to vocabulary limits. Subsequently, to limit the effect of this; I have been very careful in selecting equivalent wording in order to not change the meaning of the data expressed by the respondents. Furthermore, in order to strengthen the credibility of the translated data, I sent back the English version of the transcripts to respective respondent, in order to get their approval that the interpretation and the translation have been made in an accurate way. In this study I aim to understand a phenomenon through the respondents’ eyes, and one can therefore argue that the only ones who can ensure the credibility of the collected empirical data are the respondents themselves, which is done in this study with the utilisation of member checking strategy. By taking the measures above, I argue that the credibility of the study is satisfactory.

Transferability refers to the extent a research’s findings can be transferred to other milieus (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004, p. 110; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 294). As discussed in the section 3.3.4.1 (case study), the current research does not aim to generalise or apply the obtained findings on a wider population, which is the ambition of statistical generalization. Instead, the research aims to generalise within the theory and the studied cases, which is referred to as analytical generalisation. Graneheim & Lundman (2004, p. 110) mention: “the authors can give suggestions about transferability, but it is the reader’s decision whether or not the findings are transferable to another context”. Scholars mention that in order to facilitate for transferability the researcher should offer rich descriptions in regard to the research context, selection of cases and participants, data collection procedure, as well as how the process analysis has been conducted (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004, p. 110, Morse, 2015, p. 1212). In the methodology chapter, I provided a detailed description of the entire research process, i.e. from the selection of case companies and participants (purposive sampling), to how the collection of data has occurred, and how the process of analysis has taken place. By doing so I have facilitated for others, if interested, to transfer the original findings to other settings, even though this is not the objective of the study. Furthermore, I have throughout the empirical findings chapter used quotations to bring forward the raw data, and in the analysis chapter showed how the lining of reasoning occurred, in order to be as transparent as possible.
and offer the reader a possibility to individually interpret and analyse the obtained findings. This, according to Graneheim & Lundman (2004, p. 110) is also believed to enhance a study’s transferability. By taking the mentioned measures into consideration, I have facilitated and offered an opportunity for other to transfer the knowledge gained in this study to other contexts, if so wished. Hence, I argue that the study in a satisfactory way has contributed to transferability.

**Dependability** concerns whether the researcher has given the reader enough detailed information about the implementation of the research process, and whether it has been logical, traceable and documented (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 294). I have approached dependability by offering a detailed and stepwise description on how the actual research has occurred, where the reader for example can review the asked interview questions (see appendix 8.5. Interview guide and protocol English/Swedish). Moreover, I have also developed an interview protocol, where the reader can follow why the various questions have been asked and how they relate to the different themes inherent in the study’s theoretical framework. Furthermore, the interview protocol has been used to show the reader how the obtained data have been condensed and categorised into the different themes. By putting a great emphasis on detailed and stepwise descriptions, I have offered the reader access and an opportunity to review the different steps taken in the research process. By taking these measures, I argue that the research process is logical, traceable and documented, thus the dependability of the current study is also satisfying.

Lastly, **confirmability** refers to the linkage between the interpretation of a study’s empirical data and its findings, where the findings should not be imaginable, but rather clearly derived from the obtained data (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 294-295). I maintain that the study has addressed confirmability through being consistent and by following an equivalent structure in both the empirical finding- (chapter 4) and the analysis and discussion chapter (chapter 5), which is based on the study’s theoretical framework. By doing so, I facilitate for the reader to follow through the process of presentation of data (where pure statements of the respondents are offered) and analysis, subsequently leading to the study’s finding. By taking this measure, I argue that the reader could see that the findings are derived from the obtained data and not affected by the researchers’ perceptions. In that way, I have tried to be as objective as possible, even though as mentioned earlier a qualitative research inevitably has an inclusion of the researcher’s perceptions, since this individual possesses a central role in the research process.

### 3.7 Ethical considerations

Yin (2014, p. 77) mentions that it is especially important to take ethical considerations into account when conducting research that involves human subjects. In a research context ethics refers to the investigator’ applied behaviour during the execution of the research, and when the research can interfere or affect the rights of the study’s involved object/s (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 226). As the current study deals with case studies about human affairs, where individuals have been interviewed concerning their opinion on how strategies are made within their respective enterprises, to consider ethics is particularly important in this study. Merriam (2009, p. 230) mention that in qualitative researches ethical dilemmas typically arise from the process in

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which data is collected and from the distribution of findings. Yin (2014, p. 78) mention that a researcher must act with care and sensitivity when conducting a case study research, and this usually involves informing the study’s object/s consent and voluntary participation, to protect them from harm, as well as to care about their confidentiality and privacy.

In this study the researcher has dealt with ethics through different actions. Before the interview sessions the researcher has thoroughly informed all the involved participants about the reason and intention behind the current research (to see how the interviews have been executed, see appendix 8.5. Interview guide and protocol English/Swedish). Furthermore, the researcher has pointed out for the participants that their participation in the study is voluntary; hence, these individuals have had the right of self-determination and to withdraw or not respond to any question at any time. As the current research deals with strategy making process within Born Globals during the pre-internationalisation phase, where the researcher aims to interview decision-makers at these enterprises in order to get a better understanding how the process has occurred during a specific phase, some information that is disclosed in the detailed and deep interviews might be of a sensitive character. To make the participants to open themselves and share their opinions and perceptions is of a great importance for this study, which makes it even more important to create an open and honest environment where the interviewees feel free and secure to say whatever they want. In order to secure an open and honest environment the researcher has asked every participant during the interview sessions about their preferences in regard to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality, where their preferences have been respected and the definitive choice. By taking these different actions, the researcher has actively worked to impede ethical conflicts and to protect the involved participants from harm.

Saunders et al. (2012, p. 231) mention that in order to carry out an ethical accepted research, the researcher must promotes accuracy, act in a trustful way during the entire process, and promotes objectivity, meaning the avoidance of misrepresentation of data and findings. As it has been mentioned under the axiology section (see section 3.1.3) in a qualitative research, a researcher’s subjective judgments and values constitutes a natural element. This implies that one might wonder how objective one can be in a qualitative research. All of the interviews executed in study have been transcribed, and the transcripts have be sent to respective participant in order to reduce the risk of biases, misinterpretation and misrepresentation of data. Even though my values and thoughts will be evident in the drawn results and conclusions, I have tried to present the empirical findings in an accurate way, as well as to show how the line of reasoning went about during the analysis of data. By doing so, I have put all the cards in the table in order to be as objective as possible during the entire research process.

Moreover, when conducting this research study I have followed the thesis manual and the disciplinary regulations that governs and indicates how a second year master thesis and research in general should be conducted at the Umeå University. By doing so I have accepted the various ethical rules in the form of, among other things, to respect the work done by other researchers and to reference in a correct manner in order to avoid plagiarism.
By acting and highlighting the various factors discussed above the researcher have tried to act in a honest and objective way during the execution of the current study, thus also act in an ethical acceptable way.
4. Empirical Findings

In this chapter, I present the empirical findings that have been obtained through the completed semi-structured interviews with the various case companies. Firstly, I introduce the chapter with a background section, where detailed information about all the case companies is revealed. This is to give the reader a clear picture of the various companies that have participated in the study. The rest of the chapter is structured in accordance to the general theoretical framework, where I first present empirical findings related to Born Globals, followed by information that is related to the strategic lenses, to later focus on information related to the strategic schools of thought. Throughout the entire chapter, I use quotes that have been communicated by the various participants to exemplify and strengthen the data.

4.1 Firms background information

Table 4. Detailed information about participating companies

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Algoryx Simulation AB</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Computer software</td>
<td>11,954 MSEK</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>85 %</td>
<td>Norway, Germany, Holland, Japan</td>
<td>FS*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CodeMill AB</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Computer Software</td>
<td>23,556 MSEK</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30 %</td>
<td>United Kingdom, USA</td>
<td>AOE*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COS Systems AB</td>
<td>2010/2011</td>
<td>Computer software</td>
<td>9,009 MSEK</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15-20%</td>
<td>USA, South Africa</td>
<td>UFYE*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Kingdom Design &amp; Communication AB</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Graphical design</td>
<td>49,201 MSEK</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>85-90 %</td>
<td>USA, United Kingdom, Holland, Japan</td>
<td>UFYE*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oryx Simulations AB</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Hardware simulators for machinery operations</td>
<td>52,027 MSEK</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>85-90 %</td>
<td>Several countries spread out in the world’s five continents</td>
<td>AOE*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prediktera AB</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Computer Software</td>
<td>49,769 MSEK</td>
<td>0 (3 individuals where all)</td>
<td>75 %</td>
<td>Germany, South Africa,</td>
<td>FS*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Xore AB</td>
<td>2011/</td>
<td>Mining peripherals</td>
<td>3,663</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2012</td>
<td></td>
<td>MSEK</td>
<td>10-15</td>
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<td>Kina, USA</td>
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FS* (From start), AOYE* (After one year of establishment), UFYE* (Under first year of establishment).

4.1.1 Algoryx Simulation AB

Algoryx Simulation AB is a company that provides software and services for graphic and interactive physics based simulations. Four individuals in cooperation with another company, Oryx Simulations AB, founded Algoryx AB in 2007. The company’s product portfolio consists of three software simulation programmes used for both professional and educational purposes. The company is active in different industries, such as offshore, heavy equipment and material handling, where their diverse simulation solutions are utilised by customers to test real life evidence before taking real life action. Algoryx Simulation AB is a spinout company from Umeå University, which explains the company’s passion for research. The company’s close cooperation with research is visible in the company’s team, which mostly consist of developers and researchers with a long experience in interactive simulation. The company’s customer base consists of both industrial companies that integrate Algoryx’s software solutions in their own products, but also by end-customers that license the software programmes for their own use. The company is headquartered in Umeå, Sweden and from there it manages the entire business and software development.

4.1.2 CodeMill AB

CodeMill AB is an IT company active in the media and broadcast industry with a focus on Smart Video and other technical video solutions. Two individuals founded the company in 2008. The company assists their customers in managing, analysing and publishing video online. CodeMill AB is a spinoff company from Umeå University, which also explains the company’s close relationship with research, where the company also runs their own R&D work within the area of Smart Video. The company is headquartered in Umeå, Sweden, but they also have offices in two other Swedish cities, namely in Piteå and Stockholm. However, the business is managed from the head office in Umeå, where all production also takes place.

4.1.3 COS Systems AB

COS Systems AB is an IT company that offers different kinds of software solutions for planning, deployment and management of open access fibre networks. The company’s product portfolio consists of two software programmes that cover all the needs from planning to managing fibre networks. COS Systems AB customer base consists of other industrial companies that deliver different kind of broadband services, where these companies use COS system’s software solutions and integrate it in their respective products. The company is headquartered in Umeå, Sweden, from where the entire business is handled. However, the company also has a sales office in New York, USA.
4.1.4 North Kingdom Design & Communication AB

North Kingdom Design & Communication AB is a creative agency within the area of digital media that offers a broad spectrum of digital design services such as product prototyping, product design, concept development, digital animation etc. Two individuals founded North Kingdom Design & Communication AB in 2003 and the company is headquartered in Skellefteå, Sweden, but it also has established offices in Stockholm, Sweden and in Los Angeles, USA. Nevertheless, the greatest part of the company’s operations is handled from the head office.

4.1.5 Oryx Simulations AB

Oryx Simulations AB was founded in 1999 through a project collaboration between an entrepreneur, a research institution and another company. Oryx Simulations AB manufactures different kinds of physical training simulators for machine operators. The company’s product portfolio consists of diverse simulators, utilised within different industries such as construction, forest, mining and cargo. Oryx simulators are seen as a tool to help customers improve the productivity and safety of their operations, while reducing environmental impact and damage on machinery. The company is headquartered in Umeå, Sweden, but it also has sales offices established in both Stockholm, Sweden and in Sao Paulo, Brazil. However, the entire production is managed in Umeå.

4.1.6 Prediktera AB

Prediktera AB is an IT company that provides software solutions for image and data analysis used for research, application development or routine analysis in laboratories or productions. Three individuals founded the company in 2013. The company’s software technology can be used as an analysis method to disclose information about a surface’s chemical and spatial composition through scanning it. Prediktera’s software solutions are utilised in various industries such as the food, agricultural, plastics, forensics and medicinal industry. The company’s customer base comprises of industrial companies that utilise and integrate Prediktera’s software solutions into their own physical products. Prediktera AB is headquartered in Umeå, Sweden and the entire business including the development of their products is managed from the same place.

4.1.7 Xore AB

Xore AB is company that develops, assembles, sells and provides services to diverse physical analysers for the mining industry. Three colleagues founded the company in the end of 2011 beginning of 2012. The company’s product portfolio consists of two different analysers that are used to make rapid and accurate measurement of diverse kind of metal contents. The company is headquartered in Skellefteå, Sweden, and from there the entire business is managed.
4.2 Born Globals

4.2.1 Algoryx Simulation AB

According to the respondent Algoryx Simulation AB was international even before the company was established. The respondent stated that it has never been a question of whether to internationalise, since internationalisation has been perceived as a natural thing since the company’s start.

“We came in contact with our first international customer even before we formally had set up a limited liability company. For us, internationalisation was not even a question, we were international from day one”.

The respondent said that Umeå, and Sweden in general, is just “a very small part of the world” where opportunities are very limited. The respondent continued by mentioning that “If we were to do what we do locally to later go international, I can assure you that we wouldn’t be here today conducting business”. The respondent explained that in order to be able to get a critical mass, the company was forced to widen their eyes beyond country borders. This since their products are “so specialised”, that it is necessary to go international in order to find potential customers.

The respondent continued by mentioning that the company’s products are universally capable to attract customer from all over the world since they are not restricted to national laws and cultures. He expressed:

“Mathematics and physics are global in their construction”.

According to the respondent the founder’s involvement in academic research within the area of simulation, as well as the collaboration of their mother company, Oryx Simulations AB, has facilitated the company’s internationalisation path and has given their first international customers a perception of security.

4.2.2 CodeMill AB

CodeMill AB’s respondent mentioned that the thought to internationalise existed from start among the company’s founders. The respondent stated that the company’s process of internationalisation started one year after establishment and as a result of different kinds of collaborations with other already established companies.

“The owners' interest in internationalisation was existing from the very beginning. We [the owners] think it is exciting and challenging with international business”.

“Already in 2009, which is one year after having established ourselves, we came in contact with an international customer in Oxford, United Kingdom, through another company that we had worked with. From the beginning the greatest part of our international customers originated from collaborations with other major Swedish companies, where we were/are the experts in their platform. As we were beginners, and we knew that these Stockholm companies were interested to internationalise, we could take advantage of our relations to get some help and support from them and in
that way get to work with their international customers. Nowadays, we work further on those merits”.

According to the respondent one reason behind the company’s rapid involvement with international markets is because the company operates in a niche area, where the local market is very limited. Furthermore, the respondent said that internationalisation is a great opportunity since there is a greater margin for the work that is performed internationally.

“We do IT and system development, with a focus on media and broadcasting industry, where the local market is limited, so we need to search for customers in the global arena. Additionally, the kind of work we do can be easily done remotely. There is no obstacle that we are situated in Umeå and serve customers around the world. By contrast, I rather see it as an advantage, as we have a good university within our area close to us allowing us to recruit competent people”.

4.2.3 COS Systems AB

COS Systems AB internationalised according to the respondent during the company’s first year of establishment. The respondent mentioned that COS Systems AB had the thought to internationalise from the company’s inception. This since the local market is very mature, limiting the company’s possibilities to survive if only conducting business locally. The respondent stated that “Sweden has been one of the forefront countries within the broadband industry in the world, which means that the market is mature, leading to a very competitive market. However, internationally, there is so much potential since some countries still use old modem connections, giving us great opportunities with our high technology products tailored for fibre connections”.

The respondent mentioned that the fact that the company is active in a niche and well-defined market, as well as that the company’s products are global by nature and easy to distribute all over the world, have facilitated the company’s rapid internationalisation.

“Our products are cloud based and the system inherent in them are constructed from day one both in Swedish and English. So we can easily distribute it to customers around the world in no time”.

Further, the respondent mentioned that the company does not limit itself to any country around the world. However, he mentioned that from the beginning the company just went to countries from where they had gotten inquiries. He also confessed that many of the international customers from start appeared through “word of mouth contacts”, or by other customers that had recommended the company.

“Where one talks about internationalising, one starts to look after customer in the neighbouring countries, which for us would mean the Scandinavian countries. For me that is not that obvious, apart from the fact that we speak almost the same language in Norway or Denmark, we are not that equal in all aspects. Nowadays almost every one speaks English in Sweden, and people can switch between Swedish and English without even reacting. English is a global language, so I don’t see the point in limiting ourselves to any country or region”.
4.2.4 North Kingdom Design & Communication AB

According to the respondent one usually “begins to take on domestic customers, then you set up an office in Stockholm, before getting out to international markets”. Nevertheless, he expressed that this was certainly not the case for North Kingdom Design & Communication AB. According to him already under the company’s first year of establishment they served an international customer.

“Already in 2003, we got a large established customer from the UK, today one of the world’s largest mobile operators”.

Further, the respondent mentioned that after a “lucky cooperation” with a mobile operator everything “just happened so fast” and “surprisingly” the company started “to get more and more international missions” leading to a rapid international expansion to diverse European countries (Holland, United Kingdom, etc.) and in the US. The respondent mentioned that the company’s rapid internationalisation process was not possible 20 years ago, where he addressed globalisation and the progression of Internet as facilitating factors enabling the company to engage in a rapid internationalisation commitment. Further, he expressed that what the company does (graphic design) has facilitated their rapid international commitment. According to the respondent graphic design is global, so he questions the ambition “to be content to do something in little Sweden, where one can do the same thing internationally and even get bigger margins internationally”. For example the respondent mentioned, “you cannot even compare the budgets and the projects in the US, they are much bigger”, which “makes it even more challenging to take on these projects”.

The respondent continued to mention that he previously had professional experience of international work, and that together with his academic background in international business have influenced the decision to internationalise the company’s operations, once the discussion to set up the company started.

4.2.5 Oryx Simulations AB

According to the respondent the thought to internationalise the company’s operations was existent from the very beginning. The respondent mentioned that “the entire driving force behind starting Oryx Simulations AB was to internationalise and to start an international company. Internationalisation was in my opinion simply the goal from the very beginning”. The respondent drew parallels with another local company, where it took nearly 60 years for it to build a global presence. According to the respondent, if that would be the case of Oryx Simulations AB, “[the company] wouldn’t be here today performing business”. The respondent mentioned that the local market is very limited, and that the competition is in the global arena, which according to him, were factors that forced the company to go international, if not they “would be out-competed”.

Further, the respondent explained that the first simulators to be delivered to international customers were done during the first and the second year of establishment. According to the respondent the company did not conduct much business locally, “it was not like we first conducted business in Sweden for several years”, instead the company followed an already established company “out to the
world”, which the entrepreneur already had an established contact with. The respondent mentioned that, “even before we began to invest in the technology, and even before we started to develop the product, and started to spend money, we made sure that there was a demand and that our product would be sold by the company we collaborated with”.

According to the respondent within two years of establishment the company had delivered simulators to several countries such as Finland, USA and Brazil and in that way the company was represented and active in several continents, already at that time.

### 4.2.6 Prediktera AB

The respondent mentioned that Prediktera AB was international from start. According to the respondent this has to do with “the way the company came into being”. Here the respondent addressed the fact that the company was formed when he together with two other colleagues bought up the rights and resources of another company, which had gone bankrupt, and which they had previously worked for. The respondent mentioned that the liquidated company was an international firm that did almost the same thing as Prediktera AB is doing today. The difference is that the overtaken company focused both on the development of hardware and software with a concentration towards end-users, while Prediktera AB focuses only on software development and its customer base consists exclusively of hardware developers that integrate the company’s software in their respective products.

The respondent mentioned that Prediktera “took over” many of the international customers, which they already had an established relationship with, from the bankrupt company – and today the company works further on those merits. This has according to the respondent facilitated the company’s rapid international commitment.

“Since we took over many of the international customers [...] one can say that we were international from the very start”.

Moreover, the respondent expressed the fact that the company sells a highly advanced technology that is not that common, implies that the local market for this kind of software the company develops is very limited. The respondent stated: “In order for us to get a good volume, we were forced to look outside Sweden”. He continued by mentioning that “since we three have worked previously with the same thing, even though the current focus has changed a bit, we knew what it was expected and what we had to do in the industry we are active in [...], so we knew that we had to approach international customers from the very start”.

He continued by stating that the fact that software is “easy to distribute all over the world”, and it does not require such “extensive distributions canals” has also facilitated for the company to engage in a rapid internationalisation process.

### 4.2.7 Xore AB

According to the respondent Xore AB started to serve international customer since the company’s start. The respondent mentioned that from the beginning the company
started to sell service hours and spare parts to an analyser that was purchased by a mining company in Canada. The analyser in question was according to the respondent sold buy another company, which by that time owned the rights of the product. The respondent mentioned that since the establishment of Xore AB, the company bought the rights for the product, and took over the production and the development of the analysers. By doing so, the respondent mentioned that XORE AB also took over and started to serve the customer that already possessed the product, including the Canadian mining company.

The respondent mentioned that the company from scratch understood that they would eventually be forced to internationalise their operations “sooner or later”, this since the market for such analysers manufactured by the company is limited in Sweden. The respondent pointed out that currently there are only between seven to eight analysers of this kind in Sweden, and that their respective life span is up to fifteen years, if one maintains them well. He explained that for this reason, the local market is very slow. The respondent said;

“If we were to sell a new analyser it requires that a new mine opens up or that an existing one expands markedly, and none of those scenarios happen very often. So the market for new sales is slow and in practice fully developed. So we are forced to go overseas, and we knew from start that this would be the case”.

He continued by explaining that the local market gives possibilities for service agreements, which he clarified represents a substantial portion of what the company lives by.

4.3 Strategic lenses
4.3.1 Algoryx Simulation AB

According to the respondent the founders of Algoryx Simulation AB had several years of academic research in their baggage within the area of simulation before setting up the actual company. These individuals were knowledgeable and pretty aware of what was happening within their area of research. When the discussion to set up a company started, two years in advance of the actual founding, the founders of Algoryx Simulation AB in connection to their research involvement had conducted different kinds of systematic analyses in order to identify potential market areas that would be of interest and which eventually would suit them. Based on these analyses, they identified some market areas, and these were the automotive, robotics, special effects and animation, as well as the medical technological area. Nevertheless, Algoryx’s first international endeavour was in a totally unfamiliar industry, namely from the offshore drilling industry.

“Our first international customer came from the offshore industry, which was a totally unfamiliar industry for us. At that time, we did not think we could simulate ships, but our future customer thought differently, namely that our simulation could be used in their industry too. [...] Today the offshore industry has been very important for us, and is for sure one of the factors behind the company’s current success. Nowadays, that industry accounts for approximately one third of our revenue. And it was an industry that we would not have thought of at all from the beginning”.

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The respondent mentioned that it was the customer itself that took the initiative to the first contact: “they heard of us through published research that was written by us. During our first contact, I mentioned for them that we in association with another company [their mother company, Oryx Simulations AB] were planning to start a new company. So that is the way we started along.”

The respondent continued by mentioning that during the pre-internationalisation phase everything happened so fast, that the company did not have enough time to prepare or to thoroughly think about individual decisions, instead they simply acted when the opportunities appeared. He said:

“If I am going to be honest, we hadn’t fully started the company yet before we got a first request from our first international customer. Everything just happened so fast. The fact was that we even signed an agreement with them before we had formally set up a limited liability company”.

“From the beginning we did a bit of everything. When customers contacted us, instead of explaining our product portfolio and what we did, we asked them what they wanted, and tried then to satisfy their needs. After a while we realised that this wasn’t a good strategy”.

The respondent continued by mentioning that nowadays the situation is different and the way the company acts in regard to strategic issues is totally the opposite.

“We can say that we perform more comprehensive strategic work today. For example today all the taken decisions and actions must be documented. Furthermore, we nowadays are much better at following things up, which we did not do from the beginning. [...] From start it was me and three other individuals that were in charge of that kind of work, so communication went very smoothly and much of the discussion could be taken during the coffee break and so on. It simply worked to communicate in an effective way between a group of four, but it doesn’t work that smoothly in a group of fifteen, which is the reality today”.

“Today we also have more clearly specified product definitions, and we focus more on what we are good at. [...] We have learnt that we cannot do everything. It’s better to do less, but to do it good”.

Further, the respondent mentioned that the company from the beginning did not have established goals in advance related to their internationalisation commitment, besides that they realised from the start that they were forced to go international if they were going to survive: “It is in the international arena that potential customers are situated”. Even in this case the respondent mentioned that the situation is handled differently today.

“Today after eight years of establishment, we have geographical priorities, meaning that we concentrate our efforts to specific geographical areas. Currently, we are focusing more on the German and the Japanese markets, since we have established good contacts in these markets, which we could take advantage of and take it to the next level. So of course we have established some goals that we would like to achieve in these markets in the nearest future. But as I said earlier, these kinds of goals did
not exist eight years ago. [...] Back then we were just happy for the inquiries we received then”.

Moreover, the respondent expressed the importance of being flexible especially from the beginning.

“I usually say that strategy is like a labyrinth. When you are an SME company you have to try many different ways before you settle down. You might have a picture of where you want to go, from A to B, but the way to get there is rather hidden and you have to figure it out, and there is only one way to do it, by testing different approaches along the way. [...] From the beginning we tested many different things, for example we tried to sell via retailer, direct to customer, via web etc. To test different things requires commitment, which makes it even more important to pay attention on how it is going in order to not lose too much when testing various methods”.

Additionally, the respondent mentioned that during the pre-internationalisation phase much of the responsibility and the development of strategic issues was on the founder’s shoulders. Furthermore, he confessed that the founder’s previous experiences have had an impact on the company’s subsequent decisions.

“We are a handful of individuals that have formed the company and from the beginning it was just we four. So at that time we as founders had much to say about everything. It was expected from us to take decisions. [...] However as the company grew, the greater was the number of people involved in the decision-making process. Today we have a sales manager, a product manager and so on, so these individuals have responsibilities and are obviously involved in the decision making process too”.

“We [the founders] have a long experience within our area. So throughout the years we have seen what works and what does not work, and of course this has inevitably affected the subsequent ways/tactics we have chosen to follow. [...] The international dimension has been obvious for all of us from start. For example one the founders has an international background, so it has never been a question about whether to internationalise”.

4.3.2 CodeMill AB

CodeMill’s respondent mentioned that the company did not do much preparation or utilised formal procedures such as systematic analyses and planning to base the company’s decision to internationalise.

“I cannot say that we did much preparation in the form of systematic analyses upon which to base our decision to internationalise. The international contacts we established have been through other contacts, so when opportunities appeared we took them. To perform different kinds of analyses was not a priority then, simply because we felt that we did not need it. [...] Nowadays the situation is different, after having been active in the British market and experienced its potential, we have started to investigate how we could get a stronger foothold there. Other types of preparations that were made then, were coordinated after things happened”.

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Nevertheless, the respondent confessed that retrospectively it would have been good to have conducted more analyses. This since the company would have much more information to rely on when making strategic decisions. However, “time pressure” and the fact that “a lot of things happened at the same time” during the pre-internationalisation phase hindered the company.

“In retrospect it would have been good if we had done more systematic analyses in order to know more about the different markets, how big they are, how the demand for our products is etc. This would have been good information to have in advance, so we could make more rational decisions. Earlier we were sort of flying in blindness, so to speak”.

On the other hand, the respondent stressed that the company’s flexibility related to strategies has been perceived as a strength.

“We are a small company, so we are very flexible; we can be creative and use our ingenuity with the resources we have and change orientation in the strategic work pretty quick. This, I perceive to be a great advantage, which has especially been significant during the start, where one did not exactly know what to do”.

Further, the respondent mentioned that in the future, he sees the need to conduct more proactive strategic work than the company has done today.

“I think in the future we will need more proactive work related to strategies than we have done so far. So far, we have lived on customer satisfaction, so to speak”.

The respondent also said that in the beginning much of the strategic work was done by the two founders of the company. This since “back then it was we [the owners] who were responsible over executing these kinds of work, since we were the ones that decided what direction the company should take and so on. […] Nowadays, we have a sales manager that has experience of working internationally, so this individual is also involved in the process”.

Further, the respondent mentioned that he personally does not have any kind of prior experience related to internationalisation. Even though he couldn’t specifically say how the founder’s experience have affected the company’s behaviour and action, he stated that the founders’ “joint practical experiences” and their “ways of doing things” have obviously influenced the company’s behaviour and action since these individuals “were and still are the ones that make decisions within the company”.

### 4.3.3 COS Systems AB

The respondent mentioned that before internationalising to the American market, which was the first foreign market that the company worked towards, the company recruited an external consultant at place, who did some preparatory work in form of systematic analyses related to the specific market. However, according to the respondent “it did not work that well with the external consultant”, resulting that the company did not get much of it, meaning that the information extracted from these analyses did not play a significant role for decision-making and the company’s development of strategies. The respondent mentioned that the company after a while
decided then to break with the external consultant. In regard to the first international customer, the respondent mentioned that it was themselves that contacted the company. Further, the respondent mentioned that it was first afterwards when the company had an offer from a potential international customer and decided to go for it, that the company did more investigation about the specific market to see if there was eventually more demand there.

"The international markets where we are active now is because we had an offer from there".

"If we entered a market, we then did more investigation to see if there were more potential customers we could cater. [...] We said that we first wanted to have a customer, which could show off our products locally, before making further efforts”.

This since according to the respondent it is very “costly and time consuming” to conduct analyses, and to “do test runs in all kinds of places”, so one must focus efforts on where it is “hot” and take opportunities when they show up. Another reason for working this way is due to the respondent that “one doesn’t know how it actually is to work in a market before you are really there”.

The respondent further explained that the company did not have any concrete goals they wanted to achieve with their internationalisation process. Instead, they acted on the basis of what he calls “guidelines”, a more loose kind of goals. Further, he stressed that from the beginning the company did not have formalised strategic work, “everything was handled in a more spontaneous way”. Moreover, the respondent stressed the importance of being flexible in the beginning, “it is crucial to be able to reshape intentions, I think we were pretty flexible back then, we were very open for opportunities and we did not exclude anything in advance”.

According to the respondent, before internationalising, the company had five employees, and all of them were in some way involved in the strategic decision-making – even though the last word was up to the CEO. He explained that back then “everyone knew what was happening” and one relied much on what these individuals knew and had experienced. The respondent said: “When you are a small company, you do not sit down and read a lot of material about different markets and analyse everything in the smallest detail. Instead you go on what people know, what they have experienced and base your decisions on that. On the basis of that, you do the best out of the situation, and corrects with time”.

The respondent mentioned that the situation is different today. According to him the company nowadays conducts more formalised strategic work, and strategic questions today lies on the hands on the company’s board of direction and the management team. The respondent expressed: “Today people have more different roles within the company. [...] The management team handles much of the concrete work related to strategies, and there is always a continuous discussion with the board of direction before anything is decided”.

Finally, the respondent mentioned, “strategic work is time consuming, especially in the start-up phase. In that phase you neither have time, resources or money to conduct comprehensive strategic work. I think companies should benefit from what
we did, put your focus on selling, selling and selling, strategic work can be done afterwards when one has more real input to base it on. [...] For me strategy is an on-going work, consisting of a continuous correction based on how it goes and on the outcomes”.

4.3.4 North Kingdom Design & Communication AB

The respondent mentioned that the company did not utilise any kind formal procedures such as planning and systematic analyses to base their decision to internationalise the company’s operations. He said:

“Back then, we did not use formal procedures at all”

Moreover, the respondent expressed that the company did not have any kind of specific or detailed goals that were established in advance and that disclosed what the company wanted to achieve with their internationalisation commitment. The respondent expressed that the “desire to internationalise was the only thing that steered the company from start”. He further stressed, “at the beginning we wanted to be recognised internationally, we wanted to experience things and to have fun, monetary goals and other types of concrete goals of achievement did not exist back then”. He continued by mentioning “we wanted to be an international company, but where these customer came from did not matter at all, of course we had some dream customer we would like to work with, but we were open for everything that came up”.

The respondent continued by mentioning that the company from the beginning did not have a distinctive and defined strategy on how to approach international customer. He said that from start international customers contacted the company, so they did not need to “hunt and search for these”. When this occurred to the company, they “took the opportunities in act”. He said “from start we relied a lot on our instincts [...] of course you can discover things by analysing stuff, but it takes time, and we simply did not have that time from the beginning. [...] You do not have a long take-off period, you have to start doing things immediately, that’s what we did and instead we learned along the process”. Further he stated that from start “it was much to look around, and to try to come up with an own understanding for things”.

Further, the respondent mentioned that the individuals that made strategic decisions from start were the company’s founders. This since according to the respondent simply is because “it is the owners that naturally form a company’s strategic guidelines”. He continued by mentioning that from start “it was the consensus of the owners” that reflected the company’s subsequent strategies even though they were responsive to the surrounding environment. However, it was the founders that “had the last word” back then. Nevertheless, the respondent mentioned that “in pace with the company’s growth, more individuals got involved in the decision-making process, and they had to reconcile more opinions”.

The respondent further expressed that during the first two years of establishment they “we were up in the clouds” and that “everything was just so awesome”. The respondent referenced that the company reached turnover levels that they had not expected. He said:
“We [the founders] for the first time happily did not have to work during those summers”.

However, he mentioned that “when we [the company] transformed from being a child to an adult, we realised that we needed to be more rational in the way we made decisions, which led to a revolutionary transformation of how the company currently works with strategic work”. The respondent referenced to more frequently meeting of the company’s management team with the introduction of “Monday meetings” and that the “general work related to strategic issues started to get more formalised” and made “on a yearly basis”.

Moreover, the respondent mentioned that his earlier professional and educational experience obtained from his time spent in America has certainly affected his “perceptions, attitudes, as well as the way he chooses to act”. He expressed that “In Sweden there is the Jante law [culture of modesty characteristic to Scandinavian countries] that sometimes restricts people; you shouldn’t think that you are better than anyone, you should not think that you are someone etc. In the US this doesn’t exist, over there one is more goal- and competition oriented. I believe that this, very much, influences one’s self-confidence and how you choose to act. In that sense I am more American than Swedish”.

4.3.5 Oryx Simulations AB

When asked if the company during their pre-internationalisation phase performed systematic analyses in order to have access to information to base their strategic decisions on, the answer was very clear from the respondent: “We did not use these kinds of things at all, we worked more with informal contacts and knowledgeable people that we knew”. According to the respondent he understood from the outset that if one were to engage in a rapid internationalisation process, which was one of the company’s goal, the company “wouldn’t have time to systematically analyse different markets and to establish market contacts by our own”. The respondent mentioned that what the company did, was then to choose a “quicker” way to internationalisation via “piggybacking”, i.e. to follow another already established international company to their international markets. The respondent mentioned that the choice to piggyback on the specific company was because he personally had an established contact with the founders of that company. The piggybacking was done according to the respondent by “introducing one further product to their product flow”, which according to him was “very simply and done within a short time period, namely a few months”. The respondent mentioned that the company chose to “sacrifice their market presence, to collaborate with the other company”, which they piggybacked on. However, according to the respondent this was “one of his wiser choices that he have made so far”. After piggybacking the respondent mentioned that “new doors” to international customers was opened and the company started to receive more and more requests from abroad, since in that way the company had a “good reference to stand on”.

The respondent mentioned that the company had an objective from the beginning and it was to become an international company, which among other things he shared. However, he explained that from the beginning the company did not specifically break down this objective into plans, which in turn disclosed which path and direction the company should take in order to accomplish the company’s objective. The way to
become an international company was according to the respondent not given in advance, he explained that through communicating “we knew that the sun was over there somewhere [pointing to the sky], however how to get there has been a pretty bumpy road”.

Further, the respondent mentioned that from start he as the entrepreneur and the founder of the company had the responsibility to make strategic decisions. He expressed, “from start where the company was tiny, I worked more independently with strategic issues and it was me exclusively that made these kinds of decisions”. This according to respondent: “simply because it was me who took the initiative to start the company”. However, he mentioned that, in pace with the company’s expansion, the role of the company’s board of directors has been more visible in the decision-making process, meaning that nowadays “no bigger changes are done without the support of the company’s board of directors”. This even though suggestions are made from the company’s operational management team, where he among other individuals is included.

4.3.6 Prediktera AB

The respondent mentioned that Prediktera AB did not perform any kind of systematic analyses in advance to base strategic decisions on. Furthermore, the respondent stated that the company did not have concrete goals that described what the company wanted to accomplish with their internationalisation commitment. Even so, he said that the decision to internationalise the company’s operations was “quite well-thought in beforehand”. The reason to it was, according to the respondent, because the founder’s had previous professional experience, which they gathered through working in the international company that went bankrupt. He expressed “as we previously have worked with almost the same thing, we knew that we had to go international from start”. The respondent communicated that “our previous employment gave us a lot of knowledge, which we later tried to apply to Prediktera AB”. He continued by mentioning, “obviously, some of the strategies the former company had did not work at all, which according to me was one of the factors behind the company’s bankruptcy”. He then said, that once they decided to set up Prediktera AB, they wanted to take advantage of their obtained knowledge and “do what we saw seemed to work” and do the opposite, i.e. correct what they perceived did not to work. This since, as the respondent puts it, “we tried from start to be very responsive to the surrounding environment, before deciding to do anything”, which according to the respondent was a lesson learnt from the past.

The respondent declared that it is critical to have a strategy. According to him “it is important to have a long-term approach in everything you do”. This, because a long-term approach entails a focus of resources, which the respondent admitted, might be a problem for a start-up from the beginning, as they possess limited development resources. Thus, the respondent mentioned that “it is important to try do the right things from start, you cannot run to the right and to the left, you have to concentrate”. Nevertheless, the respondent mentioned that the long-approach is not supposed to “restrict you”, he explained that it is very important to be flexible and change course at the same time, and to find “a balance” between long-time thinking and flexibility. He expressed that: “from the beginning we wanted to have 10-15 international partners that we worked really close with, and that integrated our software in their
Hardware. But this hasn’t restricted us. [...] We were at the same time very responsive to our customers, and we have tried to listen to them in order to gather as much information as possible in order to not re-do the same mistake as before, and to do something that wasn’t requested by the market”.

Further, the respondent mentioned that from start much of the company’s strategic work was done in an “informal way”. Here, the respondent referenced that the company did not do much “documented” strategic work and that much of the strategies was done through an informal conversation between the three colleagues.

“We are just three people that work here, and we sit close to each other. So when we want to communicate things, it is pretty easy to do it. So now and then we talk about strategy too, but it’s all been very informal”.

4.3.7 Xore AB

The respondent mentioned that systematic analyses have not been the basis for contact with the first international customer. Moreover, the respondent mentioned that the company from start had no set goals with internationalisation. According to the respondent, “the first business appeared so fast, that we did not have the opportunity to prepare whatsoever, since they weren’t warmed up yet”. This since the first contacts were established through the company taking over the rights and the ownership for a product from another company, and thus the company “took over” and started to serve an international customer, which at that time had purchased the product while the other company owned the rights for the product. However, the respondent mentioned that shortly after the company’s establishment, the company took part of a programme called Step to Export via the Swedish trade council (Business Sweden). According to the respondent the programme was a comprehensive one, which firstly focused on internal aspects of the company, to later focus more on external aspects such as analysing the market, competitors, and the industry.

The respondent mentioned that through that programme the company identified different markets, ranked those based on the company’s interest and how suited they were, as well as they did some mapping of potential customers situated at those markets. The respondent expressed “through the programmes we identified some big mining countries in the world such as Australia, Chile and South Africa, out of which we found the Chilean market to be the most interesting, due to that market having more copper mines, where they use similar procedures and analysers as in Sweden”. Based on that information the company did more comprehensive analyses to search for potential partners in the Chilean market and the company’s management team have travelled, taken part in diverse events, and met several potential customers in Chile. However, the respondent communicated that, so far, the company hasn’t done any business in Chile. He continued to explain that in their industry “it takes long time for bids to turn into actual business”.

The respondent confessed that in the case of the first international customer it was the customers itself that contacted the company, and when those requests appeared the company simply embraced them. However, the respondent mentioned “in a small business there is always a question on how much one can take on at the same time.
Even if we have a product that has the entire world as a potential market, we cannot spread our operation all over the world. The strategic work is time-consuming and it takes time to figure out what market one should focus on etc. If one compares with Spotify or other IT companies, their distribution channels are not that long, which facilitates their chances to engage in an international commitment more rapidly. For us on the other hand, we have to send tons of hardware product to every customer, which requires a 24h installation etc., so you want to make sure in advance that it is the right decision to take”.

The respondent mentioned that strategic issues were on the hands of the founders of the company, which back then where the only ones that were employed by the company. Moreover, the respondent said that from the very beginning strategic work “ended up a little in between other issues”. Meaning that the first international business was conducted in “a bit more spontaneous way, where they tried to catch the wave and to do the best of it”.

4.4 Strategic schools of thought
4.4.1 Algoryx Simulation AB

The respondent mentioned that the founders of Algoryx AB in advance had – in connection with their involvement in academic research – performed diverse analyses in order to identify potential industry areas that were considered to suit the company based on their knowledge. According to the respondent, the information extracted from theses analyses did not base the company’s decision on whether or not to internationalise. When responding the question on if the company used formal procedures such as analyses and planning to base the decision to internationalise, the respondent answered that the usage of such proceedings “were very limited, almost non-existent”.

The respondent mentioned that from start strategic work was exclusively “an owners question”. He continued to mention that the way these individuals thought, their respective intentions, ambitions etc. had an influence on the company’s action, since these individuals “were the people that formed the company”. Further, he mentioned that from the beginning the company had a vision that was in the founders mind even before the company was established. According to the respondent this vision has guided and still guides the company’s action. The respondent mentioned that this vision constituted of a concept called “convergence”. The respondent explained, “From start we could clearly see that many specialised markets were about to consolidate and merge together. Previously, one used very specialised tools for every different kind of simulation, and these were sold in certain geographic markets and these different methods were used in different industry areas. We noted then that something was about to change, so we thought about convergence; that we would like to develop simulation programmes that embraced all the different kinds of simulation methods. Such a programme would imply that engineers could learn how to simulate diverse things, and then they could work on whatever they wished by just utilising one single method. So this has been what we’ve strived for since the beginning and we still strive for it”.
Further, the respondent mentioned that from the beginning the company tested a lot of different things, and that the “testing phase” entailed some learning, which the company nowadays takes advantage of to not make the same mistakes again. The respondent mentioned that, “I think we have tried 10-15 different approaches and we still continue to try different things. Even if what you have tried is not good, you always learn from it, because then in the future you can exclude what hasn’t worked”. He continued by mentioning, “If you never try, you’ll never know what’s right or wrong”. The respondent continued by mentioning that the company had some difficulty from start to find a “repeatable model”. He explained that, “When serving customer A, we did it in a certain way, which by that moment we were happy with. But then customer B and C came, and we did totally different things. So then we ended up having three different approaches that worked well, but at the same time tore apart our organisation”.

Additionally, the respondent mentioned that, the fact that their first customers were “much bigger” in terms of size than Algoryx AB, entailed some difficulties for the company. He expressed, “when you are doing business with a bigger counterpart, you can not think that you’re going to be the leading partner and the one that steers”. The respondent explained that working with a bigger counterpart implies some difficulties when it comes to steer that relationship, “even if one wished one could do so”. He explained that in this case the company has been forced to “adapt very much to the bigger counterparts”.

4.4.2 CodeMill AB

The respondent mentioned that from the beginning relationships and alliances have played a central role for the company’s internationalisation. According to the respondent much of the strategy from the beginning was to follow already established players in the market and to do a great job, since according to him “if one creates a good reputation, the more customers one will get”. Furthermore, the respondent mentioned that from the beginning it was the customers that contacted the company itself and made inquiries, either because they worked with a company CodeMill AB had worked previously with or because they had heard about the company in someway. According to the respondent, the company “did not have any concrete strategy” back then, instead they very much “reacted” on the opportunities that appeared then.

Further, the respondent mentioned that he himself did not have any prior knowledge in regard to start-ups and internationalisation. However, he mentioned that his and the other founders’ intentions and ambitions have certainly affected the company, because as he expressed “we were the ones that made, and still makes, strategic decisions within the company”. According to the respondent, the idea to internationalise the company from start came from the founders and it was something that they “always have strived for”, since the company’s inception. The respondent mentioned that the founders personally thought that internationalisation was challenging and exciting. Moreover, he communicated that the ideas the founders had from start have had an impact on the company’s action, for example he mentioned that the decisions concerning individuals to recruit and what the company should do have been influenced by the founders opinions. He said, “It should be natural for our employees to work in an international environment. There shouldn’t be any barriers
for them to perform their daily work and to communicate in English. They also have
to be very knowledgeable in what they do, because we want to continue to have a
scientific foundation to stand on and still be in the forefront of what we are doing”.

Moreover, he mentioned that from the beginning no formal procedures were used as
“decision support”. According to him, formal procedures related to strategic work
have just started to be used six years after the company’s establishment. The
respondent expressed, “In 2014, we took part of a programme called GAP (Global
Access Programme), where we took the help of some students via UCLA to further
look at the company’s internationalisation. So since then we had some information to
consider when making subsequent internationalisation decisions”.

Further, the respondent mentioned that from start, it was the founders that made
strategic decisions. Nevertheless, he mentioned that from start since there weren’t
many employees, all of them were in some way involved in the decision-making
process. However, as the company grew, decision-making has been more
concentrated to top-level individuals, such as the company’s founders and its sales
manager.

4.4.3 COS Systems AB

The respondent communicated that COS Systems AB during the pre-
internationalisation phase performed limited analyses used for decision-making.
According to the respondent an external consultant conducted market analysis about
the American market on the company’s behalf. However, the respondent mentioned
that the analyses conducted didn’t play a significant role in regard to decision-making
and the company’s development of strategies. Instead, the respondent mentioned
that the company during the pre-internationalisation phase relied much on key individuals
who were active then, such as the company’s founders. The respondent mentioned
that as a small company, especially during the pre-internationalisation phase, one
relies much on the knowledge and the experiences of key individuals. This since one
does not have time or resources to conducted comprehensive analyses, which would
reveal significant information that could be used as a basis for decision-making.
Further, the respondent communicated that during the pre-internationalisation phase
there was only a few individuals that worked within the company and that these
where somehow all involved in the decision-making process and in the establishment
of strategies issues, thus they were aware of “what was going on”, even though the
company’s CEO, which also was one of the company’s founder, had the last word
back then.

The respondent continued to mention that since the company’s inception key
individuals within the company had formulated a vision about what they wanted to
achieve with the company. According to the respondent this vision comprised that the
company would be an international company, having a few customers in a few
countries from start and in that way would many doors open to remaining countries
worldwide. Furthermore, the respondent mentioned that the company wanted to
establish cooperation and partnering with major players internationally, and in so way
follow them to new markets. According to the respondent this overall vision has
directed and still directs the company’s action.
Additionally, the respondent mentioned that from start the company did not follow a concrete strategy, instead the company just simply reacted and took opportunities in action whenever “they appeared” and tried to learn from these. The respondent expressed, “A really explicit strategy about on how and what we should do, we actually only have had for a year or so”.

4.4.4 North Kingdom Design & Communication AB

According to the respondent the company did not use formal procedures such as systematic analyses or planning as a basis for decision-making of strategies. The respondent mentioned that instead it was personal contacts and networks, as well as the performance of a pitch, which the company was awarded for, that attracted attention to the company. The respondent mentioned that the company from start “did not have a strategy to approach international customers”, and that it was more of the contrary, namely that it was the customers themselves that approached the company.

Further, the respondent communicated that from the company’s inception he and the other founders had a vision, which throughout the years have guided the company. According to the respondent that vision comprised more of an ambition that the company would like accomplish in the future. The respondent expressed, “We did not have specifically goals oriented towards specific markets and so, instead we had an ambition to be an international recognised creative agency and that our work would be visible in cool and big international magazines”. According to the respondent this vision has pushed the company to constantly keep moving forward and to strive to take on more challenging tasks and to work with major customers worldwide.

Moreover, the respondent mentioned that his and the other founders perceptions, ambitions, intentions have influenced the company’s action, since according to him the company from start relied very much on these individuals. According to him from the beginning the company did not have much time to think about every decision, and had to come up with a solution to everything very quick, meaning that back then “[they] relied very much on their (the founders) instincts”.

The respondent communicated “all start-up go through a very critical phase from the beginning”, which he further explained, “one must start doing things very quickly”, if not one might not survive. He continued by mentioning that because of that companies do not have time to think about every single decision and to analyse everything in advance, instead one have to act and to “learn by doing”. According to the respondent this has been what North Kingdom Design & Communication AB have done. The respondent said “ from start we haven’t had the time to analyse or read in books what we should do or not, instead we have learnt through the daily experiences and applied the learning in subsequent situations”.

According to the respondent corporate praxis, practices and traditions did not have much influence on strategic work from the beginning. The respondent mentioned that during that time the company did not have enough of time to establish a specific corporate culture. Nevertheless, the respondent mentioned that the situation is the opposite today, where the company is very culture driven and that culture affects very much the way the company choose to act in certain situations. The respondent mentioned that the culture the company have formed throughout the years implies that
individuals stay within the company for a long time. According to him “it is as a way of life to work” for the company.

4.4.5 Oryx Simulations AB

When asked if his personal perceptions have influenced the company’s strategies, the response was very clear from the respondent, namely “very much”. The respondent mentioned that his intentions and ambitions have influenced the company’s action, this since “[he] was the one, that had the idea and took the initiative to set up the company, “[...] meaning that he was the one that conveyed [his] idea further to external stakeholders in order to try to convince them and take them on-board”. The respondent mentioned that the idea to set up an international company was “his” from the beginning, and that this since the company’s start has been a goal that the company have strived for. He mentioned, “Since the company’s inception internationalisation have been our vision, and I’ve tried to press on it and to convey it further through out the years”. He continued to mention, “Perhaps sometimes it would be easier to do business at home, even though [he] has tried to convey that they shouldn’t be a company that perform business in Sweden, international commitment was [their] goal”.

Further, the respondent mentioned that from the start he relied much on “knowledgeable individuals” that he had a personal relation from the past. For example, he mentioned that the decision to piggyback on the other company was because he knew some “important people”, which “he fully relied on”, within that company. Further, he mentioned that from the beginning the focus was to serve already existing international customer from the company they piggybacked on.

Moreover, the respondent mentioned that from the beginning strategic issues were handled exclusively by him. He mentioned, “From start it was exclusively me that handled these kind of questions, nowadays it’s more of a board of directors’ issue”.

Further, the respondent mentioned that the usage of formal proceedings such systematic analyses and planning to base the decision to internationalise and to disclose the company’s path of internationalisation were non-existent.

Additionally, the respondent mentioned that from start it was very challenging to know how to work with the industry especially with larger counterparts. The respondent explained this through communicating an example “If we choose to cooperate with a large established international player in the market and this company chooses to take us and our product on-board on their boat, our product can be sold to a large number of countries worldwide”. However, he continued by saying “This is not done by automatically, so the question we have been pondering over since the start was how to get such a large counterpart to move forward. [...] If they start to move and do a lot of activities, it is really great for us. But on the other hand, if they do not do much, we can’t do so much by ourselves either, since we lack the direct market contact”. The respondent finally expressed that the most demanding issue was “how to make agreements with our industry partners. [...] As a small company it is really difficult to make an agreement with a larger counterpart, since one becomes pinched, as they are the ones that decide”.

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4.4.6 Prediktera AB

According to the respondent, the founders’ prior employment within the bankrupt company has brought a lot of practical knowledge that they have tried to take into account when making strategic decision for Prediktera AB. The respondent communicated that, “We’ve got some lessons on what did not go so well, so of course we have had that in mind and tried to use us out of it in the future. For example, we have seen that it is easier to support software from distance, so this have influenced our decision to not focus on hardware within Prediktera, since we have learned that it is expensive and hassle to work and maintain hardware from distance”. Further, when asked if his and the remaining two founders respective personal intentions, ambitions and perceptions on things have influenced the company’s action, the respondent answer is very clear, namely “of course it has”. He continued to explain by communicating “As it’s just the three of us within the company, we are responsible to take care of strategic work and to make decisions in general. So our respective views on things will be incorporated on what we choose to do”. The respondent continued to communicate that the company from inception had a vision that was settled and approved by the company’s three founders. This vision comprised according to the respondent of a statement from which the company would like to accomplish in the future. According to the respondent this vision comprised of a wish that the company would be “internationally recognised for its software solutions worldwide”. Furthermore, the respondent mentioned that the company strived for having ten to fifteen partners worldwide that integrated the company’s technology in their hardware and in so way could display the company outwards. The respondent mentioned that this vision has guided the company’s action from start and is still valid today.

Further, the respondent mentioned that the company did not use formal proceedings such as systematic analyses and planning as a function to base strategic decision-making on. He expressed, that “I can not say that we have made systematic analyses of specific markets, industry etc. to base decision-making on. Instead we used our collective knowledge”.

When asked if eventual corporate praxis, practices and traditions have in someway influenced the company’s subsequent strategic action during the pre-internationalisation phase, the respondent mentioned that the company’s internationalisation commitment initiated at the day one, which meant that the company did not have the occasion to sustain praxis and practices that eventually would have an influence on the strategic work during the specific phase.

4.4.7 Xore AB

The respondent mentioned that the company’s first international customer appeared through Xore AB taking over the rights for a product owned by another company and by that acquiring an already existing international customer from that company. Apart from that Xore AB has performed various kinds of systematic analyses in the hunt for new international customers. According to the respondent these analyses took place shortly after the company’s establishment and have been performed through the help
of Business Sweden. These analyses have firstly focused on internal aspects of the company to later move the focus to more external aspects such as industry and specific market analyses. With the help of significant information extracted from these analyses, the respondent mentioned that the company has focused its strategic focus towards the Chilean market and works currently on the search for potential customers there. Further, the respondent mentioned that during the pre-internationalisation phase the company did not use any kind of follow-up techniques to ensure the execution of strategic intentions with minimal distortion. This according to the respondent because during the specific phase, the company did not have enough of time to establish such work routines.

The respondent continued by mentioning that strategic decisions were in the beginning handled by individuals that possessed key positions within the company, such as the company’s founders. Further the respondent mentioned that his including the other founders’ respective intentions, perceptions and ambitions has surely influenced the company’s actions. This according to the respondent because it was them that “had the idea to set up the actual company”.

Moreover, the respondent mentioned that since the company’s inception the founders had agreed on a vision, that have functioned as a guideline, helping the steering of the company towards what they wanted to accomplish. According to the respondent the vision constituted of a wish to establish “a successful and an internationally well-recognised company that becomes the customers first hand choice” in what they are doing.
5. Analysis & Discussion

In this chapter I analyse and discuss the gathered empirical findings that were presented in the previous chapter (chapter 4) in relation to the theoretical framework presented in chapter two. By doing so, potential correlations and deviations between what the theory says and what real-world empirical evidence says is disclosed, ultimately leading to an answer for the study’s research question. This chapter is divided in three subheadings, where each of the subtitles in the following order deals with Born Global enterprises, strategic lenses and finally strategic schools of thought. When analysing the data, for every subtitles and their respective elements, I first present a synthesis of the gathered empirical data, to later set it against what theories say, to finally analyse and discuss it.

5.1 Born Globals

The participating companies are active in high-tech industries offering both software and hardware, and they are all pretty small in size, which they claimed to have affected their resource endowment, ultimately leading to them not having had the possibility to perform comprehensive strategic work during the pre-internationalisation phase. The interviewed companies have displayed common characteristics in regard to their vision of internationalisation. The empirical evidence showed that all companies disclosed a thought to internationalise the company’s operations from start. According to the information revealed by the interviewed companies the thought to internationalise was powered either by the companies’ founder/s or entrepreneur/s. Furthermore, the empirical evidence indicated that from start the companies have relied much on key individuals, and their respective experience and contact network to internationalise. All of the companies agreed that internationalisation has been fundamental and a necessity for them in order to survive and to continue to perform businesses. This since all of them communicated the fact that they are active in a small niche area, where they offer unique, specialised and highly technological products or solutions, which ultimately restricts their local market size. But at the same time, making the entire world a potential market, since their products or solutions are globally constructed and not restricted to specific cultures and regions. Further, the gathered empirical data have indicated that many of the participating companies have made use of others companies to facilitate their internationalisation process, which they previously have established a contact with.

Scholars argue that Born Globals companies are typically SMEs that are characterised for being highly entrepreneurial and thus relies very much on their founder/s or entrepreneur/s respective judgement (Cavusgil & Knight, 2014, p. 4; Madsen & Servais, 1997, p. 580-581; McDougall et al., 2004, p. 59). Zahra (2005, p. 23) mention that these companies’ smallness implies some liabilities connected to resource availability (Zahra, 2005, p. 23). Cavusgil & Knight (2014, p. 4) argue that a characteristic feature of Born Global enterprises is that these enterprises origin as well as their fundamental orientation is highly international. Further, Rialp et al. (2005, p. 138) mentioned that Born Global enterprises do not see international markets as a supplement to their domestic markets or that they limit themselves to individual countries. Additionally, scholars mentioned that Born Globals typically are in the
forefront of technological advancement offering highly technological and specialised technology, which due to their unique and innovative offerings are demanded globally (Knight & Cavusgil, 1996, p. 18; Madsen & Servais, 1997, p. 565). Finally, Madsen & Servais (1997, p. 568) mentioned that these enterprises scarcity of resource implies incapability for them to handle all the necessary operations by themselves.

Based on the above, one can say that the characteristics of Born Global enterprises indicated by the theories conforms to the obtained empirical facts, which means that these companies are really existent out there in the real world. One can determine that these companies indeed uniquely engage in a rapid internationalisation process and that they very much rely on key individuals from the very start. Even though these enterprises are very much limited due to their liability of smallness, they have succeeded to use alternative methods to be able to take part in a rapid internationalisation commitment. I believe that the drive to internationalise the companies’ operations championed by key individuals, the necessity to seek out to international markets, together with the changes that have revolutionised the international business arena and the great knowledge and competence inherent in these small companies implies a huge opportunity for these to seek out to international markets earlier than was possible before. One can then say that these companies “restrictions” have rather turned out be their “drivers” to engage in a rapid internationalisation, which they indeed have utilised to the fullest.

5.2 Strategic lenses

The gathered empirical evidence has displayed that three of the seven participating companies (Algoryx Simulations AB, COS Systems AB and lastly Xore AB) have in advance utilised some form of systematic analyses, from which they have later used extracted information to base subsequent strategic decisions on. The remaining four companies (CodeMill AB, North Kingdom Design & Communication AB, Oryx Simulation AB and lastly Prediktera AB) did not utilise any kinds of systematic analyses as a function to support strategic decision-making. In the case of Algoryx Simulations AB, the empirical data displayed that the analyses were performed in connection to the founders involvement in academic research and that information extracted from those have not been used to set predetermined objectives related to the company’s internationalisation commitment. In the case of COS Systems AB, the empirical data showed that an external consultant performed systematic analyses on the behalf of the company. However, in that case, empirical evidence indicated that information extracted from the analyses did not play a significant role the company’s development of strategies. On the other hand, in the case of Xore AB, the empirical data revealed that information extracted from the performed analyses, have had a significant role in the company’s strategic decision-making. This since information extracted from the performed analyses have influenced the company’s subsequent strategic efforts, where strategic intentions have been more directed towards a specific market, where one thoroughly have analysed the specific market in the search for potential local partners.

Johnson et al. (2014, p. 175-176) points out that the design lens is the most rational lens of all the strategic lenses, where one emphasizes the logic of consequence to draw preference-based conclusions in the decision-making. According to the authors
the design lens stresses the significance to conduct formal systematic analysis before taking action in order to predict an organisation’s future performance. Furthermore, the design lens also highlights the fact that objectives should be pre-defined leaving little space for potential adjustment along the strategy making process (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 175-176).

Based on the above, one can say that it is only Xore AB of all the participating companies that have applied a perspective of strategy that corresponds with the one advocated by the design lens. This since the empirical evidence has showed that the company was the only one that has used information derived from the pre-conducted analysis as a basis for strategic decision-making. By doing so, the company has followed a logic and rational sequence of decision-making, which is consistent with the view advocated by the design lens. In the case of Algoryx Simulations AB and COS Systems AB, the companies have not utilised the information extracted from the performed analyses in the same way as Xore AB. These companies have not utilised the information to predict their company’s future and to pre-determine objectives, meaning that in these cases they have not followed a fully logical and rational sequence of decision-making, which is seen as the unique and differentiating characteristic of the design lens. In my opinion the tenancy of the perspective of strategy applied by Xore AB is because the company on the contrary to the other interviewed companies (except Oryx Simulations AB) offers physical products, which might involve more preparations and caution in regard to the distribution of the actual products in comparison towards IT and software companies, which in my opinion have a favourable advantage to reach out to international markets. The choice to be more cautious and assured might entail that companies such as Xore AB chooses to perform more analyses in beforehand. Even though both Xore AB and Oryx Simulations AB are the only participating companies that offer physical products, I believe that the difference between their respective perspectives on the concept of strategy can be traced back to the way these companies have chosen to internationalise. By that I mean that Oryx Simulations AB chose to piggyback on another company that certainly had more knowledge and thus could in a completely different way rely on it. While on the other hand Xore AB chose to prepare the company’s internationalisation by themselves with their limited knowledge and not use any kind of external source to assist them in the process. Thus, the choice to execute more analyses and subsequently base strategic decisions on it, which in turn implies a more rational strategic procedure, may be perceived to be a safety precaution in order to ensure that the right decisions were made before initiating the internationalisation process.

Further, the gathered empirical data have showed that the company’s founders and entrepreneurs have had much to say in the company’s strategy making process during the pre-internationalisation phase, where in all of the cases it has been apparent that the founder/-s and entrepreneur/-s occupied a central position within it. All of the participating company’s revealed that the idea to internationalise the companies’ operations have been championed by the companies’ founders or the entrepreneurs. Furthermore, the empirical evidence could in a convincing way disclose that these individuals’ prior experience and their respective ways of doing things have very much influenced their respective subsequent strategic decisions. On the other hand, the empirical findings have in none of the cases showed a connection between
historical and cultural events and these concepts influence on strategies during the pre-internationalisation phase.

According to Johnson et al. (2014, p. 177-178) the experience lens sees strategies to be influenced by a manager’s prior experience and their respective ways of doing things, which entails in a great emphasis on legitimacy. Furthermore, the authors mention that the experience lens consider history and culture to be important elements that influence strategies (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 177-178). Thus, according to the authors, the experience lens perceives strategies to be formed by an individual or the collective perceptions of how things should be handled (cumulative wisdom of experiences) (Johnson et al. 2014, p. 177-178).

Based on the empirical evidence and what Johnson et al. (2014, p. 177-178) mention, all of the interviewed companies have disclosed that in their cases the founders and the entrepreneurs have been very influential individuals in the company’s strategy making process during the pre-internationalisation phase. By putting these legitimate individuals in the centre of the strategy making process, and by that giving them an influence over strategic issues, entails that all the interviewed case companies agree with the legitimate perspective of concept strategy advocated by the experience lens. The fact that the concepts of culture and history have not in the same manner been noticeable as the legitimate individual’s prior experience to have an influence on strategies during the pre-internationalisation phase, I believe it has to do with the companies’ young age. By that I mean that their respective young age, where some of the interviewed companies have internationalised from start and all of them have taken part of the process within two years of establishment, implies that it has not been sufficient time to give rise to a certain corporate culture or to establish a certain history that eventually would have an influence on strategic work. The great focus and influence of legitimate key individuals has in my opinion also to do with the companies’ young age, where the lack of a established working procedure and the limited knowledge entails that one decides to rely very much on what these individuals know, particularly in the beginning when everything is new and unpractised. This in turn goes along with what Cavusgil & Knight (2014, p. 4) and Madsen & Servais (1997, p. 580-581) argue, namely that Born Globals are highly entrepreneurial enterprises that especially from start relies very much on their founders and entrepreneurs judgement, ambitions for their establishment and growth.

Empirical evidence gathered from Algoryx Simulation AB, CodeMill AB, COS Systems AB, and North Kingdom Design & Communication AB showed that in the cases of these companies it was international customers itself that approached the company with a request. The empirical data displayed that these companies did not have an established procedure on how to approach international customers; instead they simply reacted and took the opportunity whenever they appeared. Further, empirical evidence revealed that in the case of Algoryx Simulation AB and Oryx Simulations AB, the companies during the pre-internationalisation phase have had some implications in regard to drafting of agreements with industry partners, since these counterparts were much bigger than the company itself, which inevitably gave them a certain power advantage and a greater influence in negotiations.

Johnson et al. (2014, p. 179) mention that the variety lens advocates spontaneity and perceives strategies to arise from the various expressed ideas from individuals within
and around the organisation. Johnson et al. (2014, p. 179) state that the variety lens in comparison to the other lenses is the only lens that allows external parties to have a say about a company's strategic decisions. According to the authors this implies that the variety lens puts much more focus on innovation, since diversity is believed to foster innovation, while focusing much less on legitimacy and rationality (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 179).

Based on what the empirical evidence demonstrates and what the theory indicates, one can claim that the choice to react to international customers’ requests or to adjust agreements and strategic intentions to please larger and stronger counterparts during negotiations implies that the participating companies have in a way allowed external interested parties to have an influence on their strategic decisions. By doing so, these companies have applied a perspective that is in line with the one advocated by the variety lens, since the variety lens is, as described in the theory, the only lens that allows external parties to have a say and in that way influence the companies’ strategies. To internationalise upon a request from external parties should in my opinion be considered quite spontaneous, this even if the thought to internationalise has been there somewhere in the form of a wish or imaginary picture. In turn, this goes in line with what the theories say, namely that spontaneity is a characteristic feature for the variety lens (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 179). Moreover, to be “forced” to adjust agreements and in so way “listen” to superior external interested parties might bring new perspectives and ideas that previously weren’t considered as possible options. In so way I believe one brings novelty and foster innovation, which according to Johnson et al. (2014, p. 179) goes in line with the variety lens and its great emphasis on innovation.

As previously mentioned the empirical evidence has clearly proved that key individuals within companies, such as the founders and entrepreneurs, were highly involved in the companies’ strategy making process during the pre-internationalisation phase. Furthermore, the empirical data have showed that during the pre-internationalisation phase the companies have not had very many employees, where the majority of the companies’ employees consisted of the key individuals themselves. Moreover, the empirical data indicated that in pace with the companies’ growth (beyond the pre-internationalisation phase), strategic issues and decision-making related to strategies were still handled by key individuals, which together with expanding numbers of employees also gave rise to a more hierarchal structure among companies, where top positioned individuals dealt with specific tasks related to strategic decision-making. Johnson et al. (2014, p. 181) mention that the discourse lens views strategy in terms of language, where managers use their linguistic competence to acquire influence, power and legitimacy within organisations. Based on what has been said, one can say that the empirical data have not been able to find evidence for the usage of a perspective consistent with the one advocated by the discourse lens. This in turn, I believe has much to do with the specific phase the current study concentrates on, which implies that the companies are quite young during the pre-internationalisation, which means that they have not yet acquired so many employees. Being very young entails that division of work and power structures among employees have not yet been established, meaning that key individuals within companies have not been able to take advantage of their linguistic abilities to acquire influence, power and legitimacy. How these key individuals develop strategies through their linguistic competence would likely be more apparent in another phase.
This even though these key individuals would possibly have linguistic competences during the pre-internationalisation phase, they have not used it during the specific phase to gain an influence over strategies. Thus, one cannot claim that any of the case companies have applied a perspective that is in line with the discourse lens.

5.3 Strategic schools of thought

The empirical evidence has showed that it was only one case company, Xore AB, which has made use of information extracted from in beforehand-executed systematic analyses to support their subsequent strategic decisions. Further, the empirical data has proved that Xore AB has thoroughly analysed both internal elements of the company, as well as the external environment the company was/is surrounded by. After strategically selecting a specific market, the empirical data displayed that the company started to analyse that market from a more industrial and competitive perspective, in order to get to know the market functions in more details. In the case of Algoryx Simulations AB, CodeMill AB, and COS Systems AB, empirical findings have demonstrated that these companies have performed systematic analyses after the pre-internationalisation phase and used information from those analyses to base subsequent strategic decisions and goals. Furthermore, empirical evidence have demonstrated that none of the investigated companies during the pre-internationalisation phase utilised follow up techniques, to ensure that the execution of small decomposed plans that disclosed small parties of the company’s overall strategic objectives were followed without distortion.

Scholars argue that the descriptive schools, i.e. the design, the planning and the positioning schools, opposes a rational and formal approach of strategy and thus perceives strategies to be “consciously identified, proactive and formulated prior to decisions and actions” (Bhimani & Langfield-Smith, 2007, p. 5; Kraus & Kauranen, 2009, p. 41). According to Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 25-27) the design school emphasises that strategies are developed through the congruence of analyses of the company’s internal abilities and the surrounding environment. While, the positioning school places the organisation within the context of its industry, and examines how it can develop its strategic positioning within it, i.e. the focus here is on industrial and competitive analyses (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 81-85). On the other hand, the planning school sees strategies to be formed through a strict and controlled process with the utilisation of small decomposed plans, which all are oriented towards the company’s achievement of the overall predetermined objectives (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 47).

Based on the above, one can say that of all the investigated companies, Xore AB has been the only case company that has followed a descriptive approach to strategy making. This since the company has formed strategies in accordance with elements ascribed by the descriptive design and positioning school. Also, since the company has performed internal and external analyses (linked to the design school) and competitive analyses (linked to the positioning school) and used information extracted from those analyses to support their subsequent strategic decisions, which implies that strategic intentions have been formulated prior to actions and thus can be considered to be of a deliberate nature. By following such strategy making procedures, the company has used methods that are characteristic for the descriptive parent group and
In particular in line with the design and the positioning school. Even though analysing might entail some degree of planning, one can say that what the empirical evidence has revealed is not enough to claim that Xore AB has developed strategies in line with the planning school. This, since the company did not utilise a controlled process through the usage of checklists or other follow-up techniques to ensure the execution of the plans with minimal distortion. According to Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 57-58), such conduct is very characteristic of the planning school, and consequently, one cannot claim that Xore AB or any of the other investigated companies have formed their strategies in accordance to the procedures advocated by the planning school. The gathered empirical data from Xore AB has indeed showed that top positioned individuals within the company had a great influence in the company’s strategy-making process during the pre-internationalisation, which in turn is also consistent with what the descriptive school theories claim (Mintzberg et al. 1998, p. 57-58). However, these individuals’ substantial involvement and influence disclosed by the empirical findings, imply that even though Xore AB has followed an approach consistent with the descriptive design and positioning school, the company on the other hand has also been the subject of a certain influence from the entrepreneurship strategic school of thought. The fact that the majority of the investigated companies have chosen to perform formal systematic analyses only after the pre-internationalisation phase might have to do with the fact that from the beginning it is fully possible to conduct business in a more informal way. Furthermore, characteristics of the context during the pre-internationalisation phase and the liabilities of being a Born Global enterprise might also have a certain influence over that decision. However, I believe that sooner or later in order to bring the company forward and to concentrate efforts one needs to perform more formal strategic work. Further, one can argue that the fact that only one of the investigated company applied formal and systematic strategy-making procedures advocated by the descriptive schools might has to do with that Xore AB was the only company that did not make use of any kind of external help or received international requests to engage in an internationalisation process.

Empirical data have clearly showed in all the case companies that key individuals within the companies, in the form of the companies’ founders or entrepreneurs, have had a great influence in the companies’ strategy making process during the pre-internationalisation phase. In accordance with the obtained empirical data, all of the cases stress that the idea to internationalise the companies’ operations could be traced back to key individuals’ perceptions, ambitions etc. Moreover, empirical evidence have demonstrated that in all of the cases the company’s founders or entrepreneurs have had a vision that uncovered what they would like to accomplish with their companies in the future. These visions have according to the empirical data guided the companies’ subsequent actions and even though they haven’t been documented or set in stone they have affected the ways the companies have chosen to go. Additionally, the empirical results have displayed that in all of the cases it has been the companies’ founders or entrepreneurs that exclusively have dealt with strategic issues from the very start. Nevertheless, in the cases of Algoryx Simulations AB, CodeMill AB, COS Systems AB, North Kingdom Design & Communication AB, Oryx Simulations AB and Xore AB, empirical data displayed that after the pre-internationalisation phase, the exclusive role of key individuals within the companies’ strategy making process has changed a bit. Empirical data could then identify that these individuals were not anymore the only ones that had a say in regard to strategic
issues. Instead, more individuals that occupied different managerial positions, and also in some of the cases the companies’ board of directors, were involved in the making of strategic decisions.

Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 123-125) mention the entrepreneurship school places the organisation’s leader/s in the centre, where strategies are personalised and driven by the organisation’s leader/s, meaning that this/these individual/s holds exclusive control of the strategy making process and their respective perceptions, intuitions, ambitions, experiences, judgements are believed to influence strategic outcomes. Furthermore, Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 123-125) argue that strategies emerge through a visionary process, which takes place within the mind of the organisation’s leader/s.

When analysing what the empirical evidence has arrived at, together with what the theory on the entrepreneurship school says, one can say that all of the case companies have in some way formed their strategies through following the methods advocated by the entrepreneurship school. This since individuals such as the companies’ founders and entrepreneurs, which during the pre-internationalisation phase were seen as the organisations’ leader/s, have been very much involved and influential in the companies’ strategy making process. The fact that all of the companies disclosed that the decision to internationalise could be traced back to the companies’ founder/s or entrepreneur/s, as well as saying that these individuals perceptions, ambitions, prior experiences have influenced the companies’ subsequent actions, that their respective visions have in some way displayed the companies path, and that these individuals held the control of the strategy making process; indicates that these individuals have been highly influential in the strategy making process during the pre-internationalisation phase. All of these above-mentioned arguments are according to Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 123-125) characteristic for the entrepreneurship school. The decision to not undertake formal systematic analyses by their own, which the majority of the case companies (except Xore AB) have chosen, implies that the companies must in some other way base their decisions on alternative approaches. I believe that Born Globals’ scarcity of resources implies that these companies choose in the specific situation to make use of existent available resources, and therefore choose to base their decisions on what people know and have experienced, which consequently put these people on a central position in the strategy making process. This in turn goes along with what Cavusgil & Knight (2014, p. 4) mention, that Born Globals are highly entrepreneurial enterprises, meaning that they are strongly marked by these individuals, which in turn is consistent with the entrepreneurship school. The fact that empirical data have been able to display that some intentions that were established in beforehand, for example the idea to internationalise, have been fulfilled and realised. While other intentions such as how the actual process of internationalisation would take place have not been formed in advance but rather during the actual process, imply that companies have utilised both a deliberate and an emergent perspective of strategy. This in turn is in line with what the Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 145) say, namely that the entrepreneurship school applies a semi-conscious view on strategy.

The obtained empirical data has not been able to say anything about whether or not companies have used procedures advocated by the cognitive school in their strategy making process during the pre-internationalisation phase. This since nothing in the empirical data could be linked to the elusive elements that are characteristic of this school. Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 149-150) mention that the cognitive school

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perceives strategies to derive from a human cognition process, where the human brain holds a central position within the school, since here the focus lies on understanding how humans perceive patterns and process information. By not being able to generate facts that could be linked to the cognitive psychological elements stressed by the cognitive school entails that the question of whether or not companies have followed procedures advocated by this school, and if elements inherent in it affects strategies still remains to be discovered. I believe that the reason to why this study has not been able to generate facts generally depends on the construction of interview questions, as they have simply not been constructed to address the psychological matters concerning the abstract elements characteristic to this school, which eventually also affected the generation of data. Instead, the data with potential to address the features of the cognitive school have been more straightforwardly connectable with elements of the learning and experience schools. This, as cognition in many ways concerns the process of learning, i.e. repeating the behaviour that seems to produce good outcomes. Similarly, the traditionalism inherent in learned behaviour, the repetition of decision structures and patterns, is the result of an individual’s collected experience. Indeed, the difficulty to address features stressed by the cognitive school goes along what Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 172-173) argue themselves, and which I would like to concur with, namely that the cognitive school has been more recognised by its potential than its real contribution.

According to the empirical findings some of the investigated companies (Algoryx Simulation AB, COS Systems AB and North Kingdom Design & Communication AB) have tested different strategic approaches before settling down and deciding on a concrete strategy. These companies disclosed in the interview sessions that they initially did not have a predetermined strategy, but they instead tried different methods and afterwards with some distance analysed the outcomes and tried to learn from these. The empirical data displayed that through testing diverse things, these companies have considered and subsequently applied what they experienced to work in following decisions, while not repeating what worked less good again. Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 175-178) mention that the learning school perceives strategies to derive from an emergent and iterative formation process. Scholars argue that the learning school emphasises that the environment is complex and thus impossible to predict, which implies that strategies are derived from an incremental learning process, consequently leading them to be of an emergent character (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 175-178). By comparing the gathered empirical data with what the theory concerning the learning school says, one can say that the above listed companies’ have followed a strategy making process that is consistent with the one emphasized by the learning school. This since the companies forms their strategies through an incremental and iterative strategy making process. The iteratively element is referred to the repetitious approach used by the companies, meaning that what they have perceived and experienced to work is subsequently remade. While the incrementally element refers to the companies’ stepwise approach to strategy making, where strategic intentions are not set in stone in advance but rather appear along the process. The decision to engage in an iterative and incremental strategy making process, I believe lies in Born Globals’ characteristics, which during the pre-internationalisation phase are not well-proven and experienced companies, but rather very novel and inexperienced. Moreover, the inability to thoroughly analyse the environment entails an impossibility to predict the future. This in turn implies that companies instead of
deciding strategies in advance rather learn along the process and corrects with time, which by applying such an approach entails an emergent view of strategy.

The gathered empirical evidence indicated that external parties have had some sort of influence on both Algoryx Simulation AB and Oryx Simulations AB’s strategy making process. According to the empirical data, these companies have during the pre-internationalisation phase been forced to adjust strategic intentions to the requirements of superior external parties. Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 233-235) mention that the power school perceives strategies to arise from a negotiation process taking place either inside the own organisation (micro power), where power members and holders within the own organisation battle against each other out of self-interest; or by forces that come from external actors (macro power), for example individuals from another organisation etc. (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 233-235). Based on that, one can say that Algoryx Simulation AB and Oryx Simulations AB have also showed a tendency to form their strategies in accordance with the power school. This since these companies’ strategic intentions have been influenced by macro power, in the form of external actors’ requirements, implying that in these ways the companies have taken part in a negotiation process with external parties. The influence of micro power during the pre-internationalisation phase has not been possible to determine, since empirical data has not proven the influence of internal forces in the companies’ strategic making process. The not identified influence of micro power may depend on the fact that during the pre-internationalisation phase, the companies had not yet established power structures within the organisations, resulting in an impossibility for members to battle for power out of self-interest. Instead during that phase, which the empirical facts also revealed, companies back then did not have many employees, and instead their working group consisted solely of the companies’ founders and entrepreneur, which were also the ones taking care of the strategic work. The need for adjustment in line with the requirements made by external actors might be a consequence of the dependence or the choice to follow these external parties to international markets. One can argue that the stronger partner will be able to use their superior advantage to determine more in the negotiation process, which consequently leads to their intentions becoming more reflective in the final strategies. Due to that reason, predetermined intentions will be evident in the strategies, which in turn implies a deliberate perspective of strategy. However, the negotiation process also implies room for modifications, but as the superior partner is more likely to be able to design strategies in accordance to their intentions, to follow an approach consistent with the power school would suggest a more deliberate view of strategy.

The collected empirical data could not demonstrate that corporate culture, praxis and traditions have had an impact on the companies’ strategy making process during the pre-internationalisation phase. On the other hand, the empirical data revealed that these elements rather affected the companies’ strategies at a later stage, i.e. after pre-internationalisation phase. Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 263-264) mention that the cultural school perceives strategies to be formed on the basis on an organisation’s collective and cooperative process deeply rooted in an organisation’s shared beliefs and values, where corporate culture, praxis and traditions are central elements believed to influence strategic outcome. Based on that, one cannot say that any of the investigated companies have followed an approach equivalent with the one emphasized by the cultural school during the pre-internationalisation phase. This since none of the investigated companies’ have revealed an influence of the
aforementioned elements in their strategy making process. The outcome of the empirical data could in my opinion be explained by Born Globals’ young age at the pre-internationalisation phase, which I think has simply not been enough to allow them to create a corporate culture and to establish routinised methods of working, which eventually could have an impact on strategic work. This since in order to establish and to anchor these things among the companies’ employees implies a decent time of work.

The obtained empirical evidence showed that some companies (Algoryx Simulation AB, COS Systems AB, and North Kingdom Design & Communication AB) commenced an early international commitment by responding to external requests from international customers. The empirical data showed that these companies did not have a predetermined strategy from start on how to approach international customers, but they rather responded to inquiries and simply took the opportunities when they appeared. In the case of Prediktera AB, the empirical results showed that the company’s establishment and their international commitment occurred through a takeover of a bankrupt estate company. While, in the case of Xore AB, the company’s establishment and its internationalisation process began when the company bought up the rights to its current products from another company that was no longer interested in holding them. Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 285-298) mention that the environmental school sees strategy formation as a reactive process, where the external environment possesses a central position within the school, which in turn implies that organisations are seen as passive entities that react to the external environment. Based on that, one can interpret that all of the above-mentioned companies have followed an approach of strategy making equivalent to the one expressed by the environmental school. This since the companies, through their comportment, have reacted to external events either in the face of international requests, acquisition of a bankrupt company or by buying up undesired product rights. By acting in either of the above-described ways, the companies have allowed the external environment to set the agenda, and have therefore become subordinate of it, which in turn according to Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 286-287) are characteristic features for the environmental school. Such a passive and reactive comportment during the strategy making process entails an emergent perspective of strategy.

Finally, the empirical evidence has showed that none of the investigated companies have followed just one single approach when forming their strategies during the pre-internationalisation phase. On the contrary, the empirical evidence revealed that all of the companies made use of combined approaches, which were stressed by the various schools, and utilised these at different stages along the pre-internationalisation phase depending on which issues they faced. Mintzberg et al. (1998, p. 301-302) mention that the configuration school sees strategy to derive from a transformational process, where organisations switch between different types of decision-making structures and integrate the messages of several schools. Having that said, one can argue that all of the schools have followed procedures equivalent to the one stressed by the configuration school. This since the empirical evidence has demonstrated that all of the investigated companies have utilised messages from more than one single school in the strategy making process during the pre-internationalisation phase. One can argue that the reason for applying different approaches of strategy making might have to do with the complexity of strategy and the process of strategy making. Furthermore, the context in which Born Globals are enmeshed in during the pre-
internationalisation is believed to even more strengthen that complexity, which implies that during the pre-internationalisation phase these companies try to address strategic issues differently depending on what kind of issues they face. This implies that they use several ways to form strategies, in order to cope with the issues they face, ultimately leading to the usage of several schools, thus, also using a procedure that is consistent with the one advocated by the configuration school. The use of several schools implies that the feature of deliberate or emergent depends on the approach the companies chose to apply when forming their strategies.
6. Conclusions

In this final chapter I am going to tie together the entire study by presenting the obtained results, ultimately leading to an answer for the study’s research question. This is followed by an explanation for how the study’s alleged contributions have been fulfilled. Lastly, a discussion about limitations and suggestions for future research is offered.

6.1 Research findings

The purpose of the study is to investigate how decision-makers at Born Global enterprises form their strategies in the pre-internationalisation phase. In order to fulfill the aforementioned purpose, a research question has been formed, which this study aimed to answer, namely:

*How do decision-makers at BornGlobals form their strategy in the pre-internationalisation phase?*

After taking part in seven fruitful discussions with individuals that were involved in Born Global enterprises’ strategy making process during the pre-internationalisation phase, I have been able to get an understanding for how these companies formed their strategies during the specific phase. Consequently, this has enabled me to answer the study’s research question and to fulfil the study’s purpose.

The obtained findings demonstrated that decision makers at Born Global enterprises in a peripheral area in Northern Sweden are greatly affected by the circumstances they face when forming strategies. The results indicated that when Born Globals used external assistance to internationalise, they did not use in a great extent of rational and proactive strategy making procedures. Consequently, this led to a reactive and emergent view of strategy. Also the findings indicated in cases where Born Globals handled the process of internationalisation by themselves, the companies were anxious that the right decisions were taken. This resulted in the use of more formal and rational strategy making procedures, which reflected a deliberate shade of strategy.

Additionally, the obtained results indicated that decision-makers at Born Globals during the pre-internationalisation phase did not specifically form strategies in a single way. Instead, Born Globals alternated between different strategy making procedures along the pre-internationalisation phase. The obtained results demonstrated that the examined Born Global enterprises, in the specific case, utilised strategy-making procedures that were representative for the design-, planning-, positioning-, entrepreneurship-, learning-, power-, environmental-, and cognitive school of thought. This means that the results refuted the usage of procedures that were characteristic for the cognitive and cultural school of thought. In accordance with the obtained findings, elements addressed by the cultural school, was found to have a significant influence over strategies beyond the pre-internationalisation phase. Whereas, the obtained findings were incapable to generate facts that could be linked to the cognitive school of thought, implying an incapability to determine this school
influence over Born Globals’ strategy making process.

The fact that decision-makers used different strategy making procedures when forming strategies during the pre-internationalisation phase, implies that these individuals were applying elements from various strategic schools of thought. Consequently, decision-makers have formed their strategies in accordance with the configuration school, whose motto is “to everything there is a season” and is the only school that recognises the possibility to integrate messages from the other strategic schools of thought along the strategy-making process (Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 302).

The fact that the research concluded that decision-makers at Born Global enterprises formed their strategies by following the configuration school, implies that they also apply different perspectives of the concept strategy, depending on what procedures they use when forming strategies. This conforms to Johnson et al. (2014, p. 174) statement that says that strategies are complex and in order to capture their fuller picture, it is favourable to look at strategies from different angles, i.e. the different strategic lenses. The fact that the research findings demonstrated that decision-makers at Born Globals rather apply a mixture of strategy making procedures during the pre-internationalisation phase, implies that one cannot justify whether how rational/irrational and how proactive/reactive decision makers at Born Globals are when forming strategies. On the basis on the research findings, one can conclude that Born Globals apply a mixture of proactive and reactive strategy making procedures, which entails that they form both deliberate and emergent strategies during the pre-internationalisation phase.

Based on the obtained results, that indicate that none of the investigated Born Globals followed strategy-making procedures advocated by only a single school of thought during the pre-internationalisation phase, the researcher cannot support any of the earlier formulated theoretical propositions in this study. This due to the reason, that the configuration school is the only one, of all the schools, which permits the utilisation of a mixture of strategy making procedures from more than one single school in the strategy making process (Johnson et al. 2014, p. 177-178). Hence, the researcher must reject the theoretical proposition that considered that Born Globals would form their strategies by following the procedures disclosed by the entrepreneurship school. This even though the results indicated that all of the investigated Born Globals have during the pre-internationalisation formed their strategies in accordance to the procedures advocated by this school. Worth noting is that the entrepreneurship school was the only school that was addressed by all of the investigated Born Globals enterprise.

6.2 Fulfilment of alleged contributions

By conducting this research study, which is of an intersection character were one combines theories from both the strategic management field (the strategic lenses and the process of strategy-making, i.e. the various schools of though) and entrepreneurship field (Born Global) the researcher has contributed to the advancement of the international entrepreneurship field. Another theoretical contribution generated from this study is that the author has contributed to enrich the understanding for Born Global enterprises and in particular their respective strategic
behaviour, an area in which several researchers have pointed out need more researchers on (Andersen, 2004; Jantunen et al., 2008). By combining the above-mentioned theories into a theoretical framework, the researcher has tried to understand how Born Globals form their strategies and thus shed light into the specific issue.

Concerning the practical contributions generated from this study, one can mention that the current study can assist decision-makers in companies with similar characteristic features to Born Globals (limited resources), or companies that operates in similar context such as Born Global enterprises (very uncertain context) with practical insights on the influence of context on strategies, and what strategy making approaches are suitable to utilise in different occasions. The results from this study have yielded that the context and the circumstances Born Globals face will certainly have an impact on strategies. Moreover, the research findings showed that in occasions when more experienced partners assisted the company, companies did not use in a great extent of formal and systematic procedures as a function of strategic decision support, this is because they relied on the experienced external partners. In these cases the results showed that the dependence on external actors entails some negotiation issues. On the other hand, when the company do not take external assistance, the results showed a greater evidence of the usage of formal and systematic procedures to lay the basis for strategic decisions.

The societal contribution generated from this study is limited. One such societal contribution is that this study shed lights about the strategy making process in Born Globals during a chaotic and vulnerable phase, i.e. the pre-internationalisation phase. To provide decision-makers at these enterprises with such knowledge is seen as significant for the society, this since these enterprises survivor might dependent on their respective ability to form a strategy, which can guide the enterprise through stormy seas. These international enterprises longevity are important for a society’s socioeconomic progress, particularly in a peripheral area, where these enterprises can market the distant region towards the remaining world. Moreover, these small international enterprises characteristic feature for being a great source of innovative ideas, with their short decision making path between ideas and decisions, can be seen as a good promoter of innovation for the society.

6.3 Limititions

A limitation in the current study concerns the incapability to address the notions of the cognitive school, and whether the elements addressed by this school have an influence on Born Globals’ strategy making during the pre-internationalisation phase. Arguments stressed by the cognitive school, disclosing that strategists are self-taught individuals, and that individuals form their respective knowledge structures and thinking processes through direct experiences (Fern et al., 2012, p. 428; Mintzberg et al., 1998, p. 150), implies that much of what the cognitive school stresses, can be linked to the entrepreneurship and the learning school. The research findings have revealed that decision-makers at Born Globals have applied strategy-making procedures advocated by both the entrepreneurship and the learning school, with a very clear tendency for the entrepreneurship school across investigated cases. Based on that, it would be very interesting to investigate the influence of the cognitive
school on Born Globals’ strategy making. This in turn could serve as a suggestion for future research. However, in order to accomplish with it, future researchers must ensure that their questions are more accommodated to generate cognitive psychological information.

6.4 Suggestions for future research

The obtained results in this study have clearly indicated that in all of the investigated cases, the entrepreneur/-s possessed a central position within the companies’ strategy making process during the pre-internationalisation phase. Based on this finding, one can say that these individuals have been very much involved and influential in the companies’ strategy making process. This in turn gives rise to a suggestion to future research, namely to investigate whether these individuals are still seen as key individuals in the company’s strategy making process beyond the pre-internationalisation phase, or whether its legitimacy decreases as the company’s begin to find their feet.

An additional suggestion to future research is to investigate the strategy making process within Born Globals in another context, for example in another area such as metropolitan areas, in order to broad and enrich the knowledge of strategy making within Born Global enterprises.
7. References


## 8. Appendices

### 8.1 Definitions of Born Globals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author/-s (Year)</th>
<th>Definition of Born Globals</th>
<th>Type of enterprise</th>
<th>Export initiation</th>
<th>Export intensity in relation to total sales</th>
<th>Scope of internationalisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rennie (1993)</td>
<td>Firms that began exporting only two years after their foundation and achieved 75% percent of their total sales through export</td>
<td></td>
<td>Within 2 years of founding</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knight &amp; Cavusgil (1996)</td>
<td>Small, technology-oriented companies that operate in international markets from the earliest days of their establishment</td>
<td>Technological Oriented enterprises</td>
<td>Within 2 years of founding</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chetty &amp; Campbell-Hunt (2004)</td>
<td>Firms that have virtually no domestic market or only a small one before they start to internationalize. They make their internationalization debut soon after their inception</td>
<td></td>
<td>Within 2 years of founding</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oviatt &amp; McDougall (1994)</td>
<td>Business organisations that from or near inception seeks to derive significant competitive advantage</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not specifically stated. &quot;From or near inception&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madsen &amp; Servais (1997)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authors</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Within 2 years of founding</td>
<td>25 %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McDougall et al. (2003)</td>
<td>From the use of resources and the sales of outputs in multiple countries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knight &amp; Cavusgil (2004)</td>
<td>A company which from or near its founding, seeks to derive a substantial proportion of its revenue from the sale of its products in international markets</td>
<td>Within 2 years of founding</td>
<td>25 %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabrielsson &amp; Kirpalini (2004)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melén &amp; Nordman (2009)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavusgil &amp; Knight (2014)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.2 Interview request e-mail English/Swedish

To whom it may concern

My name is Nayron Bittencourt and I am currently enrolled in a master programme in business administration (Master programme in business development and internationalisation) at Umeå School of Business and Economics at Umeå University. At the moment I am working on my master thesis, which deals with the strategy-making process within Born Global enterprises (a term used to refer to small- and medium sized companies that engage in a rapid internationalisation process shortly after their inception) during their pre-internationalisation phase. Now I am at the stage of the thesis where I am in need to collect empirical basis, hence the reason why I am contacting you with this e-mail.

I have an inquiry if you possibly could take part of an interview session and thereby help me to complete my master thesis. The interview session is estimated to take place in the beginning or middle October and the length is estimated to be approximately an hour. I am very flexible in regard to the interview format, date and time.

To verify my request, please find attached a confirmation letter written by my supervisor Ms Zsuzsanna Vincze, in which she confirms my participation in the master’s programme and the requirement to collect empirical primary data for the completion of the thesis.

I would be grateful if you possibly would be willing to take part of an interview session. Your participation would contribute to a better understanding for how strategy-making process occurs within Born Global enterprises. You can confirm your interest by responding this e-mail, and in such case I will get back to you so we can arrange a time for the interview, as well as with more details about what the interview will cover.

I am looking forward to hear from you

Sincerely

Nayron Bittencourt
Till vederbörande

Mitt namn är Nayron Bittencourt och jag läser sista året på ett mastersprogram i företagsekonomi (mastersprogrammet i affärsutveckling och internationalisering) på Handelshögskolan vid Umeå universitet. Just nu håller jag på att skriva min masteruppsats som behandlar strategiprocesser inom Born Globals företag (ett begrepp som används för att beteckna små- och medelstora företag som åtar sig en snabb internationaliseringsprocess kort efter företagsetablering) före internationaliseringsetablering (pre-internationalistion phase). Nu befinner jag mig i det stadiet av uppsatsen där jag behöver samla in empiriskt underlag, vilket även är anledningen till att jag kontaktar er med detta e-mail.


För att verifiera min förfrågan bifogar jag ett kortare bekräftelsebrev från min handledare Zsuzsanna Vincze, där hon bekräftar mitt deltagande i mastersprogrammet och behovet av insamlingen av empirisk primärdatal för fullföljandet av uppsatsen.

Jag skulle vara tacksam om ni kunde tänka er att ställa upp på en intervju. Ert deltagande skulle bidra till en ökad förståelse gällande strategiprocesser inom Born Globals företag. Ni kan bekräfta ert intresse genom att svara på detta e-mail och i så fall återkommer jag till er för att bestämma en lämplig tidpunkt samt med mer information angående vad intervjun kommer att handla om.

Jag ser fram emot att höra från er

Med vänliga hälsningar

Nayron Bittencourt
8.3 Interview request letter

INTERVIEW REQUEST FOR MASTERS THESIS

Dear Madam/Sir,

My name is Zsuzsanna Vincze and I am an Associate Professor at the Umeå School of Business at Umeå University (Umeå, Sweden). I am currently the supervisor of master’s thesis projects.

I would like to confirm that Nayron Bittencourt is enrolled at Umeå University (Umeå, Sweden) and undertakes the Business Development and Internationalization Master’s Programs. In fulfilling the Degree Program he must write a Master thesis. He is therefore currently in the process of doing their Master thesis on the topic “Strategizing in an international context – A multiple-case study on Born Global enterprises in the Västerbotten County” and as part of his research he will require to carry out interviews in various organizations. A practical approach together with the theoretical is highly valued at our School and we therefore encourage students to partner with organizations such as yours in order to obtain relevant knowledge on the workings of business through research. I thereby request you to accord Nayron the opportunity to carry out his research in your organization, by offering him the necessary support so as to enable him complete his thesis successfully.

In case of any further queries or clarifications on this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Zsuzsanna Vincze, PhD
Associate Professor
8.4 E-mail for participating companies English/Swedish

Dear [name],

Thank you for agreeing to participate in an interview session.

With this e-mail I would like to inform you in more details about what the coming interview session will be about.

As I previously mentioned, the topic of the thesis is about how decision-makers at Born Global enterprises form their strategies at the pre-internationalisation phase.

During the interview session I will ask some questions regarding your company’s preparation and the chosen approach to internationalise, how the line of reasoning went about when the decision to internationalise were taken, as well as how you guys worked/and currently works with strategy making. These questions will be based on theories that comprises ten different ways in which companies can use to form strategies.

As agreed the interview session will take place at:

   a.  [Date]
   b.  [Time]
   c.  [Place]

If any impediment arise, please let me know.

I am looking forward to talk to you

Best regards

Nayron Bittencourt
Hej [namn],

Tack för att du har valt att medverka på intervjun.

Med detta e-mail vill jag informera lite mer detaljerat om vad den kommande intervjun kommer att behandla.

Som det tidigare har framgått, är ämnet för min uppsats hur beslutfattare på Born Globals företag formar strategier före internationalisering.

Under intervjun kommer jag att ställa några frågor gällande ert företags förberedelser och tillvägagångssättet för att internationalisera, samt hur ni har resonerat och arbetat kring formulering av er internationaliseringsstrategi. Jag kommer att basera frågorna på ett teoretiskt ramverk som omfattar tio olika sätt som ett företag kan följa vid formande av strategier.

Som vi kommit överens om, kommer intervjun att hållas:

a. [Datum]
b. [Tid]
c. [Plats]

Om eventuella förhinder uppkommer får du gärna höra av dig.

Jag ser fram emot att prata med dig

Med vänliga hälsningar

Nayron Bitencourt
### 8.5 Interview guide and protocol English/Swedish

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview guide</th>
<th>Interview protocol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I. Introduction</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you for having me</td>
<td>The objective of this section is to open up the interview session and to provide the interviewee with information about the current study. By presenting himself, introducing the current research, explaining to participants about their rights, the researcher makes sure that the current research is conducted under ethically acceptable forms. Moreover, by asking for the participants’ authorisation for recording the current interview, the researcher reduces the risk of loss and misinterpretation of data, and at the same time he strengthens the study’s credibility and accuracy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The researcher presents himself</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The researcher presents the current study including its purpose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The researcher presents the current interview structure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The researcher explains for the interviewee about their voluntary participation, anonymity, and that they just need to answer the questions they are willing to.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The researcher asks for the participants’ authorisation to record the current interview.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>II. Background questions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>I will begin this interview with a few brief personal questions, some questions about the company, as well as, some questions about how the internationalisation process has occurred within the company.</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s your name?</td>
<td>The objective of these questions is to provide the researcher with some information about the interviewee, as well as to reveal this individual’s position and in what way he/she have been/are involved in the company’s internationalisation process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s your current position within the company? For how long have you possessed the current position? Have you had another positions within the company?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In what way are/or were you involved in the company's internationalisation process?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have any kind of prior experience in internationalisation?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When and who founded the company?</td>
<td>The purpose of these questions is to give the researcher a general idea about the case company, as well as how the internationalisation process have occurred within the company and how it looks now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the company vision?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many employees does the company have at the moment?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could you briefly describe the company's internationalisation history? When and to what markets you began to internationalise? How is the situation today, in which markets are you represented?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How come the company chose to engage in an internationalisation process? What factors have enabled you to engage in an internationalisation process?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How much do export activities account for the company’s total sales?

### III. Strategy-making process

*Now I will move on and ask some more detailed questions about the strategy making process. These questions are in turn derived from theories, which sometimes can be a bit tricky to understand. In such case, please let me know and I will try to clarify for you what I mean.*

This section of the interview will deal with some more specific and detailed questions about how the companies went about in forming their internationalisation strategy (how the strategy-making process has occurred).

*Procedural reminder:* Remind every single interviewee to think back to the pre-internationalisation phase when answering the questions below.

| Question | All strategic lenses | All schools of thought | Determine how the respondents see strategy and the importance of it. Get an overview of how the company proceeded on to become internationalised. This in turn can reveal specific actions and steps that can be linked to a certain perspective of strategy applied by the company (strategic lenses) as well as what practical procedures the company has used (schools of thought). Determine how rational/irrational the company was when taking the decision to internationalise.

| What is strategy for you? How important do you think it is to have a strategy where going international? | All strategic lenses | Determine how the respondents see strategy and the importance of it. Get an overview of how the company proceeded on to become internationalised. This in turn can reveal specific actions and steps that can be linked to a certain perspective of strategy applied by the company (strategic lenses) as well as what practical procedures the company has used (schools of thought). Determine how rational/irrational the company was when taking the decision to internationalise.

| How did you go about when deciding to internationalise the company? How does/did the company work with strategic issues related to internationalisation? Group meeting/Individual? Do meet continuously to discuss strategic issues? | All the strategic lenses | All schools of thought | Get an overview of how the company proceeded on to become internationalised. This in turn can reveal specific actions and steps that can be linked to a certain perspective of strategy applied by the company (strategic lenses) as well as what practical procedures the company has used (schools of thought). Determine how rational/irrational the company was when taking the decision to internationalise.

| How did the company prepare to enter international markets? | All strategic lenses | All schools of thought | Determine how rational/irrational the company was when taking the decision to internationalise.

| Did the company have clear goals set desired to be accomplished with the international expansion? What were the goals? Were these goals followed in smallest detail? How and who decided these goals? | All strategic lenses | All schools of thought | Determine how rational/irrational the company was when taking the decision to internationalise.

| Did the company use formal procedures in terms of planning and analysis to ground the decision to internationalise? | All strategic lenses | All schools of thought | Determine how rational/irrational the company was when taking the decision to internationalise.
In such case, what kind of formal procedures did the company use?
- Internal and external analysis?
- Planning?
- Industry and competitive analysis?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prescriptive schools</th>
<th>Distinguish between the various prescriptive schools.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Design school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Planning school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Positioning school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Did the company apply procedures to follow up what was stated in the plans actually came into action?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience lens Entrepreneurship school</th>
<th>Determine if individual experiences and perceptions have affected the company’s subsequent internationalisation strategy.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you think that your personal beliefs and past experiences have influenced the company’s internationalisation efforts and the course of action taken during the internationalisation process?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The learning school</th>
<th>Determine if the process was flexible and allowed for adaptation along the process.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When choosing to internationalise did you depart from any specific vision and act according to it? If so, how was this vision established?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental school</th>
<th>Determine the role of external environment within the strategy-making process.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Was it possible to adapt, and thereby depart from initial intentions along the strategy-making process?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural school</th>
<th>Determine the role of cultural proceedings in the strategy-making process.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What did you learn? How important do you consider the learning was/is?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Configuration school</th>
<th>Determine if the company switches between different approaches that characterises different schools along the strategy-making process.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What impacts do you think external events had on strategic decisions? Did you take into consideration what happened on the external environment and thereby customised strategic intentions in accordance to it?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All strategic lenses</th>
<th>Determine which individuals can be classed as strategists, as well to see how hierarchal/ non-hieratic the company is.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All schools of thought</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When making strategic decisions did you take into account any course of action or praxis that you usually do at your company?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Configuration school</th>
<th>Determine if the company switches between different approaches that characterises different schools along the strategy-making process.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Did you switch between different types of decision-making structure (rational/irrational) at different stages of the strategy-making process?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Configuration school</th>
<th>Determine if the company switches between different approaches that characterises different schools along the strategy-making process.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you compare how strategic decisions were made during the pre-internationalisation phase to how it is made today, is there any difference?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Configuration school</th>
<th>Determine if the company switches between different approaches that characterises different schools along the strategy-making process.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Which were the primary individuals that were involved in the process of making strategies during the pre-internationalisation phase?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All strategic lenses</th>
<th>Determine which individuals can be classed as strategists, as well to see how hierarchal/ non-hieratic the company is.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All schools of thought</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How come these individuals were particularly involved in the process?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Configuration school</th>
<th>Determine if the company switches between different approaches that characterises different schools along the strategy-making process.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Could individuals independent of their role/position in the company express their opinions and insights?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Configuration school</th>
<th>Determine if the company switches between different approaches that characterises different schools along the strategy-making process.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IV. Summarising questions and rounding of the interview
Now I will round off the interview with some general questions in regard to the strategy-making process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>General question</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>According to you what has been most challenging when forming strategies during the pre-internationalisation phase?</td>
<td>General question for getting a picture of what the interviewee considered has been most challenging.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there anything else you would like to add?</td>
<td>General question for adding additional information.</td>
<td>To know if the interviewee wants to add something that the researcher has forgot to ask about.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you for your collaboration. Is it ok to contact you again if I need further explanations on what has been said during this interview?</td>
<td>The purpose of this section is to get an overall, summarizing picture about the interviewee view of their company’s strategy-making process. The researcher finally rounds of the interview session by thanking the participant for its collaboration and asking if he/she would like to get an electronic version of the thesis when it is completed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Close interview session
### Intervjuguide

#### I. Introduktion

- Forskaren tackar för att han fick komma och intervjua deltagarna.
- Forskaren presenterar sig själv. Forskaren presenterar den aktuella forskningen och dess syfte.
- Forskaren presenterar den aktuella intervjustrukturen.
- Forskaren klargör för deltagarna om deras frivilliga deltagande, och vilka rättigheter de har i förhållande till anonymitet samt att de behöver endast besvara på de frågor de är villiga att svara.
- Forskaren frågar efter deras deltagarens godkännande för att spela in den aktuella intervjun.

Målet med denna fas är att öppna intervjuutløket, och att erbjuda deltagarna med information om den aktuella studien. Genom att forskaren presentera sig själv, introducera studien, förklarar för deltagarna om deras rättigheter, forskaren se till att den aktuella studien sker under etiskt godtagbara villkor. Vidare genom att fråga efter deltagarna godkännande för att spela in den aktuella intervjun, forskaren reducera risken för förlust och missförståelse av data, samtidigt som man stärker studiens trovärdighet och noggrannhet.

#### II. Bakgrundsfrågor

Jag kommer att börja med att fråga några korta personliga frågor, några frågor om företaget, samt några frågor om hur och varför företaget valde att engagera sig i en internationalisering process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fråga</th>
<th>Intervju protokoll</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vad heter du?</td>
<td>Målet med dessa frågor är att forskaren ska få en bild av intervjudeltagaren samt förstå på vilket sätt denne har varit inblandad i företagets strategiska beslutfattande att åta sig en internationalisering process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vilken är din nuvarande position inom företaget? Hur länge har du haft den? Har du haft andra positioner tidigare?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>På vilket sätt är/eller var du inblandad i företagets satsning att internationalisera sig?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Har du någon form av tidigare erfarenhet av internationalisering?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>När och vem grundade företaget?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vad har företaget för vision?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hur många medarbetare har företaget för tillfället?</td>
<td>Målet med dessa frågor är att forskaren ska erhålla en generell bild av fallföretaget samt förstå hur företagets internationaliseringsprocess har gått till och hur den ser ut idag.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I vilken stadie kom ni på tanke att internationalisera?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skulle du kortfattat kunna beskriva företagets internationaliseringshistorik? När och till vilka marknader började ni internationalisera? Hur ser det ut idag, i vilka marknader finns ni representerade?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hur kommer det sig att ni valde att internationalisera? Vilka faktorer möjliggjorde det för er att åta i en internationaliseringsprocess?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hur mycket står export för sett till företagets totala omsättning?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. <strong>Strategi framställningsprocess frågor</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Nu kommer jag gå vidare och fråga lite mer detaljerad frågor om strategi framställningsprocess. Dessa frågor är grundade på teorier, vilket gör att de ibland kan vara lite kluriga att förstå. Om så är fallet, säg gärna till så förklarar jag vad jag menar._

_Denna del av intervjun kommer specifikt att behandla om hur företaget gick tillväga för att forma deras respektive strategier (hur strategi framställningsprocess inträffade)._  

_Förfarande påminnelse:_ Påminn de intervjuade att de ska tänka tillbaka till pre-internationalisering fas när de besvarar frågorna nedan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vad är strategi för dig? Hur viktigt anser du att det är med strategier när man ska internationalisera?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alla strategiska linser  Alla strategiska skolor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Få en övergripande bild om hur företaget gick tillväga för att internationalisera sin verksamhet, vilket kan avslöja deras specifika aktioner och steg som sedan kan kopplas till den
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hur arbetar/arbetade företaget med strategier relaterat till internationalisering?</th>
<th>syn på strategin företaget har (olika strategiska linser) samt den praktiska förfarande (olika skolor) de har använt sig av.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grupp? Träffades ni kontinuerligt?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Hur förberedde ni er satsning att äntra internationella marknader? *Var beslutet att internationalisera noggrant genomtänkt eller växte den fram?* | Alla strategiska linser
   Alla strategiska skolor
   Avgöra hur rationell/irrationell (förutsägande) företaget var. |
| Hade företaget tydliga mål uppsatta som ni ville åstadkomma med er internationalisering satsning? Vad var det för mål? Hur bestämdes dessa mål och vilka var inblandad i denna process? Följde ni dessa i minsta detalj? | Alla strategiska linser
   Alla strategiska skolor |
| Använd företaget av sig formella förfarande i form av planering och analys när ni tog beslutet att internationalisera? | Alla strategiska skolor |
| I så fall vilka typer av formella förfarande använde ni er av?  
  • Intern och extern analys?  
  • Industrianalys? Konkurrensanalys? | Preskriptiva skolor
   • Design skolan
   • Planerings skolan
   • Positioning skolan
   Särskilja mellan de olika preskriptiva skolor. |
| Hade företaget rutiner för att följa upp att det som sagts i planer faktiskt kom till handling? | Experience lens
   Entreprenöriella skolan
   Avgöra om individens tidigare erfarenheter och uppfattningar påverkade företagets efterföljande strategi, som i sin tur kan kopplas till experience. |
<p>| Anser du att dina personliga uppfattningar och tidigare erfarenheter har avspeglats företagets internationaliseringssatsning eller det tillvägagångssättet ni |  |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frågan</th>
<th>Skola</th>
<th>Svar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Har ni valt att tillämpa under internationaliseringsprocessen?</td>
<td>Lens och till entreprenöriella skolan.</td>
<td>När ni valde att internationalisera utgick ni från någon form av framtidsvision som ni ville uppnå och handlade därmed utifrån denna? I så fall hur fastställdes denna vision?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fanns det möjlighet att anpassa och därmed undgå initiala strategiska planer under strategi bildande processen?</td>
<td>Lärandet skolan</td>
<td>Fastställa om processen var flexibel och möjliggjorde anpassning och utvecklande av strategier längs processen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hur flexibla var in under strategi bildande process? På vilket sätt anser du att ni var flexibla?</td>
<td>Konfiguration skolan</td>
<td>Avgöra om företaget har förändrat sättet att fatta strategiskt beslut samt om de pendlade mellan olika objekter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vilken påverkan anser du att externa händelser hade på strategiska beslut ni fattade under er internationella satsning? Anpassade ni strategiska beslut efter vad som hände i den externa miljön?</td>
<td>Kultur skolan</td>
<td>Avgöra vilken roll den externa miljön hade på företagets strategiska beslut.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>När ni fattade beslut gällande er internationella satsning utgick ni från någon form av förfaringsätt eller praxis som ni brukar använda er av?</td>
<td>Konfiguration skolan</td>
<td>Avgöra om företaget har förändrat sättet att fatta strategiskt beslut samt om de pendlade mellan olika objekter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Har värderingar, traditioner eller övertygelser influerat den slutliga strategin?</td>
<td>Konfiguration skolan</td>
<td>Avgöra om företaget har förändrat sättet att fatta strategiskt beslut samt om de pendlade mellan olika objekter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pendlade ni mellan olika beslutfattande struktur (rationell/irrationell) vid olika stadium av strategisk</td>
<td>Konfiguration skolan</td>
<td>Avgöra om företaget har förändrat sättet att fatta strategiskt beslut samt om de pendlade mellan olika objekter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framställningsprocessen?</td>
<td>Handlingsåtta under processen.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Om ni jämför hur ni fattade strategiskt beslut innan ni internationaliserade er tills hur ni gör det idag när ni ämnar älntra nya marknader, finns det någon skillnad?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vilka var de främsta individer som var inblandad i beslutfattande processen gällande er internationella satsning?</td>
<td>Alla strategiska linser, Alla strategiska skolor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hur kommer det sig att just dessa individer van de som fattade beslut?</td>
<td>Avgöra vilka individer som klassades som strateger i företaget samt hur hierarkiskt/ icke hieratiskt företaget var.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kunde individer oberoende roll i företag framföra deras respektive åsikt?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IV. Sammanfattande frågor och avrundning av intervju**

*Nu kommer jag avrunda intervjun med en sammanfattande generell fråga.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enligt dig vad har varit mest utmanande vid bildandet av strategier före internationaliserings fasen?</th>
<th>Allmän fråga</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Erhålla en bild av vad intervjuaren har ansett varit mest utmanande vid förande av strategier i den pre-internationaliseringsfasen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Är det något du vill tillägga?</th>
<th>Allmän fråga</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Att få veta om det är något speciellt intervjuaren vill tillåga som forskaren har glömt att fråga efter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
