The Evolution of Internationalisation Strategy: A Case Study of the University of Nottingham

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Abstract

Internationalisation is at the centre of debate on the future of higher education as an area of important strategic and organisational activity in the rapidly changing global and local landscapes within the knowledge-based economy. Internationalisation encompasses multiple dimensions of university's strategies, and there is limited understanding on how these different dimensions influence universities' activities in a holistic way. Drawing on a case study of the University of Nottingham with its campuses in the UK, Malaysia and China, this paper examines the changing scope of its internationalisation strategies and how these strategies have affected four key institutional activities, namely, student learning, staff mobility, quality assurance, and community engagement. The study unpacks the concept of internationalisation through the lenses of stakeholder relationships and leadership theory and illustrates challenges of internationalisation as perceived by the university leaders and key stakeholders. Questions are raised about the sustainability of internationalisation strategies, in particular, how to enhance the quality of the student learning experiences in local contexts.

Keywords: Universities, internationalisation, strategies, innovation, stakeholder relationships

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Introduction

Internationalisation is at the centre of many debates on the future of higher education. One dominant view is that internationalisation is the process of integrating international and intercultural dimensions into the research, teaching and services function of higher education (Knight, 1999, 2003; Harman, 2005). The internationalisation of universities involves all three missions, namely, research, teaching and the so-called 'third mission' of knowledge exchange and external engagement. However, there is limited understanding on how the process of internationalisation influences a university's multiple and diverse activities, and how these activities are affected by the local contexts within which a university is embedded.

In order to compete in a globalising knowledge-based economy and contribute to its development, universities need to reconcile the tensions between the three different missions and sometimes their conflicting priorities. For example, how can the university's international and global strategies be reconciled with the needs of their neighbouring localities and with regional and local policy agendas? How does the university pursue its research excellence agenda whilst enhancing the process of making use of research results for economic and social purposes, working with a wide range of its knowledge users including its local city and region (Casaleiro, 2011; Romein, Fernandez-Maldonado and Trip, 2011; Heijer and Magdaniel, 2012)? How could teaching be part of such process, by providing quality teaching and learning experiences relevant to international students as well as local communities?

In order to better understand such complex processes of internationalisation, and the nature of "glocal" universities (Grau, 2016), we need to examine how internationalisation affects different sets of universities' activities in specific local contexts. We unpack the complex processes of internationalisation and changing activities of the university by adopting the lenses of stakeholder relationships and leadership theory. A major and important role of leaders is to facilitate change – both in mission and vision, as well as with regard to the values and culture related to internationalisation. A range of internal and external stakeholders can be the drivers for the evolution of such internationalisation strategies.

Methodologically, this paper employs an illustrative case study approach. The University of Nottingham is chosen for the study, because of its wide scope and length of internationalisation experiences over the years. Originally established in the UK as University College Nottingham in 1881 and granted a Royal Charter in 1948, the University of Nottingham has played a pioneering role through its internationalisation strategies by setting up and developing offshore campuses in Malaysia in 2000 and in China in 2004. This happened at a time when the UK state increased the pace of its withdrawal of funding for the higher education sector (Knight and Trowler 2001: 30) and the UK higher education sector was looking for new business opportunities abroad. This paper examines how the university's internationalisation strategies have evolved over time, and have affected four key institutional activities: student learning, staff mobility, quality assurance and community engagement. We highlight perceptions of different stakeholders in each of the contexts, and how internationalisation processes are shaped and challenged by incorporating different dimensions of university activities.

Unpacking internationalisation

Internationalisation has become a key phenomenon for higher education over the years (Kehm and Teichler, 2007). For higher education institutions (HEIs), internationalisation can take different forms with a variety of stakeholders with their own rationales and incentives for internationalisation (Knight, 1999). According to Knight (1999, xi), internationalisation is the "process of integrating an international, intercultural, and global dimension into the purpose, functions (teaching research and service), and delivery of higher education at the international and national level". Van der Wende (2001, p.250) argues that the understandings of internationalisation have changed from being an "add-on activity, marginal and short-term policy based on temporary funding mechanisms", to a focus on the international mobility of students and academic staff.

De Wit (2011) sees internationalisation as a process which introduces new dimensions to and improves institutional quality and delivery of education. Internationalisation affects universities' strategies influencing a wide range of core institutional resources and activities, such as teaching and learning, quality assurance, governance, human resource development and resource mobilisation (Ayoubi and Massoud, 2007; Elkin, Farnsworth and Templer, 2008; Msweli, 2012; Soderqvist, 2007). Soderqvist (2007, p.29) argues that a change process from a national HEI into an international HEI leads to "the inclusion of an international dimension in all aspects of its holistic management in order to enhance the quality of teaching and research and to achieve the desired competencies". Internationalisation therefore encompasses a variety of plans and activities, such as branch campuses; cross-border collaborative agreements; education programs; international research partnerships; and international exchange of students and staff (Altbach and Knight, 2007).

Maassen and Uppstrøm (2004) present even broader views and interpret internationalisation as:

• New student and staff mobility patterns funded and regulated through specific international or national programs.
• New geographical destinations for students and staff.
• New forms of cooperation as part of formal institutional agreements.
• New providers coming on the scene, many of them dependent on ICT, many of them for-profit oriented in their international teaching activities.

The internationalisation processes of universities can be set within the context of a number of phenomena, which include diversification of providers, privatisation, massification and new modes of delivery (see Huang, 2007). Diversification of educational providers is manifest in a number of ways: types of HEIs within individual national systems each with different foci and forms of programme offer; cross-border institutions with campuses in different jurisdictions; institutions with a focus on attracting new types of students including those previously marginalised. Historically many systems have been exclusively publicly funded; not only has public support been reduced in some countries, but increasingly the private sector has been invited to take a greater share of the HE market. This has occurred in the context of systems becoming massive and a trans-national competition for the pool of available students. The emergence of new methods of delivery, most notably the use of information and

communications technologies (ICT) from the late 1990s onwards culminating in current Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) developments (Osborne and Mayes 2013), adds a further dimension to competition for an increasingly valuable resource: *the international student*. The myriad of delivery options, from distance learning using ICTs through franchising to a partner institution in the host country to an international branch campus, are commonly termed as transnational higher education (TNE) (OBHE, 2012; Mellorne-Bourne *et al*. 2015).

Universities are increasingly perceived to be part of international hierarchies of academic distinction, prestige, and wealth (Oleksiyenko and Sa, 2009; Altbach and Bala´n, 2007) and have sought to extend their activities and "brands" internationally (Sidhu, 2009). De Wit (2011) points out that the scope and strategies of internationalisation that individual universities can choose and take, in reality, are constrained by the type of university and how they are "embedded" nationally in the higher education systems. This is partly because internationalisation strategies are often created and implemented as an institutional process, conditioned and negotiated by a variety of actors, stakeholders and regulations. The institutional approach to internationalisation may involve a shift of the mission, underpinning strategic plans of the institutions undertaking these initiatives, or may be a superficial thought through the attempt to expand market, sometimes with unintended and negative consequences (Brennan *et al*., 2014). This suggests that understanding the internationalisation of HEIs as a set of change processes requires contextualised understandings of different activities, stakeholder relationships and institutional changes of content, structure and governance (Miller *et al*., 2014).

Internationalisation through the multi-level lenses of stakeholder relationships

In order to understand the different dimensions of internationalisation, this paper explores how one university's internationalisation strategy evolves and affects key institutional activities using the lenses of stakeholder theory and leadership theory literature. Stakeholders are actors (organisations, agencies, clubs, groups or individual) who may gain or lose from an organisation's activities with an interest ('stake') in the organisation's performance (Benneworth and Jongbloed, 2010). Universities' 'stakeholders' include those potentially positioned to benefit from universities' internationalisation activities. As strategies evolve, new groups of internal and external stakeholders emerge (Castro *et al*., 2014). External stakeholders may demand a more active voice to improve the value of their share and benefits through internationalisation (Amaral and Magalhaes, 2002).

Universities are increasingly required to operate at a number of spatial scales, interweaving international, national and subnational roles (Kitagawa, 2010). The environments of organisations are always changing, and amongst the roles of their leaders are to ensure that changes are accepted and become 'necessary' (van Wart, 2013). Stakeholders' salience with regards to internationalisation can be defined as the degree to which HEIs' leadership prioritises certain claims over those of other competing interests (Mitchell *et al*., 1997, p. 869). As Benneworth and Jongbloed (2010) argue, stakeholders' salience is also constructed within wider networks of relationships. They argue that stakeholders' relationships need to be examined within wider systemic perspectives.

At the macro level, international and national systems of higher education define internationalisation forces and frame the hierarchy of universities' priorities and external stakeholders. Such macro level internationalisation forces and imperatives such as TNE and new delivery mechanisms have been identified in the above section.

At the meso-level, there are relationships between key government actors including national quality assurance agencies, and public and private funders. For example, in the context of international branch campuses, it is the responsibility of the awarding institution and their partner(s), who define the contexts and conditions of equivalence and opportunities for adaptation of curricula, to meet global and local requirements (Altbach and Knight, 2007; Smith, 2010); however, it is national governments that hold the most decisive power over issues of education. Overseas campuses are faced with unique local political contexts and complex structures of actors including external investors, as well as national and overseas organisations concerned with quality assurance of cross-border education (Smith, 2010; Woodhouse, 2006).

Internationalisation processes add new contexts, expectations and challenges to local and national stakeholders both in the home and host countries. A question may be asked how universities with international campuses assure local benefits to the city-region of their location. In recent years, a number of research-intensive universities are developing collaborative research facilities with universities in other countries (Li et al., 2016) whilst some countries proactively invite foreign universities to engage in innovation activities in selected city-regions.

The contribution of universities to the knowledge-based development of their city-regions is not a new phenomenon. Universities have historically played an important role in the city-region space, though in the recent policy discourse, they are certainly given increased political importance (Benneworth and Hospers, 2007; Kitagawa and Robertson, 2011). Promoting the relationship between the university as a producer of knowledge for high-tech innovation leading to wider city-region development has become one of the stronger policy aspirations in the knowledge economy as documented in different parts of the globe (Webber, 2008; Bathelt and Spigel, 2011). However, universities can be seen as "overstated ingredients" (Lawton Smith, 2007) in territorial development unless they are integrated as part of wider economic growth strategies and as part of the evolving territorial governance structures. International contexts add further complexity to such governance challenges.

At the micro-level, there are a variety of agencies in the specific contexts of internationalisation processes. There is a dearth of empirical evidence concerning the micro-processes of internationalisation and changes that can be observed in the form, functions and strategies of the university. These can be driven by key individuals within certain organisational contexts by interacting with multiple stakeholders. In order to understand stakeholder relationships at the multiple levels, we combine the analysis at the micro and meso level. In the rest of this paper, we first focus on the meso-level analysis of internationalisation processes in order to understand the evolution of the internationalisation strategies of the University of Nottingham. Second, we conduct micro-level analyses of stakeholder perceptions in order to understand the evolving relationships within the specific contexts. Drawing on the interviews with key stakeholders, we identify four areas of key activities and related issues that have

emerged through the internationalisation, namely, students' learning experiences, staff mobility, quality assurance, and community engagement.

Research methodology

Drawing on a single illustrative case study of the University of Nottingham, this paper presents how different stakeholders experience and understand internationalisation and how they perceive its impact on a variety of institutional activities: student learning, staff mobility, quality assurance, and community engagement. A single case study approach (Yin, 2009) was adopted to gain rich information of the University of Nottingham's internationalisation processes and how that affects the selected key institutional activities. This study does not intend to provide statistical generalisability for all universities' internationalisation strategies. Its findings are expected to provide theoretical insights into understanding the internationalisation strategy, internationalisation activities and the way stakeholders' perspective influence the way these processes are shaped. Such insight may be of value to other universities engaged in transnational education and wider internationalisation processes.

The data collection was conducted as part of a large European Commission funded project (Brennan *et al.* 2014) and was designed around two main research questions:

1. What is the scope of the University of Nottingham's internationalisation strategy and how have they changed over years?
2. How has the process of internationalisation been perceived by key stakeholders, which then may have shaped the key institutional activities?

The study draws on twenty interviews as a primary source, supplemented by documentary analysis of the University of Nottingham's Strategic Plans. The interviews were semi-structured and conducted either face-to-face or over the phone in 2013. Each interview lasted between 30 minutes to 1 hour. Twenty internal and external stakeholders with different roles and seniority were selected for interviews. The interviewees selected from the University of Nottingham were the present and previous Vice-Chancellors, and five senior university managers responsible for internationalisation. External stakeholder interviewees included officials from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), and persons engaged with media in the local community in Nottingham. Officials from the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in the UK were approached and their documents were consulted. Other key stakeholders interviewed outside the UK included: four students at the University of Nottingham campus in China, the Heads of both of the Asian campuses (in China and Malaysia), one official of the Higher Education Evaluation Centre of the Ministry of Education of China, and two key local community stakeholders in the campus in China.

The interview data was treated confidentially, and analysed by thematic coding around the main themes from the two research questions: evolution and scope of internationalisation, and how stakeholders' views and experiences of internationalisation shaped the internationalisation processes. We identified four key specific contexts to analyse the micro-level perceptions of stakeholders: students' learning experiences; staff mobility; quality assurance; and community engagement.

Research findings

Evolution and scope of internationalisation

According to the University of Nottingham's "Strategic Plans 2010-15", the internationalisation strategy "is embedded in and driven by all university activities". Internationalisation at the University of Nottingham has been developed over the last two decades, starting with expanding student numbers, implementing a renewed curriculum, building the new Jubilee campus in Nottingham in 1999, and the starting up of campuses in Asia. The University of Nottingham was the first UK University to set up a full campus overseas with the opening of its Kuala Lumpur operation in Malaysia in 2000; there followed in Malaysia the Semenyih campus, which opened in September 2005, and which at the time of our study was the home of some 4500 students. The Ningbo campus in China started with temporary accommodation for 287 students in 2004, and it had 5400 enrolled students by 2013 (QAA, 2012).

Both Asian campuses benefit from local business investment as well as municipal government funding in China, and the support from the UK government. Both governments provided visitors at the highest levels, including Xi Ching Ping, Tony Blair and John Prescott. There was and is strong support from the Ningbo City Government, reflected in making the former Vice Chancellor of the University, David Greenaway, an Honorary Citizen of the City of Ningbo in 2012. All these factors have strengthened the internationalisation profile of the University of Nottingham.

The interviewees, including senior university managers and external stakeholders, regarded the two Asian branch campuses as a key feature of Nottingham's ongoing internationalisation strategy. According to senior university manager interviewees, the overall objective of establishing the Asian campuses was to create a habit of continuous development and "a different identity and stature" for the University, and to progressively embed an attitude of innovation and an international outlook throughout the University. They stressed the importance of maintaining strong financial positioning of the Asian campuses within the overarching system of the University of Nottingham. According to their account, the University of Nottingham has generated good surplus for investment; for example, it was £25 million in 2014 (University of Nottingham, 2015). The interviewees pointed out that the surpluses have been used to reinvest in each campus.

The University of Nottingham has also achieved awards based on its internationalisation activities. In 2000, it was awarded a Queen's Award for Enterprise in recognition of its work in recruiting overseas students and its decision to open a campus in Malaysia (University of Nottingham, 2012). In 2010, the University of Nottingham Ningbo Campus (UNNC) became the first foreign university in China to be designated an "International Science & Technology Co-operation base" - a status awarded to universities and companies with successful international research collaborations (University of Nottingham, 2015). These achievement were highlighted by the UK national media and they described the University of Nottingham as "one of the first to embrace a truly international approach to higher education" and as "the closest the UK has to a truly global university"[2] . These awards and recognition suggest that the University of Nottingham have been a very visible and leading player in the UK higher education internationalisation landscape.

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[2] *The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2013*

The reputational benefit was acknowledged and emphasised by the senior university manager interviewees who were heavily engaged with the internationalisation development. They related this to "innovation", a leading feature of the processes of internationalisation. They used the term "innovation" to refer to any changes as part of institutional processes to transform the University of Nottingham's identity, mission and ways of working, which could be either "deliberatively disruptive", or "from deeply conservative to vibrant, visionary and imaginative". These changes were related to "becoming entrepreneurial", "increasing student numbers", and "developing different areas of university activities including teaching, research, partnerships, knowledge exchanges, and responding to the local needs and environments".

Students' learning experiences

Despite the reputational and financial benefits, students' learning experiences was perceived by the university leaders as an area to be improved, particularly in the areas of student mobility, graduate employment and the quality of education. At the Ningbo campus in China for example, both student and university manager interviewees pointed out that there was well-established student mobility from China, as students who are academically good can be selected for the one-year exchange activity from China to Nottingham and Malaysia, but there was very little reverse flow to China. University managers described that getting UK students to Ningbo is "like pulling teeth". This one way mobility differs from the University of Nottingham's expectation that internationalisation should be a two-way process.

The officials from the Higher Education Evaluation Centre in China expressed concerns that it is difficult for Ningbo Nottingham's undergraduates to find jobs in China, apart from studying abroad or finding a job in a foreign enterprise. This is because the graduates of Ningbo are perhaps less competitive in the Chinese market by comparison with graduates of Chinese universities. One official said that "if compared with Chinese universities, the rank of the University of Nottingham Ningbo China is … between 30th-50th in China". He listed two main perceived reasons for the lack of competiveness. One reason is his perception that the academic standard of the Ningbo campus is relatively low by comparison to high-ranking Chinese universities, suggesting that this is because its students need to spend greater time learning English at the expense of their specific disciplinary courses. The other reason cited was the relatively high tuition fees of the Ningbo campus, if compared with other Chinese universities. This he suggested has prevented many academically excellent students from applying to study there.

Notwithstanding these issues, the small sample of four students interviewed spoke highly of Nottingham Ningbo, outlining the merits of the opportunities afforded in terms of the status of a degree from the West, the courses offered (including the lack of courses concerned with politics and Marxist philosophy), the opportunity for extra-curricular activity and the timing of vacations. There were also deterrents including the higher tuition fees, less attention to support for career development by comparison to Chinese universities and limited opportunities for interaction with visiting students from other campuses outside the classroom because of the nature of living arrangements. There was a practice of separate accommodation for Chinese and international students in Ningbo that limited cultural exchange in social settings.

Some students had had experience of programme exchange at the University of Nottingham in the UK and as a result inevitably made comparisons between the two campuses. They felt that compared with the UK campus, the quality of provision at Ningbo was lower, for example with regard to its library resources, although it had more reading materials in English than other universities in China.

These student interviewees also expressed their concerns of very big classes at Ningbo campus and language barriers in that some teachers' English was hard to understand, because the majority of teachers were recruited locally. An indication of the success of Ningbo campus was that three of the students were currently or intended to study at post-graduate level in the UK.

Staff mobility
One of the ways the University makes efforts to ensure the impact of internationalisation is through "people mobility and transfer" within the organisational architecture.

Firstly, the international mobility and engagement of leadership from the home campus at the highest levels was seen as essential. This was then followed by the management of core academic processes. This has led to an embedded model in which the University has sought to devolve and distribute responsibility to key units at the home campus. Accordingly, academic units at the international campuses are regarded as part of their home school. Thus, the University's Business School, School of Computer Science and Faculty of Engineering may be viewed as single academic units with bases across all three campuses. Furthermore, key senior university staff moves between such roles as Pro Vice Chancellor International, Dean, and Provost across the three campuses in the UK, China and Malaysia, ensuring sharing values across the three campuses.

Mobility of people is not only at senior academic level. For example, a new £17 million International Doctoral Innovation Centre at the university's China campus was announced in 2013, where 100 of the most able PhD students (who would split their time between the the UK and China) in the fields of energy and digital technologies would be trained.

However, not all aspects of mobility function well, particularly with regard to the human resource management of academic staff. It is evident that the quality of student learning experience was closely influenced by the management of the diversity of staff and extensive international staff mobility at Ningbo campus. It was acknowledged by all the interviewees that the staff at the University of Nottingham have become increasingly diversified. At the time of the study, there were over 600 staff from 70 countries at the Ningbo campus, and these staff were classified under three categories: "seconded" (leadership posts); "internationally recruited"; and "local" (mainly support staff). Whilst this diversity has helped to increase the dimension of internationalisation of the University of Nottingham, the intensive form that mobility of academic staff takes was raised as a concern by student and university manager interviewees alike. A key issue that was recognised was that most academic staff had short-term contracts with Nottingham in China. According to the university manager interviewees, intensive mobility with relative

short periods of time spent by visiting staff has been caused by the lack of career and personal development including within research, despite the good salaries offered. The management of research and teaching workload was another area of concern. Teaching provides the main source of operating income, and research is an area to be developed at Ningbo campus. University manager interviewees reported that in theory there were research opportunities for staff, but it was hard in practice, especially in the business field where teaching is prioritised over research because of the income captured. The lack of research opportunities is another major cause for staff to opt for intensive mobility. The university manager interviewees were well aware that there is resistance from staff in the Nottingham campus to work in the Asian campuses for long periods, as staff sees more cost than benefit. They perceive that there are more routine academic-related chores than they would experience in more traditional settings. Furthermore, the placements overseas were associated with lifestyle and family disruption.

Quality assurance

Quality assurance practice at the Asian campuses was raised as another issue by the interviewees. Quality assurance in the Ningbo campus has become entirely a UK matter and proceeds through the same mechanisms as in the University of Nottingham in the UK. The main agency concerned with teaching quality in the UK is the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), established in 1997. The QAA takes a leading role in international developments in standards and quality. Arrangements such as franchising come under close scrutiny, especially with overseas partners. This quality assurance practice is based on the fact that the Ningbo campus is a fully integrated campus of the University of Nottingham and provides students with the 'Nottingham experience' in China. Therefore the academic standards and the quality of the student learning experience at Ningbo campus are expected to be equivalent to those at the home university (QAA, 2012).

However, the interviewees, particularly the university managers, were concerned that the QAA practice differs from those applied to Chinese universities, and this has created challenges for the Ningbo campus. One challenge is that the Ningbo campus found it difficult to meet the Chinese state's additional requirements in teaching and learning, for example, by relating outcomes to the requirements of professional practice in fields such as Engineering where there are specific national professional body requirements. These different quality assurance practices have therefore created difficulties for the Ningbo campus in navigating issues of quality standards of teaching and learning in China.

Community engagement

Community engagement was expressed as a key institutional activity, but the interviewees held different perceptions of how the university's internationalisation strategy affected the local community both in England and in Asia. University senior managers and the heads of Asian campuses held a belief that the Asian campuses have significantly contributed to the development of the local community through providing good quality graduates. However, external stakeholders, for example, officials from the Higher Education Evaluation Centre in China and the local community in Nottingham and Ningbo put more emphasis on the need for a city-university-region growth agenda and the specific local benefits for the city. They believed that science, new technology and creative industries all need a high-level academic base, and that the University's

teaching and research activities should be connected with local demands and the needs of the local labour market.
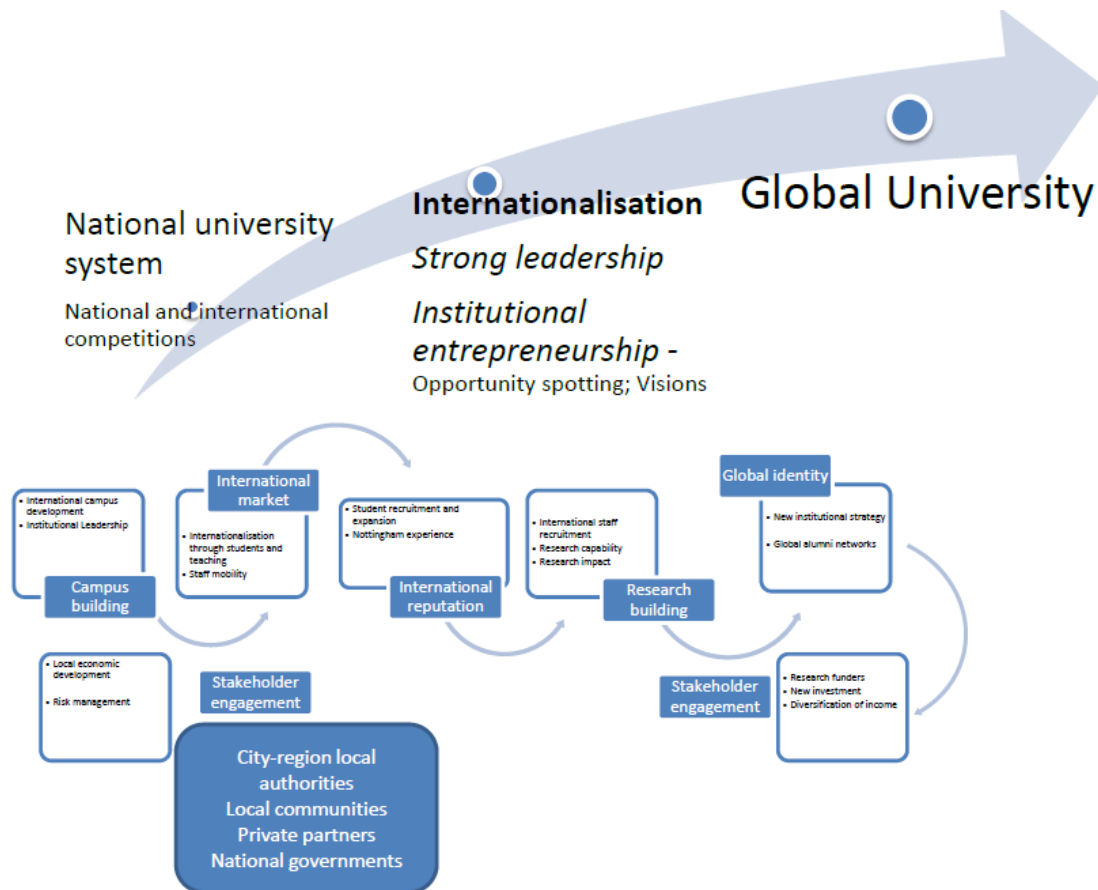
The local community stakeholder interviewees agreed that engagement with the local community could be strengthened. In Nottingham itself, they recommended a broad economic strategy in which the university could become a creative cluster by linking with local business and innovation and science parks, in order to develop a "Technology-City". For example, the official from Nottingham City Council expressed that it is important to "retain graduates as a huge resource for internationalisation development", because students have such a significant presence, and that the city could offer funds to them for small business start-ups and development. The gap between the difficulty in retaining graduates and the University of Nottingham's expectation for close engagement with the local community suggests that the University needs to increase its links with the local labour market. This debate did not surface in Ningbo, despite the fact that China has become a leader in the development of *learning cities* (Jordan, Osborne and Longworth 2014).

Discussion

The empirical findings have revealed that internationalisation has become a central feature of policy, strategy and identity for the University of Nottingham over the years. Its key internationalisation strategies started in the late 1990s in order to set up the two branch campuses in Asia, which since have evolved to encompass all the key domains of institutional activities. The university has been led by a strong institutional leadership, acting as institutional entrepreneurs in spotting new opportunities and creating new organisational capabilities through the negotiation with external stakeholders. International opportunities have been materialised through targeting international student markets and building an international academic staff community. Mobility of students, staff and sharing of a common value system has proved to be the key elements of strategy alongside the physical development of the international environment, i.e., the development of the international campuses that replicate the *Nottingham student experience*.

Through its internationalisation strategy, the University of Nottingham has created a new identity encompassing three geographical locations, where the University's different activities, teaching, engagement and research, interact. The strong institutional leadership that originally spotted opportunities and since then has provided visions and resources, combined with strategic alignment with external stakeholders at multiple levels in multiple locations (the city of Nottingham, the cities of Seminyah and Ningbo) with strong support from the respective national governments and private partners. These multiple levels of partnership have enabled innovative global enterprise to take off and continue. This journey has been supported by national and international regulatory mechanisms, assuring quality as well as an existing and growing reputation as a truly global university. Schematically this is shown in Figure 1:

Figure 1 The innovation processes through internationalisation (Source: Brennan *et al.* 2014)

National university system

National and international competitions

Internationalisation

Strong leadership

Institutional entrepreneurship -
Opportunity spotting; Visions

Global University

- International campus development
- Institutional Leadership

Campus building

International market

- Internationalisation through students and teaching
- Staff mobility

- Student recruitment and expansion
- Nottingham experience

International reputation

- International staff recruitment
- Research capability
- Research impact

Research building

Global identity

- New institutional strategy
- Global alumni networks

- Local economic development
- Risk management

Stakeholder engagement

City-region local authorities
Local communities
Private partners
National governments

Stakeholder engagement

- Research funders
- New investment
- Diversification of income

This has been a considerable success, but as we have suggested our findings indicate not without challenge. Our interviewees experienced and interpreted the internationalisation change processes variably, and they related the impact of the University of Nottingham's internationalisation strategies to four main aspects: expansion of the campus' scale; reputational benefits; diverse staff cohorts; and surplus for investment.

Internationalisation processes were also associated with the concept of "innovation", which has been used as catchword in referring to the strategic institutional changes and improvement of activities that internationalisation has brought over the years. Despite good income streams, interviewees expressed their concerns with the sustainability of institutional reputation for four main reasons:

1) slow progress with innovation in practice,
2) human resource issues including the intensive mobility patterns of academic staff,
3) cross-border quality assurance practices, and
4) the need to improve student learning experiences.

These concerns increased the awareness among the university senior manager interviewees about the substantial risk to institution reputation, which led them to think about "investment and return" and "risk and exposure" as a long-term project. Intensive mobility of staff and wider human resource management across campuses is another concern, especially among university managers and external stakeholders. This is a good example of how internationalisation has so many dimensions, including for human

resource strategies, personal development and the career trajectories of staff. For example, despite of the clear benefits of getting overseas experiences and salary remuneration, the academic staff saw more cost than benefits in terms of lifestyle, family disruption, the lack of research opportunities, and the lack of career development.

Over the decades of continuous processes of internationalisation, the University of Nottingham has managed the meso-level institutional transformation through developing and implementing their internationalisation strategies in negotiation with their stakeholders at national and local levels. However, it is now facing a double challenge in terms of micro-level practices of internationalisation. The first challenge is concerned with improving students' learning experience at the Asian campuses, and it is recognised that getting good student experience is demanding and costly. The second challenge concerns recruitment, retention and cultivation of talents of staff who have international mind-sets and experiences, and have a commitment to work at Asian campuses for a long period of time.

Conclusion
Universities worldwide are facing multiple-challenges, including growing international competition, national accountability requirements, continuing reduction in national public funding, and growing expectations to be relevant to their local society and to the economy. These challenges for universities resonate with the key conditions for knowledge-based development at local, national and international levels (Grau, 2016). These challenges suggest that there are expected and unexpected consequences as a result of evolving nature of internationalisation. Given such challenges, universities need to identify strategic pathways to internationalisation by finding the inter-connectivity of different strategies and by prioritizing key institutional activities and stakeholders involved in the internationalisation process. Therefore, in order to understand internationalisation, a holistic view is required, encompassing a broad range of university strategies and activities rather than seeing internationalisation as pursuing a "specific linear goal" (De Wit, 2011). As the case of the University of Nottingham illustrates, changes through internationalisation entail not only the individual academic and institutional elements, but also there are emerging and growing connectivity between key institutional activities.

By drawing on stakeholder theory and leadership theory literature, the paper adopted a multi-level systemic perspective to analyse internationalisation processes (see Benneworth and Jongbloed, 2010). With the macro-level pressures for internationalisation and the competition of diversified transnational higher education markets, the University of Nottingham needs to adjust and create wider institutional frameworks and resources related to education and wider engagement as illustrated in our meso-level analysis of their internationalization strategies. At the micro-level, the process has been shaped and influenced by multiple stakeholders' involvement over the years, as well as internal and external changes facilitated by the organisational leaders, who managed to exploit external opportunities. Despite a number of challenges recognised by both internal and external stakeholders, the case of the University of Nottingham shows that the university has made societal as well as economic impacts at local, national and international level. This has been possible through engaging with a variety of stakeholders and adopting the international strategies in the specific local

contexts, and by combining different dimensions of university activities and resources and by exploiting external opportunities.

This paper is based on a single case study of University of Nottingham and it reveals that the university's internationalisation strategies have broadened to encompass all aspects of its key activities. The stakeholder interviews highlighted a number of issues and tensions that they experienced throughout the process of internationalisation. Concerns were raised related to tensions and challenges in maintaining the quality of student learning experiences, retaining good academic staff and maintaining institutional reputation through the continuous internationalisation processes. These issues raise questions about the sustainability of the university's internationalisation strategies in the rapidly changing and growingly competitive global higher education market.

Whilst there are a number of lessons learnt from this single case study of internationalisation experiences, this study does not intend to provide a generalisable model nor pathways of internationalisation. For any HEI that aim to promote internationalisation, emulating the exemplar and successful cases such as the case of the University of Nottingham, could be a highly risky endeavour. The case study was chosen primarily for its theoretical suitability. Despite such shortcomings, the single case study provides important theoretical perspectives into understanding the scope, contexts and the impact of university internationalisation strategies working at multiple-levels that affect key domains of institutional activities through the evolution of stakeholder relationships.

Questions may be raised about the sustainability of internationalisation strategies given the increasingly diversified and competitive global higher education landscape. Further understanding is required, in particular, concerning the diversity of international/transnational student experiences, the impact of internationalisation on different missions of the university, and the types and roles of institutional leadership. Change in universities may be constrained by their own legacies, path dependencies, as well as by broader policy and financial conditions. Some of the tensions discussed in this paper need to be explored through an examination of broader policy contexts and discourses, and by means of empirical evidence concerning different institutional practices in diverse national and regional contexts.

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