

Rocket Science ?

***Networking and External
Engagement for Academic Success***

Prof. Dr. Axèle Giroud
Alliance Manchester Business School



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Networking and External Engagement for Academic Success

Abstract: While no two paths are similar, successful academics must possess and/or acquire a variety of essential skills and qualities. The panoply of skills is not confined to the ability to conduct good research and be an excellent teacher and communicator. In this presentation, I will focus on the importance of networking and developing one's own academic network, as well as the importance of external engagement. Drawing on my personal experience, I will first present the reasons why I believe networking and external engagement constitute complementary skills in building and strengthening one's research profile and in creating career opportunities for academics. I will then focus on selected opportunities and challenges associated with combining academic work with policy-oriented work.

Bio: Dr Axèle Giroud is Professor of International Business and Director of the MSc in International Business and Management with the Alliance Manchester Business School, University of Manchester; and Visiting Professor with the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. Her main research interests are multinational enterprises' economic and social impact in host countries, inter- and intra-firm linkages, technology and knowledge transfers, and international strategy. She was previously President of the Euro-Asia Management Studies Association, and worked as Senior Economic Affairs Officer for the Division on Investment and Enterprise at UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development). She has completed a number of reports for major organizations, sits on the editorial board of five academic journals and has published widely.



Brief Presentation of my Research

Individual research topics:

1. Sustainable impact of MNEs in host economies, notably through linkages and spillovers

2. Knowledge generation, acquisition and transfer within multinational firms and across firms

3. Nature of inter- and intra-firm relationships and networks

4. Business in and from emerging markets, with a focus on Asia

Brief Presentation of my Research

Overarching Research Theme:

“To better understand multinational firms' sustainable impact on host countries, notably social, economic and technological impact through inter-firms linkages, exploring the role of firms' strategic choices, knowledge transfer, innovation competencies, global or strategic orientation, as well as intra- and inter-firm network relationships.”

Why network ?

What your personal professional network can do:

If nothing else.... long-term emotional support mechanism ☺

Makes you an attractive employee / collaborator

Helps build your reputation

Support (future) projects

Leads to more co-authorship = co-operativeness

Creates opportunities and supports external engagement

Networking is not easy

“Networking” =>

- Buzzword with a punch or the joys of walking in a room full of strangers

Unwanted outcomes and managing expectations:

- Personal vs professional: separate, overlapping, complementary
- The *who*, but also the *how*, *when*, *why* (strong/weak nodes)

A question of balance:

- Internal and external networking
- What you do for others vs what you do for yourself

When networking is forced / fake, is it still good?

- Depends on who you are
- Conscious vs incidental networking (Not about selling yourself nor being insincere)

The high maintenance effect

- It takes time
- It is fragile

Building Resilience

3 things to consider

- Professional networking \neq personal networking
- Professional networking should support your **personal professional development**
- Professional networking should be **coherent** (eg around a key research portfolio – show *complementarity*)

Of networking and engagement

- **Networking and external engagement are linked but distinct**
- **Definition:** According Berkmann et al (RP 2013: 424)
 - “First, **academic engagement** represents inter-organisational collaboration instances, usually involving ‘person-to-person interactions’, that link universities and other organisations, notably firms. (...)
 - Second, generally the partners pursue **goals that are broader** than the narrow confines of conducting research for the sake of academic publishing, and seek to **generate some kind of utility** for the non-academic partners.
 - For instance, the academic may offer his/her expertise to provide new ideas on application-oriented issues, solve problems and suggest solutions to collaborating organisations.”
 - Generally, in the university context, the decision to engage externally is a decision that is primarily taken on an **individual level**.”
- For me, an individual should be concerned with the **breadth, depth and impact/outcome of his/her external academic engagement** with/on various stakeholders (universities can focus on determinants).

Key questions

What is the relationship between external engagement and knowledge transfer?

- Value of one's expertise and specialism (external recognition of expertise on FDI and IB field and how to demonstrate it)
- Focus of one's research profile (intersection between IB strategy and development)

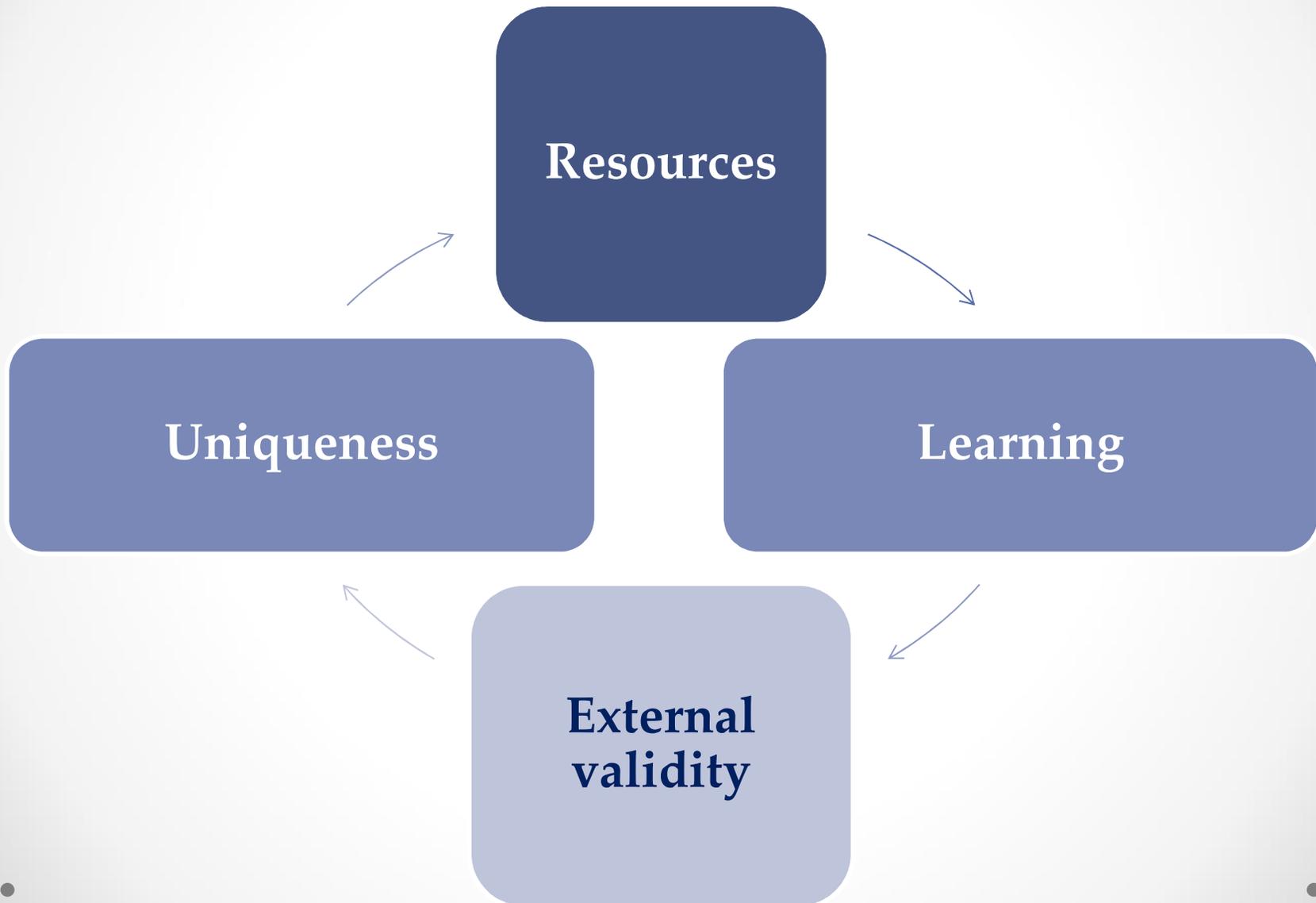
What does external engagement do for *me*?

How can I show *impact* ?

What do I want to achieve next ?

- Personal reflections on increased engagement with policy-makers
- Personal reflections on how to strengthen research profile, output and income

Illustrations of what external engagement brings me



And finally

- **Reflect !**

The why/what/when/how of

“Building more and stronger partnerships with external organisations, institutions and individuals locally, nationally and internationally.”

- **Do it if you *learn* and it adds value**
- **Do it if you enjoy it ...**

Thank you.

