



# From the *transnational* to the *flexible* solution

A comparison and characterisation of  
media companies' cross-border strategies

D. Voci<sup>1</sup>, P. Nölleke-Przybylski<sup>2</sup>, J.E. Möller<sup>3</sup>, M. Karmasin<sup>1-4</sup>,  
K.-D. Altmeyden<sup>2</sup>, M.B. von Rimscha<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Alpen-Adria-Universität Klagenfurt

<sup>2</sup>Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt

<sup>3</sup>Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz

<sup>4</sup>Austrian Academy of Sciences



# Which different strategies?



- › Media as dual goods » balancing adaptation and standardisation
  - › Transnational = best solution?
  - › Research questions:
    - » (RQ1) Which strategies do media companies apply?
    - » (RQ2) How are these strategies further characterised?
- analytical potential of differentiated denominations of cross-border strategies

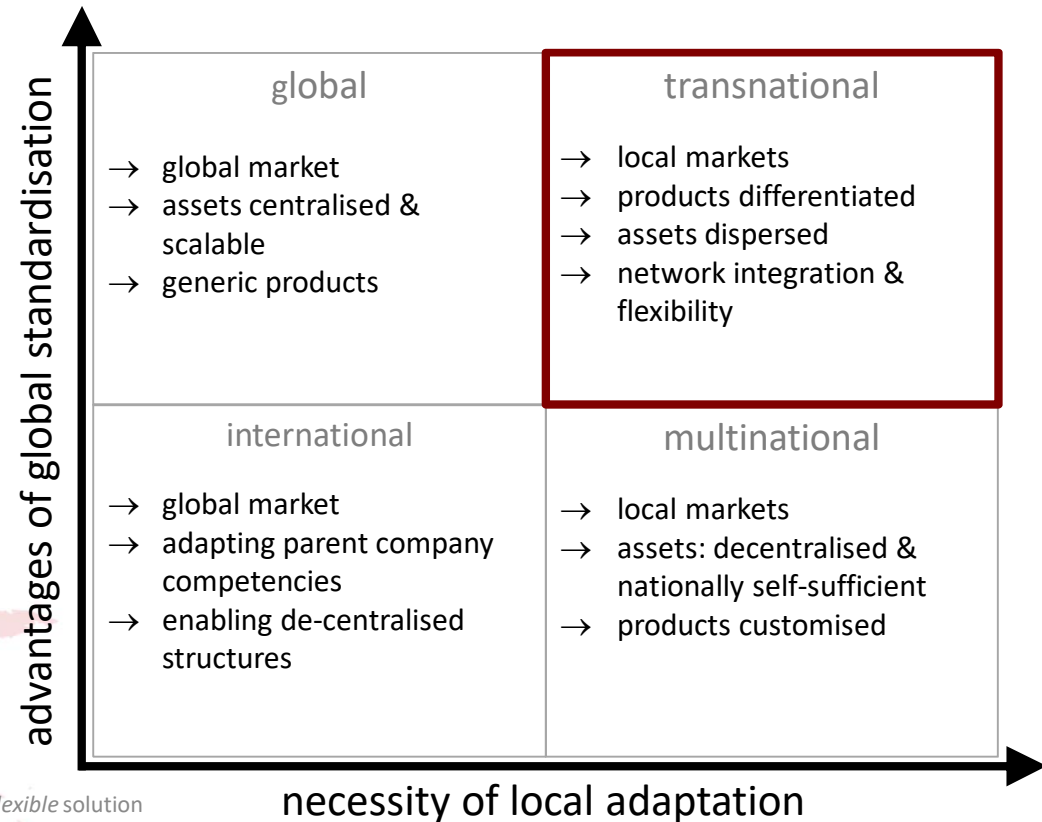
# Which strategies do media companies apply?

## Systemising strategic approaches



Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1989

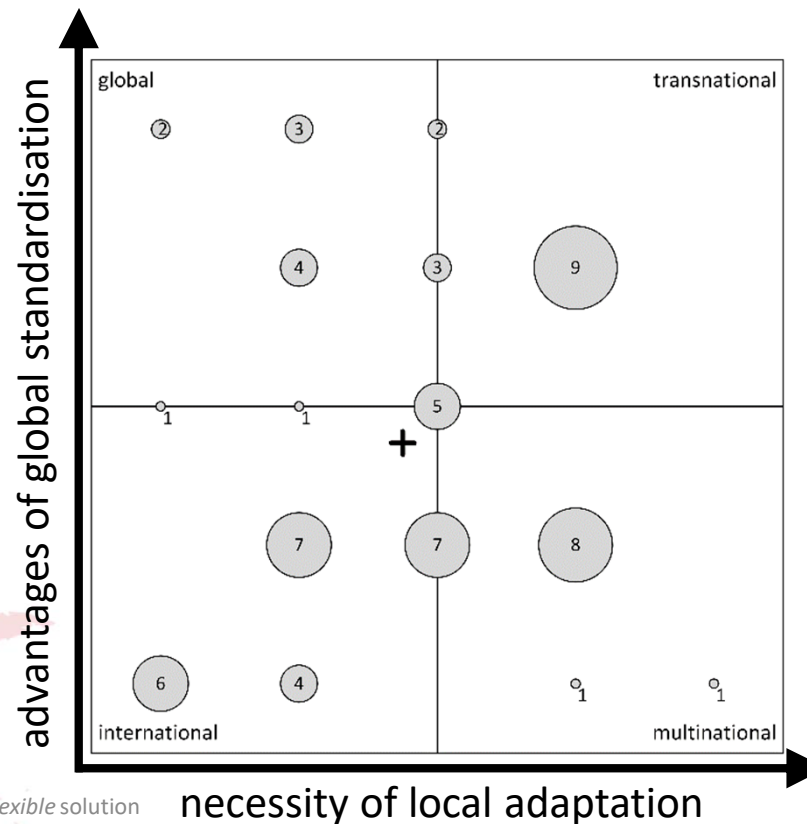
- › Organisational structure (e.g. degree of control over overseas operations)
- › Strategic direction (e.g. focus on global or local markets)



# Which strategies do media companies apply?

## Study 1 standardised survey

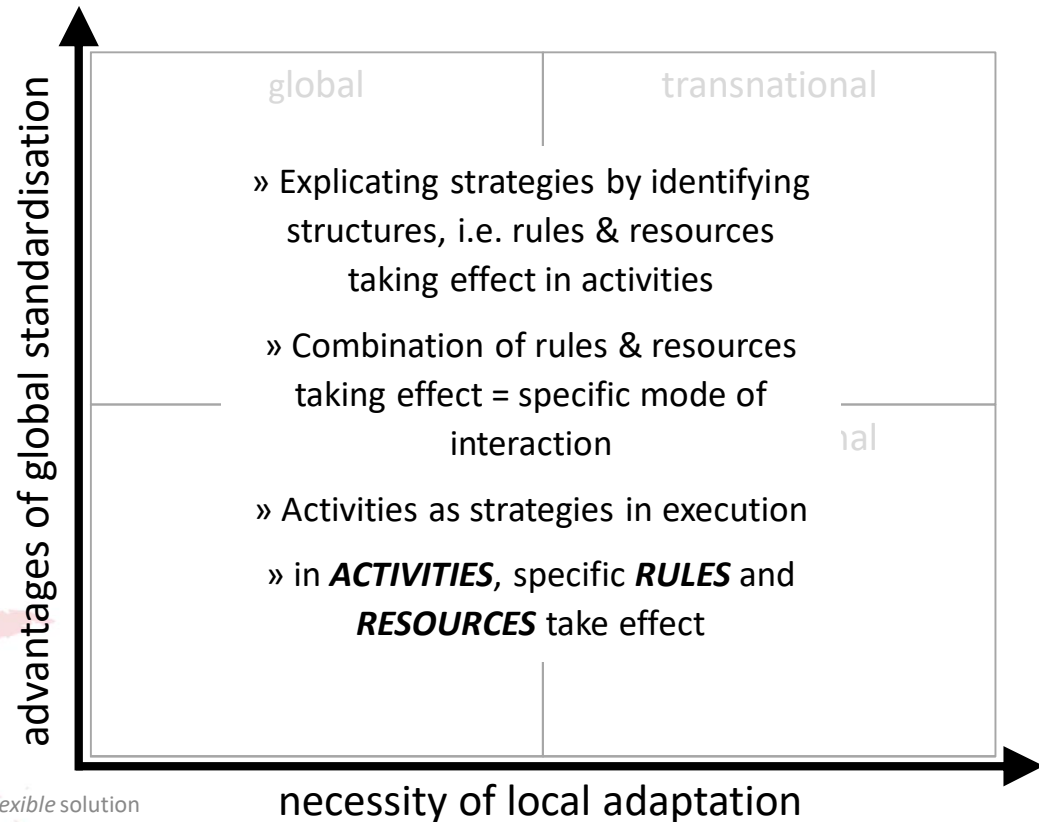
- › Online questionnaire
- › Decision makers in media companies with international engagements (AUT, DE, CH, UK, US, MX, ESP, NL)
- › 973 media companies contacted
- › 64 usable cases
- › self-positioning: *How would you characterise your company with regard to its overall international commitments?*



# How are these strategies further characterised?



- › Structuration theory feeds the B&G matrix
- › Recursive coupling of (organisational) agency & (market) structure (Altmeyden et al., 2012)
- › Defining structures as rules & resources (Giddens, 1989)
- › Interrelation of organisation & market results in specific structures  
→ **structural modalities**



# Which strategies do media companies apply?



## Study 2 qualitative interview study

34 semi-structured interviews with top-management:

- > AUT: ORF-Enterprise, Mediaprint, Kurier
- > DE: Axel Springer, Vogel Business Media, ZDF Enterprise, DPA, Studio, Hamburg, Bertelsmann, Motor Presse, Hubert Burda Media, Turner Broadcasting System Deutschland
- > CH: Diogenes, Highlight Communication, Tamedia
- > ESP: Grupo Prisa, Grupo Secuoya
- > UK: Reed Elsevier, ITV, Time Inc. UK, Reuters
- > NL: De Persgroep, Wolters Kluwer
- > Europe: European Broadcasting Union
- > US: Thomson Reuters, Story House, Time Warner, TCA, Time Inc., Discovery Networks International, Associated Press, PBS Distribution



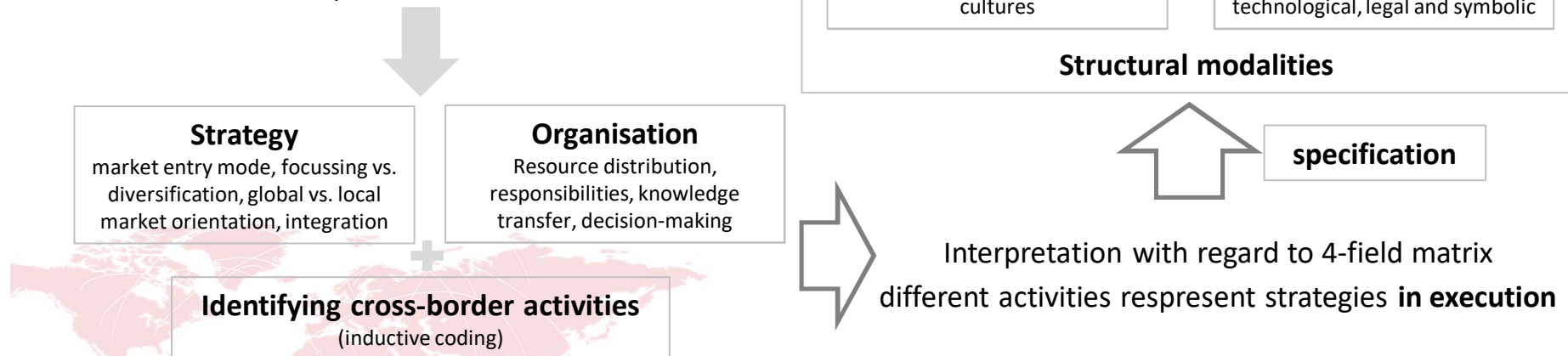
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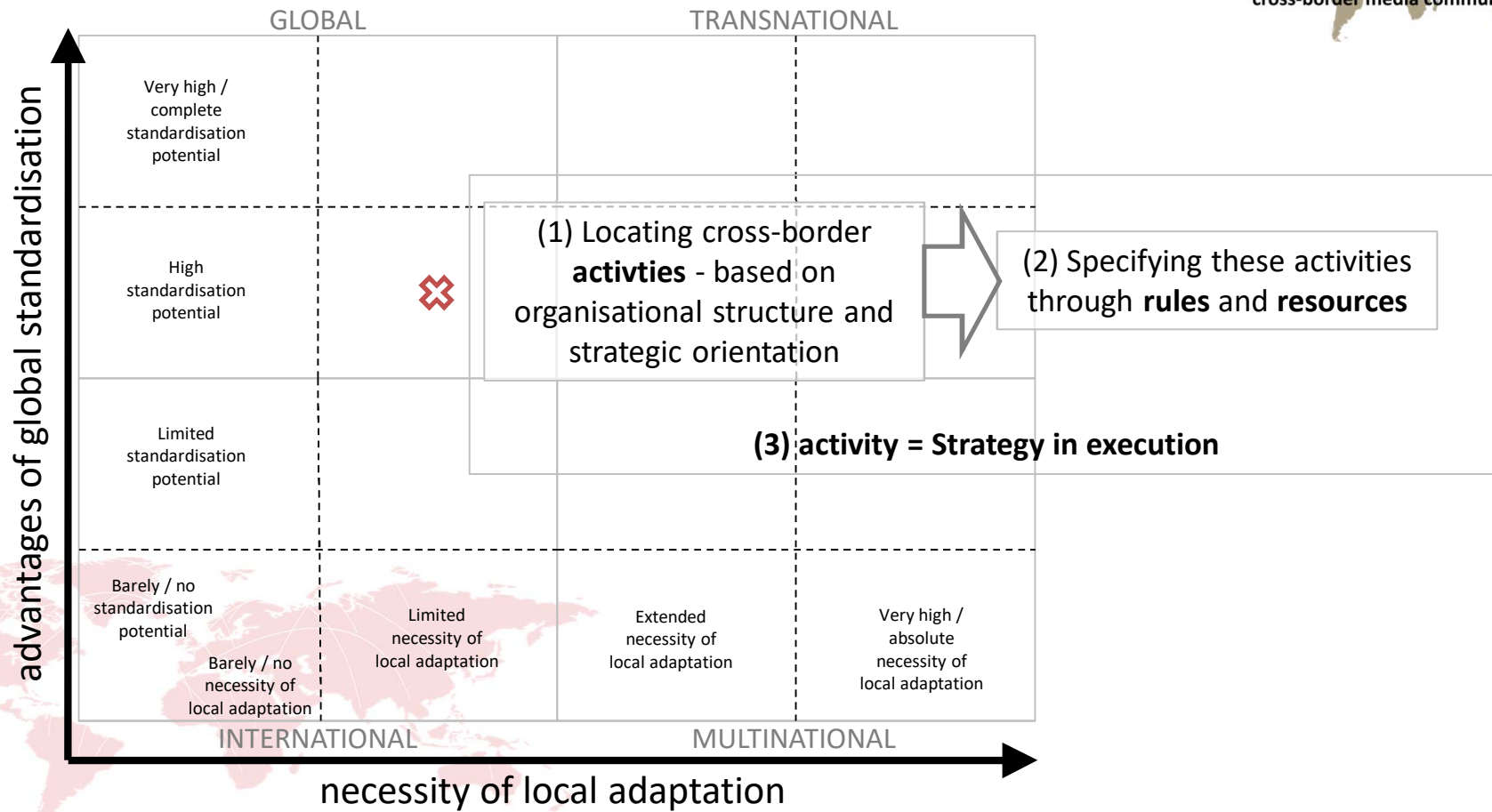


Study 2 qualitative interview study

## Methodical approach:

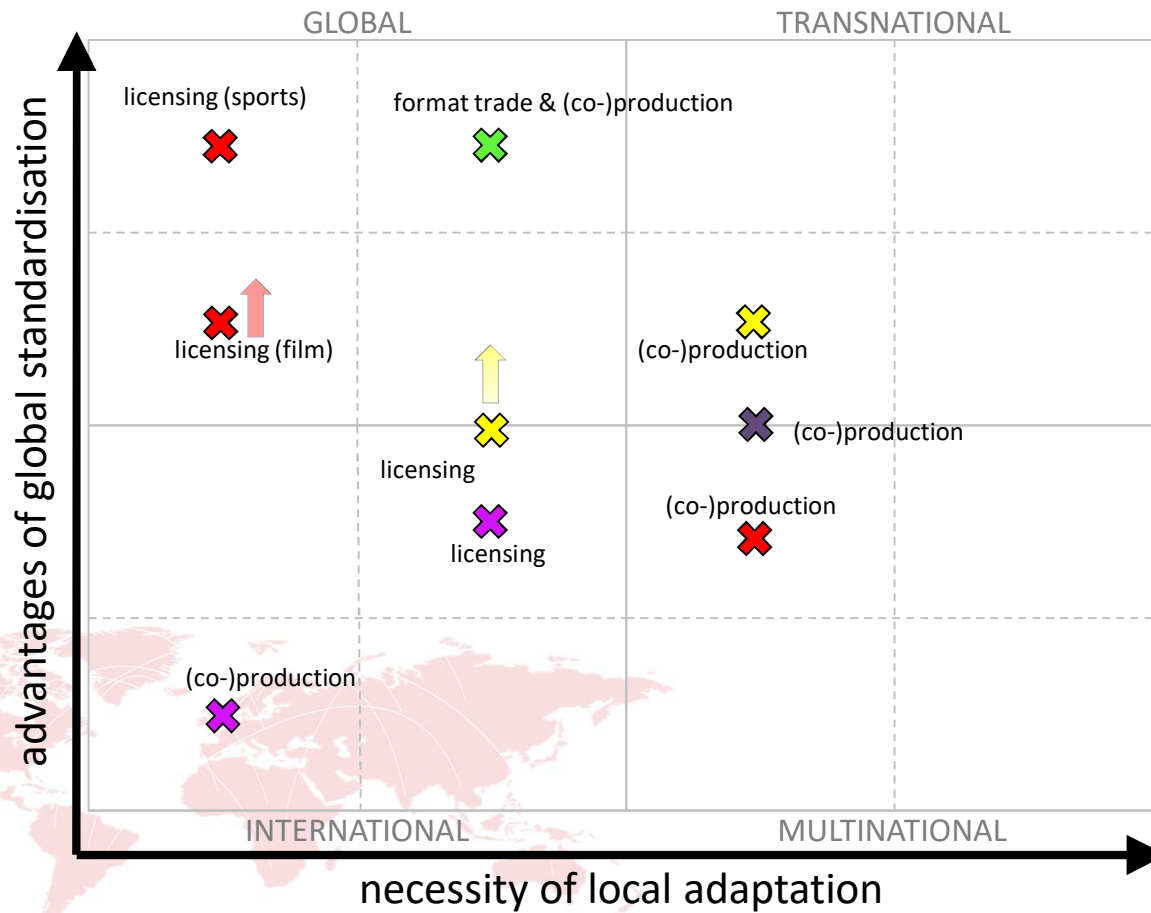
- › Category-led qualitative content analysis
- › Categories derived from strategy types differentiated by Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1989





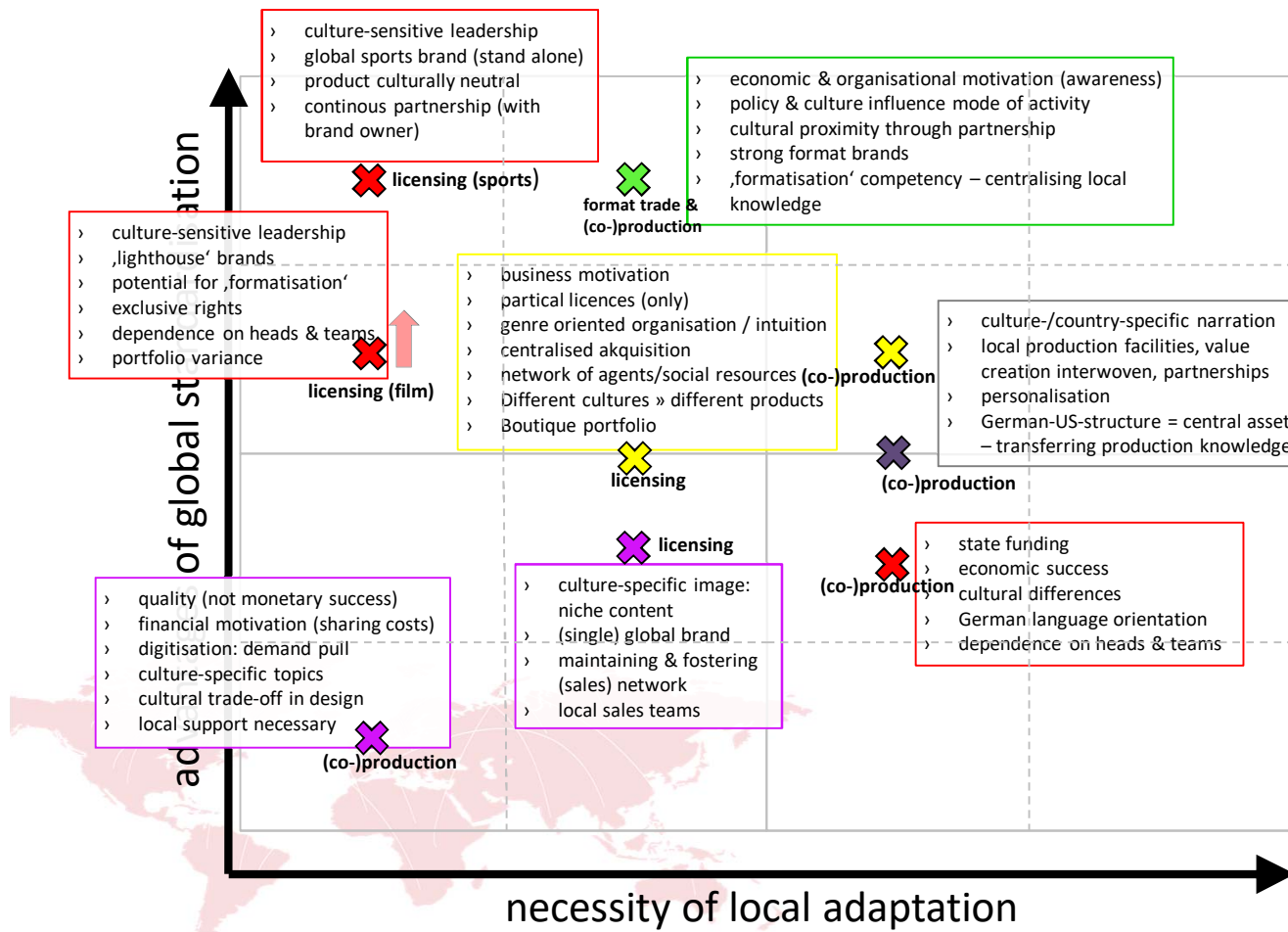


# activity-based strategies of audiovisual companies



- ✖ Highlight Communication
- ✖ ZDF Enterprises
- ✖ ORF-Enterprise
- ✖ Story House Productions
- ✖ ITV Studios

# activities of audiovisual companies: rules & resources



# Structural modalities of media companies



## Resources in execution

- Strong brands (company, content)
  - Company image
- Local support (financial, organisational, juridical)
- Social resources (personal, management)
  - Portfolio variance
  - Structure of the company
  - Company history

## Rules in execution

- Cultural proximity (language, values, leadership, narration)
  - Stability (policy, economy)
    - Scalability
  - Profit maximization
- Cost and risks sharing
  - User behavior
  - Digitisation
  - Legal environment

## Product characteristics

### As resources

- Niche vs. mass product
- Content (info vs. entertainment)
- Topic (Special vs. General interest)
  - Production conditions
- Cultural background (content, production, story telling, language)
- Materiality (media to which they are bound)
- International, global, national product

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# Conclusions



- › **Theoretical contibution:**
  - » Strategy in execution
  - » Coupling macro- and mesolevel of strategic management research
  
- › Media companies flexibly **combine strategies**
  - » Culture-specific/localised activities with global activities
    - Local adaptation remains relevant, but not necessarily via local structures
    - **BUT** combination with potential global businesses → scalability
  - » strategic complexity » transnational strategy as „meta“-strategy(?)
  
- › Structurationist views » **rules & resources:** factors moderating specific cross-border **activities as strategies in executions**» providing (first) explanatory patterns
  - » Product characteristics:
    - Cultural specificity, content type, materiality, orientation..



Thank you for your attention.

More information on the project: [www.cbmc.info](http://www.cbmc.info)

