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Centralised or decentralised? : strategic implications of resource allocation models

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**Abstract**

This paper examines the strategic implications of resource allocation models (RAMs). Four interrelated aspects of resource allocation are discussed: degree of centralisation, locus of strategic direction, cross-subsidy, and locus of control. The paper begins with a theoretical overview of these concepts, locating the study in the contexts of both strategic management literature and the university. The concepts are then examined empirically, drawing upon a longitudinal study of three UK universities, Warwick, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), and Oxford Brookes. Findings suggest that RAMs are historically and culturally situated within the context of each university and this is associated with different patterns of strategic direction and forms of strategic control. As such, the RAM in use may be less a matter of best practice than one of internal fit. The paper concludes with some implications for theory and practice by discussing the potential trajectories of each type of RAM. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)