

Capital Exchange in Creative Industries

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Summary

Focusing on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and situated within the Born Global Irish animation industry context, this qualitative study employs an inclusive perspective on capital (Bourdieu, 1986) to develop a holistic understanding of the capital mobilization of repatriated Irish SIEs. This study explores the impact of the repatriates' mobilization of their economic, cultural, and social capital within a purposely selected case study of a collective of Born Global Irish animation firms. In doing this, our study unpacks the individual repatriated SIE's career journey within a "context of industry structures and particularly social networks" (Morris, McKinlay and Farrell., 2023, p.343). In assessing the impact of repatriated SIEs' capital within a Born Global industry, the study addresses the lacuna within the SIE literature on the actual repatriation of SIEs (Ellis, Thorn and Yao, 2020) and their mobilization of various forms of capital as they reestablish themselves within their home country creating new business opportunities.

Keywords

Self-Initiated Expatriates, Born Globals, Repatriation, Expatriation, Capital Mobilization, International Capital, International Careers.

Track: 10 – Human Resource Management

Introduction

We unpack how repatriated Born Global Self Initiated Expatriates (SIEs), operating within the context of the ‘Born Global’ Irish animation industry, mobilize different forms of capital (Al Ariss and Syed, 2011) in establishing their careers and, for all, a new business within the Irish animation sector. “Employment decisions and career narratives have to be contextualized” (Morris et al., 2023, p.357) within the relevant industry, structures, and networks (Eikhof, 2017), and the context of our study features a highly globalized, non-competitive industry practicing high-intensity collaboration rather than competition as the prevailing ethos. ‘Born Global’ firms are businesses with “a global niche market focus from day one” (Moen , Sorheim and Erikson, 2008, pp. 536). They quickly enter the relevant international market looking for “significant competitive advantage from the use of resources and the sales of outputs in multiple countries” (Oviatt and McDougall, 1994, pp.49). It is this need to quickly enter the relevant international market that makes the repatriated SIEs’ mobilization of their international experience (knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA)) and networks (cultural and social capital) a vital asset for the Born Global firm. The capital offered by the repatriated SIE depends on “the richness of the KSAs (knowledge, skills and abilities) gained in the host country (Ramaswami, Carter and Dreher, 2016).

In answering the question “how does repatriated SIEs’ capital (economic, cultural, and social) affect career and business outcomes within ‘Born Global’ firms?” the study extends our understanding of the effect of repatriated SIEs’ capital mobilization on reestablishing their careers and business in a home country ‘Born Global’ firm. Influenced by streams of literature from Career studies, Human Resource Management and International Business, to answer this question our study holistically unpacks the capital utilization of repatriated SIEs using Pierre Bourdieu’s forms of capital (economic, cultural, and social) (Bourdieu, 1986). Utilizing Bourdieu’s forms of capital offers the researcher a relational unpacking (Al Ariss and Syed,

2011) of the SIEs' capital mobilization. The extant, and growing, SIE literature has tended to concentrate on the act and experience of expatriation, with a lacuna in the work on SIE repatriation (Ellis et al., 2020). There is a similar gap in the capital mobilization of expatriates and migrants (Al Ariss and Crowley-Henry, 2013; Crowley-Henry, O'Connor and Al Ariss, 2016; Zikic, 2015), with a concentration on capital development and utilization in the host country, much to the neglect of studies on host country capital utilization of repatriated SIEs (Israel, Cohen and Czamanski, 2019).

In the following sections, we briefly review the literature on self-initiated expatriation, which is followed by a detailing of the theoretical approach adopted. We then discuss the methodology of the study, present and discuss the findings, and conclude with the contributions and limitations of the study as well as highlighting further research opportunities.

Literature review

Internationally mobile workers and self-initiated expatriates (SIEs)

The variety of terms utilized in the extant literature on international mobility has caused conceptual concerns, which have been highlighted by papers such as those by Crowley-Henry et al. (2016), Andresen, Bergdolt, Margenfeld and Dickmann (2014), and Cerdin and Selmer (2014). However, the majority of the literature tends to concentrate on three main terms for internationally mobile workers: Organization Assigned Expatriates (AEs), SIEs and (Skilled) Migrants, with SIEs the population at the center of this study.

Organization Assigned Expatriates (AEs) (Alshahrani and Morley, 2015, Brewster and Scullion, 1997) are employees sent by their home companies on temporary overseas assignments. They receive organizational support for the move, duration of the expatriation and repatriation (Cerdin and Selmer, 2014), which is a strong differentiating factor between AEs and the other two forms of mobile worker, SIEs and skilled migrants.

Skilled Migrants tend to be depicted as moving to developed countries from developing ones (Baruch, Budhwar and Khatri, 2007), and studies are inclined to portray them as vulnerable (Burgess, Connell and Winterton, 2013), discriminated against (Derous, Pepermans and Ryan, 2017), underemployed (Risberg and Romani, 2022) and lacking in career agency (Al Ariss et al., 2012). Migration is ‘pushed’ by a want to better their material or social conditions and improve prospects for themselves or their families (O’Connor and Crowley-Henry, 2020). Migrants are seen to settle in a host country for lengthy periods or permanently (Cerdin and Selmer, 2014).

SIEs (Jokinen, Brewster and Suutari, 2008, Suutari and Brewster, 2000) on the other hand are seen to be “endowed with agency” (Al Ariss, Koall, Ozbilgin and Suutari., 2012, pp.94), making a free decision to independently move abroad for career, adventure, travel or lifestyle reasons (Doherty, 2013). The existing literature tends to present SIEs as being in control of an international career (Carr, Inkson and Thorn, 2005). A limited selection of the SIE literature reflects an opposite view, revealing SIE narratives of negative aspects of their international move, such as poor career opportunities and development (O’Connor and Crowley-Henry, 2020).

The SIE concept originated as the Overseas Experience (OE) concept (Inkson, 1997), defined as a phase of travel, adventure and individual development (Inkson and Myers, 2003). The Overseas Experience (OE) concept was not, originally, a career-orientated concept. As the concept developed Cerdin and Selmer (2014) identified four conditions that define SIEs. The four criteria, (which must all be fulfilled at the same time), are (1) Self-initiated international relocation, (2) intention to seek regular employment, (3) intentions of a temporary stay and (4) possessing a skill and/or professional qualifications. Figure 1 on the following page summarises Cerdin and Selmer (2014)’s criteria. The criteria in figure 1 identify the research population for this study as SIEs; with all interviewees having professional or skilled qualifications, and self-

initiated expatriation, they sought and obtained host country employment, and always planned to repatriate back to Ireland.

INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE

In the next section, we focus on Bourdieu's forms of capital (economic, cultural, and social), which have been utilised to unpack the career experiences of migrants and SIEs in several previous career studies (Chudzikowski and Mayrhofer, 2011). Bourdieu's forms of capital, seminal concepts in his social theory of practice, provide us with a "multilayered framework" (Chudzikowski and Mayrhofer, 2011, pp.22) to holistically unpack the repatriated SIEs capital mobilization in their development of careers and business.

Forms of SIE capital

Extant research on internationally mobile workers (migrants, AEs and SIEs) focuses on the human capital view for understanding the career developmental effects of migration/expatriation (Phan, Banerjee, Deacon and Taraky, 2015). Several studies (Al Ariss and Syed, 2011), note that the human capital lens is too narrow and lacks "the in-depth qualitative insights needed for studying all aspects" of internationally mobile careers (Syed, 2008, pp.29). Therefore, to gain a relational and holistic understanding of the repatriates' capital mobilization, we adopt a Bourdieusian approach, a conceptual framework that has been applied in career research in several instances and has been found to offer a better option (Al Ariss and Syed, 2011) for unpacking how internationally mobile workers navigate their career path in an

international setting. There are four main capital constructs in Bourdieu's theory of practice, which are: cultural capital, social capital, economic capital, and symbolic capital.

Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) define social capital as "the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, pp. 119). This is the resources and/or power, based on social connections, group and/or class membership (Bourdieu, 1986). When SIEs move to a host country, they tend to need to establish new social capital, or they may depend on older home country networks that have become established in the host country, e.g. family or alumni (White and Ryan, 2008; Phan et al., 2015).

Cultural capital is the knowledge, education, and advantages that a person has, which promotes social mobility in society and is instrumental in the diffusion of power, class structures, inequity etc. There are three forms of cultural capital: Embodied Capital, such as language, accent, and national culture, accumulates over time and is the deliberately acquired and passively inherited attributes of one's self (Bourdieu, 1986). It becomes embedded in one's habitus, which are the deeply ingrained skills, habits, and dispositions we develop from our life experiences (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Objectified capital is cultural capital "objectified in material objects and media, such as paintings, monuments, instruments, etc., is transmissible in its materiality" (Bourdieu, 1986, p.19). Ownership of a painting does not necessarily give one objectified cultural capital. Institutionalized capital is the objectification of cultural capital in the form of academic qualifications and certifications, such as a degree in classical animation, which is a "certificate of cultural competence which confers on its holder a conventional, constant, legally guaranteed value" (Bourdieu, 1986, p.20).

Economic capital is fiscal capital, wealth, "general, anonymous and immediately convertible money," (Chudzikowski and Mayrhofer, 2011, pp.23). Economic capital can be

more easily transformed into other forms of capital, such as how some of the interviewees invested in their education, turning their economic capital into institutionalized cultural capital in the form of specialized animation qualifications. This also turns the investment into a form of social capital via the contacts and friendships they create while they are undertaking their studies. In a non-competitive industry practicing high-intensity collaboration, such as the Irish animation industry, this social capital would prove invaluable later in the interviewees' careers.

Finally, symbolic capital is the reflected power gained through the accumulation and deployment of any form or combination of capital (Al Ariss and Syed, 2011). It is only when the other form(s) of capital, such as cultural, are "acknowledged" in the respective field do they become symbolic and, for this reason, a valid currency" (Chudzikowski and Mayrhofer, 2011, p.24). For example, a degree from Art College is a form of institutionalized cultural capital, which becomes symbolic capital when the holder uses it to gain employment in an arts organization, such as an animation producer. However, if a qualification is not accredited in the host country, as can happen with expatriates' qualifications (O'Connor and Crowley-Henry, 2020), it will lose its symbolic value as capital, highlighting the importance of the international recognition of the degrees held by the majority of this study's population.

One final concept from Bourdieu's theory of practice we found the participants exhibited was habitus. Habitus has been described as socialized norms or personal tendencies that guide how ones behave and thinks (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). They are socially constructed "lasting dispositions, or trained capacities and structured propensities to think, feel, and act" (Navarro, 2006, pp.16) that determine and guide how we respond to and act on the events, experiences etc that we encounter in our life (Navarro, 2006). Habitus, operating below consciousness, is built from our past experiences and influences our future actions (Al Ariss and Syed, 2011). It is a "product of social conditioning, and thus of history... is endlessly

transformed, either in a direction that reinforces it... or in a direction that transforms it and, for instance, raises or lowers the level of expectations and aspirations.” (Bourdieu, 1990, pp.116).

To conclude, our study focuses on understanding SIEs and their ability to mobilize their capital (Bourdieu, 1986). As a qualitative study, taking a “relational and context-specific approach” (Kozhevnikov, 2021, pp. 706), the findings are the products of mixed contextual influences (Morris et al, 2023). The following section outlines the study's research context Kozhevnikov, A. (2021).

Context

Understanding Born Globals

The term born global was first coined by the McKinsey Report (Rennie, 1993) to describe highly globalized firms that quickly and successfully engage in foreign exports. They are characterized by their ability to overcome the initial barriers of international market entry without first having a strong presence in their home market, in other words, using various forms of capital as their aid. The ability of such firms to circumvent traditional lengthy competitive internationalization processes has piqued the interests of many (Ferguson, Henrekson and Johannesson, 2021). Referred to as a ‘new breed’ of company, adopting a borderless view of their existing markets, they are found to be innovation-intensive (Andersson and Wictor, 2003; Cavusgil and Knight, 2015) and human capital-intensive (Knight, 2001; Melen and Nordman, 2007) adopting an easily scalable production process (Kudina, 2008; Cannone and Ughetto, 2014). In summary, Knight and Cavusgil (1996) p.11 describe them, as “Small, (usually) technology-orientated companies that operate in international `markets from the earliest days of their establishment”.

While our study features the smallness of these rapidly globalizing companies it also examines why the repatriated SIEs’ capital is important to a born global. Strong entrepreneurial

performance is seen as an enabler for companies to further exploit potential technological developments, gaining information on international markets (Madsen and Servais, 1997; Moen, 2002; Andersson and Wictor, 2003). The born global entrepreneur is characterized as one with a global mindset (habitus), which encourages internationalization from the outset (Andersson, 2011). Additional driving factors include their extensive international experience (symbolic capital), management commitment and market knowledge (cultural capital), networking capability (social capital) as well as managing profitability and funding sources (economic capital), which serve as significant markers for born global progression (Bourdieu, 1986; Rennie, 1993; Smith, 2014).

Irish animation coopetition

The context of our study features a highly globalized, non-competitive industry practicing high-intensity collaboration rather than competition as the prevailing ethos. This is because of the sales strategy within the industry. Animation firms individually pitch for commissions or are sought after for their offering by commissioners, rather than tendering for projects. Entrepreneurs share capital, in the form of international market knowledge, industry networks, funding partnerships and management experience, therefore this information expands opportunities for all Irish animation firms, sharing a similar space. While there may be occasions of mild competition around content space and getting the commissioners' attention, it is an extremely benign form of rivalry and rather, extensive collaboration. This behavior is recognized as coopetition. The term coopetition is used to describe the ironic concept of management that combines competition and cooperation (Brandenburger and Nalebuff, 1996;). Due to context, the Irish animation industry and company founders represent an under-researched example of an Irish Born Global SIEs, as a small 'novel' industry operating in a limited domestic market, with many push and pull factors.

Home and host country, push and pull factors

Our study is situated within the context of the Born Global indigenous Irish Digital, Film and TV production industry and, focuses on its largest division – the animation sector. The Irish animation sector is by nature a small industry operating in a limited domestic market. This context is the perfect setting for a ‘Born Global’ industry and highlights the importance of international business and an internationally mobile workforce with international capital. The context of the study helps explain the push and pull factors influencing the interviewees’ expatriation and repatriation decisions (Krings, Bobek, Moriarty, Salamonska and Wickham, 2009).

Push factors or ‘negative’ factors that influence a person’s decision to leave a country can include, a lack of professional (O’Connor and Crowley-Henry, 2020) or economic opportunities (Al Ariss and Özbilgin, 2010) in their home country. On the other hand, pull or ‘positive’ factors can influence a person’s desire to move to a certain host country, in the case of the Irish animators, the UK and the USA acted as a strong pull factors. While push factors instigate some people to leave their home country, they must also be accompanied by pull factors to entice people to the new host country (Dobson and Sennikova, 2007). While the Irish animation industry was still delicate, the global industry was propelled to the forefront of the public’s imagination with Pixar’s breakthrough via hugely successful movies, both critically and commercially, such as Toy Story, Monsters Inc, Cars, Wall-E and Up. Also, the explosion of cable TV led to the emergence of dedicated TV channels such as Nickelodeon and the Cartoon Network. This development led to a huge increase in global demand for animation content and thus a strong draw for young Irish animators seeking experience in an innovative arena. These pull factors translated into better, economic conditions (Cook, Dwyer and Waite, 2011) lifestyles (Doherty, 2013), professional experience (Ryan, Evers, Smith and Andersson,

2019) or career opportunities (O'Connor and Crowley-Henry, 2020). It is also worth noting that some researchers have noticed that different professional groupings with the international mobile labour force are moved by different pull and push factors. For example, Ryan, et al., (2019) noted that Irish Animators were 'pushed' to go abroad given the limited opportunities available in the then moribund home market, with its "small domestic [animation] market, insufficient home country audience base and consequent negligible local market potential" (Ryan et al., 2019, pp.8). As experimenting with animation only started in Ireland in the 1920s, it was a very novel industry with newness limitations (Smith, 2014). The maturing of the industry later began in the early 1980s when governing bodies introduces sizeable tax incentives to encourage investment in Irish animation studios (Monster, 2002; Clancy, 2005).

In this context – the Irish animation market, with its small population, inadequate audience size, consequent negligible local market potential and breadth of global product sourcing - the Irish SME digital animation firm must from inception, quickly access customers in the international arena if they wish to be successful (Smith, Ryan and Collings, 2012). Acting as a push factor, meant many of the new graduates and entrants to the animation employment market became SIEs, usually seeking employment in countries with cents of production excellence, for example, Hollywood USA, acting as the pull factor. The SIEs found employment, internships, and placement opportunities with big-name players such as Walt Disney Feature Animation, Warner Brothers, MTV New York, Universal Studios and 20th Century Fox.

Method

Research design

Adopting a phenomenology paradigm as a form of an inductive/ qualitative research approach, this study emphasises the importance of understanding human experiences and the structures

within which humans experience the world (Lee and Lings, 2008). Michailova and Mustaffa (2012) highlight the importance of carefully selecting an idiosyncratic setting to provide further accurate explanations. Similarly, Crick and Jones (2000) appeal for further studies that will generate richer data when focusing on narrowly defined groups of firms. The research methodology employed involved a single case study investigation of an indigenous Irish industry consisting of practicing Born Global SIEs. A case study approach has been deemed a suitable tool for examining contemporary issues set in explicit contexts (Yin, 2003). Our case study considers the career narratives of 12 repatriated Born Global SIEs drawn from eight companies, to better understand the dynamics present within a particular, and prudently chosen setting (Eisenhardt, 1989). These selected companies are an extract from a more extensive study focusing on the Born Global routes followed by such firms. The research approach involved conducting an all-Ireland study of suitable Born Global SIEs, drawing from both primary and secondary information sources.

Using an explanatory case study design (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2003), this study aims to develop a holistic understanding of the capital mobilization impact on repatriated SIEs careers, business motivations, actions, and outcomes in the form of Irish Born Global firms. By examining a single industry grouping containing multiple proven-to-be born global firms, as defined by Oviatt and McDougall (1994), conforming to Cerdin and Selmer (2014) definition of SIEs, the study unpacks the narrative surrounding the impact of the repatriated SIEs mobilization of their economic, cultural and social capital within Irish SMEs, typically employing less than 20 employees. Employee figures can fluctuate and are determined by the projects being worked on. As a result, numerous freelance animators are ‘floating’ and seeking work at all times. Initially, we developed a database of all Irish-based animation companies using Animation Ireland’s website (www.animationireland.com), followed by creating a

‘company and founder information profile’ for each company and founding members using secondary sources.

Data collection

Throughout the screening process, we identified 8 companies and 12 repatriated Born Global SIEs that met the criteria. These are represented in our study population table, (see Table 1). All identified Born Global SIEs agreed to take part and contribute to the study. The primary data collection technique used in this investigation was in-depth interviews. Interviewing has been identified as the most used technique for gathering qualitative research, given its flexibility, in terms of time and content, which can be tailored to suit any research topic (Lee and Lings, 2008). The interviews were conducted in English with native English speakers. To ensure the interviewees’ anonymity, the names used in this work are pseudonyms.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

To source the initial interviewees for the study, the researchers, utilizing purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2007), used personal contacts they had developed in the Irish animation industry. With purposeful sampling, the researcher selected the respondents and location for the research from those that can purposely provide information and knowledge about the phenomenon under critique (Creswell, 2007). The researchers then combined ‘Cold-Calling’ and Snowball sampling (Browne, 2005) to continue the process. For Snowball sampling, the initial interviewees, using their work and social networks, were encouraged to recommend appropriate interviewees for the next round of research interviews (Bryman, 2008). With the

‘Cold Calling’ approach, the researchers utilized a directory from Animation Ireland, cross-referenced with Enterprise Ireland and the Irish Film Board. Triangulation was also conducted by gathering secondary material from many industries-related websites, press releases, industry and company reports, online podcasts, published media content, and founder and company social media platforms. This information provided a richer context for our research.

Data coding and analysis

The researchers carried out all interviewees, with an average duration of 1 hour and 15 minutes. Each interview was recorded and later transcribed verbatim. The data was systematically analyzed using NVivo which allowed for case analysis and cross-case comparisons (Yin, 2003; Myers 2009). An interview file was later created for each company and its founding members. Each transcript consisted of rich narratives, disclosed by founding animators and verified gifted storytellers, and was then rigorously analyzed, unveiling the history of events that led to repatriated Irish Born Global SIEs. Selected quotes were then chosen to demonstrate the unique industry properties around the core theme that the final analysis was based on, such as the impact of context on career actions. Furthermore, triangulation was further employed by incorporating and continuously tracking the key industry, firm, and founder updates, significant events, and notable milestones as part of the secondary data-gathering process. This cross-analysis method helped to further understand the primary data and enhance the reliability of our findings (Quinton and Smallbone, 2006).

Findings and discussions

This section sets out the research findings from a small closely-knit industry sector of practicing Born Global SIEs. All interviewees left Ireland due to the lack of opportunities in the then moribund Irish animation market. Attracted to the major animation studios in countries such as

the USA and UK, they used their home country's developed capital, such as their classic animation degrees, to source work in these world-leading animation studios. It was through these roles that our interviewees started to build up the international experience and network necessary (cultural and social capital) for working in the industry. This host country developed capital was then later mobilized (Al Ariss and Syed, 2011), by the SIEs to repatriate and establish a career/business in Ireland's small but revitalized, highly globalized, high-intensity animation industry, which had acted as a pull factor for the now experienced SIEs to repatriate. It should be stated there was no major push factor to leave the host country, but it was the strong pull factors of the desire to return home that encouraged repatriation.

In our framework, figure 2 we symbolize this phenomenon by portraying this lack of major push factors in non-bold font. All interviewees are now living and developing their careers and business in the animation industry in Ireland. For a summary of the findings and the SIEs' path please see figure 2, while the following sections unpack this career journey in detail.

INSERT FIGURE 2 HERE

The animation industry in Ireland practices a benign form of competition and an extremely rare form of collaboration, where the interviewees' sharing of international market knowledge and intelligence helped expand opportunities for all members of their local network. While this study concentrates on the international transfer and utilization of various forms of capital by repatriated Irish Born Global SIEs, it is essential to outline the interviewee's early home country career and capital development, which helps unpack and understand the interviewees' careers motivations, actions and outcomes (Inkson, Dries and Arnold, 2015).

Early capital development and push/pull factors

For this study's sample of SIEs, their story begins with their education. Unsurprisingly, the majority were graduates from Ballyfermot College of Further Education, which is the hub for educating Irish animators in their early-stage career training. Only one of the interviewees completed a design degree in a different institution, the National College of Art and Design. Their training and qualifications, such as a degree in classical animation, were to act as a form of institutionalized cultural capital, which was internationally transferable, gaining symbolic capital status when the subjects expatriated to work in international animation studios around the world. In addition, their initial development of social networks within these Irish educational institutions was also the beginning of their social capital within the field of the small close-knit Irish animation industry.

“We used to work in ‘An Other Ltd’ and they [the owners] were in our class. Some of the others in Dublin would have been a few years ahead of us in college... one or two of them would have been our teachers. That is why everyone knows each other... the industry is so small” (Jordan).

However, the small size of the close-knit Irish animation industry also had its negatives, with limited opportunities for professional and career development in what was, then, a struggling industry. This lack of development and career opportunities acted as push factors in the recently graduated animators' decisions to leave Ireland.

“Some of us went off, like me, and got work in London and Australia or wherever and got work for a few years.. there wasn’t that much work in Ireland... so obviously [we] had to fend for ourselves....you know” (Gavin).

Accompanying these push factors was the attraction of the international animation sector in countries such as the USA and the UK, where career and developmental opportunities in well-known and established animation companies acted as strong pull factors. For some, the choice of the host country was also partly driven by their existing social capital

“The friends that we made in college helped us connect internationally. Some had gone ahead of us abroad and were our door openers. We had them on speed dial....” (Lola).

The ability to travel to a host country and gain employment in important movie and TV studios, such as Pixar-Disney and Warner Bros., was a result of the mobilization of the symbolic capital value of the SIEs’ institutionalized cultural capital, such as their degrees in classical animation. The embodied capital of their Irish nationality also gained symbolic capital status as it was their Irish (and EU citizenship) that allowed free travel to the UK and within the EU. The international work experience in the host country gave several interviewees their first experiences in the global animation industry. This experience then became an important source of capital, such as social (international network), cultural (work experience, reputation), and economic (understanding of and access to investment funding), which would be later mobilized as symbolic capital in the act of repatriation.

“I worked at Warner Brothers, I spent 3 years there on a bunch of their films... jumping between drawing and animation. It was a brilliant experience... There

is no substitute for onsite training and working with other people, all with different ideas and mindsets” (Blake).

The majority of our interviewees (10 out of 12) left Ireland intending to return. However, the length of planned stay in the host country was fluid and dependent on when the participants felt they gained the necessary experience, network etc., i.e., the capital to establish themselves in the international animation industry. The time frame varied from one year as a minimum to four years. However, on average, our respondents spent just over two years in the host country.

“Family brought me back home to Ireland again, I always knew a short stint abroad would be worth gold and it was” (Thomas).

The following section will uncover the repatriation process and the support that encourages the respondents within a small niche industry to re-establish.

Repatriation and re-establishment

When the subjects felt they had gained the necessary capital to establish themselves in the international animation industry, they then decided to repatriate back to what was now a revitalized Irish animation industry. There was no major push factor to leave the host country, except for the desire to return home and re-establish their career and start their own animation business. Their new and increased capital was mobilized as symbolic capital in the act of repatriation and re-establishment of their careers back in the now revitalized Irish animation industry. The increasing global success and growing profile of the Irish animation industry also acted as a strong pull factor in the act of repatriation.

“the [Irish] industry had won a lot of awards... like when “Give Up Yer Aul Sins” was Oscar nominated, two out of the three [nominees] were Irish... this helped us return home as we were Irish and we would easily connect again abroad” (Thomas).

A meso-level pull factor, and one that played a major role in the resurgence of the animation industry, was the government-funded representative body, Animation Ireland. This organization was tasked with promoting and coordinating the activities of Ireland’s animation enterprises. Animation Ireland provided expert advice and assistance in sales, marketing, networking, and international market development, further adding to the social and cultural capital of the repatriated SIEs, now operating from Ireland but in an international animation market. In the following sections, we unpack the role of economic, social and cultural capital in shaping repatriated SIEs career decisions and outcomes in their home country.

Capital mobilization in the home country

The findings from our study highlight a wide range of capital mobilization strategies (Al Ariss and Syed, 2011) undertaken by the repatriated SIEs. As SIEs, they lacked organizational support (Cerdin and Selmer, 2014) for their repatriation and were entirely dependent on mobilizing their personal social, cultural, economic, and symbolic capital. In the next sections, we unpack the mobilization of each of these forms of capital separately, but it is important to note that all forms of capital are inherently linked in a relational mobilization of the repatriates’ total capital resources (Al Ariss and Syed, 2011).

Repatriates mobilization of social capital

All our participants drew heavily on their social capital in their repatriation and re-establishment process. The participants' education (mainly home country-based), work experience (mainly host country based), and the resulting networks (home and host country based), were the primary sources of social capital. These sources included work experience carried out with 'previous employers', 'client referrals' as a result of work previously conducted, and 'educational links' acquired through their degree studies and training.

"I'd been working at Warner Brothers... I had a lot of connections built in LA, Ireland, all over and I knew I could use these at any stage to tap into the market... use them as a support while I started my business back in Ireland" (Blake).

For all our participants, social capital emerged as a significant form of capital in the repatriation and reestablishment process, and the form of social capital they benefited from the most, unsurprisingly, came from their professional and educational networks.

"We get on very well... We all went to college together... we all had a wealth of different experiences, and we worked for lots of different companies. So, we decided to come back [home], pool our talents and set up our own company" (Michael).

The small size of the Irish domestic audience, with its negligible local market potential (Ryan et al., 2019), which was an initial push factor, was a legacy issue that still faced the repatriated animators. This constraint demanded the exploitation, and expansion, of the participant's broader international social capital.

“My main connections are in the States... established from working there for three years... [when] Warner Brothers closed its doors to animation and everybody I know there went to other studios... so all of a sudden you know a bunch of people at Pixar, at DreamWorks, at Sony... I go back there every year and meet them...work with them... get their feedback. We keep that network alive and through that, we also meet new people” (Blake).

Following the highlighted successes of the social capital acquired by these successful individuals, we next underline the importance of cultural capital in this setting.

Repatriates mobilization of cultural capital

Cultural capital includes, among other forms, culture, education, professional skills, and languages, all forms of capital which can promote social mobility in society (Bourdieu, 1986). For example, having English as a native language enabled the Irish expatriates to navigate socio-cultural and structural challenges they may have faced in the UK or the USA (Al Ariss and Syed, 2011). In addition, cultural capital developed pre-expatriation, such as knowledge of Ireland, its culture, and the animation business environment, and also remained as symbolic capital for the repatriated animators.

“When we were in Ballyfermot we got to know the industry, who was were... what companies were working on. It was a small closely knit industry... We really did know all the players... It stood to us” (Thomas).

Skills and experience are other forms of cultural capital the participants mobilized when they were repatriated to Ireland. This cultural capital, gained from working in the host country's animation companies, was mobilized as symbolic capital in re-establishing the participants and setting up a business in the home country's animation sector.

“People want to work with people they know. Our international experience was key, it helped us understand the business, the industry culture, what the industry actually wants and how to tap into those niche opportunities. On setting up, we have kind of went step by step, for example, we started with the short film which was 3 min, then the Variety show which was ten min then after that Miss Remarkable which was 30mins, then a TV series... so it's grown step by step”.

(Lola)

The Irish animators are “punching well above their weight” (Jimmy), internationally achieving many prestigious awards, proving industry legitimacy. The winning of international awards has heightened the industry's reputation internationally and increased international commissions and sales. This is cultural capital in operation, gaining symbolic capital status. As Peter simply described it, “Getting awards, well, that helps... doors were opened by the awards”. The winning of awards helped build the international reputation of both the individual company and the overall Irish animation sector, and with its coopetition ethos, each award was seen to be for the common good of all [Irish] players in the field (O’Gorman and Evers, 2011). Reputation is another important form of cultural capital that the participants valued highly. As Raymond states, within the industry, it is all about reputation.

“Word of mouth is huge. It's all about reputation, even when we started to do this project... AN Other got a call from Cartoon Network asking about us...”

Disney got a call from Cartoon Network. Thank God they all said good things.

The usual cliché ‘You’re only as good as your last gig’” (Raymond).

Finally, an unusual form of cultural capital was mobilized by our participants, which is the reputation Irish people have for being good storytellers. The Irish are understood to have a unique storytelling talent, bolstering their industries’ success in the form of cultural capital. However, Paul highlights the importance of having the skills and experience to live up to this reputation.

“When you are abroad, you are always viewed as the ‘Irish storyteller’, this is a big bonus, this is how we are viewed. You are seen to have the artistic skills to do the job, but you have to have the work ethic to back it” (Paul).

Having unpacked the repatriated SIEs’ mobilization of varied forms of cultural capital acquired, we next examine the role played by economic capital in the repatriates’ career journey. Bourdieu established a connection between possessing economic capital and accumulating cultural capital, which is created “through the mediation of the time needed for acquisition” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 246). Financial capital can provide the time and opportunity needed to accumulate cultural capital.

Repatriates mobilization of economic capital

There was a negligible amount of repatriated economic capital mobilized in the repatriation of the SIEs. However, knowledge of and access to support and funding in the home country played a substantial role in the re-establishment of the participants in the Irish animation sector. Macro-level supports, such as new Irish government tax incentives, played a large part in revitalizing the Irish animation industry. Today’s industry heavily depends on an incentive scheme known

as Section 481, which commenced in 1997 and is designed to promote investment in Irish film, animation etc. by granting individual investors tax relief on their investment. As Tate states “it’s what saved us [the Irish Animation industry]”. It was this resurgent Irish animation industry along with the new and many opportunities it offered, that acted as a significant pull factor in the SIEs’ decisions to repatriate home. The SIEs use of their home country's cultural capital (knowledge of Irish government supports and the animation sector) to source economic capital was a vital aspect of the repatriated SIEs development of new business. Aaron also emphasizes the role in government support for the animation industry played in her repatriation decision.

“Section 481 (tax incentives) was the incentive, I knew I could still work with these amazing companies and those that I had connected with abroad, but work from home (Ireland), it was the best of both worlds” (Aaron).

This conversion of social capital into economic capital is the opposite of how previous studies found that economic capital, is “more easily converted into cultural, social or symbolic capital than vice versa” (Chudzikowski and Mayrhofer, 2011, p.23). The limited size of the Irish animation sector means that the Irish animation sector cannot support all the animation that is produced, so the participants needed to source international funding and support to co-produce most of their projects. To qualify for EU funding, co-produced projects need participants from a minimum of three EU countries.

“if we wanted to raise a budget of between four or five million or six million to make a feature... you just can’t get all that money in Ireland. The domestic market isn’t strong enough. You have to create international partners to raise money... and that is where your previous connection or previous job gives you the advantage” (Peter).

The SIEs use of their international social capital to source economic capital was a vital aspect of the repatriated SIEs access to international funding for the development of new businesses and projects, highlighting the relational aspect of the various forms of capital.

Repatriates' habitus

A mindset for conducting business, a form of habitus (Bourdieu, 1980), has become ingrained in the Irish animation industry, where strong forms of collaboration, cooperation, and reciprocity exist between the players within the Irish animation field. Habitus is socialized norms or tendencies that guide behavior and thinking. Operating below levels of consciousness, habitus is guided by past experiences and influences future actions (Al Ariss and Syed, 2011). Several interviewees describe this as where, give and take is expected among the industry members, it is given within the industry. This mindset has led to the near-total absence of opportunistic behavior, which could be detrimental to the other players in the field (Ryan et al., 2019). The participants highlighted how one individual firm's achievement and reputation led to a positive reputation for the whole Irish animation sector, as one interviewee reflected,

“It reflects well on us. Any company that performs and does well is seen to raise the profile of every company” (Drew).

This mindset appears to have led to “a common appreciation amongst network members of their duty of care to all network members” (Ryan et al., 2019, pp.18). Vital to the strong collaboration, cooperation and reciprocity that exists within the Irish animation sector is an “appreciation that any benefits of sharing valuable, relevant, and timely international market information and intelligence strongly outweighed corollary advantages of an isolated “go-it-

alone” international market development approach” (Ryan et al., 2019, pp.16). An essential player in the creation of this coopetition within the industry has been “Animation Ireland”, a government-funded representative body, that cultivated close relationships with and among the animation sector in Ireland.

In conclusion, the findings and discussion suggest that these Irish Born Global SIEs have maximized each opportunity to utilize various forms of capital to begin, grow and succeed in pursuing successful career agendas. The following section concludes the chapter.

Contribution, limitations and further research opportunities

In this study, we have highlighted the impacts of the capital (economic, cultural and social) utilization of repatriated SIEs. By adopting Bourdieu’s (1986) perspective of capital, we have captured the impacts on the career and business motivations, actions and outcomes of the various forms of capital mobilized and transferred by a unique set of repatriated Irish SIEs.

Research in careers, international business and HRM, and in particular, studies on self-initiated expatriation, have tended to neglect SIE repatriation (Ellis et al., 2020), as well as the capital mobilization of repatriated SIEs in their home country (Crowley-Henry et al., 2016; Israel et al., 2019). While there are some studies on the importance of capital in developing and growing Born Capital firms, such as the Ryan et al. (2019) study on social capital in Born Globals, we found an almost complete lack of studies on repatriated SIEs’ utilization of capital in creating and shaping successful careers and home country based Born Global firms. In addressing these lacunas, this paper makes an important contribution to careers, international business and HRM literature by unpacking the impact of repatriated SIE capital in their Born Global firms. The study has unpacked how repatriated SIE capital (social, cultural and economic) enhanced the ability of the Born Global firms to overcome barriers to international

market entry, and in turn, helped to shorten and/or avoid much of the standard and drawn-out competitive internationalization processes.

Our review of the extant careers and expatriation literature also revealed the more common utilization of human capital in unpacking and understanding international careers. However, the review also revealed the drawback of depending solely on human capital, with several researchers finding human capital, on its own, insufficient for fully unpacking expatriate career decisions and experiences. This study provides a more holistic view of the participants' careers by utilizing Bourdieu's forms of capital, which broadens our findings on the capital mobilization of repatriated SIEs as compared to a study that solely utilized human capital. This multilevel and relational approach, enabled by our use of the various forms of capital, permitted the study to move beyond the micro-individual emphasis of much of the extant SIE literature (Al Ariss and Syed, 2011), and create an understanding of the micro, meso and macro impacts on and of SIE capital and its mobilization upon repatriation. By adopting Bourdieu's (1986) forms of capital, we have portrayed the effect on career/business motivations, actions and outcomes of the various forms of capital mobilized and transferred by this unique set of repatriated Irish SIEs.

While the contemporary career is recognized as being, to some extent, boundaryless (Arthur, 1994), this study has highlighted the barriers and boundaries that exist in careers. Certain forms of capital, such as the social capital from home-based education networks, were lessened or negated by the act of expatriation and played a limiting role in the SIEs career journey. While our sample enjoyed access to the open labour of the EU and UK, the influence of US immigration policies was restrictive for some of the SIEs. However, the international importance and value of transnational forms of capital, such as internationally recognized degrees and international networks, were strongly highlighted by all interviewees.

Finally, our study highlights the importance of context (geographical, temporal, socio-political) when examining international mobility. The contexts of the international animation industry, Born Global firms in a small market along with the socio-political context of travelling and working in the EU and USA all played strong and crucial influences on the career and business choices of the repatriated SIEs.

Our study has some limitations. It is worth noting that our sample is homogeneous, as all interviewees were Irish citizens, which added to the SIEs agency (freedom of movement in the EU) and removed certain career barriers (recognition of credentials across the EU) faced by non-EU citizens. The capital mobilization experiences of non-EU or a more diverse sample may be very different, and they may encounter more or varied barriers to their capital mobilization. As a qualitative approach was adopted in this study, the findings are not designed to be generalized to the wider population of SIEs. However, as a qualitative study, this was never an aim. Our sampling technique meant our sample companies, as they are in operation for several years, were all, to some extent, successful, and the owners' stories could be seen as more an exemplar of successful SIEs business owners.

Future research on born global SIEs could focus on different contexts, in other industries and other national cultures. Such research could usefully attempt to test our repatriated SIEs careers framework by conducting further studies in these varieties of settings and beyond the unique and distinctive idiosyncratic industry included in this study.

Conclusion

This article shares the findings from an in-depth qualitative study on Irish Born Global SIEs operating within the animation industry. Considering the main conditions that define an SIE (Cerdin & Selmer, 2014), and Born Global firm (Oviatt and McDougal, 1994) and by adopting Bourdieu's (1986) perspective of capital, we have summarized the main forms of capital used

to navigate careers and ultimately establish new enterprises in a unique and novel industry space.

While many studies have examined SIEs, there is limited attention given to how acquired international capital is assigned and used as an instrument for shaping successful careers and award-winning initiatives. The digital animation industry grouping in Ireland is idiosyncratic in that it features co-operation rather than competition as the traditional business culture. This is because digital animation firms individually pitch rather than competitively tender for commissions and thus, they can collectively share technical knowledge and industry contacts (Ryan et al, 2019). All in all, this converts into accumulated social capital, as carefully planned by these key players to build successful firms with the support of solid network connections, thus futureproofing repatriated SIEs.

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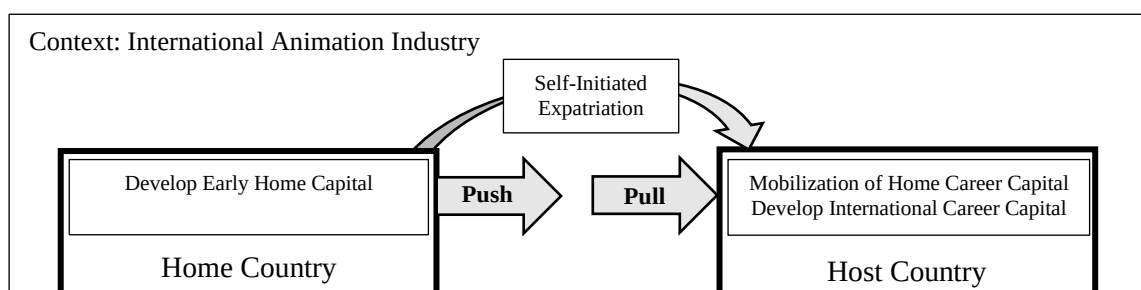
Figures

Figure 1: SIE Criteria



Source: (Cerdin and Selmer, 2014)

Figure 2: Repatriated SIEs Career Path



Tables

Table 1: Born Global SIE Profile

Pseudonym	Education	Year of Inception	Year of Internationalization	International Markets	Origin of Founders	Expatriation Host Country	Years Expatriated	No of Employees
Jordan	Degree	2003	2005	Canada, Denmark, Hungary, the UK, Sweden	Irish	Czech Rep.	2 years	<20
Lola	Degree	2003	2005	Canada, Denmark, Hungary, the UK, Sweden	Irish	Germany UK	2 years and 4 months	<20
Blake	Degree & Specialized Certificate	2002	2003	Australia, Austria, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the UK, the USA, Spain, Sweden	Irish	USA	3 years	<20
Raymond	Degree & Specialized Certificate	2000	2000	Australia, Canada, the UK, the USA	Irish	USA	1 year and 6 months	100+
Drew	Degree (Incomplete)	1997	1997	Holland, the UK, the USA, Singapore	Irish	USA	3 years	20-50
Paul	Degree & Degree	1999	1999	Belgium, France, Germany, the UK, the USA	Irish	UK	1 year and 4 months	100+
Thomas	Degree	1999	1999	Belgium, France, Germany, the UK, the USA	Irish	UK	2 years	100+

Tate	Degree & Masters	2008	2010	Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, the UK	Irish	UK	1 year	<20
Michael	Degree	2002	2002	Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, France, Holland, Iceland, India, Norway, the UK, the USA, Slovenia	Irish	USA	2 years	20-50
Aaron	Degree	2002	2002	Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, France, Holland, Iceland, India, Norway, the UK, the USA, Slovenia	Irish	France	2 years	20-50
Jimmy	Degree & Masters	2002	2002	Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, France, Holland, Iceland, India, Norway, the UK, the USA, Slovenia	Irish	USA	4 years	20-50
Gavin	Diploma	2004	2004	Canada, Germany, the UK, the USA	Irish	UK Australia	2 years	<20
Source: (Created by Authors, 2023)								