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Argonauts and Icaruses: Social networks and dynamics of nascent international entrepreneurs

Abstract: Drawing on Bourdieu's theory of practice, we consider internationalization as a process of field crossing and apply this framework to nascent international entrepreneurs. The analysis of 37 interviews with French entrepreneurs, managers, and support providers in China allows identifying two types of international entrepreneurs: (1) "Fallen Icaruses", unable to incorporate and exhibit a global habitus and who fall back to the home field, and (2) "Global Argonauts", incorporating and exhibiting a global habitus and who proceed with internationalization. Our findings show that social networks can be hostile to newcomers and that incumbents in those networks first assess newcomers' "compatibility". We posit that the success of international initiatives by entrepreneurs depends on their ability to cross and fit into different "fields", and to develop various forms of social relationships in those fields.

Keywords: International entrepreneurs, social networks, social relationships, Bourdieu, theory of practice.

Highlights:

* This study focuses on the social networks of nascent international entrepreneurs in China.
* We analyze the process of field crossing according to Bourdieu's theory of practice.
* Two types of entrepreneurs are identified: "Fallen Icaruses" and "Global Argonauts".
* Their success depends on their ability to develop social relationships in China.

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship literature has traditionally focused on domestic development and the idea of entrepreneurs, managers, and leaders embedded into a single local or national economic, institutional and social context marked by a specific logic (Birley, 1985; Davidsson & Honig, 2003; Maksimov, Lu Wang, & Luo, 2017; Vincent & Pagan, 2019). Dahl and Sorenson (2009) develop the term "embedded entrepreneur", i.e. someone rooted firmly in place who can navigate the local scene, understands the history of the place, trusted by the community and with a certain level of social attachment, and who can thus benefit from "the advantages of the local in terms of connections and private information, in the ability to raise funds, to recruit employees, to position products and services, and to sell to customers" (p. 172). Conversely, Saxenian (2006) describes entrepreneurs as modern-day Argonauts roaming the globe in search of their own golden fleeces, seeking opportunities throughout the world, creating and developing entrepreneurial ventures across borders, and naturally fitting into various environments.

With regards to the latter, an emerging body of literature on transnational (Drori, Honig, & Wright, 2009; Patel & Conklin, 2009) and international entrepreneurship (Cavusgil & Knight, 2015; Onkelinx, Manolova, & Edelman, 2016; Reuber, Knight, Liesch, & Zhou, 2018) has started to identify, analyze and discuss a new entrepreneurial or business "elite", able to integrate and develop in diverse socially embedded international environments or one emerging global field, transcending national boundaries. An increasing number of studies focus their attention on international entrepreneurs, defined as individuals identifying and acting upon cross-border opportunities (Coviello, 2015; Knight & Liesch, 2016; Oviatt & McDougall, 2005). Some authors analyze individual characteristics (demographic, social, psychological, etc.) of such entrepreneurs (Onkelinx, Manolova, & Edelman, 2016) and their capacity to establish social relations and

networks beyond national borders and to develop international business ventures, groups, or "communities" gathered around joint internationalization projects. It has even been suggested that international entrepreneurs can choose and manage the international networks to which they belong (Lindstrand & Melén Hånell, 2017; Slotte-Kock & Coviello, 2010) – or at least [born global firms] "…tend to be very effective in building global networks of collaborators" (Cavusgil & Knight, 2015, p. 10).

The home country's socio-cultural context influences internationalization by early-stage entrepreneurs (Liu, Li, & Xue, 2011). As part of this context, informal institutions (culture, social structures, and networks, work routines, etc.) support the sharing of cultural values, social expectations, and perceptions of appropriate actions in a specific society or culture (Bruton, Ahlstrom, & Li, 2010). As such, they can either support or inhibit social values and norms associated with entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial propensity (Baughn & Neupert, 2003; Baughn, Cao, Le, Lim, & Neupert, 2006; Stephan, Uhlaner, & Stride 2015; Stephan & Uhlaner, 2010). Muralidharan and Pathak (2017) demonstrate that the home country's socio-cultural context (societal social desirability of entrepreneurship, societal performance orientation, and societal self-expression) affects internationalization by nascent international entrepreneurs. However, the micro-social processes that lead to such propensity or inhibition to create and develop a new international venture require more investigation.

Little is known about the social mechanisms leading to increased or decreased international entrepreneurial activities (Patel & Conklin, 2009) as well as the dynamics of essential network expansion (Chandra & Wilkinson, 2017; Ellis, 2011) even though the role of networks and social capital internationalization as such have received considerable attention (Coviello & Munro, 1997; Ellis, 2011; Coviello, 2015). Further, international entrepreneurship literature focusing on human capital has mostly studied demographic variables such as age, education, and prior international

experience (Coviello, 2015), and there is a need to better understand the characteristics and traits of successful international entrepreneurs. This is important as entrepreneurs are key drivers behind internationalization and subsequent development in international markets (Ciravegna, Kundu, Kuivalainen, & Lopez, 2019). To explore this gap and following Bourdieu's theory of practice, we posit that the success of international initiatives by entrepreneurs depends on their ability to cross and fit into different "fields" and to develop various forms of social relationships ("capital") in those fields. They can either establish a balance between domestic (home country) and foreign (host country) habitus – "bifocality" – or incorporate the global habitus of an emerging global (borderless) field (Bourdieu, 2000). Bourdieu's theory of practice, as well as other relational theories, essentially explain how different actors link to the contexts in which they are embedded (Drakopoulou Dodd, Wilson, Bhaird, & Bisignano, 2018; Outsios & Kittler, 2018; Terjesen & Elan, 2009; Vincent & Pagan, 2019). Extending Bourdieu's field concept, we suggest that the crossing of fields, i.e. the entrepreneurs' movement from a domestic field to an international or even global field, should give rise to several issues and conflicts between established actors and newcomers. The objectives of this article are twofold: (1) to identify major characteristics of nascent international entrepreneurs and (2) to show how social networks can strengthen or weaken the entrepreneurs' internationalization path.

Social networks are defined as informal interpersonal relationships based on trust, mutual obligations, and the satisfaction of their members' social expectations. They differ from business networks, which are formal inter-organizational relationships based on a logic relating to economic expectations (Huggins, 2010). The empirical study is based on 37 interviews conducted with French entrepreneurs in China. The novelty of our research is to apply Bourdieu's theory of practice to analyze the development of social networks of international entrepreneurs. Bourdieu's framework provides an integrated framework, which has been remarkably generative of new

research insights (Dobbin, 2008) and can be helpful in international entrepreneurship, since "…there are virtually no studies in IE that seek to characterize entrepreneurs as a holistic bundle of identity, knowledge, and networks" (Sarasvathy, Kumar, York, & Bhagavatula, 2014, p. 76).

Our study provides three important contributions to IE (international entrepreneurship) and in general IB (international business) literature by increasing the understanding of the cognitive dimension of social networks in the internationalization of small firms. First, our findings allow identifying two types of international entrepreneurs: (1) "Fallen Icaruses" who are frustrated escapees, unable to incorporate and exhibit the dominant global habitus, and who fall back to the home field and (2) "Global Argonauts" who are nascent global entrepreneurs incorporating and exhibiting a global habitus and who proceed with internationalization. Second, we show the divisions arising between these two categories depending on their habitus. Those divisions lead to different performances in nascent entrepreneurs' efforts to internationalize and, consequently, we tackle the issue of the usefulness of social networks. Third, whilst so far, most of the literature has had a rather utilitarian perspective, usually considering networks as friendly, cooperative groups of people willing to help their peers (Zhou, Wu, & Luo, 2006), we show that social networks can be hostile to newcomers. Indeed, our findings suggest that incumbents in those networks assess newcomers' "compatibility". Entrepreneurs deemed able, matching the incumbents' habitus then get into and stay in the game, those who do not are rejected. We thus uncover the impact of potentially colliding habitus between members of international social networks and discuss several implications to the existence of "global" or "cosmopolitan" entrepreneurs and managers contrasting with other "would-be" international entrepreneurs. At the micro-level, the study helps us to understand how entrepreneurs can overcome challenges related to the liability of outsidership (Chen, Shaheer, Yi, & Li, 2019; Johanson & Vahlne, 2009; Stoyanov, Stoyanova, & Woodward, 2018).

2. Theoretical Framework

Research in international entrepreneurship investigates the "process of creatively discovering and exploiting opportunities that lie outside a firm's domestic markets in the pursuit of competitive advantage" (Zahra & George, 2002, p. 261). International entrepreneurs are considered as individuals identifying and acting upon cross-border opportunities (Coviello, 2015; Knight & Liesch, 2016; Oviatt & McDougall, 2005). To discover, acquire and mobilize the resources needed to exploit such opportunities, create and develop new business ventures in foreign markets, international entrepreneurs try and integrate socially embedded environments by mobilizing and extending social networks (Coviello, 2006; Ellis, 2011; Jones & Coviello, 2005). This study draws and extends on novel works by Drori, Honig & Wright (2009) and Patel and Conklin (2009) by applying Bourdieu's theory of practice, and, eventually, enables us to study cognitive aspects of international entrepreneurs' social capital.

2.1. Field, Capital, Habitus and other Bourdieuan Concepts

Surprisingly, citations of Bourdieu's work are scarce in the international business and entrepreneurship literatures (Drori, 2009). In this study, we mainly focus on three fundamental concepts (field, capital, habitus) and associated terms (practice, incorporation, symbolic violence) which are used to develop our theoretical framework.

Bourdieu considers that individuals and groups are located and evolve in a social space or "field" defined as a "multi-dimensional space constructed on differentiation or distribution principles, constituted by the set of properties active in the social universe under consideration, that is, conferring force or power on their possessor in that universe" (Bourdieu, 1992, p. 229). Bourdieu

considers that a social space encompasses various dimensions (economic, cultural, etc.) associated with different types of resources or "capital". The field structure, that is the distribution and value of these capitals, depends on the "habitus", that is "a system of acquired dispositions functioning on the practical level as categories of perception and assessment or as classificatory principles as well as being the organizing principles of action" (Bourdieu, 1992, p. 229). An individual located in a certain field is endowed with different types of capital, whose "symbolic" value depends on the rules, norms, cognitive and perception schemes ("habitus") that define the field. By evolving in a certain field, an individual "embodies" the field habitus and develops more capital. Fields are the stage for constant "symbolic" struggles (the result of "symbolic violence", the imposition of meanings, values) between individuals ("agents") struggling to defend their position (dominants vs. dominated), their capital and impose their "doxa", their categories of perception and appreciation of the social world, their "sense of one's place" in the field.

2.2. A Bourdieuan Perspective on Internationalization

Drawing on Drori, Honig, and Wright (2009), Terjesen and Elam (2009), and Patel and Conklin's (2009) seminal work on the role of habitus and social networks in transnational entrepreneurship (transnational entrepreneurs are migrants who create social fields that cross national boundaries for business-related purposes), we consider that Bourdieu's perspective can be applied fruitfully to international entrepreneurship. Our first insight is to consider internationalization as a passage, a crossing from one field to another. Bourdieu mentions the possibility of a passage "from the national to the international field" (Bourdieu, 2005, p. 223) and notes that "the unification of the economic fields tends [...] to pitch all social agents into an economic game for which they are not equally prepared and equipped, culturally and economically". According to Bourdieu, we see that a "departicularization" and a "delocalization"

of fields involves "mechanisms that help to bring all social processes relevant to a higher level of universality by snatching the particularities (linguistic, cultural, and also economic) associated with their local specificity" (2005, p. 274) and promote the emergence of a "global economic field" (2005, p. 229).

We interpret internationalization as a departure from a domestic ("home") field marked by local specificities, dynamics, shared values, rules, norms, etc., that is, in Bourdieu's words, a domestic ("home") habitus, and an integration into a global field marked by a certain "universalism" or "cosmopolitanism" (defined in contrast with "local specificities"). This conceptualization induces to question the field dynamics, "positions" and evolutions of entrepreneurs and firms in those fields, depending on their integration of the fields' respective rules (habitus). Bourdieu suggests that the "national capital", resources, and advantages derived from one's membership in a particular nation may affect firm competitiveness. Our interpretation is that firms, embodied in their entrepreneurs, develop and mobilize different types (economic, cultural, social, etc.) and forms (objectified – financial capital, diplomas, club membership cards and access to professional events, etc. and incorporated – "business sense", sense of "do's and don'ts", etc.) of domestic (entrepreneurial) capital. Their value can be recognized in the national field as a result of the integration of a habitus, but may not be identically valued in other fields (e.g. foreign fields, global field) and thus have a positive or negative effect on the actor's position in those fields.

A key to understanding international entrepreneurship as the crossing from one field to another by mobilizing capital in these fields is to study the ability of internationalizing entrepreneurs to penetrate the "host" field, that is, to incorporate its habitus and consequently develop new forms of capital. In other words, international entrepreneurship consists in converting an initially national ("home") entrepreneurial capital into an international ("host") entrepreneurial or perhaps a global entrepreneurial capital ("conversion strategies", Bourdieu, 1972).

The perspective we develop in this research considers internationalization as a transition process (transition from one field to another), involving the mobilization and struggle between different actors for various types and forms of capital. Resources, actual or virtual, can accrue directly from the entrepreneur's characteristics and experience to another individual or a group, or, indirectly, by virtue of possessing a durable social network. Our perspective depends on the entrepreneur's ability to carry out such a process, that is to develop lasting relationships with individuals providing access to resources necessary to pursue an international entrepreneurial opportunity, his/her ability to incorporate the habitus of actors ("agents") endowed with resources and his/her ability to be recognized by them as legitimate.

The joint consideration of the concepts of field, capital, and habitus places the subject in a set of relationships interacting in a social space responding to a certain logic. Entrepreneurs' efforts to develop international ventures, that is discover and pursue an entrepreneurial opportunity across borders, are included in a set of complex social relationships. Some relations may foster the discovery of opportunities and the initial mobilization of resources (e.g. information) in the domestic ("home") field. Some relations may enable nascent international entrepreneurs to meet and integrate into a network of "internationalizing" (other nascent international entrepreneurs, internationalization accompaniment agencies, etc.) and internationalized actors (experienced international entrepreneurs, expatriates, international managers, etc.). Besides, the habitus that defines domestic, international, and global fields may be different, if not opposed. As a consequence, different types of capital (human and cultural, economic, social, and other symbolic capitals) that together form the entrepreneur's capital in the domestic field ("home" country) are likely to hold different value, relevance, and usefulness in other fields. Skills required to integrate into "boundary-spanning networks" (Kostova & Roth, 2003) may be very different from skills required to integrate into domestic networks (Ellis, 2011). Social network tie-based international

opportunities can be seen to lead to exchanges that are constrained by geographic and psychic distance (Ellis, 2011) – and entrepreneurs need to find a way to overcome these barriers.

Our study of internationalization as an entrepreneurial process, embodied by an entrepreneur crossing from a domestic field to an international field, considers jointly the entrepreneur's initial personal capital, its different types, and the interaction between this capital and the network of relations mobilized by the entrepreneur when attempting to move from field to field. This interaction between the entrepreneur and other actors should eventually translate the initial domestic capital into an international (specific to the host country) or global (specific to a hypothetical global, trans-national field) capital. In other words, we propose to explain internationalization as the development of an international entrepreneurial capital, more or less favored by the interaction between a domestic entrepreneurial capital and multidimensional effects of the entrepreneur's personal network. A summary of the various concepts developed and extended from the existing literature is presented in Table 1.

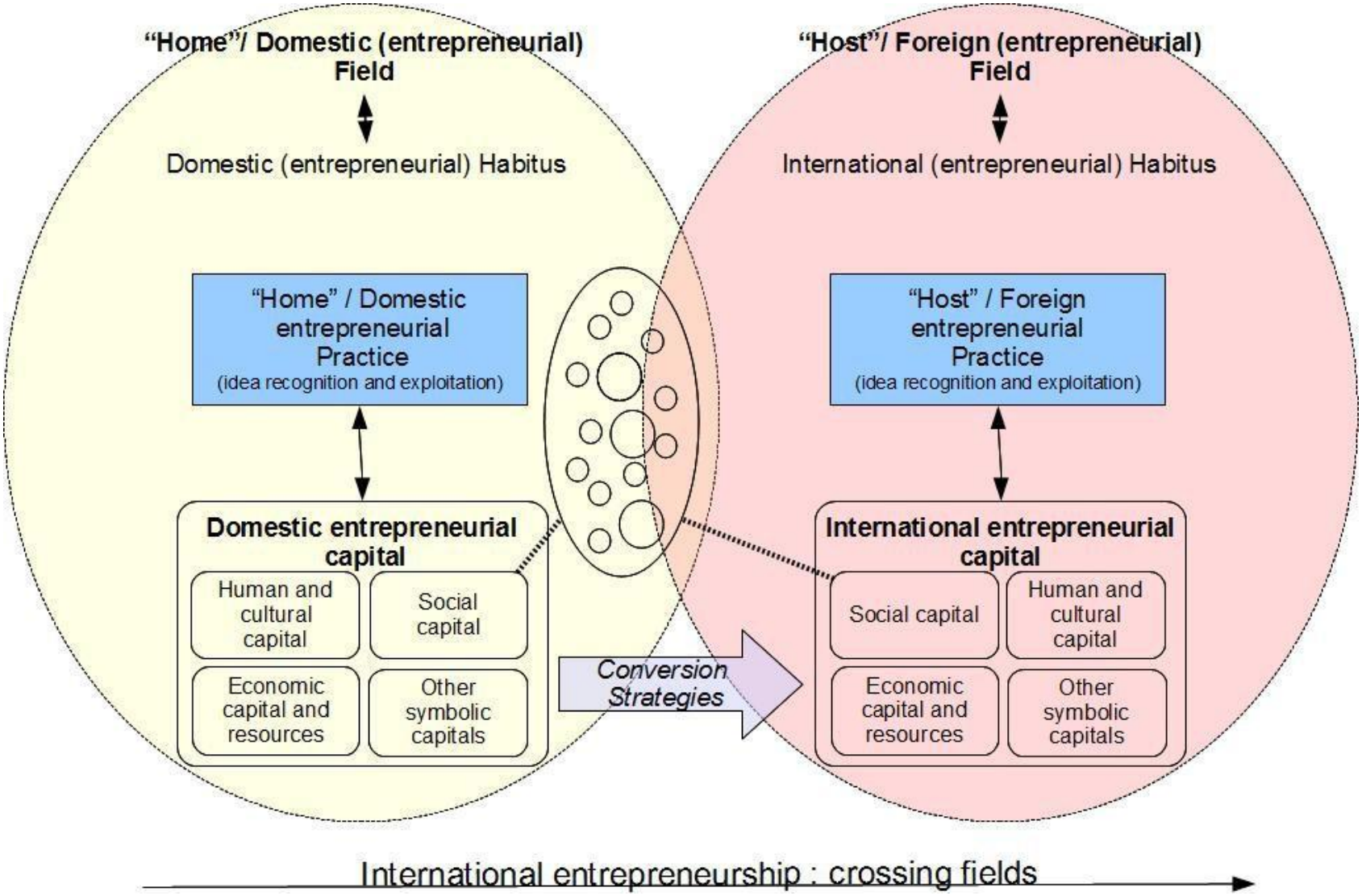
Table 1: Glossary of concepts

Concepts	**Definition(s)**
Domestic habitus	System of durable dispositions structuring the domestic/national / "home" field, its practices, and collective representations.
International habitus	System of durable dispositions structuring the foreign / "host" field, its practices, and collective representations.
Global habitus	System of durable dispositions structuring the global (trans-national) field, its practices, and collective representations.
Cosmopolitanism	Habitus and discourse related to having worldwide rather than limited/national scope of activity. "World citizen" ethos and identification to a global / trans-national space. Similar to the manifestation of global habitus.
Domestic/home entrepreneurial field	Structured social space of agents/actors/individuals performing an entrepreneurial/business activity on domestic/national / "home" territory.
International entrepreneurial field	Structured social space of agents/actors/individuals performing an entrepreneurial/business activity on foreign / international / "host" territory.
Global entrepreneurial field (inspired by Sassen, 2007)	Supposedly emerging structured social space of agents/actors/individuals performing an entrepreneurial/business activity on a global scale, regardless of national borders.
Bifocality (Patel & Conklin, 2009)	"A dual frame of reference through which entrepreneurs constantly compare their situation in their "home" society to their situation in the "host" society abroad".

Levels and dimensions of network analysis identified in previous studies (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998) allow us to consider a wide range of interactions and effects of domestic entrepreneurial capital (relational, resources, and cognitive dimensions) on internationalization efforts, that is, the integration into an extra-national social field. On the one hand, actors incorporating an international habitus should be able to acquire various resources through personal

relationships in the host country field and to develop an international entrepreneurial capital that would enable internationalization to move forward. On the other hand, entrepreneurs who do not incorporate such habitus would be unsuitable and probably rejected from the international field. The internationalization process, as an attempt to move from one field to another, can be regarded as a process of network mobilization and socialization. The process can thus contribute to establish or maintain distinctions between actors endowed with different kinds of capital (entrepreneurs with strong international experience vs. newcomers, individuals from large companies vs. small business entrepreneurs, etc.), ultimately affecting the success or failure of internationalization attempts. Our theoretical framework of internationalization as a passage from one field to another is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Internationalization as crossing fields, incorporating habitus and converting capitals



Our conceptualization extends existing contributions on the opportunities that social ties represent for international entrepreneurship and firm internationalization (Coviello, 2006; Ellis, 2011; Wong & Ellis, 2002; Zhou, Wu, & Luo, 2006) by identifying the constraints and "dark sides" of social networks. We question the fact that any kind of capital is necessarily conducive to international development. Does any form of domestic entrepreneurial capital (a set of relevant, useful, and recognized resources in the domestic entrepreneurial field), developed according to a domestic habitus (durable dispositions slowly incorporated through socialization in the national entrepreneurial field) represent an asset for development beyond the domestic field? The reasons and effects, positive or negative, of such domestic entrepreneurial capital (depending on a specific habitus) on the entrepreneur's position and evolution in another field remain unexplored and are the subject of our empirical research.

3. Methods

3.1. Research Design and Context

This research follows a critical realist perspective (Bhaskar, 1998), "typically involving a qualitative, in-depth study of individual agents in their causal contexts" (Sayer, 1992, p. 243) and providing a "contextualized explanation", as advocated by Welch, Piekkari, Plakoyiannaki, and Paavilainen-Mäntymäki (2011), and Welch and Piekkari (2017). Our study focuses on the entrepreneur's social relationships when he/she first approaches the field of foreign and global actors, the reactions from those actors, and the consequences in terms of internationalization. We were particularly interested in understanding events and behaviors as experienced by actors from their own perspective (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Investigating a dynamic phenomenon such as

international entrepreneurship calls for a process theory approach (Langley, 1999), and we followed Burgelman's (2011) suggestion to rely on "strategic inflection points" – here actors' initial international entrepreneurial activities (preparatory information meetings, first visits to China, debrief and follow-up meetings) – to determine the length of observation. We started our data collection with interviews of several key founders of the field (international support providers) and then observed the social dynamics in the field for a period of approximately three years, during which companies, entrepreneurs, and international support providers were particularly active in developing ties with China in response to government policies – a critical inflection point in the formation of the field. We used a qualitative methodology to develop a thorough understanding of interactions between individual and collective characteristics in their context. Our empirical study is based on 37 interviews conducted with French entrepreneurs as well as managers from various industries and support providers involved in the development of start-ups and SMEs in China. We intended to focus on the social networks and social capital of international managers, and how they may foster or hinder internationalization efforts. In the course of the research project, we realized that entrepreneurs and managers' perceptions and resulting behaviors formed a fundamental part of the process and certainly shaped incumbent actors' reactions and reception and, in turn, international new entrants' success or failure.

3.2. Data Sampling

Our empirical data comprise interviews, internal documents and communication materials, and meetings with nascent international entrepreneurs and managers (French entrepreneurs entering the Chinese market), international support providers, and other actors deemed relevant by interviewees.

Respondents were identified through a mixed positional (based on status and function), purposeful (Patton, 2014), and reputational (identified by other respondents), snowball sampling (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998) approach. We initially identified five interviewees from previous contacts we had in China and from the list of associations established by the French Chamber of Commerce and Industry in China and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At the end of each interview, we invited respondents to name persons deemed relevant for business development in China. This first set of interviews allowed us to access several clubs of internationalizing entrepreneurs and to discover the existence of a "small world" revolving around public and private internationalization support providers. This mixed sampling process enabled us to identify a set of nascent international entrepreneurs. Those individuals had undertaken at least one gestation activity to explore and/or exploit an entrepreneurial opportunity in China (e.g. information gathering with partners, existing or potential customers; education, classes, and training on starting or developing business in China). Appendix A reports the composition of the sample of interviewees, broken down by position, sector, gender, company tenure, workplace location, and international experience.

In this research project, we followed the unfolding internationalization process from the beginning, for a period of three years. Studies based on established firms often deal with questions related to the early stages of international development. Their approach suffers from several limitations (Davidsson & Honig, 2003), none the least being a success bias as results are based solely on firms that survived the creation process. Our research design aims to overcome that bias by identifying and following entrepreneurs from a very early stage, observing both successful and unsuccessful attempts and eventually analyzing some reasons for failure.

3.3. Data Collection

The first author interviewed 37 people with semi-structured interviews, each interview lasting from one to six hours, in France and China. We conducted the interviews in two different languages (French and English), depending on the mother tongue and language skills of the interviewee. All interviewees were personally involved in nascent international entrepreneurial endeavors. (Nascent) entrepreneurs were people who answered "Yes" to the question "Are you alone or with others, currently trying to start a new international business, including any self-employment or selling any goods or services abroad?" (Arenius & Minniti, 2005). Support providers and managers contributing to nascent entrepreneurs' initiatives were people who answered "Yes" to the preliminary question "Over the past twelve months, have you done anything to help start a new business overseas, such as looking for equipment or a location, organizing a start-up team, working on a business plan, beginning to save money, or any other activity that would help your company or another launch a business abroad?". Respondents who answered negatively were not included in the sample.

We followed a story-telling approach (Czarniawska, 2004): interviewees were able to express their experiences, without too much guidance on the part of their interviewer. We used an interview guide, with questions and topics that had to be covered but the order in which questions were asked varied. The interview guide addressed three main topics: (1) personal and professional background and experience (domestic and international, in particular in China – travels, training, education, work experience, etc.); (2) creation and use of social networks for international development; (3) meaning given to these networks (social capital) for business purposes. All interviews opened with the same general prompt: "Can you please tell me why you decided to go to China?" This very frequently prompted interviewees to talk about their background and interest in China. The

interview guide also comprised a range of questions dealing with social networks and individuals' perceptions of people they met when trying to create or grow their business in China. The interview ended with a subjective assessment of the company's performance and development in China and an invitation to appoint other potentially relevant respondents.

Throughout the research project, the first author also made direct observations of meetings between entrepreneurs, managers, support providers, and other actors (information meetings, entrepreneurs' "get-togethers" before and after visits to China, etc.). The first author also remained in contact with some interviewees years after the interviews had been conducted. This proximity provided numerous opportunities for (4) informal follow-up discussions about our findings as well as respondents' development and trajectory, thereby improving research validity.

We also collected additional documents – company reports, communication brochures, internal documents, companies' or associations' newsletters, books published by participants or support providers, etc. – to triangulate the data and improve the internal research validity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2012). These documents provided interesting information on the companies' internationalization process but also their general understanding of specific issues, their relations to other actors in the field, their perceptions of China and Chinese people, and so forth. The research and data collection phases are described in Appendix B.

Interviews and additional documents were fully recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed. Over 1500 pages of interview transcripts, 300 pages of observations, and another 300 pages of secondary data were thereby collected and analyzed.

3.4. Data Analysis

We used NVivo qualitative data analysis software to code all interviews as well as documents and observations. Analyses were performed in two steps (Gioia et al., 2013). During the first round of coding (1st-order analysis), we assigned descriptive codes to all text passages that evoked activities and processes occurring before, during, or related to the internationalization endeavors. The initial coding was performed according to the broad categories covered in the interview guide and progressively enriched with informants' own terms: personal and professional background and experience, creation and use of social networks for international development; reactions of people met during the process, meaning given to these reactions; results and performance. A review and consolidation of these descriptive codes yielded an initial scheme with approximately 70 codes ("nodes" in NVivo's terms) that facilitated the comparison of topics across data sources. After the first round of coding, we began an iterative, axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 2008) – synthesizing and clustering first-order codes into higher-order themes. We moved back and forth between data and theory to capture what we had identified as the most empirically grounded and theoretically interesting factors relating to what goes through the international entrepreneur or manager's mind when he/she first approaches the field but also how interactions with other actors can influence his/her endeavors and vice versa. The final phase, theoretical coding, involved assessing the semantic relationships among the previous themes, a process that generated three overarching dimensions associated with the international entrepreneurial process and finally yielded a simplified, more abstract data structure, which is presented in Appendices C and D.

The data structure has six main second-order themes that we associated with three aggregate dimensions – "Habitus", "Field (crossing)" and "Internationalization" (success or failure) – that make up the basis of the emergent framework. It displays the ordering and structuring of the data showing illustrative quotes, codes, themes, and dimensions that capture the initial stages of the collective international entrepreneurial process. We aggregated the informant-based, first-order

codes into researcher-induced, second-order themes, which we further distilled into overarching theoretical dimensions, in line with Bourdieu's theory of practice (habitus and field crossing dynamics applied to internationalization).

4. Findings: Identifying Two Profiles of International Entrepreneurs

The analysis of the collected empirical data allowed identifying two profiles of international entrepreneurs, each one exhibiting different personal characteristics and habitus, developing divergent forms of capital in the domestic and international fields and, consequently, experiencing different performances in terms of internationalization: "Argonauts" successfully created or developed a new venture in China whereas "Icaruses" failed and returned home. Table 2 presents two archetypical international entrepreneurs of Argonauts and Icaruses.

		JBF (Argonaut)	**JYG (Icarus)**
Capital (other than social: human, economic, etc.) •Management education and competencies •Previous successes/failures •Risk avoidance	**HABITUS**	•"Grande Ecole" graduate, prestigious degrees •Over 10 years experience in executive positions, prestigious employers (in France) •Successfully managed subsidiaries/departments •Engineer and inventor (patents deposited) •Currently out of work ("waiting for more interesting offers")	•Pharmacist •No business education •Declares himself "recently divorced", "depressed", "tired of selling condoms and aspirin" •Saved a lot of money and now wants to enjoy life •Wants a "life change", declares he "has nothing to lose"
Domestic / International Orientation •IB competencies: IB education, language skills, international		•Early professional career in the U.S. •Years dealing with Chinese people •French and Chinese people are "competent", "professional"	•No professional experience abroad •Enjoys traveling abroad with relatives and friends •Did not know anything about China before meeting MJH and PAD (support providers)

experience (professional and personal) •International orientation •Perception of China / IB / Chinese people / foreigners •Perception of compatriots (French), entrepreneurs, and support providers		•Met during a business meeting organized by support providers •Support providers can help but JBF considers he "does not need them"	•Chinese people are "inscrutable" •French people are "self-centered", "public service is a plague", "millions of euros are wasted to support parasites"
Social Capital •"Quantity" of actors known – network size, wealth of ties •Resources provided by other actors – resource dimension •Strength of ties: duration, frequency, intimacy trust, friendship – relational dimension		•Strong "Grande Ecole" alumni network •Many relations with "executives in the automotive industry" •Meeting once a month with the "Grande Ecole" alumni services: "A [Grande Ecole] graduate can't remain unemployed!" •Network provides job offers, business opportunities, industry-related information, etc.	•Ran his own pharmacy, alone •Many loyal customers •Friend with "a few business owners" and "the city's servants" •Long-lasting ties with a few people met at the pharmacy •Share ideas and opinions about all sorts of things, not business
Collective / network dynamics • "Ease" or "unease" •Feeling welcome/unwelcome •Others' perceived benevolence/malevolence •Shared values •Shared visions •Shared languages •Shared stories/narratives		•Feels "comfortable" with other entrepreneurs, managers, etc. •Most people are willing to help •Considers he benefited from "Team France / French Team" 's support •China is a "collective project" •Explained in details how a [Grande Ecole] alumnus welcomed him and introduced him to potential employers/partners	•Disliked the French expatriates in China, "people pretending to be friendly but who do not care" •Enjoyed the cultural visits/sightseeing with friends (other French participants) •Contrasts "French bureaucrats" (negative elements) and "Chinese entrepreneurs" (positive elements) met in China • "Happy to go, happy to come back"
Results and performance •Global performance (proceed with internationalization/quit, etc.) •Liability of foreignness/newness/smallness		•Became a consultant for major French car manufacturers •Participated in the development of [French motorcycle manufacturer] in South-East Asia	•Sold his pharmacy •According to MJH, JYG is "enjoying life, here and there".

Table 2: Archetypal international entrepreneurs

4.1. "Fallen Icaruses": Entrepreneurs Oriented towards the Domestic Field

Fallen Icaruses were outsiders to the international business community, in China as in other parts of the world. Their initial idea to seek business and development opportunities in China was motivated by difficulties encountered in the domestic field (personal and professional issues, e.g. divorce, job loss, bankruptcy). These aspiring entrepreneurs benefited from friends, relatives, and relationships from previous work environments (e.g. former colleagues). They gathered around one or two individuals, friends, or professional relationships, promoting the international development of start-ups and SMEs on behalf of the city council or other local public authorities. These individuals provided aspiring international entrepreneurs with information, connections with foreign partners (mayor, economic services, and entrepreneurs from a sister city in China), international officials (e.g. diplomats), consultants, and experienced entrepreneurs or managers in China (international managers form large groups, foreign entrepreneurs in China, etc.). Fallen Icaruses had little personal international exposure before their internationalization attempts in China, even if some declared occasionally traveling abroad for recreational purposes, and spent their professional career in the "home" field. The home market is therefore perceived as crucial for the development of their companies, whereas international markets are considered with mixed enthusiasm and fear.

"*I find China quite fascinating but clearly I am already too busy in France to deal with this. […] We thought about hiring a youngster to do that but it's a hassle anyway*." FB

Fallen Icaruses possess substantial domestic entrepreneurial capital. Many of them exhibit significant management know-how (knowledge related to a specific industry and general management skills) after years of education and experience in the "home" entrepreneurial field (human and cultural capital in the "home" field). For example, many entrepreneurs boast about

past successful (and highly profitable) businesses, fair rewards for years of hard work, and specific personal skills. Some entrepreneurs graduated from French elite business, engineering, and art schools. Entrepreneurs also declare having connections with various domestic partners (clients, suppliers, and other business partners) developed by doing business in the home field (social capital in the "home" field) and some are part of professional associations.

"*I have been in this business for years and years. I have worked for all the big names around Paris, people know us and I know them.*" FR

However, this capital appears oriented towards the domestic ("home") field and irrelevant if not counter-productive in the international ("host") field (China). First, entrepreneurs insist on the "cultural" difference between themselves (i.e. French entrepreneurs) and their Chinese counterparts. Chinese entrepreneurs and potential partners are presented as fundamentally "different", "exotic", difficult to understand and to deal with. Second, entrepreneurs claim to be poorly considered and relatively ill-treated by other French actors (diplomats, economic mission staff, expatriates, etc.) contacted for support overseas.

"*We're told the Chinese are this and that, and it's true that they are quite inscrutable but I didn't find the French in China so welcoming either. Of course, the guys from the Chamber of Commerce and so on come to see us… it's their business! As for so-called "patriotism", don't make me laugh! It's every man for himself."* JYG

As a consequence, entrepreneurs proved weak in developing new ties either with Chinese partners or other foreign entrepreneurs and actors in China whereas some discovered common interests with "home" entrepreneurs met during joint internationalization initiatives and decided to join efforts back "home".

Despite strong support from domestic friends and supporting agencies, internationalization efforts, that is attempts to escape from the domestic field, failed and resulted in a fallback to the

home market (hence the name chosen to refer to these entrepreneurs). JYG is an archetype of these entrepreneurs (see Table 2).

4.2. "Global Argonauts": Entrepreneurs Oriented toward the International and Global Fields

Global Argonauts had no or little experience in the "host" field (China) but a strong personal experience in other foreign countries (studies, professional assignments, temporary or permanent migration, etc.). For example, one Iranian-born entrepreneur emigrated to France in her twenties and spent several years working in the Middle East. Another entrepreneur spent years studying then working in the U.S. before moving back to France to take over the family business. Their initial idea to approach China was typically motivated by a firm belief that:

"China represents a 'not-to-miss opportunity' and that, more generally, there is no reason to limit (their) scope to France or even Europe." MG

We note in the entrepreneurs' discourse a strong emphasis on "globalization", considered as "an erosion of national barriers" to markets, cultures, people, etc. This group of entrepreneurs stresses on similarities they perceive with foreign populations and entrepreneurs, no matter their country of origin. For instance, an entrepreneur explains that she observes in the industry (interior design) a convergence in customer preferences and corporate strategies across countries. Others describe memorable travel experiences, roaming the world to meet people they consider "not so different after all", sharing "values of hard work and risk-taking" and "values of entrepreneurship".

"*When you have been all over the world, for work or else, you know that people are not so different after all. It sounds a bit like Disneyland… you know… It's a small world after all!" (He laughs)*. FO

Like Fallen Icaruses, Global Argonauts exhibit substantial domestic entrepreneurial capital with significant management know-how, gained both at "home" and abroad. They also boast many friends and fellow entrepreneurs capable of bringing them business opportunities, some are part of entrepreneurs' clubs. However, in contrast to Fallen Icaruses, the "international orientation" exhibited by Global Argonauts appears to act as a catalyst for their domestic capital and eventually kick-started their internationalization attempts. Like Fallen Icaruses, these entrepreneurs initially searched for support among friends, relatives, and relationships in the domestic field. Global Argonauts gathered around internationalization support service providers (i.e. agencies or other actors providing export assistance for example) employed by regional public authorities and met through friends, business partners, fellow entrepreneurs, or direct contact during exhibitions, conferences, etc. Let us note that internationalization support service providers had been recruited based on their professional experience and/or formal qualifications in international business (in China or elsewhere). For example, three (out of six) had worked or studied abroad, two had master's degrees in international business, all could speak fluent English, and two fluent Mandarin Chinese. The providers' criteria for sponsoring entrepreneurs were the latter's perceived "seriousness", that is the existence of "some sort of strategy" (JMA), a development plan but also the ability to communicate with an international audience (language skills) and an international openness or international orientation. Selected entrepreneurs were provided with information, connections with foreign partners (potential customers, suppliers, joint venture partners), government officials (e.g. diplomats), and consultants as well as other experienced entrepreneurs and managers in China (international managers from large groups, foreign SME entrepreneurs in China, etc.). In other words, the support provided appeared much similar to the one provided to Fallen Icaruses.

However, the existence of a selection process, operated by internationalization support providers personally trained and raised in an international context and consistently singing the praises of a "borderless world", a "world of opportunities", seems to be critical and strengthens aspiring entrepreneurs' initial positive orientation. Contrary to Fallen Icaruses, Global Argonauts note that they always received a very favorable welcome from contacted actors and entrepreneurs in China as in other countries. Entrepreneurs considered they were treated as "professionals" by "professionals". Initially setting sail for China with supporting providers sharing similar entrepreneurial values, entrepreneurs were put in contact with other actors (Chinese entrepreneurs, French entrepreneurs, and expatriates in China, etc.) also "celebrating" such values and the advent of a global business community.

"*Chinese are colleagues... We're professionals... We have known each other for years. One of the directors over there was trained here, at the CEA (French Atomic Energy Commission). A very competent person… I could find other examples, from Brazil, the US or Africa… It's not so much where you come from as where you were trained."* JCP

The entrepreneurs' network, therefore, consisted of players originally encountered in the domestic field, then gradually expanded to international actors after demonstrating their incorporation of a common habitus, perception schemes, and values. By doing so, entrepreneurs incrementally developed a portfolio of international relationships and received preliminary advice and information, contacts with potential customers, etc., which eventually encouraged them to continue and intensify their efforts to obtain a first order. JBF is an archetype of these entrepreneurs (see Table 2).

4.3. Crossing of Fields: Divergent Paths of "Fallen Icaruses" and "Global Argonauts"

The two types of international entrepreneurs followed divergent paths when crossing fields. Global Argonauts started out with a global habitus and therefore could easily cross fields to develop in China (host field).

"I may have discovered China at that time, but I did not discover the world. We'd been working with people from all over the world for years." PT

"I wouldn't say that China is a market like any other but we are not totally... ignorant or naive. When you deal with Italians, Spaniards, Americans, or even Indians or Chinese, you know in broad terms what you should say or do. Afterward, you adapt to the specificities of the country, the regulations, etc." MD

Their global habitus enabled Global Argonauts to be more calculative in their networking. They sought strategic network resources from the outset (Sepulveda & Gabrielsson, 2013), which could then be used for successful internationalization.

"A key point for me is to know who is really useful and who is just showing off. The Chinese always tend to tell you that they know so-and-so personally, that they know someone who can do it much faster... It's not only them... When you start, you waste a lot of time meeting people who are ultimately useless. That's also our strength: we know whom we can trust, who has the right contacts, etc." OC

"In life, there are people who are 'bridges' and others who are 'dead ends'. We try to (make entrepreneurs) meet bridges rather than dead ends." MJH

"I've been traveling for so many years, I'm kind of used to it... I mean, we're not virgins. You have to play down the international. Whether you're dealing with Chinese people or other people, there are still... We are in a globalized economy with players from many different countries working together. They are our competitors but there are also partners. We sometimes find ourselves working with our competitors. It's not a zero-sum game." AL

In contrast, “Fallen Icaruses” were less calculative in their networking (Sepulveda & Gabrielsson, 2013). They established all kinds of networks, some of which were not useful or willing to help them for their internationalization.

“We spend hours, days or even weeks meeting the boss of this, the mayor of that, the biggest supplier in the region for that, etc. On the spot, we say to ourselves that it is marvelous, that all these people are interested in us, that we are going to make a hell of a business... We visit their factories, we eat with them, we exchange business cards saying that we talk again as soon as we get back, etc., and then... well nothing more in fact! […] I wouldn't say I wasted my time because I wasn't expecting much, but still...” DB

“The French (in China), they are very nice but they have other things to do anyway than playing nanny... Some of them are nice, they are willing to receive us, to have a drink, but it stops there. Having said that, I understand them, if I were them, I would surely do the same.” OH

“Fallen Icaruses” who were able to understand the necessity to incorporate a global habitus adopted conversion strategies, sometimes with success for other international fields.

“I may not have met any Chinese people I'm going to work with, but I met another French boss there who gave me ideas to go elsewhere. […] If I had to do it again, I think I wouldn't do it exactly the same way. Rather than going there as a ‘tourist’, I would try to prepare everything a little more seriously. I've found that there are plenty of people who are willing to help, but it's like a job interview, they want to know first whom they're dealing with.” OH

“That’s the strength of networking. I believe in networking. Not necessarily formal networks like the ‘Equipe de France de l’export’, but more the network between actors of the same value chain. The people at Total talk to everyone, whether they are French, American, Chinese, etc. For us [SMEs], it may not be as easy, but the ones we've seen over there who are successful are those

who have mixed with the locals and other foreigners. […] It's not natural, you have to do a little violence to yourself but it's worth it." FR

"Fallen Icaruses" who were not able to understand the necessity to incorporate a global habitus did not cross the fields and could not find a balance or become bifocal.

"I think it's a waste… all that money we spend to organize receptions, conferences, etc. These great gatherings paid with our taxes, they'd better give us the money so that we can manage for ourselves. I don't need anyone to hold my hand." JFS

"Frankly, it's nice to travel but do you think we have time for that? I can't afford to pay someone to spend months prospecting, shaking hands with what's-his-name, eating petits fours at the Embassy, etc., when we're already struggling here in France." FB

"Sometimes there is a bit of a 'dancing-with-wolves syndrome'... There are people who become more Chinese than French! Finally, they don't appreciate the French system, that's why they leave it. Some people totally disappear from the radar of the embassy and the French community. They live their lives." OC

Our findings show that Global Argonauts did not have to adopt conversion strategies for crossing fields. They could more easily develop calculative networks from the outset. Conversely, "Fallen Icaruses" established various kinds of networks that were not all useful for their internationalization. Some of them adopted conversion strategies that helped them for their successful internationalization in other fields whilst others were unable to cross fields and thus fell back to their home fields.

4.4. Collective and Network Dynamics

Our data also provides novel insights into collective and network dynamics, i.e. the compatibility, interaction, process of mobilization, and struggle between different actors. These dynamics are linked to various aspects such as "ease" or "unease", feeling welcome or unwelcome, others' perceived benevolence or malevolence as well as shared values, visions, languages, or stories/narratives.

The incompatibility of actors shaped their interactions and thus led to struggle between them and eventually to failure.

"At the end of the day, we are too different (from the Chinese). You can do whatever you want, there is a gap that will never be bridged." JYG

"The (French) managers and so-called consultants, experts, etc. who are officially there for us… It's business… […] Those who really want to help, like MJH, they do it because they really care for us […] but in the end, they are also treated like us by these people (French national support providers, expatriate managers, etc.)." JYG

"The winner takes it all. Ultimately, who gets help? Not me, not us, the small fry but THEM (multinational companies, expatriate managers, etc.). It is the snake that bites its tail!" JYG

The compatibility of actors facilitated their interactions and they could therefore reach an agreement, which then led to successful internationalization.

"We are engineers. I am French, they are Chinese so what? We work together on giant international projects. We all know that we couldn't make it alone anyway." JCP

"Of course, the French services are helpful. That's everyone's interest that we develop in China and elsewhere." JCP

We also observed several conflicts between French participants, which were perceived differently by "Fallen Icaruses" and "Global Argonauts".

"We attended a trade fair promoting business in France. The difference between (French multinational representatives) and us (SME owners and managers) was so obvious! They have representatives (from French export support services) who are on their booth and anyway their booth is next to the 'Maison France' or I don't know how they call the French services' booth. We are already happy to be there on a very small stall with a dozen others!" FR (Fallen Icarus)

"When you invite small business owners to trade shows, the first thing they do is take out their regional flags! As if the Chinese or the Indians were interested whether they are Breton, Basque or Corsican! Frankly, it's a bit of a shame... So the next times we don't invite them anymore or we put them in a corner." PD (Global Argonaut)

Our findings indicate that group and network dynamics depend on the compatibility of actors, which can facilitate interactions but also lead to struggles and even conflicts between them.

5. Discussion

5.1. Capital, Habitus, and Internationalization

Our results show that whatever the nature and quantity of the entrepreneur's domestic capital, the value of this capital is associated with a specific area or "field". In other words, the entrepreneur's domestic capital represents a "symbolic capital" as any kind of capital whose value is recognized in a specific space (field). The two types of international entrepreneurs identified show diverging orientations, different abilities in relation with geographic markets, cultures, and partners, different degrees and forms of capital, that is, "different cards in hand" (Bourdieu, 1992). Similarly, the social capital developed by entrepreneurs, either under an objectified form (e.g. membership of an association of internationalizing entrepreneurs, membership of domestic and

international clubs) or an incorporated one (e.g. personal characteristics such as an attraction for networking) can be another "card" for business development. These interdependent forms of capital shall also be considered as part of the same game, the same portfolio of resources or entrepreneurial capital. However, the two profiles of entrepreneurs presented in this study show that different kinds of capital might not have the same impact, the same value for the approach of a different social space (field), that is, an international market. In other words, different profiles benefit from capitals that are more or less transferable from one field to another. Some entrepreneurs' success story strongly echoes with Saxenian's (2006) description of the "New Argonauts", U.S. educated immigrants sharing with partners across the globe similar entrepreneurial values and practices, capitalizing on their experience and the support of professional networks to identify and exploit international opportunities wherever they are. Other entrepreneurs (Fallen Icaruses) with symbolic capital that is relevant and useful in the domestic entrepreneurial field fail to benefit from this capital in other, international fields, as this domestic capital happens to be too "distant" from international actors' habitus. Earlier research found that, if the market is very competitive, networks may not help in internationalization (Ciravegna, Majano, & Zhan, 2014). This may also be because the entrepreneurs do not have the right habitus for that market.

How public institutional support networks influence the business outcomes of SMEs is underexplored (Baker & Welter, 2020). Oparaocha (2015) shows that institutional network relationships have a positive effect on the internationalization process of SMEs. The study indicates a continuous and positive influence of such relationships at different stages of the internationalization process, whilst we suggest that those "supporters" may also have a negative influence on international entrepreneurial endeavors.

Our findings reveal that all forms of capital are not necessarily conducive to international development (as the penetration of networks and social fields). A domestic entrepreneurial capital developed according to a domestic habitus may even inhibit development beyond that field. International entrepreneurship literature has pointed out that new ventures may benefit from 'learning advantages of newness' (Autio, Sapienza, & Almeida, 2000), as if the firm internationalizing early could develop its strategy, operations, and structure from day one to serve international customers and would not have to change its modus operandi. If there were a need to evolve, however, one key to successful internationalization, understood as a passage from a domestic field to an international one, seems to be the entrepreneur's ability to incorporate a new habitus and to develop new forms of capital to convert his/her initial domestic entrepreneurial capital into an international one (a "conversion strategy", Bourdieu, 1972). Different profiles of entrepreneurs, defined by their entrepreneurial capital (produced according to a particular habitus), experience different conversions with contrasting consequences upon their integration of the host field. The nature of such habitus and capital remains relatively unexplored but it may explain the difference between more and less successful international entrepreneurial firms. Early large footprint on international markets or a higher level of international experience – which can be seen as a proxy for entrepreneurial capital gained earlier (Mudambi & Zahra, 2007) – increases the likelihood of survival or better international performance.

We concur with Harris and Wheeler (2005) that the functions of interpersonal relationships in the internationalization process are much more profound than previous research would indicate. Indeed, they can direct strategy and transform the firm for the better or the worse, not just provide information and access to networks.

5.2. *Domestic, International, or Global Habitus?*

Entrepreneurial development in a foreign country appears dependent upon the incorporation of standards, codes, perception schemes (habitus), more or less integrated by the entrepreneur through his/her past professional and personal experience, strengthened or inhibited by social relationships during the initial phases of internationalization. This research initially considered the foreign field approached by the entrepreneur as defined by a habitus that would differ from the domestic habitus characterizing the home entrepreneurial field. The first perspective was, therefore, to consider the passage by the entrepreneur from one field to another as a "balancing act", the largely unconscious development of "bifocality" (Patel & Conklin, 2009, p. 1046), that is the ability to operate in two different environments, to mobilize resources from those environments by incorporating (at least) two different, if not contradictory, habitus and thus constitute a symbolic entrepreneurial capital in those two fields. Our observations challenge this perspective, many entrepreneurs rejecting both an identification with the domestic field and any specific international field, and insisting to be considered as "cosmopolitan", "global" citizens.

Extant literature in IB is strongly influenced by the concept of mutually exclusive habitus (or, more broadly, culture), a notion of exclusive allegiance according to which the sense of belonging to a nation, the sharing of certain norms, values, and practices, would oppose members of a nation, community or group to "outsiders". According to this view, the double orientation, or bifocality, of the international entrepreneur is likely to result in a dilemma of identity. Neither fully familiar with the habitus of their "home" field nor with the habitus of the "host" field, incorporating, perhaps, a kind of extra-national or trans-national habitus, defining a global field of international business. These new types of entrepreneurs partly represent the emergent, cosmopolitan class of a "borderless world" (Ley & Waters, 2004; Sassen, 2007). A "cosmopolitan" class does not include individuals incorporating various national habitus. "Cosmopolitan entrepreneurs" like Global Argonauts not only claim a personal understanding of various foreign "cultures" (here Chinese

culture) but, more broadly, knowledge and recognition of global values, norms, and practices. This view is shared by a rising number of actors roaming the planet for opportunities, that is, the manifestation of the incorporation of a global (cosmopolitan) habitus. Statements of entrepreneurs seem to confirm the ideal expressed by the "cosmopolitan" stream of international sociology, a decline of national specificities and claim that cultural identities can no longer be assumed as static and nation-bound, and are created instead in deterritorialized spaces, characteristics of cosmopolitan futures.

Interpreting the discourses and practices of various international entrepreneurs, their habitus, and corresponding type or class also enables us to understand mechanisms of international socialization such as the integration or, conversely, the exclusion of individuals into or from an elite global class of entrepreneurs. We will now address these struggles and their impact on entrepreneurs' efforts to internationalize.

5.3. Symbolic Violence and Divisions among Internationalizing Entrepreneurs

In our study, we observed a continuous division between entrepreneurs and other internationalization actors (embassies, foreign offices, international trade centers, chambers of commerce, international executive managers, consultants, etc.). We observe different profiles of entrepreneurs, according to personal characteristics and the structure and quantity of "entrepreneurial capital". The social milieu of international executives has no unit of a cosmopolitan elite and cosmopolitan values expressed by some entrepreneurs often are a "family heirloom" acquired and transmitted from an early age by contact with different languages and cultures, education, and, later, a professional career that fostered the development of international orientation. This group of entrepreneurs and managers is bonded by shared ethical values, the celebration of the opening of borders, and contempt for nationalism. When managers seek to

explain their mobility, they rarely allude to professional arguments, but rather raise an appeal to mental and moral categories. He/she who has traveled, who knows foreign countries and systems, is credited with superior views from one who is confined to the national (or local) environment.

Discourses from Global Argonauts illustrate this point with a particular emphasis on the distinction between “amateurs” and “professionals”. The latter are defined as people sharing entrepreneurial values (perseverance, customer focus, time efficiency, etc.) and “naturally” oriented towards international fields perceived as a way out of a domestic system conversely perceived as an absolute “repellent” to entrepreneurship. Cosmopolitanism proclaimed by some entrepreneurs is consistently opposed to the “stay at home” tendencies of real or fantasized entrepreneurs and other domestic actors.

Initial distinctions between internationalizing entrepreneurs first find their origin in personal characteristics. These distinctions are then reinforced by social interactions during early internationalization stages. While cosmopolitan entrepreneurs promptly declare that internationalization is a “natural” expansion for their business, some entrepreneurs, identified by the former as domestic (home-loving, sedentary) entrepreneurs, insist on the importance of developing into their market (field) of origin, either by choice or as a fallback position after unsuccessful international experiences. We understand this fallback as a result of “symbolic violence”.

Symbolic violence is “any power which manages to impose meanings and to impose them as legitimate by concealing the power relations that are the foundation of this power” (Bourdieu, 1970, p. 18). This violence is “symbolic” as it consists in impositions of meanings, senses, acceptance of relations of domination. Internationalized actors (experienced entrepreneurs, international executives, support providers, etc.) observed in our study have incorporated an international habitus providing them with an international entrepreneurial capital, a symbolic capital in the

international entrepreneurial field. These internationalized actors or elites maintain their dominance over the international field by convincing newcomers, deprived of such a habitus, to be content with their domestic condition. In doing so, internationalized or cosmopolitan actors impose a "doxa", i.e. "a sense of one's place and one's sense of belonging": domestic entrepreneurs-international newcomers belong to the domestic field and international-global-cosmopolitan entrepreneurs to the international or global field.

This symbolic violence triggers a succession of behaviors among newcomers: (1) an initial flee from the domestic to the international field, (2) the discovery of power relationships, domination exerted by already-internationalized actors, (3) a fall back to the domestic field. As illustrated by Fallen Icaruses, nascent entrepreneurs (newcomers) first turn to international markets while they are more or less consciously persuaded of their low probability of success. These initial perceptions are inspired by personal experience, domestic habitus and reinforced by reactions from the dominant players encountered (e.g. expatriate entrepreneurs and managers, international executives from major companies, diplomats, international consultants). A correlation is then established between these low expectations and reality – internationalized actors' negative reactions, which eventually leads newcomers to accept their failure and fall back to the domestic field.

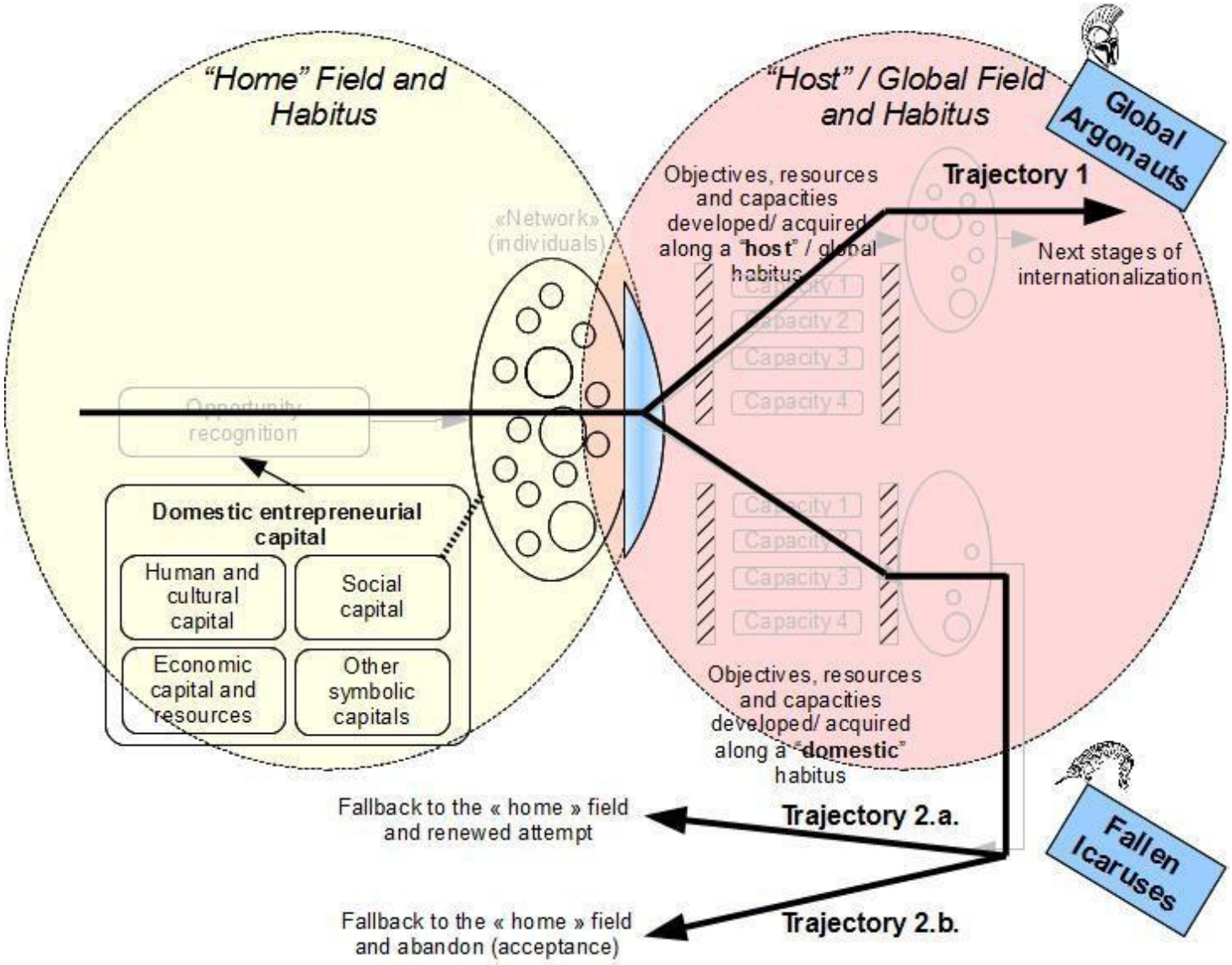
The discovery and exploitation of an entrepreneurial opportunity across national borders depend on the entrepreneur's personal characteristics and his/her integration (incorporation) of a particular habitus "necessary to seize the 'potential opportunities' formally offered to all, but only available to holders of the instruments necessary to discover them" (Bourdieu, 1974, p. 10).

Our initial modeling of internationalization as a transition from a "home" (domestic) field to a "host" (foreign) field allows us to propose a new perspective: that of a struggle between types or classes (groups of actors), between a cosmopolitan elite, dominating domestic and foreign or global

fields and exhibiting a global (cosmopolitan) habitus, and aspiring international entrepreneurs devoid of such habitus, but nevertheless rejecting their belonging to a dominated class of domestic entrepreneurs, irremediably embedded into a "home" (domestic) field. Efforts to pass from one field to another engender a confrontation with symbolic violence exerted by dominant players, established actors from large multinationals for instance, over dominated SME entrepreneurs with little international experience and few ties with "dominant" players.

Aspiring international entrepreneurs thus follow different internationalization paths, depending on their incorporation of the dominants' habitus (cosmopolitanism). Entrepreneurs incorporating such a habitus, manifested by a discourse of cultural openness, "world citizenship", global values among entrepreneurs regardless of their country of origin, are recognized by dominants actors, and consequently gain durable access to the "host" or global field (see Figure 2, Trajectory 1). They can build ties that able them to spot opportunities (Ellis, 2011). This could be explained by value and goal congruence between the dominant cosmopolitan actors and newcomers who share the same vision, values, and goals. This congruence would make actors in the network willing to accept the newcomers into the network – and eventually gain "insidership" (Johanson & Vahlne, 2009). On the contrary, entrepreneurs deprived of such a habitus are rejected and tend to consider internationalization as out of reach. Rejected by the dominant cosmopolitan actors and rejecting domestic peers, these entrepreneurs find themselves in an uncomfortable position, suffering from a dual liability of outsidership (Chen, Shaheer, Yi, & Li, 2019; Johanson & Vahlne, 2009; Stoyanov, Stoyanova, & Woodward, 2018). Falling back to the domestic field, they reiterate their internationalization initiatives (see Figure 2, Trajectory 2) or finally give up (Trajectory 2b).

Figure 2: Trajectories of aspiring international entrepreneurs



6. Conclusion

Our extension of Bourdieu's concepts of field, habitus, and capital to the analysis of internationalization has led us to conceptualize the process as the entrepreneur's passage from one field to another. This conceptualization and empirical evidence offer important implications for both theory and practice.

First, drawing on the framework and concepts initially developed by Bourdieu, we expanded the concepts of field, capital, and habitus to the process of internationalization. We posited that international entrepreneurship, that is the discovery and exploitation of business opportunities by an individual entrepreneur (Coviello, 2015; Knight & Liesch, 2016; Oviatt & McDougall, 2005), is partly dependent on the incorporation of standards, codes, perception schemes, that is a certain "habitus", prevailing in the "host" field (a specific "foreign" environment such as China or a "global" environment). The entrepreneur's incorporation depends on his/her personal and professional past and experience, enhanced or inhibited by social relationships and networks developed during the initial phases of internationalization.

Second, the nature of this habitus has been partly explored. More specifically, we got back to two phenomena previously developed in the international business literature: "multiculturalism" or "bifocality" (Drori, Honig, & Wright, 2009; Patel & Conklin, 2009), that is the ability to balance two frameworks, two potentially conflicting habitus (domestic vs. foreign), and the notion of global or cosmopolitan habitus, that is the development of a cosmopolitan consciousness as the basis for entrepreneurs' integration and socialization into the "host" field or even into an emerging "global" field.

Third, observations conducted suggest the existence of an "elite" (Manolova, Brush, Edelman, & Green, 2002; Onkelinx, Manolova, & Edelman, 2016) dominating global trade as well as various national fields. We suggest that this elite class maintains its domination by

discouraging potential newcomers, exerting a form of symbolic violence. The entrepreneurial elite differs from other classes by its degree of cosmopolitanism, a consequence of a gradual incorporation of global habitus, repeated contacts with global players, often since early childhood as well as personal and professional experiences abroad. Here our findings relate to works on transnational entrepreneurship (e.g. Terjesen and Elam, 2009) – and entrepreneurs who are entrepreneurially oriented, innovative, and possess good communication and execution skills. However, Global Argonauts are not limited to transnationals per se: they have a global habitus. Aspiring international entrepreneurs who do not share that global habitus or, at least, that of the "host" (foreign) field they penetrate, suffer from symbolic violence (contempt and rejection from dominants) rendering obsolete the capital developed in the domestic field. As a consequence, aspiring entrepreneurs have little choice but to fall back to the "home" field.

On the contrary, aspiring entrepreneurs exhibiting such a habitus, perhaps incorporated elsewhere, are welcomed and integrated into global social networks. With these findings, we provide a dynamic analysis of the microfoundations of international entrepreneurs trying to enter new networks, and our results help IE research to dissolve the theoretical and empirical heterogeneity concerning the influence of key resources such as networks on entrepreneurial firms' internationalization (cf. Schwens et al., 2018; Zahra & George, 2002). Even though networks have been seen seminal for internationalization in IE literature (Cavusgil & Knight, 2015; Coviello, 2006), their effect on performance has been mixed. Our study shows that it is not only the existence and availability of the networks but that there is more to be looked at – and we should aim for a better understanding of the habitus of the entrepreneur and the 'fit' between the entrepreneur and the host country social networks they are entering to. Our contribution is then very much about micro-foundations of international entrepreneurs' network competence. Our findings also add to the institution-based view by providing evidence about

the importance of adoption of local "rules of the game" (North, 1990, p. 3) in early internationalization.

Finally, this study implies for practitioners (for example, aspiring international entrepreneurs as well as public and private internationalization support providers) that the success of international initiatives, particularly from start-ups and SMEs, is partly conditioned by individuals' integration into a larger network of experienced internationalized entrepreneurs and managers. Therefore, we can but encourage the development of training and educational programs aiming at developing international orientation and skills among domestic entrepreneurs (education in foreign languages, country seminars, information on available export subsidies, etc.) but also some voluntary sponsorship between nascent and experienced entrepreneurs. Participation in trade missions and meetings with boundary-spanning actors should also be encouraged as this would enhance international entrepreneurial capital and increase the likelihood of the possible transition of entrepreneurs towards the cosmopolitan (global) entrepreneurs 'class'. This would help firms avoiding costly mistakes in their internationalization.

Our research presents several limitations and research perspectives. It thus seems necessary to follow the internationalization paths of the two identified groups of international entrepreneurs (Fallen Icaruses and Global Argonauts) for a longer period. We believe that more studies need to be conducted to better understand the positive and negative impacts of social networks. Furthermore, the interplay between habitus and actual triggers for internationalization should be scrutinized in a more detailed manner – and here the linkages to entrepreneurial orientation and global mindset literature (e.g. Turunen & Nummela, 2017) would be of particular interest. Furthermore, it could be relevant to extend the study to other geographic contexts to analyze how the "home" and "host" fields affect the internationalization of start-ups and SMEs. The economic, institutional, and cultural characteristics of the home and

host countries are likely to have an impact on the way companies build social networks and internationalize their activities. Our findings give a good starting point for this endeavor by looking at how individuals approach and experience international entrepreneurship.

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Appendix A: Details of the interviewees

Name	Position	Sector	Gender	Company tenure	Workplace location	International experience (years)
OH	Entrepreneur[1]	Electronic Meter	M	>10	France	0
JBF	Entrepreneur	Automotive	M	>10	International	3
JFS	Entrepreneur	Engineering	M	>10	International	1-5
FB	Entrepreneur	Furniture	F	>10	France	0
FR	Entrepreneur	Architecture	M	>10	France	0
FO	Entrepreneur	Mechanics	M	>10	France	1-5
JS	Entrepreneur	Audio products	M	>10	France	0
NM	Entrepreneur	Architecture	F	>10	France	1-5
DB	Entrepreneur	Investments	M	>10	France	1-5
JYG	Entrepreneur	Confectionery	M	1-5	France	0
JCP	Manager[2]	Nuclear industry	M	>10	International	5-10
JMA	Manager	Nuclear industry	M	>10	International	5-10
MG	Manager	Consulting	M	>10	International	5-10
PD	Manager	Energy	M	>10	International	1-5
LG	Manager	Mechanics	M	1-5	France	1-5
JCL	Support provider[3]	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	M	>10	International	1-5
EO	Support provider	Ministry of Industry	F	1-5	France	0
CBL	Support provider	Lawyer	F	>10	International	>10
NA	Support provider	Consulting	M	>10	International	>10
MH	Support provider	Chinese business development	M	>10	International	>10
OC	Support provider	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	M	1-5	China	>10
MD	Support provider	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	M	>10	France	1-5
JLP	Support provider	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	M	>10	France	1-5
AP	Support provider	Regional economic services	F	1-5	France	1-5
MM	Support provider	Regional economic services	M	1-5	China	1-5

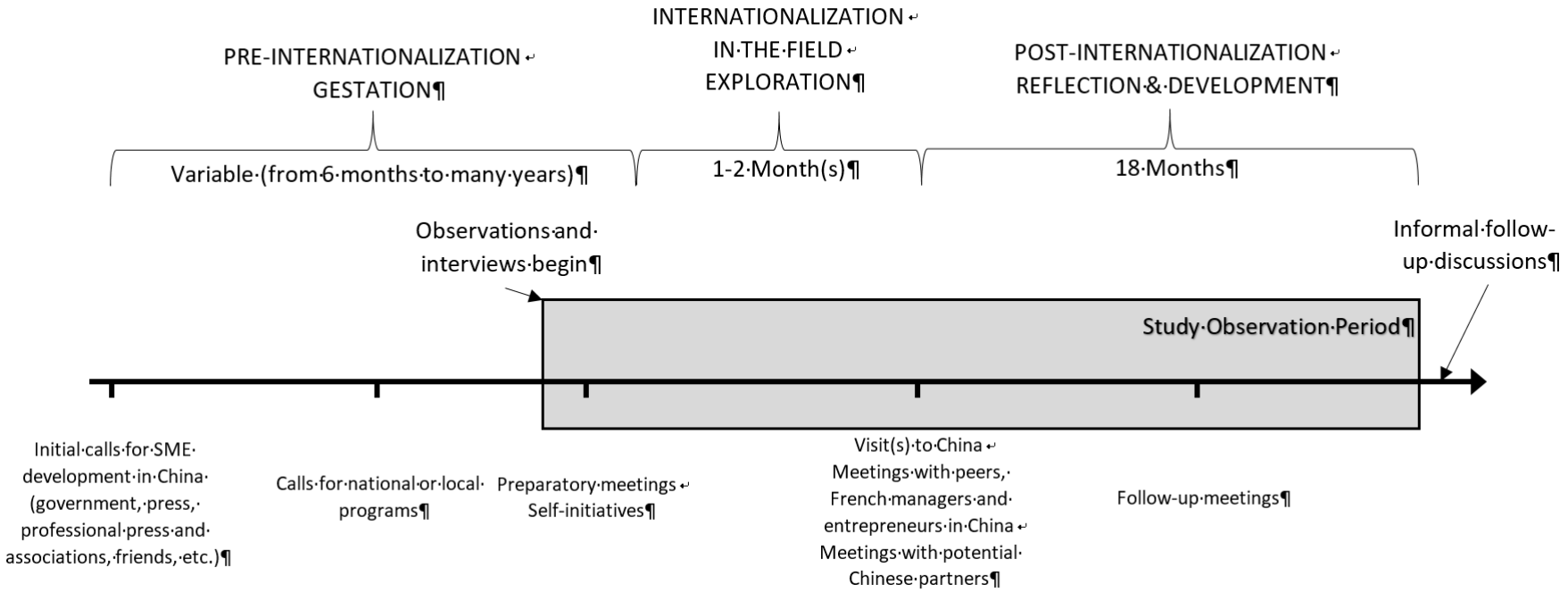
[1] An "international entrepreneur" is defined as an individual identifying and acting upon cross-border opportunities (Coviello, 2015; Knight & Liesch, 2016; Oviatt & McDougall, 2005), individuals who view particular situations as attractive cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities and decide to act upon them. In practice, the "international entrepreneurs" considered were owners or founders of a small-or-medium-sized firm (employing less than 250 people) who had undertaken some internationalization activity (cross-border collection and/or exchange of information (eg. trade fairs); import of goods or services; international sales of products or services to customers abroad, whether direct or indirect; advanced international sales in the form of direct exports or exports through the firm's own foreign office, etc.) in the past 5 years.

[2] « Managers » also qualify as international entrepreneurs or support providers as they either contributed to view particular situations as attractive cross-border entrepreneurial opportunities and to act upon them (e.g. creation and development of a new international venture) inside an existing organization (corporate international entrepreneurs) in the past or answered "Yes" to the question ''Over the past twelve months have you done anything to help start a new business overseas?''.

[3] Support providers are public and private organizations that help indigenous firms perform their export activities more effectively by providing informational (training sessions on general export business practices, information on foreign markets, etc.), operational (building contacts with foreign markets and key actors through participation in international trade shows and events or prospecting missions) and financial (addressing issues regarding loans, subsidies, guarantees, and insurance related to export operations) support (Catanzaro et al., 2019).

BD	Support provider	Regional economic services	F	5-10	International	1-5
AL	Support provider	Regional economic services	F	>10	France	1-5
JPM	Support provider	Regional economic services	M	>10	France	0
JD	Support provider	Regional economic services	M	>10	France	0
DA	Support provider	Consulting	F	5-10	International	1-5
PT	Support provider	Consulting	M	5-10	International	>10
BP	Support provider	National economic services	F	1-5	International	1-5
AC	Support provider	National economic services	F	1-5	International	1-5
MJH	Support provider	National economic services	F	5-10	France	0
PAD	Support provider	Consulting	F	1-5	France	1-5

Appendix B: Timeline of research project and internationalization



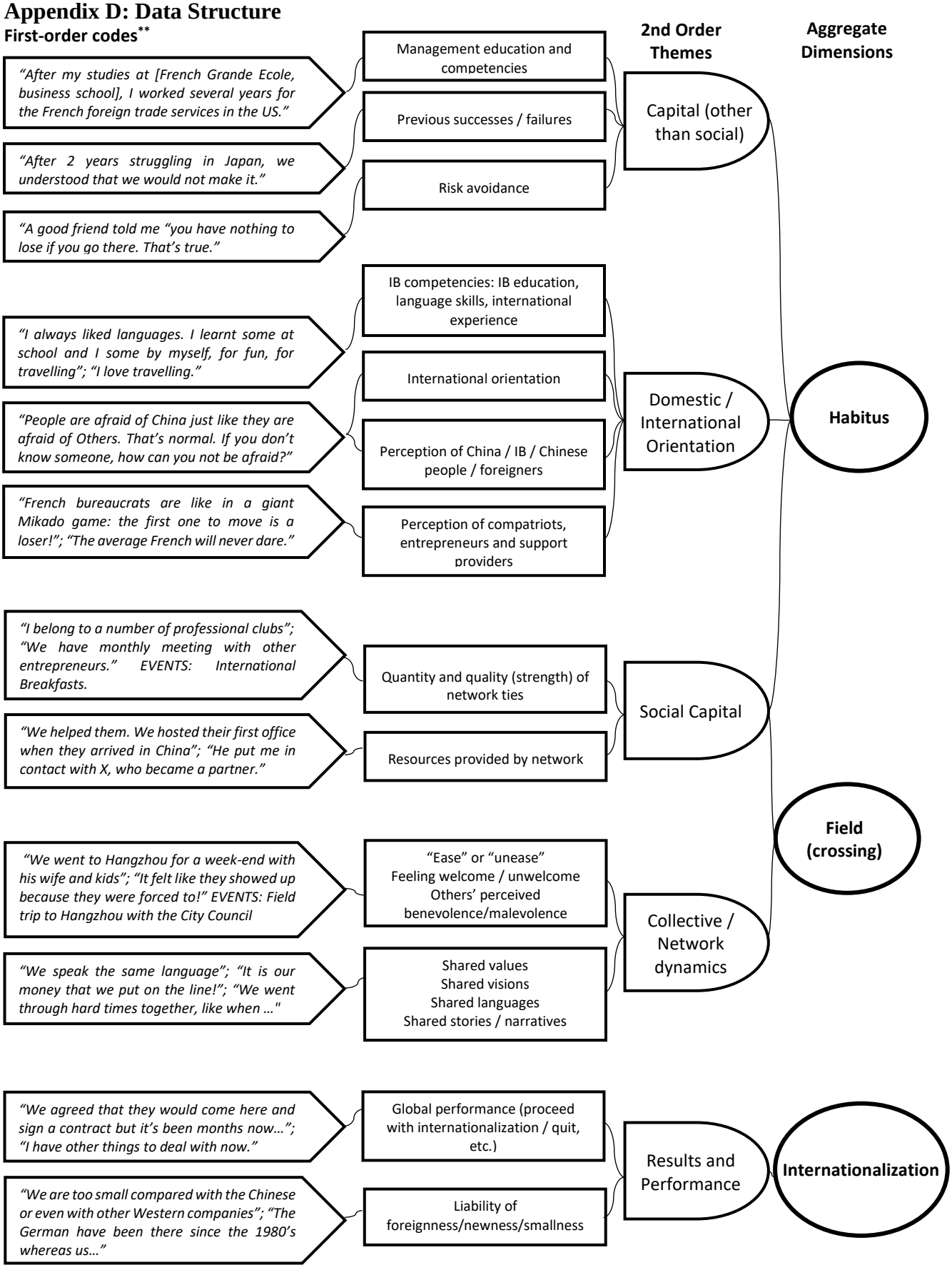
Appendix C: Illustrative quotes, first-order codes and second-order themes

Illustrative quotes	1st order codes§	2nd order themes
"After my studies at [French Grande Ecole, business school], I worked several years for the French foreign trade services in the US." FO "I left [French multinational company] after almost 30 years there. I had started there just after I graduated from [French business school]." MH "I am an engineer. I am from [France most reputed engineering school]. I invent things. I learned to sell them on the job." JS "One doesn't need to graduate from Polytechnique [France's most reputed engineering school] to run a business! I respect them but business is about understanding people and learning from them. I never studied business in a classroom. I learned by myself. That's the best school you can get." FB	Management education and competencies	**Capital (other than social)**
"After 2 years struggling in Japan, we understood that we would not make it." FO "It is not the first business I am running! It's at least the 4th or 5th! In my country (Iran), there is a saying: 'If you haven't failed at least 5 times, you are not an entrepreneur'." NM "We have to learn from our failures. You know… 'what doesn't kill me makes me stronger', etc." NM "The first project in China was not an immediate success but time will tell. The company had to move on. I have to move on. We have learned something anyway." JBF	Previous successes/failures	
"A good friend told me 'you have nothing to lose if you go there'. That's true." NM "Taking risk is seen as something rather pejorative in France. The Chinese value those who dare." MH "Being an entrepreneur means taking risks. That's actually how we recognize each other." FO	Risk avoidance	
"I always liked languages. I learned some at school and some by myself, for fun, for traveling"; "I love traveling." JS "I did an MBA in the US. I could have done it in France but I wanted to get some international experience, to see what it is like in 'the place-to-be'." FO "I always targeted say… French-speaking countries. I feel more comfortable with people there, even Africans. We understand each other better." JD	IB competencies: IB education, language skills, international experience	**Domestic / International Orientation**
"I was 16 when I traveled alone for the first time. Fifty years later or so, I still like to backpack! That's certainly why I am still doing this job: I travel the world constantly. I always wanted this life." OC MH wrote and published his autobiography: Itinéraire(s) d'un enfant du monde ("Itinerary-ies of a world child"). The introduction mentions: "I always wanted to see the world. I remember spending nights watching a globe, planning to visit such and such remote place on earth." […] "Asia has always been my most faithful partner", etc.	International orientation	
"People are afraid of China just like they are afraid of Others. That's normal. If you don't know someone, how can you not be afraid?" PD "It is good you do this research. There are such stupid things said about China and Chinese people. French people don't know China. After so many years, I still discover it. […] I love China." CBL	Perception of China / IB / Chinese people / foreigners	

§ First-order codes include data from observations (events), secondary documents (reports, books) and interviews with informants

"French bureaucrats are like in a giant Mikado game: the first one to move is a loser!"; "The average French will never dare." JFS "They are all like… stay-at-home people if you see what I mean. They don't want to get out of their comfort zone." JFS "Don't tell them but many SME people are… You know what SME means? Small Means, Small ambitions. This doesn't help…" MD "You remember what George Bush said? 'The problem with French people is that they have no word for an entrepreneur!' He was not so wrong!" OC	Perception of compatriots, entrepreneurs, and support providers	
"I belong to several professional clubs." FO "We have monthly meetings with other entrepreneurs, we call them 'Entrepreneurs' breakfasts'." MJH EVENT: PAD, FB, and MJH decide to visit Qufu together over the weekend ("We wanted to live this together, as friends." FB) FO EVENTS: Monthly "International Breakfasts" with AP, MM, BD, AL, and JPM.	Quantity and quality (strength) of network ties	**Social Capital**
"We helped them. We hosted their first office when they arrived in China." CBL "We hosted their first VIE (international volunteer) for a couple of years and we still welcome them every year in our offices in Beijing." PD "(MM) put me in contact with X, who became a partner." DB	Resources provided by network	
"It felt like they showed up because they were forced to!" JYG "They want to look welcoming but in fact, we understand that it annoys them, that they do it as an obligation, etc." JFS "We went to Hangzhou for a weekend with his wife and kids. He was really friendly." JCP EVENTS: Field trip to Hangzhou with the City Council (PAD, MJH), organized jointly with Chinese partners.	"Ease" or "unease" Feeling welcome/unwelcome Others' perceived benevolence/malevolence	**Collective / Network Dynamics**
"We speak the same language." JCP "It is our money that we put on the line!" FO "We went through hard times together, like when… We wanted to expand on the Russian market but we didn't understand much about it... We spent whole nights out together in Russia discussing about the world, life, etc. over a bottle of vodka. That's a long story…" FO	Shared values Shared visions Shared languages Shared stories/narratives	
"We agreed that they would come here and sign a contract but it's been months now…" FB "I didn't expect anything and indeed I got nothing." JYG "I have other things to deal with now." PAD "The project has moved forward. The Chinese partners will come later this year to attend our general meeting." JMA	Global performance (proceed with internationalization /quit, etc.)	**Results and performance**
"We are too small compared with the Chinese or even with other Western companies." FB "The Germans have been there since the 1980s whereas us…" LG "[JCP's company] certainly did better than other French companies because we have been there since the 1990's." JCP	Liability of foreignness/newness/smallness	

Appendix D: Data Structure



** First-order codes include data from observations (events), secondary documents (reports, books) and interviews with informants