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START-UP ABROAD: AN ABDUCTIVE ANALYSIS OF AMERICAN EXPAT-PRENEURS IN GERMANY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to explore the motivations and concerns of the expat-preneur and the German government's actions and plans to attract them. This paper uses an abductive research approach using a 'case-pool' investigative design. Thirty depth interviews were conducted of expat-preneurs, government officials, innovation leaders, and entrepreneurship academics within Germany. Expat-preneurs were found to be a distinct group of self-initiated expatriates and were also quite distinct from typical American domestic entrepreneurs. Quality of life, business opportunity and government incentives were important for the expat-preneurs. The strengths and weaknesses of the German community-driven entrepreneurship apparatus were also discovered.

JEL: M13

KEYWORDS: Expatriate Entrepreneurs, Transnational Entrepreneurs, Expat-preneurs, German Start-Ups, Abductive Research, Entrepreneurial Culture

INTRODUCTION

Starting a small business can be a daunting proposition even for those with adequate planning, resources, funding and an attractive product. Now, consider this same challenge in a foreign country with a different language, culture, laws and markets. Why would anyone make an already difficult endeavor even harder? Despite the obvious challenges, this is exactly what many entrepreneurs are seeking to accomplish. (Vance, McNulty, Paik & D'Mello, 2016). Entrepreneurs that have decided to leave their home countries to start a business in a foreign nation are often referred to by the portmanteau Expat-preneur, a combination of expat and entrepreneur. (Andresen et al., 2014).

Given the importance of entrepreneurship as a source of economic development and greater international mobility, it has become important to identify expatriate groups such as the expat-preneur more clearly. (Doherty et al., 2013). Further, scholars have called for a better understanding of expat-preneurs and how they are differentiated in characteristics and motivations from traditional entrepreneurs (Despotovic et al. 2015). This research seeks to advance this research agenda using an abductive research process of primarily interviewing expat-preneurs and those that work with expat-preneurs to identify the important and defining characteristics of this important and growing group of transnationals.

Estimating the number of expat-preneurs is difficult. Expat-preneurs can be considered a subgroup of the often-studied Self-Initiated Expatriate (SIE). This group, for various reasons, decides to move to another country to find a job in a new place and/or explore a different culture. SIEs are estimated to make up 60% of the globally mobile workforce (Andresen et al., 2014). The scale of movement of the current mobile workforce is estimated to grow to 1.75 billion by 2022, an increase of almost 25% since 2014 (Luk, 2015). If even a small portion of this group are entrepreneurs, this means that there are likely millions of expat-preneurs. Another way to estimate the number of expat-preneurs is to look at the

numbers available from the United States. Every year, America adds another 650,000 new startup businesses (US Census Bureau, 2022). Of this group, about 1-2% of those entrepreneurs expatriate (65,000-130,000) annually (Wadhwa, 2012). And, the rate of expatriation of entrepreneurs is increasing (Brewster, 2016). Given the large numbers of expat-preneurs and the formidable impact that they have on the global economy, the lack of research on this group is somewhat surprising.

Since academic research on expat-preneurs is in a nascent state, this research is meant to establish a foundation on which other studies can build. Thus, we have taken a broad focus and chosen an abductive research method. We explore the motivations, characteristics and priorities of expat-preneurs and how these may differ from traditional entrepreneurs. We examine what kinds of government policies have been attractive as well as how governments and companies have been able to leverage the expertise and energy of expat-preneurs. Finally, we explore some of the cultural shifts that may be happening as American entrepreneurs bring disruptive change to German business practice.

This article is structured as follows. We begin with a literature review. Then, the methodology and research questions are detailed. The findings are presented. Then we discuss those findings including their limitations and opportunities for future research and we conclude with a summary of the overarching narratives and their implications for international entrepreneurship.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research about expatriate's entrepreneurial practices is of interest to both governments and corporations. (Vance et al., 2016). That said, the literature in the area is still scattered, and there is a lack of consensus on many categories or characteristics between self-initiated expatriates and expat-preneurs (McNulty & Brewster, 2017). Studies of the expat-preneur phenomenon have ranged from adjustment factors to prepreparation, cultural distance, difficulties with family assimilation, work expectations, technical ability to be effective and dozens of other factors (Hyounae et al., 2012).

One country that has identified a need to boost entrepreneurship is Germany. The German government is seeking to address the problem that "Germans don't view entrepreneurship that positively" (Breugst et al., 2015). The fear of failure, the shame that would come with it, the "firmly anchored longing for a secure job" and shunning risk (Brandhorst, 2016) have caused a lessening of the entrepreneurial spirit in German business. In response to these shortcomings, the German government has made entrepreneurial activity a government priority by directing cabinet ministers to work with senior public servants to shape and empower entrepreneurial policies, programs and agencies (Arshed et al., 2014). The German government realizes the importance of developing policies that address the needs of the entrepreneur by recognizing that small business strategy is often 'transactional' while entrepreneurship approaches tend to be 'relational' (Mazzarol et al., 2007). These strategies have created an attractive environment for entrepreneurs in general, and expat-preneurs in particular. Recently the World Economic Forum rated Germany as the top country for foreign entrepreneurs, exceeding the United States.

Connelly (2010) surveyed 160 expatriates to establish a four-quadrant typology of expatriates, comprised of traditional expatriates, transnational entrepreneurs, ambassadors and worldchanging entrepreneurs. Expat-preneurs fits squarely within the transnational entrepreneur quadrant in that they are profit-seeking and do not have the backing of a multi-national corporation like traditional expatriates. We heed Connelly's (2010) call to "consider even more specific groups of expatriates based on common embedded values and underlying organizational principles" (p. 51). On one level, our research explores the business and cultural challenges that expat-preneurs experienced operating within the context of Germany. At a deeper level, we uncover the common values and motivations of expat-preneurs.

METHODOLOGY

This paper uses an abductive research approach using a 'case–pool' investigative design. Abductive research has been used in exploratory business research. (Dunne and Dougherty, 2016) (Lukka and Modell, 2010) Abduction allows the creation of a typology and taxonomy of the subjects to be studied. It also allows the separation of their activities and begins the process of theory formation from repeated observation. *Abductive* reasoning examines phenomena from a holistic perspective to drive initial theory. Abduction allows subject identification and theory generation *as part and result of* the investigative process. (Dubois and Gadde, 2002).

We created research pools for investigating the primary concepts of interest, the building blocks of theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). From these pools (Figure 1), the study developed categories (Expat-preneurs, German Government, Hochschule/Innovation Leaders and Entrepreneurship Academics to identify the key elements of interest. Assumptions (not theory or hypotheses) about relationships from previous taxonomy and typology work as well as related background research provided a starting point to begin this investigation (Padgett, 2016).

A series of repeated in-depth conversations with key experts, along with in-situ observation of the activities of all players interacting in the environment, provided a solid basis for the evolution of the abductive work (Martinko and Gardner, 1985; Noordergraf and Stewart, 2000). The addition of 'shadowing' (or unobtrusive participant observation) created the most comprehensive approach possible within the limits of this study's purview (McDonald, 2005). As we conducted our interviews, additional and more specific research questions were added as is typical with the abductive research process. These additional questions were also explored in depth and allowed for more specific findings.

Figure 1: Research Pools by Research Question Area

Research Area 1: Expat-preneur Evaluate & Start Up Overseas

- Expat-preneur
- Hochschule/Innovation Leaders
- Entrepreneurship Academics

Research Area 3: German Motives to Attract American Expat-preneur

- German Government
- Hochschule/Innovation Leaders
- •Entrepreneurship Academics

Research Area 2: Challenges Faced by Expat-preneur In Germany

- Expat-preneur
- German Government
- •Hochschule/Innovation Leaders
- •Entrepreneurship Academics

Research Area 4: Can American Expat-preneur Drive Cultural Change

- Expat-preneur
- •German Government
- •Hochschule/Innovation Leaders
- •Entrepreneurship Academics

This figure shows which research pools were interviewed according to the research area of interest. All four research pools were interviewed for Research Area 2 and 4. In Research Area 1 and 3 only 3 pools were interviewed. Hochschule/Innovation Leaders and Entrepreneurship Academics were interviewed for all 4 research areas.

The researcher conducted in depth interviews until saturation was achieved. This resulted in a total of 30 interviews across the four target groups of interest. See Table 1. These were combined with other less formal discussions with key individuals in an ad hoc fashion. Studies with similar sample plans are not without precedent. Stubbs and Cocklin (2008) used 11 abductive interviews in developing their analysis of

sustainable business models in banking. Cifarelli (1999) used only five subjects in an abductive report regarding problem solving by college students. Taylor *et al.* (2009) using abduction in studying social context as a determinant of motivational strategies used 22 total interviews of male teachers to create and publish a paper. Aarikka-Stenroos and Jaakkola (2012) employed 25 total interviews in their abductive investigation of value co-creation in knowledge-intensive business services.

Observation research was ongoing both while working with subjects as well as German entrepreneurs. Shadowing with expat-preneurs lasted 2-3 hours per session or as appropriate to each situation. These research activities were largely unscripted and focused on the operations of foreign entrepreneurs and interaction events between American expat-preneurs and foreign nationals.

Additionally, the interviewer had ad hoc conversations with both American and German entrepreneurs as appropriate during the observation process. The study developed two sets of procedures: one for items to be cognizant of while interacting in different situations and another system for pure observation. Protocols were also modified for each group (similar to but much less detailed than IDI guides and shadowing procedures).

By centering research areas (shown in Figure 1 above) as key starting points, it was possible to begin advancing through the initial topics to develop more detailed and relevant understandings of the reality on the ground versus extant beliefs. As each round of investigation proceeded, evaluation of results led to sample type changes and new lines of investigation. The nested semiotic triads surfaced more relevant and revelatory conditions as well as new lines of questioning.

Interviews and information-gathering missions were conducted largely in person (two initial and follow up questions by telephone) in Germany during three in-country research periods during September 2018, March and June 2019.

The discussions were free-form, without a formal topic guide and allowed to cover new topics as areas of interest appeared. This approach not only provided support for rigor in the scientific character of the method, but it also allowed the interviewer to rethink data collection and make heuristic fixes throughout the process to guide and adapt theory construction (Madill and Gough, 2008).

Table 1: Total Interview Count by Sample Group

	Expat-preneur	Academic	Innovation Leader	Government Representative	Total Interviews
Interview Count	9	9	9	3	30

This table shows the number of interviews conducted in each of the identified research pools of interest. A total of 30 interviews were conducted across 4 distinct categories of interviewees. This resulted in 30 total interviews across the four target groups of interest

The analytic process began with four initial research areas informed by the literature review and secondary sources. While information was created in the initial two iterations of the research, the resultant research areas determined the research path driving final conclusions. (See Table 2.)

Table 2: Abductive Analysis Process Map

Iterations	Research Area 1	Research Area 2	Research Area 3	Research Area 4
Initial	Why do expat-preneurs decide to startup in Germany?	What are the issues and challenges?	What are the motivations of the German government to attract American entrepreneurs?	Can the manner in which American expat-preneurs startup companies positively affect German business practices?
Consequent	Who are expat-preneurs as opposed to other American entrepreneurs?	How do expat-preneurs navigate the German system?	What are the underlying drivers for Germany to attract expat-preneurs?	Is Germany's goal really focused on changing German entrepreneurial culture?
Resultant	What are the specific reasons expat-preneurs go to Germany?	What are the mechanisms and practices that help or hurt expat-preneurs during intitial transition to the German business environment?	How is the government trying to become more effective in incorporating entrepreneurial thought into how they assist companies?	What are the things German business is doing to assist expat- preneurs, learn from them and change their marketing practices? What are the specific ongoing and logistic hurdles that expat- preneurs must address?

This table shows the evolution of research questions from intitial to consequent to resultant for each research area of interest. Note how the research questions become more specific and focused as the study proceeded. While information was created in the initial two iterations of the research, the resultant research areas determined the research path driving final conclusions.

Reassembly utilizing qualitative data analysis software (MaxQDA) for initial data entry and coding followed the interviews themselves. The analytic software allowed analyses by category, layered crosstabulation, word frequencies and quotation by each categorical breakdown and respondent. Word and code clouding added more to each change through semiotic triads and final data analysis with resultant findings.

FINDINGS

Research Area 1: Differences Between Expat-preneurs and Domestic Entrepreneurs

Much of the literature regarding entrepreneurs have tended to consider domestic and international startup businesses as largely the same (Vance et al., 2016). Studies comparing domestic entrepreneurs with expatpreneurs have attempted to categorize them based upon the assumption of mutual priorities and activities (Przytuła and Strzelec, 2017). While there are certainly similarities in all types of entrepreneurial activities, this research uncovered several differences. The expat-preneurs perceived opportunities in Germany to be superior and were willing to move at least in part for this reason alone. Specifically, they perceived networking and sales opportunities, as well as innovation capacity in Germany to be superior.

I believe that Europe has things that the [United States] doesn't. Europe has the infrastructure that is actually there because entrepreneurial collaboration is stronger than in the [United States]. Government and business are investing in infrastructure to help entrepreneurs. Collaboration is one version of capacity, innovation capacity. For innovation capacity you need synergy, you really need collaboration. By default, we have it here. I think that really attracts people.

In addition, the interviewees considered the German economy to be stronger and more stable than the United States. One expat-preneur stated,

It's amazing how many people come here for just the strength of the economy.

Further, all four sample groups (expat-preneur, academic, innovation leaders, and government representatives) cited quality of life issues, such as a lower cost of living than New York or Silicon Valley. This emergent theme was explored in greater depth in our next stage of research.

Consequent Research Area 1: Differences Further Examined

Since initial results indicated definite differences between expat-preneurs and American (domestic entrepreneurs) the next stage of the research project sought to further investigate this phenomenon.

This round of study showed a difference between how expat-preneurs and domestic entrepreneurs view quality of life. It is generally accepted that the American domestic entrepreneur is highly tolerant of ambiguity and low liquidity, less engaged in planning, more aggressive in pursuit of risky endeavors, and willing to work long hours (Begley and Boyd, 2007). Findings indicated that the expat-preneur, by contrast, seems to prefer a somewhat more relaxed pace of business development. They tend to plan in more depth. They focus on building strong cash reserves or financial backing. They are more tolerant of bureaucracy as it tends to put natural breaks in the development process. And, they prefer not to give up personal time to the extent seen in America. This finding is somewhat counterintuitive, as one might think that expat-preneurs (due to their adventurousness to venture overseas to start a business) would be more tolerant of ambiguity and risky endeavors than the domestic entrepreneur not less tolerant.

Another finding at this stage of the research was also somewhat counterintuitive. Since expat-preneurs are willing to make personal sacrifices to relocate to a different country, it would seem to follow that while overseas they would continue to sacrifice personal time, working long hours and they would change their products at a frenetic pace. However, this was not the case.

You can experiment more, let's say, for your customer exploration phase. I'd say you have a lot more time and less pressure. And let's say, as compared to Silicon Valley, it's not that competitive landscape. The Germans want their free time, not working 80 hours per week. (sic)

Research Area 2: Issues and Challenges Facing Expat-preneurs

The second research area (R2) attempted to refine concerns expat-preneurs face when attempting a German startup. The vast majority of comments in this area fell into the following categories: navigating challenges, business practices, and cultural challenges. The challenges comments seemed to bifurcate into concerns regarding personal requirements for the startup (language assimilation, minimum financing, finding information, slower pace of business) and difficulties in dealing with government bureaucracy.

The third series of comments centered again around quality of life issues, such as the physical cost of living and adjusting to foreign living practices. At this point, quality of life still seemed to indicate that navigating challenges represented the intersection of work and personal life. For example, one expat-preneur commented.

I think the bureaucracy has a lot of ties, to like, if I have a big idea it's going to take so long to get done and there's all this paperwork. People don't really want to go through that. Even Germans. They're like, I don't want to do that. It can really burn you down, I mean personally, if you keep hitting these walls..

Consequent Research Area 2: How Do Expat-preneurs Navigate the German System?

R2 revealed that navigating challenges was a key theme. At the same time, there was little in the way of specific outcomes as a result of pursuing that research question. The consequent research topic became, how do expat-preneurs navigate the German system? Using a diagnosis of the processes and practices of expat-preneurs in navigating the specific challenges they face in German startups allowed clearer subthemes to emerge.

Among the strong sub-themes that emerged were business opportunities, German business practices, and

once again quality of life. Quality of life continued to be an important element across categories that still needed to be untangled to find its clearest meaning. The business opportunity category was also an element, but interview comments were focused on the advantages of more developed networking opportunities and entrepreneurial ecosystems. For example, an innovation leader said,

We have several programs to connect innovation and startups with funding and connections. Subcontracting to the government or corporations as well as representing angel investment.

Expat-preneurs also seem to focus on adjusting to German business communication practices. For example, in Germany, email is still king. Virtually every aspect of the German business process from introductions, sales, process updates, and so forth is handled by email and at arm's length. Plus, communication speed is slow. Businesses expect a single contact and then leave the entrepreneur to wait. A return email may take days or even weeks, but frequent communication creates an impression of impertinence or rudeness. It can be a difficult hurdle for even the most patient American entrepreneurs to handle. One expat-preneur interviewed confirmed,

Email is big for all communications, but be ready to wait. Timing on communications is slow. Germans think this is normal, so don't push them or they'll cut ties.

Once again, quality of life issues came into play. Quality of life seems to be a constant background to virtually all other aspects of the expat-preneur experience. At this point, it seems safe to say that quality of life permeates much of the expat-preneur drive. A government agent who was interviewed noted,

Some [American entrepreneurs] get very frustrated with the pace of the government or the pace of the business practice, but I do think there are some that like it. We are very hard workers in Germany, but we also make sure we enjoy the free time. Some Americans have said this to me.

Research Area 3: German Government Objectives and Motivations to Attract Expat-preneurs

This study aimed at understanding two sides of one system; how and why American entrepreneurs expatriate to start up a new business (R1 and R2), and why the German government would want those entrepreneurs to come to Germany (R3 and R4).

Initial research area three (R3) was specifically designed to uncover the specific meanings of those categories. The research question (what are the motivations of the German government and German businesses to attract American entrepreneurs to start up in Germany?) led to an uncovering of two separate narratives: the stories of the governmental goals and development and the reaction of the German business community to government efforts to encourage foreign entrepreneurship and investment in Germany. Also, it seemed clear that since the inception of the organized German entrepreneurship outreach programs, there has been a divergence of goals between government and business.

In this iteration, comments regarding attraction to expatriate had to do with the government having a vested interest in entrepreneurial growth to strengthen the German economy over the long term versus some of the laissez-faire, do-or-die attitudes of the American government. Attraction to expatriate is how the Germans see what they are doing for entrepreneurs. In an interview, a representative from the Landing Pad agency stated,

I can also say that the purpose for the future is also to invest even more into supporting startups and to funding startups. The government understands the importance of this topic and has a really, a many-sided approach to supporting startups. It's not just about money. It is about using entrepreneurship as a tool to strengthen the entire German economy over time.

The second key element to R3 lies in the area of business opportunities. The German business community seems to believe that the synthesis of German business and American risk-taking and opportunity identification is a winning combination. This is not discussing personal cultural change as alluded to earlier, nor is it business conditions seen by the American expat-preneur as opportunities to influence. It appears to be more of the German view that American entrepreneurs can not only have an effect on boosting the German economy but represent an opportunity for German businesses to jointly provide opportunity while exploiting American approaches to strengthen the business or the economy. An innovation leader interviewee commented.

I think actually, what the great combination usually says is like Americans are great, great salespeople. And Germans are really good engineers. So, when you put them together actually, it's a great combination. Then the American(s), they're magic on this. I think that's the great combination of mixing diversity of cultures and business here. I think that's what makes it the idea(l) and the new company unique.

Consequent Research Area 3: German Drivers to Attract Expat-preneurs

While the stated goals of the German government may be to attract entrepreneurs to change German entrepreneurial culture and increase economic development, this consequent line of investigation led to discussions regarding how German businesses were truly open to entrepreneurial thinking and valued disruptive change in their organizations. Our findings indicate that companies in Germany are starting to adopt the tenets and lessons of entrepreneurial marketing aggressively.

Information gathered regarding changing German culture spoke almost solely on how American entrepreneurs are adding and bringing disruption to larger corporations. Companies not only see the Americans as introducing or leading larger marketing concepts but also adding complementary aspects to existing German change movements. One innovation leader remarked,

An entrepreneur can really add value to the society in reality. Entrepreneurs are also those people that create jobs and are there to help the society. Disruptive change means many times to break through the walls of stagnant(ion), to become innovative and to change how companies work. It almost feels like the Americans are the only ones that can do this. It goes against German practices, but it is advice from outside of Germany.

The sub-theme seems to concern German business views of threats to the economy from outside sources. German business owners worry about the effects of growing economies and the revitalization of right-wing populism. The belief seems to be that the combination of American adventurism with German professionalism and competence may be a powerful force in improving German ability to compete. One of the academics interviewed commented.

Before it was more of a problem to be able to compete [at] such [high] levels within the Germany economy. Now, I think the most eminent [threats] economically, even though from a cultural perspective, [are] situational foreign issues like the Chinese economy and [the fact that] technology development is so strong.

Regarding underlying drivers to import American entrepreneurs, the discussion turns toward German businesses feeling like they must search for outside risk-takers as they are not finding them in Germany. These businesses would like to see more aggressive actions and big ideas coming from an internal place, but those ideas and traits do not seem to be there. In general, our findings indicate that companies believe that real change can come from the entrepreneurial mindset, but they believe that German entrepreneurs are not innovators. Businesses see German entrepreneurs as improvers molded by the expectations of German society. The motivations German entrepreneurs need must be larger and more aggressive. As one of the academics interviewed put it,

We have entrepreneurs who are like Germans busy with inventions, which are really innovations, which are really just improvements. The risk that they are taking is really not about inventing something new. It's really about improving what's already there, and I think there has been the realization that that is just not enough.

With the realization that this internal-external perception exists among German businesses, the next logical line of inquiry pointed at building a better understanding of the true goals of German business. The resultant and final line of inquiry in this research area became, how are governments and businesses trying to become more effective in incorporating entrepreneurial thought into how they assist companies?

Research Area 4: Outcomes for German Business Culture

One of the stated goals of the original entrepreneurship assistance programs was specifically to help remove the stigma of entrepreneurship in society. Our findings indicated that German entrepreneurs were not seen as risk-takers as they had to contend with both personal risk and social risk. That is, not only did an entrepreneur risk financial well-being and reputation but also that of the entrepreneur's family and even community. For example, one of our respondents (an expat-preneur) stated,

In Germany, if you fail, it's personal. It's not that your business failed; it is that you failed. And people look at you as that and look down at you for that failure."

This feeling was thought to have caused a culture of derision among the general population toward both successful and failed entrepreneurs. Aside from the mandated goal of economic development, a secondary objective of the government was to remove some of the uncertainty in entrepreneurial endeavors and change the views of entrepreneurs overall.

Response to this research area was overwhelmingly in the cultural change category code. However, it was clear that this category was a limited descriptor as sub-themes appeared within the classification. On the one hand, there was significant discussion around how American attitudes were changing perceptions of German entrepreneurs. Others spoke of how German entrepreneurs operate, to create individual innovations versus modifications or additions to existing projects. It was even discussed as to how German entrepreneurs study an issue, seek permission and approval, and only then begin to pursue development in small steps. One expat-preneur stated,

One of the most distinctive factors I have found in the [United States] is entrepreneurs are closer to each other than Europe. If you have an idea, you first do it. If someone doesn't like it, you apologize. When in Europe, if you have an idea, you first start asking around, and very often in Germany...I have the feeling asking for permission is asking for denial. Because if you want to create a new idea, you don't ask people who never had an idea in their lives.

Lastly, in no small measure, there were both hints and open discussion regarding whether both government and business were looking to increase entrepreneurship or were more focused on looking at entrepreneurial thought as the disruptive change to larger German businesses. The first inkling of this was the increased ubiquity of specific German business changes to recruit entrepreneurs outside of the governmental system, help them establish businesses, and act as process consultants for German companies. The government consultant who was interviewed stated,

Almost every...big company in Germany has its own accelerator program or some form of program for investing into startups. They can learn their (entrepreneurs) ideas and approaches and apply them to the larger company.

This additional comment spoke to the need to refine the initial R4 from exploring whether Americans change the entrepreneurial culture to exploring if that was the goal of the German government at all. This led to the next semiotic adjustment.

Consequent Research Area 4: Is Germany really Focused on Changing German Entrepreneurial Culture?

The abductive process uncovered clues that begged clarification as to the actual goals of German efforts before developing further specifics regarding activities. How could the investigation determine what entrepreneurs could do in Germany without understanding Germany's intentions? It seemed that the most appropriate avenue of research at this point was in determining if pursuing entrepreneurial change was the government's actual goal.

This research area seemed to drive the resultant signs necessary to complete the analysis. The resultant research groups initially revealed some conflicting information. The findings presented keys to these phenomena through discussions around how the German government is trying to become more effective in incorporating entrepreneurial thought into how they assist companies. Interviewees and informal discussions seemed to point to inconsistencies between the government's stated position of attracting entrepreneurs to reinvigorate the German entrepreneurial spirit versus deeper needs of the government and German business.

Exploring this research area led to attributes describing practical business issues as one of the driving forces behind Germany's efforts rather than cultural change. An innovation leader suggested,

It's a way for (German) corporations to have access to cheaper research and development. And get in contact with the startup ecosystem, get the right talent. So, they feel incorporated and added value working with a startup and maybe find the right people to get this entrepreneur culture inside their corporate culture.

Other themes arising from this research area included discussion of business opportunities for expatpreneurs with German corporations and ways in which the American expat-preneur could change German business culture and practices versus simply affecting changes in attitudes toward entrepreneurialism. One academic stated,

So, what we see now in German markets for corporations, entrepreneurs acting as consultants would be very good people to work with. So, now companies are looking for people that have built something, that have run something in terms of scaling a startup because they know marketing very well. They know sales very well. And they know how to run a company and then how to be leading innovative programs, thought leaders. They bring them into almost every big company in Germany has its own accelerator program or some form of program for investing into startups. They can learn their ideas and approaches and apply them to the larger company.

This yielded a significant amount of evidence pointing toward government goals being much more aligned with the promotion of business goals and seeing how entrepreneurs can work to help adjust corporate systems. One respondent noted that the government has even begun to reimburse companies' portions of their investments in bringing entrepreneurs into their organizations.

DISCUSSION

This study explored two major issues: why are American entrepreneurs expatriating to Germany to start up new businesses, and why is Germany enticing them to do so? These questions seem straightforward on the surface, but upon examination proved to be more complicated than was commonly believed. In exploring the entrepreneur and expatriate literature, definitions of expat-preneur were unclear. Some

sources saw them simply as entrepreneurs operating overseas as they would domestically while others tried to focus more on the issues that drove or constrained expatriation startups. Our findings help to create a much more nuanced and detailed perspective on the American expat-preneur in Germany.

The literature likens the expat-preneur to the self-initiated expatriate, but this is a misnomer. Self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) include individuals seeking work with a foreign company. The expat-preneur is truly an entrepreneur looking to start up a new small business in a foreign country. And, their motivations versus the American domestic entrepreneurs appear to be different in notable ways.

Quality of life in both the personal and business sense is critical to the expat-preneur approach to expatriated startup. This finding converges with recent findings that macroeconomic stability and quality of life are important attributes for SIEs (Ryan and Silvanto, 2021). Many expat-preneurs are attracted to start their businesses in Germany as much for lifestyle reasons as business opportunities. They are careful planners in every facet of their businesses and seem to be somewhat more solvent than entrepreneurs in the U.S. Plus, they are patient. In Germany, bureaucracy with governmental assistance programs can create prolonged timeframes to receive licensing and benefits. The patience of the expat-preneur is better suited to the prolonged waits that can occur due to the bureaucracy and ongoing hurdles in navigating the German business environment.

Determining the true goals of enticing expat-preneurs to Germany was the other general aim of this research. Under the direction of the EU, Germany developed an extensive program of assistance to entrepreneurs, much of it aimed at attracting foreign (mainly American) investment and startups. The programs are generous but mired in bureaucracy. This system has gotten to the point where it is somewhat self-defeating with broad requirements for application and long wait times for action. While this has not been too much of a problem for true expat-preneurs, it has become a frustration for German businesses.

The German government developed entrepreneurship assistance programs with the overt goals of increasing economic development and foreign investment. Secondary and less publicized government goals were to foster change in the German entrepreneurs' approach to risk-taking and changing public attitudes toward entrepreneurs. Seeking relief from bureaucratic hurdles, expat-preneurs became more involved with established German businesses. This catalyzed change in established German business views. More German corporations started to sponsor individual expat-preneurs. By streamlining the expatriation and startup process they were able to lay the groundwork for the possibility of a joint venture with these new expat-led companies. These programs appear to be operating regionally or even by city. Academics, innovation leaders, and local economic development authorities have become important elements in facilitating business networks and connections with expat-preneurs.

Businesses also changed the purpose of the expat-preneur in Germany. Corporations are seeing significant changes in consumer value propositions and government regulation. Companies have become much more open to significant process change as they begin to realize that previous corporate structures may not be adequate to address new consumer requirements and competitive adjustment. German companies are seeking disruptive change in processes and are beginning to help expat-preneurs set up and then are using them as change agents for instituting entrepreneurial marketing techniques.

Limitations and Future Research

One limitation is that the study focused on American expat-preneurs in Germany. Opening up the interview process to expat-preneurs from and within other countries could have yielded other interesting findings. Another limitation is that results from this study are not meant to be generalizable. The depth interview process is meant to provide insights into expat-preneurs' lived experience. While not generalizable, the results from this study should provide insight and an initial framework for future research in this

understudied area.

This process revealed a number of interesting pathways for future research. First, we recommend further investigation into the distinction between personal and business quality of life among expat-preneurs. It is common practice to discuss work-life balance in companies, yet the idea of separating the character of the work life in terms of satisfaction and self-actualization seems a different comparison and could be an area for further examination. Another area of future research would be further investigations into the changing culture of German businesses. Corporations are becoming concerned with competitive advantage and new requirements from customers and government. Companies are opening the doors and their minds to new views of disruptive change and see the American view of entrepreneurial marketing as a vehicle for that change.

The German government established extensive entrepreneurial assistance programs to ostensibly increase economic development as well as drive cultural change in German entrepreneurism. As time has passed and German corporations have voiced their needs, German government processes have evolved to accommodate. While not specifically stated, government assistance programs have turned toward partnering with business to bring in entrepreneurial thought. Study around government processes could provide beneficial findings. In Germany, this is particularly interesting because our results have found that the government incentives initially attracted entrepreneurs, but at the same time, the grinding bureaucracy in the country emerged as a common theme in our findings.

Lastly, future research could certainly be extended on the abductive research process itself. Induction is by far the most widely accepted and utilized form of qualitative research. But, the power of abductive analysis lies in its ability to uncover initial concepts in under-researched areas and provide topics for further examination with inductive or quantitative analysis.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we contribute to the literature in two main ways. First, expat-preneurs are not the entrepreneurs described by much of the literature. They have different motivations, processes, and priorities than traditional American domestic entrepreneurs. They operate from a different set of priorities than traditionally associated with entrepreneurism. They are patient, planned, and not willing to sacrifice quality of life in business or personal life. Second, this research uncovers the complexity of the German community-driven entrepreneurship apparatus. This community-based approach provided the support needed for American expat-preneurs. Once expat-preneurs became members of this community, they were able to bring much-needed change and fresh business perspectives to both the German economy as well as to individual German firms who partnered with these expat-preneurs.

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