INTERNATIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A REVIEW AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

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Abstract. With a view to increasing integration and interdisciplinary ties between international business and entrepreneurship, this chapter looks back and forward on research in the field of International Entrepreneurship. A specific focus is placed on examining one of the mainstream topics in this field which refers to the so-called born-global firm phenomenon. We conduct an integrative overview of the past and current literature. Based on our comprehensive literature review, we then critically assess the current state of this topic and provide new directions for improving future research.

To be submitted as a book chapter for The Routledge Companion to International Entrepreneurship (Edited by Stephanie Fernhaber and Shameen Prashantham)
International Entrepreneurship: A Review and Future Directions

INTRODUCTION

Business internationalization, generally understood as the process of increasing involvement in international operations across borders (Welch and Loustarinen, 1988) and of adapting firms’ operations to such international environments (Calof and Beamish, 1995) can be considered as a major issue of the strategy-driven process of many contemporary firms (Welch and Welch, 1996). Accordingly, the internationalization of the firm has received much academic interest in the last four decades (Rialp and Rialp, 2001; Werner, 2002). For a long time, a large portion of scientific research on internationalization had focused on empirically testing the behavioral-based sequential or gradualist approach earlier postulated by the Internationalization Process Model or Uppsala-Model (Cavusgil, 1980; Johanson and Vahlne, 1977, 1990). This model views firm internationalization as a lengthy process that develops in stages, assuming that market knowledge is acquired primarily through experience from current business activities in increasingly psychologically distant target foreign markets. This gradualist approach, however, has been criticized and lately revisited (Andersen, 1993; Johanson & Vahlne, 2006; 2009) due largely to the emergence of early internationalization perspectives (Knight & Cavusgil, 1996; Madsen and Servais, 1997; Oviatt and McDougall, 1997).

Indeed, the salient features of early and rapid business internationalization from inception are best captured at the intersection of the entrepreneurship and internationalization perspectives (McDougall and Oviatt, 2000; Mathews and Zander, 2007). International Entrepreneurship (IE) has emerged as a distinctive and interdisciplinary field of research at the interface between
internationalization and entrepreneurship (McDougall and Oviatt, 2000; Oviatt & McDougall, 1999, 2005a,b; Dimitratos and Jones, 2005; Hessels, 2008; Fernhaber et al., 2009) and focusing primarily, but not exclusively, on the challenging phenomenon of infant firms that operate internationally early after inception. While the two most commonly used terms to label these firms are international new ventures (INVs) (Oviatt & McDougall, 1994, 1997; McDougall et al., 1994, 2003; Prashantham and Young, 2011; Spence et al., 2011) and born-global firms (BGFs) (Rennie, 1993; Knight and Cavusgil, 1996, 2004; Madsen and Servais, 1997; Andersson and Wictor, 2003; Sharma & Blomstermo, 2003; Chetty and Campbell-Hunt, 2004; Hashai & Almor, 2004; Nordman and Melén, 2008; Cavusgil & Knight, 2009), scholars use other terms such as global start-ups (Jolly et al., 1992; Oviatt and McDougall, 1995); born international SMEs (Kundu and Katz, 2003), early internationalizing firms (Rialp et al., 2005a; Schwens and Kabst, 2009) or rapidly internationalizing ventures (Cesinger et al., 2012). This disparity in terminology can create confusion, especially when used interchangeably (Svensson, 2006; Svensson and Payan, 2009; Crick, 2009; Baum et al., 2011). Nonetheless these terms all refer to essentially the same phenomenon, i.e., new or young and independent ventures internationalizing at inception or very shortly thereafter (typically within three years of foundation). Such businesses have come of age during the current era of globalization and advanced technology. For brevity sake, we will collectively refer to such young companies as Born Global Firms (BGFs).

Since the early 90s, numerous researchers have focused on explaining the particularly early and accelerated internationalization of born-globals mostly in high-technology sectors (Jolly et al., 1992; Bell, 1995; Knight and Cavusgil, 1996; Crick & Jones, 2000), but also in more traditional, mature industries (McAuley, 1999, Fillis, 2004). Regardless of the context of
empirical investigation, much scholarly research has described these firms and attempted to advance theoretical perspectives, especially given the inability of extant international business theories and models to fully account for them (McDougall et al., 1994; Oviatt and McDougall, 1997; Bell et al., 2004).

Given the widespread appearance of born global firms, researchers have devoted much scholarly attention to this phenomenon, which is very frequently considered in comprehensive reviews of the contemporary literature (Coviello and McAuley, 1999; Fillis, 2001; Fletcher, 2004; Ruzzier et al., 2006; Rialp and Rialp, 2007; Wright et al., 2007; Jones et al., 2011). However, despite its growing significance as a current research issue, mostly documented at the empirical level so far, some authors believe that more advanced and comprehensive explanations of this phenomenon are still lacking (Oviatt and McDougall, 1999, 2005a; Knight and Cavusgil, 2004; Jones and Coviello, 2005; Zahra, 2005; Coviello, 2006; Mathews and Zander, 2007; Weerawardena et al., 2007; Gabrielsson et al., 2008a). Thus, more dedicated research efforts are needed to enrich existing knowledge on the born-global phenomenon (Zahra and George, 2002; Bell et al., 2001, 2004; Melén and Nordman, 2009; Rialp et al., 2010).

The born global phenomenon was first reviewed by Rialp et al. (2005a) and, more recently, by others (Aspelund et al., 2007; Jones et al., 2011; Cesinger et al., 2012; and Madsen, 2013). However, it is one mainstream topic, although perhaps the most developed and consolidated one, of the different streams of research belonging to IE (Oviatt and McDougall, 2005a,b; Jones et al., 2011). Accordingly, in this chapter we focus our review effort specifically on examining contemporary studies on BGFs.
We aim to provide an updated and integrated review of the contemporary international business and entrepreneurship literatures focused on smaller born-global firms (BGFs)\(^1\) (including both conceptual contributions and empirical studies) with the twofold objective of (a) examining the current state of knowledge on the born global phenomenon as a contemporary research issue, and (b) identify future research directions from which promote further conceptual and empirical progress in the field.

We structure our chapter as follows: first, an overview of International Entrepreneurship as a field of research is provided in which BGFs are positioned as a very relevant category of international entrepreneurial ventures, followed by an integrative overview of the past and current literature focused on this challenging born-global phenomenon. Then, based upon our literature review, we critically assess the current status of this field and provide new directions for future research. We close with concluding remarks.

**INTERNATIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A FIELD OF RESEARCH**

Since its earliest origin in the late 80s until nowadays, research in International Entrepreneurship (IE) (Wright and Ricks, 1994; McDougall and Oviatt, 2000; Dimitratos and Jones, 2005) is characterized by a multiplicity of evolving definitions, approaches, frameworks, methods, and even gaps (McDougall, 1989; McDougall et al., 1994; Oviatt and McDougall, 1994, 1997, 1999; 2005a,b; Zahra & George, 2002; Coviello and Jones, 2004; Autio, 2005; Jones and Coviello, 2005; Zahra, 2005; Coombs et al., 2009; Keupp and Gassman, 2009;

\(^1\) It is worth mentioning here, by the way, that traditionally IB researchers investigating internationalizing new ventures- like BGFs- versus long-established SMEs, have still put greater emphasis on their smaller size condition as compared to larger, long-established international firms than Entrepreneurship scholars in this IE field, who tend to largely emphasize earliness in a venture’s life rather than size (SME). We particularly thank the co-editors of this book for this pertinent comment.
Szyyliowicz and Galvin, 2010; Jones et al., 2011; Reuber and Fischer, 2011; de Clercq et al., 2012; Kiss et al., 2012; Peiris et al., 2012; Covin and Miller, 2013; Mainela et al., 2013).

Numerous scholars have sought to define the boundaries of IE (cf. Jones and Nummela, 2008; Jones et al., 2011), some focusing mainly on BGFs (Rialp et al., 2005a,b; Aspelund et al., 2007; Gabrielsson and Kirpalani, 2004, 2012) and others noting that older, established companies, not only new or young ones, can also show an international entrepreneurial behaviour (Wright and Ricks, 1994; McDougall and Oviatt, 2000; Zahra, 2005). Actually, the most updated, well accepted, and broadest definition of IE “the discovery, enactment, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities across national borders to create future goods and services” (Oviatt and McDougall, 2005a: 539) fosters both international opportunity (Mainela et al., 2013) and international entrepreneurial orientation (Covin and Miller, 2013) as key constructs, and applies to all firm sizes, large and small, and types of firms, young and old. Over time, the IE field has tended to shift from its early focus on firm age (new), size (small) and industry (hi-tech) to increasingly emphasize the role of firm resources, capabilities, processes, and (international) opportunities. The above definition accommodates such an evolution in the born global literature.

Although some authors claim IE research has not yet attained the necessary theoretical rigour and external theoretical legitimisation (Keupp and Gassmann, 2009), others believe that IE research is progressing well, achieving consistency and gradually developing unifying paradigms and theoretical perspectives (Jones et al., 2011). Thus, while still in an emergent status, IE can be considered an integrative, coherent, and highly promising scholarly field whose domain encompasses at least three main research avenues, branches or thematic areas: 1) Entrepreneurial internationalization (cross-national-border behavior of entrepreneurial actors); 2) International
comparisons of entrepreneurship (cross-national comparisons of domestic entrepreneurship); and 3) Comparative entrepreneurial internationalization (cross-country comparisons of new venture internationalization) (Hessels, 2008; Jones et al., 2011; Terjesen et al., 2013).

Accordingly, IE currently covers a wide array of international entrepreneurial activities (Wright and Ricks, 1994; Jones and Coviello, 2005; Zahra, 2005; Mathews and Zander, 2007) due mostly to the fact that international entrepreneurial behavior may simultaneously concern both new and established firms irrespective of age, size or industry (Dimitratos and Jones, 2005). Diverse classifications, typologies and/or archetypes of international entrepreneurial ventures are emerging in the growing body of IE literature (Zucchella and Scabini, 2007; Gabrielsson et al., 2008b; Bell et al., 2004, 2011; Kuivalainen et al., 2012; Madsen 2013).

Within this general IE domain, born global firms (Madsen and Servais, 1997; Madsen et al., 2000; Moen, 2002; Moen and Servais, 2002; Knight and Cavusgil, 2004; Rialp et al., 2005b) undoubtedly constitute the most distinctive type of new organizational form in IE research with comparatively much higher level of presence than any other type of venture in the specialized literature in the last two decades. However, other smaller but more long-established ventures (SMEs) can be also detected in the contemporary IE field which may also exhibit international entrepreneurial behavior like born globals, such as born-again global firms (Bell et al., 2001, 2004, 2011; Jantunen et al., 2008; Tuppura et al., 2008), global entrepreneurial SMEs/globalizing internationals (Gabrielsson and Gabrielsson, 2003, 2004; Dimitratos et al., 2010; Kalinic and Forza, 2011), and even micro-multinationals (Dimitratos et al., 2003), apart from smaller foreign subsidiaries linked to a larger MNE and new emerging market multinationals (Mathews, 2006; Guillén and García-Canal, 2009, Cuervo-Cazurra, 2010). However, due to the fact that better understanding the earlier and usually faster or accelerated internationalization process from
inception of entrepreneurial new ventures like BG firms is a mainstream topic within IE research (Hurmerinta-Peltomäki, 2003; Oviatt and McDougall, 2005a,b; Jones et al., 2011), the remaining sections of this chapter address the literature examining BGFs as a main typology of international and entrepreneurial new ventures.

INTEGRATING PAST AND CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE ON BORN GLOBAL FIRMS

A Brief Look at the Origins: Pioneering Studies on INVs/BGFs

While for several decades research in International Business had emphasized large, established multinational corporations, with entrepreneurial SMEs receiving much less research attention, since the late 1970s, some scholars in international business turned their attention to the incremental process through which smaller exporting firms gradually internationalize to psychically distant markets (Johanson and Vahlne, 1977; Cavusgil, 1980; Welch and Luostarinen, 1988).

However, a few scholars began identifying companies that undertake early internationalization from inception through more flexible managerial attitudes and practices (Hedlund and Kverneland, 1985; Morrow, 1988; Ganitsky, 1989). In her seminal work on new ventures’ international sales, entrepreneurship scholar McDougall (1989) defined International Entrepreneurship (IE) as the emergence of new companies that, from their inception, engage in international business thus viewing their operating domain as international from the initial stages

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2 In this particular section, we make use of the original name given by different authors to this type of early internationalizing new firms, though we collectively refer to them as born global firms throughout the chapter as mentioned earlier in the introduction section.
of the firm’s operation, and termed “International New Ventures or Start ups (INVs)” those firms emphasizing aggressive foreign market entry, with management taking an international perspective from the firm’s earliest days. They pursued broad strategies serving numerous customers in diverse market segments, developing high market or product visibility, and by developing and controlling numerous distribution channels (McDougall, 1989).

In 1993, Rennie introduced the term “born global” to describe companies that internationalize at or near their founding, based on his research on exporting firms from Australia. Rennie (1993) found that a large proportion of new Australian firms targeted foreign markets from inception, in largest part because of the relatively small size of Australia’s domestic market. Like McDougall, Rennie was a pioneer in the born global literature. In his study of 300 firms, Rennie (1993) found that Australian born globals began exporting, on average, only two years after founding and obtained some three-quarters of their revenues from abroad. These small firms successfully competed against larger established players worldwide. Remarkably, Rennie (1993) found that born globals accounted for some 20 percent of Australia’s high-value-added manufacturing exports. He argued that the emergence of born globals reveals how SMEs can power a nation’s economic growth.

In 1994, McDougall, Shane, and Oviatt compared five generally accepted IB perspectives—Monopolistic Advantage Theory, Product Cycle Theory, Stage Theory of Internationalization, Oligopolistic Reaction Theory, and Internalization Theory—and concluded that some aspects of born global firms are not well explained by extant international business theories.

In a related and highly acclaimed work, Oviatt and McDougall (1994:49) provided the first substantive conceptual explanation in the academic literature of INVs, these being defined as
“business organizations that, from inception, seek to derive significant competitive advantage from the use of resources and the sale of outputs in multiple countries”. By examining value chain activities and the number of countries entered, the authors identified four types of INVs: 1) Export/import start-ups (with few international activities in few countries); 2) Multinational traders (with few international activities in many countries); 3) Geographically focused start-ups (with many international activities in few counties); and 4) Global start-ups (with many international activities in many countries). They presented an explanatory framework of early internationalizing firms by integrating accepted MNE and international business theories with developments in entrepreneurship research. They noted that many such firms succeed by controlling rather than owning unique resources, especially knowledge.

Although Oviatt’s and McDougall’s (1994) early typology of INVs has been widely accepted in the literature, empirical testing of the determinants of INVs types remains incomplete. Zahra (2005), Crick (2009), Baum et al (2011), and Madsen (2013) perceive that the original INV typology merits additional scholarly attention to examine, for example, sources of competitive advantages, market scope, and strategies that affect their performance.

In the mid 1990s, Knight and Cavusgil (1996:11) and Knight (1997) defined Born Global Firms (BGFs) as “small, technology-oriented companies that operate in international markets from the earliest days of their establishment”. These authors argued that the born global phenomenon challenged traditional views of company internationalization (e.g., Johanson and Vahlne, 1977), and described the factors and implications associated with the arrival of born global firms, and the limitations posed for conventional internationalization views.
Contemporary Research on the Born Global Phenomenon: an Integrated Overview

Since its origins in the late 1980s, the academic literature on born global firms has largely increased, almost exponentially year after year in the current century, to become one of the main and more consolidated research issues in the emerging and interdisciplinary field of International Entrepreneurship (IE).

In Table 1, a review of existing research developed on the born global phenomenon in the last decades is presented and organized according to a number of key research topics typically addressed by international business and entrepreneurship academics alike, including both conceptual and empirical studies and also literature reviews. We have classified studies based on their dominant focus, although some works address two or more topical areas. Because we include only exemplary works, the table does not represent an exhaustive collection of available studies in the field. We, however, alert the reader that we only collectively refer to these studies here, without specifically citing authors (who appear carefully noted in Table1).

[Insert Table 1 around here]

From the International Business discipline numerous topics have been analyzed, with varying depth, in research focused on the emergence and further development of BGFs. Many authors have identified both internal and external/ environmental factors that drive early and rapid internationalization. Also, the key role played by knowledge-based resources and (dynamic) capabilities in the early internationalization process is highlighted. We note that scholars have given less emphasis, by contrast, to examining how knowledge-based organizational learning processes impact information seeking and foreign market research by these firms. Also, relevant managerial decision-making processes regarding foreign country-market/segment selection
(especially dealing with higher or lower geographic and psychic distance between home and foreign markets) and entry mode choice in born global firms have been perhaps lesser examined to date mostly because most studies focus on born global exporters sometimes in comparison with more traditional exporting firms and, with some exceptions, do not generally deal with other foreign entry modes also available to these firms. Several authors have exhaustively examined a range of international competitive and marketing strategies adopted by born global firms. For example, born globals are often seen to exhibit high levels of international marketing orientation, capability and competence. Further scholars have investigated the key role of the Internet and communications technologies in born global firms for improving communication and for managing customer relationships, distribution channels and intermediaries, sales transactions and fulfillment activities (Internet-enabled internationalization). There is, also, increased interest in investigating post international entry and global expansion determinants of these firms.

Applying a more entrepreneurial perspective, scholars have also investigated the key role of networks (either business, social and/or personal ones both at the domestic and international context) and entrepreneur-manager’s characteristics underlying early and rapid internationalization processes (especially, global mindset, international vision and orientation, cognition, risk-taking, and proactiveness). Also, the notion of (international) entrepreneurial orientation has become a key construct in contemporary research on BGFs and International Entrepreneurship. More recently, some current research on BGFs is paying high attention to causation vs. effectuation processes within these firms which is derived from its current consideration in the general Entrepreneurship field nowadays\(^3\). There is also increased interest in

\(^3\) See Saravasthy (2001) for a more general discussion of effectuation and causation in Entrepreneurship research.
investigating international opportunity identification, evaluation, and exploitation processes undoubtedly linked to the latest and broadest definition of IE concerning “the discovery, enactment, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities across national borders to create future goods and services” (Oviatt and McDougall, 2005a: 539). Some works have also dealt with the pre-founding and founding processes of BGFs, and public policy implications related to their emergence and further development. Both aspects, however, are highly underdeveloped yet and require further attention in future research in this field.

Also, important conceptual and empirical progress in the IE field in the last decades is clearly observable in the growing number of both theoretical works and literature reviews on BGFs and IE research in general which have recently emerged. Interestingly, however, other seemingly interesting research issues such as the (international) marketing/entrepreneurship nexus and entrepreneurial marketing in BGFs, which seem clearly to be at the intersection of entrepreneurship- and internationalization-oriented researchers’ interests, are still underrepresented topics in contemporary research on IE.

**TAKING STOCK AND LOOKING AHEAD: MAIN GAPS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH ON BORN GLOBAL FIRMS**

Despite substantial advances made in recent decades in the scholarly domain of born global firms regarding how and why BGFs are able to internationalize so early and even succeed in international business, much more work remains to be done. In this section, we discuss some challenging research opportunities in the field.
Taking Stock: Theoretical and Methodological Lessons from Past Research

From our perspective, future researchers should aim first at unifying and improving operational definitions of “born-globalness”, which remain heterogeneous (Aspelund et al. 2007; Gabrielsson et al., 2008b; Svensson & Payan, 2009). For example, operational definitions of born globals should consider the fact that some are in fact spin-offs from larger, long-established firms and, therefore, potentially may access substantial resources of the parent firm. More broadly, further work is also needed in improving and clarifying international entrepreneurship definition and domain (Zahra, 2005; Coviello et al., 2011). The development of more standardized and unifying definitions and conceptualizations will help make future research efforts more understandable and comparable. Likewise, despite increased theoretical and empirical rigor in the field, more research is needed to develop and refine theoretical explanations and causal models regarding the born global phenomenon (Knight and Cavusgil, 1996; Oviatt and McDougall, 1999; Bell et al., 2003). Future studies also should aim to advance the methodological domain of International Entrepreneurship research (Coviello & Jones, 2004).

We note that much extant research relies on a single theoretical framework, such as the Uppsala Internationalization Model or the network theory perspective, to investigate born global firms (Rialp et al., 2005a). More work is needed to extend or integrate internationalization models and the network view with more recent developments, such as the resource-, dynamic capabilities, and knowledge-based views of the firm, to explain internationalization in small, entrepreneurial firms. In addition, the sometimes forgotten time-based dimension still has a crucial role to play in current and future internationalization process research (Hurmerita-Peltomäki, 2003; Jones and Coviello, 2005) and, more particular, in better understanding of the born global firm phenomenon. Such a dynamic conception would perceive time rather as a flow
of events. For example, we conjecture that timing of internationalization is likely dependent on industry-level characteristics such as the need for large scale, industry structure, the nature of global competition, and the dispersion of requisite external resources around the world.

Moreover, there is much contrast between time-dependent theories and the traditional stage-based models of internationalization which cannot fully describe early internationalization (Hurmerita-Peltomäki, 2003). By focusing on states or positions (stages), rather than on those events or change of events which probably caused them, the Uppsala-Model and other gradualist views have substantially failed to capture the dynamics of internationalization (Morgan-Thomas and Jones, 2009).

Coviello and McAuley (1999) argued that future research should integrate major perspectives, particularly foreign direct investment theory, the stages models, and the network approach. They concluded that born global internationalization can be best understood by integrating these major theoretical frameworks. Accordingly, from a theoretical standpoint several insightfully integrated conceptual frameworks and models can be already found in the born global-related literature (see Table 2).

[Insert Table 2 here]

More recently, Aspelund et al. (2007) recommend examining concepts of variation, selection, and retention offered by evolutionary economics because they might prove to be relevant theoretical constructs, applicable in future research in the attempt to analyze which firms will survive and generate earnings under the currently turbulent market conditions. Therefore, future research might leverage multiple theoretical frameworks, the resource/knowledge-based view of the firm, transaction cost theory, the organizational capability perspective and the organizational learning and organizational theories, among others, in order to advance
knowledge on born global firms. Incorporating insights from such contemporary perspectives can help future researchers to address issues raised about the ability of born global firms to develop and retain competitive advantage over time. Such perspectives will bring a degree of dynamism to analyses on the evolution of these firms (Zahra, 2005).

Most theoretical and empirical research on born global firms and international entrepreneurship in general has been mostly developed either by international business researchers or entrepreneurship-oriented researchers acting rather separately. Consequently, the full potential of combining diverse strategic management and marketing-oriented approaches with entrepreneurship developments for better understanding strategy-making processes associated with born global firms’ emergence and international development is yet unrealized (Rialp et al., 2010). There remains substantial scope for developing improved theoretical frameworks of reference on the born-global phenomenon by linking entrepreneurial and strategic management-oriented approaches more closely. Only in this way, more holistic theoretical frameworks will assist in the development of better explanations, new research hypotheses and propositions in this field.

Focusing now on methodological aspects, much research on born global firms is dominated by a positivist, hypothetic-deductive perspective. That is, the research is very much focused on deductively confirming or disproving hypotheses and research questions without benefit of prior exploratory research. Studies used quantitative surveys and sophisticated analytical methods such as regression analysis or structural equation modeling. Advanced empirical studies that test hypotheses should be reserved for research in relatively advanced fields. Scholarship in a relatively young field like International Entrepreneurship, by contrast, should emphasize exploratory research aimed at defining, identifying, and explaining key concepts and basic
phenomena. Research should aim to develop constructs and theory that lay the foundation for subsequent empirical research. In this early phase of inquiry, extensive use of confirmatory research methods may be premature. In numerous areas, more exploratory research is needed to formulate and enhance underdeveloped concepts, constructs, relationships, and theory (Marschan-Piekkräri and Welch, 2004). Studies that utilize qualitative and inductive research methods, such as exploratory and explanatory case studies, can provide rich, context-specific description and explanation of born global firms. For example, the case-based approach led Bell, McNaughton and Young (2001) to uncover the so-called “born-again global firm” which actually became a very surprising discovery in their research. Ultimately, the best research combines exploratory and confirmatory approaches, by mixing both qualitative and quantitative research methods and data sources. For instance, a methodological research strategy initially based on a number of case-based studies of born global (and even non born global) firms together with further longitudinal surveys of large-scale, statistically representative samples of born global and other types of firms would prove very useful and promising in this field. Therefore, future research will benefit from skillfully combining quantitative and qualitative approaches.

In addition, regarding data collection processes in born global firm-oriented research, numerous past empirical studies focused on just one country/sector (usually a well developed Western economy and/or a high-tech industry). Future scholars should obtain data from various contexts, including developed and less-developed economies (Kiss et al., 2012), diverse industries (such as traditional and hi-tech manufacturing and service sectors), in order to produce findings with substantial external validity. Drawing data from various research settings and countries ensures external validity of findings and/or uncovers differences in born global firms
around the world. External validity is important because it shows how findings from the study can be generalized to other countries, industries, and populations of firms.

Likewise, future research would largely benefit from a perspective that recognizes internationalization as a dynamic, time-sensitive process. Longitudinal research facilitates deeper understanding of how born globals evolve over time. In the long run, some born global firms flourish, some flounder, and a proportion of them likely will merge with large companies as smaller firms often do. Empirical research that attempts to provide a more insightful understanding of how, why and when a new/young firm’s international growth pattern reflects clear development stages, relates to surrounding domestic and/or international networks, or exhibits advanced foreign entry modes beyond exports, such as international co-operation agreements and/or foreign direct investments, would be welcome to further understand complex organizational behavior such as the one shown by born global firms.

Future research in this field should be more pluralistic and “triangulated” than before, employing a variety of conceptual frameworks, suitable research methods, and analytical techniques to examine this challenging born global phenomenon more sophisticatedly which will allow researchers to optimize the likelihood of generating meaningful knowledge (Coviello and McAuley, 1999; Coviello et al., 2011).

**Looking Ahead: Key Topics and Research Questions Pending for the Future**

From our systematic and integrative review of this literature, we also believe that future research on born global firms should aim at better clarifying the key sources of their international precocity and dynamics by means of examining their performance antecedents and consequences, environmental conditions, internal and external resources/capabilities, and strategic marketing strategies typically associated with these firms, as well as the highly
influential characteristics of the entrepreneurs-managers who found them and drive their early and typically accelerated internationalization process.

A primary topic of interest resides in providing more refined and plausible explanations that help examine better the type of technological and/or market-related strategies that are currently enabling an increasing number of young firms to internationalize early. Future research should seek to deepen knowledge about the current environmental/institutional and internal factors that drive early internationalization (Szyliowicz and Galvin, 2010; Zucchella et al., 2007; Fernhaber et al., 2009). In this sense, possible relevant differences could be identified between early internationalizing firms in manufacturing versus service sectors (are they indeed different?).

Even more intriguing is how resource-poor born global firms are able to reconcile the usually costly customized product needs of unique foreign markets segments spread all over the world with the parallel need to achieve cost economies through product, price, distribution and/or communication standardization practices (i.e., the globalization versus localization of the international marketing strategy dilemma). For example, what accounts for the early international success of born globals in light of the resource constraints they typically face?

According to Zahra (2005), even the born global firm’s organizational form itself could be a key source of competitive advantage, so opportunities need not be found only in its external environment. While numerous studies have attempted to portray characteristics and behaviors typically observed in born global firms, as well as the factors determining their performance in international markets (Rialp et al., 2005a), we are still largely unaware of the specific characteristics or conditions, both internal and external to the firm, that give rise to early internationalization, consolidated international growth, and superior international performance.
Another interesting research question centers on the role of personal, social, and business network relationships associated with early and substantial internationalization. In particular, how and why do both domestic and mostly international networks support early internationalization and what types of network contacts and ties are most beneficial to achieve higher market space? Likewise, how and under what circumstances does the behavior of born globals parallel or differ from the international behavior of long-established SMEs and large multinational firms? In particular, future research investigating how organizational culture orientations and innovative, entrepreneurial strategies being currently applied by born global firms might be leveraged to improve international performance in larger and long-established firms as well would be an important contribution to knowledge in various areas, including general internationalization views and international strategy (Coviello et al., 2011). Very likely, older and larger companies can also benefit from sophisticated technological and marketing oriented strategies found among born global firms thus adopting the resources, capabilities, and postures that help these smaller new ventures succeed internationally. As mentioned above, future research about born global firms would benefit from comparative investigations across various levels in regard to industry and/or national setting, and organizational resource base, including firm size. Resultant information would be useful for advancing theory about the different strategies that born global firms apply to reach their internationalization goals.

As reviewed before, past born global firm-oriented research also highlights the role of the entrepreneur/s in the founding and even pre-founding process of early and rapidly internationalizing firms. Managerial vision, international orientation, high-level of personal competences, and awareness of growth opportunities abroad allow some entrepreneurs to aggressively pursue international opportunities almost from their firms’ inception. This
perspective contrasts with the traditional view of internationalization, earlier advanced by the stages models, which emphasize the firm as the unit of analysis. It is likely that international entrepreneurship arises at multiple levels, including the industry, firm, and individual. We surmise there are even numerous governments worldwide that possess a relatively strong entrepreneurial orientation; for example, Chile and South Korea have advanced national strategies intended to support the internationalization of their indigenous firms. Investigating the extent to which international entrepreneurship perspective is at least partly shifting the relevant unit of analysis from the firm itself to the individual (founder entrepreneur-manager or even a founding team) gives rise to very interesting research questions such as, for example, what is the role of international managerial vision and global mindset in early and dedicated internationalization? How does the nexus between the individual and the foreign business opportunity (new product/process discoveries) takes place? How do international entrepreneurial orientation and international marketing orientation of these firms’ decision-makers translate into specific strategies, tactics and performance outcomes? What is the role of cognitive processes at the managerial level?

Some authors have remarked on the role of the managerial cognitions in defining born global firms’ identity, strategies, and organizational cultures (McDougall et al., 2003; Knight and Cavusgil, 2004; Zahra et al., 2005). These cognitions evolve over time and shape managers’ ability to foresee opportunities in foreign markets, thereby influencing the various decisions to be made and how they are executed. More research is needed to reveal how these cognitions contribute to the success or failure of born global firms.

Knowledge on born globals also would benefit from research that distinguishes the underlying causes of these firms’ long term performance (success vs. failure). To date,
researchers have hardly examined the longer-term survival of born global firms and very little is known about their survival relative to other types of young companies or organizational forms. Thus, future research should investigate what happens with or what becomes of born global firms in the long run. More research is needed to examine the extent to which born globals remain small companies, what proportion become large or very successful firms, how many merge with other firms, and how many go out of business. Another issue centers on how born globals overcome the inertia and “bottle necks” of evolving from small to large companies. As they grow, small firms frequently encounter rising, substantial competition, intense growth, and resource gaps that constrain development into large companies, and can even threaten survival of the firm. Scholars might investigate how resource-intensive internationalization and growing exposure to international competitors endanger born global survival and prosperity over time. By the same token, youth and small size tend to confer flexibility and agility that can help born globals compete more effectively than larger rivals (Autio et al, 2000). Further research is needed to examine how age, size, international experience, and other demographic characteristics influence the international success and sustainability of born global firms.

Scholars might also examine much more how, what, and when new ventures learn, and how such learning, characterized by numerous dimensions (Weerawardena et al., 2007) facilitates early internationalization and superior international performance (Autio et al. 2000; Zahra et al., 2000; Autio, 2005; Zahra, 2005; Schwens and Kabst, 2009). Learning capabilities are important sources of vital knowledge that enable born global firms to prosper and succeed in international markets. Research might investigate how different types of learning processes influence the various dimensions of internationalization and firm performance.
On the other hand, it has been also pointed out that early internationalization might also carry important disadvantages (Zahra, 2005). There are likely numerous cases of born globals that failed at internationalizing or went bankrupt because they could not overcome the risks of early foreign market entry, the challenges of competing against larger and longer-established rivals, or other limitations that encumber young, resource-poor firms. Thus, instead of being aimed at providing advantages, early internationalization might have sometimes very opposite and negative effects for survival and growth for some young firms. In this sense, another potential contribution would be to identify resource gaps and establish ways to overcome resource constraints faced by young firms that might impede their successful development abroad.

Finally, once the nature and success factors of born global firms become more significantly understood, further research should also investigate which public policy initiatives can facilitate and promote the development and progress of this distinctive breed of firms. Born global firms are often drivers of national economic development and innovativeness. However, national export promotion organizations often focus on large firms, to the detriment of young ventures. Public policy often is designed to support incremental or gradual internationalization, characteristic of more traditional firms. The earlier internationalization process of born global firms also represents an important challenge to governmental export promotion agencies at defining the nature of support and assistance to provide that best supports young firm needs (Bell and McNaughton, 2000). Government agencies should, in general terms, emphasize policies and programs that are tailor-made to addressing firms’ changing specific needs. Export and/or internationally-oriented public policy should be reconsidered to better address the specific gaps and support needs of born global firms. Given the limited financial and tangible resources that characterize many of them, public policy might aim at supporting the success of such businesses
in their international endeavors by focusing on promoting such intangible, human- and/or knowledge-based assets apart from developing better infrastructures. Accordingly, research that assists policy-makers to better understand what types of public policies can best support the emergence and successful sustainability of these firms is absolutely welcome.

Table 3 summarizes the topics and research questions raised above. Addressing these and other similar research questions will further elucidate their nature and specific needs.

[Insert Table 3 around here]

CONCLUDING REMARKS

BGFs, as well as other types of international entrepreneurial ventures, represent a multifaceted phenomenon that requires interdisciplinary research both at the conceptual and empirical levels. Scholars in entrepreneurship and international business, with few exceptions, have tended to work relatively independent of each other. As McDougall and Oviatt (2000) already recommended several years ago, collaborative scholarship is needed that more effectively integrates and leverages the perspectives of these and other fields, to support higher-level research on born global firms.

Due largely to their distinct disciplinary origin, IB researchers have mostly contributed in examining, usually be means of increasingly sophisticated quantitative data analysis, key issues of born global firms’ international management mostly related to their strong international marketing orientation, technological and marketing-related capabilities of these firms, foreign market research activities, country-market/segment and entry mode selection decision-making processes, global versus local approaches of their international marketing strategies (product, price, distribution and communication at the international level) and, more recently, Internet-enabled internationalization. Entrepreneurship researchers also interested in born global firms
have, however, mainly contributed to this literature by focusing perhaps on the earliest stages of BGFs emergence (pre- and founding process), the founding entrepreneur’s (or founding team) characteristics and cognition, international entrepreneurial orientation, the nexus individual-(international) opportunity and its recognition, evaluation and exploitation in a new business format, the role of entrepreneurial networks in the constitution and development of born global firms, and so on, very often by means of qualitative-oriented (case-based) research methods.

However, born global firms in particular and International Entrepreneurship in general as emergent streams of research link both disciplinary traditions: IB more traditionally focused on investigating established firms’ internationalization processes and Entrepreneurship much more focused on new business creation and its determining factors. Future endeavors in this field point to closer collaboration between IB and Entrepreneurship-oriented researchers aimed at better combining their specific and unique research capabilities thus generating positive synergies. Such collaborations will engender mutual benefits aimed at integrating and jointly redefining key constructs, theoretical frameworks, measurement scales, and research methods. Only in this way a more holistic view of the phenomenon of “born globalness” of common interest for both disciplines can be reached. The emerging research field of International Entrepreneurship opens new and large windows of opportunities for more advanced contributions by international business researchers (Styles and Seymour, 2006), and exactly the same applies for entrepreneurship scholars. Actually, even new entrants to the field coming from other different disciplines who may contribute new insights on this complex phenomenon would be highly welcome as well (Coviello et al., 2011).
REFERENCES


Table 1. Extant research on born global firms*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core discipline</th>
<th>Key research topic</th>
<th>Example studies in past research</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International Business</td>
<td>Determinants of early and rapid internationalization (internal and environmental driving factors)</td>
<td>Rennie (1993); Roberts &amp; Senturia (1996); Knight &amp; Cavusgil (1996, 2004, 2005); Knight (1997); Autio et al. (2000); Crick &amp; Jones (2000); Shrader et al. (2000); Moen (2002); Moen &amp; Servais (2002); Andersson &amp; Wictor (2003); McDougall, Oviatt and Shradler (2003); Bell et al. (2003, 2004); Etemad (2004); Andersson (2004); Rialp et al. (2005a,b); Fernhaber, McDougall and Oviatt (2007); Fan &amp; Phan (2007); Zucchella et al. (2007); Kudina et al., (2008); Cavusgil &amp; Knight (2009); Kuivalainen et al. (2012); Nowinski &amp; Rialp (2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational resources and (dynamic) capabilities</td>
<td></td>
<td>McDougall, Shane &amp; Oviatt (1994); Liesch &amp; Knight (1999); Bloodgood et al. (1996); Knight &amp; Cavusgil (2004); Autio et al. (2000); Zahra et al. (2000); Moen &amp; Servais (2002); Kuemmerle (2002); McDougall et al. (2003); Zahra et al. (2003); Kundu &amp; Katz (2003); Lostarinen and Gabrielsson (2006); Rialp &amp; Rialp (2006); Zhang &amp; Tansuhaj (2007); Laanti et al. (2007); Mudambi &amp; Zahra (2007); Weerawardena et al. (2007); Zucchella and Scabini (2007); Karra et al. (2008); Autio et al. (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign market research, information seeking and organizational learning/knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td>Liesch &amp; Knight (1999); Autio et al. (2000); Zahra et al. (2000); Yeoh (2000, 2004); Kuemmerle (2002); Michaelova &amp; Wilson (2008); Weerawardena et al. (2007); Zhou (2007); Gassman &amp; Keppe (2007); Jantunen et al. (2008); Nordman &amp; Melén (2008); Fernhaber et al. (2009); Schewns &amp; Kabst (2009); Prashantham &amp; Young (2011)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foreign country-market/segment selection (niche focus)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jolly et al. (1992); Bell (1995); Bloodgood et al. (1996); Madsen et al. (2000); Yip et al. (2000); Shrader et al. (2000); Crick &amp; Jones (2000); Aspelund &amp; Moen (2001); Moen (2002); McNaughton (2003); Knight &amp; Cavusgil (2004); Knight et al. (2004)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entry mode selection</td>
<td></td>
<td>McDougall, Shane, Oviatt (1994); Burgel &amp; Murray (1998); Zahra et al. (2000); Shrader et al. (2000); Crick &amp; Jones (2000); Yip et al. (2000); Gabrielson &amp; Kirpalani (2004); Freeman et al. (2006); Servais, Zucchella and Palamara (2006); Taylor &amp; Jack (2012); Ripollés &amp; Blesa (2012)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global vs. Regional/Local approach</td>
<td></td>
<td>Moen (2002); Kuemmerle (2005); Svensson (2006); Svensson &amp; Payan.(2009); Acs &amp; Terjesen (2012)</td>
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<tr>
<td>International (marketing) strategy / international marketing orientation and competence</td>
<td></td>
<td>McDougall &amp; Oviatt (1996); Knight (2000); Aspelund &amp; Moen (2001); McDougall et al. (2003); Knight, Madsen &amp; Servais (2004); Chetty &amp; Campbell-Hunt (2004); Bell et al. (2004); Knight &amp; Cavusgil (2004, 2005); Gabrielson (2003, 2005); Lostarinen and Gabrielson (2006); Aspelund, Madsen and Moen (2007); Harstfield et al. (2009)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internet-enabled internationalization</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sinkovics &amp; Bell (2006); Yamin &amp; Sinkovics (2006); Arenius et al. (2006) Loane (2006); Servais et al. (2007); Zhang &amp; Tansuhaj (2007); Gabrielson and Gabrielson (2011); Reuber and Fischer (2011)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-international entry and expansion</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yip et al. (2000); Lostarinen and Gabrielson (2006); Morgan-Thomas &amp; Jones (2009); Melén &amp; Nordman (2009); Prashantham &amp; Young (2011); Efrat &amp; Shoham (2012); Sleuwaegen &amp; Onkelinx (2013)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(International) Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>International entrepreneurial networks (business, social, personal)</td>
<td>Johanson &amp; Vahlne (1990, 2009); Bell (1995); Coviello &amp; Munro (1995, 1997); Yeoh (2000); McDougall et al. (2003); Andersson &amp; Victor (2003); Sharma &amp; Blomstermo (2003); Harris &amp; Wheeler (2005); Freeman et al. (2006); Mort &amp; Weerawardena (2006); Coviello (2006); Coviello &amp; Cox (2006); Angdal &amp; Chetty (2007); Zhou, Wu &amp; Luo (2007); Parshantham &amp; Dhanaraj (2010); Vasilchenko and Morris (2011); Fernhaber &amp; Li (2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International entrepreneurial orientation/ culture/dynamics</td>
<td>McDougall, Shane &amp; Oviatt (1994); Oviatt &amp; McDougall (1995); Knight (2000); Knight &amp; Cavusgil (2004); Mathews &amp; Zander (2007); Zhang &amp; Tansuhaj (2007); Kuivalainen et al. (2007); Jantunen et al. (2008); Coviello (2006); Coviello &amp; Cox (2006); Angdal &amp; Chetty (2007); Zhou, Wu &amp; Luo (2007); Parshantham &amp; Dhanaraj (2010); Vasilchenko and Morris (2011); Fernhaber &amp; Li (2012)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Founding process</td>
<td>Oviatt &amp; McDougall (1995); Moen &amp; Servais (2002); Kuehmerle (2002); McDougall et al. (2003); Rasmussen et al. (2001); Andersson &amp; Victor (2003)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneur-managers’ characteristics (global mindset, international vision and orientation, cognition, risk taking, and proactivity)</td>
<td>Jolly et al. (1992); Oviatt &amp; McDougall (1995); Knight &amp; Cavusgil (1996); Bloodgood et al. (1996); Reuber &amp; Fischer (1997, 2002); Kundu &amp; Katz (2001); Moen (2002); Moen &amp; Servais (2002); McDougall et al. (2003); Andersson (2004); Etemad (2004); Knight et al. (2004); Chetty &amp; Campbell-Hunt (2004); Nummela et al. (2004); Gabrielsson &amp; Kirpalani (2004); Zahra et al. (2005); Zhou (2007); Acedo &amp; Jones (2007); Freeman &amp; Cavusgil (2007); Federico et al. (2009)</td>
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<tr>
<td>International opportunity recognition, evaluation and exploitation</td>
<td>McDougall, Shane &amp; Oviatt (1994); Crick &amp; Spence (2005); Zahra et al. (2005); Mort &amp; Weerawardena (2006); Di Gregorio et al. (2008); Karra et al. (2008); Chandra, Styles &amp; Wilkinson (2009, 2012); Butler et al. (2010); Kontinen and Ojala (2011); Mainela et al. (2013)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Causation vs. effectuation</td>
<td>Andersson (2011); Evers &amp; O’Gorman (2011); Fisher &amp; Reuber (2011); Harms &amp; Schiele (2012); Nowinski &amp; Rialp (2013)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public policy implications</td>
<td>Bell &amp; McNaughton (2000); Bell et al. (2003, 2004)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(International) Marketing/Entrepreneurship interface/Entrepreneurial marketing</td>
<td>Knight (2000), Kokac &amp; Abimbola (2009); Mort et al. (2012); Hallbäck &amp; Gabrielsson (2013)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Conceptual developments</td>
<td>Oviatt &amp; McDougall (1994, 1997, 1999, 2005a,b); Madsen &amp; Servais (1997); McDougall, Shane &amp; Oviatt (1994); McDougall &amp; Oviatt (2000, 2005a); Zahra &amp; George (2002); Bell et al. (2003); Hurmerinta-Peltomäki (2003,2004); Etemad (2004); Rialp et al. (1995a); Jones &amp; Coviello (2005); Prashantham (2005); Sapienza et al. (2006); Weerawardena et al. (2007); Zucchella and Scabini (2007); Gabrielsson et al. (2008a,b); Johanson &amp; Vahlne (2003, 2006, 2009); Rialp et al., (2010)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature reviews/comments on BGFs/INVs and IE</td>
<td>Coviello &amp; McAuley (1999); Zahra &amp; George (2002); Coviello &amp; Jones (2004); Rialp et al. (2005a); McDougall and Oviatt (2005b); Autio (2005); Zahra (2005), Aspelund, Madsen &amp; Moen (2007); Cavusgil and Knight (2009); Keupp and Gassman, (2009); Coombs et al. (2009); Szyflyowicz and Galvin (2010); Reuber and Fischer, (2011); Jones et al., (2011); Cesinger et al. (2012); de Clercq et al. (2012); Kiss et al. (2012); Peiris et al. (2012); Casillas &amp; Acedo (2012); Covin and Miller (2013); Madsen (2013); Mainela et al. (2013); Terjesen et al. (2013)</td>
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*: Due to space concerns, only those references also included in the body of this chapter are listed in the chapter’s References section. The full list of references cited in this Table is, however, available upon request.
A deeper conceptual understanding of the early and rapid internationalization process of born-global firms is offered by means of applying the lens of the strategy-making process. In other words, this paper offers an integrated strategic management perspective to explain the so-called born-global phenomenon. Born-global firms’ strategy-making processes can be aligned with different schools of strategic thought depending mostly upon the nature of the specific factor(s) triggering their particular international strategic behavior and also the specific phase in which they may find themselves along their international development process from inception.

### Table 2. Some useful theoretical frameworks on the born global phenomenon.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author/s</th>
<th>Conceptual contribution-model</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oviatt &amp; McDougall (1994)</td>
<td>A theory and a classification of small firms with a proactive international strategy from inception is established based upon existing internationalization theories and recent developments in the fields of strategic management and entrepreneurship. Four main conditions for explaining their sustainable existence are: (1) organizational formation through internalization of some transactions; (2) strong reliance on alternative, hybrid governance structures to access resources; (3) establishment of foreign location advantages; and (4) control over unique resources. Four different types of international new ventures emerge according to the number of countries involved and the level of co-ordination of value chain activities: export/import start-ups; multinational traders, geographically-focused start-ups and global start-ups.</td>
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<td>Oviatt &amp; McDougall (1999)</td>
<td>A more dynamic theory explaining accelerated internationalization according to which, while rapidly changing technology is taken as the foundation of this process, a number of political, economic, and industrial conditions together with some firm-specific effects and he management team also constitute key building blocks.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coviello &amp; Munro (1995, 1997)</td>
<td>A network theory perspective is adopted to examine the impact of network relationships on international market development and marketing-related activities among entrepreneurial firms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madsen &amp; Servais (1997)</td>
<td>The propensity of born global firms to emerge and their further development are likely to be affected by the characteristics of the environment itself (market internationalization, technology level and specialization), and those of the organization (competences, routines, governance structure and business networks) and the founder/entrepreneur (past experience, ambition level, motivation and personal networks), simultaneously. Born global firms’ international behavior seems to develop in a way that may to a certain degree be in accordance with the sequential internationalization process model (the Uppsala-Model), evolutionary thinking and the (international) network theory.</td>
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<td>Knight &amp; Cavusgil (1996)</td>
<td>Born global firms pose a relevant challenge to the most traditional internationalization theories mostly because these fail to explain why some small companies are currently able to operate abroad very soon after their birth. Born global firms are, among other specific characteristics, most usually managed by highly visionary entrepreneurs and business people that seem to perceive the entire world as their natural marketplace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zahra &amp; George (2002)</td>
<td>A general theoretical model on international entrepreneurship, understood as a major and interdisciplinary research field, which basically connects its main antecedents with several types of activities and outcomes, together with other strategic and environmental influencing factors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jones &amp; Coviello (2005)</td>
<td>Drawing up on classic approaches to internationalization and importing insights from entrepreneurship theory, three potential models of firm internationalization, evolving from the simple through general to precise levels of conceptualization, are presented as a time-based process of entrepreneurial behavior. Entrepreneurial internationalization is both time-based and time-dependent and the cyclical effect of time in respect of how the environment, firm and entrepreneur interact and learn to impact on internationalization is highlighted. The relationships existing among the internationalization process, experiential knowledge, and the time and behavior dimensions are considered to be critical in this model.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rialp et al. (2005a)</td>
<td>A resource-based model of early internationalizing firms in which three key issues are basically highlighted: a firm’s intangible resource base (1) would be of the highest importance in generating a critical level of firm’s early internationalization capability (2) which contributes, although moderated by external environmental conditions, to the development of the highly particular strategic behavior exhibited by born-global firms abroad (3).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weerawardena et al. (2007)</td>
<td>Building on the extant literature and drawing on the dynamic capabilities view of competitive strategy, the authors present a conceptual model of born global firm internationalization in which a set of dynamic capabilities that are built and nurtured by internationally-oriented entrepreneurial founders enable these firms to develop cutting-edge knowledge intensive products, paving the way for their accelerated market entry.</td>
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<td>Gabrielsson et al. (2008a,b)</td>
<td>The BG phenomenon is conceptualized by establishing three main phases of successful development: 1) introductory, 2) growth and resource accumulation, and 3) break-out to independent growth as a major global player. A number of events and incidents concerning key aspects such as financing, channel/network choice, and learning are singled out in each phase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rialp et al. (2010)</td>
<td>A deeper conceptual understanding of the early and rapid internationalization process of born-global firms is offered by means of applying the lens of the strategy-making process. In other words, this paper offers an integrated strategic management perspective to explain the so-called born-global phenomenon. Born-global firms’ strategy-making processes can be aligned with different schools of strategic thought depending mostly upon the nature of the specific factor(s) triggering their particular international strategic behavior and also the specific phase in which they may find themselves along their international development process from inception.</td>
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</table>
Table 3. Key topics and questions for further research on born global firms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEY FUTURE RESEARCH TOPICS</th>
<th>RESEARCH QUESTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| External factors driving early internationalization | • Which are the current external factors facilitating and promoting the early internationalization of the firms?  
• Does early internationalization also occur among firms that specialize in services? If so, how do they differ from early internationalizing manufacturers? |
| Internal resources, networks and strategies of born global firms | • What specific conditions within the firm give rise to early internationalization?  
• How do networks advance early internationalization goals and international performance?  
• What types of network contacts are most beneficial?  
• How do resource-poor born global firms reconcile the costly customized product needs of unique foreign markets with the need to achieve economies through product standardization?  
• How and in what circumstances does the behavior of born global firms truly differ from larger firms? |
| Roles of founding entrepreneurs | • What is the role of managerial vision and drive, product/process discoveries, and other such factors in the internationalization process of the born global firms? |
| Learning, development, successful performance and failure determinants | • What is the role of the firm’s age in the international success of born global firms?  
• How, what and when new ventures learn?  
• What accounts for the early international success of born global firms, particularly in light of the resource constraints they typically face?  
• To what extent do born global firms go out of business?  
• To what extent do born global firms remain small companies?  
• What proportion become big, successful firms?  
• How many merge with other firms?  
• How do born globals overcome the “growing pains” of evolving from small to large firms? |
| Public policies tailored to born global firms | • Which public policy initiatives can facilitate and promote the development and progress of this distinctive breed of enterprise? |