Cosmopolitanism and transnational elite entrepreneurial practices: manifesting the cosmopolitan disposition in a cosmopolitan city

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Cosmopolitanism and transnational elite entrepreneurial practices: manifesting the cosmopolitan *disposition* in a cosmopolitan *city*

Abstract

Purpose – The paper focuses on the role that *cosmopolitanism* and, in particular 'the cosmopolitan disposition' (Woodward *et al.*, 2008) plays in the process of entrepreneurial business creation by transnational business elites in Dubai.

Design/Methodology/Approach –

Adopting a relational perspective based on Bourdieu and Wacquant's (1992) reflexive sociology as well as an inductive design, we conducted 30 semi-structured interviews focusing on both expatriates and Emiratis (locals) who displayed key features of a transnational business elite.

Findings – Our findings indicate that the cosmopolitan disposition is an asset for transnational business elites when they venture into entrepreneurial business within the context of Dubai.

Research limitations/implications – The findings would have to be further replicated in similar contexts, i.e. other major cities displaying similar cosmopolitan features with Dubai. We propose a theoretical framework that calls for further study of transnational entrepreneurship via the lens of cosmopolitan disposition and Bourdieuan 'habitus'.

Practical implications – The research outlines cosmopolitan skills for a transnational business elite which are required when entrepreneurial ventures are developed in a city like Dubai.

Social implications – Cosmopolitanism and transnational entrepreneurship perpetually change cities around the world like Dubai. Therefore, our study aims to achieve a better understanding of these changes and the ways in which they occur.

Originality/value – Studies on transnational entrepreneurship have already adopted Bourdieu's theory (1977/1986), but this is the first time the cosmopolitan perspective and cosmopolitan disposition has been researched using this approach.

Keywords – Cosmopolitanism; Cosmopolitan disposition; Transnational entrepreneurs; Bourdieu; Capital; Dubai

Paper type – Research paper

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to investigate the cosmopolitan disposition (Woodward *et al.*, 2008) and notions of 'cosmopolitanism' as part of the process of entrepreneurship development by transnational elites in Dubai, as an example of a cosmopolitan city (Kappadia, 2016), using a relational approach based on Bourdieu and Wacquant's (1992) *Reflexive Sociology* framework. We focus on the 'transnational entrepreneurial elite' as a distinct class of transnational business people and how they interact with their context; subsequently, we investigate how this interaction assists in the manifestation of the cosmopolitan disposition and how both (the transnational elite and the city) change in the process. Finally, we describe their practices or skills and how these are acquired, which Vertovec (2010, p. 7) describes as a 'toolkit' building on Bourdieu's concept of *habitus.*

Vertovec and Cohen (2002) stress that cosmopolitanism does not limit itself to Kant, ancient Greece or the Enlightenment; cosmopolitanism according to Vertovec and Cohen (2002, p. 13) can find a 'friendly home' in Athens of antiquity, contemporary Singapore or Ireland. Woodward *et al.* (2008, p. 207), on the other hand, stress that among the consequences of globalisation is the 'development of individual outlooks, behaviours and feelings that transcend local and national boundaries'. Still, according to Woodward *et al.* (2008, p. 223) 'social actors depending on their social and cultural attributes differentially endorse elements of the cosmopolitan agenda', which can be mapped upon different discourses in-use in various national or socio-cultural contexts.

Goss (2005) argues that entrepreneurship can be seen as a form of social action and that entrepreneurs as social agents *learn by doing*; additionally, entrepreneurial identity formation, according to Goss (2005) is developed in interaction with others in a socio-economic context. According to a 'relational' or 'social constructionist' approach (Hosking and Hjorth, 2004), entrepreneurial activities are embedded within social practices, whilst relational processes are more important than the actions and processes of individual entrepreneurs (Chell and Baines, 2000; Jack and Anderson, 2002).

Theorising transnationalism and entrepreneurship

Vertovec (2009) investigates various aspects of transnationalism and highlights links to globalization; Vertovec (2009) argues that when transnational practices are moderated by disparities in *power* and *resources,* links to entrepreneurship are supported via the theorization of Castells' (1996; 1997; 1998) 'Global network society', comprising global networks, information flows and ICTs. For Vertovec (2009), such global elements and interactions could support the creation of a more cosmopolitan future.

Transnational entrepreneurship is a relatively new area within the field of entrepreneurship. Relevant definitions of transnational entrepreneurs include:

- Self-employed immigrants (Portes *et al.*, 2002)
- Home-based boundary spanners (Rusinovic, 2008)
- Dual/multiple residents (Drori *et al.*, 2009)

In forming the body of literature of transnational entrepreneurship, *international* as well as *ethnic entrepreneurship* provide relevant conceptual connections: Drori *et al.* (2006) note that transnational entrepreneurs have a 'dual relationship' with their environments–their own communities as well as those of the countries in which they are hosted; in this way, they can grow and use their base or resources, accordingly. Drori *et al.* (2009) highlight the importance of the institutional perspective, and access to power, as important features of transnational entrepreneurship activities. However, the development of entrepreneurship is also dependent on other forms of capitals (e.g. social, human) which, through their transformation potential, can lead to access to economic capital and resources (Harvey *et al.*, 2011).

Cosmopolitanism, cosmopolitan disposition and Bourdieu

The vast literature on cosmopolitanism can be broadly categorised into three viewpoints (e.g. Maak, 2009): most literature has focused on *multi-culturalism, diversity* and related issues; a second growing body of literature is exploring *ethical and moral* approaches vis-à-vis the inter-dependencies that characterise our 'big world in a small planet' (Rockström and Klum, 2015); a third view is concerned with the *legal, accountability and political systems* (Held, 2005) that may be needed to deal with many of today's (global) challenges and opportunities, which 'bypass' national frontiers.

Our work is mostly aligned with the research around the cultural view of cosmopolitanism, i.e. the work of Vertovec and Cohen (2002, p. 7-13) who identify six perspectives on cosmopolitanism – two of which are especially relevant for the discussion in this paper. The first is cosmopolitanism viewed as an '*attitude' or 'disposition'* of intellectual openness in relation to 'the Other' – a feature that supports cosmopolitan mobility. The second is the perspective of cosmopolitanism viewed as *'practice' or 'competence'*; aided by the right education, people can become multicultural and develop a repertoire of multiple cultural competencies through 'exposure, learning and practice' (p.11).

Mirroring these two perspectives, Woodward *et al.* (2008; p 210) stress that globalisation is neither 'a necessary (n)or sufficient condition' for cosmopolitanism. Woodward et al (2008) utilise Bourdieu's *Theory of Practice* (1977) to draw attention to the concept of *habitus* which they define as a 'system of dispositions'; when the latter interact with practice, social agents can obtain a 'particular set of cultural understandings of the world' (Woodward et al, 2008, p.211).

For Bourdieu, dispositions *dispose* the agent to act and habitus provides the basis for the *generation of practices*; at the same time, interactions between the habitus and different fields produce different potential dispositions (Jenkins, 2002). Jansson (2012) stresses that in order for cosmopolitanism to be translated to increased social power it needs a field with the right logic, to achieve Distinction (Bourdieu, 1984). Cosmopolitanism has also been included

as one of the features that differentiate new generations of executives and managers from older ones (Bourdieu, 1984; Prieur and Savage, 2011; Weininger, 2005).

In turn, Vertovec (2010, p.5) distinguishes between 'elite cosmopolitanism' (which, he argues, are associated with international business class professionals), 'working class cosmopolitanism' (as evidenced in labour migrants) and 'everyday cosmopolitanism' (such as in contexts in which diversity is fostered and normalised) and concludes that cosmopolitanism can be understood as comprising a combination of 'attitudes, practices and abilities that can be associated with experiences of travel or displacement, transnational contact and diasporic identification' (p.10).

Similarly, several studies (Jansson and Andersson, 2012, McEwan and Sobre-Denton, 2011, Salazar, 2010) highlight that cosmopolitanism is not necessarily 'a privilege of the rich and the well-connected', nor is 'physical and spatial mobility….a necessary condition to become cosmopolitan' (Salazar, 2016, p. 67). This resonates with authors such as Ward (2010), who argue that a globalised reality does not make everyone necessarily a cosmopolitan, as somebody can espouse cosmopolitan values, even if they are not globally mobile. Indeed, Levy *et al.* (2013) mention the category of 'ordinary cosmopolitans', i.e. individuals who are mostly outward-looking, although not necessarily globally mobile.

Nikolopoulos and Nicolopoulou (2015) point towards the work of research on elites, in particular Nielsen (2003), Kakabadse and Kakabadse (2012), and Nicolopoulou *et al.* (2014), in order to stress a related aspect: the difference between 'transnational leisure elites', 'power elites' and 'transnational entrepreneurial elites'. Although the focus of the three categories is different, by transcending national boundaries, they all constitute a single social group (Nielsen, 2003; Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 2012; and Nicolopoulou *et al.*, 2014). Based on the above, Nikolopoulos and Nicolopoulou (2015) suggest a Bourdieuan explanation about two concurrent possibilities regarding these elite categories of 'embodied habitus': when the logic of practice behind the disposition for the capital mobilisation and transformation is glamour and power, the result is the manifestation of embodied cultural capital, whereas when the logic is innovation and opportunity, the result is the creation of cultural capital.

Identifying the research gap

Literature that focuses on the development of enterprise by individuals who move between countries forms the body of transnational entrepreneurship. This literature, such as Chen and Tan (2009), Sequeira. *et al.* (2009), Jones *et al.* (2010), Portes and Yiu (2013), Baltar and Icart (2013) usually focuses on the movement of migrants to set up businesses in more economically-developed countries. The movements of more 'privileged' (i.e. elite) cosmopolitans and their role in the transnational entrepreneurship agenda have not been studied to the same extent. Similarly, the relationship between cosmopolitanism and globalisation in the transnational entrepreneurship have not been covered in the relevant literature. Also, there are noted gaps in terms of our understanding of entrepreneurial processes and motivations, in particular where socio-cultural factors are concerned in non-western, non-Anglo-Saxon contexts (Al-Dajani and Marlow, 2010; Tlaiss, 2013).

Finally, in considering the city and urban developments that take place in order to boost economic growth and increase entrepreneurial activity, 'a plausible case can be made for acknowledging the specificity and variety within Western nations as well as beyond them' (Ward, 2010, p. 1178). Therefore, the *city* as a social space, within which the entrepreneurial process takes place, merits further academic theorisation. For our work, we follow Spigel (2013, p. 807), who takes on board a Bourdieuan perspective to highlight the regional scale (rather than the national one) as the most appropriate for studying the relationship between entrepreneurship and culture. According to Spigel (2013, p. 807) 'the 'regional' or the 'local' is frequently defined as a metropolitan' (in our interpretation, city-based) terrain.

Two key research questions guided our research:

- What are the 'cosmopolitan' dispositions of Dubai-based entrepreneurs and how do they contribute to the development of entrepreneurship in this specific context?

- What are the relevant capital transformations and field interactions via which entrepreneurial activity develops in the context of Dubai?

Context of study

The UAE is considered one of the most desirable places to live in the Middle East, combining a diverse and strongly business-focused mentality; aided by the blend of several nationalities with long traditions in trade. This mindset facilitates the rapid development of entrepreneurship. Forstenlechner and Rutledge (2011) stress the smaller ratio of nationals to non-nationals, the strategies such as investing in highly-skilled labour, and tuning educational offerings focused on supporting the development of the knowledge economy, as some of the current strategies which are *isomorphically* shaping the employment market. Following a long period of fluctuating between success and decline as a hub for pearl trading (Mc Queeney, 2012), Dubai has been the most prominent amongst the seven Emirates to move towards economic diversification from oil dependency towards sustainable development via embracing sectors that could lead to a knowledge economy (hospitality, trade, tourism, ICT) (Madar research, 2003). The role of political leadership in creating a visionary, enabling environment designed in a way that would allow everyone to succeed was crucial in this turn (Weir, 2015); linked to that, was Dubai's emphasis on future thinking and strategic action to achieve an ecosystem supported by the development of human capital, technological infrastructure, networks and spaces where everyone would be supported to co-create for joint success (Obeidat and Saleh, 2015). At the same time, various incentives and policies have been initiated in order to foster entrepreneurship amongst the national population, as well as to bridge the gap between male and female entrepreneurship. Social factors, such as more generic trends of 'modernisation' of social and commercial activities, have induced interest in specific forms of entrepreneurship with a focus on media, entertainment and leisure (Kargwell and Inguva, 2012). The increased emphasis on entrepreneurship in Dubai is also supported by the development of several 'urban spaces' for incubation, and inspirational events with a focus on entrepreneurship and creative business (e.g. The Dubai Impact Hub). At the same time, the discourse and policy on multiculturalism and co-existence has been

identified as one of the city's current strengths (Al Ameri, 2012).The economy of Dubai has been characterised by 'institutional voids' – not unlike other emerging economies (Mair and Marti 2009)-, which allow for the development of agency and innovative action; according to an INSEAD report in 2013 (INSEAD Innovation and Policy Initiative), the UAE features strong incentivisation for innovation, with a noted capacity to access required resources (e.g. ICT infrastructure), as well as to anchor innovation. Supportive policy frameworks for innovation have recently been developed, including the UAE national innovation strategy (www.uaeinnovates.gov.ae/ and similar websites) , with a focus on energy, transportation, education, health, water. The Dubai Plan 2021 (www.dubaiplan2021.ae) emphasises people, society, experience, place and economy as important factors in the further embeddedness of innovation in the city.

Methodology of the study

The study followed a social constructionist approach and an interpretivist epistemology. In-depth interviews with 30 entrepreneurs, owner-managers and directors of enterprises were conducted from September 2013 to February 2014. The participants for this study were selected from within the Dubai-based branch of an established global business network. The interviewees were sampled according to gender (male/female) and expatriate versus national status, following a purposeful sampling logic (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Patton, 2002). Beyond the expatriates interviewed, the Emirati entrepreneurs interviewed had the characteristics of *boundary spanners*, involved in *knowledge transfer* activities and importing of *innovation* (Rusinovic, 2008).

All of the interviewees had a higher education, with a few holding PhDs, and were between 30 to 60 years of age, approximately; each interview lasted between 60 to 90 minutes, approximately.

TABLE 1 HERE

The enquiring team used open coding techniques to assign first-order concepts /phrases that emerged from the interview narratives (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). These first-order concepts allowed for the construction of an overview of how entrepreneurs perceive and define opportunity identification, enterprise creation and development, their views on

cosmopolitanism, and their experiences with the UAE as an environment for building entrepreneurship and conducting business. Subsequently, several themes with similar descriptions were grouped in order to create an overview of frequently-mentioned issues. Transcripts were initially individually coded and any discrepancies were resolved through discussion during the iterations of the analysis. This approach served the creation of rich data narratives (Patton, 1987; Kakabadse and Louchart, 2012). Finally, a focus group with several of the study participants was convened in May 2014, with the purpose of engagement and further discussion of the preliminary findings via a presentation and participative open-ended conversation.

Narrative analysis of main themes identified in the interviews

Tables 2 and 3 contain the main findings of the research. In particular, Table 2 contains the main themes identified in the interviews with supporting quotes and Table 3 identifies the cosmopolitan attributes, how these translate to skills, capacities and qualifications as well as the respective links between cosmopolitanism and entrepreneurship.

TABLE 2 HERE

In particular:

Context-based characteristics identified during the interviews focused on openness of the environment for business, and looking towards the wider world to identify business opportunities; these, were aligned with Pecould's (2004) notion of 'inside-out' cosmopolitanism.

Although participants were aware of both ***challenges and constraints*** of the environment, they did acknowledge recent developments in the form of incentives for ***supporting entrepreneurship*** as fundamental stepping stones towards creating an entrepreneurial ecosystem. Key challenges in terms of the entrepreneurial landscape are counteracted by ***leadership figures*** who provide inspiration, structural and institutional support through their ***local and global connections***, and thus form part of the entrepreneurial habitus (Wacquant, 2014).

Characteristics of the entrepreneurial process (Jack and Anderson, 2002; Anderson and Jack, 2002) identified in the study included attitudes to opportunity and business growth,

opportunity identification and planning, as well as the development of growth strategies. Opportunity identification was seen by the participants as a combination of knowledge about the market, information acquired via a network of relevant people, as well as planning.

Elements of ***transnational entrepreneurship*** that align to the literature definitions (eg: Drori *et al.*, 2006) were also evident in several of the interviewees' narratives in how they identified themselves.

Social and economic capitals (Anderson and Jack, 2002; Anderson and Miller, 2003) are important for entrepreneurship and the development of business; in terms of insights from the interviews, these included strategic networking as well as human capital in the form of enterprise-based teams.

The role of ***networks*** was also seen as important in identifying business opportunities and growing the business further. At the same time, ***financial independence*** was seen as a key enabler for developing entrepreneurship, and this was particularly a factor that differentiated business practice between local and expatriate entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurial traits (Chell, 2008) were also present; nonetheless, those were mediated by a calculated risk attitude, as ideas were implemented through experimentation (Kerr *et al.*, 2014).

A related understanding is that, although there is substantial activity as well as policy-driven incentives in terms of ***developing innovation*** in Dubai, still, entrepreneurship is less of an outcome of processes or innovation, and more a result of the transfer of knowledge and know-how from other contexts, and their subsequent application locally.

Major influences and role models include influential family members as well as leadership figures that feature publicly or within the work environment (Bosma *et al.*, 2012). Relatedly, the interviewees' attributes and reasoning seemed to portray some of the highly complex cognitive elements, the openness to and articulation of multicultural and strategic realities (both at global and local levels) that characterise the *global mindset* described by Levy *et al.* (2007).

Mindsets of cosmopolitans (Levy *et al.*, 2007) include values, skill sets, and major influences in terms of thinking and practice. The values and skill sets of the interviewees include a combination of a pragmatic business approach alongside an appreciation for skills that come from an education that builds an international perspective towards thinking and action-taking.

Ultimately, interviewees lived and developed entrepreneurship within two *distinct cultures*, which were characterised by elements of a local (family-values-oriented) as well as expatriate (US-similar, or 'amorphous') culture.

This *cultural capital* (Lamont and Lareau, 1998) further highlighted a sense of belonging not only to an in-between identity space, but also to a notion of the 'bigger world' – seen as a positive attribute.

The *role of the city* was specifically highlighted as Dubai came through the interviews as a context that helps business development through an 'open field of opportunity' approach. There was a sense that an individual can make a difference in the social/economic fabric through engagement in entrepreneurial activity, thus catalysing positive attributes and strengths of different communities within the city.

Several of the entrepreneurs had the opportunity to *develop their formation and experiences* through prior international or local corporate careers, or careers in high positions in the public sector, and used entrepreneurship as an exit strategy in their careers. *Female entrepreneurs* often began their careers in large corporations, where they ultimately have to operate within the confines and expectations of traditional big business. These women can grow and flourish as part of a more entrepreneurial and free trading environment, which inspires determined approaches to risk-taking and heightened future ambitions.

TABLE 3 HERE

Discussion

We have adopted a framework enriched via a Bourdieuan lens for analysing cosmopolitanism and transnational entrepreneurial practices; within an 'international' context cosmopolitan skills can become transnational cultural capital (Jansson, 2012; Kennedy,2009). According to Jansson (2012, p.138), *Distinctions* 'can only emerge if there is resonance between social practice and the logic of the field' (ie: norms and values that determine capitals)- in our case, the skills that the cosmopolitan agent (transnational entrepreneur) needs in order to enter the field (Dubai). A cosmopolitan city such as Dubai needs the cultural capital of the cosmopolitan individuals and can, in turn, transform these skills into key assets in the form of symbolic capital. As it is a strategic decision for the United Arab Emirates to make Dubai an international city, Dubai as a social field experiences the creation of a cultural system that attracts, in turn, cosmopolitan agents through a field interaction. On a similar note, Yeoh (2004) describes such a turn as a part of a multicultural society and emergent civil space that is being reconfigured by transnationalism.

The presence of a transnational entrepreneurial elite signifies that the more cosmopolitan Dubai becomes, the more attractive it can also be for business and enterprise development. For many of the participants of the study, entrepreneurship was often seen as an 'exit strategy' from a corporate career, and most of them seemed to be looking for an 'opportunity' or 'niche' which could serve a locally identified need; this need could often be catered by importing 'know-how' or via the process of knowledge transfer. This characteristic aligns with Volery's (2007) conceptualisation of opportunity as a concept of cosmopolitanism in terms of an 'inside-out' motion (knowledge transfer).

Applying a relational Bourdieuan perspective has allowed us to grasp this multifaceted reality and identify the various factors involved when studying entrepreneurship in a cosmopolitan city like Dubai. It has enabled us to see how the process (entrepreneurial activities) interacts with the context (the city) resulting in transformation for both.

Based on the fact that entrepreneurs in Dubai often come into the entrepreneurial process out of a prior established business or corporate career, entrepreneurship is often more mature than in other contexts; college graduate-level entrepreneurship endeavours are mostly covered via programmes of support for nationals. This makes for potentially more promising

entrepreneurial outcomes, and it also verified to us that the *predominant disposition in terms of entrepreneurship in Dubai is an elite one*.

Altogether it becomes evident that for transnational entrepreneurship, cosmopolitanism and, in particular, the 'cosmopolitan disposition' (Woodward *et al.*, 2008) is an asset. This can have implications for entrepreneurship training, as its focus could become more international and could include development of the values and mindsets that support such a cosmopolitan disposition.

These findings also align with the theorisation of Vertovec (2009; 2010) and point to the attributes of globalisation (networks, information flows, ICT) as elements of transnationalism; Vertovec (2009; 2010, p. 10) concludes that within such a framework, cosmopolitanism is 'comprising a combination of attitudes, practices and abilities gathered from experiences of travel or displacement, transnational contact and diasporic identification'.

Bourdieu (Wacquant 2014, p 8) stresses the tendency of habitus to become 'stable and congruent… with the operant milieu'. In the case of Dubai, at the level of structures, the city as a social field provides opportunities, infrastructure, and a friendly attitude to entrepreneurship that attracts cosmopolitan 'agents'. At the same time, the values prevailing in organisations, and the skills required, correspond to the capital possessed by cosmopolitan agents. The need for honesty and trust, an international education and exposure to various social and cultural environments, mastery and use of the English language, characterises their cosmopolitan disposition and constitutes the capital they have accrued over time. These act as 'status markers' (Bourdieu, 1984) that increase the symbolic capital of agents through its interaction with the social field in Dubai.

As Wacquant (2014, p 3) explains, 'habitus can become a source of creativity whenever it is composed of disparate dispositions in tension or contradiction to one another'; in a setting like Dubai, innovation and opportunity prompt cosmopolitan agents towards capital creation, whilst individuals congregate with others that resemble them in their 'disposition'(Woodward et al, 2008). This makes if more likely for them to reinforce their interest to assimilate to the leadership figures who provide inspiration and support for starting business in Dubai or other similar cosmopolitans who have learned to operate between two,

or more, cultures. As suggested by Beck (2002), cosmopolitanism encourages *hybridity*, *plurality* and *dialogue*.

In terms of entrepreneurship, the versatility identified in the forms of development and growth, embodies and articulates change that is both its *milieu* as well as its *medium*. In this manner, entrepreneurs often become change agents of different scales in the city. A Dubai-specific form of 'cosmopolitanism', which has been highlighted in the study, helps business and enterprise development by emphasising an 'open field' of opportunity.

According to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), practices are produced via an interaction, on the one hand, between habitus and its dispositions, and on the other, through the *constraints, demands and opportunities* of the *social field*. Spigel (2013, p. 814) provides a conceptual model which we have adapted to show the described interactions (Figure 1) in our research. Habitus is seen as a social phenomenon, influenced by the social context; in this way, cosmopolitan entrepreneurs operating successfully within the social space of Dubai contribute, via their practices, to its cosmopolitan character and advance its economy by both interacting with context as well as by changing it.

FIGURE 1 HERE

Conclusions and recommendations

A key understanding gained from conducting this study with participants from this particular context is that entrepreneurship in Dubai has both *elite* as well as *transnational* features, and is often shaped through transfer of know-how and know-what from other contexts. The 'know-who' and mobilisation of networks (Latham, 2006), which can be local, regional or transnational, is important for entrepreneurial success. In addition, entrepreneurship in this context is mediated by a cosmopolitan disposition, in that several entrepreneurs draw upon resources and capitals that are transnational (Drori *et al.*, 2006; Drori *et al.*, 2009). This includes national (Emirati) entrepreneurs who are operating as boundary spanners, and whose connections and activities help them operate within the space of the 'bigger world'.

Our findings on cosmopolitan disposition (Delanty 2006; Levy *et al.*, 2013; Woodward et al, 2008) as a feature of transnational entrepreneurship can also have an impact

on the field of international management, as companies operating within such transnational cosmopolitan environments will inevitably have to take into consideration the complex matrix of interactions with social actors' habitus, consisting of multicultural, structural resources; these characteristics align well with literature insights about transnational capital (Drori *et al.*, 2006; Drori *et al.*, 2009) as a feature of a cosmopolitan disposition in entrepreneurship.

We acknowledge certain limitations in terms of our study, which pertain to context-specificity, and the challenge of generalising inductively from field-generated qualitative data (Bendassolli, 2013). Although the latter can be a methodological challenge, such an approach could be an informative way to respond to gaps in research focusing on 'entrepreneurship in context' and the acquisition of in-depth knowledge about non-Western, non-Anglo-Saxon contexts, which the body of entrepreneurship theory has identified as important (Tlaiss, 2013).

Future research could further the main findings of the current study by investigating the interaction between cosmopolitanism and transnational entrepreneurship in other cosmopolitan cities, e.g. London, New York or Singapore where considerable research on transnational entrepreneurship has already taken place (e.g. Fletcher, 2007; Collins, 2003). Our world is always changing, and therefore transnational entrepreneurship will continue to evolve as a field. Each cosmopolitan city would have unique features to highlight via the examination of cosmopolitan dispositions in entrepreneurial activities, which could contribute towards development of the body of the relevant literature.

Equally promising research agendas may also engage with the ethical and moral views of cosmopolitanism (Maak, 2009) and explore how transnational entrepreneurs deal with responsibility, moral concerns and governance issues, e.g. whether their 'global citizenship' translate into broader concerns for the 'distant other' and global justice issues (Chatterjee, 2004), or whether their business ventures foster new alliances that promote new governance systems to deal with global issues. Finally, a particularly promising line of enquiry may also examine these issues in the field of social entrepreneurship, for which Zahra et al (2008) highlighted that a cosmopolitan ethos can be a way forward for a globalised landscape.

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