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# Investigating How Sino-British TNE Partnership Activities affects the Development of Social Capital



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# Rationale for Research

- Global changes stimulated by world polity have prompted higher education institutions to reconsider their attitudes towards internationalisation (Knight, 2013, 2014).
- One method for realising international opportunities afforded by neo-liberal policies is to develop international partnerships.
- HE Institutions seek alliances in which to develop the critical mass needed to ensure their survival (Bennell & Pearce, 2002).



# Rationale for Research

- Naidoo (2009) argues with student mobility likely to slump, transnational education represents a key growth area, with demand from Asia likely to grow (British Council, 2013).
- Understanding what generates sustainable and valuable partnerships is arguably of *critical importance to the business of contemporary higher education.*



# Contribution to Knowledge

- A lacuna exists in transnational discourse as to how partnerships, once initiated by the strategic level are operated by faculty members in order to create sustainable and valuable partnerships (Spencer-Oatey, 2012, Keays et al., 2014).
- Study aims to facilitate understanding of: *how activities, undertaken by faculty members at the operational stage of Sino-British transnational 'joint programmes', affects the development of social and partnership capital* (Eddy, 2010).



# Research Aims

1. To explore how transnational faculty member activities **affects the development of social** and subsequent **partnership capital** (Eddy, 2010).
2. To establish how internal and external **structural factors** such as partnership objectives, resourcing, regulation, communities and management of activities, **hinder or assist faculty** in the **development of social** and **partnership capital** (Eddy, 2010).
3. To **advance theory** by creating a model that can assist in explicating faculty activities and the social and partnership capital (Eddy, 2010) potential inherent within them.



# Partnership Literature

- Partnership considered an evolutionary process (J.E Austin 2000, Gray, 1989, Wohlsetter et al., 2005).
- The strategic level is important in the initial phase of partnership development (Kanter, 1994).

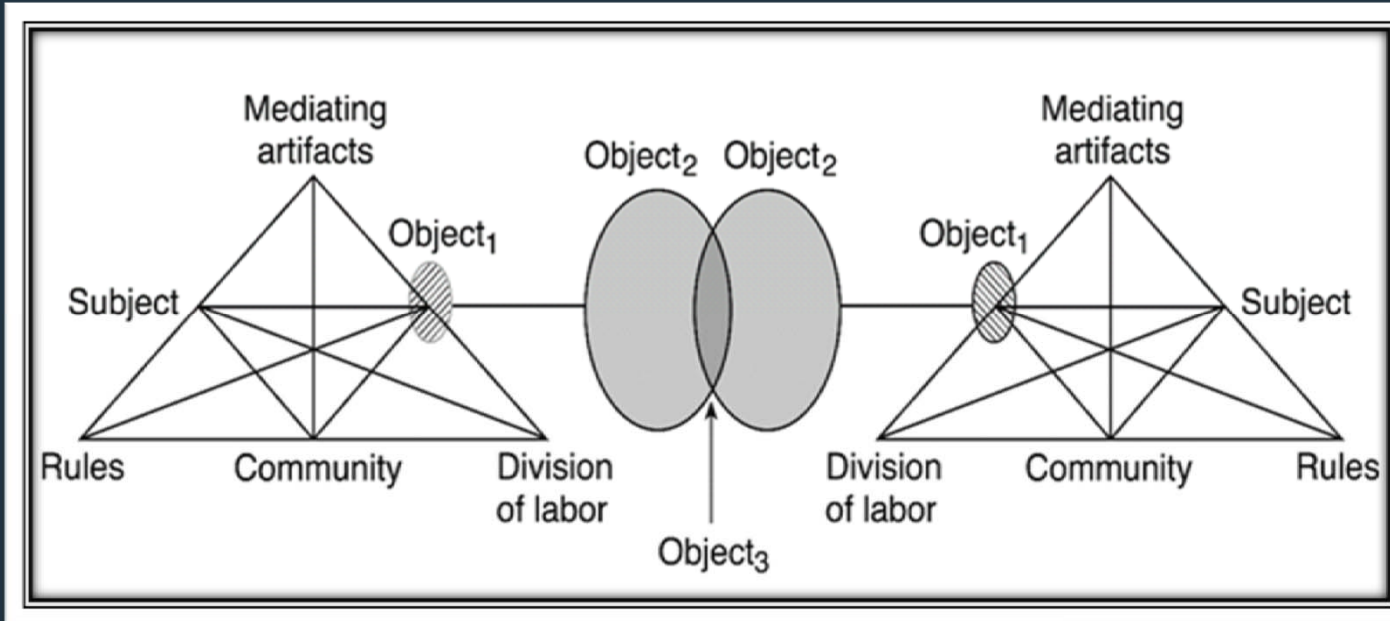


Organisational + Social Capital = Partnership Capital (Eddy, 2010)





# Partnership Theoretical Frameworks



- 3rd Generation CHAT (Engeström 2001).
- Managerial/ organisational tool to improve capacity for working across boundaries (Daniels & Edwards, 2010).
- Object<sup>3</sup> zone of partner interpretation and meaning.





# Social Capital Literature

- A *resource*, available to an agent through *social relationships* (Coleman, 1994).
- Social capital represents the *resources* accrued by an individual or group through a *network* of relationships based upon mutual acquaintance and recognition (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).
- ‘*Resources* embedded in a social structure that are accessed and/or mobilized in purposive *actions*’ (Yin, 2001, p. 29).
- The concept of reciprocation and its effect on the building of *trust* (Putnam, 1993).
- Field (2008) argues trust is only a consequence of social capital.
- ***What resources? Which faculty activities utilise which type of resource? How does this inhibit/ promote resource growth? (interpret meanings of actions) What conditions (outputs) does this create?***



# Social Capital Theoretical Frameworks

- Social Action Theory (Weber, 1978).
- Interpreting the meaning behind social action.
- Rational and empathetic intelligibility.
- Motives for behaviour- why we do what we do.
- Perception of action and associated meaning.
- How resources hinder/ promote human action.



# Philosophical Position

- **Critical Realism: a structured ontology** (Bhaskar, 1978).

	Domain of the Real	Domain of the Actual	Domain of the Empirical
<b>Mechanism, Structures, Powers</b>	◆		
<b>Events &amp; Actions</b>	◆	◆	
<b>Experiences &amp; Perceptions</b>	◆	◆	◆

- Partnerships are experienced and perceived by faculty (subjective), but events and mechanisms that underpin them may not be experienced (objective) (Collier, 1994).



# Philosophical Position

- Investigation switches from the empirical- the consequences of human action to the *conditions that make action possible* (Ackroyd & Fleetwood, 2000).
- By becoming aware of the mechanisms and events that underpin our partnerships we have the potential to reflect and *transform* our partnerships.



# Methodology

- Employing a multiple-case study design of 4 Sino-British partnerships (Yin, 2014, p. 50)
- Each case therefore represents a unique partnership (activity) system as the unit of analysis (Yin, 2014).
- Point of interest in case (Yin, 2014) - faculty experience.
- Sample: UK and China based faculty – 2 from each side = **Total 16.**



# Methodology

- Semi-structured interviews (Kvale, 2007).
- Coding: Template Analysis (King, 2012).
- Templates developed from initial analysis of two transcripts. Developed and reconfigured through multiple application.
- Templates- flexible technique enabling changes in thinking to be documented.



# Initial Data Collection

- 8 interviews conducted in China (March 2014).
- Field notes suggest social capital as a resource is **knowledge** and **support**.
- It is dependent on:
  - **Purpose.** Must all *understand* purpose of activities.
  - **Expectation.** Clear purpose *central* to expectation.
  - **Perception.** Partner relations *differ* depending on faculty role/position.
  - **Competency.** Qualified PhD. No *reason* to doubt.
  - **Knowledge transfer.** *Sharing* information critical.
  - **Support.** *You back me up.*
  - **Physical familiarity.** *Stronger* the relationship.





# Initial Data Collection

- What depletes social capital?
  - *Conflicting purposes. Multiple voices. Hidden agendas?*
  - *Assumption. You should know this!*
  - *Restrictive governance structures. No negotiation.*
  - *Rule changing with no prior explanation.*
- Effects on partnership capital? (Eddy, 2010)
  - *Motivation- why bother? Affects commitment level.*
  - *Academic identity- who am I?*
  - *Resource allocation- access denied.*
  - *Creates feelings of procrastination.*
  - *Creates defensiveness- information flow controlled.*
  - *Perception of partner affected.*
  - *Support and knowledge transfer stops.*



## So we can Discuss...

- The student experience of TNE.
- Student identity in TNE.
- Trade in TNE.
- Quality assurance in TNE.
- *But they are all affected by the quality and success of the partnership (relationship) that underpins them.*



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