



University of **HUDDERSFIELD**

University of Huddersfield Repository

Bordogna, Claudia

Transnational Higher Education Partnership Development: A New Research Agenda?

Original Citation

Bordogna, Claudia (2014) Transnational Higher Education Partnership Development: A New Research Agenda? In: BERA Annual Conference, 23-25th September 2014, Institute of Education, London. (Unpublished)

This version is available at <http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/21882/>

The University Repository is a digital collection of the research output of the University, available on Open Access. Copyright and Moral Rights for the items on this site are retained by the individual author and/or other copyright owners. Users may access full items free of charge; copies of full text items generally can be reproduced, displayed or performed and given to third parties in any format or medium for personal research or study, educational or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, provided:

- The authors, title and full bibliographic details is credited in any copy;
- A hyperlink and/or URL is included for the original metadata page; and
- The content is not changed in any way.

For more information, including our policy and submission procedure, please contact the Repository Team at: E.mailbox@hud.ac.uk.

<http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/>

Transnational Higher Education Partnership Development: A New Research Agenda?



Claudia M.L. Bordogna
University of Huddersfield
School of Education



Globalisation

- Globalisation has caused dramatic changes to the character and function of higher education in most countries around the world (Wing Ng 2012).
- World polity (WTO, IMF, UNESCO) have prompted higher education providers to reconsider their attitudes towards internationalisation.
- One method for realising international opportunities afforded by neo-liberal policies is to develop international partnerships (Chan 2004).
- HESA data indicates 'students studying for an award of a UK HEI' with an overseas **partner**- annual growth rate 2009/10 - **207,790**, 2010/11 -**291,575** and 2012/13-**353,375**.



TNE Partnerships

- Numerous modes of cooperation with varying levels of formalisation (validation, franchise, joint programmes, IBC, distance-learning).
- Complex structures and systems which require careful management (Buchanan and Huczynski 2010).
- Formal partnerships must enable optimal levels of collaboration.
- As alliances grow in complexity and involve wider sets of stakeholders (Bolton and Nie 2010) understanding how partners interact and respond to each other offers **a new way in which to evaluate the sustainability and value of international ventures.**



Partnership Analysis

- Partnerships are not static, but **evolutionary** in nature.
- It is common to have them identified as a **series of phases** ranging in number and definition (Das and Teng 1998; Gray 1985).
- Example: 'Initiation', 'establishment' and 'maturity' (Waddock 1989, 87).
- Example: 'Initiation', 'operation' and 'evaluation' (Wohlstetter, Smith, and Malloy 2005, 420).
- The phase approach makes it possible to categorise existing TNE partnership literature:
 1. Initiation – strategy/ function/ transactional/ value
 2. **Operational** – faculty/ CPD/ quality/pedagogy
 3. Evaluation- minimal



The Operational Phase

- **Critical in transforming** inputs such as technology, capital, energy and knowledge into beneficial and valuable outputs (Slack and Lewis 2008).
- Implementation -requires agents to **work together** to successfully negotiate and complete tasks and transform relationships.
- At the same time a certain course of action may effect the **motivation and attitude of other group members**.
- Previous work appears not to ask empirical questions, which contribute to an understanding of **how and why** TNE relationships develop.



Empirical Questions

1. What kind of activities do faculty engage in at the operational phase of a partnership?
2. Do certain faculty practices influence relations more than others?
3. Can modifications to faculty practices improve faculty relationships?
4. Are faculty encouraged and are they able to embed partnership learning's over time?
5. How do the operational practices of faculty and the subsequent relationships affect the quality of TNE programmes and the experiences of students?

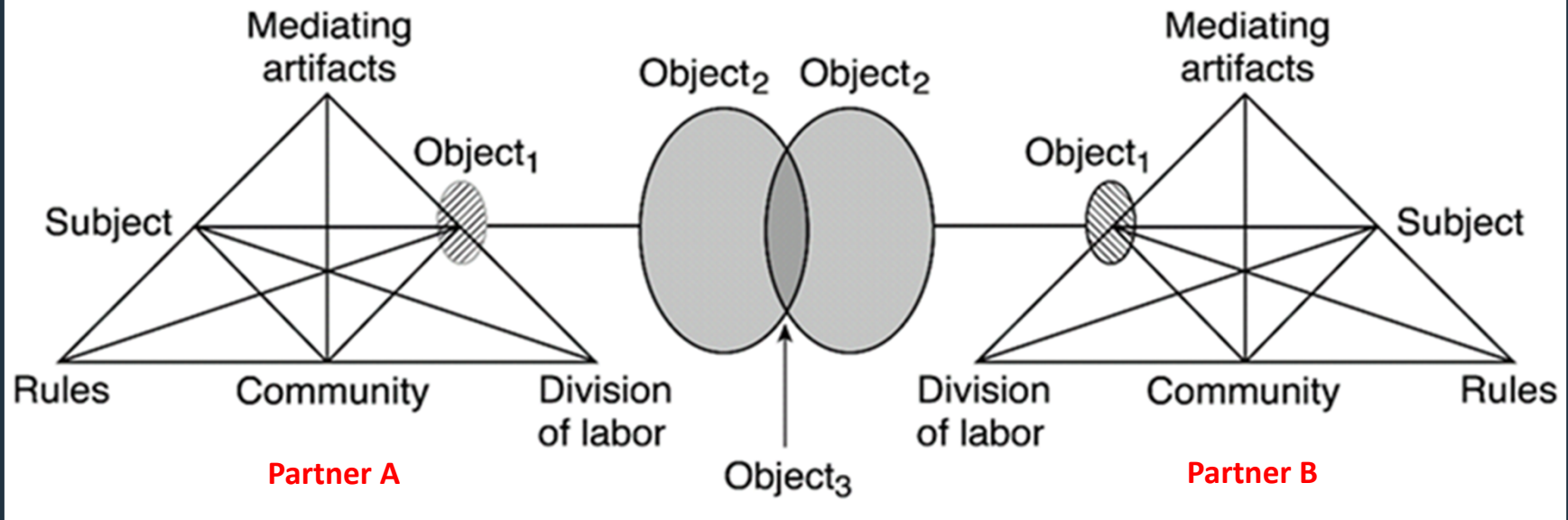


Conceptual Framework

- Partnership: **a socially structured and evolutionary relationship, consisting of agents (faculty) who generate and participate in social activities in order to achieve mutual outcomes that stimulate positive relational developments over time.**
- Partnership therefore represents a socially constructed phenomenon, reliant on **social processes** - develop relationships over time (Ryan et al. 2012).
- Social processes may take many forms- **social activities.**
- Activities are critical to the development of TNE partnerships over time.



Theoretical Framework



- Third generation cultural, historical activity theory (Engeström 2001).
- 'Collective, artefact-mediated and object orientated activity system, seen in its network relations to other activity systems' (Engeström 2001, 136).



Theoretical Framework

- Operational phase- represents a system of **social interaction**, reliant on **resource sharing, learning and support** (Cohen and Prusak 2001).
- Yet faculty actions are constrained by structure.
- Can faculty **transformation** their partnership systems and social structures (work-place learning (micro) vs organisational learning (macro))?
- Joint activities = psychological effects (object³) (Vygotsky 1989).
- Important in the development of integrative bonds between subjects (Molm, Whitham, and Melamed 2012).



Social Capital

- Represents a critical component in the forming and maintaining of long-term, successful partnerships (Eddy 2010; Dhillon 2009).
- Bourdieu and Coleman emphasise the intangible character of social capital, whereby it exists in the structure of social relationships (Portes 2000).
- Benefits are yielded by agents accessing and mobilising each others resources.
- How faculty feel about each other may **influence accessibility and motivation** to share resources.
- Perceptions of historical and current activities are important if positive relationships are to develop.



Social Capital

- Social capital: **resources embedded in partnership networks, which faculty access and/or mobilise in purposive social actions** (Lin 2001) **thereby creating psychological conditions (outputs) that affect further partnership relations, resources and actions over time.**
- Faculty, through their practices -ability to stimulate emotional states, which third generation CHAT does not identify.
- CHAT does not recognise time, motives, interpretations of action or associated meanings.
- Social Action Theory (Weber 1978) provides a theoretical lens in which to consider the more subjective aspects of social capital.



Conclusions

- Paper offers a new lens in which to investigate the operational phase of TNE partnerships.
- How partnership (activity) systems empower faculty to transform them overtime in order to strengthen relations is critically important to the future of transnational alliances.
- Furthermore, third generation CHAT represents a thinking tool, enabling faculty activities to be analysed in light of their social capital potential.
- Social action clearly affects the generation of emotional outputs such as trust and commitment.
- Operational activities therefore have the **potential to transform, positively or negatively** international partnership relationships.



Research in Progress

- Critical realist paradigm- seeking to explore social reality.
- Multiple case-study design of 4 Sino-British TNE partnerships.
- Applying third generation CHAT and Social Action Theory in order to explore the challenges facing faculty.
- Limitations, opportunities and catalysts for improving TNE partnerships are being uncovered.
- Limitations of third generation CHAT as a theoretical model also being identified.



References

- Bolton, D., and R. Nie. 2010. Creating value in transnational higher education: the role of stakeholder management. *Academy of Management Learning and Education* 9, no.4: 701-714.
- Buchanan, D., and A. Huczynski. 2010. *Organizational Behaviour: An Introductory Text*. Harlow: Prentice Hall.
- Chan, W. W. Y. 2004. International cooperation in higher education: theory and practice. *Journal of Studies in International Education* 8, no.1: 32-55.
- Das, T. K., and B. Teng. 1998. Between trust and control: developing confidence in partner cooperation in alliances. *Academy of Management Review* 23, no.3: 491-512.
- Dhillon, J. K. 2009. The role of social capital in sustaining partnership. *British Educational Research Journal* 35, no.5: 687-704.
- Eddy, P. L. (2010). Partnerships and Collaborations in Higher Education. In K. Ward & L. E. Wolf-Wendel (Eds.), *ASHE Higher Education Report* (Vol. 36 number 2). San Francisco, CA: ASHE.
- Engeström, Y. (2001). Expansive learning at work: towards an activity theoretical reconceptualisation. *Journal of Education and Work*, 14(1), 133-157.
- Gray, B. 1985. Conditions facilitating interorganizational collaboration. *Human Relations* 38, no.10: 911-936.
- HESA. (n.d). "Type of Activity and Level of Provision." Accessed September 2. <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/pr199>
- Lin, N. (2001). *Social Capital: A Theory of Social Structure and Action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Molm, L. D., M. M. Whitham, and D. Melamed. 2012. Forms of exchange and integrative bonds: effects of history and embeddedness. *American Sociological Review* 77, no.1: 141-165.
- Naidoo, V. 2009. Transnational higher education: a stock take of current activity. *Journal of Studies in International Education* 13, no. 3: 310-330.
- Portes, A. (2000). Social capital: its origins and applications in modern sociology. In *Knowledge and Social Capital: Foundations and Applications*, ed. E. L. Lesser, 43-67. Butterworth-Heinemann: Woburn, MA.
- Ryan, A., J. Tähtinen, M. Vanharanta, and T. Mainela. 2012. Putting critical realism to work in the study of business relationship processes. *Industrial Marketing Management* 41, no.2: 300-311.
- Slack, N., and N. Lewis. 2008. *Operations Strategy*. Harlow: Prentice Hall.
- Vygotsky, L.S. 1989. Concrete human psychology. *Soviet Psychology* 27, 53-77.
- Waddock, S. 1989. Understanding social partnerships: an evolutionary model of partnership organisations. *Administration and Society* 21, no.1: 78-100.
- Weber, M. (1978). The nature of social action. In W. G. Runciman (Ed.), *Weber: Selections in Translation* (pp. 7-32). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wing Ng, S. 2012. Rethinking the mission of internationalization of higher education in the Asia-Pacific region. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 42, no.3: 439-459.
- Wohlstetter, P., J. Smith and C.L. Malloy. 2005. Strategic alliances in action: towards a theory of evolution. *The Policy Studies Journal* 33, no.3:

Feedback welcome

Draft paper

Claudia Bordogna

University of Huddersfield

School of Education



Contact: c.bordogna@hud.ac.uk

Phone: 01484 473018