



University of **HUDDERSFIELD**

University of Huddersfield Repository

Bordogna, Claudia

Investigating Sino-British Partnership Development through the Practices of Faculty

Original Citation

Bordogna, Claudia (2014) Investigating Sino-British Partnership Development through the Practices of Faculty. In: HEA Annual Conference 2014, 2nd - 3rd July 2014, Aston University, Birmingham, UK. (Unpublished)

This version is available at <http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/21242/>

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/>

Investigating Sino-British Transnational Partnership Development through the Practices of Faculty



Claudia M. Bordogna FHEA
School of Education
University of Huddersfield



Rationale for Research

- Global changes stimulated by world polity have prompted higher education institutions to reconsider their attitudes towards internationalisation (Knight, 2005, 2013).
- 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.*

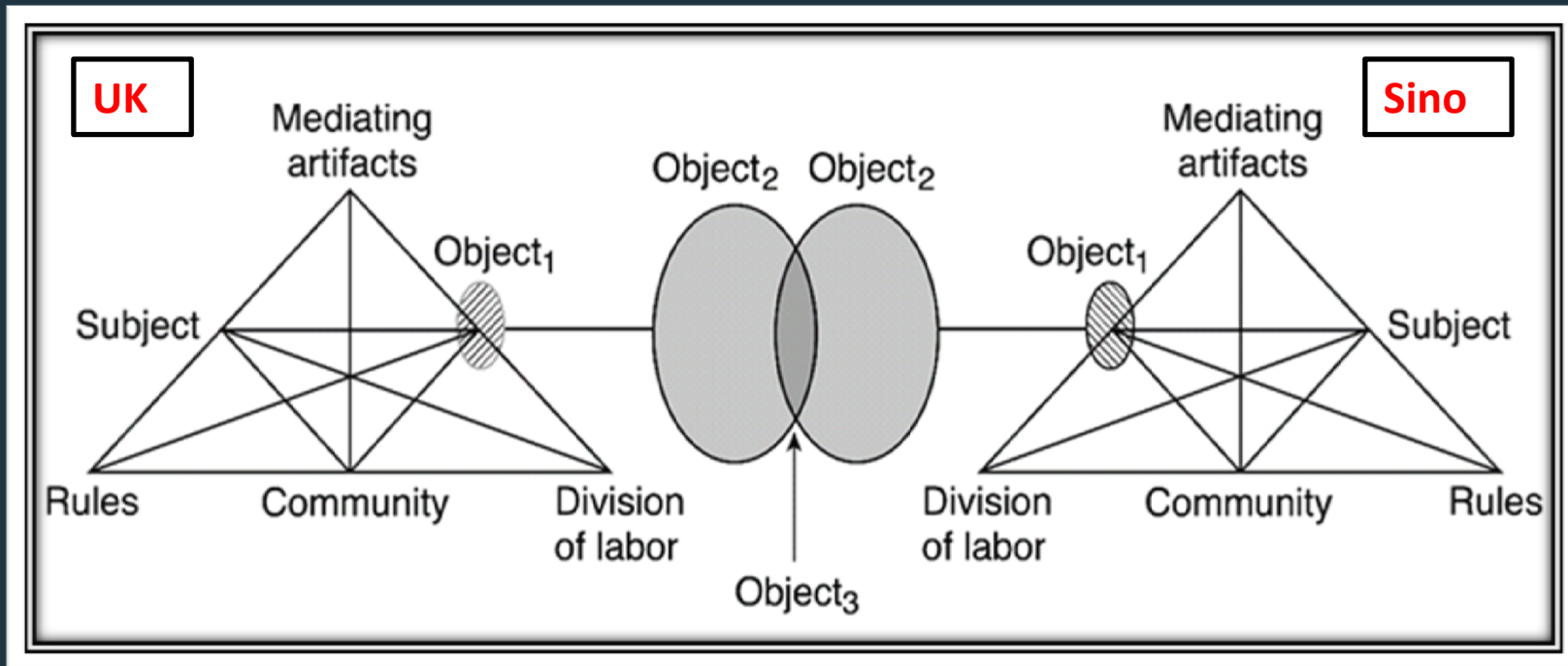


Contribution to Knowledge

- A lacuna exists in transnational discourse - how partnerships, once initiated by the strategic level are operated by faculty members in order to create sustainable and valuable partnerships (Spencer-Oatey, 2012, Keay 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).



Partnership Theoretical Frameworks



- 3rd Generation CHAT (Engeström 2001).
- Managerial/ organisational tool to improve capacity for working across boundaries (Daniels & Edwards, 2010).



Social Capital Theoretical Frameworks

- ‘Resources embedded in a social structure that are accessed and/or mobilized in purposive action’ (Lin 2001, p. 29).
- What **resources** are embedded in the partnership network?
- How do they help in generating **purposive action**?
- What do purposive actions generate in terms of **outputs**?
E.g. trust, commitment, defensiveness, frustration? (Field, 2008)
- Can access to embedded resources be **restricted, or blocked**?
- Can embedded resources be **developed and enhanced** through action?
- Social Action Theory (Weber, 1978).



Methodology

Multiple-Case Design

Holistic (single-unit of analysis)



Adapted from Yin (2014, p.50).



Partnership D: Sino Partner

1. Conflicting Systems

- *British* system operating in China- “it’s not British you know.”
- British education but not a British experience.
- Same timetabled system as UK- “completely help communication” “continuity of communication.”
- Multiple TNE programmes in operation at delivery partner- “I felt lost...nightmare” “I didn’t feel I belonged to anyone.”

Example:

- **Activity: Teaching (on multiple TNE arrangements).**
- Multiple responsibilities, growing ‘to do lists.’
- Multiple expectations from multiple stakeholders.
- Prioritisation of tasks?



Sino Partner *Hannah*

- Conclusions

- Multiple stakeholders – purposes not clear. Prioritise one activity over another? Could be seen as procrastination, passiveness, inertia by other stakeholder groups.
- Cannot find the time to **develop the connections** they need to build partner relationships, due to high level demands imposed by multiple stakeholders.
- Sino faculty feel they do not have the time to learn and reflect about their practice, often **taking/ extracting** UK knowledge and support embedded in the partnership structure, but do not have the time to reciprocate in its development.



Partnership D: Sino Partner

2. Training & Support

- Share UK knowledge- “bring this knowledge to us” “very good training...details...too general sometimes the information.”
- Training needs to be detailed- “no one taught us what to do...discovering by ourselves” “not enough support...feeling lost a little bit.”

Example:

- Activity: Online marking of student assignments.
- Not sure how to use Gradermark “lot of time-wasting really.”
- Internet in China “challenging” “poor capacity for student numbers.”
- UK recognised limitations of technology and negotiated a different approach- “very glad” “very well received.”



Sino Partner *Hannah*

- **Conclusions**

- Faculty need access to information to complete even basis tasks (online marking). No knowledge? activities loses appeal, demotivates.
- Negotiation **throughout** the activity process and empathy creates **positive outputs**.
- If activities start to demotivate individuals then individuals *shut down*- “I would quit.”
- They no longer interested in engaging- almost mechanical completion of tasks.
- Should we consider the **output**? In this case delivering student grades- and not the process- not the how, but the what.
- Can we negotiate processes better, which consider the limitations of our partners activity system?



Partnership D: Sino Partner

3. Communication

- Lack of communication with UK- “waiting for two or three days for an answer” “I felt lost” “looking for an answer...we couldn’t find.”
- Interpreting regulations alone- “interpreting in different ways the regulations” “my colleague understood one thing, I understood another.”
- Cannot answer student questions- “students were asking questions no one could answer” “we were in the middle between students and the UK.”

Example:

- Activities: 1. Marking the late submission of student coursework.
2. Emailing.
- Unsure of what UK regulations to apply.
- Assistance from UK not always timely.
- Emailing too formal and can be too emotional- “bothering” “pollute their inbox”
- Emails can be misinterpreted.



Sino Partner *Hannah*

- **Conclusions**

- Delayed access to knowledge and support embedded in the partnership network creates **blockages** in the partnership system.
- It slows down activities (purposive action).
- Outputs generated- “lack of trust” “missing guidance.”
- Activities such as emailing can make faculty feel they are annoying or too dependent on their partner. Can we try **too hard** to access knowledge and support in which to validate our choices and subsequent actions?
- Can constant communications actually **erode** social capital? Can we ask for too much help? Is there a **tipping point** in relational development?



Social Capital (S.C)

UK Partner (Internal)	Sino Partner (Internal)	Output
Poor S.C	Good S.C	Unequal relational development- potential failure.
Good S.C	Poor S.C	Unequal relational development-but has potential to survive.
Poor S.C	Poor S.C	No relationship- failure.
Good S.C	Good S.C	Across team collective sharing: Partnership institutionalisation Partnership capital (Eddy, 2010)



Final Thoughts

- The student experience of TNE.
- Trade in TNE.
- Quality assurance in TNE.
- But ultimately they are all affected by the **quality** and **success** of the partnership (relationship) that underpins them.
- Improved efficiency, reputation and quality arises from relationships where we understand **how** to improve working relations.
- Cost opportunity = retention, time, attrition, revenue.



References

- Bennell, P., & Pearce, T. (2002). The internationalisation of higher education: exporting education to developing and transitional economies. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 23(2), 215-232.
- British Council. (2013). *The Shape of Things to Come: The Evolution of Transnational Education: Data, Definitions, Opportunities and Impacts Analysis*, from http://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/britishcouncil.uk2/files/the_shape_of_things_to_come_2.pdf
- Daniels, H., & Edwards, A. (2010). Introduction. In H. Daniels, A. Edwards, Y. Engeström, T. Gallagher & S. Ludvigsen (Eds.), *Activity Theory in Practice: Promoting Learning Across Boundaries and Agencies* (pp. 1-8). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- 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.
- Field, J (2008) *Key Ideas: Social Capital*. (2nd ed). Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge
- Keay, J., May, H., & O' Mahony, J. (2014). Improving learning and teaching in transnational education: can communities of practice help? *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 40(3), 251-266.
- Knight, J. (2005). New typologies for cross-border higher education. *International Higher Education*, 38, 3-5.
- Knight, J. (2013). The changing landscape of higher education internationalisation- for better or worse? . *Perspective: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 17(3), 84-90.
- Lin, N. (2001). *Social Capital: A Theory of Social Structure and Action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Naidoo, V. (2009). Transnational higher education: a stock take of current activity. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 13(3), 310-330.
- Spencer-Oatey, H. (2012). Maximising the benefits of international education collaborations: managing interaction processes. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 17(3), 244-261.
- Weber, M. (1978). The nature of social action. In W. G. Runciman (Ed.), *Weber: Selections in Translation* (pp. 7-32). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (5th ed.). London: Sage Publications.



Partnership D: Sino Partner

1. Timings

- Conflicting working calendars (UK / China) impacts on activities.
- No access to UK -“lost” “big issue” “broken relationship” “there is no-one.”
- Fear of making decisions- repercussions “would it be correct?”

Example:

- **Activity: Marking late student submission of work** (Dec 2012).
- No UK contact -“new situations...you don’t know exactly what to do in specific cases.”
- Regulations can be interpreted differently.



Sino Partner *Hannah*

- Conclusions

- Lack of access to resources such as knowledge, embedded in the partnership network, means activities lose direction – not sure how to engage with the activity.
- Generated output: “frustration...no information? Frustration.”
- Unable to access UK knowledge and support– she fears possible repercussions, activities may **not meet** partner expectations.
- Frustration is not mentioned as a critical success factor in partnership literature.
- We need to consider how we **minimise frustration**.