A Qualitative Case Study of UK University Academics' Collaborative Practices: A Social-Psychological Perspective

by

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Abstract

This thesis analyses the social-psychological processes in the journey of the collaborative practices of 12 British University academics working at a university located in south-east England (henceforth, SEE University).

This study stresses the importance of what happens behind the scenes of collaboration. It endeavours to explore (i) the values and qualities of the partners with whom the participants collaborate; (ii) the spaces and disciplines wherein these collaborations take place; and (iii) their motives for choosing to engage in collaboration. To achieve the aims of the study and address the research questions, a qualitative case study methodology was used. The data were collected through a series of semi-structured face-to-face and online interviews before and during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The findings reveal that the participants seem to focus more on three main social-psychological processes shaping their collaboration journey rather than only the outcomes produced, and that their feelings and behaviours appear to determine the quality of their collaboration. Therefore, understanding the three core elements in the journey of collaboration – 'who', 'where' and 'why' – prior to initiating collaboration appears to be necessary. That is, this research strives to supply the missing piece of the collaboration puzzle. Regarding the 'who', findings show that it is important for participants to choose the right academic collaborative spouses with whom they can collaborate effectively. As for the 'where', the data demonstrate that participants cross two types of boundaries when collaborating. These are 'spatial' and 'disciplinary'. The 'why' findings describe the motives triggering participants to collaborate. These are 'expressive' and 'instrumental'. However, participants' accounts show that the 'who' seems to outweigh both the 'where' and 'why'.

The originality of the study lies in that the latter takes a novel approach to exploring how the participants collaborate – social psychology, wherein the focus is on how academic Selves and Others influence one another's thoughts, feelings, and behaviours when collaborating. This thesis, therefore, attempts to produce a reaction to the collaboration that the participants build to gain a deeper understanding of what occurs in the journey of producing intangible as well as tangible outcomes. Contribution-wise, all my participants and I co-developed a flexible 3W model (Who, Where, and Why) that future researchers can apply when studying collaboration or similar social or academic phenomena.

In light of the research findings, there are implications at two levels – theoretical and practical implications. Implications at the theoretical level concern the new social-

psychological insights that the findings can add to the concepts that were used to make sense of the data, namely, Social Capital (SC), Human Capital (HC), Communities of Practice (CoPs), and Oldenburg' Concept of First, Second and Third Place. Implications at the practical level are related to implications of the findings on academics to consider when engaging in collaboration. These implications have to do with the significance of 'understanding the social psychology of collaboration', 'personality compatibility in collaboration', 'nomadicity', 'university financial support for international collaboration', 'implications of Covid-19 on collaboration', and 'balancing expressive and instrumental collaboration'.

Overall, the findings of the study can be used to help academics reframe and rethink collaboration at tertiary level and raise their awareness about the significance of the 'right' academics with whom they should collaborate, 'where' they need to collaborate, and, most importantly, 'why' they choose to collaborate.

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Dedication

I dedicate this humble work to my adoring deeply missed mother (May her soul rest in peace) and my warm, generous and kind-hearted living father (May Allah bless him with happiness, good health and long life).

To my most caring, compassionate and supportive English best friend and second mother, Pauline Thomas (May God bless her with good health, long life and everything her kind heart desires).

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To my beautiful, adoring and supportive sisters, Nawel, Souhila, Fouzia and Nabila.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AT – Attribution Theory

CLIER – Culture, Language and International Education Research

CoPs – Communities of Practice

CPD – Continuous Professional Development

EFL – English as Foreign Language

HC – Human Capital

HE – Higher Education

HEIs – Higher Education Institutions

IELTS – International English Language Testing System

IRB – Institutional Review Board

IT – Interdependence Theory

PsyCap – Psychological Capital

RIUs – Research-Intensive Universities

SC – Social Capital

SEE – South-east England

SPC – Social Psychological Capital

TESOL – Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

TIUs – Teaching-Intensive Universities

UK – United Kingdom

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

Collaboration among university academics is increasingly perceived as a significant vehicle for enhancing the quality of teaching, supervision, and research practices in Higher Education (HE). However, for an effective collaboration in the aforementioned areas to happen, academics are to understand the different complex and multifaceted processes and factors triggering the success and failure of such collaborative activities.

This thesis, which fits into the field of professional behaviour in HE, examines the social-psychological processes and anatomy of the collaborative endeavours of a group of 12 British academics working at SEE University. It explores the mutual influence which exists between the participants and their academic collaborative spouses[1] in terms of thoughts, feelings, and behaviours when engaging in co-teaching, co-supervision, and co-research practices, hence the social psychology of collaboration. While past studies on collaboration, a number of which are mentioned in Chapter Two, focused on the *outcomes* that collaborative academics yield, this study takes a fine-grained look at the complex social-psychological *processes* of the tangible and intangible outcomes of collaboration, not solely the outcomes per se. This is because "[...] it's not always about the outcome or product[2]" as "these can be achieved individually anyway, but the key thing is that a great outcome needs the right person", as clarified by two participants. The overriding objective of this thesis, therefore, lies in understanding the social-psychological journey of what lies beyond the complexity of collaboration, hence my concept 'meta-collaboration'.

Instances of the processes and elements in the journey of collaboration include 'the people with whom academics collaborate', 'how they feel and act when collaborating with particular academics', 'how they feel in the space and discipline wherein they collaborate', and 'the social-psychological motives for engaging in collaboration'. This suggests that this research attempts to decrypt the encrypted story of co-teaching, co-research, and co-supervision practices by bringing forward the voices of six male and six female British University academics having varied academic statuses.

[1] I am using the word 'spouse' in this thesis in a metaphorical way to refer to the academics with whom the participants collaborate. Therefore, 'spouse' is a word which is informed by the findings to indicate the close relationship, bond, and ability to live and stay together and jointly experience the ups and downs in the journey of collaboration.

[2] I am using 'outcome' and 'product' to refer to the intangible and tangible outcomes of collaboration, respectively.

Methodology-wise, to address the research questions and aims of the study, which are presented in Section 1.3, I espoused a qualitative case study methodology. I used a case study as a methodology to explore the academics with *whom* the participants collaborate, *where* they collaborate, and *why* they collaborate. This was achieved through a series of in-person and online interviews as the main data collection tool.

The three overarching key findings of the research are presented as follows: participants seem to (a) focus on the qualities of the people with whom they collaborate (the 'who'?), (b) collaborate irrespective of space and discipline, and that each collaborative space is unique in terms of how they feel in each space (the 'where'?), and (c) collaborate for expressive as well as instrumental reasons (the 'why'?). Therefore, the findings of this study made the whole thesis read as a journey into participants' minds as members of a collaborative community of practice. Having considered what happens in the minds of the participants while collaborating rather than observing them engage in their collaboration yielded plentiful data. However, as the findings reveal, it should be highlighted that the 'who' seems to outweigh both the 'where'[3] and 'why' elements in the journey of collaboration. The overarching argument in this thesis, therefore, is that academics need to focus more on the whole process of collaboration rather than just the outcome, and that collaborating with the 'right' academics in terms of who they are as people or social beings (i.e., social capital) and what they have as similar academic areas of interest (i.e., human capital) is of paramount importance.

Having had a general snapshot of what the thesis is about, the rest of this chapter is structured as follows: firstly, Section 1.1 features my personal motivation for studying British academics' collaborative practices. Secondly, Section 1.2 portrays how the scope and the focus of the study have changed during the course of the study. Thirdly, research aims and research questions are presented in Section 1.3. After that comes Section 1.4 to describe the elements of originality and contribution of the study. However, it might be difficult to understand the meaning of some concepts unless I explain them in Section 1.5. Therefore, Section 1.5 provides definitions of the terms which are omnipresent in this thesis. Finally, Section 1.6 outlines the thesis structure.

1.1. Personal motivation

This section portrays my story behind conducting research on collaboration. This research into academics' collaboration at UK University level arose from my personal 'academic thirst' to gain insights into how and why a group of academics at a particular British

[3] The 'where' element in this thesis refers to both spatial and disciplinary 'where'.

University engage in co-teaching, co-supervision, and co-research practices. Overall, attending a Pre-sessional programme[4] at SEE University in 2017-2018 was a tremendous opportunity for me to establish a motive to conduct this research. The reasons for conducting this study at university in general and British University in particular are discussed below from general to specific starting with '*why collaboration*?', then '*why university academics*' *collaboration*?', and ending with '*why British University academics' collaboration*?'.

Firstly, the rationale behind my choice to investigate *collaboration* is that I have always been an 'intellectually generous' person who enjoys sharing knowledge and collaborating with people, be they non-academic individuals, schoolteachers, fellow Ph.D. researchers or academics. When I started teaching at Algiers 2 University, Algeria, I also collaborated with some colleagues who taught similar modules. For example, I often used to share a class of phonetics and phonology with a female colleague who was interested in learning the way I was teaching segmental and supra-segmental phonology. That was mutually beneficial in that we both learnt from each other as I also attended some of her classes and did benefit from the way she taught lessons like 'vowel quadrilateral', 'word and sentence stress', and 'intonation'. I used to bring my mini portable Bluetooth speaker to teach oral expressions to my students while a colleague of mine used to sit at the back and observe the way I was interacting with my students and delivering my lesson. This, to me, was the lowest level of co-teaching described in Chapter Two, and which I really enjoyed as not only did it help improve my own teaching skills, but also those of my colleague. Moreover, the interest in studying academics' collaboration did not remain in Algeria; it travelled with me to the UK wherein my interest in exploring British academics' collaboration grew tremendously.

Secondly, the reason why I wished to study collaboration at *tertiary* rather than primary or secondary education level is that I was actively involved in collaborative activities with Algerian University academics from my discipline and within the wider academic community. Therefore, I opted to focus my Ph.D. research on university academics rather than schoolteachers because I was experiencing collaboration both in teaching and research while studying and teaching at the same time. However, had I taught at middle or secondary schools, I might have shifted the focus to investigate how middle or secondary schoolteachers collaborated. Furthermore, because I am going to be a university lecturer after obtaining my

[4] Pre-sessional programme is a full-time academic English language and study skills programme run by most universities in the UK. It prepares linguistically and culturally international students whose first language is not English for their future degree studies (undergraduate or postgraduate studies).

Ph.D. degree, learning about how university academics co-teach, co-supervise, and co-research will help me improve my own collaborative practices in the future.

Thirdly, my motive for choosing to study *British* academics' collaboration rather than Algerian or any other academics from other countries goes back to the Scholarship which my home country 'Algeria' offered me to undertake doctoral research at SEE University. Here the idea of investigating how British academics collaborate started to develop. For example, during the period of the Pre-sessional course, which was one year before I started my Ph.D., I could not help but notice how some of the academics who taught me modules like IELTS, Language, Discourse and Culture, and TESOL were working together as members of a 'strong', 'well-functioning' collaborative community. This diversity of academics coming from different faculties and disciplines to work together as a community was new to me as a researcher. For instance, we[5] used to have British academics from two different disciplines with different research expertise deliver a lecture together in front of a huge number of students. Not only was this surprising to me personally, but also to most of my Algerian fellow students who started raising questions like 'how come two academics from two different disciplines know each other well and teach together?' This, therefore, triggered my academic curiosity to conduct research on how and why British University academics in general and those working at SEE University in particular engage in co-teaching, co-supervision, and co-research practices.

In the following section, I describe the journey of development of the research focus, which shifted from looking at how the participants in the setting perceived and experienced formal collaborations and partnerships to exploring the mutual influence that existed between my participants and their collaborative spouses when engaging in both informal and formal collaborations.

1.2. "*It's not just about collaboration; it goes beyond that*": Expanding the scope and sharpening the focus of the thesis

This section describes the journey of development of the research focus and scope. When I first came to the UK and started to make acquaintance with academics at SEE University, my interest to study British academics' collaborative practices began to develop. I had initially intended to explore the nature of British University academics' collaboration and partnership, and how those academics perceived the value of such practices. My focus was

[5] The personal pronoun 'we' here refers to a large group of Algerian university students who attended a Pre-sessional programme at SEE University in 2017-2018 before embarking on the Ph.D. journey.

vague as I wished to develop deeper insights into academics' collaboration without having a particular theoretical perspective from which I wanted to examine it. Besides, I used to employ the constructs 'collaboration', 'cooperation', 'collegiality', and 'partnership' interchangeably as if they all had the same meaning. Moreover, my focus was only on *formal* rather than both *formal* and *informal* collaboration because I only realised that the latter existed when I started collecting the data.

Nevertheless, when in the field, the scope of the research started to sharpen, and the general aim of the thesis began to expand. After several interviews and follow-up interviews with the participants, it became apparent that they accentuated the social-psychological aspects and processes of collaboration rather than only the quality or quantity of the outcome produced. For instance, some participants discussed how they felt when collaborating with other academics in different spaces, and the social-psychological motives behind their engagement in collaboration. This made me rethink the concept of collaboration in HE by learning from some participants that "[…] it's not just about the outcome expected or it's not just about collaboration; it goes beyond that, really […]" and that "[…] there is a lot of hidden stuff about collaboration that we don't always know about if we don't experience that ourselves when working on projects together like research or teaching or anything, really […]", hence the title of the section.

Once I fathomed the lens through which I was examining collaboration, only then did I continue to focus on the social-psychological anatomy of participants' formal and informal collaborations. My questions in the follow-up interviews mostly revolved around the mutual impact of the participants and the academic Others they collaborated with on one another's thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and behaviours. This suggests that the nature of participants' collaboration is complex and multifaceted. Hence, collaboration is the result of several interrelated social-psychological factors, making it a cyclical rather than a linear process. This thesis, therefore, is premised on the idea that understanding the social psychology of collaboration rather than collaboration per se is important.

In summary, by delving deeper into my participants' multiple ways of perceiving collaboration, I managed to shift the focus of the study from merely looking at how academics collaborate (i.e., focusing on the outcome like the number of publications, co-designed curricula, and co-supervised theses) to highlighting the social-psychological journey of their formal collaboration (i.e., what happens behind the scenes of those co-publications, co-supervised theses, and co-taught classes) as well their informal collaborations. In addition, analogous to the issue of space and 'meta-physical' space, this study, therefore, emphasises

'meta-collaboration' – or what lies beyond the 'obvious' or 'visible' in collaboration. Having mentioned the adjectives 'obvious' and 'visible' and linked to the iceberg analogy, this thesis, therefore, focuses on what lies below rather than above the surface of the iceberg of co-teaching, co-supervision, and co-research practices wherein the participants engage. In this respect, Adam (formal interview) argues that "there is a lot of hidden stuff about collaboration that we don't always know about if we don't experience that ourselves when working on projects together like research or teaching or anything […]".

1.3. Research aims and research questions

Having delineated the journey of evolvement of the focus and scope of the study, this section presents the research aims and research questions underpinning this thesis. The present investigation has three overarching aims, as listed below:

The first aim is to understand the criteria of the 'right' academics with whom the participants collaborate. This implies that the participants may not establish collaborative relationships with any academic unless certain criteria are met and given values are respected. It specifically seeks to examine the extent to which there is a correlation between the people with whom participants collaborate, the space for collaboration and the reasons for participating in collaboration.

The second aim is to explore the different settings and disciplines wherein participants collaborate. Specifically, it attempts to ascertain the social-psychological motives for moving from one space and discipline to another when collaborating, and aspires to understand why the participants think, feel and behave differently when collaborating in varied spaces and disciplines.

The third aim is to reveal the social-psychological reasons behind participants' engagement in collaborative practices. This aims to apprehend the social-psychological rewards that engaging in academic collaborations has on participants at the personal and professional level.

Therefore, the research questions which guide this study are stated as follows:

RQ1-With whom do the participants in the setting collaborate?

RQ2-Where do the participants' collaborative practices take place?

RQ3- Why do the participants engage in collaborative practices?

The way these questions are addressed is presented in the 'Further discussion' section within Chapter Eight.

1.4. Social psychology as a novel approach to studying collaboration: The new knowledge

This section depicts the aspects of originality and contribution that the findings of this study can add to knowledge about academics' collaborative practices.

The present research has yielded a considerable amount of in-depth data, which was then organised into three main findings, namely, the psychology of people in collaboration (the 'who'), the social psychology of crossing boundaries in collaborative practices (the 'where'*),* and the social-psychological rewards of collaboration (the 'why'). The findings of the study were all examined from a social-psychological angle – an important novel approach to studying academics' collaboration, which the literature seems to overlook. While abundant research studies on collaboration in HE from both students' and academics' perspectives exist, there appears to be a dearth of research on how British University academics collaborate through this lens. The findings, therefore, contribute to reduce this knowledge gap by bringing forward the voices of 12 academics from four faculties within SEE University.

The findings of the study are original in that unlike previous research on collaboration that mainly focused on the physical product that arises from collaborative endeavours, this research stresses the 'meta-physical' features of collaboration, not collaboration or its outcome per se. The data reveal that there are more intangible aspects that accompany participants when collaborating, which should not go unnoticed. Hence, delving deeper into participants' minds to gain a better grasp of how collaboration works in practice through this novel approach is significant.

Therefore, what is original about this research is that it attempts to understand 'the untold story' behind collaboration and what lies below rather than above the tip of the iceberg of collaboration. That is, this study seeks to uncover the hidden story behind the outcome that participants produce out of collaboration because, for instance, co-written books, co-designed modules, co-supervised theses, or co-presented papers at conferences do not often reveal the complex processes in the journey of co-writing that book, co-designing that module, co-supervising the research student's thesis or co-presenting that paper at a conference. That is, the reader of a co-written article might not be able to ascertain if the academics who wrote it got on well or not, used one another or not, how they felt when collaborating in the space wherein they co-wrote the article, or why they chose to engage in collaboration to start with. Thus, all these social-psychological processes can determine whether it is possible to collaborate. Furthermore, my findings- constructive critique of some of the concepts that

helped me understand the data adds the social-psychological dimension to these concepts as most of them appear to overlook such feature in their premises.

As for the theoretical contribution of the findings to knowledge, this novel approach to explaining the participants' collaboration has helped my participants and I to co-construct an important '3W model' ('Who', 'Where', and 'Why') which describes how the participants in the setting collaborate. The findings of this research, therefore, enabled me to see some concepts (e.g., SC, HC, CoPs, and Oldenburg's Concept of First, Second, and Third Place) in a different light. Thus, researchers can apply this model to study individuals' behaviours and interactions in a collaborative community located in a particular setting, and how understanding these processes can determine the quality (failure or success) of their collaboration.

Finally, it is important to note that the 3W model did not 'emerge' from the data. Instead, it was 'co-constructed' and 'co-developed' thanks to the mutual engagement of my participants and me in the whole process of data collection, analysis and discussion. Therefore, the verb 'co-constructed' here suggests that this 3W model was the outcome of the co-construction of knowledge and co-negotiation of meaning between my participants and me as to collaboration, hence the link between 'reflexive' thematic analysis and social constructionism in this thesis. Moreover, it should be highlighted that the verbs 'emerge' and 'inform' are not used interchangeably in this thesis because if this model had 'emerged' from the data, this might have made the reader believe that this is Grounded Theory research when it is not. To conclude, in reflexive thematic analysis, researchers chant the mantras 'themes do not emerge' and 'they are co-constructed between the participants and the researcher' (Braun and Clarke, 2021).

1.5. Notes on terminology

The definitions provided in this section can assist with the understanding of the terms used in the Literature Review, Methodology, and Findings Chapters.

Senior lecturer: A senior lecturer position is an academic career promotion opportunity for a lecturer. This academic rank is between a lecturer and a reader, with an increased focus on research, administrative duties and leadership. However, this title can mean different things in different universities in the UK. For example, the senior lecturer title can be similar to a reader in some UK universities. In this study, there are eight participants who hold the title of a senior lecturer.

Reader: A reader is an academic title which is above senior lecturer, equal to principal lecturer and below professor. This title refers to a senior academic with distinguished record of excellent research. Thus, to progress to a reader position, a senior lecturer needs to demonstrate active engagement in original research. However, the definition of a reader also depends on each UK University.

Professor: The most senior academic job title in the UK is professor. In the context of this study, only four of my participants hold the title of a professor.

Practices: The term 'practices' is used in this thesis to refer to teaching, supervision and research activities wherein the participants collaborate.

Space: The way 'space' is used in this study is not synonymous with 'place'. While I use 'place', 'setting' or 'environment' to refer to the physical features of a particular location, I employ the term 'space' in this thesis to refer to the 'social-psychological' rather than the 'physical' characteristics of a particular setting. Thus, while Oldenburg (1989) uses first, second and third *place*, I use first, second and third *space* to emphasise the social-psychological aspects which the setting has, and wherein individuals show different feelings and behaviours.

Nomadic academics: I describe my participants as 'nomadic academics' because they cross spatial and disciplinary boundaries, and that they do not have only one setting wherein they collaborate. They collaborate in different spaces and disciplines depending on different situations and circumstances. The reason I refer to them as such is that they have features akin to those of 'nomads' who do not have a fixed home and who move from one place to another. However, I should clarify that I am referring to my participants as 'nomadic academics', not 'academic nomads' as the former implies that these participants are 'academics' with some 'characteristics' resembling those of nomads.

'Meta-physical': My use of 'meta-physical' in this thesis denotes what lies 'beyond the physical' – the social-psychological and mental aspects of the space, not the spiritual world. I am not implying something about categories of philosophy either.

'Meta-collaboration': Analogous to the physical space and 'meta-physical' space, I use 'meta-collaboration' to suggest what lies beyond the 'visible' in collaboration. The prefix 'meta' here denotes the social-psychological processes of collaboration, which are understood from the participants' minds.

Social psychology of collaboration: Social psychology is the study of how individuals in a society influence one another's behaviours, affect, and cognition. According to Allport (1954, p.5), social psychology is "the attempt to understand and explain how the thoughts, feelings, and behavior of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of other human beings". Therefore, I use this perspective in this thesis to gain rich insights into the different ways wherein the participants and the academic Others they collaborate with influence one another in terms of the decisions they make, the actions they take, and the behaviour they exhibit when collaborating. Furthermore, linking social psychology to social constructionism shows that the choice of this particular theoretical lens through which collaboration is examined in this thesis is informed by the findings, in the sense that both my participants' ways of looking at collaboration (i.e., ontology) and my own interpretation of their perceptions of collaboration (i.e., epistemology) helped in the co-construction of social psychology as a theoretical perspective from which the findings were examined.

Academic Selves and Others: I use academic 'Selves' and 'Others' in this thesis to refer to university academics who collaborate with other academic partners that I refer to as *collaborative spouses* in this thesis. The reason I add the adjective 'academic' to both 'Selves 'and 'Others' is to distinguish them from 'non-academic' Selves and Others who pursue a 'non-academic' career path. Specifying the type of Selves and Others helps reduce ambiguity in that the reader might think that I am referring to collaboration outside the academic context.

Academic collaborative spouses: I refer to the academics with whom my participants collaborate as their 'academic collaborative spouses' because the participants perceive collaboration as marriage, in the sense that in both marriage and collaboration, similar criteria and values need to be respected. This indicates closeness, bond, and interrelationship that exist between the participants and their collaborative spouses. However, it should be emphasised that the coinage of this term was informed by the findings, not my preconceived thoughts. That is, since social constructionism is the philosophical paradigm which underpins the methodological part of my research, the term 'spouse', therefore, is socially constructed in that my participant and I co-coined this concept thanks to (a) how they perceive the academics they collaborate with and (b) how I interpret their perceptions of those academics.

1.6. Mapping the thesis structure

To conclude this chapter, the way the forthcoming seven chapters are organised is presented as follows:

Chapter Two – *Academics' Collaborative Practices in Higher Education.* This chapter discusses how academic collaborative activities are conducted in HE. The collaborative practices described in this research are related to teaching, supervision, and research.

Chapter Three – *Theories and Concepts Informing the Study into Academics' Collaboration in Higher Education*. While the previous chapter describes the collaborative practices in the HE context, this chapter delineates the four concepts and two theories informing the study, and which I use to make sense of the data. These are Social Capital, Human Capital, Interdependence Theory, Attribution Theory, Communities of Practice, and finally Oldenburg's Concept of First, Second and Third Place.

Chapter Four – *Research Methodology.* This chapter describes the methodology that I used to undertake the study. It is organised around five sections. In the first section, I explain how the theoretical paradigm I espoused in the study – 'social constructionism' – operates. The second section portrays the research design adopted in this study. In particular, this section outlines the qualitative case study methodology; the context of the case study; the research participants and recruitment techniques; the interviews as the only data collection instrument; and finally, how I applied the reflexive thematic analysis framework to analyse and discuss the data in a reflexive way. However, before delving into how I made sense of the data, a section on how I located myself as a researcher within the research and how I described my positionality and reflexivity during my research journey is presented. While the fourth section emphasises the trustworthiness of the research findings, the fifth section accentuates the ethical route that I pursued to undertake the study.

Chapter Five – *"These Kinds of Things Need the Right People": Choosing the Right Academic Collaborative Spouses.* This is the opening Findings Chapter that discusses issues based around two main ideas – personal values and shared values. It mainly tackles the issue of the 'who'– the qualities of the people with whom the participants collaborate – and which seems to outweigh both 'where' and 'why' elements in the journey of collaboration.

Chapter Six – *"We Need to Move Around a Lot": The Social Psychology of Crossing Boundaries in Collaborative Practices*. While the previous chapter delineated the 'who', this

second Findings Chapter concerns the 'where'– the two instances of participants' crossing boundaries in collaboration – crossing spatial boundaries and crossing disciplinary boundaries.

Chapter Seven – *"I Collaborate Because It's Fruitful": The Rewards of Collaboration*. Unlike the previous two Findings Chapters, which focus on the individuals with whom participants collaborate, and where their collaborative practices take place, respectively, the third Findings Chapter describes the social-psychological motives behind participants' engagement in collaboration. This chapter discusses expressive and instrumental collaboration.

Chapter Eight – *Further discussion, Implications, and Conclusions*. The last chapter sets out the general discussion of the 'Who', 'Where' and 'Why' Chapters, and by so doing addresses research questions 1, 2 and 3, respectively. It also outlines the theoretical as well as practical implications of the study and suggests some practical considerations for further research. The conclusion section in this chapter concisely reiterates the aims of the study and provides a reflective account on the impacts of the whole research on me as a researcher, i.e., reflecting both *on* and *for* action.

CHAPTER TWO

2. ACADEMICS' COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

This chapter discusses academics' collaborative practices in the HE context as both collaboration and HE are the core elements in this thesis. This chapter is structured as follows: the first Section 2.1 examines the context of the study – HE. Within the same section, two Subsections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 on overview of UK HE and UK HE academic staff, respectively are described. Following these two subsections come two sections. Section 2.2 addresses how the topic of academics' collaboration has been researched in HE in general, and Section 2.4 specifically discusses collaboration in the UK HE context. However, before moving to the three areas of academic collaboration, Section 2.3 on values in collaboration is presented. After that, I shall discuss the three areas of academic collaboration in HE in Section 2.4, which is divided into three subsections – 2.5.1 addresses collaborative teaching, 2.5.2 discusses collaborative supervision, and 2.5.3 describes collaborative research.

2.1. UK HE context

Since this study is about UK University academics' collaboration, the context of HE needs to be described in this thesis. This section, therefore, discusses how UK HE sector functions.

There seems to be abundant studies on 'schoolteachers' collaboration in their learning community (e.g., Cuellar, 2011; McCarthy, 2011; Goldstein, 2015; Ayubayeva, 2018). However, and as the phrase 'schoolteachers' suggests, most studies which have been conducted on the area of teachers' collaboration are particularly pertinent to primary, middle and secondary schools, not HE academics. Significantly, studies investigating academics' collaboration in HE are scarce (Kezar and Lester, 2009; Zundans-Fraser, 2014). My study, therefore, seeks to address this gap by investigating UK University academics' collaborative practices.

Even though there are different 'countries' within the UK, the HE system in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales follows almost the same pattern. Over the past few decades, the UK HE has undergone a movement to fundamentally change the functions and roles of the university in general (Robertson, Bonal, and Dale, 2002; Bullen, Robb, and Kenway, 2004), and particularly to decrease the amount of public investment in HE, and,

hence, universities are now compelled to act more like business than educational organisations (Burnes, Wend, and By, 2013).

UK HE is becoming more commercialised than ever. It keeps changing and is being dominated by neoliberal ideologies which, in turn, make UK HE look like a "marketer" (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004, p.1; Wong and Chiub, 2017). The marketisation of the UK HE system denotes that university students are more like 'consumers', being at the core of the HE sector (BIS 2011), who pay for a service in the form of a degree-level education, while universities are like 'service providers' (Wong and Chiub, 2017; Taberner, 2018). However, conceiving students as merely consumers can also be dangerous (Wenstone, 2012). On a similar note, Waddington (2016, p.1) seems to be against the term 'neoliberal' when it comes to describing universities as neoliberal and whose students are nothing but consumers: "increasing marketisation in UK higher education, where students are seen as consumers, rather than learners with power". She further suggests that reflexive dialogue and critical reflection in UK universities can facilitate the smooth development of compassionate academic practices.

For any UK HE institution to ensure that university teaching standards do not drop, the quality of teaching, whose integration in tandem with research and knowledge exchange is highly valued by the HE institution wherein these practices take place (Learning and Teaching Strategy 2015-2020), according to BIS (2016), is consistently assessed not only by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), but also by Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) which begun in 2017. Similarly, HEFCE (2012) states that research is also evaluated on a periodic basis by the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), now replaced by the Research Excellence Framework (REF) not solely to assess research quality in university faculties and schools, but also to provide funds for research. Nevertheless, there are pressures on academics in UK HE to meet research and teaching excellence criteria as well as contribute to the wider knowledge economy and the reputational standing of their institutions (Barry, 2018).

Moreover, UK universities are divided into two categories – Research-Intensive Universities (RIUs) and Teaching-Intensive Universities (TIUs). UK RIUs, as reported by Tijssen, Lamers, and Alfredo (2017), have become increasingly 'energetic and resourceful' in relation to research marketing and other ways of coping with their status as business industry.

2.1.1. Roles of UK HE academics

As the participants in this study are UK University academics with different academic statuses and responsibilities, understanding their roles as academics is important in this thesis. UK university academics have four main roles – teaching, supervision, research, and

administration. This section, therefore, reports the different roles that a UK HE academic undertakes. These include those who teach only; those who research and supervise only; and those who are engaged in both teaching and research or supervision (Khattab and Fenton, 2016). In addition to the roles mentioned above, other academics also hold some administrative and managerial responsibilities. However, I am particularly focusing on teaching, supervision, and research areas of academics in my study of collaboration as these are the core activities wherein the academics in this research collaborate.

As for *teaching-focused* academics, few participants in this study engage more in teaching related collaborations than those linked to research. Therefore, the first category of the employment responsibility that a UK HE academic has is teaching-only or teaching-focused role (Nyamapfene, 2018). Teaching-only academics now make up a substantial proportion of the academic staff in the UK HE. In addition, supervising research students in the UK HE is also considered as a form of teaching wherein academics engage. The main purpose of academics behind all those efforts invested in teaching is to improve the learning experience of students through the creation of students learning environments conducive to foster their criticality and creativity and, which can, in turn, help them become employable graduates (Fleith and Pereira, 2017).

The second category of most participants in this study is *research-focused* academics. The reasonable grounds behind the existence of universities consists in achieving two main goals – the learning and development of novel knowledge through activities which involve systematic research, as well as through its provision of a variety of programs and assistance activities (Rowley, 2000). This, as pointed out by Lucas (2006), implies that the research productivity of academics is at the core of inter-university rivalry, which defines their rank and quality. This is because, as Ng and Pemberton (2013) suggest, the prominence of both academic staff and university is increasingly dependent on this principle. A research-focused academic in the UK HE is referred to as an academic whose official role includes 50% or more research (Hilli, 2016). Unlike research, which has long been described as a 'rich cousin' to teaching (Nyamapfene, 2018), the latter, as recognised by the UK government, has been depicted as:

> Poor relation in higher education. Promotion for academics is based largely on research excellence, rather than teaching ability. There is no respected and defined separate professional career track for higher education teaching in its own right.
>
> (DfES, 2003, p.19)

Nevertheless, this does not necessarily imply that academics who are employed mainly to undertake research ignore other academic activities like teaching or undertaking administrative tasks. It only emphasises the prominent place of research in the HE landscape (Sharp and Coleman, 2005).

The third category of the participants in this study are *teaching-and-research-focused* academics wherein both teaching and research are combined. According to Light, Calkins, and Cox (2009), both teaching and research determine the nature of HE and define the practice of a significant proportion of academics. In addition, teaching-and-research academics are required to undertake research together with teaching, as well as other contracted activities like administration. The main reason why I decided to look for HE academics who not only teach but also carry out research can be justified as follows: had I recruited participants who only taught or undertook research, I would have had a narrow picture of the kind of collaboration which happens in their community.

Besides engaging in teaching and research collaboration, most of the participants involved in this study also supervise doctoral students. *Supervision* of university research students is widely considered as a form of teaching in that both supervisors and supervisees are co-constructing the knowledge that shapes the final work, and that there is a great amount of expectation of learning and great deal of knowledge mastered by the supervisee that will be manifested in the final thesis or dissertation (Peelo, 2010). Although supervising students has continued to receive greater attention in the literature, most of the research conducted in this area revolved around supervisees' perceptions of the supervision process. However, less has been done on how supervisors view the process of supervising students (Guerin, Kerr, and Green, 2015). Besides, a glance at a particular UK university's documents like *code of practice* related to doctoral supervisions can uncover the diverse responsibilities of supervisors. However, every university, and sometimes even a faculty or school within that university can have their unique policies which speak of the duties of supervisors.

To summarise, this section has discussed how the UK HE sector functions, and described the roles that UK HE academics have, and in which the participants in this study engage. These are teaching, research and supervision. In the following section, I describe collaboration in HE context.

2.2. Overview of collaboration in HE

As collaboration in HE is the focus of this study, looking at how this is defined in the HE literature in general is necessary to allow a greater understanding of this phenomenon.

According to Hill (2008, p.2), collaboration among HE academics can be defined as "jointly co-authoring a paper, jointly working on an academic grant or project, or jointly advising a graduate student". Moreover, Kemp (2013, p.4) describes collaboration as "the act of working collectively with other individuals for an agreed upon mission. The collaborative individual seeks to not only work toward individual goals, but toward mutual goals". Hill's short, yet comprehensive, definition of academics' collaboration seems to emphasise the wide divergence that exists between collaboration, which occurs between schoolteachers and university academics. This difference lies in the fact that collaboration in schools, as Schmoker (2005) describes it, consists in teachers working collaboratively to improve teaching practices and enhancing students' learning experiences. This suggests that while schoolteachers, whose collaborative endeavours appear to revolve around enhancing their teaching practices and, thus, improving students learning, HE academics collaborate with academics within or external to their institutions to improve their teaching, supervision, and research practices. However, the general goal of collaboration, be it at the level of schools or Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), lies in producing better outcomes and achieving better results that may otherwise not be achieved individually.

Furthermore, collaboration among academics is not a practice that has been introduced or discovered recently (Kemp, ibid.). It is an academic phenomenon that has been in academia long enough (Steel, Thompson, and Wright, 2019). In contemporary society, global academic exchange and research collaboration among academics has been deemed as a requirement for establishing a successful academic career for academics (Larsen and Tescon, 2018). Besides, perceiving collaboration among university academics as necessary implies that by virtue of collaboration, academics can be more productive in some aspects of their roles like research (Landry, Traore, and Godin, 1996). This shows that there is a correlation between collaboration and higher performance in terms of quality i.e., high academic research productivity (Lee and Bozeman, 2005).

Moreover, it has been described that collaboration among university academics has grown dramatically and has become increasingly important in the realm of scientific research in recent decades (Abramo, D'Angelo, and Di Costa, 2009). Such academic collaborative relationships can have a profusion of advantages, such as dissemination, sharing and transmission of knowledge; bringing together academics into a wider academic community; rendering the production of tangible outcomes like articles or books more visible and recognisable worldwide; accelerating the research process (Sooryamoorthy, 2009; Payne et al, 2011); and allowing the work to be shared among different academics belonging to particular

communities (Beaver, 2001). However, the relationship between academic collaboration and productivity does not always seem to be clear (Lee and Bozeman, 2005; Abramo, D'Angelo, and Murgia, 2017).

Yet, the question that one may ask would be as follows: 'why do some academics have particular fellow academics with whom they prefer to collaborate?'. My argument is that academics cannot collaborate with 'random' academics unless they know that the latter has certain qualities, meet some criteria, and respect values in collaboration as addressed in the following section.

2.3. Values in academic collaboration in HE

University academics often collaborate with individuals who respect values and norms both at the personal and professional level. As argued in this thesis, these values and principles, which are critical to the sustainability and strength of any collaborative relationship among academics, include trust, respect, communication, commitment, and confidence. This section, therefore, builds in part on the discussion of the values that will be presented in the next chapter – Sections 3.1, 3.2, and 3.5.

Trust

The mutuality of trust among collaborative academics is a critical element in successful collaborations (Olson and Olson, 2000). Members of any collaborative community need to respect the individuals involved in that collaboration in terms of what each member can bring to the situation. Moreover, collaboration among academics also seems to involve trust in situations where risks are unlikely to be avoided without the presence of trust. In this respect, Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995) argue that the need for trust emerges only in some cases where taking risks can be regarded as a necessity: "trust is not taking risk per se, but rather it is a willingness to take risk" (ibid., p.712). Similarly, Kramer and Tyler (1996) claim that trust is a key component in any social activity. These social activities can be cooperation, collaboration and coordination because as Handy (1995) expounds, the capability of carrying out collaborative activities is considered as an essential skill which the members of a collaborative community need to master. Yet, it is trust which is the decisive factor influencing the efficiency of collaboration.

Furthermore, trust has been described as a significant ethical value in collaborative endeavours. Not only is trust depicted as "the essence of collaboration" but also as the "lubricant and the glue" which promote and "facilitate the work of collaboration and [. . .] hold the collaboration together" (Bryson, Crosby, and Stone, 2006, pp. 47-48). Manu et al. (2015)

propose that promoting trust-based collaborations is a prerequisite for the development of collaborative relationships that are based on knowledge exchange. Additionally, some researchers (e.g., Wilson, Berwick, and Cleary, 2003; Stokols et al., 2008) advocate that the trust element is key to successful collaborative research, and that trust among academics can be easily achieved, especially if those collaborators already have experiences of working collaboratively with various entities. These previous positive experiences and working relationships from earlier collaborations can also contribute to strengthening future collaborations (Stokols et al., ibid.). Thus, as it is contended in this study, trust is a necessary attribute and a fundamental criterion that academic collaborators need to meet to be able to establish healthy collaborative relationships with their collaborative partners (O'Leary, Choi, and Gerard, 2012).

Nevertheless, trust alone in a collaborative relationship might not be sufficient unless academics show some respect for one another's ideas, knowledge, capabilities, viewpoints, and experiences, hence the concept of 'human capital' that is discussed later in Chapter Three (Section 3.2).

Respect

Another personal value that academics participating in collaboration need to seek in their collaborative partners is respect for one another's human capital (i.e., skills, knowledge, experience, expertise, etc.), meaning the mutual academic respect that academics have for one another, so that they maintain a successful collaboration. The relationship between mutual trust and respect resides in the fact that trust and interdependence-based collaborative relationships, wherein academics are mutually accountable for their collaborative work, could lead academics to respect and appreciate one another as part of an academic community. Besides, academic respect is a commonly acknowledged moral and ethical value and is an essential element in any academic practice (Tsou, Shih, and Ho, 2015), and academic collaborative practices are no exception (Gittell, 2006). Besides, Gittell (ibid, p.87) perceives mutual respect as necessary for fostering effective equal collaborative relationships among academics, stating:

> [V]aluing the contributions of others involved in the work process and ...consider[ing] the impact of [one's] own actions on the ability of others to do their work.

This suggests that respect, which results from trust and interdependence-based collaboration, is about mutually appreciating the knowledge, expertise, capabilities and experiences of the academics involved in collaboration, regardless of where they come from,

their religion, language or ethnicity. Studies on the relationship between respect and collaboration reveal that mutual appreciation and respect for people in a collaborative community can decrease any issues or conflicts between the academics participating in that collaboration (Jehn, Northcraft, and Neale, 1999; Jehn and Mannix, 2001).

Moreover, respect in collaborative relationships, as discussed later in this thesis, is also related to how academic Selves and Others from different disciplines view the divergence that exists in one another's disciplines. Respecting one another's disciplinary variations when collaborating is necessary as this demonstrates that academics are aware of the differences in, for example, as Bauer (1990, p.106) puts it, "epistemology, in what is viewed as knowledge, and in opinion over what sort of knowledge is possible. They differ over what is interesting and what is valuable". However, not only does respect in collaboration refer to the act of valuing one another's knowledge, experiences and disciplinary variations, but it also refers to the process of respecting and celebrating one another's cultural differences when collaborating (Ochieng and Prince, 2009) nationally or internationally. This thesis, therefore, proclaims that understanding academics' perceptions of international[6] academic Others is of crucial importance in international academic collaborations (e.g., open-minded vs close-minded academics).

Communication

Trust and respect, which are vital for any effective collaboration among academics, are also influenced by academics' clear and effective communication right from the start of the collaboration. Most collaborations among university academics, however, may come to an end unless the people involved in them stay in touch and communicate with one another religiously. In this respect, Delva, Jamieson, and Lemieux (2008) argue that effective collaboration necessitates regular communication, which is premised on feeling of physical ease, comfort, and respect. This suggests that collaborations, which are not based on respect and comfort, can hinder communication and might eventually fall apart. This also indicates that effective communication among members of an academic collaborative community should, as argued in this thesis, focus more on the relational dimension of collaboration than the actual content of that communication (Way, Jones, and Busing, 2000). In attempting to define communication in collaboration, Mishra and Mishra (2009, p.439) suggest that:

[6] This is not to suggest that 'cultural differences' automatically equate 'international collaboration'. The only reason I link them together in this thesis is that there appears to be no cultural differences in the UK that may affect British academics' collaboration. However, cultural differences can be of a consideration when collaboration is held outside the UK with academics from different countries.

> There are various channels of communication, but face-to-face communication is found to be the most effective as it provides instant feedback and multiple cues like expression, emotions, and personal focus.

Notwithstanding the accuracy of their views about the importance of face-to-face communication in interpersonal relationships, this does not often seem to be applicable during unusual circumstances like the global pandemic Covid-19. Instead, virtual communication between collaborative academics, as claimed in this study, appears to be the only ideal way of maintaining contact. Thus, like academic collaborations, it is crucial that individuals' interpersonal relationships keep developing through regular interaction and communication. In this regard, Altman and Taylor (1973, p.129) propose that:

> The growth of interpersonal relationships is associated with a greater depth and value of communication, an opening up of more intimate areas of exchange and more intimate areas of personality.

Thus, the nature and quality of academics' collaboration can have a significant role in enabling or impeding communication between them. Consequently, I believe that understanding the link between collaboration, trust, respect, and communication is extremely important. Müller (2003) identifies that not only does quality communication between collaborators enhance their collaboration, but it also facilitates and increases the level of trust between them. Similarly, Bond-Barnard, Fletcher, and Steyn (2018) conclude that excellent communication and trust can affect the success and sustainability of any collaborative project management. Thus, it is through good communication skills that collaborative efforts can take place (Fruchter and Ponti, 2010).

However, the opposite can be true in that Doz (1996), for instance, believes that if the people involved in a collaborative project fail to exhibit a high level of regular interactions and communication, their miscommunication might create doubt and misunderstanding, and the whole collaboration might ultimately collapse. Therefore, it is important for academics to communicate adequately and effectively with their collaborative partners as possessing quality communication skills can make the exchange of knowledge easier, and eventually reduce any doubt or misunderstanding between partners, and their level of mutual trust can eventually increase (Cheng, Li, and Love, 2000).

Commitment

Notwithstanding, for a collaborative relationship to develop and be successful, academics and their collaborative partners also need to show commitment to their

collaboration, and that perceiving the goal of collaboration as shared is crucial. Many studies show the importance of being committed and devoted to the collaborative activities in which individuals engage (e.g., Mohr and Spekman, 1994; Buvik and Rolfsen, 2015). According to Hoegl, Weinkauf, and Gemuenden (2004), collaboration is built on a foundation of commitment, which consists in showing enthusiasm, willingness and readiness to participate in a collaborative activity, and exhibiting a strong desire for being a member of a particular collaborative community (i.e., developing a sense of belonging to a community of practice, as discussed later in Chapter Three, Section 3.5). For example, when defining collaboration, Perrault et al (2011, p.283) accentuate the necessity of remaining committed to collaboration, depicting collaboration as: "a durable relationship that brings previously separate organizations into a new structure with commitment to a commonly defined mission, structure, or planning effort".

Overall, academics need to show interest and engagement in the topic that is worth caring for, otherwise the chance for collaboration to succeed might be low. Therefore, it is required that members of any collaborative community are committed and accountable to the shared domain because without such commitment, the community cannot be called a real community of practice. In this regard, Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002, p.30) suggests that: "a shared domain creates a sense of accountability to a body of knowledge and therefore to the development of practice".

Confidence

However, none of the above-mentioned values might be sufficient for an effective academic collaboration to take place unless another personal feature is exhibited by the collaborative academics. This concerns confidence. Several studies investigated the significance of demonstrating confidence in collaboration since having faith in one another to achieve goals in collaboration is an important psychological factor that can affect collaboration. For example, a study conducted by Lee et al. (2017) shows that there are three forms of confidence in collaboration. These are *confidence in the collaborative partners' capabilities*, *having confidence in the agreement to collaborate*, and *having confidence that engaging in a collaborative relationship is mutually beneficial for both partners*. This shows that collaboration "requires competence, confidence and commitment on the part of all parties involved. Respect and trust, both for oneself and others, is key to collaboration" (Henneman, Lee, and Cohen, 1995, p.108).

In summary, so far in this chapter, I have given an account of the context where the study into academics' collaboration takes place – UK HE, and the three main roles that the academics involved in this study have – teaching, supervision, and research. In addition, the first two sections in this chapter have presented an overview of collaboration in HE in general, as well as the key values and criteria that need to be found in both academic Selves and Others when collaborating. Now that I have given a broader overview of what constitutes collaboration in HE in general, the following section describes collaboration in the UK HE.

2.4. Describing collaboration in UK HE

While Section 2.2 addressed academic collaboration in HE in general, this section describes collaboration in the UK HE context. This is because a significant proportion of the collaboration among UK academics takes place within universities based in the UK.

Collaboration is so complex and sophisticated in nature and entails a wide range of terms and conditions that academics and their collaborative partners need to abide by to give their collaborative relationships a chance to develop and be successful. Besides, there is a great deal of literature on collaborative working in HE which focuses on external collaboration between, for instance, the NHS[7], schools and universities in the UK (Parkes et al., 2014). Notwithstanding, there seems to be a lack of knowledge surrounding the social psychology of UK University academics' collaboration, and this research attempts to address this gap.

It is commonly recognised that universities within the UK rely increasingly on collaboration among academics (Sargent and Waters 2004). This suggests that UK University academics are expected to be accountable for developing a collaborative culture in their communities and propagating it all over the UK HE landscape (Meyer and Evans 2005). Furthermore, when academics undertake research with other people, Pataraia et al. (2013), argue that this research collaboration can promote their critical professional development through providing them with strategies and skills to be applied to their teaching. That is, what academics learn through collaborating with other people, be they within their immediate community or beyond, will become integrated in their teaching practices. In addition, as stated by Wayne, Shore, and Liden (1997), collaborating with one another and becoming good citizens is among the many benefits of sharing what university academics know with other academics.

In the UK HE context, there is a voluminous literature on academic-student, academic-practitioners, and academic-patient collaboration (Macmillan and Scott, 2003) from different

[7] National Health Service for the UK

academic fields across the social and natural sciences (Priest et al., 2007). As for academic-student collaboration, the idea of university students and academics collaborating to improve the HE sector has also drawn growing attention because it has become "one of the most important issues facing HE in the 21st century" (Healey, Flint, and Harrington, 2014, p.7). Moreover, HEIs function well when their academic staff work together and support one another in many respects. Whitchurch (2013) notes that it has become increasingly evident that increasing collaboration between academic staff supports the functions of HEIs in the sense that this academic-academic collaboration can assist academic staff to become more flexible and encourage them to collaborate with other academics from various faculties and schools across the institution and beyond. Moreover, the prosperity of a particular UK University depends primarily on the active involvement and engagement of its academic staff in collaborative activities to allow innovation, originality and creativity to maximise (Duke, 2003).

Furthermore, collaboration does not appear to take place only among academics within the same institution. It can also occur among academics from a particular HE institution and other teachers from different educational contexts like primary or secondary schools. Collaboration between UK HE academics and teachers, as an example, has become increasingly prevalent over recent years (Bevins and Price, 2014). According to Universities UK (2014), since 2012, changes to the provision of initial teacher training across the sector have influenced the way universities operate with schools. Handscomb, Gu, and Varley (2014) state that while collaboration between schoolteachers and university lecturers continue to be around the general areas of initial teacher education, continuing professional development (CPD), and research advice, the focus has been changed from university-guided partnerships towards those based on collaboration, interdependence, and reciprocity.

In the next section, I describe the areas where academic collaborations take place – teaching, supervision, and research.

2.5. Academic productivity in the 'teaching-supervision-research' collaboration triad

Collaboration among university academics seems to take place in the three areas of their academic life – teaching, supervision, and research. As such, in this section, I present the 'productivity' dimension which, as argued in the thesis, results from collaboration and mutual engagement of academics in the teaching, supervision, and research practices. However, the sense of productivity that academics develop out of collaboration can be both tangible (e.g.,

co-producing quality books, articles, modules, theses, etc.) as well as intangible (e.g., enhancing their knowledge about teaching, research, and supervision – this is what is referred to as 'human capital' in Chapter Three, Section 3.2 and as 'increased human capital' in Chapter Seven, Section 7.2.1.2).

2.5.1. Academic productivity in teaching collaboration

Since teaching is an important area wherein academics collaborate, in this section, I discuss how and why academics engage in collaborative teaching practices.

Many university academics are being asked to collaborate with other academics on teaching not only to develop who they are professionally (Ostovar-Nameghi and Sheikhahmadi, 2016), but also to serve the needs of their students (Bacharach, Heck, and Dahlberg, 2008). Be it in primary, secondary or tertiary education, teaching is generally perceived as the act of transferring knowledge to learners or students. To Bella (2016, p.73), teaching is defined as "the process of carrying out activities that experience has shown to be effective in getting students to learn". This demonstrates that there is a great deal of communication and interaction between the teacher, who is the knower of the subject matter, and the students over that subject matter. Besides, the teaching practice can often fall under two broad categories, which are solo-teaching and co-teaching. While the former refers to the act of teaching a group of students by one single teacher, the latter involves two or more teachers who co-teach students.

These examples of collaboration that are related to the teaching practice include co-teaching – which is a type of collaboration that generally takes place *inside the classroom* setting – and co-designing, developing, revising and assessing curricula and modules – which are more of teaching-related collaborative practices that take place *outside the classroom* environment.

2.5.1.1. Co-teaching as an instance of an *inside-the-classroom* collaboration

The first type of collaborative teaching activities engaged in by university academics is instructing together (i.e., the actual collaborative teaching) inside the classroom environment. In this type of co-teaching, academics co-deliver their lessons to a huge number of students and try to boost their students' achievements. Therefore, designing modules, planning lessons, assessing students' progress and engaging in actual classroom teaching relationships with other academics on a voluntary basis can be more beneficial and far more fruitful than feeling the responsibility for dealing with the instructional practice individually. This, as commented by Lock et al. (2016, p.22), indicates that academics who foster collaborative relationships with

other academics on the teaching practice "bring their skills and competencies to the co-teaching relationship in ways that create an instructional dynamic greater than can be achieved individually".

Academics who seek to enhance the effectiveness of the way they transmit knowledge and deliver teaching to their students is still an ongoing endeavour (Clarke and Kinuthia, 2009), which, as Bacharach, Heck, and Dahlberg (ibid., p.15) put it, "provided an energizing opportunity for faculty to renew their passion for their profession". However, it should be underlined that I am using the concepts 'collaborative teaching' (or co-teaching), 'team-teaching', 'partnership teaching', and 'cooperative teaching' synonymously as the four have been used interchangeably in the literature (Stang and Lyons, 2008; Lock et al., ibid.; Taşdemir and Yıldırım, 2017) to refer to the same idea – academics working together to deliver an effective form of instruction to students.

Despite being well-documented and extensively researched in the primary, middle, and secondary education (Cook and Friend, 1995; Forbes and Billet, 2012; Nichols, Dowdy, and Nichols, 2010; Scott, 2016), the co-teaching practice seems to be under-researched and there remains a scarcity of empirical and evidence-based research on HE academics' collaborative teaching practices (Seymour and Seymour, 2013). This is because most of the collaborative activities that academics engage in are those which are related to research rather than teaching. However, in the past few years, collaborative teaching practices have witnessed a substantial growth in HE (Bacharach, Heck, and Dahlber, ibid.; Lester and Evans, 2009; Kelly, 2018). Collaborative teaching practice has a variety of meanings and can be applied differently in various educational contexts. According to Wenzlaff et al. (2002, p.14), collaborative teaching relationships can be understood as "two or more individuals who come together in a collaborative relationship for the purpose of shared work…for the outcome of achieving what none could have done alone". Similarly, Cook and Friend (1995, p.2) perceive teaching as "two or more professionals delivering substantive instruction to a diverse, or blended, group of students in a single physical space".

Nevertheless, and as it is the case for most participants involved in this study, Perry and Stewart (ibid.) view co-teaching as being a constituent part of a collaboration continuum that changes depending on the degrees of joint work and collective accountability. This implies that while academics at *the lowest level* of collaboration plan courses and teaching materials together then later deliver and assess them on an individual basis without teaching them collectively, academics who are at *the highest level* of collaboration plan, teach and assess the course on a collaborative basis.

2.5.1.2. Co-teaching as an instance of an *outside-the-classroom* collaboration

Another way in which academics collaborate on teaching is outside the classroom context by, for example, co-designing curricula, co-developing modules, co-planning lessons, and co-assessing them. However, when it comes to going into the classroom and sharing the delivery of the lesson, this is done individually. This, in the literature, is defined as *the lowest level of collaboration* in the co-teaching continuum (Perry and Stewart, ibid.). Literature surrounding academics' engagement in co-teaching practices, positioning themselves more towards the lowest or highest level of collaboration in the teaching profession, demonstrates the many benefits that academics can gain from engaging in co-teaching practices with their colleagues. For example, Sandholtz (2000, as cited in Perry and Stewart, ibid.) classified co-teaching or team teaching into three categories, namely, (a) two or more teachers broadly sharing responsibilities for teaching; (b) collaboratively planning, but individually teaching; and (c) joint planning, teaching, and assessment of students' learning experiences.

This subsection, therefore, is focused more on the second (b) classification of co-teaching in HE as it reflects what most of the academics in this study do in terms of teaching collaboration. Specifically, I argue that not only does my use of the co-teaching model in this study refer to the way two or more academics engage in teaching a group of students and jointly assess their learning experiences, but also to the overall process of teaching. My view of co-teaching in this thesis is in line with how Taşdemir and Yıldırım (2017, p.633) define co-teaching in their study on collaborative practices of English language teachers' joint planning of the EFL programme at a private university in Istanbul, Turkey. They perceive the co-teaching practice as follows:

> [C]o-teaching referred to two or more instructors working together in the process of planning the content of the courses, discussing how to deliver instruction, preparing instructional materials as well as testing and assessment tools for the same group of students but teaching them separately.

A review of the literature surrounding collaboration on the process of teaching revealed some important principles which govern collaborative teaching relationships. These underlying principles, according to Wolfensperger and Patkin (2013) and Lock et al. (2018), include: developing joint efforts and commitment to mutual respect; ensuring that the contact between the academics involved in collaboration is ongoing and their communication is excellent; serving a useful purpose; appreciating and acknowledging their colleagues' varied skills and knowledge in a particular field; and keeping an open mind when it comes to considering ideas that can enhance students' learning experiences.

Yet, prior to moving to Section 2.5.2, both merits and drawbacks of co-teaching, be it inside or outside the classroom environment, need to be discussed as understanding how this practice can benefit both teachers and their students and describing the challenges or drawbacks of co-teaching is important in this thesis.

Merits of co-teaching

Be it inside or outside the classroom context, co-teaching in HE can have a number of merits. As for *academics*, Bacharach, Heck, and Dahlber (ibid.) and Doppenberg et al (2012) state that among the merits of co-teaching practices is offering teachers the opportunity to develop who they are professionally by promoting their professional learning opportunities that might probably not happen if they taught on their own. This, according to Achinstein (2002) and Sergiovanni (1994), can help collaborative teachers improve their level of knowledge and performance in the classroom. In the same vein, Bacharach, Heck, and Dahlber (ibid., p.15), who articulate that "co-teaching experience provided an energizing opportunity for faculty to renew their passion for their profession", depict the aspects of co-teachers' professional development and learning opportunities which result from co-teaching experiences as enhancing their teaching methods, improving their overall teaching practices, and allowing them to be more reflective in their teaching, so that they can update their pedagogical expertise (Mitchell and Sackney, 2009).

Co-teaching can also benefit academics in terms of their efficacy. The concept of self-efficacy is defined by Bandura (1997, p.2) as a person's capacity to "organize and execute the course of action required to manage prospective situations". This suggests that co-teaching practices can construct the knowledge base for teachers in an academic community wherein they discuss their classroom experiences and expertise, and wherein they can actively learn about and reflect upon their teaching practice (Mitchell and Sackney, 2009). As argued in this thesis, academics who teach together often increase their level of human capital. Moreover, academics who collaborate on teaching can also improve their sense of self-efficacy by co-teaching with other academics from other disciplines, especially when the subject requires the expertise of another academic from another area of study. This – interdisciplinary co-teaching practice – can help academics "learn about lesser-known fields and thereby grow intellectually" (Laughlin et al., 2011, p.15) as a result of learning with and from one another to improve their teaching practice and, hence, develop a stronger sense of self-efficacy.

As far as *students* are concerned, studies on co-teaching also note the positive effects of this practice on students. Co-teaching can offer students the opportunity to increase their

learning outcomes (Dugan and Letterman, 2008) and promote their critical thinking as a result of being exposed to two or three different teachers with various perspectives, areas of expertise, and teaching approaches and strategies. In addition, co-teaching has also been shown to help enhance students' social and academic skills (Cefai, 2008), which can, in turn, assist in the development of a stronger sense of classroom community (Wu, 2012). Finally, the presence of other teachers in the same classroom is reported to increase students' interest in the subject they study, enhance their critical thinking and creativity, and decrease the number of absentees in the classroom (Gaytan, 2010). Nevertheless, no research study investigated 'who' academics prefer to co-teach with, 'where' they co-teach and how they feel where they engage in this practice, and most importantly, 'why' they engage in co-teaching activities in terms of the 'must' and 'have to' motives behind their collaborative practices delineated in Chapter Eight, Section 8.1.3.

Drawbacks of co-teaching

The practice of co-teaching in HE can have some drawbacks. For example, while teaching on one's own can be organised, collaboratively teaching students has been characterised by 'messiness and disorganisation' which "moves beyond the familiar and predictable and creates an environment of uncertainty, dialogue, and discovery" (Plank, 2011, p.3). Moreover, as suggested in this thesis, the practice of co-teaching needs the right academics. This is because not all academics can show willingness to share their human capital with others. Therefore, academics who engage in co-teaching practices can face some possible challenges if they are not 'careful' with who they co-teach – they need to be with people who are trustworthy, respectful, willing to share their human capital, and above all can show commitment and engagement, particularly when engaging in inside-the-classroom co-teaching. In this respect, Lock et al (ibid., p.25) note that:

> Co-teaching requires careful attention in the development and in the fostering of the collaborative relationship, as well as a commitment on the part of the co-teachers to design and facilitate robust learning experiences for students.

To conclude, academics' engagement in the two levels of co-teaching can be rewarding and productive provided that this is done with the right academics who respect the values addressed in Section 2.3.

2.5.2. Co-supervision and productivity in HE

Another area in which academics collaborate is in supervising doctoral students. In this section, I present the value that co-supervision can add to the one-to-one, supervisor-supervisee relationship.

Supervising research students has long been one of the many responsibilities of university academics. However, just like *inside-the-classroom* and *outside-the-classroom* teaching collaborations, supervising Ph.D. students is an activity which is not often performed individually. Research students' supervision is usually perceived as a daunting task that is generally shared with other colleagues to reduce the pressure of some academics who might find it hard to supervise students on their own. The topic of university academics who co-supervise students is under-researched in the academic literature (Olmos-López and Sunderland, 2017). Yet, since academics can supervise students and advise them without necessarily requiring their colleagues' support or assistance, then the reader of the thesis might wonder about what the other academic(s) can add to the quality of the supervision and progress of the research students' work. As opposed to individually supervising research students, most British academics supervise research students on a collaborative basis. Thus, this section aims at discussing the significance of co-supervision relationships in promoting doctoral students' research skills to conduct a piece of research that is of acceptable standards.

Most universities around the globe, including the UK, encourage the inclusion of a second supervisor into the main supervisor-supervisee relationship. This seems to be more effective than the presence of only one supervisor who gives support to the research student, allowing no room for multiple perspectives and different voices to be heard. The gist of this section, therefore, revolves around the idea that having more than one supervisor to provide both academic and pastoral support to supervisees means a lot, especially when it comes to improving both the quality and the quantity of the final thesis submitted. Watts (2010) argues that contrary to solo supervision of research students, co-supervision is advisable in HE as a result of the rise of interdisciplinarity of doctoral theses, which require a wide array of experiences, expertise and knowledge.

In addition, the process of having two or more supervisors to assist a Ph.D. student has been defined in a multiplicity of ways by different researchers. Manathunga (2011), for example, conceptualises co-supervision as the ongoing and formally arranged supervision of a research student by two or more supervisors, particularly when the research topic is interdisciplinary (Pole, 1998). However, some researchers employ terms like 'joint

supervision' and 'team supervision' interchangeably to refer to the shared supervisory arrangements (HEFCE, 1996).

Two or more academics sharing the task of supervising and advising research students has been a current trend and is now widely practised in doctoral programs (Taylor, Kiley, and Humphrey, 2018). This phenomenon, according to Waghid (2006), has to do with the neoliberal agenda which is governing the university since students are seen as customers or consumers placed within the broader commercial HE context. As for collaborative or team supervision of doctoral research students, this includes the development of the culture of rivalry and competitiveness between universities and between individual academics over the number of students to supervise (Slaughter and Leslie, 1997). This suggests that it is the supervisors who make the economic wheel of the university turn by trying to attract as many research students as possible.

Similar to regular one-to-one supervisor-supervisee encounters, co-supervision also aspires to facilitate effective progress for the student in their research projects. Since the focus of my Ph.D. research is on UK University academics' collaborative practices, in the UK, it was expressly suggested a while back initially by the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA, 1989), which demanded the assignment of 'supervisory teams' for HEIs, which, at that time, did not exist as students used to be under the supervision of one supervisor, not two or three.

However, it should be noted that research supervision does not always involve supervisors from similar disciplines. As I argue in this thesis, the practice of co-supervising research students crosses disciplinary boundaries. That is, one aspect of collaborative research supervision, which is germane to this study, is interdisciplinary co-supervision. As discussed in this thesis, academics who come from two different, albeit interrelated, disciplines can co-supervise research students whose research area is interdisciplinary in nature. This would call for the necessity of other academics from other disciplines to assist in the supervision of the research student.

Merits of co-supervision in HE

Be it disciplinary or interdisciplinary collaborative supervision, the body of literature in the field of co-supervision has identified the productivity aspect that collaboration can add to the solo-supervision practice. Bourner and Hughes (1991) note that research co-supervision has four merits. These are *greater expertise*, *a second opinion*, a*voiding dependency*, and *insurance.*

Great expertise suggests that having two or more supervisors with a wide range of expertise, knowledge, and experience in different areas of study is much better than having only one supervisor trying to guide research students in their doctoral research journey. Supervisors working in pairs or as a team to supervise postgraduate researchers can help supervisors with lower levels of expertise become more experienced and gain greater knowledge and enhanced skills in a specific area of research. This can, in turn, benefit the research student who will make the most of that collaborative supervision thanks to which greater and further understanding of the field will help them complete their research on time. In this respect, Paul et al. (2014, p.2) explains:

> With more than one supervisor, there is a chance of greater content and methodological expertise and the likelihood that one of the supervisors will bring more supervisory experience than the other which could in turn benefit the student's progress.

Joint supervision can empower supervisors who might lack some supervisory skills, particularly when it comes to the content or methodology of research students' work. In this case, with the assistance of other supervisors from a variety of disciplines, and with ample expertise in the field, co-supervision can help both supervisors and supervisees achieve greater results which can, in turn, manifest themselves in the greater quality of the final work produced (i.e., tangible sense of productivity). In summary, co-supervision of research students can result in allowing "ordinary people to achieve extraordinary results" (Scarnati, 2001, p.5).

However, it is not a categorical rule that only academics with less experience in academic content, methodology and supervisory practices in general would learn from the more experienced ones. For example, Olmos- López and Sunderland (2017), in their study of UK Doctoral supervisors' and supervisees' responses to co-supervision, argue that learning from other academics does not necessarily mean that only inexperienced or less competent supervisors learn from more experienced and more competent supervisors. In fact, they found that the more experienced supervisors learned from the less experienced ones. Thus, learning knows no limits; it crosses many boundaries, including space, discipline, age, and gender.

The second rationale behind academics' engagement in collaborative supervisory arrangements of research students lies in the benefit of seeking *a second opinion* from another supervisor on students' work. Research students who receive feedback on their work from more than one supervisor can help both their supervisors and them construct a sense of safety. Robertson (2017), in this regard, points out that co-supervision can provide a *safety net*

responding to issues of danger related to traditional one-to-one mode of supervision wherein one supervisor 'looks after' one research student.

This second benefit has a direct relationship with *avoiding dependency,* which is the third benefit of co-supervision arrangements that suggests:

> [W]hen there are co-supervisors a student lacking confidence is less likely to become dependent on one individual to direct their work. By learning to interact with two academics who work well together and yet have their own perspectives, the doctoral student learns that there are multiple points of view and that academic discourse promotes the development of rigor in the conduct of scholarship
>
> (Paul et al., 2014, p.3)

By having more than one supervisor guiding the research student's work, the latter (research student) can develop a sense of independence. This implies that the research student with academic or personal issues would not rely on one supervision as it is the case for solo supervision. Instead, they would share their problems and concerns with both supervisors to arrive at a good solution.

Insurance is the fourth reward that academics reap from co-supervising students. As its name indicates, this suggests that in case of the absence of the first supervisor, the second supervisor will be there to academically 'take care' of research students who have become 'orphans'. 'Academic orphans' is a concept which was coined by Wisker and Robinson (2013) to refer to the doctoral students who have lost their first supervisors and who need a second supervisor to 'academically protect' them and oversee their Ph.D. thesis. This insurance benefit of co-supervision was also addressed by Watts (2010), who sees it as taking place in critical situations like sudden illness, an unexpected long-term maternity leave for female supervisors, or in the passing of the supervisor wherein the research student becomes an orphan. Here the need for another supervisor to supervise and advise the student becomes a necessity.

Drawbacks of co-supervision in HE

If not worked out properly, collaborative supervisory relationships among academics can come at a cost. Guerin and Green (2015) point out that the key issues of co-supervision for research students are facing the risk of opposing views and contradictory advice from the two or three supervisors. That is, difficult and problematic situations can arise from the conflicting views and advice that the research student receives from their co-supervisors. Moreover, Phillips and Pugh (1987) summarise several issues that can emerge from academic co-

supervision. Responsibility can be diffused unless one of the supervisory team members volunteers to be in charge of leading the supervisory team; research students receiving different, yet at times contradictory, pieces of advice can bring about conflict in that the students find themselves unsure about whose advice they should follow.

2.5.3. Academic productivity in research collaboration

The third area in which academics collaborate is research. While the preceding two sections described co-teaching and co-supervision practices in the HE context, this section discusses how and why university academics engage in co-research practices.

Even though academics can carry out research, present papers at conferences, write books, articles and publish them individually, working together as a collaborative community of researchers to increase the productivity of their work has become the norm in HE. This process of collaboration in research wherein one academic, for example, writes the theoretical part of the article or book, the second, third or sometimes fourth academic engages in the more practical part of the work has proven to be more productive in terms of the quality of the work produced.

Moreover, both collaborative academics and the final product would be even more productive if the individuals involved are from various disciplines with the necessary competencies in the field. An increasing body of literature surrounding research collaboration in HE reveal that the current scientific research has been characterised by a complex multidisciplinary approach wherein academics come from different 'academic homes' (i.e., disciplines) to contribute to a better production of some pieces of research, and which often results in contexts wherein a single researcher does not possess all the necessary skills for the achievement of academic advancement (Beaver, 2001).

Furthermore, several studies describe the rise in the amount of research papers with more than one author involved in them (e.g., Moody, 2004; Schmoch and Schubert, 2008). Over the past few years, there has been increasing interest among university academics to conduct research collaboratively, and there have also been studies investigating the development of collaborative research activities, wherein the trend of co-authored papers produced by academics from same or different academic fields continues to increase (Cronin et al., 2004; Schmoch and Schubert, ibid.). Not only does conducting research with other academics rather than doing it individually impact the research process, but also the final outcomes yielded.

Katz and Martin (1997), for example, describe collaborative (or participatory) research as the mutual engagement of academics in research to accomplish the shared goal of producing new knowledge and expertise in a particular field. This suggests that collaborative research can be synonymous with participatory research in that the former involves the participation and engagement of academic researchers in jointly producing tangible and intangible research-related outcomes, which can, in turn, help them develop who they are as academics. In this regard, Wenger (1998, p.145) describes the relationship between communities of practice, participation, and the development of the Self (i.e., the academic Self in this study) as follows: "we define who we are by the ways we experience ourselves through participation". This implies that academic Selves are defined and recognised through participating in collaboration with academic Others. However, my argument is that it is the act of participating in collaboration with the *right* academic Others which can help academic Selves become more recognised, hence my expression in Chapter Seven: 'tell me with whom you collaborate, and I tell you who you are'. In other words, understanding the whole social-psychological processes in the journey of research collaboration can be more important than the outcomes per se as the process can affect the outcome either positively or negatively.

2.5.3.1. Interdisciplinary research collaboration

One aspect of research collaboration, which is relevant to this study, is interdisciplinary research collaboration. Therefore, this section explores the literature surrounding interdisciplinary collaborative research practices in HE. Academics can collaborate both in their academic homes (i.e., bonding social capital) or within the wider collaborative academic communities (i.e., bridging social capital). Moreover, crossing disciplinary boundaries and engaging in interdisciplinary research collaboration, which can, in turn, help in the construction of multiple disciplinary identities, is claimed to be an important feature in collaboration in HE.

Nowadays, many academics are conducting research with people from different academic disciplines. Crossing disciplinary boundaries suggests that academics do seemingly not see a divide between various disciplines and appear to hyphenate such disciplines and develop a feeling of belonging to more than one area of study or *academic home,* as it is referred to in this research. As I argue in this thesis, academics who co-research with other academics outside their area of expertise generally have *bridging social capital*, which helps them bring together multiple perspectives on a research issue. Several researchers (e.g., Morillo, 2003; Bruce et al, 2004; Brint et al 2009) report that interdisciplinary research collaboration and co-authored publications is a trend that is on the rise, and that there is an increasingly growing

demand for different skills, knowledge, and multiple perspectives of people from different academic disciplines (Ledford 2015).

Moreover, studies reveal that each discipline is unique in terms of collaborative research opportunities (Siemens et al., 2014; Kosmützky, 2018). This demonstrates that there exist some disciplinary differences in collaborative research practices in relation to the ratio of the rise in the amount of collaboration across disciplines (Cronin, 2004). Speaking of the disciplinary discrepancies in collaborative research opportunities, Kosmützky (ibid.), for example, recognises that academics in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities are less collaborative than those in the Faculty of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math.

Larivière et al. (2005), in their study of Canadian interdisciplinary collaborative research, argue that almost all research publications that exist in the Faculty of Natural Science and Engineering were collaborative, that two-thirds of all the published books articles in the Faculty of Social Sciences were collaborative, and that only 10% of publications in the Faculty of Humanities were collaborative. This demonstrates that such studies stressed the product that results out of collaborative endeavours among academics from different academic disciplines. However, there seems to be little to no knowledge about the social-psychological processes and factors which help in understanding academics' 'appetite' (or no appetite) for interdisciplinary research collaboration.

2.5.3.2. International research collaboration

Not only do academics cross 'national' spatial and disciplinary boundaries, but also 'international' ones when collaborating on research. This study focuses both on collaborative research papers written by researchers within the same country (nationally) and different countries (internationally). In this respect, Pečlin et al (2012) argue that research publications written by multiple authors from different countries are said to be cited more than those written by authors from the same country.

International research collaboration can be defined as two or more international researchers who collaborate to produce articles, books, papers, etc. Moreover, there seems to be a constant increase in the amount of global co-authored publications (Archibugi and Coco, 2004; Allen 2017). Having multiple authors coming from diverse disciplinary and cultural backgrounds can assist in increasing the quality of the outcomes resulting from collaborating with internationally diverse researchers (De Dreu and West, 2001). Therefore, it is this diversity of academics in terms of where they come from and the knowledge they bring with them which seems to help international co-authorships work better than those of domestic and

national nations. Through the internationally diverse knowledge that they bring with them when collaborating internationally, academics enhance their human capital, especially that the individuals with whom they collaborate are not from the same domestic nation.

This implies that 'domestic' academics who collaborate with 'international' researchers can enhance their human capital by learning novel insights from one another in terms of, for example, learning new research concepts, methodologies, and newly developed strategies and skills that might not be learnt if collaboration remained situated domestically (Burt, 1992). Development of a sense of productivity when collaborating with international academics, which can, in turn, lead to more scientific outputs, seems to galvanise many countries to actively engage more in international co-authored publications than ever (Bornmann et al., 2015). However, as Abramo et al. (2011) wonder, "[a]re researchers that collaborate more at the international level top performers?". Some studies show that the impact of international collaboration on the quality of research outputs can be gauged by the discipline and the country of the academics involved in the collaboration in terms of who should take the lead and be in charge of the collaboration (Moed, 2005).

This suggests that the influence of international co-authorships on research citation tends to depend on the economic status of a particular country and the issue of dependence in terms of power (in)equality. Power-wise, Altbach (2002, p.32) advocates that researchers from developed countries can exert power over developing countries in terms of who organises the collaboration, stating:

> [A] few countries dominate in global scientific systems; the new technologies are owned primarily by multinational corporations or academic institutions in the major Western industrialized nations, and the domination of English creates advantages for the countries that use English as the medium of instruction and research. All this means that the developing countries find themselves dependent on the major academic superpowers.

Ensuring that the academics who engage in international academic collaborations work together with an interdependence mindset is key as this may affect the whole organisation of collaboration. Knowing that the collaborative partners should be equal and need to negotiate power relations is a necessity in any international academic collaboration (See 'linking social capital' and 'Interdependence Theory' in Section 3.1.1 and 3.3, respectively). Therefore, the international collaboration among academics should be presented to the world as "sustained interactions between people who are representatives of their university culture, structure and

functions" (Slater, 2001, p.45) wherein power dynamics and other issues related to discipline, space, and distance are negotiated, not coerced.

3.5.3.3. *'Collaborating through the screen'*: Academics' virtual co-research practices

Virtual collaborative spaces are the only alternatives without the possibility of their physical counterparts. Since this study was conducted both prior to and during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is necessary to describe the way academics collaborate nationally and internationally in the different virtual spaces, such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Skype, and WhatsApp, hence the use of the first part of title of this section as a *synecdoche*[8]. Therefore, while the previous section discussed how academics collaborate internationally on a physical, face-to-face basis, this section investigates how academics collaborate both nationally and internationally using virtual collaborative spaces.

Human beings are now living in a digital world wherein most of their activities and working practices are facilitated by cutting-edge technology, including teaching, supervision, and research, and academics' collaborative practices are no exception. Nowadays, many academics build collaborative communities wherein they collaborate virtually when the physical presence of the individuals involved in that collaboration can be difficult, or when it is not possible to collaborate in a physical environment or space. Moreover, academics often organise their collaborative encounters using virtual spaces through blurring spatial and temporal boundaries (Robey et al., 2000). Virtual collaboration has been defined differently by various scholars. Coughlin and Kadjer (2009), for example, define virtual or online collaboration as the practice of having two or more geographically dispersed academics collaborating on a digital basis to learn from and help one another develop professionally. This implies that universities are increasingly becoming more virtually shaped.

With the advent of digital technology, academics can develop more sense of autonomy when it comes to searching for other modes of developing collaborative communities. In this regard, Wenger (2009, p.11) proposes that "[c]ommunities of practice offer a useful perspective on technology because they are not defined by place or by personal characteristics, but by people's potential to learn together". This suggests that academics' idea of creating a virtual collaborative community of practice requires that the individuals involved in that collaboration have the ability and willingness to participate in the collaboration, be happy to substitute the

[8] *Synecdoche* is referred to here as a figurative speech in which a part of something is used to refer to the whole thing. For example, the word *screen* here is a synecdoche for *computer* or *laptop* that academics use to collaborate with other academics.

real collaborative communities by their virtual counterparts. That is, they need to be individuals who show some flexibility in terms of collaborating across the physical and virtual space.

However, such virtual collaborative practices among university academics can also have some limitations or barriers to this virtualisation. Furst et al. (2004, p.7), when evaluating the effectiveness of virtual collaborations, found that the latter can have three main issues, which are:

> [L]ogistical problems, such as communicating and coordinating work across time and space, (2) interpersonal concerns, such as establishing effective working relationships with team members in the absence of frequent face-to-face communication, and (3) technology issues, such as identifying, learning, and using technologies most appropriate for certain tasks.

Collaborating through modern digital technology can be more daunting than engaging in face-to-face collaborations. This, based on the quote above, can be attributed to external or situational factors, such as collaborating internationally across time zones in that it can be problematic and frustrating for academics to have to be up early to collaborate with another international academic in another country whose morning is evening or afternoon. Furthermore, the impossibility of the physical presence of collaborative academics can also affect the efficiency of collaboration and, thus, might stunt it as the ties between the members of the collaborative community become weak (Jones and Esnault, 2004). This also insinuates that virtual collaboration might not have existed unless in-person collaboration had been established prior to adding the medium of technology to them (Nichani and Hung, 2002).

Technology-wise, academics who co-research virtually should be able to know how to use technology and be motivated to learn about the modern virtual spaces which are now used for collaboration more than ever. Thus, having technological skills is a sine quo non in virtual collaboration (Shriberg, 2009). Nevertheless, while most researchers studied virtual collaboration during normal times, there seems to be a paucity of evidence on how academics collaborate virtually during the Covid-19 pandemic in general and particularly from a social-psychological perspective.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the three broad areas wherein university academics' collaborative practices take place, and where there is a great sense of productivity. These are teaching, supervision, and research. Yet, prior to detailing each area, an overview of UK HE, the various roles that UK HE academics undertake, and an overview of collaboration in HE in

general then in UK HE in particular was described. Moreover, this chapter has demonstrated the critical importance of academics' collaboration, and that the shared sense of productivity that academics develop when co-teaching, co-supervising, and co-researching can be attributed to the core values that academics should respect if they want their collaboration to be a success. This implies that it is mostly about the individuals with whom academics collaborate. That is, even though the benefits of academic or professional collaboration and knowledge sharing inside HEIs can include "enhanced professional practice and mutual respect for diversity of knowledge, expertise and influence" (Lister and Waddington, 2014, p.4), these may not happen unless academics collaborate with the 'right' people.

Furthermore, since the context of this research is UK HE, providing a broader picture of the UK HE context was necessary for a better grasp of how UK University academics collaborate. Finally, I have also delineated the way academics cross both international and disciplinary boundaries when engaging in co-research practices. However, such instances of crossing boundaries when co-researching took place on a face-to-face basis, not virtually.

This chapter has also demonstrated that collaboration, be it in the area of teaching, supervision, or research, needs to be carried out with the right academics, and that academics need to think more about the social-psychological processes shaping their collaboration rather than just the outcomes per se. Besides, most of the collaborative activities that academics engage in during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic have been 'forced' to take place virtually in the first 'place' – a theoretical phrase coined by Oldenburg (1989) which refers to home space, and which I shall describe in the chapter that follows. Therefore, in the following chapter, I describe the theories and concepts that helped me better understand the findings in relation to collaboration in the context of this study.

CHAPTER THREE

3. THEORIES AND CONCEPTS INFORMING THE STUDY INTO ACADEMICS' COLLABORATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

While the preceding chapter described academics' collaborative practices in the HE context, this chapter presents four concepts and two theories that informed the study. These concepts and theories directly relate to what was discussed in the previous chapter and can be used to make sense of the collaborative activities described in Chapter Two. These are Social Capital (SC), Human Capital (HC), Interdependence Theory (IT), Attribution Theory (AT), Communities of Practice (CoPs), and Oldenburg's Concept of First, Second and Third Place.

However, it should be highlighted that these are theories and concepts, not theoretical or conceptual frameworks. They are not theoretical or conceptual frameworks as I did not use them before the data collection phase to guide the study. Instead, they are theories and concepts as I used them to make sense of the data during the analysis and discussion phase in an inductive (posteriori) rather than a deductive (priori) way. Moreover, I need to clarify that this is not Grounded Theory research either as my aim is not to construct a new theory from the data; my aim is to develop a new understanding about the phenomenon of collaboration in HE, neither to create a theory nor to generalise the findings.

The relevance of these theories and concepts[9] to this study can be illustrated as follows: analogous to interpersonal relationships, in an academic collaboration, academics need to show proclivity for engaging in collaborative relationships, hence SC. Social capital, therefore, is a significant asset because it might be difficult to share skills, experiences, and knowledge with academics (i.e., Human Capital) were these individuals not interested in establishing collaborative relationships and sharing their HC to upgrade one another's capabilities. However, sharing human capital with academics needs to be done on an interdependent basis (i.e., Interdependence Theory) as no academic might be keen on collaborating with individuals who take full advantage of them. Thus, neither SC nor HC may work unless academics have an interdependence mindset when engaging in collaboration. Therefore, SC, HC and IT are related to RQ1. When SC, HC, and IT are considered, only then can academics think about

[9] While the concepts are 'SC', 'HC', 'CoPs', and 'Oldenburg's Concept of First, Second, and Third Place', the theories are 'AT' and 'IT'.

their perceptions of the value of collaboration and the reason behind their involvement in collaborative practices, hence AT. Consequently, AT is connected to RQ3.

Once SC, HC, IT, and AT are present, only then can CoPs and Oldenburg's Concept of First, Second and Third Place be a consideration. When all the above-mentioned criteria for effective academic collaborations are met, academics can then form a community of practice (CoP) that is ubiquitous, i.e., it can be found at the international, virtual and national level (i.e., the first, second or third place), hence Oldenburg's Concept of First, Second, and Third Place. While SC, HC, IT, and CoPs are related to RQ1, and AT to RQ3, Oldenburg's concept is linked to RQ2. However, some of these concepts and theories are so flexible that they can be linked to all three RQs.

This chapter, therefore, is structured as follows: while Section 3.1 describes the concept of Social Capital and its link to the study, Sections 3.2 and 3.3 present the concepts of Human Capital and Interdependence Theory, and the reason for using them to better understand academics' intangible asset of human capital and the interdependence mindset they have when collaborating, respectively. Following these comes Section 3.4 to describe Attribution Theory and how this can be used to understand academics' factors triggering their collaboration. Then, Section 3.5 introduces the concept of Communities of Practice (CoPs) to fathom how such communities bond academics together as members of a collaborative CoPs with shared domain, community and practice. Finally, Section 3.6 describes Oldenburg's Concept of First, Second, and Third Place, and how this can be applied to the context of collaboration in HE.

3.1. Social Capital (SC)

Collaboration requires that academics be able to engage in interpersonal relationships and show willingness to collaborate with academics for a common purpose. This ability to be in social relationships is referred to as *social capital*. SC, therefore, is used in this thesis to better understand the different ways in which this social asset can affect collaboration. For example, as argued in Chapter Two, collaboration on teaching, supervision, and research can fall apart unless academics collaborate with the *right* people, and by the *right* people here I mean academics who are happy to engage in collaborative practices, i.e., people who have social capital as a medium to initiate and sustain collaboration.

Since collaboration is based on social resources and values grounded in interpersonal relationships, reviewing the 'multidimensional' construct of *social capital* in relation to my study is key. This is because, on the one hand, it helps understand the overall meanings that social capital carries in sociology in general, and academia in particular, and on the other hand,

it assists to identify the gap in this concept that this study attempts to address. As highlighted above, the reason SC is employed in this study is that it is strongly related to RQ1 (*With whom do the participants in the setting collaborate?*). This suggests that both the academic Self and Other need to own SC to be capable of developing collaborative relationships.

However, prior to explaining what social capital means, elucidating the meaning of the term 'capital' is important. The 'capital' in social capital refers to the set of social rather than economic resources, assets, norms, and values that individuals possess. These values are fundamental to network relationships wherein people engage (Baker, 2010), and collaborative relationships are no exception. Accordingly, social capital, conceptualised as "the valuable resources embedded in a person's social network" (Lin and Erikson, 2008, p.8) and "the groups, networks, norms, and trust that people have available to them for productive purposes" (Grootaert et al, 2003, p.3), is a concept which has gained popularity in the social science literature through its use by several scholars that I review below.

A wealth of research attributes the systematic exposition of social capital into academic discussions and debates to the founding theorists and key figures in Sociology – Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1988) and Putnam (1993). Yet, the latter is said to be the most cited author of social capital who heavily popularised and promoted this concept in the social science debates in the 1990s (Fine, 2007), and across many other disciplines, such as Politics, Economics, Health and Well-Being, Education, and Science (Halpern, 2005). While Bourdieu (1983, p.248) perceives social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition", Coleman (1988, p.98) and Putnam (2000, pp.18-19) broadly portray social capital as "a variety of entities with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structure, and they facilitate certain actions of actors...within the structure" and "connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them", respectively.

Bourdieu's, Coleman's, and Putnam's conceptualisations of social capital seem to revolve around one common theme – *individuals' ability to engage in social relationships,* or "who you know" (Luthans et al., 2004, p.46). Their views also suggest that social capital is the cornerstone of any relationship among people, and that not only does it reside between social actors in a social relationship, but it also "is the glue that holds them together" (World Bank 1999, p.44). Linked to collaboration, this suggests that in order for the development and sustainability of their collaborative relationships to happen, academics need to collaborate with academic Others who are similar to them in terms of possessing social capital and showing a

keen interest in being and collaborating with academics. One seemingly consensual interpretation of social capital from these three theorists is formulated as follows: social capital refers to those social assets which are available in social relationships and groups, and which are accumulated, maintained, and used by the individuals engaged in such social networks (Bourdieu 1986; Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993.). However, though I acknowledge the importance of all the explanations attributed to SC, including how interpersonal relationships are key to individuals, I argue that people have distinct levels of social capital that either increase or decrease the level of their engagement in social interactions owing to some psychological factors which the literature around SC seems to overlook (Tulin, Lancee, and Volker, 2018).

3.1.1. Functions of social capital: bonding, bridging, and linking

As discussed in Chapter Two, patterns of collaboration considered within the context of social capital can be broken down into three distinct types, which are bonding, bridging, and linking social capital. Academics can use their social capital to engage in collaborative practices with individuals having varying degrees of academic power hierarchy, either from within their 'familiar' and 'immediate' community of researchers (bonding social capital) or with others from another community of academics (bridging social capital). This denotes that, while *bonding* social capital (*homogeneous members*) resides 'within' a particular group of network connection, *bridging* social capital (*heterogeneous members*) is 'between' different social communities (Putnam, 2000). The key feature of these social relationships of exchange (be they bonding or bridging) is discrepancy in positions and power hierarchy (i.e., linking SC). Putnam (ibid.), albeit well-known for the bonding-bridging social capital divide, other scholars at the World Bank are credited for suggesting the third function of SC – *linking* social capital to refer to power dynamics that exist between people in a social group (Woolcock, 2001).

Hence, the various delineations of social capital led to the emergence of three typologies to demarcate the distinctive features of the concept. Szreter and Woolcock (2004) are the authors who created the commonly accepted typology of social capital. 'Bonding' to refer to the immediate community of people, 'bridging' to describe the distant communities in which people engage, and 'linking' to suggest connections with individuals in positions of power and authority. Location-wise, the difference between bonding and bridging social capital is that while the former is in, for example, a city (e.g., London), the latter is in another city (e.g., Manchester). Linked to this study, *bonding* SC can be exemplified as two academics from the same community of Psychology academics collaborating on teaching, supervision, and

research. *Bridging* SC can be, for example, one academic from the School of Psychology co-teaches, co-supervises, or co-researches with another academic from the School of Sport, hence Sport Psychology. Finally, an example of *linking* SC can be illustrated as one professor co-writes a paper with one of their Ph.D. students. Or it could be a 'reader' co-supervising a research student or co-teaching a module with an 'early career academic'.

3.2. Human Capital (HC)

As highlighted in Chapter Two, collaboration among university academics involves sharing skills, experiences, expertise, creativity, novel insights, time, and energy in relation to teaching, supervision and research. These individuals' human resources are referred to as *human capital*. The concept of human capital, therefore, is strongly related to collaboration, particularly in relation to the 'intangible sense of productivity' which academics develop when collaborating on teaching, research, and supervision, and which I noted in Section 2.5 in the previous chapter. As I claimed in Section 2.3, collaboration may not be a success unless academics collaborate with the *right* people. By the *right* people in relation to human capital I refer to academics who not only have human capital as a means for investing in collaboration, but who also are happy to share it, hence the phrase *academic generosity* which I use in this thesis.

Contrary to social capital, which emphasises *networks* (individuals in relationships), social assets and resources regarded as important in social relations, human capital (HC) stresses *individuals* (individuals as individuals) and the stock of 'intangible' (cognitive) human resources that people own, and which are deemed as fundamental to people's daily life, education, job, etc., and collaborative academics are no exception. HC, therefore, addresses the "what you know?" rather than "who you know?" question (Luthans et al., 2004, p.46). Thus, the link between HC and collaboration is that academics generally engage in collaborative relationships with individuals who possess knowledge, skills, creativity, intelligence, expertise, and experiences, and are interested in investing in such important asset in collaboration to add a greater value to the outcome yielded. As explained earlier, HC directly relates to RQ1 (*With whom do the participants in the setting collaborate?*). That is, as I said above, academics often collaborate with individuals who have a high level of HC, otherwise it is pointless to collaborate unless both collaborative academics know that their collaboration is mutually beneficial.

Historically speaking, what makes SC and HC somewhat similar is that they are both rooted in Economics before being applied to Education, Training, Sociology, Politics, and other

disciplines. That is, many authors trace the historical development of HC back to the works of the economists T.W. Schultz and G.S. Becker in the 1960s. OECD (1998, p.9) conceives of HC as "the knowledge, skills, competences and other attributes embodied in individuals that are relevant to economic activity". In relation to this study, HC, therefore, is the full gamut of traits, education, training, creativity, knowledge, skills, and energy that both academic Selves and Others should possess and invest in when collaborating (Becker, 2002; Weatherly, 2003). This suggests that HC is about investing in human resources to be productive and efficient in one's profession and work environment. To sum up, the difference between HC and SC lies in the fact that while the former resides in individuals, the latter resides in social relations (OECD, 2001).

3.2.1. Interrelationship between social capital and human capital

The constructs of social capital and human capital are essential elements in collaboration as it may be difficult for academics to engage in collaborative practices with people who do not possess high levels of social capital and human capital. In other words, the presence or absence and the sufficiency or insufficiency of these two types of capital may affect the quality of academics' collaboration.

Several scholars assume that education can help individuals accumulate HC (Putnam, 2000; Jones, 2006), and that they can also accumulate HC through investing in social relationships (i.e., SC), as it is the case in this study. Accordingly, there appears to be a positive relationship between investing in SC and accumulating HC. In this regard, Coleman (1988) holds that among the many benefits of investing in social capital is the production of human capital. Likewise, Putnam (1993, pp.35-36) puts that: "working together is easier in a community blessed with a substantial stock of human capital". This shows that the more academics engage in collaboration, the more their HC can increase, and their intangible sense of productivity in teaching, supervision and research can develop hugely. Furthermore, Paldam and Svendsen (2004) maintain that there is a complementary relationship between social and human capital in that individuals' knowledge, skills, creativity, intelligence and expertise which they possess can help them develop social capital. However, it can work the other way round as well in that SC can be a factor affecting people's creation of HC through investing in social groups. In this regard, Hargreaves and Fullan (2013, p.37) argue that investing in SC is more influential than investing in HC as the former fuels the latter:

> Human and social capital are both important, but human capital is not as influential as social capital as a lead strategy. To enact change faster and more

> effectively, to reduce variation in effective teaching in a school or between and among schools in terms of networks, our advice is to use social capital.

However, as I argue in Chapter Five, I perceive both SC and HC in this study as equally important since both capitals seem to have a complementary relationship, and both are important in collaboration.

3.3. Interdependence Theory (IT)

Collaboration demands mutual collaborative efforts for mutual benefits. As argued in Chapter Two, for any collaboration to be successful, academic Selves and Others' collaboration needs to be based on mutual engagement and bilateral dependence. This mutual dependence in collaboration is referred to as *interdependence*, which is a core value that academics need to respect when collaborating. This section, therefore, addresses another theory that informs the study, and which is used in this research to approach interdependence in collaboration and make more sense of what was described in the previous chapter.

Academics tend to depend on one another when collaborating, and, thus, perceive collaboration as a socially interdependent activity. Therefore, the link between this theory and the present study is that it relates to RQ1 (*With whom do the participants in the setting collaborate?*). That is, academic Selves need to collaborate with academic Others who also deem collaboration as an *interdependent* rather than a dependent or an independent activity. Thibault and Kelley (1959), in their seminal book *The Social Psychology of Groups,* refer to the theory which studies individuals' mutual dependence as *Interdependence Theory* (IT).

Interdependence Theory has long been a widely used framework for analysing and apprehending interpersonal interactions. Unlike psychological theories, which generally focus on the individual as an individual, social psychological theories examine individuals' behaviours in their social milieu, hence the research perspective. As such, IT is a purely social psychological theory which seeks to understand the mechanisms underlying interpersonal relationships, and how the key features of relationships (the interdependence structure) can have implications for individuals' propensity for behaving in predictable ways within those relationships. In this regard, Van Lange and Balliet (2014, p.65) define interdependence as: "the process by which interacting people influence one another's experiences". Espousing such a crucial theory to make sense of the whole study can help me gain a thorough understanding of collaborative relationships that are 'supposed' to be shaped by interdependence. Moreover, it should be noted that Thibault and Kelley's (1959) interdependence framework was originally influenced by the social psychologist *Kurt Lewin* (1948).

Lewins (ibid) notes that understanding the basis underpinning interdependent relationships is critical for comprehending the behaviours of the individuals as part of a particular community, and academics engaging in collaborative activities are no exception. Lewin seems to emphasise how interdependence can affect people's behaviours, mood, and overall experiences in a particular social relationship. On a related note, Kelley et al. (2003) accentuates the need for IT to focus more on delineating the dispositional (internal) as well as situational (external, contextual) causes leading to specific patterns of interdependence, and which are based on the premises of Attribution Theory (AT) that I describe later in Section 3.4.

3.3.1. Basic assumptions of interdependence theory

This section covers the two most salient presumptions of Interdependence Theory. These are *the principle of structure* (the situation) and *the principle of transformation* (what individuals make of the situation). These two assumptions assist in understanding the way academics collaborate in terms of the level of dependence and the positive as well as the negative types of interdependence discussed later in this thesis. That is, academics need to consider these levels of interdependence if they want their collaboration to be effective.

a) The principle of structure (the situation)

Authors of IT use *structure* to refer to all the interactions that occur in a social context of a particular situation. Thus, Interdependence Theory offers an analysis of intangible rather than palpable features of a given social situation, and by so doing individuals' behaviours become greatly influenced by the interdependence structure (Van Lange and Balliet, 2014). These interdependence properties are presented in a taxonomy of situations, which include six dimensions detailed below.

Degree or level of dependence – This feature stresses the degree of dependence one person has on the other in an interpersonal, dyadic relationship. This indicates that the outcomes of, for example, academic A are shaped by the actions of academic B when collaborating. To Kelly and Thibaut (1978) and Van Lange (2011), three forms of control characterise this dimension, namely, *actor control* (academic A achieves a sense of productivity irrespective of B's actions, i.e., academic A is independent), *partner control* (academic A achieves a sense of productivity by dint of academic B's actions, i.e., academic A's success is the result of their dependence on academic B's actions, i.e., academic B holds greater power over A), and *joint control* (A's actions and B's actions influence both A's and B's outcomes). This third type of control is the one which my study is concerned with because

academics participating in collaboration often see collaboration as a mutual system wherein both parties depend on one another to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.

Mutuality of dependence – or **bilateral dependence** – It describes the extent to which people are equally and mutually dependent on one another. This dimension is more akin to joint control, in the sense that people in a particular relationship depend on one another in a mutual way. Individuals who display this dimension would highly unlikely have issues with 'who does what?' as both individuals share or at least 'negotiate' power in interactions, as it is the case in academic collaborations. There seems to be no place for unilateral dependence in interdependence-based collaborations.

Covariation of interest – This concerns the degree to which people's outcomes correspond or conflict. This dimension seeks to understand if, for example, the collaboration between academic A and academic B produces similarly satisfying outcomes for both A and B. Thus, if the level of great satisfaction is corresponding, then this is *collaboration* or *positive interdependence*. However, if the level of satisfaction is conflicting, then this is no longer collaboration, it is *competition* or *negative interdependence* as described by Johnson and Johnson (1989) in his theory of 'social interdependence'. As I argue in this thesis, academics with unilateral dependence mindset have more instrumental than expressive purposes behind their engagement in collaboration. This implies that collaboration in this case can be inhibited by negative interdependence as A's sense of productivity or empowerment, for instance, depends on the exploitation of B's efforts (Johnson and Johnson, 2014).

Basis of interdependence – It looks at the means by which the interacting Selves and Others influence one another's outcomes. This is akin to the first dimension in that the basis of interdependence is the enactment of the degrees of interdependence. It explains why partners have one of these three types of control. Examples of means of influence are as follows: academic A promises academic B, A threatens B, so that B becomes submissive to A, or A and B both respect social and moral values, which can, in turn, trigger them to adopt the joint type of control (Turiel, 1983; Finkel et al., 2006).

Temporal structure – It states that partners' current interactions can influence future interactions, behaviours, situations, or outcomes by making them either available or unavailable. This dimension portrays, for example, the evolvement of collaborative partners' relationship over time: "movement from one situation to another, bringing partners to a new situation that differs from the prior situation in terms of behavioural options or outcomes" (Van Lange and Balliet, 2014, p.71).

Information availability – or **information certainty** – as elucidated by Kelly et al. (2003); Van Lange (2011) and Van Lange and Balliet (2014), this dimension highlights the amount and quality (certain vs uncertain) of knowledge and information that A and B have about each other in relation to (a) the effect of their actions on each other's outcomes, (b) their goal-based actions, and (c) potential opportunities that might be made available or unavailable to them as a result of acting in a certain way. However, if, for instance, academic A had uncertain information about academic B's motives for collaborating with him/her, they might realise that B is using him/her and may take actions to eliminate any future possibilities for B to collaborate with him/her. Thus, it is important for collaborative partners in general to have understanding and information about one another during or even before the collaboration to eschew any potential issues (Collins and Miller, 1994), and this applied to collaboration among academics in HE as well.

b) The principle of transformation

Understanding academics' behaviours and actions when engaging in collaborative activities in HE context can influence their present and future collaborations. This principle directly relates to the overarching argument presented in this thesis, which is that academics often collaborate to reap expressive and instrumental rewards.

Having examined what interdependence structure or situation means, discerning what individuals make of that situation (i.e., transformation) is also important. Transformation is seen as the psychological process through which individuals make decision rules during the course of their interaction (Van Lange et al., 2007; Murray and Holmes, 2009), and so do academics who engage in collaboration. Every individual action or activity can result in two types of outcomes – *rewards* or *costs,* and academic collaborative activities are no exception. There are four types of rewards and costs in Interdependence Theory (Guerrero et al, 2007), as presented below:

Emotional – This refers to the positive or negative feelings experienced as a result of an action in a relationship. Linked to this study, academics can develop positive feelings when their collaboration is perceived as a mutual system wherein collaborative efforts are negotiated, and the opposite is true in unilateral dependence-based collaboration.

Social – It relates to individuals' social status and their ability to engage in social relationships, i.e., their level of social capital. If the social situation wherein partners engage is gratifying and enjoyable, this may yield social rewards. However, if the social appearance of

either partners or the social situation in which they are is unexciting, then the social costs may begin to emerge.

Instrumental – It has to do with the activities that people in a relationship must do. Instrumental rewards are obtained when, for example, two academic collaborative partners work together to achieve an outcome and to complete each other. Yet, instrumental rewards can turn into costs when neither of them does the work properly, hence my use of 'conscientiousness' trait as part of the Big Five Personality Traits Model (Goldberg, 1993) in this thesis.

Opportunity – This is linked to the opportunities that develop in a social relationship. Opportunity rewards take place when a person does not squander any opportunity that would not otherwise be received if the person works on their own. For instance, some early career academics co-write papers with well-established professors to gain professional recognition and visibility in academia. Opportunity costs occur when an individual must abandon something in a relationship.

3.4. Attribution Theory (AT)

In this section, I present a theory which discusses how academics interpret their actions and behaviours when collaborating and addresses the way they perceive the value of collaboration in their academic life.

Academics often attribute the reasons for engaging in collaborative practices to either themselves (internal factors) or others (external factors). Hence, this theory is used in this thesis as it directly relates to RQ3 (*Why do the participants engage in collaborative practices?*). This theory strives to understand how academics construct their sense of value of collaboration because individuals must collaborate for a particular reason, and this theory allows a greater understanding of these motives behind academics' participation in collaboration. However, besides its use to help me uncover the way academics' sense of value of collaboration is constructed, AT can also be employed to decipher the social-psychological factors triggering academics' collaboration (i.e., what makes collaboration succeed or fail?).

Fritz Heider (1958), who is often described as "the father of attribution theory" (Sanderson, 2010, p.112), refers to the theory which studies the action of assigning causal explanations to individuals' behaviours as *Attribution Theory* (AT). He refers to the personal and internal factors as *dispositional* (i.e., psychological) attribution and the external factors as *situational* (i.e., social) attribution – hence social psychology. Though AT was first introduced

by the social psychologist Heider (ibid.), it was then further developed by Harold Kelley (1967) and Bernard Weiner (1972).

While I use Thibault and Kelley's (1959) Interdependence Theory to approach the interdependence structure of academics when engaging in collaborative activities, I employ Heider's, Kelly's and Weiner's Attribution Theory to explore academics' motives for taking part in collaboration, and explanations of their behaviours (mood, thoughts, behaviour, etc.) when collaborating with particular people (hence, the social psychology of people's behaviours) in particular settings and disciplines (hence, the social psychology of space and discipline). Specifically, the predominant principles of this theory in part help me understand the 'who?', 'where?' and 'why?' research questions from a social-psychological perspective. As discussed above, AT underlines *how* and *why* individuals pursue and understand explanations of their behaviours and events, or as Fiske and Taylor (1991, p.23) put it:

> Attribution theory deals with how the social perceiver uses information to arrive at causal explanations for events. It examines what information is gathered and how it is combined to form a causal judgment.

Drawing upon Fiske and Taylor's (1991) theoretical delineation of AT, it can be assumed that AT concerns the pursuit of the why of people's behaviours and actions. That is, human beings tend to attribute causes to their behaviours, views, choices, events, and actions to themselves as people, to other people, or to the social milieu wherein they reside (Heider, 1958; Kelley, 1967). In the following section, I describe the two-sided causal inferences – *dispositional* and *situational* causes.

3.4.1. Types of attribution

The *dispositional* and *situational* types of attribution provide detailed insights into the motives behind academics' behaviours and actions when collaborating. They also allow a deeper understanding of how academics perceive the value of collaboration. In the context of this study, I use these two types of attribution to explore why the participants (a) engage in collaboration; (b) collaborate with particular people; (c) collaborate in specific settings and disciplines; and (d) feel and act differently in the different spaces and disciplines wherein they collaborate.

Attribution Theory puts forward the idea that there are two main types of causes that individuals attempt to attribute to their everyday behaviours and actions (Kelley, 1967, 1971). These are *dispositional* (internal) and *situational* (external). Weiner (2010) refers to these two

causal attributions as *locus of causality* to suggests the 'locus' or place where causes of behaviours and actions are situated.

Dispositional (internal or personality[10]-based explanations) – It is the process of ascribing people's causes of behaviours and actions to their internal features rather than outside agents or forces (Myers, 2010). Examples of dispositional attribution in relation to collaboration can be academics' motivation and interest in collaboration, their personality, confidence, abilities, skills, etc.

Situational (external or beyond-personality-based explanations) – It is the process of imputing people's reasons for their behaviours and actions to external forces rather than people's internal system. An example of such type of attribution can be the environment wherein academics collaborate, the weather, people surrounding those academics, emotional and financial support, issue of time, hence situational (i.e., situations or circumstances academics in which find themselves).

Although Heider (1958) portrays AT as being two-sided, this does not necessarily insinuate that people are unable to attribute a variety of causes to their behaviours (Laczniak et al, 2001). Weiner (2010) perceives causal attributions as being three-sided – *locus of causality* (dispositional vs situational), *stability* – does the cause change over time? (e.g., as it is the case for collaboration during Covid-19, academics are 'obliged' to 'temporarily' collaborate in the virtual space), and *controllability* (i.e., the extent to which people can control the causes for their actions or behaviour. These are the causes that people can control or change personally (e.g., unavailability of human or social capital). For instance, while academic A cannot have an informal collaboration with academic B at a local pub as it is closed (i.e., external attribution), A and B can control that through being more flexible by searching for other alternative spaces like going home or somewhere else wherein they can feel emotionally and intellectually comfortable and safe, hence controllability of causes.

Notwithstanding Wiener's three-dimensional model of attribution, which generally pertains to issues like success and achievement, I shall apply this in the context of my study to explore the social-psychological factors influencing my participants' feelings, behaviours, and actions when collaborating.

[10] Personality is defined as "relatively enduring patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that reflect the tendency to respond in certain ways under certain circumstances" (Roberts, 2009, p.140).

3.5. Communities of Practice (CoPs)

Academics who engage in collaboration often create a community of practice or several communities of practice to which they develop a sense of belonging. CoPs provide rich insights into, for example, how and how academics form a collaborative community of practice. The key elements in this concept, along with its dimensions and forms, are argued to be significant in collaborative practices at tertiary level. This is because, as discussed in Chapter Two, for successful collaborations to occur, academics need to collaborate with the *right* people, and by the *right* people in the context of CoPs here I refer to academics who share a similar domain of interest that binds them together as a 'real' rather than a 'pseudo' collaborative community of practice.

The social learning concept of Communities of Practice (CoPs), therefore, is another important concept which informs this study into academics' collaboration as the practice of collaboration is performed in a community of practice characterised by three fundamental elements. These are *domain*, *community*, and *practice*. Thus, the interrelationship between CoPs and this study is that it relates to RQ1 (*with whom do the participants in the setting collaborate?*). This demonstrates that academics need to collaborate with individuals who have a shared domain, a shared practice, shared goals, and who also identify themselves as members of a particular collaborative community whose sense of identity is shared, and differentials of power are negotiated (i.e., linking social capital) in the collaborative community of practice. Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002, p.4) define CoPs as:

> [G]roups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis.

This definition implies that CoPs in the context of collaboration among university academics is a social learning which takes place when academics, who share a similar enthusiasm and passion about a particular subject or domain, work together over a period of time, exchange new knowledge, ideas, innovative techniques, experiences, encourage an understanding of new perspectives, and collectively search for better solutions to problems. On a similar note, Hara (2009, p.118) portrays CoPs as "collaborative informal networks that support professional practitioners in their efforts to develop shared understandings and engage in work- relevant knowledge building". That is, it is the shared area of expertise that binds academics together as members of a collaborative community of practice. In this regards, Wenger and Snyder (2000, p.139) define CoP as: "a group of people informally bound together

by shared expertise and passion for a joint enterprise". Moreover, CoPs is of great importance and strong relevance to my study because both CoPs and academic collaboration are interrelated in that active involvement in communities of practice provides a basis for boosting collaborative working and breaking down human silos (Patton and Parker, 2017).

3.5.1. Elements of CoPs in collaboration

As discussed above, the key elements of any community of practice are claimed to be important in collaboration. These elements are *domain*, *community*, and *practice* (Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder, 2002). This is mainly because the academics involved in any collaborative activity need to have shared domain, develop a shared sense of belonging to a collaborative community, and mutually engage in the practice of collaboration, otherwise this would not be deemed as community of practice, but a mere 'community': "[n]ot everything called a community is a community of practice. A neighborhood for instance, is often called a community, but is usually not a community of practice" (Wenger, 1998, p.72)

According to Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (ibid., p.27), the *domain* develops a "shared ground" and a feeling of "shared identity". This implies that it is the area of expertise that brings all the collaborative academics together under one community defined by a shared domain and a series of problems to find solutions to by jointly working with the members of the community. Shared identity suggests that when academics collaborate on a shared domain, they generally build a sense of shared identity, which can manifest itself in the sense of belonging and identity they construct – the use of '*we, our* and *us*' as opposed to '*I, my* and *mine*', as well as in having a shared purpose. Nevertheless, the absence of the domain, which is a fundamental factor affecting collaboration, and which binds the members of the community together, can increase the likelihood of the disappearance of collaboration and appearance of human silos because, as Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (ibid) claims, within a community of practice, the domain motivates the members to actively engage in the community, facilitates their learning process, and helps make their practice meaningful.

Unlike the domain, which creates the common ground of a community of practice and, thus, for the kind of collaboration in this study, the construction of a *community* is another important element of CoPs. In this thesis, constructing a sense of belonging to a group of academics is argued to be key for them to be committed to the domain and, therefore, helps boost their engagement in collaborative activities. Hence, academics feel that by belonging to a collaborative community of practice, this latter creates the 'social fabrics' which stimulate learning by means of participation, collaboration, and sharing knowledge and expertise with

members of the community. A collaborative community of practice, in my study, involves academics who interact on an ongoing basis, and who develop 'sustained' collaborative relationships as a result of having shared values, beliefs and objectives, which, in turn, help them deal with issues and share knowledge among the members in an effective way (Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder, ibid.).

The third element which characterises a successful collaborative community of practice is *practice*. This has to do with the 'actual doing or action', i.e., the importance of linking the domain, which keeps academics together as a community, to action or practice. In other words, the presence of domain and community does not necessarily guarantee the development of collaboration unless the knowledge on which academics collaborate is enacted and is actively engaged in by members of the community of practice. Practice, as defined by Mohajan (2017), involves 'knowledge in action'. Similarly, Brown and Duguid (2001, p.203) confirm that "by practice we mean, as most theorists of practice mean, undertaking or engaging fully in a task, job or profession".

The element of practice is an important factor in collaboration and can be more significant than the willingness to collaborate because practice has to do with meaning as participation in daily life (Wenger, 1998). By taking part in a community of practice and be active members in it, academics continuously build knowledge about the practice of the community and can, therefore, understand and become involved in different "tools, language, role-definitions and other explicit artefacts as well as various implicit relations, tacit conventions, and underlying assumptions and values" (Handley et al, 2006, p.5). In addition, it is through the process of connecting practice to domain and community that a specific form of community (i.e., community of practice) is defined (Wenger, 1998).

3.5.2. Dimensions of CoPs

Academics' collaboration can have the potential to be successful when the members of the collaborative CoPs believe in and manifest mutual engagement when collaborating, having a shared understanding of what constitutes any collaborative CoPs, and have shared artefacts which bind them together and which, in turn, distinguish them from other types of communities. Wenger (1998) highlights that through associating community and practice, three key features which the element of practice gives the community its coherence can be expected in CoPs. The three dimensions as the property of a community of practice are summarised below:

Mutual engagement: This suggests that CoPs is about reciprocal engagement, interaction, joint efforts and establishing relationships with members of the community.

Joint enterprise: It refers to the joint understanding that members of the community have about CoPs.

Shared repertoire: It describes the communal resources, such as language, stories, concepts, and styles that members of CoPs use.

3.5.3. Forms of CoPs

These forms provide rich insights into the different shape that collaborative communities of practice can take in the HE context. Academics may engage in collaborative CoPs which can be small or big, long-lived or short-lived, co-located or distributed, homogeneous or heterogeneous, spontaneous or intentional, and finally unrecognised or institutionalised.

CoPs can take a variety of forms, and it is crucial to discern the discrepancies that exist between communities of practice and their distinct forms. Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (ibid., p.24) state that: "knowing these variations is important because it helps people recognize communities of practice, despite different guises and names". Among the various important shape that communities of practice can take are summarised below.

Small or big: Some communities of practice consist of a very small number of people. Others can involve many individuals.

Long-lived and short-lived: The life span of some communities can be very long. They exist for years (i.e., sustainability). Others can exist only for a short period of time due to some factors.

Co-located or distributed: According to Agrifoglio (2015), communities cannot be co-located unless people of the community have a meeting on the same site or do not live far from the location of the community. However, when communities are distributed, i.e., no face-to-face meetings can be held and, therefore, no opportunities to work together and share knowledge, it would be difficult for the members of the community of practice to collaborate. Yet, with the advent of technology, virtual communities of practice can replace their real, physical counterparts.

Homogeneous or heterogeneous: This suggests that some communities involve members who belong to the same domain (i.e., bonding social capital). Others have people from different domains (i.e., bridging social capital).

Spontaneous or intentional: According to Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (ibid.), in spontaneous communities of practice, members spontaneously meet as they want to collaborate and learn from one another. However, there are other types of communities of practice which "are also launched to meet the needs of organizations for specific knowledge and skill resources" Agrifolio (ibid, p.33). In this thesis, I argue that both spontaneous and intentional types of CoPs are important in collaboration.

Unrecognised or institutionalised: Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (ibid.) state that some organisations find some CoPs so important that they formalise and integrate them into their structure. On the other hand, there are other types of CoPs which are not visible to the organisation and are not officially recognised. The people of the organisation are not aware of the value of such communities.

3.6. Oldenburg's Concept of First, Second and Third Place (1989)

The collaborative practices in which academics engage can be ubiquitous, i.e., they can happen in various settings that Oldenburg (1989) refers to as first, second and third *place*.

Having sketched how the other concepts and theories relate to the phenomenon of collaboration studied in this thesis, in this last section in this chapter, I elucidate 'where' the academics' collaborative communities of practice discussed in the previous section occur. Academics can collaborate in three distinct, albeit interrelated, environments – 'home', 'university', and 'public settings', such as cafes, restaurants, gardens, and pubs, perceiving these various settings as centres of collaborative communities of practice. The American sociologist Ray Oldenburg, in his influential book *The Great Good Place* (1989), refers to these places as *first place*, *second place*, and *third place*, respectively. The relationship between this concept and the study is that it directly relates to RQ2 (*where do the participants collaborate?*). That is, using this concept shall help me understand where academics' collaborative practices take place and the reason why their collaborations do not remain in one single setting. Considering the field of environmental[11] psychology in relation to Oldenburg's concept of place can also help me fathom the way the different environments wherein academics collaborate impact their behaviour when collaborating.

[11]Environmental psychology is a subdiscipline of psychology which studies the interrelationship between individuals and their environment. Linked to this study, my aim, therefore, is to understand why my participants feel and behave differently when collaborating in different collaborative spaces, such as first, second, third, international, and virtual space (the latter is referred to as cyberpsychology).

This section is presented as follows: I first describe the meaning of first, second, and third place, their characteristics and their relevance to this study. However, it should be highlighted that I am not giving more weight to 'third place' than the other two places, Oldenburg is. This is mainly because he seems to focus more on third place than the other two places.

First Place

According to Oldenburg (1989, p.16), home is perceived as the first place, explaining:

> The first place is the home — the most important place of all. It is the first regular and predictable environment of the growing child and the one that will have greater effect upon his or her development. It will harbor individuals long before the workplace is interested in them and well after the world of work casts them aside.

Analogous to Oldenburg's conceptualisation of home as a first place, this study also conceives of the home place where some individuals collaborate as a first place. However, my use of first *space* in lieu of first *place* in this thesis stresses the psychological rather than the physical characteristics of home as a collaborative space.

Second Place

While the home setting is described as first place, Oldenburg (ibid., p.16) refers to the workplace setting (i.e., university, school, hospital, etc.) as second place, clarifying that "[t]he second place is the work setting, which reduces the individual to a single, productive role". Similarly, I argue that I perceive the university setting where academics collaborate as second *space* as opposed to second *place* to give more importance and bring focus to the psychology rather than the physicality of such collaborative settings wherein academics collaborate.

Third Place

Now that we know about the first and second place, Oldenburg (ibid., p.16) also uses the contested concept *third place* to refer to the many public settings and social surroundings other than home and workplace, such as cafes, restaurants, pubs, and gardens. He describes third place as:

> [A] generic designation for a great variety of public places that host the regular, voluntary, informal, and happily anticipated gatherings of individuals beyond the realms of home and work.

This definition seems to argue that third places are for people to relax and relieve stress, establish informal conversations and promote a sense of community and increase sociability between members of a particular community. Oldenburg views the third place as socially distinct from people's first and second places wherein one would feel as comfortable as they would in their own home. In this regard, Mikunda (2004, p.11) conceptualises third place as "somewhere which is not work or home but a comfortable space to browse, relax and meet people, even enjoy a meal". That is, third places are settings where people gather informally and voluntarily as there is no coercion to be in a third place: "[T]hird places exist outside the home and beyond the 'work lots' of modern economic production. They are places where people gather primarily to enjoy each other's company" (Oldenburg and Brissett, 1982, p.269). Moreover, being in a third place, according to Oldenburg and Brissett (ibid.), can also decrease the potential of losing social interactions.

However, similar to Wenger's argument that not all communities are necessarily communities of practice, Oldenburg also contends that not all public places are necessarily third places (Oldenburg and Brissett, ibid.; Oldenburg, 1989). Then, what makes a particular public setting a third place? This question is addressed below.

3.6.1. Eight characteristics of third place

Oldenburg (1989) states that third places are characterised by eight features, all of which are important in this study of collaboration. These are:

a- Neutral ground – This implies that there is no coercion for people to go to third places. Individuals, therefore, can enter and leave such places as they wish (freely). Similarly, in collaborations, academics need to negotiate the collaborative space as this can affect their collaboration. They have the right to collaborate in the first, second or third space depending on circumstances and situations (i.e., situational attribution) or their internal system (i.e., dispositional attribution).

b- Leveler – This suggests that individuals' social, economic, and academic rank and status are of no import in third places, and that all people can come and interact as they please: "[a] place that is a leveler is, by its nature, an inclusive place" (Oldenburg, 1989, p.24). This connotes that there is no such thing as third place only for professors or readers. Third places can host different academic collaborative spouses regardless of their academic statuses.

c- Conversation – Interacting and engaging in conversations with individuals in third places are key 'ingredients' in the development of such places: "[n]eutral ground provides the

place, and leveling sets the stage for the cardinal and sustaining activity of third places everywhere. That activity is conversation" (ibid., p.26). In these places, the topic of the conversation needs to be of general interest. Similarly, academics can frequent third places to engage in informal collaborative conversations, which can, in turn, become more formal in the future. As I argue in this thesis, most formal collaborations start with a 'hi' in any setting like the third 'space'.

d- Accessibility and Accommodation – Third places are socially and geographically easily accessible to people. They are also accommodating and welcoming to the individuals who frequent them. Oldenburg (ibid., p.32) describes this feature as:

> Third places that render the best and fullest service are those to which one may go alone at almost any time of the day or evening with assurances that acquaintances will be there.

This suggests that academics can collaborate in third places anytime they wish thanks to the 'accessibility and accommodation' feature that such places have. However, I argue that while academics develop a sense of belonging to their first 'space' as they possess their homes 24/7, this is not always the case for third 'spaces' as they cannot remain open 24/7.

e- The regulars – Third places have regulars whose psychological purpose lies in welcoming, attracting, and making newcomers feel at ease: "[e]very regular was once a newcomer, and the acceptance of newcomers is essential to the sustained vitality of the third place" (ibid., p.34).

f- A low profile – The under-advertised nature of third places makes people want to frequent them, hence they are conducive to the well-being of individuals, especially those who are from middle-class category: "They fall short of the middle-class preference for cleanliness and modernity […] As a physical structure, the third place is typically plain" (ibid., pp.36-37).

g- The mood is playful – The nature and tone of conversations held in third spaces are characterised by playfulness and wit, not hostility or tension. People who generally frequent third places appear not to feel moody. However, as discussed later in the thesis, my argument is that for the third space to have the 'the mood is playful' attribute, it needs the right people in it. That is, collaborative academics need to collaborate with people with similar personalities. Therefore, I argue that it is not always about the nature of the 'space' as much as it is about the people frequenting it.

h- A home away from home – People who frequent third places feel comfortable as the atmosphere in those places is home-like (i.e., homely place). It is the warmth and sense of belonging which makes people feel like they are home, and this is what I refer to as *space* rather than a *place* in this thesis. Similar to what I argued above, even though the space is homely, 'who' is there in that homely space is more important than the space itself, hence 'it is mostly about people'.

Oldenburg and other researchers studying third place mostly emphasise the social and physical aspects of third places, such as issues of proximity, access, and sitting place (e.g., Mehta, 2007; Mehta and Bosson, 2010). Nevertheless, as I argue in Chapter Eight, the psychological features of third places do not seem to be emphasised enough, i.e., there appears to be a lack of distinction between what is a third *place* and a third *space*. This study, therefore, claims that there are indubitably psychological characteristics supporting academics' informal collaborative encounters in third 'spaces', such as energy, mood, behaviour, and, most importantly, the people they collaborate with in such spaces.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have delineated the four concepts and two theories that informed the study. These are Social Capital (SC), Human Capital (HC), Interdependence Theory (IT), Attribution Theory (AT), Communities of Practice (CoPs), and Oldenburg's Concept of Place. As highlighted in this chapter, the reason for listing such theories and concepts in this particular order can be explained as follows: I have argued that in an academic collaboration, academics need to have the ability and proclivity for engaging in collaborative relationships, which is Social Capital (SC) in this case. SC, therefore, is a significant asset as it would be hard to share skills, experiences, ideas and knowledge with academics (i.e., Human Capital) if those academics were not interested in establishing collaborative relationships and sharing their Human Capital to upgrade one another's capabilities and skills. Nevertheless, sharing these intellectual human assets with academics needs to be done interdependently (i.e., Interdependence Theory) because probably no academic may be keen on collaborating with individuals who take full advantage of them. Thus, neither social capital nor human capital might work unless there is a culture of interdependence between the academics engaged in collaboration.

Therefore, Social Capital, Human Capital, and Interdependence Theory relate to RQ1 ('who'?) in this thesis. When social capital, human capital, and 'interdependence' are considered when collaborating, only then can academics think about their perception of the

value of collaboration and the reasons behind their involvement in collaboration, hence my use of Attribution Theory in this thesis. As a result, Attribution Theory is linked to RQ3 ('why'?) in this thesis. Once social capital, human capital, interdependence and motives behind collaboration are present, only then can Communities of Practice and Oldenburg's First, Second and Third Place be a consideration. When all the above-mentioned criteria for a successful academic collaboration to take place are met, only then can academics form a community of practice (CoPs) that is omnipresent, i.e., it can be found in the first place, second place or third place, hence my use of Oldenburg's Concept of First, Second, and Third Place. As highlighted in this chapter, while SC, HC, IT, and CoPs are related to RQ1, and AT to RQ3, Oldenburg's Concept of First, Second, and Third Place is linked to RQ2 (Where?).

To conclude, it could be argued that these were theories and concepts which helped me understand the phenomenon of collaboration in HE, not theoretical or conceptual frameworks that underpinned the whole investigation, hence the title of this chapter. This, therefore, explains the reason why this chapter came after Chapter Two. Had these been theoretical and conceptual frameworks, this chapter would have been placed after Chapter One. In the next Chapter, I describe the methodological route that I took to conduct this research.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

While the preceding two chapters described academics' collaborative practices in the HE context and delineated the concepts and theories that I am using in this thesis to construe the participants' nature of collaboration, respectively, the current chapter aims to provide detailed insights into the methodological route which I pursued to conduct this research. The content of this chapter, therefore, is presented as follows: firstly, in Section 4.1, I present the philosophical paradigm underpinning this study – 'social constructionism'. Secondly, I devote Section 4.2 to the research design in which the qualitative approach (Section 4.2.1), case study approach (Section 4.2.2), context of the study (Section 4.2.3) along with research participants recruitment techniques (Section 4.2.4) are outlined. Following this, Section 4.2.5 on data collection method is described. Within this section, Subsections 4.2.5.1 and 4.2.5.2 describe interviews and the interview-based data collection journey, respectively. Thirdly, in Section 4.3, I discuss my positionality and reflexivity in this research. After that, in Subsection 4.4, I describe the data analysis journey. Following this, Section 4.5 on trustworthiness of the study is outlined. Finally, Section 4.6 addresses important issues related to ethical considerations followed in the conduct of the research.

4.1. Articulating my philosophical paradigm: Social constructionism

This section portrays the social constructionist paradigm underpinning the methodological part of this investigation, and which I especially adopted to address my participants' perceptions and behaviours as to collaboration. Since the research approach adopted in this inquiry is qualitative, the philosophical paradigm I embrace and draw upon in this research is social constructionism (Grix, 2004; Bryman, 2012). Social constructionism addresses the issue of how people perceive social reality and phenomena, and how these realities change contingent upon the different social situations and circumstances within which people are. Unlike positivist researchers, who perceive reality as objective, social constructionist researchers believe that reality is subjective and should, therefore, be socially constructed (Mertens, 2009).

Ontology and epistemology are the foundation of any research (Grix, ibid.). Ontology, which is inherently about the 'what' or nature of reality (Elshafie, 2013), is associated with a central question of whether social entities should be perceived as objective (positivist) or

subjective (interpretivist). Therefore, my ontology is that reality is socially constructed, in the sense that people collectively make sense of the world when engaging in a social activity, and that there is no such thing as one single interpretation of the world. I see reality and knowledge as multiple and in an ongoing state of shifting depending not only on the social context and circumstances within which individuals make sense of the world, but also on the way they feel when construing their understanding of reality. This designates that individuals' construction of their own understanding of the world depends on experiencing the world and reflecting upon their experiences with the world or social phenomena (Honebein, 1996). Linked to this study, this implies that my participants should have experienced collaboration with academics to be able to construct knowledge about what constitutes collaboration in HE. That is, reality is constructed in a social activity. In this regard, some participants like Adam (formal interview) puts that "there is a lot of hidden stuff about collaboration that we don't always know about if we don't experience that ourselves when working on projects together […]".

Epistemology is concerned with the "way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know" (Crotty, 2003, p.3). Therefore, my epistemology is that the multiple realities that individuals believe in and display in practice are interpreted differently by different people, and that different researchers can generate different codes and develop different themes from the ones presented in Chapters Five, Six, and Seven. In this respect, Byrne (2021, p.3) contends that "there should be no expectation that codes or themes interpreted by one researcher may be reproduced by another". For example, as a researcher, I should interpret my participants' multiple perceptions of collaboration subjectively, so that meaning can be uncovered. However, these subjective interpretations of participants' perceptions and actions would not have been achievable unless I had interviewed them both in person and virtually. Had I not been actively engaged with them during the interviews, I might have been unable to make sense of the factors triggering their views and behaviours as to collaboration. This also suggests that I played an active role in the collection and analysis of the data gleaned in that I was an important instrument without which the production of knowledge as to collaboration might not have existed (Braun and Clarke, 2019, 2021).

Raskir and Bridges (2004) state that in social constructionism, individuals have their own ways of meaningfully making sense of themselves and the social world surrounding them, which they, in turn, display in their daily life. This suggests that reality would not exist if individuals did not construct it first in their minds, then display it in their social practices. The reason individuals have 'different' realities of the 'same' social world wherein they live is that they construct knowledge of any social phenomenon differently as they do not all experience

it in the same way. Therefore, by studying academics' collaboration in HE, my aim is to understand how my participants and the academic Others they collaborate with influence one another when collaborating, and this is achievable through delving into participants' psyche.

My participants' perceptions and behaviours regarding collaboration, therefore, are unique. For instance, while academic A and B may feel comfortable collaborating in the second space as they co-construct this sense of comfort in this space, academic C and D may find it difficult to collaborate in the second space and would prefer to collaborate in the first space simply because individuals' psyche appears to be different in different spaces and situations. This also shows that my participants' views and actions as to collaboration are different from one individual to another, and that their construction of their understanding of issues related to collaboration also depends on their state of mind and that of their collaborative 'spouses' (i.e., *dispositional factors*), as well as the space or context wherein they collaborate (i.e., *situational factors*). Moreover, as discussed in Chapter Seven, my expression 'tell me with whom you collaborate, and I tell you who you are' articulates the view that participants might not have constructed that sense of professional recognition and visibility in academia unless they had collaborated with some 'important' academics in their field.

Linked to the perspective from which collaboration is examined in this thesis, this implies that both social psychology and social constructionism acknowledge the mutual influence which exists between academic Selves and Others when collaborating (Schwandt, 2003; Burr, 2015). Consistent with the premises of social constructionism, I consider the whole research process as socially shaped in that all my participants and I co-construct and negotiate meaning as to collaboration during the data collection and analysis process, hence the issue of 'Inter-Views: Negotiation and co-construction of meaning within the research' discussed in Section 4.2.5.1.1, and the issue of reflexive thematic analysis delineated in Section 4.4.1. However, I should not believe that participants' perceptions of collaboration are all true because it is not about collaboration per se; it is about the meanings they make of the phenomenon of collaboration.

4.2. Research design

Having delineated the social constructionist paradigm adopted in this research, this section aims to describe the research design espoused in the present investigation. Specifically, this section defines the approach used in the research, describes the method of data collection, and explains the connection between the data collection instrument and the general research aims which uphold this study. Yet, this whole chapter might have been inexistent unless I had

known what I was trying to find out. In this respect, Miles and Huberman (1984, p.42) argue that "knowing what you want to find out leads inexorably to the question of how you will get that information". Therefore, in my attempts to study the social-psychological processes in the journey of collaboration of 12 British University academics, I decided to adopt a qualitative case study methodology for a number of reasons which I detail below.

4.2.1. The qualitative approach

The general aim of my research is to explore how a group of 12 academics at SEE University engage in co-teaching, co-supervision, and co-research practices with their collaborative spouses. Therefore, since I am interested in people's lived experiences and understandings of collaboration rather than, for example, counting the number of academics who collaborate per year, or investigating whether male academics collaborate more than their female counterparts, I espoused a qualitative approach to be able to address the questions and aims of the research.

Qualitative research has been defined differently by different researchers. Punch (1998, p.4) views qualitative research as "empirical research where the data are not in the form of numbers". In the same vein, Corbin and Strauss (1990, p.7) describes qualitative research as "any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification". Besides, Denzin and Lincoln (2011) portray it as a method of investigation wherein researchers can understand phenomena in their natural settings. Linked to this study, I went to the university wherein my participants work and interviewed them in person pre-Covid-19 times and virtually during the initial stages of the pandemic.

In addition, my employment of qualitative rather than quantitative research assisted me to co-construct in-depth knowledge of detailed, context-dependent, and non-quantitative data (Mason, 2002) through carrying out semi-structured interviews with my participants in their real-life environment, which is their university offices in this case (Creswell, 2009). Moreover, qualitative research methodologies have an inductive nature, their emphasis is on meaning, and their approaches involve a variety of objectives, which reflect my ontological and epistemological foundations I set in this research (Ritchie and Lewis, 2013).

Moreover, I chose to use a qualitative approach to be able to explore how participants interpret the several ways they look at their everyday collaborative activities (Kakabadse and Steane, 2010). Against this background, Holliday (2016, p.24) states that "qualitative research integrates deeply with everyday life", and that qualitative research methodologies can be

classified as follows: “case study, ethnography, ethnomethodology, phenomenology, grounded theory, and participatory action research” (Holliday, ibid., p.13).

Drawing upon the above-listed methodologies, in the following Subsection 4.3.2, I describe the qualitative case study methodology which suits the broader aim of the study.

4.2.2. The case study methodology

I adopted a case study methodology to explore the social psychology of 12 British University academics’ collaborative practices through gathering in-depth data from a particular group of academics working at a particular British University. The research questions I raised were related to the ‘who?’, ‘where?’ and ‘why?’ of participants’ collaboration. According to Myers (2009), the use of case study as a qualitative methodology of research whose nature is descriptive or exploratory (Mouton, 2001) is ‘ideal’.

Having mentioned the phrase ‘a particular British University’ above, Simons (2015, p.175) describes a case study as “the study of the singular, the particular, the unique, whether that single case is a person, a project, an institution, a programme or a policy”. My research into academics’ collaboration can be viewed as a single, unique and holistic case study in that I examine a particular group of academics in one single and unique UK HE setting (Baxter and Jack, 2008; Yin, 2009). Moreover, since my aim is not to study one single academic, but a group of academics who work at the same university rather than different universities in the UK, I think that a single rather than a multiple (collective) case study is the most appropriate methodology in this research (Simons, ibid.). This is because my aim is to develop a new understanding about the phenomenon of collaboration from the perspective of 12 participants within a specific real-life setting, which is SEE University (Idowu, 2016), and not from different universities as I do not seek to draw a comparison between the collaboration of a group of academics from one university with another group from another university. That is, had I chosen a multiple rather than a single case study methodology, my goal would have been to replicate findings across cases (Yin, 2003), which is not the case in this research.

Furthermore, I used a case study methodology to help me investigate rigorously a single and unique case marked by time and space (Stake, 2005). This, in this case, is a group of 12 academics from different faculties located within SEE University, and I am drawing detailed, interrelated, context-dependent, and unique insights only from those 12 participants and solely in SEE University context (Idowu, ibid.), not beyond that. This indicates that I am not aiming to generalise the findings to other contexts other than the one studied here. According to Firestone (1993), this is because this can be a challenging task, and that I am conducting

research into collaboration, which is grounded in the social science research, not the natural science one. As such, there is less emphasis on the generalisation of the findings to other similar contexts like natural science researchers do (Tsang, 2014). This shows that I am aware that the findings cannot be replicated in another study because the "trouble with generalizations is that they don't apply to particulars" (Lincoln and Guba, 2000, p.27).

Despite the widespread of case studies in social science research, some researchers argue that the criticism of this methodology lies in the fact that their use seems to be inapplicable to and unsuitable for social science research. This is because in the social sciences, research is often deemed as being less interesting, or as Yin (2009, p.14) describes it: "less desirable form of inquiry", and as having less scientific rigour (Armour and Griffiths, 2012). Moreover, it is widely believed that a case study tends to seek particularity rather than generalisability of the findings to other contexts. By generalisability, I mean, for example, learning from the case of British University academics as to collaboration to understand how collaborative practices are undertaken in other real-life contexts like Algerian, French, or Turkish HE institutions. Notwithstanding, as the merits of using case study research outweigh its limitations, I believe that, as articulated by Stake (2005), the clear benefit of using the case study research methodology is that it provided me with a 'holistic picture' of how a group of academics at a particular British University collaborated and viewed collaboration.

Linking case study to research sample, Patton (2002, p.230) discusses the importance of researchers to select their participants and referred to this type of sampling as 'purposive' sampling. The advantages of purposive sampling can be seen in the richness and depth of the data researchers can yield from studying a particular social phenomenon. As for this type of sampling and the issue of generalisability of the case, Patton, (ibid, p.230) puts that:

> The logic and power of purposive sampling lie in selecting *information-rich cases* for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term *purposive* sampling. Studying information-rich cases yields insights and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalizations (italics in original).

To conclude, in this section, I have attempted to provide a general snapshot of the case study methodology adopted in this study underpinned by social constructionism. In the following Subsections 4.4.3 and 4.4.4, I describe the setting wherein the study took place, and the techniques that I used to recruit participants.

4.2.3. Context of the case study

This study was conducted at one British University located in south-east England, and which I refer to as 'SEE University' to maintain privacy and confidentiality of the institution and the participants. SEE University has four[12] faculties. I recruited participants from each faculty. These are Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Medicine, Health and Social Care, and Faculty of Science, Engineering and Social Sciences. Yet, as I illustrate in Section 4.2.4 below, I categorised my participants according to (i) the disciplinary homes rather than the faculties they belong to, and (ii) my insider-outsider positionality in terms of how I felt in the different disciplinary homes to which the participants belonged. In addition, as explained in Section 1.1, my choice of the study setting was more of a convenience issue rather than just a random institution to study academics' collaboration. This suggests that had I not attended the Pre-sessional course at SEE University in 2017-2018, I might not have chosen it as a research setting. Hence, I should add that it was made easier for me to get permission to conduct my research at SEE University as my participants' familiarity with me (mainly the purposive sample) was important to get access to the 'outsider-space' participants, and the way my 'insider-space' participants perceived me before, during and after the data collection phase remained the same.

4.2.4. Research participants and recruitment techniques

The targeted sample in this study is 12 academics from SEE University, and who, based on my observations in 2017-2018, appeared to engage in collaborative practices. These participants belong to different disciplinary homes, which are applied linguistics, history, education, sociology, politics, psychology, archaeology, engineering, nursing, business, and law. For the sake of clarity, I decided to refer to the participants from the disciplines of applied linguistics and education as '*discipline A participants*', participants from the disciplines of History and Politics as '*discipline B participants*', participants from the disciplines of sociology, politics, archaeology and psychology as '*discipline* C *participants*', and those from the disciplines of engineering, nursing, business and law as *'discipline D participants'*.

Moreover, it should be highlighted that the disciplinary homes of the participants affected the data yielded in this research, in the sense that participants from the discipline of psychology, for example, used some concepts that reflected the disciplinary home they belonged to. Therefore, each and every disciplinary home is unique in terms of the genre of

[12] SEE University had four faculties at the time of the data collection and analysis. Now, it has only three faculties. Yet, I am keeping the old structure of the university as it was at the time of the study.

'discourse' used in their disciplines and during the interview, hence my expression 'tell me who you interviewed, and I tell you how the data will be'. That is, the reader of the thesis can tell where the participants come from through the concepts and expressions they use, and which reflect the disciplinary home they live in. A description of my research participants and their disciplinary homes is presented below.

Pseudonym	Gender	Academic status	Sampling technique	Disciplinary home
1)- Lorenzo	Male academic	Senior lecturer	Purposive	Applied linguistics
2)- Marc	Male academic	Professor	Purposive	Applied linguistics
3)- Paul	Male academic	Professor	Purposive	History
4)- Robert	Male academic	Senior lecturer	Purposive	Education
5)- James	Male academic	Professor	Purposive	Sociology
6)- Adam	Male academic	Professor	Purposive	Politics
7)- Victoria	Female academic	Senior lecturer	Purposive	Education
8)- Sara	Female academic	Senior lecturer	Purposive	Psychology
9)- Florence	Female academic	Senior lecturer	Snowball	Engineering
10)-Grace	Female academic	Senior lecturer	Snowball	Nursing
11)- Maria	Female academic	Senior lecturer	Snowball	Business
12)- Lisa	Female academic	Senior lecturer	Snowball	Law

Table 4.1: Describing my research participants and their disciplinary homes.

However, the reader of this thesis might wonder as to why I chose not to explore the gendered nature of the participants' contributions and their impact on collaboration. Therefore, it should be clarified that the fact that the number of male and female participants in this study is equal does not necessarily imply that I had planned to investigate the way the gender of the participants could affect their collaborative practices, including both the process and outcome of their collaboration. In fact, the equal number of participants in terms of gender was not something which I intended to do. This was unintentional, not planned, hence my choice not to explore the gendered nature of participants' collaboration.

Moreover, as I am not an expert in the field of gender studies, I chose not to study the gendered nature of my participants as to collaboration because when the research began, I was focusing on the way the participants as academics – regardless of their gender – perceived and

experienced collaboration in HE. For example, investigating whether female academics' reasons behind their engagement in collaboration is more expressive than those of their male counterparts is not a priority in this research. Or whether male professors are more academically generous, compassionate, and altruistic in terms of helping other early career academics gain academic recognition and visibility than their female counterparts. Yet, as I mentioned in Chapter Eight, Section 8.3, this can be an interesting further research study to be carried out in the future.

Furthermore, my plan was to gather data that would be representative of a particular group of academics working at the SEE University only, and not to generalise the findings to the entire population of SEE University or to other academics from other universities in The UK or beyond. In addition, it should be noted that while the findings are not generalisable, their long-term contributions are. However, it was not possible for me to conduct a case study with all the academics working at SEE University. This is mainly because I thought that to co-construct in-depth data from that case, I needed to minimise the sample size, which is inextricably linked to the features of sample size in qualitative research, i.e., small sample size (Silverman, 2005). Thus, I had to select the sample of academics and managed to recruit them by means of two techniques – *purposive* sampling (e.g., Patton, 2002; Mertens, 2005) and *snowballing* sampling (e.g., Noy, 2009; Woodley and Lockard, 2016).

In addition, I had to choose some academics who were "knowledgeable people, i.e., those who have in-depth knowledge about particular issues" (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2011, p.157), which is collaboration in this case. I, therefore, employed *purposive* sampling to deepen my understanding about collaboration in HE from the perspectives of some British academics working at SEE University, and I managed to do that through selecting participants who were expected to provide in-depth insights into the phenomenon under investigation. Those participants, therefore, were "uniquely able to be informative because they are expert in an area or were privileged witnesses to an event" (Weiss, 1995, p.17). In my research, the 'experts' or 'knowledgeable people' were 12 academics from SEE University, and who met the criteria which are presented below:

1- Being a university *academic* (lecturer, senior lecturer, professor, etc.) from SEE University.

2- Being an academic who not only *teaches* but is also engaged in *research* and other *supervision* activities.

3- Being an academic who is currently participating in *collaborative activities* or at least has some *experiences* in collaborating with other academics at various geographical levels (locally, nationally, and internationally).

With respect to accessing and recruiting participants in this study, I used *purposive* sampling and *snowball or chain referral* sampling, which are techniques commonly employed to recruit participants in qualitative research (Gentles et al, 2015). Purposive sampling[13], which is a term that several qualitative researchers like Patton (2015, p.265) deems as "a specifically qualitative approach to case selection", can be referred to as "[t]he selection of participants or sources of data to be used in a study, based on their anticipated richness and relevance of information in relation to the study's research questions" (Yin, 2011, p.311).

Moreover, since I was a partial-insider to most participants, the eight participants who I had deliberately selected to participate in the study, and who viewed me as an insider to their faculties, some of them helped me recruit other participants from D Discipline. This kind of sampling is referred to as *snowball* sampling. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011, p.158), snowball sampling is a technique for recruiting research participants wherein "researchers use social networks, informants and contacts to put them in touch with further individuals". Therefore, I used the eight participants (*purposive* sampling), who were from disciplines A, B and C, to assist me in identifying and recruiting other academics from D Discipline, who were somewhat hard for me to find as I was not in close contact with them, and I had never thought I would need them in my research. This snowball sample technique, therefore, was of significant help in establishing contacts and trust with few academics who eventually became participants.

Snowballing technique, access, and power

However, the same academics who had initially refused to be my participants changed their minds and accepted to participate after that two of my gatekeepers had forwarded an email asking them to kindly participate in the study. For instance, one academic from discipline A and two from discipline B acted as gatekeepers and put me in contact with their colleagues who, according to them, were 'good' collaborators. Therefore, I managed to overcome the challenge of recruiting other participants through the help of the participants that I selected. Moreover, since I was an outsider to the participants from D Discipline, I was somewhat

[13] I used this recruitment technique prior to rather than during the data collection stage. Had I used it during the data collection and analysis phase, this would have been called 'theoretical sampling' – a Grounded Theory sampling technique employed during the data collection and analysis phase.

dependent on the other eight participants who I had initially chosen to advertise my research and highlight me as an 'ethical researcher'. Besides, as discussed above, being an insider to the other eight participants had a tremendous influence on the way I approached and recruited participants from D Discipline. For this reason, I described my 'insider-space' participants as being more 'compassionate' than their 'outsider-space' counterparts when it comes to recruiting them and conducting several interviews with them.

Additionally, identifying participants from discipline D was quite a dauting task for me as I originally had not thought about including all the four faculties of the University. I had initially planned to work with the participants that I had an acquaintance with, then while having an informal conversation about my research, two of my participants from the A and B Disciplines mentioned that besides collaborating with people from discipline C, they also collaborated with few discipline D academics. This triggered my academic curiosity to increase the sample size and started contacting some academics from discipline D with no positive reply probably because I was an outsider to them. Yet, the other participants introduced me to them, and I successfully gained access and recruited them as participants in my study. Moreover, though my participants engage in co-teaching, co-supervision, and co-research practices, much of the findings seem to 'skew towards' research, supervision and *outside-the-classroom* rather than *inside-the-classroom* teaching collaboration. This is mainly because these participants are the ones that my 'purposive sampling' participants and I could most easily access. Therefore, I should acknowledge that there appears to be a leaning towards more research-focused than teaching-focused participants.

After having described how I managed to recruit research participants by means of *purposive* and *snowball* sampling, in the following, I describe the data collection method and data collection journey.

4.2.5. The data collection method

To understand 'the qualities of the individuals' with whom the participants collaborate, 'where' their collaborative practices take place, and 'why' they engage in collaboration, I opted for a single approach to data collection. Although it is essential for a case study to research a phenomenon using a variety of data collection instruments (Baxter and Jack, 2008), in this study, I relied exclusively on interviews as the only instrument for collecting data. That is, as a social constructionist researcher, I selected participants who I knew they were involved in collaborative practices, otherwise it would have been difficult for them to construct meaning of collaboration unless they had experienced it. Thus, the reason for the selection of the

participants along with the data collection tool was to "best help us understand the case" (Stake, 1995, p.56).

In the following, two main subsections are presented. First, a general overview of semi-structured interview (4.2.5.1) adopted in this study is described. Moreover, within the same subsection, I depict the rationale behind my employment of this data collection technique and also explain how the interview questions were tested prior to the actual data collection phase. Finally, in the last Subsection 4.2.5.2, details on how I collected data in this research are sketched.

4.2.5.1. Interview

Since I adopted a qualitative approach to investigating the collaborative practices of 12 academics within a particular British University, to be able to understand the subjective experiences and views of the participants, I believed that the employment of interviews, and more precisely semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, was a significant method through which data were gathered. Having a social constructionist mindset, I recognise, influenced the way I explored how my participants individually[14] experienced collaborations and subjectively interpreted the way they looked at such collaborative endeavours. This also suggests that my positionality as a researcher affected the choice that I made about the data collection tool I used in this study. This data collection tool is *interviewing* the academics involved in collaborative practices.

Moreover, I should stress that it was I who conducted the whole research, including its data collection, analysis and discussion phases. This is because in qualitative research, the researcher is an essential instrument in the entire process of data collection and analysis (Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, 2014), otherwise there would have been no point in engaging myself in the research process unless I had acted as an important tool without which this research might not have existed (Braun and Clarke, 2021). Prior to exploring how I gleaned data, I should first sketch the reasons for opting to use such an important data collection method.

As a qualitative researcher aiming to explore collaboration from a chosen group of academics within a particular UK university using a case study approach, I should, therefore, understand this phenomenon, as Spradley (1979) recommends, from three main sources. These are (i) from what individuals say, (ii) from the way people behave, and (iii) from the artefacts individuals use. By stating the phrase 'from what individuals say', Spradley (1979) here is

[14] By 'individually', here I am referring to each and every participant as an individual who collaborates with other academic collaborative spouses.

referring to interviews, which represents a significant data collection tool adopted in this case study, and which is framed by social constructionism. This is because interviews appear to be well-suited for the general aim of my research. In a similar vein, and the way I view my interviews, Kvale (1996, p.174) views the interview as "a conversation, whose purpose is to gather descriptions of the [life-world] of the interviewee". As explained earlier, these 'interviewees' were academics that my 'purposive sampling' participants and I selected based on the criteria they met and which I described earlier in Section 4.2.4.

4.2.5.1.1. *'Inter-Views'*: Negotiation and co-construction of meaning within the research

Based on my social constructionist perspective, which views meaning and knowledge as socially constructed between the researcher and the researched, I, therefore, argue that all my participants and I negotiated meaning and co-constructed knowledge about collaboration, and that both of us learnt from one another: "I am now learning when you're interviewing me. It's giving me ideas. You're making me think about interesting things which I might write about in the future" (Marc, formal interview). This denotes that both my participants and I were actively engaged during the course of the interview, excluding the very first couple of interviews conducted wherein I was quite 'naïve' in terms of reflexivity. This is because an interview is about 'interchanging' views and beliefs between the researcher and the participants. In this vein, Brinkmann and Kvale (2015, p.4) explain the co-construction of knowledge and meaning by the researcher and the participants as follows:

> The research interview is based on the conversations of daily life and is a professional conversation; it is an inter-view, where knowledge is constructed in the inter-action between the interviewer and the interviewee. An interview is literally an inter-view, an inter-change of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest.

Reflecting upon Brinkmann and Kvale's (ibid.) recommendations when conducting a qualitative research interview, even though I acknowledge that I naturally have a good command of conversational skills, running those interviews appeared to be challenging. This is probably because I believe that the face-to-face interviews which I had with my participants actually went beyond a simple social interaction which generally occurs between an interviewer and an interviewee. In fact, it required me to possess 'substantial' skills and knowledge in this craft of interviewing. Moreover, the term 'interview' is perceived by Brinkmann and Kvale (ibid.) as 'inter-view'. This suggests that the interviews that I had with my participants were a professional conversation wherein knowledge about issues surrounding collaboration were produced by virtue of the interaction and engagement which I had with my

participants during the interviews. This elucidates that most of my interviews – or *inter-views* – were a two-way process of co-constructing knowledge, negotiating meaning, and exchanging ideas and views between my participants and me when discussing issues surrounding collaboration in HE, which was a topic of great interest to both of us, and which is something that helped me generate rich and in-depth data.

Speaking of 'interest', after finishing the interview with her, Florence (formal interview), for example, added that: "[t]he topic is most interesting. I genuinely enjoyed participating in your interview […] I'm a big believer in collaboration". Similarly, Sara (email message) enthusiastically responded to my email when inviting her to participate in the study, expressing: "I would be very happy to be part of your research and help in any way that I can – it sounds like a very interesting and important topic". That is, had my participants and I not been interested in the phenomenon of collaboration in HE, this research might probably not have existed. Moreover, before I began to design my interview schedule, I had already considered what King and Horrocks (2010, p.9) suggest when conducting any qualitative research interview: "[i]t is flexible and open-ended in style"; "it tends to focus on people's actual experiences more than general beliefs and opinions"; and "the relationship between interviewer and interviewee is crucial to the method".

4.2.5.1.2. Designing the interview questions

I designed my interview questions in a way that was semi-structured (See Appendix A on page 271). This type of interviews, which employs an interview schedule to guide me throughout the interview process, is the most frequently employed genre of interviews used in qualitative research (Stuckey, 2013). As I used a small-scale case study, I had to employ semi-structured interviews because they give a very flexible method for small-scale research (Drever, 1995). Thus, semi-structured interviews allowed me to predetermine the structure of the interview I wanted to conduct beforehand by designing the questions in a semi-structured way. The reason for this is that it enabled me to make decisions about what to ask according to the interview guide, with chances for open questions to unexpected issues to develop.

Additionally, this interview approach was of foremost importance in my study as it "allows depth to be achieved by providing the opportunity on the part of the interviewer to probe and expand the interviewee's responses" (Rubin and Rubin (2005, p.88). For instance, all my participants and I had the opportunity to discuss and expound the interviewee's answers (Mann, 2016) by giving room for unexpected themes to be explored and gain more in-depth and richer data.

4.2.5.2. The interview-based data collection journey

Having described the significant data generation tool employed in this study – semi-structured interview – in this section, I sketch my journey itinerary of data collection relying exclusively on interviews. This section is structured as follows: firstly, Section 4.2.5.2.1 describes how I tested my interview questions. Secondly, Section 4.2.5.2.2. portrays the follow-up interviews and journey of development of the initial research themes. Thirdly, Section 4.2.5.2.3 explains the different attributes which my follow-up interviews have. Furthermore, Section 4.2.5.2.4 delineates the issue of power relations in my research. Finally, Section 4.2.5.2.5 describes the two interview tools used in this research – photographs and documents.

Prior to embarking on narrating how I went about collecting data, at the beginning of the study, I was planning to conduct my research using three tools – interviews, observations and focus groups. However, because my aim was to understand academics' perceptions and explore their experiences with collaboration, this did not necessitate observations because after conducting the interviews, I came to realise that most of the collaborations wherein my participants took part were natural, spontaneous, and mostly informal, which made the use of observations unnecessary. As for the use of focus groups after interviews, I did not conduct any focus group for two reasons.

While the first reason was that most of my participants were too busy and had tight schedules, and, thus, they preferred to be interviewed individually rather than collectively, the second reason is that, by the end of all the interviews and follow-up interviews, I did not really feel the need to group academics together and have a focus group discussion about the reasons why they perceived collaboration the way they did as the data were already rich, and assisted in addressing the research questions. In other words, since I took a reflexive approach to thematic analysis, my main aim was to make sure that my study was designed to address the research questions, not to ensure that it does not overlook any issues related to collaboration. I, therefore, ended up conducting one-to-one interviews and follow-up interviews, which, I believe, were in-depth in nature, and helped me address my research aims and questions, which is the most important thing a researcher should aim for in their research.

My data collection journey, which, I should acknowledge, was full of enthusiasm, excitement and stimulation, had two phases. The first phase was before the Covid-19 pandemic, i.e., it started on the 17th of September 2019 and ended on the 15th of December 2019, that is over a period of three months. The second phase took place during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic, i.e., from the 1st of May until mid-May 2020. This denotes that I gleaned two sets of collaboration-related data – participants' collaboration *before* and *during* the initial stages

of the global pandemic. During the first phase of data collection, I collected the data, transcribed the interviews, and at the same time tried to start the initial analysis of the data.

However, and as most qualitative researchers may feel, I would describe my data collection journey as a 'labyrinth' with all the interview data in total disarray and disorganisation, particularly because I had lots of rich data which I did not know what to do about. The massive volume of data made me feel overwhelmed and asphyxiated. Along the same line, Dornyei (2007, p.125), when referring to the 'disorganisation' state of data in qualitative research, reveals that:

> Qualitative research is by definition less systematic and standardized in its data collection approach than quantitative research … [and] the messiness of the rich data we are aiming for is often merely a reflection of the complex real-life situations that the data concerns.

As I mentioned earlier, I conducted 12 audio-recorded interviews with 12 participants and 10 follow-up interviews with eight participants. Interviews helped me gain an accurate picture of how the participants and their collaborative partners collaborated, and how they influenced one another's behaviours and actions when collaborating. I also gained some 'intuitive' and 'intellectual' understandings of the collaborative culture of the studied community and avoided to impose any ideas or force the data to 'speak' (See *reflexive bracketing* in Section 4.1.2). That is, after a few interviews, I began to take Britten's (1995, p.251) advice by remaining faithful to my participants' views about collaboration and letting the data speak for themselves by trying to

> [A]void imposing the researcher's structures and assumptions as far as possible. The researcher needs to remain very open to the possibility that the concepts and variables that emerge may be very different from those that might have been predicted at the outset.

Moreover, all my interviews had a brief conversation with my participants prior to starting the interview as to whether they were happy with the interview to be audio-recorded. As they accepted to be recorded, I informed them that they could ask me to stop the recording at any time during the interview, and that their real names would be replaced by pseudonyms to protect their identities and those of their collaborative 'spouses'. Taking Borg and Gall's (1989) recommendation on board, I did not go into the interview meeting with hypotheses or questions to 'test'. Instead, I went into the research field with the aim of "exploring and understanding the meaning" (Creswell, 2009, p.4) my participants would give to collaboration

based on their experiences with collaboration in HE. The data were explored through the experiences, perceptions and values of the academics who I thought had enough knowledge to share with me about their collaboration. However, I should state that I had tested my interview questions with two Ph.D. researchers before officially conducting my actual study.

4.2.5.2.1. Testing the interview questions

The aim of testing the interview questions was to solve unexpected issues that might have emerged when conducting the actual interviews. Thus, trying out my interview questions with other colleagues was critically important. Testing the interview questions emphasised the extemporisation to the main research and helped me verify the questions, rehearse and gain practice about the way interviews should be conducted before formally running them (Abdul Majid et al., 2017). For example, the two fellow researchers with whom I conducted my interviews prior to the actual study pointed out two important issues when I interviewed them. These were at two levels – 'linguistic' and 'behavioural'. By *linguistic* level, I mean that the way I had formulated the interview questions had been quite ambiguous in that I had not used a clear and easy language that could be understood easily. For this reason, as suggested by one of my colleagues, I had to be careful with my language at the actual interview. Regarding the issue spotted at the *behavioural* level, my colleagues pointed out that I was trying to hasten to answer some interview questions without listening carefully to what they were saying. I, therefore, took on board their advice and tried to have a critical ear on the actual interview day.

After testing my interview questions, I began to contact my participants by email to invite them to the interview meeting which, for ethical considerations, did not exceed 60 minutes. However, some participants were so engaged in the interview that they went on for too long discussing interesting issues related to their experiences with collaboration. Moreover, I had to consider my participants' preferences, and had to ask them whether they would be happy to have a face-to-face, telephone or Skype interview. As for the interviews, I also allowed my participants to choose the location for the interview wherein they would feel most comfortable and what would be most convenient to them. Regarding the questions of the interview, as highlighted previously, the whole interview guide comprised 15 open questions in a simple and clear English language. The language used in the interviews was English as all of my participants were native speakers of English language.

4.2.5.2.2. Follow-up interviews and the journey of development of initial themes

As described previously, I conducted 12 face-to-face interviews and 10 follow-up interviews, one of which was a telephone follow-up interview as the participant was not in the

UK and it was impossible for us to meet in person. The follow-up interviews were conducted after I had finished transcribing and had started the initial analysis of the first interviews. The aim of running follow-up interviews was to gain more thorough understanding about some important themes that had been co-constructed in the first round of interviews. For instance, in the first interviews, when talking about how they viewed collaboration based on their past experiences, most of my participants mentioned issues like 'outcome-focused academics', 'diverse collaborative places', and 'academics belonging to a community of researchers'.

These 'undeveloped', 'immature' and 'un-Ph.D.-like' themes, as my supervisor and I described them, by dint of conducting follow-up interviews, taking my participants', supervisors' and critical friends' feedback into account, were refined and started to develop into more 'mature' and 'Ph.D.-like' themes. For example, some of the immature themes turned into more mature ones like 'academic productivity', 'academic freedom', 'crossing spatial boundaries', 'construction of a shared sense of professional identity in a collaborative community', 'negotiation of power in collaboration', and 'professional recognition through collaboration'.

As I detail in Section 4.4, the journey of maturity and development of my Ph.D. research themes was heavily loaded with feedback from different 'academic sources' that helped in the (re)-shaping of themes, writing about them, making sense of their meaning and validating the way I was interpreting them in a way that reflected Ph.D. level. As an example, when discussing my initial themes with them, my supervisor and two of my critical friends were not impressed at all and kept repeating the questions 'so what?' and 'why is this important?' thanks to which I started searching for depth, originality and creativity in those themes by always keeping in mind those two short, yet important, questions.

4.2.5.2.3. Characteristics of my follow-up interviews

The 'depth' and 'breadth' of the findings were yielded from the 10 follow-up interviews that I run with eight participants. I regarded the first couple of interviews as 'exploratory interviews' and the follow-up interviews as 'the real interviews' wherein depth and breadth of what I was researching began to expand. Before going any further, I should make it clear that most of the qualitative studies which were conducted using interviews and follow-up interviews as the main data collection method did not define what they meant by follow-up interviews. Therefore, were I to define follow-up interviews from my research experience, I would refer to them as a set of interviews conducted by a researcher following the first round of arranged interviews, and are characterised by three key features – power, trust and depth.

I am using *power* here to highlight that follow-up interviews, from my own experience, involved some degrees of power on the part of the participants. For instance, unlike in the first round of interviews wherein some participants appeared to be extremely interested in taking part in the study as that was the first time we had an interview, when asking few of them for follow-up interviews, two of them did not really want to be involved again in other follow-up interviews. They claimed that they were too busy, and others simply did not respond to the emails that I had sent to them. Here, I felt 'powerless' and could not oblige them to have another interview. On the other hand, the other eight participants were happy to be interviewed more than twice. For example, when inviting her for a follow-up interview, Sara (email message) replied: "[i]t was a pleasure to meet you, and absolutely no worries at all! I hope that some of it will be useful to you (despite my mumbling), and yes, very happy for any follow up chats that you might need". Linked to social constructionism and social psychology, this suggests that the way different participants treated me had a huge impact on the way I perceived myself as a researcher in the research. That is, identity-wise, I felt that I had a 'fluid' researcher identity wherein, as I describe later in Section 4.3.1, my perception of myself as a researcher was constantly changing from insider to outsider, and vice versa, hence my expression 'moving across the hyphen of insider-outsider' (See Section 4.3.1 for more details).

As for the element of *trust* in my follow-up interviews, I recognise that my participants would not have accepted to be interviewed again unless I had built a 'good' trust-based relationship with them. Trust proved to be vital in my case. For example, one participant in one of our follow-up interviews said: "don't worry Aziz, I trust you". Another participant, in another instance, mentioned that she trusted me thanks to the academic friend that we had in common, and that, according to her, I was a 'trustworthy' researcher.

The third fundamental feature in my follow-up interviews is *depth*. In all the follow-up interviews I conducted, more in-depth and richer data were yielded. This, however, does not necessarily mean that the data obtained from the first phase of interviews were not profound enough to be analysed. The only reason I decided to conduct follow-up interviews was to have new and thorough understanding about the themes that my participants and I had co-constructed from the first round of interviews. That is, my aim was to explore further what was said in previous interviews and to turn those 'undeveloped' 'immature' and 'MA-like' themes into more 'mature' and 'Ph.D.-like' findings characterised by richness, elaboration and depth. For example, my supervisor and one of my critical friends commented: "I really like the points you're making in this chapter, very Ph.D.-like!" and "I'm so proud of you now!", respectively.

4.2.5.2.4. Power relations within the research

This section discusses power relations and their implications in the development of the research process. In relation to power dynamics in my interviews, I argue that my interviews were academic conversations which were generally "initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information and focused on content specified research objectives of systematic description, prediction or explanation" (Cohen and Manion, 1989, p.307). However, some of my participants had, as (Hoffman, 2007, p.337) summarises:

> [S]trong preferences as to where and when to meet...Once the interview actually takes place, the interviewer begins by asking questions...The researcher's questions, however, are of little value without the responses from the interviewee. Here, again, the power shifts back to the respondent. Interviewees might condition their replies on various responses of the interviewer...Sometimes the interview process itself can seem threatening [to the interviewee].

Based on the quote above and drawing upon my own experience with interviewing my participants, it is unquestionable that there were degrees of power between my participants as interviewees and me as an interviewer throughout the whole data collection phase. The levels of power that my participants exerted over me were at two stages – *before* and *during* the data collection phase.

I refer to the first stage as *procedural power*. This suggests that my participants did have power prior to officially accepting to participate in my study. Akin to 'procedural ethics' discussed in Section 4.6, I am using 'procedural power' to suggest the type of power that my participants had in deciding whether to accept to participate in my research interviews. For example, unlike participants from disciplines A, B and C, whose consent was straightforward, participants from discipline D took some time before they finally agreed to participate in the study.

I refer to the second stage at which power on the part of the participants was high as '*situational powe*r' or '*power in practice*'. By situational power, here I am referring to the levels of power that were exerted over me during the data collection phase. I felt that most of my participants had more power than I did, particularly when I began to ask some of them for further details during the interview. An instance of situational power was when I requested a participant to provide me with a metaphor to explain the link between collaboration and productivity, by which they answered "no, I do not want to". However, I did not have the right to insist on the participant as I knew that was against ethics, and they might even have

withdrawn from the study had I done otherwise. Another example was when I asked a participant for the possibility to take part in a second 'follow-up' interview, by which they replied: "I think this is getting too much". The latter reminded me of the Speech Act Theory in that the "I think this is getting too much" utterance was a locutionary act whose illocutionary counterpart was "I do not want to participate again". Therefore, the perlocutionary act on my part was that I did not insist on them and had to respect their decision.

However, this does not suggest that none of my participants attempted to 'negotiate power' and show more 'flexibility' as to when and where the interview could be done. In fact, few of my 'insider-space' participants showed less authority and more flexibility when it came to the time and venue of the interview. For example, when I emailed her to apologise for not being able to make it to the interview at 10 a.m. as I had an important RDP[15] session to attend that morning, Lisa (email message) replied: "[n]o worries at all; 11 suits me well actually. I'll be in my office all morning, so whenever you are free after your RDP". Besides, I also had another positive reply from Robert (email message) when I inquired about the possibility to change the time of the interview as that coincided with an interview meeting that I had scheduled with another participant, saying: "[h]ello Aziz, how about another time on Wed 20th. Would 1.30 p.m. work for you? If not, please let me know".

4.2.5.2.5. Interview tools

To help yield richer data, I decided to use two main interview tools, which are photographs (Mann, ibid.) and documents (Merriam, 2009). Yet, I need to highlight that applying the social constructionist paradigm to my study using these two tools played an important role in the way I conducted the interviews. That is, participants might probably not have shed light on some issues about collaboration had I not provided them with photographs and documents (or documentary evidence) describing academic practices in HE. Therefore, as elucidated in Sections 4.1 and 4.2.5.1.1, both data and their analysis in this study are socially constructed, in the sense that my participants and I co-constructed and negotiated meaning and knowledge about collaboration.

a) Photographs

I provided my participants with four photographs. Two representing collaboration of university academics and two describing isolation (See Appendix B on page 273). This interview tool consists in using pictures in an interview and requesting the interviewee to

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express their opinions about the visual image which relates to the topic of the interview, which is collaboration in this case. I opted to use photographs to improve my relationship with my participants and ultimately gain in-depth data. The question which accompanied the photographs was "which photo would best describe you as a university academic?". That was just to understand the degree to which the participants were engaging in collaboration. The question was also asked to explore the correlation between participants' personality types and their ability to collaborate with other academics (i.e., academics' level of social capital).

Besides, the aim was also to trigger them to, as Thomas (2009) mentions, produce an oral discussion and help the interview go smoothly. Moreover, not only did the photo elicitation technique helped my participants comment on visual images about collaboration and isolation, but it also assisted to co-construct different types of data as it elicited participants' information, emotions, and recollections (Harper, 2002). For instance, when I showed them a photograph about academics working together, most of participants seemed to be excited and had a lot to share with me as they could easily recall the collaborative activities wherein they participated with different academics worldwide.

Therefore, had I not provided my participants with photographs, they might probably have been unable to describe their personality or discuss some issues surrounding collaboration without looking at the photographs. The latter allowed my participants to think of some similarities and differences between the people in those photographs and them. Besides, themes like 'the correlation between social capital and collaboration'; 'introvert, ambivert and extrovert academics'; 'virtual collaboration'; 'informal (small c) collaboration'; and 'personality versus persona' were generated through the photo elicitation technique.

b) Documents

The second tool I used in all the interviews was documents (See Appendix C on page 275). The use of documents in my interviews offered me in-depth data as to participants' multiple interpretations they had for some SEE University's collaboration-related documents. A succinct definition of documents in qualitative research is: "any written material other than a record that was not prepared specifically in response to some requests from the investigator" (Guba and Lincoln, 1981, p.228). This indicates that I did not request the university to prepare documents about academics' collaborative activities. I gathered some pieces of texts from the four faculties within SEE University wherein components of collaboration, joint work, academics' professional learning, and community formation were stated.

Those were 'public' documents which belonged to every participant's faculty. That is, participants from the *discipline A* were given documents related to their faculty, not other faculties. I did the same with participants from other faculties to ensure that those people were aware of what was mentioned in the documents. Furthermore, I used documents, which formed part of my participants' day-to-day academic life (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2007), as another interview tool to help me gain a thorough understanding about the extent to which what was stated in those documents was reflected in participant's practices. However, the aim was not to 'test' the credibility of the information stated in those documents. Like photographs, I used documents to enable my participants to voice their perceptions about the myriad examples of collaboration mentioned in the documents.

Furthermore, the question which accompanied the set of statements extracted from different sources (e.g., University portal and University official documents like Teaching and Learning Strategies 2015-2020) was: "Would you please reflect upon the following statements?". Participants' reactions towards the series of statements provided ranged from "sorry but these are bland statements. To me they are stating the obvious, they state what we do. They're bland, pointless [..]" (Paul, formal interview); "these are the sorts of things you have to write when you're writing a report, when you're writing a bit of advertise […]" (Marc, formal interview) to "I think as a whole these are true and they do happen in our faculty" (Sara, formal interview). Moreover, the use of documents helped trigger my participants' opinions about the collaborations mentioned in the documents and which, according to them, were reflected in reality.

In addition, participants provided me with unexpectedly interesting data elicited by those statements. For example, while those statements only focused on academics' formal (or big C) collaboration, participants pointed out that those documents did not state the informal collaboration they had with academics within and outside their collaborative communities. Therefore, themes like 'balancing the formal-informal collaboration binary'; 'developing a sense of shared identity in collaboration'; 'crossing spatial boundaries' and 'crossing disciplinary boundaries' were mostly elicited by the documents provided to the participants.

4.3. Locating myself within the research

Prior to moving to the way I went about analysing the data, I should first describe how I located myself within the research (i.e., my positionality as a researcher in the study), and then feature how my positionality influenced the research process and the findings. This section, therefore, delineates my journey of self-discovery as a researcher in the research field.

It first begins with describing where I stood in the research in relation to my participants in terms of insider-outsider perspectives, then exploring my reflexivity as a researcher and its implications in the research process.

4.3.1. '*Moving across the hyphen of insider-outsider*': Describing my partial-insider researcher positionality

This section describes my insider (emic) - outsider (etic) or 'partial-insider' (Lim, 2012; Balchin, 2017) role as a researcher in this study. The insider-outsider dichotomy is perceived as "the degree to which a researcher is located either within or outside a group being researched" (Gair, 2012, p.137). The remainder of this section is structured as follows: firstly, my 'fluid' researcher identity or 'partial-insider' researcher positionality is illustrated. Secondly, the way I felt in the insider and outsider space is described. Thirdly, the relationship between 'purposive sampling' and 'insider-space' participants is clarified.

As a qualitative researcher, it was extremely important for me to reflect upon my positionality as a researcher because this inevitably had a huge impact on all phases of my research process, including research design, access to the research setting, data collection, and data analysis and discussion, or as Foote and Bartell (2011, p.46) put it:

> The positionality that researchers bring to their work, and the personal experiences through which positionality is shaped, may influence what researchers may bring to research encounters, their choice of processes, and their interpretation of outcomes.

Drawing upon the quote above and based on my experience as a researcher, I argue that my positionality was influenced by power relations in terms of who I was, what I brought to the research field, and where and how I wanted to stand in relation to my participants. In this study, I was an insider and an outsider researcher at the same time and kept moving across the insider-outsider hyphen or the *space* between them (Corbin Dwyer and Buckle, 2009), hence the title of this section. Therefore, the link between my 'fluid' researcher identity, social psychology and social constructionism lies in the element of 'social influence' that both the former and the latter have in common, i.e., my identity as a researcher was socially constructed in that it was fluid, meaning that while participants from discipline D made me feel as an outsider and 'powerless', their counterparts from disciplines A, B and C made me feel that I was an insider to them and was as academically important as they were. This suggests that my 'fluid' research identity was influenced by the way I treated and was treated by my participants,

hence my own expression ‘tell me how you treat and are treated by your participants, and I tell you who you are’ in terms of ‘insider’ or ‘outsider’ researcher identity.

As I explained in Section 4.3.4, while I felt that I was an insider to members from disciplines A, B and C, that was not the case with participants from discipline D. This suggests that I recognised some similar ‘Selves’ to mine in the insider space wherein I felt part of that community and could relate to the experiences they were sharing with me (e.g., the common research seminar that we run every other Wednesday), and because most of the participants in the insider space were my tutors back in the Pre-sessional programme.

However, I felt different from the way I did in the ‘insider’ space when I started moving toward the other end of the insider-outsider continuum (i.e., outsider end) wherein I did not sense that same degree of insiderness as I did in the ‘insider’ space because the people there and I were not familiar with one another. I felt as a stranger, very anxious, and less confident. Nevertheless, though I felt more of an insider in the disciplinary homes A, B and C, this does not necessarily indicate that I did not “make the familiar strange” (Pole and Morrison, 2003, p.200) when interviewing them, and I was still able to take an outsider’s view. In fact, when some of the familiar participants were discussing issues about collaboration that I was aware of, I, during the interviews, tried to ‘defamiliarise’ myself with what was happening in the setting, and kept asking them to elaborate more on some points. For instance, two participants kept mentioning things like “you know, you’re part of the [name of a research group that we run every other Wednesday]” and “as you already know”, respectively. Yet, I had to make what was familiar to me strange to avoid falling into the trap of being an insider who is in over-rapport with the participants as I thought this could affect the quality of the data and eventually its analysis. Expecting the unexpected, therefore, helped me obtain more interesting data.

Furthermore, I attempted to follow Corbin Dwyer and Buckle’s (2009, p.60) advice regarding my positionality in the middle of the insider-outsider spectrum. Considering that while I perceived myself and was perceived differently in the two differing, albeit overlapping, spaces, I acknowledged that I had a dual researcher identity – ‘insider-outsider’ – with similar and dissimilar features between them and me:

> Accepting this notion [insider-outsider simultaneously] requires that noting the ways in which we are different from others requires that we also note the ways in which we are similar. This is the origin of the space between. It is this foundation that allows the position of both insider and outsider.

This implies that while I felt comfortable in the insider space, I did not really feel at ease when I was interviewing academics with whom I had never had any communication

(discipline D). Researchers' feelings in the insider-outsider spaces seem to be important in shaping the research process. For example, my relationship with the participants from the insider part of the continuum made me feel that I was part of their academic community. Being invited by two participants for a cup of coffee outside the university environment was something which the participants from the 'insider' rather than the 'outsider' space did.

As I discussed in Section 4.2.5.2.3, I conducted more follow-up interviews with academics from the insider space than with those from the outsider one. Therefore, I argue that researcher-participant familiarity was key in my research as while these were my *purposive sample*, it was they who introduced me to other participants wherein I felt less of an insider and more of an outsider, yet not completely outsider as they were still part of SEE University and whose collaborative relationships with my insider-space participants were 'strong'.

Having described my 'fluid' researcher identity in the field or my 'insider-outsider' positionality as a researcher in this study, the following section discusses the link between my 'partial-insiderness' and the extent to which I was engaged in reflexivity, and how my positionality affected the research process, including the collection and analysis of data.

4.3.2. '*From immature to mature reflexive practices*': My journey of becoming a reflexive researcher

In this section, I describe my reflexive practices in the research field and exemplify my process of *becoming* rather than *being* a reflexive researcher, hence the title of the section. Structure-wise, while the first couple of paragraphs discuss how 'naïve' I was as a researcher in terms of reflexivity in the early stages of the data collection, the second part explains how I *became* more reflexive in the research process.

Reflexivity, which concerns the role of one's own subjectivity as a researcher, is the process by which the researcher reflects upon the process of data collection and analysis. As Holliday (2007, p.137) clarifies, "qualitative research is itself social action, therefore the presence and influence of the researcher are unavoidable". As Palaganas et al. (2017, p.227) describe it, "reflexivity as a process is introspection on the role of subjectivity in the research process". This explains how researchers in social research involve their own role; reflect upon the data they collect and analyse; and that both reflexivity and subjectivity are essential to any researcher who seeks to conduct social research beyond the positivist perspective (Guillaume, 2002).

Reflecting upon my fieldwork experience and analogous to Balchin's (2017, p.17) description of himself as a researcher in the early stages of his study as "quite naïve and

lack[ing] reflexivity when the study began", I also felt that I was 'naïve' and deficient in mature prospective reflexivity. Notwithstanding my awareness of the fact that reflexivity in qualitative research often involves reflection on the impact of the researcher on the data, I failed to display my theoretical understanding of reflexivity in practice. For example, I was not fully engaged with my participants as I should have been during the first couple of interviews. This made me realise that there was an apparent gap between theory and practice of reflexivity in the very early stages of data collection. Some of the instances of my initial 'naïve', 'immature' and 'undeveloped' (hidden) reflexivity are described below.

When I first entered the field and began to interview[16] my participants, I was not that reflexive in the way I was interviewing them. I had lacked subjectivity, self-awareness, self-analysis and the skills to scrutinise and critically question my participants' perceptions and actions as to collaboration. For instance, in my initial interviews, I failed to critically ask my participants about the way they felt when collaborating in each space. I had taken what they had mentioned in the first round of interviews about collaborative spaces for granted without deeply reflecting upon what they were saying while I was interviewing them. Reading between the lines of participants' words was a thinking skill that I developed at a later stage. This, therefore, had affected my approach to reflexive thematic analysis.

This made the initial themes more 'un-Ph.D.'-like as I lacked the social and mutual engagement with participants and kept considering the first interviews as nothing but an instrument for data extraction. Moreover, my lack of reflexivity could be detected in the way I was 'describing' and 'reporting' rather than 'critically analysing' and 'interpreting' what the participants were saying. I, as my supervisor commented, was "scratching the surface without (yet) managing to really explore the depths of what you're trying to research". When I started transcribing the interview data, I also noticed that the way I was interviewing participants in the first couple of interviews was not efficient and demonstrated that I was not that subjective, critical or open-minded.

However, from the first week of November until mid-December 2019, I started to recognise that it was about time I was actively engaged in the data collection process, and eventually succeeded in becoming more reflexive and began to look at the data with a reflexive and critical eye. This, in turn, impacted my approach to data analysis in that I began to consider taking a 'reflexive' rather than a 'traditional' approach to data analysis because what

[16] I regarded my first couple of interviews as 'verbal questionnaires' or 'surveys' that lacked subjectivity and active engagement with the participants.

differentiates the reflexive from the traditional genre of thematic analysis is that the former – reflexive thematic analysis – is concerned with "the researcher's reflective and thoughtful engagement with their data and their reflexive and thoughtful engagement with the analytic process" (Braun and Clarke, 2019, p.594). Yet, before exemplifying how I became a mature reflexive researcher, I should acknowledge that I had to follow Mann's (2016) advice concerning three elements that any qualitative researcher needs to consider if they want to be actively involved in the field and after leaving it by keeping a reflective journal or a research diary. These elements that helped me maintain and promote more reflexivity and, hence, bridge the gap between theory and practice in the field were 'collaborative talk', 'reflective research diary', and 'reflexive bracketing'.

Collaborative talk (Co-constructed interviews): What helped me become reflexive is the fact that I conducted several follow-up interviews with most participants. Conducting further interviews allowed me to 'talk' to my participants again and critically question and reflect upon some issues that I had taken at face value in the first round of interviews. The 'emergent' reflexivity (Balchin, ibid.) during the follow-up interviews phase helped me realise how important it was for me to comprehend my participants' views and behaviours with respect to collaboration, and how significant it was for me to play an active role in the knowledge production (Braun and Clarke, 2019, 2021) – which is an important feature of reflexive thematic analysis. For example, issues like first, second and third space were co-constructed during the follow-up interviews. I noticed that the more I returned back to my participants and had more co-constructed interviews with them, the more I had a better idea of what I was researching.

Further, during the follow-up interviews and when I became more mature in terms of reflexivity and subjectivity, I began to realise that I had to be closer to my participants, so as the research knowledge could be constructed collaboratively. For example, I felt it was about time I established what Mann (ibid., p.27) calls a "reflexive relationship" with my participants. This suggests that all my participants and I had a huge impact on the (re)shaping of the research process, particularly the data analysis phase wherein I took a 'reflexive' (quality) approach to thematic analysis proposed by Clarke and Braun (2021). Moreover, as described in Section 4.4.1, since my approach to data analysis is inductive in nature, Braun and Clarke (ibid, p.331) suggest that "[r]esearchers using reflexive TA inductively need to identify, and ideally articulate in their reporting, the theoretical assumptions informing their analysis". The three Findings Chapters, therefore, are the fruit of becoming reflexive in the second round of interviews.

Reflective research diary: While it is common that most researchers use 'paper' research diary wherein they keep all their reflections about the research, I chose to keep a 'virtual' reflective diary wherein I talked to myself on Messenger and WhatsApp about everything that was happening during my data collection journey. This is because researchers are different, and so are their techniques of transferring their intangible reflections into more digitally tangible ones. I also claim that sharing my reflections with my other 'virtual academic Self' about the research process, and the way I perceived and was perceived by my participants, and how all these affected the way I went about analysing and discussing the data was important. Keeping such an important diary helped me foster my level of reflexivity and assisted me in maintaining a reflexive approach to my research (Blaxter, Hughes, and Tight, 2001, as cited in Mann, ibid.).

For example, though I had acute noticing skills while interviewing my participants and noticed that some of them had some of their co-written books and articles on their shelves in their offices, I genuinely had not thought of that as important. However, when I left the field, and thanks to my virtual reflective research diary, I began to record myself when reflecting upon how some participants exemplified their experiences with collaboration by taking some of their collaborative research publications (e.g., books, research papers, and articles) from their shelves and showing them to me. This reminded me of a teaching technique wherein English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers use materials from everyday life as teaching aids – *Realia*. Therefore, though it is generally used as a language teaching technique, I employed *Realia* in this thesis to describe my participants' process of exemplifying their experiences with collaboration through showing me real 'objects' – in my case these were 'paper' and 'digital' copies of their co-written books and articles.

However, this does not necessarily imply that I stopped talking to myself to reflect upon my participants' experiences and the research when I left the field. Flexible reflexivity continued to exist after the first phase of data collection had ended. That was done through reacting to circumstances in lieu of blindly applying procedures as I was in the beginning. For example, even though I had left the field around mid-December 2019, I still felt the need to interview some participants during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic in early May 2020 to explore their perceptions of and experiences with virtual collaboration during such difficult circumstances. Had I not begun to be more reflexive in my research, it would have been highly improbable that I would have engaged in further Covid-19-follow-up interviews (See extracts from my virtual research diary in Appendix F on page 283).

Reflexive bracketing[17]**:** During the first couple of interviews, I used to try hard to impose my own beliefs and prejudices on my participants. I used to want them to tell me what I wanted to hear, not what they genuinely wanted to say. For example, I used to insist on my participants that their perception of collaboration was 'neoliberal' as that was how I had initially understood it. My supervisors' and critical friends' comments on this were: "there is no data or evidence to support your argument", "I'm not sure the academics now are thinking about the economic value of their research", "I think you're trying to make this argument, but you haven't given the data to support it", and "be open-minded and flexible, Aziz!".

Nevertheless, my reflexivity started to develop when I had to set those biases aside and had to step back from the research topic without trying to force my participants to tell me what I wanted to hear. I, then, learnt that data should come from the participants' actual words, and that I should ask more reflexive questions and look at the data with an open mind. Once I distanced myself from how I used to perceive collaboration, interesting data like 'first', 'second' and 'third space'; 'psychology of finance'; and 'psycho-therapeutic collaboration' began to be constructed in a collaborative and reflexive way. I, for instance, had never thought about investigating 'where' my participants collaborated because I was blinded by my own presuppositions and the 'intellectual baggage' which I carried with me to the research field. I had never thought collaborative practices could be carried out at home or in pubs as that was not something that Algerian lecturers would do in Algeria. I initially thought that British academics would set boundaries between the social and professional side of their lives, and thus would only collaborate at university.

Therefore, attempting to 'bracket' my previous 'Algerian' way of perceiving collaboration, leaving my 'intellectual baggage' behind, and starting to think and act locally (UK) was important for a better grasp of collaboration from the perspectives of my British participants. Overall, showing more open-mindedness and flexibility when conducting the follow-up interviews and analysing the data helped me tremendously in discovering the perspective from which collaboration is now examined in this study.

4.4. Data analysis

As a summary of my data collection journey, I collected data for this interview-based qualitative case study from six male and six female British academics in four distinct, albeit

[17] Despite my awareness of the fact that it is difficult for me to bracket out my experience and set aside my own beliefs as these assumptions and prejudices unavoidably get in the way (LeVasseur, 2003), I found it necessary to consider this practice in my research to understand collaboration in more clarity (Schutz, 1967).

interrelated, faculties at SEE University. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews. However, Chapters Five, Six, and Seven might not have existed unless I had constantly made connections with the principles underpinning social constructionism, and at the same time had reminded myself that spinning the 'golden thread' that 'sewed' the several datasets together was an important factor shaping the analysis and discussion process. This section, therefore, describes the practical steps involved in the analysis of the data using reflexive thematic analysis approach, which is informed by social constructionism.

4.4.1. Reflexive thematic analysis

Contrary to its quantitative counterpart, qualitative research has a multiplicity of methods through which qualitative data can be analysed without necessarily sticking to a particular series of guiding principles (Robson, 2002, Braun and Clarke, 2019, 2021). As for the method of data analysis espoused in this study, I chose to use *reflexive thematic analysis* inductively rather than deductively as a method for "identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.6). Moreover, because the aim of the research lies in interpreting participants' views and behaviours as to collaboration from a social-psychological perspective, adopting such an approach to data analysis seems to be a good fit because it "[a]llows for social as well as psychological interpretations of data" (Braun and Clarke, ibid., p.37). Furthermore, as I highlighted in Section 4.3.2, my mature reflexive practices in the second round of interviews helped me tremendously in terms of looking at the whole datasets with an open, reflexive eye. This reflexive thematic analysis approach, therefore, reflected the many subjective and analytical skills which I brought with me to the process of making sense of the data – a process which I genuinely enjoyed engaging in, and whose nature was situated, interpretive, and reflexive (Braun and Clarke, 2021).

The reason I opted for this 'flexible' approach to data analysis is that it does not require one specific framework. Instead, it can be used with any conceptual or theoretical framework adopted in the research. As its name suggests, in reflexive thematic analysis, the aim of qualitative researchers is to co-construct 'themes' which they find relevant to the general aim of the research in a reflexive rather than a traditional way (Braun and Clarke, 2019, 2021). That is, since reflexive thematic analysis approach is informed by social constructionism, I, therefore, argue that all the themes presented in this thesis were the result of the active engagement and reflexive relationship that existed between my participants and me, in the sense that themes did not emerge from the data; they were co-constructed in a reflexive and thoughtful (i.e., quality) way. In this respect, Braun and Clarke (2021, p.343) stress that themes

in reflexive thematic analysis are 'co-constructed'; they do not 'emerge' from the data, emphasising: "[a]n account of themes "emerging" or being "discovered" is a passive account of the process of analysis, and it denies the active role the researcher always plays in identifying patterns/themes, selecting which are of interest, and reporting them to the readers".

To be able to conduct this genre of analysis with some 'ease', as a novice researcher, I decided to follow Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2012, 2019, 2021) six-stage framework for doing qualitative thematic analysis by trying to constantly make connections between different datasets, themes and the philosophical paradigm underpinning the study, which is social constructionism. These steps are 'familiarising oneself with the data'; 'developing initial codes'; 'generating themes which fit the codes developed at the previous stage'; 'revising and reviewing the themes generated in the preceding phase'; 'refining the themes and defining their meaning'; and finally, 'writing up'.

However, I need to point out that the fact that I described the reflexive thematic approach adopted to make sense of the data as being *inductive* does not suggest that there are no theoretical assumptions at all when engaging in the analysis process. For example, as detailed in Chapter Three earlier and in Section 4.4.1.2 below, I used two theories and four concepts which helped me make sense of and better understand the data *during* rather than *before* the data analysis journey. In this respect, Braun and Clarke (2021, p.337), when critiquing other researchers who believe that thematic analysis is an *atheoretical method* when used inductively, argue that "[w]e also encounter TA being treated as an atheoretical method through researchers failing to specify the theoretical assumptions informing their engagement with TA". Therefore, they suggest that "[r]esearchers should always reflect on and specify the philosophical and theoretical assumptions informing their use of TA, even inductive TA" (ibid, p.338) because the latter "does not equate to analysis in a theoretical vacuum" (ibid, p.345).

Therefore, embracing Braun and Clarke's (2021) twenty critical questions to guide assessment of thematic analysis research quality helped me greatly in shifting from *traditional* to *reflexive* type of thematic analysis by dint of critically reflecting on the strong connection which exists between the analysis of the data and the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of the whole research. Failing to demystify the relationship between social constructionism as a philosophical foundation of my research and reflexive thematic analysis can, therefore, result in some issues, and to avoid the latter from happening, I had to use thematic analysis in a way that was deliberate and reflexive. Moreover, I argue that my reflexive authorial voice is ubiquitous all over the thesis. I also argue that I have three reflexive

authorial voices, which are *theoretical* [18] voice (i.e., in relation to literature review in that I was not just reporting or describing; I was also critically reflecting on and thoughtfully engaging with the literature provided), *methodological* voice (i.e., in relation to the reflexive way I wrote about the methodological route I have taken to conduct this research), and *analytical* voice (i.e., when it comes to adopting reflexive thematic analysis to make sense of the data in a knowing, deliberate and reflexive way).

Overall, I conclude that researchers need to understand that thematic analysis is not a 'one size fits all' approach to data analysis, that reflexivity is at the core of any qualitative research, and that spinning the golden thread that sews the theoretical, methodological and analytical parts of the research is key. In the following, I sketch the data analysis steps using Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis approach.

4.4.1.1. Transcription

Familiarising myself with the data, which was basically achieved through converting the audible data into written ones, was the most important step I took for the analysis (Bazeley, 2007). I did the transcription manually. That is, I did not rely on any transcription software to help me achieve this task because I am the researcher who collected the data, not the software. However, transcribing the interview data was not an easy task. It was both a time-consuming and a physically tiring activity (Halcomb and Davidson, 2006). For example, among the many challenges I faced during the transcription phase was *accent*. Scottish and Irish accents were quite difficult for me to comprehend.

As English is not my first or second language, trying to fathom what some participants, who had different accents, were trying to say was a daunting task. I even spent roughly two days attempting repeatedly and carefully to listen to just one interview and trying to transcribe it as clearly as possible. Another problem I had with the transcription was my participants' use of some phrasal verbs and idiomatic expressions with which I was not familiar. This made the transcription task even harder. However, thanks to asking for the assistance of some of my 'trustworthy' colleagues, and without getting them to listen to the whole recording, so that they would not be able to recognise the identity of the participants, I succeeded in deciphering what few of my participants were trying to say.

Moreover, it should be highlighted that the fact that English is a foreign language to me affected the way my participants and I conducted the interview, which, in turn, impacted the

[18] My reflexive theoretical voice can also be identified in Chapter Eight, particularly in Sections 8.2.1.1, 8.2.1.2, 8.2.1.3, and 8.2.1.4.

data collected in terms of the choice of words, phrases and idiomatic expressions used by the participants. However, had I been a native speaker of English language, my participants and I might have co-constructed completely different themes, and the latter might have been different in terms of the way I would have titled them, hence the 'reflexive' approach to thematic analysis used in this thesis.

4.4.1.2. '*A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step*': Describing the 'codes-to-final-themes' development journey

After transcribing the interviews and familiarising myself with the data, I embarked on coding my qualitative interview data in a way that was less meaningful, less organised and less systematic (Brantlinger et al., 2005). As discussed earlier, the analysis of the data was guided by my philosophical stance used in this research – social constructionism. This suggests that I considered the subjective viewpoints of my participants, and which was reflected in the way I developed codes and generated themes that might not have existed unless all my participants and I were actively engaged in the whole process of data collection and analysis.

The present section, therefore, describes the journey of development of the codes and themes generated in this research using the analogy of 'a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step', which implies that it is those little codes (i.e., the processes) that made up the final themes (i.e., the outcomes), which, in turn, made up the three Findings Chapters Five, Six, and Seven. That is, the co-constructed themes in this research might have been inexistent unless I had generated codes and had shared some of the codes and themes with most participants just to corroborate the nature of codes and themes, and eventually the overall quality of the analysis. In this respect, when delineating their reflexive thematic analysis approach, Braun and Clarke (2021, p.332) argue that "[w]ithin reflexive TA, the coding process is integral to theme development, in the sense that themes are an 'outcome' of these coding and theme development processes, are developed through coding […]". In addition, as highlighted above, using the social constructionist paradigm in realtion to reflexive thematic analaysis in my study helped me tremendously in the process of analysing the data by reminding myself that making sense of different datasets through applying some of the premises pertinent to both social constructionism and reflexive thematic analysis was crucial. That is, all my themes were co-constructed and interrelated in that one theme led to another.

Coding is "the process of analysing qualitative text data by taking them apart to see what they yield before putting the data back together in a meaningful way" (Creswell, 2015, p.156). However, codes and themes are two different things, and should not be used

interchangeably. In this regard, Braun and Clarke (2021) contend that "[r]eflexive TA makes a distinction between codes and themes, but there is no absolute distinction between codes and themes across TA methods". This suggests that while "[i]n reflexive TA, a code is conceptualised as an analytic unit or tool, used by researcher to develop (initial) themes", themes are "[…] multi-faceted crystals – they capture multiple observations or facets (occasionally, rich, complex and multifaceted codes might be 'promoted' to themes" (Braun and Clarke, 2021, p.340).

Moreover, my whole analysis process was "an ongoing and iterative process" (Nieuwenhuis, 2007, pp.99-100). This means that I did not separate the data collection stage from the data analysis phase. I was collecting the data, and at the same time was trying to understand what was going on in the data, taking into consideration De Vos, Schulze, and Patel's. (2005, p.335) comment about the data collection and analysis phase wherein there exists an "inseparable relationship between data collection and data analysis, and this is one of the major features that distinguish qualitative research from traditional research".

That said, my coding, generating themes and discussing them were all interrelated and were achieved at the same stage: "[t]he qualitative analysis process is cyclic without finite interpretation, and requires researchers to return repeatedly to data and the coding process throughout the analysis process" (Vaismoradi et al., 2016, p.103). In general, after each interview, data were analysed and follow-up questions were designed and asked. My own way of coding the data was as follows: I did not use any data analysis software like NVivo to code, develop themes or ease the burden of making sense of the data. Instead, I used Microsoft Word as a tool to first store the data and then code some chunks of data which, in turn, developed into categories or themes.

Interestingly, though the early stages of the data analysis process were 'chaotic' and 'messy', I should acknowledge that I sincerely enjoyed every single step of the data analysis as I felt the whole process was full of creativity, excitement, enthusiasm and fascination. In this respect, Marshall and Rossman (1999, p.150) succinctly describe data analysis as a process of "bringing order, structure, and interpretation to the mass of collected data. It can be a messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative and fascinating process".

Coding types explained

Prior to illustrating how I went about generating codes and developing themes in this research, I should highlight that my approach to thematic analysis is reflexive, in the sense that it reflects my own interpretive way of making sense of the data using three main tools (Braun

and Clarke, 2019, 2021). These are the datasets, my theoretical assumptions of the whole analysis, and the analytical skills which I brought with me to the analysis (ibid.). In other words, as demonstrated in Section 4.1, every researcher has their own way of interpreting the data, and that "there should be no expectation that codes or themes interpreted by one researcher may be reproduced by another" (Byrne, 2021, p.3). This shows that different researchers have different epistemological lenses through which they look at data and interpret them.

With regard to coding the data, I took on board Richards and Morse's (2007) two main types of coding, which are descriptive and analytic. Descriptive codes are similar to what Boyatzis (1998) and Braun and Clarke (2021) refer to as 'semantic' (overt, surface, explicit) level of coding wherein memos are assigned to specific sentences or a whole text by only 'scratching' the surface of the data without necessarily going into detail. The descriptive codes I identified reflected patterns or themes that were obvious on the surface or were stated directly by the participants (i.e., In Vivo codes). Moreover, when I was assigning descriptive or semantic level of codes, I was simultaneously reading and re-reading the transcripts several times to get the overall sense of the data. I also allowed room for unexpected and important issues to be raised, and to get a feel for participants' multiple realities and started highlighting words, phrases, sentences, and at times whole paragraphs, which I thought had direct relevance to collaboration.

For instance, I took one transcript (e.g., Sara's transcript) and started reading it several times and began highlighting in different colours different pieces of data. An example of descriptive codes from the transcripts would be 'home', 'teaching', 'research', 'resistance', etc. Besides, I also used participants' words to develop codes, which, according to Saldana (2009), are called 'In Vivo Coding', such as "I don't do regulations" (Paul, formal interview) when some participants described their attitudes towards being told to collaborate, or "pushing spatial boundaries" (Marc, formal interview) when some participants described the different places wherein they collaborated. Therefore, I used analytic memos to summarise chunks of data and assign labels to them.

However, this does not suggest that those memos were the final refined themes. In this respect, Saldaña (2009, p.33) states that:

> Codes written in the margins of your hard-copy data or associated with data and listed in a CAQDAS file are nothing more than labels until they're analyzed.

The second type of coding is "analytic coding" wherein descriptive – or obvious – codes became more refined, multifaceted, carried more depth and meaningfulness, and had the potential to turn into themes eventually. In other words, those 'obvious', 'simple' codes turned into "richer, more complex themes that revealed multiple facets of a particular meaning or experience" (Braun and Clarke, 2021, p.340). This stage is more akin to what Boyatzis (ibid.) and Braun and Clarke (2021) call 'latent' (hidden, underlying, interpretive) coding wherein those 'surface', 'depth-free' and 'immature' codes became more mature and deeper analysis and richer discussion of the data started to take place.

That is, taking a reflexive approach to data analysis through immersing myself in the data, reflecting, imagining, being creative, linking the whole analytic process to the principles of social constructionism, writing, returning to my participants for clarifications, and rewriting was crucial for the development of 'reflexive' themes. Against this background, Braun and Clarke (2021, p.332) describe the whole analytic process as involving "immersion in the data, reading, reflecting, questioning, imagining, wondering, writing, retreating, returning". For instance, the initial descriptive and topic codes, such as 'home collaboration', 'university collaboration', 'public places collaboration', 'international settings', and 'virtual environment' were all compressed into one single theme, which is *crossing spatial boundaries* (See appendix D on page 274).

In addition, other pieces of data also discussed crossing boundaries not in relation to the space of collaboration, but in relation to discipline, which led to the generation of another subtheme – *crossing disciplinary boundaries*. 'Crossing spatial boundaries' and 'crossing disciplinary boundaries', therefore, are two main subthemes of the overarching theme *crossing boundaries in collaborative practices*. Moreover, as I followed Saldaña's (2016) guidance on how to best code qualitative data, I was expecting my initial and analysis-free codes to turn into more refined, interpretive and analytic ones. That was achieved through going back and forth coding and re-coding the same texts until more developed and in-depth codes, which then became themes, started to develop: "as you code and recode, expect…your codes and categories to become more refined and, depending on your methodological approach, more conceptual and abstract" (p.12).

However, it should be noted that themes like first, second, and third space were not going to be referred to as such had I not familiarised myself with Oldenburg's concept of place. That is, when I initially started coding the data in relation to the issue of space, my codes were 'home', 'university', 'pubs', 'cafes', etc. Yet, when I started reading about space and place in the literature, I began to realise that those codes did have 'theoretical' names in the literature –

'*first place* for home, '*second place'* for university in the context of this study, and '*third place'* for pubs, cafes and restaurants. Nevertheless, I chose to use 'space' in lieu of 'place' because the focus of the study is on the social psychology of collaboration. Similarly, codes like 'new knowledge', 'improved practice', 'enhanced learning experience', and 'better teaching practice' might not have been categorised under the theme '*increased human capital*' unless I began to read about the concept of Human Capital in the literature, and the same applies to 'nomadicity', which stems from codes like "moving around a lot", "I don't stick to one single place", "I push the boundaries", and "I collaborate everywhere". This indicates that I began to use the concepts and theories after I had already generated the codes, not before that.

This indicates that I am aware of the fact that in reflexive thematic analysis, there are two types of themes – 'themes-as-pre-existing analysis' and 'themes-as-the-outcome of analysis'. The latter is the type of themes that my research is considered with. As part of their 'take away' message, Braun and Clarke (2021, p.343) "encourage researchers using reflexive TA to write about theme generation as a creative and active process, one they are central to, and to always avoid claiming that themes emerged".

The final themes that made up the three Findings Chapters Five, Six, and Seven – 'who', 'where' and 'why' are presented in the table below.

CHAPTER FIVE "*These Kinds of Things Need the Right People*": Choosing the Right Academic Collaborative Spouses	CHAPTER SIX The Social Psychology of Crossing Boundaries in Collaborative Practices	CHAPTER SEVEN "*I Collaborate Because It's Fruitful*": The Rewards of Collaboration
5.1. Personal values • Ethics and integrity. • Personality traits and social capital. **5.2. Shared values** 5.2.1. *Shared perspectives and experiences.* • Shared sense of identity. • Shared domain of interest. 5.2.2. *Negotiated power* • Leadership in collaboration.	**6.1. The social psychology of crossing spatial boundaries:** **6.1.1. The social psychology of crossing national spatial boundaries** 1. *Fist space (home)* 2. *Second space (University)* 3. Third space (neither home nor University, i.e., cafes, restaurants, gardens, pubs, etc.) **6.1.2. The social psychology of crossing international spatial boundaries.** **6.1.3. The social psychology of crossing virtual spatial boundaries** **6.2. The social psychology of crossing disciplinary boundaries.**	**7.1. Expressive collaboration** • Developing a sense of enjoyment. • Psycho-therapeutic collaboration. **7.2. Instrumental collaboration.** • 7.2.1. Developing a sense of academic productivity. • 7.2.2. Professional recognition and (professional) visibility. • 7.2.3. Developing a sense of professional empowerment and security. • 7.2.4. Increased national and international social capital (global nomadic academics or 'glomadic academics').

Table 4.2: Outlining the final themes and subthemes.

Furthermore, I should acknowledge that I sometimes had to 'disturb' the data while making changes to the participants' 'sentence structure' to serve my data presentation and writing. For example, I recurrently had to turn verbs into gerunds, so that the sentence would sound grammatically and musically correct. By doing so, I had to add square brackets […] to show that was my own suffix or prefix which I added to the word. For instance, while the original text from Paul's interview was: "[...] to produce a better and richer product", I had to remove 'to' and add 'ing', so that the text would sound grammatically and musically better: "produc[ing] a better and richer product".

4.5. Trustworthiness

This section intends to uncover the extent to which the interpretations of the data are trustworthy. I use the term *trustworthiness* as its purpose in qualitative investigations is to underpin the claim that the research findings are significant and worthy of attention (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). For clarity, I use the interpretivist concept 'trustworthiness' in lieu of the positivist concepts 'validity' and 'reliability', which are often employed in quantitative research.

Though there could have been many possible ways of explaining the findings presented in Chapters Five, Six, and Seven, I chose to interpret my participants' data accurately, credibly, and in a way which authentically represented the data through engaging in an approach to enhancing the trustworthiness of qualitative research findings proposed by Rallis and Rossman (2009, p.269). This approach to trustworthiness evaluation criteria includes: "prolonged engagement", "triangulation", "participant validation", "using a critical friend", and "using your community of practice". A description of how these criteria were applied to this study is presented below.

"Prolonged engagement" or "being there": My physical presence during the data collection phase was important in that three months of data collection from 17th of September to 15th of December 2019 was sufficient to understand my participants' views and experiences as to collaboration. In those three months, I conducted 12 formal interviews and 10 follow-up interviews on a face-to-face basis. Yet, as the Covid-19 pandemic hit the entire globe, I had keen interest in conducting more follow-up interviews to investigate how the pandemic has affected my participants' perceptions of and experiences with collaboration.

However, in such difficult times, the physically 'being there' criterion was not possible. Yet, I virtually continued to interview few participants for two weeks (early May to mid-May 2020) and felt that there was not a huge difference between in-person and virtual engagement

with participants as most of them seemed to have a 'university office-like' rooms at home wherein their collaborations continued to happen. I also maintained a reflexive relationship with the participants and was actively engaged with them as if we were in an in-person interview setting.

"Triangulation": Though I did not have multiple data collection instruments, and mainly relied on interviews as the only data collection tool, I argue that my use of interviews with the two important interview tools (i.e., photo elicitation technique and documents), follow-up interviews, and noticing participants' behaviours while they were discussing their experiences with collaboration was enough in establishing the trustworthiness of the findings presented in this thesis. I also claim that I consider the first couple of 'interviews' which I conducted as 'exploratory interviews' resembling 'questionnaires' in that they assisted me to build rapport with my participants. Nevertheless, the actual depth and breadth of the data were gained from the 'follow-up interviews' that I conducted with most participants. Consequently, I stress that interviews were 'one tool' and follow-up interviews were 'another tool'. Moreover, I should add that I focused more on the 'quality' of the data rather than the 'quantity' of data collection instruments.

As highlighted in Section 4.2.5.2, I could not use observations and focus groups as the topic in itself did not require observation and some participants were not comfortable participating in focus groups with other academics. Though I did not directly observe academics when collaborating, I had acute noticing skills during the interviews and follow-up interviews that allowed to 'deepen' and 'thicken' the description of the data in the analysis and discussion stage, hence 'thick description'. As I mentioned in Subsection 4.1.2, thanks to my acute noticing skills and after leaving the research field, I started to reflect back upon the fact that some of my participants showed me some of their collaborative work that they were discussing during the interviews and were on the shelves in their offices. I refer to the fact of enacting their descriptive experiences with collaboration during the interview by showing me some examples of co-written books and articles as something akin to a teaching technique called 'Realia'. This made their experiences with collaboration more tangible and their data more 'trustworthy'[19] just like EFL teachers who use objects from everyday life to teach English to speakers of other languages.

[19] However, this is not to suggest that the data obtained from those who did not concretely show me examples of their collaborations were not trustworthy.

"Participant validation" or "Member checks": To reduce the biases as a researcher afraid of my voice dominating that of my participants through my personal beliefs and interests, after the initial data analysis phase, I returned some interview transcripts along with preliminary analysis to most of participants to provide me with feedback on the themes that I had developed and the overall accuracy and representability of what they said in the interviews. Thus, those participants checked what they had mentioned in their first and follow-up interviews and commented on several 'immature' and 'undeveloped' themes that I showed to them. For example, when showing some of my 'immature' themes to him, Lorenzo (follow-up interview) provided me with constructive feedback as to the way I had understood his perception of collaboration, arguing that "the word *productivity* can imply quantity, so you need to be careful; it's about quality, not quantity".

This approach also assisted in corroborating the quality of data analysis and discussion, hence my claim that the themes presented in this thesis have been socially constructed in that all my participants and I had an active hand in co-constructing the research themes. In other words, the reflexive nature of the titles of the themes which I developed in this thesis might not have been the way they are now unless the participants validated and checked them, hence the use of social constructionism to underpin the methodological part of this research, including the data collection, discussion, and writing up phase.

"Using a critical friend" or "Peer debriefer": As I mentioned on the 'Acknowledgements' page, I was and still am lucky to have two kinds of critical academic friends reviewing and commenting on my co-constructed themes, and who accompanied me on the journey of development of my research findings. Formality-wise, my critical friends are divided into two, namely, *formal* (my supervisors) and *informal* (fellow Ph.D. researchers) critical friends. The influence of my participants' and critical friends' feedback on (re)-shaping my Ph.D. themes and validating them was key. My supervisors' and fellow researchers' comments on my initial themes were as follows "you're scratching the surface", "these are un-Ph.D. like themes", "don't you think that your codes and themes are rather descriptive, Aziz?", and "I think you need to return back to your participants and ask them more about what they mean by this", respectively. Yet, these were constructive comments which made me work harder on my analysis by virtue of the assistance of few participants', my supervisors' and my colleagues' feedback.

"Using your community of practice": Whilst I was analysing the data, I had many critical discussions with well-established academics in my field who helped me question and make sense of what I was doing. I also shared my themes with my local community of practice

at CLIER[20] meetings and was given constructive feedback, which helped enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the data. On another occasion, I delivered a presentation whose title was '*Developing my 'Immature' and 'Un-Ph.D.-like' Themes to More 'Mature' and 'Ph.D.-like' Themes:* The Influence of my Supervisors', Participants' and Critical Friends' Feedback on (re) shaping my Ph.D. Research Themes'. That presentation allowed me to rethink the way I was looking at my findings and enabled me to consider issues which I had overlooked or taken for granted.

4.6. Ethical considerations

This section addresses the ethical route that I followed to conduct this research. Before the start of the data collection, I had to pursue an ethical route since I was going to interview human participants. I, therefore, had to ask for the permission of the participants. Once the consent form that I had forwarded to my participants was signed, only then could I start the data collection which involved conducting a series of semi-structured interviews with 12 academics from different faculties within SEE University. In relation to my study, there were three different ethical dimensions that I had to comply with – *procedural* ethics, ethics in *practice (*or *situational* ethics), and *relational* ethics.

Ethical dimensions explained

As for *procedural* ethics, one of the early stages of the research process was the completion of the research ethics committee's application form. This ethical dimension was authorised by Institutional Review Board (IRB) committee to confirm that procedures addressed consent, privacy, and protecting my participants from any harm. This involved describing the proposed methodology in the study, including the setting, sample, and the type of data collection instrument employed. Reid et al. (2018) states that *procedural* ethics, which concerns formal consent required for research to start, strongly depends on the rationale behind conducting the research and a stated pledge to adherence to ethics.

Therefore, I had to be careful with my language when describing the way I intended to conduct my research, and how I ensured that my participants would not be harmed, so that the application would be approved. In this respect, Guillemin and Gillam (2004, p.264) report that:

> Most researchers learn quickly that they need to be savvy in addressing the potential issues of concern of the committee: using the appropriate discourse to ensure that applications will be approved as quickly as possible with

[20] A research group which stands for 'Culture, Language and International Education Research' run by academics and postgraduate students at SEE University.

> minimum changes and dispute, while remaining true to their research integrity.

The second dimension of ethics that I took into account when undertaking my research is *situational* ethics – or ethics *in practice*, as Ellis (2007) refers to it. This involved the different ethical issues I considered while conducting the interviews, neither before nor after that. Reid et al. (ibid.) enunciate that following formal consent and gaining access to a particular site to undertake research (i.e., procedural ethics), unexpected ethical issues may raise while conducting the research. For instance, even though I had forwarded the consent form to some of my participants via email before the start of data collection, the day of the interview most of them asked for an oral summary of the purpose of the study and the issue of confidentiality.

I, therefore, had to inform them about the voluntary nature of their participation in the research, and that their names and the names mentioned during the interview would be anonymised. I also informed them that they had the right to withdraw at any time they wished without any justification. Ellis (ibid., p.4) gives instances of issues related to ethics in practice, namely "what if someone discloses something harmful, asks for help, or voices discomfort with a question or her or his own response?".

In light of Ellis' question above, one of the most significant incidents which happened with one of the participants was the participant's refusal to give full details about their personality as they thought it was something personal and private, and that they were not happy to reveal it. However, because knowing about my participants' personality traits was of paramount importance in my study, I had to seek other alternatives to ask the same question to gain richer data because I thought had I insisted on them, this would have led to ethical issues, and might have made them withdraw from the study.

Finally, to ensure that my research was conducted in an ethical way, which decreases risks and increases beneficial impacts on the participants, I also had to consider *relational* ethics. Relational ethics describes how I cared about my participants and managed to retain them for a three-month period of data collection prior to and during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic. For instance, during all my interviews, I showed respect for all my participants and cared for them as they were so important in my study that I had to be careful with every single question I was asking. I avoided asking questions which involved sensitivity or embarrassment. I had to consider the relationship I was building with my participants, and how those relationships could affect the kind of data I was going to obtain.

Further, I succeeded in building a trust-based relationship with my participants through the follow-up interviews. Having noticed that my participants were pleased with the way I was

interviewing them, and how they were interested in the research topic made me respect them even more. I recognise that building a good rapport with my participants was a significant factor that affected the quality of the data. For instance, one participant was hesitating to mention something important about the colleague with whom they collaborated, but then said that they would not have mentioned that unless they had trusted me, stressing: "[b]ut anyway I trust you!". Besides, my relationship with few participants went beyond the participant-researcher zone and developed into academic friendship. For example, two of my participants invited me for a cup of coffee outside the university environment just to see how I was progressing with my Ph.D.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the methodology that I used in this study. It was organised around five sections. In the first section, I explained how I used social constructionism in this study. The second section described the research design adopted to conduct the research. More specifically, this section outlined the qualitative case study methodology, context of the case study, a snapshot of the research participants and recruitment techniques, and interviews as the data collection instrument. Moreover, prior to moving to how I analysed the data using a thematic analysis approach (4.4), I described how I located myself as a researcher within the research in Section 4.3. Within this section, I featured my positionality and reflexivity throughout my research journey. Finally, while Section 4.5 highlighted the trustworthiness of the whole research, Section 4.6 described the ethical route that I followed to conduct the study.

Having depicted the methodological route that I have followed to undertake this research, the next three Findings Chapters Five, Six, and Seven are organised as follows: Chapter Five is the first Findings Chapter entitled *"These Kinds of Things Need the Right People": Choosing the Right Academic Collaborative Spouses*. In this chapter, I describe the criteria that participants believe their collaborative spouses also need to meet and the values they should respect, so their collaboration become effective. The second Findings Chapter is Chapter Six, which is entitled *Crossing Boundaries in Collaborative Practices*. This chapter discusses where participants' collaborations take place, i.e., the two instances of crossing boundaries when collaborating – spatial and disciplinary boundaries. The third Findings Chapter is Chapter Seven, which is entitled *"I Collaborate Because It is Fruitful": The Rewards of Collaboration*. This last Findings Chapter delineates two types of rewards that the participants reap from collaborations – expressive and instrumental collaboration.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. "*These Kinds of Things Need the Right People*": Choosing the Right Academic Collaborative Spouses

Nested in social psychology, the present chapter, which is the first Findings Chapter from which the overarching argument in this thesis stems, is concerned with the criteria that participants believe their collaborative spouses need to meet for their collaboration to be successful. The reason for organising[21] the three different, albeit interrelated, Findings Chapters in this way can be explained as follows: the 'who' – the qualities of academics taking part in collaboration – needs a space wherein their collaboration occurs, i.e., the 'where' (Chapter Six), and when the 'who' and the 'where' convene, only then can the 'why' be considered (Chapter Seven). The rationale behind titling this chapter in this way is that the 'who' seems to outweigh the collaborative space as the latter only means that participants have a setting wherein they collaborate. Yet, for an effective collaboration to happen, a collaborative space needs the right people: "these kinds of things need the right people" (Lorenzo, formal interview), hence the title of this chapter.

Moreover, my rationale behind describing the individuals with whom my participants collaborate as 'academic collaborative spouses' is that some participants seem to perceive collaboration as 'marriage' wherein the requirements for marriage appear to be somewhat like those of collaboration: "another thing about collaboration is that you have to be able to last and work with that person on a close relationship […] it [collaboration] is like a sort of marriage" (James, formal interview). Thus, Chapters Six and Seven might be inexistent unless there were people with certain criteria that would make it easier for participants to engage in collaboration.

Therefore, this chapter discusses issues based around two broad ideas, which are 'personal values' (5.1) and 'shared values' (5.2). The personal values are 'ethics and integrity' (trust, interdependence and respect), 'personality traits', and 'social capital'. The shared values are 'shared perspectives and experiences', and 'negotiated power'.

Yet, before going any further, I need to describe how the theories and concepts delineated in Chapter Three are used to make sense of the data in this chapter. Interdependence Theory is employed to understand participants' interdependence mindset as to collaboration

[21] I am organising the three Findings Chapters in this way for the sake of clarity. Undoubtedly, there is an interplay between the 'who', 'where', and 'why' elements in the journey of collaboration, in the sense that it can be hard to tell which comes first because these elements follow a cyclical rather than a linear pattern.

discussed in Section 5.1.1.2. The concept of Social Capital, which includes The Big Five Personality Traits Model, is used to make sense of the participants' different personality traits which influence the creation of their social capital and, thus, collaboration – Section 5.1.2. Social Capital is also used here in relation to 'linking social capital' when addressing the issue of negotiated power in Section 5.2.2. Moreover, Wenger's CoPs concept is employed in this chapter to address the participants' shared sense of identity and their creation of the shared domain discussed in Sections 5.2.1.1 and 5.2.1.2, respectively. Finally, Attribution Theory is also used in this chapter to address the dispositional and situational factors influencing participants' engagement in collaboration, and which are tackled in Sections 5.1.2.4, 5.1.2.5, 5.1.2.6, and 5.1.2.7, in addition to issues like support factor and time factor, hence social psychology of collaboration.

5.1. Personal values

All participants seem to have a set of values by which they consistently live, and which they regard as crucial in collaboration. These personal values are attributes which influence participants' behaviours when collaborating. Thus, the reason I mention 'personal' values lies in that each participant seemingly possesses some personal qualities that they think are important in their academic homes (i.e., disciplines), and whose application differs from one academic to another. However, the adverb 'consistently' might be misleading because, though all participants have personal values, not all their collaborative partners seem to apply them, otherwise some collaboration would not have fallen apart. Put differently, personal values have to do with 'who' the academics engaged in collaborative practices and their collaborative spouses are as individuals in terms of ethics (trust, interdependence, and respect) as well as in relation to personality traits and social capital (i.e., the focus is placed on the social assets and resources that academics have to be able to collaborate effectively). Such values concern the individuality of academics involved in collaboration (i.e., since academics are individuals, understanding their individuality and how it affects their collaboration is important). That is, these personal values are related to the concept of Social Capital – the question asked as to personal values in relation to collaboration is 'who are you in terms of (individual) ethical and social values and norms?'.

5.1.1. Academic ethics and integrity (trust, interdependence, and respect)

As reported by participants, the first aspect of personal values required in any collaborative endeavour is academic ethics, which includes three dimensions of academic integrity and moral values. These are 'trust', 'interdependence' and 'respect'. Participants

believe that academics need to nurture the value of academic integrity and ethics in the various aspects of teaching, supervision, and research collaboration wherein they participate. Therefore, the following subsection explains the reason why participants perceive trust as a vital element in academic collaborative relationships.

5.1.1.1. *'It is all about trust'*: Recognising the significance of trust in academic collaboration

All participants believe that for their collaboration to be effective, they need to choose the right collaborative 'spouses' who should be trustworthy. I consider trust as both 'personal' and 'professional' because participants indicate that they cannot collaborate with academics unless they know that they are trustworthy and reliable as people and as academics. In this regard, James (formal interview) argues that "[t]rust here is personal trust as well as academic trust". Similarly, Maria (formal interview) agrees that "you can't do work with people who you don't trust personally or professionally". This demonstrates the importance of mutual trust in any academic collaboration, and that participants believe that academics need to develop a feeling of trust and have faith, integrity and reliability in the academic Others with whom they collaborate.

However, the question that the reader might ask would be as follows: 'how do the participants establish a trust-based collaborative relationship, and how can this impact the success of their collaboration?'. The answer is presented as follows: participants seem to attribute the effectiveness of their collaboration to trust factor, which they deem as a significant criterion if academics are willing to collaborate productively. This is probably because if they did not trust one another, they might not seek other academics' assistance when in need. For instance, when evaluating the effectiveness of his collaborations, Paul (formal interview) claims that most of his collaborations are:

> [V]ery effective because it builds a scholarly community. Because academics trust each other, and now that they will be consulted and ask for our views and everything […] But we work collaboratively. We understand our students because everybody talks to each other and we're friendly, too. Yes, sure, I trust my colleagues, otherwise I wouldn't work with them. But I don't have colleagues I don't trust anyway or refuse to accept.

This suggests that participants' trust could be established through previous contacts and experiences with the academics they work with, otherwise they would not collaborate with them. This denotes that the participants must have gone through positive experience, not having "carried a lot of baggage" (Adam, formal interview) in their past 'informal' collaboration, and,

had instead, had a "positive history together" (James, formal interview), which led them to trust their collaborative partners. In addition, once individuals ensure that their collaborative partner is worthy of trust, only then can they collaborate interdependently in that they know they can rely on one another to collaborate effectively as there is a 'strong code of professional conduct' underpinning collaboration (See Chapter Six, page 181 for more details on code of professional conduct in collaboration).

The following subsection describes how participants collaborate interdependently to ensure better collaboration quality.

5.1.1.2. *"We're all in this together":* Investigating participants' interdependence mindset in collaboration

Participants seem to have an interdependence mindset when it comes to collaborating with other academics. By interdependence, I mean that participants appear to have faith in the academic Others they collaborate with and depend on one another since they know that they can trust one another as they value reciprocity. Participants and their collaborative spouses appear to share the same responsibility and are accountable for the success of the joint wherein they engage, and perceive collaboration as consisting of mutual reliance, commitment and engagement. They also perceive the academics with whom they collaborate as individuals who are with them, not against them as they are all working towards similar goals, or in Florence's (follow-up interview) words: "we're all in this together".

However, not all interdependence is positive because in some instances wherein trust is broken, negative interdependence emerges, which can, in turn, make collaboration collapse. Thus, the upcoming subsection delineates two aspects of interdependence – positive and negative interdependence.

Positive interdependence-based collaboration

Participants' collaborations can only be rewarding if they and their collaborative spouses hold a positive interdependence-based approach to collaboration. This suggests that participants can develop a sense of security when collaborating with academics who believe in and practice positive interdependence when collaborating. This is because mutual trust is key as it is not ethical if one academic does the work and the other does almost nothing, but strives to secure professional recognition in return, or in Marc's (follow-up interview) words: "[t]his is not collaboration as no ethics no trust".

Thus, effective collaboration involves academics collaborating interdependently with one another. The idea of successful collaboration and its link to interdependence can be directly related to Sara's (formal interview) claim, who states that:

> [A] successful collaboration involves members of a community who work interdependently and who, in turn, develop a sense of purpose as they know that in order for that goal or purpose to be obtained, they have to work together, and this is what collaboration is about – it's an interdependent activity.

This demonstrates that participants might not have developed a sense of achievement unless they had shared the efforts put in that collaboration, which are negotiated among the academics involved in that collaboration. This implies that participants seem to share the load of the collaborative work in a way which does not make them feel used. Therefore, having that sense of mutuality is key in any interdependence-based collaboration, as can be illustrated by Florence (follow-up interview):

> Mutuality is extremely important in collaboration. I cannot work with someone who would rely only on me to do all the work. This is selfish and unfair! I would feel I'm taken for granted and being used […] We've got to be able to throw ideas to one another in a useful way [...] I think in collaboration we've got to detox our ego and work together with one another […] as at the end of the day our success is your success and my success as well since we're all in this together, aren't we?

Florence's comment seems to indicate that individuals need to work with colleagues who have a shared sense of mutual accountability, engagement and commitment to their collaborative work. This demonstrates that a successful collaboration can work better if academics assign a task to their collaborative spouses in an equal, fair and honest way as when the final work get published or the module get developed, all the individuals involved in that collaboration would celebrate that shared success. This is because it concerns all the individuals involved in collaboration. This idea of "*we're all it in together"* can also be linked to the current slogan that the world has developed in these difficult times of the Covid-19 pandemic wherein individuals have to assist one another to slow the spread of the virus because the NHS staff are doing their utmost to help eliminate this inauspicious virus. This also necessitates the help and solidarity of citizens by respecting the government's health guidance, including staying at home or applying the social distancing rules when out – hence, interdependence.

Therefore, solidarity in collaboration is important and academics are advised not to behave selfishly and should, instead, depend on one another when collaborating. It is these

mutual-assistance-based collaborative relationships that seem to make collaboration enjoyable and sustainable. For instance, Marc (formal interview), who considers his collaborative partner as his assistant with whom he collaborates interdependently, states that:

> With [Olivia] I'm pretty sure it is mutual, but because I'm a lot senior than she is, it might look as though she is my assistant. She is helping me to get things done. She, for some reason, seems to like transcribing stuff. So, she does all that. So, you could say that she is my assistant, but I hope it's also working the other way around that I'm also her assistant because there is stuff that I can then do that she can't, so it's mutual […] I don't do this with anybody, and I know of cases that other people have mentioned to me where they complained about their co-author because they don't do any work, and they don't have the ideas and steal everything. This is not collaboration as no ethics no trust. If anything of that nature began to emerge, I would just cancel that collaboration immediately. So, for me collaboration is a mutual support system. We learn what one person can do better than the other and we assist each other. So, the link is one person can do something the other one can't so there is an assistant relationship. I assist her and she assist me [...] a sort of assistance/collaboration relationship.

Considering Florence's and Marc's quotes, collaboration seems to work well when academics trust one another in that they need to share the collaborative work in a fair and mutual way. They also should not make their collaborative spouses feel exploited because the success that results from that collaboration is a shared success, not an individual one. Thus, not only should academics work collaboratively, but, most importantly, interdependently and need to perceive the whole efforts devoted for the joint work as shared, making their mindset move from 'my' to 'our', i.e., shared sense of identity when collaborating is essential – an important issue which I shall present in Section 5.2.1 in this chapter.

Although most of what I discussed above regarding interdependence-based collaboration was mostly *positive* in that there seems to be a mutual assistant relationship among the academics working together and the reciprocity value is respected, this does not necessarily suggest that interdependence cannot be negative. Therefore, in the following subsection, I discuss how negative interdependence can impact collaboration negatively.

Negative interdependence-based collaboration

Unlike positive interdependence, which can often result in successful collaboration as academics work ethically and interdependently, negative interdependence can make collaboration unsuccessful as neither trust nor mutuality is respected. It is when individuals do not adhere to ethical principles that such type of interdependence starts to emerge. For instance,

Adam (formal interview) emphasises the importance of academics' ethical behaviours when collaborating on teaching, supervision or research, clearly indicating that among the criteria that academics need to meet, so they can engage in an academic collaboration are trust, shared goals and positive interdependence. He further elaborates that negative interdependence can be the result of a lack of common goals behind collaboration. This suggests that collaboration can turn into a competition, not collaboration (Johnson and Johnson, 1989) when academics who work together are on "opposite sides of the barricade", having conflicting views of reality.

Therefore, absence of ethics can be the main reason why some collaborations fail, as can be illustrated by Adam (ibid.) below:

> I don't collaborate with anybody, they have to be people with track record and people I can trust, or people who are on the right side of the barricade. I had a collaboration with [X] a few years ago and worked for two years and then it went horribly wrong because the mutuality which I valued was broken, and [X] did not adequately acknowledge the work we did in the development of the work, and then I felt exploited. So that was difficult because I think the social engaged practice work very important.

Arguably, when mutuality is not respected, collaboration disappears and competition begins to emerge because the moral values underpinning that collaborative community of practice are not considered, making the latter sounds like a 'pseudo' community of practice. Consequently, academics who often go through bad experiences or "carr[y] a lot of baggage" (ibid.) when collaborating as their collaborative partners break trust and do not respect mutuality and interdependence can develop a feeling of 'fear' towards collaborating with the same person again. Against this background, James (formal interview) believes that: "[T]rust is linked to fear […] because there should be no fear in a [collaborative] relationship like this".

Therefore, it may be pointless if academics collaborate with people who do not make them feel emotionally and intellectually safe. As such, academics need to respect trust, mutuality and interdependence to avoid developing such negative feelings that can affect their psychological states and the overall quality of the final work produced. This can, in turn, encourage academics to respect their collaborative spouses.

5.1.1.3. Not only trust and interdependence, but also academic respect

Another personal value which the participants believe academics need to look for in their collaborative spouses is respect. The kind of respect I refer to here is the academic one, i.e., the mutual academic respect and appreciation that academics have for one another, so they maintain a successful collaboration. Respect can result from ensuring the collaborative

academics are trustworthy and have a positive interdependence mindset by which they live. If academics and their collaborative spouses did not live by moral codes and their collaboration was not trust-based, they might not be able to show mutual respect or appreciation for one another. Instances of academic respect as a key factor affecting collaboration is mentioned by many participants.

Lorenzo (formal interview), for example, seems to link respect to the idea that academics need to hold interdependence-based view of collaboration, meaning that the fact that academics and their collaborative spouses work together, and each contributes to the success of others implies that they show mutual respect for one another's knowledge:

> Respect for each other's contribution and knowledge i.e. I won't collaborate with someone if I think I'm the only one putting ideas here, and the other one is just being tagged along...it's a kind of the potential for exchange of ideas... it's going to be a fruitful collaboration if there is that potential...each of us say something and the other one will think oh that's a good idea. That's what we should do! It's that kind of mutual respect, mutual understanding, and mutual involvement.

This also shows that when academics carry out positive interdependence-based collaborative activities, the level of respect increases substantially as they know that each academic acknowledges the efforts that others are putting to produce a productive piece of collaborative work. Thus, mutual involvement in collaboration can help collaborative academics gain respect for one another and can help them appreciate any extra value that other academics add to the work that could otherwise be done individually. In this respect, Sara (formal interview) maintains: "I am always very respectful of what other people offer to a situation". This point also relates to the issue of power negotiation in collaboration which I discuss later in this chapter. Besides, academics who collaborate with one another in a respectful manner are generally people who get on well with one another as they know that each one of them is academically well-behaved, in the sense that their compatibility is based on mutual trust and respect, which is a behaviour that can serve as the basis for a 'good' collaboration.

In this regard, Paul (formal interview) emphasises that: "[t]here has to be compatibility. You have to get on well with the academics you work with and respect one another. Mutual respect is essential for any academic relationship to work". Another instance of mutual respect in collaboration is when collaborating at the international level, in the sense that international academic collaborative Selves and Others need to show respect for one another's cultures,

knowledge and experience, i.e., being open and agreeable[22] academics is important when it comes to international collaboration.

However, a question which might spring to the reader's mind is the relationship between academic respect and liking. That is, is it necessary for academics who trust and respect one another to like one another when collaborating? This issue is addressed in the following subsection.

5.1.1.4. Liking and amiability

To present a professional image, most participants, whose relationship with their collaborative colleagues is akin to marriage relationship, appear to have to like and be compatible with one another when collaborating as like, dislike and amiability are also categorised under personal values. Academically liking and being on good terms with some academics denotes that feeling of appreciation and friendliness that participants develop for their academic collaborative spouses. This suggests that for a solid and long-lasting collaboration to take place, "these kinds of things need the right person" (Lorenzo, formal interview). That said, it may be difficult for academics to collaborate with others unless they "like one another professionally and get on well with one another" (Victoria, formal interview).

In this respect, academic liking and amiability is a requirement for successful collaborative relationships to continue to exist, or else such relationships, in Lorenzo's (formal interview) words, "wouldn't have continued if we were not suitable and we didn't get on in terms of collaborating together [...] and on the personality level, you need to be able to get on well". Similarly, James (formal interview) describes that he may not engage in collaboration unless he likes his academic collaborative spouse, explaining:

> I have to like them. If I don't like them, I can't work with them. That's sort of personal choice. I mean there are so many nice people around, but I don't know whether I want to work with them […] people should get on well to work together. I don't think I have never worked with anyone that I didn't get on well with or trust.

This indicates that liking and being on good terms with the collaborative partner participants collaborate with is a necessity for the development of collaboration, otherwise it is difficult to work with partners who can be hard to deal with: "I collaborate with both genders.

[22] Besides extraversion and conscientiousness, openness and agreeableness – which are part the Big Five Personality Traits Model (Goldberg, 1993) – are the four main personality traits addressed in this thesis. However, this is not to suggest that the fifth personality trait–neuroticism – is not important. This is only because the data did not address the issue of neuroticism in collaboration.

Anybody, but personality matters. The gender doesn't matter, but the personality does" (Lorenzo, follow-up interview). In this regard, Sara (formal interview) points out that: "I would never approach someone to work on a project with me if I knew that person would be difficult to collaborate with". This denotes that collaborating with academics of a similar character can help make the whole collaboration journey most enjoyable and fun:

> You need to get on well with the academics you work with. I mean I've never had to work on any project where I've worked with people who I've not seen eye to eye with. Generally, you tend to migrate toward people of a similar character and then you can work together with those people.
>
> Victoria (follow-up interview)

However, this is a personal choice rather than a necessity for some individuals. This suggests that as opposed to having to be friendly with their collaborative partners, participants claim that liking them can be optional, and that 'respecting' their 'professionalism' is enough in building a collaborative community of practice when there is a scarcity of academics in a particular expertise. For instance, Paul (formal interview) emphasises that:

> There has to be compatibility. You have to get on well with the academics you collaborate with and respect one another. But if I have to work with them because they are the only person able to understand the field, then I will accommodate them and respect their professionalism, but it doesn't mean I have to like them. No.

Paul's pragmatic way of collaborating seems to be premised on practical as opposed to theoretical or emotion-based considerations. Contrary to the other participants, Paul seems to be the only participant whose approach to collaboration is straightforward, seeking to research his goal, which is producing some work out of those collective endeavours irrespective of how much he likes or dislikes the academics with whom he collaborates.

Nevertheless, no less important than academic ethics and integrity, which are fundamental to any collaborative relationship, and which include trust, interdependence and respect (the latter also involves liking and being on good terms with academics – compatibility), understanding participants' personality traits in shaping their ability to build their social capital, which can, in turn, enable them to engage in collaboration is key.

5.1.2. Personality traits and the creation of social capital

Personality traits are important for creating social capital and understanding the sociability of participants as to collaboration. By social capital in this section, I refer to social capital as a *means* of collaboration, not a *goal* to reach (i.e., 'enhancing social capital' as I discuss later in Chapter Seven). That is, here I look at academics' ability to engage in interpersonal relationships and work together towards common goals.

While in the first part of this section I discuss participants' extroversion, persona, confidence, generosity and autonomy, in the second part I describe how these personality types can have an active hand in shaping participants' social capital.

5.1.2.1. Extroversion

For an effective collaboration to occur, participants believe they need to collaborate with colleagues who are extrovert or sociable like them. This suggests that participants' social capital first needs to be *expressive* then *instrumental* to begin with as individuals' personality can determine whether or not they can collaborate and needs to be a number one priority to examine prior to embarking on any collaboration. In this respect, Lorenzo (formal interview) believes: "I think personality factor comes into it strongly […] I would say yes, my personality must, therefore, influence my academic collaboration […] I prefer to collaborate with people with similar personalities". Half of the participants in this study report that they are naturally extroverts, and that their extroversion is considered as significant in collaboration. For instance, Sara (formal interview) describes her personality as follows:

> I'm very social. I like meeting people and working with them. I am very driven, I want to succeed and make sure what I am doing is the best because I am very self-critical, so I think I'm social but sometimes too social [hahah] I want to say YES to everything and get involved in every single project – too extrovert I would say [hahaha].

Sara's extrovert personality seems to help her achieve her goals as she is a goal-oriented person, and that were she not interested in being with people and collaborating with them, she would probably be uninterested in engaging in collaboration. This is because collaboration requires that academics be on good terms with one another and enjoy one another's company, otherwise it can be hard to collaborate unless their personalities match – compatibility. Likewise, Paul (formal interview) and Lorenzo (formal interview) seem to enjoy their collaborative spouses' company, claiming: "I also enjoy an active social life and being with the people I collaborate with and students" and "I like to see people […] I am a social person

in that sense [...] that's my personality. People with similar personalities make them want to interact with people more", respectively.

Moreover, Sara's perception of her personality as an extrovert person and how the latter is in support of her motivation to collaborate seems to be in line with what Lisa (formal interview) believes she is:

> I think I'm outgoing. I am happy to chat with people about different things. I have got an interest in a broad range of topics which help me when I do collaborations. I would say I am very driven, so I know where I would be in 5- or 10-years' time with regard to research. So, because I am driven, I don't hesitate to seek help and try to find those links. And I also enjoy collaborating with people who are similar to me in terms the type of personality I have.

Analogous to Sara, Paul, and Lorenzo, Lisa's words suggest that the fact that most academics are extrovert, sociable, outgoing, and who enjoy people's company, according to participants, participates actively in creating 'good' collaborative opportunities thanks to the 'tangible asset' they own – social capital.

However, prior to moving to how participants' social capital affects their collaboration, it is important to stress that not all sociable individuals are necessarily extroverts.

5.1.2.2. 'Ambivert academics' in an introvert-extrovert spectrum

In spite of their sociability, few participants like Maria and Paul do not seem to regard themselves as purely extrovert, and that sociability does not necessarily equate extroversion. It, instead, indicates these participants can fall in the middle of introvert-extrovert continuum. Maria (formal interview), for example, believes that:

> I'm quite outgoing and sociable. I'm not an extrovert! That goes too far probably […] But you can be sociable, but not necessarily extrovert. An extrovert really puts themselves out there and throws themselves out of the people. I don't think I do that, but with confidence I can approach other people and I can talk and express myself, but I wouldn't say I'm an extrovert because I think an extrovert probably is a big too pushy and forceful, and I hope I'm not. If you have a continuum introvert-extrovert, I'm probably the extrovert, but not all the way across.

This shows that even though Maria enjoys socialising and collaborating with fellow colleagues, she still does not regard herself as an extrovert. This, however, does not indicate that the participants who believe that they are more sociable than extroverts are necessarily introverts. As can be seen from Maria's comment, the enjoyment of collaborating with academics is strongly present and that she can be a 'moderately' extroverted person in an

introvert-extrovert spectrum. Similarly, Paul (formal interview) believes that he is sociable, but not extrovert, and that he enjoys being introvert and moderately extrovert at the same time, believing that:

> I spent a lot of my life on my own, and I'm very comfortable in my own company, but I also enjoy an active social life, and being with the people I collaborate with and students. It depends on the situation, I do both. I can see myself as both introvert and extrovert.

In light of Maria's and Paul's statements, it can be argued that academics can have different personality types – purely extroverts, purely introverts and somewhere in between that I refer to as *ambivert academics*, or in James's (formal interview) words: "I would say that I'm an introvert that has a slight extrovert shell over myself sometimes". This indicates that these participants appear to move across the hyphen of introvert-extrovert spectrum. To conclude, sociable academics in this case are individuals who believe they have dual personality types – introvert and extrovert, or *ambivert* as I refer to them in my study as they think they can fall in the middle of the introvert-extrovert continuum.

However, how can purely introverted individuals collaborate with other academics when their personality does not allow them to do so? or what would they do to overcome introversion, so as not to squander collaborative opportunities? These two queries are addressed in the following section.

5.1.2.3. *'Introverts in extroverts' clothing':* Investigating participants' adopted persona for collaboration

My 'introverted academics in extroverted academics' clothing' expression suggests that the other half of the participants, who claim that they are not naturally extroverts or sociable, felt the need to create a persona which helps them collaborate: "[c]ollaboration pushes you to put on another face […]" (Adam, formal interview). Adam's statement shows that the academic Others (*the independent variable*) appear to impact some participants' behaviours, feelings and attitudes towards their authentic personality (*the dependent variable*). Therefore, this new 'academic face' that participants project to their collaborative partners, and which can be differentiated from their 'non-academic' face, is referred to as *persona.*

This adopted persona can seemingly help the introverted participants behave like extroverted individuals. However, I should make it clear that I am not analysing my participants' personalities as I am not a psychologist. Instead, I am only analysing how they described their personalities and the need to create a more sociable persona to help them

collaborate. Yet, this does not suggest that participants are not happy with their personalities. As I argue in this section, some participants 'wear' a more 'extrovert' face when collaborating, not when working on their own. Thus, I am using the title of this section in a positive way as some participants seem to move from being introvert – which is an inadequate personality trait in collaboration – to being more extrovert – which is a suitable personality attribute in collaboration.

Keeping with the aim of this research, participants seem to feel and act differently when collaborating with academics, i.e., adopting a persona which is different from that of when they work alone. Thus, the value that academic Others add to academic Selves is *change* in their *personality* to match that of their collaborative spouses, and vice versa. Moreover, few participants claim that they are not naturally extroverts or sociable, and that 'putting on' an 'extrovert' face is a necessity in collaboration, otherwise no collaboration might continue to exist. For instance, Grace (formal interview), who believes she falls in the introvert part of the 'introvert-extrovert' spectrum, states that: "I'm an introverted person". In the same line, Robert (formal interview), though he enjoys collaborating with academics, still thinks of himself as:

> [V]ery quiet and thoughtful, I listen. I think I like working with people, but I guess underneath a lot of that is that I'm quite a very shy person. So, to work with people I don't know is a lot of effort. I'm going to a meeting on Friday as the new director of the doctorate in [discipline], I'm going to a meeting in [a city in England] for whole day and it was all the other directors of the doctorates. I probably won't know anybody, so that's quite a daunting thing, but I have to make myself do that because I know through that there will be opportunities to meet other people in my situation. [My] personality as a shy and introvert person, and that's why I try to make myself get out of this […].

Robert seems to be aware of his unsuitable personality trait – introversion – that might be bad for his academic career in that did he continue to be introvert and not sociable enough to be able to collaborate with other academics, he might miss many collaborative opportunities. Thus, Robert seems to be aware of the fact that adopting a persona, which can help him behave in a more sociable or extrovert way, can be very helpful for him. Equally, Marc (formal interview) claims that his collaboration is not a normal, natural thing to do, but it is something that he needs to 'work out':

> My personality? Oh God Heaven! I try to push the boundaries, and I don't take myself too seriously […] I like doing things with people, but it has to be worked out. Even though I'm not naturally sociable, but I have to push

> myself. I really have to push myself. It's not a natural thing to do. It's risk taking.

Behaving in a way that is not natural can save lives. Were participants not aware of the significance of collaboration in helping them gain their professional recognition, become more academically visible and broaden both their human and social capital, they might probably not bother to adopt a new persona just for collaboration. Besides, being in extroverts' clothing, less sociable and very shy participants demonstrate that they are risk-taking, and they would fight for collaboration as they strongly believe in it because if they did not believe in the rewards of collaboration, there might be no need to be the 'archetype' of another extroverted person. Furthermore, few participants like Sara and Robert report that they choose to collaborate with academics "[…] who would mirror me as I need to feel as comfortable as I would do when I'm by myself when collaborating with academics who have got similar personalities", and "who also appreciat[e] the efforts you make for collaboration. You know trying to be like them [as sociable as possible] is not an easy thing to do", respectively.

Having clarified the difference between sociable, extrovert, introvert and ambivert academics, the following section elucidates the relationship between academics' personality, social capital, and collaboration.

The link between personality, social capital, and collaboration

It appears that the participants, who are naturally extroverts and sociable, possess social capital which helps them search for collaborative opportunities by moving from one space and discipline to another looking for the right academics with whom they should enjoy collaborating. This suggests that participants' personality shapes social capital and the latter provides resources that help them engage in collaborative projects and attain goals which they might probably not achieve if they did not have social capital: "[d]efinitely it [personality] encourages my collaboration" (James, formal interview).

Therefore, the link between personality, social capital, and collaboration seems to be strong as participants claim that the more they are outgoing and enjoy being with people, the more their ability to collaborate with other academics increases as they have a solid base beneath their collaborations, which is social capital. For example, participants believe that academics need to be more sociable and outgoing when collaborating, otherwise this may not help them increase both their national and international social capital and, thus, no invitations for collaboration might happen. In this respect, Victoria (formal interview) clarifies that: "underneath that outgoing person there is somebody who is riddled with anxieties which, I

think could hinder collaboration". Therefore, the connection between participants' personality, social capital, and collaboration can be made clear by Lorenzo (formal interview), who believes that his personality as a sociable person affects his collaboration, claiming: "my personality must, therefore, influence my academic collaboration".

In addition, receiving invitations for collaboration can be the result of owning social capital, i.e., being able to connect with academics and collaborate with them by virtue of their sociable personality, as can be understood from Sara's (formal interview) quote below:

> I think yes there is a direct connection [between personality and collaboration]. I think I have been able to get involved in loads of collaborations because I'm a very social person, and I'm very happy to talk to people and I want to know about their experiences, and I do care about people. I think because I'm quite an outgoing, extroverted person, I think it does help with getting collaborations developed because you are able to be the one to take the lead and say do you want to do this do you want to do that? I generally get on with people, so I think it helps with them being effective. So, yes, I think there is a direct link; the more social you are, potentially the more likely you are to get collaborations.

It can be argued that when individuals are sociable, they generally own social capital which can, in turn, help them collaborate. This suggests that academics need to collaborate with people whose personality matches theirs. This demonstrates that social capital is the independent variable, and that collaboration is the dependent variable because were there no such thing as social capital, or when academics were shy and anxious about collaborating with other academics, collaboration in this case might not exist, or might be hindered. Moreover, it can be claimed that the participants possess social capital for two purposes – to achieve a certain goal, such as earning a promotion and getting published, or to gain personal satisfaction and enjoyment: "I'm collaborating to make my job more interesting" (Lorenzo, follow-up interview). In other words, participants use their social capital for *expressive* and *instrumental* purposes (See Chapter Seven for more details).

Types of social capital for collaboration: Bonding, bridging, and linking (Szreter and Woolcock, 2004)

As discussed later in Chapter Seven, to maximise their collaborative opportunities, the participants argue that academics need to possess or build three kinds of social capital. Social capital to be able to collaborate with academics from the same discipline or community; social capital to collaborate with academics from different disciplines or communities; and social capital to collaborate with people at varying degrees of power hierarchy. These three functions

of social capital are referred to as *bonding (homogeneous)*, *bridging (heterogeneous),* and *linking* social capital, respectively (Putnam, 2000; Szreter and Woolcock, 2004). The difference between the three forms of social capital that the participants appear to possess or create is discussed below.

Bonding social capital

Bonding social capital concerns the intra-community collaborative relationships that the participants engage within their academic 'neighbourhood'. As discussed in the next chapter, participants argue that the academic collaborative spouses that individuals need to collaborate with are those who can collaborate within their own community as well as others' because probably little to no bridging social capital can exist unless academics collaborate first with people from their own discipline.

Bonding social capital is the foundation of bridging social capital. This suggests that the academics who are not used to collaborating within their academic homes are unlikely to leave their homes and collaborate with academics from various academic communities and disciplines. However, this can be limiting in that less opportunities for collaboration might be available. For example, participants believe that belonging to only one academic home or discipline is 'old fashioned', 'limiting' and 'boring', and that collaborating with academics from different disciplines needs to be something to be encouraged: "I enjoy working with people from different disciplines. I absolutely encourage interdisciplinarity" (Sara, formal interview) (See Chapter Six for a detailed explanation on how participants balance their bonding and bridging social capital).

Bridging social capital

Besides bonding social capital, participants also believe they need to have bridging social capital, so that they do not squander any collaborative opportunity. This demonstrates that they are flexible, open and responsive to change. Bridging social capital denotes the inter-community collaborations wherein academics participate. Crossing disciplinary boundaries is an example of bridging social capital that participants possess. Furthermore, did the participants not believe in the importance of all disciplines, they might probably not have appetite for collaborating with academics from other disciplines.

Linking social capital

As discussed in Section 5.2.2, some participants seem to collaborate with individuals at different levels of academic power hierarchy. An example of this power hierarchy in

academic collaboration can be as follows: supervisors co-writing articles with their supervisees, or professors collaborating with early career academics. Nevertheless, one can have a high level of social capital, but not necessarily confidence. Thus, confidence, based on the participants' words, is also significant in collaboration.

5.1.2.4. Confidence

Participants seem to ensure that they collaborate with academics who are confident like them regardless of how rich their social capital is. Confidence in collaboration suggests that academics need to show confidence in sharing what they know or what they do not know. It is about showing that academics and their collaborative spouses trust one another's expertise and have confidence in one another's abilities. However, confidence in this context also has to do with personality in that some collaborations are successful as a result of academics' strong personality in not allowing drawbacks to exist in collaboration. For instance, Paul (formal interview) attributes the reason for his drawback-free collaborations to his strong personality and increased level of confidence, explaining:

> Well, I have a strong personality. So, I don't get many drawbacks. If there is an academic who I don't want to work with, I will tell them early on […] Not at all. I don't allow drawbacks! It [collaboration] has always been positive [...] but the thing is that I am driving it. I'm very confident. I'm not going to sit here and waste my time like an idiot, but I respect the professionalism of my colleagues and they've all been brilliant.

Though some individuals might find Paul's statement somewhat 'arrogant', this does not seem to be the case because he appears to be confident and pragmatic in his collaborative relationships, something which seems to help his collaborations to be a success. The fact that Paul 'drives' his collaboration shows that he is confident. This is because if he were not confident and did not have a strong personality, he would not feel confident to say that his collaborations have never witnessed any issue. Likewise, Lisa (formal interview) believes that her personality as a confident academic helps her search for collaborative opportunities: "if I see someone doing a talk at a conference, I just walk to them and say can we work on a project together?" Lisa's words suggest that "if you're not confident to do that [collaborate], you will never find those opportunities" (Lisa, ibid.).

Therefore, the fact that the participants self-generate collaboration demonstrates that they are confident and brave enough to collaborate without any fear: "I don't think there are any drawbacks in collaboration because, for example, my collaborations are always self-generated, so I generate them" (James, formal interview). This indicates that when

collaboration is done on a voluntary basis, participants can feel more confident in leading that collaboration wherein all the individuals involved in it can develop a sense of equality.

When academics feel confident, they generally develop a feeling of emotional as well as intellectual safety in that they can voice their views in a way which does not make them feel threatened. This confidence, according to Robert (follow-up interview), also has to do with previous collaborative activities wherein academics participate. That is, the more participants collaborate, the more they say their confidence increases: "I think that comes from confidence of previous collaboration and confidence about what I'm doing and understanding what I'm doing, and that wouldn't have been strong if I hadn't collaborated in the past". This implies that the more participants have faith in what they think they know, the more they feel confident to collaborate both at the national and international level:

> [Y]our level of confidence in your academic reputation or professional expertise is also a factor because I notice that the more confident I am feeling, the more likely I'll seek out external or internal collaborators. If you're feeling down on yourself or like you're struggling with something, I think I'll be less likely to reach out to someone.
>
> (Marc, follow-up interview)

However, being extrovert, sociable and confident might not be sufficient unless academics are 'academically' generous and show willingness to share their thoughts and experiences (i.e., human capital) with their collaborative colleagues.

5.1.2.5. Academic generosity

Participants report that they need to collaborate with colleagues who are generous – not financially, but academically generous: "I am very willing to share my ideas" (Marc, formal interview). Academic generosity in the context of this study refers to participants who are happy to share their time, knowledge, and resources with their collaborative spouses and are interested in collaborating with them. As an example of academic generosity, Victoria (formal interview), regards academic or intellectual generosity as an important facet of academics' personality, describing her personality as:

> [Q]uite generous, not necessarily financially, but with my time and with my energy and resources. I like sharing resources. If I see something that is of interest to anybody, I'd share it. So, I'm generous as a person, that's my character, and I think it manifests itself in academia through sharing things. So, if I get an email with something that looks interesting, I'd share it with

> other people, and it's great pleasure to collaborate with someone who is generous like you.

Academic generosity seems to stem from personal generosity in that generally those who are naturally generous as people are also generous in their academic environment. Thus, sharing and caring are important criteria in academia, and this can make it easier for participants to collaborate as they are ready to achieve this goal by virtue of their intellectual generosity. However, according to the participants, those who do not share knowledge with their colleagues and do not enjoy collaborating may not be regarded as 'academics' because in academia, being academically generous is key:

> No of course not [not like photographs 3 and 4 = not sharing knowledge, not collaborating]! I do like sharing my stuff with anybody. I publish my stuff, and anybody can use it as long as they acknowledge me. I'm happy for people to think I'm wrong, then that's great let's have the argument and learn more together! That's what it is. I'm too old to worry about such things [being selfish and jealous] […] And for me academics who do not collaborate, and who protect their research not sharing it until they get all the credit for it, behaving like 'idiots' whose egos are bigger than their brains. I have no time for them. They don't exist. We're supposed to be a knowledge business and you have to share otherwise it doesn't count.

(Paul, formal interview)

Similar to Rene Descartes' famous dictum "I think; therefore, I am", which denotes that if individuals can think, this suggests that they exist, my revised version of it "I collaborate; therefore, I am[23]" implies that academics may not develop a sense of existence in academia unless they share their human capital with academics and academically care about them: "I do care about academics and people in general" (Sara, formal interview). Thus, to be considered as 'academic', participants point out that academics need to reduce their level of academic selfishness, i.e., not sharing with other academics what they know in relation to teaching, supervision or research. Furthermore, being academically generous in terms of human capital, which can, in turn, lead to the development of collaboration, is, in Adam's (formal interview) words:

[23] However, this does not suggest that academics do not have any identity at all. By 'therefore, I am', here I am referring to the degree to which academics can be recognisable in a particular domain, i.e., wider academic identity and recognition that academics can develop in a particular field as a result of 'collaborating' with particular 'well-established' academics in a relevant domain.

> [S]omething that should be automatic. The academic who doesn't collaborate in my view wouldn't be able to function as an academic because they wouldn't know about the scholarship in their area, or they wouldn't be able to learn from the best practice from other people particularly in our teaching.

This implies that 'non-functional academics' are individuals who tend to keep their knowledge to themselves, thinking that this is a smart way of 'climbing' the academic ladder when it is not. It is by assisting other academics through sharing knowledge with them that the opportunities to have a wider collaboration with them can emerge. For instance, when James (formal interview) received an email from someone he did not even know to review his two book chapters, James did not refuse to do that, and finds it very generous of him to do that for academics through the screen, he reports:

> I didn't know him so I said why would I bother to do that because I don't know this person, and I'm not gonna be paid for it, but the topic was easy enough because it was in my area, so I decided to do it, and I looked at the two chapters […] read them and I sent him back comments […] then I received an email saying thank you for those, and I thought that was rather nothing […] four months later I got an invitation to be an editor of the [name of the journal], and I found out that he was one of the editors or one of the chief editors […].

The moral of the story is to do good for other academics even if they are not well-known because it will come back in unexpected ways, and James's story is a good example of academic generosity through the screen.

5.1.2.6. Academic autonomy

Most participants argue that their collaborative partners need to have a sense of autonomy. They need to be people who should not accept to be forced to collaborate as there should not be such thing as coercion in any academic collaboration. This suggests that participants perceive collaboration as being voluntary and self-initiated, not imposed on them by the university. In this regard, Marc (formal interview) contends:

> […] I personally make a decision whether I'm going to go to the university in [Europe] and meet colleagues and collaborate with them. This is my autonomous decision. So, the university you work for is a place from which you can go, it's not a place that confines you or forces you to collaborate with certain people. Your academic freedom is the ability to collaborate with colleagues whenever you think it's important. And that's your own decision. So, there's a huge sense of autonomy, there should be! […] There are some people at some levels in some universities who feel they don't have the

> freedom that they should have. And this is to do with structures and management that sometimes gets in the way. Personally, I don't care about these things. I am free to collaborate […]

Marc's argument highlights that the intrusion of university into academics' collaboration can limit their autonomy to collaborate. This also suggests that collaboration is often generated by academics, not the university or anybody else. Also, individuals do not have to wait for the permission of the university to embark on collaborative relationships as most collaborations happen spontaneously: "it's us, academics, who do that without waiting for any permission to collaborate" (Maria, formal interview). Similarly, Lisa (formal interview) puts:

> I don't think academics would wait for the university go-ahead sign to actually go ahead and start looking for people to collaborate with. We have the freedom to collaborate with whoever we feel comfortable with

This shows that participants' sense of autonomy can assist them to find collaboration with academics with whom they feel emotionally and intellectually comfortable. Thus, it is important that academics feel that they are autonomous and free when it comes to choosing the person to collaborate with whenever and wherever they wish.

Nevertheless, having a sense of autonomy does not guarantee that the participants always want to collaborate unless they are motivated to do so. Thus, motivation is another factor which I discuss below.

5.1.2.7. Motivation

A great majority of participants argue that autonomy would not be sufficient if they and their collaborative spouses are not motivated to collaborate. This shows that the psychological dimension to collaboration is essential as well, and that autonomous academics become more motivated to collaborate, or as Adam (formal interview) expresses:

> There is a personal-psychological dimension to it [collaboration] as well. I mean people's willingness to be involved in collaborative work. Some people are more enthusiastic to collaborate with people than others. Some people no matter how much money was available and how many structures you could put in place, they still wouldn't be interested, but the majority of people, I think, are interested. So, there is a lot of hidden stuff about collaboration that we don't always know about if we don't experience that ourselves when working on projects together like research or teaching or anything, really […].

This indicates that collaboration needs to come from within academics. Collaborations which are driven by autonomous academics can be sustainable as both autonomy and motivation are present (dispositional attribution), hence my use of Attribution Theory. Likewise, Victoria (formal interview) believes that:

> [C]ollaboration has to do with motivation. It is driven by a desire to get people that I think are similar. So, it's me who should look for academics to collaborate with.

It can be claimed from Adam's and Victoria's quotes that academic Selves need to collaborate with similar academic Others who are interested in collaboration as well. Some participants state that their university has nothing to do with their collaboration, and that they do not allow university rules to interfere in their collaborative business as they think this is personal: "I don't do regulations. I don't give Monkey's about rules. I am free to collaborate with anybody, colleagues, students [...] without being told to do that" (Paul, formal interview). Nevertheless, few participants seem to be contradictory in their answers. On the one hand, they claim that they do not care about the university rules, and that their collaborations are voluntary, and on the other hand, state that the university requires them to collaborate if they want to be promoted.

Yet, the key phrase here is 'if they want to'. This suggests that it is their motivation, interest, and autonomy which help them collaborate to become professionally promoted. However, though this seems as though it is a sort of compulsion, participants argue that they do that because they want to secure promotion. They do that because they know this is for their own good. They would probably not engage in collaboration unless they knew that this would benefit them.

Nonetheless, the above-mentioned arguments might beg the following question: 'are there not any obstacles that may hinder participants' engagement in collaboration?'. This issue is investigated in the following section.

Support factor

Three participants argue that despite their academic autonomy and motivation to be involved in collaboration (*dispositional attribution*), so they can be promoted or achieve other goals, other external factors like university support can 'block' their motivation to achieve their goals (*situational attribution*), hence my use of Attribution Theory. This implies that universities can prevent academics' collaborations by showing disapproval or creating difficulties for their 'formal collaborations'. For example, Victoria (formal interview), who

seems to resist being 'told' to collaborate, claims that her university limits the chances for collaborations by not allowing them to have enough funding, arguing that:

> [I]t's me personally who should look for other academics to collaborate with. It's me, not the university. And worse than that, my next step professionally is to become a Reader, and to become a reader I have to build networks outside the institution, I have to write collaboratively, I have to attend conferences. And then I put in a very small bid for some conference fees, and they said no, there is no money, but the problem they said to become a reader you need to attend conferences, write collaboratively, and build networks.

This suggests that external factors like university encouragement can be important in collaboration. However, the university can work against the participants' fulfilment of their professional goals like becoming professors or readers, which necessitates that they collaborate with academics outside their university. Moreover, this lack of support can make few participants feel they are left out by their university and would feel that their efforts are not valued, as expressed by Sara (formal interview):

> Sometimes the feeling of a lack of value or support does stop me from putting much energy to something that I like to do with other academics, and I lose the motivation to work with other people because doing any research collaboration or any sort of collaboration or whatever you're doing is an emotional experience just as much as anything else.

Feeling supported seems to boost some participants' emotional well-being. This indicates that Sara might not have developed a feeling of 'not being valued or appreciated' enough by her university if the latter had appreciated her efforts by writing back to her. Thus, "communication is so important in collaboration" (Sara, ibid.). However, this should not hinder academics from achieving their goals, and that where there is a will there is a way. Yet, sometimes not having time for collaboration can also be an issue.

Time factor

All participants argue that regardless of autonomy, motivation, and support factors, time can also be an issue in collaboration. Being available to collaborate can sometimes be out of academics' hand due to other academic and social responsibilities that academics have: "but trying to find the time to do that [collaborating] is extremely difficult" (Sara, formal interview). Time factor seems to make collaboration so difficult to occur that it can make some participants miss out on some collaborative opportunities: "I'm not always available to collaborate, like if I don't have time for that then I just say no I can't because I don't have time for that." (Grace,

formal interview). Yet, this does not suggest that some participants squander some collaborations because they want to. It is "[b]ecause I think people are busy. People don't have time" (Marc, formal interview).

However, time cannot always limit participants' collaboration and be 'accused' of being a strong factor restricting their collaboration. Participants claim that they need to choose the right academic collaborative spouses who would 'make time' for collaboration and try to look for other alternatives, so as not to squander collaborative opportunities. This demonstrates that academics who are intensely interested in collaboration would 'create' and 'allow' time for it.

Because time is linked to space, some participants like Lorenzo (follow-up interview) recounts that though time can be an issue in collaboration, this does not imply that there are no other ways to make collaboration happen, arguing:

> I would say time make it more difficult […] I can only give you the example that the last two things that my colleague and I wrote a paper. We were here in a period of leave trying to get it written because we couldn't find time in our actual normal work time to get done as it had to be done, and she had to come to my house.

Though it is true that time can be an issue in collaboration as time and space are often interrelated, this does not appear to be the case for some participants as the latter and their collaborative spouses can find alternatives and are flexible to collaborate in different spaces wherein time would not be an issue. While Lorenzo did not have time to collaborate in the first space, he was flexible and agent of change, and did not allow time to limit his collaboration. Finding space-related alternatives is key in collaboration. In the same vein, Sara (formal interview) also does not seem to link time for collaboration to space, especially that we are living in the era of technology wherein the virtual collaborative space is available:

> [T]ime is a big issue, and when it is so difficult to meet, especially if your colleagues are abroad, not in the same place at the same time. […] the best substitute for the face-to-face collaboration is the computer-based environment.

This implies that collaboration does not always have to take place in the second space: "I'm not just doing it inside the university time" (Marc, formal interview). As I discuss in the next chapter, participants believe that academics need to collaborate with people who are not bound by a particular collaborative space.

5.2. Shared values

While the first category discussed the personal values which the participants and their collaborative spouses possess, the second category elucidates the shared values that participants' academic collaborative spouses and they need to respect in order for their collaboration to avoid the potential of failing. These are 'shared perspectives and experiences', which include 'a shared sense of identity' and 'a shared domain'; and 'negotiated power'. Moreover, while 'personal values' are related to 'who' the participants and their collaborative spouses are in terms of *social capital*, 'shared values' have to do with who the participants and their collaborative spouses are in terms of *human capital* – what they have as knowledge, domain or interest, experience, expertise, skills, etc. to be able to engage in collaboration. Hence, the question asked as to shared values in relation to collaboration is 'what do you know to be able to establish academic collaborative relationships?'.

5.2.1. Shared perspectives and experiences

The participants state that academics with shared perspectives and experiences often collaborate effectively and produce better outcomes, be they tangible (e.g., co-publishing books, co-supervising theses, or co-designing modules), or intangible (e.g., enhancing ways of looking at issues related to teaching, supervision or research). By shared perspectives and experiences, here I refer to the views that the participants and their collaborative spouses have in common regarding collaboration and how they collectively experience them. For example, all participants appear to believe in the premise which says 'my gains are your gains; therefore, our gains', meaning that academics need to have a shared sense of identity by using 'we, our and ours' in lieu of 'I, my and mine' when collaborating, otherwise that would be regarded as a collaborative rather than an individual one. Moreover, perceiving the goal behind collaboration as shared is also important in collaboration as a result of having something in common on which to work (shared pursuit and domain). Therefore, the following section explore participants' shared sense of identity.

5.2.1.1. A shared sense of identity

All participants appear to construct a 'strong' shared sense of identity when collaborating, meaning they seem to perceive the whole collaborative work wherein they engage as a collective rather than an individual action. This is because they know that developing a feeling of belonging to a community is arguably the most important aspect of building a collaborative relationship. This also implies that they tend to use the personal pronoun 'we' instead of 'I' when describing their collaborations. The aspects of this shared

sense of belonging to a community of collaborative academics can be twofold: through the use of personal pronoun 'we', and through the manifestation of this pronoun through collective participation and engagement. Thus, this section investigates how collaboration facilitates the construction of participants' shared sense of identity in their collaborative community.

Constructing a shared sense of identity through the personal pronoun 'we'

All participants seem to identify themselves as part of a collaborative community through using the personal pronoun 'we' instead of 'I': "I think that's what collaboration is about! It's a 'we' rather than an 'I'. I feel part of the 'we' and this is how I construct a shared rather than a sort of individual identity" (Victoria, follow-up interview). This group identification or 'We-ness' can be vindicated by all the participants. Sara (follow-up interview), for instance, explains the reason for opting to use 'we' instead of 'I' when discussing her experiences with collaboration, stating:

> It does reflect that I feel part of a big collaborative community of [discipline]. And pretty much always identify myself in terms of WE, not I. I think because it's just the way I am personally as well. If I talk about the students, I'll say our students I'll never say my students, I'll say our community, not my community […] I always think about my colleagues as well because we pretty much represent one another in that community, we have a sort of shared identity [...] we're all pretty much the same.

Sara seems to express her sense of belonging to a community through the personal pronoun 'we'. This only two-letter word, albeit significant, can 'empower' participants and make them feel that they are not alone in their collaboration journey. In addition, other participants like Robert (formal interview) claims that he uses 'we' instead of 'I' when describing his experiences with collaboration to combat isolation:

> I think that's because I feel that I'm part of a community of researchers and that we all work together towards a common goal. I think it's important in terms of the research supervision that you don't feel isolated in that, for example, both second supervisor and I need each other to help supervise the research student. I mean the success of the students means our success. You don't feel isolated as a student that there are your peers; there are things like [collaborative group], and so on. So, I see it as very much what might be the supervisor is a collective we in terms of understanding the work of the student.

Robert's comment suggests that identifying himself as part of a community of researchers makes him feel less isolated and more engaged in the community. Supervision, for

instance, is claimed to be a collective rather than an individual activity, and thus, participants would feel more protected or empowered when hiding behind the 'we' pronoun when discussing their collaborations. This, according to Victoria (follow-up interview), is solidarity: "I think it [identity] is collective because of the notion of solidarity". The power of personal pronoun 'we' can, therefore, be linked back to the issue of collective participation in collaboration in that participants do not seem to use 'we' just to show that they are highly collaborative. Instead, participants also 'manifest' the 'we' pronoun in practice through mutual participation and engagement, which is the second aspect of sharing a sense of identity in collaboration.

They achieve that though their mutual engagement and participation in real and virtual collaborations with their collaborative spouses. Besides, the participants report that they collaborate with academics whose "actions should speak louder than their words as we say" (Maria, follow-up interview) in terms of the mutual engagement and participation in collaboration. Exemplifications of participants' manifestation of their shared sense of identity through participation is found in all the Findings Chapters. However, while incredibly important, constructing a sense of shared identity may not be enough for the success of collaboration. Participants claim that academics who engage in collaboration also need to develop a clear shared domain. This is mainly because besides having to develop a shared sense of identity, a shared domain of interest can provide a 'social glue' for academics and their collaborative partners to support one another

5.2.1.2. Participants' creation of a shared domain of interest

In addition to developing a shared sense of identity (We-ness), participants also argue that both their collaborative spouses and they need to create a shared area of interest, or using Wenger's (1998) CoPs concept 'a shared domain of interest'. This shared domain of interest seems to define the shared sense of identity that the participants and their partners create when collaborating. This proposes that if the participants and their collaborative spouses did not have a shared domain to be able to collaborate, they would not perceive themselves as one community, would not use the personal pronoun 'we' instead of 'I', and, most importantly, would not even be able to collaborate: "[n]othing really works as an academic unless you're speaking to the people of similar interests" (Adam, formal interview).

In the same vein, Victoria (follow-up interview) claims that "[i]f it's for something that I am not interested in, then I would just drop off". Therefore, it is this shared area of interest that appears to 'glue' participants and their collaborative spouses together as a real, meaningful

community of practice, not a pseudo one. Besides, this shared domain is also helpful if the participants and their collaborative colleagues share a similar working style: "I also think that you have to have shared research interests and it helps if you have common mode of working" (Florence, formal interview). However, before discussing participants' shared domain of interest, it should be emphasised that a 'shared domain' and a 'shared sense of purpose' are two distinct aspects of collaboration. That is, participants report that they can have a shared domain which bonds them together with their collaborative spouses, but not necessarily a shared purpose because they collaborate for different purposes, which I, in Chapter Seven, describe under two categories – *expressive* versus *instrumental* collaboration.

Therefore, in addition to developing a shared sense of purpose, having a shared domain of interest or a common academic pursuit seems to be an important factor in collaboration. Grace (formal interview), for instance, believes that academics need to search for people with similar areas of expertise as this could help them establish a complementary collaborative relationship glued by a shared domain:

> I supposed it's more looking for collaborators for areas that are your specialist or your areas of interests, I mean people with similar expertise who would complement you. So, obviously where my background in terms of [area of expertise] that particular area I'm interested in. So, I'm looking out for all people I can collaborate with who are doing [area of expertise], and I'm building links on Twitter and Facebook because that now helps to identify people and just highlight who would be interested in working with me. So that's part of willingness and availability to collaborate. I suppose they have similar philosophical approach to me because some people may be different.

Grace seems to be interested in collaborating with academics whose domains match hers, otherwise it would be hard to develop and sustain collaboration that is not based on a shared domain. This also shows the relationship between the title of this chapter and the current section in that a marriage relationship requires that the couple be like-minded, and whose beliefs match each other, and so do collaborative relationships. That is, the participants believe that they need to collaborate with "people who fit with what I'm doing. They are part of a discussion which is going to connect with my discussion" (Marc, formal interview). And to achieve that, interested individuals do not just wait for other academics with similar expertise to appear. Instead, they have to search for them, or in Lorenzo's (formal interview) words: "you're going to have to go out there and find ways of collaborating [...] that is take the initiatives".

Ways of finding academics with a similar domain can be done through social media as I discuss in the next chapter. This also requires that academics be enthusiastic, motivated, and willing to collaborate with like-minded people.

The significance of having a shared 'philosophical approach' in collaboration

As can be illustrated in Grace's quote, even within a similar area of expertise, having a shared 'philosophical approach' can also be of key when it comes to collaboration. This denotes that such philosophical or methodological approaches can at times be prioritised over the general discipline like Education, Politics, and Linguistics. Philosophical approach or "methodological position", as James (formal interview) refers to it, is the methodological route which researchers pursue when conducting research like Ethnography, Phenomenology, Grounded Theory, and Quantitative research:

> So, the people that I work with are people from [one discipline], [another discipline] or elsewhere who have an understanding of [this common methodological position]. So, you can say that the methodological position comes first. If you gonna do an [a research methodology] on something, it has a particular status and that's the status I occupy, but also some of the collaborations have been linked to one of the substantive research interests I have which is primarily [research interest]. So, some collaborations I have done in health is associated with [research interest], so there's a link there actually that is [research interest] and methodology ethnography. So, basically similar interests and similar methodologies.

This suggests that the participants are interested in the 'link' they can find between them and their collaborative spouses regardless of the general domain or area of expertise. This also shows that participants are flexible and that not only do they work with academics from their own discipline in their community (i.e., bonding social capital), but also with others from diverse disciplinary backgrounds (i.e., bridging social capital) provided that there is a link that binds them together, which, in this case, is the methodological or philosophical approach or position that the participants generally follow in their research.

***'Thinking outside the box'*: Exploring participants' flexible domains of interest**

The participants seem to search for collaborative partners who are similar to them in terms of being risk-taking, flexible and open to change when it comes to collaboration. That is, though the participants believe that it is extremely important for them to collaborate with academics with similar academic interests, what is also as important as that is their potential collaborative spouses' flexibility as to the domain of interest. For example, Marc (formal interview) argues that it is important that academics become flexible and adventurous to be

able to collaborate with other academics from different domains as these, I claim, are the core features of nomadic academics:

> You're prepared to explore in avenues you might not have thought about before, because you might discover something...I am searching all sorts of things. OK there is a very famous example of this, you know the Noble prize? Somebody won the Noble prize in Chemistry, and they were interviewed on the Radio and they said what enabled you to do that? They said well it was because I was able to think outside the box and because I used to meet colleagues from other departments in the university, and we had conversations about all sorts of things, and that helped me to think differently.

Marc seems to stress that collaborating with academics from different disciplines is significant if academics wish to widen their collaboration circles and be open to experience. Openness is one of the important Big Five personality factors affecting interdisciplinary collaboration. Moreover, another factor influencing participants' flexible domain of interest is availability of opportunities. For example, Robert (follow-up interview) concludes that:

> One [factor affecting collaboration outside one domain of interest] is opportunity. There is actually an opportunity to make these connections. I think some different opportunities emerge and that takes you in a direction that you haven't thought about.

Expecting the unexpected in the journey of academic collaboration is important, and that allowing room for collaborative opportunities to emerge is essential because it can be beneficial if academics do not solely collaborate with academics with similar interests, but also with others from different disciplines. This can be done through "bringing in our expertise and their expertise" (Lorenzo, follow-up interview) or through "try[ing] to contribute by sending some of my expertise and thoughts" (Grace, follow-up interview). Nevertheless, another factor which is as important as the shared domain of interest is the personality of participants' academic collaborative spouses. For example, Lorenzo (formal interview) emphasises that:

> [N]ot that they have to have same interests, but they have to be people who you can work with…everybody will have colleagues within the department or any department where they would be more inclined to work with them or less inclined to work with them just because of personalities are a bit different …some people you are happy to sit at the computer for three with… other people you're not happy to sit at the computer for three minutes with...so yeah there's the personal aspect as well.

Again, this is linked back to the overarching argument established in this thesis, which is that for a successful collaboration to take place, academics need to collaborate with the right people with whom they should enjoy collaborating and to whom they can refer as their academic collaborative spouses. In the following section, I discuss participants' negotiated power.

5.2.2. Negotiated power

All the participants seem to assume that differentials of power can be negotiated in collaboration. I use 'negotiated power' here to indicate that the participants believe that regardless of the academic status of academics, power dynamics need to be broken down when collaborating. This is because academic collaboration works well with people having various academic positions, and who try to break power dynamics down when collaborating: "the more we break power dynamics down, the more successful I think that collaboration will be, I think it's good to feel we're equals" (Adam, formal interview). This is what 'linking social capital' in academia is about – it is about building collaborative networks with academics who have different degrees of academic power hierarchy. The discussion below, therefore, is based on *linking* social capital in academic collaboration.

Seniority-wise, participants report that their collaborations are threefold: academics with academics, academics with postgraduate students, and senior lecturers with professors or readers. Participants believe that there cannot be a shared sense of identity unless they feel they are equals: "[y]ou really have to feel you're equals (Marc, formal interview). This suggests that feelings are developed as a result of academic Selves and Others' behaviours when collaborating. This suggests that when the participants feel that their collaborative partners do not exert power over them, and vice versa, they can develop a feeling of community, belonging, and, hence, happiness because they sense that they are emotionally and intellectually safe with the people with whom they collaborate, and so do their collaborative spouses. In this regard, Marc (ibid.) describes how thrilled he becomes when both his collaborative partner and he negotiate power when collaborating.

This feeling of happiness and achievement is the result of Marc's way of treating his collaborative partner and the positive feedback his partner provides about the way she perceives their collaboration:

> Well, I am very happy when she says, "there are very few senior professors who would treat me as an equal" and I am pleased about that honestly. I am so pleased when she says that we work as equals. […] That means a lot to

> me. Even though she has hardly published anything, I respect her ideas. That makes me feel, in my personal terms, that I have succeeded because I managed to be who I am without being hierarchical. Why would I exert power or impose myself on other academics who are happy to collaborate with me?

Marc would probably not feel a sense of achievement and find joy in his collaboration did he not set academic power and hierarchy aside. Even though his writing partner – Olivia – is 'academically younger' than he is, this does not seem to pose any issue because they both are happy to collaborate with each other, and that they both think that collaboration needs to be an equal relationship wherein both academics need to feel comfortable working together. This negotiated power seems to be a personal skill which extends to academia and, thus, collaboration. Sara (follow-up interview), in this respect, argues that dominating non-academic collaborations is something which she does not even do at the personal level, let alone the academic ones, explaining that:

> I mean coming back to me as a person, I don't tend to dominate in that respect. It's not the way I would think. I am always very respectful of what other people offer to a situation. So, I don't see collaboration as exerting power or being dominant, no, never […] from my own perspective, I don't think that I create that power. I don't see it in that way personally. I think power is negotiated. I find that very helpful […] I think that people who may feel inferior and nervous don't give their best. I think the negotiated power between academics who are collaborating freeze up everyone's knowledge and make them comfortable because both feel a sense of equality without being hierarchical or trying to dominate that collaboration.

Like Marc, Sara appears to believe that being controlling and dominant is a personal matter in that she does not seem to be happy to impose herself on her collaborative partners because it can be argued that the more power is not negotiated, the less comfortable and intellectually safe academics can feel. Therefore, feelings of inferiority and nervousness can be the result of academics not negotiating academic power when collaborating. This implies that if academics and their collaborative partners want their collaboration to be anxiety and stress free, they had better not bring in power in their collaboration even if one of them was in a position of power in their previous jobs. In this respect, Paul (formal interview) argues that: "I'm not in a position I'm used to be in a position of authority, but not here because here everybody shares what we do, we are all equals". This feeling of equality seems to make the whole collaboration journey an enjoyable experience because in their minds, participants know

that their collaborative partners would not attempt to be controlling either, and that for their collaboration to be a success, academic power should be negotiated.

The above-mentioned examples of power negotiation in collaboration are related to academic-academic collaboration. Yet, it would also be interesting to fathom how participants collaborate with their postgraduate students to see if there is any difference.

Negotiated power in 'academic-student' collaboration

Not only do the participants negotiate power with other academics, but also with students. The fact that some participants collaborate with their students suggests that power is also negotiated in this case. For example, to avoid being 'unfair' with his students as they might think that academics only collaborate with their colleagues, Adam (formal interview) also collaborates with his students to break this stereotype, explaining:

> Sometimes academics' collaboration tends to be between professors or academics on a particular project because those ones tend to be status driven, I'm trying to break down that a bit you know just to not exert power, so I'm collaborating with one of my Masters students on a piece of work on [research area], so that she gets an interesting paper, but for the most part there's a seniority there because of the way in which journals work and everything. But generally speaking, the more we break that power dynamics down, the more successful I think that collaboration will be, I think it's good to feel we're equals. I'm doing quite a lot of work with my Ph.D. students on an article.

Giving students the opportunity to collaborate with senior lecturers, professors or readers is a good sign of academic power negotiation. Adam is a professor who usually collaborates with professors like himself. However, he seems to consider all the people he collaborates with as worthy of collaboration, otherwise students would feel marginalised and not being encouraged to collaborate with academics who can be above them in terms of academic power. Having said that, Victoria (formal interview) believes that collaboration is an opportunity that needs to be given to everyone, not just academics:

> [I]t [collaborating with everyone, including students] should be encouraged as an opportunity for everybody, not everybody has to take it, but it should be offered to everybody. If we close down collaborative work in favour of this more isolated model, it would be to the detriment of the academic community, because there will be some people who get all powerful, and others who are more marginalised.

Collaborating with individuals who are less 'academically powerful' than others can be helpful for the early career academics like Ph.D. students as this shows that academic collaboration knows no limits or does not favour a particular category of people (i.e., hierarchy-wise) over others. Marc (formal interview), for instance, recognises that power relations and hierarchy in collaboration need to be removed, and that learning from students is as important as learning from established academics: "I believe that I have to learn from everybody. I don't only collaborate with academics who are readers or professors like myself. Absolutely not! This is why I enjoy working with my Ph.D. students". This shows that if Marc exerts his power over his students, this "can undermine the collaborative aspect of it because we're not on an equal putting" (Florence, follow-up interview). Similarly, James (formal interview), supporting Marc's argument, states:

> I think it's up to the academic to work that power relation. Established academics like [Marc], you have some degree of power within the discipline, you're given opportunities. So, the point then is whether you can offer up somebody other opportunities to staff who are further down this circle of hierarchy because they need assistance.

Even though power relations and hierarchy in academic collaboration are said to be negotiated, this does not suggest that there is no leadership in collaboration in terms of who needs to lead and be in charge of that collaboration.

Leadership in collaboration

Participants believe that they need to develop a clear sense of leadership when collaborating. My use of 'leadership' in this context is not synonymous with power because the former is often based on a collective decision, and then someone in that collaboration needs to take the lead and be in charge of it. This needs to be done without having to be controlling because if there is such behaviour along with unclear leadership this, in Sara's (follow-up interview) words would "make people just don't want to collaborate and they just leave, and it's a real shame". That is, when power is negotiated, the individuals taking part in it can have the right to voice their opinions and can also take a decision on a collective rather than an individual, selfish basis. With regard to leadership, Lorenzo (follow-up interview) states that leadership, in his case, means having a discussion with members of the collaborative community to which he feels he belongs, and that it does not suggest that he exerts power over his collaborative colleagues, arguing:

> Hopefully we come to a collective decision. I think the only time where in the end I'll have to come down on one side or the other if there are two sides is where it's split i.e., there are two distinct opinions, and in the end if only one solution can be adopted, then in that decision as a [administrative responsibility] I'll have to come down on one way or the other. I agree with you that the way it sounds it did sound like there is a power thing going on, but I try to play that down and try to share that power among the members of the community.

Leadership, therefore, does not necessarily imply that only one academic needs to take the decision which suits them. This leadership is used to make collaboration work better. That is, if none of the academics involved in a collaborative activity wants to be in charge of it, or there is no clear leadership at all, collaboration might not even develop, or based on Sara's (follow-up interview) comment: "if you don't have any clear leadership, things can also fall apart". Therefore, having someone taking the lead in collaboration without being a "dictator" is important for the development and sustainability of collaboration. In relation to making a collective decision in collaboration, Paul (follow-up interview) argues that:

> In my way of thinking you have to share power with everybody, but there has to be somebody who carries the ultimate responsibility and decision, otherwise nothing will ever get done. You can be in charge, but you cannot be a dictator in collaboration […] you can take into account what everybody says, and everybody feels comfortable that they are able to participate and can share a collective decision, but really, it's only one person who should listen to all the decision made by the members of that community.

To conclude, having clear leadership in collaboration is extremely important if academics want their collaboration to succeed. However, as I shall argue in the next chapter, it is *mostly* rather than *all* about the people involved in collaboration because while it is true that the 'who' seems to outweigh the 'where', the latter can also be equally important in shaping participants' behaviour and feelings when collaborating. As I discuss in the following chapter, 'every collaborative space is unique' and by 'unique' here I argue that not all collaborative spaces are alike, and that participants feel and behave differently in different spaces, i.e., their emotions tend to be in motion – 'emotions in motion'.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the important values and criteria that participants believed their collaborative spouses needed to respect when collaborating. It has discussed the qualities of the people with whom the participants collaborate – the 'who'. Specifically, participants argued that they needed to collaborate with academics who respected two kinds of values. These are personal and shared values. While the issues surrounding personal values were 'ethics and integrity' (trust, interdependence and respect); 'personality traits and social capital', the shared values were 'shared perspectives and experiences', and 'negotiated power'.

The overarching argument in this chapter has been that for a successful collaboration to have the potential to happen, academics need to choose the right collaborative spouses, and that it is mostly about the 'who', in the sense that the academics with whom the participants collaborate appear to outweigh both the 'where' and 'why'. In the following chapter, I address the issue of crossing boundaries in collaborative practices from a social-psychological perspective – the 'where'.

CHAPTER SIX

6. "*We Need to Move Around a Lot*": The Social Psychology of Crossing Boundaries in Collaborative Practices

For their collaboration to have a greater chance to be successful, all the participants in this study seem to be 'nomadic academics' whose behaviours and feelings are in motion, and who appear to be intensely interested in crossing two types of boundaries, namely, 'spatial' (which includes national, international, and virtual spatial boundaries) and 'disciplinary' boundaries.

Crossing spatial boundaries (6.1) implies that the participants 'break down' boundaries related to the setting wherein they collaborate, and do not seem to be attached to one specific collaborative environment. They collaborate nationally, internationally, and virtually. National space-wise, the participants collaborate in the first space (home), second space (university), and third space (e.g., cafes, restaurants, and pubs). International space-wise, this suggests that not only do the participants traverse 'national' geographic boundaries for collaboration, but also 'international' ones to be able to connect with other academics from other countries and collaborate with them beyond the geographic constraints of collaborating internationally. However, when neither of these spaces is available, only then can the virtual space be a consideration, hence crossing virtual spatial boundaries.

Crossing disciplinary boundaries (6.2) insinuates that the participants collaborate with other academics from different 'academic homes' provided that there is a shared domain of interest that binds them together.

However, I need to explain how the theories and concepts presented in Chapter Three relate to some of the themes discussed in this chapter. Oldenburg's Concept of First, Second, and Third Place is used in Sections 6.1.1.1, 6.1.1.2, and 6.1.1.3 to describe first (home), second (university), and third (public settings) space wherein the participants collaborate. Besides, the concepts of CoPs and Social Capital are used to address issues in Sections 6.2 and 6.2.3 like multiple disciplinary identities (i.e., crossing disciplinary boundaries) and bridging capital when collaborating across disciplines and communities, respectively. Moreover, Attribution Theory is ubiquitous in the whole chapter to explain participants' views and actions as to crossing boundaries in collaboration.

6.1. The social psychology of crossing spatial boundaries

This section concerns, as some participants put it, "crossing", "pushing", "breaking down" and "blurring" spatial boundaries for collaboration through a social-psychological lens. Specifically, this section discusses participants' thoughts, attitudes, behaviours, and feelings when collaborating with their academic collaborative spouses across spatial boundaries.

The participants in the setting appear to cross national (6.1.1), international (6.1.2), and virtual (6.1.3) spatial boundaries to collaborate effectively. Crossing spatial boundaries demonstrates that the participants and their collaborative spouses do not have one fixed setting wherein they collaborate. They seem to be aware of the multiplicity of spaces wherein they can engage in collaboration, and that blurring spatial boundaries seems to be necessary in academic collaboration. In this regard, Maria (formal interview) states that: "it [collaboration] is not restricted by boundaries related to the notion of space". Collaboration does go beyond one fixed space and can happen "[…] anywhere where academics meet particularly about academic issues. It can be in the university, outside the university, in another country, or it can be online, or in public places, why not?" (Grace, formal interview).

However, not only does the fact that my participants have nomadic features suggest that they move around from one environment to another 'hunting' collaborative opportunities at the national, international, and virtual level, but also that their feelings and behaviours change depending on the *space* wherein they collaborate with other *academics* – hence the phrase 'emotions in motion'. The type of nomadicity I am referring to here is both physical and virtual/digital as the participants move from one physical and virtual space to another just to pursue their collaboration: "[…] I think that in order to collaborate effectively, we need to move around a lot, not staying in one place all the time" (Victoria, follow-up interview), hence the title of the chapter.

Therefore, the first subtheme discussed under the overarching 'crossing boundaries in collaborative practices' theme is 'crossing spatial boundaries', which includes crossing national, international, and virtual spatial boundaries. The next section, therefore, describes the social psychological processes in the journey of crossing national spatial boundaries.

6.1.1. The social psychology of crossing national spatial boundaries

The different spaces wherein the participants collaborate nationally are the first space (home), the second space (university), and the third space (public spaces). This section is organised as follows: Section 6.1.1.1 describes the first space, Section 6.1.1.2 delineates the

second space, and Section 6.1.1.3 discusses the third space mainly from a social-psychological angle.

6.1.1.1. First space

The first space in which the participants collaborate nationally is 'home'. Oldenburg (1989) refers to this as *first place.* However, as my focus is on the social psychology of the collaborative setting, I use the conceptual phrase 'first space' instead of 'first place' to refer to the social psychological rather than the physical features of the 'first place'. Therefore, the aim of this subsection is to describe how the participants behave and feel when collaborating at 'home' – *the social psychology of participants' collaboration in the first space.* The issues discussed in this section are normalising home as a collaborative space; emotions and behaviours in the first space; developing a sense of emotional and intellectual security in the first space; negotiating the collaborative space; and finally developing a feeling of escapism from the second space and refugism to the first space.

6.1.1.1.1. *'A university away from university'*: Normalising home as a collaborative space

Only four participants appear to normalise the home space as a collaborative space and seem to create their own professional collaborative environment in the first space. In this respect, Maria (formal interview), for example, stresses that collaborating with academics in the first space is a 'normal' thing to do, and that the home space has now become an extended version of the first space in that their offices, in a metaphorical sense, 'travels' between university and home. This also shows how flexible and responsive to change the participants are. That is, were the participants, who 'need to' collaborate in the first space, not happy to break the routine of collaborating in the second space, and were not interested in crossing collaborative spatial boundaries, it might be improbable that they would care about creating a professional space in the first space:

> […] it's not unusual for us to work at home because I, for example, work from home one day a week. So […] working and collaborating from home is a norm for us […], it's a natural progression. Sadly, we could argue that our homes are also our offices they are an extension of our offices, and in many cases where our contact working at home is kind of more comfortable than at work, and many of us share small offices and if we want to work and focus and concentrate, we should not be at work.

This implies that the home space is different from the second and third spaces in that it appears that few participants develop a feeling of ease, comfort, and peace when collaborating

at home, and behave differently in different spaces. Therefore, in the following subsection I delve into academics' emotions and behaviours in the first space.

6.1.1.1.2. Mood and behaviour in the first space

Studying the how participants feel and behave when collaborating in the first space is important for understanding the quality of collaboration and the relationship between their feelings and behaviours in the first space. For instance, Sara, Victoria and Maria, who also collaborate at home, describe how they feel when collaborating in the first space and report that they, unlike Lorenzo, prefer to collaborate from home, and do not seem to enjoy collaborating in their offices, in the second space:

> I collaborate in my house as well. For example, I am collaborating with someone, so he is coming to my place because we've got a collaborative project in January. I do feel more comfortable working with my colleagues at home than here in my office […] I think at home I feel more comfortable because I'm in my own space.

(Sara, follow-up interview)

Similar to Maria, Sara also finds collaborating at home 'normal' as she develops a sense of comfort and relief there more than in her office because she knows she is in her own space where no protocols or formalities exist. This also shows that Sara, Maria and the other participants all seem to have a shared understanding of the psychological values of collaborating in a place which is away from their formal offices. Developing a feeling of attachment to the home space seems to make some participants enjoy collaborating there. This is mainly because they are not threatened and feel protected in that they have the freedom to express themselves and their thoughts freely without being judged, especially that the environment is friendly and homely. Having mentioned that few participants feel protected when collaborating in the first space with the right people, the following subsection describes participants' development of a sense of security when collaborating in the first space.

6.1.1.1.3. *"A meta-physical space"*: Developing a sense of emotional and intellectual security in the first space

Few participants believe that the first space can be an environment wherein they collaborate safely as this particular space seems to 'look after' participants' emotional and intellectual wellbeing – a feature that the first space has, and which Victoria (follow-up interview) refers to as 'the meta-physical space'. By meta-physical space, Victoria appears to

refer to the energy that the home space has (i.e., psychology of the space), not to its architecture (i.e., the physicality of the space). Thus, the first space appears to determine the way participants behave and feel when collaborating. Participants can feel relieved in the home space when collaborating as they have the freedom to express themselves in a more relaxed way. Victoria (follow-up interview) explains how she feels when collaborating at home, illustrating:

> I would say relaxing and most importantly safe. Collaboration can only take place in a safe space, and that doesn't mean just safe in terms of security and the roof not falling in but feeling emotionally and intellectually safe as well. So, a meta-physical space.

Victoria seems to believe that academics often prefer to collaborate at home as it is an ideal space wherein they can be in a good state of mind, relaxed, comfortable, and protected both emotionally and intellectually. The reason why those participants seem to find home as a peaceful space wherein they collaborate comfortably is that they develop a feeling of possession and belongingness. This suggests that they do not possess the second or third space, but they do own their homes 24/7 and would not feel under pressure when collaborating at home as they know that wherever they go it is the first space – or domestic shelter – which would offer them peace, comfort, emotional and intellectual security, which is something they might not find in the second or third space, making the proverb "East or West home is the best" applicable in this case.

This suggests that the energy of the space can affect participants' mood and behaviour in that if participants did not feel comfortable and emotionally safe when collaborating in the first space, they might not continue to collaborate there. This may probably affect their productivity, especially if their emotional wellbeing is considered. In a similar vein, Sara (follow-up interview) expresses:

> I think at home I feel more intellectually and emotionally comfortable and relaxed because I'm in my own space, and the rooms are larger and cozier. we feel more at ease as we know we are safe at home. By safe I mean we both feel intellectually safe to talk about anything we want and share ideas without fear […] we both feel a sense of emotional or psychological security in terms of letting our guard down and you know you can show your authentic self.

Both Victoria's and Sara's quotes seem to highlight that the energy of the first space allows academics to be who they really are without having to fake their behaviour or feelings.

This indicates that this space takes the psychology of participants into account by caring for their emotional and intellectual wellbeing. Moreover, developing a sense of emotional belongingness to the collaborative first space seems to boost academics' mood and 'lift their spirit' by dint of the feeling of homeliness they create for home. Another point concerns the architecture of the first space which seems to be important in shaping academics' behaviours and controlling their emotions and mood. This demonstrates that if the participants' room were not cozy and comfortable enough, they might not develop a feeling of relaxation and homeliness as participants are different, and the way one academic feels at homes may be different from one academic to another.

However, to feel relaxed and comfortable in the first space, the participants believe that academics and their collaborative spouses need to have some negotiation skills when it comes to negotiating the collaborative space. That is, though the space can be important for collaboration, the people with whom academics collaborate can at times be more important than the space itself, in the sense that those participants might not feel emotionally and intellectually safe unless they collaborated with the right people in the right space. Thus, the following subsection discusses how participants negotiate the collaborative space, be it first, second, or third space.

6.1.1.1.4. Negotiating the collaborative space

The fact that some participants collaborate in the first space suggests that they have 'good' negotiation skills. It also demonstrates that their personality and that of their partners match as not all people are open to change and would rather stay in once setting like the second or third space unless they are happy to negotiate their collaborative space. That said, the four participants argue that the collaborative space can be negotiated between the collaborators, but not imposed. For example, Victoria (follow-up interview) notes that "[…] the space has to be negotiated". Therefore, collaboration cannot be imposed or enforced. Instead, it needs to be done voluntarily and that academics and their collaborative partners have the freedom to collaborate whenever and wherever they desire:

> We cannot force people to come to a place where they don't feel comfortable. So, yes, it's good to negotiate the time and place to avoid conflicts and misunderstandings.
>
> (Sara, follow-up interview)

Furthermore, as can be noted from Lorenzo's, Sara's, Victoria's and Maria's words, collaboration in the first space is not always intentionally chosen. Instead, Lorenzo, Sara, Victoria, and Maria collaborated at home for some practical reasons, not because they really wanted to collaborate in the first space. They negotiated that space prior to starting the collaboration. Therefore, a sense of enjoyment and comfort when collaborating at home seems to be created when academics are good negotiators and flexible enough to change spaces and accept to collaborate at home instead of somewhere else. Additionally, participants and their collaborative spouses seem to care about one another's psychological wellbeing in that they both make the collaborative first space atmosphere most conducive for collaboration: "we both get some fish and chips and make the atmosphere more relaxing and enjoyable for both of us" (Sara, ibid.).

6.1.1.1.5. *"[I]t's better to take yourself away from the office and work at home":* Developing a feeling of 'escapism' from the second space and 'refugism' to the first space

Those four participants appear to escape from the 'unquiet' second space and seek refuge in the less noisy first space not only to feel emotionally and intellectually safe, but also to get their collaborative work done. In this respect, Lorenzo (follow-up interview) states that: "it's better to take yourself away from the office and work at home", hence the title of the section. Collaborating in one's own space can be more beneficial and more productive than collaborating in an office in that at home both collaborative partners can focus on their joint work away from students knocking on the door every now and then asking for help. In this regard, when he collaborates, Lorenzo (ibid.), for example, focuses on "having quiet space where you won't be disturbed and to be able to better focus".

Participants escape from their offices and classrooms and head to their home as an emotional refuge to collaborate because their second space office is meant to be a space for getting work related to teaching or administration done. Maria, who does not seem to collaborate a lot in her office, emphasises that: "work is for dealing with student teaching and if we want to do serious stuff with other colleagues like collaboration, we actually need to do it at home" Maria, (formal interview). On a similar note, Lorenzo (ibid.) also tackles this point, stating:

> In certain spaces you're expected to do certain things. Here, in my office, I'm expected to do teaching-related, managerial-related work. If you stay in that space, the tendency is to focus on that, even if with your collaborative partner you have a deadline coming, you won't do that first because you have to do

> your other work first. So, sometimes it's better to take yourself away from the office and work at home.

Therefore, to benefit from all the opportunities available to them to collaborate with people outside their 'small' offices, the participants argue that academics need to be more flexible and should leave their second space shell: "definitely, we also collaborate outside our small offices and classrooms". Therefore, it should not be thought that the workplace space is the only space wherein collaboration needs to take place.

While this section described how the participants and their collaborative spouses felt and behaved when collaborating in the first space, the following section accentuates the social psychology of participants' collaboration in the second space.

6.1.1.2. Second space

The second space wherein the participants collaborate nationally is university. Oldenburg (1989) names this space *second place*. However, as my focus is on the psychology of the collaborative setting, I use the conceptual phrase 'second space' in lieu of 'second place' to refer to the social psychological rather than the physical features of the 'second place'. This section, therefore, analyses the way participants' thoughts, feelings, and behaviours are affected by the people they collaborate with in the second space. This section has only one theme – *mood and behaviour in the second space*.

6.1.1.2.1. Mood and behaviour in the second space

Mood and behaviour are important for the development of collaborative activities in the second space. That is, the social-psychological factors shaping academics' feelings and behaviours when collaborating with other academics in the second space needs to be considered as they take an important play in the quality of the collaborative work produced. The idea of favouring the first space over the second space when collaborating can be seen from Sara's (formal interview) words, who seems to feel and behave differently in the presence and absence of her collaborative spouse, illustrating:

> I do feel more comfortable working with my colleagues at home than here in my office […] I think at home I feel more intellectually and emotionally comfortable […] because I'm in my own space, and the rooms are larger and cozier. I think here in the workplace it can be quite difficult because I personally feel quite anxious working with someone in the workplace because I prefer open spaces that feel like home and because in my office, I have email after email after email, and I have people knocking on the door […]

As can be understood from Sara's quote, collaboration seems to require that the first space be larger, cozier and have good energy which would make it easier for academics to collaborate in that space. This suggests that the reason why some participants feel less comfortable collaborating in their second space is because they believe that the second space is for individual rather than collaborative work: "[h]ere, in my office, I'm expected to do teaching-related, managerial-related work. If you stay in that space, the tendency is to focus on that […]" (Lorenzo, follow-up interview).

Having delineated how some participants felt and behaved when collaborating in the first and second space, in the next section, I explore participants' psychology when collaborating in the third space.

6.1.1.3. Third space

Most participants seem to acknowledge that not only do their collaborations occur in the first and second space, but also in public spaces (e.g., pubs, restaurants, woods, and cafes). Oldenburg (1989) refers to such spaces as *third place*. However, as my interest is in the social psychology of collaborative settings, I use the conceptual phrase 'third space' instead of 'third place' to refer to the social psychological rather than the physical features of the 'third place'.

Most participants appear to perceive their collaborations as taking place in manifold locations. For instance, Victoria (formal interview) explains the locality wherein most of her collaborations happen as follows: "they happen in coffee shops, they happen in a restaurant or in a pub […]". Therefore, this section stresses the social psychology of third spaces by focusing on two issues: third space as a home away from home and killing two birds with one stone.

6.1.1.3.1. "*People are relaxed feeling like they are home*": Perceiving the third space as a home away from home

Few participants like Florence and Paul regard the third space as a 'home away from home' (Oldenburg, 1989). This implies that these participants seem to develop feelings of homeliness, comfort, and emotional and intellectual safety akin to the ones they sense when they collaborate in the first space. Thus, in the same way participants deem the first space as 'a university-away-from-university' when it comes to escaping from the second space, third spaces are also an extension of the home space, which makes academics feel home. These third spaces, according to the participants, happen in 'informal' social settings wherein individuals would feel relaxed and develop a sense of freedom in being creative in a more enjoyable, comfortable and 'a-home-away-from-home' atmosphere:

> [I collaborate] outside my office […] I feel that some of the best collaborative discussions with the people I enjoy collaborating with happen in informal places like pubs because people are relaxed feeling like they are home, and also there is a freedom to be a little bit more creative in whatever we're talking about […] and we were talking about what sorts of project do we make of them together with that material...all that informal collaboration was over a pizza in a pub rather than in the office.
>
> Florence (telephone interview)

Florence's statement suggests that most of her collaborations with academics occur outside the other two social spaces. This idea is in line with Maria's (formal interview) comment that says: "we also collaborate outside our small offices". Going back to her words, Florence seems to like collaborating in less formal spaces like pubs because, according to her, such spaces enable both her colleagues and her to exchange different thoughts, interact more freely, and discuss ideas in a more creative way. This is because she collaborates in a home-like space – a setting where her colleagues and she do not reside, but one wherein they feel as comfortable as they would in their own abode.

However, I should clarify that despite the fact that Oldenburg describes the third space as having good mood and is home-like, the participants also add that it is the people in the third space who also matter as the good energy of the third space itself might not be enough if academics are not collaborating with the right people in the right space. In this regard, Paul (follow-up interview) stresses that: "I won't really enjoy being there [third spaces like pubs] if I am not feeling at ease with the person I am interacting with". Similarly, Lorenzo (Covid-19-follow-up interview) argues that "I think this has to do with who you're collaborating with, not necessarily where you're collaborating, but who is there in that collaboration". Hence, it can be argued that it is mostly about the people in a particular space rather than the space itself.

6.1.1.3.2. "*Not the conference itself, but the dinner and the meeting space afterward*": Killing two birds with one stone in third spaces

Participants appear to 'kill two birds with one stone' when attending conferences in that not only do they attend or present a paper at a conference, but they also benefit from informal collaborations that happen in third spaces like pubs or restaurants: "[…] conferences are really good, but not the conference itself, but the dinner and the meeting space afterwards" **(**Victoria, follow-up interview), hence the title of the section.

Arguably, conferences and seminars play the role of a mediator between the second space and third space. The latter, as highlighted previously, often extends from the conference

which takes place in the second space. In other words, what happens after the conference seems to be more important than the conference itself. In the same vein, Grace clarifies that:

> […] I would not say in the conference as a conference, but after the conference we go have a chat at one of the local pubs and we start interacting and sparking off ideas in a more creative and relaxing way.

(Grace, formal interview)

It can be inferred that most of participants' collaborative activities happen mostly in pubs after attending or presenting a paper at a conference. These spaces seem to be informal, and those informal collaborative conversations are the focus of those 'third places' (Oldenburg, 1989). Besides, one participant (Victoria) seems to emphasise the point that collaborations among academics in informal third spaces need to be done with academics who are on good terms with one another in that they need to have a good, friendly relationship (i.e., the 'who'?). In addition, she goes on to state that most of the academics she collaborates with in the third spaces are those who she tends to collaborate with informally. This implies that even informal 'intellectual conversations' in informal third spaces do not seem to be held with 'random' people, or with people with whom she is not on good terms. The following excerpt from Victoria (follow-up interview) sums this point up:

> So, the people I collaborate within those really informal third spaces like coffee shops and bars or going for a walk, these collaborations would be with people that I interact with informally anyway. So, I wouldn't be having those sorts of intellectual conversations with people that I wasn't on friendly terms with.

Building on what was argued in the preceding chapter, the 'who' seems to outweigh the 'where' in that though the 'where' can provide participants comfort and ease, these would be pointless unless they collaborate with the right academic in the right space.

While Section 6.1.1 discussed how the participants felt and behaved when collaborating nationally in the first, second, and third space, the following section describes participants' feelings and behaviours when collaborating internationally, hence the social psychology of crossing international spatial boundaries.

6.1.2. The social psychology of crossing international spatial boundaries

Besides transcending 'national' spatial boundaries, participants also cross 'international' boundaries for collaboration. Contrary to the first type of participants that I

referred to as 'national nomadic academics' because they cross national spatial boundaries for collaboration, I am referring to the participants who collaborate at the global level as 'glomadic academics' – or 'global nomadic academics'. This is because not only do they collaborate at the national level, but also outside their local country (UK) by moving from one country to another and by 'getting out' of their 'only-national-collaboration' box. Thus, the following section discusses issues like 'understanding the psychological factors behind international collaboration', which includes participants' perception of international academic Others; participants' interest in travelling; and finally, participants' kinesthetic collaboration style.

6.1.2.1. Understanding the psychological factors behind participants' international collaboration

Understanding the affective factors behind participants' international nomadicity and engagement in collaboration with academics from outside their home country is important. These factors are participants' perception of 'international' others, participants' interest in travelling, and participants' kinesthetic collaboration style.

6.1.2.1.1. Participants' perception of 'international' academic Others

The first psychological factor which seems to affect participants' involvement in collaborative practices outside their home country is the way they see the international academic Others with whom they collaborate.

Participants appear to be open and ready to participate in 'in-person' international collaborations outsider the UK. They seem to be happy to travel abroad and collaborate with other academics from different countries with several racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. Participants' tolerance and positive attitudes towards foreigners seem to pave the way for them to travel to different parts of the world without showing any dislike for the international Other. For example, Sara (follow-up interview) claims that she is a naturally open and tolerant person when it comes to working with people who she does not know. This seems to help her collaborate with different academics from various countries:

> […] I'm quite happy to meet new people regardless of where they come from. I don't really care about who they are as country as much as I do care about who they are as people. […] I'm an open-minded person with no hatred or prejudice against people from other cultures […] I find this quite exasperating and may actually limit instead of widening your circle of collaboration […] you'll end up with people from your own country and the culture you know […] I am not a judgmental person […]. As I said, I'm quite happy to collaborate anywhere in the world as long as two criteria are met – seeing people as people and […] mutual respect for people's culture […].

> And that's what I've been trying to say that's it's not just about the outcome expected or it's not just about collaboration; it goes beyond that, really.

It could be argued that for a successful international collaboration to happen, academics should not hold negative attitudes towards the international academic Others with whom they collaborate. Moreover, academics should not be close-minded when it comes to collaborating with foreigners, otherwise they would not be able to cross any international boundaries. This is because who they are as people may not help them get out of their 'close-mindedness' bubble. Therefore, the more participants show respect and love for international academics and their cultural backgrounds, the more those international boundaries can easily be removed. Participants believe that academics need to free their minds from such prejudices and judgements and accept that when travelling abroad for collaboration, there would be some cultural differences wherein academics should not feel offended and need to welcome and celebrate diversity and difference instead.

Furthermore, not only does celebrating international academics' cultural diversity while collaborating in the host country seem to foster tolerance, openness, and respect for other cultures, but it also helps academics become more culturally aware of the differences that exist in each country. This is because participants so believe in the power of collaboration that they know that international boundaries need to be blurred, and that they are culturally open and aware as people, accepting to take risks to travel to a foreign country for collaboration. Speaking of cultural awareness as a result of participants' international collaborations, Lorenzo (formal collaboration) says:

> [B]ecause lots of collaboration had been with international partners then I probably have become more understanding on a culture level about how to act in a collaborative process […]

This suggests that among the benefits of cross-cultural collaboration is broadening participants' horizons and becoming more cross-culturally aware of how international collaboration is to be carried out. As such, international collaboration is nothing but a product of many interfering psychological factors among which is being open and agreeable academics who need to show tolerance and respect for the host country, or in Robert's (formal interview) expression: "being respectful of cross-cultural collaboration is important, like doing silly mistakes and offend people, and that's really difficult when I go to [a country in Asia] because of the language barrier". Thus, prior to signing any international collaboration agreement between academics from different countries, it is argued that academics need to educate

themselves and develop their cross-cultural awareness, which includes the language, religion, ethnicity, and race of the host country.

Once the criteria of being open-minded, agreeable and respectful towards international academics' cultures are met, only then can academics embark on travelling for collaboration. However, participants' interest in travelling is another important factor affecting their international collaboration.

6.1.2.1.2. Participants' interest in travelling (international nomadicity)

Being open in terms of collaborating with academics from different countries does not necessarily guarantee that all academics are interested in collaborating outside the UK and traveling to various countries for that. Therefore, being interested in moving from one location to another at the international level suggests that participants can be nomadic academics both at the national and international level.

Most participants claim that if they were not naturally keen on travelling to different counties just for collaboration, it might be improbable that they would think of collaborating internationally. Thus, interest in travelling can be an important factor, as Lorenzo (Covid-19 follow-up interview) puts it: "[…] one of the side benefits of collaboration is you get to travel, so that's great!" (Lorenzo). Yet, Sara (follow-up interview) claims that being interested and having an appetite for travelling is more important than the travel itself:

> [Y]ou also need to be able to travel; not in in terms of how much money you can afford, but in terms of who you are as a person, are you into travelling? So, people are different and so are their interests and hobbies.

Both Lorenzo's and Sara's statements indicate that international collaboration can enable academics to travel to many places in the world, which they might probably not be able to visit unless they had invitations for collaboration. However, to be able to travel comfortably, participants report that academics also need to have the ability to leave their 'I-only-stay-in-my-country-and-collaborate-with-the-people-I-know' bubble. They should also express their interest in and enthusiasm for travelling and getting to know new international academics – a factor without which many international collaborations might be cancelled. This can also be shown in Marc's words, believing that: "[a]nother good effect of collaboration on me is you get invitations to travel […] and I am very pleased to be invited to [a country in Europe] to get on the plane" (Marc, formal interview). Similarly, Lisa (formal interview) reveals that:

> I'm working with someone in [a university in Europe] and he said can you come here for a week and we work on a paper, so that was a space where

> we've been working on the paper because we did not do it here. It's a good experience to work with someone outside your home country. I love travelling anyway. Travelling is fun […].

Beyond being interested in travelling internationally for collaboration and being international nomadic academics, exploring participants' kinesthetic collaboration style as a factor affecting international collaboration is also key.

6.1.2.1.3. Participants' kinaesthetic collaboration style

The fact that participants do not seem to have negative attitudes towards collaborating with international academics and can travel to different countries suggests that they have a kinesthetic collaboration style when it comes to collaborating internationally. Kinesthetic collaboration style implies that participants have a particular style of collaboration and prefer to meet the academic they collaborate with in person, not always through the screen.

Some examples from the data clearly show that participants' engagement in international collaborations has to do with the style that they adopt for collaboration in general. Sara (formal interview), for instance, mentions some of the characteristics of kinesthetic collaboration styles, explaining:

> It's not ideal in a way that it's better to be in the same space I think one-to-one you have got papers and pen you share things […] it's way better. So, it is very detached in a way.

This demonstrates that Sara seems to have a kinesthetic collaboration style in that not only does she prefer to meet with the academics she is collaborating with in person, but she also enjoys feeling objects like printed copies and materials to use while collaborating.

However, this may sound somewhat contradictory to what I argue later in Section 6.1.3 about virtual nomadic academics. As discussed later in Section 6.1.3, I claim that my participants also appear to have digital skills when it comes to carrying out virtual collaborative activities. Yet, this, indeed, applies to collaboration in challenging times like Covid-19, and when funding is not possible, and academics find themselves obliged to work online and try to adapt to new collaboration styles. Nonetheless, and as can be seen from Sara's quote, participants seem to be equipped with different collaboration modes, among which the kinesthetic one is their most favourite one, as Lorenzo (Covid-19 follow-up interview) reports:

> One of the side benefits of collaboration is you get to travel...this is non virtual collaboration, so you get to see different places...You get to experience the whole environment. I'm gonna be collaborating with

> colleagues in [a country in Asia]. Yes, I will see their faces, but when I go home there, I'll probably give a talk or a workshop...I'll get to see other people speaking in their environment...I'll understand the setting a lot more...So, yes, we can have the same meeting online, but things are not quite the same.

It can be argued that some of the features of kinesthetic collaboration style are 'moving around', 'experiencing the physical setting wherein collaboration happens', 'enjoying seeing other academics around', and 'talking to them'. Participants, therefore, prefer to travel for international collaborations to be able to move around, have physical contact with the academics with whom they collaborate, and experience the social world in which they are.

Furthermore, 'moving around a lot' is a key feature that the participants seem to have, and which allows them to travel abroad without any issue (expect for finance which can at times be an issue discussed later on page 166). For instance, Marc (Covid-19 follow-up interview) expresses how he felt when he was unable to travel to [a country in Europe] due to the pandemic, narrating:

> what I really miss is going out catching the train, being amongst people, looking around, seeing different things, going from one building to another, from one department to another which we cannot do online [...] this is important stuff, and if you're a social scientist, the world is out there.

I, therefore, claim that the participants' psychological reasons for their international nomadicity for collaboration is linked to the fact that they are kinesthetic academics who enjoy experiencing the world around them in a way which might not be done virtually. Therefore, the next section discusses the way the participants collaborate virtually from a social-psychological perspective.

6.1.3. The social psychology of crossing virtual spatial boundaries

Virtual collaborative spaces are the only alternatives without the possibility of their physical national and international counterparts. Therefore, not only do the nomadic participants' collaborative practices appear to occur in *real* national (i.e., the first, second, and third space) and international spaces, but also in *virtual* spaces like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Skype, WhatsApp, and Facebook. Understanding participants' nomadic collaborative practices enabled me to discover their two *nomadicity* patterns – physical and virtual nomadicity. Therefore, in the same way I referred to the participants who move from a physical space to another when crossing national and international boundaries as 'physical nomadic academics',

I refer to those who collaborate in different virtual collaborative spaces as 'virtual or digital nomadic academics'.

This section, therefore, explores participants' collaborative practices held in the virtual collaborative space through a social-psychological lens. The elements discussed in this section are 'virtual nomadic academics and virtual collaboration'; 'the impact of virtual collaborative spaces on collaboration sustainability'; 'mood and behaviour in virtual collaboration'; 'psychological factors affecting virtual collaboration'; and finally, 'virtual collaboration during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic'.

6.1.3.1. Virtual nomadic academics and virtual collaboration

The phrase 'virtual nomadic academics' refers to the participants who use technology to collaborate with academics from different parts of the world by moving from one social networking site to another in a nomadic manner. The purpose is to make connections and take part in collaborative projects which might not be possible in physical spaces: "it [collaboration] can be online, or in public places, why not?", elaborates Grace (formal interview). As explained earlier, virtual nomadic academics 'hunt' collaborative 'opportunities' to grow socially (virtual social capital) and develop professionally (expertise, knowledge, visibility and recognition). This also suggests that participants do not always have to build a community of practice that exists in real, physical settings. They can also develop a virtual collaborative community of practice.

6.1.3.2. The impact of virtual collaborative spaces on collaboration sustainability

Participants report that the virtual collaborative space has made collaboration more acceptable, feasible and sustainable. Sustainability appears to be a fundamental philosophy promoted by the participants: "[s]ustainability is key in collaboration" (Victoria, follow-up interview). This suggests that for any collaboration to have the potential to be sustainable, participants argue that maintaining collaborative relationships with academics is significant for collaborations to be long-lasting, not being ephemeral or one-off occasions:

> We are still collaborating and maintaining our successful collaboration, and this is how collaboration should be...it should be encouraged and not solely left to a one-off occasion, I believe. I mean now that we have the new technology, we have WhatsApp, Skype, Facebook which I didn't know how to use it a decade ago, we should make the most of it to promote and maintain a culture of collaboration.
>
> (Marc, formal interview)

Marc seems to link the sustainability of collaboration to its success. This implies that most sustainable collaborations are maintained as the final outcome resulting from it is successful. That is, the sustainability of collaborative relationships can be gauged by the extent to which the collaborative activities are successful, or in Lisa's (formal interview) phrasing: "I think some [collaboration] were really effective because they are still ongoing [...] we're still working on a project and this happens via Skype, not face to face". This issue of sustainability of collaboration, which often happens online, seems to involve a higher level of trust for keeping the relationship sustainable, which, in turn, increases the efficiency and productivity of collaboration: "if you don't trust them you won't work again with them" (James, formal interview).

6.1.3.3. Mood and behaviour in virtual collaboration

Similar to physical spaces, every virtual collaborative space is unique. By unique, I mean that the type of collaboration (formal versus informal) is different in various spaces. That is, the nature of the virtual space can determine the type of collaboration to be carried out. This is because, seemingly, participants feel and behave differently in different virtual spaces. For example, the way one participant feels when collaborating on Skype or Microsoft Times is different from the way they feel on Twitter or WhatsApp. In this regard, Sara (formal interview), describes her feeling when collaborating virtually, expressing:

> I think when you have a big team meeting [in-person one] with 10 people and there is a big boardroom in the [place in the UK] is actually quite intimidating. Whereas I think actually something like a Skype meeting even though it's formal because you're discussing formal things about the project, I think it can be a lot more beneficial because it's in a less formal and relaxing environment […] you are a one-to-one person in a virtual place...you feel comfortable, safe maybe? I mean I would not bother too much about what to wear that day as I know I'm home […].

As Sara's words indicate, participants seem to feel and behave differently in different collaborative spaces. That is, in physical collaborative spaces academics can develop a sense of embarrassment, intimidation, and discomfort due to the number of academics involved in the collaborative project. However, in virtual spaces, participants appear to feel more comfortable and develop a sense of emotional security as the surroundings and conditions wherein they collaborate virtually are non-threatening, not making them feel anxious or intimidated by the number of people engaged in that collaboration. Seemingly, a good

collaboration wherein individuals are unlikely to develop a feeling of intimidation and anxiety has to do with a fewer number of academics with whom they collaborate.

Thus, space is incredibly important and that to collaborate comfortably, participants seem to connect their feeling of security and comfort to their 'intimate' space – home – as it is their own space which determines the kind of dress code and overall behaviour to abide by. The psychology of dress code means that academics are aware that each collaborative virtual space can require them to behave in a certain way. That said, it seems that the virtual collaborative spaces are informal, less demanding, and relaxing spaces, which, in turn, affect the way academics speak, dress, and behave in such environments.

However, the question that the reader might raise would be as follows: *aren't virtual collaborative spaces everywhere?* The answer to this question can be made clear by James (formal interview), who argues that: "you collaborate at home through the internet, and then you collaborate at the university through the internet, so it's the same action, but you're in different locations doing it". James's argument seems to be valid in that the virtual collaborative space travels from one space to another to assist academics to achieve their collaboration. While it can be held true that the action of virtual collaboration can be executed in all the three different spaces (first, second, and third space), the psychology of each of the three spaces appears to determine how academics behave.

6.1.3.4. Psychological factors affecting academics' virtual collaboration

Participants appear to balance the physical-virtual space binary to be able to 'hunt' every collaborative opportunity they come across, hence the normalisation of virtual collaborative spaces. In the following, I focus on the psychological factors behind participants' engagement in virtual collaboration.

Participants' interest in technology

Were participants not psychologically ready to take risks to "[…] eagerly work with researchers from a wide range of disciplines from around the globe" (Lisa, formal interview), they might probably not seek replacements for off-line collaborations which take place in real spaces. However, the extent to which participants are enthusiastic about the use of technology to develop and sustain collaboration can also have an active hand in the way they collaborate with academics and choose the 'right' people who match their personality. This implies that for online collaboration to be successful, participants believe that academics should have no issue with using technology in general and for collaborative purposes in particular as this might affect the whole collaboration journey, as Sara (formal interview) clearly argues:

> Absolutely it [communicating via Skype] is a form of collaboration, an online collaboration I would call it. And I enjoy doing that […] I enjoy using technology and learn its different tools enthusiastically […] this helps a lot, especially if you're working with somebody else where the use of the internet becomes a necessity […] Like Skype, we both agreed to communicate via Skye as we thought we both liked using it for collaboration […].

A glance at Sara's words can show that virtual collaboration is building bridges, making the world a small village. Yet, for those bridges to be solidly built, participants claim that academics need to show some interest in using technology. Most participants seem to show positive attitudes vis-à-vis technology and their preference for learning more about it, so as their virtual collaborative communities of practice be well formed. This shows that not only do participants 'like' using technology for its own sake, but also to collaborate and connect with academics who belong to a similar 'academic home'. In addition, as can be noticed from Sara's quote, developing an increased sense of enjoyment when using technology to achieve successful and meaningful collaborations can help academics stimulate strong positive emotions when collaborating.

To sum up, participants appear to have aptitude for learning about technology, which enables them to connect with their virtual academic community without having to cross physical spatial boundaries. Furthermore, individual differences in both physical and virtual collaborative spaces seem to be important, and it is crucial to take into account aspects of these differences when analysing the psychology of participants' virtual collaboration. This is, because participants' personality, aptitude, and motivation are all psychological factors that can affect the way academics engage in virtual collaborations, or as Maria (follow-up interview) describes: "I really like my personality because I am very able to take bits and pieces of communication different times of the day, and this makes me appreciate technology even more".

The correlation between participants' 'interest in technology' and 'productivity'

Having briefly discussed the significance of academics' positive emotions (e.g., holding positive attitudes and developing an increased sense of enjoyment vis-à-vis technology), in this subsection, I explain the correlation between participants' sense of enjoyment they seem to develop towards using technology for collaboration and the degree of productivity of that collaboration. This is because these two elements appear to be fundamental for an effective collaboration to occur. In this respect, Robert (formal interview) states:

> I think that technology and collaboration are made for each other, but the key thing here is the extent to which you are confident enough and happy to learn how to use technology to collaborate effectively, I think.

Robert's and Sara's quotes seem to have a complementary relationship. While Sara's words appear to revolve around the way academics' development of a sense of enjoyment when collaborating virtually (positive emotions), Robert's statement seems to be straightforward and easy to understand the deeply intertwined relationship between academics' sense of self-confidence, self-efficacy, and developing a higher level of motivation to be able to have positive impacts on the way they perform collaborative activities virtually.

By mentioning self-confidence, self-efficacy, and motivation in relation to technology and collaboration, here I argue that for collaboration and virtual space to legitimately be "made for each other", participants claim that academics need to boost their self-confidence, so that they can develop a strong sense of motivation, which, in turn, helps their collaboration to be of good quality (i.e., productivity). Grace (formal interview), reinforcing Robert's and Sara's points, argues that:

> [...] I think that's a huge benefit. But still, you need to be able to do that [collaborate virtually] because some people aren't happy to use social media or technology in general to collaborate because they are not really into social media. It's a personal preference I would say.

This shows that not all individuals are willing to collaborate virtually owing to some psychological factors like motivation, interest, and preferences. Therefore, academics need to choose the right academic collaborative spouses who also enjoy using technology for collaboration, otherwise no collaboration may happen.

The psychology of finance in collaboration

Few participants seem to refer to an important factor affecting academics' collaboration – 'finance', and how the latter plays a role in affecting the mood and behaviour of participants, hence *the psychology of finance.* What I mean by this is how some participants behave in the availability and unavailability of money to invest in collaboration.

Most participants claim that they use the virtual collaborative space and that "we don't need to worry about the distance or how far is that person from me" (Robert, follow-up interview). Then, why do they not just travel and meet their collaborative spouses in person since all means of transportation are available now, and since participants are nomadic, flexible, responsive to change, and above all they are risk-taking? Sara (formal interviews)

seems to have an answer to this question by clarifying that money, in her case, can be an obstacle making in-person collaborative meetings less possible, if not impossible. However, money can also be a facilitator which encourages participants to engage in virtual collaborative activities, not having to pay any travel expenditure, which may cost them a fortune – something which can make some participants feel less comfortable about paying a lot of money to travel for collaborative business:

> [T]here was no way we could go to each other's places. Financially, it wouldn't have been beneficial, it would cost an arm and a leg […] and I wouldn't have the time to go anyway. So, we collaborated on Skype because there was no other way I suppose. And if we really want to collaborate, we should not say no to the online sort of opportunities. Some of our stuff we do them by email […] I mean I could have borrowed some money […] but again! am I going to feel as comfortable and happy as when I travel with my own money? Definitely not. You see? I mean it's always great to meet the person you're working with face-to-face, but when the flight ticket is too expensive that you have to cancel the face-to-face meeting [..] you know you won't feel OK unless you know something somewhere will go right as you know you are financially stable […] but again I am still collaborating with her on Skype so that's the main thing and nothing has changed, really.

(Sara, formal interview)

Sara's comment can clearly indicate how participants behave when going through financial crisis or when it can be difficult to travel for financial reasons. Besides, as Sara describes, when academics have enough money to travel for collaborative agendas, they collaborate comfortably as they know the money invested in that collaboration is worth it. This is because they are not under pressure or are expected to pay the money back after the collaboration has ended, making academics less eager to meet their collaborative partners in person. Likewise, attending international conferences to develop collaborative links with international academic Others can also require some money which some researchers can find quite expensive, or in Victoria's (formal interview) words: "I should pay for the conferences I want to attend, which I didn't. That was expensive" and that "the university is encouraging us and almost forcing us to work collaboratively but then they're not resourcing that, no money".

However, the lack of money can make individuals feel uncomfortable, anxious, and sometimes absent-minded. This may, in turn, affect their state of mind by just thinking about the borrowed money, which can affect the quality of the final work produced. The reason is that collaboration is supposed to be fun, and according to Robert (follow-up interview), "what

is important is that both partners are available and are happy to work together". Nevertheless, I should add that the lack of money should not always be blamed for hindering academics from co-researching with academic Others as there are some people who are financially stable, but do not have the motivation and willingness to engage in any collaboration. This is linked back to the 'who', and particularly to the issue of 'motivation' addressed in Chapter Five. In this regard, Robert (ibid.) clarifies that: "[s]ome people no matter how much money was available and how many structures you could put in place, they still wouldn't be interested in collaboration". This shows that the dispositional type of attribution outweighs that of situational attribution, and that it really is mostly about people.

Setting financial issues aside and focusing more on academics' motivation to collaborate, technology like Skype, Microsoft Teams or any other virtual spaces seem to help academics save their time, energy and money for in-person collaborations, and encourages them to make good use of this virtual space in difficult times. Thus, the upcoming subsections discuss the significance of refuging the virtual space during the Covid-19 pandemic.

6.1.3.5. Participants' virtual collaboration during the Covid-19[24] pandemic

All the above-mentioned examples of virtual collaboration took place during 'normal' times. However, how have the participants collaborated in difficult times where the social distancing policy is implemented worldwide? In other words, during the Covid-19 crisis, participants have had fewer face-to-face collaborations and have felt the need to use technology to stay connected and collaborate with academics from different parts of the world. The following section, therefore, examines how participants have experienced collaborative practices during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Sustainability of collaboration during the Covid-19 pandemic

Lorenzo, Marc, and Sara – the three participants with whom I conducted Covid-19-related follow-up interviews using WhatsApp – have continued to use the virtual space to stay connected and keep collaborating with academics during the pandemic. Yet, the question that may spring to any reader's mind would be as follows: 'has the Covid-19 pandemic affected participants' collaborative practices?' The answer to this question can be found in the three aforementioned participants' data, claiming that there is not much of a difference between collaboration prior to and during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic: "[i]t [collaboration] hasn't [changed] because nearly all my research-related interactions with my

[24] By Covid-19, I am referring here to the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic (March- May 2020) rather than from March 2020 to present.

colleagues is by Skype". (Marc, Covid-19 related interview). This might be because they got accustomed to collaborating virtually, and that the collaboration wheel is turning as normally as it used to do before the Covid-19 times.

Some of the instances of the continuity of research-related collaborative activities during these difficult times can be described as follows: Lorenzo (Covid-19-related interview), for example, reports that Covid-19 has not affected his research-related collaborative activities, recounting:

> I was finishing an article for a journal with a colleague, and we had to finish it online, sharing a document within either Microsoft Teams or Zoom […] and so we could both see the document on screen. So, perhaps that's the most clear example because we did finish the article and submitted it.

The quote above describes the maintenance of continuous collaborative activities even during these inauspicious Covid-19 circumstances. This shows that participants' efforts and willingness to work together cannot be stopped by a microscopic virus, and that they truly believe in the power of collaboration by doing their utmost to overcome every single obstacle they come across when attempting to collaborate, making the proverb "if you believe in it, then fight for it" very pertinent in this case. By using social media and new collaborative software, this has made collaboration in the virtual space, particularly during such difficult times more 'normalised', especially that the article was not cancelled and was finished and submitted like they used to do before this pandemic. Similarly, Sara agrees that "I mean we are still collaborating […] as we are used to collaborating online anyway". This is because eventually it is the 'who' again that has shown to outweigh the 'where'. In the following section, I discuss the significance of participants' personality during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The importance of participants' personality during the Covid-19 pandemic

Participants' personality has proven to be important during the Covid-19 times in that they show that they are not stubborn to adapt to new ways of maintaining and sustaining collaboration. That said, some participants' colleagues, on the other hand, can display some aspects of stubbornness and how they demonstrate their 'resolute adherence' to their own ideas of how collaboration should be done – favouring the real space over its virtual counterpart. In this respect, Marc (ibid) argues that:

> Several of my colleagues don't like this [virtual collaboration] at all. […] wouldn't do it unless they have to, but they are doing it. And they don't like doing it because people have different personalities. I think personality does

> matter in this case. I think some people are naturally more inclined to use this sort of technology than other people. I've always been somebody who's been fascinated by technology. You know I had a meeting with you in the café not long time ago because I was interested to know how Face Time works. I'm actually very interested in these things. Some people don't even want to pick up their mobile phone unless they really have to because they see it as an imposition, let alone collaborating during these hard times.

Linked to the psychology of academics, it can be understood that what matters in collaboration is the people with whom participants collaborate more than the space: "I think this has to do with who you're collaborating with, not necessarily where you're collaborating, but who is there in that collaboration" (Lorenzo, ibid). Therefore, be it before or during Covid-19 times, academics need to be mindful when choosing their collaborative spouses – preferably someone who would not mind changing their modes of collaborating, moving from being physical to virtual nomadic academics. This compatibility issue is of paramount importance because participants cannot work with people who are not similar to them in terms of personality: [t]hey have to be people like me. Compatibility is important" (Paul, follow-up interview).

Now that we have learnt about the importance of participants' personality in accepting the normalisation of collaboration in the Covid-19 times as a necessity rather than a choice made by them, in the following subsections, I analyse the difference between participants' feelings and behaviour before and during such hard times.

"It's all psychological": Participants' psychological distress during the Covid-19 pandemic

Even though they find virtual collaboration "generally increasingly comfortable, and the more you collaborate online the better it is" (Lorenzo, ibid), some participants believe that collaboration during Covid-19 can sometimes be 'terrible' and 'uncomfortable', especially when they think that this is the only space wherein they will have to collaborate in the future. This seems to be a 'terrible' feeling which makes the participants behave in a different way than when they used to collaborate online during normal times. For instance, Marc, whose eyesight is problematic owing to his age, thinks of collaboration during such difficult times as increasingly uncomfortable, explaining that:

> I am not sure for how long I will find it easy to cope with all my collaborations being online. I think that we're all doing this with an optimism that is not going to go on for very long. So, collaborating online is fine if it's not the only thing you can do or the only space where you can collaborate.

> But thinking that it's the only space that you can collaborate in, psychologically gradually it's gonna have a lot of pressure. Also, your eyesight, I mean different people have different issues...I have an eye-sight problem, but if I stare at the screen for too long my eyes dry up and I can't focus anymore, and this makes me feel uncomfortable working online particularly during such difficult times [Covid-19] that's why I gotta keep looking around all the time. I gotta have a notebook that I can scribble on. It's increasingly uncomfortable.

This feeling of anxiety and uncomfortableness that some participants go through when collaborating during Covid-19 times seems to be caused by the fact of negatively thinking that the virus will remain with us forever, making the virtual space the only space for collaboration. This, as the quote shows, appears to make participants feel disappointed about not being able to get back to normal life wherein the in-person meetings were regarded as the most favourite mode of collaboration. This can make individuals both emotionally and physically uncomfortable. For instance, Marc, who is not a young academic, can barely keep looking at the screen for too long when collaborating virtually as this has to do with the way he thinks about collaboration during such challenging times. This suggests that it is the academic's mind which appears to control their behaviour and performance, i.e., this is a psychological issue, or in Marc's and Lorenzo's words:

> [I]t's all psychological [...] so you need to tell your mind […] that this is not going on for very long so that you avoid getting psychological problems. Anyway, I hope this will not last forever but who knows what might be next hahah (Marc)

And

> [A]t the moment mentally I'm still seeing this as a short-term, stop gap situation. I'm not really viewing it thinking oh ok I've got forever operate in different way...I'm seeing it as how can we get through this period as we are maybe because of I'm thinking in this short termist way..i'm thinking in 6-month time I can go back to research collaboration as I was doing before […] (Lorenzo)

Hence, participants' perceptions of Covid-19-related collaborations appear to influence their practice, either positively or negatively. Unlike Marc' mind, which is set on thinking on a 'long-termist' way, and which results in affecting his mood and behaviour, Lorenzo's mind seems to perceive collaboration in these difficult times as a 'passing storm' which will stop blowing eventually and the academic life and collaboration will get back to normal. However, I need to make it clear that the Covid-19-reated data were from near the early stages of the

Covid-19 pandemic. Whether it is still the case for them to perceive collaboration in this way is a further study which I suggest later within the 'Suggestions for further research' Section in Chapter Eight.

Nostalgia during the Covid-19 outbreak

When thinking that this situation of having to collaborate virtually will remain the same, participants would collaborate unwillingly as they prefer the face-to-face collaboration that generally happens in real, physical settings. They have developed a profound, melancholic longing for past in-person collaboration. Sara (Covid-19 follow-up interview), for instance, describes how she feels during Covid-19, expressing:

> It's terrible in the sense that I do miss meeting my colleagues in person […] what is missing is the physical presence of the people we collaborate with […] we had choices which we don't have now. Now I feel that I have to collaborate online, otherwise we would lose our research projects.

This nostalgic feeling of missing the in-person collaborative meetings seems to limit collaborative opportunities. Marc (Covid-19 follow-up interview) maintains that though Covid-19 helped increase virtual collaborative opportunities as academics can now 'easily' find people to collaborate with virtually, face-to-face collaborative opportunities are decreasing, making him miss his academic life before the pandemic, explaining:

> [I]t's [collaborative opportunities during the Covid-19 pandemic] decreasing because you don't have the luxury of being in a space where there are other researchers around who you talk to in a more spontaneous way […] when I go to the university, I walk pass an office and someone was sitting in there and I might stop and talk, I can go and knock on someone's door and have a conversation and this is how collaborations sort of begin […] and I think also people get a bit tired or having to do things on screens all the time. It is exhausting...So, among the disadvantages of collaboration during Covid-19 is that it's unnatural and I hope it's not going to become a normal form of communication and collaboration with people.

This links back to the issue of 'kinesthetic academics' that I discussed in Section 6.1.2.1.3 wherein some participants appear to enjoy being with people, talking to them in person, shaking hands with them, knocking on their office door to see how they are progressing, etc. All these used to happen in the past before the Covid-19. Now, even if the rules might be relaxed in the near future, academics might still not feel as comfortable as they were before as they all have to wear a face mask and keep a two-metre distance now.

Coping with nostalgia during the Covid-19 times

Though the physical collaborative space is absent at the moment, making participants feel nostalgic, this does not suggest that they cannot create their own 'real professional space' in the third space. Marc (ibid.), for instance, states that because he misses seeing people in general and academics in particular, he tries to create his own 'real professional space' in a third space by using technology to achieve that, explaining:

> You might be surprised but one of the things that I do within the rules, I'm getting my car, I go and sit in the supermarket car park just so that I watch real people walking around, and I work on my iPad chatting to colleagues about work. This is my equivalent of going to the café...so I sort of created my own collaborative space, and this is something I discovered is possible. There is one car park which has internet but it's half an hour drive away, but you know I need to be in the world not just looking at the screen all the time.

This shows that if academics are intensely interested in being and collaborating with academics, space should not be an issue as where there is a will there definitely should be a way to achieve that, and Marc's experience is a good example.

To summarise, participants' instances of crossing spatial boundaries has shown that all spaces are important for collaboration, be they national (first, second, and third space), international or virtual spaces. Yet, collaboration during the Covid-19 pandemic has illustrated that the home space has turned out to be the only space wherein virtual collaboration can take place, making the 'East or West, home is the best' proverb relevant in this case. More importantly, not only does the home space show that it is the only space wherein the participants collaborate, but it also demonstrates that it is the safest of all spaces, particularly during such difficult circumstances wherein the whole world is following the 'stay home, stay safe' guidelines.

In the following section, I describe the social psychological processes triggering informal and formal collaborations. The reason the next section is placed after discussing the three types of spatial boundaries is that for a better grasp of the informal and formal types of collaboration wherein the participants engage, deciphering the national, international and virtual spaces first helps gain rich insights into the different spaces in which informal and formal collaborations happen.

The social psychology of balancing the informal-formal collaboration binary

All participants do not seem to draw a clear distinction between formal and informal collaboration, believing that both types are of great significance, and that academics should not favour one type over the other as both are equally important. This also demonstrates that participants are open-minded and flexible in the way they approach collaboration, otherwise they would remain 'loyal' to only one type. For this reason, both formal and informal collaborations are perceived more as a binary or a continuum than a divide – a perception which participants like Victoria (formal interview) seems to have, stating that both types "[…] are important. I would not say that informal collaboration and formal collaboration is a divide. I think there is almost a continuum and at one point informal collaboration turns into formal collaboration". This section, therefore, is organised as follows: while Sections a, b, c, d, e, and f are concerned with the way the participants feel and behave in informal collaboration, Sections g and h are related to the way the participants think, feel, and behave when engaging in formal collaboration.

a) Informal (small c) and formal (big C) collaboration

According to participants, informal is a type of collaboration characterised by informal, spontaneous conversations which often happen spontaneously, or as Maria (formal interview) states, "informal collaboration is pretty much every discussion that you have with colleagues about your teaching or research". Likewise, other participants refer to informal collaboration as "small c" collaboration, believing that the former and the latter can often be used interchangeably as both appellations can be applied to any kind of "talk to each other all the time" (Paul, formal interview). Informal or 'small c' collaborations do not need funding to develop a tangible outcome, and as Lisa (formal interview) believes, "small c collaboration doesn't have a huge output, or it doesn't need huge amounts of money that goes towards it".

On the other hand, formal collaboration refers to the type of collaboration which is characterised by plan, agreement, funding and a tangible outcome (product). Lorenzo (formal interview), in this regard, summarises that:

> [T]he formal kind of collaboration would be the example of my collaboration with a colleague to write an article for a journal or to undertake a research project or to work with another university undertaking a research project or outside-international partner […] where there is often an agreement […] and funding.

This demonstrates that in 'formal' collaboration, participants are more inclined to collaborate to produce a tangible outcome by which their success can be gauged, and wherein freedom and choice are not given priority by the university wherein they work. In a similar fashion, Victoria (formal interview) states that: "[t]here isn't always something that is produced out of informal collaboration; there is an expectation by the university that you would produce something when you collaborate formally". Besides, just like informal collaboration, which is broadly regarded as 'small c' collaboration, formal collaboration is often depicted as 'big C' collaboration.

By 'big C' collaboration, the participants refer to the kind of collaboration which involves funding and expected tangible outcomes (e.g., publishing articles, books, designing modules, and co-organising scientific events like conferences, seminars and study days.). Lorenzo (formal interview) and Lisa (formal interview), for instance, seem to have a common perception of big 'C' collaboration, believing that: "big C collaboration is usually over a longer period with funding and outcomes" and "it [big C collaboration] is about what the output is gonna be, it needs huge amounts of money that goes towards it", respectively.

Having introduced the difference between the formal and informal types of collaboration, in the following section, I describe participants' feelings, attitudes and behaviours when collaborating informally and formally.

b) "*It all starts with a 'hi'*": Examining the psychological comfort of informal collaboration

Participants believe that the first step in engaging in a collaborative activity is informal collaboration, wherein they start getting to know one another, learn about one another's area of expertise and embark on discussing what they can achieve together. Unlike formal collaboration, informal collaboration does not seem to impose any sort of structures, conventions, constraints, or expectations. This suggests that informal collaboration does not create psychological discomfort that interferes with participants' collaborative practices.

The reason why I started with the informal type of collaboration is due to the 'journey of development' that big C and formal collaborations go through. It is through first 'bumping into' each other, greeting and talking to each other that a potential collaboration can be born. In this regard, Marc (follow-up interview) mentions that: "you see the power of informal conversations? That's exactly how it all started. It [collaboration] all starts with a *hi*", hence the title of the section.

Now that we have learnt that behind every formal or 'big C' collaboration there is a simple 'hi', which can lead academics to aim 'high', in the following, I describe participants' personality. This is because understanding participants' personality appears to be important in informal collaboration as not all people are willing to interact with others or are interested in stopping just to say 'hi'– a two-letter word which can allow opportunities for formal collaboration to develop.

c) The importance of participants' personality in informal collaboration

The participants, who report that they do not engage in any formal or big collaborative activities unless they first meet with their academic partners and discuss with them informally about what they can 'produce' together, seem to be interested in people, socialising and collaborating with them. This suggests that participants' social capital can help them search for people with similar personalities and interests to form 'good' collaborative relationships. Were participants not sociable, they would miss informal collaborations. Thus, being a sociable academic is key in informal collaboration, as can be demonstrated in Lisa's (formal interview) comment below:

> I'm also sociable and make efforts to join programs like the [name of a program] program so I am actively going to speak to a lot of people in different faculties. I think I'm someone who would not miss any opportunity. If I see an opportunity, I'll go for it. I have got a link with [name of a faculty at SEE University] because someone said we need someone from [name of a faculty at SEE University], so I was like ok I'll go there...I'm quite happy to say YES to things.

Examining what lies behind such informal collaborations is important. This is because, based on Lisa's words, being a sociable academic can open up doors for formal collaborations that may end up with publications, co-designing a curriculum or suggesting a new module or program to teach at university. Besides, Lisa is a 'yes' person who tries to please any 'right' academic and does not want to miss any collaborative opportunity even if it is not from the same program or faculty.

This implies that it is up to the participants to grab those informal collaborations and need to do that themselves by trying to engage more in informal discussions with similar academics: "[s]o, I guess, I am a social person in that sense[...] that's my personality. People with similar personalities make them want to interact with people more." (Lorenzo, follow-up interview). However, the few participants, who claim that their chances to initiate informal collaborations with academics are low, believe that this goes back to the issue of their

personality – not being sociable enough to grab those opportunities: "my informal collaboration is quite small maybe that links back to my personality as a shy person, and that's why I try to make myself get out of this you know" (Robert, follow-up interview). This implies that adopting a 'persona', which can help academics rid their previous introvert, shy and unhelpful personality trait and, thus, make them confident in engaging in informal talks with academics, is key.

d) The architecture of the second space

Participants argue that the architecture of the second space wherein they also collaborate matters when it comes to informal collaboration. By architecture of the second space, here, I refer to the structure of the buildings which form the basis for the collaborative second space, i.e., the university space wherein academics often meet for work or collaboration. For example, Sara (follow-up interview), points out that besides the personality factor affecting informal collaboration, the way the university campus is built can make a 'massive' difference in the way participants search for collaborative opportunities. She explains that:

> [T]he dynamics of the space in which you're in makes a massive difference to collaboration. One thing that SEE University has forced me to collaborate more than [another university in England] […] is collaborate outside of my program and school, because everyone in the university are close together, so, just going to café I was introduced to an academic in [a discipline], and I was introduced to someone in [another discipline], and that's because the university is very small compared to [another university in England], even though we collaborated a lot with [discipline], we often didn't collaborate outside of that because a lot of the other disciplines were on a different campus. So, space is actually a big factor […]

Sara's words imply that the benefits of academics being sociable and extroverts, showing interested in chatting to other academics and getting to know them, so that they plan collaboration together in the future is probably of no use unless academics know that there is a space wherein they can meet academics from various faculties. That is, SEE University has a small campus wherein buildings of different faculties are adjacent to one another, making it easy for academics not to miss informal collaborative opportunities. However, it appears that individuals who work in an academic environment whose buildings are huge and far from one another that academics barely meet, or if they do, they may not mingle with other academics from outside their faculty or school.

Furthermore, Grace (formal interview) complains that it is unfair that her faculty is based at two different campuses – one at SEE University and one outside the campus, revealing that:

> People at [a name of a university campus] often feel that SEE UNIVERSITY is eccentric and equally people in SEE UNIEVRSITY feel that [a name of a university campus] has its particular focus. That does create more a struggle for collaboration, but I don't think it's impossible. But you need more awareness of who you need to collaborate with if you're based here [SEE UNIVERSITY] or at [the other campus] to ensure that people don't feel excluded because our department is spread across the two campuses, and you can miss important opportunities if you forget.

This demonstrates that the structure of the university might also be a factor affecting how academics engage in informal collaboration. However, this does not necessarily suggest that participants' chances for collaboration are limited by the architecture of the second space.

e) The 'who' and the architecture of the second space

Undoubtedly, and based on Grace's quote above, it is the academics who can make the divide between any department and faculty look more like a binary than a divide by staying connected with one another, not blaming the structure of the university campus for being far from the main campus.

Participants claim that academics need to make efforts in searching for the right academics to have informal collaborations with for whom both time and energy invested for that collaboration would be worth it. Moreover, while the architecture of the university space can help academics meet with different people from different disciplines as it is a small campus, it can, however, be limiting in that only few academics work there which, in turn, decreases the chances for informal collaboration with people outside that university or outside the UK. In this respect, James (formal interview) contends:

> I don't think that's an issue [the fact that SEE University is small]. The issue is access to knowledge about the people. I think you could say if it's a smaller university, it will be easy because less people, but then with a big university, say, [name of a huge university in England), they could well be greater opportunities because you might find people in different schools have similar interests on an interdisciplinary basis. So, they can be more people. We've got to find them […].

As I argued in the previous chapter, it is up to participants to choose the right person to collaborate with either informally or formally, and that the 'who' seems to outweigh the

'where'. Yet, this does not mean that the latter has no value, otherwise academics would not feel and behave differently in different collaborative spaces. Furthermore, there are many ways through which academics can find informal collaborative opportunities, but they should also make efforts and be interested in investing in both time and energy to look for them. Attending conferences or using social media, for example, can help academics start informal collaborations, which can lead to a more formalised style of collaboration: "[…] there are other ways in which collaboration can be initiated, for example by going to conferences or using social media" (Lorenzo, follow-up interview). In the following section, I describe participants' emotions and behaviour when collaborating informally.

f) Mood and behaviour in informal collaboration

Mood and behaviour seem to play a pivotal role in the development of informal collaboration. Participants' state of mind when collaborating formally and informally has shown to be different as each type of collaboration seems to be unique just like the different collaborative spaces. That is, in this section, I discuss how participants feel and behave in each type of collaboration regardless of the space. The reason for this is that, for example, even if some participants collaborate at home (an informal space), the type of collaboration can be formal and the way they would collaborate (formally or informally) even in the same space (home) leads participants to behave differently. This, therefore, does not have to do with the *space*, but with the *type* of collaboration wherein academics engage.

All participants claim that collaborating informally makes them feel less anxious as, in their minds, they know that they are not expected to produce something tangible. The feeling of not being under pressure because there are no deadlines as opposed to formal collaboration: "in formal collaboration we've got very tight deadline and we have to produce our output for certain time or day" (Maria, follow-up interview), therefore, is a key feature which seems to make participants feel they are do not need funding, time and commitment for co-written books, articles or co-designed curricula or modules. In this vein, Lorenzo (formal interview) states that:

> [I]f it's small c collaboration like sharing ideas then it's easier in the sense that it's not a big-time commitment. It can be just a one hour off, whereas the BIG C collaboration it's usually over a longer period with funding and outcomes, more pressure so those kinds of things you need the right person.

The fact that participants find informal sharing of ideas easier than formal collaboration suggests that they feel at ease collaborating informally than formally as the latter appears to be

more demanding in terms of time, energy, funding, and efforts. Having mentioned 'efforts', the reason why participants claim that informal collaboration is not daunting is that it does not necessitate big efforts to engage in informal conversations wherein they share ideas about teaching, supervision, and research. Moreover, the issue of funding seems to be linked to what Sara previously says about finance. She believes that unavailability of money to travel internationally for collaboration makes her feel uncomfortable as she knows that formal collaboration requires some good finances.

Having discussed how academics feel when collaborating informally, in the following section, I delineate participants' *formal* collaborative practices.

g) What lies behind the backstage of formal collaboration?

In order for their formal collaboration to be successful, participants report that they need to perform rehearsals before officially engaging in formal collaborations. Therefore, I am using 'backstage' here to refer to the rehearsals performed behind the stage of formal collaboration, and which is claimed to be necessary for formal collaborations.

Participant who also collaborate formally seem to have a 'good' history with informal collaboration, which is referred to in this thesis as "not carrying a lot of emotional baggage" Adam (formal interview). This expression suggests that participants appear to have gone through previous positive experiences with informal collaboration, otherwise they would highly unlikely engage in official, formal collaborations. That is, participants argue that 'good' informal collaboration can have the potential to become more formalised: "I think it also depends on how we approach each other first informally then formally" **(**Robert, formal interview) and that "if you don't trust them you won't work again with them" (James, formal interview).

From Robert's and James' quotes, what can be noticed is that prior to officially collaborating with any academic, participants state that academics need to build a good relationship that is based on mutual trust and respect, otherwise they would not collaborate with the same academic again. 'Again' is a key word here implying continuity, familiarity, involvement, attachment and sustainability of collaboration and satisfaction of participants with their collaborative spouses. In this regard, Maria (formal interview) believes that most of her formal collaborations have been a success thanks to the previous informal collaborations she had with her collaborative colleagues, expressing that:

> I think it's fairly effective because I've collaborated with people on projects and then they asked to collaborate again because we both had good experience working together both informally and formally.

Having a "positive history" of collaboration in which none of the individuals involved in that formal collaboration has ever "carried a lot of emotional baggage", which can make them eligible for collaborating on a more formal basis is important. In this respect, James (formal interview) emphasises that "to actually have formal collaboration you have to have a positive history together". In the following, I elucidate how informal and formal collaboration feed into each other by virtue of the 'solid code of practice', which is commonly understood by the participants and their collaborative spouses.

h) The social psychology of collaboration within the 'code of professional practice': The hidden formality

Some participants believe that even informal collaboration can be governed by rules and codes of behaviour and conduct. Marc (formal interview) refers to this as a "code of professional practice or conduct". This code implies that in every informal collaboration there should be some degrees of formality, which make informal collaboration have the potential to turn into a more formal one. Thus, in this subsection, I examine some participants' perceptions of the correlation between the informal and formal collaboration under the 'code of practice' philosophy.

As stated above, some participants argue that informal collaboration has the potential to become more formal as the latter is part of the former. For example, Marc (follow-up interviews) contends that "in every informal collaboration I believe there is a hidden formality". Therefore, it can be inferred that in informal collaborations there are some degrees of formality and rules with which academics need to comply. Thus, having a collaborative conversation with an academic in a formal setting implies that both individuals are aware that their informality entails some formality which is binding them together. Robert (follow-up interview), for instance, clarifies that:

> From the formal settings sometimes comes an informal meeting […] I can think of a couple of colleagues in [a country in Asia) where we had a conference and students have visited. From that conference might come a dinner with colleagues and you talk about the conference, and ideas come from that informal discussion […]. So, yes, Marc is right because we cannot let go of the formalities that govern informal collaboration […].

This suggests that knowing how individuals should behave in informal collaboration can help promote a solid base for promising collaborations as they know that those informal collaborations are underpinned by a code of conduct, which can make them behave in a certain expected way. Nonetheless, this does not suggest that the code of conduct or honour that participants have to abide by has to do with how formal the collaborative space is because Marc (ibid.), for example, explains that:

> I was sitting in the café, which is an informal space of course, and a colleague came back and we talked for five minutes and we both benefited from that, which I consider more like an informal collaboration in away. […] although it was not a formal collaboration, but this is really important as there is a code of professional practice which is developed through the community, which means that when you talk and collaborate informally, there are principles of collaboration which you both believe in. And this is universal! […] a lot of informality is possible because there is a very solid, mutually understood, internalized, formal base.

To conclude, academics need to collaborate with the right academics whose collaboration is based on rules and principles acquired through the collaborations they engaged in, and that the right academic with a solid formal frame would not cross behavioural boundaries. While all the sections above addressed the social psychology of crossing *spatial* boundaries in collaboration, the following section describes the social psychology of crossing *disciplinary* boundaries.

6.2. The social psychology of crossing disciplinary boundaries

Not only do participants cross national, international, and virtual spatial boundaries, but also disciplinary ones: "it [collaboration] can be interdisciplinary" (Lorenzo, formal interview). Crossing disciplinary boundaries suggests that all participants do not seem to see a divide between various disciplines and appear to hyphenate them and develop a feeling of belonging to more than one discipline or "academic home", as some participants refer to it when it comes to engaging in collaborative practices. Thus, this section explores how and why participants cross disciplinary boundaries. The section is presented as follows: "all disciplines matter": developing a sense of belonging to different academic homes; the importance of 'intellectual heritage'; and finally, importance of participants' interest in bridging social capital.

6.2.1. *"All disciplines matter"*: Developing a sense of belonging to different 'academic homes'

Paul's (follow-up interview) statement that "all disciplines matter" argues that there is no one discipline better than the other, and that all disciplines have a complementary relationship, meaning that an academic from discipline A may need to collaborate with an academic from discipline B, C or even D. Besides, participants appear to believe that remaining in one single academic home or discipline (*bonding social capital*) is old fashioned, limiting and boring, and that collaborating with other academics from different disciplines (*bridging social capital)* should be something to encourage: "[…] I enjoy working with people from different disciplines. I absolutely encourage interdisciplinarity" (Sara, formal interview).

This denotes that the participants seem to have appetite for interdisciplinary collaboration and have the freedom to collaborate with whoever they wish in any discipline they desire without being judged. With regard to the idea that every university academic needs to have an academic home to which they belong and based on which they can develop a feeling of belonging to other homes, James (formal interview) clarifies that:

> [T]he key thing is that you have a home, and your home is the discipline, and that's where you should feel that you make sure that you do get support even though in this picture you are alone, but there should be your discipline. This is the key thing for each researcher is that you have to realize where your home is. With some people, like maybe yourself and certainly me, is the number of homes because it's interdisciplinary but you still have to have that home.

The point that James raises seems to be rational because achieving a sense of belonging to various academic homes, i.e., the bigger community, or in my words 'academic neighbourhood', individuals first need to establish their own academic home wherein they collaborate with academics within that discipline. Once that home is built, only then can individuals move around in the bigger community, which may then make greater collaborations happen. This also suggests that academically 'homeless' academics may unlikely develop a sense of belonging to the wider community unless they have their own home to which they belong. Speaking of the relationship between belonging to several disciplines (*bridging social capital*) and the effectiveness of collaboration, Lorenzo (follow-up interview) states that:

> [T]he stronger the sense of community, the greater collaboration. So, if you feel you're more part of a community, then there is more likelihood of collaboration. For example, in my university, there is a research group where

> my department and the [name of a faculty] combine together […] so because that sense of community has been created for students and lecturers in the research community that the potential for collaboration increases greatly.

This also shows that the academics who are more inclined to escape from their 'I-collaborate-only-within-my-discipline' bubble are more likely to be involved in interdisciplinary collaboration because they regard all disciplines as important, and that they all complement one another. Having multiple disciplinary identities as a result of crossing disciplinary boundaries is referred to by Wenger (1998, p.109) as *broking*, which refers to the act of "transfer[ring] some element of one practice into another". Thus, working together while respecting and believing in the expertise of other disciplines is essential. This is because if participants did not believe in other disciplines, it would be improbable that they would leave their academic homes without showing any interest in collaborating with other academics in other disciplines.

However, this feeling of belonging to different academic homes can only be developed if academics have "intellectual heritage" and their personality is apt for this 'adventurous journey'. The following subsection outlines the link between academics' intellectual heritage, academics' personality, and interdisciplinary collaborations.

6.2.2. Importance of "*intellectual heritage*"

Not only does crossing disciplinary boundaries require that academics be open to change and to new experiences, flexible, and respectful of other academics' disciplinary differences, but it also demands that they have received 'good' 'academic upbringing' in the academic home wherein they reside. This 'academic upbringing' is referred to by James (formal interview) as "intellectual heritage". Intellectual heritage refers to the education that academics receive from their academic community (like academic parenting) throughout their collaboration in their own academic home. However, not all academics necessarily equally receive the same type and quality of academic upbringing which helps them leave their discipline and search for academics from other disciplines to collaborate with and build a heterogeneous rather than merely homogeneous collaborative community of practice, which would include different academic homes from the bigger academic neighbourhood. James (ibid.) clearly explains the issue of intellectual heritage, illustrating that:

> [what affects academics' interdisciplinary collaboration] I think the nature of the discipline and how you have been brought up within your discipline. So, I'm a [discipline], but I work across [discipline] areas which include gender, labor market, education, criminology, and it's about knowing the people in

> these fields. So why I perceived it [collaboration] this way [interdisciplinary] because it's definitely part of your intellectual heritage.

Similar to Marc's 'code of professional practice or conduct' when collaborating informally, James's 'intellectual heritage' also implies that to be eligible to take part in interdisciplinary collaborative endeavours, academics need to inherit academic skills like how to form heterogeneous collaborative communities of practice and collaborate with academics from various disciplines and learn from them. This also suggests that crossing disciplinary boundaries is a behaviour which is taught by other academics in a particular discipline. This is for individuals to avoid ending up being 'silos' just collaborating with the academics they know in their disciplines, 'fearing' to move out of their academic home and collaborate with other academic 'neighbours'. Regarding the issue of intellectual heritage and how a good academic upbringing can demolish academics with 'silo' mindsets, who only collaborate with people from their disciplines, Paul (formal interview) stresses that:

> I perceive it [collaboration] as not just in your own department, it's in your own school, it's in your faculties, in your own university or outside the university with different people that you may not even know. It should be more cross-disciplinary. I like to see more university wide coherent, and that's what we're doing, rather than having people 'silos' in their own discipline, which is a problem […]. Silos are created by natural behaviour, and you need good leadership to knock it down. No barriers, please! […].

However, other academic homes still have this silo mentality which can directly or indirectly influence by not allowing academics to collaborate with people outside their disciplines. In this respect, Victoria (formal interview) claims that:

> I think certainly within my own school, I think I could easily get away with not collaborating with anybody. So, my interdisciplinary collaborations are driven by me. I choose to collaborate.

Victoria's claim proposes that the academic home that participants dwell in can either nurture interdisciplinary collaboration or encourage them to keep their silo mentality, collaborating only with people from their own academic homes. This shows that even though her school tries to limit her to collaborate within her discipline or not collaborate at all, Victoria can still cross disciplinary boundaries thanks to who she is as a person. Therefore, the next section describes the significance of participants' interest in crossing disciplinary boundaries.

6.2.3. Significance of participants' interest in bridging social capital

Not only does crossing disciplinary boundaries demand that participants receive 'good' 'academic' upbringing and intellectual heritage in the academic home to which they belong, but it also requires that they have some assets like openness to new experiences, flexibility, and agreeableness when it comes to welcoming other academics from other disciplines or communities.

The fact that participants collaborate with different academics from different disciplines implies that their interest and motivation encourage them to achieve that. That is, participants appear to be open not only when it comes to international collaboration, but also in relation to widening their collaborative communities of practice to include more academics with different expertise. These positive attitudes towards collaborating with academics from different disciplines seem to help them be on good terms with different academic Others (discipline-wise) and establish collaborative links with them. For example, even though few disciplines might not allow other academics from other disciplines to collaborate with them, some participants still want to collaborate across disciplines as they are passionate and want to bring about change to the 'mundane' collaborations they do in their own discipline, which are described as 'old-fashioned and boring', explains Paul (follow-up interview):

> Our disciplines are old-fashioned and boring in that they keep it separate, there's too much being in a silo rather than working together. I love to do a big second world war strategy module, I've written one, but I like to add to it the Politics dimension because at the end of the day war is pursuit of politics […] So I'm so frustrated because I think we should do a lot more of cross disciplinary collaboration [...] I think we should push these boundaries […] that would be the best type of collaboration; interdisciplinary collaboration where all disciplines work together.

I, therefore, argue that 'real collaborative academics' are those who do not let their discipline confine them and limit their collaborations to just their academic home, not allowing them to move out of their 'my-own-discipline' box. This also demonstrates that participants are so aware of the rewards of crossing disciplinary boundaries that they want to collaborate outside their disciplines. This is because they know that this is for their own good.

Conclusion

This chapter has described the boundaries that the participants crossed when collaborating with their collaborative spouses. These are 'spatial' (which includes national, international, and virtual) and 'interdisciplinary' boundaries, hence my description of them as 'nomadic academics'.

Therefore, while the main argument in Chapter Five was that it is mostly about the academics with whom participants collaborate – the 'who', in this chapter, I have argued that the space can also be as important as the 'who' because it might be difficult for the right academic to collaborate in spaces and disciplines wherein they might not feel at ease. Hence, I have claimed that each collaborative space and discipline is unique, and that academics need to negotiate the space wherein they collaborate, so they develop a sense of enjoyment and productivity in collaboration. In the next chapter, I delineate the reasons behind participants' engagement in collaboration through a social-psychological lens.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7. "*I Collaborate Because It's Fruitful*": The Rewards of Collaboration

While the preceding Findings Chapters Five and Six discussed the 'who' and 'where' elements of collaboration, respectively, the present Findings Chapter examines the 'why' of collaborating, or the rewards that the participants gain from their academic collaboration, particularly from a social-psychological perspective. The overwhelming majority of participants seem to use their social capital to collaborate for two different purposes, namely *expressive purposes* (e.g., to develop a sense of enjoyment and interest: "I'm collaborating to make my job more interesting") (Lorenzo, follow-up interview) and *instrumental purposes* (e.g., to achieve a certain goal like gaining promotion, improving teaching and supervision practices, and getting published: "[I collaborate] to produce something richer and more exciting" (Marc, follow-up interview). Overall, the participants would not collaborate if they thought that this practice would not benefit their collaborative spouses and them: "I collaborate because it's fruitful" (Florence, formal interview), hence the title of the chapter.

However, dividing this chapter into two main sections – Section 7.1 for *expressive collaboration* and Section 7.2 for *instrumental collaboration* does not necessarily suggest that the two motives are considered as a continuum wherein at one end there is expressive collaboration and at the other end there is instrumental collaboration. This may mislead the reader by thinking that participants might be divided into two groups based on the type of collaboration they prefer to lead – expressive-led collaboration and instrumental-led collaboration, which is not the case in this research as they do not choose one or the other because both are equally important. This denotes that the participants who collaborate instrumentally must also have collaborated expressively as well.

Therefore, this chapter discusses issues based around two broad purposes of collaboration, which are *expressive purposes* (7.1) and *instrumental purposes* (7.2). The expressive purposes are 'developing a sense of enjoyment' (7.1.1) and 'the psycho-therapeutic purpose of collaboration' (7.1.2). The instrumental purposes are 'academic productivity' (7.2.1), 'professional recognition and visibility' (7.2.2), 'developing a sense of professional empowerment and security' (7.2.3), and 'increased national and international social capital' (7.2.4).

Yet, before going any further, I should clarify how the theories and concepts delineated in Chapter Three are used to make sense of the data in this chapter. Attribution Theory is used here in relation to the expressive and instrumental reasons for collaboration discussed in Sections 7.1 and 7.2. Social Capital is employed here in relation to the national and international social capital addressed in Section 7.2.4, and Human Capital is used in this chapter in relation to the intangible sense of productivity discussed in Section 7.2.1.2.

7.1. Expressive collaboration

Prior to thinking about the instrumental purpose of collaboration, the participants appear to collaborate for expressive purposes as well. Expressive collaboration suggests that participants do not only seem to look for academic recognition and visibility or achieving an academic promotion: "but it's not to achieve a promotion. But, if you're using the words of motivation, it's probably to some extent integrative collaboration", explains Lorenzo (follow-up interview). Instead, participants focus first on improving some psychological aspects of their academic life, such as developing feelings of happiness, comfort, enjoyment, and emotional and intellectual security in their academic environment. This implies that their motives for collaboration stem from their personal, internal desire to enjoy the journey of collaboration – dispositional attribution, not primarily external or instrumental – situational attribution.

This section, therefore, investigates the two instances of expressive collaboration – 'developing a sense of enjoyment' and 'psycho-therapeutic collaboration'.

7.1.1. *"I collaborate because I enjoy it"*: Participants' development of a sense of enjoyment in collaboration

The first personal reason behind participants' willingness to collaborate is that they enjoy socialising and working with people in general, and academics are no exception: "I collaborate because it's more enjoyable, I mean I spend a lot of time sitting by myself working on something. So, as an academic it's nice to have some other people involved" (Lorenzo, follow-up interview). In this regard, Marc (Covid-19 follow-up interview) explains the expressive purpose behind his collaboration, elucidating:

> Because we are people. We're social animals. We depend on others to survive. It's well known that lots of people and academics go to work in order to get the social interaction, and yes, I am like these people. I collaborate to get social interaction because I like doing that.

This explains that prior to thinking about establishing academic collaborative relationships, participants believe that they first need to understand the reason why they want

to collaborate. Getting social interaction seems to be important in collaboration, which appears to make participants enjoy collaborating with other academics. Participants claim that it would be 'meaningless' to keep collaborating with certain academics if they did not even enjoy working with people in general, let alone academics. This indicates that participants' personality has a significant role to play in shaping their collaboration. If participants were not interested in people, or did not feel at ease being with them, how could they even enjoy collaborating with academics? Adam (formal interview) seems to answer this question, explaining: "I'm interested in collaborating in a range of different projects. I quite like people and I enjoy their company and working with them. So, if I want to collaborate, I will have to enjoy it otherwise I would just withdraw from it".

Adam's quote implies that enjoying being with people is significant for collaboration, and that 'loving' one's collaboration is also important: "[b]ecause I love it and I really enjoy working with people", clarifies Sara (formal interview). Likewise, Lorenzo (follow-up interview) states:

> I collaborate because I enjoy working with people! So, I think collaboration for me is a socially motivating activity because I don't want to be stuck in my office with a computer doing things. […] some people when they don't have to be here, they prefer to work at home. I don't! Because I work better here and be with people, I like to see people [...] I am a social person in that sense...that's my personality. People with personalities make them want to interact with people more.

Akin to Marc's comment above, Lorenzo stresses that most academics generally go to university to work, so as they get social interaction with students, fellow colleagues and other people who work there. This suggests that their personality appears to encourage collaboration in that extroverted and sociable participants often enjoy chatting to other academics, and this is how most of informal collaborations begin. In addition, there can be no coercion in collaboration, i.e., for academics to have a successful collaboration, participants believe that their collaboration should not be imposed on them, otherwise they would engage in something which they would not necessarily enjoy. Thus, the more academics naturally enjoy being with people, the more there are chances for them to collaborate with their colleagues, and the link between their personality and collaboration would be clear, or in Lisa's (formal interview) phrasing: "I think my personality has an influence on the collaboration I do".

However, most participants also claim that they enjoy collaborating with academics for another reason. This second motive for engaging in collaborative practices is psycho-therapeutic.

7.1.2. *"Because life would be boring without it [collaboration]*": The psycho-therapeutic purpose of collaboration

Experiencing different psychological states, such as boredom, loneliness, and anxiety among participants in their academic homes can be unavoidable and seems to be mitigated against through their engagement in collaborative practices with other academics having various academic statuses. In this regard, Grace (formal interview) and James (formal interview) put that "I think collaboration is fun. It's nice to meet new people and work with them" and "Fun is really important here [in collaboration]", respectively. Thus, in this chapter, I refer to this 'mitigation' as therapy – and more precisely a *psychological* rather than *medical* therapy. I am using the compound adjective *psycho-therapeutic* to suggest any psychological benefits that participants reap from collaborating with other academics. This also implies that participants' behaviours, mood and attitudes seem to improve when collaborating with their collaborative spouses.

Most participants claim that the expressive reward of collaboration is psycho-therapeutic in that it helps them leave their boredom and loneliness bubble. The feeling of academic boredom and loneliness that participants seem to experience when working on their own makes them want to collaborate to feel psychologically 'better'. This might be because participants believe that talking to academics and collaborating with them is psycho-therapeutic as there is that sense of academic support and solidarity that can turn boredom, loneliness and stress into more fun, engagement and relaxation – a point that Sara (formal interview) discusses below:

> I think collaboration gives a support network if you're feeling lonely or stressed […] and that's why I'm collaborating [...] so it's very important for your own wellbeing that you are constantly talking and working with people and it is fun as well. That's why I like collaborating with my colleagues in [name of a discipline]. Here [ibid.] or when working at home with [a name of a colleague] I don't feel lonely or bored because this is what collaborations are for; they are there to lift your spirits […] And I think having someone collaborating with me helps to make it more fun experience because you can share ideas, bounce ideas around of each other. It's never boring or lonely.

Sara's quote suggests that collaborating with academics can be akin to consulting a psychotherapist with whom individuals would feel comfortable, less stressed and supported because they know academics are there for them, not against them, or as Florence (formal interview) believes: "I think collaboration can make you feel more supported as long as you're working with the right people". 'Meaningful' collaboration needs to ensure that the emotional wellbeing of academics is looked after by the their 'right' collaborative partners involved in collaboration, otherwise it would be 'meaningless' to have collaboration that instead of caring for the emotional wellbeing of academics, increases anxiety, boredom, loneliness and unhappiness. On a similar note, Paul (formal interview) says: "[t]o me the benefits are fighting boredom and routine and increasing my sense of happiness and well-being".

Therefore, participants suggest that it is important for academics to be academically engaged at all times as this is crucial for their loneliness, boredom, unhappiness and lack of confidence to be offset. As for boosting their level of confidence through collaboration, participants like Grace (formal interview) believes: "I feel that sense of achievement, and with the collaboration I feel like it's nice to make connections and it boosts your confidence". Similarly, Sara (follow-up interview) describes the positive impacts that her collaboration with other academics have on her, expressing:

> I think collaborating with other colleagues or academics has made me happier because I feel I'm achieving things, it's like you have goals and when you meet those goals, it's incredibly positive. It also improved my confidence through doing collaboration […].

Nevertheless, in order for an effective collaboration to work as a psychotherapy for participants by increasing their emotional wellbeing and lowering their boredom and loneliness, participants, as highlighted in Chapter Five, claim that they need the right academics to collaborate with because different academics have different personalities, and this can be an issue in collaboration.

7.1.2.1. Psycho-therapeutic collaboration works best with the 'right' academics

In order for their collaborative spouses to have the psycho-therapist attribute, who would help them feel emotionally and intellectually secure, the participants seem to have to choose the right academic collaborative spouses to collaborate with as not all the participants appear to have to be on good terms with their collaborative partners, and vice versa: "you really need to get on with them" (Lorenzo, follow-up interview). Thus, academic Selves and Others can determine the emotional quality which they experience, such as feeling down, bored,

unhappy, uncertain, and anxious in that people with similar personalities seem to make it easier for one another to collaborate. Therefore, choosing the right academic collaborative spouses is a necessity in this case. In this regard, Lorenzo (Formal interview) indicates that:

> [T]hey [collaborative partners] have to be people who you can work with […] everybody will have colleagues within the department or any department where they would be more inclined to work with them or less inclined to work with them just because of personalities are a bit different. Some people you are happy to sit at the computer for three hours with. Other people you're not happy to sit at the computer for three minutes with...so yeah there's the personal aspect as well.

This shows how crucial it is for participants to be on good terms with their collaborative partners as this can help with increasing instead of decreasing their emotional wellbeing. Participants who prefer to choose their own colleagues to collaborate with often predict how their behaviour and emotional wellbeing would be with academics of different age groups. The reason I mention the phrase 'age groups' is that some participants like Paul (formal interview), who is an older academic, appears to prefer to collaborate with younger academics because, according to him, they make him develop a sense of happiness more than older academics do:

> It's a great pleasure working with young people. I do like collaborating with them indeed as I think it keeps you young [...] I mean I'm passed retirement age, but I intend to carry on until I retire because it's so much fun working with young people. I do feel happy being and collaborating with them more than my age group people. Young academics come up with exciting stuff, so it's worth with them.

By making sense of the 'why' through the 'who', the quote above suggests that to perceive collaboration as a 'fun and enjoyable' experience, Paul seems to favour collaborating with younger academics over older ones as he believes that the former have a particular 'young' energy that he can draw from them and make him feel younger as an academic as well. This can also show that older academics – both in terms of age and experience – tend to be more academically generous with the younger generation of academics. Nevertheless, collaborating with younger, older, or more experienced academics does not seem to make a difference in the production of the final work like a co-written article or co-designed module, but it makes a huge difference in how they feel (i.e., mood and energy) when collaborating with older or younger academics.

Furthermore, getting used to collaborating with a certain category of academics can demonstrate how comfortable those young academics can make older academics feel, and that

the more they collaborate with them, the more they develop academic attachment to them. For instance, Marc (formal interview), who also is an older academic, often collaborates with a younger academic who seems to feel happy and comfortable collaborating together despite the noticeable seniority between them. He reports that Olivia is his younger academic collaborative spouse with whom he enjoys collaborating the most, stating:

> [Enjoy collaborating] with her [Olivia] quite a lot, a researcher at the university of [a European country] [...] I have just finished writing a book with a young academic who is just beginning her career. I am so pleased when she says that we work as equals. That means a lot to me. […] I really enjoy collaborating with her. I really do.

Yet, this should not be categorical because while some participants prefer to collaborate with younger academics, others would rather collaborate with older or more experienced ones, and this is a matter of feeling and mood, not necessarily age.

7.1.2.2. Not only collaboration, but also friendship

From a psycho-therapeutic perspective, another reason for some participants to collaborate with other academics is to make friends. This suggests that not only do participants collaborate to produce tangible and intangible outcomes, but also to establish friendship: "[o]ther collaborations turn into something longer lasting or even friendship, really" (Grace, formal interview). According to some participants, having collaborative academics as friends can be psycho-therapeutic in that having those informal talks can make them feel better, boost their mood, and improve their behaviours. For example, Robert (follow-up interview) views collaboration as an activity from which friendship can develop:

> I think beyond that [collaboration] there is another example of good friendship that comes from that. And that's an excellent thing of course [...] It's also about understanding each other's values, and when you work with people, you understand those much more.

As indicated by Robert, developing and maintaining friendship can happen as a result of collaboration, and that having a good understanding of both personal and social values that academics need to respect when collaborating is key for establishing friendly and healthy collaborative relationships. This suggests that collaborative academics in research, for example, "not only focus on writing a paper, but also develop a sort of meaningful friendship from there as we both feel comfortable" (Maria, follow-up interview). This also demonstrates that if participants did not feel comfortable collaborating with their colleagues, it might be

highly improbable that they become friends with those academics and let go of the professional distance that some academics would prefer to keep. Besides, Victoria (follow-up interview) also appears to enjoy her 'intellectual friendship' while collaborating informally in informal third spaces, reporting:

> I suppose you could argue that this same colleague we're now friends thanks to our collaboration and we often walk our dogs together and it was funny actually because it was Sunday she said while we were walking our dogs in the woods [...] she said oh it will be really nice if we could apply for some funding together to do a research project together.

In light of the above, it can be argued that collaboration can turn into meaningful friendship provided that both academics and their collaborative partners feel comfortable being with one another, and that this friendship should have a psycho-therapeutic effect in that it should make them feel better than when they work alone. The fact that Victoria does not seem to keep a professional distance with the colleague that she often collaborates with shows that both her collaborative colleagues and she respected personal and shared values, which are significant in any collaborative relationship to develop and be successful.

However, some people may not allow academic Others into their lives by trying to set boundaries between personal and professional life. This issue of keeping a professional distance when academic Selves collaborate with academic Others is discussed below.

Keeping a professional distance in collaboration

Conversely, one participant – Paul (follow-up interview) – believes that he should not make friends in his immediate academic environment and that keeping a professional distance when collaborating is crucial:

> I would have no close friends on campus because in my previous career I had to keep a professional distance and same thing in academia, we're friendly, but not friends in the sense that I hang out with them or go with them to pubs or cafes [...] I don't socialise with colleagues or students; I only collaborate with them. It doesn't mean I have to socialise with them and take them to pubs […] I always keep a professional distance from them.

Paul's way of viewing his collaborative partners seems to be pragmatic in the sense that he cares less about making friends out of his collaborative relationships, and that every individual is unique, meaning that academics should not be confused with 'friends'. This can be linked back to his previous career where he had to put emotions aside. This seems to extend to academia as well. In addition, Paul's pragmatic way of collaborating seems to be based on

practical rather than theoretical or emotion-based considerations. Unlike other participants, Paul seems to be the only participant whose approach to collaboration is straightforward, seeking to research his goal, which is producing some work out of those collective endeavours, no matter how much he likes or dislikes the colleagues with whom he collaborates. To conclude, enjoying friendship while collaborating appears to be personal and this depends on academics' personality (extrovert, introvert, sociable, confident, etc.).

Nonetheless, all these instances of psycho-therapeutic collaboration happened during normal times, i.e., prior to the inauspicious Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, the question that the reader might ask would be as follows: 'what about psycho-therapeutic collaboration during Covid-19'? That is, to what extent has collaboration during Covid-19 been psycho-therapeutic? The following subsection addresses this query.

7.1.2.3. Psycho-therapeutic collaboration during the Covid-19 pandemic

Prior to Covid-19 crisis, participants used to collaborate for psycho-therapeutic purposes with academics on a face-to-face basis. Yet, during the global pandemic, few (three) participants' psycho-therapeutic collaboration seems to be increasing due to the impossibility of the in-person communications and the impact of the lockdown on their psychology. This shows that there is now more of 'caring for the emotional wellbeing' of academics than before the lockdown. But, as argued earlier, this does not suggest that there was no such thing as looking after the emotional wellbeing of academics before the Covid-19 outbreak. For instance, Sara (Covid-19 follow-up interview) believes that, while academics' wellbeing and mental health were not a priority in collaboration before the pandemic, it is the case now during these difficult times, describing:

> That's why now we tend to ask people to turn their cameras on to see each other and check that everything is ok with colleagues. […] But now that the virus is spreading so quickly all over the world this makes us more inclined to care about the wellbeing of our colleagues as we work as a one community and before we share ideas, resources, concepts I believe caring becomes a priority at this point. [...] it's extremely important to look after your mental health and wellbeing and that of the people you collaborate with as at the end of the day, we're humans and the way we feel now can have an impact on the work we produce tomorrow.

Sara's comment implies that the psycho-therapeutic aspect of collaboration is more needed now in these difficult times, especially that participants' wellbeing might have lowered owing to their isolation from the physical academic world. Moreover, caring for the feelings of academics during these times seems to be incredibly important in that it can have a huge

impact on the final outcome (tangible or intangible) that results from collaboration (i.e., productivity). Talking to academics before the Covid-19 was quite normal, but during the lockdown this has proven to be vital as this can make some academics feel happier and less anxious. For example, Marc (Covid-19 follow-up interview) seems to describe his mood and behaviour during such difficult circumstances, maintaining that:

> I think under these circumstances it [collaboration] would be a wonderful thing to do [...] as I am interested in people. Something which my colleagues might not know is that seeing my colleagues and collaborating with them makes me happy, and maybe even happier now [during Covid-19] [...] I knew about [software] but I didn't know how to use it, and I was getting very anxious because I didn't know how to use it. [...] But I was very pleased because I wanted to learn how to use it and now, I feel I've achieved something. So, next time if any academic wants to collaborate with me I wouldn't feel anxious as I know I can manage any software now.

This can elucidate the importance of collaboration as psycho-therapeutic during Covid-19 where participants are no longer allowed to meet or collaborate in person, and that the virtual space should be the only alternative space for collaboration. This also shows that the psycho-therapeutic purpose of collaboration has continued to work even during such difficult times, and that, as I argue in Chapter Six, this virus does not seem to prevent participants from collaborating for expressive and instrumental purposes. Furthermore, though under these circumstances most individuals need to collaborate from home, this home space can at times work against the psycho-therapeutic purpose of collaboration in that the home space has become the only collaborative space during the Covid-19 times. This indicates that while the 'who' can work as a psychotherapist during Covid-19 collaboration, the space can also be an issue in this case.

7.1.2.4. Psycho-therapeutic collaboration and the collaborative first space during the Covid-19 crisis

While the first space appears to be the only collaborative space during the Covid-19 pandemic: "you know the home space is now the only space where you can carry out collaborative activities" (Sara, follow-up interview), the psycho-therapeutic purpose of collaboration appears to be 'disturbed' by the social pressure that exists in the first space. By social pressure, here I refer to the fact that participants who work from home and collaborate with their colleagues in a space wherein there are other responsibilities can disturb the psycho-therapeutic benefits of collaboration. For example, Lorenzo (Covid-19 follow-up interview) believes that remote collaboration appears to make it more difficult for academics "because

you're working in an environment with a child and family commitment things, so yes that's not gonna make it easier". In the same vein, Marc (follow-up interview) states:

> What I'm pointing out is that there are different sorts of social pressure because there are different sorts of responsibilities and thinking about my [an academic], she and her husband are both academics and they have to teach online, and at the same time they have children at home that they have to teach as all schools are shut now and they can't escape from this. So, I think the major change is that you can no longer leave your home space, to go somewhere else in order to explore a different part of your persona. Everything becomes inside the same space.

Lorenzo's and Marc's quotes suggest that while the 'who' has shown to be the most important part of psycho-therapeutic collaboration, the space can also be significant in the sense that having other responsibilities in the first space can affect the way participants feel when collaborating at home. This is because these two participants claim that they do not feel comfortable and get more anxious when collaborating at home in such difficult times, especially when there are other people involved in that space. Yet, this is not the case for all participants because as Sara (follow-up interview) claims: "well, I'm single so I can't really talk about parenting responsibilities as I'm living on my own here, so I don't think it [home space] has impacted my collaboration negatively".

7.2. Instrumental collaboration:

While the first part of this chapter (7.1) discussed examples of expressive collaboration, in this second part, I shed light on the instrumental purposes of collaboration. Not only do all participants in this study seem to collaborate for expressive purposes, but also for instrumental ones, so they can attain some outcomes, be they tangible or intangible. The examples of such instrumental collaborations are 'developing a sense of academic productivity (7.2.1); 'increased professional recognition and visibility' (7.2.2); 'developing a sense of professional empowerment and security (7.2.3); and 'increased national and international social capital' (7.2.4).

7.2.1. Developing a sense of academic productivity:

All participants seem to place great emphasis on getting an outcome out of the collaborations they engage in: "collaboration is much more focused on getting a publication into journal or whatever" (Robert, formal interview). This is mainly because they believe that through collaboration, they can develop a sense of *academic productivity* in terms of the efficiency and quality of the outcome yielded, not its quantity in terms of the amount of work

they produce when collaborating: "the word *productivity* can imply quantity, so you need to be careful; it's about quality, not quantity" (Lorenzo, follow-up interview). Not only do all participants appear to collaborate "to produce something, but [also] to produce something *better* and *richer*, and that's the key thing in collaboration" (Lorenzo, ibid.), which would, in turn, help them develop a sense of academic productivity and achievement. By the same token, Marc (follow-up interview) argues that it would be pointless to collaborate without producing anything, and that the extra value that the academic Other can add to the work is productivity:

> I would never collaborate just for the sake of it because I am an outcome-focused person. Perhaps that's my personality that there not only has to be an outcome or a product out of anything I do with other people, but a much better one than what I would have done on my own [...].

Based on Marc's quote above, one instrumental reason for which the participants seem to collaborate is to get more exciting and more productive outcomes: "[m]y collaboration is always done on the basis of creativity, bringing new knowledge, challenging discrimination or hierarchies" (James, formal interview). This indicates that collaboration is not simply a conversation among colleagues. It denotes two or more academics working towards a common goal to create a new outcome beyond what they could have achieved individually. What the participants and their collaborative spouses can do is making one another feel academically productive and efficient. This feeling of productivity might not develop unless the academic Self collaborated with the 'right' academic Other to both celebrate the 'richness' and 'improvement' value that their joint efforts can add to the work: "[c]ollaboration doesn't mean only production because the production happens anyway whether you are working individually or collaboratively" (Lorenzo, follow-up interview).

However, it should be made clear that "it's not always about the outcome or product" (Lisa, formal interview) because "these can be achieved individually anyway, but the key thing is that a great outcome needs the right person" (Adam, formal interview). This leads to a conclusion that it is not always about the outcome as much as it is about the 'right' individuals involved in the co-production of a greater outcome. Furthermore, this sense of productivity in relation to the outcome produced collaboratively, according to all participants, can be both *tangible* and *intangible* – two issues that I expound below under two headings: 'tangible sense of academic productivity' and 'intangible sense of academic productivity' (or increased human capital).

7.2.1.1. Tangible sense of academic productivity

All participants seem to develop a 'tangible' sense of academic productivity when co-researching, co-teaching, and co-supervising. According to them, a tangible sense of productivity refers to the feeling of achievement that they develop when producing 'concrete' and 'tangible' outcomes characterised by "richness and depth" (Robert, follow-up interview), such as a 'fantastic' co-written article, a 'better' co-designed curriculum or module, or a 'more critical' co-supervised Ph.D. thesis. In the following, I explain each instance of tangible productivity in more detail.

a) Tangible sense of productivity in co-research

The great majority of participants believe that they feel more 'tangibly' productive when co-researching. It is thanks to the collaboration between the academic Other and Self which can make them feel tangibly productive in research as this feeling tends to be increased as a result of tangibly "produc[ing] something richer and more exciting" (Marc, follow-up interview), such as books and articles. Robert (follow-up interview) further explains the point that collaboration on research can make academics improve both their sense of productivity and the quality of the final work produced, explaining:

> There's improvement of positioning and there is an improvement of depth and understanding when I write with a colleague about a particular issue whatever it might be. Obviously, this would make both the book or articles or whatever product and us even more productive.

This suggests that these participants co-research with their collaborative spouses to produce better and richer outcomes, such as quality books or articles that would be characterised by more depth, criticality and enrichment. This can also have an impact on the psychology of the participants. This is because the value that the academic Other adds to the academic Self and the product itself in research can improve their sense of productivity and that of their collaborative partners, or in Marc's (follow-up interview) words, co-researching: "[is] about the enrichment and enhancement of the co-written book or article". Thus, the more academics collaborates with other colleagues to, for example, write a paper together, the more this collective endeavour "makes the final product stronger and more robust because there is more than one person doing that" (Grace, follow-up interview).

This also demonstrates that if participants were not interested in collaborating with their colleagues and sharing their voices with them on the written work they produce together, they might "miss other people's voices and viewpoints. This may probably make the work more

attractive and stronger in that sense" (Grace, follow-up interview). This might also impact their feeling of productivity, achievement and efficiency which they would attach to the final collaborative work produced.

b) Tangible sense of productivity in co-teaching

Most participants also state that their feeling of tangible productivity and that of their collaborative spouses grows more when collaborating with their colleagues on teaching. Here, I am considering the teaching practice both inside and outside the classroom. In relation to the *outside-the-classroom* teaching collaboration, the majority of participants report that they feel more tangibly productive when co-designing a module or co-developing a curriculum with their right collaborative spouses: "generally any collaboration that had happened, happened outside of the class, for example in preparing the schedule of what to teach, designing the syllabus, designing the module" (Lorenzo, follow-up interview). Regarding the *inside-the-classroom* teaching collaboration, few participants claim that they teach the same module with other colleagues, stating: "teaching the same module in the same room at the same time because the module requires the expertise of more than one person" (Maria, follow-up interview). Thus, the first part of this section describes the first instance of co-teaching – co-teaching as an instance of an *outside-the-classroom* collaboration.

Tangible sense of productivity in co-teaching as an instance of an *outside-the-classroom* collaboration

All participants claim that they feel more tangibly productive when "co-develop[ing] a curriculum or co-deliver[ing] or co-design[ing] a module and then teach it together" (Maria, formal interview), which are all aspects of teaching-related collaborative practices happening outside the classroom environment. For instance, Paul (formal interview) and Maria (formal interview) consider that "produc[ing] a curriculum that makes sense and meet the needs of students" (Paul, formal interview) or "produc[ing] a better and richer product that would probably not have been richer if it had been done individually" (Maria, formal interview) make them feel more productive than if they had to develop and evaluate, for example, a module on their own, and which might be a repetition of what has been done in previous years. In this regard, Paul (ibid.) recounts:

> [W]e work together across all various periods to produce a good curriculum; set the module choices that reflect latest research, and I devise the program with colleagues, review it every year, increase it and look after the pastoral support of the students as well. And we work together so that we complement

> each other, and we don't repeat what was done before. We work together to bring new and innovative aspects to the existing modules.

Paul appears to believe that creativity and innovation are brought to teaching by the collaboration he had with academic Others in the area of teaching. He further elaborates that when there is 'change' and 'innovation' in the way his colleagues and he apply to the existing modules, this could make them feel that collaboration in teaching is worth it as it makes both the module and them develop a sense of productivity and achievement.

Tangible sense of productivity in co-teaching as an instance of an *inside-the-classroom* collaboration

By contrast, few participants like Maria and Marc mention that they generally share a class with one or two other academics and teach the same class at the same time. This, according to them, makes them feel that they achieve a sense of productivity as they know that they are not alone in the classroom. For example, Maria (follow-up interview) describes her experience with *inside-the-classroom* collaboration, saying:

> I've done very little on my own in terms of teaching because we do very little teaching where it's one person teaching one module, it's always team or collaborative teaching. Two or three people who teach on a module and any sort of activities around students. we never do it on our own it's always 'We', and there is very little 'I' […] it's much better to have two people teaching the same module in the same room […]

This suggests that the presence of more than one academic to co-teach certain modules can be necessary not only because the module dictates that, but also because Maria seems to know that she works with a team whose sense of professional identity is shared. The issue of shared sense of professional identity seems to make academics, who teach collaboratively, enjoy doing that as tangible productivity can also be seen in their students: "but also it's better for the students, if they haven't got the same person particularly an hour in semester, so they get an hour a week in each module" (ibid). Moreover, Marc (follow-up interview) also describes how tangibly productively he feels when co-teaching with another colleague in the same seminar room, recounting:

> I mean you've been seeing me collaborating with [X], you know on one level you could say we're playing around, it's informal collaborative teaching, but with a knowledge of a very solid formal base we co-plan what we would teach you beforehand, and we present and review the content together in front of you [Algerian international students]. I am sure I have benefited a lot from co-teaching with him. And I am sure he did as well.

Since I was one of those international students Marc is referring to, I should add that only has co-teaching a group of Algerian international students made Marc and his collaborative colleague develop a sense of tangible productivity in teaching, but it also impacted the way we were learning about the content of the module in that both lecturers co-constructed knowledge in a way which was productive.

However, for effective *inside-the-classroom* and *outside-the-classroom* collaborative teaching relationships to happen, academics need to be with the right people. This is because not all academics can show willingness to share their human capital in terms of teaching with other academics. Therefore, academics who engage in co-teaching practices can face some possible challenges if they are not mindful with who they co-teach. That is, they need to be with people who are trustworthy, respectful, willing to share their human capital, and above all can show commitment and engagement, particularly when engaging in *inside-the-classroom* co-teaching. In this respect, Lock et al. (2016, p.25) note that:

> Co-teaching requires careful attention in the development and in the fostering of the collaborative relationship, as well as a commitment on the part of the co-teachers to design and facilitate robust learning experiences for students.

To conclude, academics' engagement in the two levels of co-teaching practices can be rewarding provided that this is done with the right people.

c) Tangible sense of productivity in co-supervision

Four participants state that Ph.D. supervision is another example of collaborative practices among university academics: "the supervision process should be a collaborative process" (Victoria, follow-up interview), and that co-supervising doctoral students to support them and ensure they possess good strategies for writing a 'good' thesis also makes them feel tangibly productive: "it [co-supervision] is about academics working together to help their students produce the best thesis they can" (Robert, formal interview). The participants and their collaborative spouses seem to develop a sense of productivity as a result of their students producing better 'tangible' outcomes like writing a good thesis or co-supervising students, so they are capable of "writing fantastic research papers" (Sara, formal interview). Robert (ibid.) maintains that the presence of the second supervisor is important for a better version of their students' writing, making both supervisors and the student feel productive when writing their thesis, stating:

> The way that the two supervisors come together to support a research student and it's about discussing the best strategies to pursue in order for that research

> student develop properly or write properly, and that might be about the quality of writing, the depth of writing, just getting some good writing done and making the final thesis a successful thesis.

This implies that the expertise of the two supervisors to help their Ph.D. students produce a richer and much more exciting thesis is worth it not only for students, but also for the co-supervisors and the student would feel that co-supervision helps them develop a sense of efficiency and productivity.

However, this does not always seem to be the case because it could be argued that with two supervisors neither is fully invested in the process of supervising and guiding the research student in terms of the time and efforts given to care about the progress of the student. This suggests that the value of sharing human capital in relation to supervision is not respected in this case. Thus, this issue can be linked back to the 'who' in that co-supervisors need to create a shared sense of responsibility to supervise the research students' project in a dedicated, dutiful[25] and interdependent way. That is, first supervisor needs to appoint the right second supervisor who would equally help supervise the research student. It should not be like 80% first and 20% second supervisors' involvement as this might make the first supervisor feel "taken for granted and being used, really!!...I really hate relying on people or people relying on me to do everything […]" (Florence, follow-up interview). This also demonstrates that the first supervisor needs to find the right second supervisor who would perceive co-supervising as interdependent activity wherein both supervisors are equally engaged and invested in the supervision process. Striking a balance between co-supervisors in terms of roles and division of supervisory responsibilities expected from them is key in any co-supervision in HE. In this regard, James (formal interview) stresses that "[i]t [collaborative supervision] has to be that supervisors are totally committed and aware of possibilities".

7.2.1.2. Intangible sense of productivity (or increased human capital)

By contrast, all participants claim that not only do they develop a 'tangible' sense of productivity, but also an 'intangible' one in the aforementioned areas, particularly when engaging in informal collaborations. Participants refer to 'intangible' sense of productivity only when, for example, talking about improving their way of thinking, finding better solutions for problems, or developing their learning about something related to teaching, research or supervision. I, hereafter, refer to this intangible sense of productivity as 'increased human

[25] This is a personality trait which is referred to in the 'Big Five Personality Traits Model' as 'Conscientiousness'.

capital'. As discussed in Chapter Three, human capital is an intangible human asset that participants appear to possess, such as knowledge, skills, and experiences which grows more when collaborating with other academics.

a) Increased human capital in co-research

All participants seem to claim that the feeling of productivity that they develop with their collaborative spouses in co-research can also be intangible like learning novel knowledge, broadening their insights on research problems as a result of listening to different voices and viewpoints, and that they do not always have to produce something tangible to develop a sense of productivity: "I think we learn a lot from each other because different people have different viewpoints and voices, so that can influence the direction we go" (Grace, follow-up interview). This suggests that all participants seem to possess human capital. A succinct description of what 'increased human capital' in co-research means can be understood from Victoria's (formal interview) words, clarifying:

> [Collaboration] can also result in intangible outcomes like learning new knowledge or improving your way of thinking or perception of a theory or anything […] it's led to a lot of extra thinking, so it's something that we learn inside our head. It was a thought-provoking discussion, really [..] However, these intangible outcomes can manifest themselves into more tangible outcomes in terms of writing and article as a result of me growing intellectually.

This indicates that Victoria's human capital expands when engaging in informal collaborative conversations and this seems to make her feel more productive as she learns things in relation to research which she might not have known if she remained "like that person […] in a Michael Jackson bubble. So, he is alone" (James, formal interview) – a human 'silo'. This also shows that productivity can happen in the head and is not always tangible. This intellectual growth accompanied by a feeling of intangible productivity, according to Victoria, can lead to something more tangible. Similarly, Lorenzo (follow-up interview), for instance, states that: "but somehow knowledge of the three speakers and the audience might increase, i.e., intangible outcome, which may later on feed into something more tangible". This demonstrates that "intangible outcome is when by doing something you perceive there is an improvement and knowledge production" (Lorenzo, ibid.).

b) Increased human capital in co-teaching

Similar to expanding their human capital in co-research, some participants also accumulate an 'increased' version of their human capital in relation to teaching. For instance,

Lorenzo (follow-up interview) believes that collaboration helps him develop novel insights into teaching and find better solutions for teaching-related issues:

> I' m sure during the course of collaboration I have also developed my ideas and ways of thinking, ways of teaching... Possibly, every time you chat with somebody over a coffee about something that you're researching or something you're teaching or a situation you're managing then your way of thinking changes and hopefully developed […] Or you chat with a colleague and they're having troubles with students who don't seem to be interested...so you might maybe you should think about every 10mins having a kind of interactive activity where the students discuss together, not you are talking for half an hour every time.

This insinuates that constructing a sense of productivity in teaching does not always manifest itself in tangible outcomes, such as revising and improving modules or going into the class and teach together. Instead, by just having informal collaborative discussions about teaching-related issues, participants seem to learn new knowledge about how to teach or deal with certain categories of students, for example, or acquiring expertise in teaching through discussing with other academics and learning from them:

> It can be more efficient to collaborate because you're sharing workload and sharing tips and strategies about how to manage the classroom and students behaviour. I think sometimes it can be necessary to collaborate in the teaching sense, especially when I don't have certain knowledge or expertise that I need, I think collaboration in this case can be a good experience.
>
> (Florence, follow-up interview)

In relation to co-teaching practices, participants also appear to consider their learning from their teaching colleagues as a good experience, which might help them turn those intangible skills into something more tangible and productive like applying what they learn in the classroom with their students.

c) Increased human capital in co-supervision

The tangible "best" and "most successful" thesis that Robert (formal interview) was referring to earlier might not have been produced if the two supervisors had not learnt new knowledge or had not found better solutions for the problems that the student might have faced. In this respect, Robert (ibid.) claims:

> [T]his collaborative supervision is about deepening your understanding of the doctoral learning and the doctoral supervision of that learning. So, that collaborative supervision is enriching and deepening my thoughts.

This indicates that when an academic supervises students with another colleague, this can make both of them develop that feeling of efficiency and productivity as they both share the load of supervision and the feedback they give to one another can help them become more reflective:

> [A]lso giving each other feedback I think it's very important. So, through co-supervision and exchanging feedback I definitely became more reflective. I've learnt a lot from what the other supervisors do, but also things that have gone wrong or things they have learnt from themselves, I think we need to be sharing these things.

(Sara, formal interview)

Not only does sharing feedback with co-supervisors help improve the overall quality of students' work, but it also encourages the supervisors to reflect both *in* and *on* action: "the reflection *in* action is more on the spot; however, over your evening meal you reflect on what happened in the day, so that becomes like reflection *on* action" (Lorenzo, follow-up interview). Furthermore, the feedback of the second supervisor is equally important, particularly when a student has a problem, and the latter needs to be shared with the second supervisor, so that they find better solutions with the right person. For example, Florence (formal interview) narrates:

> I had a student who was struggling with her research, and I'm her first supervisor, we had a few meetings and felt like we weren't moving forward, so I arranged the joint supervision with my colleague, and it was really productive because sometimes just having another person in the room means that there is a triangular discussion that evolves, which helps everyone how the research can move forward in a way that a one-to-one chat can be a bit more restrictive, so yes the presence of the second supervisor to help solve students' problems is very fruitful.

When two supervisors collaborate to help a Ph.D. student overcome some difficulties that they may face in their research, the student would feel less worried as their problem with their research can be solved through the presence of first and second supervisor. Therefore, this can help supervisors be more productive as they both try to find a solution to solve a supervision-related problem, and as problem-solving is an aspect of human capital, the latter would also increase through collaboration.

However, this does not often appear to work well as having two supervisors guiding a research student can at times create more problems for the research student. This is because some supervisors have opposing views and perceptions of the social world, and this can be more confusing for the research student, who might find themselves lost as they do not know whose advice they should follow. Therefore, as mentioned in Chapter Two, it can be argued that such collaborative supervisory relationships among university research supervisors can come at a cost unless worked out properly. For example, Guerin and Green (2015) point out that the key issues of co-supervision for research students is facing the risk of opposing views and contradictory advice from the two or three supervisors. Moreover, first supervisors need to choose the right second supervisors who share similar methodological and philosophical approach to research. Thus, to eschew potential issues with the research student, the latter needs to be given the right co-supervisor who "fits with what I'm doing. They are part of a discussion which is going to connect with my discussion" (Marc, formal interview).

7.2.2. *'Tell me with whom you collaborate, and I tell you who you are'*: Participants' increased professional recognition and visibility through collaboration

Beyond developing a sense of academic productivity and achieving continuous professional development, six out of 12 participants also seem to collaborate instrumentally to become recognised and visible in a particular expertise within the wider academic community: "I suppose that recognition could be a product of collaboration" (Victoria, follow-up interview). Increased professional recognition suggests that these participants believe that when collaborating with well-established academics, other academic people can recognise them and they become more visible, for example, as a result of co-writing a book or co-presenting at a conference: "[collaboration] will bring me some recognition because I'll be writing collaboratively with esteemed researchers. So, on researcher papers, my name will be linked with those academics as co-authors" (Victoria, ibid.). In this regard, Sara (follow-up interview) stresses that collaborating with other academics has made her more visible and recognised as an academic, emphasising:

> [C]ollaboration made me much more visible because we're a team of [experts] and if I always work on my own, my identity as an academic would be less visible, I think. By visible I mean to the academic world[...] but I think collaborations have more than anything sorts of made me a much more known I suppose academic, and because of that I have opened up more opportunities. I think that's really important. Again, it comes down to not being siloed and being in this tiny space and tiny bubble, and it helped me

> met more people […] If I think of Sara now Versus Sara 4 years ago, I have developed my identity as an academic thanks to being part of this big village. I think my identity has changed because of that growth in confidence which came off collaboration basically... I'm not just Sara who works in [research area], looking at this. I'm now recognizable across environments. That wasn't the case before I started collaborating.

This argues that academic Selves and Others can help one another gain more academic visibility and recognition as a result of collaboration. That is, participants, including Sara, do not state that they do not have a professional identity, or their identity is not visible at all. Instead, as it appears from the quote above, what collaboration can bring to the participants is 'more' professional visibility and recognition, or in Florence's (telephone follow-up interview) words: "my sense is that two heads are always better than one and it's through others that selves are recognised, and vice versa". However, as discussed earlier, not all academics can genuinely help others become recognisable in their particular area of expertise, only the 'right' people can. Therefore, academics should consider the people they collaborate with prior to investing in their time and energy to collaborate with them.

7.2.2.1. Professional altruism and academics' professional recognition and visibility

By contrast, few participants seem to collaborate instrumentally, yet not for getting professionally recognised or visible, but for assisting other academics to attain this goal. For example, Marc (follow-up interview), who no longer seeks to be promoted or recognised in his field as he already has that, believes that, by writing with him, his younger collaborative partner is gaining a wider recognition in academia, and she is now 'more visible' in her area of expertise, explaining that:

> I'm at the end of my career. When I say at the end of my career, I haven't stopped. But I'll never be promoted again. I've been promoted as much as I can be, and I've got here. So, yes, I have achieved the professorial status, which is the highest you can get in a British university. So, I am valued because of the quality of the research that I do. I believe I have a very high status. And the people who collaborate with me would get that wider recognition if they are interested in such things of course.

As highlighted in Chapter Five (Section 5.1.2.5), some participants are academically generous and enjoy collaborating with other academics who are less experienced than they are to help them attain their professional recognition. This is a quality which seems to be in Marc who, despite the fact that he has already gained his professional recognition and is well-known in his academic field throughout the world, still thinks of broadening the professional image of

his younger writing colleague – Olivia – so that when she, for example, is invited to present at a conference, other academics would recognise her professional identity due to the work she did with Marc. Likewise, Grace (follow-up interview) states that: "when I go to conferences, I introduce myself and they will be like oh you're Grace, so they would obviously know who you are because of the publications I have with other well-established professors".

This also argues that collaboration can assist in the professional development of academics: "collaboration develops me to develop professionally. Collaboration is a core of professional development" (Marc, formal interview). Yet, this necessitates that academics do not miss any collaborative opportunity and are interested in developing their professional recognition through collaboration.

7.2.2.2. The importance of participants' interest in developing their professional recognition through collaboration

In order for their professional recognition and visibility to be developed and broadened in academia, those six participants point out that it is vital that they show interest in securing recognition and do not want to squander any collaborative chance, otherwise it would be likely that they miss the opportunity to achieve their goal. For instance, Marc (formal interview) believes that:

> And if I was evaluating another academic, I'd be looking at how far they seek out relationships with academics in other universities across the world which are significant to develop who they are as academics. I think this is evidence of what an academic should be doing. So, it's part of my responsibility to seek out collaboration with other academics in my field across the world. So, I get an email from professor [X] at [a University in Asia], who is a leading figure in my area, so if I didn't respond and make use of that I'd not be doing what I'm supposed to be doing. Well, I'd say that if I did not respond to that email and collaborated with that professor, I think I'd lose my identity as an academic, yes, yes, I think so because it's like in any professional field, if somebody doesn't take advantage of the resources that are given to them to develop themselves then they're not going to advance in their understanding of what they do and will miss the opportunity to develop who they are as academics, really.

Again, as discussed in Chapter Five, all participants report that they need to collaborate with academics who are happy to be involved in collaborative relationships and boost their professional identity. Thich implies that their willingness to collaborate and become professionally recognised is crucial, and that it is the responsibility of academics to search for collaboration to secure that professional recognition, or in Lorenzo's (formal interview) words:

"you're going to have to go out there and find ways of collaborating [...] that is, take the initiatives". What Marc and Lorenzo seem to argue is that if any academic is keen on getting their professional identities recognised in their scholarly fields and develop who they are professionally, they will have to communicate their ambitions by, for example, getting back to emails which invite them for collaborative projects or by contacting well-established academics and ask if they are interested to collaborate with them on a particular project.

7.2.2.3. 'Moving up' the academic ladder through collaboration

Only four participants claim that they engage in collaborative practices to secure an academic promotion. That is, if an academic wants to 'climb' the academic ladder by, for example, moving from being a (senior) lecturer to a professor or a reader, he or she, according to these participants, needs to establish collaborative links and networks with academics, preferably outside their immediate academic community: "I think my professorial status has been largely shaped by the links and collaborations I have made with other people outside university" (Marc, follow-up interview). Additionally, Victoria (formal interview) states that one of the criteria for becoming a reader is external collaborations with academics from other universities, elucidating:

> [B]ecoming a reader is an outcome or a product that is born out of collaboration with other academics. I think collaboration is essential if you want to make progress in academia. It's absolutely essential. I suppose you could consider collaboration as part of the production of a reader. The metaphor I would give to this link would be someone giving you a step up to get to the top of a fence of something, for example me working with someone from [UK University] ...will give me a step up to produce the outcome I want to achieve.

This implies that one aim of Victoria and the other three participants from collaboration is to secure an academic promotion. Thus, what the academic Other can do for the academic Self, and vice versa, is important in that not only do the four participants believe that their collaboration with academics can make of them 'recognisable' academics within the wider academic community, but they also think that it can help them gain promotion, or as Adam (formal interview) puts it:

> Academia is very status-driven. I became a professor last year and part of the criteria for becoming a professor involve collaborative involvement, so the fact that I've collaborated with many people within and outside the university and was able to get references from senior professors from many institutions across the UK.

The existence of collaborative partners mainly outside the university wherein academics work and getting references from well-esteemed academics is essential if academics are willing to secure a promotion. Similarly, Marc (follow-up interview) experienced the same thing when he wanted to apply for the professorial status, reporting:

> Yes, absolutely [collaborating with external academics] because they have to find references from outside the institution you work for. It's a cross-sectoral thing. So, they have got to find people...you provide them with a list of people, and they choose one person and call them to see if I have ever collaborated with them.

As discussed above, establishing external academic networks, therefore, is mandatory for academics' promotion. However, while all that has been discussed above was more about external professional recognition and promotion, this does not necessarily mean that academics in general are unable to become professionally recognised and secure a promotion in their fields unless they collaborate externally. For example, Robert (follow-up interview) clarifies:

> [T]hat's [professional recognition] much more internal thing, not talk about external sort of links, and that's where probably in my head I now need to pursue those, not necessarily because I want to be a reader or a professor, but, I think in some ways in my current role, the recognition is internal more than external.

This indicates that the more participants collaborate outside their local community (i.e., bridging social capital), the wider their professional recognition would become. Besides helping them become recognised in their professional life and assist them in gaining a good internal or external promotion, collaboration also seems to help some participants develop a feeling of professional empowerment and security.

7.2.3. Developing a sense of professional empowerment and security through collaboration

Some participants appear to think that by collaborating with other academics, they feel more empowered and secure as they are aware of the fact that they are not alone in whatever collaborative activity they are doing. Victoria (follow-up interview), for instance, believes that presenting a paper at a conference is a scary and daunting task to do and that co-presenting would help her gain confidence and develop a sense of empowerment and security, explaining:

> Presenting papers at conferences with collaborators has enabled me into those spaces that were quite scary. And I suppose that's another thing about collaboration, they can take you into places that would be otherwise quite

> scary on your own [...] So, presenting at a conference on your own is more daunting than presenting a paper or a presentation with other academics. I have done that as somebody who needed the support, but then I have also done it as the person who's been the person who's guiding others. As I've gained my own confidence, I've collaborated with others to move them forward into being able to present at a conference.

This indicates that 'solo' presentations at conferences can make academics feel quite frightened of facing the audience (i.e., social psychology of audience). However, by collaborating with another academic to co-present the same paper together, this academic would provide Victoria with power, confidence and security to be in control of the presentation. Once that feeling of empowerment and emotional and intellectual safety is developed, only then can these academics move forward and help other less confident academics. In the same manner, Sara (follow-up interview) describes how collaboration can make of her a more confident and empowered academic, illustrating:

> [W]e support one another we're able to input your own individual experience which naturally will always be a better excavation, but I don't do it on my own anyway, it will be very scary [...].

Overcoming fear of academic tasks seems to be less difficult with the presence of other academics who would help individuals, who might feel 'unsafe' and 'powerless', develop feelings of emotional security and empowerment when undertaking academic activities. This also implies that the presence of the academic Other seems to make a huge difference in the way the academic Self makes choices and takes actions when collaborating, and vice versa. Speaking of feelings, Sara (formal interview), for example, describes the way her personality as an academic has shifted, and that she has become more confident by virtue of collaborating with the right academics, stating: "collaboration is quite effective like improving your confidence through collaborating with other academic people. So, yes, it also improved my confidence through doing collaboration".

Nevertheless, collaborating with the right academics is fundamental if academics wish to develop a feeling of empowerment and security when collaborating. Choosing the right academics with whom participants collaborate, as discussed in Chapter Five, is of paramount importance because not all people are similar in terms of feelings, thoughts, and behaviours. Other rewards that the participants seem to reap from collaborating with other academics consist in expanding both their national and international social capital.

7.2.4. Increased national and international social capital

Most participants appear to engage in collaboration to expand their social capital both nationally and internationally: "I think it [collaboration] can have a positive effect because it's about extending our network and the people we collaborate with here [nationally] or internationally" (Florence, telephone follow-up interview). While I tackled the issue of social capital in Chapter Five mainly as a *means* through which participants can find collaborative opportunities, I discuss social capital in this section as a *product* or a *reward* that can result from taking part in collaboration with different academics around the world. However, here I am talking about those participants who own social capital, otherwise, as discussed in Chapter Five, it would be hard for those who do not show any ability to engage in conversations and collaborations with academics to increase their collaborative network.

In this regard, Grace (formal interview) explains that: "I suppose being an introvert sometimes can be difficult to make the initial contacts with people […] whereas sometimes I think extroverts are greatly attracted […]. Grace's quote suggests that prior to wanting to enhance their social capital and expand the circle of academics with whom they collaborate, participants argue that academics should first have 'social capital' as a *means*, so they can embark on enhancing it, hence social capital as an *outcome* of collaboration. Furthermore, most participants appear to make good use of their past collaborations with different academics to gain access to new collaborative opportunities that would, in turn, broaden their network of academics who they did not necessarily know before. In this regard, Marc (formal interview) mentions that:

> Another good effect of collaboration on me is you get invitations to travel [...] and I am very pleased to be invited to [European country] to get on the plane. I never met those people before. They know people who know people who know people who know me. So, that how it works. So, I go there, and they say we know you because of what you've written, because of other people even though I have never met them before. But within the bigger system, there is a familiarity. […] There is a lot of ego tripping in it, because people like you and you like them, and you get invited.

This insinuates that academics should not underestimate the power of social capital that they possess as it can help them initiate collaborative projects with other academics. This also argues that were Marc not sociable enough to engage in collaborative relationships with academics, he might probably not be capable of expanding his social capital. Interestingly, another good benefit of collaboration is that participants receive invitations to travel abroad not only to increase their national social capital, but also their international one. Besides, the

"[t]hey know people who know people who know people who know me. So, that how it works" (Marc, ibid.) quote seems to be quite similar to the technique which I used for recruiting 'outsider-space' participants in this study – *snowballing*. That is, the fact that Marc knows many academics in different parts of the world appears to make it easier for him to be recommended to other academics to collaborate with as they already know that their past collaborations went well. Furthermore, this shows that previous academic contacts are of significant importance in the development of new contacts for collaboration.

Snowballing and participants' social capital as a medium of collaboration

The fact that participants like Marc, James, Robert, and Adam received invitations for collaboration and were given collaborative opportunities by academics 'who know other people who know them' shows that this academic snowballing has a lot to do with people's personality. That is, if people thought that Marc and James were not suitable for collaboration, it would be improbable that they recommend them to other academics. This implies that academic snowballing works best with highly recommended academics in terms of how far they can use their social capital as a means of collaboration:

> I think in a team people want to know whether you're reliable, and whether you do the work and get on with it and that you're more extrovert like them and I think that strengthens the collaboration once people know that you can manage. So, yes it might be more a bit harder to get in, but once you establish yourself then opportunities emerge […] Someone else within the university went on an international trip and they came back and they named someone who was looking to collaborate over here, and that has put me in a big international network of nurse researchers in my professional...so I suppose for me that's been a real huge benefit of those sorts of links and collaborations thanks to which I had research opportunities which I was interested in as well. I wouldn't think I'd be selected if I was not interested in collaborating with external contacts.
>
> (Grace, formal interview)

This indicates that if academics' aim is to increase their international social capital and receive invitations to collaborate internationally with people they might not know, they need to show that they have an aptitude to engage in collaborative activities in an effective way. This is quite similar to the 'recommendation letter' that supervisors write for their graduate students when searching for a job. That is, academics need to be as sociable as the people with whom they collaborate, otherwise there might be no social capital to expand since they do not even have one to start with. Yet, this does not always seem to be the case because, as I explained in

Chapter Five, some participants were not naturally extroverts, and they did not really have that strong level of social capital that could enable them to look for collaborative opportunities. However, they did not surrender to their natural personality, and instead did their utmost to "push themselves" (Marc, formal interview) to create a more "sociable" persona, so as not to miss collaborative opportunities and develop their social capital:

> So yes, I'd develop myself socially and academically through working with other academics and colleagues […] I probably won't know anybody, so that's quite a daunting thing, but I have to make myself do that because I know through that there will be opportunities to meet other people in my situation.

(Robert, formal interview)

This also suggests that it is the national or international academic Other that opens doors for collaborative opportunities for the academic Self by lauding the successful past collaborations that the latter had with other people, and vice versa. Nevertheless, most participants highlight that academics should not merely focus on increasing their national and international social capital, but, most importantly, should be with the right people to be able to sense the productivity they develop as a result of expanding their professional visibility in a particular academic field worldwide:

> I have got more opportunities for collaboration thanks to the people I know and who are well established in that particular institution here or outside the UK. And also, making links with the right people. Networks are really important.

(Adam, formal interview)

Thus, it might be pointless to expand their national and international social capital unless participants chose the right academics with whom they could collaborate. This, therefore, shows the significance of collaborating with the right academics in the whole collaboration journey, and that if participants, who I describe as nomadic academics, did not have social capital as a *means* of collaboration to start with, they might not develop the level of their social capital as an *outcome*. In other words, the more academics invest in their social capital to 'hunt' collaborative opportunities (i.e., *social capital as a means*), the more their enhanced version of these 'social values' expand (i.e., *social capital as an outcome*).

Conclusion

This chapter has tackled the issue of the 'why' or the two main reasons behind participants' engagement in collaborative practices. These are *expressive* and *instrumental*.

The expressive rewards that participants seem to reap from their academic collaborations are 'developing a sense of enjoyment' and 'the psycho-therapeutic purpose of collaboration'. The instrumental purposes are 'academic productivity', 'professional recognition and visibility', 'developing a sense of professional empowerment and security', and 'increased national and international social capital'.

This chapter has, therefore, argued that academics first need to develop a sense of enjoyment when collaborating (i.e., expressive collaboration), then focus on co-publishing articles, co-designing modules, co-supervising a thesis, or gaining promotion (i.e., instrumental collaboration). Participants' ways of perceiving collaboration reveal that academics should care more than they do at the moment about their emotional well-being and that of their collaborative spouses when collaborating. Thus, balancing expressive and instrumental collaboration is important because it would be pointless if academics solely focus on getting books or articles published without considering how their academic collaborative spouses feel in the journey of collaboration. For this reason, these findings argue that the people with whom academics collaborate appear to outweigh both 'where' and 'why' they collaborate.

CHAPTER EIGHT

8. FURTHER DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

This final chapter presents 'Further discussion', 'Implications', and 'Conclusions'. With regards to 'Further discussion' section, this aims at recapitulating the key findings of the study, which were made sense of through four concepts and two theories, and which were extensively discussed in Chapters Five, Six, and Seven. Within the same section, research questions 1, 2, and 3 are addressed in 'Further discussion of the *who*', 'Further discussion of the *where*', and 'Further discussion of the *why*' subsections, respectively. As for 'Implications' section, this seeks to provide a list of theoretical and practical implications that arose from the research. Finally, in 'Conclusions' section, I shall summarise the research aims, give a snapshot of the methodological route that I have pursued to conduct this research, and finally, provide some final reflections on what I have learnt from conducting research on academics' collaboration and its implications for my future collaborative practices in academia.

8.1. Further discussion: Addressing RQs 1, 2, and 3

Chapters Five, Six, and Seven discussed the main findings of the study, which are 'the characteristics of the *right* academic Others with whom the participants believe they need to collaborate – the *who*'; 'where the participants collaborate and the social-psychological factors affecting their academic nomadicity – the *where*'; and 'the expressive and instrumental motivations behind participants' engagement in collaborative activities – the *why*'. The present section provides a 'further' discussion of the three above-mentioned findings, and by doing so addresses the three research questions presented in Section 1.3 in Chapter One.

8.1.1. Further discussion of the 'who': Addressing RQ1

This subsection discusses further the qualities that participants argue are central to the academic collaborative spouses when participating in collaborative activities – the 'who', and by doing so addresses RQ1: *With whom do the participants in the setting collaborate?*

Participants reveal that they have to choose the 'right' academic Others who need to respect personal and shared values. This suggests that for a successful collaborative relationship among academics to develop, both academic Selves and Others need to value the same criteria, which are referred to as personal and shared values in this thesis. The personal

values pointed out by participants are individual behaviours and characteristics that academics need to possess and exhibit when collaborating. These are issues related to trust, interdependence, respect, liking and amiability, personality types, confidence, academic generosity, autonomy, and motivation. On the other hand, findings show that besides the necessity of living by same personal values listed above, participants also argue that both academic Others and Selves need to respect some shared values. These are shared perspectives and experiences as well as shared power.

Moreover, the link between personal and shared values lies in that while the former concerns the social assets and resources that the participants and their collaborative spouses possess to be able to collaborate more effectively, the latter has to do with the intangible and cognitive assets which the participants and their collaborative spouses have in common. That is, while personal values are related to academics' social capital (who are you as a social being in terms of social assets and resources?), shared values are linked to human capital (what do you have as skills, domain of interest, experience, etc. to build academic collaborative relationships?). Overall, though this subsection discusses further the 'who' in collaboration, it should be noted that this 'who' is divided into two – the 'who' in terms of *social capital* and the 'who' in terms of *human capital*.

Therefore, I refer to the individuals with whom my participants collaborate as 'academic collaborative spouses' in that the participants seem to view collaboration as marriage wherein the criteria for marriage also apply to collaboration. Participants also claim that the academic Self needs to choose the 'right' academic Other and need to be together in the journey of collaboration, jointly experiencing all the ups and downs which happen during this journey.

Personal values

As discussed in Chapter Five, the participants often collaborate with academics who are trustworthy. *Trust* is a top priority and highly sought-after quality in the potential academic Others with whom the participants collaborate (Olson and Olson, 2000). Thus, the more participants develop a sense of trust towards their collaborative partners, the more they feel comfortable collaborating with them, and which can, in turn, influence their performance and productivity. This implies that when collaborating, the academic Self needs to find a trustworthy academic Other who is able and willing to take risks as trust tends to be linked to people who are genuinely happy to be responsive to change when in difficult situations like the

Covid-19 pandemic. In this respect, Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995, p.712) argue that "trust is not taking risk per se, but rather it is a willingness to take risk".

Once academics ensure that their collaborative partners are worthy of trust, participants state that it is only then can those individuals describe their collaboration as an interdependent activity. Therefore, the second criterion within personal values needed in collaboration, and which also helps to address RQ1, is interdependence. *Interdependence* is argued to be central to participants' collaboration. To understand how participants collaborate interdependently, Thibault and Kelley's (1959) Interdependence Theory was used. As detailed in Chapter Five, participants report that most of the academics they collaborate with show mutual reliance, commitment, and engagement in the collaborative activities wherein they engage, and that they are "all in this together". Findings also indicate that there are two different approaches to interdependence in collaboration – positive- and negative-interdependence (Johnson and Johnson, 1989).

Positive interdependence-based collaboration, which is based on mutual assistance, trust, engagement and accountability, tends to help the partners engaged in collaboration develop a sense of emotional and intellectual security as they know that they are collaborating with people who hold a positive interdependence-based approach to collaboration. However, negative interdependence can make collaboration unsuccessful if neither trust nor mutuality is respected. Participants also claim that it is when academics do not respect ethics that the negative type of interdependence starts to emerge, leading them to perceive their academic collaborative endeavours more as a competition than a collaboration (Johnson and Johnson, ibid.). Therefore, findings show that participants prefer and need to collaborate with individuals who can help them feel secure and safe as a result of respecting ethical values like trust and interdependence. This can, in turn, encourage the academic Self and Other to respect each other – a third criterion and factor that participants believe is essential as it could affect their collaborative relationships (Gittell, 2006).

Respect in this case is the result of academics respecting moral codes, being trustworthy and perceiving collaboration as based on mutuality of efforts, accountability and commitment, hence interdependence. In addition, the participants argue that it would be highly unlikely that the academic Self would show academic respect and appreciation for the academic Other who might not be worthy of trust, or who might hold a negative-interdependence-based collaboration by not jointly contributing to the success of the collaboration. Mutual respect in collaboration in this research has two aspects – respecting academic Others' *human capital* (i.e., mutually respecting the skills, knowledge, experience and disciplinary differences (Bauer,

1990) of the people engaged in collaboration) and *cultural differences* when collaborating internationally (i.e., being open and holding positive attitudes towards collaborating with international academics is fundamental in collaboration). Participants also indicate that academics, who pursue an ethical route to collaboration (i.e., trust, interdependence, and respect), and who also respect and are respected by the academics with whom they collaborate, often believe in and practise trust and interdependence-based collaboration.

Therefore, honesty – which entails trust, interdependence, and respect – is key in the type of collaboration studied within the context of this study. According to Waddington (2016, p.6), even though the letter 'h' in 'honesty' is silent, its meaning and value are not when it comes to "knowing and doing what is morally right", and displaying high academic integrity and honesty in collaboration is no exception. This is because not only can honesty affect collaboration, but also the relationship between partners as the absence of ethics means no trust and no trust means no honesty, and when the latter is not respected, collaboration can collapse. Thus, when academics engage in trust, interdependence, and respect based collaborative relationships, only then can liking and amiability be a consideration. In this respect, most participants contend that *academically liking* the academics they collaborate with and being on good terms with them is essential in collaboration as it would be hard for collaboration to develop in a healthy way if the participants and their collaborative spouses did not like one another.

Another attribute that the participants believe their collaborative spouses need to have is similar *personality traits.* As highlighted in Section 3.3.1, there are five personality traits discussed by the Big Five Personality Traits Model (Goldberg, 1993). These are Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism – or The OCEAN Model. Yet, the neuroticism trait has not been considered in this thesis because, based on the participants' accounts, the other four traits seem to be key in collaboration. This model has implications for collaboration. It appears that this model, if taken into consideration when collaborating, can help make collaboration successful. This is because successful collaboration, in this context, requires that academics be (a) open to experience; (b) conscientious (perceiving collaboration as a mutual responsibility); (c) extrovert – or at least ambivert – and (d) agreeable i.e., welcoming collaborative academics from (i) other countries, and (ii) other disciplines.

Being an *extrovert* or *sociable academic*, therefore, seems to be an important personality factor that attracts similar academics to form collaborative relationships which can, in turn, strongly affect collaboration. Thus, participants argue that they need to choose extrovert or sociable individuals as it might be difficult to collaborate with someone who is not interested

in being or collaborating with people. In this case, half of the participants contend that *creating a more sociable or extrovert persona* for those who are not naturally sociable is crucial, so they do not miss collaborative opportunities. This demonstrates that if participants were not interested in collaborating with different academics regardless of the space and discipline, they would probably not be responsive to change, adaptable, flexible or even willing to move from being introvert to extrovert (or at least sociable) just to develop who they are professionally and promote their professional image in academia. This also suggests that there is a strong relationship between participants' personality traits, social capital, and collaboration.

Participants also claim that academics with *a suitable personality*, such as 'being sociable', 'confident', 'academically generous with human capital, time and energy', 'autonomous', 'conscientious', 'agreeable', 'motivated', 'committed', 'engaging', 'good at communication', 'flexible', 'risk-taking', and 'space and discipline-independent' find it easier to develop social capital, which, in turn, helps them engage in collaboration with different academic Others. Therefore, collaborating with academics who possess social capital becomes a necessity, not a choice in this case. Moreover, participants highlight that they need to collaborate with academics who are able to demonstrate that they own all the three types of social capital that Szreter and Woolcock (2004) refer to as bonding (being able to collaborate with academics within the same academic community), bridging (being able to collaborate with academics within the wider academic community), and linking social capital (being able to collaborate with academics with different academic statuses – academic power).

Shared values

Besides personal values, participants also seem to collaborate with academics who respect shared values. The first aspect of shared values is shared perspectives and experiences, which refer to the perceptions that participants have in common with their collaborative spouses as to collaboration, and how they collectively experience them. This entails 'developing a shared sense of identity' and a 'shared domain'. In relation to *a shared sense of identity*, participants appear to collaborate with individuals who construct a strong sense of community (Wenger, 1998) through the use of pronouns 'we, our, ours' in lieu of 'I, my, mine' when talking about their collaborations. The fact that participants use 'we' instead of 'I' when discussing their collaborative projects shows that they collectively participate in their collaborations, and that they do not perceive collaboration as an individual, independent activity. However, the extent to which academics manifest their shared sense of identity in practice when collaborating is also important. That is, participants argue that they collaborate

with academics whose "actions should speak louder than their words as we say" (Maria, follow-up interview). That is, both participants and their collaborative spouses also demonstrate their shared sense of identity through their actual participation in collaborative communities of practice, be they offline or online (Wenger, ibid.).

Furthermore, participants also reveal that the academics they collaborate with have *a shared domain of interest*. This is because it is the shared domain which can help participants and their collaborative spouses develop a shared "ground" and a sense of "common identity" (Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder, 2002, p.27). Creating a shared area of interest is vital in collaboration as participants believe it is hard to continue to collaborate with academics whose domains do not match theirs. Moreover, within a shared domain of interest, participants also state that they enjoy collaborating with academics whose philosophical and methodological approaches to research are similar to theirs. Nevertheless, the findings highlight that both participants and their academic collaborative spouses are flexible and open to change when it comes to collaborating outside their academic realm (i.e., *bridging* social capital). Though it is crucial for academics to collaborate with people within a similar domain, it is also important to find academics who can rid themselves of their 'I-only-collaborate-in-my-academic-home' mindset. Expecting the unexpected in the journey of collaboration, therefore, is important. Furthermore, participants argue that allowing room for collaborative opportunities to emerge is essential because academics are encouraged not to solely collaborate with academics with similar interests, but also with others from different disciplines (*bonding* and *bridging* social capital at the same time).

The second aspect of shared values is *negotiated power*. The academics that the participants collaborate with are those who are willing to set academic power differentials aside and negotiate them when collaborating – hence, *linking* social capital (Szreter and Woolcock, ibid.). Participants are happy when collaborating with academics who make one another feel equally important in the collaboration journey. This shows that academic collaboration works best with people having different levels of seniority, and who perceive the academic Others, who are either below or above them, as equal to them when it comes to collaboration. However, even though academic power relations and hierarchy in academic collaborations are said to be negotiated, this does not explicitly suggest that there is no leadership in collaboration in terms of who should take the lead and be in charge of collaboration. Thus, participants also reveal that they prefer to collaborate with academics who have *clear leadership* in collaboration as this is extremely important if academics want their collaboration to be a success.

8.1.2. Further discussion of the 'where': Addressing RQ2

This subsection discusses further the two important aspects of participants' crossing boundaries when collaborating, i.e., where their collaborative practices take place – the 'where', and by doing so addresses RQ2: *Where do the participants' collaborative practices take place?*

Findings show that participants cross two distinct, yet interconnected, types of boundaries when collaborating with their collaborative spouses. These are *spatial* (which includes national, international, and virtual space) and *disciplinary* boundaries. This suggests that participants can collaborate everywhere regardless of location and discipline, which is a defining feature, and thanks to which I refer to them as *nomadic academics* since they do not always stay in one setting or discipline when collaborating. They "move around a lot" (Victoria, follow-up interview) from one place and one discipline to another, so they do not miss any collaborative opportunity. Thus, the relationship between the 'who' and the 'where' in this thesis lies in that the former seems to outweigh the latter because participants claim that they need the right academics to collaborate with in the right space, and who can be risk-taking and flexible enough to cross these boundaries – hence, it is mostly about the 'who', otherwise the participants would not consider the academics they collaborate with as their collaborative spouses did the latter not "move around a lot" in terms of space and discipline.

With regards to the *spatial type of boundaries* crossed when collaborating, findings demonstrate that the participants collaborate across national, international and virtual boundaries. As for the 'national space' wherein they collaborate, it is shown that the participants collaborate at the level of first (home), second (university), and third space (public places) (corresponding to Oldenburg's first, second, and third place). Besides the third space, the first space appears to be the participants' favourite locus for collaboration as this space makes them feel comfortable more than the second space does. Moreover, though both first and third space can be equally important in terms of comfort, were they to be put in a continuum, participants would choose the first space as their most favourite locus of all. This is probably because they do not own the second or third space, but they do own their homes. Participants do not seem to feel under pressure when collaborating at home as they are aware that wherever they go it is the first space – or domestic shelter – which offers them peace, comfort, and emotional and intellectual security 24/7 – a feature which they may not find in the second or third space.

The reason why participants normalise the first space as their collaborative space lies in that the home space has energy which the second space does not seem to have. The collaborative first space also helps the participants feel intellectually and emotionally safe as no formalities or protocols exist in that space. On the other hand, the second space seems to compel participants to escape from it and head toward the first space as their mood and behaviours become better when collaborating at home, especially that the second space often imposes some regulations and protocols with which participants need to comply. Collaborative third spaces are any spaces external to the home and university space. Participants also collaborate in the third space, such as pubs, cafes, and restaurants as they develop a feeling of 'home away from home' (Oldenburg, 1989) when they collaborate informally in the third space. Moreover, akin to their mood and behaviour in the first space, the participants also argue that they build a sense of comfort, relaxation, and safety as they would in their own home.

Regarding the 'international space' wherein the participants also collaborate, I refer to my participants as 'glomadic' or 'global nomadic' academics as not only do they collaborate nationally, but also internationally. The fact that the participants travel abroad for collaboration implies that they hold positive attitudes vis-à-vis collaborating with international academic Others. This shows that participants are ready to collaborate internationally and have an appetite for travelling abroad. This also indicates that the participants respect and celebrate the cultural differences of the academics they collaborate with internationally. The fact that participants show positive attitudes towards international academic Others can open windows of opportunity for them to travel anywhere in the world. According to the participants, once the criteria of being open-minded and respectful of academic Others' cultures are met, only then can they embark on travelling for collaboration. However, a second factor needs to be considered before suggesting any international collaboration to any academics, which is participants' interest in travelling.

Thus, participants' interest in travelling is an important factor that affects their international collaboration. This is because the participants believe that not all academics are able to leave their home country for some time for collaborative purposes (e.g., they may be willing to travel internationally for collaboration, but family commitments can make it difficult). This indicates that international nomadicity requires that academics be fine with travelling abroad for collaboration. Yet, beyond showing interest in travelling internationally for collaboration and being international nomadic academics, exploring participants' kinesthetic collaboration style as another factor affecting international collaboration is also significant. This kinesthetic collaboration style that participants have is strongly related to their

international nomadic features. Among the many features of kinesthetic collaboration styles that the participants have are 'moving around a lot'; 'experiencing the physical setting wherein the collaboration happens'; and 'enjoying seeing other academics around and talking to them'. This suggests that participants prefer to travel for international collaborations to be able to "move around", have in-person meetings with the academics with whom they collaborate, and experience the social world in which they are.

Besides being physical nomadic academics as they collaborate mostly in every physical location, participants also seem to be *virtual nomadic academics* when *crossing virtual spatial boundaries* since they continue virtually in the online collaborative spaces like Facebook, Skype, Twitter, WhatsApp, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams, collaborations which started in the national and international physical spaces. In addition, participants claim that they enjoy collaborating virtually as they feel more comfortable and less anxious because the surroundings and conditions wherein they collaborate virtually are conducive for collaboration. However, as participants argue pre-Covid-19 times, it would be hard to collaborate in virtual collaborative spaces unless the academics they collaborate with and they are interested in technology and are confident about using it for collaborative purposes, and have negotiation skills when it comes to negotiating their virtual collaborative spaces. Furthermore, what sometimes makes participants want to collaborate virtually rather than in person is the issue of finance whose psychological impacts tend to affect their mood and behaviour. Absence of funding (budgetary constraints) can make academics frustrated and that the virtual medium in this case is the 'ideal' solution to keep the collaboration wheel turn.

However, all the above-mentioned instances of collaboration occurred before the Covid-19 times. Participants have continued to collaborate virtually during this pandemic. Yet, the difference between collaborating virtually before and during the Covid-19 crisis lies in that while collaborating virtually before Covid-19 was a *choice*, virtually collaborating during Covid-19 has become a *necessity* as no other alternatives are available to all academics worldwide, and my participants are no exception. This argues that the participants' personality is an important factor in this case as neither them nor their collaborative spouses are stubborn, and that they are interested in collaboration regardless of the space. This also suggests that the 'who' outweighs the 'where' as the space is nothing but a setting wherein collaboration takes place. However, because some participants do not know for how long this pandemic would last, they begin to feel less comfortable collaborating virtually during Covid-19, especially when thinking that this is the only space wherein they will have to work and collaborate in the future. Yet, as I highlighted in Chapter Six, I should make it clear that the Covid-19-related

data were from near the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, whether it is still the case for them to think like that can be a further study which I suggest within the 'Suggestions for further research' Section.

Another implication of collaborating virtually during Covid-19 on the participants is academic nostalgia – a phrase which I use in this thesis to describe how participants have felt and acted when collaborating during these difficult times. They have developed a profound, melancholic longing for past in-person collaborative encounters. This also insinuates that the Covid-19 pandemic has shown the participants the significance of the physical academic world in general, and collaboration is no exception. In addition, the participants also perceive informal collaborations as important as their formal counterpart since the former gives rise to the latter. Therefore, in order not to let go of any collaborative opportunity, the participants appear to balance the informal-formal collaboration binary.

As for the *disciplinary type of boundaries* that participants cross when collaborating, findings show that participants develop a sense of belonging to different academic homes. 'Academic home' is a phrase that participants use to describe their academic 'discipline'. The fact that participants cross disciplinary boundaries, and that they collaborate with different academics from various disciplinary backgrounds, shows that they have appetite for interdisciplinarity, and that there is no such thing as one discipline is better than the other. The act of crossing disciplinary boundaries and having multiple disciplinary identities as a result of belonging to several collaborative communities of practice is referred to by Wenger (1998, p.109) as *broking* – the act of "transfer[ring] some element of one practice into another". Hence, my participants appear to be 'good' brokers.

According to Kenway et al. (1993, p.4), UK University academics have become "knowledge brokers", and since my participants are UK University academics, their 'brokage' in relation to collaboration is germane as they also move knowledge around and strive to reestablish some links with academics from various disciplinary backgrounds. While the term 'broker' has 'business' meaning of 'importing-exporting' of goods, I am using it in this thesis to refer to the act of crossing disciplinary boundaries when collaborating. My participants, therefore, transfer and 'import-export' knowledge and expertise when collaborating across disciplines through, for example, "bringing in our expertise and their expertise" (Lorenzo, follow-up interview). Therefore, participants would not be qualified as brokers unless they crossed disciplinary boundaries as this is a key feature in brokerage (Wenger, 1998; Smith, Hayes, and Shea, 2017). In addition, understanding the social-psychological factors affecting 'brokers' is important in collaboration. That is, fathoming 'who' academics prefer to share and

'import-export' human capital with, 'where' they engage in this activity, and 'why' they do it to start with is of paramount importance in collaboration.

Nevertheless, participants also argue that academics can develop a feeling of belonging to different academic homes and have appetite for interdisciplinarity if they have 'intellectual heritage' and their personality as risk-taking helps them take this 'adventurous' journey. Thus, untangling the link between participants' intellectual heritage, their personality and cross-disciplinary collaboration is key for a better understanding of the success or failure of collaboration. Receiving good academic upbringing in the academic home wherein participants grew up, and which can play a significant role in the way they collaborate across disciplines, is equally important. This is because participants assume that the discipline which they belong to appears to instill the culture of crossing disciplinary boundaries when collaborating with national and international academics Others.

Yet, some participants claim that despite how well-brought up in their academic home they are, some academics are still not interested in developing their bridging social capital – an attribute which would not help them collaborate across disciplines. Participants' personalities, therefore, appear to play a critical role in the way they collaborate with different academics in various academic homes. This leads to the conclusion that not all academics are open when it comes to widening their collaborative communities of practice to include more academics from other scholarly disciplines to join them, only the 'right' academics are.

8.1.3. Further discussion of the 'why': Addressing RQ3

This subsection discusses further the two important rewards that participants reap from their collaboration, i.e., why they engage in collaborative practices – the 'why', and by doing so addresses RQ3: *Why do the participants engage in collaborative practices?*

Participants argue that they engage in collaboration for two main reasons, which are 'expressive' and 'instrumental'. Participants first collaborate *expressively* to improve some psychological aspects of their academic life, such as developing feelings of happiness, comfort, enjoyment, and emotional as well as intellectual security in their academic environment, then focus on the *instrumental* motives behind their engagement in collaboration. Within the expressive purposes of collaboration, participants claim that they collaborate because (a) they enjoy it and (b) it is psycho-therapeutic and helps them develop friendship both before and during the Covid-19 pandemic. Moreover, linking expressive and instrumental collaboration to the modal verbs 'must' and 'have to' respectively shows that in expressive collaboration, participants 'must' collaborate as they enjoy doing that and there is a large element of choice,

freedom and autonomy involved. However, in instrumental collaboration, participants 'have to' collaborate as this has a lot to do with 'external' rather than 'internal' or 'dispositional' factors, hence the use of Attribution Theory in this thesis.

This also suggests that in both types of collaboration there is an element of 'obligation' as well. Yet, this depends on who 'imposes' the obligation to collaborate – internal (i.e., dispositional) vs. external (situational) obligation. Nevertheless, as I discussed in Section 5.1.2.7 in Chapter Five, it is the participants' motivation, choice, interest, and autonomy which encourage them to collaborate to be able to achieve their goals, such as gaining academic promotion, increasing their level of social capital, and producing better outcomes.

Participants reveal that they collaborate because they *develop a sense of enjoyment* when doing that. This implies that did the participants not have the willingness to be and collaborate with people in general, it might not be possible for them to collaborate with academics in academic collaborative communities of practice. This also suggests that participants' sociability and extroversion can have a significant role to play in shaping their collaboration because if they were not interested in people, and did not feel comfortable being with them, they might probably be unable to engage in national, international, and virtual collaboration with academics across disciplinary boundaries. Moreover, most participants also argue that they enjoy collaborating with academics for a purpose.

This purpose concerns *psycho-therapeutic* collaboration. Participants believe that collaboration, on the one hand, decreases the level of boredom, anxiety and stress, and on the other hand, increases their level of happiness and enjoyment as they consider collaboration as a fun activity. This shows that participants believe that talking to academics and collaborating with them is psycho-therapeutic as, just like a psychologist, the 'right' academic Selves and Others can help one another feel more emotionally 'better' than when working on their own, or when isolating themselves from the rest of the academic world – being academic silos.

Another motive that encourages participants to collaborate is to make friends. Thus, the other psycho-therapeutic aspect of collaboration is *friendship*, which may not develop if both academic Self and Other do not break down their 'silo' mentality – this feature of thinking outside the box and trying out new experiences is referred to in the Big Five Personality Model as 'Openness to experience' (Goldberg, ibid.). Furthermore, these psycho-therapeutic rewards of collaboration, which happened during normal times, also extended to the Covid-19 circumstances. The participants involved in the Covid-19-related interviews describe that their emotional wellbeing has decreased tremendously during the pandemic, especially that in-person meetings with their collaborative spouses have become less possible. Therefore, there

seems to be more caring now than before for the mental and emotional wellbeing of the participants and their collaborative spouses. Another interesting issue that the findings yield from the Covid-19-related data is the relationship between first space and collaboration during Covid-19. The first space has turned out to be the only collaborative space without the possibility of in-person collaborative meetings, and that the home space has become the safest of all other spaces – hence, 'stay home, stay safe' when collaborating. Thus, during such challenging times, I argue that 'East or West, the home space is the best'.

Besides expressive collaboration, participants also collaborate for *instrumental* reasons. These consist in (a) developing a sense of intangible and tangible academic productivity in teaching, supervision and research practices; (b) increasing their professional recognition and visibility; (c) developing a sense of professional empowerment and security; (d) gaining academic promotion; and (e) increasing their national and international social capital.

All participants collaborate to *develop a sense of productivity*. This suggests that the participants collaborate to yield a much better outcome. This outcome can be both tangible (i.e., product) and intangible (i.e., increased human capital). Participants develop a 'tangible' sense of productivity when collaborating on research (e.g., co-producing articles and books); on teaching (e.g., co-designing a curriculum, co-evaluating a module, or co-teaching inside the classroom); and on supervision (e.g., co-supervising a postgraduate student to write a 'good' thesis). On the other hand, participants also claim that they collaborate to develop an 'intangible' sense of productivity (i.e., increased human capital) when collaborating on research (e.g., learning new insights about research methodology and philosophies); on teaching (e.g., learning novel teaching methods and new ways of assessing students' progress); and on supervision (e.g., reflecting upon the supervision process or helping the postgraduate student when having some issues with their research or other psychological issues).

Half of the participants also collaborate to become more *professionally recognised and visible* within the wider academic community. Collaborating with well-established academics seems to help some participants develop a sense of pride and confidence as the academic Others they collaborate with are there to assist them to become academically visible and recognisable in a particular area of study. However, this may not be feasible unless the academic Other is professionally altruistic, who cares about the professional image of the academic Other collaborating with them, and that the latter should not let go of the opportunity to develop and broaden who they are as academics in a particular scholarly field. That is, participants claim that academics need to be interested in broadening their professional recognition and visibility, otherwise nobody would do it for them. Personality here is of first importance. In addition, few

participants mention that they engage in collaboration, so that they secure an academic promotion, i.e., they care about 'moving up' the academic ladder to become principal lecturers, professors, readers, etc.

Few participants also argue that they *develop a sense of empowerment and security* as a result of collaborating with the 'right' academic Others. Through collaboration, these participants develop more sense of confidence, security and empowerment which they might not construct if they worked on their own or did not rid themselves of their 'silo' mentality. Finally, most participants also indicate that they collaborate to increase their national and international social capital. However, as I argue in Chapter Seven, participants first need to own social capital as a 'means' which enables them to engage in collaborative relationships, and this can, in turn, help them *enhance their collaborative networks both nationally and internationally* thanks to the many academics they know and collaborate with. I refer to this as 'academic snowballing', i.e., when an academic makes some acquaintance with new academics as a result of having previous contacts with other academics from different parts of the globe. This might not be possible if participants did not know the academics they strongly recommended to their colleagues. Had the people collaborating with my participants not known that the latter were trustworthy, sociable and possess all three types of social capital, participants might not have received invitations for collaborations. Again, it is mostly about people – the 'who'.

8.2. Theoretical and practical implications of the research findings

While in the Findings Chapters I made sense of the findings, in this implications section, I make sense of the utility of the findings in practice. Findings from this study have, therefore, yielded implications at two distinct levels, which are theoretical and practical implications. The theoretical (or conceptual) implications of the findings are concerned with the novel insights that the findings can add to the concepts that were used to make sense of the data, namely, Social Capital (SC), Human Capital (HC), Communities of Practice (CoPs), and Oldenburg' Concept of First, Second and Third Place. The research findings also generated implications at the practical level as it will be discussed in Section 8.2.2. However, I need to clarify that both theoretical and practical implications arose from the findings.

8.2.1. Theoretical implications

As mentioned above, the theoretical or conceptual implications of the findings are related to the new light in which the concepts that I employed to understand the data are seen,

namely, Social Capital (SC), Human Capital (HC), Communities of Practice (CoPs), and Oldenburg' Concept of First, Second and Third Place.

8.2.1.1. Social Capital (SC)

The findings helped me rethink the concept of social capital. As I highlighted in Chapter Three, though I acknowledge the importance of all the explanations attributed to SC, including how interpersonal relationships are significant to individuals, I argue that people have different levels of SC that can either facilitate or debilitate their engagement in social interactions due to some psychological factors which the literature surrounding SC seems to overlook.

It should be recognised that there seems to be little evidence about the psychological features in the concept of SC (Tulin, Lancee, and Volker, 2018). All the definitions of social capital provided by the three key figures Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam, as well as other authors, do not appear to refer to what lies beyond the 'social' element in SC, or in my own terms 'meta-social capital'. This suggests that all the conceptualisations of SC mainly revolved around the sociology rather than the psychology of individuals' participation in social relationships. Furthermore, while previous studies examined SC only during 'normal circumstances', my study explores SC both prior to and during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic.

As a suggested alternative, the findings of this research attempt to reinvigorate the psychological value of such an important concept by considering academics' collaboration from a social-psychological perspective. I argue that notwithstanding its great significance in accounting for how systems work, and individuals as actors within those systems, SC does not seem to consider an accompanying psychological theory to work at the level of the individual. Moreover, it either does not consider the psychology of individuals taking part in social groups at all, or if it does, it does not acknowledge that by taking, for instance, people's personality for granted – it gives the impression that all people are willing and able to be socially engaged with others.

Though Tulin, Lancee, and Volker (ibid.), for example, examined the correlation between personality and SC and found that extroverted people were more inclined to create social capital, and vice-versa, this is still insufficient because personality is one part of the psychology of people. My study, instead, examines all the components of people's psychology, such as personality, energy, emotions, feelings, attitudes, behaviour, mood, and dress code when engaging in an *academic collaboration*, not when taking part in a particular *social* activity. Though they discussed individuals' personality, they overlooked the fact that some

people can be ambiverts – neither introverts nor extroverts, but in the middle of the continuum. Another point which my study addressed, and which they did not, is people with introverted personality. I argue that those who are introverted can create another 'persona' to help them engage in collaboration.

I, therefore, claim that people are different and their levels of motivation, confidence, extroversion, introversion, etc. that enable them to build connections with people differ from one individual to another, and so do their levels of SC. I also argue that the *social* in SC may not exist unless the psychological criteria are met, enabling me to suggest espousing *social-psychological capital* (SPC) as a concept to apply when studying academics' or people's psychological characteristics of their SC (when Selves and Others interact with one another).

Though Psychological Capital (PsyCap), derived from Positive Psychology, exists in the literature (Luthans, Youssef-Morgan, and Avolio, 2015) with its four components – Hope, (self)-Efficacy, Resilience and Optimism (HERO), there seems to be no explicit correlation between PsyCap and SC, and these psychological resources are not enough if applied to interpersonal relationships. It does not state how those components interact when in social relations – no such thing as *social-psychological capital* has been discussed under this HERO model. I, therefore, argue that while PsyCap refers to psychological resources (HERO) that individuals can use for personal development and performance improvement, SPC is concerned with personal, psychological resources individuals use when engaging in social interactions, not when engaging in an activity on their own (i.e., no collaboration). Question-wise, while the question that SC raises is 'who do you know?', PsyCap and SPC ask the questions 'who are you?' and 'how do you feel and behave when it comes to the "actual, imagined, or implied presence of other human beings" (Allport, 1954, p.5) when collaborating?', respectively.

Therefore, because no study about the way academics think, feel, and act when collaborating exists in the literature, my own suggested delineation of social capital in relation to collaboration is as follows:

> Social capital – or *social-psychological capital* – refers to the act of showing proclivity for investing in and living by academic values when collaborating with academic collaborative spouses whose personalities match theirs ('who') irrespective of location and discipline ('where') to reap expressive as well as instrumental benefits ('why') from such academic interactions. This indicates that I perceive SPC happening first in people's minds then in practice (reality). As such, the concept of SPC, which could be used to decipher academics' interpersonal relationships, including collaboration, has three main elements: 'who?' (The right people to invest in SC with), 'where?'

> (Setting or location wherein SC is invested), and 'why?' (Expressive as well as instrumental benefits of investing in SC).

Overall, I suggest that there needs to be a clear correlation between the levels of SC and academics' willingness and ability to engage in collaborative practices. Another suggested alternative is to understand the psychological processes in SC as this has proven to be key for an effective collaboration to occur. I would also propose that the concept of SC is more psychological than social, and that examining academics' proclivity (one *psychological* component of SC) for investing in their SC to enjoy being with people prior to starting to collaborate with academics (the *social* component of SC) is important. In this regard, Fukuyama (1995, p.28) holds that:

> Some show a markedly greater proclivity for association than others, and the preferred form of association differ. In some, family and kinship constitute the primary form of association; in others, voluntary associations are much stronger and serve to draw people out of their families.

In light of the above and based on the findings, I conclude that the concept of social capital is so complex and multifaceted that it needs more attention by social capital researchers as to the other factors influencing such an important construct in our lives.

8.2.1.2. Human Capital (HC)

As a suggestion for the concept of HC, the findings of this research helped me reshape the concept of HC by construing it from a social-psychological perspective. Although I acknowledge that some authors attempted to interpret HC from a psychological perspective (e.g., Quill, 1999; Srivastava and Das, 2015; Kell et al, 2018), there still seems to be a gap in the HC literature regarding how and why academics share their HC when collaborating with other academics, not when working alone. Besides, though it is known for SC to reside in the social, and HC to reside in the individual, it could be argued that academics' HC can expand when collaborating with academic Others. This suggests that taking this social-psychological approach to understanding HC in (academic) relationships is important as this can help individuals make sense of the psychological 'hows' and 'whys' of sharing HC in academia. Therefore, based on the findings and as a suggested conceptual definition of the original construct of HC, my own way of viewing HC in academic collaboration is presented below:

> I refer to human capital – or *social-psychological human capital* – as the 'human' in human capital, or the psychological characteristics of human capital in social contexts. Not all people are happy to invest in their human

> capital to increase it when collaborating due to several psychological factors, such as the proclivity to invest in social capital, personality traits, academic generosity, and interdependence mindset. Or it can be linked back to the benefits of sharing HC – expressive or instrumental.

As I argued in Chapter Five, knowledge (i.e., HC) is not power unless it is shared. This suggests that to be able to share knowledge, experiences, acquired skills, and negotiate the time and space with academics and collaborate with them effectively, academics need to be able to create SC to achieve this goal. This implies that having a good understanding of individuals' psychology when sharing their HC is vital because, for example, not all people are willing to share what they know with other people – not all academics are academically generous irrespective of their possession of HC. Therefore, the findings recognise the need for HC and SC to be invested in with the 'right' academics, so that collaboration can be a success. Yet, as I argued in Chapter Three, SC can be more influential than HC when it comes to collaboration. On a similar note, Hargreaves and Fullan (2013, p.37) argue that:

> Human and social capital are both important, but human capital is not as influential as social capital as a lead strategy. To enact change faster and more effectively, to reduce variation in effective teaching in a school or between and among schools in terms of networks, our advice is to use social capital.

However, there seems to be a scarcity of evidence regarding the link between SC, HC and SPC. Though some studies investigated the relationship between SC, HC and PsyCap (e.g., Luthans, Luthans, and Luthans, 2004; Ghashghaeizadeh, 2016; Jeung, 2018;), they do not seem to be accurate as to how SC and HC can be leveraged through SPC. Therefore, what my research findings can add to the literature surrounding SC and HC is interpreting the former and the latter through a social-psychological lens, and not solely a psychological one because having an idea about the 'type' of academic Others that academic Selves collaborate with is key for a better understanding of how SC and HC can be manifested in practice.

In summary, the suggested 3W model (Who, Where and Why) to successful academic collaboration is of great significance when it comes to comprehending academics' SC and HC as it can expound how and why academics invest in these capitals when collaborating.

8.2.1.3. Communities of Practice (CoPs)

Similar to the concepts of social capital and human capital, the findings also helped me remodel the existing CoPs concept by arguing that it focuses less on individuals' behaviour and feelings when participating in a community of practice which gives rise to collaboration. Wenger (2002, p.4) conceives of CoPs as:

> [G]roups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis.

The most striking point which the definition does not seem to tackle is the individuals who engage in CoPs. Wenger appears to believe that all people can show proclivity for participating in CoPs. However, the findings of the study argue that because it is collaboration, not all people have to be part of CoPs as there is a large element of 'choice' involved. Embracing the findings of the research can help the academics interested in developing CoPs – which is a vehicle for creating and sustaining collaboration – reconsider this concept by espousing the social-psychological lens through which it needs to be looked at. Hence, my suggested conceptual definition of Wenger's original construct of CoPs is described below:

> CoPs are groups of the 'right' people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis. Thus, choosing the right people in CoPs is key. Even though CoPs have three constituent components – domain, community, and practice – these would be of no significance unless people engaged in CoPs have a similar personality and would actually manifest their shared sense of identity through physically or virtually taking active part in CoPs. Hence, there appears to be more to CoPs than CoPs themselves – the social psychology of CoPs seems to be missing.

Moreover, members of CoPs in this study appear to have nomadic features by "moving around a lot" between first, second, third, international, and virtual space. Linking CoPs to Oldenburg's Concept of First, Second, and Third Place and to the issue of nomadicity, therefore, can add more novel insights into and deeper understanding about the way members of CoPs feel and behave when being in different spaces – how members of CoPs behave and feel when being in the first, second, third and digital space is an important gap which the literature does not appear to address. Furthermore, the concept of 'brokers' that Wenger used does not seem to consider people's motivation or interest in belonging to various CoPs, making it look like all people are interested in crossing disciplinary boundaries when it comes to forming CoPs. Some people only prefer to be part of one, not multiple CoPs due to some dispositional or situational factors. Furthermore, there seems to be a paucity of research as to how members of CoPs have operated during the Covid-19 pandemic. Finally, CoPs emphasise learning and knowledge (i.e., HC) as a result of participating in a CoP. However, CoPs seem to overlook other important rewards that members of such communities can reap from participating in them, such as 'increasing their level of SC', 'developing their professional

visibility and recognition', and 'developing a feeling of empowerment and security', to mention but a few.

8.2.1.4. Oldenburg's Concept of First, Second and Third Place

The new knowledge as to Oldenburg's concept is that I use first, second, and third 'space' in lieu of first, second, and third 'place' to refer to the 'abstract and mental' features that are not as tangible as 'place' since the findings appear to highlight the psychological, emotional, mental, and intangible elements of those 'places' (Blaschke et al., 2018), not their physical and concrete appearances as Oldenburg appears to highlight (Mehta, 2007; Mehta and Bosson, 2010; Purnell, 2015). Hence, I am not using 'place' and 'space' interchangeably in this thesis. Besides, the only time Oldenburg refers to the psychology of the place was in relation to the third place when describing it as 'home-away-from-home'. However, this is still ambiguous as he kept referring to such settings as 'third place' in lieu of 'third space' even though he tackled the issue of the psychological support that third places offer to individuals and communities frequenting them.

There seems to be no reference to psychology in relation to first and second place in his concept, let alone how and why academics collaborate in these three 'spaces'. Purnell (ibid., p.5, emphasis added), corroborating my argument about the issue of place in general and third place in particular, concurs that there is a "need to view third *places* by their use of *space* rather than their designated architectural purpose". Therefore, my use of 'space' in this thesis describes feelings of attachment and belonging which participants develop for particular settings wherein they collaborate. Additionally, what the findings add to Oldenburg's concept is the issue of the people in the space, and particularly the third space. As I argued in this thesis, it is the personality compatibility between academic Selves and Others which makes the space the way it is. Therefore, the importance of the 'who' seems to outweigh that of the 'where', hence my claim *it is mostly about the 'who'*. Consequently, the space would be of no import unless there are the right people in it: "I think this has to do with who you're collaborating with, not necessarily where you're collaborating, but who is there in that collaboration" (Lorenzo, Covid-19-follow-up interview), hence my expression 'tell me with whom and where you collaborate, and I tell you how you feel and behave in that space'.

Moreover, I use 'space' instead of 'place' to spotlight the social-psychological characteristics of a particular 'setting' (Blaschke et al., ibid.) which can help the participants feel and behave differently in different locations when collaborating, not when frequenting those loci alone (hence, the social psychology of the collaborative space). This implies that it

is the academics and their 'right' academic collaborative spouses who make any 'place' their own 'space' through developing emotional attachment to it. For this reason, I claim that 'not every place is necessarily a space' because every place is unique. Therefore, not all collaborative places are collaborative spaces as my participants feel and behave differently in various settings depending on the (a) space and (b) kind of people they collaborate with in those spaces. For example, some individuals can have a *house* (place), yet not necessarily a *home* (space).

Overall, I employ the term 'space' to highlight the social-psychological factors affecting my participants' movement from one location to another when searching for the right academic Others with whom they collaborate. Having mentioned 'movement', I, therefore, refer to my participants as *nomadic academics* as they do not appear to have one stable location for collaboration. They collaborate wherever they feel emotionally and intellectually safe and comfortable provided that it is with the right academics. Thus, what the findings of this thesis can add to Oldenburg's concept is the construct 'nomadicity' – moving with the right academic collaborative spouses from one particular collaborative space to another to accomplish tasks, which is collaboration in this case. There also seems to be a gap in Oldenburg's concept as to the motives for people's movement from one setting to another, and this thesis appears to address this gap by arguing that the participants appear to move from one collaborative space to another, so as they do not squander collaborative opportunities with their right academic collaborative spouses.

However, I should acknowledge that the term 'nomadicity' is not new and has been used by many researchers to refer to the act of moving from one physical or virtual location to another (e.g., Salazar, 2001; Perry and Brodie, 2006; Rossito, 2009), and nomadic practices in collaboration are no exception (Bardram and Bossen, 2003: Erickson and Jarrahi, 2016). Pinatti de Carvalho, Ciolfi, and Gray (2017), for example, conducted a study on how university academics work nomadically when teaching and researching on their own, not when doing that with other academics. Thus, not only did their study overlook the social-psychological factors impacting academics when collaborating, but it also did not address the issue of how academics feel when moving from one location to another. In addition, none of the studies mentioned above, including Oldenburg's, tackled the issue of energy, mood and behaviour of individuals when moving from one place to another. That said, my participants' collaborative spaces do not move, yet their feelings and behaviours do, hence my expression 'emotions in motion'.

Nevertheless, individuals' nomadic practices can be stunted by situations and circumstances like the Covid-19 pandemic – situational attribution. As discussed in Chapter

Six, because the entire world is following the 'stay home, stay safe' advice, the first space has become the safest and only space among the other two spaces wherein academics often collaborate. This suggests that what the findings add to Oldenburg's concept of place is *how* and *where* individuals engage in social interactions during the 'stay-home-stay-safe' times, and *how* and *where* academics' collaborations take place during the pandemic is no exception. That is, while Oldenburg studied the three 'places' wherein people interact and socialise during normal times, the findings of this research describe the only space wherein academics can stay and collaborate during the Covid-19 times, which is the first space, and the factors influencing people's non-nomadic practices. This implies that academics now have to engage in more virtual collaborations which happen in the first space.

8.2.2. Practical implications

This section discusses some important practical implications of the findings for academics to consider when engaging in collaborative practices. These practical implications are the significance of 'understanding the social psychology of collaboration', 'personality compatibility in collaboration', 'nomadicity', 'university financial support for international collaboration', 'implications of Covid-19 on collaboration', and 'balancing expressive and instrumental collaborations'. To give a sort of concrete sense of the implications – mainly in relation to 'the significance of university financial support for international collaboration'– I used some SEE University's documents related to collaboration and knowledge exchange in HE.

However, I should clarify that I am not the one who decided what needs to change as to academics' collaborative practices. It is the participants who think what academics need to do to be able to collaborate more effectively. Overall, the findings of the study focus on what is not being emphasised enough regarding collaboration in HE.

The significance of understanding the social psychology of collaboration

The findings of this study can be used to help both novice and experienced academics reconsider the practice of collaboration at tertiary level and raise their awareness about the people with 'whom' they need to collaborate, 'where' they ought to collaborate, and, most importantly, 'why' they choose to collaborate. That is, academics need to concentrate more on the social-psychological anatomy and journey of collaboration that might or might not lead to an outcome than the outcome itself. Embracing the co-developed 3W model can motivate academics to view collaboration from a bottom-up as opposed to solely top-down perspective. The participants' accounts suggest that academics should recognise the significance of

considering the social-psychological factors affecting collaboration because deciphering what makes collaboration succeed or fail can help increase the likelihood of success and decrease the potential of failure. Therefore, there needs to be more emphasis on the *process* rather than only the *product* of collaboration as the latter "can be achieved individually anyway, but the key thing is that a great outcome needs the right person" (Adam, formal interview) and that "there is a lot of hidden stuff about collaboration that we don't always know about if we don't experience that ourselves when working on projects […]" (ibid.).

Overall, academics need to understand that "[…] it's not just about the outcome expected or it's not just about collaboration; it goes beyond that, really […]" (Sara, follow-up interview) and that studying the social psychology of collaboration is important as it can enrich academics' understanding of themselves and the people they collaborate with. Hence, understanding how academics view one another when collaborating and how they behave in the presence of the people they collaborate with can help them gain greater appreciation for the way academics' collaborative relationships affect their performance (i.e., their tangible and intangible sense of productivity).

The importance of personality compatibility in collaboration

Drawing upon Adam's quote above, the practical implication here is that it is important for academics to collaborate with people whose personality matches theirs as this can have an impact on their collaboration. Participants consider the national and international academic Others they collaborate with as academic collaborative spouses who need to respect same personal and shared values. Therefore, to maximise the potential of success, academics are advised to collaborate with people whose personality is compatible with theirs in terms of being flexible, open to other alternatives, responsive to change, confident, motivated, autonomous, academically generous, and, most importantly, possessing good negotiation skills in terms of time, space, and power: "on the personality level, you need to be able to get on. Compatibility that's the word. Whether it's male or female it doesn't matter, but the personality does" (Lorenzo, follow-up interview). Taking such criteria into account is key for effective collaboration. However, while this might sound somewhat idealistic as it is not always easy for academics to find collaborative partners who can genuinely have all these characteristics, this does not necessarily suggest that it is not possible either. Hence, understanding the gender with whom academics collaborate can also be important in collaboration as not all academics are the same, and so are their preferences as to the gender with whom they prefer to collaborate.

Nomadicity

The findings of the study confirm the value and significance of embracing the concept of nomadicity when collaborating. Taking the findings of this research into account can encourage collaborative academics to consider the practice of academic nomadicity and apply it to their actual collaborative practices by "mov[ing] around a lot" (Victoria, formal interview) from one 'space' and 'discipline' to another. What they should do to maximise the potential of finding collaborative opportunities is not to stick to one setting or discipline and should, instead, try to be more flexible and accept change. Having mentioned 'space', to be productive, academics and their collaborative partners need to seek out settings wherein they feel comfortable as this can impact their mood and behaviours and eventually their collaboration. Thus, prior to engaging in any collaborative activity, academics first need to understand one another's psychology, i.e., how they feel in every 'location'. For example, it would be thoughtful if academics ask one another how they feel about collaborating in the first, second, third or virtual space as not all people are willing to collaborate in one of these spaces. Since my participants feel and act differently in different 'places', understanding the difference between a 'place' and a 'space' is also key in collaboration.

The significance of university financial support for international collaboration

As discussed in Chapter Six, showing emotional support in general and financial one in particular is significant in research collaboration and can have important implications. Though some of the documents available on SEE University's website state that "the university has several funding sources […] and opportunities for academics and business", the findings reveal that the university seems to restrict academics' collaborative research opportunities by not increasing funding to start collaboration (i.e., budgetary constraints), particularly at the international level. Thus, universities need more recognition of the significance of investing in their staff by granting them more funding[26], so they can travel abroad for formal collaborative projects. The psychology of finance, therefore, appears to impact participants' feelings and behaviours negatively as they feel that their university does not value their efforts.

However, the findings indicate that academics can still collaborate virtually in the absence of funding, and that virtual collaboration should not be neglected. Thus, it is important that academics have good technological skills to be able to engage in internet-mediated

[26]I am talking about the need for universities to recognise the importance of more funding for academics to be able to engage in international collaboration during normal times, not during the Covid-19 pandemic. This is because of the issue of virtual collaboration which seems to be an abiding consequence of Covid-19.

collaborative activities. Academics should look for people who do not mind balancing the in-person-virtual collaboration binary. Equally important, however, there needs to be access to appropriate technology as well, such as good connections, appropriate software platforms, and sufficient hardware.

Implications of Covid-19 on collaboration

Not only has Covid-19 impacted individuals socially, but also academically, particularly when it comes to collaboration. Covid-19-related findings spotlight an important issue as to when it is crucial for academics to engage in face-to-face collaborations because co-working during the Covid-19 times has uncovered that collaboration in general and international collaboration in particular can be performed through the screen without necessarily having to be physically present. Thus, academics can embrace these findings to reconsider the real significance of face-to-face collaboration. This global pandemic has also 'opened up' academics' eyes somewhat to the possibilities of virtual collaboration, and that while the latter was a choice before Covid-19, it has become a necessity and the only collaborative space during such difficult times. Accepting 'blended collaboration' would, therefore, be significant during future potential pandemics.

Furthermore, the Covid-19 crisis has prepared and paved the way for academics to face and cope with any pandemic which might emerge in the future as they will have been more trained to use different online collaborative tools without the possibility of in-person collaborative meetings. Moreover, as for the issue of collaborative space during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic, findings show that the first space, which is the home space, has turned out to be the safest and only space of all wherein academics can conduct their collaborative practices. Thus, to help reduce the spread of the Coronavirus and protect one another, academics are advised to stay at home and engage more in internet-facilitated collaborative practices. Therefore, as a rhetorical question, does that mean that virtual collaboration is 'on the cheap' now?

The importance of balancing expressive and instrumental collaboration

The findings also tackled a key issue of using collaboration to reap expressive and instrumental rewards. Academics first need to develop a sense of enjoyment when collaborating, and then focus on, for example, co-publishing articles or co-designing modules. Participants' ways of perceiving collaboration reveal that academics should care more than they do at the moment about their emotional well-being and that of their collaborative spouses when collaborating. Thus, perceiving expressive and instrumental collaboration as a binary

rather than a divide is important because it is senseless if academic Selves only focus on meeting their *instrumental* needs without considering how the academic Others they collaborate with feel in the journey of collaboration (i.e., meeting *expressive* needs). Therefore, the overarching argument developed in this thesis is that the qualities of the people that academics collaborate with appear to outweigh both 'where' and 'why' they collaborate.

8.3. Suggestions for further research

The findings of the study can serve as a platform for further research to be conducted in relation to collaboration in HE. Directions for further research are presented as follows:

Though my study involved both male and female academics, it did not really address the issue of the gender with whom participants prefer to collaborate, or whether the gender of academics can influence their collaboration. Additional research, therefore, is needed to investigate academics' experiences and expectations specifically with gender politics when collaborating (i.e., how they think of gender when collaborating). In particular, it would be valuable to explore how male academics would feel and behave when collaborating with male academics and opposite gender, and vice-versa, and what impacts, if any, gender preferences have on collaboration.

Another important direction for further research would be to thoroughly explore the role of collaboration in building academics' professional identity and Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

Linked to the issue of gender politics in collaboration, another study needs to be conducted to establish the relationship between male and female academics' collaboration for developing their professional recognition and CPD. More specifically, it would be worthwhile investigating 'whose collaboration is mostly instrumentally led, male academics' or female academics'?'

Since my positionality as a researcher in this study was a 'partial-insider', it would be interesting to explore how 'entirely insider' or 'entirely outsider' researchers would investigate the phenomenon of collaboration from British University academics' perspectives through exhibiting more reflexivity right from the beginning of the research process.

As my research into academic collaboration in HE is based exclusively on interviews – which is something that I argue is not a limitation in this study as this data collection tool achieved what it essentially aimed for – it could be possible for further research to investigate at a deeper level, for example, how academics engage in 'informal' collaborative practices by conducting an ethnographic case study using observations, interviews, and focus groups as data

collection instruments. In addition, since the findings of the study are solely applicable to SEE University, it would be valuable to study the collaboration of another group of academics working at another British University to explore new venues for collaboration which the findings of this study did not uncover.

Evidence from this study reveals that participants collaborate with various people in terms of age, gender, religion, power dynamics, etc. It would, therefore, be worthwhile to study the impacts of academic Selves' and Others' age, religious and cultural backgrounds, and power dynamics on their psychology and the overall collaboration journey. As for power relations in collaboration, additional research is needed to investigate how academics collaborate with Ph.D. students and schoolteachers.

Another suggestion for further research would be to examine the role of technology in promoting virtual collaborative practices in the presence and absence of face-to-face encounters. 'Blended' or 'hybrid' collaboration – a mode of collaboration which has emerged particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic – needs more attention by international researchers who are interested in academic collaboration. This could be achieved through, for example, investigating academics' perceptions of and experiences with blended collaboration and the different factors influencing it.

Linked to Covid-19, further research also needs to investigate further how academics have felt and behaved when collaborating during the Covid-19 times, and how this pandemic has affected teaching, supervision, and research collaboration in HE. Exploring how academics have coped with the absence of face-to-face collaboration and communication during this inauspicious pandemic is also important.

Since cyberpsychology[27] is an important area of psychology, it would be useful to research further how technology and virtual space can impact the mind and behaviours of academics when collaborating. Specifically, further research needs to be conducted to fathom the psychology and energy of each virtual collaborative space like Facebook, WhatsApp, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Skype, and why academics move from one virtual space to another – hence, virtual nomadicity needs considerable attention and further investigation.

Because probably not all academics in academia have high levels of self-confidence, self-image, and self-esteem to approach people to build collaborative links with, identifying the role of academics' self-confidence, self-image, and self-esteem in collaboration would be

[27] Cyberpsychology in the context of this study refers to the way academics feel and behave when collaborating virtually.

of paramount importance as such psychological factors can have huge impacts on the success or failure of collaboration. This could be done through, for example, administering a personality questionnaire, then based on the questionnaire data, some interviews could be run to have a deeper understanding of what they say in the questionnaire.

As an Algerian Ph.D. student in the UK, it would be of great interest to conduct a comparative study to identify similarities and differences between Algerian University academics and their British counterparts when participating in collaborative activities.

Since the findings in relation to collaborative research in the context of this study outweigh those of collaborative teaching and supervision, one last suggestion would be to explore in detail how university academics engage in collaborative teaching practices through recruiting teaching-focused rather than research-focused academics.

8.4. Conclusions:

This section sums up the main points tackled in this research. These points consist in (i) restating the general aim of the thesis; (ii) reviewing the methodological route that I have pursued to conduct the research; (iii) reiterating the overarching argument and key findings of the study; and (iv) providing an account of my retrospective contemplation in terms of what I have learnt from conducting research on collaboration in HE and how this can help me improve my own collaborative practices in the future – my reflections *on* and *for* action.

This qualitative case study research has explored the way a group of 12 academics working at a British University located in south-east England (SEE) influenced and were influenced by their academic collaborative spouses when co-teaching, co-supervising, and co-researching. Instead of only stressing the final intangible (e.g., enhancing their knowledge in relation to teaching, supervision, and research) or tangible (e.g., co-producing books, co-designing modules, or co-supervising a Ph.D. thesis) outcomes of collaboration, the overriding objective of this study has been to uncover what lies beyond collaboration – 'meta-collaboration'. That is, the overarching aim behind conducting this research has been to decrypt the encrypted journey of the collaborative practices undertaken by 12 SEE University academics. Linked to the iceberg analogy delineated in Chapter One, this thesis has attempted to dive into the underside of the iceberg of collaboration to fathom the underlying social-psychological processes in the journey of participants' collaborative practices.

Specifically, it aimed at (a) deciphering the qualities of the academics with whom the participants collaborate; (b) exploring the spaces and disciplines wherein the participants perform their collaborative activities; and (c) examining the different reasons that motivate the

participants to engage in collaboration. Furthermore, to address the research aims and questions, I used an interview-based qualitative case study methodology wherein I recruited 12 participants working at SEE University and interviewed them for a period of three months prior to the Covid-19 times and a fortnight period during the Covid-19 circumstances to describe their experiences with collaboration before and during the early stages of the pandemic.

However, it should be made clear that the fact that the number of male and female participants in this study is equal does not necessarily suggest that I had intended to explore the way the gendered nature of the participants can have an impact on their collaborative practices. Besides, because I am not an expert in the discipline of gender studies, I chose and preferred not to 'indulge' in issues which are nested in a disciplinary home wherein I do not really feel academically comfortable. For instance, investigating whether female academics' motives behind their participation in collaboration is more expressive than those of their male counterparts was not a priority in this research. Or whether male professors are more academically generous, compassionate, and altruistic in terms of helping other early career academics gain academic recognition and visibility than their female counterparts. Yet, as I suggested in Section 8.3 above, this issue can be an interesting further research study to be conducted in the future.

My overarching argument, which stems from Chapter Five, therefore, is that the social-psychological processes and elements ('who', 'where', and 'why') in the journey of collaboration seem to outweigh the outcomes of collaboration per se. However, this thesis has demonstrated that not all academics can collaborate, only the 'right' academics can, hence *it is mostly about the 'who'*. This research has, therefore, uncovered a complex interplay and a dynamic relationship between the participants and their collaborative spouses when engaging in academic collaborative practices. To conclude, this study has revealed the significance of acknowledging the underlying social-psychological elements that underpin academics' collaboration, which is something that is not often recognised in the literature, hence the originality of the study. The bottom-up approach to collaboration, therefore, is the piecing together of 'who', 'where' and 'why elements, which, when worked out properly, can induce collaboration and productivity.

Overall, as I mentioned in the abstract, the contribution of the study lies in that all my participants and I have co-developed a flexible 3W model (Who, Where, and Why) that future researchers can apply when examining collaboration or future academics can adopt as a model for a better understanding of what academic collaboration is about, which can, in turn, help them improve their own collaborative teaching, supervision, and research practices.

Final reflections: My future collaborative endeavours in academia

To say that this thesis has solely been a piece of academic work would be an understatement. This is because not only has this Ph.D. research served as an apprenticeship for me as a researcher to fathom collaboration at the UK HE level, but it has also been an intellectually enriching journey and a fruitful learning experience wherein my former 'collaboration-can-only-be-formal' thinking along with other old perceptions and 'intellectual baggage' as to collaboration have changed. This indicates that I am now more aware of the complexity of collaboration in HE, and that I now see collaboration among academics in more clarity. Moreover, having portrayed my 'personal motivation' for researching collaboration in HE as 'academic thirst' in Section 1.1, this thesis has, therefore, succeeded in 'quenching' this thirst of learning about how some academics at SEE University collaborated. Furthermore, as explained in Section 4.3, this research has made me a more mature researcher whose reflexive thinking about collaboration in HE has increased tremendously, which can, in turn, influence my future academic collaborative practices. My reflective account on collaboration as a social-psychological phenomenon, which can assist in maximising the success of my future academic collaborations, is described below.

What I have learnt from undertaking this research is that deciphering collaboration from a social-psychological perspective can reveal countless stories behind my future academic collaborative practices. Specifically, because I am going to be a university lecturer after obtaining my Ph.D. degree, I, just like any academic, will have to produce as many academic research publications as possible and engage in both teaching and supervision practices to be able to 'move up' the academic ladder. Interestingly, teaching, supervising and researching collaboratively with the 'right' academics has proven to accelerate the process of gaining promotion and recognition in academia. Moreover, this research has helped me become more reflexive and critical, especially prior to deciding whether to participate in whatever academic collaborative activity by always raising the question 'is this collaboration going to be a *mess* or a *bless*?'.

That is, this study has taught me that I should never take the success of any academic collaboration for granted, and that for my future collaborations to be a *bless* rather than a *mess*, I will need to choose the right academic collaborative spouses with whom I make sure I enjoy collaborating, and that I should focus more on the 'process' rather than only the 'product' or 'outcome' of any of my potential co-teaching, co-supervision, and co-research practices. This research has also made me feel more confident about my future collaborative endeavours in

academia in that I feel I am ready to collaborate with any academic provided that all the elements of the 3W model delineated in this thesis are considered.

Furthermore, the findings of this investigation have affected me hugely in terms of the choice of gender with whom I feel that my future collaborations can be a success. Therefore, writing an autoethnographic account of my reflections on how collaborating with both male and female academics will make me think, feel, and behave is particularly interesting. In addition, espousing the 3W model (Who, Where, and Why) discussed in this thesis can help me improve my future collaborative practices by being more mindful of the academics I will collaborate with in terms of who they are as people or social beings (i.e., social capital) and what they have as similar academic areas of interest (i.e., human capital) to be able to collaborate effectively, where I will collaborate with them to have less stress and clearer thoughts, and, most importantly, why I will want to collaborate. Therefore, balancing my expressive and instrumental motives behind my future collaborations can help increase my sense of productivity and that of my academic collaborative spouses.

Yet, as I argued in this thesis, it is mostly about the people involved in collaboration. That is, since I am a sociable person who enjoys being and working with people, I will need to collaborate with like-minded academics whose personality matches mine in terms of being sociable, academically generous with human capital, flexible when it comes to crossing temporal, spatial, and disciplinary boundaries, risk-taking, and, most importantly, holding a positive interdependence-based approach to collaboration.

To conclude, not only have the findings challenged my own assumptions and pre-conceived thoughts about collaboration, but they have also 'opened up' my eyes to the many ways in which social or academic phenomena can be examined. Looking at the social-psychological processes shaping a particular social or academic practice is a thinking skill which I have developed through this study. Consequently, this research has helped me consider investigating issues which I once took at face value. For example, being in the process of writing an article entitled '*Academic Gossip Amongst International Ph.D. Students in the UK: A Social-Psychological Perspective'* is a concrete example of how the flexible 3W model which my participants and I have co-constructed has inspired me to study the journey of some academic practices and phenomena.

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List of Appendices

Appendix A – Semi-structured interview questions:

1. Why did you choose to be a university academic?
2. Could you tell me about your role/position as a UK University academic?
3. How would you evaluate your role as a university academic?
4. What is your definition of collaboration?
5. How would you perceive academic collaboration among university academics? Why?
6. Are you aware of any faculty or university regulations or guidelines related to academics' collaboration?

- If so, do you follow them? And how?
- If not, why not?

7. Having reviewed some documents related to collaboration in your discipline, would you please comment on these extracts.
8. Handing four photos (two about university academics working together in their professional community, and two about university academics isolating themselves from the rest of the academic community) to the participants and asking them the following questions:

a. Would you please describe both photos and tell me what you think about the content of each one of them?

b. Which photo would best describe you as a university academic?

9. Focusing on the first photo, do you form a collaborative community wherein you work together with other colleagues from your university or beyond? – Give examples of some of your experiences with academic collaboration?
10. Who are the people that you tend to collaborate with in academia?
11. Why do you collaborate?
12. How effective do you think your academic collaboration is? And why?
13. What factors influence your academic collaboration with other academics?
14. Does your university in general, and your faculty in particular, schedule any collaborative planning time for academics to plan together?

15. Have your academic collaborations ever affected you at any level? If so, what, according to you, are the benefits and drawbacks of university academics' collaboration?

Appendix B – Interview tools: Photo elicitation: (Source: Google Images)

Appendix C – Interview tools: Document Excerpt

Faculty of [Name of the faculty]

School of [Name of the school]

1- "The Faculty of [X] works closely with a range of partners both locally and internationally, sharing our knowledge and expertise in line with our belief in the power of higher education to transform individuals, communities, society and the economy."

2- "The Faculty of [X] strives to have a positive impact in the public domain, reaching out to diverse groups and creating strong and enduring connections. We are constantly seeking to find ways of making our research activity relevant to the world around us, working with local people in [a city in south-east England] as well as with regional, national and global communities.

3- "The University's learning community should be a place in which students and staff become co-creators of understanding, co-producers of learning; partners in a shared praxis of reason and reflection."

4- "We will foster relationships with employers to increase the provision of work placements, internships, industry-relevant projects and employment networks."

5- "It recognizes that [SEE UNIVERSITY] learning community is interconnected with local, national and international workplaces and global challenges".

Appendix D – Examples of the codes and themes generation process

Victoria: So, yes, I think that in order to collaborate we need to move around a lot and not stay in one place all the time as this can be boring...you see what I mean. So, again it can be anywhere here [in-person] or virtually using new technology. It can actually go beyond that. I collaborate in different spaces with different people, and for example, I collaborate at home. It was one of my colleagues and we were writing a paper together. So, she come to my house because it was quicker and easier for her to come to me than it was for us both to come here [university] and also, I think I had to be at home that day, I couldn't be in the office […].

Lounaouci, Abdelaziz (a.lounaouci554@canter...
NOMADIC ACADEMICS

ME: How would you define academics' collaboration?

GRACE: I suppose academics' collaboration is anywhere where academics meet particularly about academic issues. It can be in the university here, outside the university, or in another country or it can be online, or in public places, why not? I mean it's so stupid to stay in one place

Lounaouci, Abdelaziz (a.lo...
Crossing Spatial Boundaries

ME: Who do you collaborate with? What criteria do these people have in order for you to collaborate with them?

ADAM: Well, sometimes academics' collaboration tends to be between professors or academics on a particular project because those ones tend to be status driven. I'm trying to break down that a bit you know just to not exert power, so I'm collaborating with one of my Masters students on a piece of work on Marxism and gender studies so that she gets an interesting paper, but for the most part there's a seniority there because of the way in which journals work and everything. But generally speaking, the more we break that power dynamics down, the more successful I think that collaboration will be, I think it's good to feel we're equals. I'm doing quite a lot of work with my PhD students on an article. In terms of the practice-based research, it's quite different because I want to collaborate with people that are really involved in their communities. So, I don't collaborate with anybody, they have to be people with track record and people I can trust, or people who are on the right side of the barricade.

Lounaouci, Abdelaziz (a.lounaouci554@cant...
NEGOTIATED POWER

MARC: Well, although it was not a formal collaboration, but this is really important as there is a code of professional practice, which is not written down in these documents, which is developed through the community, which means that when you talk and collaborate informally, there are principles of collaboration which you both believe in. And this is universal! You find it in any collaboration you engage in, this is why I've been invited to examine a PhD thesis at [name of a British University]. I have never met before the person who asked me, but I know I share something with them because we have been through this professional orientation all the time.

Lounaouci, Abdelaziz (a.lounaouci554@cant...
"*Code of professional practice*": The hidden formality

ME: Would you please describe your personality as an academic?

ADAM: I am a lot more an extrovert than I used to be because of my job in a way dictate it. I mean my job involves a lot of collaborations. So, I have to be more extrovert in this case. I am partly like that because I cannot be an introvert, shy or isolating if I'm working with other people. Collaboration pushes you to put on another face if you want hahaha.

Lounaouci, Abdelaziz (a.lounaouci554@ca...
The adopted persona

Appendix E – Excerpt from an interview transcript

JAMES' INTERVIEW

ME: What is your own definition of academics' collaboration?

JAMES: Academic collaboration is writing and researching, which is two separate things, together with other academics. For example, because I'm an editor of two journals that means the other editors are working on a collaborative basis with...on a journal. But also, some of these academics who are from other universities of course we actually collaborate to write something together, so you could say that the journal brings people together, but also in some cases I knew the academics before they were on the journal, so you already have an existing network of collaboration, but that takes an enormous amount of time to develop and sustain.

ME: How would you perceive the academic collaboration that happens between academics?

JAMES: To actually have formal collaboration you have to have maybe a positive history together or you work in a closely related interdisciplinary field on a common thing. I've worked with many people over the years...all from different universities. I think the key thing each time is that you have to be able to trust them. If you don't trust them you won't work again with them, and trust very closely related to creative imagination because if you cannot express your ideas or theory in a way that you feel gives full range to where you want to go then there is no point in collaboration unless you're doing collaboration on an instrumental basis. I do know some academics who collaborate on an instrumental basis, but personally I am not interested on collaboration on an instrumental basis. My collaboration is always done on the basis of creativity, bringing new knowledge, challenging discrimination or hierarchies. So, there is always a purpose to the collaboration and the purpose isn't formal university or how universities are assessed...Universities are assessed by REF and so you are supposed to engaged in collaboration, but for me collaboration exist pre-REF and goes beyond that.

ME: Why did you perceive academics' collaboration this way?

JAMES: I think the nature of the discipline and how you have been brought up within your discipline. So, I'm a sociologist, but I work across sociological areas which include gender, popular music, labor market, education, criminology, and it's about knowing the people in these fields. So why I perceived it [collaboration] this way [cross-disciplinary] is definitely part of your intellectual heritage. It's perceived in that way through your intellectual journey

through the Ph.D. and who you supervisor was, and also other people that were involved in your supervision (laughing).

ME: Are you aware of any university/faculty regulations or guidelines related to academics' collaboration?

JAMES: I suppose the only two things I'm aware of are: the university and schools do have a sort of ambition or aims to encourage staff to be collaborative and then also there is expectations formally related to the surveillance of the university REF. Interdisciplinarity is a good thing so that means working with other staff and other colleagues within the school or across the faculty is actually encouraged. For me I can just give you an example of the way I see collaboration within a school or maybe across the school. One of the things that I've done is that with my Ph.D. students as they begin to finish or when are finishing what I do is...if I'm given the opportunity to engage in a publication I sometimes ask them because I think it's useful for them to be mentored in the process of dealing with journals, mentored in the process of dealing with publishers because as an established academic you get invitations to do a number of things. And I think it's a value to include early career researchers or Ph.D. students in this process, so they feel inducted into it and supported, because when you're a Ph.D. student or an early academic it can seem quite a mountain as it's actually something beyond your reach. It should be a responsibility for academic staff and certainly supervisors to assist their research students in this way top move within the academy.

ME: So, in a nutshell, are you aware of any regulations or documents which speak about academics' collaboration?

JAMES: Not exactly policies, but I am aware of highly recommended suggestions that staff should be involved in collaboration, but I think the idea of forcing some sort of collaboration is actually against academic freedom. The key thing about any collaboration is that it should be voluntary, and should be done on a motivational basis, and people should get on well to work together. I don't think I have never worked with anyone that I didn't get on well with or trust. In fact, that could be a restriction, but in terms of the number of academics I have actively worked with quite a lot, so I think that shows that trust is essential. Also, trust is linked to fear (laughter) because there should be no fear in a relationship like this. It's a bit like supervision. For example, with [Marc] and myself have supervised over the years a lot of Ph.D. students together, and when you have two academics together and a Ph.D. student in the middle. This is another form of collaboration in a way ...each academic in advising the student about anything literature, theory, how to do research, each academic has to feel that the advice they are giving is given on a total basis of freedom, so if [Marc] says something I'm not gonna say

oh that's rather important perhaps I should have said that. Or the other way around. The two academics have a total trust-based relationship, it's not a competition, it's about enhancing the students' capabilities. That's absolutely essential. I can tell you now that certain people that you may supervise with that relationship won't exists and is a slight problem for the Ph.D. student. It has to be that supervisors are totally committed and aware of possibilities.

ME: Since you stated that you are aware of the fact that collaboration is highly suggested by the university, do you follow the university regulations with regard to collaboration?

JAMES: Oh no I don't follow any regulations or rules about collaboration. As I said earlier, it should be voluntary, not imposed.

ME: Why not?

JAMES: Because I think that will be like a force. Giving a force to collaborate. As I have said earlier, I've always done academic collaboration, I don't see that as a problem. I do that voluntarily. From my very first beginning as an academic at the institute of Education, I worked on a collaborative basis on a feminist research project, so we worked together, we wrote together, and it just seemed natural, not forced or imposed.

ME: What about the university? Any active had in your collaboration?

JAMES: The university should offer up the opportunity for collaboration. For example, to actually collaborate you have to collaborate on something. Academics like myself get invited to do a journal article, to do a book chapter, and so then is on the basis of I've given the opportunity, so one wants to give an opportunity of collaboration, so I hand select the people I want to collaborate with. OK what's the basis of trust? The basis of trust could be two thigs: the first thing is that I collaborate a lot with my Ph.D. students because I trust them, and they trust me.

ME: What do you mean by trust here?

JAMES: Trust here is personal trust as well as academic trust, because what you're trying to do is you got a goal which is finishing the Ph.D., and the key thing here is making sure you fell that the student knows that you're giving them 100 percent in all areas, because a Ph.D. as you know is a mobile feast as it goes along each stage, and each stage requires different forms of commitment from the supervisor, whether it's to do with the literature, whether it's to do with research access, or some aspects of theory or analysis. How would you interpret this. It should be up to the supervisor to offer up as much insights into the whole process as possible. If the supervisor holds things back, in terms of ideas then the trust relationship is not working.

ME: Would you please reflect on the following statements?

JAMES: Well members of staff have to be research active and that's the question, are they research active? Teaching is one thing and research is another. They can come together. Writing is research as well, but writing a lecture is not really research although of course it does take research to do a lecture. There is a slight inconsistency there. Research means that your research has to go into the public zone (the public arena). Teaching is within the locality, within the institution, you teach students...there is the teaching context, but research is about publications of ideas on a national or international level.

ME: Then what's the purpose behind these collaboration-related statements?

JAMES: Well the purpose is like a form of advertising, marketing that staff are engaging in these types of collaborative research

ME: What do you mean by marketing? What's its relation to collaboration?

JAMES: (laughter) it depends how things are marketed. For example, with my Ph.D. supervisor we were first publishing his papers in highly respected academic journals in the late 1950s and early 1960s I don't think it would occur to him or that it was engagement in marketing, it was knowledge in knowledge production. However, these policies here are in essence still about knowledge production, but you could say that they have a certain neoliberal cloth. These sorts of policies would've been implicit for all academics pre-neoliberalism, you can interpret these statements about collaboration under a neoliberal perspective.

ME: How?

JAMES: By saying that it's about making things relevant and is about marketing. But, the thing is that research pre the contemporary pollical period here would've been the same because you'd have been trying to do research with other academics that is relevant to the educational people, relevant to the understanding of family or social class, it's still seen as relevant. Knowledge production should take, in terms of research collaboration, a keen awareness of what the political hegemony is, I.e., neoliberalism, but the neoliberal hegemony should not be seen as shaping or determining the research collaboration, the research collaboration should be independent. I mean that could be rather idealistic (laughter) because of course the neoliberal funding bodies (independent funding organizations) are actually shaped by government policies, which means that the research agenda is to some extent shaped by a neoliberal policy. So, it's a close relationship.

ME: Would you please reflect on the following photos and tell me what you think about them?

JAMES: Photo number 1 is computer mediated where people seem to be engaged in researching to find something out. It's about discussion and finding out about information and

try to work things through because they are concentrating. You could say that their work is done on a group basis because there is more than one person. So, the first photo is more interactive because they are collectively working together.

ME: If you were to give a title for the two photos, what would be this title?

JAMES: Interactive learning maybe.

ME: What about the second photo?

JAMES: This looks like that person is in a Michael Jackson bubble. So, he is alone. But of course, that's the thing in academia, which I didn't mention earlier, your Ph.D. is a lonely journey. You do have a nice supervisor but it's you and all about you and you who has to get through the viva, the key thing is that you have a home and your home is the discipline, and that's where you should feel that you make sure that you do get support (noise) even though in this picture you are alone, but there should be your discipline. This is the key thing for each researcher is that you have to realise where your home is. With some people, like maybe yourself and certainly me, is the number of homes because it's interdisciplinary but you still have to have that home. Also, it represents people working alone suffering from isolation, but they shouldn't do that because they should have their discipline. However, the other picture is about working together. Either way, the collective or the individual is that they have to produce work, that is creative and imaginative whatever discipline is based in.

ME: Which photo would best represent you as an academic?

JAMES: (Laughter) I'll have to put a rider for that. The first picture is me working on a collaborative basis with the people I collaborate with like Ph.D. students or early career staff. But, at the same time I would say there is also the second photo where I can see myself in which maybe this one (the blue one).

ME: Why?

JAMES: Because I suppose I do two things: I work alone, and I work collectively. As far as I work alone still because of the impact of Ph.D. on me, but then also being part of research teams in my academic career both from the institute of education and from the university. I've actually worked with teams, group of people. It's easy to work with early career staff or Ph.D. students.

ME: Based on the photos in front of you, how would you describe your personality?

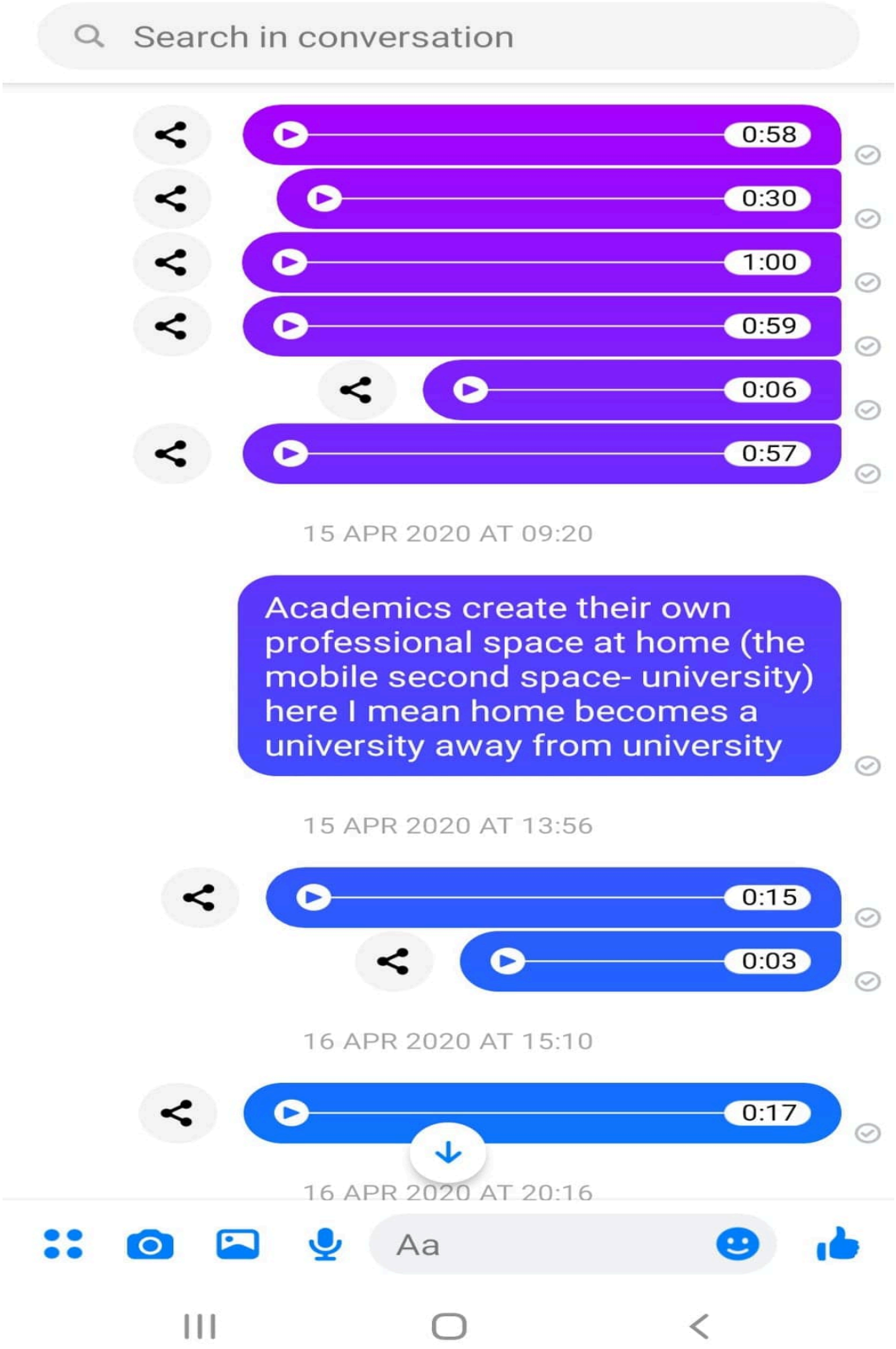
JAMES: (laughter) very difficult to say. In terms of the people that I work with I like to think that I come across somebody they keen to work with and collaborate with so that it sees as an equal relationship. I would say that I'm an introvert that has a slight extrovert shell over myself sometimes. In some ways I'm a bit shy, but at the same time through my intellectual journey

as an ethnographer, to do ethnography and work with other ethnographers I have to speak to people that I don't know I can't just be a shy retiring flower, so I have to put on a certain face to work with other academics.

ME: What is the link between your personality and your collaboration?

JAMES: To collaborate, my personality with other people is that it has to be...well I collaborate because it's a serious thing to do, but it has to be seen as an enjoyable experience even of course it's hard because people criticise you (laughter) but you should be able to work that through. Fun is really important here. It's in the make up between the existing parties. If you pick any of the examples where I collaborated with Ph.D. students or early career academics, it has to be two and from, it has to be interactive, it has to be joined, it has to be respect. That respect has to be about forging new ideas and new analysis. If you hold something back and you think oh that's a good idea, I won't actually mention that in the discussion we're having, then I think it's a failure because you're being selfish…..

Appendix F – Extracts from my virtual research diary (WhatsApp and Messenger)




Myself
0:11
03:17
0:11
13:30
Professional learning= increased human capital
13:31
0:24
17:17
16 MAY 2020
How this situation made me think of conducting other follow-up interview
13:45
0:22
18:42
It appears that academics are invading all spaces
22:58
17 MAY 2020
0:19
23:10
19 MAY 2020
Even in covid 19 we work in 1st space
00:59
Type a message