

TITLE: *NORTH-SOUTH  
ACADEMIC  
PARTNERSHIPS AS  
INHERENT  
'FRICTIONS': WHAT  
DOES THIS  
MEAN FOR IOB?*

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# ***PRIMARY REFLECTIONS ABOUT THE PAPER***

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The paper courageously names the asymmetries and power imbalances that we often experience but hesitate to discuss openly in Global North-South academic collaborations.

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‘Friction’ as analytical Tool: The concept of 'friction' is productive - it avoids simplistic binaries and recognizes the complexity of our collaborative reality – The first part of the paper

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Self-Reflexive Approach: IOB's willingness to examine its own practices demonstrates the kind of institutional self-awareness necessary for genuine partnership - Second part of the paper

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- think collectively along with partners to plan current and future collaborations ahead – Third and Fourth part of the paper

# *OBJECTIVE OF THE PAPER*

- This paper while rethinking on way forward or future of institutional partnerships for Institute of Development Policy (IOB) with global south, theoretically reflect on larger context of discussions on academic partnership between Global North and Global South.
- This paper refers to the literature on asymmetry of relationship in research initiatives that explicitly favours Global North.
- So, the core question that paper addresses is as to how to avoid reproducing historical inequalities, and what does this mean for IOB's international collaborations in general?
- The theoretical framework of 'friction' by Tsing - beyond binary construct - a continuum of tensions and contradictions - historical and practical challenges or differences

# ***THE FOUR FRICTIONS: OUR REALITY***

1. **Asymmetries:** South as data mining periphery while North becomes theorisation centre

– Agenda setting – research design, the resource allocation and ontological analysis –including decolonisation perspective-  
Friction from within – Anglo-American dominance

2. **Academic and/or developmental partnership:** Caught between international publication pressures and urgent local community needs - both are legitimate, both demand our time –  
Friction within

# ***THE FOUR FRICTIONS: OUR REALITY***

**3. International Standards vs. Local Needs:** Research- academic outputs are prioritised over local needs, community development - Publishing in 'high-impact' journals often means our most relevant local input goes unrecognized in promotion systems.

**4. Political Economy of Research funding and teaching:** The change in University Funding by states in Global South has resulted in more look out for donors for research and adhering to the standards of research/research goals instructed by the projects itself – homogenous construct of knowledge production

# ***What We Experience: The Hidden Costs***

- **Administrative Burden:** Complex reporting requirements in foreign languages and formats consume precious time. We manage this alongside teaching overloads (micro level).
- **The 'Data Collector' Role:** Too often, we gather data while Northern partners analyze and theorize - our intellectual contribution marginalized to 'local knowledge.'
- **Dependency Dynamics:** Multiple partnerships with different priorities can fragment our institutional agenda rather than strengthening it.
- **Ethical concerns:** Local ethical concerns that uniform ethical framework cannot take note of.

# ***What We Experience: The Hidden Costs***

- **Change in Institutional prioritization (meso level):** Find out funds, find resources for your resources
- **State Level Depletions (macro level):** Promoting autonomous institutional status- state withdrawal from public funding of education
- **Ideological silence:** Silencing of critical frameworks in grant proposals- promotion of neutral frameworks
- **Global South Data Workers:** No ownership over the data, no parity among Global North-South researchers in working conditions, confidentiality agreement to life (cognitive arrest), online field work and its perils

# **Yes, Partnerships Remain Essential**

- Realisation of frictions and valuation of these collaborations because:
  1. Potential of capacity building
  2. Resource access
  3. Huge learning/intellectual exchange
  4. Knowledge creation
  5. Claim making
  6. Local community development
  7. Equity in mobility
  8. Alternate structures of support

# ***RESEARCH COLLABORATION***

- **Co-Design from the start:** Joint research question formulation before funding applications - Equal participation in methodology design- Shared ownership of theoretical frameworks.
- **Equitable Authorship Practices:** Discuss authorship at project inception, not at publication stage - Recognize intellectual contributions beyond data collection- First authorship rotation in multi-paper projects.
- **Value Multiple Research Outputs:** Policy briefs and community reports alongside journal articles - Regional journal publications as legitimate outputs.
- **Action Research:** community empowerment

## ***TEACHING & CAPACITY BUILDING***

- **Co-Teaching, Not only Guest Lectures:** joint curriculum development with equal input- Team teaching that showcases both perspectives- Local faculty leading with Northern colleagues supporting
- **Focus on Advanced Programs:** MA and PhD programs where added value is clearest- Specialized short courses - Support for developing our own pedagogical approaches
- **Two-Way Mobility:** Our faculty teaching in Northern institutions - Student exchanges that flow both directions

# ***TEACHING & CAPACITY BUILDING***

- **Resources access:** Databases or remote library access on set of materials pre-decided for the faculty engaged in research
- **Affiliation programmes:** Faculty being provided with affiliate positions for evolving skill sets such as grant proposal writing, academic writing and publication strategies

# ***INSTITUTIONAL & FINANCIAL***

- **Realistic Resource Allocation:** Fair compensation for coordination and administrative work- Research time buy-out to reduce teaching overload- Infrastructure support, not just project activities
- **Long-Term Commitment:** Multi-year frameworks beyond single project cycles- Institutional partnerships, not just individual connections - Transition plans that don't collapse when key people leave
- **Simplified Administration:** Reduce reporting burden through streamlined processes- Administrative support for proposal and report writing

# ***RESEARCH-TEACHING-OUTREACH NEXUS***

- The paper rightly emphasizes this integration. From my perspective:
- **Teaching-only partnerships risk reinforcing commercialization** of universities. We need research opportunities to remain intellectually vibrant.
- **Research:** Joint investigation addressing local and global questions
- **Teaching:** Advanced programs with co-developed curricula arising in and out of Research Project
- **Outreach:** Community engagement valued as legitimate academic work

# ***THE ROLE OF 'BRIDGING FIGURES'***

- **Strengths**
- Alumni and those with experience in both contexts can indeed facilitate mutual understanding and navigate institutional cultures effectively.
- **Focus on**
- Ensuring diversity from partner countries
- Long-term individual faculty and institutional bonding
- Having a annual plan on minimum action plan
- Active organsiational/institutional coordination

# SOUTH-SOUTH COLLABORATION

- The paper mentions competitive dynamics limiting South-South cooperation. This is real, but:

Can we think North support for:

- Facilitating regional networks among Southern partners
- Funding South-South mobility and exchange
- Joint research projects led by Southern institutions
- Regional conferences and collaborative platforms
- **South-South Spokes:** To a network model where Southern institutions connect directly.

# ***MOVING BEYOND METRICS***

- **Institutional strengthening:** Enhanced research infrastructure, strengthened graduate programs, improved library access
- **Epistemic Justice:** Southern theoretical contributions recognized, local knowledge validated
- **Local Impact:** Research influencing policy and practice in our communities
- **Sustainability:** Programs continue beyond external funding through institutional bonding
- **Mutual Learning:** N-S appreciate experiences and learning mutually

## ***CERTAIN QUESTIONS FOR IOB***

- Given that the political economy of underfunded Southern universities creates real tensions between teaching obligations and research aspirations, how might IOB partnerships move towards supporting the sustained scholarly productivity—including reduced teaching loads, research time, and access to research materials?
- What is IOB's expectation from partners in Global South in terms of research and teaching in academia?
- In your experience with ongoing partnerships, what moments or practices have felt most genuinely reciprocal in terms of learning from each other?
- What are IOB's concerns in working ahead with Global South partners in next five years?

## ***Conclusion: Friction as Opportunity***

- We engage with Frictions - IOB
- Research Collaborations – knowledge enhancement for community
- Whyte and Whyte – Long term institutional partnership through capacity strengthening projects, multiple publication avenues, collaborative ethnographies
- This paper opens important dialogue. Let's continue it with honesty, commitment, and hope for genuinely equitable partnerships.

*THANK YOU*

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