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# Building Bonding and Bridging Capital through the 'China Club'

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## ABSTRACT

Out-of-school activities offered to young people can be discrete activities, completely divorced from school life and school curriculum, or they can offer extensions to normal school curriculum. This article reports on an ethnographic case study that investigated the effectiveness of a particular out-of-school activity, the 'China Club'. It offered secondary school pupils in the West of Scotland opportunities to learn about Mandarin language and Chinese culture, and facilitated the development of Bonding Capital between the group members and Bridging Capital between individual group members and people outwith the group. In working with those with whom they would not normally have engaged, and in visiting China as part of the 'China Club', the young people's peer relationships were positively impacted upon, as was their willingness to take risks by moving beyond familiar and predictable social and learning environments to those that challenged and tested them, socially, and as learners.

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## Introduction

There has been an increasing interest in examining the benefits of out-of-school activities and the role that they play in the generation of various capitals for children and young people. Out-of-school activities are diverse in nature and have a variety of intended outcomes. In some cases, they are highly structured activities organised through and by schools, conducted on school premises, after school hours, and run by teachers. These are variously referred to as 'out-of-school' programmes, 'after-school' programmes, 'clubs' and 'extra-curricular activities', depending on their focus.<sup>1</sup> Such programmes can be an extension of the normal school curriculum with the aim of providing additional academic support and/or particular skills' development. The degree of their alignment with the school curriculum depends on their foci, the degree of collaboration and the nature of communication between school personnel and out-of-school personnel (Bennett, 2015).

In some cases, out-of-school programmes are completely removed from mainstream schooling. They are conducted away from school premises, are informal, focused on social or sporting activities and are run by volunteers, youth workers or religious organisations. One such example is the *Healthy Pokes* programme in Laramie, Wyoming, USA (Gaudreault, Shiver, Kinder, & Guseman, 2016). Run by undergraduate university student volunteers, it calls upon the support of the broader community, including a university, a school district authority, a local hospital and shops. It is designed to enable young people to set goals for themselves with a view to achieving a healthy lifestyle as well as becoming more confident and competent in the lifestyle choices they make. Some after-school activities

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provide an informal setting in which participants have no obligation to demonstrate an acquired skill or competence. Examples include chess clubs, sporting clubs, arts and crafts clubs, book clubs, and so on. Some informal out-of-school activities, conducted away from school premises and not run by teachers can also allow for a blend between academic development, informal learning and social skills development. For example, *The Geography Club* conducted at a university in the USA, provided students with a relaxed, informal environment, focusing on topics from their regular curriculum. Their knowledge of geography informed 'their practical engagement with the world, thereby making geography relevant to their lives outside of the school setting' (Thomas-Brown, 2011, p. 187).

Regardless of the focus of out-of-school activities, a growing body of research suggests that they offer a broad range of positive advantages for young people. Those out-of-school activities that are voluntary and lack formal assessment can provide participants with the opportunity to investigate and experiment without being constrained by the need to prepare for the tests and examinations associated with formal education. They can allow for engagement with flexible, open-ended problem solving activities (Sahin, Ayar, & Adiguzl, 2014) that are akin to those that young people may experience in other areas of their lives. Out-of-school activities can also contribute to the development of effective social networks for young people by facilitating new and existing relationships with peers, adults and community to develop a sense of belonging (Fredricks & Simpkins, 2013). In out-of-school clubs where the quality of the experiences offered is carefully considered, children feel safe and empowered (Simpkins, Riggs, Ngo, Ettekal, & Okamoto, 2016). In creating positive out-of-school learning spaces for young people it is important to understand the participants' social contexts and what it is they need in order to find the activities or club of interest and use (Simpkins et al., 2016).

This article reports on research that investigated the effectiveness of one particular out-of-school activity. The 'China Club', an initiative of Scotland's National Centre for Languages (SCILT), was based at a major Scottish University and funded by Hanban.<sup>2</sup> It explicitly aimed to facilitate the learning of Mandarin language and Chinese culture by a group of secondary school pupils in the West of Scotland. In this sense, it complemented the current foreign language teaching policy in Scotland which is a commitment to providing all pupils with opportunities to learn two foreign languages in addition to English.<sup>3</sup> The weekly sessions were often highly structured and mainly took place at the University, where SCILT was based, although some sessions also occurred at the secondary school because of transport difficulties. China Club was voluntary, and designed to function as a less formal learning context than a school classroom. There were no tests or formal assessment requirements and the tuition was provided, not by Scottish teachers, but by Chinese teachers, employed by Hanban and seconded to SCILT. Essentially, as the name suggests, this out-of-school activity was intended to be a 'club' with an emphasis on informal learning, and social activities that would facilitate the pupils' positive attitudes towards learning Mandarin.

China Club consisted of two groups of pupils; China Club 1 and China Club 2 which was established nine months later.<sup>4</sup> The activities for both clubs consisted of language learning tasks including basic vocabulary and its development and practice, basic Mandarin characters and pinyin, elements of traditional Chinese culture such as papercutting, basic calligraphy, and making New Year's decorations. The pupils also participated in excursions to a Chinese supermarket and restaurants in the city. China Club 1 participants also experienced a two-week sponsored trip to China where they visited tourist sights, museums, a school and the family home of the Chinese pupil with whom they had been partnered. In addition to teaching Mandarin language and Chinese culture, a less explicit aim of the initiative, but equally important, was providing pupils from one of the most socially and economically disadvantaged areas of Scotland, with opportunities to spend time on a university campus. It was hoped that this experience would contribute to increased confidence and familiarity with a university environment, raise their aspirations for post-school study and contribute to them developing greater awareness of the world beyond their own local area. Thus, China Club can be seen as straddling the divide between a formal educational programme and a club for socialising and relationship building.

Our research about the China Club had two interrelated foci. It aimed to investigate: (1) the success of the programme in facilitating the engagement of young people with China, Chinese culture and the Mandarin language; and (2) the success of the programme in facilitating the development of Bonding

Capital between the group members and Bridging Capital between individual group members and people outwith the group. While the focus of the China Club was on learning Mandarin language and Chinese culture – and it certainly achieved this goal to a degree – in this article we address the second of the research aims and draw on data that highlight how the pupils' Bonding and Bridging Capital developed and the implications of this on their confidence and interpersonal relationships with peers and others.

In what follows, we describe the theoretical frame underpinning this work, the research methodology and then present data, findings and discussion. We conclude by making recommendations for the organisation and conduct of out-of-school programmes such as the China Club.

## Theories of capital

The concept of capital has developed importance as a theoretical and analytical lens across a broad range of fields to explain how human action is related to acquiring and securing some form of capital or combination of capitals, including economic capital, cultural capital and social capital (e.g. Bourdieu, 1987; Bassani, 2008; Coleman, 1988). Economic capital comprises the monetary, financial resources one has, while cultural capital refers to the values, beliefs, tastes and preferences learned in a range of social and familial contexts and embodied in accent, dispositions (*habitus*), and cultural practices. The concept of Social capital, in particular, is described as

a form of power, a currency, a resource: it can be utilised, traded, exchanged, drawn upon, invested or cashed in. Social capital is a form of energy, a force; it is a capacity, a facility that can be deployed and activated towards some desired goal. (McGonigal et al., 2007, p. 80)

Social capital comprises the 'assets' and 'resources' derived from the relationships between people and groups of people. It is linked to

possession of a durable network [...] – or in other words, to membership in a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital, a 'credential' which entitles them to credit, in various senses of the word. (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 248)

Important to this, is *who* it is one knows. One must have relationships with the 'right' people and therefore, be able to draw on the resources and assets generated through such relationships. Social capital can impact on pupils' access to various types of education, their aspirations and thus, their educational achievement (Forbes & Sime, 2016; Shahidul, Zehadul Karim, & Mustari, 2015). Putnam's work on civic engagement and social interaction in the USA culminated in a model of social capital that has been applied to a wide range of social research contexts, including education (e.g. Hope, 2011; Santoro & Wilkinson, 2016). Putnam asserts that social capital is generated by the 'connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them' (Putnam, 2000, p. 19). He further developed his concept of Social Capital to include Bonding and Bridging Capital (2000) which are generated through individuals' participation in different kinds of social networks. Bonding Capital is 'a social "glue" that sticks like people together' (Brough et al., 2006, 407) and creates tight but inward looking networks between people with common interests and connections (McConkey & Mariga, 2011). Bonding Capital is 'gained from participation in local social networks that are most often homogenous and supportive, and provide a sense of belonging' (Santoro, 2013, 962). According to Terrion, 'Bonding social capital provides a sense of belonging and is critical to the sense of wellbeing of the members of families and groups and fulfils immediate needs for belonging, love, emotional support, and solidarity' (2006, p. 157).

On the other hand, Bridging Social Capital is obtained from participation in heterogeneous, external looking and more loosely tied social networks that generate 'broader identities and reciprocity' (Putnam, 2000, p. 20). It comprises the associations made across different bonded groups within society ... [giving] access to a more extensive range of formal and informal resources' (McConkey & Mariga, 2011, p. 18). Bridging Capital enables the crossing of social groups and acts as 'a social lubricant [...] for allowing different kinds of people to mix together freely' (Brough et al., 2006, p. 407). The kinds of

relationships and networks that build Bridging Capital are usually established and maintained outside the home and beyond familiar and local communities. A third type of capital, Linking Capital, is generated via relationships with ‘sympathetic individuals in power ... in order to leverage resources, ideas, and information from formal institutions beyond the community’ (Woolcock in Terrior, 2006, p. 158).

Some scholars argue that Bridging Capital and Linking Capital are more valuable than Bonding Capital (Woolcock & Narayan in Brough et al., 2006) because they are accessed and built via more powerful and diverse networks. These capitals are thought of metaphorically, as either horizontal or vertical. In the case of Bridging Capital, networks extend outwards, horizontally. In the case of Linking Capital, networks extend upwards and vertically (Terrior, 2006). Bonded networks, on the other hand, are circuitous in nature. In considering the extent to which Social Capital impacted upon educational performance, Menahem (2011) draws a clear distinction between Bonding and Bridging Social Capital, suggesting a ‘significant positive relationship between the density of a community’s bridging social capital and its rates of educational performance’ (Menahem, 2011, p. 1122). Regardless of the strength of bonding relationships, it is unlikely that Bonding Capital alone will facilitate access to the resources necessary for an individual’s successful integration into a new community. However, the acquisition of Bonding Capital is a precursor to the acquisition of Bridging Capital and Linking Capital; it can enable and facilitate individuals moving from family and close social networks into the community more broadly. Therefore, there is a strong and positive relationship between these forms of capital.

Despite criticism of Putnam’s work because it pays insufficient attention to the negative elements of social relationships, such as the associated obligations and restrictions and the development of behaviours and attitudes in group members that are anti-social (Tzanakis, 2013), it has been particularly useful for us. As we gained deeper and better understanding of the social context of the China Club participants and engaged in ongoing data analysis, we realised the importance of the China Club in generating various forms of Social Capital for these young people. Of particular importance was the building of Bonding Social Capital within the group and Bridging Social Capital outwith the group.

### Researching the ‘China Club’

The research focused on examining the experiences of pupils from Langdale High School,<sup>5</sup> a school situated in area of deeply entrenched deprivation and among the 5% of most deprived areas in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2016). The residents of Langdale are more likely to have poor levels of education, few marketable labour skills, low household income, poor health outcomes and low life expectancy. There is high unemployment and the suburb has poor public transport and poor housing conditions. The study uses an ethnographic case study approach, well recognised as an effective means to understand real people in real situations (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). It accentuates the significance of understanding how people act in particular contexts (Hammersley, 2006, 2016). Ethnographic data collection methods enabled us to collect rich in-depth data from participants over a sustained period of time. The China Club participants (both China Club 1 and 2) consisted of 21 young people aged 13–16 (8 males and 13 females). The other participants were two teachers from the school, two Hanban teachers, the Director of SCILT and an administrative coordinator from SCILT.

After obtaining ethics approval and informed consent from participants, a range of data was collected over a seven-month period during 2015/2016. Data collection methods comprised observations and observational logs, and interviews. Observation of all the young people participating in the activities as well as the Hanban teachers occurred for two hours on a weekly basis over a seven-month period. During the observations, participants engaged in normal activities as part of their regular China Club participation. The research team was visible in the classroom, yet aimed to be unobtrusive. Between one and three researchers attended each session and individually completed the same observation templates in which they recorded: how teacher-pupils and pupil-pupil relationships were established or enacted; the nature of these interactions; the pedagogical strategies employed by the teachers; and the pupils’ responses, participation and engagement. After each session, one member of the research team was tasked with gathering and transcribing all comments from the observation logs of the research team.

A focus group discussion with eight of the young people offered opportunities to discuss the impact that China Club had on their knowledge of Chinese culture and of Mandarin, as well as the nature of their relationships with one another and with their teachers. The young people in China Club 1 who went to China as part of the programme of activities were invited to reflect on their experiences there, what they had learnt, what they had enjoyed and found challenging, and how their knowledge about the world had changed. The focus group discussion was conducted in the school with volunteer participants recruited by one of the school teachers involved in China Club. This lasted roughly fifty minutes and was audio-recorded for transcription purposes.

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with two teachers from Langdale Secondary School, two Hanban teachers (one of whom accompanied the pupils to China), the Director of SCILT, and a SCILT Project Officer who also accompanied the pupils to China. Interviews elicited data from participants about the young people's progress in learning Mandarin and their engagement with Chinese culture as well as their views about how successful China Club was in fulfilling its explicit and implicit aims. They were also asked about the professional challenges they encountered as a China Club teacher. Semi-structured interviews with the Director of SCILT focused on the rationale for the China Club, how it came to be established and her perspectives on the success of China Club in fulfilling its aims. The one-to-one interviews generally lasted between 40 and 60 min and were carried out at the University in the case of the Hanban teachers and SCILT staff, while the interviews of the Langdale teachers and pupils were conducted at the school. The interviews were transcribed verbatim for later analysis.

As is commonly the case when ethnographic methods are employed, data analysis occurred simultaneously with data collection (Jeffrey, 2008). The minute the research site was entered, decisions were made about what or who to observe with early observations influencing what further data were collected. Researcher reflexivity remained at the core of the research, and this extended to the data analysis process itself (Delamont, 2002). Data collection is not an objective or unbiased process. We are not simply 'collectors of data, as though they exist in some predefined form, ripe for the picking' (Santoro & Smyth, 2010, p. 494). Rather, we are active producers of data and intrinsically linked with the data from the start.

Thematic analysis of the observational data and interview transcripts was then undertaken. This involved individual members of the research team independently reading, re-reading and using a process of open coding to identify patterns in the data. The patterns were then compared, contrasted and cross checked across the sets of interview data with the researchers looking for differences and similarities, tensions, contradictions and complexities. The data were then sorted and categorised under themes and subthemes connected to Bridging and Bonding Capital. In this article we present data under two main themes: 'Developing a Sense of Community and Belonging' and 'Expanding Horizons and Networks'.

### **Building Bonding Capital: developing a sense of community and belonging**

While the main intended outcome of China Club was to teach pupils Mandarin and introduce them to elements of Chinese culture, it also served a number of other, but related purposes, including the building of cohesion within the group. There is entrenched generational conflict between some families in Langdale which is played out through a divisive and territorial gang culture prevalent among local youth. George, one of the teachers at Langdale, says, 'Langdale has a terrible reputation for territorialism. It always has had'. According to Frances, the Director of SCILT, 'The biggest problem is gang culture. So often children from the one set of four streets can't even go to the other side of Langdale because they are into different gang territory and they would be at risk'. It is not surprising that this culture of conflict shapes the pupils' relationships with each other and, as George reports, often spills over into the classroom or school yard with the young people bullying each other and/or being physically aggressive towards one another. However, George also observes that the pupils have developed better relationships with each other since joining China Club.

I think China Club has had a very positive impact on the kids and it's developed them in many ways. I think it's helped them mature in their approach to people. Friendships have developed and deepened as a result of China Club.

This is echoed by Frances who says:

Actually, what is really interesting is that some of those children really don't like each other. Outwith China Club, their families have bad blood. But when they are in China Club, the children co-operate and work well together.

The young people themselves acknowledge they had not all been friendly with each other prior to joining China Club. Indeed, some pupils did not speak to some of the others. However, as China Club progressed, the pupils reported that they had started to see one another outside China Club and that this had increasingly become more frequent as time had gone on. During the focus group discussion they confirmed the importance of the Club in helping to build friendships and thus, Bonding Capital.

Interviewer: How well did you know each other before China Club?

Pupil 1: Some of us were pals, but we weren't all that great with each other ... like me personally, I wouldn't really talk to Joe and Natalie when I started.

Pupil 2: No, I wouldn't speak to any of them either.

Pupil 3: We all have our different groups ...

Interviewer: And are you closer now as a group?

Pupil 4: Yes.

Pupil 2: Definitely.

Pupil 3: I think it's made us all closer.

One young person went as far as to say that 'Being part of China Club is the best decision I ever made. It brought us all closer together and I gained a second family'.

There are a number of conditions that enabled the generation of Bonding Capital within the group. First, the China Club is conducted at the University which is in unfamiliar territory to the pupils. To some degree, it is 'neutral' ground without the territorial issues associated with Langdale. Secondly, the China Club places pupils in situations where they need to trust and rely on each other. This was certainly the case during the trip to China. Hui, one of the Hanban teachers who accompanied the pupils to China said:

What I saw during the trip, there is huge culture shock and differences, is that they are very confident and supportive of each other. [...] In China, they are very aware they are from the same school. In China Club they are very together, very supportive, even though there are some girls who have issues. Before we go we know they don't want live in the same room. So we know there are some issues. But only in China, they want to be together.

While experiencing a different culture can be exciting and stimulating, it can be enormously unsettling and testing, especially for those with little experience of travel. Being in China, albeit accompanied by Mandarin speaking teachers, would have tested the pupils' resilience and ability to cope with uncertainty. Some of the pupils reported being worried by the different food and overwhelmed by the noise and crowds. While the stress of being in this environment without the support of family could have reignited conflict between the pupils, the shared experiences and the need to support each other actually generated Bonding Capital and a sense of belonging and unity. It is this which leads Katrina, the SCILT programme coordinator who accompanied the group, to observe the pupils as having become 'a really kind of tight group [and] a bit more aware of community'. She goes on to say:

Whenever we were in China and they were buying sweets or anything, they would be like "Oh do you want one"? It was just really kind of nice to see ... there was a sharing of what they had and also their support for each other. They were always very willing to kind of, if somebody had an issue or they weren't understanding something or they were just struggling generally, they were all very supportive of each other.

In this unfamiliar environment China Club participants recognised the need for interdependence and reliance on each other. While the Club did not offer opportunities for physical risk-taking in the sporting context described by André, Louvet, and Deneuve (2013), the emotions that might be elicited as a consequence of the change in environment, appear to afford the same bonding effect often experienced in

being a part of a sports team. Furthermore, participation in the weekly language learning tasks in the China Club may also have generated support and empathy within the group, and thus, Bonding Capital. It is well accepted that there is a strong correlation between anxiety and foreign language learning (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; Horwitz, 2010). It can provoke feelings of inadequacy, embarrassment and frustration as learners struggle to make themselves understood. For teenagers, the risk to their self-esteem of making errors of pronunciation and comprehension in front of their peers can be debilitating. However, our field notes reveal the pupils being considerate of each other and demonstrating respect for one another's attempts to speak Mandarin.

They allow each other to speak and do not laugh when others are speaking Mandarin. I am surprised there is a little talking within groups when others are being asked to repeat something. No-one makes fun of each other when they are practising the pinyin sounds. They are on-task even though it doesn't seem all that interesting at times (researcher field notes).

Our field notes indicate that the children appeared to be highly confident in China Club. The anxiety or self-consciousness that might be expected from young people in a new group, with a new teacher and learning a completely different language was in general, not evident. They answered questions enthusiastically in class, were keen to speak Mandarin and were prepared to attempt challenging tasks such as tongue twisters in Mandarin. In fact, one boy was keen to sing a song in Mandarin for the class. Many of the language learning activities required the pupils to collaborate with one another, thereby developing interdependence (André et al., 2013; Christie, Tolmie, Thurston, Howe, & Topping, 2009). Some research suggests that an increase in peer social support among young people also leads to an increase in self-esteem and thus, pro-social development (Wright et al., 2010).

The Hanban teachers' role in helping to build the cohesion and cooperation that developed among the pupils, and thus generated Bonding Capital, cannot be under-estimated. In the case of Hui, it was clear he understood the nature of the pupils' backgrounds, the difficulties of their home lives and how these experiences might play out through the context of the China Club. He says: 'They [the pupils] protect themselves more, like they have a shield between them and other people, so it is very important to build trust. Relationships are very important between this group'. Hui appeared to genuinely care about the pupils and understood the need to relate to them on friendly and relaxed terms in order to gain their confidence and trust. Our observation notes indicate this resulted in a supportive and encouraging learning environment which was indeed akin to, and in the spirit of a club. He was also instrumental to the success of the trip to China. While he expected them to take initiative and responsibility for themselves in China and encouraged them to communicate in Mandarin, he was also sensitive to the pupils' insecurities and the significant challenges the cultural differences presented for them. After his term in Scotland had come to an end and he was due to leave for China he received a letter from the pupils which sums up the impact he had on them:

You are the heart and soul of China Club and you will be extremely missed! You have been an amazing teacher, leader and friend to us all. You have really impacted on us and we will never forget you. Thank you for every single thing you have ever done for us!! We all love you so much!!

### **Bridging Capital: expanding horizons and networks**

The China Club enabled the young people to experience the world differently, to extend their networks and to build Bridging Capital. Prior to their participation in the China Club they had rarely left their home areas – they generally do not travel or go on holidays, some have never been into the city, only 7 miles away. However, China Club provided opportunities for them to meet people outwith their usual networks. George claims that 'bringing them in here [the University], is kind of helping to build a bridge'. By coming into a university environment, albeit for the purposes of informal learning, they were able to interact with a broader range of people than they might normally meet and, importantly, they gained familiarity with a university environment and awareness of the potential opportunities for study in the future. There is a good deal of evidence from Scotland and elsewhere indicating that pupils from the most disadvantaged households are less likely to attend universities than their more affluent peers (e.g.

Crawford & Vignoles, 2010; Jerrim, Chmielewski, & Parker, 2015; OECD, 2015; Sosu, Smith, McKendry, Santoro, & Ellis, 2016). They are more likely to lack confidence and aspiration, it is unlikely that there will be university graduates in their families to act as role models and they are unlikely to consider university education as an option for themselves. While China Club was not an outreach programme in a formal sense, nevertheless, it contributed to making the unfamiliar university environment, familiar.

An intended outcome of the China Club was to develop attitudes of respect in the young people towards cultural difference. Frances expresses the aim thus: 'What we try to do through language learning is create a more cohesive, tolerant, outward-looking society'. By providing opportunities for the pupils to engage directly with people who are different from themselves, China Club enabled pupils to understand something of the world beyond Langdale and to understand themselves as more than just a citizen of Scotland or the UK. Indeed, the current Scottish *Curriculum for Excellence* (Scottish Executive, 2004) with its focus on education for citizenship 'encourages the expression of attitudes and beliefs to respond to the challenges we face as global citizens' (Education Scotland, n.d.). There is a good deal of literature that suggests positive contact with culturally diverse others can be a way to build tolerance and respect (Hepple et al., 2017; Kissock & Richardson, 2010). A specific activity that facilitated connections between the pupils and their Chinese peers was writing to pen-friends in China. As none of the pupils had pen-friends prior to participating in China Club, this was a new experience in itself. However, it also provided them with opportunities to interact directly with another teenager from a culture vastly different from their own. Those participants who went to China visited their pen-friends and their families, thus gaining an insight into Chinese families and Chinese homes. In general, their experience on the trip had a strong effect on the pupils. As one said, 'Going to; China was an amazing experience! I loved every second of it!'

Furthermore, having contact with the Hanban teachers was the first opportunity some of the pupils had ever had to interact directly over a sustained period of time with someone from a culture different from their own. That the teachers, especially Hui connected personally with the pupils helped develop the pupils' cultural awareness, respect for difference and preparedness to compromise. As some said during the focus group:

We know how to respect them, like in the school, we know we can't talk to them the way we talk to our teachers, because our teachers, we can have jokes with them, but we can't ... like we *could* have jokes with a Chinese teacher, but it is just different, and we know not to go too far.

Our observation notes indicate that the pupils were incredibly respectful of the Hanban teachers and were generally attentive and polite. That the teachers were native speakers of Mandarin meant they, and the programme held greater status in the pupils' eyes and were therefore deserving of respect. They spoke about having 'an actual native Chinese speaker [who] knows what he is talking about' as being preferable to a non-native speaker. The pupils knew of another group that was being taught Mandarin by a non-native Mandarin speaker. 'We know a lot more than them and they were doing it long before us. But we had an actual native Chinese speaker'.

## Concluding remarks

The Bridging and Bonding Capital generated by and for the pupils through their participation in the China Club can be seen to have significant benefits for this group of young people. The Bonding Capital enabled a more cohesive sense of community to develop between the individual pupils while the Bridging Capital enabled them to make connections beyond their local and familiar networks. There were a number of factors that enabled this, including the condition of 'risk'. Participation in the China Club potentially presented risks to the pupils' self-esteem and emotional security. They were required to collaborate with people with whom they otherwise would not work or be friendly, they were positioned outwith their normal physical environment at the University and in China, and at times, they had to cope with communication barriers and with uncertainty. In fact, the risk associated with going to China was too great for a couple of parents who refused to allow their children to go to China because of fears

about their safety. However, for the others, the supportive nature of China Club can be regarded as facilitating their development as risk takers who were able and prepared to move beyond familiar and predictable social and learning environments to those which challenged and tested them, both socially, and as learners. Overcoming risk has, in turn, the potential to build resilience and the achievement of 'positive outcomes despite challenging or threatening circumstances' (Zolkoski & Bullock, 2012, p. 2296). Resilience can result in individuals demonstrating 'a sense of purpose ... [which] involves having goals, educational aspirations, and a belief in a bright future' (Zolkoski & Bullock, 2012, p. 2296).

As the data above shows, the success of the programme can also be attributed to the Hanban teachers who taught China Club. However, it was also the case that the commitment of the school teachers at Langdale was crucial for the programme's success. The club relied on the teachers accompanying the pupils to the University, organising transport, recruiting participants and valuing the knowledge the pupils gained in the China Club. The teachers' enthusiasm was important in supporting the pupils in the new experiences, including accompanying them to China, especially since the teachers had to fund their own travel. Without the support of the teachers and the school administration, it is likely that the China Club would have struggled to gain traction.

While the China Club produced benefits for this group of young people, we do not suggest that out-of-school programmes like this are a panacea for the difficulties experienced in general by children from socially isolated and deprived urban areas. This research was limited in scope to a small number of pupils from a specific area of Scotland. There is need for research that collects data from larger pupil cohorts from a range of backgrounds and contexts. In regards to this particular group of pupils, there is also the need for further research in order to explore how the Bridging and Bonding Capitals acquired through their participation in the China Club impact upon their lives and educational experiences in the long term.

## Notes

1. We use the term out-of-school to refer to any programmes occurring outside the school day.
2. Hanban is a public institution in China affiliated with the Chinese Ministry of Education.
3. 'Language Learning in Scotland: A 1+2 Approach', Scottish Government (2012).
4. In this article we draw on data obtained from China Club 1 and China Club 2 teachers and pupils.
5. All names are pseudonyms.

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## Notes on contributors

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