University-Industry Collaborations (UICs) for Innovation: A Matter of Proximity Dimensions?

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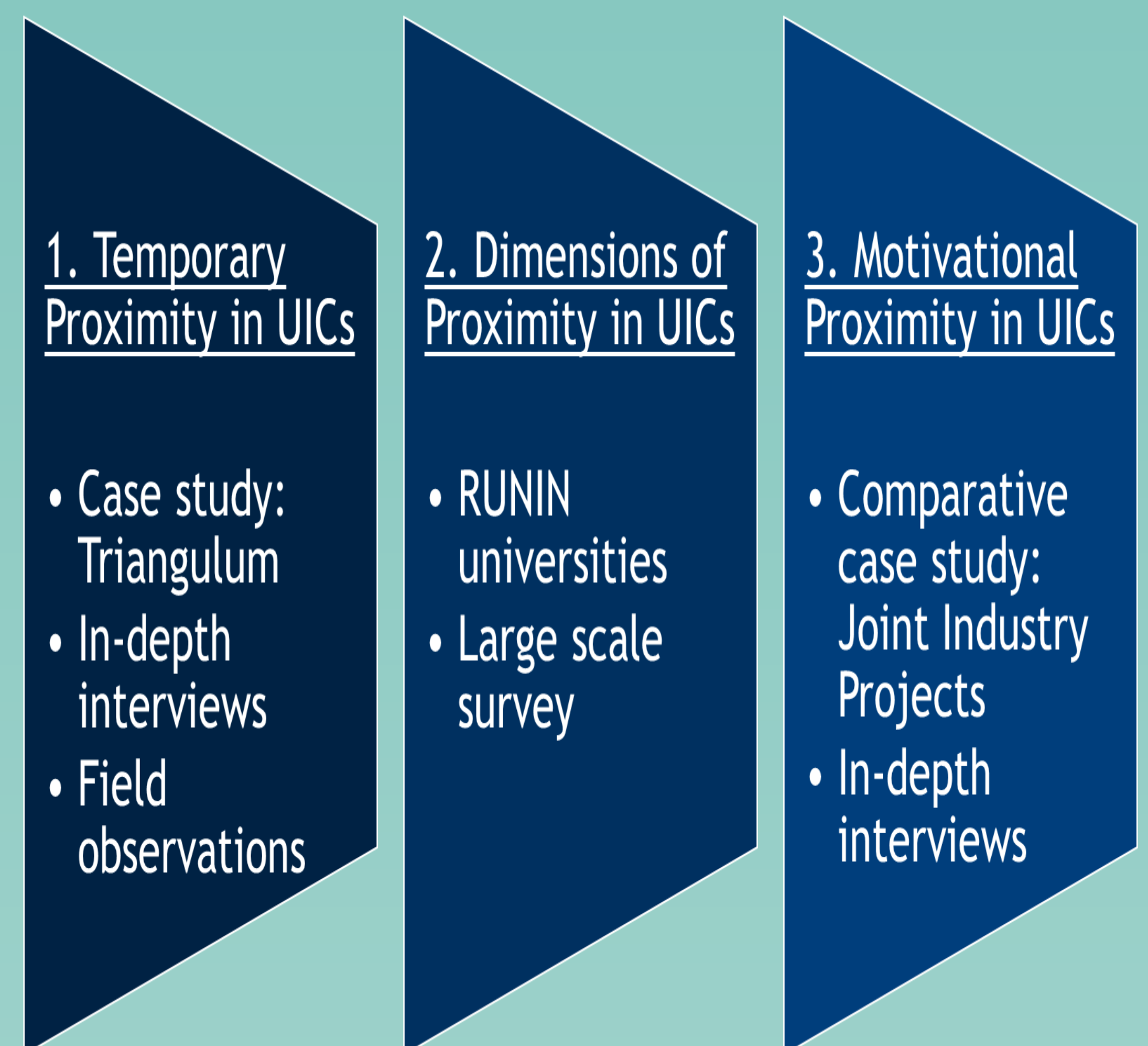Contact: utku.alpaydin@uis.no

BACKGROUND

Firms collaborate with a number of actors in their pursuit of external knowledge for innovation purposes, but universities emerge as key partners.

However, belonging to very different institutional settings and having somehow contradictory characteristics, universities and industry actors face several barriers in the exchange of knowledge and collaboration with each other. Therefore, in order for the effective knowledge exchange between universities and firms to take place, there should be some facilitating mechanisms that ease the process of coordination and collaboration.

The concept of proximity, which refers to "closeness of actors and is often assessed by the similarity between the actors", may help in identifying such underlying conditions. This PhD research is dedicated to analyze how proximity dimensions affect UICs with a special focus on the temporary and motivational aspects of proximity.

RESEARCH STRUCTURE AND METHODOLOGY

The research is divided into 3 components. It will be mainly conducted through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, such as case studies with in-depth interviews and a large-scale survey.

1. Temporary Proximity in UICs

- Case study: Triangulum
- In-depth interviews
- Field observations

2. Dimensions of Proximity in UICs

- RUNIN universities
- Large scale survey

3. Motivational Proximity in UICs

- Comparative case study: Joint Industry Projects
- In-depth interviews

GEOGRAPHICAL PROXIMITY
COGNITIVE PROXIMITY
ORGANIZATIONAL PROXIMITY
INSTITUTIONAL PROXIMITY
SOCIAL PROXIMITY
MOTIVATIONAL PROXIMITY

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ1: How do different dimensions of proximity affect university-industry collaborations?

RQ2: How does **temporary proximity** influence the success of UICs by developing other proximity dimensions?

RQ3: How does **motivational proximity** influence the success of UICs?

EXPECTED OUTPUT / IMPACT

- Increased understanding of proximity dimensions in UICs

- Influence of temporary proximity on other dimensions

- Validity of motivational proximity

- Development of policy implications

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