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## **Marketing ‘development’ in the neoliberal university: A critical insight into UK Higher Education Institutions**

Kamna Patel and Olga Mun

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Graphics and layout: Luz Navarro, Giovanna Astolfo and Paola Fuertes



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September 2017

ISSN 1474-3280

**Abstract.** UK higher education institutions (HEIs) are in competition with each other and HEIs across the globe for fee-paying students within a higher education model that promotes neoliberal values of individualism and competition in a global free market. This creates the conditions for the neoliberal university to actively market itself and its products in an international marketplace of potential students. We analyse three dominant frames employed by universities to do this: brand recognition, a discourse on the creation of global workers, and an emphasis on a degree as a product that is bought and sold. Current literature on marketing and HEIs focuses on how marketing works with the university as the unit of analysis, whereas the contribution of this paper is to advance critical insight into university marketing practices at the level of a specific discipline – development studies - with the intention to deepen our understanding of the effects of marketing practices on the discipline. That is, we ask in marketing development programmes what

precisely is sold? Thus, we critically examine representations of ‘development’ within the development industry and explore the marketing of ‘development’ as a neoliberal product that it is conceptualised and sold by northern development actors to primarily northern audiences. We identify five key ideas of ‘development’ that are sold to northern publics: ‘development’ as a positive association for an individual, a commodity, an act of global citizenship, an exercise in northern nation branding and taking a broader perspective, ‘development’ as an overly simplistic, racist and misogynist trope. Bringing together these two distinct literatures, we present a conceptual framework to lead deeper enquiry into what is sold and how when marketing ‘development’ in the neoliberal university. Through this paper we aim to draw attention to the potential for contestation that can emerge between ethical and considerate representations of ‘development’ and the effective marketing of development studies programmes to fee-paying students.



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# 1. Introduction

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This working paper brings together literature from two distinct disciplines in a novel way to explore a new area of interdisciplinary study: representations of 'international development' in university marketing practices. We focus particularly on the potential for contestation that can emerge between ethical and considerate representations of 'development' and the effective marketing of development studies courses to fee-paying students. The two disciplinary literatures examined are marketing to potential students in higher education institutions (HEIs) and representations in critical development studies. The aims of this working paper are two-fold. The first is to map the literature and establish a proof of concept between marketing in higher education and representations of development. The second is to produce a case to support 'pro-education marketing', a concept originally developed by Maringe and Gibbs (2009) to mean ethical marketing, and that we have adapted to mean that learning objectives inspired by postcolonial and feminist theory should play a central role in shaping marketing communications between (potential) students and universities, which may be in opposition to current marketing rationales applied in a neoliberal higher education marketplace.

The case for bringing these two literatures together arises from a critical postcolonial position that is reinforced by a complementary agenda to engage with decolonial thought and praxis in higher education, exemplified by student-led campaigns such as 'Rhodes Must Fall' and 'Why is my curriculum white?' The origins of development studies are embedded in the end of colonialism and the (re)training of 'natives' to run their own affairs. Western universities too have established relationships with colonialism. Many modern universities were born in the age of Victorian imperialism and its positivist mission to collate, classify and order knowledge. Indeed, established disciplines such as geography, anthropology and biology were dependent on imperial expeditions and projects that catalogued 'facts' and 'truths' about the rest of the world. There is a synergy between UK universities, the discipline of development studies and colonial flows of power and representations of knowledge not only historically, but today, exemplified by marketing practices. As central government funding for universities decrease, international students are courted to programmes in the UK largely based on the marketised ideals of the superiority of western knowledge (Robertson, 2010), the branding of UK universities as leading providers of expert knowledge (Chapleo, 2010) and holders of UK degrees assured greater success and employment

prospects with one than without (Sidhu, 2006). Within this, a postcolonial lens suggests alternative knowledges produced by women, marginalised people, racialised minorities and citizens of the global south are subordinated to patriarchal western accounts and images of other places and people. Contemporary discourses of development studies, reflected in postgraduate and undergraduate programme marketing materials, thus have the potential to reinforce or challenge neo-colonial representations of knowledge and expertise and thus affect imaginations of 'development' among students, with implications for inclusive curricula and inclusive approaches to development practice.

While there is established literature on the marketisation of UK universities, including some critical literature through a postcolonial lens (e.g. Sidhu, 2006), and literature problematising representations of 'development' in international development scholarship, particularly the gendered and racialised ways in which 'development' is communicated by international NGOs and in major global campaigns like 'Make Poverty History' (Yanacopulous, 2015; Harrison, 2010; Wilson, 2011), there is no research linking the two. This is a new area of interdisciplinary scholarship that also serves to deepen critical enquiry within the two disciplines. For example, critical literature on the marketisation of higher education in a neoliberal age has produced deep examination into the marketing practices of UK universities (Sidhu, 2006; Robertson, 2010; Molesworth et al, 2010). However, much of this literature takes the university as the unit of analysis, whereas the contribution of this working paper is to advance critical insight into university marketing practices at the level of a specific discipline – development studies - with the intention to deepen our understanding of the potential effects of marketing practices at the level of a discipline.

The paper's contribution to postcolonial development studies is to turn the discussion on representations of 'development' into a more reflexive analysis by spotlighting the role of the critical academic as administrator and manager within the higher education system, and thus responsible for supporting particular representations of 'development' in the marketing of their own development studies courses. This discussion builds on critical analysis of development representations in other parts of the development industry, such as NGOs (Yanacopulous, 2015), and rounds out the reflexive literature on the academic as teacher and researcher of development studies (e.g. Abbott, 2006; Patel, 2015; Patel, 2017).

The paper is structured into four parts. Part one asks ‘what is the neoliberal university?’ and what role does marketing to students play within it? This part engages with the internationalisation agenda, which we argue, currently gives neoliberalism in HEIs its form and shapes the ideas and practices of marketing approaches in UK HEIs. Part two sets out three frames or rationales through which we understand key approaches to marketing to students in HEIs and their effects. Part three examines ‘development’ as a neoliberal product and explores the dominant ways in which it is conceptualised and sold by northern devel-

opment actors to primarily northern audiences. This part will draw out arguments made in postcolonial and critical development scholarship that are relevant to examining what precisely is sold in the marketing messages of HEIs crafted to attract potential students. Part four brings together the marketing frames commonly used by HEIs and common representations of ‘development’ to produce a conceptual framework that explores what is sold and how when marketing ‘development’ in the neoliberal university. In this part, we also explore knowledge gaps and suggestions for further study in this area.



## 2. The neoliberal university

Decreases to state funding are thought to be the main factor that contributed to the rise of neoliberalisation, marketisation and the commercialisation of higher education globally and in the UK. According to Maringe and Gibbs (2009), internationally, public higher education paid for by the state is a story of the past. Thus, the neoliberal university engages in commercialisation and marketing activities that produce public-private partnerships, commercial sponsorship and court a global customer base of fee-paying students. Ball, Dworkin and Vryonides (2010) claim that it is appropriate to describe the current situation in global higher education as “A post-neoliberal world of borderless education within which learning is a commodity, a private good and an opportunity for profit” (p.527). For the UK context, Ball (2012, p.24) provides a fuller description of the neoliberal university. He writes,

UK universities are involved in complex ‘border-crossing’ relationships with the private sector, state agencies, international consortia and other national states. Partnerships, linkages and networks ‘join up’ state organisations with commercial ones and create discursive capillaries through which the sensibilities and dispositions of enterprise, competition and profit flow and the ontology of neoliberalism is generalised. Complex relationships built upon contract rather than collegiality and aimed at profit generation rather than knowledge for its own sake or public service enfold public universities into the field of commerce.

Multiple factors contribute to the development of neoliberal universities. One is the internationalisation agenda, which entails multiple components including the internationalisation of the student body, facilitating faculty exchange and the internationalisation of the curriculum. While the internationalisation agenda could encourage UK universities to develop programmes that cater for a range of different students from different cultural backgrounds and engage in co-producing ‘global’ knowledge, overwhelmingly, it centres on bringing international students, particularly those from the global south, to UK universities as a means to generate “a much-needed income” (Bennell and Pearce, 2003, p.215; also in Altbach and Knight, 2007). Fees from international students (which excludes EU students) make up over 14% of university income (Universities UK, 2014). UK higher education is a major contributor the educational export industry. Its commercial niche capitalises on UK education as a product and

the ‘UK brand’ as one associated with globally recognised quality, which Sidhu (2006) critically argues, generates and plays on a discourse of the relative superiority of Western education and knowledge. Crude commercial logic appears to override Sidhu’s concern. According to a Universities UK report published in March 2017, the UK is second most popular choice for international students after the US. In 2014-2015 EU and non-EU international students contributed significantly to the UK economy overall as they, their family, friends and visitors created around £25.8 billion in gross output through spending on and off campus (Universities UK, 2017).

Overall, internationalisation is a multi-layered set of complex processes. In different regions, it is practised for different reasons and driven by a range of logics. Historically, for example, internationalisation practices in the UK focused on cultural exchange programmes driven by learning outcomes (Altbach & Knight, 2007). However, in an era where for commercial reasons institutions are driven by revenue-seeking opportunities, for UK, USA, Australia and Canadian universities in particular, internationalisation is a key strategy to generate revenue by charging international students high fees (Altbach and Knight, 2007). Within this context, Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka (2006) argue, UK universities are no longer just competing among themselves for students, but against US, Australian and Canadian universities. This, in turn, drives UK universities to actively market UK higher education and participate in global recruitment campaigns for international students.

The brand identity of UK universities is an important vehicle for enterprise, competition and profit (Ball, 2012). This identity enables institutions to position themselves in the HEI marketplace in order to effectively attract new student-clientele and commercial partners; a key component of this brand is the international character of a university (e.g. UCL as London’s Global University). Scholars critical of the marketisation of UK HEIs argue that market processes are dynamic, complex and affect both the physical and social structures of universities (Komljenovic and Robertson, 2016). For example, marketisation affects how academics see themselves and students, the way funding is distributed as increasingly universities invest in branding, producing university leaflets and promotional materials, and the social relationships within the institution and between the institution and the outside world. The pervasiveness of these marketing practices and established norms for competition between universities (for

students, researchers, research income etc.), leads Maringe and Gibbs (2009, p.163) to conclude that “adopting a marketing orientation is no longer an optional choice in higher education”. Furthermore, marketing strategies are increasingly internal as well as external, meaning that academics as university employees are encouraged to “promot[e] the university through their own work tasks and performances” (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2010, p.216). They add, the financial imperatives driving commercial marketing practices in universities has produced two key effects: an orientation towards a ‘student as customer’ model and a new conceptualisation of the university as a business where curricula are centred on student employment and satisfaction (Maringe and Gibbs, 2009).

At the level of the university, there are multiple marketing frames or rationales that create and shape the relationship between a university and a student. These relationships are built prior to students joining universities, during their studies and after they graduate. Each stage in the university-student relationship speaks to a different rationale within an overarching framework of the neoliberal university e.g. attracting fee-paying students, increasing the global reputation and reach vis-a-vis other universities and building strategic relationships with future sponsors e.g. through alumni giving, which makes up an important part of financing for universities (Stephenson and Yerger, 2014). Moreover, loyal students and alumni might become university brand ambassadors and affect the recruitment of new students in a virtuous financial cycle. Overall, it is becoming clear that universities see students not only as learners but increasingly as customers procuring a service.

While neoliberalism is strongly integrated in contemporary higher education practices, this paradigm does not go unchallenged. The neoliberal university produces a tension on the vision of a university’s core purpose and resistance to casting students as customers. Maringe and Gibbs (2009), who discuss the concept of pro-education marketing, vociferously argue that education rather than the market should play the main role in shaping relations between students and the university. The authors caution that students should not be seen as regular customers as higher education is not a business in the same mould as other types of business. It has a higher social purpose, though ultimately can benefit from some marketing strategies that are commonly used to generate efficiency in other business sectors. Ball (2016) also argues that, reflecting on Foucault’s writing on resistance, there are sites of refusal within neoliberal settings,

The point is that in neoliberal economies, sites of government and points of contact are also sites for the possibility of refusal. However, the starting point for a politics of refusal is the site of subjectivity. It is a struggle over and against what it is we have become, what it is that we do not want to be. (Ball, 2016, p.1143)

This means, marketing messages of universities and specific programmes could serve as sites of contestation on the role of the neoliberal university and could offer a platform for different representations of disciplines such as ‘development’ and encourage conceptualisations of students as other than ‘customers’.

### 3. Approaches to marketing to potential students in HEIs

A review of salient literature on marketing approaches within HEIs reveals three key frames to understand how neoliberal universities approach marketing themselves to students, and the conceptualisations of students therein. While we recognise that primarily students are conceptualised as learners in teaching and learning discourse within academia, the purpose of this section is to outline how neoliberalism is redefining this traditional idea of the student and the relationships between the university and the student. The marketing frames that are used to sell UK universities to students are: brand recognition, a discourse on the creation of future global workers, and an emphasis on a degree as a product that is bought and sold in a business transaction. In the process of implementing these marketing frames, students are made brand ambassadors, 'global' workers and transactional customers.

#### 3.1 Marketing through brand recognition

As discussed in the previous section, the marketisation of higher education is a complex phenomenon that is taking place across global higher education. It changes how universities function and is reshaping how universities communicate and build relationships with students. Since universities are competing for the custom of fee-paying students, they are expected to develop their own niche identity and actively engage in branding. Branding, image creation and reputation management are not new concepts and are very well developed in the US HEI context as part of an essential commercial strategy (e.g. Jevons, 2006). Similarly, in the UK context, the concept of brand management in higher education, for reasons including as part of sound commercial strategy, is very well documented (e.g. Chapleo, 2005; 2010; Chapleo et al. 2011). While different definitions of marketisation and branding have been used overtime and across different countries, for the purposes of this study, by 'the brand' we mean the organisational image created by a university for its outreach and external communications.

There is a clear relationship between the branding capacities of a university, its academic reputation and financial capabilities, the latter, Klassen (2002) argues in the US context, means lower-ranked universities are at a disadvantage in promoting themselves when compared to top-ranked schools. In the UK, emerging institutions are competing between each other and against older institutions that hold

well-established reputations primarily for research, which affects faculty and student recruitment as it is linked to the perceived quality and kudos of particular institutions. This suggests, there is a marketability to being associated with a university branded as 'research excellent', for example. This is particularly interesting in the case of students who may not actively contribute to any research output but are courted through university branding to associate themselves with places with strong research reputations.

University brands can also capitalise on their locations with the name of the host town or city reflected in the name of the university. Chapleo (2005) argues that successful university branding campaigns (in terms of student recruitment) make the most of the desirability of living in a cosmopolitan city (London), a historic quaint city (Bath), a musical and culturally rich city (Liverpool) etc. That is, they ride on the wider brand recognition of place to sell the university to students, even if the university itself is not, in the case of the University of Bath for example, either historic or quaint. Beech's (2014) work imaginative geographies similarly argues that for international students especially, perceptions of place drive decision making. These perceptions are forged not only by university branding and marketing campaigns, but also media (films, music etc.) and their own social networks.

Beyond student recruitment, university branding continues within the university in attempts to engage current students as brand ambassadors. In a literal sense, this is observable through branded products in university shops where one can purchase clothes or stationery with the university logo. More subtly, Balaji, Roy and Sadeque (2016) argue, good and well-developed university branding campaigns, "... help students better understand the university characteristics and personality, and this motivates them to engage in university supportive activities" such as volunteering on open days (p.3031). Based on their research in Malaysia, Balaji et al (2016) explore the role of university branding in shaping student identity. The study was grounded on social identity theory by Tajfel which states that individual identities are shaped as a result of interaction with other social actors. They conclude that students develop psychological ties with the university brand and subsequently engage in activities and advocacy on behalf of the university, arguing, "Brand personality allows for differentiation and competitive positioning and enables the students to identify themselves with the university and to express their personality" through the university (Balaji, Roy and Sad-

equé, 2016, p.3025). Studies on consumer-company relationships, reinforce this idea that customers (or students in our case) develop a strong association with a brand that reflects their beliefs and self-perception (Bhattacharya and Sankar, 2003), and in turn the brand can come to mould their self-perception. Consequently, if universities brand themselves as global changemakers or agents of international development, students wanting to associate themselves with such vision may be drawn to the brand.

Such a focus on the brand and branding activities of universities reveals a limitation to imagining and actively communicating the wider social role of a university to educate, challenge and produce knowledge. Particularly, as students may be willing to be associated with a brand built on marketing messages of exclusivity and prestige, or friendliness and cheer, rather than other factors including the quality of teaching and the extent to which they expect to be challenged by a critical educational experience.

### 3.2 Marketing that creates future ‘global workers’

UK universities position themselves as ‘global universities’ that offer world-class education and globally competitive degrees. Canaan and Shumar (2008) argue that due to globalisation, universities in the global north are considered the key site for training workers for the ‘global knowledge economy’. Consequently, universities are actively participating in teaching cross-cultural skills that equip a 21st century global worker able to work in international teams, hold a cultural awareness of global issues and develop a global sense of civic mindedness (Martin and Griffiths, 2012; Altbach, 2002). It is commonly understood that by studying at UK universities, UK students are able to receive a global education ‘at home’ due to a perceived high quality and global nature of UK education. That many UK universities are highly ranked in global league tables reinforces the idea that they are global higher education leaders. Although, it is worth querying the extent to which such league tables are global in their capture of universities around the world, and acknowledge, as Amsler and Bolsmann (2012, p.283) argue, the politics underlying ranking systems in an age of global competitiveness where such systems service “elite networked institutions of global capital” and generate crude interpretations on the value of education.

A key aspect to making ‘global universities’ that in turn make students ‘global workers’ is embedded in the internationalisation agenda. Specifically, curricula that value and emphasise knowledge of other places and people as a way to mimic exposure to cultural diversity, a classroom that introduces UK students to multinational working environments (Haigh, 2010; Montgomery, 2009), and the very presence of international students on campus (Luxon and Peelo, 2009). International students are not

only conceptualised by UK universities as economic players that generate revenue and contribute to the host country’s economy as discussed in Part 1 of the paper, they are an instrument for marketing the international and global credentials of universities. Such students embody a multicultural and international learning environment that contributes to the diversity of the student body and helps to substantiate claims that the university itself is international and holds a global attraction (Peterson, Briggs, Dreasher, Horner and Nelson, 1999). A more critical point, prompted by Warikoo’s (2016) discussion of ‘the diversity bargain’ and the presence of non-white students on campuses in the UK and US, is that the presence of diverse bodies reinforces a selling point for ethnic majority white students (national or international) who are able to procure a “diverse learning experience” packaged and sold by universities. Warikoo’s analysis draws together ‘race’ and internationalisation as a fetishized commodity in selling diverse student bodies as a means for all students to gain a competitive advantage in the workplace.

For international students, being sold an idea of a ‘world-class education’ where they will learn skills that will give them a competitive edge in their country of origin, they are also being sold an idea of the relative superiority of a UK education over any other kind. Maringe and Carter (2007), argue the idea of a superior education is a main driving force behind education migration from countries in the global south to the global north, leading Maringe and Gibbs (2009, p. 90) to argue that when it comes to UK higher education, “The colonial political domination experiment thus continues in a more subtle form in the post colonial era”. The argument substantiating a post-colonial lens on the conceptualisation of UK knowledge as superior draws heavily from Ravinder Sidhu’s (2006) work on the marketisation and globalisation of UK HEIs and her visual and textual analysis of UK HEI marketing material. In her work, Sidhu (2006, pp.vii-viii) “recasts international education as a set of geopolitical and geoeconomic engagements with colonial roots”, arguing that international education illuminates the operation of power and knowledge in constituting contemporary post-colonial relations.

One of the three areas that Sidhu (2006) explores is the marketisation of international education by UK and US universities that “desire [...] overseas credentials in the postcolonial world” through a “First World education export industry” (p.ix). Sidhu demonstrates that global power relations shape the desire for an Anglo-American education from people across the globe, but especially from the global south and east. This desire may be borne of a savvy reading of a global marketplace where an Anglo-American education assists with employability, and/or continuing ideas of such education as ‘modern’. Sidhu identifies the notion of modernity as intrinsic to the export of UK education and overt attempts to ‘modernise’ other parts of the world through programmes such as Fulbright and the Education UK campaign, the latter arising from the Brand

Report in the 1999 as a drive by the UK government to export HEIs, attract international students, and create UK students that are globally aware (Sidhu, 2002). In both of these, elites from other parts of the world are disciplined in socio-cultural norms of learning and thinking within an Anglo-American framework and in ways sympathetic to an Anglo-American framework. Sidhu (2006, p.12) adds, "the ostensible function of colonial education and the post-independence educational exchanges that followed was to serve as a political and economic investment. Discursively packaged as a gift to be transmitted from educated, civilised colonizer to culturally and educationally deficient colonized subject", this gift produced a continued "colonised imagination" (2006, p.12) where one is an educator of 'the Other' (also in Sidhu, 2002, p.24).

Selling UK HEIs on a discourse of 'global education' that functionally creates 'global workers' is premised on graduates of British universities potentially serving as business links abroad and conduits to extend British soft power internationally (HEPI, 2015). In this scenario students are conceptualised as potential cultural ambassadors or soft power agents in executing their role as global workers that tie UK interests to those of a student's country of origin in the case of international students or place of work for domestic students working in a global marketplace.

### 3.3 Marketing that selling degrees as a product

The neoliberal university sells both a direct product to students in the form of a degree or certificate, and indirectly sells social capital to join a global elite network. Thus, universities around the world are engaged in student recruitment activities that range from high school visits to online campaigns that sell the university and its programmes to eligible individuals. These campaigns to recruit students and the orientation of student support once they arrive, Maringe and Gibbs (2-9, p.163) note, conceptualise students as customers. They write,

Issues of value for money are gradually taking centre stage in students' union charters and campaigns for the improvement of services and quality of educational provision. Thus, rather than remaining at the periphery of decision-making, students are increasingly becoming an integral part of the core business of universities. Whether it is the design of curriculum, the planning of a variety of service encounters, library and accommodation services among others, student input and views become integral to the university's decision-making and strategic planning. A customer focus will thus revolutionize the way universities conduct their core business of teaching, learning, research, and community service.

Within this conceptualisation of student as customers, it is unclear how universities meaningfully approach or fulfil any social commitment to provide opportunities to students from all backgrounds regardless of their social class, race, gender, disability status or ethnicity, as this may not be demanded by either a majority of students or students in positions of power (Warikoo, 2016). The neoliberalisation and commercialisation of higher education produces a tension that may compromise the social role of a university and potentially exacerbate existing social inequity, since the degree is essentially a commodity to improve the quality of life of a particular individual, as opposed to a social collective (as argued by Harkavy, 2006); that is, a degree is a personal investment for personal gains.

In light of the internationalisation agenda and focused recruitment of international fee-paying students, the social consequences of the student as customer model stretch beyond the UK. Fees for UK universities are significantly higher for international students than home/EU students, irrespective of whether the student's home country is defined as low-income or middle-income. This funding model tends to skew admittance to UK universities to international students either able to afford studying in the UK through personal means, or students who hold sufficient social and human capital to apply for and receive scholarships. Consequently, creating an elite education experience in the UK which affects the creation of global elites and recreation of national elites around the world.

The conceptualisation of students as customers is the most contested of all three conceptualisations explored here. Clayson and Haley (2005) argue this model lacks ethics and a long-term vision. It produces students who approach learning as a service provided by teachers, where any failure to understand or meet academic standards is taken as poor service delivery and noted in customer complaints, or their equivalent such as student satisfaction surveys. It can produce teachers who play to student satisfaction (e.g. setting relatively easy assignments). It distorts the traditional idea of a university as a space to challenge one's ideas and worldview. They argue, such critical spaces are minimised in a neoliberal university because curriculum are designed to satisfy customers and meet their expectations which may not be the same as providing challenging, inconvenient and at times radical ideas that do not produce feelings of satisfaction among students. Clayson and Haley (2005, p.6) ultimately suggest a new model to conceptualise students as "a collaborative educational partner", signifying a shift from educating the individual to something bigger where, "the function of a university or college would be to advance the interests and goals of students, faculty, staff, parents, government, and the society as a whole" (Clayson and Haley, 2005, p.6). A re-conceptualisation of students not as customers, has major implications on programme and university marketing and would require a de-linking between paying fees and a highly individualised

idea of 'value for money'. Unfortunately, this topic is not broached by literature on the marketing of HEIs, which overwhelmingly focuses on broad trends and incremental improvements to HEI marketing models.

The three marketing frames explored here: marketing through brand recognition, creating future global workers and selling degrees as a product, are complementary and occur simultaneously in service of the neoliberal university. Each frame conceptualises students as variously brand ambassadors, global workers and customers and in doing so speak to three key neoliberal values: individualism, competition both between universities and between students to support a global free market. That said, we acknowledge that students are not passive actors and participate in resisting neoliberal practices, as exemplified by tuition fee protests and the 2016/17 boycott of the National Student Satisfaction survey. None-

theless, we do not see the influence of student resistant on university marketing itself in either the content of marketing messages, medium of delivery or target audience. That is, despite student protests, the marketing of HEIs continues broadly within these three frames. Having outlined how these frames drive UK universities to market themselves to students and the conceptualisations of students therein, we turn now to how 'development' is marketed or sold within the development industry. Crucially, current literature does not include universities within debates on how conceptualisations of 'development' are made and sold, despite the central role played by universities in creating development workers. Therefore, part 3 of the paper draws out key conceptualisations of 'development' sold to the audiences (or buyers) of 'development' messages, in order to later connect in part 4 what messages are sold, to whom and for what purpose in the marketing of development studies in UK HEIs.

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## 4. How 'development' is sold in the development industry

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The development industry refers to a well-established system and actors dedicated to a concerted effort to intervene in global, national and local affairs to bring about an idea of 'progress'. Such actors include bilateral donors such as the UK Department for International Development (DFID), multilateral agencies such as the World Bank, international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) such as Oxfam, Save the Children and ActionAid, and large global development consultancy firms such as Adam Smith International and ICF. On the fringes of the industry are traditional private sector actors that are increasingly drawn upon to deliver 'development' under public-private partnerships or through their corporate social responsibility agenda. Develtere (2012), uses the language of a 'development market' to describe the rationalities that drive these actors within the development industry. He argues compellingly that 'development' is a messy market with numerous actors, that common entry to the market is 'everyone wants to help' (in ways which are never fully defined), and as in any market, its actors engage in competition for resources and power to implement their vision. The language of markets, while certainly appropriate to any industry, is particularly interesting when used to describe the development industry as it suggests that 'development' is a product that is created, traded and consumed by the industry. The language also spotlights the idea that 'development' as a concept or as a vision is somehow bought and sold.

Numerous authors, particularly those employing critical lenses of postcolonialism and post-development, have argued that while there may be some variation in specific conceptualisations of 'development' by actors charged with operationalising the concept in the form of development policy, programmes and projects, since the 1990s neoliberalism has remained the main theoretical framework directing practices of 'development' (Escobar, 2012; Peet and Hartwick, 2015; Power, 2000; Wilson, 2015). That is, neoliberal logic guides overarching ideas of 'development', which Martin and Griffin (2012) argue, is expressed in two forms: the political and the economic. Political neoliberalism values agency and individualistic freedoms in the pursuit of self-actualisation. In this rendering of 'development' the interventions of the development industry are paternalistic and focus on improving or empowering individuals in the global south to achieve a form of social justice. Economic neoliberalism is an approach to development that focuses on trade, free market economics and the expansion of global capital to achieve

macro targets such as halving poverty, by creating conditions where organisations and individuals achieve their highest potential and realise progress through competition, engagement with the free market and increases to an individual's productivity or capacity for labour.

In both of these manifestations of neoliberal development is an embrace of a dualism that states that one part of the world is developing, emerging and progressing, while the other part is developed and has presumably emerged and progressed socially and economically enough to be in a position to intervene to improve so called developing countries (Martin and Griffin, 2012). This message is contingent on processes of 'othering', which Said (1978) describes as a dichotomy between the Occident (west) and Orient (east), where the latter is inferior to the former, and this inferiority is explained through racialised and racist discourse that produces a 'White Man's burden' to bring his rationality, order and progress to other lands in need of maturation (1978, pp. 226-227).

The embrace of a development dualism and the subsequent logic of development interventions is remarkably devoid of historic explanation of the role of imperialism, slavery and neo-colonialism in creating profound material and political conditions of deep and lasting inequality both between nation-states and within them. One of the consequences of which may be an imperviousness to the ways in which the superiority of western society and a racialised ranking or hierarchy of 'progress' can be coded into contemporary development interventions. For example, Wilson (2015, p.804) argues that conceptualisations of 'development' within the current neoliberal theoretical framework must be understood in relation to imperialism and 'race'. In her discussion of the World Bank's (2011) new initiative of 'Gender Equality as Smart Economics', she argues women in the global south, and particularly girls who are currently fashioned as individual agents of change (see the Girl Effect), have been constructed as "hyper-industrious" and "entrepreneurial" to produce the,

central trope of twenty-first century neoliberalism. Just as colonial representations of contented and productive women workers in colonial enterprises 'symbolically affirmed the need for empire' (Ramarthy, 2003), so these contemporary representations implicitly confirm the 'empowering' potential of neoliberal globalization and erase questions of structural injustice (Wilson, 2015, p.809).

This context is central to understanding the power and potency of how 'development' is created and sold in a crowded development industry that competes for the public attention, funds and political capital necessary to implement visions of 'development'. It would be an error to think that neoliberal conceptualisations of development are all alike, rather, postcolonial and other critical literature on development suggests that within an overarching neoliberal framework that individualises and ahistoricizes responsibilities for 'development', the product is continually reinvented for different audiences over time and space, though without fundamentally challenging ideas of individual responsibility (both to improve others and to self-improve) and narrowly equating progress with economic gains in a universalising discourse devoid of 'race', anti-colonial and feminist politics (White, 2002; Kothari, 2006; Wilson, 2011; Wilson 2015).

Within the development industry, Smith and Yanacopoulos (2004) argue that there are many public faces of 'development' and that these change over time in order to better mediate relationships between northern development agents (including individual donors or volunteers) and poor people in the global south. We take their idea that northern development agents use visual and textual codes of people and places in the south to convey meaning and ideas of 'development' to northern audiences, and draw on other literature that examines the work of representations in 'selling' development i.e. we explore what representations of 'development' can do for different northern development agents, the rationales for particular representations and their effects on primarily northern publics. We do so by not just looking at textual representations of development, but taking a cue from Power (2000), aim to situate representations of development within their wider political and economic contexts in order to better understand the production of development knowledge.

Specifically, we explore the marketing of multi-actor global development campaigns (such as Make Poverty History); the marketing efforts of international NGOs in terms of their advocacy campaigns, partnerships and fundraising; the use of celebrity advocacy for development causes (e.g. George Clooney's Save Darfur Coalition); and the sale and purchase of ethical products (e.g. RED and TOMS shoes) as mediums for where ideas of 'development' are sold to non-expert northern audiences. These mediums reflect an array of more contemporary 'development' conceptualisations beginning in the late 1990s that mark a conscious marketing turn away from development as northern charity to 'development' as northern activism, cosmopolitanism and global ethical engagement (Cameron and Haanstra, 2008). We use these mediums to examine: what is sold? How? And, to what effect? The focus on non-expert northern publics is appropriate for this study as it allows us to draw inferences to potential students of development studies who are likely to be

keen supporters of 'development' and unlikely to yet be knowledgeable of critical perspectives of 'development', poverty, inequality and social justice.

An overview of literature on marketing development in the global north suggests five key ideas of 'development' that are sold through the mechanisms outlined above to northern publics: 'development' as a positive image for a northern individual to be associated with, a commodity, an act or representation of global citizenship, an exercise in northern nation branding and taking a broader long-view perspective, 'development' as an overly simplistic, racist and misogynist trope.

#### **4.1 'Development' as an image to be associated with**

Most authors writing on the marketing and branding of 'development' for a northern public agree that since the 1990s there has been a conscious shift in the marketing efforts of NGOs in particular. From images of 'development' to northern publics that capitalise on 'poverty porn' (Nathanson, 2013), we have the projection of positive images that an individual in the north wishes to be aligned with such as an image of 'development' that is culturally popular, positive and 'sexy' (Cameron and Haanstra, 2008). This shift occurred within a larger change in development thinking. Globally, development agents' awareness of the failures of structural adjustment policies implemented in the 1980s and 90s in the global south was growing, spurring a new idea of 'neoliberalism with a human face'. The term entered common development parlance to explain the abandonment of structural adjustment policies, yet the retention and popularisation of neoliberal values that claimed concern for the poor and thus the need for economic growth in the global south driven by productive industries and highly productive individuals. In the UK, this period coincided with the creation of the DFID and what felt like a new political movement led by Tony Blair's 'New' Labour government elected in 1997. Blair's government sought to change the ways in which Britain understood its role in the world through changes to British self-image and self-projection, often through the careful use of celebrity (e.g. the 'Cool Britannia' phase of British pop culture and its export). Within this, British foreign policy, where aid is a foreign policy tool, was to be morally driven, and education policy focused on creating Britons that were globally conscious citizens (discussed further under heading 3) (Biccum, 2007; 2011).

The traditional discourses of development and the framing of the development subject utilised by northern development agents then had to change in the 1990s. The creation of third world subjects helpless and hopeless unable to manage their own lives and without agency and voice (Nathanson, 2013), gave way somewhat to



capable and hopeful people, though only if empowered by northern agents to be so and still without agency and voice in northern marketing materials. This shift however, was partial. Images of a desperately poor black or brown child, staring straight into camera and thus to 'you' the northern donor and pleading for money, remain ubiquitous (see Figure 4.1).

Nathanson (2013) explains the endurance of these images and ideas. She writes,

Portrayals like these are no accidents. The rationale goes like this: the happy pictures do not attract money. Nor do complex explanations of why people are suffering. And for agencies in the business of aid, it's the dollars that count. What matters is that people connect emotionally and that they perceive easy solutions. (p. 106).

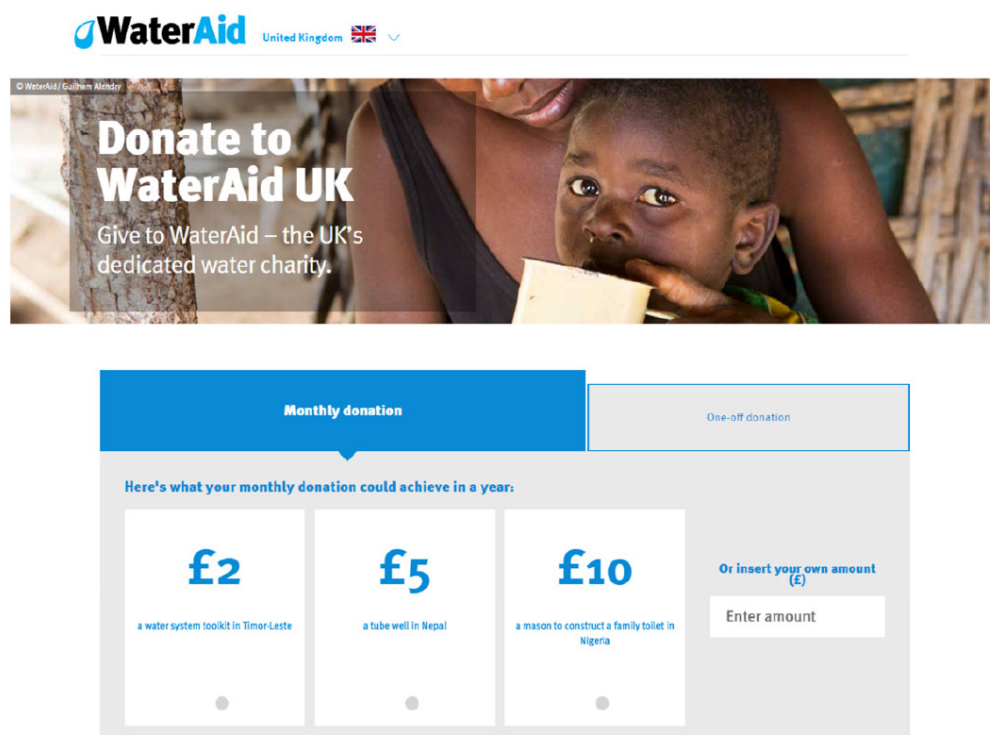
Thus it is more accurate to state not that northern development agents have shifted their discourses of 'development', but that there are now a wider range of approaches to communicating the idea of 'development' and its subjects utilised by northern development actors.

The main new approach to selling 'development' to northern publics, Cameron and Haanstra (2008, p. 1482) argue, is a "focus on the identity of Northern 'selves' rather than Southern 'others'". Daley (2013), Biccum (2011) and Fernández-Aballí (2016) argue that the focus on the

northern self in development marketing illustrates how neoliberal subjectivities in the north are made. These subjectivities refer to a privatised response to development crisis and an associated commodified action such as buying ethically, donating and being an activist as defined by northern development agents, in ways that continue to make invisible structural inequalities. The northern self is made "sophisticated, affluent, cosmopolitan and sexy" (Cameron and Haanstra, 2008, p. 1476) through their generosity as donors, supporters and consumers of a worthy cause. Increased consumption then becomes an ethical position for the neoliberal individual.

The making of this northern self is particularly apparent in the use of celebrity in global issue-based campaigns. Over the past 10 years, Brockington (2014) argues, the relationship between celebrity and northern development organisation has become more professional, organised and systematic. With each party clear on what the other provides them and with each party able to trade on the brand recognition of the other. Examining the use of celebrity in humanitarianism, Daley (2013) argues that northern celebrities such as Angelina Jolie, George Clooney and Bono (who tend to be identified as 'global' celebrities) are themselves branded commodities used to frame humanitarian crisis for northern public consumption<sup>1</sup>. We draw on her in-depth examination of George Clooney's Save Darfur Coalition (SDC)<sup>2</sup> and the Kony2012 campaign by Invisible Children, a US NGO, to illustrate the making of the northern self.

Figure 4.1. The donation page of the INGO WaterAid. Source: screengrab of wateraid.org/uk, 08/08/17



Using celebrities to sell development demands establishing credibility to the celebrity-cause relationship. The celebrity must be presented as knowledgeable of the cause, and the cause must benefit from the celebrity's brand of trustworthiness or cultural popularity. Clooney, in SDC, had to establish his expertise of Darfur. He did, as other celebrities do (Brockington, 2014), through a highly choreographed field visit to Sudan with a film crew. The material produced worked to make an "Imaginative, geographically distant and racial[ly] privileg[ed] [account, which] along with charismatic status, gives credence to whatever narratives [the celebrity] present of their return" (Daley, 2013 p.384). Being able to draw upon their very limited personal experience, the northern audience trusts this account. They are also willing to trust this account because where the site of celebrity activism is Africa, in northern public imaginations no case needs to be made for why Africa is deserving of aid and assistance. Mahmood Mamdani's discussion of the SDC further argues that countries selected for celebrity campaigns are selected on the basis on which they are palatable for US (or other northern) citizens. Mamdani argues it is easier to campaign for Darfur than Iraq or Afghanistan, because US citizens can feel "a largeness of heart" and not responsibility and guilt. (cited in Daley, 2013, p.382). The cult of Clooney engendered by centring a humanitarian response on 'his' coalition initiative serves to decontextualise humanitarian crises, suggests that 'politically neutral' outside networks are best placed to resolve complex regional crisis, and that heroic individuals can lead solutions, an idea that lies within the neoliberal framing of development as self-responsibility and individual action. As Daley notes, this is "much to the detriment of local agency and alternative contextual readings" (2013, p.382). Clooney's credibility with northern audiences, as an expert knowledgeable on Darfur proven by videos and endorsement by coalition members (who included humanitarian experts and organisations such as Amnesty International), means that his brand is used to endorse a position or cause on to which a northern public can express their own 'political activism', which the Save Darfur Campaign webpage helpfully suggests takes the form of hosting film screenings/events, lobbying politicians and fundraising (see Save Darfur, 2017).

The Kony2012 campaign illustrates further how northern non-expert publics can express their 'political activism' in this new type of development marketing. The Kony2012 video was produced and distributed by a US NGO, with celebrity endorsements of the video and its aims (to capture Joseph Kony) accumulating after the video was released. Its endorsement by celebrities with a strong brand in trustworthiness, like Oprah Winfrey and Ellen DeGeneres, gave the campaign publicity and legitimacy as a virtuous cause. Daley (2013) identifies four types of response to the campaign for northern publics: (i) consumption (though buying bracelets

and other merchandise); (ii) donation (to the charity Invisible Children), (iii) night protests led by young people (not about youth issues in their own place, but in northern Uganda a distant and imagined 'other'), and (iv) clickism (a response that speaks to the important marketing influence of social media, and that has pejoratively been termed 'slacktivism', as being seen to be politically aware does not require any meaningful action beyond sharing or 'liking' online). These four responses, Daley argues, were possible because of the strategic use of celebrity to give the message legitimacy, the simple narrative of good and bad individuals and an easy solution of finding and arresting Kony (without any context of the political economy of Uganda, the complexity of war, and government and African Union's ongoing military operations in northern Uganda and neighbouring countries), and the presentation of northern governments as the solution and northern individuals as responsible for raising awareness and acting to influence their own government.

The feel-good association for northern selves (both the celebrity and non-celebrity), stands in contrast to the notion of 'development as charity' that tapped into northern guilt at watching images of starvation from relatively comfortable homes. Instead, giving and generosity of time, money and perceived influence are values aligned with a northern sense of cosmopolitanism. Critically, Cameron and Haanstra (2008) suggest that the construction of the northern donor to development, does not mark any significant change in the imagination of 'development' or the global south. They observe a reversal in what is made implicit and what is made explicit. For example, a focus on southern need and want, implicitly creates a north that is full and should therefore be generous. In making development 'sexy' and constructing a northern donor that is cosmopolitan, the northern self is explicit and makes implicit the southern recipient's parochialism. In the making of neoliberal subjectivities in the north, the north-south dualism exists intact, othering still takes place and partial and situated accounts of development are still generated in this new approach to selling 'development'. Fernández-Aballí (2016, p.365) goes further in her analysis of INGO advocacy campaigns targeting northern audiences to argue,

the representation of the "northern-based self" within INGO advocacy campaigns as protectors, saviors, and liberators of the "southern other" depicts both an agency and moral superiority which perpetuates neocolonial imaginaries.

Critically, she asks a question that we echo where 'development' is an image or ideal for a northern public to be associated with, "Are INGOs promoting a discourse, which confuses the need for self-indulgence with the capability of resistance, solidarity, and endurance of [the] oppressed [...]?" (2016, p.373).

## 4.2 'Development' as commodity

Related to the previous framing of development as an image to be associated with and the making of neoliberal subjectivities through corresponding actions that include the purchase of wristbands, ribbons, t-shirts and so on in order to raise awareness, 'development' itself is made a commodity, that is an idea or object that is traded. Ponte and Richey (2014) coined the term "Brand Aid" to refer to this phenomenon of branding development problems and the people they affect in packages sold to northern audiences through simplified storytelling and products they can consume.

The purveyors of these products include traditional development actors (e.g. INGOs), non-traditional development actors (e.g. social enterprises with an explicit developmental focus) and private multinational corporations engaging with development issues through their corporate social responsibility agenda. All three types of actor utilise celebrity and partnership among each other to grant the product and its claim to ethical development legitimacy and credibility, without being in anyway contingent on legitimacy granted by the subjects of 'development'. We draw on analysis of TOMS shoes (Ponte and Richey, 2014), RED products (Richey and Ponte, 2008; Cameron and Haanstra, 2008), and the selling of pink things for women's causes (Sweeney and Killoran-McKibbin, 2016) to illustrate how 'development' is packaged as a commodity and explore its effects.

TOMS shoes is a social enterprise where the purchase of a pair of shoes in the global north triggers a corporate donation summed up by the simple marketing messages: 'With every product you purchase, TOMS will help a person in need' and 'buying a pair, gives a pair'. Over time, the business has expanded from providing shoes in the global south, to other development goods like water and sanitation services. Ponte and Richey (2014) argue that 'development' as the cause tied to a product is designed and marketed in a top-down way that rests on the imagination of northern audiences of needy people in the global south, coveting or needing goods easily available in the global north, and simultaneously, the imagination of northern audiences of themselves as helpful, giving and beneficent in a globalised marketplace where consumers can make a difference through their consumption choices. TOMS shoes in particular uses storytelling in simple prose to sell their product, this is in marked contrast to advertising that focuses on the product (the shoes) itself. Ponte and Richey (2014) show that TOMS shoes (and RED) achieve the effect of creating a development product through cause related marketing, an approach to marketing that comes from business studies in which private sector companies associate their products with a moral good. Citing studies that suggests cause related marketing is not financially lucrative for companies, the authors probe its value and find that 'Brand Aid' incorporates both "material value and fantasy" (2014, p.76). The fantasy element refers to the

symbolic and ethical value to 'development' triggered by a northern consumer purchase. The material value to corporations exists not just in profits, but in cases where the goods being sold are socially irresponsible or environmentally dubious, companies can create a better image for the industry cheaply (Ponte and Richey, 2014).

The argument that 'development' is a commodity trading in material value and fantasy is echoed in the case of RED products. As with the idea of 'development' as an image to be associated with, RED is grounded in the cult of celebrity as saviour; it was launched by Bono at Davos in 2006. It is an umbrella brand where traditional corporations such as Gap, Apple and American Express launch a RED product line and the profits from this support health projects in Africa. It is a private initiative that serves to privatise aid by promoting individual and corporate northern donors to use their "status, capitalism and conspicuous consumption in the name of 'helping'" (Richey and Ponte, 2008, pp. 713-714). Through the purchase of everyday goods from well-known northern corporations, northern individuals are encouraged to be 'ethical' consumers, without any real change to their consumption patterns. The marketing of RED products tends to focus on the quality of the product and celebrity endorsement, making it different from other ethical products that use systems of certification to validate their ethical claims, leading Richey and Ponte (2008, p. 723) to argue that,

Product RED is fetishist in the sense that it embeds information about the 'quality' of the product in the most powerful instrument of codification—branding [of the celebrity and the product] —without actually releasing significant information on the trade and production relations that are behind these products ... The beauty of this celebrity simplification is that it provides the possibility that everyday people can engage in low-cost heroism.

In 'development' as commodity, the education of the consumer on development issues is secondary to immediate consumption and a feel good association for the northern donor. Cameron and Haanstra (2008) suggest this model of consumption produces a person that is somewhere between a one-off donor and a less than activist, in that their knowledge of the cause tends to be limited though they are interested and possibly able to retell the narrative they were sold. The forms of awareness that are raised are decidedly compatible with capitalist modes of consumption, and devoid of any structural analysis of patterns of global trade and modes of production. Richey and Ponte (2008, p. 713) add, in the context of raising a new type of awareness of Africa and its public health in the minds of northern consumers through RED products, there exists a historical reimagining of the role of northern consumer and southern producer that disconnects the two from the legacy of slavery, colonialism and resource extraction for northern consumption from the continent.

This pattern is also found in cause related marketing where the aim is not to sell corporate products, but to explicitly raise awareness of an issue through the purchase and wearing of red and pink ribbons, for example. That is, consumption is still framed as a simple individualised solution to an issue that helps to make generous and supportive northern selves. Drawing from Sweeney and Killoran-McKibbin's (2016) analysis of cause related marketing, raising awareness of women's issues and the selling of pink things in Canada, we draw out a deeper insight into the problematic construction of the northern self that is made through a somewhat myopic cause related marketing approach. The lessons are salient for examining the tensions that can arise between marketing theory and what exactly is marketed. Sweeney and Killoran-McKibbin (2016) analyse the sale of pink ribbons for breast cancer awareness among Canadian women and pink infused branding in Plan Canada's 'Because I am a girl' campaign which sought to connect stereotypical experiences of womanhood and girlhood between the global north and south. They found that both campaigns "exploit gender and sexual identities to promote particular forms of consumption and charitable giving", specifically, "they activate, validate, and promote heteronormative gender identities [and] actively engage in traditional and stereotypical feminine ideals while simultaneously adopting a feminist discourse to mobilize their campaigns" (2016, p.458).

For example, the 'Because I am a girl' campaign infantilised all of Plan Canada's women subjects of development and made them girls, relationally making the white Canadian women targeted by the campaign maternal and responsible for others, mobilising representations of women as victims and carers, and racialised tropes of paternalistic white women caring for their black or brown charge. The campaign failed to see the possibility of racially and ethnically diverse Canadian women. Within Canada, the marketing of pink ribbons was accompanied by hyper-sexualised imagery of women's breasts where awareness of self-examination focused on breasts as an icon of feminine sexuality through a heterosexual gaze (Sweeney and Killoran-McKibbin, 2016, p. 463). Furthermore, the use of the colour pink in both campaigns, the authors argue, trades on a "constant connection of the color pink to women's bodies [and] thus effectively racializes the campaign and excludes women of color". They add, "The association of pinkness with women's bodies supports the view of pristine white womanhood, while whiteness, femininity, and wealth are conflated into a singular construction of womanhood [and where] to be non-white, non-feminine, or poor is to be relegated to girlhood." (2016, p. 463). In these examples, cause based marketing not only raised awareness of women's issues and engendered feelings of moral superiority or self-satisfaction in a northern self, it also defined a heteronormative white womanhood and delineated the boundaries of her responsibility, which includes black and brown girls in the global south.

### 4.3 'Development' as global citizenship

Notions of global responsibility among citizens in the north to citizens elsewhere can be traced back to Kipling's 19th century 'White Man's Burden' and beyond, its contemporary manifestation is arguably global citizenship education. Broadly, and in the context of engagement with 'development', global citizenship education refers to learning outcomes that help "enable young people to develop the core competencies which allow them to actively engage with the world, and help to make it a more just and sustainable place" (Oxfam, 2017). It focuses on notions of individual rights and responsibilities, as traditional citizenship education does, but roots these in a globalised and interconnected world. In the UK context, Biccum (2007) argues that with the creation of DFID, a new Labour government in 1997, and with the guiding agenda of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the British government began cultivating a British presence on issues of global governance and global poverty alleviation. A strategy within this was global citizenship education in schools which aimed to produce a British citizenry knowledgeable of other cultures, places and people, with regard for a common humanity and supportive of northern efforts of 'development' in the global south. By producing global citizens, Biccum argues, "the real aim is to produce 'little developers' imbued with the capability to go out and do the developing" (2007, p. 1114). She notes changes in the national curriculum to facilitate this and the production of global citizenship teaching materials by DFID and Oxfam, in particular (though the educational impact of these materials is mixed, see Cameron and Fairbrass, 2004).

Examining the curriculum in greater depth, Martin and Griffiths (2012, p.912) argue, that global citizenship education has teachers "prepare their pupils 'to play an active role as citizens'", which in its global context is interpreted "based on the liberal concept of care". Quoting Jefferess (2008, p.28), they explain that this means (2012, p.912),

The notion of aid, responsibility, and poverty alleviation retain the Other as an object of benevolence. The global citizen is somehow naturally endowed with the ability and inclination to 'help' the Other. To be addressed as a global citizen is to be marked as benevolent.

To Martin and Griffiths, global citizenship education was grounded in the same tired tropes of Othered 'development'-needing people in the global south, and to whom people in the global north had an individualised sense of responsibility. This, Biccum (2011, p.1334) adds, does not promote political literacy of development issues like poverty, inequality and notions of justice, but advocates a model of "entrepreneurialised activism that promotes market-based solutions to development and is aimed at (re)producing neoliberal subjectivity". Though these authors focus on secondary and primary education, there

are obvious connections to higher education too and the role of development studies in creating 'little developers' and global citizens with the capacity, will and self-belief to intervene and bring about change in societies to which they may or may not be members.

In addition to creating workers for the international development industry, as Biccum (2007) argues and Martin and Griffiths (2012) imply, the production of global citizens knowledgeable of global issues, is also deeply tied to an internationalist agenda to create "competitive cosmopolitan subjects" equipped to engage with a global knowledge economy and global employment market (Biccum, 2011, p. 1334). This claim is tied to wider discussions of cosmopolitanism and global citizenship in globalisation literature, which broadly argues that globalisation has the potential to produce global consciousness and cosmopolitan students, but that the workings of globalisation in the education sector and its market-orientated approach and a citizenship curriculum rooted in western liberalism, what tends to be produced are globally-oriented neoliberal subjectivities that in turn create international knowledge workers (e.g. Matthews and Sidhu, 2005). Within this, knowledge of 'development' and consumption of it in ways discussed above, is made as an act of global citizenship for the globally aware northern citizen.

#### 4.4 'Development' as northern nation (re) branding

Where 'development' is sold to make global citizens, it is also sold to make national identities, which Browning (2016) suggests is part of an attempt at nation branding, or rebranding in the case of the UK (Biccum, 2005). Browning (2016) considers three frames to understand the purpose of nation branding in the field of international development drawing on branding and marketing literature. The first is branding to sell a national comparative advantage in order to attract foreign direct investment, this branding frame is applied with reference to the nation-branding of so-called developing countries for better economic growth. The second, is cultural nation branding that is primarily for a domestic audience and is related to the politics of identity. Browning draws on examples from South Africa to illustrate that this type of branding is useful to create a national identity among diverse citizens. This framing is also relevant to the development education activities in the UK launched at the same time as DFID to build ideas of UK citizens as global citizens with an important moral role to play in the world (Biccum, 2007; Martin and Griffiths, 2012). The third branding frame is closely related to public diplomacy, which Browning calls a 'political approach' to nation branding (2016, p.51). This frame is relevant to understanding DFID's conceptualisations of 'development' and its brand power (now branded as UKAid) to Britain's global image in an act of soft power. Browning argues (al-

beit with reference to new aid donors), that the giving of aid is a global marker of a nation's internal competency and ability to give, and enables all aid-giving countries to claim a soft power, not just in the countries that they give aid to, but in the 'international community' with seats and voice in supranational organisations and committees.

In the case of the UK however, as a member of NATO, contributor to the World Bank and with a permanent seat on the UN security council, Browning's explanation for nation-branding through 'development' for soft power does not fully explain the relationship between UK aid and nation branding. Rather it prompts a deeper question: what image is the UK cultivating for itself through 'development' and why?

Power (2000) discusses in-depth the ways in which outward projections of a 'new' Britain were purposefully reimagined and remade in the late 1990s under Tony Blair's Labour government, and that DFID served to encapsulate the 'global moral authority' of a post-colonial Britain, that is, Britain as "being reborn free of an imperial past" (2000, p. 97). Power (2000) argues that ethical global Britain was an image initially substantiated by highly symbolic acts such as Prime Minister Blair issuing apologies for some acts of British colonialism such as producing famine in Ireland (Marks, 1997). Though any moral authority gained by such symbols quickly diminished with political scandals uncovering the illegal sale of arms by the British government to Sierra Leone just a year after Blair's apology to Ireland (BBC, 1998). This, alongside the British government's continuing weapons sales to countries on human rights watch lists (Doward, 2016), lends salience to Power's findings that the British government's historic and ongoing crimes in Africa and elsewhere do not substantiate claims of British global moral authority.

Nonetheless, DFID is crafted and sold to the British and global public as the compassionate face of modern Britain. As a government department, as opposed to an agency within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, from its inception DFID and thus the British government's projection of itself in the world, was marked as different from what came before. Britain was branding itself as ambitious, grandiose and at a historic turning point in reframing pride in British national identity (White, 1998; Power, 2000). Power (2000, p. 94) argues DFID's first white paper in 1997, 'Eliminating World Poverty: A challenge for the 21st century', was "a document specifically designed by New Labour to be taken as a 'landmark' historical statement about British relations and policies towards 'the poor' and 'developing' nations." The document itself states,

Our particular place in history places us on the fulcrum of global influence. Helping to lead the world in a commitment to poverty elimination and sustainable development is an international role in which all people of Britain could take pride. (DFID, 1997, p.3, cited in Power, 2000, p. 94).

Where DFID was branding Britain as a new kind of power in global development issues, Biccum (2005) suggests DFID was simply reinventing an old colonial discourse for a new younger public. Applying Homi Bhabba's concept of the 'uncanny', she argues DFID publicity and marketing of development, focused on crafting a trope layered with paradoxical meaning: 'development' was presented to the British public as the contemporary solution to poverty in the global south. Yet, the history of the discourse of development is based on 500 years of European imperialism that created the conditions recognised by the 'developed' as 'underdevelopment'. The uncanny, she argues, "masks or normalises an 'unconsciousness that obscures the immediacy of meaning'" (2005, p. 1011). It is the uncanny that allows the British public to be sold a vision of 'development' that is borne of but framed at odds with British imperialism.

Harrison (2010) and Biccum's (2007) analysis of the global campaign to 'Make Poverty History', illustrates how 'development' can work to reimagine Britain's colonial past through the power of silence and create a contemporary British national image of generosity, global vision and outreach that builds on established national tropes embedded in public culture. Harrison (2010) notes that the Make Poverty History campaign, which was initially conceived by a group of INGOs (mostly based in the UK) in 2003 to lobby the G8 summit in Scotland two years later, focused on global fair trade, international debt relief and better aid. There was no spatial focus beyond the global south. As the campaign took off with the support of the British government, Harrison describes how the campaign gradually took on a process of "Africanization" to fill "the hollowness of poverty imagery and mobilize people to engage with campaigns on behalf of distant others" (Harrison, 2010, p. 397). The textual and visual representations of 'development' need were observably black African, reinforcing an established synonym for poverty and the corollary British public response of empathy and moral concern for Africans (2010, p. 398). The representation of Africa as in need of British assistance has a familiar imperial legacy.

Biccum (2007) argues, that the marketing efforts embedded in Make Poverty History and Live 8 (in 2005) produced a moral imperative for British foreign policy and the British public to act in the best interests of the 'other', based on an Africa imagined as a place where trade and governance must improve for Africa's own sake. This rhetoric was necessarily devoid of historic context and the role of the British Empire in creating material poverty and inappropriate systems of governance. Yet, the rhetoric and imagery of Africa was the same as "apologetic literature around empire" (Biccum, 2007, p.1123). Biccum cites the official Live 8 book (Live 8, 2005, p. 33, cited in 2007, p.1123):

To improve its ability to trade, Africa needs to improve transport and roads to make goods cheaper to move. ... It must make it easier to set up busi-

nesses. Many of these changes are easy, cheap, quick and in the hands of Africa itself. ... More aid from rich nations can help fund all these changes.

In the pursuit of 'development' in Africa, Biccum argues the figure of the concerned global citizen who supports Make Poverty History and Live 8 echoes nineteenth century colonial policy of selling a civilising mission in Africa to service global capitalism as the moral obligation of British citizens and legitimate foreign policy for British governments. Through 'development' discourse Britain is able to rebrand itself in uncanny ways.

#### 4.5 'Development' as simplistic, racist, misogynist trope

The previous four headings explored broad conceptualisations of 'development' that are sold to northern publics, we turn now, briefly, to textual and visual representations of 'development' in marketing materials. Much has been written recently on the text and images used to sell 'development' that we do not recap it here in-depth (see Dogra, 2011; Wilson, 2015; Wilson 2011; Calkin, 2015; Keenaghan Reilly, 2017; Nathanson, 2013; Valencia-Fourcans and Hawkins, 2016). Instead, we note that underlying all four of the key ideas that are used to sell 'development' to northern publics are grounded in textual and visual representations that are deeply problematic for their reliance on simplistic narratives of poverty, inequality and injustice; gendered and racialised imagery of victims of underdevelopment; and the squeezing out of counter-narratives to these tropes. Examples include representations of women in the global south targeted by INGOs as either 'deserving victim' or 'mother' in narratives that illustrate their suitability for northern intervention in acts of global feminism and where men are often missing, even though feminism is relational (Dogra, 2011). And, the production of a generic homogenous 'Africa' for northern audiences replete with images of slums, poorly resourced hospitals, arid vistas, landfills, decaying physical infrastructure and where the audience of these images is not told (and presumed not to care by the purveyors of these images) the country or city in which the image was taken (Keenaghan and Reilly, 2017).

The literature on textual and visual representations of 'development' is consistent in the argument that these representations are necessarily partial in order to serve the marketing and branding purpose of northern development agents, be it to raise funds from northern publics, raise their own profile in a competitive development market or raise awareness and build support of a northern agent's vision of 'development'. The content of marketing messages centres on creating and trading images of black and brown bodies to predominantly white audiences to craft and feed stereotypes of the helpful and the helpless. These textual and visual representations endure because

'they work' i.e. they succeed in raising funds (Nathanson, 2013), building organisational profile and generating awareness of a 'development' vision (this is clearly illustrated by the Make Poverty History campaign, which gained public momentum once linked to Africa and African poverty, Harrison, 2010). A deeper question explored throughout this part of the paper, is what other 'work' to they do? They play an instrumental role in crafting a counterpoint to northern subjectivities and directing northern expressions of cosmopolitanism and global citizenship. They also serve as a useful 'other' for outward projections of compassionate nations in ways reminiscent of colonial missions to spread civilisation. Together, simple ahistoric narratives service the sale of neoliberal solutions put forth by northern development agents to the excesses of global neoliberalism (e.g. highly productive empowered individuals able to better compete in a free market). A further critique, not discussed in the literature reviewed, is that within popular representations of 'development' the northern audiences of 'development' are imaged without northern diaspora or citizens of dual heritage with a different knowledge of the global south, rooted in different sources of information. That is, within northern societies, indigenous and non-white northern citizens' experiences or knowledges of 'development' are entirely absent.

The pervasiveness of problematic representations of 'development' and their effects is at odds with critical and more contemporary development thinking within development studies. These stereotypical representations of 'development' are continually challenged by postcolonial, feminist, anti-racist and post-development scholars whose ideas are taught in development studies classrooms, though perhaps not nearly enough. In critical study of 'development', there is the prospect of powerful discourses that runs counter to the neoliberal narratives and drivers of 'development' discourse in development marketing, although perhaps Arturo Escobar (1985) would disagree. He argues development studies is a western discipline in which 'development' is solely constructed as a technical pursuit, restricting alternative vision of 'development' and fixing unequal power relations between north and south. Nonetheless, a review of literature on how 'development' is sold to northern audiences, certainly prompts the question that when it comes to the 'neoliberal university', what and whose ideas of development education are coded into the marketing of development studies programmes? Why? And is there room or appetite for critical 'development' narratives in order to pursue the 'pro-education marketing' of Maringe and Gibbs (2009).

#### NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

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1. In 2016 Angelina Jolie was appointed visiting Professor of Practice at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), suggesting a crossover in the strategic use of celebrity in humanitarian causes to celebrity in humanitarian education.

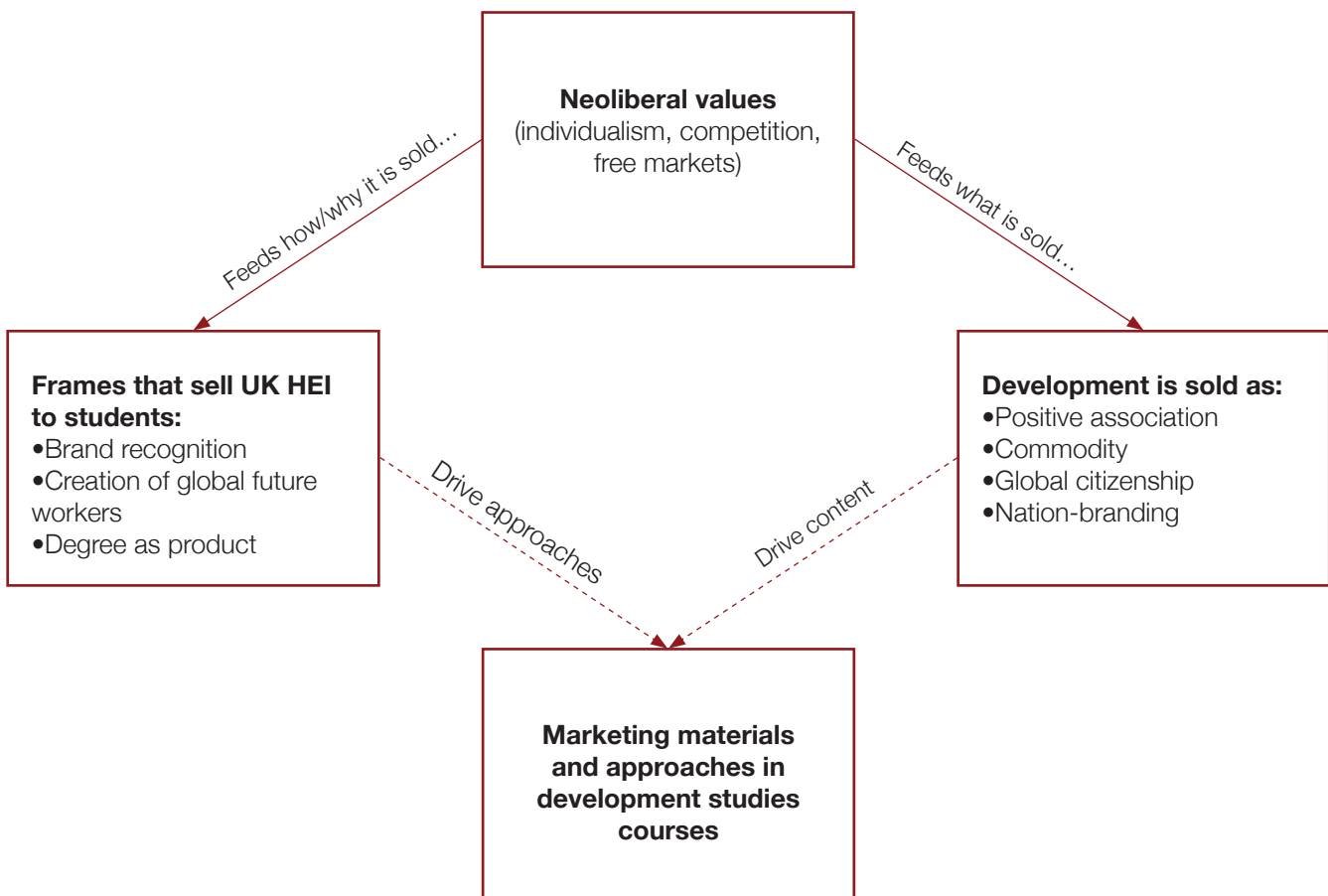
2. This was part of a wider Save Darfur Campaign. See <http://savedarfur.org/> (accessed 09/08/17)

## 5. Rationales and effects of marketing ‘development’ in UK HEIs

The aims of this paper were twofold, the first was to establish a proof of concept for a new area of interdisciplinary study: representations of ‘international development’ in university marketing practices. We have done this by bringing together two literatures - marketing in HEIs and representations of ‘development’ - and have identified synergies between them. For example, the importance of neoliberalism as a global value system that directs and drives competition at an organisational level between universities for students, and between development actors for the attention of northern audiences. And, at the in-

dividual level, the making of cosmopolitan subjectivities through purchasing an association with and product of UK universities, and/or through participating in acts of ‘development’. We push the proof of concept further in this final part, by bringing together parts 2 and 3 to suggest there is a complementary neoliberal logic that sells UK universities and their programmes, and may simultaneously sell distinct representations of ‘development’ in development studies programmes. The conceptual relationships between parts 2 and 3 are represented in the figure below.

**Figure 5.1.** Conceptual framework: marketing development in HEIs. Source: produced by authors





In the figure, neoliberalism is understood as a set of political and economic values that emphasise individualism and competition in the service of a global free market. We found these values were prevalent in conceptualisations of 'development' in the development representations literature, and an important underlying driver of the marketing frames we explored in the UK HEI marketing and branding literature. We therefore suggest that neoliberal values feed the marketing of 'development' in UK HEIs. We identified three frames (or rationales) that drive approaches to selling UK HEIs to students. We focused predominantly on the international student literature as based on our own experience, international students make up a vast part of the UK development studies student cohort. We suggest these frames can explain why and how development studies courses are marketed. To examine the content of marketing materials we unpack the representations of 'development' that are sold to northern publics, on the basis that potential students to UK HEIs, whatever their country of origin, are likely to be highly mobile, relatively affluent and may appropriately be considered as part of (or aspiring to be part of) a global cosmopolitan or elite set. The four conceptualisations that we identify are potentially related to the three marketing frames. For example, the idea of brand recognition as a way to confer prestige to a student, conceptually, speaks to the positive association garnered from studying and otherwise engaging in 'development' activities. The creation of global future workers with ties to the UK as a marketing frame speaks to the development education literature and the idea of engagement with 'development' including its study serving as an act of global citizenship and contributing to nation-(re)branding. The framing of a degree as a product where universities facilitate a transaction

speaks clearly to the idea of 'development' as a commodity, where one buys the 'development' product as a normal everyday act of consumerism.

The key questions raised by this framework, and which we take as gaps and areas for further research, are what do the marketing materials and approaches in development studies courses do? That is, at the level of the university, how is brand recognition attached to the positive association of 'development' and to what effect? For example, in an age of 'impact stories' does this limit spaces for critical debate in UK universities on notions of expertise and knowledge. At the level of the student, what imaginations of 'development' are fed by marketing materials and thus what kinds of students are being made e.g. cosmopolitan global workers in opposition to a parochial 'other' who is the subject of 'development'? At the level of a discipline, is 'development' sold in HEIs in the same ways it is sold by other development actors, if so, what might be the consequences for a discipline that may trade in problematic text and visual representations of 'development' in light of current national debates on inclusive curricula and postcolonial, feminist, anti-racist and post-development critique? This raises a larger point that speaks to Ball (2016), Sidhu (2002) and other writers critical of the neoliberal university, and speaks to the second aim of this paper which is to make a case to support 'pro-education marketing', which we take to mean that learning objectives inspired by postcolonial, anti-racist and feminist theory should play a central role in shaping marketing communications between potential students and universities. In service of this larger point we ask: as producers of critical knowledge, do HEIs and those who market development studies have an obligation to be different in their approaches to and in the content of marketing 'development' to students?

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## DPU WORKING PAPER NO. 191

The Development Planning Unit, University College London (UCL), is an international centre specialising in academic teaching, research, training and consultancy in the field of urban and regional development, with a focus on policy, planning, management and design. It is concerned with understanding the multi-faceted and uneven process of contemporary urbanisation, and strengthening more socially just and innovative approaches to policy, planning, management and design, especially in the contexts of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East as well as countries in transition.

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