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DOCTOR OF EDUCATION (EDD)

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Education

University of Bath

Department of Education

May 2021

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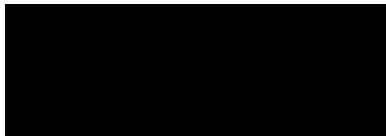
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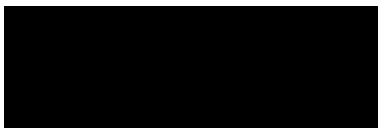
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This thesis is dedicated to Tasnim A. Saleh (26 November 1981 – 21 July 2021), a brilliant mind, a beautiful spirit, and a great IBC educator and leader, who left a rainbow of creativity and compassion everywhere she went.

Abstract

During the past several decades, higher education has undergone profound changes through internationalization, privatization, and marketization. Since many universities are now global entities operating in the style of New Public Management (NPM), there is a need to explore how this impacts the experiences of academic life. International Branch Campuses (IBCs) are interesting and complex sites because they represent various dimensions of marketization in both organizational structure and management. This study focuses on IBCs specifically those that are entered into private equity/commercial infrastructure partnerships. The intended aim of the research is to provide insight into how academics perceive the effects of marketization on academic life, professional autonomy, and institutional practice. The primary academic literature is focused on the wide-scale implications of the marketization of higher education. Therefore, this study examines the theoretical literature at the micro-levels of institutional practice and professional experience. Using a critical realism paradigm, the research approach is dynamic, drawing on both grounded theory and multiple case studies. Instruments of data collection include semi-structured interviews and participant reflective responses, which are examined using a critical thematic analysis approach. The analysis suggests that the organizational qualities of a commercially partnered IBC may foster an environment where the effects of marketization and NPM are more pronounced, and critical and creative practices are less likely to be encouraged due to curriculum standardization, deprofessionalization, and efforts to involve faculty in sales and retail practices. As a result, the study recommends long-term investment in critical and creative teaching and more transparency through the reporting and publication of institutional and financial data.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the Study

The intersection of commercial investment, marketization, and pedagogy on International Branch Campuses (IBCs) is perhaps best introduced under the more general phenomenon of privatization. Privatization describes "the replacement of direct public funding to institutions" (McGettigan, 2013, p. 112) with private, typically corporate funding. However, there is a distinction to be made between not-for-profit and for-profit enterprises. Relevant for this study are Anglo-Western universities that have entered into joint partnerships with equity investors or commercial service providers abroad to set up IBCs. Private equity and commercial enterprises have already entered the K-12 education and higher education spaces through investment and acquisition of educational technology and training companies (Ball, 2012). This represents a rather large historical shift in the delivery of education. The increased presence of commercial activity in HE is a logical development of the educational funding gaps in state provision. This is consistent with neoliberalism, because of the conventional neoliberal view that private enterprise is more efficient than state sponsored higher education. Private partnerships are often positioned as a solution to funding gaps, and in the IBC context as a way to set up campus infrastructure in a foreign regulatory environment and market. The IBC in turn provides an additional stream of revenue for the home campus (McGettigan, 2013).

While IBCs are comparatively new sites of research, they present multi-layered spaces in which various parties must navigate both micro and macro issues which may include, pedagogy, maintenance of the home campus reputation, financial risks of local investors, market-driven education, globalization, national development policies, and interculturality (Smith, 2009). This study presents a micro analysis of the perceived impacts of marketization practices on pedagogy on commercially-partnered IBCs through multiple case studies of IBC academics. Hence, the focus of the study is on the potential impact of for-profit partnerships on academic life, professional autonomy, and institutional practice. Theoretically, the research is framed through a critical pedagogy lens. Critical

pedagogy can be considered a branch of critical theory, which seeks to include empirical inquiry, interpretation, and critique of the sociocultural reality under investigation (McLaren and Giarelli, 1995). Rooted in the work of Paulo Freire, critical pedagogy strives to challenge the "banking model" of education. It encourages a vibrant, socially just pedagogy that has students and teachers critically examine their own biases and the ideologies of society, texts, and the curriculum. The study argues that a highly marketized context may espouse critical education practices, but there is likely less space for their actual implementation, notably if commercial practices reduce academic/teaching autonomy. The research also draws on academic criticism of the phenomenon of New Public Management (NPM), which is associated with neoliberal reform measures in higher education.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

A study on the impact of marketization on academic life, professional autonomy, and institutional practice in the UAE IBC context has not yet been undertaken. This provides the opportunity for an investigation in an under-researched area in comparison to previous IBC research. IBC research is clustered in several areas. These include for illustration, global status and institutional reputation (Siltaoja, et. al, 2019), internationalization (Garret, et al. 2016), student mobility (Mok and Han, 2016; Buckner and Stein, 2020), quality assurance (Healey, 2015; Chankseliani, 2020) and student learning experience (Owusu-Agyeman and Amoakohene, 2020). While the current study has a relationship to some of these topics such as quality assurance, this research examines a specific institutional organizational structure within the IBC milieu: a commercially partnered IBC. A commercially partnered IBC is a structure in which the home campus institution partners with a local for-profit business operator in the host country. The local operator is normally tasked with providing infrastructure (Healey, 2015) such as HR (including the employment and recruitment of faculty), marketing, facilities management, and recruitment of students. It is the potential influences of the commercial infrastructure partner that form the substantive issues and questions researched in the study.

This study is intended to provide insight into how UAE IBC academics perceive the effects of marketization on teaching and learning. However, the national context of the research is not the main concern. It is important to note at the outset that while participant case studies were drawn from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the national context is not the focus of the inquiry. Rather, it is the micro-organizational structure of UK/Australian/North American Universities entered into joint partnership agreements with privately held for-profit infrastructure providers in an IBC host country. This trend has been made possible by international agreements, such as the GATS (General Agreement on Trade Services) treaty (Sahni and Kale, 2004). In the cases explored, the commercial partners were multinational and operating in several markets. This type of arrangement is common internationally and several participants had work experience in similar institutions across the Middle East, Asia, and Europe. It is, therefore, rational to conclude that the participants' experiences are transferable to similar contexts such as other countries outside the UAE where the commercial partner provides infrastructure for a university.

The gaps in IBC research suggest that there is a need to explore the impacts of commercial partnerships and their relationship to academic life, professional autonomy, and institutional practice. Since such partnerships are increasingly present in education generally, they are a key part of the transformative shift of marketization and internationalization. The main literature explains the changes New Public Management, neoliberalism, and marketization have brought to academic practice through theoretical and philosophical arguments. This study seeks to extend those arguments to lived academic experience in the specific context where commercial interests are present in day-to-day operations. By doing so, we can develop a greater understanding of this version of higher education, a hybrid of commerce, international expansion, and privatization through an exploration at the micro-level of IBCs. While partnerships with for-profit infrastructure providers abroad are just one illustration of the marketization and internationalization of HE, they are sites which contain many elements of both phenomena. The academic literature suggests that there is a substantial amount of

discussion and criticism of marketization practices as well as neoliberalism, commodification and NPM. The majority of these writings focus on what can be referred to as the "macro" context of higher education and globalization (Ek, et al., 2013). What this study contributes is an examination of the effects of marketization, discussed in literature, in everyday pedagogy and academic life. Commercially partnered IBCs provide a unique setting at the micro-level to scrutinize discussions surrounding pedagogy and the effects of marketization.

1.3 Background to the Study: Thought-process and Reasoning

The research for this study emerged from a topic investigated in a previous paper on adjunct faculty work experiences at international branch campuses (IBCs) in the United Arab Emirates (Nolan-Bock, 2018). That study explored the impact of casual work conditions of adjunct teachers on IBCs, and how employment precarity challenged their ability to implement critical educational practices. At the same time, the participants' accounts raised issues that were not unique to adjuncts. The participants also discussed the more general pressures of corporate practice and the ways business agendas filtered into the everyday reality of the classroom. At the root of many of these discussions was one concern: the adjuncts' employment contracts were not through a university or the home campus. A third-party infrastructure provider in the host country administered the employment contracts. Their status was akin to a subcontractor for the home campus university with the infrastructure provider setting the terms of employment and administering the daily campus operations.

Upon reflection, I reasoned that the influence of business operations resulting from commercial agendas would likely extend to faculty and student services staff as well. Though one might assume full-time faculty on IBCs have a more interactive relationship with the home campus, it was not only adjuncts whose contracts were linked to the commercial partner. All staff - academic and support, on commercially partnered IBCs were employed through the infrastructure provider. Notionally, the purpose of the commercial partnership is to alleviate the risk of the home campus university in setting up

in a foreign market, but the academic content and quality is the responsibility and domain of the degree-awarding institution. In other words, the infrastructure is to manage operations but not to interfere with academics. The jurisdiction of the infrastructure provider includes the employment of academic and support staff and the recruitment of students. Rationality would suggest that the line intended to separate the assignments of the commercial partner and the home campus is likely to blur. What could be closer to the heart of university operations than the supervision of academics and the selection of students? While reflecting on these questions, my research on adjunct experience also led me to more generalist literature on neoliberalism, marketization, and academic capitalism.

1.4 Researcher Positionality

It was not only research that inspired my curiosity about the connection between marketization, teaching practice, and IBCs. Like many researchers, my initial ideas were formed through observations and lived experience. Growing up during the economic boom of the 1990s and the early optimism surrounding globalization, the European Union, and the internet, there was one message that was made clear repeatedly: to get a job, a *good* job, and therefore, a life worth living, you needed to go to university. In a competitive school district, this was a message I heard early and often. I remember being told in kindergarten that we needed to practice our letters correctly because "we would be competing against the whole world." Though this was likely not an appropriate pedagogy for kindergartners and more of a humorous story to recount at family holidays, the stark message left an impression.

I joined my classmates in years of preparation for standardized tests, worrying over GPAs, managing anxiety over sports and musical performances, and trying to find volunteer and find part-time work opportunities to demonstrate the well-roundedness "colleges were looking for." My story is a common one amongst suburban US children. Many of us succeeded in college admissions, and we enrolled with the idea that to secure a future we needed at least a bachelor's degree. Yet, what was waiting for us at the end

of the horizon of college graduation: the 2008 Great Recession. This was one of a first of economic awakenings for, "Millennials have spent much of their lives enduring economic calamity." (Smialek, Chodosh, and Casselman, 2021) After spending a near-lifetime believing higher education would guarantee a measure of economic security, I watched as my peers, including those with "prestige brand" degrees, were unable to find employment and unable to pay the educational loans they had been advised to take out. What was a piece of advice given? Wait out the economic downturn in graduate school. While the personal and intellectual benefits of more education were always evident to me as there is an intrinsic joy to be found in learning, the economy suggested a law of diminishing returns on higher education credentials. Perhaps that is most apparent in my exploratory study of IBC adjuncts. After reaching a terminal measure of education such as a Ph.D., many adjuncts cannot secure full-time employment even within the industry that had trained them.

Professionally, as an IBC academic in the UAE for over 10 years, I often reflected upon and discussed informally with colleagues issues related to commercialism and marketing in our educational sphere. I was also among what could be considered peripheral or the "lowest rung" of the faculty chain. For one, I was recruited locally without any academic research profile and was a complete outsider to the home campus institution. In some cases, I had never even visited the home city of the institution. I also worked as an adjunct for many years, often at multiple institutions, so I retained a somewhat fragmented relationship with the IBC institutions where I worked. Beyond that, I most often lectured in what could be referred to as mandatory core courses, for instance, foundational academic literacy programs, critical thinking courses, and English language. In my experience, since IBCs are often small, these courses do not qualify for their own department. I sometimes had the impression that other faculty and students considered my classes an inferior status compared to departmental majors. Though I would note that I believe this is a sentiment general to academia, not just IBCs and not my own perceptions. Contingency in higher education and the "feminization" of part-time work in academia, particularly in writing and skills programs is well documented (McMahon and Green, 2008; Morphew, Ward and Wolf-Wendel, 2018). The literature on legal

composition indicates that non-tenured skills and writing programs are mainly staffed are by women who face "challenges like poor pay, heavy workloads, and lower status such as contract, nontenure or at will" (Allen, Jackson, and Humphreys, 2019, p. 525). The disproportionate representation of women in skills and writing teaching is for example, referred to in legal education circles as the "pink ghetto." (Tiscione and Vorenberg, 2015). These phenomena were visible in my IBC institutions and my own experience mirroring both the literature and the conditions of the wider-labor market.

Later, even as an IBC full-time faculty member and departmental coordinator in a required but not major-tracked media studies program, I maintained a sense of estrangement and "less-than" status akin to the experience teaching skills. From a research perspective, however, this detached status gave the feeling of outsider experiencing "the inside." This experience coupled with the skepticism with which I viewed marketing messages surrounding higher education helped to inform the foreknowledge and premise for undertaking the current research.

1.5 Key Concepts Relevant to the Study

1.5.1 Marketization and Internationalization

Marketization describes the supplanting of traditional academic structures with the procedures and practices of managerial corporate industry and NPM. This is not a new development but one that aligns with the decades long free-market ethos of neoliberalism. In the neoliberal condition, aspects of human social life, historically seen to be a public good including education, are transformed into marketable commodities. In this way, what was once a public or social benefit is mutated into a personal, individual acquisition (Lauder, et. al, 2006; Brown, 2015). Supporters of applying free market-logic to HE rationalize that industry-oriented universities will be more innovative, more efficiently managed, and be able to educate larger numbers of students. In other words, the classical arguments of capitalism fostering creativity, choice, and maximum productivity through competition are adopted for the university structure.

This type of utopian vision of growth, choice, and prosperity, however well-intentioned, conceals challenges to the austere realities of a market society (Polanyi, 1945; Harvey, 2005). Observable trends associated with the marketization of higher education which raise questions about the impact on pedagogy are considerable. Some of these trends, which will be further discussed in the study, include the transformation of students into consumers, the fetishization of rankings and quality assurance, performance management culture, massification, and the application of corporate managerialism (Tolofari, 2005; Marginson, 2017; Watermeyer and Olssen, 2016; Brankovic, Ringel and Werron, 2018) . In addition, academic work has been in many cases redefined. The decision-making power of academics has been greatly reduced with university governance structures replaced by administrators, management teams, and boards of trustees. Research time is often only reserved for elite or celebrity academic entrepreneurs, and untenured or adjunct faculty carry out the majority of teaching loads, often in job insecure and precariat positions (Giroux, 2007). The general employment conditions of higher education typify the overall precarity of labor wherein there is a scarcity of jobs especially highly-desirable jobs. Precaritization further produces unequal social and material security since the distribution of insurance is often attached to employment (Birnbaum, 2017). The purpose of highlighting these changes is not to create a nostalgic argument wherein the traditional or past academic practice is seen as necessarily better or more successful pedagogically. Rather it is to underscore that marketization has brought serious changes, which require critical interrogation, especially those which have a distorting effect on teaching and learning. As one example, educational activities and disciplines which may produce a wider public or individual benefit but do not increase returns or are out fashion in the employment market are less attractive in market-driven contexts. We can think of budget cuts entirely eliminating areas of the humanities including theatre, foreign languages, classics, religion, geology, sociology, and music literature. Subjects such as art are replaced with the more employment-friendly, graphic design or entrepreneurship (Huckabee, 2010; Dix, 2018; Schwenk, 2020). Additionally, the reduction of academics' authority and influence both within the university and outside have been intimated since the early 90s (Halsey, 1992).

Concurrently, the past decades have brought an unprecedented expansion and internationalization of higher education (Maringe and Foskett, 2010). This is intractably linked to marketization. Universities have faced public funding cuts and have been encouraged to apply market principles and become more entrepreneurial, and more global. Moving into overseas markets either in the form of recruiting international students or setting up programs abroad provides universities with additional revenue streams. Higher education is then positioned as an export commodity for expansion of the knowledge economy. Additionally, in a time of neoliberal globalization, higher education is viewed as a marketable industry to develop in emerging and transitioning economies, such as a post-oil strategy for the Gulf and MENA, the context for this study (Mackie, 2019). International Branch Campuses (IBCs) are one such manifestation of the international expansion of higher education.

1.5.2 Defining International Branch Campuses (IBCs)

Though IBCs (International Branch Campuses) are an evident development in the areas of transnational or cross-border education, there are a variety of conceptions of IBCs and since they operate in varied jurisdictions, several models exist. It is an area of international higher education which is highly fluid and in constant change (Lawton and Katsomitros, 2012). This study takes the common IBC definition of an institution which operates and awards degrees in a host country which is a different region than the home campus. Further to, the programs and degrees offered on the IBC are first accredited in the home country (Kinser et al., 2010) though they may also be accredited in host country. The specific context of this study is in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) where IBCs operate independently of the national education system often in tax-free economic zones dedicated to higher education and training (Lane, 2010; Borgos, 2016).

While the regulatory and funding conditions of IBCs are specific to the host country (Borgos, 2016), in comparison to the context of home campuses, IBCs "are much closer to operating in 'normal' classical markets rather than quasi-markets as there are fewer direct constraints on how universities operate within them." (Foskett, 2011 p. 24). This is

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an important starting point that is fundamental to the study as it is the origin of tension and contradiction. In traditional Marxist analysis and later developed critical theory approaches, contradiction and tension produce conflict, or what we can understand as sites that can serve as "the motor of change." (Hargave and Van de Ven, 2009, p. 122). While terms such as contradiction, tension, and conflict have negative connotations in general discourse, from analytical perspectives, they can be studied to examine policy and practice contradictions, power dynamics, as well as institutional values espoused versus those in action. The aim of such study can be to reveal these tensions, but also to further recommend ways in which contradiction can be resolved, stabilized or used as Hargave and Van de Ven argued, for innovation and creativity (2009).

International branch campuses (IBCs) are sites of contradiction as a result of marketization and commodification. In one aspect, the IBC is a marketing tool for the home institution to develop a global brand or a strategy to "achieve" internationalization (Chee, et al., 2016, p. 86). On another level, the IBC has its own marketing and branding strategy targeting local and international student populations. There is also the pedagogical layer or academic mission of the IBC, which is sometimes in conflict with marketization aims. Therefore, there are several, sometimes ideologically competing, internal and external parties on an IBC and within its orbit. These parties include home campuses, private equity companies, IBC managers, academics, students, and parents. This study focuses on the specific circumstances of a home campus institutions entering into a partnership with a commercial business in the host country and the potential influence on pedagogical practices. The inquiry does so with the following initial research questions to direct the study. Why initial research questions? These questions are later refined after the Literature Review and Methodology chapters with consideration to the literature, ethics, and conditions of the study. To present the development of the study as accurately as possible, the below research questions served as a guideline for conducting the literature review and formulating the research design. These questions therefore serve a foreshadowing purpose. Creswell and Poth (2018) highlight this condition as: "Qualitative research questions are open-ended, evolving and

nondirectional." (p.137) Since research, particularly qualitative research, is not linear in nature, modifications to research questions are justifiable as circumstances change.

1.6 Initial Research Questions at the Commencement of Study

1. To what extent do participants' marketization practices affect academic practice and undergraduate pedagogy specifically in carrying out the educational mission of the "home campus brand" at the IBC?

> 1a. How do IBC academics describe educational goals and outcomes of their IBC institutions?
>
> 1b. To what extent do these descriptions contradict or align with the participants' views of an appropriate critical pedagogy?
>
> 1c. To what extent do their views of appropriate pedagogy align with those of critical pedagogy?

2. To what extent do IBC academics, academic leadership, and student academic support service professionals perceive the influence of commercial interests on pedagogy and curriculum?

1.7 Assumptions

There are several assumptions, which underpin this research. First, the working experience of academics, academic managers, and professional staff at commercially-partnered IBCs is distinct from the experience of working on a home campus. This is apparent even if the staff is operating under the same educational "brand." Since an IBC is classified as a joint venture where the university partners with a local operator or business (OBHE, 2009), the governance structure and procedures of IBCs are often different from the home campus or partner university. For example, data, which is publicly available for the home campus, such as ownership, staffing, income, and enrolments are frequently obscured from the public record on the branch campus (Healey, 2015).

Research has, however, indicated that financial incentives are a motivating factor for opening an IBC (Van der Wende, 2003; Hou, Montgomery, and McDowell, 2014) and that IBCs often serve as a marketing strategy employed by universities to expand their brand and elevate their reputation in foreign markets (Edwards et al., 2010). It is, therefore, to be investigated whether the organizational qualities of a commercially-partnered IBC may produce an environment where the impacts of marketization and managerialism are more pronounced, and critical and creative pedagogies are espoused but inhibited in practice. While critical pedagogy, or other creative pedagogies, may be a technique some university lecturers choose to implement in their classes, it is generally not officially within the underlying design of a university curriculum in the way it might be for a K-12 learning space. However, it is arguable that in a highly marketized context tenets of critical pedagogy are attractive slogans for institutions to champion because the student-centered and democratic approach can be distorted. That is to say, critical pedagogy has been institutionalized and domesticated not just in its application in the classroom, but also through the brand fashioning and molding of its principles to mimic consumerist choice.

1.8 Organizational Overview

This study is organized into six major chapters. Chapter 1, the introduction provides a general summary of the context, identifies the main areas of inquiry, the research questions and justification for the study. In Chapter 2, I present the relevant literature on marketization, IBCs, and an overview of the theoretical lens, critical pedagogy, and New Public Management. Chapter 3 outlines the research approach, which draws on both grounded theory and multiple case studies, and also explains the research paradigm, critical realism.   Additionally, I provide the rationale for the data collection process and the method of analysis, critical thematic analysis.

Chapter 4 presents the findings categorized thematically and analyzes the findings against relevant literature and theory on marketization and critical pedagogy. The findings address how the participants' accounts both reflect and explicate larger critical

arguments of neoliberal and marketization policy and practice in an era of expansion of international higher education. Chapter 5 synthesizes the findings into a discussion which argues that the data suggests three main conclusions. First, participants described the acute financial pressures on their commercially-partnered IBCs due to the quasi-market structure. Consequently, a marketization and bureaucratic culture was present on their IBCs in a way that contributed to a fragmented relationship between the home campus and IBC. Second, the participants' accounts reflect shifts in professional identity and decreasing morale. Descriptions of deprofessionalism, precariatization, and proletarianization were also present. Conditions which are demonstrative of wider trends labor trends in higher education and elsewhere. Last, it is arguable that the commercial culture of the IBCs under discussion, compounded with deprofessionalization of academic staff effectuates a less authentic pedagogy and reduces teaching autonomy and creativity. This is followed with a look at the pedagogical opportunities present on IBCs and policy recommendations. Chapter 6 concludes the study with a summary of the research contributions including those to IBC research and theoretical frameworks. I further address potential challenges to the study and provide directions for future research.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1 Purpose of the Chapter

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an understanding of the present inquiry within the relevant phenomena, context, and theoretical framework. The literature was collected over an extended period of time starting in 2016/2017 with a review of noted critical pedagogist and researchers of neoliberal policy and marketization in higher education (e.g. Apple, 1979, 2001, 2012; Ball, 2012; Brown, 2011; Brown, 2015; Giroux,, 2015; McGettigan, 2013; Molesworth, 2009; Lauder, 2006; Tomlinson, 2020; Watermeyer, 2020) and an exploration of key publications on marketization and higher education particularly *The Marketisation of Higher Education and the Student as Consumer* (Molesworth, Scullion, and Nixon, 2011), which was a highly influential text in the conception of the study. Other philosophical texts, cited both in the review and the Findings Chapter, are derived from critical, social, and cultural theory (Bourdieu, bell hooks, Foucault, Gramsci, Sontag, Fromm), which were also significant in helping to understand and analyze emerging themes.

The cited research serves different purposes for the study and can be considered within the description categories presented by Erikson and Erlandson (2014): "Argumentation, Social Alignment and Data." The literature presented on neoliberal policy, marketization, and critical theory/pedagogy frames and supports the argument of the study. However, it should be noted that an eclectic array of authors was intentionally included throughout to provide both orthodoxy of theory and divergence of ideas. The literature included on IBCs is presented to explicate the data and social alignment on the IBC context. The data interwoven throughout is to "provide an overview of the field" (Erikson and Erlandson, 2014) and to establish a perspective for the reader of where within IBC research this study stands.

The review thus takes a generalist approach to the phenomena of neoliberalism and academic capitalism and then filters to the more specific instance of IBC research. IBC research is peculiar in the sense that it truly is a "micro" phenomenon in the scheme of higher education (Altbach and de Wit, 2020), but due to the many complexities of IBCs from institutional and policy perspectives (Bordogna, 2020b), there is much to explore from a research perspective. Two systematic reviews of IBC literature have been published (Kozmützky and Putty, 2016, Escriva-Beltran., Muñoz-de-Prat, and Villó, 2019) which were instrumental in helping determine primary areas of IBC research. Key journals which included *Higher Education, Studies in Higher Education, Higher Education Policy*, search terms such as "international branch campuses" "IBCs" "IBC academic practice" "IBC quality assurance" and prominent IBCs researchers (Altbach, Garrett, Kisner, Knight, Lane, Healey, Huisman, Wilkins) all guided the process of gathering literature as well as identifying the placement of the current study. This is especially important for IBC research as a significant portion of literature published on the topic exists as gray literature and data is often kept confidential (Wilkins, 2020b). For example, while there are organizations such as The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education (OBHE), publications are paywalled or accessible to members. Following a discussion of IBC research, a summary of the germane academic literature on the theoretical frameworks of critical pedagogy and NPM is presented because these frameworks are relevant to evaluating the data. The chapter concludes with a justification, grounded in the literature, for undertaking the study and presents amended research questions and hypotheses/propositions in the light of the literature.

2.2 Overview of the Literature

It is well established that marketization, or the notion of higher education as a commodity in the free market, is one of the driving forces shaping higher education and pedagogy in the UK, USA, Australia and increasingly, globally (Gibbs, 2011). Marketization describes how universities, ideologically, and in practice, have embraced corporate and commercial style enterprise (Furedi, 2011). Many universities are now global entities operating across multiple regulatory and cultural frameworks. The

internationalization of higher education has indisputably altered the experience of pedagogical practice. Concurrently, marketization techniques, under the umbrella of neoliberalism, are well established in tertiary education. However, the exportation model of higher education in the form of international branch campuses (IBCs), in this study, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), presents a unique context for exploring the marketization phenomenon particularly in exportation models in which a university partners with a non-governmental commercial or for-profit entity.

This literature review sets out to first establish the broader ideological framework, neoliberalism, in which the marketized or commercially oriented IBC is positioned. The discussion will include a brief review of the recent history of neoliberal ideology in educational policy and practice and how it has provided fertile ground for the international marketization and exportation of higher education. The review will next explore the more specific marketized situation of IBCs. This section will evaluate how an IBC is defined and the noted benefits and criticisms of IBCs. Then, a case is put forward for how the commercially partnered category of UAE IBCs may exhibit a more deliberate version of the marketized university in both practice and in the research because of the influence of private equity and profit dynamics.

Next, I will turn to the discussions surrounding what potential impacts marketization has on the pedagogical condition. Critical pedagogy will provide the lens for analyzing how these impacts may be demonstrated and perceived in the commercially partnered IBC context. I will primarily discuss these impacts through the student as consumer and employability narratives of marketization and the ways these influence curricula. I then intend to establish the justifications for the provision of a study exploring the extent to which marketization practices are demonstrated and perceived in the commercially partnered IBC context and argue that a highly-marketized education context leaves less space for the implementation of critical education practices in the curriculum and reduces teacher autonomy.

2.3 International Higher Education: The Umbrella of Neo-liberal Ideology

A critical exploration of the marketization of higher education in UAE IBCs first requires contextualizing the broader situation for the internationalization of higher education. Today's university, global entity, and brand is actor, site, and artifact of contemporary neoliberalism (Larner, 2003). Thus, the story of IBCs is one that begins with a critical look towards neoliberal ideology. As universities have undertaken international expansion through the opening of international branch campuses (IBC), we are presented with numerous instances in which the processes of neoliberalism are manifested in policy, practice, and individual experiences. Like other far-reaching ideologies such as postmodernism and feminism, the term neoliberalism has become simultaneously diluted and fluid and "in danger of becoming meaningless" (Ball, 2012, p. 3). At the same time, the ideology is omnipresent in our lives in material and economic matters, in social relations, and even in our own perceptions of self-worth. The definition which most aptly describes the viewpoint of this research is: "a view of neo-liberalism [that] recognises both the neo-Marxist focus on the 'economisation' of social life and the 'creation of new opportunities for profit" (Ball, 2012, p. 3). The marketization and international exportation of higher education are both outcomes and symptoms of the neoliberal condition.

According to Ball's (2012) genealogy of neoliberalism, the foundations or "proto-neo-liberalism" can be traced to Adam Smith's treatise on free-market economics, "Wealth of Nations." Its incarnation in the 20th century, or second wave, stems from Hayek and Friedman's theoretical framework of economic liberalism and critical view of Keynesian economics, collectivism, and the "welfare state." It was therefore, in its beginnings intentionally designed and promoted not an organic development. Philosophically and in policy construction, neo-liberalism privileges free-market practices, individualism, choice, profit, growth, and competition (Sauntson and Morrish, 2011). The most recent application or entrenchment of neoliberalism in policy and governance is most associated with the leadership of Reagan and Thatcher. The roots of the marketization of universities stem from this period, where policies were initiated to reduce

government spending on higher education. Such policies paved the way for countries internationally to encourage universities to become "more autonomous and less reliant on state funding" (Brown, 2011, p. 20). This birthed the era of the marketized university mirroring corporate structure, and the "reality that academics have to live with" (Furedi, 2012, p. 1): an institutional structure which emphasizes a consumer-driven model (Brown, 2006).

Further educational reforms and initiatives such as the Bologna Process in Europe promoted the adoption of universalist quality assurance standards for higher education in the style known as "New Public Management." Positioned to reduce government spending and increase accountability, New Public Management describes the operational transformation of public sectors through the application of market and managerialist principles. In simplest terms it is the adoption of a business management ideology with the belief that such practices are more productive (Tolofari, 2005). The aspects of quality control and quantitative analyses in these types of policies are rooted in the neoliberal belief that the private sector and market practices are more effective in serving students and the public. In a time when upskilling the workforce is often seen as an imperative in developing and developed countries (Brown, Lauder and Ashton, 2011), neoliberal educational policy endorses entrepreneurship, credentialing, and training as solutions to job insecurity. Criticism of NPM has been relatively consistent over the past decades including large-scale protests over neoliberal reform measures across Europe. Despite this, much of the questioning of NPM has been dismissed and its critics portrayed as "an eccentric philosopher hopelessly dreaming about the failed Humboldtian ideals." (Štech, 2010, p. 264). This characterization of neoliberal critics as refusing progress and over idealizing the past is almost trope-like in the way NPM proponents apply it.

Concurrently, the ranking of universities has become commonplace in reporting with yearly League Tables in the UK, *US News and World Report* in the US. Such reforms and public rankings suggest that the university exists as an entity that is in service to the labor market (Bendixen and Jacobsen, 2017) and requires auditing measures to ensure efficiency. While quality assurance and striving for better performance can bring about

meaningful progress and ensure fairness, there are still pernicious aspects to a highly audited culture. There is the well-known argument of Goodhart's law: "When a measure becomes a target, it ceases to be a good a measurement." Strictly speaking, individuals will seek to manipulate conditions to achieve within the policy and have a negative effect on performance (Van Thiel and Leeuw, 2002).

Moreover, one can argue that neoliberal and New Public Management emphasis on performance standards goes against its own ethos of the competitive, free market being the ideal zone to incubate creativity or innovation when the same standards are applied across all universities. In other words, to raise quality, the more the same policies and practices will be implemented that meet external performance standards. In the Foucauldian sense, the control exercised through quality assurance technologies (1979), has the potential to create uniform, more conservative institutions, and a more conservative pedagogy (Giroux, 1999; 2011). There are also arguments that rankings simply reinforce the reputation of elite and exclusive universities (thereby reproducing the cultural and social capital associated with the credentials and networks prestige universities provide (Bourdieu, 1977; Grenfell, 1998).

Moreover, in higher education, and education generally, we can see the influence of neoliberalism as academic capitalism is increasingly implemented and defended (Slaughter and Leslie, 1997) and with a growing emphasis on university branding (Hemsley-Brown, Lowrie and Chapleo, 2010). Through marketization and New Public Management style managerialism, universities have been transformed into semi-corporate entities operating on a global scale (Mitchell and Nielsen, 2011) or as relevant for some UAE IBCs, international investment opportunities for private equity companies looking to enter the education sector (McGettigan, 2013). There is also an increased focus on neoliberal and NPM style goals including the turn towards practical skills-based education and entrepreneurship over of theoretical or discipline knowledge (Giroux, 2011). And while one might counter that interdisciplinary and varied educational programs might enhance the much-discussed critical thinking facet of education more than isolated departments, trends have indicated a preference for workforce preparation or an

instilment of the professional world into higher studies (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2008). This has been accompanied by general and populist political sentiments of anti-intellectualism (Varman, Saha and Skalen, 2011). Additionally, performance management cultures for students and academics, quality assurance, international rankings and an increase in non-academic managerial staff are also elements of the neoliberal condition or "corporatized" university (Henkel, 2005; Kolsaker, 2008; Winter, 2009; Ivancheva, 2015). The publication of rankings can also be viewed as a "social process" which produces competition through comparison and quantification (Brankovic, Werron, and Ringel, 2018).

There is an extensive history of criticism (Reid, 1996; Lynch, 2006; Naidoo and Williams, 2015) of what Giroux calls "neoliberalism's war on higher education" or "heartless version of economic Darwinism." (2014, p.15) and its impact on the ideals of higher education (Nixon, Scullion, and Hearn, 2016). However, a pro-marketization faction also has its proponents not only in practice but in the literature as well (Slaughter and Leslie, 1997). As earlier mentioned, critics who contest the implementation of neoliberal policy are dismissed as old-fashioned or unwillingly to depart from traditional notions of university structure and purpose. Regardless of the stance, there is broad acknowledgment that higher education now exists in the realm of big business on an international scale. The marketized neoliberal university is an accepted given, or as Gibbs (2011) describes, "the genie is out of the bottle, and there is no going back. Moreover, as Wilkins and Urbanovic, 2017, p. 1388), state the role of higher education to both the individual and public has changed, "increasingly, higher education is considered as a commodity that can be sold in the global marketplace rather than to satisfy the social and cultural objectives as a public good."

The fatalism with which even critics view contemporary neoliberal hegemony is perhaps the most reliable indicator of its grasp on higher education and social life. The reluctant acceptance or surrender to neoliberalism and NPM demonstrates a particular type of fatalism that only accompanies a hegemonic ideology that we can no longer see or argue for an alternative (Bourdieu, 1998). Despite this fatalism and normalization,

many questions remain unanswered. As critics continually argue, higher education is not a commodity in the traditional market sense. Education cannot be uniformly packaged or returned; it is an intangible product not easily defined in one way (Brown, 2011). The purpose of higher education remains abstract and theoretically debatable. The traditional ideals of the university are rooted in service to society and intellectual and social development (Nussbaum, 1998), but there is the aforementioned pro-market political faction that seeks to define education as a feeding tube to industry and argue that the university has always been an incubator for entrepreneurship and business development. In other words, higher education is a "corporate pipeline" where skills can be acquired. (Woodall, Hiller and Resnick, 2012, p 55). This highlights several significant undercurrents of neoliberal and pro-market ideology. The first, the individual is solely responsible for their success or failure (Bourdieu, 1998); it is a matter of further credentialing themselves to ensure economic viability. Second, the university works for the service of the labor market, not as an autonomous entity (Bendixen and Jacobsen, 2017). Third, higher education is viewed as a commodity in line with consumerist culture (Scullion, Molesworth, and Nixon, 2011) A degree can be used to position oneself in the market to support a consumerist lifestyle. Here we see the normalization or embedding of the discourse of neoliberalism in the individual and societal mindsets.

In terms of how the marketized or commodified university has been studied, much of the critical literature surrounding marketization and neoliberal policy and policy networks has been conducted at what Ek, et al. (2013, p. 1305) call the "macro-level" of policy and discourse analysis by "philosophers, historians, and sociologists." Admittedly, the discussion so far in this chapter relies on theoretical criticism of this type (Giroux, 2011; Ball, 2012). This suggests that there is room for more examination of how marketization impacts lived experiences in the academic world, classroom pedagogy and how practices and contradictions of commodification are implemented at the micro-sphere or in more specific institutional contexts. The international branch campus model in the UAE provides one such microcosm for investigation.

2.4 Defining an IBC

The definition of international branch campuses best applied to this study is taken from Shams and Huisman (2012) an offshore site where an established university "awards their degrees to students located in a different country" (p. 107) and Garrett (2018) "an entity that is owned, at least in part, by a foreign education provider; operated in the name of the foreign education provider; and provides an entire academic program, substantially on site, leading to a degree awarded by the foreign education provider." (p. 14) In part, the emergence of IBCs can be traced to the 1995 GATS (General Agreement on Trades Services), which produced a liberalizing effect on cross-border services and sectors, including higher education. Mode III of the agreement allows for a commercial presence of a supplier in a member territory. Higher education could, therefore, be exported as a privatized or commercial service (Sahni and Kale, 2004). Colloquially, and in the literature, this is often referred to as the "franchise" model or borrows from the more direct description of "The McDonaldisation of Higher Education" (Hartley, 1995). Though this research study centers on Western universities, primarily those from the UK, USA, Canada, and Australia (the earliest and largest provider) who deliver their curriculums at home and abroad in English in the Gulf, IBCs are an international phenomenon (Kosmützky and Putty, 2016). China, India, Iran, Russia, and several continental European universities have expanded overseas. (Healey, 2015; Chee, et al., 2016; Sawahel, 2018). The majority of research on IBCs, likely in proportion to the level of activity, examines the exporter (English speaking Western nations) - importer (the Middle East, Asia) model dynamic.

There are arguments that the branch campus is in a continual period of transformation (Hill and Thabet, 2018) that several other models, including online delivery, partnerships of several international universities, brand alliances, and the development of edu-hub and cities are altering the TNE landscape. Others argue that the term branch campus is, in fact, a misnomer because the current iterations are not representative of campus as it would be understood in a home country (Altbach, 2015). However, even with the marked growth in IBCs, most are still in their first decade

of service, the scale of operations is understandably smaller. Further research contends that the IBC model has peaked and has become unattractive for export due to risk factors and a declining market (Healey, 2019).

2.5 IBCs in General

2.5.1 Benefits of IBCs

Despite the risks, IBCs both bring and create benefits. At first glance, it is easy to judge IBCs as solely a market expansion strategy. Further to, as exporters of Western education and accompanying cultural norms, IBCs and the exportation of knowledge, is often, understandably, critiqued as a neo-colonial expression of education or academic colonialism (Siltaoja, Juusola, and Kivijärvi, 2019). Nevertheless, IBCs are also seen as a way to widen access and participation in higher education globally for students unable to travel internationally (Lien, 2008; McNamara and Knight, 2015). And while this research study focuses on IBCs originating from Anglo-Western countries, it is essential to remember that the IBC market is not exclusive to these countries. The Iranian Islamic Azad University is the world's largest university with four branch campuses, and the Indian Amity University has ten international branch campuses (Chee, et al., 2016). Universities from China, Russia, and other countries also export higher education through the branch campus model (Healey, 2015; Chee, et al., 2016), and many countries are simultaneously exporters and importers of higher education (Kozmützky and Putty, 2016; Chopra, 2019).

Additionally, IBCs are often encouraged and courted by countries looking to provide more opportunities for higher education, to address skill gaps in the population, achieve sustainability, and as sites which will be able to generate local and international research (Wilkins, 2020b). Healey (2020) refers to this as an opportunity to express or exhibit "soft power," or the use of cultural and economic tactics to project international influence. As revealed in the Wikileaks cables, amongst discussions of complicated and layered regional politics, education was cited as a key factor in achieving "modernization and moderation." In the same cable, US Senator Joseph Liebermann was encouraged

by government authorities to help facilitate the opening of a significantly sized branch of the University of Connecticut (Wikileaks, 2010). IBCs are not only a secondary site for a university but a component of diplomatic and geo-political relationships. And in many respects, this aligns with the decent intentions of many IBCs and their national hosts: to foster cross-cultural relationships as well as knowledge and expertise exchange (Wilkins and Urbanovic, 2017). Though one could argue the general term "soft power" does seem to do a disservice to the power that culture has to influence ideology, perceptions, and politics in the Gramscian or Cultural Marxist sense.

From the international student perspective, there is also an argument that IBCs are filling a gap for quality education. There is a "push-pull" theory in the literature that students are either pushed away from their home country due to limited educational opportunity or unable to leave their home country, and consequently pulled into the IBC or equivalent educational dynamic (Mazzarol and Soutar 2002; Pimpa 2005; Li and Bray, 2007). We can see that IBCs are micro-environments with an intersection of many issues related to the global economy, labor market, and politics. As such, they are also sites of significant debate.

2.5.2 Risk Factors

In 2017, two established organizations, The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education (OBHE) in collaboration with C-Bert, Cross-Border Education Research Team (in conjunction with the State University of New York at Albany and Pennsylvania State University) published a two-part report on the nature and success factors involved in IBCs. Though definite figures are absent (Kosmützky and Putty, 2016), OBHE and C-Bert reported that there were 263 IBCs in operation globally. In 2016, there were 230, so the number has been growing steadily over the past two decades. However, as mentioned, in higher education, generally, branch campuses represent only a small portion of activity in the TNE landscape, but they are the "most visible form" and the "riskiest" (Wilkins, 2016, p. 167). Branch campus failure hovers around 10% (Lane and Kisner, 2014), and the reasons for closure are often obscured from the public (Wilkins, 2016) likely for

diplomatic and reputational propriety. More than 41 IBCs have closed since the 1990s reflecting a 10-15% failure rate (Jing, et. al, 2020). Thus, there is a portion of research surrounding risk mitigation (Shanahan and McParlane, 2005; Healey, 2015) and which questions the long-term viability of the IBC model (Bothwell, 2019b; Altbach and Wit, 2020) especially when the "IBC market" has been discussed as saturated with limited potential profitability in the current market (Wilkins, 2020a).

Risk, of course, takes many forms. There is the apparent financial undertaking of opening a branch campus. For example, in Malaysia, the University of Reading IBC recorded an annual financial loss of 27 million pounds (Bothwell, 2019a). In some geographic areas, there are security and environmental risks. In one extreme 2014 example, Ban Ki-Moon, then United Nations Secretary, called the University of Central Lancashire's branch campus "unauthorized" and indicated it posed a security concern for being built in the village of Pyla, located on the buffer zone between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot areas (Morgan, 2013). The university was also later critiqued for obtaining investment funds from the state telecom firm Cyta, which has been accused of corrupt practices (Wilkins, 2015). There is also the more general burden of newness (Chee, et al., 2016) because while IBCs may have an established reputation in the home country, they are new to the host country and thus face the challenges of developing local trust and credibility. Though for "prestige" category universities (e.g. - NYU Abu Dhabi, Georgetown Qatar), there is less of a hurdle to overcome in securing respectability especially when they are government-funded (Wilkins, 2020b). A "prestige" brand in UK higher education system, for example, also provides a measure of protection since risk is shown to "greatest in low status HEIs" (Marginson, 2017, p. 15) However, perceived elite status does not guarantee success. NYU's Tisch School of the Arts program in Singapore closed citing financial challenges. However, former students also brought a federal lawsuit claiming the university misrepresented the equivalency of the program to the one run in NY (Redden, 2016) though it was eventually dismissed. In general, questions surrounding academic authenticity are a common point of discussion surrounding IBCs as is financial management. The University College London, for example, shuttered its campus in Adelaide, Australia, stating academic and financial risk as reasons for closure

(Maslen, 2015). These are instances of some frequent issues IBCs must contend with, however, there are also benefits which make IBCs an attractive undertaking even though there are documented risks, especially financial and reputational.

2.5.3 Critical Discussions of IBCs

Beyond financial risks, ethical considerations are often raised as a point of criticism of IBCs. Among these are issues of academic integrity, academic freedom, and authoritarianism (Sia, 2013). However, it should be noted that any discussion of ethics will always be understood through culturally relative lenses. An IBC, however, presents something of a dilemma. If ethics are culturally determined, an IBC must function across several ethical, cultural frameworks. The identity of the IBC is firmly rooted in the culture and social mores of the home country, but the IBC should also accommodate local traditions, customs, and laws. Wilkins (2015) rightly points out that ethics are normative and "judged by individuals." (p. 1395) and cites two examples of "hypocrisy" in Western countries, one in which academics in the UK faced disciplinary charges for criticizing management and leaking to the press and another grade manipulation scandal for student-athletes in the US. This, type of argument, common in IBC research, however, relies on a rather weak *tu quoque* construction. If Western universities have instances of unethical conduct in their home countries that is not a justification for IBCs to compromise standards in either labor practices or academic integrity, particularly if their academic staff or students face harm. When Matthew Hedges, a Ph.D. candidate at Durham, was jailed and accused of spying in the United Arab Emirates, both Durham and the University of Exeter suspended academic relations in the country (Batty, 2018). Since then, the University of Exeter has closed its program entirely though the Hedges case was not cited as the primary reason. The line for ethical standards may be arbitrary, but there are cases where universities have elected to align with home country norms, and others, where they have determined that take a host country stance, is more amenable. Since issues of ethics, culture, cross-cultural exchange, and interculturality are complex and situational, a portion of IBC research is centered around these areas and the ones discussed below.

One might further argue that academic freedom of expression and critical dissent are both a cultural and institutionalized norms in the Western world but also norms that helps universities, researchers, and students to flourish. Immanuel Kant "believed that it was the function of scholars to challenge the dominant orthodoxies of their day, and that without that freedom to challenge progress would not be made." (Seldon, 2016) However, we have seen in recent decades, something of a suppression of critical voices in Western universities (Giroux, 2011). There is further discussion which addresses the ways in which universities with the good intentions to reduce elitism, have demonstrated illiberal attitudes towards faculty, students, art and literature that do not conform to contemporary liberal rhetoric (Williams, 2016) often colloquially referred to as "cancel culture." This is another way the neoliberal university mirrors corporate industry. Movements for social justice and equality are transformed into stylish marketing campaigns and public relations opportunities wherein the display of progressive values is given primacy over policy of progress. Higher education, just as companies seeking to control their public image, seem willing to publicly align with the latest cause, but unwilling to address their own contributions to inequality, such as the aforementioned precarity of academic labor, tuition fees resulting in students starting their adult lives deeply in debt, tiered ranking systems which reproduce elite networks, and the ways tuition costs prevent individuals from accessing higher education. IBCs are, as the literature suggests, also a component of public image, reputation, and internationalization.

2.6 IBC Research Landscape in Summary

As a category of research, the study of international branch campuses (IBCs) falls under a broad spectrum of terms. Transnational (TNE), borderless, cross-border, and offshore are all used in the literature to describe the internationalization of higher education with transnational and offshore the most common and contemporary designations (Kosmützky and Putty, 2016). Historically, the study of TNE focused on student mobility to supplier countries (Ziguras, 2008), but as universities have increasingly opened offshore campuses and international programs, new thematic fields of research focused on developments in TNE have emerged including, but not limited to:

global status and reputation (Siltaoja, et. al, 2019), internationalization (Garret, et al. 2016), international students and student mobility (Buckner and Stein, 2020; Mok and Han, 2016), quality assurance (Healey, 2015, Chankseliani, 2020) and student learning experience (Owusu-Agyeman and Amoakohene, 2020). With the use of terms such as cross border or borderless, there is an indication that many higher education institutions are now beyond geographic borders in the delivery of degrees but operating within several national financing and regulatory environments (Knight, 2005). Though IBCs represent a rather small portion of TNE activity in the higher education landscape, they are a marked and clear element (Wilkins, 2018) and one that presents an out of the ordinary context to explore many educational and policy issues related to pedagogy, management, institutional development, quality assurance, and academic staff. (Wilkins, 2020b). The findings in this study address several of these topics as the participants discussed them in relationship to their experiences. It is also worth noting that many of these issues are intertwined in daily, observable life and thus, while they are often researched individually, their connection to one another cannot be ignored. For example, what role does academic staff have in the quality assurance process (Bordogna, 2020b) or how is institutional development connected with teaching practice? The more these questions are reflected upon, the more challenging it is to view them as siloed.

Yet, research on IBCs is still an emerging field of research with most research occurring over the past 15-20 years. Along with the previously discussed thematic, there are several key clusters of research. The aforementioned systematic reviews of the literature on IBCs (Kozmützky and Putty, 2016, Escriva-Beltran., Muñoz-de-Prat, and Villó, 2019) indicate these cluster areas include: research focused on students (Hoyt and Howell, 2012; Wilkins, Balakrishnan and Huisman, 2012a; Wilkins, Balakrishnan and Huisman, 2012b; Fang and Wang, 2014; Bhuian, 2016; Ahmad and Buchanan, 2017; Belderbos, 2019; Jones, 2019; Sin et al., 2019, Yang et. al, 2020), managerial and staffing questions (Altbach and Knight, 2007; Shams, 2012; Healey, 2016; Clifford, 2015), quality assurance (Healey, 2015; Wilkins, 2017; Chankseliani, 2020), knowledge and skills (Knight, 2011; Garrett, et al, 2017; Morgan, 2020), and institutional development and internationalization. (Garrett, et al, 2016; Han, 2016) There is also a further division of

IBC research focused on economic and finance (Lien and Wang, 2012). Below brief summaries of main research cluster areas are presented and followed by an analysis of their relationship to neoliberal and marketization discourse.

2.6.1 Students

There first cluster of IBC research focuses mainly on student perceptions and rationales for choosing to study at IBCs (Wilkins et al., 2012; Chee et al., 2016) along with adjacent issues relating to student experience (Shah, Roth, and Nair, 2010; Peiper and Beall, 2014; Bhuian, 2016; Wilkins, 2020a), choice (Weinman, 2014; Ahmad and Buchanan, 2015), mobility and employability (Mellors- Bourne, 2015; Cheong, et. al, 2016; Owusu-Agyeman and Amoakohene, 2020). Similar to much of IBC information published research exists on data surrounding student satisfaction and student experience collected from in-house IBC surveys and host countries QA authorities is available (Bhuian, 2016; Ahmad, 2015; Yang, et al., 2020), but a large portion of this data remains obscured from the public (Wilkins, 2020b). There is a plausible case that the perception of the home country is a weighted aspect in students' decision to study at an IBC (Cubillo, Sanchez and Cervino, 2006). IBCs originating from developed economies are often historically preferred (Javalgi, Cutler, and Winans, 2001) One might take this argument further and suggest that things such as academic freedom, a tradition in many economically developed countries, is what makes the IBC exportable and attractive to students. Students are often enrolling with the expectation that the IBC is equivalent to that of the home country counterpart, and one can argue that this includes experiencing the cultural norms of the host country as well as the host country. Yet, as previously mentioned IBCs originate from across the globe (Healey, 2015) and now move not just from developed to developing economies but in multiple directions, for example, developed to developed or developing to developing (Wilkins, 2020b). However, student mobility has not proven to be as cross-directional as IBC development. Direction of students principally moves from transfer from IBCs to home campuses with some instances up to 90-95% of IBC students moving abroad (Mok and Han, 2016; Garrett, et al, 2016; Wilkins, 2020b). Institutions also find that IBC is an effective recruitment tool to

feed IBC undergraduates to home campus graduate programs (Escriva-Beltran, Munoz-de-Prat, and Villo, 2019).

2.6.2 Managerial and Staffing Questions

Managerial issues on IBCs are complex because of the multiple institutional aims, partnerships, and in the case of the present study, financial pressures. Therefore, a cluster of research explores the many managerial challenges related to leadership Borgos, 2016; Healey, 2016). Nested within managerial issues, another common theme of critical discussion is the academic staffing of IBCs (Cai and Hall, 2016, Neri and Wilkins, 2019, Wilkins, Butt and Annabi, 2017). This a topic of particular relevance to the present study as the participants are IBC academics and leadership employees. For one, there is historically little unified data on either national or international scales regarding the demographics of IBC academics (Naidoo, 2009). However, there are three primary acknowledged models of academic staffing on branch campuses, which may contribute to how much influence and perceived stature an academic possesses. One is relocating faculty from the home campus though there is considerable expense involved, and some universities have faced resistance from their student bodies and accusations of "brain drain." Also, they may not want to face the subject and content restrictions on IBC campuses with different cultural and religious norms (Smith, 2009). There are also further perceptions from the home campus that the IBC may not add "value" to the institution as a whole and potentially can cause the home campus "a loss of resources" including recruiting faculty to the branch (Wilkins, 2020b). Additionally, IBC students often arrive with the expectation that they will have teaching faculty from the home campus (Shams and Huisman, 2012). One of the speculative reasons for George Mason University closing its extensive campus in the emirate of Ras Al Khaimah in the UAE was that none of the faculty came from the home campus (Lewin, 2009). This suggests there is some tension regarding who has access to the home campus faculty. Another form of academic staffing is a "fly-in, fly-out" program where faculty fly to the IBC for an intensive week or two of teaching though the literature this model is falling out of fashion also due to the exorbitant cost. The third style of academic staffing is recruiting locally from the host country. This

method is often met with both a nod to practicality and budgeting but also with some derision. One of the more relied upon arguments against hiring locally from the host country is that highly qualified and established teaching staff are in short supply, and quality may be compromised (Ziguras, 2008). However, one can also argue that this type of criticism is rooted in imperialist notions where developed countries are perceived as possessing powerful knowledge (Naidoo, 2009). And while some may argue that "adjuncts lack experience and appropriate qualifications" (Wilkins, 2020b, p. 318) the empirical and lived experience of IBC adjuncts suggests a more exploitative system of the highly educated and qualified (Nolan-Bock, 2018). This follows of course in a long tradition in higher education of profiting from the qualifications and precarity of adjuncts, especially when they are women (Schell and Patricia, 1998; McRae, 2012). The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic must also be acknowledged since digital education is currently restructuring the delivery of higher education and the ways this will impact IBCs in the long-term is yet to be seen. It raises questions about how expanding digital learning will affect the already fragile job security of IBC academics, adjuncts, and physical learning spaces.

For one, students in the host country sometimes enroll with the expectation that the faculty from the home country will deliver the course content (Shams and Huisman, 2012) and the digitalization has made this more possible. Yet, the practicalities and expenses involved in relocating faculty, short-term or permanently, from the home country can be prohibitive (Gill, 2009; Shams and Husiman, 2012). Host country faculty may not wish to relocate their families abroad for a long-term posting, or they may not desire to teach the material in an environment where the cultural and religious values of the host country may present conflicts with their subject area (Smith, 2009). As a result, branch campuses often recruit academic staff from the host country though this strategy is not immune to criticism. Those who are critical have argued that employing local staff may be detrimental to the teaching and learning of students because highly qualified lecturers are often in short supply in the developing world where most branch campuses are set up (Ziguras, 2008). Conflicts about the management of academic staff, and curricula (Coelen, 2014) are part and parcel to the joint partnership aspect of IBCs as two entities

(home campus and private investor), often with differing agendas seek control over an IBC. In this dimension, we can see internationalization generally and IBCs specifically as further manifestations of marketization in that they widen the scope of the market segment for a university operating with a commercial agenda.

2.6.3 Quality Assurance and Institutional Reputation

A third cluster of research explores quality assurance (Yokoyama, 2011; Shams, 2012; Franklin and Alzouebi, 2014; Silver, 2015; Healey, 2018; Hou, et. al, 2018, Chankseliani, 2020), a multi-layered topic due to challenges of attempting to confer a analogous degree and student experience in different national and regulatory atmospheres (Farrugia and Lane, 2012). Jing et. al, refer to this as "global integration" (2020, p. 2) with quality assurance covering topics spanning operations to assessments (Henderson, Barnett, and Barnett, 2017). However, quality assurance outside of in-depth singular case studies is difficult to exam in the IBC context. One reason for this may be that there is no compulsory or centralized reporting system.

For example, there are many external agencies, governmental and non-governmental regulators involved in the QA process such as UAE's Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA), UAE's CAA (Commission for Academic Accreditation), UK's QAA (Quality Assurance Agency), Australia's TESQA (Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency), various US agencies, e.g. MSCHE (Middle States Commission on Higher Education) and NECHE (New England Commission of Higher Education), and a multitude of agencies in Europe e.g. AQUINN (Accreditation, Certification and Quality Assurance Institute, Germany), QQI (Quality and Qualifications Ireland). This is compounded with the various commercial infrastructure partners who may or may not publish institutional data especially if they are privately held and financial data is not often disclosed either by the partner or the home campus (Wilkins, 2020b). This is also indicative of the layers of complexity of TNE (Bordogna, 2019) and multiple parties involved in IBC administration. It is an issue which is therefore intertwined with managerial and staffing issues.

The literature also suggests that due to abovementioned *complexity* of operations in TNE and IBCs, the there is a growing need for academic staff who have the knowledge and skills to manage the challenges. According to Bordogna "Academic staff, both at home and overseas, who are responsible for managing TNE provision are now expected to deal with aligning the strategic objectives of multiple institutions, project management, and the protection of academic standards and reputations, all whilst creating equitable and comparable student learning experiences." (2019, p. 5) It is further indicated that academic staff on IBCs are often given a series of objectives and standards to implement, but not the ability to contribute to systems or quality assurance development (Lim, 2010). This is an issue which informed the development of several interview questions used in the data collection for this study and which the participants discussed at length.

The challenges of quality assurance in the IBC context are linked to institutional status, internationalization aspirations and "brand" reputation. Yet, for smaller institutions, the IBC can serve as a marketing function to introduce international students and employers to the home campus (Wilkins, 2020a). For prestige category universities, which have ample funding and a global image, such as NYUAD (Morgan, 2020), the pressures of sustaining operations are significantly reduced, and attention can be focused onto larger, more holistic knowledge exchange and research goals. It raises the question then to what extent funding and financial pressures impact the teaching and learning, and, therefore, knowledge.

2.6.4 Knowledge and Skills

Previously cited amongst, the reasons for hosting IBCs were that they can serve as mechanism for "upskilling" the local population. IBCs also offer an "international" experience for students who are unable to study overseas (Li, 2020). And IBCs sometimes benefit from a *perception* of academic freedom and creative learning whereas domestic institutions may be perceived as more rigid and traditional (Wilkins, 2020a). Returning to the upskilling aspect, we can further understand how the tentacles of

marketization seep into the IBC context. While transformational learning, knowledge exchange, and innovation are often discussed (Knight, 2011, Wilkins, 2020b), career prospects, employability, advantage over public university graduates, and "soft skills" appear often in assessing the value or contribution of IBCs (Cheong, et. al, 2016; Mok, et al. 2018; Belderbos, 2019, Oswusu-Agyeman and Amoakohene, 2020).

2.7 The Commercial Nature of IBCs

From the pro-market perspective, investment in higher education is not just an opportunity to shape policy, but a profiteering opportunity. In the initial decades of development consultants and strategists often over-projected the financial gains to be had in exporting higher education in the form IBCs (Wilkins, 2020a) and while institutions have become more aware of the challenges, profit objectives are, as the participants in this study discuss, are a tangible aspect of academic life on commercially partnered IBCs. Though profit generation is not exclusive to neo-liberal or even capitalist economic systems, the entry of external third parties with profiteering aims in higher education has increased in the past two decades (Ball, 2012; Tan, 2015). Within the marketized IBC, we have two, sometimes layered situations. One, the university functions corporate-like in the global market but remains state-owned or not-for-profit in overall aim, or two, the university is partnered with a for-profit partner who has revenue as its ultimate goal. There are also combined situations in which a state or not-for-profit university has a corporate partner in the form of a joint venture. The benefit of such partnerships to a home campus is the ability to mitigate some of the risks associated with IBCs. Agreements can range from areas that have little impact on academic experiences, such as outsourcing security or cafeteria services to areas with significant pedagogical impact.

Investors, edu-business, and the consulting sector often position themselves as solution saviors for higher education and education broadly. Private enterprise is presented as primed to help "define problems and provide solutions" and actively influence educational policy on an international level (Ball, 2013, p. 128). These dynamics are visible in "liberalised" policies enacted at the state and "not-for-profit"

universities and most relevant for this study, the entry of "for profit" or joint ventures into the higher education sector (Brown, 2011, p. 11).   The neo-liberal mythology is one where schools, teachers, and universities need private industry to correct inefficiency, be more in tune with the labor market, and deliver results. Results that can be measured, ranked, and audited. According to Watters (2015), industry (specifically the tech industry) is particularly adept at crafting a myth, often relying on a historically false picture of "education-as-a-factory-model" that has been static, unchanged for centuries and unable to address individual learners. Edu- business employ this narrative to promote their ability to "disrupt" and solve the problems of education. There is also a parallel philanthropic sector that promotes a similar change and solution savior narrative. Though it is worth noting that many of these educational foundations and non-profits have leadership origins in commercial industry, particularly digital technologies, such as The Gates Foundation or Facebook's initiatives with public schools in the United States (Olmedo, 2016). There are also educational technologies programs from Apple, Amazon and a myriad number of start-ups. Educational technology often presented or evangelized through the marketing narrative of utopian solutions and access while the political, economic, surveillance, and profiting aims are obscured. Yet, the reality demonstrates that the Edtech sector is valued at close to 43 billion (Choudry, 2020; Mirrlees and Alvi, 2020).

Support for private business, consulting, and arguably some types of philanthropy in education, is often rooted in a pro-market, neoliberal ideology. Private sector strategy and knowledge are often unquestioningly presented as efficient alternatives to bureaucracy and as more connected to "the real world." As previously highlighted, the "real-world" symbolizes the labor market or that which is connected to some form of production and profit generation. We can observe an emphasis on meeting the demands of the consumer and the job market through the increase in entrepreneurship programs and an emphasis on graduate employability statistics (Ek et al., 2013; Bridgstock and Jackson, 2019). Scholarship and the many diverse educational methods and disciplines which are not directly linked to the "market" and not measurable are positioned as antiquated and improvident (Giroux, 2011). Critical research often refers to this as managerialist culture colonizing educational policy and practice (Lynch, 2015).

Pedagogically significant corporate partnerships currently exist in research funding and the online teaching space as OPMs (online program managers). Publishing companies often package and sell online "critical thinking" as well as postgraduate program materials. According to Carey (2019), these for-profit companies are rendered invisible to students and have a vested interest in remaining covert. The likely reason is that these companies often take upwards of 60% of the tuition fees for an online degree. Carey further argues that online degrees were an opportunity to increase affordable access to higher education and thus, social mobility. However, the presence of profit-seeking OPMs creates a barrier and diverts resources from teaching and instruction. The expansion of online space presented universities and academics a chance to explore new quality delivery methods, which could be delivered at a low cost, but the entry of for-profit OPMs quashed this opportunity. The example of OPMs is relevant because it very much resembles the role of the private, commercial partnership at IBCs internationally.

As discussed, to navigate the host environment, universities either for logistical reasons or legal requirements tend to partner with a local business entity (Wilkins, 2016) if they do not partner with a government or semi-government agency. In the UAE, as earlier cited, a government partnership is typically reserved for elite category universities such as NYU Abu Dhabi (Wilkins, 2017) and thus such set ups have been excluded from the present study. While the government is involved in some tactical decisions, universities in such partnerships have a guarantee of academic freedom and organizational autonomy even if this occasionally goes awry (Redden, 2015). Some research (Hill et al., 2014), which has examined joint venture partnerships in the UK-Malaysia context, has argued that conflict and compromise between the home university and partner are inevitable. Areas of conflict and tension in this case centered on curricula, staff management, and tuition fees.

The universities at the center of this study, however, originate from Anglo-Western countries that have exported education abroad through an IBC to the Gulf. In order to set up the IBC, a local equity partner in the host country enters into a licensing or franchising

agreement with the home campus. Often, operations, local regulatory work, marketing, and HR are outsourced to the local business partner or infrastructure provider. It is this dynamic, which arguably places IBCs and IBC academics in a new, more extreme frontier of the marketized university. It is not merely the adoption of the corporate sector practices but for-profit proprietorships. We can see this in the example, as mentioned earlier of the University of Central Lancashire's allegedly corrupt telecom partner. This is not to suggest that all business partners have miscreant intentions. Wilkins and Urbanovic (2014) found that organizations involved in IBC operations had meaningful intentions and were motivated by a desire to help individuals and national development. Yet, there is always a distinction between intentions and the actuality those intentions create. This does not erase the fact, however, that many partners have for-profit targets and agendas in a stage beyond marketization rituals or implementing corporate governance tactics.

Furthermore, the role of the equity partner on IBCs is often subterranean in visibility to students and the public or, as Healey states, "shrouded in commercial secrecy" (2015, p. 6). It is as Wilkins (2020) described "almost impossible to obtain precise figures, as most institutions do not publish separate financial accounts for their IBCs." (p. 315). As these types of private sector and equity relationships are increasing across all of education globally (Ball, 2012), it is undeniable that they have an impact on academic experience and pedagogy. Many IBCs, particularly in the Gulf, are sites that have tread the waters of this dynamic since their early beginnings. One might even argue that IBCs with private partnerships have already arrived in the place where much of education, including higher education, is headed if the OPM scenario is suggestive of future dynamics. Therefore, there is insight to be gained in how such partnerships impact teaching experience and pedagogy.

To be clear, enterprise partnerships are not exclusive to IBCs as earlier discussed, many home campuses and Western universities also have corporate partnerships for various services. Commercially partnered IBCs simply provide one interesting environment to explore this dynamic. For-profit higher education investors or edu-businesses have grown substantially over the past decade (Verger, et al.,

2017). Examples beyond OPMs include investments made by global edu and tech businesses such as Apple, Pearson, and McGraw Hill entering into joint ventures with universities (Ball, 2012). Williamson (2020), in a case study on Pearson explains that edu-businesses follow a similar trajectory to digital capitalism aims, seeing higher education as lucrative market to exploit, harvest data, and privatize stating that "many universities in the US and UK have signed long-term 10 year deals with the company's [Pearson] online program…These long-term agreements ultimately 'lock-in' universities to for-profit platforms by creating new dependencies of public institutions on private transnational capital." Digital technologies thus facilitate and make possible the restructuring of higher education to consumer product and service as well as investment. (Selwyn, 2014). However, the data on the profit divisions and spending remains challenging to obtain on UAE IBCs (Healey, 2015; Wilkins, 2020b) and is an area which could be explored further. It is difficult to know to what extent students are cognizant of third-party ownership when it is hidden behind a Western university "brand" and to what extent his impacts teaching and learning when faculty are not employed directly by the university but through a private investor. Overall, there is very little critical research and public discussion on this aspect of the IBCs globally and in the Gulf. Holistically, IBC research reflects a lean towards a pro-market stance.

2.8 Where is the current study situated in IBC literature?

To understand the aims of the current study, both the profitability motive of commercially partnered IBCs and the literature need to be considered. What the research primarily suggests is that IBCs are ensconced in a neoliberal, marketized and NPM discourse both in practice *and* in research because they are often studied from pro-market, performance evaluation, and development perspectives. And that research helps to reproduce, and legitimize, a marketization dynamic. If the primary clusters of literature are considered in the context of neoliberal education environment, we can how these topics of research are connected to a pro-market stance even when they are highlighting the risks of IBC operations. Student choice, recruitment, experience, employability, quality assurance, and management, these all reflect the language and discourse of

neoliberalism and academic capitalism. In other words, to research student choice or management efficiency is to arguably sanction, tacitly endorse and further promote corporate-style practice in higher education.

There is even an argument that areas such as cultural awareness and identity are also embedded in the neoliberal ideology in how they can be manipulated for market purposes. According to Altbach (2015), "Let us be honest about branch campuses. With a few notable exceptions, they are not really campuses. They are, rather, small, specialized, and limited academic programs offered offshore to take advantage of a perceived market." (p. 2). As discussed earlier, data suggests that lower-tier or less prestigious HEI incur more financial risk. Thus, lower ranking HEIs are more likely "to adopt volume maximization strategies in international education." (Marginson, 2017, p 16). This is not to suggest that lived experience is not impacted by identity and culture or that intercultural and identity researchers have a pro-market, neoliberal stance. Most researchers would likely argue that such discourses are intended to be emancipatory in nature. But this does not erase that there is profitability in tailoring the international educational experience to a cultural and market context and using identity for corporate gain in a cosmetic or superficial sense. The reverse also applies in that the country of origin for an IBC is often a heavily relied upon marketing strategy through the leveraging of the culture capital a "British education" might symbolize. A belief in individual identity (or identities) and autonomy are central to a market-oriented culture because it helps inform our consumer preferences or what we believe to be our personal taste. It helps corporations customize products for more niche identity segments and capitalize on what students imagine a future life will be like. Nixon, Scullion, and Molesworth summarize the connection between consumer identity, choice, and the potential impact on pedagogy:

> Consumer choice privileges instant gratification, allowing us a sense that
> we establish our identity without recourse to lengthy and complicated
> procedures or activities, but rather through purchasing something: for
> example, Gabriel and Lang (1995:162) note how consumers are
> 'frequently presented as thirsting for identity and using commodities to

quench this thirst.' Worse, as we increasingly define ourselves in terms of our tastes- building a personal profile of our wants and desires that we then articulate as needs - the only person who can legitimately know our needs is ourselves. This may potentially reduce the role of tutors to service providers who must meet the instant needs of customers. (2011, p. 199)

Thus, while we can find a significant amount of research with a pro-market dimension and research focused on student experience and cultural awareness, there is a limited critical perspective on how marketization practices, how they are perceived, and what impacts on academic life and pedagogy they might be having. There are, however, several relevant themes in the literature regarding the pedagogical and epistemological impacts of marketization, generally, which are relevant to the study. Using a critical framework, this section expressed the viewpoint that the neoliberal ideology of choice or student as consumer is the opening scene of an interwoven pro-market narrative of higher education. It is a rhetoric presented to students, and the general public, which feeds the perception that higher education as either stopover before the "real world" of employment (Williams, 2012, p. 175) or a pathway to financial security (Sellingo, 2018) and a consumerist lifestyle (Nixon, Scullion, and Hearn, 2018). This in turn arguably presents a situation where an instrumentalist, standardized curriculums are likely to be favored over critical, creative, and authentic education practices.

2.9 Theoretical Framework for Analysis A: Critical Theory and Critical Pedagogy

The theoretical lenses selected for analyzing the relationship between the commercialized practices on branch campus and their potential impacts on educational experience is critical theory, and more specific to the educational context, critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy was selected as a lens to interpret academic life and professional autonomy because it rests at the oppositional point to a prescribed or "top down" curriculum. Critical pedagogy is rooted in critical theory, which seeks to include empirical inquiry, interpretation, and critique of the sociocultural reality under investigation

(McLaren and Giarelli, 1995). While critical theory actively seeks to avoid a uniformity of thought or a "blueprint" for analysis and research, there are several ideas which underpin research with a critical framework (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2000). First, there is an acceptance that human experience, value systems, what is taken as fact, and social structures are historically and socially situated. Second, the critical tradition is to challenge the ideology of our time, which are accepted as "natural" or unescapable and reveal the way these perceptions contribute to inequality.

Philosophically and theoretically, Marxism, Liberation theology, postmodernism/post-structuralism and the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory are all central influences on critical pedagogy and its core aim of democratic principles and emancipation for oppressed populations. Though it is important to note that critical pedagogy is not just a Marxist understanding of class oppression and political economy. There is the further acknowledgment of how multiple systems of oppression, poverty, racism, sexism, gender and sexuality and so on intersect with and are reproduced by capitalist systems (hooks, 2010). However, since the present study centers on a critique of neoliberal, marketization practices on IBCs, the theoretical analysis is more heavily anchored in questions or generative themes around the intersection of economy, academic/teaching experience, pedagogy, and language.

Critical pedagogy is derived primarily from the work of Paulo Freire and strives to challenge the "banking model" of education and encourage a vibrant, socially just pedagogy that has students and teachers critically examine their own biases and the ideologies of society, texts, and the curriculum. In other words, teachers and students must understand how their cultural and social reference points influence their reading of, and participation in the world. There is also an emphasis on authentic and socio-culturally relevant curriculum materials (Freire, 1983). One of way of understanding critical pedagogy is to consider a contrasting educational philosophy such as informational or skills-based learning. In contexts using informational-style learning, curriculums are often standardized with scripted or commercially created materials (Rogers, 2004). However, the banking model continues to flourish in neoliberal regulatory environments because,

education is valued and promoted in terms of "rates of return on investments" (Brown, Lauder and Cheung, 2020, p. 154). Education is structured to meet the needs of the job market. Thus, the curriculum adopts a credentialing approach through standardization, including testing, employability and benchmarking while learning becomes primarily a passive experience to develop employment-friendly skillsets in service of industry (Brown, Lauder, and Cheung, 2020). Therefore, the distribution of knowledge and what constitutes curriculums in universities and schools is connected to a web of institutions, which Michael Apple (1979) has described as,

> schools as caught up in a nexus of other institutions—political, economic, and cultural—that are basically unequal. That is, schools exist through their relations to other more powerful institutions, institutions that are combined in such a way as to generate structural inequalities of power and access to resources. Second, these inequalities are reinforced and reproduced by schools (though not by them alone, of course). Through their curricular, pedagogical, and evaluative activities in day-to-day life in classrooms, schools play a significant role in preserving if not generating these inequalities (p. 63).

The explicit political dimension to critical pedagogy (and research) is one of the primary and established criticisms raised by opponents (Searle, 1990). Critical frameworks are often positioned as inciting political radicalism, leftism and disregarding objective knowledge for extreme relativism. However, critical pedagogy does not have a specific agenda to indoctrinate students or teachers into any one political viewpoint but rather to examine the mechanisms of how we maintain certain perspectives and how "common sense" perspectives in the Gramscian sense uphold oppressive structures (Crehan, 2016). Critical pedagogy aims for students and teachers to question society's assumptions about learning, knowledge, and the notion of objectivity and scientific neutrality (Giroux, 1988). Expressly, there is no knowledge "beyond examination." (Kincheloe, et al., 2011, p. 239). The critical teacher, student, and researcher is always

asking: "What do I know, how do I know it, what do I not know, who does this knowledge benefit?" It therefore encourages students to come to their own conclusions about situations and texts and is not intended to coach them into any one specific ideology. If the aim of academic exercise is to foster creativity and critical thinking, this aspect of a critical pedagogy is just one example of how to address more universal goals of education.

Additionally, Giroux (2011) argues much of the criticism accompanies conservative movement to depoliticize education and apply neoliberal models of measurement and control to the curriculum, teacher autonomy, and research. For example, in the IBC contexts, curriculums may espouse the values of critical pedagogy in learning outcomes, but because they are preset classroom materials, teachers might not be able to function autonomously, incorporate authentic materials, or determine assessments. In the wider neo-liberal context, policy makers and educational reformers have a vested interest in *not* being subject to criticism. When critical pedagogy explicitly challenges policy and the notion of universal, timeless, objective knowledge in the curriculum, it is often perceived as threatening the status quo. This places critical educators and researchers in a rather precarious, increasingly marginalized position because work in this area is less likely to be funded or supported (Giroux, 2010).

Historically, criticisms of traditional critical pedagogy suggest that the framework is ever evolving to address current circumstances. Giroux has argued that while critical pedagogists had developed important concepts such as the hidden curriculum (Apple, 1980) and often effectively revealed the ways schooling reproduces dominant ideologies and produces "truth," much of the work of critical pedagogy has remained in critique (1988) not action. This prompted Giroux to develop a practical critical pedagogy for students to learn the discourse of critique, transformative reflection, and radical democracy. Reflective practices based on the work of Giroux (1988), Dewey (1939) and others have of course become widely popular across many disciplines. While originally embraced due to the emancipatory potential (Halliday, 1998), critical reflection has also arguably suffered a dilution and been reduced to a "set of techniques." (Akbari, 2007, p.

201) or a soft skill (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2008). Critical pedagogy and critical reflection also function within dominant neoliberal structures, and the reduction of critical practices to performative steps seems another example of instrumentalizing learning. In recent years, *Revolutionary Critical Pedagogy*, an expanded version of critical pedagogy, has more specifically challenged finance capital and its rejection the "domesticated" applications. This perspective presents a shift from "traditional critical pedagogy's" post-structural focus on representation and identity and towards using critical pedagogy as a social movement against oppressive social labor, capitalist structures (McLaren, 2011).

There are also arguments surrounding questions of epistemology and the curriculum as they relate to critical pedagogy. More recent discussions have evaluated how key ideas of critical curriculum theory and postmodernism/post structuralism such as: relativity, subjectivity, and the view that schooling represents the interests of the powerful have reduced the role of knowledge in the curriculum (Young, 2013). Further to, there is a case that the student/learner centered, constructivist approach has paved the way for neo-liberal academic standards with an emphasis on skills, employability competencies, and learning outcomes (Deng, 2015). This approach is integral to commercially partnered IBCs which license academic content from the home campus rather than locally produce courses. In other words, knowledge has been turned into a tool or instrument rather than something which has inherent value on its own (Biesta, 2010). Much of this discussion stems from a social realist perspective, which is currently advocating for "bringing knowledge back in" (Young, 2007) and positioning schools and universities as sites where students will be exposed to knowledge they cannot access in their everyday lives (Bernstein and Solomon, 1999). For example, many contemporary curriculum projects, such as having students take on narrow roles in projects which mimic the work world and research areas exclusively derived of their own experience of the world are arguably disempowering and denying students access to knowledge which can better help them understand the structures of society or the ways in which knowledge is historically and socially situated.

These critiques are raised not only because of their contemporary nature, but also because of the ways these issues intersect with marketization and commercially partnered IBC context. With curriculums and courses of study heavily based on marketability, employability and entrepreneurship, there is a marked departure from both critical approaches and knowledge-based approaches (Young, 2011) and from this, leaving philosophical debate about objective knowledge aside, it is arguable that multiple pedagogical traditions suffer. Though this requires believing, despite contradictions, that a knowledge-based approach can also effectively work with critical education practices. If students and teachers are to critically evaluate the world and themselves, there needs to be substantial and authentic material, culturally relevant and culturally foreign artifacts for students to critique and discuss. Critical education practices emphasize simply going beyond learning disciplines as siloed subjects or universal knowledge but connecting them to society and oneself. As Giroux writes in *Neo-liberalism's War on Higher Education*,

> means more than offering an academic enclave for students to learn history, philosophy, art and literature. It also means stressing how indispensable these fields of study are for all students if they are to be able to make any claim whatsoever to being critical and engaged individual and social relations, and modes of pedagogy that constitute a formative culture in which the historical lessons of democratization can be learned the demands of social responsibility can be thoughtfully engaged, the imagination can be expanded, and critical thought can be affirmed. (2014, p. 19)

However, as previously highlighted, critical pedagogy along with other pedagogies has undergone a domestication process and much of the transformational notions have been chipped away at through standardization, performance measurements, and emphasis on reflection and soft skills (Ecclestone and Hayes, 2008). It is noteworthy that this has occurred in tandem with the marketization of higher education, and education generally. It seems not so much that critical pedagogy and poststructuralist views lead

the way for performance-driven curriculums but rather that critical movements were rerouted through reform movements, both progressive and conservative. On the one hand, critical pedagogy is often positioned as progressive, but the student-centered, individual identity can echo and feed the student-as-consumer model. In the conservative spectrum, the emphasis on every day, practical knowledge designed for the workplace manipulates the idea of questioning why some knowledge is more valued than other knowledge to elevating practical, skills-based knowledge as more important than theoretical knowledge. Ideas which suggest that learning that takes place outside the classroom is just as valuable (Wilson, 1993; Darder, 2003) have also been retooled as marketing and recruiting strategies to recognize prior learning and fast track students into programs. Further to, curriculums which are heavily prescriptive in nature, focusing on performance and outcomes, arguably deny agency to teachers and academics and this has been to the detriment of many differing pedagogies and creative methods of teaching. The transformation of the curriculum and effects on teaching autonomy can be further explained as consequences of the quasi-market structure of IBCs.

2.9.1 Rationale for using Critical Pedagogy

There are two primary reasons critical pedagogy has been selected as a theoretical lens. The first is that the aims of the research are aligned with the emancipatory themes of Freire and Giroux. The role of the critical theorist and researcher is to critique the dominant ideologies in practice and to be aware that academic research itself is often used as a way to uphold and reproduce dominant ideologies (De Lissovoy and McLaren, 2003). Thus, I am applying tenets of critical pedagogy to my reading and analysis of the data. For example, in the aforementioned discussion of IBC research, we can see that the majority of studies help to maintain and reproduce a neoliberal view because they are primarily focused on managerialism, success, and student satisfaction. With this reading, IBC research is ensconced in the maintenance of NPM practices because of the language implemented in these studies. Management, success, growth, satisfaction and like terms signify a corporatist agenda. Whether this language is used consciously or unconsciously, the critical researcher interprets such language as

upholding the status quo of marketization.   This is the primary application and use of critical pedagogy in the study.

As an example, a critical perspective will be taken in the analysis of the language used by the participants' and the IBCs themselves in the form of social media marketing materials. Language and its use in maintaining dominant power relations then is paramount to the critical lens (hooks, 2010; Fairclough, 2015). The examination of language, or discourse, and its relationship to power relations is integral to a critical interpretation as it is applied in this study. While deconstructing texts and critically "reading the word" and "reading the world" (Freire and Macedo, 1987) have a postmodern/poststructuralist association, such practices are also relevant for a critical lens because they ask why, and how language, upholds a dominant ideology. Language can prompt the exploration of contradictions between theory/practice between institutional values as promoted and as they actually practiced. Language can reveal, "contradictions between the values people and institutions are committed to and what is actually said and done. Other contradictions relate to sincerity, for instance whether the reasons which people give for doing things are their real reasons, or rather "rationalizations." (Fairclough, 2015, pp. 12 -13).

The second reason critical pedagogy is useful in my analysis is that it is at the polar end to a preordained curriculum delivered by teachers seen as technicians or defined through employability credentials. In other words, a standardized curriculum is the formalization of the banking model challenged by critical pedagogy. It just has a longer chain: the curriculum is "banked" into the teacher and then the student. This is particularly relevant for the commercially partnered IBC context because a prefabricated curriculum and audited teaching are standard practice according to the majority of participants in the study. Other educational philosophies such as the aforementioned Young's argument for bringing knowledge back into the curriculum can also stand in contrast to centrally controlled curriculum based on skills. However, along the spectrum of differing educational theories, misappropriation of critical pedagogy can serve as perhaps the most vivid exemplification of reduction of academic autonomy and freedom.

Critical pedagogy has often been misinterpreted and co-opted by various agendas, including reform movements, edu-businesses, and arguably by critical educational theorists themselves. Critical education practices have been domesticated, diluted and one might argue been peddled to select audiences to be used in service of the market. For example, the International Baccalaureate program (IB), a rapidly expanding and lauded curriculum, implements strains of critical pedagogy in courses such as "Theory of Knowledge." However, participating schools must pay a fee to the organization, which is prohibitive to many public schools and thus, the IB has remained primarily in the domain of private education. The organization may be non-profit in function, but globally it provides service to those wealthy enough to afford (Ricci, 2015) its "critical pedagogy light" curriculum (Ricci, 2015). Thus, while critical pedagogy strives to be egalitarian, the general ways in which is enacted through curriculums such as the IB potentially stifles its democratic aims. A similar comparison can of course be drawn to commercially partnered IBCs. While they are often positioned as providing access to underserved populations, tuition fees render them exclusionary to students who can afford to attend. We can also see top-down measures of control in both situations with the committees and experts producing a "critical" curriculum to be licensed to paying institutions and then handed down to teachers to execute. This separates teachers from their labor in the traditional Marxist sense and denies them an autonomous role in the production of knowledge (Kincheloe, 2011). One hardly suspects that Paolo Freire envisioned these developments in the application of critical pedagogy. Freire was in fact highly critical of the domestication of critical pedagogy, which he argued had been reduced to "student-directed learning devoid of social critique" and a disempowering role for teachers (Kincheloe, 2011; McClaren, 1997). In these cases, a cynical perspective might conclude that critical pedagogy is under threat of being monopolized by the dominant ideologies of quasi-market and neoliberal education.

2.10 Theoretical Framework B: New Public Management

A more focused term which addresses both the discourse and policies of quasi-market and neoliberal education is "New Public Management." Theories of New Public Management (NPM) explain how since the rise of neoliberalism, there has been a refashioning of the management of what were once public services. Education and healthcare are primary examples. Even if these fields remain state-managed, they have been increasingly administered with management practices from corporate industry, which, despite consistent criticism, have persisted since the 80s. The language or discourse of education has been surrendered to that of the world of finance and business. Corporate-style terminology such as, *effectiveness, accountability, efficiency, performance, targets, communities of practice* and *outcomes* are normalized in the curriculum and the ways in which we describe and "evaluate" student and academic/teaching work. Olssen and Peters (2007) further explain that the stress on practical knowledge over theoretical were developed in business and organizational studies. Parallels can be drawn here to the previous discussion regarding the discourse critical pedagogy which is often rebranded to suit market and consumer logic.

According to Lorenz, NPM can be "characterized by a combination of free market rhetoric and intensive managerial control practices." Yet, with the varied and hierarchal higher education landscape, NPM manifests at different intensities. As an illustration, underfunded public colleges and universities and vocational institutes often experience higher levels of NPM effects than elite or prestige category universities (2017, p. 600). Effects include loss of professional autonomy for faculty, increased emphasis on interdisciplinary or soft skills instead of subject knowledge, and larger bureaucratic and surveillance administrations (Barry, 2004). Prestige category universities are somewhat shielded from the performativity culture associated with NPM possibly due to their self-financing security. NPM is often then associated with the public sector adopting the practices of the free market including private ownership, consumption, efficiency management, and risk. The commercially partnered IBC is a natural progression of NPM application on several fronts. IBCs exemplify what Olssen and Peters (2007) describe as

> …the role of higher education for the economy is seen by governments as having greater importance to the extent that higher education has become the new star ship in the policy fleet for governments around the world. Universities are seen as a key driver in the knowledge economy and as a consequence higher education institutions have been encouraged to develop links with industry and business in a series of new venture partnerships

First, the commercially partnered IBC is entrepreneurial in its essence. New Public Management encourages, arguably requires, the practice of entrepreneurship at multiple levels of social organization. The commercially partnered IBC provides an example of this tiered system. In neoliberalism, the state, particularly in emerging and transitioning economies must be entrepreneurial in order to participate and remain competitive in the global market economy. In other words, such economies follow the trajectory of postindustrial economy towards knowledge economy. The state also aims to secure international investment and build a "customer base" of diverse fields including for example, financial services, tourism, healthcare, education, and cultural production through media and art/design hubs.   Second, it also represents a remodeling of a historically public service, education, into a service sector approach, which includes the transformation of student to consumer. Third, is the nature of the partnership between the home campus and private industry in order to establish multiple funding avenues. Finally, private sector management techniques and market logic are the norm since the operations of the branch are managed from outside the home campus university system and exist fully in cost-efficiency/profitability model.

At the same time, the bureaucratic apparatus surrounding the IBC is intensified. There is the obvious condition of having two managerial teams in place, the home campus academic oversight and the commercial partner, but there are often multiple accreditation agencies and audit cultures. Traditionally, IBCs have been accredited solely in the

country of origin, but they are increasingly subject to multiple quality assurance agencies such as educational hub operators and state authorities (Lane, 2011). Lorenz (2014) makes the astute argument, that while NPM is capitalist in its nature, and its aims, centralized control and surveillance are integrated into the NPM ethos so much so that there is a strong resemblance to former communist states (Lorenz, 2014). We can think of NPM's emphasis on auditing, documentation, and surveillance. In line with Lorenz's argument, we can look to one of the great critics of the phenomenon of centralized control in communism, Vaclav Havel who described the observable effects of excessive managerial control,

> Everyone must have perfect control over how they work, and must not allow them the slightest deviation, autonomy, or private intention – nothing that would even faintly resemble freedom. What we have here is the inevitable result of a system which by its very nature must know, at all times, where you are, what you are doing, whom you are influenced by…(1992, p. 121)

In this type of state, professional autonomy and creativity in teaching are reduced. It may be in the ways described in the previous section, such as the implementations of a centrally controlled curriculum or time needed for administrative tasks rather than educational ones. To borrow a classic neoliberal turn of phrase, theories of NPM have "trickled down" into the curriculum as well as expectations of student learning and teaching practice. NPM is exhibited through mechanisms such as predetermined learning and performance outcomes and monitoring efficiency and is thus relevant for examining pedagogical practices on commercially partnered IBCs.

2.11 Justification for Study

Research on IBCs has made a point of examining student perceptions of IBCs and student choice, suggesting that this is an area of importance to the IBC environment (Hoyt and Howell, 2012; Wilkins, Balakrishnan and Huisman, 2012b, Chee, et al., 2016). For

private IBC investors, student recruitment and satisfaction are paramount to ensure financial viability and profitability. What then are the pedagogical consequences of commodification and student as a consumer? From the literature, we can evaluate four critical areas of discussion between opposing factions. From a pro-market stance, choice, access, and empowerment of the student are seen as positive pedagogical developments (Neary and Winn, 2009; Barnett, 2011; Guilbault, 2018). The critical faction argues that the commodification of higher education results in constraints on pedagogy and a conservative learning environment that produces risk-averse students and a culture of complaint (Haywood, Jenkins and Molesworth, 2011; Nixon, Scullion and Molesworth, 2011; Varman, Saha and Skalen, 2011). The third category of research discusses the commodification and consumerist aspect with a more ideologically neutral, less "fixed value-laden" position and turns to exploring possibilities within the marketized context (Barnett, 2011, p. 39).

As demonstrated in the literature, there is still a need to provide more empirical and contextual evidence on the impact of marketization on learning in specific situations. I take here Ball's (2012) point about neo-liberalism:

> There is a failure to ground the work of advocacy in specific practices, in specific locations, involving lived social relations and interactions and costs. There is a conflation of space and place. In saying that, I am aware of Peck and Tickhell's (2002) point that in the analysis of neoliberalism and its effectiveness, we always have to 'walk the line between local specificity and global interconnection. (p. 15)

UAE IBCs provide a specific location grounded in both the local and the global. As transnational institutes, they are at the cross-section of at least two educational systems, with international student bodies originating from developed and developing economies. Moreover, due to partnerships between home campuses and commercial partners, a portion of UAE IBCs can provide valuable insight into a highly marketized context and

what influence it might have on the learning environment and critical education practices. A study on marketization practices on UAE IBCs, or IBCs globally, has not yet been undertaken.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

3.1 Chapter Introduction: Research Questions and Propositions

The review of the literature indicated that there is a need to explore marketization practices in micro-contexts. There are further arguments that marketization places critical pedagogy in a precarious position. The micro-context of commercially partnered IBCs provides one such space for investigation. This chapter presents the methodological construction of the study to examine the below revised research questions based on the literature review. Each major research question is followed with a proposition or hypothesis.

The literature and theoretical lens of the study are the basis for forming the research propositions. Propositions help to define the scope of the study and normally derive from the "literature, professional experience, and theoretical frameworks." (Baxter and Jack, 2008, p. 551). In addition, propositions serve as guidelines for the researcher to focus the analysis of the data. In the quantitative models, the equivalent to propositions are hypotheses (Yin, 2003). Therefore, the review of the literature has led to the development of several working propositions surrounding the relationship between IBC commercial partnerships and pedagogy in connection with revised research questions.

1. To what extent do participants perceive the effects of marketization, neoliberalism and New Public Management on their commercially partnered IBCs?
   a. How do IBC academics describe educational goals and outcomes of their IBC institutions?

Proposition 1

Neoliberal dynamics are evident across higher education globally and have transformed academic experience in public and private educational environments

(Ball, 2012; Brown, 2006; 2011, Gibbs, 2011; Giroux, 2011, 2014; McLaren, 2011 Molesworth, Nixon, Scullion, 2011; 2018.). In the context of commercially partnered IBCs, there is likely to be an extensive embedded discourse and possibly intensification of marketization practices as the result of for-profit agendas. Therefore, the research questions set out to explore if the participants perceive marketization and commercial practices have an effect the discourses and practices on their IBCs and to what extent this might impact the academic environment.

2. To what extent do neo-liberalism and NPM in the case of commercially partnered IBCs determine the framing of pedagogy and academic life?
   a. To what extent do IBC academics, academic leadership, and student academic support service professionals perceive the influence of commercial interests and NPM on pedagogy, teaching practice and professional autonomy?

Proposition 2

Taken in combination**,** marketization practices, and reduced academic autonomy present a challenge to the implementation of critical education practices in that critical pedagogy and alternative pedagogies may be espoused as institutional values but diluted in practice through mechanisms such as a highly monitored, outcomes-based, skills-driven curriculum focused on employability.

3.2 Research Paradigm

The research paradigm explains the worldview or beliefs guiding the study. Creswell and Poth (2018, p. 18) call this "the interpretive framework." The critical pedagogy theory outlined in the literature review represents the "lens through which to view the needs of the participants and communities" in this case commercially partnered IBCs and, more specifically, IBC academics and learning support staff. However, the research paradigm is distinct from this lens in that it informs the study in both broad and

detailed dimensions. First, the paradigm provides the overarching abstract philosophical character of the study by identifying the research position used here on epistemology, ontology, and axiology. Second, it provides an explanation for these choices in the more concrete methodological aspects of data collection and analysis. This section provides an overview of the research paradigm, critical realism. As will be discussed, there is some alignment between critical theory and critical realism in the theoretical and methodological elements, so they serve a complementary function.

3.3 Critical Realism

Critical realism rests at a medium between positivism/post-positivism and postmodernism/interpretivism. Though one may also argue that methodologies do not exist on linear spectrum but rather as distinct approaches to research. Philosophically, the Critical Realist methodology acknowledges that ontologically, an "entity can exist without our knowledge of it," but also that social phenomena are "always mediated and subjective" (Bryman, 2016, p. 25). Therefore, the goals of the critical realist paradigm are not to produce universalist principles in the positivist tradition or to present the lived experiences of participants in a constructivist style approach, but rather to develop a deeper understanding through an explanation of the effects of a social structure and/or phenomenon. It can also be described as an explanatory critique (Bhaskar, 1986/2009). This makes the critical realist approach particularly suitable for examining everyday institutional life and informing policy. In other words, "The critical social sciences enable us to understand how social institutions, for example, markets, systems of production, governments, universities, facilitate or undermine the interactions between human and non-human nature." (Huckle, 2004, p. 5) Though it is sometimes associated with mixed-methods, there is not a strict orthodoxy of practice to critical realism which leaves space within the paradigm to draw from several research approaches and analytical frameworks (Oliver, 2012).

3.4 The Three Dimensions of Critical Realism

The three dimensions of critical realism account for how we may reasonably reach conclusions. That is, in contrast to the social constructivist viewpoint, realism accepts that external reality exists materially and independently of individual experience. In this view, reality is not brought into existence through our perceptions. It is mind-independent (Haig and Evers, 2015). This perspective translates quite easily to the physical sciences but ontologically, the social sciences present more complex circumstances, which go beyond this metaphysical dimension. Casual or generative mechanisms, often referred to as structures, describe the processes which bring about an outcome. This is distinct from a cause and effect understanding of causality. Since human experience cannot be isolated in an experimental lab, occurrences in the social world cannot be studied in the way of isolating variables to establish cause and effect. From the critical realist perspective, power depends on mechanisms, things which exist in the real world but are challenging or impossible to observe. There is then an admission of the unobservable, but we can rationally identify causal mechanisms from what we observe and can make logical inference to "the best explanations." (Haig and Evers, 2015, p. 14)

This can be further understood by contrasting with post-structuralists notions of power relations. To illustrate this point Dowding's (2006) explanation of Lukes' "Power: A Radical View" applies:

Lukes wants to be able to identify and criticise values that lead dominated people to acquiesce and even celebrate their own domination. At the same time, he does not want to fall into the Foucauldian trap where all social relationships are seen in the same relativistic light and where all – dominated and dominant alike – are subject to the same power of structural relations and so all subject to the same moral opprobrium.

Within the current study, the domains of realism can help us examine the structural conditions and the nuanced subjectivist side. If we consider, neoliberalism as the overarching casual mechanism, the actual events and experiences of IBC academic life can be interpreted and explained through theory is beyond mundane "cognition and perceptions" (Bordogna, 2020, p. 885). The study is framed as concern for the subjective experiences of individuals and seeks to use the casual mechanism to explain patterns and effects of behaviors and events.

3.5 Ontological Position of the Study

There may be questions as to why an interpretivist paradigm was not selected because this study is qualitative, employs thematic analysis, and sometimes relies on the theoretical vocabulary of several anti-foundationalist thinkers. At the outset of the research, the study was intended to focus solely on the lived experiences of IBC academics perhaps with a phenomenological approach. While this is still a fundamental aspect of the research, the aim of the research is not to present a reality that emerges from multiple perspectives in the constructivist sense. Critical realism does not take the position of multiple separate realities. Rather, it seeks to examine the effects of structures and institutions upon experiences (Creswell and Poth, 2018). As such, the examination of structural power requires a presumption of reality, for example, the natural or physical world, independent of our thoughts and experiences even if individuals interpret that reality differently. Explanation of differing views of reality is a further component of critical realism. As Bhaskar (2002) explains, "we never create the social structure, we never create the social circumstances into which we are born…it always pre-exists us." (p. 20) Therefore, this study presupposes that political economy, in this case, a neo-liberal, marketized educational economy, is an external reality that can be described even if that reality can only be mediated or understood through our language and experiences.

For example, if a curriculum board determines to eliminate philosophy, it might be done with the belief that as a subject it does not serve a "useful" or "real-world function." From the critical realist perspective, we can argue that this belief is generated from larger

structures such as economic markets that produce and reproduce particular ideas about education in relation to utilitarianism. The curriculum board in this example may very well understand that they are part of a system in which education is held responsible for producing efficient workers or they may not, and they may simply be enacting what has become "common sense" or "the norm" in the Gramscian argumentative sense. Critical realism seeks to explore how this process occurs, and possibly include recommendations for policy and practice. It is to ask the question, what are the mechanisms, often called "generative mechanisms" by which we can reveal the layers of a phenomenon? Erich Fromm describes this as:

> … we cannot explain the structure of society of the personality of its members by the educational process, but we have to explain the educational system by the necessities resulting from the social and economic structure of a given society…While educational techniques are not the cause of a particular kind of social character, they constitute one of the mechanisms by which character is formed. In this sense, the knowledge and understanding of educational methods is an important part of the total analysis of a functioning society (1941/1994, p. 284)

3.6 Epistemological Position of the Study

Though critical realism holds something of post-positivist and Marxist recognition of a material external reality, epistemologically, there is also some alignment with constructivism. Critical realism acknowledges that "social reality is pre-interpreted and that language, discourse, and ideology shape its production and reproduction" (Huckle, 2004, p. 6). However, it is the epistemological understanding of research knowledge that critical realism is distinct. Perhaps this is where the association with mixed-methods factors in, but critical realism considers both quantitative and qualitative approaches to understanding education as both legitimate and incomplete techniques. In other words, the empirical knowledge produced either from a positivist/quantitative viewpoint or from a qualitative/constructivist viewpoint is imperfect because the knowledge we can obtain

can only seek to explain a small portion of an immense cosmic reality. Therefore, instead of relying solely on empirical descriptions to explain casual mechanisms of social conditions and phenomena, critical realism uses theory or theories to understand and illuminate problems (Danermark et al., 2002) and thus, strong theories adapt and transform based on insights from research. In other words, we can only know what our "best" theories tell us. Critical realism is comfortable with acknowledging the contradictions and "theoretical plurality" (Oliver, 2012, p. 3) in research especially research of a sociological nature or that which deals human experience. This study then relies on using critical pedagogy with more generalist elements of critical theory to analyze the phenomenon of marketization practice, the potential impact on teaching and learning practices enacted on commercially-partnered IBCs.

3.7 Methodological Influence

While critical realism does not have an orthodox research methodology, it does apply a reasoning system. Amongst the reasoning systems used in the social sciences, induction, deduction, abduction, and retroduction, critical realism often adopts retroduction and abduction. Retroduction "entails making an inference about the casual mechanism [and casual power] that lies behind and is responsible for regularities that observed in the social world" (Bryman, 2016, p. 25). Abduction is reasoning to explain and justify hypotheses or propositions or moving from effect to describe cause (Niiniluoto, 1999). This is sometimes referred to as a Bayesian approach, particularly in the quantitative sphere, where the researcher makes casual inferences, "from combinations of correlational (cross-case) and process-level (within-case) observations, given prior beliefs about causal effects" (Humphreys and Jacobs, 2015). Critical realism then also takes the position that research cannot be an impersonal endeavor that uncovers reality. In other words, there is no such thing as "objective" or "unbiased" research. The critical realist researcher addresses this by acknowledging that they bring their own worldview and political perspective to their research. The researcher uses methods and tools to progress their knowledge of the topic under investigation by asking "why do we have data

that suggest X exists?" (Olsen, 2007, p. 2) in addition to reflectively considering their role and position within the context of the research.

3.8 Researcher's Relationship to Inquiry

Part of the rationale for implementing a critical realism paradigm is that it supports the axiological, or aesthetic and ethical position of this research. Critical realism similar to critical theory/pedagogy has a transformative/emancipatory conviction at its core (Patton, 2002). Much like the participants in the study, and as a record of professional disclosure, I worked at several commercially-partnered IBCs for close to a decade. While this study is not ethnographic, it was initially informed by observations from my experience, informal discussions with colleagues, and study of IBC marketing materials as discussed in the introductory chapter. What first stood out was the similarity across organizations and a limited amount of teaching autonomy in each institution. All academic content including assessments originated from the home institution. My relationship with the home campus consisted of sending students' assignments and marks to be audited. From a teaching point of view, the required methodology was often highly prescriptive.

Considering both the philosophical and research perspectives, I have always been uncomfortable with the presentation of paradigms as incompatible dichotomies or orthodox doctrines. Throughout my educational journey, it seemed that value and limitation could be found in both post-positivist/constructivist or quantitative/qualitative viewpoints. An extreme constructivist viewpoint individualizes knowledge to a degree that if viewed cynically, seems to work in contradiction to collective change. And positivist style perspectives sometimes have an objective notion of infallibility regarding data which seems to ignore that "objective" data is still harvested with the worldview of the researcher in place. These arguments may seem passé in the world of research and "paradigm wars", but they appear ever real in the way the ideas have been co-opted by popular/mainstream culture where emphasis on individual identity, and "big data" are consistent parts of public discussion. Critical realism, with its appreciation of the limitations of what is knowable, possesses an attractive humility, which is arguably lacking

other paradigms. Moreover, I believe research should inspire some measure of transformative change, however small, rather than simply reproducing or expressing compliance with power structures.

3.9 Research Design

Research design in qualitative studies encompasses a "broader and less restrictive" non-linear approach or an "active model" (Maxwell, 2008 p. 215). In contrast to quantitative studies where design schemes are normally sequentially planned out, qualitative research requires flexibility and reflection through the collection and analysis of data. Yin (2003) argues that while research design in qualitative case studies may not be explicit, it is presented in the way the problem is described, the layout of the conceptual framework and theoretical frameworks, research questions, methodology, ethics, discussion of limitations and validity. Therefore, the items to be covered in the following section are those related to methodological decisions.

3.10 Research Approach: Deciding on Multiple-Case Study

Amongst the choices of qualitative research approaches, I applied a multiple-case study methodology though elements of grounded theory and narrative inquiry were influential in my interviewing process. Grounded theory in particular aligns well with a realist perspective. According to Haig and Evers (2015) a realist approach, "shares…with grounded theory a facts-before-theory…conception of inquiry" rather than a "top-down", theory testing approach (p. 73). However, in a departure from the traditional grounded theory expression of "grounded in the data," Haig and Evers explain that a realist viewpoint is "grounded in the phenomena." If we consider that phenomena are repetitive and long-standing, and thus observed, they are the observable occurrences theories seek to "explain and predict." (p. 77).

A case study "aim[s] to generate an intensive examination of a single case, in relation to which …[the researcher can]…then engage in a theoretical analysis." (Bryman, 2016, p. 64). While there are varying viewpoints on case study design or approach, the

position of commonality is that case studies are intended to investigate a topic in a thoroughly comprehensive and in-depth manner (Peel, 2020). A multiple-case study is when the researcher evaluates an issue through purposeful collection of different viewpoints. (Creswell and Poth, 2018). It was not a straightforward path to arrive at a multi-case study approach as early on in the study other options were considered.

At the outset, phenomenology was the logical approach. As an approach, it is concerned with individuals' shared understanding of a phenomenon (Creswell and Poth, 2018). Marketization practices are the phenomenon, and this study does set out to explore academics and support services experience and comprehension. However, the lived experience dimension presents challenges in philosophical assumption as the framework is highly constructivist and centers on interpreting the participants' lived experience and describing the essence of that experience rather than overtly engaging with larger social structures and ideologies. It also involves the researcher bracketing their own experience (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 2015) when I thought this aspect was an integral component of incorporating experiential evidence into the formation of propositions and the reflection.

I had also considered conducting a multi-site comparative case study. This approach would have involved an in-depth look at one or two branch campuses with a comparative case conducted at their respective home campuses. Proceeding in this way would have been a more directed form of institutional research, and the comparative element would have provided a more detailed look into the different experiences of home campus academic and IBC academics. However, as I will outline in the ethics section, obtaining institutional approval proved challenging. Approaching participants individually across several IBCs was a more feasible method to accomplish the research both within ethical parameters and a reasonable time frame.

A multi-case study approach is when each individual participant represents a case. This is sometimes alternatively referred to as a collective case study (Yin, 2003). This renders an opportunity for the researcher to examine, in-depth, each case in isolation

(within-case analysis) and in comparison, to each other (cross-case analysis). This approach is effective for examining a phenomenon occurring in different settings because it allows "the researcher to analyze within each setting and across settings" (Baxter and Jack, 2008, p. 550). While there is a temptation to assume that more cases will produce a better study, the number of participants in a multi-case study must be kept within a limit which will still enable the data to be analyzed to the in-depth degree required for a case study approach (Creswell and Poth, 2018). There may be some points of conjecture about why each case consists of a participant rather than an institution, since it is the commercial IBC environment at the center of the study. However, due to institutional access difficulties, which are further explained in the data collection and ethics subsections, a true cross-comparison of institutions was not possible. Each participant is then an individual case study of professional experience at one or more commercially-partnered IBCs.

Criticisms of case study research are similar to those of qualitative research generally, in that it is difficult to generalize the findings and produce external validity. However, according to Yin (2009), a multiple-case study does to some extent apply the logic of replicability in its selection of similar cases. Identifying generative mechanisms, which can rationally be generalized is another way to apply the logic of replicability. This point can also be addressed by looking at the aims of a case study. Reproducing findings in the positivist's tradition is not the aim of qualitative research, where the goal is to "seek greater understanding" (Stake, 1995). In addition, reproducibility as a gold standard has recently been debated amongst the scientific community, with some advocating for triangulation, which has long been a tradition of qualitative research (Munafo and Smith, 2018). Case studies, in alignment with a critical realist paradigm, can center on theory, in that they can entail theory building or theory testing. The centrality of theory, particularly when examined in a multiple-case study can aid in "the understanding of causality" and "the main argument in favor of the multiple-case study is that it improves theory building." (Bryman, 2016, p. 67)

Further on the point of causality, case studies are valuable to the critical realist paradigm because they are a qualitative hermeneutic method or interpretative in nature, but there are no philosophical restrictions on an ontological assumption of an external reality. While case studies values constructivists paradigms, subjective human experience, there is no rejection of an objective reality (Miller and Crabtree, 1999) or that there is unobservable knowledge. A question may be posed as to why mixed-methods were not applied to the study, or rather, a quantitative element, as this is a common, though not mandatory, technique when applying critical realism. This research seeks to systematically explore the issue of IBC commercial infrastructure partnerships through individual experience and in-depth interviews were identified as the best technique especially considering the bounds of a case study. Within TNE partnership research, it has been recommended that "participants should be encouraged to share their lived experiences in detail, enabling the researcher to collect as much information as possible about that individual's role, responsibilities, experiences and interpretations…" (Bordogna, 2020 p. 890). In addition, my past research experience also is more aligned with qualitative practices along with an interest in human experience. This directed the focus towards interviewing to obtain rich and detailed chronicles.

3.11 Instrumental Case Study

An instrumental case study is centered on exploring a phenomenon within a specific organizational structure (commercially partnered IBCs) not specific individual or institution. In contrast to an intrinsic case study which is designed to learn more about a specific person or phenomenon, the individuals or institutions in instrumental case studies "facilitate" or act as a channel for exploring and illustrating an issue (Stake, 2000, p. 437). Since the study set out to explore a phenomenon in-depth, how and why marketization practices are enacted on UAE commercially partnered IBCs and how they may impact academic life, pedagogy, and professional autonomy rather than a single institutional site or individual. This made the instrumental model the most appropriate as multiple case studies can provide a more comprehensive and holistic portrait of the phenomenon under question in a natural, everyday setting (Yin, 2009). As the sampling section will outline,

the majority of participants had professional experience at more than one commercially-partnered IBC site. This helps to compare management and educational practices across different contexts with the same organizational setup.

3.12 Research Context

The research context is integral to case studies because it helps to set the boundaries of the case. As discussed, the research did not take place at a specific institution rather participants were recruited who had professional experience at several different commercially-partnered IBCs. The rationale is that joint partnerships between universities and for-profit infrastructure providers is somewhat unique in higher education contexts though it is occurring with more frequency. In some areas, partnerships are referred to as P3 or public-private partnerships, which are similar in scope to private contracting for government services. A P3 is as a "long-term agreement between a public entity and a private industry team that is tasked with designing, building, financing, operating, and maintaining a public facility. The past decade has seen a steady increase in the use of P3 structures, both inside and outside higher education." (Renner, 2019) This is a somewhat comparable condition for commercially-partnered IBCs through commercial partners on the IBCs in this study, are also responsible for branch campus HR and academic staffing, which means there is an extended role in academic life.

Private partnerships are also common in university pathway programs whereby for-profit education providers such as, Kaplan, Pearson, Cambridge Education Group, Navitas, create academic programs, most often for pre-entry foundation programs, ESL, and online courses. These models were primarily introduced in the UK and Australia but have recently become more commonplace in the United States. The implementation of such programs suggests a mass production of and influence on academic content because "pathway programs intersect with core academic functions -- recruitment and admissions and teaching -- leading critics to question why universities can't simply develop these programs in-house." (Redden, 2014). This is a development which is in departure from Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) idea that academic capitalism does not

necessarily involve external corporate influence. Entrepreneurial motivation arises not just from the actors within the university system, students, faculty and administration but from private investors in education.

Therefore, the role of for-profit entities is not unique to IBCs, but it is relevant because it is the common unifier amongst institutions the participants were or had been employed at. Commercially-partnered IBCs provide one space where the impact of these partnerships and the influence of marketization on academics and pedagogy can be explored. Therefore, while the location of the commercially-partnered IBCs is the UAE, it is entirely feasible that the conditions may be comparable internationally at similarly structured institutions. The context has less of a connection to the country where the data was collected than to the nature of institutional partnerships under discussion. As addressed earlier, this type of joint partnership is common in international offshore educational hubs and free zones, which through different regulatory aims and fewer national restrictions are designed to appeal to foreign organizations. Therefore, the marketization practices of IBC operated by a commercial partner can be considered the "quintain" (Stake, 2006) or phenomenon under review in the case. Each participant's case is a manifestation of the quintain, but it is the wider phenomenon/quintain which the study seeks to explore.

3.13 Participant Sampling

The initial plan for conducting a multiple-case study was to center the study on two commercially-partnered IBC campuses and the two home campus counterparts. The plan was to conduct a multi-site comparative case study. Unfortunately, after attempting to contact academic leadership at several sites (by email, phone, through current staff, or in-person) over the course of several months, it became clear I would be unable to obtain institutional clearance. My requests were either ignored or delayed to the point where a new approach was needed. Though this is speculative, the possible reason for this hesitancy was brand protection. Upon suggestion from my advisor, I shifted to

approaching individual participants where the decision to participate would rest with the individual rather than any institutions.

In alignment with the instrumental case study approach, academics with a similar length of experience at commercially-partnered IBCs were selected. To present a well-rounded perspective on the commercially-partnered IBCs, participants who had five or more years' work experience and who had also worked at more than one commercially-partnered IBC with a UK/Australia/US home campus were considered the ideal "typical" case. Therefore, the sampling strategy was purposive. Convenience and snowballing strategies were employed to recruit participants, and participants were active in recruiting others to join the study. Several participants recommended contacting student service staff (academic support and academic counseling) to provide further insight, which was also done. In addition, two active researchers focused on IBC campuses were also interviewed to provide a wider perspective on the GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) IBC landscape. This was included to present different perspectives on the context. Institutional categories and participant profiles are outlined below.

Institution Label	Country of Origin	Operational Status	Commercially-partnered
UA	Australia	Currently operating	yes
UB	Australia	Currently operating	yes
UC	United Kingdom	Currently operating	yes though recently broke from commercial partnership in 2020.
UD	United States	Currently operating	yes
UE	Australia	Currently operating	yes
UF	Australia	Currently operating	yes
UG	Canada	closed	yes
UH	United Kingdom	Currently operating	no

Pseudonym	Institutions Currently or formerly employed with	Department*	Profile
Wren	UA,UC, UE, UF	Psychology	*Wren has teaching experience as well as a clinical and fieldwork background in social and health sciences. Wren has close to 10-years' experience at four different commercially partnered IBCs in the UAE.*
Ariel	UE, UD	Leadership	*Ariel has been working in higher education for over a decade as a humanities and social sciences academic and as in academic leadership positions including as a Head of Department, Head of Academic Advising services and IBC Academic Dean. Ariel's work experience has been at three IBCs two in the UAE and one abroad.*
Manon	UG, UA	Media Studies/Student Affairs	*Manon has a background in media originally working in the marketing and career services areas of a university. When the university opened an IBC in the UAE, Manon was part of the*

			set- up team. After the university closed its branch campus, Lee joined another commercially-partnered IBC as a student services professional. As part of this role, Manon was assigned courses to teach in composition and humanities due to the low number of academic staff.
Nicky	*UH*	Education	*Nicky is a career academic with extensive experience in IBC research and operations.*
Kennedy	*UC*	Academic skills	*Kennedy originally began teaching at a high school branch campus but transitioned to higher education. Kennedy's teaching experience is primarily in English and humanities with further experience in student academic enrichment.*
Gisele	*UA, UB*	Mathematics	*Gisele has over ten-years' experience teaching mathematics, physics, and IT. Gisele has also served as a department head.*
Sami	*UA, UB*	Engineering	*Sami has over ten-years' experience at several commercially-partnered IBCs teaching undergraduate and postgraduate in engineering.*

Zain	*UE*	Communication Studies	*Zain is a writer who teaches in arts and media. Zain has experience at IBCs in the UAE both as a lecturer and academic leadership.*
Wehbe	*UE*	Computer Science	*Wehbe's background is in computer science and programming with IBC experience in teaching and academic leadership positions.*
Ola	*UA, UB*	Mathematics	*Ola has a decade of experience as a lecturer at two separate commercially-partnered IBCs working primarily in IT, mathematics, and business departments.*
Lee	*UA, UB, UD*	Applied Languages	*Lee has experience at three IBCs, two within the UAE and one abroad in a neighboring country. Lee's has worked as a lecturer in humanities and applied languages as well as in senior academic leadership positions including as an academic director.*
Thomas	*UA, UB*	Communication Studies	*Thomas is both an administrator (department head) and lecturer in communications with close to ten-years' experience at two different commercially-partnered IBCs.*

| Laila | *UD* | Student Affairs | *Laila works as a head of student affairs* |

Participants were approached directly through email and through private message on the networking platform LinkedIn (see Appendix A). Of the 29 participants approached, 15 originally agreed to interview but ultimately 13 participated for the reasons described in the ethical section. The participants were a highly international and diverse group with home countries in Europe, North Africa, the GCC (Gulf Cooperative Council), North America, the Levant, South Asia, and the United Kingdom. The group also represented a broad spectrum of academic departments including IT, education, engineering, mathematics, media, psychology, creative arts, TESOL, and business. Several held leadership positions as academic directors or department heads. However, some of the barriers from the initial plan were still present. Academics from one of the larger commercially-partnered IBCs were unable to participate as the IBC had placed restrictions on speaking to external researchers (see Appendix D). At this juncture, it is important to address some of the ethical and censorship issues related to the research and why it is a necessary precursor to explaining the research design and analysis.

3.14 Ethics

Ethical considerations need to be addressed during several stages of the research process including in the planning and start of the study, data collection, analysis, reporting, and any subsequent attempts at publication to ensure the welfare, privacy, and respectful treatment of participants (Creswell and Poth, 2018). In the planning phase of the study, following the BERA's (British Educational Research Association) guidelines, I completed the ethical implications form. I submitted the form to the institutional review board at the University of Bath and received approval to proceed with data collection. With institutional approval, I began to approach potential participants with an informative email outlining the general nature of the study and inviting them to partake.

Participants were assured that their participation was voluntary and that they, any institutions they referred to in interviews or written journals, as well as any mentioned third parties would be anonymized in the write up of the research. Data was collected and stored per standard ethical recommendations (Creswell and Poth, 2018). I carried recording devices and notes in a locked bag and later secured it in my private residence. All electronic data was uploaded and stored on a password-protected computer. This data will be securely maintained for 5-years after the completion of the study. Consent forms describing the recording process as well as the voluntary and anonymous nature of the study were distributed to participants. Participants selected the time and location of interview meetings to reduce any disruptions to their lives and make sure they felt comfortable.

At the outset of the research, I did not consider my research particularly controversial or provocative. As outlined in the literature review, neoliberalism, marketization practices, and critical pedagogy are all established research areas and commonplace in mainstream international public discussions surrounding higher education. However, several participants did indicate that they were afraid to speak with me and that they had requested permission from their academic directors to do so. Some hinted that they were fearful of losing their jobs as a result and this alone raises interesting questions about the commercial IBC environment, academic freedom, and job security. This may be related to the cultural context, but it is also indicative precarity of academic work on an international level described by Herzog (2020), "Becoming an academic is now a risky job choice: for many people it means years of precarious employment. After their academic training, usually culminating in a hard-earned PhD, scholars can face many years of uncertainty, living from contract to contract, and sometimes even moving from country to country, with no promise of a permanent position." For many of the participants in this study, their visas and thus, ability to remain with their family in the UAE is connected to their employer. Their caution is understandable in this situation. Above all, I wanted participants to feel safe, and I reassured them of confidentiality. Further to

the fact that academics at multiple institutions were included, there is no way to distinguish one IBC from another in the finding discussions. This, along with assigning pseudonyms and de-identifying institutions, I believe ensures an additional privacy buffer.

However, it should not be discounted that the participants did take professional risk in discussing their institutional experiences with a researcher. Accounts that could place institutions and individuals in a negative and, sometimes legally compromising, light were revealed throughout the data collection. Participant accounts were also often emotionally charged, and I noted that a few participants cried during their interviews. Other participants had more of a positive "public relations" style spin inviting me to tour the campus, new facilities and providing me with an overview of positive institutional development. In general, I was often taken aback by the candor and openness expressed during interviews. Yet as participants seemed compelled and eager to share their experiences, I decided to take a further look into confidentiality recommendations. An additional technique recommended by Creswell and Poth (2018) to ensure privacy is to develop "composite profiles…or stories so that individuals cannot be identified." (pp.55-56). However, the use of composite profiles is normally employed with a larger sample size so instead, more concealment measures were applied after discussion with my supervisor.

There is also the more general assumption that participants fully comprehend the interview questions and have answered interview questions honestly. Participants also presented their individual experiences and opinions therefore subjective bias is assumed. However, analyzing the participants' descriptions through theoretical frameworks and academic literature helps to contextualize lived experience within the wider landscape of international higher education. It should also be noted that the researcher's positioning in relation to the research also has an influence on the interpretation of data. The study has been informed by previous professional observations and experience, which informs the interpretation of data. While the reading of the data is subjective, the study has been designed to implement an approach which could be replicated by a different researcher.

Finally, there is no claim that there this study's interpretation of the data is the only possible or definitive outcome.

3.15 Data Collection

3.15.1 Interviews

A semi-structured interview procedure was taken so that it would be possible to gain in-depth qualitative accounts of participants' experiences, beliefs, and values (Bryman, 2018). An interview guide (see Appendix E) was used though participants were encouraged to raise topics and issues outside of these questions. Several draft versions of the interview guide were written and piloted with my supervisory team and with the first two participants. The benefit of a pilot is that can help to modify and refine questions for clarity (Bryman, 2016). The final, refined guide contained three primary sections, the first a section on the participant's background, professional experience philosophy, or values about education. The second section centered on questions about their institution or institutions and how marketization practices were implemented. The third section focused on the participant's perceptions and relationship to the home campus. Therefore, the aim was to gain a holistic picture of the participant's IBC experience. Questions were also adjusted or modified based on the participant's role, whether they were an academic, student services employee, or an IBC researcher.

Thirteen interviews were gathered over the span of six months from mid-2019 to early 2020, but one participant elected not to participate post-interview due to new regulations about speaking to researchers at their IBC. Their wish to withdraw was honored. Participants selected the location of interviews, and the majority were held in either their office or a neutral location, such as a café. Several of the participants were located overseas during the interview appointment and in those cases, Skype or Zoom was used to conduct the interview. Each interview lasted approximately one to two hours, and some participants were asked follow-up questions or to participate in supplementary written critical reflections (described below in *Visual Reflective Entries*). All interviews were recorded and transcribed before analysis.

In the research approach section, I indicated that grounded theory and narrative analysis influenced interview techniques. While grounded theory was not applied in a purist sense, it was influential in the interviewing process in that I kept notes or memos and compared participants' thoughts by conducting preliminary analysis of emerging ideas. There was simultaneous data collection and analysis in order to explore emerging topics in future interviews though this was not done to the systematic extent outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1998). Rather, it was applied to facilitate a more refined interview process with more focused questions. For example, I did not have questions about student mental health and safety in my interview guide. However, this was a topic that several participants raised independently, and it was consequently discussed more fully in future interviews.

Throughout the interviewing process, I also allowed for a modified narrative approach during the in-depth interviewers Participants often, sometimes unprompted, recounted incidents through storytelling and I encouraged interviewees with follow up questions suggested by Riessman (2008) such as asking, "and then what happened?" These informal vignettes were not life span stories in the traditional narrative analysis approach, but they provided "accounts relating to episodes and to the interconnections between them." (Bryman, 2018). It is important to emphasis this is a narrative approach to interviewing not a narrative approach to data analysis, but many of these episodes can be analyzed as to how individuals rationalize contradictions and resist policies and structures.

3.15.2 Visual Reflective Entry

In addition to interviews, written visual reflective entries were gathered from 5 participants (see Appendix F). Participants self-selected for this activity, meaning that it was voluntary and optional. Similar to a diary form of data collection, such as in ethnography or a participant produced diary, the reflective entries could have a structured format or a free form approach (Bryman, 2018). However, many participant diaries are

collected over a period of time while participants engage in activities; however, the diaries collected from this study were one-off reflective entries with a set of structured questions, so they could alternatively be referred to as written interviews (Zimmerman and Wieder, 1977). The written interviews were designed to be reflective so participants would only have to complete them once as opposed to having participants keep diary logs. One of the criticisms of diary as data is that long-term diaries can be burdensome for participants to carry out (Butcher and Eldridge, 1990). This was taken into consideration and in place of a week- or month-long reflective diary, participants were asked to submit a one-time response.

For this response, participants were asked to review the public narrative presented on social media of a branch campus and the respective partner home campus. Submitting the entry was a voluntary, optional extension of the interview. Participants conducted a short discourse analysis comparing the two narratives or public accounts. Therefore, the entry was centered on historical reflection or the participants' past experiences. The social media platform selected was Instagram because it is a highly visual medium that incorporates both photography, infographics, and text. Occasionally, the platform is referred to as a micro-blog and is often studied in visual communication disciplines. While Facebook and Twitter are commonly used in academic research, Instagram is still a novel platform, and methods of analyzing the platform are still developing (Russmann and Svensson, 2016). However, the platform is more widely used by 18-29-year-olds, the largest university target group, than Twitter or Facebook (Perrin and Anderson, 2019). Further to, the use of visual imagery is an increasingly more important dimension to marketing and brand formation than text (Fahmy, Bock, and Wanta, 2014), and "Images suggest reality and thus have the potential to build and/or restore trust and legitimacy concerning the sender (i.e., organizations). Images help the viewer to achieve coherence faster; they create meaning and foster interaction" (Russmann and Svensson, 2016). These points are particularly relevant to the marketization dynamic and also as a way of examining the distinctions in organizational presentation, and potentially, values between the IBC and the home campus. Yet, visually oriented analysis is still an emerging area

(Creswell and Poth, 2018) and visual-based methodologies, as well as social media analysis, are still in development. There is still a text component to each Instagram posting either embedded in the visual or captioned below. Therefore, if one considers visuals part of discourse and includes the text, the basic principles of critical discourse analysis can be applied.

With this in mind, the entries produced reflect the participant's perception of the organizations' self-presentation on Instagram and how they understand that perception to relate to their everyday experience (to address Q1a and Q2). The images presented to participants were from the calendar year of January 2019-January 2020. More recent posting was excluded because of the dominance of Covid19 content. The postings included images marketing the university, images of the university and location, student testimonials, information about events and degree programs.

The rationale for collecting these entries was threefold. First, the entries contribute to more a robust collection of data to develop a more in-depth understanding. In addition to the interviews, the entries provide engagement with two data forms documentation. First there is the documentation exhibited through the visual Instagram posting of the two campuses and second, the participants' entries analyzing the imagery and messaging. Second, along with the literature, this contributes to a triangulation, or confirmation of findings using multiple sources (Maxwell, 2008). Third, it allowed the participants to produce their own analysis. Instead of solely having their interviews interpreted, they were also able to engage in interpretation and reflection of the marketization phenomena more directly. This is intended to align with the critical approach in which the researcher and participants co-produce the inquiry (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

3.16 Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis, owing in large part to the often-unwieldy amount of content and "prose" style data, does not have the same "unambiguous" strictures of quantitative analysis. (Bryman, 2018, p. 570) This can often present challenges in

interpretation and analysis. However, there are several approaches to qualitative data analysis that provide guided pathways for securing a rigorous and trustworthy analysis. Among these are 1) grounded approaches where an inductive analysis to developing theory from the data is conducted 2) narrative analysis 3) socio-linguistic techniques including conversation analysis and critical discourse analysis and 4) thematic analysis which includes coding data to formulate themes (Bryman, 2018; Smith and Firth, 2011). The procedure of analysis applied in this study was thematic. However, some elements of critical discourse analysis were integrated into the data collection and interpretation processes.

3.17 Thematic Analysis

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis can be described as "a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail." (p. 79) Though there is not a standard definition of what signifies a theme, we can consider several factors. A theme is a "category" related to the focus of the research, in this case, marketization and critical pedagogy. The researcher ascertains themes through code building content from transcripts, notes, and journals. An analysis of the themes in conjunction with the academic literature provides "the basis for theoretical understanding of…data" (Bryman, 2018, p. 584). Describing data in rich detail parallels with the case study design, and it also provides a flexible approach for integrating theoretical analysis. And according to Boyatzis (1998), thematic analysis can move between qualitative and quantitative languages because organizing, analyzing, coding, and interpreting a data set can be applied to a variety of epistemological viewpoints.

However, there are criticisms of thematic analysis. It is not considered a "foundational" qualitative method like grounded theory or ethnography. There are also arguments that thematic analysis can be potentially inconsistent and vague in describing the ways are presented (Nowell, et al., 2017). However, the use of a consistent and

standard procedure, which is described below, can help to ameliorate vagueness and provide concordance in analysis.

3.18 Adapted Framework Thematic Analysis

Developed by the UK National Centre for Social Research, Framework thematic analysis provides a set of guidelines for carrying out thematic analysis in a systematic fashion. Framework is considered a matrix scheme for managing and synthesizing a large amount of data (White, Woodfield and Richie, 2003). Adopting a procedural structure to analysis helps facilitate a pathway for organizing a weighty amount of raw qualitative data and constructing a catalog or index of themes and subthemes. It also provides an explicit explanation to readership about how the data was analyzed. Theoretically and in terms of trustworthiness, the process should lend itself to replicability if more than one researcher analyzes the data. At the same time Framework does not "tell the user how to identify themes" and allows for flexibility in abstraction (Bryman, 2018, p. 585). There are several suggested stages to Framework. I have outlined the stages used in the analysis and a brief description of how they were adapted and modified to the study. The overall aim of modeling off of the Framework analysis was to create a "clear audit trail from original raw data to final themes" (Gale et al., 2013, p. 6) however I have incorporated elements of the systematic critical ethnography framework presented by Huberman and Miles (1994). The applied processes align with those recommended for case study analysis and representation in that a uniform framework was applied to the analyzing and displaying of data (Yin, 2009) and data was aggregated into categories (or codes) and finally "collapsed" in larger, presentable themes (Creswell and Poth, 2018).

Step 1. Transcription

For data collected through interviews, the first step is to transcribe the recordings verbatim. This was done for all 12 interviews. Journal entries were collected in written format and were therefore added as an extension to the interview to the respective participant.

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Step 2 Familiarization

The next stage is familiarization wherein the researcher reflectively revisits the data. After transcription, I read and listened to each interview several times keeping reflective notes of my impressions highlighting important details and writing any relevant questions to send to participants for clarification. This also included writing a summary of my interview notes.

Step 3. Coding

In the coding stage, "the researcher carefully reads the transcript line by line applying a paraphrase or label that describes what they have interpreted in the passage as important" (Gale, et al., 2013, p. 4). Coding can take an inductive, (open coding) or more deductive approaches (closed coding), which begins with predefined codes. From the critical perspective of abduction or retroduction, I applied both methods in phases. This stage contributes to the collective case study design wherein the within-case analysis of each individual case was conducted before developing a thematic cross-case analysis.

Phase 1. Open coding In the first phase to stay as close to the text and the participant's views, I coded based on repetitions and recurrences (Lawless and Chen, 2019) within each transcript, and, for those that participated, additional diary entries. The focus on repetition in this stage does add a quantitative element highlighting that qualitative and quantitative methods do not always exist in mutually exclusive spheres (Creswell and Poth, 2018). In a more critical discourse fashion and as a departure from relying on a repetitive quantitative measure, I also sought out an individual's use of metaphors and analogies. As linguistic conventions, metaphors and analogies are popular techniques for individuals to understand and express their own experiences (Punch, 1998) and can, therefore, reveal relevant themes. After in-depth coding of each transcript, I revisited the

data to code for similarities and differences in a comparative manner to explore how topics were discussed in different ways.

Phase 2. Closed Coding Next, I aimed to "interlink the interview discourses with larger societal ideologies…and consider what ideologies, positions of power, or status hierarchies are recurring, repeated, and forceful." (Lawless and Chen, 2019). This second phase seemed appropriate to align more deeply with a critical perspective and bring the themes into a broader discussion of causality and generative mechanisms. To follow the stage data analysis of case studies, each participant's material was analyzed and coded individually prior to embarking on cross-case analysis (Merriam, 1998). Researcher notes were also coded in this phase. The general themes and subthemes were developed from critical theory and critical pedagogy lenses to link to interpretive theoretical framework and position of the study. The charts on the following page provide a brief guide (1.) and example (2.) of the coding process.

1. Two-step Critical Thematic Analysis coding process (adapted from: Lawless and Chen, 2019)

Open Codes	Closed Codes (Overarching Themes)
What was repeated, recurrent, and forceful in the interview texts?	What neoliberal and marketization ideologies are recurring, repeated and forceful?

2. Example two-step coding Critical Thematic Analysis coding process (adapted from: Lawless and Chen, 2019)

Open Codes	Closed Codes (Overarching Themes)
What was repeated, recurrent, and forceful in the interview texts?	What neoliberal and marketization ideologies are recurring, repeated and forceful?
Student recruitment priority Student progression pressure Student numbers Targets Sales Competition for students	Quantification
KPIS Evaluations Surveillance/Cameras/Recordings Inconsistency	Performance Management Culture

Step 4. The Analytical Framework

The analytical framework is developed from the themes identified. The Framework in this stage is then refined into a hierarchy of general themes and subthemes. Data is then sorted into the Analytical Framework however refinement is still possible. In this study, the hierarchy of themes, or themes that emerged from the open coding were then cataloged to broader ideological labels and concepts. It is possible to do this stage in a

computer-assisted program such as NVivo, but manual coding was preferred in this instance to be as familiar with the data as possible.

Step 5. Interpreting and Synthesizing the Data

Throughout the coding process, the researcher should keep analytic memos of concepts, contrasts, comparisons, themes of interest, and making connections to the literature and theory. This interpretation of major themes is presented in the findings chapter.

3.19 Limitations

As with any study, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of the research. This is a qualitative study based on individual accounts, meaning the abstraction of theory and argument relies on the researcher's interpretation. However, I do not seek to argue that my interpretation is an absolute reading. A multitude of theoretical lenses and methods of analysis could have been applied and taken the study in a different direction. The theoretical lens of critical pedagogy guided the analysis, and I do not doubt that an alternative theoretical perspective different inferences and conclusions could have been drawn. However, the acknowledgment of my theoretical perspective is necessary to convey how I arrived at the explanation and also in line with the critical realist paradigm.

Other issues of limitations center on the participants. While the majority of participants constitute a purposive sampling (teaching academic, academic leadership, or academic support professionals who had worked at more than one commercially-partnered IBC for the past 5 years or more), negative professional experiences may have been a deciding factor in electing to participate. Several indicated this before their interview. This on its own is an interesting aspect of the research story because it helped in the development of the propositions. Furthermore, while findings of the study may have limitations in their generalizability to the wider commercially-partnered IBC professional community, comparative experiences found across the dataset do provide insight because they reflect commonality in several institutions. Also, two participants

interviewed were, at the time of the interview, autonomous IBC researchers and not employed at commercially-partnered institutes. This was to provide more insight into the operational and political structures at work on IBCs internationally, and thus, presents both a holistic account and possibly one that counters those expressed by the other participants. Furthermore, the IBC researchers were positioned to provide insight into policy and regulatory developments.

As a third limitation, it is also important to note that the thematic Framework method is often done in research teams where multiple individuals can offer perspectives and consistency of the development of a framework matrix. Since this is an independent study, I undertook the analysis as a single researcher. However, adding this framework provides a data trail and systematic process, which can be presented to the readership and contributes to trustworthiness and validity components.

3.20 Trustworthiness and Validity or Dependability

Validity (alternatively, dependability for qualitative research) and trustworthiness both contribute to the credibility of the study, therefore, the researcher must address how "threats" to validity were addressed throughout the research process (Maxwell 2008, p 245). First, there may be questions of researcher bias as my own professional experience was a source of developing the study and the propositions. Historically, research bias was considered something which needed to be reduced or eradicated from studies (Maxwell, 2008). Instead of bias, Strauss (1987) refers to this as "experiential data." It has become accepted and encouraged for researchers to explicitly reflect on how they are situated in the research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Some arguments suggest that eliminating the background and influence of the researcher is impossible (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). The role of critical reflection is then paramount to examining my assumptions, values, and beliefs which influence the interpretation of data. According to Maxwell (2008, p. 225) critical awareness of one's own experience, can provide a "major source of insights, hypotheses, and validity checks." However, another pointed question surrounding case study research or social science research done with initial theories in

mind is confirmation bias. Confirmation bias raises the issue of the researcher "seeing in the case only whatever is brought out it in the prior theory" (Haig and Evers, 2015, p. 134). So, it is not only the life experiences of the researcher which have the potential to create a bias, but also the theories embedded in their hypotheses or propositions. Yet, the researcher must also thoroughly comb through the patterns and evidence of the case to strengthen coherence with the chosen theory or theories. Part of the process then is identifying anomalies and inconsistency in the data. This is often done through triangulation.

The depth and triangulation of data are both instrumental in ensuring credibility. Triangulation describes a strategy which "reduces the risk that your conclusions will reflect only the systematic biases or limitations of a specific method and allows you to gain a better assessment of the validity and generality of the explanations that you develop." (Maxwell, 2008, p. 236). This serves as a way to cross-check findings (Bryman, 2012) for both patterns and inconsistencies, which are equally important to identify and analyze. With each interview, I was able to return to the theoretical framework and question what the data was revealing and what was significant. Moreover, participants were asked to validate their interviews though not all responded.

The length of engagement with participants was significant. While some participants sat for a single interview, I was in contact with most of the participants for two years to ask follow-up questions. They also kept me abreast of new observations and developments in their teaching practice, their IBC's policies, and if they had moved to a new institution. In addition, to reiterate the purposeful sampling, almost all participants had worked at more than one commercially-partnered IBC for five years or more. Some had close to ten-years' experience. The length and depth of participants' professional experience and knowledge is testament to the data's credibility and trustworthiness.

3.21 Transferability

This is a qualitative study which relies on individual accounts, meaning that the data is not generalizable in the orthodox quantitative tradition, but as earlier explained the application of triangulation and the purpose of qualitative research address external validity and transferability. The richness of qualitative data can lead to a multitude of interpretations, and I do not claim that my interpretation the only possible reading. Punch (1998) suggests evaluating three components of the study to examine transferability. The first is the diversity of sampling. The participant sample, while relatively small, 12, has considerable weight in important aspects. Each of the participants had worked at least two IBCs over the past ten years. While the majority of these experiences were at commercially-partnered IBCs in the UAE, several participants also had experience in IBCs in different geographic regions and at some IBCs which were not-for-profit or partnered with governments. This indicates that they would be able to draw organizational comparisons from the depth of their exposure and be able to assess their experiences at commercially-partnered IBCs on balance. The participants were also diverse in the more traditional sense of the word having different national backgrounds which included origins in the Middle East and North Africa, North America, South Asia, Australia, and Europe. It is rational to believe they each have a sophisticated perception of multiple education contexts and that their varied professional and life experiences are reflective of an international viewpoint. The participant sample does "capture...variation" as Punch recommends (1998, p. 261)

The second aspect is the description of context. The organizational structure of a commercially-partnered IBC and its relationship to the home campus has been explained in detail on several occasions. I further argue that the national context of the study is of less significance because the economic free zones in which the IBCs most often operate are following a more classical market structure, which could logically transfer to any geographic location where education is subject market or quasi-market imperatives. The final aspect is the abstraction. The theoretical lens of critical pedagogy and critical theory

have been heavily influential in my analysis. Therefore, the data is analyzed and evaluated against an established theoretical framework.

It should be highlighted that the findings do not extend to IBCs with different organizational structures such as a government partnership or independent operations. They also do not represent a true comparison between practices on commercially-partnered IBCs and home campuses, only the participants' subjective opinions on what they, from their position in the university organization, perceive to be differences. Finally, I do recognize that I could have arrived at different conclusions had another theoretical framework been used for analysis. In the critical reflection section, I will discuss some other possibilities for methodology and evaluation.

Chapter 4 Findings

4.1 Introduction to the Chapter

The purpose of the study is to understand the realities of marketization and its perceived impacts on academic life on commercially-partnered IBCs. Particular attention is dedicated to evaluating how the mechanisms of market-logic policies influence the practice of critical pedagogy. Based on the literature review, it is discernible that more research is needed on the micro-level to explore marketization practices. Using the propositions derived from the literature, the data will be analyzed using a critical thematic analysis in discussion with relevant literature and theory.

4.2 Review of Revised Research Questions and Propositions

1. To what extent do participants perceive the effects of marketization, neoliberalism and New Public Management on their commercially-partnered IBCs?
   a. How do IBC academics describe educational goals and outcomes of their IBC institutions?

Proposition 1

In the context of commercially partnered IBCs, there is likely to be an extensive embedded discourse and possibly intensification of marketization practices as the result of for-profit agendas. (Ball, 2012; Brown, 2006; 2011, Gibbs, 2011; Giroux, 2011, 2014; McLaren, 2011 Molesworth, Nixon, Scullion, 2011; 2018.).

2. To what extent do neo-liberalism and NPM in the case of commercially-partnered IBCs determine the framing of pedagogy and academic life?
   a. To what extent do IBC academics, academic leadership, and student academic support service professionals perceive the influence of

commercial interests and NPM on pedagogy, teaching practice, and professional autonomy?

Proposition 2

Taken in combination**,** marketization practices, and reduced academic autonomy present a challenge to the implementation of critical education practices in that critical pedagogy and alternative pedagogies may be espoused as institutional values but diluted in practice through mechanisms such as a highly-monitored, outcomes-based, skills-driven curriculum focused on employability.

4.3 Organization of Findings

The findings have been organized to move from discussions of the organization as a stratified global university with two major partners, home campus and commercial entity, to perceptions of marketization practices in day-to-day operations on the IBC. This includes a more specific focus on to what extent participants felt marketization practices crossed over into academics and pedagogical practices. The findings are presented with the assumption that pedagogical processes are influenced by the wider campus culture and institutional practices. The data has been reported verbatim to convey participants' experiences and opinions authentically. In all cases the identity of the participant, institution, or third parties have been concealed. Phrases such as "our IBC" or "service provider" were substituted for the name of the university or the commercial partner and identifying titles such as "Head of Psychology Department" have also been generalized. Some participants have been assigned a number to further obscure identifying characteristics including gender. As much of the data is sensitive, any other information which could be considered injurious to participants, organizations, or third parties was also redacted. Quotes from participants have retained the original text of the transcript and have not been edited for language usage.

The findings are divided into six major thematic categories along with subthemes. The first major thematic category centers on institutional fragmentation wherein participants describe the blurred boundaries often present on commercially-partnered IBCs and their perceptions of a sense of inferiority in comparison with the home campus. Additionally, evaluated within the first findings are the participants' accounts of the influence of the local commercial operator on academic life. The second major theme examines participants' experience with quantification, student recruitment, and retention pressures and the participants' judgments of a numbers-driven agenda on academic life. Faculty participation in marketing practices is the general topic of the third thematic category.

The fourth thematic category participants' narratives of performance management culture on the IBCs are analyzed with subthemes of evaluation, surveillance and policy application. In the fifth major thematic category the focus turns to pedagogy and curriculum. Discussed in this section are prescriptivism/heterogeneity in curriculum and course content, levels of teaching autonomy and accounts of resistance and subversion. The sixth and final thematic category centers on student mental health with sub themes of visibility of mental illness and limited resources. The connection of student mental health to brand reputation is also considered. The Discussion Chapter following the Findings Chapter will therefore interrogate the findings against the propositions set out in the Methodology Chapter in more depth and provide a more forward-looking perspective including opportunities and recommendations.

Each thematic category provides an interpretation and analysis of the data. This is done through incorporating observation and academic literature as well as theoretical analysis. While there are arguments for presenting findings without analysis in order to limit researcher bias (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2012), to be fully understood the data needs to be contextualized and interpreted within the wider global landscape of marketization of HE. This is to demonstrate that the participants' experiences are part of the larger story of commercialization of HE and a dilution of critical pedagogy. This is done through

evaluating the participants' responses against established arguments on the implementation of market practices in higher education.

To reiterate, from a pro-market stance, choice, access, and empowerment of the student are seen as positive pedagogical developments (Neary and Winn, 2009; Barnett, 2011; Guilbault, 2018). Yet, the critical faction argues that the commodification of higher education results in constraints on pedagogy and a conservative learning environment that produces risk-averse students and a culture of complaint (Haywood, Jenkins, and Molesworth, 2011; Nixon, Scullion and Molesworth, 2011; Varman, Saha and Skalen, 2011). A third category of research discusses the commodification and consumerist aspect with a more ideologically neutral, less "fixed value-laden" position and turns to exploring possibilities within the marketized context (Barnett, 2011, p. 39). From this perspective and the pro-market perspective, we can see that there is more flexibility and dynamism in a privatization, supply context. If higher education is considered a "product," market theory would suggest that more options will become readily available. For example, private suppliers are more likely to have flexibility of study, online study, short courses, and two-year degrees (McGettigan, 2013). However, it is unclear whether customer service provider approach actually improves the learning process. Research has indicated that the "experience shows that the provision of academic teaching does not fit easily into the paradigm of consumption." (Furedi, 2011, p. 6), and there are well-known debates raised around the adoption of a market strategy in HE and its impact on critical and creative education practices. While some of these arguments have been overviewed in the literature review, they will be scrutinized against the data. Furthermore, the analysis of findings also utilizes several theoretical perspectives including post-structuralism/postmodernism and critical theory, which are relevant to critical pedagogy.

4.4 Findings

Findings Theme 1: Institutional Fragmentation

(subthemes: *Blurred Boundaries, Alienation/Sense of Inferiority, Concealed Corporatization***)**

In the early 20th century, writing on popular culture and the alienating and isolating conditions of modern life, cultural critic Sigmund Kraucer observed a popular dance performance of the time. These revues consisted of kick line dancers known as the "Tiller Girls" forming kaleidoscope-style geometric patterns such as stars or circles. He termed it "The Mass Ornament." These shapes could only be understood through the audience, who were themselves stacked in tiers because they had aerial vantage. For Kraucer, the mass ornament in its aesthetic form was representative of the conditions of capitalism or as we might conceive of it today, the neoliberal and late-capitalist condition. The ornament requires conformity and continual movement to function. He writes,

> Community and personality perish when what is demanded is calculability; it is only as a tiny piece of the mass that the individual can clamber up charts and can service machines without any friction. A system oblivious to differences in its form leads on its own to the blurring of national characteristics and to the production of worker masses that can be employed equally well at any point on the globe. Like the mass ornament, the capitalist production process is an end in itself. The commodities that it spews forth are not actually produced to be possessed; rather, they are made for the sake of a profit that knows no limit. Its growth is tied to that of business (p. 78).

A somewhat refashioned mass ornament can also be used as a metaphorical representation of the contemporary transnational university. In the IBC context, employees are spread across the globe under a single university logo. Thus, the first

finding begins with participants' descriptions of their organizational structures, which includes the relationship between the home campus and IBC commercial partner as well as participants' understanding of their place within it. As a starting point, this helps to explain how the wider context of the TNE university and its overseas commercial partner's relationship manifests in the daily experience of participants. Despite the public branding of a unified academic institution, participants often described an experience of disunified communities where they were caught between the aims of calculability/profitability and the need to remain in alignment with an academic mission. The specific realm of commercially-partnered IBCs emblematizes as Lee discusses below, the often-blurred boundaries present in the international exportation of higher education.

Lee: I don't know if this is derogatory and I don't mean it this way, but I tend to describe it as a franchise model. At least when... When it's... I don't know, in the non-profit sector, I don't know. But in the for-profit sector, when you have an academic infrastructure provider, everything gets really messy. So, I see it as sort of like a franchise, where you've got a lot of disconnect between the partner that's running the business side that has one objective, and the educational institution that has another. And it's like they are two spheres that never quite intersect into a... Do you know the Venn diagram? They don't have that center point because they sort of live in their own worlds. And their goals, I feel, from what I've seen in admin, don't ever fully align. And the tough part is the one that has the ethical considerations of the student and what the educational quality should be, is not the one controlling the contracts and the money and the financial decisions. Or even the marketing for that matter.

Perhaps we can visualize the participants' organizations as the Venn diagram Lee describes above or as two separate circles connected by a line. The participants occupy this line between the two organizations. They are tethered to the IBC commercial partner as their contractual employer, one circle, but also linked to the academic mission of the home campus, the other circle. This friction and blurring evidenced in Manon's account below may be invisible in the aerial or publicly constructed image of transnational universities where home and branch are positioned and marketed as one academic institution, but as individual employees, they have a clear vantage point to explain the mechanisms and blurred tensions and agendas of the TNE mass ornament. In other, more colloquial terms, they could be described as outsourced academic labor.

Ball (2012) argues that blurring the financial relationship of the public service and private business has created a hybrid condition where the "funding of public sector HE is increasingly opaque and the moral and educational bases of educational practices are increasingly murky." (p. 134) He further argues that in these relationships the commercial and profiting agenda, supersedes traditional aims of public service, knowledge production, and cross-cultural exchange. Such relationships are indicative of the neoliberal hegemony present in higher education generally, but also indicate that there is a more direct market-driven restructuring element or "blurring" in place on IBCs. The extent to which the role of the commercial partner (the participants sometimes refer to this as the "infrastructure provider") presence is understood by students is unknown. This "opaque" condition, however, is rather transparent by the participants, who provide insight, which is significant not only for the IBC context but globally as higher education is increasingly privatized and more universities form global alliances or partnerships with edu-businesses and private equity companies (Giroux, 2016; McGettigan, 2013).

Manon: I'm not sure of his title now. But the CEO or whoever, the person, the director, the Academic Director, I guess, who was running the school came from a tech background, so he didn't come from didn't come from a higher-education background. So that made it seem not as, what's the word? It made it not as professional because the person making all the main decisions maybe wasn't making them from the place of how a university should run, but more of how the business should run. So that, and he had his own ideas about things that sometimes didn't match up with what the staff thought, who, a lot of them did come from a higher-education background or worked at other universities. So that was a bit at odds, for sure. And when we had a Dean come from the actual university to oversee things, him and the academic director were often at odds with things, and that was clear to the faculty and staff. So that was a bit of a negative... That was a negative point as well, I would say.

The disconnect in the impacts of the privatization redesign is evident in the often-contradictory objectives of an educational institution compared to a commercial organization. For Lee, the visual image of the Venn diagram is used to describe an empty meeting space where the two spheres of influence should meet (in a context where commercial enterprise is accepted as the norm). This reveals a difficult tension. The aims of profitability are transparent to those carrying out the academic mission of the IBC. Here the logic of marketization is given a greater sphere of influence on the IBC compounded

with the fact that the home campus has offloaded responsibility of daily operations for commercial partners, which creates both "conflicts and mutual dependencies." (Ball, 2012, 135). Mutual dependency can, of course, be a benefit in solving problems relating to access, funding, and development. Yet, when an organization exists in "competition" it takes on the risks of the market, which creates vulnerability and instability. Generally, participants did not perceive their IBCs and home campuses as in a necessarily mutual relationship as evidenced in Manon's account. Participants such as Wehbe explained that there was something of a connection, but "*I feel like a separate organization. Connected but still separate.*"

Other participants suggested that a cultural hierarchy was in place with the home campus understood as a remote "top tier" organization. Participants described that as IBC academic staff they felt unwelcome, burdensome or as Sami describes a Bertha Rochester-type character or potential liability who should be hidden away from the home campus personnel visiting the IBC. Ola used a parent-child type analogy, which encapsulates this idea that the branch is a mini though unequal version of the home campus in terms of academics. This suggests a perception of a hierarchy in which the home campus is the original or authentic institution and the branch as a lesser facsimile with fewer resources, less power, and less legitimacy.

Sami: Yeah, there was fear instilled generally across people that, even when people from the home campus come, only [certain] people will meet them. The others just ask if you can speak, just go mute for the day. Just stand around.

Ariel: And the feeling I got was that they didn't really want my participation, that I was kind of forced on them. So, I mostly stayed quiet in these meetings and just listened in and asked questions when I had questions.

Nicky: Because the home campus, rightly or wrongly, sees itself as the real university; the branch campus, is the branch

Ola: There's some sort of understanding gap, but I feel like they want to have the power. So, they feel superior and they feel that we are inferior...I feel like they're a complete separate entity. Because a lot of

things that they don't agree with, with respect to how the lecturers are delivering here, not just in my course,
but even in others. The marking, according to them, our students are supposed to be failing. There's quite
a lot of difference.

On first reading, the participants' reflections such as the above, may be reflective of the neocolonial hierarchies and prejudices that give way to the view that Western higher education is somehow more "esteemed" and that the home campus is "dispensing" advice and leadership. There was evidence from participants that image constructions of the branch campus were invested in the perceived prestige value of the Western home campus. While IBCs originating from Anglo-Western countries are the subject of this study, they are not the most populous or extensive IBCs as explained in the literature review. The IBC market is very much a global one, but in a competitive global market, each "product" requires an accompanying narrative. Following a traditionally competitive market trajectory, universities set out to brand or differentiate themselves from one another through both product and image (Gibbs and Knapp, 2002), which creates choice categories for students. According to McGraig (2011), historically, there have been two choice sets for students, one of prestige or elite category research universities and a second of open access admission universities. IBCs globally and in the UAE can, of course, be attached to a home campus in either category though, as previously noted in the literature review, prestige category universities usually have a government sponsor. In the commercial context, the home campus is something of a palimpsest to the branch campus, an "idealized" original upon which the IBC reuses as a template for public image construction. There is an attempt to foster an image of authenticity, of sameness with the home campus, but participants often expressed that this was incongruous with the reality of both the IBC and the home campus.

Wren: I'd say, that was especially the case at UC university, where they were very, I'd say preoccupied with
branding...they have a specific tartan [from the home country] that was used everywhere. And for example,
the paint in the hallways had to match the color scheme of the tartan. And campus publications also were
supposed to match this. There were very specific ways that we were supposed to use the logo. So, they
were quite interested in, I'll say, the design element of the branding, but they were also very invested in
trying to brand themselves as [British]. So, for example, they would have a big campus-wide event, or sorry,
they'd host an event and invite several other local campuses to take part. And it was called The Highland

Games. And really tried to invest in making this seem British. [I] think it would be rare to see people playing bagpipes at a sporting event in Britain. So, it seemed a little overdone. So, I'd say it was sort of the touristy version of Britain. So, they seemed quite invested in that, and were often sort of marketing themselves as quality British education and really emphasizing the British aspect.

Wren: I just happened to be on vacation in the same city as the home campus, so I thought, "Why not? I'll just pop by and check it out? Since I have a free afternoon and it's raining, go see what it looks like." So not in any kind of official capacity.
I: And did you feel any sense of affiliation?
Wren: No, absolutely not... It really didn't seem to have much to do with [our IBC], except I just recognized some of the pictures on the recruitment brochures.

However, as Wren explains, there is a perceived value associated with "British education" which the IBC commercial partner seeks to exploit and market. From Wren's description, the IBC relies on clichés and stereotypes, which are instantly recognizable in the global mass culture. We associate these types of heuristic techniques with advertising and branding. In the political economy of transnational higher education, marketing techniques rely on themes, visual images and promotional events which border on spectacle. For one, this type of activity ventures into the realm of entertainment culture, a phenomenon closely associated with commodification, with its promises of "authentic" individual experience and festival-like promotion of university life. Wren's characterization of the IBC's British display is almost camp-like as in Sontag's (1964) famous description of "style at the expense of content" and "a vision of the world in terms of style -- but a particular kind of style. It is the love of the exaggerated, the "off," of things-being-what-they-are-not." (pp. 2-3). Though in this case the camp even though it is performative is unintentional.

Moreover, it is relevant that many promoted services are not directly related to academic life but to the student experience, future jobs, and the university brand. Universities allocate a tremendous amount of capital towards lifestyle amenities, including student housing, fitness, and entertainment facilities, with the notion that such investments can be marketed as student experience for recruitment though in actuality results in higher tuition fees (Marcus, 2016). Therefore, the brand image of the university

becomes increasingly essential in a marketized context (Jackson, 2017). It is also worth noting that aspects of student life such as housing and entertainment have produced cottage industries surrounding higher education with private contractors entering the market. Second, the importance of presenting as a copy of the home campus, even if it is a pastiche, is likely rooted in the need to establish legitimacy in a new market, an issue discussed in the literature review regarding the liability of newness for IBCs. Returning back to the participant's earlier discussions, there is also an indication that participants perceive the IBC to be a "lesser" version of a university and further believe that the home campus shares this perception.

There is also a suggestion that some commercial partners seek to actively obscure or downplay their existence to present a more academic character rather than a business image preferring to keep the home campus brand upfront in the public eye. Perhaps, and this is an assumption because the commercial partner understands the inherent ethical conflicts involved in being primarily answerable to market forces. The value of the university degree still exists in "presenting" as a purely academic institution even if it is, in fact, a business where the cost-efficiency management model is the nature of the organization in practice. The below discussion with Thomas seems to indicate that there is an awareness of the neoliberal, profiteering agenda impacting the educational "brand." Thomas is clear that they are considered an employee of the "service provider"/commercial partner. In this instance the commercial partner has asked Thomas to obscure this aspect of their employment and request Thomas present themselves as employed with the home campus. Yet, this is not the reality of their contractual status. What this suggests is both an element of cynicism and that perceived legitimacy still rests with academic name not with the business operator. Higher education has never been an entirely wholesome space, competitive practices are on record from the "medieval" era (Furedi, 2011, p. 1). Growth agendas, revenue, or other pernicious practices are present in higher education as in any field. Yet, presenting or performing an institutional image that education is a virtuous space that places students, learning, and knowledge before profit has valuable marketing potential. It is similar to companies branding themselves as green/environmentally friendly or performing social justice initiatives to

secure a positive reputation. There are some instances in which participants implied that the commercial partner understands how the public may perceive a profiteering agenda in an academic context.

I: Now, in terms of your relationship with the home campus, are you an employee of the home campus?
Thomas: No, I think all of us are employees of the service provider.
I: And when someone asks you, "Do you feel you work for the service provider or do you feel you work... "
Thomas: No, we've clearly been told, "You work for the university." So, we don't... The service provider has said, "Don't bother mentioning us at all."
I: Why not?
Thomas: Because they say you work for the university, and we work for the university. So, the university brand is the most important brand. So, you will never find the service provider's logo on the ads or marketing material or...
I: I mean, why though? Why do you think this?
Thomas: I think it's their policy to put the university first and stay back as service providers.
1: But do they in actuality stay back?
Thomas: They do. Unlike maybe previous jobs, where the provider competed with the university to have their logos, this particular service provider does not want to be seen or...

In general, what participants described was a fragmented relationship between home campus and IBC where the boundaries between commercial interest and education are in flux, where the IBC struggles for legitimacy both publicly and with the home campus, and that efforts to present as a serious institution often relied on commodifying the home campus culture and concealment of corporate presence. What we can interpret from these initial findings, which set the context for the following ones, is that the participants present the home campus as the dominant organization symbolically and aesthetically, but in practice, the profit-oriented provider largely determines the educational and general atmosphere on their IBC including their interactions with the home campus. The participants' IBCs are part of a larger reform in the privatization of higher education. Whether their home campus has partnered with a for-profit company or private equity investor, they are new, but increasingly common, structural models for higher education. The benefits of such an arrangement, "however lucrative...may involve reputational risk since the home institution has little control over what is happening

abroad." (McGettigan, 2013, p. 121). Both Sami and Lee describe the level of involvement of the commercial (infrastructure) provider to be more substantial than the home campus. Sami touches upon one issue which several participants raised which was that the level of faculty interaction with corporate affairs was observably more intensive compared to normal practice on a home campus. This is reflective of the ways in which the participants perceive their experience to be different from that of home campus faculty, and also illustrates that in terms of employment conditions, the home campus has little "control" over the IBC. Gisele explains that while there are nods to traditional academic responsibilities, ultimately the decision making is routed through the commercial partner.

Sami: There's a lot of involvement of the management in academic affairs. And because I've studied at home campuses and etcetera, I've noticed that faculty aren't really involved when it comes to a lot of HR stuff, meeting the CEO on a daily or regular basis, all of those things. But over here my...Yeah, the autonomy, yes. So yeah, I think what happens here, or in our franchise, is that HODs are answerable to the corporate part of the university rather than being governed by academic integrity in collaboration with the home campus. So, for instance, even if the home campus has complete autonomy... The academics have complete autonomy over courses and they're not really into corporate, the same model is not replicated over here. You would find a lot of, yeah, management interference.

Lee: But if you don't have that and you've got four or five campuses globally, you're at the mercy of whoever's providing the salaries and issuing these contracts to hire the right people. And that's a giant question mark.

Gisele: We were told at one point the criteria about each of us having to do a certain number of research hours, marketing activities, and teaching but because, especially here in, we're not actually hired by the main campus or the university, we are hired by an infrastructure provider. Sometimes the decision or the last word, let's say, stays with the infrastructure provider.

To summarize the context findings, under transnational capitalism and neoliberal hegemony, the organizational structure of the commercially-partnered IBC is an example of the current phase of enterprising higher education. This includes the merger of corporate interest and higher education as well as the participants' descriptions of branding. Marketization, particularly through branding, further serves as a concealment

mechanism through the reliance on a pastiche or even arguably "camp" representation of the home campus academic culture. In other words, it is a theatrical, artificial aestheticization of the home campus, which according to participants, is not the reality of the IBC. The home campus is utilized as enticement for registration through the national culture of the home campus even if the relationship between the two organizations and local practices are at odds. This presentation of a singular organization, marketed by the IBC, also plays a role in obscuring the profit network, some participants' employment terms, and the tensions participants must negotiate between two organization. There is also the fantasy or ideal image of the IBC which must be performed at recruitment events and through social media marketing. This is designed to enchant prospective students and their parents, but this can only be maintained by the repression of the realities of profit pressures, student numbers, and an unpredictable job market for graduates. Furthermore, the commercial power has substantially more power in controlling the faculty's role and hiring decisions. What is explained in the following finding is that educational outcomes are secondary to profit and upwardly directed surplus revenue.

Theme 2. Quantification and the Student as Consumer/Client

(subthemes**:** *Recruitment targets, student progression pressure, perceived impact on academics*)

Neoliberalism relies on competition and the belief that consumer choice is empowering. In higher education, this is often discussed around ideas of student choice even if this means that education has been transformed into a "private right rather than a public good" (Giroux, 2014 p. 34). When these ideologies are applied to the IBC they are most perceptible in the areas of student recruitment and retention. Choice is often positioned as a positive for students and parents, but the competition for student-consumers creates unique pressures for IBC environments. Home campuses may have additional revenue streams from public funds, endowments, publishing houses, grants, and even the licensing agreements with IBC commercial-partners. In other words, home campuses have multiple forms of financial cushions to mitigate market risks (Foskett, 2011), and second, are more likely to be a non-profit, public entity, or receive government

financing in their country of origin. However, from the participant's experiences, commercially-partnered IBCs primary, if not sole, source of revenue is derived from tuition. Furthermore, in several of the participants' accounts, the commercial partner of the IBC was an equity investor, so the IBC revenue may be one part of an investment portfolio with the campus manager reporting quarterly profit data to a board. Research on the sustainability of IBCs is still at an early stage, but enrollment numbers are consistently noted as a point of concern (Altbach, 2011; Borgos, 2016). What is particularly unique to commercially-partnered IBCs is how the enrollment numbers intrude into the academic and social life of the campus because it was not simply a matter of filling the class but garnering enough tuition to ensure profitability. Participants recounted a hawkish approach to student recruitment.

Kennedy: It depends who you talk to, but I think it's always on the back of everyone's minds. And if you were to bump into the head of campus, that would be the first thing that he would say. "Oh, numbers are up", or "Numbers are down." It's always, always, always, always number driven

Ariel: Extremely aggressive. I'd say everything, every action, every strategy, everything that happens in my previous workplace came as a reaction to the student numbers. And there was a huge focus on recruitment, not that I thought that they were doing a good job of it, but it was definitely very high on their radar, to the extent that I feel it affected the academic side as well, which up until a few years ago was not really as pronounced. And again, I attribute that to a change in management as well as a change in the economic environment.

Since institutional survival is predicated on profit from tuition, commercially-partnered IBCs need to place revenue as the organization's top priority. However, the extent to which this impacts academics is dependent on the IBC management approach and the fluctuating state of the market. While a true comparison with home campus practices cannot be drawn from this study, participants and visual marketing materials suggested that the most evident instance of quantification was in student progression and retention and that these numbers were focused on short-term profitability gains.

Wren: And we did a separate orientation for every program, so this was pretty extensive, so I would have to attend every single orientation, but there was a definite emphasis on retention and progression. And that was actually one of the things I was tasked with, was they wanted to see an increase in progression numbers within a year. And a lot of the retention issues ended up on my desk, too. So, the campus had a service called Thinking of Leaving, so any student who wanted to leave was sent for academic counseling...There seems to be, yeah, a pretty strong focus on progression, especially progression from the foundation programs into the degree programs. So, some ways that manifests are students who didn't quite pass being... Having their marks increased, so that they can progress into the bachelor's degree. And in some cases being told to re-mark assessments so that the marks are higher. For that reason, and so just to increase progression numbers.

The caliber of students and the passing of students who may not have fulfilled the criteria of their courses was a point of concern raised by the participants. They often drew a direct link between these elements and the management's intense focus on numbers. Student recruitment is often commonly thought of as prestigious universities competing for "the best" or most "elite" students (Marginson, 2004). What academic staff in the IBC commercial context described was that it was a competition for any fee-paying student not students of a certain academic tier or qualification. While on the one hand, we can acknowledge this as a positive; there is space for everyone, the more detrimental possibility is that there is space for anyone able to afford the tuition. Participants like Sami and Ariel both explained that this can create a pathway for engaging in direct sales tactics and potential academic corruption, such as not failing students in order to appease and retain their tuition fees.

Sami: But then, I saw the other side wherein it was pretty nasty. You were just taking any students, the attendance would be abysmal. And I would actually be surprised if I saw the student going from one semester to the next semester, and I'd question it because I know that this student may have failed. I excused him. I specifically remember having failed the student on the account of not submitting a certain extension or something of that sort. And I'm pretty sure he failed, and then next semester they show up.

Ariel: Perhaps I am jaded having done it for so long, but I can smell the desperation for students a mile away. I have worked in a total of 4 branch campuses over the last 15 years, and I have witnessed this first hand one too many times. In some contexts, it's more subtle, whereas some contexts are more open about it. I have been told many a time to find loopholes in policies so we can admit a student that did not otherwise meet the minimum requirements to enter the branch campus in which I was working, or to find a loophole

to not suspend a student who clearly should be suspended. The message that "we cannot afford to lose even one student" is one that I have been hearing for years, regardless of where I work. The lack of importance placed on research, that we are simply "teaching institutions" because that's how we make money. The fact that academics are invited to budget meetings so they can see how dire the situation is and not fail students. Local management getting involved in academic decision even though it is clearly stated that they shouldn't be in the agreement with the home campus. The examples are so many I could probably write a book (or a horror movie for teachers) about it.

As Furedi describes, "we live in a world where the transformation of the student into a consumer has become an accomplished fact." (2011, p. 5) Research on IBCs has made a point of examining student perceptions of IBCs and student choice, suggesting that this is an area of importance to the IBC environment (Hoyt and Howell, 2012; Wilkins, Balakrishnan and Huisman, 2012b, Chee, et al., 2016). As mentioned, for private IBC investors, student recruitment and satisfaction are paramount to ensure financial viability and profitability. We turn then to the question of, what then are the pedagogical consequences of commodification and student as a consumer? As earlier mentioned, marketization proponents argue more choice, flexibility and competition for students will raise the quality education and student happiness. Options such as part-time courses and summer schools are all ways to reach and engage different populations, including children, parents, individuals in full-time work, and underrepresented populations (Barnett, 2011). IBCs are another manifestation of consumer choice in that they provide an alternative, perhaps more accessible location for study in addition to often offering the fore mentioned options (Wilkens et al,. 2012). However, there is limited evidence that an increase of options or "consumer choice" truly enables access or has a financial welfare benefit for all populations.

Additionally, the consumerist mindset and the impact on student and academic experience, however, does need to be critically examined. Haywood, Jenkins, and Molesworth, 2011 point out that the growing body of academic research dedicated to "student satisfaction" is indicative of both the entrenchment of consumerism in the way higher education is structured but also studied (Molesworth et al., 2009). We can look back to research on IBCs and see that student choice and satisfaction were primary

clusters of literature. This reflects what Giroux (2015) argues, is the quieting of critical voices in favor of those that ape the consumption goals of corporations. Participants, like Gisele and Zain, echoed that the consumer-driven model has the potential to misinform or mislead students in efforts to enroll them.

Zain: And of course, the way that the sales department pursues and has targets, so there's a commercial aspect to it. And when there's a commercial aspect to it, naturally there's gonna be no distinction between a student who is serious and a student who isn't.

Gisele: I would say it became a bit more aggressive. Of course, the team also changed. I mean, pretty much all their staff have... Not by age, but by time [chuckle] there, yeah, I am one of the faculty that was there from the beginning or close to the opening and the team changed. Anyone in admission, marketing, and... I would say it's a bit more aggressive. I don't see it as a positive thing. You can organize more school visits, you can organize maybe more visits on the campus, which actually I think it's a bit more beneficial, but let the students explore and make up their minds. Sometimes I feel that some of the students are kind of pulled in the program without having an inclination for the program, without having... It's not really their call or their wish, but somehow got convinced because the admission person was very nice and was explaining everything very nice and sounding very convincing, yeah. I wouldn't say it's most of the students or the majority, but some students do end up like this because the admission person was more approachable. It's not a negative point, the admission and marketing should be approachable, but there should be a balance I think or some…

There is also the contradiction of the policies of admission criteria (set by the home campus) and the often defacto open admissions in practice on the IBC, particularly for foundation programs. What Ola below is referencing is the usage of foundation programs to progress to the undergraduate degree programs. In an ideal scenario, this is actually a strong pedagogical tool. The foundation programs are intended to help students, including those with non-traditional academic backgrounds or insufficient credentials, become acclimated to the culture and requirements of higher education. Since research historically suggests that the transition to higher learning is a challenge for most students (Peel, 2000; Briggs, Clark and Hall, 2013), the rationale for such programs is strong. There is reason to believe these programs are useful on several levels.

However, what the academic staff are describing is the way the foundation program is used as an additional revenue stream for the commercial partner and as a way to circumvent the admissions criteria of the home campus. According to participants, the academic content of the foundation program is subject to approval by the home campus, but the commercial partner does not pay a licensing fee on the curriculum. Therefore, the foundation programs are something of a lucrative venture for IBCs. Additionally, if students successfully "pass" or complete the foundation program certain admissions criteria no longer apply as the foundation program outcomes are considered equivalent. Much of the progression pressure the academic staff described seemed to originate from this point though they indicated it continued throughout degree programs.

Ola: They want to get as many students as possible. So that's why sometimes in foundation, you end up getting not a good batch of students as well because they would enroll just anyone. Specifically for foundation. However, when it comes to UG, then yeah, there's a criteria because it has to match with what the home campus has as well. So that needs to be filtered out properly.

Ariel: Teachers were and are, as far as I know, being asked to do things that a teacher shouldn't be asked to do. So I believe that there should be a sort of separation of church and state here. The management, the number of students, the profitability, should be managed by certain people, and there should be kind of this Chinese wall between the administration, management, and the academic side. That was the case until a few years ago. And now this Chinese wall is basically a blurred line. So, teachers are told how to teach because that is how the main campus believes that they will get and retain students who used to go to the programs. They are put under increasing pressure to provide support to students who shouldn't be there, because they're not putting in the work. So, students who would have failed out of the program in the past are now being kept in the program, and the teachers are being forced to provide additional support for these students, putting extra pressure on the teachers to pass the students just because the [branch] needs the numbers.

Furthermore, what Ariel explains is that as a result of progression and profitability pressures, teachers are pushed into a more client or customer service role not with an academic objective but to maintain numbers. The customer service mentality arguably inhibits critical pedagogy. Maringe (2011) states, "customer satisfaction is misplaced" because it is not a conducive measure to assess the learning experience. The experience

is often filled with personal challenges, and the rewards are not often realized straight away; this is, of course, the antithesis to consumer experience, which is designed for ease and immediate gratification (Haywood, Jenkins and Molesworth, 2011; Williams, 2011). According to the literature, faculty are among the most resistant factions to the idea of "student as consumer." Guilbault (2018) has reported that faculty are "emotional" about the topic (p. 294) and "had the lowest customer mindset of higher education employees surveyed (p. 296)." The same study argues that faculty ideas of customer service, "the customer always being right" are outdated and not universal. Yet, even if faculty have an "outdated" view (we can see thematically that the antiquated, outdated argument is a popular and overly relied upon one), the term customer has a subjective vulgarity attached to it. A customer purchases jeans, a car, or a hamburger, which is one of the metaphors Zain employed to describe the recruitment culture at their IBC.

Zain: I think that they operate under a guise of being an educational institution, but I don't think that's the case, personally. And I think that I've been there long enough... I think the longer you are somewhere the more you try and turn a blind eye to things. But I think now it's gotten... Especially now that we're going through this bad trimester, where the numbers are down and all of this. And so, the way that the methods that are being employed to retain students are in my view, very unethical. And this leads me to the conclusion that it's a business and I think that's the best way to describe it. Because a business doesn't differentiate the type of customer. At the end of the day for them, if anybody is coming in and they wanna buy a burger, they're not gonna ask you where you're from, or what your qualifications are or why you wanna buy it.

Beyond selection and consumption, a customer is not involved in a process of intellectual development, which often includes an extensive process of self-reliance, challenge, failure, and success (Maringe, 2012). There is also an underlying assumption that because faculty do not subscribe to the customer service mindset, they somehow do not care about their students' satisfaction, as if resistance to the terminology indicates resistance to keeping students happy. One may easily counter that faculty are resistant precisely because they do care.

Moreover, in parallel to much of the literature on IBCs, research on student satisfaction and dissatisfaction is a growing field of study (Nixon, Scullion, and Hearn,

2018). Much of this scholarship attempts to position consumer-driven higher education as energizing for students. The packaging of students as an emboldened consumers with more choice is simply neoliberal hegemony masquerading as a celebration of faux empowerment. What is arguably worse is that several of these discussions use terminology, which is arguably rooted in critical pedagogy such as, co-producer, and co-creator (McCulloch, 2009, Naidoo, Shankar and Veer, 2011). Even if such terms aim to present alternatives or more workable possibilities to the student as consumer, they cannot be genuinely emancipatory if they are still used within the commodified-HE context. In such a context individual liberation is interpreted as individual consumer choice within a service-oriented sector, as participants explained is only sustained with the bringing in of increasing numbers of new "customers."

The subtext of student choice and consumption is that of freedom and opportunity for the individual. While much of the dissenting and critical research about the student as consumer is discussed philosophically or theoretically, the participants provided supporting empirical evidence to suggest that there are consequential aspects to the consumer mindset amongst students. In a qualitative examination of student experiences at a UK university, Nixon, Scullion, and Hearn (2016) found that the student-consumer model fosters dimensions of unreality, narcissism, and a propensity to blame the individual for structural inequality. The further subtext of the student-consumer narrative is the linkage of a degree to a successful future in the market. Haywood, Jenkins, and Molesworth (2012) argue that this sometimes translates into a fantasy of degree leading to a well-paid lifestyle and "dream job" to support further consumption rather than the often, "mundane" (p.183) reality of the majority of careers. Statistics in the United States indicate that upwards of 40% of university graduates can be classified as underemployed or working in jobs that do not necessitate an undergraduate degree (Sellingo, 2018). However, universities often embed this fantasy into marketing and branding materials and attach the "dream job" notion to the rhetoric of education, credentialing, and employment. The rhetoric of choice and employability are endemic to a commercially-driven agenda and significantly present in the experiences described by participants particularly as they relate to the marketing culture on their IBCs.

Major Theme 3: Culture of Marketing

(Subthemes**:** *Faculty Participation, Strategies/Messaging, Competition***)**

One of the corollary developments of the pressure profit agenda is an extensive marketing culture on IBCs. Increasingly universities devote resources to public relations exercises and institutional image development (Chapleo, 2011) and there is an increasing amount of research devoted to applying traditional branding and marketing strategies to higher education. According to participants, their IBCs are more likely to engage in direct sales practices and also attempt to involve academic staff in those endeavors beyond attending open days or information sessions. While interviewees indicated that the number of open days, information sessions and recruitment events were increasing, they also explained that mandatory participation was sometimes linked to pay raises. Additionally, they were also tasked with creating marketing materials.

Ola: Even though it's not really faculty's work to get student numbers, somehow we keep hearing about it. Because it all depends on our, say for example, our yearly increments, everything goes back to student numbers. "Oh, we haven't hit the target, so then no yearly increments this year." "Oh, this hasn't happened, we haven't reached the targeted number." And I think for the same reason, is why they're utilizing the faculty and sending them to schools, so that they can talk and somehow get numbers or impress the students so that they come up to this university. So, extra marketing activities that the faculty is being asked to do.

Zain: I think because the management's priorities are very erratic and they change very quickly and there's very little in terms of follow up. So, as an example, I was tasked with writing and directing, not tasked, I was ordered to write and direct videos to promote the degree, and this was three months ago, and we were supposed to meet, but it didn't happen, so I'm keeping quiet about it.

Returning to earlier thematic discussions on quantification, student numbers are still very much the mechanism driving a substantial amount of decision-making. While student satisfaction scores and evaluations are undoubtedly a part of home campus cultures, participants indicated that their job security, salary, and responsibilities were all tied into the student recruitment numbers on IBCs in an inescapable pertinacious way. It also reflects a market-driven employment strategy of "getting more for less" (Scullion,

Molesworth, and Nixon, p 233). IBC academic staff in these contexts are not simply contending with the student-as-consumer or client in the classroom but are actively required to play a role in bringing in "customers." This stretches the traditional role of academics from teaching, research, and service to include sales, and marketing content creation. Academic staff also discussed mandated appearance in social media marketing videos. In the literature, this is reflective of the changes to the academic profession brought on by neoliberalism where faculty are compelled to participate in academic-capitalist systems (Slaughter and Leslie, 1997; Gonzales, et al., 2014; Raina, 2019). Giroux describes this frankly, "University presidents are now viewed as CEOs, faculty as entrepreneurs and students as consumers" (2014, p. 59). In other words, an entrepreneurial and sales mentality is encouraged if not required for academics. Both Wren and Ariel describe their discomfort with taking this type of entrepreneurial role.

Wren: At UC, we did a... Oh, my God, what are those things called? I'll just say a YouTube video that wasn't on YouTube. Vine [or] Tiktok maybe. But we did some little... We did some videos that were a bit silly. Kind of a people lip syncing to a song style thing. And it was I'll say mandatory-ish, but many faculty members didn't participate. So we were dressed in the graduation robes and dancing like a church choir [chuckle] to ...[chuckle] And this is how we spent a whole morning. [chuckle] All this was filmed and put on... I guess I'll just say YouTube. A social media marketing campaign. So that would be one where I feel like we were kind of forced to appear in it. And why this really stands out is that one faculty member was really not comfortable doing this and later insisted that his face be blurred out. [chuckle]... Yeah. So in that sense, it didn't really feel like participation was voluntary, but he sort of later retracted his consent to appear in the video...I don't remember now. But it looks really bad. It's like somebody in witness relocation.

Ariel: Yes, and in a lot of times it wasn't presented as a choice, it was presented as, "You have to do this." I would have been happy to talk about our degrees on video. I think that's an important medium for a student who's considering a university. And I was actually convinced to join my PhD program by listening to a series of videos of the program coordinator discussing what the program was about. So I don't think that this doesn't have value, it's just the way that it was done was really not dignified and made me feel like I was doing a commercial for the university, which really didn't sit very well with me.

Common among the discussions of faculty participation in marketing was the notion that participants felt such activities were outside of the scope of their academic role and that they were ill-equipped to contribute. Despite this, participants also strongly

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indicated that they did not believe the marketing strategies or messaging were effective. In other words, even if they must contend with a commercial agenda, the IBC was not administered capably as a business venture. Erratic management priorities as Zain states above was a noted point among several participants. One way this can be explained is that in a constant market-driven context, trends must always be chased and short-term gains for quarterly profits take precedence over long-term development. First, the market is volatile and subject to innumerable impacting influences and failure to succeed in the market is a threat to the commercial partner's existence. This is one of the key arguments for public or social goods such as healthcare and education being positioned outside the realm of a variable global market. Free market economics relies on companies and corporations to run at "optimal efficiency" (Lorenz, 2013, p. 602). Yet, the insecurity and fragility of the market seems to undermine this goal. Second, it is also arguable that one of the difficulties in attempting to mold higher education to a business model is that corporatized language and messaging compromises the historical ideals associated with academic culture. For this reason, participants questioned the use of certain messaging strategies, which they felt demeaned the ethos of an academic institution. This testifies to both axiological tension/conflict of values and dissonance from their work.

Lee: Discount. Discount is a big one, which is always a very weird term for me when it comes to education, because things like scholarships and grants sound a bit more appropriate. But discount is a big one.

Kennedy: So for a while we were... I can't remember. Like one of the top universities, international universities, or something to that effect. And that was a big brag. And then I think our number fell so then that was no longer the bragging point. But they usually look for some kind of statistic. I think more recently it was something like we were in the Forbes top something. So there's usually some sort of table that says we're higher end. Yeah. Last year we got the five star rating, so that was big bragging rights.

Gisele: I'm not suited for a marketing, promoting activity. But students coming and seeing us, for example teaching or sitting in one of the classes and seeing the campus, from the lecturer perspective, I think are useful

While one could say discount is in practice the equivalent of a scholarship, a discount is an unearned lower rate, which serves as an enticement to purchase.

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Additionally, relying on ranking tables is a noted marketing strategy globally and a performance measure linked to the neoliberal condition of universities. Referencing a business publication such as *Forbes* furthers the rhetoric seeking corporate brand recognition. Similarly, a performance ranking system with a "five-star" system is evocative of a hotel guide rather than a university. It is the language that creates the illusion of a luxury commodity. Regulatory policies are necessary in any educational system, but in a highly marketized context accountability measures must take into consideration students' financial outlay. Yet many of the most emphasized metrics woven into auditing and rankings such as graduate employability statistics and student experience have limited connection to classroom pedagogy or the learning experience. At the same time these metrics work in service of corporatizing the higher education landscape (Tomlinson and Watermeyer, 2020). Investment in education whether national or privatized is often positioned as a social development policy; this is the basis that is commonly used to justify the publication of rankings however in the experience of the participants the key motivating factor behind the publication of rankings or is the perceived commercial benefit of attracting larger student numbers and branding the IBC. This choice of language weaves into several participants' opinion that higher education was facing a potential massification, a technique normally associated with the luxury goods industry. The comparison is a compelling one.

In effect, the IBC is a brand extension of the home campus, sometimes they are even referred to as extension programs. This is a place where we can see an overlap between the marketization practices of the home campus and the IBC. If we assume the home campus is seeking to raise capital in addition to other market expansion goals, and the IBC infrastructure essentially pays a fee to create an extension or diffusion line in a new market, it is not illogical to draw comparisons to luxury designers licensing designs to mass-market retailers. The IBC is cloaked in the same narrative of accessibility for a "prestige" product wherein the consumer or student is unaware of how much the couture designer or home campus is involved. Yet, prestige in a Bourdieu sense is a category of capital which can be traded for monetary gain but is not necessarily financial capital on its own. We can think of professional titles or awards as examples (Blackmore and

Kandiko, 2011). Therefore, the use of prestige may as a marketing strategy have inherent risks in commercial academics context. Participants described home campus involvement as at once authoritarian, neglectful and variable, but like many facets of the IBCs, the home campus's engagement is primarily concentrated on signing off on approvals and supplying and monitoring academic content while the commercial partner takes the lead on day-to-day operations (Healey, 2015). The commercial partner, however, relies on the perceived academic prestige of the home campus to "sell the degree." This type of tension could present the risks Blackmore and Kandiko (2011) point out, "This interaction between the money and prestige economies also occurs internally within institutions, for example university decisions motivated too much by financial concerns might prove to be unwise in the longer term, particularly if the university's strength is in its intellectual capital." (p. 406)

Participants also described a further messaging strategy in the commercial partner's IBC marketing rooted in an employability narrative or depending on one's outlook, employability myth. The idea that education will provide security and a more fulfilling life is an attractive and straightforward narrative and one that is firmly rooted in the public consciousnesses. If it were not, individuals would not be willing to take on the aforementioned considerable debt as the cost of a bachelor's degree in the U.S. has risen 200% over the past two decades. The internationalization of higher education over the past decades demonstrates that this is not just the case of Western nations but a global phenomenon (Chamorro-Premuzic and Frankiewicz, 2019). In prosperous countries, approximately 40% of individuals attend some form of higher education. According to the OECD (2012), more than half of the over 4 million students studying internationally come from developing nations. In other words, despite research strongly indicating that wealthier, developed nations are struggling to provide job opportunities and security for educated workers, there is still tremendous global buy-in for the "rhetoric" of education and credentialing creating opportunity and developing nations are keen to enter into the knowledge economy (Brown, Lauder, and Ashton, 2011, p.131).

Kennedy: I think employability is probably really the key focus. I think that seems to be the key thing that marketing seems to steer toward. I think that's important, but I think it is a little counterintuitive because they also want to drive students into doing their honors here or pursuing master's degrees, but they're not really showing statistics that indicate that pursuing those things would increase their chances of being hired.

In the literature, there is more discussion of branding HE institutes rather than promotional and messaging strategies, but we can consider these elements linked. Additionally, participants like Lee articulated that there was a salient culture of competition, often ruthless, between IBCs in the marketing dimension. Universities, and education, generally speaks to the powers of collaboration and cooperation, but a for-profit, market-driven imperative creates a potentially toxic culture of competition amongst universities and also across departments. One participant Sami explained that the antagonistic culture of marketing existed internally in their organization, with departments positioned against one another for student numbers. The participants in this study confirm this in the sense that they did not describe a marketing culture where academic staff were genuinely invested in the branding or promotion. Rather participants provided observations of an aggressive and impactful culture of marketing within their IBC organizations. As HE engages more with commercial partners and enters into a service provider role, these accounts illuminate the more pernicious and poisonous aspects of an intense culture of marketing and selling.

Lee: But again, the marketing that's run here is largely run by the infrastructure provider and then approved by the home campus. It's because it's a very interesting setup, in that they were both run by [redacted], they've now split ways, but yet they're next door neighbours. The marketing on many occasions has gotten really petty. So like for example, when I was at my old uni, their business programme is AACSB accredited, which is an important thing for marketing. At my current uni, that's not the case. So they took one of those, you know those banners that you pull up like this and yeah... So the marketing team, unbeknownst to us in admin, put a sign that said, "Our university is AACSB accredited. Is yours?" Right in front of the door to this other university. So it's very like head to head. That information came back to the pro-vice-chancellor here and because we never knew that sign was up, we walked straight to that door, pulled it down and said, "Don't ever do this again." But it's very in your face sort of cut throat marketing.

Sami: So a lot of individual departments, instead of working together, were pitched against each other. Or the faculty thought that they should outshine the other departments. What happened in this case was admissions was very impressive, recruitment was very impressive. They were bringing in the students based on whatever gets them to sign on the dotted line...There would be a lot of scholarships handed out just to get students to sign on the dotted line. To show your popularity in the market, to show that you are running full classes. So you were talking about, of course, scholarships, discounts, immense kind of discounts. As long as you signed on the dotted line.

To conclude with Sami's comments, which is a chronicle of inter-departmental competition being encouraged and normalized. Competition is, of course, a mechanism by which individuals are separated from one another. The subordination of collaboration in favor of individual faculty working to increase the capital aims of the organization is a logical segue to the participants' discussions of the performance management cultures instituted not by the home campus, but the commercial partner.

Major Theme 4: Performance Management Culture

(Subthemes: *Evaluations, Surveillance, Inconsistency*)

Since IBC academics and academic staff in this study are contractually employed by the commercial partner rather than the home campus university, we can hypothesize that there is a performance management culture that differs significantly from the home campus. Previous findings relating to quantification and marketing already suggest that participants were engaged in tasks outside of those normally associated with academics, including the "selling of the degree" and participation in undisguised retention strategies. Additionally, participants described evaluative appraisals such as KPIs and surveillance although they indicated such measurements were often inconsistently applied. To one degree, student evaluations were heavily weighted. This is reflective of a commonplace trend in HE, and what Wren describes as the pressure for faculty to be "likable" an ambiguous customer-service fashion.

Wren: we would go over the student evaluations collectively. So the faculty in this department would get together with the head of department, and then we'd go over everybody's ratings on different aspects, and

we would compare, and they'd give some suggestions. And so, for example, there were two math teachers, one was rated... All the students loved his course, but the number of students who passed his course was lower, so the other Math teacher was encouraged to be more likeable. So that other person tried to, I remember she said she decided to start bringing candy and to tell more jokes.

It is important to note that the evaluative measures were also set through the participants' employer, the commercial partner. This demonstrates an intrusion into the academic sphere from the commercial partner providing an example of what Bernstein (1996) describes as "the market and its managers are more and more the managers of the policy and practices of education." (p. 87). The commercial partner and managers are through performance management setting the agenda of what constitutes efficient operations and educational practice rather than a traditional academic department. There is also the further argument that academic work is difficult to incentivize successfully since individual academic motivation is often multifarious (Blackmore and Kandiko, 2011). The research reflects this, "Most quantitative studies that look at faculty motivation fail to have a theoretical basis, nor are they conclusive about the differentiation between intrinsic and extrinsic rewards" (Tien and Blackburn cited by Blackmore and Kindiko, 2011, p. 400)

Wehbe: … KPIs exist and every year... At least this is a recent system. Every year there is a performance review.
I: And what sort of things are reviewed in the performance review?
Wehbe: The industry relationships, the events, and the extended workshops, and also like how we communicate with the students on feedback.

Sami: Plus, also, how well students did, how many students passed was sort of for KPI.

Lee: So currently, I believe, they try to cap the post-graduate lecturers at three courses a term. In all honestly enrollment in the Master's program is not where I'm sure they'd like it to be. So, I'm teaching two courses right now. In terms of research output, currently in my contract, there is not a single line in the job description about research. And I actually called the general manager to ask him about this before signing the contract 'cause this... In terms of a career move, I wanted something that was gonna support research. And his words to me, verbatim were, "I'm not paying you to research. Don't do it on my clock or on my watch."

From the comments above, we can see instances where several evaluative measures are linked directly to market aims, such as building industry relationships and the number of students who passed or did well. Performance management, in this case, serves as a mechanism for permitting the intrusion of the commercial partner directing academic policy and practice rather than the home campus. Additionally, it suggests something beyond past discussions in the literature, which have outlined how managerialism has led to academic labor being shifted more to teaching responsibilities and positions than research (Mathison, 2015; Flavell, et al., 2017). In the IBC context, there is very little tradition of research support, this is something the participants explained that they do for themselves, so it is not that their role is being shifted away from research as Lee explains above. Rather, it encompasses more teaching accountability in the form of numbers and customer service as well as more market-driven elements.

Participants also explained that the commercial partner was in some instances engaged in more substantive methods of monitoring. In traditional post-structuralist social theory, we often think of surveillance tools or technologies being a social control mechanism where an individual self-monitors or self-polices out of fear of punishment or social ostracization (Foucault, 1979/1991). Yet, a more literal rather than metaphorical surveillance or Panopticon-style system was in place at some IBCs with video recording of lectures and tutorials. While there is certainly precedent for recording university lectures, traditionally this was a practice conducted by students with faculty permission for revising material. There are also legitimate or justified cases for recording those in positions of power for purposes for transparency. However, what Ola describes below is more of a policing and punitive strategy of faculty.

Ola: So we had a new faculty hired for two of the undergraduate courses. So, she delivered her first lecture on Sunday. And just after the lecture, all the students came in, they spoke to the PVC about their concerns about how they felt that the lecture was not prepared. And sort of the lecture just dragged the entire class, asking a couple of questions and re-enforcing the same questions again and again and again. And they felt like it did not really help them at all and they were not happy with her teaching style. So the head of the department, locally here, she monitored the... I mean she went over the entire lecture, which was recorded,

to see if that was actually true, and she felt the same, that the lecture was not prepared. So because it was a new hire and it was the first time that lecturer was teaching, they terminated her. For that first instance itself.

I: Did they offer her any sort of ways to improve her teaching?

Ola: Yeah. No, no, there was no... What do you say? No warning given, no comment or feedback given that, "Maybe this is where you lack and our students felt this way, if you could change that." So no chance was given. They were happy to terminate and fix it in the first instance. I feel like that could be unfair, as well. I mean, it was the first class. A new person. You can't judge someone with the first day without even giving them an orientation. She had no orientation, nothing, so it just happened.

Though it may appear a rather harsh assessment, it is not the metaphorical panopticon of social theory being described. What is depicted is closer to the material 18th-century Panopticon prison designed by Bentham. Bentham believed that if individuals believed they were under constant observation, they would perform more efficiently and behave appropriately, and he actively lobbied for his surveillance-style architectural designs to be instituted in schools (Cutieru, 2020). Moreover, on the note of performance efficiency, what Ola describes is very much rooted in the student as consumer priority. From his point in history, Bentham likely imagined the surveillance for "controlling" students, but we see in this instance the power vested in preserving the students' experience above orienting a new faculty member to the university. The individual, the lecturer, with whom we assume power rests is subservient to both the managerial culture of the IBC and the students. While this is a singular account at one IBC, it explicates a larger trend in higher education of viewing faculty and teachers as interchangeable "technicians," easily replaceable (Giroux, 2014). It is also indicative of more distressing global employment trends ruthless to the tenets of profit over people. It exemplifies the earlier discussed link between NPM and surveillance in the way such practices echo former Soviet regimes. Additionally, high levels of managerialism and strict surveillance can create an environment of mistrust and unreasonable control. Samis's story below further instances a more deliberate surveillance, which would unlikely be present in the home campus counterpart.

Sami: So automated punch-in system, punch-out system. And at the end of the month, the reports would be generated. But they don't look at the overtime part, they just wanna make sure you're in before 9:00 and

Participants also cited more traditional methods of performance evaluation where employees participate in setting their own KPIs and self-analyzing their performance. While such measures are often packaged as empowering, a favored neoliberal phrase, individual employees, they are also instrumental and coercive (Zawadzki, 2017). Literature critical of performance management cultures, and Taylorism in particular, refers to this type of self-assessment as a component of "forced cooperation." That is to say, the employee believes themselves to be autonomous in setting their standards, but it is the setting of goals to fit institutional priorities. As Sami and Wehbe explained, many of the KPI goals were directly linked to neoliberal/NPM educational goals including retention of students and maintaining a positive relationship with the student as a consumer or client. This was evident in the participants' descriptions from the seemingly innocent need to be likable to the more severe quick removal after a single lecture was met with student complaints.

Erratic institutional priorities were previously cited in the thematic marketing segment, participants expressed that the same inconsistency extended to performance evaluations. Participants highlighted a pattern of "shifting the goalposts." This further explicates the more general chaos which occurs when market conditions change and when the institution is running with a consumer demand-led ethos (McGettigan, 2013).

Zain: think obviously there are things in place to monitor performance such as KPIs and these kinds of things, but once again, these are very, very inconsistent because they're not... They don't happen every year, and they... And they change. I remember my KPIs changing three times in one year. So I suppose these things are in... That specifically was in place at one point, but again it's not very consistent, and I think that it's more about how performance is perceived rather than what the actual performance is.

Gisele: Even when I was in charge of one of the programs and I would get the student evaluations, in the end, I didn't have much say in the evaluation or... If the infrastructure provider, for example, CEO or management wanted to keep a certain faculty or they decided... They are the ones hiring so it wouldn't be of any consequence, my opinion.

Moreover, NPM style directions such as self-evaluations, goals, targets, emphasis on "soft skills" and group development sessions identify each lecturer's vulnerabilities. As Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) argued, this has transformed the dynamic of work relationships into a therapeutic one. Where once empowerment would have meant workers standing up for themselves and managers providing leadership, the therapeutic culture diminishes both the worker through their vulnerabilities by making them continually aware of their need for self-improvement *and* managers/leadership by placing them in the position of providing emotional re-education and staff development. This is summarized in Ecclestone and Hayes thesis,

> it is a much deeper consciousness of yourself as a diminished worker, someone who feels they lack the skills and qualifications, personal abilities, attitudes, emotional qualities and understanding to do their job properly in the new workplace. We do not see the diminished worker as someone created solely by management in order to control or exploit them. A diminished sense of oneself is not confined to workers: management have the same sense of themselves as diminished. (2009, p. 106)

Erratic priorities are also a mechanism by which the therapeutic culture can reproduce. Through chasing whatever standard is on trend in the market, lecturers and managers must readjust to meet ever new priorities. Evaluative therapeutic culture is not a phenomenon rooted solely in the workplace, but one which an employability-driven curriculum promotes and indoctrinates students into. This will be reviewed in subsequent findings. In summary, participants' accounts demonstrate that there are performance management cultures in place in their IBCs, which are reflective of marketization agendas. It is likely their experience in this dimension is different from their counterparts

on the home campus simply because the home institution has no formal role in their employment. Yet, the one area where the home institution's presence is more evident is in the curriculum and course content.

Major Theme 5: Pedagogy and the Curriculum

*(*Subthemes*: Prescriptivism/Heterogeneity, Autonomy, Resistance/Subversion*)*

In the context of IBC operations (marketing, HR), participants perceived the home campus as having a limited connection to the branch campus and at the same time maintaining a mysteriously imperious presence. However, when discussing matters related to the pedagogical aspect of the IBC including the curriculum, teaching methodologies, and assessment, the directives of the home campus were clear though participants expressed frustration. This frustration was focused on the prescriptivism of the curriculum and an inability to authentically contribute to the design of the courses they teach creating a barrier to critical pedagogy. Standardization of the curriculum is an identifiable mechanism of neoliberal education reform which reduces autonomy. We can rationally argue that in contexts where the curriculum is standardized, the teacher will have less influence on pedagogy. This means through curriculum regularity and sameness neoliberal and NPM policies violates their own argument of fostering individual freedom and growth. Ariel described the impact limiting teacher freedom had on teacher and student engagement, motivation, and individual creativity.

Ariel: I generally think that this was a negative change, probably because I'm from the school of thought that the teacher or lecturer or faculty member should have complete academic freedom in their classroom. And the more restrictive and prescriptive the management is with how things are taught, the less motivated the teachers are, the less creative the teachers are, and the worse that the students do. And I think that was a big reason in me considering and eventually leaving my past job, was that I was seeing this upward trend in terms of reducing and in some cases completely eliminating a teacher's freedom and how they approach teaching their class. And I think student results also were very telling. We were seeing more students dropping out, we were seeing more students complaining, and we were seeing less creative and good output from the students.

Secondly, it is as though the "banking model" metaphor has shifted from the image of authoritarian teacher feeding information to students to the managerial institution supplying or loaning prescriptive curriculum content to the academic. Participants noted that the curriculum and course content were both highly prescribed. In other studies focused on IBCs, specifically UAE-based institutions, interviewees also mentioned circumscribed course content from the home campus (Siltaoja, Juusola, and Kivijärvi, 2019). This is truly an anathema to critical and creative pedagogies and the authentic dialogue they require. Freire wrote "How can I dialogue if I am closed to – and even offended by-the contributions of others?" (Freire, 1970/2005, p. 90). The limited ability to contribute to the curriculum and resources demonstrates an inadequate dialogue between IBC academics and the home campus. This situation marginalizes both the IBC academics and IBC students since the "bank depositors" of curriculum are at a far remove from the knowledge and experience present on IBCs and also at a distance from students, with whom they will likely never interact. Additionally, in line with the commercial-partner's marketing schema, a high priority was placed on employability skills rather than content knowledge or critical engagement. This reflects what Apple and King argue is the social and economic ideology of our time or the hidden curriculum (1977). In the current historical moment, the most "legitimate" knowledge, that which can be linked to employment and standardized, strengthens neoliberal and NPM ideologies. If we think back to the misguided arguments of "school as factory," we can see that the hidden curriculum is the more powerful tool of social control through ideology rather than the "technical" organization of education. An employability centered curriculum reinforces pro-market and consumerist logic. However, participants also described elements of resistance and internalization of neoliberal/NPM norms in their teaching practice.

One of the ways that an IBC can establish legitimacy is through the offering of courses exactly as they would be delivered on the home campus. From one perspective, this is a way to ensure equitableness across the organization and to provide students with a learning experience as close to the home campus brand as possible. Consequently, the courses from the home campus are packaged for IBC faculty to deliver, and the course delivery and assessment results are then monitored by the home campus. Participants

expressed mixed opinions about this system. In the positive dimension, this ensured a measure of fairness as all students would receive the same material and assessments and the labor of preparing for a course was also reduced. However, this type of uniformity also meant sacrificing creativity and critical practice in teaching as Ariel suggested above and Lee, Wehbe, and Sami highlighted below,

Lee: Yeah. [chuckle] But it's varied. In my experience, the most level of autonomy I've had is at post grad level, whereas when I was at UA, the undergraduate level was so prescribed, down to daily lesson plans I would receive from the UC [unit coordinator]. With a minute by minute, what you were meant to sort of do. So it's uniformity and standardization. But when it comes to trans-national campuses, there is a huge lack of trust

Wehbe: Well recently I don't really have any kind of participation in the curriculum development. Basically what we do is that we take the unit guide or the main syllabus and we add as much topics as we can to fill any gaps. So this is my participation to some extent for the curriculum development, but the main topics are still the same. We are given the topics and we talk about them.

Sami: they would take your feedback and incorporate it and they would allow you to customize or tweak it for the region. But again, you couldn't really change a lot of the content.

Gisele: First of all, at least in my case and I know with the other colleagues as well, all the materials are exactly as they are in the main campus with a few small exceptions, like in law, examples of where the culture here does not permit certain examples, but pretty much everything else is the same. Down to the slides, exams, and everything it's synchronized, so that the students do have a similar experience.

Lee's response also echoes the earlier condescension participants perceived from the home campus. A considerable amount of literature in the critical pedagogy domain discusses the limited way teacher education prepares educators for diverse, multicultural settings with different knowledges (Giroux, 2011), but in the context of commercially-partnered IBCs with prescribed curriculums, it becomes an essentially meaningless discussion. Participants described something of a tokenism strategy to address the fact that the IBC was located in a different "market." For example, IBC academics were able to submit some exam questions tailored to the local economy or culture. This reflects one of the more disingenuous and insidious aspects of neoliberalism's hold on higher

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education. Instead of working towards an authentically global and critical curriculum, minor provisions are made to satisfy market identities. In other words, adding exam questions, which address the local environment is essentially a superficial engagement with the students' experiences rather than a genuine, critical dialogue about local cultural artifacts, practices, or history. Furthermore, while critical pedagogy is about balancing power relations in the classroom, it does not equate with the erasure of teacher autonomy and intellectualism.

Neoliberal ideology and corporate-centered higher education, however, evangelize "standardizing the curriculum." (Giroux, 2011, p 10). This is in direct contradiction with the critical pedagogy notion of "academic as engaged public intellectual" (p. 11). As noted above, it is contradictory with the neoliberal's own principle of "empowered" individuals. A prefabricated curriculum encourages conformity and uniformity of pedagogical practice rather than individualism. In this context, a prefabricated curriculum is prescribed course content, resources and assessments packaged by the home campus for the IBC. Freire (2000) explicitly argued against prescriptivism as a "tool of dominance" since neither teachers nor students are fully engaged with contributing resources. While it is certainly possible for teachers and students to attempt multiple pedagogies even from "inside" a prescribed curriculum, and home campuses may encourage such practices, it is not the ideal starting point. Homogeneity and prescriptivism in the curriculum are the rejection not just of critical pedagogy but pedagogy generally because it rejects the participation and knowledge of teachers. From cultural and social theoretical arguments, the erasure of teacher knowledge from the curriculum, is indicative of deterritorialization. Similar to alienation and atomization, the teacher in this situation is removed from the cultural production of the curriculum and whose involvement is even touted as detrimental to efficient standardization and quality assurance. Standardization also, as Lee describes, has cost-efficiency benefits for the commercial partner in terms of hiring staff, so it fulfills further market imperatives.

Lee: See, I don't think I ever would have noticed as a student, but seeing what I know now, the level of autonomy that the lecturer has and also the level of expertise that they're hired at. And I think that a lot of times what happens here is, again, because you have that AIP that's running the show in terms of finances, they're looking to cut corners, and they cut corners at the expense of what's educationally right. So they get people in that are cheaper, because they don't necessarily... Yeah, they've got the qualifications on the paper, but they don't necessarily have the responsibility of designing curriculum and creating assessments. They're quite happy to have a warm body that's in front of the students that can implement somebody else's work, and this is where ethics comes into play.

Gisele: The initial team I worked with, they were all experienced lecturers and just by attending their classes and just going to see how they are teaching and the way we were communicating, I just felt there was a higher quality in teaching, now I feel that is decreasing. So once a good quality lecturer leaves, the one replacing them I feel it's slightly cheaper, if I can say so or...I don't know if the pay, probably it also plays a role, but to me it seems like even the degrees and qualifications and experience, it's less. And especially experience.

These comments are also suggestive of deprofessionalism and proletarianization of faculty, issues which will be examined more in depth in the Discussion Chapter. Giroux (2014) has discussed at length the reduced role of teachers, often to a technical rather than intellectual status. Current research indicates that high levels of autonomy for educators are correlated with greater engagement and professionalism and greater faculty retention (Worth and Van den Brande, 2020). Additionally, much of critical pedagogy philosophy and ideas about the freedom of learning discusses the importance of involving the student in the design of their own assessment (Elton, 2011), but in this case, the assessment and curriculum derive from a place more remote and distant than the teacher in front of them. Engaged pedagogy, in the terms of bell hooks (2010) "produces self-directed learners, teachers and students who are able to participate fully in the production of ideas" (p. 43). A prescribed curriculum is not the optimal starting point for an engaged pedagogy because there is a fixed hierarchy in place which limits the participation of the teacher/lecturer.

Wehbe: We are trying to communicate more with the certain branches. There is, of course, the huge time difference. So this is one of the things that makes it hard. But we are trying to communicate more. We want to understand the way they are teaching things and because mainly the curriculum is coming from them.

So we also want to understand what they are thinking about when they say that this is the curriculum they're going to be taught. And we also want to add our own suggestions for the curriculum and for topics that's being taught. So, yeah, we're trying to communicate more, but so far this is not happening as often as it should.

A secondary discussion with the participants' centered on the content of the prescribed curriculum. In earlier findings on the extent of the marketization practices on their IBCs, participants observed that highlighting employability was an integral aspect of the recruitment strategies. One may argue that the educational system generally has always been in service to the labor market, with the aims of producing a manageable workforce, but participants descriptions of employability-driven curricula and teaching practice on their IBCs is more reflective of the current reckoning with the fragility of the global market and HE's strategy to maintain relevance. While there were varying degrees of enthusiasm, participants also noted that employability, in accordance with the recruitment strategy, was a driving element of the curriculum more for the marketing benefits than work preparedness. Zain explains the recruitment, employability, and marketing loop.

Zain: So I think that their priority is employability that they can use to promote the degree, but I don't think that they institute and implement the things that make their students employable throughout the degree, and this is something that has to do with the curriculum as well

What is particularly unique to the IBCs in this study is that due to their relative newness, there is not an extensive history of debate surrounding the objectives of higher education in the IBC context. IBCs emerged in more recent decades, as the child of market expansion and the neoliberal university. For example, we can consider the traditional Humboldtian ideas of the university, as a place somewhat at a remove from society where knowledge and the development of the self are pursued for their own sake or alternatively, the university as a place which critically examines society and serves the public interest (Elton, 2011) now this has shifted rather narcissistically, in the therapeutic sense, to reflective and critical examination of oneself (Eccelestone and Hayes, 2009). Shields and Watermeyer (2018) explain that there are multiple competing and "even

polarized" (p. 3) understandings of the nature and purpose of higher education. These debates extend beyond individual institutions to media and policy. These types of philosophical debates surrounding the purpose of HE are not within the tradition of new IBCs or of the commercial-partner/service provider agenda, who to survive requires "ultimate fidelity is to expanding profit margins" (Giroux, 2014, p.55). However, Participants often characterized their IBCs as having a "start up" quality which did not always align with their perceptions of the nature of a university, which suggests that there are differences of beliefs surrounding the purpose of the IBC. And as addressed in the literature review, upskilling the local population has always been a major impetus or justification in the courting of universities to open IBCs.

The global acceptance of the employability narrative places a burden on solving the problems of the labor market on higher education, often at the expense of sacrificing certain learning traditions and possibilities for critical engagement. When the employability narrative is merged with edu-business agendas such as a commercial partner and mythologies of private industry delivering more effective results, we can presuppose that there is likely to be an effect on teaching, and curriculum content. On the curriculum focus on employability, participants' viewpoints ranged from a conflict of values and resignation to enthusiastic support for employability agendas. Despite the limited consensus, participants expressed consistent reservations about the efficacy of an employability-centered curriculum in its current form. In other words, even when an employability-driven curriculum was in practice, it was not, in their views, adequately addressing the requirements of the labor market or industry.

Nicky: This is a question I've been thinking about a lot, because I'm a little bit worried that higher education is at a crisis point and we don't know how to respond. And our only response has been to place the responsibility to the student. So higher education has effectively said, which I think is correct, "Traditional jobs don't exist. You're not guaranteed a job because of your degree. You're probably quite likely to not get a job in your degree field, therefore, you as student need to be more innovative, entrepreneurial, and critical, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera." And I don't think university lecturers are best placed to teach people how to be innovative, and etcetera, etcetera. So you've got a mismatch between... At the moment, a higher education degree guarantees debt, but it doesn't necessarily guarantee what it would have done 20 or 30 years ago. And we're not responding quick enough, because universities, because we're based on

reputation, we can't change that quickly, because then it looks like we're diminishing our credibility. So our credibility is tradition, in essence, but the world is moving [chuckle] away from that.

Nicky is vocalizing is the current struggle facing IBCs of this study and HE generally. Employability is heavily relied upon as a marketing tagline for IBCs, but in a liberalized economy, where employment trends fluctuate with the market, it is more challenging to define both what employability means and how, *and if* the IBCs are equipped to address it. If for example, students were entering a kind of planned or semi-planned economy rather than a market-driven global one, the rationale for employability-style "training" might hold more legitimacy. In a market-driven economy, there are extensive challenges in predicting future employment trends. At present, the number of degrees currently issued does not match the job market. As an example, universities have campaigned on the importance and employment prospects of STEM fields for the better part of the decade emphasizing the job market. Looking to the world's largest economy, the US, computer science is the only category of STEM where more than 50% of graduates are actually working in their field of study (Lohr, 2017). The findings in this section align with the more general consensus that HE is struggling in the employment dimension even as it becomes an increasing educational priority and ideological monopoly.

From the critical perspective taken in the study, what is intelligible is that contradiction exists between education which is defined through employability and critical and creative pedagogies. While preparing students for the working world is one responsibility of education, from a critical pedagogy perspective, it also means preparing students to have a critical voice in the professional sphere and the development of collective critical consciousness (Giroux, 2011). Developing critical consciousness is having the ability to read power relations in society and develop a language of both critique and possibility. Yet, employability both in the mediated marketing context and in the curriculum is described by participants as graduating students who will have the skills to obtain work.

In this situation, subject areas in the humanities, arts, and social sciences which do not have an immediate link to the market but are crucial to critical and creative pedagogy are "downsized and reduced to service programs for business" (Giroux, 2011, p. 52) or valued primarily in personal lifestyle of entertainment dimensions. This is the application of commercial and market logic to the curriculum and programs of study are determined by demand rather than social benefit. In this overseas IBCs, programs such as business, IT, commerce, and engineering are preferred because they are "quantified, uniform approaches more amenable to mass roll-out" (McGettigan, 2013, p 122). It is not to say that critical or alternative pedagogies cannot be applied in these disciplines, they most certainly can, but that the elimination of a critical humanities education is an assault on critical thinking espoused by so many universities. This demonstrates how the tenets of NPM are embedded into the curriculum with cost-effective programs easily suited to predetermined and measurable performance outcome.

However, as is common with educational policy and forms of educational managerialism including monitoring and quality assurance, there are often elements of teacher resistance (Terhart, 2013). The participants in this study explained that while they had very little control or ability to contribute to the curriculum or to assessments, the distance of the IBC did allow many a good measure of autonomy in their classrooms. The resistance described was of two forms, one was attempting to emphasize values and content beyond those related to employment.

Wehbe: It prepares them for the real-life work environment. It prepares them for working and to be part of an ecosystem. However, I would say, people can live without college education and it needs to be clear that college education and education, in general, are systems of guidance, not tools. That's my own personal opinion about it. It's guidance, not specific rules or templates. We're not supposed to be creating templates of human beings, we are supposed to just guide people to learn more.

Kennedy: we always try to impress upon them that it's about not just the academics of it, but also outside of these university walls. Like, how it will help change your view of the world? How can it help you to understand the world better? And that kind of notion. I think some students get that, but most of them, I think it's more they think it'll help them get a job or it'll help make their parents happy or something like that. Yeah. I think it should play a role in... I always tell my students critical thinking will save the world, like being

able to empathize with different perspectives so that you can, not just be afraid of things you don't understand, but learn about them and at least maybe have some kind of understanding of them rather than fear. So that's my perfect world answer. I think a lot of it gets lost in the pursuit of career or making money, and that's a shame.

Ariel: Because again, where's the rigor? Where is the seriousness of what a college degree should have? I tried a couple of times, and actually a couple of other faculty members tried to start more serious clubs. So I wanted to start a book club once. That was kind of addressed with a big, "No." Another faculty member tried to start a film club, a very serious one where they would meet and talk about in-depth topics about film. And that was really not very well-supported, and as much as I tried to support him, he was getting no budget to do this whereas there's a lot of budget that goes towards feeding students because it is regarded as, "Pizza brings students to campus." Which I don't disagree, college students need to eat, but if that's the only motivation to be there then that tells you about the caliber of students that are being recruited. And also the image that the university is portraying.

A second form of resistance was described in the marking. Participants described attempting to circumvent the grade monitoring system. This raises interesting questions about remote forms of moderation when the unit coordinator has not worked with the student throughout the term. It is also an area that could function as a collaborative exercise instead of a monitoring one. There could be marking across campuses or double marking. The current form echoes the limited participation participants are allowed in curriculum design and speaks to the earlier feels of inferiority and mistrust. However, according to Zain, this mistrust is somewhat misplaced as the commercial partner was described as interfering with grade moderation to ensure the earlier discussed progression numbers and student satisfaction.

I: So, ultimately you don't have much power in the process of whether they pass or fail?
Zain: Well, outwardly, we don't, but what we've started to do is that... Or not what we've started to do, what we've been doing is that we've tried to... If a student fails an assignment, we've tried to give them a lower grade than what... Maybe what they deserve, if we feel that they haven't comprehended the unit and haven't... And don't... And haven't met the learning outcomes, let's say, of the unit, then we give them a grade that's too low for Australia to moderate, and this has happened a lot of times. So for example, if a student on an essay gets... If a student on an essay, their grade is 40, and if this 40 will give them a 45 as a final grade, then I'll give them a 20 on that assignment, so that it will fall below the bracket of what Australia

will moderate. And I understand that this is maybe unethical, but so is their grade moderation and in this case two wrongs might make a right.

Sami: [When I was at university] They'd make a 68 a 70 or a 69 a 70. But they wouldn't take a 60 score and bump it all the way up or something. So I was raised that way. So, yeah, it was very demoralizing. Extremely demoralizing in that sense, which is what I like about what I'm doing right now. So I'm not teaching, but I've looked at the teaching models over here, and they're absolutely open to failing students left, right and center. But, the reason is because right now I work... Well, you can call it a home campus, they don't have branches. It's a state run government university

While Zain and Sami explained how they resisted what they considered unethical grade moderation, the process on its own demonstrates a lack of trust in faculty's professional judgment regarding grading. The centralized goal of maintaining students regardless of their academic performance sets the conditions for corruption. It is also further evidence of deprofessionalization. It is as Raina (2019) described, "Their perception of the degraded academic profession intensifies when the administrators micro-control their work." A general feeling of lack of control and helpness was evident in many of the participants' narratives. These same feelings were also present in the following thematic category, centered on the visibility of student mental health issues and the challenges of limited resources and maintenance of brand reputation presented to participants.

Major theme 6: Mental health

(Subthemes**:** *visibility of mental health issues, limited resources, concealment and brand reputation*)

The final thematic category, which emerged organically from the participants is focused on student mental health. This is not a topic for which interview questions were designed for, but participants raised the subject. Therefore, I wanted to dedicate a section to their accounts. Participants recounted incidents of potential harm and student suicide coupled with limited information and resources. These accounts are at once distressing as they are an indictment of the deteriorating mental health conditions fostered in a

neoliberal context no matter how often well-being initiatives are promoted. It has been argued that conditions such as depression, anxiety, narcissism, and ADHD are the logical effects of inequality, competition, and choice-oriented market fundamentalism (Cain, 2018). Priestly (2018) has posited that neoliberal policies of competition and financialization have exacerbated the increase in mental health conditions amongst students. From this type of social theory perspective, there are post-structuralists and Foucauldian arguments that mental illness, particularly depression, narcissism, and anxiety, are produced and reproduced as a result of neoliberal ideology. The conditions promoting competition and self-sufficiency foster mental illness, but ideologically capitalism also utilizes the tactic of individualizing responsibility for treatment instead of addressing the social conditions and policies which may create the production and reproduction cycle of a discourse of mental illness. While this is a non-biomedical interpretation of the increase in mental health conditions, students, who are already in a vulnerable age bracket for mental health (Hoffman, 2015) are also more likely to be susceptible to external demands for achievement and success (Deasy et al., 2014). We can also interpret neoliberal policies and discourses of achievement, competition and, even employability as contributing causal mechanisms of mental illness because of the pressure placed on the individual (Cain, 2018). Further pressure is placed on the individual to be responsible for their healing rather than addressing the social causes contributing to the condition. This is not to argue that individuals are pawns in a social structure, but there is significant individualizing of responsibility for health, happiness, success, and even social virtue, such as being environmentally-green. This pulls individual focus and energy inward and helps to create new markets, commodities and cottage industries to "buy" self-improvement, success, and morality.

There is also an argument that "individualization" neoliberal conception of mental health runs parallel to employability/entrepreneurship rhetoric promoted and fostered in HE and the IBCs in this study. Both emphasize self-transformation through the consumption of services, education, and health care/therapy and a retreat from addressing the influences of the environment and political economy. Writing of the mindfulness movement, a common topic of university workshops according to

participants, to address growing mental health problems in society, O'Brien (2019) cites criticism from Ronald Purser, "mindfulness has become the perfect coping mechanism for neoliberal capitalism: it privatises stress and encourages people to locate the root of mental ailments in their own work ethic." Employability and entrepreneurship could easily be substituted for mindfulness. Purser is the author of *McMindfulness,* the title of which mirrors the *McDonaldisation of Higher Education.* It is, in many ways, unsurprising that the pedagogical climate fostered and reproduced by neoliberal hegemony would intersect with student mental health.

Below, Gisele describes the often frontline position IBC faculty and advisors are placed in when dealing with a complicated situation, which fortunately seemed to pass without major incident. Wren further explains the difficulty of not having services available and being called upon to counsel a student. International research indicates that student services are under strain with an increase in demand for counseling services five times more than a decade ago (Priestly, 2019). It follows that the IBCs in this study are likely to experience a similar pattern. Participants reported counseling services in their organizations were limited, and in some cases, there were no resources at all to address student mental health. It is important to note again that IBCs are smaller and have fewer resources overall due to their smaller size and "start up" nature. However, Laila indicated that their institution was not equipped to provide help for the student in question and thus, ethically, in their opinion should not have admitted them. A direct line can be drawn from participant's earlier accounts of the recruitment targets and the need to take in as many numbers as possible to sustain business and profits. We see here an instance when the institution is bound by the commercial partner's need to both stay afloat and increase capital. As a result, further objectives of the IBC, such as pastoral care can suffer. The issue of limited resources in terms of staffing also illuminates a dynamic in which the home campus has ceded power to the commercial partner. This echoes earlier thematic sentiments regarding the precarious nature of being employed through the commercial partner while attempting to carry out the ethos of the home campus.

Laila: He was putting other people in potential danger, and himself too, because of the things that he was saying and doing to other people. So we have students that have never been diagnosed, obviously, and don't know what's going on, who don't maybe know that maybe something is wrong. Some students come to us and they know something's wrong, but they're not really quite sure. Recently, I had a student that got into trouble... I was lucky enough to be able to convince him to go and get an evaluation. And he did. And then he started to take medication. But there's a lot of cases where students aren't getting evaluated. They're just kind of getting by. A lot of parents don't think there's anything wrong. A lot of the students... Or if they do, they might not be able to afford the medical care. Or if they know what's going on, they're trying to privately take care of the situation within the family, and not share the information with the university. We get a lot of students, not only that have mental health issues that. Will make it difficult to really be successful here without mental health support on campus. But we also get students that there's no way that we are set up to support them, and they actually should have never been admitted.

Wren: I feel that the branch campuses are often very poorly equipped to deal with this. So if a student's, for example, having some kind of a crisis outside of working hours, there's not really anywhere you can refer them. And I'd say that I've certainly lost sleep worrying about that, and had some bad boundaries, where at one point, this is while I was at x, I was asked to step in and do some counseling for somebody who was not my student, and I wasn't teaching him. But he was going through a really intense emotional crisis. And since I have a background in... I have a clinical background, and at the time was still a licensed clinician in my home country, they asked me to do some counseling. And I really just didn't have anybody to refer him to, so I ended up just giving him my phone number and asking him to call me if he was feeling suicidal, which he did. But that took quite a toll, and that sort of thing wouldn't really happen elsewhere. Other countries have suicide crisis lines, they have emergency services. So that was, I'd say, quite emotionally draining. And something similar happened at y recently, but there is one person on campus, a guy who has taken that on, the home campus is often legally mandated to provide services to students with disabilities, or to basically ensure there's some kind of emotional health support to their students.

Another of the more duplicitous aspects of neoliberal ideology is that "It maintains that "the market" delivers benefits that could never be achieved by planning." (Metcalf, 2017). The private sector through NPM is positioned as better equipped to deliver solutions and efficiency, and individuals are considered more able to self-actualize in a free market context. However, what the participants' accounts suggest is that commercially-partnered IBCs must make decisions about cost-cutting, which can result in understaffing in key areas of student support. The very idea of an individual taking responsibility for their own success is undermined when they cannot access the very tools

to manifest self-improvement. Kennedy has described a situation in which the home campus identified the limited counseling resources on the IBC, but they were unable to take immediate action to compel the branch to hire staff. Ultimately, this was a scenario in which the need was finally recognized by the IBC HR, but it also demonstrates that the home campus does have an important role to play in identifying and facilitating change in their IBC counterparts.

Kennedy: I know they are, because I personally have emailed about concerns because we had a six month period where we didn't have a counselor, and they felt that it was not an essential role. And I went to HR here 'cause I said, "This had happened once before and it's not acceptable." So I went to HR here and spoke to them, and they said there's really nothing they can do. I went to the registrar, they said, "There's nothing we can do." So I emailed the well-being people in the home campus and expressed my concerns, and was told that they had been having the same argument there for years, and maybe someone will start listening. Actually, just yesterday, I was told that they're finally going to hire a second full-time counselor, which is amazing.

In other cases, participants described abandonment from the home campus on challenging mental health issues and also a culture of concealment for fear of IBC reputational damage. In TNE and the sphere of IBCs, reputational damage is often conceived of in terms of market failure and the closure of IBCs (Healey, 2015). The aspect of reputational damage from the darker, more human issues that participants revealed below is limited in IBC research.

Zain: Again because of student retention, I think that they will always walk back the tough rhetoric and all of the stuff that's in the policies in order to give... I mean, "Tom" is back now. So, "Tom" is a student who sexually harassed a bunch of students in his class and they came forward with a complaint, with a lot of... With several instances and he was kept away from class for a trimester. But now he's back, and it's as if nothing happened. And they initially asked for documentation from a counselor and he hasn't even been able to provide that and they still... And now he's back and that's it. think it was fear of reputational damage, and also because I think they just got tired of it. I think that... I don't think there's a lot of... And this is not something that was just exclusive, this is not something that we were dealing with on the "our" campus, this went to home campus. And I don't think there's very much support from home campus to the "branch" campus.

Lee: I don't know if you know, there was a student that committed suicide? Basically, we were all called into an auditorium and they told us what had happened. At that point, anyone who walked past the hallway had already seen, unfortunately as it happened on campus. And students, they were told that they were allowed to leave if they wanted to, and then I believe they called in a counselor that could speak with them on that day... I think that goes back to branding and marketing, and keeping everything very hush-hush. There was no degree issued... What is it called? Posthumously or whatever that is...I mean it was absolutely atrocious. The whole thing was atrocious. But they issued a statement to all students saying that there was an incident, but didn't really go into further detail. It's a bit concerning 'cause they were really just... Everyone worries for their image here

It should be noted that there are legal privacy reasons as to why such issues are not published within the UAE though recent laws have decriminalized suicide (Qiblawi, 2020). However, the lack of oversight from the home campuses should not be ignored. In contrast to Kennedy's earlier account, these instances demonstrate neglect. As mentioned, this finding was an unexpected area of the study, and it is an area recommended for future research, particularly from the student perspective.

4.5 Summary of Findings and a Return to Critical Realism

This chapter detailed the major findings of the study. Following a critical thematic analysis, the raw data was first coded in an open process and then subsequently categorized through closed codes related to marketization. Critical realism serves a useful approach for exploring IBC marketization conditions because it has concern for both subjective and lived experience as well as structures. As a research approach, it has been argued that critical realism is an effective paradigm to examine TNE partnerships because it acknowledges "both structure and agency, and the effect they have one another." (Bordogna, 2020a, p. 886). Therefore, critical realism as a lens for interpreting the findings, provides an intensive way of understanding the situation but unlike the constructivist approach which could have been used with interviews, participants accounts are not isolated. Rather, the participants' subjective experiences are able to explain illuminate the real structure or institutional partnership. This is because there is often a disjuncture between what individuals think and their understanding of structure: "people do not marry to reproduce the nuclear family or work to

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reproduce the capitalist economy. But it is nevertheless, the unintended consequence (and inexorable result) of, as it is also **the** necessary condition for, their activity" (Bhaskar, 1978, p. 16). And unlike a functionalist approach, which could use a" "quantitative approach may be used to generate data to support decision-making about the value of a TNE collaborative partnership as a commercial endeavour" (Bordogna, 2020a, p. 885), the mechanisms of neoliberalism and marketization have been explained and interpreted through the events and experiences of the participants. This resulted in six overarching themes, including 1) institutional fragment 2) quantification and student as consumer 3) marketing 4) performance management culture 5) market-friendly pedagogy and curriculum and 6) student mental health. The next chapter, the Discussion synthesizes these findings to present a holistic assessment. The is followed by recommendations.

Chapter 5 Discussion

5.1 Purpose of the Study Revisited

The purpose of this study is to explore and critically examine the marketization dynamics on commercially-partnered IBCs through an analysis of the perspectives of academics, academic leadership and academic support staff with a focus on those who had experience working at more than one of these types of structured institutions. Universities are increasingly entering into partnerships with private and for-profit educational service providers. In what will likely be a fragile post-Covid economy, we can assume that HE will face a number of funding challenges, which private industry will position itself to address. Recent research has suggested that the transition to online learning will transform student recruitment, with the quality of digital learning driving competition. At the same time, academics have experienced considerable professional disturbance and "existential panic" with the rapid shift to digital learning (Watermeyer, et al. 2020). It is hoped that the participants' accounts evaluated against theory and academic research provide insight into the challenges these partnerships may raise, for pedagogy, for academic labor, and for the autonomy of both academics and universities.

5.2 Discussion and Conclusions

The objective of the discussion is to synthesize and connect the thematic findings into a comprehensive argument to address the research questions and propositions. A consolidation of the findings advances three major arguments and grounds those claims in real experiences, observations and the academic literature. First, there is an intensified marketization and bureaucratic culture on commercially-partnered IBC likely due to 1. fiscal pressures and 2. a fragmented relationship between home campus and IBC. This creates an axiological tension for the majority of participants since the aims of the home campus and commercial partner create tensions. Second, the participants' descriptions indicate shifts in professional identity and conditions of deprofessionalism, and

proletarianization, which are reflective of wider trends in higher education and "knowledge" workers generally.   Third, it is arguable that the intensified marketization culture in combination with deprofessionalization of academic staff produces a diminished pedagogy. However, a critical look at these conditions illustrates that there are opportunities for developing improved professional autonomy along with critical and creative pedagogical practices. The first segment will return to the first research question and sub question:

1. To what extent do participants perceive the effects of marketization, neoliberalism and New Public Management on their commercially-partnered IBCs?

> 1a. How do IBC academics describe educational goals and outcomes of their IBC institutions?

Previous research suggests that IBC academics and staff are likely to make comparisons between the home campus and branch campus (Jonasson, et al., 2017). The participants' responses indicated that they did indeed make comparisons and many of these comparisons, for the participants in this study, this primarily centered on academic autonomy and professionalism. Several participants indicated that they believed home campus faculty is not involved with corporate management, either because they perceived the home campus faculty to be sheltered from commercial interests or because they understood faculty involvement with marketization practices, such as sales, existed only on their IBCs. Regardless of the perception, the lack of shared governance creates fragmentation across the organization, but also results in two authoritarian bodies with different missions. There is an increased bureaucratic structure in contrast to the efficiency proclamations of capitalist enterprise and NPM, but in the commercially-partnered IBC context it is a layered bureaucracy present across two organizations. Efficiency does not equal effectiveness as NPM discourse would suggest because in the commercial context efficiency is reduced to cost-efficiency (Lorenz, 2013).

At the core of many of the participants' accounts is the conflict produced by the fragmented structure of the IBC, with the priorities of a seemingly remote home campus

and a proprietary IBC operator often at odds. Through their reflections on their everyday experience, participants indicated that the IBC commercial or infrastructure partner wielded more power in employment conditions and significantly influenced academic practice. As discussed, for the past two decades for-profit entrants into higher education have increased along with the globalization of higher education and the need for universities to be entrepreneurial (Pucciarelli and Kaplan, 2016). Most concerning are the pressures that a profitable revenue requirement places on the IBC organizations and how this pressure manifests in the classroom. Much of the criticism of marketization in HE rests on the notion that universities are engaging in mimicry of the corporate world, but the commercially-partnered IBC is more intrinsically linked to the market and answerable to market demands and profit agendas. It is a reality of the often-fragile nature of institutional survival and success. And while it cannot be argued that seeking profit necessarily undermines academics, according to the literature and participants' experiences, fiscal goals do have a distorting impact. The values and assumptions of an educational mission and a for-profit business are distinct, which creates an axiological tension or conflict of values for participants. This is most evident in the employment norms and academic life of faculty.

In the realm of employment, there are two related terms which reflect a considerable number of the participants' experiences: deprofessionalism and proletarianization. To begin, if we compare the historical understanding of the terms "professional" and "worker", professionals are assumed to have a theoretical knowledge base and a measure of autonomy and freedom of regulation in their work (Raina, 2019) whereas workers lack significant decision-making power. Oppenheimer (1972) described professionalism as something of an ideal scenario wherein a worker (s) creates or produces an idea, object, structure, process, or artistic piece at a pace and in conditions determined by the worker. While this is an ideal scenario, professional conditions generally provide some measure of freedom with the notion that this leads to more fruitful and creative output. Deprofessionalization refers to loss of items associated with professionalism and has been in discussion for a variety of fields, for instance medicine, law, and teaching, since the 1970s (Haug, 1973). Recent research indicates that

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deprofessionalization manifests as academics and university support staff feel atomized, disconnected from their organizations and view institutional management with skepticism and distrust (Watermeyer and Rowe, 2021).

An associated term, proletarianization described the subsumption of professionalism to institutional bureaucracy and wage labor conditions determined by the market economy (Wisman and Duroy, 2020. There is also aforementioned precarization of a large portion of academics, which is also a sign of deprofessionalization. For example, in *The Culture of Narcissism* published in 1979, Christopher Lasch, with adept foresight, highlighted the early transformation of the professional class to the proletariat,

> Much of what is euphemistically known as the middle class, merely because it dresses up to go to work, is now reduced to proletarian conditions of existence. Many white-collar jobs require no more skill and pay even less than blue-collar jobs, conferring little status or security. (p. 68)

Therefore, it is a phenomenon we can associate with the rise of neoliberalism and the banking model. In the sphere of higher education, deprofessionalization illuminates academics "sentiment [of]...declined professional status and downgraded status" of academics (Raina, 2019). It also encompasses the feeling that the student as consumer mentality violates decorum, limits respect, and compromises quality. In other words, the bureaucratic structure of NPM undermines autonomy, creativity and therefore, professionalism.

Participants also mentioned massification of education, and while this is often considered from the point of view as education as a commodity, the outsourcing of labor is relevant to proletarianization. Similar to many outsourcing practices, the home campus financially benefits from the labor of IBC academics and staff but has relinquished any legal obligations to those carrying out the educational mission. Minimum wage, academic freedom, tenure, sabbatical and a supported research culture are all standard practices

to a certain degree on UK/US/Australian home campuses. While the argument that individuals will always be subject to the employment regulations of the jurisdiction, they work in is certainly valid and appropriate, it does not erase the ethical questions of the home campus benefiting from essentially unprotected labor. It also demonstrates the neoliberal impact on "knowledge workers" or skilled labor. Similar to the subaltern status of the adjunct class of academics, the participants' experience related perceptions of a less prestigious reputation and more precarious working conditions. There was also evidence of the "deskilling" of teachers which Giroux (2012) argues is linked to the emphasis on neoliberal accountability measures and "routinization" (p 9).

Furthermore, one of the issues which emerged from is that this intensified marketization serves as a mechanism for both producing and the additional work it requires for academics. This could also be viewed through the concept of invisible labor. Invisible labor is called so because it is not the visual performance of work, and it often goes unseen (by students/consumers) and unpaid. It is work which is required for employees to maintain their positions and performed not necessarily as part of the role, but "performed for the employer and from which the employer reaps profits" (Crain, Poster, and Cherry, p. 8). Since the central mission of a commercial entity is revenue driven, academics are consigned to supporting the profit mission. Participants clearly indicated that recruitment and retention were institutional imperatives, if not the ultimate priority. This is also another aspect of massification, where the drive to increase the number of students takes priority over teaching and research creating a situation where individuals, due to time constraints, may struggle in the pedagogical and intellectual realms. This turns us back towards a discussion of the second research and sub question:

2.To what extent do neo-liberalism and NPM in the case of commercially partnered IBCs determine the framing of pedagogy and academic life?

        2a. To what extent do IBC academics, academic leadership, and student academic support service professionals perceive the influence of

commercial interests and NPM on pedagogy, teaching practice and professional autonomy?

As evidenced by the participants' accounts, the goals of the commercial partner are focused on student recruitment and retention with an emphasis on the job market for graduates. However, research indicates that the reality is one of a growing population of high-skilled, low wage workers because corporations generally recruit only a few elite students from prestige universities. This "contributes to widening income inequalities…in career prospects among people with the same credentials, experience or levels of expertise." (Brown, Lauder, and Ashton, 2011, p. 9). There is also the fallacious though widely promoted idea that companies want employees with critical thinking skills when in fact very few employees or "aristocracy of talent" are afforded time to think and exercise creative freedom (Brown, Lauder, and Ashton, 2011, p. 161).

While employability is an aspect of more traditional higher education, it is not the holistic goal of an educational mission, which historically rests on critical thinking, citizenship, culture, and self-expression (Giroux, 2014). While the home campus maintains the degree awarding power and its own public, non-profit or funding status, the brand and academic content are licensed to the commercial partner netting the home campus additional revenue (McGettigan, 2013). This leaves IBC academics and students to primarily interact with the commercial partner, likely unbeknownst to students and potential students, but it is a source of frustration for the participants. This is an identifiable area for future research. Previous research and the participants of this study suggest that students are aware of the power dynamics of a student-as-customer model, but there is little understanding of students' awareness of the commercial presence on IBCs or student interaction with the local business partner.

However, even if the commercial partner and the home campus have different aims, as mentioned earlier, the organizations in tandem create an increased bureaucratic apparatus and an intensified discourse and practice of NPM. The curriculum, and to a

lesser degree teaching practices, are hierarchically and centrally controlled by the home campus. Whereas the research and service dimensions of the academic role are dictated by the commercial partner with some participants' indicating that there was involvement with grade moderation to ensure enrollment figures. As a result, there is evidence of micromanagement of the IBC academic and support staff through reduced academic practice, surveillance, performativity, and a transformation of intellectual life to a service or sales role all of which align with the concept of NPM, and its concentration on results (Broucker and DeWit, 2015). Raina (2019) describes a similar, and aptly comparative, condition in for-profit universities, "The rigid hierarchy of the capitalist administration intersects with the traditional hierarchies present in the university, which makes the environment more oppressive than that in the private universities of other social contexts." It is also as McGettigan (2013) explains, that privatization actually increases regulation and surveillance, which is in contradiction of the philosophical tenets of a liberal market. Taken in combination with the limited participation in curriculum production, this creates core challenges for creative pedagogical practice. In other words, there are legitimate reasons to believe that a highly prescriptive curriculum along with altered responsibilities for academics will result in a diminished pedagogy.

Arguments for a liberal, truly global humanities curriculum, where teachers have professional authority are often branded as reactionary and traditional. These types of responses are illusory because advocating for challenging curriculum content knowledge is confused with arguing for a restoration of authoritarian teaching. Firstly, it should be noted that neoliberal curriculums, designed in service of the job market, often project the façade of critical pedagogy by appropriating the theory's language. Critical pedagogy and other creative teaching practices have become "institutionalized" meaning appropriated and therefore neutralized and used in service of the neoliberal establishment. Terms such as empowerment, student centered, reflective learning, "real world" knowledge and global citizenship superficially litter the marketing and policy materials of universities including the IBCs under discussion in this study. This self-directed, "individual learning journey" rhetoric where education is promoted as a consumer good and lifestyle choice is a barrier to authentic critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy rests on important tenets of humility and

a recognition that "self-sufficiency is incompatible with dialogue" (Freire, 1907/2005, p. 91). And there is no more revered gospel in neoliberalism than that of the empowered, self-sufficient individual lifestyle seeker. Therefore, the appropriated language of critical pedagogy is arguably promoting an educational practice of individualized consumer convenience or the capitalist dream with the cosmetic facade of social justice and empowerment (Giroux, 2012).

Secondly, the homogenization of the curriculum limits teaching autonomy and agency and prohibits faculty from implementing content tailored for their students. With curriculum content and assessments standardized at a distant home campus, the students on the IBC are rendered into an anonymous entity. This is not the paradigmatic starting point for a critically engaged pedagogy as there is restricted space for academics to innovate in their teaching practice or work with students to develop engaging content and resources. A prefabricated, highly-controlled curriculum also contributes to the aforementioned deprofessionalism. There is little trust placed in the experience or knowledge of the IBC academics and having a prepackaged curriculum not only contributes to deskilling but reduces academics to be seen as replaceable technicians who can be replaced with cheaper labor rather than as unique individuals whose development in teaching and research would contribute to a long-term educational mission (Giroux, 2014).

Additionally, the value of domains relevant for authentic pedagogy, such as humanities and arts, are unable to be easily measured or quantified. It is precisely the fetishization of measurement and quantification which endangers critical education. And quantification is endemic to the commercially-partnered IBC. We can see this evinced in Nicky's statement.

Nicky: So you could argue that the home campus although diverse in student population is homogeneous in the sense that it's fixed in place. The branch campus is diverse and more fluid because it's of somewhere else, and its identity is evolving. Understanding that, understanding how teachers, academics, administrators, students, all interact in this crucible of development is very, very useful for the cultural practice of education. So a branch campus is essentially a startup. So it can offer a tremendous amount in

terms of the business learning of how you develop an entity. It's got a tremendous amount to offer in terms of how you view quality and how you manage quality. Building staff training programs, encouraging student interact... Every aspect, because you're effectively saying, "Well, it's just a university, so it's the same." No, no, no. It's not the same, but by looking... It's effectively instead of university looking at it that way, you're looking at it that way. So it's the same thing, but by looking at it through another lens you can reinvigorate the home.

5.3 Opportunities: Investing in Critical and Creative Pedagogies

This study has primarily focused on the challenges marketization poses to academics; however, highlighting the threats to critical and creative pedagogies is only a first step in redirecting the detrimental practices described by the participants. IBCs also present opportunities which could promote an engaged critical pedagogy. And while commercialization and commodification often exist in opposition with critical education until wider changes are made in funding and regulation, IBC academics along with their academics more broadly must work within the system of enterprise and corporatization. Additionally, for those with a pro-market agenda, they will need to be convinced that an "investment" in authentic, engaging pedagogy will produce long-term benefits for IBCs' reputations and ability to function more as a public good. Potential opportunities for the implementation of critical pedagogy include a stronger relationship with the home campus, including governance participation for IBC academics, more connectivity and collaboration across campuses and a willingness to incorporate areas of study not directly linked to the labor market and to make these areas of study accessible. In other words, arts and humanities need to be available for all students, not just those who have the luxury to study areas which do not directly correlate to the job market. To use the language of marketization, arts and humanities are in need of a "rebranding" to reach IBC potential students. This needs to go beyond the superficial and corporatized acronym STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics), which places arts in service to what are perceived as more utilitarian, "real-world" subjects.

One of the major points of discussion among participants was the disconnect they felt with the home campus and the perception that they were viewed as lower tier

academic. While an increase in the bureaucratic and surveillance is not suggested, channels for more participation and collaboration should be considered. There are also opportunities, as Nicky, above, made clear for knowledge to be directed from the branch to the home campus rather than the traditional hierarchy.

While Nicky discusses this primarily in managerial terms, the same construct could be applied to pedagogical practice, curriculum and course content. There are opportunities for original course content and curriculum to be developed on IBCs and implemented on the home campus. Additionally, with the increased shift to online learning due to COVID19, there are more opportunities for faculty and students to collaborate across campuses. Such practices may also help to integrate the two campuses into a cohesive educational organization through the building of collaborative activity.

5.4 Policy Recommendations

There are also aforementioned wider policy recommendations for the regulation of commercially-partnered IBCs. There is always a danger of overregulation and auditing increasing the bureaucratic structure, and therefore, autonomy and creativity. However, the participants' accounts do reflect a need for more transparency and public accountability. There is also an argument that while commercial-partnered IBCs are often privately held, the mission of education is still within the boundaries of public service. A suggested regulatory framework would include two major changes. The first recommendation is a formal separation between academic practice and business operations and the second is required reporting and publication of institutional data including finances similar to that of a publicly-held company.

Without an acknowledgement that the aims of profit may run counter to educational quality, commercially-partnered IBCs are potentially at reputational and sustainability risk. Participants described compromising academic standards to support business priorities in several areas including admissions, grade moderation, curriculum content and marketing campaigns. However, if commercially-partnered IBCs continue with a student

as a consumer model, students are then due consumer protections. And if education is to be viewed as a commodity, it should be subject to regulation standards just as any material commodities business is. Commodities traders, for instance, must undergo an external assurance audit, which demonstrates that they have implemented and maintained adequate processes to mitigate risk that the business is not being used to disguise the origin of conflict materials. Any number of businesses and industries have comparative practices including auditing firms. In the case of commercially-partnered IBCs, it is recommended that a similar external assurance report, which takes into account the experience of academics and students through interviews and surveys, and which demonstrates that the academic standards of the degree-awarding institution have not been compromised by commerce. The need for formal separation between academic practice and operations was emphasized by Ariel, to restate:

Teachers were and are, as far as I know, being asked to do things that a teacher shouldn't be asked to do. So I believe that there should be a sort of separation of church and state here. The management, the number of students, the profitability, should be managed by certain people, and there should be kind of this wall between the administration, management, and the academic side. That was the case until a few years ago. And now this wall is basically a blurred line...The people who own the place, because they're now operating from a numbers-only place, they don't realize that what this is doing is actually going to affect their numbers. And what I'm seeing is that it's affecting their numbers quite rapidly. So it's not even a long-term thing, you can see it in the short term, that the numbers are being affected. But they still try to tackle this from, "Let's get more students. Let's keep more students", rather than, "Let's look at what the real problem is, let's look at what we're doing to our teachers and how that is affecting the students and the student numbers."

To further demonstrate that academic standards have not been compromised, reporting and publication of institutional data as is common practice on home campuses should be implemented on IBCs. The production of an annual "Student's Right to Know" report, which would include the financial reporting of the commercial partner is also recommended. There are several options for administration and enforcement of the recommended regulations through either accreditation bodies or the home campus could require such quality assurance as part of continued partnership.

Despite the problems posed by the merger of education and enterprise, edu-business and privatization they are likely to continue to flourish particularly through partnerships. While the abolition of such partnerships is possible in the future, neoliberal ideology and globalization continue to persist. The participants of this study and the literature both call attention to the hazards of commercial interests in education. It is therefore recommended that regulatory and accreditation bodies as well as universities independently take such steps to lessen the risks to academic quality without increasing surveillance technologies to the degree that they would compromise institutional or academic autonomy. There are dangers to over implementation of quality assurance as seen in the fetishization of rankings. However, if quality assurance perspectives shift from a neoliberal view of higher education to a more holistic conception of education and pedagogy, which takes in account the experiences and observations of academics, IBCs and students stand to benefit. It is as Zizek describes ""Freedom of choice is something beautiful but works only against a very thick background of regulations, ethical presuppositions, economic conditions and so on." (Derbyshire, 2009).

Chapter 6. Conclusions

6.1 Purpose of the Chapter

The purpose of this chapter is to bring the study to a close through the provision of a critical reflection on the limitations and challenges of the study as well as highlighting the study's significance and contributions to research and theory. The chapter, and thus study concludes with a look towards future expansion of the study and related potential areas of study raised by the findings.

6.2 Critical Reflection

Undertaking this study and the doctoral process presented many challenges but also an incomparable opportunity for personal development and learning. I knew at the outset that I could conduct a more "career-friendly" study. This meaning I could undertake research that supports a developmentally optimistic chronicle of IBCs, pedagogy, and privatization, research that aligns with current policy trends in higher education or more "solutions oriented" such as classroom-based action research. However, it was exactly the dichotomy or gulf between the publications related to IBCs and my decade of experience in multiple IBC environments that drew me to exploring the commercial partnerships. I would read articles and there would often be a cursory mention of infrastructure partners, but no deeper exploration of impact or power. Home campus universities never seemed to disclose provider or infrastructure partnerships when marketing the IBC on their websites. Rather there was the presentation of internationalization, cosmopolitanism, and brand expansion. It seemed as there was a curtain drawn between lived experience and public presentation, between the pro-business development accounts of IBCs and "life on the ground."

What then is the point of research and theory which does not provide a critical lens? If we are just to provide neutral accounts of development, there is no impetus for change. However, criticism, even constructive with the intention of promoting

improvement, can be interpreted negatively especially in cultural and business environments where preserving public reputation is paramount. This was a dimension of the research which made me somewhat anxious and fearful for both myself and the participants. No matter how much I emphasized that the study was not focused on national context nor centered on a specific institution(s), but about a holistic analysis of the potential impacts of commercial partnership on academic life, I was met with rejection. Rejection that ranged from "Who cares?" to "we don't allow external researchers on our IBC" to accusations of attempting to sabotage sales targets. Practically, this made it difficult to get the study off the ground, but psychologically, it required facing fears of misinterpretation and developing both self-belief and belief in the study. Reading the literature on marketization, corporatization, and academic capitalism in higher education gave me the confidence to know that much of my skepticism was shared and supported. Moreover, my daily observations were often confirmed in participant interviews and topics which I had not previously considered were raised. Much of what I learned through the process was to be persistent and unafraid because the data told a story that needed to come out from "behind the curtain."

Yet, if I were to conduct the study again, there are, with the benefit of hindsight, several matters which I could have approached differently. For one, I may have conducted a thematic analysis from a few initial interviews and explored one of the thematic concepts in depth. As my supervisor counseled, doctoral research can be like lifting the lid of a black box which spurs new and often unanticipated questions and lines of inquiry. For example, each of the major themes such, as *institutional fragmentation* or *student as consumer*, could have been an independent study. This would have perhaps made for a more concentrated analysis in one area. Though given the length and depth of the participants' interviews, it seems it also would have been a disservice not to present all the themes. This allowed for the presentation of a more complete and comprehensive account. One way to view this study then is to consider it a starting point to conduct further research into one or more of themes as discussed in the later section on directions for future research. The themes also lend themselves to quantitative research and could thus be used as the building blocks for questionnaires. The overall significance of the

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study and contributions to theory and knowledge below also explain how the present study can contribute to future research.

6.3 Significance of Study

Over the past several decades, for-profit partnerships in higher education along with the rise in internationalization and marketization have altered the HE climate. Commercially partnered IBCs are an example of the intersection of these issues especially since the IBC under review in the study are closer to functioning in a classical, free market style, not quasi, and therefore, answerable to profit and market demands. Research also indicates that a pro-market, neoliberal agenda has not been to the overall benefit of academics as academics have experienced deprofessionalization, employment vulnerability, such as casualization and overloaded with work outside of teaching and research (Loveday, 2018; Tomlinson and Watermeyer, 2020). Thus, an examination of the organizational and pedagogical practices of seasoned IBC employees serves as a micro-level exploration of macro issues stemming from the marketization of higher education. Moreover, the commercially partnered IBC is arguably at a more advanced stage of commodification and marketization than the home campuses and thus can also serve as a prognostic case for the implementation of private infrastructure partnerships and their impact on pedagogy, academic life, and professional autonomy.

In other words, the study takes wider critical arguments of neoliberalism and marketization discussed in the literature review and examines them against every day, institutional reality. From a critical realism approach, the findings indicate a convergence of initial propositions and coherent patterns which help to confirm several arguments in the theoretical literature critical of the consequences of marketization including deprofessionalization, alienation, and a devalued critical pedagogy. Therefore, the propositions are not only "defensible…upon the merits of the background theory into which [they] are embedded" (Haig and Evers, 2015, p. 133) but also correspond with empirical evidence presented by the participants.   To review the initial propositions:

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Proposition 1

In the context of commercially partnered IBCs, there is likely to be an extensive embedded discourse and possibly intensification of marketization practices as the result of for-profit agendas. (Ball, 2012; Brown, 2006; 2011, Gibbs, 2011; Giroux, 2011, 2014; McLaren, 2011 Molesworth, Nixon, Scullion, 2011; 2018.).

Proposition 2

Taken in combination**,** marketization practices, and reduced academic autonomy present a challenge to the implementation of critical education practices in that critical pedagogy and alternative pedagogies may be espoused as institutional values but diluted in practice through mechanisms such as a highly monitored, outcomes-based, skills-driven curriculum focused on employability.

The findings assist in confirming and explaining these initial propositions since many IBCs have a standardized curriculum from the degree-awarding home campus there are limits on IBC academics in terms of the content and assessments which places limits on critical and creative teaching practices. This is then compounded by the conditions commercial partnerships produce some of which include additional academic responsibilities aligned with marketization including reducing teaching autonomy and requiring performances of "salesmanship" from faculty.

6.4 Theoretical Contributions

Similarly, the findings of this study contribute to arguments about marketization and academic life, including professional autonomy and creative teaching practices as specific to commercial partnerships . To explain the case of commercially partnered IBCs, the study supports these concepts through the kind of pattern-matching to theory attached

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to critical realism (Haig and Evers, 2015). Though the experiences of the participants are situated in a specific context, they can be scrutinized against larger theoretical frameworks such as the exemplar lens used in this study, critical pedagogy. IBCs are subject to a network cultural, political, and economic institutions and powers, but the risks and stressors of market competition create friction with the intellectual and moral aspects of academic life and professionalism. This study confirms a preoccupation with market appearance, reputation, and profiteering suggesting that commercial partnerships produce and increased tension with academic and pedagogical goals which do not align with market directives.

The impact of commercial partnerships in the IBC context is transformational in that it by functioning in a competitive market, the risks of solvency and aims of profit often take precedence over ensuring rigorous academic standards, as demonstrated in the participants accounts of recruitment and retention practices. At the same time, the curriculum shifts to an emphasis on employability even though this is a somewhat illusory and ever-shifting goalpost. The findings support and expand arguments in the literature that academics and thus, learning and knowledge are dominated by neoliberal ideology and cognate forces of marketization and consumerism, including ideas such as the student as consumer, university as corporate pipeline and so on. The study also adds empirical evidence to discussions surrounding student mental health (Cain, 2018; Priestly 2018) and presents this as theme requiring further investigation.

6.5 Contribution to IBC Research

As outlined in the literature review, an extensive amount IBC research is either explicitly pro-marketization or exists in categories which are arguably linked to neoliberal ideology or clustered in adjacent areas such as students, student experience, and (Hoyt and Howell, 2012; Wilkins, Balakrishnan and Huisman, 2012a; Fang and Wang, 2014; Bhuian, 2016; Ahmad and Buchanan, 2017; Belderbos, 2019; Jones, 2019; Sin et al., 2019, Yang et. al, 2020), managerial and staffing questions (Altbach and Knight, 2007; Shams, 2012; Healey, 2016; Clifford, 2015), quality assurance (Healey, 2015; Wilkins,

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2017; Chankseliani, 2020) knowledge and skills (Garrett, et al, 2017), and institutional development and internationalization (Garrett, et al, 2016; Han, 2016). In other words, the preponderance of research can be argued to be in service market logic and NPM. That this type of research would be produced is a logical consequence of the market-dynamic of IBCs. First, IBCs are young institutions hence questions of development and sustainability are prioritized. Second, this is arguably reflective of the fatalism which accompanies the current neoliberal state of higher education internationally. In other words, the majority of research suggests complacency and passivity with market-logic norms and commodification. This is an expected outcome of neoliberalism and NPM.

This study departs from a market logic perspective and takes a more skeptical view of higher education as an industry suited for financial targets and development aims associated with globalization and economization. It aims to bridge the gap between lived experience on the ground of commercially partnered IBCs and what was not being said in the IBC literature. However, the thematic findings of this study are in line with certain broader and eclectic philosophical and theoretical surrounding marketization, neoliberalism, and pedagogy. The findings thus provide empirical and evidentiary support for established literature ground the evidence in everyday reality. The findings also have regulatory and quality assurance implications. While the study does not suggest an intensified monitoring or surveillance practice would be of benefit, it does indicate that market participation of IBCs either needs to be reconsidered or a transparent finance and management compliance system needs to be installed which monitors the risks of market competition, regulates marketing content, and ensures the protection of students, academics and degree quality, from the more predatory and exploitative corporate aims.

Methodologically, the study contributes to application of an underutilized sociological paradigm within TNE and IBC research, critical realism. Much of TNE research can be categorized as functionalist or interpretivist and Both of these approaches can help to explain different elements of IBC (Bordogna, 2020). Functionalism can analyze the structure and strategy and interpretivism the lived experience, behavior, and agency of actors. The critical realism approach applied in this

study, however, does not view these paradigms in isolation. The study presents commercial infrastructure partnerships as an existing reality not a construction, but maintains that that reality cannot be understood objectively, but explained through what our strongest theories tell us. By acknowledging neoliberalism as generative mechanism stimulating and normalizing marketization, and therefore, affecting institutional practice, professional autonomy, and pedagogy in the actual domain. The findings demonstrate the complexity and challenges of commercial partnerships in the IBC context.

6.6 Potential Challenges to the Study

The study does claim to be an all-encompassing or definitive study of marketization on IBCs nor are the participants representative of the entire class of IBC academics. It is also possible that the conditions participants described could be found at public or not-for-profit institutions meaning they are not exclusive to private for-partnerships. This is an identifiable area for future research where a comparative case study could be undertaken should access to institutional data be granted, a persistent challenge in IBC research (Healey, 2015; Wilkins, 2020b). Yet, the compulsory profit aim of commercially-partnered IBCs combined with tuition as the sole revenue stream comes with pressures beyond sustained maintenance.

There also may be questions as to why cultural dynamics were not explored in more detail. However, the view taken in the context of this study is that the application of neoliberalism is the more dominant hegemonic in practice at the IBCs, and that neoliberalism and NPM are global in scope. In other words, organizational decision making is determined more through global market-logic and finance than by social culture, and that when the IBC explicitly highlights cultural signifiers, it is done so in service of marketing rather than as an authentic expression. That while cultural norms may be evident in aspects of curriculum and regulations, in the current environment commercially-partnered IBCs must conform to values of marketization and NPM in order to stay operational. Global neoliberalism and private business interests, which operate both separate to and inside of other social and national cultures, are the primary and dominant

culture of the participants' IBCs. It is my argument that market-logic has a more profound influence on pedagogy than the relativist positions commonly found in cultural awareness transnational education and IBC-centered research. Neoliberalism is the dominant discourse and hegemony impacting commercially-partnered IBCs.

Additionally, there is the risk of the argument being interpreted as a moralistic judgment on those spearheading IBC for-profit partnerships. However, the intent of the research is to explore the consequences of maximizing profit return and the privatization of what has historically been considered a public good in the specific IBC realm. Though this should be evident as a research tenet, critique is reserved for the consequences of applying a market system as the main mechanism for organizing higher education along with value messaging of freedom and quality through consumer choice. The study is not to be read as a narrative of powerless "victim" IBC academics and all-powerful "oppressor" IBC management. Mcgettigan argues that academics have also forsaken their own responsibilities in the current profitability and efficiency framework,

> …too willing to cede difficult chores to bureaucrats. The 'self-critical community of scholars', which is meant to safeguard degree standards, has been eroded to a large extent by an expansionist executive and managerial class, who will now have a new range of performance metrics with which to discipline more and more pliable academics. Collegiality has been displaced by corporatism.

This same argument could also be applied to research publications. Yet, this is not a critique of specific individuals working within a hegemonic system which is very challenging to both detach from and resist. The reality of neoliberalism dominance is that it is normalized to such a degree that it is difficult to see alternatives to a liberal market being the best gateway to individual and collective liberation. Often mentioned through the study was the ways in which IBC research often upholds and reinforces marketization and neoliberal dynamics. Research which has arguably helped to uphold, reproduce, and

further normalize neoliberal hegemony as a real mechanism in higher education. The power of neoliberalism rests on its ability to make it seem like "common sense" that the social aspects of human life should be transitioned to marketable goods and that this view needs to be supported in order maintain job security.

6.7 Directions for Future Research

There are several identifiable areas for future research particularly comparative studies. The first would be to expand the number of participants both numerically and geographically. Since commercially partnered IBCs are an international phenomenon, there is scope for obtaining comparative accounts from multiple locations. Building a quantitative survey based upon the findings of this study is one direction. Similarly, the literature and the participants' interviews indicated that there is a need for more detailed analysis of comparative practices and policies between home campuses and IBCs. What would the home campus make of information regarding IBC academics differing experiences? Would more knowledge encourage an interest in IBC academic and student welfare or would it simply increase reporting and surveillance practices under the guise of quality assurance and brand protection?

There are also opportunities for exploring the perceptions of students regarding commercial practices. As mentioned in the findings, the extent to which students, potential students and parents are aware of the commercial partnership is unclear. The recommended transparency would make the partnership more visible. However, would awareness of commercial enterprise exacerbate the student-as-consumer condition? Or perhaps encourage more accountability and resistance to such models?

Another, somewhat different, area for future inquiry is in the performative and aesthetic nature of the university branding as well as the impacts of media and popular discourse on the curriculum, students, and academics on IBCs. This was touched upon in several areas of the findings particularly those related to marketing and branding. This phenomenon seems intrinsically connected to marketization. The employability marketing

dimension is another area where this could be explored. Eccelstone and Hayes (2009, p 108) highlighted the work-entertainment connection:

> We are all obsessed by work seen in the growing popularity of work-as-entertainment There are three sets of examples: Television serials such as 'Ugly Betty', ', …A seemingly endless stream of 'fly on the wall' documentaries about ordinary work such as 'Holiday Airport', 'Airline', …The 'can you hack it' programmes showing how useless people are even at management level, such as 'Kitchen Nightmares' and 'The Apprentice'. All the above and more are evidence of how life at work dominates the popular consciousness.

This is also mirrored in the ways technology obscures the boundary of work and entertainment since in many cases the means production for work and consumption of media occur on the same device (laptop, Iphone, smart TV) (Brown, Lauder and Cheung, 2020). It also seems as Williams (2011) further suggests that media representations of work life in student perceptions. In the IBC context it would be interesting to further explore how these idealized-media representations are refracted in the marketing of degree programs as well as student perceptions. The participant reflective entries on the social media presence of IBCs touched upon this aspect, but there is scope for more exploration.

Finally, marketization and globalization have created a period of uncertainty and tension across HE. More studies which explore the developing consequences from a lived experience perspective are necessary to navigate the challenges of these changes. In many ways, the participants' accounts and the literature suggest that bending and bowing to market imperatives threatens the credibility of HE. The credibility of HE and education on the whole relies heavily on stability. Marketization, except for shielded prestige universities, has fostered an instability which seeps into the classroom. The participants' accounts demonstrate that research challenging corrosive neoliberal practices rather than upholding them is both needed for critical practices in higher education, and to convince those in positions of authority that transparency is intrinsically linked to

credibility. And the "bottom line" and appeal of any educational organizations rests on nothing, if not its sustained credibility and reputation.

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Appendix A Invitation to Participate in Study

From: Maryjane Nolan
To:

Dear

I am a Doctorate in Education candidate at the University of Bath, UK. I am writing to ask if you would be willing to be an interview participant in my research, which focuses on the teaching experience of branch campus academics in the UAE in comparison to their counterparts on home campuses in the UK, Australia and the United States.

The study aims to examine how marketization impacts pedagogical practice. The structure of the research is a multi-site case study. This means data is collected from academics at multiple organizations. Your knowledge and perceptions as a branch campus academic will bring valuable insight into an under researched area in the field of internationalization of higher education.

Participation in the study would require a one-off interview, which will take approximately 1 hour. The interview can be scheduled at a time and location convenient for you. The interview can be conducted in-person or via Skype/Zoom. You will have a chance to review the interview transcripts prior to their analysis.

The findings from the research will be written up as my final thesis, which may or may not be published. Your identity and institution will remain confidential, including to other members of your institution who may be participating in the study.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact me at mfn24@bath.ac.uk or at ▮▮▮▮▮▮ ▮▮▮▮▮▮ I will be happy to discuss with you any queries you may have.

I would kindly ask you to reply to this email if you are willing to participate.

Kind Regards,

Maryjane Nolan-Bock

Appendix B Invitation to Submit Reflective Journal in Addition to Interview

Dear Participant,

Thank you for participating in my research and taking the time to be interviewed. As a follow up to the interview, I would like to ask you to participate in a visual stimulus exercise if you have time. The exercise involves writing a short reflection on the public narrative presented on social media by a branch campus and a home campus. I have provided you with two links below and ask that you review the images from the past year 2019-2020.*

https://www.instagram.com/[university redacted]

https://www.instagram.com/[university redacted]

If you prefer to discuss your reflections with me rather than write them, we can arrange a time to talk in person or over Skype.

Please consider the following questions in your response. There are no right or wrong answers and if you wish to write something additional or different that is fine as well. If you would like to reference any specific images, you may screen shot them or provide a date of reference.

Describe. What are your first impressions upon viewing the pages as a whole? How are they similar? How are they different? (Consider, style, imagery, tone of voice) Do they appear to be the same organization or "brand"?

Interpret. What type of image do you think is being put forward by the home campus? What do you gather are their organizational priorities and values? Why?

Interpret. What type of image do you think being put forward by the branch campus? What do you gather are their organizational priorities and values? Why?

Explain. As an educator on a branch campus, can you draw any connections between the official public narrative presented on social media and your everyday work experience? (Even if the branch campus presented is not the one you currently work at.)

Extra optional questions:
Has doing this exercise prompted you to reflect on something you hadn't considered before?
How has participating in the exercise made you feel?

Thank you for your help. If you can please return this to me by email **on or before March 20th**, I would appreciate it.

The name of the branch campus will be made confidential in the final interview. There are no ethical restrictions against evaluating materials published for public consumption.

Appendix C Participant Consent Form

Dear Participant,

Purpose and Overview of the Study

The significance of this study lies in adding qualitative research to a limited body of knowledge on faculty teaching experience at International Branch Campuses (IBCs). While each IBC has its own organizational structure and mode of operation, this study takes the position that IBC faculty, on the whole, are a unique category of individuals with some shared experiences, and their perceptions provide valuable insight into the cross section of pedagogy and marketization and internationalization of higher education.

Involvement in the study includes participating in a 1-hour interview (approximate timing). There will be an audio recording of our interview. However, if you decline to be recorded, we can decide on alternative method of documentation (i.e. note-taking).

Participant Qualifications

To participate in this study, you should have served or currently be serving in a position of academic leadership or teaching at an International Branch Campus (IBC) during the past 5 -7 years.

Ethics

This study follows the ethical guidelines set by The University of Bath and the British Educational Research Association (https://www.bera.ac.uk/). The ethical merits of the study have been subject to review and approval by the University of Bath, Department of Education Institutional Review Board.

Confidentiality, Privacy and Accuracy

Should you elect to participate in the study, your name and institution(s) will not appear in any reports of the research at any stage of the project. Your identity will remain anonymous including to other participants who may be from the same institution(s).

Pseudonyms will be given to you, your institution and any relevant third parties mentioned in the interview.

After the interview has taken place and transcribed, you will be supplied a copy of your interview. Should you wish to make annotations, provide clarification, or ask for redactions from the interview, you will have the option to do so.

For data protection, all recordings, transcripts, and correspondence will be stored on password-protected computers and drives. Any hard copies of data and written notes will be transported in a locked bag and stored in a safe cabinet when at my residence.

Risks

Participation in this project involves no known risks to you other than those associated with everyday life.

Please *check* as appropriate.

___ I am willing to participate in this research project.

___ I am not willing to participate in this research project.

Please print your name, sign and date and return this form:

_____

(Your name – please print)

_____ _____

(Your signature) Date

Return to:

Maryjane Nolan-Bock

m.f.nolan@bath.ac.uk

Appendix D Evidence of Data Collection Barriers

██████████████████████████████   Thu, Sep 26, 2019, 9:45 AM ☆ ↩ ⋮

to me ▾

Dear MJ,

Thank you for your email and apologies for the delayed response. I was actually travelling-had gone to settle my daughter in University, so am still catching up on all my emails!

Please give me till next week to get back to you on this. The University policy on granting access to externals for research purposes has become quite rigid recently, so I need to run this by my Director, who is currently out of the country for work. I will get back to you as soon as I have run this by him.

I can imagine it must have been challenging moving from Dubai to AD; it's so close by but a completely different world in many respects. Sending you lost of good wishes for a smooth transition!

Will write again soon.

Kind Regards

Appendix E Interview Template

Participant Profile

How many years have you been teaching?

-What is your subject area/discipline?

-How many years have you been working your current IBC?

-Have you worked at other IBCs?

-Have you ever worked at a "home campus?"

-What are your contractual obligations (e.g. number of courses/hours required to teach/research output/office hours)?

-How would you describe your level of autonomy in teaching?
      -What level of input do you have in curriculum/course development?
      -How often are you involved in assessment design?
      -Does your campus subscribe to a particular teaching style/methodology?

Participant Values

-What, in your opinion, is the purpose of a university education/higher education?

-What are your professional goals?

-What do you believe "excellence in teaching" constitutes?

-If your curriculum is prescribed, how would you challenge it?

Institution/Organizational Processes

-How would you describe the branch campus you work at?

-What majors and fields of study are offered at your campus?

-What is number of students enrolled at your branch campus?

-How would you describe the student body at your branch campus?

-How do you believe your IBC defines "student experience"?

-What do you believe are the key educational priorities on your branch campus? (employability, development of skill sets, holistic education) (Do you agree?)

-How do you believe your campus defines excellence in education? (Do you agree?)

-Is there a research culture at your campus? Are you encouraged to participate in research or provided time/resources to do so?

-How would you describe the branch campus identity or "brand" in the local education market? (i.e. how do you believe the campus markets itself)

-In your estimation, how much is invested in marketing activities including open days, advertising campaigns?

-How often does your campus host open days/open nights/or other such recruitment events?

-How often do you participate in the recruitment events (is it required or voluntary participation)?

-To what extent are student recruitment and enrollment numbers a priority on the branch campus?
        -Does this crossover into your teaching experience?

-What methods or tools of performance management are used at your branch campus to evaluate teacher performance?

-How often are student evaluations conducted in your units?
-What, if any, impact do they have on teaching practice and classroom   management? (method of delivery, pedagogic practice, curriculum development, etc.)

-To what extent, as a faculty member, has participating in other marketing activities including the development of social media content, become a part of your work?
        -If you participate in marketing activities, to what extent, if at all, does it take time away from teaching and research?

-Overall, how would you describe the development of the branch campus since first joining?
        -From the time you joined the branch campus, would you describe market-driven practices as having remained consistent or change?

Relationship with Home Campus
_____
-How often are you in contact with the home campus institution?
        -With which individuals?
        -For what purposes?

-Have you ever visited the home campus in person?

-How would describe the strength of connection between the home campus and your IBC? What level of oversight is there?

-What sense of affiliation do you have with the home campus?

Appendix F Critical Reflective Journal Template

The exercise involves writing a short reflection on the public narrative presented on social media by a branch campus and a home campus. I have provided you with two links below and ask that you review the images from the past year 2019-2020.

https://www.instagram.com/[universityredacted]

https://www.instagram.com/[universityredacted]

If you prefer to discuss your reflections with me rather than write them, we can arrange a time to talk in person or over Skype.

Please consider the following questions in your response. There are no right or wrong answers and if you wish to write something additional or different that is fine as well. If you would like to reference any specific images, you may screen shot them or provide a date of reference.

Describe. What are your first impressions upon viewing the pages as a whole? How are they similar? How are they different? (Consider, style, imagery, tone of voice) Do they appear to be the same organization or "brand"?

Interpret. What type of image do you think is being put forward by the home campus? What do you gather are their organizational priorities and values? Why?

Interpret. What type of image do you think being put forward by the branch campus? What do you gather are their organizational priorities and values? Why?

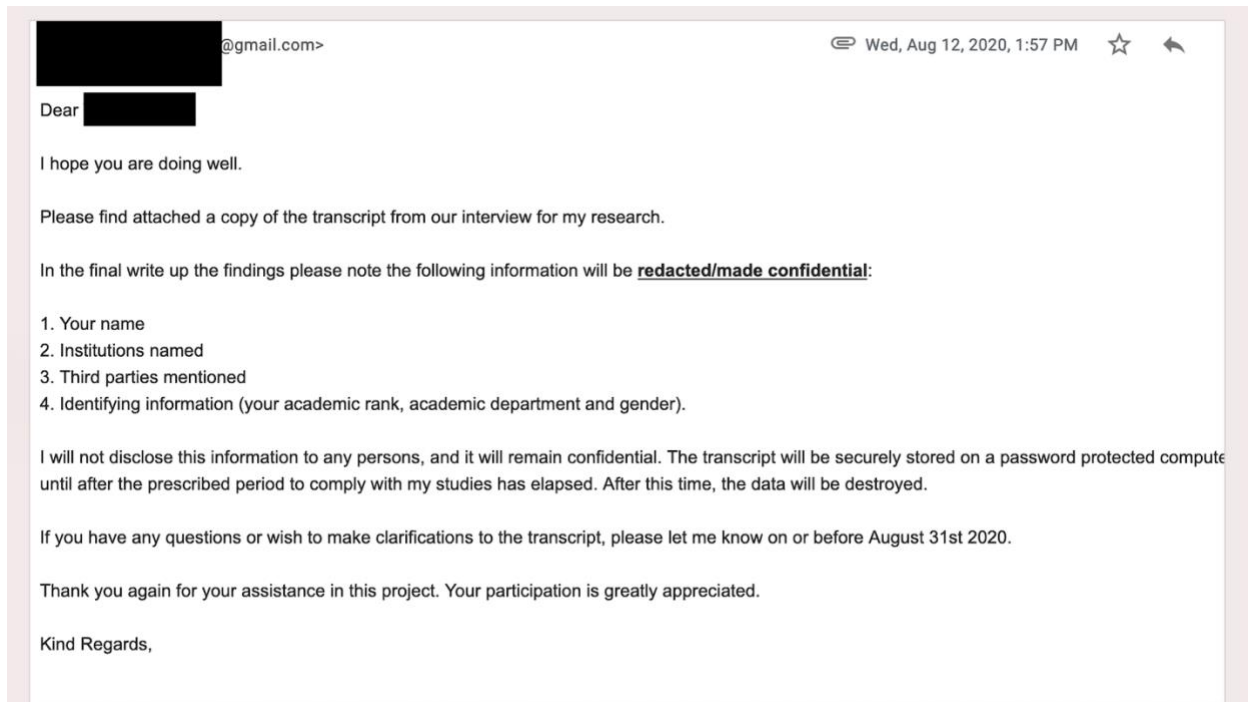**Explain**. As an educator on a branch campus, can you draw any connections between the official public narrative presented on social media and your everyday work experience? (Even if the branch campus presented is not the one you currently work at.)

Extra optional questions:
Has doing this exercise prompted you to reflect on something you hadn't considered before?
How has participating in the exercise made you feel?

Appendix G Sample verification e-mail

@gmail.com>   Wed, Aug 12, 2020, 1:57 PM ☆ ↩

Dear ▮▮▮▮▮▮

I hope you are doing well.

Please find attached a copy of the transcript from our interview for my research.

In the final write up the findings please note the following information will be **redacted/made confidential**:

1. Your name
2. Institutions named
3. Third parties mentioned
4. Identifying information (your academic rank, academic department and gender).

I will not disclose this information to any persons, and it will remain confidential. The transcript will be securely stored on a password protected compute until after the prescribed period to comply with my studies has elapsed. After this time, the data will be destroyed.

If you have any questions or wish to make clarifications to the transcript, please let me know on or before August 31st 2020.

Thank you again for your assistance in this project. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Kind Regards,

Appendix H Data Coding

Open Codes	Closed Code (Overarching Theme)	Sample Coded Data
"What was repeated, recurrent, and forceful" in the text? (Lawless and Chen, 2018)	What neoliberal/marketization ideologies are recurring, repeated, and forceful?	
Alienation Atomization Perceived sense of inferiority Hierarchy Limited Communication Weak Relationship with Home Campus Strong Relationship with Home Campus	Fragmentation	*P5: Yes. It's been interesting 'cause this is something that we keep talking about on and off with meetings when various people come to visit from the UK to tell us how we shouldn't perceive them as the home campus, yet the people from the home campus are the only ones who seem to be able to make any changes, or we always have to fly in someone to tell us big news. And it just seems that it's like they want you to believe something but they don't actually want to do it themselves.* *p7: Absolutely none, absolutely none. Even though we saw the owners come in every month, there were regular people coming in from there. It was all very monitored, very audited. So, yeah, but there wasn't even a degree of interaction. Nobody would actually discuss issues and ideas on how to improve things or something. No, that wasn't there.* *P6: P: Yeah. I think that's one of the... I was a little worried about that at first, because I thought, "Okay, we're just out here in Dubai and probably most of the staff members don't even know about us from the main campus." But I was actually really surprised, because I've been able to really get a lot of support from them. Usually if I email them during the day, they are starting to come into the office at about 4 PM our time, usually. So many times I can actually get an*

		answer if not that day, by the next day in the evening, or in the next day. I: Okay. Now we've talked about this just briefly, because we went over this with the home campus, but what sort of sense of affiliation do you have with [the home campus]? Do you feel any connection to them? P7: No, not really. Not on a personal level, but even on a department level, I just see them as people who will dictate to us and we just have to find a way to apply it.
IBC as business Navigating conflicting interests Interference/impact on academic Cult of profitability Cult of immediacy Targets Direct sales practices	Commercial Presence	P8: I would describe my campus as purely a business. Pure and simple. I think that [the branch] operates under a guise of being an educational institution, but I don't think that's the case, personally. And I think that I've been there long enough... I think the longer you are somewhere the more you try and turn a blind eye to things. But I think now it's gotten... Especially now that we're going through this bad term, where the numbers are down and all of this. And so the way that the methods that are being employed to retain students are in my view, very unethical. P3: I'm not sure of his title now. But the CEO or whoever, the person, the director, the Academic Director, I guess, who was running the school came from an IT background, so he didn't come from didn't come from a higher-education background. So that made it seem not as, what's the word? It made it not as professional because the person making all the main decisions maybe wasn't making them from the place of how a university should run, but more of how the business should run. So that, and he had his own ideas about things that sometimes didn't match up with what the staff thought, who, a

lot of them did come from a higher-education background or worked at other universities. So that was a bit at odds, for sure. And when we had a Dean come from the actual university to oversee things, him and the academic director were often at odds with things, and that was clear to the faculty and staff. So that was a bit of a negative... That was a negative point as well, I would say.

p1: I think that that's a source of conflict, is the academics saying that, "No, it's too late, the students missed too much course content." And the recruitment/sales team being pressured to increase numbers and not wanting to have that student wait till the next term. And in my experience, the marketing or the... Sorry the recruitment and sales people will tend to win that battle, and students will just join late. So that affects my teaching in that we are then expected to help those students catch up, and to make accommodations for all the content, sometimes assessments that they've missed.

P5: From what I've gathered, the financial side of things, is that Dubai is the only campus that's actually making money. So I think that they take advantage of that, but they spread it because Y university is supposed to be a non-profit organization, so I think they kind of... Yeah.

P10: It was more professional. You come in, you deliver, you go. It just felt like, back then it felt like it was more being monitored from [the home campus], they were in charge of it. Now I feel like the local infrastructure is more involved, as compared to the previous time, when it felt like, okay, only the home campus was involved. So I see that difference quite a lot now, maybe because it's the start-up of a new branch campus and they feel that they have to be involved

		till they reach to that certain point of having enough students or something like that. So I think that's something that has changed quite a lot. And the pressure has increased somehow because they've started all from scratch. So they now expect you to actually do more than just teaching, which is take part in marketing activities, be there all three days for GETEX [SIC: Education Expo] and things like that.
Student recruitment priority Student progression pressure Perceived impact on academic life Student numbers and targets	Quantification	*I: Why do you think the students are not interested?* *P8: Because of their caliber. I think that the way that X university is designed globally is, they target the gap... They target the bracket of students who doesn't do well enough to graduate and get into a good school in whatever field of study that they wish. And so, that means that there's this bracket of students who either don't know what they wanna do, which to be honest, this specific category of students are the ones that maybe we have the most success with. And the ones who think that it's an easy degree and the ones who are special needs students, who can't get into a good school in this part of the world anyway, and so, they end up with us, because of the lax or non-existent entry criteria* *p1: There seems to be, yeah, a pretty strong focus on progression, especially progression from the foundation programs into the degree programs. So some ways that manifests are students who didn't quite pass being... Having their marks increased, so that they can progress into the bachelor's degree. And in some cases being told to re-mark assessments so that the marks are higher. For that reason, and so just to increase progression numbers.*

		p2: The other change that I think affected us here was the change in management, moving from a semi-government-owned college to a private college where every decision was coming from the numbers. "Are we meeting our targets? Are we keeping students? Are we getting enough students?" So I think these two reasons combined, along with the flailing economic situation right now and a lot of people losing their jobs, is what affected the student numbers, thus putting more pressure on everyone working in the branch campus
Faculty participation in marketing/sales Strategies/messaging Social media participation Competition Appearance Target market	Marketing	*P11: They were really aggressive in terms of their marketing. It became really annoying as a member of staff, and people became very resentful of it, because they tried to work this into their staff's workload. And that became an issue.* *p2: Required, definitely not voluntary. I was called in to give a presentation about the university. Initially, I was told that I had to even discuss things that had nothing to do with academics like tuition fees. And eventually, I was able to convince management that I am not the right person to talk about this. Now, I don't know if this has changed again now and that has been put back into the presentation, whoever is delivering it, but it made me really sour. I didn't want to participate in these events, and as much as possible I actually would try to reassign them to someone else who's more willing to do these presentations. And I think management picked up on the fact that I really was not enjoying giving these presentations because they were a sales pitch. So I had to talk about things like student life in a way that would sell the university as this super fun place to be, and I don't think this is a good representation of what universities or colleges are. You're there to study.*

		P7: There were other instances where people would be photographed for putting up content for schools, guest lectures coming up, all of these things. And also, I remember, people had their headshots taken or professional photographs taken with the university logos and colors in the background for the website, but then it doesn't get populated on the website unless we're going for some accreditation. So for just that period they would kinda put it up on the website. And then take it off. It was more to do with... So they would say they're an international university when they were not. And if they put up the profiles of the faculty, you would realize a lot of them were concentrated from the same place, then there's like you, me an Iranian, we would be the exception, the oddities over there in a South Asian market. And that's why they wouldn't put it up because probably they didn't wanna showcase that. *P10: Even though it's not really faculty's work to get student numbers, somehow we keep hearing about it. Because it all depends on our, say for example, our yearly increments, everything goes back to student numbers. "Oh, we haven't hit the target, so then no yearly increments this year." "Oh, this hasn't happened, we haven't reached the targeted number." And I think for the same reason, is why they're utilizing the faculty and sending them to schools, so that they can talk and somehow get numbers or impress the students so that they come up to this university. So, extra marketing activities that the faculty is being asked to do.*
KPIS Evaluations Surveillance Inconsistency	Performance Management Culture	*P11: Again, the entire process is very much Big Brother because it's... And we actually just did this whole thing at X uni where we've reviewed the entire moderation process. They're not doing it*

Self-policing Moderation Security systems		*according to the way they should, because it defeats the purpose when you send a paper down to a unit coordinator and they tell you, "Bump it up by a point or bring it down by a point."*
		P7: Right now we still stick to whiteboards because all of our lectures are recorded on video camera just to... You've got the security cameras that are always on, always running. Other faculty, who are not in classes at that time, are monitoring the others. For what? I have no idea, but yeah, there wasn't really any... Yeah. 1:00:20 S1: And what was... Was it to learn from others teaching? Or...
		p7: No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. This was, for instance, people watch someone who monitors traffic and security mons on those, this thing... So it was more about are faculty going to classes on time? Are the students kept into the classroom? Is the faculty just sitting down? What time are they ending the class? So it was only video, there is no audio there. Like quality control, but at the extreme micromanagement level.
		P9: Yeah, there is. KPIs exist and every year... At least this is a recent system. Every year there is a performance review.
		I: And what sort of things are reviewed in the performance review?
		P9: The industry relationships, the events, and the extended workshops, and also like how we communicate with the students on feedback.
		P10: However, our lectures are all recorded. So every lecture that we give are recorded for various purposes. Firstly, the students can access the recorded lectures in case someone has missed a class or someone did not understand something in the class, they can go back to the lecture and go over the entire lecture all over again.

| | | Secondly, if there are any concerns or complaints made by students, then the head of departments, and the academic head they will look at the lecture to see if that really happened, if the student is right for a particular concern that they've made, so based on that they can further have the decision of keeping a faculty or not keeping a faculty, and that has actually happened quite recently as well. So we had a new faculty hired for two of the undergraduate courses. So, she delivered her first lecture on Sunday. And just after the lecture, all the students came in, they spoke to the PVC about their concerns about how they felt that the lecture was not prepared. And sort of the lecture just dragged the entire class, asking a couple of questions and re-enforcing the same questions again and again and again. And they felt like it did not really help them at all and they were not happy with her teaching style. So the head of the department, locally here, she monitored the... I mean she went over the entire lecture, which was recorded, to see if that was actually true, and she felt the same, that the lecture was not prepared. So because it was a new hire and it was the first time that lecturer was teaching, they terminated her. For that first instance itself.

I: So they didn't offer to her any sort of ways to improve her teaching?

P10: Yeah. No, no, there was no... What do you say? No warning given, no comment or feedback given that, "Maybe this is where you lack and our students felt this way, if you could change that." So no chance was given. They were happy to terminate and fix it in the first instance. I feel like that could be unfair, as well. I mean, it was the first class. A new person. You can't judge someone with the first day without even giving them an orientation. She had no orientation, nothing, so it just happened. |

Prescriptivism Heterogenity Employability Methodology Resistance Subversion Sense of autonomy Performativity Ability to Contribute Values about education	Curriculum and Teaching	*p4: "Come to university, get a job," or a degree is only about getting a job, because a higher education should be about higher thinking, it should be about deep learning, it should be about the opportunity to fail and learn in a safe environment, rather than simply, "Come, tick a few boxes and go get a job." 'Cause if that's the case, you don't need universities. The purpose of, the philosophy of learning should be what we're about. I think we need to look at our methods, and we need to look at our approaches, but I think there's still a very valuable role that universities can and should play.* *P7: That's because we had unit coordinators. I'm talking about the franchise model right now. We had unit coordinators back at home, on the home campus, who would sort of control the content. Of course, they would take your feedback and incorporate it and they would allow you to customize or tweak it for the region. But again, you couldn't really change a lot of the content. But that was great from a faculty teaching group perspective.* *P11: Yeah. [chuckle] But it's varied. In my experience, the most level of autonomy I've had is at post grad level, whereas when I was at Curtin, the undergraduate level was so prescribed, down to daily lesson plans I would receive from the UC. With a minute by minute, what you were meant to sort of do. So it's uniformity and standardization. But when it comes to trans-national campuses, there is a huge lack of trust* *P1: The person at the branch campus managing that program. Whereas the oversight on a course for the undergrad level seems to be much more overseen by the branch campus. So I'd say I had a lot less autonomy at the undergrad level than at the foundation level. I*

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		think that depends quite a lot on the leadership, so at... And again at the level. So teaching Foundation at X uni and at Y uni, a great deal of my suggestions were implemented, while that was not the case at M uni at all. And then at the undergrad level, I think that really depends on the faculty member at the home campus who's overseeing the course, and the kind of relationship that you build with that person. So I found that for an undergrad course that I was teaching at M uni, I developed a strong working relationship with the professor who was overseeing the course [from the home campus]. And so she would typically be willing to make small changes to it. But the bigger obstacle towards any kind of change there was generally that there were always curriculum changes anticipated. So nobody was really willing to get involved in overhauling a curriculum that was supposed to be changed soon, even though the date of the change kept being postponed, and it still hadn't changed when I left. *p2: So as a branch campus we get the syllabi from the home campus. And in the past, that was still the case. So when I first started in that job we were still getting the syllabi from the home campus, but there were, I think, two significant differences. One, the method of teaching was not prescribed, so that really meant that the teacher could approach the class in any way that they wanted. And two, the learning outcomes were better stated. So it made it a lot easier for the teacher to be able to teach the class because they knew what the goal of the class was. And they would have the freedom to approach it the way they wanted to. These two things have disappeared in the last few years in that campus.*

| Student mental health Limited Resources Concealment and brand reputation | Mental Health[1] | *p6: he was putting other people in potential danger, and himself too, because of the things that he was saying and doing to other people. So we have students that have never been diagnosed, obviously, and don't know what's going on, who don't maybe know that maybe something is wrong. Some students come to us and they know something's wrong, but they're not really quite sure. Recently, I had a student that got into trouble, and I was meeting with him and I found that his behavior was really bizarre. And then it was interesting, because he was then flagged by his [internship] advisor, 'cause he was taking a course with her. And she wrote to me and she just said, "I just wanna flag him. He had really bizarre behavior." And then I met with him again, and then I thought, "I know something is not right." And so I was lucky enough to be able to convince him to go and get an evaluation. And he did. And then he started to take medication. But there's a lot of cases where students aren't getting evaluated. They're just kind of getting by. A lot of parents don't think there's anything wrong. A lot of the students... Or if they do, they might not be able to afford the medical care. Or if they know what's going on, they're trying to privately take care of the situation within the family, and not share the information with the university. We get a lot of students, not only that have mental health issues that. Will make it difficult to really be successful here without mental health support on campus. But we also get students that there's no way that we are set up to support them, and they actually should have never been admitted.* |
| | | *p15: They just started employing a counselor and doing all these workshops etc. I don't mean to be cynical but I think the only reason they are doing this is because it is part of the KHDA ranking. On two occasions we have had student suicides and been barred from* |

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[1] This category was not officially a closed code. It emerged as an unexpected overarching theme as the study progressed.

		discussing it with the press. I obviously wasn't going to go running to the newspapers, but it has made me consistently question their intentions.
		p6: We don't have any resources at all, so obviously, when I first started that, that was quite alarming to me. I was coming from a university that did have a full-time counselor. She was fantastic, and she was really someone that students trusted. So that was obviously very concerning. And I have requested numerous times, many times in person, on email, through any type of report I could, request for mental health support for our students. There's many times when something will happen, and usually... Usually there's, when there's a behavioral incident, or something with a student...
		P11: I don't know if you know, there was a student that committed suicide? Basically, we were all called into an auditorium and they told us what had happened. At that point, anyone who walked past the hallway had already seen, unfortunately as it happened on campus. And students, they were told that they were allowed to leave if they wanted to, and then I believe they called in a counselor that could speak with them on that day. But even so, the issue of that incident came down to the fact that it had to do with releasing information to a parent, because the child was over 18. . I think that goes back to branding and marketing, and keeping everything very hush-hush. There was no degree issued... What is it called? Posthumously or whatever that is. There was nothing like that you'd see in the States, right? What happened that day was... Whatever the, [police], they have their own... They came in and they did their whole investigation. I mean it was absolutely atrocious. The whole thing was atrocious. But [the branch campus] issued a statement to all students saying that there was an incident, but didn't really go

		into further detail. It's a bit concerning 'cause they were really just... Everyone worries for their image here and it's like, "What's our job, really?"
Collaboration Development	Opportunities[2]	*P4: So I think where positive, the branch campus can, and this is where it's collaborative rather than competitive, and this is where Malaysia has done a very good thing, the UAE is doing it as well. Where you're looking at... So the recent funds here that have just come out where private universities can bid for government funding in partnership with public universities or with other institutions. Malaysia did the same thing where the foreign branch campuses could apply for government research funding, providing they were partnered with a public university. So you're building collaborative activity where often the public has the resources and perhaps the foreign has the expertise. So when you force collaboration, it's a very good way to build capacity, and in that respect, the branch campus shouldn't be a competitor of the public, because it's a niche market.*

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[2] Discussed in recommendations