

**A critical pedagogy approach to understanding equity and equality in the transnational higher education sector**

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**Published version**

PICKERING, Nathaniel (2019). A critical pedagogy approach to understanding equity and equality in the transnational higher education sector. In: SRHE Newer & Early Career Researchers Conference, Newport, Wales, 10 Dec 2019. SHRE. (Unpublished)

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# A critical pedagogy approach to understanding equity and equality in the transnational higher education sector

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Newer & Early Career Researchers Conference 2019

# Global higher education participation



HAS MORE THAN DOUBLED  
IN THE LAST 20 YEARS FROM  
86 MILLION IN 1997 TO  
OVER 220 MILLION IN  
2017 (UNESCO, 2018)



IS PREDICTED TO REACH  
JUST OVER HALF A BILLION  
BY 2035 (CALDERON, 2012)



## Transnational Education

The mobility of an education programme or higher education institution/provider between countries, where learners are located in a country other than the one in which the awarding institution is based (Knight, 2016 & (McBurnie & Ziguras, 2007)

# UK TNE scale and scope



The number of TNE students has increased by 81% since 2008-09 (Universities UK, 2017)



Over one third of all UK TNE programmes are in Business and Management (42% of TNE students) (Universities UK, 2017)



83% of TNE students are classed as undergraduates (Universities UK, 2017)



52% of TNE students are studying their programmes online (Universities UK, 2017)



The UK TNE sector has an estimated value of £550 million (HEGlobal, 2016)



In 2016-17, 138 UK universities were delivering TNE provision in 224 countries and territories to over 700,000 students (Universities UK, 2017)

# What does TNE represent?

For many, TNE represents the antithesis of higher education as a public good, and instead symbolises the commodification and marketisation of higher education by neoliberal policies into a private good (Naidoo, 2007).

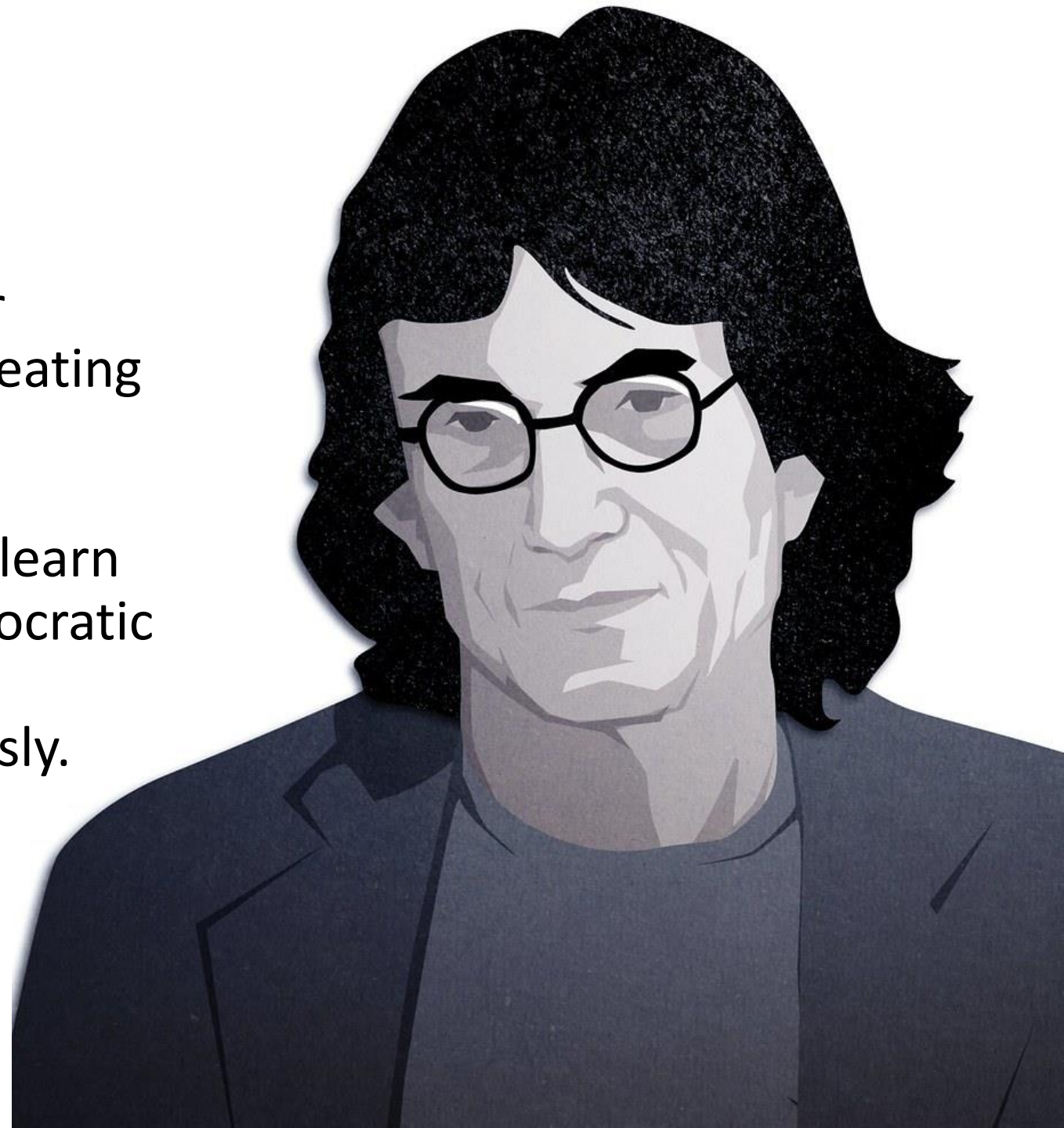
For others, the opening up of new markets through TNE provision is viewed as a way to widen access into higher education for those currently excluded from participating (Hills, 2017).

# If you build it, they will come.....

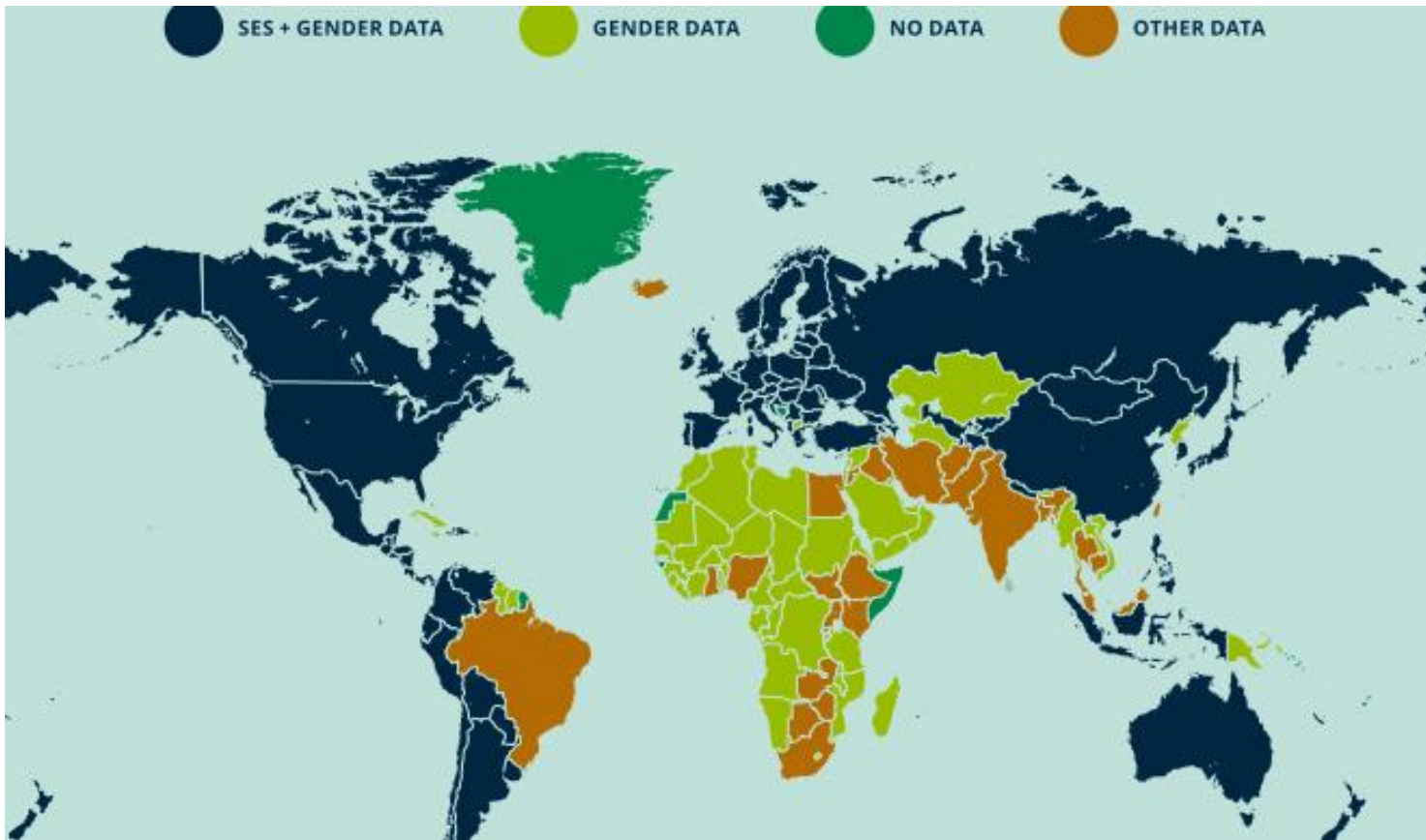
The belief that higher education expansion improves access for the disadvantaged ties 'the struggle for social justice to economic and institutional expansion' together, which wrongly equates 'equality with equality of opportunity'. As a higher education system grows, the opportunities for minority and disadvantaged groups to participate may also increase, but their opportunities may bring higher risk and not the same status or benefits (Aronowitz & Giroux, 2003)



Education is important not only for gainful employment but also for creating the formative culture of beliefs, practices, and social relations that enable individuals to wield power, learn how to govern, and nurture a democratic society that takes equality, justice, shared values, and freedom seriously. (Giroux, 2011, p. 4)







Data: Non-existent, partial  
or patchy

A 'country's social, economic and political history' plays a crucial role in framing access and equity in higher education, and what information is classified as 'private' or 'public' information has an impact on what can be used to monitor access (Atherton, Dumangane *et al.*, 2016, pp. 28-9)

# A critical pedagogy approach

- Location – global middle classes, unsatisfied demand, financial incentives, place and infrastructure
- Curriculum (especially online) - liberation, oppression, standardisation, training, cultural imperialism, detached irrelevant and inappropriate
- Corruption of knowledge – high market value, elimination of subjects and research capacity
- Failure to challenge exclusion of certain groups in society - age, gender, ethnicity, location, religion and migrant status
- Meritocracy – reinforces inequalities in wealth, power and status
- Freedom

# Freedom



Higher education is a crucial public space because it allows students to challenge established and taken-for-granted beliefs and values, while aiding them to imagine a more socially just, equal and democratic society (Giroux, 2003)

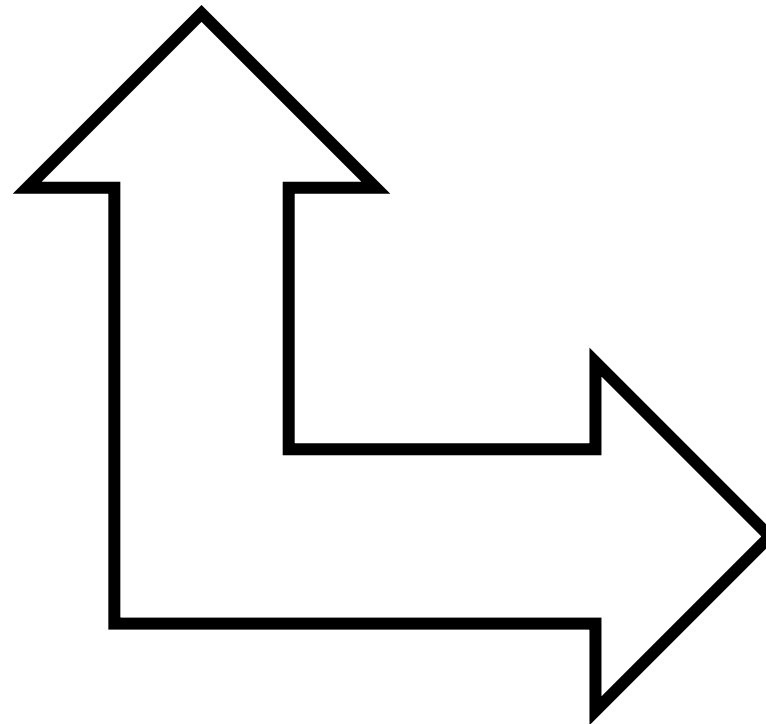
Freedom House, an independent watchdog dedicated to the expansion of freedom and democracy around the world, rates 14 out of the 20 countries that have the highest number of UK TNE students as 'Partly Free' or 'Not Free' (Freedom House, 2018).

# Schizophrenic nature

Anglo-Saxon universities have a schizophrenic nature; on the one hand, they emphasise and promote their 'public role and function', while on the other hand, they are 'being very active in the market place', especially across international borders where they 'behave like private entities' (van der Wende, 2003, p. 202)

# Vertical and horizontal dimensions of equity

The vertical dimension 'follows the logical sequence of tertiary education' looking at who enters, their progression, and who graduates (Salmi & Bassett, 2012).



The horizontal dimension involves a much more granular examination of the structural differences among student groups; it is concerned with understanding not only who accesses higher education, but what type of institution they attend, the subject they study, their attainment, and what labour market opportunities are open to them (Salmi & Bassett, 2012)

# Discussion.....

- How can we as academic citizens in 2019, challenge the neoliberal principles underpinning TNE provision?
- How can the application of critical pedagogy challenge/change government and institutional policy in relation to TNE provision?

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