

***Welcome to the (Social) Justice League:  
Widening Access to University as a Tool  
to Address Educational Inequality***

**Alex Blower**



- **2012-2015** Schools and Colleges Liaison Officer (BCU)
- **2015-2019** UK Student Recruitment and Outreach Officer (Southampton)
- **2016-2019** PhD Education and Inequality (Wolverhampton)



- Why we should care about the work that we conduct
- Societal change and the widening equality gap
- Can we conduct activity to widen access to Higher Education badly?
- How do we work to facilitate more equitable access to Higher Education?

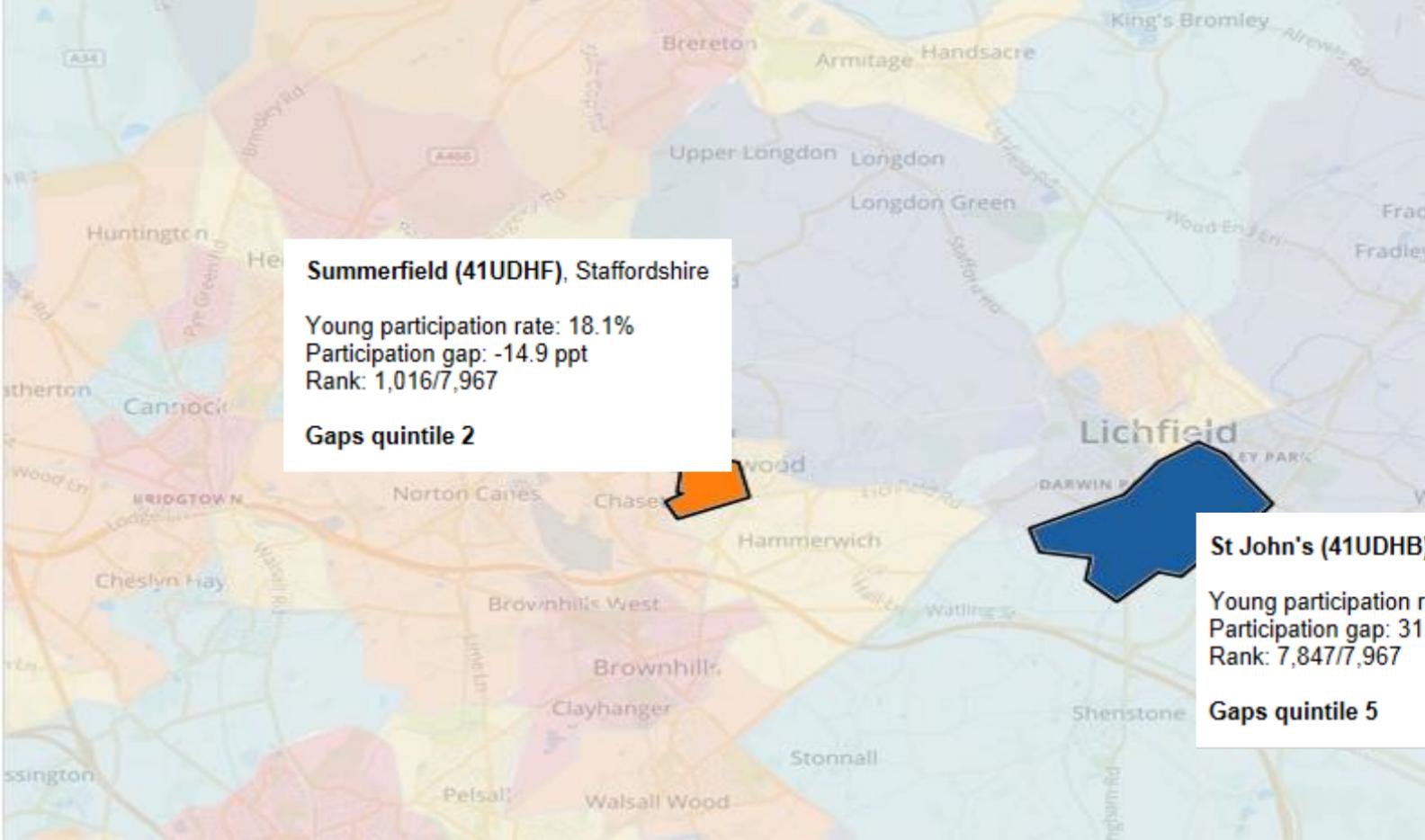


When I grow up I  
want to be a Schools  
and Colleges Liaison  
Officer



**Complete  
Accident**

# Why we Should Care



**Summerfield (41UDHF), Staffordshire**

Young participation rate: 18.1%  
Participation gap: -14.9 ppt  
Rank: 1,016/7,967

**Gaps quintile 2**

**St John's (41UDHB), Staffordshire**

Young participation rate: 64.0%  
Participation gap: 31.1 ppt  
Rank: 7,847/7,967

**Gaps quintile 5**



## Inequality: The IFS Deaton Review

The IFS is launching a major new £2.5 million study of inequalities, funded by the Nuffield Foundation and chaired by Nobel Laureate Professor Sir Angus Deaton.

Read more at our new dedicated website  
[www.ifs.org.uk/inequality](http://www.ifs.org.uk/inequality)

Aiming to understand inequality not just of income, but of health, wealth and opportunity too, this five-year study will be one of the most ambitious of its kind. Our aim is to answer some of the most fundamental questions about the nature of inequality in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the forces shaping it, and what can, and should, be done about it.

With Sir Angus in the chair, the panel overseeing the project includes world-leading experts in sociology, demography, epidemiology, political science, philosophy and economics. We will commission work from many more leading experts to help us understand inequalities in outcomes by gender, ethnicity, geography, age and education. Our analysis will cover the full breadth of the income and wealth distributions – not just what is happening at the very top and very bottom.

"I am delighted that IFS and the Nuffield Foundation have launched this review, and am honoured that I have been asked to chair it. It is an exciting prospect to work with so many distinguished scholars in so many disciplines to try to understand more about the nature of inequality, what it is about inequality that upsets so many people, and what might be done about it."

Professor Sir Angus Deaton, Nobel Laureate and Chair of the Review

Press release

## Class privilege remains entrenched as social mobility stagnates

The Social Mobility Commission's State of the Nation 2018 to 2019 report highlights inequality in Britain and sets out key findings and recommendations.

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Published 30 April 2019

From: [Social Mobility Commission](#)

[Social Mobility Commission: State of the Nation](#)

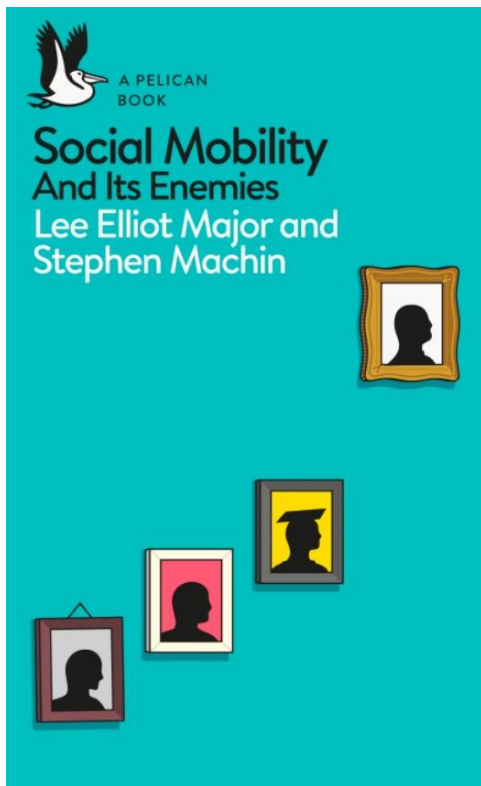


*‘People from working class backgrounds are much more likely to be paid below the voluntary living wage than those from more advantaged backgrounds (27 per cent vs. 17 per cent), showing entrenched social mobility problems within the low paid workforce’*

*‘Increasing numbers of students from low income families are entering university by age 19, although their better off peers are still much more likely to do so. However, despite increases in university entry, students eligible for FSM are very unlikely to go to the most selective universities, with only five per cent gaining entrance (compared to 12 per cent of all students)’*

*‘Almost all forms of adult education have been in decline since 2010. Those who do receive education or training are more likely to be affluent; 49 per cent of the poorest adults have received no training since leaving school, compared to 20 per cent of the richest’*

*‘Cuts to budgets and efforts to improve schools in recent years have had unintended consequences for poorer students. Reforms to the curriculum, although well intentioned, were implemented too quickly for some young people, and disadvantaged students lost out disproportionately during the implementation’*

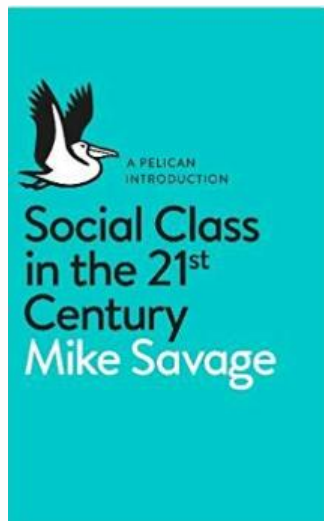


## ***The Gini Coefficient, Intergenerational Elasticity and The Great Gatsby Curve***

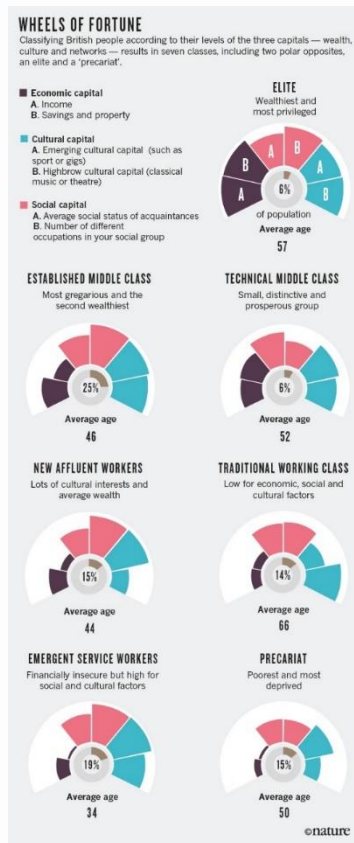
*‘The growing divide in life’s resources has taken its toll on many Britons. We are a society of unequals: not just in terms of the money we earn, but the wealth we own, the attitudes we have, and the political beliefs we hold’*

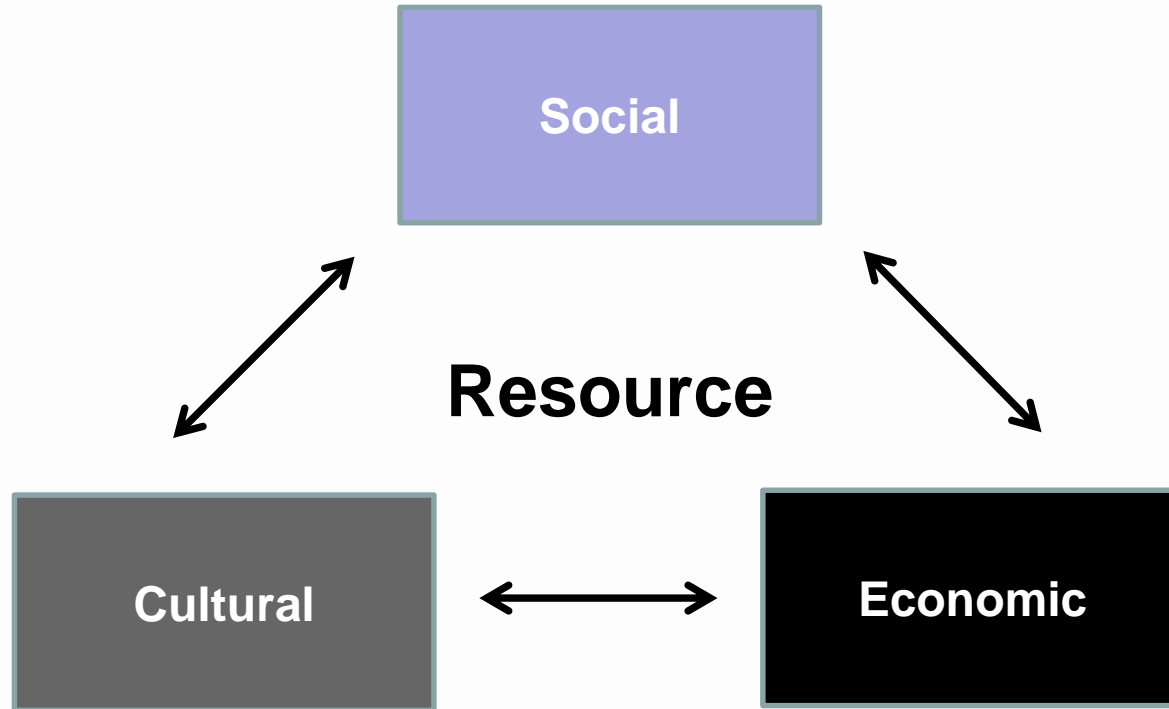






## The Great British Class Calculator



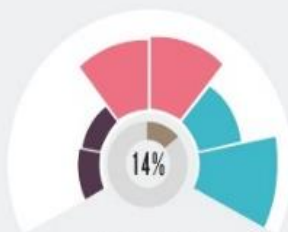


# Which group are the students that we work with in?



## TRADITIONAL WORKING CLASS

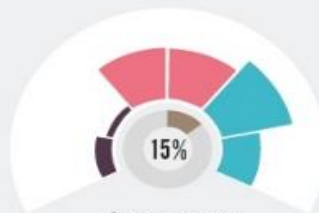
Low for economic, social and cultural factors



Average age  
66

## PRECARIAT

Poorest and most deprived

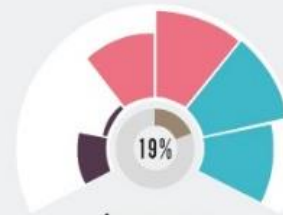


Average age  
50

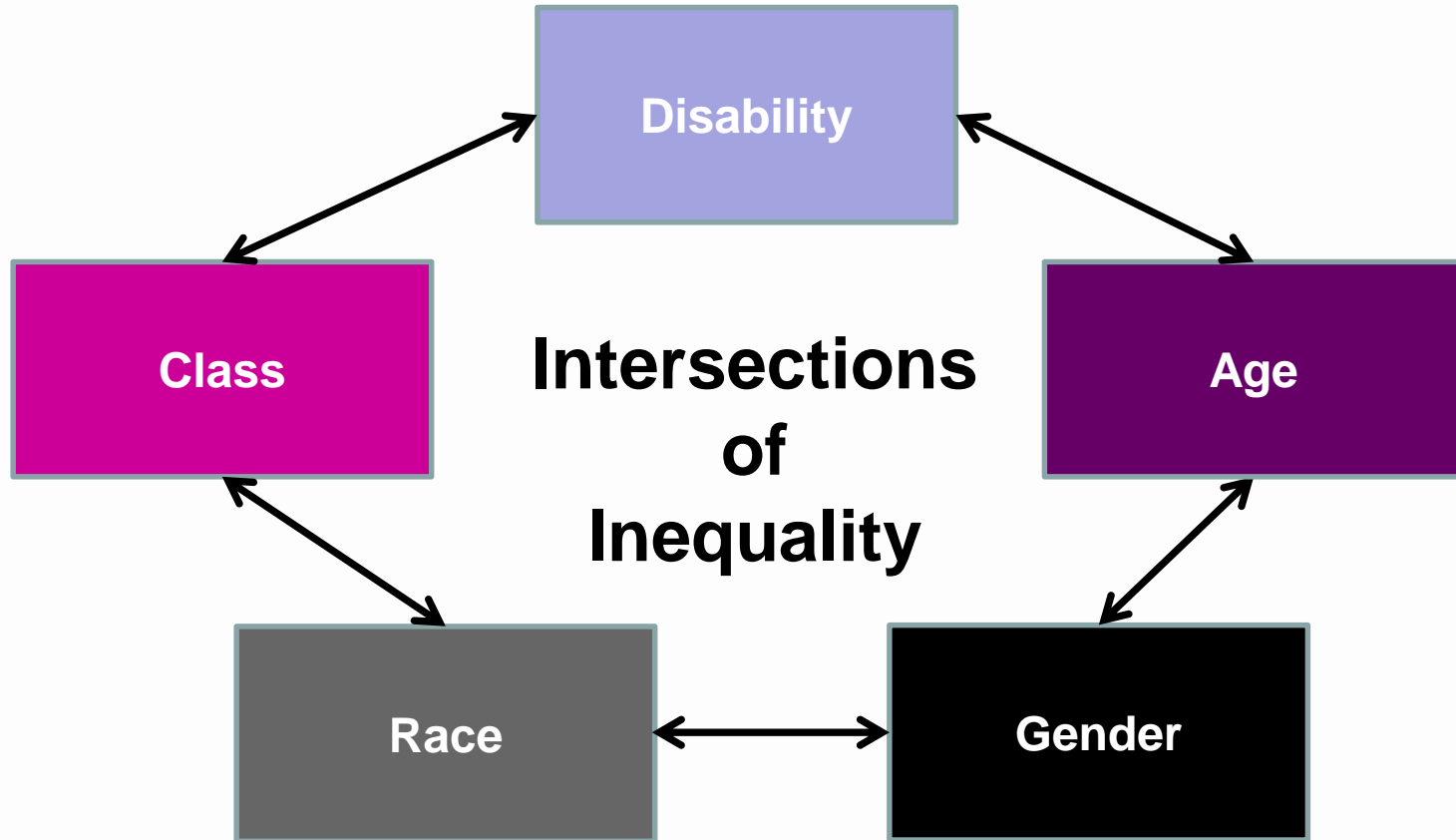
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## EMERGENT SERVICE WORKERS

Financially insecure but high for social and cultural factors



Average age  
34





# The Race for \$100



**Can we conduct activity to  
widen access to Higher  
Education badly?**



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### Ofsted chief says poor white communities lack 'aspiration and drive'

By Judith Burns  
Education reporter, BBC News

21 June 2018

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*'This is not just a matter of gender. Ethnicity makes a difference too. Leicester City Council told the House of Commons Education Select Committee of their experience that in parts of Leicester, 'the white working class culture is characterised by low aspirations and negative attitudes to education' in a way not seen with other ethnic groups.'* (HEPI, 2016)





## Dictionary



aspirat

/aspə'reɪʃ(ə)

noun

1. a hope or  
"the need  
synonym

2. MEDICINE  
the action

**BERJ** | British Educational  
Research Journal



[Original Article](#) | [Free Access](#)


## Challenging discourses of aspiration: The role of expectations and attainment in access to higher education

Neil Harrison , Richard Waller

First published: 19 September 2018 | <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3475> | Cited by: 1

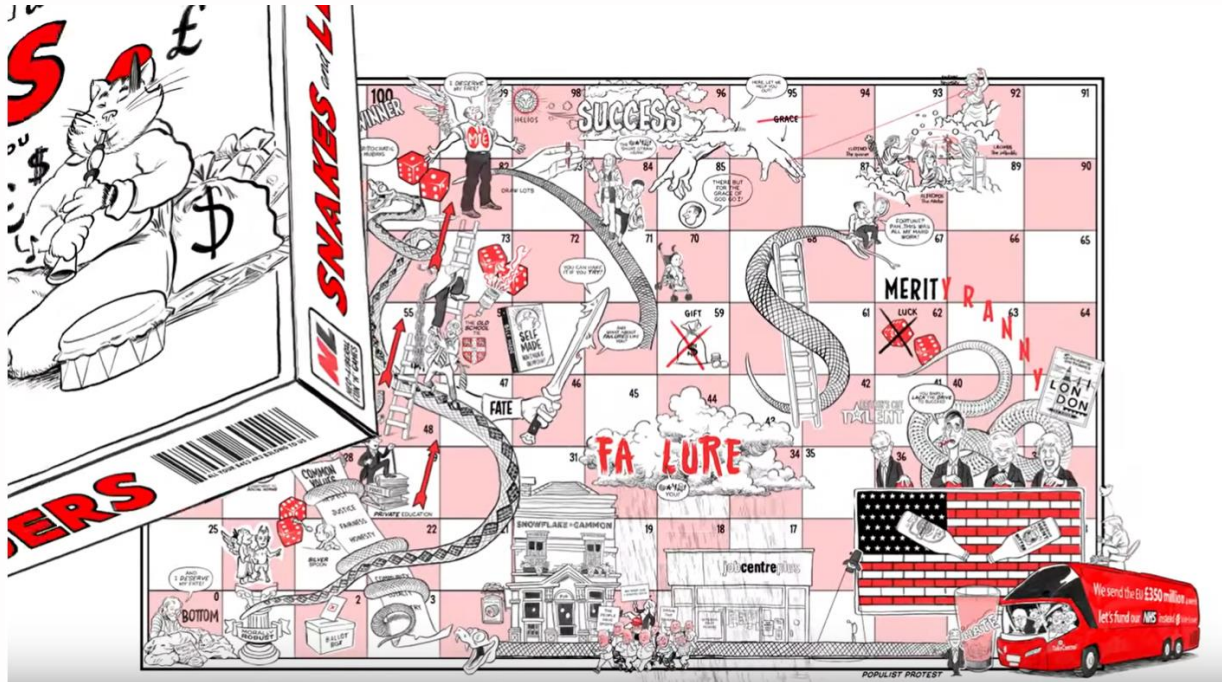


## expectation

/ekspek'teɪʃ(ə)n/ 

noun

1. a strong belief that something will happen or be the case.  
"reality had not lived up to expectations"  
*synonyms:* supposition, assumption, belief, presupposition, presumption, conjecture, surmise, reckoning, calculation, prediction, forecast, projection; More
2. MATHEMATICS  
another term for [expected value](#).



## The Tyranny of Merit



## The historical socially embedded 'choice'

(The familiar route inside familial  
experience)

**Vs.**

## The contingent socially mobile 'choice'

(socially mobile trajectory outside of  
familial experience)

Ball, S.J., Reay, D. and David, M. (2002) 'Ethnic Choosing':  
Minority ethnic students, social class and higher education  
choice. *Race ethnicity and education* [online], 5(4), pp. 333-357

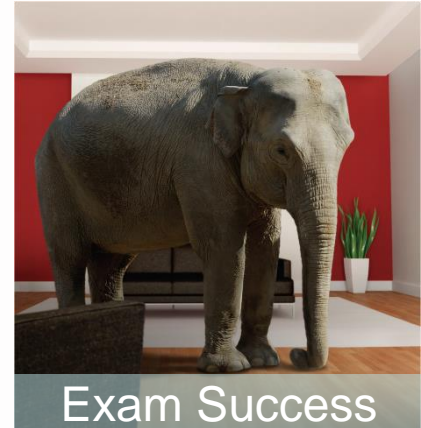


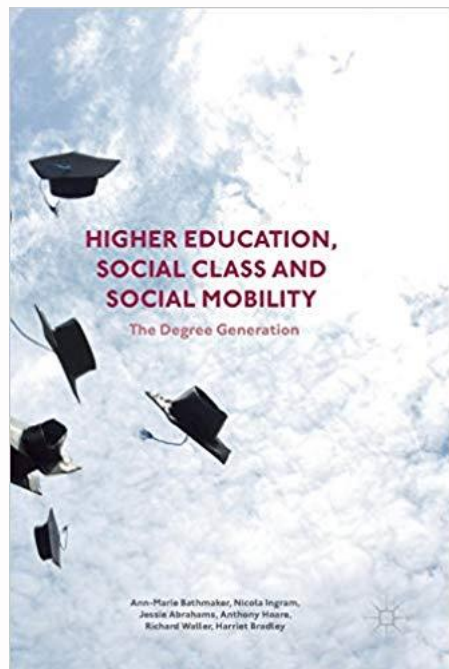
## Option 1

Go for the 'safe bet' of a familiar trajectory which the members of your immediate social network have experience navigating (even though there's a chance of being stuck in precarious employment)

## Option 2

Follow a new educational trajectory outside of the family's experience involving the deferment of paid work, the accrual of student debt and possibly moving away from close friends/family members who support you, whilst at the same time finding ways to access the knowledge and social networks to facilitate successful entry in to HE (all of which isn't easily accessible)





## 'Strangers in paradise'? Working-class students in elite universities

[D Reay](#), [G Crozier](#), [J Clayton](#) - *Sociology*, 2009 - [journals.sagepub.com](#)

This article draws on case studies of nine working-class students at Southern, an elite university. 1 It attempts to understand the complexities of identities in flux through Bourdieu's notions of habitus and field. Bourdieu (1990a) argues that when an individual encounters an ...

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## 'Fitting in' or 'standing out': Working-class students in UK higher education

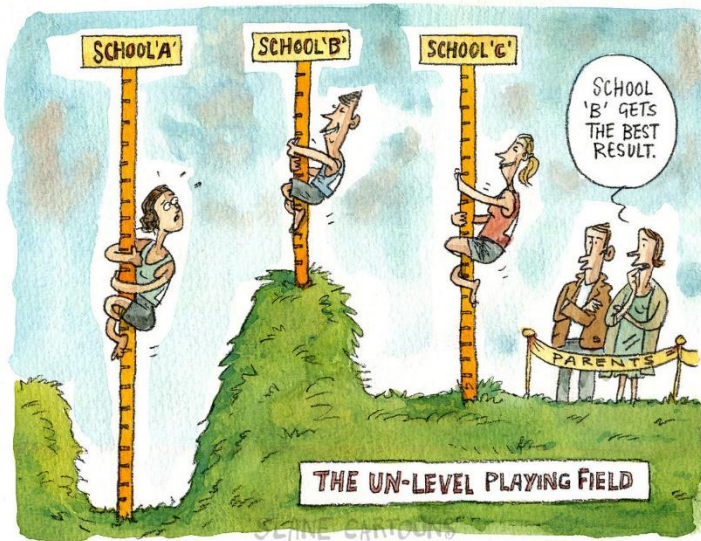
[D Reay](#), [G Crozier](#), [J Clayton](#) - *British educational research ...*, 2010 - [Wiley Online Library](#)

... habitus, and the article explores how the four different institutional habituses result in a range of experiences of **fitting in** and **standing out** in higher ... **Our** research is taking place at a time when in the UK and globally, there is concern about 'widening participation' and breaking ...

☆  Cited by 567 Related articles All 10 versions Web of Science: 213



**So how do we do work to widen  
access to Higher Education  
well?**



**Provide resource for  
development of future  
expectations**

**Social**

**Cultural**

**Economic**



The Telegraph

## Education

**U**niversities are now admitting twice as many BTEC students as they did a decade ago, amid fears of falling standards.

Higher education institutions have become “increasingly open” to accepting school leavers with vocational qualifications rather than the traditional A-levels, a new report by Universities UK (UUK) has found.

In 2008, there were 49,250 students who were offered places at British universities with BTEC qualifications. But by 2017 this had more than doubled, with more than 100,000 BTEC students winning university places, according to figures from Ucas.

**Which? University**

## International Baccalaureate (IB) students: applying to university

The number of students applying to higher education with the IB has doubled in the last decade; in 2008 there were 1,035 acceptances, while in 2017 there were 2,190 acceptances – a figure that has remained pretty stable for the last few years.



**Newcastle**

**Devonshire**

**Bedfordshire**

**London**

**Cultural**

**Resources**

**Social**

**Economic**



## Changing Mindsets

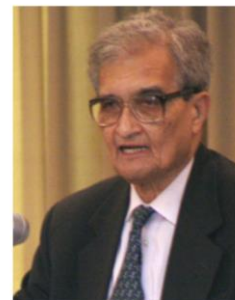
### Changing Mindsets

A Office for Students funded project focused on closing attainment gaps in higher education

*‘Changing Mindsets is based on Dweck’s Implicit Theories of Intelligence, in which Dweck argued that intelligence is malleable and that teachers can help pupils develop a growth mindset by praising their effort and persistence, over their innate intelligence. This iteration of Changing Mindsets is a student and staff workshop-based intervention that builds a growth mindset: the belief that intelligence is not a fixed characteristic and can be increased through effort’*

[Changing Mindsets Project](#)

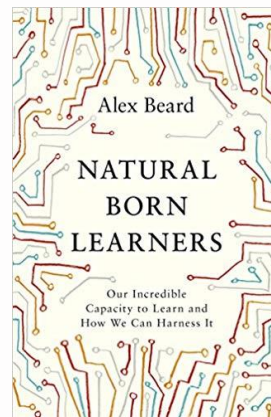
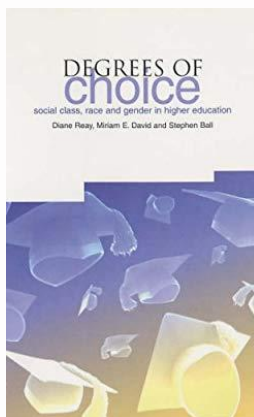
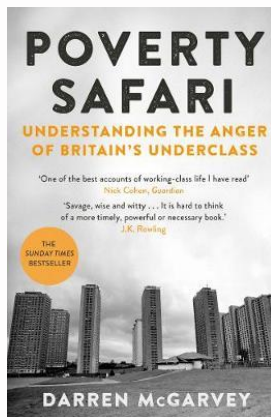
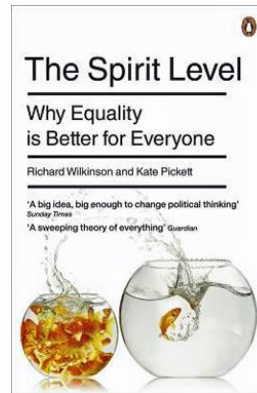
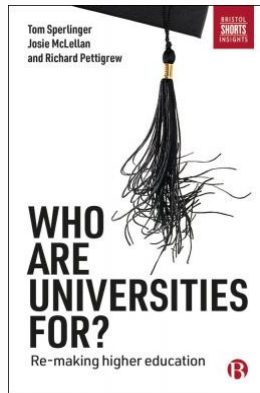
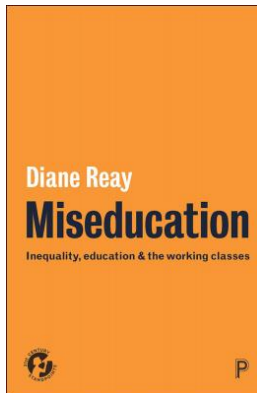
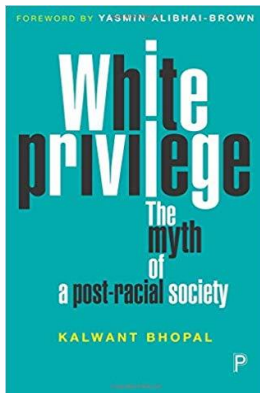
### Sen’s Capability Approach



The Capability Approach is defined by its choice of focus upon the moral significance of individuals’ capability of achieving the kind of lives they have reason to value. This distinguishes it from more established approaches to ethical evaluation, such as utilitarianism or resourceism, which focus exclusively on subjective well-being or the availability of means to the good life, respectively. A person’s capability to live a good life is defined in terms of the set of valuable ‘beings and doings’ like being in good health or having loving relationships with others to which they have real access.

The Capability Approach was first articulated by the Indian economist and philosopher Amartya Sen in the 1980s, and remains most closely associated with him. It has been employed extensively in the context of human development, for example, by the United Nations Development Programme, as a broader, deeper alternative to narrowly economic metrics such as growth in GDP per capita. Here ‘poverty’ is understood as deprivation in the capability to live a good life, and ‘development’ is understood as capability expansion.

[Sen’s Capability Approach](#)





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**Edu Detective**



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