**Discourses and marketing of equity in higher education**

Literature review

A key area of scholarship in the fields of higher education and equity/ social justice is a shared concern regarding the impacts of marketisation and neoliberalism on the potential, scope and effectiveness of equity policy and practices. Understanding the history and impact of shifts to competitive, market-based logics on higher education is crucial to the development and enactment of efforts to widen participation and redress endemic patterns of underrepresentation of particular groups. Fran Collyer (2015) describes the impact of marketization as “violat[ing], or threaten[ing] to violate highly valued academic norms and practices” in higher education (p.320), when concerns with economic returns and employability are prioritised over scholarship and teaching.

The influence of marketization on the competitive recruitment of students has caused universities to take up the project of equity/ widening participation in often-conflicting ways, reflecting the tension between national concerns about future economic competitiveness and social justice (for example, Bradley et al., 2008). These mixed messages can be observed across the world, with scholars noting how “deliberately fuzzy” messages (Graham, 2011) about widening participation in discourses and practices undermine the project of redressing historic patterns of underrepresentation of particular groups (Bowl & Hughes, 2013; Bowl, 2018; Chapman, Mangion & Buchanan, 2015). The ambiguity surrounding widening participation, resulting from the competing imperatives of recruitment and social justice, actively hinders the success of redressing historic inequity. As Stevenson, Clegg & Lefever (2010) contend:

*…as long as the policy context and the philosophical rationale for [widening participation] remain unclear, [widening participation] practice is likely to remain the preserve of committed individuals, and, at the local level, will be largely incapable of having a sustained impact on broader institutional cultures and discourse.*

(p.105)

An analysis of the Australian context suggests a highly similar situation, with contradictory messages about equity creating confusion, and the conditions for institutions to engage with equity in ways that indicate an insubstantial commitment to the project. Chapman, Mangion and Buchanan’s (2015) analysis of the mission statements of three Australian universities, and interviews with staff in those universities suggests that despite the rhetoric in the official documents produced by the institutions, staff were largely suspicious of the commitment to equity. Moreover, Kilpatrick and Johns’ (2014) desktop audit of publicly available documents pertaining to social inclusion strategies in Australian public universities illustrates similar patterns. Their audit revealed that, in general, older and more research-intensive universities index a more market-driven, competitive positioning, compared with regional, newer universities, which communicate a more social justice/ human potential-driven view of social inclusion, with a significant absence of coordination or commonality in

what social inclusion looks like across the sector. Kilpatrick and Johns (2014) argue that each institution’s history tells a story about how social inclusion evolved in particular ways, leading to the current diversity in responses. However, the depth of these histories point to challenges in making changes.

Part of the problem with equity practice in the corporate university is that institutional marketing departments are highly adept at appropriating discourses of inclusivity and diversity, therefore creating a set of moral discourses that are difficult to contest. It is highly challenging to argue against social inclusion and diversity (Archer, 2007; Armstrong & Cairnduff, 2012). As noted by Archer (2007) in her focus on the discourse of diversity, “It is so apparently benign and ‘good’ that it silences other interpretations, thus “render[ing] those who resist it unintelligible or morally reprehensible” (p.648). These messages are compounded by the disconnections between policy and media environments within universities, with messages about inclusivity and equity “frequently contradicted and neutralized by counter messages that propagate entrenched positions about class, individual ability and suitability and the stratification of higher education by quality” (Snowden & Lewis, 2015, 587). Inclusion and equity therefore become linked to institutional competitiveness and global presence, evidencing what Chapman, Mangion, and Buchanan (2015) identify as “competing ideological discourses” (p.3) and indicating tension between social justice and neoliberal economic pursuits.

Fairclough (2003), also argues that the presence of a particular discourse does not necessarily indicate its enactment, or its full enactment, within institutional culture (Fairclough, 2003). Furthermore, as Webb, Dunwoodie and Wilkinson (2018) report, there is limited integration across the three institutional pillars of a university’s framework, namely a profound disconnect between the Federal government level policies and the rules, laws and governance arrangements of the university, and the experiences and beliefs of university staff. Nevertheless, the absence of explicit references to ‘practices’ and ‘connections’ within university policy documents and media releases also does not necessarily equate to a lack of these actions at the micro-level. Indeed, much of the work to support student inclusion goes unseen, occurring at the ‘coalface’ and involving individual staff acting as key brokers to guide students through admission processes and academic enculturation (Baker, Field, Burke, Hartley, & Fleay, 2018; Webb, Dunwoodie, and Wilkinson, 2019). This is a reminder of the warning offered by Stevenson, Clegg and Lefever (2010) about how these activities (or ‘workarounds’, to use Webb, Dunwoodie & Wilkinson’s term) will remain at the level of the committed individual, thus absolving responsibility from the institution from doing more to ensure equitable access to education for all students.

Another strand of discourse surrounding equity in higher education is the notion of the student as consumer (Bunce, Baird & Jones, 2016; Mars, Slaughter, Rhoades, 2008; Tomlinson, 2017). Findings from Tomlinson’s study, (2017) which explored key themes in the literature regarding students as consumers, indicate a range of attitudes or subject-positions on the student-consumer scale, including the ‘active service-user’, who strongly felt “that increased costs needed to be matched by highly transparent and effective modes of delivery from institutional providers who were receiving the costs that students were incurring” (p.7), the ‘positioned consumer’, who “expressed a mixed and ambivalent attitude toward the consumer ethos” (p. 6) and the ‘non-consumers’, who ‘challenged the notion of consuming higher education, and actively distanced themselves from this approach’ (p. 10). Tomlinson (2017) therefore argues that the notion of all students as consumers is challenged, although consumerist discourses do appear to be widely evident in student talk.

On the other hand, Mars et al. (2008) aimed to modify the existing academic capitalist framework (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2008) by ‘developing the instructional dimension of the academic capitalism knowledge/learning regime and examining the new roles institutions are supporting for students educationally as entrepreneurs’ (p. 638). Their case studies on the University of Iowa and the University of Texas El Paso, indicate indicate the ‘emergence of a new student role – ‘state-sponsored entrepreneur’, which is consistent with & possible due to the ‘development of an academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime that collapses the boundaries between public & private sectors and that constructs an organizational infrastructure for developing & pursuing new circuits of knowledge creation’ (pp. 658 -659). The authors therefore argue that ‘the emergent role of the state-sponsored student entrepreneur introduces a new dimension to the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime - the position of the student as active agent of academic capitalism’ (p. 664), which challenges Slaughter and Rhoades’ (2004) view that students are marginalized within the capitalist academy. Apart from that, Bunce et al.’s (2016) study explored the ‘student as consumer’ (SAC) notion by investigating the influence of traditional factors (learner identity and grade goal) on academic performance and potential predictors of consumer orientation (fee responsibility and subject studied), as well as the mediating role of consumer orientation on academic performance. Findings from their study suggest that while a lower learner identity was linked to a higher consumer orientation among students, grade goal, fee responsibility and subject studied was positively associated with a higher consumer orientation (Bunce et al., 2016). The findings also suggest that consumer orientation is a significant mediator of all relationships between the predictors (learner identity and grade goal) & academic performance (Bunce et al., 2016). The authors therefore suggest that universities should initiate a dialogue about the SAC approach and its consequences with students (Bunce et al., 2016).

Summary written by Anna Xavier & Sally Baker

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**Equity in Higher Education Annotated Bibliography Series**

**Discourses and marketing of equity in higher education**

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| **Citation** | **Annotation** |
| Archer, L. & Hutchings, M. (2000). [‘Bettering Yourself’? Discourses of Risk, Cost and Benefit in Ethnically Diverse, Young Working-Class Non-Participants’ Constructions of Higher Education,](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/713655373) *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 21(4), 555–574.  UK  Annotation by Sally Baker | **Context:** Widening participation in English HE, post-New Labour election and new imposition of 50% target, viewed from perspectives of working class non-participants. Contrasts institutional position statements on WP with what is known about working-class constructions/ perceptions about HE (noting arguments that HE is viewed in alignment with employment; see argument that HE was perceived as irrelevant by working class because of job opportunities available; Metcalf, 1997). Notes work by Reay (1998, Reay et al., 2001) on classed and racialised expectations of higher education – middle class ‘common sense’with relation to unequal distribution of power and access to resources  **Aim:** To argue that risk and benefits of participating in higher education = unequally distributed according to social class and is therefore “more difficult and costly ‘choice’ for working-class students” (p.555); “to contribute to an analysis of the multiple factors underpinning ‘working-class’ participation in higher education” (p.556)  **Methodology:** Draws on MORI-funded large scale mixed methods study of educational decision-making/ constructions of HE for working-class students and non-participants. Paper reports on qualitiative data collected via 14 x focus groups with 109 working-class non-participants in London aged 16-30. 10 of groups recruited from FE colleges; 4 groups = recruited from general public; these 4 = deliberately mixed by gender and ethnicity (white/ African Caribbean)/ 10 from FE = more ad hoc. 1/3 = Black, 1/3 = Asian, 1/3 = White. Most (n=72) taking Level 1 or 2 vocational courses; 16 = taking Level 3; 21 = not studying – most had left school at 16 to start work  **Findings:** Participants “constructed HE aspirations, and the ability to 'get there', as mediated by the risks and costs that they themselves would experience**”** (p.560) – risks in terms of time, money and effort. Main benefits = family expectations.  Participants associated few benefits with studying at university; instead seeing it as ‘boring’, ‘hard work’, ‘pressure and stress’ (see p.560). Some viewed university as associated with sex and drinking, but not enough to outweigh other perceived costs.  Participants also acknowledged lack of network (that middle-class peers may have) for support. Possibility of failure = most common perceived risk, with failure “constructed in economic, social and personal terms” (p.561), and familial pressure (not letting parents down/ wasting parents’ money), particularly for Black and Asian participants.  Many participants perceived themselves as disadvantaged by mature age, FE/ vocational qualifications, money, perception of HE as middle class, white: some data “can be read as drawing on white working-class notions of territoriality that exclude ethnic-minority groups and deny them equal access to resources” (p.563) = ‘racist resistance’ (Cohen, 1988).  *Post-graduation perceptions*: most viewed benefits of graduating at individual level = only African/Caribbean women talked about community/ national economic benefits. Many of benefits construed as ‘better job opportunties’ (not ‘getting stuck; see p.564) and therefore ‘better pay’ and ‘bettering oneself’ and pleasing parents/ family, especially for immigrant children (See Mirza 1992 for arguments about black women in HE and Skeggs (1997) for discussion of working class women in HE)  Some participants expressed concern about being ‘overqualified in an overcrowded job market’ – this discourse used more by participants who didn’t want to go to university. Authors note literature that points to further disadvantage for working-class students who are constrained to attend local, less prestigious institutions.  Participants concerned with debt **Core argument:** Young working-class people generally index dominant discourses about individual (economic and employment) benefits of HE but construct HE as “**i**nherently risky, demanding great investment and costs, and yielding uncertain return” (p.569). |
| Alexander, K.; Fahey Palma, T; Nicholson, S. & Cleland, J. (2017). ‘[Why not you?’ Discourses of widening access on UK medical school websites](file://localhost/doi/%2010.1111:medu.13264), *Medical Education*, 51(6), 598–611.  UK  Annotation by Sally Baker | **Context:** UK medical schools and the widening participation agenda (‘widening access’; WA) = recruitment and admission of non-traditional students – numbers of low SES students = disproportionately low. UK context = different from other nations (e.g. USA and Canada) because 90% of programs are undergraduate. Cites previous work by co-author (Cleland et al. 2015) that found conflicting interpretations of WA policy when interviewing medical admissions staff – incongruence between opening access to diverse students and ‘selecting for excellence’. Cites other work from Canada that has examined tension between social justice and meritocratic selection for ‘excellence’  **Aim:** To “investigate how the value of WA is communicated by UK medical schools through their websites, and how this may create expectations regarding who is ‘suitable’ for medicine” (abstract). Asks: “What are the barriers to applying to medicine for those from under-represented or ‘non-traditional’ groups?” (p.2); to examine the messages given about medical education.  **Theoretical frame:** Foucault’s notion of discourse  **Methodology:** Critical discourse analysis of medical school websites in paradigm of ‘criticalism’. Asked these questions of the data: “How is the value of WA to medicine communicated by UK medical schools through their WA webpages? What expectations are set up by these discourses with regard to who is ‘suitable’ for medicine and encouraged to apply?” (p.3). Data = 25 (from possible 34) medical schools = information on websites about WA initiatives (e.g. outreach, visits, mentoring), WA entry routes. Other 9 universities did not provide this information on their websites. Total corpus = 433815 words. 5 stages of analysis:   1. familiarization phase 2. data collected through copying text 3. used analytic framework from Hyatt (2013) to examine 3 aspects: drivers, levers, warrants 4. examined differences and similarities in ways WA = constructed (looked at linguistic features such as evaluative language, tone, register and audience address; see p.5). 5. explored subject positions and subjectivities made available   Analysis= cross-checked and validated across the team  **Findings:** Strong driver communicated by all schools = WA as need to ‘diversify the workforce or student body’ – thus focusing on what WA is, rather than why. Individuals = central to WA messages, conveying the value of WA as facilitating social mobility (warranted against ‘fairness’ and social justice) – desirable forms of merit = academic achievement, commitment to study and potential. Some schools indicated WA was about *improving* fairness of selection (italics in original; p.7). Two websites positioned WA as about diversifying the workforce (thus not focus on benefits of WA to individuals, but rather benefits to workforce). Medical schools position themselves as ‘helping’ WA students: “In a Foucauldian sense, this discourse creates and legitimises a subject position for medical schools in which they are responsible for ‘providing’ WA through support and information. Participants in WA initiatives are seen to require and receive medical schools’ actions, legitimising their position of disadvantage and deficit” (p.9). **Core argument:** Dominant message communicated on medical websites = individually-focused view of social mobility; “it is perhaps surprising how strongly this discourse overpowers the counterdiscourse of the value of WA for the improvement of service provision and patient care, especially given the increasing presence of this argument internationally” (p.9). Therefore, WA students = positioned as needing to demonstrate traditionally valued qualities for medicine, and justifications for WA = “intertwined with the promotion and preservation of the dominance of academic merit within selection” (p.10) |
| Archer, L. (2007). [Diversity, equality and higher education: a critical reflection on the ab/uses of equity discourse within widening participation](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13562510701595325), *Teaching in Higher Education,* 12(5-6), 635–653.  UK  Annotation by Sally Baker | **Context:** Examines how rhetoric of diversity = mobilised in New Labour/ English HE WP policy. Paper set post-Dearing England (with 50% WP targets). Examines how diversity = “are employed, deployed, subverted and reconfigured within WP policy” (p.637) – ‘perniciously’ elided with choice (institutional diversity; which university students choose to go to = marketised sector) and ‘social inclusion’ (student diversity) = key notions in New Labour’s reforms of HE: “these constructions of diversity derive an important element of their symbolic power from an association with notions of ‘democratisation’, ‘equality’ and ‘fairness’” (p.636).  **Aim:** To offer a ‘think piece’ for discussion of contested discourse of ‘diversity’ and the differing/competing ideologies it indexes  **Theoretical frame:** Instantiations of discourse of diversity as enactments of egalitarian and neoliberal ideologies  **Methodology:** ‘Think piece’/ essay, drawing on HE policy documents and public messages about WP  **Findings:** 1) ‘Institutional diversity’ = Archer notes universities were invited to identify/ position themselves in market according to three-part distinctions (“a benign trinity”, p.638): research, teaching, and locally-oriented universities. Archer argues this is based on intention to further fraction relationships between research and teaching, and further stratifies the system and is achieved through the use of ‘diversity of provision’ (aka choice). Archer distinguishes between horizontal diversity (plurality of options = appeals to ‘customers’ needs’; couched in terms of ‘individualisation’ with expansion of system beyond university, e.g. FE or Foundation degrees) and vertical diversity (stratification of institutions based on notion of ‘quality’: “encouraging institutions to respond,  innovate and improve to ensure their survival”, p.639. Targeted funding as rewards rather than equal funding across the sector). Horizontal and vertical diversity = “inherently conflictual” (p.639). Stratification of ‘gold, silver and bronze’ institutions (the benign trinity) = linked to hierarchies of geography/ geographies of power (gold= global; bronze = local; gold= older, research-intensive; bronze = newer, former polytechnics). Bronze universities = positioned as heavy lifters for social inclusion/ WP work: “rendered fixed and disempowered in order to liberate ‘silver’ and ‘gold’ institutions from the economic and social responsibilities of engaging in the (‘real’ work of) WP. The task of WP is not shared out equally between all HEIs” (p.641) = clearing institutions rather than institutions of choice – notes Bauman’s argument about individuals’ social value being derived from consumption patterns.  2) Student diversity = “fundamental dissonance” between equitable diversity and economic diversity. New Labour policy privileges the latter (Mirza, 2003) = e.g. ‘untapped potential’ for national economic future gain. Economic diversity argument depends on neoliberal logics – to push responsibility onto individuals; to erode the responsibility of the state. Institutional/ sectorial hierarchies play out in student diversity: “the formalisation of institutional hierarchies (e.g., through league tables) has a detrimental impact on the ‘choices’ and psyche’s of those students who are constituted as the targets of WP policy” (p.644). Similarly the ‘value’ of a degree “also becomes more highly differentiated and potentially devalued”. The dominant cultural norms of the academy remain white, middle class and male therefore many students feel disconnected from higher education. Archer also makes the point that ‘diversity’ is used as a moral discourse as “operates as a powerful justificatory discourse within policy as something that signifies ‘good for everyone’ rather than just ‘good for some’” (p.648). It is so apparently benign and ‘good’ that it silences other interpretations, thus “render[ing] those who resist it unintelligible or morally reprehensible” (p.648). **Core argument:** Archer argues that notions of diversity are aligned/ draw their symbolic power from notion of equality, but that possibilities for potential of WP = eroded by neoliberal policies of New Labour ‘third way’ politics. She argues that the market cannot provide social equity – New Labour policies continued to disproportionately advantage the middle classes while providing a suggestion of egalitarianism and pushing more of the cost of higher education on to the individual. The notion of choice is a false premise because the social stratification of the sector limits students’ ‘choices’ about where they can study. |
| Armstrong, D.; Armstrong, A.; & Spandgou, I. (2011). [Inclusion: by choice or by chance?](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13603116.2010.496192), *International Journal of Inclusive Education,* 15(1), 29–39.  AUS  Annotation by Sally Baker  Keywords: *social inclusion; higher education; partnerships* | **Context:** Low SES students and their underrepresentation and policy on social inclusion in Australia. Sets the scene by arguing that Sydney University broke the norm by admitting students on merit rather than background when it opened in 1852 (but did not extend to women/adult learners). Notes that ‘inclusive education’ is an opaque/ under-defined term that needs to be understood in particular social context/ particular assumptions = there are particular social/policy contexts where inclusive teaching/ social inclusion sit; there are particular practices that advance inclusion. Authors discuss opportunities/challenges of engaging with policy/practice in USYD = long-term outreach program: ‘Compass – find your way to higher education’ (started 2008) – focus on social capital building in low SES communities/schools. Argues that WP initiatives are usually one-off events (including USYD pre-2008) and that much WP work fails because it is atheoretical (Archer, Hutchings & Leathwood, 2001). Maintain that education will always be socially selective: “In workforce planning, it is assumed that there is a part of the population that does not need highe  r education” (p.921) – assumed to be 60% if HE participation target is 40%  **Aim:** Poses these questions: “What does it really mean to have an education system that is ‘inclusive’? Who is thought to be in need of inclusion and why? If education should be inclusive, then what practices is it contesting, what common values is it advocating, and by what criteria should its successes be judged?” (p.918)  **Theoretical frame:** Draws on reproduction theory (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977)  **Methodology:**  **Findings:**  Language of social inclusion/ equity = superficial, thus fuelling ‘the problem’ – who can be against social inclusion?: “The language of social equity obfuscates assumptions about economic productivity and wealth creation (for whom?)” (p.921). Argues that ‘social inclusion’ cannot improve until universities engage with it beyond the notions of access and participation; as it is, the language = “a parody of itself”… it “becomes the language of a new form of exclusion dressed up in a rhetoric that allows us to be blissfully disengaged from the genuinely transformative power of education” (p.922) – thus, how can a research-intensive (or any) university contribute to building capacity without engaging in introspection and reflexive exercise?  Outreach: cannot be undertaken with idea that engagement/participation might improve league table results/ or hero-mentality of ‘saving’ disadvantaged communities (be careful of patronizing/ deficit assumptions)  Compass (as an example of a university=community partnership) = built on 4 principles generated from research: 1) engagement early in schooling; 2) parents are influential on career choices/ post-school education or training; 3) teacher/school capacity makes a big differences; 4) need to increase awareness/understanding of educational pathways.  **Core argument:** Engaging in outreach that does not reproduce dominant hegemonic systems: “To be inclusive, we need to learn from working with others and adopt strategies that are owned within schools and communities, not imposed on them from outside” (p.926). Necessitates a “self-critical” approach from all stakeholders (especially universities)  “it is reasonable for universities to be asked whether in doing so they are producing leaders in their own image (and in the image of social groups who have traditionally benefited from and reproduced their advantages  through these networks) and if not then to be asked how they understand their relationship to the wider communities and what implications this relationship has for their practice” (p.926) |
| Beddoes, K. & Schimpf, C. (2016). [What’s wrong with fairness? How discourses in higher educational literature support gender inequalities](file://localhost/DOI/%2010.1080:01596306.2016.1232535), *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education,* 39(1), 31-40, DOI: 10.1080/01596306.2016.1232535  USA  Annotation by Sally Baker  Keywords: D*epartment heads; female professors; gender; fairness; collective good; discourse; training* | **Context:** Underrepresentation of women in higher education leadership (department heads/ chairs) positions in the USA, particularly for women of colour and particularly because of having to balance home and work responsibilities. Authors’ review of literature on department heads = mostly ‘gender blind’. Authors offer examples of how discourses of fairness, collective good and training are instantiated in the literature.  **Aim:** To examine discourses engaged in field of higher education with regard to gender bias using discourses that authors identified from literature review: *fairness, collective good*, and *the training imperative*  **Theoretical frame:** Discourse as power relation  **Methodology:** Critical discourse analysis/ review of literature on department heads  **Findings:** Fairness = subjective and gendered: “what is fair for women is often perceived as unfair for men or the department as a whole” (p.3)  Collective good (benefitting the whole department) = disadvantaging to women if assumed to be ‘gender neutral’, with gender stereotypes working against women if they are not considered to be ‘kind’ (but authors note “gender biases of this sort are difficult to detect and prove because they are subtle, indirect, and implicit”, p.5).  Training imperative: (aka there isn’t enough training for leaders). Authors recognise the validity of this argument, but argue that training alone won’t challenge existing bias/ stereotypes and is again ‘gender blind’  **Core argument:** Department head literature = gender blind and does not appear to have changed significantly over the period surveyed. |
| Bowl, M. (2018). [Differentiation, distinction and equality – or diversity? The language of the marketised university: an England, New Zealand comparison](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03075079.2016.1190961), *Studies in Higher Education,* 43(4), 671–688.  UK  Annotation by Sally Baker  Keywords: *diversity; equality; university ranking; marketing higher education; language* | **Context:** Examines the impacts of marketization of higher education; author specifically explores how universities reconcile their participation as ‘global competitors’ with need to respond to national policy imperatives, such as equality (inequity) by looking at the language used in publicly available websites of universities in England and New Zealand. Article begins with discussion of global league tables and the tension with meeting social justice goals: “There is thus a tension between the need for universities to project themselves as strong competitors in a global market and leading contributors to the knowledge economy, while at the same time responding to national policy requirements to widen the social base of higher education” (p.2). Global league tables ‘ostensibly’ provide transparency to enable ‘choice’ and ensure parable measurements of quality of institutions across the world. Rankings = symbolic of managerialism and ‘growth of the audit culture’ (p.2; see also Deem, 2001; Deem et al., 2007). However, league tables take no heed of local or national contexts, and there are no ranking systems of universities’ performance with regard to equity/ inclusion. Bowl points to work by Ball (1998) and Marginson (2006) that argues that the flow of global market principles “do not straightforwardly transfer to national contexts” (p.3); aka each nation gives global market logics their own spin. At an institutional level, “universities are shaped by their own histories, cultures and norms which, in turn, shape internal priorities and external perceptions about what ‘type’ of institution they are” (p.3).  Bowl offers an overview of ‘widening the social base of HE’ of England and NZ.  **Aim:** To reveal how four universities (English/ New Zealand) use language to ‘reconcile the tensions’ between global competition and equity; to demonstrate how “the language of ‘distinctiveness’ and ‘diversity’ are employed to mask the incompatibility of market competition and equality, and to bolster claims for elite status” (p.2)  **Theoretical frame:**  **Methodology:** Essay; comparative [linguistic] analysis (draws on Fairclough but does not describe = discourse analysis). Institutions chosen as ‘pairs’, according to world rankings (2 = elite/ ‘aspirant research’ universities; 2 = regional). Documents taken from website home pages (WP), mission, vision and value statements (MVV), annual reports (AR), strategic plans (SP) and profiles (P). Also, Investment Plans (IP) and Access Agreements (AA) analysed.  **Findings:**  ‘Doing business’: AR and SP = confirm “extent to which commercial priorities have penetrated the strategic heart of university planning and policy-making” (p.8), although there is clear difference between the 2 types of university. Auckland and Durham stress financial sustainability, freedom from government funding constraints, ‘diversified’ income sources [in partnership with business]; Waikato and Aston = foreground entrepreneurialism and business responsiveness [serving business]. Analysis of the language used to describe links between teaching/ learning and national economic priorities: “moderated language suggests that high-status institutions, with greater holdings of cultural, social and economic capital, are somehow ‘above’ the market” (p.8)**.**  ‘Standing out from the crowd’: all four universities professed ‘excellence’ (e.g., ‘world-class’, world-ranking’, ‘world-leading’ or ‘world-wide’, see p.10), particularly with reference to global rankings. Lower status universities talk more about ‘potential’, rather than ‘achievement’. All universities claim ‘distinctiveness’. A regard for equality is not noticeable in the ‘public utterances’ of the universities. For the high status universities, where it is mentioned, equality = made in terms of qualifying a commitment to social justice (for instance, justifying the selection of promoting merit and potential of applicants which recognize ‘equality of opportunity; see p.12): “What is visible in these statements around equality is that, while national legislation and policy priorities concerning under-represented groups and social mobility are addressed, there is a tendency to limit equality commitments to what is required for the purposes of compliance, rather expressing them as principles” (p.13). Equality is thus performative rather than principled approach to social justice (p.14). Bowl also notes ‘linguistic slippage’ between diversity and equality: “The vagueness of the term serves a number of purposes. It invokes the warmth and harmony of institutional inclusiveness without threatening an elitist ethos. It evades specification of who is currently excluded, what structural and economic constraints may perpetuate their exclusion, and what action might be needed to end it” (p.14). Moreover, with this vagueness, ‘diversity’ can also refer to the international student body **Core argument:** Lower status institutions linguistically position themselves in servitude to business; organisational positioning and responses to policy pressure = reflect their position in relation to one stream of funding (aka government). Particular buzzwords are employed: *differentiation*, *distinctiveness* (which “helps to soften of the harder edges of competitive differentiation”, p.14), *diversity* (an ‘empty word’, p.15), and *potential*. |
| Bowl, M. & Hughes, J. (2013). [Discourses of fair access in English higher education](https://www.ingentaconnect.com/openurl?genre=article&issn=1466-6529&volume=15&issue=4&spage=7), *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning,* 15(4), 7–25.  UK  Annotation by Sally Baker  Keywords: *higher education, fair access, document analysis, education market, widening participation* | **Context:** Tensions between social mobility/ national economic competitiveness and role of higher education in England; role of Office for Fair Access (OfFA) and Access Agreements (AA) because they “offer insights into the way in which universities interpret and ‘speak to’ government policy” (p.10); authors argue that other forms of public messaging (such as mission statements, university websites and prospectuses) “further illuminate universities’ priorities (Fairclough, 1993) and how these are translated for public consumption” (p.10).  **Aim:** To “analyse how universities in a stratified system present their commitment to widening participation and how this relates to their strategic positioning in a higher education market” in OfFA AAs  **Theoretical frame:** CDA (Fairclough)  **Methodology:** “Document-based analysis of Office for Fair Access (OfFA) Agreements for 2012–2013 and other publicly available material produced by eight universities in one English region” (p.9). Questions asked of collected documents:  “How are universities publicly responding to changing government policy on fees and admissions?  • How are universities defining and operationalising widening participation and fair access?  • What differences and similarities can be discerned between universities in different mission groups?  • How are ‘outreach’, ’targeting’ ‘retention’ and ‘employability’ activities being utilised in relation to widening participation?” (p.11)  **Findings:** Clear difference between Russell Group (‘selecting’) universities and other (‘recruiting’) universities with regard to performance (state school recruitment/ % of under-represented groups enrolled). Only two of the 8 universities (from the ‘Guild Group’) highlighted diversity/ social justice as “integral to their mission” (p.15)  1) Regulation of proposals for WP = weak (p.9). Authors write: “This leads us to suggest that the commitment of universities to widening participation in the current climate is differentiated, fluid and in some cases ambivalent” (p.15).  2) Combination of government direction and institutional discretion = led to student financial incentives (National Scholarship Programme) being used as a marketing tool. Five of the 8 universities “engaged in own-branding” with NSP offers, which “appears to allow an institution to market a government-funded initiative as a ‘home grown’ one” (p.17). Six of the 8 did not clearly articulate the scholarship eligibility criteria/ likelihood of applicants receiving financial support **Core argument:** Shifting policy and funding context with regard to WP in England = created a “policy context in which these agreements are produced is characterised by a combination of bravado, neglect and interference” (p.22).  Bravado = evident in public statements;  Neglect = less evident in commitment from OfFA to monitor/ incentivise/ discipline, and universities in terms of acting on their rhetoric: “In a market climate which is increasingly challenging this failure contributes to the likelihood that universities will feel obliged to retreat from the idea of higher education as a vehicle for promoting social justice in order to ensure survival” (p.23).  Interference = government misreading of what universities would do/ the market in terms of raising tuition fees (expectation that only elite universities would charge full 9000GBP, but all universities did it) |
| Bowl, M. & Hughes, J. (2016). [Fair access and fee setting in English universities: what do institutional statements suggest about university strategies in a stratified quasi-market?](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03075079.2014.927846), *Studies in Higher Education,* 41(2), 269–287.  UK  Keywords: British *higher education; document analysis; education market; elite and mass; widening participation* | **Context:** Tensions between social mobility/ national economic competitiveness and role of higher education in England; role of Office for Fair Access (OfFA) and Access Agreements (AA)  **Aim:** To explore “how universities, as quasi-market organisations, might be expected to respond to the contradictory external pressures [of increased national economic competitiveness and social mobility]” (p.270)  **Theoretical frame:** Oliver’s (1991) institutional theory and resource dependency theory (typology of organisational responses to external pressure: acquiescence, compromise, avoidance, defiance, manipulation) to “provide a framework within which different universities’ responses to policy pressure could be compared” (p.270). See Table 2 (p.274) for research questions derived from Oliver’s framework (including predictive dimensions leading to 10 hypotheses = Table 3). Authors selected 3 of 10 hypotheses, leading to 3 conjectures:  Selected hypotheses:  1) The greater the degree of constituent multiplicity, the greater the likelihood of organizational resistance to institutional pressures  2) The lower the degree of external dependence on pressuring constituents, the greater the likelihood of organisational resistance to institutional pressure  3) The lower the level of uncertainty in the organization’s environment, the greater the likelihood of organizational resistance to institutional pressures. (all p.276)  Conjectures:  Conjecture 1*: All universities in this study will show responses beyond acquiescence and there may be differences in the degree and nature of these responses between recruiting and selecting institutions* (any response except acquiescence = resistance, according to Oliver)  Conjecture 2: *Acquiescent responses will be more typical of recruiting institutions; more resistant responses will be associated with selecting universities* (not all universities in England are equally dependent on OfFA approval; according to Oliver, for dependence, defiance and manipulation = resistant response, and high levels of external dependence likely to result in acquiescence or compromise).  Conjecture 3: Acquiescence would be demonstrated by all universities in this study but recruiting and selecting institutions would use different strategies in relation to widening participation (all p.277) – lower uncertainty leads to higher resistance, with resistant strategies = defy and manipulate.  **Methodology:** Application of Oliver’s (1991) framework to OfFA reports/ AA from 8 universities (same ones as in Bowl & Hughes, 2013).  **Findings:** Russell Group universities underperforming in terms of measurement against WP metrics: clear difference between ‘selecting’ (RG) and ‘recruiting’ universities (Million+ and Guild Group alignments).  *Russell Groups (RG)*  Analysis of AAs and publicly available documentation shows that RGs positioned themselves as ‘research intensive’ and elite in terms of attracting the ‘gifted and talented’ students — academic excellence/ high academic standards etc. (see p.279). RG universities expressed belief that they should be benchmarked for WP performance against similar institutions because benchmarking against the whole sector “underplays both the success we have achieved and, crucially, the clear commitment we have to fair access and widening participation” (from Russell Group 2 AA; see p.279). Authors argue that this is an intention to excuse its underperformance: “In positioning themselves as distinctive, both downplayed their poor performance in widening participation relative to other institutions in their region, while asserting their commitment to fair access” (p.279). And yet, both RG universities positioned themselves as leaders in WP, using language like “‘sector leading’ and ‘flagship’…[and] ‘the first research-led University in the UK to give priority to widening participation and lifelong learning’” (p.280). Overall, RGs = signalling acquiescence to policy, compromise in terms of focusing on academic standards, and avoidance by focusing on state schools (rather than disadvantaged areas)  *Million+*  Tensions in positioning with regard to low rankings and high WP enrolments — these universities had to implement the highest student fees to avoid perception of being lower quality. These universities = “justifiably assertive” in positioning with regard to WP enrolments in their AAs/ messaging to WP, but downgrading these assertions in their public-facing messaging (for fear of being perceived as lesser). These universities generally position with employability message, rather than inclusivity, “reflecting their historical vocational specialism and national concerns about graduate employment” (p.281) to justify the increased fees. Authors argue this is ‘mimetic isomorphism’ (according to Oliver, 1991), but they also demonstrate acquiescence to policy (“in spite of the fact that their record on recruitment from underrepresented groups is good, when compared with the Russell Group universities, and they might have grounds to complain that they are being expected to do more than is reasonable to increase recruitment from these groups” (p.282).  *Guild Group* (brief analysis on p.282) — general messages about being committed to WP; messages based around ‘student-centred’ and ‘community spirit’, and messaging about employability. Consistency in messages to OfFA and public.  All three groups demonstrated acquiescence to policy but positioned themselves differently **Core argument:** RG universities acquiescence = accompanied by manipulation and avoidance, in effort to craft a case about how they should be measured with regard to WP performance (partially supporting Conjecture 2).  Conjecture 3 = unsupported because authors’ expectation that ‘recruiting’ universities would foreground WP enrolments, but instead the public messages were ambiguous, which they argue “highlights for us the tension between equity and market positioning which is apparent in a quasi-market situation” (p.284).  The quasi-market of higher education means that Oliver’s theory does not easily work with snapshot analysis, but could be useful for longitudinal research. |
| Bravenboer, D. (2012). [The official discourse of fair access to higher education](https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/openu/jwpll/2013/00000014/00000003/art00008), *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, 14(3), 120–140.  UK  Annotation by Sally Baker  Key terms: *fair access; widening participation; higher education; official discourse* | **Context:** UK Widening Participation policy – official higher education discourse**;** ‘disadvantaged young people’ less likely to attend higher tariff institutions. Bravenboer argues that “a tacit ‘deficit model’ of widening participation in selective universities serves to position the lack of progress in widening access as principally an applicant issue” (p.123)  **Methodology:** Application of frame of ‘constructive description’ to 3 official texts (positioned as sociocultural objects/artefacts): the Schwartz Report (AHESG, 2004), Higher ambitions: The future of universities in a knowledge economy (BIS, 2009) and Higher education: Students at the heart of the system (BIS, 2011 – hereafter described as the ‘White Paper’). Four steps were followed (p.125):  1. Localising and bounding of the text in the higher education field as an object of analysis  2. Identification of oppositions and alliances within a reading of object text  3. Construction of modes of action by recontextualising identified oppositions and alliances  4. Analysis of the dynamics of the strategic distribution and exclusion of textual objects in relation to the discursive space constructed as modes of action  **Findings:** Proposes two sets of conceptual tools for exploring fairness and merit/potential.Fairness constructed as binary: impartial/partial approaches to determining access (p.125): 4 possible modes of action: admissional, privileged, recognitional, excepted. Gatekeepers: *Admissional:* impartial/ participation is closed. *Privileged*: approaches to deciding access = partial/ participation is closed. Open Access: *Recognitional*: approaches to deciding access = impartial/ participation is open. *Excepted*: approaches to deciding access = partial/ participation is open. Merit/potential (considered synonymous) subject to binary variables of valid/non-valid and reliable/non-reliable. *Valid but non-reliable* = predictable but not replicable measurement of merit (e.g. references or personal statements). *Non-valid/non-reliable* = diametrically opposed to fair assessment (aka nepotistic). *Reliable/ non-valid* = systemic adoption of nepotistic practices would make them reliable/re-producible (but still non-valid) – e.g. automatically (not) selecting on basis of school attended or total exclusion of ‘wider contextual factors’/ certain kinds of qualifications. “…the Schwartz Report’s terms of reference explicitly do not provide the discursive authority with which to establish a common currency for determining a candidate’s merit and potential to benefit from higher education” (p.135). Professionalism in admissions is subject to assumptions; there are no explicit guidelines on what is reliable/valid. **Core argument:** Focus/strong defence of institutional autonomy means that robust exploration of discourses that underpin concept of ‘fairness’ is difficult to undertake. |
| Brink, C. (2009). [“Standards will drop” – and other fears about the equality agenda in higher education](https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ838690), *Higher Education Management and Policy*, 21(1), 1–19.    UK/SA/AUS  Annotation by Sally Baker | **Context:** Equality agenda: “the aim is that nobody who has the ability to go to university should lack the opportunity to do so, no matter what his or her circumstances are” (p.3). Three main arguments for pursuing equality [*note: not equity*] agenda: 1) everyone has a right to education and under-representation of any group is “a sign of a systemic denial of such rights” (p.4); 2) notion of ‘redress’ (think South African context) of historical marginalization or disadvantage; 3) utility – meeting human capital requirements (makes more sense in SA than Aus). Need to distinguish between *widening* and *increasing* participation (p.4) – increasing = + no.s; widening = + ratios. Foregrounds importance of language: “Our habitual terminology, which is socially conditioned, will influence the reasons we give for engaging in widening participation, and consequently the actions we take” (p.5) – gives example of ‘deprivation’ tapping into discourses of victimhood and entitlement, rather than more neutral discourses around talent and potential.  **Aim:** Paper offers “a few observations about the fears, doubts and anxieties that permeate” the equity/equality debate (p.3).  **Findings:** Discusses common fears  ‘*Standards will drop’* – based on assumed correlation between under-representation of certain groups and not meeting entry requirements (Brink gives examples from SA and UK that counter this fear)  *‘Our reputation will suffer’* – validated by relational positioning according to league tables (example of entry scores forming ranking formula in UK). Follows with example of challenging ‘African hegemony’ at Stellenbosch University in SA (where Brink was VC for 7 years)  *‘It’s not our problem’* – discusses the distribution of blame to school (A-levels) but points to success rates in GCSEs and how universities might not see that far down as part of their problem. Gives example of Newcastle University’s commitment to becoming a civic university.  *‘It’s social engineering’* – consider underpinning discourses (social engineering as *harmful* not benevolent; as *coercive* not free choice). Brink gives example of his tenure at Stellenbosch and cautions against governments penalising universities for not following a prescriptive equality agenda (for fear of losing political and public support); rather universities “have their own path to tread” (p.11) – connection with notion of academic freedom.  *‘It’s not fair’*- connects with notion of ‘fair access’ (in UK relates to privately educated students disproportionately represented in leading universities): “Fair access”, then, is the insistence that prospective students should be judged in terms, not just of the arithmetical fact of their school-leaving results, but of the context within which those results were obtained” (p.12). On contrary, notion of ‘unfair access’ also applies in decontextualized terms (if places are based on merit, it is ‘unfair’ that a student with lower scores gets in above a student with higher scores).  ‘It’s a waste of time’ – based on two fears: 1) time, money and effort do not justify the returns; 2) it is impossible – “that widening participation and maintaining standards are inherently contradictory” … so that “excellence and equality are mutually exclusive” (p.13-4). Brink dismisses the second fear with the example of Nelson Mandela and examples of ignorant statements relating IQ and ‘intelligence’ (performance in tests) with certain groups.  **Core argument:** Brink concludes by saying that “the comparison of different manifestations of underlying fears tells us something about what is fundamental and what is accidental. Circumstances are accidental, and differ from place to place. Fears, on the other hand, seem to be fundamentally the same, no matter where” (p.18). |
| Brown, R. (2018). [Higher education and inequality, Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13603108.2017.1375442), 22(2), 37-43, DOI: 10.1080/13603108.2017.1375442  UK  Annotation by Anna Xavier  Keywords: *Inequality; social mobility; higher education; universities; ‘winner-take-all’ markets* | **Context:** Set within the author’s argument that ‘the high levels of inequality that we are now experiencing in most Western countries result from a combination of underlying structural phenomena such as globalisation, technological change and financialisation, and the Neoliberal policies of deregulation, privatisation, tax and welfare cutbacks, and macroeconomic deflation that have been adopted in many countries since the late 1970s but especially in the US and UK (which also have the highest levels of inequality) (p. 37), and the emphasised connection between HE and the rising economic inequality.  **Aim:** To argue that:   1. ‘The expansion of HE may actually have contributed to rising economic inequality. 2. Higher education – at least in the major Anglo- phone countries – exemplifies the growth in inequality as a classic ‘winner-take-all’ market. Government policies to ‘marketise’ higher education (Brown and Carasso 2013) have reinforced this. 3. However, HE could also play a part in reversing or slowing inequality, but only if there are changes in policy, practice and indeed philosophy of which the renewed opposition to fees may be a portent’ (p. 37)   **Theoretical frame:** Not specified in study.  **Methodology:** Discussion.  **Discussion:** 1)HE & social mobility - A huge gap is observed between people with & without college degrees, which is evident in the following ways: a) The continuing difference in financial rewards – the ‘graduate premium’ (p. 37) between graduates with degrees and high school graduates; b) The increasing geographical divide of communities with & without large concentrations of graduates’ (p. 38); c) The varying attitudes towards ‘popular reform’ in Brexit & US election – where a high school qualification appears to indicate if someone votes for a ‘populist, anti-establishment candidate’ (p. 38). 2)HE as a ‘winner-take-all’ market: The ‘winner-take-all’ markets, which was previously only evident in limited sectors, is now ‘ubiquitous’ across various sectors, including HE; Frank (1999) – HE is an ‘excellent example’ of this market, as the winners of each competition received rewards ‘out of all proportion relative to the quality of what they do’ (p. 38); Universities also allocate status through credential granting; The competition for status leads to the ‘inevitable outcome’ of ‘increased stratification’ (p. 38), and the competitive advantage is reflected in the new ‘Three Rs’: resources (especially income from endowments and donations), reputation & research (p. 39); Baum & McPherson(2013)- HE is increasingly becoming a world of ‘sorting, selecting & ranking’ (p. 39). 3)The cost of status competition: The pursuit of status is an ineffective use of resources – a) stock of prestige is limited, where one HEI can only progress if the rankings of another HEI goes down; b) a diversion of effort from the core purpose of student education, research & scholarship; c) reduction of trust in universities; d) risk of losing societal understanding and support; e) adds to & exacerbates other pressures, leading to an increase in economic inequality. 4)Inequality & HE: Neoliberal policies are ‘key enablers of increased inequality’, even in HE – ‘increased stratification; the rationalisation of subjects, courses and institutions; reduced diversity; less innovation; commodification and lower quality of student learning; wastage of resources; and the diversion of universities away from being autonomous centres of learning to being commercial purveyors of ‘learning services’’ (p. 40). 5)Implications – 1) HE should aim for the reversal of marketisation towards ‘a genuinely mixed public/private funding system backed by a better balance between state, market and peer regulation, as well as far more stringent market-entry criteria for new providers’; 2) A re-examination & re-emphasis of the role of HE in preparing students to engage in a more diverse & fairer society is needed; 3) HE educators should re-evaluate & redirect (if necessary) the curriculum offered to students, with an emphasis on the ‘development of personal values & characteristics which will produce a new generation of citizens committed to producing a fairer society’ (Astin & Astin, 2015) (p. 40).  **Core argument:** The increasing stratification of universities & colleges in Anglophone countries & the constituencies they serve mostly reflects on issues happening in these societies – an increasing gap between the ‘small, wealthy elite and the great mass of middle and lower-income households’ (p. 41), and highlights the impact of Neoliberal policies. Hence, no significant changes in HE can be observed until ‘broader Neoliberal policies are abandoned’ (p. 41). |
| Bunce, L., Baird, A. & Jones, S.E. (2016). [The student-as-consumer approach in higher education and its effects on academic performance,](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03075079.2015.1127908) *Studies in Higher Education*, 42:11, 1958-1978,  DOI: 10.1080/03075079.2015.1127908  UK  Annotation by Anna Xavier  Keywords: *student-as-consumer; learner identity; academic performance; grade goal; tuition fees* | **Context:** The notion of the students as consumers (SAC) in England has recently been emphasised due to significant changes in HE funding: Students are now responsible for up to £9000 (triple the previous fees) annually for their tuition, and the government protects students under the Consumer Rights Act (2015). However, the effect of this change on student approaches to HE and effects on academic performance has received ‘limited empirical attention’ (p. 12) (Tomlinson, 2014).  **Aim:** To examine ‘the predictive role of traditional factors (learner identity and grade goal) upon academic performance and potential predictors of consumer orientation (fee responsibility and subject studied) whilst concurrently looking at the mediating role of consumer orientation on academic performance’ (p. 12).  **Theoretical frame:** Not specified in study. Key concepts: Learner identity – ‘a broad set of attitudes and behaviours associated with intellectual engagement, approach to learning and identification with the social category, ‘learner’’ (p. 4); in study – ‘a composite measure that took into account studying attitudes and behaviours including attending class, reading relevant sources, making an effort to study, self-identifying as a learner, enjoying learning, and the importance of being at university to learn’ (p. 5); Grade goal – in current study: ‘assessed by asking students to indicate the final degree classification with which they hoped to graduate. In line with the above research, we predicted that a higher grade goal would be associated with a higher level of academic performance’ (p. 5).  **Methodology:** Large scale survey which assessed students’ agreement/disagreement with statements evaluating consumer and learner orientations on a 7 point Likert-type scale (0=strongly disagree, 3=neutral, 6=strongly agree); Survey statements - adapted from Saunders (2014); 15 consumer statements & 20 learner statements; Participants: Undergraduates from a total of 35 universities in England (n=608); 81.4 % female (n=495) & 17.8 % (n=108) male; 0.3% transgender (n=2); and 0.3% who preferred not to answer (n=2); White majority (92% / n=558); Data analysis – mediation analysis to explore if consumer orientation mediated effects of learner identity, grade goal, fee responsibility & subject on academic performance; preliminary analyses to determine additional variables to include in model.  **Findings:** 1) General findings: No difference observed in consumer orientation for three variables: Work (being in paid employment or not), Year of Study (Year 1 or other) and Gender (female or other); Significant effects on consumer orientation observed for four variables: Extracurricular Involvement, Course Credit, Volunteering, and Age; a higher consumer orientation was evident among (a) students who did not have an extracurricular role (M = 2.59, SD = 0.81) compared to those who did (M = 2.38, SD = 0.93, t(606) = −2.715, p<.007); (b) students who received course credit (M=2.68, SD=0.81) compared to those who did not (M = 2.46, SD = 0.86, t(606) = 2.929, p < .004); (c) students who did not work as a volunteer (M = 2.57, SD = 0.84) compared to those who did (M=2.35, SD=0.86, t(606)=−2.558, p<.01) and (d) younger students (M= 2.25, SD = 0.91) compared to mature students (M = 2.58, SD = 0.83, t(606) = −3.347, p < .001). Therefore these four variables were entered as covariates in the analysis; 10 variables were included in the final model. The outcome variable was academic performance and the mediator was consumer orientation, both of which were measured on an interval scale. There were four predictors. The first was learner identity, which was measured on an interval scale. The other three predictors were categorical: Fee responsibility (1 = responsible, 0 = not responsible), grade goal (1 = first class, 0 = other), and subject type (1 = STEM, 0 = non-STEM); 2) Mediation of consumer orientation: A negative relationship was observed between consumer orientation and academic performance (higher consumer orientation was associated with lower academic performance); all predictors had a significant direct effect on consumer orientation; Learner identity had a negative association with consumer orientation (a lower learner identity was associated with a higher consumer orientation); grade goal, fee responsibility and subject were positively associated with consumer orientation (a first class grade goal, being responsible for paying fees, and studying a STEM subject were associated with a higher consumer orientation); direct effects on the predictors of academic performance – learner identity & grade goal were significant positive predictors of academic performance; indirect effects – consumer orientation was a significant mediator of all relationships between predictors & academic performance; contrary to predictions of authors – total indirect effect remained positive, although significantly reduced, suggesting that consumer orientation partially accounts for positive association between learner identity & recent academic performance.  **Discussion:** 1) Direct effects on consumer orientation – the effect of learner identity on consumer orientation supported the authors’ hypothesis (a lower learner identity was associated with a higher consumer orientation); grade goal was positively associated with consumer orientation (a higher grade goal was related to a higher consumer orientation); fee responsibility & subject were also positively associated with consumer orientation. 2) Mediating role of consumer orientation on academic performance – consumer orientation was a significant mediator of all relationships between the predictors & academic performance; consumer orientation is partially responsible for the positive association between learner identity & recent academic performance; learner identity might ‘compete’ with consumer orientation (p. 14); there is also evidence of the mediating link of consumer orientation between grade goal & academic performance (a higher grade goal was associated with lower academic performance when consumer orientation was taken into account); evidence of consumer orientation as mediator for the link between fee responsibility & academic performance; evidence of significant mediating effect of consumer orientation on the relationship between subject & academic performance (studying STEM was related to a higher level of consumer orientation which caused poorer academic performance). Implications: 1)Universities should initiate a dialogue about the SAC approach & its consequences with students 2) Governments and universities should not conceptualise students as consumers in the first place 3)Universities should not implement changes based on feedback from students with a higher consumer orientation without thinking.  **Core argument:** ‘The significant paths between learner identity, grade goal, fee responsibility, and subject underscore the need for further research to give direct attention to the SAC approach in HE to help mitigate its negative effects on academic performance’ (p. 17). |
| Burke, P.J. & Kuo, Y.C. (2015). [Widening Participation in Higher Education: Policy Regimes and Globalizing Discourses](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-1-137-45617-5_29). In Huisman, J.; H. de Boer; D. Dill & M. Souto-Otero (Eds.) *The Palgrave International Handbook of Higher Education Policy and Governance*, pp. 547–568. Palgrave Macmillan UK.  AUS/ US/ UK  Annotation written by Sally Baker | **Context:** An overview of WP policy regimes in China, USA, UK, exploring how discourses of excellence, meritocracy are increasingly foregrounded in HE policy, and how this relates to/ impacts on positioning of WP in policy. Focus of access on different groups; traditionally China = focused on rural and remotes groups; US = people of colour; UK = working class, low-participation neighbourhoods and people with disabilities. Student mobility also a significant part of the jigsaw  **Aim:** To “show that meanings attached to ‘WP’ are not only highly contextual but are also connected to diverse and competing values and perspectives, as well as interconnected policy regimes” (p.548) and to show “messiness” of policy formation  **Theoretical frame:** Regime theory (e.g. Krasner, 1982; Wilson, 2000): “sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures” (Krasner, 1982: 186, cited on p.548)/ concept of ‘assemblage’ = policy formation at level of gov’t but also web of local, institutional and global contexts (p.549)  **Methodology:** Literature/ policy review: critical analysis  **Findings:** Discussion of tension between excellence and equity (p.550-2)  *China*: vast regional differences in quality and access. Chinese government is committed to set of ‘world-class university’ initiatives (competing in global ranking). Fees have increased, government investment has declined. Access to HE impeded by family background, place of residence, gender, finance (parents’ background and earnings). Rich, urban children more likely to attend Tier 1 universities (1.48 times higher); one-child policy favours male students over female. Chinese HE has expanded quickly – impacted on quality. Chinese government’s ability to increase opportunities to socially and economically marginalised people has been diminished because of lack of regulation of fee-charging by Chinese gov’t. Discourses such as ‘socialist market economy’ that China has embraced and can be seen in HE policy, about HE supporting modernisation of socialism (p.556) but needs to be seen within context of competing in global ‘market’ of HE  *USA*: “relatively progressive agenda with affirmative action used as a mechanism to redress the social inequalities between historically disadvantaged and privileged groups” (p.556). Discourses of meritocracy and excellence “increasingly countered and undermined such values and perspectives” (p.557) as seen in the way that financial aid/ scholarships available to students with strong academic records/ sporting and musical ability. Research universities are elite and meritocratic (Altbach, 2011)  *England*: Thatcher’s government promoted neoliberalism and New Labour did little to reform the marketization and privatisation of key services, including HE and this has been pushed forward by Con-Lib Dem coalition gov’t – “cementing trends towards ‘enterprise’ and decentralisation” (p.560). Decrease in public spending/ increase in student contributions. However, New Labour pushed WP agenda to heart of HE reforms (1997). Meanings of WP = “contested and shifting in England” (p.560) and connected to student fees [similar to HECS argument in Aus: deferring payment is WP initiative bc all students can access HE and pay later]. Concentration of WP funds to outreach and access “has tended to ignore issues of participation” (p.563). Stratification of HE in England may lead to WP happening more intensely in particular kinds of institutions, “with concomitant social justice implications for students” (p.562).  **Core argument:**  China: binary system aims to bring together Chinese socialism and ‘unethical’ western market practices  US: excellence intertwined with merit-based financial aid mechanism  England: meritocratic view and embedded WP towards marketised system |
| Butcher, J.; Corfield, R. & Rose-Adams, J. (2012). [Contextualised approaches to widening participation: a comparative case study of two UK universities](http://oro.open.ac.uk/33147/), *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning,* 13(SI), 51–70.  UK  Annotation by Sally Baker  Keywords:*strategy; discipline; leadership; policy; practice; comparative.* | **Context:** Examines staff perspectives on WP from two different UK universities (Northampton = post-1992 and OU = distance/open university). WP in UK = traced back to Robbins Report (1963) but has been particularly dominant in preceding 15 years (New Labour gov’t). Equity groups [term not used in paper] in UK = BME, students with disabilities, ‘disadvantaged social and economic backgrounds’, FinF, OOHC, part-time, non-traditional qualifications. New universities in particular attracted higher funding during New Labour years; post-Conservative-Liberal gov’t, funding = cut (e.g. EMA, increased student fees). Paper based on hypothesis that leadership perspectives on WP = “likely to be major determinants affecting how WP is conceptualised and translated into practice as part of the university’s mission” (p.53).  University of Northampton = WP university; new VC in 2010 with strategic business plan to reposition uni in terms of research performance/capacity.  Open University = open access policy (no entrance requirements); majority of students = p/t and 70% also work f/t. OU student population mirrored demographic profile of UK in 2010. OU also got new VC (in 2009) with mission to expand more into international markets and move more to online environments  **Aim:** To report research that interviewed senior staff members on personal perspectives of “a passing ‘golden age’ of WP, in which generous resources flowed in support of a national strategy, and an emerging ‘austere’ age in which the architecture underpinning WP is being drastically dismantled and a very different business model of student fees is being introduced” (p.53)  **Theoretical frame:**  **Methodology:** Research conducted in 2011 (between two major policy moments: acceptance that student fees could rise and HEFCE’s ‘drastic cuts’ to teaching grants). ‘Senior stakeholder interview methodology’ used to study policy effects (from national/HEFCE to institutional policy), grounded in context of economic, political and organisational forces. Staff interviewed = VC, PVC and Deans of schools at Northampton (x8) and Unit Directors in OU (national, regional, WP, student services and Diversity and Equality staff; x9)  **Findings:**  Literature review illuminates 4 ‘connecting terms’ with WP: diversity (synonymously used with WP), inclusion (used predominantly with disability in UK), equality (legislative context and equity (Australian context; see p.55) – see Thomas et al.’s (2010) analysis of themes in 129 institutional WP Strategic Assessments.  Widening Participation as conflicted discourse = number of different conceptualisations suggest sense of confusion, sometimes at level of mixing policy and personal/values-driven discourses (strategically?). Staff in professional areas = more definitively either pragmatic (about recruitment) or principled (based on ideas about social justice). Many participants articulated a sense of not knowing what WP is, particularly with regard to public phrases such as ‘fair access’ and ‘social mobility’. For OU, WP = umbrella term to describe supporting students and widening access = focused on generating higher student numbers – but lack of central clarity (due in part to differentiated UK context). WP = “a conflicted discourse, an educational space in which contradictory impulses around pre-entry aspiration-raising and university-based support for learning are still not embedded in any coherent way into the strategic approach to WP” (p.61)  Widening participation = conceptualised and delivered in disciplines = At Northampton, WP = organised/conceived/ delivered at school level = interviews illustrated “clear customisation of the WP agenda” (p.62), e.g. activities based on gender imbalance; focus on access to Arts courses (less BME students). Preparedness of WP students = continuing challenge. All Deans identified the preparedness of some WP students for HE as a continuing challenge. (p.62). Issues with self-referral to generic support (less confidence= disadvantage) – WP funding = insufficient to support all interventions ideally needed. Many participants identified issues with greater inclusivity in curriculum = related to dominance of “anglocentricity and ethnocentricity” (p.63) and lack of diversity in staff.  Impact of WP: acknowledgement of difficulty of measuring impact; “the actual impact may be difficult to measure unequivocally because of the complexity of educational, economic, social and cultural factors involved, their interplay, and the long timeframes involved” (p.64). Recognition of individual journeys (rather than homogenous view of WP students) = suggests a “values-informed leadership role for universities in making social mobility a reality” (p.65). Interviewees recognised that quant metrics = important but is also important to include qualitative, student-centred measurements.  Danger of WP = becoming ‘tired cliché’ – Northampton changed name of WP department to ‘Access and Achievement’; similar for OU: changed to ‘Centre for Inclusion and Curriculum’  **Core argument:** Research highlights shifting notions of WP as universities changed strategic plans/ vision/ direction. Tensions exist between broad national target measurements and more student-centred measures. There is a lot of slippage between different/differing understandings of WP as policy discourse and enactments in practice. “The key message from senior stakeholders for WP practitioners is to adapt and evolve, or risk extinction” (p.69). |
| Chapman, A., Mangion, A., & Buchanan, R. (2015). [Institutional statements of commitment and widening participation policy in Australia](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1478210315581462), *Policy Futures in Education,* 13(8), 1–15.  AUS  Annotation by Sally Baker  Keywords: *higher education, widening participation, statements of commitment* | **Context:** Australian higher education post=Bradley review (2008) – highlights “competing ideological discourses” (p.3) tension between social justice and neoliberal economic pursuits. Works from Bowl & Hughes, 2014’s analysis of UK context  **Aim:** To explore the constructions of equity in three universities’ publicly available mission statements and strategic plans and see how equity is “translated into action” in one university (abstract)  **Theoretical frame:** Austin’s ‘speech acts’ and Ahmed’s (2012) framework for conceptualising diversity work through connections between policy documents and practices in the field – focusing both on what is said and not said (penetrating the rhetoric). Ahmed says “To track what texts do, we need to follow them around.” (2006:105, on p.7)  **Methodology:** Textual analysis of 3x mission statements and strategic plans and semi-structured interviews with 78 staff (41 professional/ 37 academic staff from 7 faculties) on responses to Bradley Review and student transition/ retention in Australian WP context.  **Findings:** Participants perceived university’s mission statement reflected equity as central concern as evident in mission centre; also promotion of altruism. Ma Some staff were concerned about silencing of student voices (disconnect between saying and doing of equity), others were concerned about level of bureaucracy as a hindrance to translating vision into action and the push for research. There was also concern about the provision of resources (money hadn’t risen in line with student numbers) **Core argument:** “Statements of commitment… were consequently read by staff as non-performatives in relation to the WP agenda with the follow-up actions necessitated by such institutional commitments viewed as either absent, inconsistent or out of line with other strategic agendas” (p.12) – this is how practitioners struggle with and against the neoliberal logic. Raising participation rates without commensurate resources to support student retention and support = creates conflict between economic and equity aspects of WP (p.13). |
| Collyer, F. (2015). [Practices of conformity and resistance in the marketisation of the academy: Bourdieu, professionalism and academic capitalism](https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Practices-of-conformity-and-resistance-in-the-of-Collyer/146da9f22e32086752a9d528dd05c3a70c2d06b3), *Critical Studies in Education,* 56(3), 315–331.  AUS  Annotation by Sally Baker  Keywords: *academic capitalism; Bourdieu; knowledge society; managerialism; marketisation; neoliberalism; new professions; professionalisation; universities* | **Context:** Explores the perceptions/observations/ reflections on everyday practices of staff in four Australian universities to understand processes of social change in context of marketisation of the academy – impact of new ‘professional managers’ on established academic 2. Do staff resist or conform to pressures of marketisation? Works from call from Mars et al. (2008) for more local case studies to understand the different ways they operate in marketised academy.  **Aim:** Seeks to develop a picture of “why academics adopt – or resist the adoption of – market behaviours and become involved or co-opted into these new organisational arrangements” (p.318)  **Theoretical frame:** Theory of academic capitalism (“a multi-faceted and powerful way of speaking about the integration of public research universities into monopoly capitalism and their transformation into active, for-profit players in the marketplace, selling their employees’ knowledge, activities and products”, p.315-6)/ Bourdieu (capital, habitus, field). Collyer concedes that the theory of academic capitalism is also contested and requires further elaboration/refinement.  **Methodology:** Qualitative; interviews conducted with staff (in Social Sciences) from 4 universities – mix of research/teaching/managerial/ administration; half female; mix of positions. All but one were in permanent/ continuing positions.  **Findings:** High level of awareness of processes of marketisation (e.g. competing for funds/ recruiting international students/ private businesses on campus) – and almost all participants held negative views of changes. New forms of appraisal were also disliked: “Many academics found these forms of measurement ‘ incongruous and insulting’, a sign from management of the need for close surveillance rather than an assumption that they were honourable, trustworthy and ‘ professional’” (p.320). Contempt expressed about people employed to ‘manage’ but without research/teaching experience – not super common in Australia but increasingly common globally. Two broad groups of participants: conformists and resistors.  Conforming: Some participants self-identified as ‘managers’ and were more comfortable with market rather than academic ethos. When managers who have academic experience start to conform to market ideologies, it is “a phenomenon that puzzles and frustrates” (p.321) – data suggests that conforming to market results from practical experience in roles/ position in the field. Other examples of conformity: buying out teaching time with research funding/ negotiating promotions at the end of each temp. contract/ coopting into marketing narratives.  Resisting: Some HoDs describe themselves in ‘buffer’ terms – partly protecting staff from the impact of marketisation (between academics/ upper management). Offers examples of how participants have worked the system to work better for them [this sounds like another form of efficiency/ resource-saving to me] – e.g. writing several articles with one single idea/ co-editing book with 2 others so only have to write 2 chapters).  *Habitus/control over knowledge*: “In the university context, efforts on the part of university management to wrest control of expert knowledge from academics can be regarded as attempts to reshape the academic habitus in line with managerial principles, and thus with the market” (p.324).  *Capital/control over workplace:* Discusses how professionals hold more capital in neo-liberal university (controlling budgets/ appointments) – so that marketisation can be seen to be changing/diluting academic capital - and how some academics are drawing on other forms of capital (scientific/ intellectual capital) to protect themselves from these practices/surveillance, but particular people can do this (permanent, close to retirement, senior positions with high levels of publications and funding)  **Core argument:** Marketisation “violates, or threatens to violate highly valued academic norms and practices” (p.320) |
| Dakka, F. (2020). [Competition, innovation and diversity in higher education: dominant discourses, paradoxes and resistance](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01425692.2019.1668747?journalCode=cbse20), *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 41(1), 80–94.  UK  Annotation by Anna Xavier  Keywords: *Neoliberalism; competition fetish; university; polarized convergence; innovation* | **Context:** Contemporary HE theoretically challenging, as it is animated by a variety of institutional actors and processes that are interconnected and engaged with the global, economic, political and cultural environment that has historically generated it and continues to shape it.  **Aim:** To contribute to the ‘extant critique of (higher) education by introducing the concept of ‘polarised convergence’ as an instance of differentiation without diversity in the contemporary English university’ (p. 81). Theoretical aim: To review the shifting state-higher education-market nexus via a critical cultural political economy lens. Conceptual aim: To closely examine concepts that expos the material & discursive ‘*dispositifs’* through which nation-states, institutions & individual actors mobilize universities to position themselves in the global knowledge economy.  **Theoretical frame:** Key theoretical concepts: 1) ‘Logic of competition’ (Davies, 2014) 2)’Competition fetish’ (Naidoo, 2011; 2015; 2018) 3) ‘Polarised convergence’ (Dakka, 2020).  **Methodology:** The discussion is complemented by empirical evidence obtained from a doctoral project conducted to capture the views, reactions and analyses of senior leaders in HE (2013-2014). The empirical evidence is aimed to highlight the ‘contradictory and paradoxical outcomes’ of competitiveness practiced in English HE institutions. Data collection method: Semi-structured interviews. Participants: Six senior leaders in HE institutions. Sample: 6 HE institutions characterised as ‘research intensive, teaching intensive and mixed’.  **Discussion:** 1) State-university-market: A shifting construct – a)Competition & competitiveness within contemporary HE (structural, discursive & cultural undertones): i)Systemic level: Regulation approach (RA) (Jessop, 1990, 1993, 1995)- allows the alignment of globalisation, neoliberalisation and the re-scaling and re-structuring of the post-Keynesian capitalist state with the transformation of HE. ii)’Competitive state’ (Cerny, 1990, 1997): Connects state transformation with ‘exogenous pressures’ (p. 81) stemming from globalization via 3 key areas: International market structures and economic networks arising from the international mobility capital; rapid and diffuse technological change; the formation of international networks and discourses of power legitimating new types of governance. b)Commodification/Marketization of HE: ‘New spatial politics of (re)bordering and (re)ordering of the state-education-citizen relation’ (Robertson, 2011) (p. 82) - Globalizing processes, specifically the widespread diffusion of neoliberalism has led to new forms of territorial bordering (eg: European Higher Education Arena) & the emergence of new categories which as ‘constitutive of education sectors and subjectivities’ (Robertson, 2011, p. 281). 2)English higher education – a complex ecology: Trajectory of recent policy interventions in English HE: 2012 – a) Changes resulting from the liberalisation of the HE sector: Tripling of the annual tuition fees (capped at £9000) backed by a (financially unsustainable) Income Contingent Loan system; partial relaxation of student number controls (AABs, ABBs policies); the Research Excellence Framework (2014); creation of a level playing field for alternative providers (private & for-profit education providers); increased reliance on metrics (eg. Key Information Sets, National Student Survey, multiple ranking devices) to evaluate performance & produce accurate information for the student-consumer (BIS White Paper, 2011). B) Impact of the Higher Education and Research Act (2017): Introduction of a Teaching Excellence Framework (will pave the way for variable tuition fees in connection with outcomes after 2020); creation of the Office for Students (merges the functions of the existing Office for Fair Access (OFFA) & the former Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)); increased reliance on metrics (student satisfaction, graduate employment, retention) for performance evaluation & the creation of new evaluation measures; merging of seven research councils, Innovate UK, UK Research & Innovation (UKRI); easing the entry & operational requirements for alternative providers; evaluation of the more flexible switching of university courses; increased transparency in admission processes by demanding the publication of gender, ethnicity & socio-economic backgrounds of the student body. 3) Unpacking competition: Competition emerges as a ‘symbolic and material engine at the heart of neoliberal marketization’ (p. 83); ‘The theoretical paradoxes of competition’ (p. 83) are central to the current articulation of the relationship between state, education and markets in 3 key ways: i)The promotion of competition requires the state to play both the ‘active and disengaged’ role (p. 84) 2) Competition ‘paradoxically combines equality and inequality’ (p. 84) 3)Competition is both ‘an object of investigation & a policy’, transcending the disciplinary division between sociology and neoclassical economics’ (p. 84); Question that triggered the crucial shift towards theorising competitiveness as an ‘ultimate source of authority and legitimization’: ‘Is market competition necessary to deliver competitiveness?’ (Davies, 2014, p. 44); Other theories relating to ‘competition’: ‘Competitive agency grants’ (Schumpeter, 2014) – Contends that long term feasibility of capitalism is threatened by ‘oppressive bureaucracies and rationalistic attempts’ to control the future, which is evident in both governments and private enterprises, competition is thus expanded to include sociological, cultural, political and technological factors; ‘Competition fetish’ (Naidoo, 2011; 2015; 2018) – Complements and develops Davies’ distinction between classic competition and competitiveness. ‘Shamans’ of competition: Governments, international organizations such as the OECD or the World Bank, and global corporations (Naidoo, 2018). Argues that competition inside the university is ‘relayed, internalized, reproduced or *resisted* with the help of institutional ‘audit-market’ intermediaries’ (Enders & Naidoo, 2018) (p. 84), which either facilitate the transmission of market forces, or act as buffers/negotiators. Third & crucial layer of Naidoo’s ‘competition fetish’ concept: Naidoo’s anthropological take on the magic workings of the ‘fetish’ through a series of ‘mind snares’ (Naidoo, 2018, p. 6), which adds analytical strength to Davies’ examination of the Schumpeterian innovator’s psychological traits; Many scholars agree with Davies’ and Naidoo’s critique of neoliberal competition as ‘essentially hindering diversity and innovation, exacerbating pre-existing inequalities, creating new zones of exclusion (via institutional stratification) and fundamentally altering the nature of academic work’ (p. 85) ((Dale 2016; Marginson 2016; Ahmed 2004; Burrows 2012; Burrows and Knowles 2014; Gill 2009; Collini 2012; Olssen 2016). 4)Competition & innovation in the English HE: Voices from the field (drawn from empirical evidence of doctoral project) – Highlights ‘polarised convergence’ (Dakka, 2020, p. 86), which illustrates the intrinsic contradictions stemming from a case of ‘marketization by the state’ - clarifies two fundamental aspects of the rhetoric and reality of competitive markets in education: a) ‘Imperfections’, instead of failures, are intrinsic to the implementation of market mechanisms. b)The subjective tensions & analytic discomfort surround meanings & interpretations of marketisation were unanimously expressed by participants of the study (senior managers, university leaders) & literature; Senior leaders (often sharing thoughts in ‘dual mode’ (p. 86): managerial & academic) – highlighted the intricacies, ambiguities & tensions observed in Naidoo’s account of the structural, symbolic & affective levers of competition; Competition appears to be both the ‘cause and solution to the predicament’ (p. 87) faced by the leaders’ respective institutions: its opaque contours and strong emotional connotations (‘cut-throat’, ‘feed your own institution’) drive symbolic and strategic action, without a clear promise of educational or financial gain (p. 87) – in line with Naidoo’s analysis: the competition fetish produces a ‘psychological ambience of the university’ but is more or less actualized in excellence policies which aim to increase productivity (p. 87); A sense of urgency and nervousness was observed when participants reflected on the meaning of enterprise, innovation & distinctiveness in their institutions – most participants candidly admit their inability to define what makes their institution distinctive or what is defined as being ‘entrepreneurial, excellent and innovative’ (p. 87); Tensions & ambivalence of the HE leaders regarding goals & ambitions that are explicitly framed in business-like jargon is observed; Participants’ responses confirm Sum & Jessop’s (2013) reflections on the relationship between competitiveness, HE & the knowledge-based economy and the increasing trends towards innovative regional partnership models; Marketization is identified with financial shortage/redistribution, liberalization, commercialization and metricization’ (p. 89); The uneven levels of competition within and across national borders demystifies the classic liberal belief of equivalence , where all competitors start equal & only become unequal as a result of competition; ‘When institutional differentiation is equated to its reputational divide and market positioning, in-segment convergence is favoured and systemic, functional differentiation is sacrificed’, resulting in the ‘ultimate paradox: differentiation with diversity’ (p. 90).  **Summary of discussion:** 1)The binary logic of success/failure that is so embedded in pecking orders institutionalizes competitiveness by conflating means with ends to the detriment of the diversity and richness of educational experiences and philosophies. 2)Mimetic desire, existential anxiety and shame are powerful emotional instruments through which neoliberalism, *via* the logic of competition, finds its internal source of legitimation and reproduction, swallowing its own critique and accommodating paradoxes. 3)The link between semiosis and affect should not be overlooked: that is, the fetishization of calculative practices in education is built upon and justified by certain constellations of feelings.  **Core argument:** Competitive, mimetic desire and the ‘affective’ nature of competition can pose a significant challenge to the current HE systems’ ability to effectively and substantially diversify their structures and contents, consequently compromising the achievement of its intended goals: innovation and positional advantage in the knowledge-based economy. A counter-narrative to the fetish of competition & a remedy to innovation loss should begin from ‘a subversion and re-signification of meanings, practices & spaces’ (p. 91). |
| David, M. (2012). [Changing Policy Discourses on Equity and Diversity in UK Higher Education: What Is The Evidence?](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9781137283412_2). In Hinton-Smith, T. (ed), *Widening Participation in Higher Education: Casting the Net Wide?.* Palgrave MacMillan: Basingstoke, pp.22–36.  UK  Annotation by Sally Baker | **Context:** Examines evolution of WP as policy discourse in UK HE – moving from expanded access to HE for women in mid 20th century. Post-WWII = ‘equality of educational opportunity’ principle – initially for secondary education and later extended to post-compulsory education. Initially about disadvantage, later about economy (in Thatcher years = neoliberal agenda – but notes how despite proliferation of market, participation continued to widen and the gender gap closed in school, but not for all social classes). New Labour did not challenge privatisation/ marketisation of education. WP = reached a peak during New Labour = legislated for equality duties (but = ‘on individualistic grounds’, p.24) – focus on access rather than participation. WP = major policy discourse for 13 years but still linked to neoliberal policy discourse + economic agenda. Under Con/ Lib Dem coalition = more individualistic about social mobility (see changing unit names/ locations of HE responsibility).  **Theoretical frame:**  **Methodology:** Discussion; reports on TLRP research = brief overview of each section of the project.  **Findings:** Vignoles’ project = shows that socioeconomic gap in HE = due to secondary school participation/ achievement. Young low SES students = more likely to drop out; mature age women = less likely to drop out. To reap benefits of HR = students need “to secure a good class of first degree”; therefore, need to raise expectations, especially of low SES boys (p.29). Hayward’s project shows gendered rates of participation (more males via FE college pathway) – transition from VET – HE = difficult **Core argument:** Policy discourse = moved away from equity/equality and towards social mobility, with selective evidence based used to make argument and instrumental focus on jobs. David Willetts (launching White Paper) blamed lack of progress of males on progress of women, meaning that some households had two graduates earning, while others had none |
| Edmond, N. & Berry, J. (2014). [Discourses of ‘equivalence’ in HE and notions of student engagement: resisting the neoliberal university](https://uhra.herts.ac.uk/handle/2299/15314), *Student Engagement and Experience Journal,* 3(2), 1–19.  UK  Annotation by Sally Baker | **Context:** Marketisation of higher education and development of ‘students as consumers’ discourse; discourse of employability on student engagement.  **Aim:** To “ discuss the impact of the discourse of employability on student engagement and argue that it positions students as engaged in an individual process of CV building rather than a collective process of learning and knowledge development” (abstract)  **Methodology:** ‘Documentary analysis’ of five universities’ websites where students have been protesting (student union webpages)  **Discussion:** Authors describe the contemporary neoliberal/ marketised shape of English higher education, arguing that to “mount opposition, it is vital to conceptualise education in the same way as neoliberals do, as a commodified – and increasingly privatized - good to be bought, sold and bid for along with housing, healthcare, energy and basic transportation” (p.5). They offer an overview of how higher education has changed over time, which has pushed the employability agenda to the fore (which they call the ‘vocationalisation’ of higher education). They make an argument for ‘equivalence’, which “legitim[ise] the expansion of universities’ involvement in the development of the existing workforce through means such as part-time in-service courses and bespoke programmes for employers and the trend within some universities to move into the ‘territory’ of the workplace to enhance and accredit workplace learning” (see p.7) – leading to academic capitalism (Rhodes, 2003).  Authors discuss how market competition requires differentiation, which has led to deepening inequity within participation/ achievement of particular groups, because “markets have their own logic for calculating value and this discourse of ‘equivalence’ can serve to obscure or deny inequality (in this case of the exchange value of qualifications) much as the ‘equal but different’ discourse of apartheid and the Jim Crow laws sought to do” (p.9).The assumption of choice depends on the assumption of independence/ autonomy: “Essentially, within a marketized system in which the ‘value’ of HE is expressed in terms of eventual earning potential (the exchange value of labour power), student engagement becomes a process of ‘commodification of the self’” (p.10)  Authors explore possibilities for ‘active resistance’ — through promotion of participation (work/ volunteering) in student union protests against increasing student fees through justification of employability angle  **Core argument:** “we argue that it is only through challenging some of these basic precepts of value - of which employability, the privileging of skills and the development of certain notions of character are most prevalent – can we, as students and academics, open up the possibilities of concerted opposition to neoliberal hegemony” (p.14) |
| Gartland, C. (2015). [Student ambassadors: ‘role-models’, learning practices and identities](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01425692.2014.886940), *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 36(8), 1192–1211.  UK  Annotation by Sally Baker  Keywords: *student ambassadors, higher education, widening participation, science, technology, engineering and mathematics including medicine, role-models, informal learning* | **Context:** Discusses the use of student ambassadors in marketing HE in context of widening participation in outreach in UK in two contrasting universities. Critiques discourses of aspiration as individual improvement project (quotes Burke, 2012). Student ambassadors positioned as aspirational role-models for school pupils. While the research literature suggests that there are benefits to ambassadors, there is less information/research on benefits to/ voice of pupils. Ambassadors can be source of hot or warm knowledge  **Aim:** To trace and analyse discourses around ambassadors and positioning within learning contexts, relationships with pupils and learning that takes place (abstract)  **Theoretical frame:**  **Methodology:** Ethnography: 2 year engagement in two London universities (one ‘new’, one ‘old’) in field of WP outreach in 2008-9 (programs funded by different sources – see p.7). Interviews conducted with 41 pupils/16 ambassadors in old uni/ 71 pupils and 16 ambassadors in new uni. Pupils all Year 8-11 and most students from low SES schools in ‘deprived’ areas of south-east London.  **Findings:** Identifies 4 groups of main learning attributes: process/ location and setting/ purposes/ content. *Discourse analysis*  With teachers, Gartland identifies discourse of credentialism as a regime of truth (ambassadors requested to help raise C/D borderline (p.9) – gives examples of ambassadors supporting Year 11 pupils with GCSE Maths exam papers: didactic and formal assessment in school classroom – in this context, ambassadors were viewed as “inadequate substitutes for real teachers” (p.10). Teachers also wary of ambassadors’ ability to ‘teach’ on basis of undergraduate discipline “Positioning ambassadors as teachers simply because of their mathematical expertise is problematic” (p.10) when aim of them being there was to drive up grades. Students’ perceptions of ambassadors (p.10-11). Ambiguity noted in teachers/ organisers’ understandings of ambassador role to manage behaviour. Activities described could be placed on continuum of formal – informal attributes. Example of ‘Train Tracks’ day = informal because no curriculum learning (instead mostly subject learning) with ambivalent purposes (aspiration raising/ subject knowledge/ promoting key messages) – experiential learning. Contrast with Maths Workshops. **Core argument:** Generalised discourses about ambassadors as aspiration raisers/ role-models = commonplace but no shared understanding of how it works in practice. Stakeholders have vested interests in ambassador work which influences how they are constructed through discourse and positioned in institutional spaces. Positioning of WP in marketing spaces positions pupils as consumers. Dominant discourses of credentialism/ school cultures position ambassadors and pupils in particular ways. “The current government focus on pupils as rational choosers of HE who need access to better information (Department for Business Innovation and Skills [BIS] 2011) entrenches further individualised discourses of pupils as consumers in the HE marketplace” (p.18) |
| Graham, C. (2011). [Balancing national versus local priorities: analysing ‘local’ responses to the national](https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/openu/jwpll/2011/00000013/00000003/art00002/supp-data)  [widening participation agenda in six case study](https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/openu/jwpll/2011/00000013/00000003/art00002/supp-data)  [HEIs,](https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/openu/jwpll/2011/00000013/00000003/art00002/supp-data) *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning,* 13(3), 12–26.  UK  Annotation by Sally Baker  Keywords: *Policy; institutions; widening participation.* | **Context:** UK HE context post-2007 – ‘negotiations’ of national policy to local interpretations flows of discourse and practice around WP. Draws on perceptions of WP managers. Author notes how the UK national message on WP = “deliberately fuzzy” which “allowed widening participation, on the surface, to appear to be the kind of policy that was uncontroversial – offering a win–win outcome to both students and society” (p.15) = weak framing because multiple interpretations possible in practice.  **Aim:** To examine how 6 HEIs mediated the national WP agenda in/for local contexts; “to consider how six case study universities ‘framed’ or communicated their commitment to widening participation across a range of different settings” (p.13).  **Theoretical frame:** Draws on Edwards et al.’s (2009) adaptation of Bernstein’s ideas to organisational contexts – in particular the ‘mediational power of institutions’ (2009:60); also uses Bernstein’s notion of ‘framing’ to analyse discourses at play (CDA). Framing = “the regulation of communication in organizational contexts” (p.14) = “Therefore, where widening participation is strongly framed, staff within an institution are likely to appear to give a consistent message when speaking about the institution’s commitment to widening participation” (p.14). Strength of framing is important (through consistent discursive practices)  **Methodology:** See Graham (2013)  **Findings:** Three of case study HEIs described WP as part of core mission and pre-dated New Labour policy: “The widening participation managers in the post-92 case study institutions often described a more embedded approach to widening participation, whereby there was no separate ‘widening participation’ function” (p.18). Comments from WP managers at 6 HEIs suggested weak commitment to WP,” with its place in the mission or corporate strategy being contingent upon continued government support and/or the ability of widening participation to fit with pre-existing corporate objectives that were designed to preserve or enhance the status of the institution” (p.18).  All 6 HEIs demonstrated commitment to WP in corporate strategy.  Ideological conflict between WP and RG university’s academic mission/ local agenda noted by RG participant (see p.20). Post-1992 participant’s talk suggests WP is also part of market survival (‘We’ve got to be a welcoming institution … otherwise where are we going to get these students from?’) p.21 = strong overlaps between recruitment and WP, and seen as benefit to HEI before community.  All HEIs pointed to individual staff = enthusiastic to do WP work. As result of weak framing = different ‘voicing sets’ emerge: “there is scope for a variety of different ‘voicing sets’ within the institution. Some staff will express a commitment to widening participation work while others will not” (p.24). **Core argument:** The relatively weak national framing of WP led to possibilities for flexibility in terms of uptake but meant that it “appeared to foster a degree of ‘picking and choosing’ when it came to the delivery of widening participation work” for some HEIs (RG universities in particular) – p.13 |
| Graham, C. (2013). [Discourses of widening participation in the prospectus documents and websites of six English higher education institutions](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01425692.2012.692048?journalCode=cbse20), *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 34(1), 76–93.  UK  Annotation by Sally Baker  Keywords: *higher education; widening participation; discourse analysis* | **Context:** Widening participation discourses in UK HE (2007 and 2011) – how institutional commitment to widening participation was discursively presented in institutional documentation that are publicly available (position themselves and their students). Between 4 years, New Labour lost power and the Tory-Lib Dem coalition took power: tuition fees were increased to $9000 per year. First phase of research (2007) took place after the introduction of variable fees in English universities in 2006. In 2010, Browne review of HE funding and student finance recommended shift towards customer-focused HE system and social mobility for students with the ‘highest academic potential’ (DBIS, 2011: 7) and recommended lifting tuition fees to £9000 per year. Following this, the second phase of analysis took place in 2011 (prior to students enrolling in 2012).  **Aim:** To compare the discourses/ positioning of WP in 6 case study universities between 2007 and 2011  **Theoretical frame:**  **Methodology:** Offers a comparative analysisof discourses (Fairclough’s CDA = language use as social practice; discourse as ‘mode of action’) of widening participation in 6 prospectuses/ websites from 2007 and 2011. 3 universities = pre-1992 (two x Russell Group); 2 = post-1992; 1 = university college. Focused on four areas: overall impression projected by positioning of institution and students; detailed textual analysis of welcome message; fees and funding information; presentation of information about scholarships and bursaries. Used same 16 questions each phase.  **Findings:** Questioned whether more selective universities have ‘specialised recognition rules’ (Bernstein, 1990) - therefore creating marketing materials that invoke a particular student (excluding others). In 2007, post-1992 positioned themselves as “welcoming and accessible” while pre-1992 universities positioned themselves as “providers of information, with no overt effort to encourage students to apply” (p.82). Highlights how the pictures in the pre-1992 universities work to market to an ‘ideal prospective student’ (p.83). In contrast, one post-1992 university talked about ‘when you come for an interview’ (not ‘if’) – works to include all potential applicants. By 2011, there appeared to be a shift. The Russell Group universities appeared to pay more attention to the student experience (e.g. shift from ‘who we are looking for’ to ‘what we are looking for’) and information for care-leavers and students from under-represented groups that were previously absent/ brief. However, one Russell Group university pushed a message that students are discouraged from working and mature students would be welcome if they are “able and willing to fit into an experience that has been designed for school leavers” (p.84) = exclusion for many mature students.  The welcome message was a feature in all the case-study universities in 2007, usually from the VC – although the two post-1992 universities had ‘authorless’ messages. Textual analysis illustrated the elitist language used in Russell Group prospectus (e.g. ‘academic ancestors’/ ‘world class achievement’), compared with the inclusive language in a post-1992 university (‘you are welcome’). By 2011, the welcome message had changed for the post-1992, so it had become more like the Russell Group university. Welcome message appears to be a way of “‘branding’ their values and projecting a particular image” (p.86).  Tuition fee information: in 2007, there was a clear divide regarding the presentation of fee information – for the pre-1992 universities the headings were ‘What will it cost?’, ‘What are the costs at X?’; whereas post-1992 universities had headings like ‘Financial Support’/ ‘Investing in your future’. In 2011, there was less of a distinction and the post-1992 universities had moved toward less inclusive language.  Scholarships/bursaries: All the case study universities were offering above the minimum (£300 per student/year) although it was difficult for student to see what they would be able to receive. This information was still difficult to understand in 2011.  **Core argument:** In 2007, there was a clear distinction between the pre- and post-1992 universities. In particular, the choice of visual materials stood as a set of ‘specialised recognition rules’ (Bernstein, 1990: 29). However, the distinctions were diminished by 2011, perhaps as a result of change of government/changes to HE policy landscape. The Russell Group universities seemed to have moved towards a more inclusive discourse |
| Kilpatrick, S. & Johns, S. (2014). [Institutional Responses to Social Inclusion in Australian Higher Education: Responsible Citizenship or Political Pragmatism?,](https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Institutional-responses-to-social-inclusion-in-or-Kilpatrick-Johns/c53a210c0c1e00fac7f968455865aaccbf2f3815) *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning,* 16(2), 27–45.  AUS  Annotation by Sally Baker  Keywords: *equity; higher education; social inclusion; strategic planning.* | **Context:** Social inclusion policy and practice = underpinned by differing ideologies. Social inclusion = “focuses on informing aspirations, providing opportunities, and creating a supportive environment so that all students with the ability to succeed at higher education are empowered to realise their potential and become agents of social transformation” (p.29). No ‘one-size-fits-all’ model for social inclusion (see Devlin, 2011; Naylor, Baik & James, 2013).  **Aim:** To offer analysis of Australian universities’ strategic planning documents, looking for evidence of strategies to implement social inclusion agenda (positioned on spectrum of neoliberalism – social justice – human potential empowerment); and “specifically to question whether Australian universities’ strategic plans include social inclusion strategies that have integrity and are sustainable” (p.28).  **Theoretical frame:** Draws on social inclusion conceptualisations offered in Gidley et al. (2010): neoliberal – social justice – human potential empowerment.  **Methodology:** Desktop audit of publicly available documents pertaining to social inclusion strategies. Content analysis (Babbie, 2004) undertaken. 19 universities made disability action plans available (but these were excluded). Selection criteria: “To be counted has having social inclusion access strategies, universities’ strategic or sub plans had to state actions that targeted groups underrepresented in Australian higher education to assist them to apply for or enrol in a place at that university, or state an intention to increase numbers from one or more named underrepresented groups” (p.37). **Findings:**  Broadly, older and more research-intensive universities = more neoliberal compared with regional, newer universities (more social justice/ human potential). Only “a small number of universities have embraced a holistic approach to social inclusion, articulating an integrated suite of strategies spanning the access, participation and empowerment domains” (p.40).  “In general terms, older, more prestigious, research intensive universities appear to be willing to accept students who have been able to demonstrate ability despite any educational cultural capital barriers they may have had to overcome, while locally connected, often younger universities are proactive in supporting the aspiration and transition of non-traditional students to higher education” (p.42).   * 38 universities had publicly available strategic plans; * 11 also had sub-plans publicly available * 15 had separate Indigenous education/ Reconciliation plans available * 34 of the strategic plans explicitly referred to social inclusion and most (n=29) included strategies to address social inclusion, equity and/or access for underrepresented or disadvantaged groups; the other 5 set out social inclusion principles and provided strategies in sub-plans * 1 set out strategies for Indigenous students only * 1 had strategies that related to social inclusion but were not explicitly labeled as such * 2 did not have strategies * 1 did not have a plan * 33 of universities with publically available plans =mentioned at least one targeted/ equity group and it was Indigenous people * 28 =made specific mention of low SES, underrepresented, disadvantaged or non-traditional higher education participant groups * 12 = mentioned students with disabilities * 11 = mentioned geographic disadvantage * 6 = mentioned CALD * 16 = targets for various equity groups in their publicly available strategic plans or sub plans (mostly low SES and Indigenous) * 25 = explicitly mentioned social inclusion strategies with relation to staff (22 of which = increase Indigenous employment and women in senior positions * 34 = articulate plans around access * 26 = articulate participation strategies * 15 =empowerment approach (“strategies framed in positive terms (strengths based) and including social, psychological and economic dimensions” (p.36). 9 of these targeted only Indigenous students * 18 = identified access/ pathways but 14 of these = access strategies; other 4 = focus on access and pathways to open access and improve participation. * Participation strategies = categorized as pathways, student experience, empowerment * Language used: neoliberal strategies = reflected deficit views (“‘Build education and training opportunities for disadvantaged urban populations” (ATN university); social justice approach = strengths based (“continue to attract and support students from low socio-economic backgrounds” (IRU); human empowerment (“Learn in partnership with Indigenous students, staff and communities” (IRU) * Institutional strategies are influenced by context of research intensity, tradition, culture (p.40). * Go8 universities tend to emphasise access for high achievers * Newer universities (particularly those that have evolved from technology-based education; ATN) = more likely to foreground pathways * Newer universities (e.g. IRU) = “are more likely to have integrated pathway strategies, that move beyond access to facilitate participation” (p.40).   **Core argument:** “socially inclusive universities articulate a comprehensive and integrated suite of strategies spanning the access, participation and empowerment domains”, which include “a high level plan or framework that articulates goals, agreed strategies for building and sustaining a socially inclusive organisation, and indicators of success” (p.27). Need to consider same patterns in context of history – to understand how universities have evolved in particular ways.  “Socially inclusive universities’ strategies are underpinned by the following principles:  • A strengths-based approach, in which students and staff who may be socially disadvantaged are not seen as having problems that need to be fixed, but as bringing different strengths and diversity to the university which should be celebrated.  • An all-encompassing and proactive approach, where social inclusion is embedded in the core activities of the university (learning, teaching and research), and facilitated through a range of participation and empowerment strategies.  • An integrated strategy that focuses on social inclusion at all levels – access, participation and empowerment.  • A holistic view of participation and engagement which extends across the student engagement cycle, from shaping aspirations through to graduate transitions (all p.41)  Universities that have aligned closely (narrowly) with the Australian Government’s social inclusion agenda = “may be missing a valuable opportunity” (p.42) |
| Leach, L. (2013). [Participation and equity in higher education: are we going back to the future](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03054985.2013.791618)?, *Oxford Review of Education,* 39(2), 267–286.  NZ, AUS, ENG  Annotation by Sally Baker  Keywords: *equity, higher education, access, widening participation policy* | **Context:** Overview of policy developments in New Zealand, Australia and England from 1960s–2011.  **Aim:** To provide an overview of policy and practice with relation to equity and participation in higher education in NZ, Aus, England over 50 years  **Theoretical frame:** None explicit  **Methodology:** Policy/ literature review  **Findings:**  *Section 1: from elite to massified system* – massification driven by two forces: 1) increasing participation and widening access. SES = common framing but is measured differently in each country (see p.269).  Higher education in NZ: pre-1980s = elite. Major changes in 1980s/90s in post-compulsory education sector, with access opened to ‘disadvantaged’ groups (socioeconomic, ethnicity, disability and gender disadvantage in NZ educational policy). Funding arrangements of HE shifted (fees set, students assumed part of cost, student loans system started). In 2001, obligations to indigenous students recognized. Six strategies outlined in *Tertiary Education Strategy 2002-2007*: Maori aspirations, raise foundation skills (including literacy) – for indigenous, migrants, refugees, ‘at risk’ youth, long-term unemployed, students with disabilities, people with few/ no qualifications - , educate Pacific People for development and success. Next policy paper (2007-12) focused on equity of access and achievement.  England: framed as widening participation (to under-represented students) and lifelong learning. Robbins Report (1963) recommended expanded HE system; 1970s = new polytechnics – creation of binary system. *Educational Reform Act 1988* recognised access courses as alternative pathway into undergraduate study – paved way for end of binary system. *Further and Higher Education Act 1992* abolished binary system, making all polytechnics into ‘new’ universities. Widening participation = large focus of Dearing Report (1997) and New Labour government elected in 1997 set participation target of 50% of 18-30 year olds by 2010. *Higher Education Act 2004* increased student fees to 3000GBP per year (variable top up fees). Office for Fair Access (OFFA) established in 2005 and WP = strategic objective of HEFCE, which supported Aimhigher and Action on Access.  Australia: Martin report (1964) – Fraser government (1974): Commonwealth assumed full responsibility for cost of HE. In 1988, unified system (FE and HE) introduced; HECS introduced (sold as equity mechanism). *A Fair Chance for All =* identified six equity groups. Review in 1996 (West Report) suggest some improvements in participation rates of 6 groups, but not for Indigenous, low SES and R&R students. In 2002 (Nelson reforms), HECS contribution (aka cost to student) increased, but policy reform included requirement for institutions to do more to ensure equity. Access and equity = key drivers/ foci in Bradley Review (2008) – Australia seen as lagging behind.  Higher Education post-GFC (policy 2008-2011)  New Zealand: Cap on enrolments in 2008; 2009 = $500mNZD reduction in funding to HE, with further incremental decreases until 2014. Universities turning many students away. New performance review funding introduced (5% based on completion/ progression to higher study/ retention). Financial penalities for insitutions that exceeded capped enrolments. People under 25 = remained target group. Financial pressures increased by earthquake in Christchurch in 2011. Loan repayments increased in 2012.  England: *Browne Report* (2010) = recommended increase in tuition fees (resulting from austerity politics). Under-represented students still targeted as long as they had ‘talent’. Access agreements introduced with Higher Education Council – all universities charging more than 6000GBP had to have access agreements with OFFA. National Scholarship Programme introduced to support low income full-time students. HEFCE required all universities to provide WP statement in 2012.  Australia: ‘counter-cyclical’ approach taken – introduction of demand-driven system in 2010. Aus gov’t invested $500m in Teaching and Learning Capital Fund for infrastructure and facilities (as per Bradley Review recommendations). Introduction of HEPPP and equity targets 20/40 set in 2010. Additional regional loading funding ($110m) added in 2011 plus additional infrastructure investment for regional universities. Additional funding also added.  **Core argument:** Australia took a different funding approach (investment) in face of GFC compared to NZ and England. Equity policies = limited success in 3 countries, despite redressive policies: “These data show that even at times of expansion, with policies that support widening participation in higher education, the proportion of under-represented students in each of the three countries has not increased as hoped” (p.298). Similar shifts in discourse occurred in line with GFC: NZ = ‘extent of ability’; England = ‘potential’; Australia = ‘capable’ – move towards ‘merit based’ approach. Institutional approaches (such as cutting staff numbers) had an impact on possibilities for equity: “Class sizes and increased staff–student ratios may also decrease the quality of teaching, a key factor in student outcomes”, particularly for traditionally under-represented students (p.279) and particularly when funding = contingent on completion. Costs of higher education = also understood to be prohibitive for low SES students. |
| Leibowitz, B. & Bozalek, S. (2014). [Access to higher education in South Africa: A social realist account](https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Access-to-higher-education-in-South-Africa%3A-A-Leibowitz-Bozalek/97e74101c86f1a0bd9ca7a0b9abac33cf34b3da6), *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning,* 16(1), 91–109.  SA  Annotation by Sally Baker  Keywords: *Socio-economic; access to higher education; challenges; society and schooling* | **Context:** Explores access to HE in South Africa 20 years after end of Apartheid. Notes issues of racial categories used in SA (harking back to Apartheid days). SA has major issues with inequality and poverty, with considerable inequality evident in school results and access to HE (see p.94-5). SA has 3-tiered university system: Research Intensive, Comprehensive & Technology universities; also = layer of historical d.  **Aim:** To describe issues in SA society and school system that perpetuates unequitable access to HE; to “present an overview of the educational context in South Africa and the challenges that it faces” (p.92)  **Theoretical frame:** Draws on social realist account (Archer, 1995), namely ‘morphogenetic’ analysis, to make sense of openings and constraints for social transformation. Social domain comprises = structure, agency, culture (structure and culture = objective; human interaction with structure and culture can lead to change (morphogenesis) or no change (morphostasis)  **Methodology:** Reports on NRF- funded project on structure, culture and agency that explored issues of teaching and academic development in SA HE. Draws on variety of sources including national documents, policies, websites and interviews with middle management person with responsibility for policy and strategy at 8 SA universities (range of types).  **Findings:** Policy level (conceived as structures/ enactment of culture) – traces developments in positioning of equity/ access from 1997 to 2012. Boughey & Bozalek (2012) argue that policy trends in neoliberal context = ‘apolitical’ and lead to morphostasis.  Responses to national policy: draws on interview data and includes topics such as Extended Curriculum Programmes (ECPs), bridging programs and bursaries. Some universities engage in innovative and targeted outreach (e.g. weekend classes at rural/ working class schools, school visits, disseminating recruitment materials) – but not much evaluation of this WP work, with exception of ECP. The lack of success = “A key reason why this is so, is that these schemes do not speak to the broader systemic features of society including  structure and culture, which might influence how transformation does or does not occur, and they don’t take into sufficient account how individuals and groups of individuals might exercise their own agency to influence how the policies are interpreted and implemented” (p.102). Meso level (culture) = analysis of 21 universities suggests little public positioning on WP and if it is there, it is buried in section on admissions.Analysis of talk from participants on widening access showed interesting diversity: in historically disadvantaged universities, the use of terms/ nomenclature =of less concern; in historically advantaged universities = concern with defining and measuring disadvantage. Discussion of targeted approaches (e.g. only offering places to black students), but authors note how this can play out in less equitable ways (see p.103). **Core argument:** Nature of political settlement (playing out at structural and cultural levels) maintains inequity because privileged institutions are privileged by ‘predatory elites’. In SA, treatment of issue of race = important and difficult. Students vote with their feet, meaning that structural efforts (policy/ funding) perpetuate stratification of universities in terms of balance of different types of students served. |
| Mars, M.M., Slaughter, S. & Rhoades, G. (2008). [The state-sponsored student entrepreneur](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00221546.2008.11772122), *The Journal of Higher Education, 79*(6), 638 – 670.  US  Annotation by Anna Xavier  Keywords (Anna’s): *academic capitalism; student entrepreneurship, higher education* | **Context:** Academic capitalism has been theorized and empirically detailed as a new knowledge/learning regime in Slaughter & Rhoades’ (2004) *Academic Capitalism and the New Economy: Markets, State and Higher Education.*. However, students’ roles were examined ‘primarily as educational consumers rather than as students engaging the (in)formal curricula and as academic entrepreneurs’ (p. 638).  **Aim:** To ‘extend and modify the academic capitalist framework by theorizing and empirically developing the instructional dimension of the academic capitalism knowledge/learning regime, examining the new roles institutions are supporting for students educationally as entrepreneurs’ (p. 638). RQs: 1. Do student entrepreneurship and associated market transactions reflect shifts in the boundaries among public, non-profit, and for- profit organizations, and if so, do universities aggressively pursue ownership of students’ products? 2. Do student entrepreneurs intersect new circuits of knowledge that connect curricula and classroom experience to the market? 3. Does the entrepreneurial learning environment of the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime promote the role of the state- sponsored student entrepreneur, and if so, how and with what implications for the student/faculty relationship?  **Theoretical frame:** Academic capitalism (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004).  **Methodology:** Case studies of two universities (University of Iowa (UI - large, selective, very high research activity) & University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP - moderate-sized, less selective, high research activity); Sampling strategy: Purposeful sampling; Guiding criteria for selection: ‘(a) the presence of a formalized, institutionally recognized entrepreneurship education center; and (b) the existence of or intended goal of establishing an entrepreneurial incubator accessible to students’ (p. 645); Case 1: Covers undergraduate & graduate levels at UI: ‘centers on the commercialization of bioinformatics software by students who worked as undergraduate assistants in the laboratory where the research supporting the software was conducted’ (p. 646); software developed – Bio:Neos; Case 2: At graduate level (at UTEP):’ involves the discovery of marketable, sustainable, and eco-friendly pigment’ (p. 646); Resulting venture - Mayan Pigments, Inc; Data collection methods: Semi-structured interviews (n=28); Document analysis – ‘documents specific to each university’s entrepreneurship education model and curricular structure as well as institutional policies regarding market behaviors’ (p. 647); Data analysis: Employed a structured coding framework (Miles & Huberman, 1994).  **Findings:** Case 1: Bio::Neos at the University of Iowa - Bio::Neos is a student-founded company born out of the UI’s Coordinated Center for Computational Genomics (CLCG); created by three former undergraduate engineering students who had completed or were near completing master’s degrees in electrical and computer engineering (all share equal positions in the venture); three students were first exposed to the scientific knowledge used in developing the software as undergraduate laboratory assistants in the CLCG; three faculty members have undisclosed amounts of equity in Bio::Neos; company contract is not available for public viewing. Q1: Shifting boundaries & market transactions - knowledge used in the creation of the company’s software stemmed from the graduate thesis of one of the students (idea gained from experience as an undergraduate lab assistant); based on university policy - the university does not take a copyright on any information or materials related to student work required for the completion of a degree; ‘Student rights to ownership of intellectual property linked to formal education as clarified through official university policy contributed to the student’s capacity to act as a state-sponsored entrepreneur’ (p. 649); However, despite apparent clarity of preceding UI policy, the student’s initial exposure to the knowledge leading to his thesis while employed as a university research assistant complicates the ownership of the intellectual property linked to the software -, a case claiming the student work as “work-for-hire” could have been made (p. 649); Benefits for UI: No direct benefits, but several indirect benefits – a) market successes of state-sponsored student entrepreneurs contribute to a pro- business institutional climate, which is always important to regional industries and employers b) UI can claim a contribution to regional economic development and use the contribution to leverage state legislative support. c) entrepreneurial success plays a part in attracting possible donor support d) the entrepreneurial activities of students open possibilities for recruiting other like-minded students.; Q2: New circuits of knowledge - Bio::Neos is a new circuit of knowledge that is highly representative of the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime in the new economy; the establishment of Bio::Neos and the commercialization of its software involved a “rewiring” of the university for such activity; The UI entrepreneurship education center played an essential role in the commercialization of the Bio::Neos software; Key private funders of UI entrepreneurship education center – John Pappajohn & Tom Bedell; The center provided the Bio::Neos students access to its entrepreneurial incubator under the agreement that at least one student from the team enrol and complete an entrepreneurship studies course, which benefited the center and university by producing student credit hours and tuition dollars; Bio::Neos students operated within a complex organizational environment constructed around internal and external networks and newly created knowledge circuits and supported by an amalgamation of public, not-for-profit, and for-profit individuals and groups; partitions separating public and private sectors were replaced with a structure that explicitly intersected the public university with those private markets, creating a ‘fluid environment’ (p. 652) that can produce and distribute subsidies to student entrepreneurs; Q3: Entrepreneurial learning environment - The Bio::Neos students were engaged in traditional curriculum centered on engineering principles and knowledge, but the curriculum also included intellectual property & other market-oriented topics; integration of entrepreneurial principles into the UI engineering curriculum was ‘explicit and apparent’ to students (p. 653); Bio::Neos students received formal training in the area of entrepreneurship that was beyond what was included in their engineering coursework; Examples of the course topics offered to students through the entrepreneurship center included ‘technology applications for the entrepreneur, entrepreneurial marketing, strategic management of technology and innovation, entrepreneurial consulting, and advance business planning’ (p. 653); entrepreneurial learning environment at UI has promoted the emergence of state-sponsored student entrepreneurs in a variety of ways – Bio::Neos - students were encouraged to be entrepreneurial by the faculty overseeing their past work within the research laboratory as undergraduate assistants; Overall conclusion- this case marks the emergence of a new role for students: ‘university-sponsored student entrepreneur’. Case 2: Mayan Pigments, Inc. at UTEP - The Materials Research and Technology Institute (MRTI) at UTEP is an organization designed to create employment opportunities for UTEP graduates, develop intellectual property for the institute and university; The institute has developed collaborations with 8 research universities in the United States and 20 Mexican institutions; Mayan Pigments, Inc. is the first spin-off company to originate out of the MRTI and the university as a whole - centers on the pigment technology of ancient Mayan peoples, which was recently rediscovered within the labs of the MRTI; An MRTI graduate student (completed doctoral studies in materials science and engineering) played a primary role in the scientific discovery of the now patented pigment and the commercialisation of the product through the creation Mayan Pigments, Inc; The student is currently the co-owner and Chief Technology Officer (CTO) of Mayan Pigments, Inc; Faculty member who introduced the pigment to her is a co-owner; Q2: Shifting boundaries and market transactions - Both faculty member and graduate student researching the Mayan pigment determined the technology had significant market potential; the university will ‘retain a 5% equity holding in the company if and when it becomes a publicly traded firm’ (p. 656), pursuing a minimal financial profit; Q3: New circuits of knowledge: Being UTEP’s first start-up company, Mayan Pigments, Inc. constitutes a ‘new circuit of knowledge creation for the university’ (p. 656); co-founders of the company received consultation from entrepreneurial experts, including students, within UTEP’s well-established and rapidly expanding entrepreneurship education center- The Centers for Entrepreneurial Development, Advancement, Research, and Support (CEDARS) (comprised of nine programs and initiatives); The Kauffman funding has stimulated cross-disciplinary faculty participation in entrepreneurship education; company founders also received support from other interstitial units at UTEP; Q3: Entrepreneurial learning environment - The Mayan Pigments, Inc. case unfolded as a ‘classic teaching-learning exchange’ (p. 657); new step - faculty member offering a suggestion about commercializing the knowledge, which the student acted upon, in class; The MRTI was complemented by local, state, and federal government initiatives aimed at revitalizing the El Paso metroplex (see Mars, 2006); organizational initiatives and the administrators and business leaders associated with them provided an entrepreneurial learning environment that instructed faculty and students about the viability of commercial ventures linked to scientific knowledge and discovery; the informal but explicit lesson learned by the student was to approach research not just with curiosity but from an entrepreneurial standpoint of translating scientific inquiry into commercial endeavour.  **Discussion:** 1) Both cases indicate the ‘emergence of a new student role – ‘state-sponsored entrepreneur’, which is consistent with & possible due to the ‘development of an academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime that collapses the boundaries between public & private sectors and that constructs an organizational infrastructure for developing & pursuing new circuits of knowledge creation’ (pp. 658 -659). The findings modify & extend the academic capitalist framework in the following ways: a) the cases ‘recast students as potential entrepreneurs, active agents, and beneficiaries of academic capitalism, not simply as its commodities and/or victims’ (p. 659); b) the cases suggest that ‘at least in the early stages of promoting student entrepreneurship, universities are not aggressively pursuing their ownership claims to the property being created’ (p. 659); c) the cases point towards ‘examples of distinctive circuitry that involves external players promoting entrepreneurship’s benefits more widely within the academy and some universities and units promoting more locally and even public good oriented commercial ventures’(p. 659); d) the cases enable identification of ‘entrepreneurial learning environments that at least in some places are emerging within universities in ways that redefine the faculty/student relationship to include a dimension of entrepreneurial partners’ (p. 659).  **Core argument: ‘**The exploration of the emergent role of the state-sponsored student entrepreneur introduces a new dimension to the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime: The position of the student as active agent of academic capitalism challenges Slaughter and Rhoades’ (2004) view that students are marginalized within the capitalist academy. Consistent with the depiction of the traditional entrepreneur (Bygrave & Minniti, 2000, Drucker, 1993; Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001; Minniti & Bygrave, 1999; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000), the state-sponsored student entrepreneur recognizes and leverages the entrepreneurial environments, infrastructures, and resources of their university to their private, commercial advantage’ (p. 664). |
| McCaig, C. (2015). [The impact of the changing English higher education marketplace on widening participation and fair access: evidence from a discourse analysis of access agreements](http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/openu/jwpll/2015/00000017/00000001/art00002?crawler=true), *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning,* 17(1), 5–22.  UK  Annotation by Sally Baker  Keywords: *Widening Participation, Fair Access, Office for Fair Access, National Scholarship Programme, Differentiation, Marketisation* | **Context:** UK HE in time of Conservative government (post-‘Students at the heart of the system’ White Paper, Browne Review, National Scholarship Programme, OFFA policies re: Access Agreements) and in context of higher tuition fees and changing policy field. Author argues that these changes have resulted in changes towards positioning of WP and students over time (comparing 2006/7 to 2012/13) – more emphasis on ‘brightest’ rather than traditional WP activities focused on all people. National Scholarship Programme (NSP) = funded 1/6 of number of students supported in previous iteration = shift from increasing overall number of students to increasing (smaller) number of WP students into prestigious universities/ courses. Review of WP in UK (p.9-10).  **Aim:** To identify discourses of marketization in UK HE policy, particularly differentiation of/between different types of universities as a result of policy changes (tuition fee increases); looking at possibilities for WP in different types of universities through DA of policy documents/ Access Agreements  **Theoretical frame:** Critical discourse theory + theory of marketisation  **Methodology:** Discourse analysis of 20 Access Agreement statements from 2006/7 and 20 from 2012/13 (same 10 RG and same 10 post-92 universities for both periods)  **Findings:** Key themes derived from analysis = strategic aims and objectives, historical record on access, access enhancement statements, outreach targeting.  Post-1992 universities = particularly vulnerable “to the changing context for widening participation created by economic downturn and the introduction of higher fees, as well as competitive market pressures for potentially contracting student numbers during the 2006-2012 period” (p.11). In 2012/13, post-92 unis had to focus more on retention and success, lead to post-92 universities appearing.  Pre-1992 universities had to work towards helping disadvantaged students to meet grades requirements. Discusses ‘Realising Opportunity’ scheme run by some RG universities to prepare young people for any research-intensive university. Therefore, pre-92 universities have not had to adapt far from their original and stated goal = to recruit the brightest and best – but with consideration of WP principles  **Core argument:** McCaig’s analysis suggests that, in reaction to increased marketization and intra-university competition, “Institutions are seeking to create and sustain narratives that differentiate them from institutions of another type” (p.18); post-92 universities have had to accommodate more towards new policy field: “reflecting the ongoing differentiation of the sector due to long term marketisation as well as the specific policy changes” (p.19). Post-92 universities are particularly threatened by policy changes (declines in typical student bodies (e.g, mature age/ part time). |
| Mockler, N. (2014). [Simple solutions to complex problems: moral panic and the fluid shift from ‘equity’ to ‘quality’ in education](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/rev3.3028), *Review of Education,* 115–143.  AUS  Annotation by Sally Baker | **Context:** Set in context of individualised conceptualisation of education (‘neoliberal imaginary’) and driving productivity/ human capital theory – claims that educational panic is used by politicians and media to obscure persistent issues with inequity in education. Scopes critiques of equity as discourse – noting access = positioned as choice within market and relations with class/SES. Offers critique of ‘third way politics’ and its impact on Labor government (e.g. Rudd, 2007) = narrow conception of excellence and equity. Scopes literature on panic (David Marr) and shock doctrine (Naomi Klein) and ‘manufactured crises’ (Berliner & Biddle, 1995)  **Aim:** To examine perceived ‘crisis’ in ‘teacher quality’ and shifts away from discourses of equity in education; to examine “how problems related to educational equity are reframed as problems of ‘quality’ within neoliberal  regimes, and the mechanisms of this reframing in the public space“ (p.117)  **Theoretical frame:** Argues that panic = neoliberal tool; draws on Goffman’s (1974) framing theory for analysis and discourse analysis (Foucault0  **Methodology:** Case study of ‘policy moment’ in Australian higher education policy = 42 speeches, media texts and policy documents related to a single event = ‘Gonski Review’ in Sep 2012. Three level content analysis  **Findings:** In first level of analysis, equity did not emerge as own ‘package’/ dominant contributor to frame – equity replaced with ‘quality’. Three main packages/ themes:   1. Saving the nation’s education system (“national moral crusade”, p.124) – mocked by conservative press 2. School improvement – focus shifted from school funding to school *improvement* (my emphasis), including justification for NAPLAN 3. Teacher quality - e.g. raising university entrance requirements for teacher education   **Core argument:** Through analysis of the policy moment, it is evident that discourses shifted from equity to teacher quality and school improvement, based on a perception of crisis/ panic = related to performativity (Ball, 2012) “Discourses of quality are linked to audit cultures through the accountability and compliance structures that are invariably seen as the key to ‘improvement’… As a consequence of the reframing of ‘quality’ at the hands of neoliberal discourses, teacher habitus is currently being impacted and reshaped by a number of linked and interlocking trajectories, each related to the discourse of quality” (p.136). However, such accountability has positive potential for making teachers more trusted/ vigilant and committed to contributing to public debate around education |
| Moreau, M.P. (2016). [Regulating the student body/ies: University policies and student parents](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/berj.3234), *British Educational Research Journal,* 42(5), 906–925.  UK  Annotation by Sally Baker  Keywords: *England; higher education; student parents; widening participation* | **Context:** Examines the policy context of student-parents in English HE. Set in context of diversified academy that remains beholden to patriarchal, hegemonic policies and practices that privilege the experience of ‘traditional’ students – discussion of historic exclusion of women from education; Westernised masculine rational thought (denial of embodied, affective knowledges). Moreau offers a critique of the impacts of neoliberal/ entrepreneurial university on student-parents (see p.911). Offers analogy of parenting as ‘greedy institution’ (see Moreau & Kerner, 2015 for the same argument about universities): “Both appear to be time rather than task-driven and always leave room for bettering one’s own (academic and parenting) work” (p.911). Parenting = characterised as ‘private matter’ (increased parent choice; increased scrutiny of parents)  **Aim:** To explore “the role of university policies in compounding the experiences of student parents – a group which remains under-researched” (p.908); examining whether university policies ‘normalise’ the care-free student.  **Theoretical frame:** Feminist theory (Crompton, 1999) -intersectionality; three-part levels of care: care orders (macro), care regime (meso), care practices (micro); sociology of (higher) education/ widening participation  **Methodology:** Data in paper gathered in Nuffield Foundation-funded project on student parents in HE (fieldwork in 10 different English universities) = desktop audit, interviews with staff and student-parents, demographic questionnaire for students. Policy = macro-institutional level; “institutional and national policies are conceptualised as creating a terrain allowing particular scripts to emerge” (p.909).  **Findings:** Dissociation of care in HE = evident in what’s not visible – lack of representation of student-parents and children on campus. Dominant characterisations of students = carefree, young and careless. Overlap between student parents and mature students = partial, and not immediately visible in imagery or policy, which also plays out in awareness of student-parent friendly policies and services (from interview data with staff). Parental status = often disclosed at point of crisis – meaning the likely label of ‘problem student’ = ascribed.  *Analysis of institutional policies*  Children’s access to HE = varied significantly (offers examples of where children = not permitted into libraries; see p.914)  Three different approaches identified in 10 universities:   1. Universal/ ‘careblind’: 2/10 universities had no policy or provision for student=parents; reference to children = prohibit their presence 2. ‘Targeted’: 5/10 universities had ‘some specific provision’; reference made mostly in context of nursery and financial/ means-tested grant 3. ‘Mainstreaming’: 3/10 universities attempted to mainstream; extensive references to student parents (child care, children allowed on campus, spaces for student parents   Moreau notes limitation of design (aka case study universities = not likely to be representative of whole sector)  Results of analysis of policyscape – seemingly ‘neutral’ policies can (further) marginalise student parents: “As generic policies are usually designed with the childfree student in mind, their negative effects on parents, including at academic, financial, social, health and emotional levels, risk being overlooked” (p.916). Spatial-temporal domain = significant barrier despite being ‘fair’ or ‘neutral’ (e.g., timetabling and unsuitable spaces for breast feeding). Issues persist at level of cost (e.g., for childcare/ lack of financial support), leading to students being viewed as deficient, needy, special. For ‘mainstreaming’ to be successful, it needs to be well-resourced and systematically implemented **Core argument:** The hegemonic shape of HE = masculine and care-free: “By rendering carers, children and pregnant bodies invisible in academia, media, national policy and university ‘texts’ regulate (the) student body/ies and normalize the association of the ‘bachelor boy’ with HE” (p.913). |
| Purcell, W.M., Beer, J. & Southern, R. (2016). [Differentiation of English universities: the impact of policy reforms in driving a more diverse higher education landscape](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13603108.2015.1062059?journalCode=tpsp20), *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 20(1), 24-33, DOI: 10.1080/13603108.2015.1062059  UK  Annotation by Anna Xavier  Keywords: *university; mission; differentiation; disruption; market; strategy* | **Context:** Set in the context of the HE setting in the UK after the fundamental policy shift in the way undergraduate teaching was resourced, where the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) moved away from giving block grants to universities with the grants supported by tax payer funds, and developed a funding system that was almost entirely supported by student fees. The deregulation in funding led to an increase in alternative providers, resulting in a more marketized HE sector, which aligned with the policy objective to increase student choice through competition. Consequently, universities have begun to differentiate themselves to express their offers more clearly and attract students.  **Aim:** To contribute to the ‘debate on the role & importance of diversity within the HE system by drawing on empirical findings from a HEFCE-funded study (The Leading, Governing, Managing (LGM) Enterprising Universities project) and positioning them within a possible theoretical framework’ (p. 33).  **Theoretical frame:** Red oceans & blue oceans (based on Kim & Mauborgne’s (2005) work on uncontested market space); Red ocean: The known market space, where ‘industry boundaries are well defined and rules of the game are known’ (p. 28). The more crowded the market space gets, the more intense the competition becomes, limiting space for profit & growth; Blue oceans: Represent ‘new, emerging and distinctive market spaces’ (p.28), where ‘demand and value is created rather than fought over, leaving room for growth’ (p. 28).  **Methodology:** An analysis of the mission statements (or equivalent vision statements), other strategic documents & key performance indicators of 128/130 universities in England.  **Findings:** 1) 72 universities had broadly similar mission statements, and could be clustered in what is described as a crowded ‘middle market space’ (p. 28). 2) Second analysis in 2012: 34 institutions had changed their mission statements since 2010, with seven showing significant changes in direction; Small number of universities in the blue ocean ‘racing back to the middle’ (p. 29), large number of institutions moving horizontally to occupy new spaces; Evidence of two ‘entirely new & unique positions’ appearing from: a ‘research and enterprise’ space & a ‘practice-based education’ space (p. 29). 3)Re-analysis in 2014: 35 universities (almost one-third) have changed their mission statements since 2010; an increase of 23 institutions classified as ‘non-aligned’. 4) Representation of universities through mission group alliances: 4 distinct mission groups – a) The Russell Group (20 major research-intensive universities throughout the UK; b) The 1994 Group (now dissolved) (19 smaller research-focused universities); c) The University Alliance (23 UK universities with a strong focus on business & professions); d) Million+ - (a university think tank with 27 members – defined by social inclusion and a focus on teaching) (p. 31).  **Discussion:** 1)Which differentiation strategy to use? (Vertical vs horizontal differentiation – See Teichler (2008)) – Adopting a vertical strategy will lead to HE institutions to ‘compete harder and run faster’ due to increased competition in the red ocean, especially for those without an outstanding reputation or heritage; adopting a horizontal strategy (striving for blue oceans) – could support institutional sustainability & high quality. Risks with horizontal strategy- universities may specialise in subjects that do not attract students, or with marginal return of investment. 2) Implications from study: Two key issues from analysis of mission statements – a) ‘ability to capture horizontal value at institutional level’; b) the relevance of the existing representative structures for mission based groups in the future. 3)Broader question from findings – is a ‘one size fits all’ approach in an increasingly diverse sector still appropriate in HE institutions?  **Core argument:** ‘Differentiation of universities is certainly a subject that warrants further research taking a global perspective’ (p. 33). |
| Sanders, M. & Mahalingam, R. (2012). [Under the Radar: The Role of Invisible Discourse in Understanding Class-Based Privilege](https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/handle/2027.42/90533), *Journal of Social Issues,* 68(1), 112–127.  US  Annotation by Sally Baker  Keywords: *discourse; class; privilege; intergroup dialogue; habitus* | **Context:** Discussion of discourses of social class and group privilege in US university context. Argues that in US context = lack of ‘clear and explicit’ discourse on class-based privilege (because hidden by taboos on money and status) which leads to lack of critical reflect/xivity on part of privilege individuals/groups. Also, class = conflated with objective markers (such as income bracket, professional status) which obscures the situation  **Aim:** To argue “that control of discourse around a social identity functions as a way to normalize privilege and reduce conflict around structural inequalities” (p.112). It also “investigates the relationship between an individual’s class-based privilege and that individual’s ability to engage in discourse about social class. We examined the types of discourse surrounding social class employed by economically advantaged and economically disadvantaged students in intergroup dialogue classes at a large Midwestern university” (p.117)  **Theoretical frame:** Makes connections between social class and identity/ identification = draws on Bourdieu (habitus) whereby discourse = ‘invisible framework’: “One particular feature of habitus, its lack of explicitness and the way it minimizes discourse, has especially interesting implications for the study of class-based privilege” (p.116).  **Methodology:** Qualitative textual data (final paper = reflection on what students had learnt about social class) collected from ‘intergroup dialogue’ course (n=82): “44 participants self-identified as female, 28 self-identified as male, 31 participants did not disclose their gender; 47 participants self-identified asWhite, 55 self-identified as  non-White; 37 participants self-identified as lower/working class, 56 participants self-identified as middle/upper class, 10 participants did not disclose their social class” (p.118) Data = content-/archived analysed. Intergroup dialogues = “structured conversations between members of different social identity groups that have  a history of conflict or tension which foster intergroup communication, exploration, and learning (Dessel, 2008; Dessel & Rogge, 2008)” = p.116  **Findings:** Majority (64/82) = reported feelings of self-discovery (mostly positive). Only 12/82 came into group with strong class-based identity ‘salience’ (7 = upper class/ 5 = working class)  Class= racialised  There are taboos which prevent discussion of class and privilege (especially among upper/middle class students) = “this lack of class-based discourse revealed interesting ways in which class privilege is maintained and seems to be “natural.” (p.123)  There are class-based stereotypes circulating (e.g upper class = spoilt slackers) **Core argument:** “The lack of discussion about these issues silences lower-income people and reproduces privilege for economically advantaged people” (p.123) |
| Singh, M. (2011). [The place of social justice in higher education and social change discourses](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03057925.2011.581515?journalCode=ccom20), *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 41(4), 481–494.  UK  Annotation by Sally Baker | **Context:** Unpacks instantiations of social justice discourse in discussions about higher education and social change – has social justice “been appropriated into a neo-liberal strategy for growing competitive economies” (abstract)? Can an instrument of public management be used to advance social justice in HE?  Makes case that social justice does not have ‘common set of understandings’ “at the level of political ideology, normative principle, and social policy and strategy” (p.481), and as a result it gets reappropriated by different stakeholders with differing ideological/normative underpinnings (p.483). Social justice gets 'stretched in different directions”, depending on how policy goals are characterised (p.482).  “The pursuit of social justice can be seen as the search for a fair (not necessarily equal) distribution of what is beneficial and valued as well as what is burdensome in a society” (p.482). Social justice is often discussed in terms of/ relationship to policy, philosophy and ethics, but structural material and cultural frames are also significant (p.482). Discusses social justice in HE in context of European Science Foundation foresight exercise on higher education in Europe beyond 2010.  Discussion of literature on knowledge societies and social justice; main points:  Some claim that knowledge societies have democratizing function (because of expanded access to information/ technology) – but see commodification of knowledge argument  Intensification of competition  HE is a public good (universally accessible but partially available) = confers private benefits and public gains but it also has potential to sustain/perpetuate inequality. What does social justice look like in low income countries? Discusses social justice in South Africa  **Aim:** To “to track what happens to social justice in making this transition from philosophical principle and normative aspiration to strategic goal and targeted intervention in the world of social policy” (p.483) and explore these RQs:  \_ Has the notion of social justice in higher education been appropriated into a neo-liberal strategy for growing competitive economies?  \_ Conversely, is it possible to deploy an instrument of new public management for advancing the purposes of social justice in higher education?  **Findings:** Appropriation of quality assurance = ‘indispensable’ and “ubiquitous imperative” (p.487) that has spread rapidly and been professionalised. Policy rationales = economic/ efficiency/ value for money = not necessarily educational improvement. Mostly positioned as negatively, as ‘audit culture’. Predominant identity of QA = instrument of new public management. What are possibilities of reframing QA in a way that addresses social justice?Describes how South Africa implemented a new QA system that included the social justice/transformation imperative in its definition of quality |
| Snowden, C. & Lewis, S. (2015). [Mixed messages: public communication about higher education and non-traditional students in Australia](file://localhost/Mixed%20messages/%20public%20communication%20about%20higher%20education%20and%20non-tra%E2%80%A6), *Higher Education,* 70, 585–599.  AUS  Annotation by Sally Baker  Keywords *Mediatisation; tertiary education; vocational education; public communication; non-traditional students; media framing; content analysis* | **Context:** Marketing and mediatisation of higher education, especially for non-traditional/ equity students.  Examines intersection of educational marketing, media, policy and public debate – argues that mainstream messages on higher education impact on students’ choices, especially for disadvantaged students. Mixed messages come from disconnections between policy and media environments: “One set of messages promotes open access and social inclusiveness leading to individual and societal benefit, but these are frequently contradicted and neutralized by counter messages that propagate entrenched positions about class, individual ability and suitability and the stratification of higher education by quality” (p.587). Not clear post-Bradley review how students and their families would be informed of sudden policy/cultural change. Lack of consistency and clarity around options for post-secondary education particularly for students from non-traditional backgrounds and contributes to “preference for low risk options to sustain status quo”  **Aim:** To explore “the content of mainstream media messages about higher education and the influence such messages may have on public perception and student choice of educational institution, especially by students from non-traditional and disadvantaged background” (p.585). To examine media reports on post-secondary education, specifically messages about access and participation, in context of Bradley Review reforms.  **Theoretical frame:** Content analysis/ critical textual analysis to identify discursive patterns. Draws on agency setting theory and third person effect  **Methodology:** Textual-content analysis (2 periods: 1) Jan-Apr 2009 = immediately after release of Bradley Review + gov’t response + GFC commentary; 2) Mar-June 2010). Also examined ‘in-house’ communication of UWA (Go8), SWIN (dual-sector), ANU (national institution) and TAFE SA to reflect 4 parts of stratified tertiary sector  **Findings:** Central = relationship between media reporting and public perception. Authors note the relationship between political rhetorical patterns (depending on the point in the three-year term of governance) and arguments about the length of study (3 years for undergraduate degree; 4 years for full trade qualification)  Analysis of in-house comms: Universities and TAFE = positioned differently/ different messages communicated: TAFE = continued to foreground ‘hands on’ model = technical-vocational employment futures. University = positioned as theoretical/intellectual project, leading to professional careers rather than jobs: “The difference in the two positions is summarized by distinctions in the discursive frames of job versus career; technical versus analytical; applied versus theoretical; trade versus profession” (p.590).  Print media content analysis: 4 recurrent themes: SES factors distinguishing student cohorts, earning potential and employment opportunities, reinforcement of status/ stratified system, pathways between sectors.   * 29% of print articles analysed = related access and success directly to SES factors; * 12% = deficit framing of low SES (low-income families don’t value higher education but go to TAFE instead) - “Consequently, the dominant message which policy seeks to transform is reinforced, positioning socio-economic background as an almost insurmountable obstacle to success” (p.592); thus failure = directed at individuals and families rather than system; * 16% of articles = related to earning potential and/or employment outcomes; * 8% = message that university leads to higher pay and better jobs; * 45% of articles = refer to positioning of TAFE against university; * 13% = message that TAFE is lesser than higher education; * 10% of messages = expressed need for improved pathways between VET and HE.   **Core argument:** Continued systemic inequality and ‘policy failure’ = part result of mediatisation of mixed-messages: “Such discursive messages validate traditional aspirational pathways for universities as a viable choice for the best students, and reinforce the existing role of the VET sector as a safer, pragmatic, but inferior option for students with lower academic success at secondary level” (p.596). |
| Stevenson, J.; Clegg, S.; & Lefever, R. (2010). [The discourse of widening participation and its critics: an institutional case study](https://www.ingentaconnect.com/contentone/ioep/clre/2010/00000008/00000002/art00002). *London Review of Education,* 8(2), 105–115.  UK  Annotation by Sally Baker  Keywords: *widening participation; higher education; policy; values* | **Context:** Explores contradictory discourses of WP and contestations between public policy and practitioners. WP = “a contradictory and unstable amalgam of economic rationality and social justice arguments” (p.105). Scopes UK HE landscape (1960s – 2010), through Tory policies of 1979-1997, and impact of New Labour policies – looking at language used, from “the drive to increase participation as an act of social justice was overtaken by a policy discourse which saw mass higher learning as fundamental to the future prosperity and competitive advantage of the UK” in Tory policy to New Labour ethos: “knowledge-economy, higher education becomes a potentially powerful instrument of social justice, since it serves not only as a driver of wealth creation, but as a critical determinant of life chances’” (all p.106). Currently, UK HE policy is underpinned by discourse positioning students as ‘consumers’ of free market – with non-participation seen as a deficit (Burke, 2009). In UK = ambiguity about who WP groups are  **Aim: “**to interrogate how these public debates and policies are realised in practice, and what interpretative work is engaged in by those who see themselves as WP advocates and practitioners” (p.108) – how do WP staff make sense of WP in context of competing discourses  **Theoretical frame:** takes Trowler’s (2002) view of ‘loose coupling’ between policy and outcomes  **Methodology:** Institutional case study of post-1992 HEI; tools = documentary analysis, online q’naire, interviews as part of internally commissioned audit of practice. 94 staff members completed q’naire  **Findings:** Documentary analysis showed that there was no longer a WP policy (other terms used such as diversity, inclusion, equality), which was reflected in confusion in staff interviews. When prompted, staff gave multiple definition of who WP is for, and many used the interview to seek clarification from researchers. One theme: staff interviews suggested = “heavily values-based orientation towards WP” (p.110). Examples given related most to public policy and aspirations building (Aim Higher). Interviews with staff also suggested who staff considered having responsibility for WP (most saw it laying equally with all staff; others saw it as the work of a particular department) and there was ‘confusion’ about whether students or staff should be proactive in offering support. In terms of the case study university’s commitment to WP, senior managers perceived a strong commitment to WP but this wasn’t ‘filtering down’ and believed that other staff were negative about WP. Staff lower down the hierarchy were less convinced of institutional commitment to WP and, according to one participant (an academic) the university was “lucky to have a lot of willing and dedicated staff and individual commitment to WP that really needs to be harnessed more effectively” (p.111). Discourse of blame = likely result of an unclear and inconsistent use of WP terms and practices, meaning individual staff drew on own local/personal values and blamed ‘others’ for lack of support/engagement with WP. Blaming others “,mirrors the individualism of the WP discourse itself” (p.112) Clear sense of frustration within WP practitioners and advocates because of lack of consistency/ confusion messages from institution.  **Core argument**: “as long as the policy context and the philosophical rationale for WP remain unclear, WP practice is likely to remain the preserve of committed individuals, and, at the local level, will be largely incapable of having a sustained impact on broader institutional cultures and discourse” (p.105) |
| Tomlinson, M. (2017). [Student perceptions of themselves as ‘consumers’ of higher education](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01425692.2015.1113856?journalCode=cbse20), *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 38(4), 450–467.  UK  Annotation by Sally Baker | **Context:** Paper is situated in contemporary UK HE sector and explores the different orientations of students in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland (pre and post-tuition fee increase to £9000 per year). Paper is situated in the marketised HE sector: “this development is often seen as foregrounding the purpose of higher education as providing private goods whose benefits are referenced against their potential future economic exchange value” (p.2). Common characteristics of the (international) neo-liberal academy are: increased role of markets, diminishing role of the state, “a new mode of service responsiveness that meets the needs of service users” (p.2) – evident in promotion of student choice (targets/ metrics/ marketing material). Of significance in this context is the idea that students’ relationships with higher education have changed (have they internalised the discoursal shifts evident in policy changes) and does this affect their study behaviours? If so, this is:   1. likely to give rise to more ‘paying customer’ subject positions, “who expects their providers to deliver their services and products in ways commensurate with their demands” (p.2) 2. value given to HE = equated to costs of participating so that ‘associated markers of value – teaching, learning, student experience – are based on these perceived costs: ‘value for money’ 3. students make strong connections between HE and other goods and services 4. students understand and respond in similar ways (and thus shape new approaches to education)   **Aim:** Explore key themes in literature on students as consumers; explore findings of qualitative study (UK-based) on students’ attitudes, approaches and shifting identity positions in contemporary UK HE and in context of 2012 tuition fee increase.  **Methodology:** Focus groups and individual interviews with 68 UG students from 7 different HEIS: 4 in England (1 x Russell Group, 1 x post-1994, 1 x post-1992, 1 x guild) + 1 x Welsh, 1 x Scottish, 1 x NI university during spring in 2013. Students were mixed (pre-2012/ post-2012)  **Key themes from literature review:** 1) consumerism (consumption rather than production = central idea) “is now taken to be at the heart of modern productive relations in late capitalism, given that much of the post-industrial economy is based on the consumption of intangibles in the form of human services and products that have largely perishable value” (p.3); 2) impact of consumerism (and marketisation of HE) depends on relative privilege/status and kind of knowledge produced of HEI – more elite universities are able to maintain traditional pedagogies and ways of doing so that “Students receive the message that they are in receipt of elite education, whose knowledge is sacred and of high social value, and that conformance to the elite pedagogies is imperative if they are to succeed in this environment. In contrast, lower prestige institutions are more subject to the symbolic violence of consumer ideology given that their principal currency has been on providing students with a relevant and applied ‘Mode 2’ knowledge” (p.4); 3) increased consumerism leads to increased instrumentalism – resulting in higher levels of ‘student performativity’ (Ransome, 2011); 4) marketised HE inculcates a possessive ‘having’ mode (rather than an ontological/becoming/ ‘being’ mode) = Molesworth, Nixon & Scullon (2009).  **Findings of study:** Study identified range of attitudes/ subject positions on a scale of student-consumer:   * active service-user * positioned consumer = students “expressed a mixed and ambivalent attitude toward the consumer ethos: while they had internalised discourses of student rights and entitlements, they still distanced themselves from the position of consumer” (p.6) * non-consumers   Active service-users: “Active service-user attitudes were underpinned by a strong sense that increased costs needed to be matched by highly transparent and effective modes of delivery from institutional providers who were receiving the costs that students were incurring” (p.7) - signal a shift of power from institutional provider (university/ lecturer) to purchaser (student)  Positioned consumer: “At one level, they saw consumerism as an inevitable consequence of a marketised higher education system and something that was justified through students’ private contribution and the need for experience commensurate to increased costs [but] they also acknowledged the limitations of this approach” (p.9) – ‘value for money’ attitude + need for responsibility and engagement for learning  Resisting consumerism: “those who challenged the notion of consuming higher education, and actively distanced themselves from this approach” (p.10) = consumption seen as passivity, signaling lower intellectual merit which could devalue social/economic status of degree.  **Core argument:**  Notion that all students are consumers is challenged – there are a range of subject positions/ attitudes but consumerist discourses do appear to be widespread in students’ talk. Be interesting to find out if disaffected students demonstrated consumerist attitudes (connections between disengagement and consumerism). Overall, “utilitarian values and attitudes are framing students’ approach to higher education as reflected in increasing concerns about their ‘returns’, relative academic performance (grades outcomes) and how their credentials may be consumed by others in the marketplace (their ‘employability’ and ‘attributes’)” (p.13). |