

SELLING OUR YOUTH

Great Debates in Higher Education is a series of short, accessible books addressing key challenges to and issues in Higher Education, on a national and international level. These books are research informed but debate driven. They are intended to be relevant to a broad spectrum of researchers, students and administrators in higher education, and are designed to help us unpick and assess the state of higher education systems, policies, and social and economic impacts.

RECENTLY PUBLISHED IN THIS SERIES

Theory of Change: Debates and Applications to Access and Participation in Higher Education

Samuel Dent, Anna Mountford-Zimdars and Ciaran Burke

Transformational University Leadership: A Case Study for 21st Century Leaders and Aspirational Research Universities

Hilary Coulson, Yali Zou and Frank Fernandez

Degrees of Success: The Transitions from Vocational to Higher Education

Geoff Hayward, Eugenia Katartzi, Hubert Ertl and Michael Hoelscher

Reimagining Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Survival Beyond 2021

Gary B. Crosby, Khalid A. White, Marcus A. Chanay and Adriel A. Hilton

Higher Education at the Crossroads of Disruption: The University of the 21st Century

Andreas Kaplan

Combatting Marginalisation by Co-Creating Education:
Methods, Theories and Practices from the Perspectives of
Young People

*Edited by David Thore Gravesen, Kaz Stuart, Mette Bunting,
Sidse Hølvig Mikkelsen and Peter Hornbæk Frostholm*

Challenging the Teaching Excellence Framework: Diversity
Deficits in Higher Education Evaluations

Amanda French and Kate Carruthers Thomas

Leadership of Historically Black Colleges and Universities: A
what not to do Guide for HBCU Leaders

Johnny D. Jones

The Fully Functioning University

Tom Bournier, Asher Rospigliosi and Linda Heath

A Brief History of Credit in UK Higher Education: Laying
Siege to the Ivory Tower

Wayne Turnbull

Degendering Leadership in Higher Education

Barret Katuna

Cultural Journeys in Higher Education: Student Voices and
Narratives

Jan Bamford and Lucy Pollard

Perspectives on Access to Higher Education

Sam Broadhead, Rosemarie Davis and Anthony Hudson

Radicalisation and Counter-Radicalisation in Higher Education

Catherine McGlynn and Shaun McDaid

Refugees in Higher Education: Debate, Discourse and Practice

Jacqueline Stevenson and Sally Baker

The Marketisation of English Higher Education: A Policy
Analysis of a Risk-Based System

Colin McCaig

Access to Success and Social Mobility through Higher Education: A Curate's Egg?

Edited by Stuart Billingham

Evaluating Scholarship and Research Impact: History, Practices, and Policy Development

Jeffrey W. Alstete, Nicholas J. Beutell, and John P. Meyer

Sexual Violence on Campus: Power-Conscious Approaches to Awareness, Prevention, and Response

Chris Linder

Higher Education, Access and Funding: The UK in International Perspective

Edited by Sheila Riddell, Sarah Minty, Elisabet Weedon, and Susan Whittaker

British Universities in the Brexit Moment: Political, Economic and Cultural Implications

Mike Finn

Teaching Excellence in Higher Education: Challenges, Changes and the Teaching Excellence Framework

Amanda French and Matt O'Leary

SELLING OUR YOUTH

Graduate Stories of Class,
Gender and Work in
Challenging Times

BY

HARRIET BRADLEY

University of the West of England, Bristol, UK

RICHARD WALLER

University of the West of England, Bristol, UK

And

LAURA BENTLEY

University of Birmingham, UK



United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India
Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited
Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2022

Copyright © 2022 Harriet Bradley, Richard Waller and Laura Bentley.
Published under exclusive licence by Emerald Publishing Limited.

Reprints and permissions service

Contact: permissions@emeraldinsight.com

No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without either the prior written permission of the publisher or a licence permitting restricted copying issued in the UK by The Copyright Licensing Agency and in the USA by The Copyright Clearance Center. Any opinions expressed in the chapters are those of the authors. Whilst Emerald makes every effort to ensure the quality and accuracy of its content, Emerald makes no representation implied or otherwise, as to the chapters' suitability and application and disclaims any warranties, express or implied, to their use.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-80117-239-4 (Print)

ISBN: 978-1-80117-236-3 (Online)

ISBN: 978-1-80117-238-7 (Epub)



ISOQAR

REGISTERED

Certificate Number 1985
ISO 14001

ISOQAR certified
Management System,
awarded to Emerald
for adherence to
Environmental
standard
ISO 14001:2004.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

CONTENTS

<i>About the Authors</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>xi</i>
Introduction	1
1. Young Graduates' Employment Trajectories in Context	7
2. The <i>Paired Peers</i> Project and Its Findings	41
3. Reaching for the Top: Middle-Class Men's Work Stories	65
4. Slow Train to the Top? Middle-Class Women's Narratives of Building a Career	91
5. Making Their Way: Working-Class Men's Work Stories	123
6. Confronting Double Disadvantage: Working-Class Women	149
7. Conclusions	177
<i>References</i>	<i>191</i>
<i>Index</i>	<i>201</i>

This page intentionally left blank

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Harriet Bradley is Professor Emerita at Bristol and West of England Universities and Fellow of the Academy of Social Science. Her many publications include *Fractured Identities*, *Gender and Power in the Workplace* and *Men's Work, Women's Work*. She has written and researched widely on inequalities of class, gender and ethnicity. The *Paired Peers* project, funded by the Leverhulme Trust, is the latest of many research projects she has headed. The first book jointly authored by the project team, *Higher Education, Social Class and Social Mobility*, was awarded a prize by the Society for Education Studies.

Richard Waller is Professor of Education and Social Justice at the University of the West of England, Bristol, where he has worked since 1995. Richard's research explores the intersection of education, social class and identity, and is driven by a social justice agenda. In addition to the *Paired Peers* project upon which many of his key publications are based, Richard has also recently completed projects on combatting gender-based violence in universities, and a retrospective analysis of the Aim Higher widening participation initiative of the early 2000s. He is currently researching the experiences and motivations of working-class young men in higher education.

Laura Bentley is an ESRC Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the School of Social Policy at the University of Birmingham. She is the principal investigator for the project *Still Jenny from the Block? Working-class women, higher education and social mobility in the COVID context*. Previously, Laura has worked on the *Paired Peers* project and the *Revisiting the Needs of Sutton Coldfield: Change and Future Requirements* project. She is a co-convenor of the British Sociological Association's Social Class Study Group and hosts the *Working-class Women's Writing Retreat* for academics and students.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to acknowledge the Leverhulme Trust for its funding of the *Paired Peers* project, especially its faith in us providing the second tranche for the follow-up study. We also want to acknowledge the other members of the team who worked with us to generate the data used in this book: Ann-Marie Bathmaker, Tony Hoare, Nicola Ingram, Jessie Abrahams, Vanda Papafilippou, Jody Mellor, Phoebe Beedell and Mike Ward. We are very grateful to Bristol University and the University of the West of England for assisting with this research.

Special thanks are due to Jessie Abrahams for conducting the survey reported on in Chapter 7 and sharing its data.

Harriet Bradley would like to thank the Economic and Social Research Council for its funding for the *Winners and Losers* project, data from which are also referred to in the book: the team for this project also included Steve Fenton, Jackie West, Will Guy and Ranji Devadason.

We thank our families for their forbearance and support while we were writing this book: (especially Steve Gillen, Caroline Laybourn, Charlie Waller, Eddie Waller, Daniel Round, Ben Copley and Lisa Copley).

Finally, we owe a massive debt to the fantastic young adults who gave their time and thoughts to be interviewed for our projects. Thank you for giving us permission to tell your stories and use quotations from the interviews. We wish you all the very best for your lives in these challenging times.