Everyday (In)Security: An Autoethnography of Student Life in the UK

https://www.e-ir.info/2020/12/31/everyday-insecurity-an-autoethnography-of-student-life-in-the-uk/

ANON, DEC 31 2020

Responding to the question 'Why did you go to university?' users of The Student Room (TSR) – a website which claims annual usership of 70% of all students – largely expressed their desire to acquire a degree, access better opportunities and ensure a more secure financial situation (replies include, for instance: 'I want to be educated to get a better job, and just so I have the qualification' or 'To get a better job in the future and earn money'). I too was driven by this logic when choosing to go to university, as I felt it would provide me with a direct pathway to a successful professional life. However, through my own experience and conversations with my peers, I started questioning universities' capacity to produce this feeling of security. I observed a high level of anxiety amongst students as preoccupations such as "What will you do next? How many applications have you sent? How much do they pay graduates? Will you be able to pay off the debt?" highlighted the risks which come with fees-based university degrees. Universities' answer to such anxiety seems to always be that higher education (HE) is a way of securing yourself – particularly your economic self (Bialostok and Whitman 2012, 12 & 20).

This teleological reasoning provides an answer to the question of financial security but does not offer a solution for the ontological insecurity – that is 'a security of being, a sense of confidence and trust that the world is what it appears to be' (Kinnvall 2004, 746) – one might feel when burdened, for instance, by a large amount of debt. This led me to reflect on how universities produce and advertise an idea of security that is not necessarily experienced by students and academics as ontological security. Now a few months away from graduation, I feel less confident in my being and in my understanding of the world than what I had expected – and, to a certain extent, was promised – when joining university. It is in this context that I have reflected on the (in)security dynamics which seem inseparable from the modern undergraduate student. The question then appears to me to be, how is university shaping my understanding of security and insecurity? What are the ideological underpinnings behind their conception of security? And how does that affect students and academics' sense of self?

To answer these questions, this essay will take an autoethnographic approach to the everyday experience of ontological security at university. Undertaking, a 'layered account' which situates my 'experience alongside data, abstract analysis, and relevant literature' (Ellis et al., 2010, 20), in this way avoiding an 'erasure of the self' (Dauphinee 2010, 817). Within this methodology, holding everyday security as 'the practices of self-protection that become the substance of people's lives and the discourses of danger and threat that…delineate people's days' (Ochs 2011, 3). Meaning, this essay will focus on practices and discourses which shape understandings of (in)security within the university.

In this essay then, I will begin by examining how the university produces a sense of ontological security. After which I will investigate whether this security is rooted in an ideology of neoliberalism, found in the modern university, and if neoliberal subjects are therefore produced by the university. Finally, I will question whether the ontological security manufactured by neoliberal universities is in fact insecure. Concluding that ontological security as produced by the university is: dogmatic, (re)productive of a neoliberal ideology, and built on shaky foundations.

How does university provide us with a sense of security?

Everyday (In)Security: An Autoethnography of Student Life in the UK
Written by anon

In 2017/18 it was announced 'a record 50.2 per cent of English 17-30 year olds had participated in higher education' – mostly through the university (Kershaw 2019). As student fees were introduced from 1998 it's apparent that all of these had also paid for this privilege, either through self-funding, sponsorship or by taking a student loan (Anderson 2016). Seeing that outstanding student loans are increasing by £16 billion annually there is clearly still an appetite for fees-funded HE (Bolton 2019). That such a demand remains, despite an individual annual cost of £9250, just for fees, is attributed to HE's transformative effect on skills, job prospects and earning potentials (UCAS 2016). In this way 'based on the human capital model…student debt [is]…an investment in the future' (Scott et al., 2001, 8). Put in terms of ontological security the university reifies the individual as a successful and legitimate member of society, confident of being, and in a world they can better act within.

A central part of universities security-regime then is in providing skills. As outlined by UCAS – the UK's undergraduate application service – university 'develops[s] the essential skills you'll need in your career and working life – communication, organisation, time management, team work, leadership, problem-solving' (UCAS 2016). These skills reflect the desired criteria for most graduate schemes or internship positions, both of which occupy the attention of myself and most my peers. Indeed, small talk is no longer guided by the weather or television, instead, applications or career experiences dominate conversation. In this context then its unsurprising all of my third-year module outlines have sections detailing their 'employment skills' and that as part of the universities' career service, there are sessions to better understand your 'transferrable skills.' By emphasizing skills-based learning, university equips students with the tools necessary to enter the globalised jobs-market, securing them identities as competitive individuals (DfES 2006). In this way university constructs a stable personal narrative (Laing 1965) – namely that of a skilled individual – with which students have the confidence of self necessary to claim their working identity

Beyond skills, university also claims to secure employment – a central component of identity (Levidow 2001). Referring again to TSR, comments like 'there will be jobs you are ineligible for without a degree' reflect the importance of a university qualification to students. This is also displayed on sections of degree course's webpages, where a list is almost always provided of 'career prospects' made possible by this qualification. What is fundamental to a degree, therefore, is that it qualifies the student to work in specific contexts. It is a natural conclusion then, that universities' answer to the increasingly specific expertise necessary for entry-level jobs in the knowledge-economy, is to provide equally specialised degree 'classification[s]' (Molesworth et al., 2009). Therefore, a degree is a qualification which legitimises an individual's ability to make knowledge-claims, which are necessary conditions for particular employment. In this way a degree facilitates the construction of a self as vested with expertise, therefore, making the subject employable and removing the risk of destitution or social exclusion. As a result, the graduate is able to sustain a personal narrative that they are a productive and demanded member of the labour market, and as such are ontologically secure (Giddens 1991, 54).

Lastly, the most oft-cited and culturally resonant reason for going to university is earning potential. According to UCAS a degree means 'you'll earn more. The average salary for graduates is 30% higher than for non-graduates aged 25-30' (UCAS 2016). Moreover, throughout a lifetime a graduate earns on average £168,000 to £252,000 more than a non-graduate (Walker and Zhu 2013). Such data is used by universities to justify the cost of HE as an investment in your future self (Scott et al., 2001, 8). This argument aligns with the life-cycle hypothesis that, when people are young they spend – borrowing if necessary – in order to invest in their human-capital, then repay and save through middle-age, and consume once retired (Deaton 2005). Getting a degree then becomes a way of securing an economically prosperous future self, who is made ontologically desirable through completing a socially privileged process of acquiring knowledge and then working hard. Furthermore, disposable income allows for a wide array of self-affirmatory actions, such as giving to charity, enabling practices of self-reproduction. Moreover, following market logics, an individual who holds a well-paying job is demanded (Hayek 2007, 114), thus he/she is affirmed in the perceptions of others (Giddens 1991, 53). In these ways, but also in the more basic sense that money now constitutes a store of societal and so self-valuation (Mazzucato 2019), increased earnings solidify ones sense of self.

Therefore, through skills, employment and earnings the HE sector has devised methods to manufacture an ontologically stable identity for graduates. I have seen this reflected in the pride with which a friend told me he had secured a job in investment banking and in the sorrow with which another told me his financial services internship hadn't resulted in a job offer. The first was affirmed that the 'skills and expertise' he had 'acquired' through his

Everyday (In)Security: An Autoethnography of Student Life in the UK

Written by anon

'qualification' could secure his position, whilst the second questioned his 'competitiveness.' Neither friend though throughout our conversations raised doubts about the market logics which lay behind their respective ontological security and insecurity. Doubtless, however, such logics and neoliberal *dispotifs* now inhabit the university.

Underlining the arguments made in this section is the idea that by 'acquiring' and then 'having' a degree (Molesworth et al., 2009) ontological security can be (re)constructed. Fundamental to this idea are certain assumptions that market values such as individualism, consumerism and market participation can play an uncontroversial role in the university. To interrogate these assumptions, the following section will therefore address how the modern university produces neoliberal subjects, whose ontological security is dependent on a neoliberal ideology.

The creation of the Neoliberal Subject

Neoliberalism broadly defined 'is a value system in which the economic has replaced the intellectual and political and in which the competitive, rational individual predominates over the collective' (Phipps and Young 2014, 306). It is ontologically individualist, universalising, utilitarian, and market-valorising (Hayek 1948), in these ways it can already be seen as an undercurrent to much of the security-regime outlined above. With the introduction of tuition fees, alongside other measures, it is claimed that the university has become distinctly neoliberal and thus coerces academics and conditions students into becoming neoliberal subjects (see e.g. Molesworth et al. 2009; Ball 2012; Jessop 2018). This section will therefore engage with how the ontological security manufactured by the university is conditioned by neoliberal logics, through which practices the university now performs neoliberalism, and how it therefore produces neoliberal subjects.

Ontological security, understood by the university as produced through skills, employment, and earnings, reveals a marketization and 'utilitarian preoccupation with extrinsic outcomes' within HE (Brady 2012, 344). Regarding skills and employment, market-logics are shown in the preoccupation of universities to produce 'qualified' graduates (Reich 1991 in Morley 2003, 3). This desire, founded on government's need to staff the knowledge-economy and justified by characterising students as profit-maximisers, distorts HE pedagogy from a process of learning to one of acquisition and transaction (Jessop 2018). By adjusting curriculums to the needs of the labour-market, education ceases to be an end in itself, instead it becomes a means to employment (Morley 2003, 7). When education becomes a means that is secured though payment it is commodified and the student is metamorphized into a 'student-consumer' (Naidoo and Jamieson 2006 in Brady 2012, 348). Any interactions by student-consumers with the university are therefore transactional: a payment is given and in return access is acquired to the knowledge-economy. In this way students cease to 'be learners' and instead become individuals who have or will 'have a degree' (Molesworth et al., 2009, 278), demonstrating then the acquisitional nature of the modern undergraduate experience. Therefore, through transaction and acquisition, which are inherent to the universities produced sense of ontological security, neoliberal logics are observed. These logics stem from the institutionalisation of the neoliberal university and its enacted practices.

As outlined in the case of student-consumer ontological security, the university engages in the affirmation of identity through sustaining narratives, worldviews and systems of being which are dependent on neoliberal value structures. The question then remains, has the university itself become institutionally neoliberal and do its practices – 'patterned actions that are embedded in particular contexts' (Adler and Pouliot 2011, 5) – reflect this? To provide an answer I will analyse how the university disciplines its academics and enacts new managerialism, side-lining a concern with the student experience to see if neoliberalism permeates other aspects of the university.

There is a surplus of ways academic ontologies are disciplined – as understood in the Foucauldian sense (Foucault 1991) – two key ways are through the structures of risk and competition, both deeply neoliberal logics. Risk is manifest in that, with the shift to a commodified degree a relationship of 'accountability' has been established between academics, who are service-providers, and students, who are purchasers (Jones 2007, 209). Because the university responds to this logic by establishing practices like termly module reviews, wherein student feedback becomes central to academic's success, an increasing pressure is placed on academics to keep students happy (Jones 2007, 209–10). As a result, including content which destabilises students or setting 'aside time for writing and

Everyday (In)Security: An Autoethnography of Student Life in the UK
Written by anon

research,' wherein an academic will be unresponsive to students, risks negative personal repercussions (Morley 2003, 133). To stay safe, academics internalise a shift to service provision and employ technologies like PowerPoint – drawn from the private-sector – so that their lectures are easily accessible to students, arguably undermining knowledge as process of individual discovery (Tanczer et al. 2019, 14). In this way, risk distorts the perception of the self by academics and reflects the consumer-prioritising nature of the university.

Besides risk, competition within the academy also underlines neoliberal practice in the university. Competition, exemplified by the mantra 'publish or perish,' has appeared in the context of the increasing precariousness of academic jobs and permeates the everyday of academics. Driven by market-logics of cutting costs and increasing productivity the university demands performance which is measurable in both impact and revenue gain (Ball 2012, 19). In terms of practice, this is reflected by the centrality of ResearchGate scores to academic profiles as well as the number of times published works have been cited – both of which contribute to job prospects (Tanczer et al. 2019, 24). Furthermore, the likelihood of promotion, if not formerly acknowledged, is partly down to the revenue an academic can bring to the university, either through research grants or by running professional workshops (Molesworth et al., 2009, 280). In this way, fixed criteria are used to make academics 'calculable,' which also then produces determinants for career progression and enables peer-to-peer measurement and competition.

Linked to, and arguably driving, academic disciplining is the regime of 'new managerialism' within the university, wherein 'deans and head of departments are coming more to resemble managers than academic figures' (Delanty 2001, 107 in Mavelli 2014, 862). A central result of this is the internalisation of market logics by those who run the university. Centrally this leads to the preferencing of 'hegmonic intellectuals' whose market-impact is stronger and who are more demanded, especially by companies and foreign (higher fee-paying) students (Jones 2007, 216). This stems from the need to compete successfully within the globalised HE market, which if achieved confirms the ontological narrative of the managers as competent neoliberal actors. As a result, education for educations sake is deprioritised in favour 'of economic efficiency' (Lynch 2006, 7). Through managerial practices then, the university is itself ontologically reconstituted as a being whose narrative self-confidence is dependent on neoliberal understandings of its own success.

An understanding of the university, as distinctly neoliberal, raises the question in what ways is it producing neoliberal subjects? This question is distinct from how the universities' constitution of ontological security is dependent on neoliberal logics, as the manufacture of neoliberal subjects goes beyond self-affirmation of a given ontology through skills, employment, and earnings, and relates more to the construction of a new ontology. Nevertheless, by creating neoliberal subjects the university is engaging in understandings of ontological security, insofar as it justifying a sense of being around neoliberal precepts.

Firstly, the use of risk and competition as disciplining mechanisms highlights the coercion of academics into 'exemplary neoliberal subject[s]' (Kurowska 2020, 1). By creating a culture wherein academics are both wary of students and are actively competing with each other, the result seems to be an increased reliance on logics of self-interest and risk. Pursuing a self-interested desire to be promoted and thus increase their social status, academics perform the publishing and teaching requirements demanded by the neoliberal university (Tanczer et al. 2019, 22). Furthermore, by avoiding content which destabilises student's self-narratives – which are often already neoliberal – they show a sensitivity to the risk relationship which now guides their transactional relationship with students. Thereby demonstrating the conditions which guide academics towards a reflexive reliance on neoliberal modes of action. In this way showing the nudging of academics towards neoliberal subjectivities.

Returning to a concern with the student, the absence of ontologically destabilising content and the language with which students are handled demonstrates our conditioning as neoliberal subjects. The dearth in ontologically destabilising content, is linked to managers desire to produce the most employable graduates, as well as academics self-interested exclusion of troubling subject-matter. By excluding content which will not help in securing a job, managers seek to produce a graduate identity most able to achieve employment and as such contribute to their league table rankings (QS 2017). Academics, working within the framework established by managers, then construct their modules around employable skills. This results in a situation where the content provided on modules reifies student-consumer identities as rational and self-interested market actors. Consequently, an ontological

security dependent on participation in the economy is instilled in students.

Furthermore, the language of HE contributes to manufacturing students as neoliberal subjects. My realisation of this came through accessing the Student Loan Company (SLC) – the non-profit government provider of student loans– website. The first time I used the SLC website was in the third year of my undergraduate degree in advance of writing this essay. I had not even had to set up an account by this point because the process of annually applying for loans was carried out on a different student finance (SF) website, which doesn't show your total debt. In setting up my SLC account, which is essentially just a loan repayment portal, I therefore expected a sign in procedure like SF where I would provide my email to login. Instead SLC required a 'Customer Reference Number'. This affirmed to me two things: one, that HE saw me as a student-consumer, and two that for time I will be repaying this debt I will remain a 'Customer.' In this way the language used traps me in a preoccupation with self-interest, in that I'll be continually reassessing whether I got best-value for my HE purchase. In a broader sense this customer and debt regime produces 'commercially oriented professionals' among whom 'public interest values' are side-lined in favour of individualised neoliberal logics (Lynch 2006, 2). Demonstrating then, how language which reifies the student-consumer simultaneous (re)constructs graduates as neoliberal subjects.

To sum-up, ontological security based on skills, employment, and earnings is interwoven with neoliberal assumptions. This then reflects that the university as an institution has now become distinctly neoliberal in the practices through which it disciplines its academy and competes with other universities. As a result of these and other practices the modern university now plays a key role in (re)producing both academics and students as neoliberal subjects. Consequently, university can be seen to condition ontologies and understandings of ontological security by forcing an alignment with neoliberal dogma and in (re)producing neoliberal identities. The ontological security being offered by the university then, can be called into question. The final part will, therefore, engage critically with this question by asking, whether the neoliberal university produces student understandings such that they feel ontologically insecure?

The neoliberal identity and ontological insecurity

To determine whether the neoliberal identity (re)produced by the modern university is ontologically insecure, I will draw on my personal experience with debt-funded education. By centring on debt my analysis will not be relevant to the roughly 10% of self-funded students across English universities (Press Association 2019) but will provide a situated intervention into how a debt-funded fee-regime produces ontological insecurity.

Through registering for my SLC account the neoliberal conditions which discipline my interaction with HE became clearer to me. Accessing the account and seeing the amount of debt owed, I realised I was left feeling deeply anxious. Anxiety here – which is 'caused by disturbing circumstances, or their threat,' (Giddens 1991, 13) – I believe comes from an ontological destabilisation which, if not caused by debt, is made understandable through it. Taking for granted that debt plays a role in this ontological insecurity, the question remains: why did seeing the debt unbalance my sense of self? I believe the answer to this is that debt made me feel like I was quantified, as it placed an exact measure on the value on my accumulated knowledge and efforts over three years. As a result, when I reflected on my undergraduate experience the 'self-scrutiny' (Giddens 1991, 53) which manifested was oriented around a cost benefit analysis asking: did I get enough value for my investment? That this question dominated my self-analysis undermined the confidence that I had held in developing my intellectual curiosity over an employable profile whilst at university. Subsequently, I felt pulled toward a graduate identity endorsed by the university in order to become a skilled and employable high earner. This desire clearly reflected Kinnval's point that as ontological insecurity increases so does a desire for one fixed identity (Kinnvall 2004, 749, 757). In my case, debt driven anxiety destabilises an identity based on intellectual curiosity, leading instead to an ontological coercion to conform with neoliberal logics. In this way debt represents an undermining of the self and creates in its place a neoliberal subject.

By providing an autobiographical account of my experience of debt I have aspired to impart the emotionality that accompanies the process of a situated study of ontological (in)security. The university experience, which generally occurs at the intersection of childhood and adulthood, should be expected to shape understanding, especially of how one might secure oneself in the world. The problem, I believe, which the neoliberalisation of university has brought, is

the instrumentalization of the process of becoming in the interests of sustaining neoliberal market logics.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the everyday experience of the university – felt through its practices, discourses, and structures – can shape understandings of security and insecurity. The perception of ontological security it produces for its participants is dogmatic in its reliance on a neoliberal ideology. An undergraduate education, therefore, has largely ceased to be one of ontological discovery and has instead become a process of enforcing a singular, neoliberal, logic on students. This led me to conclude that what previously appeared to me as security has left me feeling insecure in my own identity. An interesting next step to research how everyday experience of the fees-based university shapes understandings of ontological security and insecurity would be to compare my experience with students who don't pay for their education. It would be particularly interesting to do so in the case of a country where there is still a large public higher education system which exists outside of neoliberal logic, such as France.

References

Adler, Emanuel, and Vincent Pouliot. 2011. 'International Practices'. *International Theory* 3 (1).

Anderson, Robert. 2016. 'University Fees in Historical Perspective'. Policy Paper. *History and Policy*. http://www.historyandpolicy.org/policy-papers/papers/university-fees-in-historical-perspective.

Ball, Stephen J. 2012. 'Performativity, Commodification and Commitment: An I-Spy Guide to the Neoliberal University'. *British Journal of Educational Studies* 60 (1): 17–28. https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2011.650940.

Bialostok, Steven, and Robert Whitman. 2012. 'Eduation and the Risk Society: An Introduction'. In*Education and the Risk Society: Theories, Discourse and Risk Identities in Education Contexts* , edited by William S Bradley, Robert Whitman, and Steven Bialostok, 5:1–34. Contexts of Education. Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

Bolton, Paul. 2019. 'Student Loan Statistics'. Briefing Paper 1079. House of Commons Library. file:///C:/Users/joeja/Downloads/SN01079.pdf.

Brady, Norman. 2012. 'From "Moral Loss" to "Moral Reconstruction"? A Critique of Ethical Perspectives on Challenging the Neoliberal Hegemony in UK Universities in the 21st Century'. *Oxford Review of Education* 38 (3): 343–55. https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2012.698987.

Dauphinee, Elizabeth. 2010. 'The Ethics of Autoethnography'. *Review of International Studies* 36 (3): 799–818.

Deaton, Angus. 2005. 'Fraco Modigliani and the Life Cycle Theory of Consumption'. In . Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei.

Delanty, Gerard. 2001. *Challenging Knowledge: The University in the Knowledge Society* . Buckingham: Open University Press.

DfES. 2006. 'Widening Participation in Higher Education'. Department for Education and Skills.

Ellis, Carolyn, Tony E. Adams, and Arthur P. Bochner. 2010. 'Autoethnography: An Overview'.*Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung (Qualitative Social Research)* 12 (1). http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1589/3095.

Foucault, Michel. 1991. *Discipline and Punish*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. London: Penguin Books.

Giddens, Anthony. 1991. *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* . Cambridge: Polity Press.

Everyday (In)Security: An Autoethnography of Student Life in the UK
Written by anon

Hayek, F.A. 1948. 'Individualism: True and False'. In *Individualism and Economic Order*, 1–32. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

———. 2007. *The Road to Serfdom: Text and Documents*. Edited by Bruce Caldwell. Vol. 2. The Collected Works of F. A. Hayek. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Jessop, Bob. 2018. 'On Academic Capitalism'. *Critical Policy Studies* 12 (1): 104–9. https://doi.org/10.1080/19460171.2017.1403342.

Jones, Anna. 2007. 'Looking over Our Shoulders: Critical Thinking and Ontological Insecurity in Higher Education'. *London Review of Education* 5 (3): 209–22. https://doi.org/info:doi/10.1080/14748460701661260.

Kershaw, Alison. 2019. 'More than Half of Young People Now Going to University, Figures Show'. The Independent. 27 September 2019. https://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/university-students-young-people-over-half-first-time-a9122321.html.

Kinnvall, Catarina. 2004. 'Globalization and Religious Nationalism: Self, Identity, and the Search for Ontological Security'. *Political Psychology* 25 (5): 741–67. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9221.2004.00396.x.

Kurowska, Xymena. 2020. *Awaiting publication*, 'The Secondary Gains of Neoliberal Pain: The Limits of Consolation as a Response to Academic Anguish'. *PARISS* 1 (1): 1–12.

Laing, R.D. 1965. *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness.* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Levidow, Les. 2001. 'Marketizing Higher Education: Neoliberal Strategies and Counter-Strategies'.*Education and Social Justics* 3 (2): 12–24.

Lynch, Kathleen. 2006. 'Neo-Liberalism and Marketisation: The Implications for Higher Education'. *European Educational Research Journal* 5 (1): 1–17. https://doi.org/10.2304/eerj.2006.5.1.1.

Mavelli, Luca. 2014. 'Widening Participation, the Instrumentalization of Knowledge and the Reproduction of Inequality'. *Teaching in Higher Education* 19 (8): 860–69. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2014.934352.

Mazzucato, Mariana. 2019. *The Value of Everything.* 2nd ed. Milton Keynes: Penguin Books.

Molesworth, Mike, Elizabeth Nixon, and Richard Scullion. 2009. 'Having, Being and Higher Education: The Marketisation of the University and the Transformation of the Student into Consumer'. *Teaching in Higher Education* 14 (3): 277–87. https://doi.org/10.1080/13562510902898841.

Morley, Louise. 2003. *Quality and Power in Higher Education*. Society for Research into Higher Education. Berkshire: Open University Press.

Naidoo, R, and I Jamieson. 2006. 'Empowering Participants or Corroding Learning? Towards a Research Agenda on the Impact of Consumerism n Higher Education'. *Journal of Education Policy* 20: 267–81.

Ochs, Juliana. 2011. *Security and Suspicion: An Ethnography of Everyday Life in Israel*. The Ethnography of Political Violence. Philadelphia and Oxford: University of Philadelphia Press.

Phipps, Alison, and Isabel Young. 2014. 'Neoliberalisation and "Lad Cultures" in Higher Education'. *Sociology* 49 (2): 305–22. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038514542120.

Press Association. 2019. 'One in 10 Students in England "Rich Enough to Avoid Big Debts"'. *The Guardian*, 15 January 2019, sec. Education. https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/jan/15/wealthy-students-in-england-

Everyday (In)Security: An Autoethnography of Student Life in the UK
Written by anon

can-avoid-big-debts-say-researchers.

QS. 2017. 'QS Graduate Employability Rankings 2019'. Top Universities. 1 February 2017. https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/employability-rankings/2019.

Reich, R. 1991. *The Work of Nations: Preapring Ourselves for 21st Century Capitalism*. London: Simon and Schuster.

Scott, Adrian J, Alan Lewis, and Stephen E.G. Lea, eds. 2001. *Student Debt*. Bristol: The Policy Press.

SLC. n.d. 'Student Loans Company'. GOV.UK. Accessed 2 December 2019. https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/student-loans-company.

Tanczer, Leonie Maria, Ronald J Deibert, Didier Bigo, M.I. Franklin, Lucas Melgaco, David Lyon, Becky Kazansky, and Stefania Milan. 2019. 'Online Surveillance, Censorship, and Encryption in Academia'. *International Studies Perspectives* 0 (0): 1–36.

TSR. n.d. 'Why Did You Decide to Go to University?' The Student Room. Accessed 30 November 2019. https://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/showthread.php?t=1677993&utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=fblikebutton&utm_campaign=thread.

———. n.d. 'Why Do We Go to University?' The Student Room. Accessed 2 December 2019. https://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/showthread.php?t=2915821&utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=fblikebutton&utm_campaign=thread.

UCAS. 2016. 'Why Choose Higher Education?' UCAS. 15 June 2016. https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/student-life/why-choose-higher-education.

Walker, Ian, and Yu Zhu. 2013. 'The Impact of University Degrees on the Lifecycle of Earnings: Some Further Analysis'. Research Paper 112. BIS Research Paper. Department for Business Innovation & Skills. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/229498/bis-13-899-the-impact-of-university-degrees-on-the-lifecycle-of-earnings-further-analysis.pdf.

The author's identity has been verified by E-International Relations, but wishes to remain private.
Written at: Kings College London
Written for: Dr Emma Mc Cluskey
Date written: 12/2019

About the author:

The author/s of this content have been verified by E-international Relations, but wish to remain anonymous.