



Section 4: Class and policy

Possibilities for mobility

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1. The National Framework

- ▶ New fees regime
- ▶ Marketization
- ▶ Privatization
- ▶ Funding cuts

The response to fees

- ▶ Most students deplored the high fees
- ▶ Saw it as necessary to have a degree whatever the cost
- ▶ Did not feel they were getting value for money (classes too large, lack of personal, contact, lectures cancelled, research put before teaching etc)
 - *If I was paying £27,000 I would expect it to be a more personal experience. I wouldn't pay £27,000 for mass teaching out of a textbook, turning up to labs every day (Male engineering student).*

Class and fees

- ▶ W/c more likely to say they might not have come
- ▶ Believed it would put off their schoolmates
- ▶ Would have chosen more vocational subjects

2. The university policy framework

- ▶ Cuts in staff
- ▶ Obsession with plant and 'customer' service
- ▶ Regimes of performance management which focus on REF , research
- ▶ Policies DO NOT give students what they want



Priorities for spending

	UoB (%) (n=34)	UWE (%) (n=19)	WC(%) (n=26)	MC (%) (n=27)	TOTAL (%) (n=53)
More teaching staff	35	42	23	52	38
Books and library	41	32	54	22	38
Computer provision	9	16	12	11	11
Better labs and classrooms	9	5	8	7	8
Student unions & leisure facilities	6	0	4	4	4

What students want

- ▶ More personal contact
- ▶ Better guidance
- ▶ Recruitment fairs that do not just focus on finance, engineering, law (interest in voluntary sector)
- ▶ Help in finding jobs (eg university sponsored placements)
- ▶ Cheaper accommodation options
 - *More teaching staff. They're the people that make your experience worthwhile. ..I mean if you sit at a grubby desk and do work it's the same thing as a nice posh expensive desk, it doesn't actually make us work any harder which is what we're here to do (Anna, working-class, UoB)*

3. Do universities promote social mobility?

► Initial hypothesis:

- w/c students would feel more comfortable at UWE
- But w/c students at UoB would have better outcomes
- *I do aspire to live a higher class life than my parents did, I just see it as a natural progression, and I think Bristol has been a huge stepping stone in achieving that. It is a really good opportunity for social mobility from the cultural experiences you can gain. (Marcus, w/c UoB)*

Individual v class mobility

- ▶ Some w/c students do make it upwards
- ▶ But the lack of capitals may limit some confining them to lower-status or non-graduate occupations
- ▶ Could upward mobility be declining, in comparison to post-war decades?
- ▶ Does individual mobility change anything in an increasingly unequal society?
- ▶ Heightened aspirations and awareness of importance of HE

The non-economic benefits of university

- ▶ Greater social awareness, including understanding of class dis/advantages
- ▶ Broadened horizons
- ▶ Desire to give something back (eg teaching disadvantaged children, working for development agencies and charities, ecological concerns)
 - Education for a better future?