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Author

HANCOCK, Sally

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A future in the knowledge economy? : Analysing the career strategies of doctoral scientists through the principles of game theory / Sally Hancock

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Abstract

In recent decades, increasing participation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) has emerged as a globally shared policy objective in higher education. This policy objective is underpinned by a commitment to the economic framework of the knowledge economy and the belief that STEM education, knowledge and innovation are prerequisites for economic growth. This paper is concerned with doctoral scientists, who occupy a position of considerable privilege according to knowledge economy discourse: expertly knowledgeable, highly skilled and sought by elite employers. This paper assesses these policy claims against the experiences of recent doctoral scientists studying in the UK. Data from a 3-year mixed-method study are subjected to a novel, game theory informed analysis of students' values, decision-making behaviour and career ambitions. While all doctoral scientists engage in career-oriented strategizing, the game strategies employed by students

are diverse and reveal conflicted understandings of knowledge economy policy. Implications of these findings and the analytical merits of game theory are discussed. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)

Hancock, Sally, E-Mail: sally.hancock@york.ac.uk