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Pulling structured inequality into higher education : the impact of part-time working on English university students

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Abstract

This paper explores the social and academic effects of term-time working on undergraduate students at an English university. Data initially collected via a survey of student social relationships were enhanced by the inclusion of end-of-year academic performance. Various inferential statistical techniques were used to identify these effects. Path analysis was employed to disentangle significant variables and to show that term-time working had direct and significant effects on the two factors shown to be affected most significantly by term-time working: end-of-year average grade and participation in university societies. A major finding was that almost all students who worked came from state schools rather than from independent privately financed schools. The findings are discussed within the context of the recent history of funding policy regarding higher education in England. A key conclusion is that structured inequality, an inherent feature of a divided secondary education system, is being pulled firmly into higher education. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)