



## **Working Title:**

# **Widening Participation in Higher Education: The Aspirations of Young People Living in Low Participation Neighbourhoods**

**Ed Bickle – PhD student  
Bournemouth University**

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# The Policy Context

**Widening participation major policy of past 20 years**

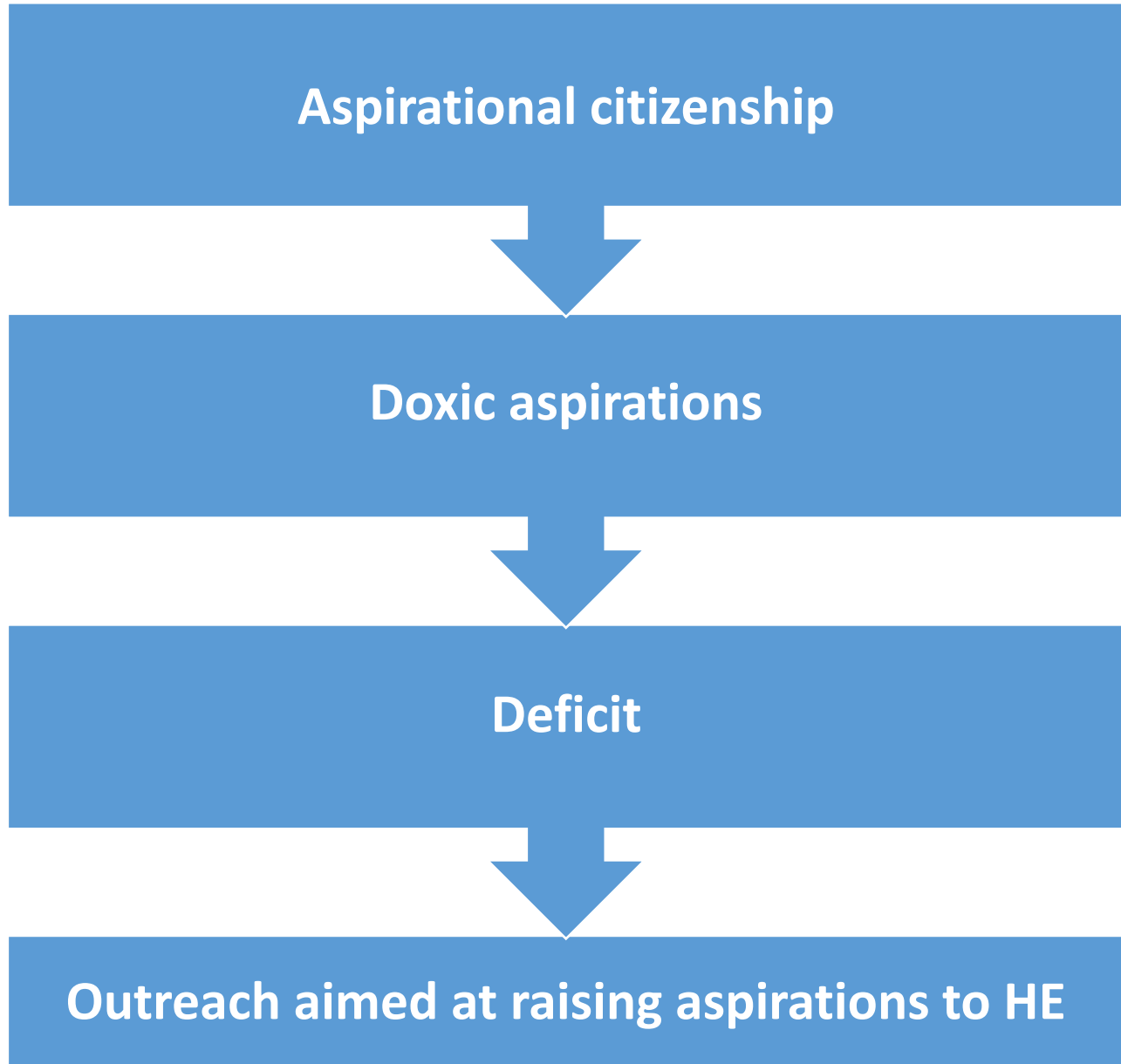
*‘Widening participation to higher education is about ensuring that students from disadvantaged backgrounds can access higher education, get the support they need to succeed in their studies, and progress to further study and/or employment suited to their qualifications and potential’ (OFFA and HEFCE 2014, p.6)*

**2004 Higher Education Act introduced access agreements**

**Increased emphasis on outreach programmes**

**Pupils from ‘Low Participation Neighbourhoods’ key target group**

# The Aspiration Context



# Research Questions

## Research Question 1:

What are the aspirations of young people living in low participation neighbourhoods?

## Research Question 2:

How are these aspirations shaped?

# How is aspiration defined?

***‘Strong desire to achieve something, such as success’ (Collins Dictionary 2015)***

***‘A hope or ambition of achieving something’ (Oxford Dictionaries 2015)***

***‘From intensely held goals and desires to looser, more nebulous interests; from ‘high’ or lofty ambitions to more prosaic, mundane or realistic expectations’ (Archer et al 2010, p.78)***

# Aspirations...

**Are different to expectations?**

**Do not exist in a vacuum**

**Are developmental (Gottfredson 1981: 2002)**

**Are intrinsic as well as extrinsic (Kasser & Ryan 1993)**

**Are two-dimensional (Quaglia & Cobb 1996)**

**Are based on an economic model, structural model or somewhere in the middle? (pragmatic rationality) (Payne 2003)**

# Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

**Its aim is to explore how participants make sense of their personal and social worlds and to understand the meanings particular experiences hold for the participants (Smith & Osborn 2011)**

Phenomenology



Idiographic



Hermeneutics

## Some concepts to explore

# The need to contextualise 'low' aspiration

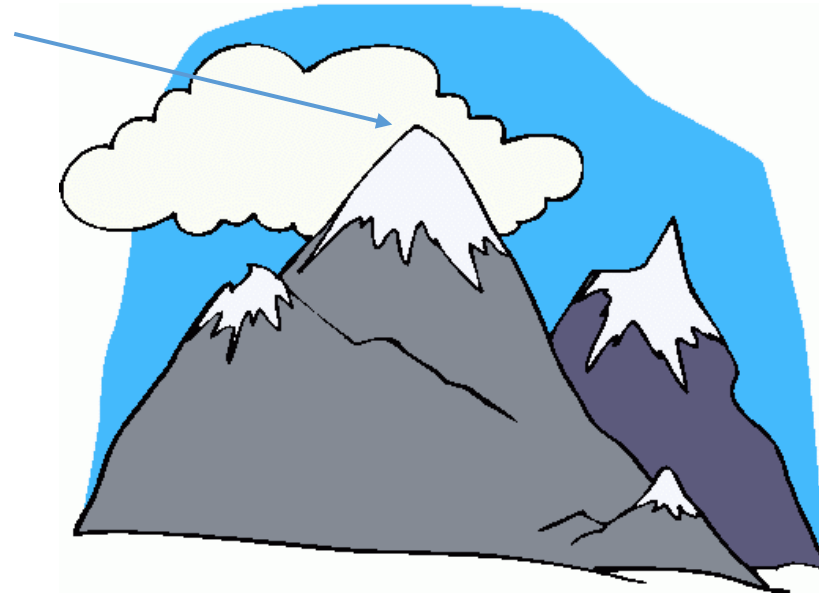
*What does success mean?*

*Just enough money to  
live on*



# The concept of relative distance

Higher Education



***‘We should thus be prepared to find class determined variations in aspirations not because the individual class members are more or less ambitious but because the classes themselves are nearer to some goals than to others’ (Keller & Zavalloni 1964, p.60)***

## Some concepts to explore

### The pressure of doxic aspiration?

*There are like teachers that are like get good grades do something academic. You're going to fail if you do something that's not to do with like English or science or something like that. They kind of pressure you saying you're gonna fail in life if you don't do what they want you to do.*

# Some concepts to explore

## The importance of self?

*It can be quite frustrating sometimes cause if you keep failing some people just give up but as long as you've got the right mind-set for it then you can just keep on going*

*If someone told me I wasn't good enough I'd keep trying even harder to get what I wanted until I actually got it like I wouldn't stop until I got like what I wanted*

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## Contact details

Ed Bickle

[ebickle@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:ebickle@bournemouth.ac.uk)

<https://microsites.bournemouth.ac.uk/cel/fair-access/>