



Civic Education Policy:

New Approaches to Place, Work and Education

Call for papers

Journal special collection (Civic Sociology)

Civic Sociology

An Open-Access Journal published by
University of California Press

For over 40 years, a liberal, individualistic approach to education has dominated policy and pedagogy based on the assumption that more education leads to greater social mobility. While true for select talented (and lucky) individuals, it is becoming increasingly clear that aggregate levels of mobility across dimensions of class, ethnicity, gender, migration status and more have stagnated or are declining. Even more troubling: the expansion of credentials without corresponding growth in jobs may well be producing greater precarity across all occupations and statuses. Culturally, this condition produces swelling resentment amongst non-credentialed, often older, populations against professional, political and media 'establishments' – who too often return this disdain through blanket dismissals of others' intelligence. Meanwhile, younger student populations experience crisis levels of anxiety earlier and earlier in life as all are compelled to compete in this overheating hamster wheel. The global popularity of Squid Game is testament to the scale of shared experience of this damaging liberal paradigm around the world.

Yet, bringing the particularities of regions and 'place' back into our analysis only intensifies awareness of these emergent dynamics. Clearly some places are doing better than others at reproducing and aggregating the social advantages that education is designed to make and distribute. Further, disadvantaged places too often exhibit multiple, overlapping forms of social deprivation, of which educational attainment is just one element in systemic, place-specific problems. The government in the UK have begun talk of 'Levelling Up' regional economies, though they retain a Schumpeterian faith in technology that has also failed to deliver on promises in recent decades.



The University of Manchester



We need to begin to rethink education from the ground(s) up. We need to ask new questions including:

- Does everyone and every place require the same education?
- Can we rethink the 'ends' of education as being not just academic/university credentials?
- How has the pandemic and changes to hybrid working effected the relationship between education, work and place?
- Can we remove 'deficit' thinking in education, by reflecting on places as systems where all contribute and learn in different ways?
- Can we rethink the way advanced knowledge – both intellectual and practical/craft knowledge – are integrated and developed in places?
- Can we usefully develop typologies of different knowledge ecologies that are suited to, for example, post-industrial towns or seaside villages?
- Can we develop (in fact, recover) place-based education and curriculum?
- How do we co-develop these kinds of place-based curricula with communities themselves?
- Can we map and understand the overlapping dynamics between power, place and knowledge? What are some major regional differences to consider alongside education?
- Can we contribute to policy discussion around 'levelling up' through well-conceived strategies to link research, policy and practice?
- Can we critically interrogate the idea of 'levelling up'? Who do we privilege and who do we exclude by prioritising this frame?
- What does 'Levelling Up' mean in a global context? Do the term and issues apply elsewhere?
- Can we develop a non-individualistic, civic approach to education that understands these relational dynamics between place, work and knowledge?

And, countless other questions rooted in any number of national, disciplinary, professional, and political backgrounds. Our aim is to bring together researchers, policymakers and publics to discuss these important issues around education, work and place in new, critical and constructive ways.

Please submit all articles via the [Civic Sociology](#) online submission website.

