

ASPIRATION AND A GOOD LIFE AMONG WHITE WORKING-CLASS BOYS IN LONDON

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White British pupils often maintain lower aspirations than other ethnic groups in the United Kingdom and are the least likely to remain in full-time education. Furthermore, underachievement is more prevalent among boys than girls in the lowest performing ethnic group. As a result, central to the United Kingdom's education policy is the goal of raising aspirations, although this approach has not been empirically researched. This article explores the processes and negotiations of White working-class boys in the United Kingdom regarding their conceptions of aspiration. The study participants included a group of 23 working-class boys from South London, aged 14-16 years. The research critically considers persistent educational underachievement among this group relative to neoliberal rhetoric, which uses the label "low aspirations" or attributes no aspirations at all to these students. The research method involved a school-based qualitative protocol and included interviews, focus groups, and visual methods. I explore the study's findings in the context of how dominant, neoliberal discourse, which values competitive, economic and status-based aspiration, shapes the subjectivities of these young males.