

**AUA Conference 2019**

**Fit for the future?  
stories about the nation and  
its universities**

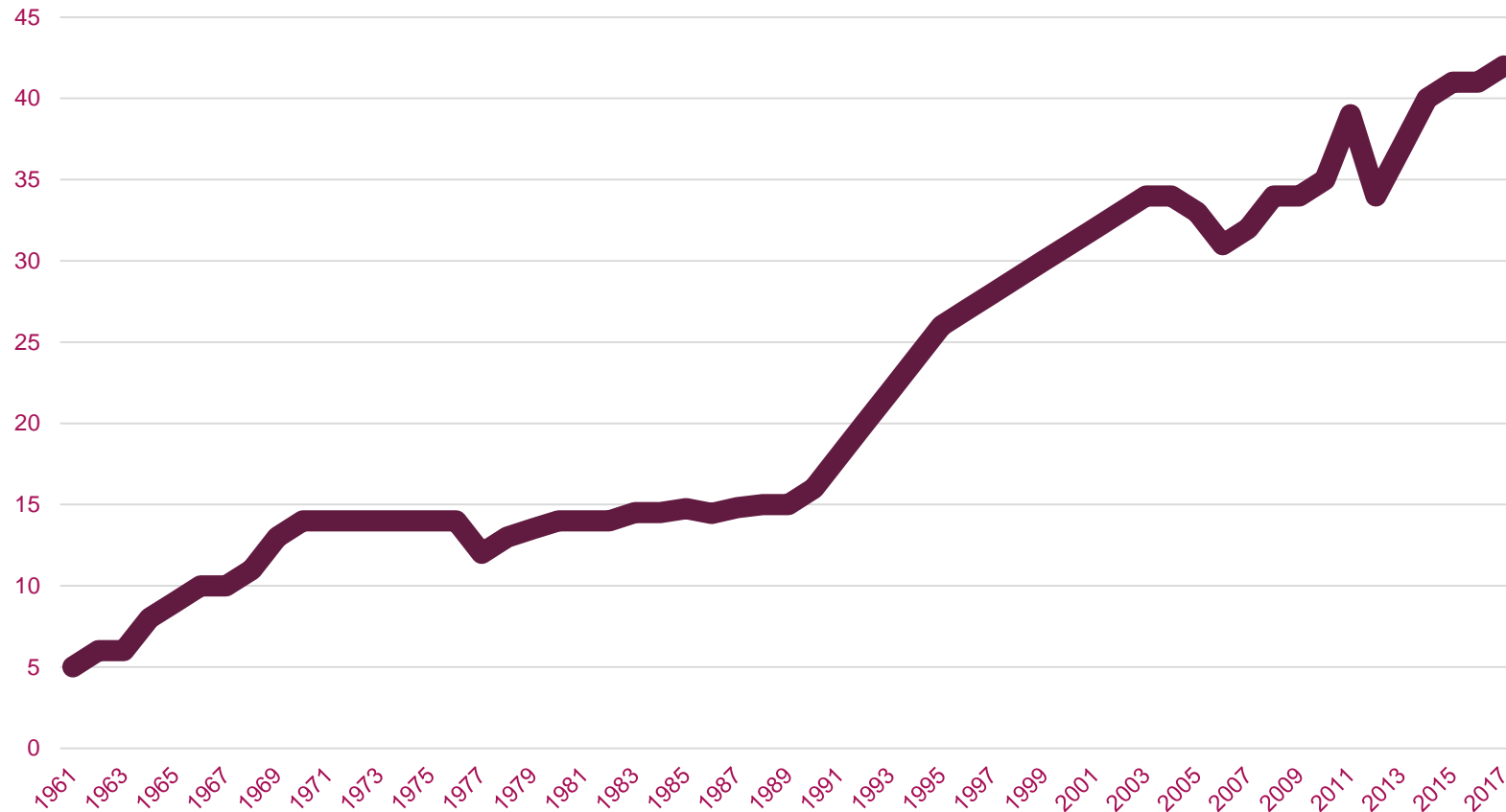
**Professor Sir Chris Husbands  
Vice-Chancellor, Sheffield Hallam University**

# the stories

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# participation

## 18 year old participation 1960-2017



## impact contribution to the UK economy

If all UK universities were based in the same city, it would be the fifth-largest city economy in the country, based on contribution to GDP. Overall UK universities generate a yearly output of

**£73bn**

Leeds-Bradford (GDP)

Rank 4

**£43.9bn**

UK universities (GDP)

Rank 5

**£39.9bn**

Liverpool (GDP)

Rank 6

**£36.1bn**

# reach global influence



## the critics



‘the university cartel’/’restore the binary divide’



‘a Ponzi scheme’



‘soft toys and snowflake sensibilities’

## the critics



‘inflexible model’



‘lowering standards to fill places’



‘extremely expensive, a bad bargain for the taxpayer and the student. ..we...have destroyed, other institutions which can deliver parts of tertiary education better’

# the argument

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## beneath the stories

<b>Outside in....</b>	<b>Inside out....</b>
undercurrent of elitism ('more meant worse')	access and participation (more means possibilities)
private returns (LEO)	public benefit
teaching is paramount	research, economic contribution and teaching matter
place and nation (Goodhart's 'somewheres')	global perspective ('anywheres')
cost	investment
different ways of looking at the world: expectations, assumptions, purposes	

A man with a conviction is a hard man to change. Tell him you disagree and he turns away. Show him facts or figures and he questions your sources. Appeal to logic and he fails to see your point.

**Leon Festinger**

## **the argument:**

the nation and its universities

elite preparation [preservation of privilege]

social mobility [the elevator model]

research innovation [health and technology]

academic excellence [especially in context of global competition]

export earnings [economic rather than cultural case for international engagement]

## **the argument:** confused expectations

elite and selective...open and accessible

recognisably traditional...entrepreneurial and innovative

globally engaged...locally located [and in between]

critical...supportive

loci of debate...shaping normativity

competitive....collaborative

autonomous...accountable

# **the narrative**

## what's your story?

- 1: the globally engaged corporate
- 2: the driver of regional economic growth
- 3: the school for grown-ups
- 4: the outsourced training institution
- 5: the cultural hub

these are different stories which land differently



Women were not allowed to vote in Switzerland until 1971. Women in Switzerland had to wait seven centuries after men for the vote.

In Appenzell Innerrhoden, women were granted suffrage only because of a supreme court decision in 1990.

This happens in societies and groups where communities “**expose us to disproportionate support for our own ideas and...shield us from the disagreement of outsiders**” (Schulz)



# the case

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# **the case**

## engaging the argument

comfort zones

delivering priorities

necessity and choice

productivity weakness post 2008

skills levels and match: city, region, nation

access and attainment: post-admission trajectories

windows and walls...who comes?

## **the case**

what won't work

deploying evidence [Festinger]

confused narratives [not making choices]

restating the community consensus [Schulz]

misunderstanding the audience's assumptions

## **the case**

what needs to be recognised

case needs clarity which understands audience world-view

a 21C university case: making choices and delivering

The true scarcity in Keynes' world - and ours - was therefore not of resources, or even of virtue, but of understanding.

Paul Krugman, *The return of depression economics, 2008*

I read Shakespeare and the Bible and I can shoot dice. That's what I call a liberal education.

Tallulah Bankhead, *My autobiography*, 1952

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