

## **Human Reflexivity and Student Experiences: A Critical Realist Analysis**

The term 'student experience' is commonly used across the higher education sector and in scholarly research. In Sociology of Education literature, the most common framework through which student experiences have been analysed comes from the work of Pierre Bourdieu; however, despite their merits, those studies are limited in their ability to explain why student experiences differ *within* groups of students whose individual members are similarly positioned from a Bourdieusian perspective (i.e., in terms of habitus, capital, and field). As such, this paper presents theory and evidence from research that went beyond Bourdieusian concepts to create a new framework for understanding student experiences. This involved integrating work from Margaret Archer and Self-Determination Theory to analyse relationships between different modes of reflexivity and different kinds of motivations. The quantitative findings from 336 students at a modern UK university suggest that student reflexivity has a significant bearing on the quality of student experiences, with meta reflexivity being associated with intrinsic motivation, and fractured reflexivity associated with amotivation. As such, this paper adds new insights to our understanding of student experiences and explores the practical implications for educators and university stakeholders who are interested in empowering student reflexivity and, ultimately, student flourishing. The paper will address questions about what kinds of reflexivity we should want to empower in students, which modes we should help students avoid, and why.