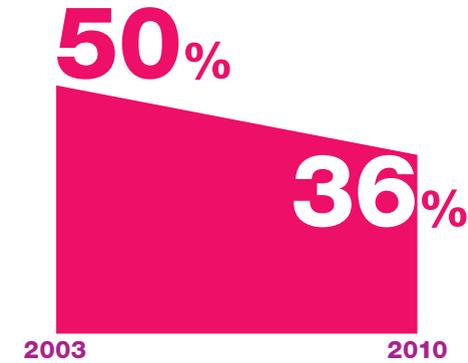


# 5. Higher education

## A limit to expansion? Attitudes to university funding, fees and opportunities

The coalition government’s approval for a large-scale increase in university tuition fees in England has prompted street protests and contributed to a drop in support for the Liberal Democrats. But the public’s wider views on the expansion and funding of higher education may not be as clear-cut as the political debate implies.

**Support for the continued expansion of higher education has fallen in England as the number of university places has increased. Opposition to students paying for tuition and taking out loans to cover their living costs has decreased (though the survey preceded the latest fee increase).**

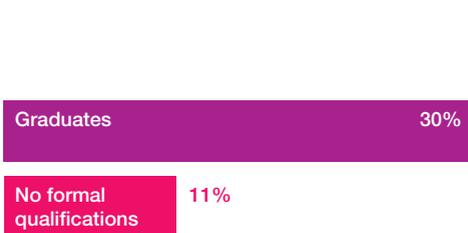


Public support for **expanding higher education** opportunities for young people peaked at 50% in 2003 and has since fallen to 36%.

Most (70%) think that some students or their families should pay university **tuition fees**, and the proportion wholly opposed to them has fallen from 25% in 2007 to 16%. Despite the political uproar following the Liberal Democrat's post-election change of position on tuition fees, only a small minority of Liberal Democrat supporters are wholly opposed to fees (13%).



**Those who are most privileged educationally and economically are less likely to support university expansion, and more likely to support fees.**



Graduates (30%) are much more likely to support a reduction in the number of university places, than those without formal qualifications (11%).



Those who are opposed to tuition fees are more likely to support the expansion of higher education than those who want tuition fees for all (42% compared with 19%).

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Higher education funding and the cost of obtaining a university degree has proved to be one of the most contentious political issues since the 2010 General Election. The coalition government's decision to increase the top rate of fees that universities in England can charge from £3,290 to £9,000 (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2010) prompted large-scale public demonstrations during 2011. Opposition within Parliament and on the streets has been fuelled by criticism of the coalition government's junior partner, the Liberal Democrats, who had actively campaigned during the election to phase out university tuition fees for first degrees. Indignation has focused on this political *volte-face* as well as the jump in fees that will take place from the autumn of 2012, and the much larger loans that most students will need to meet them.

Fieldwork for the 2010 *British Social Attitudes* survey took place after the election, but before the government had announced its intention to raise tuition fees (based on recommendations from a review of university funding by the industrialist Lord Browne (2010)). But the response to our questions seeking people's views about access to higher education and how to pay for it sheds new light on a debate whose intensity increased dramatically a few months later. We wanted to know how far the public supports the 40-year trend that has seen higher education expand from the preserve of an elite group in society to something experienced by nearly half the young people in Britain. The last time views were obtained about the number of young people going to university was in 2007 when there were signs that support for a continued increase was starting to fall. We were keen to find out whether that apparent shift in public opinion has been sustained.

In the same way, we wanted to know whether attitudes to tuition fees, government maintenance grants and student loans have altered over time. Tuition fees were introduced by Labour in 1998, with variable rate fees (top-up fees) added in 2004. As the cost of funding higher education has been transferred from the state to individual students and their families, we wonder if the public has become more accepting of the loan system. Alternatively, has opposition to the new system intensified – at least in England where students are required to pay full tuition fees?

The situation for students whose family homes are in England differs, of course, from those of students normally resident in Scotland, for whom the devolved government has abolished tuition fees (Scottish Government, 2010). More recently the Welsh Assembly Government, in response to the latest rise in tuition fees, has decided to 'cap' the fees paid by Welsh students at UK universities at their current level, using public money to fund the difference (Welsh Government, 2010). Given these different approaches now being taken to the funding of higher education in Scotland and Wales, we have decided to confine our analysis of public attitudes in this chapter to responses from people in England. It is their views that can be expected to carry the greatest resonance for the current political debate about fees.

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But while concentrating on public opinion in England, we must also take account of the possibility that any overall trends we identify disguise a more subtle interplay of attitudes between different social and political groups. Recognising this, we not only look at trends over time, but also how the views expressed in 2010 vary according to social status. We also examine how far people's views on the expansion of higher education are linked or consistent with their attitudes concerning university fees. Might some people welcome fees as a means of restricting access to universities? Do others, by contrast, accept the argument made by some politicians that higher fees and loans are necessary to enable universities to continue to expand to meet the higher education aspirations of many? We go on to compare people's views with their political affiliations and consider how far they accord with the stated policies of the parties they support.

### **Trends in attitudes towards participation, fees and loans**

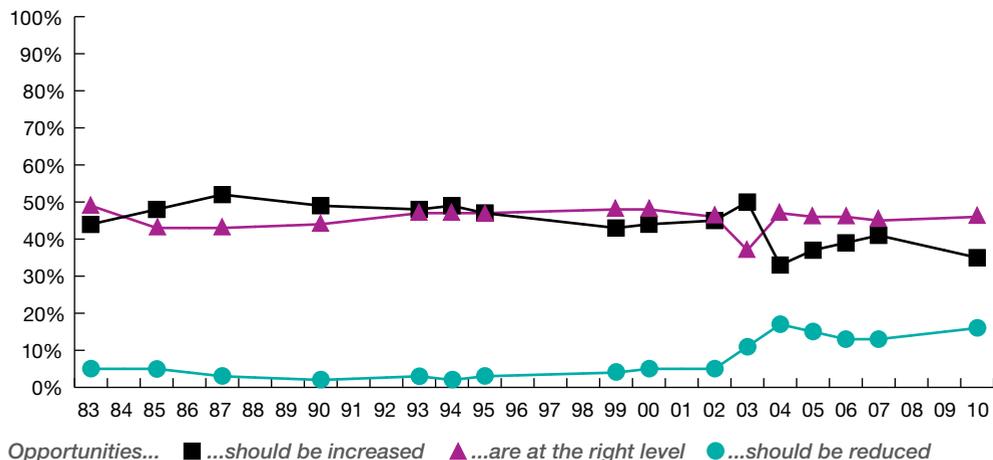
Policies for increasing the number of young people reaching higher education have been pursued by both Labour and the Conservatives, with the last Labour government setting a target – still unmet – of 50 per cent of young people attending university with the current Higher Education participation rate being 47 per cent (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2011). While the Liberal Democrat manifesto at the 2010 election pledged to scrap this target, but restore free tuition for first degrees (Liberal Democrats, 2010), the Conservative manifesto promised 10,000 extra university places (Conservative Party, 2010). Posing a question about participation in higher education that has been consistently used in the *British Social Attitudes* series, we asked people:

***Do you feel that opportunities for young people in Britain to go on to higher education – to a university or college – should be increased or reduced, or are they about the right level now?***

Figure 5.1 describes the trends recorded since this question was first asked. It shows that – as in 1983 – there are more people in England who think the level of higher education opportunities is “about right” than believe they should be increased or reduced. But the similarities end there because in 2010 the proportion favouring further expansion has fallen over recent years (35 per cent), while the percentage recommending reduced rates of university participation has reached its highest level to date (16 per cent). So, as the proportion of young people in higher education has continued to increase in recent years, so support for further increasing participation has gone into decline.

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 **Policies for increasing the number of young people reaching higher education have been pursued by both Labour and the Conservatives** 

**Figure 5.1 Trends in views on the level of higher education participation, 1983–2010**

*Base: England only*

*The data on which Figure 5.1 is based can be found in the appendix to this chapter*

A high point in public support for the expansion of higher education was reached in 2003 when 50 per cent of those interviewed wanted more opportunities in higher education – and the proportion content with existing provision fell below 40 per cent. Support for expansion fell in 2004 to 33 per cent, perhaps as a result of debates surrounding the proposal in January 2004 to introduce £3,000 tuition fees. Following a gradual increase to 2007 (41 per cent), support decreased again in 2010 to 35 per cent. Meanwhile, the proportion of respondents saying that opportunities for participation should be reduced increased from five per cent in 2000 to 16 per cent in 2010.

Nevertheless, those wanting more university opportunities for young people still outnumber those calling for a reduction by more than two to one. Of course, this trend reflects the increasing proportion of young people participating in higher education. The downward trend in support for expansion could therefore partly reflect consistent views about the optimum level of participation. But we can still see that a significant minority of the population – one in six – now think it is time to reverse the process. It will be interesting, later in this chapter, to see how far this group is distinct in terms of social status and party politics from people who favour continued expansion.

For now, we continue to focus on trends, by examining people’s opinions about university tuition fees and student loans. Since 2004, *British Social Attitudes* has asked the public what it thinks “about university or college students or their families paying towards the costs of their tuition, either while they are studying or after they have finished”. The question asks respondents which of three views they think is closest to their own:

***All students or their families should pay towards the costs of their tuition***

***Some students or their families should pay towards the costs of their tuition, depending on their circumstances***

***No students or their families should pay towards the costs of their tuition***

Table 5.1 shows a fairly stable picture between 2004 and 2007, with two in three people accepting that some students or their families should pay tuition fees, and up to one in four maintaining they should not. However, by 2010 this minority has shrunk from 25 per cent in 2007 to 16 per cent, while the proportion thinking that some should pay, depending on their circumstances, has increased somewhat from 66 per cent to 70 per cent. There has also been an increase in the minority of people who suggest that all students or families should pay tuition fees, from eight per cent to 13 per cent.

**Table 5.1 Attitudes towards tuition fees, 2004–2010**

	2004	2005	2007	2010
<b>Who should pay towards tuition costs?</b>	%	%	%	%
All students/families should pay	11	9	8	13
Some students/families should pay	66	67	66	70
No students/families should pay	22	22	25	16
<i>Base</i>	2684	1796	2617	913

*Base: England only*

An increasing body of opinion that students or their families should pay may, in part, reflect increasing acceptance of tuition fees as the *status quo*. Although people were interviewed before the government decided to raise maximum fees to £9,000 a year, we can also expect opinions to have been influenced by the recession and widely-debated concerns about public spending.

Seeking views on the complementary issue of student living expenses, we asked two further questions. The first advised respondents that currently “some full-time British university students get grants to help cover their living costs” with grants depending “upon the student’s circumstances and those of their family”. Respondents were invited to say whether:

***all students should get grants to help cover their living costs,***

***some students should get grants to help cover their living costs***

***or, that no grants should be given to help cover students’ living costs?***

**70%**

**say some students should pay tuition fees, depending on their circumstances**

On student loans, people were advised that many full-time university students “are now taking out government loans to help cover their living costs” and that “they have to start repaying these loans when they begin working”. The question asked, generally speaking, if they thought that:

*students should be expected to take out loans to help cover their living costs*

or

*students should not be expected to take out loans to help cover living costs*

Table 5.2 displays the responses to the question about loans since it was first asked in 1995, and to the grants question since 2000. Replies to the latter show a modest decline in support for universal maintenance grants from 27 per cent 10 years ago to 21 per cent, while support for grants being awarded to some students has remained relatively stable (67 per cent in 2000, and 70 per cent in 2010). Opposition to any grants being given at all is very low, although it stands at four per cent compared with one per cent in 2000.

**Table 5.2 Views on higher education loans and grants, 1995–2010**

	1995	2000	2010
<b>Should students get grants to help cover their living costs?</b>	%	%	%
All students	n/a	27	21
Some students	n/a	67	70
No grants	n/a	1	4
It depends	n/a	4	4
<i>Base</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>959</i>	<i>913</i>
<b>Should students be expected to take out loans?</b>	%	%	%
Should be expected	27	28	43
Should not be expected	64	58	42
It depends	8	12	14
<i>Base</i>	<i>1041</i>	<i>959</i>	<i>913</i>

*Base: England only*

Opinion about student loans shows more movement over time. In 1995, four years after government-sponsored loans were first introduced, two out of three (64 per cent) people thought students should not be expected to borrow money to cover their living costs. Little more than one in four (27 per cent) took an opposite view. By 2000, this was still the balance of opinion, although the majority opposing loans was smaller (58 per cent). Ten years later, we find opinion is evenly divided with 42 per cent saying students should not be expected to take out a loan, and 43 per cent insisting that

they should. This increased acceptance may simply be due to the long standing of the policy, and the political reality of support for loans from both major parties.

But while loans have become the norm in higher education, they continue to attract widespread criticism – not least through concerns that the level of debt needed to complete a university course will deter some applicants. The government argues that poorer young people should not be deterred by debt because loan repayments are only sought after the graduate borrower has passed a minimum income threshold. Against those who insist that state-funded higher education would be fairer, it is typically argued that funding from general taxation is far from equitable because the students who benefit still come disproportionately from affluent backgrounds. But are members of the public who support tuition fee charges and maintenance loans really more ‘egalitarian’ in their outlook? Or are their views linked to a more ‘elitist’ view of higher education that considers higher education is expanding too far? We explore these possibilities in the remainder of the chapter.

### **Attitudes held by different social groups**

Having reported on how the public’s views about participation, fees and loans have changed over time, we consider how their responses in the most recent survey vary according to occupational status and educational background. We categorise occupational background into three groups: (1) professional and managerial occupations, (2) intermediate occupations, that is those in non-manual employment outside the professional and managerial sector and (3) those in either skilled, semi-skilled or unskilled manual employment, that is traditional working-class employment. In Table 5.3 we can see that those in traditional working-class jobs are rather more likely (50 per cent) to think the current level of opportunities “about right” than those from professional and managerial (39 per cent) backgrounds. A more striking difference emerges among the minority who favour a contraction of existing opportunities; 10 per cent of those in traditional working-class jobs think opportunities should be reduced, compared with 26 per cent of those from professional and managerial backgrounds.

Our analysis based on educational attainment reveals an even stronger series of contrasts. People with qualifications below degree level are very much more likely to favour an expansion of university opportunities (40 per cent) and those who have been to university are least positive. Conversely, 30 per cent of graduates think that higher education opportunities should be reduced; far exceeding the proportion among those with lower qualifications (14 per cent) or no qualifications at all (11 per cent). From this, we can see that the minority who believe that there should be fewer places in higher education consists disproportionately of people who have been to university themselves.

When we apply the same social background analysis to people’s views about tuition fees, distinctions by social class and educational attainment are discernable,

# 30%

**of graduates think that higher education opportunities should be reduced**

but much less marked. A larger minority of professional and managerial respondents think that all students should pay (16 per cent) than those from intermediate (11 per cent) or working-class (12 per cent) backgrounds. Graduates (18 per cent) are also more likely to take this view than people with qualifications below degree level (10 per cent) or no qualifications at all (14 per cent). Conversely, those without qualifications are rather more likely to insist that no students should have to pay tuition fees (21 per cent) than those with degrees (16 per cent) or lower qualifications (14 per cent). We must, however, recognise that – as in the population as a whole – most people in most of these demographic groups accept that some students should pay something. Knowing that the 2010 survey took place before the government's decision to institute a dramatic rise in tuition fees, we might speculate that this general acceptance of student fees is linked to the relatively low amounts being demanded at the time. But only time will tell.

**Table 5.3 Attitudes towards higher education opportunities, by demographic characteristics**

	Higher education opportunities...				Base
	...should be increased	...are about right	...should be reduced		
<b>Occupational class</b>					
Professional/managerial	%	34	39	26	163
Intermediate	%	33	45	18	361
Working class	%	38	50	10	351
<b>Educational attainment</b>					
Degree or higher	%	28	40	30	182
Below degree level	%	40	45	14	426
No qualifications	%	31	54	11	211
<b>Whether the respondent has a child living in household</b>					
Child in household	%	41	56	12	365
No child in household	%	32	46	19	563
All	%	35	46	16	913

*Base: England only*

When we turn to views on maintenance grants and student loans, the differences by occupational status and educational background become more pronounced. Most people in most groups think that *some* students should receive grants, but support for *all* students receiving grants is highest among working-class respondents (24 per cent) and those with no qualifications (23 per cent). This compares with 15

per cent of people from professional and managerial backgrounds and 16 per cent of graduates. These latter groups provide the strongest support for students being expected to take out loans: 56 per cent of managerial and professional respondents and 51 per cent of graduates, compared with 36 per cent of working-class respondents and 31 per cent of those without qualifications. Conversely, 46 per cent of people from working-class backgrounds and 45 per cent without qualifications say students should not be expected to take out loans; falling to 34 per cent among professionals and managers and 37 per cent among graduates. So, the even balance between views about loans that we find across the public as a whole does not exist for these particular social groups.

These findings provide some support for the suggestion that an ‘elitist’ strand of opinion might exist among graduates and the managerial and professional classes that wants to reduce access to higher education and make those who do reach university pay for it themselves. They also suggest that people who have not been to university tend to be more broadly ‘egalitarian’ in their thinking, believing that access to higher education should continue to grow and that students should receive state funding.

Another possible explanation for these differences of view might be that they reflect people’s self-interest. As a way of testing the extent of people’s self-interest or altruism, we compared the responses from people with children in the household, with those who did not have children living with them. Support for increasing higher education opportunities is higher among those who have a child living in the household (41 per cent) compared with those without a child in the household (33 per cent). This suggests that self-interest does play a role in determining the views of parents of a child who could go on to university.<sup>1</sup>

### **Links between attitudes**

The coalition government – like the previous Labour government – has argued that the nation cannot afford current or future levels of participation in higher education unless students themselves carry more of the costs. But does the wider public make this connection? To find out, we analysed our data to see which strands of opinion on university expansion are linked to particular views about tuition fees.

Table 5.4 suggests that people do not generally see any connection between increasing fees and the continued expansion in higher education. Instead, those who think students should not pay tuition fees are the most likely to want participation in higher education to increase (42 per cent), while those who believe that all students should pay fees are the least likely to favour expansion (19 per cent). While acknowledging that nearly half the population in England think that current levels of university access are “about right”, we can still interpret these findings in terms of the distinction between a minority of ‘elitists’ who oppose expansion and support fees, and another of ‘egalitarians’ who favour expansion but oppose fees being charged to students.

 **The minority who believe that there should be fewer places in higher education consists disproportionately of people who have been to university themselves** 

Having investigated these links – and the way that they diverge from the defence of policy mounted by both the current government and its predecessor – we turn, finally, to people’s views in relation to their support for political parties.

**Table 5.4 Attitudes towards higher education opportunities, by attitudes towards university fees**

	Who should pay towards tuition costs?			All
	All students/ families should pay	Some students/ families should pay	No students/ families should pay	
Higher education opportunities...	%	%	%	%
...should be increased	19	37	42	35
...are about right	54	45	44	46
...should be reduced	22	16	13	16
<i>Base</i>	113	638	146	913

*Base: England only*

### Attitudes and support for political parties

Do Conservative voters align themselves with the party’s election commitment to expand university entrance? Do Labour supporters share the outgoing government’s support for tuition fees and for a higher proportion of young people attending university? Most interesting of all, are the views of Liberal Democrat supporters closer to the party’s opposition to charging students’ tuition fees during the election, or to its support for fees once in government?

As with the general public in England, we find that people who think the level of higher education opportunities is “about right” are the largest single group among supporters of each of the main parties (Conservative and Labour 46 per cent, Liberal Democrat 45 per cent). Nevertheless, a noticeably higher proportion of Conservative supporters (25 per cent) favour a reduction in opportunities, than those aligned with the Liberal Democrats (15 per cent), or Labour (12 per cent), or those stating no party affiliation (eight per cent). Similarly, although 27 per cent of those who identify with the Conservatives want increased university opportunities for young people, the proportion of Labour (40 per cent) and Liberal Democrat (38 per cent) supporters saying the same is higher. So, about a quarter of Conservative supporters appear to agree with the party’s manifesto policy of creating 10,000 extra places in higher education, but another quarter endorse a policy of reducing access.

The most remarkable feature of the responses on tuition fees is not the differences of view between supporters of different parties, but the similarities. Prior to the 2010 UK general elections, the Liberal Democrats took a distinctive position against tuition fees, and they are perceived to have been damaged among the electorate by their

*volte-face* on this issue once they joined the coalition government. We might therefore have expected to see strong anti-fees attitudes among Lib Dem supporters in 2010, but, as Table 5.5 shows, this is not the case.

Instead, views of the three major parties are remarkably similar. Comparable proportions of Liberal Democrat supporters (76 per cent), Labour supporters (70 per cent) and Conservatives (74 per cent) think that some students or their families should pay fees. Only a small minority of 13 per cent of Liberal Democrat supporters believe no students or their families should pay, while the largest minority opposed to students paying their own tuition fees is among those who do not identify with any party at all (23 per cent).

**Table 5.5 Attitudes towards university fees, by party identification**

	Party identification				All
	Conser- vative	Labour	Liberal Demo- crat	None	
<b>Who should pay towards tuition costs?</b>	%	%	%	%	%
All students/families should pay	15	14	11	11	13
Some students/families should pay	74	70	76	67	71
No students/families should pay	11	16	13	23	16
<i>Base</i>	270	249	125	162	913

*Base: England only*

Table 5.6 shows that when it comes to living costs, Labour supporters and the unaffiliated appear to be the most likely to support universal grants (24 per cent in each case) compared with 18 per cent of Conservative and 17 per cent of Liberal Democrat supporters. However these are not significant differences, and overall the three major parties are similar in their views on grants. A majority of all groups supported the view that some but not all students should receive grants.

On the issue of student loans, however, the differences of opinion between party supporters are not only more marked, but also reveal a striking change of alignment. While rather more than half of Conservative supporters (53 per cent) say students should be expected to take out loans, a similar proportion of Liberal Democrat supporters (52 per cent) maintain the opposite view. The views of Labour supporters lie in-between, but considerably closer to Liberal Democrat supporters. Thus, intriguingly, Liberal Democrat supporters are closest to Conservative supporters on the issue of tuition fees and grants, but closer to Labour supporters on loans. Whether this remains the case following the coalition government's decision to raise tuition fees is, for the time being, a matter for conjecture. It is certainly surprising that people who identify with the Liberal Democrats are less exercised about university tuition fees than about the somewhat different issue of loans.

**Table 5.6 Attitudes towards grants and loans, by party identification**

	Party identification				
	Conser- vative	Labour	Liberal Demo- crat	None	All
<b>Who should receive grants?</b>	%	%	%	%	%
All students should get grants	18	24	17	24	21
Some students should get grants	73	68	76	66	70
No grants should be given	5	3	3	2	4
It depends	4	3	3	4	4
<i>Base</i>	270	249	125	162	913
<b>Should students be expected to take out loans?</b>	%	%	%	%	%
Students should be expected to take out loans	53	40	37	40	43
Students should not be expected to take out loans	34	46	52	39	42
It depends	13	13	11	16	13
<i>Base</i>	270	249	125	162	913

*Base: England only*

## Conclusions

There has been a clear change in attitudes towards higher education funding over time towards greater support for tuition fees and a decline in opposition towards loans. In the case of tuition costs, we can see that the change is not so much a consequence of opinions altering slowly over time as a fall in public opposition to fees between 2007 and 2010. This suggests that hardening support for students paying their own way through university may be linked to the financial crisis in the late-2000s. Nevertheless, support for student grants has not declined in the same way. Of course, the actual level of the fee increases to up to £9,000 that has emerged has surprised many, and we will need to wait for the next survey to see how this has affected attitudes.

The Liberal Democrats pledged to abolish tuition fees for students taking their first degree if they were elected in 2010, a policy which clearly differentiated them from the other main parties in England, and they appear to have been damaged politically by their decision to drop this policy when they entered into coalition with the Conservatives. So, it is surprising that only a fraction of Liberal Democrat supporters are entirely opposed to fees. This indicates that support for the Liberal Democrats manifesto position was low even among Liberal Democrat supporters, although this may not apply in constituencies with large student populations, where the Liberal Democrats campaigned particularly strongly on an anti-fees platform. We also need to bear in mind that party affiliation is not the same thing as voting behaviour, as people may vote for a party that they do not identify with for tactical reasons – and around 17% of respondents had no party affiliation. However, it may be that it is the appearance of untrustworthiness in breaking a pledge that has damaged the Liberal Democrats as much as the substance of the policy itself.

The Liberal Democrats are, meanwhile, not the only party whose higher education policies appear somewhat out of tune with those of their declared supporters. More Labour supporters oppose the policy of expecting students to take out loans to cover their living costs than support it. Conservative supporters are the most likely to think that students should be expected to take out loans, but also the most strongly in favour of reducing access to university – a view that contrasts with the expansion pledge in the party's 2010 manifesto.

Party politics aside, we have seen that the public does not seem wholly convinced by the proposition that young people's access to university should continue to expand and that tuition fees and student loans are the way to make this affordable. Most people think that levels of participation in higher education are either 'about right' or already too high. And while a majority agree that some students should pay tuition fees, opinion is evenly divided on the question of whether they should be expected to take out loans. Some have argued that free higher education is a subsidy to the middle classes, as they are the most likely to benefit from higher education. This argument would suggest the hypothesis that respondents from manual occupations should be most likely to support tuition fees. However, our analysis shows that the opposite is the case. Opposition to fees and loans and support for grants is highest among the manual groups and those without degree level qualifications. However, overall, class differences in attitudes towards higher education fees are perhaps surprisingly small.

We can conclude from this that support for further expanding higher education enjoys broadly the same demographic base as opposition to tuition fees and loans, coupled with support for maintenance grants. Our analysis also demonstrates that people who support charging tuition fees to students and who expect them to take out maintenance loans are more likely than others to call for a reduction in the number of university places. There is little evidence that people's opinions are driven by a calculation of their immediate self-interest. Significant and consistently opposed minorities do, however, appear to hold views that reflect something approaching a class-based interest or ideology. The middle classes and existing graduates are more likely to seek to protect the value of their investment in higher education by restricting access to it, while those in manual occupations and without a university degree are more likely to wish to reduce barriers to participation.

## Notes

1. As a further test of self-interest we compared the responses from parents who told us it was fairly or very likely that their children would go on to higher education, with those who said it was not likely. Since the latter group constituted a very small proportion of our overall sample (36 respondents) we do not place much weight on the analysis. However it is interesting to note that support for reducing university opportunities is at a similar level among those who think it likely their children will attend university, and the few parents who think their child is unlikely to go on to higher education (45 per cent compared with 47 per cent).

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### Acknowledgements

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### Appendix

The data for Figure 5.1 are shown below.

<b>Table A.1 Trends in views on the level of higher education participation, 1983–2010</b>								
	1983	1985	1987	1990	1993	1994	1995	1999
<b>Opportunities for young people to go on to higher education...</b>	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
...should be increased	44	48	52	49	48	49	47	43
...are at the right level	49	43	43	44	47	47	47	48
...should be reduced	5	5	3	2	3	2	3	4
<i>Base</i>	1495	1538	2402	1205	1260	996	1090	920
	2000	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2010
<b>Opportunities for young people to go on to higher education...</b>	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
...should be increased	44	45	50	33	37	39	41	35
...are at the right level	48	46	37	47	46	46	45	46
...should be reduced	5	5	11	17	15	13	13	16
<i>Base</i>	959	2897	2767	2684	1796	2775	2617	913

*Base: England only*