

3. Private education

Private schools and public divisions: the influence of fee-paying education on social attitudes

Senior figures within the state apparatus such as politicians, judges and civil servants are disproportionately educated at private schools. Some claim private schooling perpetuates a form of social segregation; this chapter explores and contributes to this debate by examining whether being educated privately affects people’s political attitudes and values.

There are differences between the views of the privately and state educated that cannot be explained by differences in where they come from (for example parental income) and where they are now (for example current income).



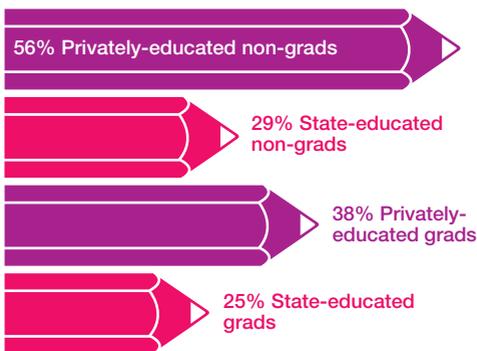
63% of the privately educated **see themselves as middle or upper middle class** compared with only 24% of the state educated. Even when we account for upbringing and current income and occupational status, the privately educated are nearly twice as likely as their state counterparts to describe themselves as middle class.

60% of the state educated think there is **“one law for the rich, and one law for the poor”**, compared with 44% of the privately educated. These differences are reduced, but cannot wholly be explained by family background and current social status.



Since 1986, **support for the Conservatives** has averaged 51% among the privately educated, but only 29% among the state educated.

Going to university seems to reduce some of these differences. The gap between the views of the state and privately educated is smaller among graduates than among non-graduates.



Since 1986, **support for the Conservatives** has averaged 56% among privately-educated non-graduates, compared with 29% among state-educated non-graduates. Among graduates the gap is much smaller; 38% of the privately educated support the Conservatives, compared with 25% of their state-educated counterparts.

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What marks England out is the degree to which its schools segregate the socially advantaged from the rest. (Adonis and Pollard 1997: 37)

Democracy as exercised in Britain carries no particular expectation that those who run the country will constitute a demographically matched sample of the people they represent or administer. One of the most obvious instances of the way this works in practice is the disproportionate number of people in positions of power and influence who have been educated in private school. When the coalition government took power in 2010, for example, it was led by a Prime Minister educated at Eton College, a Deputy Prime Minister who attended Westminster School and a Chancellor of the Exchequer who went to St Paul's School, while across government as a whole two-thirds of Ministers were privately educated. The proportion of Members of Parliament who went to private schools is lower at 35 per cent, but still up to five times the seven per cent found among the general population (The Sutton Trust, 2010). Nor is it only among politicians that we find a preponderance of privately-educated people at the top: studies in the past decade have found that more than half of all senior civil servants attended private schools (Wilson and Barker, 2003) and that the vast majority of senior judges are privately educated (S.J. Berwin, 2005).

In theory, social exclusivity need not result in unrepresentative government: a man can, in principle, share the concerns and values of a woman, just as a middle-class person can understand those of someone who is working class. But for this to work in practice there has to be some basis of shared values and experiences to allow a proper understanding of the lives and concerns of other people. If the education system – as the moulding social influence on the lives and minds of young people – enshrines the kind of separate development where the future leaders of society are educated apart from the people they will later govern or judge, then warning bells should probably sound.

But does the prominence in power of people who were privately educated really mean that we live in a 'them and us' world more readily associated with the ruling establishment of 50 years ago (Boyd, 1973) than the 21st century? Or might an examination of their attitudes reveal that people who have experienced a fee-paying education share values and views that are little different to those of their state-educated peers?

In this chapter we seek to shed new light on whether or not people who have attended private schools differ in their perceptions, attitudes and political choices from the majority who went to state schools. Before setting about this task, however, we should mention how two technical issues have been resolved to help ensure that the results of our analysis carry real meaning. Firstly, we know that between 10 and 12 per cent of respondents in any *British Social Attitudes* survey will normally have been privately educated at some stage in their school careers.¹ This means the overall number surveyed in any one year is too small for the kind of analyses we need to carry out. However, by pooling the data obtained in different surveys that have asked

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the same, relevant questions we can assemble samples of up to 8,900 privately-educated people.² Secondly, we want to know how likely it is that any differences we find between private and state-school students are explained by their educational experiences, as opposed to other factors in their family backgrounds – or their circumstances at the time of interview. For example, the privately educated will tend to come from more affluent backgrounds than others (Sullivan and Heath, 2003), and have distinctive aspirations and strategies of advancement they endorse for their children, as shown in our chapter on school choice. We need to know whether any differences we find reflect these factors rather than their education. To do that, we use methods that allow us to take account of, or ‘control for’ a person’s background and current circumstances. A more technical description of this can be found in the appendix at the end of this chapter.

The picture that we paint has had to include broad brush strokes. We do not, for example, have information on which private schools our respondents went to or for how long they attended. Yet we might suspect that people educated in the most exclusive and expensive institutions live lives that have less in common with the rest of society than those who are educated in less prestigious private schools. The same might be thought about those educated outside the state system throughout the years of compulsory schooling, compared with those who only attended a private secondary school. So while we include all privately-educated respondents in our reference group for this chapter, it is possible that this results in our underestimating the social exclusivity experienced by those in positions of power who first attended elite preparatory schools followed by the likes of Eton or Harrow.

Who are the privately educated?

The standard question from *British Social Attitudes* surveys that we use to identify people who were privately educated is:

*Have you ever attended a fee-paying, private primary or secondary school in the United Kingdom?*³

Using the responses, we first examine how privately-educated people compare with the general population in terms of jobs, education, income, ethnicity, sex, where they live and social background. How different demographically are they? Interestingly, when we look at the relevant data from different years spread over a quarter of a century, we find little or no change over time in the social characteristics of the privately educated. Using data pooled from a number of different years, we highlight the following findings:

- *Social background:* 34 per cent of privately-educated people have fathers whose jobs were professional or managerial, compared with 14 per cent of those who were state-educated.⁴

55%

of people who were privately educated have a professional or managerial job compared with 29% who were state educated

- *Occupational class*: 55 per cent who were privately educated have a professional or managerial job compared with 29 per cent who were state educated.
- *Income*: one in five people (22 per cent) who attended fee-paying schools are placed in the top 10 per cent ('decile') of the income distribution.
- *Education*: 30 per cent who were privately educated have a degree compared with 12 per cent who went to state schools.
- *Location*: 38 per cent of people who attended private schools live in London or south east England compared with 27 per cent of former state-school students.
- *Ethnicity/sex*: there are few differences in educational background that relate to ethnicity or sex. Ethnic minorities and women are as likely to have been privately educated as men and those not from an ethnic minority.

From this we can see how people who have attended fee-paying schools are relatively privileged in terms of their background and their current lives. But does the evidence also suggest that this advantage is transmitted through families across generations?

Private schooling as 'social apartheid'?

The quotation at the start of this chapter comes from a book published in 1997 intended to debunk the myth of Britain as a classless society. According to its authors – one of whom became an education minister under Labour – the segregation between private and state schooling amounts to a form of "social apartheid" (Adonis and Pollard, 1997). Emotive though that description may be, it has been used more recently by Anthony Seldon, Master of Wellington College, who describes independent schools as "detached from the mainstream national education system, thereby perpetuating the apartheid which has so dogged education and national life in Britain since the Second World War" (Seldon, 2008). So how far do the accumulated data from *British Social Attitudes* surveys bear out such strong claims of separate social development?

Family continuity

We first examine the degree to which there is continuity within families when it comes to private education. Do people educated at fee-paying schools tend to have parents who were also privately educated? In forming their own families are they disproportionately likely to choose a privately-educated partner? Are they more likely than others to send (or want to send) their own children to private schools? Using the responses to questions that have been asked in a number of different years,⁵ we again find little evidence of change over time:

- 43 per cent of the privately educated who have children have sent them to private schools, nearly five times the rate for parents who went to state schools (nine per cent).
- Among married individuals, 41 per cent of the privately educated are married to a privately-educated person, compared with six per cent of those who are state educated.
- Finally, of those who are married with children, 65 per cent who went to private

schools and whose spouses were also educated privately have sent a child to a fee-paying school, compared with only six per cent of parents who both attended state schools.

These findings point to a striking degree of generational continuity within families when it comes to private schooling, as well as the impressive extent to which individuals who are privately educated tend to marry people from the same educational background. However, to test the claims made about ‘social apartheid’ we also need to consider how far private schooling is associated with a distinctive set of social attitudes. Do the former students of fee-paying schools express views and political preferences that distinguish them from their state-educated peers? Do they really think of themselves as ‘a class apart’?

Social class

We start by looking at where people place themselves in terms of social class. In a number of years between 1983 and 1996,⁶ *British Social Attitudes* respondents were told that “Most people see themselves as belonging to a particular social class” and were asked which social class they would say they belonged to, using a card with the categories “upper middle”, “middle”, “upper working”, “working” and “poor”.

Looking at Table 3.1 we can see that most state-educated respondents regard themselves as “working class” with less than a quarter (24 per cent) describing themselves as “middle class” or “upper middle class”. By contrast, nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) of privately-educated respondents think of themselves as “middle class” or “upper middle class”.

Table 3.1 Perceived social class, by educational background⁷

	State educated	Privately educated
	%	%
Upper middle	1	7
Middle	23	56
Upper working/Working/Poor	76	37
<i>Base</i>	15569	2007

The sense of high social status that this reveals among privately-educated respondents might simply reflect people’s proper sense of their circumstances: such as better educational qualifications and higher incomes. However, by controlling our data to take statistical account of background factors and current circumstances we can see whether they alone explain these differences, or whether a private education is more than a ‘marker’ or ‘proxy’ for the sense of class superiority being expressed.

Table 3.2 shows what happens to the data on social class perceptions when statistical ‘controls’ are applied for a number of background factors (specifically: father’s

occupation, gender, birth cohort and race). The table then shows what happens after taking into account both background and people's current circumstances (specifically: their household income, current occupational social class, educational qualifications and regional location).

Table 3.2 Perceived social class by educational background, taking into account social background and current circumstances^a

	Controlling for background only		Controlling for background and current situation	
	State educated	Privately educated	State educated	Privately educated
	%	%	%	%
Upper middle	2	6	2	5
Middle	22	47	22	37
Working/Upper working/Poor	76	48	76	57
<i>Base</i>	1360	240	1360	240

Comparing the results from this analysis with those in Table 3.1, we can see that the proportion of privately-educated respondents who identify themselves as “middle” or “upper middle” class after controlling for their background circumstances is 10 points lower at 53 per cent. This suggests that the class identities of people educated at fee-paying schools are, as we suspected, influenced by their privileged family backgrounds. Looking at the other half of the table, which shows the results after our analysis controlling for background and current circumstances we can see the proportion is even lower at 42 per cent, suggesting that the tendency for people who are privately educated to credit themselves with high social status is also related to their levels of income, educational attainment and current occupation. Nevertheless, after taking into account all of these possible explanations for the way respondents view themselves, we see that the class differences between people who have been privately educated and those who attended state schools remain robust and substantial.

Indeed, the estimates shown in Table 3.2 tell us that the privately educated are still roughly *twice* as likely to see themselves as being “middle” or “upper middle” class after all the statistical controls have been applied. This is much higher than we would expect if people who went to fee-paying schools were simply assessing their social class on the basis of their current circumstances. The difference we identify could be characterised as a ‘sense of superiority bonus’ that comes from attending a private school. While there is no doubt that people who are privately-educated tend to obtain better qualifications and higher status jobs than others, they also appear to acquire the social confidence to place themselves higher in the social pecking order than their state-educated peers.

Attitudes concerning pay, inequality and social justice

The next stage of our investigation is to establish if there are other ways in which the social perceptions of people who attended private schools are distinct. In particular, we examine their views on a number of issues relating to fair treatment and social justice; starting with the responses to questions asked in 2009 about appropriate rates of pay for different types of job. The replies we have analysed concern pay for “a shop assistant” and “an unskilled worker in a factory”, for “the chairman of a large national corporation” and “a cabinet minister in the UK government”.

After an opportunity to say what they think people doing those jobs actually earn, respondents were asked:

*...what do you think people in these jobs **ought** to be paid – how much do you think they **should** earn **each year before taxes**, regardless of what they actually get?*

Table 3.3 shows the average salaries people thought appropriate, divided between state-educated respondents and those who went to fee-paying schools. Given we have data for fewer than 100 people who have been privately educated, caution must be applied in interpreting the findings outlined below. We can see that views about pay for people in the two low-skilled jobs are similar – and even more so after controlling the data for family background and current circumstances. However, when it comes to assessing the right level of pay for the chairman of a big national corporation or a cabinet minister, those who were privately educated take a much more generous view.⁹ The average figure of £237,000 a year suggested for the company chairman by respondents who attended private school is £88,000 higher than the average level proposed by people who went to state schools. The gap between the equivalent assessments of what a cabinet minister should earn is £28,000 a year. And while the differences between the average amounts proposed by privately and state-educated respondents are reduced by controlling for background and current circumstances, they are by no means removed.

We note that the really big differences of view between people educated at private and state schools concern the two jobs at the top end of the pay scale where privately-educated people are more likely to be – or aspire to be – themselves. It may be that those who went to fee-paying schools are merely more realistic about salaries at the highest level than their state-educated counterparts. But we might also suspect that at least some people who were privately-educated have adopted a principle that ‘people like us’ deserve more. This would be a more convincing possibility if the tendency to value the work of ‘top people’ more highly than others was accompanied by views suggesting a more general endorsement of social inequality.

To examine this we draw on questions asked by *British Social Attitudes* designed to explore social and political divisions. These have been asked regularly over a quarter

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of a century, and we again find that there have been few, if any, changes over time in the balance of replies between those who were privately and state educated. Once again, therefore, we are able to base our analysis on pooled data from several years between 1987 and 2009.

Table 3.3 Average perceptions of what people in different jobs should be paid, by educational background, 2009^a

Type of job	Mean annual pay level suggested by...	
	...state-educated respondents	...privately-educated respondents
	£	£
Chairman of national corporation	149,000	237,000
Controlled for current/background factors	152,000	205,000
<i>Base</i>	685	81
Cabinet minister	69,000	98,000
Controlled for current/background factors	70,000	86,000
<i>Base</i>	676	83
Shop assistant	19,000	18,000
Controlled for current/background factors	19,000	17,000
<i>Base</i>	686	82
Unskilled factory worker	19,000	20,000
Controlled for current/background factors	19,000	19,000
<i>Base</i>	690	83

All figures are rounded to the nearest £1,000

The survey invites respondents to consider three statements about aspects of social justice. These are:

Ordinary working people do not get their fair share of the nation's wealth

There is one law for the rich and one for the poor

Management will always try to get the better of employees if it gets the chance

Respondents were asked to say whether they “agree strongly”, “agree”, “neither agree nor disagree”, “disagree” or “disagree strongly”. The questions relate inequality and injustice to social class in order to gain an impression of how far people subscribe

to a class-based account of the issues. In Table 3.4 we show the balance of opinion between respondents who attended fee-paying schools and those who are state educated. Combining the data for “agree strongly” and “agree” we present the proportions who agree with each statement, followed by the results after applying statistical controls for family background factors and current circumstances.

Table 3.4 Concern with social inequality, by educational background¹⁰

	State educated	Privately educated
% agreeing that...		
...there is one law for the rich, and one law for the poor	60	44
Controlled for current/background factors	59	52
<i>Base</i>	5061	716
...ordinary working people do not get their fair share of the nation's wealth	63	46
Controlled for current/background factors	63	54
<i>Base</i>	5041	714
...management will always try to get the better of employees if it gets the chance	61	42
Controlled for current/background factors	60	51
<i>Base</i>	5053	712

We can see that people who went to private schools are substantially less likely than those who attended state schools to agree with the three statements.¹¹ While 60 per cent of the latter think that “there is one law for the rich and one law for the poor” only 44 per cent of those who were privately educated agree with them. The 16 percentage point gap is, however, more than halved by controlling the data for past and present circumstances – suggesting that family background and current social status go some way to explain the headline difference of view. Very similar patterns can be seen in the percentages agreeing that “ordinary working people do not get their fair share of the nation’s wealth” and that “management will always try to get the better of employees if it gets the chance”. Even so, the analysis does suggest that a private education exerts an influence on people’s views that is independent of other factors. This may not seem

81%

of the state educated agreed there should be “stiffer sentences”, compared with 66% of the privately educated

altogether surprising given our previous findings that demonstrate the robust effect of private education on self-perceived class and views about top people's pay.

The distinctively conservative nature of the positions taken by privately-educated respondents on social inequality is further emphasised by analyses of other sorts of social attitudes. On questions about law and order, when people were asked how much they agreed or disagreed that "People who break the law should be given stiffer sentences" or "For some crimes, the death penalty is the most appropriate sentence" privately-educated respondents were not more conservative, if anything they were more liberal. While 81 per cent of state-educated people agreed there should be "stiffer sentences", 66 per cent of privately educated did so. And while 61 per cent of state-educated people agreed that the death penalty should be brought back, 47 per cent of privately-educated did.¹² While the differences between two groups are reduced by controlling for background and current circumstances, they are not removed.

Support for political parties

The questions we have used to compare attitudes to inequality and social justice deliberately include a class-based dimension that reflects one of the classic ideological divisions between supporters of the political 'left' and 'right'. The responses are a long way from suggesting that people who are state educated and those who went to private schools occupy two separate and ideologically-opposed camps. They show an overlap of views in both cases. But knowing that proportionately fewer people who were educated at fee-paying schools agree with our three statements about social inequality, we can expect to see corresponding differences in their party political affiliations. And while we may anticipate that these will relate mainly to support for Labour and the Conservatives, it will also be interesting to see how privately and state-educated respondents view the more 'centrist' Liberal Democrats. If people who went to private school tend to support one political party more than another, we also need to know whether this is more attributable to their background and current circumstances, including qualifications, occupation and pay, rather than their schooling. Once again, we use statistical methods to control for these factors, including, as with all the other tables, year of survey to account for any changes in overall party support from year to year, which is known to vary substantially.

The *British Social Attitudes* survey asks people if they think of themselves as "a supporter of any one political party" or, if not, whether they are "closer to one political party than to the others". Those who answer "yes" to either question are invited to say which party they incline towards. Table 3.5 shows that the differences between privately and state-educated respondents in their party political affiliations are among the strongest we have seen.

The gap of 22 percentage points between 51 per cent of privately-educated respondents who say they incline towards the Conservatives and 29 per cent of those who went to state schools is very large by survey standards. Average support for Labour (20 per cent) is conversely weaker among the privately educated, for whom the Liberal Democrats (19 per cent) represent an almost equally appealing choice. Put another way, if this was a 'snapshot' opinion poll among people who attended fee-paying schools, the Conservatives would hold a 31 point lead over Labour. Conversely, Labour would lead the Conservatives by 10 points among state-educated respondents.

Table 3.5 Party identification, by educational background¹³

	State educated	Privately educated
% Conservative	29	51
Controlled for current/background factors	30	43
% Labour	39	20
Controlled for current/background factors	41	28
% Liberal Democrat	14	19
Controlled for current/background factors	15	17
% No party affiliation	18	10
Controlled for current/background factors	14	13
<i>Base</i>	4833	682

People who have been privately educated are also less likely to say they have no party political affiliation (10 per cent) than those who went to state schools (18 per cent). This is the only distinction that all but disappears once we control for other background circumstances and people's current situation. It suggests that where people were schooled does not, of itself, exert much influence over whether they identify with a party or not. However, when it comes to declared party affiliations, we can see that while the data controls result in a narrowing of the gap, the distinctions are still a long way from being explained away by other factors. Private schools, it seems safe to conclude, tend to produce Conservative partisans.

The influence of a university education

So far we have seen that a range of social issues distinguish the attitudes of people who have been privately educated from the views of people educated in state schools. These distinctions almost always persist after we take account of other factors in people's family backgrounds and current circumstances that could potentially explain the differences we observe. We have yet, however, to consider one further influence that is potentially important: that of a university education.

Although the chances of attending university are greater for students at private schools than for those attending state schools (around three times in our samples), there are still a considerable number of privately-educated people who have not been to university. In 2010, for example, less than 40 per cent of the privately-educated adults were graduates. Research has suggested that universities provide an opportunity for students from different social backgrounds to mix, and thereby foster an increased acceptance of social diversity (Hyman and Wright, 1979; Evans, 2002; Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005). We may, therefore, suspect that the views of privately-educated adults who have not been to university will be more distinctive than the opinions held by privately-educated graduates. Conversely, we might expect a university education to lead to a weaker political divide between private and state-educated graduates.

To test this hypothesis, we compare the views of state and privately-educated people according to whether or not they graduated from university. In particular, we examine responses to the three class-based statements about inequality and social injustice and also the educational backgrounds of people who are inclined to support the Conservatives. As Table 3.6 demonstrates, our analysis supports the idea that graduates from fee-paying and state-school backgrounds will tend to be less divided in their views than non-graduates.

The difference between graduates and non-graduates in support for the Conservatives is particularly striking. While 56 per cent of privately-educated people without university degrees express a political preference for the Conservative Party, this falls to 38 per cent among privately-educated graduates. The differences between privately-educated graduates and non-graduates are less marked when it comes to our three statements about social inequalities, but nevertheless non-trivial. For example, 45 per cent of graduates who attended fee-paying schools agree that “there is one law for the rich, and one law for the poor” compared with 51 per cent who went to private

Table 3.6 Views on social inequality, plus support for the Conservative Party, by educational background¹⁴

	State educated	Privately educated
% agreeing that “there is one law for the rich, one law for the poor”		
Graduate	49	45
Non-graduate	67	51
<i>Base</i>	53206	7037
% agreeing that “ordinary working people do not get their fair share of the nation’s wealth”		
Graduate	56	46
Non-graduate	66	50
<i>Base</i>	53086	7020
% agreeing that “management will always try to get the better of employees if it gets the chance”		
Graduate	43	35
Non-graduate	63	44
<i>Base</i>	54378	7193
% Conservative supporter		
Graduate	25	38
Non-graduate	29	56
<i>Base</i>	62454	7947

school, but did not graduate from university. Although we do not include the results in the table, our analysis applying statistical controls for background and current circumstances does not, again, account fully for the association between people's views and their schooling.¹⁵

The findings are clear: when private education is followed by university the differences between the privately educated and the state educated in support for Labour versus Conservatives, and associated attitudes towards social inequality, are not eliminated, but they are reduced. The most distinctive attitudes, even after controlling for numerous other differences, are for those who left school at 18 or before. Interestingly, the attitudes that change most are those of state-educated people, who become more like those of the privately educated: integration works in both directions. Whether the growth of university education helps to bridge the social divide created in the school room remains to be seen, though our evidence at least suggests this possibility.

Gender differences

Throughout the analyses undertaken in this chapter we have found that the differences we have highlighted apply to women who were privately educated as well as men. Perceptions and attitudes among those who went to fee-paying schools are very similar irrespective of gender. As opportunities for women to obtain top positions in society are expanding, through efforts to promote women in the boardroom and the court room and the cabinet, the likelihood is that many of these, too, will come from privately-educated backgrounds. Ironically, rather than blurring the boundaries of 'social apartheid', it is quite possible that increasing gender equality will simply augment the privately-educated elite that already exists in positions of power.

Conclusions

In recent decades some commentators have argued that we are witnessing a return to Edwardian levels of social inequality and the exclusion of disadvantaged people from the levers of power (National Equality Panel, 2010). In this chapter we have examined the idea that private schools provide the vehicle for a form of 'social apartheid' at a time when social inequalities risk becoming more polarised. To do this, we looked at the way that adults who were privately educated define their social class and found that they tend to see themselves as more middle or upper middle class than others, even allowing for their generally higher qualifications and employment status. We have seen that their assessments of appropriate pay for cabinet ministers and company chairmen are much higher than those made by people who went to state schools; we have also found them more likely to disagree with statements about the existence and possible injustice of class-based inequalities. Unsurprisingly, the privately educated also tend to align themselves with the Conservatives rather than Labour or the Liberal Democrats. At the same time, while the privately educated may express less egalitarian attitudes than others in their attitudes towards social inequality we do not find evidence that they are more conservative on questions concerning law and order.

 **The differences we have highlighted apply to women who were privately educated as well as men**

We have also seen evidence that a university education tends to narrow the gap between the views held on social inequality and party politics by people who attended private schools and those who were state educated. Over time, perhaps, the expansion of university education may work to reduce the differences in views that we find are linked to schooling. However, this assumes that all universities are held equal and that we will not see an increasing level of ‘social apartheid’ where students choose to attend a particular institution as a consequence of being privately or state educated. In this context, we may note the disparity that already exists between Oxbridge – where around half the undergraduates come from private schools – and institutions such as Bolton University, where 99 per cent come from state schools.

Of course, people who have been privately educated tend to be richer, as well as more highly educated and to hold jobs that give them higher social status. They tend to live in more attractive parts of the country than people who go to state schools, and to come from more privileged and aspirational backgrounds. So should we focus any discussion about policy implications on the inequalities of income and wealth that influence people’s views, rather than the fee-paying education that they make possible? The answer we have found, by controlling our data for these potential explanations, is that while they play a significant part, they are not the whole story. After taking other factors into account the divided attitudes associated with a private education are more muted, but they remain. In that sense, we can only conclude that private education does, indeed, perpetuate a form of separate development in Britain, or ‘social apartheid’. The dominance in the current government of people who come from such a segregated elite can only add to concerns that it does not understand or share the views of the vast majority of the population it purports to represent.

Notes

1. The proportion of *British Social Attitudes* respondents who are privately educated is higher (at 10 to 12 per cent) than the commonly accepted seven per cent figure for the population as a whole. This reflects the fact that our question is phrased in a way that encourages people who have attended a private school even briefly to answer “yes”.
2. In assembling our sample we were only able to use some, not all, of the *British Social Attitudes* data gathered since 1983 because relevant questions were only asked in certain years. This applies to the questions that supply some of our background control variables, such as father’s occupational status, as well as those that frame particular issues. As data are drawn from different years, bases cannot be directly compared across tables.
3. We advised respondents that our definition of “private” primary or secondary schools included those who attended an independent school, or held a scholarship or assisted place at a fee-paying school. It excluded direct grant schools (unless fee-paying), voluntary-aided schools, grant-maintained (‘opted out’) schools and nursery schools.
4. People who were educated privately are also disproportionately likely to have parents who were self-employed (24 per cent compared with 11 per cent of those who attended state schools). The figures are derived from questions about father’s occupation asked in 1987, 1991, 2003, 2005 and 2009.
5. For children’s educational background we use *British Social Attitudes* 1985–2010 data; for spouse’s educational background we are only able to use 1985–1999 data.
6. We analysed responses to a question on social class asked in the *British Social Attitudes* surveys 1983–1991 and 1996. Although not reported, we obtained similar results from an analysis of data from 2009 when a different question was asked to elicit social class. We have

further replicated our findings using the responses to another question asked in 1987, 1991 and 2009: “In our society there are groups which tend to be towards the top and groups which tend to be towards the bottom. Below is a scale that runs from top to bottom. Where would you put yourself on this scale?”

7. Table 3.1 uses data from the 1983–1991 and 1996 *British Social Attitudes* surveys.
8. Table 3.2 uses data from the 1987 and 1991 *British Social Attitudes* surveys that collected information on father’s occupation as well as various measures of social status.
9. The average figures exclude views where the suggested sum is less than £3000 a year or exceeds £2 million a year. Differences between the median levels of pay suggested by privately and state-educated respondents are similar to the mean differences shown in the table.
10. Table 3.4 uses data from the 1987, 1991, 2003, 2005 and 2009 *British Social Attitudes* surveys.
11. This has changed little over time. For the “fair share” question the gap between the state and privately educated was 19 per cent in 1986 and exactly the same 24 years later in 2010. The gap does shrink somewhat over time for the other two items (for the “management” question the gap reduces from 17 per cent in 1986 to 15 per cent in 2010, and for the “one law” question the decline is from 20 per cent to 16 per cent), but these are really quite small changes.
12. The table below shows the percentage of those agreeing with questions on stiffer sentences and the death penalty, by educational background.

	State educated	Privately educated
% agreeing that...		
...people who break the law should be given stiffer sentences	81	66
Controlled for current/background factors	81	74
<i>Base</i>	4112	567
...for some crimes, the death penalty is the most appropriate sentence	61	47
Controlled for current/background factors	61	56
<i>Base</i>	4107	564

This table uses data from the 1991, 2003, 2005, and 2009 *British Social Attitudes* surveys.

13. Table 3.5 uses data from the 1987, 1991, 2003, 2005, and 2009 *British Social Attitudes* surveys.
14. Table 3.6 uses data from 1986–2010 *British Social Attitudes* surveys.
15. The interaction effect in models with all current and background controls remains in the same direction and is statistically significant for party support and the “one law for the rich” question. If the dataset is expanded by leaving out the father’s class variable, which means that all surveys from 1986–2010 can be analysed giving a similar base number to that presented in Table 3.6, then the interaction effect is of a similar magnitude but is now statistically significant for all the dependent variables presented here at the 5% level. As in the raw figures, with all controls included, a university education appears to, roughly, halve the effect of private schooling.

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Appendix

The analyses we have used to control for “background and current circumstances” derive from multinomial logistic (for Tables 3.2 and 3.5), logistic (for Table 3.4) and linear (for Table 3.3) regression models. The “background controls” numbers are the predicted proportions or figures from a model that predicts the relevant variable of interest using a dummy variable for private schooling, father's occupation (measured as professional, managerial, routine non-manual, skilled manual, semi or unskilled manual, self-employed, unknown), sex, birth cohort (measured in 10 year birth cohorts) and race (white or non-white). The resulting figures represent what the population would look like if the only difference between people was educational background.

The ‘background and current controls’ figures are from models that include a dummy variable for private schooling, all the background controls already mentioned and controls for current circumstances. These are: household income (this is split into quintiles, with the top quintile split into the top two deciles), current occupational social class (upper service, lower service, routine non-manual, petit bourgeois, foremen and supervisors, skilled manual, semi or unskilled manual), educational qualifications (degree, some higher education such as teacher/nurse training, A-level or equivalent, O-level or equivalent, CSE or equivalent, apprenticeship, no qualification) and region (Scotland, Wales, North, Midlands and East, South West, London and the South East).