

# Engines of Privilege: Britain's private school problem

#LSEPrivilege

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Professor of Work and Education Economics at the Institute of Education, UCL.

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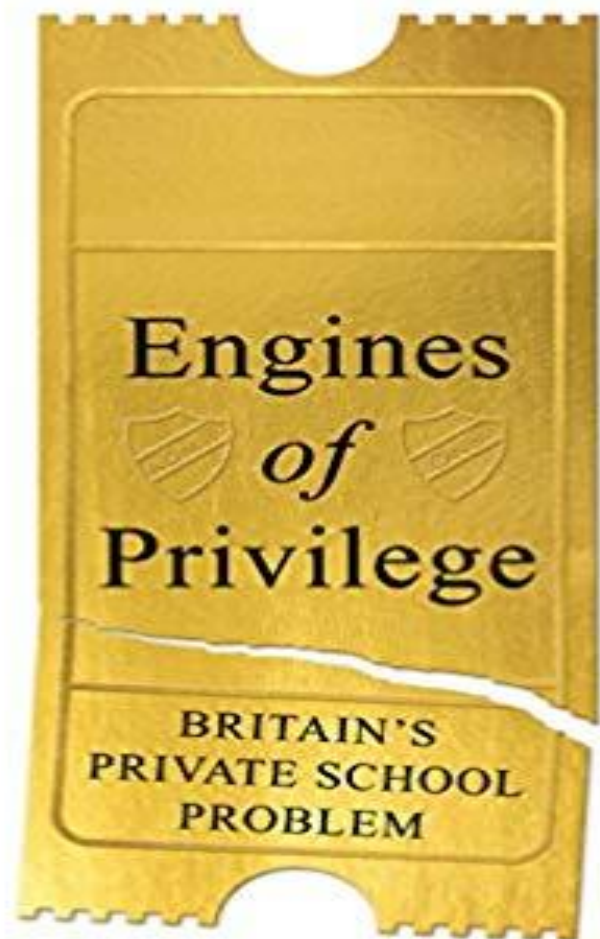
## **Discussant: Dr Luna Glucksberg**

Researcher at the International Inequalities Institute, LSE.

## **Chair: Dr Sam Friedman**

Associate Professor in Sociology, LSE.

*Hosted by the International Inequalities Institute*



FRANCIS GREEN AND  
DAVID KYNASTON

BLOOMSBURY

# Why worry about private schools?

- Only 1 in 16 pupils overall
- Yet:
  - 1 in every 7 teachers is in the private sector; ~ £1 in every £6 of expenditure is in private schools;
  - this means a private/state resource gap of about £3 to £1 for each pupil
  - beacons of inequality

# Typical private school

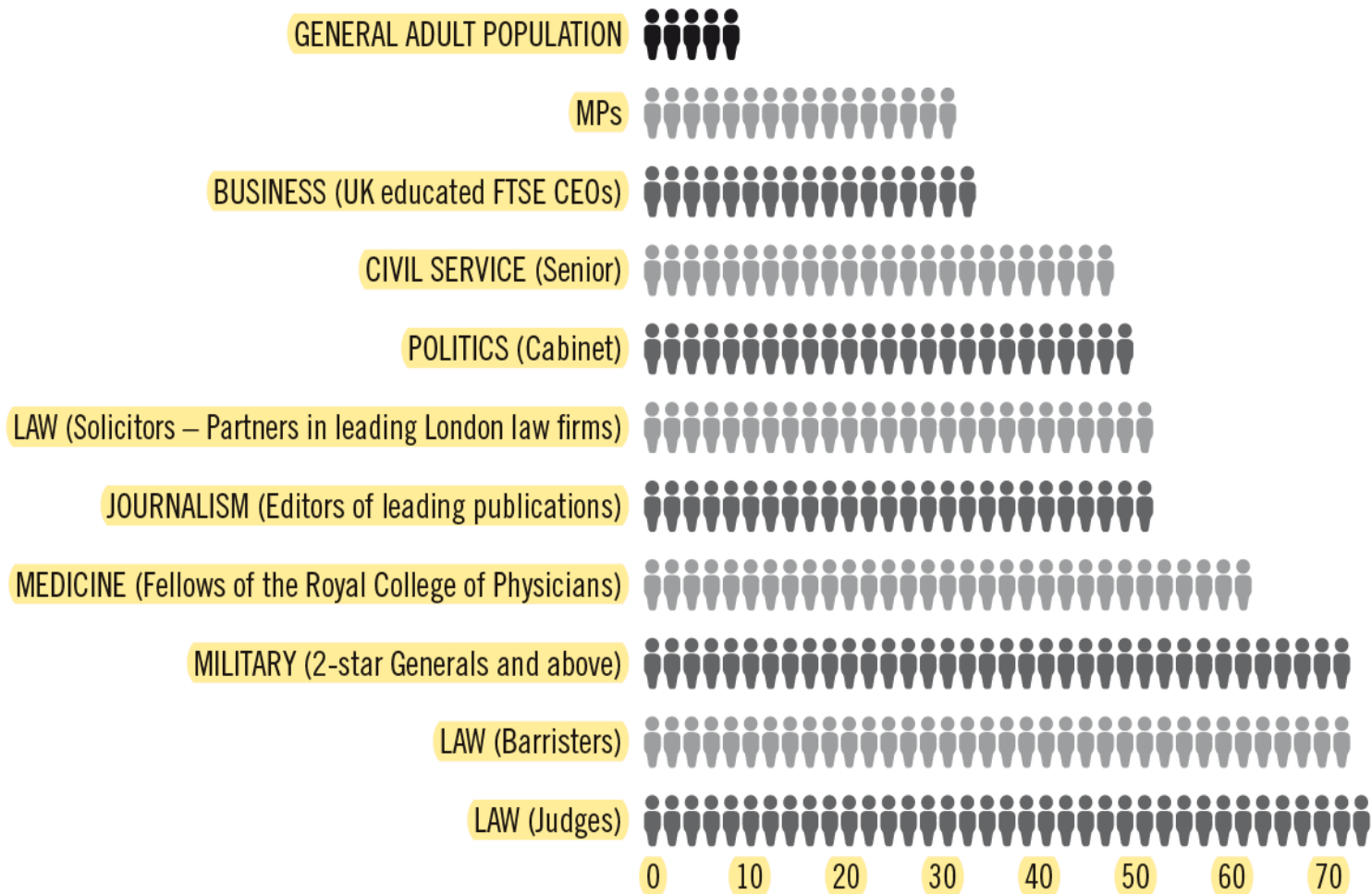


# Typical state schools



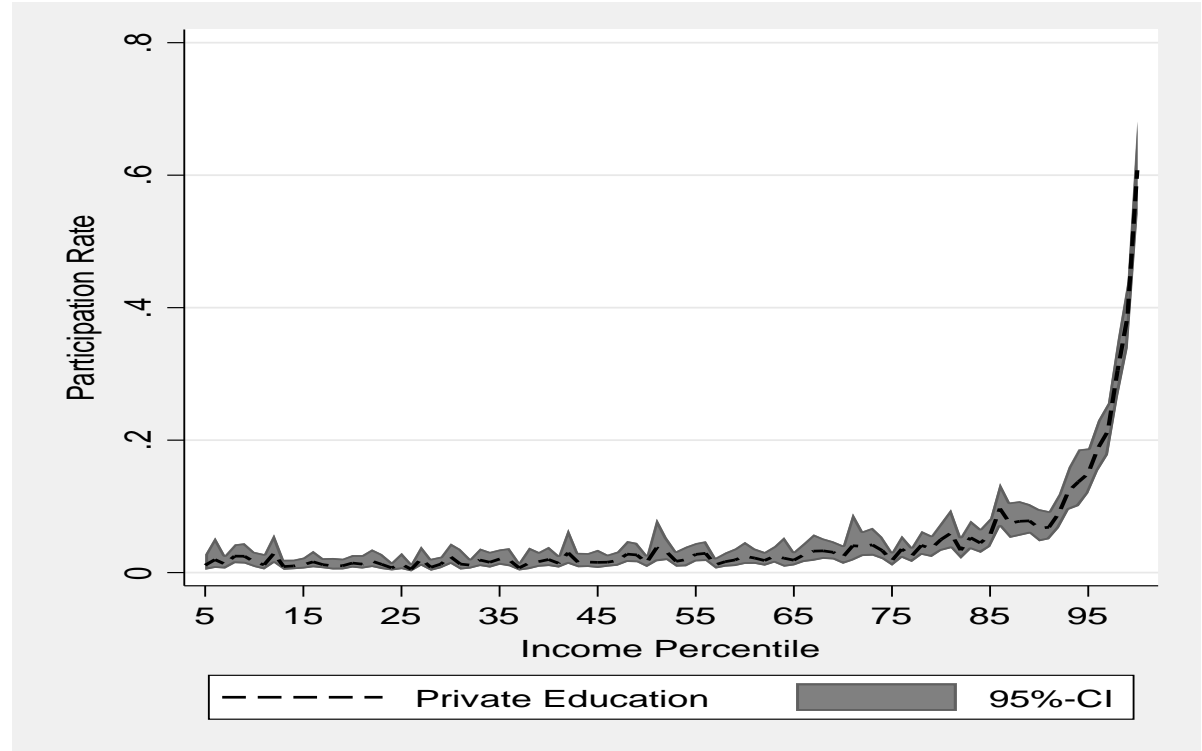
# What does the evidence say?

- Better educational outcomes at all stages of education
- Better access to universities
- Better chances of success in the labour market



Source: Kirby, P. (2016), *Leading People 2016*, the Sutton Trust, London.

Participation in private school is concentrated at the very top of the income distribution

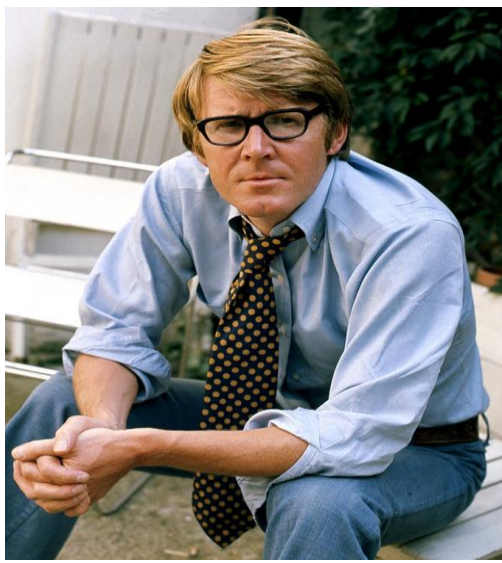


Participation in private school education across family income percentiles



# What's the problem?

- Systemic inefficiency
- Democratic deficit
- Unfairness/ reproduction of privilege  
(low social mobility)

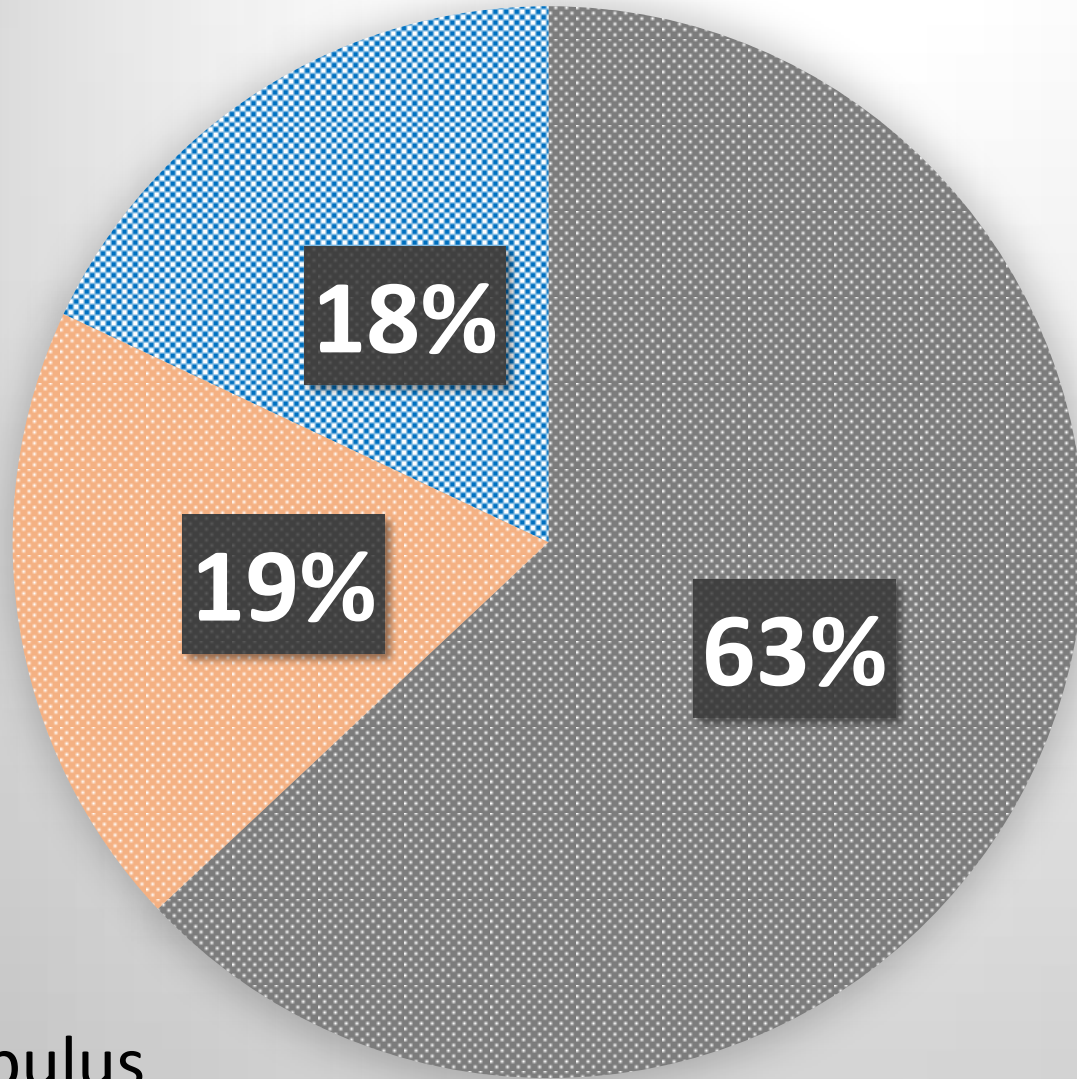


## Alan Bennett's sermon in Cambridge

‘Private education is not fair. Those who provide it know it. Those who pay for it know it. Those who have to sacrifice in order to purchase it know it. And those who receive it know it, or should. And if their education ends without it dawning on them, then that education has been wasted.’

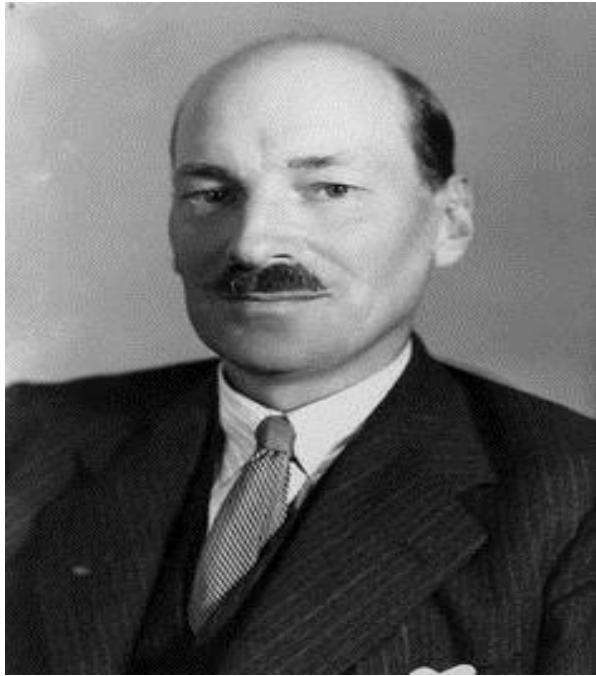
Our Populus poll:

“It is unfair that some people with a lot of money get a better education and life chances for their children by paying for a private school”

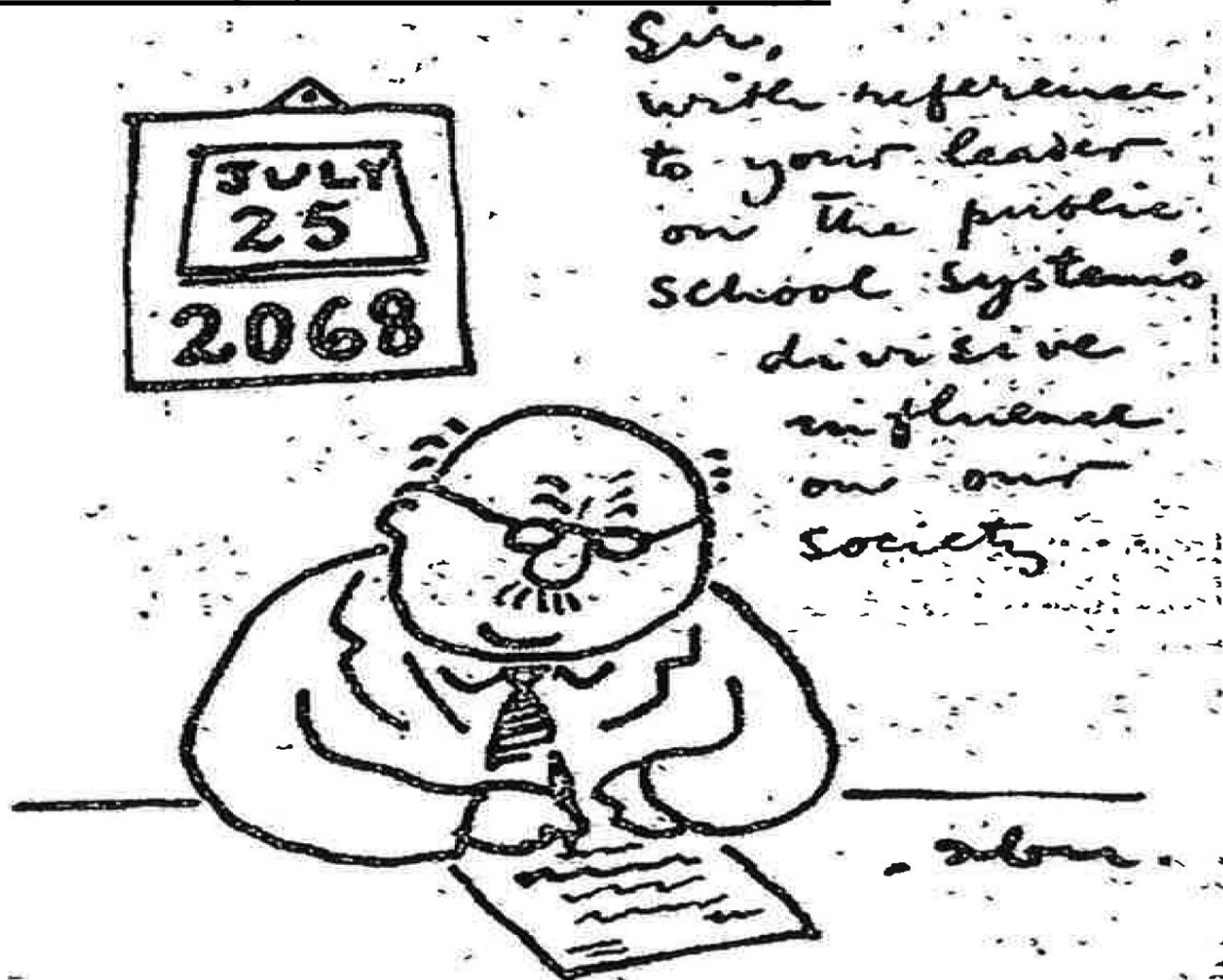


- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree

Populus



# Abu cartoon, Guardian 1968



# Options for reform

- Curtailing demand
  - contextual admissions
  - taxation
- Crossing the tracks/integrating supply
  - with *private* control over admissions
  - with *social* control over admissions

# Curtailing demand:

- contextual admissions

- taxation

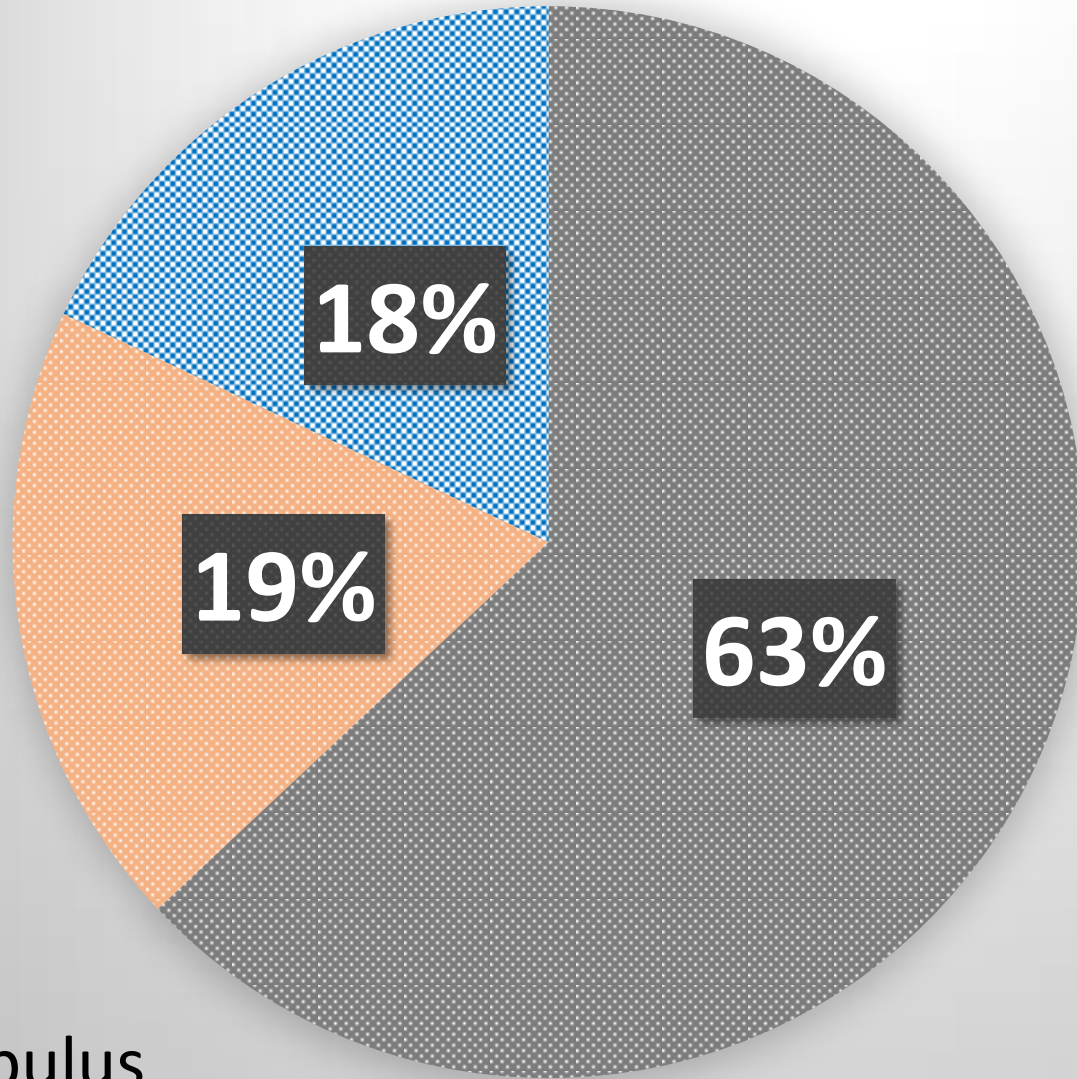


# Crossing the tracks:

- Private control over admissions
  - Open Access Scheme
  - others
- Social control over admissions
  - Fair Access Scheme
- 'Abolition'

# What won't work:

- removing charitable status
- the 'politics of hypocrisy'
- small scale schemes
  - private philanthropy/bursaries
  - small scale schemes



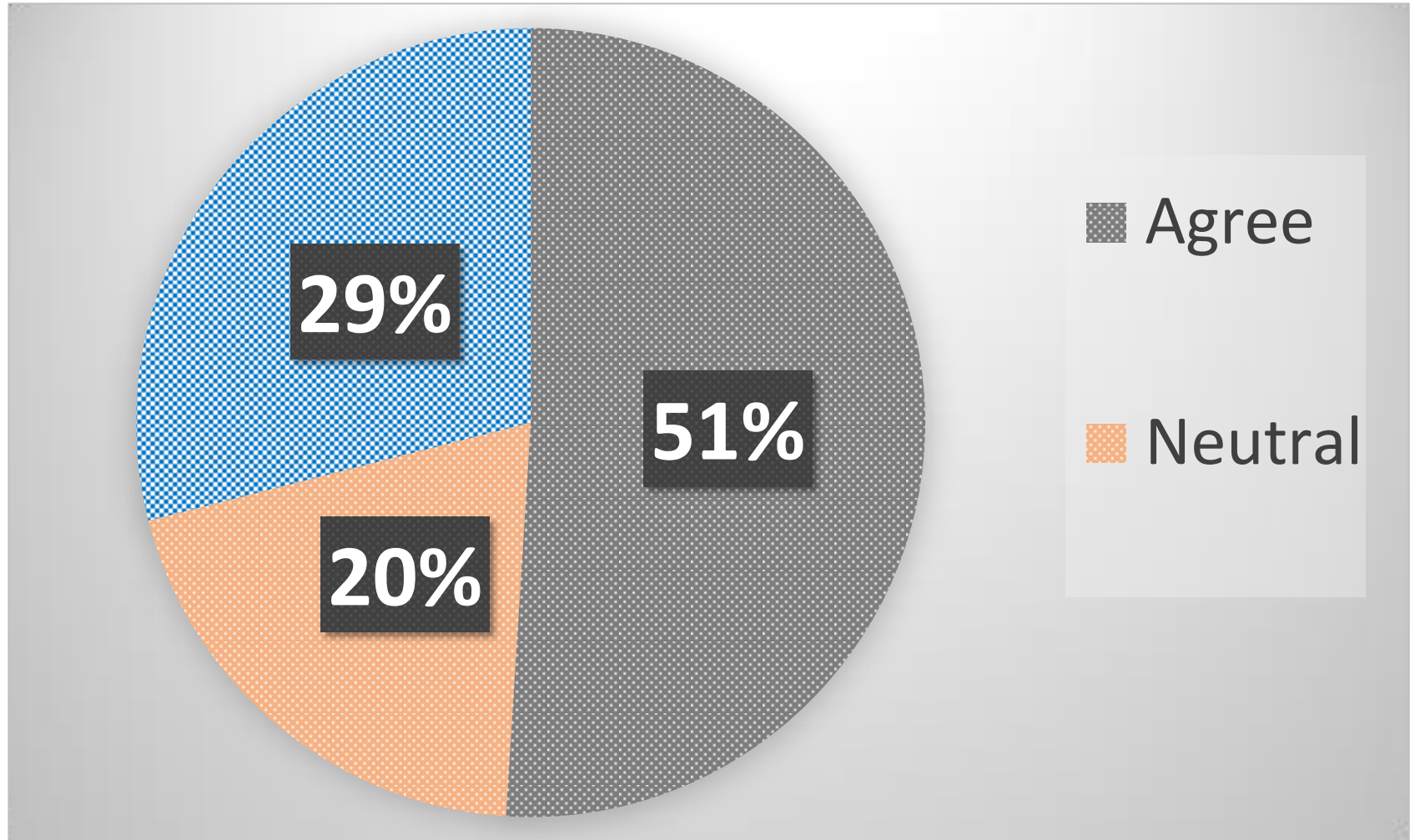
■ Agree

■ Neutral

■ Disagree

Populus

# Private school insiders' views on unfairness





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GOOD SCHOOLS GUIDE 2017



**THE SUNDAY TIMES**  
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