

# The paradoxical role of social class background in the educational and labour market outcomes of the children of immigrants in the UK

Carolina V. Zuccotti<sup>1</sup>  | Lucinda Platt<sup>2</sup> 

<sup>1</sup>Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Getafe, Spain

<sup>2</sup>London School of Economics and Political Science, London, UK

## Correspondence

Carolina V. Zuccotti.

Email: [carolinaviviana.zuccotti@uc3m.es](mailto:carolinaviviana.zuccotti@uc3m.es)

## Abstract

Despite predominantly lower social class origins, the second generation of established immigrant groups in the UK are now attaining high levels of education. However, they continue to experience poorer labour market outcomes than the majority population. These worse outcomes are often attributed in part to their disadvantaged origins, which do not, by contrast, appear to constrain their educational success. This paper engages with this paradox. We discuss potential mechanisms for second-generation educational success and how far we might expect these to be replicated in labour market outcomes. We substantiate our discussion with new empirical analysis. Drawing on a unique longitudinal study of England and Wales spanning 40 years and encompassing one per cent of the population, we present evidence on the educational and labour market outcomes of the second generation of four groups of immigrants and the white British majority, controlling for multiple measures of social origins. We demonstrate that second-generation men and women's educational advantage is only partially reflected in the labour market. We reflect on the implications of our findings for future research.

This is an open access article under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/) License, which permits use and distribution in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, the use is non-commercial and no modifications or adaptations are made.

© 2023 The Authors. The British Journal of Sociology published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of London School of Economics and Political Science.

## KEYWORDS

educational outcomes, employment, ethnic groups, second generation, social class, social mobility, social origins

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

The performance of immigrants and their children in education and the labour market has been subject to extensive study across Europe (Alba & Foner, 2015; Heath & Cheung, 2007). While immigration and the multi-ethnic nature of European societies is not new, and in some countries indigenous or longstanding minorities, such as Gypsies, have occupied a specific disadvantaged position, increases in ethnic diversity and the growth of multiculturalism have largely been associated with largescale post-war labour migration from countries outside Europe. The 'visibility' of these new immigrant populations—in terms of skin colour, but also religion, language and culture—has contributed to their more marginal economic situation in the labour market, as well as driving concerns about long-term integration (Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, 2021; Heath & Cheung, 2007). In this paper, reflecting standard terminology for the UK, we refer to such visible, established immigrant groups and their descendants as ethnic minority groups. At the same time, the tendency of these new immigrant populations to cluster in lower socio-economic positions within destination societies, with implications for risks of poverty and its intergenerational transmission, has confounded the association between being from an ethnic minority group and socioeconomic disadvantage (Malik, 2023; Mirza & Warwick, 2022).

While much analysis of economic outcomes has traditionally focused on immigrants themselves—i.e., the first generation—increasing attention is now being paid to their children—i.e., the second generation—as they pass through education and reach adulthood in greater numbers (Crul & Schneider, 2010; Heath et al., 2008). Studies on the second generation have typically attempted to account for their relative disadvantage compared to majority populations. In understanding educational outcomes, recognising, and adjusting for, the fact that first-generation ethnic minorities tend to cluster in lower socio-economic positions has helped to account for their children's poorer educational outcomes in many country contexts (e.g., Levels & Dronkers, 2008). Research on 'ethnic penalties' in the labour market (Heath and McMahon 1997)—focused on the (often poorer) performance of (more or less visible) first- and second-generation groups—has also been enhanced by recognising the role of social background in employment outcomes, and the importance of adjusting for social origins to more precisely identify such penalties (Li & Heath, 2016; Platt, 2005; Zuccotti, 2015).

By incorporating social origins into analysis of both educational and labour market outcomes, these bodies of research have been empirically and conceptually fruitful in developing understanding of immigrant inequalities. However, while this approach makes sense when addressing groups with *poorer* educational as well as labour market outcomes than the native majority, in the UK, we increasingly observe second-generation ethnic minorities *outperforming* the majority population in education (e.g., Crawford et al., 2010; Crawford & Greaves, 2015; Strand, 2014). We are then faced with the apparent paradox that these children of immigrants are educationally successful *despite* their disadvantaged origins, while their labour market outcomes continue to be regarded as in part a *consequence* of such origins (Li & Heath, 2016). This paradox, that adjusting for social class background can lead to a picture of second-generation ethnic minority *advantage* in education, while it helps to account for second-generation *disadvantage* in the labour market, has not been explicitly addressed in current research.

We argue there is a need to reconsider the interpretation of ethnic penalties in the labour market and the role of social origins in contributing to such outcomes, as well as to reflect on both ethnic advantage and ethnic disadvantage as requiring adequate explanation (Modood, 2004; Shah et al., 2010). Our contributions are threefold. First, we conceptualise why and how second-generation ethnic minorities may be advantaged in education, despite their tendency to cluster in lower socio-economic positions, and whether (and to what extent) we might expect such mechanisms to translate into labour market advantages. Second, we substantiate this discussion with new evidence

on ethnic educational and labour market outcomes, based on the analysis of a unique 40-year longitudinal data set, the ONS Longitudinal Study (ONS-LS) (Office for National Statistics, 2019). The ONS-LS has the largest analytical samples of children of immigrants in the UK and enables us to track them from social origins (including family and neighbourhood contexts) to destinations. These data not only provide the most robust source for investigating social mobility for specific cohorts in England and Wales (see e.g., Buscha & Sturgis, 2018) they also enable us to make comparisons by generational status and for those cohorts facing the same historical and economic context as they grow up (Waters & Jiménez, 2005). In addition, the data allow us to make use of multiple measures of social origins, enabling us, importantly to capture more precisely the context in which individuals were growing up, which has been demonstrated to be important both for educational and occupational attainment (Bell et al., 2019; Chetty et al., 2014; Zwysen & Demireva, 2020). Third, by bringing together our analysis of educational and labour market outcomes for the same individuals and separating our analysis of men's and women's outcomes, we highlight the limits of current analysis of 'ethnic penalties', which assumes independence of education and social origins, and draw attention to the implications for future research.

We focus on four second-generation ethnic groups with distinctive immigration and settlement histories: Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, and Caribbeans (see the brief overview under "A comparative framework" in the Supplementary Material). These official ethnic group categories classify by national (immigrant) origins (Burton et al., 2010), but demonstrate a high degree of consistency in ethnic identification across immigrant generations (Platt, 2014). Their distinctive immigration and settlement histories might be expected to translate into different educational and labour market outcomes (Luthra et al., 2017). Yet our analysis reveals that all four second-generation ethnic minority groups experience higher educational attainment than their British majority counterparts, while labour market outcomes are more mixed. We offer some evidence that unmeasured characteristics associated with educational success may promote occupational attainment; however, they do not seem to provide returns in access to employment. We discuss the implications of our results for future analysis, the interpretation of 'ethnic penalties' and the understanding of the role of social origins more generally.

The paper proceeds as follows. First, we introduce previous studies paying particular attention to the UK context (Section 2); next, we develop our theoretical framework (Section 3); then we present the data (Section 4) and empirical results (Section 5); finally, we conclude (Section 6).

## 2 | PREVIOUS LITERATURE AND THE UK CASE

There is increasing attention to the extent to which the children of immigrants are or are not achieving (upward) social mobility (OECD, 2017; Papademetriou et al., 2009), and the role of both educational attainment and social class origins in explaining differential outcomes. Adjusting for educational attainment in measuring economic outcomes across first- and second-generation ethnic minority groups was fundamental in developing the concept of 'ethnic penalties' (Heath and McMahon, 1997). Since immigrants and their children in Europe have tended to be less well qualified than majority populations (Dustmann et al., 2012; Kristen & Granato, 2007), such adjustment has typically reduced, even if not eliminated, observed labour market gaps. This has in turn enabled comparative evaluations of the systematic ethnic penalties faced by the second generation in Europe (Heath and Cheung, 2007). However, education is not the only predictor of labour market outcomes. Social origins impact outcomes directly—i.e. through resources, orientations, networks and behaviours (Breen and Müller 2020; Hout & DiPrete, 2006)—as well as indirectly through education ("the OED model": see Blau & Duncan, 1967). Since first-generation immigrants tend to cluster in lower social class positions (Dustmann et al., 2022), it has thus been argued that part of the reason why second-generation ethnic minorities continue to be disadvantaged in the labour market is their lower social class origins (Platt, 2005). Studies on the second generation's outcomes have thus increasingly incorporated social class of origin (i.e., parental social class), and this adjustment has contributed further to explaining ethnic penalties in a number of contexts (Gracia et al., 2016; Zuccotti, 2015). At the same time, since social class is expected to have a

direct effect on educational attainment, incorporating social class background into studies focusing on educational outcomes has helped to account for educational disadvantage of children of immigrants (Marks, 2005).

Such analysis is, however, complicated by the fact that in some cases educational outcomes of the children of immigrants outstrip those of their majority group counterparts, despite their average lower social class origins. This leads to the analytical problem that adjusting for educational outcomes, net of class origin, increases, rather than reduces, ethnic penalties in the labour market, even as controls for social class background lessen them.

The UK offers a key setting within which to explore this paradox of educational success and labour market disadvantage. In many countries, a deficit model of educational attainment of the second generation persists (Levels & Dronkers, 2008; Song, 2011); but in the UK, recent school cohorts consistently outperform the majority. For example, second-generation ethnic minorities tend to improve their test scores at a faster rate throughout compulsory schooling than the majority population (Strand, 2011; Wilson et al., 2011); and test scores at the end of compulsory schooling now suggest an advantage for most ethnic minority groups compared to the majority (Mirza & Warwick, 2022), even if with substantial variation.<sup>1</sup> For example, Indians perform very highly whereas Black Caribbeans are less high-attaining. For given levels of performance, second-generation ethnic minorities are also more likely to stay on in post-compulsory education than the white majority (Bradley & Taylor, 2004; Fernández-Reino, 2016) and to attend university (Crawford et al., 2010). At the same time, ethnic minorities in the UK have higher risks of unemployment and more mixed occupational attainments (Cheung & Heath, 2007; Zuccotti, 2015), at odds with their high educational achievements (Mirza & Warwick, 2022).

The implications for our understanding of the role of social origins of this combination of educational success but more mixed labour market outcomes have not been systematically investigated. Most studies of immigrant educational outcomes focus on youth, while studies of ethnic penalties in the labour market focus on adults. The latter typically treat social class and education as having independent effects on labour market outcomes (Li & Heath, 2016). We aim to set out ways of thinking about the relationship between social origins, education and the labour market that does not assume such independence, while presenting new findings on both outcomes for the same individuals.

### 3 | SOCIAL ORIGINS, EDUCATION AND LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES

Treating education and social class origins as having independent effects on labour market outcomes is conceptually problematic when diverse second-generation ethnic groups are being compared. Following the OED model of Blau and Duncan (1967), if second-generation ethnic minorities are able to achieve in education (E) despite their lower social class origins (O)—i.e., that of their first-generation parents—one might expect this advantage to also apply to their labour market outcomes (D). This is because the unmeasured factors driving educational attainment in this model would also be expected to affect labour market attainment. However, when an ethnic advantage in education that arises *despite low social origins* is coupled with an ethnic *disadvantage* in the labour market that is *explained by social origins*, treating a 'zero ethnic penalty' in the labour market as the attainment of equality<sup>2</sup> with the majoritarian population might not be an appropriate conclusion. Rather, we need to explore why educational advantage achieved by the second generation of different ethnic minority groups is not translated into advantage in the labour market. In what follows, first we outline the processes of how educational advantage may be achieved; we then evaluate under what conditions this might or might not be expected to translate into the labour market.

#### 3.1 | Explaining educational advantage

The literature points to different mechanisms that might be responsible for the second generation's educational advantage, including parental class misallocation, positive selection, and ethnic capital. Parental social class is known to be a key determinant of educational attainment because it provides individuals with different levels of

socioeconomic and cultural resources and networks (Breen and Müller, 2020). Higher parental social class is typically associated with better educational outcomes, and we should expect to see this both for majority and minority individuals. However, the meaning of (lower) parental social class for the children of immigrants can be more complex since, in many cases, including the UK, the first (parental) generation is concentrated in occupations for which they are overqualified (Cheung & Heath, 2007; Social Mobility Commission, 2020) or which represent a lower social position than they might have enjoyed in their country of origin. Occupational status in the destination country might therefore be an imprecise measure of their 'true social status' and associated cultural capital or habitus (Bourdieu, 1997), education, expectations and work experience (see also Modood, 2004). If this is the case, greater relative educational achievement among (some) second-generation ethnic minorities who come from lower social class origins specifically appears less surprising—a conclusion drawn by some of the migrant selectivity literature (Feliciano & Lanuza, 2017; Ichou, 2014).

Immigrants' general positive selection might also be responsible for observed ethnic educational advantage. Immigrants, especially those who migrate for economic reasons, are often selected on characteristics expected to ease their migration (such as better health) and on the motivation to improve themselves and the lives of their children (Feliciano, 2020). They are assumed to have greater aspirations, determination and resilience in fostering gains for their descendants (van Zanten, 1997), including progress in education (Dollmann, 2021; Kao & Tienda, 1998). This has been observed in the UK for the South Asian population in particular (Dale et al., 2002; Fernández-Reino, 2016; Shah et al., 2010; Strand, 2014). Such positive selection may translate into better educational outcomes across social origins, and hence into a relative advantage among those with immigrant parents. Paralleling the literature on primary and secondary effects deriving from social class, Jackson et al. (2012) elaborate ethnic differences in aspirations and choices in terms of secondary effects. Unlike in the model of primary and secondary effects of social class, these secondary effects operate to compensate rather than reinforce performance deficits. The authors also observe that the UK facilitates the enactment of such choices enabling second-generation ethnic minorities more easily to continue to university education.

Finally, the role of ethnic capital has been widely acknowledged in studies of immigrant integration (Borjas, 1992). Living close to co-ethnics, and especially living close to co-ethnics with a certain level of cultural capital, can bring benefits to the community overall, and this includes obtaining better educational attainment 'against the odds' (Lee & Zhou, 2014). This has been argued to be the case, for example, with ethnically concentrated London schools (Burgess, 2014). Geographical clustering of ethnic groups is, however, also typically paralleled by clustering of disadvantage, poorer housing conditions, and greater occupational segregation in poorer quality jobs (Jivraj & Khan, 2013; Phillips, 1998). These material factors, which also are affected by the timing and settlement patterns of different immigrant groups, are likely to depress educational attainment or access to advantaged peer networks even as concentration may foster ethnic capital, indicating the need to account for geographical context alongside social class origins.

### 3.2 | Translating educational advantage into the labour market

We know that social class is both materialised in educational attainment and exerts an independent effect on labour market outcomes. Similarly, once these potential sources of advantage are materialised in better educational outcomes for second-generation ethnic minorities, to what extent might we also see their additional consequences in the labour market? It is likely that the mechanisms posited to drive second generation's educational attainment also apply to some extent in the labour market, but that there are also reasons why they may be less effective.

We have suggested that *parents' (unmeasured) level of cultural capital* as well as *their determination and motivation* may offer a potential explanation for the overperformance of second-generation ethnic minorities, especially those from lower social class backgrounds. Those traits and resources might be expected to bring benefits in the labour market too. However, this is more likely to be the case for occupational attainment or career progression than access

to employment. First, these cultural and motivational characteristics can lead minorities to aspire to (and obtain) highly qualified jobs, especially among the more educated—as suggested by Cheung and Heath (2007)—who have already demonstrated them in their educational achievement. Second, such hard-to-measure traits are challenging to demonstrate at the point of application for work, where stereotypes can dominate decision-making. Such stereotypes are also gendered, compounding women's more constrained labour market options (Lancee, 2021). Conversely, these positive traits can be more easily observed by employers once in work and, therefore, reduce the effects of statistical discrimination (Cheung & Heath, 2007; Thijssen, 2016).

As for *other unmeasured aspects of social class* derived from parental occupations (i.e., income, social networks, knowledge of the job market), we might expect them to play a stronger role in the labour market than in education, making it harder for second-generation ethnic minorities to overcome the effects of class origins even when they have attained in education (and especially when they have not). While these aspects are not irrelevant to educational outcomes (e.g., paying for additional tutorship), access to education, and educational success, is overall less restricted than access to the labour market; and the English school system has been highlighted as one offering greater opportunities for minorities to succeed (Dollmann, 2021; Jackson et al., 2012). Conversely, a crucial aspect of finding a (suitable) job is not only having the material resources to sustain a (sufficiently long) job search, but also having the right networks (i.e., bridging ties) (Franzen & Hangartner, 2006; Granovetter, 1973). Hence, those who have achieved educationally but from more disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to be able to sustain that attainment in the job market, particularly given they may lack the diversity of networks that would enable them more easily to communicate their positive traits.

*Neighbourhood context*, in terms of ethnic and socioeconomic composition, may play a role in labour markets too, and even more so than in education. The clustering of ethnic minorities in deprived areas is likely to reduce their overall labour market opportunities and increase occupational segregation (Jivraj & Alao, 2023; Jivraj & Khan, 2013). The literature on the role of ethnic enclaves in supporting employment and facilitating occupational mobility is, however, mixed. While Portes and Jensen (1989) extolled the potential of such enclaves for promoting economic success, Xie and Gough (2011) came to more equivocal conclusions, demonstrating the potential of enclave employment for suppressing earnings. Ethnic networks have been shown both to facilitate employment and reduce information gaps (Dustmann et al., 2015), but also to limit the types of jobs accessed (see e.g., the discussion in Fernandez & Fernandez-Mateo, 2006). In the UK, some studies show negative effects of ethnic concentration on access to employment (Clark & Drinkwater, 2002; Khattab et al., 2010), especially for South Asian women (Jivraj & Alao, 2023; Zuccotti & Platt, 2017). There is also evidence of the limiting role of niche economies even for second-generation ethnic minorities, such as UK Chinese (Mok & Platt, 2020). At the same time, a positive effect of ethnic concentration on second-generation's occupational outcomes has been demonstrated, for example, for Indians (Zuccotti & Platt, 2017); and there is also some evidence of co-location by choice in patterns of suburbanisation, which is also likely to facilitate the network effects aiding employment (Dorsett, 1998).

Last, but not least, is the role of *ethnic discrimination*. While there is some evidence for teacher stereotyping of ethnic minority groups (Burgess & Greaves, 2013; Campbell et al., 2007), the evidence for labour market discrimination, particularly at point of access to employment, is more consistently attested and of greater magnitude (Di Stasio & Heath, 2019; Riach & Rich, 2002). While labour market discrimination can impact all minority groups negatively, educational stereotyping can favour those groups seen as 'high attaining'. This means that the positive assets that ethnic minorities have—be these individual, parental or collective assets—might be more difficult to translate into the labour market. Our understanding of discrimination within, rather than at access to employment, in terms of career progression is, however, less well-evidenced. But evidence on employment discrimination implies that those with fewer resources will be particularly vulnerable in the labour market.

### 3.3 | Expectations

While far from exhaustive, this discussion of the operation of potential mechanisms leads us to delineate five tentative expectations. It should be noted that is not our aim here to test these mechanisms directly, but to observe and

discuss the general patterns of how ethnic advantages (and penalties) vary across educational and labour market outcomes, and how far such patterns are consistent with our expectations. This includes a revised interpretation of the role of social background in shaping economic and educational attainment concurrently.

First (i), we expect second-generation ethnic minorities to be advantaged in education with respect to white British individuals, especially those second-generation ethnic minorities from lower social class backgrounds (some of whom might be misallocated in terms of their parental occupation). We would expect such educational advantage to be particularly marked among those groups with greater ethnic capital and where processes of downward mobility on migration in the immigrant generation are better attested, in particular, among Indians. Second, we can infer from the preceding discussion that how far educational success and those factors driving it are translated into the labour market depends on both the extent to which educational attainment is achieved in the first place and the economic outcome under consideration (employment or occupational success). The extent to which we observe such differentiation also helps to shed light on the specific mechanisms at play. According to our discussion, we expect (ii) upward mobility from lower social class origins to be less evident in the labour market than in educational outcomes. We also expect those characteristics that drive relative educational success to be more evident (iii) in occupational attainment, rather than in access to employment, and (iv) among those who have actually materialised such immigrant advantage in a better education (i.e., those with a university degree).<sup>3</sup> Finally, we would also expect to observe differences between men and women, particularly for some groups (v). Women and men overall show different occupational profiles (Platt, 2021) and gain different returns to education. Even if women from second-generation ethnic minority groups have been relatively successful in education, they might still struggle more than their male counterparts to materialise this educational success (see e.g., Dale et al., 2002); and they may face specific forms of labour market discrimination. We would therefore expect second-generation women with a university degree to experience less relative advantage and greater gaps between education and labour market outcomes than their male counterparts. This might be particularly evident among South Asian women, who tend to be more likely to prioritise family responsibilities over employment (Dale et al., 2006), partly informed by community norms (Zuccotti, 2021). To test whether these expectations are evidenced, we move to our analysis.

## 4 | DATA AND METHODS

### 4.1 | Data and variables

We use the ONS Longitudinal Study, a unique dataset that links census records for a one per cent sample of the population of England and Wales across five successive censuses (1971, 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011). The original (1971) sample selected individuals based on their birthdate (with four possible dates); and, at each census, the sample is updated with intercensal births and immigrations of those with the same birthdays. Slightly more than 500,000 individuals can be found at any census point. About 400,000 people provide records at any two census points; while there are linked records across all five censuses for around 200,000 individuals. Individuals in ONS-LS are also linked to some administrative data, including births, deaths and cancer registrations.

In addition to its large sample, a special feature of this dataset is that both household and aggregated census data can be attached to each individual and for each census point. That is, we have information on the co-resident parents of the individuals when they were children, on the characteristics of their households in childhood and adulthood, and we can also match in characteristics of the neighbourhoods in which they reside at different periods. This, uniquely for the UK, enables us to account for social and spatial upbringing contexts and study how they impact outcomes measured in later life (c.f., Chetty et al., 2014, Bell et al., 2019). This means that we do not use (as it is often the case in stratification and mobility studies) retrospective information to study social origins; rather, we exploit the longitudinal nature of the data and measure explanatory and explained variables at different time-points. Given the relevance of cohort differences and differential patterns of settlement and 'reception' in confounding understanding

of differential economic outcomes, the ability to measure social origins consistently for the given cohorts of our groups under study and to incorporate neighbourhood as well as individual measures of origin context constitutes a major advantage over existing studies.

We study individuals who lived with at least one parent between 0 and 15 years of age in any of the three so-called 'origin' years: 1971, 1981 and 1991. We measure the educational and labour market outcomes of these individuals in 2001 and 2011 ('destination years'), when they are between 20 and 45 years old. We exclude those between 46 and 55 years old, given they are present only for the 1971–2011 cohort. In line with research employing panel data, we constructed our sample to allow for more than one measurement per individual. Given that individuals can be between 0 and 15 years old in a maximum of two 'origin' census points, each individual can have up to 4 measurements (e.g., 1971–2001; 1971–2011; 1981–2001; 1981–2011). The total sample comprises more than 350,000 observations; around half of whom are 'unique' individuals. In order to account for repeat observations on individuals, we control for the 'origin' and 'destination' years, and we cluster standard errors at the individual level. In robustness analysis we restrict our sample to a single observation per individual with consistent results. While the observations are from Census data and therefore do not suffer attrition associated with longitudinal surveys, the data face potential loss to follow up from differential mortality and differential emigration. Given the age range under consideration, differential mortality is likely to have minimal impact. We have, moreover little insight into the likely extent or impact of differential emigration.<sup>4</sup> Reassuringly, we have at least one 'destination' response for all those whom we observe at 'origin', suggesting that this is a limited issue for our sample.

We study four outcomes: attainment of a university degree or equivalent, known as 'Level 4+' qualifications (vs. other educational level)<sup>5</sup>; activity (vs. inactivity, excluding full-time students) for women only; employment (vs. unemployment), and current or previous access to the social classes represented by professional and managerial occupations (vs. other social classes/occupations). Social (occupational) class is measured with the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC).<sup>6</sup> The NS-SEC has seven categories from higher managerial/professional occupations to routine occupations. We combine as higher occupational class outcomes those in classes 1 (higher managerial, administrative, and professional occupations) and 2 (lower managerial, administrative and professional occupations).

We pool these four outcomes for 2001 and 2011. In additional analysis, we examined change over time, by comparing labour market outcomes across the two years (see "Exploring changes over time" in the Supplementary Material), since time is an important factor in integration processes. However, there was little relative change in ethnic minority groups' position over time.

Our main independent variable is ethnic group. We focus on the white British majority and second-generation ethnic minorities of Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Caribbean origins. These four groups represent those which have sufficient numbers of second generation adults for analysis and capture different immigration histories, settlement patterns, and occupational niches, as well as all constituting 'visible' minorities with persistent within-group identification across immigrant generations. They are identified by self-report to the official ethnic group question (measured in 2011; or 2001 if missing in 2011). Our definition of second-generation includes both individuals born in Britain with foreign-born parents<sup>7</sup> and individuals born abroad who arrived before age 16 (around half of Bangladeshis and a quarter of Pakistanis are in this situation, while the shares for the other groups are below 20%). Robustness checks restricting our analysis to those born in the UK only provided consistent results, but reduced our sample sizes for the Bangladeshi group to the extent that limited our analysis. We tested for a 1.5-generation effect using a dummy for non-UK born, but it was not significant. White British individuals are restricted to those with both parents (or one, in the case of single-parent households) born in the UK.

Other key predictors are various indicators of individuals' social origins, which we measure in 1971/1981/1991. Critically, all our measures of social origins are measured when our sample members are school-age or younger, living with their parents and resident in England and Wales. Hence, we are capturing social origin measures that are directly comparable for cohorts and reflect the occupational experience of first-generation immigrants within the UK, even if they had experienced downward mobility on migration. Chief among our measures is parental social class.



We derive a five-category measure of No earners/not-codeable, Manual, Routine non-manual, Petit Bourgeoisie, and Service class, from a 7-category class schema whose members broadly share similar market and work situations (Goldthorpe & Hope, 1974). This is the only origin social class measure available and is harmonized for the three years (1971, 1981 and 1991). We use highest social class of co-resident mother or father. We also include three household-level variables, which capture the material context in which our sample grew up: housing tenure (owner, private rented, in social housing), number of cars (0, 1, 2 or more) and number of persons per room (over 1.5 persons per room; 1.5; over 1 but less than 1.5; over 0.75 but less than 1; 0.75; over 0.5 but less than 0.75; and 0.5 or less); and a measure of neighbourhood deprivation. This is measured at the ward level (average population c.4000) using the Carstairs Index (Norman & Boyle, 2014; Norman et al., 2005), and summarizes four dimensions: % male unemployment; % overcrowded households; % no car/van ownership; and % low social class. The variable is expressed in population-weighted quintiles.

We also control for age in years and, in the labour market outcomes, for detailed educational attainment categories (No qualifications, Level 1 (basic), Level 2 (lower secondary), level 3 (higher secondary/post-compulsory), Level 4+ (university degree or equivalent) and Other). Additional controls include year of origin and of destination measurement, and number of times observed. We conduct separate analyses for men and women. Distributions of all independent variables are provided in Table S1 in the Supplementary material.

## 4.2 | Analytical strategy

The key advantage of our approach is that we are able to exploit the longitudinal nature of our data to chart educational outcomes and labour market outcomes prospectively from social origins. This enables us to avoid issues of differential recall and the potential incomparability of parental origins across different national contexts. By matching cohorts and evaluating their circumstances in childhood, we also avoid the problems of confounding economic outcomes with cohort change (Waters & Jiménez, 2005). Finally, unlike much of the literature we investigate both patterns of educational attainment from different social as well as ethnic origins, and the implications of this attainment for labour market outcomes. Thus, we are able to directly face the non-independence of social class and education. To do this, we estimate a series of logistic regression models for each of the outcomes measured adjusting for key control variables, and report average marginal effects (AME) and predicted probabilities (Mood, 2010). Our models for employment are conditional on participation. However, we do not estimate selection models given the challenges finding appropriate variables to identify such models, especially given that any such identifying variables may differ across groups.<sup>8</sup> Instead, given that the share of those active is lower among women, and in particular for some groups of women, we estimate both participation and employment for women. The estimates for employment thus illustrate transparently the extent of penalties in employment across more and less selected groups of women. For men, participation rates are high for this age group and analysis of participation does not shed light on labour market inequalities, so we only analyse employment. For occupational outcomes, we estimate the attainment of professional or managerial class compared to any other class outcome. Since our concept is class position, rather than current economic status, we use information on past social class for those currently not in work. This means our sample for this outcome includes some not currently in employment (whether unemployed or not-participating) but excludes those who never worked or for whom we otherwise have no measure of past occupation. Again, we estimate a conditional model rather than attempting to adjust for selection, providing consistency with comparable analysis of intergenerational social mobility.<sup>9</sup> For the interaction terms included in our models (see below), we computed contrasts in Stata 14 (shown in the Supplementary material, Figures S1 and S2). We illustrate our key results graphically to aid interpretation.

We first (Section 5.2) estimate how much second-generation ethnic minorities' probability of attaining a university degree differs from that of White British individuals, after controlling for parental social class and other key independent variables. We use the full sample and estimate separate models for men and women's educational

attainment, first with basic controls and then additionally adjusting for measures of social class background. We then add interactions between parental social class and ethnic group, to investigate whether the estimated effect of social origins on educational attainment differs across groups.

We then turn to labour market outcomes (Section 5.3). Similarly, we first estimate average effects of ethnic group for each labour market outcome (employment and professional/managerial class for men, and participation, employment and professional/managerial class for women). We again estimate a model with basic controls and then adjust for parental social class and other measures of social class background. Finally, we estimate a model including educational attainment, which thus enables us to identify how far any differences across social class origins between groups are driven by differences in educational attainment. Then, in line with our expectations relating to the highly educated potentially being better able to materialise their 'ethnic advantage', we investigate ethnic group differences in returns to education by interacting ethnic group with education. We compare those with a degree qualification (Level 4+) with those with a low qualification (Level 1 or less).

## 5 | RESULTS

### 5.1 | Descriptive statistics

Figure 1 presents descriptive statistics of the key variables, by ethnic group, and provides the sample sizes for our different outcome measures. There is substantial variation in parental social class across ethnic groups. Second-generation Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Caribbeans have higher shares of manual social origins compared to white British individuals; and all groups have lower shares of service class origins, but this is especially marked for Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. Table S1 in the Supplementary material shows that in addition to differences in social class background, all ethnic minority groups are more likely than their white British peers to have lived in overcrowded households and in deprived neighbourhoods when young.

Even though they are overrepresented among lower social backgrounds, most second-generation ethnic minority groups have high levels of tertiary qualifications. For example, more than 35% of South Asian (Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi) men attained this level, even though almost half of them had parents with manual jobs and only 16% of them had parents with a service class position. Conversely, although the proportion of white British men with higher class parents stood at 29%, only 26% had Level 4+ qualifications. Similar patterns (with variations) are observed among women (see Table S1 in the Supplementary material).

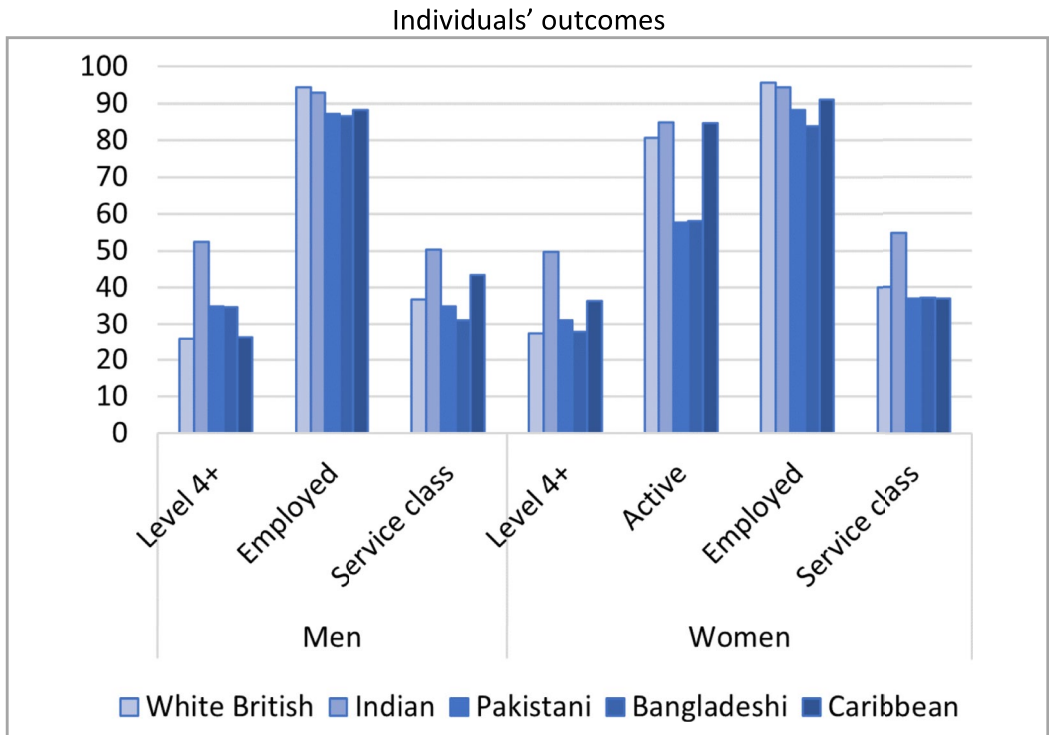
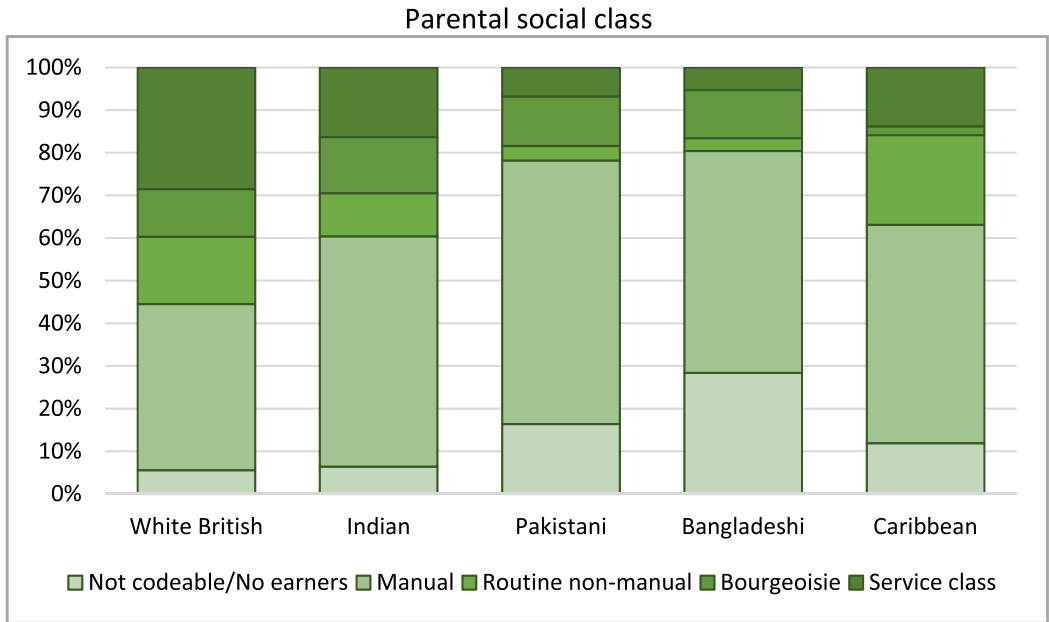
Labour market outcomes are more varied. Some of these seem to align more with groups' lower social origins, such as higher unemployment rates for certain minority groups. This also suggests that education is not fully translated into employment opportunities. For example, second-generation Pakistani and Bangladeshi men have much higher unemployment rates and similar or lower probability of attaining professional managerial occupations compared to white British men, despite their high educational attainment. Most second-generation women have higher unemployment levels than the white British, even though they are in general more educated. Of all second-generation ethnic minority groups, Indians, both men and women, seem to have best transferred educational advantage into the labour market, especially in their occupational attainment.

We go on to explore these relationships in detail, in multivariate models.

### 5.2 | Educational outcomes

Table 1 shows AME of ethnic group in the probability of attaining a university degree, by sex. M1 has basic controls, while M2 adds social origin variables. Full models are provided in the Supplementary material, Table S2.

We see that all second-generation ethnic minority groups have an equal or higher probability of attaining tertiary qualifications compared to white British individuals (M1). There is thus no 'disadvantage' to be explained here by



recourse to social class background, but rather a zero effect or an advantage for the ethnic minorities. Once we control for the fact that a majority of second-generation ethnic minorities are raised by lower social class parents and have, in general, poorer socio-economic conditions at origin (M2), we observe—as expected—a positive difference for all minority groups. These educational advantages are substantial: controlling for age and social origins,

ethnic minority men and women have between 14 and 34 percentage points (pp) higher probabilities of attaining a university degree compared to their white British counterparts. Predicted values show that Pakistani and Bangladeshi women are, on average, less likely to attain degree-level qualifications compared to men; the opposite is observed among Caribbeans.

We next attempt to gain traction on the differentiated role of social origins by interacting parental social class with ethnic group. Figure 2 shows the predicted values of educational attainment for all ethnic minorities and white British, for manual and service social class origins. We find a similar pattern as observed in Table 1. Independently of social origins, all second-generation ethnic minorities remain advantaged with respect to white Britons. For Indians and Bangladeshis, this advantage is similar across social origins (they have similar reproduction patterns compared to white Britons). For Caribbeans the advantage appears larger among those with lower social origins, while the opposite is observed for Pakistanis; however, these differences are small. Overall, we see both the persistence of class advantage across all groups, but that, at the same time, ethnic minorities are successful in translating their aspirations for the next generation into educational outcomes even from more disadvantaged social origins (where they tend to be concentrated). Those second-generation ethnic minorities from lower social classes are even achieving at or beyond the rate of the white British from more advantaged social origins. The results suggest that resources and aspirations associated with immigrant selection and misallocation, coupled with the potential role of ethnic capital, might be relevant mechanisms for this pattern of success. These, however, enhance, rather than substitute, the networks and resources offered by more advantaged social origins. What is interesting here, is, that the stereotypically more advantaged Indian group shows patterns that are most comparable to the most stereotypically disadvantaged Bangladeshi group. Factors such as group concentration, quality of schooling, or access to educational institutions, offer potential plausible explanations, over and above individual and family-level drivers.

### 5.3 | Labour market outcomes

#### 5.3.1 | Average effects

So how far do these educational gains translate into the labour market? Tables 2 and 3 show the probability of being employed, of being in professional/managerial positions and, for women, of being economically active. As in the previous table, M1 shows results with basic controls, while M2 controls for social origins, demonstrating, effectively, the extent to which upward mobility is (or is not) being achieved from disadvantaged origins. M3 adds education and family composition, revealing the extent to which such upward mobility is achieved via the educational attainment we saw in the previous section. Full models are shown in Tables S3 and S4 of the Supplementary material.

Based on our previous findings, we would expect to find that, when controlling for social origins (Tables 2 and 3, M2) we would see labour market advantages for second-generation ethnic minority groups (positive and significant coefficients) driven both by the educational success net of social origins seen in Table 1 and by the unobservable factors leading to that educational success. When we additionally control for education (M3) we would expect to see an attenuation of that advantage, but not for it to disappear, given we are only capturing observed educational attainment and not the unobservables that drove that success regardless of social origins. However, it is clear from

**FIGURE 1** Descriptive statistics: social class origins and educational, and labour market outcomes of men and women, by ethnic group. Totals: Parental social class = 354498 (WB), 5986 (I), 3738 (P), 1142 (B), 2890 (C); Education (men) = 17336 (WB), 3033 (I), 1787 (P), 526 (B), 1285 (C); Employment status (men) = 162037 (WB), 2867 (I), 1572 (P), 483 (B), 1158 (C); Occupation (men) = 167085 (WB), 2916 (I), 1608 (P), 480 (B), 1207 (C); Education & activity status (women) = 181129 (WB), 2953 (I), 1951 (P), 616 (B), 1605 (C); Employment status (women) = 146203 (WB), 2510 (I), 1128 (P), 358 (B), 1360 (C); Occupation (women) = 173106 (WB), 2795 (I), 1583 (P), 488 (B), 1498 (C). Population: Individuals between 20 and 45 years old. Source: Authors' own calculations based on ONS-LS.

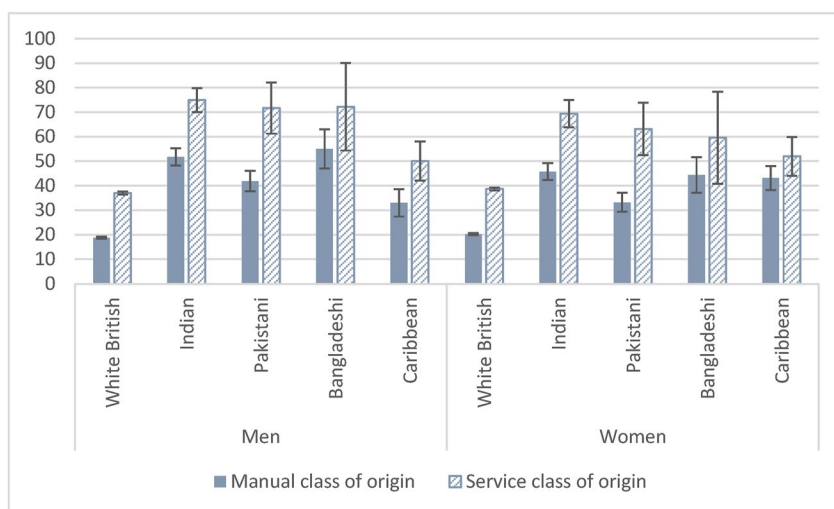
**TABLE 1** Educational outcomes (attainment of university degree); average marginal effects (AME) and predicted values. Men and women.<sup>a</sup>

	Men		Women	
	M1	M2	M1	M2
Ethnic group (ref. white british)				
Indian	0.251** (0.014)	0.331** (0.012)	0.197** (0.014)	0.280** (0.013)
Pakistani	0.090** (0.016)	0.241** (0.016)	0.010 (0.015)	0.158** (0.016)
Bangladeshi	0.097** (0.027)	0.339** (0.028)	-0.021 (0.021)	0.226** (0.025)
Caribbean	0.014 (0.018)	0.140** (0.020)	0.090** (0.018)	0.218** (0.018)
Predicted values				
White british		25.6		27.3
Indian		58.7		55.3
Pakistani		49.7		43.1
Bangladeshi		59.5		49.9
Caribbean		39.7		49.0

Note: +  $p$ -value < 0.1 \* $p$ -value < .05 \*\* $p$ -value < .01. Robust (clustered) standard errors in parentheses. Population: Individuals between 20 and 45 years old.

<sup>a</sup>Model 1 controls for age, origin and destination years and number of census points; Model 2 adds social origin controls, including parental social class, tenancy, number of cars, number of persons per room and neighbourhood deprivation, measured when the individual was between 0 and 15 years old.

Source: Authors' own calculations based on ONS-LS.



**FIGURE 2** Educational outcomes (attainment of university degree) by parental social class; predicted values (with all controls) and CI (95%). Population: Individuals between 20 and 45 years old. Source: Authors' own calculations based on ONS-LS.

TABLE 2 Labour market outcomes. Men. average marginal effects (AME).<sup>a</sup>

	Employment			Professional/managerial		
	M1	M2	M3	M1	M2	M3
Ethnic group (ref. white british)						
Indian	-0.007 (0.005)	0.007 (0.005)	-0.004 (0.005)	0.156** (0.0129)	0.230** (0.0117)	0.0826** (0.0105)
Pakistani	-0.044** (0.008)	-0.008 (0.006)	-0.021** (0.007)	-0.0109 (0.0165)	0.124** (0.0161)	0.0102 (0.0135)
Bangladeshi	-0.033** (0.012)	0.016** (0.006)	0.006 (0.007)	0.0123 (0.0292)	0.213** (0.0282)	0.0649** (0.0249)
Caribbean	-0.057** (0.012)	-0.017* (0.008)	-0.012 (0.007)	-0.0327+ (0.0188)	0.0745** (0.0194)	0.0181 (0.0167)

Note: +  $p$ -value < .10 \* $p$ -value < .05 \*\* $p$ -value < .01. Robust (clustered) standard errors in parentheses. Population: Individuals between 20 and 45 years old.

<sup>a</sup>Model 1 controls for age, origin and destination years and number of census points; Model 2 adds social origin controls, including parental social class, tenancy, number of cars, number of persons per room and neighbourhood deprivation, measured when the individual was between 0 and 15 years old; Model 3 adds education and family composition.

Source: Authors' own calculations based on ONS-LS.

TABLE 3 Labour market outcomes. Women. average marginal effects (AME).<sup>a</sup>

	Activity			Employment			Professional/managerial		
	M1	M2	M3	M1	M2	M3	M1	M2	M3
Ethnic group (ref. white british)									
Indian	0.040** (0.009)	0.063** (0.008)	-0.002 (0.011)	-0.007 (0.005)	0.003 (0.004)	-0.013** (0.006)	0.128** (0.0129)	0.196** (0.0122)	0.0505** (0.0106)
Pakistani	-0.232** (0.015)	-0.146** (0.014)	-0.191** (0.014)	-0.052** (0.01)	-0.021** (0.007)	-0.035** (0.008)	-0.0203 (0.0164)	0.0985** (0.0172)	0.00605 (0.0141)
Bangladeshi	-0.227** (0.024)	-0.069** (0.02)	-0.154** (0.02)	-0.071** (0.016)	-0.007 (0.008)	-0.038** (0.012)	-0.0470+ (0.0268)	0.155** (0.0291)	0.0248 (0.0224)
Caribbean	0.047** (0.012)	0.084** (0.009)	0.029* (0.012)	-0.05** (0.011)	-0.018* (0.008)	-0.020** (0.008)	0.0601** (0.0179)	0.160** (0.0175)	0.0479** (0.015)

Note: +  $p$ -value < .10 \* $p$ -value < .05 \*\* $p$ -value < .01. Robust (clustered) standard errors in parentheses. Population: Individuals between 20 and 45 years old.

<sup>a</sup>Model 1 controls for age, origin and destination years and number of census points; Model 2 adds social origin controls, including parental social class, tenancy, number of cars, number of persons per room and neighbourhood deprivation, measured when the individual was between 0 and 15 years old; Model 3 adds education and family composition.

Source: Authors' own calculations based on ONS-LS.

Tables 2 and 3 that this is not the case for all groups and both sexes, nor it is observed consistently across labour market outcomes.

M2 shows, instead, that for access to employment, only second-generation Bangladeshi men are more likely to be employed (rather than unemployed) compared to white British men of similar social backgrounds and demographics, while there is a penalty or no difference for the other groups. Among women, we observe an ethnic minority advantage in activity for Indian and Caribbean women. In all other cases, and for employment, we either observe equal probabilities or a penalty for ethnic minorities. Results differ when we turn to occupational class outcomes:

conditional on ever having worked, all groups and both sexes are more likely to have professional/managerial positions than white British individuals, on equality of social origins. These results suggest that the positive unobserved characteristics present when studying education may play a role in occupational outcomes but are less salient, as we anticipated, in terms of access to jobs.

When we turn to M3, however, observed ethnic minority advantages reduce and/or become zero; and any zero effects or disadvantages remain unchanged or become more negative. (The exception is Caribbean men, for whom the employment penalty reduces.) Given we are now including education as the route by which that attainment is achieved, and thus would anticipate some attenuation in the positive relative outcomes, we would not expect them to attenuate to zero or become negative. While, for the reasons we discussed, we cannot assume that the unobservables that explain second-generation ethnic minorities' educational success should work equally in the labour market, the observed level of educational success shown in Figure 2 would imply sufficient unobserved (individual, family and community) resources to maintain advantages in occupational outcomes. But we only see this maintenance of advantage for Indian and Bangladeshi men and Indian and Caribbean women in terms of occupational success.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, some Pakistani men and all second-generation women are penalized in employment, even if on average they perform much better in education. This is notable for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, given they also have substantially lower participation rates, and thus those active are a selected group. For those for whom there are observed 'zero penalties' in M3, these do not straightforwardly imply an absence of inequality—as classical studies of ethnic penalties would assume. Rather, they may be reflecting the incapacity of individuals or groups of translating those (positive) unobserved characteristics into the labour market, which may be due to a series of factors, including discrimination or lack of networks. It is clearly an issue that requires further attention from scholars when estimating models that treat education and social origins as independent in this way.

### 5.3.2 | Exploring the role of education

We next estimate interactions between education and ethnic group to ascertain if those second-generation minorities who demonstrate high educational attainment also gain relatively greater labour market success, as we posited. Figure 3 shows predicted values by ethnicity and education. (Statistically significant interactions are shown in the Supplementary material, Figure S2).

Consistent with our expectations, we see that for several of the second-generation South Asian groups, education has a greater value in the labour market, that is, they gain greater returns to education than white British individuals. For example, Indian men with a degree gain a greater advantage in terms of occupational outcomes compared to white British men. Among those Indian men who have level 1 or less education, there is only a 4–5pp occupational advantage; but this increases to 11pp among those educated to degree level. Similarly, degree-educated Pakistani men reduce their disadvantage in terms of employment, while obtaining an 7pp advantage in terms of occupational class. Among women, second-generation Pakistani and Bangladeshi women also have greater returns to their education, relative to white British women: we see this in their activity rates. While activity rates remain lower than equivalent White British women, the gap is much smaller for those who are degree-educated. Degree-educated Pakistani women also see a reduced gap in access to employment and Bangladeshi women achieve an advantage of 7pp in terms of accessing professional or managerial occupations, while those with lower levels of education have similar or lower rates of professional/managerial outcomes relative to their white British counterparts. These results suggest that the unobserved 'positive' factors that were presumed to play a role in the probability of obtaining a higher education, materialise in the labour market for some second-generation minority groups through their greater returns to education. That is, factors associated with educational success can thus to some degree 'compensate' for those wider contextual factors that appear to suppress the labour market outcomes of ethnic minorities, such as access to material resources and networks and discrimination. However, we do not observe a fully consistent pattern across groups and/or outcomes: Caribbean women, for example, get relatively lower returns to education, which leads to a smaller advantage among the higher compared to the lower educated.

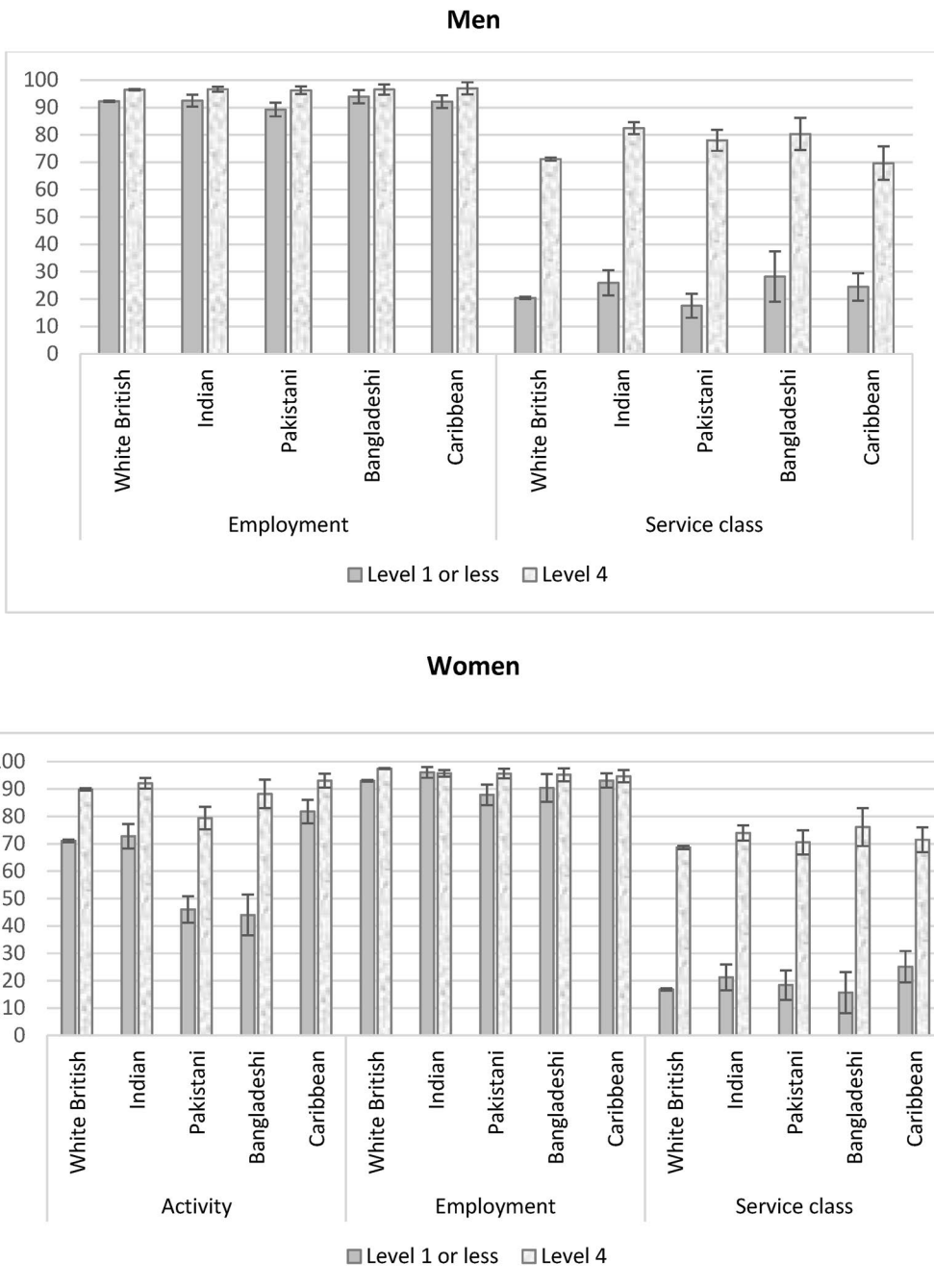


FIGURE 3 Labour market outcomes by education and ethnic group: predicted values. CI (95%). Men and women. Population: Individuals between 20 and 45 years old. Source: Authors' own calculations based on ONS-LS.

## 6 | SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The concept and evaluation of ethnic penalties has long dominated the literature on educational and labour market integration of immigrants and their children in destination societies. While adjusting outcomes for social class origins



in addition to educational attainment has proved valuable in describing net differences in disadvantage, it is limited in capturing the mixture of both advantage and disadvantage that is increasingly a feature of second generation's lives. The experience of second-generation ethnic minority groups in the UK, with their high rates of educational success, but mixed labour market outcomes, offers a very clear case of this phenomenon, and calls for the development of a new framework for the analysis of the outcomes of children of immigrants. We highlighted the discrepancy between attempts to explain educational success for those from lower social class origins with reference to relevant unobservables, while assuming that social class has a consistent, explanatory role in labour market outcomes across majority and minorities. We provided an updated empirical analysis of educational and labour market outcomes that illustrated these points, drawing on the most substantial and complete UK longitudinal dataset available.

We set out different mechanisms by which second generation's educational advantage might arise, and then discussed the extent to which these mechanisms might be translated into labour market outcomes. In line with our first expectation (i), we showed a clear advantage in access to higher education for all second-generation ethnic minority groups and across social origins. Interestingly, the advantage applied not only to Indians, who have been associated with the 'immigrant success story', but also to Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, who have been characterised as particularly disadvantaged among the UK's ethnic groups (Modood et al., 1997), demonstrating the dynamic nature of the second generation's experience in the UK, and the importance of explanatory frameworks tracking these changing patterns. In line with work elaborating the ways in which 'secondary effects' in terms of educational choices and commitment may counteract secondary effects of more disadvantaged origins of some minority groups (Jackson et al., 2012), what we saw was indicative of compensatory processes that rendered the role of lower social class origins less salient for second-generation ethnic minorities. At the same time, the similar patterns of educational advantage across social origins implied that parental class misallocation—or downward mobility following immigration—was unlikely to be the only driver of educational success, supporting the relevance for immigrants across social class origins of being selected on aspirations, drive and motivation and the salience of ethnic capital for outcomes. The particular gains of the Bangladeshi group suggested that contextual factors such as the quality of local institutions—as exemplified in the 'London effect' (Burgess, 2014)—might also play an important, and often neglected role, in accounting for specific patterns of educational attainment.

In line with our second and third expectations, we observed that, in general, advantages were not as pronounced in the labour market as they were for education (ii), especially in terms of access to jobs (iii). Our findings illustrated how educational advantage was coupled with disadvantage in access to jobs for most groups. No second-generation ethnic minorities had a higher probability of finding employment than white British individuals, and all second-generation ethnic minority women and Pakistani men experienced a disadvantage. Among Pakistani and Bangladeshi women, this was also coupled with high inactivity rates. For occupational success, some groups experienced a 'zero penalty' (Pakistani men and women Caribbean men and Bangladeshi women), while others experienced an advantage (Indian men and women, Bangladeshi men, and Caribbean women). Hence, for some groups, once a job has been secured, unobserved strengths that deliver educational success such as habitus or motivation may pay off—a finding that resonates with previous research (Cheung & Heath, 2007; Zuccotti, 2015). Why this applies only to some groups and sexes may help offer leverage in future work aiming to identify the mechanisms at play. We further argued (iv) that it was theoretically those who successfully attained higher rates of education who should be most fully endowed with, or best able to 'materialise', their unmeasured immigrant advantage. Consistent with this, we observed higher returns to education for some second-generation ethnic minority groups, when compared to white British individuals. This was particularly evident for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in access to the labour market, highlighting certain anticipated gender differences (v). However, while there were clearly differences between the sexes within some groups, these did not show a common pattern.

Overall, the unobserved positive characteristics that play a role in second-generation ethnic minorities' educational achievement seem potentially able to deliver occupational success, but are not currently fully translated into the labour market, particularly in terms of access to jobs. This suggests that further attention should be paid to understanding the relevant constraints, including discrimination, at different points in the employment process. At

the same time, the fact that social class clearly does not 'mean' the same thing for ethnic minority groups as it does for the majority should lead to caution in incorporating it (and interpreting it) straightforwardly in analysis of ethnic group outcomes. More positively, the ability of second-generation ethnic minority groups to achieve educationally at a level that outranks those of white British majority with similar (i.e., largely similarly disadvantaged) class origins, offers great analytical potential for further investigating the 'black box' of social class and for identifying which class-related characteristics are salient for which outcomes. For migration scholars, disentangling the exact mechanisms that produce the observed combination of positive and negative outcomes in education and the labour market is a fruitful and crucial task for the future.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Some cell counts, percentages and totals shown in the tables created with ONS-LS data have been modified in order to comply with publication rules established by the Office for National Statistics. These modifications, however, do not affect the main findings derived from the regression models. The permission of the Office for National Statistics to use the Longitudinal Study is gratefully acknowledged, as is the help provided by staff of the Centre for Longitudinal Study Information & User Support (CeLSIUS). We are particularly thankful to Wei Xun, Rachel Stuchbury and Aly Sizer. CeLSIUS is supported by the ESRC under project ES/V003488/1. The authors alone are responsible for the interpretation of the data. This work contains statistical data from ONS, which is Crown Copyright. The use of the ONS statistical data in this work does not imply the endorsement of the ONS in relation to the interpretation or analysis of the statistical data. This work uses research datasets, which may not exactly reproduce National Statistics aggregates.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

No conflict of interest.

## DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from Office for National Statistics, UK. Restrictions apply to the availability of these data, which were used under license for this study. Data are available from <https://www.ons.gov.uk/aboutus/whatwedo/paidservices/longitudinalstudyis> with the permission of Office for National Statistics, UK.

## ORCID

Carolina V. Zuccotti  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8374-2963>

Lucinda Platt  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8251-6400>

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Most of the evidence we cite applies to England rather than to the UK, given different education systems. However, most of the UK's non-white minorities (>90%) live in England.
- <sup>2</sup> A 'zero ethnic penalty' refers to the disappearance of an ethnic penalty. In statistical analyses, it means that the effect of ethnic group on labour market outcomes is no longer statistically significant.
- <sup>3</sup> Note that even if ethnic minorities may have different 'market value' qualifications (i.e., they attend less prestigious universities), much of the difference in university selection can be accounted for by social class background (Boliver, 2013; Shiner & Noden, 2015).
- <sup>4</sup> It is not clear whether those who have emigrated would have had better or worse economic outcomes: the literature is mixed on this point and is largely focused on the immigrant rather than the second generation.
- <sup>5</sup> Since most Level 4+ qualifications are university degrees, we use the terminology tertiary-educated, Level 4+ and with a university degree interchangeably throughout.
- <sup>6</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/classificationsandstandards/otherclassifications/thenationalstatistics socioeconomicclassificationnscrebasedonsoc2010>

- <sup>7</sup> We exclude from our analysis those with one foreign-born and one UK born parent. Similarly, we exclude from our comparison group of the White British majority those with a foreign-born parent. Given, for single parent households we only had information on the parent present, we additionally tested a dummy for single parent households, and a dummy for single parent households interacted with ethnic group, which resulted in no substantive changes to our findings.
- <sup>8</sup> We have also chosen to incorporate local labour market context (one contender for such an identification strategy) as part of our measures of economic circumstances at origin, further restricting our potential options.
- <sup>9</sup> In addition, to the above-mentioned problems of implementing a suitable identification strategy, adjusting for selection into occupational class would be further complicated by the fact that our sample encompasses those measured on the basis of prior as well as current occupation.
- <sup>10</sup> Additional analysis interacting social class origins with ethnic group to ascertain whether there were different patterns of social mobility by ethnic group indicate that these three sub-populations experience relatively greater upward mobility from manual/routine class origins relative to the White British. Patterns for the other groups were no different from those of the White British, with the exception that the small shares of Pakistani women and Caribbean men coming from privileged social calls origins gained less advantaged from them.

## REFERENCES

- Alba, R., & Foner, N. (2015). *Strangers no more: Immigration and the challenges of integration in North America and Western Europe*. Princeton University Press.
- Bell, B., Blundell, J., & Machin, S. (2019). *Where is the land of hope and glory? The geography of intergenerational mobility in England and Wales*. LSE.
- Blau, P., & Duncan, O. D. (1967). *The American occupational structure*. Wiley.
- Boliver, V. (2013). How fair is access to more prestigious UK universities? *British Journal of Sociology*, 64(2), 344–364. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12021>
- Borjas, G. (1992). Ethnic capital and intergenerational mobility. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 107(1), 123–150. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2118325>
- Bourdieu, P. (1997). The forms of capital. In A. H. Halsey (Ed.), *Education: Culture, economy, society*. Oxford University Press.
- Bradley, S., & Taylor, J. (2004). Ethnicity, educational attainment and the transition from school. *The Manchester School*, 72(3), 317–346. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9957.2004.00395.x>
- Breen, R. & Müller, W. (Eds.) (2020). *Education and intergenerational social mobility in Europe and the United States*. Stanford University Press.
- Burgess, S. (2014). *Understanding the success of London's schools*. Centre for Market and Public Organisation.
- Burgess, S., & Greaves, E. (2013). Test scores, subjective assessment, and stereotyping of ethnic minorities. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 31(3), 535–576. <https://doi.org/10.1086/669340>
- Burton, J., Nandi, A., & Platt, L. (2010). Measuring ethnicity: Challenges and opportunities for survey research. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 33(8), 1332–1349. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870903527801>
- Buscha, F., & Sturgis, P. (2018). Declining social mobility? Evidence from five linked censuses in England and Wales 1971–2011. *British Journal of Sociology*, 69(1), 154–182. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12275>
- Campbell, R. J., Muijs, R. D., Neelands, J. G. A., Robinson, W., Eyre, D., & Hewston, R. (2007). The social origins of students identified as gifted and talented in England: A geo-demographic analysis. *Oxford Review of Education*, 33(1), 103–120. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03054980601119664>
- Chetty, R., Hendren, N., Kline, P., & Saez, E. (2014). Where is the land of opportunity? The geography of intergenerational mobility in the United States. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 129(4), 1553–1623. <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qju022>
- Cheung, S. Y., & Heath, A. (2007). Nice work if you can get it: Ethnic penalties in great Britain. In A. Heath & S. Y. Cheung (Eds.), *Unequal chances. Ethnic minorities in Western labour markets* (pp. 507–550). Oxford University Press.
- Clark, K., & Drinkwater, S. (2002). Enclaves, neighbourhood effects and employment outcomes: Ethnic minorities in England and Wales. *Journal of Population Economics*, 15(1), 5–29. <https://doi.org/10.1007/pl00003839>
- Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities. (2021). *The report of the commission on Race and ethnic Disparities*. Cabinet Office.
- Crawford, C., et al. (2010). *Young people's education and labour market choices aged 16/17 to 18/19*. Department for Education.
- Crawford, C., & Greaves, E. (2015). *Socio-economic, ethnic and gender differences in HE participation*. Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.
- Crul, M., & Schneider, J. (2010). Comparative integration context theory: Participation and belonging in new diverse European cities. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 33(7), 1249–1268. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419871003624068>
- Dale, A., Lindley, J., & Dex, S. (2006). A life-course perspective on ethnic differences in women's economic activity in Britain. *European Sociological Review*, 22(3), 323–337. <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jci060>
- Dale, A., Shaheen, N., Kalra, V., & Fieldhouse, E. (2002). Routes into education and employment for young Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in the UK. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 25(6), 942–968. <https://doi.org/10.1080/014198702200009386>

- Di Stasio, V., & Heath, A. (2019). *Are employers in Britain discriminating against ethnic minorities?* Centre for Social Investigation.
- Dollmann, J. (2021). Ethnic inequality in choice- and performance-driven education systems: A longitudinal study of educational choices in England, Germany, The Netherlands, and Sweden. *British Journal of Sociology*, 72(4), 974–991. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12854>
- Dorsett, R. (1998). *Ethnic minorities in the inner city*. Policy Press.
- Dustmann, C., Frattini, T., & Lanzara, G. (2012). Educational achievement of second-generation immigrants: An international comparison. *Economic Policy*, 27(69), 143–185. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0327.2011.00275.x>
- Dustmann, C., Glitz, A., Schönberg, U., & Brücker, H. (2015). Referral-based job search networks. *The Review of Economic Studies*, 83(2), 514–546. <https://doi.org/10.1093/restud/rdv045>
- Dustmann, C., Kastis, Y., & Preston, I. (2022). Inequality and immigration. <https://ifs.org.uk/inequality/>
- Feliciano, C. (2020). Immigrant selectivity effects on health, labor market, and educational outcomes. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 46(1), 315–334. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-121919-054639>
- Feliciano, C., & Lanuza, Y. R. (2017). An immigrant paradox? Contextual attainment and intergenerational educational mobility. *American Sociological Review*, 82(1), 211–241. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122416684777>
- Fernandez, R. M., & Fernandez-Mateo, I. (2006). Networks, race, and hiring. *American Sociological Review*, 71(1), 42–71. <https://doi.org/10.1177/000312240607100103>
- Fernández-Reino, M. (2016). Immigrant optimism or anticipated discrimination? Explaining the first educational transition of ethnic minorities in England. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 46, 141–156. Part B. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rssm.2016.08.007>
- Franzen, A., & Hangartner, D. (2006). Social networks and labour market outcomes: The non-monetary benefits of social capital. *European Sociological Review*, 22(4), 353–368. <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcl001>
- Goldthorpe, J., & Hope, K. (1974). *The social grading of occupations*. Clarendon Press.
- Gracia, P., Vázquez-Quesada, L., & Van de Werfhorst, H. G. (2016). Ethnic penalties? The role of human capital and social origins in labour market outcomes of second-generation Moroccans and Turks in The Netherlands. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 42(1), 69–87. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183x.2015.1085800>
- Granovetter, M. S. (1973). The strength of weak ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, 78(6), 1360–1380. <https://doi.org/10.1086/225469>
- Heath, A. & Cheung, S. Y. (Eds.) (2007). *Unequal chances. Ethnic minorities in Western labour markets*. Oxford University Press.
- Heath, A., & McMahon, D. (1997). Education and occupational attainments: The impact of ethnic origins. In A. H. Halsey (Ed.), et al. (Eds.), *Education: Culture, economy, and society*. Oxford University Press.
- Heath, A., Rethon, C., & Kilpi, E. (2008). The second generation in Western Europe: Education, unemployment, and occupational attainment. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 34(1), 211–235. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.34.040507.134728>
- Hout, M., & DiPrete, T. A. (2006). What we have learned: RC28's contributions to knowledge about social stratification. *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 24(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rssm.2005.10.001>
- Ichou, M. (2014). Who they were there: Immigrants' educational selectivity and their children's educational attainment. *European Sociological Review*, 30(6), 750–765. <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcu071>
- Jackson, M., Jonsson, J. O., & Rudolphi, F. (2012). Ethnic inequality in choice-driven education systems: A longitudinal study of performance and choice in England and Sweden. *Sociology of Education*, 85(2), 158–178. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038040711427311>
- Jivraj, S., & Alao, C. (2023). *Are ethnic employment penalties mitigated in deprived neighbourhoods and in ethnically dense neighbourhoods?* *Population. Space and Place*. n/a(n/a).e46.
- Jivraj, S., & Khan, O. (2013). *Ethnicity and deprivation in England: How likely are ethnic minorities to live in deprived neighbourhoods?* University of Manchester.
- Kao, G., & Tienda, M. (1998). Educational aspirations of minority youth. *American Journal of Education*, 106(3), 349–384. <https://doi.org/10.1086/444188>
- Khattab, N., Johnston, R., Sirkeci, I., & Modood, T. (2010). The impact of spatial segregation on the employment outcomes amongst Bangladeshi men and women in England and Wales. *Sociological Research Online*, 15(1), 13–36. <https://doi.org/10.5153/sro.2082>
- Kristen, C., & Granato, N. (2007). The educational attainment of the second generation in Germany: Social origins and ethnic inequality. *Ethnicities*, 7(3), 343–366. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796807080233>
- Lancee, B. (2021). Ethnic discrimination in hiring: Comparing groups across contexts. Results from a cross-national field experiment. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 47(6), 1181–1200. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183x.2019.1622744>
- Lee, J., & Zhou, M. (2014). The success frame and achievement paradox: The costs and consequences for Asian Americans. *Race and Social Problems*, 6(1), 38–55. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12552-014-9112-7>
- Levels, M., & Dronkers, J. (2008). Educational performance of native and immigrant children from various countries of origin. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 31(8), 1404–1425. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870701682238>
- Li, Y., & Heath, A. (2016). Class matters: A study of minority and majority social mobility in Britain, 1982–2011. *American Journal of Sociology*, 122(1), 162–200. <https://doi.org/10.1086/686696>

- Luthra, R., Soehl, T., & Waldinger, R. (2017). Reconceptualizing context: A multilevel model of the context of reception and second-generation educational attainment. *International Migration Review*, 52(3), 898–928. n/a(n/a). <https://doi.org/10.1111/imre.12315>
- Malik, K. (2023). *Not so black and white*. Hurst.
- Marks, G. N. (2005). Accounting for immigrant non-immigrant differences in reading and mathematics in twenty countries. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 28(5), 925–946. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870500158943>
- Mirza, H., & Warwick, R. (2022). *Race and ethnicity*. IFS Deaton Review of Inequality. <https://ifs.org.uk/inequality/>
- Modood, T. (2004). Capitals, ethnic identity and educational qualifications. *Cultural Trends*, 13(2), 87–105. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0954896042000267170>
- Modood, T., Berthoud, R., & Lakey, J. (1997). *Ethnic minorities in Britain diversity and disadvantage*. Policy Studies Institute.
- Mok, T. M., & Platt, L. (2020). All look the same? Diversity of labour market outcomes of Chinese ethnic group populations in the UK. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 46(1), 87–107. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183x.2018.1524291>
- Mood, C. (2010). Logistic regression: Why we cannot do what we think we can do, and what we can do about it. *European Sociological Review*, 26(1), 67–82. <https://doi.org/10.1093/esr/jcp006>
- Norman, P., & Boyle, P. (2014). Are health inequalities between differently deprived areas evident at different ages? A longitudinal study of census records in England and Wales, 1991–2001. *Health & Place*, 26(0), 88–93. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2013.12.010>
- Norman, P., Boyle, P., & Rees, P. (2005). Selective migration, health and deprivation: A longitudinal analysis. *Social Science & Medicine*, 60(12), 2755–2771. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2004.11.008>
- OECD. (2017). Catching up? Intergenerational mobility and children of immigrants.
- Office for National Statistics. (2019). *Released 11 June 2019, ONS SRS metadata catalogue, dataset*. ONS Longitudinal Study - England and Wales. <https://doi.org/10.57906/z9xn-ng05>
- Papademetriou, D. G., Sumption, M., & Somerville, W. (2009). *The social mobility of immigrants and their children*. The Migration Policy Institute.
- Phillips, D. (1998). Black minority ethnic concentration, segregation and dispersal in Britain. *Urban Studies*, 35(10), 1681–1702. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0042098984105>
- Platt, L. (2005). *Migration and social mobility: The life chances of Britain's minority ethnic communities*. Policy Press.
- Platt, L. (2014). Is there assimilation in minority groups' national, ethnic and religious identity? *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 37(1), 46–70. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2013.808756>
- Platt, L. (2021). COVID-19 and ethnic inequalities in England.
- Portes, A., & Jensen, L. (1989). The enclave and the entrants: Patterns of ethnic enterprise in miami before and after mariel. *American Sociological Review*, 54(6), 929–949. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2095716>
- Riach, P. A., & Rich, J. (2002). Field experiments of discrimination in the market place. *The Economic Journal*, 112(483), F480–F518. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0297.00080>
- Shah, B., Dwyer, C., & Modood, T. (2010). Explaining educational achievement and career aspirations among young British Pakistanis: Mobilizing 'ethnic capital'. *Sociology*, 44(6), 1109–1127. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038510381606>
- Shiner, M., & Noden, P. (2015). 'Why are you applying there?': 'race', class and the construction of higher education 'choice' in the United Kingdom. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 36(8), 1170–1191. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2014.902299>
- Social Mobility Commission. (2020). Changing gears: Understanding social downward mobility.
- Song, S. (2011). Second-generation Turkish youth in Europe: Explaining the academic disadvantage in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland. *Economics of Education Review*, 30(5), 938–949. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2011.03.010>
- Strand, S. (2011). The limits of social class in explaining ethnic gaps in educational attainment. *British Educational Research Journal*, 37(2), 197–229. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01411920903540664>
- Strand, S. (2014). Ethnicity, gender, social class and achievement gaps at age 16: Intersectionality and 'getting it' for the white working class. *Research Papers in Education*, 29(2), 131–171. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2013.767370>
- Thijssen, L. (2016). Taste-based versus statistical discrimination: Placing the debate into context. *The Growth, Equal Opportunities, Migration and Markets (GEMM)*.
- van Zanten, A. (1997). Schooling immigrants in France in the 1990s: Success or failure of the republican model of integration? *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 28(3), 351–374. <https://doi.org/10.1525/aeq.1997.28.3.351>
- Waters, M. C., & Jiménez, T. R. (2005). Assessing immigrant assimilation: New empirical and theoretical challenges. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 31(1), 105–125. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.29.010202.100026>
- Wilson, D., Burgess, S., & Briggs, A. (2011). The dynamics of school attainment of England's ethnic minorities. *Journal of Population Economics*, 24(2), 681–700. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00148-009-0269-0>
- Xie, Y., & Gough, M. (2011). Ethnic enclaves and the earnings of immigrants. *Demography*, 48(4), 1293–1315. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-011-0058-8>
- Zuccotti, C. V. (2015). Do parents matter? Revisiting ethnic penalties in occupation among second generation ethnic minorities in England and Wales. *Sociology*, 49(2), 229–251. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038514540373>

- Zuccotti, C. V. 2021. The role of neighbourhood ethnic concentration on gender role views: A study of ethnic minorities in England and Wales migration letters, 18(6), 609–620
- Zuccotti, C. V., & Platt, L. (2017). Does neighbourhood ethnic concentration in early life affect subsequent labour market outcomes? A study across ethnic groups in England and Wales. *Population, Space and Place*, 23(6), e2041. <https://doi.org/10.1002/psp.2041>
- Zwysen, W., & Demireva, N. (2020). Ethnic and migrant penalties in job quality in the UK: The role of residential concentration and occupational clustering. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 46(1), 200–221. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183x.2018.1498777>

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of this article.

**How to cite this article:** Zuccotti, C. V., & Platt, L. (2023). The paradoxical role of social class background in the educational and labour market outcomes of the children of immigrants in the UK. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.13047>