

Using the ONS LS for research on ethnicity and social mobility

UK LS Linkage Launch Event
6th March 2014

Lucinda Platt



THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

Ambitious blacks outpace whites on road to success

Abul Taher

BLACK Britons are more socially mobile and less likely to be working class than the white population, a study of 30 years of official data has found. In contrast to the 1970s when nearly 80% of British people of Caribbean origin were in the lowest socio-economic groups, the figure is just over 22%. The proportion of whites stuck in these groups is 25%. The figures show the black population has shed its image of deprivation and unemployment, punctuated by rioting in



Other studies show social mobility among whites falling particularly among a hard core of "Neets" (people Not in Education, Employment or Training), blamed by Whitehall for costing the state billions. Diane Abbott, MP for Hackney and the first black woman elected to parliament, said: "This sort of research is to be welcomed and reflects the progress of black women, especially in the public sector. But it masks continuing underachievement and higher rates of unemployment among black men in their teens and twenties. They

Daily Mail, Monday, November 14, 2005

How parents give black and Asian workers a step up the ladder



The Guardian | Monday November 14 2005

National

Ethnic minority youngsters getting better jobs, study say

Mian Ridge

Young people from ethnic minority families are transcending Britain's class system and beating their working class white peers into report.

tracked the employment of 140,000 people in England and Wales over 30 years from the 1960s. Using data from the Office for National Statistics, she found that 56% of people from Indian working class families took

experiencing success in the employment market. People from Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities were underperforming both other migrant groups and their white working peers. Pakistanis stood a particularly poor chance of gain-

end up in professional and managerial families even when taking their backgrounds and their own educational level into account," the report said. Ms Platt said the fact that a disproportionate number of "unwardly mobile"

up on welfare benefits. With "more room at the top" in part due to a general expansion of and managerial roles, continued to play a significant part in the gap

THE INDEPENDENT MONDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2005

Children of immigrants break class barriers

By Helen McCormack

Black people are breaking through the class barrier and entering the middle classes at a faster rate than their white counterparts, according to a new study.

Children of Caribbean immigrants who arrived in the 1960s, with two thirds main-

"But for the children of Pakistani and Bangladeshi parents it is quite a different matter. They can be subject to extreme deprivation, are often living in some of the poorest parts of the country, and are in danger of being left behind."

The success of the majority of ethnic minorities in breaking through the

Some of the seeds of recent ethnic and religious tensions can be found in the economic disparities between the different ethnic groups, according to Dr Platt. Last month's riots in Birmingham may have been influenced by economic disparities between the conflicting groups.

There is a danger that the

"There are issues of isolation. It is easy for the Government to say that we have got to worry about engaging the community now that September 11 has happened. But that is looking for rationale after the event." Dr Platt warns that "there is no room for complacency", as the group overall are still more vulnerable to unemployment

from being a meritocracy where social class no longer plays a part in determining children's chances of well-paid careers", Dr Platt said. "There is good news to the extent that a disproportionate number of the young people who are upwardly mobile are the children of parents who came to this country as migrants. But their welcome

when it appears to be so much harder for young people from Pakistani or Bangladeshi families to get ahead."

The report also analysed the impact of religious belief on mobility, with Dr Platt finding Jews and Hindus had more of a chance to enter the middle classes than Christians, while Muslims and Sikhs had a lower chance of moving up the so-

Using the LS to study social mobility and ethnicity



Aim of the study (utilising the 2001 Census link)

- To look at transitions between parents' social class and children's social class
- To look at the role of education as the means to upward mobility
- To look at how social mobility (dependence of children's outcomes on their parents social class position) varied by ethnic group
- To draw inferences about relative equality of opportunity according to class and ethnic group

Policy relevance



Social mobility is of significant interest to policy makers and has been high up the policy agenda since at least 2001

Ethnic inequalities are also of great policy relevance, though their political salience and corresponding attention has shown more variation over the last decade and a half

It remains, however, critical to a long-term understanding of ethnic penalties, equality and adaptation – and longer-term consequences for a significant share of the population, to understand

- a) how much differences in social class background help us to understand ethnic group inequalities, and
- b) the extent to which advantage that is maintained across the population as a whole is reflected across sub-populations.

This sheds light on the social mobility debate as a whole and can help to open the 'black box' of social class origins

Nevertheless



There has been very little research specifically on social mobility across ethnic groups (i.e. taking account of parental background directly in children's occupational outcomes)

This was even truer 5-10 years ago, but there is still relatively little, in Europe as well as the UK

- Partly because there are few really suitable sources

Using the LS to study social mobility and ethnicity



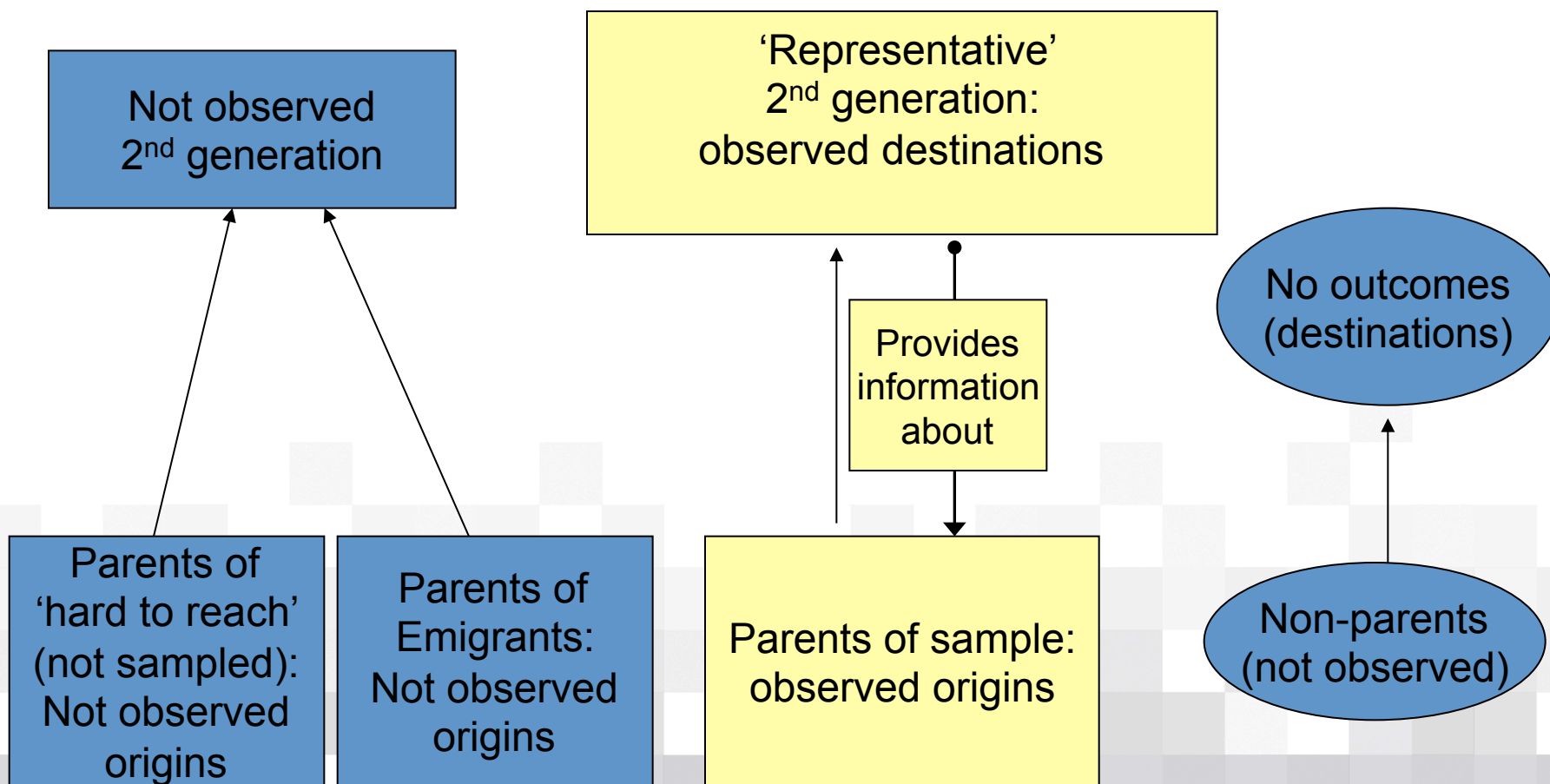
Advantages:

- Can look over extended periods
- Can look at differences by ethnic group
- Can measure mobility prospectively rather than retrospectively.
- Can also, therefore, explore the characteristics of those who are not identified

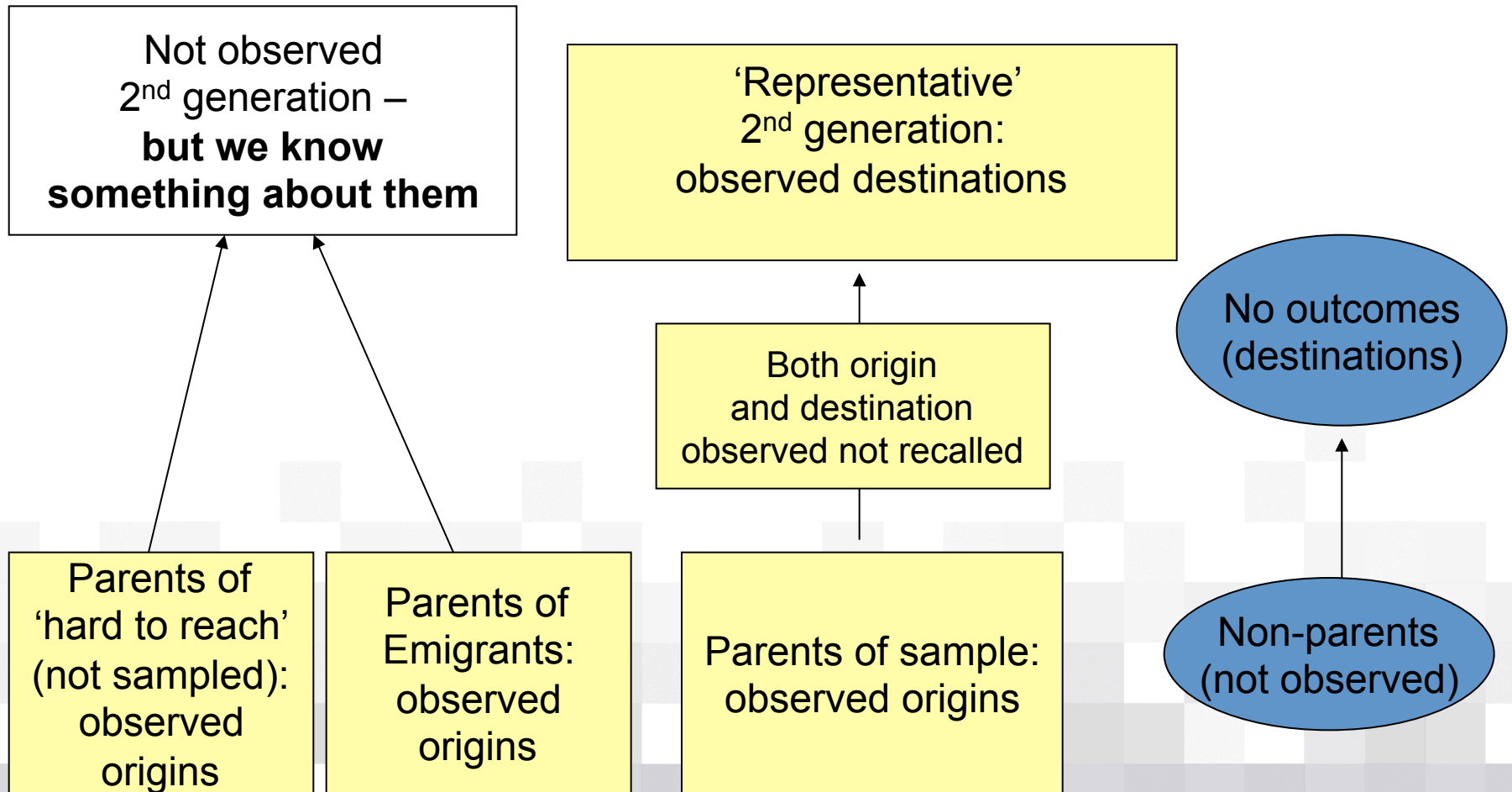
These advantages are particularly salient for studying the social mobility of ethnic minority groups for a number of reasons

- Large sample sizes are critical for meaningful analysis
- Important to know in which country family occupational / socio-economic origins are measured
- Information on co-resident family members critical to prospective approach
- Emigration may be part of mobility story

Selection in retrospective studies



Studying mobility with the LS



Study design



Two cohorts (one from 1971 and one from 1981) of ONS Longitudinal Study members aged 4-15 living with at least one parent.

Information about 'origins' captured at these points (1971 / 1981).

Information about the cohorts' 'destinations' measured in 2001 for both cohorts (and additionally in 1991 for the 1971 cohort).

Pooling of the cohorts increases sample sizes and also enables some exploration of whether there appear to be cohort effects.

Variables used



For 'origins'

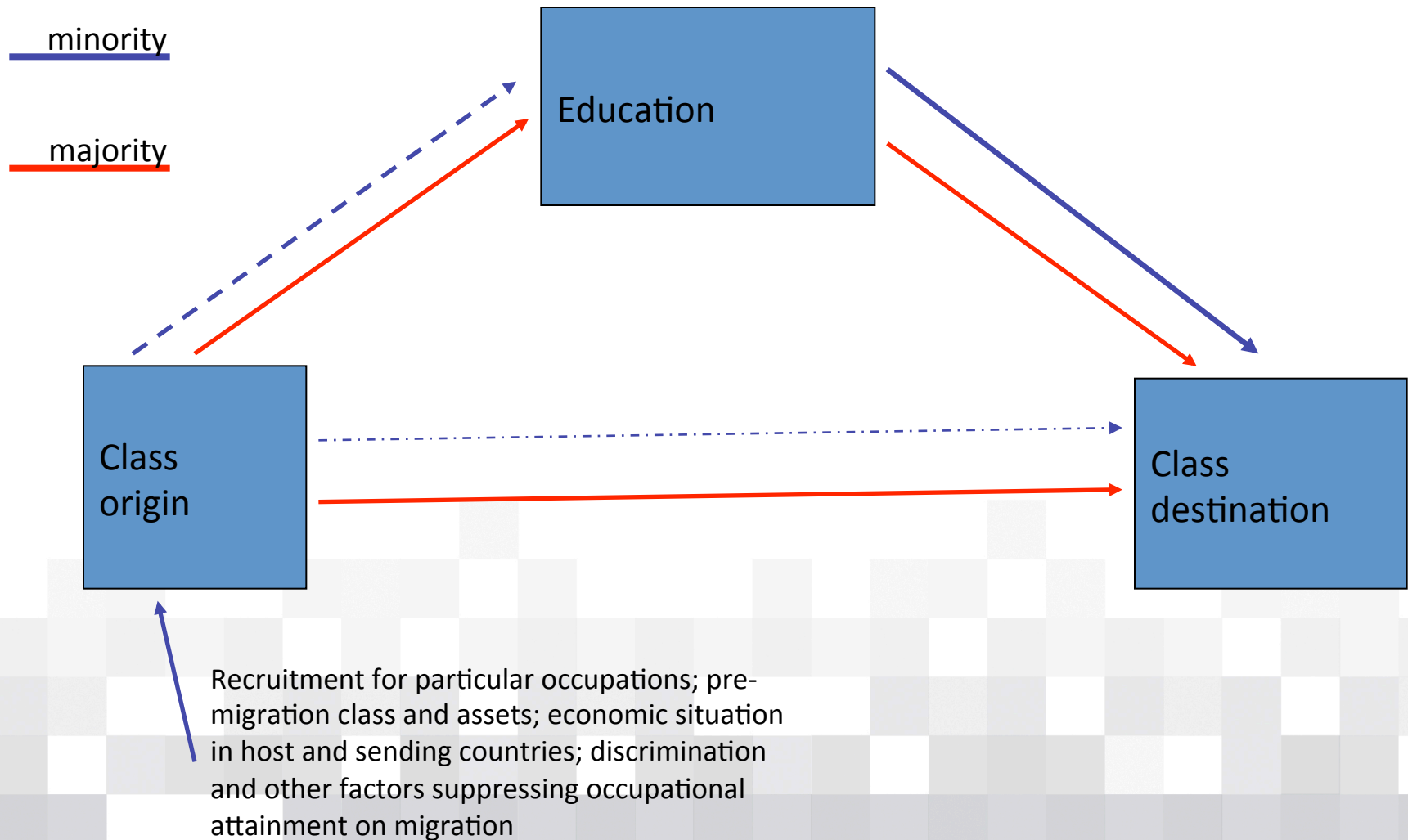
whether one or two co-resident parents, parents' social class, housing tenure, car ownership, parents' countries of birth, study member's country of birth, parents' educational qualifications, concentration of minority group members in ward of residence

For 'destinations'

ethnic group, study member's and spouse's social class and economic status, partnership status, educational qualifications, housing tenure, car ownership, whether died, whether emigrated

Variables were harmonised to be equivalent across both cohorts

Models of majority and minority social mobility

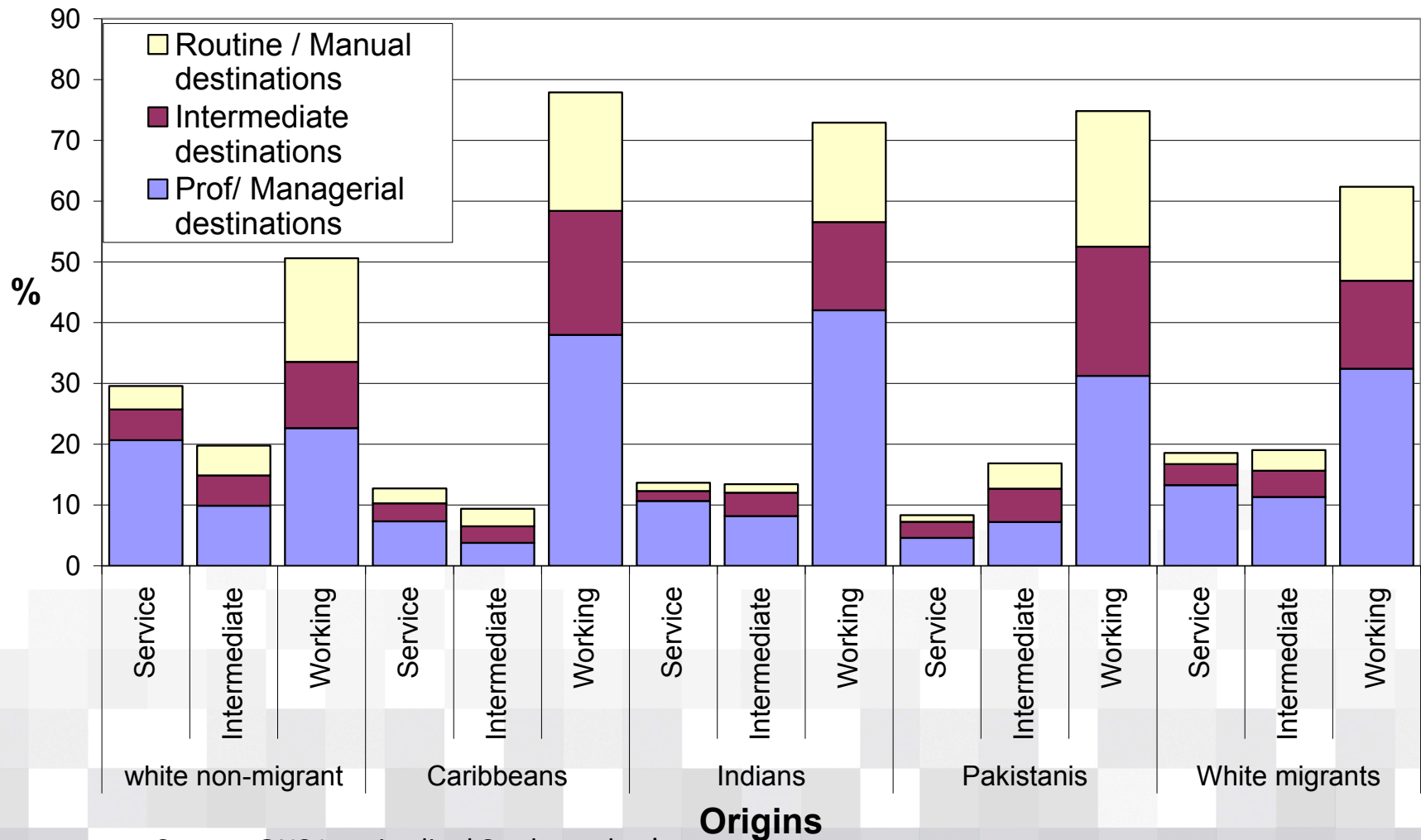


Access to the professional & managerial classes given origin starting points

Unemployment (and inactive) as additional outcomes, since and important part of the story, particularly from the perspective of ethnic inequalities even if typically excluded from social mobility analysis

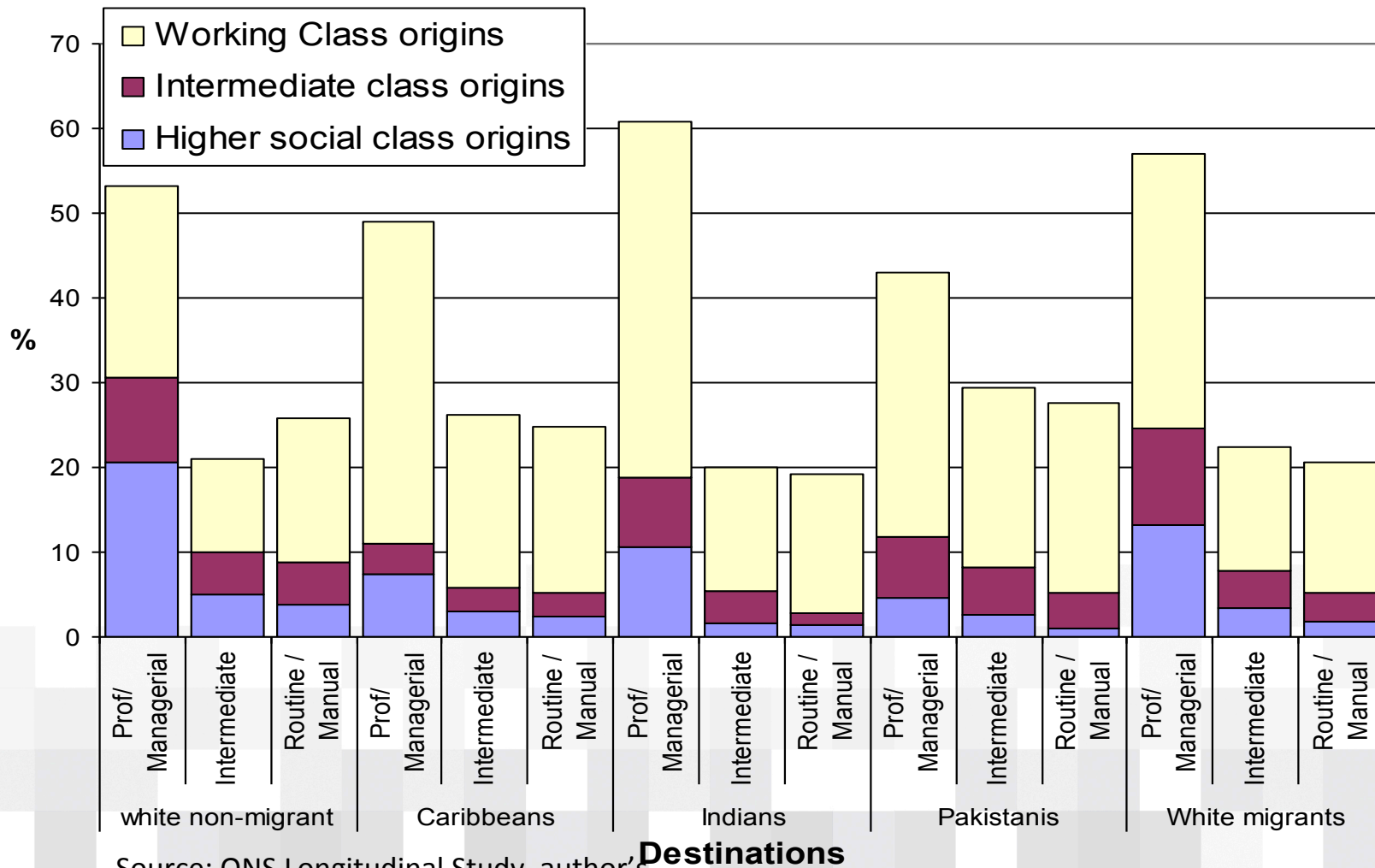


Simple origins by destinations



Source: ONS Longitudinal Study, author's analysis (Platt, 2007)

Simple destinations by origins



Source: ONS Longitudinal Study, author's analysis

Source: ONS Longitudinal Study, author's analysis (Platt, 2007)

Social mobility: conclusions from research



Great upward mobility overall and for minorities in particular, but also higher risks of unemployment for some minority groups (Caribbeans and Pakistanis)

Other groups are disadvantaged in terms of access to professional classes, even when taking account of background and education (Pakistanis and Bangladeshis)

Social class backgrounds account for some but not all of the raw differences between groups

Generally weaker role of social class background ('origins') than destinations for minorities than for majority

- Within group 'meritocracy' in a non-meritocratic context implies both chances to 'catch up' but also processes of exclusion / discrimination

Different value of levels of education across groups

- Education necessary but not sufficient for minorities' upward mobility

Diversity within as well as between groups

Transitions including loss to follow up by 2001



Complete origin to destination transitions, 1971/81-2001, row percentages

	Professional/ Managerial	Inter- mediate	Routine / Manual	Un- employed	other	missing	N
Service	51.5	12.4	9.4	1.4	3.2	22.0	46,513
Inter- mediate	35.8	17.8	17.3	1.8	4.8	22.5	32,111
Working	30.7	14.7	22.1	2.5	6.2	23.8	88,153
Other	21.8	10.6	19.7	3.8	9.8	34.3	10,244
Missing	20.3	12.2	17.5	3.5	7.6	38.9	606
Total	36.5	14.4	17.8	2.2	5.4	23.7	177,627

Source: ONS Longitudinal Study, author's analysis

What causes loss to follow up?



Emigrate as recorded in embarkations records

Die (few given the age range)

Others such as those who join the armed forces; and those who between 1971 and 1983 move into long-stay psychiatric units; also includes non-recorded emigrations, as well as others 'missing' from the Census or unmatched

Analysis of Emigration (as missing part of social mobility story)



Service class origins, parental qualifications, car ownership and owner occupation all increase the probabilities of emigration.

Women are more likely to emigrate than men when other characteristics are controlled; and unsurprisingly, birth abroad increases the chances of emigration. Indians, Black Africans and Caribbeans show no marked propensity to emigrate, while the other minority groups do.

So may be losing some of the most upwardly mobile from the picture, or those who can best mobilise socio-economic advantage

Policy (and media) interest in the study when first published (and thereafter)



- Substantial coverage in all main daily newspapers as well as special feature in Observer and half-page feature in the Daily Mail. Also television, radio interviews and regional and international press coverage (e.g. Le Monde).
- Cross-party political interest: e.g. invitation to talk to a Conservative Party working group on ethnic minority employment and mobility, and detailed discussion with David Blunkett on implications of findings. Regular requests from Cabinet Office for summaries of research to include in briefings etc.

Hard to point to single impact or direct policy follow up, but policy salience and relevance was reflected in the repeated and ongoing follow-ups, and current requests to talk about the issues. Salience and relevance of subject hasn't gone away ...

Therefore...



Currently completing follow up study (with Carolina Zuccotti), using 2011 Census link.

This study adopts a very similar design and exploits the same advantages of the LS as the earlier research but differs in some key ways and new wave offers increased potential:

- increased scope for addressing change over time
- this time looking separately at men and women (rather than at the family level)
- sufficient numbers now properly to investigate outcomes for Bangladeshis

This has made it possible to answer (for example)

- Are things are getting better for ethnic minorities since 2001 in terms of social mobility? and
- How are women from different ethnic groups doing compared to men – are they more or less likely to face enduring penalties? Are they more or less held back by social class origins?
- Do Bangladeshis show diverging destinies from Pakistanis (with whom in very many previous studies they have so often been grouped)?

Acknowledgements



The permission of the Office for National Statistics to use the Longitudinal Study is gratefully acknowledged, as is the help provided by the Centre for Longitudinal Study Information & User Support (CeLSIUS). The above, however, bear no responsibility for the interpretation of the data.

Census output is Crown copyright and is reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO and the Queen's Printer for Scotland.



References: sources and related research



- Platt, Lucinda. 2005. *Migration and social mobility: The life chances of Britain's minority ethnic communities*. Bristol: The Policy Press.
- Platt, L. (2005) 'The intergenerational social mobility of minority ethnic groups', *Sociology* 39 (3): 445-461.
- Platt, L. (2006) 'Understanding ethnic group differences in Britain: the role of family background and education in shaping social class outcomes', pp. 72-90 in S. Delorenzi (ed.) *Going Places: Neighbourhood, Ethnicity and Social Mobility*. London: IPPR
- Platt, L. (2007) 'Making education count: the effects of ethnicity and qualifications on intergenerational social class mobility'. *The Sociological Review*, August 2007.
- Platt, L. (2005) 'Mobility and missing data: What difference does non-response make to observed patterns of intergenerational class mobility by ethnic group?' Working Paper 2005-10 of the Institute of Economic and Social Research, Colchester: University of Essex, available at <http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/pubs/workpaps/pdf/2005-10.pdf>