



THE LONDON SCHOOL  
OF ECONOMICS AND  
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

## Social Policies and Distributional Outcomes

in a Changing Britain

# **Understanding recent patterns in intergenerational social mobility: differences by gender, ethnicity, education, and their intersections**

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## 1. Introduction

It is widely recognised that social mobility in the UK is low by international standards (Corak, 2013, Jerrim and Macmillan, 2015) and has at best, stagnated (Bukodi et al, 2015) and at worst, declined (Blanden et al., 2004, 2005) for recent generations. However, one limitation of our understanding of social mobility is that we rely on large-scale quantitative surveys that have information about individuals' childhood circumstances and their socio-economic status in adulthood. Previous social mobility research in the UK has tended to focus on the longitudinal birth cohort studies that follow individuals throughout their lives, comparing those born in 1958 to those born in 1970<sup>1</sup>. This has meant that we have been unable to comment directly on trends in social mobility for more recent cohorts.

While a number of sociological studies published in the literature on intergenerational class mobility have emphasised stability in absolute class mobility across time (Bukodi and Goldthorpe, 2018, Bukodi et al., 2015, Erikson and Goldthorpe, 2010, Goldthorpe and Jackson, 2007), recent work has unearthed interesting trends within total absolute mobility rates, with younger cohorts experiencing increasing rates of downward mobility and declining rates of upward mobility (Bukodi and Goldthorpe, 2018, Bukodi et al., 2015). This has been explained by the slowing growth in occupations at the top of the class structure, which had previously expanded at a rapid rate in the post-war period, creating stable rates of upward and downward mobility over much of the period. Much of the previous work then has concentrated on the role of the labour market in creating opportunities, with the recent evidence suggesting that we should focus on the growth of high-status occupations, rather than education policy, to reverse this trend (Bukodi and Goldthorpe, 2018).

A focus on total absolute mobility rates has also been shown to mask gender differences in intergenerational class mobility. Li and Devine (2011) found unfavourable trends in upward mobility and increasing downward mobility for men between 1991 and 2005. In contrast, women experienced favourable trends in upward mobility and no change in downward mobility over the same period.

Recent work by Li and Heath (2016) pointed out that while there has been research into both broad trends in social mobility, and ethnic disadvantages in the labour market, very few studies have considered differences in rates of social mobility by ethnic groups. Exceptions to this include earlier work by Platt (2005a, 2005b, 2007) who considers ethnic group differences in social mobility, and the mediating role of education, using linked census data from 1971-2001. This work showed that first generation migrants to the UK are more likely to experience absolute downward mobility than the majority population or second-generation

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<sup>1</sup> Some attempt has been made to create a birth cohort for individuals born in the 1980s using the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) but small sample sizes hamper the reliability of this approach.

migrants; an 'immigration penalty' Li and Heath (2016). Language barriers, poor recognition of qualifications attained outside the UK and discrimination can mean that the 'true' class position of first-generation migrants is suppressed, leading to greater downward mobility. Zwysen and Longhi (2018) use Understanding Society data to show that parental background accounts for the lower earnings of black Caribbean men and Pakistani and Bangladeshi women relative to their white peers. Li and Heath (2016) find that Pakistani and Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean, and Black Africans face lower rates of social mobility than other ethnic groups over the period 1982-2011, highlighting the important role of origin class differences and immigration history. A recent report by Platt and Zuccotti (2021) use linked-census data shows that while ethnic minorities do much better in terms of educational achievement than might be expected given their disadvantaged origins, this does not necessarily translate into better labour market outcomes.

Here we contribute to this body of work by analysing trends in social mobility for more recent time period. We compare rates of absolute social mobility, measured based on parents' and survey respondents' main occupation, by gender for individuals in 2014 and 2018. By utilising the large sample of survey respondents we also offer an important advancement to our understanding, building on the work around ethnic differences in mobility to consider recent patterns in the intersections of gender and ethnicity with education, to be able to comment in a timely fashion on the most up-to-date evidence on which groups experience greater social mobility in the UK.

We find that while the trend of broad stability continues over this short period, there are important differences by education, ethnicity and gender. Higher educated individuals are more likely to be upwardly mobile and less likely to be downwardly mobile, and these differences by education level achieved are particularly pronounced among men. We find that this relationship increases after controlling for class origin, suggesting that this is not being driven by privileged children attaining higher levels of education. Similarly, there are differences in mobility rates by ethnicity. In particular, Black African men and women, and Black Caribbean men are less likely to experience upward mobility, and more likely to experience downward mobility than other ethnic groups, when comparing those from the same origin class and conditional on immigration status.

Yet this is masking some important differences between the two groups. While Black Africans have less upward and more downward mobility due to their higher origin social class, and recent immigration status, Black Caribbean men face similar patterns despite their relative lower origin status and small numbers of recent migrants. When we consider the interaction with education, upward (and downward) mobility penalties are prevalent among non-graduate Black Caribbean men, with those who graduate facing similar rates to White graduates. For Black African men, the upward (and downward) mobility penalty exists among both non-graduates and graduates, but is more prevalent for graduates. Black Caribbean women also experience similar patterns, although their mobility

rates are more similar to other ethnic groups once their lower origin class and immigration status is accounted for.

In the next section we discuss the data and methods used in detail before presenting broad trends in overall levels of mobility in Section 3. Section 4 focuses on the role of education, while Section 5 highlights differences in mobility rates by ethnic groups, and Section 6 considers differences in rates of upward and downward mobility at the intersection of gender, education and ethnicity. Section 7 summarises the main findings, the strengths and limitations, and areas of future research.

## 2. Data and methods

The UK Labour Force Survey (LFS) began collecting responses to retrospective questions on the occupations and employment status of survey respondents' main earning parent in July-September 2014. Since then these questions have been collected on an annual basis in the summer wave. This study uses data from 5 years of intergenerational modules covering 2014 to 2018. While the LFS does not collect the depth of data that surveys such as the cohort studies, used in previous analysis of social mobility, collect, this intergenerational element has different strengths. The relative size of the LFS compared to the cohort studies means that it is possible for the first time to assess trends in social mobility across time, and look at recent rates of social mobility by gender, education and ethnicity, and the intersection of these important characteristics.

The class destination of survey respondents is measured using the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC) based on their current or last occupation (for respondents who left their last job within the last eight years). The NS-SEC, derived from the same conceptual basis (employment relations and conditions) as the older Goldthorpe class schema, is a classification combining the occupation of the respondent with employment status, any managerial or supervisory responsibility and the size of the employer (Rose, Pevalin and O'Reilly, 2005). Table 1 shows that the destination class structure of our LFS cohort (average age 42) is very similar to that seen in the British Cohort Study (BCS) at age 42.

While using current and last occupation captures a relatively permanent form of social status for those from their mid-thirties onwards, this analysis excludes those who do not report a current or last occupation – typically longer-term inactive respondents, including some long-term sick or disabled, and those looking after the home. It is standard in the literature to not include this group as there is no clear ranking of this category within the occupation class structure because, by definition, there are no employment relations and conditions for this group (although formally within NS-SEC this category is class 8)<sup>2</sup>. Perhaps more

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<sup>2</sup> Exceptions include Li and Heath (2016) who include a non-working/unemployed category in their estimates of absolute class mobility which they rank as the lowest class.

significantly transition into this group do not necessarily constitute downward movements, particularly for those looking after the home, and so we follow convention and exclude this group. Previous work highlights that first-generation men from ethnic minorities (except Chinese) were more likely to be unemployed than White respondents and there is a correlation in worklessness across generations (Li and Heath, 2016). Our findings will therefore understate persistence in immobility driven by this intergenerational correlation. It is also important to acknowledge that excluding respondents in this group will disproportionately affect Bangladeshi and Pakistani women who have very low rates of employment and respondents from single-parent families.

Class origin is derived from the occupation of the survey respondent's main earning parent at 14. In over 80% of cases this is the respondent's father. Occupations are coded to SOC2010 unit groups (4 digit codes), which are used to derive NS-SEC positions using the simplified method<sup>3</sup>. Table A1 shows that while the 'top' classes are similarly distributed in the LFS relative to the BCS, there are some important differences in the distribution of the 'lower' classes, partly driven by the fact that origin class in the cohort study is measured using father's SEG occupation group when the cohort member was age 10, rather than SOC2010 unit group of the 'main earning parent' and a wider age group of parents in the LFS as BCS respondents are all born in the same year.<sup>4</sup>

We investigate broad trends in social mobility by gender from 2014 to 2018, before considering differences in social mobility by gender, education, ethnicity, and the intersection of these characteristics, by pooling our 2014-2018 sample. This ensures that we have sufficient sample size for our sub-group analysis. Education is coded into 5 categories, from below Level 2 (less than 5 good GCSEs), to post-graduate qualifications. Ethnicity is coded into 7 categories, in a similar manner to that previously used in the literature (Li and Heath, 2016, Friedman et al., 2017); White, Indian, Pakistani/Bangladeshi, Chinese and Other Asian, Black African, Black Caribbean, and Mixed / Other. When considering the intersection between gender, ethnicity and education, we collapse our education groups into a binary graduate / non-graduate variable due to sample size constraints.

To consider broad trends in absolute mobility over time, we calculate total mobility, and upward, downward, and horizontal mobility in 2014 and 2018, using 7x7 transition matrices. Those who move up or down a class from their class of origin are defined as upward or downwardly mobile, except for movements within classes 3 to 5, which are defined as horizontal movements. Those remaining in the same class as their main earning parent are defined as immobile. These absolute mobility rates are affected by occupational change in

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<sup>3</sup><https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/classificationsandstandards/standardoccupationalclassifications/soc/soc2010/soc2010volume3thenationalstatisticssocioeconomicclassificationssrebasedenosoc2010>

<sup>4</sup> For example, in the 2014 LFS a 25 year old respondent was aged 14 in 2003 and a 59 year old respondent was aged 14 in 1969, while BCS respondents were all aged 10 in 1980.

the labour market between parents and children, through more 'room at the top' and 'de-skilling' of jobs at the bottom and increasing self-employment which change the size of different NS-SEC classes. Comparing Table 1 (destination class) to Table A1 (origin class) we can see that there has been an increase in the proportion of men and women working in managerial and professional occupations over time, and a decline in the proportion of men and women working in semi-routine and routine occupations.

To measure differences in mobility rates between groups, including education, ethnicity and the intersection of these, we use linear probability models (LPM) to estimate the probability of upward and downward mobility conditional on these key characteristics. The models also include controls for age and region of residence. We know that age profiles and geographical distribution vary between ethnic groups and both of these variables could account for differences in social class destinations. Here we restrict our sample to those who are able to move upwards and downwards (excluding those from the top and bottom origin class respectively). We estimate models on 5 years of pooled data (2014-2018), controlling for year of survey and other observable differences in the population of respondents, including age and destination region. We also estimate further models that control for 'initial conditions', conditioning on origin parental NS-SEC (Li and Heath, 2016). Finally, given the importance of migration history when considering differences across ethnic groups, we estimate final models that control for whether the respondent is a first generation migrant (born outside of the UK).

### 3. Trends over time

Figure 1 plots trends in mobility over the period 2014 to 2018, showing rates of total mobility, and its constitute parts in upward, downward and horizontal mobility. Total mobility rates during this period are just under 80%, consistent with previous findings within the social mobility literature (Bukodi et al., 2015, Friedman et al., 2017, Bukodi and Goldthorpe, 2018), implying that just over 20% of men and women age 25-59 stay in the same class as their parents while the rest move to a different destination class from their origin.

While 80% total mobility may seem high in the context of the characterisation of the UK as a low social mobility country, there are a couple of factors that need to be taken into account. First, we are measuring absolute social class mobility rather than relative social mobility which is most commonly used for international comparisons. Even where relative social mobility is stable, absolute social mobility can increase/decrease due to changes in occupational (social class) structure of employment.<sup>5</sup> Second, there will be some measurement error present in our estimates due to having to use the simplified method for deriving parental NS-SEC, and through the inclusion of younger adults aged under 35 years who have not yet achieved a settled social class. Here the main interest is

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<sup>5</sup> For example, expansion of managerial occupations or contraction in craft occupations.

in estimating differences between sub-groups and intersections rather than establishing an overall value for mobility and therefore while it is important to bear these factors in mind, the findings between groups in terms of sign (advantage or disadvantage) is unlikely to be affected. We replicate our main analysis using a more restrictive sample aged 35-59 years to show that our main findings hold for those with settled destination social class status.

Total mobility rates can be disaggregated into upward mobility, the largest type of movement, with just over 40% of men and just under 40% of women experiencing a move up in social class from their origin position. Downward mobility accounts for a little under 30% of class movements for men and just over 30% for women, while horizontal mobility, movements within classes 3-5, constitutes the remaining 7% for both genders.

The darker bars plot levels of mobility for 2014 respondents, the lighter bars for 2018 respondents, and the grey bars show changes over the period in rates of mobility for the three types of movements. Class mobility is very stable between 2014 and 2018, and this is perhaps not surprising over just four years but it is consistent with previous findings over far longer time periods (Bukodi et al., 2015, Goldthorpe and Jackson, 2007, Erikson and Goldthorpe, 2010). Table 1 describes the destination occupational structure in 2014 and 2018 for men and women, suggesting that there has been very little change in the destination class structure over this period, and therefore stability in absolute mobility rates is unsurprising.

This stability in the occupational structure (and similarly for origin class structures as shown in Table A1) over the period motivates our focus on absolute rates of mobility for the remainder of the analysis as there is little need to account for changes in the underlying class structure 2014-2018 which relative mobility models adjust for. Appendix Figure A1 illustrates that relative rates are also very stable over the period for completeness. Given stability in these broad trends in mobility for all men and women, we increase the sample size by pooling the data from 2014-2018 to ask whether there are differences in levels of upward and downward mobility among subgroups of the population, with different education levels and different ethnic backgrounds, and the intersections of these. When comparing across groups, we explicitly consider the role of differences in the origin class structures of different groups throughout the following analysis.

#### **4. Mobility by education level**

Table 2 shows the distribution of educational attainment by gender for our pooled 2014-2018 sample. From this point forward we show our results for two samples of interest, our upward mobility sample (which excludes those from origin NSSEC 1 who cannot move up by definition) and our downward mobility sample (which excludes those from origin NSSEC 7 who cannot move down). Across both samples, education is broadly similar across genders. Our downward mobility sample is more positively selected on education, relative to our upward

mobility sample, as would be expected given those excluded are from lower and higher classes respectively. For our upward mobility sample, just under 30% achieve GCSEs or below as their highest level of educational attainment, a quarter achieve a degree, while a further 7% achieve a post-graduate qualification. For our downward mobility sample, around 25% achieve GCSEs or below, 30% achieve a degree, and another 9% achieve post-graduate qualifications.

Figure 2 illustrates that educational achievement is strongly related to rates of upward and downward mobility, particularly for men. 47% of degree educated men are upwardly mobile, with only 23% downwardly mobile. Contrast this to degree educated women, where 42% are upwardly mobile, and 29% downwardly mobile. These differences are less stark among those achieving GCSEs, where 37-38% of men and women are upwardly mobile, and 35% are downwardly mobile.

The first columns in the upper panel of Table 3 shows that men with a degree are 30ppts more likely to experience upward mobility than men with a qualification below Level 2, and men with a post-graduate qualification are 38ppts more likely to experience upward mobility than the baseline group with below Level 2 qualifications. The corresponding figures for women are less steep with graduate women being 26ppts and post-graduate women 30ppts more likely to be upwardly mobile than their counterparts achieving below Level 2. Education therefore appears to be an important characteristic in understanding who moves up and down the class distribution. Appendix Table A3 replicates Table 3 for the more restrictive sample of those age 35-59 (assuming more stable class destinations from mid-30s). The findings are almost identical across Table 3 and Table A3, suggesting that different age profiles in education are not driving these findings.

Table 4 describes the origin distributions of those with low and high levels of education. As is expected, given the relationship between parental origin class and educational achievement (Breen and Jonsson, 2005), those with higher levels of education are more likely to come from higher origin social classes, with an even distribution across gender. In the second column of Table 3 we therefore condition on origin social class of the respondent, comparing the likelihood of experiencing upward mobility for people with different education levels from the same origin classes. The second columns of the upper panel in Table 3 show that the underlying differences in origin class by education are suppressing some large differences in the chances of upward mobility by education achievement, particularly for women. When comparing men and women from the same origin class, those with degree qualifications are 45ppts more likely to experience upward mobility than those with a qualification below level 2. For those with post-graduate qualifications, this difference increases to 55ppts.

The lower panel of Table 4 shows probabilities of experiencing downward mobility by education level. Here we again see a strong role for education, with higher educated men and women significantly less likely to experience downward mobility than lower educated men and women. The gradient here in

the first model is more similar between men and women, with those with a degree 24ppts less likely to be downwardly mobile than those with less than level 2 qualifications. When we take into account origin class in the second model, these probabilities again increase. Comparing men from the same origin class, those with a degree are 40ppts less likely to experience downward mobility than those with a qualification below level 2. For women from the same origin class, the gap is 44ppts, and 55ppts for post-graduate qualifications.

Given the large expansion in educational attainment over the past three decades, we may expect trends in educational attainment to be confounded by age: younger survey respondents are more likely to have a degree or post-graduate qualification and are likely to appear more mobile if they have not yet reached their settled occupation status (Bukodi et al., 2015). Table A2 illustrates that those with lower levels of education are slightly older in the full sample (45 for men, 46 for women) compared to those with higher levels of education (41 for men and women). If we restrict the sample to a smaller age range (30-45) the differences are much smaller, with low educated respondents on average age 38 relative to high educated respondents who are on average age 37.

## 5. Mobility by ethnic group

Table 5 shows the distribution of survey respondents from different ethnic backgrounds by gender across our upward and downward mobility samples. The composition of ethnic groups are broadly similar across samples, and genders with 77-78% of respondents reporting that their ethnicity is White. Indians are the second largest group (around 3% across samples and genders), while Pakistani/Bangladeshi are the third largest group of men (around 2-3%), and Chinese and Other Asian are the third largest group of women (2%). Black Africans account for around 2% of the sample, Black Caribbean's around 1% and Mixed and Other ethnic background groups make up the remaining 2.5%. The lower panel of Table 5 illustrates the underlying number of respondents from each ethnic group (unweighted).

Figure 3 illustrate raw differences in upward and downward mobility rates by ethnic group. There are large raw differences in upward mobility rates by ethnic group, particularly for Black African men and women, for Chinese and Other Asian, and Mixed and Other ethnic background men and women, relative to White men and women. Table 6 shows conditional differences between ethnic groups, controlling for age, destination region, and year of survey in column 1 (men) and 4 (women). The upper panel shows that Indian men are 4ppts more likely to be upwardly mobile, compared to White men, while Black African men and women are 15ppts less likely to be upwardly mobile relative to White men and women. Black Caribbean men are 5ppts less likely to be upwardly mobile relative to White men, but Black Caribbean women are 5ppts more likely to be upwardly mobile, relative to White women. Mixed and Other ethnic groups, and Chinese and other Asian men and women are 5-8ppts less likely to experience upward mobility than White men or women.

Our findings for Chinese and other Asian men and women should be treated with caution – given sample sizes we are combining Chinese men and women with a very mixed group of ‘other Asians’. It could be the case that the experience of Chinese men and women differ from this mixed ‘other’ group, and this could explain why we find different results from other literature. For example, Li and Heath (2016) find no significant differences between White men and women and their Chinese counterparts, in terms of risks of unemployment or access to the top social classes.

Given the interesting differences between those from Black African and Black Caribbean backgrounds, Table 7 shows the origin class structure of these ethnic groups, and the proportion of each group who are first generation immigrants (born outside of the UK). There are stark differences in both the origin class structures and the proportion who are first generation immigrants between groups, with Black Africans typically coming from higher origin social classes (just short of 40% are from NS-SEC 2 in our upward mobility sample) and 88% are first generation immigrants. Contrast this to the Black Caribbean group, where 20% are from NS-SEC 2, and 28% of men and 35% of women are first generation immigrants.

Given these stark differences, columns 2 and 5 of Table 6 controls for origin social class, while columns 3 and 6 control additionally for first generation status. Here we are comparing then the relative chances of upward mobility between men and women from different ethnic groups relative to White respondents, who come from the same origin class, and have a similar immigration history, to see if these factors can account for some of the differences in likelihoods of experiencing upward mobility that we see in columns 1 and 4.

Focusing on the differences between Black African and Black Caribbean respondents, comparing men from the same origin class equalises the difference between Black African and Black Caribbean men, relative to White men, with both groups 10ppts less likely to experience upward mobility. The inclusion of immigration history in the third column further explains the difference for Black African men – once comparing Black African men and White men who are both first generation migrants or not, the difference in chances of experiencing upward mobility reduce to a 5ppt penalty for Black African men. Immigration status does little to change the relative probability for Black Caribbean men (as the majority are not first generation immigrants). Said another way, Black African and Black Caribbean men are still 5ppts and 9ppts respectively less likely to experience upward mobility than White men when they are from the same origin class, and with similar immigration status. Appendix Table A4 confirms that these patterns are stable for the more restrictive age range 35-59, suggesting that this isn’t being driven by the differences in age profiles of individuals from different ethnic groups and backgrounds.

For women the pattern is similar in columns 4-6. Conditioning on origin class removes the advantage seen for Black Caribbean women relative to White women, indicating more room to move up for this group playing a role in their relative chances. As for men, the inclusion of the first generation control variable

does little to change the story for Black Caribbean women who end up with the same chance of experiencing upward mobility as White women. Black African women's 14ppt penalty in column 4, reduces in a similar manner to Black African men, with a third of the raw penalty accounted for by origin class structure, and a further third accounted for by first generation immigrant status. They remain the only group who are significantly less likely to experience upward mobility relative to White women in the final column.

Downward mobility patterns by ethnicity in Figure 3, show the inverse pattern in many cases. Black African men and women, Mixed and Other ethnic background men and women, and Chinese and Other Asian women experience higher rates of downward mobility relative to White respondents. Black Caribbean men and women and Indian men have relatively low levels of downward mobility by contrast.

The regression models in the first and fourth columns in the lower panel of Table 6 show that Pakistani/Bangladeshi men and women are 6-9ppts more likely to experience downward mobility relative to White men and women. Black African men are 17ppts more likely to experience downward mobility relative to White men. Black African women also have high rates of downward mobility relative to White women (14ppts higher). In contrast, Black Caribbean men have similar rates of downward mobility to White men, and Black Caribbean women are less likely to be downwardly mobile, relative to White women (8pts).

Table 7 shows that for our downward mobility sample, the origin distributions for those from Black African backgrounds are much higher than those from Black Caribbean families, with around twice as many Black Africans with origin NS-SEC classes 1 and 2 in the downward mobility sample, compared to Black Caribbeans. There are also again stark differences in the immigration history of the two groups, with 87% of Black African men and women being born outside of the UK, compared to 28% of Black Caribbean men and 36% of Black Caribbean women.

Columns 2 and 5 of the lower panel B of Table 6 compare those from the same origin class while columns 3 and 6 also compare those with similar immigration histories. Controlling for origin class makes little difference to the relative chances of Black African men and women experiencing downward mobility, relative to White men and women. This is perhaps unsurprising given that the origin class structure of this ethnic group are skewed towards higher classes, leaving more scope for downward movements. Unlike upward mobility then, the downward mobility penalty of Black Africans relative to White men and women is not driven by initial conditions, in terms of class structure. The inclusion of the immigration history control variable in the final columns does reduce this penalty to some degree, meaning that the high likelihood of being a first generation immigrant among Black Africans can explain part of the reason that they are more likely to experience downward mobility relative to White men and women. Again, Appendix Table A4 confirms that these patterns are stable for the more restrictive age range 35-59, suggesting that this isn't being driven by the

differences in age profiles of individuals from different ethnic groups and backgrounds.

For Black Caribbean men and women, controlling for the origin class of the respondent changes the picture quite dramatically. When comparing Black Caribbean men from the same social origin as White men, Black Caribbean men are 11ppts more likely to experience downward mobility. For women, Black Caribbean women switch from being less likely to be downwardly mobile, to being more likely to be downwardly mobile (4ppts) than White women once comparing those from the same origin class, likely because there is less room to fall among Black Caribbean women given their origin class structure in Table 7. Controlling for immigration history does little to change the picture for Black Caribbean men, but removes any difference between Black Caribbean women, relative to White women. Overall then, Black African men and women, and Black Caribbean men from the same origin class and with the same immigration history are 10-12ppts more likely to experience downward mobility than White men and women. Black Caribbean women do not face the same penalty.

## 6. Intersectionality

To consider the intersection between gender, education, and ethnicity in rates of intergenerational class mobility, Figure 4 plots raw rates of upward mobility for men and women by ethnic group for non-graduates and graduates. Graduates have higher rates of upward mobility than non-graduates across all ethnic groups, but the gaps are more pronounced for Black Caribbean men, Chinese and other Asian men and women, and Black African women. Chinese and other Asian and Black African non-graduates have very low rates of upward mobility overall (20-30%), compared to over 60% for Black Caribbean graduate men and women. Black Caribbean non-graduates have higher rates of upward mobility than Black African graduates (4ppts for men and 6ppts for women), highlighting the size of the differences between the two ethnic groups. This could in part be driven by the fact that Black Africans are typically from higher origin social classes as seen in Table 7 but also as a higher proportion of Black Africans are first generation migrants, their qualifications are more likely to have been gained outside the UK.

Table 8 presents regression models, first comparing differences in upward mobility rates among non-graduate and graduate ethnic groups, conditional on age and destination region (columns 1 and 4). We then account for differences in the origin social class of these groups, before accounting for differences in the immigration history in columns 3 and 6. In our first model, Black Caribbean non-graduate women have similar rates of upward mobility (5ppts) to Black African graduate men and women (around 7ppts more than White non-graduates).

As seen in Figure 4, graduates from all ethnic groups are more likely to experience upward mobility than White non-graduates, as are Black Caribbean non-graduate women. Indian, Chinese and Other Asian, and Black Caribbean graduate men are over 24ppts more likely to be upwardly mobile relative to

White non-graduate men. For all but Black Caribbeans, this finding is less pronounced for women (although still positive). Indian, Chinese and other Asian, Black African, and Mixed and other ethnic background non-graduates have a lower probability of being upwardly mobile than White non-graduates, and this is broadly stable across genders.

Table 9 shows that there are very large differences in the origin class structure of non-graduate Black Caribbean men and women, and graduate Black African men and women in our upward mobility sample. Over 40% of non-graduate Black Caribbean male respondents and 44% of non-graduate Black Caribbean female respondents are from classes 6 and 7 (in contrast to 17-18 percent of graduate Black African male and female respondents respectively). This leaves a lot more scope for upward mobility for non-graduate Black Caribbean respondents. Conversely, the majority of graduate Black Africans are from classes 2 and 3, leaving little scope for upward mobility.

Columns 2 and 5 compare upward mobility rates for those from the same origin social class, to explore how much class origin differences are driving these findings. Comparing Black African graduates to Black Caribbean non-graduates from the same origin class fully explains this and changes the picture completely. Now Black African graduates are 17-18ppts more likely to experience upward mobility than White non-graduates, similar to graduates from all other ethnic groups, while Black Caribbean non-graduate women have the same chances of experiencing upward mobility, and Black Caribbean non-graduate men are 6ppts less likely to experience upward mobility, relative to White non-graduate men and women.

Across other groups, the inclusion of origin class makes little difference between groups, broadly increasing the likelihood of upward mobility for all graduates relative to White non-graduates, as we would expect from Table 3. Only Pakistani/Bangladeshi non-graduate men and women see a change, with the inclusion of origin class leading to a 4-6ppts penalty, relative to White non-graduates, in their likelihood of experiencing upward mobility.

Columns 3 and 6 of Table 8 compare non-graduate and graduates from ethnic groups with similar immigration histories. Table 9 shows that 95% of Black African non-graduate women were born outside the UK, compared to 80% Black African graduate women, 37% Black Caribbean non-graduate women, and 22% Black Caribbean graduate women. The differences between graduates and non-graduates is less stark here for men, with 84% and 87% of non-graduate and graduate Black African men born outside of the UK, compared to 28% non-graduate and 24% graduate Black Caribbean men. Accounting for first generation status in the models therefore changes the picture for Black African men and women, but makes little difference for Black Caribbean men and women. Black African and Caribbean non-graduate men are both 5ppts less likely to be upwardly mobile, relative to White non-graduate men. Black African non-graduate women face a similar 4ppts penalty, while Black Caribbean non-graduate women are as likely to be upwardly mobile as White non-graduate women. Conditioning on immigration history also accounts for the raw penalty

for Indian, Pakistani/Bangladeshi, and Mixed and other ethnic backgrounds non-graduate men and women, relative to White non-graduate men and women, but an unexplained penalty remains for Chinese and other Asian non-graduates.

Black African and Caribbean graduate men and women with similar immigration history are 20-28ppts more likely to be upwardly mobile than White non-graduate men and women. Indeed, conditioning on immigration status actually makes very little difference among graduates from all ethnic groups, implying that graduates face relatively similar rates of upward mobility, regardless of whether they are first generation immigrants or not.<sup>6</sup> This is in line with findings from Platt (2007) that 'for all minority groups... education provides the means to higher rates of upward mobility' at least relative to White non-graduates in this setting.

Figure 5 shows patterns in downward mobility by gender, ethnicity and graduate status. Non-graduates have higher rates of downward mobility across all ethnic groups, with pronounced education gaps between Chinese and other Asian men and women, and particularly for Black African women. Non-graduate Black African men and women have downward mobility rates of around 50% compared to 10-20% for Black Caribbean graduates, while Black African graduate men are more downwardly than Black Caribbean non-graduates.

Table 10 shows the estimated probabilities of experiencing downward mobility by graduate status and ethnic group, compared to the baseline of White non-graduates for men and women separately. The first and fourth columns control for age and destination region, while columns 2 and 5 control for origin class, and columns 3 and 6 control for immigration history, as in Table 8. Considering first columns 1 and 4, as seen in Figure 5, Black African graduate men have a similar chance of being downwardly mobile as White and Black Caribbean non-graduate men. Black Caribbean non-graduate women are less likely to be downwardly mobile relative to White non-graduate women (8ppts) to a similar degree as Black African graduate women (11ppts).

Graduates from all ethnic groups are less likely to be downwardly mobile compared to White non-graduates, ranging from 6ppts for Pakistani/Bangladeshi men, to 23ppts for Black Caribbean women. Similarly, with the exception of Black Caribbean women, ethnic minority non-graduates are more likely to be downwardly mobile compared to White non-graduates, ranging from 4ppts for Mixed and other ethnic background women, to 18ppts for Black African women. There are also generally bigger differences in the likelihood of downward mobility among ethnic minority non-graduate women, relative to White non-graduate women, compared to ethnic minority non-graduate men, relative to White non-graduate men.

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<sup>6</sup> The biggest differences are found for Black Africans and Chinese and other Asians. As noted earlier, a higher proportion of Black Africans are first generation migrants and this means that a larger share are likely to have gained their qualifications outside the UK which may not be fully rewarded in the UK labour market.

Table 11 shows the origin class distributions of Black African and Black Caribbean non-graduates and graduates for our downward mobility sample to provide a potential explanation for some of these differences. As a large proportion of non-graduate Black Caribbean respondents are from the lower origin classes, there is less scope for them to experience downward mobility, while the majority of Black African graduates are from the highest two origin classes, leaving plenty of room to fall. As in Table 9, Black African non-graduates and graduates are far more likely to be first generation immigrants, relative to Black Caribbean non-graduates and graduates. 94% of Black African non-graduate women are first generation immigrants compared to 21% of Black Caribbean graduate women.

Columns 2 and 5 of Table 10 consider whether these stark differences in origin class are driving the distinct differences in experiences of downward mobility. Comparing respondents from the same origin class, Black African graduate men are now marginally less likely to be downwardly mobile than Black Caribbean and White non-graduate men (although only by 6ppts). However Black Caribbean non-graduate women now look more similar to White non-graduate women in terms of their likelihood of experiencing downward mobility once accounting for origin class, while Black African graduate women are 16ppts less likely to experience downward mobility relative to White non-graduate women. Controlling for origin class makes very little difference to the chances of experiencing downward mobility across any other ethnic groups, for non-graduates, while for graduates, it further reduces the likelihood of most ethnic groups (apart from Black Caribbean) experiencing downward mobility, relative to White non-graduates.

Finally, in columns 3 and 6 of Table 10 we compare differences in the chances of experiencing downward mobility for those with similar immigration histories, as well as similar origin classes, age and destination region. This makes very little difference to the overall story, apart from for Chinese and other Asian non-graduate men, where adjusting for immigration history removes any increased likelihood of being downwardly mobile, relative to White non-graduates. Broadly speaking then, graduates from all ethnic groups are around 20-25ppts less likely to experience downward mobility, relative to White non-graduates, once accounting for immigration history and origin class, although Black Caribbean, Black African and Pakistani/Bangladeshi men are 9-14ppts less likely. For non-graduates, Indian, Pakistani/Bangladeshi, and Black African men and women, along with Chinese and other Asian women, and Mixed and other ethnic background men are more likely to experience downward mobility relative to White non-graduates, in the order of 5-10ppts, even when accounting for origin class and immigration status.

## 7. Conclusions

This paper presents new estimates of recent social mobility in the UK by gender, education and ethnicity, and their intersections. The estimates measure absolute social class mobility using data from the Labour Force Survey 2014-2018.

Overall, little change in social mobility occurred over this short period but sub-group analysis using a pooled sample reveals some important new findings documenting stark ethnic differences in social mobility prospects in the UK.

Education is a key factor in determining who moves up and who moves down the class distribution with higher levels of educational attainment associated with greater chances of upward mobility and lower risks of downward mobility. The strength of the relationship between educational attainment and upward/downward mobility increases after controlling for class origin, demonstrating that higher upward mobility and lower downward mobility associated with higher levels of education is not just the result of more privileged children attaining higher levels of education.

An important contribution of this paper is the analysis of social mobility by ethnic group and immigration history which is made possible through the large sample size achieved through pooling LFS data. Other research has shown that recent migrants tend to have their 'true' class position suppressed in the first generation following migration to the UK. In addition, risks of upward and downward social mobility are related to origin class position (i.e. the higher up the origin class distribution, the greater the risk of downward mobility and vice-versa) even after excluding the very top and the very bottom positions from the relevant samples.

There are striking differences between Black Africans and Black Caribbeans, with Black Africans more likely to have a higher social class origin and the majority are first generation immigrants while Black Caribbeans are less likely to have a high social class origin and the minority are first generation immigrants. To examine the extent to which ethnic differences in upward and downward social mobility are due to class origin or immigrant history, regression models are estimated to control for these factors.

Turning first to the results for upward mobility for Black African and Black Caribbean men and women relative to their White counterparts. The results show that Black African and Black Caribbean men are less likely to be upwardly mobile than White men. This result holds even after controlling for class origin and immigration history but the penalty for Black African men is reduced by one half after controlling for immigration history. This is important given their different initial conditions, implying that while much of the story for Black African men is being driven by high origin class and higher rates of first generation immigration, Black Caribbean men face lower rates of upward mobility despite low origin class and more settled status. For women, Black Africans are less likely to be upwardly mobile than White women but Black Caribbean women are more likely to be upwardly mobile than their White counterparts. The apparent advantage of Black Caribbean women is accounted for by differences in their origin class distribution with more from lower social class origins and therefore greater opportunities for upward mobility. Black African women are less likely to be upwardly mobile than White women in part because of their origin class distribution and their greater likelihood of being a first generation migrant but these factors only account for around two-thirds of the disadvantage that Black African women face in the UK.

In relation to risks of downward mobility, Black African men and women, from the same origin class and with the same immigration history as White men and women, are more likely to experience downward mobility. Black Caribbean men face higher rates of downward mobility despite their low origin class and more settled immigration status. However, Black Caribbean women face similar rates of downward mobility as White women after differences in origin class and immigration status are taken into account.

This is consistent with recent literature on the labour market outcomes of those from Black African and Black Caribbean backgrounds. Li and Heath (2020) show that these groups, along with Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnic minorities, face higher probabilities of unemployment and lower earnings throughout their lives, enduring lasting scarring effects in the form of delayed re-entry and wage penalties. Zwysen et al. (2020) combine evidence from observational studies with that from field experiments to show that at least some of the penalties faced by different ethnic groups in the labour market arise from ethnic discrimination, with these groups facing the greatest hiring discrimination, alongside worse labour market penalties.

Differences in upward and downward mobility between other ethnic groups are less clear cut with the exceptions of Indian men and women who are more likely than their White counterparts to experience upward mobility and Pakistani/Bangladeshi men and women who are more likely than their White counterparts to experience downward mobility. The penalty for this group may be even higher given the much lower rates of employment (particularly for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women) and the exclusion of respondents not reporting a current or last occupation.

We also take advantage of the large sample size available from the pooled LFS data to calculate, what we understand are, the first absolute social class mobility estimates at the intersection of gender, ethnicity and educational attainment (graduate versus non-graduate) in the UK. Graduates from all ethnic groups are more likely to experience upward mobility than White non-graduates, as are Black Caribbean women. After controlling for class origin there are similar rates of upward mobility for graduates between ethnic groups, regardless of whether they are first generation migrants or not. Among male graduates, Black Africans are the least likely to be upwardly mobile and Indians the most likely to be upwardly mobile relative to White non-graduate males. Among female graduates, Pakistanis/Bangladeshis are the least likely to be upwardly mobile and Indians the most likely to be upwardly mobile relative to White non-graduate females.

Indian, Chinese and other Asian, Black African, and Mixed and other ethnic background non-graduates are less likely to be upwardly mobile than White non-graduates and this is broadly similar across genders. This heterogeneous picture across different ethnic groups may speak to the selectivity of different migrant groups – van der Werfhorst and Heath (2019) show that second generation immigrants are less disadvantaged if they are positively selected in terms of educational attainment.

Graduates from all ethnic groups are less likely to experience downward mobility relative to White non-graduates. Although for Black Caribbean, Black African and Pakistani/Bangladeshi men graduate status is less likely to protect them from downward mobility. For non-graduates, Black African, Indian and Pakistani/Bangladeshi men and women, and Chinese and other Asian women, and Mixed and other ethnic background men are more likely to experience downward social mobility relative to White non-graduates.

This work suggests that broad trends in rates of social mobility mask important differences by gender, ethnicity and education. Comparing mobility rates for the intersection of these groups provides a more nuanced picture of recent trends in social mobility. In particular, we highlight how Black African and Black Caribbean men and women are less likely to experience upward mobility and more likely to experience downward mobility than other ethnic groups, even among graduates. While the relatively high social origins and high proportion of first generation migrants can account for part of this picture for Black Africans, these initial conditions only exacerbate raw differences for Black Caribbeans.

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**Table 1: Changes in destination occupational structure over time in LFS (2014 to 2018), and comparison to BCS 1970 cohort (age 42)**

	Men		Women			
	LFS 2014	LFS 2018	BCS 2012	LFS 2014	LFS 2018	BCS 2012
Higher managers and professionals	22.3	23.5	20.7	12.5	14.3	11.3
Lower managers and professionals	26.0	26.7	26.9	33.8	34.1	30.2
Intermediate occupations	7.4	8.0	9.4	20.4	19.7	21.9
Small employers and own account workers	13.5	12.8	16.3	6.6	6.8	8.6
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	10.3	9.6	12.0	4.1	3.5	5.1
Semi-routine occupations	9.2	8.9	6.7	15.7	15.5	18.4
Routine occupations	11.4	10.6	8.0	7.2	6.3	4.6
Average age	42	42	42	42	42	42
N	13985	9919	3264	15156	10743	3076

Notes: Destination measures in LFS based on current or last occupation. Missing if unemployed, in full time education, or any other form of inactivity. In the British Cohort Study this is coded based on their current or last reported occupation from the age 42 sweep. Missing if unemployed or inactive. All figures are weighted using LFS person weight

**Table 2: Proportion in pooled LFS (2014-2018) in each education group, for those age 25-59**

	Upward mobility sample		Downward mobility sample	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Less than level 2	9.8	7.8	7.7	6.0
Level 2 (GCSEs)	18.9	22.5	16.6	19.4
Level 3 (A levels)	32.0	30.6	30.8	29.4
Level 4 (Degree)	25.2	27.0	30.1	31.7
Level 5+ (Post-grad)	6.6	7.2	8.7	9.4
Missing education	7.6	4.8	6.2	4.1
N	47,893	51,342	49,057	52,508

Notes: Samples are restricted to those who can move up or down (excluding those in origin class 1 for upward mobility, and excluding those in origin class 7 for downward mobility). All figures are weighted using LFS person weight

**Table 3: Rates of upward and downward mobility in pooled LFS (2014-2018) by education level, for those age 25-59**

Upward mobility	Men		Women	
Less than level 2	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Level 2 (GCSEs)	0.087*** (0.009)	0.126*** (0.008)	0.103*** (0.009)	0.158*** (0.008)
Level 3 (A levels)	0.160*** (0.008)	0.235*** (0.007)	0.189*** (0.009)	0.300*** (0.007)
Level 4 (Degree)	0.302*** (0.008)	0.447*** (0.008)	0.258*** (0.009)	0.454*** (0.008)
Level 5+ (PG)	0.380*** (0.011)	0.554*** (0.010)	0.300*** (0.011)	0.545*** (0.010)
Age and Region	x	x	x	x
Parent origin class		x		x
N	47,893	47,893	51,342	51,342
Downward mobility	Men		Women	
Less than level 2	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Level 2 (GCSEs)	-0.070*** (0.009)	-0.111*** (0.008)	-0.129*** (0.010)	-0.172*** (0.008)
Level 3 (A levels)	-0.157*** (0.008)	-0.233*** (0.008)	-0.201*** (0.009)	-0.298*** (0.008)
Level 4 (Degree)	-0.252*** (0.008)	-0.400*** (0.008)	-0.263*** (0.009)	-0.443*** (0.008)
Level 5+ (PG)	-0.311*** (0.010)	-0.494*** (0.010)	-0.321*** (0.011)	-0.546*** (0.010)
Age and Region	x	x	x	x
Parent origin class		x		x
N	49,057	49,057	52,508	52,508

Notes: Samples are restricted to those who can move up or down (excluding those in origin class 1 for upward mobility, and excluding those in origin class 7 for downward mobility). All models control for year of survey and include missing dummies for missing ethnicity information. Models additional control for region and age, and origin class. Models that also control for ethnicity also show very similar patterns (available on request). All models are weighted using LFS person weights. Standard errors in parenthesis, \* 1%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\*10% significance

**Table 4: Origin distributions in pooled LFS (2014-2018) for those achieving different education levels, for those age 25-59**

GCSEs or lower	Upward mobility sample		Downward mobility sample	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Higher managers and professionals	N/A	N/A	10.7	10.3
Lower managers and professionals	17.0	15.5	19.4	18.0
Intermediate occupations	10.5	10.9	12.0	12.6
Small employers and own account workers	16.5	15.6	18.8	18.1
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	15.0	15.7	17.1	18.1
Semi-routine occupations	19.2	19.7	22.0	22.8
Routine occupations	21.9	22.7	N/A	N/A
N	14,056	15,917	12,295	13,707
Degree or higher	Upward mobility sample		Downward mobility sample	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Higher managers and professionals	N/A	N/A	28.0	26.8
Lower managers and professionals	41.5	41.4	33.0	33.6
Intermediate occupations	15.1	14.6	12.0	11.8
Small employers and own account workers	11.2	11.4	8.9	9.2
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	13.4	13.2	10.6	10.7
Semi-routine occupations	9.6	9.6	7.7	7.8
Routine occupations	9.2	9.7	N/A	N/A
N	14,628	17,130	18,256	20,993

Notes: Samples are restricted to those who can move up or down (excluding those in origin class 1 for upward mobility, and excluding those in origin class 7 for downward mobility). Missing education, and A level education categories not shown. All figures are weighted using LFS person weight

**Table 5: Proportion and sample numbers in pooled LFS (2014-2018) by ethnic group, for those age 25-59**

	Upward mobility sample Men	Upward mobility sample Women	Downward mobility sample Men	Downward mobility sample Women
<b>Proportions</b>				
White	77.0	77.2	77.6	77.9
Indian	3.1	2.6	3.2	2.7
Pakistani / Bangladeshi	2.5	1.3	2.1	1.1
Chinese / Other Asian	1.5	1.9	1.7	2.0
Black African	1.4	1.7	1.5	1.7
Black Caribbean	0.9	1.3	0.8	1.1
Mixed and Other	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.6
Missing ethnicity	11.3	11.6	10.6	11.0
<b>Sample numbers</b>				
White	36,853	39,587	38,132	40,870
Indian	1,296	1,205	1,394	1,261
Pakistani / Bangladeshi	1,082	604	942	530
Chinese / Other Asian	638	874	715	959
Black African	573	719	632	787
Black Caribbean	386	593	321	484
Mixed and Other	998	1,118	1,084	1,220
Missing ethnicity	6,067	6,642	5,837	6,397
Total N	47,893	51,342	49,057	52,508

Notes: Samples are restricted to those who can move up or down (excluding those in origin class 1 for upward mobility, and excluding those in origin class 7 for downward mobility). Proportions are weighted using LFS person weight. Sample numbers are underlying sample observations.

**Table 6: Predicted probabilities of upward and downward mobility in pooled LFS (2014-2018) by ethnic group, for those age 25-59**

Upward mobility		Men			Women		
White	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Indian	0.044*** (0.014)	0.057*** (0.012)	0.094*** (0.013)	0.018 (0.014)	0.025** (0.012)	0.061*** (0.013)	
Pakistani / Bangladeshi	-0.021 (0.015)	-0.062*** (0.014)	-0.022 (0.014)	0.003 (0.020)	-0.048*** (0.017)	-0.025 (0.017)	
Chinese / Other Asian	-0.052*** (0.019)	-0.022 (0.017)	0.032* (0.018)	-0.087*** (0.017)	-0.044*** (0.014)	0.010 (0.015)	
Black African	-0.146*** (0.020)	-0.110*** (0.018)	-0.055*** (0.019)	-0.148*** (0.018)	-0.106*** (0.015)	-0.053*** (0.016)	
Black Caribbean	-0.051** (0.024)	-0.100*** (0.022)	-0.092*** (0.022)	0.052*** (0.020)	-0.025 (0.017)	-0.012 (0.017)	
Mixed and Other	-0.080*** (0.015)	-0.074*** (0.014)	-0.037*** (0.014)	-0.049*** (0.014)	-0.034*** (0.013)	-0.001 (0.013)	
Age and Region	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Parent origin class		x	x		x	x	
First Generation			x			x	
N	47,893	47,893	47,893	51,342	51,342	51,342	
Downward mobility		Men			Women		
White	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Indian	-0.008 (0.012)	-0.006 (0.011)	-0.043*** (0.012)	0.014 (0.013)	0.015 (0.012)	-0.021* (0.012)	
Pakistani / Bangladeshi	0.087*** (0.015)	0.115*** (0.014)	0.075*** (0.014)	0.062*** (0.020)	0.096*** (0.018)	0.068*** (0.018)	
Chinese / Other Asian	0.013 (0.017)	0.021 (0.016)	-0.026 (0.016)	0.070*** (0.015)	0.075*** (0.014)	0.025* (0.014)	
Black African	0.168*** (0.018)	0.173*** (0.017)	0.125*** (0.017)	0.141*** (0.016)	0.162*** (0.015)	0.113*** (0.015)	
Black Caribbean	0.018 (0.025)	0.106*** (0.023)	0.099*** (0.023)	-0.076*** (0.021)	0.040** (0.019)	0.028 (0.019)	
Mixed and Other	0.079*** (0.014)	0.076*** (0.013)	0.043*** (0.013)	0.039*** (0.013)	0.058*** (0.012)	0.026** (0.012)	
Age and Region	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Parent origin class		x	x		x	x	
First Generation			x			x	
N	49,057	49,057	49,057	52,508	52,508	52,508	

Notes: Samples are restricted to those who can move up or down (excluding those in origin class 1 for upward mobility, and excluding those in origin class 7 for downward mobility). All models control for year of survey and include missing dummies for missing ethnicity information. Models additional control for region and age. Origin class, and a dummy indicator of whether the respondent was born in the UK. Models that also control for education also show very similar patterns (available on request). All models are weighted using LFS person weights. Standard errors in parenthesis, \* 1%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\*10% significance

**Table 7: Origin distributions and proportion first generation immigrants in pooled LFS (2014-2018) for those from Black African and Black Caribbean ethnic groups, for those age 25-59**

	Upward mobility sample		Downward mobility sample	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
<b>Black African</b>				
Higher managers and professionals	N/A	N/A	18.0	16.5
Lower managers and professionals	38.8	39.3	34.9	36.1
Intermediate occupations	19.2	24.0	17.2	22.1
Small employers and own account workers	13.7	10.8	12.3	9.9
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	8.1	7.1	7.3	6.5
Semi-routine occupations	11.5	9.7	10.3	8.9
Routine occupations	8.7	9.1	N/A	N/A
First Generation	88.7	87.6	86.9	86.4
N	573	719	632	787
<b>Black Caribbean</b>				
Higher managers and professionals	N/A	N/A	4.5	4.9
Lower managers and professionals	20.4	20.7	24.3	25.3
Intermediate occupations	12.4	13.9	14.9	17.1
Small employers and own account workers	13.2	13.1	15.7	16.1
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	14.8	10.2	17.7	12.5
Semi-routine occupations	19.1	19.7	22.8	24.1
Routine occupations	20.1	22.5	N/A	N/A
First Generation	28.3	34.8	27.7	35.9
N	386	593	321	484

Notes: Samples are restricted to those who can move up or down (excluding those in origin class 1 for upward mobility, and excluding those in origin class 7 for downward mobility). All figures are weighted using LFS person weight

**Table 8: Predicted probabilities of upward mobility in pooled LFS (2014-2018) by ethnic group and graduate status, for those age 25-59**

Non graduates		Men			Women		
		Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
White							
Indian		-0.065*** (0.022)	-0.045** (0.020)	-0.019 (0.020)	-0.037* (0.022)	-0.027 (0.019)	0.005 (0.019)
Pakistani / Bangladeshi		-0.005 (0.020)	-0.056*** (0.018)	-0.028 (0.018)	-0.007 (0.027)	-0.044* (0.023)	-0.020 (0.023)
Chinese / Other Asian		-0.120*** (0.029)	-0.088*** (0.026)	-0.049* (0.026)	-0.156*** (0.025)	-0.087*** (0.022)	-0.038* (0.022)
Black African		-0.148*** (0.027)	-0.090*** (0.024)	-0.052** (0.025)	-0.188*** (0.023)	-0.089*** (0.020)	-0.041** (0.020)
Black Caribbean		-0.019 (0.029)	-0.058** (0.026)	-0.052** (0.026)	0.047** (0.024)	-0.015 (0.020)	0.000 (0.020)
Mixed and Other		-0.058*** (0.021)	-0.047** (0.019)	-0.023 (0.019)	-0.067*** (0.020)	-0.044** (0.017)	-0.016 (0.017)
Graduates		Men			Women		
White		0.196*** (0.006)	0.292*** (0.005)	0.294*** (0.005)	0.119*** (0.005)	0.247*** (0.005)	0.250*** (0.005)
Indian		0.275*** (0.018)	0.340*** (0.016)	0.363*** (0.016)	0.166*** (0.019)	0.259*** (0.017)	0.286*** (0.017)
Pakistani / Bangladeshi		0.192*** (0.025)	0.203*** (0.022)	0.226*** (0.022)	0.170*** (0.030)	0.186*** (0.026)	0.198*** (0.026)
Chinese / Other Asian		0.238*** (0.028)	0.344*** (0.025)	0.377*** (0.026)	0.124*** (0.024)	0.247*** (0.021)	0.286*** (0.021)
Black African		0.068** (0.032)	0.166*** (0.029)	0.203*** (0.029)	0.073** (0.030)	0.179*** (0.025)	0.218*** (0.026)
Black Caribbean		0.255*** (0.051)	0.279*** (0.046)	0.283*** (0.046)	0.227*** (0.035)	0.240*** (0.030)	0.243*** (0.030)
Mixed and Other		0.119*** (0.024)	0.209*** (0.022)	0.231*** (0.022)	0.103*** (0.022)	0.222*** (0.019)	0.247*** (0.019)
Age and Region	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Parent origin class			x	x	x	x	x
First Generation				x			x
N	47,893	47,893	47,893	51,342	51,342	51,342	

Notes: Samples are restricted to those who can move up or down (excluding those in origin class 1 for upward mobility, and excluding those in origin class 7 for downward mobility). All models control for year of survey and include missing dummies for missing ethnicity and education information. Models additional control for region and age, origin class, and a dummy indicator of whether the respondent was born in the UK. All models are weighted using LFS person weights. Standard errors in parenthesis, \* 1%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\*10% significance

**Table 9: Origin distributions and proportion first generation immigrants in pooled LFS (2014-2018) for those from Black African and Black Caribbean ethnic groups by education, for the upward mobility sample (age 25-59)**

Non-graduates	Black African		Black Caribbean	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Higher managers and professionals	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lower managers and professionals	28.0	30.8	18.7	14.6
Intermediate occupations	13.2	23.1	13.6	17.4
Small employers and own account workers	14.4	16.2	11.0	13.0
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	8.4	6.4	15.7	11.6
Semi-routine occupations	22.5	12.8	16.3	20.2
Routine occupations	13.6	10.5	24.7	23.3
First Generation	83.9	95.1	27.5	37.1
N	97	158	125	156
Graduates	Black African		Black Caribbean	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Higher managers and professionals	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lower managers and professionals	44.0	42.1	32.8	32.5
Intermediate occupations	17.7	22.7	12.3	12.0
Small employers and own account workers	13.5	7.8	12.8	8.9
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	7.8	8.8	12.0	10.4
Semi-routine occupations	12.0	10.2	12.9	14.7
Routine occupations	5.1	8.3	17.2	21.5
First Generation	86.9	79.7	24.3	22.1
N	205	232	77	170

Notes: Samples are restricted to those who can move up or down (excluding those in origin class 1 for upward mobility, and excluding those in origin class 7 for downward mobility). All figures are weighted using LFS person weight

**Table 10: Predicted probabilities of downward mobility in pooled LFS (2014-2018) by ethnic group and graduate status, for those age 25-59**

Non graduates		Men			Women		
		Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
White							
Indian	0.069*** (0.022)	0.078*** (0.020)	0.052*** (0.020)	0.074*** (0.023)	0.093*** (0.020)	0.060*** (0.020)	
Pakistani / Bangladeshi	0.047** (0.021)	0.083*** (0.020)	0.054*** (0.020)	0.113*** (0.029)	0.125*** (0.026)	0.097*** (0.026)	
Chinese / Other Asian	0.069** (0.027)	0.076*** (0.025)	0.039 (0.025)	0.166*** (0.024)	0.141*** (0.021)	0.093*** (0.021)	
Black African	0.161*** (0.025)	0.148*** (0.023)	0.113*** (0.023)	0.179*** (0.021)	0.140*** (0.019)	0.094*** (0.019)	
Black Caribbean	-0.032 (0.030)	0.041 (0.028)	0.037 (0.028)	-0.075*** (0.026)	0.029 (0.023)	0.014 (0.023)	
Mixed and Other	0.105*** (0.020)	0.099*** (0.018)	0.075*** (0.019)	0.040** (0.020)	0.050*** (0.017)	0.023 (0.017)	
Graduates		Men			Women		
White	-0.151*** (0.005)	-0.248*** (0.005)	-0.250*** (0.005)	-0.109*** (0.005)	-0.227*** (0.004)	-0.229*** (0.004)	
Indian	-0.167*** (0.016)	-0.239*** (0.014)	-0.264*** (0.015)	-0.112*** (0.017)	-0.213*** (0.015)	-0.242*** (0.015)	
Pakistani / Bangladeshi	-0.062*** (0.024)	-0.115*** (0.021)	-0.142*** (0.022)	-0.135*** (0.030)	-0.186*** (0.026)	-0.204*** (0.026)	
Chinese / Other Asian	-0.194*** (0.024)	-0.274*** (0.022)	-0.304*** (0.022)	-0.143*** (0.022)	-0.226*** (0.019)	-0.265*** (0.019)	
Black African	0.011 (0.027)	-0.060** (0.025)	-0.092*** (0.025)	-0.112*** (0.027)	-0.156*** (0.024)	-0.194*** (0.024)	
Black Caribbean	-0.124** (0.051)	-0.119*** (0.046)	-0.122*** (0.046)	-0.225*** (0.036)	-0.217*** (0.032)	-0.219*** (0.032)	
Mixed and Other	-0.123*** (0.020)	-0.221*** (0.018)	-0.243*** (0.018)	-0.096*** (0.020)	-0.183*** (0.017)	-0.208*** (0.017)	
Age and Region	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Parent origin class		x	x		x	x	
First Generation			x			x	
N	49,057	49,057	49,057	52,508	52,508	52,508	

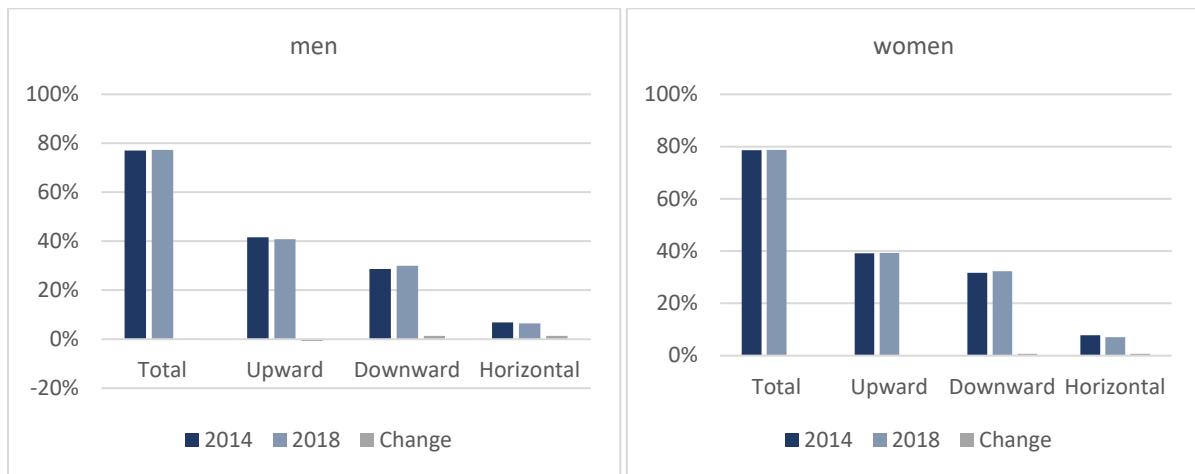
Notes: Samples are restricted to those who can move up or down (excluding those in origin class 1 for upward mobility, and excluding those in origin class 7 for downward mobility). All models control for year of survey and include missing dummies for missing ethnicity and education information. Models additional control for region and age, origin class, and a dummy indicator of whether the respondent was born in the UK. All models are weighted using LFS person weights. Standard errors in parenthesis, \* 1%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\*10% significance

**Table 11: Origin distributions and proportion first generation immigrants in pooled LFS (2014-2018) for those from Black African and Black Caribbean ethnic groups by education, for the downward mobility sample (age 25-59)**

Non-graduates	Black African		Black Caribbean	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Higher managers and professionals	7.8	10.4	1.0	1.5
Lower managers and professionals	29.9	30.8	24.6	18.7
Intermediate occupations	14.1	23.2	17.9	22.3
Small employers and own account workers	15.3	16.3	14.4	16.7
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	9.0	6.5	20.7	14.9
Semi-routine occupations	24.0	12.9	21.4	25.9
Routine occupations	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
First Generation	82.8	93.7	27.2	41.7
N	90	159	93	121
Graduates	Black African		Black Caribbean	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Higher managers and professionals	25.0	17.8	10.2	10.0
Lower managers and professionals	34.8	37.8	35.6	37.2
Intermediate occupations	14.0	20.4	13.4	13.8
Small employers and own account workers	10.6	7.0	13.9	10.2
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	6.1	7.9	13.0	12.0
Semi-routine occupations	9.5	9.2	14.0	16.8
Routine occupations	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
First Generation	82.9	79.1	23.0	20.9
N	259	262	72	153

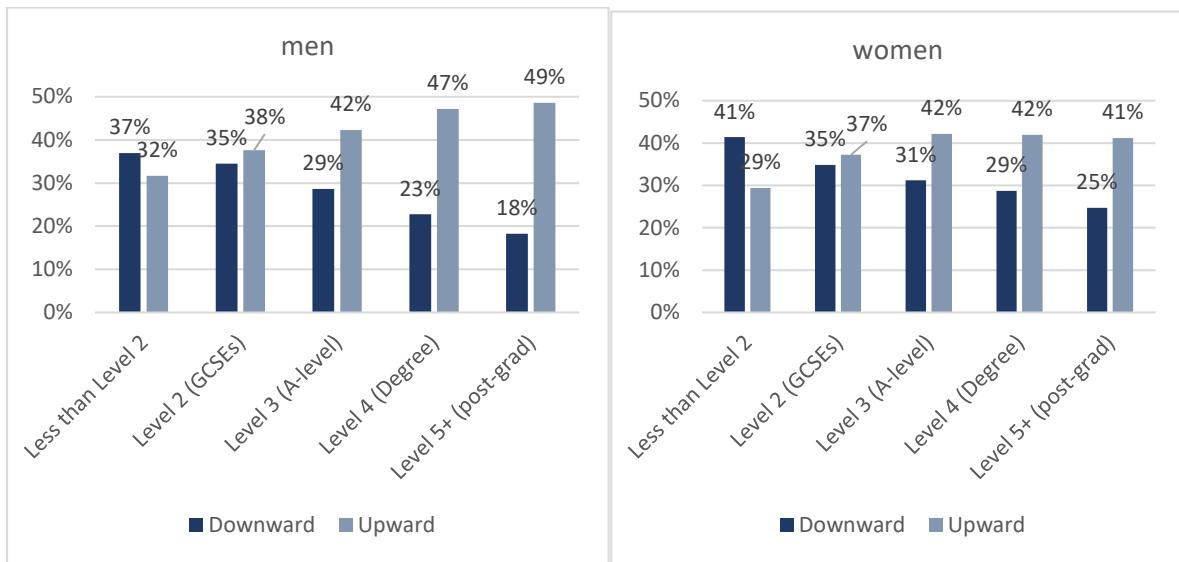
Notes: Samples are restricted to those who can move up or down (excluding those in origin class 1 for upward mobility, and excluding those in origin class 7 for downward mobility). All figures are weighted using LFS person weight

**Figure 1: Total, upward, downward, and horizontal mobility trends 2014-2018 for men and women**



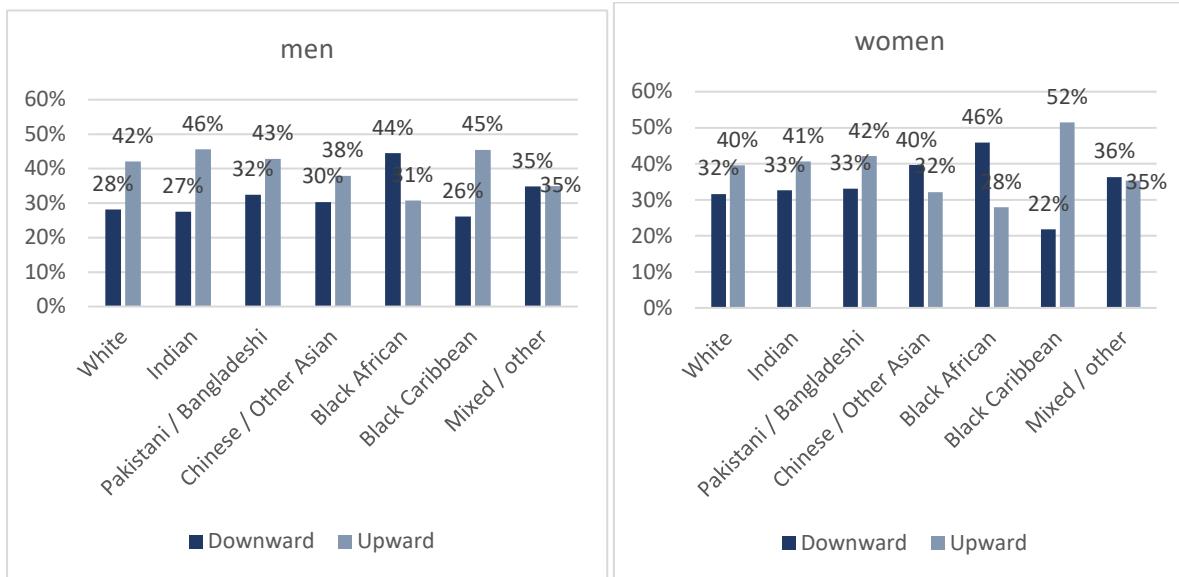
Notes: Total mobility rates calculated based on 7x7 transition matrix as any off-diagonal move. Upward mobility rates calculated as any move up a class (with the exception of moves within classes 3-5), downward mobility rates calculated as any move down a class (with the exception of moves within classes 3-5), and horizontal mobility rates calculated as moves within classes 3-5. For underlying distributions and samples see Table 1.

**Figure 2: Upward and downward mobility rates in pooled LFS (2014-2018) by education for men and women (age 25-59)**



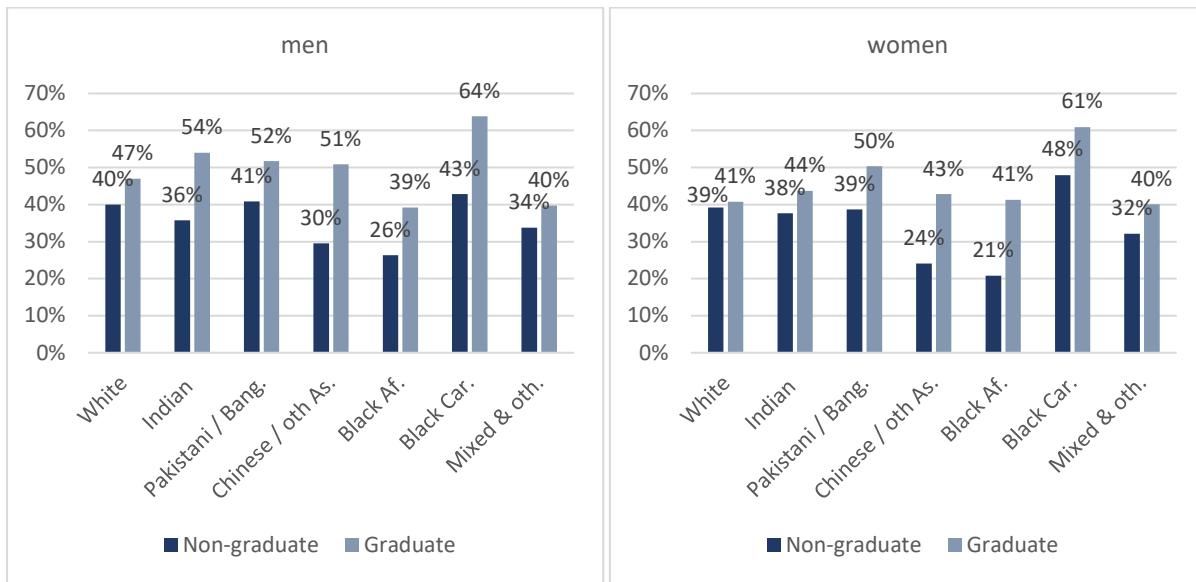
Notes: Total mobility rates calculated based on 7x7 transition matrix as any off-diagonal move. Upward mobility rates calculated as any move up a class (with the exception of moves within classes 3-5), downward mobility rates calculated as any move down a class (with the exception of moves within classes 3-5), and horizontal mobility rates calculated as moves within classes 3-5.

**Figure 3: Upward and downward mobility rates in pooled LFS (2014-2018) by ethnicity for men and women (age 25-59)**



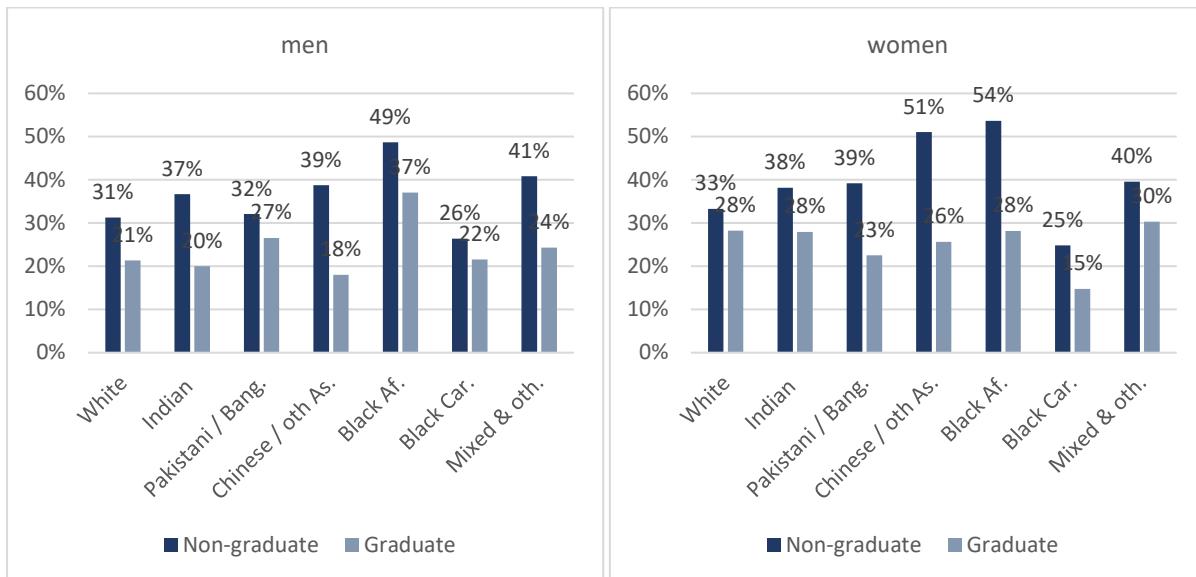
Notes: Total mobility rates calculated based on 7x7 transition matrix as any off-diagonal move. Upward mobility rates calculated as any move up a class (with the exception of moves within classes 3-5), downward mobility rates calculated as any move down a class (with the exception of moves within classes 3-5), and horizontal mobility rates calculated as moves within classes 3-5.

**Figure 4: Upward mobility rates in pooled LFS (2014-2018) by ethnicity and graduate status for men and women (age 25-59)**



Notes: Total mobility rates calculated based on 7x7 transition matrix as any off-diagonal move. Upward mobility rates calculated as any move up a class (with the exception of moves within classes 3-5), downward mobility rates calculated as any move down a class (with the exception of moves within classes 3-5), and horizontal mobility rates calculated as moves within classes 3-5.

**Figure 5: Downward mobility rates in pooled LFS (2014-2018) by ethnicity and graduate status for men and women (age 25-59)**



Notes: Total mobility rates calculated based on 7x7 transition matrix as any off-diagonal move. Upward mobility rates calculated as any move up a class (with the exception of moves within classes 3-5), downward mobility rates calculated as any move down a class (with the exception of moves within classes 3-5), and horizontal mobility rates calculated as moves within classes 3-5.



## Appendix

**Table A1: Changes in origin parental occupational structure over time, and comparison to BCS 1970 cohort (age 10)**

	Men		Women			
	LFS 2014	LFS 2018	BCS 2012	LFS 2014	LFS 2018	BCS 2012
Higher managers and professionals	15.6	17.6	16.4	15.3	16.7	15.3
Lower managers and professionals	21.6	23.3	20.3	22.8	23.8	21.6
Intermediate occupations	11.0	9.9	5.9	11.1	10.5	6.1
Small employers and own account workers	12.5	11.9	11.1	11.9	11.5	10.4
Lower supervisory and technical occupations	12.7	12.1	9.9	12.9	11.6	9.6
Semi-routine occupations	12.3	12.1	24.3	11.8	12.4	24.4
Routine occupations	14.4	13.0	12.0	14.3	13.6	12.8
Respondents' age	14	14	10	14	14	10
N	13985	9919	3264	15156	10743	3076

Notes: Origin measures in LFS from questions about 'main earner's' occupation when the survey respondent was 14. Over 80% report their father's occupation. This is coded to NS-SEC using simplified method. In the British Cohort Study origin measure is classified based on father's SEG code at age 10, using the coding framework from Goldthorpe and Jackson (2007) Table 1. The origin distributions closely match those in Table 2 and 3 from Goldthorpe and Jackson (2007).

**Table A2: Average age of survey respondents by education level for the full sample (25-59) and restricted sample (30-45), pooled 2014-2018 data**

Average age	Men		Women	
	Full sample (25-59)	Restricted sample (30-45)	Full sample (25-59)	Restricted sample (30-45)
Less than level 2	44.5	38.0	46.3	38.2
Level 2 (GCSEs)	42.8	37.8	44.8	38.4
Level 3 (A levels)	43.2	37.7	43.0	37.8
Level 4 (Degree)	41.2	37.5	40.5	37.3
Level 5+ (Post-grad)	38.9	36.7	38.2	36.7

**Table A3: Rates of upward and downward mobility in pooled LFS (2014-2018) by education level, for those age 35-59**

Upward mobility	Men		Women	
Less than level 2	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Level 2 (GCSEs)	0.086*** (0.010)	0.126*** (0.009)	0.100*** (0.010)	0.157*** (0.008)
Level 3 (A levels)	0.175*** (0.009)	0.245*** (0.008)	0.201*** (0.010)	0.309*** (0.008)
Level 4 (Degree)	0.317*** (0.009)	0.461*** (0.009)	0.264*** (0.010)	0.460*** (0.008)
Level 5+ (PG)	0.372*** (0.013)	0.542*** (0.012)	0.283*** (0.014)	0.528*** (0.011)
Age and Region	x	x	x	x
Parent origin class		x		x
N	36,715	36,715	38,765	38,765
Downward mobility	Men		Women	
Less than level 2	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Level 2 (GCSEs)	-0.070*** (0.010)	-0.113*** (0.009)	-0.140*** (0.011)	-0.182*** (0.009)
Level 3 (A levels)	-0.162*** (0.009)	-0.232*** (0.008)	-0.216*** (0.010)	-0.310*** (0.009)
Level 4 (Degree)	-0.260*** (0.009)	-0.403*** (0.009)	-0.269*** (0.010)	-0.445*** (0.009)
Level 5+ (PG)	-0.302*** (0.012)	-0.481*** (0.011)	-0.318*** (0.013)	-0.536*** (0.011)
Age and Region	x	x	x	x
Parent origin class		x		x
N	37,213	37,213	39,232	39,232

Notes: Samples are restricted to those who can move up or down (excluding those in origin class 1 for upward mobility, and excluding those in origin class 7 for downward mobility). All models control for year of survey and include missing dummies for missing ethnicity information. Models additional control for region and age, and origin class. Models that also control for ethnicity also show very similar patterns (available on request). All models are weighted using LFS person weights. Standard errors in parenthesis, \* 1%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\*10% significance

**Table A4: Predicted probabilities of upward and downward mobility in pooled LFS (2014-2018) by ethnic group, for those age 35-59**

Upward mobility		Men			Women		
White	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Indian	0.012 (0.016)	0.020 (0.015)	0.061*** (0.015)	-0.018 (0.017)	-0.010 (0.015)	0.019 (0.015)	
Pakistani / Bangladeshi	-0.078*** (0.018)	-0.108*** (0.017)	-0.061*** (0.017)	-0.050* (0.026)	-0.096*** (0.023)	-0.072*** (0.023)	
Chinese / Other Asian	-0.106*** (0.022)	-0.071*** (0.020)	-0.014 (0.021)	-0.127*** (0.019)	-0.080*** (0.017)	-0.039** (0.018)	
Black African	-0.175*** (0.022)	-0.129*** (0.021)	-0.073*** (0.022)	-0.163*** (0.021)	-0.117*** (0.018)	-0.076*** (0.019)	
Black Caribbean	-0.019 (0.027)	-0.072*** (0.025)	-0.060** (0.025)	0.055** (0.022)	-0.028 (0.019)	-0.017 (0.019)	
Mixed and Other	-0.111*** (0.018)	-0.098*** (0.017)	-0.059*** (0.017)	-0.076*** (0.018)	-0.062*** (0.016)	-0.035** (0.016)	
Age and Region	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Parent origin class		x	x		x	x	
First Generation			x			x	
N	36,715	36,715	36,715	38,765	38,765	38,765	
Downward mobility		Men			Women		
White	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline	Baseline
Indian	0.010 (0.015)	0.020 (0.014)	-0.017 (0.014)	0.047*** (0.016)	0.052*** (0.014)	0.019 (0.015)	
Pakistani / Bangladeshi	0.137*** (0.018)	0.161*** (0.016)	0.120*** (0.017)	0.108*** (0.026)	0.129*** (0.023)	0.102*** (0.023)	
Chinese / Other Asian	0.059*** (0.019)	0.071*** (0.018)	0.025 (0.019)	0.111*** (0.018)	0.116*** (0.016)	0.073*** (0.017)	
Black African	0.192*** (0.020)	0.188*** (0.019)	0.143*** (0.019)	0.162*** (0.019)	0.170*** (0.017)	0.129*** (0.018)	
Black Caribbean	-0.019 (0.028)	0.065** (0.026)	0.057** (0.026)	-0.072*** (0.023)	0.044** (0.021)	0.032 (0.021)	
Mixed and Other	0.111*** (0.016)	0.107*** (0.015)	0.074*** (0.016)	0.076*** (0.017)	0.079*** (0.015)	0.051*** (0.015)	
Age and Region	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Parent origin class		x	x		x	x	
First Generation			x			x	
N	37,213	37,213	37,213	39,232	39,232	39,232	

Notes: Samples are restricted to those who can move up or down (excluding those in origin class 1 for upward mobility, and excluding those in origin class 7 for downward mobility). All models control for year of survey and include missing dummies for missing ethnicity information. Models additional control for region and age. Origin class, and a dummy indicator of whether the respondent was born in the UK. Models that also control for education also show very similar patterns (available on request). All models are weighted using LFS person weights. Standard errors in parenthesis, \* 1%, \*\* 5%, \*\*\* 10% significance

**Figure A1: Relative mobility trends 2014-2018 for men and women**

