

Educational and Occupational
Aspirations: sociological perspectives on
links to inequalities by disability, gender
and ethnicity

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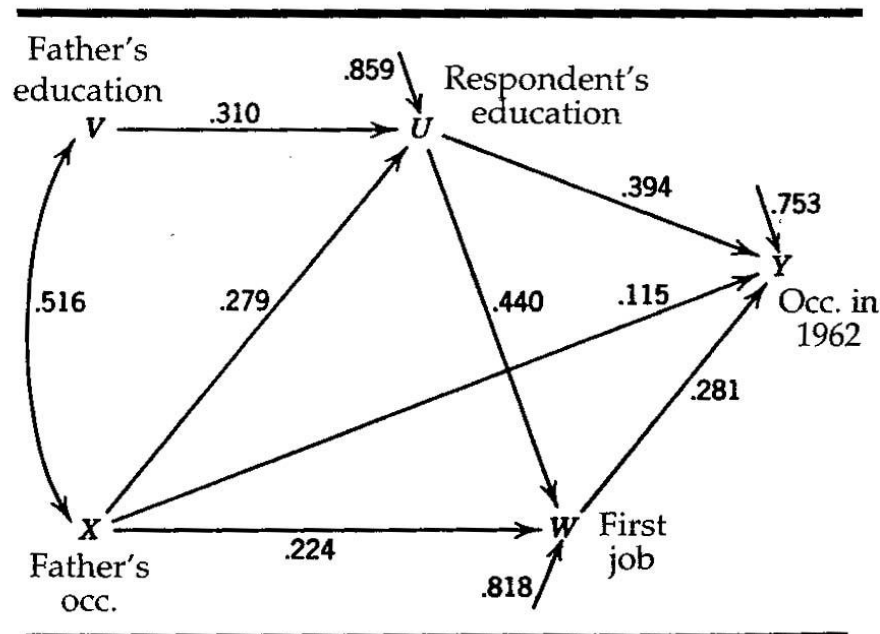
Long history of attention to aspirations in 'status attainment' models

From Blau and Duncan (1967)

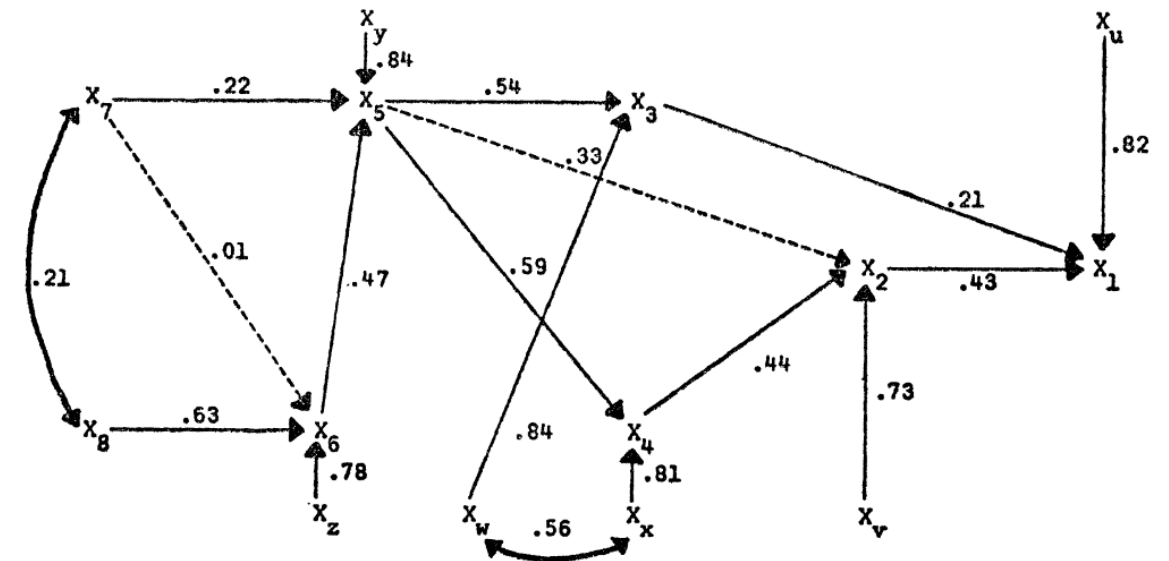
To Sewell, Haller and Portes (1969)

FIGURE 1

Path coefficients in basic model of the process of stratification



PATH COEFFICIENTS OF ANTECEDENTS OF EDUCATIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL ATTAINMENT LEVELS



- X₁ - Occupational Attainment
- X₂ - Educational Attainment
- X₃ - Level of Occupational Aspiration
- X₄ - Level of Educational Aspiration
- X₅ - Significant Others' Influence
- X₆ - Academic Performance
- X₇ - Socioeconomic Status
- X₈ - Mental Ability

Blau, Peter M. and Otis Dudley Duncan. (1967) *The American Occupational Structure*. New York: Wiley.

Sewell, William H., Archibald O. Haller, Alejandro Portes. (1969). The Educational and Early Occupational Attainment Process. *American Sociological Review*, 34(1): 82-92.

Key contributions

- Blau and Duncan highlighted the role of parental education and occupation in shaping educational and (directly and indirectly) occupational outcomes
- Sewell, Haller and Portes argued that we needed to build in
 - Social position affects who the significant others are; and the individual's 'mental capacity' influences expectations of significant others.
 - Significant others contribute to own occupational and educational aspirations and educational attainment
 - Own occupational aspirations affect educational and own occupational attainment affect occupational attainment; and education also affects occupation
- Takeaways: 1) SES matters (at least in part) because of the expectations of those around and how these translate into own aspirations; 2) aspirations matter for outcomes – helps to explain stratified outcomes

Primary and secondary effects and RRA

- A related dominant approach in sociology, deriving from Boudon (1974) to help explain social class differences in educational / employment outcomes is based around the distinction between:
 - Primary effects – e.g. the association between social class and demonstrated academic ability
 - Secondary effects – the differences in choices made given academic ability / attainment
- Breen and Goldthorpe (1997) argued that these secondary effects can be understood as deriving from rational decision-making in the face of differences in resources and constraints
 - Relative risk aversion – avoidance of downward mobility related to expectations of returns to different outcomes – will lead to different aspirations and different choices depending on social class background; differential expectations of success (shaped by patterns of attainment); differences in the relative costs and opportunity costs of staying on
- Hence, the authors could account for increasing take up of education across the board, alongside persistent class differentials and reducing or reversing gender differentials; and eschew (sub)cultural expectations or those based on differences in values across classes

Relevance to other factors linked to unequal outcomes – key questions

- What is the relevance of both significant others and aspirations when looked at in relation to other characteristics (gender, disability and ethnicity) and unequal outcomes across them?
 - Can they help to explain differential educational / occupational outcomes?
- Is a framework of primary and secondary effects useful when looking beyond social class, for example, disability and ethnicity?
- Can we think of variation in ‘choices’ and their consequences for outcomes in a rational action framework of responses to resources and constraints?

NB primary effects may be a consequence of genetics either of child or as they influence parenting (Ukikoshi and Conley forthcoming), or of psychological processes or culture or material resources, for these purposes no need to determine which.

Illustrations

1. Special educational needs (SEN) / disability and educational aspirations
2. Gender and occupational aspirations
3. Ethnicity and educational and occupational aspirations

1. SEN and educational and occupational aspirations

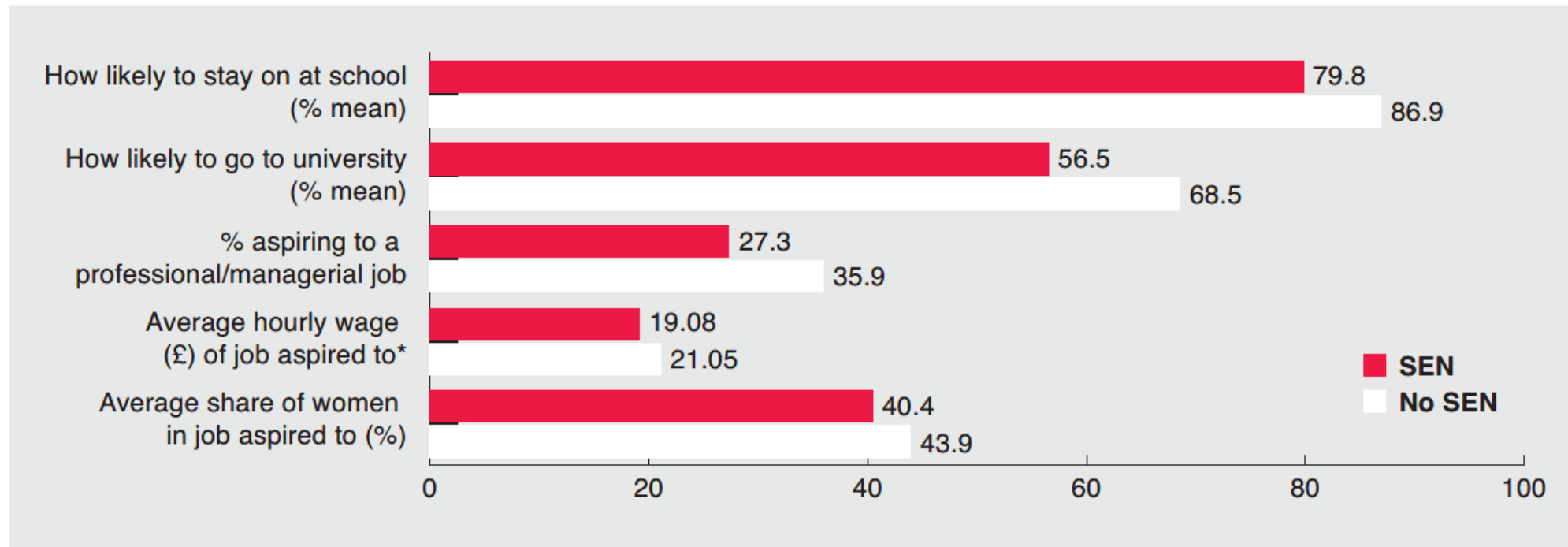
Derived from Parsons and Platt (2018)
and Chatzitheochari and Platt (2019)

Context

- Large labour market inequalities faced by disabled adults and by those with special educational needs in childhood (Jones 2021)
- Much, though not all, of this driven by differences in educational attainment
- Can result in cumulative impacts across the life course (Parsons and Platt 2022).
- Are there also influences of aspirations and significant others in shaping trajectories – and inequalities?

14-year-olds with SEN have lower aspirations conditioning on cognitive ability

Aspirations for the future at age 14: predicted probabilities net of child's previous response, cognitive ability and sex, by SEN status



*Average hourly wage displayed, (log of) average hourly wage in aspired job used in regressions.

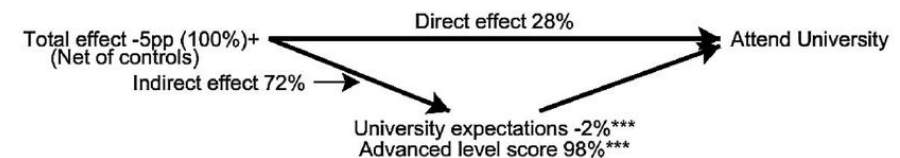
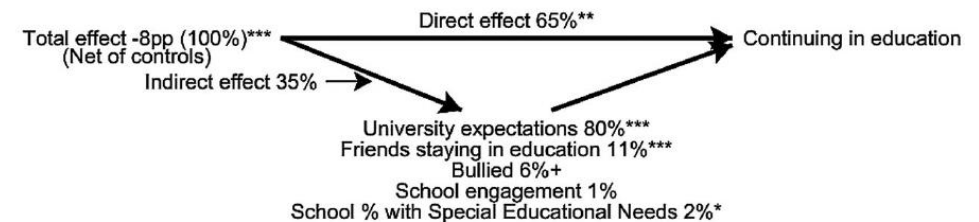
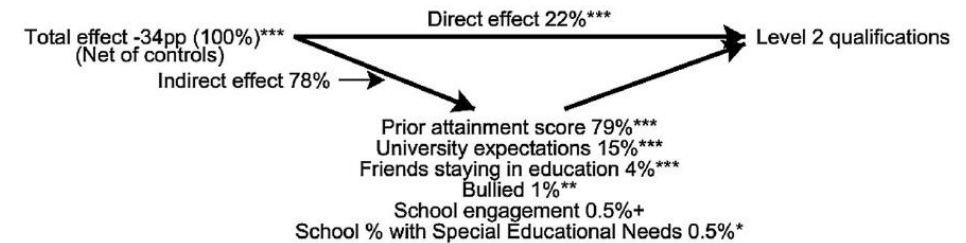
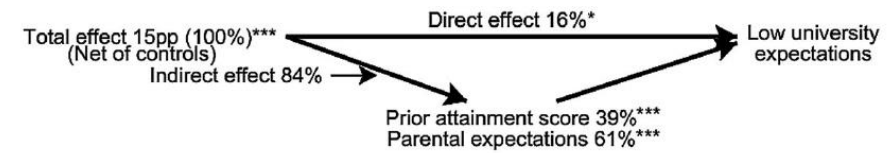
Source: Parsons and Platt (2018) using the Millennium Cohort Study

Comments

- Respondents were those whose SEN was identified in primary school and persisted at secondary school
- The findings controlled not only for cognitive ability (which is on average lower among children with SEN), but also for children's prior responses – to capture the earlier influences of family background and expectations
 - However, doesn't directly assess the role of parental expectations
- Patterns are somewhat comparable to those stratified by social class – secondary effects differ on top of primary effects
 - A rational response to the challenges presented by their condition? Including the fact that they report education as a fairly unhappy experience.
 - But are the alternatives more viable?
- *Note that sample does not include the most severely disabled children*

Primary and secondary effects in educational transitions

- Substantial differences in educational expectations – largely driven by parental expectations and prior attainment
- Large differences in attainment, largely driven by prior attainment, but also educational expectations and direct effect of SEN
- Smaller differences in staying on, but largely a direct effect of SEN – indirect effect largely driven by educational expectations
- Small difference in tertiary enrolment, largely driven by academic attainment



Source: Chatzitheochari and Platt (2019) using Next Steps

Comments

- Primary effects are the biggest driver of differences in outcomes – as would be expected
- However, also differences in educational expectations – secondary effects of disability
- Parents' expectations largely drive lower educational aspirations, but also a response to differences in measured academic ability
 - The role of significant others in shaping differentiated choices
 - Effects are net of social class background
- Disability / SEN differentials decline through educational stages
 - Similar to the declining influence of class background across decision points
- Differences in secondary effects make sense in terms of Breen and Goldthorpe model, given greater potential costs of continuing (including stigmatising environment) and lower group-level attainment shaping expected success and returns
- Raises questions about what alternative options are, with the increasing salience of qualifications for outcomes, and whether aspirations are being 'suppressed' in order to protect children

2. Gender and occupational aspirations

Derived from Polavieja and Platt (2014)

Context

- Occupational sex segregation remains a key driver of gendered labour market inequalities
- Demand-side theories focus on discrimination and social-closure
- But cannot explain sex-differences in career-preferences, work orientations and aspirations –even amongst youngsters with no labour market experience
- Therefore ask: how far do girls and boys – before contact with the labour market (or completing education) – choose such different routes?
- What is the role of parental influences – behaviours and attitudes – and their variation by social class in shaping different preferences – i.e. the extent to which preferences are gender normative or not?
- Is there still a role for individual agency shaped by traits that are not driven by parental circumstances and influences?
 - Advantage of sociological accounts in drawing attention to socialization processes and their relevance as an alternative to human capital or sphere specialization accounts, but come with the risk of being over-socialised and discounting agency

Study of the sex-typing of occupational aspirations of British teenagers before end of school

Anticipated mechanisms

via influences from SES and from attitudes / expectations embodied and expressed:

1. Parental Socio-Economic Resources

- Primary + secondary effects → influence occupational horizons
- Restricted occ. horizons offer fewer neutral occupations to choose from because segregation is higher in low-skilled jobs
- So that low (high) SES will increase (decrease) sex-typing in children's occ aspirations

2. Role modelling from parental behaviour

- Parents' behaviour at the domestic and economic spheres enacts gender roles. Children learn from this behavior what is socially prescribed for their sex
- Thus, parents' degree of occupational sex-typing transmitted via sex-role learning
- And traditional distribution of housework increases sex-typing

3. Ideological transmission

- Gender ideology provides values, attitudes and a largely coherent narrative about gender differences which can be transmitted through verbal interactions
- Thus, traditional gender ideology increases children's sex-typing

Plus agency as personality

- Personality traits relevant to socio-economic success
- Personality traits influenced by both heredity and social environment → intergenerational transmission
- But personality traits also have a purely individual dimension reflecting pure individual heterogeneity, after controlling for parental resources and characteristics involved in the intergenerational transmission of personality

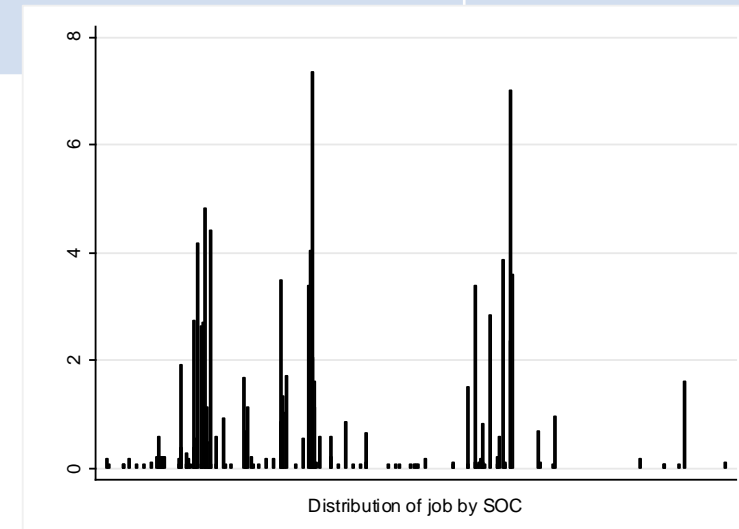
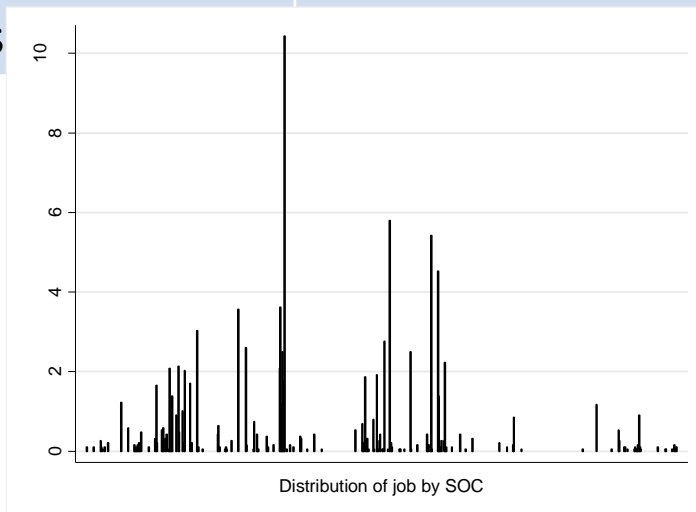
Used the British Household Panel Survey Youth Questionnaire

Matched

- A) to information from adult (parental) files – with measures of parents preceding those of children; and
- B to information from Labor Force Survey to categorise sex composition of parents' occupations and children's occupational aspirations (*What job would you like to do once you leave school or finish your full-time education?*), using 3-digit SOC coded data on these
- Final analytical N=3,040 ages between 11 and 15 (with a few aged 16) from waves 4-18 (1993-2008) of BHPS
 - 1,868 boys identified 122 occupations. Average % women= 23%
 - 1,880 girls identified 153 occupations. Average % women=58%
- NB aspired occupations are not expected to match directly on to what they *actually* end up doing; but to indicate their range of expectations and thus inform their behaviours and the opportunities they seek – follow up shows they are relevant to sex composition of occupational outcomes

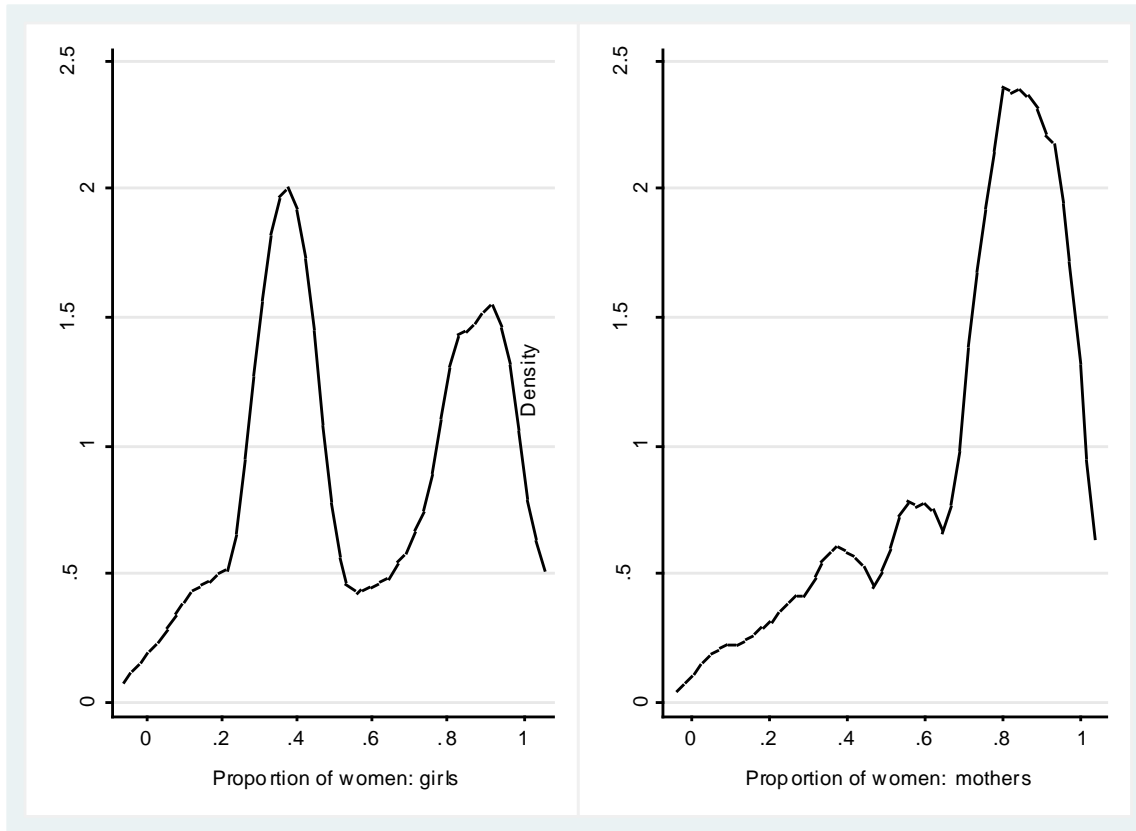
Top 5 aspired/actual jobs of boys & girls /mothers & fathers, and SOC distribution of aspirations

Boys	Fathers	Girls	Mothers
Sports professionals	Vehicle drivers	Actors etc.	Sales assistants
Motor mechanics	Works managers	Hairdressers	Cleaners
Armed forces	Service industry managers	Primary & nursery teachers	Care assistants
Police Officers	Other managers	Lawyers	Education assistants
Artists / graphic designers	Metal workers and fitters	Vets	Nurses

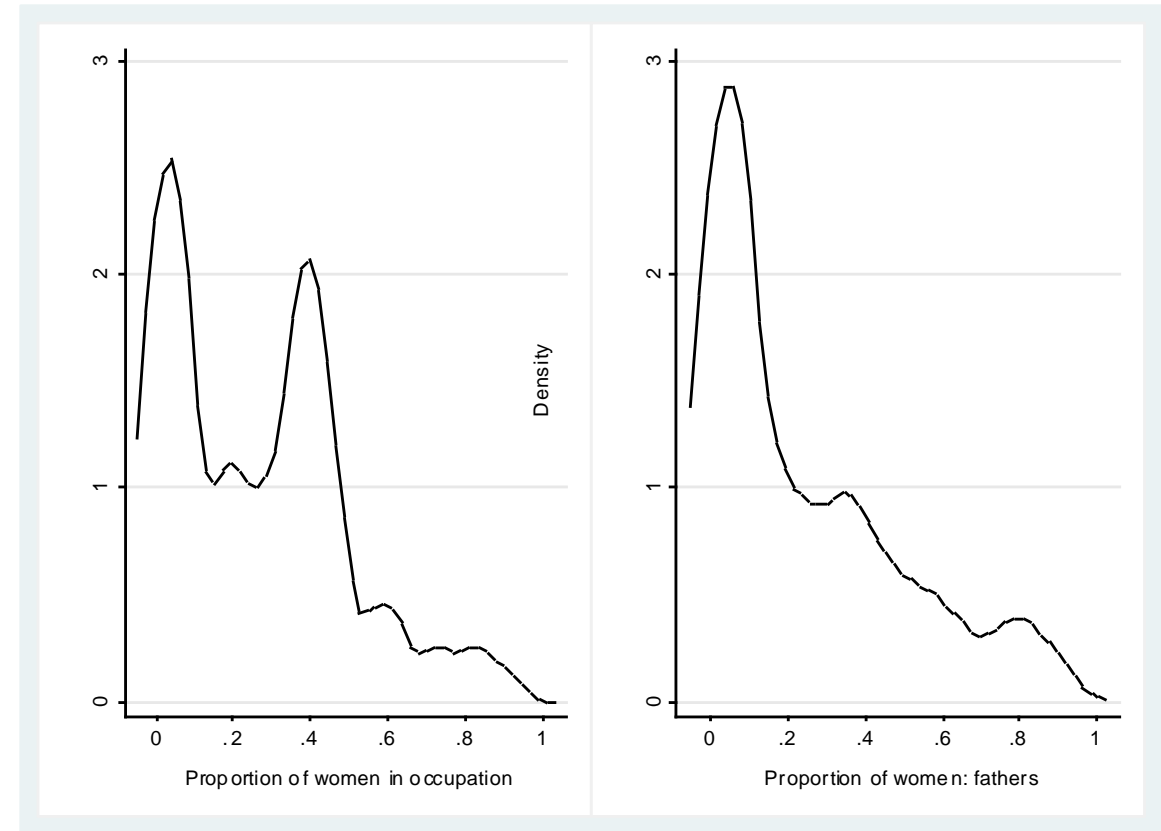


Share of women in occupations: parents and children

Girls and mothers



Boys and fathers



Results: girls cols 1 and 2; boys cols 3 and 4

- Parental SES reduces sex-typed choices for both boys and girls- for girls by more ambitious choices
- Less ambitious (lower paid) aspirations more gender typical
- Mothers in gender atypical and fathers in gender typical decrease/increase the gendered choices of daughters and sons respectively
- Greater housework inequality increases typicality of son's choices
- Self-esteem (and motivation for girls) decreases gender-typicality of choices – for girls = more ambitious choices

Probability of aspiring to a sex-typed occupation

Parental qualifications (Ref = none)				
Higher	-0.871*** (0.234)	-0.00920 (0.291)	-0.747** (0.238)	-0.532* (0.241)
Upper secondary	-0.348† (0.197)	0.170 (0.242)	-0.408* (0.206)	-0.309 (0.207)
Lower secondary	-0.531** (0.191)	-0.293 (0.227)	-0.133 (0.192)	-0.0631 (0.192)
Child's occupation matches same-sex parent	0.528 (0.434)	0.383 (0.666)	0.917* (0.377)	0.642† (0.373)
Mother's occ. gender typicality (ref = intermediate)				
Gender atypical	-0.447** (0.151)	-0.577** (0.186)	-0.0827 (0.155)	-0.0335 (0.157)
Gender typical	-0.00879 (0.144)	-0.00834 (0.179)	0.117 (0.145)	0.119 (0.146)
Father's occ. gender typicality (ref = intermediate)				
Gender atypical	0.125 (0.182)	0.333 (0.231)	-0.0278 (0.196)	0.0166 (0.203)
Gender typical	-0.0645 (0.183)	-0.0320 (0.225)	0.676*** (0.183)	0.697*** (0.190)
Average occasions mother was housewife	0.382† (0.220)	-0.193 (0.265)	0.176 (0.234)	0.0621 (0.236)
Housework inequality	-0.00195 (0.00535)	0.0000367 (0.00555)	0.0125* (0.00507)	0.0126* (0.00523)
Motivation score	-0.276*** (0.0675)	-0.0407 (0.0895)	-0.103† (0.0612)	-0.0192 (0.0623)
Self-esteem score	-0.175** (0.0633)	-0.0402 (0.0778)	-0.191** (0.0682)	-0.148* (0.0692)
Log of hourly wage in aspired occupation		-3.304*** (0.160)		-1.353*** (0.232)

Comments

- Results consistent with the relevance of SES effects for boys and girls and how they can contribute to maintaining labour market segregation
- While also showing that gendered expressions communicated through actions more than words also influence subsequent patterns of segregation
- But effects are not large – girls apparently not adapting preferences in accordance with changing labour market opportunities
 - though partly a cohort effect...?

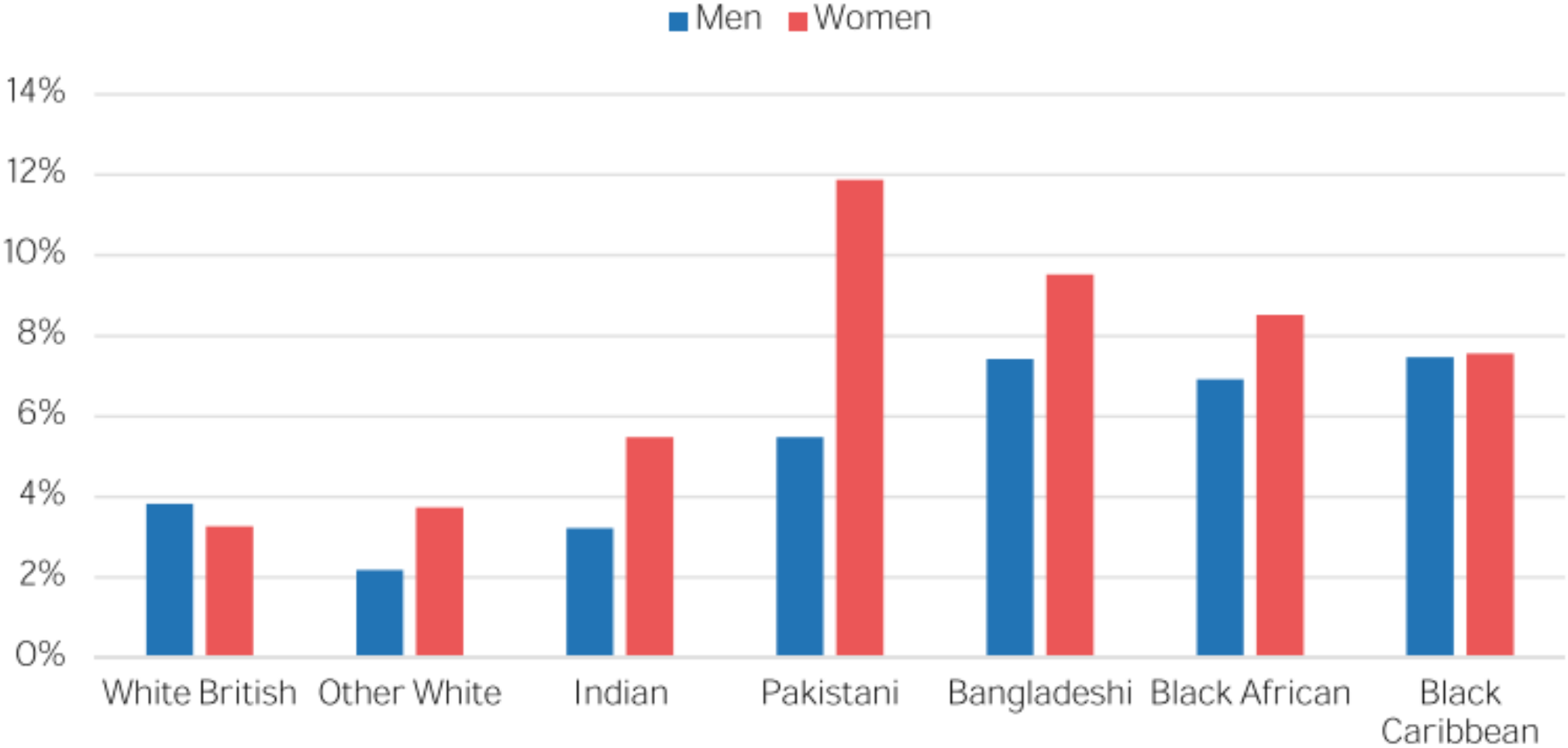
3. Ethnicity and educational and occupational aspirations

Derived from Parsons and Platt (forthcoming)

Context

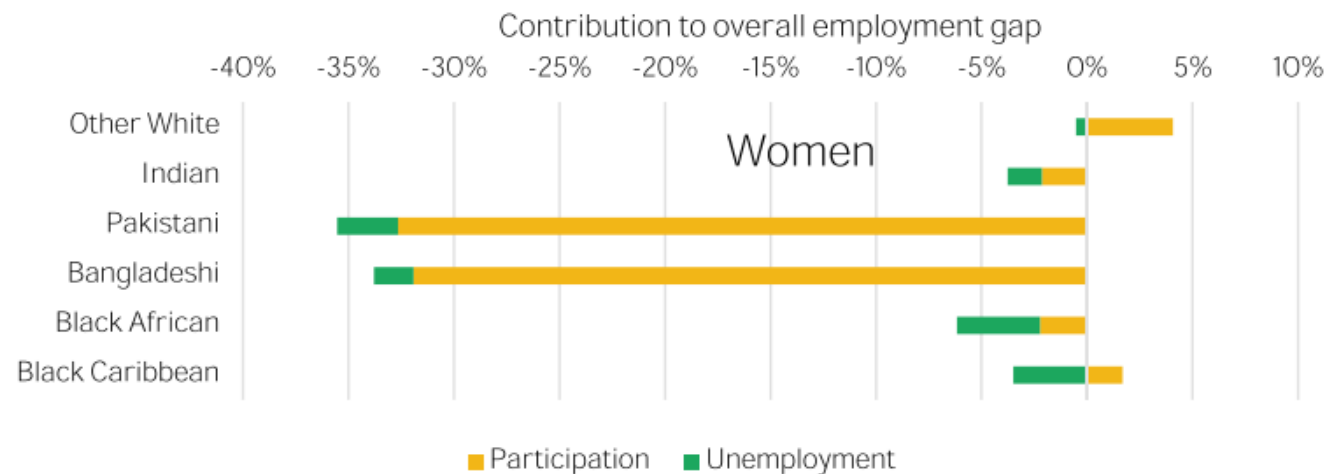
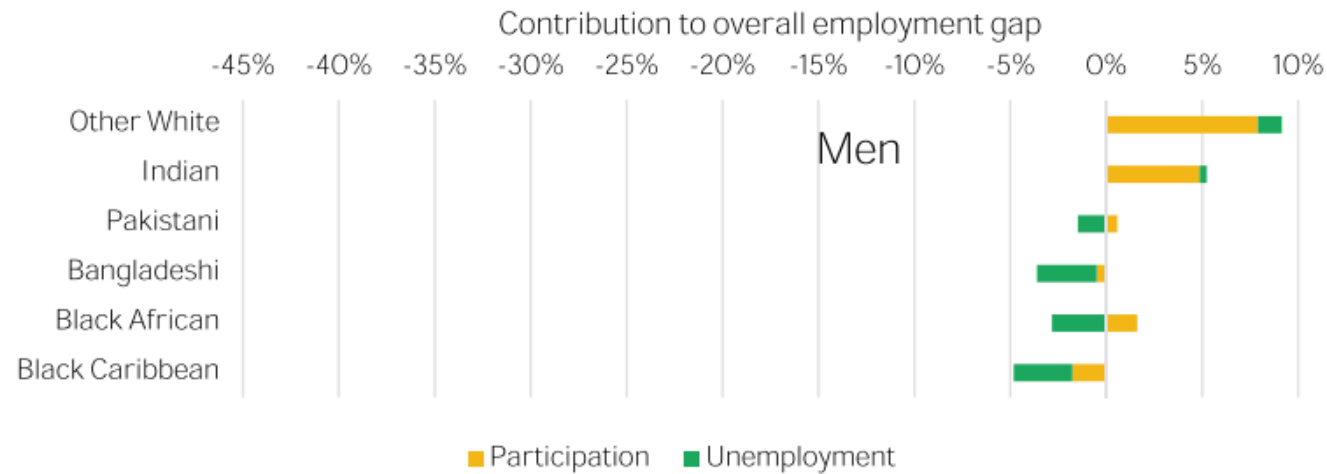
- Ethnic minorities continue to experience disadvantages in the UK labour market (e.g. Mirza and Warwick 2024)
 - Though with much variation across groups
- These are particularly marked for employment, and also for participation
- In work, inequalities in pay have been associated with different patterns of occupational distribution or occupational segregation (Brynin and Longhi 2015; Longhi and Brynin 2017; Longhi et al. 2013; Platt 2022)
- Occupational segregation is also implicated in more marginal labour market position, and also accompanied by higher rates of self-employment, which also increases labour market vulnerability

Unemployment rates by ethnic group



Source:
Mirza and
Warwick
2024,
Figure 34.

Employment gaps: unemployment and participation



Source: Mirza and Warwick 2024, Figure 33

Pay (employees 16-64 not in education)

Ethnicity	Median wage (£)		<10% above min wage		>90th wage percentile	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
White British	14.0	11.2	16%	28%	14%	6%
Other White	12.0	10.6	21%	31%	15%	7%
Indian	16.6	12.5	16%	23%	21%	11%
Pakistani	10.7	9.9	32%	37%	9%	3%
Bangladeshi	9.9	10.9	37%	30%	5%	4%
Chinese	19.3	15.0	10%	20%	22%	13%
Black African	11.5	10.7	26%	30%	5%	4%
Black Caribbean	12.2	12.2	18%	21%	7%	5%

Source: Mirza
and Warwick
2024, Table 4

Occupational distribution: Men, England and Wales, 2016-1019

Ethnic group	UK born?	Occ 1 (%)	Occ 2 (%)	Occ 3 (%)	Occ 4 (%)	Occ 5 (%)	Share in top 5
White British	UK	Elementary storage (2.1)	LGV drivers (2.0)	Sales accounts (2.0)	Production mngrs (1.9)	Electricians (1.8)	9.7
Other white	<i>Non-UK</i>	<i>Elementary storage (5.1)</i>	<i>Construction (3.5)</i>	<i>LGV drivers (3.2)</i>	<i>Chefs (2.9)</i>	<i>Programmers (2.5)</i>	17.2
Indian	<i>Non-UK</i>	<i>Programmers (8.8)</i>	<i>IT / telecoms (5.4)</i>	<i>Medics (4.6)</i>	<i>IT analysts (2.2)</i>	<i>Elementary storage (2.1)</i>	23.0
	UK	Book-keepers (4.0)	Programmers (3.6)	Medics (3.2)	Sales accounts (3.1)	Finance analysts (2.9)	16.7
Pakistani	<i>Non-UK</i>	<i>Taxi drivers (20.7)</i>	<i>Medics (3.8)</i>	<i>Security guards (3.6)</i>	<i>Sales assistants (3.0)</i>	<i>Shopkeepers (2.7)</i>	33.8
	UK	Taxi drivers (7.9)	Sales assistants (4.3)	Medics (3.2)	Book-keepers (2.8)	Van drivers (2.4)	20.6
Bangladeshi	<i>Non-UK</i>	<i>Taxi drivers (16.6)</i>	<i>Chefs (10.8)</i>	<i>Waiters (6.3)</i>	<i>Sales assistants (4.2)</i>	<i>Catering assistants (4.2)</i>	42.1
	UK	Waiters (4.5)	Sales assistants (3.5)	Taxi drivers (3.3)	IT & telecoms (3.3)	Customer service (3.3)	17.9
Black African	<i>Non-UK</i>	<i>Security guards (6.2)</i>	<i>Taxi drivers (5.3)</i>	<i>Care workers (5.1)</i>	<i>Elementary storage (4.1)</i>	<i>Nurses (3.5)</i>	24.1
	UK	Security guards (2.9)	Book-keepers (2.8)	Business & finance (2.7)	LGV drivers (2.6)	Care workers (2.6)	13.6
Black Caribbean	<i>Non-UK</i>	<i>Sales assistants (4.4)</i>	<i>Bus / coach drivers (3.6)</i>	<i>Elementary storage (3.4)</i>	<i>Construction (3.2)</i>	<i>Van drivers (3.1)</i>	17.6
	UK	Sales assistants (3.7)	Van drivers (3.4)	Security guards (3.2)	Elementary storage (2.8)	Care workers (2.3)	15.2

Source: Platt 2021, Table 2

Occupational distribution: Women, England and Wales, 2016-1019

Ethnic group	UK born?	Occ 1 (%)	Occ 2 (%)	Occ 3 (%)	Occ 4 (%)	Occ 5 (%)	Share in top 5
White British	UK	Other admin (4.3)	Sales assistants (4.1)	Care workers (4.0)	Nurses (3.7)	Primary teachers (2.9)	19.0
<i>Other white</i>	<i>Non-UK</i>	<i>Cleaners (7.1)</i>	<i>Sales assistants (3.2)</i>	<i>Care workers (3.0)</i>	<i>Elementary storage (3.0)</i>	<i>Catering assistants (2.8)</i>	19.0
Indian	<i>Non-UK</i>	<i>Nurses (8.2)</i>	<i>Sales assistants (4.3)</i>	<i>Care workers (3.5)</i>	<i>Medics (3.3)</i>	<i>Programmers (3.2)</i>	22.5
	UK	Sales assistants (3.3)	Other admin (3.1)	Medics (3.1)	Primary teachers (2.6)	Book-keepers (2.5)	14.7
Pakistani	<i>Non-UK</i>	<i>Care workers (6.1)</i>	<i>Sales assistants (5.6)</i>	<i>Other admin (4.6)</i>	<i>Medics (4.0)</i>	<i>Teaching assistants (3.6)</i>	23.8
	UK	Care workers (6.3)	Sales assistants (5.0)	Teaching assistants (4.9)	Primary teachers (4.3)	Nursery nurses (3.2)	23.8
Bangladeshi	<i>Non-UK</i>	<i>Sales assistants (10.9)</i>	<i>Care workers (5.8)</i>	<i>Other admin (5.1)</i>	<i>Teaching assistants (4.7)</i>	<i>Catering assistants (4.5)</i>	30.9
	UK	Other admin (7.8)	Sales assistants (5.6)	Primary teachers (5.5)	Teaching assistants (4.7)	Nurses (3.6)	27.2
Black African	<i>Non-UK</i>	<i>Care workers (18.2)</i>	<i>Nurses (13.0)</i>	<i>Cleaners (9.1)</i>	<i>Nursing assistants (6.8)</i>	<i>Sales assistants (3.2)</i>	50.3
	UK	Care workers (5.8)	Nurses (4.4)	Sales assistants (4.3)	Other admin (4.1)	Welfare profs (3.2)	22.5
Black Caribbean	<i>Non-UK</i>	<i>Care workers (13.7)</i>	<i>Nurses (9.1)</i>	<i>Nursing assistants (5.5)</i>	<i>Cleaners (5.0)</i>	<i>Other admin (3.2)</i>	36.6
	UK	Care workers (5.6)	Nurses (4.3)	Sales assistants (4.2)	Teaching assistants (3.2)	Other admin (3.2)	20.7

Source: Platt 2021, Table 3

What explains these (varied) labour market outcomes?

- A range of arguments have been put forward to explain differences in occupational patterns across ethnic groups, and in ethnic differences in participation (particularly among women)
- These have focused on both
 - processes of exclusion and
 - ‘preferences’ (particularly but not solely for women)
- But do these patterns represent preferences (which cannot be simply inferred from actual patterns due to feedback effects)?
- And can we use existing tools for analysing social transmission to help describe and explain occupational preferences
 - Including drawing on the insights to be gained from looking at preferences before exposure to feedback effects from labour market (c.f. Polavieja and Platt 2014).

Why might preferences differ across ethnic groups?

- Differences in SES across ethnic groups – influence expectations and shape secondary effects (including relative risk aversion)
 - But perceived risks of ‘downward mobility’ might be different for children of immigrants:
 - Immigrants may face downward mobility on migration (Dustmann et al. 2024)
 - Act of migration may be to achieve upward mobility – for next generation
- But also responses to what is observed in terms of achieved outcomes of others – rational awareness of opportunities
- Noted cultural persistence in employment and participation (Polavieja 2015; Finseraas and Kotsadam 2017; Fernandez and Fogli 2006)
 - Culture might be expected to work through intergenerational & family processes, as well as community, neighbourhood and peers, and be expressed (in part) through ‘preferences’
 - Role of significant others outside family

What might we expect from what we know about SES and socialisation?

- Parents and socialisation matter for children's occupational ambitions (and participation)
 - Role modelling effect
 - Communication and transmission of gendered expectations
 - More advantaged family origins (and more highly educated parents) associated with greater occupational ambition
 - Some of this works through educational attainment and educational aspirations (cf. status attainment model)
- Parents' work status, participation, expectations and attitudes will affect occupational aspirations, some of this will be mediated by educational expectations (e.g. Platt and Polavieja 2016)

Children's characteristics also matter

- Self-concept linked to higher and more independent occupational aspirations
- Children are also influenced by peers, and tend to become more conformist in their teens, even if they also become less rigid in their gender assumptions
- Children evaluate their possibilities over time, as they adjust to their school performance and changing options
- Children's educational expectations co-evolve with occupational expectations
 - And adjust to feedback from performance
- Therefore, at younger ages, parents are the strongest influence, but over time individual and peer influences strengthen, and evaluation of what is possible also shapes preferences

Ethnic group differences in family influences

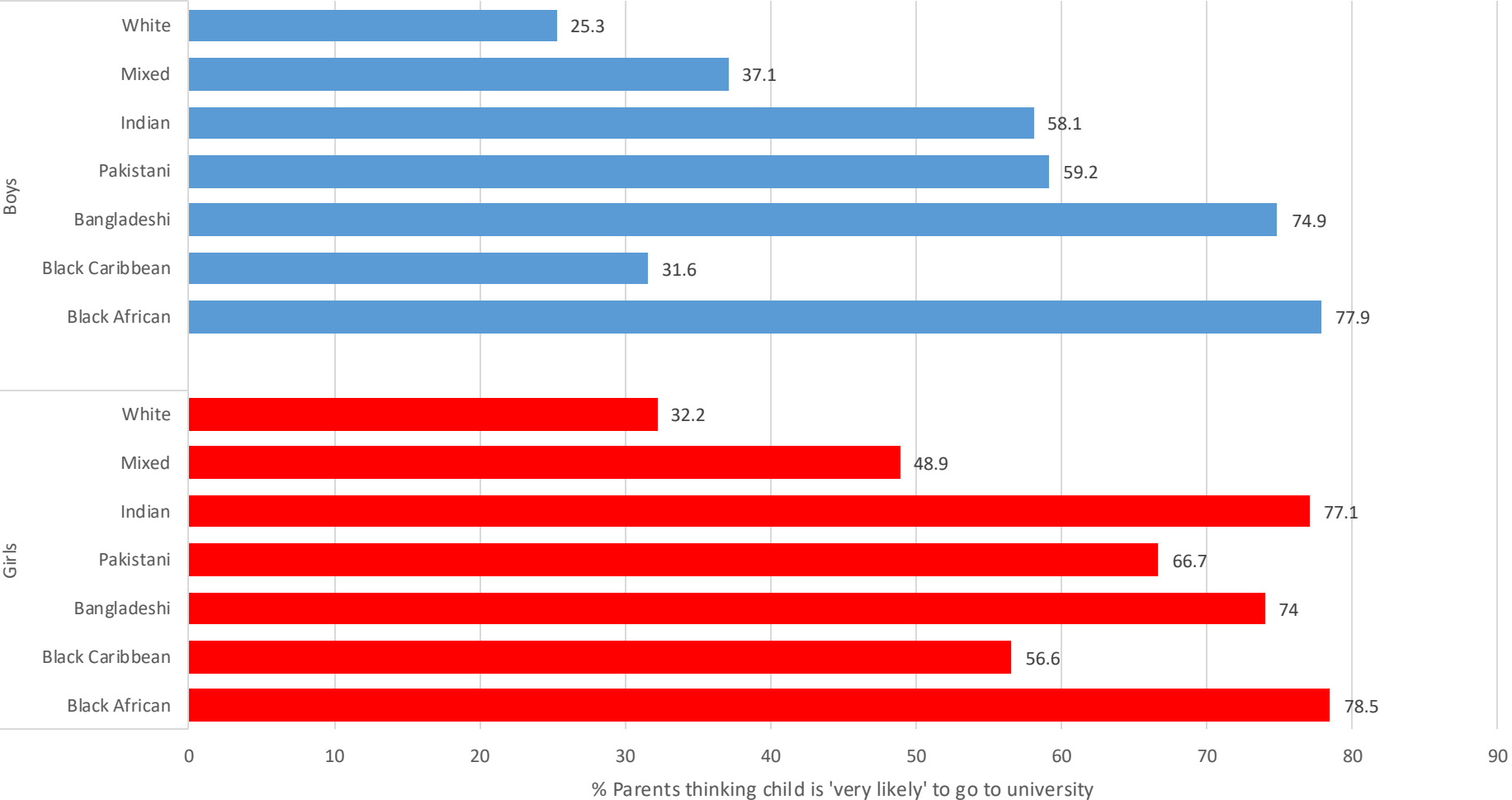
Major differences in the UK across groups in:

- Women's labour force participation
- Occupational position and unemployment rates
- More / less traditional gender role attitudes
 - South Asian groups more traditional, white British midway, Black Caribbean and Black African more egalitarian (e.g. Wang 2018)
- Family structure
 - e.g. White and black Caribbean – more lone parent families
- Might suggest different occupational ambitions and different patterns for boys and girls
- BUT girls and boys from ethnic minority groups are well recognised for high educational expectations (the immigrant aspiration 'paradox')

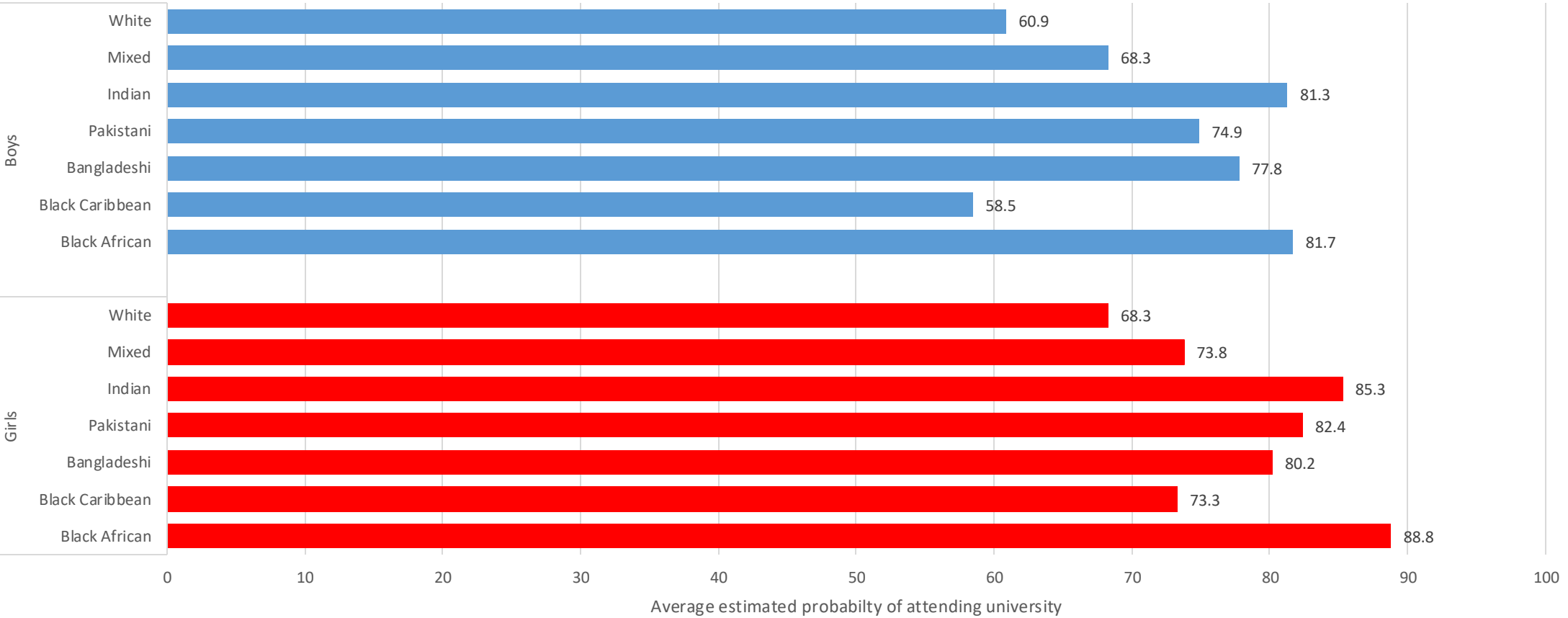
Educational aspirations across ethnic groups

- Differences in parental – and child – educational aspirations across ethnic groups
 - Differences in child aspirations largely accounted for by differences in parental aspirations (e.g. Strand 2014) (c.f. status attainment model)
 - Secondary effects related to ethnicity compensate for primary effects (Jackson 2012)
- Different levels of aspirations have consequences in terms of educational participation and attainment (Strand 2011, 2014; Burgess 2016)
 - See illustrations from MCS at age 14/15
- Educational attainment of minority groups is less sensitive to social class background (e.g. Platt and Zuccotti 2023)

Parents think their child is 'very likely' to go to university (age 11)



Average probability of “how likely to go to university”, asked at age 14



Peer effects

- Peers matter for behaviours and perceived options
- Some research suggests that ethnic minority children are less susceptible to peer effects compared to majority children (Giordano 2003)
- At the same time, given the tendency towards homophily across ethnic groups (Burgess and Platt 2021), we might expect spillover effects within groups –so that peers generate more comparable expectations and ambitions

We therefore ask:

- *Are there differences in occupational aspirations across girls and boys from different ethnic groups that can help us account for observed differences in labour market outcomes?*
- In particular,
 - do ethnic minorities have less (more) ambitious job aspirations? And do girls and boys from more traditional background have more gender-typical expectations?
 - how far can any differences be explained by differences in family background (and other relevant characteristics)?
 - how do the occupational aspirations of girls and boys from different ethnic groups evolve over time, as peer and horizontal influences become stronger?

Expectations (1)

1. Occupational preferences will be less ambitious (more segregated & traditional) for those from more disadvantaged groups (*Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black African, Black Caribbean*)
 - Explained largely through direct effects of parental characteristics and family background
2. Occupational preferences will be less (more) ambitious and more (less) gender-typical for girls from more (less) traditional ethnic groups and those where rates of female labour force participation are low (high) (*Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Indian girls – less ambitious; Black Caribbean girls more ambitious*)

Expectations (2)

3. Occupational preferences will be more ambitious where educational ambitions are also high (*all minority groups, but especially Indian, Black African, Pakistani and Bangladeshi, and especially girls*)
 - Due (largely) to own / parents' educational expectations
4. Occupational preferences will be more susceptible to family influences early and will develop more independently (influenced by educationally (occupationally) aspiring peers later) leading to an increase in occupational ambitions over time across minority groups and a decrease in gender typicality (girls in particular)
5. Wider horizontal influences may suppress occupational ambitions across all minorities

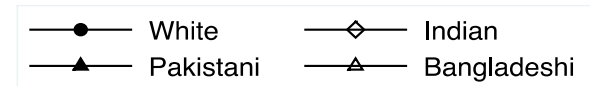
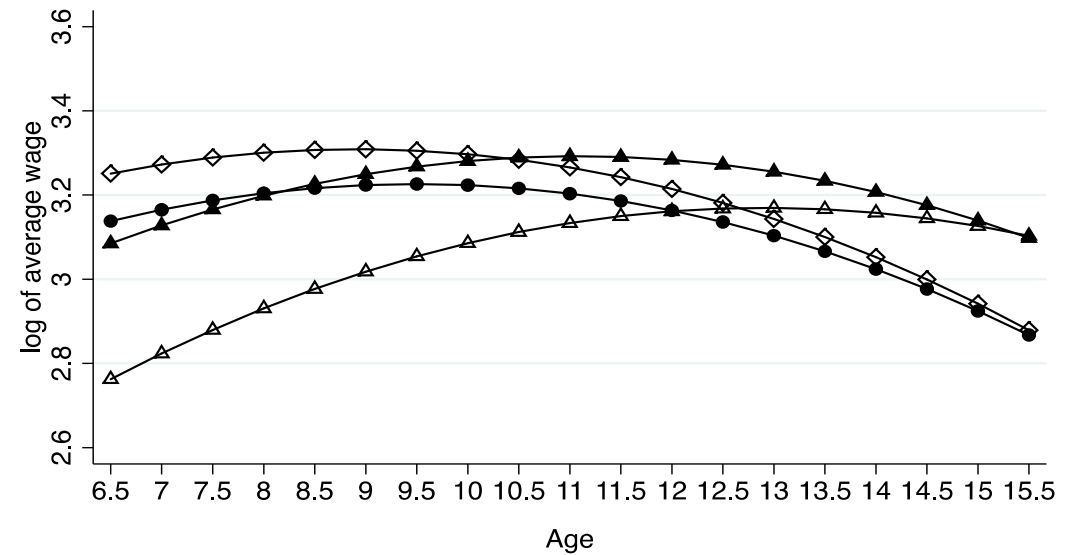
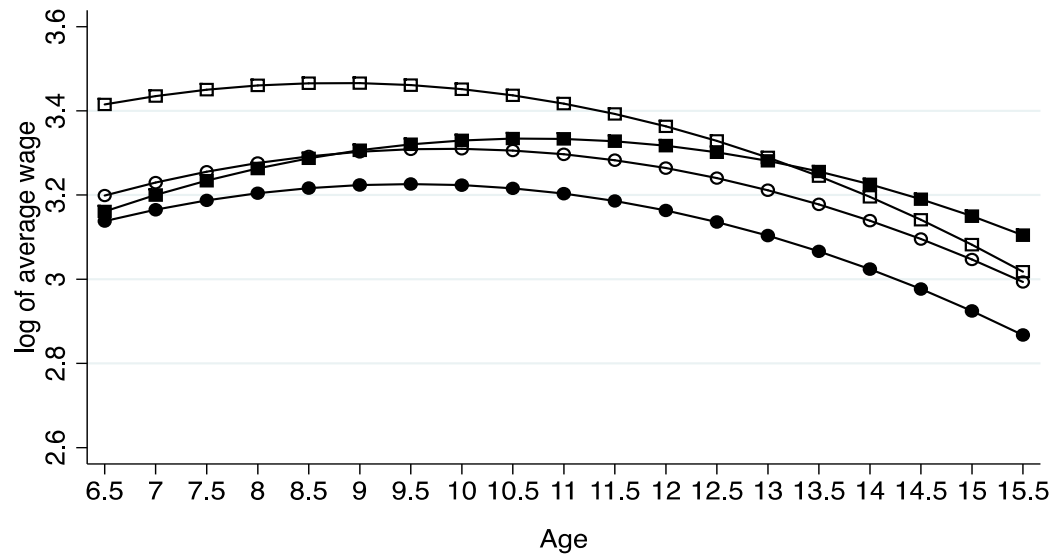
Test using the Millennium Cohort Study

- Use children's responses to self-completion questionnaire at ages 7, 11, and 14 surveys (*"what do you want to be when you grow up?"*)
- Match to Labour force survey to give measures of % female and average pay in occupation at period of responses
- Plus measures from child of educational expectations and self-esteem
- Also matched to information from parental interviews on SES, ethnic group, family structure and educational expectations
- And matched to direct measures of child cognitive ability at age 11
- Estimate growth curve models (linear mixed models) to capture inter-group differences in intra-child patterns and to capture evolution as child ages, with fixed and TV covariates and random intercept and slope – separate models for boys and girls
 - N= 13154 observations from 6272 boys and 13950 observations from 6242 girls

Top five: girls

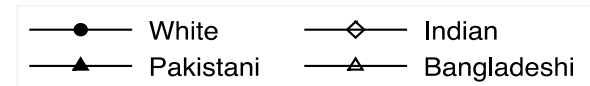
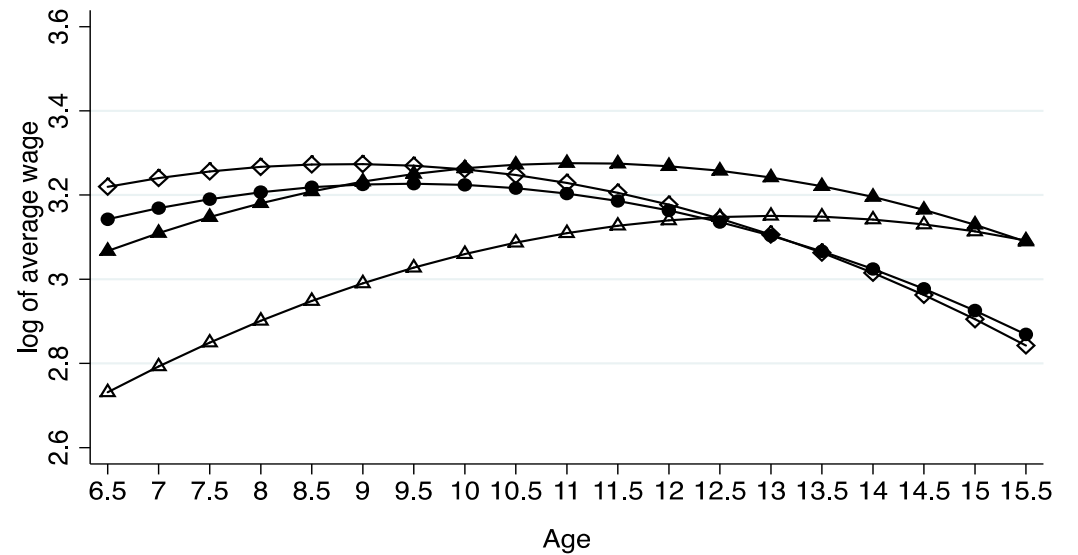
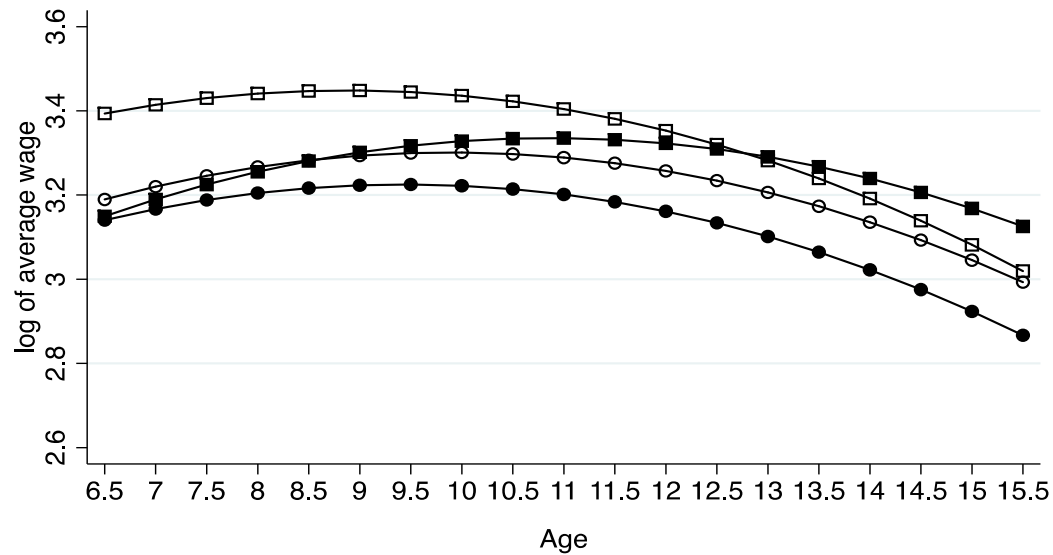
	White	Mixed	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Black Caribbean	Black African	Other
Secondary School Teacher	1	2	3	4	3		3	2
Actor/Performer	2	3				3	4	
Medical Professional	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Vet	4					5		
Legal Profession	5	4	2	2	2		2	3
Musician		5						
Dental			4	5				
Accountant			5					
Nurse				3	4			5
Midwife					5		5	4
Architects						2		
Psychologist						4		

Occupational aspirations, 7-14 – wage of aspired job: Boys, unadjusted



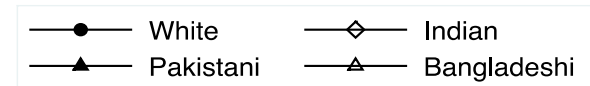
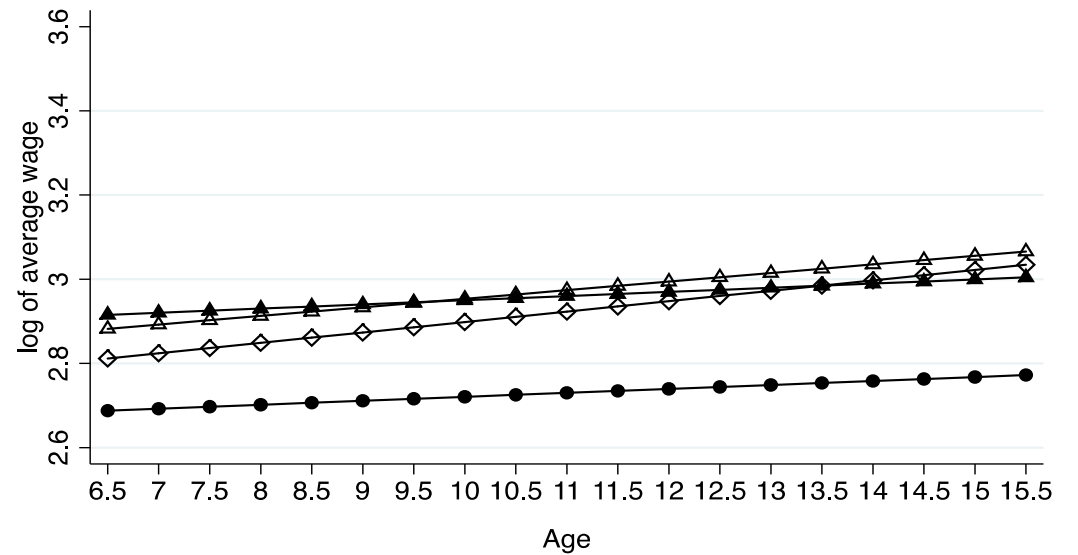
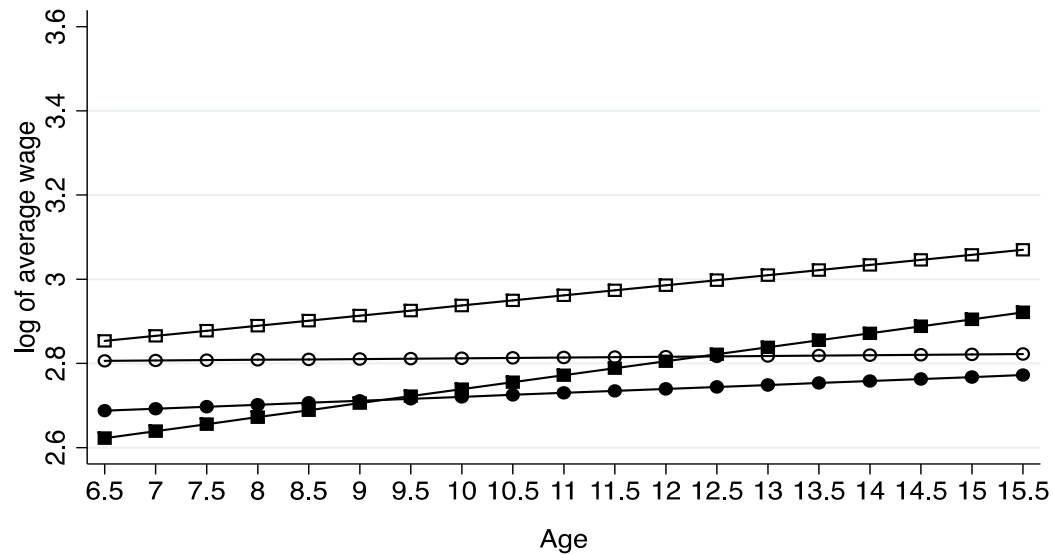
Significantly higher log wage in jobs aspired to by Mixed, Pakistani and Black African compared to White majority boys overall, significantly lower among Bangladeshi boys, but positive and significant age gradient for Pakistani and Bangladeshi boys

Boys: adjusted



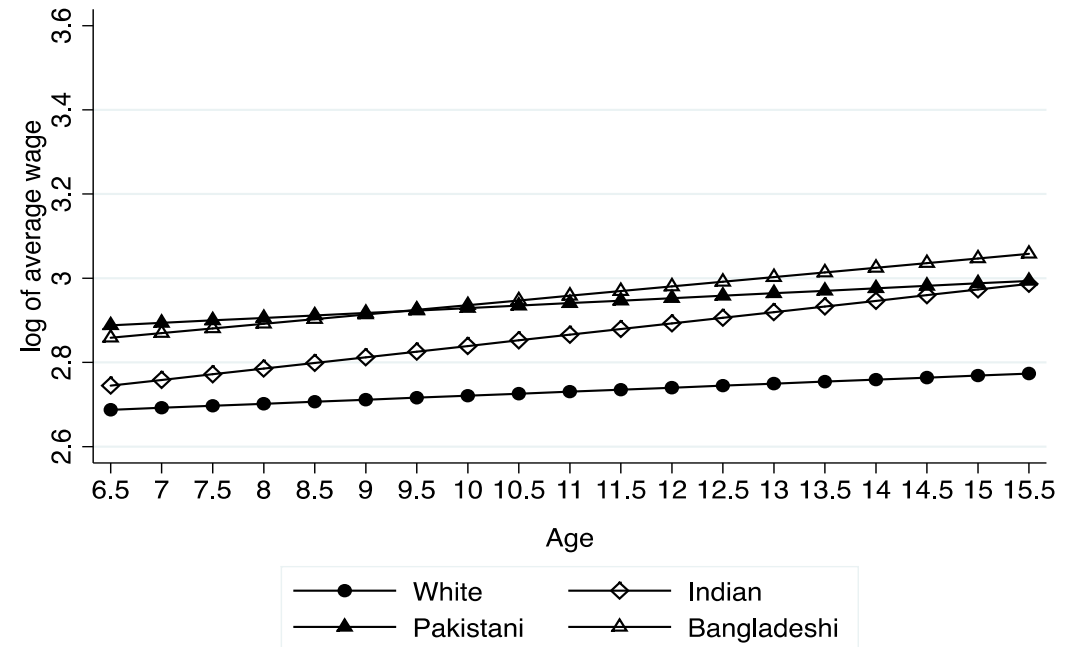
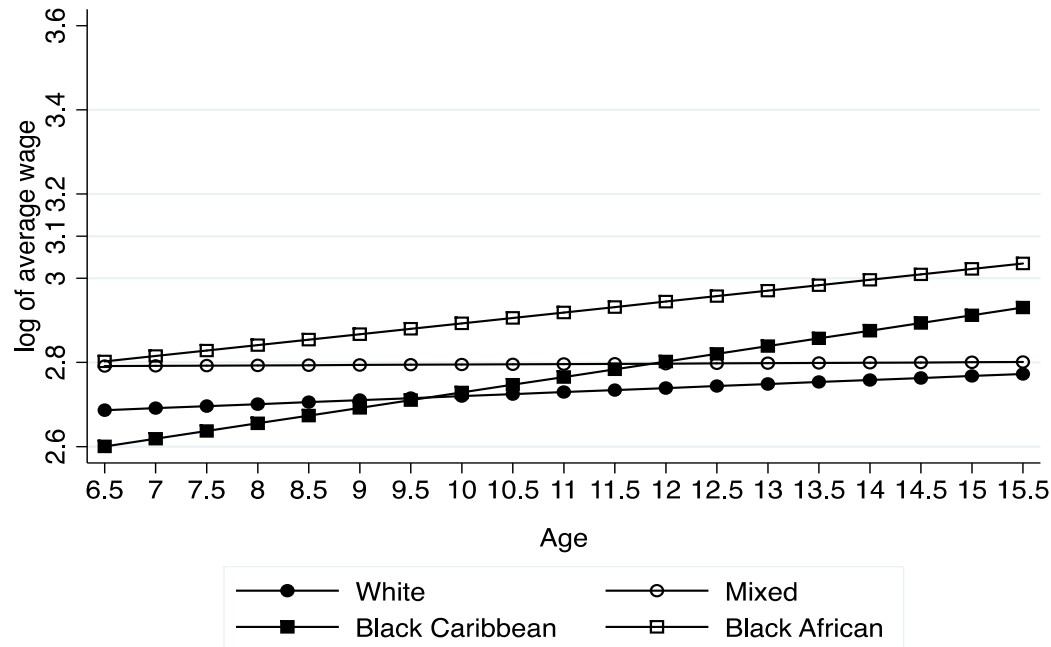
Significantly higher log wage in jobs aspired to by Mixed, and Black African compared to White majority boys overall, significantly lower among Bangladeshi boys, but positive and significant age gradient for Pakistan and Bangladeshi boys

Occupational aspirations, 7-14, wage of aspired job: Girls unadjusted



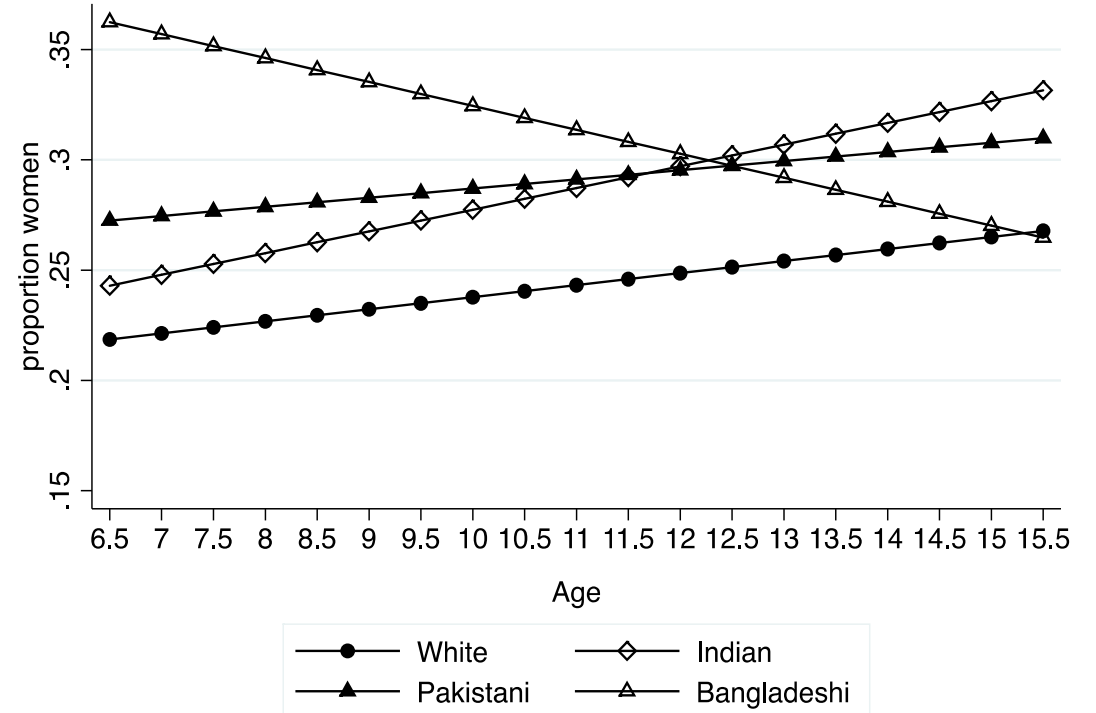
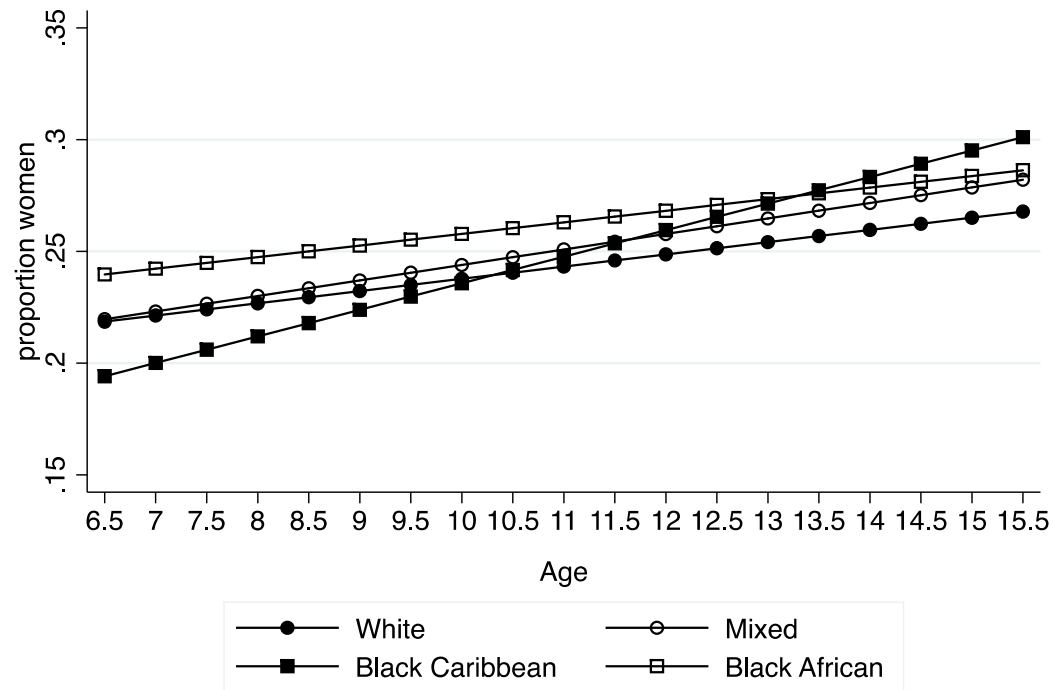
Significantly higher log wage in jobs aspired to by Mixed, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black African compared to White majority girls overall, positive and significant age gradient for Indian girls

Girls, adjusted



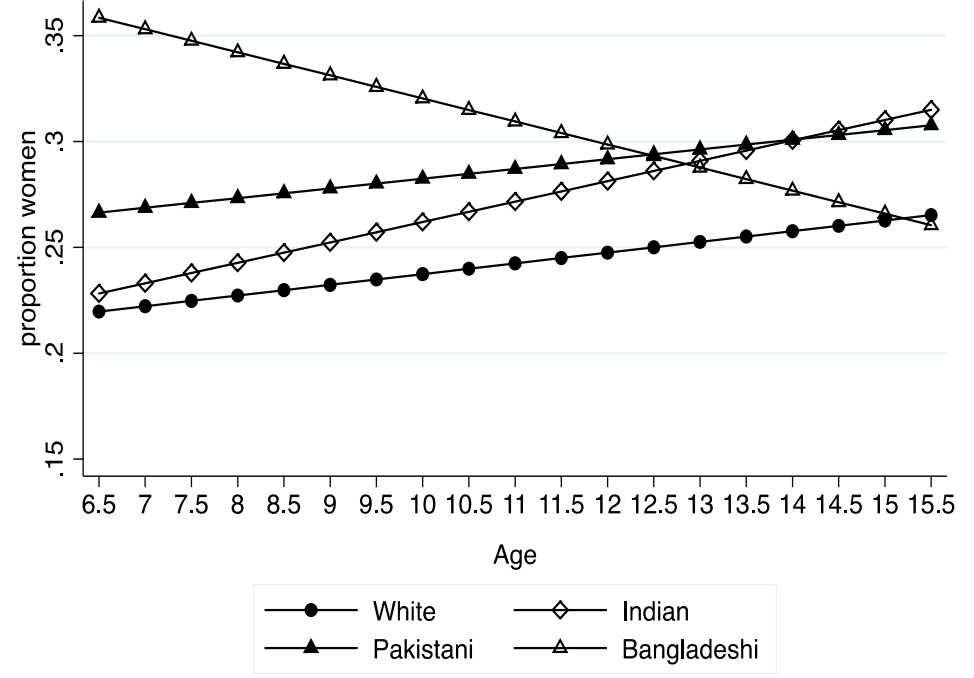
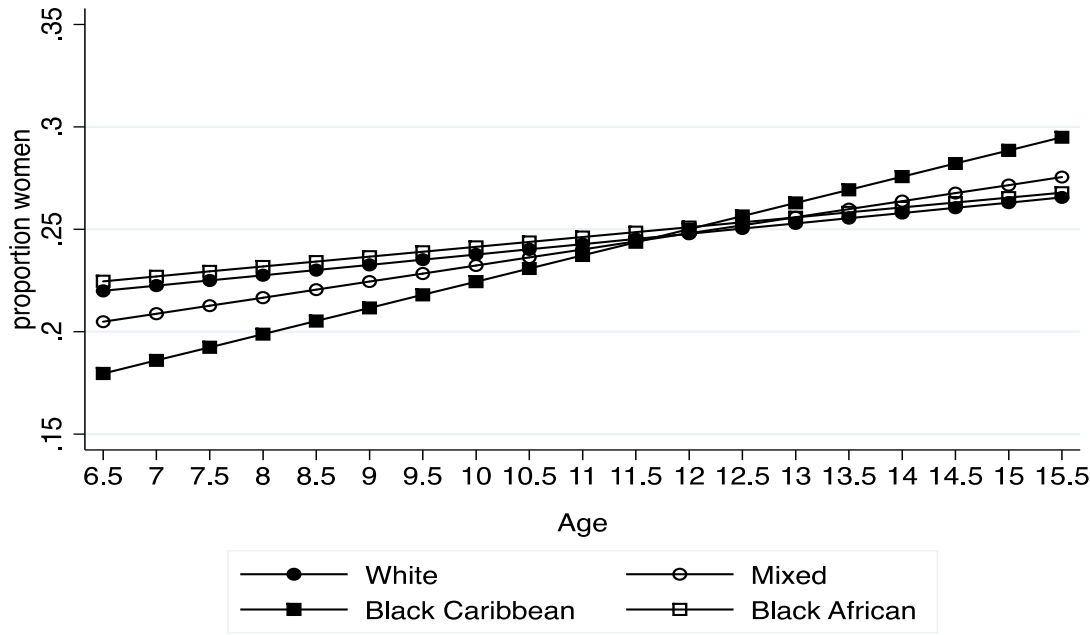
Significantly higher log wage in jobs aspired to by Mixed, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black African compared to White majority girls overall, positive and significant age gradient for Indian girls, positive linear gradient for white majority girls

Occupational aspirations, 7-14, share of women in aspired job: Boys unadjusted



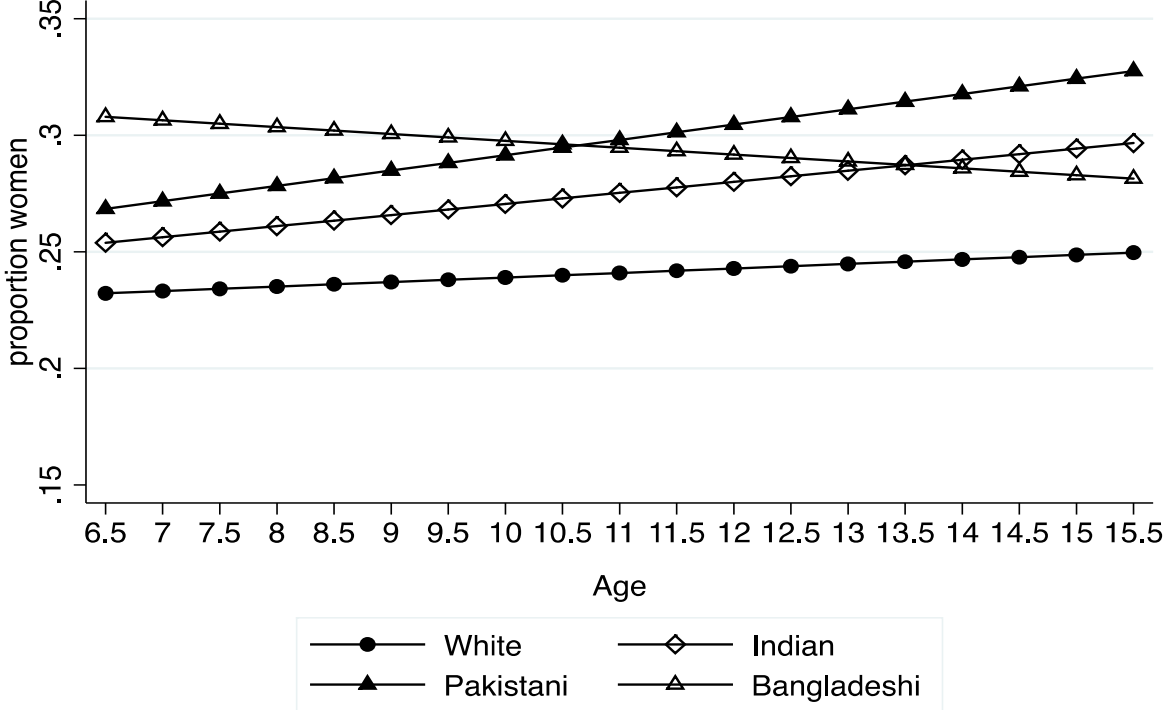
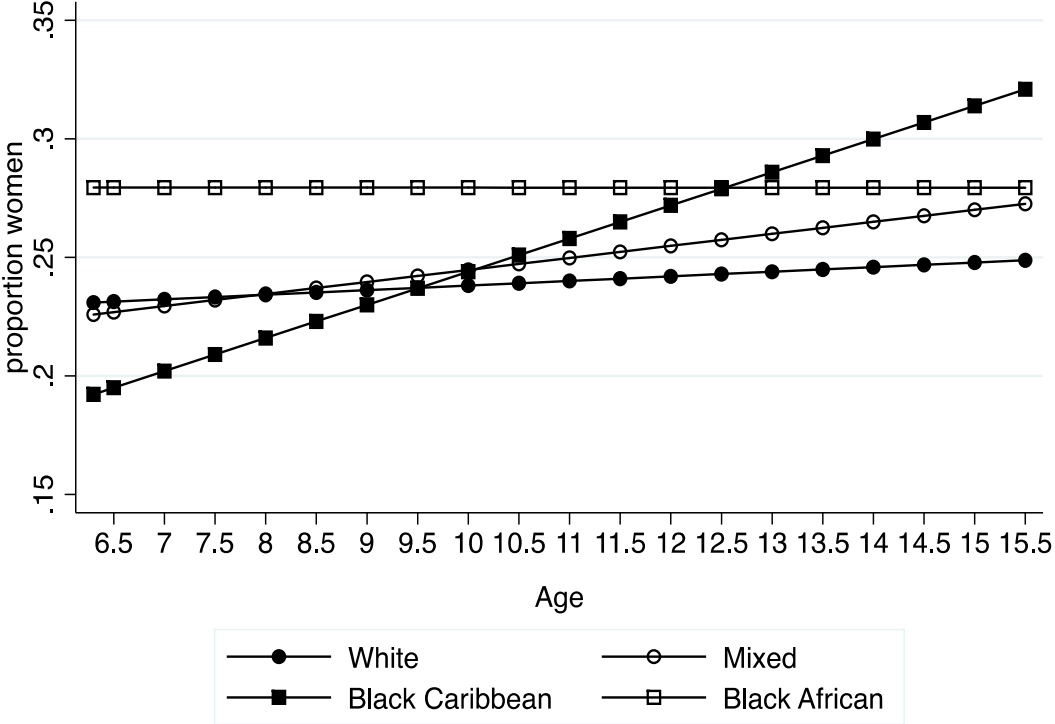
Significantly higher % women in jobs aspired to by Indians, Pakistani and Bangladeshi compared to White majority boys, significant decline over time among Bangladeshis

Boys adjusted



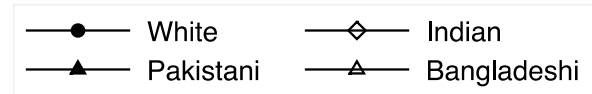
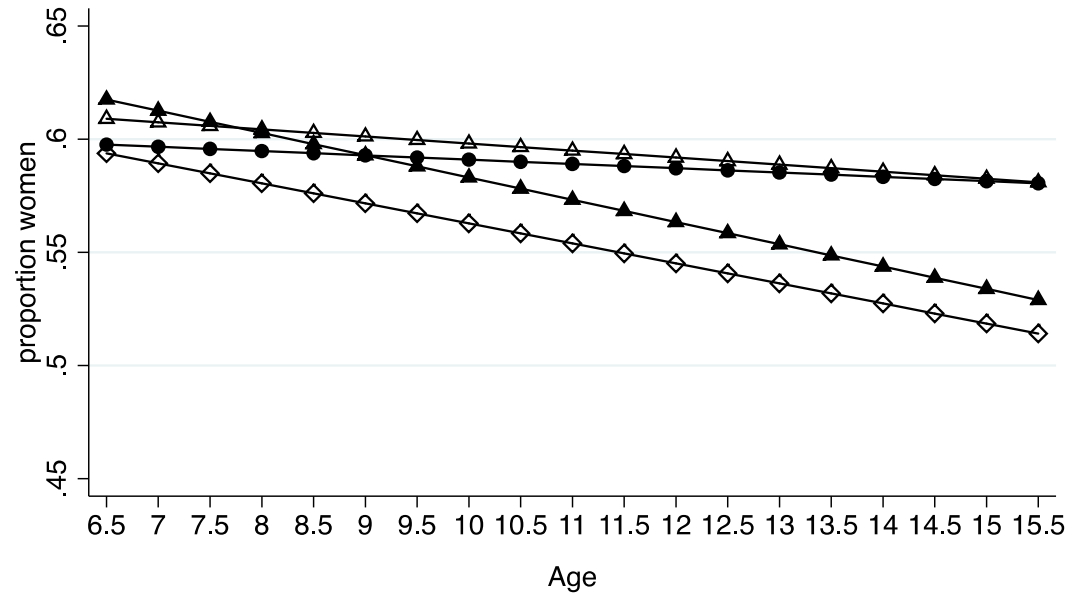
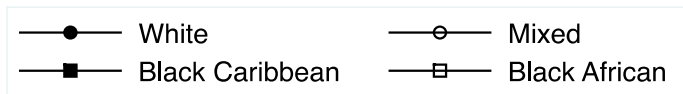
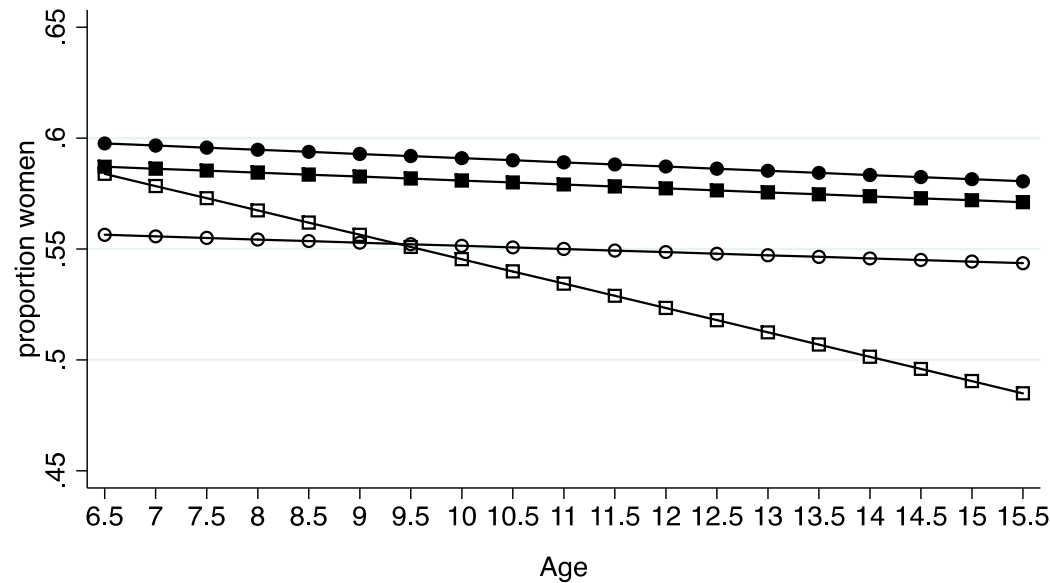
Significantly higher % women in jobs aspired to by Pakistani and Bangladeshi compared to White majority boys, significant decline over time among Bangladeshi boys

Boys adjusted, plus log wage



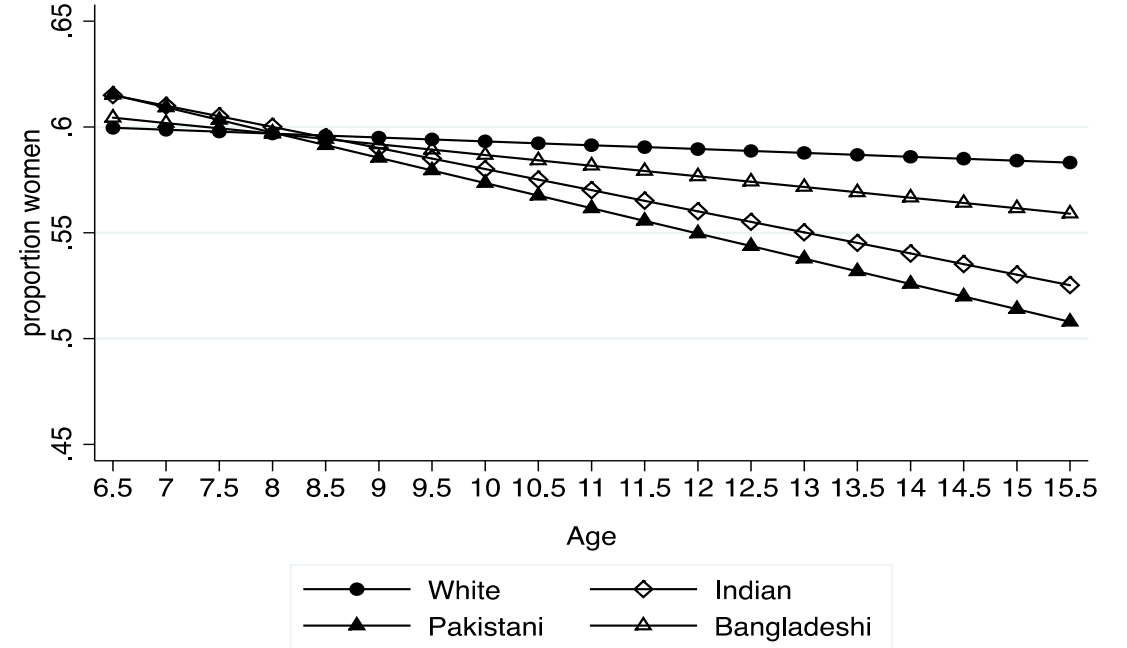
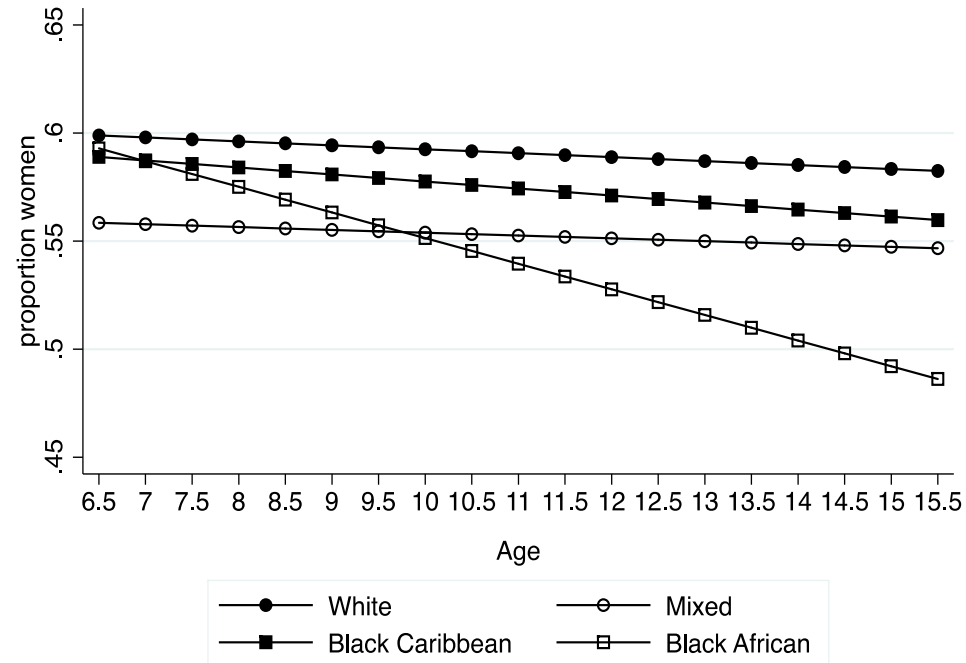
Significantly higher % women in jobs aspired to by Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black African compared to White majority boys, significant decline over time among white majority

Occupational aspirations, 7-14, gender typicality of aspired job: Girls unadjusted



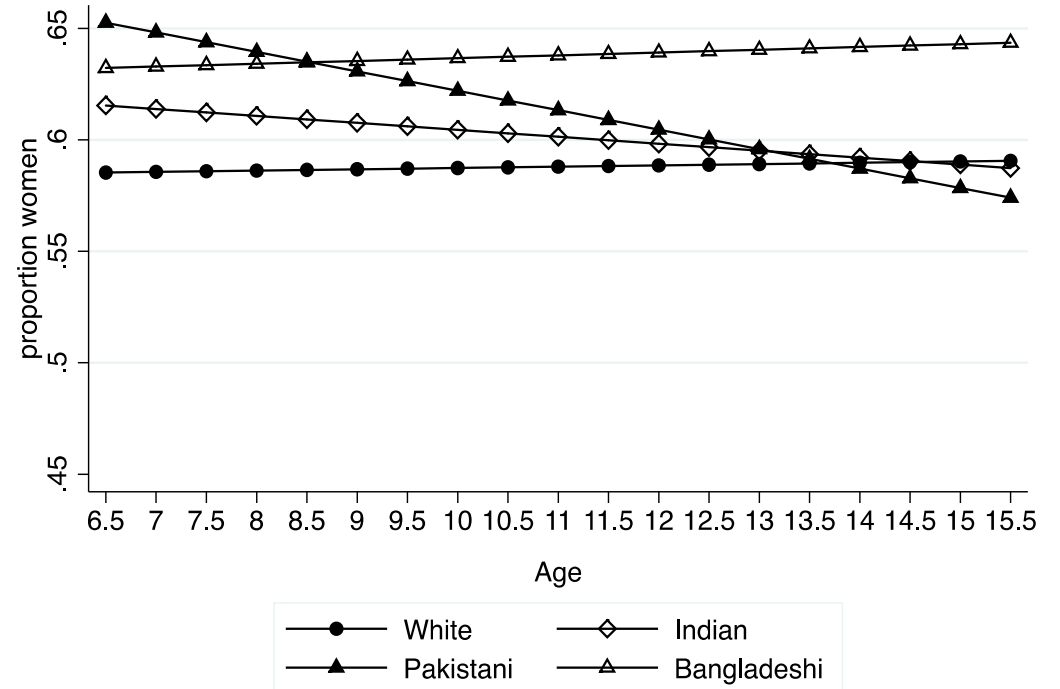
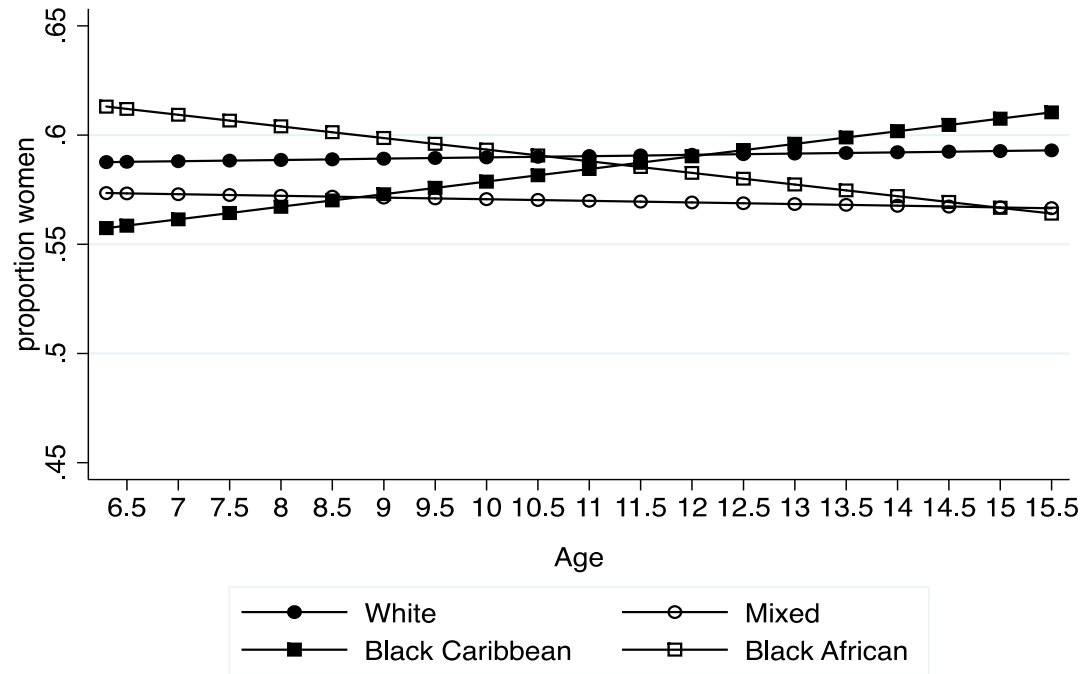
Significantly lower % women in jobs aspired to by Mixed, Indian and Black African compared to White majority girls, significant decline over time among Pakistanis

Girls adjusted



Significantly lower % women in jobs aspired to by Mixed, Pakistani and Black African compared to White majority girls, significant decline over time among Pakistani girls

Girls adjusted, plus log wage



Significantly higher % women in jobs aspired to by Pakistani and Bangladeshi compared to White majority girls, significant decline over time among Pakistani girls, decline and levelling out among white majority girls

Other (significant) associations: adjusted model (without wage for gender typicality)

Value of occupation

- Cognitive ability – higher (girls)
- Summer born (rather than Autumn) – lower (boys)
- Self esteem – higher boys and girls
- Post 16 staying on – higher (girls)
- Parental university aspirations – higher boys and girls
- Lone parent – higher (girls)
- Highest parental qualification lower (boys), higher (girls)

Gender typicality of occupation

- Cognitive ability – less typical / fewer women (girls)
- Post 16 staying on – less typical / more women (boys)
- Parental university aspirations – less typical boys and girls
- Lone parent – less typical (boys)
- Mother not in work – less typical (girls)
- Higher family income less typical boys and girls
- Highest parental qualification less typical (boys)

Summary (1): value of job

- Some evidence for differences in occupational aspirations across ethnic groups
 - Though differences between sexes much greater
- Where there are significant differences, these tend to be in the direction of minorities having 'higher aspirations' – seeking better paid jobs
 - Bangladeshi boys start 'lower' but show steep gradient over time
 - Otherwise no evidence that aspirations of minorities are lower at younger ages when family influences are most marked
- Higher value aspirations particularly marked for minority girls (& not fully accounted for by educational expectations)
- Changes over time not dramatic, but in terms of rewards of job tends to be convergence between girls and boys
 - Boys become more 'realistic' and girls opt for more 'professional' occupations

Summary (2): gender typicality

- Marked difference in gender composition of aspired jobs of boys and girls
- Boys start by aspiring to very gender typical jobs and graduate to slightly less gender typical ones
 - the patterning of gender typicality accounted for to some degree by job value of aspirations, as job value declines, so gender typicality does
 - The exception is Bangladeshi boys, where the share of women in aspired job decreases as the value increases
- Girls start with very gender typical choices, reduce over time as their 'ambition' increases, steeper gradient for Pakistani girls
- Nevertheless, when holding 'value' of job constant, Pakistani and Bangladeshi girls prefer more 'gender typical jobs' than their white peers choosing the same 'value' of job

Comments

- Girls and boys have their sights set on good – but nevertheless highly gendered occupations. This is the case across groups.
 - Despite changes in the top 5 jobs towards more ambitious choices, girls on average are still selecting lower paid occupations on average, with likely consequences for outcomes
- Variation across groups limited but does not suggest that minorities are selecting into poorer or more gender typical jobs – even before taking account of parental SES, in many cases the opposite
 - Immigrant ambition effect trumps SES transmission processes? But occupational ambition over and above educational ambition.
- No evidence that family influences are constraining minorities to particular choices; nor that gender conformity plays a major part in (differences) in choices across groups

Conclusions

- Longstanding sociological research tradition has shed light on the ways in which inequalities in educational and labour market outcomes by SES can be understood
- Concepts of primary and secondary effects, the role of significant others – and others' influence on own aspirations; and rational decision making within context of resources and constraints and relative risk aversion can help also in understanding stratified outcomes across other sources of inequality.
- Can also enhance with paying further attention to heterogeneity in outcomes alongside the regularities of SES and ascribed characteristics

Thank you and questions

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