

Ethnic minorities are better educated but have less job prospects

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Britain's ethnic minorities (both those born abroad and those born in the UK) are, on average, better educated than their white peers but have lower probabilities of being in employment according to a new study published in the journal *Oxford Economic Papers*.

The research shows that Pakistani and Bangladeshi women who are born in Britain have employment probabilities that are 25% and 47% lower than those of their native British-born white peers. This differential is smaller than that of their foreign-born parent generation: In the early 1980s, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women experienced 46% and 60% lower employment probabilities than white native-born women.

The report - written by Christian Dustmann and Nikolaos Theodoropoulos from the Centre for Research and Analysis of [Migration](#) (CReAM) at University College London - provides detailed analysis of foreign-born individuals from ethnic minorities and their descendents in Britain.

The research finds that British-born ethnic minority individuals are better educated than their foreign-born parent generation and their white British-born peers. Also, the improvement in their [educational achievement](#), compared to the parent generation, is larger for most British-born ethnic minority groups than for whites. This suggests that education of their children is an important concern among Britain's ethnic minorities.

About 46% of British-born ethnic minorities live in high-wage London (as opposed to 10% percent of their white peers), which explains why wages of British-born ethnic minorities are slightly higher than those of their white peers, in particular for females. However, if British-born ethnic minorities had the same education and the same regional distribution as their British-born white peers, their wages would be lower - by about 9% for males.

"Our research shows that individuals of ethnic-minority descent born in Britain invest considerably into education, and more so than their British-born white peers", comments Christian Dustmann, director of CReAM and co-author of the study. "However, it is concerning that on average British-born ethnic minorities, and in particular men, would have a wage disadvantage if they had the same education, and lived in the same region, as their white British-born peers."

Britain's ethnic minority groups are not all the same. The study identified dramatic differences in achievements across [ethnic-minority](#) groups. For instance, for those born in Britain between 1963 and 1975, half of individuals of Chinese descent have obtained a university education, while this is the case for only 15% of black-Caribbean descent, and for 20% of whites.

The analysis was based on the British Labour Force Survey (a large-scale household survey of individuals in Britain carried out by the Office for National Statistics) from 1979 to 2005 and distinguishes between the following ethnicities: white, Indian, Pakistani, black Caribbean, black African, Bangladeshi and Chinese.

More information: [doi:10.1093/oep/gpq004](https://doi.org/10.1093/oep/gpq004)

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