

The Class Ceiling: why it pays to be privileged

#LSEClassCeiling

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Hosted by the Department of Sociology and the International Inequalities Institute

The Class Ceiling

Why it Pays to be Privileged

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Mobility and Meritocracy



We won't entrench the advantages of the fortunate few, we will do everything we can to help anybody, whatever your background, to go as far as your talents will take you.

Professional or Managerial Origins

- 1** Higher managerial and professional occupations
CEO, professor, engineer, stock broker, doctor, military officer
- 2** Lower managerial and professional occupations
Teacher, nurse, journalist, store manager, IT consultant



Intermediate Origins

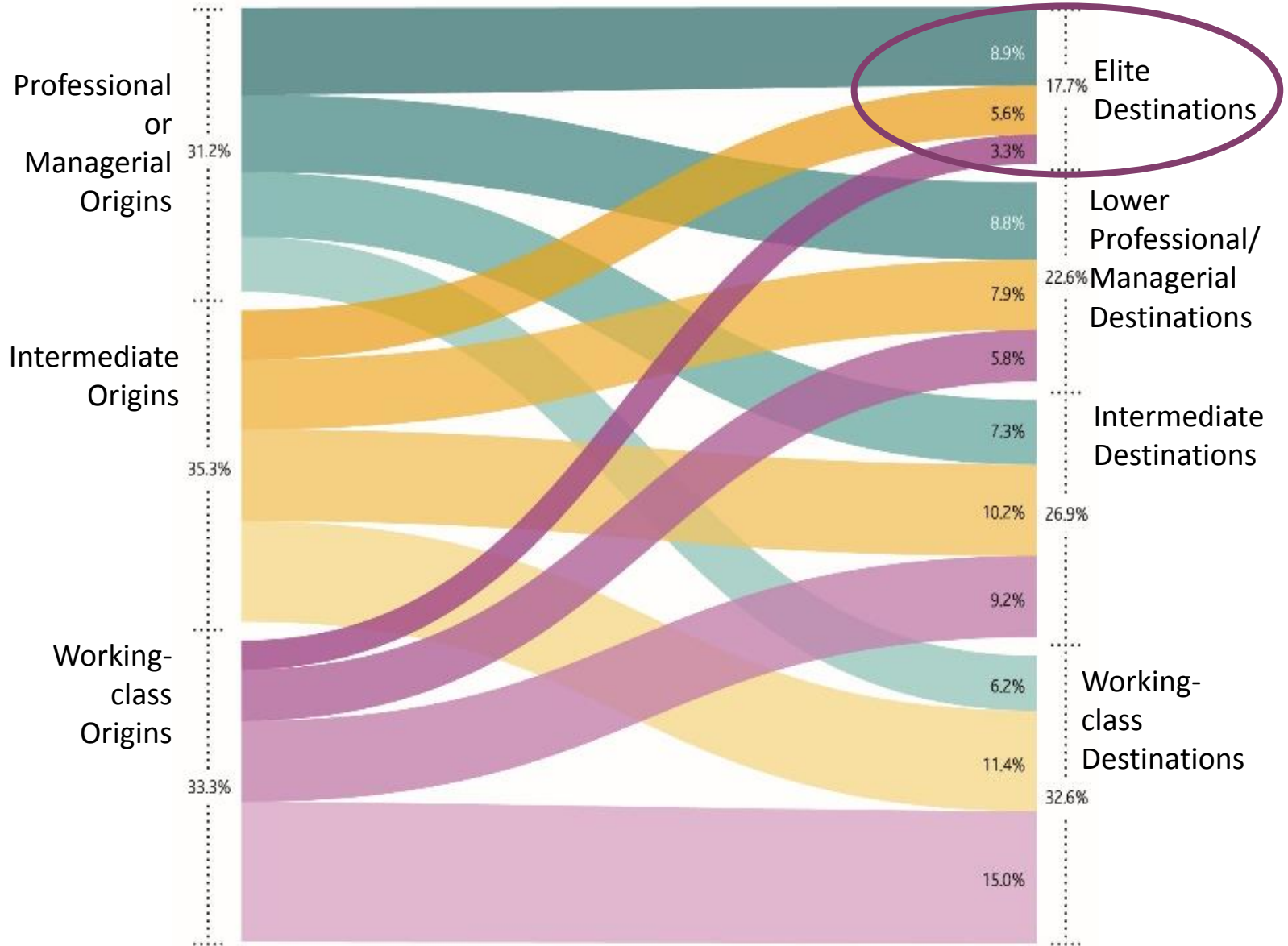
- 3** Intermediate occupations
Bookkeeper, secretary, teaching assistant
- 4** Self-employed:
Plumber, carpenter, hairdresser, taxi driver
- 5** Lower supervisory and technical occupations
Chef, electrician, communication operator



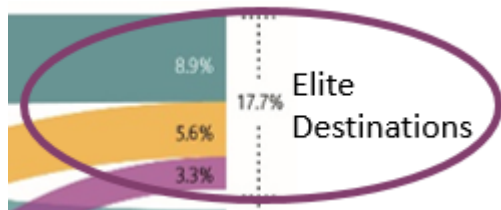
Working Class Origins

- 6** Semi-routine occupations
Sales and retail assistant, care worker, landscaper
- 7** Routine occupations
Waiter, cleaner, truck or bus driver
- 8** Never worked or long-term unemployed





Our Research



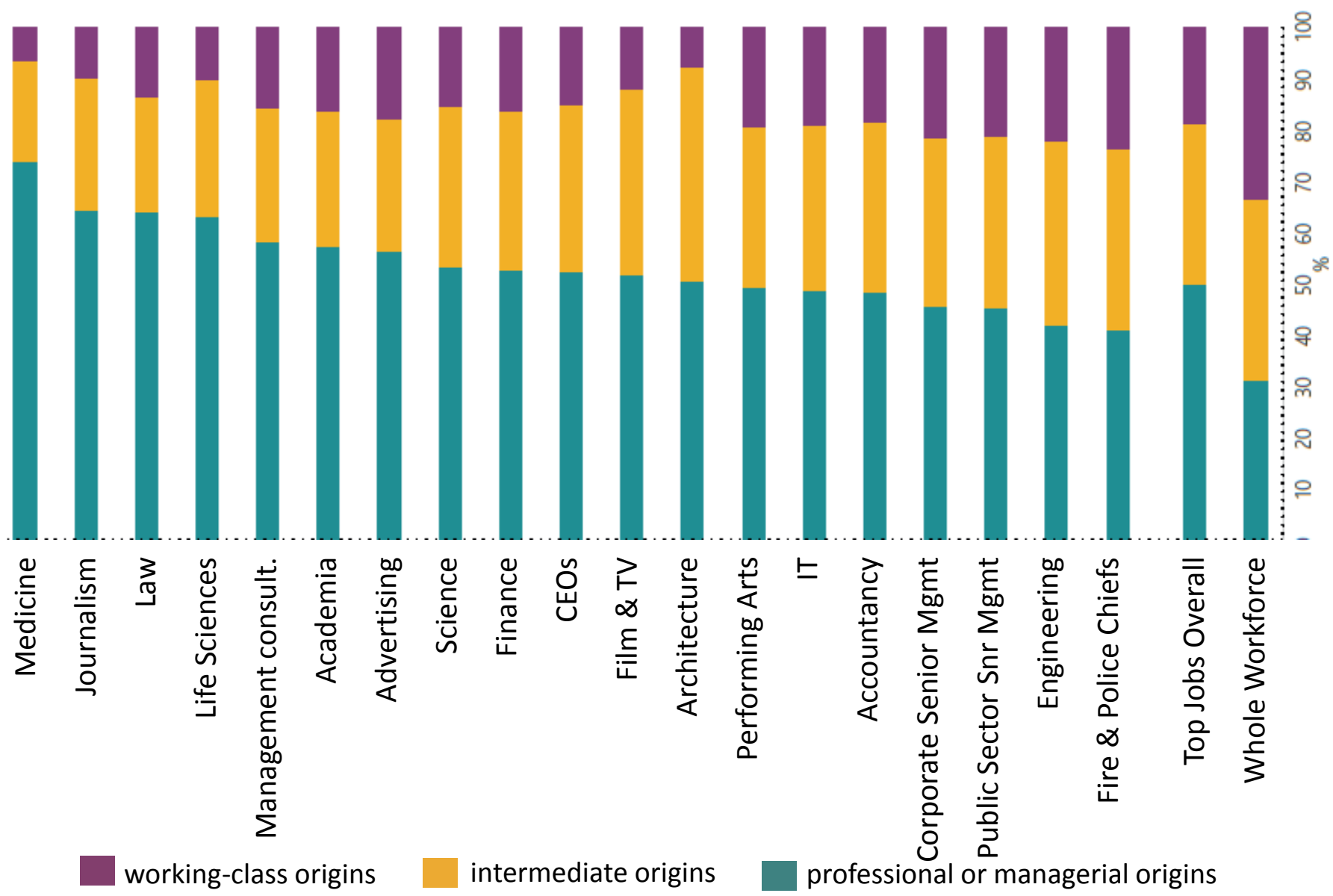
e.g. CEOs, Professors, Stock Brokers,
Doctors, Military Officers, Finance
Managers

e.g. Film & TV production, Actors,
Journalists, Artists

What is the relative social exclusivity of
different high-status professions in Britain?

Do the upwardly mobile face a class pay gap?

If so, why?

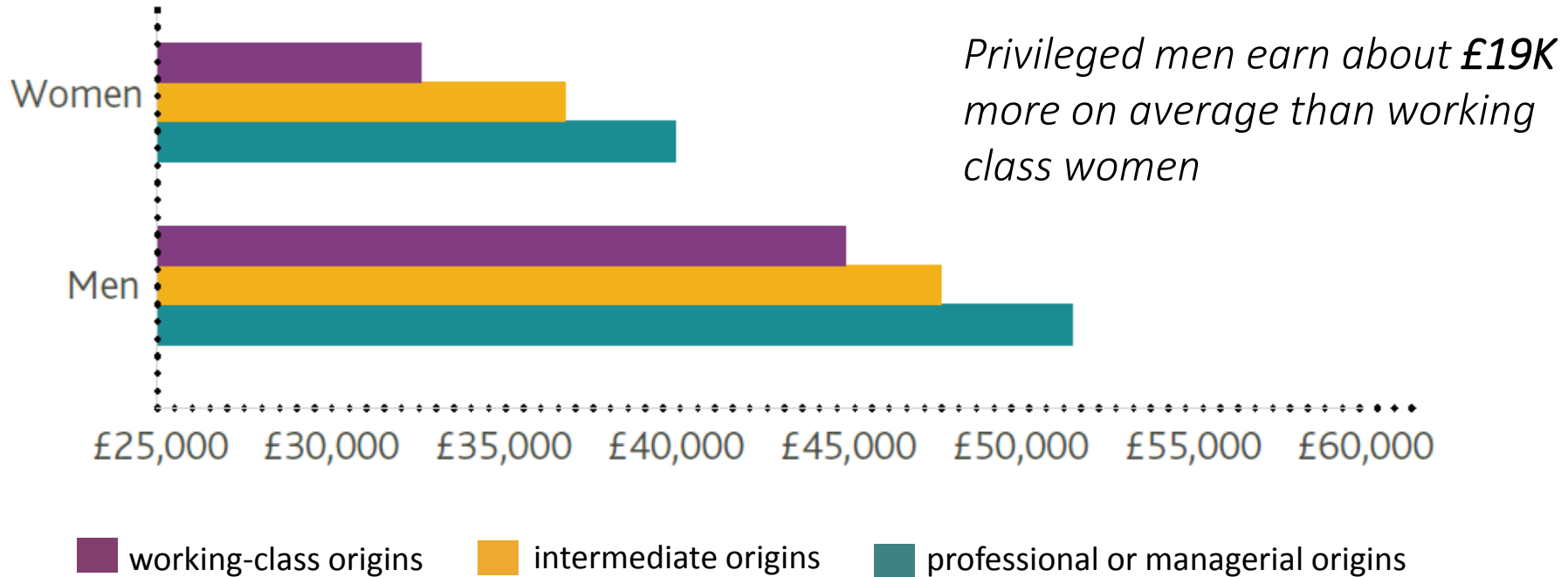


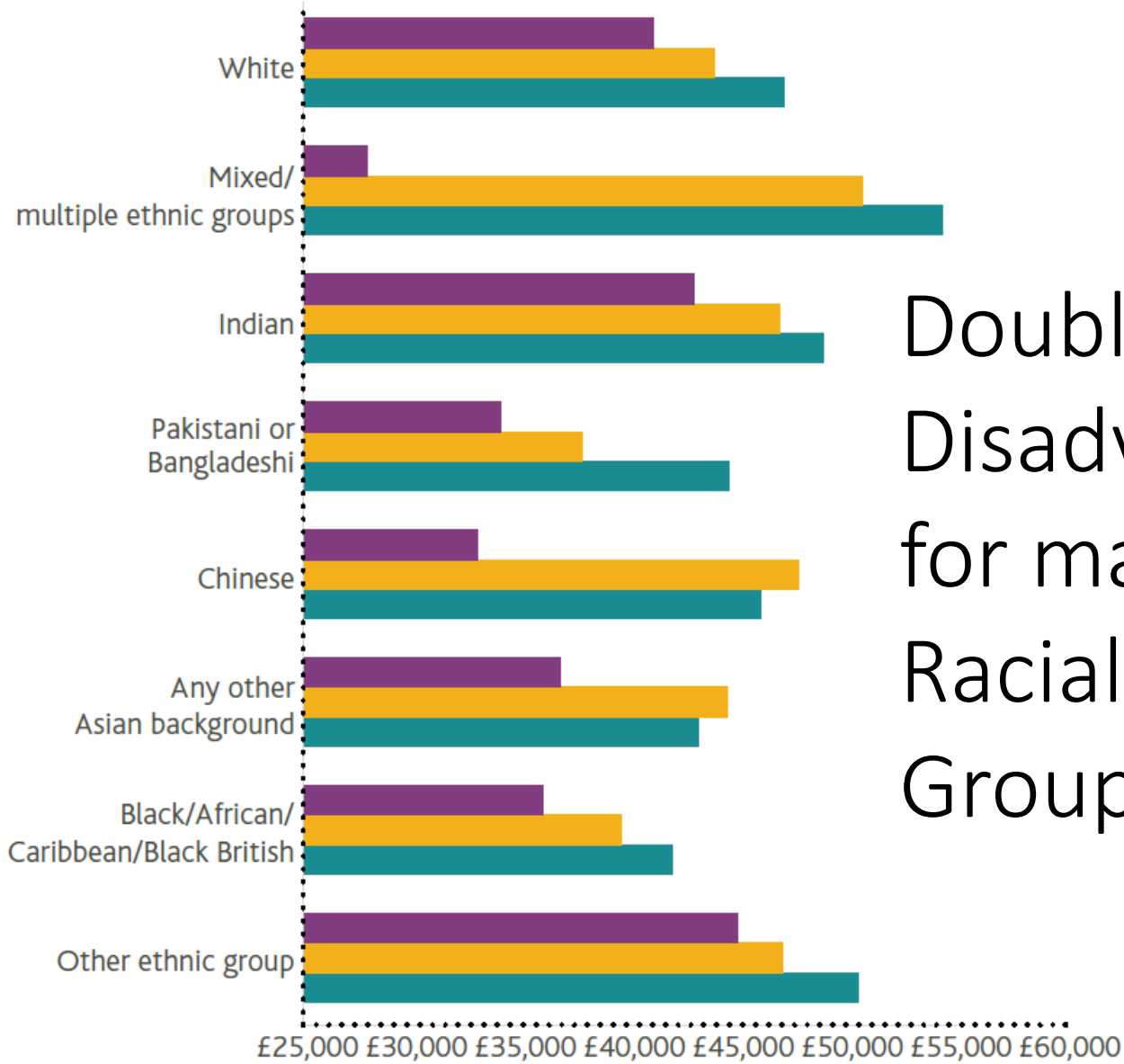


The Class Pay Gap

People from privileged origins earn about £6400 more each year

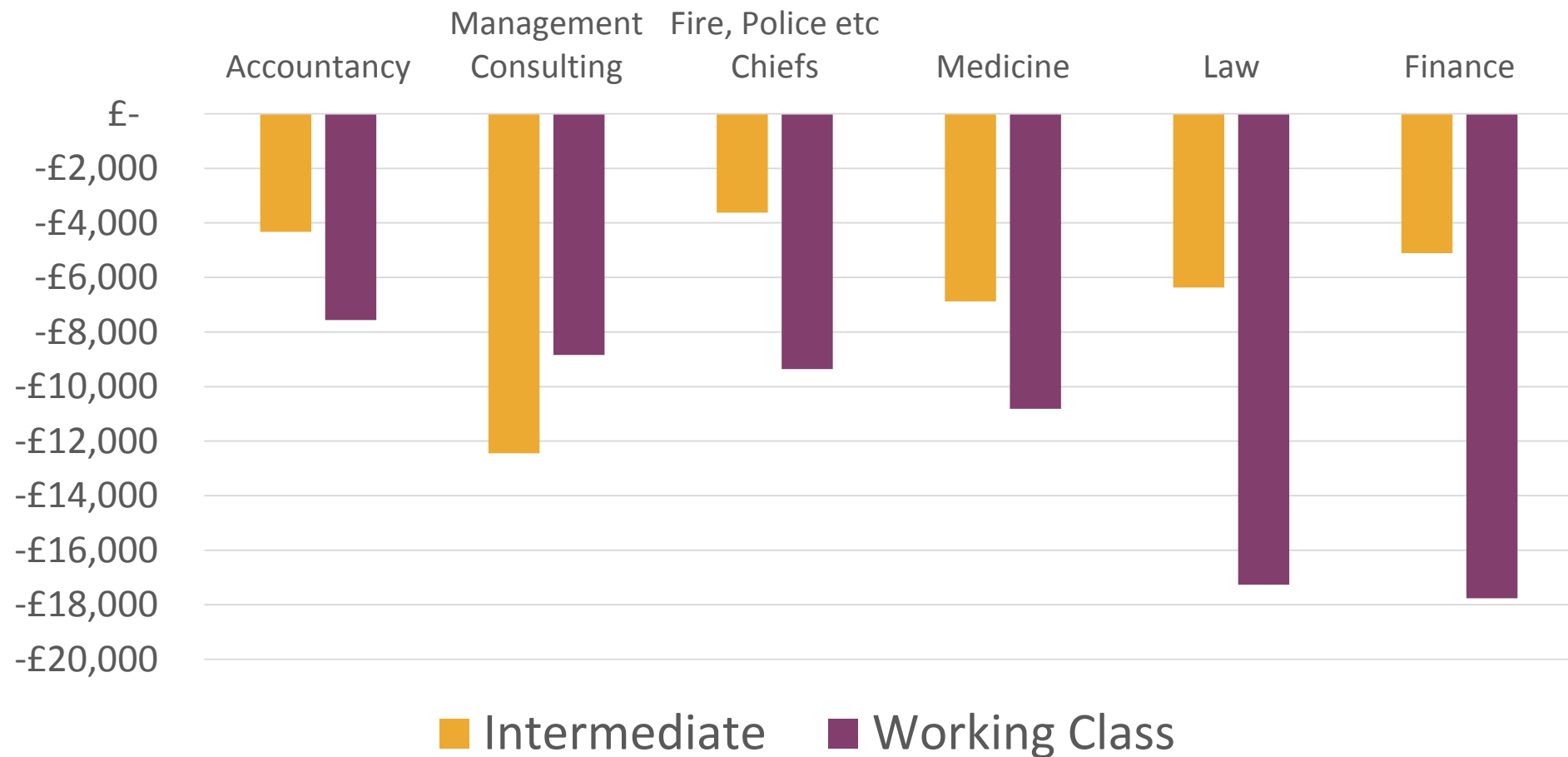
Double Disadvantage for Working Class Women

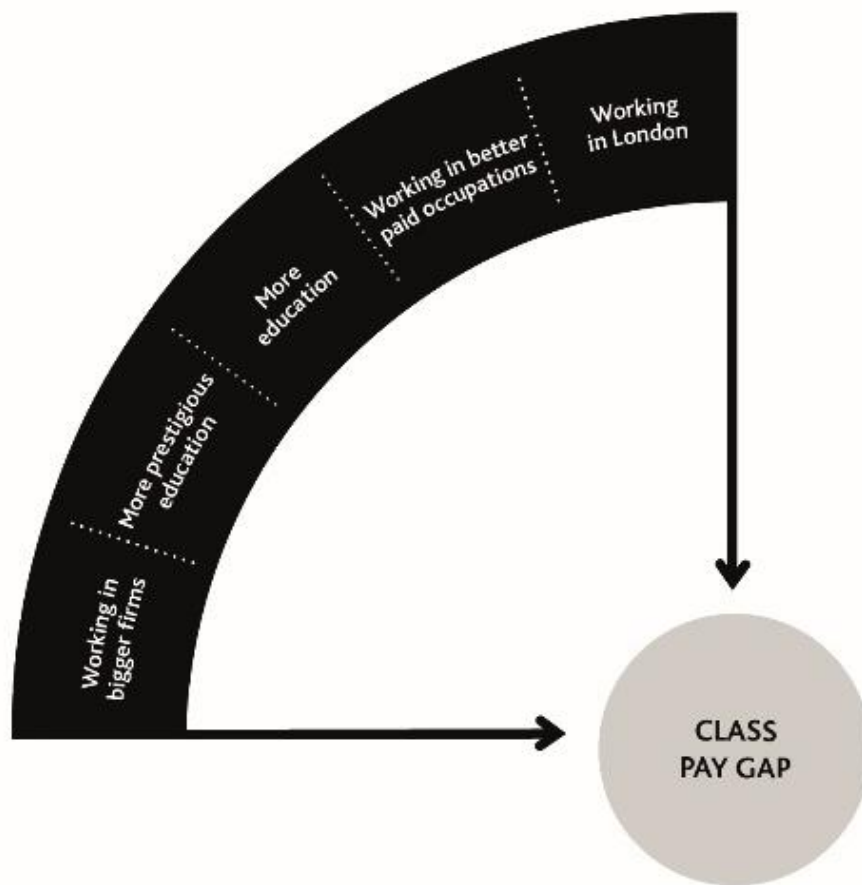




Double
Disadvantage
for many
Racial-Ethnic
Groups

Biggest Pay Gaps in ...





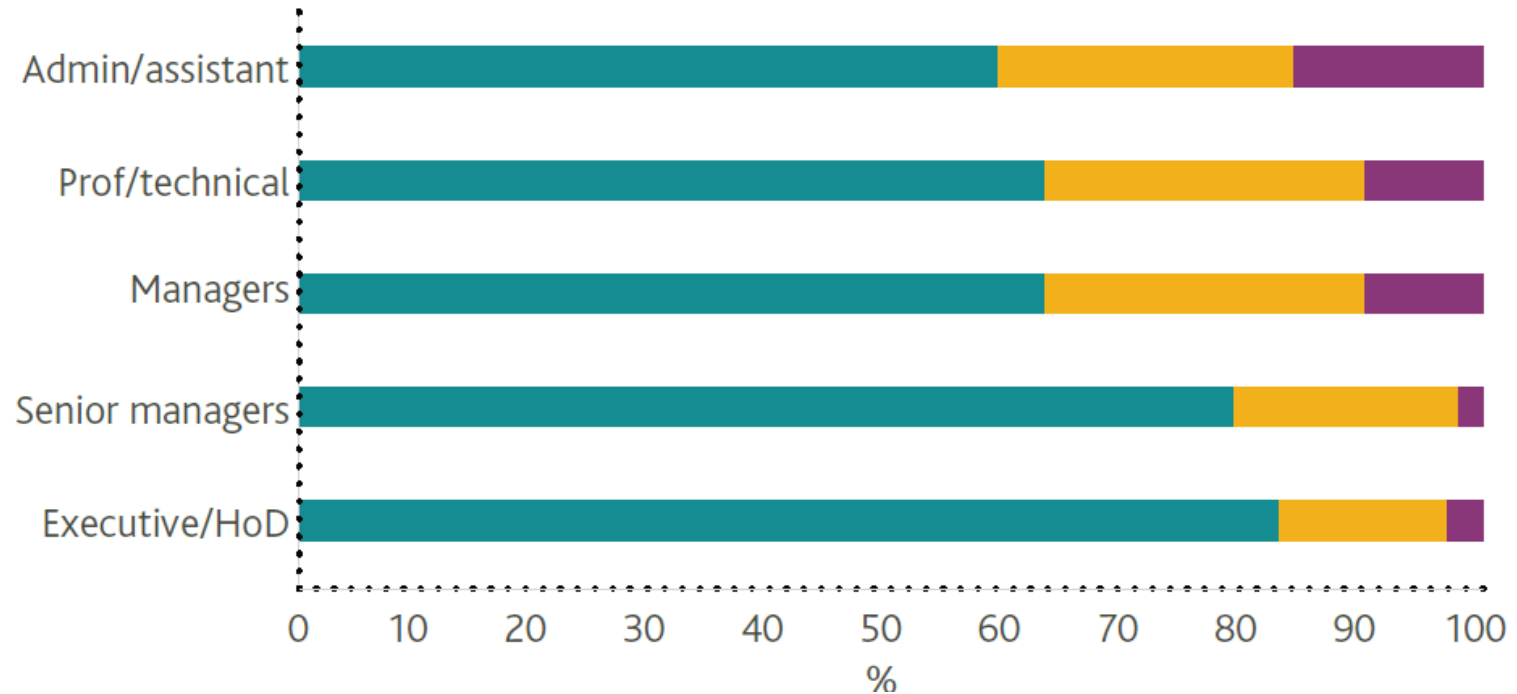
*These drivers only explain
about half the pay gap*

So Why?

To explore the *drivers* of the class pay gap we conducted 175 interviews via four occupational case studies:

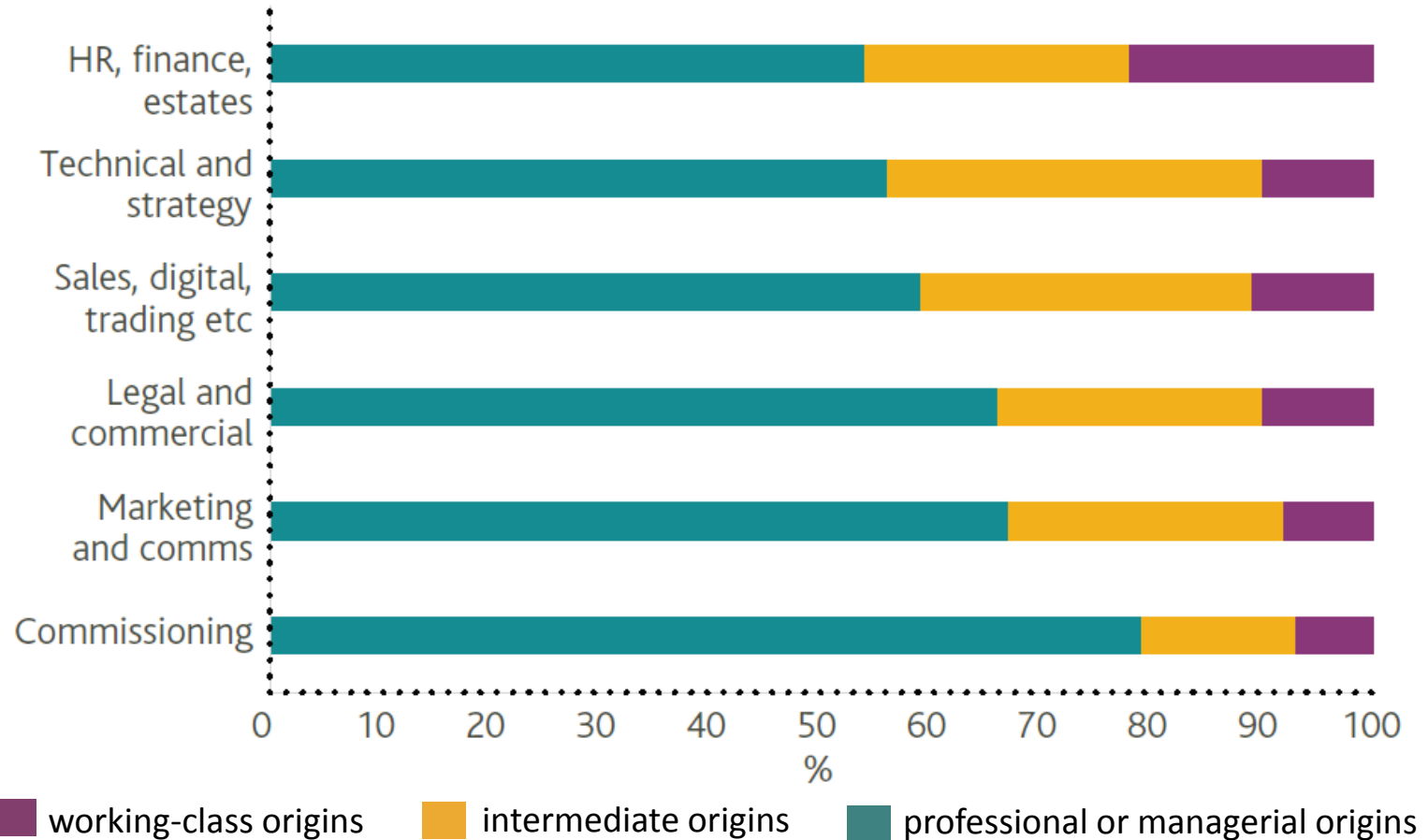
1. Multinational Accountancy Firm (Turner Clarke)
2. Television Broadcaster (6TV)
3. Architecture Firm (Coopers)
4. Self-Employed Actors

The Class Ceiling at Channel 4

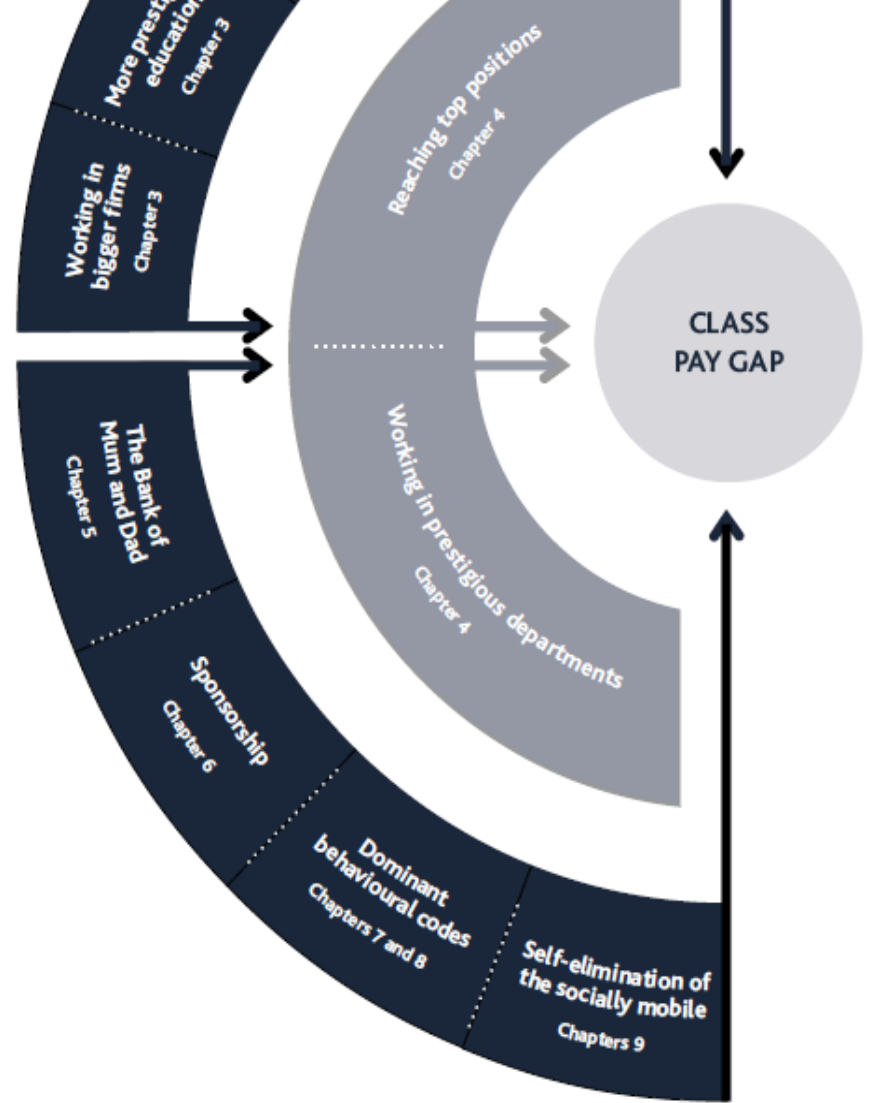


working-class origins intermediate origins professional or managerial origins

Horizontal Segregation at C4



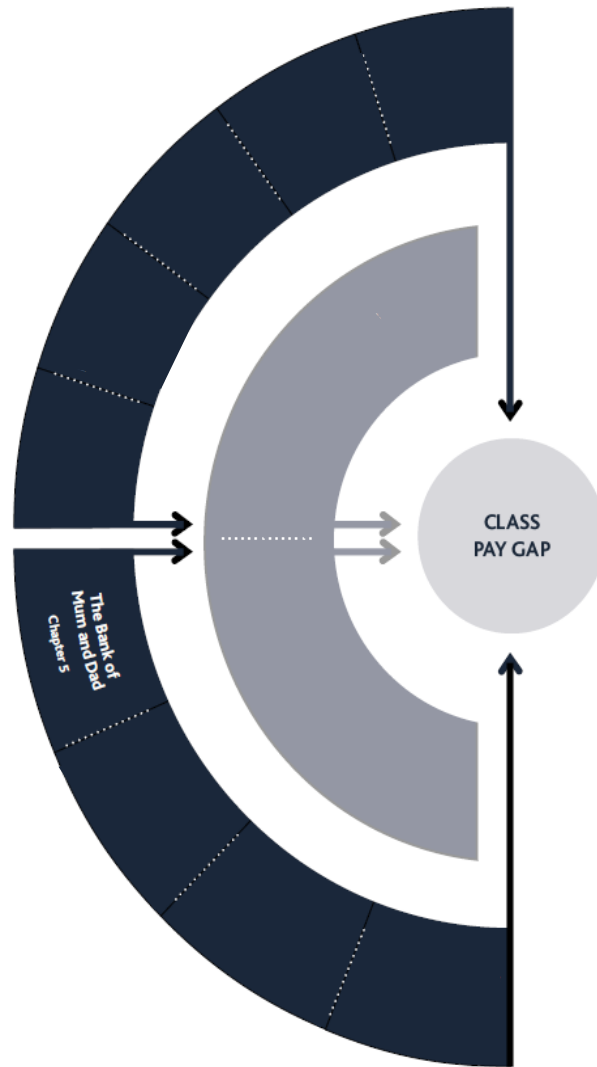
The drivers of the Class Ceiling



Mark, Senior Commissioner



The Bank of
Mum and Dad





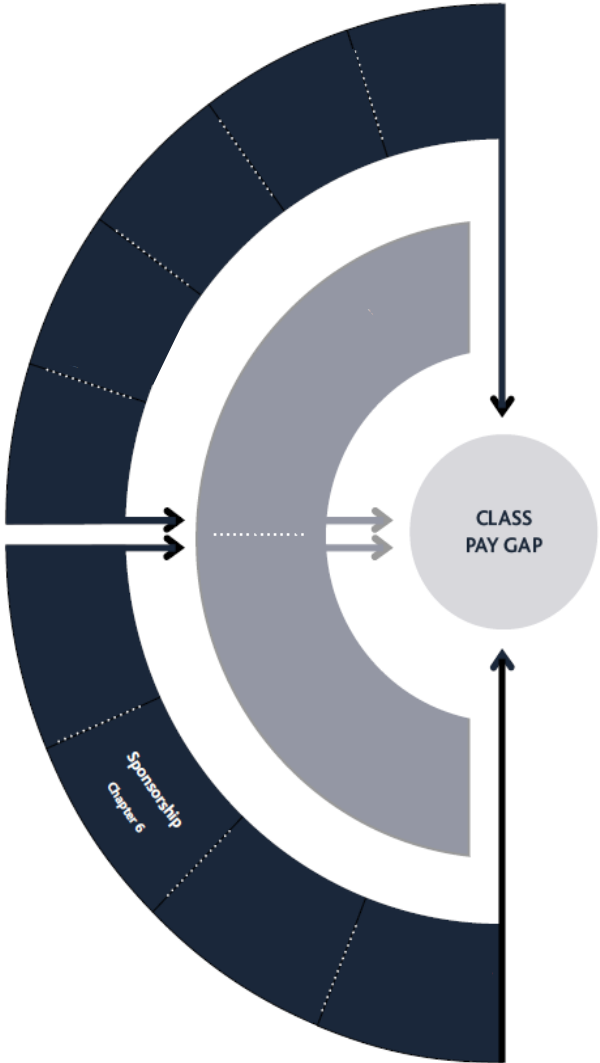
What's driving the Class Ceiling?

The Bank of Mum and Dad

So if you have savings then you can afford to go to the gym, work a bit, whereas for me **there is a massive element of chaos, I feel like I'm skydiving without a parachute**

(Ray, Working Class, Actor)

Sponsorship





What's driving the Class Ceiling?

Sponsorship

I could almost give you my whole trajectory in **sponsors** because, it's sort of, **it's quite medieval in television**. You serve apprenticeships and you have a patron

(Mark, Professional-Managerial, Senior Commissioner, C4)



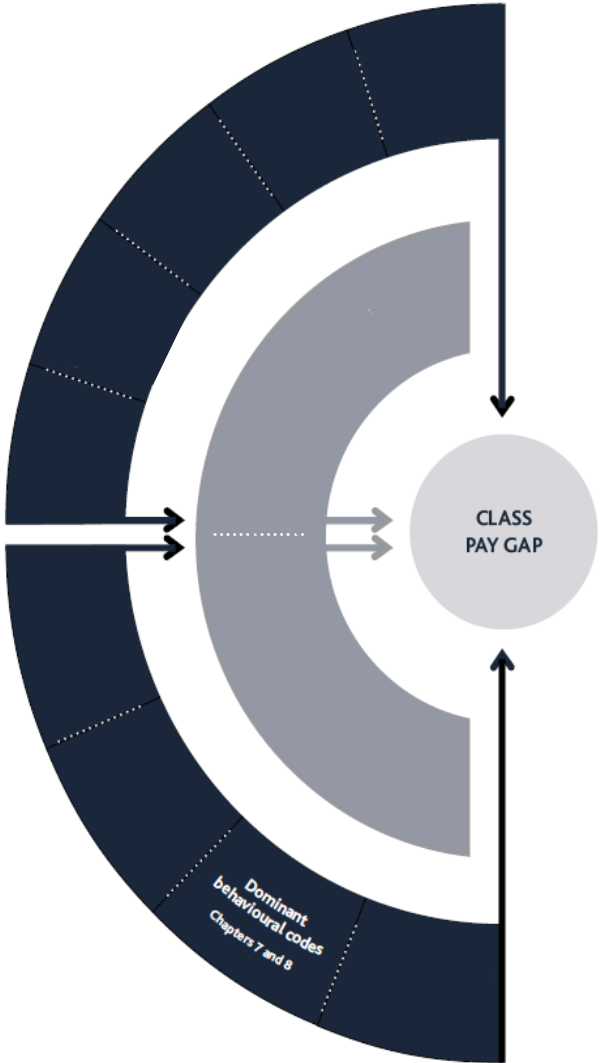
What's driving the Class Ceiling?

Sponsorship

It's ironic; I guess the person that has done the best is the person that is most like me. But then that's maybe because I really forced that by **encouraging him**, taking him down the same route, bringing him through

(Peter, Professional-Managerial, Partner, Turner Clarke)

Dominant
Behavioural
Codes





What's driving the Class Ceiling?

Behavioural Codes

(Studied Informality at C4)

So every day we had this morning meeting where we decided what stories to do and everyone pitched in on [...] what our angle should be. **And it was instantly recognisable to me, exactly like the common rooms I encountered at Oxford and at school. The rules were – it's good to be right, but it's better to be funny!**

(Mark, Professional-Managerial, Senior Commissioner, C4)



What's driving the Class Ceiling?

Behavioural Codes

(Studied Informality at C4)

It's sort of a **game of showing off**. I'm like how...**why are we talking about Of Mice and Men in relation to a programme about lie detectors?** You don't need to know about the great American novel to make shows on Channel 4. You really, really don't. What you need to know is...you need to be interested in the world; what actual real people care about

(Deb, Professional-Managerial, Senior Commissioner, C4)



What's driving the Class Ceiling?

Behavioural Codes

(Studied Informality at C4)

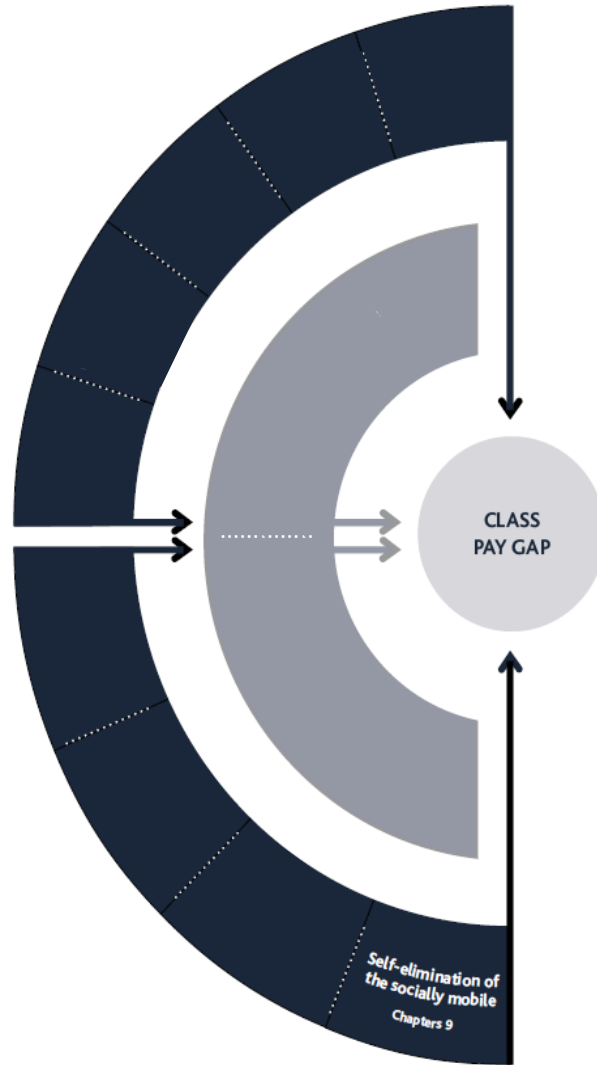
It tends to be walking into a room and thinking 'I'm some kind of imposter here.' It's like they all know each other... I know they don't... But there's this sense... I can't bear those meetings. **It's like they all went to Hogwarts or something... this posh club that I can't be in**

(Claire, Intermediate Origin, Strategy, C4)

The Performance of Merit

Supposedly 'objective' measures of merit are often actually received, assessed and valued very differently according to how they are performed. Some performances fit, in other words, and others do not

Self-elimination
of the Socially
Mobile



What's driving the Class Ceiling?

Self-Elimination

You can sort of change yourself. **But that only gets you so far.** Like there is this thing - I wonder if it mirrors others from similar backgrounds - that **I don't socialise much with people in the industry.** I don't go to the parties, the clubs, and there's part of me that thinks actually ... they're all c***s [laughs]. **I've got my friends from the past, my family, and that feels real and important.** Whereas this often feels like a game ... I've sort of blagged my way in so, although I'm saying I've learned to play the game, **I still don't really feel a properly signed-up member**

(Bill, Working Class, Commissioner, C4)



Conclusion

The Following Wind of Privilege

It is not like I think I am rubbish, I mean I've seen lots of peers with greater networks and privilege screw up because they just weren't good enough. **But at the same time it is mad to sort of pretend there's not been an incredibly strong following wind throughout my career**

(Mark, Professional-Managerial, Senior Commissioner, C4)

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