



Western

Centre for Research on
Migration and Ethnic Relations

**Winter Colloquium
Series 2022**

Renee Luthra



Renee Luthra is the Director of the Essex Centre for Migration Studies and Assistant Director, ESRC Research Centre on Micro-Social Change. Professor Luthra is a sociologist with expertise in international migration, social stratification, and quantitative methods. She is the author of *Origins and Destinations: the Making of the Second Generation* (with Thomas Soehl and Roger Waldinger). Her current research interests include migration and inequalities in parenting, education, work and health.

“Does Selection Matter? Immigrant Selectivity, Skills, and the Labour Market ”

A key rationale for more restrictive immigration policy, with stringent educational attainment or language skill requirements, is to select immigrants who are “the brightest and the best” from their sending countries and who will be net fiscal contributors in the receiving country. It is typically assumed that those who are more highly educated will do better in the labour market, but also that those who are more educated than the majority of their compatriots, that is who are ‘selected’, will bring additional skills and characteristics associated with economic success. However, there has not yet been an empirical assessment of whether this is in fact the case. Combining information on the cognitive and non-cognitive skills, social networks, and labour market outcomes of the foreign born in the UK with aggregate data from non-migrants in immigrant sending countries, this paper examines changes in selectivity of immigrants in the UK by time of arrival, using relative educational attainment as an indicator of economic selection. We then assess whether educational selectivity is associated with better labour market outcomes and explore the relationship between educational selectivity and typically unobserved skills and social network characteristics. We find no positive association between educational selectivity and the posited causal mechanisms leading to superior labour market performance. Our research suggests that to the extent migration policies are successful in gaining migrants from the top of the educational distribution they facilitate class reproduction rather recruiting the brightest and the best.

Thursday, January 27th, 2022

4:00 pm, Virtual Zoom Event

All Welcome!

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