

GROWING UP IN SOCIAL HOUSING IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM: HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS AND EARLY OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN BORN IN 2000

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Introduction

This work is one of a pair of studies. (The other, which uses the British Cohort Study, can be found at <http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/case>.)

This pair develops the findings of two previous reports (Feinstein *et al*, 2008, Lupton *et al*, 2009). These examined housing circumstances in childhood for those born in 1946, 1958, 1970 and 2000, and the relationship between childhood housing and adult outcomes across a range of measures (except for those born in 2000).

They found as yet unexplained connections between being 'ever' in social housing in childhood and worse adult outcomes on an overall measure of deprivation and a range of individual measures for those born in 1958 and in 1970 (but not for those born in 1946) (Feinstein *et al*, 2008, Lupton *et al*, 2009). Statistically significant associations remained after using a large set of 56 controls for family and individual characteristics, for many outcomes and many ages, although the size of the associations was substantially reduced by controls.

The aims of the research

The current research draws on the Millennium Cohort Study (MCS), a longitudinal study of children born in 2000.

The research aims to explore:

- I. The housing and neighbourhood circumstances of today's children, in some detail;
- II. Whether there are links between housing and very early childhood outcomes, which in some way might parallel the links seen for adult outcomes for earlier cohorts; and
- III. Whether features of social housing neighbourhoods might either constitute all or part of any links between tenure and early childhood outcomes.

The Millennium Cohort Study

The Millennium Cohort Study is a longitudinal study of children born in 2000.

Almost 15,000 children have been tracked to the age of 5 in 2006.

The 2006 study includes interviews with parents, tests on children, and surveys of older siblings (where present, average age 12).

We report data for cohort members born in England, rather than Great Britain (in contrast to Feinstein *et al*, 2008 and Lupton *et al*, 2009).

(For more information on the Millennium Cohort Study and its data, see Lupton *et al*, 2009 or visit www.cls.ioe.ac.uk).

(I) Housing at age 5 in 2006

At the age of 5 in 2006, most cohort members lived in houses with gardens. Most lived in homes which had 4+ rooms and which were not overcrowded. Most were free from damp or condensation.

Most parents said homes were not 'really disorganised', not 'noisy' and had a 'calm' atmosphere.

In terms of housing tenure:

- 65% were living in home ownership;
- 24% were living in social housing (including a very small number in shared ownership);
- 9% were in private renting; and
- 2% were living with grandparents (in various tenures).

Some of the owner occupied homes may have been former social housing bought under the Right to Buy 1980-2006.

Housing tenure and family advantage

We calculated an 'Index of Family Advantage', made up of the children's parents' i) highest educational level and ii) occupational class, when the cohort member was born in 2000.

The situation of children in social renting stands out.

- 1% had parents in most advantaged 20% of all families on the Index
- 7% had parents in the most advantaged 40%.
- 23% had parents in the middle 20%
- 69% had parents in the least advantaged 40%
- 33% had parents in the least advantaged 20% of all families.

In contrast, substantial proportions of children in both private renting and home ownership came from every quintile of family advantage.

In general private renting families were somewhat disadvantaged and home owners' families were more advantaged.

Tenure and housing characteristics (1)

We investigated features of homes widely considered to be more and less *attractive* (we do not have direct evidence that these factors are linked to child development).

5 year olds in owner occupied homes were the most likely to be in homes with more attractive features:

- 97% in houses rather than flats
- 94% had access to gardens
- 70% had 6+ rooms, 99% had 4+ rooms
- 90% were damp/condensation free

Parents said homes were 'not really disorganised' (86%), 'not noisy' (86%) and 'calm' in atmosphere (82%).

Given that 65% of children were in home ownership, they constituted a majority of those in homes that parents thought were 'really disorganised' (51% of total) 'noisy' (70% of the total) or not 'calm' (67%).

Tenure and housing characteristics (2)

Most children in rented housing were also in homes with more attractive features.

However, the proportion of children in rented housing who were in less attractive circumstances was higher than for those in home ownership.

Of 5 year olds in private renting:

- 89% lived in houses
- 78% had access to gardens
- 38% had 6+ rooms, and 95% had 4+ rooms
- 78% free from damp/condensation.

Most parents said homes were 'not really disorganised' (77%), 'not noisy' (80%) and 'calm' in atmosphere (85%).

Tenure and housing characteristics (3)

5 year olds in social rented homes were the least likely to have homes with more attractive features.

Of 5 year olds in social renting:

- 77% lived in houses
- 70% had access to gardens
- 20% had 6+ rooms, and 93% had 4+ rooms.
- 79% were free from damp/condensation

Most parents said homes were 'not really disorganised' (72%), 'not noisy' (75%) and 'calm' in atmosphere (82%).

Although only 24% of children were in social housing, they made up a majority of all children in flats (65% of the total), those without access to a garden (55%) and of those in homes with fewer than 4 rooms (55%).

Tenure and neighbourhoods at age 5 in 2006

We used the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007 to characterise the Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs, neighbourhoods typically with 600 homes and 1,500 people) in which cohort members were living in at age 5.

Again the location of children in social housing stands out:

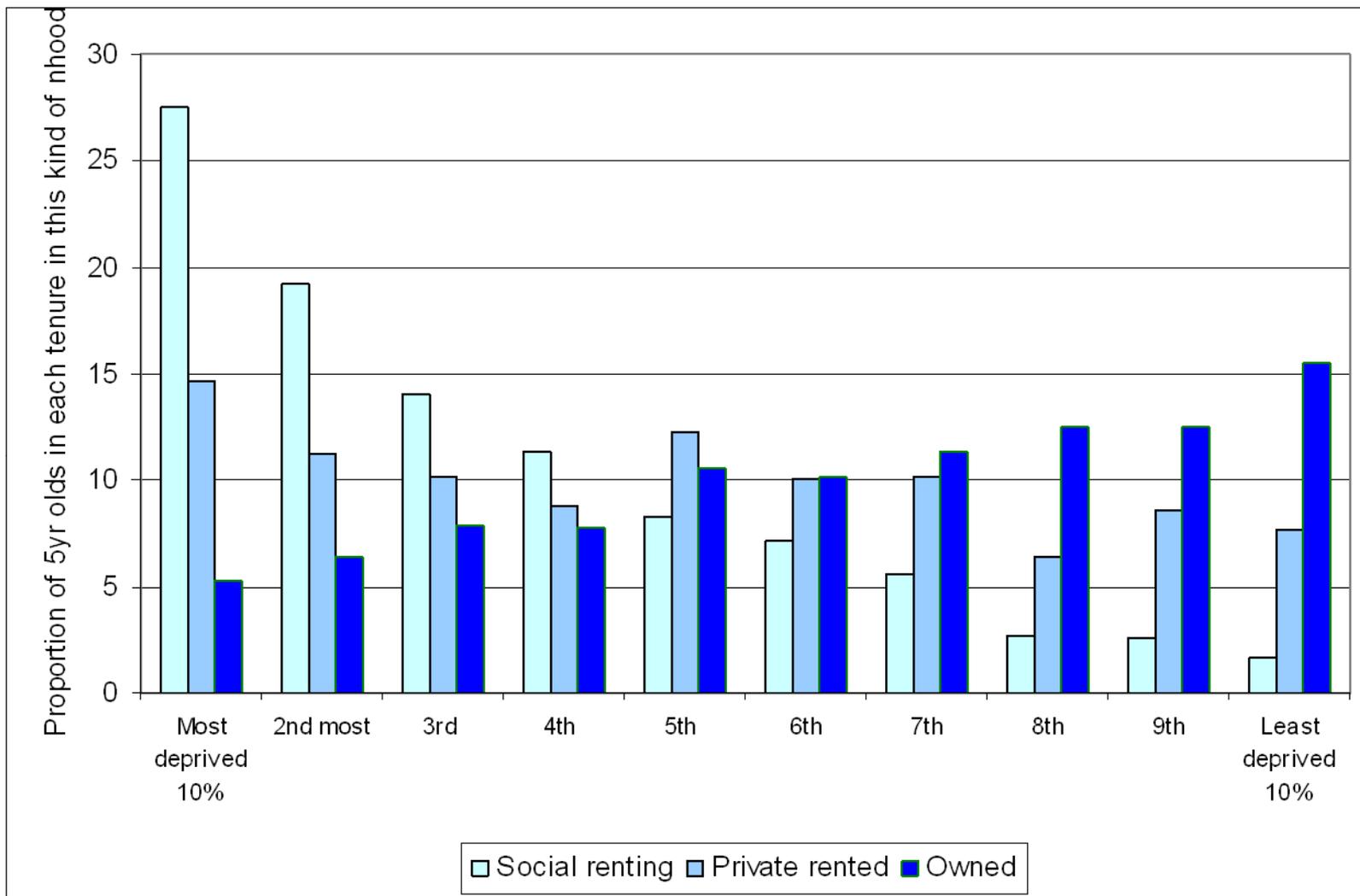
- 5% in the least deprived 20% of all neighbourhoods
- 13% in the least deprived 40%.
- 15% in the middle 20%
- 72% in the most deprived 40%
- 47% in the most deprived 20%

and

- 28% in the most deprived 10% of LSOAs

Those in other tenures were more evenly distributed between different types of neighbourhoods.

Percentage of children in each housing tenure in LSOAs in different deciles of the IMD 2007, at age 5 in 2006



Comparing family disadvantage and neighbourhood disadvantage

Children in social housing at the age of 5 in 2006 were more excluded from the most advantaged *families* than they were from the most advantaged *neighbourhoods*.

They were more concentrated in the most deprived *neighbourhoods* than they were in the least advantaged *families*.

	<u>Families</u>	<u>Neighbourhoods</u>
Most advantaged 20%	1%	5%
Most advantaged 40%	7%	13%
Middle 20%	23%	15%
Least advantaged 40%	69%	72%
Least advantaged 20%	33%	47%

Parents' and older siblings' experiences of neighbourhoods when children were 5 in 2006 (1)

According to parents, there was little difference between tenures in proportions getting places at their first choice of primary school, access to local family and friends, and use of parks and playgrounds.

However, the majority of social renting parents did not feel that their neighbourhood was 'excellent' or 'good' for raising children, in contrast to those in other tenures. 5 year olds in social renting made up 24% of all children, but 69% of those whose parents thought their neighbourhood was 'poor' or 'very' poor for raising children.

Social renting parents were the most likely to be concerned about crime. Older siblings in social renting were least likely to enjoy living in their areas, were most likely to be concerned about crime, and to have been victims of crime and anti-social behaviour compared to those in other tenures.

Parents' and older siblings' experiences of neighbourhoods when children were 5 in 2006 (2)

Higher proportions of older siblings in home ownership were in more attractive neighbourhood situations than those in other tenures.

However, they constituted a majority of those who were worried about mugged or robbed (67% of the total), who had experienced theft (62%), and who were afraid of going out at night (67%).

The study has a lot of detail about the neighbourhood activities of children in social housing

The older siblings of cohort members who were children of social tenants were less likely than those of owner occupiers to sometimes go to classes and clubs outside school, to do sport, sometimes go to cubs, brownies, scouts, or guides, music lessons, singing or choir outside school, use the local library, to have a private tutor, to go to after school clubs, to stay after school for organised sports clubs or teams and to stay after school to play in a band or orchestra or to sing in a choir.

On the other hand, children of owner occupiers and social renters were similarly likely to go to play centres or adventure playgrounds, to classes connected with religion or culture, to holiday play schemes, and to work for money outside school.

Children of social renters were slightly more likely to go to breakfast clubs before school and to homework clubs after school, to youth clubs, to attend art classes or do pottery outside school, to attend a play centre or drop in on their own to talk about problems, or attend clubs connected with the armed services. Again, these patterns may be linked to different parental interests, or other factors, rather than to any difference in local provision of services.

The study has a lot of detail about the education of children in social housing:

Primary school

Parents in all tenures were equally likely to get their first choice of school (94% for home owners' and 93% for social renters).

However, amongst the children of owner occupiers, equal proportions travelled to school by car and on foot, whereas nearly two thirds of those in social renting travelled on foot and only 28% by car. This suggests that owners may have had a broader geographical choice of schools. It also points out the extra importance of safe routes to school in social housing areas.

In addition, parents in different tenures were choosing on slightly different grounds. Owner occupier parents were more likely to have chosen for more school-specific reasons. 50% of owners, compared to 47% of private renters and 35% of social renters, chose the school for factors including, for example, 'reputation' and 'impression'.

The majority of parents were 'very satisfied' with the education their children were receiving at their current school, (73% of home owners and 73% of social renters), and the vast majority were 'very or 'fairly' satisfied (98% of home owners and 95% of social renters).

96% of home owners' parents thought their children always or usually enjoyed school, compared to 94% of social renting parents.

Secondary school

Older siblings of cohort members who were children of social renters were just as likely as those of owner occupiers to say that good marks at school were 'very' or 'fairly' important (97% compared to 98%), and that it was 'not OK to break even a bad rule at school' (90% for both children of social renters and owner occupiers).

Older siblings in social housing were slightly more likely to say they planned to leave school at 16 than those in other tenures, but nonetheless, fully 87% planned to stay on (compared to 91% of children of home owners).

However, compared to children of owner occupiers, children of social renters were less likely to like most teachers (70% compared to 79%), and less likely to say they cared what teachers thought about them (54% compared to 67%). They were more likely to say that teachers were always getting at them (26% compared to 21%), and that teachers liked ordering pupils around just to show who was in charge (52% compared to 41%).

(II) Early outcomes at age 5 in 2006

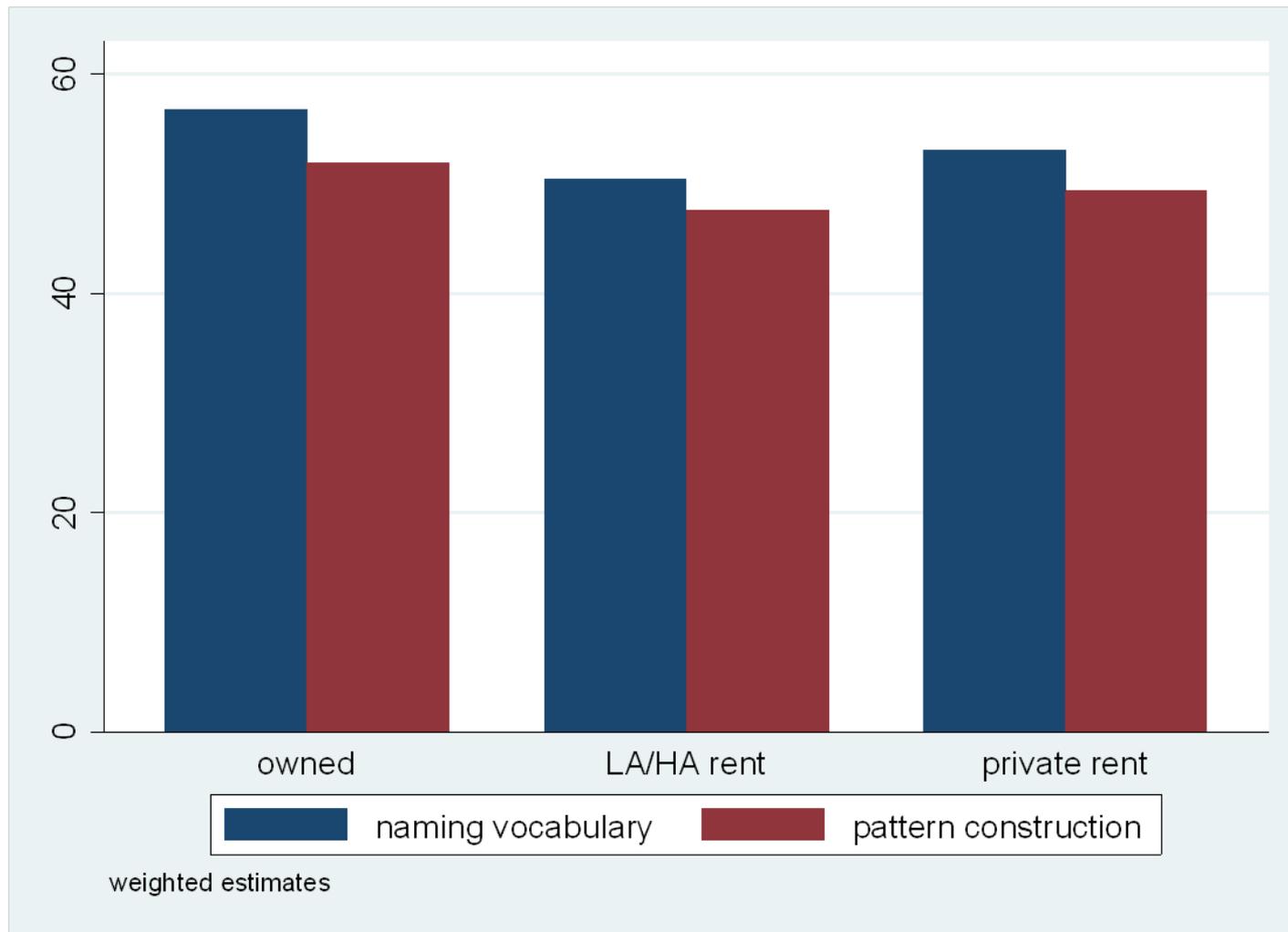
We examined early developmental outcomes through scores on tests of vocabulary and drawing skills at age 5.

Results at age 5 on similar tests used in the 1970 British Cohort Study have been shown to be associated with achievement in reading and maths at age 10 and qualifications and wages at age 30 (Feinstein and Duckworth, 2006).

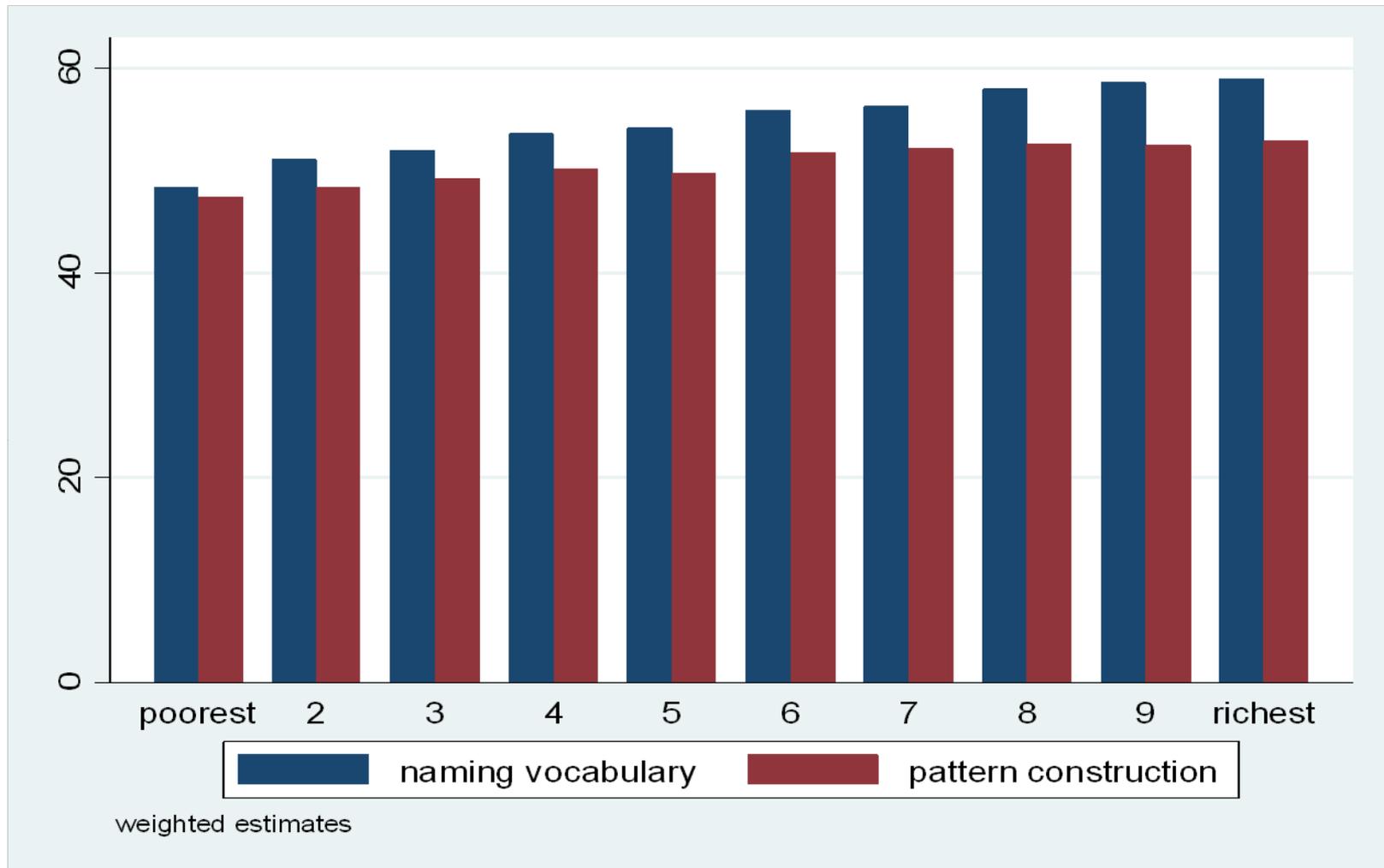
On average, children in social housing scored lower on these tests than those in private renting, and those in private renting scored lower than those in home ownership.

Children in deprived neighbourhoods and children from less advantaged families also scored lower than others.

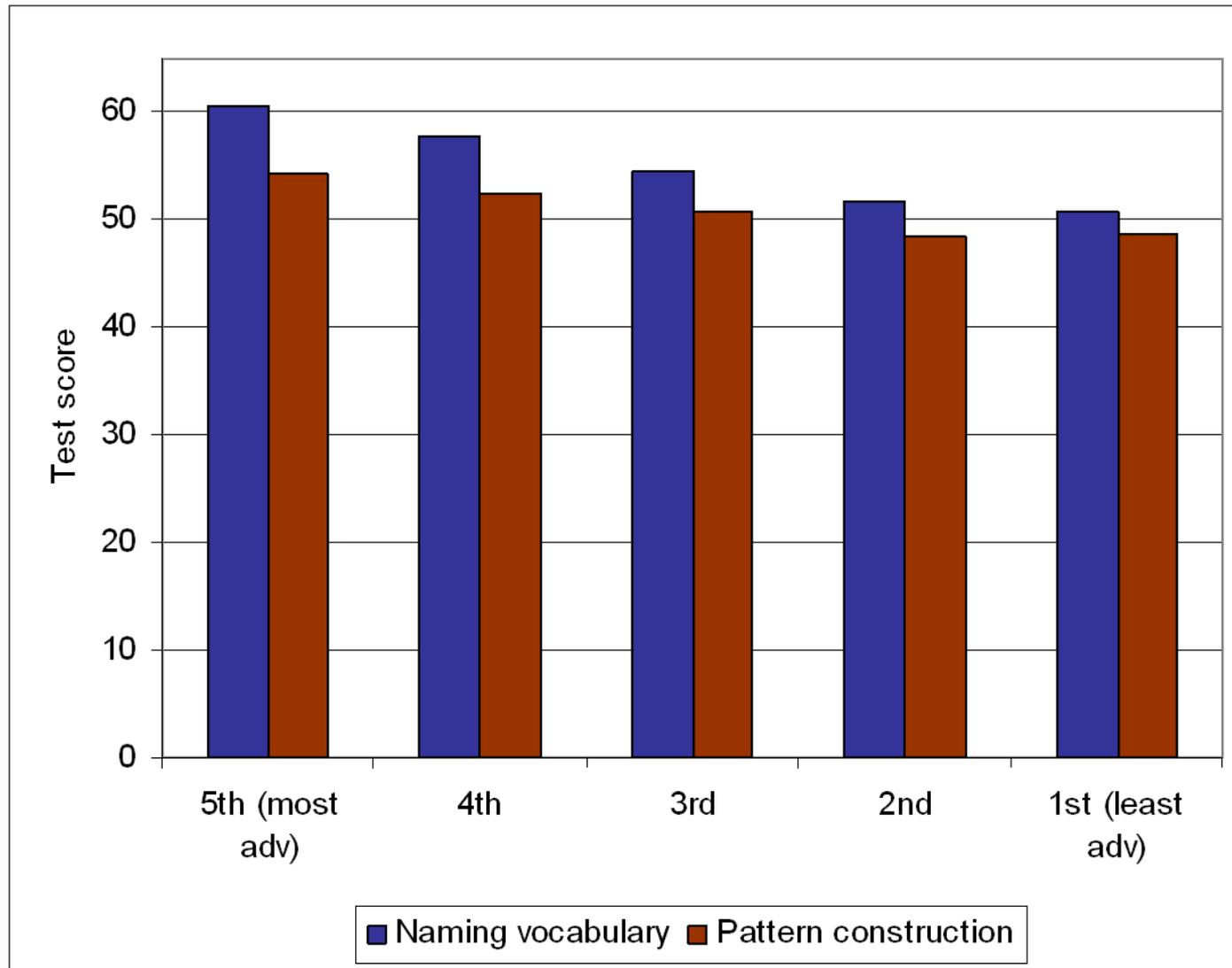
Mean test scores by housing tenure, age 5 in 2006



Mean test scores by neighbourhood IMD 2007 decile, age 5 in 2006



Mean test scores by Index of Family Advantage, age 5 in 2006



Other factors in addition to housing tenure, neighbourhood disadvantage and family advantage known to be associated with early outcomes

Other research on the Millenium Cohort Study has found that these test scores are also associated with gender (Schoon et al, 2010), ethnicity (Dearden and Sibieta, 2010), parents' employment status and financial situation, parenting practices, parents' relationship quality, mother-child relationships and mother's wellbeing and self-esteem (Jones, 2010)).

(III) The role of housing tenure and neighbourhoods in early outcomes

We carried out regression analysis on test scores to control for a small number of factors:

- i. Whether or not children lived in the most deprived tenth of neighbourhoods;
- ii. Index of Family Advantage (based on parents' education and occupational status);
- iii. Mother's age at first birth;
- iv. Family structure;
- v. Number of siblings.

Regression results

Half the gap in test scores between children in both rented tenures and those in home ownership was removed by controlling for these factors:

Thus, the typically high deprivation levels of social housing neighbourhoods appear to constitute part of the link seen between tenure and early childhood outcomes.

Individual and family factors also appear to constitute part of the link.

Discussion

Whether the associations we have found between housing tenure and early outcomes are 'large' or 'small' or a concern for policy is a matter for judgment.

After controls, the gap in scores between children of owner occupiers and those of social renters was less than the difference between children with 1 sibling and those with 3+. The gap in scores was similar to the difference between scores for children with a mother of average age (30-34 years old) at her first birth and a mother under 20 years old at her first birth.

It is possible that further controls, would reduce or remove the gap entirely.

Summary

There are substantial variations by tenure in terms of some aspects of children's family, housing, neighbourhood circumstances.

There are links between housing tenure and very early childhood outcomes, which in a general sense parallel the links seen between childhood housing tenure and various adult outcomes for earlier cohorts (Feinstein et al. 2008; Lupton et al. 2009)

The typically high deprivation levels of social housing neighbourhoods appear to constitute part of the link seen between tenure and early childhood outcomes.

The typically low levels of family advantage of social renting families also appear to constitute part of the link.

This is not evidence of a 'tenure effect', and, importantly, the models and the variables we used – housing tenure as well as neighbourhood characteristics and family characteristics – all explain only a small proportion of the total variation in children's test scores.

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For more information

A report summary, the full text, and summary and text of the companion reports based on the Millenium Cohort Study are available at: <http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/case/>.

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