

niesr

Education and social mobility: where next for research and policy?

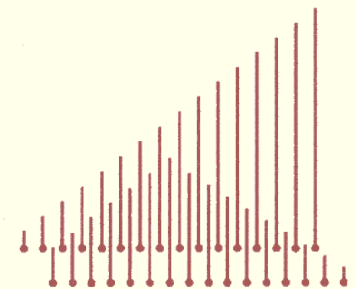
Jonathan Portes

January 2012

www.niesr.ac.uk

Twitter: @jdportes

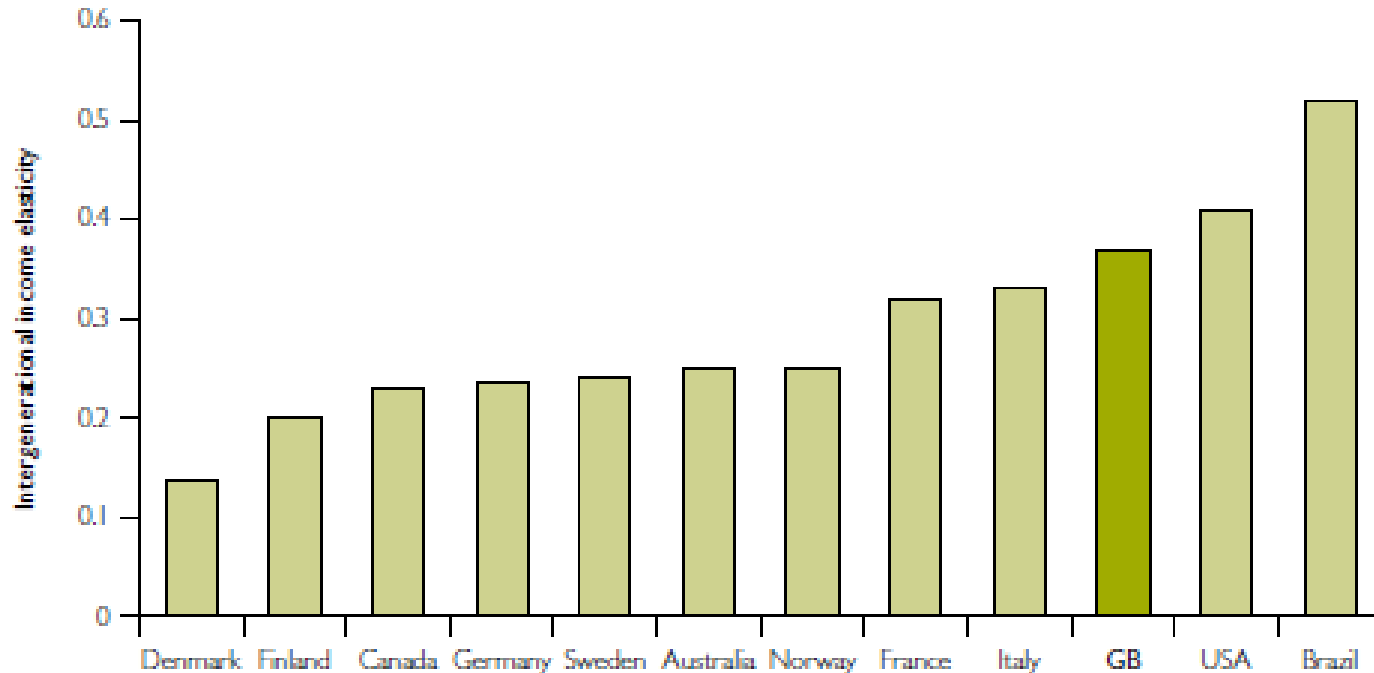
Blog: <http://notthetresuryview.blogspot.com/>



National Institute
of Economic and
Social Research

Social mobility is low in the UK

Figure 1.3: The relationship between the incomes of parents and their children is stronger in Great Britain than in many other countries

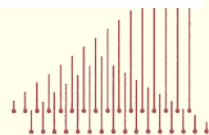


Source:

Blanden J, *How Much Can We Learn from International Comparisons of Intergenerational Mobility?*
Centre for the Economics of Education Discussion Paper 111 (2009).

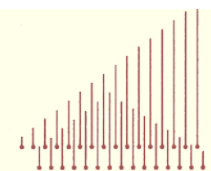
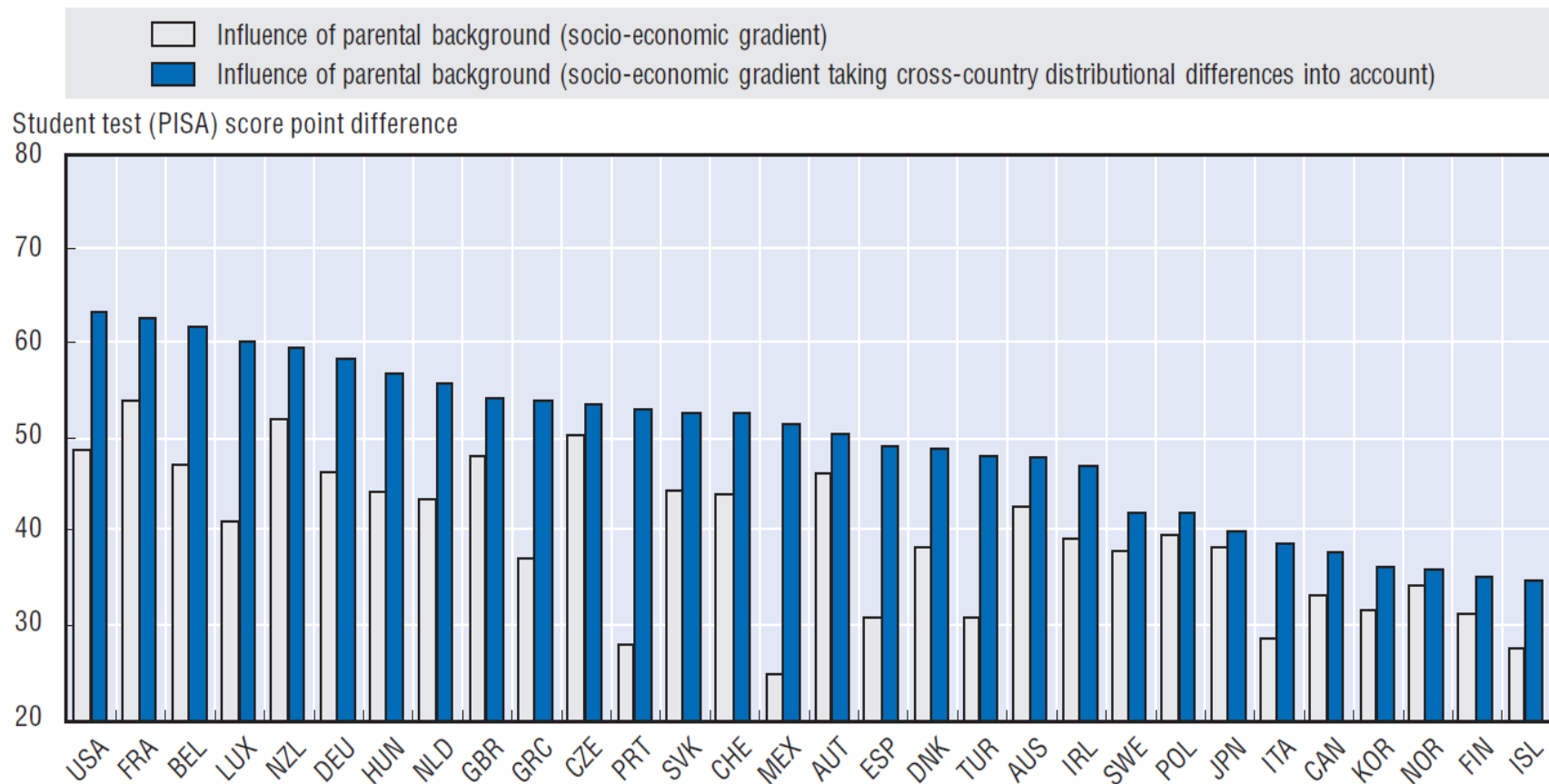
Note:

Cross-country differences in intergenerational income elasticity – higher values mean less mobility



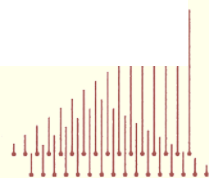
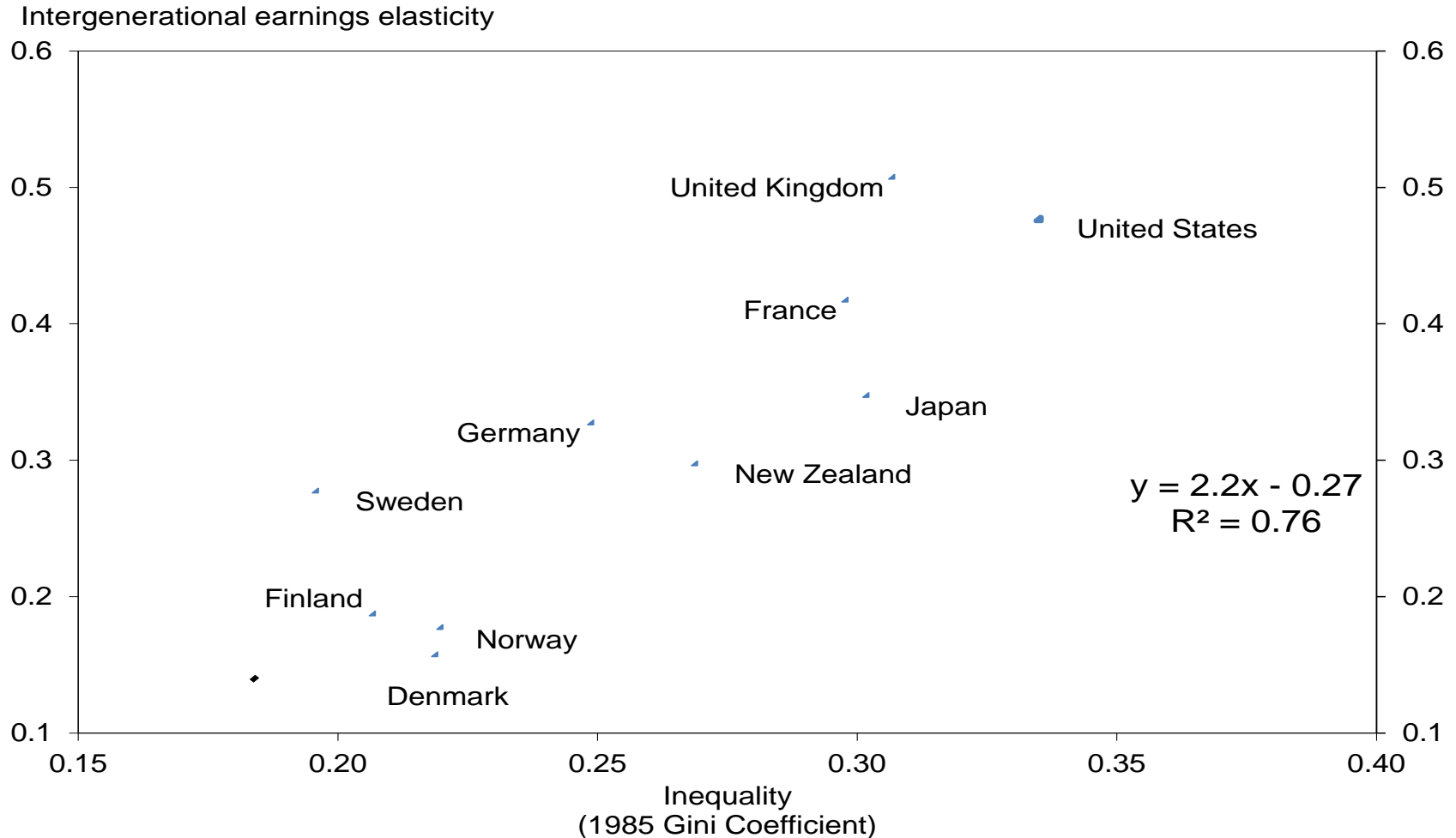
The socio-economic gradient of educational attainment is high..

Figure 5.3. **The influence of parental background on student achievement in secondary education varies widely across the OECD countries¹**



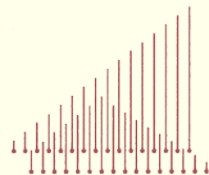
And higher income inequality is associated with (subsequent) lower social mobility

The Great Gatsby Curve



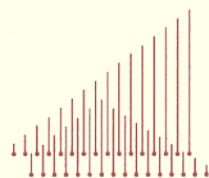
Clear interaction between the three variables..

- Income inequality, social (im)mobility, and socio-economic gradient of education strongly correlated
- All endogeneous so exact causal model unclear
- But reasonable to assume that reducing socio-economic gradient would over time improve social mobility



So what explains past changes?

- Increased educational inequality in 1980s and 1990s: "the increased influence of parental income in determining educational attainment, especially higher education, and labour market attachment. " [Blanden, Gregg and McMillan]
- Increased income inequality: sharp rise in overall inequality in 1980s and early 1990s; mixed picture since, but no sharp fall [National Institute Economic Review, October 2011]



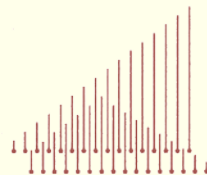
Future prospects: short to medium term

- Optimism on impact of recent education trends:

“declining social mobility is not an immutable force, but can be changed. Indeed, it seems that it was changed by the education policies of the previous government.

[Simon Burgess, FT]

- But pessimism on inequality: tax and benefit changes likely to increase inequality, especially among families with children



Significant reduction in socio-economic gradient at lower end

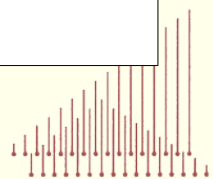
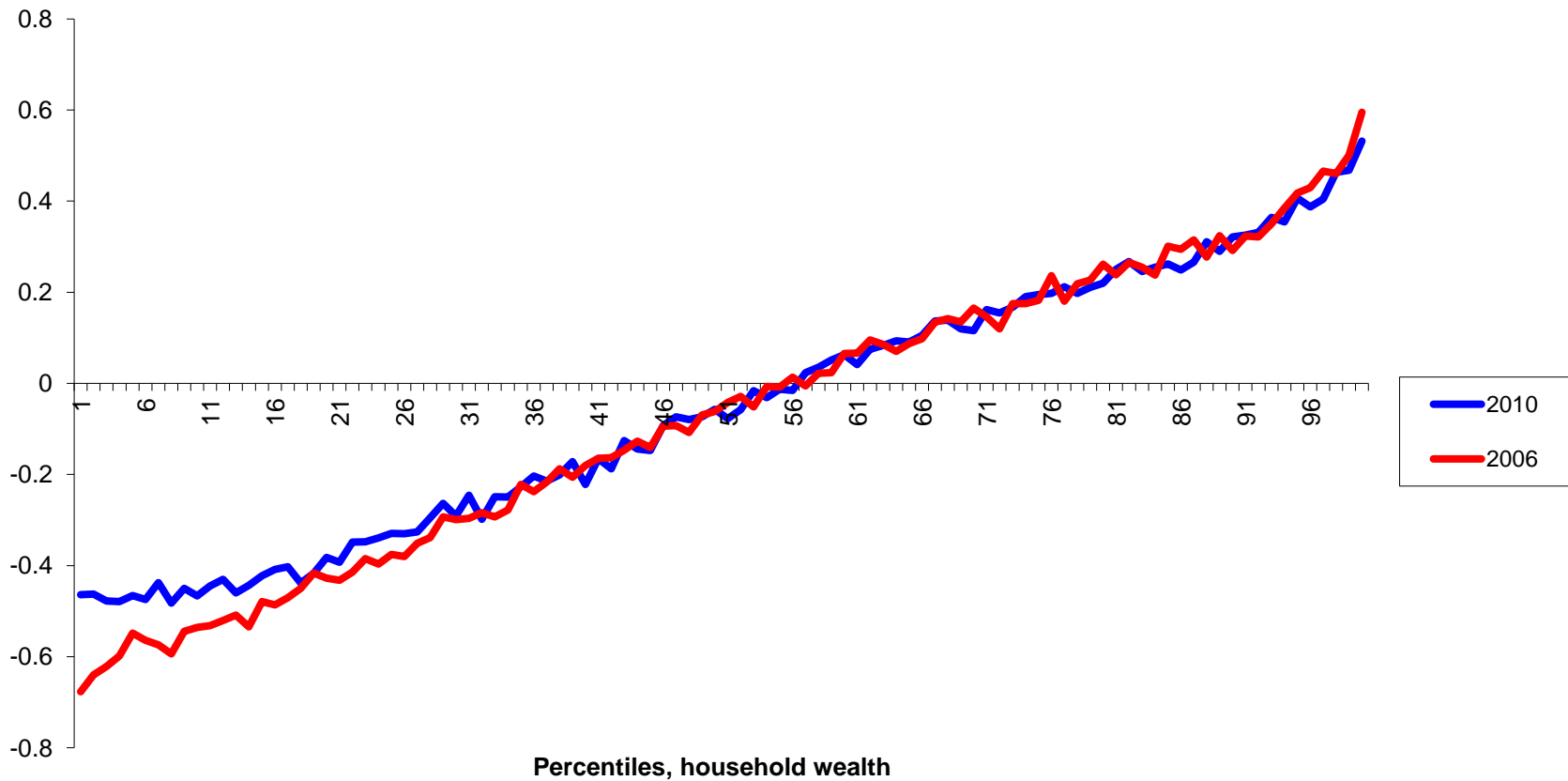
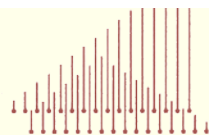
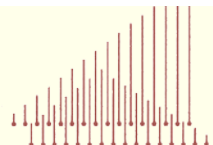
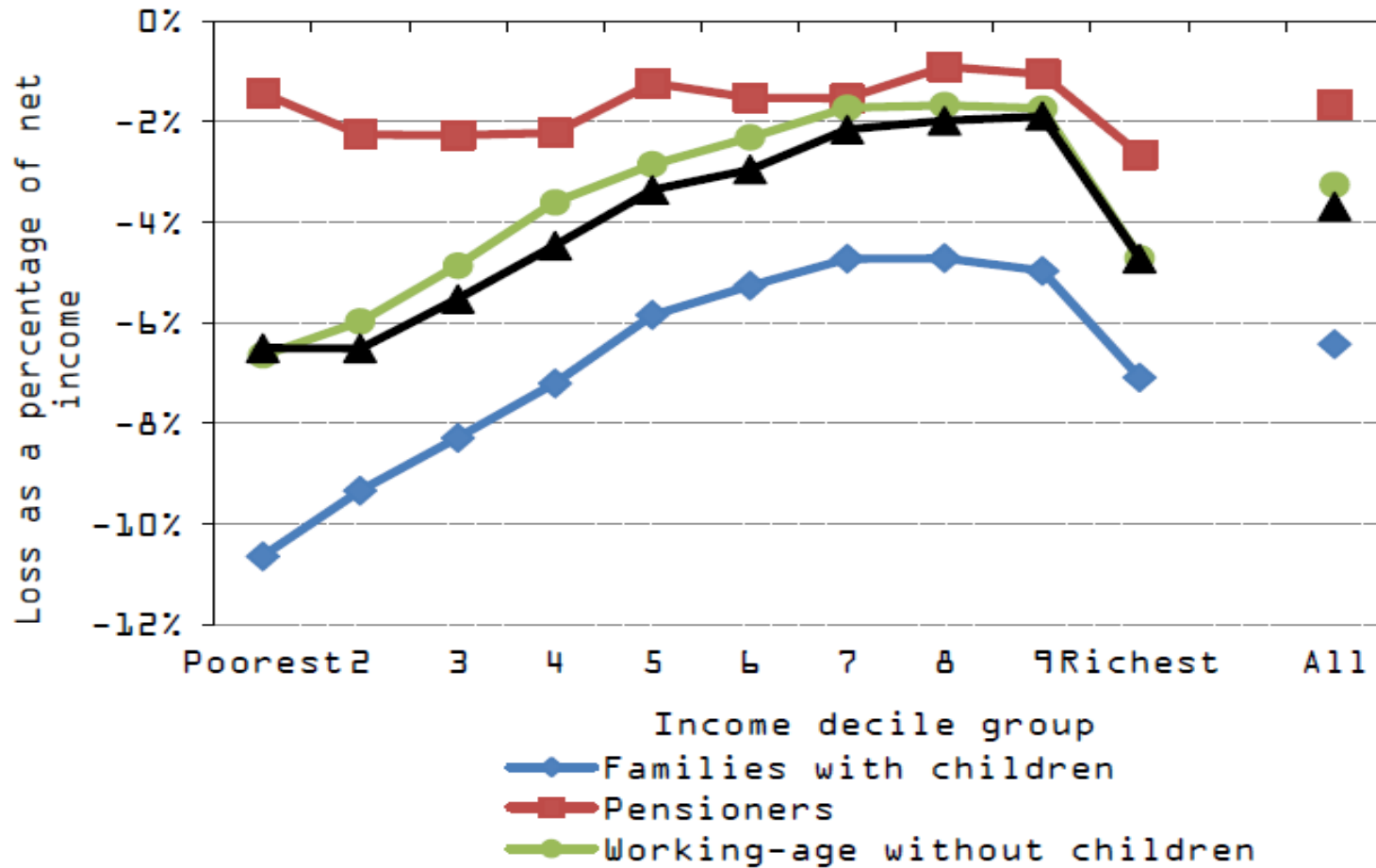


Figure 8: “The Great Gatsby Curve”: Projection

The Great Gatsby Curve



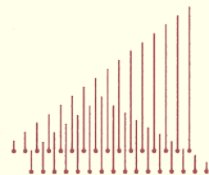
Losses from tax and benefit changes, 2011-14 (IFS)



Future prospects: longer term

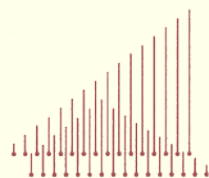
Will depend largely on (further) narrowing education gaps. Lots of policies will impact on this:

- Early years
- Academies/free schools
- Pupil premium
- Abolition of EMA



Likely impacts?

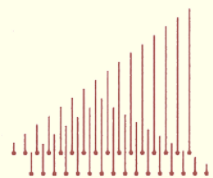
- Early years (-ve short-term, +ve long term?)
- Academies/free schools (-ve?)
- Pupil premium (+ve)
- Abolition of EMA (-ve)



Impact of selection likely to be negative

"early selection into different institutional tracks is associated with larger socio-economic inequalities in learning performance without being associated with better overall performance."

[OECD]



As it was in the past

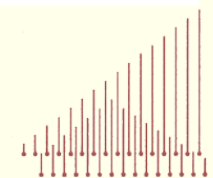
Panel A. No controls

	1 st quartile destination	2 nd quartile destination	3 rd quartile destination	4 th quartile destination
<i>1st (lowest) quartile origin</i>				
Grammar school	0.8	0.4*	1.7*	2.0*
Secondary modern school	1.2	0.9	0.8	1.1
Selective system school	1.1	0.7	1.0	1.4
<i>2nd quartile origin</i>				
Grammar school	0.7*	0.8	0.8	2.3*
Secondary modern school	1.4	1.3	0.8	1.0
Selective system school	0.9	1.1	0.8	1.3
<i>3rd quartile origin</i>				
Grammar school	0.8	0.7	1.1	1.5*
Secondary modern school	1.3	1.0	0.9	0.9
Selective system school	1.1	0.9	1.0	1.1
<i>4th (highest) quartile origin</i>				
Grammar school	0.5*	1.0	0.8	1.8*
Secondary modern school	1.3	1.2	0.6*	1.0
Selective system school	0.9	1.1	0.7*	1.4*

Panel B. Controlling for propensity scores

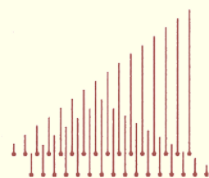
	1 st quartile destination	2 nd quartile destination	3 rd quartile destination	4 th quartile destination
<i>1st (lowest) quartile origin</i>				
Grammar school	1.0	0.5*	1.4	1.3
Secondary modern school	1.2	1.0	0.8	1.1
Selective system school	1.1	0.8	1.0	1.2
<i>2nd quartile origin</i>				
Grammar school	0.9	1.1	0.8	1.5
Secondary modern school	0.9	1.3	0.9	1.0
Selective system school	0.9	1.2	0.9	1.2
<i>3rd quartile origin</i>				
Grammar school	1.0	1.1	0.9	1.1
Secondary modern school	1.0	1.1	1.0	0.9
Selective system school	1.0	1.1	1.0	0.9
<i>4th (highest) quartile origin</i>				
Grammar school	0.8	1.5	0.7	1.1
Secondary modern school	1.2	1.3	0.7	1.0
Selective system school	1.0	1.3	0.7	1.1

Note: Figures in the table are odds ratios. Asterisks indicate a statistically significant difference in the odds of reaching the stated destination from the stated origin in comparison with those who attended comprehensive schools ($p < 0.05$). Bold type indicates a statistically significant difference between the odds ratio concerned and the corresponding odds ratio for those from the lowest income origin quartile ($p < 0.05$).



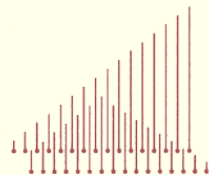
Can we quantify any of these impacts?

- EMA raised staying-on rates and attainment: possibly by 0.1 to 0.2 of a standard deviation (IFS evaluation)
- Pupil premium could raise per pupil relative expenditure by perhaps 20-30%;
- But only 20-30% of outcome variation is between school (DFE stats)
- And estimated elasticities are low even when positive (STAR; academies)



Conclusions

- Recent improvements in socio-economic gradient of attainment may translate into some improvement in social mobility in short term
- But net impact of changes now in train probably on balance negative
- If government wants to see sustained improvement over longer term, new policy directions required



niesr

Education and social mobility: where next for research and policy?

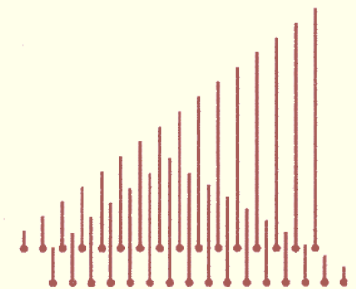
Jonathan Portes

January 2012

www.niesr.ac.uk

Twitter: @jdportes

Blog: <http://notthetresuryview.blogspot.com/>



National Institute
of Economic and
Social Research