CATALYSING SOCIAL MOBILITY THROUGH STUDENT SUCCESS

Siyaphumelela Network Conference
2023

Murray Leibbrandt,
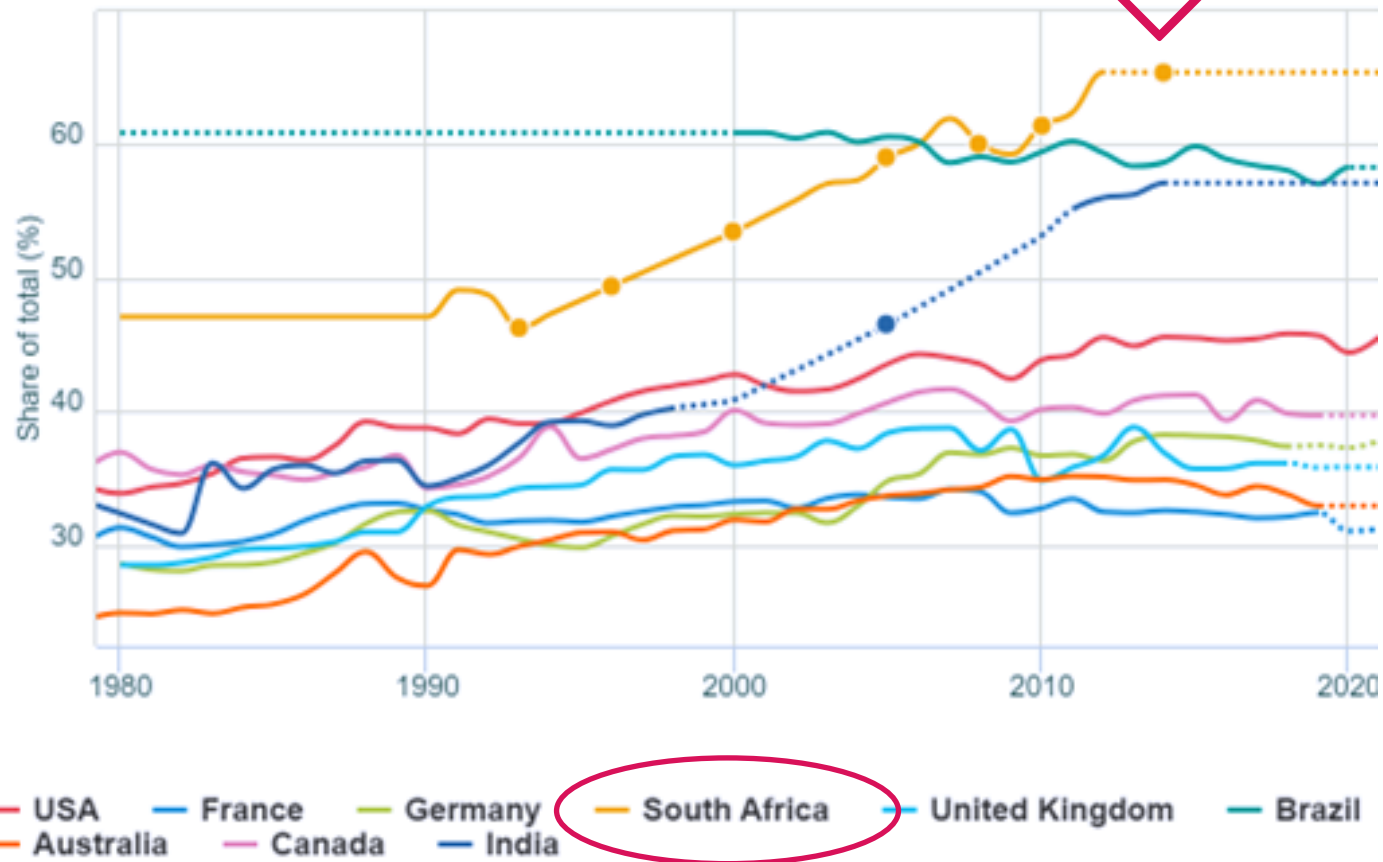Nicola Branson, and Emma Whitelaw

Overview

1. Texture of our Inequality and our (Im)mobility
2. Post School Attainment and Mobility
3. Delving Deeper: Student SES and Higher Education Access and Success
4. Labour Market Success of Graduates
5. Concluding Comments

AND SO, THE CYCLE CONTINUES

Siyaphambili
We Are Moving Forward

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1. The Texture of our Income Inequality and our (Im)mobility

Top 10% National Income Share

Source: World Inequality Database (https://wid.world/)

Low earnings mobility – Intergenerational Failure

Sons' intergenerational earnings elasticity by earnings quantiles

Source: Finn, Leibbrandt & Ranchhod, 2017
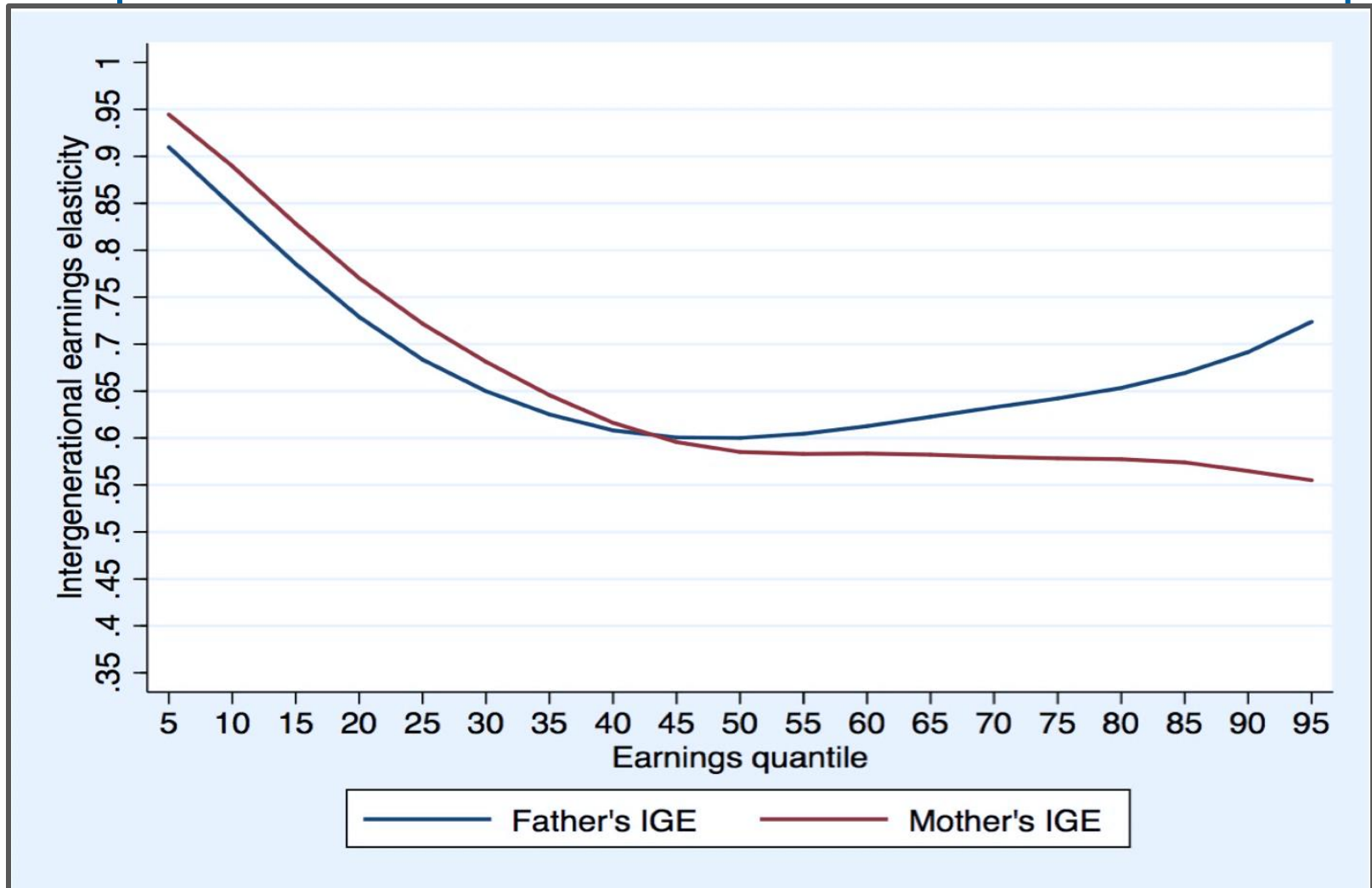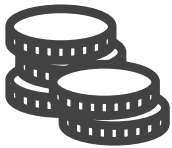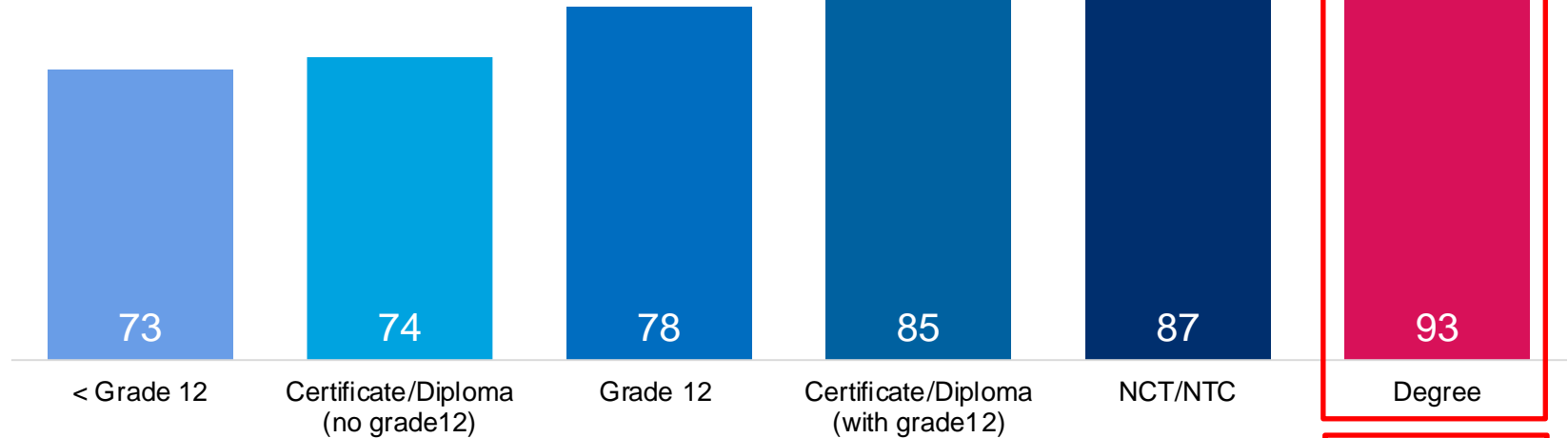
2. Post School Attainment and Mobility

High and rising returns to 12+ (especially post-secondary)

Average returns to schooling, South Africa 1994-2011
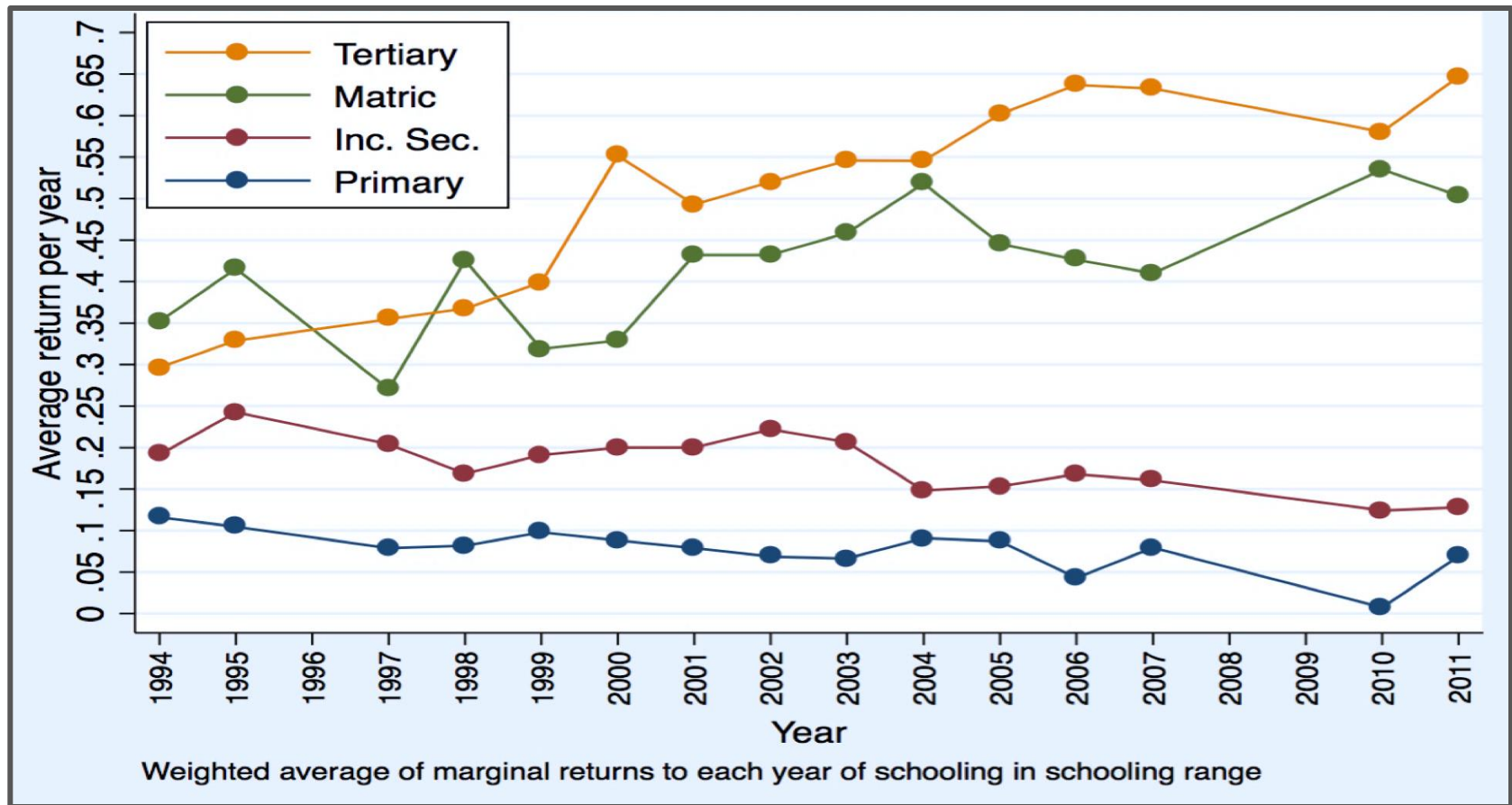
Probability of employment

< Grade 12	Certificate/Diploma (no grade12)	Grade 12	Certificate/Diploma (with grade12)	NCT/NTC	Degree
73	74	78	85	87	93

Earnings per month (ZAR)

< Grade 12	Certificate/Diploma (no grade12)	Grade 12	Certificate/Diploma (with grade12)	NCT/NTC	Degree
R3 002	R5 136	R5 095	R8 605	R7 788	R20 958

Source: NIDS Wave 5 (2017)
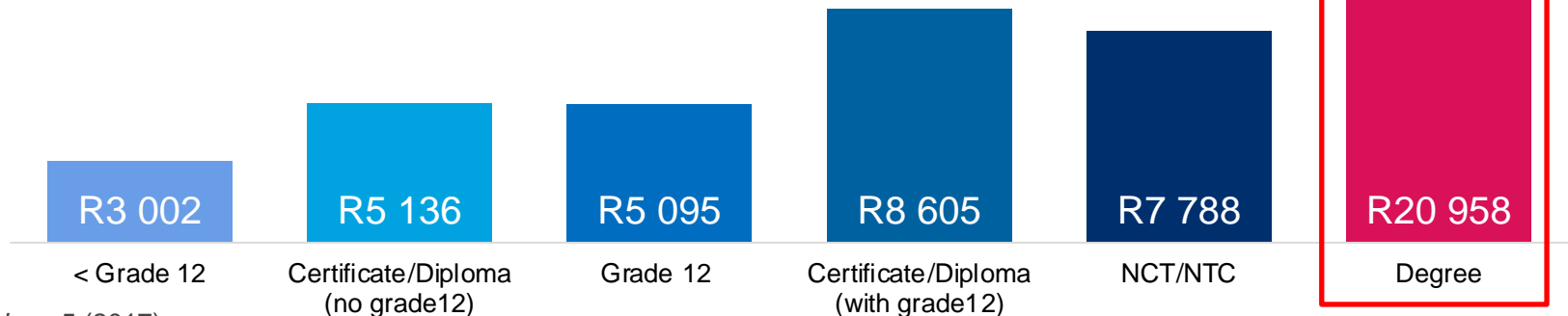
Qualifications attained, 1994-2030

No change in the share of youth with diploma, bachelor or higher qualifications since 1994

28% goal

10,2%

10,6%

Percentage

Year

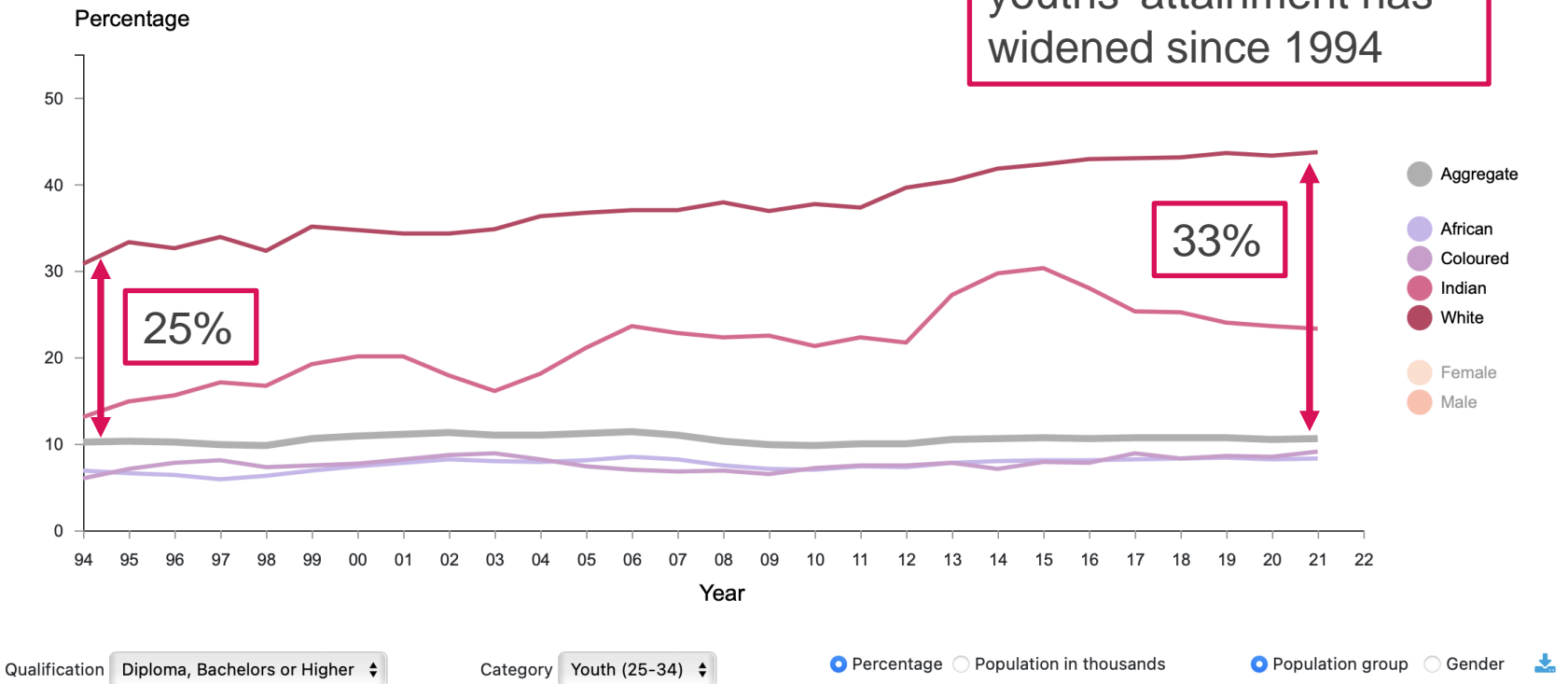● Any qualification   ● Diploma, Bachelors, or Higher

Category Youth (25-34) ⇕

Source: Siyaphambili interactive website

Qualification attainment by sub-group, 1994-2021

Percentage

The gap between African and White youths' attainment has widened since 1994

25%

33%

Aggregate

African
Coloured
Indian
White

Female
Male

Year

Qualification Diploma, Bachelors or Higher ⬍   Category Youth (25-34) ⬍   ⦿ Percentage ◯ Population in thousands   ⦿ Population group ◯ Gender
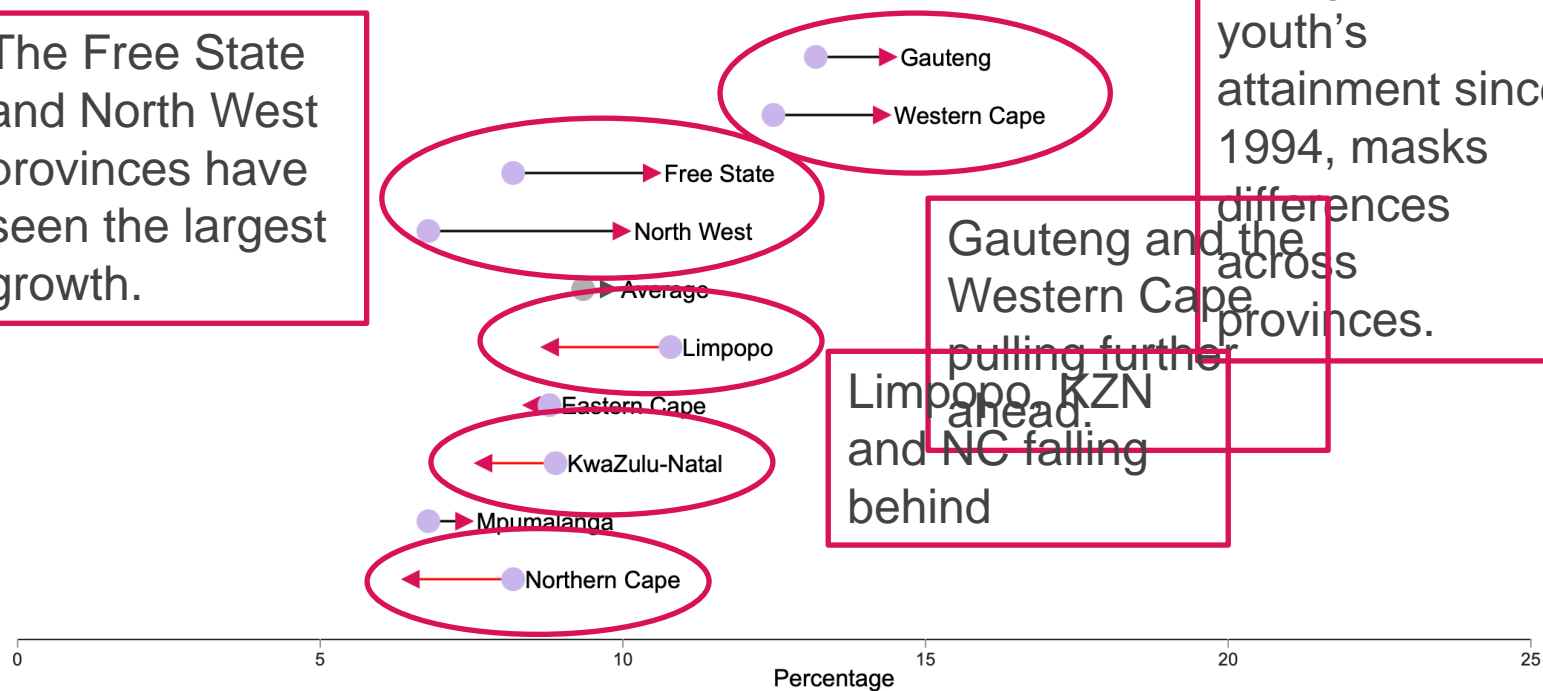
Source: Siyaphambili interactive website

Growth in qualification attainment by province

The Free State and North West provinces have seen the largest growth.

Overall 'no change' in youth's attainment since 1994, masks differences across provinces.

Gauteng and the Western Cape pulling further ahead.

Limpopo, KZN and NC falling behind

Gauteng

Western Cape

Free State

North West

Average

Limpopo

Eastern Cape

KwaZulu-Natal

Mpumalanga

Northern Cape

0   5   10   15   20   25

Percentage

Qualification [Diploma, Bachelors or Higher ▼]   Category [Youth (25-34) ▼]   ● Percentage ○ Population in thousands   From year [1994 ▼] To year [2021 ▼]
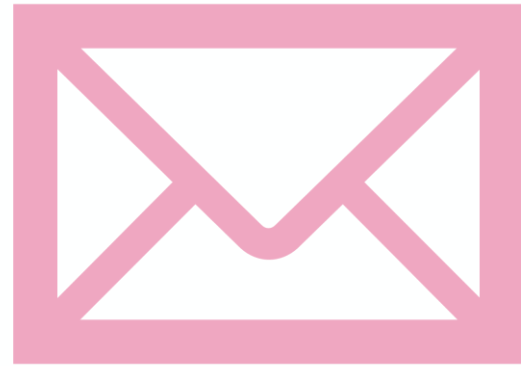
Source: Siyaphambili interactive website

3. Delving Deeper: Student SES and Higher Education Access and Success
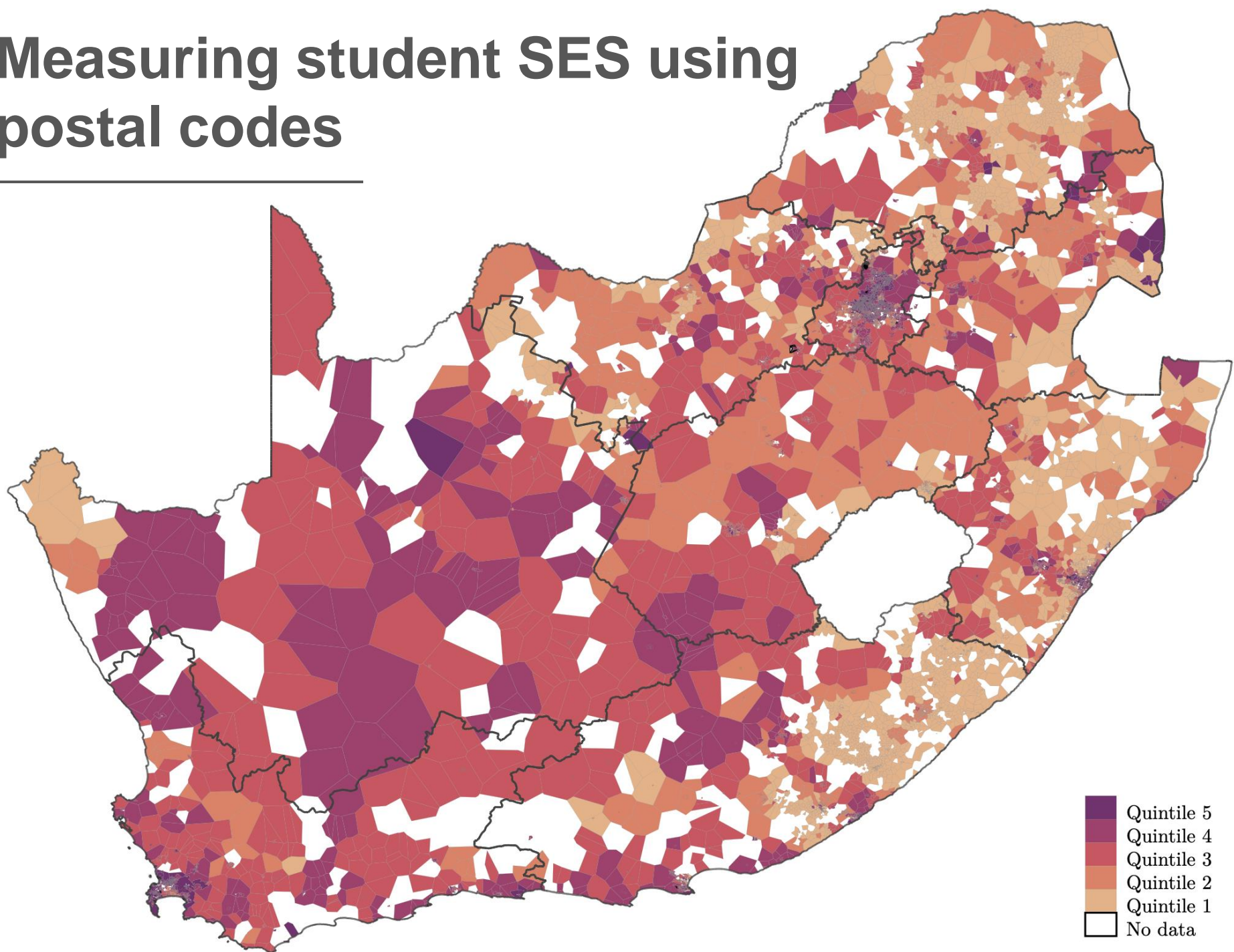
Measuring student SES using postal codes

- Comprehensive system-wide university data in HEMIS, but little socioeconomic status (SES) information.

- Therefore, match student postal codes to average Census 2011 community income information and divide the population of students entering undergraduate university qualifications in 2015 into 5 equal groups.

- Caveat: we assume that students' socioeconomic circumstances are well represented by the average characteristics of the postal code in which they originate.

- Classify students from quintile 1-3 postal codes as lower income.

Measuring student SES using postal codes

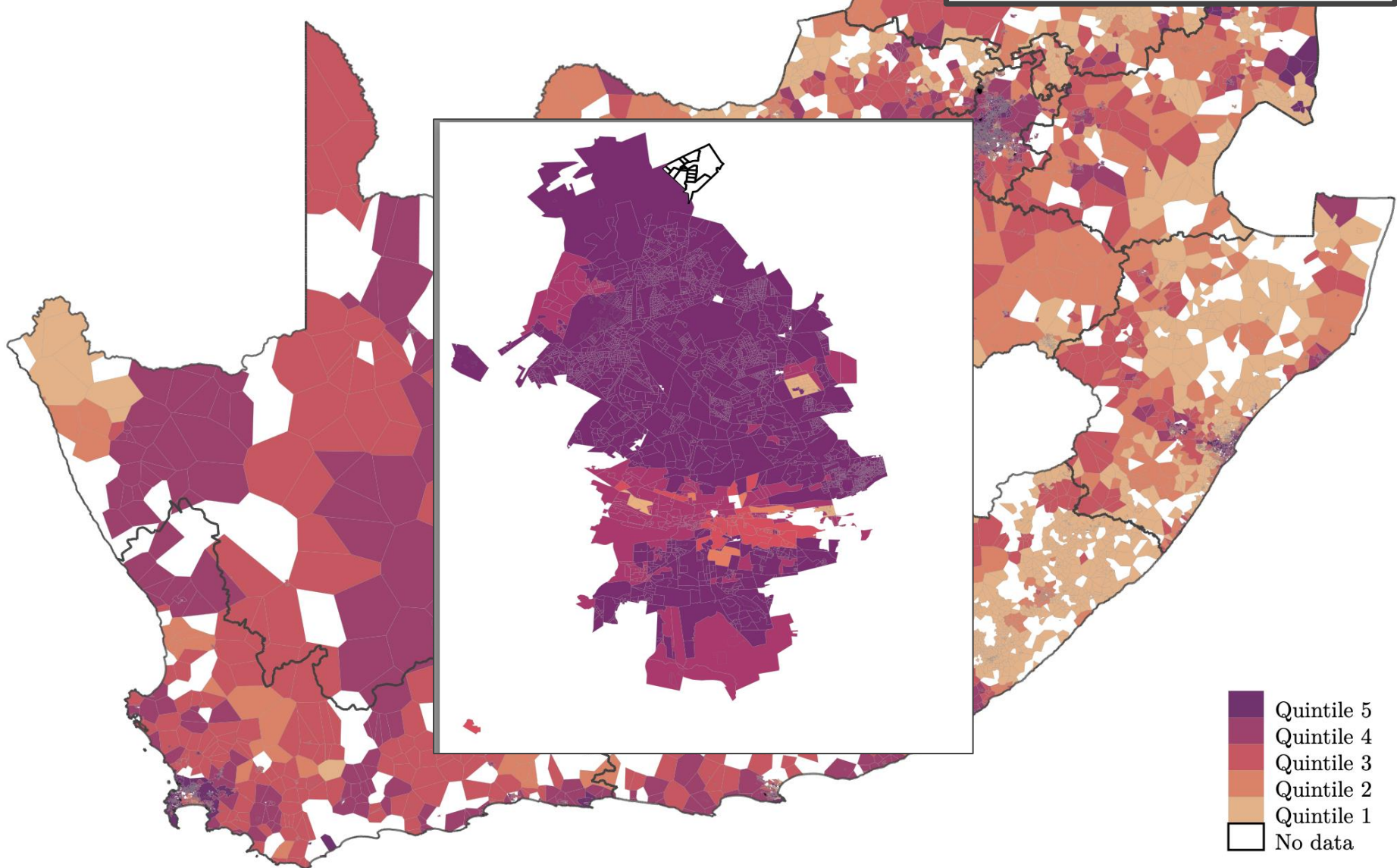Quintile 5
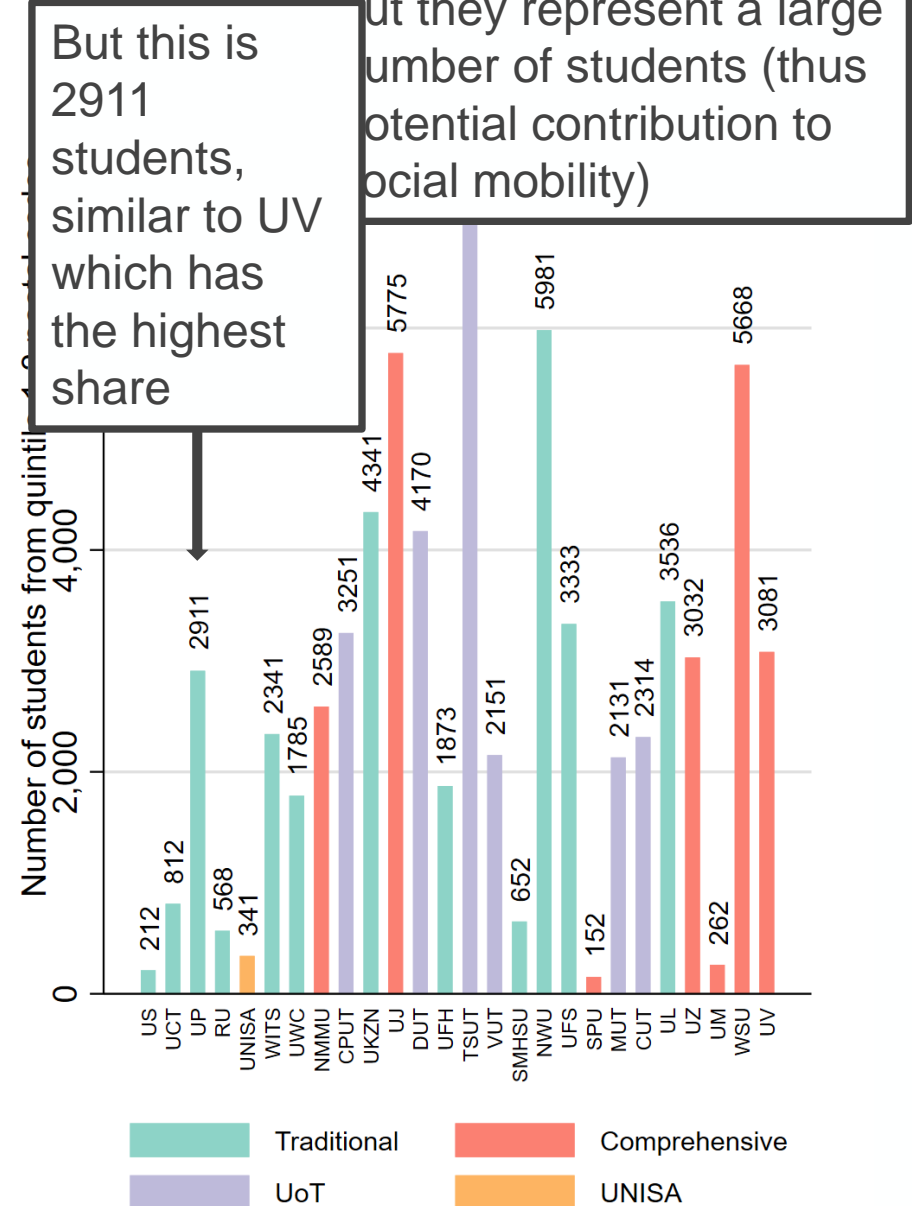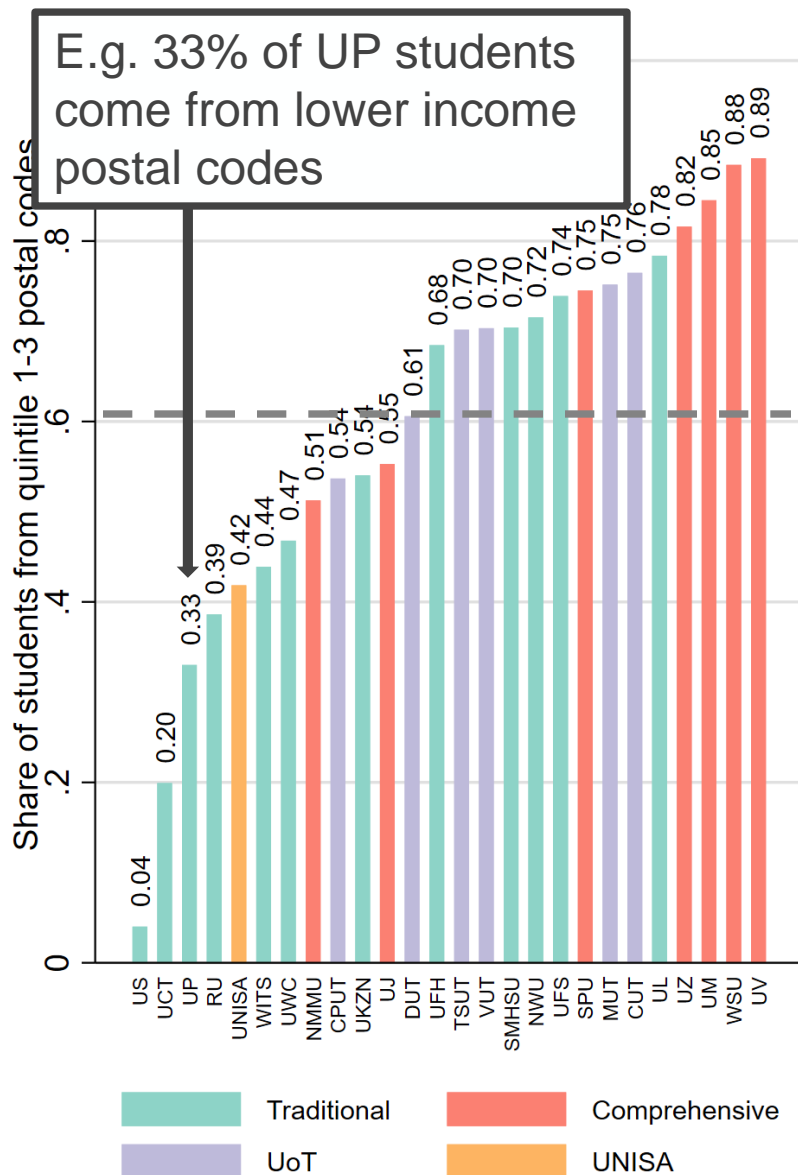Quintile 4
Quintile 3
Quintile 2
Quintile 1
No data

Measuring Student SES using postal codes

27% of all students from quintile 5 postal codes are from Joburg, Sandton, Randburg

Quintile 5
Quintile 4
Quintile 3
Quintile 2
Quintile 1
No data

Lower income access, by insti[tution]

E.g. 33% of UP students come from lower income postal codes

But this is 2911 students, similar to UV which has the highest share

In some institutions, the share of students is low, but they represent a large number of students (thus potential contribution to social mobility)

Left chart — Share of students from quintile 1-3 postal codes:
US 0.04, UCT 0.20, UP 0.33, RU 0.39, UNISA 0.42, WITS 0.44, UWC 0.47, NMMU 0.51, CPUT 0.54, UKZN 0.54, UJ 0.55, DUT 0.61, UFH 0.68, TSUT 0.70, VUT 0.70, SMHSU 0.70, NWU 0.72, UFS 0.74, SPU 0.75, MUT 0.75, CUT 0.76, UL 0.78, UZ 0.82, UM 0.85, WSU 0.88, UV 0.89

Right chart — Number of students from quintile:
US 212, UCT 812, UP 2911, RU 568, UNISA 341, WITS 2341, UWC 1785, NMMU 2589, CPUT 3251, UKZN 4341, UJ 5775, DUT 4170, UFH 1873, TSUT (highest), VUT 2151, SMHSU 652, NWU 5981, UFS 3333, SPU 152, MUT 2131, CUT 2314, UL 3536, UZ 3032, UM 262, WSU 5668, UV 3081
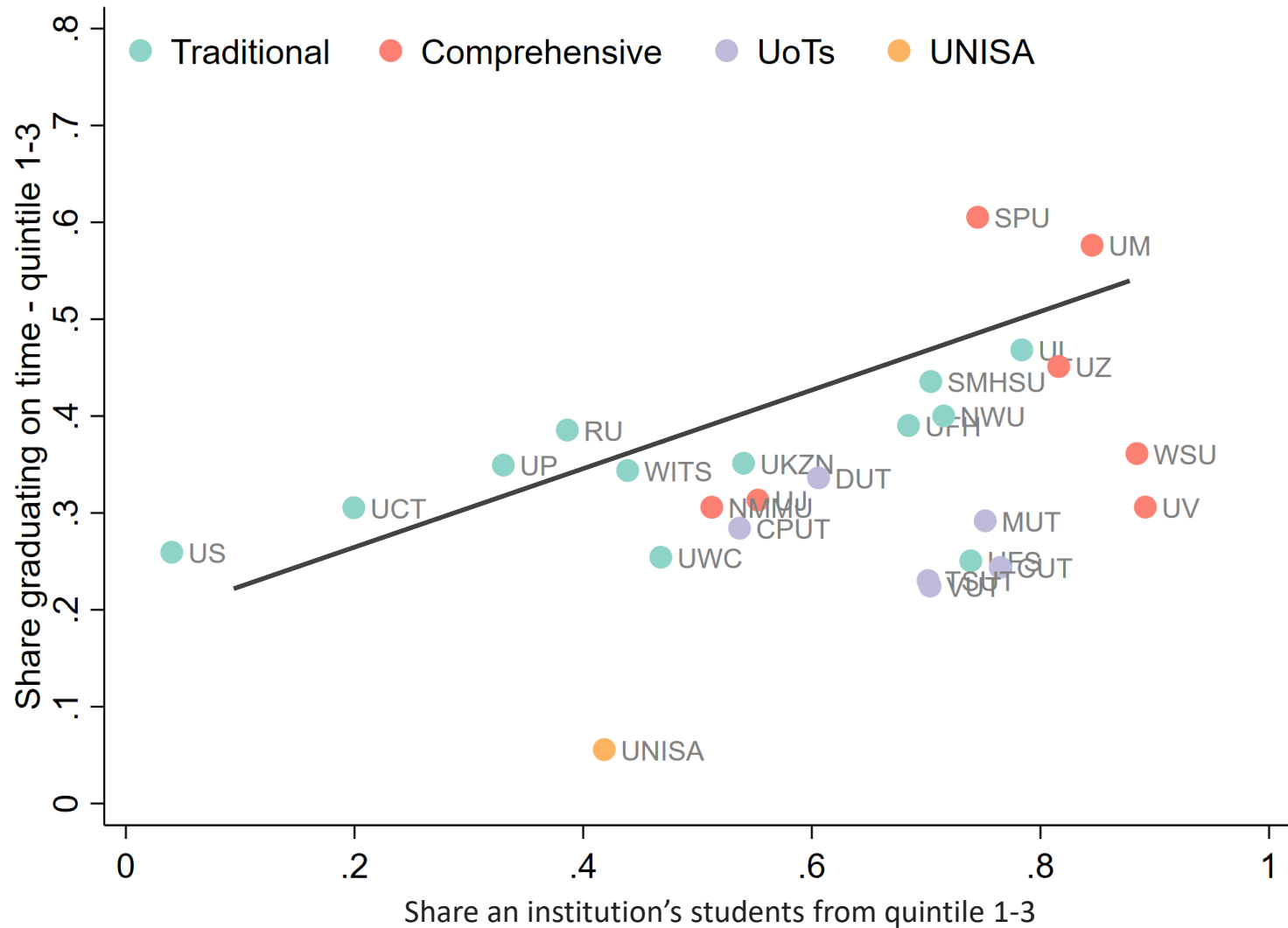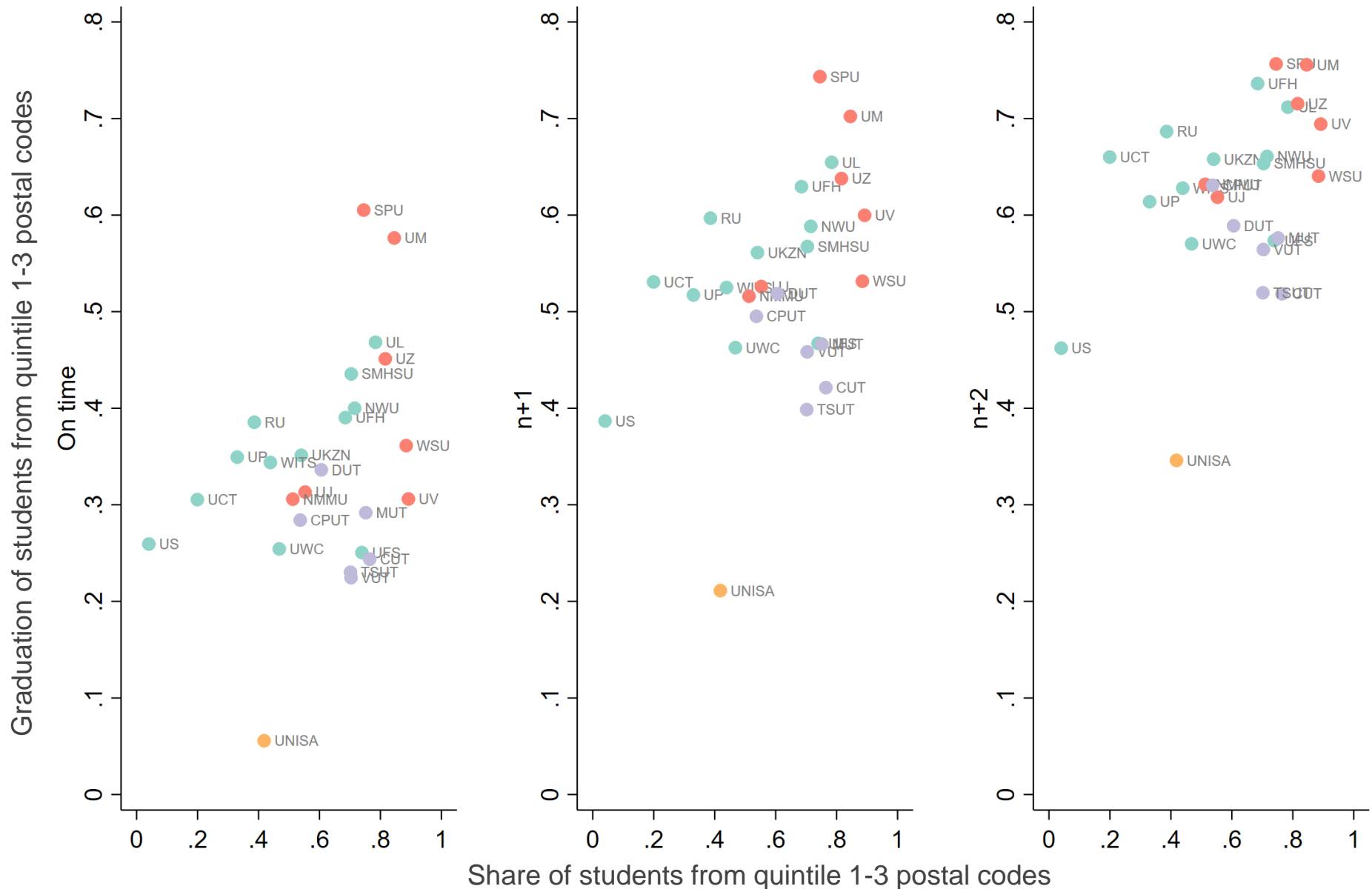
Legend: Traditional, Comprehensive, UoT, UNISA

Contribution to 'mobility' - Graduation

Contribution to 'mobility'

4. Success in the Labour Market

Employment and upward income mobility

Share of 2015 NSFAS graduates employed in 2017

University	Value
UL	57.10
UV	59.80
WSU	62.40
UZ	62.50
TSUT	72.30
UFH	72.70
MUT	75.40
NWU	76.20
VUT	76.50
UKZN	77.10
NMMU	79.30
CUT	80.30
DUT	80.30
UNISA	81.40
UFS	82.20
UJ	82.90
UP	85.40
RU	85.60
WITS	86.20
US	90.20
UCT	91.10
UWC	91.10
CPUT	91.50

Legend: Traditional, Comprehensive, UoT, UNISA

Source: Based on Wildschut, Rogan & Mncwango (2020)
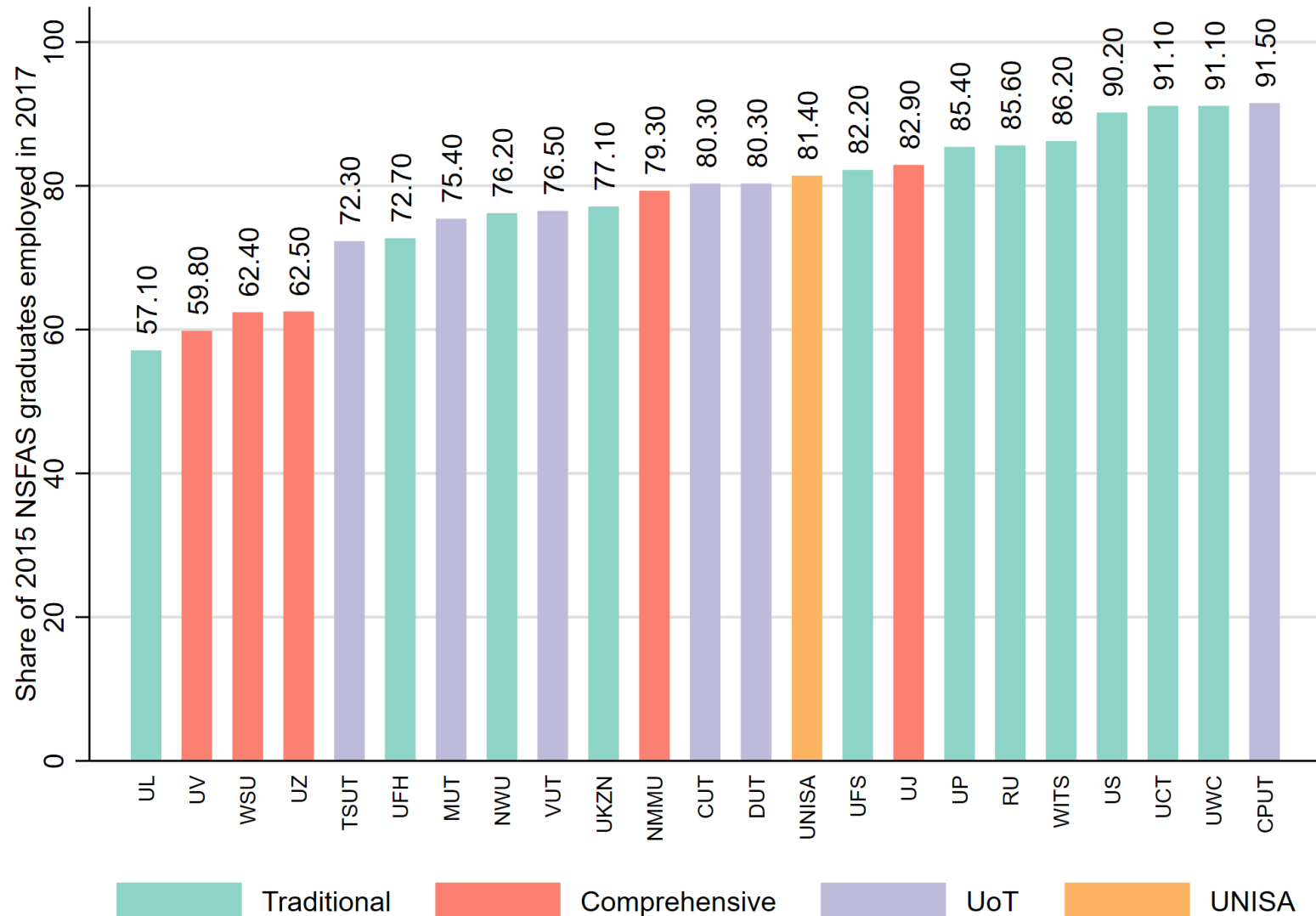
5. Conclusions

Policy approaches to upward mobility

Increasing social protection

Improving early literacy/numeracy

Improving higher education

Basic Package of Support: Reaching Proof of concept

Youth Explorer: building layers of knowledge to better inform policy design and planning

Funda Wande
Reading for Meaning

COVID Learning Losses

EARLY GRADE READING IN SOUTH AFRICA

MAY 2021

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The missing middle, youth characteristics and NSFAS

	Persistently eligible	Transiently eligible	Vulnerable MM	Stable MM	HH income > R600k
Household income, access to credit					
Per capita income (monthly)	R1 336.04	R3 428.71	R8 748.65	R12 609.20	R22 682.60
At least one resident has a home loan/bond	0.00	0.07	0.21	0.54	0.44
At least one resident has vehicle finance	0.00	0.08	0.28	0.40	0.41
Household composition					
Number of children under 6	0.84	0.63	0.84	0.35	0.34
Number of children aged 6-18	1.53	1.43	1.44	0.70	0.88
Household employment rate (working age adults)	0.34	0.56	0.54	0.73	0.66
Employment, enrolment states					
Enrolled but level is unknown	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02
Enrolled in school	0.25	0.19	0.24	0.24	0.23
Enrolled in post-school	0.04	0.09	0.15	0.14	0.22
Employed	0.28	0.45	0.38	0.53	0.44
NEET/no info on enrolment/employment	0.43	0.26	0.23	0.09	0.08
Schooling (current/past)					
Completed or enrolled in Grade 12	0.29	0.56	0.59	0.76	0.75
School quintile 1-3	0.75	0.54	0.43	0.08	0.16
School quintile 4-5	0.15	0.30	0.34	0.62	0.53
Parental education					
Mother's education: post-school	0.04	0.20	0.33	0.46	0.53
Father's education: post-school	0.04	0.15	0.22	0.44	0.52
Individuals (aged 15-35)	*38 245*	*15 654*	*929*	*517*	*745*

Source: NIDS Waves 1-5 (post-stratification weights)
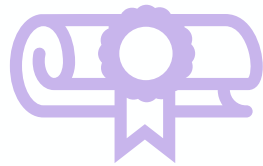
Catalysing social mobility through student success

- Evidence of the need to approach student success holistically.

inclusive access

support while studying

graduate outcomes

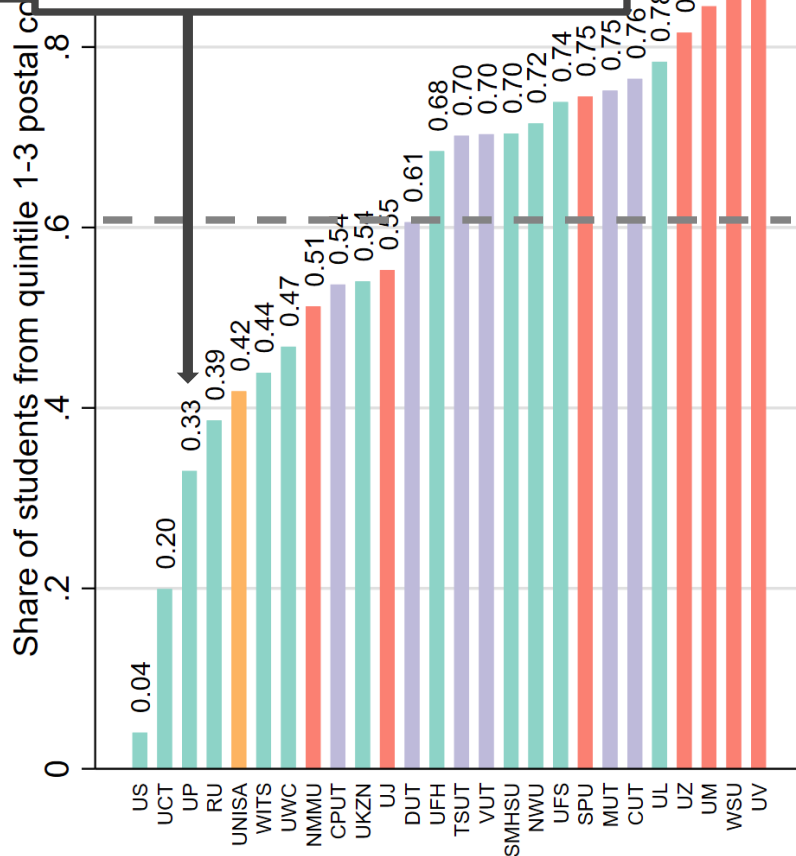**CHALLENGING INEQUALITIES THROUGH POLICY RELEVANT ACADEMIC RESEARCH.**

References

- Culligan, S. (2022). **Using census, institutional and geospatial data to estimate the socio-economic profile of post-school students by institutional type**. Master's thesis. University of Cape Town.

- Finn, A., Leibbrandt, M. & Ranchhod, V. (2017). **Patterns of persistence: Intergenerational mobility and education in South Africa**. Version 3. SALDRU Working Paper Number 175/ NIDS Discussion Paper 2016/2. University of Cape Town.

- Lam, D., Finn, A. & Leibbrandt, M. (2015). **Schooling inequality, returns to schooling, and earnings inequality: Evidence from Brazil and South Africa**, WIDER Working Paper 2015/050, United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research.

- Whitelaw, E., Branson, N. & Leibbrandt, M. (2022). **Social stratification and post-school funding thresholds: A dynamic approach to profiling the missing middle**. SALDRU Working Paper No.288. University of Cape Town.

- Wildschut, A., Rogan, M., & Mncwango, B. (2020). **Transformation, stratification and higher education: Exploring the absorption into employment of public financial aid beneficiaries across the South African higher education system**. Higher Education, 79, 961-979.
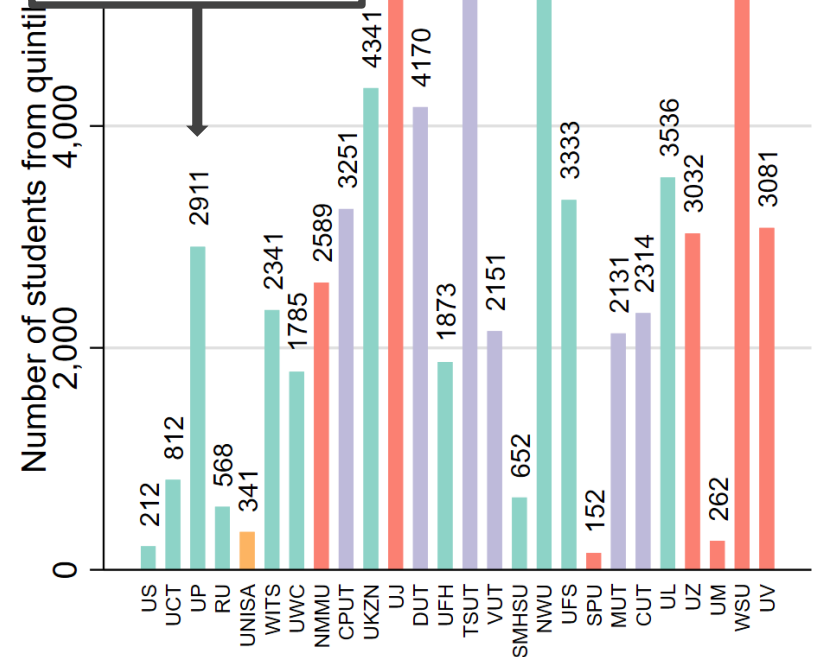
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Lower income access – by Institution

E.g. 33% of UP students come from lower income postal codes
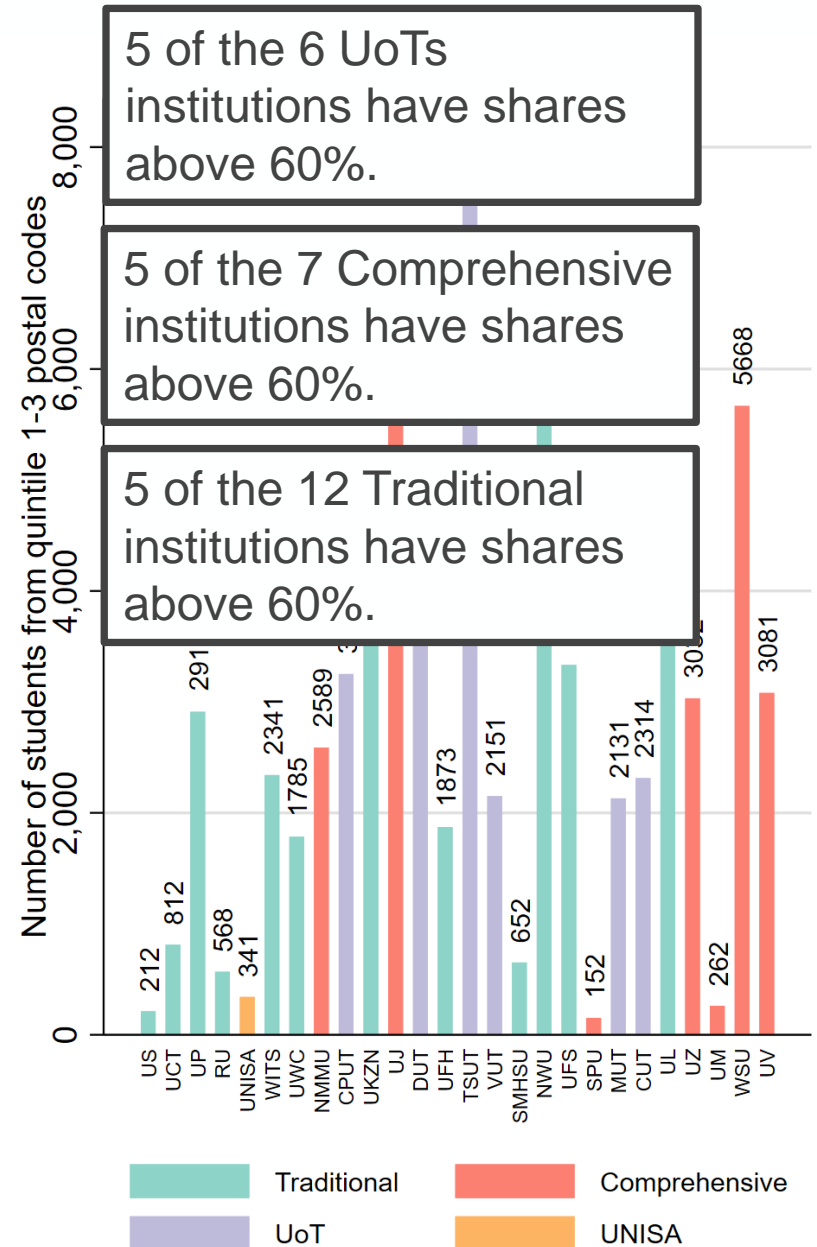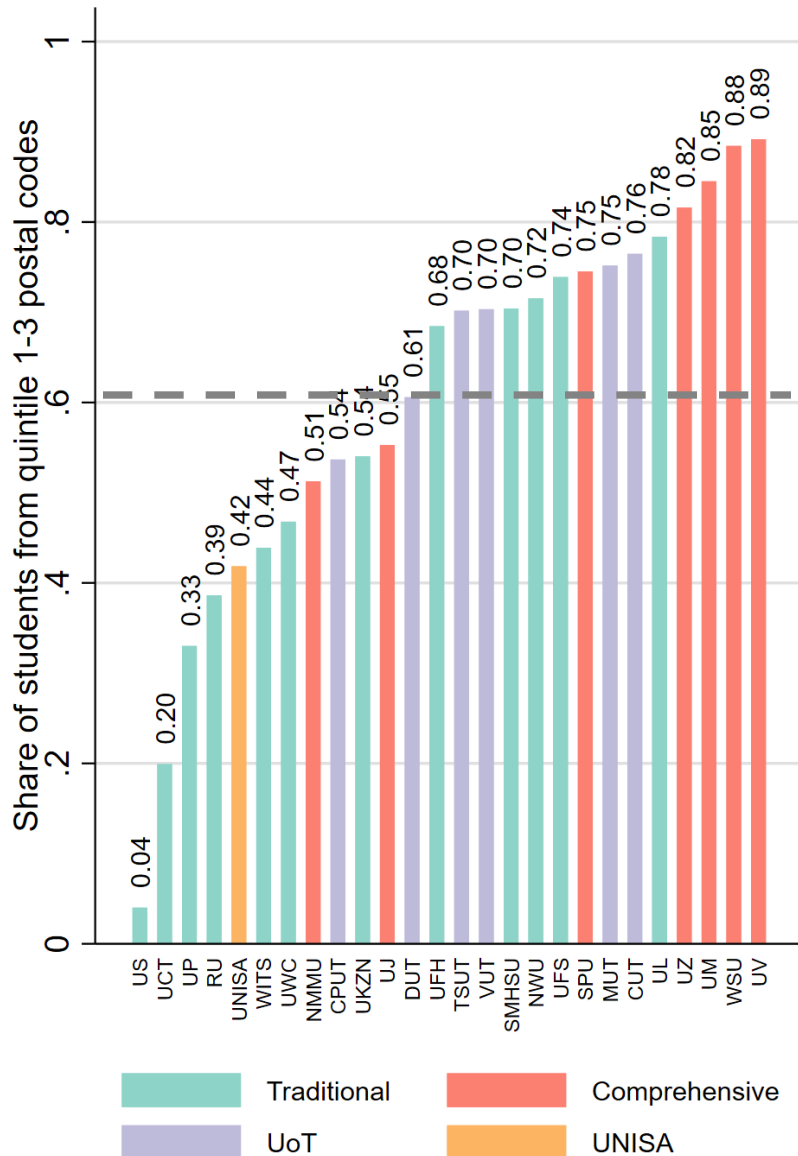
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Legend: Traditional, Comprehensive, UoT, UNISA

Lower income access

5 of the 6 UoTs institutions have shares above 60%.

5 of the 7 Comprehensive institutions have shares above 60%.

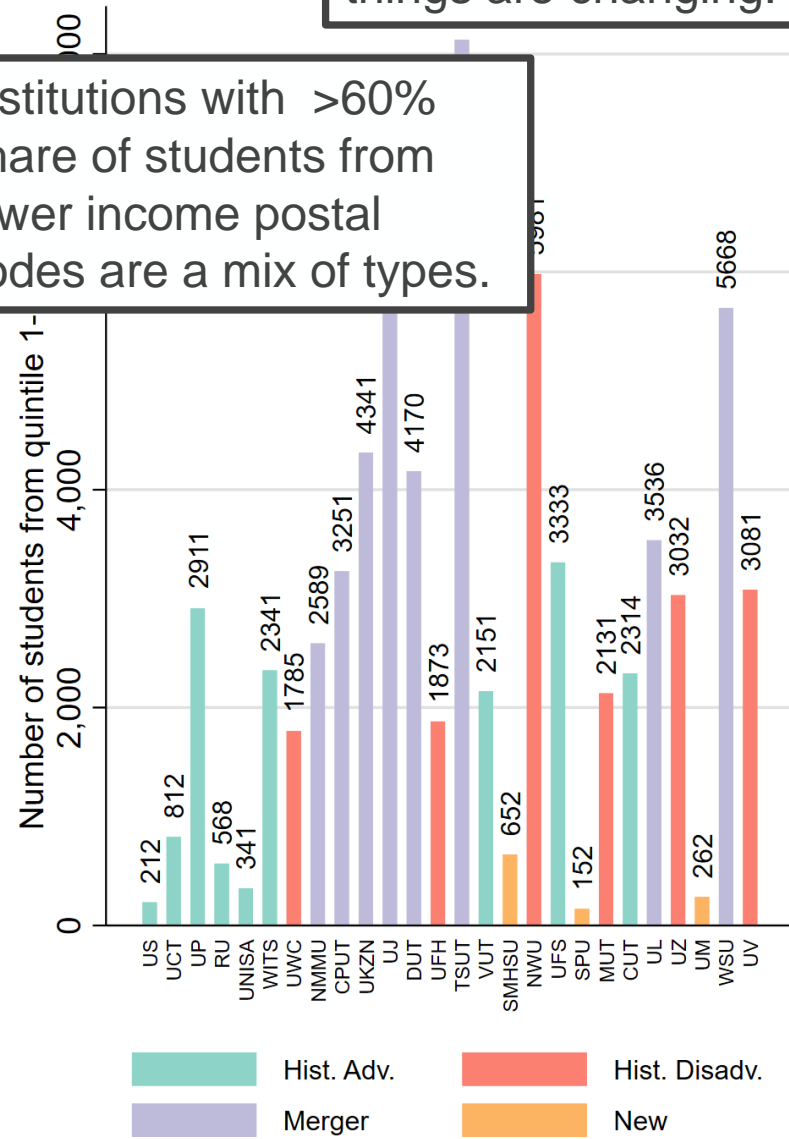5 of the 12 Traditional institutions have shares above 60%.

Lower income access

Historical legacy is evident in the shares, but things are changing.

Institutions with >60% share of students from lower income postal codes are a mix of types.

Historically advantaged institutions still have lowest share.

Left chart — Share of students from quintile 1:

Institution	Share
US	0.04
UCT	0.20
UP	0.33
RU	0.39
UNISA	0.42
WITS	0.44
UWC	0.47
NMMU	0.51
CPUT	0.54
UKZN	0.54
UJ	0.55
DUT	0.60
UFH	0.70
TSUT	0.70
VUT	0.72
SMHSU	0.74
NWU	0.75
UFS	0.75
SPU	0.76
MUT	0.78
CUT	0.82
UL	0.85
UZ	0.88
UM	0.89
WSU	
UV	

Right chart — Number of students from quintile 1:

Institution	Number
US	212
UCT	812
UP	2911
RU	568
UNISA	341
WITS	2341
UWC	1785
NMMU	2589
CPUT	3251
UKZN	4341
UJ	
DUT	4170
UFH	1873
TSUT	
VUT	2151
SMHSU	652
NWU	3333
UFS	
SPU	152
MUT	2131
CUT	2314
UL	3536
UZ	3032
UM	262
WSU	5668
UV	3081

Legend: Hist. Adv., Hist. Disadv., Merger, New

Lower income graduation

The share of lower income students graduating... minimum 50% in... institut...

UM and SPU, while having higher graduation rates, serve few lower income students
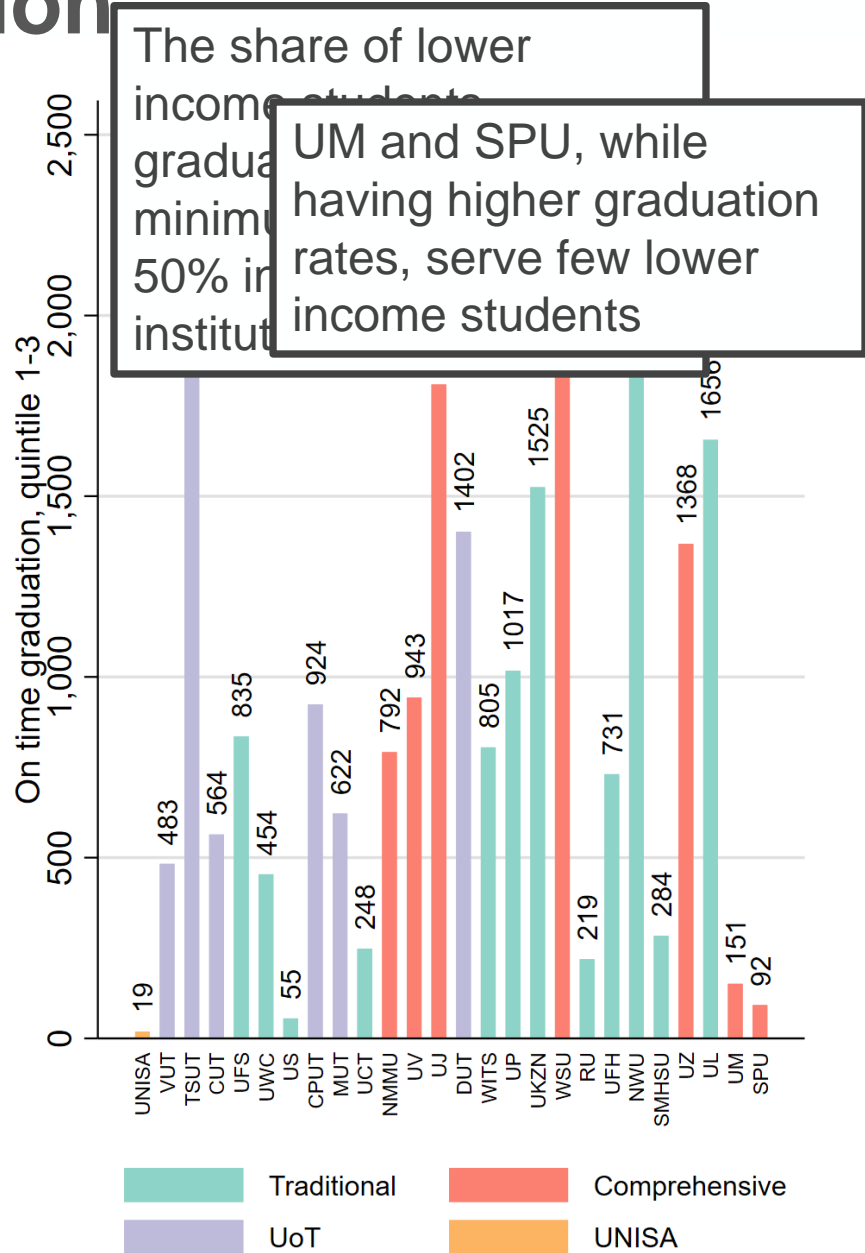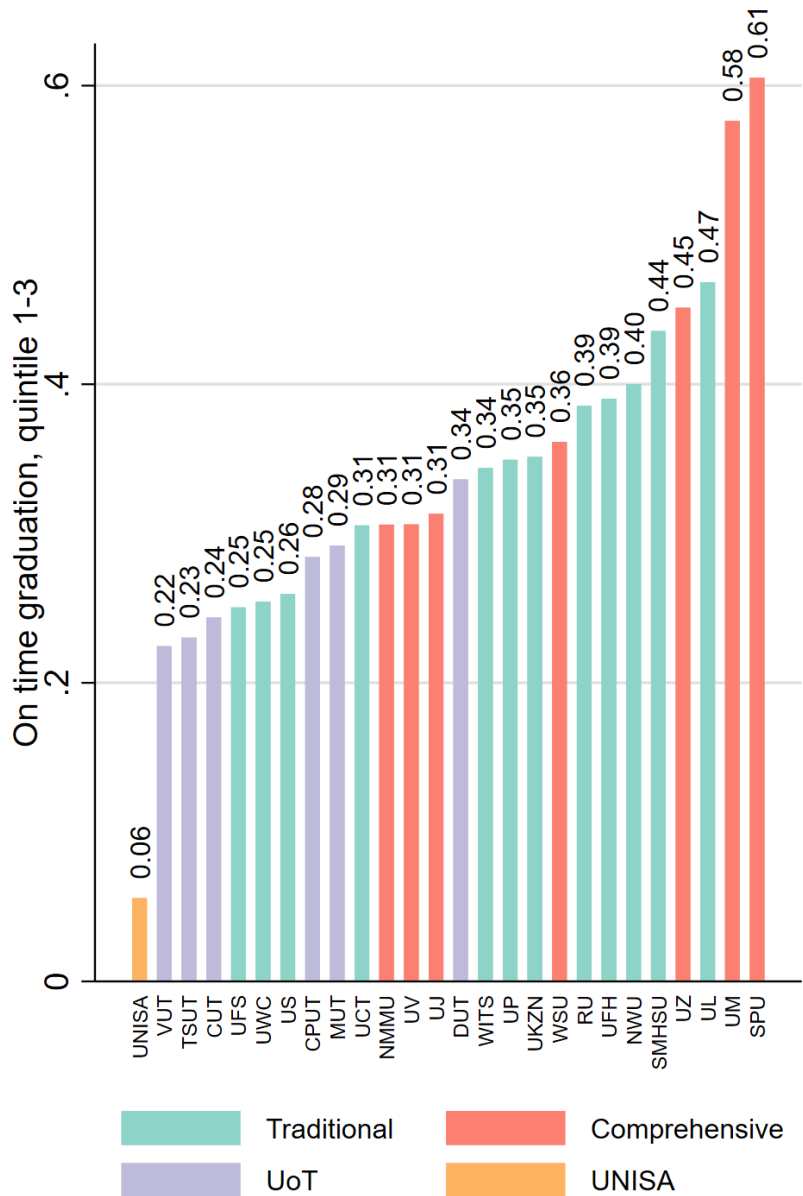
Contribution to 'mobility'

Students vs. population
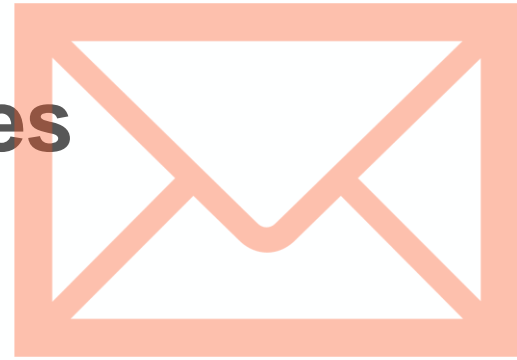

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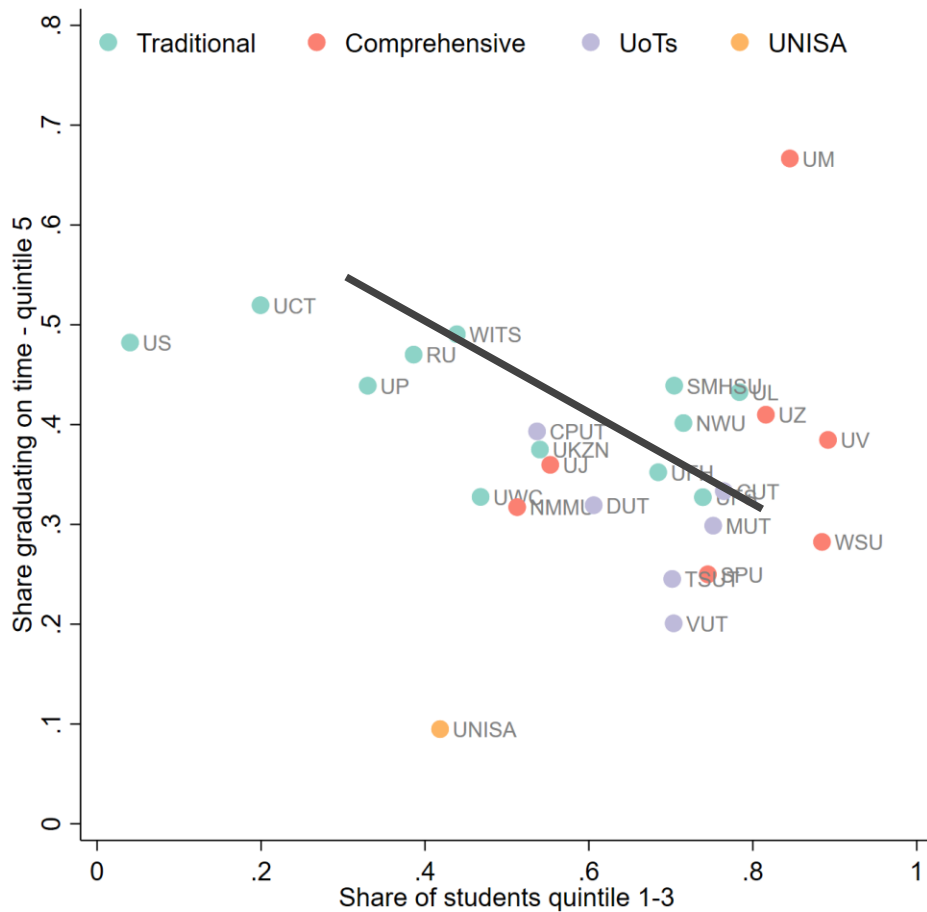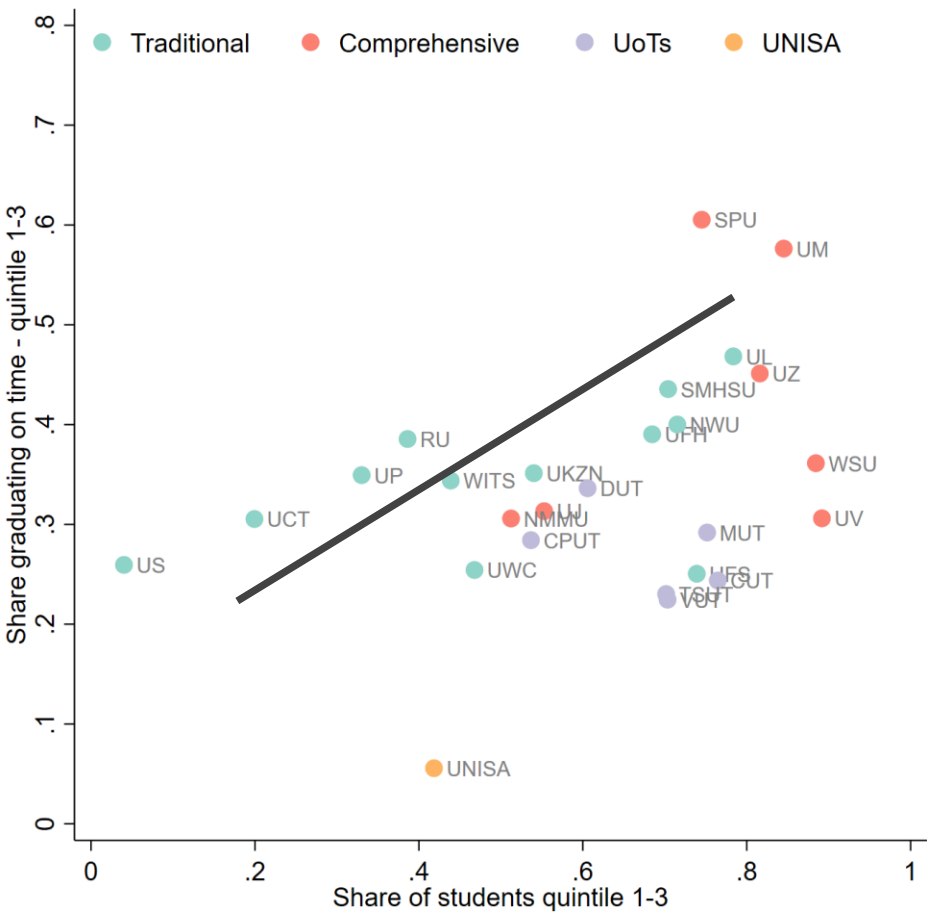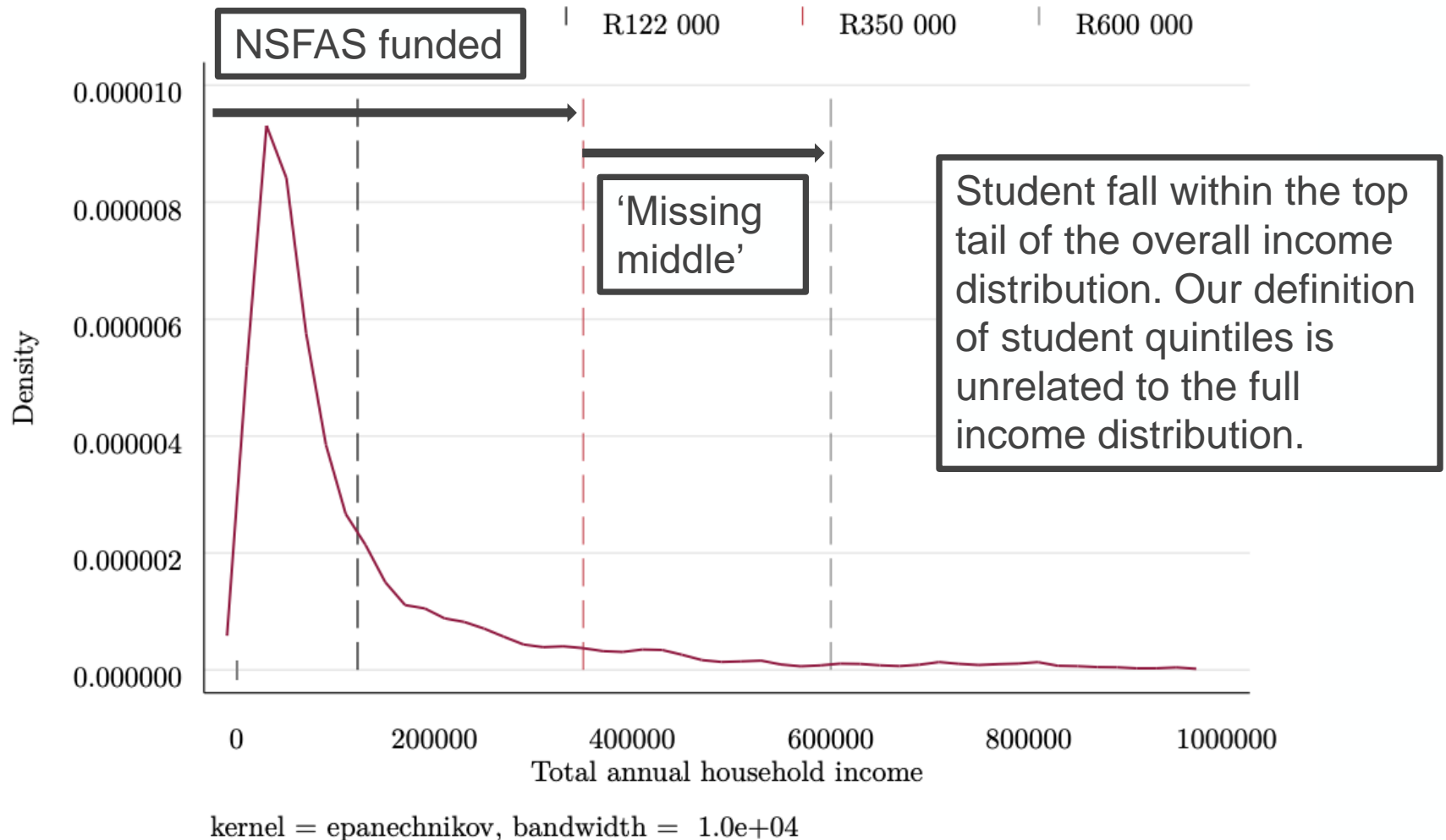
Source: NIDS Wave 5 (2017) in Whitelaw et al 2022

Measuring SES using postal codes

- Postal codes in HEMIS, but no SES information

- Census 2011 community profile SES indicators at the Small Area Level

- We map the Small Area Level (SAL) to postal codes(s) – i.e. there is overlap

- Our postal code indicators are a weighted sum of the share of the postal code represented by a specific SAL, and the SAL level indicators

- Important! In constructing the postal code level indicators, we aggregate information from a smaller geographical area, the SAL, to a larger geographical unit, the postal code.

- Caveat: we are assuming that students' socioeconomic circumstances are well represented by the average characteristics of the postal code in which they originate.