



Sustaining Opportunity in Salt Lake City

New Insights from Big Data

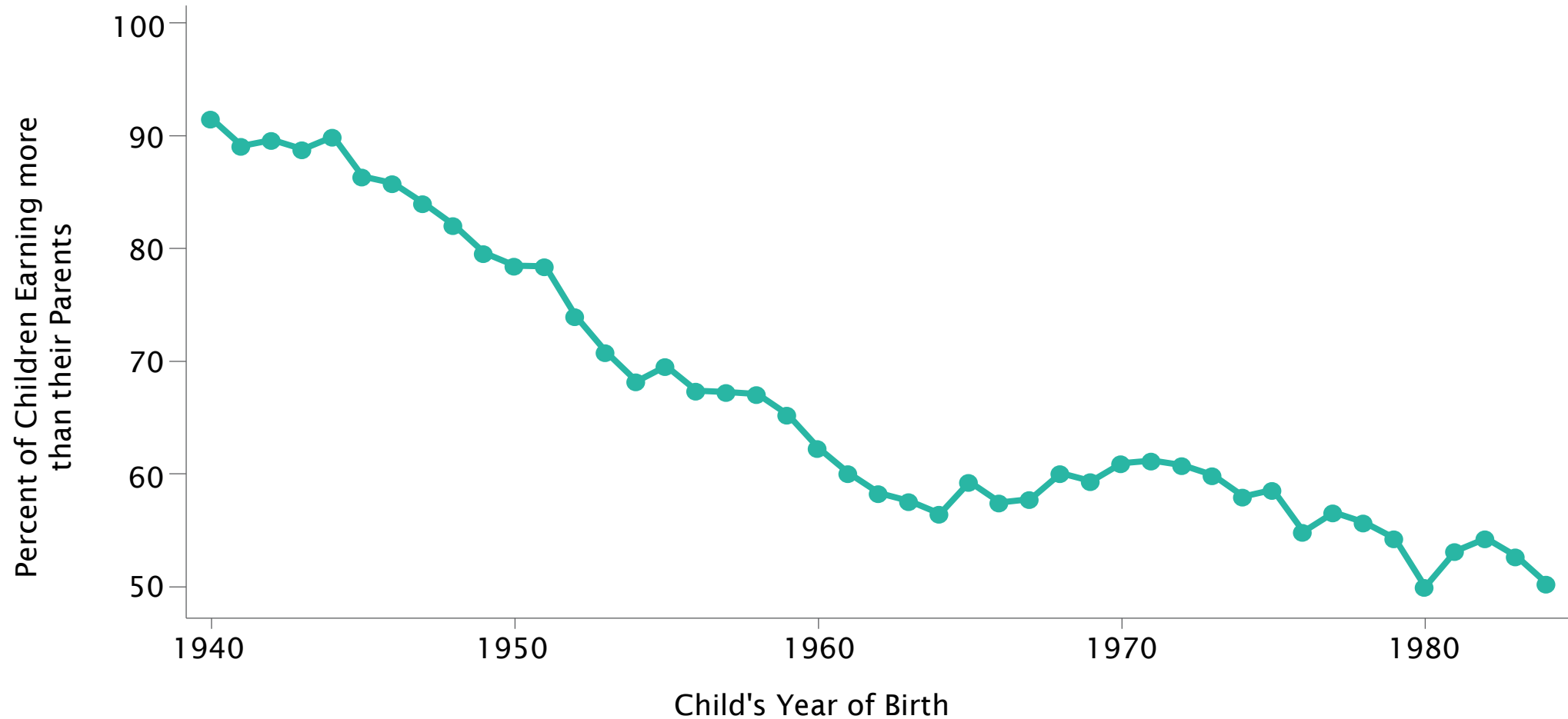
Raj Chetty
Harvard University

Utah System of Higher Education Board | March 2025



The Fading American Dream

Percent of Children Earning More than Their Parents, by Year of Birth

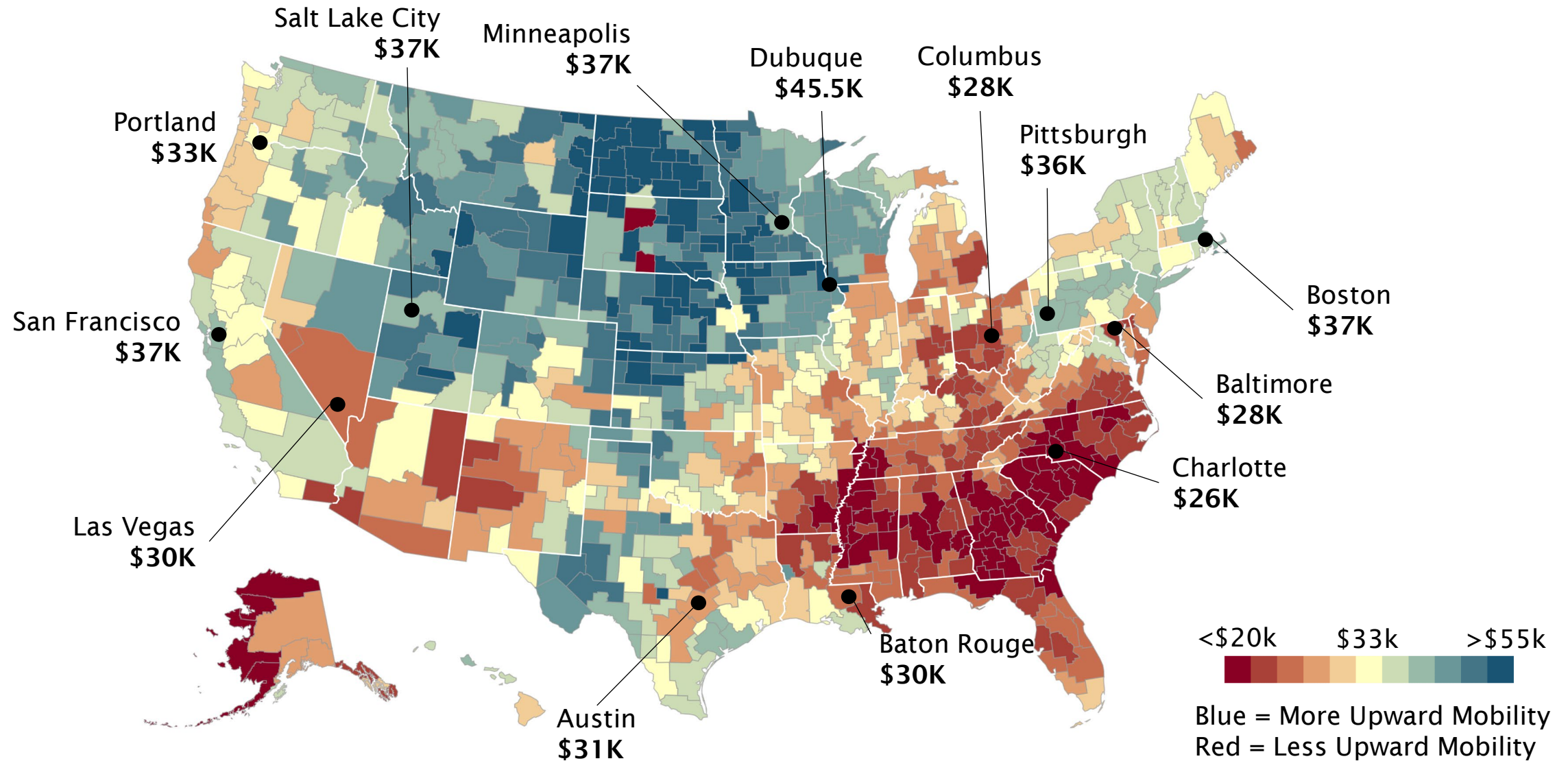


Source: Chetty, Grusky, Hell, Hendren, Manduca, Narang (Science 2017)



The Geography of Upward Mobility in the United States

Average Household Income at Age 35 for Children Born in 1978 whose Parents Earned \$27K (25th percentile)

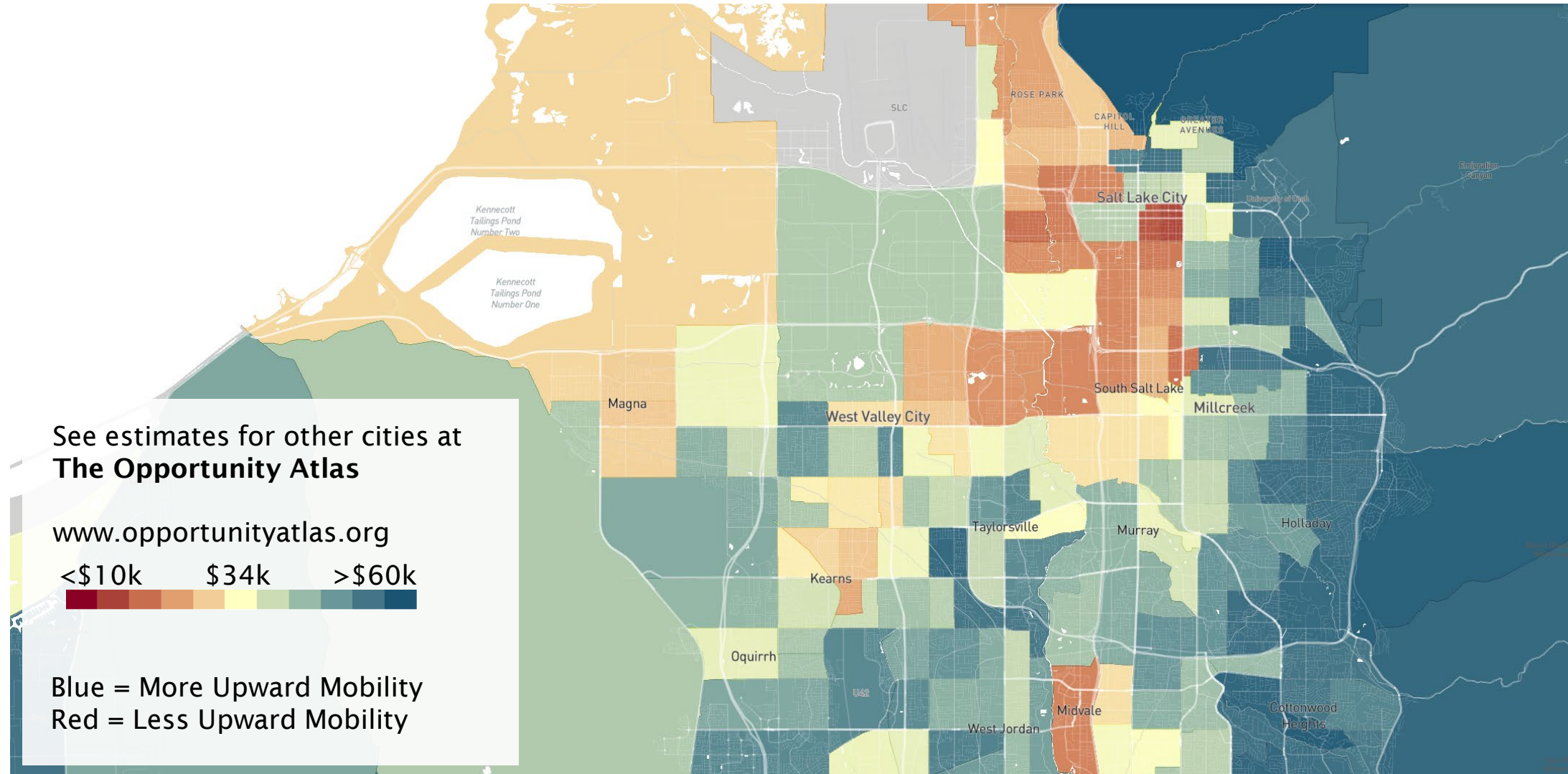


Source: Chetty, Hendren, Kline, Saez (QJE 2014)



The Geography of Upward Mobility in Salt Lake City

Average Income at Age 35 for Children Born in 1978 whose Parents Earned \$27,000 (25th percentile)



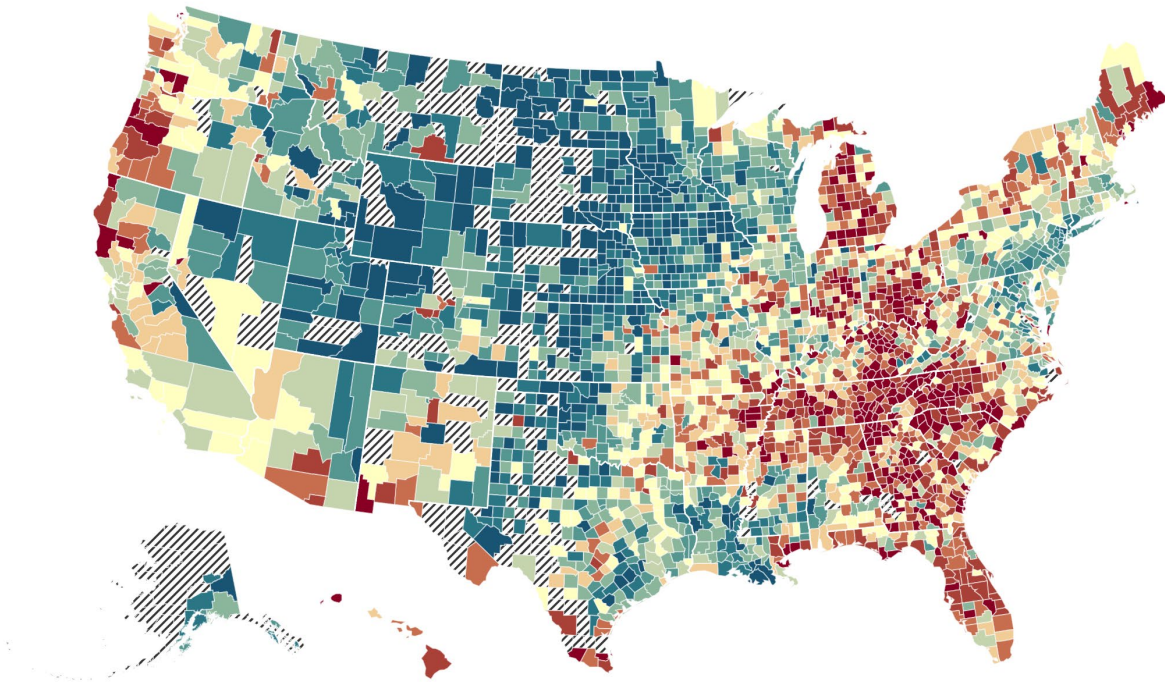
Source: Chetty, Friedman, Hendren, Jones, Porter (NBER wp 2018)



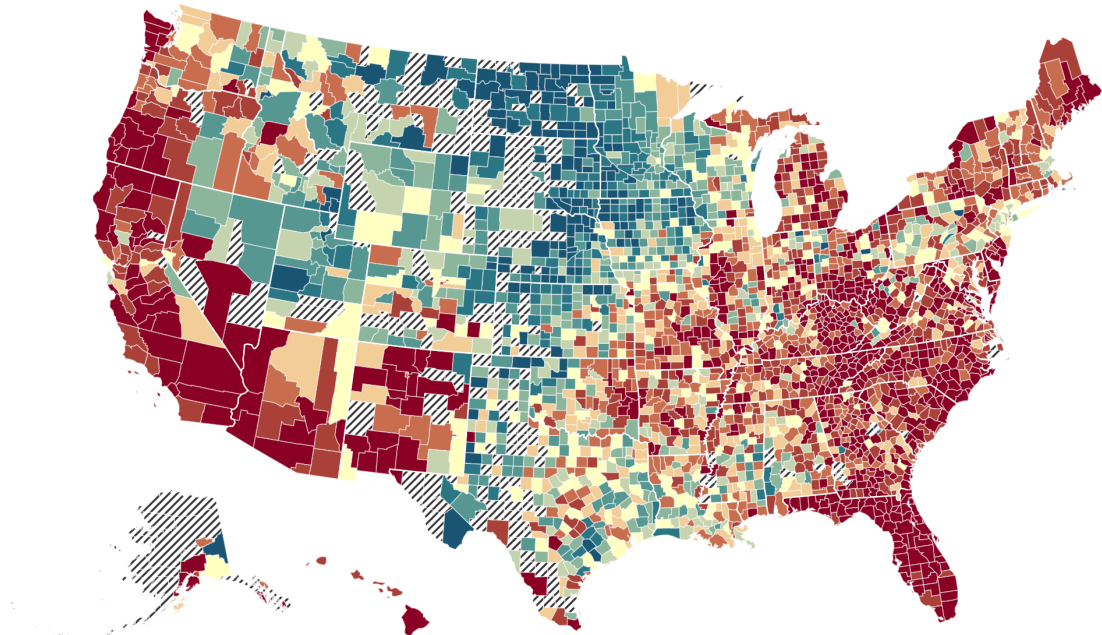
Changes in Opportunity for White Americans

White Children with Low-Income Parents

Born in 1978



Born in 1992



Household Income Percentile at Age 27 for
Children with Parents at 25th Percentile

\$30.8k

\$33.7k

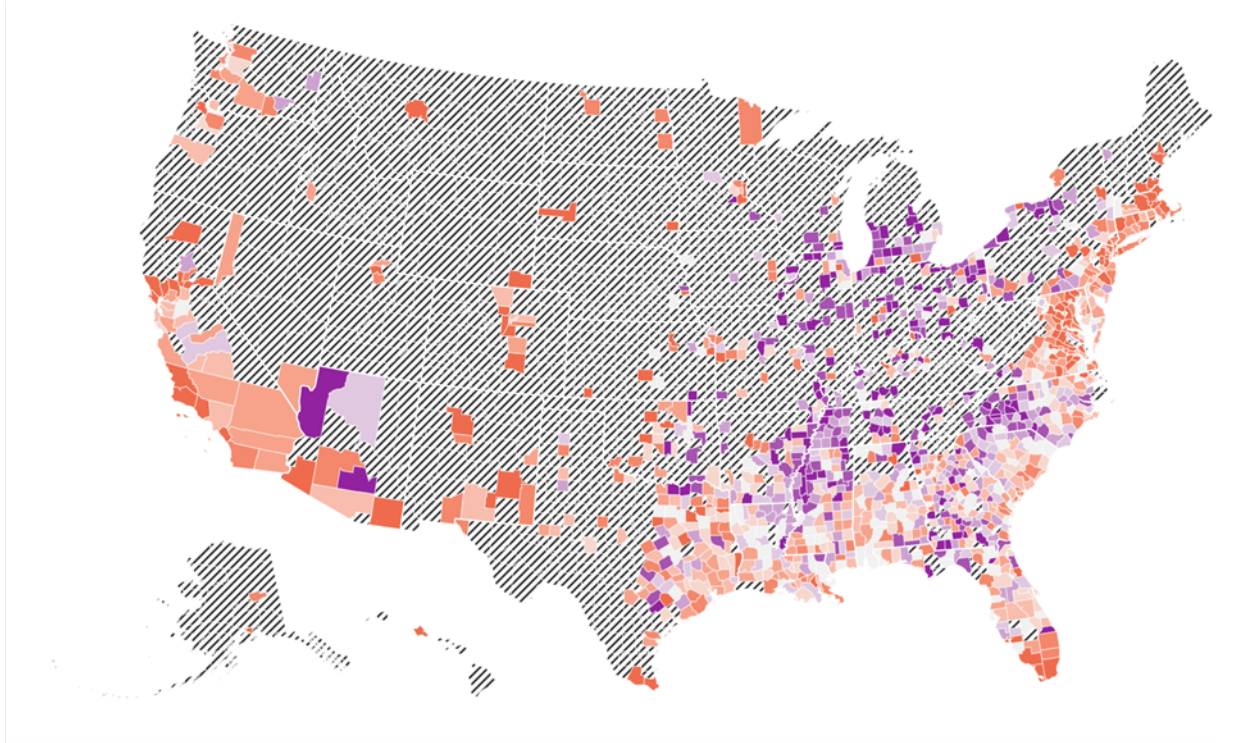
\$40.9k



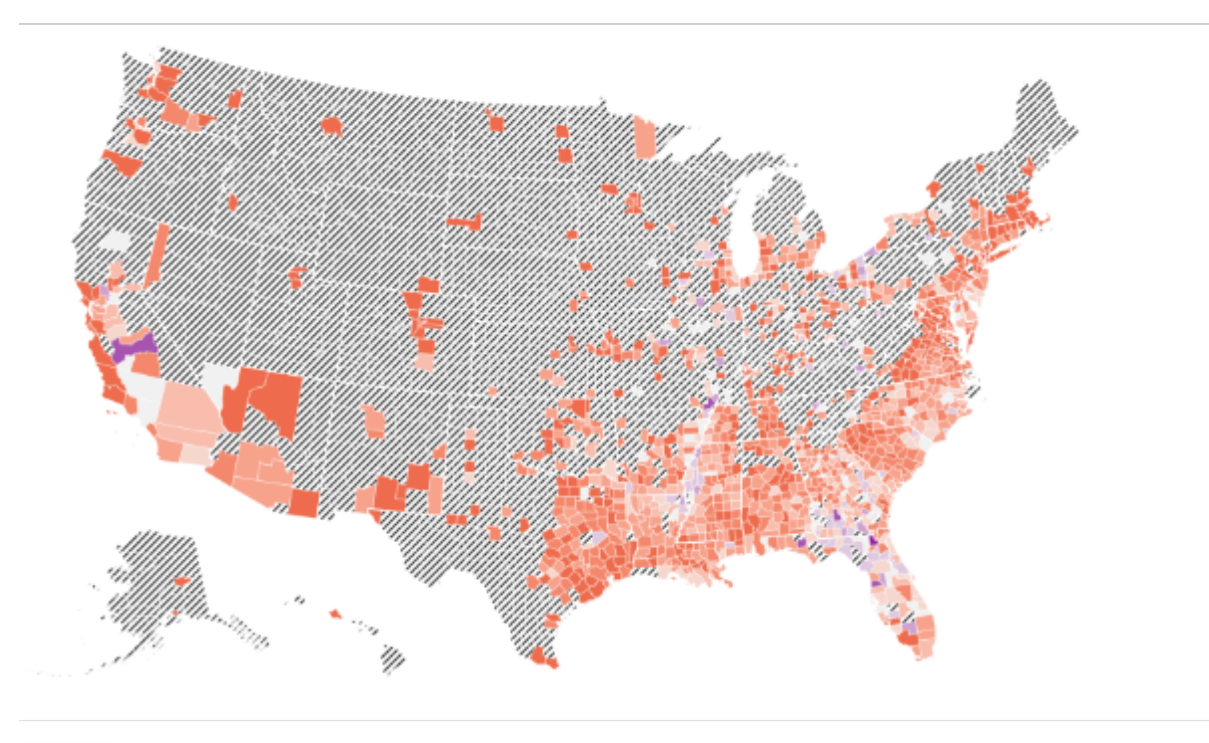
Changes in Opportunity for Black Americans

Black Children with Low-Income Parents

Born in 1978



Born in 1992



Household Income Percentile at Age 27 for
Children with Parents at 25th Percentile

\$18.8k

\$21.2k

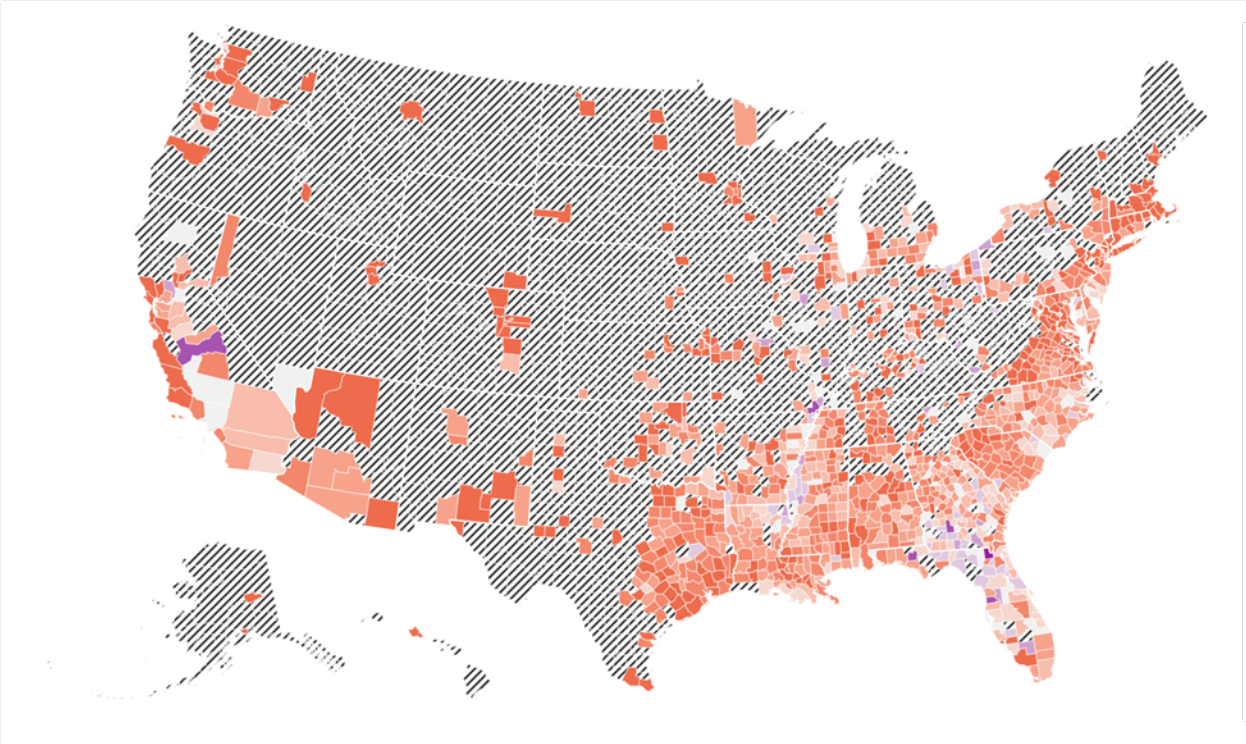
\$25.6k



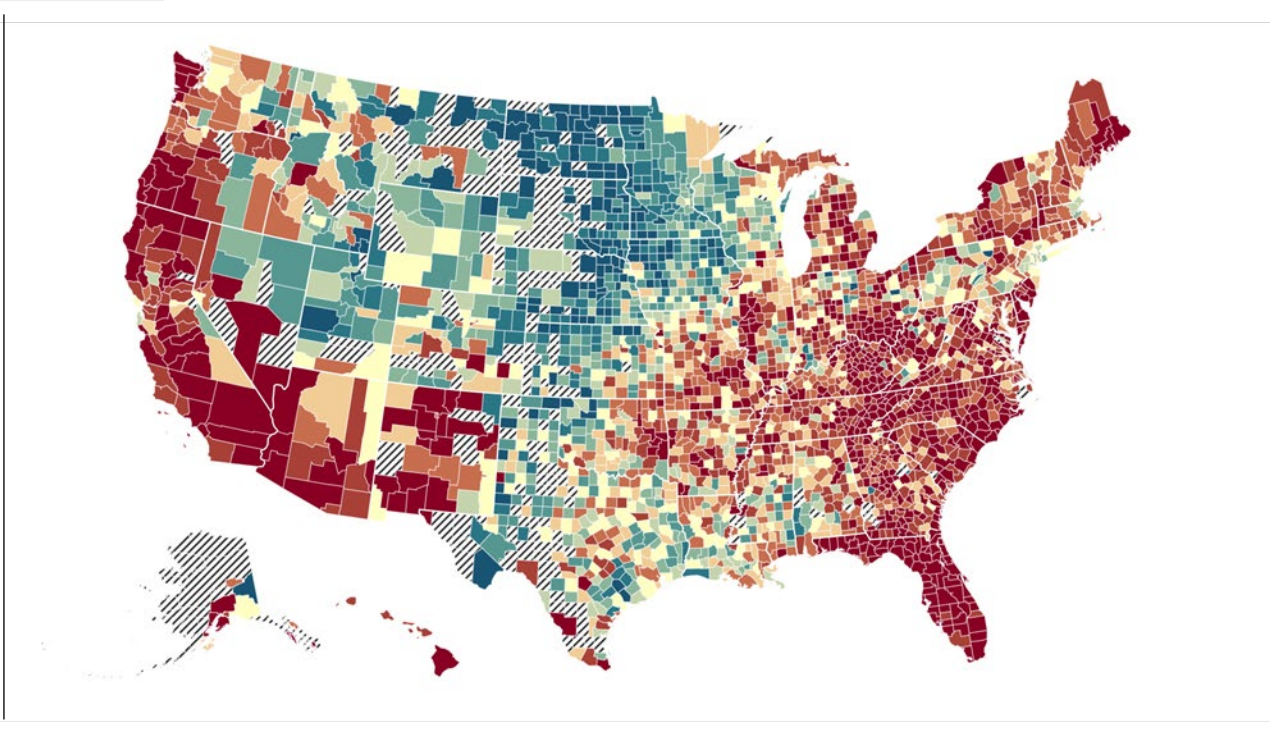
The Geography of Upward Mobility in the United States

Average Household Income at Age 27 for Children born in 1992 whose Parents Earned \$27K

Black Children Born in 1992



White Children Born in 1992

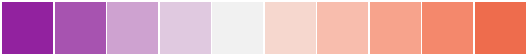


Household Income Percentile at Age 27 for
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\$18.8k

\$21.2k

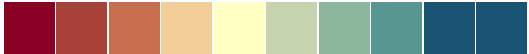
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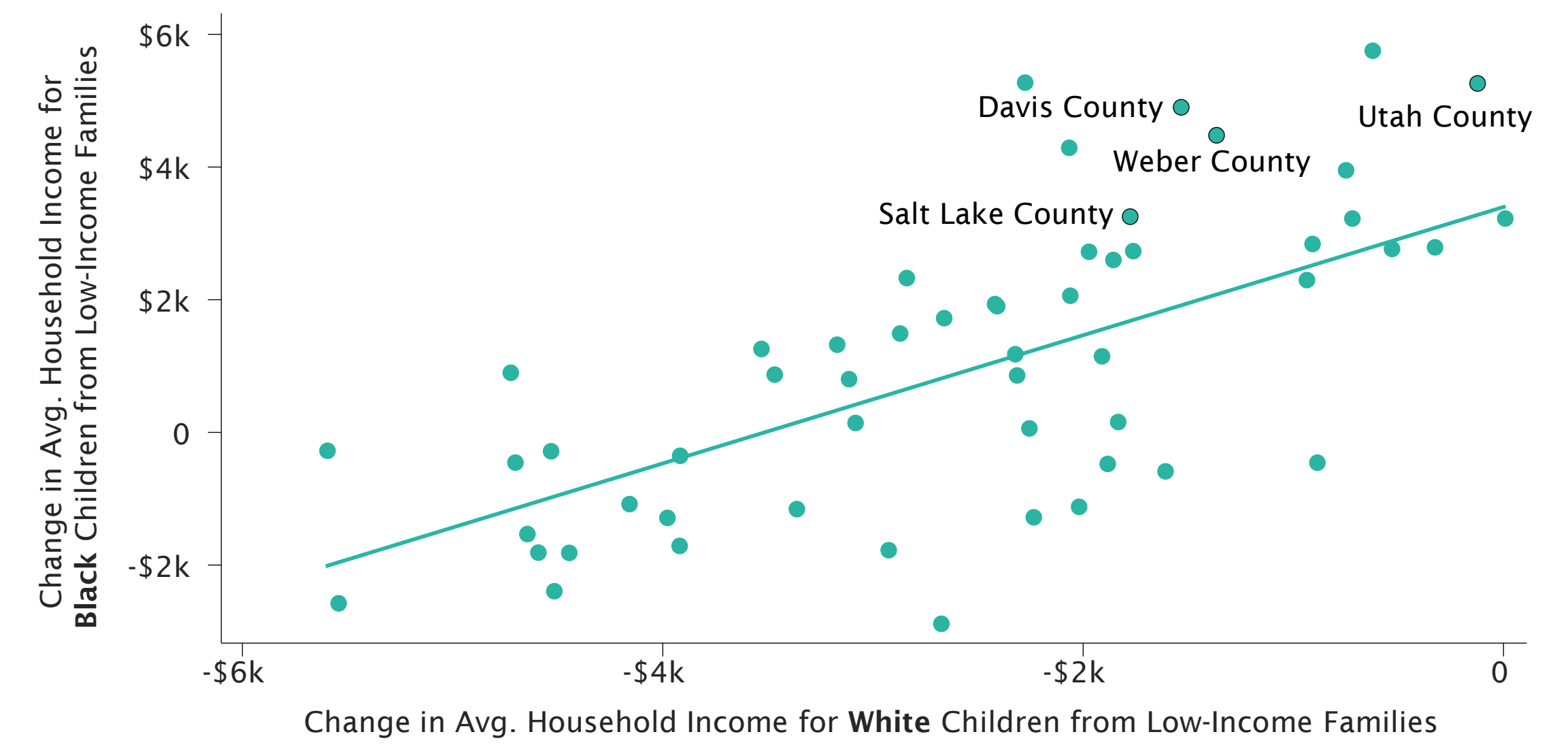
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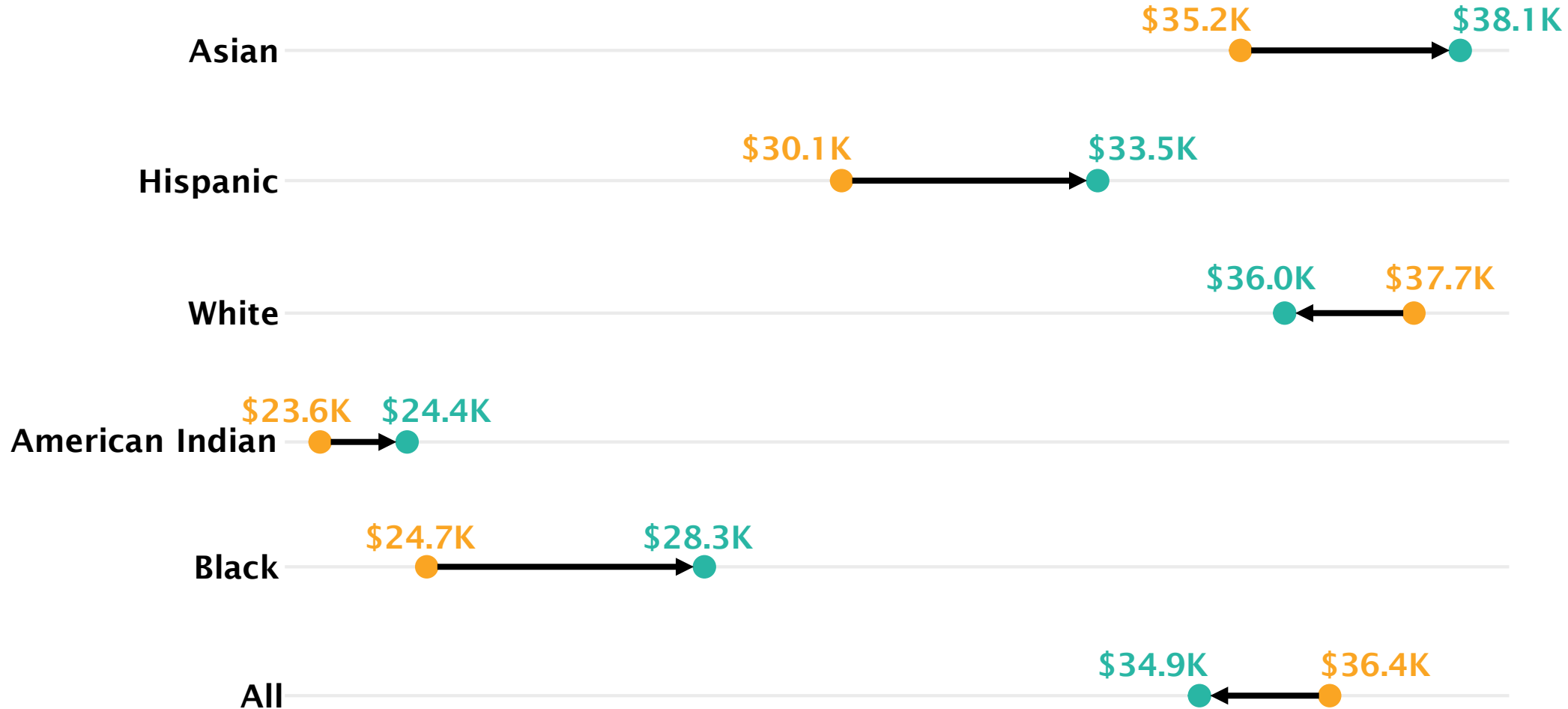
Changes in Mobility for Black vs. White Children with Low-Income Parents



Trends in Economic Mobility by Group in Salt Lake County

Change in Children's Income in Adulthood born to Low-Income Parents, 1978 vs. 1992 Birth Cohorts

● Born in 1978 ● Born in 1992



Source: Opportunity Atlas, Opportunity Insights and the US Census Bureau

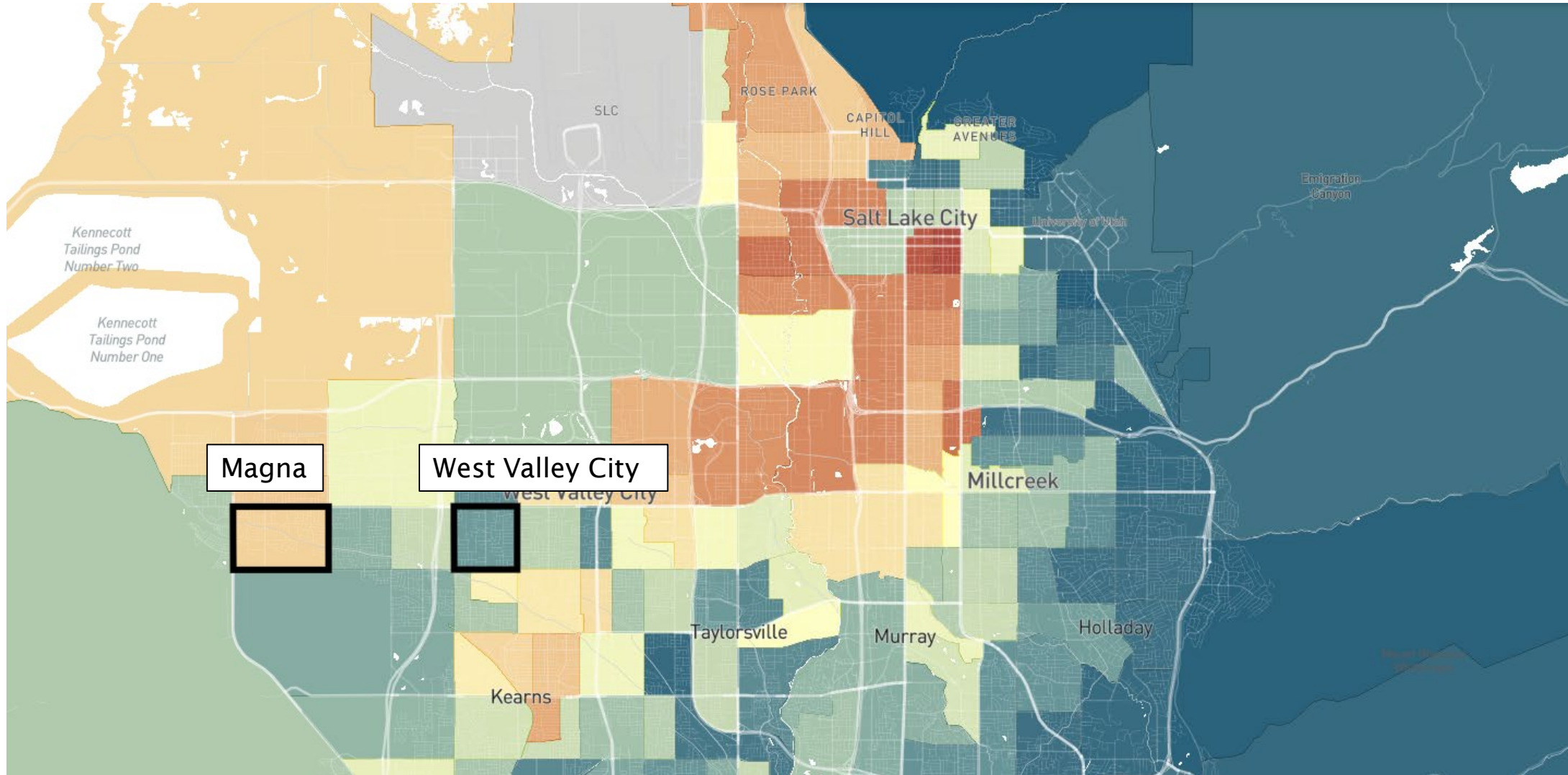


Determinants of Economic Mobility



The Geography of Upward Mobility in Salt Lake City

Average Income at Age 35 for Children Born in 1978 whose Parents Earned \$27,000 (25th percentile)

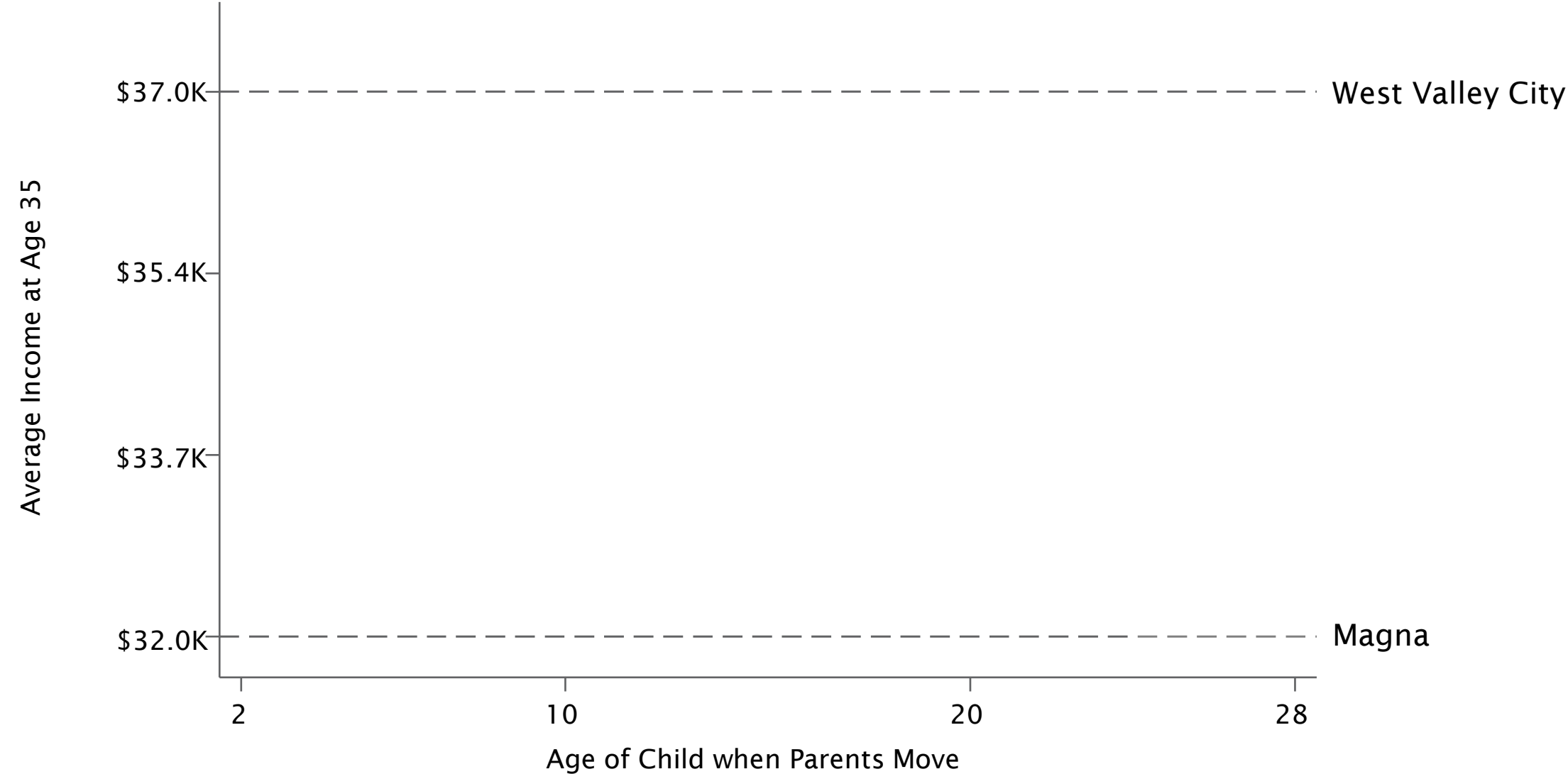


Source: Chetty, Friedman, Hendren, Jones, Porter (NBER wp 2018)



Income Gain from Moving to a Better Neighborhood

By Child's Age at Move

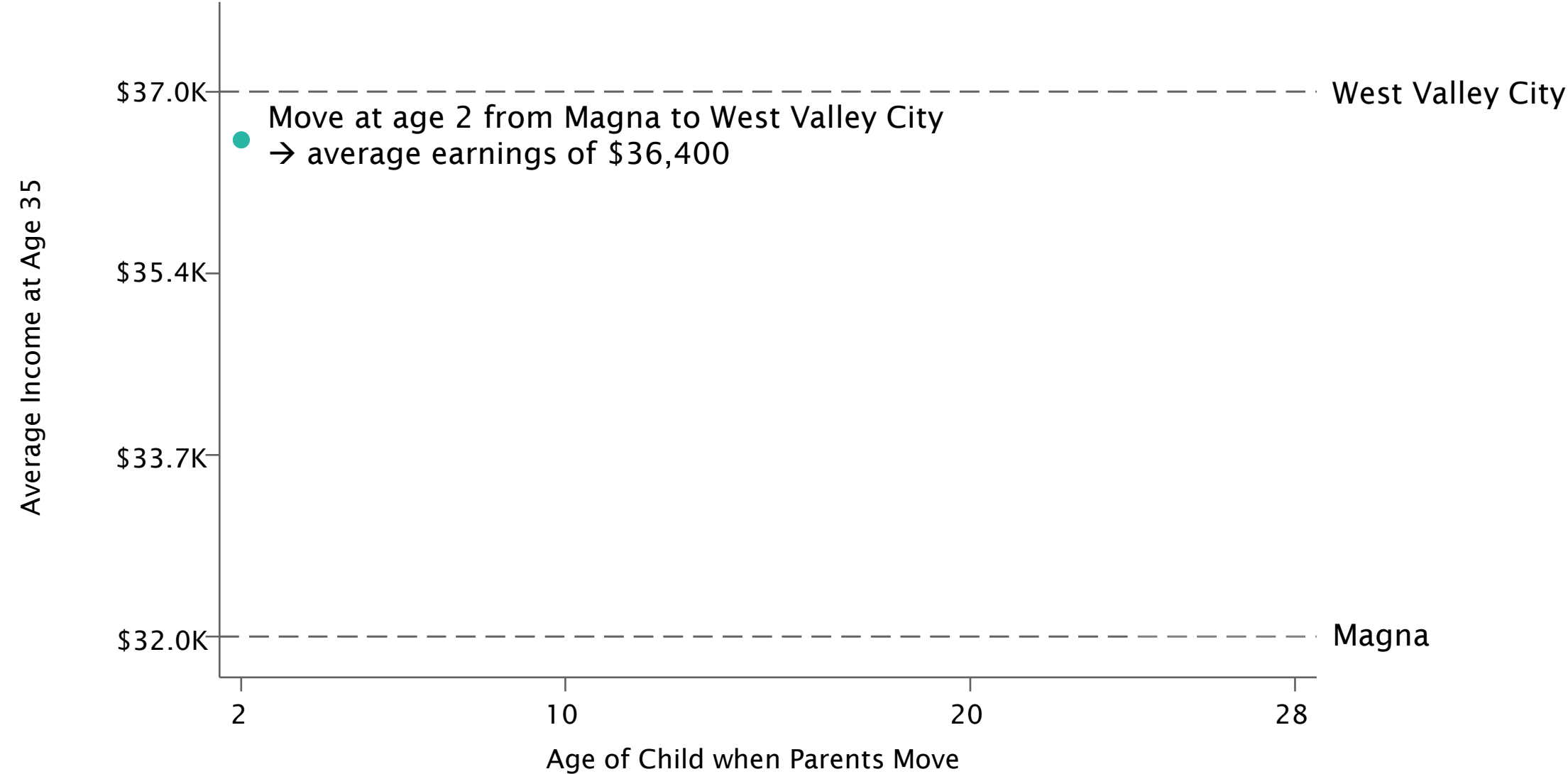


Source: Chetty and Hendren (QJE 2018)



Income Gain from Moving to a Better Neighborhood

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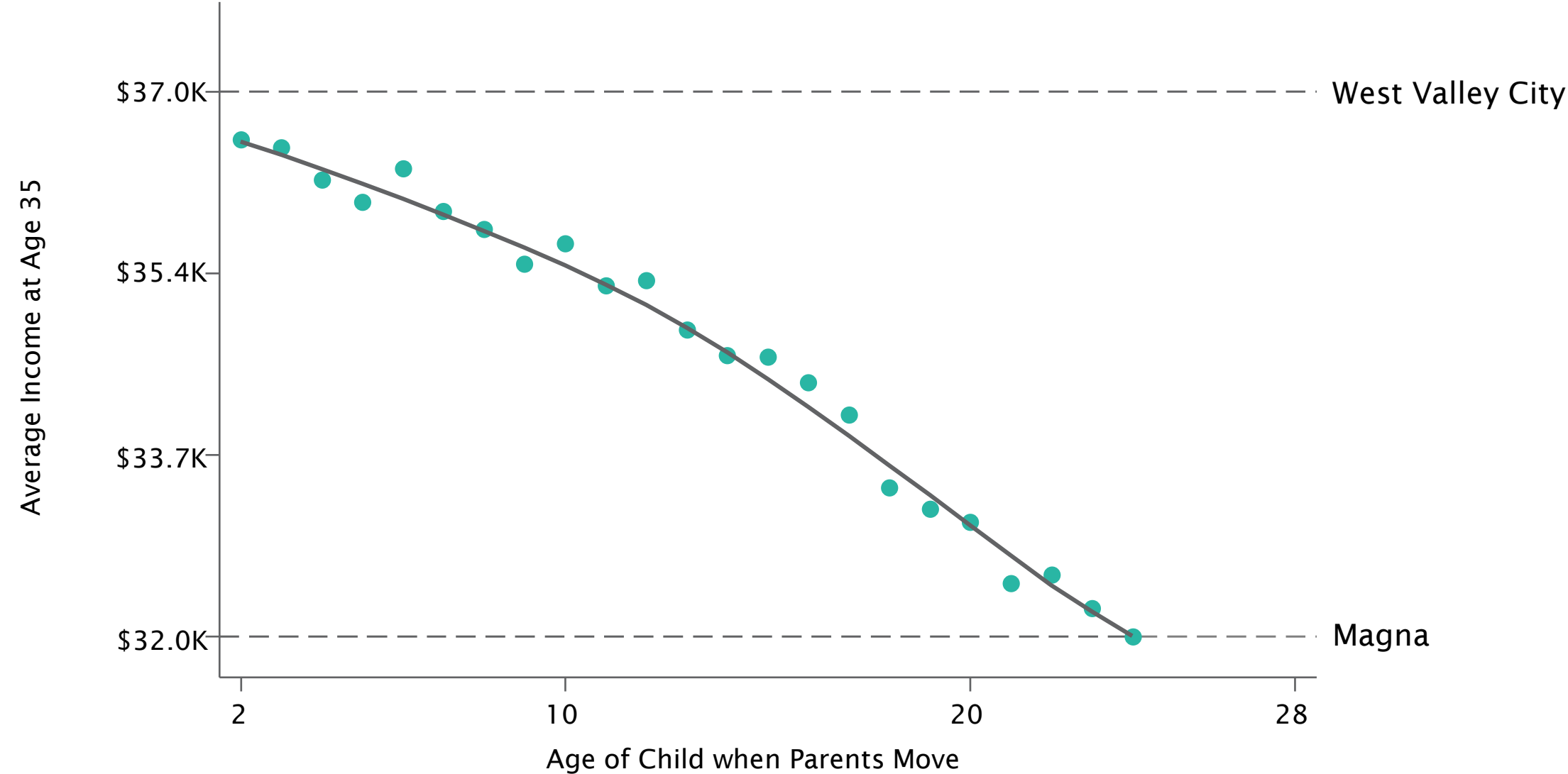


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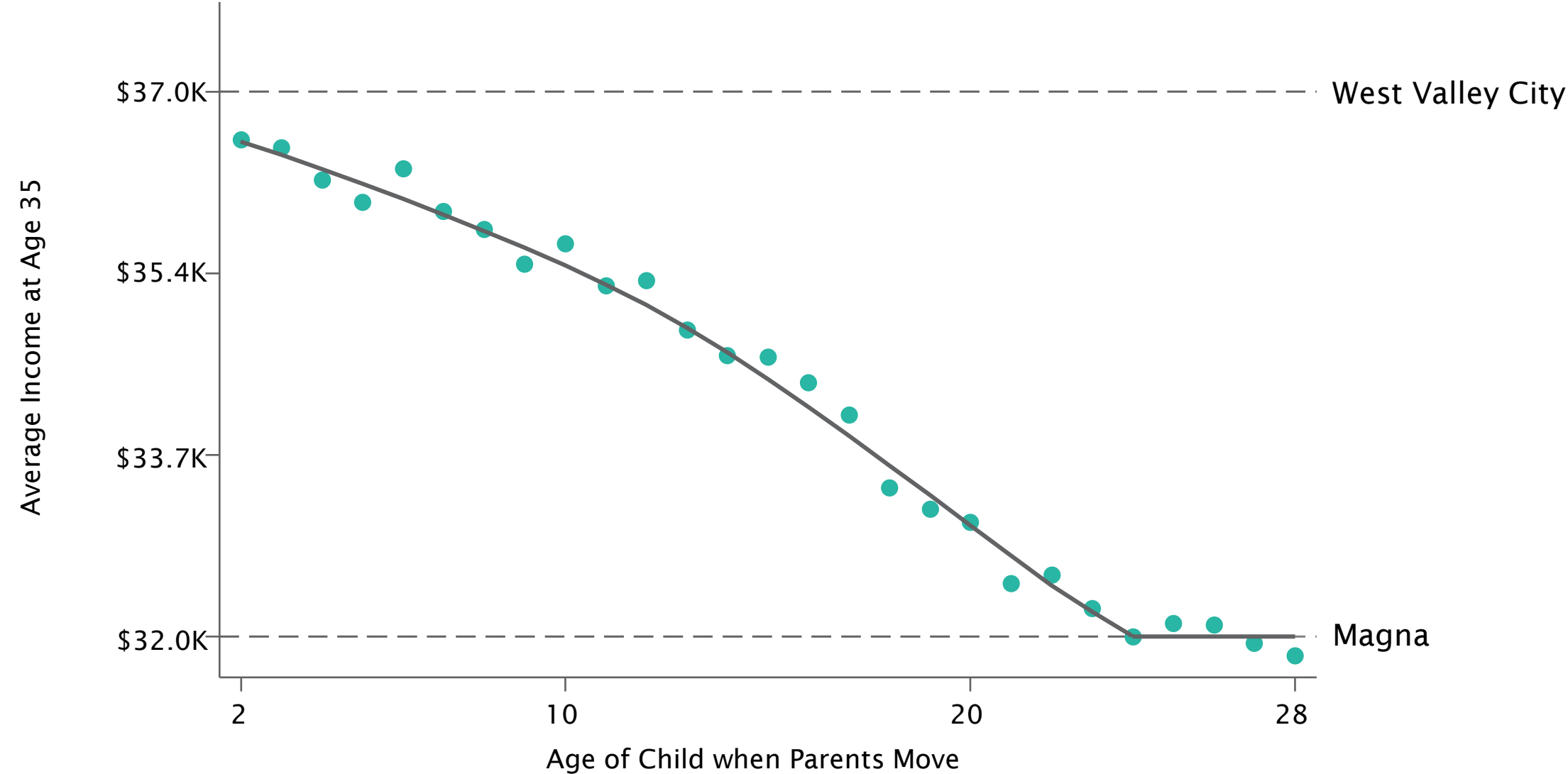


Source: Chetty and Hendren (QJE 2018)



Income Gain from Moving to a Better Neighborhood

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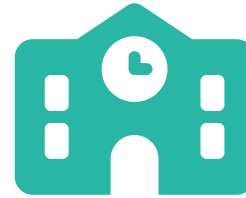
Characteristics of High-Mobility Neighborhoods



**Lower
Poverty Rates**



**More Stable
Family Structure**



**Better
School Quality**

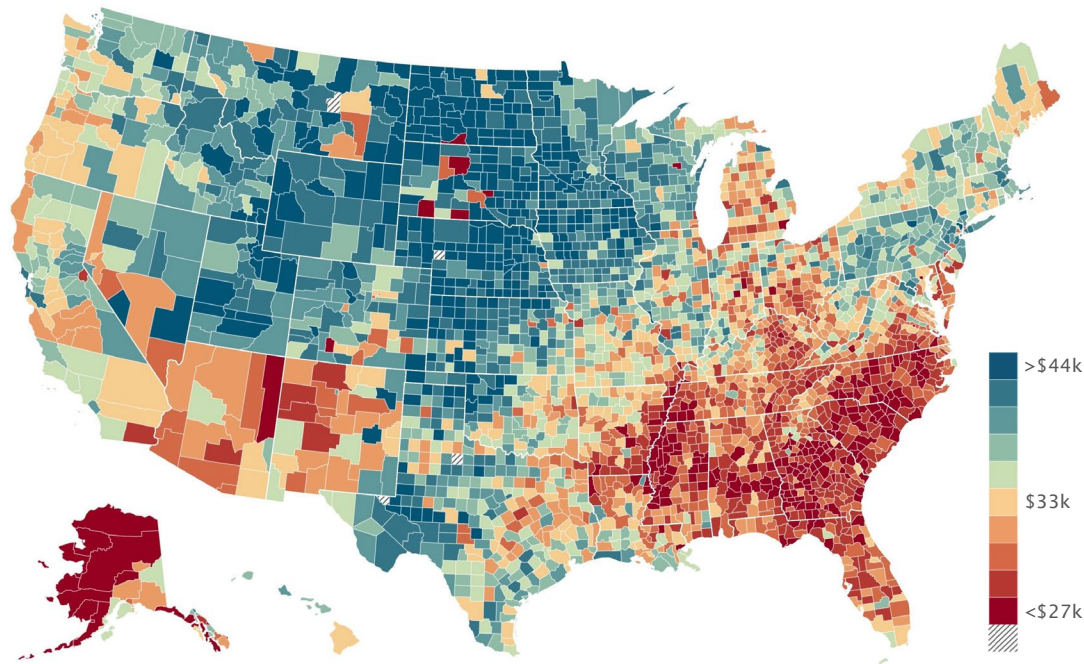


**Greater
Social Capital**



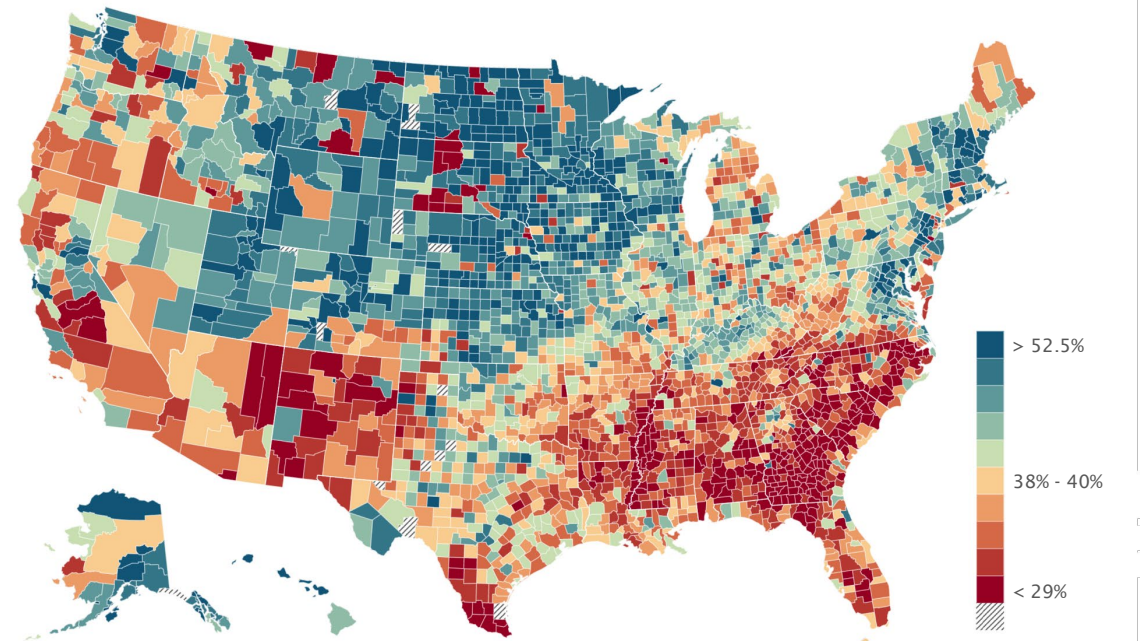
Economic Opportunity and Social Capital

Upward Mobility
Based on Tax Records



Average Household Income at Age 35
for Children whose Parents Earned \$27k

Economic Connectedness
Based on Facebook Data



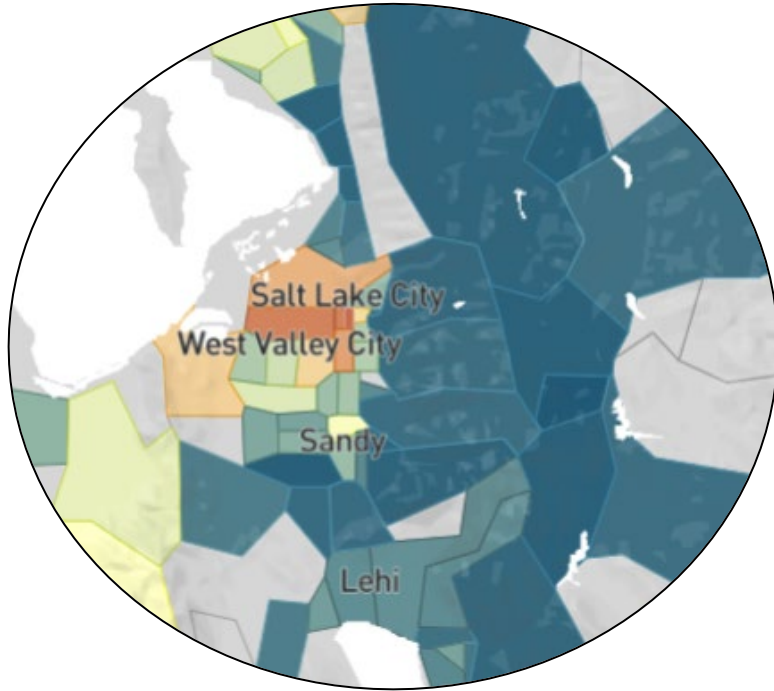
Share of Above-Median-Income Friends
among Below-Median-Income People



Economic Opportunity and Social Capital

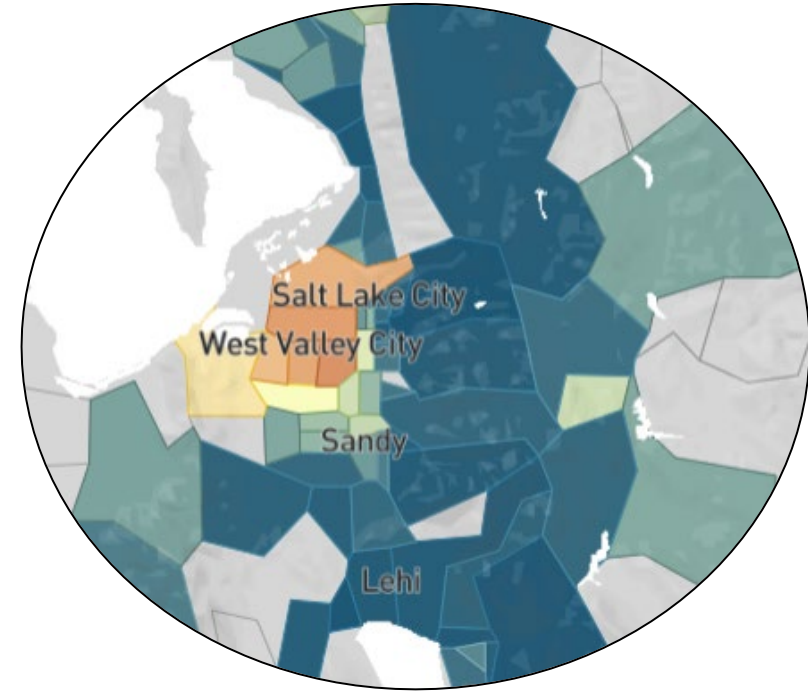
Salt Lake City

Upward Mobility Based on Tax Records



Average Household Income at Age 35
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Economic Connectedness Based on Facebook Data



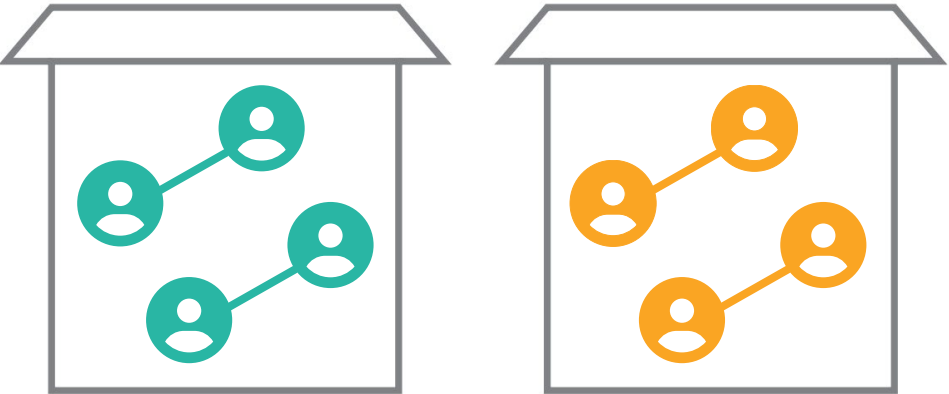
Share of Above-Median-Income Friends
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Determinants of Economic Connectedness

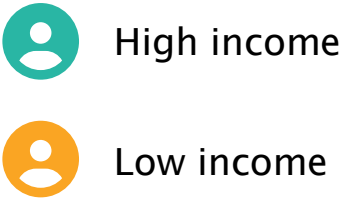
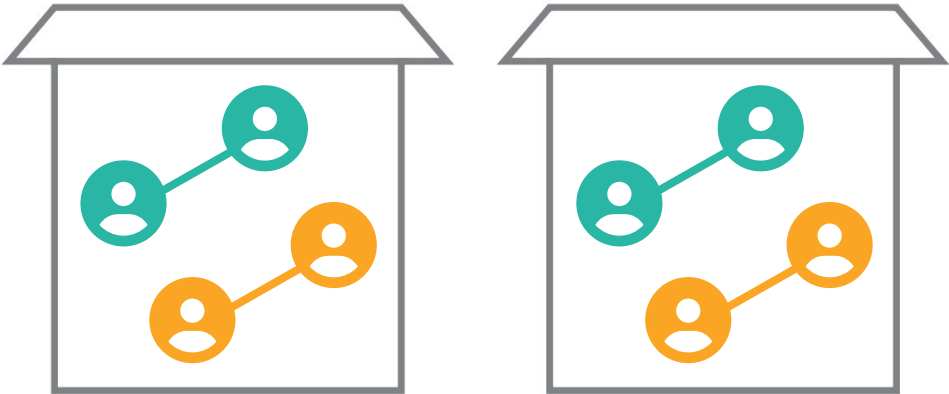
Exposure

Segregation by income



Friending Bias

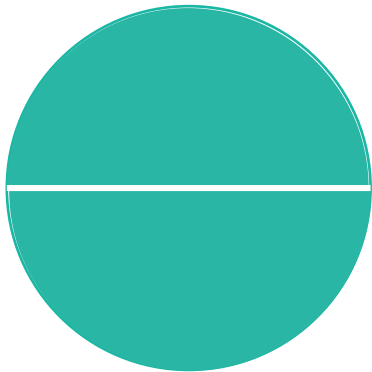
Interaction conditional on exposure



Determinants of Economic Connectedness

50% Exposure

Segregation by income



50% Friending Bias

Interaction conditional on exposure

Every time I walked across Eutaw Street, I witnessed the exchange of realities. As I grew older, I've come to learn that this was how Baltimore works.

Millionaires could live on one side of a street, and the projects could be on the other side.

*Those two worlds would never cross, **never make friends, never acknowledge each other.** Everybody was OK with it, especially the rich.*

- Carmelo Anthony
Where Tomorrows Aren't Promised (2021)



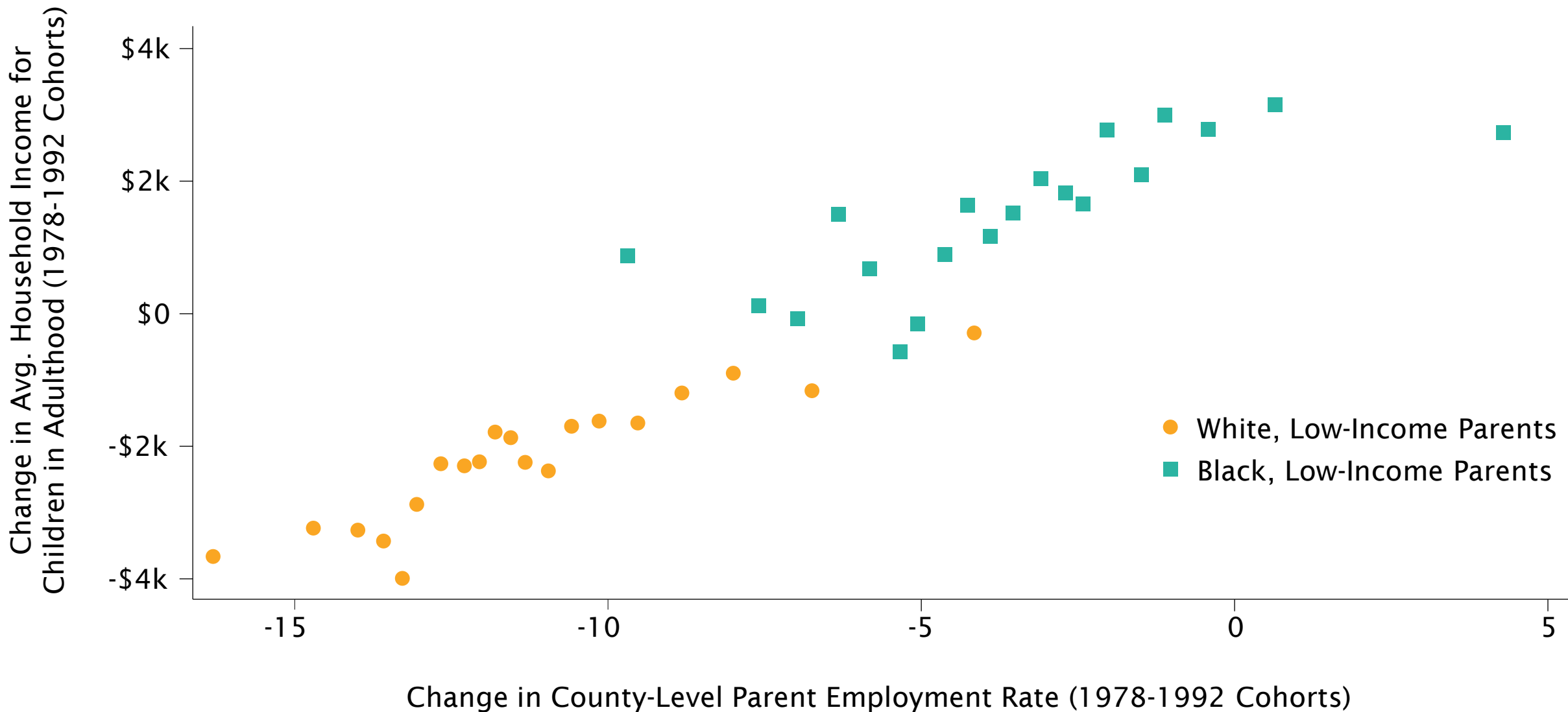
Changes in Economic Mobility vs. Changes in Parent Employment Rates

By County, Race, and Class



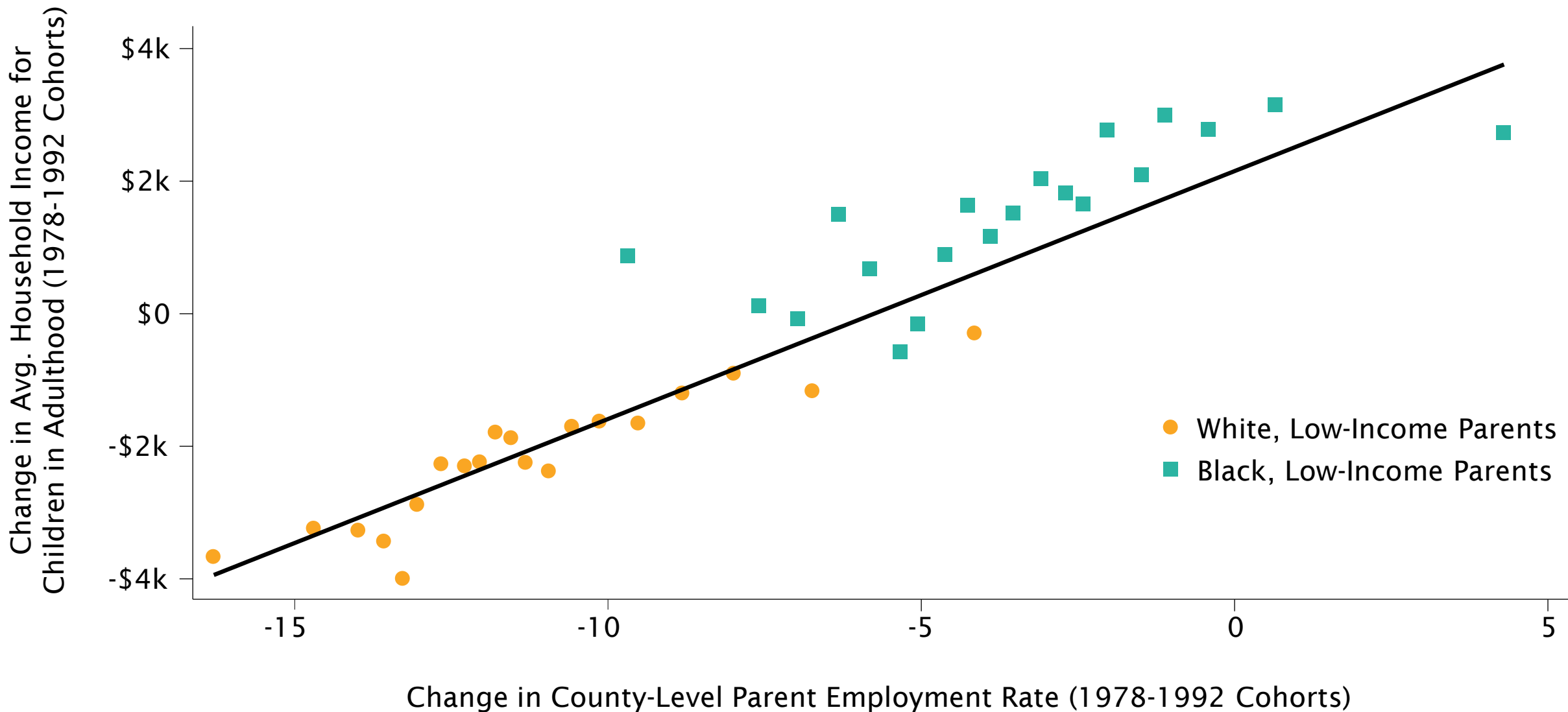
Changes in Economic Mobility vs. Changes in Parent Employment Rates

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Changes in Economic Mobility vs. Changes in Parent Employment Rates

By County, Race, and Class



Changes in Economic Mobility vs. Changes in Parent Employment Rates

By County, Race, and Class for Children whose Own Parents Remain Employed



Policy Interventions to Increase Economic Mobility



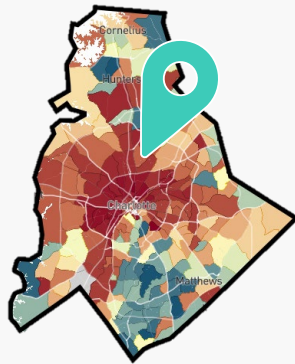
Three Policy Approaches to Increasing Upward Mobility

Reducing Segregation



Help Low-Income Families Move to High-Opportunity Areas

Place-Based Investments



Increase Upward Mobility in Low-Opportunity Areas

Higher Education & Workforce Training



Amplify Impacts of Colleges and Training Programs on Mobility



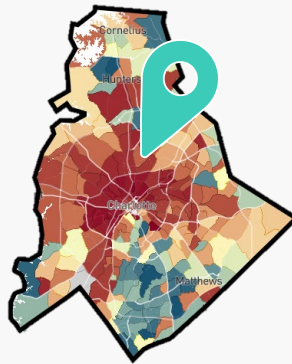
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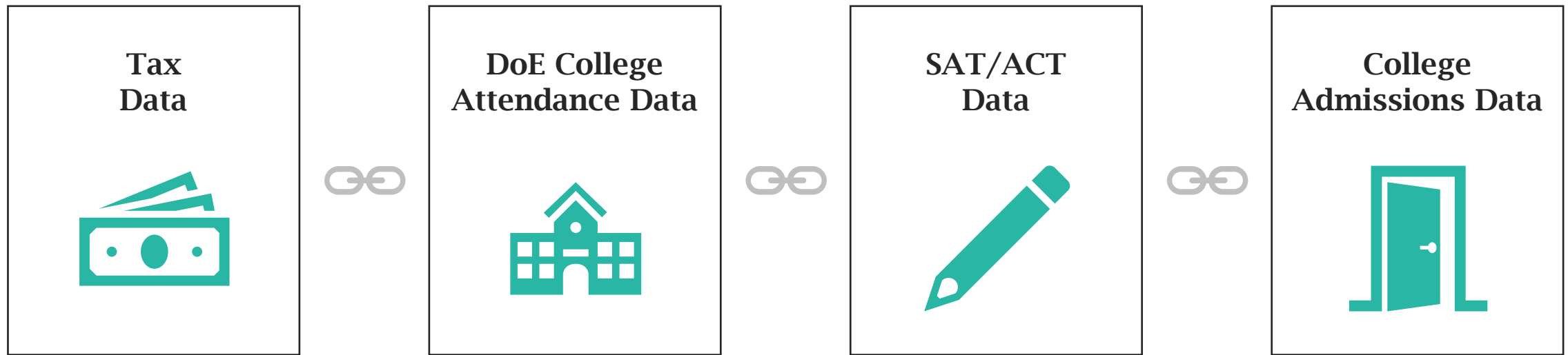
Higher Education & Workforce Training



Amplify Impacts of Colleges and Training Programs on Mobility



A Big Data Approach to Studying Colleges' Contribution to Mobility

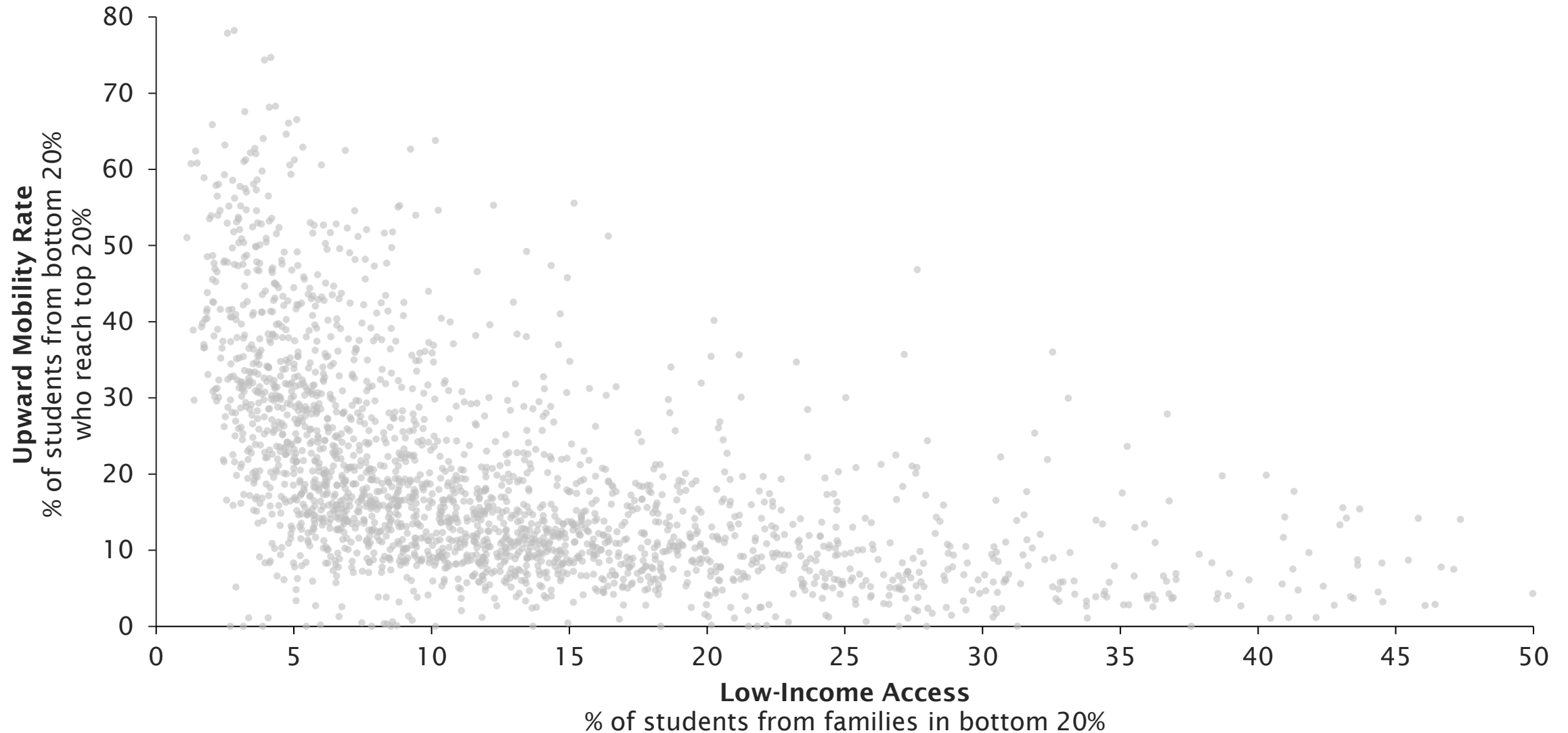


Data on Nearly all College Students in Entering Classes of 1999-2015



The Contribution of Colleges to Economic Mobility

Upward Mobility vs. Low-Income Access

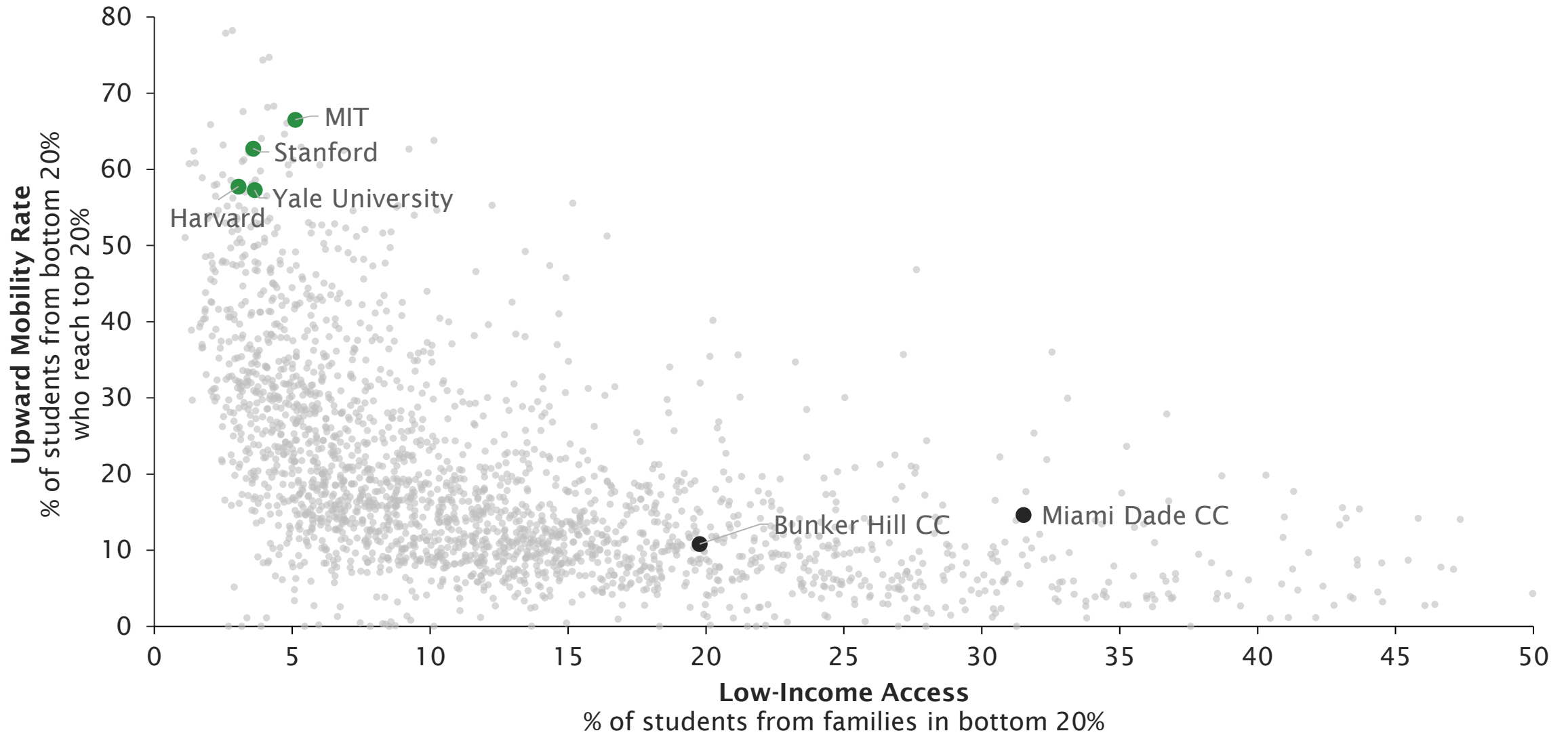


Source: Chetty, Friedman, Saez, Turner, Yagan (2020)



The Contribution of Colleges to Economic Mobility in Utah

Upward Mobility vs. Low-Income Access

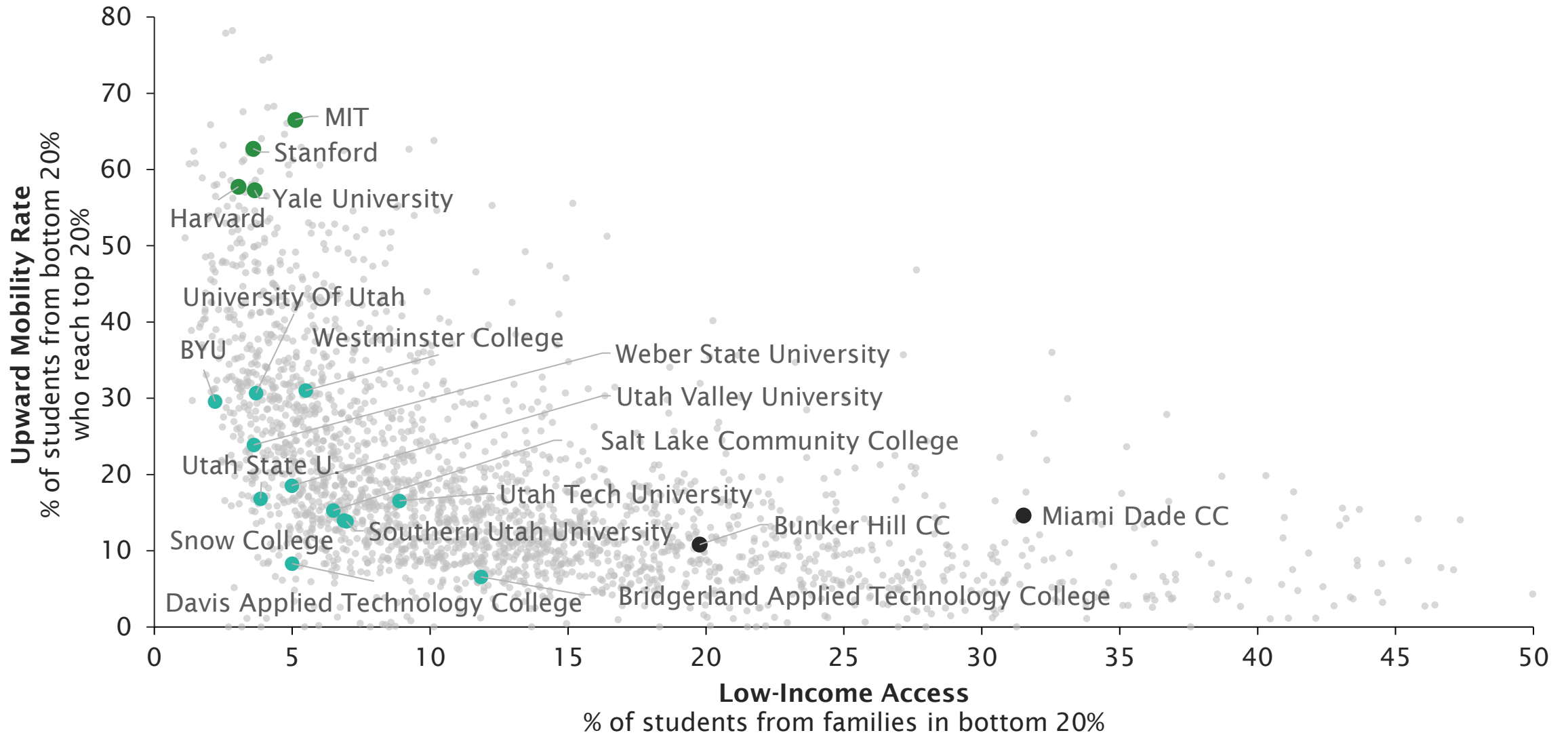


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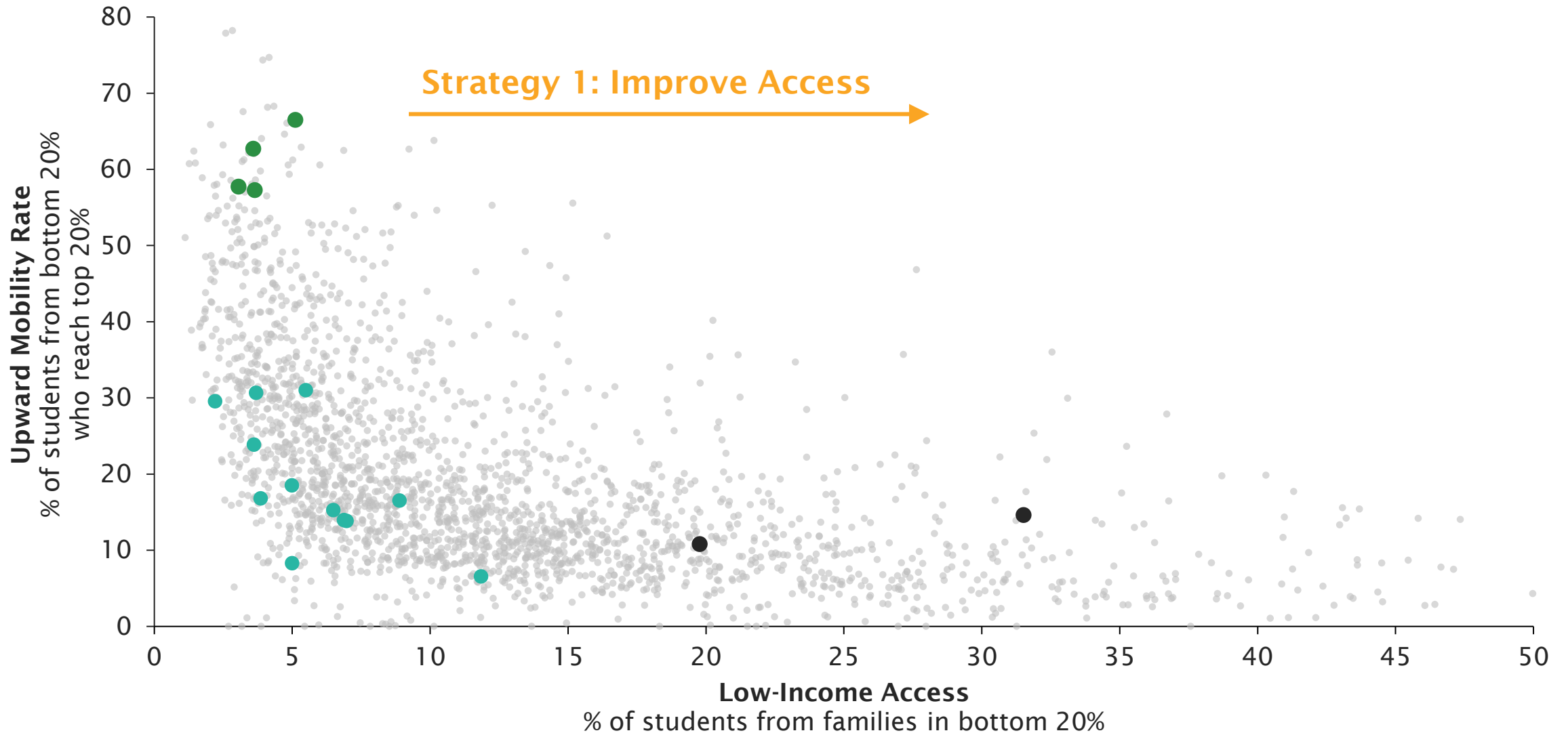


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The Contribution of Colleges to Economic Mobility in Utah

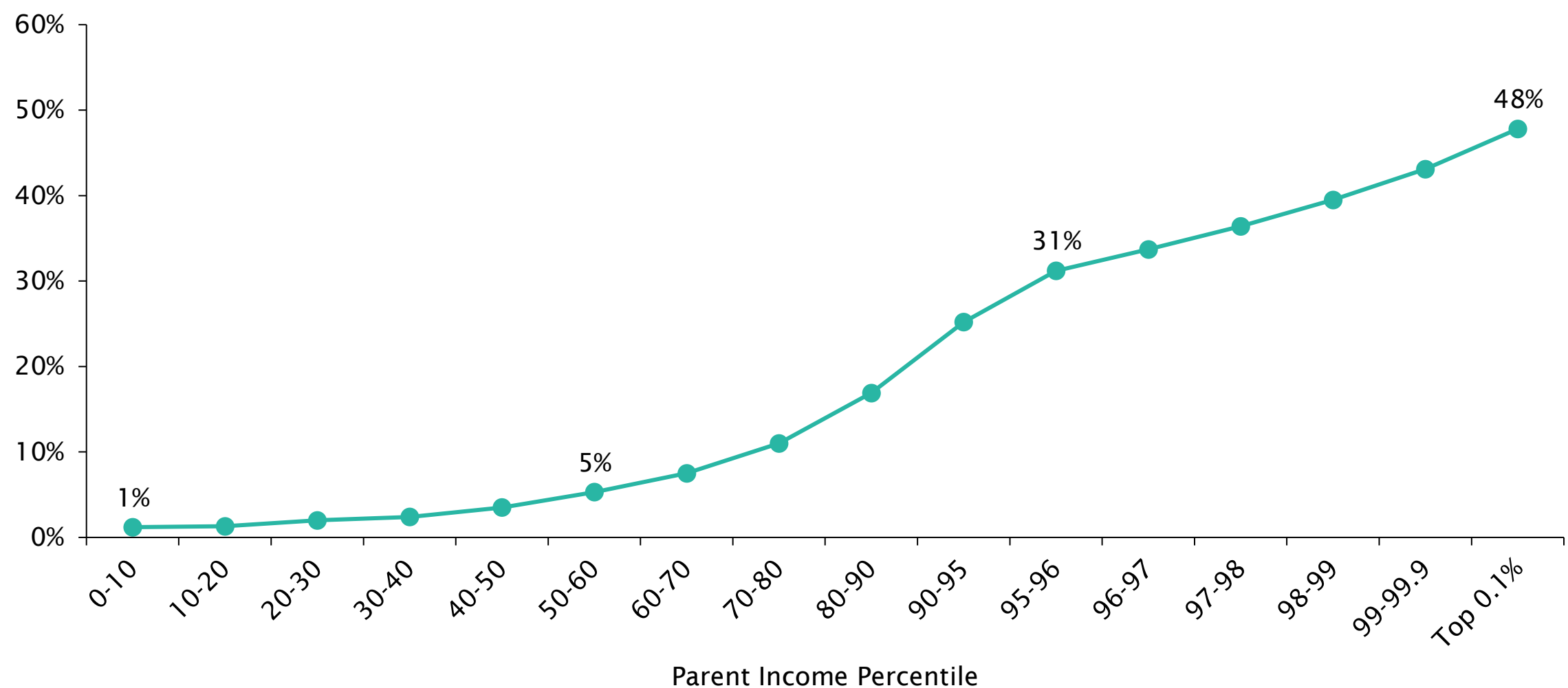
Upward Mobility vs. Low-Income Access



Source: Chetty, Friedman, Saez, Turner, Yagan (2020)



Percent of SAT test takers who scored 1200 or higher, by income group

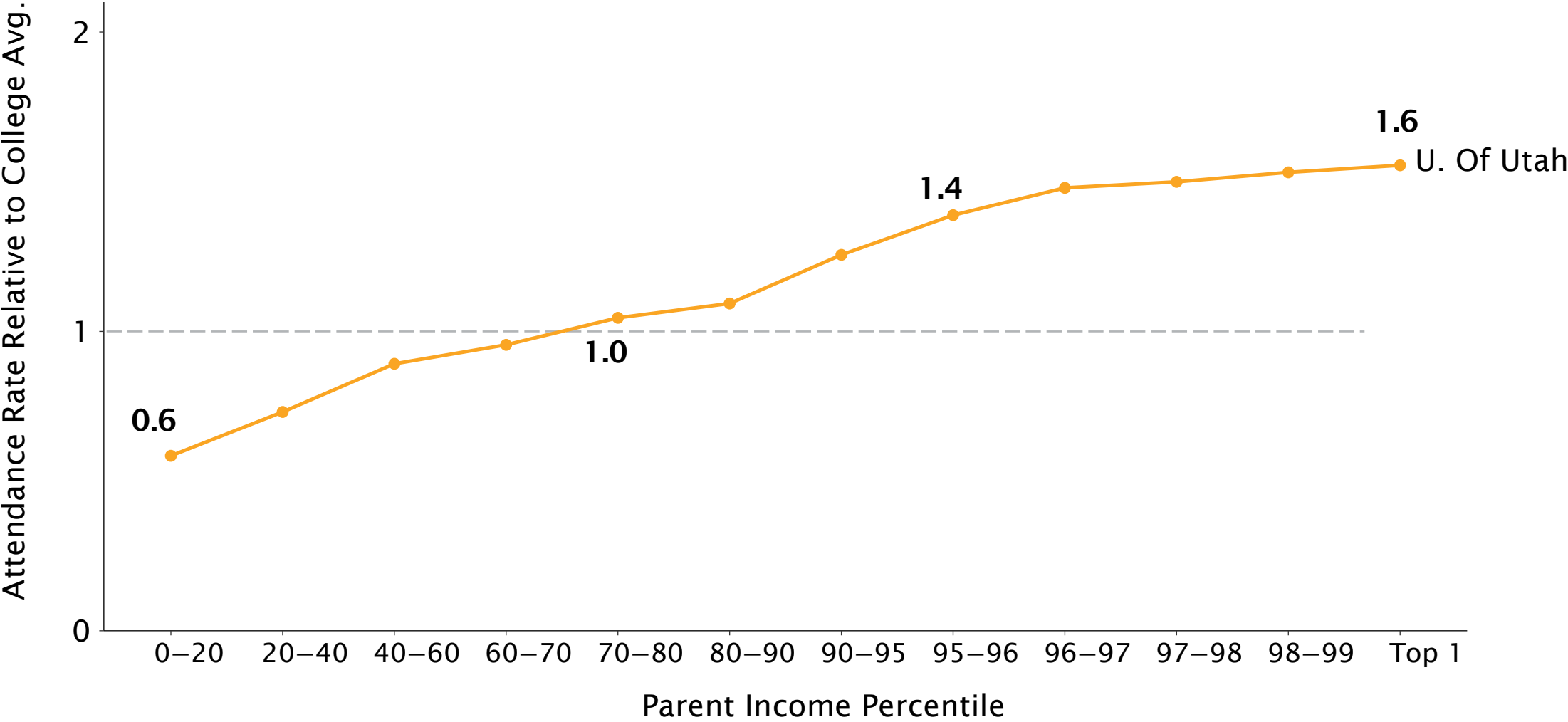


Source: Chetty, Deming, Friedman (2023)



Attendance Rates by Parental Income, Entering Classes of 2011-15

For Children with Test Scores Comparable to Current Student Body

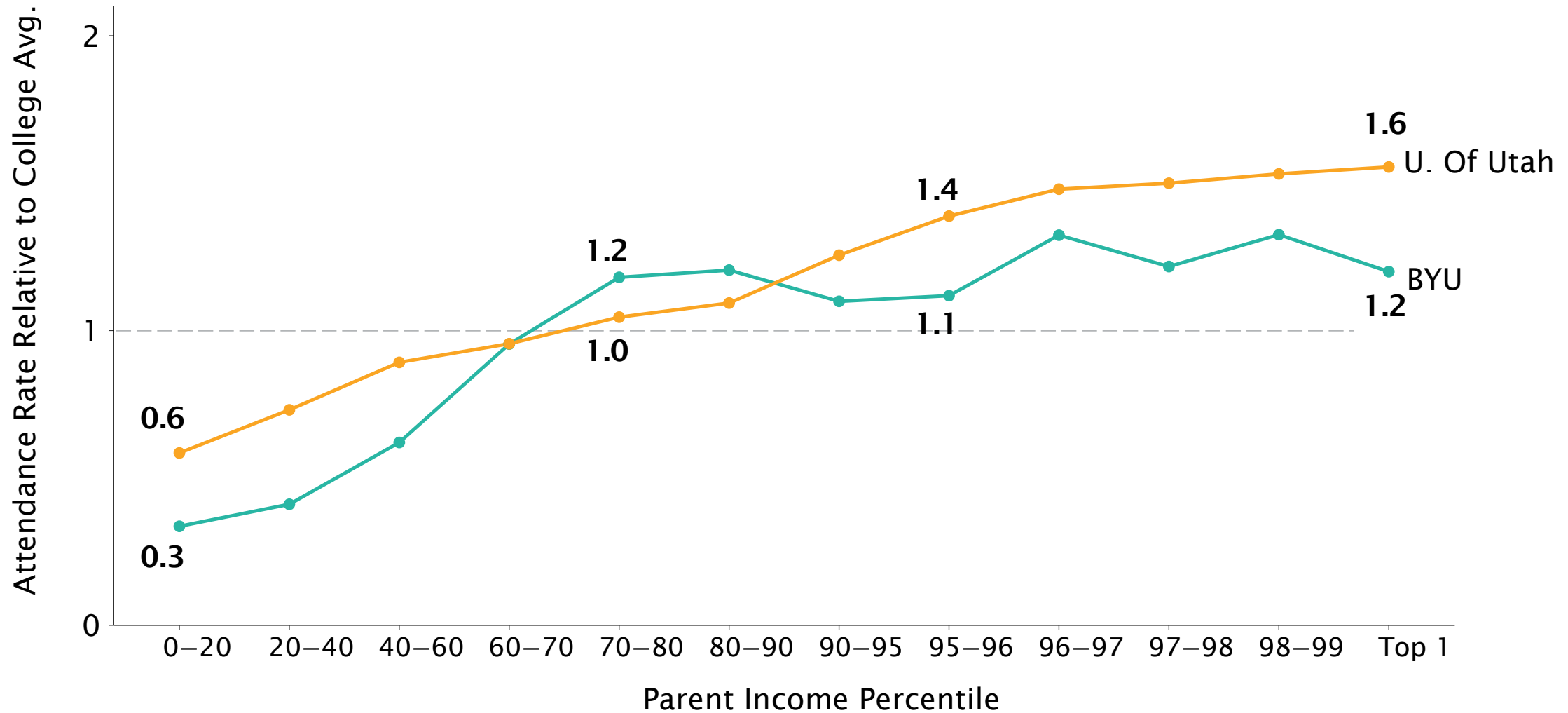


Source: Chetty, Deming, Friedman (2023)



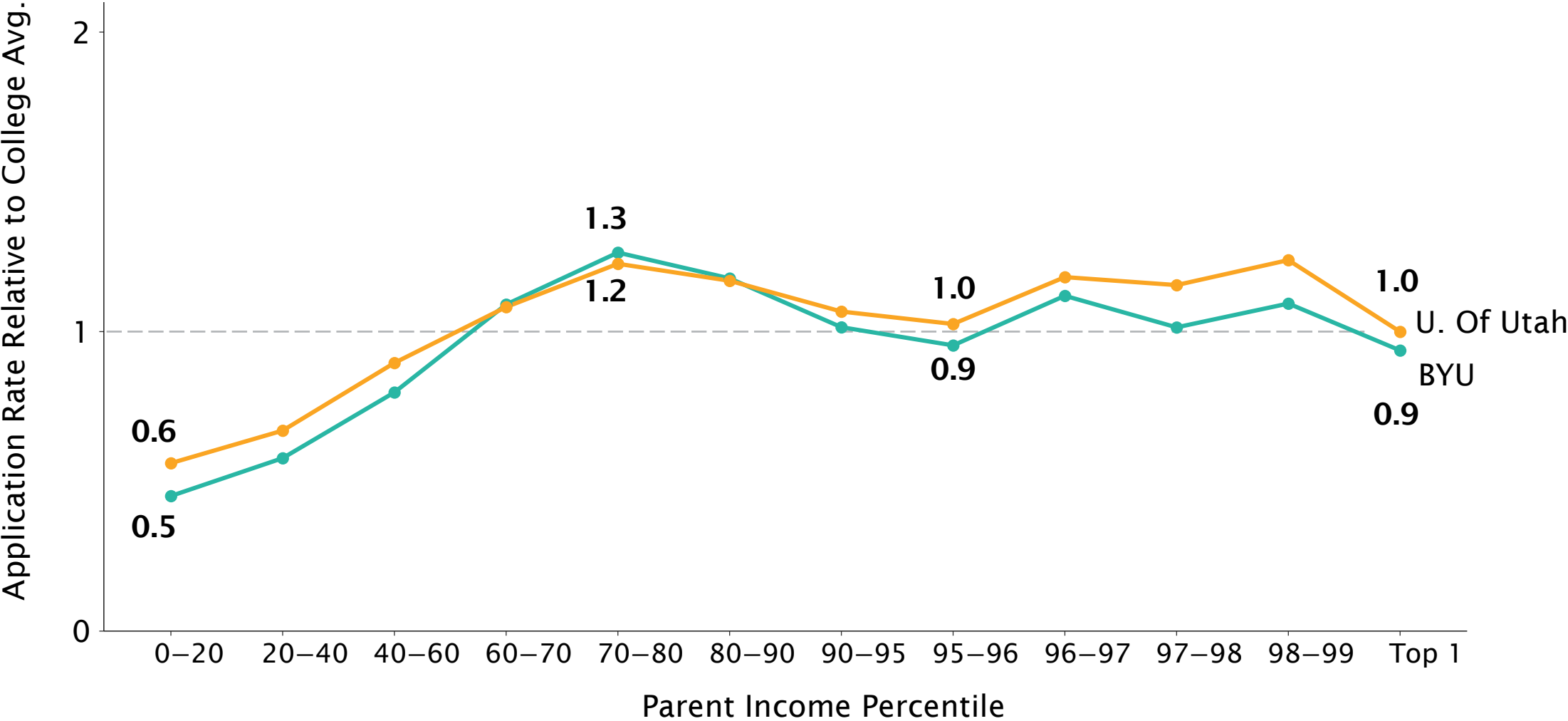
Attendance Rates by Parental Income, Entering Classes of 2011-15

For Children with Test Scores Comparable to Current Student Body



Application Rates by Parental Income, Entering Classes of 2011-15

For Children with Test Scores Comparable to Current Student Body

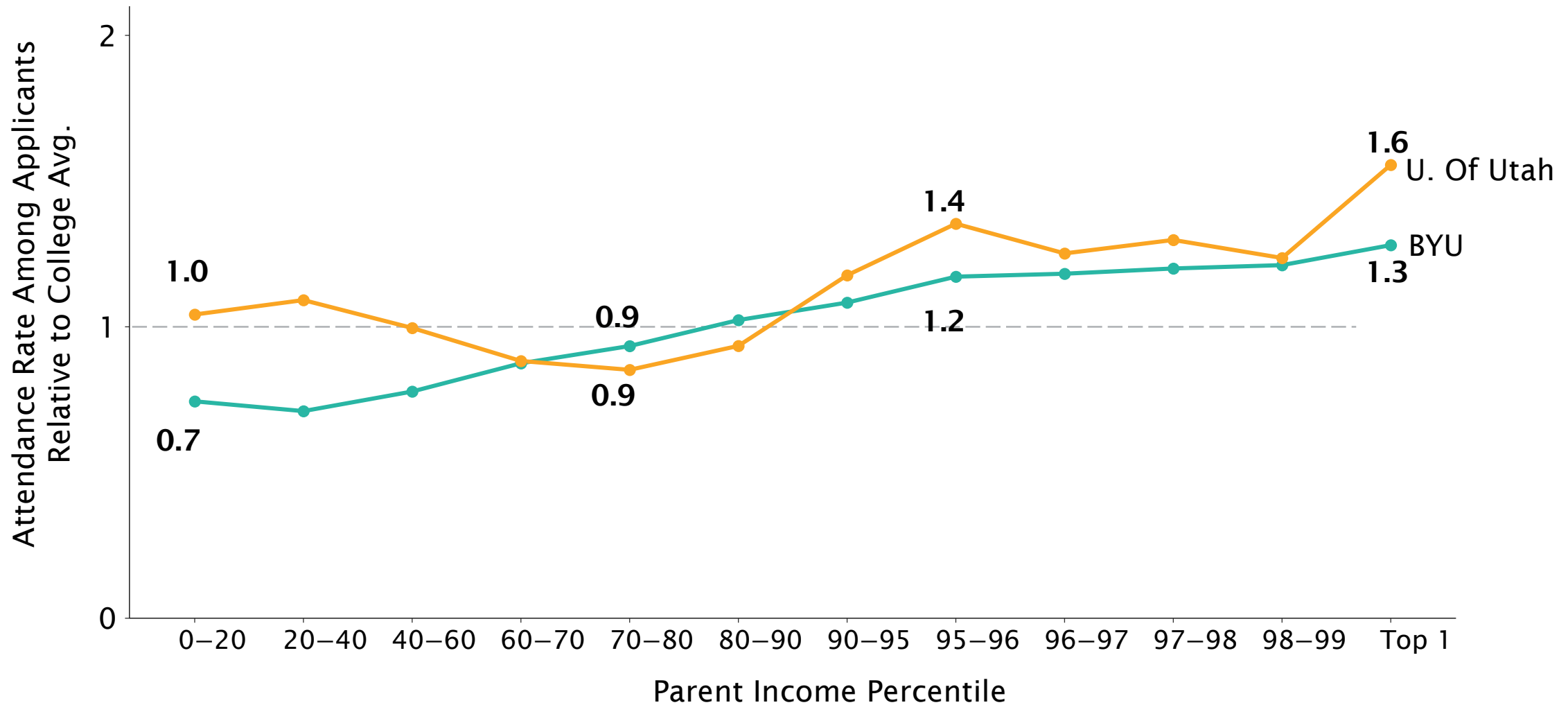


Source: Chetty, Deming, Friedman (2023)



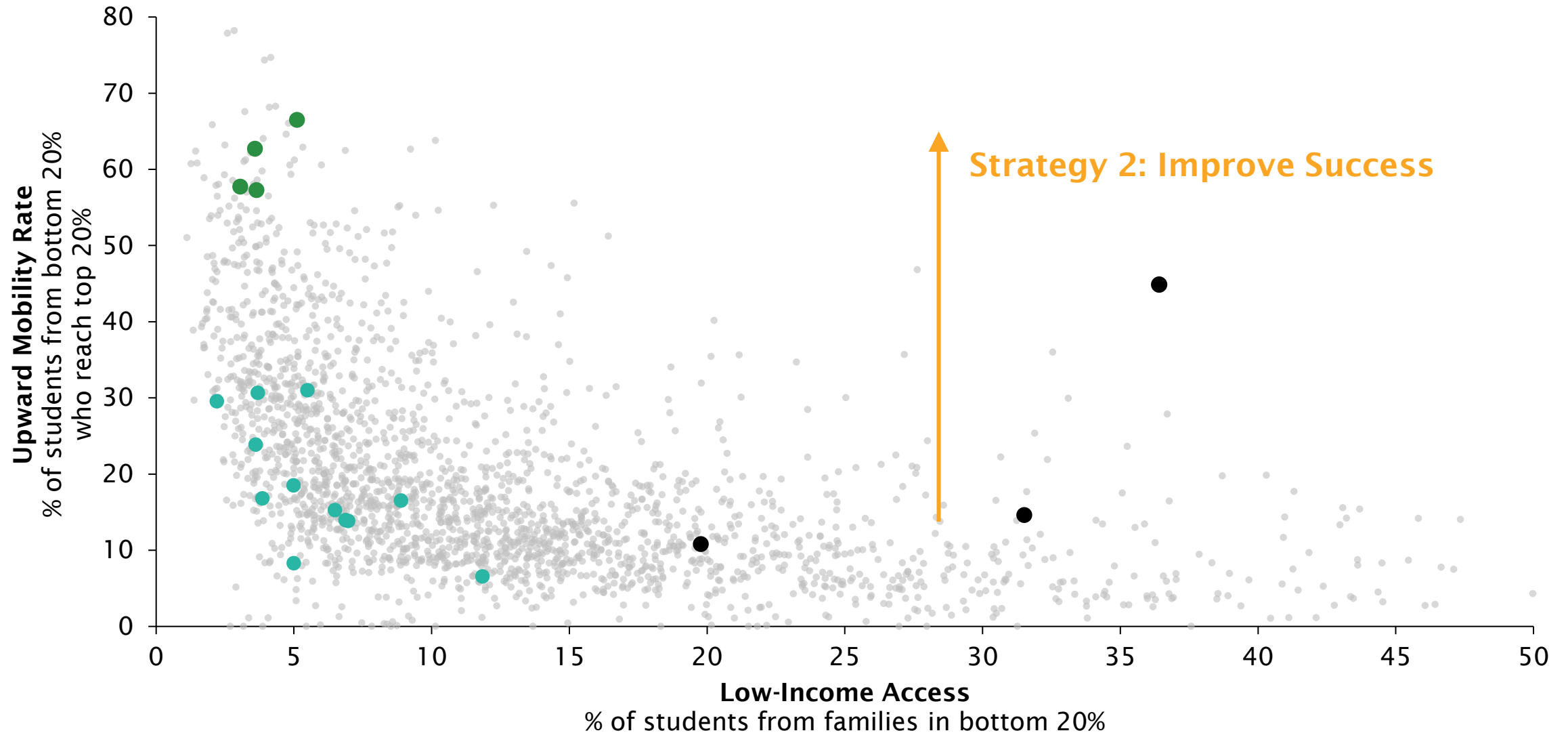
Attendance Rates Among Applicants by Parental Income

For Children with Test Scores Comparable to Current Student Body



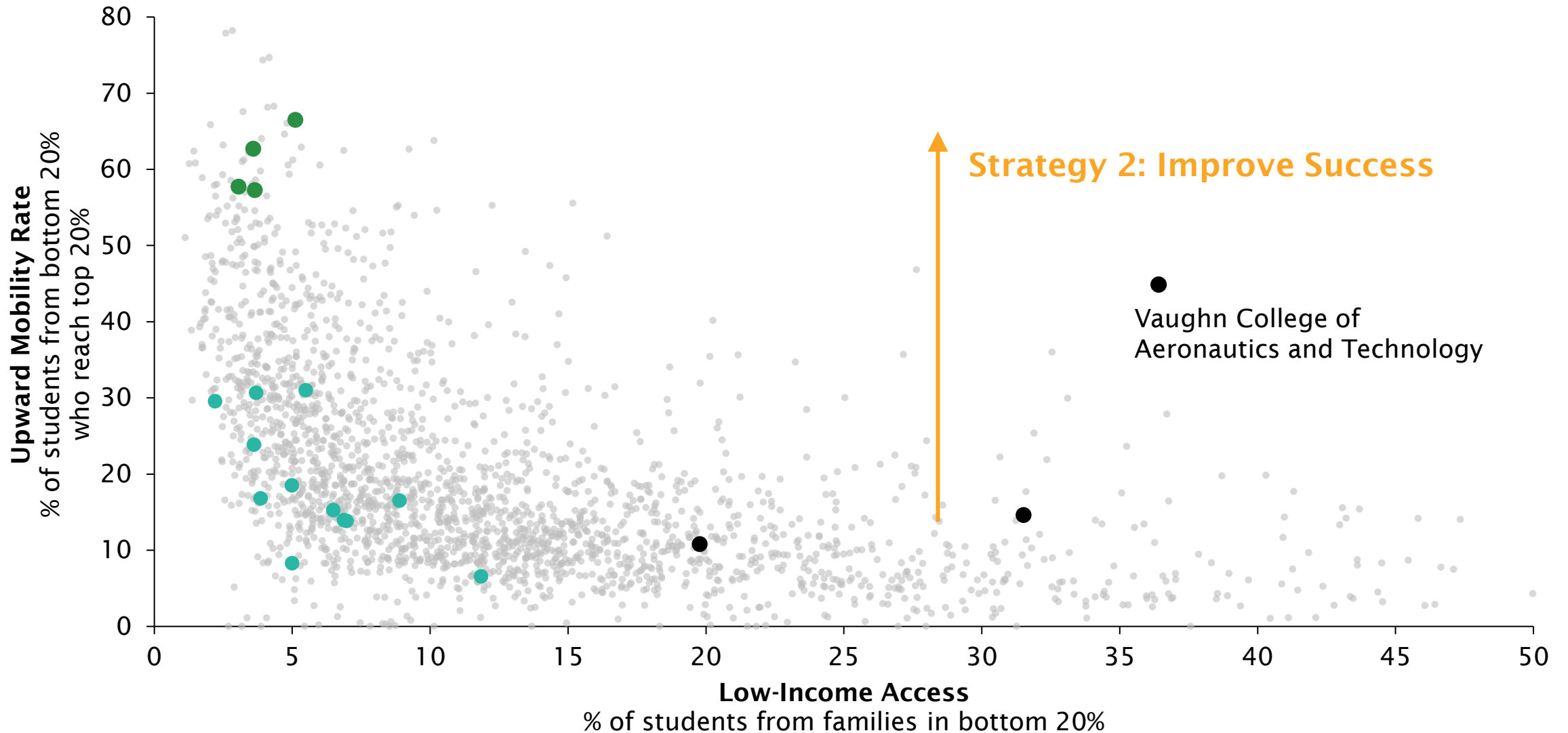
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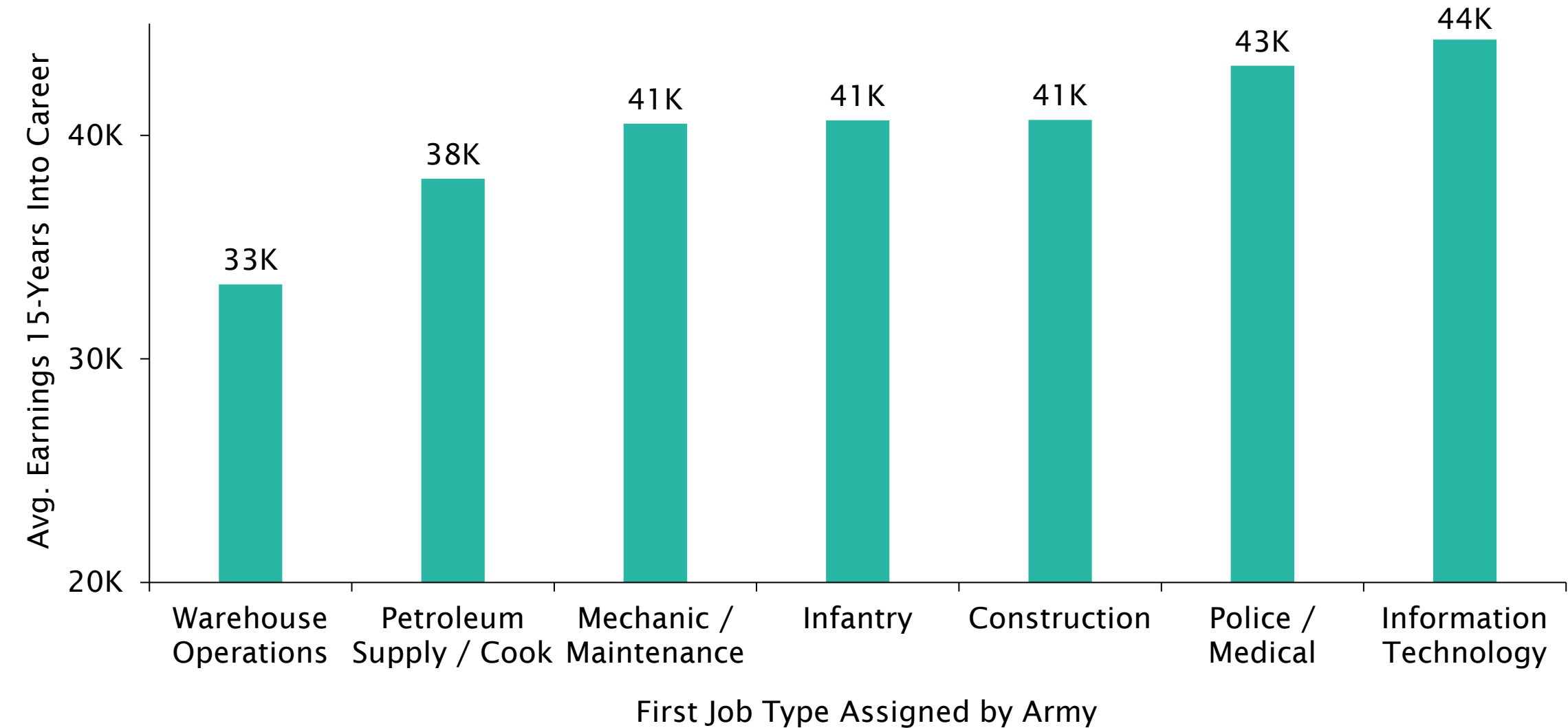


Source: Chetty, Friedman, Saez, Turner, Yagan (2020)



Impact of First Job on Long-Term Earnings Potential

Average income 15-years into career for veterans whose first job type was assigned by the army



Source: Bruhn, Fabian, Gallagher, Gudgeon, Isen, and Phipps (in progress)



Learn new skills to launch your career.

Year Up's job training program is tuition free, and offers access to today's best companies and a proven path to career success.

[FIND TRAINING](#)

Our approach

Three steps to a new job

1 Learn



The Learning & Development phase of our program provides you with skills based training from expert

2 Intern



Put the skills you learned into practice! We'll match you to a hands-on internship at a top

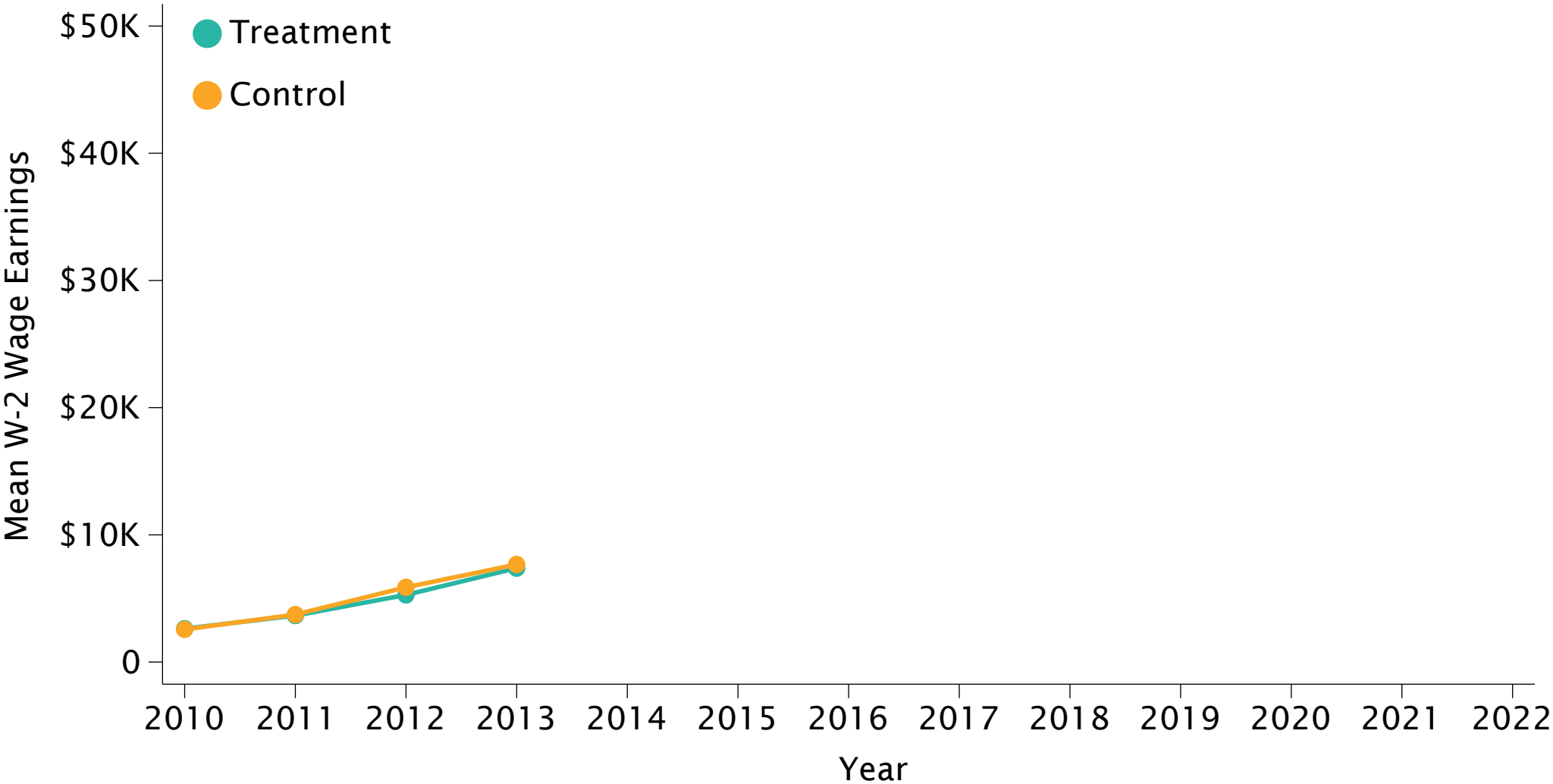
3 Land a job



80% of alumni are employed and/or enrolled in college within 4 months of graduation. Our support staff will

Impact of Year Up on Earnings

Evidence from PACE Randomized Trial in 2014

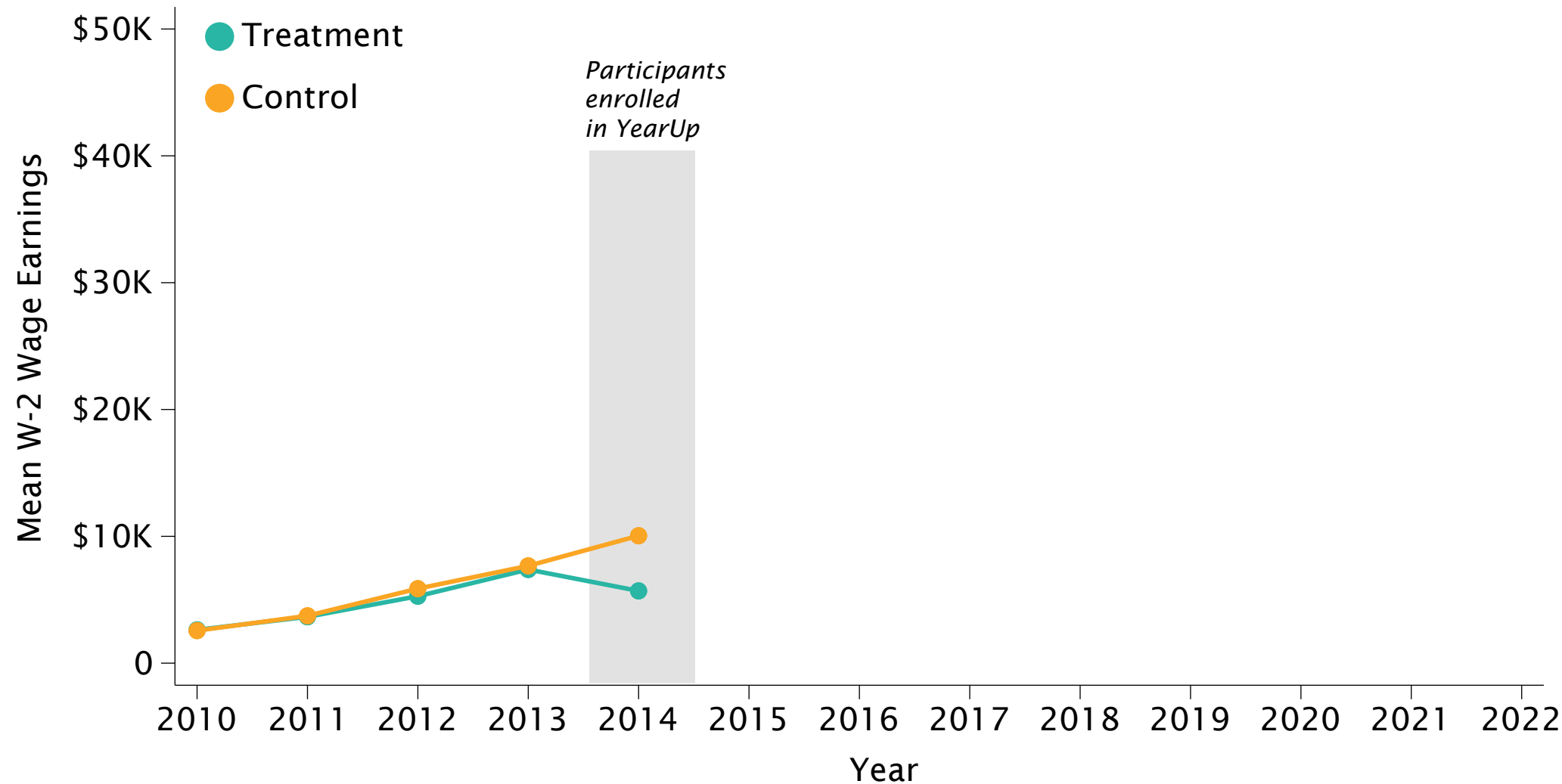


Source: Chetty, Katz, Noray, Porter, Reisinger (2025)



Impact of Year Up on Earnings

Evidence from PACE Randomized Trial in 2014

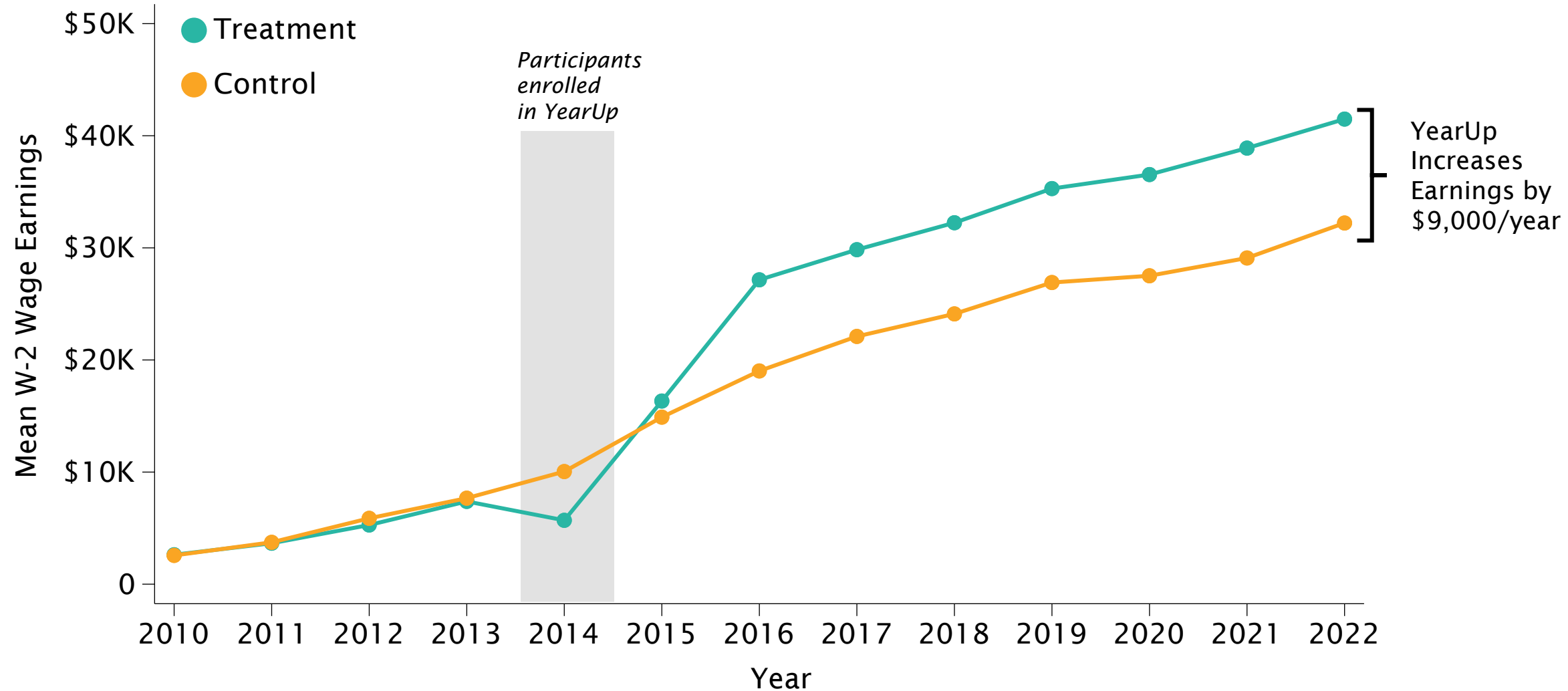


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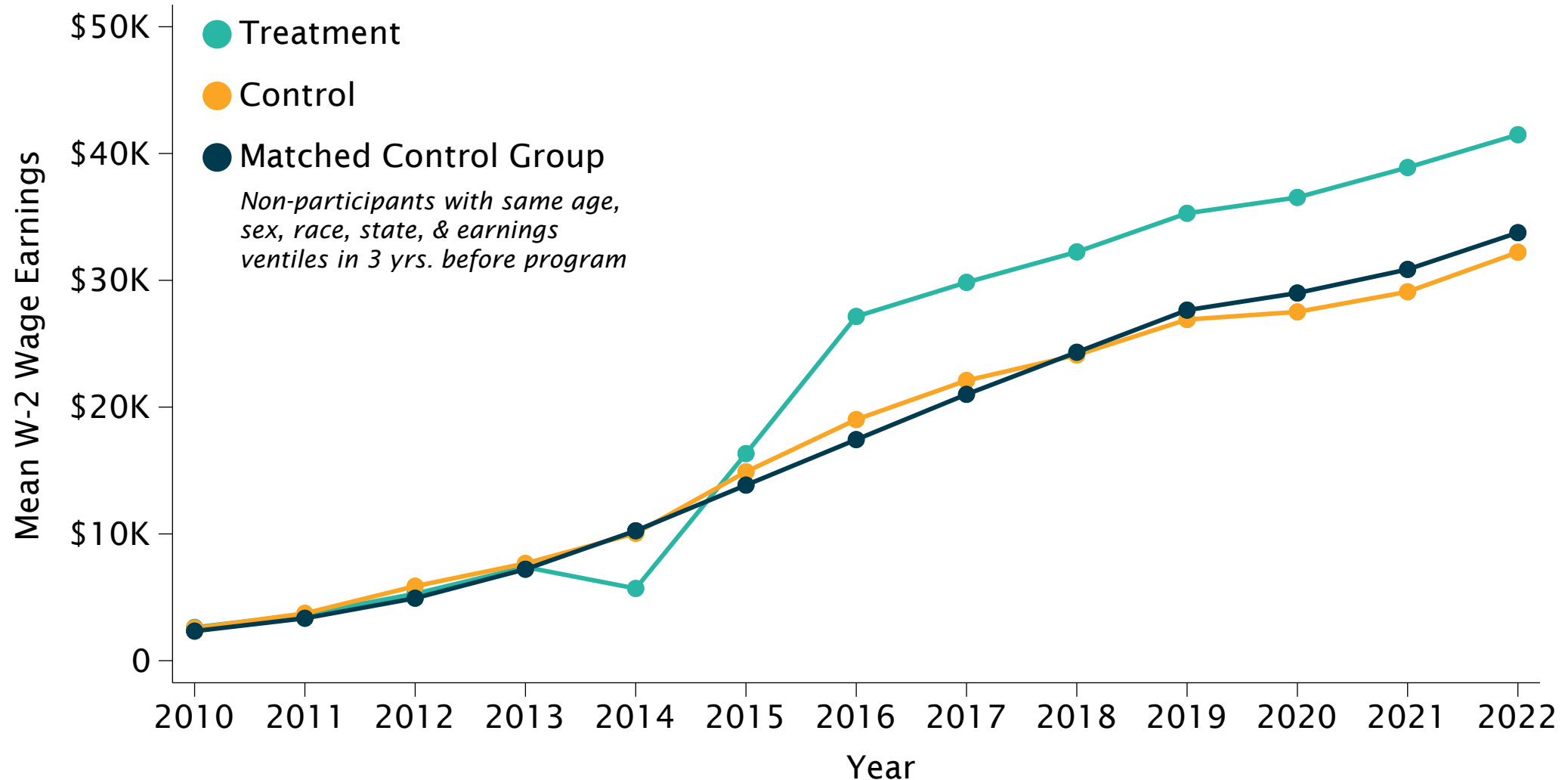
Impact of Year Up on Earnings

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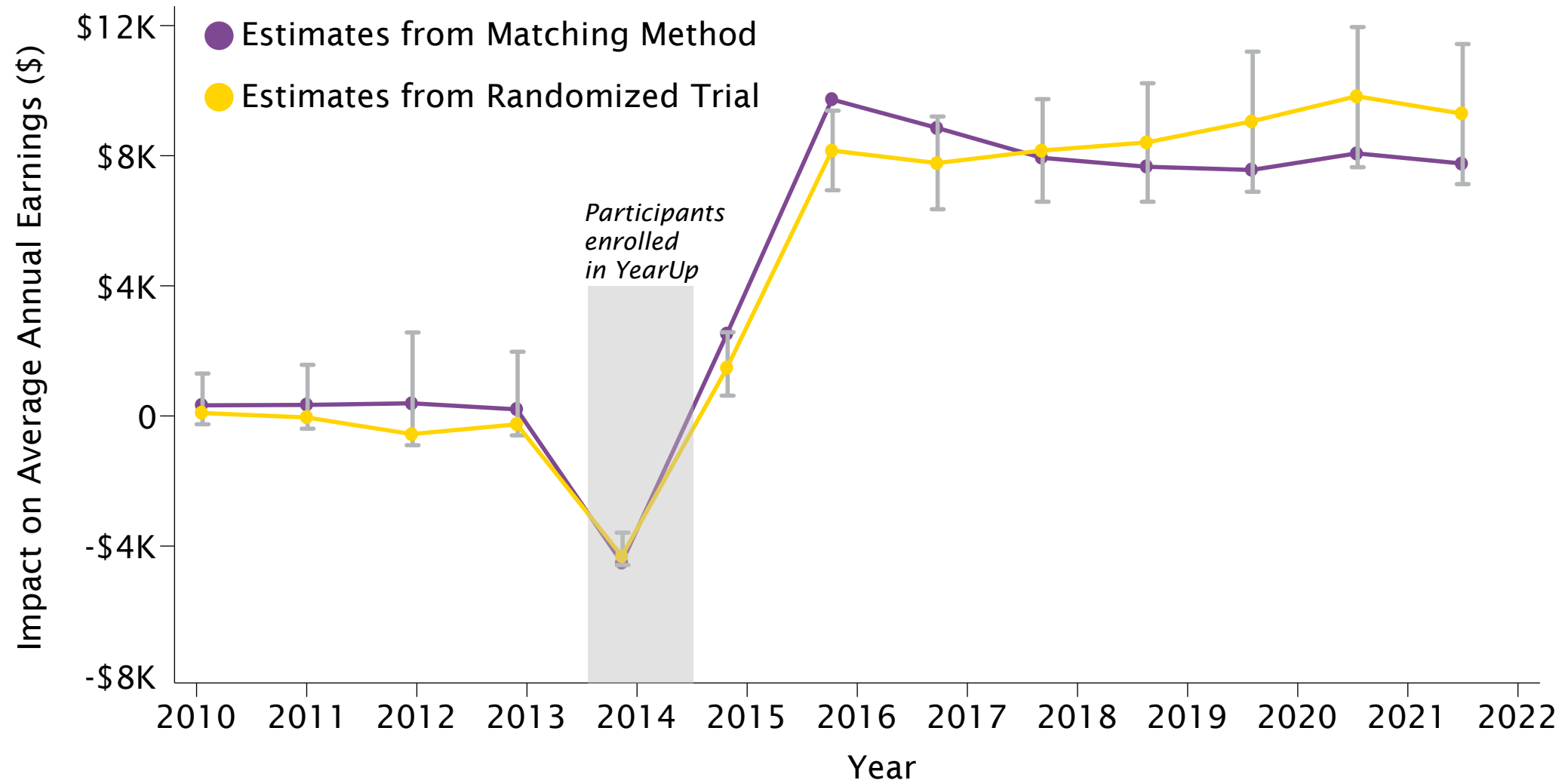
Impact of Year Up on Earnings

Evidence from PACE Randomized Trial in 2014 vs. Observational Matching Estimate



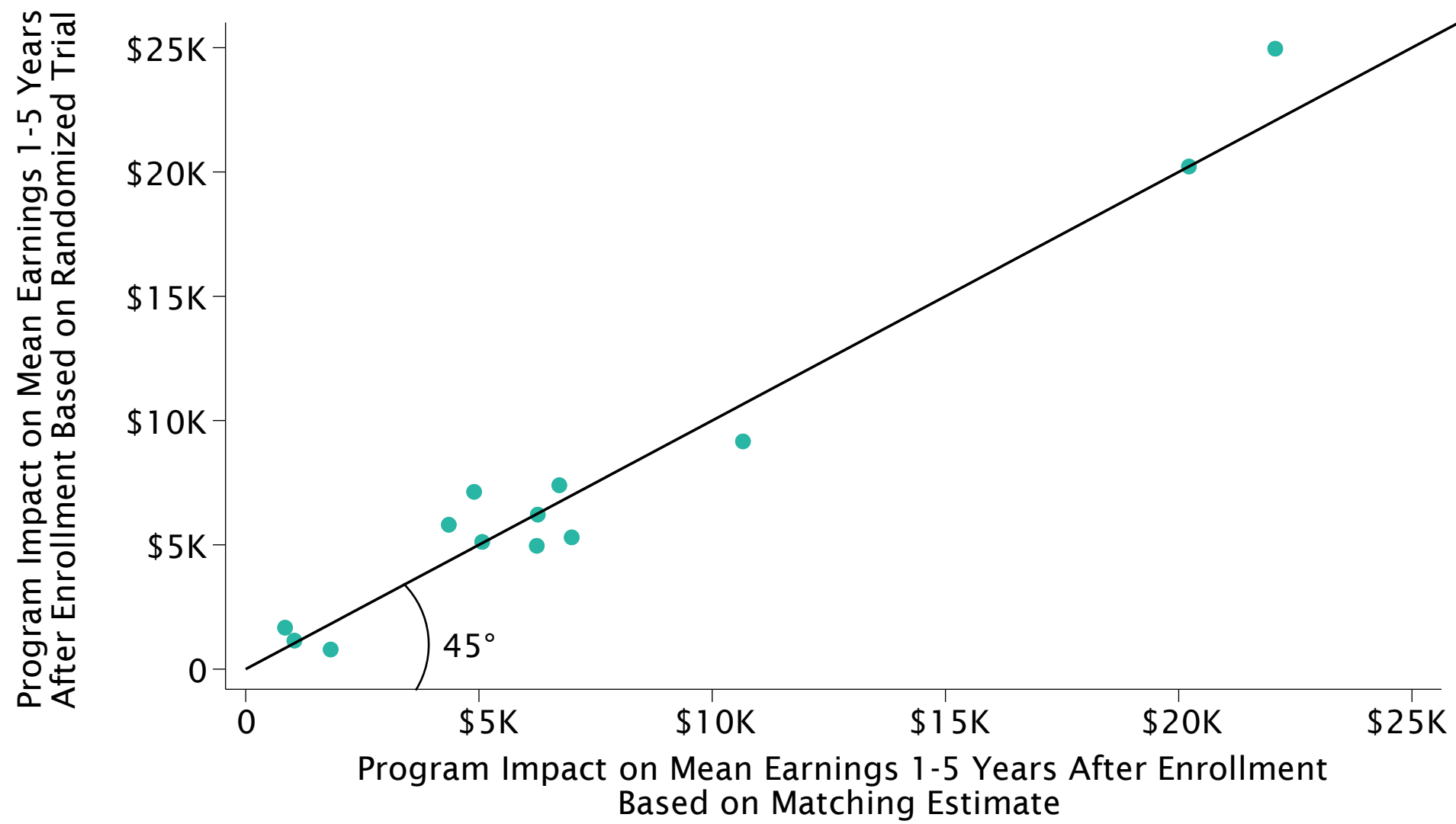
Impact of Year Up on Earnings

Matching vs. Randomized Trial Estimates



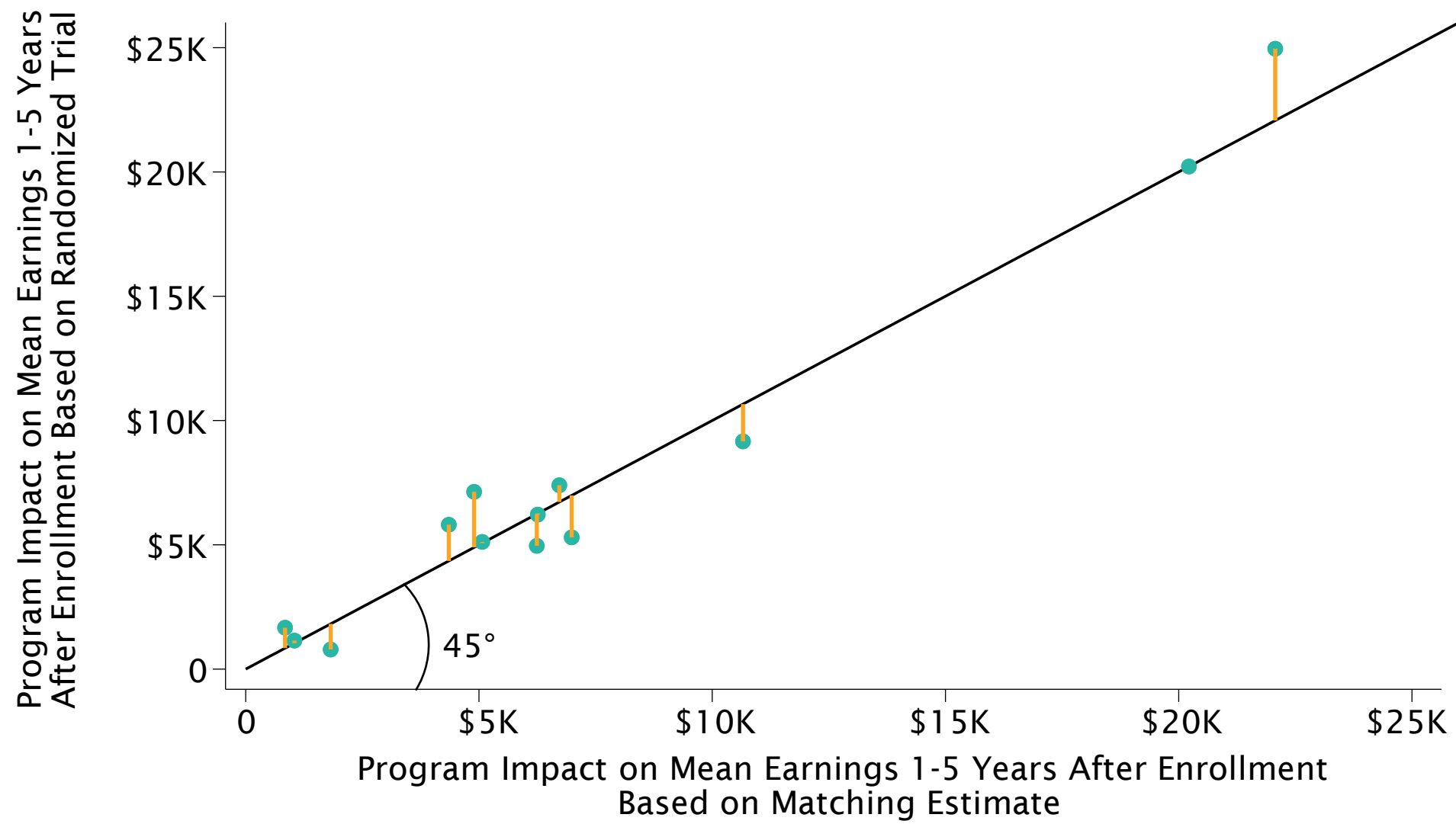
Effects of Workforce Training Programs on Earnings

Matching vs. Randomized Trial Estimates for Programs Implemented in 13 Cities



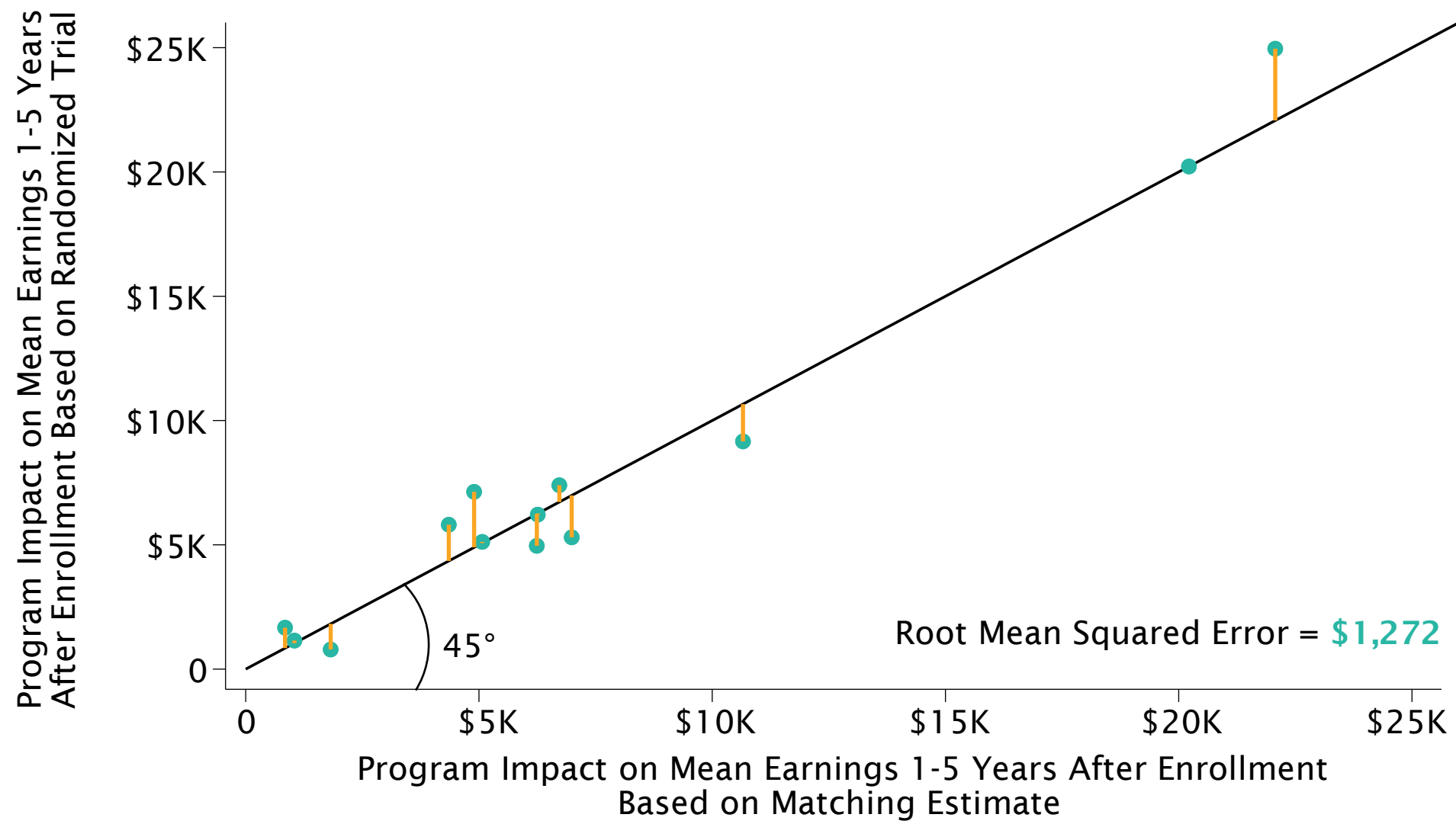
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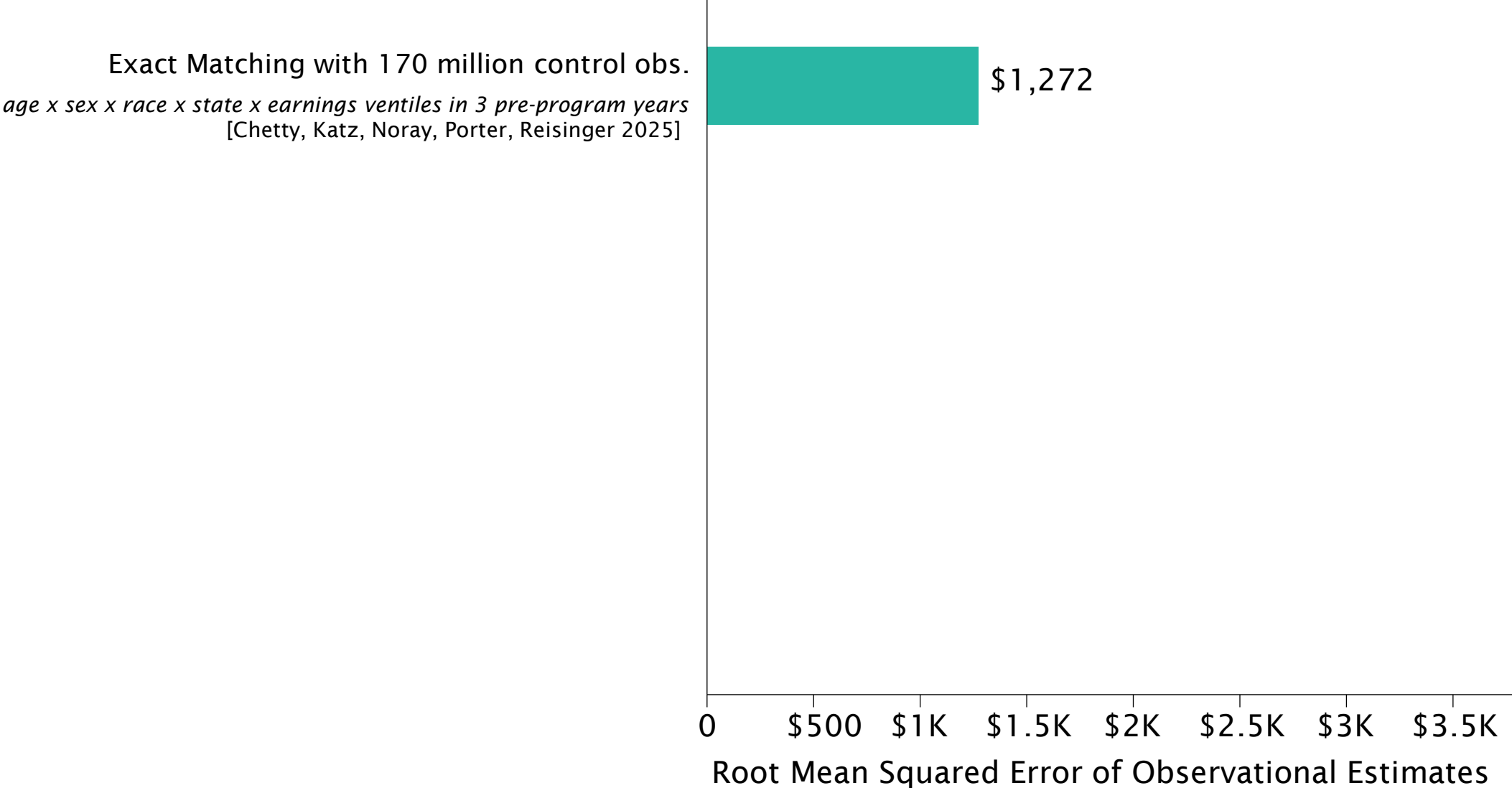
Effects of Workforce Training Programs on Earnings

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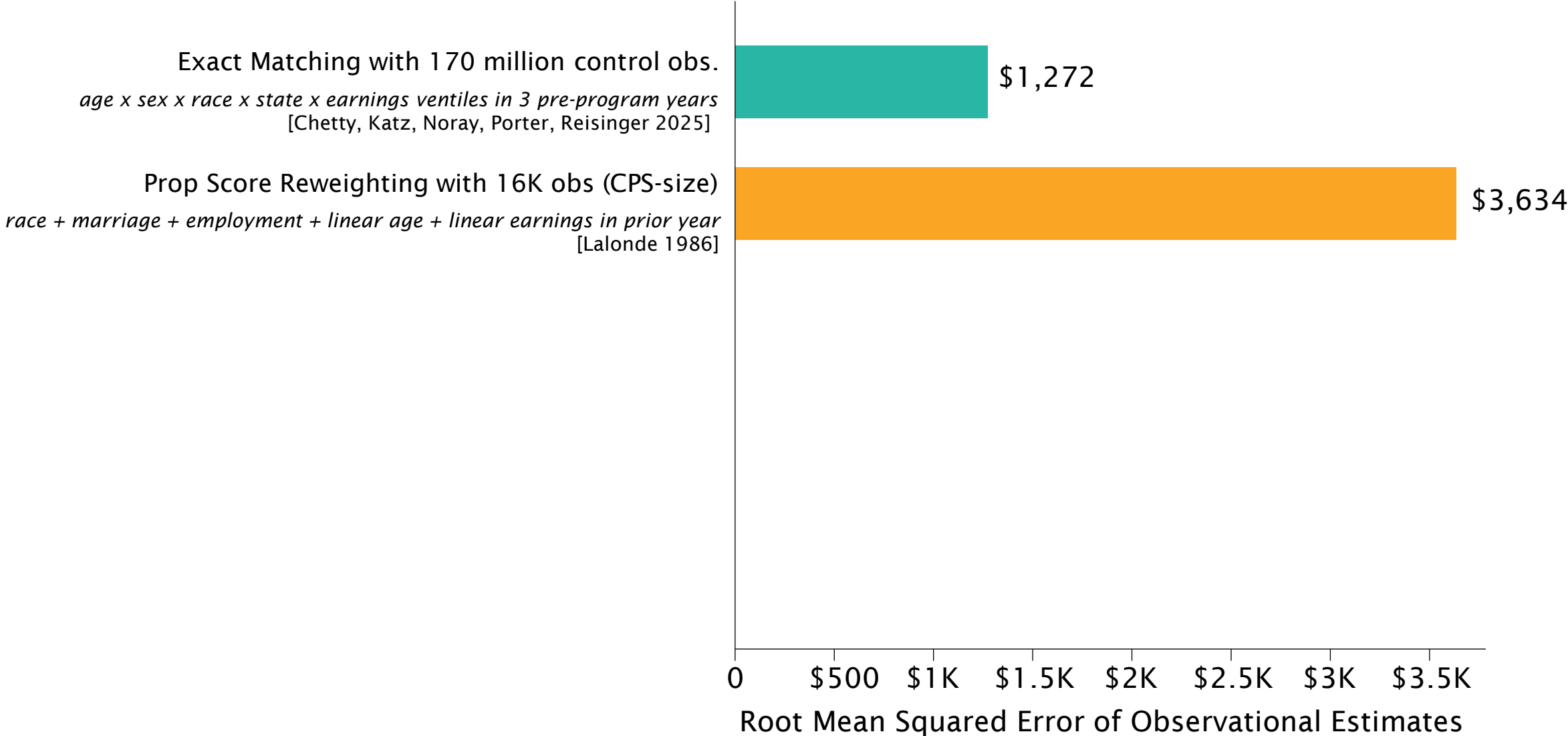
Performance of Observational Estimators

Root Mean Squared Error of Observational Estimates Relative to Experimental Estimates Across 13 Programs



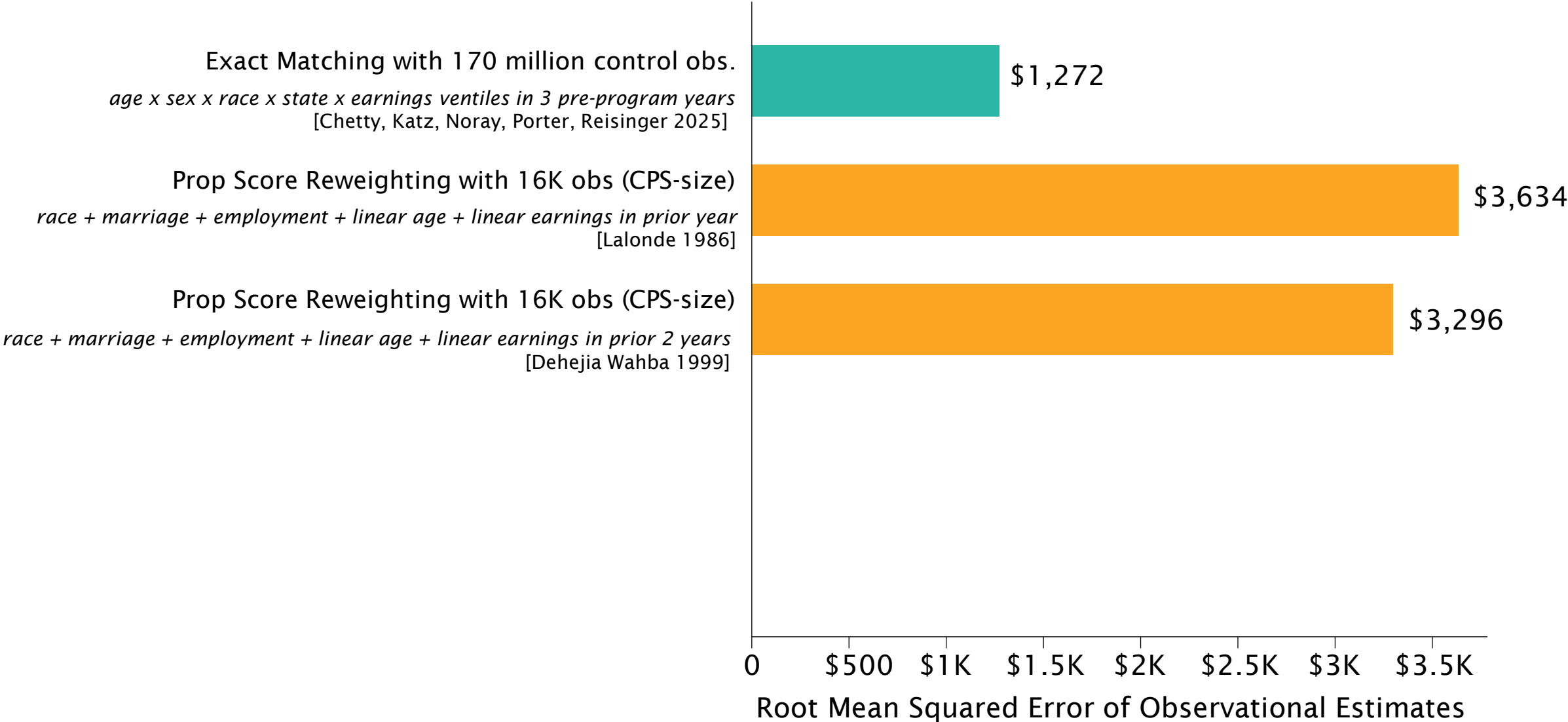
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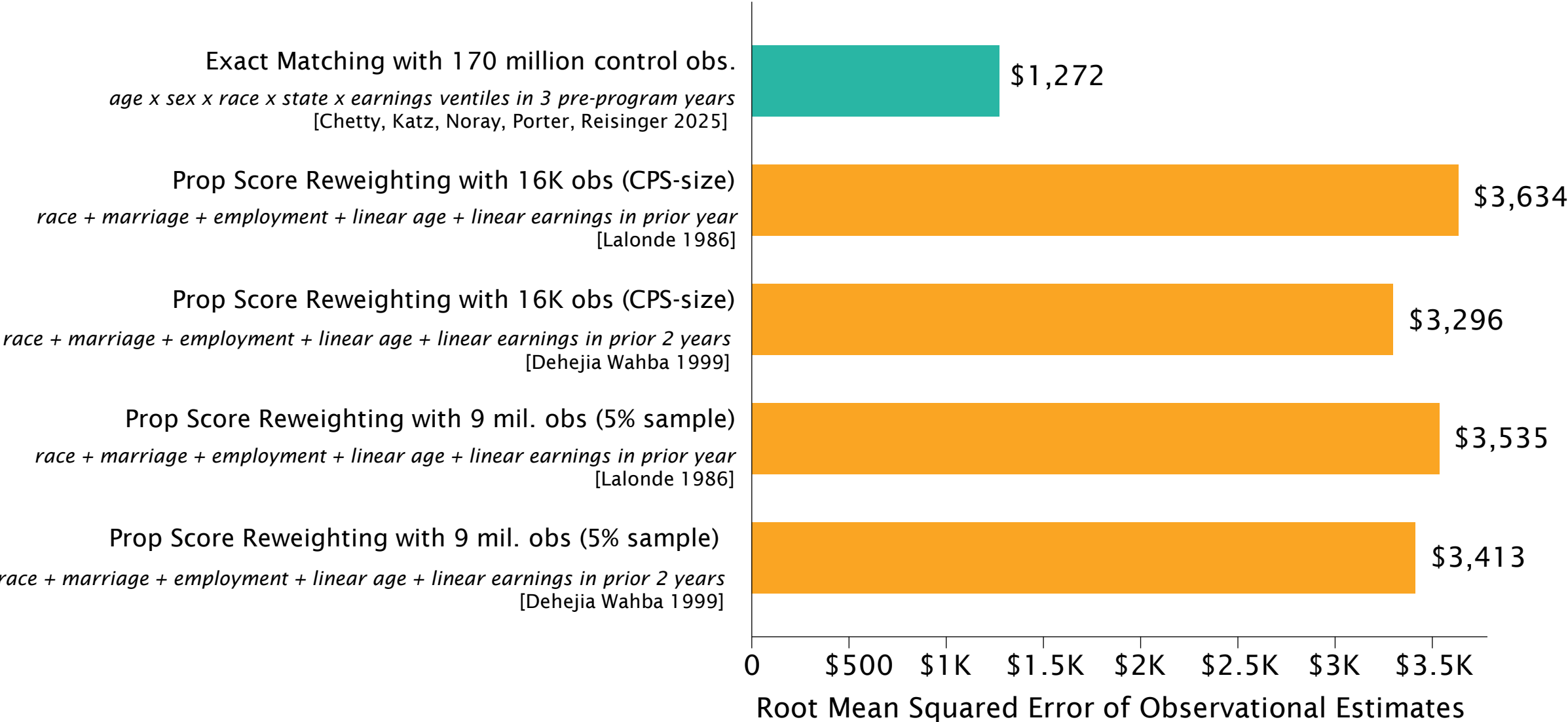
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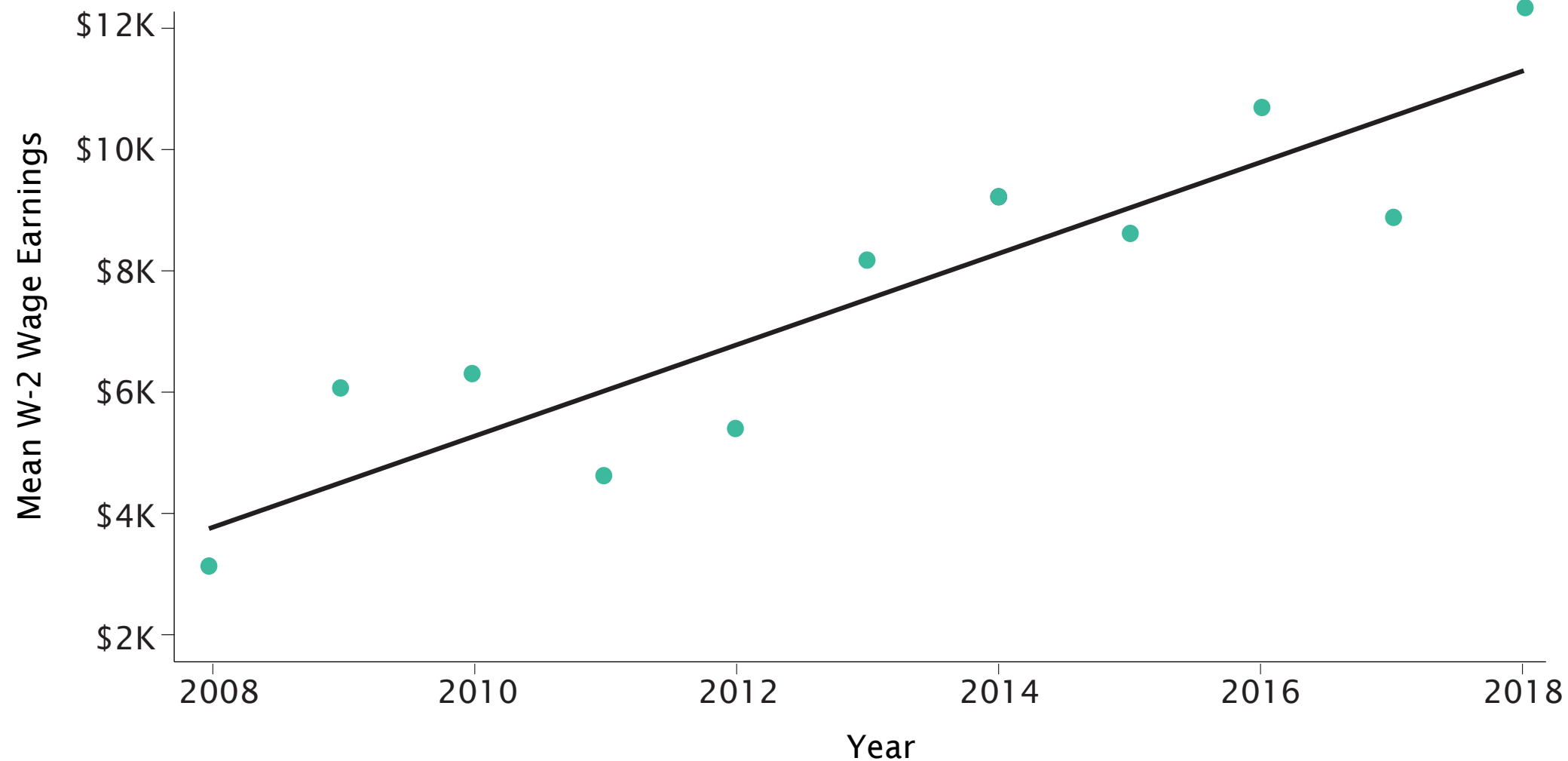
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Impacts of Year Up on Earnings, by Year of Enrollment

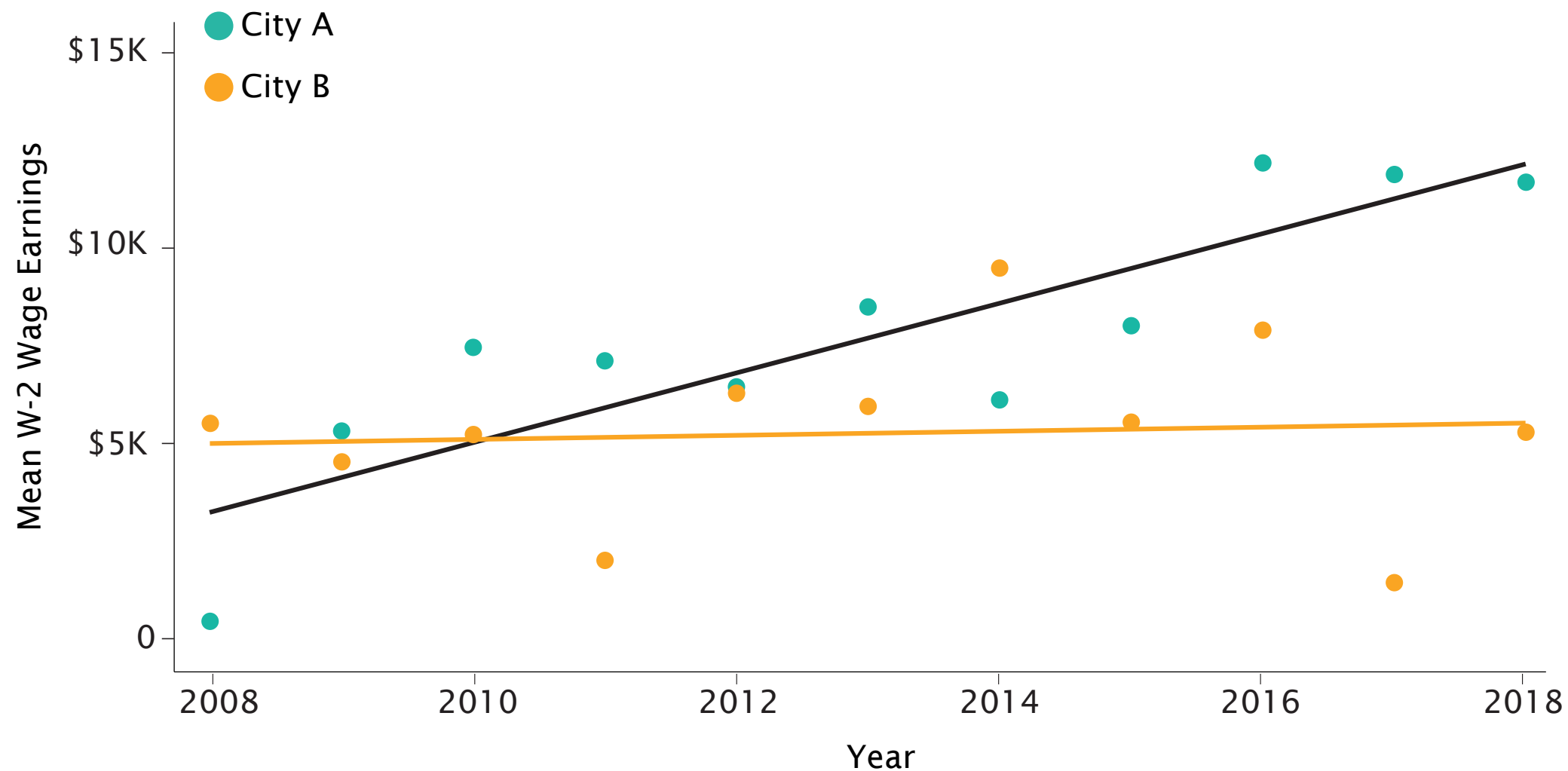
Mean Impacts, Averaging Across All Sites



Source: Chetty, Katz, Noray, Porter, Reisinger (2025)



Impacts of Year Up on Earnings, by Site and Year of Enrollment

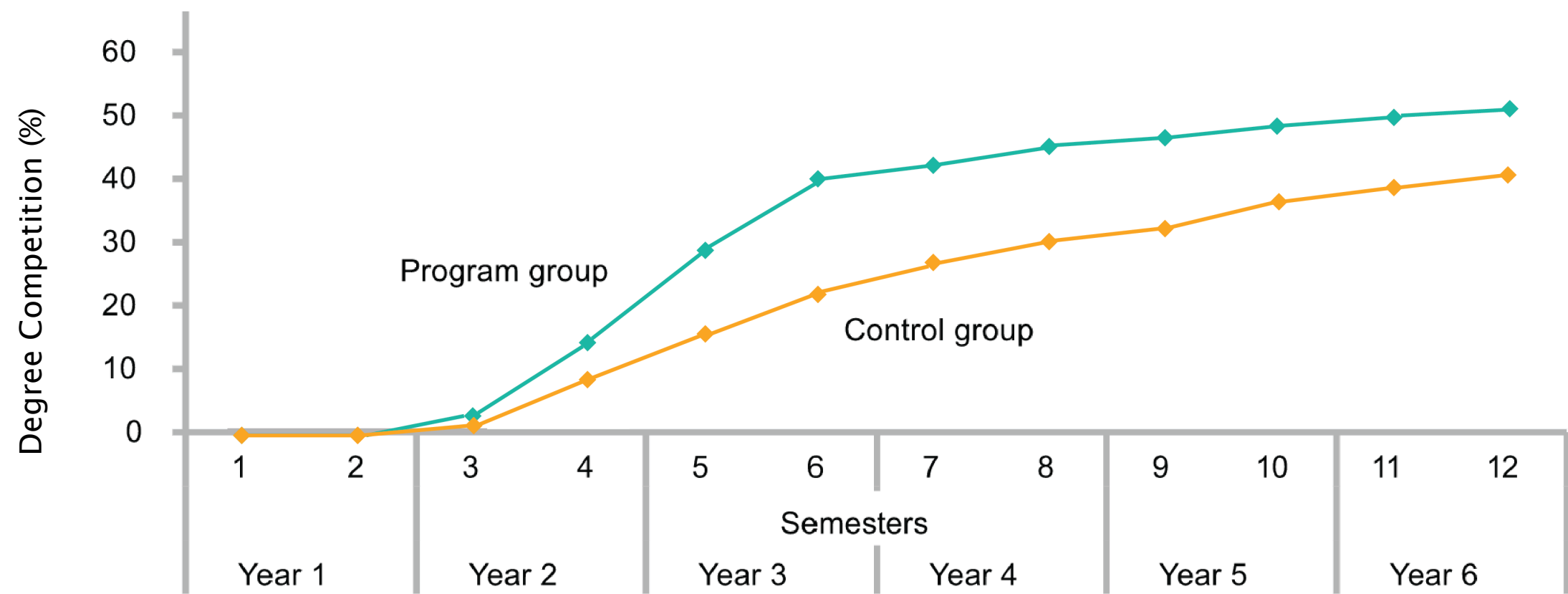


Source: Chetty, Katz, Noray, Porter, Reisinger (2025)

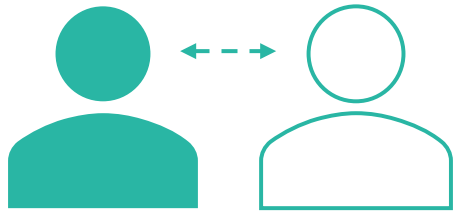


Impacts of CUNY’s Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP)

Evidence from Randomized Trial on Rates of Degree Completion



Impact of Intensive Advising on 4-Year College Attainment



Bottom Line Advising

Intensive access and success advising by counselors in high school and college



Impacts

Randomized trial with 2,500 students in Boston, NYC, and Worcester

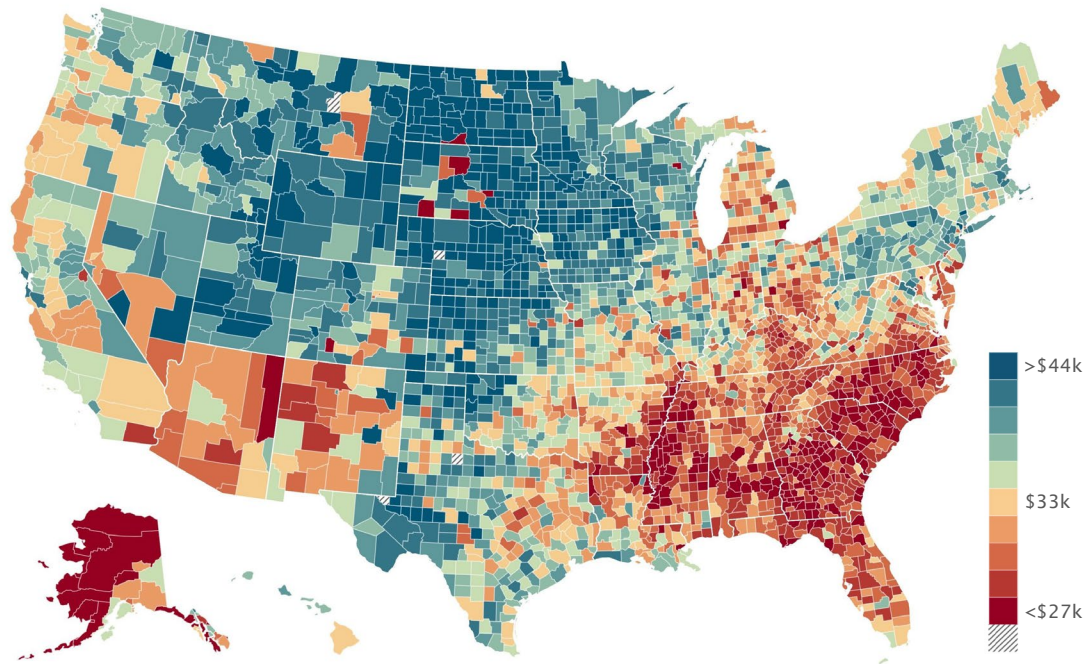
13% ↑ in college enrollment

23% ↑ in BA attainment 4 years after high school



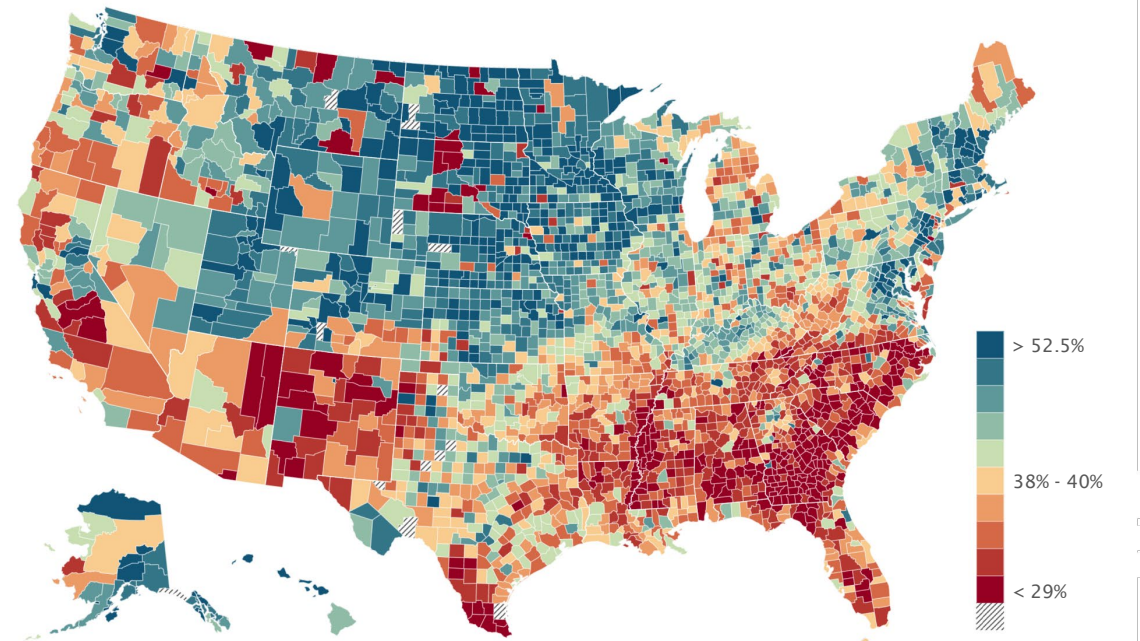
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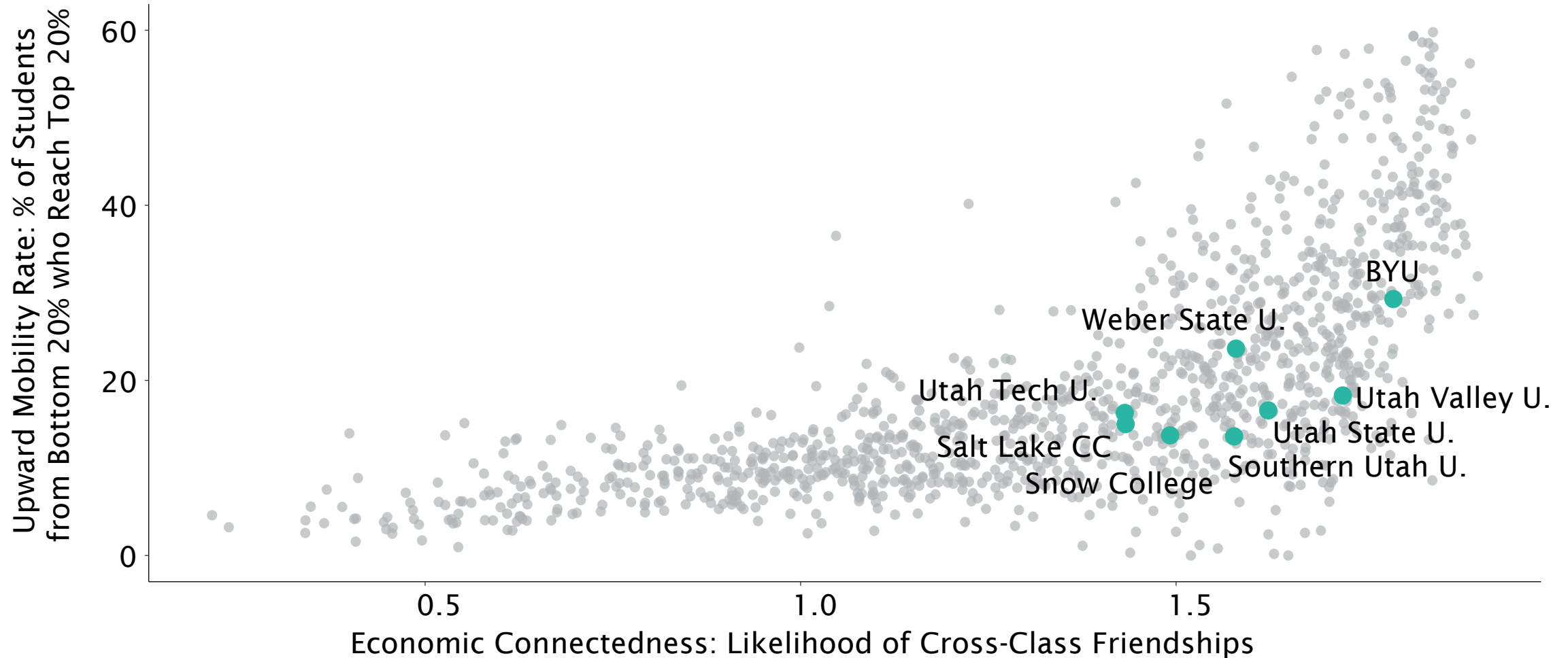


Share of Above-Median-Income Friends
among Below-Median-Income People



The Contribution of Colleges' Social Capital to Economic Mobility

Upward Mobility vs. Economic Connectedness in Utah



Source: Chetty, Friedman, Saez, Turner, Yagan (2020); Chetty, Jackson, Kuchler, Stroebel et al. (Nature 2022)



An Evidence-Based Path Forward to Increasing Social Mobility



Open question: What interventions are most effective in creating **social capital** to increase student success **on scale**?



Evaluate your interventions using **short-term proxies** for later success

- Quality of first job based on historical trajectory of those who had that job, not just earnings out of college
- Students' social network and contacts in college



Link data on interventions to tax records and other datasets to build knowledge in the field



Policy Impacts



Housing Policy at the Local and Federal Levels

Expanding families' access to high opportunity neighborhoods



Creating Moves to Opportunity

📍 *Seattle, WA*

CMTO, a pilot program in Seattle, tested strategies to help families with housing choice vouchers move to high-opportunity neighborhoods.



A Better Address Can Change a Child's Future



In Seattle, A Move Across Town Could Be A Path Out Of Poverty



Seattle may have figured out how to get more poor people into better housing



U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

HUD launches \$75M Community Choice Demonstration project in CA, LA, MN, NY, OH, PA, and TN to replicate the Seattle CMTO approach.



U.S. Congress

Bipartisan bill, Family Stability & Opportunity Vouchers Act, would add 250K vouchers (\$5B/yr) to increase stability and geographic choice for families.



Higher Education Policies

Shifting policies in college rankings, standardized testing, and admissions

 **TheUpshot**

College Rankings

Some Colleges Have More Students From the Top 1 Percent Than the Bottom 60. Find Yours.

 **U.S. News**

U.S. News updates college rankings to include emphasis on social mobility

 **The New York Times**

Standardized Testing

The Misguided War on the SAT

Test scores can be particularly helpful in identifying lower-income students who will thrive.

 **BROWN**

 **Caltech**

 **DARTMOUTH**

 **HARVARD**

 **STANFORD**

 **Yale**

Top colleges reinstate standardized test requirements for admissions

 **The New York Times**

Admissions Policies

Behind the Scenes of College Admissions

Plenty of students from modest backgrounds are qualified to attend elite colleges and would benefit from doing so.

 **Yale**

Yale College uses place-based data from Opportunity Atlas in admissions review

 **Forbes**

Admissions Policies

How The Admission Practices Of Elite Colleges Perpetuate The Advantages Of The Wealthy

 **CA**

 **VA**

 **MINNESOTA**

States pass laws banning legacy and donor preferences in admissions



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Place-Focused Investments to Improve Opportunity

Charlotte, North Carolina

The Charlotte Observer

Land of Opportunity? Not by a long shot.

“When the headline broke about the Harvard University/UC Berkeley study that ranked Charlotte-Mecklenburg 50th out of 50 in upward mobility for children born into our lowest income quintile, many in our community responded with disbelief. How, on the one hand, can we be such a vital and opportunity-rich community, and on the other, be ranked dead last in the odds that our lowest income children and youth will be able to move up the economic ladder as they become adults?”



PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION

\$160M corporate investment in local workforce development



Mayor's initiative raises \$250M to boost opportunity in Charlotte

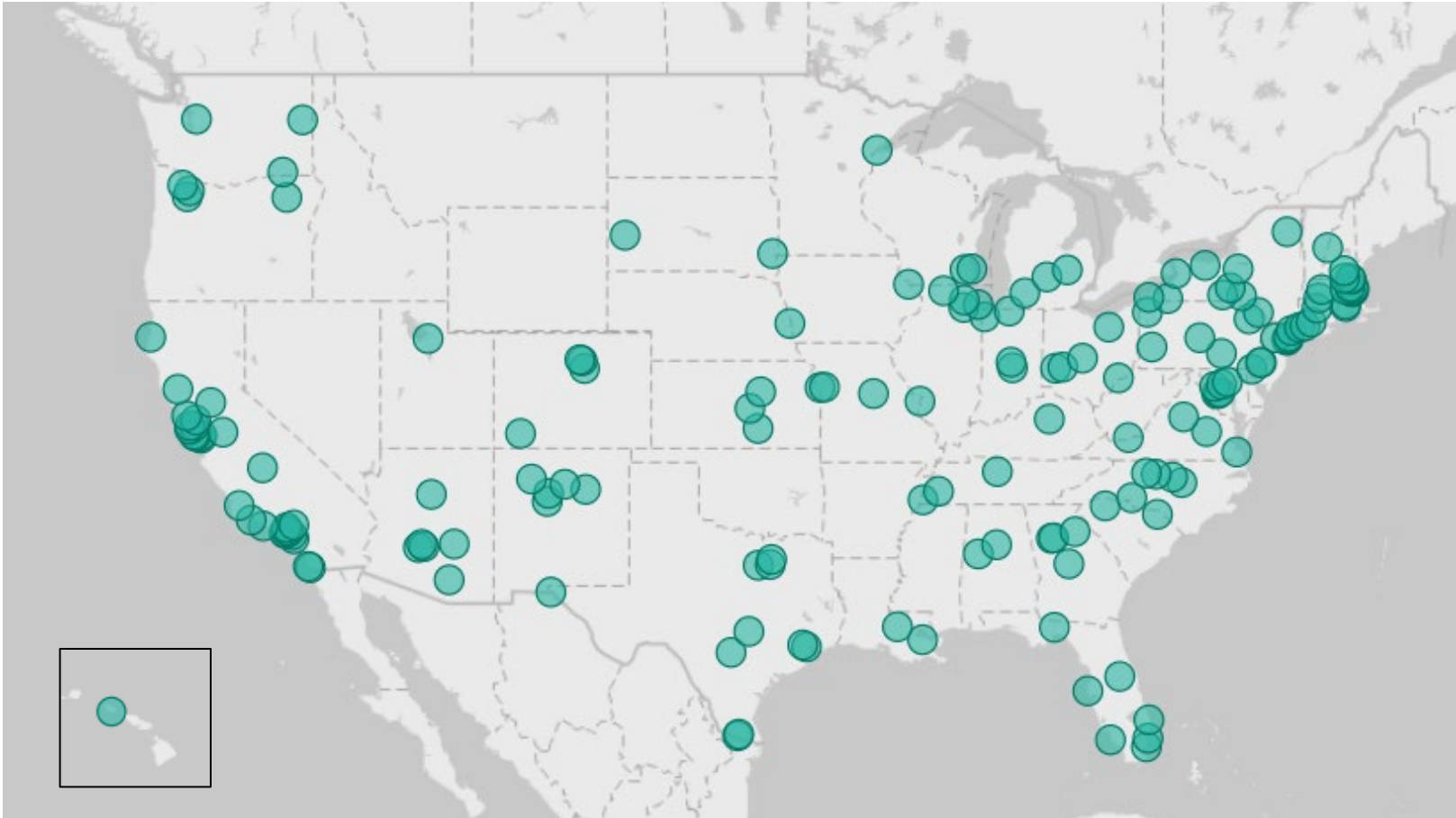


A local data tool developed to monitor opportunity indicators for >100 area nonprofits



Using Data Science to Improve Economic Opportunity Across America

Communities Where Opportunity Insights Worked with Local Stakeholders in 2024



In 2024, Opportunity Insights engaged with 313 organizations across **179 cities** in **41 states**



Takeaways for Increasing Opportunity Going Forward

Focus on Childhood Environment



Provide opportunity-rich environments from birth to adulthood

Social Communities as Unit of Change



Target communities that have historically lacked opportunity

Invest in Social Capital



Connect those who don't have opportunity to those who do





From Jasmine, 7 years old, whose family moved to a high-opportunity area in Seattle in the Creating Moves to Opportunity study



Research studies and summaries
www.opportunityinsights.org



Explore your community's data
Opportunity Atlas: www.opportunityatlas.org
Social Capital Atlas: www.socialcapital.org



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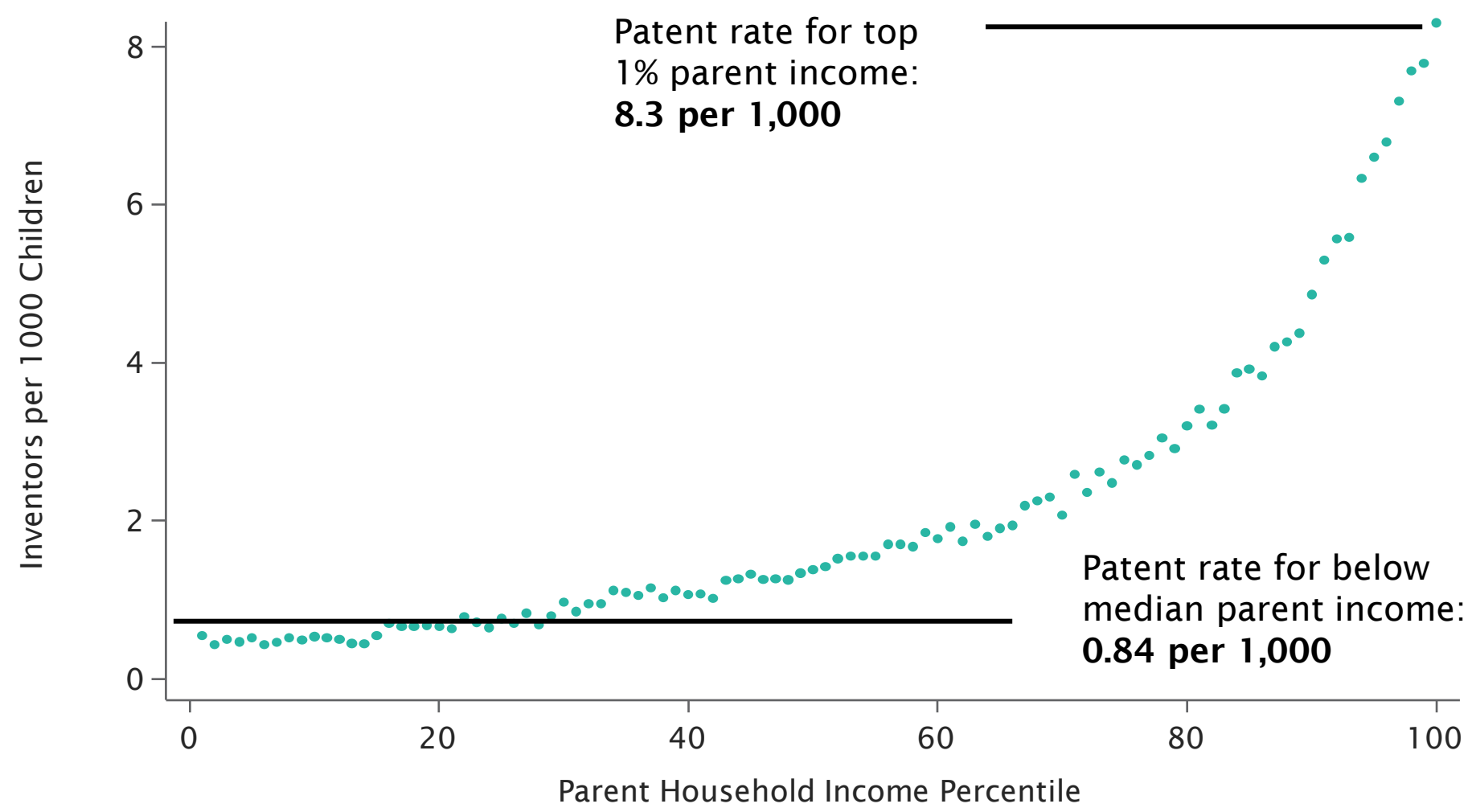


Questions?
info@opportunityinsights.org



HARVARD
UNIVERSITY

Patent Rates vs. Parent Income

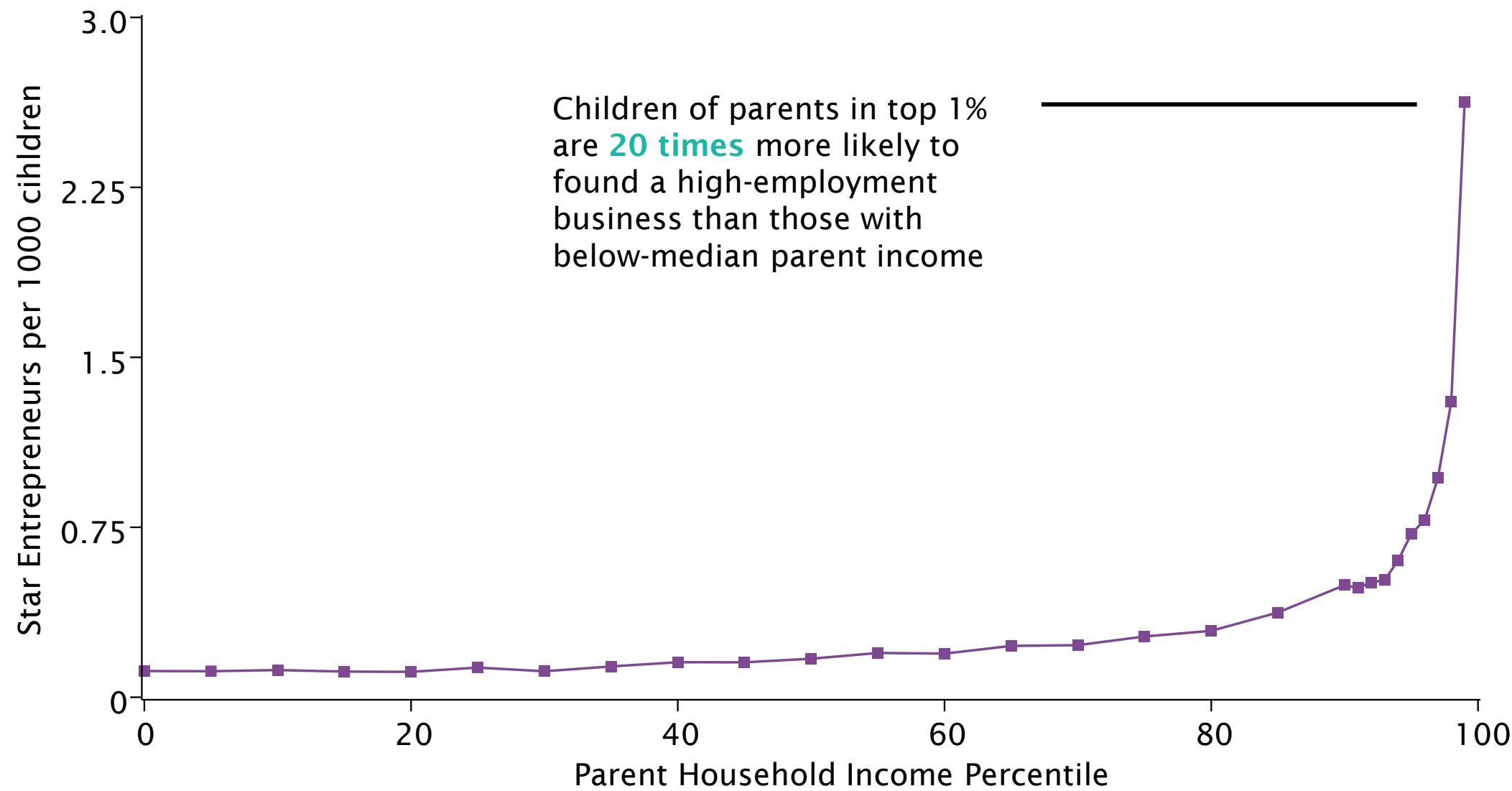


Source: Bell, Chetty, Jaravel, Petkova, van Reenen (QJE 2020)



Entrepreneurship Rates by Parental Income

Share of Individuals who Found High-Revenue, High-Employment Businesses



Source: Chetty, Dossi, Smith, van Reenen, Zidar, Zwick (forthcoming 2025)



Lost Einsteins

4x

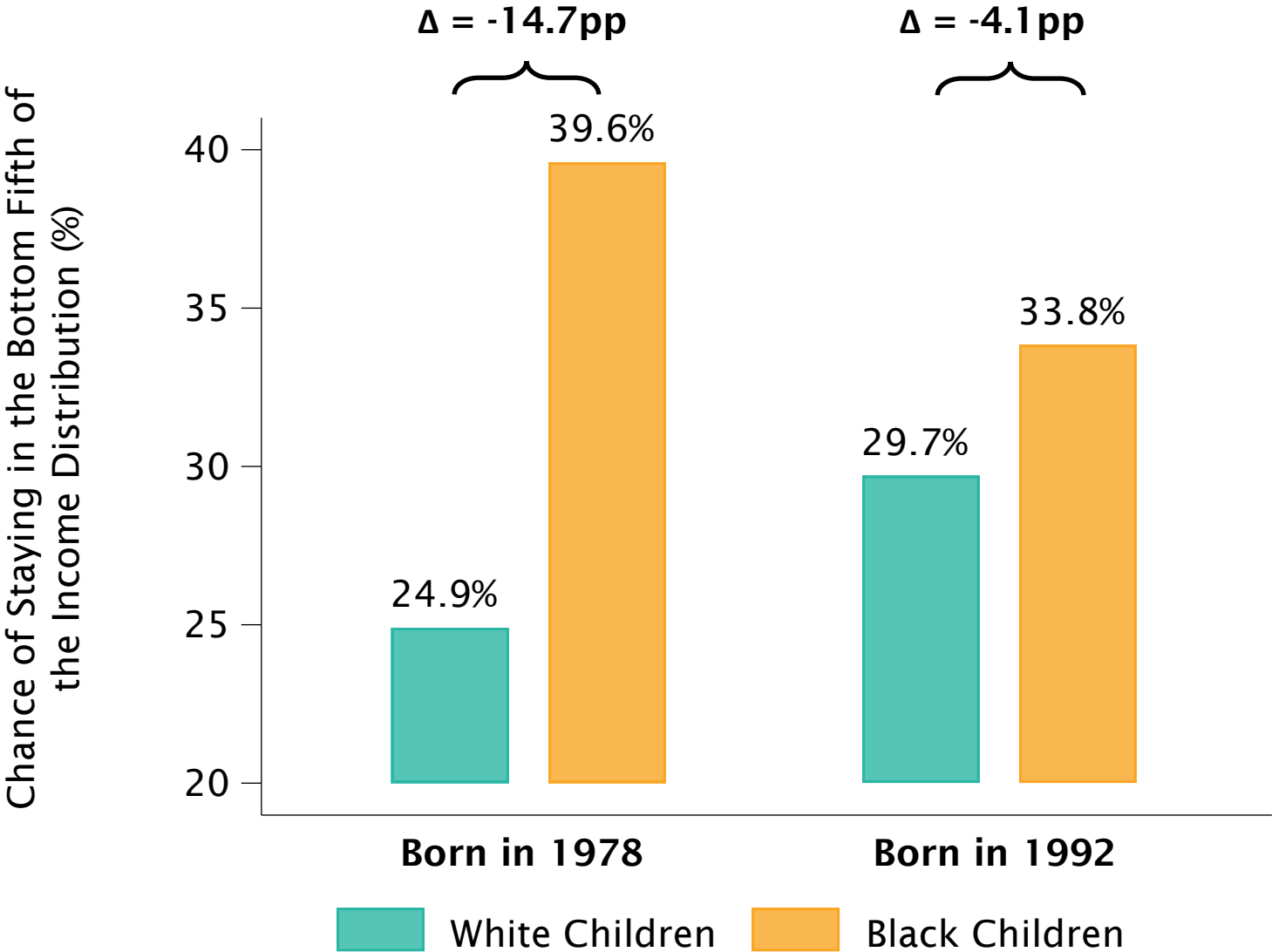


If women, minorities, and children from low-income families invent at the same rate as high-income white men, the innovation rate in America would **quadruple**



Persistence of Poverty Across Generations Has Changed Substantially

Fraction of Children with Parents in Bottom Fifth who Remain in Bottom Fifth as Adults



But Chances of Reaching the Top Fifth Have Not Changed Much

Fraction of Children with Parents in Bottom Fifth who Rise to Top Fifth in Adulthood

