

The bright & dark sides of social capital

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Social capital =
social networks have value



To enable individuals and families to make use of the opportunities present, they need **MENTORING**: Someone to show the way.

Mentors are significant **non-parental** figures...

“Sounding boards” (Rhodes et al., 2002)

“Possible selves” (Markus & Nurius, 1986)

“Opening doors” (Darling et. al., 2002)

“I believe in you” (Jones, 2022)

Mentors can be:

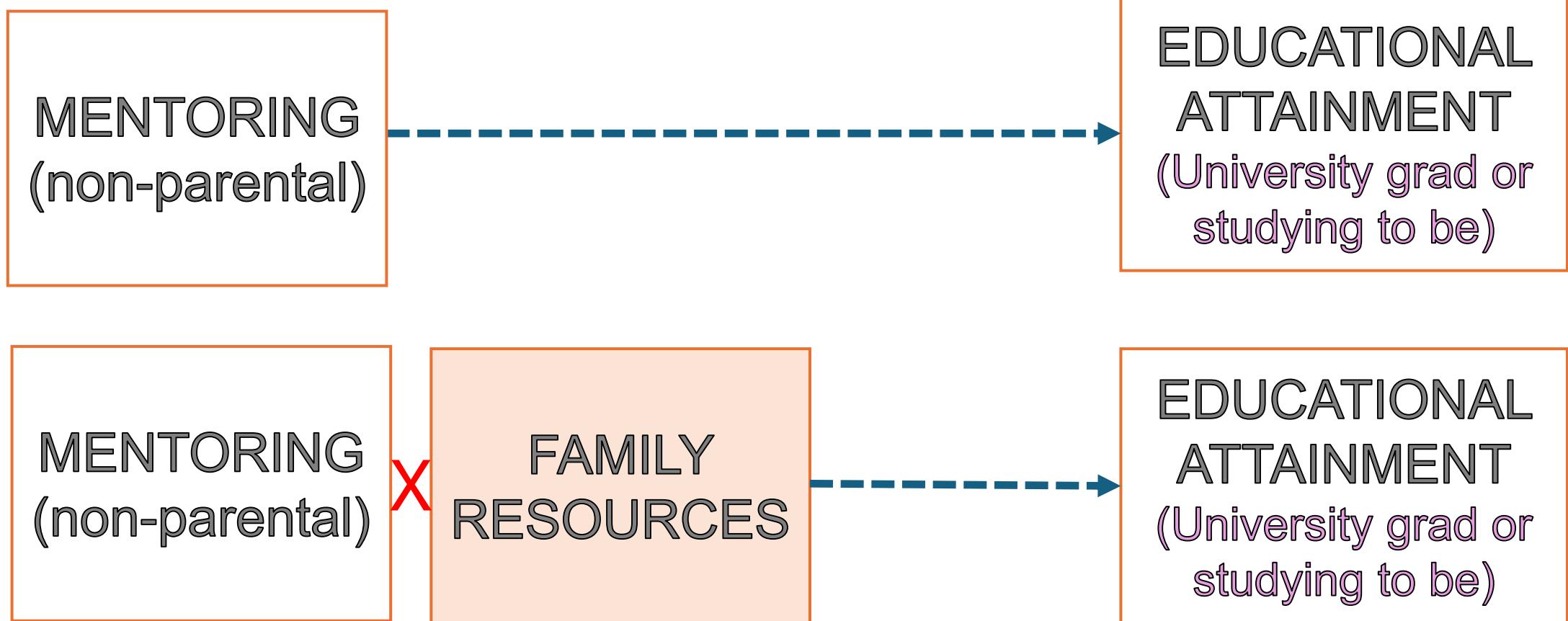
Relatives (**not parents**) (Kornhaber & Woodward, 2019),
Friends (Crosnoe & Johnson, 2011),
Teachers (Stephanou & Doulkeridou, 2020),
and/or Others (Gardner, 2004).

- All social relationships qualify as social mixing because no two individuals are ever alike (***Simmel, The Web of Group Affiliations, 1955***).
- The question then is: ***which are the lines that matter most?***
 - **Class social mixing** is key (Chetty et al., 2022).
 - ...**Class social mixing spreads resources around, benefiting low SES groups/individuals in particular** (also see Lin and Dumin 1986).

- **Mentoring** has the potential to bring people from different SES backgrounds together. It is a form of **social mixing** that helps build **social capital** and reduce differences in economic, cultural, and social resources (Stanton-Salazar, 2001).

- ***Bridging the Gap: GenZ, Social Mixing and Social Equity in Singapore***
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- **Nilanjan Raghunath (PI)**, Singapore University of Technology and Design, **Vincent Chua (co-PI)**, NUS
- **Survey of N=474**
- **Data collected Jan-April 2024**





We **measure “family resources” using household income**. But in order to capture the **income of the parents**, we minus away respondent’s own income, spouse’s income (if married), and we control for the number of siblings in the household.

Compare families

Target group: The survey interviewed young people (18-25) who live in 1-3 room HDB flats. Some own their flats, some rent their flats.

Comparison group: Includes youth from better resourced households (HH income) for comparison (e.g., a respondent who lives in a 3-room flat but with higher income (e.g., >10,000 SGD per month).

FINDINGS

“Has an adult, other than your parents or stepparents, made an important positive difference in your life at any time since you were 14 years old?”

- **Overall, 68% of respondents reported having such a mentor.**

Subsequently, respondents were asked to name their one most significant mentor:

Relatives (non-parents) = 26%
Friends = 18%
Teachers = 17%
Others = 7%

@48% university graduates (or currently studying in university)

FIGURE 1: OWNERSHIP, FLAT TYPE, STIGMATISATION DUE TO FINANCIAL SITUATION

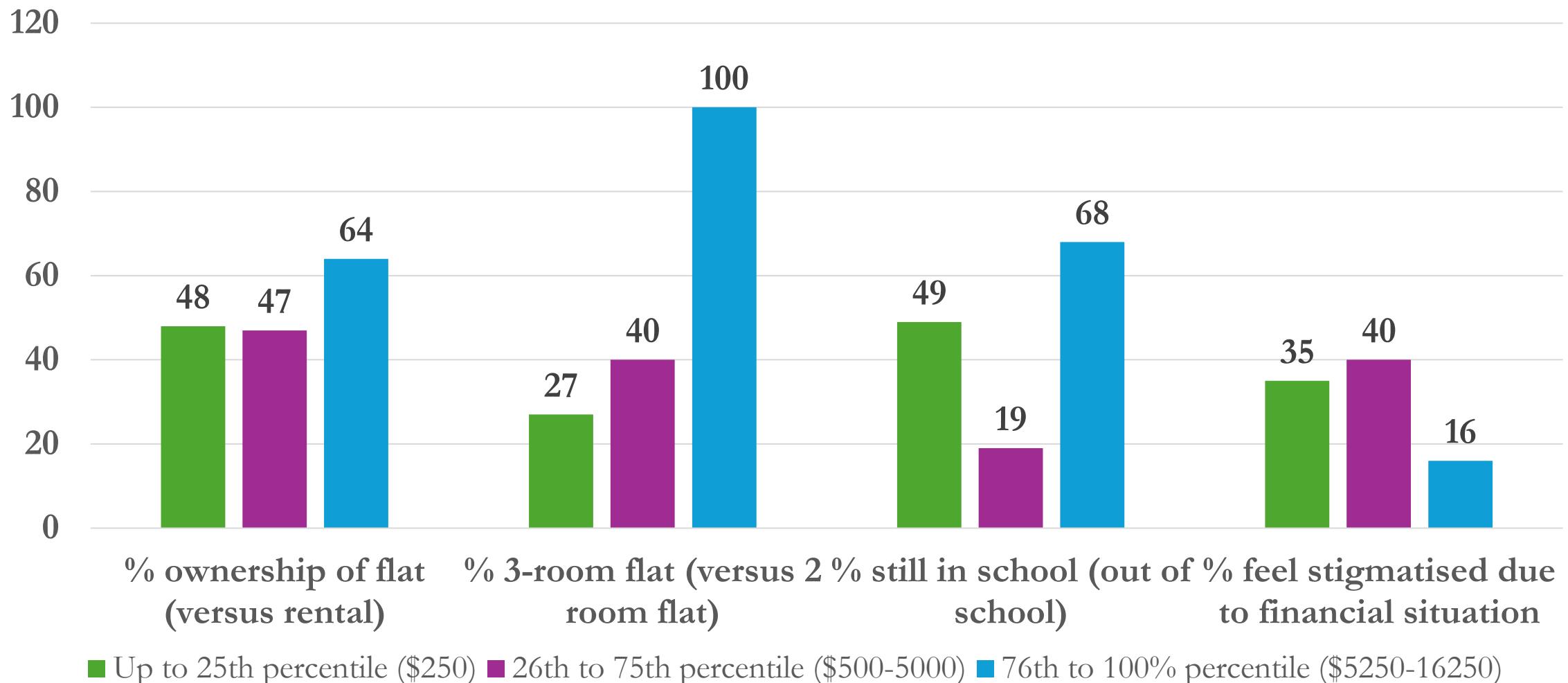


FIGURE 2: PARENTAL PRESENCE AND WARMTH

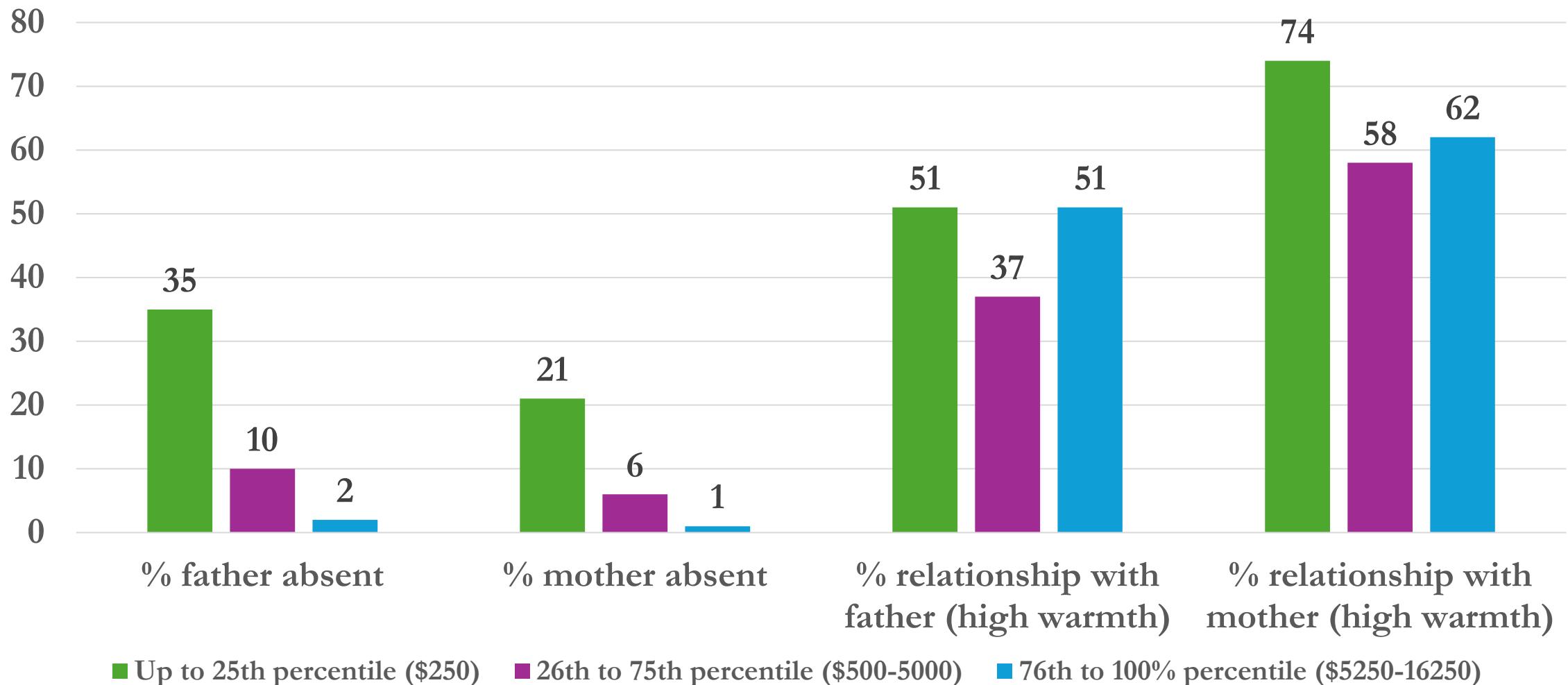


FIGURE 3: PARENTAL EDUCATION AND PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS

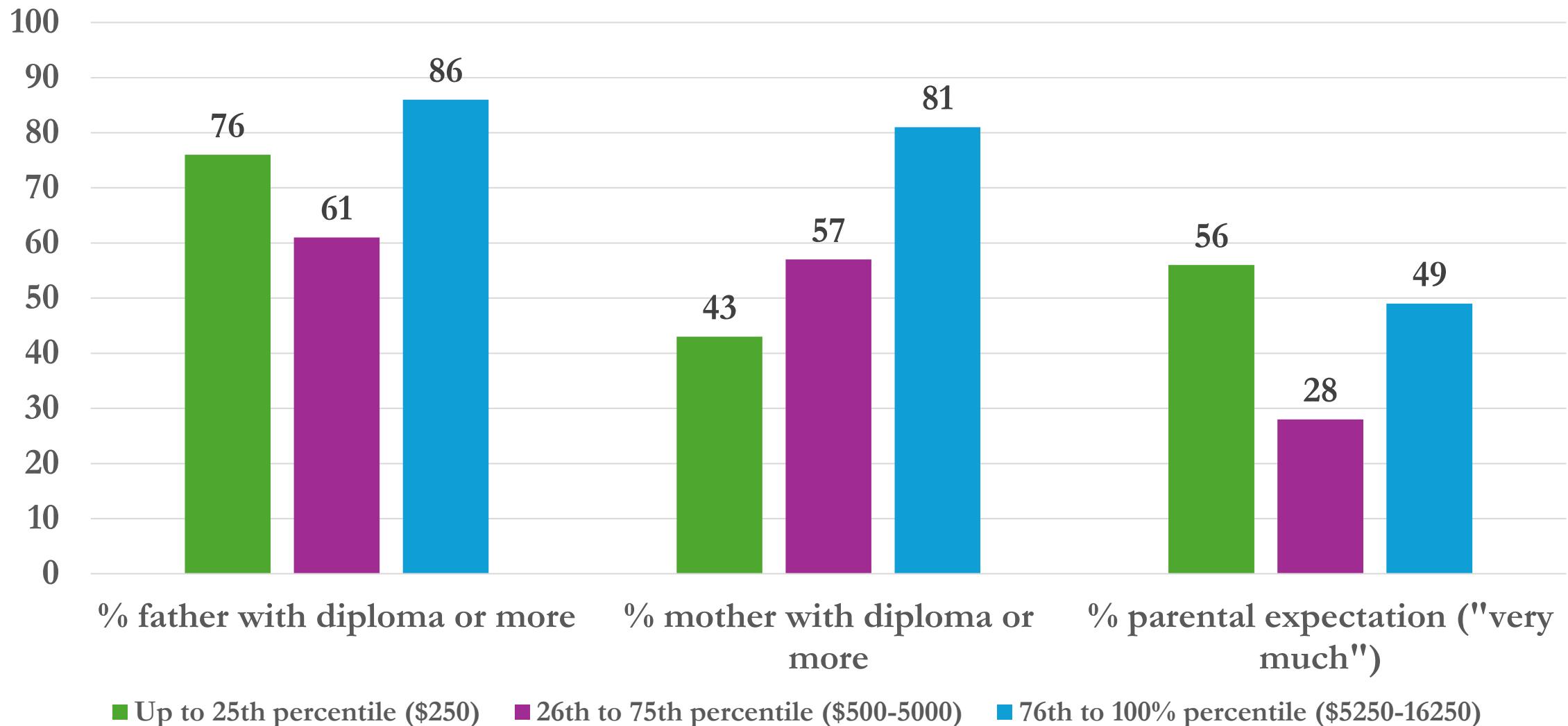
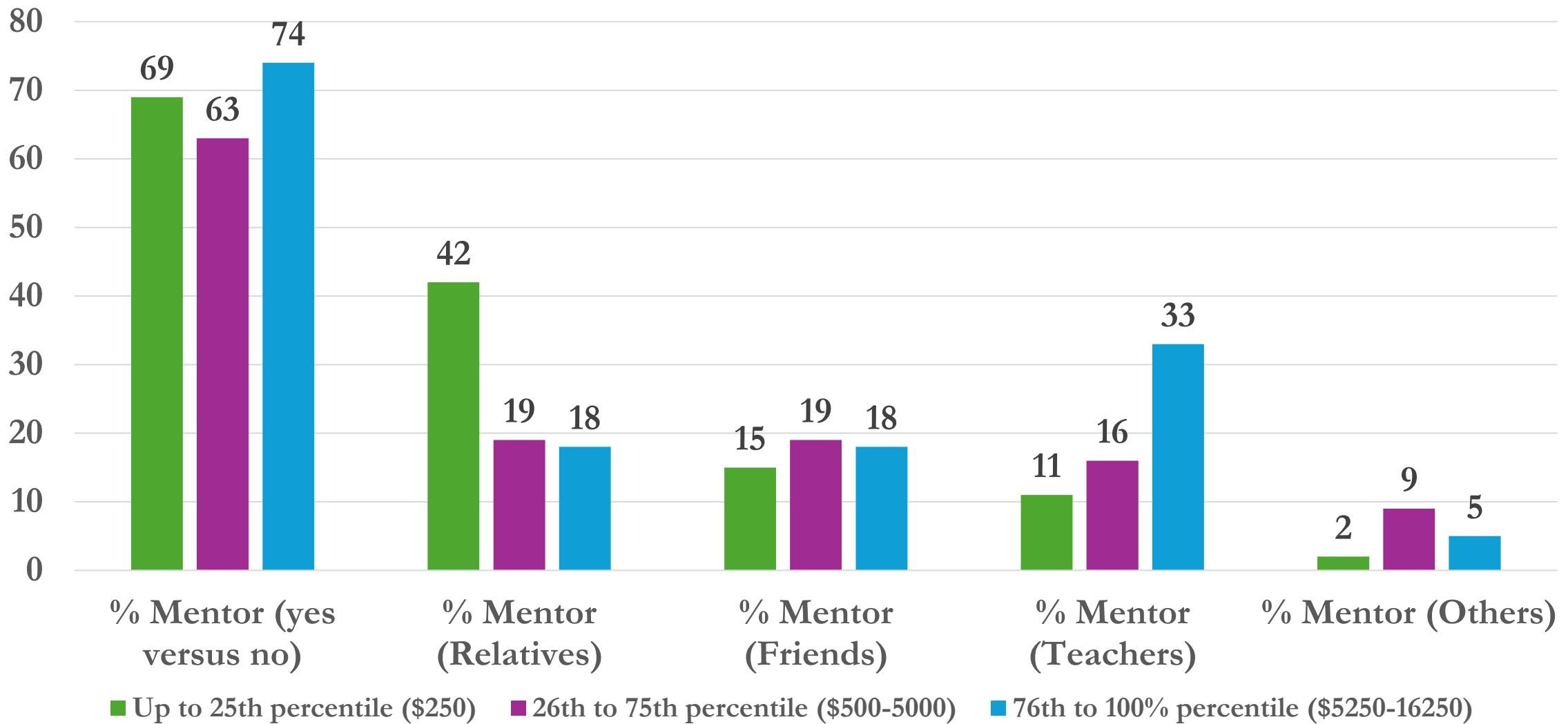
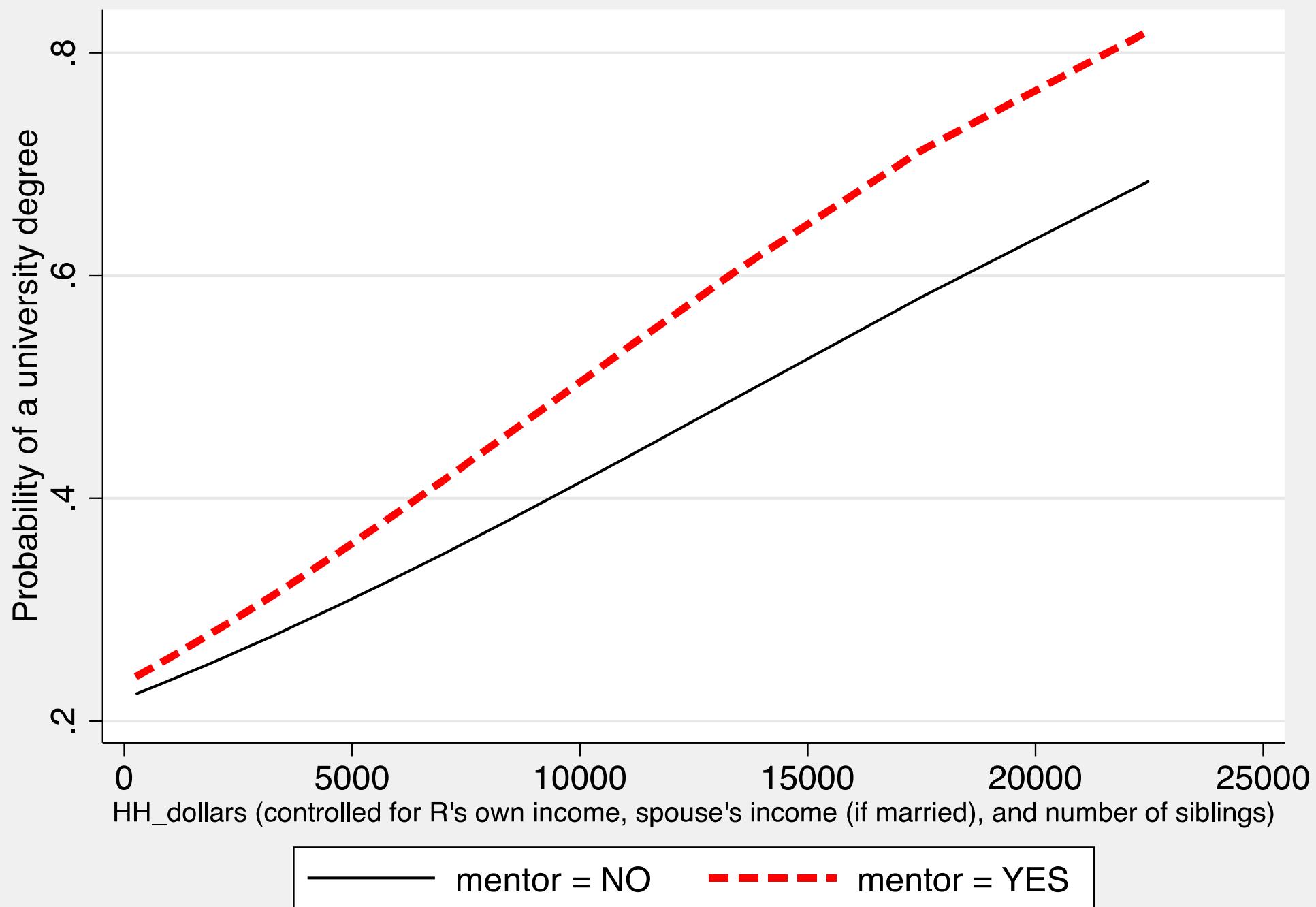


FIGURE 4: MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS





FAMILY RESOURCE	LOWER SES	MIDDLE SES	HIGHER SES
Mentor - Relatives	.16	.17	.47
Mentor - Friends	.46	.47	.66
Mentor - Teachers	.12	.13	.49
Mentor - Others	.45	.45	.44
Mentor - None	.24	.25	.42

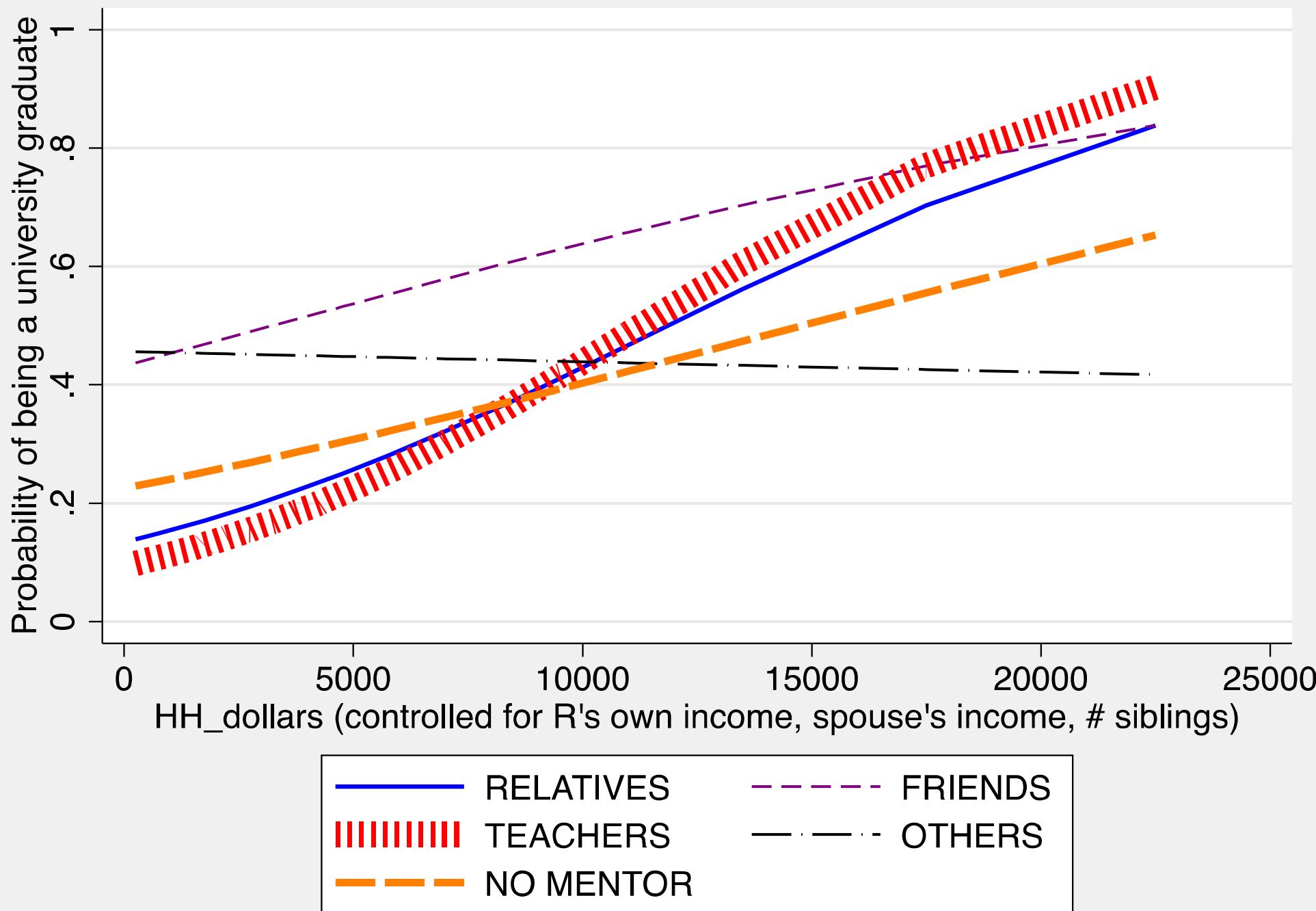
The numbers indicate the probability of being a university graduate (or currently in university).

The likelihood of university degree increases with family SES.

However, the jump in probability (at higher levels of family SES) is esp. greater with teacher mentors.

Interaction term tested (Mentor: Teacher X HH Income), p=.023 (significant).

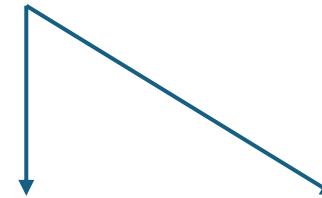
The positive impact of teacher mentors are amplified in wealthier households



Kim and Schneider's (2005) **theory of aligned ambition and actions** illustrates how parents leverage external information and resources to help their children achieve specific goals, such as university admission.

SOCIAL CAPITAL

**“THE CORE IDEA OF
SOCIAL CAPITAL IS THAT
SOCIAL NETWORKS
HAVE **VALUE**”
(PUTNAM 2000)**



**It is precisely because
capital is valuable, that it
becomes subject to
competition,
“opportunity hoarding”
(CHARLES TILLY 1998),
which translates into
social ties being a
potential source of the
reproduction of
advantages and
disadvantages (NAN LIN
2000)**

Policy-wise, the results underscore the importance of channeling more towards the bottom, in order to combat the effects of compounding capitals (at the top).

Three basic human needs

Resource
Relationship
Respect

