



# **MEASURING SOCIAL PROGRESS**

PRESENTATION *to* HAMILTON CITY COUNCIL

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# The importance of social progress indicators



The Salvation Army publishes a State of the Nation report every February – this is based on 23 indicators across five policy areas



In August 2015 The Army publishes *Mixed Fortunes* which presented a range of data on regional disparities





# The importance of social progress indicators



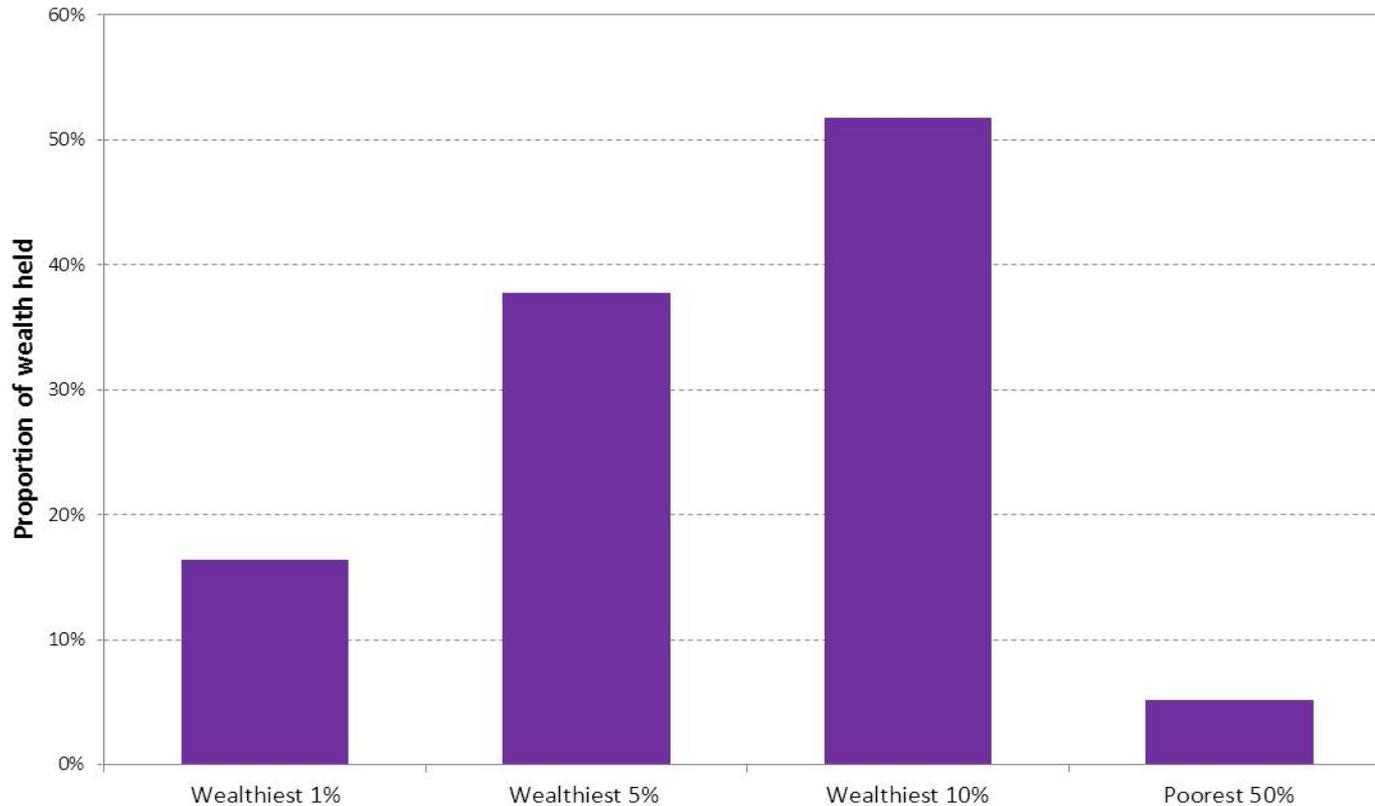
The choice of which indicators to use and the way in which indicators can be aggregated to present a total picture is contentious. By any account New Zealand still features well in international comparisons.

SOURCE: Social Progress Imperative at <http://www.socialprogressimperative.org/>



## But distribution is important

### DISTRIBUTION of WEALTH in NEW ZEALAND - 2003

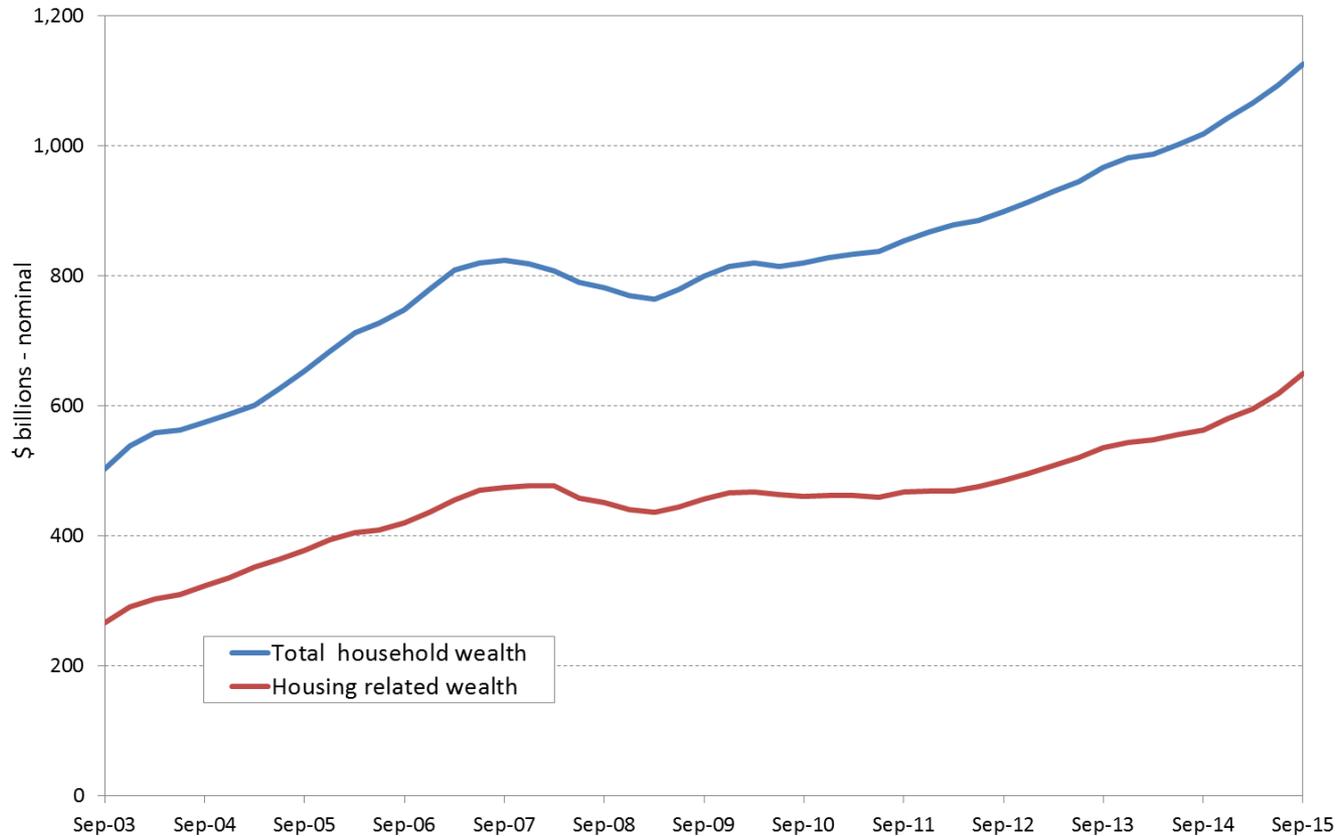


In 2003 one percentage of adult New Zealanders owned 16% of the wealth while the poorest 50% of adults owned less than 5% of this wealth



# But distribution is important

## GROWTH in WEALTH – 2003 to 2015

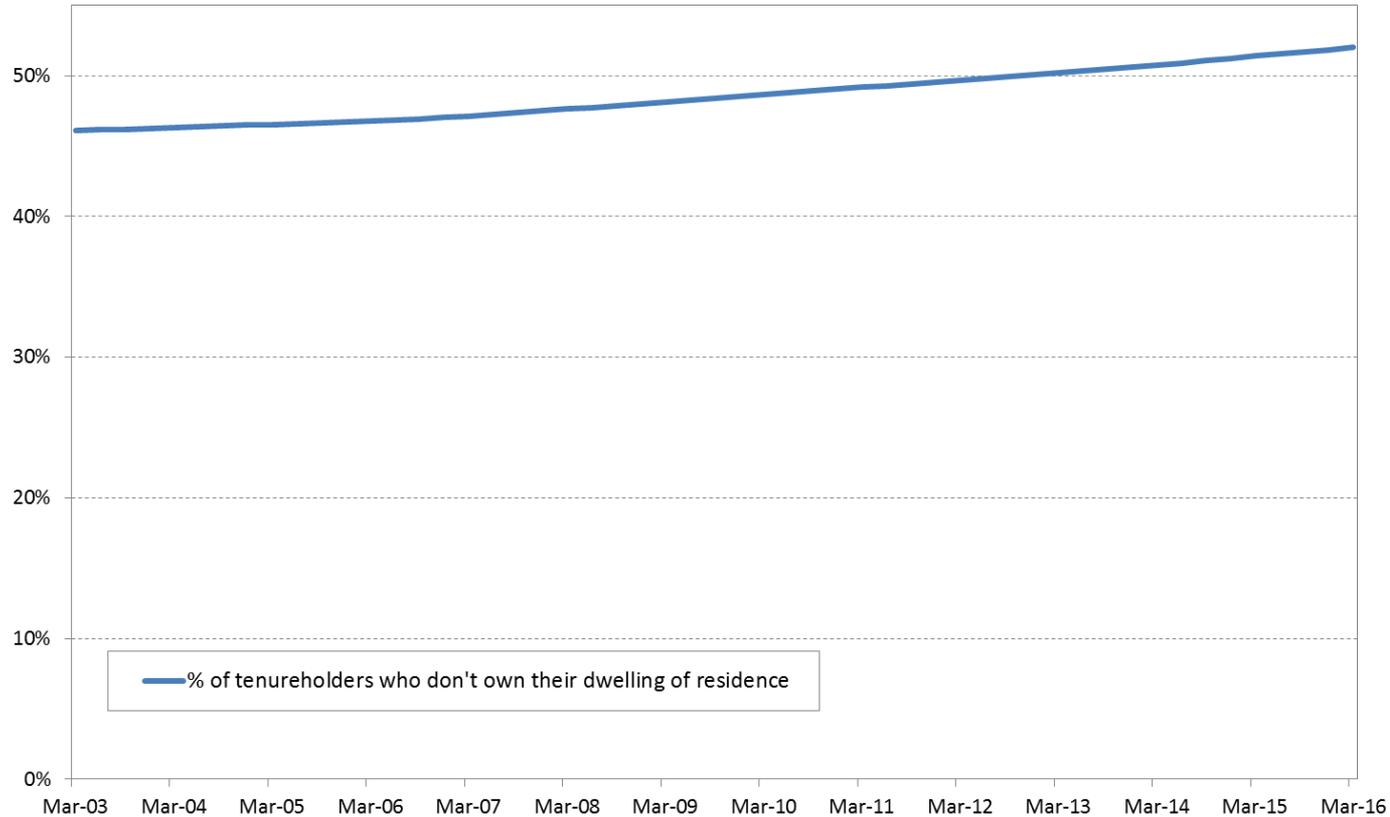


Between 2003 and 2015 total household wealth grew 125% in nominal terms – 60% of this increase was in housing related wealth



## But distribution is important

### DECLINE in HOMEOWNERSHIP – 2003 to 2016



Between 2003 and 2016 the proportion of adults not owning their home rose from 46% to 52% - this is around 1.7 million adult New Zealanders

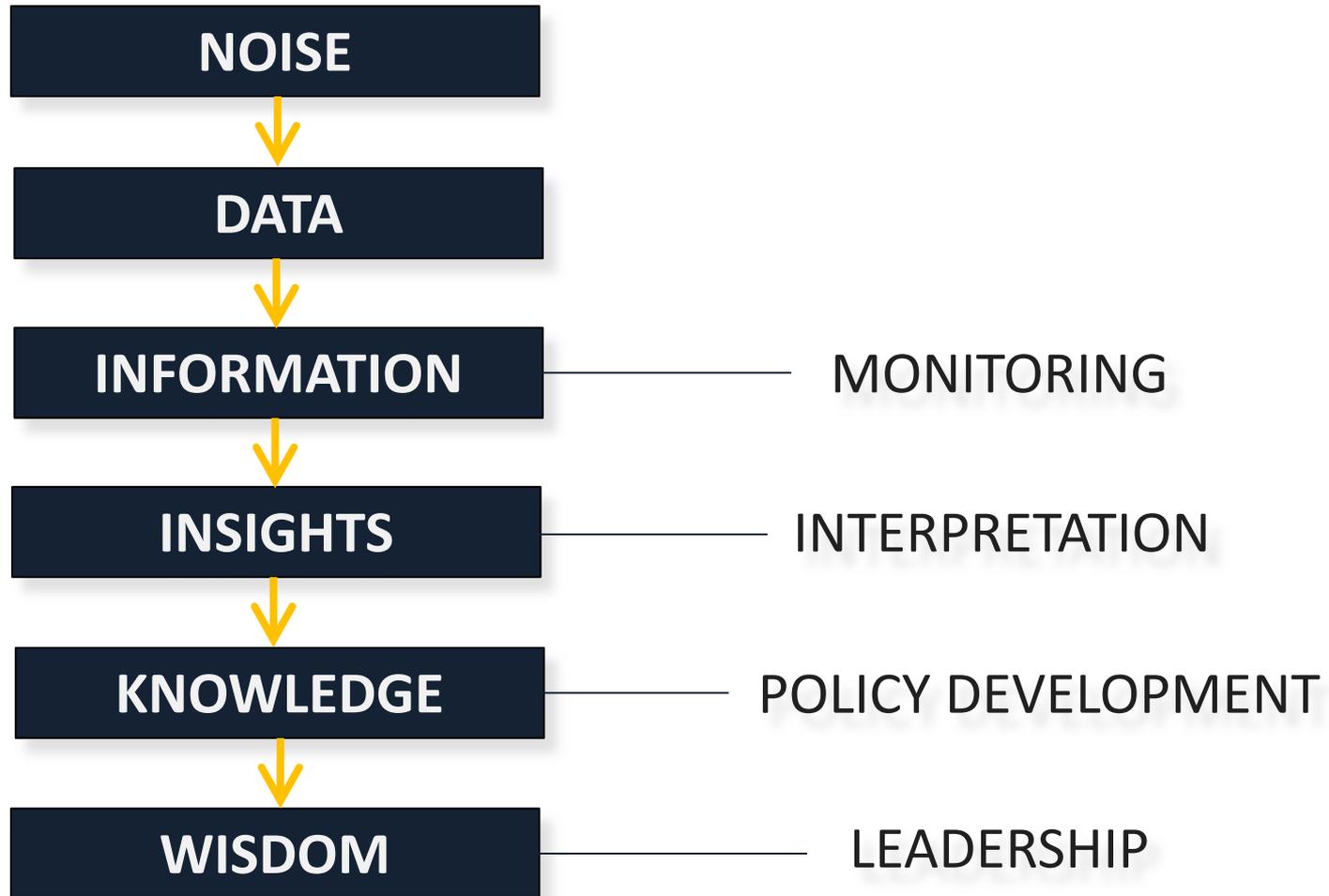
## The ubiquity of data



SHARE MARKET INDICES ON BUILDING ON WELLINGTON WATERFRONT

Data on economic trends is everywhere – almost in real time. This creates the impression of importance even though much of the data is noise and of little relevance to the real economy

## The ubiquity of data



To some extent policy and politics are about filtering out the important questions from the background noise



# A framework for monitoring social progress

## SOME KEY FEATURES of a MONITORING FRAMEWORK

### RELIABLE + CREDIBLE

The information offered has to come from trusted sources & the picture presented has to be believable

### RELEVANT + COMPREHENSIBLE

The picture presented has to talk to the concerns of a relevant audience & should be easily understandable to that audience

### REGULAR + CRITICAL

The information should be offered on a regular & recurring basis and provide opportunities for insight



# A framework for measuring social progress

## CHOOSING an APPROPRIATE TIMEFRAME

### DATA AVAILABILITY

Think about how regularly the data is made available – it may be necessary to have several layers to the framework based on availability

### IMMEDIACY

Data or information which is unduly delayed can lack immediacy – ‘things have changed since then’

### HASTA MÃNANA

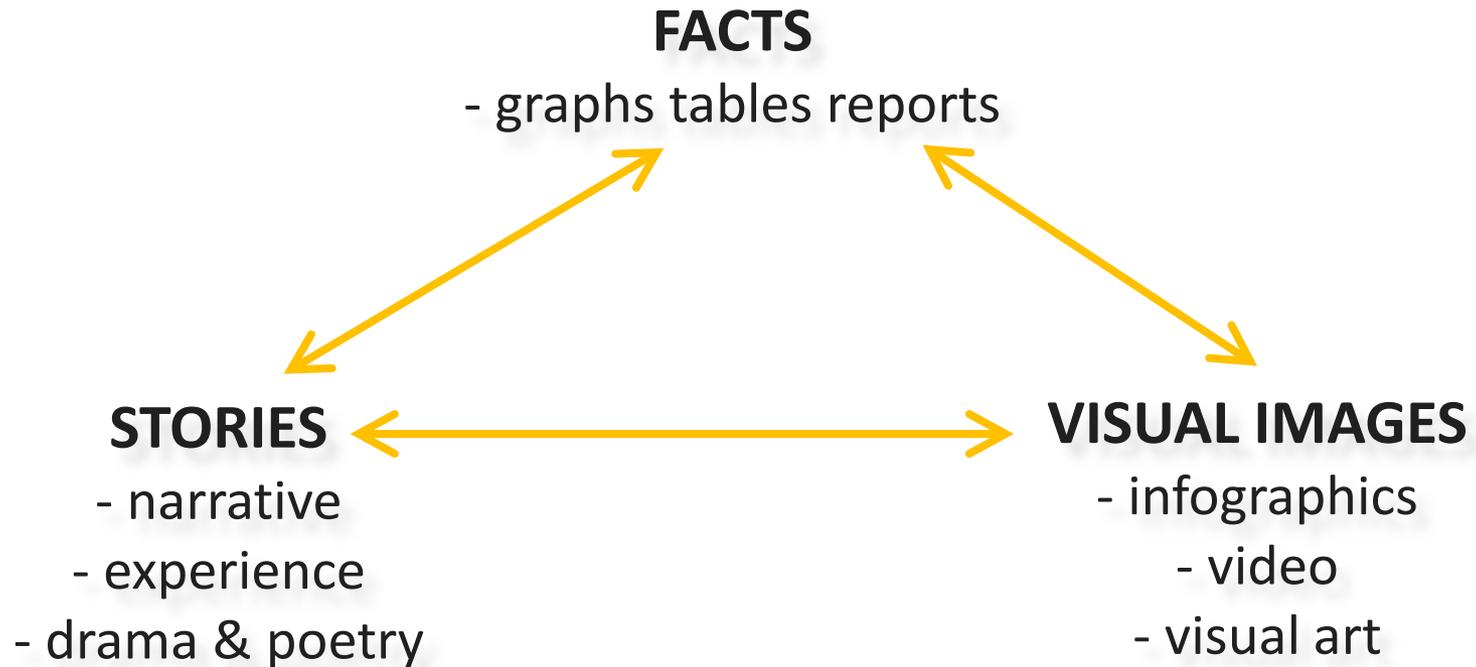
Long-term data especially forecast data can breed an indifference amongst policy makers – the seduction of hasta mÃnana



# A framework for measuring social progress

## CHOOSING an APPROPRIATE FORMAT

### HOW DO WE CREATE OUR WORLD VIEW?



## ART and CHANGING WORLD VIEWS

### GUERNICA

Painted by Pablo Picasso in 1937 to represent the bombing of a Basque village by German aircraft – brought world attention to the Spanish Civil War



### BANKSY

an anonymous British street artist who offers satirical social and political commentary





# A framework for measuring social progress

## CHOOSING an APPROPRIATE FORMAT for HAMITON

### WELL-BEING INDICATORS

- current work-stream based on a variety of data sources & time scales
- local focus
- perhaps an annual publication cycle

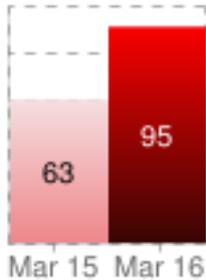
### POVERTY MONITORING

- perhaps undertaken by credible outside part(ies) & seen as a collaborative exercise between Council & civil society

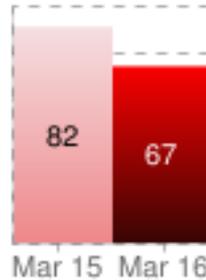
### SNAPSHOT REPORTS

- Briefer more regular (quarterly) reports which presents more 'immediate data' to a wider audience

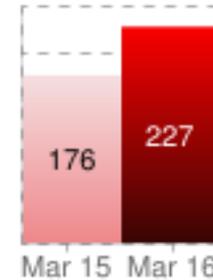
## AN EXAMPLE of 'IMMEDIATE DATA'



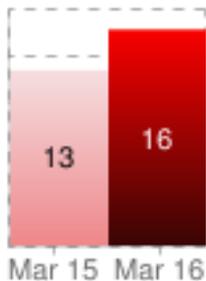
Public place assaults



Assaults resulting  
in serious injury



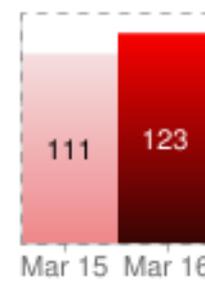
Dwelling assaults



Robbery



Burglary

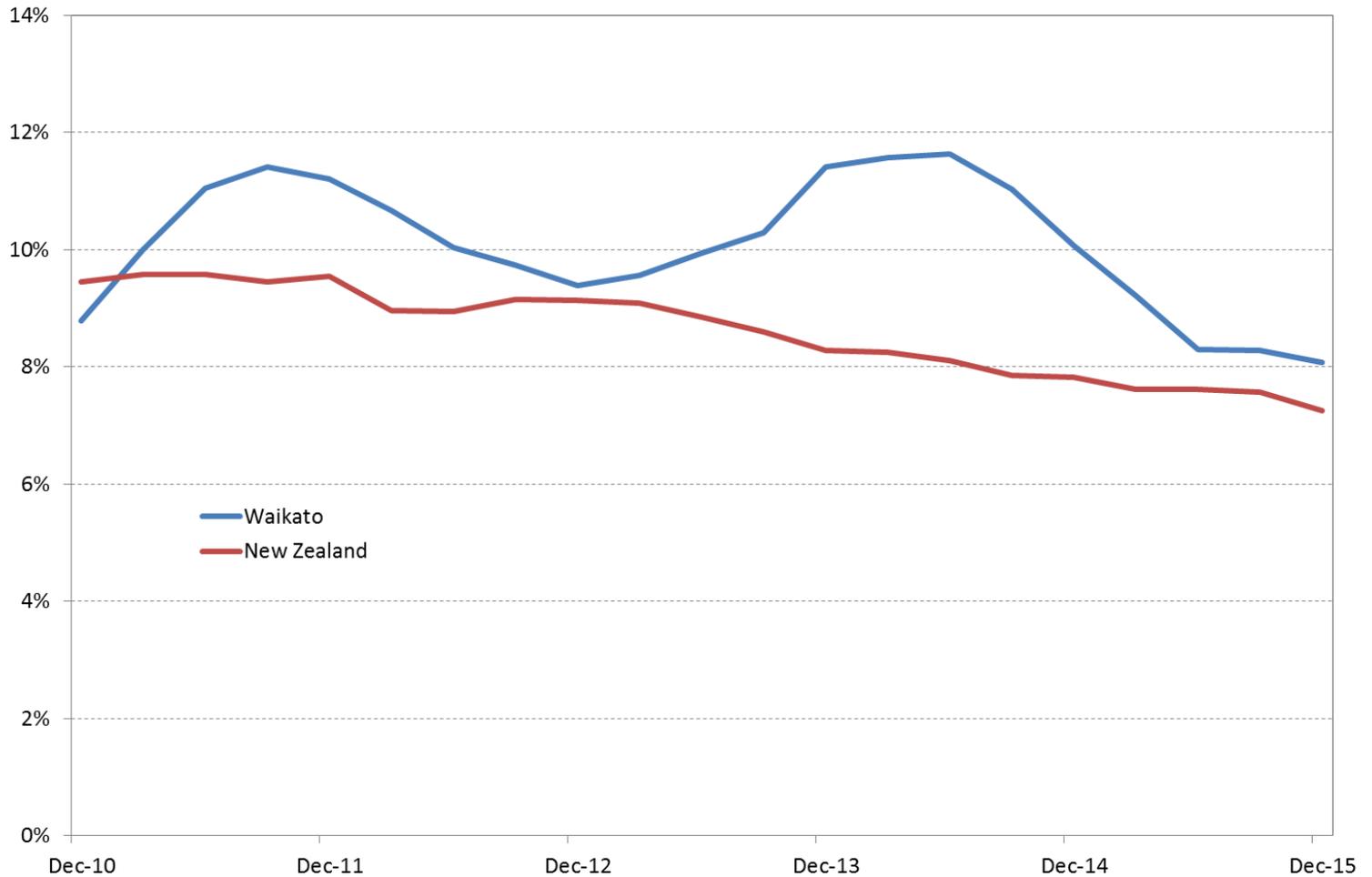


Vehicles stolen

**MONTHLY REPORTING by POLICE for WAIKATO POLICE DISTRICT**

# ANOTHER EXAMPLE of 'IMMEDIATE DATA'

## NEET RATES FOR 15 to 19 YEAR OLDS





# The sum of the parts

## INTERCONNECTEDNESS



Be wary of being too local

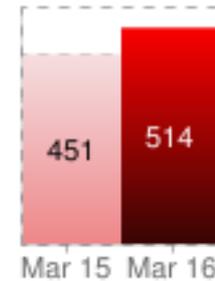
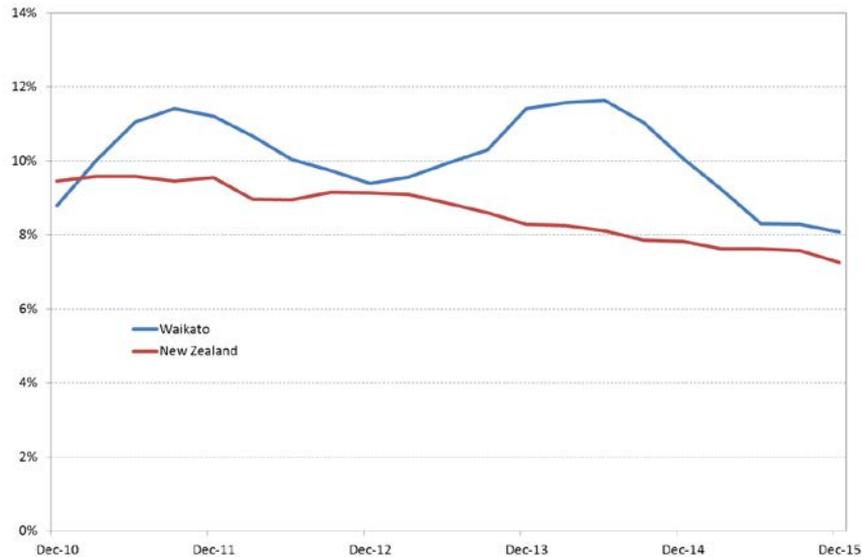
- boundaries: especially administrative boundaries are often not that relevant to social outcomes



# The sum of the parts

## INTERCONNECTEDNESS

### NEET RATES FOR 15 to 19 YEAR OLDS



Burglary

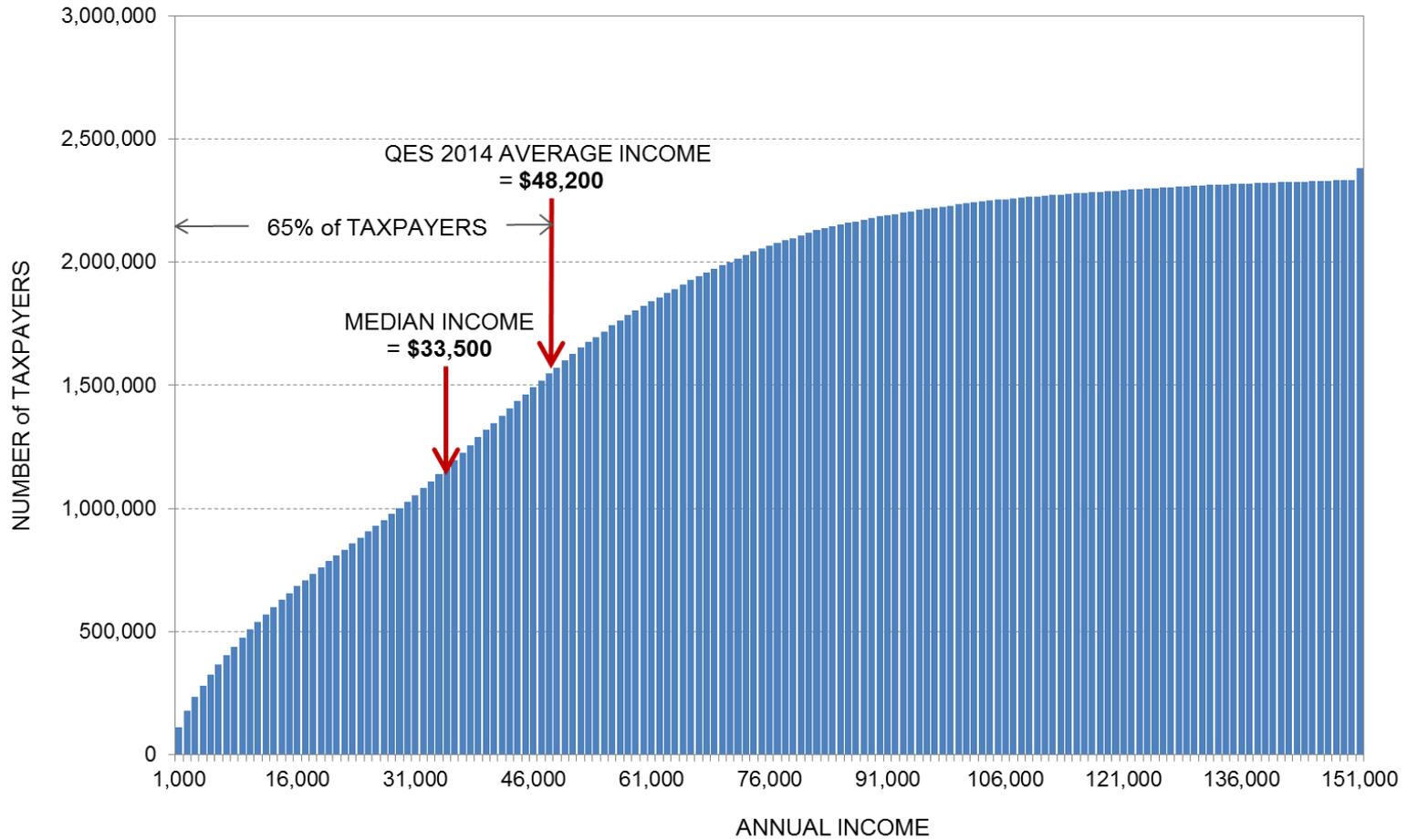
Insights might be gained by seeing connections between outcomes but often the connections are not apparent or when found not easily explained



# The sum of the parts

## DISTRIBUTIONS

Cumulative count of wage & salary earners by taxable income - 2014

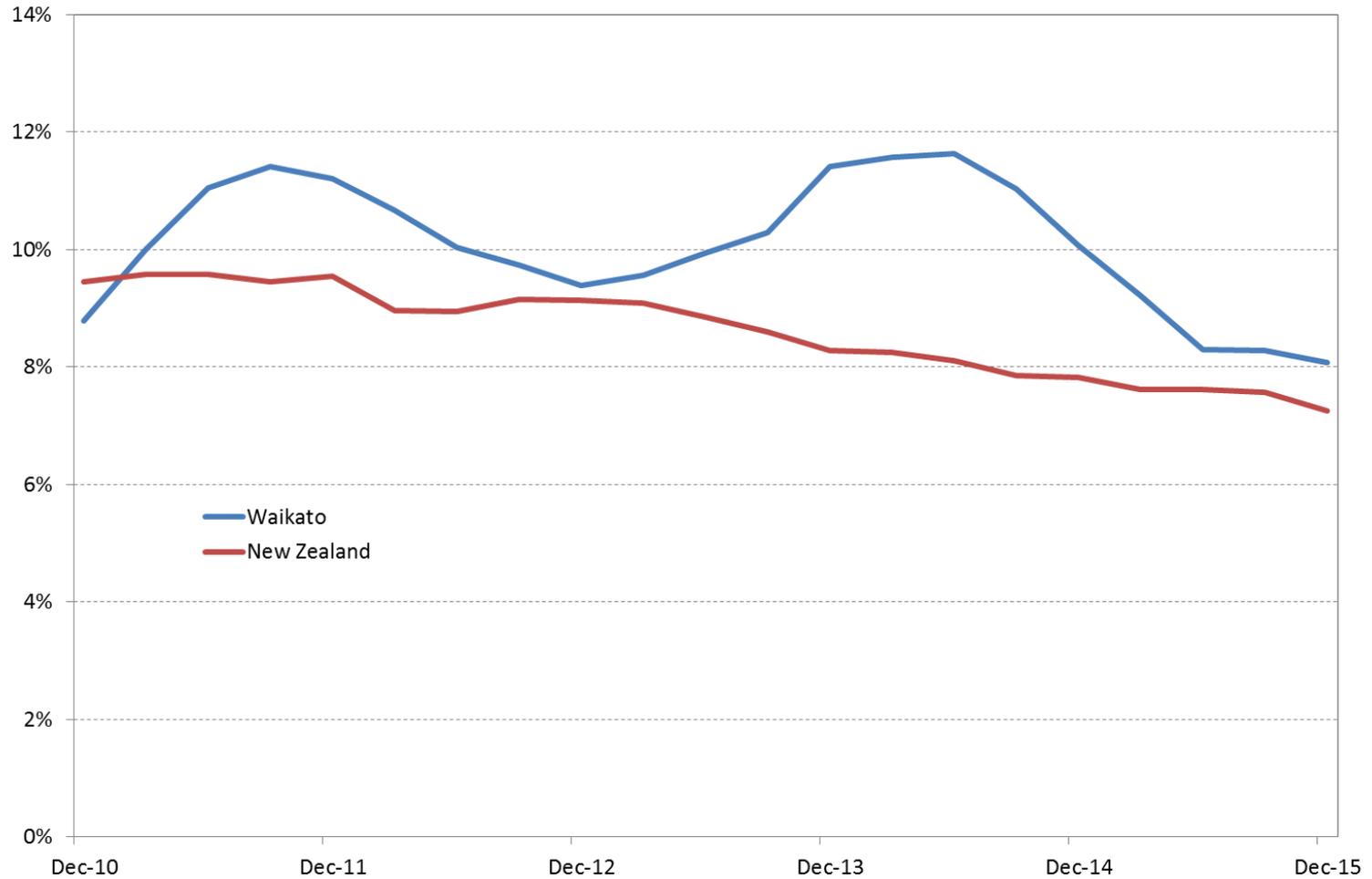


Averages can often tell us very little about the experiences of people which we may see as typical citizens



# The sum of the parts

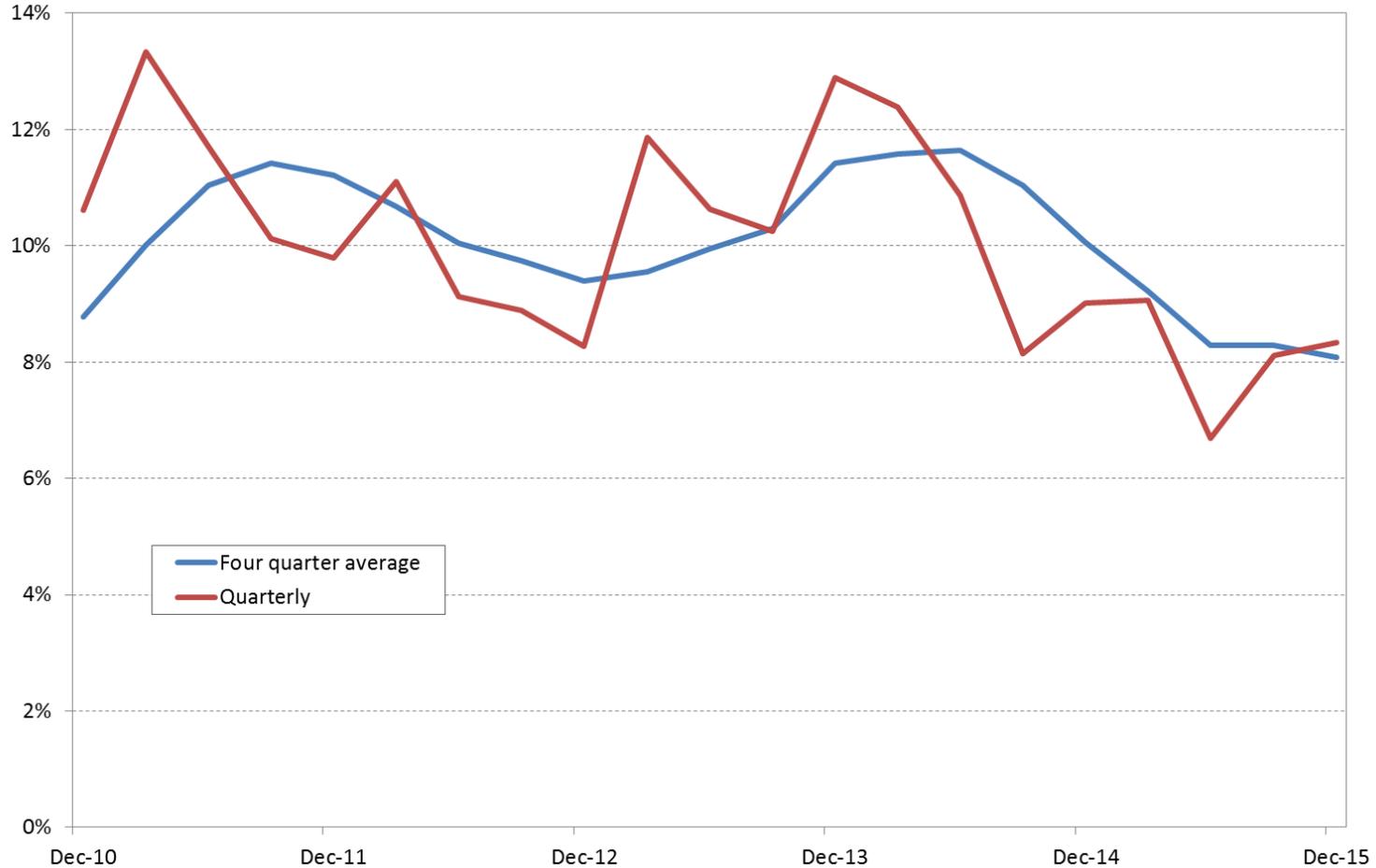
## SOUND from NOISE





# The sum of the parts

## SOUND from NOISE



Because of relatively small sample sizes local data can be volatile so don't be too distracted by changes over short timeframes

## BEWARE of TRUTHINESS

Truthiness, according to the American comedian Stephen Colbert, who coined the word in a pilot episode of his hit TV show back in 2005, is 'the truth that you feel in your gut regardless of what the facts support'.



'I just don't feel that we need to trawl through evidence and give that much kind of evidence to something that is just so obvious.' **Paula Bennett**