

Thinking Like a Social Scientist: Weber, Sachs and Muddy Boots

Stuart Corbridge

Development Studies Institute
London School of Economics



Warning note

This set of slides will seem even more eclectic than the lecture that accompanies them. The threads of the lecture – loosely based on how I became a social scientist, and drawing some lessons from different pieces of work I have done, or that others have done – are pulled together at the end. They will make rather better sense when played with the Podcast.

**Why Is The England Football Team Doing So Poorly? A
Geographical Analysis**

Stuart Corbridge

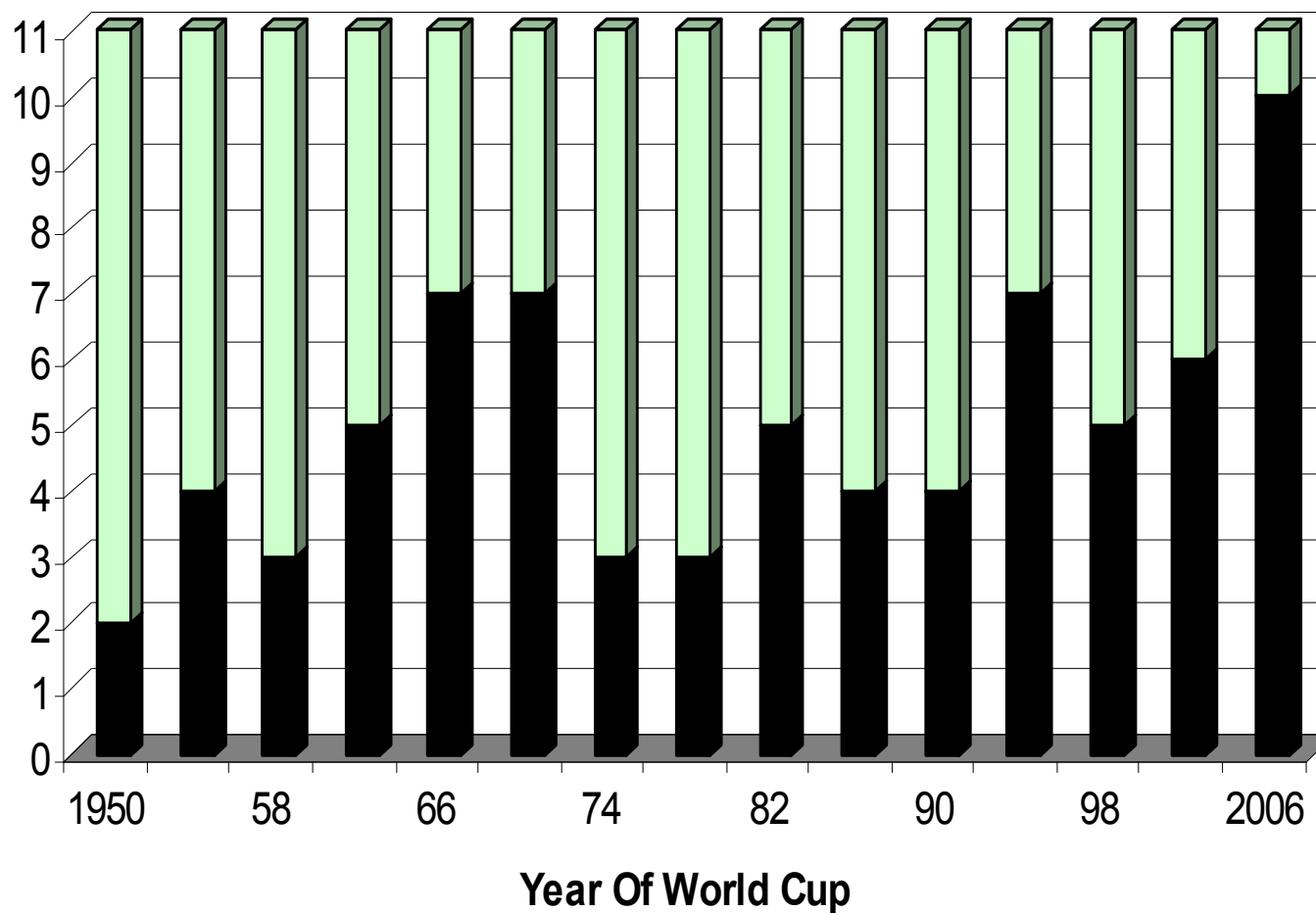
**Development Studies Institute
London School of Economics**

Joanne Corbridge

**Department of Geography
The University of Hull**

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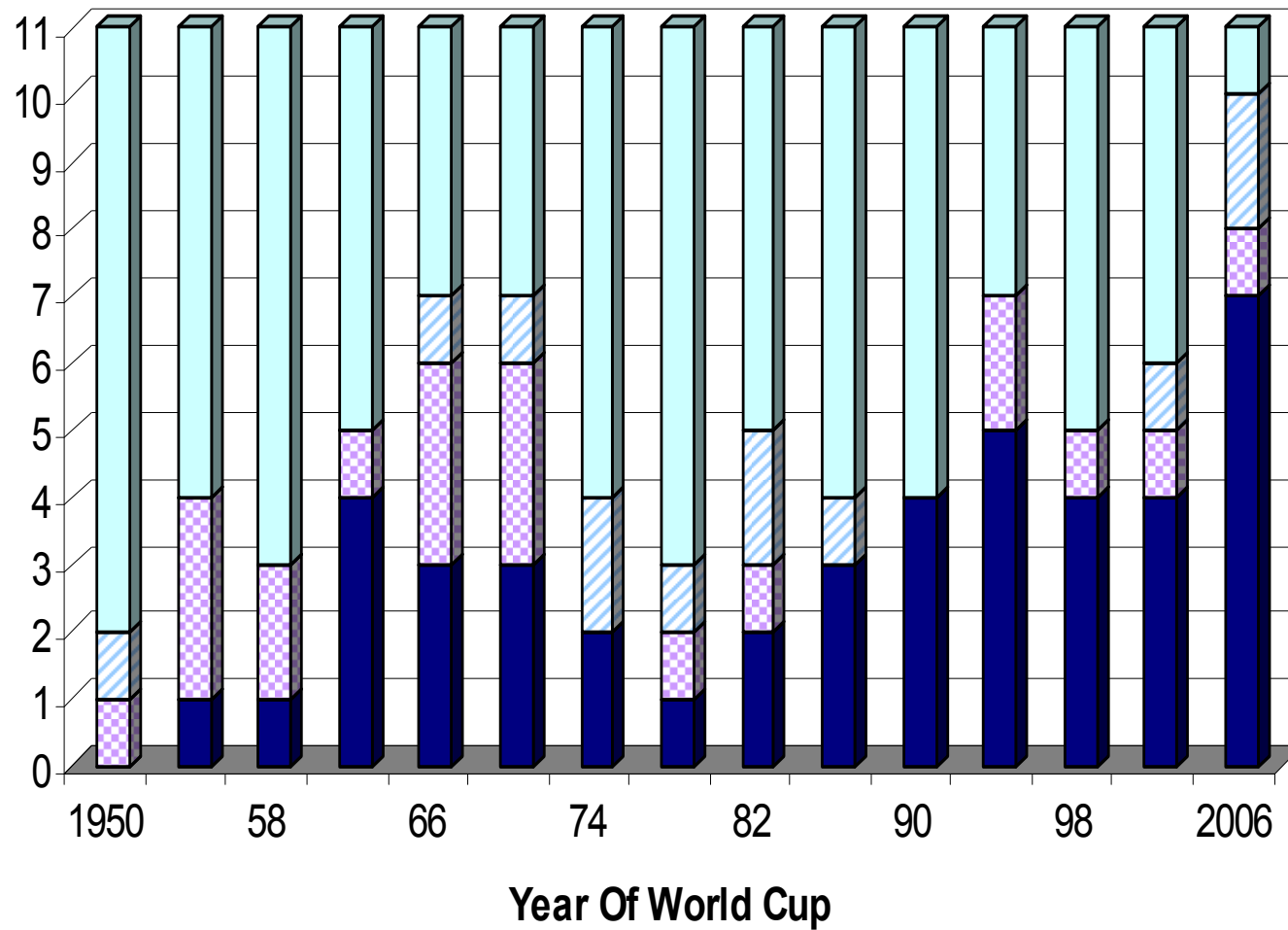
Geographical Origins of England Football Team Starting XI: First Game In Competition



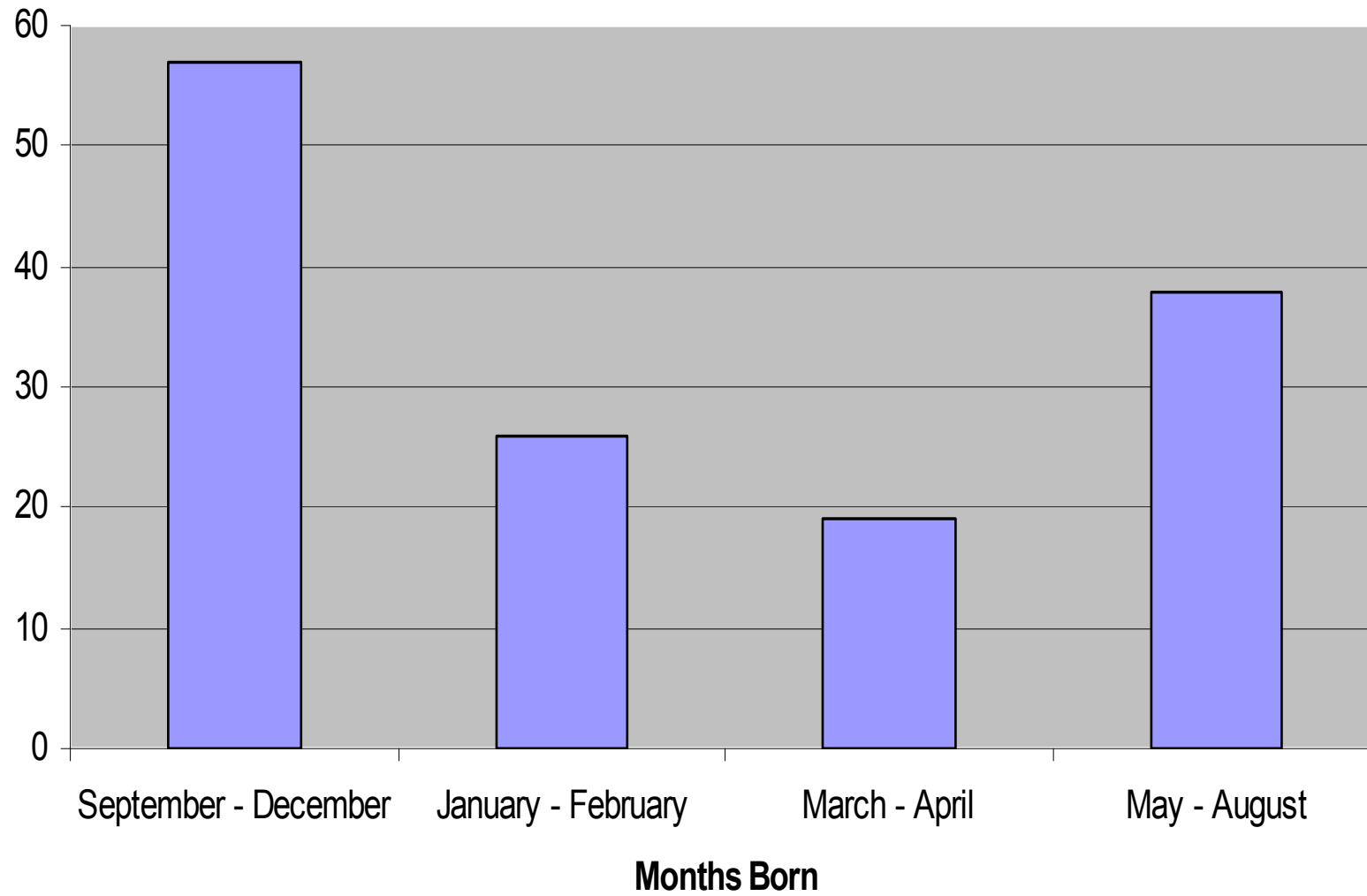
■ Greater London, Greater Manchester and Merseyside

□ Other

Geographical Origins Of England Football Team Starting XI: First Game In Competition



Birth Dates of England Football Players: World Cups, 1950 - 2006



Max Weber

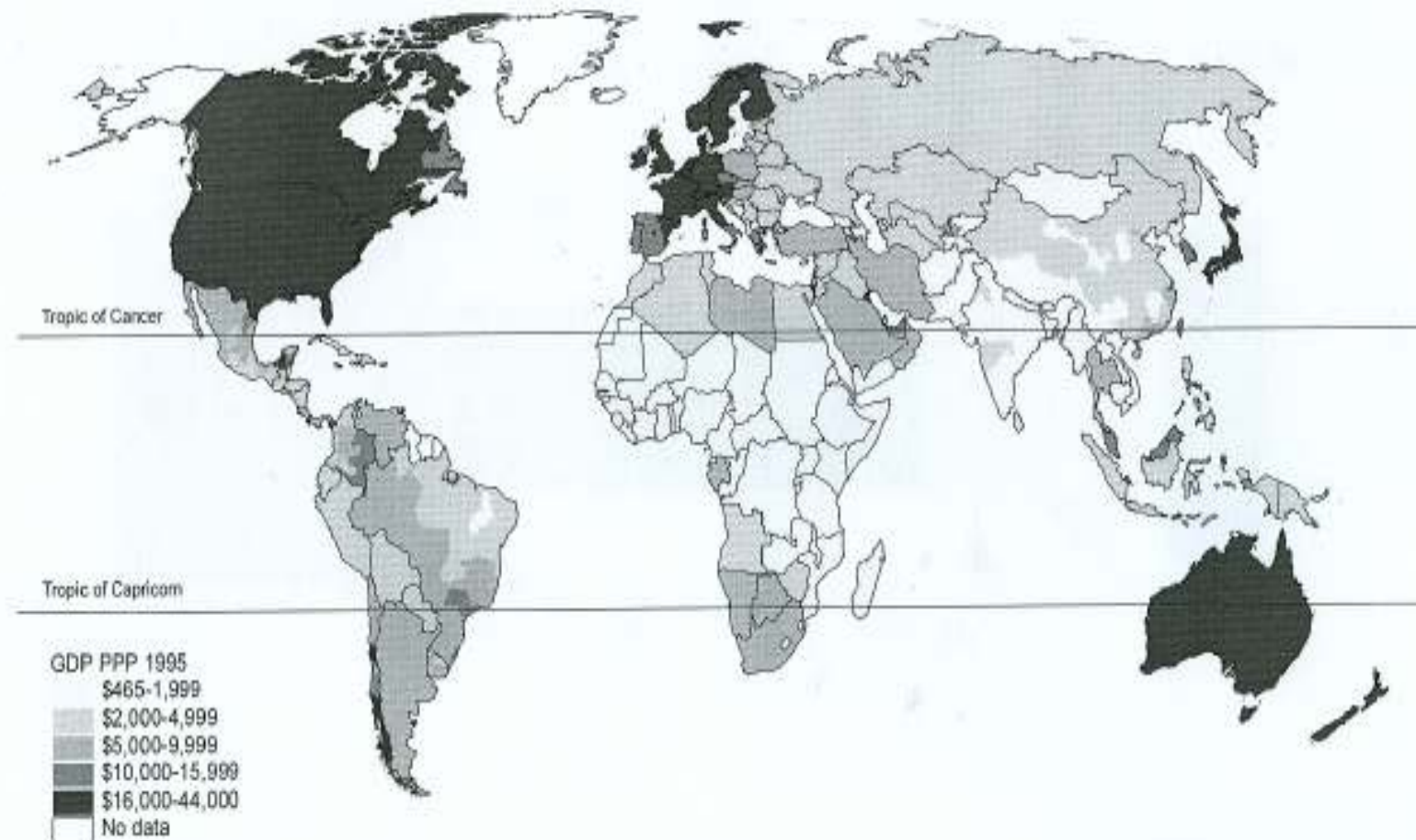
“THE TRUE FUNCTION OF SOCIAL SCIENCE IS TO RENDER PROBLEMATIC THAT WHICH IS CONVENTIONALLY SELF-EVIDENT”

(attributed: c.f. also Donahue-Levitt and Reyes on declining crime levels)

Development Studies

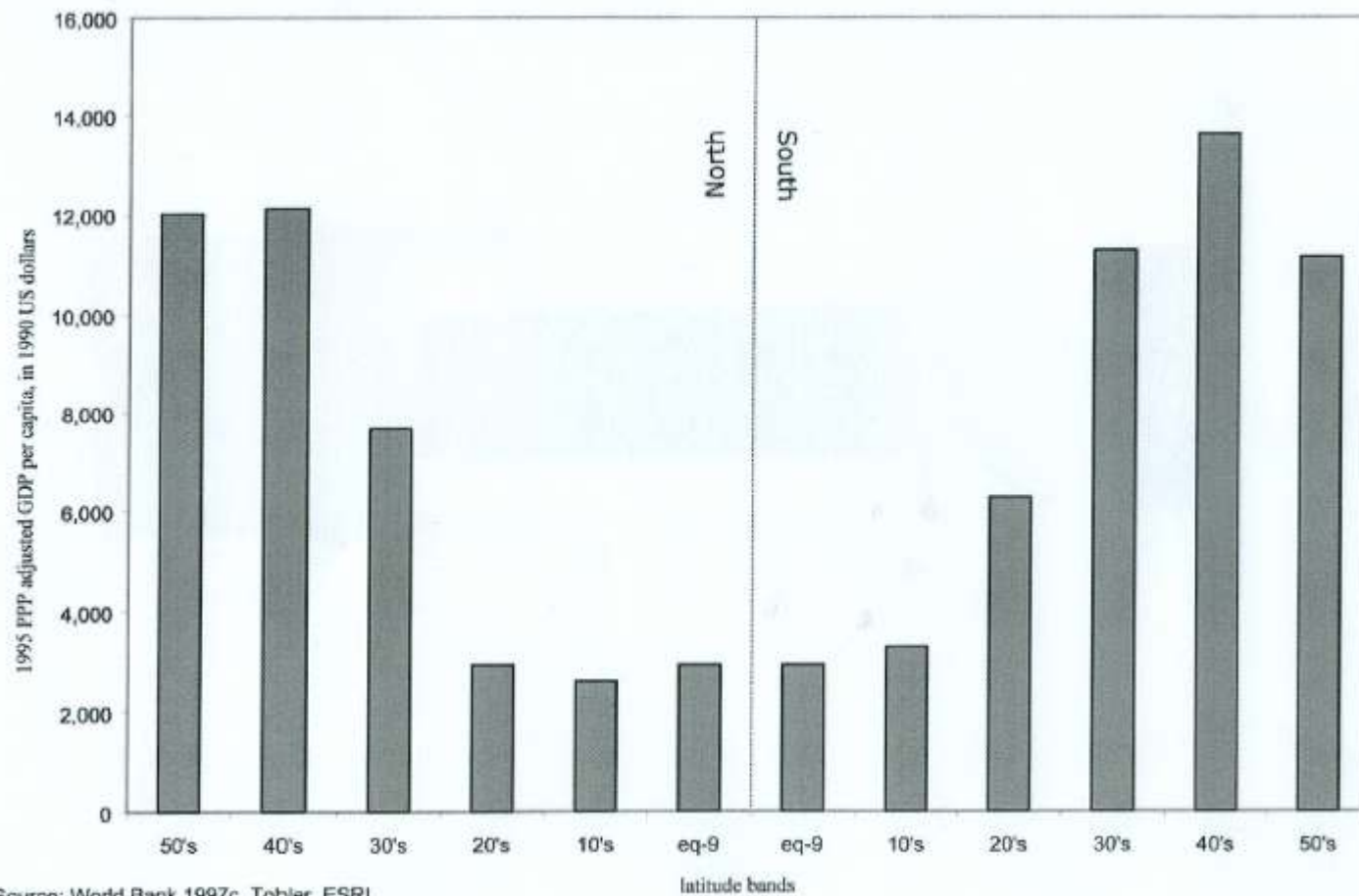
1. Commitment to understanding why some countries are much richer or poorer than others, and to finding policies that would allow the 'Third World' to catch up.
2. Most recent version of a Big Push model of development has come from Jeffrey Sachs. Ending poverty in SSA mainly a function of overcoming Tropicality and Poor Location. What is needed most are large and coordinated infusions of aid to build up better transportation networks and to tackle malaria, HIV, etc.

Figure 1. Income per person, 1995 (with sub-national data for 19 countries)



Note: GDP PPP = 1995 Gross Domestic Product per person in purchasing power parity international dollars.

Figure 2. GDP per capita by Latitude



Source: World Bank 1997c, Tobler, ESRI

Table 3. Shares of Tropics in World Population, GDP, and U.S. Patents in 1995

	Population (millions)	GDP (billions)	Patents issued, 1995
Tropics	2,019	5,893	1,880
World	5,653	34,519	101,330
Tropics (% of world)	35.7%	17.1%	1.9%

Source: Tropical population is the number of individuals living with the tropical climate zones. GDP is allocated to climate zones by assuming that GDP per capita is identical for all individuals within a country. Thus, the "Tropical GDP" of a country is calculated as the proportion of the population within the tropical climate zones in the country, multiplied by the aggregate GDP of the country in 1995 (PPP adjusted). "Tropical patents" are calculated as follows. The U.S. Patent Office reports patents by country according to the residence of the lead inventor. I then count as "tropical patents" in a country as the number of patents of the country multiplied by the proportion of the population within the country living in tropical climate zones.

Rodrik and Subramanian

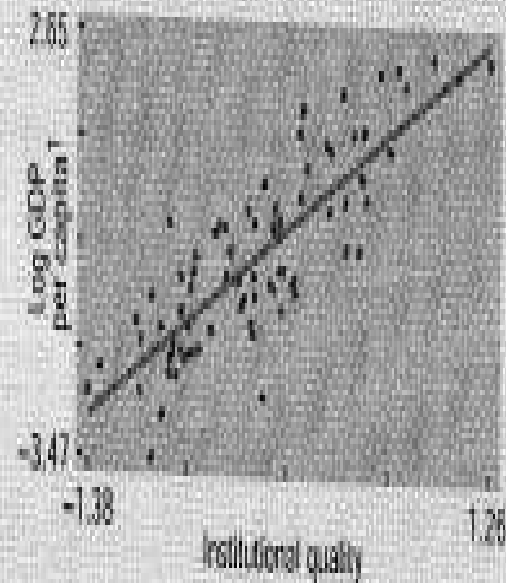
“Our results show that the quality of institutions (as measured by a composite indicator ... of property rights protection and the strength of the rule of law) is the only positive and significant determinant of income levels. Once institutions are controlled for, integration has no direct effect on incomes, while geography has at best weak direct effects”

Chart 2

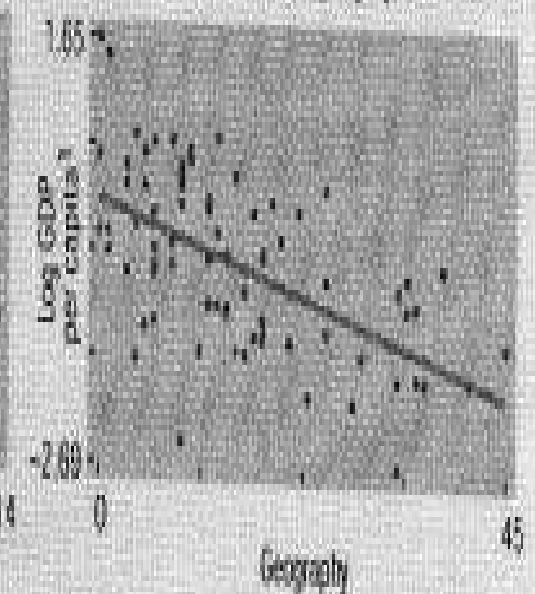
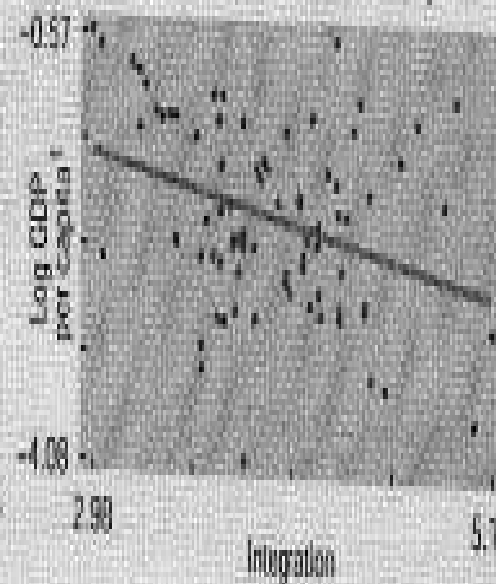
Institutional quality scores high

Institutional quality can boost income significantly, while global integration and geography, on their own, do not.

As institutional quality rises, so does income ... but increases in integration may not help



... nor does a more benign geographic location.



Source: Authors

Note: The graphs capture the causal impact of each of the determinants on income, after controlling for the impact of the others. The indicators of integration and geography used are the ratio of trade to GDP and distance from the equator, respectively. For further details, see Rodrik, Subramanian, and Trebbi (2002).

¹Expressed in terms of purchasing power parity, 1995.

Institutions and Public Policy: 1

Rodrik et al accept – or advertise – the fact that:

“the operational guidance that our central result on the primacy of institutional quality yields is extremely meager... Obviously, the presence of clear property rights for investors is key... Our findings indicate that when their property rights are protected, the economy ends up richer. But nothing is implied about the actual form that property rights should take. We cannot even necessarily deduce that enacting a private property-rights regime would produce superior results compared to alternative form of property rights”

Institutions and Public Policy: 2

1. Rodrik et al/Acemoglu et al: point to substantial gains from institutional improvement in Meiji Japan and South Korea in 1960s. [Others focus more on informal institutions, or other 'rules of the game'].
2. But: this takes us back (or onwards) to less comfortable questions – at least from a public policy perspective – about colonialism and long-standing path dependencies, about politics and local incentive systems, and about the possible merits of 'regime change' and violence. [There is clearly more to the good governance agenda than tacking corruption...]

World Bank: Gender and Corruption

- New body of work slowly emerging, e.g. from Swamy, Knack, Lee and Azfar (2000)
- Hypothesis is that higher female participation in politics, the legislature and the judiciary reduces corruption (because of less tolerance)
- Early cross-country work confirms this: 'countries with greater representation of women in government or market work have lower levels of corruption'

Gender and Corruption 2

- Significant policy implications, if we assume slow changes in female attitudes over time and when in positions of power.
- Mexico City late-1990s: police chief took ticket-writing powers away from 900 male traffic cops and created a new female-only force; copied in Lima

Gender and Corruption 3

- Less clear-cut in India, however: *panchayati Raj* and gendered affirmative action. Ethnographic evidence gives ground for scepticism, but more positive findings from Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2004) [also, relatedly, from Tim Besley et al in regard to education levels, political selection and reduced abuse of power]
- But, not the only way of looking at gender and corruption...

Gender and Corruption - 4

- Money: on average 12% greater loss through theft (wages, pensions, etc.)
- Time: on average 37% longer to see same or nearly same state official; women of roughly similar income as men 3 times as likely to be Q-jumped; thus more resort to paid intermediaries (*dalaals*) or male relatives
- Space: average 'total journey times' (hours) for similar tasks (e.g. permission to cut trees, receipt of certificates), 28% greater for women than men
- Humiliation: sexual harassment reported by 16% of sample women.

Summing up

1. Thinking outside the box
2. Make use of correlations but don't assume they always describe causal relationships; use them to further specify testable hypotheses; the cumulative nature of good social science
3. Asking better questions is perhaps the main contribution we can make to public policy, especially development policy; great schemes for social improvement almost always do more harm than good
4. Get inside the data