

Notions of Belonging among Economics First Year Students

Developments in Economics Education Conference 2013

5th September 2013

Guglielmo Volpe

School of Economics and Finance

Queen Mary, University of London

g.volpe@qmul.ac.uk



School of Economics and Finance
Queen Mary, University of London



www.econ.qmul.ac.uk

Structure of the presentation

- The study – background/methodology
- The quantitative findings
 - Whole data
 - Economics students
- Your thoughts



Background to project

- **Student engagement, effort and success**

Is influenced by many situational and contextual factors.

- **Sense of belonging**

The extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included and supported by others in the social environment (Goodenow, 1993)

- **Previous work indicates that developing a sense of belonging:**

- is a key issue in successful transition (Kember *et al*, 2010; Hand and Bryson, 2008)
- is a particular challenge for inner city universities (Stuart *et al*, 2009)
- brings positive benefits especially for ‘disadvantaged’ students (Anderman & Freeman, 2004; Mounts, 2004)



Research Methodology

- **Quantitative**

Psychological Sense of School Membership (PSSM) instrument
(Goodenow,1993)

- **Qualitative**

‘Biographic Narrative’ interviews using a qualitative tradition of ‘cultural stories’ (c.f. Miller and Glassner,1997).



Quantitative study

- 1346 students from three Institutions: two post-1992 Business Schools and one (recently) Russel Group Economics School
- All in first year, first semester
- Administered in learning weeks 7 or 8

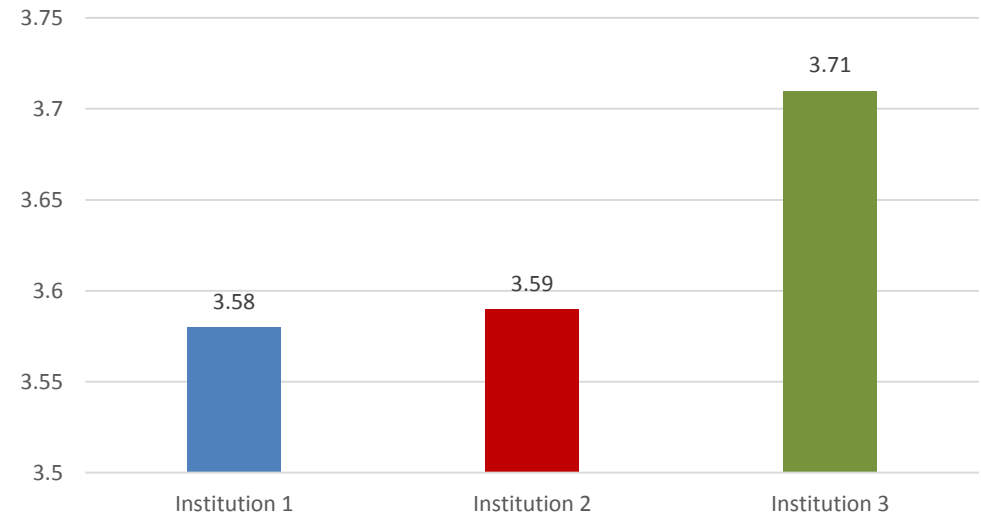
Data collected:

- Who are the students?
 - gender/age/ethnicity/family background
- What are the students?
 - choice of institution/home students/hours of work
- Measuring students' sense of belonging
- Their university experience so far

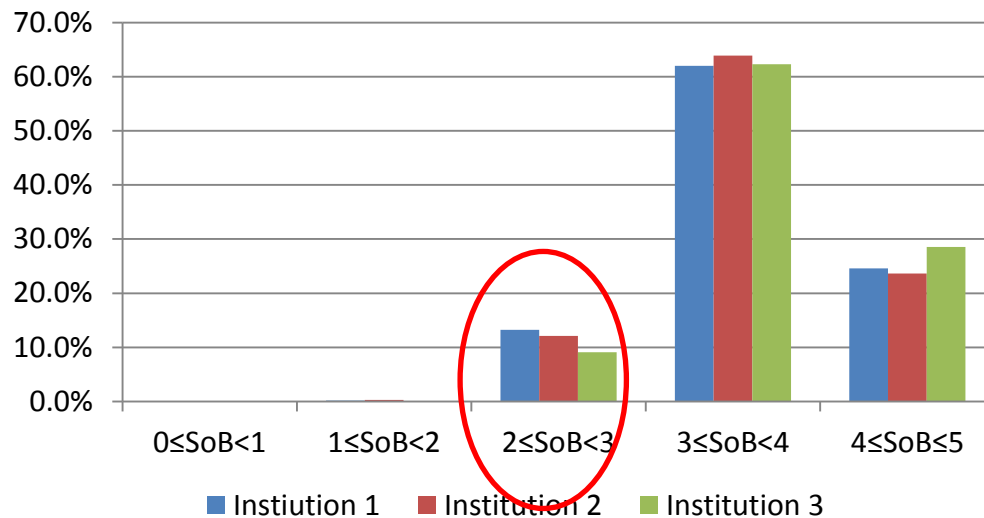


Measuring Sense of Belonging

Average Sense of Belonging

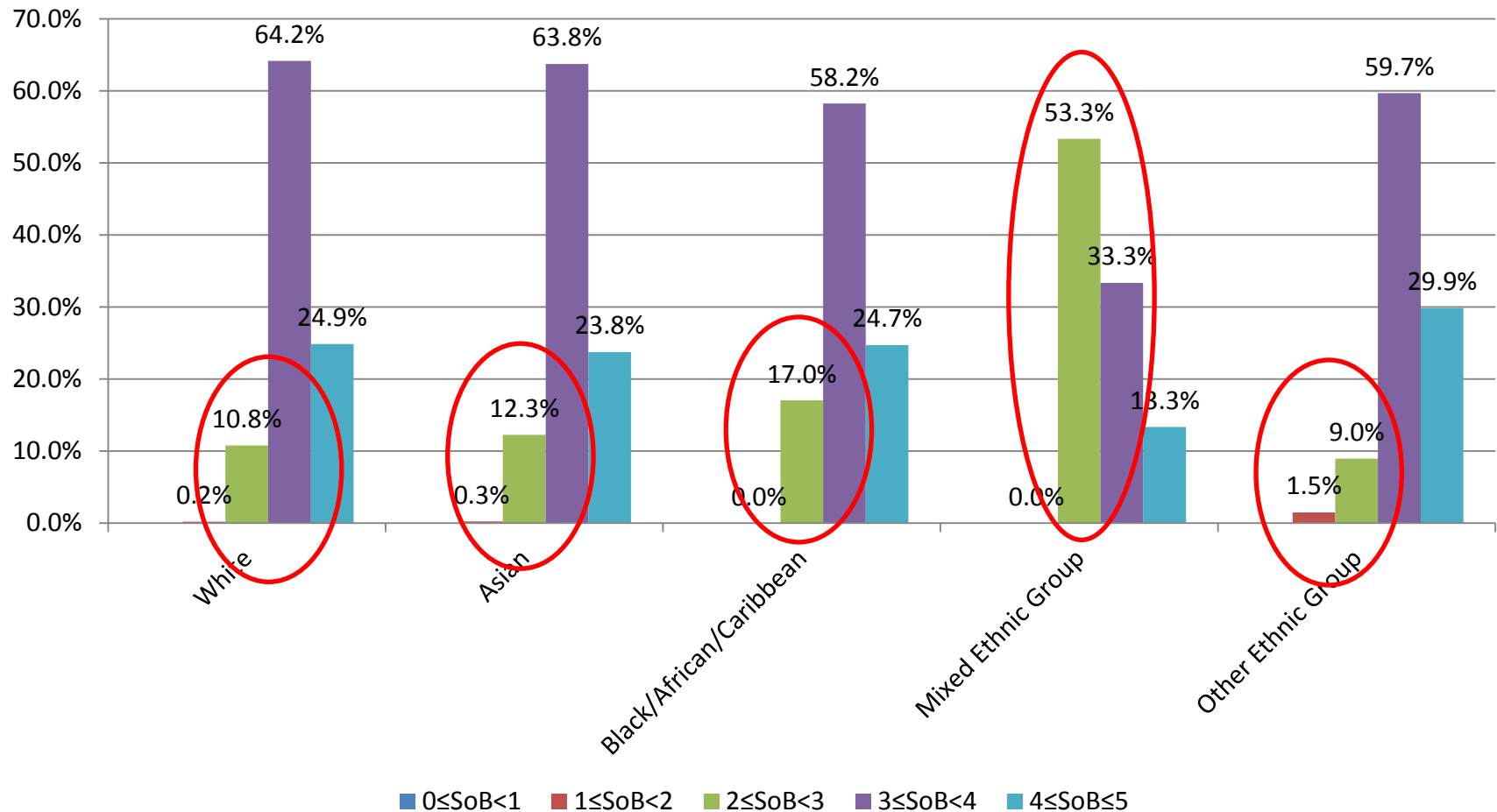


Distribution of Sense of Belonging Index



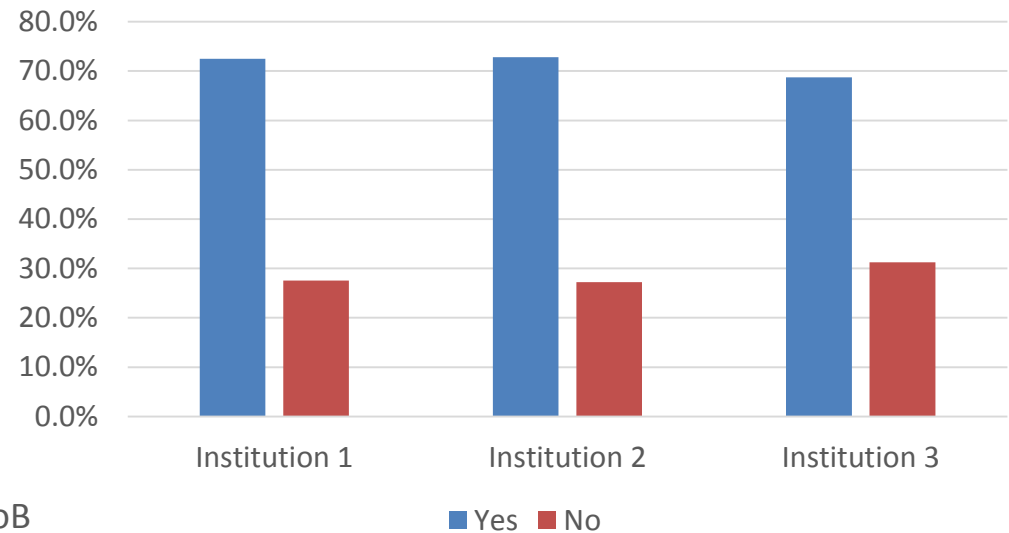
Sense of Belonging by Ethnicity

Distribution of SoB index across ethnicities

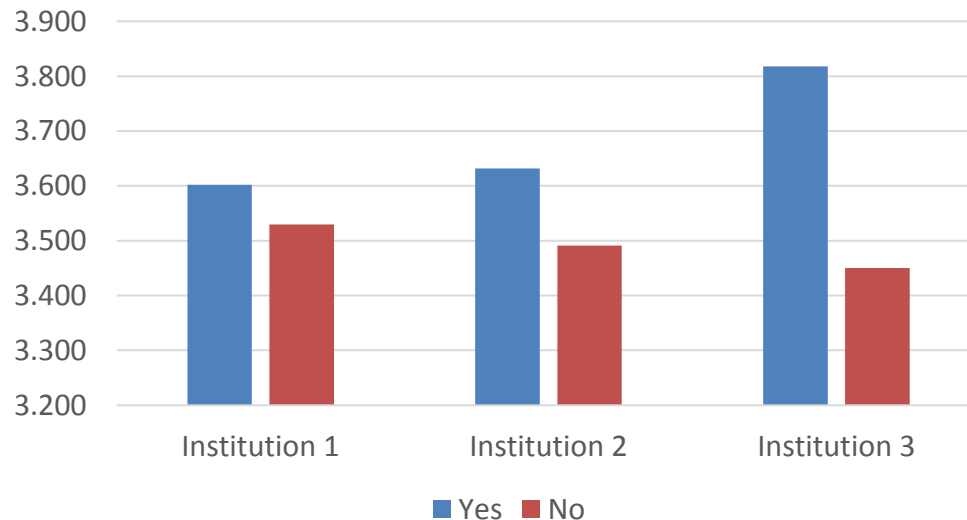


Induction

Proportion of students attending induction



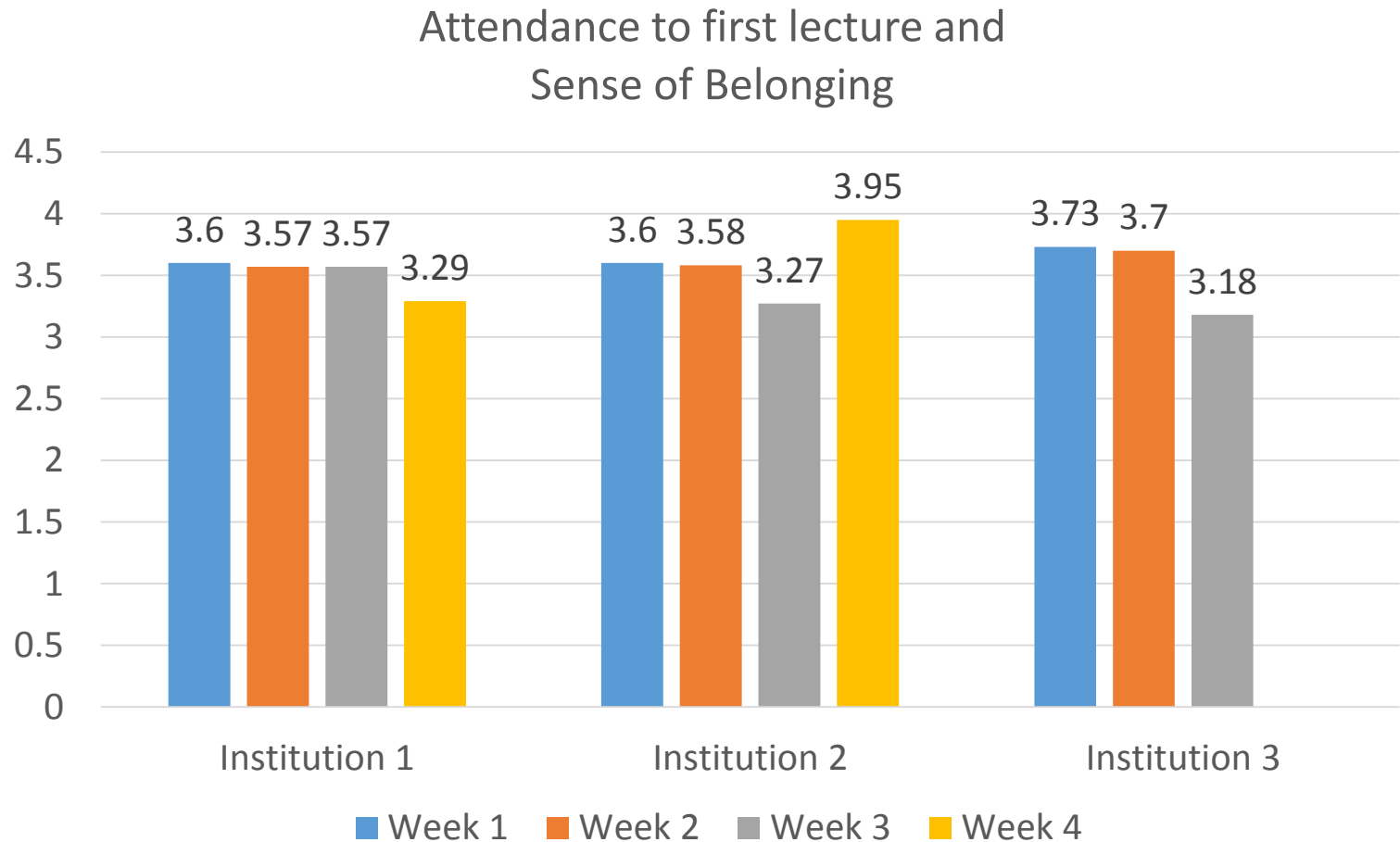
Attendance to induction and Average SoB



The difference in sense of belonging is statistically significant for students at Institutions 2 and 3 but not at Institution 1



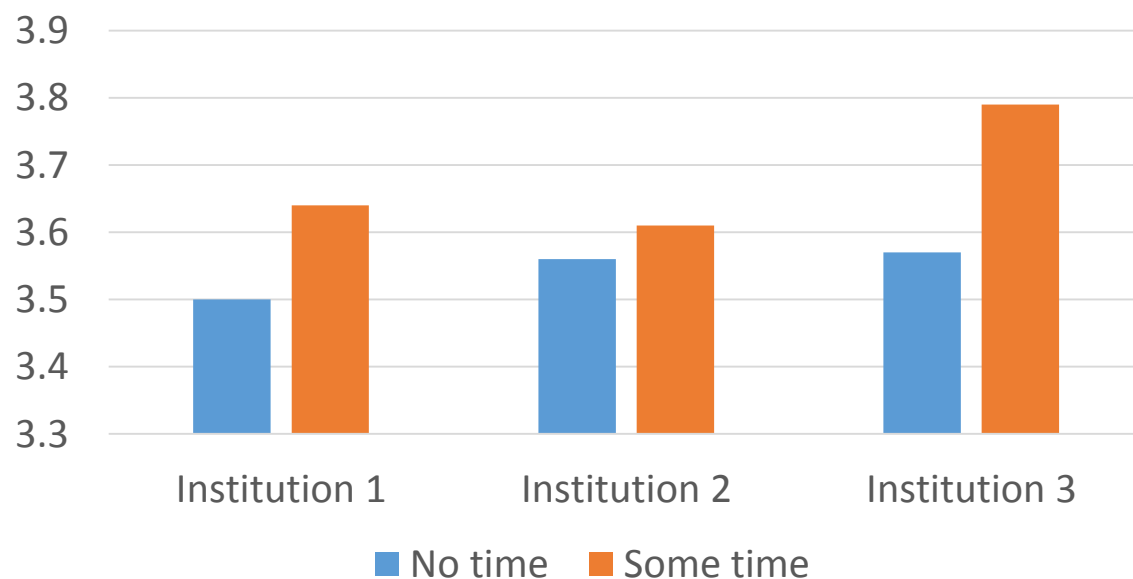
Attendance to first lecture



	No time	Some time
Institution 1	42.21%	57.79%
Institution 2	39.50%	60.50%
Institution 3	42.68%	57.32%

Time dedicated to Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities and Sense of Belonging



A regression analysis

Variable
Constant
Age
Clearing
Engage in learning
Curricular activities
Induction
First choice
Mother or father degree
Travelling time
Extra curricular activities
Institution 3



Belonging among students on Economics degrees

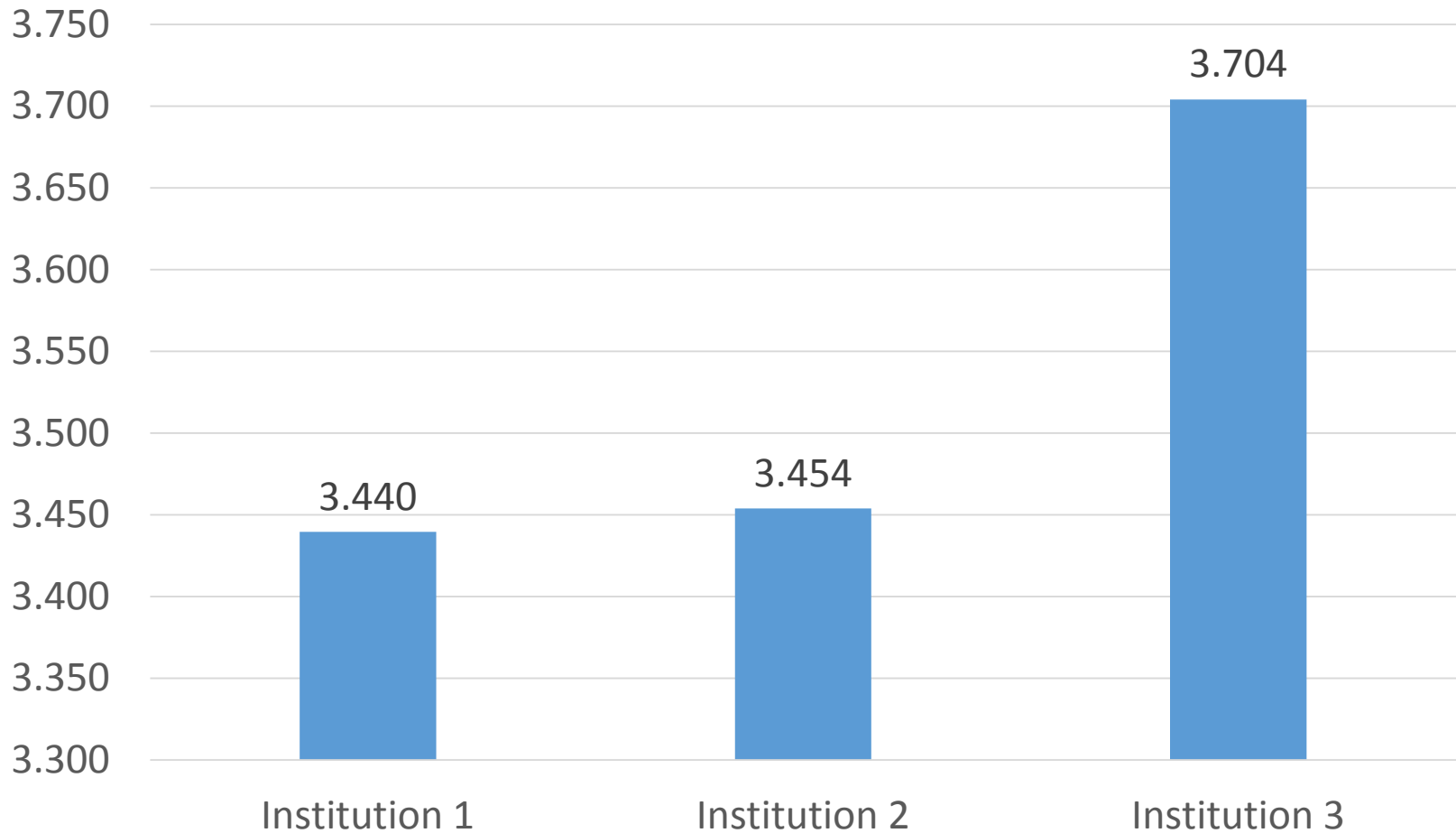


School of Economics and Finance
Queen Mary, University of London



www.econ.qmul.ac.uk

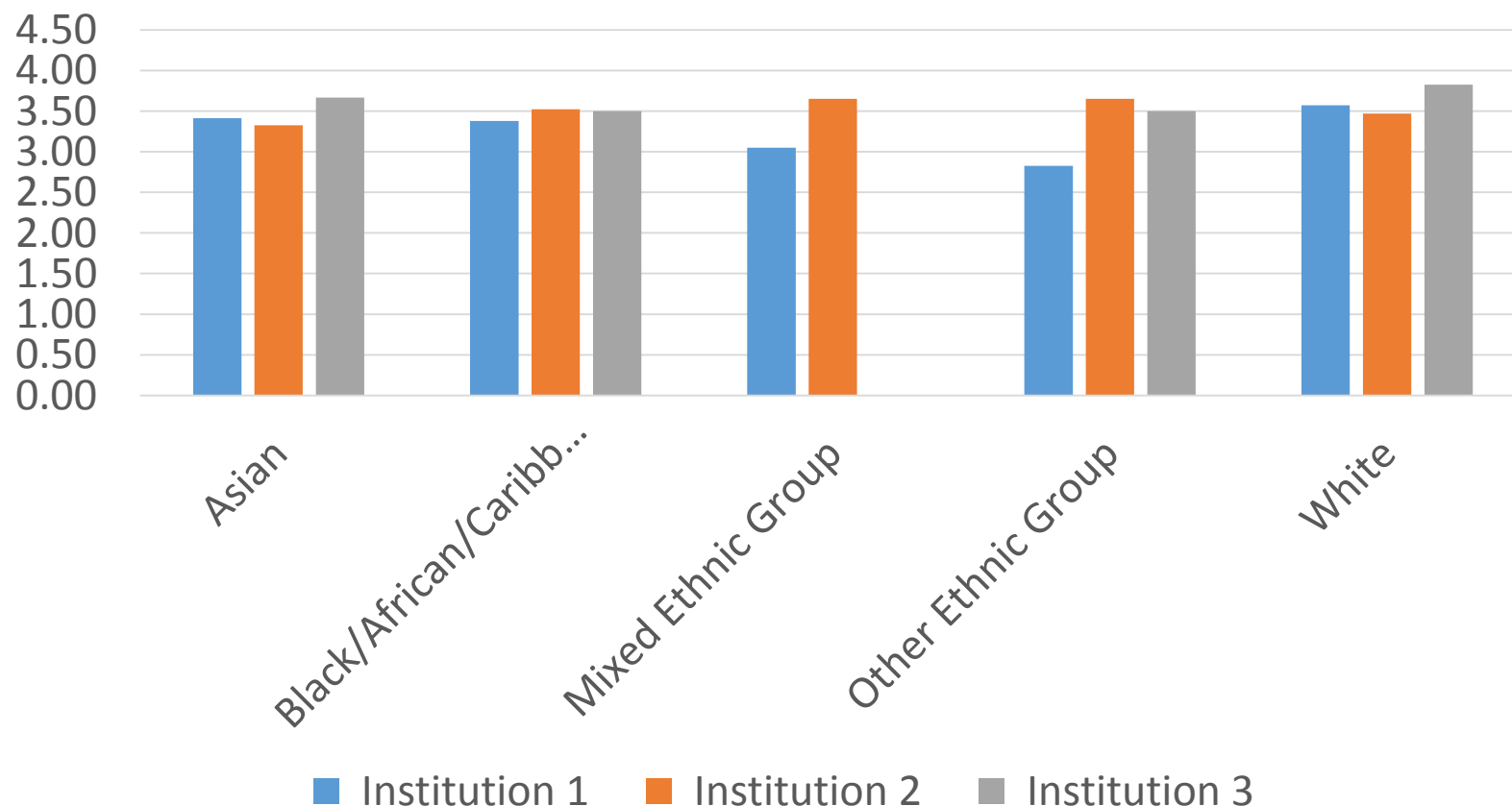
Average Sense of Belonging among Economics students



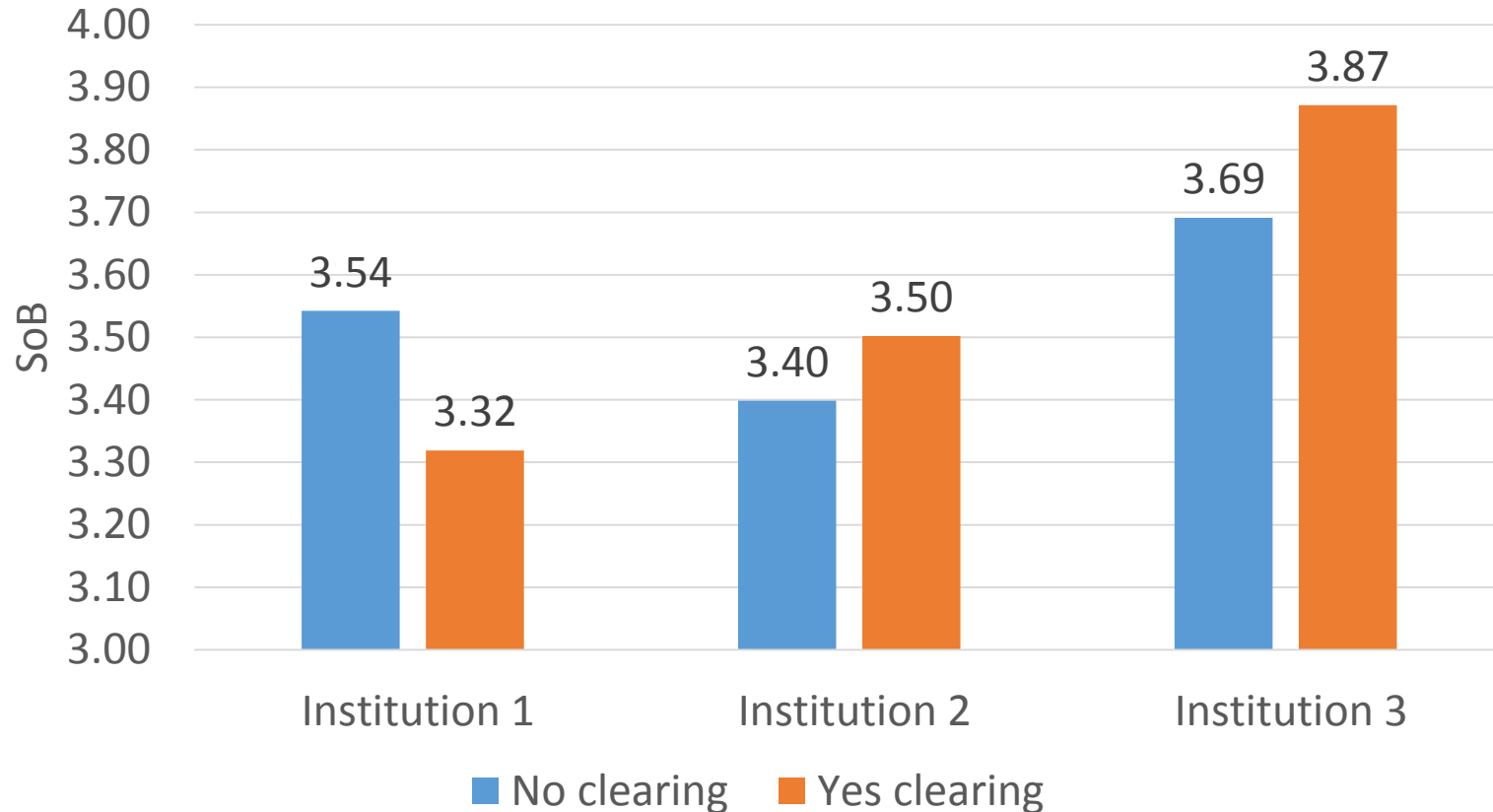
Distribution of Sense of Belonging among Economics Students



Economics students: Ethnicity and SoB

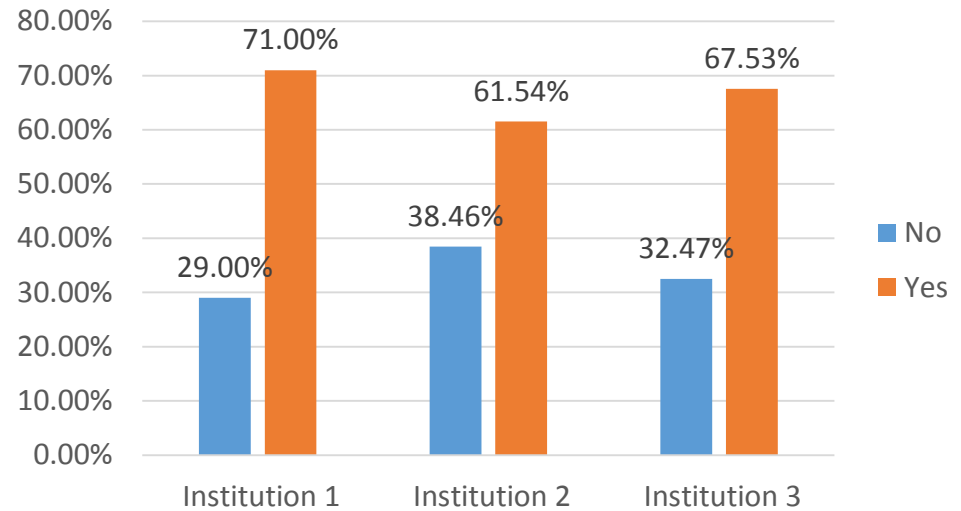


Clearing and Sense of Belonging

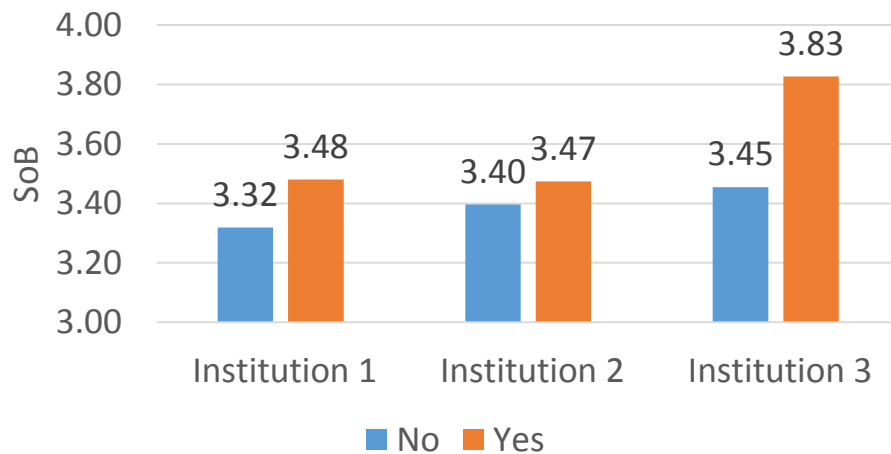


Induction

Percentage of students attending induction

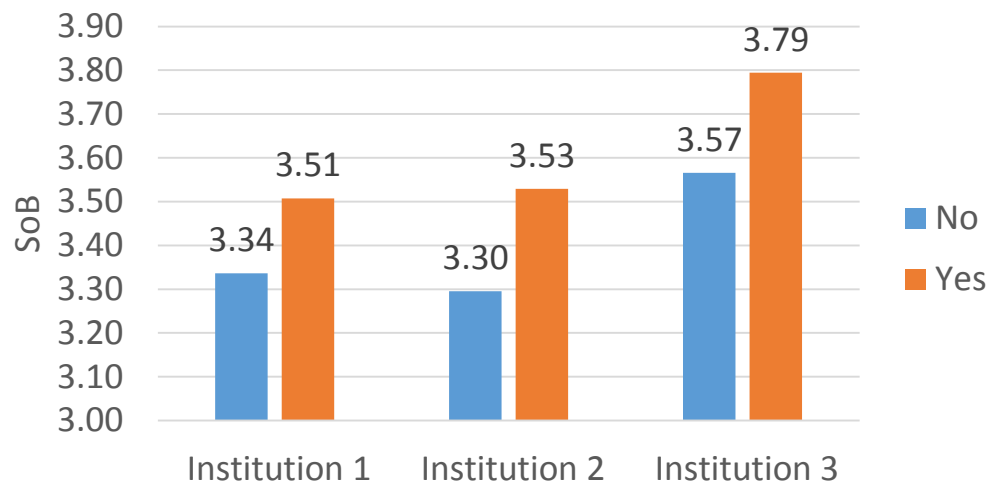


Economics Students: induction and SoB

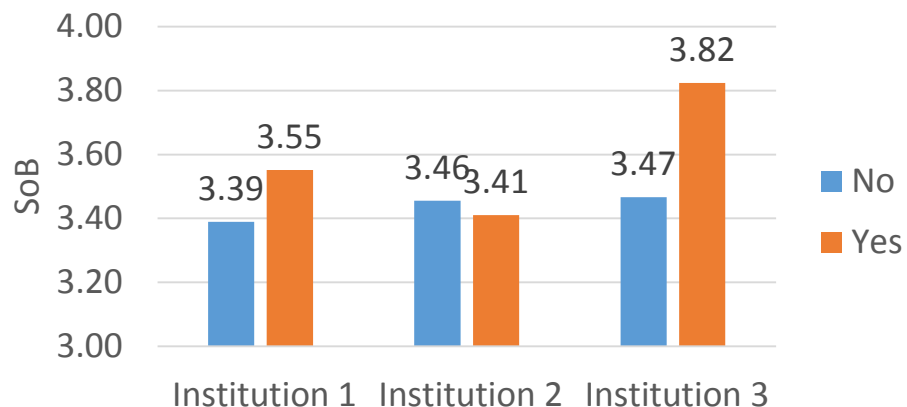


Engagement

Participation to **extracurricular** activities and Sense of Belonging



Participation to **curricular** activities and Sense of Belonging



Variable

Constant

Age

First choice

Induction

Engage in Learning

Mother or father degree

Travelling time

Extracurricular activities

Clearing

Institution 3



Preliminary Conclusions

- Attempt to measure students perception of being part of the Institution they study at and their possible determinants
- No evidence of strong differences across ethnic groups
- Early engagement in curricular and extracurricular activities seem to be important determinants of belonging
- Possibly, economics students studying in an Economics School relative to a Business School develop a greater sense of belonging?
- Among economics students early engagement in curricular and extracurricular activities also seems to be an important determinant of belonging

Thanks for listening!

