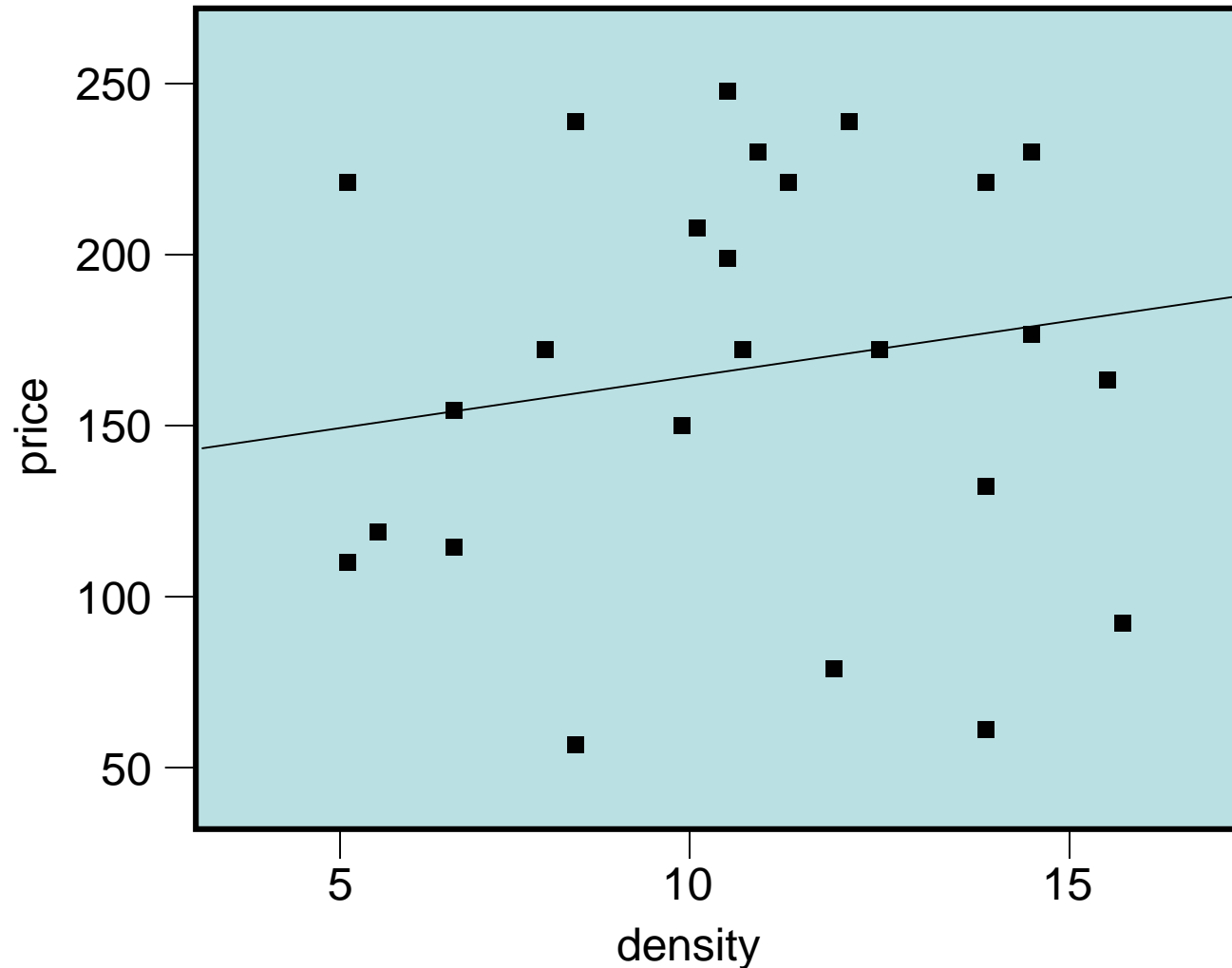


# Strategic thinking in preparation of journal articles

T. S. Jayne

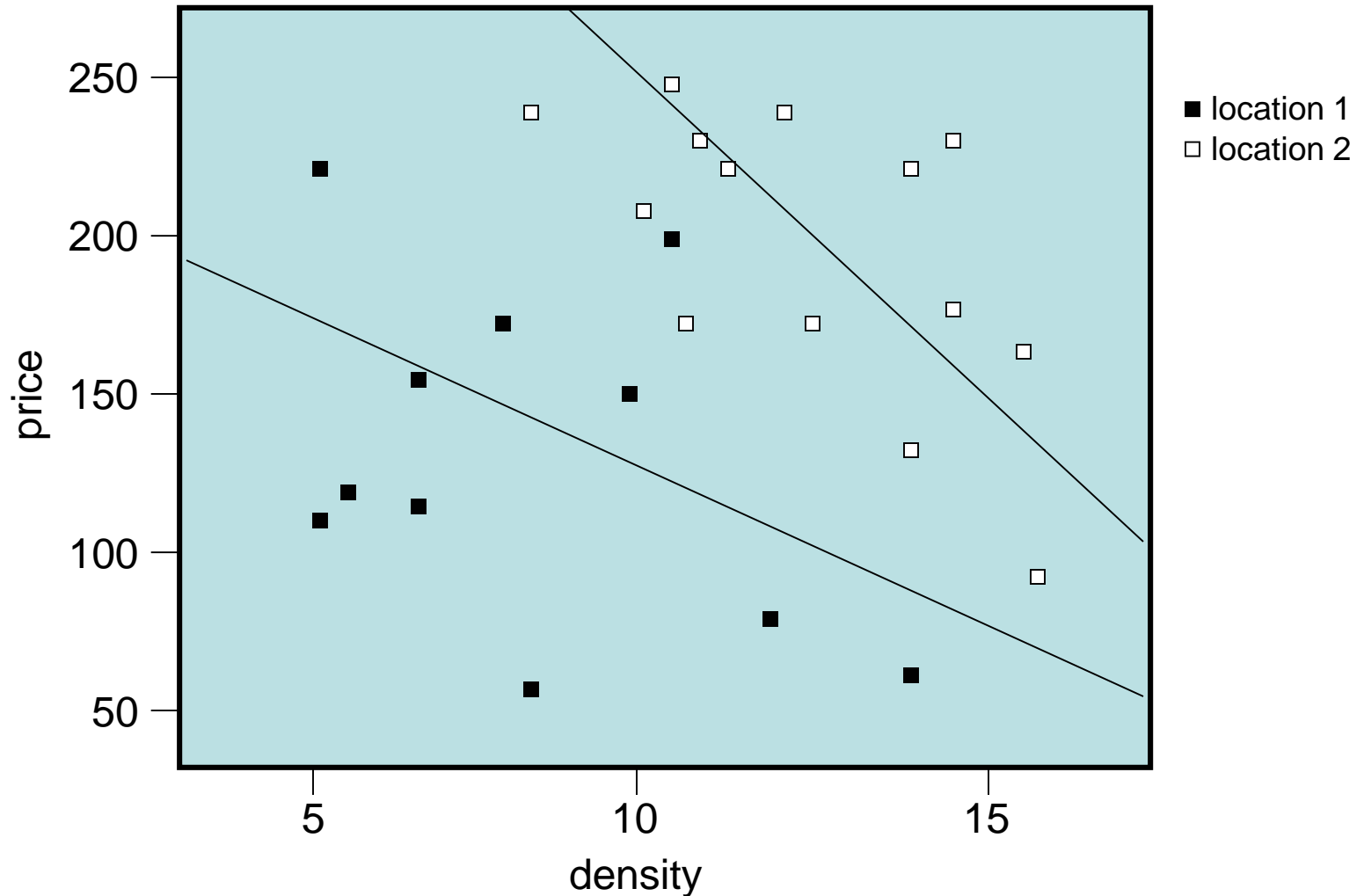
Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute seminar,  
Lusaka, Zambia, 16 November 2016

# Simpson's paradox



e.g. housing price & population density – *positively correlated?*

# Simpson's paradox



e.g. housing price & population density – *negatively correlated!*

# 1. Getting started: choosing a topic

1. Problem statement:
  - what is the problem?
  - Why does the problem need analysis?
  - Headline grabbing?
2. Discover the current cutting edge by talking to academic leaders in the field and ask them about their current research activities
3. Read/critique the relevant literature
4. Identify early on which kind of contribution(s) you are aiming for:
  - Disciplinary
  - Subject Matter
  - Problem Solving

# Three general types of articles

	examples
Disciplinary	
Subject matter	
Problem solving	

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<b>Problem solving</b>	<p>Strategies for protecting hard-hit communities from the effects of Ebola</p> <p>Is liming a cost-effective investment for farmers on acidic soils?</p>



# Introduction

1. Funnel concept: broad to narrow
2. Problem statement
3. What's the likely outcome if the problem remains unresolved
4. What is the deficiency of the literature to date: Identify the *"knowledge gap"*
5. Clear presentation of objectives
  - If a quantitative analysis, use terms like "determines" ,  
"estimates", not "explores"
6. How you will achieve these objectives, i.e., methods?
7. Who will benefit? / who will care?

# Objectives

- No more than 3!
- Consider a paragraph or two after you present the objectives to show how you will address the problems / knowledge gaps identified earlier. How the achievement of the objectives will contribute to our understanding...

# Get a feel for the data early in the process

- If you have primary data already, run basic descriptive statistics, e.g.,
  - Plot distribution of all variables of interest
  - Skewed? outliers?
  - Distribution of dep var and main RHS variables: 10<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> -50<sup>th</sup> -75<sup>th</sup> -90<sup>th</sup> percentiles of distribution
  - Example: distance to point of sale
- Rough out “dummy tables”
  - Then fill in – usually tables of the distribution, % adopting, cross-tabs, bivariate relations
- If you don't have access to data, this emphasizes even greater need for solid literature review

# Be serious about addressing challenges to internal/external validity

- Demonstrate attempts to show how robust your results are to plausible alternative model specifications/functional forms
- How are you addressing:
  - unobserved heterogeneity
  - Simultaneity
  - Selection bias issues
  - How generalizable can the results be considered?

