

Workshop Day: Writing and Developing an Idea

Lecture 5

ARE 264

Feb 1, 2022

Preparing for lecture 6

- Equity exercise on bCourses
- Read Kaplow (2004), Fullerton (2011)
- Ideal to read Fullerton after doing the exercise

Outline

- ① **How to think about your title, abstract and introduction**
- ② **Diagramming a paper: Tarduno example**
- ③ **Developing an idea: Leaks example**
- ④ **Diagramming a paper: Leaks example**

A hierarchy of exposure

- Many people read your title (TOC, CV)
- Some read your abstract
- A few read your introduction
- Epsilon read the paper

- What are the purposes of a paragraph?
 - Motivate topic
 - Explicate research question
 - Explain the results of the paper
 - Anticipate objections/concerns
 - State contribution relative to literature
 - Outline paper
 - ...?

Strategic citations

- Directing citations: How does an editor find referees for a paper?
- Flattering citations: What makes a referee happy or grumpy?
- Seminal citations: What makes a paper seem important?
- Current citations: Do people care about this now?
- Tier of citations: are papers in this topic published at or above the current journal?

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- What about the title?
- What does the abstract accomplish?
- How does it position the paper?
- What is missing if one only reads the abstract?

- Diagram the introduction: what is the purpose served by each paragraph?

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Leaks

- Suppose you have data on all the reported underground toxic leaks (mostly from petroleum product storage) in a state, with start and end dates
- Assume a narrow radius of like effects for some uncertain health impacts
- **How do you turn this into a paper?**

Leaks

- Michelle Marcus, “Going Beneath the Surface: Petroleum Pollution, Regulation, and Health” *AEJ: Policy* 2021
- Got birth detail records at exact location from Vital Statistics
- Cross-sectional comparison is confounded; use sibling study in panel (mother FE) and “donut” method
- Find birth weight effects similar in magnitude to existing papers on air quality
- Then evaluates policy: comparing effects of information disclosure (media coverage) to prevention from regulatory change
- Find high education mothers move (away) in response

Figure 1: Mother and neighborhood characteristic gradients with distance

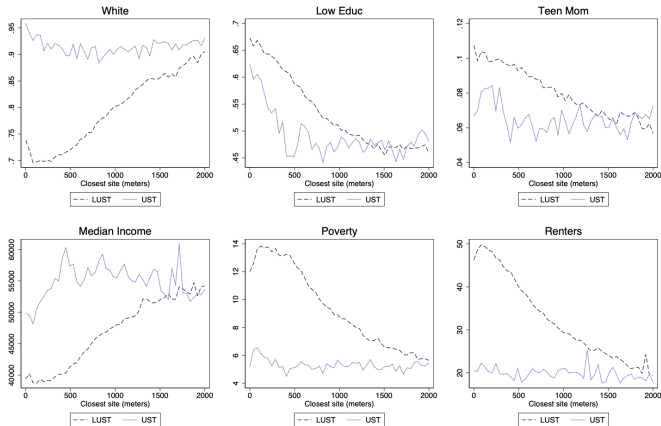
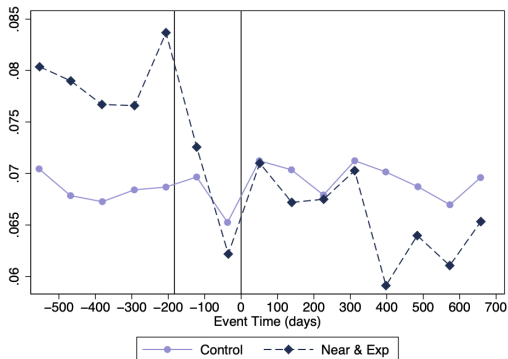
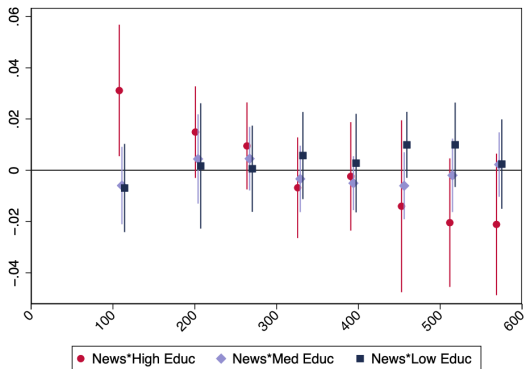


Figure 5: Low Birth Weight Relative to Compliance with Spill, Overfill and Corrosion Protection



Notes: Event time (in days) is calculated as the difference between the date of birth and the date of facility upgrade. The date of facility upgrade is the date of new tank installation if the new tank is installed within half of a year from the last tank removal before the deadline, December 22, 1998. If the facility had existing tanks and is still open after the deadline, I define the date of facility upgrade to be the deadline. The first vertical line identifies the earliest time at which old tanks were removed (a half year) before the new tanks were installed at time 0, which is marked by the second vertical line. The diamonds represent individuals who live within 300m of the facility and were exposed to a leak. The control group includes individuals farther away (300-600m) or unexposed. The outcome is low birth weight. The sample contains data from PA and FL and is limited to non-movers.

Figure 6: Moving in response to newspaper coverage of leaks



Notes: Coefficients and 99 percent confidence intervals are shown from equation 8. News is measured as an indicator for any news coverage of local leaking underground storage tanks. High education, medium education, and low education are indicators for mothers with a college degree or higher, a high school degree or some college, and less than a high school degree, respectively. The outcome, moving, is equal to one if a mother moves to a new location by the next observed birth.

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Going Beneath the Surface: Petroleum Pollution, Regulation, and Health[†]

By MICHELLE MARCUS*

- How would you evaluate the title?

This paper quantifies the health impacts of petroleum leaks from underground storage tanks, the effectiveness of tank regulation, and the role of information as a policy tool in the same setting. Exposure to a leaking underground storage tank during gestation increases both the probability of low birthweight and preterm birth by 7–8 percent. Compliance with regulations requiring the adoption of preventative technologies mitigated the entire effect of leak exposure on low birthweight, and information increased avoidance and moving among highly educated mothers. Back-of-the-envelope calculations suggest the health benefits of preventative regulations exceed the upgrade cost to facilities. (JEL I12, K32, L71, L78, Q35, Q51, Q53)

- How would you evaluate the abstract?

- As time allows...
- Diagram the introduction: what is the purpose served by each paragraph?

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