

Adventures with a Natural Experiment Hunter: Teaching Economics Research

David Slusky

Byron T. Shutz Lecture

May 12, 2021



Goal: to make you love economics research as I do

- What is economics?
- What is exciting right now about economics research?
- What should **everyone know about econ research?**
- What is research consumption (vs. research production)?
- How I **teach research consumption** to
 - First year undergraduates
 - Juniors & seniors
 - Graduate students

Isn't economics just about math and money?

$\sqrt{-1}$ ❤️
Math



What is economics primarily the study of?

- Money
- Capitalism
- Decision making
- Scarcity
- Exploitation

I would say “allocation under conditions of scarcity”

- We (an individual, a company, a government) have certain resources and decisions to make
- We also live under scarcity (“finite & limited resources”)
- Making decisions requires considering all the potential consequences of those decisions
- And so economics has also become about quantifying those unexpected consequences

This gives economists a role in government & policy



Source: <https://www.newyorker.com/news/our-columnists/janet-yellens-confirmation-hearing-provides-a-glimpse-into-the-biden-era>
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/01/business/cecilia-rouse-biden-economist.html>

And even in amicus briefs with the Supreme Court

No. 12-416

IN THE
Supreme Court of the United States

FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION,

Petitioner,

v.

ACTAVIS, INC., ET AL.,

Respondents.

ON WRIT OF CERTIORARI TO THE
UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE ELEVENTH CIRCUIT

**BRIEF FOR
HEALTH ECONOMICS AND LAW
PROFESSORS AS AMICI CURIAE
IN SUPPORT OF RESPONDENTS**

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312-607-9922
STEPHEN@ZOSIMAGROUP.COM

No. 15-274

IN THE
Supreme Court of the United States

WHOLE WOMAN'S HEALTH, ET AL.,

Petitioners,

v.

KIRK COLE, M.D., COMMISSIONER, TEXAS DEPARTMENT
OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES, ET AL.,

Respondents.

**On Writ of Certiorari to the
United States Court of Appeals
for the Fifth Circuit**

**BRIEF OF HEALTH ECONOMISTS
AS AMICI CURIAE
IN SUPPORT OF PETITIONERS**

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January 4, 2016

WILSON-EPES PRINTING CO., INC. - (202) 789-0096 - WASHINGTON, D. C. 20002

Nos. 18-1023, 18-1028, 18-1038

IN THE
Supreme Court of the United States

MAINE COMMUNITY HEALTH OPTIONS, *Petitioner,*

v.

UNITED STATES, *Respondent.*

MODA HEALTH PLAN, INC., *et al., Petitioners,*

v.

UNITED STATES, *Respondent.*

LAND OF LINCOLN MUTUAL HEALTH INSURANCE
COMPANY, AN ILLINOIS NONPROFIT MUTUAL
INSURANCE CORPORATION, *Petitioner,*

v.

UNITED STATES, *Respondent.*

ON WRITS OF CERTIORARI TO THE UNITED STATES
COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE FEDERAL CIRCUIT

**BRIEF OF AMICI CURIAE ECONOMISTS
IN SUPPORT OF PETITIONERS**

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Counsel for Amici Curiae

September 6, 2019

291069

No. 19-840

In the
Supreme Court of the United States

CALIFORNIA, ET AL.,
Petitioners,

v.

TEXAS, ET AL.,

Respondents.

**On Writ of Certiorari
to the United States Court of Appeals
for the Fifth Circuit**

**BRIEF AMICI CURIAE FOR
BIPARTISAN ECONOMIC SCHOLARS
IN SUPPORT OF PETITIONERS**

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May 13, 2020

Sources: [supremecourt.gov](https://www.supremecourt.gov), [Scotus Blog](https://www.scotusblog.com)

We are living in a golden age of economics research

The Washington Post

Wonkblog

SLATE

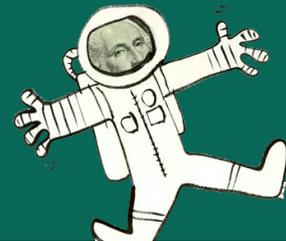
MONEYBOX

The New York Times

TheUpshot

npr

Planet Money



Vox

THE WEEDS

Why do we have so much great research right now?

- Data
- Computing power
- Natural experiments (i.e., some were arbitrarily treated)
- Interest

As well as celebrity economists



Sources: https://static01.nyt.com/images/2010/09/16/opinion/Krugman_New/Krugman_New-articleLarge.jpg, <https://emilyoster.net/about>

I do applied microeconomics research about health

Demography (2019) 56:2005–2031

The Impact of the Flint Water Crisis on Fertility

Daniel S. Grossman¹ • David J.G. Slusky²

Received: 25 October 2017 | Revised: 2 April 2019 | Accepted: 5 April 2019

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Did UberX reduce ambulance volume?

Leon Moskatel¹ | David Slusky² 

Journal of Health Economics 65 (2019) 48–62

Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](#)

Journal of Health Economics

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/econbase



ELSEVIER



WILEY

Health
Economics

Reproductive health care in Catholic-owned hospitals

Elaine L. Hill^{a,*}, David J.G. Slusky^b, Donna K. Ginther^{b,c}

Natural experiments are crucial because real ones are

- Too expensive financially
- Too time consuming
- Logistically infeasible
- Unfair
- Unethical

For example, here are experiments I could never run

- Randomly close half the abortion clinics
- Randomly give half the honors undergraduate students an F in my course to see how it affects their job prospects
- Decide randomly which REI or GRF grants to fund
- Randomly cut half the faculty's salary by 30% to see how much more consulting they do
- Randomly raise half of faculty salaries by 30% to see how much less research they do (no need for outside offer)
- But I do have enough data to work on these topics if and only if I can find a natural experiment...

Five key elements to set up applied microecon research

- Question
- Motivation
- Variation
- Counterfactual
- Data

(don't worry – this will come up again later)

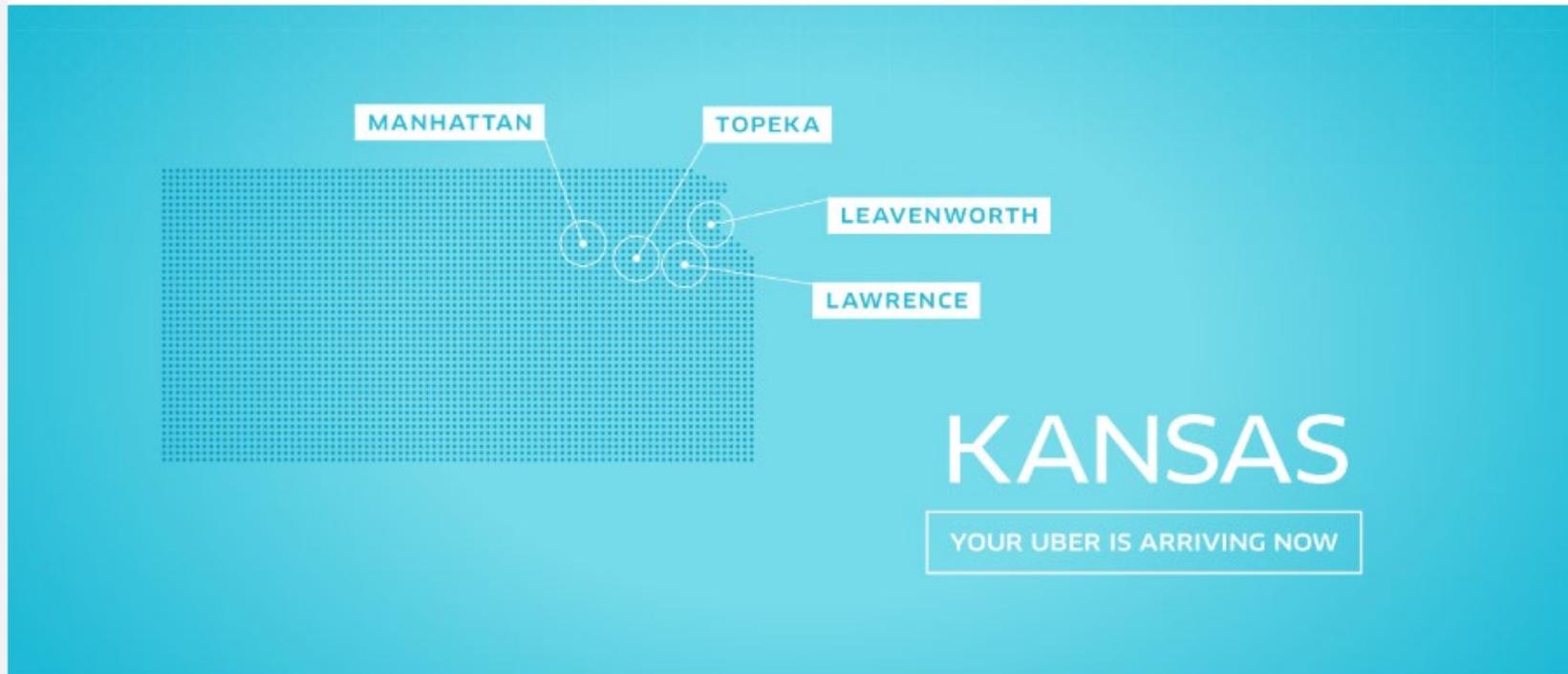
Example: my work on using Uber as an ambulances

- Question: Did Uber Reduce Ambulance Volume?
- Motivation: Ambulances are expensive & inflexible
- Variation: Uber became available across the country
- Counterfactual: Some locations were early and some late
- Data
 - Uber dates and service regions available on their website
 - Can be confidentially matched by time and location to NEMSIS data on ambulance volume

Source: Moskatel and Slusky (2019)

We scraped entry dates from Uber's blog

Uber Is Expanding across Kansas



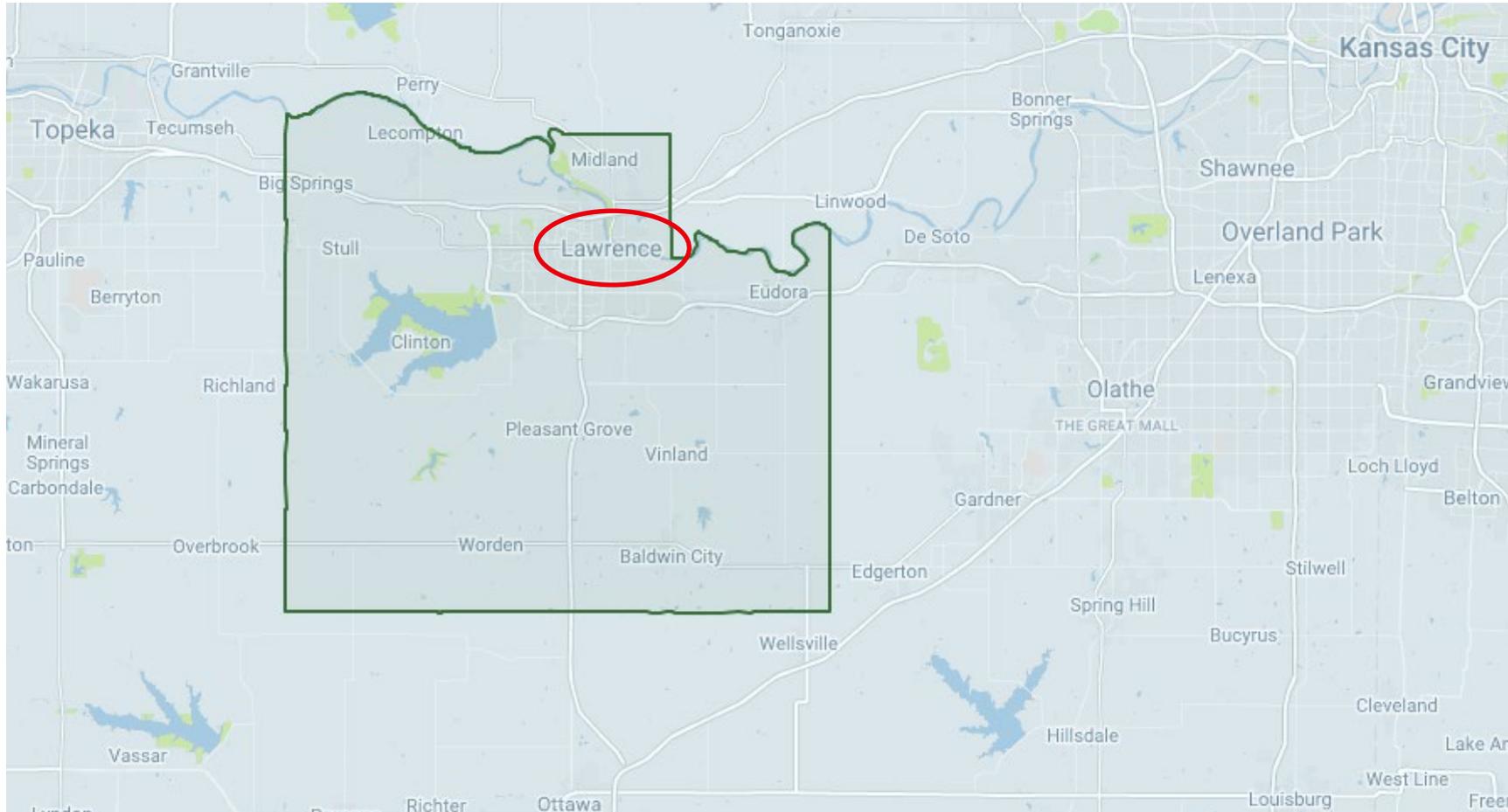
April 23, 2015

Posted by Dave



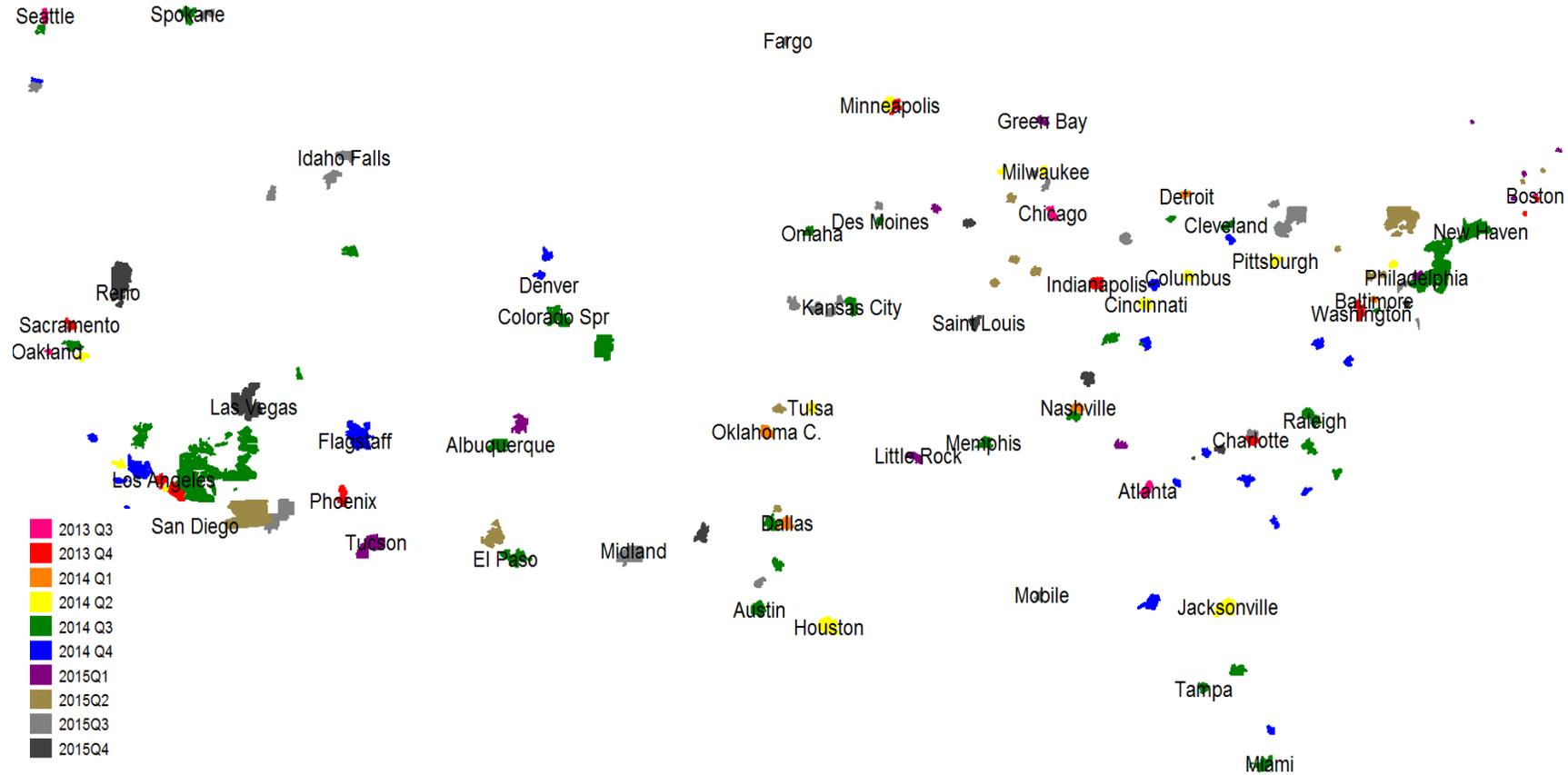
Source: <https://newsroom.uber.com/us-kansas/uber-is-expanding-across-kansas/>

Can get the covered ZIP codes from their map



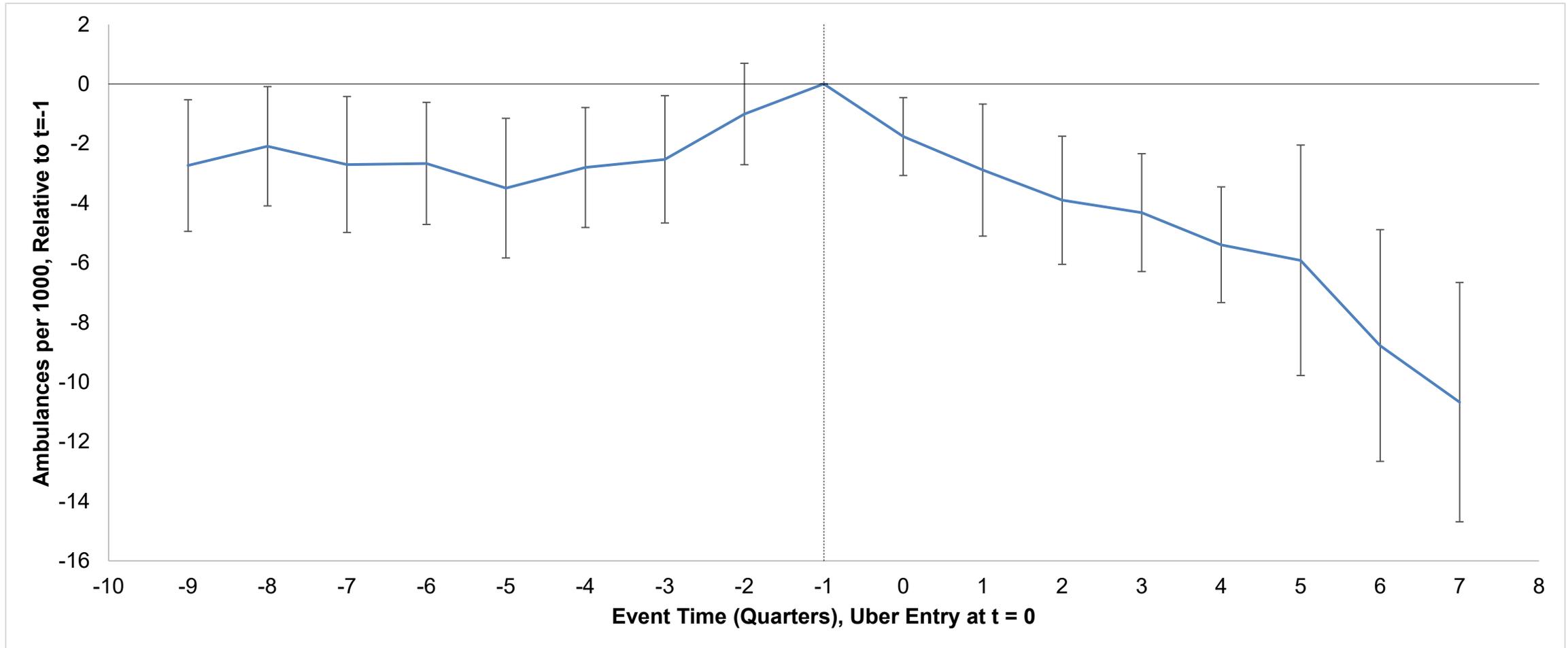
Source: <https://www.uber.com/cities/lawrence/>

Can then map the regions across the country



Source: Moskatel and Slusky (Health Economics, 2019)

Uber reduced ambulance volume by at least 6.7%



Source: Moskatel and Slusky (Health Economics, 2019)

Aside: Economics has a strong working paper culture

the NATIONAL BUREAU *of* ECONOMIC RESEARCH

I Z A Institute
of Labor Economics

IZA Discussion Papers

The University of
KANSAS

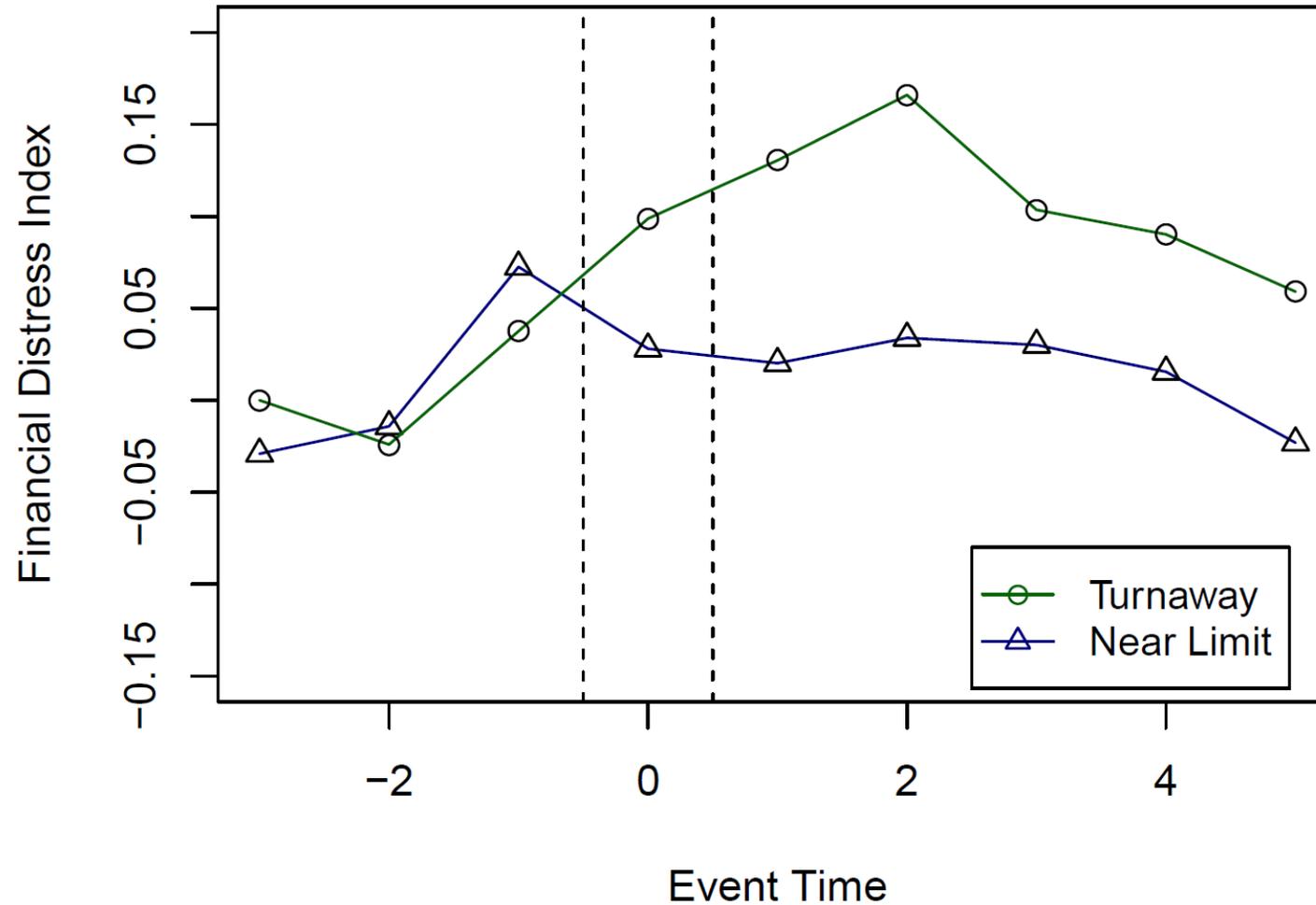


Department of Economics



**WORKING PAPERS SERIES
IN THEORETICAL AND APPLIED ECONOMICS**

E.g., (from health econ): financial distress & abortion



Source: Miller, Wherry, and Foster (NBER Working Paper #26662, 2020)

German school reopening did not spread COVID-19

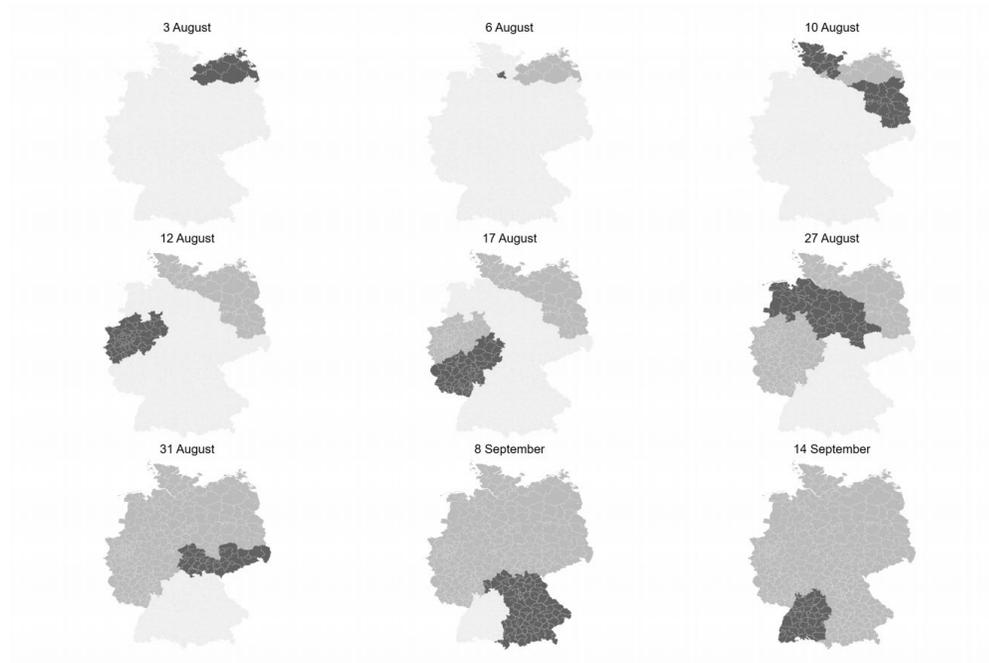


Figure 2: School Opening Dates after Summer Vacation 2020 in Germany

Note: This graph shows a map of German counties highlighting the counties in states by date of school opening after summer vacation 2020. Counties (states) highlighted in dark gray start the new school year on the respective date, while light gray indicates that they are still on summer vacation and medium gray indicates that they had already re-opened schools at an earlier date. Schools re-openings: 3 August: Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, 6 August: Hamburg, 10 August: Schleswig-Holstein, Berlin, Brandenburg, 17 August: Hestia, Rhineland-Palatinate, and Saarland, 27 August: Lower Saxony, Bremen, and Saxony-Anhalt, 31 August: Saxony and Thuringa, 8 September: Bavaria, 14 September: Baden-Wuerttemberg. Source: KMK.

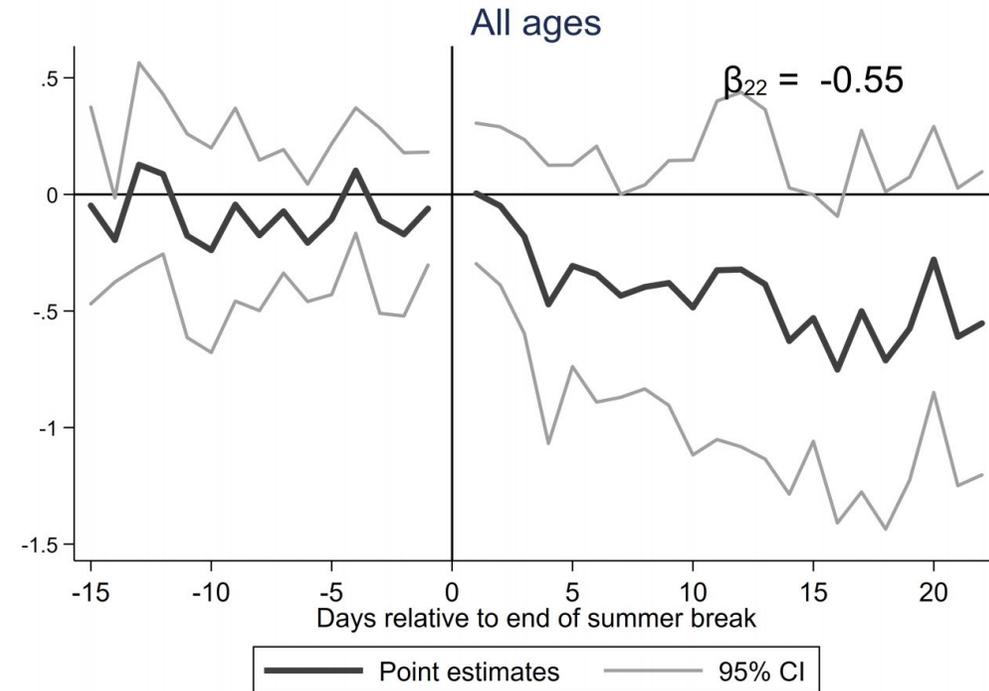


Figure 4: The Effect of the End of Summer Breaks on Confirmed Cases

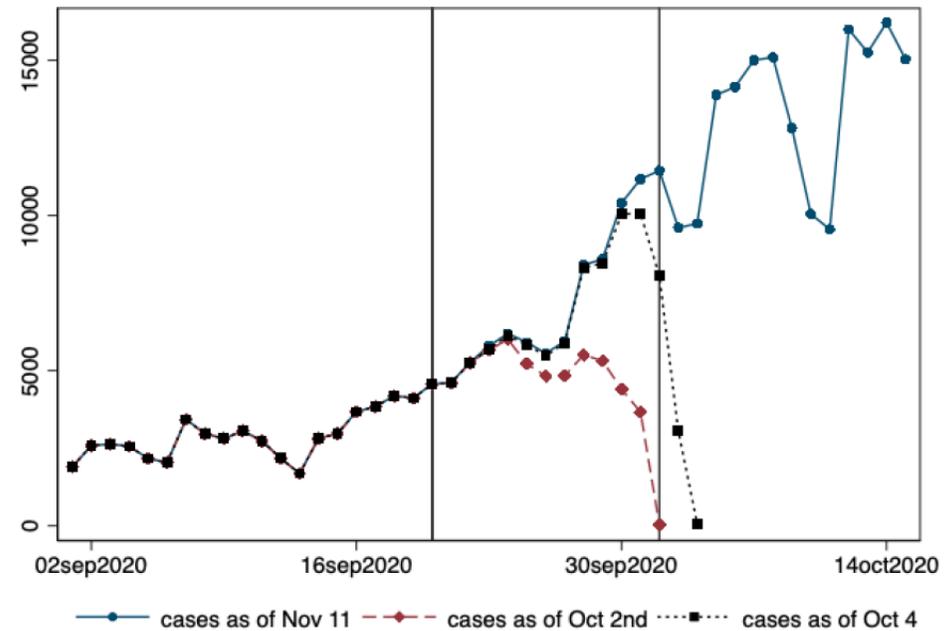
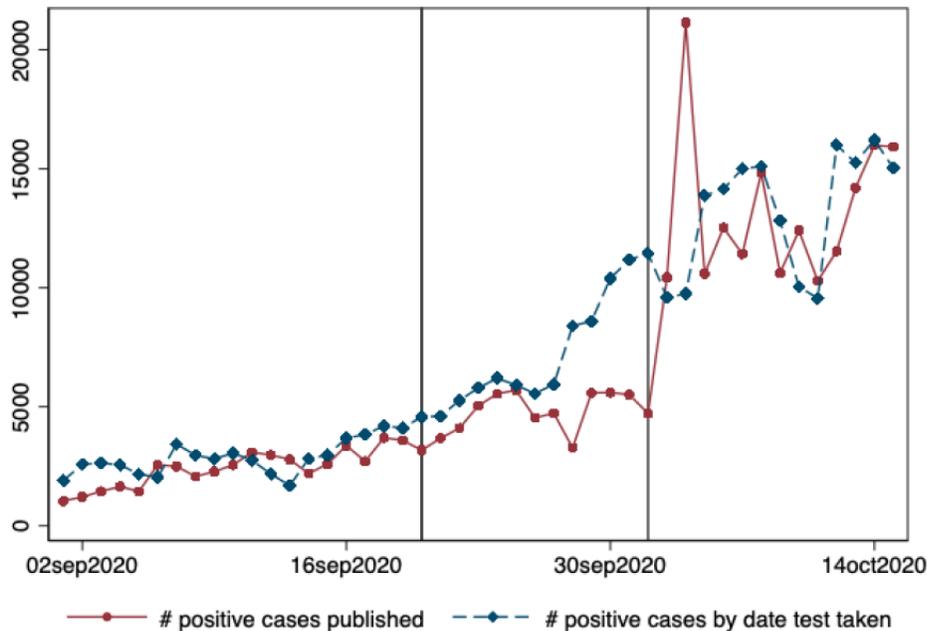
Note: This graph plots the point estimates ($\hat{\beta}_\tau, \tau \in [-15, 22]$) and corresponding 95% percent confidence intervals of the event study model as defined in Equation (1). The dependent variable is the daily count of confirmed cases per 100K population per county. The vertical line at $\tau = 0$ indicates the school opening. The regressions include fixed effects on the county and day level. Standard errors are clustered at the federal state level.

Source: Ispording, Lipfert, Pestel (IZA DP No. 13790, 2020)

Excel error in contact tracing; had to back out effect

Figure 1: Delayed contact tracing referral: Identification of delayed referral to contact tracing

Panel A: Cases by date of test & by publishing date Panel B: Identifying missing cases across vintages

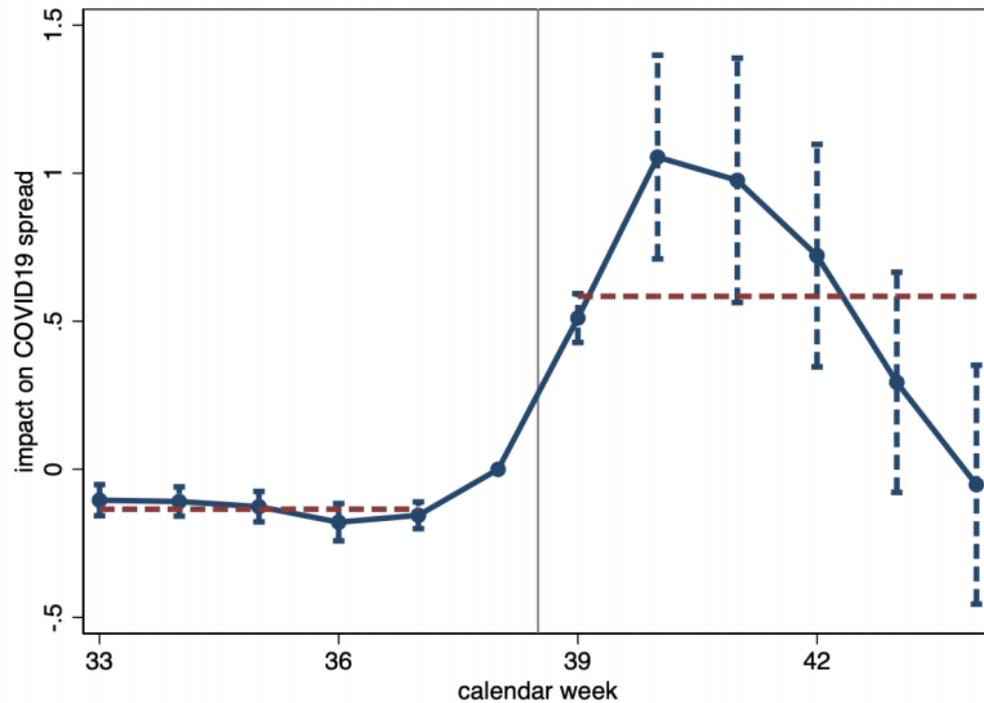


Source: Fetzer and Graeber (Warwick economics research papers series (WERPS) #1314, 2020)

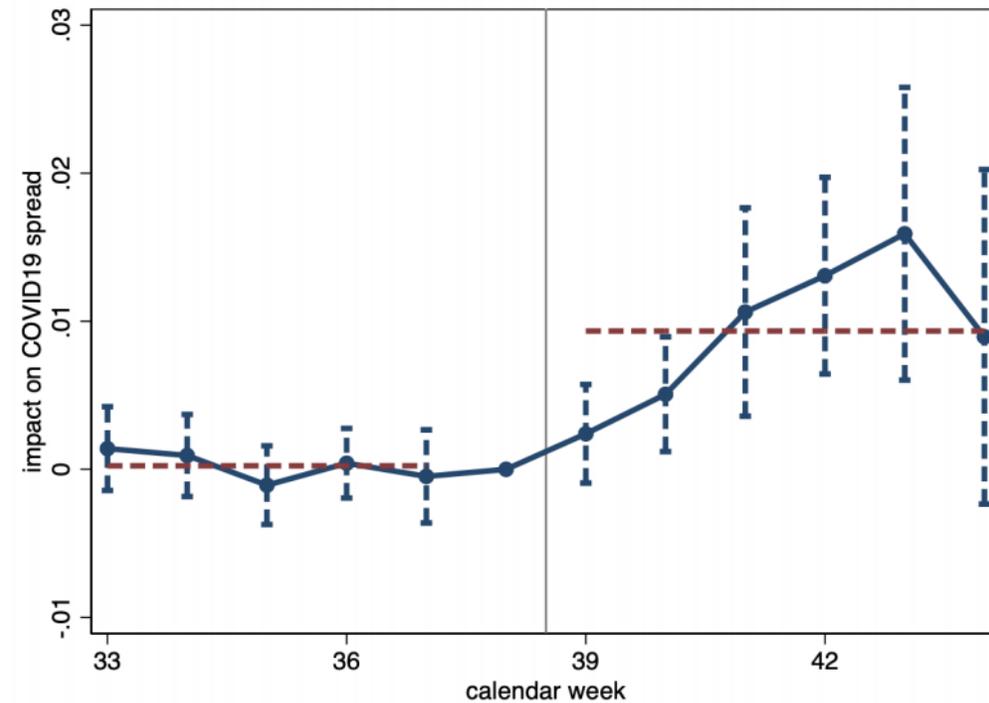
Excel error in contact tracing led to 1500 COVID deaths

Figure 2: Impact of delayed referral to contact tracing, new COVID-19 infections and deaths

Panel A: Number of new COVID-19 cases per capita



Panel B: Number of new COVID-19 deaths per capita



Source: Fetzer and Graeber (Warwick economics research papers series (WERPS) #1314, 2020)

What problems do natural experiments solve?

- Selection (treated individuals not representative)
- Omitted variables (which are correlated with treatment)
- Reverse causality (outcome can cause independent var.)
- No counterfactual (what would have happened?)

Why is this important? Causal analysis!

- Many (e.g., in medicine, epidemiology, psychology) think only real randomized control trials lead to causal results
- Then all observational studies are only “correlational”
- Then the media and public assume everything is causal
- I teach how to decide which studies to believe:
 - Don’t assume that controlling on observables always help with selection on unobservables
 - Don’t assume the counterfactual is always no effect
 - Avoid the “shoot the doctors” mentality

So how (& what) to teach: production vs. consumption



Source: Professor Belinda Sturm from <https://www.kansas.com/news/coronavirus/article244642707.html>

What do I mean by production vs. consumption?

- **Research production:** The act of participating in the creation of new research
- **Research consumption:** The act of reading and discussing existing research
- But we mostly define “student research” as the former
- Even though “research consumption” can include all
- Production also excludes students who don’t have the right skills or are in fields that lack opportunities
- Research faculty do both production & consumption and so as a producer I am best able to teach consumption

Major goal: enable *everyone* to be a research consumer

- I created courses to teach consumption at three levels:
 - ECON 177 goal: read about academic literature
 - ECON 641 goal: explain an academic paper to others
 - ECON 919 goal: absorb a large volume of academic literature
- I also teach research consumption broadly, e.g.:
 - American Public Square panels (3x)
 - Testimony before the Kansas Legislature
 - Briefed the Governor's Council on Tax Reform
 - Appearances on NPR and other podcast and TV
 - 2020 Seaver Lecture for the Humanities Program

ECON 177 is in the fabulous first year seminar program

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Seminars are taught by faculty from a range of disciplines throughout the university. Seminar topics focus on exciting and important questions that provide students with the opportunity to explore issues, gather and evaluate evidence, and develop their ideas through writing. By participating in a First-Year Seminar, students develop essential academic skills that they will use throughout their time at KU.

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KU Today

Audit effort affected by partner rotation and board inspections, study finds — *All KU News* »

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I created a class is on the Affordable Care Act

ECON 177 - The Affordable Care Act - Fall 2020

T 9:20-11:45 on Zoom

Professor David Slusky (david.slusky@ku.edu)

Office hours: T 2-4, R 9-11

Department of Economics, University of Kansas

First-year seminar goals:

- Be introduced to intellectual discovery and scholarly inquiry at the university
- Develop and inspire own intellectual curiosity
- Foster critical thinking and learning skills
- Participate in hands-on experiential learning
- Navigate the transition from high school to college

Course goals:

- Understand the policy, economics, history and politics of the ACA
- Use that content as a means to think and talk
- Be inspired to take more math, economic theory, and applied economics
- Gain insight into academic interests toward the objective of selecting of a major

Required textbooks: (You may rent or buy new/used)

- Emanuel, Ezekiel J. 2014. *Reinventing American Health Care*. New York: Public Affairs.
- Gruber, Jonathan & N. Schreiber. 2011. *Health Care Reform*. New York: Hill and Wang.

Here are some articles consumed in ECON 177

This study is forcing economists to rethink high-deductible health insurance

By Sarah Kliff | sarah@vox.com | Oct 14, 2015, 10:00am EDT

f t SHARE



Study: the US could have averted about 15,600 deaths if every state expanded Medicaid

The real impact of Republican's rejection of Medicaid expansion under Obamacare.

By Tara Golshan | Jul 23, 2019, 1:30pm EDT

f t SHARE



Source: <https://www.vox.com/2015/10/14/9528441/high-deductible-insurance-Kolstad>, <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2019/7/23/20703776/medicaid-expansion-obamacare-health-care-2020>

Here are some articles consumed in ECON 177 (cont.)

Major study suggests Medicaid work requirements are hurting people without really helping anybody

Medicaid work requirements are associated with lower enrollment and higher uninsured rates.

By Dylan Scott | @dylanScott | dylan.scott@vox.com | Jun 19, 2019, 5:00pm EDT



The first major study on the nation's first Medicaid work requirements finds that people fell off of the Medicaid rolls but didn't seem to find more work.

Since Arkansas implemented the nation's first Medicaid work requirements last year, a new study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* has found, Medicaid enrollment has fallen for working-age adults, the uninsured rate has been rising, and there has been little discernible effect on employment.

The research appears to confirm some of the warnings from Medicaid advocates who opposed the Trump administration's approval of work requirements in Arkansas and other states. People are losing Medicaid coverage, often as a result of confusion rather than failure to meet the work requirements, but they aren't finding jobs and getting insurance that way. They are simply becoming uninsured.

Source: <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2019/6/19/18691249/medicaid-work-requirements-health-care-reform-study-nejm>, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/10/upshot/irs-letter-health-insurance-fine-study.html>

The New York Times

TheUpshot

The I.R.S. Sent a Letter to 3.9 Million People. It Saved Some of Their Lives.

The study was an accident. The results show the positive effects of health insurance.



At a rally in July to support the Affordable Care Act, demonstrators displayed images of Americans who could be hurt if the law were struck down. Jonathan Ernst/Reuters

By Sarah Kliff

Published Dec. 10, 2019 Updated Dec. 13, 2019

ECON 177 project: beneficial change in health policy

- Scaffolded assignments throughout the 2nd half of term
 - Proposal with two possible topics
 - Annotated bibliography (**including one academic article**)
 - Rough draft (>1000 words)
 - Presentation (in class, with slides)
 - Final draft (<800 words)
- Happy to help students find a topic they care about
- “Too old to write a paper on a topic you don’t care about”

I also created a capstone version of labor economics

ECON 641: Labor Economics - Capstone – Spring 2020

Professor David Slusky (david.slusky@ku.edu)

Office hours: T 9-11 & R 2:20-4:20 in Snow 415C

Department of Economics, University of Kansas

Goals

- To gain a mastery of the mathematical and graphical representations of labor economics
- To be able to quantitatively evaluate and recommend public policies
- To be prepared for Econ 770 (graduate level labor economics)
- To be able to understand and communicate the essence of applied microeconomic academic research, as a capstone to the undergraduate economics major
- To satisfy KU Core Goal 6

Prerequisites: Econ 520, Econ 526, Math 116/126, and Math 526 (or equivalents in intermediate micro, econometrics, calculus, and statistics)

Required Textbook: Borjas, *Labor Economics*, McGraw Hill, 2016 (7th Ed). You may rent, buy (new/used/ebook) or use a copy on reserve at Anschutz Library. Please let me know if you ever find that all reserve copies are all in use.

Top journalists covering research only have B.A./B.S.

SARAH KLIFF

HOME BIOGRAPHY WRITING MEDIA APPEARANCES SPEAKING



BIOGRAPHY

Sarah Kliff is one of the country's leading health policy journalists, who has spent nearly a decade chronicling Washington's battle over the Affordable Care Act. Her reporting has inspired new legislation in Congress, been cited by the Supreme Court, and resulted in multiple hospitals revising their billing policies.

Sarah is an investigative reporter at the New York Times, focused on health care. She is currently investigating the high costs of coronavirus testing and treatment, and encourages patients to share any bills they've received [here](#).

Sarah grew up in Seattle and Toronto. She is a graduate of Washington University in St. Louis, where she got her start in journalism working on the campus paper. She resides in Washington, D.C. with her husband, son, and a very friendly dog named Goose.



new billing policies, and new legislative proposals in Congress and the California legislature.

At Vox, she was also the creator and host of *the Impact*, an award-winning podcast about how policy effects people.

Prior to joining Vox, Sarah covered health policy for the Washington Post, where she was a founding writer at Wonkblog, a blog dedicated to making complicated policy easily understandable. She has also covered health policy for Politico and Newsweek magazine.

Sarah's work has impact: the Supreme Court cited Sarah's work in their 2012 decision upholding the health care law. After she [broke news](#) in early 2017 that Republican legislators had exempted their own coverage from their Obamacare repeal bill, the House of Representatives took a vote to close that loophole.

She is the recipient of multiple reporting awards, including fellowships from the Association of Health Care Journalists and the Annenberg School of Journalism at the University of Southern California.

Sarah is a frequent television guest and has appeared on CBS, PBS, Fox News, CNN, and MSNBC. She enjoys public speaking and, most recently, has presented at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, the Aspen Ideas Festival, the Colorado Health Institute and the California Health Care Foundation.

Sarah grew up in Seattle and Toronto. She is a graduate of Washington University in St. Louis, where she got her start in journalism working on the campus paper. She resides in Washington, D.C. with her husband, son, and a very friendly dog named Goose.

Dylan Scott

ABOUT RESUME CLIPS AND LINKS MEDIA CONTACT

About

Dylan Scott is a policy reporter for Vox, leading the news organization's coverage of the Republican efforts to repeal and. Before graduating from the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University, he was awarded first place by the Associated Press Society of Ohio for Best Investigative Reporting for a series of stories [exposing questionable accounting practices and budget decisions](#) by the university's administration.

governing magazine. Since joining Vox, Washington, D.C., in 2011, he has covered the biggest political news of the day: Supreme Court rulings on [the Affordable Care Act](#) and [gay marriage](#), the opening of [diplomatic relations with Cuba](#), the shooting of Michael Brown [in Ferguson, Mo.](#), and [the 2016 presidential campaign](#). He has broken news on [major developments on Capitol Hill](#), interviewed the most powerful people in politics [including Vice President Joe Biden](#), and traveled across the country to [tell stories beyond the Beltway](#).



Interviewing Vice President Joe Biden in Houston, Texas. Sept. 16, 2016.

Dylan's first job out of college took him to the award-winning Las Vegas Sun in 2010, where he covered [the fallout of the Great Recession](#) in one of the country's hardest-hit metropolitan areas.

Before graduating from the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University, he was awarded first place by the Associated Press Society of Ohio for Best Investigative Reporting for a series of stories [exposing questionable accounting practices and budget decisions](#) by the university's administration.

Sources: <http://www.sarahkliff.com/biography>, <https://dylanlscott.com/>

So KU undergrads can learn the elements of a paper

1. Question
2. Hypothesis
3. Motivation—why should I care?
4. Variation—what changed?
5. Counterfactual—for whom did it not change?
6. Data
7. Results
8. Discussion—what are the consequences of this result?
9. Conclusion

E.g., consider my paper on women's health clinics



Donate

For Women In Rural Kansas, A Longer Drive Can Mean Less Health Care

By ESTHER HONIG • FEB 26, 2016

- Share
- Tweet
- Email



At a domestic violence shelter in Hays, Kansas, Leyila, right, tells shelter director Tiffany Kershner she needs to see an ob-gyn but can't afford it.

Source: Lu and Slusky (American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, 2016); <https://www.kcur.org/post/women-rural-kansas-longer-drive-can-mean-less-health-care#stream/0>

Here's how to apply this method to my paper

1. **Question:** Does access to women's health clinics affect preventive care?
2. **Hypothesis:** Yes, with decreases in access leading to decreases in care
3. **Motivation:** Preventive care is important for good health and avoiding major health conditions
4. **Variation:** Women's health clinics have closed around the country due to funding cuts
5. **Counterfactual:** But not all clinics

Source: Lu and Slusky (American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, 2016)

Here's how to apply this method to my paper (cont.)

- 6. Data:** Survey data on preventive care with respondent ZIP codes matched to quarterly data on clinic locations
- 7. Results:** A 100-mile increase in driving distance decreases preventive care rate by ~15%
- 8. Discussion:** This change could result in worse health and future health care costs and exacerbate existing health disparities
- 9. Conclusion:** Preventive care rates decrease when women's health clinics close

Source: Lu and Slusky (American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, 2016)

Students consume and present an academic paper

- Each problem includes an academic paper (11 in total)
- Students also work with me to choose a paper to present
- I ask the students to email me what they're interested in
- I then send the students 5-10 papers in that area
- The students then pick 3 as possible papers to present
- And then I pick 1 from those 3, avoiding duplicates
- “Too old to present a paper you don't care about”
- Students write their own slides that follow the 9 elements

Even my graduate class is majority consumption

ECON 919: Health Economics

Professor David Slusky (david.slusky@ku.edu)

Department of Economics, University of Kansas

Student Goals

- Master the mathematical and graphical representations used in health economics
- Build a broad and deep fluency with the classic and current health economics literatures
- Develop a research proposal that can lead to a dissertation chapter

Prerequisite: ECON 802 and ECON 818. ECON 870 recommended.

Optional Textbooks:

Health Economics, Bhattacharya, Hyde, and Tu. (BHT). 2014.

Health Economics. Sloan and Hsieh (SH). 2nd Edition. 2016.

Health Econometrics Using Stata. Deb, Norton, and Manning. 2017.

Plan

Classes in **bold** have assigned readings. Classes in underline have other assignments due. Some classes have both.

1 Introduction (2/2)

2 Overview, Fundamental Theory, and Measurement of Health (2/4)

3 Health Insurance (Optimal) (2/9)

4 Go over analytical exercise (2/11)

In each class we walk through four assigned papers

- Overview, Fundamental Theory, and Measurement of Health
- Health Insurance (Optimal)
- Selection
- Health Insurance (Applied)
- Medicare and Medicaid
- The Affordable Care Act
- Household Finances
- Health over the Business Cycle Hospitals and Competition
- Physicians, Nurses, and Malpractice
- Geographic Variation, Productivity of Spending, and International Comparisons
- Health Behaviors (Alcohol and Smoking)
- Health Behaviors (Obesity and Wellness)
- HIV/AIDS
- Pollution
- Reproductive and Child Health
- Pharma and Opioids
- Race and Health
- Machine Learning
- COVID-19

The class has other assignments to teach consumption

- The students write a mock referee report (on a current KU econ student's job market paper)
- The final exam consists of new job market paper abstracts, for which the students have to:
 - Cite 5 papers from the class that are relevant
 - Put this one in context
 - Make 3 suggestions for next steps
- We spend a whole class practicing these tasks

This class does help students with research production

- A scaffolded process that produces a research proposal:
 - Written list of five original research questions
 - Annotated bibliography for chosen question with at least 10 papers and a short paragraph (~100 words) about each
 - A 3000-word written research proposal draft
 - A presentation with slides to the whole class
- An abstract & introduction writing assignment
 - The students are given published papers without those parts
 - They then pick one and then read it and write those sections

Beyond the classroom, I gave the 2020 Seaver Lecture

32nd Annual James E. Seaver Lecture

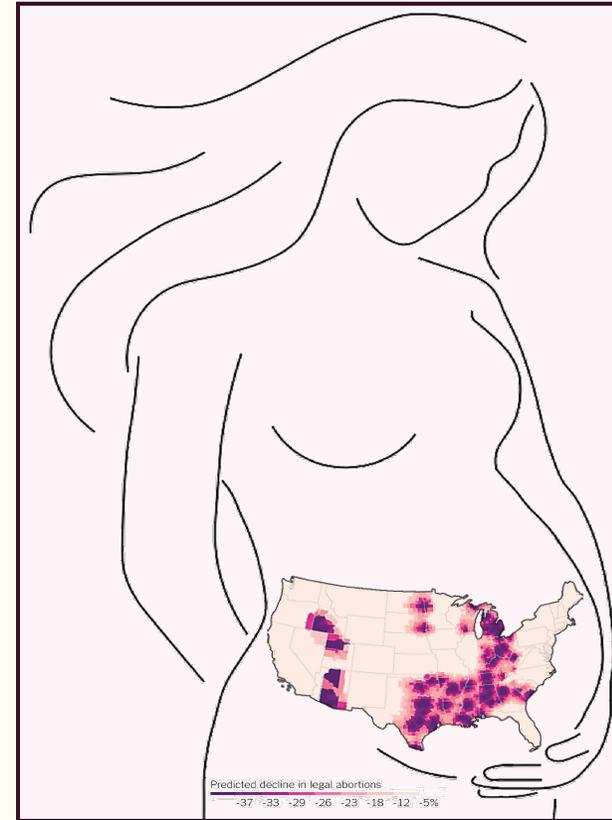
"What to Expect when You're Unexpectedly Expecting: Reproductive Rights Restrictions in Trump's America"

Presented by David Slusky
Associate Professor, Associate Chair, Director of Undergraduate Studies
Department of Economics

Wednesday, March 4th at 4:30 p.m.
Hall Center for the Humanities
Conference Hall

Sponsored by the Humanities Program and
Co-sponsored by the Hall Center for the Humanities

Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to attend University of Kansas sponsored events. If you require a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in this event, please contact the Humanities Program by Friday, February 21, 2020 at hum@ku.edu or 785-864-3011.



Where Roe v. Wade Has the Biggest Effect, NY Times.
Map Image Credit: Margot Sanger-Katz

Reproduction and mastery of destiny are ancient parts of the human condition that have often been in conflict. Modern technology, however, has diminished this conflict by giving humanity control over its reproduction and therefore also its destiny. Recently, we have seen numerous new restrictions on reproductive rights. This has led to fewer abortions, increased birth rates, less preventive care, and worsening household financial situations. We are now contemplating a landscape where abortion is completely unavailable in many parts of the country and access to contraception is severely limited. Understanding these recent consequences will help us envision what may await us.

I've also testified about research to the KS legislature

To: Chairman Gene Suellentrop and members of the Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare

From: David Slusky, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Economics, University of Kansas, and Associate Professor of Population Health (by courtesy), University of Kansas Medical Center¹

Date: January 21, 2020

RE: Health Economics Research Relevant to Senate Bill 252

Thank you, Chairman Suellentrop and Committee members for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 252, Expanding medical assistance eligibility and implementing a health insurance plan reinsurance program.

I am a health economist. The Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion has been one of the most studied government policies in the history of my field. This is primarily because the partial expansion has allowed comparisons between states that did expand and those that did not. The most recent comprehensive literature review (from August 2019) cites 324 studies.² Below I will summarize the results of the most salient of these studies, as well as several that have been released since last August.

First, Medicaid expansion, as intended, increased insurance coverage among childless adults by 3.0 percentage points, and did so without having a significant impact on employment.³ Secondly, Medicaid expansion had minimal if any impact on rates of job finding or labor force attachment.⁴ Thirdly, among low-income Medicaid beneficiaries ages 19-64, expansion reduced disruption in coverage by 4.3 percentage points, resulting in half a million fewer adults experiencing an episode of churning (i.e., switching insurance) annually.⁵

Medicaid expansion also improved household financial circumstances. It reduced the number of unpaid bills and the amount of debt sent to third-party collection agencies. Those who gained Medicaid coverage due to the ACA experienced a reduction in collection balances on average of

¹ This testimony represents my own perspective as an economist and does not necessarily represent the views of the University of Kansas.

² Antonisse, L, R Garfield, R Rudowitz, M Guth. 2019. The Effects of Medicaid Expansion under the ACA: Updated Findings from a Literature Review. Kaiser Family Foundation Issue Brief.

³ Leung, P, A Mas. 2016. Employment Effects of the ACA Medicaid Expansions. NBER Working Paper No. 22540.

⁴ Buchmueller, TC, HG Levy, RG Valletta. 2019. Medicaid Expansion and the Unemployed. NBER Working Paper No. 26553.

⁵ Goldman, AL, BD Sommers. 2020. Among Low-Income Adults Enrolled In Medicaid, Churning Decreased After The Affordable Care Act. Health Affairs 39(1): 85-93



And to the Governor's Council on Tax Reform

Governor's Council on Tax Reform

Expanding Medicaid will save lives and raise revenue

- Kansas has ~72 excess deaths/year from not expanding
- This adds up to 504 excess deaths from 2014-2020
- Biden administration will send Kansas an extra \$450 million/year for traditional Medicaid for expanding
- This is more than 2x the direct 10% cost of expansion
- Many researchers believe Kansas won't even have to pay the 10% cost due to indirect benefits of expansion
- These federal dollars will also help the state economy



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I hope I've shown how I teach research consumption

- Everyone can (& should!) consume economics research
- Add reading NYT's Upshot or Vox or Slate to your day
- Sign up for emails of new NBER & IZA working papers
- Lots more on my website (slusky.ku.edu), including
 - Syllabi for all my classes
 - Recordings of podcast and panel appearances
 - Slides for public lectures
- And please email me (david.slusky@ku.edu) and tell me what you're interested in and I'll recommend papers!



Questions?

Thank you!

