

European Job Market Morning

David Schindler (Tilburg University)

August 26, 2022



EUROPEAN ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION
Developing and Applying Economics as a Science in Europe

PART III

Your Job Market Package

Job Market Package

What does the job market package contain?

Mandatory

- Job Market Paper
- CV
- 3 Letters of Recommendation (LoR)

Optional, common

- Cover Letter
- 4th LoR
- Teaching Statement
- Research Statement

Optional, less common

- Teaching Evaluations
- 5th LoR
- Diversity Statement
- Other Papers

Job Market Paper

Job Market Paper (JMP)

- Purpose: To showcase **your** ability as an academic economist
 - **Novel and interesting research question(s)** with potentially far-reaching implications (for research or applications)
 - **Use of state-of-the-art techniques** to answer research question as convincingly as possible (to show you've thought of everything and you have mastered the methodology).
- Important: Hiring committees reward *creativity* (conditional on *quality*)!
Paper needs to reflect **your** ability of finding ideas!
 - Pick your best paper, *ideally* it's single-authored.
 - Avoid papers with senior co-authors (especially advisors).
 - Conditional on quality: pick the paper with the fewest coauthors. But, trade-off: Really bad single-authored paper versus top co-authored paper: pick co-authored paper.

Example: Bad & Good (fictitious) Job Market Papers

Abstract

Many papers have investigated the effects of technology on growth. In this paper, I provide correlational evidence from South Sudan that confirms the patterns previously found in the literature for other papers: technology enhances growth. I compare the findings in magnitude to the prior literature and observe effect sizes of half the size commonly observed. Future research should investigate the causes for why the case of South Sudan is so different.

Abstract

How technology affects growth is a central question of economic development. I provide novel evidence from an experiment in South Sudan on the underlying channel. By varying the indirect costs of technology adoption, I can show that adoption of technology is facilitated mainly by information flows through adapting firms' networks, rather than through supply side constraints. My estimates and a structural model suggest that a simple central information platform can increase technology adoption and thus growth in developing nations by almost 50%.

Tips for selecting your JMP

- Ask your advisor(s) and other graduate students which paper to choose
- If you're still early in the Ph.D.: start working on JMP worthy ideas as early as possible, seek constant feedback from others
- Think about ways to make your papers a) more interesting for a general audience, b) less susceptible to alternative explanations
- Approach other people in your field and ask for input/feedback (sounds daunting, but many people will be open to short meetings)

How to write the introduction of your JMP

- At the interview selection stage, committees will likely (at most) read your introduction.
- Keep your introduction to 4-6 pages and make sure it's SUPER polished.
- Polishing may require dozens or more of writing iterations, plan enough time before submitting!
- Getting feedback from peers, professors, everyone who owes you a favor!
- Same holds for the abstract.

Abstract of your JMP

- 100-200 words (closer to the former)
- Make the abstract all about your **contribution** and **findings**
- Start with 1 sentence to set the stage/motivate your (broad) RQ. Example:
 - Why are some countries rich and others poor?
 - There has been a long standing interest in why women shy away from competition.
 - Can wealth taxation reduce income inequality?
- Follow with 1 or at most 2 sentences on “what you do”. Example:
 - In a field experiment, I analyze if insurance take-up increases if participants observe the insurance choice of a peer.
- Describe 1 or 2 most important findings. Example:
 - My model shows that media concentration leads to increased revenue of 50% at the cost of 20% lower consumer welfare.
- Lay out the most important implications of your findings. This should be about 50% of your abstract.

Introduction of your JMP

- Your JMP introduction usually has a strict ordering:
 - Part I: “What is the general topic and why is it important?”
 - Part II: “What is it that I do?”
 - Part III: “What do I find?”
 - Part IV: “How does it relate to what we already know?”
- Part II & III are sometimes intertwined, make sure the reading flow is natural.
- Don’t have a dedicated “related literature” section, but instead weave all important related literature into Part IV of the introduction

Introduction of your JMP: Part I

- Part I is usually one paragraph long (sometimes two).
- Purpose: Convince reader that this area of research is important and generate interest for what's to come.
- If you span a story arch too narrow, the reader may believe the topic to be too unimportant to have a major academic impact.
- If your motivation is too broad, the reader may believe that your study won't have external validity.
- Use numbers to stress the importance of the topic, example:
 - Every year, 10,000 Americans lose their life to gun violence, more than in any other advanced economy.
 - In 2015, over one million asylum seekers landed on the shores of the Mediterranean to seek refuge in Europe.
- Mention the importance of the topic in scientific and policy discussions.
- Discuss briefly what limits the prior literature on this question or what additional insights you bring to the table! (if applicable)

Introduction of your JMP: Part I

- One very good (actual) example:

1 Introduction

The glass ceiling—the barrier that females and minorities face in obtaining upper-level positions—has been enduring. Despite decades of progress in labor force participation and university enrollment, women remain underrepresented in top corporate leadership positions. For example, in the S&P 1500 companies, women make up 40% of the workforce but hold only 6% of CEO positions (Hindlian et al., 2018). This gender gap widens at each step of the corporate ladder (Lean In and McKinsey & Company, 2020). To the extent that managerial talent is equally distributed across genders, the underrepresentation of women in executive roles can be indicative of talent misallocation (Hsieh et al., 2016).¹ Due to the potential aggregate consequences of female underrepresentation in executive positions, understanding the barriers to advancement along the corporate pipeline is critical.

Introduction of your JMP: Part II (& Part III)

- Part II is mostly a high-level description of what you do in the paper, often already presenting the most important results (Part III).
- Part II is between 2-5 paragraphs long typically.
- Don't discuss unimportant details (e.g., who provided the data set, which control variables you use, what technique you use to determine the model equilibrium).
- Focus on bringing the most important steps of your paper (Part II) & the results (Part III) together.
- The goal is to give the reader a basic understanding of what you're doing in the paper (this is the most descriptive and least persuasive part).
- For actual examples check out JMP's of candidates in recent years.

(Actual) example sentences for Parts II & III

- In this paper, we exploit one of the largest aggregate shocks to U.S. firearm demand to study the effects of handgun purchase delay laws.
- In a first step, we show that the existence of purchase delays led to a relative reduction in handgun sales during the six months after the 2012 Presidential election and the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School.
- During this period, fear of more restrictive gun control legislation and higher perceived need for self-defense capabilities led to record sales of firearms across the entire United States (Vox, 2016; CNBC, 2012).
- We use a difference in differences (DiD) framework, comparing handgun sale background checks (BGCs) in states with handgun purchase delays to states without such delays during the six-month window of increased firearm demand. Our baseline results indicate that states with purchase delay laws witnessed a 7-8% relative decrease in handgun sales. Differences in gun popularity and other types of firearm legislation cannot explain these results.

Introduction of your JMP: Part IV

- In Part IV you discuss your contribution relative to the existing literature.
- Make sure to avoid listing incremental contributions, say how you expand our knowledge frontier!
- Typical organization:
 - Two to four paragraphs with groups of related papers.
 - State your contribution and improvement over each of them.
- **Example:** We contribute to the small literature discussing experimenter demand effects (Zizzo, 2010; Fleming and Zizzo, 2014; Shmaya and Yariv, 2016), demand characteristics (Orne, 1962), and obedience to the experimenter (Milgram, 1963). We are aware of few attempts to directly assess the empirical importance of experimenter demand, and a key contribution of our paper is to provide a general framework for studying demand effects and evidence from a wide range of standard tasks.

More JMP tips

- Pick an informative title. Avoid puns in the title.
- Include a hyperlink at the top that links to the most current version (deposited on your website).
- Use font size 12.
- Make sure your writing is not too prosaic.
- Keep in mind the goal: to persuade the reader of the potential and quality of your work!

CV

CV

- CVs often follow a standard form. If your institution doesn't provide you with a template, check out other candidates' websites!
- What to list:
 - Education
 - Research output (with abstract), JMP goes first
 - Areas of interest
 - Teaching experience
 - Professional experience (if relevant only)
 - Awards, grants (if applicable)
 - Names of references
 - Contact information!!! (incl phone number, email address, website)

Reference Letters

Reference Letters

- You'll need 3 LoRs, some people have 4 and rarely do I see 5 LoRs.
- Rule: Beyond 3 LoRs, only add letters if they contain (helpful) information not contained in the other letters.
- Have an honest conversation with your letter writers about your preferences and what they can do for you.
- Try to get an idea how strong of a letter they will write; ask them for their experience writing letters (and resulting placements).
- If you can choose between several letter writers: ask around who writes the most supportive (former grad students, your advisors)

Reference Letters

- The language in reference letters is very specific. Your letter writers not using the right language may disqualify you.
- Example:
 - “X was born to be a researcher! His/her achievements match and exceed those of anyone I have encountered in my 18 years at School Y.”
 - “X learned very quickly and produced a very nice paper.”
- Female candidates: be aware of gender bias in these letters! Ask your letter writers if they are aware!
- **IMPORTANT:** Tell your letter writers if you only apply selectively!

Cover Letter

Cover Letter

- Many European institutions will look for clues in your cover letter that you are interested in them.
- Mention any ties to the country/city/university (e.g., speaking a language, prior experience, family nearby).
- Name a few faculty members in the department who work on related topics (this may be overkill for all schools if you apply broadly, so do it for a subsample).
- Because faculty quality is very heterogenous across European departments, emphasize if a department is very strong in your area!
- Keep cover letter to one page if possible (never more than 1.5)!

Teaching & Research Statement

Teaching & Research Statement

- A teaching statement is usually 2 pages long and contains some info on
 - Your teaching philosophy (quite often nice sounding BS, “I put students first...” etc)
 - Evidence of you implementing this philosophy effectively: quotes from student teaching evaluations or other outcomes
- A research statement is usually 2-3 pages long. It groups your existing works in broader “fields” (usually 2) and explains how they are connected (thus making clear what your broader agenda is)
- Both of these documents may not receive much attentions by many universities, but some may care more about these, so make sure they’re carefully crafted!

Other documents

Other documents

- Teaching evaluations: Only submit those if they paint you in a good light (or if req'd)
- Diversity statement: rarely required in Europe. If you need one stress how you can contribute to diversity (either through innate characteristics or actions you take)
- Other papers: Only include them if they help strengthen your profile (or the employer requests it). The former is very rarely the case!

Video Presentation

- It has become more common to make a professional video of your JMP Spiel.
- Only do it if you can produce a professional product! (No cell phone cam blurry recordings)
- Do it once you perfected your Spiel, not before!
- (I have a hard time assessing the value of such a video. In the past hiring cycle, I deliberately avoided watching the videos of candidates we interviewed.)

The whole package

- Have the package ready and submitted by early to mid November, in no case after Thanksgiving (Thursday, 24th of November this year).
Track deadlines of job ads!
- Have your website ready with a professional picture and all papers + CV ready for download
- Don't use Dropbox or Google Drive to store documents, some organizations (esp. in industry) block these!
- Next stage: Interviews!!!

Signals

- The AEA allow you to send signals to 2 employers, reaffirming your interest (even if employer advertises elsewhere).
- Use them for schools you'd really like to work for and you think they would not invite you otherwise (hard to figure out)!
- Either:
 - Low-ranked departments who might think that you're too good.
 - Departments who are in doubt if you're good enough for them.
- Obviously: Don't waste a precious signal on employers that will (not) invite you anyway.

Further readings

- All resources used/discussed in these slides (and more) can be found here:

<https://sites.google.com/view/econgradadvice/home>

