The Role of Conferences on the Pathway to Academic Impact: Evidence from a Natural Experiment*

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Abstract

We provide evidence for the effectiveness of conferences in promoting academic impact, by exploiting the cancellation – due to 'Hurricane Isaac' – of the 2012 American Political Science Association Annual Meeting. We assembled a dataset of approximately 31,000 articles and quantified conference effects using difference-in-differences regressions. Within two years of being presented at the conference, articles receive an additional 15-17 downloads, and their likelihood of being cited increases by five percentage points. These advantages are permanent. We decompose these effects by authorship and provide an account of the underlying mechanisms.

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1 Introduction

Modern societies commit considerable resources to academic research, and of these resources academics generally invest a significant proportion in attending (and organising) conferences and similar gatherings.[1] But is this proportion being well spent? Though conferences feature prominently in the dissemination strategies for most academic projects, it is striking that there is little existing scientific evidence for, or direct measurement of, the effectiveness of such meetings in promoting the impact of academic work.

A main reason for this deficiency lies in a hard to escape identification problem. In general, one does not have a compelling counterfactual for the papers presented in any given conference. An ideal test of efficacy would entail deliberate randomization of paper selection for a scientific meeting.[2] As an alternative to such an intervention, in this paper, we exploit a *natural experiment*: the last-minute cancellation, due to an act of nature ("Hurricane Isaac"), of a very large conference: the 2012 American Political Science Association (APSA) Annual Meeting.

The APSA meeting gathers close to 3,000 presenters every year, from more than 700 institutions. By the time of its cancellation in 2012, the conference program had been fully arranged and was compositionally indistinguishable from previously occurring editions, and there was therefore a unique opportunity to identify conference effects. We assembled a new dataset comprising 30,978 conference papers scheduled to be presented between 2009 and 2012, and we matched these to outcomes collected over the next four years from the Social Science Research Network (SSRN) and Google Scholar: articles' downloads and citations, respectively.

To quantify conference effects, we adopt a difference-in-differences approach. We examine how outcome patterns change in 2012 (first difference) in the APSA meeting series versus in a comparator meeting series (second difference): a similarly large and significant conference in the same academic field (the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting). In our two indicators of visibility - downloads and citations - we detect large and statistically significant conference effects. An article being presented in the conference gains, on average, 15-17 downloads over the subsequent year, and the likelihood of its becoming cited within two years increases by

[1] The American Economic Association advertised close to 300 meetings in 2014, and in the field of medical science there is an estimated 100,000 meetings per year (Ioannidis, 2012).

[2] One paper does achieve this: Blau et al. (2010) evaluate the impacts of *CeMENT* – a mentoring workshop for female assistant professors, at which participants also have a chance of having a working paper discussed by a small group of peers. However, to the extent that Blau et al. (2010) hint at any generalizability, their suggestions are with respect to other mentoring interventions rather than to other conference settings.

about five percentage points. These gains are long-lasting, and the estimated effects are robust to several econometric specifications, including covariates for author fixed-effects (presented in the Appendix).

In principle, at least two different mechanisms could be operating. One is an *advertisement effect*. The conference presentation advertises a paper to a session audience, who may in turn go on to spread the word about the paper further. Another mechanism is a *maturation effect*. The process of making a presentation, and of reflecting on the presentation and on any feedback received, potentially improves a paper and encourages its progression to more visible forms: being posted online, or published. These mechanisms connect with two important strands in the literature of economics of science. The advertisement effect aligns with work, such as McCabe and Snyder 2015, Gargouri et al. 2010, Evans and Reime 2009, on 'open knowledge'. This literature to date has focused mainly on the dissemination benefits of, for example, open access and online publication. On the other hand, the maturation effect aligns with the growing literature on 'peer effects' in research production (e.g. Azoulay et al. 2010, Agrawal et al, 2014, Borjas and Doran 2015, Waldinger 2010, 2012).

As an alternative identification strategy, and to help distinguish between mechanisms, we construct a measure of 'expected session audience' within the APSA meeting.[3] We test whether articles with a larger conference audience were the ones more negatively affected by the 2012 APSA meeting cancellation. In the case of downloads, the predicted conference impacts are that every 13 session attendees generate one download of the article presented in the 15 months following the conference. We present several econometric specifications and robustness checks to ensure the validity of our identification strategy: i.e. that we are not capturing other factors such as unobservable heterogeneity related to articles' download prospects or changes in the profession's demand or supply for research themes, instead of conference effects.[4]

In addition, we ask: *who* benefits from presenting in conferences? Does the gain mainly accrue to already-established academics or to less-known and newcomer authors? The answer is not obvious. One supposition might be that conferences are particularly valuable for less-established

[3] Session attendance per se is not observed. Our 'expected audience' measure depends positively on the number of other conference papers in the same theme (i.e. because participants attend sessions that are closely related to their own work) and negatively on the number of articles in this same theme being presented in parallel (because these are competing for the same time-slot audience).

[4] Also, in other specifications, presented in the Appendix, we consider other possible correlates for session attendance. Papers that were allocated to the first session of the meeting (which is often perceived as ill-attended), and papers scheduled to be presented in competition (in a different session, but in the same theme and same time-slot) with a paper presented by a famous author, were similarly less affected by the 2012 cancellation.

authors as a means to advertise their work. A countervailing supposition might be that scholars with an existing reputation benefit by attracting large audiences within the conference, while less-known authors find their presentations less-attended and therefore less effective. In other words, conferences could plausibly either mitigate or exacerbate any "famous-get-famous effect" (or "Matthew effect").[5]

On downloads – the more preliminary measure of visibility – we find stronger effects among less visible authors (particularly, authors with no previous articles posted in SSRN). But the statistically significant conference effects on citations are more general. This distinction along with other evidence detailed in Section 3 supports a conclusion that while conferences succeed through the advertisement mechanism in expanding articles' early readership, it is rather the maturation effect that lies behind the impact of conferences in increasing citations.

Our findings give scientific corroboration to the common perception among research funders and institutions that conferences play a significant role in disseminating and improving academic work. These results are consistent with correlations found in previous empirical work,[6] but - to the best of our knowledge - this study is the first to have used quasi-experimental evidence to estimate the benefits of conferences and in this sense is wholly novel within the existing literature.

In addition, the evidence in this paper points to the relevance of peer exposure for academic work at an early, unpublished stage.[7] Conferences lead to the improvement and progression of academic papers, due to peer feedback or the authors' own preparation in expectation of peer exposure. This in turn affects significantly – by 5 percentage points – the chance of articles ever becoming cited.

The remainder of the paper is developed as follows. In Section 2, we explain the data and we present the results in Section 3. In Section 4 we conclude.

[5] See Merton (1968), Azoulay et al. (2013).

[6] See for example, Winnik et al. (2012); Galang et al. (2011); Lee et al. (2012); Toma et al. (2006). In these studies a selection effect (the extent to which the conference committee selects for papers that are likely to have greater impact) is likely to be a confounder to any conference effect.

[7] For consonant results on the significance of "initial conditions" – in determining academics' careers – see Oyer (2006).

2 Data

2.1 The American Political Science Association and the Midwest Political Science Association Meetings

In investigating the effect of conferences, our analysis focuses on a specific conference: the annual meeting organized by the American Political Science Association (APSA). This meeting occurs in the last week of August or the first week of September (always on the American Labor Day weekend), and comprises four days of presentations of panels, posters, workshops, evening sessions and roundtables.

The 2012 APSA meeting was due to take place in New Orleans and was scheduled to start on August 30. However, it was cancelled at less than 48 hours' notice due to the approach of "Hurricane Isaac".[8] By the time of this cancellation the conference program was complete and publically available. We show, in Table 1, that the program was compositionally similar to that in previous APSA meetings, the fractions of participants by institution tier being essentially indistinguishable from those in the 2009-2011 meetings, as shown in columns 1 and 2.[9] We therefore use the cancellation as a 'natural experiment' to estimate various 'conference effects'.

In the main diff-in-diff analysis we use, as a baseline for APSA articles, papers accepted at a comparator conference: the Midwest Political Science Association (MPSA) Annual Meeting. The APSA and the MPSA are professional associations of political science scholars in the United States. Both associations publish leading journals, *The American Political Science Review* and *The American Journal of Political Science*, respectively. Their Annual Meetings are the largest conferences in the field and are similar in profile and format, though the MPSA meeting has a larger number of presenting papers than the APSA: 4,700 versus 3,000 presenting papers, on average. The diff-in-diff approach that we are using controls for systematic differences across conferences, such as different standards for article acceptance. Moreover, the MPSA conference

[8] The synoptic history for Hurricane Isaac - see http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/data/tcr/AL092012_Isaac.pdf - traces back to an atmospheric trough that started developing on August 16-17, and manifested to a 'tropical storm' by August 21. A state of emergency was declared for Louisiana on August 26.

[9] This is notwithstanding an early campaign against holding the conference in Louisiana (due to the state's refusal to recognize same sex marriages), within which some academics advocated a boycott. Potentially, this campaign could have introduced some selection, jeopardizing our identification strategy. Table A1 in the Appendix provides an additional descriptive of participants' characteristics, and like in Table 1, the data does not support the hypothesis of selection. Moreover, we conducted the regression analysis at the author-article level and including controls for author fixed effects and we detected similar, statistically significant impacts under this set of controls. These results are reported in the Appendix in Tables A5-A7.

takes place five months before the APSA conference, so there is no possibility that cancellation of the 2012 APSA meeting affected in any way the profile of papers at the 2012 MPSA meeting. (Once again, see Table 1 and Table A1 in the Appendix).

The key identification assumption is that, had the 2012 APSA conference taken place, outcome differences between the 2012 papers and the 2009-11 papers would have been the same as for the MPSA papers. This could be violated if the time trend in articles' outcomes differs by author characteristics, such as affiliation, and these characteristics in turn differ between the MPSA and APSA conferences. We test and address this issue by reporting results with and without a large set of controls, and by controlling for any conference-specific time trend.

Table 1

As a remedy for the 2012 cancellation, the APSA sent a hard copy of the programme to all participants, and of course the programme was made available online. It is therefore possible that authors (notwithstanding the cancellation) gained some visibility. Moreover, one might suppose that some authors would have tried to compensate for the cancellation by attending alternative conferences. To the extent of these possibilities, and as we note in our conclusion, the estimates we derive may be viewed as a lower bound for the conference effect.

2.2 Sample and Sources

We assembled a dataset of papers presented in the APSA and MPSA Meetings from 2009-2012, and the corresponding outcomes. As the MPSA meeting precedes the APSA meeting by five months, we conduct our analysis using outcomes collected five months earlier for MPSA articles than for APSA articles. We focus on the performance of articles presented in panel sessions (which concentrate most of the participants). In both meetings, panel sessions are 1 hour and 45 minutes long and usually have four presenting papers, one chair and one or two discussants.

We collected titles of all APSA articles, comprising 12,094 presented papers. For the MPSA, we have two groups of articles. The first and main group is a random sample of 20% of all papers presented in the MPSA meeting from 2009-2012, comprising 3,415 articles, for which we searched for all outcomes. The second includes the entire list in the MPSA program, containing 18,891 articles. We obtained this list later on, and therefore only obtained later outcomes for the

full list.[10] Our datasets - derived from the conferences' online programs - include, for each article, the title, authorship, and each author's affiliation. They also include the session within which the article was due to be presented, and information on the theme, day and time of each session.

We collected articles' outcomes from two sources: the Social Science Research Network (SSRN) and Google Scholar. From the SSRN, we collected articles' downloads: 15 months after the 2012 conferences and then subsequently at 12-month intervals thereafter. For convenience, we shall refer to these observations as '1 year', '2 years' and '3 years' after the 2012 conferences. From Google Scholar, we collected citation counts recorded 24 months and 48 months after the 2012 MPSA and APSA conferences (in April and September, 2014 and 2016).[11]

The SSRN downloads outcome we use is measured by the number of times a paper has been delivered by the SSRN to an interested party either electronically or as a Purchased Bound Hard Copy. At the working paper stage, this is the most-used indicator for visibility and (though SSRN also records articles' views and citations) is the primary measure used in SSRN's ranking of authors and papers. In our analysis, we trimmed 5% of the sample to exclude outliers. Since SSRN downloads were found only for articles deliberately posted in that outlet, one concern might be that this in turn might introduce some selection issue. We ameliorate this by controlling for covariates including the date the article was first posted in SSRN, the number of authors, and various author characteristics: the aggregate number of SSRN citations by the article's authors, whether one of the authors has a previous paper posted in SSRN, the earliest year that an author posted a paper in SSRN, and the proportion of authors in the conference article that have at least one citation, at least five citations, and at least one previously posted paper in SSRN. We gathered this information also from SSRN: in total, we collected data from 947,000 SSRN articles posted from 1996 to 2015, authored by a scholar that during this time had a paper the series "Political Science Network". (For each article, SSRN reports the date it was first posted and accumulated

[10] When we started this project, the publicly available MPSA data was only published in early PDF versions. We had research assistants transcribing the sessions by hand, but only for a (random) sample. The randomization occurred as follows: The MPSA has between 60 and 63 sessions for each day-time slot. We randomly selected sixteen sessions in each day-time slot, and collected information on session characteristics (time and day) and all articles and participants in each of these sessions. Later, we obtained the electronic version of the MPSA Programs, for which we thank Arthur Lupia and Will Morgan for their help.

[11] SSRN is a leading website repository for academic working papers in the social sciences, boasting over 241,000 authors and more than 1.7 million users. Authors upload their papers without charge, and any paper an author uploads is then downloadable for free. At the time of the conference, papers due to be presented are largely unpublished, and SSRN and Google Scholar provide good means of tracking such papers' impact. Visibility manifests as downloads (on SSRN) far more rapidly than as citations. In terms of citations, Google Scholar has the advantage for our purposes (over other sources, such as the Web of Science) of recording citations to working papers made both by working papers and by published papers.

donwloads to date.) We assembled this information at the author level and linked it to our main dataset at the article level, the merge being based on authors' first and last name. We conducted several checks to ensure that this level identifies uniquely conference authors with some previous history in SSRN. We crossed this information with unique SSRN author identifiers. For all matches, we checked by hand all authors with likely common names: those whose combination of first and last name is associated with more than one middle initial in the conference dataset.

There are significant challenges associated with tracking unpublished papers. The titles of pre-published papers often change over time and indeed authors' projects can develop, evolve, divide or combine in ways that mean one cannot objectively say whether a specific working paper is the same paper that was presented at a conference or not. In order to increase our chances of finding conference articles, our main search was made based on authorship and an abbreviated form of each article's title. Our initial search recorded information from the first three Google Scholar hits.[12] We developed an algorithm (explained in the Appendix) to verify title similarity between the papers discovered by the search and the conference paper.

In constructing the citation outcome, we retained only the highest hit (among the discovered articles) that (a) was verified by the algorithm as a title-match, and (b) had exactly the same authorship as the conference paper. If none of the first three Google Scholar hits were thereby retained, we considered the paper as 'not found on Google Scholar' and as having zero Google Scholar citations. To check the accuracy of our sample, two research assistants conducted manual checks on 900 randomly chosen articles (a sample approximating 5% of our full dataset). From this sample, 98.5% of the articles identified on SSRN, and 96.6% of the articles identified on Google Scholar, were considered correct.

We conducted a later search (including all APSA and MPSA papers) for 2015 SSRN downloads, that was instead based on the paper full title. This turned out to be, indeed, a more restrictive criteria, but it nevertheless achieved the goal of increasing the size of the MPSA control group and therefore confirmed the robustness of results for the 20% MPSA sample in Table 3.[13]

Table 2 presents summary statistics for all variables considered in the main regressions and in the robustness checks, and for all three main samples. Panel A shows that two years after

[12] In our auditing, we found that, if a conference paper could be found on Google Scholar, then in more than 90% of the cases it did so in the first three hits.

[13] We found 407 fewer APSA papers than under the previous search using authorship and a title abbreviation. This is visible in Table 2 in Panels B and C.

the 2012 APSA Meeting, 10.8 percent of papers had accumulated at least one Google Scholar citation; 4.3 and 2.4 percent had accumulated at least 5 and 10 citations, respectively. On average, there are 1.37 authors by paper of whom 16.5 percent are affiliated to a Top 10 institution, 41 percent to an institution between Top 10-100 and 42 percent to an institution outside the Top 100. Panels B and C report the summary statistics for variables in the SSRN samples. Panel B reports for papers whose outcomes are observed for the three consecutive years after the 2012 APSA Meeting, and Panel C for papers whose search included all APSA and MPSA articles. There is close resemblance between the characteristics in both samples. Altogether, focusing on the SSRN sample in Panel C, the automated search found 2,287 APSA articles and 495 MPSA articles in the SSRN.[14]

Table 2

3 Results

We present several tests for the effects of conferences on articles' academic visibility. We begin by examining a more preliminary measure of impact: the conference effect on downloads. We find a conference effect, on the number of accumulated downloads, that endures over the three years following the cancellation of the 2012 APSA meeting. Then we examine the conference effect on likelihood of accumulating citations. We find that a conference presentation increases the likelihood of achieving at least 1, 2, 5 or 10 citations over a two year period. This advantage fades slightly after four years, but remains significant in determining the chance of an article ever being cited. Then, we test for heterogeneous effects by authorship and provide evidence for the underlying mechanisms.

3.1 The Effect of Conferences on Articles' Downloads

To quantify the effect of conferences, we adopt a difference-in-differences approach, considering the sample of articles in the programs of the APSA and MPSA Annual Meetings. In the treatment

[14] A main reason for finding a larger fraction of APSA than MPSA articles is that the APSA encourage accepted authors to post their articles in the SSRN APSA Annual Meeting Series, while there is no SSRN working paper series for the MPSA meeting. To account for this fact in the Appendix and as will be further explained in the next section, we report results for a propensity score sample that includes only APSA papers most resembling the control group of MPSA papers.

group are articles that were to be presented in the cancelled 2012 APSA meeting. We test the hypothesis that articles in the treatment group have reduced academic visibility, compared with articles that were scheduled to be presented in conferences that took place.

In Table 3, we present unconditional difference-in-differences in the average number of downloads for APSA and MPSA articles for years in which both conferences took place (2009-2011) and the year in which the APSA meeting was cancelled (2012). Panels A, B and C show downloads recorded one year, two years and three years respectively after the 2012 conferences. In all panels, it is noticeable that the difference in outcomes between 2012 and previous years is larger for APSA than for MPSA articles, suggesting a conference effect. The difference-in-differences for the number of downloads is -16.7 in Panel A, -20.9 in Panel B and -17.7 in Panel C.

Table 3

Next, we present our estimates, adding controls. We estimate (1):

$$Y_{iT} = \alpha + \beta_1 (APSA \cdot 2012)_i + \beta_2 APSA_i + \sum_{t=2010}^{2012} \theta_t [t_i = 1] + \lambda \mathbf{X}_i + \nu_{iT} \quad (1)$$

where, *i* indexes article and *t* indexes year. Y_{iT} is the outcome observed in time T, $APSA_i$ is a dummy indicating whether the article is in the APSA Meeting Program, $\sum_{t=2010}^{2012} \theta_t [t_i = 1]$ are conference year dummies, and $APSA \cdot 2012$ is an indicator for whether the article is in the 2012 APSA meeting program. The vector of covariates $\mathbf{X}_i$ includes author and article characteristics and ν_{iT} is a random term. The conference impact is revealed by the coefficient β_1.

Table 4, columns 1-4 show regression results when using the random (twenty-percent) sample of MPSA articles. Columns 5 and 6 use information from all MPSA and APSA articles. In column 1, the dependent variable is the number of downloads recorded one year after the 2012 conferences. We control for several characteristics that can determine the academic potential of the conference paper, such as authors' affiliation fixed effects and for number of authors. As proxies for authors' experience, we consider the aggregate number of SSRN citations by all article i authors, whether one of the authors has a previous paper posted in SSRN and the earliest year that a paper was posted in SSRN (relative to the year of the conference attended), among all authors of article i. We also add covariates related to the composition of the authorship team: the proportion of authors in

article i that have at least one citation, at least five citations and have posted at least one previous SSRN paper. To control for timing effects, in addition to the conference year dummies, we added linear and quadratic covariates for the number of days the article has been posted in SSRN.[15] For this specification, the size of the diff-in-diff coefficient is -16.9, but is not statistically significant.

In column 2, we control for differential time trends for APSA and MPSA articles. It is conceivable that articles differ in the time profile of their downloads. Since the conference cancellation affected newer (2012 articles) rather than older articles and outcomes are observed in the relatively short term if, for example, MPSA articles accumulate downloads earlier than APSA articles, this would generate a positive bias on the effect estimated by the diff-in-diff coefficient. We therefore include, in the regressions, linear and quadratic time interactions for APSA articles' days in SSRN, and we replace year dummies by a year time trend. The size of the estimated impact of conferences decreases to 15.5, and the diff-in-diff coefficient becomes statistically significant at the 5% level. In columns 3 and 4 in Table 3, we replicate the specification in column 2, but focus on downloads recorded two and three years after the 2012 conferences, respectively. Again, there are detectable positive impacts: 18.2 and 21.1, respectively, that are statistically significant at the 5% level. Since we are controlling for the number of days the article has been posted in SSRN, the difference in the estimated diff-in-diff coefficients for outcomes recorded at different times (column 2, and columns 3 and 4) should reflect a change in the conference effect. The differences in the estimated coefficients over time are close to two downloads per year, suggesting that the conference effect sustains, and perhaps modestly increases, from the short to the long run.

These positive results are robust to different samples. In columns 5 and 6, we report results for downloads recorded three years after the 2012 conferences, using the entire list of papers in the MPSA program.[16] In column 5, we replicate the specification in column 1; and in column 6, we replicate the most complete specification used in regressions reported in columns 2-4. The results are supportive of conference impacts, and the magnitudes are very similar to those in columns 1-4. They indicate that, on average, articles in the 2012 APSA conference would have benefited from, approximately, an extra 22-34 downloads in the three years after the conference if Hurricane Isaac had not occurred.

In a similar vein, to account for the fact that the MPSA sample is small for the main sample

[15] We also explored including higher order polynomials for number of days in SSRN, but they are not statistically significant and the results do not change with the inclusion of these extra variables.

[16] The sample of MPSA articles increases from 107 articles (in columns 1-4) to 497 (in columns 5 and 6).

(Table 3, columns 1-4) and these papers differ in some characteristics from the APSA papers, we also conducted regressions restricting the sample to MPSA articles and only APSA articles that are sufficiently similar the MPSA articles. To find this group, we estimated a propensity score based on a logit model that controls for authors' characteristics and time variables as described in Table 3, column 1. We then restricted the sample to all MPSA papers and APSA articles whose propensity score are in the 95 percentile. The results are reported in the Appendix, Table A2. We find the same qualitative results as in Table 3, columns 1-4. The estimated impacts are statistically significant at the 5% level.

Focusing on the most conservative estimate for the conference effect, our findings indicate that, on average, an article in the 2012 APSA conference would have gained an additional 15.5 downloads one year after that meeting and 21 downloads three years after the meeting, had the conference taken place.

Table 4

Next, we investigate a specific channel determining conference effects, as a means to corroborate the existence of such effects. In this analysis, instead of looking for a different conference for comparison to the APSA Meeting (the MPSA meeting being the closest one), we focus our investigation within the sample of APSA articles, but explore heterogeneity in the size of session audience. We conjecture that articles that would have had a larger audience were more hindered by the 2012 meeting cancellation. We conduct difference-in-differences regressions to test the hypothesis that the number of downloads is lower for articles with a larger (expected) audience, in the cancelled 2012 conference, than in previous editions.

Before presenting results, we explain our measure for 'Expected Audience'. In creating this variable, we followed the intuition that participants tend to sort into attending sessions related to their own research interest. $ExpectedAudience_i$ is a function of the total number of articles in the same theme as article i across the meeting in which i was presented (T_i), the number of articles to be presented in the same time slot and theme as article i but in a different session (N_i), and the number of co-synchronous sessions on the same theme as article i (S_i). (The crude intuition here is that the audience in a given session will be drawn from the pool of other authors whose papers at the conference are on the theme of the session, excluding the article's own author, divided equally across the simultaneous sessions on this theme.)

$$ExpectedAudience_i \equiv \frac{T_i - N_i - 1}{S_i} \quad (2)$$

In constructing this variable, we used the APSA Meeting classification of articles (and sessions) in 132 session themes.[17] In the period 2009 to 2012, each theme gathered 33.44 articles per year, on average, but there are highly-populated themes that feature more than 100 articles per year. In the Appendix, we show the histograms of Expected Audience$_i$ per conference year.

In Figure 1, we show the relationship between future downloads and articles' Expected Audience for the 2009-2011 editions (in which the conference took place). In Figure 2, we illustrate this relationship for the sample of articles in the 2012 program, when the conference was cancelled. Each point indicates an article-outcome. To ease visualization, we plot a linear regression line in both figures. While a positive relationship is visible in Figure 1; almost none is observed in Figure 2. The slope of the line in Figure 1 is 0.113 and it is statistically significant at the 1% level, while the slope in Figure 2 is 0.026, with a respective p-value of 47%. Figure 1, as opposed to Figure 2, shows that articles' (future) downloads are increasing in the Expected Audience measure.

Figure 1

Figure 2

This relationship suggests that at least part of the conference effect derives directly through the mechanism of the presentation serving as an advertisement of the paper to the audience within the session.[18] We investigate this further in a regression framework, in which we estimate (3),

[17] These include 52 main theme panels (that contain 90% of the articles) and 70 remaining themes that vary per year. The main theme sections are Political Thought and Philosophy, Foundations of Political Theory, Normative Political Theory, Formal Political Theory, Political Psychology, Political Economy, Politics and History, Political Methodology, Teaching and Learning, Political Science Education, Comparative Politics, Comparative Politics of Developing Countries, The Politics of Communist and Former Communist Countries, Advanced Industrial Societies, European Politics and Society, International Political Economy, International Collaboration, International Security, International Security and Arms Control, Foreign Policy, Conflict Processes, Legislative Studies, Presidency Research, Public Administration, Public Policy, Law and Courts, Constitutional Law and Jurisprudence, Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations, State Politics and Policy, Urban Politics, Women and Politics Research, Race, Ethnicity, and Politics, Religion and Politics, Representation and Electoral Systems, Political Organizations and Parties, Elections and Voting Behavior, Public Opinion, Political Communication, Science, Technology, and Environmental Politics, Information Technology and Politics, Politics, Literature, and Film, New Political Science, International History and Politics, Comparative Democratization, Human Rights, Qualitative and Multi-method Research, Sexuality and Politics, Health Politics and Policy, Canadian Politics, Political Networks, Experimental Research.

[18] Alternatively, attendees can download articles, they consider relevant by finding them at the APSA Meeting Program when at the conference. The gain in articles' visibility due to conference might be explained because the commitment

using as the dependent variable the number of downloads recorded one year after the cancelled conference.

$$Y_{iT} = \gamma + \delta_1 ExpectedAudience_i \cdot 2012 + \delta_2 ExpectedAudience_i + \sum_{t=2010}^{2012} \lambda_t [t_i = 1] + \varphi \mathbf{X}_i + \epsilon_{iT} \quad (3)$$

The impact of the conference is identified from the interaction from the variable Expected Audience with a dummy for the 2012 cancelled conference, and the coefficient of interest is δ_1. It reveals the change of the relationship between expected session audience and future downloads for articles in the cancelled vs occurring conference. This reflects the downloads forgone due to the cancellation, but with an important point of difference with the analysis in the last section. In the present analysis we isolate one part of the conference effect: the visibility gained via session participants. There are other possible conference gains, not quantified by coefficient δ_1. (For example, articles may have experienced improvements due to advice from discussants or chairs, leading to an increase in articles' visibility.)

Returning to the results, in Table 5, we present results when clustering errors at the theme level. In column 1, we begin with the specification controlling for a polynomial for the number of days the article has been posted in SSRN and authorship characteristics. Consistent with Figures 1 and 2, the coefficient δ_1 is negative (-0.112) and statistically significant at the 5% level. In column 2, we added 131 theme fixed effects (that are jointly statistically significant at the 1% level), and the diff-in-diff coefficient decreases slightly (to -0.106). In column 3, we include author affiliation fixed effects. The diff-in-diff coefficient is statistically significant at 5% and its magnitude remains very similar (-0.111). The robustness of the diff-in-diff coefficient size to different sets of controls reflects the situation of random assignment of articles to the conditions of cancelled vs occurring conferences, determined by the hurricane in 2012.

For the specification in column 2, the Expected Audience coefficient is identified based on variation in the number of articles within-theme over years, and the number of same-theme sessions occurring simultaneously, per conference. There is a concern that the Expected Audience variable is endogenous, correlated with unobservables related to articles' quality or impact potential.

to attend the academic meeting puts scholars in the state of mind of learning about the research of participants. We perform tests with slightly modified variable (Modified Expected Audience$_i$= T$_i$ - 1) and find same qualitative results, as the ones in Figures 1 and 2.

These might be observed by conference organizers, internalised by the allocation of articles to sessions in the program, and captured by the Expected Audience variable. For example, the organizers might allow cosynchronicity of sessions comprising weaker articles within a given theme to a greater extent than of those comprising the most promising articles. (In this case, the diff-in-diff coefficient still captures a causal effect, but it is the return of articles' quality from presenting in a conference.) In column 4, we add to the covariates in column 3, 16 dummies for the session time-day slot that the article has been allocated, as the time-day allocation might correlate with articles' perceived quality. These indicators are not jointly statistically significant: the p-value for an F-test is 32%. The diff-in-diff coefficient remains statistically significant and the size is 0.108.

It is also possible that the variable Expected Audience is in fact capturing variation in numbers of submissions by theme, correlated with fashions in the profession and articles' prospective downloads. To account for this, in column 5, we present results for the specification in column 3 (controlling for theme and affiliation fixed effects), and include session themes specific year-trends. These last controls are meant to account for possible different time trends across articles from different themes. The diff-in-diff coefficient decays to 0.064, and the p-value increases to 0.11. In column 6, we account for the possibility of a differential time-profile of downloads across articles with different expected audiences: i.e. it might be that the dynamic for accumulating downloads differs between general interest and niche articles. We include in the regression linear and quadratic interactions for expected audience-days in SSRN, and replace year dummy variables by a linear year trend. The diff-in-diff coefficient increases in size significantly to -0.20, and it becomes statistically significant at the 5% level.

Overall, estimates for δ_1 indicate that for each 6-16 attendants in the same session, there is an increase of one download for article i. Considering the distribution of the Expected Audience variable, on average, an article gains between 4 to 10 downloads, from the session audience in the APSA conference, in the 15 months following the meeting.

Table 5

In Table A3 in the Appendix, we present results from using other proxies of session attendance. First, we tested for whether there is a differential effect for a paper that is facing direct competition for session audience to an article written by a famous author. We recorded whether an article is allocated to a same theme and time slot (that have roughly the same group of interested partici-

pants), but to a different session, to a paper written by someone well-known in the field.[19] In this case, we conjecture that a reasonable part of the prospective audience of article i will migrate to the session of the famous author. In the same spirit as the previous test, we check whether, in comparison to previous APSA editions, articles allocated in 2012 to sessions that were likely (by this conjecture) to be poorly attended were less handicapped by the conference cancellation than other articles. Another source of heterogeneity for articles' visibility within the conference relates to the allocated session time slot. Sessions occurring in the first slot are often perceived to be poorly attended: in the APSA meeting, these occur on Thursday at 8am, when conference participants are still arriving and registering. Our test consists in examining whether articles allocated to the slot of Thursday 8am in the cancelled 2012 APSA meeting have higher downloads (relative to articles allocated to other slots) than articles allocated to the first session in the APSA meetings of 2009-11. The results are reported in Table A3 in the Appendix, and in both cases, we detected effects that are marginally supportive (statistically significant at the 10-13% level) of our hypothesis of a conference effect.

3.2 The Effects of Conferences on Articles' Citations

Next, we examine whether the meeting cancellation had an impact on articles' citations, replicating the analysis from the previous section. Citations are highly skewed: eighty-nine percent of conference papers have no citation and ninety-eight percent of papers have fewer than ten citations (Table 2). We therefore examine the likelihoods of a conference article receiving at least one citation, at least two citations, at least five citations and at least ten citations.[20] Table 6 reports the diff-in-diff results from a linear probability model, using citation data from 2014 (two years after the 2012 APSA Meeting cancellation). In column 1, we report results from equation (1), and using data on all conference papers. The results indicate positive conference effects. They indicate that the APSA meeting cancellation led to a decrease in the likelihood of presenting papers receiving

[19] We classified as a famous author someone that is in the editorial board of the *American Political Science Review* or of the *American Journal of Political Science* (the top journals in the field [(McLean, Blais, Garand and Giles 2009)] in the respective conference year. This classification is obviously very simplistic, but easily traceable. Alternative measures for "stars" in the profession are based on their citations, grants and awards (Azoulay et al, 2010; Oettl, 2012; Waldinger, 2012), that is difficult information to recover by conference year. In the data, the group of editorial board scholars author approximately 2% of articles in panel sessions per year. Approximately 5% of other articles faced competition with an editorial board paper.

[20] Alternatively, in Table A4 in the Appendix, we present OLS results using the number of cites and the log of (1+cites) as dependent variables. We also present results from negative binomial regressions explaining the number of articles' cites. These findings are somewhat inconclusive: while we find statistically significant results for the OLS regressions, we do not detect significance for the relevant coefficient for the negative binomial regression specification.

at least one citation of 4.8 percentage points. We detected similar conference effects (naturally, smaller in magnitude) on the likelihoods of papers collecting larger numbers of citations: the cancellation leading to decreases of 3.8, 2.6, and 1.5 percentage points in the likelihoods of receiving at least two, five and ten citations respectively, shown in the remaining columns. These findings are observed in simple regressions without controls (including only covariates for year- and APSA fixed effects) and in specifications controlling for authorship covariates and affiliation-fixed effects.

Table 6

In column 2, we show estimates from equation (3) and using data only on APSA papers. The purpose is to test whether conferences affect articles' chance of accumulating citations directly via the mechanism we suggested to be operating on downloads, of the presentation serving as an advertisement of the paper to the audience within the session. Aside from slightly increasing the likelihood of a paper receiving at least 5 or 10 citations (occurrences for just 2% and 0.77%, of papers in the 2012 APSA sample, respectively), we do not detect a statistically significant effect of the session audience in increasing the chance of citations (rows 1-2). So the results in column 2 do not provide support for the session audience explanation, as a main drive for the effects on citations.

On the other hand, conferences may encourage participants to publicize and finish working papers, the article having been perhaps improved due to comments received during the meeting and/or the process of an author's own preparation for presenting at the conference. In row 5, we report results for the test of whether the conference cancellation affected the likelihood of papers to be "found" on Google Scholar (closely indicative of an article having been posted in some version online). The results show that the conference cancellation reduced by 7.3 percentage points the likelihood of affected papers having an online version (column 1).

In Table 7, we examine whether the effects on citations are long lasting. We examine the effects at different times: two years (2014) and four years (2016) after the 2012 meetings. The results are reported in Panels A and B, respectively. The estimated effects in the chance of articles receiving at least one or two citations remain statistically significant four years after the cancelled conference, and the coefficients increase slightly. This is visible in Panel B, columns 1-4, indicating that the 2012 APSA meeting cancellation had a permanent effect on the chance of articles ever becoming cited. On the other hand, the conference effects on higher number of citations (5 or

10) fade out over a longer time frame (Panel B, columns 5-8). This dynamic is consistent with the preceding evidence about the underlying mechanisms driving conference impacts, and confirms the conclusions from Table 6. (An advertisement effect is likely to be cascading in nature,[21] but the maturation effect, that seems to be driving the increase in citations, not so.)

Table 7

In summary, the most likely explanation for conference effects on citations seems to be the maturation rather than advertisement mechanism. The combined effects of preparing and making the presentation, of comments received, and of direct encouragement to post the paper online – increases the likelihood of a paper being subsequently available to be read and cited.

3.3 Effects by Authorship: Who Benefits from Conferences?

For various reasons, one may expect some heterogeneity, by authorship, of conference effects. A conference gathers a group of unpublished articles. In its absence, any article has an ex-ante expected readership, based (at least in part) on its authors' characteristics: their institutional affiliation, the existing visibility of their previous papers, etc. In this section, we investigate whether there are differential conference effects by such characteristics. Articles with authors whose characteristics lead to a high ex ante expected readership may benefit more from the conference due to unbalanced sorting of attendees into their presenting sessions. But, on the other hand, for these articles there may be less to gain: academics interested in the topic would have become aware of the articles anyway. Indeed, it is conceivable that the conference may lead such articles to lose readers, as interested academics become aware of other work by less established authors. (The analogous reasoning can be applied to articles with a lower ex ante expected readership. These articles may have a smaller audience in the conference, but this audience may include a greater number who, though interested in the topic, would not have encountered the article otherwise.) The net effect of these forces will determine the size and sign of the conference effect. In our analysis, we use two proxies for this author-based ex ante expected readership: (i) authors' institutional affiliation,[22] and (ii) whether the authors have a previous paper posted in SSRN, as a

[21] See Salganik et al. (2006).

[22] Kim et al. (2009) and Oyer (2006) show that scholars affiliated to higher tier institutions are more cited and have a higher chance of publishing in top journals. Similarly, in our data, we find that these scholars have more citations.

proxy for seniority (graduate students being less likely to have a previous SSRN paper).

In Table 8 we look for heterogeneous effects from subsamples divided by these two characteristics, and for the longer term outcomes: downloads after 3 years and citations two and four years after the 2012 conferences. Each entry reports estimates for the key diff-in-diff coefficient. We find different patterns for the effects of conferences in downloads and citations. The impact in increasing downloads is largest and is only statistically significant among less visible authors: those without a previous paper in SSRN or affiliated to an institution outside the Top 100. On the other hand, statistically significant effects on citations are detected among all subsamples. Plausibly, the differential pattern of effects by authorship for downloads and citations is again consistent with the differential mechanisms that we have so far suggested. One might suppose that an advertisement effect lying behind the conference effect on downloads would be particularly important for less visible authors, while the maturation effect lying behind the effect on citations may apply to all authors.

Table 8

4 Conclusion

By exploiting a natural experiment, we have provided estimates for the effects of conferences on articles' visibility and academic impact. To the best of our knowledge, no previous analysis has applied a compelling identification strategy to this issue; and the issue itself is of considerable importance, because significant resources across all research fields in academia are apportioned to organising and attending such events.

Using articles accepted in a comparator conference as a baseline group for articles in the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, our diff-in-diff findings suggest a conference effect of 15-17 downloads in one year following the 2012 conferences. One mechanism for this gain is an advertisement effect, which increases with the size of the audience and accrues particularly to less-established authors. And we have noted that - since the 2012 APSA papers would have gained *some* visibility (via the conference programme) - the magnitude we have discerned can be viewed as a lower bound.

Perhaps more significantly, by a similar analysis, we then find that the conference presentation

of a paper increases by 4.8 percentage points (which is more than one-third) its likelihood of being cited within a relatively short, two-year time frame. In this sense, the conference effect extends from visibility to impact. This initial advantage accrues to all authors, but subsequently more clearly endures for early-career academics. The main mechanism behind the conference effect on citations seems to be a maturation effect: the presentation improves the paper and helps bring it to a stage where it is more likely to be posted online and otherwise visible.

In this article, our main focus has been on the visibility and impact gain for the work that is presented at conferences. This encompasses both any direct gain, through an advertising effect, and any indirect gain, achieved if the conference leads to improvements in the work itself that in turn increase its eventual readership. We find evidence for both channels in our empirical analysis. We do not, in this present work, consider other conference benefits: network formation, idea formation and so forth. These are avenues for future work.

A APPENDIX

In this appendix we detail the algorithm implemented to compare each conference paper title with titles retrieved in Google Scholar. We then present further tables, associated with additional econometric specifications mentioned within the text.

A.1 Title-Match Algorithm

Our title-match algorithm associates, with any ordered pair (X_0, Y_0) of paper titles, a title-match dummy $B(X_0, Y_0) \in \{0, 1\}$. In the present case, title X_0 is conference paper title and title Y_0 the Google Scholar paper title. The algorithm comprises the following steps 1-5.

1. Title X_1 is defined to be the portion of X_0 that precedes any first occurance of a character "?" or ":". (Portions of paper titles that succeed these characters are often, in effect, 'subtitles' with a higher tendency to change between successive versions of a paper.)

2. Titles X_2 and Y_1 are defined by converting titles X_1 and Y_0 respectively to lowercase.

3. Titles X_3 and Y_2 are defined by the following, ordered transformations from titles X_2 and Y_1

respectively. (These transformations eliminate common differences between British, American and other conventions of spelling and transliteration.)

(a) Every string “ence” is replaced with “ense”.

(b) Every string “ae” and “oe” is deleted.

(c) Every character “u” and “e” is deleted.

(d) Every string “ll” is replaced with “l”.

(e) Every character “z” is replaced with “s”.

(f) Every character that is not either a digit (ASCII characters 48 to 57) or a lowercase letter (ASCII characters 97 to 122) is deleted.

4. Title X_3 is partitioned into a set of n substrings, $\mathbf{x} \equiv \{x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_n\}$ such that x_1 is the first five characters in X_3, x_2 the next five characters in X_3, and so forth. (So substrings x_1 to x_{n-1} will each have five characters and substring x_n will have between one and five characters.) We record, as the variable k, the number of elements in $\mathbf{x}$ that are substrings in Y_2.

5. If $\frac{k}{n}$ is strictly greater than 0.5 then we let $B(X_0, Y_0) = 1$, otherwise we let $B(X_0, Y_0) = 0$.

A.2 Further Tables

Tables A1-A2

Figure A1

Tables A3-A7

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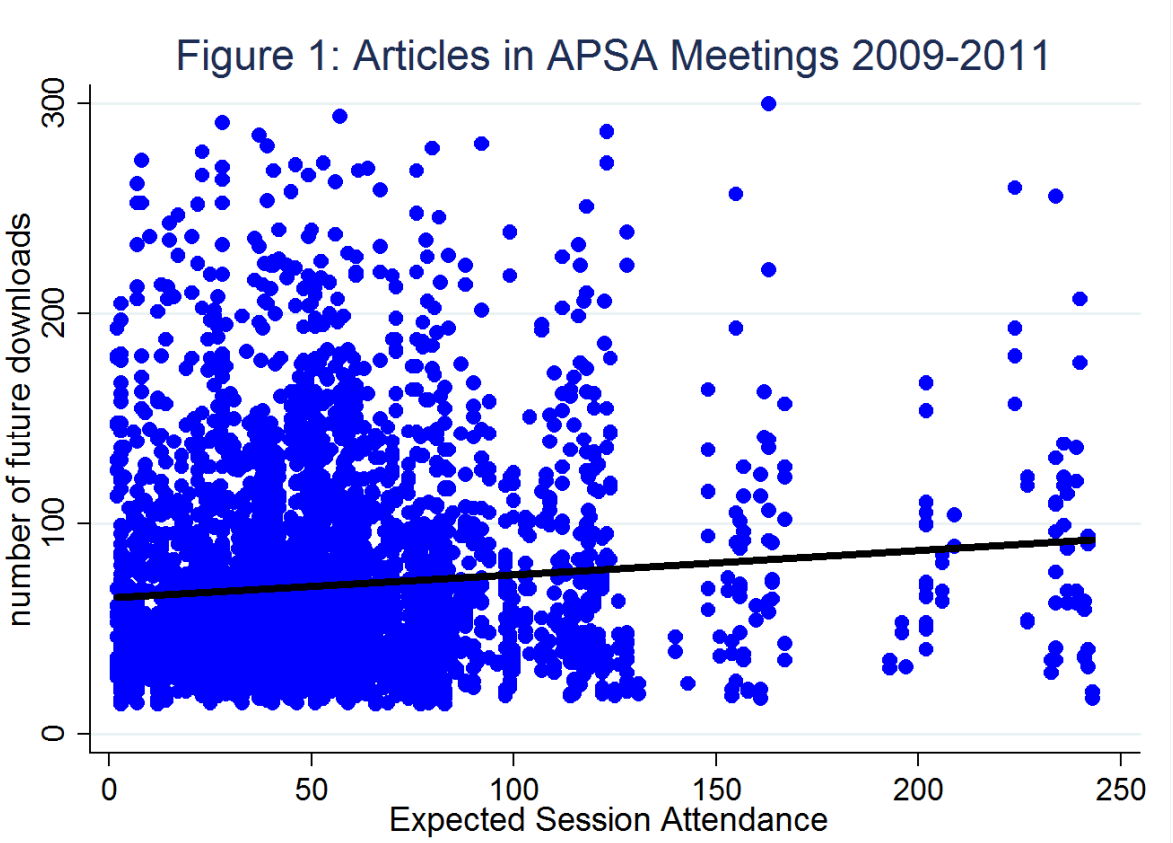
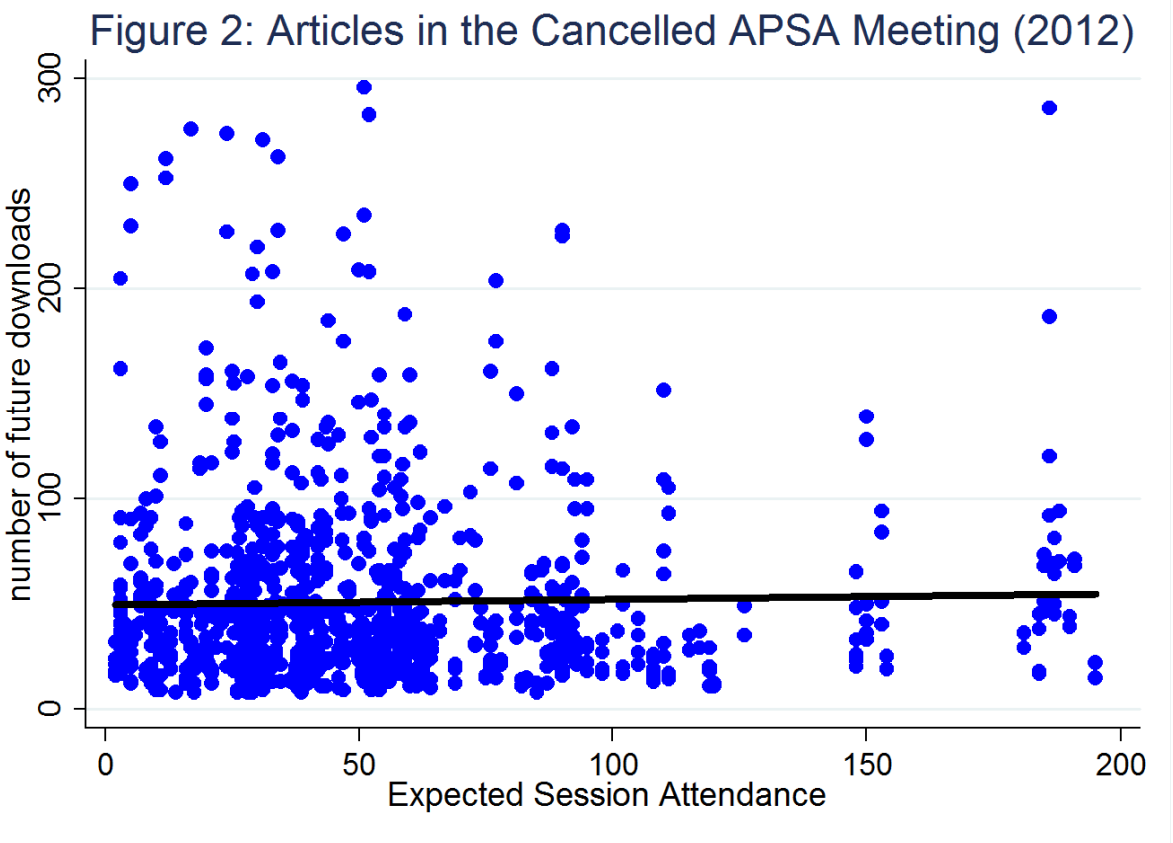




Notes: Each point is the outcome of an article in time T. The lines are predicted values from a linear regression of downloads on expected audience and a constant.

Table 1- Proportion of Authors by Ranking of Affiliation by Conference

	APSA		MPSA		Differences	
Institution by Ranking	before 2012	2012	before 2012	2012	[2]-[1]	[4]-[3]
	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
] 1, 10	0.1251	0.1204	0.1075	0.1072	-0.0046	-0.0003
] 10, 20	0.0663	0.0728	0.0742	0.0839	0.0065	0.0097
] 20, 30	0.0546	0.0493	0.0546	0.0523	-0.0054	-0.0023
] 30, 40	0.1008	0.0934	0.0522	0.0441	-0.0074	-0.0081
] 40, 50	0.0381	0.0335	0.0377	0.0390	-0.0046	0.0013
] 50, 60	0.0532	0.0583	0.0545	0.0517	0.0051	-0.0029
] 60, 70	0.0326	0.0322	0.0361	0.0380	-0.0004	0.0019
] 70, 80	0.0174	0.0232	0.0229	0.0233	0.0058	0.0003
] 80, 90	0.0290	0.0280	0.0277	0.0231	-0.0010	-0.0046
] 90, 100	0.0297	0.0290	0.0212	0.0212	-0.0007	0.0000
] 100, 110	0.0256	0.0216	0.0282	0.0237	-0.0040	-0.0045
] 110, 120	0.0229	0.0235	0.0265	0.0245	0.0006	-0.0019
] 120, 130	0.0206	0.0138	0.0187	0.0172	-0.0067	-0.0015
] 130, 140	0.0141	0.0225	0.0088	0.0080	0.0084	-0.0008
] 140, 150	0.0122	0.0116	0.0177	0.0174	-0.0006	-0.0004
] 150, 160	0.0150	0.0106	0.0219	0.0233	-0.0044	0.0014
] 160, 170	0.0066	0.0074	0.0071	0.0094	0.0008	0.0022
] 170, 180	0.0038	0.0058	0.0029	0.0057	0.0020	0.0028
] 180, 190	0.0029	0.0045	0.0015	0.0018	0.0016	0.0003
] 190, 200	0.0110	0.0119	0.0074	0.0055	0.0009	-0.0019
] 200	0.3135	0.3126	0.3705	0.3797	-0.0009	0.0092
N	8,988	3,106	13,988	4,896		

Note: Observations here are at the article level, using the highest ranking affiliation among the article authors.
We use institution rankings from Hix (2004).

Table 2 - Articles' Outcomes and Characteristics: Summary Statistics

	Mean	Stand Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Observations
Panel A: Google Scholar (GS) data					
At least 1 GS citation	0.1086	0.3111	0	1	N=15,498
					n= 12,094
At least 2 GS citations	0.0790	0.2698	0	1	15,498
At least 5 GS citations	0.0426	0.2019	0	1	15,498
At least 10 GS citations	0.0239	0.1529	0	1	15,498
Number of article GS citations	1.0030	7.8575	0	355	15,498
At least 1 author has a previously-posted SSRN article	0.1841	0.3876	0	1	15,498
Combined authors' SSRN citations in the last 10 years	0.5357	8.0109	0	356	15,498
Number of authors in the conference paper	1.3766	0.6516	1	4	15,498
Conf. year minus earliest year of a SSRN paper by any author	0.5544	1.3720	0	10	15,498
% authors with at least 1 SSRN citation	0.0303	0.1520	0	1	15,496
% authors with at least 5 SSRN citations	0.0114	0.0937	0	1	15,496
% authors with at least 1 previously-posted SSRN article	0.1414	0.3197	0	1	15,496
Highest affiliation among article authors					
Top 10	0.1651	0.3713	0	1	15,498
]Top 10, Top 100[	0.4111	0.4921	0	1	15,498
] Top 100	0.4237	0.4942	0	1	15,498
Panel B: SSRN sample 1					
Number of article SSRN downloads (1 year after)	63.9472	47	6	321	N=2,801
					n=2,694
Number of article SSRN downloads (2 years after)	73.7156	57	8	529	N=2,774
					n=2,669
Number of article SSRN downloads (3 years after)	84.4251	70	8	668	N=2778
					n=2,672
At least 1 author has a previously-posted SSRN article	0.2263	0.4185	0	1	2,801
Combined authors' SSRN citations in the last 10 years	0.5052	5.9398	0	265	2,801
Number of authors in the conference paper	1.3720	0.6607	1	4	2,801
Conf. year minus earliest year of a SSRN paper by any author	0.7012	1.5442	0	10	2,801
% authors with at least 1 SSRN citation	0.0382	0.1701	0	1	2,801
% authors with at least 5 SSRN citations	0.0142	0.1056	0	1	2,801
% authors with at least 1 previously-posted SSRN article	0.1802	0.3560	0	1	2,801
Highest affiliation among article authors					
Top 10	0.0982	0.2976	0	1	2,801
]Top 10, Top 100[	0.4327	0.4991	0	1	2,801
] Top 100	0.4677	0.4990	0	1	2,801
Panel C: SSRN sample 2					
Number of article SSRN downloads (3 years after)	80.2275	61.3717	9	560	N=2,782
					n=2,287
Some author has a previous article in SSRN	0.2455	0.4305	0	1	2,782
Combined authors' SSRN citations in the last 10 years	0.5830	6.1953	0	265	2,782
Number of authors in the conference paper	1.4180	0.6855	1	4	2,782
Conf. year minus earliest year of a SSRN paper by any author	0.7297	1.5385	0	10	2,782
% authors with at least 1 SSRN citation	0.0401	0.1718	0	1	2,782
% authors with at least 5 SSRN citations	0.0158	0.1105	0	1	2,782
% authors with at least 1 article previously posted in SSRN	0.1904	0.3590	0	1	2,782
Highest affiliation among article authors					
Top 10	0.1344	0.3412	0	1	2,782
]Top 10, Top 100[	0.4001	0.4900	0	1	2,782
] Top 100	0.4655	0.4989	0	1	2,782

Notes: N refers to the total number of conference articles and n refers to the total number of APSA articles.

In Panels B and C, `1 year …', `2 years …' and `3 years after' refers to 15, 27 and 39 months after the 2012 conference dates.

SSRN sample 1 includes articles found in a search for all APSA papers and 20% of MPSA papers. SSRN sample 2 includes articles found in a search for all APSA and MPSA papers. GS citation refers to 2 years after.

Table 3 - Average SSRN Downloads

	Conference editions		
	Before 2012	2012	Difference
Panel A: Downloads (1 year after)			
APSA Articles	68.6	46.4	-22.2
MPSA Articles	59.7	54.2	-5.5
			-16.7
Panel B: Downloads (2 years after)			
APSA Articles	77.5	58.9	-18.6
MPSA Articles	71.3	72.9	1.6
			-20.2
Panel C: Downloads (3 years after)			
APSA Articles	87.4	72.3	-15.1
MPSA Articles	83.5	86.1	2.6
			-17.7

Note: The conference editions "Before 2012" corresponds to 2009-2011.

The total sample size is 2,801 in Panel A, 2,774 in Panel B and 2,778 in Panel C.

Table 4 - Effects of Conferences on Articles' Downloads

Dependent Variable:	one year after		two years after	three years after		
	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
APSA x 2012	**-16.8955**	**-15.4898**	**-18.2390**	**-21.1278**	**-22.8093**	**-34.1167**
	[12.1570]	**[3.4170]****	**[4.4845]****	**[5.6940]****	**[9.7921]****	**[6.5944]****
APSA	5.6611	4.3439	-4.1560	-5.6669	2.6608	57.6220
	[5.4607]	[15.1326]	[25.1147]	[32.2567]	[3.9467]	[15.7077]**
2012	14.3251				40.6979	
	[13.5988]				[14.1584]**	
2011	8.4847				25.1214	
	[4.5283]*				[10.6205]**	
2010	0.7515				12.6405	
	[3.0317]				[6.7564]*	
Number of Days in SSRN	0.0307	0.0312	0.0016	-0.0109	0.0298	0.0550
	[0.0102]**	[0.0163]*	[0.0268]	[0.0343]	[0.0151]**	[0.0148]**
(Number of Days in SSRN)^2	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
	[0.0000]	[0.0000]**	[0.000]	[0.0000]	[0.0000]	[0.0000]
Year trend		4.4040	2.8717	2.9532		13.3061
		[2.2278]**	[2.9433]	[3.6867]		[4.4005]**
APSA X Number of Days in SSRN		-0.0096	-0.0029	-0.0028		-0.0985
		[0.0173]	[0.0262]	[0.0329]		[0.0290]**
APSA X (Number of Days in SSRN)^2		0.0000	0.0000	0.0000		0.0000
		[0.0000]**	[0.000]	[0.000]		[0.0000]**
Authorship controls	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
SSRN Sample	1	1	1	1	2	2
R-squared	0.1093	0.1103	0.0822	0.0731	0.1066	0.1112
N	2,783	2,783	2,756	2,759	2,718	2,718

Notes: Columns 1-4 include a random sample of 20% MPSA articles and columns 5-6 include all MPSA articles.

Authorship controls include authors' affiliation fixed effects; number of article i authors; aggregate number of SSRN citations by all article i authors; whether one article i author has a previously-posted SSRN paper; the earliest year that a paper was posted in SSRN (relative to the year of the conference attended) among all authors of article i; and the proportions of authors in article i that have: at least one citation, at least five citations, and at least one previously-posted SSRN paper.

Robust standard errors are in brackets.

** Significant at the 5% level, * Significant at the 10% level.

Table 5 - Effects of Conferences on Articles' Downloads

	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
APSA x 2012 x Expected Audience	**-0.1124**	**-0.1065**	**-0.1107**	**-0.1085**	**-0.0637**	**-0.2002**
	[0.0464]**	**[0.0489]****	**[0.0536]****	**[0.0545]****	**[0.0393]**	**[0.0450]****
Expected Audience	0.1114	0.0544	0.0651	0.0689	0.0627	0.1471
	[0.0357]**	[0.0359]	[0.0425]	[0.0429]	[0.0460]	[0.1378]
R-squared	0.0671	0.1398	0.1874	0.1915	0.2213	0.1869
N observations	2,688	2,688	2,684	2,684	2,684	2,684
Controls						
Authorship characteristics	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Days in SSRN and (days in SSRN)^2	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Conference year dummies	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no
Session theme fixed-effects (N=131)	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Author affiliation fixed effects (N=158)	no	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Session time-day slot fixed-effects (N=12)	no	no	no	yes	no	yes
Session theme - year trend	no	no	no	no	yes	no
Year trend	no	no	no	no	no	yes
Expected Audience X days in SSRN	no	no	no	no	no	yes
Expected Audience X (days in SSRN)^2	no	no	no	no	no	yes

Notes: The sample includes only APSA articles. The dependent variable is the number of downloads one year after the cancelled 2012 APSA Meeting.
The variable Expected Audience is explained in the text and described in equation 2.
Authorship controls include authors' affiliation fixed effects; number of article i authors; aggregate number of SSRN citations by all article i authors; whether one article i author has a previously-posted SSRN paper; the earliest year that a paper was posted in SSRN (relative to the year of the conference attended) among all authors of article i; and the proportions of authors in article i that have: at least one citation, at least five citations, and at least one previously-posted SSRN paper.
Robust standard errors clustered at the theme level are in brackets.
** Significant at the 5% level, * Significant at the 10% level

Table 6 - Effects of Conferences on Citations

		Coefficients		
		APSA x 2012	APSA x 2012 x Expected Audience	Controls
	Outcomes	[1]	[2]	
[1]	At least 1 citation	-0.0482 [0.0099]**	-0.0001 [0.0001]	no
		-0.0485 [0.0100]**	-0.0001 [0.0001]	yes
[2]	At least 2 citations	-0.0377 [0.0084]**	-0.0001 [0.0001]	no
		-0.0376 [0.0085]**	-0.0001 [0.0001]	yes
[3]	At least 5 citations	-0.0264 [0.0060]**	-0.0001 [0.0001]*	no
		-0.0259 [0.0061]**	-0.0001 [0.0001]*	yes
[4]	At least 10 citations	-0.0158 [0.0043]**	-0.0002 [0.0001]**	no
		-0.0152 [0.0044]**	-0.0002 [0.0001]**	yes
[5]	In Google Scholar	-0.0730 [0.0152]**	0.0002 [0.0002]	no
		-0.0729 [0.0154]**	0.0002 [0.0002]	yes
	Sample of Conference Papers	APSA	APSA + MPSA	
	N	12,094	15,624	

Notes: Each entry represents estimates from a separate regression.

All regressions include covariates for conference year fixed effects and an indicator for whether the paper was presented in the APSA conference. Controls include authors' affiliation fixed effects; number of article *i* authors; aggregate number of SSRN citations by all article *i* authors; whether one article i author has a previously-posted SSRN paper; the earliest year that a paper was posted in SSRN (relative to the year of the conference attended) among all authors of article i; and the proportions of authors in article i that have: more than one citation, more than five citations, and more than one previously-posted SSRN paper.

The number of observations is 15,498, including 12,094 APSA papers and 3,404 MPSA papers.

Robust standard errors are in brackets. ** Significant at the 5% level, * Significant at the 10% level.

Table 7 - Effects of Conferences on Articles' Likelihood of Receiving Citations - long term effects

	one citation		two citations		five citations		ten citations	
	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]	[7]	[8]
Panel A - Outcome: Received at least (2 years after)								
APSA x 2012	-0.0482	-0.0485	-0.0377	-0.0376	-0.0264	-0.0259	-0.0158	-0.0152
	[0.0099]**	[0.0100]**	[0.0084]**	[0.0085]**	[0.0060]**	[0.0061]**	[0.0043]**	[0.0044]**
Panel B - Outcome: Received at least (4 years after)								
APSA x 2012	-0.0523	-0.0515	-0.0435	-0.0420	-0.0197	-0.0182	-0.0104	-0.0078
	[0.0150]**	[0.0150]**	[0.0139]**	[0.0138]**	[0.0011]*	[0.0115]	[0.0099]	[0.0099]
Controls	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes

Notes: Each entry represents estimates from a separate regression.

All regressions include covariates for conference year fixed effects and an indicator for whether the paper was presented in the APSA conference.

Controls include authors' affiliation fixed effects; number of article i authors; aggregate number of SSRN citations by all article i authors; whether one article i author has a previously-posted SSRN paper; the earliest year that a paper was posted in SSRN (relative to the year of the conference attended) among all authors of article i; and the proportions of authors in article i that have: more than one citation, more than five citations, and more than one previously-posted SSRN paper.

The number of observations is 15,498, including 12,094 APSA papers and 3,404 MPSA papers.

Robust standard errors are in brackets. ** Significant at the 5% level.

Table 8 - Long term and Heterogeneous Effects by Authorship

		Coefficient 2012 APSA				
		Top 10	Top 10-100	below Top 100	Had an SSRN paper BEFORE the conference? yes	no
		[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
[1]	**downloads**	-9.6744	-23.4039	-38.4271	-11.2962	-23.0202
		[15.9448]	[11.3178]**	[14.5892]**	[12.9339]	[8.7566]**
	at least one citation					
[2]	2 years after	-0.0580	-0.0478	-0.0376	-0.0517	-0.0454
		[0.0311]*	[0.0160]**	[0.0130]**	[0.0297]*	[0.0107]**
[3]	4 years after	-0.0730	-0.0321	-0.0538	-0.0435	-0.0519
		[0.0416]*	[0.0240]	[0.0211]**	[0.0419]	[0.01611]**
	at least two citations					
[4]	2 years after	-0.0537	-0.0381	-0.0221	-0.0481	-0.0342
		[0.0277]**	[0.0133]**	[0.0106]**	[0.0270]*	[0.0088]**
[5]	4 years after	-0.0635	-0.0168	-0.0484	-0.0334	-0.0426
		[0.0397]	[0.0217]	[0.0191]**	[0.0394]	[0.0146]**
	at least five citations					
[6]	2 years after	-0.0439	-0.0288	-0.0125	-0.0336	-0.0241
		[0.0213]**	[0.0088]**	[0.0076]*	[0.0188]*	[0.0065]**
[7]	4 years after	-0.0330	-0.0072	-0.0182	-0.0163	-0.0195
		[0.0329]	[0.0180]	[0.0160]	[0.0321]	[0.0123]
	at least ten citations					
[8]	2 years after	-0.0370	-0.0204	0.0001	-0.0268	-0.0135
		[0.0159]**	[0.0073]**	[0.0045]	[0.0144]*	[0.0047]**
[9]	4 years after	-0.0208	-0.0010	-0.0074	-0.0151	-0.0059
		[0.0290]	[0.0152]	[0.0137]	[0.0288]	[0.0105]
N		2,558	6,372	6,566	2,847	12,612

Notes: The sample includes APSA and MPSA articles. Each entry represents coefficients for a separate regression.

SSRN Downloads are measured 39 months after the 2012 conferences, and scholar google citations are measured 24 months after the 2012 conferences.

All regressions include covariates for conference year fixed effects and an indicator for whether the paper was presented in the APSA conference.

Regressions in columns 4-5 also include controls for authors' affiliation fixed effects and number of authors.

Regressions in columns 1-3 also include controls for number of article i authors; aggregate number of SSRN citations by all article i authors; whether one article i author has a previously-posted SSRN paper; the earliest year that a paper was posted in SSRN (relative to the year of the conference attended) among all authors of article i; and the proportions of authors in article i that have: at least one citation, at least five citations, and at least one previously-posted SSRN paper.

Robust standard errors are in brackets. ** Significant at the 5% level, * Significant at the 10% level.

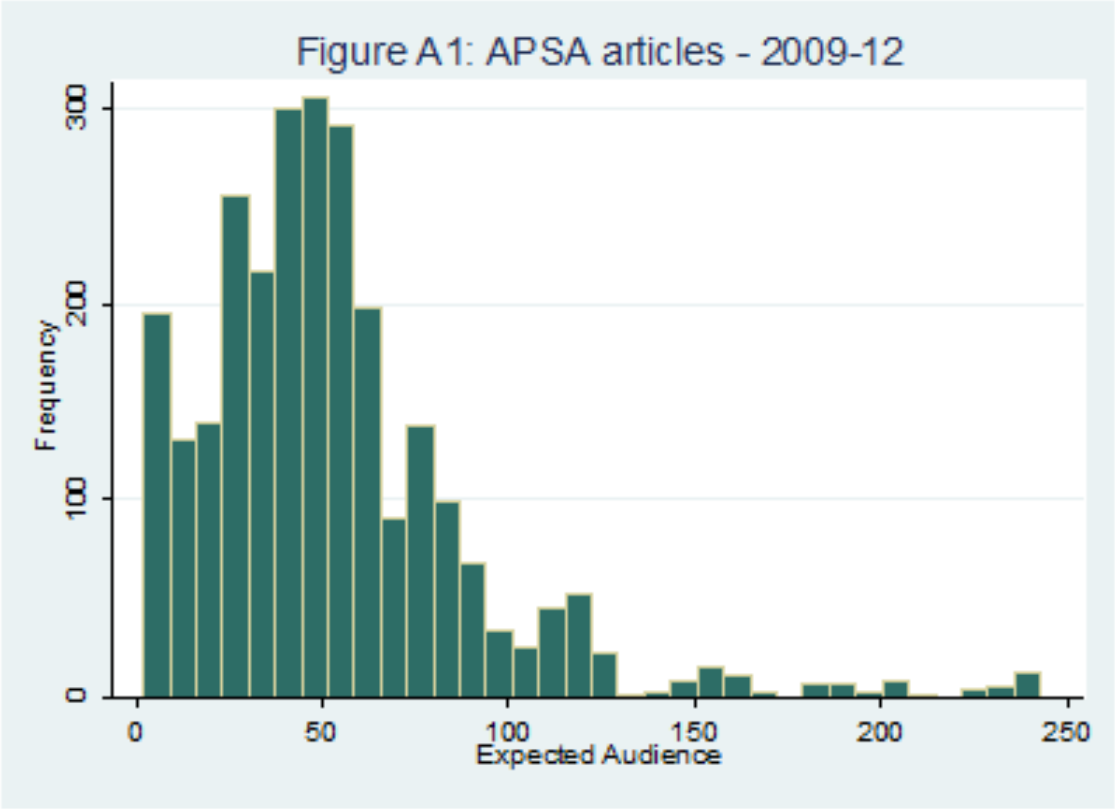
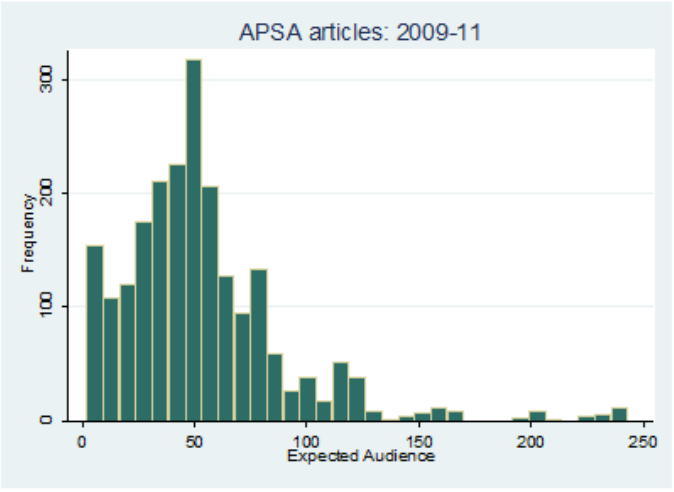


Figure A1: APSA articles - 2009-12
Frequency
0
100
200
300
0
50
100
150
200
250
Expected Audience


APSA articles: 2009-11
Frequency
0
100
200
300
0
50
100
150
200
250
Expected Audience

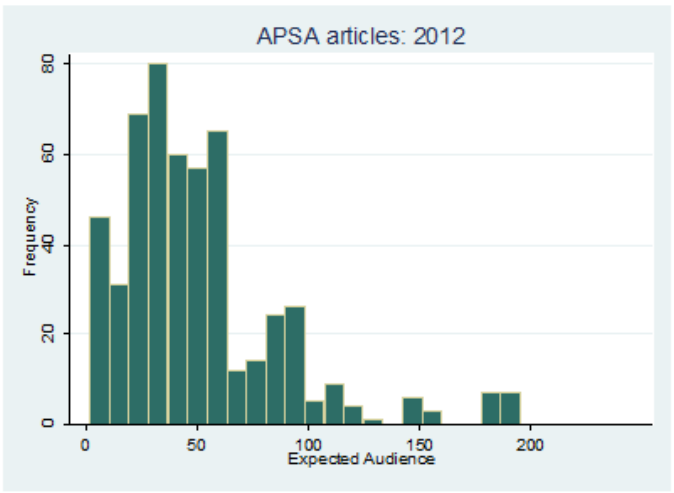

APSA articles: 2012
Frequency
0
20
40
60
80
0
50
100
150
200
Expected Audience

Table A1 - Descriptives of Authors' characteristics

	APSA		MPSA		Differences (in p.p.)	
	before 2012	2012	before 2012	2012	[2]-[1]	[4]-[3]
	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
(in a 5-year window of the conference)						
Previous number of publication	1.53	2.03	0.91	1.39	0.5	0.5
no publication	52%	49%	69%	63%	-3	-6
1-2 publications	26%	23%	19%	19%	-3	0
3-6 publications	17%	19%	10%	12%	2	3
more than 6 publications	5%	9%	3%	6%	4	3
sum publication*impactfactor	2.26	3.00	1.32	2.03	0.7	0.7
impact factor of best publication	1.91	2.03	1.81	1.95	0.1	0.1
N (number of participants)	12,611	4,203	15,124	5,019		

Table A2 -Effects of Conferences on Articles' Downloads - Propensity Score Sample

Dependent Variable:	one year after		two years after		three years after	
	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[5]
APSA x 2012	**-21.0676**	**-18.8028**	**-25.1762**	**-28.0682**	**-29.3785**	**-48.8083**
	[13.8545]	**[6.5493]****	**[9.2509]****	**[11.3921]****	**[13.6253]****	**[12.7644]****
APSA	0.0004	1.6230	-6.3536	-3.9645	26.1299	73.3890
	[9.6004]	[17.0937]	[28.4500]	[35.7384]	[15.8408]*	[23.3929]**
2012	9.0744				32.2940	
	[15.9274]				[12.1535]**	
2011	3.6408				15.7965	
	[6.7474]				[12.3810]	
2010	0.2800				11.2560	
	[5.2215]				[8.2751]	
Number of Days in SSRN	0.0245	0.0316	-0.0095	-0.0249	0.0623	0.0699
	[0.0154]	[0.0169]*	[0.0308]	[0.0389]	[0.0286]**	[0.0243]**
(Number of Days in SSRN)^2	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
	[0.000]	[0.000]**	[0.000]	[0.000]	[0.000]	[0.000]
Year trend		1.6945	-1.1975	-3.9956		11.4494
		[3.3403]	[5.0393]	[6.1691]		[4.4479]**
APSA X Number of Days in SSRN		-0.0185	-0.0103	-0.0164		-0.1053
		[0.0190]	[0.0291]	[0.0360]		[0.0473]**
APSA X (Number of Days in SSRN)^2		0.0000	0.0000	0.0000		0.0000
		[0.000]**	[0.000]	[0.000]		[0.000]
Author and paper characteristic controls	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
R-squared	0.1996	0.2041	0.1721	0.1805	0.2677	0.2760
N	874	874	866	874	853	853

Notes: The sample is explained in the text.

Columns 1-4 include a random sample of 20% MPSA articles and columns 5-6 include all MPSA articles.

Authorship controls include authors' affiliation fixed effects; number of article i authors; aggregate number of SSRN citations by all article i authors; whether one article i author has a previously-posted SSRN paper; the earliest year that a paper was posted in SSRN (relative to the year of the conference attended) among all authors of article i; and the proportions of authors in article i that have: at least one citation, at least five citations, and at least one previously-posted SSRN paper.

Robust standard errors are in brackets. ** Significant at the 5% level.

Table A3 - Effects of Session Attendance on Articles' Downloads

	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]
APSA 2012 X CompeteFamousAuthor	**11.9095**	**12.5694**		
	[8.5193]	**[7.9721]**		
CompeteFamousAuthor	-2.6068	-3.9822		
	[4.6253]	[3.0439]		
APSA 2012 X First Session			**15.3693**	**15.5444**
			[7.9699]*	**[8.6504]***
First Session (Thursday 8AM)			-1.4552	0.8681
			[4.7403]	[4.7482]
Controls	yes	yes	yes	yes
R-squared	0.1430	0.1906	0.1434	0.1910
N	2,688	2,684	2,688	2,684

Note: The sample includes only APSA articles. The dependent variable is the number of downloads 15 months after the cancelled 2012 APSA Meeting. Control variables in columns 1 and 3 include the same covariates as in Table 5, column 4, and control variables in columns 2 and 4 include the same covariates as in Table 5, column 4 excluding authors' affiliation fixed effects. Robust standard errors are in brackets. * Significant at the 10% level.

Table A4- Robustness Check: Effects of Conferences on Articles' Citations

Method	Outcomes	coefficient APSA X 2012	Controls
OLS	Number of citations	-0.6916 [0.1547]**	no
		-0.6764 [0.1679]**	yes
OLS	log (1+citations)	-0.0936 [0.0176]**	no
		-0.0927 [0.0179]**	yes
Negative Binomial	Number of citations	-0.3229 [0.3516]	no
		-0.3742 [0.2759]	yes
	N	15,457	

Note: Scholar google citations were recorded two years after the 2012 Meetings

All regressions include covariates for conference year fixed effects and an indicator for whether the paper was presented in the APSA conference. Controls include authors' affiliation fixed effects, number of authors, aggregate number of SSRN citations by all article i' authors, whether one of the authors has a previous paper posted in SSRN, the earliest year that a paper was posted in SSRN (relative to the year of the conference attended), among all authors of article i, the proportion of authors in article i that have at least one citation, at least five citations and have posted at least one previous SSRN paper.

Table A5 - Effects of Conferences on Citations

		Coefficients		
		APSA x 2012	APSA x 2012 x Expected Audience	Time varying controls
	Outcomes	[1]	[2]	
[1]	At least 1 citation	-0.0561	-0.0001	no
		[0.0150]**	[0.0001]	
		-0.0556	-0.0001	yes
		[0.0150]**	[0.0001]	
[2]	At least 2 citations	-0.0393	-0.0001	no
		[0.0129]**	[0.0001]	
		-0.0388	-0.0001	yes
		[0.0129]**	[0.0001]	
[3]	At least 5 citations	-0.0411	-0.0002	no
		[0.0092]**	[0.0001]	
		-0.0396	-0.0002	yes
		[0.0092]**	[0.0001]	
[4]	At least 10 citations	-0.0159	-0.0002	no
		[0.0072]**	[0.0001]**	
		-0.0149	-0.0002	yes
		[0.0073]**	[0.0001]**	
[5]	In Google Scholar	-0.0804	0.0003	no
		[0.0208]**	[0.0002]	
		-0.0789	0.0002	yes
		[0.0209]**	[0.0002]	
	Sample of Conference Papers	APSA + MPSA	APSA	
	N (article-author)	21,059	16,512	

Notes: Each entry represents estimates from a separate regression.

All regressions include covariates for author fixed effects, conference year fixed effects and an indicator for whether the paper was presented in the APSA conference. Controls include authors' affiliation fixed effects; number of article *i* authors; aggregate number of SSRN citations by all article *i* authors; whether one article i author has a previously-posted SSRN paper; the earliest year that a paper was posted in SSRN (relative to the year of the conference attended) among all authors of article i; and the proportions of authors in article i that have: more than one citation, more than five citations, and more than one previously-posted SSRN paper.

Robust standard errors are in brackets. ** Significant at the 5% level.

Table A6 - Effects of Conferences on Articles' Likelihood of Receiving Citations - long term effects

	one citation		two citations		five citations		ten citations	
	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]	[7]	[8]
Panel A - Outcome: Received at least (2 years after)								
APSA x 2012	-0.0561	-0.0556	-0.0393	-0.0388	-0.0411	-0.0396	-0.0159	-0.0149
	[0.0150]**	[0.0150]**	[0.0129]**	[0.0129]**	[0.0092]**	[0.0092]**	[0.0072]**	[0.0073]**
Panel B - Outcome: Received at least (4 years after)								
APSA x 2012	-0.0624	-0.0594	-0.0610	-0.0583	-0.0314	-0.0290	-0.0182	-0.0146
	[0.0216]**	[0.0214]**	[0.0195]**	[0.0194]**	[0.0165]*	[0.0164]*	[0.0144]	[0.0146]
Time varying controls	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes

Notes: Each entry represents estimates from a separate regression.

All regressions include covariates for author fixed effects, conference year fixed effects and an indicator for whether the paper was presented in the APSA conference. Controls include authors' affiliation fixed effects; number of article i authors; aggregate number of SSRN citations by all article i authors; whether one article i author has a previously-posted SSRN paper; the earliest year that a paper was posted in SSRN (relative to the year of the conference attended) among all authors of article i; and the proportions of authors in article i that have: more than one citation, more than five citations, and more than one previously-posted SSRN paper.

Robust standard errors are in brackets. * Significant at the 10% level, ** Significant at the 5% level.

Table A7 - Long term and Heterogeneous Effects by Authorship

		Coefficient 2012 APSA				
		Top 10	Top 10-100	below Top 100	Had an SSRN paper BEFORE the conference? yes	no
		[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
[1]	**downloads**	-33.1837	-15.2446	-5.9719	-7.4527	-9.1094
		[14.4156]**	[7.0383]**	[7.0749]	[8.3603]	[4.9043]*
	at least one citation					
[2]	2 years after	-0.0823	-0.0802	-0.0414	-0.0962	-0.0260
		[0.0399]**	[0.0217]**	[0.0270]	[0.0323]**	[0.0187]
[3]	4 years after	-0.0530	-0.0392	-0.0652	-0.0984	-0.0541
		[0.0340]	[0.0204]**	[0.0188]**	[0.0512]**	[0.0253]**
	at least two citations					
[4]	2 years after	-0.0779	-0.0652	-0.0218	-0.0705	-0.0177
		[0.0365]**	[0.0188]**	[0.0209]	[0.0296]**	[0.0161]
[5]	4 years after	-0.0525	-0.0158	-0.0624	-0.1206	-0.0469
		[0.0319]*	[0.0188]	[0.0172]**	[0.0477]**	[0.0228]**
	at least five citations					
[6]	2 years after	-0.0741	-0.0579	-0.0183	-0.0632	-0.0285
		[0.0296]**	[0.0125]**	[0.0138]	[0.0200]**	[0.0118]**
[7]	4 years after	-0.0352	-0.0040	-0.0292	-0.0488	-0.0222
		[0.0274]	[0.0160]	[0.0144]**	[0.0376]	[0.0204]
	at least ten citations					
[8]	2 years after	-0.0142	-0.0361	0.0030	-0.0505	-0.0079
		[0.0230]	[0.0112]**	[0.0091]	[0.0183]**	[0.0083]
[9]	4 years after	-0.0227	-0.0084	-0.0135	-0.0467	-0.0101
		[0.0239]	[0.0139]	[0.0122]	[0.0333]	[0.0175]
	N (article-author)	3,750	9,118	8,186	4,725	16,334

Notes: The sample includes APSA and MPSA articles. Each entry represents coefficients for '2012 APSA' for a separate regression.
SSRN Downloads are measured 39 months after the 2012 conferences, and scholar google citations are measured 24 and 48 months after the 2012 conferences.
All regressions include covariates for author fixed effects, conference year fixed effects, an indicator for whether the paper was presented in the APSA conference and number of article i authors.
Regressions in columns 1-3 also include controls for aggregate number of SSRN citations by all article i authors; whether one article i author has a previously-posted SSRN paper; the earliest year that a paper was posted in SSRN (relative to the year of the conference attended) among all authors of article i; and the proportions of authors in article i that have: at least one citation, at least five citations, and at least one previously-posted SSRN paper.
Robust standard errors are in brackets. ** Significant at the 5% level, * Significant at the 10% level.