

LISA HO

Yale Economic Growth Center
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POSITIONS

2024 – 2025 Postdoctoral Associate, Yale Inclusion Economics, Economic Growth Center
2025 – Economist, World Bank Development Research Group

EDUCATION

2018 – 2024 MIT, PhD in Economics
Fields: Development Economics, Labor Economics

2017 – 2018 Tsinghua University, Schwarzman College, MA in Global Affairs

2013 – 2017 MIT, BS in Computer Science and Mathematical Economics

JOB MARKET PAPER

“Bringing Work Home: Flexible Arrangements as Gateway Jobs for Women in West Bengal”
(with Anahita Karandikar and Suhani Jalota)

Several hundred million women who want a job are out of the labor force, often because available opportunities are incompatible with traditional norms of household roles. In a field experiment with 1,670 households in West Bengal, we offer short-term data entry jobs with flexible work arrangements that meet households where they are in terms of expectations on women’s domestic responsibilities. We find three sets of results. First, job flexibility more than triples take up, from 15% for an office job to 48% for a job that women can do from home while multitasking with childcare. Second, working from home reduces worker productivity due to interruptions that interfere with flow effects. Third, flexible jobs act as a gateway to outside-the-home jobs for women initially out of the labor force: women who first had an opportunity to work from home are more likely to accept outside-the-home work several months later. This gateway effect may be due to changes in attitudes about appropriate behavior for men and women. Job flexibility is more important to the labor supply of women from more traditional households, and work experience in turn shifts the gender attitudes of these women and their children to become less traditional. Thus, flexible work arrangements can both attract women to the labor force and provide a gateway to outside-the-home jobs.

PUBLICATIONS

“The Impact of Large-Scale Social Media Advertising Campaigns on Covid-19 Vaccination: Evidence From Two Randomized Controlled Trials” (with Emily Breza, Abhijit Banerjee, Arun Chandrasekhar, Fatima Cody Stanford, Renato Fior, Kelly Holland, Emily Hoppe, Louis-Maël Jean, Lucy Ogbu-Nwobodo, Benjamin Olken, Carlos Torres, Pierre-Luc Vautrey, Erica Warner, Esther Duflo & Marcella Alsan). *AEA Papers & Proceedings*, 113, 653-658, May 2023.

OTHER WORKING PAPERS

“What Works for Her? Digital Jobs and Women’s Labor Supply in Urban India” (with Suhani Jalota)

In many developing countries, gender norms create a significant barrier to married women’s labor force entry. These may manifest as practical constraints—like travel restrictions and housework responsibilities—and other intangible domesticity constraints like household disapproval of women working outside the home. We design an experiment to distinguish between these barriers by establishing new job offices for part-time, smartphone-based digital work with minimal practical constraints: the work is local, only for women, less than five minutes walking distance, and permits children. We assign 3,200 wives in Mumbai to work-from-home or office jobs and cross-randomize them to one of three wage levels (low, medium, or high). We find that 56% of wives started working from home, while only 27% took up office jobs. Surprisingly, doubling wages does not significantly affect entry. A parallel experiment with husbands shows more responsiveness to wages and no preference for work-from-home. A follow-up experiment to uncover underlying mechanisms finds that introducing an observable two-minute daily check-in at the office decreases job take-up by 25% (explaining half the home-office difference), driven by women from less progressive households. Taken together, the experiments show that beyond practical constraints, domesticity constraints—the belief that a woman’s place is at home—restrict women’s labor market entry. Without changes to these constraints, home-based jobs may represent the most immediate path to increase female labor force participation.

“Got Beef with Beef? Evidence from a Large-Scale Carbon Labelling Experiment” (with Lucy Page)

Food systems account for approximately one-third of total greenhouse gas emissions, and simple shifts across food choices can yield large cuts in emissions. In a randomized field experiment with over 200,000 meal kit customers in the US, we find that carbon footprint labels cause customers to choose lower-emission meals, and that the introduction of labels has positive effects on customer retention and company profits. Both the reduction in emissions and the increase in profits are driven by customers with high baseline beef consumption. We find evidence that the labels act through salience rather than knowledge, and that the effects on meal choices depend on whether customers’ values are aligned with the mission to address climate change through behavioral change.

“The Impact of 3G Mobile Internet on Educational Outcomes in Brazil” (with Pedro Bessone and Ricardo Dahis)

What is the impact of mobile broadband internet on children’s test scores? We compare standardized test scores before and after the staggered entry of 3G into Brazil’s 5,570 municipalities using a heterogeneity-robust event-study design. We find no effects of mobile internet on test scores for 5th or 9th grade students and can reject effect sizes of 0.04 standard deviations in both math and Portuguese. Taken together, our results indicate that the arrival of high-speed mobile internet is not sufficient to improve educational outcomes either through direct take-up by individuals or through broader changes to the economy.

SELECTED WORK IN PROGRESS

“The Effects of Mandated Maternity Leave on Young Women’s Labor Market Outcomes” (with Garima Sharma, Shreya Tandon, Stephanie Hao, and Pulak Ghosh)

We study the effect of a maternity benefits law in India which extended the mandatory length of benefits that firms had to provide from 12 weeks to 26 weeks. Using data from the Employees Provident Fund Organization, a panel data set from which we infer salary information over time for the universe of formal workers in India with monthly pay of Rs 15k or less, we examine whether the new law affected firms’ propensity to hire new female workers as well as the impacts on the career progression of incumbent workers.

FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS, AND AWARDS

2022 – 2023	NBER Gender in the Economy Dissertation Fellowship
2021 – 2022	Jameel (J-PAL) Fellowship
2019 – 2020	John Krob Castle (1963) Fellow
2018 – 2019	Walter A. Rosenblith Presidential Fellowship
2017 – 2018	Schwarzman Scholar, Tsinghua University
2017	Phi Beta Kappa

RESEARCH GRANTS (AS PRIMARY PI)

2022	Wellspring Foundation, Agency Fund (\$104,000)
2022	STEG Small Research Grants (£14,842)
2021, 2022	Weiss Fund in Development Economics (Pilot: \$14,590, Main: \$49,938)
2021, 2022	George and Obie Schultz Fund (\$14,000)
2021	J-PAL Jobs and Opportunities Initiative (Pilot: \$16,012, Main: \$46,921)
2021	J-PAL Gender and Economic Agency Initiative (Main: \$21,562)

TEACHING

2024	Public Economics (undergrad), TA to Robin McKnight Research in Economics (undergrad), TA to Isaiah Andrews and Nina Roussille
2022	Randomization Theory & Practice, J-PAL/IPA/EPoD Research Staff Training
2020	Development Economics (PhD), TA to Jishnu Das and Ben Olken The Challenge of World Poverty (undergrad), TA to Frank Schilbach

PRESENTATIONS AND SEMINARS (SCHEDULED*)

2024	World Bank DECRG, University of Oxford, Georgetown Econ/SFS, UC San Diego, Rutgers, NUS, IIES, PacDev, MWIEDC, Columbia MAD, Development Rookiefest, BREAD, CEPR Development Economics Symposium, SEEDEC (NHH), NovAfrica, NBER SI: Development*
2023	NEUDC, CAGE Summer School (Warwick)
2022	NBER SI: Gender in the Economy
2021	NEUDC

REFEREEING

American Economic Review, American Economic Review: Insights, Economic Development and Cultural Change, Journal of Development Economics