

# LISA HO

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## POSITIONS

2025 – Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Columbia University  
2024 – 2025 Postdoctoral Associate, Economic Growth Center, Yale University

## EDUCATION

2018 – 2024 MIT, PhD in Economics  
2017 – 2018 Tsinghua University, Schwarzman College, MA in Global Affairs  
2013 – 2017 MIT, BS in Computer Science and Mathematical Economics

## WORKING PAPERS

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

*Revise and resubmit at The Quarterly Journal of Economics*

There is a large latent workforce in developing countries that consists of hundreds of millions of women who prefer to have paid work and yet are out of the labor force. Often, available job opportunities are incompatible with traditional gender roles that encourage women to stay at home. In a field experiment with 1,670 households, we partner with a jobs platform to offer short-term data work to women who are out of the labor force. We find three main results. First, flexible work-from-home jobs are highly effective at bringing women into paid work. 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, these jobs can act as a stepping stone to less flexible work. Trying paid work from home increases take up of less flexible jobs two to three months later by 5 percentage points. “Gateway jobs” are especially important for women from more traditional households: their labor supply is more likely to be marginal to job flexibility, and in turn, work experience shifts their attitudes to become less traditional. Third, from the labor demand side, remote work comes with trade-offs in terms of worker performance, causing a 4% decrease in accuracy and a 20% decrease in speed. However, these drawbacks may be outweighed by the increase in available workers associated with remote work.

### **“What Works for Her? Digital Jobs and Women’s Labor Supply in Urban India”**

(with Suhani Jalota)

We randomly assign 3,200 married, out-of-labor-force women in Mumbai to a job offer from home or from an office, cross-randomizing them to one of three monthly wage levels (low, medium, high). We find that 56% of women start the work-from-home job. Despite offices being female-only spaces that permit children that require only a 5-minute commute by walking, only 27% take up the office jobs, matching India’s female labor participation rate. Surprisingly, even wages that would double household income increase job take up by only 8 percentage points. A parallel experiment with husbands shows that men’s labor supply is more responsive to wages and less responsive to job location. A follow-up experiment to uncover mechanism finds that adding a requirement for a 2-minute daily check-in at the office decreases home-based job take-up by 25% (explaining half the home-office difference), driven by women from more traditional households. Taken together, the experiments suggest that even beyond practical constraints, norms of domesticity—the expectation that a woman’s place is at home—constrain female labor supply in India. Without changes to these norms, home-based jobs may represent the most immediate path to increase their 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 a Maternity Leave Mandate 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.

**“Increasing Female Employment at Scale: Direct and Spillover Effects of Rural Workfare on Women's Empowerment”** (with Urmi Bhattacharya, Erica Field, Rohini Pande, Simone Schaner, and Charity Troyer Moore)

Increasing women's control over income can reshape restrictive gender attitudes and improve markers of female empowerment. While the individual- and household-level impacts of such initiatives are clear, the consequences of this policy when implemented at-scale – across entire markets and communities – are unknown. For example, encouraging women's access to work opportunities could increase local economic activity and liberalize restrictive norms, and effects may also spillover onto untreated women. In addition, an at-scale approach could also change men's economic opportunities or be met with increased resistance by community members. In this project, we examine the consequences of increasing women's financial control and access to local work opportunities while varying the intensity of treatment by randomly assigning some locations to have a higher saturation of employment-related training than others.

**“Rejection Regard: When Employers' Concern for the Unhired Favors Men - Evidence from Jordan”** (with Nina Buchmann, Paolo Falco, and Andreas Menzel)

## PAPERS

**Learning from Job Offers About Labor Supply Constraints: A Barrier for Women without Work Experience** (with Suhani Jalota and Anahita Karandikar). *AEA Papers & Proceedings*, 115, 297-302, May 2025.

Labor market surveys often include individuals outside the workforce, but respondents who lack work experience may have inaccurate beliefs about their labor supply preferences and constraints. Using data from an incentivized job preferences elicitation in West Bengal, India, we show that women who are out of the labor force make costly mistakes in assessing whether they would take up future hypothetical jobs. Receiving an employment offer and navigating the subsequent decision process improves women's prediction accuracy. Heterogeneity analysis is more consistent with learning about external constraints such as other household members' preferences rather than internal constraints such as own abilities.

**Are Some Firms Better for Women's Careers?** (with Garima Sharma, Shreya Tandon, Stephanie Hao, and Pulak Ghosh). *AEA Papers & Proceedings*, 115, 232-23, May 2025.

This paper examines whether some firms are systematically better at advancing women's careers, focusing on India's corporate sector. Using an identification strategy based on firms' first recruitment events at universities, we compare women who join top-ranked female-friendly firms to peers from prior cohorts. Drawing on LinkedIn career histories, we find that women who start at these firms are significantly more likely to remain at their initial employer, advance to management positions, and take on roles requiring abstract tasks. These effects persist eight years after graduation, suggesting that early placement at supportive firms can have lasting impacts on women's career trajectories.

**“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.

## TEACHING

2025	Labor Markets in Developing Countries (PhD) Development Economics (undergrad)
2024	Public Economics (undergrad), TA to Robin McKnight Research in Economics (undergrad), TA to Isaiah Andrews and Nina Roussille Reading Group for Yale PhD Students (Economics of Gender)
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

## FELLOWSHIPS AND HONORS

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

## SELECTED RESEARCH GRANTS

2024	International Growth Center (IGC) (£33,925)
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)

## PRESENTATIONS

2025	Indian Institute of Science Education and Research Bhopal (IISERB), University of Pittsburgh, Yale, Future of Work for Women (Hoover/SIEPR), Columbia, Field Experiments in Economics and Business (TUM Heilbronn)
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, Gender and Growth Gaps in India Research and Policy Dialogue, Advances in Field Experiments (LSE), The Implications of Remote Work (Stanford), What Work Works for Women (UCSD), UT Austin, University of Southern California, Annual Conference on Economic Growth and Development (Indian Statistical Institute)
2023	NEUDC, CAGE Summer School (Warwick)
2022	NBER SI: Gender in the Economy
2021	NEUDC

## REFEREEING

*AEJ: Applied, AER: Insights, American Economic Review, Economic Development and Cultural Change, Economic Modelling, Economics of Education Review, Journal of Development Economics, Journal of the European Economic Association, Quarterly Journal of Economics, Review of Economics and Statistics*