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DOCTORAL STUDIES Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)
PhD, Economics, Expected completion June 2023
DISSERTATION: "*Essays on Development Economics*"

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE AND REFERENCES

Professor Benjamin Olken
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Professor David Atkin
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Professor Abhijit Banerjee
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PRIOR EDUCATION Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM) 2015
B.A. in Economics, graduated with highest honors
Concentration in Economic Theory

CITIZENSHIP USA and Mexico **GENDER** Female

LANGUAGES English (fluent), Spanish (native), French (intermediate), Hebrew (intermediate)

FIELDS Primary Fields: Development Economics
Secondary Fields: Public Economics

MIT Economics

DIANA SVERDLIN LISKER
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TEACHING EXPERIENCE	Political Economy and Economic Development (undergraduate)	2022
	Teaching Assistant to Profs. Esther Duflo and Sarah Lowes	
	Firms, Markets, Trade and Growth (undergraduate)	2022
	Teaching Assistant to Profs. David Atkin and Dave Donaldson	
	Data Analysis for Social Scientists (EdX, online)	2021
	Teaching Assistant to Profs. Esther Duflo and Sarah Ellison	
	Public Finance and Public Policy (undergraduate)	2020
	Teaching Assistant to Professor Jonathan Gruber	
	The Challenges of Global Poverty (EdX, online)	2019/20
	Teaching Assistant to Profs. Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo	
RELEVANT POSITIONS (ACADEMIA)	Research Assistant to Professors Abhijit Banerjee, Rema Hanna and Benjamin Olken	2018
	Research Assistant to Professor Enrique Seira	2014
RELEVANT POSITIONS (PUBLIC SECTOR)	Petróleos Mexicanos (PEMEX)	2016-2017
	<i>Led a group of four analysts to model Pemex's fiscal regime and proposed variations to align its interests with the government's and those of new entrants into the energy market.</i>	
	<i>Wrote the presentation of Pemex's Business Plan to the President, the Finance Ministry, rating agencies and investors.</i>	
	Mexican Institute of Social Security (IMSS)	2013-2015
	<i>Worked in the director's strategic planning unit, researching the disparity between GDP and formal employment growth.</i>	
	<i>Modeled historic consumption of medicines to improve the supply of the Institute's 1,400 pharmacies, thereby increasing patients' adherence to prescriptions by ensuring their availability.</i>	
	<i>Managed and trained a group of 20 implementers to improve processes and increase oversight in key metrics to reduce consultation and hospital admission waiting times system-wide.</i>	
	Mexican National Institute of Public Health	2013
	<i>Modeled a proposed nationwide soda tax to estimate its expected revenue and degree of regressivity. Our work was cited by the legislative commission that drafted a bill on the matter.</i>	
FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS, AND AWARDS	Economics Department Summer Fellowship, MIT	2022
	George and Obie Shultz Fund Grant, MIT	2019/21
	Pre-Doctoral Aging and Health Fellowship, NBER	2019/20
	National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship	2017
	ITAM: Merit Scholarship	2011

PROFESSIONAL Referee: *American Economic Review: Insights*

ACTIVITIES

Presentations:

NEUDC, Yale University	2022
Workshop on Small Firms, Growth and Development	2022
Alumni Conference, ITAM	2022

Service/Leadership:

Graduate Resident Advisor, MIT's McCormick Hall	2018-present
Mentor, Harvard/MIT Application Assistance Mentoring Program	2021-2022
Tutor, ESL Program for Service Employees at MIT	2020-2021
President, MIT Graduate Economic Association	2019-2020
Co-director, ITAM Economics Gazette	2014-2015
Facilitator, Harvard T.H. Chan School Winter Course	2014

**RESEARCH IN
PROGRESS**

“Fragmented Markets and the Proliferation of Small Firms: Evidence from Mom-and-Pop Shops in Mexico” (Job Market Paper)

(with Daniel Ramos-Menchelli)

Developing countries are characterized by the prevalence of small firms in the retail sector. We argue, through a spatial model, that high transport costs lead to small effective market sizes which results in more firms of smaller size and lower quality. By creating a new panel of firm-level data using the universe of mom-and-pop shops in Mexico we can test the implications of our model. We exploit the deregulation of the Mexican gasoline market in 2017 as an exogenous shock that increased consumer transport costs and show that in places where gas prices increased, the number of mom-and-pop shops differentially increased while their average size and quality fell. We give evidence of fragmentation and localized demand as the mechanism behind these effects. We evaluate the welfare consequences of a regularization program proposed in Mexico City which increases costs of entry for mom-and-pop shops. We show that, in a world with high transport costs, such program would have larger negative impacts on consumer and producer welfare.

“Social Protection in the Developing World”

(with Abhijit Banerjee, Rema Hanna and Benjamin Olken)

Social protection programs have become increasingly widespread in low- and middle-income countries, with their own distinct characteristics to match the environments in which they are operating. This paper reviews the growing literature on the design and impact of these programs. We review how to identify potential beneficiaries given the large informal sector, the design and implementation of redistribution and income support programs, and the challenges and potential of social insurance. We use our frameworks as a guide for consolidating and organizing the existing literature, and also to highlight areas and questions for future research.

“Spillovers of private provision of healthcare on the public sector”

How does the private provision of healthcare affect access and health outcomes in the public sector? In this project, I study the implications of expanding private clinic access by leveraging a regulation change in Mexico that exogenously led to a growth

of pharmacy clinics in some places relative to others. I document a decrease in both the intensive (number of appointments) and extensive margin (number of users) in the public sector in places where more openings occurred. Contrary to concerns about lowered quality of care, I find no adverse effects on health outcomes.

OLDER RESEARCH

“Externalities of Environmental Regulation: New Evidence on the Impact of U.S. Lead Regulation on Mexican Children from Social Security Records”

Cross-country externalities associated with environmental regulation have been at the core of policy debates regarding international agreements on toxic emissions. While the economics literature has greatly advanced on the effects of environmental regulation on the production side, research on the effect of this type of regulations on health across countries has just started. This study provides new evidence of the effects of strengthening the US lead regulation in 2009 on Mexican infants' birth outcomes. Most lead production in North America comes from the recycling of used lead-acid batteries and after 2009 a sharp increase of US battery exports to Mexico was documented. Using this as background and a newly constructed birth outcomes dataset from hospitals belonging to the Mexican Institute of Social Security, I compare birth outcomes of newborn babies in areas close to battery recycling plants with those born slightly away before and after 2009. Relative to the most important previous study in the same context, the dataset allows me to (a) analyze complications arising for mothers, (b) analyze birth outcomes for same mothers by controlling for mother fixed effects, and (c) check for longer background trends before the regulation. My difference in differences estimation shows that birth weight decreased, and complications increased after 2009, but not before. I further show that the effects remain quantitatively similar after controlling for mothers, in particular mothers whose first baby had lower-than-median birth weight, suggesting that the negative health consequence is concentrated in more disadvantaged families. The findings add further evidence on cross-country health externalities of environmental regulations.