

# MIT Economics

## LISA HO

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**DOCTORAL STUDIES** Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)  
PhD, Economics, Expected completion May 2024  
DISSERTATION: “Essays in Development Economics”

### DISSERTATION COMMITTEE AND REFERENCES

Professor Esther Duflo  
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**PRIOR EDUCATION** Massachusetts Institute of Technology 2017  
Bachelor of Science in Computer Science & Mathematical Economics  
  
Schwarzman College, Tsinghua University 2018  
Master of Global Affairs

**CITIZENSHIP** USA, UK **GENDER** Female

**LANGUAGES** English (native), Chinese, French (both intermediate), Hindi (beginner)

**FIELDS** Primary Field: Development Economics  
Secondary Fields: Labor Economics, Behavioral Economics

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<b>TEACHING</b>	Understanding Randomization (Research Staff Training)	2022
	Workshop for J-PAL, IPA, & EPoD research associates	
	Data Analysis with R	2021
	Workshop for J-PAL research associates	
	Development Economics (PhD level)	2020
	Teaching Assistant to Professors Ben Olken and Jishnu Das	
	The Challenge of World Poverty (undergraduate)	2020
	Teaching Assistant to Professor Frank Schilbach	
<b>FELLOWSHIPS, HONORS, AND AWARDS</b>	NBER Gender in the Economy Dissertation Fellowship	2022-2023
	Jameel (J-PAL) Fellowship	2021-2022
	John Krob Castle (1963) Fellow	2019-2020
	Walter A. Rosenblith Presidential Fellowship	2018-2019
	Schwarzman Scholar, Tsinghua University	2018-2019
	Phi Beta Kappa	2017
<b>RESEARCH GRANTS (PRIMARY PI)</b>	Wellspring via the Agency Fund (\$104,000)	2022
	STEG Small Research Grants (£14,842)	2022
	J-PAL Jobs & Opportunities Initiative	2021
	Piloting (\$16,012) & Main Study (\$46,921)	
	J-PAL Gender & Economic Agency Initiative	2021
	Main Study (\$21,562)	
	The Weiss Fund in Development Economics	2021, 2022
	Piloting (\$14,590) & Main Study (\$49,938)	
George and Obie Schultz Fund (\$14,000)	2021, 2022	
<b>PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>Referee:</b> <i>American Economic Review, American Economic Review: Insights.</i>	
	<b>Presentations:</b>	
	North East Universities Development Consortium (NEUDC)	2023
	NBER Summer Institute, Gender in the Economy	2022
	North East Universities Development Consortium (NEUDC)	2021
	<b>Service:</b>	
	Harvard/MIT Application Assistance & Mentoring Program	2021-present
	MIT Economics Mental Health & Peer Support Group	2021-2022
	Organizer, MIT Development/Political Economy Lunch	2021-2022

**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 G. Chandrasekhar, Fatima Cody Stanford, Renato Fior, Kelly Holland, Emily Hoppe, Louis-Maël Jean, Lucy Ogbu-Nwobodo, Benjamin A. Olken, Carlos Torres, Pierre-Luc Vautrey, Erica Warner, Esther Duflo and Marcella Alsan). *AEA Papers and Proceedings*, 113, pp. 653-658, May 2023.

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

There are hundreds of millions of women who want a job but are out of the labor force, often because available opportunities are incompatible with traditional norms about their household roles. In a field experiment with 1,670 households in West Bengal, we offer flexible, short-term data entry jobs which meet households where they are in terms of expectations on women’s domestic responsibilities. We find three sets of results. First, flexibility more than triples job take up, from 15% for an office job to 48% for maximally flexible, work-from-home jobs, with larger effects for women with more traditional gender attitudes. Second, although flexible work arrangements have no adverse effects on total quality-adjusted output, fragmented work patterns reduce efficiency. Third, flexible jobs shift women and children’s gender attitudes to become less traditional, and treated women are more likely to take up less flexible jobs after the intervention. Our results highlight that providing flexible work arrangements can both attract women to the labor force and provide a gateway to less flexible jobs.

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

Through a six-armed randomized experiment in Mumbai with 3,300 married women, we show that wage levels have very small effects on job take-up rates for women. In contrast, working from home (rather than a nearby office) increases job take up rates by two-fold. Surprisingly, up to 500% increases in wages are ineffective at inducing women to work outside the home, even when these jobs are offered at offices within the same community (often in the same building), in women-only centers where children are permitted, and where there are minimal safety concerns. We test for the mechanisms behind the strong preference to work from home, including observability of the woman’s work status, convenience, multi-tasking, and permissions to leave the house for work. In contrast, men exhibit expected increased labor supply responses to wage increases.

## **“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.

## **RESEARCH 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.