# SEAN HIGGINS
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**BUSINESS ADDRESS:**
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**CURRENT POSITION:**
Post-Doctoral Fellow, Center for Effective Global Action and Haas School of Business, UC Berkeley (2016-present)

**DESIRED RESEARCH AND TEACHING FIELDS:**

| PRIMARY | SECONDARY |
|---|---|
| Household Finance | Finance/Financial Economics |
| Development Economics | Entrepreneurship |

**JOB MARKET PAPER:** "Financial Technology Adoption"

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|---|---|
| Principal Advisors: | Professors Paul Gertler and Ulrike Malmendier |
| Other References: | Professors Benjamin Faber, Frederico Finan, and David Sraer |

| DOCTORAL AND PRE-DOCTORAL STUDIES: | DEGREE | DATE | FIELD |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tulane University | Ph.D. | 2016 | Economics |
| Tulane University | B.S. | 2011 | Economics |

**PAPERS:**

- Financial Technology Adoption (Job Market Paper)

  *Abstract:* How do the supply and demand sides of the market respond to financial technology adoption? In this paper, I exploit a natural experiment that caused exogenous shocks to the adoption of a financial technology over time and space. Between 2009 and 2012, the Mexican government disbursed about one million debit cards to existing beneficiaries of its conditional cash transfer program. I combine administrative data on the debit card rollout with a rich collection of Mexican microdata on both consumers and retailers. The shock to debit card adoption has spillover effects on financial technology adoption on both sides of the market: small retailers adopt point-of-sale (POS) terminals to accept card payments, which leads other consumers to adopt cards. Specifically, the number of other consumers with debit cards increases by 21 percent. Richer consumers respond to corner stores' adoption of POS terminals by substituting 12 percent of their supermarket consumption to corner stores. Finally, I use microdata on store prices, store geocoordinates, and consumer choices across store types to estimate the consumer gains from the policy's effect on retail POS adoption.

- How Debit Cards Enable the Poor to Save More (with Pierre Bachas, Paul Gertler, and Enrique Seira). NBER Working Paper 23252.

  *Abstract:* While formal savings can have a number of positive impacts for the poor, savings and active account use remain low. We study an at-scale natural experiment in Mexico in which debit cards are rolled out to beneficiaries of a cash transfer program, who already received transfers directly deposited into a savings account. Using administrative account data and household surveys, we find that after two years with a card, beneficiaries accumulate a savings stock equal to 2 percent of annual income. This effect size is larger than the impact of other interventions studied in the savings literature. We show that the increase in formal savings appears to be an increase in overall savings, financed by a voluntary reduction in current consumption. Debit cards increase account usage and savings through two mechanisms: first, they reduce the transaction costs of accessing money in the account; second, they reduce monitoring costs, which leads beneficiaries to check their account balances frequently and build trust in the bank.

- The Long-Term Effects of Temporary Incentives to Save: Evidence from a Prize-Linked Savings Field Experiment (with Paul Gertler, Enrique Seira, and Aisling Scott). Working paper.

- Bank Non-Secrecy: Taxation and Financial Service Use in Mexico (with Pierre Bachas and Anders Jensen). In preparation.

**PUBLICATIONS:**

- Digital Financial Services Go a Long Way: Transaction Costs and Financial Inclusion (with Pierre Bachas, Paul Gertler, and Enrique Seira). *American Economic Association Papers & Proceedings* 108: 444-448, 2018.

- Can a Poverty-Reducing and Progressive Tax and Transfer System Hurt the Poor? (with Nora Lustig). *Journal of Development Economics* 122, 63-75, 2016.

- Comparing the Incidence of Taxes and Social Spending in Brazil and the United States (with Nora Lustig, Whitney Ruble, and Timothy M. Smeeding). *Review of Income and Wealth* 62, S22-26, 2016.

**WORK IN PROGRESS:**

- Digital Sales and Inventory Data to Assess Creditworthiness (with Paul Gertler, Ulrike Malmendier, and Waldo Ojeda). Pilot completed.

- Leveraging Government Transfers to Offer Low-Risk Microcredit in the Dominican Republic (with Frederico Finan, Seth Garz, and Paul Gertler). Randomization stage.

- e-Payments (with Paul Gertler, Ulrike Malmendier, and Waldo Ojeda). Analysis of administrative data under way and randomization to begin soon.

- Gender-Differentiated Digital Credit Algorithms using Machine Learning (with Laura Chioda, Joshua Blumenstock, and Paul Gertler). Pilot under way.

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:**

**RESEARCH:**

Visiting Researcher, Banco de México (Central Bank) Payment Systems Division, Mexico City (Fall 2017)
Visiting Scholar, Haas School of Business, UC Berkeley (2014-2015)
Visiting Scholar, Center for Economic Studies, El Colegio de México, Mexico City (2013-2014)
Research Assistant, Department of Economics, Tulane University (2010-2013)

**TEACHING:**

Guest Lecturer, Haas School of Business, UC Berkeley (Spring 2018)
    Big Data and Better Decisions (MBA course)
    Applied Impact Evaluation (MBA course)
Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship Program, UC Berkeley (Spring, Fall 2018)
Stata Instructor, World Bank, Washington, D.C. (short courses, 2015-2018)
Teaching Assistant, Department of Economics, Tulane University (2011-2013)
    Intermediate Microeconomics
    Economics of Poverty

**FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS:**

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| 2018 | National Science Foundation standard grant ($241,814) |
| 2018 | USAID grant ($100,000) |
| 2017 | Digital Credit Observatory grant ($268,253) |
| 2017 | UN Foundation grant ($50,000) |
| 2017 | World Bank grant ($154,000) |
| 2016 | Innovations for Poverty Action grant ($345,000) |
| 2016 | CEGA-Visa Financial Inclusion Lab grant ($160,000) |
| 2015 | National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant ($16,481) |
| 2014, 2015 | School of Liberal Arts Summer Fellowship |
| 2014 | Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation grant ($581,162) |
| 2014 | Schloss Prize for Excellence in Economic Research |
| 2013 | Fulbright Scholar to Mexico |

**OTHER INFORMATION:**

Languages:   English (native), Spanish (fluent), Portuguese (advanced), and French (advanced)
Citizenship:  United States