

School for Environment and Sustainability
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor

November 15, 2024

Dear Hiring Committee Members,

I am writing to apply for the tenure-track, open-rank faculty position in Sustainable Development Economics at the School for Environment and Sustainability at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor. I am an applied microeconomist who integrates theoretical insights and rigorous empirical methods to address pressing issues related to gender, conflict, and economic development. I will complete my Ph.D. in Agricultural and Applied Economics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in May 2025.

My job market paper, “Effects of Military Bases on Women in Colombia,” co-authored with Felipe Parra, investigates the causal impacts of military base presence on sexual violence, fertility, and child support disputes in rural Colombia. Using a novel dataset constructed from various sources and employing an event-study approach, we leverage the temporal and geographical variation in military base placements driven by Colombia’s military expansion from 2000 to 2016. This allows us to identify the causal effects of military interventions, revealing a 72% increase in registered cases of sexual violence over 16 years. This research contributes to understanding the unintended consequences of state security interventions and provides critical insights for policymakers working in conflict-affected settings.

In addition to my focus on conflict and gender dynamics, my broader research agenda explores the economic barriers women face in labor markets. In a project in Pakistan’s garment sector, I analyze how social norms affect employers’ decisions to hire women using a behavioral game. This research, supported by funding from the International Growth Centre (IGC) and Private Enterprise Development in Low-Income Countries (PEDL), aims to develop policy interventions to increase female labor force participation, particularly in environments constrained by traditional gender norms.

In the coming years, I will expand my research on gender disparities and conflict in developing economies. In Colombia, I will investigate the broader social impacts of military interventions, including effects on reproductive rights and educational outcomes. In Pakistan, I will focus on identifying scalable solutions to increase female labor force participation by addressing entrenched social norms. I am committed to securing funding from a diverse range of public, private, and non-profit sources, and will use external funding to support research assistants on my projects.

My teaching philosophy emphasizes inclusivity and accessibility, ensuring that economics resonates with diverse student backgrounds. As a teaching assistant for “Introduction to Statistical Methods for Public Policy Analysis” at the La Follette School of Public Policy, I developed and adapted teaching materials to accommodate students with varying levels of statistical proficiency. I focus on intuitive explanations, multiple presentation methods, and real-world examples to engage students, an approach that has been well-received in my student evaluations. Beyond the classroom, I have led training sessions for diverse groups, including development practitioners and policymakers, and adapted to various learning environments, from summer schools in Rwanda to training at the World Bank.

Mentorship is central to my commitment to fostering diversity and inclusion. I have actively mentored female Japanese students pursuing Ph.D. degrees, as well as supported students from African countries through the graduate application process as a mentor in the Graduate Applications International Network (GAIN). These experiences have shown me the transformative impact of providing guidance and support to underrepresented students in achieving their academic and professional aspirations.

Thank you for considering my application. Professor Ross Milton at the University of Wisconsin, Madison can promptly provide a teaching recommendation if needed. I can be reached by telephone at +1 (917) 969-5420, and by email at sshibuya2@wisc.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sakina Shibuya". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sakina" and last name "Shibuya" clearly distinguishable.

Sakina Shibuya