

Division of Social Science
Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

November 12, 2024

Dear Hiring Committee Members,

I am writing to apply for the Assistant Professor in Computational Social Science position at the Division of Social Science at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. 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. 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.

Thank you for considering my application. I can be reached by telephone at +1 (917) 969-5420, and by email at sshibuya2@wisc.edu.

Sincerely,



Sakina Shibuya