Muskan Jain

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EDUCATION

London School of Economics, London, UK
PhD in Economics *2023 - Expected 2027*
MRes in Economics (with Distinction) *2021 - 2023*

London School of Economics, London, UK *2019 - 2021*
MSc in Economics (with Distinction)

St. Stephen's College, University of Delhi, New Delhi, India *2016 - 2019*
B.A. (Hons.) Economics (First class)

REFERENCES

Placement Director: Prof. Matthias Doepke
m.doepke@lse.ac.uk

Graduate Administrator: Emma Taverner
e.taverner@lse.ac.uk

Prof. Guy Michaels
Department of Economics
London School of Economics
G.Michaels@lse.ac.uk

Prof. Gharad Bryan
Department of Economics
London School of Economics
G.T.Bryan@lse.ac.uk

Prof. Stephen Machin
Department of Economics
London School of Economics
S.J.Machin@lse.ac.uk

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Primary: Labour Economics
Secondary: Development Economics, Urban Economics

WORKING PAPERS

Gendered Use of Cities: Evidence from Jakarta *(Job Market Paper)*

Abstract: This paper examines gender differences in the use of urban space and how the provision of public space affects these differences. I create a scalable measure of street presence by gender from hand-labelled and machine-classified street imagery of Jakarta, and combine it with labour force and travel surveys. Women account for roughly one quarter of the adults observed on the street. An accounting exercise attributes about 70 per cent of the gender gap in street presence to differences in employment, hours and the location of work. Outside work, women make more trips than men but travel more locally. Comparing streets near and far from newly opened neighbourhood parks, I find that street presence rises by similar proportions for women and men, while women make up close to half of the adults photographed inside the spaces. Estimates from a nested discrete choice model of trip participation and destination choice indicate that women's participation responds more strongly to local access: 31 per cent of women's visits to new facilities represent additional trips, compared with 11 per cent for men. The results suggest that the gains from public space depend on residents' existing alternatives and on population density, and that such provision addresses only part of the gender gap in use of the city.

Spatial Cost of Formality: Street Vendors' Preferences in India *with Lachi Singh*

Abstract: Governments in developing countries have introduced many policies to formalise informal firms, but take-up is often low. We study street vendors, who trade on public land to which they hold no legal

claim. For these firms, the most common formalisation instrument is the vending zone: a designated site where certified vendors receive the legal right to trade, conditional on relocating there. We study the implementation of India's Street Vendors Act of 2014 in Patna, where all but one of the zones built are empty. Because the Act removes the cost of registration, low take-up reflects the terms of relocation. Using a stated preferences experiment with a randomised information treatment, administered to 2,922 vendors across 206 marketplaces, we value the barriers to relocation as a share of monthly sales. Vendors value a zone at their current location at 5.51 per cent of monthly sales. Any change in commute costs 2.87 per cent, and each additional kilometre a further 1.33 per cent. As a result, a zone that requires relocation can charge at most one per cent of sales in rent, and vendors refuse a free spot about two kilometres away. Coordination failure and lack of information explain much less. Within marketplaces, vendors whose choices respond to the terms of the zone earn more than those who always relocate, so zones with poor terms attract the vendors whose locations are worth least. Zones remain empty because formalising a firm without premises requires relocating it, and relocation costs more than half of the value of legal status.

Embedded Livelihoods: The Structure of Street Vending Markets in India *with Lachi Singh*
IGC Working Paper, IGC Policy Brief

Abstract: Street vending provides livelihoods for millions of workers across the developing world, yet the sector remains poorly understood and subject to repeated policy interventions that have largely failed. This paper provides a comprehensive microeconomic profile of street vending markets in Patna, Bihar, using original survey data from 2,922 stationary vendors across 206 marketplaces. We document that vendors are deeply embedded in overlapping social, spatial, and economic structures that make their livelihoods far more organized and far harder to administratively reshape than standard policy frameworks assume. Entry into vending and product choice are mediated by family networks; labour is almost entirely household-based; procurement is organized through stable relational ties with suppliers; and vendors cluster in spatially differentiated markets from which they derive substantial agglomeration economies. Pricing is implicitly coordinated through shared wholesale cost anchors, and 99 percent of vendors have never changed their marketplace despite operating without legal tenure and facing regular eviction pressure. The regulatory environment compounds this vulnerability: fewer than 2 percent of vendors are aware of the Street Vendors Act of 2014, which was designed to protect them, and over 40 percent report moderate to high psychological distress. We argue that the concept of embeddedness offers a more accurate framework for understanding this sector than the atomistic agent model implicit in most policy interventions, and that formalization efforts, particularly spatial relocation mandates, will continue to fail until they account for the social, spatial, and economic complementarities that sustain vendor livelihoods.

GRANTS, HONORS AND PRIZES

Research Grants

CEP PhD Grant (£1,000) *2026*
SEAC PhD Research Support Fund (£3,495) *2026*
LSE Seed Research Fund (£19,800) *with Swati Dhingra & Lachi Singh* *2025*
IGC Small Grants (£16,007) *2024*
IGC Small Grants (£16,857) *with Lachi Singh* *2024*
British Academy (£10,000) *with Swati Dhingra & Lachi Singh* *2024*

Honors and Prizes

LSE Economics PhD Scholarship *2021–2026*
LSE Department of Economics Teaching Bonus Award *2023, 2024, 2025, 2026*
St. Stepen's College - Rudra Economics Prize, Dr. Charat Ramji Gold Medal, Bank of Tokyo Mitsubishi UFJ Scholarship *2018 - 2019*

RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS

Prof. Swati Dhingra, CEP & LSE *Summer 2023*

Prof. Torsten Figueiredo Walter, New York University Abu Dhabi *2020 - 2022*

POLICY AND OTHER WRITINGS

Making Cities Work for Business *with Victoria Delbridge, Tim Dobermann, Juliana Oliveira-Cunha*
IGC Synthesis Paper, 2026

Missing Women in Public Spaces *(MRes Paper)*

Do crimes against women affect female labour supply at the intensive margin in India? *(MSc Extended Essay)*

How are Private Schools Inspected? *with Mahim Singla*
Anatomy of K-12 Governance in India, Centre for Civil Society, 2019, pp. 47–62

Impact of Rape Incidents on Female Labour Force Participation Rate *with Kriti Arora*
Ramjas Economic Review, Vol. 1, 2019, pp. 1–3

CONFERENCES AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

2026 British Academy Ideas Festival; Warwick PhD Conference

2019 15th South Asian Economics Students' Meet, Sri Lanka

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

London School of Economics, London, UK

Course Manager
- EC1A1 Microeconomics I *Winter Term 2025-26*

Graduate Teaching Assistant
- EC400 Introductory Course in Mathematics and Statistics *2024, 2025*
- EC1B3 Macroeconomics-I *2024-25*
- EC2A3 Microeconomics-II *2022-25*
- EC1A1 Microeconomics I *2023-24*
- EC2B3 Macroeconomics-II *2022-23*

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Refereeing: Economica

Seminar Organization: Labour Economics WIP Seminar co-organizer *(2024–2025)*

Mentoring: Academic Mentor to Undergraduates *(2025-2027)*; LSE Applicant Mentoring Programme *(2022–2024)*

SKILLS

Programming: Stata, Python, LaTeX, QGIS, SurveyCTO
Languages: English (Fluent), Hindi (Native)

Last updated: November 2026