

# Elisa Macchi

Department of Economics, Brown University - Robinson Hall (office 303D), Providence, RI 02912  
✉ [elisa\\_macchi@brown.edu](mailto:elisa_macchi@brown.edu) 🌐 [emacchi.com](http://emacchi.com) ☎ +1-857-999-7953

## Academic Positions

2025- BROWN UNIVERSITY, August Family Assistant Professor of Economics  
2023- 2025 BROWN UNIVERSITY, Assistant Professor of Economics  
2021- 2022 MIT, Postdoctoral Associate, Economics Department

## Visiting Positions

2025-2026 PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, Visiting Assistant Professor (RPDE and IRR Section)  
2018 -2019 HARVARD UNIVERSITY, Economics Department, Visiting Fellow

## Affiliations

2024- Bureau for Research & Economic Analysis of Development (BREAD), Affiliate  
2024- Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR), Affiliate  
2024- Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), Invited Researcher  
2023- Brown University Population Studies and Training Center (PSTC), Affiliate

## Education

2015-2021 UNIVERSITY OF ZURICH, PhD in Economics (summa cum laude)  
Thesis title: "Essays in Development Economics and Political Economy"  
Committee: David Yanagizawa-Drott, Lorenzo Casaburi, Hans-Joachim Voth  
2013 - 2015 UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA, M.Phil. in Economics (LMEC) (summa cum laude)  
2012 - 2013 EBERHARD KARLS UNIVERSITÄT TÜBINGEN, Erasmus Semester  
2010 - 2013 UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO - BICOCCA B.Sc. in Economics and Business (summa cum laude)

## Publications and Forthcoming

"Informal redistribution through work" with Jeremia Stalder, *Econometrica*, *Forthcoming*. CEPR Discussion Paper 19833.

"Graduate student and faculty mental health: Evidence from European economics departments" with Clara Sievert, Paul Barreira, and Valentin Bolotnyy, *American Journal of Health Economics*, 2026, Vol. 12 (3), pp. 562-609, <https://doi.org/10.1086/735865>

"Worth your weight: experimental evidence on the benefits of obesity in low-income countries." *American Economic Review*, 2023, Vol. 113 (9), pp. 2287-2322, <https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.20211879>

"EU transfers and euroscepticism: can't buy me love?", with A. Borin and M. Mancini, *Economic Policy*, 2021, Vol. 36, Issue 106, pp. 237-286, <https://doi.org/10.1093/epolic/eiaa028>

## Working Papers

"Hidden discrimination in frictional labor markets" with Claude Raisaro, BREAD Working Paper No. 663, April 2026

*Abstract:* Organizational frictions shape how firms hire. We study their consequences for hiring discrimination. In an experiment across three male-dominated sectors in Uganda, 915 employers evaluate profiles of vocational trainees to hire on probation. We randomize profile gender and

performance signals, and offers of audits to prevent theft or harassment. Under business-as-usual, female profiles are 10.6 percentage points less likely to be selected. Theft audits increase only male selection, raising this penalty by 56%; harassment audits increase only female selection and close the gap. Neither audit changes beliefs about candidate attributes. The effects are consistent with frictions raising the value of perceived trustworthiness, on which women are viewed favorably, and worries about women's exposure to harassment. Technical skill signals raise selection but do not explain the gap, and a complementary experiment with trainees does not support employers' beliefs that women are less skilled, nor that men are less honest. Thus, the status-quo gap conceals inaccurate statistical discrimination against men and a larger underlying bias against women. This provides direct evidence of a second-best problem: theft audits offset the first but amplify the hiring consequences of the second. Because gender signals several attributes, estimated bias depends on which ones researchers observe and treat as productive: in our setting, it ranges from 1.68 to 16.57 percentage points.

"Incentivized ratings design in the field"

*Abstract:* The incentivized ratings design has emerged as a transparent and incentive-compatible alternative to correspondence and audit studies for measuring discrimination and eliciting decision-makers' preferences. While originally implemented in online hiring settings in the U.S., I argue that its structure is especially well suited to contexts where decisions are made in person and where traditional audit methods are infeasible —features common in developing countries. This article reviews the expanding body of research using incentivized ratings, highlights conceptual innovations, and synthesizes lessons across 38 studies conducted between 2019 and 2025. Drawing on these applications and on my field implementations, I provide practical guidance on implementing this design in low-resource settings.

## Work in Progress (selected)

"The effects of large scale cash transfers on informal redistribution and firm growth", with Dennis Egger and Nicholas Swanson

"Symptoms", with Kevin Carney

"Attention, productivity, and phone use in poor countries", with Rohini Pande, Emma Riley, and Simone Schaner

## Grants & Awards

**2026** *Weiss Fund* with Nicholas Swanson and Dennis Egger (USD 59,670)

*Population Studies and Training Center (PSTC) Seed Funding* with Kevin Carney (USD 25,000)

**2025** *Weiss Fund* with Claude Raisaro (USD 69,000)

*Population Studies and Training Center (PSTC) Bridge Funding* (USD 10,000)

*Brown University Economics Department BRAVO Funding* (twice, total USD 50,000)

**2024** *Weiss Fund* (USD 14,750)

*Brown University PSTC Seed Funding* (USD 10,000)

*Brown University Economics Department BRAVO Funding* (USD 10,000)

**2022** *RESTUD Tour North America*

University of California San Diego, University of Chicago, University of Pennsylvania

until 2021 Swiss Re Fund for Development Economics – Top-up Grant (USD 10,800) – Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) Early Postdoctoral Mobility Fellowship – Diligentia Stiftung Research Grant (with David Yanagizawa-Drott; USD 39,500) – GRC Travel Grant (USD 2,800) – Swiss Re Fund for Development Economics (USD 27,000) – Director’s Grant, University of Zurich Graduate School of Economics (USD 5,400) – SNSF Doc.Mobility Fellowship – Stringher Scholarship (particolarmente meritevole, Banca d’Italia).

## Seminars and Conferences Presentations

2026/2027 \* = sched BRAVO Behavioral Conference – NYU – Econometric Society Africa Meeting (Cairo)\* – Rutgers – SOLE Denver – BEDI Pittsburgh – Women in Empirical Microeconomics Conference\* – UPF – World Bank Africa Economics Seminar Series – NBER Organizational Economics Working Group\* – Georgetown University\*

2025 NBER Development Meeting – CEPR Paris Symposium – Yale – Dartmouth Macro Mini-Conference – Cities and Development Workshop, Harvard – Princeton – Cornell – Econometric Society World Congress (Seoul) – Northeastern – Boston U – BREAD Princeton Meeting – Firms, Labor Markets, and Development Workshop.

2024 Princeton – Chicago – UBC – USC – Stanford – UCSD Rady – CEPR/BREAD LSE Conference.

2023 PSE – AMSE – LSE – Columbia – St Andrews (virtual) – Pacific Northwest Development Conference – BFI Women in Applied Microeconomics – Zurich Workshop on Economics and Psychology – Barcelona Summer Forum Microdevelopment – LSE ODDO Conference – BREAD & MIT Conference.

2022 Chicago Booth – Bocconi LEAP Conference – WEFIDEV – Cologne – St Gallen – Stavanger.

2021 MIT – Restud Tour: UCSD, Chicago, UPenn – EEA–ESEM Congress – Weggis Workshop in Political Economy and Development – Northwestern Rookiefest.

Job Market Talks: Brown, CEMFI, Collegio Carlo Alberto, Harris (Chicago), IIES, NHH, NES Moscow, Nova SBE, PSE, UCSD Rady, Stockholm, World Bank DRG.

until 2020 BREAD – NEUDC – DEVPEC – Essen Health Conference (virtual) – ECBE – ETSG.

## Teaching

BROWN UNIVERSITY

2023-2025 Introduction to Econometrics (Brown 1620), Instructor

2023-2025 Graduate Development I, Instructor

MIT

2022 Economics and Psychology (MIT 1413), Co-instructor with F. Schilbach.

## Professional Service and Advising

REFEREEING

American Economic Review American Economic Review: Insights American Economic Journal: Applied Economics American Economic Journal: Economic Policy Econometrica Economic De-

*velopment and Cultural Change*   *Experimental Economics*   *Journal of African Economies*   *Journal of Development Economics*   *Journal of Health Economics*   *Journal of Political Economy*   *Journal of the European Economic Association*   *Quantitative Economics*   *Quarterly Journal of Economics*   *Review of Economic Studies*

#### DEPARTMENT SERVICE, BROWN UNIVERSITY

2023–2026   Applied Micro Seminar, co-organizer (three times).  
2026   Behavioral Seminar, organizer.  
2026   Concentration advisor, Economics.  
2023–2025   Ph.D. Admissions committee, Economics (three times).

#### SELECTION COMMITTEES AND DISCUSSANT

2026   North East Universities Gender Day, selection committee.  
2025   North East Universities Gender Day, discussant.  
2024–2025   Selection Committee Member, Northeast Universities Development Consortium (NEUDC) at Northeastern University and Tufts University.  
2022   Firms, Labor Markets, and Development Workshop, discussant.

#### ADVISING

Juan Pereira, Economics graduate student at Brown University (placement: Amazon);  
Sonali Deliwala, research assistant (placement: PhD, Political Science, Columbia University);  
Max Goldstein, undergraduate at Brown University (placement: PhD, Economics, Columbia University).