

Melanie Khamis

Professor of Economics | Wesleyan University

Updated: 2nd September 2026

Education

The London School of Economics (LSE), London, U.K. *2008*

PhD

University of Warwick, Coventry, U.K. *1999*

MSc in Economics

The London School of Economics (LSE), London, U.K. *1998*

BSc in Economics

Research and Teaching Interests

Labor Economics, Development Economics, Gender Economics, Microeconomics, Econometrics

Employment

Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT, USA *2011–present*

- Professor of Economics, Department of Economics *2023–present*
- Associate Professor of Economics (with tenure), Department of Economics *2018–2023*
- Assistant Professor of Economics, Department of Economics *2011–2018*
- Chair of Latin American Studies Program *2020–2021, 2024–2025*
- Core Member of Latin American Studies Program *2011–present*

Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA), Bonn, Germany *2008–2011*

Postdoctoral Research Associate

Department for International Development (DFID), London, U.K. *2003–2007*

Government Economist

The World Bank Group, Washington D.C., U.S.A. *2006–2007, 2019, 2020–2022*

Consultant

The World Bank Group, Buenos Aires, Argentina *2004–2005*

Consultant

The World Bank Group, Washington D.C., U.S.A. *2002*

Summer Internship

The International Monetary Fund (IMF), Washington D.C., U.S.A. *2000–2001*

Research Assistant

Maxwell Stamp PLC, London, U.K. *1999–2000*

Economic Consultant in International Development Consultancy

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

1. What Happens When Men Don't Migrate? Partnership and Fertility in a Migrant Sending Country, with Sarah Pearlman and Emily Conover, *The World Bank Economic Review*, forthcoming.
2. Demography, Human Capital Investment, and Lifetime Earnings for Women and Men, with Joyce Jacobsen and Mutlu Yuksel. *Eastern Economic Journal*, June 2024, vol. 50(3).
3. It's Not Easy Being A Green Party: Green Politics as a Normal Good, with Patrick Gourley. *European Journal of Political Economy*, January 2023, vol. 76.
4. Declining Outmigration and Local Labor Markets, with Emily Conover and Sarah Pearlman. *Journal of Human Resources*, 2023, vol. 58(6).
5. Initial Job Match Quality and Labor Market Transitions: Evidence from Mexican Informal and Formal Labor Markets, with Emily Conover and Sarah Pearlman. *Journal of Development Studies*, July 2022, vol. 58(7).
6. Gender Imbalances and Labor Market Outcomes: Evidence from Large-Scale Mexican Migration, with Emily Conover and Sarah Pearlman. *IZA Journal of Migration and Development*, 2021, 12.
7. Environment Matters: New Evidence From Mexican Migration, with Xiyue Li. *Applied Economics Letters*, 2020, 27, 168–173.
8. Women Make Houses, Women Make Homes, with Mevlude Akbulut-Yuksel and Mutlu Yuksel. *Labour Economics*, 2017, 49, 145–161.
9. For Better or for Worse: The Long-Term Effects of Postwar Reconstruction on Family Formation, with Mevlude Akbulut-Yuksel and Mutlu Yuksel. *Applied Economics*, 2016, 48:29, 2771–2784.
10. Convergences in Men's and Women's Life Patterns: Lifetime Work, Lifetime Earnings and Human Capital Investment, with Joyce Jacobsen and Mutlu Yuksel. *Research in Labor Economics*, 2015, 41, 1–33.
11. Does the minimum wage have a higher impact on the informal than on the formal labor market? Evidence from quasi-experiments. *Applied Economics*, 2013, 45:4, 477–495.
12. Is informal sector work an alternative to workfare benefits? The case of pre-program expansion and economic crisis. *Review of Development Economics*, 2012, 16:4, 579–593.
13. Consumption and Social Identity: Evidence from India, with Nishith Prakash and Zahra Siddique. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 2012, 83, 353–371.
14. The Persistence of Informality: Evidence from Panel Data, with Aslan Akay. *Research in Labor Economics*, 2012, 34, 229–255.
15. A Note on Informality in the Labor Market. *Journal of International Development*, 2012, 24, 894–908.

Working Papers

15. Comparative Advantage, Segmentation and Informal Earnings: A Marginal Treatment Effects Approach, with Omar Arias. IZA DP No. 3916 (January 2013).
16. The Early Labor Market Impacts of COVID-19 in Developing Countries: Evidence from High-Frequency Phone Surveys, with Daniel Prinz, David Newhouse, Amparo Palacios-Lopez, Utz Pape, Michael Weber. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 9510, 2021.
17. Risk Attitudes and Informal Employment in Ukraine, with Thomas Dohmen, Hartmut Lehmann and Norberto Pignatti. IZA DP No. 16445 (September 2023).
18. Migration and Household Informal Activity, with Ira Gang and John Landon-Lane (December 2025). *In preparation for Handbook Chapter*
19. Absentee Landlords and Land Tenancy, with Annemie Maertens and Siddharth Sharma. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 10865 (May 2026).Submitted

20. The Labor Market Effects of Mobile Internet: Evidence from Mexico, with Lisa Hoeckel, Anica Kramer and Manuel Santos Silva (April 2026).
21. What Happens When Men Don't Migrate? Partnership and Fertility in a Migrant Sending Country, with Sarah Pearlman and Emily Conover (March 2026). *revision resubmitted*

Other Peer-Reviewed Publications

23. Formalization of jobs and firms in emerging economies. *IZA World of Labor*, May 2014.
24. Ethnic Fragmentation, Conflict, Displaced Persons and Human Trafficking: An Empirical Analysis, with Randall Akee, Arnab Basu and Nancy Chau. In Gil S. Epstein and Ira N. Gang (eds.), *Migration and Culture*, Frontiers of Economics and Globalization, Vol. 8, Emerald Publishing, 2010.
25. Crisis and Recovery in Argentina: Labor market, poverty, inequality and pro-poor growth dynamics. In Stephan Klasen and Felicitas Nowak-Lehmann (eds.), *Poverty, Inequality and Migration in Latin America*, Peter Lang Verlag, 2008.

Peer-Reviewed Policy Publications

26. JobsWatch COVID-19: Early Labor Market Impacts of COVID-19 in Developing Countries, with Daniel Prinz, David Newhouse, Amparo Palacios-Lopez, Utz Pape, Michael Weber. World Bank, January 2021.
27. JobsWatch COVID-19: The Evolving Labor Market Impacts of COVID-19 in Developing Countries, with Daniel Prinz, David Newhouse, Amparo Palacios-Lopez, Utz Pape, Michael Weber. World Bank, July 2021.
28. JobsWatch COVID-19: How did countries respond to the COVID-19 crisis? Emerging Patterns on Jobs-related policies, with Ivette Contreras, David Newhouse and Michael Weber. World Bank, April 2023.

Research Funding and Awards

External

- UNU-WIDER Grant “Transforming informal work and livelihoods” (2019) — \$8,000 (with Sarah Pearlman and Emily Conover)
- W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research Early Career Research Grant (2014) — \$5,000 (with Mevlude Akbulut-Yuksel and Mutlu Yuksel)
- Volkswagen Foundation Project (with Hartmut Lehmann) (2011–2014) — 420,000
- Alexander von Humboldt TransCoop on Human Trafficking (with Randall Akee, Arnab Basu, Nancy Chau and Hilmar Schneider) (2009–2011) — 51,000
- World Bank 1st Round Funding for Informality Project Proposal (with Hartmut Lehmann) (2009) — \$10,000

Internal

- Carol Baker '81 Memorial Prize for PAC Junior Faculty, 2015–2016
- COE/Wesleyan University Faculty Fellowship, 2015–2016
- Wesleyan University Project Grant, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2017
- Wesleyan University Research Funding, 2012–2026
- Wesleyan University Travel Funding, 2012–2026
- Wesleyan University Student-Faculty Research Internship Funding, 2012–2026
- Wesleyan University Teaching and Pedagogy Grant, 2015–2016, 2017–2018
- Wesleyan University Summer Research (QAC) Program, 2012, 2018, 2022, 2024
- LSE Research Student Scholarship, 2006/2007
- Michio Morishima Travel Award, 2007

Research Visits

Cornell University — Visiting Associate Professor of Economics *Spring 2023*
Invited by Prof. Arnab Basu and Prof. Nancy Chau.

NBER Applied Microeconomics/Health Group (NYC) — Visiting Researcher *Jan–Jun 2019*
Invited by Prof. Michael Grossman and Prof. David Jaeger.

Harvard Kennedy School of Government, Cambridge, MA — WAPPP Fellow *2018–2019*
Fellow with the Women and Public Policy Program (selected by committee).

Transatlantic Senior Researcher, Ruhr Graduate School of Economics *December 2018*

University of California, Berkeley — Visiting Research Scholar *Jan–Jul 2015*
Center for Labor Economics; invited by Prof. David Card.

Harvard University, Cambridge, MA — Visiting Scholar *2013–2014*
Department of Economics; invited by Prof. Jerry Green.

Presentations

2026: ASSA Philadelphia (one discussant); LACEA Labor Network & World Bank Conference on Technological Change and Labor Markets; French/Japanese Conference on International Economics, Kyoto, Japan.

2025: Wesleyan (CSS).

2024: 13th Workshop on the Economics of Risky Behavior, Opatija, Croatia (discussant); 3rd Workshop of Applied Economics, Halifax, Canada; Southern Economic Association, Washington DC.

2023: Eastern Economic Association; University of Arkansas; Fordham; CUNY Baruch; MLPortal 2nd Workshop of Applied Microeconomics, Halifax; SEA (2 presentations, discussant).

2022: Western Economic Association; MLPortal 1st Workshop of Applied Microeconomics, Halifax; LACDEV Wellesley College (discussant); NEUDC Yale (chair); ASSLE University of Tokyo.

2021: LAC Labor and Public Conference (session chair), World Bank Latin America Region.

2020: UNU-WIDER workshop, Helsinki (virtual); IZA/World Bank/NJD Jobs and Development Conference (virtual); AEA CTREE (cancelled); ESPE Barcelona (cancelled); EALE/SOLE Berlin (cancelled).

2019: Williams College CGD; Canadian Economic Association; IZA/World Bank/NJD Jobs and Development Conference; Western Economic Association; EALE (invited flash talk); Yale; University of Arkansas; Wesleyan.

2018: UMass Amherst; RWI Essen; IZA World of Labor Conference, Berlin; The Brookings Institution; NEUDC Cornell; SEA (panelist and presentation); Universitaet Bamberg.

2017: IAFPE Conference, Seoul, Korea.

2016: AEA (chair); Fordham; Wesleyan (PAC); LSE; Indiana/Cornell University Conference in Honor of Elinor Ostrom.

2015: AEA/ACES (discussant, 3 papers); UC Berkeley; EEA; IZA/CEPR European Summer Symposium for Labor Economics.

2014: 9th IZA/World Bank Conference, Lima; PacDev Los Angeles; Wesleyan; CSMGEP Panel Discussant at AEA, Philadelphia.

2013: AEA/CSWEP San Diego; ACES San Diego; World Bank; Hamilton College; Rutgers; Connecticut College; 8th IZA/World Bank Conference, Bonn; EEA Gothenburg; LAC-DEV Amherst (discussant); Wellesley College.

2012: Workshop on Human Trafficking (Goettingen); Wesleyan (CSS); Vassar; SOLE (poster); Universitaet Goettingen; EALE; Tufts; SEA; UCONN.

2011: ASSA, LERA (poster); Wesleyan; Dalhousie; 3rd Annual Meeting on Risky Behaviors (discussant); IZA; 6th IZA/World Bank Conference, Mexico (2 papers); IZA/World Bank Workshop on Institutions and Informal Employment.

2010: ASSA, ACES; IZA; Stockholm University; University of Michigan Conference; EALE/SOLE; Ruhr-Universitaet Bochum; SAEe Madrid; Universitaet Goettingen.

2009: 4th IZA/World Bank Conference; IZA/SOLE Transatlantic Meeting; LASA; IZA; Universitaet Muenster; EALE; 1st CIER/IZA Conference; IZA/Volkswagen Foundation Topic Week; World Bank; IZA Prize Conference; College of William & Mary; Cornell; Rutgers; NEUDC (poster).

2008: Royal Economic Society; 3rd IZA/World Bank Conference; SOLE (poster); Nordic Conference in Development Economics; IZA; LACEA; IPEA; IZA Prize Conference (poster).

2007 and earlier: 2nd IZA/World Bank Conference (2007); STICERD, LSE; World Bank (2006); Poverty, Inequality and Policy in Latin America Symposium, Goettingen (2005).

Refereeing

Journals: American Economic Journal; Applied Economics, American Economic Review, Applied Economics, Applied Economics Letters, The B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy, Journal for European Economic Association, Economica, Economics, Economics and Human Biology, Economic Modelling, Economics of Transition, Empirical Economics, Industrial & Labor Relations Review, International Journal of Manpower, IZA Journal of Labor & Development, IZA Journal of Migration and Development, Journal of Applied Economics, Journal of Comparative Economics, Journal of Demographic Economics, Journal of Development Studies, Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization, Journal of Economic Policy Reform, Journal of Economic Psychology, Journal of Family and Economic Issues, Journal of Gender Studies, Journal of Institutional Economics, Journal of International Development, Journal of Human Trafficking, Journal of Human Resources, Journal of Labor Market Research, Journal of Population Economics, Journal of Productivity Analysis, Labour Economics, Singapore Economic Review, Research in Labor Economics, Review of Development Economics, Review of Economics of the Household, Review of International Organizations, Review of Social Economy, The Review of Regional Studies, The Manchester School, Oxford Economic Papers, Oxford Development Studies, PLOS One, World Development.

Grants and Reports: IZA/DFID Growth and Labour Markets in Low Income Countries Program (GLM|LIC): Phase 3 grants (2013), Phase 2 grants (2013), Phase 1 grants (2012); OECD Report *Is Informal Normal? Towards More and Better Jobs in Developing Countries* (2008).

Books: Oxford University Press Book Proposal; MIT Press Book Proposal; Routledge Press Book Proposal; Routledge Press Book 2nd Edition.

Organization of Workshops and Conferences

Organizer:

- LAC-DEV: 13th Liberal Arts Development Economics Conference, Wesleyan University, September 2026 (local organizer)
- IZA Workshop: Understanding Informal Employment in Transition (Georgia), Bonn, 2011
- IZA Workshop: Legal and Illicit Immigration, Bonn, 2010
- Graduate Workshop in Development Economics, Bonn, 2009
- 1st CIER/IZA Workshop: Research in Labor Economics, Beijing, 2009

Reviewer:

- Australian Gender Economics Workshop (AGEW), January 2024
- LAC Public/Labor Economics Conference, June 2022
- IZA/World Bank/NJD Jobs and Development Conference (December 2022, September 2021, September 2020, June 2019)
- LAC-DEV: 4th Conference, Vassar College, September 2016
- AALAC Workshop “Enhancing Inclusivity in Economics at Liberal Arts Colleges”, Pomona College, February 2016; Follow-up at ASSA Philadelphia, January 2018
- LAC-DEV: 3rd Conference, Lafayette College, September 2015
- LAC-DEV: 2nd Conference, Colgate University, September 2014
- ASSA/ACES Session Organizer, Chair and Discussant, January 2014
- Pacific Conference for Development Economics (PacDev), 2014
- LAC-DEV: 1st Conference, Amherst College, October 2013
- 3rd EALE/SOLE Conference at UCL, London, 2010
- 4th IZA/World Bank Conference, Bonn, 2009

Professional Associations

American Economic Association; Latin American and Caribbean Economic Association; UK Government Economic Service (2003–2007); STICERD Affiliate (2005–2007); Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA) Research Fellow (2011–present); Global Labor Organization (GLO) Fellow (2017–present).

Mentoring Activity

- CSWEP AEA Summer Mentoring Program, July 2026
- Mentor, American Economic Association Mentoring Program, Fall 2021–present
- Job Market Coach, AEA Pipeline Conference, June 2023, June 2024
- Job Market Coach, AEA Mentoring Program, Fall 2021, 2023, 2024, 2025
- AEA CSWEP Newsletter contribution: “Being at a Liberal Arts College with High Research Expectations”, 2020, Issue III
- Invited “Guru” talk, Berlin Network for Labor Market Research, July 2020
- Mentor, CSWEP Mentoring Program at AEA San Diego, 2020
- Mentee Participant, CSWEP Mentoring Program at AEA Philadelphia, 2014

External Examiner and Reviewer

- 2024: IZA Fellow (2)
- 2025: Tenure (1)
- 2023: Tenure (2), IZA Fellow (2), External Review of BA Economics at University of Arkansas
- 2022: Promotion (1), Master’s Degree (1)
- 2021: Tenure (3)
- 2014: PhD (1); 2020: Tenure (1)

Teaching Experience

Wesleyan University

2011–present

- ECON301 Microeconomic Analysis (multiple sections, 2011–2023)
- ECON261 Latin American Economic Development (2011–2025)
- ECON361 Development and Labor in Latin American Economies (2016–2025)
- ECON366 The Economics of Developing Countries (Spring 2012)
- ECON300 Introduction to Econometrics (2012, 2024, 2025)
- ENVS391 COE Senior Colloquium (Fall 2015); ENVS241 Labor and Development Economics in Latin America (Spring 2016)
- ECON402 Individual Tutorial on Recent Developments in Econometrics and Causal Inference (Spring

2025)

- GLSP SOCS 649 Current Topics in Development Economics, Master's Degree class (Fall 2022)

Other Teaching

- University of New Haven, Pompea College of Business — Guest Lectures in Development Economics for EMBA (2021)
- RWI, Ruhr Graduate School, Essen — Mini-Lectures 'Gender in the Labor Market' for PhD students (2018)
- Universitaet Bonn — Lecturer, Master-level Development Economics (2010)
- LSE, Department of International Development — Class Teacher, Master-level Poverty Measurement (2006)

Service at Wesleyan

University and Departmental Service

- Faculty Representative (Finance) to the Board of Trustees, 2023–2024
- Chair, Search Committee for Economics Department, 2019–2020
- Search Committee, Economics Department, 2011–2012, 2016–2017
- Search Committee, Center for the Americas Postdoctoral Mellon Fellow, 2015–2016
- Search Committee, Administrative Assistant, 2025
- Board Member, Center of the Americas, 2011–2012, 2015–2016
- Board Member, Center for Global Studies, 2016–2017
- Economics Department Seminar Organizer, 2012–2013
- Ad Hoc Committee on Promotion to Full Professor, 2025–2026
- Lebergott-Lovell Prize Committee, 2023–2025
- Research Mentor for Assistant Professors of Economics: 2018 (1), 2019–2022 (1), 2022–2023 (1), 2023–present (1)
- Teaching Mentor for Assistant Professors in Economics: 2020–2023 (1)

Student-Related Service and Advising

- Thesis Adviser: 2013, 2016, 2026
- LAST Senior Essay Tutorial: 2017
- Economics Senior Essay Tutorial: 2020
- Academic Adviser to the Wesleyan Football Team, 2016–present
- Regular student advising (22–37 Economics Majors per year, 2012–2026)

Languages and Computer Skills

Languages: English (fluent), German (fluent), Spanish (good), French (good), Latin (good), Japanese (advanced intermediate).

Software: Stata, EViews, L^AT_EX, Python, R, SQL.