

Elisa Jácome

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Academic Positions

Postdoctoral Fellow, SIEPR, Stanford University, 2021–2022

Assistant Professor of Economics, Northwestern University, 2022–

Education

Ph.D. in Economics, Princeton University, 2015–2021

M.A. in Economics, Princeton University, 2017

B.S. in International Economics (*summa cum laude*), Georgetown University, 2009–2013

Research Fields

Primary Public economics, labor economics

Secondary Economic history, economics of crime, economic mobility & inequality

Publications

“Intergenerational Mobility of Immigrants in the US over Two Centuries” with Ran Abramitzky, Leah Boustan, and Santiago Pérez, *American Economic Review* 111(2): 580–608 (NBER WP #26408)

Using millions of father-son pairs spanning more than 100 years of US history, we find that children of immigrants from nearly every sending country have higher rates of upward mobility than children of the US-born. Immigrants’ advantage is similar historically and today despite dramatic shifts in sending countries and US immigration policy. Immigrants achieve this advantage in part by choosing to settle in locations that offer better prospects for their children.

Working Papers

“Mental Health and Criminal Involvement: Evidence from Losing Medicaid Eligibility”

This paper explores whether access to mental healthcare can reduce criminal activity. Specifically, I study the effect of losing insurance coverage on low-income men’s likelihood of incarceration using administrative data from South Carolina that has been linked across six state government agencies. Leveraging a discrete break in Medicaid coverage at age 19 and a difference-in-differences strategy, I find that men who lose access to Medicaid eligibility are 15% more likely to be incarcerated in the subsequent two years relative to a matched comparison group. The effects are concentrated among men with mental health histories, suggesting that losing access to mental healthcare plays an important role in explaining the observed rise in crime. By their 21st birthdays, men with mental health histories who lost Medicaid coverage are 22% more likely to have been incarcerated than the comparison group. Cost-benefit analyses show that expanding Medicaid eligibility to low-income young men is a cost-effective policy for reducing crime, especially relative to traditional approaches like increasing the severity of criminal sanctions. These findings have important implications for the design of criminal justice policies if low-income young men are more deterred from participating in illegal activity through the provision of healthcare than through harsher punishments.

“The Effect of Immigration Enforcement on Crime Reporting: Evidence from Dallas,” Revise & Resubmit at the *Journal of Urban Economics*

Mistrust between immigrants and the police may undermine law enforcement’s ability to keep communities safe. This paper documents that immigration policies affect an individual’s willingness to report crime. I analyze the Priority Enforcement Program (PEP), which was launched by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency in 2015. Under PEP, ICE focused enforcement efforts on individuals convicted of serious crimes and shifted resources away from immigration-related offenses. I use data from the Dallas Police Department that include a complainant’s ethnicity to show that the number of incidents reported by Hispanic individuals increased by 10 percent after the launch of PEP. The results of this study suggest that reducing enforcement of individuals who do not pose a threat to public safety can potentially improve trust between immigrant communities and the police.

“Mobility for All: Representative Intergenerational Mobility Estimates over the 20th Century” (with Ilyana Kuziemko and Suresh Naidu)

We present what is to the best of our knowledge the first long-run estimates of intergenerational relative mobility for samples that are representative of the full U.S. born population. We develop a simple mobility measure that allows easy inclusion of non-whites and women for the 1910s to 1970s birth cohorts. We show a robust decline in both the intergenerational-elasticity and rank-rank persistence measures between the 1910s and 1940s birth cohorts. Both measures tend to drift up afterwards, so we find that persistence measures mirror the *u*-shaped trends in inequality over this period.

“The Effect of Mass Incarceration on Black Women”

This paper studies the relationship between rising incarceration rates and the outcomes of black women. Using state-level annual data documenting changes in sentencing policies between 1970 and 2002, I select two policies that likely satisfy as valid instruments for the incarceration rate: determinate sentencing and mandatory sentencing laws for offenses involving a weapon. I then use these instruments to estimate the effect of incarceration on black women’s outcomes using two-stage least squares. Estimates that use the universe of black births from Vital Statistics data find no evidence that higher incarceration rates lead to lower birth rates, a higher share of out-of-wedlock births, or a higher share of low birthweight births. The results for labor market outcomes are less precisely estimated, but I do find some evidence that higher incarceration rates lead to higher employment and labor force participation rates for black women.

Professional Activities

Referee for *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, *Journal of Urban Economics*,
Review of Economics and Statistics, *Review of Economics of the Household*,
Journal of Human Resources, *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, *Eastern Economic Journal*

U.S. Census Bureau Special Sworn Status, 2019–present

Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC) Research Fellow, 2018–present

Becker Friedman Institute Price Theory Camp, 2019

Graduate Student Summit for Diversity in Economics, 2018

Grants, Awards, & Fellowships

Fellowship of SPIA Scholars, 2019–2021

Marimar and Cristina Torres Prize for Best Third Year Paper, 2018

Paul & Daisy Soros Fellowship for New Americans Finalist, 2017

Princeton University Graduate Fellowship, 2015–present

Industrial Relations Section Graduate Fellowship, 2015–2017

William F. Notz Medal for Economics, 2013

Phi Beta Kappa, 2013

Conferences & Invited Seminars

2021 SIEPR Postdoctoral Fellows Conference, Northwestern University, Stanford University, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, University of Oxford, Yale School of Management, UC Santa Cruz, Chicago Harris, UCLA Anderson School of Management, University of Zurich, Cornell University, Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, UC Berkeley, Federal Reserve Bank of New York, UT Austin, University of British Columbia, Institute for Fiscal Studies, Brown University, Duke University, U.S. Treasury

2019 Social Science History Association

Research Experience

Research Assistant for Prof. Ilyana Kuziemko, 2016–2017

Research Assistant for Profs. Katharine Abraham and Melissa Kearney, 2016

Policy Coordinator and Senior Research Assistant, The Hamilton Project, Brookings Institution, 2013–2015

Research Assistant, The World Bank Group, 2012

Teaching Experience

Economic Writing and Stata Workshop Instructor, Undergraduate Junior Independent Work, 2017–2019

Teaching Assistant for Prof. Leah Boustan, Undergraduate Junior Independent Work, 2017–2018

Teaching Assistant for Prof. Martin Evans, Introduction to Econometrics, 2012–2013

Teaching Assistant for Prof. Carol Rogers, Principles of Macroeconomics, 2012

Calculus Tutor for Mathematics Department, 2010–2011

Other Publications

“Profiles of change: Employment, earnings, and occupations from 1990–2013” (with Melissa S. Kearney and Brad Hershbein). The Hamilton Project, 2015.

“Ten Economic Facts about Crime and Incarceration in the United States” (with Melissa S. Kearney, Benjamin H. Harris, and Lucie Parker). The Hamilton Project, 2014.

“A Dozen Facts about America’s Struggling Lower-Middle Class” (with Melissa Kearney, Benjamin Harris, and Lucie Parker). The Hamilton Project, 2013.

Languages and Skills

Languages: Spanish (native), English (native), French (working proficiency)

Programming languages: Stata, Matlab, L^AT_EX, ArcGIS

Last updated: June 17, 2021