

Elisa Jácome

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Education

Princeton University

Ph.D. in Economics, 2015–present (expected completion: May 2021)
M.A. in Economics, 2017

Georgetown University

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

Research and Teaching Fields

Primary	Public economics, labor economics
Secondary	Economic history, economics of crime, economic mobility & inequality

Working Papers

“Mental Health and Criminal Involvement: Evidence from Medicaid” (*Job Market Paper*)

Individuals with mental illness are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system. This paper studies the potential role for mental healthcare in reducing criminal activity. Specifically, I study the effect of losing insurance coverage on low-income men’s likelihood of incarceration using individual-level 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 matched difference-in-differences research design, I find that men who lose access to Medicaid eligibility are more likely to be incarcerated in the subsequent two years (relative to otherwise comparable men who were likely eligible, but not enrolled in the program). The effects are concentrated among men with mental health histories, suggesting that losing access to mental healthcare plays an important role in explaining the rise in criminal activity. By their 21st birthday, men with mental health histories who lost access to Medicaid coverage are 22% more likely to have been incarcerated than the matched comparison group. Cost-benefit analyses suggests that providing Medicaid eligibility to low-income young adults is a relatively cost-effective policy for reducing crime, especially when compared to traditional approaches like increasing the severity of criminal sanctions. The findings of this paper 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.

“Intergenerational Mobility of Immigrants in the US over Two Centuries” (with Ran Abramitzky, Leah Boustan, and Santiago Pérez), NBER WP #26408, Forthcoming at the *American Economic Review*

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.

“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.

“Intergenerational Mobility Over the 20th Century: Evidence from U.S. Survey Data” (with Ilyana Kuziemko and Suresh Naidu)

We use historical survey data to construct new estimates of intergenerational mobility over the 20th century, taking advantage of all surveys that asked respondents about father’s income. The use of survey data allows us to estimate intergenerational mobility in a consistent way over a long period, avoiding problems in historical record linkage as well as look at the mobility of women as well as men. The presence of a rich set of covariates unavailable in most administrative datasets also lets us examine which institutions mitigate intergenerational persistence across households. We find quite stable rank-rank correlations by cohort, with similar patterns for women and men, and that union membership, migration, and schooling all work to attenuate intergenerational persistence.

“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.

References

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Professor Ilyana Kuziemko
Princeton University
+1 (609) 258-8276
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Professor Alexandre Mas
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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

Professional Activities

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

Awards and 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

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

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