

ELIZABETH LUH

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CURRENT POSITION

Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Criminal Justice Administrative Records System, University of Michigan, 2020-present

EDUCATION

Ph.D. Economics, University of Houston, 2020

M.A. Economics, University of Houston, 2016

B.S. Economics with honors and Mathematics, University of Oregon, 2014

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Applied Microeconomics, Labor Economics, Public Economics, Economics of Crime and Discrimination

WORKING PAPERS

“Criminal court fees, earnings, and expenditures: A multi-state RD analysis of survey and administrative data” joint with Carl Lieberman and Michael Mueller-Smith); *job market paper; under embargo at the U.S. Census*

Abstract: Millions of people in the United States face fines and fees in the criminal court system each year, totaling over \$27 billion in overall criminal debt to-date. In this study, we leverage five distinct natural experiments in Florida, Michigan, North Carolina, Texas, and Wisconsin using regression discontinuity designs to evaluate the causal impact of such financial sanctions and user fees. We consider a range of long-term outcomes including employment, recidivism, household expenditures, and other self-reported measures of well-being, which we measure through a combination of administrative data (Internal Review Service tax records; Criminal Justice Administrative Records System) and household surveys (American Community Survey). We find consistent evidence across the range of natural experiments and subgroup analyses of precise null effects on the population, ruling out long-run impacts larger than $\pm 3.6\%$ on total earnings and $\pm 4.7\%$ on total recidivism. Failure to find changes in outcomes undermines popular narratives of poverty traps arising from criminal debt but argues against the use of fines and fees as a source of local revenue and as a crime control tool.

“Not So Black and White: Uncovering Racial Bias from Systematically Misreported Trooper Reports” *under review*

Featured in Probable Causation (Episode 63)!

“The Impact of Financial Sanctions in the U.S. Justice System: Regression Discontinuity Evidence from Michigan’s Driver Responsibility Program” (joint with Keith Finlay, Matthew Gross, and Michael Mueller-Smith) *under review*

WORKS IN PROGRESS

“Neighborhood Segregation and Gun Violence” joint with Kenneth Whaley

“Effects of Disparate Parking Enforcement on Long-term Outcomes”

“Effect of Early Education on Long term Educational Outcomes” (joint with Dan Engster, Scott Hofer, and M.C. Sunny Wong)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Houston

2016–2019

Instructor of Record

Houston, TX

- Chinese Economy
- Intermediate Microeconomics
- Principles of Microeconomics

AWARDS AND GRANTS

- 2021** National Science Foundation, “Effects of Financial Sanctions in the Criminal Justice System,” 2021-2023
- 2019** Dr. Walter J. Primeaux Jr. and Natalie A. Primeaux Scholarship Endowment
Awarded to Ph.D. student who has made substantial progress on theses
University of Chicago Becker Friedman Institute Price Theory Summer Camp
Cullen Fellowship Travel Grant, University of Houston
Competitive fellowship program to support graduate student travel
- 2018** Best Graduate Presentation
Given for best presentation of a 4th year student in Ph.D. workshop;
Awarded with paid trip to the Southern Economic Association Meetings
- 2014** Graduate Fellowship, University of Houston

PRESENTATIONS

- 2022** Texas Economics of Crime Workshop, Western Economic Association Annual Conference, Conference of Empirical Legal Studies, Virtual Crime Economics APPAM (planned), Southern Economic Association Conference (planned)
- 2021** APPAM, Missouri Valley Economic Association Annual Conference
- 2019** Texas Econometrics Camp, Western Economic Association Annual Conference, STATA Texas Empirical Micro Conference (Poster), Missouri Valley Economic Association Annual Conference, University of Houston’s Graduate Research and Scholarship Project
- 2018** Southern Economic Association Conference, STATA Texas Empirical Micro Conference

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Referee for *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, *American Economic Review*, *The Economic Journal*

Moderator for *Association for Mentoring in Economics* Panel Discussion

PAST WORK EXPERIENCE

- 2018 - 2019** University of Houston Hobby School of Public Affairs, Research Assistant

OTHER INFORMATION

Citizenship: U.S.A.

Languages: English (native); Chinese (advanced); French (conversational)