

**ROBERT SILICIANO**  
<https://scholar.harvard.edu/siliciano>  
[siliciano@g.harvard.edu](mailto:siliciano@g.harvard.edu)

## HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Placement Director: Amanda Pallais	APALLAIS@FAS.HARVARD.EDU	617-495-2151
Placement Director: Nathan Hendren	NHENDREN@FAS.HARVARD.EDU	617-496-3588
Assistant Director: Brenda Piquet	BPIQUET@FAS.HARVARD.EDU	617-495-8927

### **Office Contact Information**

Harvard University  
Littauer Center of Public Administration  
1805 Cambridge Street  
Cambridge, MA 02138  
Phone number: 651-357-5649

**Personal Information:** Citizenship: United States

### **Undergraduate Studies:**

A.B., Economics, Princeton University, *summa cum laude*, 2015

### **Graduate Studies:**

Harvard University, 2015 to present  
Ph.D. Candidate in Economics  
Thesis Title: "Essays in Optimal Taxation"  
Expected Completion Date: May 2020

### References:

Professor Stefanie Stantcheva  
Harvard University  
[sstantcheva@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:sstantcheva@fas.harvard.edu)  
617-496-2614

Professor Edward Glaeser  
Harvard University  
[eglaeser@harvard.edu](mailto:eglaeser@harvard.edu)  
617-495-0575

Professor Matthew Weinzierl  
Harvard Business School  
[mweinzierl@hbs.edu](mailto:mweinzierl@hbs.edu)  
617-495-6697

### **Teaching and Research Fields:**

Primary fields: Public Economics

Secondary fields: Theory

### **Teaching Experience:**

Spring, 2018-2019	Intermediate Macroeconomics, Harvard University Teaching Fellow for Professor Christopher Foote
Fall, 2017-2018	Intermediate Microeconomics: Advanced, Harvard University Teaching Fellow for Professor Edward Glaeser
Fall, 2017	Contract Theory (graduate course), Harvard University Teaching Fellow for Professors Oliver Hart and Richard Holden

### **Research Papers**

“A Tax of Two Cities: Optimal Housing Subsidies in Spatial Equilibrium” (Job Market Paper)

How should a tax code subsidize housing (as in the mortgage interest deduction)? I study a model where workers choose between places offering different wages, housing prices, and amenities. Housing subsidies induce workers to move towards high-price, high-wage cities, where they pay more income taxes. However, these subsidies are regressive, as skilled workers sort into these expensive cities. The optimal housing subsidy balances distorting location choice, raising housing prices, and its regressive incidence. When geographic mobility is high, the optimal tax code features large housing subsidies and more regressive income taxes. When housing supply is more constrained in high-wage cities, the optimal housing subsidies are cut, and depending on social preferences, a tax could be optimal. Progressive housing subsidies can make a more efficient tax system, though worker mobility reduces this gain. I quantify the model in a calibration to U.S. data that suggests a substantial role for housing subsidies. Using the theory and calibration, I show that declining rates of internal migration motivate tax policy to cut housing subsidies, mostly on higher incomes.

### **Work in Progress**

“Wage Compression and Production Policies”

I build a framework to evaluate production-side policies that aim to compress the wage distribution. Specifically, I look at subsidies to specific sectors of the economy, and the management of the public sector labor force in both size and composition. I compare them using their effects on the labor market, through an optimal taxation model and a numerical calibration using U.S. data. Changing the composition of the public sector workforce to employ more low-skilled workers has the largest effect on changing wages, as it can target labor types directly. However, this is limited by the relatively small size of the public sector in the United States. Subsidizing sectors that employ many low-skilled workers provides much smaller wage compression, due to worse targeting. Together, the calibrated adjustment to optimal policy is quite small, leading to small gains in welfare.