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EDUCATION

University of Houston

Ph.D. Candidate, Economics, 2019 – present (Expected completion May 2025)

Seoul National University

M.A., Economics, 2019

Dongguk University

B.A., Sociology, 2016

REFERENCES

Professor Aimee Chin (Co-Chair)

Department of Economics
University of Houston
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Professor Emily Hannum

Department of Sociology and Education
University of Pennsylvania
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Professor Chinhui Juhn (Co-Chair)

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Professor Blake Heller

Hobby School of Public Affairs
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FIELDS OF INTEREST

Economics of Education, Labor Economics, Public Economics

JOB MARKET PAPER

[“The Long Shadow of School Closures: Impacts on Students’ Educational and Labor Market Outcomes”](#)

Media Coverage: [EducationWeek](#)

Abstract: Each year, about a thousand public schools in the US close, displacing hundreds of thousands of students. I examine the impact of public school closures on displaced students using linked schooling and labor market data from Texas. I first document that most public school closures are driven by declines in the school-age population, due to demographic shifts and out-migration, which lead to low enrollments and constrained funding. I implement difference-in-differences strategies using the within-school across-time/cohort variation in student exposure to school closure. I find that school closures decrease test scores, increase absenteeism, and lead to more disciplinary actions. Furthermore, I find that school closures decreased high school completion, college attainment, employment, and earnings at ages 25-27. These impacts are larger for secondary sch students, Hispanic students, and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. This research highlights the far-reaching consequences of school closures, emphasizing the need for careful policy consideration in educational restructuring.

WORKING PAPERS

[“The Racial Gap in Friendships Among High-Achieving Students”](#)

(with Weonhyeok Chung)

Abstract: High-achieving minority students have fewer friends than their majority counterparts.

Exploring patterns of friendship formation in the Add Health data, we find strong racial homophily in friendship formations as well as strong achievement homophily within race. However, we find that achievement matters less in cross-racial friendships. As a result, high-achieving Black students lose Black friends as they move away from the mean achievement of their group, but do not gain high-achieving White friends in offsetting fashion. We find that high-achieving Black students have fewer friends, mainly attributable to the fact that they are exposed to fewer high-achieving peers within their own race. We find that this could account for as much as 5–9 percentage points (16–33%) of the racial earnings gap observed among high achievers.

“From Population Growth to Demographic Scarcity: Emerging Challenges to Global Primary Education Provision in the Twenty-first Century”

(with Emily Hannum, and Fan Wang)

Abstract: Demographic trends shape the challenge of primary education provision in disparate ways around the world. In some societies, ever-increasing child cohorts continue to exert expansionary pressures. In others, declining child cohorts create pressures for system consolidation. We show that recent demographic trends constitute a highly dis-equalizing force on primary educational provision globally, with persistent expansionary pressures affecting some of the world’s least-resourced educational systems. Strikingly, in recent decades, system responses to demographic pressures have produced a converging trend in child-teacher ratios while generating distinct patterns and trends in school size. Ultralow-fertility Korea offers a stark illustration of the emerging salience of rural-urban spatial hierarchies as child populations decline: non-metropolitan areas bore the brunt of past school closures and teacher losses while metropolitan areas saw increases in schools and teachers, despite student declines. Demographic pressures and associated policy responses constitute an essential yet neglected research agenda for understanding global educational inequalities.

“Low Psychic Costs of Education for Women and the Gender Wage Gap”

Abstract: In recent years, women have surpassed men in terms of schooling, leading some researchers to propose that women may have lower psychic costs of attending school. To understand the implications of this, I incorporate psychic costs explicitly into the Becker model of human capital. The model generates predictions about differential sorting into college and gender gaps in skills, education, and labor market outcomes, which I investigate with data from the NLSY97. I find that women have lower psychic costs—measured by behavioral misdemeanors—explaining one-third of the gender college attainment gap. While women in the population have higher cognitive skills, this is reversed when controlling for educational level because of differential education sorting. Due to the fact that low psychic costs of education are not strongly connected to labor market returns, the skill gaps from educational sorting explain 12 percent of the gender wage gap for the college-educated.

WORK IN PROGRESS

“Neighborhood Impacts on STEM Choice”

Abstract: I show that the neighborhoods where students grow up significantly influence their choice of STEM by using variation in the grades at which students move across districts and counties in Texas. Students moving to high STEM areas—measured by the proportion of non-moving students obtaining a STEM degree—show a linear increase in their probability of selecting a STEM major with the time spent in the new place. To distinguish the causal effects of neighborhoods from confounding factors, I exploit sharp variations in predicted neighborhood effects across school cohorts, genders, races, and specific college majors. The tests also suggest that the observed exposure effects are not merely due to an overall improvement in educational attainment. Importantly, I find that the STEM exposure measure is strongly tied to the occupational composition, further providing causal evidence that neighborhood STEM occupational composition influences students’ STEM career choices. Lastly, I find that the positive effects ex-

tend equally to students from both disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged families. Equalizing neighborhood exposure during school years could reduce disparities across genders, races, and economic statuses in STEM major choice by 20-40%.

PUBLICATIONS	“The Relative Poorness of the Old Living Alone,” <i>Korean Journal of Population Studies</i> , Volume 41, Issue 3, October 2018.
RESEARCH EXPERIENCE	University of Houston, Research Assistant for Professor Chinhui Juhn, June 2019 - August 2023 (<i>Assisted with a project on “Task Requirements, Hours Requirements, and the Gender Gap in Jobs and Pay.”</i>)
TEACHING EXPERIENCE	<i>Instructor at the University of Houston:</i> Intermediate Microeconomics (Asynchronous), Fall 2023 Principles of Microeconomics, Fall 2022 <i>Teaching Assistant at the University of Houston:</i> Econometrics (M.A.), Fall 2024 Industrial Organization, Spring 2024 Applied Econometrics, Spring 2024 Labor Economics, Spring 2022 Economics of Gender, Fall 2021 Microeconomics (Ph.D.), Spring 2020
AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS	Dr. Walter J. Primeaux Jr. and Natalie A. Primeaux Scholarship, University of Houston, 2024 (<i>awarded to the Economics Ph.D. students who have made remarkable progress on their dissertations</i>) Cullen Fellowship Travel Grant, University of Houston, 2023 CLASS Summer Fellowship for Research Excellence and Diversity, University of Houston, 2023 (<i>Awarded to the most promising PhD students in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences</i>) Price Theory Summer Camp, Becker Friedman Institute, University of Chicago, 2022 Santosh Kumar Research Grant, University of Houston, 2023 (<i>Merit-based grant for doctoral research</i>) Graduate Tuition Fellowship, University of Houston, 2019 – present
CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS	2024: Population Association of America Annual Meeting, Society of Labor Economics Annual Meeting, Memorial Conference for Dr Rodney Andrews (UT Dallas), Stanford Education School PhD Student Research Seminar 2023: Texas Camp Econometrics, Stata Texas Empirical Microeconomics Conference, Texas Applied Microeconomics Student Workshop, Research on East Asian Demography and Inequality Conference (U Tokyo), Association for Public Policy and Management Fall Research Conference
PROFESSIONAL SERVICE	Journal Referee: Economics of Education Review
SKILLS	Languages: Korean (Native), English (Fluent) Software: Stata, R, Matlab Python, L ^A T _E X, QGIS