CHRISTOPHER A. NEILSON

Yale University
Department of Economics
Jackson School of Global Affairs

christopher.neilson@yale.edu · website · github

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Professor of Economics and Global Affairs, Yale University, since 2022
Faculty Research Fellow, National Bureau of Economic Research, since 2015

PAST APPOINTMENTS

Professor of Economics, Princeton University, 2022
Assistant Professor of Economics, Princeton University, 2015 - 2022
Visiting Researcher, Microsoft Research, New England, 2017 - 2018
Visiting Scholar at Stern School of Business, New York University. 2014-2015

EDUCATION

Ph.D, Economics, Yale University, 2014
Msc. and B.A., Economics, Universidad de Chile, 2005, 2006

PUBLISHED RESEARCH PAPERS

Targeted Vouchers, Competition Among Schools and the Academic Achievement of Poor Students
Econometrica (Forthcoming)

Teacher Compensation and Structural Inequality: Evidence from Centralized Teacher School Choice in Peru
Journal of Political Economy (Forthcoming)
with Matteo Bobba, Tim Ederer, Gianmarco León-Ciliotta, Marco Nieddu

Elite Universities and the Intergenerational Transmission of Human and Social Capital
American Economic Review, Vol. 116, No. 6, June 2026, (pp. 2120-65)
with Andrés Barrios-Fernández, Seth Zimmerman

Generative Artificial Intelligence in Schools: Institutional Readiness and Digital Competencies in ICILS 2023
Papeles de Economía Española, Nº 184 (2025), pp. 265–317
with Ignacio Lepe

Lights, Camera, School: Information Provision through Television during COVID-19 Times
Journal of Development Economics (March 2025)
with Francisco A. Gallego, Oswaldo Molina

Report Cards: Parental Preferences, Information and School Choice in Haiti
Economics of Education Review (October 2024)
with Michael Borger, Gregory Elacqua, Isabel Jacas, Anne Sofie Westh Olsen

Aftermarket Frictions and the Cost of Off-Platform Options in Centralized Assignment Mechanisms

Journal of Political Economy (July 2024)
with Adam Kapor, Mohit Karnani

Centralized School Choice with Unequal Outside Options
Journal of Public Economics (June 2022)
with Mohammad Akbarpour, Adam Kapor, Winnie van Dijk, Seth Zimmerman

Small Firms and the Pandemic: Evidence From Latin America
Journal of Development Economics (March 2022)
with Maria Elena Guerrero, John Eric Humphries, Naomi Shimberg, Gabriel Ulyssea

Smart Matching Platforms and Heterogeneous Beliefs in Centralized School Choice
The Quarterly Journal of Economics (March 2022)
with Felipe Arteaga, Adam Kapor, Seth Zimmerman

O Brother, Where Start Thou? Sibling Spillovers on College and Major Choice in Four Countries
The Quarterly Journal of Economics (August 2021)
with Adam Altmejd, Andrés Barrios-Fernández, Marin Drlje, Joshua Goodman, Michael Hurwitz, Dejan Kovac, Christine Mulhern, Jonathan Smith

Information Frictions and Access to the Paycheck Protection Program
Journal of Public Economics, Vol. 190, October 2020, (pp. 104244)
with John Eric Humphries, Gabriel Ulyssea

Heterogeneous Beliefs and School Choice Assignment Mechanisms
American Economic Review, Vol. 110, No. 5, May 2020 (pp. 1274-1315)
with Adam Kapor, Seth Zimmerman

Health at Birth, Parental Investments and Academic Outcomes
Journal of Labor Economics, Vol. 36, No 2, April 2018, (pp. 349-394)
with Prashant Bharadwaj, Juan Eberhard

Grey Matters: Fetal Pollution Exposure and Human Capital Formation
Journal of the Association of Environmental and Resource Economists, Vol. 4, No. 2, June 2017, (pp. 505-542)
with Prashant Bharadwaj, Matthew Gibson, Joshua Graff Zivin

The Gender Gap in Mathematics: Evidence from Chile
Economic Development and Cultural Change, Vol. 65, No. 1, October 2016, (pp. 141-166)
with Prashant Bharadwaj, Giacomo De Giorgi, David Hansen

(Un)informed College and Major Choice: Evidence from Linked Survey and Administrative Data
Economics of Education Review, Access to Higher Education, Vol. 51, April 2016, (pp. 136-151)
with Justine Hastings, Anely Ramirez, Seth Zimmerman

Connecting Student Loans to Labor Market Outcomes: Policy Lessons from Chile
American Economic Review: Papers & Proceedings, Vol. 105, No. 5, May 2015 (pp. 508–513)
with Harald Beyer, Justine Hastings, Seth Zimmerman

The Effect of School Construction on Test Scores, School Enrollment, and Home Prices
Journal of Public Economics, Vol. 120, December 2014, (pp. 18-31)

with Seth Zimmerman

Early Life Health Interventions and Academic Achievement
American Economic Review, Vol. 103, No. 5, August 2013, (pp. 1862-91)
with Prashant Bharadwaj, Katrine Vellesen Løken

WORKING PAPERS

Incentives, Evidence, and Reminders for Bureaucrats: Overcoming Barriers to Policy Scale Up
Conditionally accepted at ***Journal of Political Economy Microeconomics***
with Patrick Agte, Daniel Morales, Sebastián Otero, Gautam Rao

College Application Mistakes and the Design of Information Policies at Scale
Conditionally accepted at ***Journal of Political Economy***
with Anais Fabre, Tomás Larroucau, Ignacio Rios

The Global Gender Gap in STEM Applications: Pipeline vs. Choice
Conditionally accepted at ***Economics of Education Review***
with Isaac Ahimbisibwe, Adam Altmejd, Georgy Artemov, Andrés Barrios-Fernández, Aspasia Bizopoulou, Martti Kaila, Jin-Tan Liu, Rigissa Megalokonomou, José Montalbán, Sebastián Otero, Jintao Sun, Xiaoyang Ye

Parents' Earnings and the Returns to Universal Pre-Kindergarten
R&R at ***Econometrica***
with John Eric Humphries, Xiaoyang Ye, Seth Zimmerman

Search and Biased Beliefs in Education Markets
R&R at ***Econometrica***
with Adam Kapor, Claudia Allende, Fernando Ochoa, Patrick Agte

Approximating The Equilibrium Effects of Informed School Choice
R&R at ***The Review of Economic Studies***
with Claudia Allende, Francisco A. Gallego

The Equilibrium Effects of Asymmetric Information: Evidence from Consumer Credit Markets
R&R at ***Journal of Finance***
with Andres Liberman, Luis Opazo, Seth Zimmerman

Teacher Preparation, Pre-College Human Capital and Student Learning: Evidence from Enseña Chile
with Soledad De Gregorio, Sebastian Gallegos

The Evolving Impacts of COVID-19 on Small Businesses Since the CARES ACT
Cowles Foundation Discussion Paper No. 2230
with John Eric Humphries, Gabriel Ulyssea

The Effects of Earnings Disclosure on College Enrollment Decisions
NBER Working Paper No. 21300 (2015)
with Justine Hastings, Seth Zimmerman

Are some degrees worth more than others? Evidence from college admission cutoffs in Chile
NBER Working Paper No. 19241
with Justine Hastings, Seth Zimmerman

The Effect of School Choice on Intrinsic Motivation and Academic Outcomes
NBER Working Paper No. 18342
with Justine Hastings, Seth Zimmerman

Getting Better Students to Become Teachers: The Effects of Targeted Tuition Subsidies
MINEDUC WP 2011
with Macarena Alvarado, Fabian Duarte

Making Algorithmic Transparency Meaningful: Evidence from Chile's National School Admissions Platform
ConsiliumBots Working Paper Series, Issue 05
with Exequiel Medina, Leonardo Ortiz Mesías

The Welfare Effects of including Household Preferences in School Assignment Systems: Evidence from Ecuador
IDB Working Paper Series (Number IDB-WP-01395)
with Gregory Elacqua, Isabel Jacas, Thomas Krussig, Carolina Méndez

Fifty Years of Admission Exams and Gaps in College Access in Chile
World Development Report 2024: The Middle-Income Trap
with Andrés Barrios-Fernández, Sebastian Gallegos

A Decade of Centralized School Choice Admission in Chile: Achievements and Challenges
Working paper (Draft: May 2026)

Firm Sorting, College Major, and the Gender Earnings Gap
Industrial Relations Section Working Paper Series (May 2021, No. 648)
with Federico Huneeus, Conrad Miller, Seth Zimmerman

The Rise of Coordinated Choice and Assignment Systems in Education Markets Around the World
World Bank Development Report: Background Papers 2024

Can Information on School Attributes and Placement Probabilities Direct Search and Choice? Evidence from Choice Platforms in Ecuador and Peru
IDB Working Paper Series
with Felipe Arteaga, Gregory Elacqua, Thomas Krussig, Carolina Méndez

The Equilibrium Effects of Public Provision in Education Markets: Evidence from a Public School Construction Policy
Industrial Relations Section Working Paper Series (November 2020, No. 645)
with Michael Dinerstein, Sebastián Otero

Quantifying the Benefits of Digitalizing and Centralizing Student Applications and Assignment to Schools
IDB Technical Note (Number IDB-TN-02571)
with Antonia Aguilera, Gregory Elacqua, Josefina Lavin, Juan Margitic

Screening and Recruiting Talent At Teacher Colleges Using Pre-College Academic Achievement
Industrial Relations Section Working Paper Series (November 2019, No. 636)
with Sebastian Gallegos, Franco Calle, Mohit Karnani

The Potential of Smart Matching Platforms in Teacher Assignment: The Case of Ecuador
IDB Working Paper Series (Number IDB-WP-01395)
with Gregory Elacqua, Leidy Gómez, Thomas Krussig, Luana Marotta, Carolina Méndez

WORK IN PROGRESS

Student Choices and the Return to College Major and Selectivity
with Justine Hastings, Karl Schulze, Seth Zimmerman

Carrots and Sticks for Teacher Colleges: The Equilibrium Design of Teacher Recruitment Policy
with Adam Kapor, Cristian Sanchez

High-School Dropouts: Cutting losses or just missing out?
with Nano Barahona, Sebastián Otero, Christina Kent

Student Loans, Student Choices and the Market Structure of Higher Education

Dynamic Complementarities of Information Interventions and Human Capital in Peru
with Francisco A. Gallego, Oswaldo Molina

Subjective Beliefs and Dynamic Human Capital Investment Decisions in Dominican Republic
with James Berry, Lucas Coffman, Daniel Morales

Adaptive Experimentation at Scale: Testing Benefit-Cost Transportability of Information Interventions in Colombia
with Eric Bettinger, Michael Kremer, Felipe Lizarazo, Christian Posso, Juan Saavedra

Balancing Accountability: Regulating with Test-Based Standards Without Overreach
Work in progress
with Magdalena Bennett, Nicolás Rojas Souyet

Improving Equity in Danish School Choice: A Digital Guidance Tool for Social Inclusion
with Andreas Bjerre-Nielsen, Mikkel Gandil, Christian Fogel Henneberg

Spillover and Congestion Effects of Large-Scale Information Interventions
Work in progress
with Claudia Allende, Fernando Ochoa

Digital School Profiles, Demand, and Equity in Centralized School Choice
Work in progress
with Claudia Allende, Fernando Ochoa

Queuing for Segregation: Evidence from Access to Childcare in Copenhagen
with Andreas Bjerre-Nielsen, Mette Gørtz, John Kennes, Elena Mattana, Bobak Pakzad-Hurson

PUBLISHED RESEARCH PRIOR THE PHD

Chile's Fiscal Rule as Social Insurance
in Cespedes, L., F. and J. Gali (eds.), Fiscal Policy and Macroeconomic Performance (2013)
with Eduardo Engel, Rodrigo Valdes

Crecimiento Pro Pobre en Chile
El Trimestre Economico (2008)
with Dante Contreras, Ryan Cooper

The Dynamics of Poverty in Chile
Journal of Latin American Studies, Vol. 40, No. 2, May 2008, (pp. 251-273)
with Dante Contreras, Ryan Cooper, Jorge Hermann

Another Pass-Through Bites the Dust? Oil Prices and Inflation
Journal of LACEA (2007)
with José De Gregorio, Oscar Landerretche

Financial Diversification, Sudden Stops and Sudden Starts
in Cowan, K., S. Edwards, and R. Valdes (eds.), Current Account and External Finance (2007)
with José De Gregorio, Kevin Cowan, Alejandro Micco

ADVISING

Current PhD Students	Program
Nicolas Rojas Souyet	Columbia University Teacher's College Ph.D.
Alena Kang-Landsberg	Yale University Economics Ph.D.
Diana Perez Lopez	Yale University Economics Ph.D.
Carolina Wiegand	Yale University Economics Ph.D.

	Students Advised	Initial Placement
2026	Fernando Ochoa	Assistant Professor, Johns Hopkins University
2025	Patrick Agte	Assistant Professor, Stockholm School of Economics
2024	Karl Schulze	Postdoctoral Associate, Yale University
2023	Carolina Concha-Arriagada	Assistant Professor, Columbia Teachers College
2020	Claudia Allende	Assistant Professor, Stanford University GSB Economics

	Students Supported	Initial Placement
2024	Felipe Arteaga	Data Scientist, Amazon
2024	Alvaro Carril	Data Scientist, Revelio Labs
2022	Antonia Paredes, Yale University	UC Berkeley Haas, Postdoctoral Fellow
2022	Fernanda (Pumi) Ramirez-Espinoza	Assistant Professor, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile
2021	Tomas Larroucau, UPenn	Arizona State University, Department of Economics
2019	Federico Huneeus, Princeton University	Yale University, Postdoctoral Fellow
2019	Andres Barrios-Fernandez, LSE	Senior Researcher, VATT Helsinki, Finland
2017	John Klopfer, Princeton University	Assistant Professor, United States Naval Academy

REFEREEING

American Economic Review, Econometrica, Quarterly Journal of Economics, Review of Economic Studies, Journal of Political Economy, Review of Economics and Statistics, American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, American Economic Journal: Policy, Journal of Public Economics, Journal of Labor Economics, Journal of Development Economics, Journal of Economic Theory, Economic Journal, Journal of the European Economic Association, Journal of Money, Credit and Banking, Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, The International Economic Review, Journal of Human Resources, Labour Economics, Oxford Economics Papers and the Education Economics Review, World Bank Economic Review.

PUBLIC POLICY ACTIVITIES

Founder and CEO of TetherEd 2022
Topics: EdTech startup that builds software to digitalize access to education and implement AI enabled platforms for
Currently working with the governments in Latin America, cities in the US and Europe.

Founder of ConsiliumBots 2018
Topics: EdTech NGO focused on helping researchers with with governments design, test and evaluate AI bots to help
get access to education, housing, health and other important social services.

Consultant to the Ministry of Education, Government of Peru. 2021-2022
Topics : Supporting the design of policy helping more students get free access to higher education in Peru.

Consultant for the World Bank, 2020
Topics: Assist with the design and implementation of education vouchers in response to COVID19.

Founder Researcher of DataLAB Republica Dominicana 2019
Topics: Incubating the data science capabilities inside the government of the Dominican Republic.

Founding Researcher of MineduLAB within the Ministry of Education, Government of Peru
founding Principal Investigator 2014, Board member 2015

Advisor to New Haven Public Schools Office of Choice and Enrollment. 2018-2022
Topics : The design and implementation of centralized school choice mechanism.

Advisor to the Ministry of Education, Government of Chile. 2015
Topics : The design and implementation of the national coordinated application and assignment platform.

Associate Partner of IDEICE, Research Unit of the Ministry of Education of the Dominican Republic 2014-2017
Topics: The study of education issues and the scale up of policies proven to improve outcomes.

Consultant for MINEDU of the Ministry of Education, Government of Peru, 2016
Topics: The design and implementation of informational platforms for college choice in Peru.

Consultant for the World Bank, 2014-2015
Topics: The design and implementation of free tuition policy in higher education in Chile.

Consultant for the IDB 2016, 2018
Topics: The design of platforms to disclose earnings by field and type of study in Peru.

GRANTS

Reducing Frictions in Access to ChildCare: A Pilot Evaluation of AI-Guided Family Support 2025
Donor: **J-PAL North America, Social Policy Research Initiative** - Grant amount: USD 49,050

Biased Beliefs and Search in Education Markets 2019-2023
Donor: **National Science Foundation (NSF)** via Princeton University - Grant Amount: USD 558,589.00

Beliefs, Understanding, and Strategic Behavior in School Choice Mechanisms 2015-2018
Donor: **National Science Foundation (NSF)** via NBER - Grant Amount: USD 457,853.00

Incubation of Human Capital Technology Organization 2018-2020
Donor: **Wellspring Philanthropic Fund** - Grant amount USD 500,000

Learning the Value of Education in the Dominican Republic 2014-2019
Donor: **DIV-USAID** via JPAL - Grant amount: USD 1,258,979 + 240,000 expansion

Getting children to stay in school and out of work: The role of Informative and Persuasive Marketing 2015-2020
Donor: **United States Department of Labor (DoL)** via IPA- Grant amount: USD 977,690.00
Donor: **Post Primary Initiative JPAL Global** via IPA - Grant amount: USD 256,464

Leveraging Administrative Data and Machine Learning Techniques to Improve Education Policy in Developing Countries 2018
Donor: **Microsoft Research** via JPAL - Grant Amount: USD 40,000 on Azure Computing Resources

Evaluating online platform to reduce information asymmetries w/in students and parents 2017-2019
Donor: **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IDB)** and MINEDU
via IPA - Grant amount: USD 202,000

Education Mismatch and Information about Relative Performance 2018
Donor: **Post Primary Initiative JPAL Global** - Grant amount: USD 50,000

Building a better future with informed investment in higher education:
Evaluating the impact of personalized provision of information on earnings and financial aid in the Dominican Republic 2019
Donor: **Skills for Youth Program, J-PAL LAC** - Grant amount: USD 49,479

Financial Aid and College Access in the Dominican Republic 2018-2020
Donor: **Post Primary Education Initiative, J-PAL** - Grant amount: USD 256,893

Reducing free-riding in public goods: An experimental approach to
improving payment compliance for trash collection in the Dominican Republic 2017-2018
Donor: **Governance Initiative, J-PAL** - Grant amount: USD 48,990

Making Centralized School Choice Work in Practice: Evaluating Informational Interventions in Equilibrium 2020
Donor: **Overdeck Princeton Education Fund** - Grant amount: USD 95,000

How the Design of School Choice Systems Affects Welfare and Student Outcomes 2019
Donor: **Overdeck Princeton Education Fund** - Grant amount: USD 85,000

AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Premio Trayectoria 90 años FEN, Universidad de Chile, 2024

Alfred P. Sloan Research Fellow in Economics, 2021-2022

Círculo de Honor, Facultad de Economia y Negocios, Universidad de Chile, 2021

Excellence in Refereeing Award, American Economic Review, 2017

Best Graduate Student Advisor - Princeton University, 2016

Review of Economic Studies Tour, 2014

Northeast Rugby Championship and 3rd place at Nationals, All Black New Haven Rugby, 2014

Joven Egresado Destacado, Facultad de Economia y Negocios, Universidad de Chile, 2014

George Trimis Prize for Distinguished Dissertation in Economics, Yale University, 2014

Anderson Fellowship, Cowles Foundation, 2012

City of New Haven, Board of Aldermen Official Citation, 2011

Distinction - Industrial Organization field examination, Yale University, 2010

100 Jóvenes Líderes El Mercurio, Santiago Chile 2007

Highest Ranked Economics MA student at graduation, Dept. of Economics, University of Chile 2006

Highest Ranked Economics BA student at graduation, Dept. of Economics, University of Chile 2005

Alumni Association prize at graduation, University of Chile 2005

International Labor Organization (ILO) Undergraduate Thesis Fellowship, 2003

LANGUAGES

Native speaker of English and Spanish (mother tongue).