SUCHETANA DAS

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EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Economics, Southern Methodist University — Dallas, Texas | Expected 2027
Master of Science, Economics, Presidency University — Kolkata, India | 2020
Bachelor of Science, Economics, Presidency University — Kolkata, India | 2018

RESEARCH

WORKING PAPERS

Misplaced at Home? A Partial Observability Approach to Foster Care Placement Decisions (*Suchetana Das – Job Market Paper*)

Abstract: When children are referred to Child Protective Services (CPS), caseworkers must decide whether to remove them from their homes or allow them to remain with their families. Although a large literature examines the consequences of foster care placement, much less is known about children who remain at home despite exhibiting characteristics similar to those of removed children. A central challenge is that both a child's underlying removal risk and whether placement decisions align with that risk are unobserved. This paper develops a partial observability framework to recover latent removal risk and foster care placement decisions using a nationally representative longitudinal sample of children referred to CPS. The model identifies children who are observationally similar to those removed from their homes but who remain with their families, a group I refer to as "misplaced at home." Estimates suggest that a substantial share of investigated children fall into this category. I then examine how latent removal risk and placement status relate to subsequent educational outcomes. I find evidence that a high predicted risk of removal is associated with poorer academic performance. However, conditional on predicted removal risk, a high probability of being "misplaced at home" is not associated with worse educational outcomes.

Unaccompanied Migrant Youth and Child Labor Violations: Accounting for Nonclassical Measurement Error (*with Daniel Millimet*)

Abstract: The number of unaccompanied minors apprehended at the U.S. border has surged in recent years, alongside a sharp rise in child labor violations under the Fair Labor Standards Act, many concentrated in industries such as meatpacking, agriculture, and food processing. This paper asks whether the release of unaccompanied migrant children to sponsors contributes to rising child labor violations across U.S. counties. Combining Department of Labor investigation records from 2015 to 2023 with county-level data on unaccompanied minors from the Office of Refugee Resettlement, we address a key measurement challenge: enforcement data likely capture only a fraction of true violations. Using an instrumental variable stochastic frontier framework that models the gap between detected and actual violations, we recover more credible estimates of both the scale of child labor violations and their relationship to youth migration flows. We find that a 10% increase in the number of unaccompanied minors released to sponsors is associated with an approximately 2.5% increase in the number of minors involved in recorded child labor violations. Over the 2015–2023 period, minors associated with reported child labor violations capture only 50.1% of the cumulative total implied by the model.

PUBLISHED WORK

Gendered Occupational Segregation and Its Cost in India

Das, S., Basu, R., Biswas, U., Das, A., & Dutta, M. (2023). Gendered occupational segregation and its cost in India: Evidence from NSSO data. In T. Banerjee Chatterjee, A. Ghose, & P. Roy (Eds.), *Risks and resilience of emerging economies* (pp. 217–237). Springer.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Do Child Labor Laws Protect Teen Workers? Evidence from State Policy Changes

SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

- AEA, Allied Social Science Associations (ASSA) Annual Meeting, January 2027 (Upcoming)
- International Conference on Empirical Economics (ICEE), August 2026
- Midwest Econometrics Group Annual Meeting (MEG), October 2026
- SMU Economics Brown Bag Seminar, October 2026

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

- George W. Bush Institute Doctoral Fellowship, 2022–2027
- SMU Provost's Summer Research Fellowship, 2025

EXPERIENCE

Southern Methodist University Aug 2022 – Present
Teaching & Research Assistant *Dallas, TX*

- Teaching assistant for undergraduate courses in Principles of Microeconomics, Intermediate Macroeconomics, Labor Economics, graduate-level Advanced Econometrics.
- Research assistant: Performed data validation and robustness checks, and streamlined Python and Stata code to improve reproducibility and computational efficiency.

HSBC Aug 2020 – Jun 2022
Business Analyst, Commercial Banking *Kolkata, India*

- Leveraged transaction-level data, Python-based entity resolution, and automated dashboards to identify high-value client opportunities and deliver actionable insights on product performance, pricing, and revenue trends.

SKILLS

Tools: Python, Stata, SQL, Git, MS Office Suite
Languages: English (Fluent), Hindi (Fluent), Bengali (Native)
Research Areas: Labor and Demographic Economics, Applied Econometrics, Economics of Education and Health.