

Se-Um Kim

Curriculum Vitae, November 2008

Department of Economics
Brown University
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Citizenship: Republic of Korea

Education

Brown University, Providence, RI
Ph.D. in Economics (Expected May 2009)
M.A. in Economics, May 2006
Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea
M.A. in Economics, Feb. 2003
B.A. in Economics, Aug. 2000

Fields of Interest

Economic Growth and Development, Macroeconomics, Political Economy, Economics of Education

Research Papers

“The Technological Origins of the High School Movement” (Job Market Paper)

Abstract: This paper argues that the emergence of knowledge hierarchies in the modern U.S. firms since the late 19th century, expedited by huge progress in communication technology, played a significant role in the expansion of mass secondary education called the high school movement in the U.S. in the early 20th century. To analyze the causal connections among these historical events, the paper presents a dynamic model in which the complementarity between individual skills is crucial to production. Middle-skilled individuals could help increase the payoff to the high-skilled by supervising low-skilled production workers as middle managers in firms, and so some of potential top managers with high skill actively supported the expansion of mass education to the secondary level some time after a sophisticated form of production organizations had started to emerge. This theoretical explanation is consistent with the existing historical evidence in the literature.

“A Theory of Selective College Admission in the U.S.”

Abstract: This paper presents a formal dynamic model showing that the origins of the unique admission process at selective U.S. colleges, which considers both academic and non-academic merits of applicants, can be found in the dramatic expansion of public secondary education called the high school movement in the early 20th century. The complementarity between individual skills in production, combined with huge progress in communication technology, caused a sophisticated form of knowledge hierarchies to emerge in the modern U.S. firms in the late 19th century, thereby leading to the introduction of public secondary education in the early 20th century with the demand for middle managers in multi-layered organizations increasing. Rather paradoxically, however, the implementation of public secondary education ultimately caused the shortage of the middle-skilled compared to the high-skilled in the economy, as many who could not have afforded to get college education before had the opportunities with the lower cost of secondary schooling. As a result, colleges have adopted selective admission criteria, following the preferences of their potential customers and alumni, so that the balance between the number of the middle-skilled and that of the high-skilled can be restored. This theoretical explanation is consistent with historical facts of the U.S. since the late 19th century, and implies that selective

college admission could effectively address the problem of overinvestment in higher education, thereby having been pivotal in making the high school movement a really historic event that would change the structure of the U.S. economy in a more efficient direction.

Teaching Experience

Teaching Assistant at Brown University:

Intermediate Macroeconomics (Fall 2006, Spring 2007, Fall 2007, Spring 2008)
Corporate Finance (Spring 2006)
Investments (Fall 2005)
Intermediate Microeconomics (Fall 2004, Spring 2005)

Honors and Awards

Brown University:

Dissertation Writer's Grant, Summer 2008
Research Fellowship, Summer 2005
Graduate Fellowship, Fall 2003-Spring 2004

Seoul National University:

Graduate Scholarship, Spring 2001-Fall 2002

Presentations

Northeast Universities Development Consortium Conference (Nov. 2008)
Brown University Workshop in Macroeconomics (Oct. 2008)
Brown Department of Economics Macro Lunch (Sep. 2005, Nov. 2008)

Skills

Computing: GAUSS, MATLAB, SAS, Scientific Workplace, STATA

Languages: Korean (Native), English (Fluent)

References

Prof. Oded Galor (Primary Advisor)

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Prof. Peter Howitt

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Prof. David Weil

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