

FELIX KOENIG

MAILING ADDRESS

Carnegie Mellon University
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CONTACT INFORMATION

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EMPLOYMENT

Carnegie Mellon University

Assistant Professor, Heinz College 2020 -

EDUCATION

Princeton University

Postdoctoral Fellow in Economics, Industrial Relations Section 2019 - 2020

London School of Economics (LSE),

Ph.D. in Economics, 2019

Advisor: Steve Pischke

MRes in Economics, with distinction, 2015

MSc in Economics, with distinction, 2012

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)

Visiting Ph.D. student, 2017 – 2018

Oxford University

BA in Philosophy, Politics & Economics, first-class (highest) honor, 2011

PRIMARY FIELDS

Labor Economics, Public Economics

HONORS, SCHOLARSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS:

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|----------------|--|
| 2020 | EALE Young Labor Economist Price |
| 2020 | Upjohn Institute Early Career Research Award |
| 2019 | LSE Early Career Award |
| 2017 – current | IZA Research Affiliate |
| 2013 – current | Centre for Economic Performance (CEP) Affiliate |
| 2017 – 2018 | Overseas Institutional Visit Grant, LSE Doctoral Training Centre |
| 2017 | Best Paper Award, Royal Economics Society Junior Symposium |
| 2013 – 2018 | ESRC Doctoral Scholarship |
| 2012 | LSE Department of Economics Teaching Award |
| 2009 – 2011 | Hertford College Scholar, University of Oxford |
| October 2020 | |

PUBLICATION:

[Can Helping the Sick Hurt the Able? Incentives, Information and Disruption in a Welfare Reform](#)

(joint with N. Bagaria, B. Petrongolo, J. van Reenen)

***Economic Journal* 2019**

The UK Jobcentre Plus reform sharpened bureaucratic incentives to help disability benefit recipients (relative to unemployment insurance recipients) into jobs. In the long-run, the policy raised disability exits by 10% and left unemployment outflows roughly unchanged, consistent with beneficial reorganization effects for both groups, while bureaucrats shifted job-brokering efforts from the unemployed to disability benefit recipients. We account for about 30% of the decline in the disability rolls from 2003-2008. In the short-run, we detect a reduction in unemployment exits and no effect on disability exits, suggesting important disruption effects, and highlighting the difficulty of welfare reform for myopic policymakers.

WORKING PAPERS:

[Superstar Effects and Market Size: Evidence from the Roll-Out of TV](#)

Best Paper Award, Royal Economics Society Junior Symposium

Technical change that improves economies of scale can generate large income growth among top earners at the expense of everyone else. I test this classic “superstar model” in the labor market for entertainers where the historic roll-out of television led to a natural experiment in scale-related technological change. The launch of a local TV station multiplied audiences of top entertainers nearly threefold and skewed the entertainer wage distribution to the right with the biggest impact on the very top tail of the distribution. Below the star level the effects diminish rapidly, and all other workers are negatively impacted. The results confirm the predictions of the “superstar model” and are at odds with a wide range of canonical models of technical change.

[Importing Inequality: Immigration and the Top 1%](#) (joint with Arun Advani, Lorenzo Pessina, Andrew Summers)

In this paper we study the contribution of migrants to the rise in UK top incomes. Using administrative data on the universe of UK taxpayers we show migrants are over-represented at the top of the income distribution, with migrants twice as prevalent in the top 0.1% as anywhere in the bottom 97%. These high incomes are predominantly from labour, rather than capital, and migrants are concentrated in only a handful of industries, predominantly finance. Almost all (85%) of the growth in the UK top 1% income share over the past 20 years can be attributed to migration.

[Reservation Wages and the Wage Flexibility Puzzle](#) (joint with A. Manning and B. Petrongolo)

Wages are weakly procyclical, implying large short-run impacts of shocks on unemployment, at odds with the quantitative predictions of the canonical search model. We highlight the role of reservation wages in wage cyclical and propose that backward-looking reference-points in their determination can reconcile model predictions with the modest estimated cyclical of both wages and reservation wages. We show that reservation wages significantly respond to backward-looking reference points, as proxied by rents earned in previous jobs, and conclude that the estimated degree of reference dependence can deliver mildly cyclical wages and reservation wages for plausible value of all other model parameters.

Labor Supply and Innovation in Entertainment: Evidence from TV (joint with G. Fenton)

We test how innovations in home entertainment affect labor supply. To identify the effect, we track exposure to TV during the initial introduction in the US and exploit the staggered deployment of television across local areas of the US in a differences-in-differences analysis. Employment information from historical Social Security records show that the rollout of television resulted in a significant decline in employment, with a 0.5% decline in the employment-to-population ratio after the launch of a television channel. The response is largest for older workers, who retire earlier when television provides a source of easily accessible entertainment.

REFEREEING:

American Economic Review Insights, Economic Policy, Economic Journal, Journal of Public Economics, Journal of Labor Economics, Labor Economics, Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics

ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS & SEMINARS:

2020: Georgetown University, University of Pittsburgh, University of Lausanne, World Congress Econometric Society, SOLE/EALE/ASSLE meeting

2019: Bocconi University, Carnegie Mellon University, Columbia University, Econometric Society, ESMT Berlin, Einaudi Institute, German Economist Abroad, Humboldt University, IZA Bonn, LMU Munich, New York University Abu Dhabi, Northwestern University, University of Arizona, Princeton University

2018: EEA Annual Congress, EDP Jamboree, EMCON Chicago, London School of Economics, MIT, Goethe University, RES Junior Symposium, IZA summer school, ZEW

LANGUAGES

English (Fluent), German (Fluent), French (Good), Spanish (Good)