

MARIA BALGOVA

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EMPLOYMENT

2019 – current **IZA, Post-Doctoral Research Associate**

EDUCATION

2015 – 2019 **PhD in Economics, University of Oxford** (Corpus Christi College)

Thesis: “Job Search and Migration”

Supervisors: Prof Margaret Stevens and Dr Abi Adams-Prassl

2013 – 2015 **MPhil in Economics, University of Oxford** (St. Cross College)

Distinction, George Webb Medley Award for exam performance

2010 – 2013 **BA in Economics, University of Cambridge** (Gonville & Caius College)
1st class

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Labour Economics, Urban Economics

WORKING PAPERS

Leaping Into the Unknown? The Role of Job Search in Migration Decisions

I present evidence of a new barrier to internal migration: thin cross-regional labour markets. Because in general workers prefer to move with a job rather than speculatively, the inability to find a job remotely translates into lower mobility. This has important implications for the differences in mobility between the less and more educated in the US. Using an augmented discrete choice model, I show that the less educated move less because they tend to work in sectors and occupations where cross-regional hiring is less commonplace. I then build a structural model of job search across space to estimate the thickness of cross-regional labour markets for different groups of workers and quantify its contribution to the observed patterns in migration behaviour. I find that up to 50% of the education gap in mobility can be attributed to differences in the thickness of cross-regional labour markets. This result suggests a large social return to improving regional search and matching for less educated and the unemployed.

Labour Market Frictions and Regional Disparities

Labour market outcomes differ across regions, and these differences are strongly persistent. The aim of this paper is to explain regional disparities, and the lack of convergence, using labour market frictions. The paper draws on two fields: New Economic Geography, and frictional labour markets. We use the idea of thick labour markets to motivate clustering of economic activity and consequently differences in unemployment rates and wages. Because increasing returns to matching create a link between frictions in the labour market and its size, workers in the thin labour markets will find it increasingly difficult to match with employers in the bigger, more prosperous markets. As a consequence, utility will not be equalised across regions, and regional differences will persist.

Flexible Work Arrangements in Low Wage Jobs: Evidence from Job Vacancy Data

(with Abi Adams-Prassl, Matthias Qian and Tom Waters)

In this paper, we analyze firm demand for flexible jobs by exploiting the language used to describe work arrangements in job vacancies. We take a supervised machine learning approach to classify the work arrangements described in more than 46 million UK job vacancies. We highlight the existence of very different types of flexibility amongst low and high wage vacancies. Job flexibility at low wages is more likely to be offered alongside a wage-contract that exposes workers to earnings risk, while flexibility at higher wages and in more skilled occupations is more likely to be offered alongside a fixed salary that shields workers from earnings variation. We show that firm demand for flexible work arrangements is partly driven by a desire to reduce labor costs; we find that a large and unexpected change to the minimum wage led to a 7 percentage point increase in the proportion of flexible and non-salaried vacancies at low wages.

The Economic Impact of Reducing Non-Performing Loans

(with Alexander Plekhanov and Marta Skrzypinska)

WORK IN PROGRESS

The Geography of Recruitment

Job Search during a Pandemic Recession: Survey Evidence from the Netherlands

(with Nico Pestel, Simon Trenkle and Christian Zimpelmann)

PRESENTATIONS

2021 (planned)	SOLE, RES
2020	ESWM (Nottingham), Bank of England, CESifo Venice Summer Institute (cancelled)
2019	LISER, IZA, Bonn, Edinburgh, Humboldt U Berlin, Copenhagen Business School, Universita Autonoma de Barcelona, SaM (Oslo), Aix-Marseille Summer School, UEA (Philadelphia)
2018	RES Junior (Brighton), EBRD conference on Sustaining Growth (London), SaM (Cambridge), ZEW Summer School (Mannheim), ESWM (Naples), UCL, Oxford
2017	Urban Economic Association (Copenhagen), IEA (Mexico City), Oxford
2016	Rimini Conference in Economics and Finance

REFEREEING

Journal of Public Economics, Journal of Housing Economics, Empirical Economics

HONOURS, GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

2015 - 2018	ESRC and Wolf Scholarship
2013 - 2015	Dulverton Scholarship

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2017 - 2019	Prelims and Core Macroeconomics, undergraduate tutor, University of Oxford
2018	Economics course, DISCOVER Summer School (in Slovak language)
2017	Economics taster sessions for Pathways, University of Oxford access and outreach initiative
2016 - 2018	British Economic History since 1870, undergraduate tutor, University of Oxford
2016	Tutor for UNIQ Summer School

PAST EMPLOYMENT

2015 - 2016	CORE, research assistant and editor
2015	Financial Times, Peter Martin Fellow
2015	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Transition Report 2015