

Martin O'Connell

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British citizen, US Permanent Resident

Current Employment

University of Wisconsin–Madison

Assistant Professor, Department of Economics (2021–present)

Past Employment

Institute for Fiscal Studies

Deputy Research Director (2019–2021), Associate Director (2016–2018), Senior Research Economist (2011–2015), Research Economist (2008–2011)

Affiliations

Institute for Fiscal Studies, Research Fellow (2021–present)

Center for Economic and Policy Research, Research Affiliate (2017–present)

Center for Economic Studies, Research Affiliate (2017–present)

Education

PhD Economics, University College London, 2015

MSc Economics (Distinction), London School of Economics and Political Science, 2008

MA (Hons) Financial Economics (First), University of St Andrews, 2007

Working Papers

- “Risk protection and redistribution in the design of social insurance”, **revision requested**, *American Economic Review* (with Rory McGee)
- “The welfare effects of price shocks and household relief packages: Evidence from an energy crisis”, **revision requested**, *Journal of Political Economy* (with Peter Levell and Kate Smith)
- “Measuring cost of living inequality during an inflation surge”, **revision requested**, *Review of Economic Studies* (with Tao Chen and Peter Levell)
- “The rise of discounters and its impact on concentration, market power and welfare”, **revision requested**, *American Economic Review* (with Howard Smith and Øyvind Thomassen)

Peer-reviewed Publications

- “The effects of sin taxes and advertising in a dynamic equilibrium”, *American Economic Journal: Microeconomics* forthcoming (2025) (with Rossi Abi-Rafeh, Pierre Dubois and Rachel Griffith)
- “Inflation measurement with high-frequency data”, *Journal of Business and Economic Statistics*, forthcoming (2025) (with Kevin J. Fox and Peter Levell)
- “A two sample size estimator for large datasets”, *Econometrics Journal*, 28 (2025) (with Howard Smith and Øyvind Thomassen)

- “Optimal sin taxation and market power”, *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 16(4), 2024 (with Kate Smith)
- “Price floors and externality correction”, *Economic Journal*, 132(646), 2022 (with Rachel Griffith and Kate Smith)
- “The dietary impact of the COVID-19 pandemic”, *Journal of Health Economics*, 82 (2022) (with Kate Smith and Rebekah Stroud)
- “Preparing for a pandemic: spending dynamics and panic buying during the COVID-19 first wave”, *Fiscal Studies*, 42(2), 2021 (with Áureo de Paula and Kate Smith)
- “Real-time price indices: Inflation spike and falling product variety during the Great Lockdown”, *Journal of Public Economics*, 191 (2020) (with Xavier Jaravel)
- “How well targeted are soda taxes?”, *American Economic Review*, 110(11), 2020 (with Pierre Dubois and Rachel Griffith)
- “A new year, a new you? Heterogeneity and self-control in food purchases”, *European Economic Review*, 127 (2020) (with Laurens Cherchye et al.)
- “Tax design in the alcohol market”, *Journal of Public Economics*, 172 (2019) (with Rachel Griffith and Kate Smith)
- “The effects of banning advertising in junk food markets”, *Review of Economic Studies*, 85(1), 2018 (with Pierre Dubois and Rachel Griffith)
- “Income effects and the welfare consequences of tax in differentiated product oligopoly”, *Quantitative Economics*, 9(1), 2018 (with Rachel Griffith and Lars Nesheim)
- “The importance of product reformulation versus consumer choice in improving diet quality”, *Economica*, 84(333), 2016 (with Rachel Griffith and Kate Smith)
- “Shopping around? How households adjusted food spending over the Great Recession”, *Economica*, 83(330), 2015 (with Rachel Griffith and Kate Smith)
- “Ownership of intellectual property and corporate taxation”, *Journal of Public Economics*, 112 (2014) (with Rachel Griffith and Helen Miller)
- “Public policy towards food consumption”, *Fiscal Studies*, 31(4), 2010 (with Rachel Griffith)

Invited Contributions

- “The use of scanner data for economic research”, *Annual Review of Economics*, 14 (2022) (with Pierre Dubois and Rachel Griffith)
- “High-frequency changes in shopping behaviours, promotions, and the measurement of inflation: Evidence from the Great Lockdown”, *Fiscal Studies*, 41(3), 2020 (with Xavier Jaravel)
- “Could COVID-19 Infect the Consumer Price Index?”, *Fiscal Studies*, 41(2), 2020 (with Richard Blundell, Rachel Griffith and Peter Levell)
- “What’s on the Menu? Policies to Reduce Young People’s Sugar Consumption” *Fiscal Studies* 41(1), 2020 (with Rachel Griffith, Kate Smith and Rebekah Stroud)
- “Corrective taxation and internalities from food consumption”, *CESifo Economic Studies* 64(1), 2018 (with Rachel Griffith and Kate Smith)
- “Sugary drinks tax: response from the Institute for Fiscal Studies” *The Lancet* 64(1), 2016 (with Peter Levell and Kate Smith)
- “Relative prices, consumer preferences and the demand for food”, *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 31(1), 2015 (with Rachel Griffith and Kate Smith)

- “The use of scanner data for research into nutrition”, *Fiscal Studies*, 30(3-4), 2009 (with Rachel Griffith)

Research Grants

- 2025–2027 (Co-I) “Evaluation of voluntary measures to restrict the use of price promotions to sell HFSS foods”, NIHR, £212,897
- 2024–2026 (Co-I) “Impacts and responses to the cost-of-living crisis”, ESRC, £250,000
- 2022–2024 (Co-I) “Consumption dynamics and the insurance value of benefits”, ESRC, £289,128
- 2021–2023 (PI) “Public policy in food markets: understanding advertising and choice inter-dependencies”, ESRC, £490,066
- 2020–2021 (Co-I) “Heterogeneity in household spending and well-being on retirement”, SSA Retirement and Disability Research Consortium, \$75,000
- 2020–2021 (PI) “The impact of the COVID-19 crisis on food security”, Nuffield Foundation, £147,680
- 2020–2021 (PI) “The impact of the COVID-19 crisis on nutrition”, ESRC, £121,511
- 2018 (PI) “Research visit to Stanford”, British Academy Small Grant, £10,000
- 2017–2019 (PI) “Regulating product characteristic space in food markets”, British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship, £325,831
- 2016–2018 (Co-I) “Empirical evidence on the formation of habits, self-control and non-separabilities in food choice”, ERC, €994,772
- 2016–2018 (Co-I) “Food consumption, advertising and dynamics”, ESRC-ORA, £404,705

Professional Activities

Associate Editor: *International Journal of Industrial Organization*

Refereeing: AEJ: Applied, AEJ: Micro, AEJ: Policy, AER, AER: Insights, Econometrica, Economic Journal, Economic Policy, European Economic Review, Fiscal Studies, Food Policy, International Economic Review, International Journal of Economics of Business, International Journal of Industrial Organization, International Tax and Public Finance, Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization, Journal of Econometrics, Journal of European Economic Association, Journal of Industrial Economics, Journal of Political Economy, Journal of Political Economy: Microeconomics, Journal of Policy Analysis and Management, Journal of Public Economics, Macroeconomic Dynamics, National Tax Journal, Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics, Quantitative Economics, RAND Journal of Economics, Review of Economics and Statistics, Review of Economic Design, Review of Economic Studies, Review of Industrial Organization, Quarterly Journal of Economics

Invited Seminars

- 2026: Chicago–Harris, South Carolina
- 2025: United Nations, Virginia, Wisconsin–Milwaukee
- 2024: Bank of Colombia, Iowa State, Paris–Saclay
- 2022: Berkeley, Michigan, Western Ontario
- 2021: Brussels
- 2020: Bristol, Cambridge, Chicago Booth, Illinois Urbana–Champaign, Oxford, Warwick, WUSTL, Wisconsin–Madison
- 2019: DICE
- 2018: Bristol, Leuven, Michigan, USC
- 2017: Toulouse, Oxford

2016: CREST

2014: St Andrews, Leicester

Policy Reports (Selected)

- “Multilateral index methods for Consumer Price Statistics”, ESCoE Discussion Paper 2515-4664 (2022) (with Kevin Fox and Peter Levell)
- “Grocery prices and promotions during the COVID-19 pandemic”, IFS BN306 (2020) (with Xavier Jaravel)
- “The evidence on the effects of soft drinks taxes”, IFS BN255 (2019) (with Rachel Griffith, Kate Smith and Rebekah Stroud)
- “Children’s exposure to TV advertising of food and drink”, IFS BN228 (2018) (with Rachel Griffith, Kate Smith and Rebekah Stroud)
- “Proposed minimum unit price for alcohol would lead to large price rises”, IFS BN222 (2017) (with Rachel Griffith and Kate Smith)
- “The exposure of households’ food spending to tariff changes and exchange rate movements”, IFS BN213 (2016) (with Peter Levell and Kate Smith)
- “Using taxation to reduce sugar consumption”, IFS BN180 (2016) (with Rachel Griffith, Melanie Lührmann and Kate Smith)
- “Excise Duties”, IFS Green Budget (2016) (with Peter Levell and Kate Smith)

Last updated: Thursday 6th November 2025