

**MICHAEL KIRKER**  
<http://michaelkirker.net>  
[mkirker@uchicago.edu](mailto:mkirker@uchicago.edu)

**Office Contact Information**

1126 E. 59<sup>th</sup> Street – Saieh Hall for Economics  
Chicago, IL 60637

**Placement Director:** Professor Ufuk Akcigit, [uakcigit@uchicago.edu](mailto:uakcigit@uchicago.edu), (773) 702 0433

**Graduate Student Coordinator:** Robert Herbst, [herbst@uchicago.edu](mailto:herbst@uchicago.edu), (773) 834 1972

**Personal Information:** New Zealand citizen

**Education**

The University of Chicago, 2011 to present

Ph.D. Candidate in Economics

Thesis Title: “Firm Productivity Growth and its Relationship to the Knowledge of New Workers”

M.A., Applied Macroeconomics and Trade & Growth, *University of Chicago*, 2012

B.C.A. (Hons), Economics, Econometrics, Money & Finance, First-class honours, *Victoria University of Wellington*, 2008

Thesis Advisors:

Professor Nancy Stokey  
University of Chicago  
[nstokey@uchicago.edu](mailto:nstokey@uchicago.edu)

Professor Robert Lucas, Jr.  
University of Chicago  
[relucas@uchicago.edu](mailto:relucas@uchicago.edu)

Professor Francisco Buera  
Washington University at St Louis  
[fjbuera@wustl.edu](mailto:fjbuera@wustl.edu)

**Teaching and Research Fields:**

Primary fields: Applied Macroeconomics, Trade & Growth

Secondary fields: Monetary Policy

**Teaching Experience:**

Spr, 2013 & 14      ECON 332: Theory of Income III, University of Chicago, Teaching Assistant for Professor Cassey Mulligan

Wtr, 2017      ECON 24720: Inequality: Origins, Dimensions & Policy, University of Chicago, Teaching Assistant for Allen Sanderson

Wtr, 2016      College Core Tutor, University of Chicago

Spr, 2015      ECON 200: The Elements of Economic Analysis, University of Chicago, Teaching Assistant for Grace Tsang

Wtr, 2014 & 15	ECON: 198: Introduction to Microeconomics, University of Chicago, Teaching Assistant for Allen Sanderson
Wtr, 2014 & 15	ECON 199: Introduction to Macroeconomics, University of Chicago, Teaching Assistant for Allen Sanderson

### **Research Experience and Other Employment:**

2015-16	New Zealand Treasury, Visiting Researcher Conducted research on the relationship between productivity growth and knowledge spillover using linked employer-employee data from Statistics New Zealand
2012-13	Booth Business School, Research Assistant Provided technical coding assistance for a model relating government housing policy to the welfare of individual households
2008-11	Reserve Bank of New Zealand, Economic Analyst/Senior Analyst in Research Team and Modelling Team Key responsibilities included presenting model based forecasts to the Monetary Policy Committee, estimation and development of the main DSGE model. I have also served as Model Operator where I was responsible for adding judgements to produce the Bank's official forecasts. During a forecasting round, I also served as Secretary to the Monetary Policy Committee.
2006-07	New Zealand Treasury, Summer Internship, Macroeconomic Policy Group Carried out a review of the Treasury's practices with regards to the estimation of the cyclically adjusted balance.

### **Publications:**

Floetotto, M., Kirker, M., Stroebel, J. (2016). "Government Intervention in the Housing Market: Who Wins, Who Loses?", *Journal of Monetary Economics*, vol 80

Albertini, J., Kamber, G., Kirker, M. (2012). "An Estimated Small Open Economy Model with Frictional.", *Pacific Economic Review*, vol 17(2)

### **Research Papers:**

"Firm Productivity Growth and its Relationship to the Knowledge of New Workers" (Job Market Paper)

Using linked employer-employee data, productivity growth at a firm is related to the firm's exposure to outside knowledge, proxied by the difference between the hiring firm's productivity and the productivity of the new worker's previous employer. The estimated relationship is compared to the predictions implied by both the knowledge spillover and worker quality channels. While not a causal

relationship, the multi-factor productivity results are consistent with the predictions of a worker quality channel in which positive assortative matching between workers and firms acts as a signal of the unmeasured worker quality that will benefit the hiring firm. When firm productivity is measured in terms of labor productivity, support is also found for the knowledge spillovers occurring from more to less productive firms through the labor mobility channel. Further investigation suggests that this knowledge spillover pertains to production technology knowledge, allowing the firm to operate at higher levels of capital intensity, and not multi-factor productivity knowledge, that would allow the firm to operate its current inputs more efficiently.

“Learning Through Hiring: Labor Mobility as a Channel for Endogenous Growth”

Firm-level analysis suggests that labor mobility is one of the channels through which productive knowledge can spillover between firms. However, the macro-level implications of this channel for both aggregate growth and the distribution of firms has received less attention. This paper embeds a search-and-matching labor model within an endogenous growth framework so that the job-to-job transition of workers act as a channel through which knowledge diffuses between firms, generating long-run growth. Within the model, the rate at which firms are exposed to new knowledge and the distribution of new knowledge they learn from are both endogenously determined by the labor market. This model is calibrated to match firm-level and aggregate-data facts for New Zealand. Counterfactual analysis suggests that knowledge spillover through the labor mobility channel has significant effects on the long-run growth of an economy and on the dispersion of firm-level productivity. However, it appears to have little impact on the distribution of firm size within the economy.

“What Drives Core Inflation? A Dynamic Factor Analysis of Tradable and Nontradable Prices”

Reserve Bank of New Zealand Discussion Papers Series, DP2010/13

“Does Natural Rate Variation Matter? Evidence from New Zealand”

Reserve Bank of New Zealand Discussion Papers Series, DP2008/17

**Technical skills:**

Highly experienced using Matlab, LaTeX,  
Intermediate skills in Python, Stata, R, EViews, SQL