Ann-Kristin Becker

University of Cologne

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Research Interests

Primary: Labor Economics

Secondary: Regional Economics; Economic History; Development Economics

Education

since 2021	**Ph.D. Candidate in Economics**, University of Cologne
	Supervisors: Prof. Dr. Erik Hornung & Prof. Michael Krause, Ph.D.
Autumn 2024	**Visiting Ph.D. Student**, LSE
	Host: Prof. Guy Michaels, Ph.D.
2017 – 2020	**M.Sc. Economics**, University of Cologne
2013 – 2016	**B.Sc. Applied Mathematics**, University of Lübeck

Professional Experience

since 2025	**Research Associate**, Center for Economic Research, University of Cologne
2021 – 2025	**Research Associate**, Institute for Economic Policy at the University of Cologne
2021	**Consultant**, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva
2020 – 2021	**Carlo-Schmid Fellow**, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva
2018 – 2020	**Research Assistant**, German Institute for Development Evaluation, Bonn

Scholarships & Awards

since 2025	Ph.D. Scholarship (Center for Economic Research, University of Cologne)
2020 – 2021	Carlo Schmid Scholarship (German Academic Scholarship Foundation)
2021	C-SEB Student Award (Center for Social and Economic Behavior, University of Cologne)
2018	Dean's Award (Faculty of Management, Economics and Social Sciences, University of Cologne)

References

Professor Erik Hornung	**Professor Michael Krause**
University of Cologne	University of Cologne
hornung@wiso.uni-koeln.de	michael.krause@wiso.uni-koeln.de

Professor Guy Michaels

LSE

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Working Papers

Production Linkages and Regional Development: Evidence from Coal Mining in Germany (Job Market Paper)

This paper examines how production linkages shape regional adjustment to industry shocks. I study this question by comparing hard coal and lignite mining in Germany. Both coal industries operated under the same institutional and macroeconomic conditions but differed markedly in their integration into local supply chains. Using a novel county-level employment dataset for Germany spanning 1849–2024, I estimate an event-study and a shift–share design. I find that hard coal mining, which produces strong upstream and downstream linkages, led to persistent increases in local manufacturing and service employment, particularly in input-supplying and coal-using industries. In contrast, lignite mining, with weaker linkages, led to local industrial decline, consistent with Dutch disease dynamics. I further show that the phase-out of hard coal caused substantial employment losses, particularly in formerly linked sectors. These results highlight the double-edged nature of production linkages: they fuel growth while a key industry is active, but can amplify local decline once it contracts.

Industrialization and the Return to Labor: Evidence from Prussia (with E. Hornung)

R&R at Journal of Economic Growth

CEPR Discussion Paper No. 20810; CESifo Working Paper No. 12237; CAGE Working Paper No. 779; ECONtribute Discussion Paper No. 378

Industrialization boosts aggregate incomes, but its distributional effects remain debated. We study the impact of coal-driven industrialization on unskilled labor incomes using novel panel data on wages from 667 Prussian localities (1800–1879), extended with county-level data through 1914. Exploiting spatial variation in coal proximity in difference-in-differences and event-study designs, we find that wage gains in coal-rich regions emerged once industrialization accelerated in the 1850s and continued to grow until WWI. Evidence from 3,000 household accounts shows that coal proximity raised labor incomes primarily for low-skilled workers, with weaker effects for high-skilled and mechanical occupations. This pattern suggests that industrialization reduced wage inequality by compressing the local skill premium. Mediation analysis indicates that wage gains for unskilled workers were primarily driven by technology adoption and the increasing demand for low-skilled labor, rather than by sectoral change or the spread of the factory system.

Work in Progress (selected)

Forced Melting Pot: Short-term Contact and International Cooperation (with C. Stapper)

This paper examines whether short-term exposure to foreign nationals fosters long-term international cooperation. We explore this question within the context of forced labor in Germany during World War II. We exploit the quasi-random distribution of foreign workers across German counties, which was not determined by prior migration patterns or existing ties. Estimating a gravity model, we find that a greater presence of foreign workers of a given nationality increases both personal links as well as the number of firm links and joint patents between German counties and the workers' countries of origin in the postwar period. However, this effect persists only when ties are institutionalized via formal town partnerships. These findings show that even coercive, short-term contact can foster lasting international cooperation when embedded in formal institutions.

Firms and Workers in Germany: Linked County-Level Censuses 1882-1939 (with L. Bosshart, S. Braun, R. Franke, F. Kersting, M. Weigand)

Publications

Vulnerable entrepreneurs' preferences for climate risk management: A discrete choice experiment with micro-enterprises in the Philippines, *Journal of Environmental Management* 392, 126485. (with G. Leppert & A. Köngeter)

Policy Work (selected)

Beyond the Pledge: Addressing Ambiguities in International Climate Finance Agreements, *Global Policy Journal*, 16/12/2025 (with I. Sieberichs)

Warum die internationale Klimafinanzierung mehr Verbindlichkeit braucht, *Makronom*, 19/12/2024 (with I. Sieberichs)

Kontroversen um den Entwicklungshaushalt, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* no. 219, p. 18, 19/09/2024 (with I. Sieberichs)

Taking Responsibility or Prioritizing Donor Interests? An Assessment of Germany's International Climate Finance, *Wirtschaftsdienst*, 103. Jhg., 2023, Heft 6 (with I. Sieberichs)

Eine Kommentierung wagen – Schlaglichter auf den Koalitionsvertrag, *Kölner Impulse zur Wirtschaftspolitik* 01/2022 (with M. Krause, T. Markefke, F. Mindl, C. Oslislo & S.J. Roth)

Compulsory Insurance Against Damage Caused by Natural Disasters, *Wirtschaftsdienst*, 102. Jahrgang, 2022, Heft 1 (with C. Oslislo)

Conference & Workshop Presentations

2025	ASREC, Copenhagen (Denmark); EHES Conference, Hohenheim (Germany); WEHC, Lund (Sweden); 1st CEPR Applied Micro-Economic History Workshop, Heidelberg (Germany)
2024	EC501 LSE Labour Seminar, London (UK); ETRANHET Workshop, Paris (France); EAYE Annual Meeting, Paris (France)
2023	EHA Annual Meeting, Pittsburgh (USA); EHES Conference, Vienna (Austria); FRESH Meeting, Cologne (Germany); EHS Annual Conference, Warwick (UK)
2022	Economic and Social History Seminar, Bonn (Germany)

Teaching

2021 – 2024	Economic and financial policy (tutorial, undergraduate), University of Cologne
2022 – 2023	Project course in economics: Academic writing in public (undergraduate), University of Cologne
since 2021	Supervision of bachelor's and master's theses, University of Cologne

(Co-)Organizer of Workshops and Seminars

2024	23rd Cologne Economic Policy Dialogue: Is violence (also) an economic problem?
2024	22nd Cologne Economic Policy Dialogue: The future of the German pension system
2023/24	Lecture series: Energy from an economic policy perspective
2023	FRESH Meeting, Cologne
2022	Science meets practice: Migration from an economic policy perspective

Referee for Journals and Conferences

since 2021	Referee for the Zeitschrift für Wirtschaftspolitik
since 2024	Reviewer for the EAYE Annual Meeting

Engagement

since 2023	Scientific support of students in the Young Economic Solutions (YES) program
	2024/25: The economy and me – Economic education as a basis for participation in a democratic society
	2023/24: Lost Generation – What can we do about the increased educational inequality caused by the Covid-19 pandemic?

Skills

Languages	German (native), English (advanced), Spanish (intermediate)
Programming	R, Matlab, Stata