

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 PhD 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 **Student 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
University of Cologne
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Professor Michael Krause
University of Cologne
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Professor Guy Michaels
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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 the local impact of industrial activity. 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) *submitted: Journal of Economic Growth*

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, exploiting that the distribution of foreign workers across German counties 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 the number of firm links 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.

Firm 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)

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
- 2025 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