

Ann-Kristin Becker

University of Cologne

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Research Interests

Labor 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
Supervisor: 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 Michales
LSE
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Working Papers

Understanding Local Economic Effects of Natural Resource Extraction: The Importance of Linkages (Job Market Paper)

This paper examines how the strength of local production linkages, that is, the extent to which activity in one sector stimulates other sectors through input demand and output supply, shapes the long-run impact of resource extraction on regional development. Exploiting a natural experiment in Germany (1849–2024), I compare the effects of extracting two types of coal—hard coal and lignite—that were mined under similar institutional conditions but differed in their degree of integration into local supply chains. Using an event-study framework and a shift-share design, I find that hard coal mining, which produced 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, generated limited spillovers and contributed to industrial decline. I further show that the phase-out of hard coal after 1960 led to substantial employment losses, particularly in formerly linked sectors. These results highlight the double-edged nature of production linkages: they fuel growth during extraction but can deepen decline when extraction ends.

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

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 through WWI. Data from 3,000 households accounts confirm that coal is associated with higher labor incomes for low-skilled but not for high-skilled workers, suggesting that industrialization reduced wage inequality by compressing the local skill premium. Mediation analysis indicates that wage gains 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. Using 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 town twinnings. These findings show that even coercive, short-term contact can foster lasting international cooperation when embedded in formal institutions.

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)

This study employs a discrete choice experiment with 625 micro-entrepreneurs in the Philippines to elicit preferences for climate risk management strategies. Using a random parameter logit model, we estimate willingness to pay for three adaptation strategies: early warning systems, resilient infrastructure, and climate risk insurance. Our findings show substantial but heterogeneous demand for climate risk management, especially for climate risk insurance, and can inform policymakers in designing needs-based climate adaptation policies.

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

- since 2021 *Zeitschrift für Wirtschaftspolitik*

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