

# Sebastian Kraus

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## Doctoral studies

**Technical University of Berlin**, 2017 to 07/2021 (expected)  
Ph.D. Candidate in Economics (Dr. rer. oec.)

**UC Louvain**, 10/2020 - 03/2021  
Guest Researcher, visiting Prof. Eric Lambin and Prof. Patrick Meyfroidt

## *Committee and References:*

Professor **Ottmar Edenhofer**  
Potsdam Institute on Climate Impact Research  
Mercator Research Institute on  
Global Commons and Climate Change

Professor **Robert Heilmayr**  
Bren School of Environmental Science  
and Management  
UC Santa Barbara

Professor **Sabine Fuss**  
Humboldt University of Berlin  
Mercator Research Institute on  
Global Commons and Climate Change

Dr. **Nicolas Koch**  
Mercator Research Institute on  
Global Commons and Climate Change  
IZA Fellow

## Employment and consulting

05/2021 - present	<b>Ministry of Finance</b>   Berlin   <i>Fellow</i> Mobility policy
05/2017 - 05/2021	<b>Mercator Research Institute on Global Commons and Climate Change</b>   Berlin Restore+ project with stakeholders from Indonesia, Brazil, and DRC
09/2016 - 04/2017	<b>GIZ</b>   Berlin/Rabat/Tunis   <i>Berater (senior staff)</i> , before: external consultant Macro-economic energy transition modeling, workshops and consulting
11/2015 - 08/2016	<b>Federal Chancellery</b>   Berlin <i>Referent Stab Politische Planung</i>   supervisor: Eva Christiansen <i>Regierungsbericht zur Lebensqualität</i> , product lead for interactive report and data visualization
06/2015 - 07/2015	<b>Sociedad Peruana de Derecho Ambiental</b>   Lima   <i>Consultant</i> Grant acquisition and project management for deforestation alert system based on Global Forest Watch (WRI)
05/2015 - 10/2015	<b>IIASA</b>   Laxenburg   <i>Consultant</i> App and web design crowdsourcing apps, GeoWiki
10/2013 - 10/2014	<b>Journalism++</b>   Berlin   <i>Staff data scientist</i> Product management and consulting for data-driven apps, network analysis tool detective.io
06/2011 - 12/2011	<b>Open Society Foundations</b>   Brussels   <i>Short-term consultant</i> Research assistance for Facebook-survey based research on “reluctant radicals” with Demos
06/2010 - 10/2010	<b>European Council on Foreign Relations</b>   Paris   <i>Intern</i> Research and advocacy assistance for report on Euro reform

## Education

2012 - 2013	<b>London School of Economics</b>	<i>Masters as a double-degree</i>
2011 - 2012	<b>Sciences Po Paris</b>	Master International Political Economy
2009 - 2010	<b>University of Oxford</b> , Keble College	Master International Economic Policy
2008 - 2010	<b>Sciences Po Paris</b> , Campus Nancy	Exchange year Philosophy, Politics and Economics
2008	Hans-Furter-Gymnasium, Oberkirch (BW)	Bachelor Public Policy
		Abitur (1.0, 800 points)

### *Honors, Scholarships, and Fellowships:*

2012 - 2013	Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes   Scholarship
10/2012	Sciences Po Alumni UK   Roger Seydoux Award
2012	Sciences Po Paris   Prix de l'Engagement for NGO Asyls
2011	Sciences Po Paris   Prix de la vie étudiante
2010 - 2012	Stiftung der Deutschen Wirtschaft   Scholarship

## Academic work

### *Publications*

**Provisional COVID-19 infrastructure induces large, rapid increases in cycling (2021).** *PNAS*. with Nicolas Koch

The bicycle is a low-cost means of transport linked to low risk of COVID-19 transmission. Governments have incentivized cycling by redistributing street space as part of their post-lockdown strategies. Here, we evaluate the impact of provisional bicycle infrastructure on cycling traffic in European cities. We scrape daily bicycle counts spanning over a decade from 736 bicycle counters in

106 European cities. We combine this with data on announced and completed pop-up bike lane road work projects. On average 11.5 kilometers of provisional pop-up bike lanes have been built per city. Each kilometer has increased cycling in a city by 0.6%. We calculate that the new infrastructure will generate \$2.3 billion in health benefits per year, if cycling habits are sticky.

## Working papers

### **Spillovers to manufacturing plants from multi-million dollar plantations: evidence from the Indonesian palm oil boom.** *Job Market Paper.* with Robert Heilmayr and Nicolas Koch

We estimate spillover effects to local manufacturing plants in the Indonesian palm oil boom using a stacked difference-in-differences approach. We use new data on the establishment dates and ownership of palm oil mills to identify clean shocks from investments in new plantations. Local plantation booms caused increased sales and productivity of manufacturing plants, despite rising blue-collar wages. Using confidential input-output data, we rule out that this effect is driven by supply chain linkages. We also find shifts in plants' product portfolios. They increased their share of tradable goods, but produced fewer relationship-specific goods. This is consistent with local road improvements. Our results are robust in a sample of large corporate groups that assign treatment more independently from changes in local conditions.

### **Provisional COVID-19 infrastructure induces large, rapid increases in cycling.** *Revise and Resubmit at PNAS. ArXiv Preprint.* with Nicolas Koch

The bicycle is a low-cost means of transport linked to low risk of COVID-19 transmission. Governments have incentivized cycling by redistributing street space as part of their post-lockdown strategies. Here, we evaluate the impact of provisional bicycle infrastructure on cycling traffic in European cities. We scrape daily bicycle counts spanning over a decade from 736 bicycle counters in 106 European cities. We combine this with data on announced and completed pop-up bike lane road work projects. On average 11.5 kilometers of provisional pop-up bike lanes have been built per city. Each kilometer has increased cycling in a city by 0.6%. We calculate that the new infrastructure will generate \$2.3 billion in health benefits per year, if cycling habits are sticky.

### **Effects of thermal inversion induced air pollution on COVID.** *ArXiv Preprint.* with Hannah Klauber and Nicolas Koch

Air pollution is a threat to human health, in particular since it aggravates respiratory diseases. Early COVID-19 outbreaks in Wuhan, China and Lombardy, Italy coincided with high levels of air pollution drawing attention to a potential role of particulate matter and other pollutants in infections and more severe outcomes of the new lung disease. Both air pollution and COVID-19 outcomes are driven by human mobility and economic activity leading to spurious correlations in regression estimates. We use district-level panel data from Belgium, Brazil, Germany, Italy, the UK, and the US to estimate the impact of daily variation in air pollution levels on COVID-19 infections and deaths. Using random variation in air pollution generated by thermal inversions, we rule out that changes in mobility and economic activity are driving the results. We find that a 1%-increase in air pollution levels over the three preceding weeks leads to a 1.5% increase in weekly cases. A 1%-increase in air pollution over four weeks leads to 5.1% more COVID-19 deaths. These results indicate that short-term measures to reduce air pollution can help mitigate the health damages of the virus.

## Work in Progress

### **No deforestation reductions from roll-out of community land titling in Indonesia yet.** with Jacqueline Liu, Nicolas Koch, and Sabine Fuss

In Indonesia, 60 million people live within 1 kilometer of state forest. The government of Indonesia plans to grant formal land titles for 12.7 million hectares of land to communities living in and around forests. These titles allow for using non-timber forest products, practicing agro-forestry, operating tourism businesses, and harvesting timber in designated production zones. Here, we estimate the early effects of the program's roll-out. We use data on the delineation and introduction date of community forest titles on 2.4 million hectares of land across the country. We find that contrary to the objective of the program, community titles in protected areas did not decrease deforestation; if anything, they tended to lead to small increases in forest loss. In contrast, community titles in zones aimed at timber production decreased deforestation, albeit from higher baseline forest loss rates.

## **Price responsiveness of primary forest conversion in Indonesia: evidence from a panel of palm oil mills.** with Valentin Guye

We estimate heterogeneous price elasticities of land use change from forest to oil palm plantations (LUCFP) in Indonesia. This is the first study to relate LUCFP to observations of the actual values paid at palm oil mill gates for fresh fruit bunches and crude palm oil. Mills are pivotal in the sustainable governance of the palm oil supply chain. We have merged the Indonesian manufacturing census and the Universal mill list in a novel, spatially explicit, 1998-2015 panel data set of palm oil mills with many micro-economic dimensions. Grounding on the plantation-mill proximity constraint, we approximate fine grain economic incentives at 3x3km parcels using inverse-distance weights. The causal identification relies on high resolution fixed-effects. We provide estimates of short and medium run LUCFP-price elasticities for Sumatra and for Kalimantan, for industrial plantations and for smallholders. We investigate the heterogeneity in the price responsiveness of LUCFP across ownership, competition, remoteness, forest types, legality, and transitional dynamics. Our results are relevant to designing effective, efficient and equitable market-based conservation schemes.

## *Presentations*

TECLIM/ELIC seminars, **UC Louvain**, 2020

Conference of the Association of Environmental and Resource Economists (**AERE**), Nevada, 2019

Environment and Resource Economics student seminar series, **UC Santa Barbara**, 2019

Conference of the Indonesian regional sciences association (**IRSA**), Surakarta, 2018

## *Supervision*

Master's thesis, Mhabeni Bona and Jacqueline Liu, Hertie School of Governance, 2018-2019

Pre-doctoral project (École Normale Supérieure), Valentin Guye, INRAE-AgroParisTech, 2018-2019

## *Volunteering*

2018 - 2021	Changing Cities   Member mobility transition committee, BA Friedrichshain Kreuzberg
2010 - 2016	Asylos - Research for asylum (Charitable Incorporated Organization)   Trustee
2012 - 2015	24GuteTaten eV   Volunteer

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<https://smkraus.github.io/files/cv.pdf>