

# Anna Becker

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**CURRENT POSITION**      **PhD Candidate in Economics**, University College London      2016 – present  
Expected Completion: 2022

**FIELDS**      Primary: Political Economy  
Secondary: Applied Microeconomics, Behavioral Economics

**PLACEMENT DETAILS**      Placement Director: Prof. Franck Portier      [f.portier@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:f.portier@ucl.ac.uk)  
Graduate Coordinator: Daniella Harper      [economics.jobmarket@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:economics.jobmarket@ucl.ac.uk)

**REFERENCES**      Prof. Hans-Joachim Voth      Prof. Steffen Huck  
University of Zurich      UCL Department of Economics  
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Prof. Attila Lindner  
UCL Department of Economics  
Drayton House, 30 Gordon St  
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**PRIOR EDUCATION**      **MRes** in Economics, University College London      2016  
**MSc** in Economics, Free University of Berlin      2014  
**BSc** in Economics, University of Bonn      2012

**JOB MARKET PAPER**      **Shamed to Death: Social Image Concerns and War Participation**  
Can social image concerns cause people to take costly actions benefiting their community? Using newly collected data, I study the impact of public shaming on voluntary recruitment during World War I in England and Wales. At the time, young women in many towns and cities handed out white feathers to men in civilian clothes, marking them out as cowards. This was intended to encourage volunteering. I reconstruct a panel of “White Feather Girls” activity from local newspaper articles and exploit the staggered spread of the movement in an event study framework. Following episodes of public shaming, recruitment increased significantly: Volunteering surged by a third during the 10 days after the first mention of the White Feather Girls in the news. Confounding factors such as reporting of wartime events are unlikely to account for these patterns. These results suggest that public image concerns can have first-order effects on costly altruistic behavior that benefits the group.

**WORK IN PROGRESS**      **The Social Foundations of Xenophobia**  
*with Leonardo Bursztyn, Armin Falk, Christopher Roth, and Hans-Joachim Voth*  
We examine how being single affects frustration and subsequent xenophobic behavior. In a first step, we show that higher male-to-female ratios are associated with more anti-immigrant violence and far-right voting. We corroborate these correlations using an instrumental variables strategy exploiting the close-by availability of university places for females. Using simple experiments, we will test a behavioral mechanism underlying single men’s inclination to engage in anti-immigrant behavior and political extremism. Single men perceive substantial social stigma of being single, which in turn, results in high levels of frustration. A simple informational intervention that corrects misperceptions about the stigma associated with being single, is meant to decrease frustration and look at the implications on attitudes towards immigrants.

## **Motivated Political Reasoning: The Formation of Belief-Value Constellations**

*with Kai Barron and Steffen Huck*

We study the causal relationship between moral values (“ought” statements) and factual beliefs (“is” statements) and show that, contrary to predictions of orthodox Bayesian models, values exert an influence on beliefs. This mechanism is mediated by prior political leanings and, thus, contributes to increasing polarization and increasing divergence in beliefs about facts. We study this process of motivated political reasoning in a pre-registered online experiment with a nationally representative sample of 1,500 individuals in the US and also examine whether subjects are willing to distort their beliefs in response to monetary incentives which they are not.

## **Fairness and the Minimum Wage**

*with Attila Lindner and Kristóf Madarász*

We propose a simple mechanism whereby, all else equal, consumers derive a higher marginal utility from consuming a good if it is produced at a sufficiently high wage cost. Combined with firms’ inability to credibly commit to higher wages, a mandated minimum wage policy can lead to higher output and increased profits simultaneously. The model can reconcile the limited effect of the minimum wage on employment with its positive effect on output prices which existing models fail to explain simultaneously. We seek to corroborate our findings with an online survey experiment that assesses the credibility of minimum wage policies, consumers’ responses to price changes, and their attitudes towards the minimum wage.

## **The Dynamics of Inequality and Social Cohesion**

This study tests the hypothesis that individuals’ cooperative behavior does not just depend on their available wealth but also on the shape of the income process which generates that wealth. Inequality is no longer observed in levels only. It also affects real incomes with those of the poorest not only stagnating but declining. I ran a pre-registered online experiment to look at the impact of income changes on cooperation. The experiment varies whether participants received increasing, decreasing or constant rewards for a task they had to complete repeatedly, while keeping their final budgets equal. Whereas I find no effects on charitable giving, I find evidence that contributions in a public goods game are affected by players comparing their reward profiles.

TEACHING	<b>Topics in Labour Economics</b> (MSc) for Prof. Christian Dustmann <b>Public Microeconomics</b> (MSc) for Prof. Ian Preston	2017 – present 2020 – present
HONORS & AWARDS	Award for best Teaching Assistant on an MSc optional module, UCL PhD Scholarship, UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Postgraduate Scholarship, German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) Postgraduate Scholarship, German National Academic Foundation Fellowship, German National Academic Foundation (Studienstiftung)	Jul 2020 Oct 2016 – Oct 2019 Sep 2015 – Sep 2016 Sep 2015 – Sep 2016 Nov 2010 – Sep 2014
REFEREE SERVICE	Review of Economic Studies, European Economic Review, Economic Journal	
PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE	Research assistant for Prof. Attila Lindner, UCL Research assistant at the Social Science Research Center Berlin (WZB) Trainee at the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union Student research assistant at the Social Science Research Center Berlin (WZB) Student research assistant at the University of Potsdam Student research assistant at the Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA), Bonn	Apr 2020 – present May 2021 – present Feb 2015 – Jul 2015 Jul 2013 – Aug 2014 Jan 2013 – Jun 2013 Oct 2010 – Aug 2012
SUMMER SCHOOLS	RES Easter School on Media, Political Economy and Development, University of Bristol PhD Summer School on Psychological Game Theory at the University of Copenhagen PhD Summer School on Socioeconomic Inequality at the University of Bonn	Jun 2021 Jun 2019 Jul 2018
LANGUAGES	German (native), English (fluent), French (beginner), Spanish (beginner), Latin	
SOFTWARE SKILLS	Stata, R, Python, oTree	