

Curriculum Vitae: Lara Marie Berger

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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Applied Microeconomics, Digital and Media Economics, Text-as-Data, Political Economy

CURRENT POSITION

07/2020 - present Research Associate, Department of Economics, University of Cologne
(parental leave 07/2023 – 03/2024)

EDUCATION

- 10/2020 - present **PhD in Economics**
University of Cologne, Cologne Graduate School of Economics
Supervisors: Prof. Dr. Johannes Münster, Prof. Dr. Bettina Rockenbach
- 10/2018 - 09/2020 **Double Degree: Master in Economics**
University of Cologne, Germany (MSc) and Keio University, Japan (MA)
One year of studies at each institution graduating with two degrees
- 04/2014 - 09/2018 **Bachelor of Science in Economics**
University of Cologne
Exchange semesters: WSE Poland (SS2016), PUC Brazil (WS2015/16)
- 10/2013 - 09/2018 **Apprenticeship as Journalist for Economics and Politics**
Cologne School of Journalism

PUBLICATIONS

- **Debunking “fake news” on social media: immediate- and short-term effects of fact checking and media literacy interventions**

with Anna Kerkhof, Felix Mindl and Johannes Münster

Journal of Public Economics, Vol. 245, May 2025

Large-scale randomized experiment on misinformation in digital news markets, providing causal evidence that brief media literacy interventions outperform traditional fact-checking in improving belief formation and factual knowledge in online environments.

JOB MARKET PAPER

- **How digital media markets amplify news sentiment**

single-authored

Studies how digital attention incentives reshape news production and consumption by inducing more emotionally amplified headlines, with downstream effects on audience engagement and learning. Combines large-scale machine-learning text analysis with randomized experiments involving professional journalists and representative audiences.

WORKING PAPERS

- **Science literacy in the newsroom: Experimental evidence**

with Anna Kerkhof and Nikola Noske

(submitted)

Shows that a concise, low-cost science-literacy intervention markedly improves journalists' accuracy in reporting research, suggesting a scalable tool for news organizations.

- **How narratives impact financial behavior**

with Sören Harrs and Bettina Rockenbach

(submitted)

Provides causal evidence that optimistic and pessimistic narratives shape expectations and can influence risk taking and patience when they trigger emotional responses.

SELECTED WORK IN PROGRESS

- **Information acquisition via ChatGPT and TikTok** *with Yero Ndiaye*

- **Upholding a good image: Selective country comparisons in the media** *with Gönül Dogan and Louis Strang*

POLICY PAPERS (no peer-review)

- **Digitale Medienmärkte: Was tun gegen Hassrede und Falschinformationen?** *with Raphaela Andres. Wirtschaftsdienst 105(3) , 161-166, 2025.*

- **Fake News in den sozialen Medien – was hilft?** *with Anna Kerkhof, Felix Mindl and Johannes Münster. ECONtribute Policy Brief No. 039, 10/2022.*

RESEARCH VISITS

02/2023 - 04/2023 Columbia University, New York. Host: Andrea Prat

05/2025 ZEW, Mannheim. Host: Irene Bertschek

07/2025 WZB, Berlin. Host: Maja Adena

PRESENTATIONS AT SEMINARS, WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES

2025: Seminar Cologne, C-SEB Workshop, AYEW, Text-as-Data Workshop Potsdam, ZEW Conference on ICT, WZB Econ Seminar, ZEW Econ Seminar

2024: RGS Doctoral Conference, AYEW, EAYE Annual Meeting, MaCCI/JRC Digital Economics Workshop, ZEW Conference on ICT, EEA-ESEM, MWZ Text-as-Data Workshop, GfW Annual Meeting, Econ Seminar Linz

2023: C-SEB Workshop Cologne, Economics of Media Bias Workshop, Studi-BUCH Interdisciplinary Text-As-Data Workshop, Doctoral Workshop on the Economics of Digitization

2022: WZB Berlin Workshop, Seminar Cologne, Economics of Media Bias Workshop, Doctoral Workshop on the Economics of Digitization, SMYE, SSES Annual Meeting, ESA European Meeting, Hannover Workshop on Field Experiments, VfS Annual Conference, CESifo Junior Workshop on Big Data, ECONtribute Young Economist Workshop, BiGSEM Workshop

2021: Applied Microeconomics Workshop Cologne, C-SEB Early Ideas Workshop

AWARDS, SCHOLARSHIPS AND RESEARCH GRANTS

2021 - 2026	Joachim Herz AddOn Fellowship (15,500€), several C-SEB Grants (summed up 11,250€), ECONtribute research grant (50,000€)
2023	Junior Teaching Award, University of Cologne (2,000€)
2021	C-SEB Student Award for excellent master thesis
2019	1st prize at Fintech Programming Competition of Keio University
2018 - 2020	Scholarship for master studies: Foundation of German Business
2016	PROMOS Scholarship for Internship at ZDF in Washington D.C.
2016	Erasmus Scholarship for studies at Warsaw School of Economics
2015	DAAD Scholarship for exchange at PUC in Brazil
2015	Deans Award for Bachelor studies at University of Cologne (top 5%)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- **Recipient of the Junior Teaching Award** (University of Cologne, 2023)
- **Media Economics (graduate)**
Tutorial: WS20/21, WS21/22, WS22/23, WS24/25, WS25/26
Seminar: WS21/22, WS22/23
- **Media Economics (undergraduate)**
Tutorial: SS21, SS22, SS23, SS24, SS25
Seminar: SS21, SS22, SS23, SS24, SS25
- **Supervision of Bachelor and Master Theses** (25x)
- **Science Journalism:** Co-designed and taught a seminar on science journalism and evidence-based reporting (with Anna Kerkhof at Cologne School of Journalism in 2022)

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCES AND SKILLS

- **Computational Skills:** Web scraping and API-based data collection, large-scale text data processing, training transformer-based language models (especially BERT- and GPT-based models), fine-tuning embedding-based classification pipelines, topic modelling
- **Programming and Software:** Python, R, Stata, LaTeX, HTML, Java, Git, Qualtrics
- **Languages:** German (mother tongue), English (C2), Brazilian Portuguese (B1)
- **Science Communication:** Presented research at public reach events such as the Global Media Forum and in a ZEW podcast, translating complex empirical results for non-technical audiences.
- **Work Experience as Economic Journalist:** Several years of freelance and newsroom reporting for major German outlets, with a focus on explaining economic policy and research to broad audiences.

PHD-LEVEL COURSES

Winter School in Causal Machine Learning and Modelling with Big Data in Economics
The Econometric Society, Remote Winter 2024

Summer School in Applied Platform Economics
Paris School of Economics, Paris Summer 2022

Fall School in Web Data Collection and Natural Language Processing in Python
GESIS Leibniz-Institute for the Social Sciences Fall 2021

Courses at University of Cologne

Machine Learning for Economists	WS 2020/2021
Advanced Experimental Methods	WS 2020/2021
Advanced Econometrics I	WS 2020/2021
Advanced Macroeconomics	WS 2020/2021
Economic Engineering	WS 2020/2021
Advanced Econometrics II	SS 2021
Political Economy and Media Economics	SS 2021
Econometrics for Behavioral Economists	SS 2022
Reading Group Micro Theory	SS 2021
Reading Group Econometrics	SS 2021

CV last updated: November 2025