

“Forced Migration: Insights from Economic History”

6-hour Masterclass at RFBerlin, November 2025

Lecturer: Sascha O. Becker, University of Warwick and Monash University and RFBerlin

This masterclass, led by Sascha O. Becker (University of Warwick, Monash University, and RFBerlin), explores the economic consequences of forced migration through a historical lens. Building on influential studies published in leading journals, participants will examine key episodes of forced migration, including post-World War II population transfers and, in particular, the persecution and escape of intellectuals under the fascist regimes of the twentieth century, and consider how displacement affected labor market outcomes and educational outcomes. A particular focus will be on the role of networks in shaping migration choices and economic outcomes.

Participants will be expected to read the papers in the syllabus.

Tentative Schedule:

Tuesday, November 18, 2025

09:30–10:30 | Morning Class 1: Forced Migration in History I

10:30–11:00 | Coffee Break

11:00–12:00 | Morning Class 2: Forced Migration in History II

12:00–13:30 | Lunch Break

13:30–14:30 | Afternoon Class 1: Forced Migration in History III

14:30–15:00 | Coffee Break

15:00–16:00 | Afternoon Class 2: Networks and Migration in History I

Wednesday, November 19, 2025

09:30–10:30 | Morning Class 1: Networks and Migration in History II

10:30–11:00 | Coffee Break

11:00–12:00 | Morning Class 2: Networks and Migration in History III

Bibliography:

Note that the bibliography includes several **surveys**. Those are highlighted in bold. Naturally, those cover a lot of different papers, without going into every single detail. The other papers will be discussed in detail, including identification strategies.

Forced Migration in History:

Becker, Sascha O. (2022) “Lessons from Forced Displacement in History”, paper following from the 2021 Noel Butlin Lecture, *Australian Economic History Review* 62(2): 2–25. <https://doi.org/10.1111/aeht.12237>

Becker, Sascha O. and Andreas Ferrara, (2019) “Consequences of forced migration: A survey of recent findings,” *Labour Economics* 59, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.labeco.2019.04.009>

Becker, Sascha O., Irena Grosfeld, Pauline Grosjean, Nico Voigtländer, and Ekaterina Zhuravskaya (2020) "Forced migration and human capital: evidence from post-WWII population transfers," *American Economic Review* 110 (5), 1430–1463.
<https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/aer.20181518>

Networks and Migration in History:

Becker, Sascha O. and Luca de Benedictis (2025) "Discrimination, Political Orientation, and the Probability of Emigration and Escape: University Professors in Fascist Italy", slide set.

Becker, Sascha O., Volker Lindenthal, Sharun Mukand and Fabian Waldinger (2024) "Persecution and Escape: Professional Networks and High-Skilled Emigration from Nazi Germany" *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics* 16(3):1–43. <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/app.20220278>

Buggle, Johannes, Thierry Mayer, Orcan Seyhun Sakalli, and Mathias Thoenig (2023) The Refugee's Dilemma: Evidence from Jewish Migration out of Nazi Germany, *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 138(2): 1273–1345, <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjad001>

Spitzer, Yannay (2021) "Pogroms, Networks, and Migration: The Jewish Migration from the Russian Empire to the United States, 1881–1914", *Hebrew University Falk Institute Discussion Paper* 21–03.

Forced Migration: Insights from Economic History
Masterclass with Sascha O. Becker
RFBerlin (Gormannstrasse 22, 10119 Berlin)
18–19 November 2025