Lea-Karla Matić

POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCHER

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Experience

Aug 2026–Present

Postdoctoral Researcher

Johannes Kepler University Linz, Austria
- Department of Economics

Feb 2021–Aug 2026

Research Assistant (unpaid leave)

The Institute of Economics, Zagreb, Croatia
- Department for Social Policy and Labor Markets

Feb 2024–Feb 2026

Project Assistant

Johannes Kepler University Linz, Austria
- Department of Economics

Academic Education

Mar 2021–Apr 2026

PhD in Economics and Statistics (PhD)

Johannes Kepler University Linz, Austria
- Joint study programme of the University of Innsbruck and JKU Linz
- Thesis: *"Essays in Applied Gender and Health Economics"*
- Supervisors: Assoc. Prof. Alexander Ahammer, Assoc. Prof. Martina Zweimüller
- Committee: Assoc. Prof. Analisa Packham, Prof. Gerald Pruckner

Oct 2018–Sep 2020

Master's degree in Economics (mag.oec.)

Faculty of Economics and Business Zagreb, Croatia

Oct 2014–Sep 2018

Bachelor's degree in Economics (univ.bacc.oec.)

Faculty of Economics and Business Zagreb, Croatia

Work in Progress

1. **Family Spillovers of Miscarriage**

   Shortlisted for 2025 ESPE PhD Prize · Working paper

   Using Austrian administrative data, I estimate the causal effect of miscarriage on the labor market and health outcomes for women, alongside its spillover effects on close family members. To do so, I construct counterfactuals for affected individuals from those who encounter a miscarriage at a later time. The results suggest that affected women experience short-term labor market detachment, deterioration in mental health, but an increase in investment in future fertility. Subsequent pregnancies and births appear to partially mitigate some of the initial negative labor market and mental health effects. For spouses, I find suggestive evidence for mental health problems but no significant changes in health behaviors, such as smoking or alcohol consumption, or health investments beyond those observed prior to the miscarriage. In addition, spillover effects on sisters suggest an increase in preventive health measures, not driven by their own upcoming pregnancies.

2. **End-of-life medical spending: Patterns and household spillovers**

Joint with Alexander Ahammer · Working paper

Medical spending is highly concentrated at the end of life and varies widely across patients, raising a first-order welfare question about whether marginal end-of-life spending reflects waste or generates meaningful benefits. Using Austrian administrative data, we document that end-of-life spending has grown markedly over time and remains highly dispersed even conditional on diagnosis, with predicted mortality explaining only a small share of the variation. We then study a largely underexplored margin: spillovers onto surviving spouses. Event study estimates show large and persistent changes in spouses' employment and healthcare use around spousal death. However, these dynamics are essentially invariant to the decedent's end-of-life spending intensity, a finding that is robust to different measures of spending intensity and to an instrumental variables design exploiting provider-level practice variation. Together, these results are consistent with an important role for inefficiencies in end-of-life care.

3. **The Right to Parental Part-Time Work in Austria**

Joint with Johanna Luise Reuter · Project awarded Theodor Körner Funds

Part-time work is a central yet understudied policy margin through which governments seek to reconcile paid employment and family responsibilities. This paper estimates the causal effects of Austria's 2004 introduction of a legal right to parental part-time work for employees in firms with more than 20 workers. Using rich administrative data and a triple-difference-in-differences design, we show that the reform generates large and persistent increases in part-time work but only modest and short-lived effects on labor market attachment. Instead, post-birth adjustment occurs through both higher employer retention and subsequent fertility. These gains come with persistent earnings losses and a higher child penalty, especially in sectors with steep returns to long and continuous working hours. We also find adverse short-term effects on maternal mental health with no evidence of long-term impacts.

4. **The economics of natural disasters: Evidence from riverine floodings in Austria**

Joint with Alexander Ahammer, Flora Stiftinger & Ivan Žilić · Funded by Croatian Ministry of Science, Education and Youth

Floods are among the most frequent and costly climate-related disasters in Europe, and climate change is expected to increase their frequency and severity. Yet there is limited evidence on their effects on individuals' employment and health, and on firm adjustment in exposed regions. This project provides new causal evidence using linked administrative data from Austria (1972–2024), combining employment histories with detailed healthcare records. We estimate the short- and long-run impacts of major flood events on labor market outcomes, health outcomes, and firm performance. Identification relies on spatial discontinuities around river corridors and detailed flood mapping, complemented by event-study analysis. The findings are expected to support evidence-based preparedness and recovery policies, including better targeting of assistance, anticipating labor market disruptions, and planning for health system pressures.

Policy Projects

An Overview of the Real Estate Market in the Republic of Croatia

Client: Ministry of Physical Planning, Construction and State Assets — *Jan 2026 — Apr 2026*

A report on developing a labor market reform agenda with the aim of empowering women

Client: World Bank — *Nov 2022 — Jun 2023*

Diagnosing and addressing aging and care-related bottlenecks for an efficient labor market in Croatia

Client: World Bank — *Jan 2024 — Jun 2024*

Maternity and parental leave benefits (2016–2021)

Client: Central State Office of Demography and Youth — *Mar 2022 — Jul 2022*

Analysis of unemployment benefit adequacy in the context of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan

Client: Croatian Employment Office — *Mar 2022 — Sep 2022*

Teaching

2025/2026

Visiting Teaching Assistant

Faculty of Economics and Business Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia

- Department of Economic Theory · Lectured course: Microeconomics (BSc)

2023/2024

Visiting Teaching Assistant

Faculty of Economics and Business Zagreb, Zagreb, Croatia

- Department of Economic Theory · Lectured course: Principles of Economics (BSc)

Additional Education

Winter School on Credence Goods, Incentives and Behavior

University of Innsbruck — *April 2022*

Quantitative Methods for Public Policy Evaluation Summer School

The Barcelona School of Economics, Barcelona, Spain — *July 2022*

Methodologies for Monitoring Anticorruption Policies Summer School

The Institute of Public Finance and the Bulgarian CDS, Zagreb, Croatia — *June 2022*

ERASMUS+ Exchange Semester

Athens University of Economics and Business, Athens, Greece — *Feb 2020—Jun 2020*

Presentations

2025 — 38th Annual Conference of the European Society for Population Economics (ESPE)

2025 — EuHEA PhD & Supervisor Conference

2025 — 3rd Croatian Health Economics Workshop

2025 — 9th Austrian Labor Economics Workshop

2025 — Workshop on Contemporary Challenges for Parents and Children

2026 — 39th Annual Conference of the European Society for Population Economics (ESPE)

Scholarships and Awards

- University of Innsbruck **Academic Excellence** Scholarship 2021/2022
- City of Zagreb **Academic Excellence** Scholarship (x3)
- Dean's award for **Bachelor's thesis** on "Debt crisis: is there something in common within serial defaulters?", AY 2017/2018
- ERASMUS+ KA103 European Mobility Program Scholarship, summer semester 2019/2020

Other Experience

European Health Economics Association (EuHEA) Early Career Committee (ECC)

Additional Skills

DATA PROCESSING	STATA, R, LaTeX
LANGUAGES	Croatian (native), English (fluent)

Research Interests

- Applied microeconometrics
- Health, labor and gender economics
- Public policy evaluation

References

Analisa Packham
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Vanderbilt University
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Alexander Ahammer
Associate Professor
Johannes Kepler University Linz
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Ivan Žilić
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The Institute of Economics, Zagreb
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