

Benjamin Milner

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EDUCATION

PhD in Economics, University of British Columbia, 2020
MA in Economics, Queen's University, 2013
BA Honours in Economics (Mathematics minor), University of Saskatchewan, 2012

RELEVANT EMPLOYMENT

Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, University of Alberta
July 2020 – Present

Teaching Assistant at University of British Columbia
September 2014 – December 2014, September 2016 – April 2019

Research Assistant for Professors Kevin Milligan (University of British Columbia) and
Tammy Schirle (Wilfrid Laurier University)
June 2017 – April 2020

Research Assistant for Professor Joseph Henrich (University of British Columbia)
Summer 2015

Teaching Assistant at Queen's University
September 2012 – April 2013

Research Assistant for Professor Eric Howe (University of Saskatchewan)
Summer 2012

RESEARCH

The Impact of State-Provided Education: Evidence from the 1870 Education Act. (Job Market Paper)

How does access to public education affect occupational outcomes and intergenerational mobility? The UK's 1870 Education Act, which introduced a public education system in England and Wales, provides a unique historical context in which to explore these questions. Using newly digitized historical records, I utilize a Regression Kink design to identify the impact of public school provision on adult outcomes in parishes near a policy-induced kink. I find large, positive effects, and confirm this result using a Triple Difference specification. To study the reform's effect on intergenerational mobility, I link over 4 million father-son pairs across time using full-count historical censuses. I find that by targeting the lower classes, public school introduction significantly improved intergenerational mobility, with the adult outcome gap between high- and low-class children decreasing by 13%.

Education as Insurance against Resource Busts: Evidence from the 19th Century (Working Paper)

Can education policy help insure against the resource boom and bust cycle? Recent literature has demonstrated that resource booms decrease human capital acquisition, leaving populations more exposed to subsequent busts. Examining historical mining legislation, I demonstrate that public policy can effectively mitigate this danger. Using full-count census records, I find that by decreasing the opportunity cost and increasing the returns to schooling, Britain's 1860 Mining Act led to increased human capital acquisition among the children of coal miners. This in turn improved their likelihood of holding human capital-intensive occupations in adulthood, with the effect especially strong among children residing in parishes that subsequently experienced mining busts.

Post-Conflict Outcomes: Studying Community-Level Effects of WWI Deaths in Post-War England and Wales (Working Paper)

During the First World War, death rates of local soldiers experienced by English and Welsh communities varied widely. Using this variation, I examine the effect of soldier mortality on changes in postwar poverty and employment outcomes. I find higher conflict death rates are associated with a fall in local poverty, with the effect appearing to be stronger among men than women. I also find weak evidence suggesting employment rates rose where death rates were higher, particularly among women. Together, these results suggest that while high death rates improved labour market conditions for those left behind, widowed women were likely forced into the labour market to avoid poverty. Finally, I demonstrate that war-induced falls in the ratio of marriage-aged males to females resulted in an increase in out-of-wedlock births, confirming previous findings showing that men often utilize marriage market bargaining power to shirk childcare responsibility.

Clergy Income and Religious Dissent: Evidence From a Long-Running Randomized Experiment in 1700s Britain (Work in Progress)

Co-author with Matt Lowe and Cory Smith.

**AWARDS &
GRANTS**

2022	SSHRC Insight Development Grant, “Clergy Income and Religious Dissent”
2021	Alexander Gerschenkron Prize Finalist, awarded by the Economic History Association for the best dissertation in economic history on a non-North American topic.
2018	University of British Columbia Graduate Student Research Award
2017	CIDE Innovative Data Grant for “The Impact of State-Provided Education: Evidence from the 1870 Education Act.”
2013	University of British Columbia Four Year Doctoral Fellowship
2012	SSHRC Joseph-Armand Bombardier Master’s Scholarship
2012	Queen’s University Graduate Award and Teaching Assistantship
2012	University of Saskatchewan Copland Prize in Social Sciences: most distinguished graduate receiving a Bachelor of Arts Four-year or Honours degree or certificate in the Social Sciences.
2012	Lewis C. Grey Prize: outstanding graduate in economics at the University of Saskatchewan
2011	Popoff Scholarship: outstanding student in third or fourth year of economics at the University of Saskatchewan
2010	Fowke Award: outstanding economics essay by an undergraduate student at the University of Saskatchewan

PRESENTATIONS

2022	World Economic History Congress (Paris, France)
2022	Northwestern Economic History Seminar (Evanston, IL)
2022	Canadian Network of Economic History (Fredericton, NB)
2021	Economic History Association (Tucson, AZ)
2021	University College London Centre for Research and Analysis of Migration (CReAM) Seminar Series (Virtual)

2021	Yale Economic History Workshop (Virtual)
2021	VSE Culture and Persistence Seminar Series (Virtual)
2021	“Rise of Education in Historical Perspective” Seminar Series (Virtual)
2020	Nuffield Historical Social Mobility Seminar Series (Virtual)
2020	Economic History Association (Virtual)
2019	Canadian Network of Economic History (Thunder Bay, ON)
2019	NBER Workshop on Income and Life Expectancy (Cambridge, MA)
2018	Social Science History Association (Phoenix, AZ)
2018	Economic History Association (Montreal, QC) (Poster)

REFERENCES

Mauricio Drelichman (Supervisor)
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