

Benjamin W. Arold

University of Cambridge

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Research Fields: Labor Economics, Economics of Education, Economics of Religion, AI & Economics
Research Methods: Causal Inference, Machine Learning, Computational Linguistics

EMPLOYMENT

Sep 2024 – Assistant Professor Faculty of Economics, University of Cambridge

AFFILIATIONS

Nov 2025 –	Research Affiliate	Rockwool Foundation Berlin
Sep 2025 –	Fellow	Sidney Sussex College, University of Cambridge
Apr 2025 –	Fellow	Durham Institute of Research, Development, and Invention
Feb 2025 –	Fellow	German Economic Association (VfS), Section on Economics of Education
Oct 2024 –	Network Affiliate	CESifo Network
Sep 2024 –	Research Affiliate	Center for Law and Economics, ETH Zuerich

PAST EMPLOYMENT

Sept 2022 – Aug 2024	Post-Doctoral Researcher	Center for Law and Economics, ETH Zürich
Sept 2017 – Aug 2022	Doctoral Student and Junior Economist	Center for the Economics of Education, ifo Institute

EDUCATION

2017 – 2022	Ph.D. Economics	LMU Munich
2015 – 2016	M.Sc. Environmental Economics	London School of Economics
2014 – 2015	M.Sc. Economics	University College London
2010 – 2013	B.Sc. Economics	LMU Munich

RESEARCH VISITS

Mar 2024	Host: W. Bentley MacLeod	Princeton University
Sep 2019 – Apr 2020	Hosts: Paul E. Peterson, Martin West	Harvard University

PUBLICATIONS

Evolution vs. Creationism in the Classroom: The Lasting Effects of Science Education.

Quarterly Journal of Economics, 139(4), 2024, pp. 2331–2375

Genetic Endowments, Educational Outcomes and the Moderating Influence of School Quality (with Paul Hufe and Marc Stoeckli).

Forthcoming, Journal of Political Economy Microeconomics

Can Schools Change Religious Attitudes? Evidence from German State Reforms of Compulsory Religious Education (with Ludger Woessmann, and Larissa Zierow).

Forthcoming, Journal of Human Resources

WORKING PAPERS

Worker Rights in Collective Bargaining (with Elliott Ash, W. Bentley MacLeod, and Suresh Naidu).

Revise & Resubmit, Quarterly Journal of Economics

The Unintended Effects of the Common Core State Standards on Non-Targeted Subjects (with M. Danish Shakeel).

Revise & Resubmit, Economics of Education Review

WORK IN PROGRESS

The Opportunities and Challenges of ML-based Targeting for Educational Technologies: Evidence from Brazil in the Aftermath of the Pandemic (with Guilherme Lichand, Elliott Ash, Jairo Gudino, Mario Curihi, Carlos Doria, David Yeager and Eric Bettinger).

Does the timing of income payments matter for households? Experimental Evidence from random within-month variation of child allowance payments (with Larissa Zierow, Sebastian Wichert, Emanuel Renkl).

Religious Language in Political Speech (with Elliott Ash, and Gloria Gennaro).

POLICY- AND INTERDISCIPLINARY CONTRIBUTIONS (SELECTED)

The economic value of worker rights in union contracts, *VoxEu Column* 12/2025.

Langfristige Auswirkungen von Religionsunterricht auf Religiosität und Arbeitsleben (with Ludger Woessmann and Larissa Zierow), *ifo Schnelldienst* 78 (12), 12/2025.

Measuring Student Mindsets at Scale in Resource-constrained Settings: SMS Toolkit with an Application to Brazil during the Pandemic (with Guilherme Lichand, Elliott Ash, Jairo Gudino, Carlos Doria, Ana Trindade, Eric Bettinger, and David Yeager), *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 35(1) 03/2025.

Teaching evolution boosts US students' science knowledge and career interest, *LSE USAPP Blog* 10/2024.

Einfluss auf Religiositaet? Auswirkungen der Wahlmoeglichkeit zwischen Ethik- und Religionsunterricht (with Ludger Woessmann and Larissa Zierow), *Zeitschrift für Didaktik der Philosophie und Ethik* 46 (4): 82-88 10/2024.

The teaching of evolution theory shapes students' beliefs and choices, *VoxEU Column* 10/2022.

The Costs of Canceling Darwin: Fewer scientists, more skepticism of science in states that limit evolution instruction, *Education Next* 04/2022.

Religious education in school affects students' lives in the long run (with Ludger Woessmann and Larissa Zierow), *VoxEU Column* 03/2022.

How Are Lower-Income Families Faring in the Coronavirus Crisis? (with Vera Freundl, Katia Werkmeister and Larissa Zierow), *ifo Schnelldienst* 74 (6), 2021.

MEDIA (SELECTED)

The Education Gadfly Show (Podcast) (10/2025), Business Talk India (Podcast) (06/2025), Econimate (Video) (11/2024), GlobeNewswire (04/2022), VoxTalks Economics (Podcast) (03/2022), Spiegel (01/2022), FAZ (01/2022), BR (01/2022), The Education Exchange (Podcast) (11/2021), Forbes (08/2021), Tagesschau.de (06/2021), Neue Osnabrücker Zeitung (06/2021)

GRANTS

2025	J-Pal Pilot Grant, 75k USD
2025	Keynes Fund, 50k GBP
2024	Spark Research Grant, SNF Switzerland, 100k CHF
2021	ifo Junior Researcher Grant, 15k EUR

HONORS AND PRIZES

2023	Fürther Ludwig-Erhard-Prize 2023
2023	Prize for Best Dissertation in 2021/2022, German Economic Association, Section on Economics of Education
2022	Participant at the 7th Lindau Nobel Meeting on Economic Sciences
2022	Summa cum laude for dissertation "School curricula, educational trajectories, and labor market outcomes"
2019-20	DAAD one-year scholarship for stay at Harvard University
2016	LSE Best Overall Performance Prize in MSc Environmental Economics and Climate Change
2016	LSE Client Earth Best Dissertation Prize in MSc Environmental Economics and Climate Change
2015	LSE Graduate Support Scheme for funding of Master studies
2010-16	German National Academic Foundation (Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes)
2010	Prize for best Abitur performance of high school (1.0)

SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION

Journal Referee:	<i>CESifo Economic Studies, Economic Journal, Economics of Education Review, European Economic Review, German Economic Review, Journal of Development Economics, Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization, Journal of Economic History, Journal of the European Economic Association, Labour Economics, Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics, Quarterly Journal of Economics, Swiss Journal of Economics and Statistics, UK Research and Innovation</i>
Associate Editor:	Journal of Economics, Management and Religion
Organization or Scientific/Program Committee:	Scien-ACL Climate NLP Workshop 2024, ETH AI Policy Summit 2023, Spring Meeting of Young Economists 2020, Royal Economic Society Junior Symposium 2019
Faculty Service:	<i>Director of Studies for MPhil Economics and Data Science; Member of Graduate Admissions Subcommittee; Empirical Micro Seminar Coordinator; Austin Robinson Economics Society (Faculty Head)</i>
Diversity Engagement:	<i>President of Munich LGBTQ Society of German National Academic Foundation (2021/2022)</i>

PRESENTATIONS

2026	University College London, Seminar (UK)
2025	Labor Workshop, Gothenburg (Sweden), Seminar, St.Andrews (Scotland), German Economic Association Annual Meeting, Cologne (Germany); Machine Learning in Economics Workshop, Barcelona Summer Forum (Spain); Seminar, Lund University (Sweden); Berlin Applied Micro Seminar (Germany); ifo Big Data Seminar, Munich (Germany); Northeast Labor Symposium for Early Career Economists, Princeton (US); German Economic Association, Section on Economics of Education, Zurich (Switzerland)
2024	Seminar, Aalto University, Helsinki (Finland); NLP & Econ Workshop, Salzburg (Austria); Empirical Micro Workshop, Cambridge (UK); Seminar, Warwick University (UK); Seminar, University of London Birkbeck (UK), CESifo Area Conference on Economics of Education, Munich (Germany); Seminar, Institute for Employment Research (Germany); Seminar, Paris-Lodron University of Salzburg (Austria); Seminar, University of St.Gallen (Switzerland); Seminar, Trinity College Dublin (Ireland), Seminar, Princeton University (US); Seminar, University of Cambridge (UK); Seminar, UC Riverside (US)
2023	Jacobs Center Research Seminar (Switzerland), ETH-UZH AI and Economics Workshop (Switzerland), VfS (German Economic Association) (Germany); ASREC Conference, London (UK); Guest Lecture in course on the Political Economy of Religion, Harvard University (US); Political Economy/History Tea, Harvard University (US); Economics of Education Meeting of the German Economic Association (Switzerland); Zurich Political Economy seminar series (Switzerland); RES and SES, Glasgow (UK)
2022	ASSA/AEA Annual Meeting (online); ASREC Conference, Chapman University (US); UZH Political Economy seminar (Switzerland); ifo-WZB EffEE conference (Germany); Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting (Germany); 9th International Meeting in Law and Economics (France); ASREC Conference (UK)

2021	AEFP (US, virtual); LMU Empirical PhD Workshop (Germany, virtual); Applied Micro Seminar at Harvard University (US, virtual); AERA (US, virtual); RES (UK, virtual); SOLE (US, virtual); ESPE (Spain, virtual); SMYE (Italy, virtual); LMU Empirical PhD Workshop (Germany, virtual); EALE (Italy); VfS (German Economic Association) (Germany, virtual)
2020	Colloquium at Program on Education Policy and Governance at Harvard University (US); AEFP (US, virtual); ifo Lunchtime Seminar (Germany, virtual); EALE/SOLE/AASLE (Germany); APSA (US, virtual); VfS (German Economic Association) (Germany, virtual); ifo/WZB EffEE PhD Workshop (Germany, virtual); LMU Empirical PhD Workshop (Germany, virtual)
2019	Seminar in Religion and Political Economy at Harvard University (US); Graduate Political Economy Workshop at Harvard University (US); IWAAEE (Italy); SMYE (Belgium); ESPE (UK); CEPR Conference on The Economics of Religion in Venice (Italy); Munich Young Economist Meeting (Germany)
2018	IRES Graduate Student Workshop at Chapman University (US); IWAAEE (Italy); Evidence-Based Economics Summer Meeting in Munich (Germany); European Doctoral Group in Economics Jamboree (Germany)

TEACHING

2025, 2026	Master's Course " <i>Economic Analysis of Non-Standard Data</i> "	University of Cambridge
2023, 2024, 2025	PhD Course " <i>Text Data in Business and Economics</i> "	Basel University
2024	Workshop " <i>NLP and Computational Linguistics in Economics</i> "	Princeton University
2019-20	Master's Course " <i>The Political Economy of the School</i> "	Harvard University
2019-	(Co-)Supervision of PhD, Master, Bachelor, and Seminar Theses in Economics and ML/NLP	Supervisor at Cambridge, ETH and LMU

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Python, R, Stata, and \LaTeX ,

LANGUAGES

German, English, French, and Spanish

Contact

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