

GAIA GHIRARDI

Curriculum Vitae

WZB Berlin Social Science Center
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[Personal Website](#)
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RESEARCH INTERESTS

social stratification, educational and health inequality, sociogenomics, early childhood

EMPLOYMENT

- 2026 - Present **Postdoctoral Research Fellow**
WZB Berlin Social Science Center, Health and Social Inequalities Research Group
Einstein Center Population Diversity (ECPD)
- 2024 - 2026 **Postdoctoral Research Fellow**
University of Bologna, Department of Statistical Sciences “Paolo Fortunati”
Project: Genes, genealogies and the evolution of demographic change and social inequality (GENPOP)

EDUCATION

- 2020 - 2025 **Ph.D. Social and Political Sciences**
European University Institute (EUI), Florence
Thesis: “[Interaction of Family Socioeconomic Status and Genotype in the Intergenerational Transmission of Educational and Health Inequalities](#)”
Advisor: Fabrizio Bernardi
Committee: Melinda Mills, Nicola Barban, Juho Härkönen
M.Res Social and Political Sciences
European University Institute (EUI), Florence
- 2017 - 2020 **M.A. Sociology** (*with distinction*)
University of Trento & University of Bamberg - *Double degree program*
Advisors: Moris Triventi, Corinna Kleinert, Tina Baier
- 2014 - 2017 **B.A. Sociology** (*with distinction*)
University of Milano Bicocca
Advisor: Maurizio Pisati

RESEARCH STAYS

- Sep 2025 - Dec 2025 **UCL Social Research Institute, University College London**
Visiting Postdoctoral Researcher - Host: Per Engzell
- Feb 2025 - May 2025 **University of Oxford, LCDS**
Visiting Postdoctoral Researcher - Host: Melinda Mills
- Sept 2023 - May 2024 **Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED), Madrid**
Visiting PhD Student - Host: Fabrizio Bernardi
- May 2023 **University of Bologna, Italy**
Visiting PhD Student - Host: Nicola Barban
- Sept 2022 - Dec 2023 **Institut National d’Etudes Démographiques (INED), Paris**
Center for Research in Economics and Statistics (CREST), Paris
Visiting PhD Student - Hosts: Lidia Panico & Felix Tropf

AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

- 2025 **Best Article Award for Young Scholar - Italian Society of Economic Sociology (SISEC)**
“Interaction of Parental SES with Children’s Genetic Propensity for Cognitive and Noncognitive Skills: No Evidence of the Scarr-Rowe Hypothesis for Educational Outcomes”
- 2023 **EUI Early Stage Researchers (ESR) call 2023**
[GxE interaction and educational inequalities](#). PI: Gaia Ghirardi
- 2021 **RC28 Travel Award (Dronkers Award)**
ISA RC28: Accumulation and compensation of inequalities, Turku, Finland
- 2020 **Trinity College Dublin**
Ph.D. full funded scholarships in Sociology (declined for incompatibility with other position)
- 2019 **Price for the best Poster Presentation**
4th NEPS Conference, LfBi, Bamberg, Germany
- 2019 **Double-degree scholarship**
University of Trento
- 2016 **Merit-based scholarship**
University of Milano Bicocca

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-reviewed journal articles

- 6) **Ghirardi G.** (2025) “[The development of body mass index from adolescence to adulthood: A genotype-family socioeconomic status interaction study](#)” *Social Science and Medicine*
- 5) **Ghirardi G.**, & Gioachin F. (2025) “[Center-based formal childcare closes gaps, others may widen them: How childcare arrangements shape early educational inequality](#)” *Acta Sociologica*
- 4) Bernardi F., & **Ghirardi G.** (2025) “[Socioeconomic status, genotype, and the differential effects of parental separation on educational attainment](#)” *Demography*
- 3) **Ghirardi G.**, & Bernardi F. (2025) “[Compensating or boosting genetic propensities? Gene-family socioeconomic status interactions by educational outcome selectivity](#)” *Social Science Research*
- 2) **Ghirardi G.**, Gil-Hernández C., Bernardi F., van Bergen E., & Demange P., (2024) “[Interaction of parental SES with children’s genetic propensity for cognitive and noncognitive skills: No evidence of the Scarr-Rowe hypothesis for educational outcomes](#)” *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*
- 1) **Ghirardi G.**, Baier T., Kleinert C., Triventi M., (2022) “[Is early formal childcare an equalizer? How attending childcare and education centres affects children’s cognitive and socio-emotional skills in Germany](#)” *European Sociological Review*

Chapters

Ghirardi, G., Bernardi, F., Koksai, S., Barban, N. Sociogenomics. Forthcoming in: *Handbook of Quantitative Methods in Sociology*, ed. Ulf Liebe, Edward Elgar Publishing.

Stienstra, Kim, & **Ghirardi, G.**, Genetics of Education: From Research to Policy to Improve Educational Performance and Equality. Forthcoming in: *The Biological Turn in Education Policy: Navigating Minds* eds. Mattei, Kyriazi, Ydesen, Stieger

Media dissemination

Van Hootehem, A. & **Ghirardi G.** “[Embryo selection based on polygenic prediction risks reinforcing social inequality](#)” *Fertility and Sterility*

UNDER REVIEW

Bernardi, F., Ferrara, A., **Ghirardi G.** “Unequal luck: chance as a mechanism of educational inequality”

WORKING IN PROGRESS

Breinholt, A. & **Ghirardi G.** “Interactions between childhood socioeconomic status and genotype in educational outcomes: A novel theoretical typology and meta-analysis of molecular studies” [Preregistration](#)

TEACHING EXPERIENCES

January 2025	Guest Lecturer in Sociogenomics (PhD Level) Winter School on Inequality and Social Welfare Theory
2023; 2024; 2025	Guest Lecturer in Sociogenomics (MA Level) University of Bologna, Department of Statistical Sciences Sociogenomics course, Nicola Barban Thesis Co-supervisor
2024 - 2025	Fatema Khan: MA level (Department of Statistical Sciences, UNIBO)
October 2019 - March 2020	Tutor in Quantitative Methods (BA level) University of Trento, Department of Sociology Quantitative Methods in Sociology, Enrico Rettore Quantitative Methods in International Studies, Stefano Benati

RESEARCH ASSISTANT

March 2023 - June 2023	European University Institute (EUI) Research assistant, Juho Härkönen
January 2019 - March 2020	Student Research Assistant at University of Bamberg NORFACE project: Life-Course Dynamics of Educational Tracking (LIFE-TRACK) Steffen Schindler
January 2019 - March 2019	Student Research Assistant at University of Bamberg DFG Project: Recent Immigration Processes and Early Integration Trajectories in Germany (ENTRA) Corinna Kristen

ACADEMIC SERVICE

Reviewer	<i>Early Child Development and Care</i> <i>European Societies</i> <i>European Sociological Review</i> <i>Nature Communications</i> <i>Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences</i> <i>Research in Social Stratification and Mobility</i> <i>Social Science & Medicine - Medical Sociology</i> <i>Social Science & Medicine - Social Epidemiology</i> <i>SSM - Population Health</i>
26 April 2024	Co-organizer workshop on Sociogenomics European University Institute (with Kim Stienstra)
29 Feb - 1 March 2024	Co-organizer workshop on Sociogenomics University of Oslo (with Arno van Hoogtem, Ruth Eva Jørgensen, Torkild Hovde Lyngstad, Karri Silventoinen)
September 2021 - 2022	Co-organizer working group and seminars at European University Institute CLIC, DISTANT CLIC and Inequality Working Group (IWG) Sponsors: Fabrizio Bernardi, Juho Härkönen

CONFERENCES

- 2025 **AlpPop, RC28 Spring Meeting, PAA Annual Conference, ESSGN*, PopDays**
La Thuile (IT), Milan (IT), Washington DC (US), Bristol (UK), Cagliari (IT)
- 2024 **SISEC, BGA, ECSR Annual Conference**
Cagliari (IT), London (UK), Barcelona (ES)
- 2023 **AlpPop, SISEC, ESSGN, RC28 Spring Meeting, ECSR Annual Conference, LIVES**
La Thuile (IT), Brescia (IT), Bologna (IT), Paris (FR), Prague (CS), Losanna (CH)
- 2022 **PAA Annual Conference, RC28 Spring Meeting, ECSR Annual Conference, PopFest**
Atlanta (US), London (UK), Amsterdam (NL), Florence (ITA)
ESSGN, SISEC
Bologna (IT)
- 2021 **ISA RC28 Spring Meeting**
Turku (FI) - Online
- 2019 **4th NEPS Conference***
Bamberg (DE)

* Poster presentation

No symbol: Oral presentation

INVITED TALKS

- 2025 **Interactions between childhood socioeconomic status and genotype in educational outcomes: A novel theoretical typology and meta-analysis of molecular genetic studies**
Max Planck Research Group Biosocial, Berlin (online)
- 2024 **Socioeconomic status, genes, and the differential effects of parental separation on educational attainment**
QSS CLS Seminar Series, UCL, London
- 2024 **Re-theorizing sociogenomics research on the gene-by-family socioeconomic status (GxSES) interaction for educational attainment**
University of Trento, Euregio Seminar
- 2023 **Re-theorizing sociogenomics research on the gene-by-family socioeconomic status (GxSES) interaction for educational attainment**
Sociogenomics workshop, Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, Helsinki
- 2022 **Do high-SES parents compensate for genetic risk for poor educational achievement in offspring?**
VU University Amsterdam
- 2022 **Re-theorizing sociogenomics research on the gene-by-family socioeconomic status (GxSES) interaction for educational attainment**
ECSR's Network Workshop, European University Institute, Florence

ADDITIONAL TRAININGS

- August 22 - 26 , 2022 **Introduction to Sociogenomics**
University of Oslo (Felix Tropf)
- July 5 - 16, 2021 **Nature and Nurture: Twin Research and Human Genetics**
VU Amsterdam Summer School
- October 16 - December 21, 2020 **Introduction to Social Science Genetics**
The Silver Beach Institute (Robbee Wedow, and Andrew Grotzinger)
- May 14 - 15, 2019 **Panel Data Analysis**
GESIS Training Course in Mannheim (Josef Brüderl)

REFEREES

Fabrizio Bernardi

Full Professor of Sociology

UNED Madrid

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Nicola Barban

Full Professor of Demography

University of Bologna

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London, February 2026