

GAIA GHIRARDI

Curriculum Vitae

Alma Mater Studiorum University of Bologna

Department of Statistical Sciences “Paolo Fortunati”, Via Belle Arti 41, Bologna, Italy

✉ gaia.ghirardi@unibo.it

[Personal Website](#)

[Google scholar](#)

[Bluesky](#)

[Linkedin](#)

RESEARCH INTERESTS

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

EMPLOYMENT

2024 - Present **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](#)) - PI: Nicola Barban

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 - Present **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 Tropsch

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) Bernardi F., & **Ghirardi G.** (2025) “Socioeconomic status, genotype, and the differential effects of parental separation on educational attainment” *Demography*
- 5) **Ghirardi G.** (2025) “The development of body mass index from adolescence to adulthood: A genotype-family socioeconomic status interaction study” *Social Science and Medicine*
- 4) **Ghirardi G.**, & Gioachin F. (2025) “Center-based formal childcare closes gaps, others may widen them: How childcare arrangements shape early educational inequality” *Acta Sociologica*
- 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

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 Hootegeem, 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

December 2025*	Guest Lecturer in Sociogenomics (PhD Level) White Rose Doctoral Pathway, University of Sheffield - *scheduled
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
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

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
fbernardi@poli.uned.es

Nicola Barban

Full Professor of Demography
University of Bologna
n.barban@unibo.it

London, November 2025