

GAIA GHIRARDI

Curriculum Vitae

WZB Berlin Social Science Center
Reichpietschufer 50, 10785 Berlin, Germany
✉ gaia.ghirardi@wzb.eu

[Personal Website](#)
[Google Scholar](#)
[Bluesky](#)
[LinkedIn](#)

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, LiFBi, 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., Koksal, 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 Hoetegem, 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 Fatema Khan: MA level (Department of Statistical Sciences, UNIBO)
2024 - 2025	Tutor in Quantitative Methods (BA level) University of Trento, Department of Sociology
October 2019 - March 2020	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
fbernardi@poli.uned.es

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

London, February 2026