

## ZHENG WANG

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### EDUCATION

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#### European University Institute

*PhD Candidate in Economics*

2017 – present

Italy

Thesis title: *Essays in the Economics and Econometrics of Networks and Peer Effect*

Supervisors: Prof. Andrea Ichino, Prof. Sule Alan

Expected completion date: May 2023

#### Aix-Marseille School of Economics

*Visiting PhD researcher*

2021 – present

France

Mentor: Prof. Yann Bramoullé

#### London School of Economics

*MSc in Econometrics and Mathematical Economics (EME)*

2013 – 2014

UK

#### Beihang University

*BSc in Finance, with second degree in Applied Mathematics*

2009 – 2013

China

### RESEARCH INTERESTS

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**Primary Fields:** Economics and Econometrics of Networks, Causal Inference, Applied Microeconomics

**Secondary Fields:** Economics of Education, Disparity, Labour Economics

### REFERENCES

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#### Andrea Ichino

Professor of Economics

European University Institute

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#### Sule Alan

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#### Yann Bramoullé

Professor of Economics

Aix-Marseille School of Economics

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#### Fabrizia Mealli

Professor of Economics & Professor of Statistics

European University Institute & University of Florence

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### TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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#### Econometrics and Statistics I (Causality)

*EUI PhD Core Course, TA to Prof. Andrea Ichino*

Fall 2019

#### Econometrics and Statistics II (Microeconometrics)

*EUI PhD Core Course, TA to Prof. Michèle Belot*

Spring 2018

## WORK EXPERIENCE

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<b>Research assistant for Prof. Andrea Ichino</b>	2018
<i>European University Institute</i>	
<b>Junior Economist</b>	2016 – 2017
<i>Research Department, International Labor Organization (Geneva)</i>	
<b>Research Intern</b>	2015 – 2016
<i>Research Department, International Labor Organization (Geneva)</i>	
<b>Data Analyst Intern</b>	2015
<i>International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Geneva)</i>	

## ADDITIONAL COURSEWORK

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<b>Summer School on The Economics of Networks</b>	2021
<i>Aix-Marseille School of Economics</i>	France
<b>Summer School on The Econometrics of Peer Effects and Social Interactions</b>	2019
<i>Prof. Bryan Graham &amp; Prof. Aureo de Paula</i>	Germany

## CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

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<b>2nd International Econometrics PhD Conference</b>	November 2022
<i>The Econometric Institute (EI) at Erasmus University Rotterdam</i>	
<b>PhD-EVS online seminar</b>	October 2022
<i>International online seminar for PhD candidates and early career researchers</i>	

## GRANTS AND AWARDS

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<b>4th year PhD Grant</b>	2021 – 2022
<i>Aix-Marseille School of Economics</i>	France
<b>EUI PhD Grant</b>	2020 – 2021
<i>European University Institute</i>	Italy
<b>EUI Special PhD Grant – Adam Smith</b>	2017 – 2020
<i>European University Institute</i>	Italy

## Languages

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English (fluent), Mandarin (native), French (basic)  
R, Python, MATLAB, Stata

## JON MARKET PAPER

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### The Linking Effect: Causal Identification and Estimation of the Effect of Peer Relationship

The endogeneity of network formation has been a major obstacle to the empirical study of peer influence for many important types of networks, including friendship networks, buyer-supplier networks and banking networks, etc. This paper puts forward the first causal identification strategy in the literature to study the effect of endogenously formed peer relationships. I prove that causal identification holds under general conditions and needs neither a network formation model nor an outcome model to be specified. This is because the propensity scores of the unobserved confounders can be non-parametrically identified and estimated from the distribution of network links. Using the proposed method, I empirically estimate the causal effect of high school friendships on female students' bachelor's

degree attainment. While previous literature finds that being exposed to more high-achieving boys in high school makes girls less likely to obtain a bachelor's degree, I show that this is not true when these high-achieving boys are considered friends by the girls. In fact, one additional high-achieving male friend increases the probability that a female student graduating from college by 3 p.p. Further analysis suggests that this positive impact is not a result of increased academic ability but rather comes from a significant confidence boost. These results imply that rather than shielding girls from high-achieving boys, it would be more effective to foster friendship and close interactions among them.

## **WORK IN PROGRESS – Econometrics**

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### **The Perils of Pairwise Peer Effect**

*Joint with Yann Bramoullé and Pierre-Philippe Combes*

Pairwise regressions have been increasingly more commonly used to study peer influence, noticeably after the influential paper by Bayer, Ross and Topa (2008). In this paper we show both the identification and inference issues coming from pairwise regressions.

## **WORK IN PROGRESS – Applied Microeconomics**

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### **Competitive Peer Effect – the Case of Duolingo**

This paper studies the effect of competition difficulty on one's effort exertion. Using data from the Duolingo leaderboard where language learners are randomly put into group competition, I find evidence suggesting that people react to competition difficulty differently depending on their time constraint and their level of commitment.

### **Experiment on Test Performance and Implications for Fairness**

*Joint with Dalila Figueiredo*

Ongoing pilot.

### **The Effect of Victimization on Long-Term Outcomes**

*Joint with Christian Dustmann, Rasmus Landersø and Mikkel Mertz*

Using Danish administrative data, we show how different aspects of victimization causally affect the long-term outcomes of the victims.