

ZHENG WANG

EUI, Department of Economics, Via delle Fontanelle 18, 50014 Fiesole (FI), Italy
☎ (+33) 0789692561 ✉ zheng.wang@eui.eu 🏠 www.zhengwangeconomics.com

EDUCATION

European University Institute

2017 – present

PhD Candidate in Economics

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

2021 – present

Visiting PhD researcher

France

Mentor: Prof. Yann Bramoullé

London School of Economics

2013 – 2014

MSc in Econometrics and Mathematical Economics (EME)

UK

Beihang University

2009 – 2013

BSc in Finance, with second degree in Applied Mathematics

China

RESEARCH INTERESTS

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

Secondary Fields: Economics of Education, Disparity, Labour Economics

REFERENCES

Andrea Ichino

Professor of Economics

European University Institute

✉ andrea.ichino@eui.eu

☎ (+39) 055 4685 974

Sule Alan

Professor of Economics

European University Institute

✉ sule.alan@eui.eu

☎ (+39) 055 4685 909

Yann Bramoullé

Professor of Economics

Aix-Marseille School of Economics

✉ yann.bramouille@univ-amu.fr

☎ (+33) (0)413 5525 34 and (0)413 9420 06

Fabrizia Mealli

Professor of Statistics

University of Florence & European University Institute

✉ fabrizia.mealli@unifi.it

☎ (+39) 055 4685 474

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Econometrics and Statistics I (Causality)

Fall 2019

EUI PhD Core Course, TA to Prof. Andrea Ichino

Econometrics and Statistics II (Microeconometrics)

Spring 2018

EUI PhD Core Course, TA to Prof. Michèle Belot

WORK EXPERIENCE

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

ADDITIONAL COURSEWORK

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

CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

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

GRANTS AND AWARDS

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

Languages

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

JOB MARKET PAPER

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, banking networks, etc. This paper puts forward the first identification strategy in a causal framework to study the effect of non-randomly formed peer relationships. It reveals the minimum set of assumptions needed for causal identification, which, unlike existing approaches, needs neither a network formation model nor an outcome model to be parametrically specified. I show that 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 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 graduates from college by 3 p.p. Further analysis suggests that this positive influence is not a result of increased academic ability but rather a significant confidence boost. These results imply that instead of shielding girls from high-achieving boys, it could be more effective to foster friendly interactions among them.

WORK IN PROGRESS – Econometrics

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

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.