

# ALEXANDRA DE GENDRE

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## CONTACT INFORMATION

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Sydney NSW 2006,  
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**Citizenship:** France, United States, Australian Permanent Resident

**Languages:** French (native), English (fluent), German (fluent), Spanish (fluent), Russian (beginner)

## RESEARCH FIELDS

**Primary field:** Economics of Education, Applied Econometrics

**Secondary field:** Labor Economics, Family Economics, Health Economics

## EDUCATION

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|-----------|---|
| 2015-2021 | PhD in Economics. Maastricht University, the Netherlands<br>Dissertation: <i>Behavioral Barriers to Success in Education</i><br>Advisor: Olivier Marie, Erasmus University, Rotterdam<br>Committee: Didier Fouarge, Deborah Cobb-Clark, Hessel Oosterbeek, Dinand Webbink, Inge de Wolf |
| 2013-2014 | M.Sc. Economics. Humboldt University Berlin, Germany  |
| 2011-2014 | M.Sc. Statistics. ENSAI ( <i>Grande Ecole</i> , National School For Statistics and Information Analysis), France  |
| 2008-2011 | <i>Classe Préparatoire aux Grandes Ecoles, B/L Lettres et Sciences Sociales</i> . Sainte-Marie de Neuilly, France<br>B.A. (equivalent) in Economics and in History from University Paris X, France  |

## CURRENT POSITION & AFFILIATIONS

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| Since 09/2019 | Postdoctoral Research Associate, The University of Sydney, Australia  |
| Since 09/2018 | Research Affiliate, IZA Institute of Labor Economics  |
| Since 09/2018 | Research Affiliate, Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Children and Families over the Life Course |

## REFERENCES

**Professor Olivier Marie**  
(Thesis advisor)

Department of Economics  
Erasmus School of Economics  
Erasmus University Rotterdam  
The Netherlands  
[marie@ese.eur.nl](mailto:marie@ese.eur.nl)

**Professor Yves Zenou**

Richard Snape Chair  
Faculty of Business and Economics  
Monash University  
Australia  
[yves.zenou@monash.edu](mailto:yves.zenou@monash.edu)

**Professor Deborah Cobb-Clark**

School of Economics  
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences  
The University of Sydney  
Australia  
[deborah.cobb-clark@sydney.edu.au](mailto:deborah.cobb-clark@sydney.edu.au)

## RESEARCH

**Class Rank and Sibling Spillover Effects (Job Market Paper)**

**Abstract:** Siblings are perhaps the most important childhood peers, yet we know little about sibling spillover effects on school achievement and their potential mechanisms. I develop a novel identification strategy for sibling spillover effects by exploiting exogenous variation in older siblings' rank in school. I use administrative records from the Netherlands, where pupils leave primary school with a national standardized test score and a tracking recommendation. Variation in class rank conditional on ability and on cohort-by-school fixed effects is credibly exogenous in this setting, and isolates sibling spillovers driven by behavioral and psychological mechanisms, net of direct transmission of human capital. A 1SD increase in child rank decreases their younger sibling's test scores in Dutch by 2.1% standard deviation and in Math by 2.6% standard deviation. I find evidence of four underlying channels: i) older sibling's own human capital accumulation, ii) parental investments through school choice and speaking Dutch at home, iii) teachers' expectation formation, and iv) sibling interactions, especially across gender-match. My findings suggest that teachers imperfectly update their expectations about children, ultimately widening achievement gaps. Behavioral and psychological mechanisms contribute to sibling spillover effects, and school inputs can be important drivers of within-family human capital spillovers.

**Submitted and Under Review**

**On the Mechanisms of Ability Peer Effect**, with Nicolas Salamanca.

**Abstract:** Studying with higher ability peers increases student performance, yet we have little idea why. We exploit mandated random assignment of students to classrooms and find positive peer effects on test scores. With rich data on nineteen potential mechanisms, we then estimate how effects on attitudes, parents, and teachers could drive these results. Higher-achieving peers reduce student effort, increase student university aspirations, increase parental time investments and parental strictness, and have precise null effects elsewhere. None of these mechanisms, however, explain our peer effect on test scores. Our novel method to detect cluster violations of random assignment is of independent interest.

**Child Health and Parental Responses to an Unconditional Cash Transfer at Birth**, with John Lynch, Aurelie Meunier, Rhiannon Pilkington, and Stefanie Schurer.

**Abstract:** We estimate the impact on child health of the unanticipated introduction of the Australian Baby Bonus, a \$3,000 one-off unconditional cash transfer at birth. Using regression discontinuity methods and linked administrative data from South Australia, we find that treated babies had fewer preventable, acute, and urgent hospital presentations—medical care available without co-payments—in the first two years of life. The payment later increased demand for elective care, which requires planning, medical referrals, and often co-payments. Our effects are strongest for disadvantaged families. Our findings suggest that up to 34% of the payout were recouped within the first year.

**From Subsidies to Loans: The Effects of a National Student Finance Reform on the Choices of Secondary School Students**, with Jan Kabatek.

**Abstract:** We analyse the effects of a national reform of higher education financing on the decision making of secondary school students in the Netherlands. The reform eliminated a universal subsidy for higher education students and replaced it by a low-interest loan, causing a substantive increase in the private costs of higher education. We show that the reform had a large impact on students' decision making, decreasing the share of secondary school students following college-preparing tracks by 6.8 percentage points. The reform also affected students' subject specialization choices, and the living arrangements of new college entrants. We show that secondary school students respond to the costs of higher education well ahead of their graduation, which has important consequences for the design of empirical studies of higher education financing. It also shows that policy uncertainty regarding financial aid is sufficient to deter many students from pursuing higher education.

## Two decades of welfare reforms in Australia: How did they affect single mothers and their children?, with Stefanie Schurer and Angela Zhang.

**Abstract:** Worldwide, single mothers are profoundly time and income constrained, making them heavily reliant on government transfers. We examine how welfare reforms that introduced mutual obligations affected the economic position of single mothers and the development of their children over the past two decades in Australia. Using nationally representative longitudinal data, we show that disposable incomes of single-mother households were significantly reduced relative to partnered mothers since the 2005 Welfare-to-Work Act came into effect in July 2006, a downward trend that was aggravated by the Global Financial Crisis and the 2013 suspension of grandfathered single parenting payment rules. The reform diminished parenting and family payments for single mothers, who compensated income loss by increasing reliance on disability pension payments, work hours, and child-care expenditures. We then use nationally representative cohort data to estimate the impact of single motherhood on child skill development, following children who entered primary school when their mothers were affected by the Welfare-to-Work reform. We find unadjusted single-motherhood gaps of 0.2 SD in cognitive and 0.3 SD in non-cognitive skills. Non-cognitive skill gaps are only partially explained by differences in observable characteristics, while cognitive skill gaps are fully explained by observable characteristics. Differences in disposable household income between single and partnered mother households explain over 50% of the observed cognitive ability gaps in childhood and 25% in late adolescence. In the presence of positive spillover effects, we propose that welfare payments to vulnerable families may function as a social investment rather than a sunk cost.

## Research in Progress

**A meta-analysis on role of models in education**, with Jan Feld, Ulf Zölitz and Nicolas Salamanca.

**The Impact of Low-Income Priority Points on School Choice and Student Outcomes**, with Shushanik Margaryan and José Montalban Castilla.

## AWARDS AND FUNDING

2020	Chief Investigator, <i>“Building Resilience: Communities, Schools and Parental Investment”</i> . Life Course Centre Research Funding (5,000 dollars AUD)
2018	ODISSEI Microdata Access Discount for Statistics Netherlands project <i>“Student Finance and Educational Choice”</i> .
2018	Chief Investigator, <i>“Student Finance and Educational Choice”</i> . Research Centre for Education and the Labor Market, Maastricht University (5,000 euros)
2018	Outstanding Tutor Award, School of Business and Economics, Maastricht University
2018	Travel Grant, Graduate School of Business and Economics, Maastricht University (3,000 euros)
2017	Chief Investigator, <i>“A Real-Effort Task Experiment On Goal-Setting and Effort Provision Under Uncertainty”</i> . Research Centre for Education and the Labor Market, Maastricht University (5,000 euros)
2015	PhD Scholarship, Graduate School of Business and Economics, Maastricht University

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CONFERENCE & INVITED SEMINAR PRESENTATIONS

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\* denotes scheduled talks

- 2022     AEA/ASSA Conference\*
- 2021     European Winter Meeting of the Econometric Society 2021\*, University of Potsdam Seminar\*; University of Wollongong Seminar; Annual Conference of the European Society of Labour Economics (EALE); 23rd Australia/New Zealand Labour Econometrics Workshop (LEW); HCEO-NES Online Summer School on Socioeconomic Inequality 2021; The University of Sydney MPP Seminar Series; 11th International Workshop on Applied Economics of Education (IWAE); 34th Annual Meeting of the European Society of Population Economics; Swedish Institute for Social Research Seminar Series (SOFI, Stockholm University)
- 2020     The University of Sydney MPP Seminar Series
- 2019     University of Potsdam 6th PhD Workshop in Empirical Economics; 10th International Workshop on Applied Economics of Education (IWAE); Workshop on The Effectiveness of Children's Education Around the Globe, European University Institute; University College Dublin Seminar Series; 2nd IZA/Briq Behavioral Economics of Education Workshop
- 2018     3rd IZA Economics of Education Workshop; Applied Micro Workshop of the Department of Economics, The University of Melbourne; 21st Labor Econometrics Workshop (LEW); 9th International Workshop on Applied Economics of Education (IWAE); 32nd Annual Meeting of the European Society of Population Economics; IZA World Labor Conference; IZA 21st Summer School in Labor Economics; University of Melbourne Department of Economics Seminar Series; RMIT Seminar Series
- 2017     Maastricht University School of Economics; Victoria University at Wellington Seminar Series; 32nd Annual Congress of the European Economic Association and 70th European Meeting of the Econometric Society (EEA/ESEM); 8th International Workshop on Applied Economics of Education (IWAE); European Society of Population Economics
- 2016     Maastricht University DUHR Seminar Series; Melbourne Institute Seminar Series; 3rd Annual Meeting of the Berlin Interdisciplinary Education Network; Dynamics of Inequalities and their Perceptions, Aix-Marseille Université

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TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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- 2020     Honours/Master co-supervision (University of Sydney)  
Assisted Prof. Stefanie Schurer's supervision duties
- 2015, 2016     Tutor in Behavioral Economics - Maastricht University  
Graduate course  
Teaching assistant for Thomas Dohmen.  
Teaching evaluation: 8.8/10 (N=21).
- 2015-2017     Tutor in Personnel Economics - Maastricht University  
Undergraduate course  
Teaching assistant for Steffen Kuenn.  
Teaching evaluation: 9.3/10 (N=70).
- 2015     Tutor in Presentation Skills - Maastricht University  
Undergraduate course  
Teaching evaluation: 8.7/10

## OTHER SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES

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### Refereeing Service

Health Economics, Labour Economics, IZA Journal of Labor Economics

### Departmental Activities

Organizer PhD Brown Bag, Maastricht University, 2016-2017

### Research Visits

2019 Visiting PhD Student, Jacobs Center & Department of Economics, University of Zurich, Switzerland

2018 Visiting PhD Student, Melbourne Institute, University of Melbourne, Australia

2016 Visiting PhD Student, IZA Institute, Germany

### Sponsored Research

2021 Commented reading for Colfuturo, Colombia (March 2021); Guest expert panelist and discussant Colfuturo policy conference 2021 (scheduled, November 2021, in Spanish)

2018 Contract research at Australian Super. "*Goal-setting and Super savings intentions*", a field experiment with Dr. Edwin Ip. (September 2018-March 2019)

## MISCELLANEOUS

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### Non-Academic Employment History

2014 Statistician Consultant, Ekimetrics, Paris, France

2013 Trainee Statistician, OECD, Paris, France

2012 Trainee Statistician, PSA Peugeot-Citroen, Paris, France

### Programming Skills

Stata, R, Python, C++, SQL, HTML/CSS, JavaScript, Qualtrics