

# Alexandra de Gendre

September 2021

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Personal	Australian Permanent Resident, France and United States Citizen

## Education

2015-2021	PhD in Economics. Maastricht University, the Netherlands <i>Dissertation title: Behavioral Barriers to Success in Education</i> <i>Advisor:</i> Prof. Olivier Marie, Erasmus University, Rotterdam <i>Committee:</i> Profs. D. Cobb-Clark, D. Fouarge, H. Oosterbeek, D. Webbink, I. de Wolf
2013-2014	M.Sc. Economics. Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany <i>Master thesis title:</i> “Modeling early warning systems for currency crises” <i>Outcome:</i> 1.5 (very good; scale from 1.0 perfect score to 4.0 fail) <i>Advisor:</i> Prof. Marcel Fratzscher
2011-2014	M.Sc. Statistics. Ensai ( <i>Grande Ecole</i> , National School For Statistics and Information Analysis), Bruz, France
2008-2011	<i>Classe Préparatoire aux Grandes Ecoles, B/L Lettres et Sciences Sociales.</i> Sainte-Marie de Neuilly, Neuilly-sur-Seine, France

## Academic Positions & Affiliations

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, The Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Children and Families over the Life Course (the Life Course Centre).

## Research Interests

Human Capital Formation; Applied Micro-Econometrics; Economics of Education; Socioeconomic Inequality

## Research

*Job Market Paper: “Class Rank and Sibling Spillover Effects”*

**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*

1. *"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.

2. *"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.

3. *"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.

4. *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.

### *Other Projects*

1. “*Quantifying Aspirational Poverty Trap*”, with Nicolas Salamanca.
2. “*The Impact of Low-Income Priority Points on School Choice and Student Outcomes*”, with Shushanik Margaryan and José Montalban Castilla.
3. “*A meta-analysis on role of models in education*”, with Jan Feld, Ulf Zölitz and Nicolas Salamanca.

### Awards and Funding

- 2020 Chief Investigator, “*Building Resilience: Communities, Schools and Parental Investment*”. Life Course Centre Research Funding (5,000 dollars AUD).
- 2018 Chief Investigator, “*Student Finance and Educational Choice*”. Research Centre for Education and the Labor Market, Maastricht University (5,000 euros).
- 2018 Travel Grant, Graduate School of Business and Economics, Maastricht University.
- 2017 Chief Investigator, “*A Real-Effort Task Experiment On Goal-Setting and Effort Provision Under Uncertainty*”. Research Centre for Education and the Labor Market, Maastricht University (5,000 euros).
- 2015 PhD Scholarship, Graduate School of Business and Economics, Maastricht University.

### Conference & Seminar Presentations

- 2022 AEA/ASSA Conference (scheduled)
- 2021 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 (IWAEE); 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 (IWAEE); 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 (IWAEE); 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 (IWAEE); 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

## Teaching

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

## Teaching Awards

2018      Excellent Tutor Award, School of Business and Economics, Maastricht University

## Other Scientific Activities

### Refereeing Service

Health Economics, Labour Economics, IZA Journal of Labor Economics

### Seminar Organizer

Maastricht University PhD Brown Bag, 2016-2017

### Research Visits

Visiting PhD Student, Jacobs Center & Department of Economics, The University of Zurich, Switzerland (April-September 2019)

Visiting PhD Student, Melbourne Institute, The University of Melbourne, Australia (March 2018-March 2019)

Visiting PhD Student, IZA Institute, Germany (Summer 2016)

### Sponsored Research

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

Commented reading for Colfuturo, Colombia (March 2021)

## Miscellaneous

### Non-Academic Employment History

2014      Statistician Consultant, Ekimetrics, Paris, France

2013      Trainee Statistician, OECD, Paris, France

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

### Skills

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

Languages      French, English, German (fluent), Spanish (fluent), Russian (advanced beginner)

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Last updated: September 2021  
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