

# Alissa Siara, Ph.D. Researcher

## European University Institute

Department of Political and Social Sciences  
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**Research Interests:** Comparative politics with a focus on Latin America, social policy, education policy, policy change and reform

## Education

- 09/2022 – present **European University Institute**, Italy  
Ph.D. in Political and Social Sciences
- 09/2022 – 06/2023 **European University Institute**, Italy  
M.Res. in Political and Social Sciences
- 09/2018 – 09/2019 **London School of Economics and Political Science**, United Kingdom  
M.Sc. in International Political Economy (Distinction)
- 09/2014 – 06/2017 **University of St.Gallen**, Switzerland  
B.A. in International Affairs (Distinction)

## Further Academic Experience

- 09/2025 – 01/2026 **Massachusetts Institute of Technology**, United States  
Fulbright Visiting Student Researcher, Department of Political Science
- 01/2025 – 07/2025 **University of Zurich**, Switzerland  
Visiting Researcher, Department of Political Science
- 07/2024 – 12/2024 **Fundação Getulio Vargas**, Brazil  
Visiting Researcher, School of Public and Business Administration
- 08/2016 – 12/2016 **Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile**, Chile  
Visiting Student, Faculty of History, Geography, and Political Science

## Publications

- Working Papers  
Sustaining reforms in weak institutional contexts: Insights from education in Brazil  
Conditional cash transfers and the absence of cross-domain policy feedback effects  
Getting politics out of the classroom: Reforms in personnel recruitment across Brazilian municipalities (with Lorenzo Mascioli)
- Book Projects  
Sustaining Reforms Despite the Odds
- Policy Briefs  
Bilotta, N., & Siara, A. (2020). Could a Bridge between the EU and Latin America Boost Innovation "Sovereignty" in a Multipolar World? *IAI Papers*, 20(19).
- Bilotta, N., & Siara, A. (2020). From Strategic Autonomy to the Internationalization of the Euro: Europe's Challenges and the Impact of the COVID-19 Crisis. *IAI Commentaries*, 12(17).
- Book Reviews  
Siara, A. (2020). Review of the book *A new foreign policy: Beyond American exceptionalism*, by J.Sachs. *The International Spectator*, 55(3).

## Teaching and Supervision

- 02/2025 – 05/2025 **Lecturer, BA Seminar**, University of Zurich, Switzerland  
Social Policy and Development in the Global South
- 02/2025 – 05/2025 **Lecturer, MA Seminar**, University of Lucerne, Switzerland  
The Developmental Welfare State, supervision of four 6-credit theses

## Relevant Employment

- 03/2021 – 07/2022 **Program Officer Central America & North Africa**, Swisscontact, Switzerland  
Supervised eight development projects in the areas of education, entrepreneurship, and labor market insertion (planning, implementation, monitoring, fundraising).
- 07/2020 – 09/2020 **Mercator Fellow**, Think Tank W.I.R.E., Switzerland  
Conducted research and consulted clients on macro trends in business and society.
- 02/2020 – 06/2020 **Mercator Fellow**, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Italy  
Co-authored two publications in the institute's Political Economy Department.
- 10/2019 – 01/2020 **Mercator Fellow**, Swissnex Brazil, Brazil  
Supported the implementation of the Academia-Industry Training connecting Swiss researchers and entrepreneurs with Brazilian industry.
- 09/2017 – 06/2018 **Project Coordinator**, Sonoma County Economic Development Board, United States  
Composed the 2018 Sonoma County Visitor Centre Report and supervised the 15-member Sonoma County Visitor Center Committee.
- 09/2015 – 06/2016 **Research Assistant**, University of St.Gallen (35%), Switzerland  
Conducted research at the Chair for Innovation Management for the publication *Exploring the Field of Business Model Innovation*, published by Palgrave Macmillan.

## Conferences and Speaking Engagements

- 2026 Swiss Political Science Association (SPSA)
- 2025 Red para el Estudio de la Economía Política de América Latina (REPAL)  
Latin American Studies Association (LASA)  
Workshop on Comparative Social and Public Policy, Universitat Pompeu Fabra  
Comparative Politics and Political Economy Workshop, MIT  
Pre-Publication Seminar, University of Zurich  
Seminar at PolSem, University of Lucerne
- 2024 Latin American Studies Association (LASA)  
Panelist, Presentation by Prof. Cathie Jo Martin at the European University Institute
- 2023 Panelist, Presentation by Prof. David Soskice at the European University Institute

## Honors and Awards

- 2024 **Fulbright Visiting Student Researcher**, awarded by Fulbright Switzerland.
- 2023 **Early Stage Researcher Grant**, awarded by the European University Institute.
- 2022 **Doctoral Scholarship**, awarded to one Swiss doctoral student per year by the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation.
- 2019 **Mercator Fellowship**, one out of five projects awarded by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Swiss Study Foundation, and Stiftung Mercator Schweiz.
- 2018 **Best Bachelor Thesis of 2017**, awarded by the Centro Latinoamericano-Suizo.

## Skills

Languages	German (Native), English (Bilingual proficiency), Portuguese (Advanced), Spanish (Advanced), Italian (Intermediate), French (Intermediate)
Software	R (Intermediate), Stata (Basic), MaxQDA (Basic), L <sup>A</sup> T <sub>E</sub> X (Basic)
Training	Teacher training certificate, European University Institute, seven days. Process tracing, European University Institute, two days. Mixed methods, European University Institute, three days. Elite interviews, European University Institute, two days. Geography Information Systems (GIS), European University Institute, two days. Fieldwork, European University Institute, two days.

## Activities and Service

2024 – present	<b>Mentor for Early Stage Researchers</b> , European University Institute, Italy Guiding early-stage researchers in developing their research proposal.
2023 – 2024	<b>Organizer Social Investment Working Group</b> , European University Institute, Italy Co-organized and co-chaired bi-weekly meetings with internal and external researchers, scholars, and practitioners to discuss research on welfare recalibration towards social investment.
2018 – 2019	<b>Correspondent Latin America</b> , London Globalist, United Kingdom Published two articles analyzing contemporary political and economic developments in Latin America and the Caribbean.
2017 – 2018	<b>Managing Fellow</b> , Swiss-California Foundation, United States Entrusted with the management of the Foundation to promote community engagement of Swiss citizens living abroad (event organization, financial management, donor acquisition and retention); raised the most funds in the 17 years of the Foundation.
2017 – 2018	<b>President</b> , HSG Alumni Chapter San Francisco, United States Organized events for alumni of the University of St.Gallen in the Bay Area.

## References

Upon request