

Elena Cossu

SENIOR EVALUATION RESEARCHER

London, United Kingdom

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I am a researcher at SciencesPo Paris and a Senior Policy Evaluation Researcher for the National Centre for Social Research (UK). I use Natural Language Processing to map and predict political configurations using political documents and social media data of illiberal governments in Europe (at SciencesPo) and I use quasi-experiments or experiments to measure the effect of policies (at NatCen). My research focuses on using machine learning, experiments, and quasi-experiments to assess causality and predict outcomes in social and political settings. I am passionate about everything that is at the intersection of data science and social sciences.

Employment

National Centre for Social Research

London, United Kingdom

SENIOR EVALUATION RESEARCHER

Nov. 2021 - Present

- Design and implementation of experiments (Randomised Control Trials) and Quasi-Experiments (e.g. Synthetic Control, Propensity Score Matching, etc.) to measure the effect of UK policies on certain segments of the population.
- Clients include the UK Ministry of Justice, The National Lottery Community Fund, the UK Department for Education, the Education Endowment Foundation, the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC), and others.

SciencesPo Paris

Paris, France

POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCHER

Apr. 2023 - Present

- Researcher for the project “Neo-authoritarianisms in Europe and the liberal democratic response” (AUTHLIB) of the Horizon Europe and funded by the European Commission.
- Using Natural Language Processing (NLP) to map political ideological configurations and dimensions across Europe.
- Writing high- quality publications, drafting and submission of research reports to the European Commission, and organising social impact activities in co-creation with civil society and institutions in Hungary and at the European level.
- Part of the Centre for European Studies and Comparative Politics.

Corvinus University of Budapest

Budapest, Hungary

ASSISTANT LECTURER

Sep. 2021 - Jan. 2022

- Assistant teacher for Master level courses.

European Commission MSCA

Budapest and London

EARLY STAGE RESEARCHER

Aug. 2018 - Sep. 2021

- Researcher as part of the Horizon 2020 European Commission project FATIGUE, a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Innovative Training Network (MSCA)
- Assist with the analysis and the writing of reports and articles for long-term research projects
- Duty stations for the project: (1) the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Office of the Chief Economist, Transition Impact and Global Economics Team; (2) University College London (UCL), the Slavonic School of Eastern European Studies (SSEES); (3) Corvinus University of Budapest at the Institute of World Economy.

Education

Corvinus University of Budapest

Budapest, Hungary

PHD IN ECONOMICS

Aug. 2018 - Present

- Everything concluded - currently awaiting for discussion date.
- PhD sponsored by the European Commission Marie Skłodowska-Curie Innovative Training Network (MSCA) to be able to work for the FATIGUE research project
- Dissertation title: ‘Essays on Conceptualising Policies Linked to Populist Rhetoric in Europe and Measuring their Effects in Hungary’

Bocconi University and SciencesPo Paris

Milan and Paris

DOUBLE MASTER’S DEGREE IN INTERNATIONAL ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT

Aug. 2014 - Apr. 2017

- MA in International Public Management with a specialisation in Global Risks from SciencesPo Paris School of International Affairs (PSIA), with a final dissertation called «Fighting terrorism and fundamental rights»
- MSc in Economics and Management of International and Public Affairs from Bocconi University, with a dissertation called «The Parisian transport system: a best practice of urban mobility»

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore

Milan, Italy

BACHELOR’S DEGREE IN POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Sep. 2011 - Oct. 2014

- Final dissertation: «The Hungarian Transition from Planned to Capitalist Economy»
- Erasmus at Pázmány Péter Catholic University in Budapest during the 2013/2014 academic year

Teaching experience

- 2018 S2 Development Economics Seminar (Corvinus University of Budapest)
2021 S1 Global Economic Trends Seminar (Corvinus University of Budapest)
2021 S1 International Organizations and Economic Diplomacy Seminar (Corvinus University of Budapest)

Research output

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

- Clustering and Analysing Relevant Policy Dimensions of Populist, Left-Wing, Centrist, and Right-Wing Parties across Europe**
2023 Central European Journal of Public Policy, 17(1), 41–54
<https://doi.org/10.2478/cejpp-2023-0004>
- The Economic Effect Of Populist Rhetoric In Hungary**
2023 Online Journal of Modelling the New Europe, 41, 105–138
<https://doi.org/10.24193/OJMNE.2023.41.05>
- Understanding Contemporary Populism Through the Latin American Experience**
2021 AARMS – Academic and Applied Research in Military and Public Management Science, 20(3), Article 3
<https://doi.org/10.32565/aarms.2021.3.4>
- The Gravity Model for Trade Theory**
2019 Köz-gazdaság, 14(3), Article 3
<https://doi.org/10.14267/RETP2019.03.25>

UNDER PEER-REVIEW

- Application of Natural Language Processing to the Electoral Manifestos of Parties Characterised by Populist Rhetoric in Central and Eastern Europe**
2024 East European Journal of Society and Politics
Forthcoming

REPORTS

- LNK Educate: Feasibility and pilot study**
2023 Youth Endowment Foundation
<https://youthendowmentfund.org.uk/funding/evaluations/lnk-educate/>

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- A Small Country Trying To Go Big, A Big Union Trying Not To Go Small**
2022 Australian Institute of International Affairs
<https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/a-small-country-trying-to-go-big-a-big-union-trying-not-to-go-small/>
- Chinese vaccine diplomacy in Latin America could change the international order**
2021 ECPR The Loop
<https://theloop.ecpr.eu/chinese-vaccine-diplomacy-in-latin-america-could-change-the-international-order/>
- Book Review: The Glass Half-Empty: Debunking the Myth of Progress in the Twenty-First Century by Rodrigo Aguilera**
2020 LSE Review of Books
<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/lsereviewofbooks/2020/10/27/book-review-the-glass-half-empty-debunking-the-myth-of-progress-in-the-twenty-first-century-by-rodrigo-agui>

PRESENTATIONS

2022	ECPR General Conference Assessing the economic performance of a government characterised by populist rhetoric in Hungary: A synthetic control approach
	The Doctoral Student Association of the University of Pécs Conference (PTE DOK) Macroeconomics and
2021	Politics in Hungary: How an Illiberal Government Characterised by Populist Rhetoric Deals With its Public Budget
2021	inGRID Workshop Macroeconomics, Policies, and CEE: a Machine Learning Approach to Social Investment and Social Protection Policies
2020	ASEEES 52nd Annual Convention A Review of Quasi-Experimental and Predictive Methodologies in Relation to Measuring Populism and its Outcomes
2020	Science is Wonderful! European Commission Outreach Event FATIGUE Project Workshop
2019	WINIR Symposium 2019 Economic populism, fiscal policies and budget deficits: the sustainability implications for Central and Eastern Europe
2019	RSA Winter Conference Present and future populist policies in Europe: the Cases of Hungary and Bulgaria
2019	UACES 49th Annual Conference The New Populist Policies Prescriptions

Relevant Skills

Data Analysis

- Matching Methods (including Mahalanobis matching and Kernel matching)
- Propensity Score Weighting (PSW)
- Synthetic Control Method (SCM)
- Cluster Analysis
- Natural Language Processing (NLP)
- BERT Modelling
- Quantitative Sentiment Analysis
- Data Scraping Techniques
- Imputation Techniques (K+means and regression analysis inputting)
- Randomized Control Trials (RCTs)

Programming Languages:

- R
- Python
- SQL
- command-line programming
- Git
- STATA
- SPSS
- HTML
- LaTeX

Natural Languages:

- English
- French
- Italian
- Spanish
- Hungarian (basic)

Awards & Achievements

AWARDS

2023 ACRI Young Investigator Training Program

ECOMOD 2021

CERTIFICATIONS

- 2023 **Google** Data Analytics Professional Certificate
<https://www.coursera.org/account/accomplishments/verify/XZCBSTWMZ3W4>
- 2022 **Office for National Statistics** Accredited Researcher
- 2022 **DataCamp** Data Scientist with R Certificate <https://www.datacamp.com/statement-of-accomplishment/track/6fda0ea43ab0dfbfd376032fd6e1072ca796a097>
- 2019 **Centre for Microdata Methods and Practice** Policy Evaluation Methods