

Elena Cossu

SENIOR EVALUATION RESEARCHER

London, United Kingdom

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About me

I am a postdoctoral 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.

Current 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.

Previous Employment

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»

- 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

1. Cossu, E. (2021). Understanding Contemporary Populism Through the Latin American Experience. *AARMS – Academic and Applied Research in Military and Public Management Science*, 20(3), 49–63. <https://doi.org/10.32565/aarms.2021.3.4>
2. Cossu, E. (2023). The Economic Effect Of Populist Rhetoric In Hungary. *Online Journal of Modelling the New Europe*, 41, 105–138. <https://doi.org/10.24193/OJMNE.2023.41.05>
3. Borges Aguiar, G. M., & Cossu, E. (2019). The Gravity Model for Trade Theory. *Köz-Gazdaság*, 14(3), 293–299. <https://doi.org/10.14267/RETP2019.03.25>
4. Cossu, E. (2023). Clustering and Analysing Relevant Policy Dimensions of Populist, Left-Wing, Centrist, and Right-Wing Parties across Europe. *Central European Journal of Public Policy*, 17(1), 41–54. <https://doi.org/10.2478/cejpp-2023-0004>
5. Kerr, J., Morgan, MacNaboe, L., Cossu, E., Barton-Crosby, J., Fugard, A., & Sciarra, A. (2023). *LNK Educate: Feasibility and pilot study*. 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 <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 <https://slides.mitchelloharawild.com/reconciling-graphs/>
- Book Review: The Glass Half-Empty: Debunking the Myth of Progress in the Twenty-First Century by Rodrigo Aguilera**
2020 <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-aguilera/>

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 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/RStudio/Posit, Python, SQL, STATA, SPSS, HTML, LaTeX, PowerBI

Natural Languages: English, French, Italian, Spanish, Hungarian

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