

ELENA ESCALANTE-BLOCK

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Postdoctoral Researcher and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow at ARENA, University of Oslo

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ACADEMIC PROFILE

I am a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow (MSCA) at ARENA, University of Oslo. Here, I analyse the effect of politicisation of EU antitrust cases on citizens' trust in the European Commission and the firms involved. Previously, I worked as a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Antwerp where I obtained two research grants. At the University of Antwerp, I investigated how EU trade agreements become subject to politicisation. For my PhD, I was also a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow as part of the Innovative Training Networks (ITN) at Sciences Po, Paris. As part of my doctoral degree, I investigated the role of state aid cases in the politicisation/depoliticisation and legitimisation/delegitimation dynamics of the European Union.

EDUCATION

PhD in Political Science, SciencesPo Paris	2017 - 2021
<i>PhD thesis: The role of actors in the legitimisation or delegitimation of MLG structures: A claims-making analysis of the politicisation and depoliticisation of EU state aid policy (defended in March 2021, Supervisor: Professor Colin Hay).</i>	
Master of Research, Macquarie University	2016 - 2017
Master of International Relations, University of Sydney	2014 - 2016
Bachelor of Journalism / Bachelor of Arts, University of Queensland	2009 - 2013
University of Exeter, UK (Student Exchange Program 2013)	2013

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Postdoctoral Researcher and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow (MSCA) at ARENA, University of Oslo

May 2024 - Ongoing

Large tech firms such as Amazon, Google, and Facebook have attracted global attention due to their violations of antitrust laws. As a regulatory authority, the European Commission can counterbalance such unfair dominance. Given this dynamic, antitrust cases, when they arise, often gain significant media attention, becoming the subject of public debate and politicisation. My MSCA-funded project called PROTRUST investigates how the politicisation of antitrust cases influences citizens' trust in the European Commission as well as these companies. Here, I analyse media coverage in various countries and conduct survey experiments based on the identified media frames. The goal of this project is to bridge the gap between politicisation and trust research, to enhance our comprehension of politicisation within competition policy, and assess the impact of media framing on competition and antitrust matters.

Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Antwerp

December 2020 - April 2024

During my postdoctoral fellowship, I was awarded a grant from the University of Antwerp Research Fund (BOF) to draft and create the PROTRUST research project. Before receiving the BOF grant, my postdoctoral fellowship was part of the project 'The Politicisation of European Union Trade Agreement Negotiations', in collaboration with Professor Dirk De Bièvre (University of Antwerp) and Professor Arlo Poletti (University of Trento, Italy). The project, which was funded by the Research Foundation Flanders (FWO), sought to answer two main questions: What are the varying degrees to which

trade agreement negotiations have been politicised? And what are the necessary conditions for the politicisation of EU trade agreements to occur?

Visiting Postdoctoral Fellowship, Carleton University, Ottawa

September 2022

I secured a two-week visiting fellowship at Carleton University, made possible through the Jean Monnet Network on Transatlantic Trade Politics, a program supported by a grant from the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. Here, I conducted research on the paper titled, ‘Trade, Politics, and Patronising Otherness: Analysing the EU’s Moral Authority in EU-trade Agreements’ (published in *Geopolitics*). I also delivered a seminar titled ‘The EU’s Digital Markets Act: Did Politicisation Trigger a Change in Legislation?’ and an interview as part of the ‘Transatlantic Trade Videos series’.

PhD Candidate and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow, SciencesPo Paris

October 2017 - December 2020

I was awarded a highly competitive fully-funded PhD fellowship for 3 years within the MSCA Innovative Training Network (ITN) PLATO funded by Horizon 2020 (Grant agreement ID: 722581). There were a total of 240 applicants for the ITN. PLATO brought together nine universities and eleven training partners (think tanks, civil society and career development organisations) in a joint research and training programme with 15 Early Stage Researchers. During my PhD I analysed how state aid cases can serve as “trigger moments” in the politicisation/depolicitisation and legitimisation/delegitimation of the European Union.

Visiting Doctoral Fellowship, ARENA, Centre for European Studies, Oslo

October 2018 - December 2018

ARENA hosted me as part of my secondment in the framework of the PLATO ITN. At ARENA, I received support and guidance in the development of the legitimacy framework of my thesis from Prof. Christopher Lord and Prof. Hanz-Jörg Trenz.

Visiting Doctoral Fellowship, University of Twente, Enschede

January 2019 - January 2020

The University of Twente hosted me as part of my secondment in the framework of the PLATO ITN. The Faculty of Behavioural Management and Social Sciences, which had a strong emphasis on public administration and law, was beneficial to my PhD work. With the guidance of the faculty, I was able to further develop a chapter on member state appeals against the European Commission and received valuable feedback on the media coverage of state aid cases in my thesis.

Research Assistant, The Electoral Integrity Project, Sydney

November 2015 - October 2017

I worked as a research Assistant to Professor Pippa Norris, Dr.Ferran Martinez-I-Coma, Dr.Alessandro Nai and Dr. Max Grömping. The Electoral Integrity Project, based at Harvard University and the University of Sydney, studied the electoral integrity of countries around the world. For this position, I had to compile and collate information for the Electoral Integrity Project reports. I also wrote election descriptions for the Electoral Integrity Project Annual Report and coded qualitative data for several research papers in both English and Spanish.

JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS

Escalante-Block, E. and Blockx, J., 2025. Legislating in the media spotlight: The Digital Markets Act in EU news coverage. *Media, Culture Society*, p.01634437251375407.

Escalante-Block, E. 2024. Trade, Politics, and Patronising Otherness: Analysing the EU’s Moral Authority in EU-trade Agreements. *Geopolitics*, DOI: 10.1080/14650045.2024.2411330.

Escalante-Block, E. 2024. Have the rules of the game changed? Novel legal interpretations and their impact on the EU's legitimacy communication. *Journal of European Integration*, 46:4, 499–519. DOI: 10.1080/07036337.2024.2307942.

Escalante-Block, E. 'Politicisation'. In Nai, A., Grömping, M. and Wirz, D. (eds). *Encyclopedia of Political Communication*. Accepted Version: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Escalante-Block, E. 'Public Sphere'. In Nai, A., Grömping, M. and Wirz, D. (eds). *Encyclopedia of Political Communication*. Accepted Version: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Eisele, O., Escalante-Block, E., Kluknavská, A. and Boomgaarden, H.G. 2022. The politicising spark? Exploring the impact of #MeToo on the gender equality discourse in Australian print media. *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 57:4, 309-327. DOI: 10.1080/10361146.2022.2045900.

Escalante-Block, E. 2022. 'Whose Voice Is Louder?: Analysing the EU's Legitimation Through the Apple State Aid Case'. In Lord, C., Bursens, P., De Bièvre, D., Trondal, J. and Wessel, R.A.(eds). *The Politics of Legitimation in the European Union* (pp. 129-151). Routledge.

Escalante-Block, E. 2021. *The role of actors in the legitimation or delegitimation of MLG structures*. The ARENA report series, ARENA Centre for European Studies.

Escalante-Block, E. 2018. Hugo Chávez's Use of Emotional Appeals. *Comunicazione politica*, 19(1), 51-72.

BOOK PUBLICATIONS

Escalante-Block, E. *In search of legitimacy: The political role of the European Commission in regulating State Aid policy*. Forthcoming (July 2025): Routledge.

PUBLICATIONS IN PROGRESS

Escalante-Block, E., Block, E., and Hames, S. Populist Disruption: Discursive Signs of Democratic Erosion in Trump's, Meloni's and Milei's First 100 Days in Office. Target Journal: *Government and Opposition*.

Escalante-Block, E., Moland, M., Georgarakis, G., and Rimkute, D. Public trust in the European Commission's regulation of big tech. Target Journal: *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*.

Escalante-Block, E., Fjortoft, T. Reputation Management in the Digital Age: DG Competition's Antitrust Strategies in Regulating the Platform Economy. Target Journal: *Regulation and Governance*.

Escalante-Block, E., and Matera, C. Politicisation as a trigger for change in legislation: the case of the Digital Markets Act (DMA). Target Journal: *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*.

Nai, A., Allen, W., Borucki, I., Escalante-Block, E., Grömping, M., Hartmann, H., Möller, J., Reiter, J., Turnbull-Dugarte., and von Sikorski, C. Peer-Reviewing the Social Sciences. Large-Scale Comparative Evidence on (Questionable) Reviewing Practices. Target Journal: *PS: Political Science and Politics*.

RESEARCH FUNDING, AWARDS AND HONORS (IN EU€)

Recipient, Marie Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship, ARENA, Centre for European Studies, University of Oslo
226,751.03€

The Marie Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship is a prestigious grant awarded by the European Commission. Its aim is to support researchers' careers and foster excellence in research. This fellowship is part of 'Horizon Europe', the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. I received a high score of 96.40% out of 100% for my proposal. In the highly competitive application process, 7,044

researchers applied, and only 1,235 experienced postdoctoral researchers were selected. My fellowship award provides funding for my research project at the University of Oslo, with a total budget of 226,751.03 EUR. Project ID: 101110738. February 2023.

Recipient, University Research Fund (BOF), University of Antwerp

48,000€

The University Research Fund (BOF) supports groundbreaking fundamental research. This fellowship was awarded as I scored highly and secured a Seal of Excellence in my first submission of the Marie Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship. April 2022.

Recipient, Seal of Excellence for my Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship, European Commission

The Marie Curie Seal of Excellence is a prestigious recognition awarded to outstanding research proposals submitted under the European Union's Horizon Europe Programme. I obtained a Seal of Excellence for my Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral proposal named PROTRUST. Proposal ID: 101063707. March 2022.

Recipient, Research Training Pathway (RTP), Australian Government

26,288 AUD

The Research Training Program (RTP) is a grant by the Department of Education of the Australian Government for highly qualified researchers. This grant funded my Master of Research programme at Macquarie University. June 2016.

Recipient, BUTEX, University of Exeter

3,000 AUD

Scholarship provided by the University of Queensland to conduct a study abroad programme at the University of Exeter. January 2013.

SUPERVISORY ROLES

Department of Political Science, University of Oslo

October 2024 - May 2025

I am currently supervising a master's student in Comparative Politics at the Department of Political Science. The student's research focuses on the governmental strategies employed by the United Arab Emirates and Qatar to attract foreign workers to their countries.

Master Thesis Supervisor: Department of Political Science and International Relations, University of Antwerp (Belgium)

October 2021 - April 2024

Between 2021 and 2024, I was appointed as a supervisor for 7 Master's theses at the University of Antwerp. The topics of the theses under my supervision included an examination of the rule of law crisis in Poland, an analysis of the effects of the refugee crisis on Euroscepticism in the Belgian Federal Parliament, a study on the framing of the COVID-19 crisis across the Belgian and Dutch press, an examination of the decline in trust in European institutions as a consequence of COVID-19, an investigation into climate change policies across different EU member states, as well as how the UK covered migrant cases from Ukraine and African countries differently.

Assessor and Jury Member of Master Theses, University of Antwerp (Belgium)

September 2021 - January 2024

I was awarded by the faculty the opportunity to expand my role by taking on additional responsibilities, including serving as the primary jury member for 47 Master's theses during this period. This role

involved reading and carefully examining each thesis, grading them based on content, methodology, and results, and leading student defense sessions, where I questioned students on their research and findings.

Comparative Politics Supervisor, Radboud University (The Netherlands)

February 2021 - September 2021

In 2021, I was appointed as a supervisor for 5 Master theses in Comparative Politics at Radboud University. The topics of the theses under my supervision were diverse and included an examination of the populist rhetoric of Syriza in Greece, an analysis of electoral malpractices across African countries, an examination of the different frames used by the Dutch government during the COVID-19 pandemic, and an investigation of the causal mechanisms that led to the breakdown of Mexico's single-party system in 2000.

Assessor of Master Theses, Radboud University (The Netherlands)

August 2021 - September 2021

As an assessor of Master theses at Radboud University, I evaluated and graded 10 Master theses. My responsibilities included thoroughly reading each thesis and providing a comprehensive evaluation.

TEACHING

Co-Coordinator and Lecturer for Issues in International Relations, University of Antwerp (Belgium)

Semester 2, 2021 - Semester 2, 2023

As a co-coordinator and lecturer for the course on Issues in International Relations, I guided students with a comprehensive understanding of various pressing issues in international relations. In the course, we explored the academic literature on different topics such as crises and cooperation in the EU, international trade liberalisation, normative-institutional versus social-constructivist explanations for democratic peace, and bindingness and flexibility in international cooperation.

Guest Lecturer for European Economic Regulation, Law Faculty, University of Antwerp (Belgium)

Semester 2, 2023

I gave law students an overview of the Competition Policy with a focus on the Digital Markets Act (DMA). Specifically, I was invited to offer political science insights to law students on issues they were examining, bridging the gap between legal frameworks and political contexts. For this, we discussed the politicisation of EU competition cases and how they may have affected the drafting of the DMA.

Guest Lecturer for Policy-Making in the EU, University of Twente (The Netherlands)

Semester 2, 2023

During this lecture, we discussed the EU's trade policy, including the key actors involved in policy-making and enforcement. I taught students how EU trade agreements can become subject to politicisation. In particular, this class focused on the EU-Mercosur and EU-TTIP agreements as examples of how these agreements became politicised in different ways.

Guest Lecturer for European Public Policy: Politicisation and the Digital Markets Act, University of Antwerp (Belgium)

Semester 2, 2022 - Semester 2, 2023

For these guest lectures, I gave students an overview of the Digital Markets Act (DMA). I also discussed how the politicisation of Google antitrust cases can trigger a change in how legislation is made and how the politicisation of these cases affected the drafting of the Digital Markets Act.

Co-Coordinator and Lecturer in Research Design, University of Antwerp (Belgium)

Semester 1, 2022

As a co-coordinator and lecturer in the course, I was responsible for guiding students through the process of developing a research design for their Master's theses. Each week, students were required to present their progress on their research projects, and these presentations were used as a basis for class discussions, which were supplemented by readings from relevant literature, including Toshkov, Dimitar (2016), *Research Design in Political Science*, London: Palgrave Macmillan and Frank Schimmelfennig and Thomas Gschwend (Ed.) (2007), *How to Practice What They Preach: Research Design in Political Science*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Guest Lecturer for EU as a Political System: Competition Policy, University of Antwerp (Belgium)

Semester 1, 2022

The EU as a Political System course forms part of the curriculum for students pursuing a Master's degree in International Relations and Political Science at the University of Antwerp. During this lecture, I gave students an overview of the EU's competition policy, including the objectives, legal framework, and key actors involved in the policy-making and enforcement.

OUTREACH

Policy Brief: Europe Knows Best? The European Union's Patronising Trade Negotiations with the Global South. ARENA Policy Brief No. 1-25, ARENA Centre for European Studies, University of Oslo, Norway. 2025. Available Here

Speaker: Europe's Development and Challenges: Snapshots from ARENA's Research. "Public Trust in Contemporary Europe: Trusting the Antitrust." ARENA Centre for European Studies, University of Oslo, Norway. November 2024. Available Here

Interview: Meet the new Marie Curie fellow at ARENA. University of Oslo, Norway. May 2024. Available Here.

Interview: Transatlantic Trade Videos, Interview with Elena Escalante Block. Carleton University, Ottawa. September 2022. Available Here.

Speaker: Book launch - The politics of legitimization in the EU: legitimacy recovered?. University of Antwerp. June 2022.

Blog Post: Recent court rulings suggest that European Commission policy on tax evasion and state aid is failing. The Loop, July 2021.

Blog Post: Will multinationals' hunger for tax benefits prevail?. Post-Crisis Democracy in Europe Blog, May 2021.

Speaker: Midterm review meeting of the PLATO grant agreement - Findings of the PhD. Bruegel. December 2018.

CONFERENCES, ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS AND WORKSHOPS

Escalante-Block, E., and Block, E. (September 2025). Populist Disruption: Discursive Signs of Democratic Erosion in Trump's, Meloni's and Milei's First 100 Days in Office. Research Workshop Do Populists in Power Undermine Liberal Democracy? Comparisons between Europe and the Americas, Centre for European Studies, Carleton University and the University of Ottawa, Canada.

Escalante-Block, E., and Nohr Fjortoft. (June 2025). Reputational Strategies in Antitrust Regulation: How the European Commission and the Federal Trade Commission Communicate Amid Contestation. Biennial Conference of the Standing Group on Regulatory Governance, Hertie School, Berlin, Germany.

Escalante-Block, E. (June 2025). Trust and Bureaucratic Communication: The Effects of Emotional Appeals on Public Trust in the European Commission. Biennial Conference of the Standing Group on Regulatory Governance, Hertie School, Berlin, Germany. .

Escalante-Block, E. (Co-Chair) (June 2025). Panel: The Regulation of Artificial Intelligence in a Global and Multi-Level Context. Biennial Conference of the Standing Group on Regulatory Governance, Hertie School, Berlin, Germany. (Presenter: Europe's Role in Global AI Governance: Perceptions from the Asia-Pacific)

Escalante-Block, E. (October 2024). Survey on Public Trust and Governmental Communication in Tech Regulation. Public Policy and Administration Research Norway Conference, Geilo, Norway.

Escalante-Block, E. (August 2024). Reputation Management in the Digital Age: DG Competition's Antitrust Strategies in Regulating the Platform Economy. European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) General Conference 2024, Dublin.

Escalante-Block, E. (June 2023). Trade, Politics, and Patronising Otherness: Analysing the EU's Moral Authority in EU-trade Agreements. Politicologenetmaal, KU Leuven.

Escalante-Block, E. (April 2023). Trade, Politics, and Patronising Otherness: Analysing the EU's Moral Authority in EU-trade Agreements. Part of the workshop on 'Spatial Politics of Trade'. Warwick University, United Kingdom.

Escalante-Block, E. (September 2022). The EU's Digital Markets Act: Did Politicisation Trigger a Change in Legislation?. Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada.

Escalante-Block, E., and Matera, C. (June 2022). Politicisation as a trigger for change in legislation: the case of the Digital Markets Act (DMA). The ECPR Standing Group on the European Union (SGEU) 2022, Luiss University, Rome.

Block, E., Escalante-Block, E. (September 2021). "How dare you!": Exploring Greta Thunberg's mediated, politicised and polarising climate advocacy speech style. European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA) 2021, Online Presentation.

Escalante-Block, E. (May 2020). The EU's legitimization in State Aid: The Apple Case. 70th Annual ICA Conference, Online Presentation.

Escalante-Block, E. (October 2019). The EU's legitimization in State Aid: The Apple Case. Chapter presented at book workshop for Bursens, P., De Bièvre, D., Lord, C., and R. Wessels (eds). Legitimacy Crisis in the European Union. University of Twente, Enschede.

Escalante-Block, E. (September 2019). State Aid, its Claims and the Question of Representation. European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) General Conference 2019, Wrocław.

Escalante-Block, E. (April 2019). A multilevel governance approach to processes of Politicisation and Depoliticisation. Plato Research School, University of Twente.

Eisele, O., Escalante-Block, E., Kluknavská, A., Boomgaarden, H. (June 2019). The Politicising Spark? Exploring the Impact of #metoo in the News Media Discourse in Australia. European Political Science Association (EPSA) Annual Conference European Political Science Association, Belfast.

Escalante-Block, E. (April 2019). How do EU issues become politicised and depoliticised in Multilevel Governance (MLG)?. European Graduate Network Conference. London School of Economics (LSE), London.

Escalante-Block, E. (October 2017). Concepts and Theories of Politicisation and Depoliticisation. PLATO Kick off conference, ARENA, Oslo.

SCIENTIFIC SOFTWARE PROFICIENCY

LaTeX	Highly Skilled
Qualtrics	Highly Skilled
SPSS	Highly Skilled
NVivo	Highly Skilled
R.	Intermediate
Stata	Basic

ACADEMIC COURSES

Plan your research data management: Module 1, University of Oslo	October 2024
Survey design for political scientists, University of Oslo	August - October 2024
Essentials of Teaching module, University of Antwerp	September 2022
Stakeholder Management, University of Antwerp	December 2021
Dive-into-Projects: Grants Proposal Writing session, University of Antwerp	October 2021
Performance Skills: How to lecture with impact, University of Twente	March 2020
Taste of Teaching, University of Twente	February 2020
Linear Regression with R, ECPR Winter School	February 2020
Advanced Multi-Method Research, ECPR Winter School	February 2020
Policy and media training, Bruegel	February 2020
How to build and present a competitive CV, University of Antwerp	February 2020
Communication with different audiences, University of Twente	February 2020
Webinar: Building an online profile as researcher, Vitae	January 2020
Webinar: Infographics, Vitae	January 2020
Doctoral Seminars (Research Design), SciencesPo Paris	November 2019
Academic writing publishing and Writing Workshop, Max Planck Society	October 2019
Effective Researcher, Vitae	October 2019
Open Access and Open Research Data, Vitae	October 2019
Presenting science workshop, SciencesPo Paris	November 2018
Networking Course, Vitae	November 2018
PLATO: PhD course-Methods in the Study of Legitimacy Crisis, ARENA	September 2018
Professional development planning, Vitae	September 2018
Effective Researcher-A toolkit to manage yourself and your research, Vitae	September 2018
Introduction to Inferential Statistics, ECPR Summer School	August 2018
Learning how to use R, SciencesPo Paris	July 2018
PLATO: PhD course in research design, Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS)	March 2018
Academic writing workshop, Institute for Advanced Studies (IHS)	March 2018
PhD course in legitimacy theory, ARENA	January 2018
How to be an Effective and Collaborative Researcher, Vitae	January 2018

REVIEWER EXPERIENCE

Peer-review journal: Governance	2025
Peer-review journal: Regulation and Governance	2025
Peer-review journal: Journal of Common Market Studies (JCMS)	2024, 2025
Peer-review journal: International Review of Public Policy (IRPP)	2022
Peer-review journal: Comparative European Politics (CEP)	2019

ORGANISATION REPRESENTATIVE AND CONFERENCE ORGANISER

Member of the Organising Committee of the ECPR Biennial Conference of the Standing Group on Regulatory Governance in 2023 in Antwerp	2023
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Panel Chair for ‘Navigating Regulatory Challenges in digital markets: Perspectives from the EU’, at the Biennial Conference of the ECPR Standing Group on Regulatory Governance.	2023
Junior Representative for SciencesPo, Paris at the European Graduate Network	2020 - 2021
Organiser of the European Graduate Network Conference at SciencesPo, Paris	2019 - 2020
Organiser of the 4th PLATO School at the University of Twente, Enschede	2019

INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

Account Executive, latinpr!

January 2014 - October 2015

latinpr! was a Sydney-based boutique agency specialising in delivering strategic PR, communications and marketing solutions tailored to the Latin American market in Australia. I wrote press releases in English and Spanish for publications worldwide; developed media proposals, briefs, and promotional material for client organisations. I managed social media strategies for client organisations and organised press conferences and media interviews for a range of client organisations, such as foreign embassies and private enterprises.

LANGUAGES

Spanish	Native fluency
English	Native-level fluency
German	Native-level fluency
French	B2 level
Dutch	A2 level

REFERENCES

Available upon request