

## MARIE SKŁODOWSKA-CURIE ACTIONS (MSCA) POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS 2026 APPLICATIONS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MACERATA

### SUPERVISOR PROFILE

**Name of Supervisor:** Prof. ..Simona Epasto

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**Department at University of Macerata:** Department of Political Science, Communication and International Relations

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**Research themes proposed:** My research focuses on the intersection of economic and political geography, geopolitics, and artificial intelligence, with particular attention to digital trust, territorial governance, and spatial decision-making. I adopt an interdisciplinary approach combining qualitative geopolitical analysis, spatial data analysis, and GeoAI methodologies.

A core pillar of my research experience is my active involvement in the Horizon 2020 MSCA-RISE project "TRUST – Digital TuRn in EUrope: Strengthening relational reliance through Technology", which investigates how blockchain, AI, and digital technologies reshape trust relationships across European and Mediterranean territories. Within this framework, I have contributed to research on digital trust ecosystems, governance models, and technology-driven regional transformations.

Key research themes include:

- *GeoAI and spatial governance: application of machine learning, deep learning, and AI-assisted spatial analysis to territorial monitoring, infrastructure resilience, risk assessment, and smart regions.*
- *Digital trust and technology-driven governance: blockchain, distributed ledger technologies, and AI as tools for enhancing transparency, trust, and accountability in public institutions and territorial systems, with a strong focus on Europe and the Mediterranean.*
- *Geopolitics of digital transformation: geopolitical implications of AI adoption, digital sovereignty, and technological infrastructures, including North–South relations and regional power dynamics.*
- *AI, ethics, and territorial justice: critical perspectives on algorithmic governance, inclusiveness, and ethical challenges related to AI-driven spatial decision-making.*
- *Science diplomacy and European integration: the role of research, innovation, and technological cooperation in fostering international collaboration and regional resilience, drawing also on insights developed within the TRUST project.*

These themes are supported by my participation in European-funded research projects, peer-reviewed publications, and extensive experience in supervising graduate and doctoral research. I particularly welcome innovative and interdisciplinary MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship proposals that integrate AI,

*spatial analysis, and geopolitical perspectives, and that demonstrate strong societal and policy relevance.*

**Other info:** I have solid experience in international research collaboration, MSCA-related project environments, and academic supervision. I actively support postdoctoral researchers in proposal development, networking, dissemination, and career development. The University of Macerata provides a highly supportive and interdisciplinary environment for MSCA Fellows, including tailored training opportunities and strong international research networks.