

ALESSANDRA GAIA

Contact Details

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Academic employment

06/2020 – date Assegnista di ricerca, Department of Sociology, University of Milan-Bicocca.
03-2018 – date Research Associate, Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER),
University of Essex. (unpaid honorary position).
06/2018 – 05/2020 Assegnista di ricerca, Department of Sociology, University of Milan-Bicocca.
11/2017 – 05/2018 Research Fellow, European Social Survey Headquarters, Department of
Sociology, City, University of London.
05/2016 – 09/2017 Research Officer, Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER), University
of Essex.
11/2015 – 05/2016 Research Associate (Survey Manager), Centre for Longitudinal Studies, UCL
Institute of Education, University College London.

Education

2015 Ph.D. in Applied Sociology and Methodology of Social Research, University of Milan-
Bicocca
2009 MSc in Economics and Social Sciences, Bocconi University
2006 BSc in Economics and Social Sciences, Bocconi University

Research visits

2019 Visiting Researcher, The National Institute for Demographic Studies. INED, Paris.
2013 – 2014 Visiting Student, Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Essex

Exchange student

2008 – 2009 Exchange student, Carlos III University of Madrid
2005 Exchange student, Erasmus University of Rotterdam

Research grants

Co-Investigator: “The value of digital data: enhancing citizens’ awareness and voice about
surveillance capitalism (VDATA)”, PI: Prof. Guido Legnante (University of Pavia), €199.895.

Collaboration in national and international research projects

Team member of the project: “Aging in a Networked Society. Older people, social networks, and well-being”, PI: Prof. Emanuela Sala (University of Milan-Bicocca)

Team member of the project: “Understanding household finance through better measurement”, PI: Prof. Annette Jäckle (University of Essex)

Team member of the project: “Methodological innovations in data collection in longitudinal studies”, PI: Prof. Annette Jäckle, Prof. Michaela Benzeval (University of Essex), and Prof. Kate Tilling (University of Bristol).

Survey Manager of *Next Steps* (age 25 survey), (UCL Institute of Education) (2017-2018), Director: Prof. Lisa Calderwood.

Team member of the “European Social Survey”, (European Social Survey Headquarters, City, University of London) (2015-2016), Director: Prof. Rory Fitzgerald.

Publications and reports

Peer-reviewed journal articles

1. Sala, E., **Gaia, A.** and Cerati, G. (in press) Are social media users more satisfied with their life than non-users? A study on older people in Italy. *Ageing and Society*.
2. **Gaia, A.** (in press) COVID-19 virus diffusion in Italy: data quality and methodological challenges. *Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia*.
3. **Gaia, A.**, Sala, E. and Cerati, G. (2021) Social networking sites use and life satisfaction. A quantitative study on older people living in Europe, *European Societies*, 23(1): 98–118, DOI: 10.1080/14616696.2020.1762910.
4. Wenz, A., Al Baghal, T. and **Gaia, A.** (2021) Language proficiency among respondents: implications for data quality in a longitudinal face-to-face survey. *Journal of Survey Statistics and Methodology*, 9(1): 73–93. DOI: <https://doi-org.proxy.unimib.it/10.1093/jssam/smz045> (Published online on 27/01/2020).
5. Sala, E., **Gaia, A.**, and Cerati, G. (2020). The grey digital divide in Social Networking Site use in Europe. Results from a quantitative study. *Social Science Computer Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439320909507>.
6. Sala, E., and **Gaia, A.** (2019) Older people’s use of Information and Communications Technologies in Europe. The Italian case. *Autonomie Locali e Servizi Sociali*, 2: 163–183. DOI: 10.1447/95863.
7. **Gaia, A.**, and Al Baghal, T. (2019) The Longitudinal Item Count Technique: a new technique for asking sensitive questions in surveys. *Methods Data Analysis* 13(1):111–37. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.12758/mda.2018.09>.
8. Thornby, M., Calderwood, L., Kotecha, M., Beninger, K., and **Gaia, A.** (2018) Collecting data linkage consents in a mixed mode survey: Evidence and lessons learnt from Next Steps. *Survey Methods: Insights from the Field (SMIF)*. doi: 10.13094/SMIF-2018-00004.

Book chapters

9. **Gaia, A.**, (2020) The Item Count Technique. In P. A. Atkinson, A. Cernat, S. Delamont, J. W. Sakshaug, R. Williams (eds.), *SAGE Research Methods Foundations*. doi: 10.4135/9781526421036914388
10. **Gaia, A.** (2020) Social Desirability Bias and Sensitive Questions in Surveys. In P. A. Atkinson, A. Cernat, S. Delamont, J. W. Sakshaug, R. Williams (Eds.), *SAGE Research Methods Foundations*. doi: 10.4135/9781526421036928979
11. Jäckle, A., Couper. M. P., **Gaia, A.**, and Lessof, C. (forthcoming, 2021) “Improving survey measurement of household finances: A review of new technologies and data sources” in P. Lynn *Advances in Longitudinal Survey Methodology*, Wiley Series in Survey Methodology.

Other

12. Co-editor (with Emanuela Sala) of the collection of articles: “Data quality during the Covid-19 pandemic in Italy. Challenges and solutions”, *Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia* (in press).
13. **Gaia, A.** (2011) *Prevention of Child Abandonment, Analysis of a Development Project in Braşov, Romania*. Saarbrücken, Germany: Lambert Academic Publishing. ISBN: 978-3845472584.

Work in progress (Revise and Resubmit)

Boerio, P., Garavaglia, E., and **Gaia, A.** Individual Capitals and Active Ageing: Are Changes in Social Capital Associated with Engagement, Initiation and Maintenance of Activity in Later Life? Revise and resubmit at *Ageing and Society*.

Burton, J., Crossley, T. F., Fisher, P., **Gaia, A.**, Jäckle, A. Understanding and reducing income reporting error in household surveys. Revise and resubmit at *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics*.

Working papers and reports

Burton, J., Crossley, T. F., Fisher, P., **Gaia, A.**, Jäckle, A. 2020. Understanding and reducing income reporting error in household surveys. Colchester: Institute for Social and Economic Research.

Jäckle, A., **Gaia, A.**, Lessof, C., and Mick P. C. 2019. A review of new technologies and data sources for measuring household finances: implications for total survey error. Colchester: Institute for Social and Economic Research.

Gaia, A. 2017. The Effect of Respondent Incentives on Panel Attrition in a Sequential Mixed-mode Design. Colchester: Institute for Social and Economic Research.

Gaia, A. (ed.) 2017. Understanding Society Innovation Panel Wave 9: Results from Methodological Experiments. Colchester: Institute for Social and Economic Research.

Thornby, M., Calderwood, L., Kotecha, M., Beninger, K. and **Gaia, A.** 2017. Collecting Multiple Data Linkage Consents in a Mixed Mode Survey: Evidence and Lessons Learnt from Next Steps. London: Centre for Longitudinal Studies.

Jäckle, A., **Gaia, A.** and Benzeval, M. 2018. The use of new technologies to measure socio-economic and environmental concepts in longitudinal studies. London: UCL Institute of Education.

Jäckle, A., **Gaia, A.** and Benzeval, M. 2017. *Mixing Modes and Measurement Methods in Longitudinal Studies*. London: UCL Institute of Education.

User manuals

Jäckle, A., **Gaia, A.**, Al Baghal, T., Burton, J. and Lynn, P. 2017. *Understanding Society The UK Household Longitudinal Study Innovation Panel, Waves 1-9, User Manual*. Colchester: Institute for Social and Economic Research.

Villar, A., Sommer, E., Finnøy, D., **Gaia, A.**, Berzelak, N., and Bottoni, G. 2018. *CROSS-National Online Survey (CRONOS) Panel Data and Documentation User Guide*. London: ESS ERIC.

Teaching (as lecturer)

- 2021 (scheduled) Essex Summer School in Social Science and Data Analysis, lecturer for the course: “Quantitative methods for surveying hard-to-reach populations”
- 2020 – 2021 University of Milan-Bicocca, Department of Sociology, invited lecturer for the class: “Methods and techniques: Surveying the homeless population” within the course Methodology in Urban Studies, PhD programme in Urban Studies (36th cycle)
- 2020 – 2021 University of Milan-Bicocca, Department of Sociology, Course lecturer (Docente a contratto) for the course: “Laboratorio: Capitale Sociale e Sistemi Socio-Economici Locali”, Laurea Magistrale in “Analisi dei processi sociali”.
- 2017 – 2018 City University of London, Department of Sociology. Course leader and lecturer for the Master of Science course: “Survey Research Methods”.

Teaching (as teaching assistant)

- 2016 – 2017 University of Essex, Department of Sociology. Teaching Assistant for the Master of Science course: “Applied Sampling”.
- 2015 – 2016 University of Milan-Bicocca, Department of Sociology. Teaching Assistant
- 2014 – 2015 University of Milan-Bicocca, Department of Sociology. Teaching Assistant
- 2014 Essex Summer School in Social Science and Data Analysis, Teaching Assistant for the course: “Applied research methods with hidden, marginal and excluded populations”.
- 2015 Essex Summer School in Social Science and Data Analysis, Teaching Assistant for the course: “Applied research methods with hidden, marginal and excluded populations”.
- 2012 – 2013 University of Milan Bicocca, Department of Sociology, “Cultore della materia”: “Metodologia della ricerca sociale” (Servizio Sociale) and “Metodologia della ricerca sociale ed organizzativa” (Scienza dell’Organizzazione).

Scientific organisation of conferences, conference sessions and workshops

1. Chair of the conference session “Cohort studies in times of COVID-19” for the 9th Conference of the European Survey Research Association (ESRA), 2021, Online
2. Co-chair of the conference session “Non-response in longitudinal studies” for the 9th Conference of the European Survey Research Association (ESRA), 2021, Online (with P. Lynn and A. Bianchi)
3. Member of the local organising committee for the 10th Conference of the European Survey Research Association (ESRA), forthcoming, 2023, Milan, Italy
4. Member of the scientific organising committee and head of the logistic organising committee of the workshop “Older People, Social Networks and Well-Being” University of Milan-Bicocca, 21st September 2020
5. Scientific organisation of the CLOSER Workshop on “Mixing modes and measurement methods in longitudinal studies” 6th November 2016 (co-organized with A. Jäckle and M. Benzeval)
6. Scientific organisation of the CLOSER Workshop on “New technologies to measure non-health topics in longitudinal studies” 4th May 2017 (co-organized with A. Jäckle and M. Benzeval)
7. Chair of the conference session “Measurement issues in household surveys” organised for the 7th Conference of the European Survey Research Association (ESRA), 2017, Lisbon, Portugal

Departmental seminars and invited talks

8. “The Item Count Technique: a method to survey hard-to-reach populations” *Essex Summer School in Social Science and Data Analysis*, July 20th 2020, Colchester, UK.
9. “L’utilizzo delle ICT da parte della popolazione anziana: Risultati di una ricerca svolta dal Dipartimento di Sociologia e Ricerca sociale dell’Università di Milano Bicocca” *Live webinar: Anziani online: accesso e uso, vantaggi, svantaggi e ruolo dell’alfabetizzazione digitale*. 29th May 2020, Online.
10. “Ageing in a networked society”. *Departmental seminar*, The French Institute for Demographic Studies (INED) 21st May 2019, Paris, France.
11. “Estimating the correlation of paying for sex and risky behaviors in presence of item missing data. Evidence from Natsal-2”. *Departmental seminar*, University College London, Centre for Sexual Health & HIV Research. 25th May 2015, London, UK.
12. “L’effetto del passaggio ad un disegno di rilevazione multicanale (*mixed-mode*) sul logorio del campione”. *Departmental seminar*, University of Milan-Bicocca, February 2015, Milan, Italy.

Speaker at national and international conferences and workshop

13. “Coverage rate and coverage bias in web surveys in Europe” *9th European Survey Research Association (ESRA) Conference*. Online.

14. “The impact of day of mailing on response rate and response speed” *9th European Survey Research Association (ESRA) Conference*. Online.
15. “Data collection innovations in large scale surveys. A comparative review on Italy and the United Kingdom” *Midterm conference, AIS (Associazione Italiana di Sociologia) Metodologia*, 30th March 2020, online.
16. “Is life satisfaction associated with Social Media use? A study on the old age population in Italy” *13th ESPANET Italia Conference*, 17th–19th September 2020, online.
17. “Le nuove tecnologie e il benessere degli anziani” *Workshop: Anziani, nuove tecnologie, e relazioni sociali*. University of Milano-Bicocca, 13th January 2020, Milan, Italy.
18. “Older people and Social Networking Sites Use. A study on older people’s patterns of SNS use in Europe”. *14th Conference of the European Sociological Association*, 20-23 August 2019, Manchester, UK. (21/07/2019)
19. “An application of the Longitudinal Item Count Technique to measure sexual orientation in a large scale general population survey”. *8th European Survey Research Association (ESRA) Conference*. 15-19 Jul 2019, Zagreb, Croatia.
20. “The association between Social Networking Sites (SNSs) use and old people health and wellbeing”. *8th European Survey Research Association (ESRA) Conference*. 15-19 Jul 2019, Zagreb, Croatia, 17th July 2019.
21. Is Social Networking Sites use associated with life-satisfaction? A quantitative study on older people living in Europe. *Workshop: “La qualità della vita interconnessa: generazioni a confronto”*, Department of Sociology and Social Research, University of Milan-Bicocca, 3rd July 2019, Milan, Italy.
22. The effect of Social Networking Sites use on life-satisfaction among the older population in Europe (poster) *International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics for the European Region*, 23rd – 25th May 2019, Gothenburg, Sweden.
23. The use of Social Networking Sites among the Older Population in Europe: An Analysis of CSIS data (oral poster) *International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics for the European Region*, 23rd – 25th May 2019 Gothenburg, Sweden.
24. A Comparison of Self-reported Sexual Identity Using Direct and Indirect Questioning. *7th European Survey Research Association (ESRA) Conference* 17-21 Jul 2017, Lisbon, Portugal.
25. Measuring income in household surveys: evidence from a collection of experiments. *7th European Survey Research Association (ESRA) Conference* 17-21 Jul 2017, Lisbon, Portugal.
26. A Comparison of Self-reported Sexual Identity Using Direct and Indirect Questioning. *Understanding Society Conference* 2017. 11th-13th Jul 2017. Colchester, UK.
27. Does the Switch to a Mixed-mode Design Increase Panel Attrition? *CLOSER Workshop: Mixing modes and measurement methods in longitudinal studies*, CLOSER, 3rd November 2016, London, UK.

28. A Comparison of Self-reported Sexual Identity Using Direct and Indirect Questioning. *Research Network 21 (Quantitative methods) of the European Sociological Association (ESA)* 13th – 15th Oct 2016, Nikosia, Cyprus.
29. The influence on substantive results of the sampling strategies adopted in qualitative and quantitative paradigms: Evidence on men who pay for sex. *9th International Conference on Social Science Methodology, The International Sociological Association (ISA)* 11-16 Sept 2016, Leicester, UK.
30. Hard to reach populations and sensitive questions in surveys: evidence on self-reported sexual identity in the UK. *InGrid Summer School “Reaching out to hard-to-survey groups among the poor”* Louvain, 2016.
31. Does the switch to a mixed-mode design increase panel attrition? Evidence from the UKHLS Innovation Panel. *5th Panel Survey Methods Workshop*, Berlin, 2016.
32. Estimating the correlation between sensible behaviours dealing with item missing data. *12th Conference of the European Sociological Association*, Prague, 2015.
33. Does the switch to a mixed-mode design increase panel attrition? Evidence from the UKHLS Innovation Panel. *6th European Survey Research Association Conference*, Reykjavik, 2015.
34. Estimating the correlation between sensible behaviours dealing with item missing data. *6th European Survey Research Association (ESRA) Conference* 13-17 July 2015, Reykjavik, Island.
35. Does the switch to a mixed-mode design increase panel attrition? Evidence from the UKHLS Innovation Panel. *Understanding Society Conference 2015*, Colchester, UK.
36. Does a mixed-mode design increase panel attrition? Evidence from the UKHLS Innovation Panel *Internet Survey Methodology Workshop*, Bolzano, December 2014.
37. The effect of a Sequential Mixed-Mode Design on Panel Attrition: Evidence from an Experiment of the Understanding Society Innovation Panel. *Internet Survey Methodology Workshop* 1-4 December 2014, Bolzen, Italy.
38. Escort’s websites: A source of data for prostitution studies? *Workshop on Advanced Research Methods* 14 Sept 2012, Urbino, Italy.

Dissemination activities

1. Talk to the general public: “I dati digitali nella ricerca sociale”. Milan Digital week. “Dati digitali e ricerca sociale: sfide di equità e sostenibilità”. 18th March 2021. Online event.
2. Organisation of the event: “Dati digitali e ricerca sociale: sfide di equità e sostenibilità”. Milan Digital Week 2021, 18th March 2021. Online event.
3. Talk to the general public: “*Divario digitale grigio e benessere degli anziani*”. Milan Digital week. “Anziani online: accesso e suo, vantaggi, svantaggi e ruolo dell’alfabetizzazione”. 19th March 2021. Online event.

4. Talk to the general public: “L’uso delle nuove tecnologie e il benessere degli anziani”. Milan Digital week. “Anziani online: accesso e suo, vantaggi, svantaggi e ruolo dell’alfabetizzazione”. 29th May 2020. Online event.
5. Talk to the general public: “Gli anziani e l’utilizzo delle tecnologie dell’informazione e della comunicazione”, 14th, 21st, 28th October 2020, Università della terza età, Arcore, MB.
6. Talk to the general public: *Talk in Campus. Society from below*. Colloquium on: “The perils of perception” by Bobby Duffy. Department of Sociology and Social Research. University of Milan-Bicocca. February 2019, Milan, Italy.
7. Talk to the general public: “La condizione della donna Indiana” (The status of women in India) The Italian secretary of medical students, Circolo la Giovane Italia, Parma, Italy, 11 Mar 2010.
8. Talk to the general public: “Prevention of child abandonment. Analysis of a development project implemented in Braşov, Romania”. Giornata dei Talenti, Nuova Accademia delle Belle Arti, December 2009, Milan, Italy.

Press: non academic writing

Gabriele Cerati, Alessandra Gaia, Emanuela Sala (2020, March 27th) “Rischio esclusione sociale per gli anziani senza rete” *La voce* Retrieved from: <https://www.lavoce.info/archives/64408/rischio-esclusione-sociale-per-gli-anziani-senza-rete/>

Fellowships and awards

“Premio Giovani Talenti 2019”, 3rd place, prize addressed to assegnisti di ricerca and researchers under the age of 36 to recognise the quality, originality and impact of scientific production (premio destinato a ricercatori al di sotto di 36 anni titolari di Assegno di Ricerca di tipo A o B, o di posizioni RTDA, RTDB e RU per riconoscere qualità, originalità e impatto della produzione scientifica) – €1000

ESRA Travel and Stay Grant 2019. Grant to attend the 8th Conference of the European Survey Research Association (ESRA) – €500

European Consortium for Social Research (ECSR) Internship grant. Grant to undertake a visiting period at INED – €1400

University of Essex – Proficio Course Development Grants (2016) grant to develop a 20 hours course in Research Methods – £1.800 – declined due to incompatibility

InGRID visiting grant (2015), grant to undertake a research visit at the Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) of the University of Essex, with the project “A comparison of self-reported sexual identity using direct and indirect questioning” – €2.436 – declined due to incompatibility

German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) grant for the reimbursement of expenses pertaining to the participation in the 4th GESIS Summer School in Survey Methodology, 2015.

European Commission, Erasmus for Traineeship Scholarship (2014) €1.440.

Selected project in the Understanding Society Innovation Panel Competition 2014 (with Noah Uhrig). Project title: “A comparison of self-reported sexual identity using direct and indirect questioning”.

European Commission, Scholarship for Short Term Scientific Mission under the COST action IS1209 “Comparing European Prostitution Policies: Understanding Scales and Cultures of Governance” €2.000

University of Milan-Bicocca, Ph.D. in “Applied Sociology and Methodology of Social Research” scholarship (2011 – 2014).

University of Milan-Bicocca, Ph.D. in “Urban and Local European Studies” scholarship (2011 – 2014) – declined due to incompatibility

Catholic University and University of Milan-Bicocca, PhD scholarship (2011 -2014) – declined due to incompatibility

Referee activities and services to the research community

Member of the editorial board of: *Quality and Quantity*

Peer review for: *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, *Survey Research Methods*, *Social Science Computer Review*, *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, *Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia*, *Archives of Public Health*, *CLS working paper series*.

Reviewer for grant applications: *Independent External Experts for the COST Open Call 2020-1 Evaluation*

Professional association memberships

European Sociological Association (ESA), *European Survey Research Association (ESRA)*.

Additional training

- 07/2019 “Advanced Social Network Analysis”. Essex Summer School in Social Science and Data Analysis.
- 10/2018 “Multilevel modelling”, University of Bristol, Online course
- 03/2017 “Question Testing Methods”, University of Essex, Colchester
- 06/2016 “Reaching out to hard-to-survey groups among the poor”, InGrid Summer School, Leuven.
- 01/2016 “Supervising Quantitative Research Degrees”, Administrative Data Research Network, CALLS Hub, Centre for Longitudinal Studies, CLOSER, NCRM, UK Data Service and Understanding Society, London.
- 08/2015 “Item non-response and multiple imputation”, GESIS Summer School, Cologne.
- 02/2014 “Designing effective web surveys”, Courses in Applied Social Surveys (CASS), London.
- 07/2013 “Choosing the right software tool for implementing web surveys”, Short course of the European Survey Research Association, Ljubljana.

- 07/2012 “Applied research methods with hidden, marginal and excluded populations”, Essex Summer School in Social Science Data Analysis, 1 week intensive course.
- 04/2011 “Human rights in Europe”, Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI), Milan.
- 05/2006 “Africa economies, conflicts, reforms and cooperation in the African area”. Bocconi University, Milan in collaboration with Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI), Milan, Italy.

Non-academic employment

- 07 – 09/2011 Research Assistant, Synergia S.r.l., Milan.
- 05 – 06/2011 Ethical Information Analyst. Covalence Ethical Quote. Geneva.
- 04/2010 – 04/2011 Research Assistant. Intesa Sanpaolo Research Centre, Milan.
- 01 – 04/2010 Project Officer. Project for People ONLUS, Milan.
- 06 – 08/2009 Research Assistant. United Nations Headquarter, Department of Economics and Social Affairs, New York.
- 07 – 09/2008 Research Assistant. The World Food Programme of the United Nations, Rome.

Softwares

Good knowledge of STATA, SPSS, and Qualtrics. Basic knowledge of R-Studio.

Language skills

Italian: Mother tongue; English: Fluent (C1); Spanish: Fluent (C1)

Volunteering

- 2001 – 2012 Bambini in Romania ONLUS, Milan, Italy. Voluntary Service
- 2010 – 2012 Associazione Lule, Abbiategrasso, Milan, Italy. Voluntary Service