

People Haven't Had Enough of Experts: Technocratic Attitudes among Citizens in Nine European Democracies

Short title: People Haven't Had Enough of Experts

Keywords: technocracy, attitudes, experts, elitism, political representation, populism, factor analysis, latent class analysis

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Research for this article has been supported by the Department of Political Science, University of Zurich. For comments on earlier versions of the article, we are grateful to Malu Gatto, Lukas Leemann, Marco Steenbergen, Lukas Stoetzer, Andrej Zaslove as well as to the journal's anonymous reviewers.

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Abstract

Political representation theory postulates that technocracy and populism mount a twofold challenge to party democracy, while also standing at odds with each other in the vision of representation they advocate. Can these relationships be observed empirically at the level of citizen preferences and what does this mean for alternative forms of representation? The article investigates technocratic attitudes among citizens following three dimensions – Expertise, Elitism, Anti-politics – and, using latent class analysis, identifies citizen groups that follow a technocratic, populist and party-democratic profile in nine European democracies. Results show that technocratic attitudes are pervasive and can be meaningfully distinguished from populist attitudes, though important overlaps remain. We investigate differences in demographics and political attitudes among citizen profiles that are relevant to political behaviour and conclude by highlighting the role that citizens' increasing demands for expertise play in driving preferences for alternative types of governance.

The data and materials required to verify the computational reproducibility of the results, procedures and analyses in this article are available on the American Journal of Political Science Dataverse within the Harvard Dataverse Network, at:
<https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/0MOPI4>.

Word count: 9560

In the run up to the UK's referendum on EU membership in 2016, Justice Secretary Michael Gove, a leading figure in the "Leave Campaign" claimed that "people in this country have had enough of experts" in an effort to rebuke economic expert opinions regarding the repercussions of Brexit. While the British people went on to vote in favour of leaving the European Union, the validity of his claim remains doubtful. Evidence from mass surveys suggest that there is a large group of citizens – in many countries a majority – who would have experts rather than politicians govern according what they think is best for their country.¹ Further, in the face of impending crises of recent years, technocratic cabinets have been put into place in a number of countries, sparking a debate on the relationship between technocracy and democracy.² At the same time, a well-documented populist backlash is taking place, often interpreted as a reaction to ineffective democratic pluralism and "out-of-touch" technocratic governance. It appears therefore that many democratic governments are being challenged by demands for both more responsiveness and responsibility at the same time.

Extant work suggests that citizens with populist attitudes believe politics should be guided by the will of the people, unconstrained by pluralist procedures and the intervention of elites. This article claims that on the other side of this spectrum, there are citizens who favour delegating decisions to experts, even if it means disregarding the people's will. Experts are perceived to possess the competence to address complex problems, without being misguided

¹ Wave 6 of the World Values Survey (2010–14) shows that more than 80% of Romanian and Polish citizens are favourable to being governed by independent experts, while this percentage is more than 50% across Western democracies. The question reads: "would you say it is a very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad way of governing this country? Having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country".

² See Brunclík and Parížek (2018); McDonnell and Valbruzzi (2014); Pastorella (2016). The Italian government of Mario Monti (2011) and Greek government of Lukas Papademos (2011) attracted the most attention, especially as their programme was, in large part, to implement financial austerity measures. Other recent technocratic cabinets in Europe include the Bajnai government in Hungary (2009) and the Ciolos government in Romania (2016).

by short-term electoral interests that constrain politicians and parties. They also do not need to be responsive to an often uninformed citizenry that does not have the time and competence to make policy decisions. Yet, unlike populist attitudes, mass attitudes towards the role of technocratic experts and support for responsible (rather than responsive) decision making, have not been the object of systematic empirical analysis.³

Theoretical work has pointed to the relevance of two types of challenge to party democracy – the populist and the technocratic (Caramani 2017). While these challenges operate across all elements of the political system, nationally and supra-nationally, citizens’ attitudes are particularly important (Pastorella 2016; Radaelli 1999). Yet empirical research in this area has exclusively focussed on populism (Akkerman et al. 2014, 2017; Castanho Silva et al. 2017, 2019; Oliver and Rahn 2016; Schulz et al. 2017; Van Hauwaert and Van Kessel 2018).⁴ We argue that technocratic attitudes represent a parallel potential challenge to party democracy (Bersou and Pastorella 2017). In this article, we build on theoretical treatments of technocracy and its relation to both populism and party democracy. The article assesses the extent to which technocratic attitudes exist among citizens, whether they can be measured, and how they relate to populist attitudes in challenging support for democratic politics. Our goal is to better understand and accurately capture current dissatisfaction with the workings of party-based representative democracy that stem, not from a wish for more citizen involvement, but from the desire for more effective, responsible and expert-based governance.

³ The classical model of political representation as mediated by parties (APSA 1950; Schattschneider 1942) has recently come under strain (Mair 2009) in its attempt to bridge responsiveness to the people and responsible decision making.

⁴ Elitism, a key dimension of technocracy, has been addressed to some extent by populism scholars. One of populism’s original conceptualizations includes anti-elitism as a dimension of populist attitudes (Akkerman et al. 2014) and more recent scholarship views elitism as the mirror image of populism – simply reversing the normative positions of elites and the people (Hawkins and Littvay 2019).

The article makes a threefold contribution. First, we conceptualize and capture empirically technocratic attitudes. We measure them along three dimensions of Elitism, Expertise and Anti-politics. We also ask how the technocratic attitude profile overlaps with the populist and party-democratic ones and what differences exist concerning their preferences for political representation.⁵ We find that, although elitism (as a critique of “the people”) is incompatible with populism, in practice populist attitudes go hand in hand with a preference for expertise in politics. Second, we investigate whether or not there are citizens harbouring technocratic attitudes in established democracies, in what numbers and with what effect. We identify citizens who are characterized by a technocratic profile, as well as a populist and party-democratic one among others, based on their response patterns on technocratic and populist survey questions. We find that citizens who hold technocratic attitudes form a sizeable group in many of the countries under study. Third, we ask about the differences among citizens, focussing on the technocratic, populist and party-democratic profiles in terms of demographic characteristics and attitudes. We find that, while citizens with technocratic attitudes are dissatisfied with current representative systems, they are distinct from citizens with populist attitudes; they are more educated and interested in politics, have higher political trust, and are not attracted to the extremes of the left–right ideological spectrum.

Being able to distinguish between populist and technocratic attitudes vastly increases our ability to understand the current challenges faced by mainstream parties and governments in established democracies on the demand side. Given that, so far, no political force has tried to mobilize this segment of the electorate, the potential implications for political behaviour and party competition are considerable. We conclude with such a discussion and the possibilities

⁵ The theoretical comparison of populism and technocracy as types of representation has pointed to areas of overlap, in particular their anti-pluralist view of society and the objective and independent solutions (Bickerton and Invernizzi Accetti 2017; Caramani 2017).

for further research on voter and elite behaviour.

From Technocracy to Technocratic Attitudes

Technocracy can be understood as the exercise of political power by technical elites (as opposed to democratically elected ones), with competence, expertise, neutrality and efficiency as their source of legitimacy and with responsible trusteeship as principle of representation (Caramani 2017; Centeno 1993, 1994; Dargent 2015; Fischer 1990; Meynaud 1969). Technocracy is a form of representation and power that can take various grades, from advisory positions for experts, to the appointment of independent technocratic prime ministers or ministers to the executive or even entire cabinets or regimes.

At the heart of technocracy rests a representation principle that legitimizes acting on behalf of the people based on knowledge and expertise, aiming at an independent identification and implementation of objective solutions to societal problems, which ensures long-term progress (Habermas 2015; Radaelli 1999).⁶ Competence and merit form the basis for membership into the elite (as opposed to privilege or popular support). Using its skills and scientific expertise, this “knowledge elite” is better placed to provide effective solutions to complex social problems (Bersch 2016). In addition, since technocrats are independent from short-term partisan or ideological interests, they are free from the constraints of serving parts of society (groups, classes, networks). They are not bound to popular approval and, hence, can provide responsible governance with a long-term perspective for the betterment of the entire community. Representation follows the “trustee” over the “delegate” model and the responsible

⁶ According to Pitkin (1967), active representation (differently than descriptive and symbolic representation) implies acting on behalf and in the interest of those represented.

over the responsive mandate (Mair 2009).

Technocracy is elitist at its core. It does not shy away from identifying an elite – based on its expertise, superior academic credentials, intellect and know-how – distinct from ordinary people. This elite is comprised by “those who know best” how to guide society and is contrasted to ordinary citizens, who are less equipped in terms of skills and time. The elitism of technocracy is, in principle, compatible with the existence of a political elite. Crucially however, this elite needs to display competence and be selected based on merit. Technocracy excludes the political elite, when this is perceived to act in an over-responsive, short-term manner and to serve particularistic interests. Technocracy is “anti-political” not because it is anti-elitist but because the political class is selected through parties and elections, which undermines their merit and ability to govern responsibly.

Technocracy entails a two-fold criticism of representative party democracy. First, from the elitist perspective mentioned above, technocracy is critical of democracy for its reliance on popular support, which binds decision makers to short-termism and responsiveness to uninformed citizens. The second criticism is anti-partisan, directed against political parties that aim to represent parts of society, sectional interests and particular ideologies that hinder the advancement of society as a whole.⁷ In the technocratic mind-set, what is “right” and “good” for society is objective and does not need to be aggregated from a plurality of subjective interests.⁸ Parties and interest groups are damaging to the prospects of societal prosperity. This

⁷ Technocratic representation shares similarities with the concept of “stealth democracy” in its criticism of democratic politics as ineffective and of politicians as unable to act in best interest of the country (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002). However, while it registers preferences for experts (over politicians or the people), this approach groups experts together with successful business people and focuses mostly on decision-making processes. We aim to go further, both conceptually and empirically, to study technocratic attitudes among the three dimensions of Elitism, Anti-politics and Expertise.

⁸ Society’s interests are considered to be “unattached” (Pitkin 1967), objective and “good for all” (Rehfeld 2011) rather than derived from the subjective preferences of specific groups.

Anti-politics dimension of technocracy questions the effectiveness of the political establishment and criticizes the processes through which party-based democracy aims to find solutions for society (that is, through competition among groups for the allocation of resources).⁹

Finally, technocracy is based on the superiority of expertise and the scientific approach to the social world. It entails the belief that an essentially positivist “best solution” or “truth” for society as a whole can be identified scientifically and independently (Shils 1956). Expertise is therefore a necessary complement to the aforementioned dimensions of Elitism and Anti-politics, emphasizing the role of rational speculation. Technocracy prioritizes output, efficiency and optimal outcomes over compromise, and views society as a highly complex machine with moving parts that need to operate effectively. The technocratic mentality entails the belief that there are neutral, non-ideologically committed experts, able to enact solutions to governance problems after evaluating evidence and facts.

We expect that citizens who hold technocratic attitudes agree with statements that reflect the three dimensions of Elitism, Anti-politics and Expertise. As theoretical arguments suggest, technocratic attitudes will stand in a close but, at the same time, conflicting relationship with populist ones (Bickerton and Invernizzi Accetti 2017; Caramani 2017). In contrast to technocracy’s Elitism, defined here as a critique of ordinary people’s involvement in politics, populism is a thin-centred ideology based on people-centrism and the sovereignty of the people (Mudde 2004). It exalts ordinary people for their wisdom, common sense and moral superiority. Further, it follows a Manichean world-view that separates it into “good and evil” groups, where anyone contradicting the will of the people must be part of the corrupt elite (Hawkins et al.

⁹ Allocation is based on neutral analysis rather than unequal power distributions between groups. The logic is not one of power and “who gets what” (Lasswell 1936) but rather one of objective identification of ideal allocation of values.

2012).¹⁰ Yet, similarly to technocracy, populism is anti-pluralist and recognises a unitary interest of society. Populism strongly distrusts parties and politicians, both as members of “the evil elite” and as carriers of particularistic interests. In this sense, populism and technocracy share Anti-politics. Populism launches a forceful critique of party-based democracy and its procedures, although this critique has its source in the lack of responsiveness to the will of the people rather than in the lack of responsible governance. Thus, it is important to separate between technocratic and populist attitudes; otherwise, it might be that our instruments are simply capturing citizen diffuse dissatisfaction. i.e. an “anything but politics” stance.¹¹

We understand party-based representative democracy as a broadly defined “status-quo” in the triangular relationship with technocracy and populism. It is supported by a set of distinctive characteristics developed in democratic theory against which technocracy and populism pose a double challenge. These features include the possibility of legitimate opposition, the representation of plurality by intermediary agencies, the supply of distinguishable aggregative ideologies and proposals by political actors, the competition for leader selection and the institutionalization of checks and balances (Dahl 1956). Citizen preferences for this type of representation stand in contrast to a monolithic people’s sovereignty, in the case of populism, and to elitist independent expertise unchecked by political representatives, in the case of technocracy.

¹⁰ Who precisely belongs to the true, ordinary and virtuous people is a function of the populist’s ideology. Left-wing populists tend to adopt an inclusionary vision, whereas right-wing populists adopt an exclusionary one. In a similar fashion, the identity of the demonised “corrupt elite” may also depend on the type of populism.

¹¹ On this inconsistency in citizen preferences see Hibbing and Theiss-Morse’s (2002) findings for a simultaneous wish for more and less citizen involvement in politics and Egan’s (2014) finding of double-peaked policy preferences, aptly named “do something politics”.

Technocratic, Populist and Party-Democratic Attitudes

Populist attitudes among citizens have been defined and measured in various empirical studies, tapping into anti-establishment sentiments, people-centrism, anti-pluralistic view of society, anti-elitism and the Manichean world-view.¹² Technocratic attitudes, however, remain largely unexplored. A first attempt was made by Robert Putnam's (1977) study on the technocratic mentality of bureaucrats. Although Putnam's typology was created specifically for the study of civil servants, it includes ideas for the measurement of objectivity, political neutrality and scientific view of policy making, which are useful for technocratic attitudes in broader citizenries.

The concept of "stealth-democracy" (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002) combines citizen preferences for less popular involvement and more effective decision making carried out by unelected experts or business people. The authors find that a large chunk of Americans would welcome a more detached and efficient way of governing that can bypass the commotion of politics.¹³ While we consider the concept of stealth democracy to be close to technocratic attitudes for its emphasis on problem-solving and preference for experts over politicians or the people, work on populist attitudes by Hawkins et al. (2012) surprisingly considered the stealth democracy questions to be akin to populism. This is already testament to the contested relationship between technocratic and populist attitudes. Stealth democratic attitudes do register

¹² See Akkerman et al. (2014, 2017); Castanho Silva et al. (2017, 2019); Oliver and Rahn (2016); Van Hauwaert and Van Kessel (2018); Elchardus and Spruyt (2012); Hawkins et al. (2012). Schultz et al. (2017) use three dimensions of populism (people centrism, anti-elitism and people sovereignty) instead of one as in Akkerman et al. (2014).

¹³ The survey items used are: (1) "It would be better for the country if politicians stopped talking and concentrated on solving actual problems"; (2) "compromise in politics is really selling out one's principles"; (3) "this country would run better if political decisions were left up to successful business leaders"; (4) "this country would run better if political decisions were left up to experts instead of politicians and citizens".

frustration with politicians and political outputs, which is shared by populism and technocracy, but the emphasis it places on elites, raises a question regarding the “anti-elitism” of populism. More recently, Bertou and Pastorella (2017) used the single survey item asking respondents if they consider having “experts, not government” making political decisions to be a good form of governance (used in the “stealth democracy” index and in the elitism measure by Akkerman et al. 2014), as a proxy for technocratic attitudes to investigate their determinants and sources of cross-country variation.

We aim to go beyond these contributions by addressing the three goals spelled out in the introduction. The first is to measure technocratic attitudes based on the three dimensions of Elitism, Anti-politics and Expertise, as well as to identify the overlaps and tensions between technocracy and populism as two challenges to the democratic party-based system. We have three expectations. First, theoretical treatments mentioned above lead us to expect a shared basis for Anti-politics between technocracy and populism, given their anti-pluralistic nature and criticisms they levy on parties, politicians and elections. Second, existing theory considers populism essentially anti-elitist, and thus leads us to expect that technocracy and populism clash on the Elitism dimension. It is true that some scholars have stressed the role of leaders as the only ones having the extraordinary competences to represent the will of the people (Mueller 2016) and hence provide an alternative basis for elite leadership compatible with populism.¹⁴ Nevertheless, most scholarship views populism as the juxtaposition of the “virtuous people” against a “corrupt elite”. The precise empirical relationship represents an unresolved puzzle, which the measurement of technocratic attitudes alongside populist ones allows us to address. Third, concerning Expertise, technocracy’s reliance on independent scientific speculation to

¹⁴ In terms of empirical evidence, prior studies have shown that elitist statements that make explicit reference to independent expertise are positively related to populist attitudes (Akkerman et al. 2014).

guide policy places it at odds with the populist reliance on people's will as sources for policy. While existing theoretical treatments are not explicit on the relationship between Expertise and populism, some claim that populists may attack evidence-based reasoning, considering it another tool of a corrupt elite (Hawkins and Littvay 2019). We expect that preferences for highly skilled and educated experts over the less knowledgeable people and politicians, clashes with populism's belief in the wisdom of ordinary people.

The second goal is to identify among the population citizen groups with technocratic, populist and party-democratic attitudes. Again, we have three expectations. First, to identify people who harbour technocratic attitudes, we expect a combination of a strong Elitist, Expertise and Anti-politics stance with an aversion to the people-centrism and people sovereignty of populism. Second, citizens who espouse populist attitudes can be expected to hold strong people-centric preferences, an aversion to elitism and expertise in politics, but share an anti-politics stance. Third, we expect citizens with party-democratic attitudes, those who fall on the third angle of the technocracy–populism–party democracy triangle, to reject anti-political views, essentially supporting a pluralist democratic vision of representation, where elites are competing and governing through political parties and elections. They should reject populist messages of relying on the unmediated will of the people and should also reject technical expertise that is not sanctioned through democratic electoral processes.

The third goal is to determine how these three groups of citizens differ in their demographics and other attitudes. First, technocratic-minded citizens are expected to be highly educated, given the emphasis placed on the superior skills of a knowledge-elite and the scientific approach to politics. This should be a point of contrast between those with technocratic and those with populist attitudes (Hawkins and Littvay 2019). Second, we expect them to show low trust in political institutions, given their criticism of politics as irresponsible

and ineffective. Citizens who harbor technocratic attitudes should have lower political trust than partisan citizens, however, they should be more trusting than those with populist attitudes, who are clearly against the “evil” corrupt elite and institutions that do not immediately enforce the people’s will. While technocratic-minded citizens reject the inefficiency and short-termism of pluralist democracy and parties, they are not willing to reject political institutions altogether and prefer political elites to plebiscitary processes. Finally, due to technocracy’s emphasis on problem solving and pragmatism, we expect that technocratic-minded citizens are not likely to show ideological extremism on either side of the left–right spectrum, again an important distinction between them and populist citizens.¹⁵ Technocracy is non-ideological in principle (Centeno 1993). In reality technocratic experiences point to an affinity between technocracy and neo-liberal economic policies, but always in the guise of objectivity.

Operationalization and Data

To measure technocratic attitudes we created a battery of 12 items. We relied on a combination of sources to formulate attitude statements that tap into the three dimensions.¹⁶ The items are phrased as statements with which respondents can agree/disagree on a seven-point scale. Some statements refer to a single actor, while others juxtapose two actors among experts, the people and politicians. Depending on where the emphasis is placed, items are assigned to the relevant

¹⁵ The article does not investigate the implications of such attitudes for voting behaviour although one could expect citizens who follow a technocratic profile to reject populist parties. While partisan citizens would find a natural object of support in established parties, it is unclear how technocratic-minded citizens would vote.

¹⁶ Sources include Putnam’s study of civil servants, the stealth democracy and populism literature, as well as recent British Election Studies that include items capturing anti-elitism and anti-intellectualism.

dimension.¹⁷ Items are presented in Table 1:

- Four items tap into Elitism and the limited political abilities of ordinary people. EL1 and EL3 juxtapose people’s lack of political knowledge with that of experts, while EL2 follows a “trustee” model of representation, suggesting leaders should make decisions according to their best judgement.¹⁸ EL4 suggests that people’s particularistic interests is evidence of their lack of understanding.
- Four items, EXP1–EXP4, tap into Expertise with an emphasis on skills and knowledge. EXP1 and EXP4 focus on the complexities of modern governance and the need for problem solving, while EXP2 and EXP3 emphasize the need for leaders with superior education and a scientific approach to society’s problems.
- Finally, AP1–AP4 tap into Anti-politics and citizens’ dissatisfaction with representative politics. AP1 contrasts experts with elected politicians whereas AP3 and AP4 criticize the short-termism and partisan interests of representatives. AP2 takes aim at political parties.

In addition, we include a series of items used in the populism literature to gauge populist attitudes, focusing on people-centrism, popular sovereignty and a Manichean outlook. Table 2 presents the items as well as their source. We acknowledge that there is an ongoing debate about

¹⁷ The use of seven-point scales for attitude measurement offers a wide enough number of response categories to gather information on the strength and distribution of respondent attitudes, yet is concise enough to avoid a central tendency bias (Alwin and Krosnick 1991; Miller 1956; Petrzela et al. 2013; Schwartz 2003).

¹⁸ Item EL3 is reverse coded and is taken from the British Election Study 2016 where it appears as a measure for anti-intellectualism.

Table 1 Survey items measuring technocratic attitudes

<i>Items</i>	<i>Scale</i>	<i>Phrasing</i>
EL1	Elitism	Ordinary people don't know what policies are good for them.
EL2		Political leaders should make decisions according to their best judgment, not the will of the people.
EL3		I'd rather put my trust in the wisdom of ordinary people than the opinions of experts. (R)
EL4		If people were knowledgeable enough, everyone would agree on the political decisions that are best for the country.
EXP1	Expertise	Politicians should be like managers and fix what does not work in society.
EXP2		The leaders of my country should be more educated and skilled than ordinary citizens.
EXP3		Social problems should be addressed based on scientific evidence, not ideological preferences.
EXP4		The problems facing my country require experts to solve them.
AP1	Anti-politics	The best political decisions are taken by experts who are not politicians.
AP2		Political parties do more harm than good to society.
AP3		Politicians just want to promote the interests of those who vote for them and not the interest of the whole country.
AP4		Politicians spend all their time seeking re-election instead of fixing problems.

the single best scale and the dimensionality of populist attitudes, but we follow Akkerman et al. (2014), Van Hauwaeret and Van Kessel (2017) and others who have measured populist attitudes as a one-dimensional construct.¹⁹ To increase comparability with previous studies, the

¹⁹ For a discussion regarding the measurement of populist attitudes on a single or multiple dimensions see Castanho Silva et al. (2018). We do not adopt a multi-dimensional measure of populism as this article focusses on technocracy and its dimensions. In addition, anti-pluralist/anti-political and anti-elitist items are included in the survey and are part of the empirical analysis, albeit as dimensions of technocracy.

Table 2 Survey items measuring populist attitudes

<i>Items</i>	<i>Phrasing (as in original source)</i>	<i>Source of phrasing</i>
POP1	Politicians need to follow the will of the people.	Akkerman et al. (2014)
POP2	The people, not the politicians, should make our most important policy decisions.	Akkerman et al. (2014)
POP3	I would rather be represented by a citizen than by a specialized politician.	Akkerman et al. (2014)
POP4	I take pride in being an ordinary person.	Castanho Silva et al. (2019)
POP5	It's important for a political leader to be like the people he or she represents.	Castanho Silva et al. (2019)
POP6	Politics is ultimately a struggle between good and evil.	Akkerman et al. (2014)

phrasing of the populist items has been kept identical to the original source. Item POP6 captures the “Manichean” world-view in the populist thin ideology. Finally, the existing battery of items also allows us to tap into party-democratic attitudes, as these would be captured through anti-politics (reversely), populism (reversely) and elitism items.

All items were first piloted with a sample of British citizens and were subsequently included in a survey fielded in nine European democracies in 2017. The country sample includes two Eastern (Poland and Romania), two Northern (Sweden and the Netherlands), two Southern (Italy and Greece) and three Western European countries (Germany, France, the UK). Three countries experienced technocratic or technocrat-led cabinets in the past decade (see footnote 2). Further, coordinated market economies such as Sweden, the Netherlands and Germany, have a different experience of incorporating and relying on expertise through institutionalized practices (Maasen and Weingart 2005). Being able to measure technocratic attitudes and identify citizens with a technocratic profile in such diverse contexts supports the external validity of the findings.

The survey was administered online using a professional survey company that provides adult national samples representative of the population according to age, gender and location. Sample sizes for each country are between N=1,008 and 1,096 (Greece and the Netherlands respectively), adding to a total pool of N=9,449 respondents.²⁰

Measuring the Dimensions of Technocracy and their Relation to Populism

To determine the existence of the different dimensions of technocratic attitudes measured by the new survey items, we first carried out a preliminary factor analysis on all 12 items. Results for the pooled sample of nine countries, as well as for each country calculated individually, show the presence of three factors with an Eigenvalue larger than 1.0, which capture Elitism, Anti-politics and Expertise, and explain approximately 50% of the total variance (results not shown; see Appendix 2: 7-19 in SI). Expertise and Anti-politics items load on the two factors as expected. AP1 is the only item that cross-loads on both, as it refers to experts but emphasizes their superiority over politicians. We retain this item as a measure of Anti-politics, since in most country analyses it loads more heavily on Anti-politics. The items used to tap into elitist attitudes “behave” in a more unpredicted manner. EL3 loads heavily and negatively on Anti-politics (essentially capturing a pro-politics stance). EL4 loads on Elitism, but the loading is too low for the pooled sample and remains modest in most country analyses.

After this preliminary test, we address the first research question and include all technocracy and populist items in a factor analysis to test whether the latter form a distinct dimension and locate overlaps with technocracy (Table 3). We find the presence of four factors

²⁰ Information about respondent recruitment, how country samples compare to other surveys, as well as information about the distribution of post-stratification weights in each country, is available in the online Supplementary Information (SI) (Appendix 1: 3).

with an Eigenvalue larger than 1, capturing about 50% of the total variance.²¹ The three separate factors for technocratic items remain, whilst populist items group together in a fourth factor. We see some overlap between the Anti-politics and Populism items, with items POP2, POP3 and AP1 cross-loading on both those factors. This is to be expected, given that these items focus on a critical approach to parties and politicians.

Elitism items focus on the shortcomings of the political involvement for ordinary people. Accordingly, we find no overlap between these and Populism items, with the exception of POP6, tapping into the Manichean view of the world. This is in line with findings by Akkerman et al. (2014). As a statement that separates the world in two groups, it bears similarities with the Elitism embedded in technocracy, which separates the world in those who know what is “correct” and those who do not. To avoid tapping into alternative psychological tendencies, we follow their suggestion and remove this item from subsequent analyses. As discussed above, we remove items EL3 and EL4 from the calculations in the next section.

The Anti-politics items form a reliable scale with Chronbach’s $\alpha=.71$ ($\alpha=.61-.76$ in individual country analyses) and the Expertise items form a somewhat weaker scale with Chronbach’s $\alpha=.60$ ($\alpha=.46-.65$ in country analyses).²² The five remaining Populism items form a reliable scale with Chronbach’s $\alpha=.73$ ($\alpha=.61-.77$ in country analyses). The associations between the four constructs reveal that Expertise correlates positively with Anti-politics ($r=.400$ for the pooled sample and $r=.240-.510$ in country analyses, $p<.01$) and that it correlates positively, albeit more weakly, with Elitism ($r=.110$, $p<.01$ for the pooled sample and

²¹ Results are based on an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). A Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) model was also calculated and presented a similar structure. The full CFA model is available in SI (Appendix 2: 6-7).

²² The two Elitism items do not form a reliable scale but correlate positively ($r=.105-.270$ across countries) with the exception of the Netherlands, where they correlate negatively.

Table 3 Factor analysis: nine countries, all technocracy and populist items

<i>Items</i>	<i>Factor1</i> <i>Eigenvalue 4.4</i>	<i>Factor2</i> <i>Eigenvalue 2.0</i>	<i>Factor3</i> <i>Eigenvalue 1.4</i>	<i>Factor4</i> <i>Eigenvalue 1.1</i>
EL1				.632
EL2		-.479		.621
EL3	-.472		.385	
EL4			.353	.344
EXP1			.555	
EXP2			.685	
EXP3			.540	
EXP4			.658	
AP1	.471		.385	
AP2	.785			
AP3	.718			
AP4	.654			
POP1		.735		
POP2	.396	.496		
POP3	.560	.326		
POP4		.710		
POP5		.726		
POP6		.425		.486

Note: Results show item loadings following Principal Component Factoring and oblique rotation (Oblimin).²³ The four factors explain 48.5 per cent of variance. Loadings below .300 are omitted for ease of interpretation except when loading on proper factor.

$r=.006-.270$ in country analyses). Elitism and Anti-politics are not significantly associated (except in the Netherlands and Sweden, where $r=.120$ and $.150$ respectively, $p<.01$). This is to be expected as the two Elitism items focus on a critique of “ordinary people” and, in the case of item EL2, follow the trustee model of representation, whereby politicians prioritize their own judgment over the mandate from constituents. For this reason, we also find a negative association between the Elitism and Populism items. Elitism items clash with the people-centrism and anti-politics of populist attitudes. In the study by Akkerman et al. (2014) Elitism

²³ Results were also calculated using other factor extraction methods that do not assume communalities equal to 1. Results stay the same, with factor loadings and Eigenvalues scoring lower.

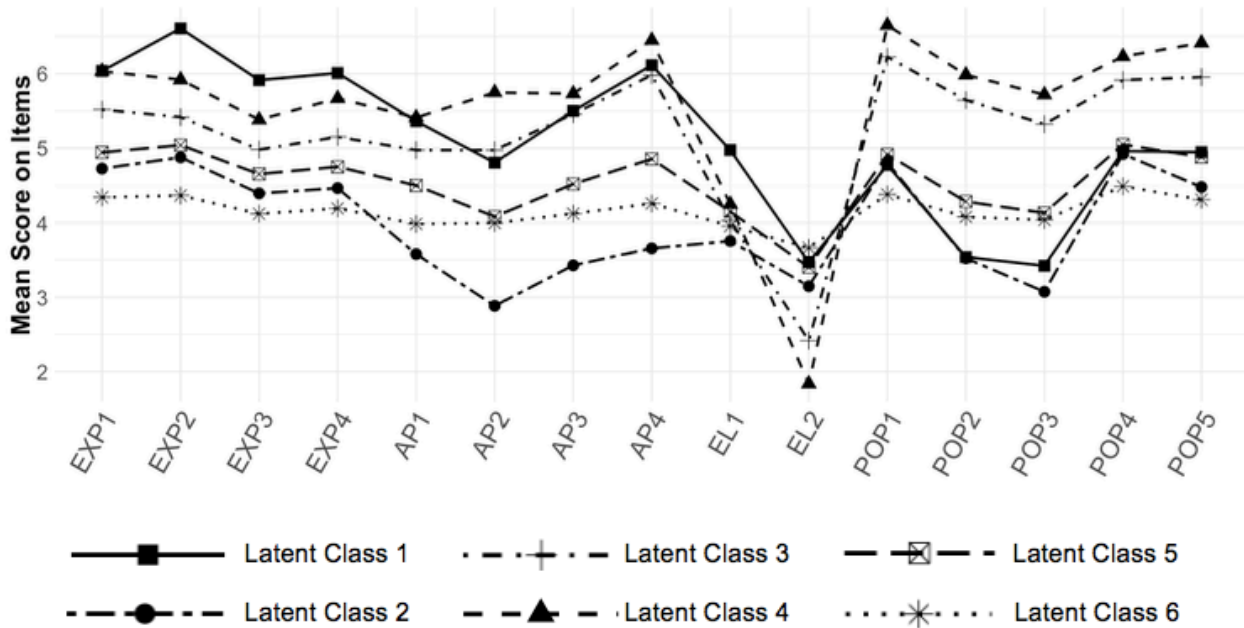
and Populism correlate positively, but Elitism includes items such as the statement “our country would be governed better if important decisions were left up to independent experts”, which in our case are better represented by Expertise or Anti-partisan items. In fact, one interesting result we shall return to is that Populism correlates positively and significantly with Expertise. As anticipated, Anti-politics and Populism scales are positively and significantly associated.²⁴

Identifying Technocratic, Populist and Party-Democratic Citizen Profiles

Having established a way to measure the dimensions of technocratic attitudes, the second question we address is whether we can identify citizens who exhibit the specific combination of item responses that form the basis of technocratic attitudes. We are looking for respondents who combine high scores on Expertise, Anti-politics and Elitism, with low scores on Populism. Latent Class Analysis (LCA) is a technique to investigate the existence of distinct “profiles” based on the similarities of people’s responses to survey questions (Hagenaars and Halman 1989; Magidson and Vermunt 2004). Unlike factor analysis, LCA examines the similarities of response patterns and is designed to study heterogenous groups among the population. Our aim is to identify substantively meaningful groups of people, in particular people who exhibit technocratic, populist and party-democratic profiles based on their responses to items of Expertise, Anti-politics, Elitism and Populism.

²⁴ Correlation coefficients between Populism and Expertise are $r=.170$, $p<.01$ for the pooled sample ($r=.140-.230$ in country analyses, except Greece, $r=-.080$ and Great Britain, $r=.070$). Populism and Anti-politics are correlated at $r=.440$, $p<.01$ in the pooled sample ($r=.270-.550$ in country analyses). Populism and Elitism are negatively correlated, $r=-.225$, $p<.01$ in the pooled sample ($r=-.338$ to $-.165$ in country analyses, with the exception of the Netherlands, $r=.070$). Full correlation matrices are presented in SI (Appendix 2: 16).

Figure 1 Profile plots for six-class LCA model: nine countries



First, we decide on the best model to describe our data based on goodness-of-fit statistics and researcher judgment. Second, we show each group’s mean response value on individual items and on the four scales. Third, we estimate the probability that respondents belong to each class and, assigning each respondent to one class following the modal probability of class membership, we calculate the size of each class and investigate its characteristics.²⁵

Figure 1 shows profile plots following a six-class model, using the pooled sample of nine countries. The six-class model fits our data well, with a lower Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) compared to the five-class model (BIC=446886 compared to 449008). These six latent

²⁵ While class assignment is probabilistic, we only take the modal probability and assign each respondent to that class. This means that we do not account for the class that would provide the “second best” fit for a respondent nor the level of probability of belonging to the assigned class (say, 90% as opposed to 45%). LCA ensures that respondents are grouped together solely based on their response patterns on these 15 survey items and, therefore, the consistency and size of the created classes can be interpreted meaningfully.

Table 4 Group profile mean scores on all dimensions and group size: nine countries

<i>Latent classes</i>	<i>Expertise</i>	<i>Anti-politics</i>	<i>Elitism</i>	<i>Populism</i>	<i>Class Size (%)</i>
Class 1 (<i>Technocratic</i>)	6.15	5.42	4.14	4.35	12.00
Class 2 (<i>Party-democratic</i>)	4.56	3.38	3.43	4.18	17.50
Class 3 (<i>Moderate Populist</i>)	5.24	5.33	3.22	5.83	25.00
Class 4 (<i>Populist</i>)	5.81	5.87	3.06	6.23	17.00
Class 5 (<i>Tracker</i>)	4.84	4.49	3.79	4.66	24.00
Class 6 (<i>Mid Responses</i>)	4.24	4.09	3.80	4.30	4.50
Overall	5.19	4.84	3.50	5.08	100.00

Notes: Models calculated using the poLCA package in R. Overall means calculated following class assignment for six classes (pooled sample) by modal posterior probability. Size refers to percentages of respondents assigned to each class.

classes constitute a mutually exclusive and exhaustive classification of citizens' profiles. Each line in the graph corresponds to one class of respondents. The lines trace the classes' mean score (seven-point scale on the y-axis) on each item. From these plots, we can discern the three profiles of interest to the goals set in this study: a technocratic (Class 1, square markers), a populist (Class 4, triangle markers) and a party-democratic profile (Class 2, circle markers).²⁶

Table 4 displays the mean scores of each class on the four scales, as well as the estimated size of each class. We label Class 1 *Technocratic*, as it exhibits the combination of responses associated to technocratic attitudes. It has the highest scores on the Expertise (6.15) and Elitism (4.14) scales, a high score on Anti-politics (5.42), but clearly below average and the second-lowest score on the Populism scale (4.35).

Class 4 has the highest Populism (6.23) and Anti-politics (5.87) scores and the lowest Elitism score (3.06). We label this class *Populist* as it follows the blend of dimensions in line

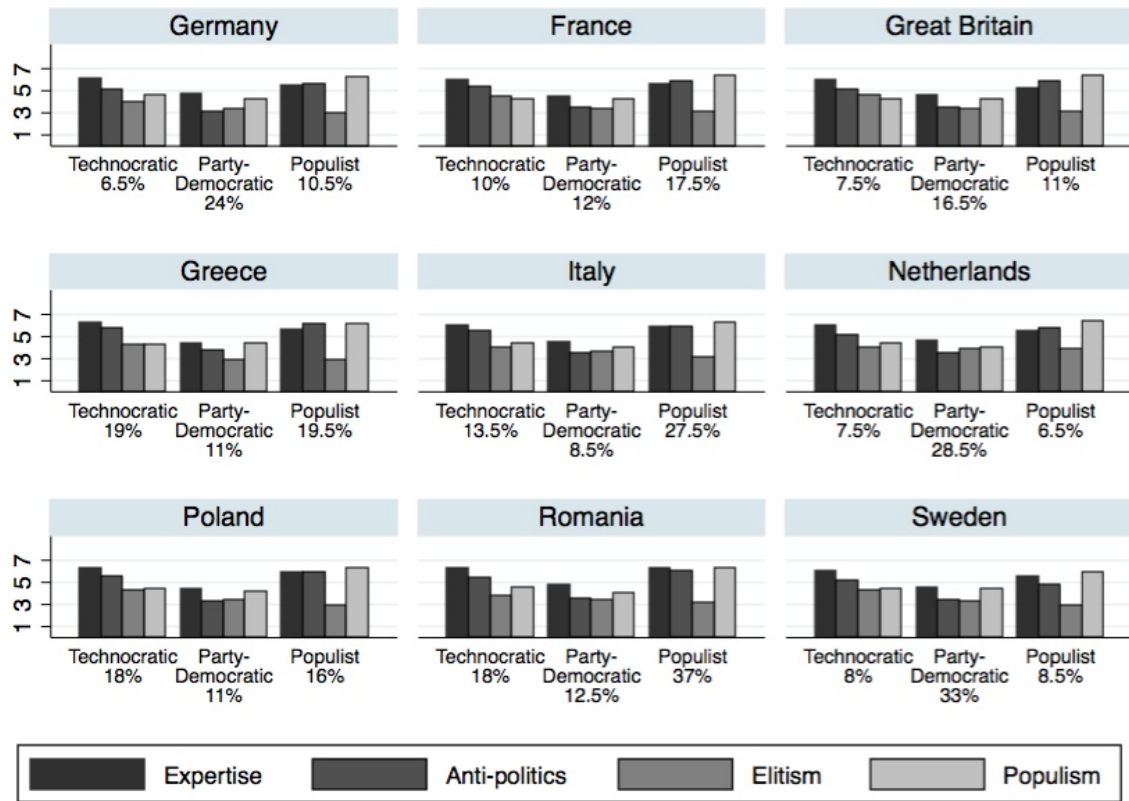
²⁶ The R package PoLCA for polytomous variable latent class analysis does not allow applying weights. As a robustness check, we have expanded the original dataset according to the sampling weight of each observation i ($obs_i \times weight_i \times 100$) and calculated a six-class model. Results and goodness-of-fit indicators are shown in SI (Appendix 3: 17). Class percentages are in line with those obtained in the non-weighted original dataset shown in the last column of Table 4. We use the original dataset for subsequent analyses.

with theoretical expectations. Class 3 is similar but more moderate. A surprising finding, relating to a theoretical puzzle mentioned above, is that populist profiles also register a strong preference for expertise in politics (Muller 2016). We consistently find across all nine countries, that there is no populism without expertise. This is in line with earlier empirical evidence suggesting populism emphasises expert problem solving. This preference for outsider expertise among citizens with populist attitudes poses further questions for scholars and points to a potential platform for populist leaders to appropriate forms of expertise in order to justify their political decisions.

Concerning the third corner of the “triangle” technocracy–populism–party democracy, Class 2 displays a combination of responses one would expect from citizens that embrace neither a populist view of democracy nor a technocratic legitimacy, and which we label *Party-democratic*. It scores low on Anti-politics, indicating citizens who accept electoral competition, compromise and intermediation by parties of plural interests in society. At the same time, they have the lowest score on Populism indicating that their democratic view is not “illiberal” in the sense of an uncritical and unconstrained reliance on a unitary people’s will. These are the citizens who believe in the role of parties and politicians and overall prefer the functioning of representative democracy to alternatives. However, they are not particularly anti-elitist (as political personnel is valued beyond its mere responsiveness) and trust the expertise of politicians (as indicated in the second-lowest score on Expertise).

Across the entire sample, the *Technocratic* class accounts for 12%. While the numbers vary across the nine countries, the number of citizens holding technocratic attitudes across Europe is by no means negligible. The *Party-democratic* class makes up 17.5% of respondents and the *Populist* class 17%. This means that approximately half of the respondents hold attitudes clearly indicative of the three visions of representation under study.

Figure 2 Country mean scores of *Technocratic*, *Populist* and *Party-democratic* classes on Expertise, Anti-politics, Elitism and Populism



The remaining three classes do not display clear profiles belonging to the technocracy–populism–party democracy triangular relationship. Class 3 follows a similar pattern as the *Populist* class, but is not as instructive for our purposes.²⁷ Class 5 (*Tracker*) groups together a relatively large chunk of respondents (24.0%) who appear to track average responses across all survey items and does not give an indication of preferences toward representation. Class 6 (*Mid responses*) includes a negligible percentage of respondents (4.5%) who appear to select the middle value across all items (value 4 on the 1–7 scale). In the following, therefore, the

²⁷ We label this class *Moderate populist* although due to its large size it is possible that it better captures a general sense of dissatisfaction and frustration with politics.

Table 5 Class assignment per country (%)

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Class 1 (Technocratic)</i>	<i>Class 2 (Party-democratic)</i>	<i>Class 3 (Moderate Populist)</i>	<i>Class 4 (Populist)</i>	<i>Class 5 (Tracker)</i>	<i>Class 6 (Mid Responses)</i>
Germany	6.5	24.0	27.0	10.5	27.0	5.0
France	10.0	12.0	29.0	17.5	26.5	5.5
Great Britain	7.5	16.5	29.0	11.0	30.0	6.0
Greece	19.0	11.0	28.0	19.5	18.5	3.0
Italy	13.5	8.5	28.0	27.5	16.5	5.5
Netherlands	7.5	28.5	19.0	6.5	34.0	4.5
Poland	18.0	11.0	26.5	16.0	26.5	2.5
Romania	18.0	12.5	19.5	37.0	10.5	2.0
Sweden	8.0	33.0	19.0	8.5	25.0	6.5

Notes: Class membership assigned by modal posterior probability following a six-class Latent Class Model for the pooled sample.

analysis focusses on the three profiles that fall more clearly on the triangular relationship and that allow us to address directly the challenge to party-democratic representation posed by technocratic and populist attitudes.

The results above refer to the pooled sample of respondents from nine very different European countries. However, we find similar patterns of citizen profiles across all nine countries. What differs is the relative class size. Figure 2 plots the mean scores on the four scales for the *Technocratic*, *Party-democratic* and *Populist* classes for each country, showing that these three citizen profiles across Europe indeed “behave” in a similar manner. This lends further support to our findings, showing that technocratic attitudes have a similar structure irrespectively of national political culture, historical trajectories and political developments. Table 5 presents the size of the profiles in each country. It shows technocratic attitudes have crystallized for a larger share of the population in the Southern and Central/Eastern European countries in our sample. Technocratic-minded citizens are plentiful in Greece (19%), Romania and Poland (18%), Italy (13.5%) and to a lesser degree France (10%), while in the remaining

Northern and Western European countries they constitute a smaller percentage of the population.

Comparing *Technocratic*, *Populist* and *Party-Democratic* Citizen Profiles

How, if at all, do citizens that follow a *Technocratic*, *Populist* or *Party-democratic* profile differ in terms of demographic characteristics, other attitudes and behaviour? The third goal of this article is to find out if and to what extent people who follow different approaches to politics also show differences in other characteristics.

We turn to evaluate the factors that make it more likely for respondents to be assigned to one rather than another class. We carry out multinomial logistic regressions with class assignment as the dependent variable and present results from the comparisons between assignment to the three classes of interest: the likelihood of being assigned to the *Populist* class as opposed to the *Technocratic (Model I)*; the likelihood of being assigned to the *Party-democratic* class as opposed to the *Technocratic (Model II)*; and the likelihood of being assigned to the *Populist* class as opposed to the *Party-democratic (Model III)*.²⁸

We examine the role of political interest, political trust, ideological self-placement and demographic characteristics (education, age, gender).²⁹ Table 6 shows the regression results.

²⁸ Full multinomial logistic regression results showing comparisons across all six classes are available in SI (Appendix 4: 20-21).

²⁹ Political interest is a four-point scale “not at all interested”, “not very interested”, “somewhat interested”, “very interested”. Political trust is measured on a seven-point scale and includes trust in the national parliament and in political parties (results do not change if variables are included separately). We do not include trust in the European Union, since its institutions are often perceived as more technocratic and non-responsive. Ideology is measured on a 10-point scale, from 1 “left” to 10 “right”. Education is operationalized in seven categories: primary, secondary, high school or apprenticeship, technical degree, university bachelor, master and Ph.D. (results are robust to alternative specifications).

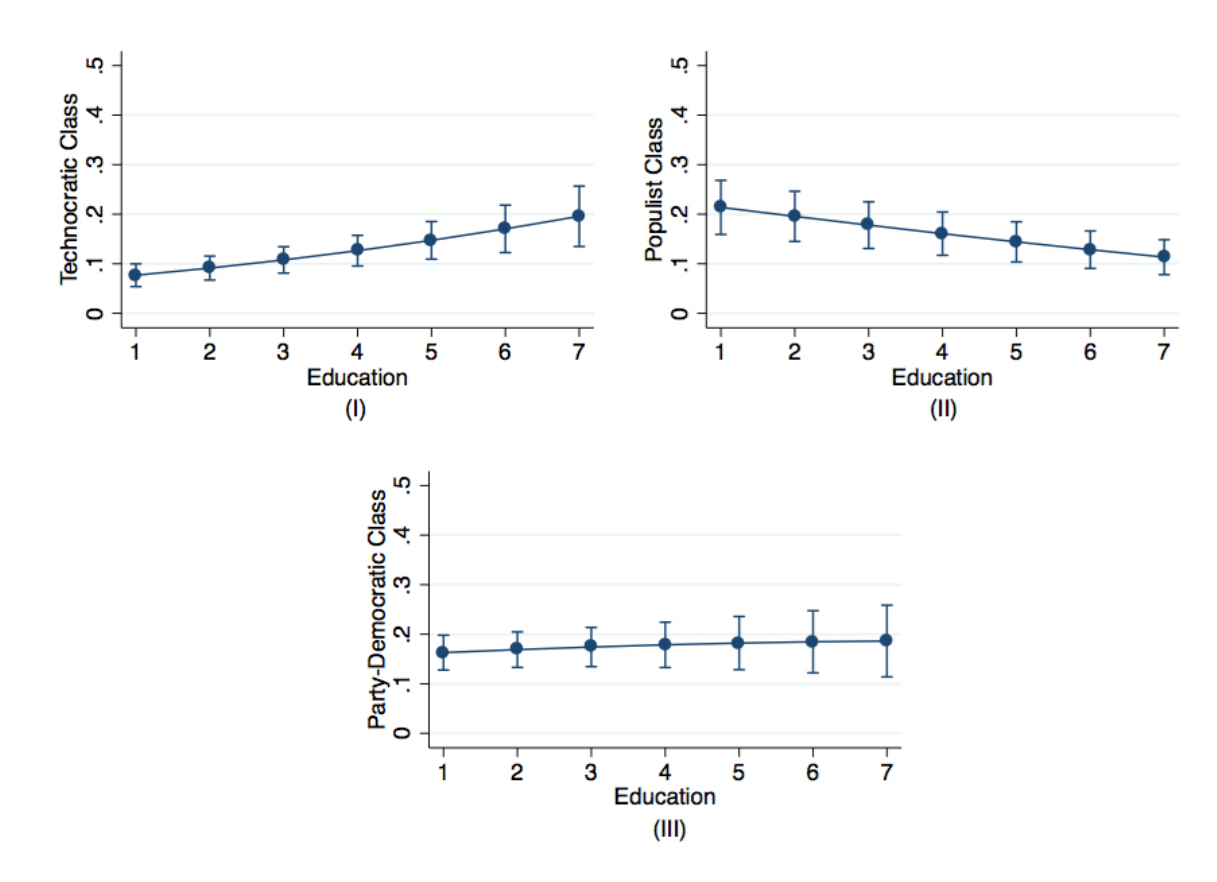
Table 6 Multinomial logistic regression

	<i>Model I</i>	<i>Model II</i>	<i>Model III</i>
<i>Dependent variable</i>	<i>Populist vs Technocratic profile</i>	<i>Party-Democratic vs Technocratic profile</i>	<i>Populist vs Party-Democratic profile</i>
<i>Independent variables</i>			
Political interest	-.17** (.08)	-.23* (.12)	.06 (.09)
Political trust	-.34*** (.08)	.52*** (.07)	-.86*** (.08)
Left-right ideology	-.54*** (.11)	-.19** (.08)	-.36*** (.09)
Left-right ideology (squared)	.05*** (.01)	.00 (.01)	.05*** (.01)
Education	-.27*** (.04)	-.13*** (.05)	-.15*** (.04)
Age	.01*** (.00)	-.01** (.00)	.02*** (.00)
Female	-.00 (.11)	-.16* (.09)	.16** (.07)
Urban	-.21* (.12)	-.33** (.14)	.12 (.19)
Constant	3.53*** (.33)	1.29*** (.29)	2.23*** (.27)
Observations	9,449	9,449	9,449

Notes: Entries show regression coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses. *** $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$, * $p < .1$, second stage multinomial logit models. Results are robust to the inclusion of country fixed effects and jackknife estimation clustering observations at the country level.

In line with expectations, we find that respondents' level of education is associated with class assignment, with higher education making it more likely for a respondent to belong to the *Technocratic* class as opposed to the *Populist* or *Party-democratic* class. A one unit increase in education reduces the odds of being assigned to the *Populist* or to the *Party-democratic* as

Figure 3 Predicted probabilities of assignment to the *Technocratic*, *Party-democratic* and *Populist* class for education

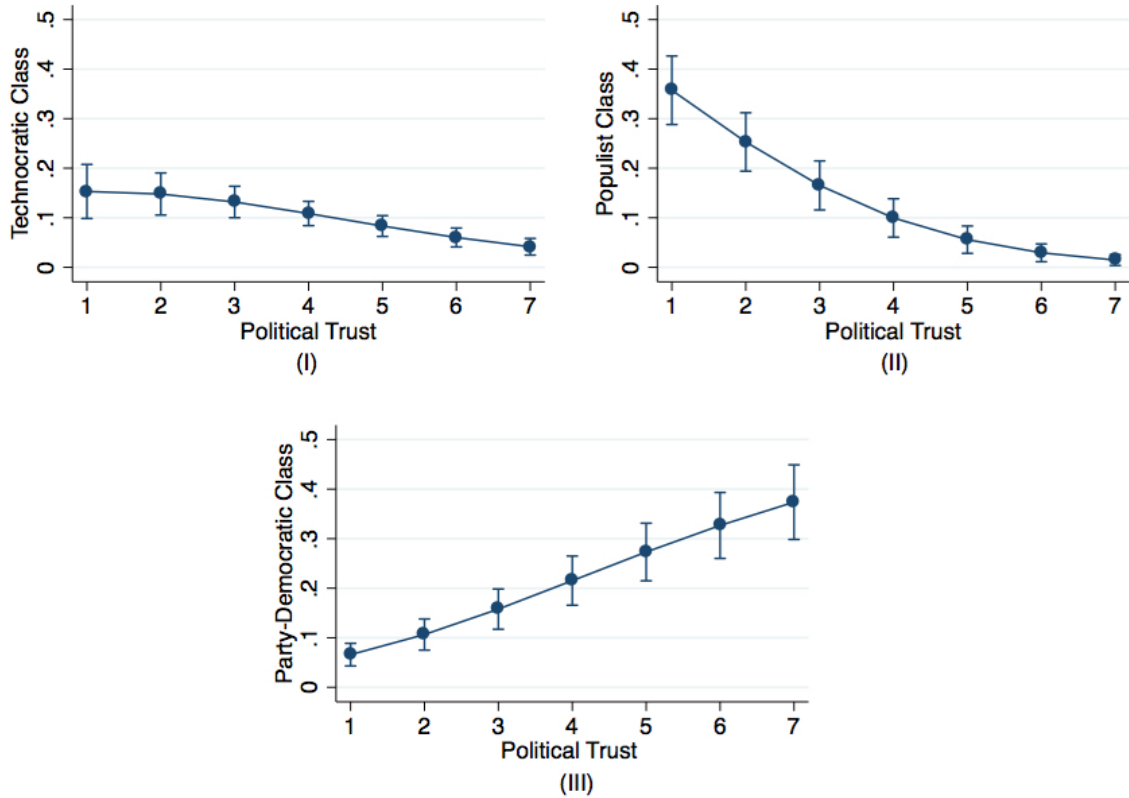


Note: Points indicate posterior means and segments represent 95% credible intervals for the marginal effects. Nine-country pooled sample.

opposed to the *Technocratic* class (relative risk ratios are .76 and .88 respectively), holding all other variables constant. Predicted probabilities in Figure 3 show more clearly the effect of education on the probability of being assigned to a class (as opposed to all remaining five classes). While effect sizes may seem small, one needs to bear in mind education is coded in only seven categories according to the highest level attained by respondents.³⁰

³⁰ As a robustness check we included education as a categorical variable, separating low, middle and high levels. Results are robust to this alternative specification and remain in line with theoretical expectations with effects being stronger when comparing high to low education levels across all class comparisons. Results are available in SI (Appendix 4: 22).

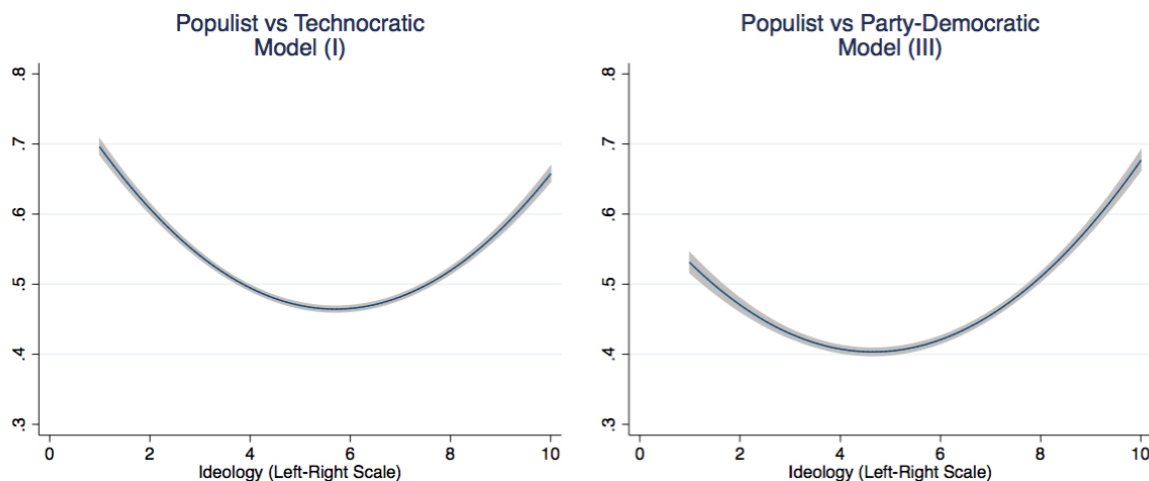
Figure 4 Predicted probabilities of assignment to the *Technocratic*, *Party-democratic* and *Populist* class for political trust



Note: See Figure 3.

Political trust is also a significant predictor of class assignment across all comparisons. Again in line with expectations, trust in national parliament and political parties is associated with membership to the *Party-democratic* rather than the *Technocratic* or *Populist* class (Figure 4). Nevertheless, technocratic attitudes are associated with stronger political trust than populist attitudes (the relative odds of membership to the *Populist* class as opposed to the *Technocratic* class is .72 for a one-point increase in trust), confirming a preference for elite rather than mass-driven decision making, even if this elite is selected through parties and elections. Again, predicted probabilities show clearly how an increase in political trust decreases the likelihood

Figure 5 Plotting the effect of left–right ideology on class assignment

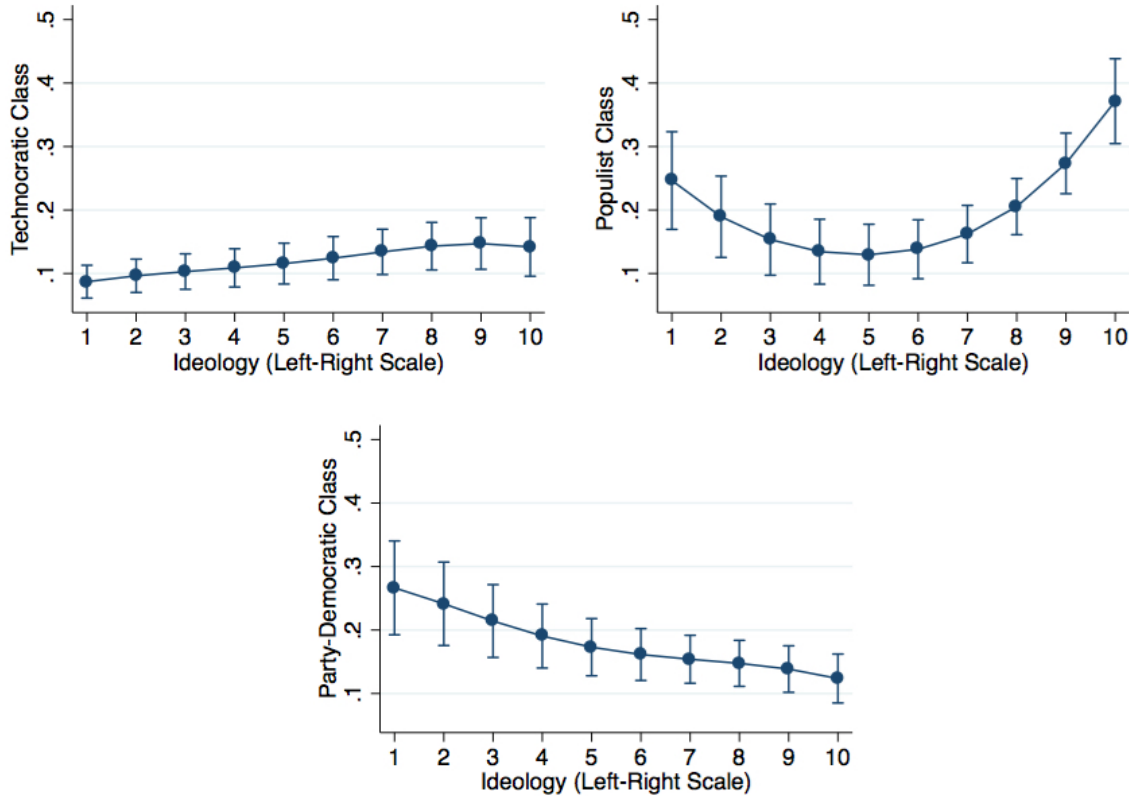


Note: Curves plot fitted values following two separate logistic regressions comparing assignment to the populist and the technocratic class (model II), and assignment to the populist and the partisan class (model III). Nine-country pooled sample.

of assignment to the *Populist* class and increases the likelihood of assignment to the *Party-democratic* class. Effects are significant across all nine countries.

Results for the ideological self-placement of respondents on the left–right dimension also confirm our theoretical expectations. The quadratic term is significant in two of the comparisons; in Model (I) comparing assignment to the *Populist* and *Technocratic* class and Model (III) comparing assignment to the *Populist* and *Party-democratic* class. In Model (II) we find a linear effect, which shows that more right-leaning ideology makes it more likely to be assigned to the *Technocratic* as opposed to the *Party-democratic* class. Technocracy’s emphasis on efficiency and output, although non-ideological in principle, is better paired with economically right-wing ideology and neo-liberalism than with left-wing ideology. This is in line with earlier empirical findings that link right ideological self-placement to stronger technocratic preferences among citizens (Bertsou and Pastorella 2017).

Figure 6 Predicted probabilities of assignment to the *Technocratic*, *Party-democratic* and *Populist* class for left–right ideology



Note: Points indicate posterior means and segments represent 95% credible intervals for the marginal effects. Nine-country pooled sample.

Looking at the comparison of the *Populist* class to both the *Technocratic* and *Party-democratic* classes, we see the effect of ideological self-placement on class assignment is curvilinear. To better interpret the effect of the quadratic term, we calculate separate logistic regressions comparing assignment to the *Populist* as opposed to the *Technocratic* class, and assignment to the *Populist* as opposed to the *Party-democratic* class only. Figure 5 plots the curvilinear effect of ideology on class assignment. As expected, when comparing *Populist* and *Technocratic* citizen profiles, placing one’s self on the ideological extremes, either on the left or the right, makes it less likely to be assigned to the *Technocratic* class, while being on the

central part of the ideological scale increases the chances of being assigned to the *Technocratic* class. Similarly, when comparing *Populist* and *Party-democratic* citizen profiles, ideological extremity is associated with assignment to the *Populist* class and the ideological “centre” (centre-left specifically) is associated with assignment to the *Party-democratic* class.

Predicted probabilities of class assignment based on ideology show that these results are driven by the ideological extremity of the *Populist* class (Figure 6). Respondents who follow a *Technocratic* or *Party-democratic* class do not tend to be more centrist when compared to all other classes. In the case of party-democrats, we see that left-leaning ideology increases the likelihood of being assigned to that class. Overall, ideology provides another important distinction between the three citizen profiles, and crucially between citizens with technocratic and populist attitudes. An implication for political behaviour is that this group of citizens is not likely to be attracted by large established political parties nor by the populist rhetoric – and analysis that is meant for further research, bearing in mind that there is no such thing as “technocratic parties” in the same way as the literature speaks of populist parties. While some parties promote reliance on expertise through their rhetoric and personnel, for the most part technocratic-minded citizens may be up for grabs as voters.

Conclusion

The classical model of political representation as mediated by political parties through articulation and aggregation (APSA 1950; Schattschneider 1942) has come under increasing strain between calls for either more responsiveness or responsibility. While recent work has demonstrated theoretically the relevance of two types of challenges to party democracy – the populist and the technocratic (Caramani 2017) – when it comes to citizens’ attitudes, empirical

research has exclusively focussed on the former. The latter has only been addressed indirectly in terms of stealth democracy (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002), partly in terms of elitism (Akkerman et al. 2014) or using a single survey item (Bertsou and Pastorella 2017).

The contribution of this article is to conceptualize the dimensions of technocratic attitudes and measure them at the mass level across nine European countries using a novel survey battery. This allows us to move the discussion from a theoretical to an empirical ground. Our results provide an empirical confirmation of the dimensionality of technocracy in terms of Elitism, Anti-politics and Expertise, derived from theory. Further, theoretical expectations stemming from the principles of technocracy and populism point to overlaps between the two, in particular the opposition to pluralist party-democracy. Populist attitudes indeed align with Anti-politics, namely scepticism toward the articulation of particularistic interests and pluralist vision of representation clashing with the holistic idea of society, as well as the negative evaluation of parties, politicians and the functioning of politics overall.

A further contribution is the identification of citizen groups based on the attitudes they exhibit towards politics. We suggested that technocratic attitudes entail a specific combination of Elitism, Expertise and Anti-politics. Using latent class analysis, the article investigates this heterogeneity, identifies groups of citizens that follow a *Technocratic*, *Populist* or *Party-democratic* profile and investigates overlaps and contrasts. We trace a group representing approximately 12% of citizens across the nine European countries, who support the idea of a knowledgeable elite making decision on behalf of a population considered insufficiently prepared to address complex issues. This group is larger in Southern and Eastern European countries, but can be found across Europe. This finding adds force to the claim that the model of responsible party government, which has dominated in Western democracies in the second half of the 20th century, is challenged not only by populism but also by technocracy. While, so

far, this claim relied on theoretical speculation, this article supports its empirical relevance.

Our findings need to be put in perspective. First, individuals with populist attitudes still outnumber those with technocratic ones. Second, respondents with attitudes in line with the pluralist articulation and aggregation of interests by parties are still very consistent. In addition, we observe the tension between three clearly distinct modes of representation only in half of the sample, whereas the other half seems mostly to express dissatisfaction but not systemically challenging the democratic representation mode. Nevertheless, beliefs around the superiority of skilful, knowledgeable and scientific experts over politicians abound everywhere in spite of country differences.³¹ The opening section of this article referred to the puzzle of a popular rejection of the recommendations made by technocrats *and* a simultaneous preference for independent experts over governments. While citizens who exhibit true technocratic attitudes are present in European democracies, they do not represent a plurality, yet. At the same time, a large chunk of citizens who score highly on Populism and Anti-politics, invariably showcase strong preferences for more expertise. In other words, our analysis of nine European countries finds no Populism without Expertise.

This represents a further puzzle. A simultaneous preference for more popular involvement and independent expertise over elected politicians, might be interpreted as a rejection of the current workings of representative democracy as both non-responsive and irresponsible, rather than a surge of populism. Alternatively, we need to acknowledge that populism, in practice, includes an elitist dimension specific to expertise and efficiency. This is in line with earlier

³¹ A fruitful avenue for further research is precisely the comparative exploration of the contextual influences upon citizens' attitudes towards technocracy such as the impact of crises or experience of communism or technocratic cabinets. Existing studies try to illuminate cross-country variation (Bertsou and Pastorella 2017) but country differences may change as the double challenge to party-based government unfolds and as populist and technocratic political actors are brought in the forefront of political decision making.

work on populism, which finds it often appeals to citizens that demand clear and “no nonsense” solutions to complex problems. Research on populist parties in Europe and Latin America has also highlighted the blurring lines between this type of elitism and populism in practice, such as the reliance on experts, the emphasis on strong charismatic leadership and the “outsider” status of leaders who are experts in their field (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 2012).

The practical implications of our findings extend to voting behaviour, to the possible success of democratic innovations and to the political entrepreneurship of elites. While it is clear that considerable segments of the population hold technocratic attitudes, there is no clear political movement, party or leader that speaks to their concerns. Furthermore, while some of these citizens may remain committed to the political establishment and support political elites in greater numbers, their frustration with the workings of current politics means that they may also shy away from established politicians and be drawn to anti-establishment parties. Therefore, it remains crucial to acknowledge that party democracy faces a second, alternative world-view besides the sirens of an unmediated and unchecked people’s will, namely that of its opposite, the exclusion of people seen as unfit to deal with complex decisions.

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