

**Research Seminar**

**Measuring Technocratic Attitudes Among Citizens in  
Nine European Democracies**

Dr. Eri Bertso is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in  
Comparative Politics at the University of Zurich

**Date:** 23/05/2017

**Time:** 13:30-14:30

**Place:** Political Science Meeting Room



**Abstract:** Our study explores the concept of technocratic attitudes and measures it among the citizenries of nine European nations. Previous work has focused on the tension between party-based democracy and technocracy at a theoretical level, and during the past few years the contested relationship between the two and the challenge of populism. While populism and the rise of populist attitudes among citizens has received widespread attention in the literature, technocratic attitudes have received much less systematic analysis. Yet, attitudes towards technocrats and preferences for the role of experts in our political systems are firmly joining the public debate. We propose a conceptual map of technocratic attitudes as a latent concept with four key attitudinal dimensions: Elitism, anti-political, anti-pluralism and scientific approach. We test this through a novel battery of survey items that tap on each dimension and further, addresses the outstanding questions regarding the relationship between preferences for technocracy, populism, liberal democratic, deliberative and stealth democratic politics. As citizen demands continue to add pressure upon the existing model of representative democracy, it is important to understand the source of democratic dissatisfaction and the reasons why people are willing to support alternatives. Currently, this novel battery of survey items has been piloted in the UK. The final survey will be fielded in nine European Democracies (UK, Germany, Greece, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania and Sweden) in June 2017.

**Biographical Sketch:** Dr Bertso earned her PhD in Government from the London School of Economics in 2015. Her broader research interests fall within the realm of political behavior, political psychology and comparative politics. Eri's research looks at citizen behavior and citizen attitudes towards democratic institutions, political parties, politicians and other groups in their society. She is especially interested in political trust and distrust, partisanship and emerging challenges to democratic representation, such as technocratic politics. You can find more information about Eri Bertso's research in her website: <http://eribertso.com/>