5

Measuring technocracy

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Introduction

The technocratic ideal has a long tradition ranging from the classical world to the Industrial Revolution and the Taylorist movement of the 1920s and 1930s. Although it has seldom been implemented in its ideal form of "experts exercising political power", the scientific ideals it champions have become part of many democracies. In the second half of the twentieth century, the increasing complexity of policymaking, the expansion of supranational governance and the growing interconnectedness of economic systems created increasing demands for expertise in governance and the depoliticization of policymaking.

More recently, the first two decades of the twenty-first century have seen the appointment of technocratic governments in Italy, Greece, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Romania in response to economic or political crises.[1] At the same time, the criticisms mounted at supranational and intergovernmental institutions, such as the European Union (EU) or United Nations (UN) bodies, show no signs of dissipating following the financial crisis and have led to a backlash of populist and anti-intellectual politics. These developments have propelled questions regarding the role of expertise and independence in politics into the public spotlight. Such questions are timely and will linger in the years to come, as polities around the world try to balance their wish for more responsiveness to the people with the need for expertise.

These discussions have instigated scholarly contributions surrounding the theoretical standing of technocracy and its relationship to representative democracy, which are also addressed in the previous chapters of this volume.[2] So far, however, far less emphasis has been placed on a systematic empirical approach to the operationalization and measurement of technocratic elements within representative democracies. This is a paradox, since some of the most important questions regarding the role and effect of technocratic politics within democratic systems are empirical. Unlike other challenges to representative democracy—such as populism, political disaffection or the decline of party membership—empirical research on technocracy cannot yet rely on a solid framework that allows the cross-sectional comparison of levels of technocratic influence in different political systems, the longitudinal trend of technocratic elements over time and, ultimately, the testing of hypotheses regarding the increase

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and effects of "technocratization" in established democracies. Instead, most of the empirical literature on technocracy has relied on single case studies and qualitative in-depth accounts of cabinets and countries (Centeno and Silva 1998, Hanley 2013, Neto and Lobo 2009, Pasquino and Valbruzzi 2012, Protsyk 2005a, 2005b).

We believe that the fundamental questions regarding technocracy and democracy cannot be answered without empirical analysis. Empirical analysis should include questions concerning the level of technocracy entailed in our democracies, its effects on policy and governance, how much technocracy do people, elites or given parties want and how much technocracy do they think is desirable for democracies. At all the different levels identified in the Introduction to this volume, such questions require empirical investigation.

This chapter offers a roadmap for the systematic categorization, operationalization and possible empirical measurement of technocratic elements in democratic systems. Using the analytical framework developed in the earlier chapters of this volume, it gathers, reviews and adds to efforts for the empirical analysis of technocratic politics.[3] It presents indicators and measures at different levels of the political system: individual (citizens and representatives), organizational (political parties and other political organizations), institutional (state institutions) and systemic (the relationship between politics and governance agencies). At each level of analysis we consider a variety of methods, including behavioural, discourse and aggregate methods. The ultimate goal is to provide a basis for comparative, cross-sectional and longitudinal analysis of technocratic elements in different political systems.

The Relevance of Technocracy in Empirical Research

The question of technocracy and its contested relation to democracy entered the public debate at the height of the financial crisis in Europe, when democratically elected governments in Italy and Greece were replaced by the technocratic cabinets of Monti and Papademos (Culpepper 2014, Pasquino and Valbruzzi 2012, Pastorella 2016). The common narrative when discussing these technocratic appointments, as with other technocratic cabinets, referred to the handling of some type of crisis when "normal" processes of representative democracy can no longer offer a swift and effective solution to the problems the country is facing (Wratil and Pastorella 2018).

However, the process of depoliticization of governance had been well underway for years across established democracies, whether by choice or necessitated by globalization, supranational coordination and an interconnected financial system (as pointed out in the

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Introduction to this volume as well as in other chapters; see also Fernández-Albertos 2015 and Fischer 2009 for overviews). Early scholars of the EU stressed the bureaucratic and, indeed, technocratic nature of this emerging political entity and pointed to the inherent democratic deficit of decision-making processes that are immune to electoral competition, party politics and democratic legitimation (Majone 1994, Moravcsik 1998, 2002, Radaelli 1999b, Sánchez-Cuenca 2017). Other policy paradigms, from larger-scale economic interventions in Latin American countries to policy programmes in the United States, followed in the same footsteps of depoliticization, expert governance and its independence from political control (Centeno 1993, Dargent 2015, Fischer 1990).

Beyond these most visible instances of technocratic politics, democratic political systems more generally have always needed to harness expertise and independence to function effectively. In many cases, the depoliticization of decision making is democratic, and even desirable, even though it circumvents the link between the citizens and the representatives they elect to enact their preferences (Pettit 2004). Technocratic elements are profuse in democratic systems, but without the right empirical measures it is impossible to know "how much" political systems are technocratic. It is also difficult to identify whether technocratic influence is increasing over time and to assess its effects on political outputs. All this is necessary before we can address more complex questions regarding the functioning of democratic systems, such as whether the "technocratization" of politics causes a populist backlash, with demands for more responsiveness and the repoliticization of governance, and what are the conditions under which technocratic elements are a "corrective" that rebalance the responsibility role of representative government. There may be parts of the political system that are better served by independent, expert-based and "non-majoritarian" entities (such as the judiciary or central banks). Our focus in this chapter is on key players of representative democratic systems, which are traditionally thought of as the locus of decision making in representative democracy: parties, executives, parliaments, politicians and the citizens that elect them.

Theoretical Basis for the Study of Technocracy

The concept of technocracy has been the object of scholarly attention in the works of Meynaud (1969), Fischer (1990) and Centeno (1993), with renewed interest from Rosanvallon (2011), Bickerton and Invernizzi Accetti (2017) and Caramani (2017). In its ideal form, the term technocracy signifies the rule or exercise of political power by a group of experts. In this

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volume, we follow a more inclusive and flexible definition of technocracy as a form of power, legitimacy, representation and decision making that stresses the role of expertise, skill and unattached interest.

The aim of technocratic politics is the identification and implementation of optimal solutions to societal problems, which will ensure the long-term prosperity of the political community. It champions responsible governance and rests on a belief that objective solutions exist and can be reached through impartial analysis, scientific reasoning and expert knowledge. Therefore, the source of power and legitimacy is not popular selection, but knowledge and expertise. Implicit in the concept of technocracy is the belief that governing a political community is a complex and taxing task that requires dedicated experts with skill and experience to make the right decisions. Other actors, such as citizens or elected officials, may be unable (lack the expertise) or unwilling (serve other interests) to govern responsibly.

Technocracy is opposed to the ideal of party-based representative democracy, where decisions are reached through a confrontation between competing interests and preferences.[4] In this sense, technocratic politics is anti-pluralist and monolithic, as it recognizes only one interest—the long-term prosperity of the entire community—and rejects all partisan, class or other group-based conflict as an impediment to this goal. Nevertheless, there is a claim to representation. What is being represented is precisely this "long-term prosperity of the entire community". In terms of representation, technocracy sits at the extreme end of the "trustee−delegate" continuum.

Moving from the definition to the operationalization of technocratic politics, we identify the following three dimensions:

• *Elitism*: Technocracy identifies an elite group, based on knowledge, expertise, academic credentials, intellect and know-how, and separates it from ordinary citizens. This elite is considered to "know best" and should guide society responsibly, with the long-term goal of prosperity. This elite sits in sharp contrast to the existing political class, political parties and any non-strictly meritocratic processes and institutions.

• *Anti-pluralism*: Technocracy adheres to a monolithic view of society. It criticizes ideological commitments and partisan interests that seek to benefit sections of the community rather than the community as a whole. Technocracy does not recognize political conflict between societal groups on the basis of sectoral, class or minority status and considers parties

and interest groups as damaging to the prospects of societal prosperity.[5] Technocracy is anti-pluralistic in a political sense, that is, anti-partisan and sceptical towards elections, which are perceived as popularity contests. Whereas populism separates the world in "good" and "evil", technocracy opts for a scientifically informed dichotomy between "right/correct" and "wrong/mistaken".

• *Scientific approach*: Technocracy is based on the belief that there are objective, neutral, non-ideologically committed experts, who are able to enact the best solutions to governance problems after evaluating relevant evidence and facts. Technocratic politics follows a positivist paradigm. There is a belief in the existence of an optimal solution or truth, which can be discovered through careful and objective analysis of scientific evidence. It prioritizes output, efficiency and optimal outcomes over other types of legitimacy and views society as a machine with many moving parts that need to operate effectively. This scientific approach complements the aforementioned elitist, anti-political and anti-pluralist dimensions by emphasizing the role of expert knowledge, political neutrality and problem-solving capacities.[6]

From the definition of technocracy given above and the dimensions that derive from it, technocratic elements become apparent at different levels of democratic political systems and across a variety of actors and processes. In the following section, we identify these elements and provide a map of possible methodological tools to empirically measure technocracy in the most important areas of political research.

Towards a Typology of Empirical Measures of Technocracy

Given its complex, multidimensional and normative character, it is perhaps not surprising that the operationalization of the concept of technocracy from a comparative and longitudinal perspective has been elusive. Studies have mainly focused on a single aspect at a time, such as in-depth case studies of specific countries and cabinets (Hanley 2009, Pasquino and Valbruzzi 2012, Stegmaier and Vlachová 2011).[7] Without a doubt, case studies still offer a wealth of information on the specific characteristics, processes and effects of technocratic politics. Yet the goal of this chapter is to propose a typology and offer suggestions for the operationalization of technocracy that can lead to comparative analysis. It reviews existing research efforts and proposes new avenues to "quantify" technocracy across different layers of the political system, and by employing diverse methodologies.

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Table 5.1 A typology of research in technocratic politics

Method of analysis	Levels of analysis		
	Individual (elites, non-elites)	*Aggregate (organizational-institutional)*	*Systemic (national-supranational)*
Sociological/composition analysis (Data: individual characteristics)	Who is a technocrat? (1) expertise (2) independence	How many technocrats are in a given group?	n/a
Discourse/text analysis (Data: texts)	Who has a technocratic discourse? How technocratic is their discourse?	Which group has a technocratic discourse? How technocratic is their discourse?	n/a
Behavioural/ attitudinal analysis (Data: survey questionnaires, experiments)	Who prefers/supports/trusts technocrats?	Which group prefers/supports/trusts technocrats?	n/a
Procedural analysis (Data: constitutions, treaties, negotiations, signalling)	n/a	How prominent/powerful are technocrats in a given group?	How prominent/powerful are technocratic institutions in a given system?

We proceed in two steps. First, we provide a typology for the research into technocracy for a given level/method combination. Second, we discuss indicators and measures for each, with examples wherever possible. To structure the map of indicators for the measurement of technocracy in an encompassing and systematic way, Table 5.1 distinguishes three main levels of analysis and four methods of analysis to investigate technocratic politics in democratic

systems. We label levels as "individual", "aggregate" and "systemic", and focus on four types or methods of analysis: sociological, discursive, behavioural and procedural.

Table 5.1 is populated with the types of questions addressed by each method/level combination. When one moves from the individual level to the aggregate level this would usually involve simply an aggregation of the analysis carried out. For example, identifying who is a technocrat is an individual-level analysis, based on the characteristics of a given figure, which is necessary before identifying technocratic cabinets or legislatures at the aggregate level.[8] Similarly, one can analyse the discourse of a given actor at the individual level, but also group together discourses of actors who represent the same group—a given political party, for example—to conduct research at the aggregate level. Thus, one may find a different composition by parties or cabinets, or different discourses and different attitudes for expert-driven governance among members of different parties.

Sociological, discourse and behavioural methods of analysis can be applied at an individual and an aggregate level, but the upward aggregation and breakdown of data by organization and institution also stops at the last level of analysis we identify: namely, the systemic level. The relationship between institutions—in particular, the degree of independence of regulators and agencies from political institutions acting on a democratic mandate—cannot be derived from behavioural or discourse indicators. The same applies to the degree to which national institutions and representatives are constrained and depoliticized by their being embedded in supranational agreements. Again, this cannot be derived from aggregate composition data from lower levels of analysis. Where the interactions between agents are most informative—that is, where procedural analysis can take place—one necessarily needs to move away from the individual level and look at groups and institutions.

Individual level

Sociological

The first obvious task in the analysis of technocracy involves identification of "the technocrat" (see, for example, Chapter 7). This applies to analyses of elites, be it political candidates, leaders, cabinet ministers, MPs or members of the bureaucracy. Throughout this volume we understand "technocrats" as independent experts active in politics. Expertise can be observed and measured on the basis of individual characteristics, background and track record.

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Educational attainment, previous professional experience and political involvement, and other relevant credentials can be used as evidence of expertise.

Independence or outside status is more controversial. While political involvement is particularly relevant alongside attestations of expertise in establishing to what degree an individual is independent from political affiliations, here there are diverse views about the "outsider status" of elites. Ideally, political independence would mean no prior political experience or political ties.[9] A long professional career in a relevant sector for governance is by default inversely related to one's political ties. However, in reality, the lines are more blurred. It is possible for independent experts to align themselves with a political party, start their own political movement, or become so prominent in the politics of a nation that they do become experienced politicians.

Camerlo and Pérez-Liñán (2015) noted the importance of separating technocrats from simple "outsiders" or people appointed from "personal networks". Outsider status can be used by political entrepreneurs, especially when grievances are mounting among citizens, but without a proven track record of professional expertise in a relevant sector of governance (corresponding to the "elite" and "scientific approach" dimensions of technocracy), such individuals should not be classified as technocrats. Table 5.2 (taken from Camerlo and Pérez-Liñán 2015) shows the categorization of elites according to political affiliation and expertise.

Table 5.2 Classification of elite profiles

Party affiliation	Expertise	
	With expertise	*Without expertise*
Yes	Partisans	Partisans
No	Non-partisan technocrats	Non-partisan outsiders

Source: Camerlo, M. and Pérez-Liñán, A., *Comp. Polit.*, 47, 318, 2015.

In their analysis of technocratic governments, McDonnell and Valbruzzi (see also Chapter 6 in this volume) formulate the three criteria for assigning the technocratic label to the leader of the executive: (1) never having held public office under the banner of a political party,

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(2) not being a member of any political party and (3) possessing recognized experience and expertise (2014: 657–58). This sets a high threshold for inclusion into the "technocratic club" and does not account for the presence of relatively more or less technocratic elements to be found among politicians. We argue that expertise is more important than political affiliation, especially given the fact that independent experts often decide to affiliate themselves with a political party, or create their own, at a later stage in their careers.[10]

An alternative approach was followed by Despina Alexiadou, who in her classification of cabinet ministers includes the category of "ideologues" for individuals with firm stances on policy direction that trumps office-seeking and vote-seeking considerations (2015, and Chapter 7 in this volume). This includes trade union officials, who have experience in wage-bargaining, workers' rights and union–employer relations, and a strong conviction regarding economic and social policies. Similarly, many technocratic appointments (by elected or appointed heads of state) are based on the relevance of experience and expertise. Macron appointed a former Olympic champion as Minister of Sport and a doctor as Minister of Health. Similarly, Monti appointed an academic and university dean as Minister for Education, and a naval officer and NATO expert as Minister of Defence. Though Alexiadou's classification is not aimed at identifying technocratic elements, there is a large overlap and all technocrat ministers fall within the category of "ideologues". Further, her definitions of expertise and experience draw attention to an existing bias in the types of knowledge usually considered to be technocratic.

This bias is two-fold. First, it is an ideological bias in favour of economically liberal views and training. Second, it is a content bias in favour of the natural sciences, engineering and economics (as it is a-ideological, as the Introduction discusses). There is no inherent connection between technocracy and liberal economic or capitalist views; nevertheless, in practice, institutions that sought to depoliticize policy in order to reduce conflict have been primarily supranational, financial and regulatory in nature and have followed liberal economic principles (Fourcade-Gourinchas and Babb 2002). Economic and financial expertise has become synonymous with experience in international financial institutions (IFIs) and their requirement for "adjustment". Yet an accurate assessment of expertise should reject this bias.

The second bias encountered frequently in the public discourse on technocracy is in favour of the formal and natural sciences as appropriate backgrounds for and evidence of expertise. In this case, there is a fundamental connection between technocracy and the hard

sciences. It emphasizes the technical nature of governance, and its positivist approach to the social world—that is, the belief that there is one true, right solution to a problem which can be discovered through unbiased scientific analysis—is a much closer fit to the paradigm of mathematics, engineering, physics and other natural sciences. Also in practice, the technical complexity of governing increased sharply in the twentieth century, necessitating increasing numbers of people with skills in addressing societal issues. However, for the purposes of assessing expertise at the individual political level, the "discipline" or "content" of one's experience and knowledge needs only to pertain to the governing task assigned.

Discursive

An alternative method of analysis at the individual level would be to identify technocrats based on the discourse used. Given that technocracy entails a legitimation strategy of political decisions, the communication of political elites offers a promising field for the study of technocracy. Technocracy represents a value-system that can be found in public discourse. This value-system is in line with the dimensions of elitism, anti-pluralism and scientific approach presented earlier, but also additional elements to be found in oral and written text.

The type of texts that can be analysed at the individual level are speeches by political leaders and other text they produce, such social media broadcasts (tweets) and content on personal websites. Texts can be analysed in either a qualitative or a quantitative way (Poblete 2015, Rooduijn and Pauwels 2011), using human coders or programmes for automated analysis. Empirical possibilities include holistic coding (Hawkins 2009) or more precise hand-coding of each paragraph, sentence or quasi-sentence of texts. Other possibilities include computer-based coding, which produces numerical results or the occurrence and frequency of sets of words, or machine-learning methodological approaches, whereby the computer is instructed how to code based on a training set of text and can then be given a new corpus to analyse (Grimmer and Stewart 2013). To our knowledge, there had been no such study of technocratic politics using text and discourse prior to this volume.

In Chapter 9, Nava et al. study the Brexit campaign using a top-down methodology of structured topic modelling. In this chapter we present an alternative approach that would be more in line with human coding according to the presence/absence of relevant characteristics of technocracy. Table 5.3 provides an excerpt from the codebook that we developed during a graduate research seminar at the University of Zurich (the full codebook is available upon

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request). The codebook is based on the three dimensions of technocracy presented earlier (elitism, anti-pluralism and scientific approach), and is supplemented by two more elements that are specific to discourse: output focus and technical style. Texts that score highly on these five dimensions represent ideal examples of technocratic discourse. While this codebook was developed and tested using human coders, it can provide the basis for more detailed instruments for text analysis.[11]

Table 5.3 Codebook for the analysis of technocratic discourse (excerpt)

Dimension 1: Elitism	Positive: Praise knowledge elite, critical of ordinary citizens and politicians. Implicit or explicit higher value attached to this group, as people "who know best" and as those who can and should guide the society. Negative: Praise of ordinary citizens, politicians or representatives of the people, critical of unaccountable elites, experts.
Dimension 2: Anti-pluralism	Positive: Reference to the welfare of society as a whole, criticism of ideological and partisan interests, special interest groups and societal struggle between different groups. Negative: Reference to interests of specific groups, sectoral (ex. workers in heavy industry), ethnic groups, social class, and reference to struggle between social groups, criticism of the "illusion" of what is the best solution for society.
Dimension 3: Scientific approach	Positive: Reference to objective, neutral, non-compromised decision making, evidence-based policymaking and critical of voices that question facts or the scientific method. Negative: Denigration or doubt of factual evidence, reference to subjective or compromised decision- and policymakers, doubt of the complexity of social problems.
Dimension 4: Output-oriented	Positive: Praise of efficiency, output, growth for the entire society and reference to what works, what provides optimal outcomes. Disregard for criticism that refer to the importance of procedural questions and non-output-related values.

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	Negative: Reference to procedures and non-output-related "achievements", criticism of principles of efficiency, output, and optimization.
Dimension 5: Technical style	Positive: Use of technical jargon, facts, figures, sources (many legitimate sources), dry language, speech that does not stir an emotional response. Clean, precise and sophisticated language.
	Negative: Use of layman's terms, inconsistent use of sources or misrepresentation of figures, emotive and value-laden speech that promotes and gives agency to the speaker (active voice, reference to "I" or "We").

Source: Codebook developed by Bertsou and Caramani.

A similar analysis has been carried out by the project NCCR (National Centres for Competence in Research) Democracy at the University of Zurich, in collaboration with communication scientists, in the analysis of the appeal of populist ideas. The database includes a number of items that can be used for technocracy. Numerous discourse strategies can be derived by being the opposite of populism, such as shifting the blame to supranational institutions and financial elites, or expressing closeness to the people. Conversely, some strategies are similar to populism, such as a monolithic view of the people or a negative contextualization of mainstream politics. Also, the style can be the opposite of populists, such as the use of data and statistics, or not relying on common sense and black-and-white rhetoric, dramatization and emotions, but rather on academic jargon. Clothing has also been coded in this project. In terms of justification of statements, economic justifications or previous agreements are technocratic features, while people's will and common sense are not. Argumentation is based on competence and causality. The targets of the statements do not identify elites as negative.[12]

Behavioural

A third methodological approach to study technocracy at the individual level relates to the preferences, attitudes and behaviour of individual actors. This represents a particularly fruitful avenue for research, and it can apply to the "supply side" of politics (political elites and bureaucracies) as well as the "demand side" (citizens). In the former case, we can analyse MPs' preferences or attitudes and how they interpret their representative "role", for which they are

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accountable to citizens. In the latter, we can study the demand for independent expertise coming from citizens. We therefore discuss the two separately.

Supply side

Putnam (1977) attempted to operationalize and measure "technocratic mentality" among civil servants in one of the earliest quantitative empirical analyses at the individual level. Apart from categorizing civil servants in terms of their training, he compiled survey evidence regarding their approach to their job tasks to estimate levels of political neutrality and tolerance for politics. Already in 1977, he found that although the threat of technical rule had not materialized, the rise of the hybrid politician–technician was a major trend in administrations and bureaucracies across capitalist and communist industrialized countries.

While this line of research was not followed up, it can still provide fruitful data for the study of technocracy among elites. Apart from a "technocratic mentality" index, the trustee model of representation provides a solid theoretical basis for analysing responsible governance, a fundamental aspect of technocratic politics. Officials may have been appointed to their posts or selected through the process of elections by the represented, but a trustee role implies independence and the absence of constraints during their remit. Under the trustee model of representation officials are entrusted with the task of governing, because of their knowledge, expertise and good character, and their responsibility is to carry out that task to the best of their ability. Much like technocrats strictly speaking, part of their legitimacy originates in their superior knowledge and skill justifying a non-responsive action in favour of a responsible one.[13] The closer an official follows the trustee model of representation—that is, making decisions not on the basis of a mandate, partisan or other, but on what is best for the community following her or his best judgement, knowledge and experience—the more technocratic their role. It is important to point out, of course, that although the trustee model of representation rests on the premise that citizens do not have the time and/or capacity to identify what is best for their community (and hence this task should be entrusted to individuals with the requisite skill and dedication), there is no guarantee of expert representatives.

Demand side

Finally, investigations of technocracy have surfaced recently in an effort to understand why citizens accept—or even prefer—the appointment of external, independent decision makers at

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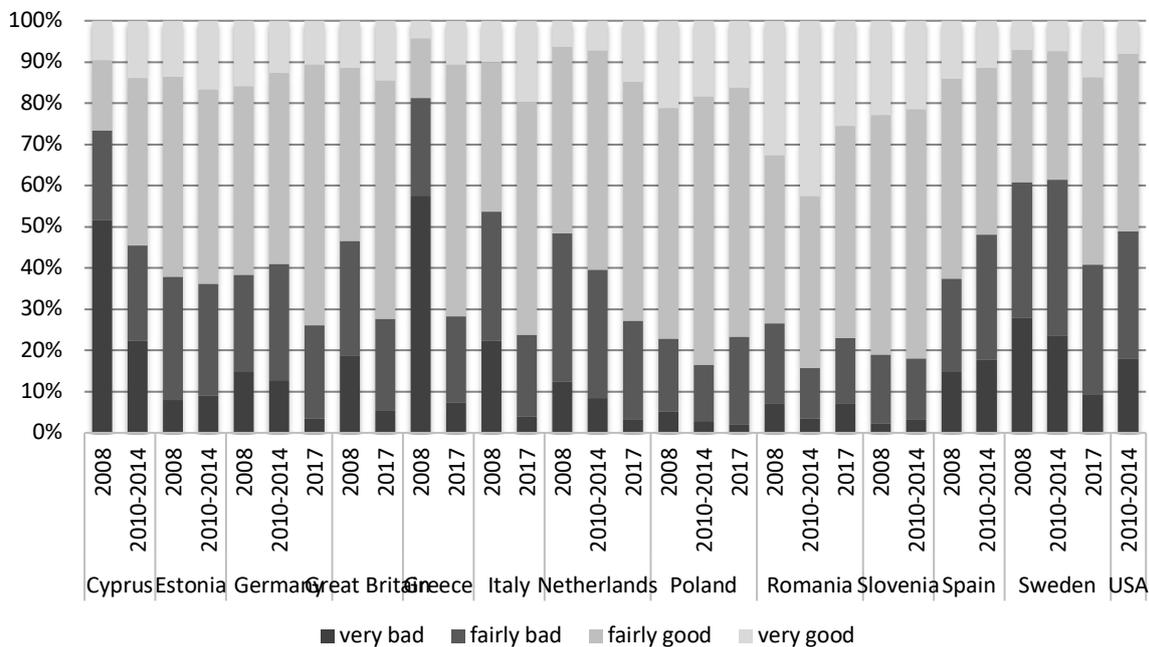
the helm of their country.[14] A prominent example is that of the concept of "stealth democracy" (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002), which measures citizens' preferences for less popular involvement and more effective decision making carried out by unelected experts or business people. The authors found that a large chunk of Americans welcomed a more detached and efficient way of governing that can bypass disagreement and division of ordinary politics. The first empirical study of citizens' technocratic attitudes in a comparative perspective (Bertsou and Pastorella 2017) relied on a survey measure of technocratic decision-making preferences as a proxy for the underlying trait of technocratic attitudes. Their analysis showed that citizens' trust in representative political institutions (political parties, national parliament and government) and their beliefs about the benefits of democratic governance have a negative effect on technocratic preferences overall, pointing to an understanding of the technocratic elements of EU governance.[15]

This analysis also revealed large cross-national variations in the attitudes of citizens towards technocracy, with Central and Eastern European countries being much more favourable towards expert decision making, and some Southern European and Nordic countries highly critical of technocratic politics. These differences appear to persist over time. Figure 5.1 shows preferences for technocratic decision making across established democracies included in two waves of the World Values Survey (WVS) and European Values Survey (EVS) between 2008–2014 and the authors' own survey from 2017.

Measuring the underlying traits that manifest as technocratic preferences requires a more nuanced approach. In an ongoing research project, we have devised a scale to measure the latent construct of technocratic attitudes, through multiple survey items that tap into different dimensions following the theoretical understanding of technocracy presented above (Bertsou and Caramani 2017). Having a detailed, theoretically driven and empirically valid measure for technocratic attitudes allows comparison with other attitudes, attributes or individual and group-level characteristics, such as ideology, education or voting. The scale is validated across different national contexts and can therefore provide a measurement tool for scholars of political behaviour, political psychology and other fields of political science.[16]

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Figure 5.1 Attitudes towards experts in governance.

(Notes: Data taken from EVS 2008, WVS 2014 and own survey. The question reads: "Do you think having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country is a very bad/fairly bad/fairly good/very good way of governing this country?")

Technocratic preferences can also be measured at the individual level without having to delve deeper into attitudinal concepts. The presence and influence of independent experts are a reality in many democratic systems, with agencies, institutions and political players considered to be "more technocratic" than others. It is therefore possible to gauge citizens' support and trust for those players, as Costa Lobo and McManus investigate support for technocratic institutions in managing the financial crisis in Europe in Chapter 11 of this volume. Even without concrete real-life political dilemmas, conjoint experiments offer another potential avenue to study the conditions under which and areas in which citizens prefer to delegate power to technocrats. This points to a promising area of research that investigates the intersection of supply and demand of technocratic elements, and citizen responses to increased or decreased technocratic governance.[17]

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Aggregate level

We use the term "aggregate" to refer to the types of analyses that look at both organizational and institutional political groups. This would include political parties, interest groups, cabinets, legislature, agencies and the civil service. Sociological, discourse and behavioural analyses can all be used at the aggregate level, facilitating comparisons between groups and over time. Once individuals at the elite level have been classified according to a technocracy scale, it is possible to compare the composition of, for example, different parties, ministries or whole cabinets between countries and/or over time. Parties can be analysed according to their reliance on "technocrats", for example, as opposed to grassroots volunteers, or the technocratic discourse of the legislature can be traced over time to show whether it increases during times of financial crisis.
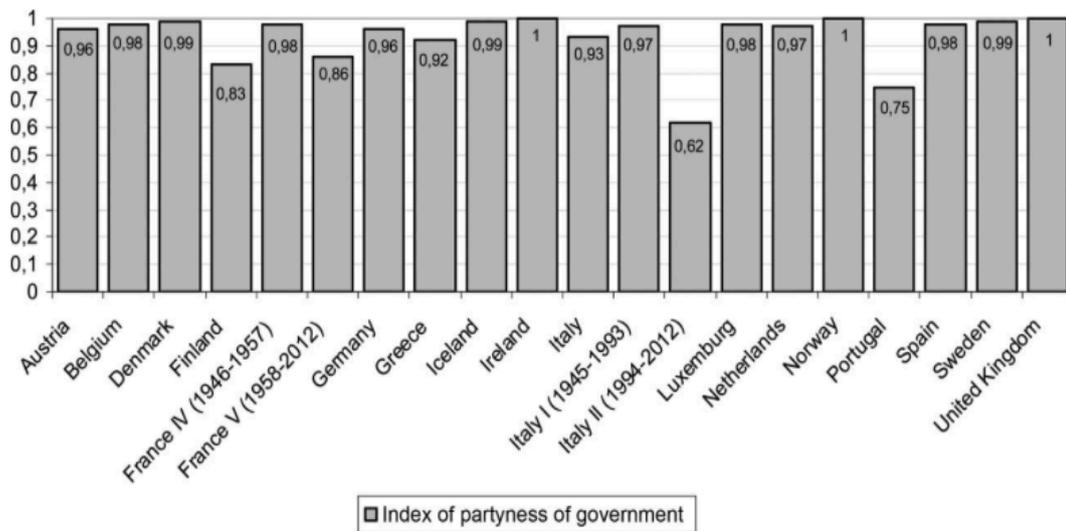
This is where we find most existing attempts to measure the technocracy of cabinets.[18] McDonnell and Valbruzzi (2014) provide an operational definition of a technocrat (necessarily at the helm of a technocratic government) and, further, four groups of such governments based on their remit and composition. Whereas their definition of "a technocrat" is dichotomous, they separate non-traditional technical governments based on their degree of technocracy. This typology includes non-partisan caretaker governments, technocrat-led partisan governments and full technocratic governments. They identify 24 governments in Europe since the end of World War II, but only 6 that are fully technocratic in their remit and composition, leading them to conclude that "European governments remain, overwhelming, duly-mandated party governments" (2014: 666).[19]

An analysis focused solely on the classification of governments led by a technocrat leaves a wide range of technocratic elements at the level of cabinets unexplored. Whereas full technocratic governments may be rare, independent ministerial appointments and the reliance on technocrats occurs more often in the absence of such cabinets (Neto and Strøm 2006, Pasquino and Valbruzzi 2012). The concept of "government partyness" is closely related to the degree of technocracy in a given cabinet and can be extended to other organizational levels (for example, the extent of partisan appointments in the bureaucracy). The partyness of government was conceptualized by Katz (1986) as the importance of the political party in its governance role. Though its operationalization varies, one aspect of partyness is the percentage of non-partisan ministers appointed in each cabinet (Katz and Mair 1995, Kopecký et al. 2012). Figure

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5.2 follows this calculation by Pasquino and Valbruzzi (2012) and shows the partyness of government among Western European countries from 1945 to 2012.

Figure 5.2 Partyness of government in Western Europe, 1945–2012.

(From Pasquino, G. and Valbruzzi, M., *J. Mod. Ital. Stud.*, 17, 616, 2012.)

At the aggregate level, discourse analysis offers a fruitful avenue for the study of texts produced by political organizations, party manifestos being the best example. Other texts produced by political parties and other organizations, interest groups (trade unions or NGOs) or even social movements, which act more or less according to a logic of advocacy representation, can be analysed. Party manifestos, parliamentary debates and official documents would allow for within- or cross-country comparative and longitudinal analysis according to the technocratic dimensions mentioned earlier. In this way, political scientists can study the degree of change over time (technocratization) and compare the different legislative branches.

Systemic level

The last level of analysis is the systemic level, where we focus on the relationship between non-elected or apolitical agencies on the one hand, and elected, representative and majoritarian institutions on the other. The question of interest at this level is: how powerful and independent are non-elected governance bodies that are not embedded in an electoral representation circuit? In other words, we need to examine the degree to which decision-making processes are

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"depoliticized" and non-majoritarian—i.e. not submitted to a public confrontation of alternatives and, ultimately, a direct or indirect electoral choice.

The thesis of technocraticization in recent years has gained traction precisely as the number and independence of governance agencies, authorities, regulatory bodies, think tanks, rating agencies, etc., has increased. It is highly challenging to empirically document such an increase, and it is here that one finds most qualitative (case study) types of analyses on the procedures of decision making, processes of displacement of competences beyond the politically representative checks. This dislocation of "authority" has been documented at the national level in matters of policy, oversight and public management (Fischer 1990), but has been more evident in the pooling of previously national political competences to depoliticized supranational bodies. As discussed, the EU has contributed to a great extent to this depoliticization at the systemic level, as political power has been transported to the "Eurocrats" of the European Commission or the European Central Bank (ECB).

The key aspects of this technocratization can be measured in terms of "limitations" set on politics, whereby the "choice" element between alternative programmes presented to the electorate is taken away.[20] Such limitations on choice appear not only when decision making is "outsourced" to national independent bodies or supranational organizations, but also in respect of international relations, with the decisions by some countries limiting or even discarding room for manoeuvre in other countries—in particular, when linked to financial loans. This is where globalization—in the sense of a growing interdependence between countries (especially when institutionalized by bodies such as the International Monetary Fund [IMF] and the World Bank)—leads to a "hollowing out of democracy". A similar example concerns the "conditionality" placed on some countries by groups of other countries to access membership or access loans.[21]

Where political choice is limited, democracy is diminished and decision making becomes technocratic. However, what this vision does not consider—and which is relevant for the empirical measurement of technocracy at the systemic level—is whether or not accountability in these independent bodies can be conveyed through different mechanisms. To what extent are these agencies, bodies and authorities accountable to politically elected institutions? How strong and "last instance" is the principal's control over these bodies?[22]

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The empirical analysis required to answer such questions is obviously largely qualitative and based on the study of procedures (both formal and informal) as they can be derived from constitutions and various laws, international treaties, guidelines and reports on the functioning of independent agencies and regulators. In Table 5.1 we range such methods under aggregate even though one probably cannot rely on quantitative information. It is nonetheless based on data. The method here goes in the direction of process-tracing and qualitative case-study analysis, and relies on documents and interviews.

However, one also finds attempts at quantification, as in the case of indices such as those of central banks' independence depicted in Figure 5.3. Crowe and Meade (2007) compiled a dataset that collected central bank indicators across OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) nations, and found a sharp increase in the protection of central banks from political influences in most cases. In the case of EU member states, previous attempts to measure the "limitations" placed upon individual governments have seen the calculation of a Banzhaf index based on each country's number of votes in the Council under qualified majority rule, but newer instruments will need to be developed especially following the power shifts that occurred during the Eurocrisis. Debates surrounding the effective "neutrality" of central banks and the genuine "depoliticization" of policy at the European level are already reviewing the degree of technocracy present at the systemic level (Adolph 2013, Sánchez-Cuenca 2017).

Figure 5.3 Central bank independence: Index of Central Bank Independence in OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries. (Based on data from Crowe, C. and Meade, E.E., *J. Econ. Perspect.*, 21, 69–90, 2007.)

Conclusion

Building on a theoretical understanding of technocracy and its relation to democracy, the aim of this chapter was to advance the discussion to the operationalization and measurement of technocratic elements within democratic systems. Only then will we be able to study technocracy in a comparative perspective and answer pressing questions regarding its prominence, increase and decrease, causes and consequences.

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The process of depoliticization and the expanding roles of non-partisan experts in the ranks of parties, cabinets and beyond has been the focus of scholarly work in separate fields of research, without necessarily referring to technocracy. Our aim was to draw these together, under one coherent conceptualization of technocracy, and offer a map for levels of analysis and types of empirical measurement that can facilitate comparative research. We find that measuring technocracy is closely related to measures of depoliticization intended as the negative view of diverse interests and values, the competition for their allocation and alternative proposals for their aggregation (the core of party democracy). Technocracy is the desire to take the "politics" out of the policy-making process, and it therefore correlates with low levels of trust towards actors primarily pursuing their own interest instead of aiming for the good of a putative "whole". Yet again, the degree to which preferences for technocracy (in citizens or given ideologies or social groups) are correlated with low levels of trust is an empirical question that makes sense theoretically but still needs to be verified through empirical data in a comparative and longitudinal manner.

Technocracy is present, to differing degrees, in a pervasive way in a political system. It is part of the preferences and attitudes of individuals (what behavioural analysis can reveal) in a way more or less correlated with individual socioeconomic features such as education and profession. Individuals with technocratic preferences and socioeconomic "predispositions" may vote for parties that present discourses that are favourable to technocratic governance, or at least are less critical of it. They may be more favourably oriented towards supranational integration and international agreements that take problem solving away from electoral competition and party politics. In countries with electorates thus oriented, the appointment of technocratic cabinets may be less controversial—or not.

Following the conceptualization provided in the Introduction, technocracy is a matter of degrees. Establishing how much and at what levels technocracy exists across countries and over time is a matter of empirical investigation and, therefore, in need of solid indicators. Also, establishing what the configuration of technocracies is among the different parts of the political system should not be left to theoretical speculation, but rather to empirical verification. The following chapters of this volume do precisely that, and offer insightful studies of technocratic politics in practice. While Chapters 6 through 8 deal with technocratic executives (based on sociological/compositional analysis) and their role in the policy process (both nationally and

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internationally), Chapter 9 investigates the framing of a referendum campaign in technocratic (vs populist) terms from a discourse-analysis perspective. Chapters 11 and 13 are based on "demand-side" individual data looking at attitudes. Chapters 10 and 12 approach technocracy from a systemic perspective, in Europe (something which Chapter 4 on the EU does in this section) and in Latin America. Parts II and III of the volume are therefore concrete attempts to apply the concepts and methods developed in Part I.

Notes

[1] These are the Fischer government in the Czech Republic (2009–10), the Bajnai government in Hungary (2009–10), the Monti government in Italy (2011–13), the Papademos government in Greece (2011–12) and the Ciolos government in Romania (2015–17). See Marco Valbruzzi in Chapter 6 for more details on their remit and composition.

[2] See Dargent (2015) and Fischer (2009). Bickerton and Invernizzi Accetti (2017) discuss technocracy from a critical analysis perspective in the wake of thinkers such as Laclau, Mouffe and Rosanvallon. The relationship between technocracy and party representation and its commonalities and differences with populism are discussed in Caramani (2017).

[3] We limit the discussion of the empirical measurement of technocracy to representative democracies even though many of the arguments presented can be extended to authoritarian systems of various sorts (on Latin America's regimes, for example, see Centeno 1993, 1994, Centeno and Silva 1998, Dargent 2015 and de la Torre 2013).

[4] Much of this discussion follows the contrast between responsive vs responsible representation first highlighted by Birch (1964) and Mair (2009) and discussed extensively in Bardi et al. (2014a, 2014b), but also in much of the literature on populism (see Kriesi 2014 for a definition and a review).

[5] This is another point of contrast with representative party-based democracy, where the best outcomes are believed to result from the competition and compromise between different societal groups.

[6] At this point it is important to note that the scientific approach can potentially be misappropriated and proponents of certain policies or ideas may use "pseudo-scientific" methods to advance their views.

[7] The role of technocratic governments attracted scholarly attention in the early 2010s with such prominent appointments in European democracies, and led to a first systematic classification of technocratic governments (Brunclík 2015, 2016, McDonnell and Valbruzzi 2014, Pastorella 2016).

[8] Based on a definition of "what does a technocrat look like" (both in terms of sociological traits and attitudes), one can classify political parties and cabinets based on their composition, promotion of political figures, reliance on external expertise and so on.

[9] An additional element that enters public debates on the classification of officials is the status of the educational institution they have attended. A focus on elite schools is in line with the elitist dimension of technocracy, but need not be a criterion in this case.

[10] This leaves open the question of whether once an official with expertise and experience in technical matters of governance enters the electoral competition and operates within a

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political party, they cease to be a technocrat. After the end of his technocratic cabinet in 2013, Mario Monti formed a political party and ran as its leader in the Italian elections. With 8.3% of the vote, it still lists 37 deputies and 19 senators, and was part of the grand coalition supporting a short-lived cabinet. Similarly, Emmanuel Macron, who served as a non-party aligned Finance Minister under President Hollande, created his own party and was elected president of the French Republic in 2017, appointing a large number of people without previous political experience, but with expertise in their fields. The commitment to pursuing necessary reforms and welcoming people with expertise in the shaping of policy has earned him the title of technocrat in the press.

[11] The coding exercise identified the speaker or author of the text as well as variables such as date, type of text, length, audience, language, source and contextual information. Grading ranged from −2 to +2 (opposite high intensity, opposite low intensity, absence, low intensity, high intensity of technocratic discourse). The coding unit was the paragraph or thematic-based sections in speeches where paragraphs could not be separated. Across paragraphs values were averaged, whereas across the five dimensions values were added together.

[12] The project, led by the Department of Media and Communication, has analysed media and political discourses as in quality press, tabloids, free newspapers, television debates, tweets, Facebook posts, and party manifestos in 12 European countries. The sampling has created a text base of roughly 55,000 texts coded by 87 trained coders through the tool Angrist and following a pilot to test the inter-rater reliability. See Wirth et al. (2016) for detailed information.

[13] Potential drawbacks of this operationalization include the degree of transparency politicians are prepared to allow regarding their representation role and their willingness to go against their constituents, party and the people in general. Examples of a survey at MP level can be found in the PartyRep project (Deschouwer and Depaw 2014), in particular, question 11.4 on the desirability "to delegate more decision-making to experts and independent agencies".

[14] This type of analysis would allow for cross-country comparisons and the identification of longitudinal trends over time in the attitudes towards, or preferences for, technocratic governance.

[15] The World and European Values Survey includes, tellingly, a single question, namely: "Do you think having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country is a very bad/fairly bad/fairly good/very good way of governing this country?", which was then used in other work to explain and trace the development of technocratic preferences. No relevant items on technocratic attitudes exist in the Eurobarometer or the Latinobarometer.

[16] The survey was administered in June 2017, with around 45 questions in 9 European countries. Beside socio-economic indicators and the items measuring technocratic preferences and attitude, the questionnaire also includes items on populist attitudes formulated to allow a comparison with existing studies (Akkerman et al. 2014, 2017).

[17] A more recent wave of studies uses conjoint experiments embedded in surveys, which present respondents with options regarding policy initiatives, decision-making processes and the involvement of independent experts in politics. These help to gauge not only the appetite of citizens for expert-driven governance, but also their relative preferences over other modes of decision making and compared across policy areas (Freyburg et al. 2017, Bertsou and Caramani 2017).

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[18] Understandably, but also limiting, most work is on executives and focuses on their composition: e.g. the number of cabinet posts (and importance) given to technocrats, and in particular whether or not the prime minister is a technocrat or not.

[19] For similar attempts on a variety of cases, see Brunclík (2015, 2016), Marangoni and Verzichelli (2015), Pastorella (2014, 2016), Costa Pinto et al. (2017).

[20] This points to the responsible party model as the democratic vehicle through which democracy is enhanced. Democracy is unthinkably safe in terms of political parties (see APSA 1950, Sartori 1982, Schattschneider 1942).

[21] See also the Introduction to the volume. Sánchez-Cuenca (Chapter 2) provides a useful distinction between two ways of depoliticization: directly, through the delegation of political decisions to independent agencies; and indirectly, through the establishment of strict rules that constrain elected officials to predetermined courses of action (see also Sánchez-Cuenca 2017). Further points on this issue can be found in Chapter 3 by Pier Domenico Tortola and in Chapter 4 by Reinout van der Veer.

[22] The question here is really about the formal and practical relationship between independent bodies and political institutions, which is different than what has been seen in the institutional level of analysis—that is, the colonization of bureaucracies and non-elected bodies in general by politically affiliated and appointed personnel, i.e. the "partyness" of these bodies.