

# PUBLIC EUROSCEPTICISM AFTER THE 2016 BRITISH REFERENDUM: UNLEASHING EMOTION



**PUBLIC LECTURE BY  
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**ABSTRACT** | What is Euroscepticism? This presentation will explore how the study of Euroscepticism has changed since the EU fifth enlargement (2004-07) and the recent British referendum. Social learning, interaction and political communication increasingly affect opinions and behaviours. In the run-up to the EU accession referendums in Central and Eastern Europe, studies addressed the role of subjective evaluations (Jasiewicz 2003; Guerra 2013), while a few years ago, commenting on the emergence of anti-politics, Alfio Mastropaolo (2012) suggested using qualitative research to show how individual evaluations lead citizens to take political decisions based on their own, often not drastic, judgements. Recently, Capelos and Exadaktylos (2016) explored how the affective content of Greek media influences attitudes towards European integration through traumatic public events. This analysis introduces Euroscepticism beyond party systems, and explores the narrative on the EU debates at the domestic level. An analysis of original data on the British referendum (23 June 2016) addresses the role of subjective evaluations and emotions on attitudes towards the EU and to what extent these can drive Euroscepticism and behaviours. The “Leave” campaign was successful in evoking citizens’ emotions, and “Leave” voters seem to be more driven by anger, while uncertainty spreads among those who are likely to have voted “Remain”, and young people feel both uncertain and anxious.

**SIMONA GUERRA** | is currently a LSEE Visiting Fellow and Associate Professor in Politics at the School of History, Politics & International Relations, University of Leicester. Her main research interest is in attitudes towards the European Union. How the latter change before and after joining the EU was the study subject in her first monograph, *Central and Eastern European Attitudes in the Face of Union* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), journal articles (*Journal of Common Market Studies*, *The Journal of Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*), and volume contributions. Simona has recently published a co-edited book (with Manuela Caiani), *Euroscepticism, Democracy and the Media. Communicating Europe, Contesting Europe* (Palgrave Studies in European Political Sociology, 2017) and during her time at the LSEE she is completing her second monograph on *Religion and Euroscepticism in Post-Communist Europe* (Routledge).