



Lara Zwitterling

Visiting Researcher Student, GR Visiting Researcher

Bio

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Lara Zwitterling is pursuing her PhD in comparative politics and is currently a Visiting PhD Researcher at the Europe Center, Stanford University. She is supervised by Jessica Fortin-Rittberger and Simon Bornschieer. Her research focuses on cleavage politics, democratic trajectories, and the ways citizens navigate emerging political conflicts. In particular, she examines how structural factors and situational threats shape political attitudes such as hostile sexism, ethnocentrism, and political polarization, as well as how interactions between political elites and citizens influence democratic development, with a strong focus on quantitative methods.

Zwitterling completed her bachelor's and master's degrees in political science at the University of Salzburg within only three and a half years. Her bachelor's thesis explored the relationship between cultural value orientations, implicit gender stereotypes, and gender segregation in STEM education and labor markets, while her master's thesis examined the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on political attitudes and party preferences. In 2025, she received the Young Investigators Award for the best dissertation project at her home university after only one and a half years in the PhD program.