

6 Unpacking the Interplay Between Populism and Euroscepticism: Towards a New Operationalization

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6.1 Introduction

Populism has emerged during the last period as a significant political phenomenon attracting much media attention and triggering broader public debates. No wonder it has, simultaneously, almost monopolized academic discussions, either in its particularity or in conjunction with other important rubrics (populism & nationalism, populism & democracy, etc.). Within the European context, especially after the formation of the Euro-zone and the bumpy management of a series of crises (the post-2008 financial crisis, the pandemic, and now war), the last few decades have witnessed rising waves of euroscepticism, which has now led to the withdrawal of one major nation-state from the Union (UK). As a result, it becomes important to study these two phenomena in a way enabling a more comprehensive understanding of their exact relationship.

No doubt, the connection between populism and euroscepticism has been the focus of a set of previous studies. For instance, Pirro & Taggart (2018, p.4) refer to “the unexceptional overlap between populist and eurosceptic politics”. Yet they recognize that “not every eurosceptic party is necessarily populist [...] and not every populist party is necessarily eurosceptic”, concluding that “there is no necessary convergence between populism and euroscepticism”. In an attempt to identify the specificity of the two phenomena before researching the interconnections between them, we see populism as mostly related to a *broader* political concept or logic concerning the operation of representative democracy, which is built around two main pillars (‘the people’ and ‘the elite’) positing an antagonistic relation between them in order to prioritize the popular side (Mudde, 2017; Panizza & Stavrakakis, 2021). On the contrary, euroscepticism is linked to a more *concrete* position regarding (negative) stances towards European integration and the functioning of EU democracy per se (see Rooduijn & van Kessel, 2019; Cossarini, Ruzza, & Berti, 2021). In that sense, populism operates at a relatively higher level of conceptual abstraction (and analytical generality) than euroscepticism. Harmsen (2010) refers to some additional differences between the two

concepts, e.g. that populism can be traced back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries while euroscepticism obviously constitutes a more recent phenomenon that dates from the early 1990s and is, of course, confined to Europe alone as it is conditioned by the long process of establishing strong European institutions (EEC, EU, etc.).

However, as Harmsen (2010) argues, although euroscepticism is not a subset of populism, there may be a strong connection between them: “opposition to European integration has unquestionably been shaped by wider anti-elite discourses, and in turn has served to reshape these discourses – as well as the parties which deploy them”. In addition, focusing on Hungary and Poland, Csehi and Zgut (2021) show that in Orbán’s and Kaczyński’s discourses “the EU is equated with ‘the corrupt elite’ that stands in conflict with ‘the pure people’, the Hungarians and Poles, and [...] the EU is claimed to act against the notion of popular sovereignty”. Given the ongoing debate regarding the extent to which leaders like Orban can be designated as predominantly populist or not (see Kim, 2021), it is important to note that – if populism predominantly involves an anti-establishment discourse, and if the European Union constitutes the established structure within which the lives of European citizens evolve –, it is probably to be expected that the latter is bound to figure (and be constructed/framed) as a main representative of the elite that populism usually attacks (see Stavrakakis, Katsambekis, et al., 2017) , especially given the ‘democratic deficit’ characteristic of its operation, recently described – even by people like Habermas – as a post-democratic orientation (see Crouch, 2004; Habermas, 2013).

All that calls for a rigorous mapping and examination of the relationship between the two. How could political analysis proceed on this front? For many years studies on populism and euroscepticism operated predominantly on the basis of applying text analysis methods on party manifestos and speeches by party leaders. Only recently, there have been studies that try to cover both the supply and the demand side of populism and euroscepticism by including batteries of items in survey questionnaires, while there is also an increasing number of expert surveys focusing on both research directions.

It is within this context that the DATAPOPEU Research Project (funded by the Hellenic Foundation for Research & Innovation) attempts to illuminate the interplay between populism and euroscepticism. The main aim of this paper is to offer an empirical investigation with fresh data on the two phenomena. We focus our analysis on the demand-side of electoral competition in the case of Greece by employing comprehensive batteries of questions for measuring the two concepts. Greece may represent a unique laboratory for analyzing both populism and euroscepticism. Since the onset of the economic crisis, the country moved from the group of reliably pro-European countries to the Eurosceptic group, at least during the peak of the economic crisis. The sharp decline of pro-EU sentiment among Greek citizens can be attributed to the austerity measures attached to the loan deals, which were widely construed as externally imposed by EU institutions (Teperoglou & Belchior, 2020). In addition, the country is well-suited for a study of populism. It has a long tradition of populist politics which goes back to the 1980s and the socialist PASOK's (Panhellenic Socialist Movement) ascend to power. Moreover, the study of Greek populism has received considerable scholarly attention due to the electoral success of parties such as the Coalition of Radical Left (SYRIZA) and the radical-right party of Independent Greeks (ANEL) (see Stavrakakis & Katsambekis, 2014, among others).

Within this context, a central objective of the paper is to discuss, on the basis of consistent conceptual clarifications, the survey items that have been used in DATAPOPEU, a research project that develops novel methods and techniques to collect, process and analyze data to systematically investigate the significant political patterns of populism and euroscepticism in the Greek context. In this paper we use the DATAPOPEU data of ELNES 2019 focusing on the items that seem to have worked well in measuring populism and euroscepticism. This is accomplished by creating two indices, one for populism and one for euroscepticism.

A second key question of our paper pertains to the way in which populist attitudes are correlated with eurosceptic attitudes. After constructing an index for populism and another one for euroscepticism, we first examine if these two indices are positively correlated. Then we

attempt a more comprehensive mapping of their relationship and we present factors that may function as moderators (i.e. can cause an amplifying or weakening effect) of the relation between populism and euroscepticism. Our findings are compared with previous studies aiming to provide an in-depth examination and an operational account of this interplay, enabling a more rigorous and reflexive analysis in the future.

The structure of the paper is as follows. In the next section, we briefly present the main conceptual framework regarding the concepts of populism and euroscepticism. A detailed section about the methodology follows, in which we analyze the batteries of items used in the surveys. The next step is to present the main findings. The paper ends with some concluding remarks.

6.2 Conceptualizing populism and euroscepticism

Needless to say, in order to be able to formulate operational methods (and indices pertaining to a survey research design, as the one utilized in this paper), a clear conceptual framework is required that will allow sufficient flexibility – taking into account the different variants of the phenomena examined as well as their potentially complex interplay. This will also be needed in order to arrive at rigorous differential assessments of a variety of quantitative tools available to the populism/euroscepticism researcher.

With regard to populism, we are today in a position to register a certain consensus emerging in a great part of the relevant political science literature. In this sense, populism is seen as involving a frame/narrative inspiring and partly explaining political behaviour, which is based on positing an antagonism between ‘the people’ and ‘the elite’ within a context conditioned by different – and often deeply polarized – assessments of the quality of democratic representation. Simply put, populism involves (1) people-centrism, and (2) anti-elitism (Stavrakakis, 2017). This is a conceptual basis on which both ideational and discursive approaches seem to be in general agreement (Laclau, 2005; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2017).

Many disagreements, of course, still remain, especially as far as the level of homogeneity of the respective formulations of the people/the elite, the relationship between

democracy and populism, and the extra aspect of ‘moralization’ highlighted by ideational scholars are concerned (see, for a criticism of the latter, Katsambekis, 2022; Stavrakakis & Jäger, 2018) – or, for that matter, other aspects stressed by discourse scholars (affective investment, psychosocial aspects, etc.). We are bracketing, at this moment, such disagreements, but will attempt to illuminate them through the data produced in our research.

At any rate, other scholars also seem to share the emphasis on the aforementioned elements. For example, although starting from a more ambivalent position in the 1980s, even disputing the existence of a ‘reasonably solid core of agreed meaning’ behind all the uses of the concept (Canovan, 1982, p. 544), twenty years later, Margaret Canovan is led to highlighting the same structural characteristics (Canovan, 1999, p. 3): ‘Populism in modern democracies is best seen as an appeal to “the people” against both the established structure of power and the dominant ideas and values of the society. [...] They involve some kind of revolt against the established structure of power in the name of the people’ (Canovan, 1999, p. 3).

Along the lines specified, De Cleen and Stavrakakis (2017, p. 310) have summarized populism as:

a dichotomic discourse in which ‘the people’ are juxtaposed to ‘the elite’ along the lines of a down/up antagonism in which ‘the people’ is discursively constructed as a large powerless group through opposition to ‘the elite’ conceived as a small and illegitimately powerful group. Populist politics thus claim to represent ‘the people’ against an ‘elite’ that frustrates their legitimate demands, and present these demands as expressions of the will of ‘the people’

Research around euroscepticism has gained more scholarly attention since the late 1980s as a result of the consequences of market integration (Hooghe & Marks, 2009). Originally, most of the studies focused on elite and party-level positions towards European integration, whereas the study of mass-level euroscepticism - and in particular the predictors

of anti-European stances - gained only recently more empirical attention (see e.g. Hooghe & Marks, 2009; McLaren, 2007).

In one of the seminal studies of euroscepticism, it was traditionally defined as “contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration” (Taggart, 1998, p. 366). Most of the literature emphasizes the complex nature of euroscepticism. As Boomgaarden et al. (2011) argued, public euroscepticism may be a multidimensional concept. For the better understanding of the phenomenon some scholars have tried to disentangle its several dimensions (Mudde, 2012), an exercise that has led to the identification of different varieties of euroscepticism.

One of the most well-known distinctions is the one between “hard” and “soft” euroscepticism by Taggart and Szczerbiak (2002, pp. 27–28): “Hard euroscepticism implies outright rejection of the entire project of European political and economic integration, and opposition to one’s country joining or remaining a member of the EU. [...] ‘Soft’ euroscepticism, by contrast, involves contingent or qualified opposition to European integration”. Kopecky and Mudde (2002) have criticized this categorization. Among others, they argue that the criteria of this distinction are unclear and particularly the definition of “soft” euroscepticism is vague. The alternative categorization that they suggest is based on David Easton’s seminal distinction regarding the support for political regimes. It is focused on a two-dimensional conceptualization between diffuse and specific support for European integration. More specifically, they define diffuse as “support for the general *ideas* of European integration”, while specific EU support is defined as “support for the general *practice* of European integration” (2002, pp. 300–301). Based on this framework of analysis, they offer a typology of party positions on Europe based on four subcategories. These are: (1) the “*Euroenthusiasts*” who support the idea of European integration and are in favour of its institutionalization; (2) the “*Eurosceptics*” who combine pro-EU stances such as the support of European integration, but at the same time tend to adopt a more pessimistic view about the future of EU; (3) the “*Eurorejects*” who are against both the idea of the EU and the process of

European integration and finally, (4) the “*Europragmatists*” who support the EU in general based on a more utilitarian approach (Kopecky & Mudde 2002). In a similar distinction analyzed by Peter Mair (2007), there are two subcategories of euroscepticism: the so-called *policy euroscepticism* versus *polity euroscepticism*. The former refers to an expression of disagreement with particular EU policies. On the other hand, polity euroscepticism refers to critical positions towards support for the EU as a system and as a consequence, against EU membership as well (for an analysis see also Verney, 2017).

Another study by Lubbers and Scheepers (2005) identifies two main dimensions of euroscepticism. One focuses on the reduction of sovereignty of the nation-state in various policy domains and the emergence of a supranational level of policy decisions. They label this type of euroscepticism as “political euroscepticism”. The other main type is “instrumental euroscepticism”. Here the interpretation is in terms of the actual financial costs and benefits that countries, regions and social categories could expect from the Union’s redistribution policies (Lubbers & Scheepers, 2005, p. 227).

Finally, another study shows that there are varieties of euroscepticism not only at the party level, but at the mass level across countries. The authors propose a distinction between “left-wing” euroscepticism and “right-wing” euroscepticism. Right-wing Eurosceptic citizens tend to object more against the future deepening of European integration compared to their left-wing counterparts. Moreover, the driving mechanism behind right-wing euroscepticism is more related to cultural issues, whereas left-wing euroscepticism relies more on egalitarian stances towards a better (and more equal) functioning of the EU (van Elsas et al., 2016).

Overall, many perspectives as well as disciplinary angles and many different methodologies are obviously needed in order to arrive at a comprehensive account of populism, euroscepticism and of their multi-level relationship – both at the supply and demand side. A focus on attitudes – such as the one employed in this research – does not necessarily attribute some higher epistemic validity to this method, but may be able to produce challenging results,

which can then be assessed together with other types of data produced through different methodologies (see, on this point, Stavrakakis, Andreadis, et al., 2017, p. 448).

6.3 Methodology and Data

Within this context, we can now move to discuss the methodology which was employed in a modest strategy to capture the interplay between the two phenomena and assess its potential in comparison with other options. In this section, we present the survey items we have used to measure populism and euroscepticism in the DATAPOPEU project. Part of the DATAPOPEU project was data collection for the official National Election Study for the 2019 Greek (Hellenic) National Elections (ELNES 2019). ELNES 2019 data was collected using a mobile-friendly web survey (Andreadis, 2015a, 2015b). Participants were recruited by sending text messages (SMS) to randomly generated mobile phone numbers (for the use of text message in surveys, see Andreadis, 2020). Table 6-1 Populism items Table 6-1 shows the populist attitudes items that have been included in the questionnaire along with their source.

Table 6-1 Populism items

Code	Text	Source
Q04a	What people call compromise in politics is really just selling out on one's principles.	CSES AMZ
Q04b	Most politicians do not care about the people.	CSES
Q04c	Most politicians are trustworthy.	CSES
Q04d	Politicians are the main problem in Greece.	CSES
Q04e	Having a strong leader in government is good for Greece even if the leader bends the rules to get things done.	CSES
Q04f	The people, and not politicians, should make our most important policy decisions.	CSES-AMZ

Q04g	Most politicians care only about the interests of the rich and powerful.	CSES
AMZ_POP3	The political differences between the elite and the people are larger than the differences among the people.	AMZ
AMZ_POP4	I would rather be represented by a citizen than by a specialized politician.	AMZ
AMZ_POP5	Elected officials talk too much and take too little action.	AMZ
AMZ_POP1	The politicians in Greek parliament need to follow the will of the people.	AMZ
SAK-POP7	Popular demands are today ignored in favor of what benefits the establishment	SAK
SAK-POP8	Political forces representing the people should adopt a more confrontational attitude in order to make their voice heard and influence decision-making.	SAK
TP1	Politicians should always listen closely to the problems of the people.	TP
TP2	Politicians don't have to spend time among ordinary people to do a good job.*	TP
TP3	The will of the people should be the highest principle in this country's politics.	TP
TP4	The government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves.	TP

TP5	Government officials use their power to try to improve people's lives.*	TP
TP6	Quite a few of the people running the government are crooked.	TP
TP7	You can tell if a person is good or bad if you know their politics.	TP
TP8	The people I disagree with politically are not evil.*	TP
TP9	The people I disagree with politically are just misinformed.	TP

Given that the questionnaire is used for the Hellenic National Election Studies (ELNES), a partner of the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES), we start with the battery of items used in the CSES Module 5 Common Core Questionnaire (noted with CSES) that is used to measure attitudes about elites: From the items of the CSES battery on elites, Q04c is expressed in a positive way towards politicians and when it is used in the analysis conducted in this paper, it is reversed.

Two of the items used in the CSES battery (Q04a as AMZ_POP7, Q04f as AMZ_POP2) have their origin in a populist attitudes scale suggested by Akkerman, Mudde & Zaslove (2014). This six items battery has been used in various questionnaires and it has been cited in many research publications on populism and populist attitudes. In addition to the two items that are part of the CSES questionnaire, the DataPopEU questionnaire included the rest four items of the Akkerman, Mudde & Zaslove scale (noted with AMZ).

We also have two items (noted with SAK) that have been suggested by Stavrakakis et al (2017) as a tool to capture the nature and the depth of the perceived antagonistic divide between people and establishment/elite and have been used in various publications (Andreadis & Stavrakakis, 2017; Stavrakakis, Andreadis, et al., 2017; Tsatsanis et al., 2018). These are potentially important in capturing the scope of the central people/elite antagonism beyond the

narrow political field and in highlighting the confrontational attitude characteristic of populism.

Finally, the questionnaire includes items (noted as TP) suggested by Castanho Silva et al. (2019). The battery has three groups of items and according to the authors, each group is used to measure the three "core components" of populist attitudes: i) People-centrism: the notion of a good, homogeneous people as a political actor; b) anti-elitism: negative attitudes towards the elites; and c) the Manichaeian outlook: the view of politics as a moral struggle between good and the evil side. Notwithstanding the aforementioned objections raised against the moralization criterion, this has been included in an attempt to measure and compare different perspectives. The middle items of each group/dimension (marked with an asterisk *) is a negative-worded item i.e. it expresses a position that is on the opposite side of the dimension.

While the literature on populism includes many attempts to create a battery of items to measure populism with surveys, similar attempts on the attitudes towards EU are less common. There are different indicators of Euroscepticism and in many cases the choice was based on the availability of survey items (e.g. Franklin & Wlezien, 1997). One of the few exceptions in this regard is the work done by Boomgaarden et al (2011) who instead of using items already available in surveys, they have created a new battery of 25 survey items related to attitudes towards the EU. Applying principal components analysis on data that were collected with a web-based survey from an online panel of Dutch citizens in November 2008 they have found five components of EU attitudes: performance, identity, affection, utilitarianism and strengthening. Most of the items have been used again in the Netherlands in a four-wave panel survey from December 2013 to May 2014 (de Vreese et al., 2017) and in other cross-national studies taking the five dimensions as granted, before the applicability of the proposed dimensions of this battery have been thoroughly and cross-nationally tested. Only recently de Vreese et al. (2019) have put the battery through dimensionality testing in 21 EU countries and they have found significant differences between countries. In addition, the data they use (collected around the 2009 European election) may be outdated because significant EU crises

that emerged after data collection (e.g. the Greek debt crisis and the bailout agreements, the refugee crisis, Brexit) may have changed the structure of the attitudes towards EU.

For the attitudes towards the EU, we have used various items from the Eurobarometer, the European Social Survey, the European Elections Studies and the European Candidates Survey. Most of these items have been used in more than one projects and for some of them it is not very clear which of these projects was the first to include the specific item in its questionnaire. Thus, to avoid doing an injustice to the actual original source, we do not include a “Source” column in Table 6-2.

Table 6-2 Euroscepticism items

Code	Text
DPEU1	In general, do you think Greece’s participation in the EU is: (good thing/bad thing/neither)
DPEU2	Taking everything into account, would you say that Greece has on balance benefited or not from being a member of the EU?
DPEU3	Some say European unification should be pushed further. Others say it already has gone too far. What is your opinion?
DPEU4	Do you consider yourself as: 1. GREEK ONLY 2. GREEK AND EUROPEAN 3. EUROPEAN AND GREEK 4. EUROPEAN ONLY
DPEU5	I feel proud for being European
DPEU6a	How much do you trust the: European Union
DPEU6b	How much do you trust the: European Parliament
DPEU6c	How much do you trust the: European Council

DPEU6d	How much do you trust the: European Commission
DPEU6e	How much do you trust the: European Central Bank
DPEU6f	How much do you trust the: Eurogroup
DPEU7	All in all, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in the European Union?
DPEU8	Are you in favour or against the following EU policies? b: A common foreign policy of the 28 member states of the EU, d:A common defence and security policy among EU member states, e: he EU’s common trade policy, f: A common European policy on migration, g: A common energy policy among EU member states, h: A digital single market within the EU.
DPEU9a	European integration is a threat for Greece’s cultural identity.
DPEU9b	European Union has strengthened democracy.
DPEU9c	European Union caused too much harm to Greek economy.
DPEU10a	European Union should have a greater say in member states’ fiscal policies.
DPEU10b	It is better for Greece to stay within Eurozone.

First, we have two items (DPEU1, DPEU2) that has been included in almost every survey trying to measure attitudes towards EU (Eurobarometer, European Election Studies etc). Either both or at least one of these two items has/have been used in most of the publications on Euroscepticism as the main dependent variable (e.g. Hakhverdian et al., 2013; Lubbers & Scheepers, 2005; Serricchio et al., 2013). Lubbers & Scheepers (2005, 2010) use a combination of these two items to measure what they call instrumental euroscepticism which

is based on the citizens' perceptions regarding the benefits of the EU membership for their particular country.

European unification items with various wordings has appeared in many surveys since 1971 (Franklin & Wlezien, 1997). We have included an item (DPEU3) regarding European unification that has been used in the questionnaire the European Election Studies and the European Social Survey. This item has also been used as the dependent variable in different publications regarding euroscepticism (e.g. Defacqz et al., 2019; Schoene, 2019; van Elsas et al., 2016).

We also use an item related to European identity (DPEU4) that has been included in Eurobarometer surveys. A similar item has been used by Lubbers and Scheepers (2010) who have shown that older European citizens and citizens of lower socioeconomic status tend to identify less with the EU. European identity has also been tested by Weßels (2007) as a strong predictor of euroscepticism. DPEU5 is another item related to European identity that has been used in the European Candidate Survey.

Trust towards EU institutions have been used as an indicator of euroscepticism (van Elsas et al., 2016). For this reason, we have used the DPEU6 battery of items related to trust towards EU institutions. Dissatisfaction with the current functioning of democracy in EU has also been used as euroscepticism indicator (van Elsas et al., 2016). Thus we have included the DPEU7.

Then we included some items related to what Lubbers and Scheepers (2005) has defined as "political euroscepticism". For the measurement of political euroscepticism they have used responses given by survey participants to a question included in a series of eurobarometers (up to Eurobarometer 30.0, which was collected in 2000) with the following wording: "Some people believe that certain areas of policy should be decided by the [national] government, while other areas of policy should be decided jointly within the European Union", followed by a series of policy areas that were displayed to the participants, and they were asked to indicate their preference if their national government or jointly the EU should decide

about each of them. During the last two decades Eurobarometer respondents face a different question but related to attitudes towards common EU policies with the following wording: “What is your opinion on each of the following statements? Please tell me for each statement, whether you are for it or against it.” followed by a list of statements regarding common EU policies. We have opted to include in the DataPopEU questionnaire the DPEU8 battery of items which appear in the more recent Eurobarometer questionnaires. Finally, we have included a battery of items (DPEU9) that have been used in European Candidates Surveys, that have been designed to collect data on the attitudes of candidates to the European Parliament and two new items (DPEU10). These items represent clearly anti-EU stances.

6.4 Data Analysis

We start our analysis by exploring if the populist attitudes items can be used to construct a uni-dimensional scale. We apply Mokken scale analysis (van Schuur, 2003) using the R package *mokken* (van der Ark, 2012). Most of the items construct a uni-dimensional scale, but there are two pairs of items that belong to different scales and three items that are not associated with any of the other items we have used. We start with the evaluation of the four items of the former group and we continue with the three items in the latter group.

All items that belong to different scales come from the Team Populism Battery (Castanho Silva et al., 2019) :

- [TP1] Politicians should always listen closely to the problems of the people.
- [TP2] Politicians don’t have to spend time among ordinary people to do a good job.
- [TP7] You can tell if a person is good or bad if you know their politics.
- [TP8] The people I disagree with politically are not evil.

The first two of them refer to the idea of people-centrism and the other two the idea of Manichean outlook. The failure of these items to fit in the same dimension along with the other items you have used, is easily explained if we take into account the method followed by Castanho Silva et al, who wanted to capture different dimensions of populism “that can be seen as separate constructs and should, accordingly, be measured separately” and they have not

examined if the three separate constructs they have suggested can be used together to construct a second order scale. In fact, the low correlation coefficients reported in their findings indicate that a second order construct would be very weak. Thus, there are voters who would fully agree with a statement from one of the three dimensions while they fully disagree with the statements of another dimension. For instance, there are voters who would fully agree with “Politicians should always listen closely to the problems of the people” because they seek more responsiveness from elected officials, while they still have positive attitudes towards the elites. Along the same lines, the Manichean outlook can be a characteristic of other ideologies. For instance, an elitist or anti-populist voter could think of the people as the absolute evil, scoring high on the Manichean dimension while scoring low in the anti-elite dimension. In general, the three Team Populism components should be regarded as non-compensatory (i.e. higher values on one component cannot offset lower values on another) and the general precautions offer by Wuttke et al. (2020) should be taken into account. This is important to the extent that it may relate to problems with operationalizing the moralistic outlook of populism.

We continue with one Team Populism item that is not associated with the other items we have used: TP9. The people I disagree with politically are just misinformed. As (Castanho Silva et al., 2019) mention in their chapter while the first two items of their Manichean outlook construct (TP7 and TP8) refer to people’s good or bad intentions, this item taps into the competence of individuals and as a result the first two items are expected to work better because “the Manichaeian view on politics is basically a view which refers to people’s intentions”.

Another item that is not associated with any of the other items we have used is one of the CSES items: [Q04e] Having a strong leader in government is good for Greece even if the leader bends the rules to get things done. The failure of the specific item to form a unidimensional scale with other populist items is compatible with previous research findings (Andreadis et al., 2018) The roots of this item may lie within the ideas of Canovan work who assumed that the united people may have a preference for a strong leader (1999, p. 5):

“A vision of ‘the people’ as a united body implies impatience with party strife, and can encourage support for strong leadership where a charismatic individual is available to personify the interests of the nation”

but the way it is expressed in Q04e (i.e. bending the rules) makes the item more suitable for an authoritarian scale rather than for a populist attitudes scale. Thus, it is expected to be supported by right-wing populists and other radical right voters (e.g. Donovan, 2021) but many left-wing populists would not feel comfortable with the idea of a strong leader who bends the rules. Besides, many self-professed ‘liberals’ might also agree with that (strong leadership) and don’t we always hear about the need for strong leadership from many unconnected sectors?

In addition, as Greaves and Vowles (2020) point out, as this question is double—barreled some people may pay attention to the first part only; in this case they may respond that they agree with it because they would like to have a strong leader, disregarding the second part of the statement and the reference to a leader who bends rules.

Finally, the last of the items that have failed in our MSA check for a unidimensional scale is SAK8: “Political forces representing the people should adopt a more confrontational attitude in order to make their voice heard and influence decision-making”. This item has worked well together with other populist items in ELNES 2015; it seems that the item was more meaningful then, because of the negotiations between the Greek government and European officials regarding the austerity measures and the bailout agreements and the high level of polarization in the Greek political arena but in ELNES 2019 this issue is less salient and although this item is still correlated with other populist attitudes items, these correlations are weaker and eventually the item fails to enter the unidimensional scale, probably due to changes of the level of polarization in Greece.

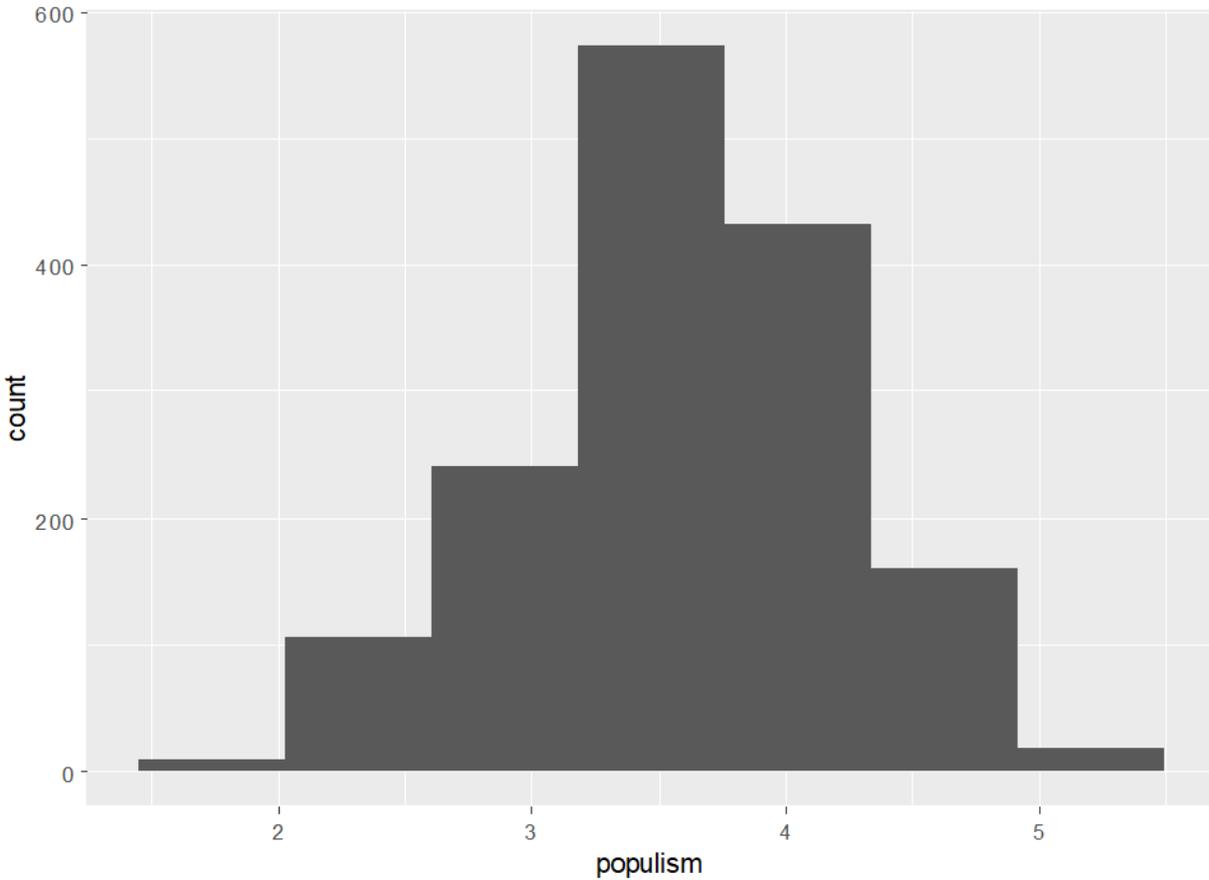


Figure 6-1 Distribution of the populist attitudes index

All the other items, construct a uni-dimensional scale ($H=0.414$) and we can use the arithmetic mean of these items to create a populist attitudes index. The distribution of this index is almost symmetrical, with very low levels of Skewness (-0.19) and Kurtosis (-0.22), i.e. very similar to a Normal distribution (Figure 6-1). The mean value is 3.6 and the standard deviation is 0.62. The median value is identical to the mean value (3.6), indicating that half of the respondents have a populism index score that is greater than or equal to 3.6. In addition, one out of four respondents has a populism index score greater than 4 and another one out of four has a score that is less than 3.2.

Before testing the Euroscepticism items through Mokken Scale Analysis we have to change the scale from some of them, because MSA does not work well when the tests items have different scales. Given that in most of our items a 5-point likert scale has been used we

have gone through the following data transformations.¹³ Then, we apply Mokken scale analysis using again the R package mokken. Most of the items construct a unidimensional scale. Only two of the items are not associated with any of the other items we have used for euroscepticism: DPEU3 and DPEU9a.

Regarding the failure of DPEU3 (about the direction of EU unification), this is not a surprise. While most of the other items are designed to catch how the respondents evaluate EU as it is (static views), this item according to Rose and Borz (2016) is a measurement of which direction EU unification should follow in the future according to the respondents (dynamic views). Dynamic views may vary a lot among people who have the same static view. Especially within the people who dislike the current state of the EU, some may favour further measures of integration; others seek less integration, and others may not even care about the future of EU unification because they want their country to withdraw from the EU (in this case they may not answer the question, or they may pick the middle point of the scale). Figure 6-2 depicts very clearly the large variation of responses to the EU unification question among the respondents who think that the EU membership is a bad thing for Greece.

¹³ i) we take the sum of all binary items in DPEU8 and then we transform the result into the [1-5] scale making sure that 5 indicates the pro-EU position, ii) we convert both DPEU1 and DPEU2 from a 3-point scale to a 5-point scale (leaving points 2 and 4 empty) and making sure that 5 indicates the pro-EU position to , iii) we convert DPEU3 from a 11-point scale to a 5-point scale (rounding to integer values when this is necessary), iv) we convert both DPEU4 and DPEU7 from a 4-point scale to a 5-point scale (leaving point 3 empty) and making sure that 5 indicates the pro-EU position and v) we reverse the negative-worded DPEU9b

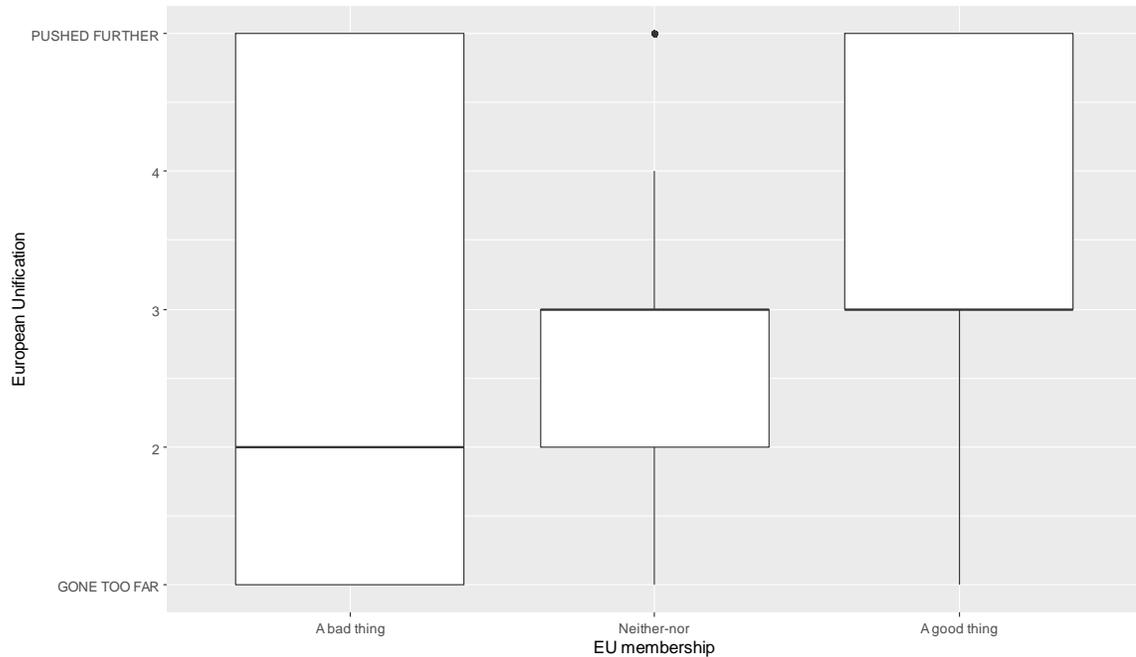


Figure 6-2 Distribution of EU unification per EU membership evaluation

The second item that had been excluded by the uni-dimensional scale is DPEU9a which is very similar to one of the items that according to Boomgaarden et al (2011) is part of the so called “negative affection dimension of EU attitudes”, which according to their hypothesis that was verified by their data, is strongly affected by anti-immigration attitudes. In our opinion, this item reflects mostly nationalist, anti-immigrant attitudes which may be modestly correlated with items that indicate a more general negative stance against EU. Figure 6-3 shows that although European citizens who evaluate EU membership as a good thing tend to disagree more with the idea that EU is a threat for their cultural identity, the boxplots of the other two groups (bad thing and neither/nor) is identical, meaning that beliefs of EU as a threat to cultural identity are very weakly related with more general EU evaluations.

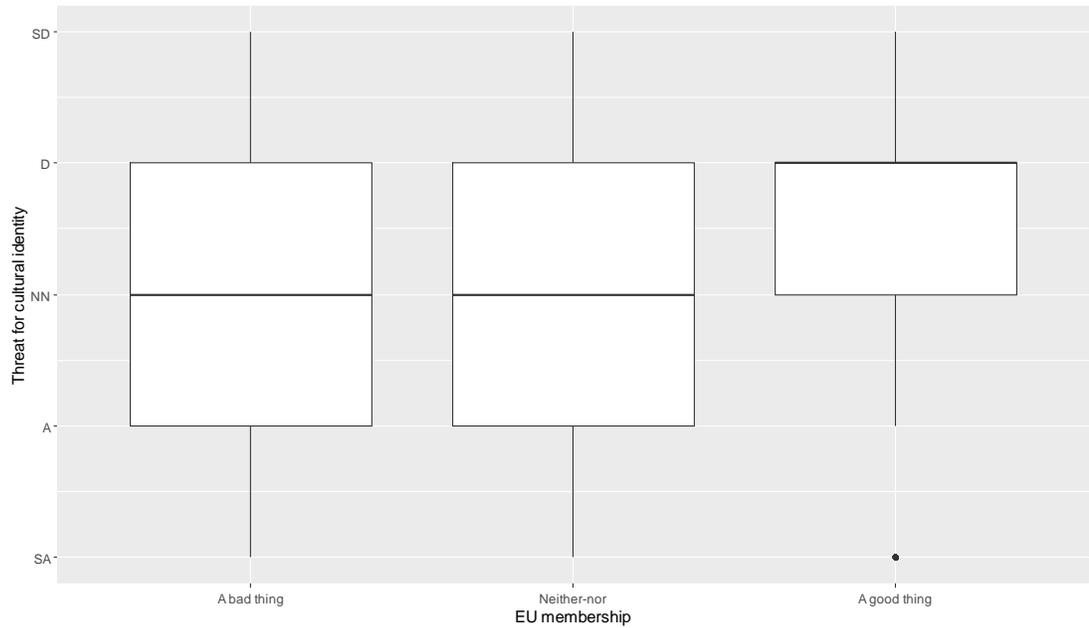


Figure 6-3 EU membership evaluations and distribution of EU as a threat for cultural identity

Comparing our results with the five dimensions suggested by Boomgarden et al, we have found that the dimension called “Strength” is indeed something different from the other euroscepticism items. In this respect, we agree with other scholars who argue that the most usual item (and most of the other items) pertaining to the strength dimension refers to attitudes on how EU should be developed in the future while the other dimensions refer to attitudes towards the current state of EU. In addition, we have shown that this item is very weakly correlated with a more general evaluation of the current state of EU because those who are dissatisfied with the current state may demand more or less EU integration with almost equal probabilities for both of these preferences for the future of EU. We have also found that one of the items that is related to the dimension “Negative Affection” does not fit with the other euroscepticism items in a unidimensional scale. However, we argue that these items capture mostly “fear of immigrants and thus, they related more to right-wing anti-immigrant stances and not euroscepticism per se. Moreover, this characteristic might be more associated euroscepticism that appears more in the richer EU countries that attract economic immigrants from other EU countries and as such may be less relevant in the Southern periphery and

especially in Greece where eurosceptic stances of citizens may be more related to the economic recession.

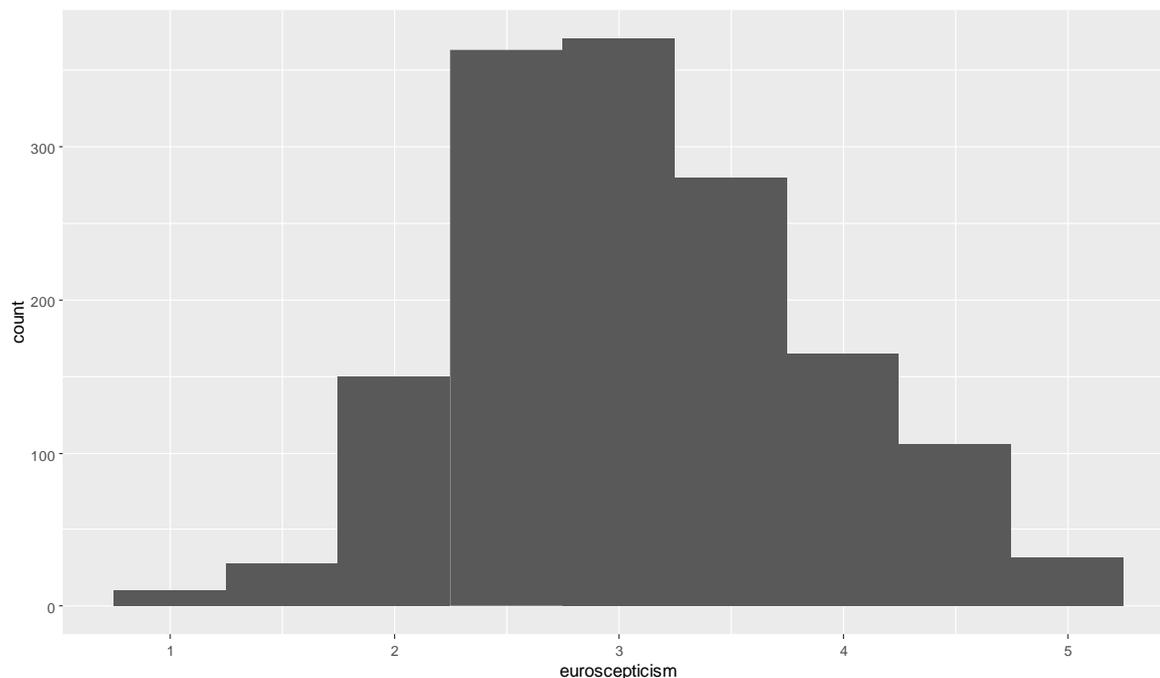


Figure 6-4 Distribution of Euroscepticism

The items that are related to the rest three dimensions highlighted by Boomgarden et al –Utilitarianism (EU membership is good thing and benefit), Performance (trust in EU institutions and SWD) and Identity –are, in our opinion, strongly interconnected and constitute one unified structure. Especially for European Identity that has been suggested as a predictor of the other dimensions (Teperoglou & Belchior, 2020; Weßels, 2007), we argue that the direction of effects between these three dimensions is not clear. For instance, citizens who believe that the EU is beneficial for them and their country or those who are satisfied with EU performance may feel more proud about being a European citizen and gradually develop a European identity. People who are satisfied with how democracy works in EU will also think that EU membership is a good thing. Given the multiple direction and the strength of the effects

among these three dimensions, we think that it makes sense to consider them as parts of the same unidimensional scale.

Thus, it is not a surprise that after excluding the EU unification and the cultural threat items, all the other items construct a unidimensional scale that is more strongly connected than the populist attitudes scale ($H=0.588$) and we can use the (reversed) arithmetic mean of these items to create a euroscepticism index. The distribution of this index is almost symmetrical, with very low levels of Skewness (0.27) and Kurtosis (-0.29), i.e. very similar to a Normal distribution (Figure 6-4). The mean value is 3.11 and the standard deviation is 0.77. The median value is almost identical to the mean value (3), indicating that half of the respondents have a euroscepticism index score that is greater or equal to 3. In addition, one out of four respondents has a euroscepticism index score greater than 3.625 and another one out of four has a score that is less than 2.533.

In an attempt to study the correlation between populism and euroscepticism, one of our main findings, as Figure 6-5 shows, is that these two indices are positively and strongly correlated. The correlation coefficient is $R=0.577$ between euroscepticism and populism indices. At this point, we are not arguing about a strict causal relationship, and we will avoid presenting a casual (e.g. linear regression) model that will facilitate the prediction of one of these indices by the other. Although, we might argue that populist attitudes could probably be used as a predictor of euroscepticism, our scope in this paper is restricted in studying the correlation of these two indices without entering into a discussion about causes and effects.

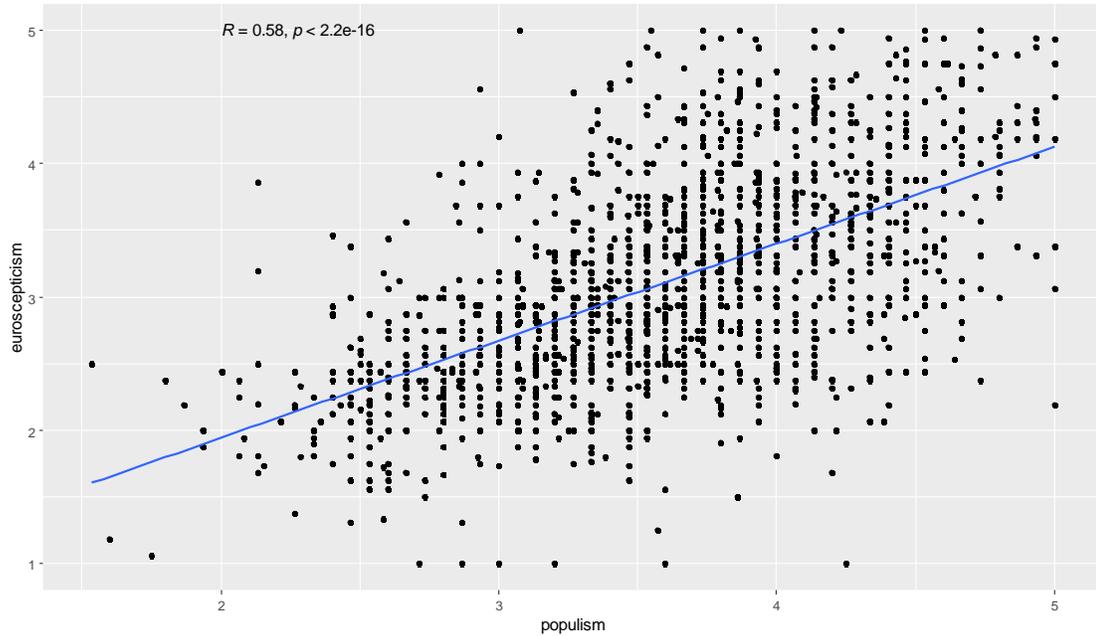


Figure 6-5 Scatterplot between Euroscepticism and Populism

However, there are some factors that can modify the strength of this correlation (i.e. should be used as additional independent variables along with the interaction terms if we wish to proceed to a linear regression model).

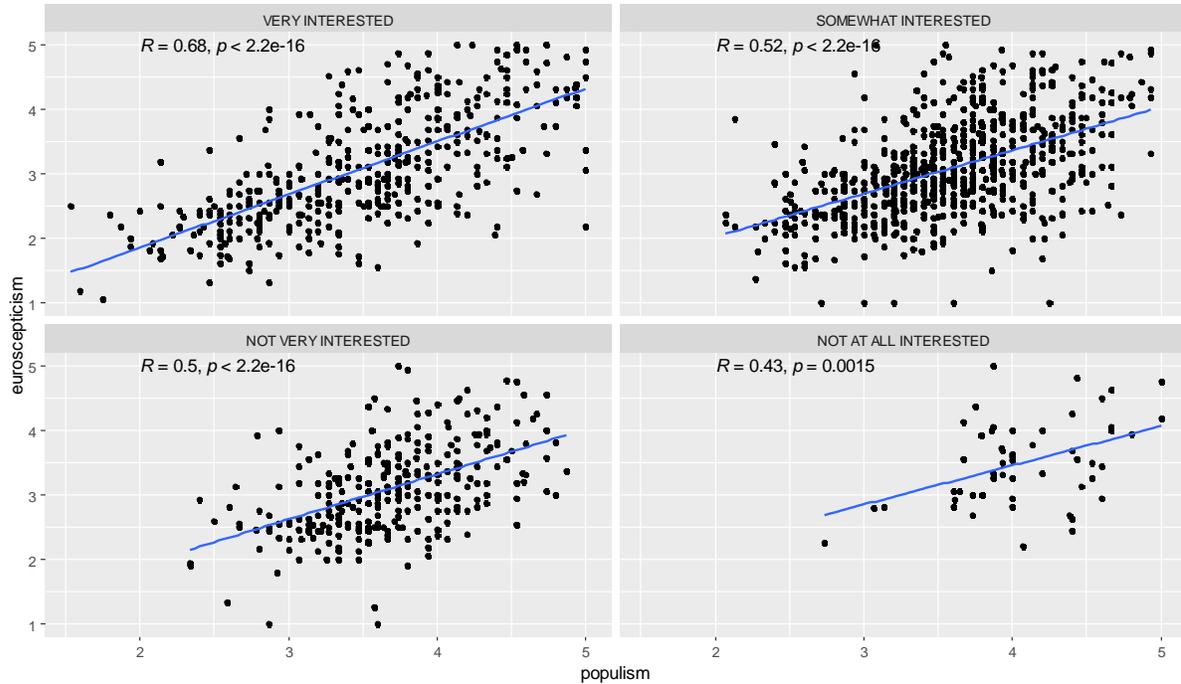


Figure 6-6 Correlation of Euroscepticism - Populism per Political Interest

As we can see in Figure 6-6, the positive correlation between populism and euroscepticism is stronger when political interest is high (for instance in the group of people who are very interested in politics (0.68) and it drops as the levels of interest are dropping) As a result of this drop, we observe that among people who are not at all interested in politics the correlation coefficient drops to 0.43 . A more careful observation of the diagrams in Figure 6-6 shows that although in the group of people who are very interested, there is a large variability for both indices as the interest drops, the variability decreases. For instance, in the “Not at all interested” group, almost everyone scores high on the populist attitudes scale and most of them score high on the euroscepticism scale.

The evaluation of the performance of the previous government has a very significant impact on the correlation between populism and euroscepticism. As it is shown in Figure 6-7, the more negative voters are for the job of the previous government the higher the correlation coefficients. The correlation coefficient is significantly lower in the group of voters who think that the previous government has done a very good job ($r=0.17$). In this group of people, we

can observe that the levels of populism have no effect on euroscepticism, which remains stable (indicated by the almost horizontal slop of the line in the corresponding diagram of Figure 6-7) and independent of the populism dimension.

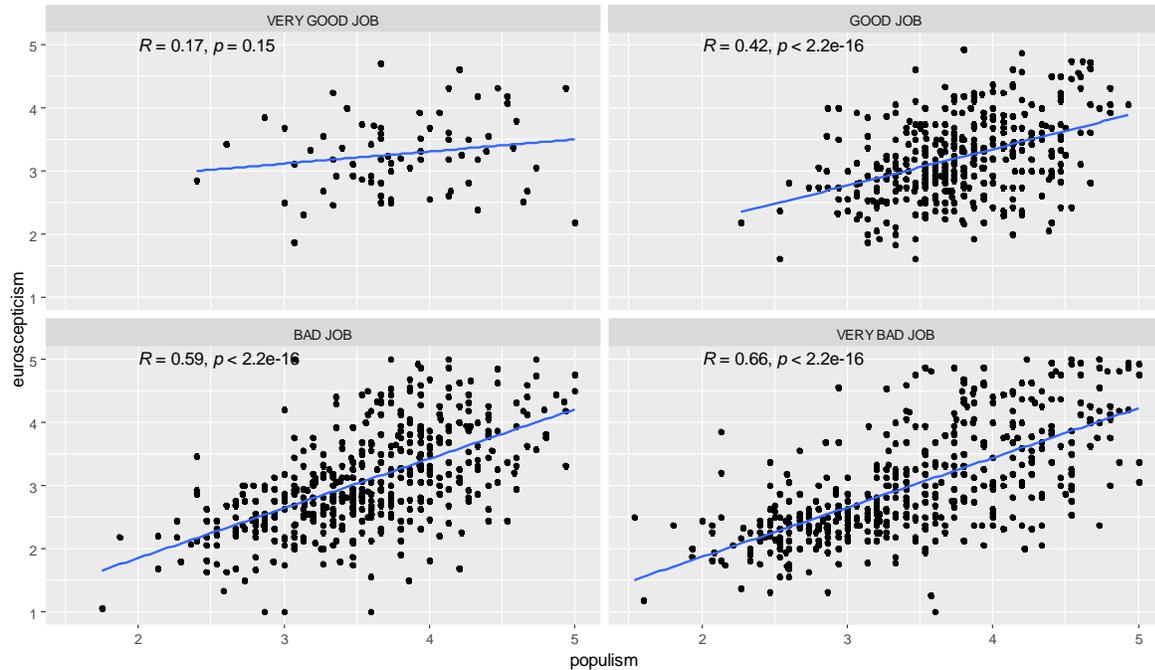


Figure 6-7 Correlation of Euroscepticism - Populism per Government Performance

In order to explain this relationship and given that the evaluation of the previous government is expected to be higher among the voters of the party that was in the government, we present in Figure 6-8 how the correlation between populism and euroscepticism varies among the voters of each party. The diagrams in Figure 6-8 show that in the group of SYRIZA voters, the correlation between populism and euroscepticism is much lower ($r=0.29$) than in the groups of the voters of other parties. Among SYRIZA voters the attitudes towards EU are much less related to populist attitudes. As a result, although in other parties, high scores on the populism index correspond to high scores on the euroscepticism index, this relationship is not so strong among SYRIZA voters. This could be related to the inclusionary characteristics of left-wing populism (but we do not observe something similar among MERA25 voters) or it could be related to the ambivalent stance of SYRIZA towards EU during the last decade.

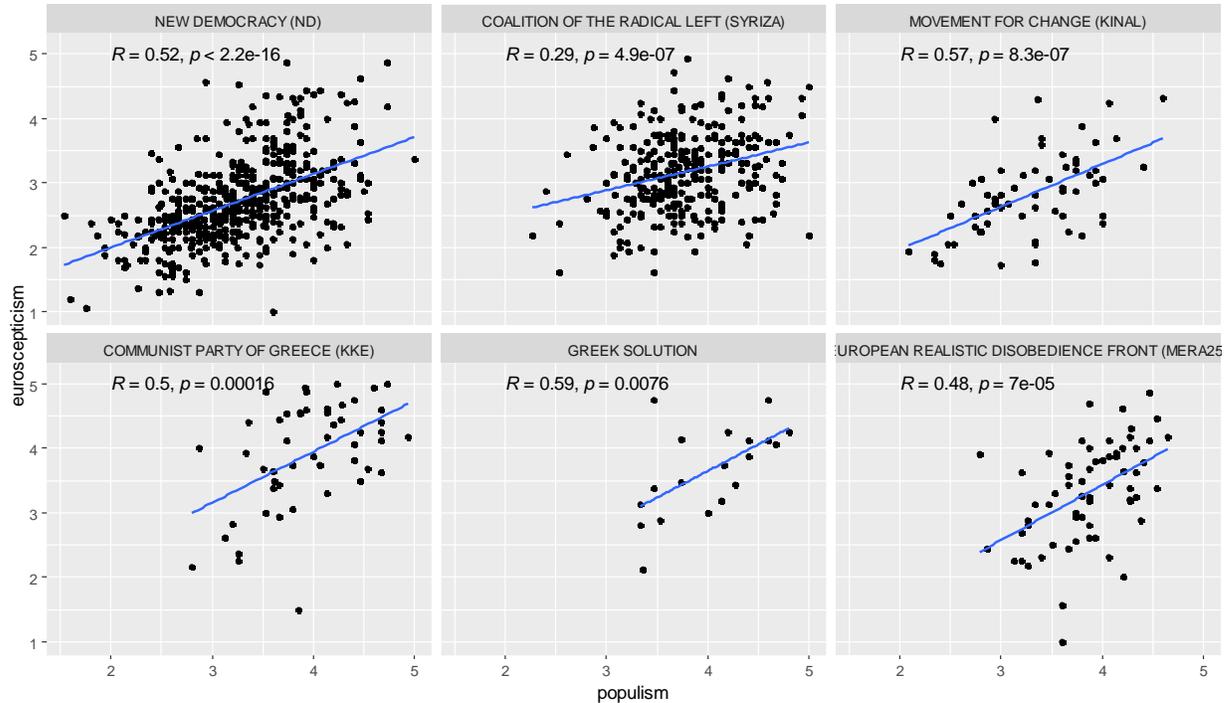


Figure 6-8 Correlation of Euroscepticism - Populism per Party

6.5 Concluding Remarks

In this paper, we aimed to analyze a series of items which are used in the DATAPOPEU surveys to measure populist attitudes and euroscepticism. Our main conclusions are as follows:

Populist attitudes items that have been designed to capture the different dimensions of populism as separate constructs (such as “people-centrism” and the “Manichean outlook” in Team Populism), which use a wording that does not include any references to anti-elite attitudes, may not be related to populist attitudes, e.g. we may find voters who score very high on these dimensions and at the same time the same voters may score low on the anti-elite dimension. These components should be regarded as non-compensatory and should not be used to construct a unidimensional populist attitudes scale. We have also verified, once more, that (at least in Greece) the CSES item about the strong leader who bends the rules does not work well as an item belonging to a populist attitudes battery.

Regarding euroscepticism, we have been able to verify that items that refer to the direction of EU unification (in the future) belong to a separate dimension of euroscepticism

from most euroscepticism items, which are designed to catch how the respondents evaluate EU as it is. We have also shown that among the people who dislike the current state of the EU there is a very large variation of preferences regarding the future direction of EU unification. We have also shown that most of the other euroscepticism items are strongly interconnected and constitute a unidimensional structure. Furthermore, our findings confirm that most of the other dimensions that have been suggested in the past are strongly correlated and we argue that people with high scores in one of them are likely to have an almost equally high score in the others (e.g. people who are satisfied with how democracy works in EU will also think that EU membership is a good thing).

Finally, regarding the relationship between populism and euroscepticism, we found that they are strongly and positively correlated (increased populism goes together with increased euroscepticism). This correlation may be moderated by other factors, such as political interest and party preference. Among Greek voters, we have found that this correlation is much lower in the group of SYRIZA voters, and we have tried to offer some possible explanations for this observation.

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