



Ακρωνύμιο πρότασης:

DataPopEU

Τίτλος πρότασης:

Καινοτόμες μέθοδοι και δεδομένα υψηλής ποιότητας για τη μελέτη του λαϊκισμού και του Ευρωσκεπτικισμού

D1.3 The datasets of NES

Δεκέμβριος 2022

The datasets of NES¹

The Hellenic National Election Voter Study 2019 Data Collection

The Hellenic National Election Voter Study includes a common module of survey questions provided by the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES), a collaborative program of research among election study teams from around the world. The 2019 Hellenic National Election Voter Study data (ELNES 2019) was collected using a mobile-friendly web survey (Andreadis, 2015a, 2015b) and the target population was Greek citizens aged 17+. According to the attached report, the vast majority of people in Greece has a mobile phone which is able to receive text messages (SMS). The sample was selected randomly via a Random Digit Dialing (RDD) approach for mobile phone numbers. In Greece, it is very easy to generate probability-based samples of mobile phone numbers through Random Digit Dialing procedures: all mobile phone numbers start with 69, followed by one of [0,3:5,7:9] and seven other digits. After the random generation of the mobile phone numbers, and subsequently checking that these numbers exist, sample members were recruited by sending text messages (SMS) to their mobile phones.

The design of a probability-based web survey of the general population, optimized for mobile users, using SMS as the main contact mode is a very innovative approach, which was implemented for the first time in the 2019 Hellenic National Election Voter Survey. Furthermore, it was based on a novel interaction between the server used for the ELNES web surveys with an SMS gateway service. Our novel method is based on the “push-to-web” method, i.e. a data collection method in which offline contact modes are used to encourage sample members to go online and complete a web questionnaire. The push-to-web method has been tested with postal mail as the contact mode (Dillman et al., 2009). In our innovative design we have replaced postal mail notifications with SMS notifications. A similar push-to-web approach (using landline calls as our contact mode) had already been applied successfully in the 2015 Hellenic voter study (Andreadis et al., 2015).

¹ All data are available at: <https://www.datapopeu.gr/data>

The selected respondents have received various text messages. We have started with a pre-notification procedure which informed the randomly selected mobile phone owners that they would soon receive an invitation to a survey organized by Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH). A telephone number at AUTH was also provided so that respondents could call in case they had any questions. The second text message was an invitation with a short URL to participate in the survey. The survey could be completed either directly on the mobile phone that received the message (if the phone had Internet access) or by copying the short URL and pasting in a browser of a tablet/laptop/desktop. The following (if necessary) text messages were reminders including once again the short URL. For details about the procedure of sending pre-notifications, invitations and reminders via text messages (SMS) and the content of these messages are available in other published articles (Andreadis, 2020).

In addition to sending text messages, we called one third of the respondents who had not clicked the link to the survey, and we asked them if they needed any help and if they preferred to participate in the survey via a telephone interview. Almost half of them (49.1%) did not answer our calls, almost 3 out of 10 (28.6%) responded that they did not need any help, because they did not want to participate in the survey, and approximately 2 out of 10 (18.7%) responded that they did not need any help and that they planned to complete the survey later. Only 0.9% of them responded that they would be willing to participate in the survey using another mode, 1.1% were ineligible and 1.8% answered that they would like us to re-send the text message with the link to the questionnaire.

However, telephone interviews would increase the response rate by much less than 0.9%, because (as our experience from other data collection projects shows) some of the respondents, who answered that they would participate in the survey if a different survey mode was offered, would not actually complete the survey if we had tried to arrange an appointment for a telephone interview with them (answering: “yes, I would participate if a different mode was available”, and actually participating when the different mode is available, are in fact two very different things). Given that we had already overachieved

our goal to gather a representative probability-based sample of 1500 completed questionnaires, the expected small number of new completed questionnaires from telephone interviews were unnecessary.

Regarding the population coverage, according to the report of the Special Eurobarometer 510² that was published in June 2021, 99% of Greek citizens have access to a personal mobile phone. This means that practically everyone in Greece has a mobile phone that accept text messages (SMS). The same report shows that access to mobile phone had increased by 8% since 2017 (indicating a significant growth rate of mobile phone access). This growth may be a result of a series of transformations initiated by the Greek government on the channels used to communicate with Greek citizens. Since 2019, and after the 2018 extreme wildfires in the area of Athens - during which many people died from these fires - SMS has become the main way of the Greek Civil Protection to alert citizens to evacuate areas in danger. In addition, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, SMS has been accepted as the most important government-citizens communication channel. The automatic SMS alerts that have been used by the Greek government to notify and remind Greeks about their COVID-19 vaccine or the paperless prescriptions that are send as as text messages to the mobile phone of the Greek citizens, are just some of the many examples of the wide use of SMS by the Greek government. In brief, Greek citizens without a mobile phone may confront large difficulties, when they want to use the services provided by the Greek state. Moreover, if they do not pay attention to their incoming text messages, they could be in danger of not being informed about serious alerts regarding situations that could threaten their lives. These may be just some of the reasons of the significant increase in mobile phone access in Greece during the last years.

The ELNES 2019 questionnaire had some additional questions that enabled us to fulfill various requirements. First, we included two filter questions at the very beginning of the questionnaire: i) Permission (consent form) and ii) Eligibility (asking people if they were

² <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2232>

eligible to vote in the 2019 Greek elections) as a screening instrument. In addition, there was a question asking whether the respondent had multiple mobile numbers. If the answer was yes, there was a follow up question asking how many mobile numbers he/she had. The final sampling probability (and consequently the sampling weight) was obtained after the process of data collection was completed, as both of these estimates need to be adjusted according to the number of distinct mobile phone numbers owned by each respondent. For instance, the sampling probability (or weight) for someone who owns two mobile phone numbers should be double (or half) of the sampling probability (or weight) of someone who owns one mobile phone number only. Thus, we have used the number of distinct mobile phone numbers owned by each respondent to calculate the sampling probability (and consequently the sampling weight) of each respondent. As a result, our data includes a variable named “sample_weight” that is calculated as one divided by the number of mobile telephones owned by the individual, to compensate for disproportionate probability of the selection of individuals with many mobile phone numbers.

Finally, we have invited via email a small number of ELNES 2015b participants, who had agreed to participate in the next election study. A total of 26052 sample members have received an invitation to participate in the survey. After reading the consent form on the first page of the questionnaire, many of the people who had been invited to the survey, did not give their consent. As a result, their questionnaire was submitted with all other (except the consent question) questions unanswered. We do not know if these sample members were eligible, because the eligibility questions were displayed on the questionnaire after the consent form, and sample members who had not given their consent were unable to answer the eligibility questions. In addition, some participants had been administered a version of the questionnaire that was split into a very short first part and a second longer part (for a similar design see Andreadis & Kartsounidou, 2020). Other questionnaires have failed to meet data quality criteria developed in the past (Andreadis, 2012, 2014) and quality criteria that have been developed in DataPopEU and are presented later in this chapter. After completing all the aforementioned procedures, we had a final,

clean dataset of 1537 completed questionnaires, corresponding to a response rate of circa 6%.

The 2019 Hellenic Candidate Survey

In Greece CCS surveys have been conducted since 2007 by the School of Political Science of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (A.U.TH). They are post-election surveys. Although, in many countries such as in Italy and in Portugal, the questionnaires of candidate survey are sent by mail to the candidates MPs (Freire et al., 2014), in Greece these surveys are conducted primarily online. For instance, for the recruitment of participants for the Greek candidate survey of 2015 we had followed two methods: i) collecting their email addresses by using search engines and visiting websites related to the candidates or to the Greek elections in general, and ii) asking political parties to provide us with a list of their candidates along with their email addresses.

In the Greek candidate survey of 2019, we wanted to examine an additional method of candidates' recruitment beyond the collection of email addresses through search engines: collecting candidates MPs' Facebook pages and personal accounts in order to ask them personally if they wanted to participate in the Greek candidate survey of 2019. As far as we know, Facebook has not been used by other CCS partners as a way to send the questionnaires of a candidate survey to candidates MPs.

Moreover, during data collection for the Hellenic (Greek) candidate survey of 2019 we conducted three web experiments to test the impact on response behavior of: i) questionnaire length ii) web survey layout and iii) candidates recruitment. In order to test the impact of each factor we have manipulated the conditions of the survey in several ways. First, we divided the questionnaires into two or three parts in order to test whether shorter questionnaires increase response rate (splitting design). Second, we conducted an experiment on whether the layout of the survey affects the response rate. Specifically, there were two different designs of the questionnaire namely single page question and grid. Furthermore, some surveys were optimized for mobile devices to test if this affects the

response rate. The final experiment is about the candidates' recruitment. Most of the Greek candidate MPs have e-mail addresses which are available online especially during the period of electoral campaign. We collected their e-mail addresses using search engines and visiting websites related to the candidates or to the Greek elections in general. We also got in contact with the candidates whose e-mail could not be collected, through their Facebook pages and personal accounts.

The findings from our experiments have been presented in previous publications (Tsigkou et al., 2020). We have shown that the shorter a questionnaire is, the less the abandonments are. We also have shown that the grid design which is optimized for mobile devices is the most suitable design for both mobile devices users and desktop or laptop users; the completion rate is higher in this kind of design than one question per page and grid designs along with the lowest abandonments along the three survey layouts. Moreover, we have demonstrated that mobile devices users are more likely to abandon a question in a grid design that is not optimized for mobile devices rather than one in a question per page design and mostly in an optimized survey. Regarding the final experiment about candidates recruitment, we have shown that the most appropriate method to contact candidates in order to invite them to a candidate survey is by email. Contact through Facebook may be an effective solution if we get in contact with candidates no later than a month or two after the elections as many of them stop dealing with their Facebook pages and personal accounts when their electoral campaign is over.

Thus, we suggest that web surveys have to be optimized for mobile devices as this design is proven to be more appropriate for both mobile devices users and desktop/laptop users. Moreover, further research is needed to find the most suitable questionnaire length in order to achieve the highest response rate possible. Finally, we think that candidates' recruitment through Facebook is worth examining further.

The DataPopEU Expert Surveys

Scholars use different methods of estimating the party positions such as literature review and analysis of party manifestos as well as public opinion surveys, elite studies and, more recently, expert surveys. Expert surveys are widely used by scholars for decades to estimate party positions in a multitude of political dimensions, such as party placement in a left-right scale (Castles & Mair, 1984; Huber & Inglehart, 1995), European integration (Ray, 1999) or economic and social-ethical dimensions (Benoit & Laver, 2006).

More recently, several expert surveys about populism and euroscepticism have appeared like Chapel Hill Surveys (Polk et al., 2017). The Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) uses the opinion of experts on the positioning of political parties in many countries in Europe. The 2017 Chapel Hill Expert Survey, in addition to two items designed to measure populism already present in CHES since 2014 (anti-elite and anti-corruption), also includes a new item on people-centrism. In the 2017 Chapel Hill Expert Survey, 228 experts estimated the positions of 132 parties in 14 countries in Europe. Each national expert was asked to reflect on the position of the leadership of the parties presented to the experts with their abbreviations and full names, in the country language and in English. The introduction of the questionnaire, in fact, clarifies what the Chapel Hill researchers mean when they refer to the leadership of the parties (party's chair, the party presidium, and the parliamentary party, as distinct from the party base or local and regional party officials). Then for a series of dimensions the questionnaire includes three items: i) position, ii) clarity and iii) salience. In addition to euroscepticism and populism, the 2017 CHES questionnaire incorporates items that can be used to estimate the position of political parties on the following dimensions: i) economic left/right and ii) libertarian vs authoritarian (socio-cultural issues).

Other expert surveys on populism have been conducted by members of the Team Populism project (Andreadis, 2018; Wiesehomeier, 2019). The expert survey conducted by Wiesehomeier in addition to a CHES item on anti-elite salience, includes more "populist" items (Wiesehomeier, 2019). This study includes measurements fielded in two

phases: the first phase was fielded in 2011 / 2012 in Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, and Chile and conceives of populism as a bundle of attributes combined in a single metric. The substantive definitions of the scale endpoints asked country experts to locate political parties and presidents along a 20-point scale, where 1 indicated the populist end defined as: “Highlights the interest of the people, with reference to the sovereign will of the majority. Condemns the ruling class and interest groups. Emphasizes personal authority, capable of leadership and a decisive resolution of problems. Uses an informal style and slang.” (1). At the other side of the spectrum, 20 indicated the pluralist endpoint as: “Highlights the interests of citizens, with references to civic or republican values. Recognizes the ruling class and interest groups as legitimate. Emphasizes impersonal authority, the formality of procedures and separation of powers. Uses a “well-educated” style and more formal language.” (20). The second expert survey disaggregated the bundle into separate dimensions with concise and straightforward wordings of the endpoints. This survey was implemented in a survey fielded in 2015 in 18 Latin American countries and tries to measure populism with the utilisation of several items: People-centrism, Anti-elite: morality, Anti-elite: rhetoric (copied by CHES), and Informal style. The main disadvantage of the study conducted by Wiesehomeier is that it covers Latin American countries only.

In DataPopEU, we have conducted two expert surveys to estimate the ideological positions of the main Greek political parties with respect to populist and eurosceptic issues. The data of the first expert survey have used in order to build the initial version of PopEUCompass and the data of the second expert survey have used to build the final version of PopEUCompass. For the statements included in PopEUCompass we have relied on previous efforts regarding populism and euroscepticism (e.g. Chapel Hill, Team Populism and the Populismus project). In addition, we have relied on some CSES items and other surveys regarding populism and euroscepticism as well as on information collected from our project –web experiments, social media, printed press. The invitations for the expert-surveys have been sent to more than 60 experts on populism and euroscepticism and the combined dataset includes responses by 36 experts.

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