

Kim, Do Won

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## Dimensionality, party competition and voter preference in the era of populism: The case of England, 2010-2017

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THE LONDON SCHOOL  
OF ECONOMICS AND  
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■



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# Dimensionality, party competition and voter preference in the era of populism: The case of England, 2010-2017

Do Won Kim

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# Dimensionality, party competition and voter preference in the era of populism: The case of England, 2010-2017

Do Won, Kim\*

## Abstract

This study examines how the UK political space, party competition and voting behaviour have changed with the recent rise of populism. First, this paper identifies the changes in UK dimensionality by conducting factor analyses on British Election Study data. Then, it maps parties and their supporters on the identified space to explore the changes in party competition and voter-party congruence. Finally, this study runs an OLS regression to analyse to what extent voter-party congruence influences voter's party preference. This study finds that UK political space has become multidimensional as issues related to populism have become salient enough to form an independent dimension. After Brexit, however, the main contents of this new dimension have changed from EU-related immigration issues to Brexit negotiation. Meanwhile, party competition and voter preferences have revolved around and placed more emphasis on the salient dimension.

**Keywords:** Multidimensionality, populism, voter-party congruence

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\* Ph.D. Candidate in Political Science, Seoul National University

Email: [kenrose05@snu.ac.kr](mailto:kenrose05@snu.ac.kr)



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# **Dimensionality, party competition and voter preference in the era of populism: The case of England, 2010-2017**

## **1. Introduction**

Populism is now one of the most prominent political phenomena in European politics. Populist parties have successfully mobilised votes in recent elections across Europe. Vote Leave won the Brexit referendum, following the electoral success of the UK Independence Party (UKIP) in the 2015 UK general election (Goodwin & Heath, 2016). Le Pen went to the second round in the 2017 French presidential election (Berger, 2017). The Alternative for Germany entered the Bundestag as a result of the 2017 German federal election (Göppfarth, 2017). The Five Star Movement won the 2018 Italian election and have formed a coalition government with the far-right League (Newell, 2018).

Although EU-related issues are often treated as the 'hidden giant' (Dinas & Pardos-Prado, 2012), it seems that those issues have become salient enough to form an independent issue dimension. Has the structure of the political space changed with the rise of populism? Previous literature agrees that the importance of the EU and immigration issues has increased (Abou-Chadi, 2016; Brigeovich et al., 2017; De Vries & Hobolt, 2012; Kriesi et al., 2006; Otjes & Katsanidou, 2017; Walczak et al., 2012). In the UK, for example, a market research organisation called 'Ipsos MORI' conducted a survey which asked the respondents what the most important issue facing Britain today was (Ipsos MORI, 2014). According to their data, economic issues such as

unemployment and inflation were the most dominant concerns for UK citizens until the 1990s. By 2010, the respondents still considered the economy to be the most critical issue, but the immigration issue came in second place. In 2016, EU-related issues already overwhelmed economic issues.

Thus, it is plausible that the UK political space has been transformed as EU-related issues have become highly salient. If this is the case, the spatial analyses of party competition and voter choice, both of which are contingent on dimensionality, should be re-examined. Nevertheless, most literature a priori assumes a two-dimensional political space, with the economic dimension on the one hand and the cultural dimension on the other. This paper aims to fill this gap by answering the following research questions: in the context of the populist surge, how have the UK multi-dimensional political space and the behaviours of political actors within that space changed? Specifically, how has the UK dimensionality changed? To what extent do the parties and voters base their political decisions on which dimension? This research uses the British Election Study data of 2010, 2015, and 2017. First, this paper identifies the number of hidden dimensions with the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and then defines to which extent each policy item loads on each dimension with the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Next, to analyse how competitive and representative the parties are, the positions of parties and supporters are mapped in this newly defined political space using factor loadings derived from the CFA. Lastly, this paper uses the OLS regression to examine how voter-party congruence on each dimension affects voters' preferences for parties.

This study found that the structure and contents of the UK political space have changed since 2010. A simple one-dimensional space in 2010 had transformed into a more complex two-dimensional space of socioeconomic (SE) and EU dimensions, by 2015. Although this two-dimensional structure remained unchanged between 2015 and 2017, the contents of the dimensions have changed. The main issues that constructed the EU dimension in 2015 were immigration and EU-related issues, which were then substituted by Brexit-related issues in 2017. Amid these changes, the party

competition centred around the salient EU dimension, while mainstream parties tended to emphasise the SE dimension and niche parties the EU dimension. Likewise, the salient issue dimension profoundly influences voter preferences. Voters tended to rely more on the salient EU dimension than on the SE dimension.

The paper is structured as follows. Section 2 reviews the literature on dimensionality and voter-party congruence under spatial logic. Section 3 presents the hypotheses and describes the data and methods. Section 4 analyses the test results, and section 5 concludes by providing answers to the research questions.

## 2. Literature Review

### *2.1 Dimensionality*

Dimensionality describes the configuration of a political space where party competition and voting choice take place. In political space, there are numerous political issues. Dimension is a category where many issues can be classified together and treated coherently as a package. For example, redistribution, tax, and regulation issues can be categorised into the economic dimension. Parties fight against each other by adopting different economic policies, and voters decide which party to vote for based on their economic preferences. The left(right)-side of this dimension signals the support for(rejection of) governmental interventions in the economy. As such, dimensions can serve as informational shortcuts of understanding political conflicts (Rovny & Edwards, 2012). In other words, the concept of dimensionality requires some reasonable degree of generalisation of the political landscape. At the same time, however, the essential characteristic of dimensionality is that it varies across time and space. Indeed, dimensionality differs from country to country (Bakker et al., 2012; König et al., 2017; Otjes & Katsanidou, 2017; Rovny & Edwards, 2012). Even within the same country, the dimensionality of the 1980s would be different from the 2010s.



Because of this context-dependent characteristic of dimensionality, we should focus on one specific country at one point in time.

There are mainly two approaches to measuring dimensionality: 'bottom-up' and 'top-down'. According to the former, the driving force that shapes dimensionality is deeply rooted in social change (De Vries & Marks, 2012; Rovny & Polk, 2013). That is, changes in voters' demands lead to the transformation of dimensionality. This perspective is based on the cleavage theory (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967). Previous literature based on this line of theory has provided explanations for the changes in European dimensionality. The educational revolution and the new social movement from the 1960s to the 1980s helped a new cultural dimension to emerge (Bornschieer, 2012; Kitschelt, 1994). Meanwhile, authoritarian counter-movements started to rise among voters from the 1980s, which were further fuelled by European integration throughout the 1990s. The European debt crisis and migration crisis were the critical junctures behind the emergence of the 'transnationalism' cleavage (Hooghe & Marks, 2017), which has become the new base of party competition. To summarise, this bottom-up approach tells us that dimensionality is greatly affected by changes in voters' demands (König et al., 2017). Following this bottom-up approach, dimensionality, as perceived by voters, can be measured using the voter survey data.

Conversely, dimensionality is the result of party competition from the top-down perspective. In other words, changes in party competition shape dimensionality (Bornschieer, 2012; de Lange, 2012). Parties, as policy suppliers, determine which issues to politicise or de-politicise when they compete against each other. Here, dimensionality changes when the mainstream parties converge and niche parties challenge. More precisely, in Western Europe, most mainstream parties have converged towards liberal stances on both economic and cultural dimensions (Carter, 2008; Meguid, 2008; Rooduijn, 2015). Moreover, as it is advantageous for them to maintain the status quo, they tend to emphasise traditional issues to avoid making new issues such as immigration and European integration salient (Rovny & Edwards, 2012).

Mainstream parties face a dilemma when it comes to these issues (Kortmann & Stecker, 2017; Odmalm & Bale, 2014). If the mainstream right decides to control immigration, it contradicts its economic stance of supporting the free movement of labour. Controlling immigration also contradicts the mainstream left's cultural stance on protecting human rights. However, the mainstream parties are also reluctant to adopt generous immigration policies. For the mainstream right, it would contradict its social authoritarian position, while for the mainstream left, it would risk their economic efforts such as preventing wage cuts. This dilemma makes both mainstream parties avoid assuming a clear position on immigration. Meanwhile, niche parties try to take over the space that is 'left-behind' due to the liberal consensus of the mainstream parties. As issue entrepreneurs, they intentionally emphasise the issues that evoke new political conflicts (De Vries & Hobolt, 2012; Rovny & Edwards, 2012), particularly the immigration issues (Kortmann & Stecker, 2017). Therefore, the dimensionality changes when the new issues become salient and politicised through party competition (Abou-Chadi, 2016).

If we follow this top-down approach, we measure dimensionality as perceived by parties, with the data such as the Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP) or Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES). The problem is that, if we use these party-level data to measure dimensionality, a simple dimensional space of 'left-libertarian vs right-authoritarian' is often derived in Western Europe. Most parties in Western Europe position themselves in left-libertarian or right-authoritarian quadrants. However, many voters also position themselves in left-authoritarian and right-libertarian quadrants, too (Kurella & Rosset, 2017; Lefkofridi, 2014). Thus, if we use party-level data to identify dimensionality, the space for these underrepresented voters is erased.

These two approaches, however, are not mutually exclusive. Instead, they interact dynamically with each other. This paper examines this interaction in the context of UK politics. In the 1950s and 1960s, electoral demands for Keynesian economic policies were very high (Quinn, 2013). Political parties responded to these demands by

converging towards an economically left-wing position to pursue the goal of building a post-war welfare state. Then, as Europe moved on to the post-industrial society in the 1960s and 1970s, the focus of electoral demands shifted from the economy to post-material values (Inglehart, 1990). With the decline of traditional class and religious cleavages (Mudde, 2014) and the rise of the middle class and the educational level, social liberalism spread among the electorate (Ford & Goodwin, 2017). As a consequence, issues related to the environment, human rights and gender equality became controversial (Fagerholm, 2014). Meanwhile, mainstream parties reacted to these changes by accommodating the salient environmental issues. At the same time, they strategically avoided competing around these issues to prevent them from becoming politicised, which was one of the main reasons behind the failure of the UK Green Party. Instead, in this period, Labour moved more towards the left to accommodate the demands of the trade unionists. In contrast, the leader of the Conservative Party, Thatcher, pushed the party's neoliberal stance further to the right. Thus, the centre of the political spectrum was void of power and could be successfully occupied by the Liberal Democrats (Carter, 2008).

From the 1980s to the 1990s, globalisation and European integration gained momentum. While a Europhile ambience was widespread across Europe until the early 2000s, the potential for a Eurosceptic backlash already existed among the electorate (Bornschieer, 2012). Meanwhile, Blair's New Labour dramatically moderated its position by lowering taxes and reducing welfare dependency (Adams & Somer-Topcu, 2009; Ford & Goodwin, 2017). The UK Conservatives used to be soft-Eurosceptic compared to other Europhile mainstream parties in continental Europe (Hobolt, 2016). However, Cameron took a practical route towards pro-EU and culturally liberal stances (Quinn, 2013; Bale et al., 2018). Thus, as a reaction to the changes in the electorate, the Labour moved towards a more economically right-wing position, while the Conservative Party moved towards a culturally left-wing position. The potential discontent of the 'losers' of globalisation started to explode, particularly after the European debt crisis and the migration crisis. UKIP mobilised these

unsatisfied demands by effectively linking immigration issues to the EU (Coffé & van den Berg; 2017). Their populist discourse blamed the EU for the problems that the country had to face. For example, the EU, to which the country is paying too much (Ford & Goodwin, 2017), is regarded as the very reason behind the inflow of immigrants (De Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2005), the potential ‘terrorists’ who are taking benefits away. Thus, reflecting the changes in voters’ demands, UKIP successfully brought EU-related issues to the centre of the political debate (Clarke et al., 2017).

To sum up, dimensionality changes when the underlying electoral demands change and when parties translate these demands into political conflicts (Rovny & Edwards, 2012). In this regard, this paper uses the voter survey data to measure dimensionality and the party-level data to examine how parties compete against each other in that dimensional space.

What, then, are the previous empirical findings on dimensionality? The previous findings are not consistent regarding the number and contents of dimensionality. Notably, most literature has found a two-dimensional structure in Western Europe (Bornschieer, 2012; Hix & Lord, 1997; Hooghe & Marks, 2009; Hooghe & Marks, 2017; Inglehart, 1990; Kitschelt, 1994; Kriesi et al., 2006; Kriesi, 2008; Kurella & Rosset, 2017; Marks et al., 2006; Rovny & Edwards, 2012; Rovny & Polk, 2013; Rovny & Polk, 2018; Stoll, 2010; Wheatley, 2014; Wheatly, 2015). The first axis is the economic dimension, and the second is the cultural dimension, whose names and contents diverge across the literature. For instance, it is referred to as ‘post-materialist vs materialist’ (Inglehart, 1990), ‘GAL/TAN (Green-Alternative-Libertarian/Traditional-Authoritarian-Nationalist)’ (Brigevich et al., 2017; Hooghe & Marks, 2017; Marks et al., 2006), ‘pro-integration vs anti-integration’ (Hooghe & Marks, 2009), ‘social liberalism vs social traditionalism’ (Rovny & Edwards, 2012), ‘cosmopolitan vs communitarian’ (Wheatley, 2015), a ‘secondary dimension’ (Stoll, 2010) with post-materialist and ethnic issues, or a ‘non-economic dimension’ (Rovny & Polk, 2013; Rovny & Polk, 2018) with immigration, ethnicity, civil liberty, and lifestyle issues as its core.

However, these are often reduced to one dimension in Western Europe, as the parties on the left(right)-side on one dimension are also located on the left(right)-side on the other dimension. Because of this strong linear relationship in party positions between the two dimensions, the parties are practically competing in a single-dimensional space of left-right or 'left-libertarian vs right-authoritarian' (Kitschelt, 1994; Marks et al., 2006; Adams et al., 2005; Kurella & Rosset, 2017). Meanwhile, Hix and Lord (1997) suggested an orthogonal two-dimensionality with the left-right dimension on the one hand and the EU dimension on the other.

As the empirical findings are inconsistent, we can neither confidently draw conclusions about dimensionality nor generalise it across countries. It is also uncertain whether the two-dimensional structure that most studies had suggested has remained the same at this time. Furthermore, while the content of the economic dimension is stable across the literature, that of the cultural dimension is not. Are the core issues of this second dimension related to the GAL/TAN sense that became salient after new social movements? Alternatively, are they related to immigration and European integration which have recently become salient? Additionally, it is also unknown whether EU-related issues can constitute an independent dimension or are embedded in the economic and cultural dimensions.

## *2.2 Voter-party congruence*

The spatial theory is a useful tool for analysing party competition and voting behaviour. On each issue dimension, the position of a voter is her ideal policy preference, and the position of a party is its policy platform (Adams et al., 2005). Under spatial logic, voters maximise their electoral utilities by considering their positions as well as the positions of parties. The most representative model is Downs' (1957) proximity model, where a voter chooses the party whose position is the closest to her ideal point. Thus, the smaller the absolute distance from the party, the larger the electoral utility of voting for that party. Spatial theory becomes more useful when voters can tell the difference between the positions of parties (Dalton, 2011; Fazekas &

Medar, 2013), and when the issues at stake are salient (Netjes & Binnema, 2007). Moreover, voter positions (Dalton, 2011; van der Eijk et al., 2005), and party positions (Endersby & Galatas, 1998) on the issue dimension are reliable predictors of voters' choices. In this regard, adopting the spatial approach is appropriate for this paper, whose purpose is to analyse how voter-party congruence affects voter preferences.

Specifically, this paper uses the proximity rule to measure the congruence in the UK, as the UK general election embodies the electoral environment that Downs assumed (Cho & Endersby, 2003). First, it is relatively clear which party to blame for current government policies, and second, there is enough information about the opposition party. Here, the role of the issue salience is essential, as the congruence measure that incorporates issue salience is found to have a more substantial influence on the vote choice than that which does not (Giger & Lefkofridi, 2014). Moreover, voter-party congruence is significant for the workings of democracy (Andreadis & Stavrakakis, 2017). Under the Downsian spatial framework, the voter-party congruence indicates how party policies are linked to voter preferences (Boonen et al., 2017; Weber, 2015). A small congruence between voters and parties means that the representation gap is significant. Thus, achieving a reasonable level of congruence is crucial for the quality of representative democracy (Bakker et al., 2018; Rohrschneider & Whitefield, 2012).

Previous literature, however, is not free from limitations. First, most studies have treated the political space as an a priori given. Most of them assume a given two-dimensional space of economic and cultural dimensions. However, what if the actual political space looks different? In this sense, this paper denies any assumptions and inductively identifies dimensionality using factor analyses. Second, even though many studies accept that the European political space is multi-dimensional, they still use a left-right scale in their analyses (Boonen et al., 2017; De Angelis & Garzia, 2013; Fazekas & Medar, 2013; Kedar, 2005), mainly because the weights of each dimension are unknown (Tomz & Van Houweling, 2008).

Some studies do use two dimensions. Nevertheless, they always adopt a combination of either 'economic' and 'libertarian-authoritarian' scales or 'European integration' and 'left-right' scales in the survey data. The problem is that while 'libertarian-authoritarian' and 'left-right' are ideological scales, 'economic' and 'European integration' scales are policy-specific. Thus, using ideological and policy-specific scales together can distort reality. For instance, concerning the immigration issue only, if a voter is located at eight on a scale ranging from 0 to 10, it implies that the voter has a tough stance towards immigrants. However, this voter might think oneself to be located at five on the libertarian-authoritarian scale. In this case, the libertarian-authoritarian scale cannot adequately capture this voter's anti-immigration stance, as this rough ideological scale does not consider the salience of specific issues. Thus, this paper rules out ideological scales and uses only issue-specific scales from the survey. However, using issue-specific proximity can also be problematic (Andreadis & Stavrakakis, 2017; Bakker et al., 2018), as the weights the voters put on each policy are unknown. In this regard, this paper uses the CFA factor loading of each policy item as its de facto weight for each dimension.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Hypotheses

Previous literature has demonstrated that UK dimensionality is relatively simple compared to other countries in Western Europe. For example, using the party-level data, Bakker and his colleagues (2012) concluded that three dimensions best described the political space of most Western European countries, except for the UK, whose political space was two-dimensional with the first dimension being dominant. However, considering that the UK electoral system is unfavourable to small parties and thus, that the UK party system is simple (Hooghe & Marks, 2017), measuring UK dimensionality with the party-level data might not be useful. Indeed, using the voter-level data, Wheatley (2015) found three dimensions in the UK: 'economic', 'cosmopolitan vs communitarian', and 'libertarian vs authoritarian'. However, the

'libertarian vs authoritarian' dimension was not visible enough, which made the UK political space practically two-dimensional. Ultimately, there is no consensus on UK dimensionality.

The UK political space might be relatively simple when compared to other countries. Nevertheless, it seems that the UK political space has become more complex across time, as the salience of EU-related and immigration issues have increased. Thus, I argue that UK dimensionality became complicated between 2010 and 2015, with the emergence of a new dimension that reflected growing right-wing populist attitudes that led to the UK's exit from the EU. However, I doubt that there were any structural changes between 2015 and 2017. Instead, the central conflicts that form each dimension might have changed. After Brexit, whether or not the UK should leave the EU was not a controversy as the majority voted to leave. What matters now are the Brexit negotiations with the EU. In this regard, the hypotheses regarding UK dimensionality are as follows:

**H1a:** The structure of UK dimensionality became more complex between 2010 and 2015, with the new dimension mainly comprised of issues related to the rise of populism.

**H1b:** The contents of UK dimensionality changed between 2015 and 2017, particularly with the core conflict of the new dimension shifting from immigration to Brexit-related issues.

For parties to send out useful cues to voters, it is crucial that they split over an issue and compete against each other (Walczak et al., 2012). However, the Conservative Party was internally divided on EU-related issues and has sent out ambiguous cues, while Labour has remained relatively silent (Hobolt, 2016; Hooghe & Marks, 2017; Meguid, 2008). Overall, the mainstream parties have downplayed new issues that were unfavourable to them (Abou-Chadi, 2016; Rovny & Edwards, 2012), while UKIP took a firm populist position on these EU-related conflicts (Kortmann & Stecker, 2017).



Therefore, UKIP could successfully steer the party competition with their populist discourse, thus contributing to the Brexit result. Meanwhile, the mainstream parties polarised after Brexit. To send out more explicit cues, Corbyn's Labour moved more towards the left, and May's Conservative shifted towards more the right in 2017 (Ford & Goodwin, 2017). Interestingly, a significant number of the electorate responded that the Conservative Party was capable of dealing with the Brexit negotiation. In a 2017 BES voter survey, an open-ended question asked what the most critical issue facing the country was. Among the total 368 respondents whose responses included 'Brexit', about 45% said that the Conservative Party was best able to handle the issue. Meanwhile, only 1.4% of respondents chose UKIP. Furthermore, many younger voters who were unsatisfied with the referendum result supported Corbyn at the 2017 general election (Dorey, 2017). Thus, it seems that the mainstream parties are steering the axis of party competition in 2017. The hypotheses on party competition are as follows:

**H2a:** The axis of competition in 2015 tilted towards the more salient new dimension related to populism.

**H2b:** The axis of competition is more balanced between dimensions in 2017 than in 2015.

What, then, are the patterns of voter preference? About 28% of the UK electorate are 'left-authoritarians', whose economic preferences are on the left and whose cultural preferences are on the right (Lefkofridi et al., 2014). These left-authoritarians are more likely to support populist parties as they feel 'left-behind' by the mainstream parties that have converged towards the economic right and cultural left (Ford & Goodwin, 2017). In the same vein, research on the Conservative members who voted for UKIP in 2015, revealed that those members, compared to other Conservative members, were more on the economic left and felt that they were ideologically far away from Cameron (Webb et al., 2017). Thus, many 'left-behind' voters in the UK are close to the economically left-wing parties, and to the right-wing parties regarding EU-related

issues. However, as they feel disillusioned by both mainstream parties, they perceive UKIP as being proximate. Then, to what extent do the voters in general base their party preferences on each dimension? In multi-dimensional Europe, a voter's preference depends on which issue conflict he or she prioritises (Baker et al., 2018; Giger & Lefkofridi, 2014). For instance, voters who prioritised cultural issues over economic issues tended to vote for the populist right (Ivarsflaten, 2005). Moreover, the supporters of the niche parties based their votes on their attitudes towards European integration (De Vries & Hobolt, 2012). In other words, voters' preferences for challenger parties are associated with their priorities on cultural concerns related to the EU. Thus, under the spatial logic, voters' preferences for parties are greatly affected by the proximity on the salient issue dimension. The hypotheses on voters and their voting behaviours are as follows:

**H3a:** UKIP supporters are close to the left-wing mainstream parties concerning socioeconomic issues, and close to the right-wing mainstream parties when it comes to EU-related issues.

**H3b:** The voter-party congruence on the salient dimension has a higher influence on voter preferences than that of the other dimension.

## 3.2 *Data and methods*

### **Data**

This paper employs data from the British Election Study (BES) conducted in 2010, 2015 and 2017. First, the UK is a compelling case to analyse the populist rise and its effect on dimensionality. As the UK Conservative Party has always been soft-Eurosceptic (Hobolt, 2016), anti-EU demands existed even before Brexit. Therefore, Brexit is an explosion of these underlying demands. It is also worth noting that England data dominates UK or British data (Henderson et al., 2017). UKIP's populist appeals

revolved around protecting 'Englishness', and the votes from England determined the Brexit result (Hayton, 2016). This paper, thus, focuses on voters and parties in England.

Second, 2010, 2015 and 2017 are the crucial reference points for the rise of populism in the UK. The European debt crisis in 2010, the refugee crisis which peaked in 2015 and the 2016 Brexit referendum, are the critical events that have shaped recent political conflicts. Furthermore, since Nigel Farage returned as the party leader in 2010, UKIP started to gain more extensive support, which saw its peak in the 2015 general election. After Brexit, however, the party collapsed in the 2017 general election. Thus, if UK dimensionality or citizens' voting behaviours have changed at all with the rise of populism, the best time span to analyse would be from 2010 to 2017.

Third, this paper uses BES post-election face-to-face voter surveys from 2010 to 2017 to identify the UK political space and the positions of voters. Meanwhile, party positions are measured with data from 2015 and 2017 BES expert surveys. The BES data contains numerous policy items that are important in the UK political context. It also allows us to map voters and parties in the same political space. The BES expert survey is designed initially to use with the voter survey. It is highly connected to the voter survey, as the experts locate the parties on the same scale by answering the questions asked in the voter survey. Appendix A presents the detailed coding of data.

Lastly, using the expert survey instead of party manifestos or voter survey data is helpful when it comes to measuring the party positions. Manifestos are less reliable as they merely present what parties say, not what they genuinely do (Bakker et al., 2015; de Lange, 2012). Measuring party position with a voter survey is also problematic due to the projection bias (Grand & Tiemann, 2013; Kedar, 2005). That is, voters tend to subjectively locate the parties they like closer to their positions, which as a result overstates the effect of proximity rule. However, the experts can bridge what the parties say and do as they are informed voters interested in the party's strategies, manifestos, or other relevant indicators (Hooghe & Marks, 2017). Unfortunately, the party positions in 2010 are not available as the BES expert survey has only been

conducted since 2015. Therefore, the analysis of the year 2010 will focus on identifying dimensionality, which only requires demand-side data.

## Methods

First, this paper uses factor analyses to measure dimensionality (Bakker et al., 2012; Bakker et al., 2015; Bornschier, 2012; Costello, 2017; König et al., 2017; Rovny & Edwards, 2012; Rovny & Polk, 2018; Stoetzer & Zittlau, 2015; Wheatly, 2014; Wheatley, 2015). As dimensionality is neither visible nor countable, researchers should draw it from the observed responses of voters (Stoetzer & Zittlau, 2015). In this sense, to identify the latent structure of political space, factor analyses are appropriate. To avoid any a priori assumptions on dimensionality, I will first conduct an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and present the results using a scree plot to determine an adequate number of hidden dimensions. Here, the 'elbow' point in the scree plot, where the graph flattens out, is the decision criterion (Wheatley, 2014; Wheatley, 2015; Costello, 2017). By checking EFA loadings, this study preliminarily identifies what each dimension is. The next step is to conduct a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to precisely define to what extent each policy statement loads on different dimensions. Items that have an abnormal correlation with other issue items are removed from the model, along with items with insignificant p-values. Then, the model will be retested, until the RMSEA fit becomes lower than 0.08 (Wheatley, 2014; Wheatley, 2015).

Then, this study will locate voters and parties in the identified space, incorporating the issue salience by using factor loadings of each policy item. For example, let's assume that redistribution and taxation issues load on the economic dimension, and a voter's ideal points for each item are at five and nine, respectively. This voter may think that the redistribution issue does not matter that much, whereas taxation does. To better reflect the voter's issue salience, this paper uses the CFA loadings instead of the mean or median values. If the factor loading of the redistribution issue on the economic dimension is 0.2, and that of the taxation is 0.8, the voter's position on the economic dimension would be 8.2 ( $= 5 \cdot 0.2 + 9 \cdot 0.8$ ). Moreover, this paper examines how

parties compete against each other by drawing the axis of competition (Rovny & Polk, 2013; Rovny & Polk; 2018). The axis of competition is a linear regression line drawn among the positions of parties. In a two-dimensional space, for instance, it shows the relationship between the party position on one dimension (x-axis) and the other dimension (y-axis). If the line is steep, the party competition is fiercer around the y-axis. Besides this, I will map the median supporter of each party to compare them with the party positions. The median supporters are identified with the following BES question: 'Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat, or what?' (Clarke et al., 2017).

After having mapped the parties and supporters in the n-dimensional space, I will run the OLS regression to examine how voter-party congruence on each dimension affects the voters' preferences for parties. Here, the dependent variable is the propensity to vote (PTV), which is useful for measuring the electoral utilities (Ramonaitė, 2018). PTVs are derived from a BES question that asks, 'How likely is it that you would ever vote for each of the following parties?'. The respondents answer by choosing their positions for each party within a scale of 0 (very unlikely) to 10 (very likely). Thus, this paper focuses on the electoral utilities, not on the discrete choices (van der Eijk et al., 2006). The independent variables are voter-party congruences on each dimension, measured with the absolute distance between voters and parties following the proximity rule. The control variables are sociodemographic variables that affect PTV, which include age and educational levels (Weber, 2015); gender (De Angelis & Garzia, 2013; Walczak et al., 2012); religion (van der Brug et al., 2009), trade union membership (Van Biezen et al., 2012); income (Stoetzer & Zittlau, 2015), and ethnicity (Ramonaitė, 2018).

There are several advantages to using PTV as the dependent variable. First, it allows us to calculate utility for generic parties regardless of the characteristics of a specific party or party system. Indeed, a voter's choice reflects her or his preferences, but it may also include strategic considerations (Blais et al., 2001). As the British electoral system constrains small parties (Harrison & Bruter, 2011), there is particularly high

motivation for UKIP supporters to vote strategically. Therefore, PTV is more useful than discrete choice, as UKIP is a crucial element of this study. Second, it allows for the inclusion of non-voters in our analysis. The non-voters did not go to the poll, but they do still have party preferences. Third, using PTV is methodologically sound, outperforming other measures such as the thermometer and like/dislike scales (Weber, 2015). Lastly, as the PTV measure is a quasi-interval scale from 0 to 10, using OLS regression analysis becomes possible (Franklin & Renko, 2013).

However, using PTVs as the dependent variable requires stacking the original data records. By creating the stacked data matrix, the transformed data shows the voters' preferences for the generic parties (van der Eijk et al., 2005). In the stacked data matrix, the unit of observation becomes the combination of voter\*party. Therefore, all variables in the regression model should also correspond to the voter-party level. The independent variables, voter-party congruences on each dimension, can be used without any modifications because they already imply the relationship between voters and parties. The individual-level sociodemographic control variables, however, should be transformed into the voter-party level. Thus, this paper regresses the PTV for each party on the control variables before stacking the data. The estimates ( $\hat{y}$ ) are centred on the party mean and then saved in the model. However, it is difficult to interpret these predicted values as they merely indicate the average effects of control variables on the PTVs (Ramonaitė, 2018). In this regard, the controls are included in the model only as controls.

### *3.3 Possible limitations*

This paper uses the party positions as understood by experts, instead of those perceived by voters because first, there are no data on the policy-specific party positions held by voters and second, using party positions perceived by voters could lead to a projection bias (Grand & Tiemann, 2013; Kedar, 2005). However, PTV might, in fact, be determined by voters' subjective judgements of how close the parties are,

rather than voters' evaluations of party positions indicated by experts. In this case, using the expert survey data becomes irrelevant.

Moreover, throughout exploring the number of latent dimensions and giving meanings to them, there is no golden rule for researchers. That is, the results of factor analysis are subject to researchers' interpretations. Hence, there could be objections to the dimensions that are inductively defined and named in this paper. In this light, this paper provides justifications to why the dimensionality is defined and named as such in the results section, and then open up relevant discussion in the conclusion section.

Lastly, this paper assumes that voters behave rationally, considering their positions as well as the positions of the parties. That is, the voters are competent enough to base their decisions on the policy platforms of different parties. However, what if they rely more on non-policy or valence factors? It would be interesting to add valence factors to the model as independent variables (Abou-Chadi, 2016; Meyer & Müller, 2012; Stokes, 1963; Tomz & Van Houweling, 2008), which is beyond the scope of this paper.

## 4. Results

### *4.1 Dimensionality*

#### **A. 2010**

The results of the factor analyses can be found in Appendix B. First, single-dimensionality was found to be adequate in 2010 as the result of the EFA. As the scree plot flattens out from the second eigenvalue, I take the first point above this elbow point. Another way to interpret the scree plot is to retain only those points with eigenvalues larger than one (Laméris et al., 2018). Following this rule, I retained only one factor. According to the EFA loadings, all policy items loaded on this single factor. Thus, I denote this dimension as the left-right dimension. Second, the CFA proved that this left-right dimension well describes dimensionality of the UK in 2010. The RMSEA fit was smaller than the criterion of 0.08, and the p-values of all items were statistically

significant. The policy item with the most prominent factor loading was *anti.radical.islamist*, followed by immigration and EU-related items. The items with low factor loadings were *tax.spend* and *civil.lib.crime*. Thus, in the left-right dimensional space, immigration and EU-related issues did not form an independent dimension, but they were already highly salient in 2010. Interestingly, the voters are normally distributed on this single-dimensional space. According to Downs (1957), when voters are normally distributed in one-dimensional space, the parties that are closest to the median voter get more votes. Indeed, during the 2010 general election, the total vote share of the mainstream parties was about 88% (Cracknell, 2011). To summarise, the UK had a single dimensionality in 2010, where EU and immigration issues were potentially salient.

#### A. 2015

A structural change occurred between 2010 and 2015. First, the EFA found two factors adequate. The scree plot starts to flatten out from the second eigenvalue, while it flattens once more from the fourth eigenvalue. This ambiguous elbow point leaves room for interpretation. I interpreted that the third eigenvalue was the elbow point. Moreover, as the second eigenvalue was the closest to the cutting line where the eigenvalue equals 1, I retained two factors. By checking the EFA loadings, the items that loaded only on factor 1 were *eu.mem*, *eu.int*, and *civil.lib.terror*, whereas the items that loaded exclusively on factor 2 were *tax.spend*, *env.econ*, *health.care.spend*, *redistribution*, and *women.equal*. Thus, I denote factor 1 and factor 2 as the EU dimension and the socioeconomic (SE) dimension, respectively.

Since the SE dimension has been widely accepted and confirmed in previous literature, there would be little debate on the naming of this dimension as such. However, naming the factor 1 as the EU dimension would raise some questions. For example, some might wonder whether the EU dimension has the same ontological level as the SE dimension since the latter seems to indicate a broader category. Some others might think that this paper is merely relabelling the traditional economic versus culture

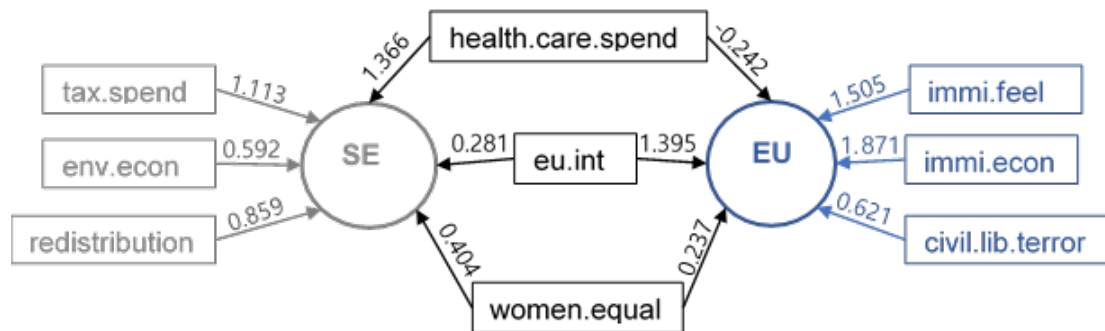


dimensions. With these potential criticisms in mind, this paper provides some justifications to why it labelled the first factor as the EU dimension.

As immigration issues that load heavily on factor 1 are not necessarily exclusively cultural, naming the factor 1 as the cultural dimension as opposed to the factor 2, socioeconomic dimension, would be problematic. Considering that the issues related to immigration, EU membership, European integration, and terrorist attacks are bundled together by factor 1, it would be much more plausible to name it as the populism dimension. However, as the dimensional space is context-dependent, this paper tried to reflect the UK-specific contexts in the naming process. In the UK, issues related to populism were expressed in the form of conflicts over the UK's membership of the EU. Hence, this paper chose to name the factor 1 as the EU dimension, rather than the populism dimension. At the current stage, as this paper only deals with the UK case, this UK-specific labelling will be used throughout the paper. Nevertheless, if this dimensional structure, in which issues related to populism form an independent dimension, is found in other countries as well, then the EU dimension in this paper could be renamed as the populism dimension.

The second step is to conduct the CFA until the model fit becomes relevant. As the RMSEA fit was larger than 0.08 in the first round, I improved the model by removing redundant variables. By checking modification indices, I found that *eu.mem* was abnormally correlated with *eu.int*, and *black.asian.equal* with *women.equal*. Therefore, I removed *eu.mem* and *black.asian.equal* from the model. In the second round, the RMSEA fit was good (0.036), but the p-values of some factor loadings were not statistically significant. Specifically, *env.econ* and *redistribution* were removed from the EU dimension, while *immi.feel* and *civil.lib.terror* were removed from the SE dimension. The RMSEA fit became 0.0328, which is slightly better than the previous round. Finally, the result of the factor analyses, that is, dimensionality of the UK in 2015, is described in Figure 1. In Figure 1, the circles indicate dimensions, the squares denote policy items, the arrows describe which policy items load on which dimension, and the numbers on the arrows are the factor loadings.

Figure 1.



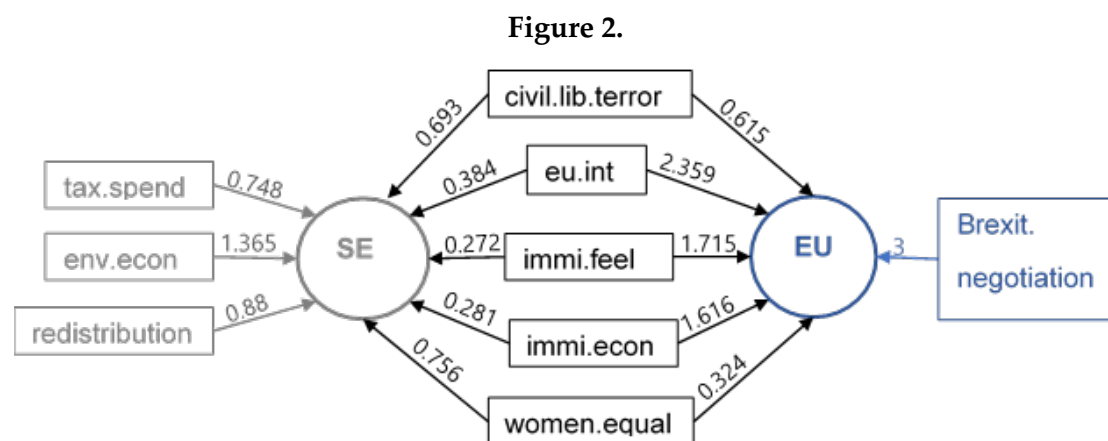
The result provides positive evidence for H1a. There was indeed a structural change from the single-dimensional space in 2010 to the two-dimensional space of the SE dimension on the one hand and the EU dimension on the other in 2015. The SE dimension includes economic issues and relatively old sociocultural issues such as the environment and gender equality, which were salient during the new social movements in the 1960s and 1970s. The EU dimension mainly comprises immigration and EU-related issues. The item with the most substantial factor loading on the EU dimension is *immi.econ*, followed by *immi.feel*. Concerning the fact that immigration issues load only on the EU dimension, it seems that these issues form a new independent axis, rather than embed into existing dimensions as Kriesi and his colleagues (2006) had suggested.

Notably, this dimensionality perceived by voters parallels the populist discourse of UKIP. That is, the voters' perceptions of the political space are highly affected by UKIP's strategies. For example, as *civil.lib.terror* only loaded on the EU dimension, voters are linking the immigrants to terrorism. Meanwhile, *health.care.spend* loaded on both SE and EU dimensions. This means that health care is not only an economic issue but also an EU-related issue, reflecting the perceptions of voters that immigrants are taking health care benefits away from them. Interestingly, the factor loading of *health.care.spend* on the EU dimension is negative, implying that economically left-wing voters tend to be welfare chauvinists. That is, the more the voter supports the

expansion of health care services, the more he or she dislikes the EU and immigrants. Likewise, *eu.int* is connected to both dimensions, as the socioeconomic perspective in which European integration resulted in the debt crisis, and the EU-related perspective in which European integration is the cause of the inflow of immigrants, coexist.

### C. 2017

The dimensional structure did not change between 2015 and 2017. First, the scree plot suggests that two factors are adequate to describe dimensionality of the UK in 2017. Second, the EFA loadings show that *immi.feel*, *immi.econ*, *eu.int* and *Brexit.negotiation* load exclusively on factor 1, while *tax.spend*, *health.care.spend*, and *redistribution* only load on factor 2. Thus, again, I denote factor 1 as EU dimension and factor 2 as SE dimension. As the first round of the CFA resulted in an RMSEA fit larger than 0.08, the two of the most prominent modification indices, *health.care.spend* and *black.asian.equal*, were removed from the model. In the second round, the RMSEA fit was 0.0515. Then, *tax.spend* and *redistribution* were removed from the EU dimension, as their p-values were statistically insignificant. Consequently, the RMSEA fit improved to 0.0486. The dimensionality of the UK in 2017 is presented in Figure 2.



The result corroborates H1b, i.e., the structure did not change between 2015 and 2017, but the main lines of conflict that construct each dimension did change. The issues that were exclusively linked to the EU dimension in 2015, such as *immi.feel* and *immi.econ*, still load strongly on the EU dimension but, are also connected to the SE dimension in

2017. The factor that only loads on the EU dimension in 2017 is *Brexit.negotiation*. Thus, the immigration issues for which the EU was blamed in 2015, have become a part of broader socioeconomic concerns that domestic actors should solve, while the Brexit negotiation has become the most salient issue directly related to the EU.

## 4.2 Mapping parties & supporters

### Party positions

The party positions can be found in Appendix C. In 2015, the axis of competition tilted towards the EU dimension, which corroborates H2a. Thus, the parties are primarily sensitive to position changes on the EU dimension. Meanwhile, UKIP and the Green Party focus more on the EU dimension, as they are above the axis of competition. In contrast, the mainstream parties are positioned below or very near the axis. Thus, the overall party competition is centred around the EU dimension, while the mainstream parties focus relatively on socioeconomic issues and the niche parties focus on EU issues. The axis of party competition seems to be more balanced in 2017 compared to 2015. Thus, party competition now takes place almost equally on both dimensions, which corroborates H2b. Meanwhile, the distance between the Conservative and Labour dramatically increased between 2015 and 2017. After Brexit, the two mainstream parties polarised, sending out much clearer cues to voters. The position change of the Conservative Party was more significant than that of the Labour, which reflects the party's strategy to take over UKIP's status as an anti-EU right-wing party.

### Supporter positions

The median supporters for each party are projected in the same political space in which the parties were mapped, which is presented in Appendix D. In 2015, the positions of the median supporters centred around the EU dimension, which implies that the EU dimension was salient for them. Moreover, the positions of the median supporters were more central compared to that of the parties. This finding supports the view that the parties hold more Eurosceptic or Europhile positions than their

voters do (Bakker et al., 2018). Meanwhile, the Labour was the most congruent party in the UK party system, as the length of the line drawn between the party and the median supporter was the shortest. UKIP, in contrast, was the least congruent party. In fact, the median UKIP supporter is close to the Labour and Liberal Democrats on the SE dimension and to the Conservative Party on the EU dimension. Nevertheless, this median UKIP supporter still identifies him/herself as being close to UKIP, which corroborates H3a.

The graph in Appendix D provides a fascinating insight into which dimension the supporters prioritise. If the lines connecting each party and its supporters are steeper than the 45° line, it means that the supporters prioritise the SE dimension. For example, the angle of the line between the Conservative Party and its supporters is less than the 45° line. The typical Conservative supporter is far away from the party on the SE dimension but close to the party on the EU dimension. That is, even though the Conservative Party is far from the supporter's ideal point on the SE dimension, as he or she prioritises the EU dimension, he or she identifies as being close to the party. Overall, left-wing supporters tend to prioritise the SE dimension, while right-wing supporters tend to prioritise the EU dimension.

In 2017, the overall distribution of party supporters is more balanced compared to 2015 but was still convergent compared to that of parties. The result of 2017 corroborates H3a, as the median UKIP supporter is closer to the mainstream left on the SE dimension and to the Conservative Party on the EU dimension. Likewise, left-wing and right-wing supporters prioritise the SE dimension and the EU dimension, respectively. Why, then, do UKIP supporters think that they are closer to UKIP although they are not in reality? First, they might have felt that no mainstream party could represent their views. Second, as they placed much salience on EU-related issues, the distance from the party on the SE dimension may not matter for them. As UKIP has a more extreme and explicit position than the Conservative Party on EU-related issues, UKIP supporters who consider these issues to be significant and urgent may feel closer to UKIP.

### 4.3 Voter-party congruence & PTV

The results of the OLS regression analyses are presented in Appendix E. Here, '*EU\_Dist*' denotes the distance between voter and party on the EU dimension, that is, voter-party congruence on the EU dimension. Likewise, '*SE\_Dist*' denotes the voter-party congruence on the SE dimension. As its p-value is less than 0.001, the 2015 model is statistically significant. The result of 2015 provides positive evidence for H3b. First, the voter-party congruence on the EU dimension mainly affects PTV. The absolute regression coefficients of *EU\_Dist* are more significant than that of *SE\_Dist*. If we control all other things, a one-unit increase in *EU\_Dist* is associated with a 0.07 unit decrease in PTV. That is, the bigger the distance between voter and party on the EU dimension, the lower the voter's preference for parties. Meanwhile, while holding other factors constant, one-unit increase in *SE\_Dist* results in a decrease of 0.012 in PTV. However, this effect is not significant. Thus, in 2015, the UK voters' preferences for a generic party are mainly based on the congruence on the EU dimension.

The 2017 model is also statistically significant. The result, however, provides only partial evidence for H3b. To begin with, the coefficients for both *EU\_Dist* and *SE\_Dist* were significant. However, the absolute regression coefficients were larger for *EU\_Dist* than *SE\_Dist*. That is, voter preferences are determined based on both dimensions, but voters still weigh more on the EU dimension. Holding all other factors constant, a one-unit increase in the *EU\_Dist* is related to a decrease of 0.058 in PTV. Thus, a smaller distance between party and voter on the EU dimension leads to a higher preference for that party. However, controlling all other things, a one-unit increase in *SE\_Dist* is connected to a 0.027 increase in PTV. In other words, the lower the congruence between the voter and party on the SE dimension, the higher the voter's PTV for that party, which runs counter to H3b. One possible explanation is that as voters prioritise the EU dimension, they prefer parties that are close to the EU dimension, even if these parties are very far from them on the SE dimension.

## 5. Conclusion

How have UK dimensionality and the political behaviours of voters and parties changed since the rise of populism? This paper found that there has been a structural change from one-dimensionality in 2010 to two-dimensionality, with the SE and EU dimensions, in 2015. This structure remained the same in 2017, but the contents had changed. By 2017, the immigration issues which loaded only on the EU dimension in 2015 were also associated with the SE dimension, while Brexit-related issues became the core of the EU dimension.

How about party competition? In 2015, overall, party competition pivoted around the EU dimension, while mainstream and niche parties focused on the SE and EU dimensions, respectively. In 2017, the overall party competition became more balanced compared to 2015, which implies that conflicts on the EU dimension became less severe. So, do parties represent their supporters well? In both 2015 and 2017, Labour was most congruent with its supporters while UKIP was least congruent. UKIP supporters, in fact, were close to the mainstream left-wing parties on the SE dimension and to the mainstream right-wing party on the EU dimension, but still felt proximate to UKIP. This paper also found that more weight was put on the EU dimension by the right-wing supporters, and more on the SE dimension by the left-wing supporters.

How, then, do voters base their party preferences on each dimension? In 2015, the voter-party congruence on the EU dimension determined the voters' party preferences. In 2017, voters based their preferences on both dimensions, but the EU dimension had a more substantial effect. To sum up, all of these findings show the importance of issue salience. We have seen that EU-related issues became salient enough to form a separate dimension whose contents have changed as the Brexit-related issues became salient. Moreover, voters and parties also behave around the salient issue dimension. Thus, dimensionality and political behaviours change, depending on which issues are salient at each time point.

This paper contributes to the literature on spatial theory, where the analysis starts by identifying dimensionality. Even though dimensionality is latent and varies across time and space, it is often a priori premised in the literature. Without any premises on dimensionality, this paper showed that UK dimensionality has changed since the rise of populism.

As this paper only focuses on the UK case, the external validity cannot be assured. Does this two-dimensional structure with the SE dimension on the one hand and the EU dimension on the other also appear in other countries? Of course, specific contents of each dimension would differ from country to country. However, if other countries have the dimension related to populism, the EU dimension in this paper could go beyond the UK-specific context and be generalised into populism dimension. Exploring this possibility is significant since the rise of populism is a world-wide phenomenon, also found in the United States or Latin America where the EU has nothing to do with the populism. To explain the populist surge across countries with different political contexts, a more generalisable account will be needed. Thus, future studies could replicate this paper on a wide-range of countries to see if issues related to populism constitute an independent dimension.

Moreover, this paper proposed using factor loadings instead of simple mean or median values to locate voters and parties in the dimensional space to reflect issue salience better. Most importantly, this paper suggests that the dimension-specific level is more appropriate than the issue-specific level when analysing voting behaviours. Let us assume that a voter is located at three concerning the redistribution policy, and at five regarding the regulatory policy. Here, the salience of the redistribution policy is 0.3, while that of regulation policy is 0.7. In this case, it is hardly likely that the voter will calculate her or his position as 4.4 ( $= 0.3 \times 3 + 0.7 \times 5$ ). Instead, it is more plausible that a voter considers at the level of a super-issue category, for instance, an economic dimension which encompasses both redistribution and regulation policies. The positions of parties, likewise, do not vary significantly at the issue-specific level.



Practically, a party's position on the redistribution issue does not differ from its position on the regulation issue. Instead, there is a meaningful difference between the positions of a party between the EU and SE dimensions.

In this sense, this paper provides a better way to capture dimension-specific salience. There have been controversies about how to measure the issue salience. Some literature has categorised the responses to the open-ended question asking what the most crucial problem in the country is (Bakker et al., 2018). Meanwhile, some others used questions asking whether the specific issue has become worse or better (Lefkofridi et al., 2014). These methods are problematic as they roughly categorise or bring some numbers from other questions, to be used as a proxy for the issue salience. For example, one can answer that environmental problems worsened, but the voter might not take into account environmental issues when choosing which party to support. Thus, this paper provided an alternative way to capture the dimension-specific salience with the regression coefficients of voter-party congruence for each dimension.

Nevertheless, although this paper succeeded in catching a change in dimensionality, whether this change is caused by the changes in party positions or by the changes in voter preferences was not identified. Likewise, whether the changes in party competition are due to the changes in voter preferences, or the other way around, is unknown. Therefore, future study could try to uncover causal relationships between 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' dynamics.

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## *Dimensionality, party competition and voter preference*

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## Annex

## Appendix A: Data coding

Table A1. 2010 BES Post-Election Survey

Variables	Questions Asked
<i>tax-spend**</i>	'Using the 0 to 10 scale on this card, where the end marked 0 means that government should <b>cut taxes and spend much less on health and social services</b> , and the end marked 10 means that government should <b>raise taxes a lot and spend much more on health and social services</b> , where would you place yourself on this scale?'
<i>civil.lib-crime**</i>	'Some people think that <b>reducing crime</b> is more important than <b>protecting the rights of people accused</b> of committing crimes. Other people think that protecting the rights of accused people, regardless of whether they have been convicted of committing a crime, is more important than reducing crime. On the 0-10 scale, where would you place yourself on this scale?'
<i>black.asian-equal**</i>	'(U)sing the 0 to 10 scale on this card, where the end marked 0 means that there is <b>no need for government to take action to improve opportunities for black and Asian people</b> , and the end marked 10 means that <b>government should make every effort to improve opportunities for black and Asian people</b> , where would you place yourself on this scale?'
<i>*eu-mem</i>	'Overall, do you approve or disapprove of Britain's membership in the European Union?'
<i>*immi-crime**</i>	'Please tell me how far you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: Immigrants increase crime rates.'
<i>*immi-econ</i>	'Immigrants generally are good for Britain's economy.'
<i>*asylum-send.home**</i>	'Most asylum seekers who come to Britain should be sent home immediately.'
<i>*anti-radical.islamists**</i>	'Radical Islamists should not be allowed to make a speech in my community.'



**Table A2.** 2015 BES Face-to-Face Voter Survey

Variables	Questions Asked
<i>tax-spend</i>	'Please look at the 0 to 10 scale on this card, where the end marked 0 means that government should <b>cut taxes a lot and spend much less on health and social services</b> , and the end marked 10 means that government should <b>raise taxes a lot and spend much more on health and social services</b> , where would you place yourself on this scale?'
<i>env-econ</i>	'(S)ome believe that protecting the environment should have priority even if that reduces economic growth. Others believe that economic growth should have priority even if that hinders protecting the environment. What is your opinion?'
<i>immi-feel*</i>	'Do you think that too many immigrants have been let into this country, or not? How strongly do you feel about this?'
<i>immi-econ</i>	'Do you think immigration is good or bad for Britain's economy?'
<i>health.care-spend</i>	'(W)hat is your view about putting more money into the health service?'
<i>redistribution</i>	'Some people feel that government should make much greater efforts to make people's incomes more equal. Other people feel that government should be much less concerned about how equal people's incomes are. Where would you place yourself on this scale?'
<i>eu-mem</i>	'(D)o you approve or disapprove of Britain's membership in the European Union?'
<i>eu-int</i>	'Which of these comes closest to your own views. Britain Should:0 Do all it can to unite fully with the European Union ~ 10 Do all it can to protect its independence from the European Union'
<i>women-equal</i>	'(H)ow do you feel about the attempts to ensure equality for women?'
<i>black.asian-equal</i>	'(H)ow do you feel about attempts to give equal opportunities to black people and Asians in Britain?'
<i>civil.lib-terror</i>	'Some people feel that, in order to fight terrorism, we have to accept limits on privacy and civil liberties, others feel that privacy and civil liberties are to be protected at all cost. Where would you place yourself on this scale?'

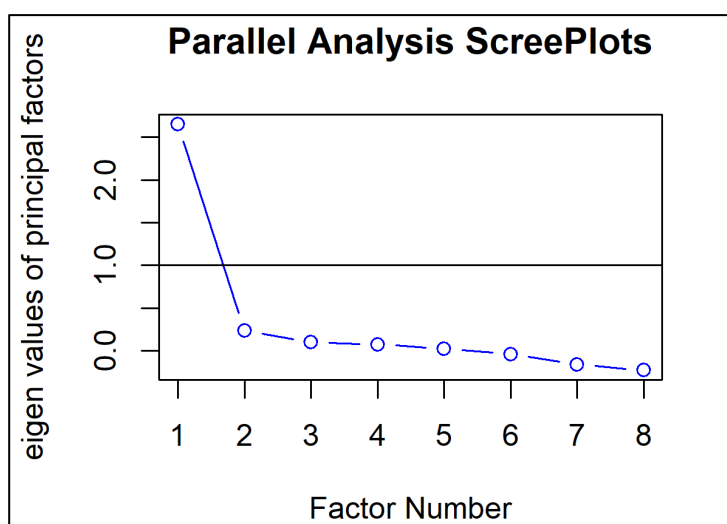
For this specific variable showing attitudes towards the immigration, I multiplied the answers from these two questions and then normalised them into the 11-point scales. For example, if a voter thinks 'very strongly (3)' that 'too many immigrants have been let into the UK (1)', the overall score is '3'. In contrast, if a voter thinks 'very strongly (3)' that there are 'not too many (-1)' immigrants, the overall score is '-3'. In this way, the 7-point scales ranging from -3 to 3 are created and standardised into 11-point scales.

**Table A3.** 2017 BES Face-to-Face Voter Survey

Variable	Question Asked
<i>Brexit-negotiation</i>	'When Britain negotiates to leave the EU is it more important for the UK government to protect Britain's access to the single market or to gain full control of immigration?'

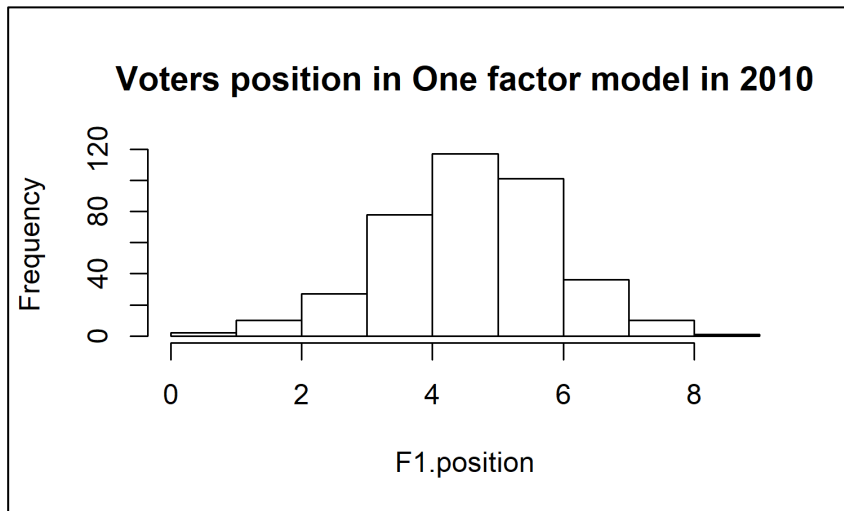
All variables and way of coding were the same with 2015, except for the *eu-mem* which was substituted by *Brexit-negotiation* question in 2017.

## Appendix B: Factor analyses

**Figure A1.** Scree plot 2010**Figure A2.** EFA Loadings 2010

Loadings :	Factor1
eu.mem	0.577
tax.spend	0.234
civil.lib.crime	0.311
immi.crime	0.659
immi.econ	0.712
asylum.send.home	0.750
anti.radical.islamists	0.531
black.asian.equal	0.617

**Figure A3.** Distribution of voters



**Figure A4.** Scree plot 2015

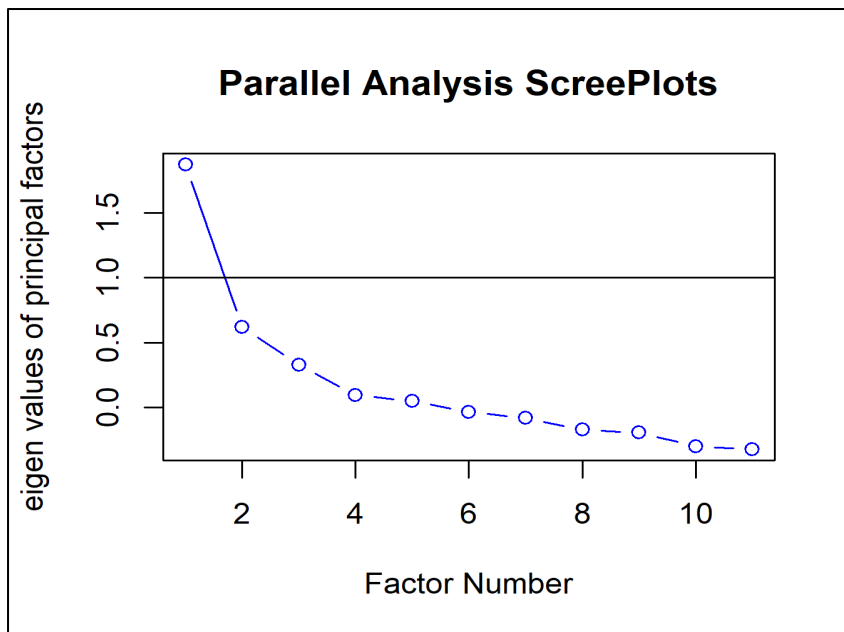


Figure A5. EFA Loading 2015

Loadings:	Factor1	Factor2
tax.spend		0.500
env.econ		0.237
immi.feel	0.360	0.159
immi.econ	0.466	0.186
health.care.spend		0.451
redistribution		0.309
eu.mem	0.872	
eu.int	0.760	
women.equal		0.373
black.asian.equal	0.213	0.340
civil.lib.terror	0.154	

Figure A6. Scree plot 2017

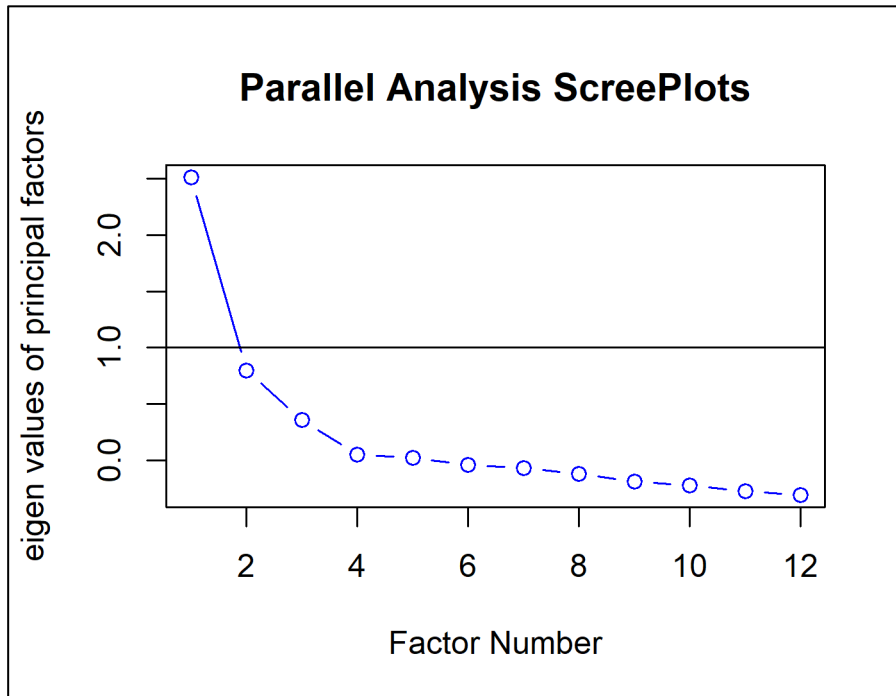
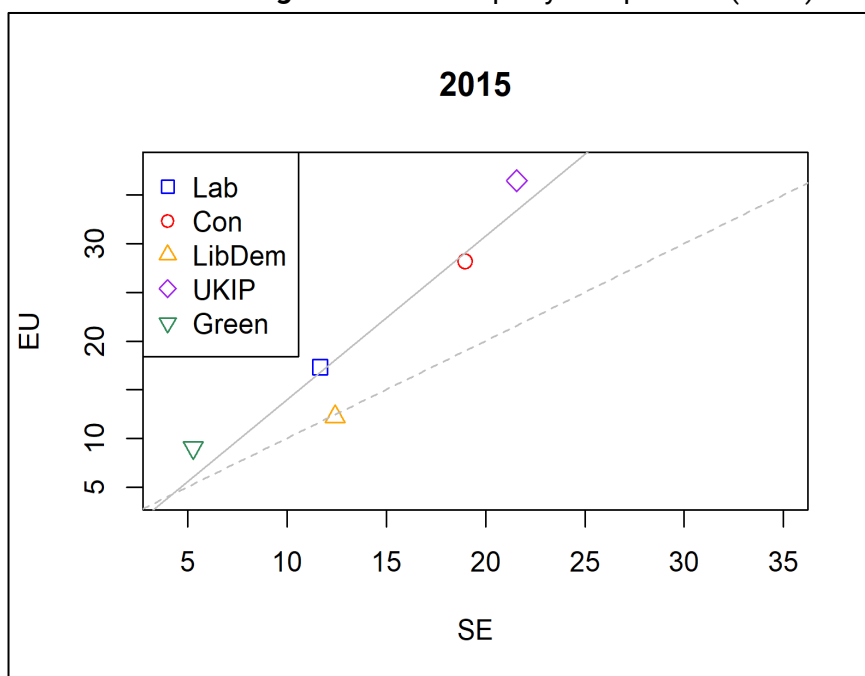


Figure A7. EFA Loading 2017

Loadings:	Factor1	Factor2
tax.spend		0.455
env.econ	0.178	0.380
immi.feel	0.621	
immi.econ	0.624	
health.care.spend		0.473
redistribution		0.369
eu.int	0.704	
Brexit.negotiation	0.800	
women.equal	0.270	0.375
black.asian.equal	0.478	0.356
elderly.care	-0.141	0.310
civil.lib.terror	0.288	0.160

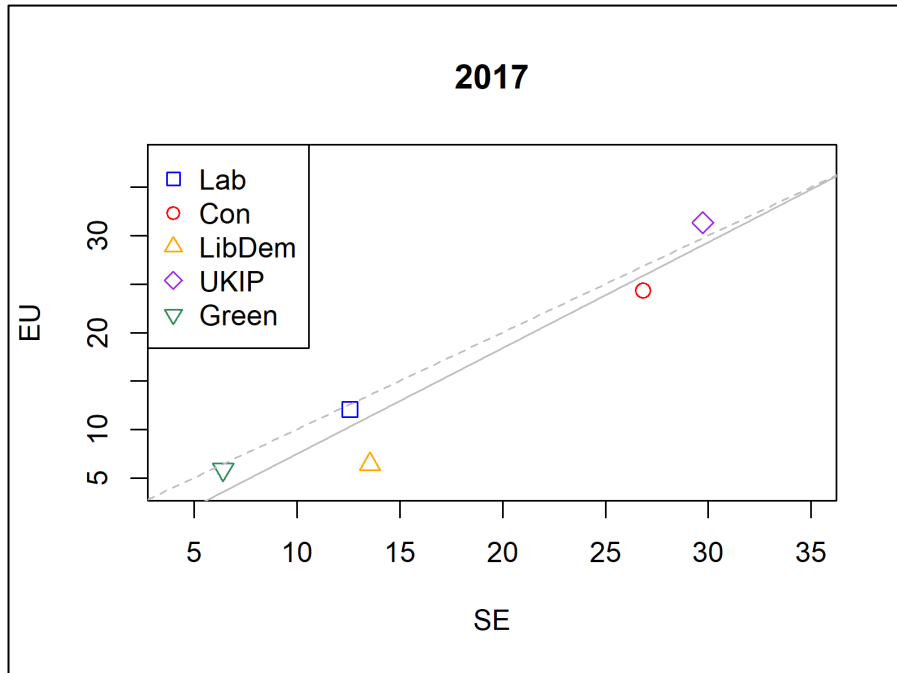
Appendix C: Axis of party competition

Figure A8. Axis of party competition (2015)



Notes: The grey line indicates the axis of competition among parties, and the dotted 45° line is drawn to ease the comparison.

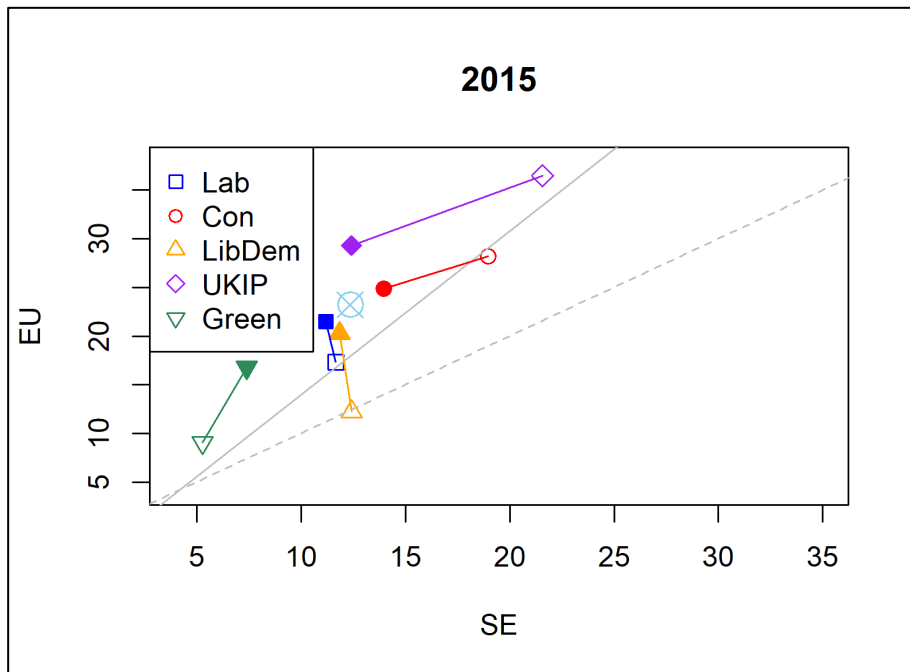
**Figure A9.** Axis of party competition (2017)



**Notes:** The grey line indicates the axis of competition among parties, and the dotted 45° line is drawn to ease the comparison.

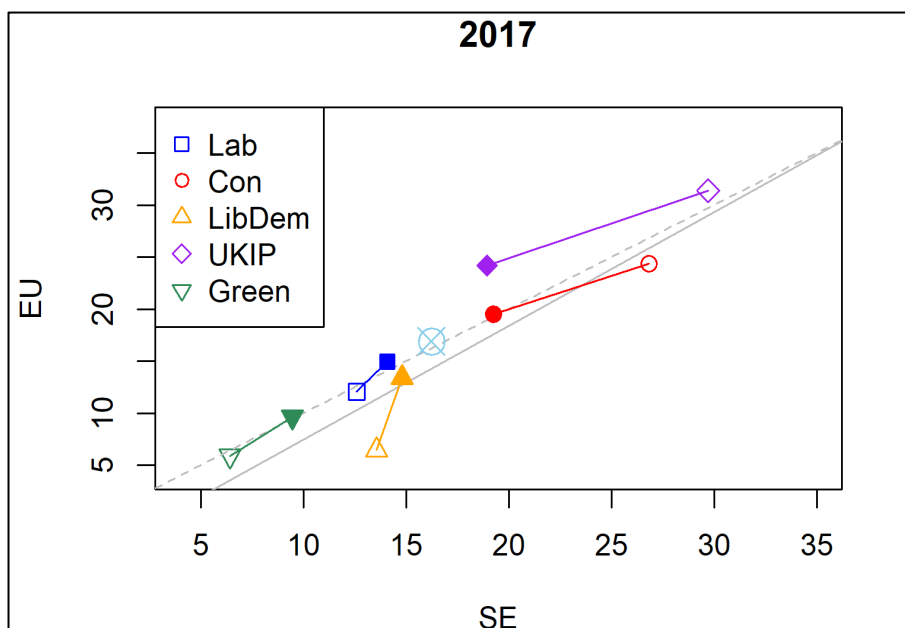
**Appendix D: Party and supporter positions**

**Figure A10.** Party and supporter positions (2015)



**Notes:** The light-blue-coloured mark is the position of the median voter. The positions of the median supporters are marked with the same symbols that are given to each party, but with the filled versions

Figure A11. Party and supporter positions (2017)



Notes: The light-blue-coloured mark is the position of the median voter. The positions of the median supporters are marked with the same symbols that are given to each party, but with the filled versions

Appendix E: Results of OLS regression analyses

Figure A11.

2015					
Coefficients:					
	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t )	
(Intercept)	1.416100	0.212788	6.655	3.04e-11	***
EU_Dist	-0.071127	0.006222	-11.431	< 2e-16	***
SE_Dist	-0.012104	0.009591	-1.262	0.206957	
income	0.490024	0.082987	5.905	3.69e-09	***
religion	-1.275195	0.201064	-6.342	2.40e-10	***
attendance	0.332836	0.153069	2.174	0.029707	*
trade.union	0.556694	0.092064	6.047	1.55e-09	***
gender	-0.299606	0.148436	-2.018	0.043584	*
ethnicity	0.382746	0.107092	3.574	0.000354	***
education	-0.024079	0.131402	-0.183	0.854612	
Age	0.684697	0.066860	10.241	< 2e-16	***
---					
Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1					
Residual standard error: 3.213 on 7154 degrees of freedom					
Multiple R-squared: 0.1472, Adjusted R-squared: 0.146					
F-statistic: 123.4 on 10 and 7154 DF, p-value: < 2.2e-16					

Figure A12.

2017					
Coefficients:					
	Estimate	Std. Error	t value	Pr(> t )	
(Intercept)	0.172105	0.203579	0.845	0.39793	
EU_Dist	-0.057739	0.008707	-6.631	3.67e-11	***
SE_Dist	0.026581	0.009887	2.688	0.00721	**
income	0.427800	0.105907	4.039	5.44e-05	***
religion	-1.711473	0.266494	-6.422	1.47e-10	***
attendance	0.357482	0.153759	2.325	0.02011	*
trade.union	0.712613	0.085145	8.369	< 2e-16	***
gender	-0.182507	0.175840	-1.038	0.29936	
Age	0.835942	0.060571	13.801	< 2e-16	***
ethnicity	0.477144	0.162746	2.932	0.00338	**
education	0.113617	0.143569	0.791	0.42876	
---					
Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1					
Residual standard error: 3.173 on 5019 degrees of freedom					
Multiple R-squared: 0.1992, Adjusted R-squared: 0.1976					
F-statistic: 124.9 on 10 and 5019 DF, p-value: < 2.2e-16					



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