



Coronasceptics in Russia (and beyond)

Socio-Demographic, Personality, and Attitudinal Profiles

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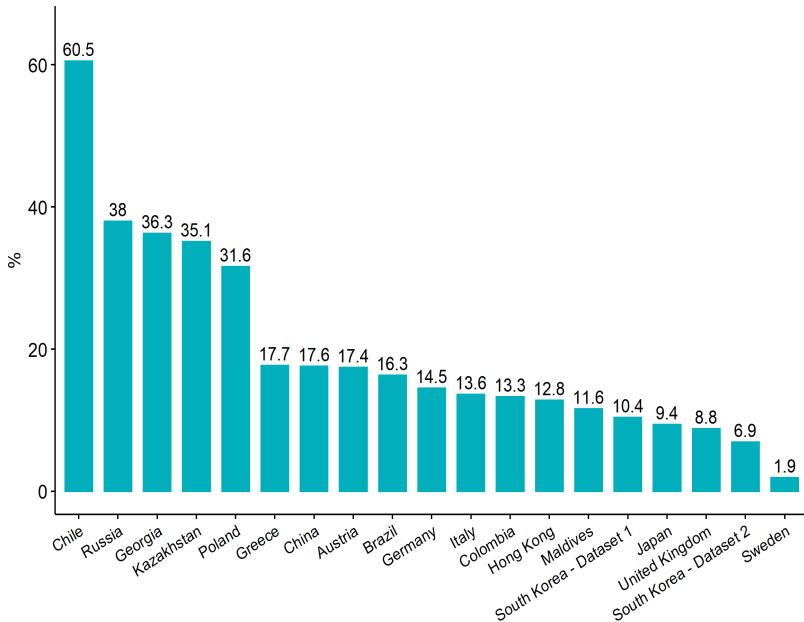
LCSR HSE / EUSP

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- ▶ Huge amount of covid-related conspiracies in social media in Russia (and elsewhere)
 - ▶ In February 2021, as many as 64% of the Russian population believed that the SARS-CoV-2 virus causing COVID-19 disease was created artificially, as a specific type of bioweapon ([Levada Center](#)). In late October 2021, this number was 61%
- ▶ Wide-spread “reckless” behaviour and related epidemiological threats: refusal to wear masks, low vaccination rates, low level of confidence in vaccines, etc.
 - ▶ In February 2021, as many as 62% of the Russian population did not trust domestic vaccines and did not plan to get a vaccine ([Levada Center](#)). Still 45% in late October 2021

- ▶ Longitudinal cross-national online survey, 3 (planned) waves, 18 countries
- ▶ 1st round in Russia: June 10-16, 2020
- ▶ Sample size: 1527 respondents, 18+ (gender and age quotas)
- ▶ Covid-scepticism:
 - ▶ The social media are full of stories telling that the Corona pandemic is a hoax and that all the lockdown measures are a hysteric overreaction. Do you believe in these stories? (YES, *I do believe in these stories* // NO, *I don't believe in these stories*)
- ▶ Exploratory analysis only

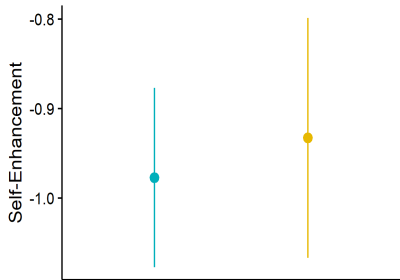
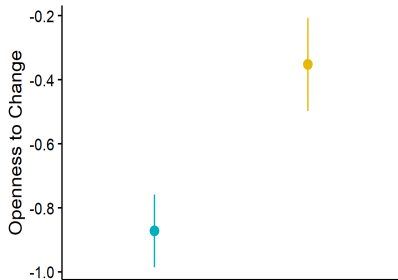
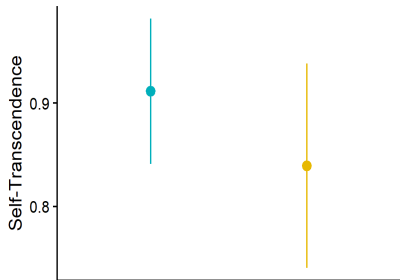
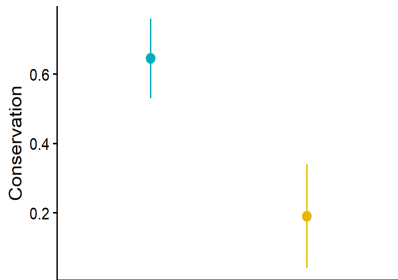
Shares of COVID-sceptics in 18 ViC countries



- ▶ 40.7% sceptics among men, 35.7% among women
- ▶ The mean age of sceptics is 44.9 years vs. 46.2 among non-sceptics. The share of sceptics is smaller among young (≤ 25) and elderly people (60+), but larger among 25-60 age groups.
- ▶ 33,1% among people with higher education vs 41,5% among those with incomplete school education and 41,1% with complete school/vocational education
- ▶ 23.3% sceptics among SPb dwellers (vs. 38% in Moscow and 35-40+% in smaller cities, towns, and rural localities)
- ▶ 31,1% of sceptics among people with direct experience of COVID-19 (12,9%) vs. 39,0% among those who has not encountered the disease (negative economic experience has the reverse effect).
- ▶ No differences in income, household size, number of children, and marital status.

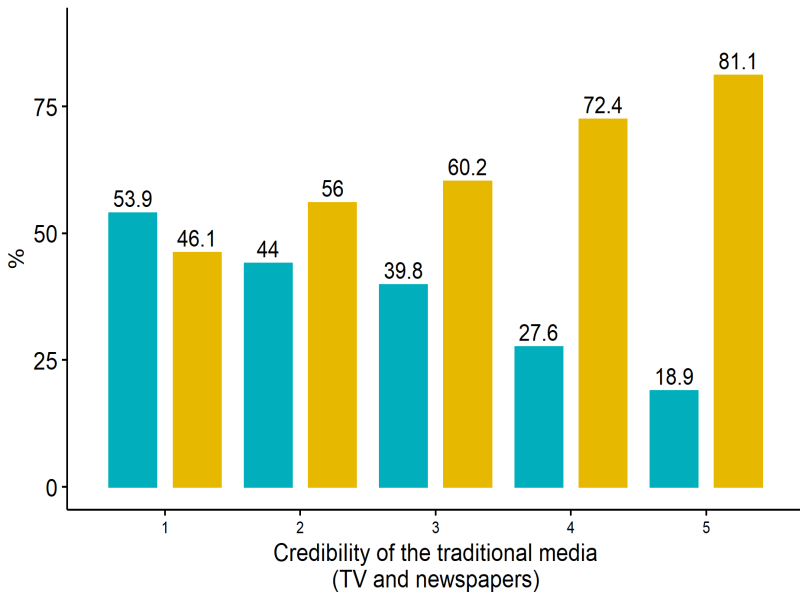
- ▶ No differences on the Big-5 personality traits
- ▶ Schwartz's values:
 - ▶ Lower scores on conformity and security (*conservation values*)
 - ▶ Higher scores on self-direction, stimulation and hedonism (*openness to change*).
- ▶ No differences in religiosity (importance of religion, subjective religiosity, church attendance)
- ▶ No differences in the level of trust to people whom one meets for the first time, very weak differences in terms of trust to people whom one knows personally: 0,07 on a 1 to 4 scale, or 2,3% of the total scale range).

COVID-scepticism ● No ● Yes

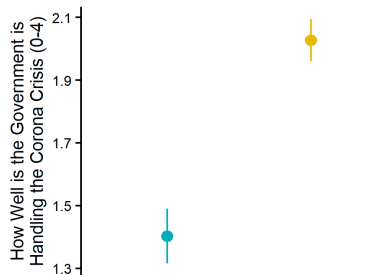
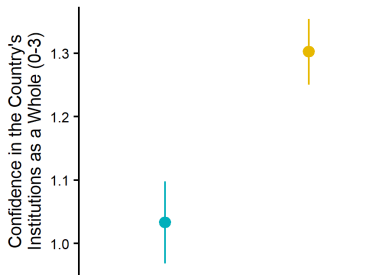
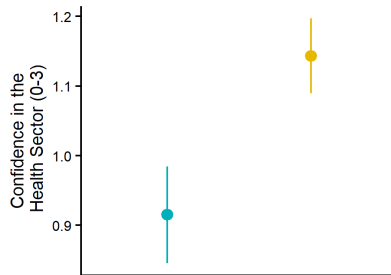
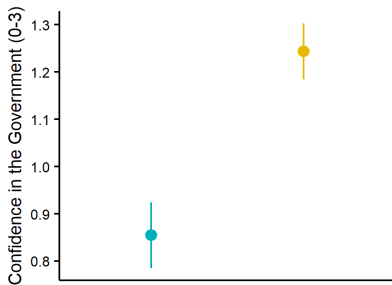


- ▶ Less proud of being citizens of Russia
- ▶ Lower solidarity with fellow citizens, but also less prone to condemn others for their behaviour during the pandemic; lower level of covid-related anxiety, but also of socio-economic optimism.
- ▶ More sceptical and intolerant views of globalization, international cooperation, and immigration
- ▶ Less trusting to the traditional media (TV and newspapers) compared to social media
- ▶ Much lower levels of confidence in government, health system, national institutions in general, and also much more critical evaluation of the Russian's government anti-pandemic policy measures.

COVID-scepticism ■ Yes ■ No



COVID-scepticism Yes No

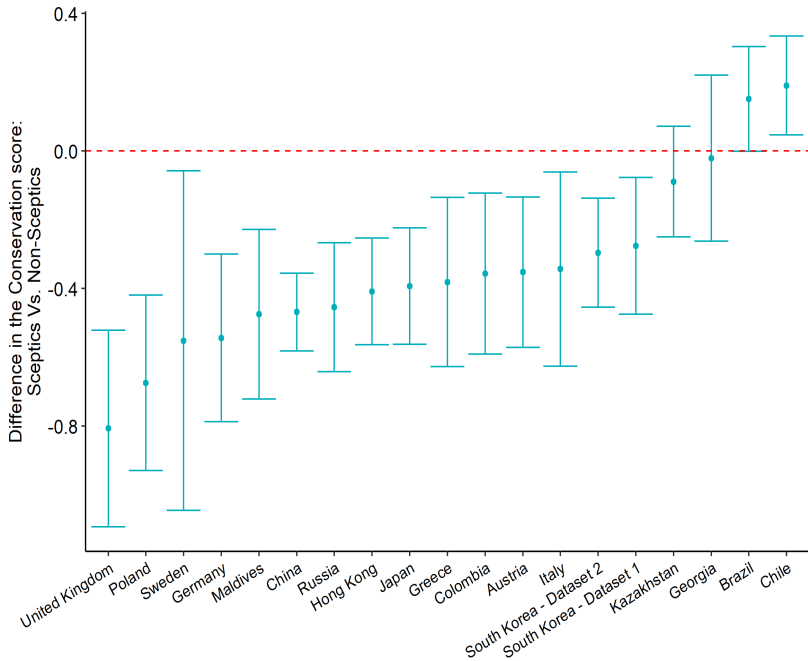


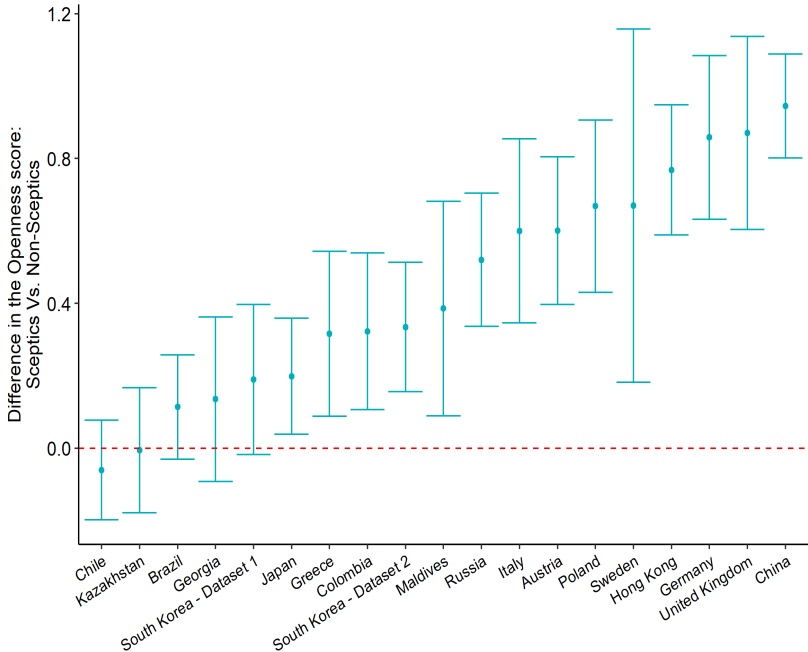
- ▶ Socio-demographics: predictable and moderate to small contrasts in terms of gender, age, education and area of residence (*uneducated middle-aged men not from SPb*).
- ▶ Personality and values:
 - ▶ less respect to the existing order and traditions, more openness to change;
 - ▶ no visible personality effects;
 - ▶ no differences in commitment to emancipative values;
 - ▶ no differences in religiosity, well-being, trust, empathy, depression, etc.
- ▶ Social and political attitudes:
 - ▶ isolationism, high xenophobia and low in-group solidarity
 - ▶ lower level of confidence in institutions (including political system) and traditional media, lower respect to authorities

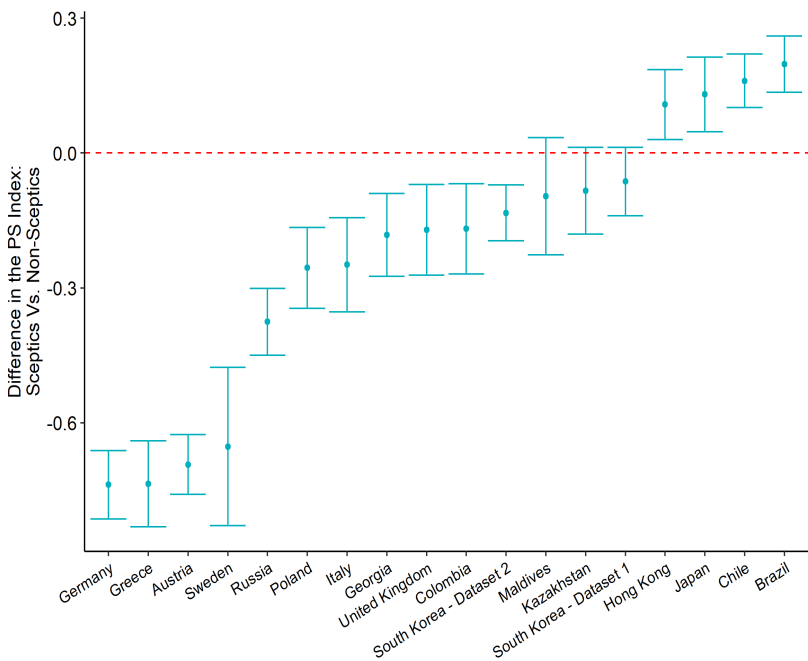


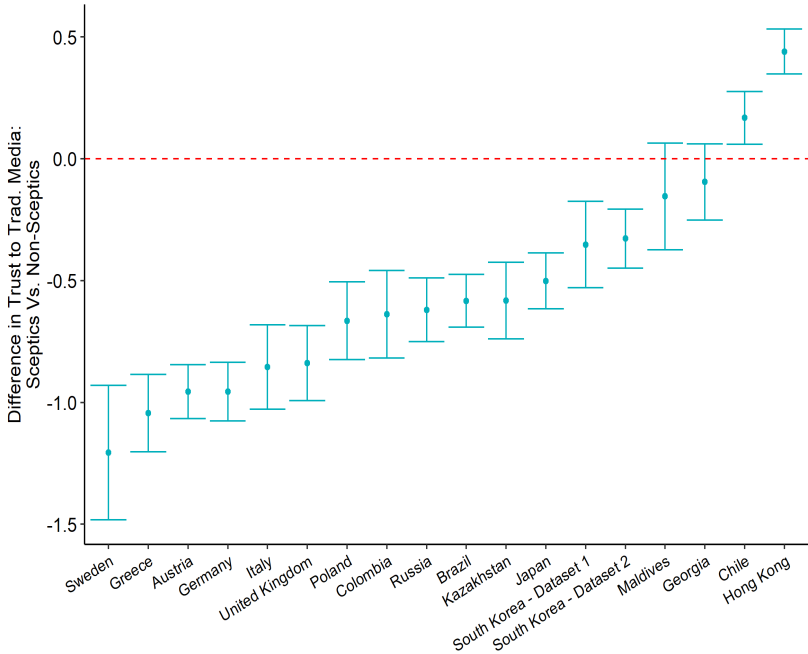
- ▶ Wave 2: April-May 2021. 1199 respondents (1101 follow-up)
- ▶ 31.9% sceptics (vs. 38% in Wave 1)
- ▶ No significant differences with respect to COVID experience (slightly smaller share among those having victims in their families); somewhat larger share of sceptics among those experienced job loss; lower level of corona-related anxiety
- ▶ Differences in media trust and political support persist
- ▶ Sceptics prioritize protecting freedom more than protecting public health
- ▶ Sceptics are less adapted to lifestyle changes and more tired of the pandemic
- ▶ Sceptics are more prone to believe in various COVID-related conspiracies

Comparative evidence











- ▶ Findings from Russia generalize to many other countries
- ▶ Soviet legacy? Poland is similar, Georgia and Kazakhstan are not
- ▶ South American societies seem do not follow the revealed value patterns
- ▶ South American and Eastern Asian societies seem do not follow the political attitudes patterns
- ▶ Interpretation?

Thank you very much for your attention!