The Controversial Populist Radical Right Through the Eyes of the Public: Disliked, yet Tolerated?

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Scientific Environment

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Summary

This thesis is about the populist radical right and why we need to study this group of parties. I ask the following research question: Why is there exceptional political controversy around the populist radical right? To answer this question, I employ a public opinion perspective, examining how voters relate to the populist radical right compared to other political parties. While much of the previous literature has focused on explaining populist radical right success and voting patterns, I argue for a different approach.

In this thesis, the populist radical right is examined using two concepts rarely seen in studies on this group of parties: public political tolerance and negative partisanship. Combining these two concepts, the thesis reveals new insight into the political controversy surrounding the populist radical right. The thesis finds that there are substantial variations in public political tolerance of populist radical right parties in Western European democracies, ranging from fully tolerated to tolerated by only half of the electorate. Despite these variations, the thesis finds that even the most tolerated populist radical right party (the Norwegian Progress Party, FrP) is particularly disliked by voters and has a larger share of negative partisans compared to all other parties in the system. Negative partisanship thus provides a deeper understanding of voters' attachment to these parties in the electoral system.

This thesis contributes with four research articles, each with its own independent contribution. The first article, "Public Political Tolerance of the Far Right in Contemporary Western Europe," shows how the public, to various extents, tolerates parties of the populist radical right in five Western European democracies. It contributes a new theoretical framework to better understand public political tolerance of the

far right, including both established political parties and extra-parliamentary actors. The theoretical framework builds on two dimensions: (1) public rejection of the Nazi past and (2) party institutionalization. The article finds that, for large shares of citizens in five key Western European democracies, rejecting the Nazi-past only means rejecting initiatives explicitly identified as neo-Nazi. For other far right initiatives, public political tolerance is much more common and increases in accordance with these initiatives' institutionalization as political parties.

The second article, "Political (In)tolerance of the Far Right: The Importance of Agency," builds on and further develops the theoretical framework presented in article 1 and demonstrates which factors that contribute to increase or decrease political tolerance. The paper uses a conjoint experimental design, varying a range of factors explaining the ideology, legacy, institutionalization, and agency of the far right. It finds that the agency of populist radical right parties is crucial for political tolerance. Nevertheless, ideological features, and particularly signs of right-wing extremism, are the most important factors negatively affecting public political tolerance of the far right.

The third article, "Negative Partisanship and the Populist Radical Right: The Case of Norway," builds on recent research demonstrating that the populist radical right party family has a larger share of negative partisans compared to other parties. The article sets out to explain why many people would never vote for the populist radical right combining closed and open-ended survey responses. It finds that negative partisanship is not a mirror image of support. The results reveal that negative partisans react against both the party's policies, particularly migration, economic and environmental policies, and also the party's rhetorical style.

The final article, "Effects of the Refugee Crisis on Perceptions of Asylum Seekers in Recipient Populations," published in the Journal of Refugee Studies in 2019, examines more closely some of the issues that article 3 found to be important for never considering voting for the populist radical right. The article addresses how people perceive asylum seekers using open-ended survey items asked before and after the 2015 refugee crisis. The article finds that people perceive asylum seekers in fundamentally different ways, which can shed light on why many people react to the migration policies promoted by the populist radical right.

In sum, this thesis contributes to the literature on the populist radical right by highlighting a new approach employing a public opinion perspective without using voting as dependent variable. The findings in this thesis are based on carefully designed survey experiments and open-ended survey questions and provides empirical evidence from a systematic and detailed comparative study, all emphasizing the voters' point of view. All articles consistently show that what sets the populist radical right apart is its ideology. Although the ideology does not necessarily prevent the populist radical right from being tolerated by the public, the ideology and rhetorical style contributes to negative partisanship.

List of Articles[1]

1   Bjånesøy, Lise, Elisabeth Ivarsflaten & Lars Erik Berntzen. "Public Political Tolerance of the Far Right in Contemporary Western Europe." (under review).

2   Bjånesøy, Lise. "Political (In)tolerance of the Far Right: The Importance of Agency." (under review).

3   Bjånesøy, Lise. "Negative Partisanship and the Populist Radical Right: The Case of Norway." (under review).

4   Bjånesøy, Lise (2019). "Effects of the Refugee Crisis on Perceptions of Asylum Seekers in Recipient Populations." *Journal of Refugee Studies, 32(si1):* i219–i237.

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[1]The article "Effects of the Refugee Crisis on Perceptions of Asylum Seekers in Recipient Populations" is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial License, which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Contents

Introduction

The populist radical right has become a fixture in Western European democracies during the past four decades. These parties have experienced a massive gain in support and representation and have naturally become a hot topic for political science research. One of the most important questions that has been asked about the populist radical right is what fuels its success. Accordingly, a substantial number of studies have examined why people vote for the populist radical right. We know less about why people *never* vote for these parties. In one of the open-ended survey responses collected in this thesis, a respondent provides the following explanation:

> These are my reasons to never vote for the Progress Party: Founding values from the establishment of Anders Lange. Immigration policies without empathy and human worth. A rhetoric that plays on fear and direct lies. Their environmental policies are totally absent. Non-political imbecile bullies of politicians. The general appearance, history and/or methods from: [naming specific politicians].

The explanation above is not unique. It reflects how one party in the populist radical right party family is perceived by a large share of the electorate. The quote entails information on the history, ideology, and rhetorical style of the party—which are all factors explaining how the populist radical right today is perceived by ordinary citizens. Previous research has shown that there are many factors explaining the success of the populist radical right. Studies focusing on the voter side have consistently shown that the most important factor explaining the populist radical right vote is opposition to immigration (e.g., van der Brug et al., 2005; Ivarsflaten, 2008). However, there are other factors in play as well. The way in which other political parties and the media respond to the populist radical right is an important part of

such explanations (Art, 2007). Some parties have been excluded from having any influence whatsoever, while others have been included in government coalitions.

While populist radical right parties have become important political players in the party system and achieved governmental influence in several countries, they have also been subject to substantial political debate and media attention, sometimes more than the established parties. Controversial statements from political candidates of the populist radical right help maintain this exposure (Rydgren and van der Meiden, 2019). There are many reasons for the heated political debates and attention focused on the populist radical right. Jean-Marie Le Pen, former leader of the Front National (FN)[2], has been convicted of racism several times and has insisted on his right to claim that the Holocaust was merely a detail in history. Geert Wilders, leader of the PVV (Partij voor de Vrijheid) has been prosecuted for racist speech due to his many anti-Islamic statements. Progress Party minister of justice Sylvi Listhaug had to step down from her post as minister after promoting a right-extremist slur attacking the Labour Party on Facebook.

Although controversial, populist radical right parties have been successful across European democracies. Other political parties have even adopted some of their policy stances on immigration (van Spanje, 2010). In addition, antidiscrimination policies have been developed at the EU level as a response to the rise of populist radical right parties (e.g., Givens and Case, 2014). This is an important response related to the political ideology of the populist radical right. However, we know less about such responses from voters' point of view.

This thesis contributes to the research field on the populist radical right. The-

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[2]The party is now renamed Rassemblement National (RN).

oretically, it applies concepts such as political tolerance and negative partisanship, which are rarely discussed in studies of the populist radical right. Empirically, it offers new evidence explaining the controversial populist radical right from a comparative perspective. Methodologically, it combines survey experiments and open-ended survey responses. Each of the four articles contributing to this thesis takes a separate approach in studying different aspects of these parties. The articles build on and complement each other, together providing new evidence and accumulating knowledge to explain why there is exceptional political controversy around the populist radical right.

The following sections will introduce the overall research question of this thesis and explain how each of the four articles contributes to the literature on the populist radical right. The thesis then moves to introduce the populist radical right as a party family and explains what it is that makes this group of parties special. After this, two concepts that I argue have been overlooked in the study of the populist radical right are introduced. This is followed by a discussion of the Norwegian Progress Party, methodology, and data. Finally, the results and design of the four research articles are presented, followed by concluding remarks and suggestions for future research.

Research question and contribution

A substantial amount of the literature on the populist radical right has asked why people vote for these parties. However, the literature has not been equally concerned with the opposite question: why people do not vote for the populist radical right. To fully understand this group of parties, it is necessary to gain a broader perspective that includes the entire electorate. The overall research question of this thesis is as

follows: Why is there exceptional political controversy around the populist radical right?[3]

To understand why there is exceptional political controversy around the populist radical right, it is necessary to gain insight into how people relate to these parties. Do voters relate to the populist radical right as they do to other political parties? What sets the populist radical right apart? I argue that we need a new approach to study the populist radical right. Following this new approach I examine how voters relate to the populist radical right using survey experiments and open-ended survey questions. The approach includes everyday-life settings to study political tolerance and the electoral setting to study negative partisanship. Taken together, I show that this research strategy can provide important information about the populist radical right through the eyes of the public.

Accumulated, this thesis contributes to research on the populist radical right theoretically, empirically, and methodologically. Theoretically, the thesis introduces a new research strategy focusing on the perspectives of ordinary citizens, without using voting as a dependent variable. Instead, this thesis proposes a new way forward by looking at political tolerance and negative partisanship. Empirically, the thesis demonstrates the variations in public political tolerance of the far right in five Western European democracies, and details the reasons for these variations. In addition, the thesis contributes to the literature by highlighting the factors contributing to the negative partisanship of the populist radical right, specifically focusing on the Norwegian Progress Party. The thesis demonstrates the stark differences in opinion regarding one of the issues found to be an important explanatory factor of negative

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[3]I refer to the term controversy as cause of public dispute and/or contention involving stark difference in opinion.

partisanship. Methodologically, the thesis uses survey experiments and open-ended questions to study this group of parties. The results demonstrated in this thesis underscore the need for more research on this group of parties.

Each of the articles included in this thesis stands on its own and contributes to the overall research question. Table 1 shows a list of the articles summarizing their respective contributions to the overall research question. The four articles contribute to knowledge on the populist radical right and help to explain why there is exceptional political controversy surrounding this group of parties.

Table 1: Short summary of the four thesis articles

#	Article	Data	Short summary
1	Public Political Tolerance of the Far Right in Contemporary Western Europe	Comparative survey experiment, EIPS 2017	This paper introduces a new theoretical framework to explain public political tolerance of the far right. The theoretical framework is tested using a comparative survey experiment in five countries with successful populist radical right (PRR) parties. The results demonstrate that public political tolerance of the far right varies significantly. Party institutionalization and rejection of Europe's Nazi past contribute to explaining the patterns of public political tolerance of the far right.
2	Political (In)tolerance of the Far Right: The Importance of Agency	Conjoint experiment, NCP 2018	The second paper further contributes to and develops the theoretical framework from article 1. It identifies specific factors contributing to increasing or decreasing political tolerance of the far right. The paper focuses on agency—what the parties do themselves to fend off accusations of racism and extremism. The paper finds that the agency of the parties is crucial for public political tolerance. However, the results also emphasize the importance of ideology and demonstrate that voters respond to signs about right-wing extremism.
3	Negative Partisanship and the Populist Radical Right: The Case of Norway	Open-ended survey question, NCP 2018	This paper examines negative partisanship and the PRR. It combines the likelihood of ever considering voting for the PRR with an open-ended survey question. The paper focuses on voters claiming that they would never consider voting for the PRR in Norway, conceptualizing this as negative partisanship. The results show that voters holding negative partisanship towards the PRR strongly react to the policies promoted by the party—their migration policy, economic and environmental profile, as well as the party's political style.
4	Effects of the Refugee Crisis on Perceptions of Asylum Seekers in Recipient Populations	Open-ended survey questions, NCP 2014 and 2016	This paper digs deeper into intergroup attitudes which article 3 found to be an important explanatory factor for negative partisanship of the PRR. The voters were asked to explain what they think about asylum seekers before and after the 2015 refugee crisis. The results demonstrate how people's perceptions of asylum seekers changed in this period. The results reveal that there are fundamental differences in how people perceive asylum seekers, ranging from deserving human beings to undeserving exploiters.

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A heterogeneous party family

Defining the populist radical right is contested in the political science debate. The populist radical right has been defined and labeled in many different ways by different scholars throughout the decades of research on this party family. However, most scholars seem to agree that the distinct common feature uniting this group of parties is nativism, or opposition to immigration. Mudde (2007, 19) identified nativism as "an ideology which holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group ("the nation") and that nonnative elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogeneous nation-state." This argument of nativism as the core ideology is supported by a range of studies on voting patterns among the populist radical right electorate in Western Europe (van der Brug et al., 2005; Rydgren, 2005; de Lange, 2007; Arzheimer, 2008; Ivarsflaten, 2008). The campaign slogan "Italians first" of the populist radical right party Lega in the 2018 parliamentary election emphasizes the importance of nativism as the core ideology, the separation between "us" and "them."

Nevertheless, the populist radical right is more than its nativism. It is, as explained by Mudde (2007), also populist and authoritarian. The term authoritarianism refers *not* to authoritarian non-democratic regimes but to a notion from social psychology (e.g., Adorno et al., 1950; Stenner, 2005). The authoritarian aspect of the parties refers to a strictly ordered society, submission of authority, strong state, as well as the emphasis on stricter punishment for criminal actions. Populism, meanwhile, is a contested concept in the study of the populist radical right. It refers to a thin ideology separating the pure people from the corrupt elite and argues that politics should be an expression of the general will of the people (Mudde, 2019, 30).

Importantly, the parties of the populist radical right party family are also radical in their "rejection of the established socio-cultural and social-political system" (Betz, 1994, 4).

In addition to the nativism, populism, and authoritarianism advanced by the populist radical right parties, each party of the populist radical right party family has something unique about it, something specific to the context from which it originates. For example, the Norwegian Progress Party and Danish People's Party were founded as tax-protest parties; the Swiss People's Party and the Finns Party were founded as agrarian parties; the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) and Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) were founded as protest movements to the European Union; Front National, the Sweden Democrats, and the Austrian Freedom Party grew out from more extremist milieus; while the Italian Lega and Flemish Vlaams Belang originate from regional independence movements. In addition to these various legacies, many of the populist radical right parties today are linked to anti-Muslim activism, at least rhetorically, with the most prominent case being the Dutch Freedom Party (PVV) (Verkuyten, 2013; van Spanje and de Vreese, 2015).

The rise of the populist radical right

There has been much scholarly attention devoted to explaining the rise of the populist radical right. Lipset and Rokkan (1967) argued that the party system had been "frozen" since the 1920s and that there was no room for new party families to enter. Nevertheless, two new party families have risen after the work of Lipset and Rokkan (1967): the green parties and the populist radical right. In fact, both party families

have grown into important political players in European democracies.

Figure 1: Average populist radical right vote share from 1980—2020, in percent
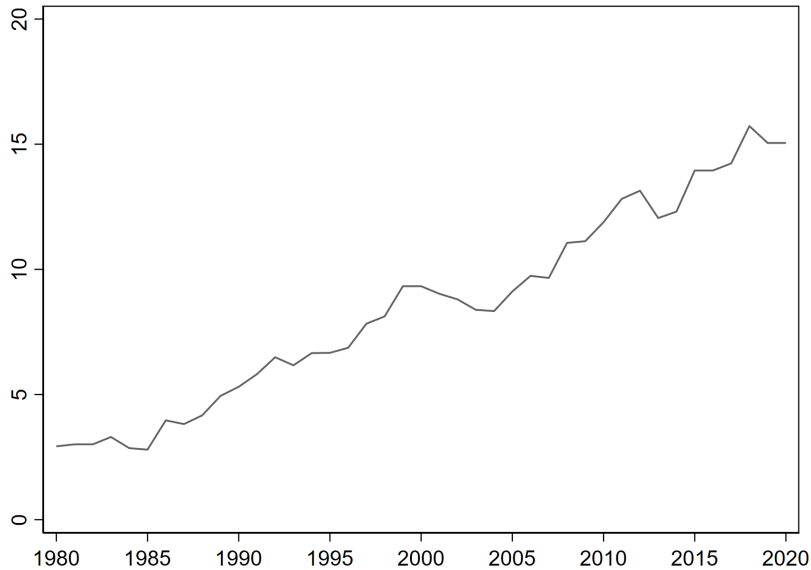
Figure 1 shows the average vote share for the populist radical right in Western Europe. The results were calculated by the average electoral support for each populist radical right party, divided by the countries in Western Europe with a (past or present) successful populist radical right party[4]. The results from Figure 1 indicate that the vote share of these parties has stabilized at around 15 percent since 2015.

What exactly led to the rise of the populist radical right? Scholars have debated

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[4]These countries are Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Germany, France, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria, Belgium, the UK and Italy. Parties included in the analysis are Fremskridtspartiet and Dansk Folkeparti (Denmark), Sverigedemokraterna (Sweden), FPÖ and BZÖ (Austria), Lijst Pim Fortuyn and PVV (The Netherlands), Fremskrittspartiet (Norway), Perussuomalaiset (Finland), Front National (France), SVP (Switzerland), UKIP (UK), AfD (Germany), Lega (Italy), and Vlaams Belang (Flanders, Belgium).

this question, and a range of theories have been put to the table. In one of the early accounts, Ignazi (1992) argued that the rise of the populist radical right came as a response to post-materialist values (e.g., Inglehart, 1981). Another account of the rise of the populist radical right that has influenced the research field argued that the transformation from industrial to post-industrial economies gave rise to a new conflict in politics: the libertarian-authoritarian dimension (Kitschelt and McGann, 1995). These societal transformations, according to Kitschelt and McGann (1995), provided opportunities for populist radical right mobilization.

In a more recent account, scholars recognized globalization as another important societal transformation. According to Kriesi et al. (2008), the transformation of the labor market and the economy caused by globalization created a group of people who were not benefiting from these transformations. They labeled this group the "losers of globalization." This group of people was unable to adapt to the changing conditions of the labor market and the economy caused by globalization. Companies can move to countries with cheaper labor at the same time that labor immigration increases. Workers who were affected by these changes were, according to Kriesi et al. (2008), more likely to be mobilized by the populist radical right.

The accounts by Kitschelt and McGann (1995) and Kriesi et al. (2008) summarize a view of real group threat as a cause for populist radical right mobilization. Although these accounts are influential and important, there is another important strand of research that can help explain *how* voters are mobilized by the populist radical right. This research refers to symbolic group threats. Such threats involve concerns about potential threats to the values, norms, or other characteristics of the in-group. They arise when the in-group believes in its moral rightness (Oskamp, 2000). Studies have

argued and demonstrated that when such threats exist, they can lead to reactions in the form of negative attitudes, negative verbal and nonverbal behavior, as well as hostile behavior (Stephan and Stephan, 2000).

In some influential studies, scholars reveal that perceived threats can lead to increases in exclusionary attitudes among the public (Huddy et al., 2002; Albertson and Gadarian, 2015). Sales (1972, 1973) found that authoritarian indicators were higher during periods of presumed societal threat than in periods without such threats. Other researchers have emphasized the importance of distinguishing between long-term societal threats and short-term threatening events (Feldman and Stenner, 1997). In this respect, Feldman and Stenner (1997) argued that it is the long-term and deeply felt threats that contribute to the development of authoritarian and exclusionary attitudes (Feldman and Stenner, 1997, 744). Other studies have suggested that perceived threats can lead many ordinary citizens to adopt more authoritarian values (e.g., Hetherington and Suhay, 2011). Such increased exclusionary reactions to perceived threats provide opportunities for populist radical right parties to mobilize voters (Ivarsflaten et al., 2019).

Rydgren (2005) emphasized that it is important not to look at the populist radical right as isolated instances but with a broader perspective. He pointed out that parties of the populist radical right are not independent of one another and that their emergence should be interpreted as interconnected events. The combination of ethnopluralism or cultural racism with populist and anti-establishment rhetoric made it possible to distance the populist radical right from the ideology of the "old" extreme right. The next part of this thesis will elaborate on the populist radical right, focusing on the features that set it apart from other political parties.

What makes the populist radical right special?

There is no doubt that the populist radical right has been the topic of a large strand of research in recent decades. In fact, no party family is studied as comprehensively as the populist radical right (Mudde, 2007). Political parties of the far right have been ostracized and excluded from political influence in some countries, while they have been included in governmental coalitions in other countries (van Spanje, 2011).

What exactly is it about the populist radical right party family that makes it so interesting, both to researchers and to the media? The populist radical right today is no longer a new phenomenon, but it remains the center of attention. Bale (2012, 256) argued that the populist radical right is "[e]motive, conflictual and colourful, it ticks all the boxes for newsworthiness." Although there are disputes regarding what constitutes the populist radical right, an interesting common feature of the party family is that, at least until recently, none of the parties have self-identified as belonging to the populist radical right party family (Ivarsflaten et al., 2019). There are several examples to note here. One interesting example was when the Norwegian Progress Party entered government in 2013. The party held a press conference in English to explain why it was *not* populist radical right and that it was wrong to compare it to parties like the Danish People's Party and the Sweden Democrats.

Past ideological ties

One of the early accounts of the populist radical right emphasized historical ties to Nazism or fascism as an important indicator of why some of these parties were unsuccessful (Ignazi, 1992). An interesting point here is that most of the anti-immigrant

parties that tried to achieve political influence during the past three decades failed to do so (Golder, 2003; Carter, 2005). The successful populist radical right party family today consists of a heterogeneous group of parties with various legacies originating from tax-protest, rural, regional independence, EU-protest movements but also from right-wing extremist milieus.

The historical ties and ideology promoted by populist radical right parties might make voters reluctant to vote for them and to perceive them as unacceptable political alternatives. Populist radical right parties have repeatedly been accused of being too extreme and have experienced non-cooperation pacts (Cordon sanitaire) from other parties. One of the arguments made to exclude the populist radical right is that their ideology is too extreme and dangerous. Such ostracization by other political parties may signal that a vote for the populist radical right is a wasted vote (Art, 2007). However, when political parties do cooperate with the populist radical right, it could send the opposite signal and extend legitimacy to the party and the ideology it promotes (Art, 2007; Bale, 2003).

Copsey (2018, 118) argued that "the fact that right-wing populists feel it necessary to repeatedly draw a clear line (in public) between themselves and the "extreme right" also tells us much about the extent to which activists from both the populist radical right and the (fascist) extreme right occupy shared attitudinal domains." Based on his argument, the populist radical right is correct to say that it is not fascist. However, the populist radical right is not completely different from fascism either. Griffin (1993, 2009) added to this point by referring to the term generic fascism—an ideological formula where external (e.g., Jews, Muslims, immigrants) and internal enemies (e.g., Communists, the Left, the elites) are viewed as threatening, arguing

that measures should be taken to prevent these threatening groups from destroying societal order.

The exclusionary ideology as well as the (distant) links to past ideological ties are important factors that set the populist radical right apart from other political parties. After the Second World War, normative boundaries were drawn do defend democracy against right-wing extremism (Bleich, 2011; Givens and Case, 2014). One example is The Charter of Human Rights, which can be understood as a safeguard against right-wing extremism, where countries are committed to not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, or religion. Importantly, such antidiscrimination policies were developed as a response to the rise of populist radical right parties in Europe (Givens and Case, 2014, 2). Givens and Case (2014, 6) argued that the growth of populist radical right parties mobilized actors on the left side of politics to take advantage of political institutions at the EU level, putting antidiscrimination and issues of race on the agenda.

Scholars have argued that an important factor for the success of the populist radical right is being able to distance themselves from the old far-right ideology of historical fascism (Ivarsflaten, 2006). Recent works have found a connection between individual psychological mechanisms and reputational shields (Ivarsflaten et al., 2010; Blinder et al., 2013). Reputational shields are one mechanism through which parties can achieve a credible distance from right-wing extremism while promoting a nativist ideology. Voters who are motivated to control prejudice against immigrants and minority groups will avoid voting for the populist radical right if signals of right-wing extremism are made explicit. According to Ivarsflaten et al. (2019, 825)

[r]ight-wing extremism works as a clear, unambiguous signal of incompat-

ibility with mainstream normative standards. It therefore repels voters who are motivated to avoid prejudice, or the appearance of prejudice, from expressing support or voting for the policy positions of a right-wing extremist initiative.

Evidence from such studies has shown that such logic can explain why the British National Party (BNP), which never had a reputational shield and repeatedly gave signals of right-wing extremism, never managed to obtain a large share of the vote, while UKIP, with its EU-skeptic reputational shield managed to become successful (Blinder et al., 2013). However, despite the odds, there are some radical right parties that have achieved electoral success even though they do not have a reputational shield and repeatedly give signals of right-wing extremism to voters. One example is the Sweden Democrats, which originated from an extreme right-wing milieu. Researchers have argued that one of the main reasons they were able to gain a large share of the votes was that they managed to significantly distance themselves from right-wing extremism (Rydgren, 2002; Rydgren and van der Meiden, 2019). Another example is the Front National, where a similar party transformation has taken place (Ivaldi, 2016).

Exclusionary populism

Much of the literature on the populist radical right concerns populism. Populism has been defined in various ways by different scholars, including as an ideology, as a strategy, as a discourse and as a political logic (Moffit, 2016). Mudde (2007, 23) identified populism as a thin ideology and rhetoric used to separate "the pure people" from the "corrupt elite." Other groups such as immigrants and ethnic minorities

are commonly excluded from the pure people (Rydgren, 2007, 245). This view of populism emphasizes the need for a combination with another, thick ideology.

Some accounts of populism view it as a political style, or a form of communication (Jagers and Walgrave, 2007). They argue that the populist radical right rhetoric is *exclusionary*, separating between groups of people. Pettersson (2020) argued that candidates of the populist radical right use their rhetoric to distance themselves from accusations of racism and extremism, for example, by framing their views against Muslims in more fact-based terms[5]. Some studies have argued that the exclusionary ideology of the populist radical right is being normalized (Ekström et al., 2020; Wodak, 2021). Ivarsflaten et al. (2019) have argued that populist rhetoric is used by the populist radical right in a way that positions their politics on the side of the people and makes it appear more democratic. The populist rhetoric can be used in such a way that it creates a democratic shield for nativism. Ivarsflaten et al. (2019, 824) explain that:

> Populism can function this way because it shares with the concept of democracy the powerful idea of "the rule of the people" (see e.g., Canovan, 2003). The populist stance generates a posture of being on solid democratic grounds; of not being extremist, even for those who advance a nativist agenda.

An important strand of research on the populist radical right has focused on media attention. It has been argued that the populist radical right is more successful in competing along the cultural axis in politics compared to the mainstream parties because the former do not have the same pressure to moderate their appeal. Ellinas

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[5]For example by referring to indisputable facts like numbers, past events or common-sense (Pettersson, 2020, 42-43).

(2010) has emphasized the importance of media attention because it can create an image of mass following and political importance (2010, 32). Research has further emphasized that media attention and exposure can contribute to validating the political presence of these parties. Continuous media exposure makes populist radical right parties and leaders legitimate political players and fuels their electoral impact (Ellinas, 2010; Ekström et al., 2020). Populist radical right parties also benefit when the media covers the political issues important to them, like crime and immigration (Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart, 2007).

It is important to take into account not only the opportunities given to the populist radical right but also to how mainstream political parties as well as the media respond to this group of parties. Mouffe (2005) argued that the populist radical right is portrayed in a way that links them to right-wing extremism. Simultaneously, she has emphasized that these parties cannot be fought through moral condemnation (Mouffe, 2005, 56). Hagelund (2010) highlighted how other mainstream parties distance themselves from the Norwegian Progress Party's immigration discourse, claiming that it is indecent. The focus on the will of the people in debates about restrictive asylum policies may attract some voters, but repel others. Importantly, such communication might make the populist radical right *more* disliked for exactly that reason.

Two overlooked concepts in studies of the far right

This thesis uses two important concepts to help explain the exceptional political controversy around the populist radical right: public political tolerance and negative partisanship. Although there is a long tradition of studies on political tolerance, the

concept is rarely used when considering political parties, and it has mostly been used to study political and social groups that are disliked. As with political tolerance, there is a long tradition of studying political partisanship. However, an important part of the concept, *negative* partisanship, has not received the same amount of attention. While political tolerance "implies a willingness to 'put up with' those things that one rejects" (Sullivan et al., 1979, 784), negative partisanship has been defined as hostility, repulsion, and negative feelings towards a political party (e.g., Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018). Taken together, these concepts offer opportunities to study the populist radical right from a broad perspective—not only by those who vote for these parties but also by those that would *never* vote for them. In the sections that follow, I will discuss the two concepts and explain how they fit into addressing the overall research question.

Public political tolerance

As explained by Sullivan et al. (1979, 784), political tolerance implies "[a] willingness to permit the expression of those ideas or interests that one opposes." Sniderman and Hagendoorn similarly argued that "[t]he test of tolerance is the willingness to support the right of people you disagree with, even possibly detest, to express *their* point of view" (Sniderman and Hagendoorn, 2007, 10, original emphasis). The populist radical right is important in studies of political tolerance because of the numerous controversies surrounding these parties.

Studies on political tolerance have successfully asked respondents to grant certain democratic privileges to political groups that they dislike or disagree with (Stouffer, 1955; Sullivan et al., 1979, 1982; Petersen et al., 2011). The logic of using such a

setting is that a party or political group can be controversial and disliked by the public but simultaneously be granted democratic privileges. The more likely a political group is to be granted democratic privileges by the public, the higher the degree of political tolerance.

Bleich (2011, 3) asked an important question concerning fundamental dilemmas of liberal democracies: "How can we balance the core values of preserving freedom while limiting the harmful effects of racism?" The populist radical right is an important research object in addressing such fundamental questions. A number of political candidates of the populist radical right have been accused of hate speech or faced racism charges. Bleich (2011, 139) highlighted this debate concerning the freedom of speech vs. racism:

> The relationship between freedom and racism is complex. Suppressing racist speech or associations may not inhibit racism but rather drive it underground where it may flourish. Outlawing racial discrimination may limit freedom for racists, but it may also enhance freedom for minorities who would otherwise not be able to secure a job or to exercise their autonomy in interactions with others.

Some studies have examined whether hate speech prosecution of politicians affects the electoral support for their political party (e.g., van Spanje and de Vreese, 2015). This strand of research raises important questions on the dilemmas concerning freedom of speech vs. hate speech. According to van Spanje and de Vreese (2015), the trial of Geert Wilders substantially increased the party's appeal and electoral support by one to five percentage points. This increase in electoral support could be explained by increased media attention and increased salience of immigration issues (e.g., Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart, 2007) as well as candidates of the populist

radical being portrayed as martyrs of free speech (van Spanje and de Vreese, 2015). Similarly, White and Crandall (2015) found that people who are prejudiced themselves are more likely to promote free speech compared to people who are low in prejudice, and thus claims of free speech can provide cover for prejudice.

This debate about free speech and tolerance is important for this thesis. It can help explain some of the dilemmas faced when the populist radical right promotes their political views towards immigrants or other minority groups. Such views can be perceived as deeply problematic and provocative to those who do not share the same views as them. Importantly, there is legislation against hate speech, racial hatred, discrimination, and Holocaust denial (e.g., Givens and Case, 2014). Nevertheless, while acting as the true defender of free speech, hateful speech might be overshadowed (e.g., White and Crandall, 2015).

Negative partisanship

In a recent article Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2018) pointed attention toward negative partisanship and the populist radical right. The study of partisanship has a long history in scholarly research (e.g., Campbell et al., 1960). Campbell et al. (1960) identified partisanship as the psychological attachment to a political party. Despite the long tradition of research on political partisanship, however, an important part of the concept, *negative* partisanship, has not received the same amount of attention. Abramowitz and Webster (2016) have argued that negative partisanship is one of the most important political developments during the last 40 years. It turns out that the populist radical right has a particularly large share of negative partisans (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018). This group of parties is surrounded by stigma and

discontent among voters (Harteveld et al., 2017, 2019). Research has also found that the populist radical right is the most disliked party family compared to all other parties in the system (Gidron et al., 2019). Negative partisanship can therefore be crucial to better understanding voting patterns for the populist radical right.

The concept of negative partisanship has been defined differently by different scholars. Maggiotto and Piereson (1977, 745) introduced the term "the hostility hypothesis," arguing that evaluations from the opposition are important to understand political behaviour. Similarly, Bankert (2020) identified negative partisanship as strong out-party hostility and demonstrated that such negative evaluations can develop without equally strong positive views of the party that voters identify with. Abramowitz and Webster (2016) have also argued that negative and positive partisanship are independent of one another. Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2018) conceptualized negative partisanship as the psychological repulsion to a specific political party, whereas Rose and Mishler (1998) operationalized negative partisanship as the party an individual would *never* vote for. Despite these different conceptualizations of negative partisanship, they all agree that it captures a negative, or even hostile, evaluation of a political party. Importantly, parties that are considered radical are prone to a large share of such negative and hostile evaluations (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018).

In addition to the limited number of studies exclusively focusing on negative partisanship, most of those have been conducted on two-party systems. Some attempts have been made to include multiparty systems in the study of negative partisanship (e.g., Mayer, 2017; Caruana et al., 2015). Such studies are necessary to better understand voting patterns in multiparty systems as well. However, an important

theoretical framework to consider in multiparty systems are so-called consideration sets. Particularly in studies of the populist radical right, it is possible that this group of parties is outside of many voters' consideration sets—they do not even consider the populist radical right as part of their electoral options. For example, Rekker and Rosema (2019), discovered that, while most voters formed consideration sets either among parties on the left or right side of the political spectrum, voters who considered voting for the populist radical right formed a separate class of their own. This underscores the importance of taking a closer look at negative populist radical right partisanship in studies of the populist radical right.

The concept negative partisanship is included in this thesis because it is particularly interesting in studying the populist radical right. Why is there more negative partisanship toward this particular group of parties compared to other political parties? It is interesting that the populist radical right has such a large share of negative partisanship in multiparty systems, where voters have many political parties to choose from. However, we know little about the causes of these reactions and how extensive they are.

The combination of political tolerance and negative partisanship is an important contribution of this thesis. Examining public political tolerance can provide important new evidence on how voters relate to the populist radical right in everyday life settings. Meanwhile, negative partisanship can provide important new evidence on how voters relate to the populist radical right in the electoral setting. While tolerance templates are able to illuminate the variations in peoples' willingness to extend democratic rights to the populist radical right, such variations are not necessarily found when looking at negative partisanship. Thus, combining both concepts can be a fruitful and

complementary approach. Importantly, looking closer at negative partisanship and the populist radical right can provide more detailed evidence about what it is that voters' experience as problematic about these parties. This thesis uses the Norwegian Progress Party as a case to examine negative partisanship more closely. The next section will elaborate on and explain this decision.

The Norwegian case from a comparative perspective

Although this thesis includes a comparative perspective of the populist radical right, Norway and the Norwegian Progress Party receive more attention. There has been debate on whether the Norwegian Progress Party should be included in the populist radical right party family. Like other populist radical right parties, the Progress Party does not self-identify as belonging to this group of parties. Rather, the party self-identifies as a libertarian party. Hagelund (2010) argued that the Progress Party is a neo-liberal, conservative, and populist party. In Norway, it is the party that holds issue ownership to anti-immigration policy issues (Jupskås, 2015, 70).

The Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet, FrP) was founded in 1973 by Anders Lange and was originally named "Anders Langes Parti." The party was founded on a platform of a strong reduction in taxes, duties, and public intervention. In the 1973 election, the party succeeded in exceeding the electoral threshold and got four elected representatives into the Norwegian parliament (Kestilä and Söderlund, 2007). However, Lange died only one year after. The party did not recover from its loss of leadership until 1978 when Carl I. Hagen became leader. The party was renamed Fremskrittspartiet (Progress Party), and its organizational ties were strengthened. In

the local elections of 1987 the Progress Party made restrictive immigration policies part of the political platform and achieved substantial gains (Hagelund, 2010). In 2006, Siv Jensen replaced Hagen as party leader. The party reached its all time high in the 2009 national election, gaining 22.9% of the votes. The Norwegian Progress Party stands out among the populist radical right parties in promoting *more* welfare and *less* taxation simultaneously (Jupskås, 2016, 174). The reason why they can promote such spending is their argument of spending more of the Norwegian State Oil fund (Jungar and Jupskås, 2014; Jupskås, 2016). On February 18, 2021, Siv Jensen announced that she would no longer be leading the Progress Party. She appointed the controversial politician Sylvi Listhaug as her successor[6].

The Progress Party is not straight-forward to classify. The widely used classification by Mudde (2007) excludes the Progress Party from the party family. According to Mudde (2007), nativism should be the core in all policy areas of the party. Such a narrow definition has led to discussions about the classification of many populist radical right parties such as UKIP, the Finns Party and the AfD. The centrality of policy issues other than nativism could potentially exclude relevant populist radical right parties. Although the Progress Party has a broad policy portfolio, it is the most central party in the Norwegian system promoting a clear nativist ideology. Country experts support the inclusion of the Progress Party in the populist radical right party family (e.g., Jungar and Jupskås, 2014; Jupskås, 2015, 2016; Widfeldt, 2018). Studies using voter data have found that opposition to immigration is the most important issue for the party's voters (Jupskås, 2015; Hagelund, 2010), and the voters of the Progress Party resemble those of other populist radical right parties in Western

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[6]The new leader of the Progress Party will be formally appointed at the party's national conference in May 2021.

European democracies (e.g., Ivarsflaten, 2008).

Inclusion in government

Another important element to consider in examinations of the Progress Party and its voters is the inclusion of the party into government. The party was included in a government coalition with the Conservative Party (Høyre, H) in 2013. This inclusion into government makes the Progress Party a highly interesting case. This entry into government was not uncontroversial. The government was formally supported by the Liberal Party (Venstre, V) and the Christian People's Party (Kristelig Folkeparti, KrF), which chose *not* to enter the government themselves but rather to work as formal supporters due to their ideological distance to the Progress Party. Eventually, the Liberal Party formally joined the governmental coalition in January 2018 and the Christian People's Party in January 2019. Table 2 shows a timeline of the Progress Party in government until it left the coalition in January 2020.

Table 2: Timeline of the Progress Party in government, 2013—2020

Oct. 2013	Jan. 2018	Jan. 2019	Jan. 2020
H & FrP	H, FrP & V	H, FrP, V & KrF	H, V & KrF

These events caused controversy and political debate. One of the most notable debates occured when the leader of the KrF, Knut Arild Hareide, announced that he wanted to discuss the possibility of the party collaborating with the social democratic Labour Party (Arbeiderpartiet, AP) instead of the conservative government coalition. This announcement caused heated debates about the pros and cons of joining the conservative government coalition or starting conversations with the opposition. Both

scenarios were possible, but the party was split in its decision. The opposition against formally joining the government raised concerns about the values of the Progress Party, arguing that these values were conflicting with the values of the Christian People's Party. Eventually, Hareide lost, and the party became a formal member of the government, but only with a bare majority.

One important controversy, and part of the Christian People's Party's discussions, was an event in 2018 involving Progress Party Minister of Justice, Sylvi Listhaug. She posted a picture with a right-wing extremist slur on Facebook with the caption, "the Labour Party thinks that the rights of terrorists are more important than national security." Some time later she deleted the post, but with the justification that she was not allowed to use that particular picture due to copy right. This was perceived by many as only more provocative. An important contextual factor is the devastating terror attacks committed against the Labour Party and their youth organization in 2011. The Facebook post and lack of apology from the minister resulted in a motion of no confidence from the opposition, and Listhaug decided to redraw as Minister of Justice.

Widfeldt (2018) argued that the populist radical right in the Nordic countries entered a new phase after the 2000's, namely, inclusion in government, and the Progress Party is one example. Art (2007, 332) further stated that:

> Conversely, when mainstream political forces either cooperate with or are agnostic toward the far right, right-wing populist parties gain electoral strength, legitimacy and political entrepreneurs that can transform them into permanent forces in the party system.

It can be argued that the Progress Party has become such a permanent force, particularly during its time in government. However, in January 2020, Siv Jensen

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announced that the party was leaving the government coalition. She argued that there were too many compromises made after the Liberal Party and the Christian People's Party joined the government coalition. Despite protests from the Progress Party, the government decided to bring home two children and their mother from a refugee camp due to health issues. The mother had previously been part of the militant group the Islamic State (IS). This was unbearable for the party, which subsequently withdrew from government.

Although Norway is often seen as a unique case with high levels of trust, it is also a country where such tensions, debates, and demonstrations take place. In Norway, like many other countries, there have been populist protest movements for road tolls, discussions of the survival of the welfare state, discussions of inclusion of minorities, as well as many anti-Islamic demonstrations and antiracism counterdemonstrations. Almost 15 % of the Norwegian population has an immigrant background (Steinkellner, 2020). The strong support for the populist radical right Progress Party and its position in government (until January 2020) makes it an interesting case to investigate further.

Methodology and data

This thesis combines open-ended survey questions and survey experiments providing an extensive empirical and methodological contribution. Particularly in studies on the populist radical right, to the best of my knowledge, no such combination of survey data has previously been used.

Survey research is a useful tool for gaining information from voters. Focusing on

the populist radical right from the voters' point of view, surveys are a useful strategy for gaining new knowledge about these parties in terms of public opinion. Oscarsson and Holmberg (2020, 1) explain that "in democratic societies, parties provide linkage between citizens' wishes, governments' decisions and policy outputs," which emphasize the importance of including citizens' views in the study of party politics. The next few sections will elaborate on survey experiments and open-ended survey responses, which are the tools used in this thesis to gain important information from voters.

Two new innovations in survey research

During the past few years, two innovations in survey methodology have been made possible with the implementation of online survey panels. These innovations are survey experiments (e.g., Mutz, 2011) and open-ended survey responses (e.g., Roberts et al., 2014). They have mainly become possible due to the availability of online panels, as the costs of collecting such data have decreased rapidly. By combining these two advances in the development of survey research, this thesis is able to provide answers of causality by conducting experiments and more in-depth information by asking open-ended questions.

Survey experiments have two main advantages. First, they feature random assignment and are able to establish unbiased causal inference (Mutz, 2011, 3). This can help improve theory by providing reliable information regarding cause and effect (Druckman et al., 2011, 3). Second, survey experiments (can) take place in nationally representative samples, randomly drawn from the population of interest (Mutz, 2011, 3). This means that survey experiments make it possible to test theories on a

representative sample, taking the experiment out of the often-used laboratory setting.

There are many different types of experimental designs (Mutz, 2011). Two types are used in this thesis: factorial design and conjoint design. Factorial design describes a situation that differs in terms of some factors. Respondents are randomized into different treatment groups in which these factors vary. The respondents are then asked to evaluate the described situation according to certain criteria. The systematic variation of factors combined with randomization makes it possible to determine the causal influence of the varying factors (Auspurg and Heinz, 2015; Liebe et al., 2020).

Conjoint design can be viewed as a more complex experimental design where multiple treatments are varied simultaneously. In a recent review of the advances in the design of survey experiments, Sniderman (2018, 265) said that conjoint design is "arguably the most promising design innovation in survey experiments developed over the past decade." The main advantage of conjoint design is the possibility to vary multiple factors and hypotheses, and test how variations in treatments work together (Hainmuller et al., 2014; Leeper et al., 2020).

The most important purpose of opinion surveys is to understand public opinion. During decades of survey research this has mainly been done by asking closed-ended questions with fixed response scales. The task given to the respondents is thus to process the question and respond to the alternative that comes closest to their own opinion (Krosnick and Presser, 2010). Although this is a well-established procedure, there are also pitfalls when asking respondents to decide what comes closest to their opinion. Walter Lippman's (1922) classic conception of public opinion states that it is constituted by the "pictures in our heads." I argue that a useful way to gain knowledge about these "pictures" is the use of open-ended questions, where the respondents

are free to express their thoughts using their own words, without having to click the response item that comes closest to their opinion. In an early study, Geer (1991) found that open-ended questions can be useful in studies of public opinion. Still, the collection and analysis of open-ended survey questions have been relatively uncommon in the social sciences (Roberts et al., 2014). Open-ended questions allow the respondents to freely express their thoughts and opinions (Smyth et al., 2009). In addition, results from open-ended questions can advance theory and help to create new survey questions and experiments—precisely because new and important information might be detected through such responses.

Although the advantages of survey experiments and open-ended survey questions are numerous, there are also challenges and limitations of both. Open-ended questions are useful for providing more reliable and valid measures compared to closed questions (Krosnick and Presser, 2010, 267). However, they can be more challenging to analyze. Such questions can be analyzed using quantitative procedures, such as topic modeling, and they can also be qualitatively analyzed with manual coding—or with a combination of the two procedures. Both of these strategies involve interpretation of the open-ended responses. Open-ended questions are more vulnerable to personal biases from the researcher reading, interpreting, coding, and analyzing the open-ended responses. This challenge in interpretation makes it important to include measures of validation. An ideal can thus be to combine open-ended and closed questions, an opportunity that is available in surveys. Both of the articles using open-ended survey items in this thesis use different measures to validate them and rule out interpretation (or coding) bias.

Regarding experiments, research in surveys and the laboratory has been criticized

for having low external validity (McDermott, 2011). The external validity of experiments refers to the generalizability of the results. For survey experiments, this is mostly related to the artificial nature of the experiments. McDermott (2011, 35) explained that "[t]he trivial tasks presented to subjects offer a poor analogue to the real-world experiences that individuals confront in trying to traverse their daily political and social environments." This critique has been used particularly against laboratory experiments because the real world is very different from the laboratory. However, survey research is different from the laboratory. People do not need to be extracted from their normal setting in order to participate (Mutz, 2011, 131). However, focusing on external validity as solely the setting in which the experiment takes place is not fruitful. Generalizability of results is not necessarily better if an experiment is conducted in its natural setting than if it is conducted on a diverse sample of participants in a laboratory (Mutz, 2011, 132). Mutz further argued that "it is only from an accumulation of studies or results across different settings and subpopulations, that one can increase the inductive probability that generalization holds under various circumstances" (Mutz, 2011, 135).

In this thesis, I combine two sets of differently designed open-ended survey items and two sets of differently designed survey experiments. Consequently, the results from the four articles contribute new knowledge about public responses to the populist radical right—not only in Norway but also from a comparative perspective.

Online panels

The data in this thesis were collected from the Norwegian Citizen Panel (NCP), an online panel where participants are drawn directly from the Norwegian National

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Population Registry, and the European Internet Panel Study (EIPS) (Arnesen, 2018). The data collected through the infrastructures of the NCP and EIPS are high quality, consisting of participants who were randomly drawn from a probability-based sample of the general population in the country. Online panels have become important and popular in the social sciences due to the possibility of collecting easily available data at a low cost. Some online panels use opt-in methods where the participants are self-recruited and not recruited through random sampling of the population. Such self-recruitment strategies skew the panel, as the politically engaged and higher educated people are more likely to self-recruit. The advantage of probability-based panels is that the samples are more representative of the general population compared to opt-in panels (Callegaro et al., 2014).

The Norwegian Citizen Panel is, like EIPS, a research-purpose online panel representative of the general population above the age of 18. The panel members complete an online questionnaire that takes around 15 minutes, three times a year. The panel infrastructure of the NCP makes it possible to monitor opinion change in the population because the same individuals are asked the same questions over time. For each survey wave of the NCP, a randomly selected respondent is awarded a gift card of 25.000 NOK for completing the survey. This is included in each survey round as an incentive, particularly to recruit and maintain respondents who are less likely to answer surveys in general.

The NCP data used for this thesis cover four different waves. The respondents in these waves were recruited in several rounds. The NCP waves used in this study are wave 3, wave 6, wave 12, and wave 13[7]. The respondents were recruited in

[7]Wave 3 was conducted between 13 October and 27 November, 2014, wave 6 was conducted between 1 March and 19 March, 2016, wave 12 was conducted between 6 June and 25 June, 2018,

wave 1 (November 2013), wave 3 (October 2014), wave 8 (March 2017), and wave 11 (March 2018). In the first two waves of recruitment, 25, 000 Norwegian residents were invited to participate in the survey. The respondents were drawn directly from the National Population Registry. In wave 8, 22,000 people were invited, while in wave 11, 14,000 were invited to join the NCP. The response rates of the four rounds of recruitment were 20.1%, 23.0%, 19.4%, and 15.1%, respectively (Skjervheim et al., 2018). The mode of recruitment varied slightly between the rounds. While all rounds used invitation by post as a recruitment method, participants were also invited by SMS in waves 3, 8, and 11. The participants registered their email address for further participation in the panel.

Table 3: Summary of data sources and cases in the four thesis articles

#	Source	Time	Main survey question	Cases	N
1	EIPS	2017	Factorial experiment	NO, SE, FR, NL, DE	8850
2	NCP	2018	Conjoint experiment	NO	4221
3	NCP	2018	Open-ended	NO	2436
4	NCP	2014 & 2016	Open-ended	NO	1620

Table 3 summarizes the data used in the four articles[8]. Article 1 used a factorial experimental design with four conditions. The experiment was conducted in five Western European democracies: Norway, Sweden, France, the Netherlands and Germany. Article 2 used a conjoint experiment with a vignette design, where each respondent was asked to evaluate one hypothetical case of the far right. Article 3

and wave 13 was conducted between 17 October and 5 November, 2018.

[8](Some of) the data applied in the analysis in this thesis are based on "Norwegian Citizen Panel waves 3, 6, 12, and 13, in 2014, 2016 and 2018". The survey was financed by the University of Bergen (UiB), and Trond Mohn Foundation. The data were provided by UiB, prepared and made available by Ideas2Evidence, and distributed by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD). Neither UiB nor NSD are responsible for the analyses/interpretation of the data presented here.

focused on negative partisanship of the populist radical right using an open-ended question, asking the respondents to explain why they would never vote for the Norwegian Progress Party. Article 4 used two open-ended survey questions, one that was asked before the 2015 refugee crisis and the other after.

The data used in this thesis were collected through the NCP and EIPS. EIPS is a collaboration between six European probability-based online survey panels. This thesis uses panel data from five of the coordinated panels[9]. The five online panels that coordinated the data collection and that have been used in this thesis are the L'étude longitudinale par internet pour les sciences socials at Sciences Po in France (Arnesen et al., 2017); the German Internet Panel at the University of Mannheim in Germany (Blom et al., 2018); the Longitudinal Internet Studies for the Social Sciences at CentERdata in the Netherlands (Das et al., 2017); the Norwegian Citizen Panel at the University of Bergen in Norway (Ivarsflaten and team, 2017); and the Swedish Citizen Panel at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden (Martinsson et al., 2018). The data were collected between May 1, 2017 and Jan 10, 2018 ($N = 18249$) (Arnesen, 2018).

Challenges and limitations

Despite proper probability samples there are some known challenges with online survey panels. One of these challenges is nonresponse, where a respondent refuses to participate in the survey, or do not complete the survey (Lee, 2006). A problem exclusive to panel surveys is panel attrition, where respondents that previously an-

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[9]The Social Science Research Institute Panel at the University of Reykjavik in Iceland is also a part of EIPS but was not used in this thesis due to the lack of a populist radical right party in the country.

swered one survey wave drop out. Callegaro et al. (2015, 213) explain that "attrition is a problem from different points of view. In terms of costs, attrition reduces the size of the panel and forces the panel companies to keep recruit members in order to keep the panel size stable. From a nonresponse point of view, attrition is an issue because it is almost never at random." This means that some respondents could be more likely to participate in the panel over time, while others are more likely to drop out. Attrition is particularly problematic for longitudinal panels such as the NCP because of reduced sample size and nonresponse measurement error (Callegaro et al., 2015, 213).

In the NCP, panel attrition is a challenge. As noted, the respondents were recruited in several rounds. In the NCP, younger respondents are more likely to drop out of the survey, while older respondents are more likely to remain panel members. This means that older respondents are overrepresented and younger respondents are underrepresented (Skjervheim et al., 2020). The same pattern applies for education. While respondents with higher education are overrepresented in the survey, respondents with lower education are underrepresented. It is important to take such skewness in the data into account.

Hooghe and Reeskens (2007) addressed the problem of underrepresentation in studies of the populist radical right and found that this particular group of voters was underrepresented in surveys. This is also the case for supporters of the Norwegian Progress Party in the Norwegian Citizen Panel (Skjervheim and Høgestøl, 2013). It is important to consider such skewness in the data when interpreting results. Two of the articles in this thesis used survey experiments, where the results are based on differences in sample randomization in the data. Thus, some level of insecurity

remains. One way to account for such bias is to use different sources of data at several points in time (Mutz, 2011). To account for some of the bias in the sample, two different robustness checks were used in this thesis. One way to estimate the robustness of results is running the experiment in different panels. This was done for article 1 in this thesis. Another way is to analyze heterogeneity in different parts of the sample. This was done in article 2 in this thesis. These results demonstrated that the main effects of the experiment holds for different subgroups of the sample.

Although I am aware of the challenges regarding the representativity of online panels, such panels are nevertheless more accurate than laboratory studies (Mutz, 2011) and also perform better compared to nonprobability panels (Cornesse and Blom, 2020). The results in this thesis are based on experimental interventions. This makes bias in representativeness somewhat less challenging. This is because the goal of such experimental interventions is to understand the differences in treatment effects and not to generalize some specific mean to the population. Similarly, skewness in the sample should not affect open-ended questions to the same extent as other types of questions. This is because analysis of open-ended data is concerned with describing attitudes somewhat differently than with closed questions. Based on the analysis of open-ended questions in this thesis, the panel does contain attitudes of those critical towards immigration, although voters of the Progress Party are underrepresented. However, when looking at the prevalence of different topics or themes in the open-ended data, as well as the generalizability of the results, skewness in the sample remains a problem.

Being aware of its limitations, this thesis nevertheless exploits the advantages of online panels by designing survey items to examine the overall research question. The

following sections will present the four research articles included in this thesis. I will briefly present the theoretical framework for each of the articles, explaining how each article relates to the relevant literature, research questions, design, method and main results and contribution.

Results and design of the thesis articles

In this section, I highlight the results and the design of the four main articles in this thesis and explain how they all fit together. The four articles all highlight different perspectives to shed new light on why there is exceptional political controversy around the populist radical right. All four articles included in this thesis build on and complement each other theoretically, empirically, and methodologically.

Briefly summarized, the first article sets out to explain the overall public political tolerance of the far right. The article contributes with a new theoretical framework tested using a comparative survey experimental design. The article shows variations in public political tolerance of the far right in five Western European countries. The second article further develops the theoretical framework presented in article 1 and complements the first article with a conjoint experimental design testing the more direct causes that help explain how public political tolerance of the far right increases or decreases.

The third article takes a different and more in-depth approach, examining the Norwegian Progress Party. The results from article 1 demonstrated that the Progress Party is the only populist radical right party that is fully tolerated by the public. A research strategy going forward is therefore to take a closer look at this party inside

the electoral arena. The paper uses the concept of negative partisanship and how voters that would *never* consider voting for the party describe it. Finally, because ideology and intergroup attitudes were found to constitute important reasons for negative partisanship toward the populist radical right in article 3, the fourth and final article investigates such attitudes from the voters' point of view. The results underscore the strong ideological differences on such policy issues.

Article 1: Public political tolerance of the far right

The first article[10] of this thesis takes a new approach to answer the overall research question of why there is exceptional political controversy around the populist radical right. The article investigates public political tolerance of the far right in five Western European democracies. The article introduces a new theoretical framework to help explain the variations in public political tolerance of far right political initiatives, including both populist radical right parties and extra-parliamentary movements. The article uses an experimental survey strategy with a between-subjects factorial design.

The theoretical framework presented in article 1 has two dimensions. The first dimension concerns public rejection of Europe's Nazi past. We argue that the more distant ties a far right initiative has, the more likely it will be tolerated by the public. Simultaneously, the more explicit ties a far right initiative has, the more likely it will be rejected. The second dimension concerns party institutionalization. We argue that the more a far-right initiative has institutionalized as a political party and in the democratic system, the more likely it will be tolerated by the public. Following

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[10]Co-authored with Elisabeth Ivarsflaten and Lars Erik Berntzen.

this logic, a far-right political party should be more tolerated than a far-right extra-parliamentary initiative, and a far-right party in government should be more tolerated than a party represented in parliament.

The setting of our experiment is extending democratic rights to a political party or extra-parliamentary group. The dependent variable is allowing or rejecting a political initiative to rent a local community house to hold a meeting for their members and sympathizers. We separate between political parties on the center-right, populist radical right, anti-Islamic groups, and neo-Nazi groups. The results support the theoretical framework. We find that only the neo-Nazi group is rejected by almost all voters in all five countries. The results from this study demonstrate that public political tolerance of the far-right varies substantially. The tolerance templates show the full variation in political tolerance of the far right, ranging from fully tolerated (FrP in Norway) to rejected (a neo-Nazi group).

What is particularly interesting and important in this study are the large differences found in political tolerance of the populist radical right parties in the five countries. They vary between fully tolerated (FrP in Norway) to being viewed similarly as an anti-Islamic extra-parliamentary initiative (AfD in Germany), to somewhere in between (SD in Sweden and FN in France). These results demonstrate how voters relate to the populist radical right in an everyday-life setting. The large variations in tolerance of the populist radical right underscore that this is a heterogeneous group of parties.

One novel approach with the design of this experimental study is the use of political parties and benchmarks. The results show that ordinary center-right parties in the five countries are viewed as fully tolerated by the public (between 0 and 10 percent

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of the voters disagree that they should be allowed the right of assembly), while the neo-Nazi group is rejected (between 70 and 90 percent of the voters disagree that they should be allowed the right of assembly). Such benchmark results, where one group of parties is viewed as fully tolerated while another is rejected, makes it possible to describe, in a meaningful way, the political tolerance of the parties that are placed in between. Nevertheless, to determine the specific factors that contribute to increasing or decreasing tolerance, a different type of study is required, which is provided in article 2.

Article 2: Political (in)tolerance and the importance of agency

The second article of this thesis builds on and further develops the theoretical framework introduced in article 1. In this article, I maintain the two-dimensional framework, arguing that public political tolerance of the far right is affected by public rejection of the Nazi past as well as by the degree of party institutionalization. However, this article adds more intricate individual factors to the theoretical framework, emphasizing that there are other important mechanisms to consider as well. Here, I argue that the agency of the far right—what the parties do to distance themselves from accusations of racism and extremism—is crucial to explain these intricate patterns of political tolerance.

The article uses a new design to gain more precise indicators of what factors exactly affect public political tolerance of the far right. The article employs a conjoint vignette design, where each respondent was presented with one far-right initiative and asked if this initiative should be allowed to hold a public event. The article illuminates the details explaining which factors contribute to increasing or decreasing

public political tolerance of the far right.

An important part of the research design of this article is the use of hypothetical cases. The conjoint design in this article was inspired by factors describing the populist radical right—for example, the hate speech accusations of Geert Wilders and the Holocaust denial of Jean-Marie Le Pen—but also by how the parties exclude members and candidates holding more extremist ideological positions. Using such examples in a conjoint design that describes a hypothetical far-right political initiative makes it possible to measure the direct effects of such factors.

The results from this article demonstrate that voters respond to signs about right-wing extremism. What political parties on the far right do is crucial for public political tolerance. Denying extremism and excluding extreme members contribute to increasing public political tolerance of the far right. Simultaneously, the features that the far right are not in control of, such as its ideological legacy and having members convicted of racism, are important explanatory factors contributing to decreased political tolerance. The results demonstrate that the agency of the far right is a necessary but not sufficient factor for public political tolerance of the far right.

The analysis in article 2 shows that, for each signal of right-wing extremism provided to the respondents, the public political tolerance of the far-right initiative decreased by approximately 10 percentage points. Simultaneously, the agency of the far right also matters to a similar degree. Denying extremism and kicking out extreme members has similar effects on increased public political tolerance. Nevertheless, signals of right-wing extremism, such as past ideological ties, still have a strong negative impact on political tolerance. The results from this study could help explain why some far-right parties achieve electoral success while others do not. This study adds

to our current knowledge by showing that agency is important. Explicit distancing from right-wing extremism and excluding extreme members is a necessary but not sufficient condition for public political tolerance.

Article 3: Negative partisanship and the Populist Radical Right

In the theoretical framework developed in article 1, the Progress Party was the only party that received the maximum score on both theoretical dimensions. The party is fully institutionalized and was in government at the time of data collection. In addition, the party has explicitly distanced itself from any such comparisons with right-wing extremism (Jupskås, 2015).

While the first two articles focus on public political tolerance of the far right, the third article takes a different approach. Instead of political tolerance and extending democratic rights to the far right, the article examines negative partisanship. This approach is more suitable to determine how voters relate to the populist radical right in the electoral system, but without using voting as dependent variable. The article conceptualizes negative partisanship as the party one would never vote for (e.g., Rose and Mishler, 1998). The results from this article demonstrate that the Progress Party is the most disliked party and has the largest share of negative partisanship among all the parties in the system. The article sets out to explain this negative populist radical right partisanship using open-ended questions.

A large share of the scholarly literature on the populist radical right has been concerned with explaining populist radical right success and determining the reasons for voting. The same amount of attention has not focused on why people *never* vote for the populist radical right. This article sets out to fill this gap in the literature

by focusing on negative partisanship, using a more in-depth measurement procedure combining closed and open-ended survey responses. The respondents were asked about their likelihood of ever considering voting for the Norwegian Progress Party and then to explain, in their own words, why. The voters answering that they would never consider voting for the party are examined more closely in this study. This strategy makes it possible to identify the reasons why a large share of voters would never vote for the populist radical right. The data were manually coded using a coding scheme based on voting models for the populist radical right.

This article provides unique insight into some of the reasons for this large share of negative partisanship toward the populist radical right in Norway. The results demonstrate that negative partisanship towards the Progress Party can, to a large extent, be explained by the policy positions of the party—particularly migration policy issues and environmental and economic policy issues. However, the political style used by the party's political candidates also plays a crucial role in negative populist radical right partisanship. The article demonstrates in a more in-depth manner what it is that voters experience as problematic about the populist radical right. Notably, the morality view in the responses concerning migration policy is important. These explanations emphasized that the party's policies affect real people and that such a view toward other human beings was incompatible with their own.

An important finding in this thesis as a whole is that although the Norwegian Progress Party is the most disliked party and has the largest share of negative partisanship in the electorate, almost everyone believes that it should be tolerated and granted the democratic right of assembly. This finding demonstrates that studies on political tolerance and on negative partisanship can be meaningfully combined.

Taken together, these concepts increase knowledge about the populist radical right in the eyes of the public.

Article 4: Digging deeper into ideology

This article investigates one of the issues that article 3 found to be an important contributing factor in explanations of negative populist radical right partisanship. The results from this study underscore the need to take a closer look at intergroup attitudes in party politics. This could help provide a better understanding of such issues and the reasons why people react strongly to the migration policy views promoted by the populist radical right.

The article asks how ordinary citizens perceive asylum seekers and how this changed after an unexpected event. Using open-ended survey questions asked before and after the refugee crisis, this article asks, first, what perceptions people have about asylum seekers, and second, how these perceptions changed after the refugee crisis. The article finds that asylum seekers are perceived in terms of deservingness (e.g., van Oorschot, 2000, 2006). They are perceived by some of the respondents as undeserving—as exploiters of the system coming to destroy Norway. These perceptions did not change after the refugee crisis. The analyses also show that asylum seekers are viewed as deserving, but to various degrees. The two topics representing a view of asylum seekers as deserving were labeled 'deserving/involved' and 'deserving/distanced'. The analyses indicate that it is between these two topics that we can detect some level of change. More people viewed asylum seekers as 'deserving/distanced' after the refugee crisis, and fewer people viewed them as 'deserving/involved', indicating a desire to wanting to help asylum seekers and acknowledging the difficult situation that they

are facing.

Another finding from this study is that changes in asylum perceptions occur in left-leaning voters and those holding positive views towards immigration. Voters who voted for the Progress Party in the previous national election, did not change their perceptions about asylum seekers. The change in asylum perceptions after the refugee crisis, as well as to what sub-groups of voters these changes were restricted, sheds an interesting light on populist radical right mobilization. The results from this article show that Progress Party voters were much more likely to view asylum seekers as undeserving.

Sniderman et al. (2004) have shown that hostility toward immigrants increases if they are portrayed in cultural rather than economic terms. Discursive analyses of the rhetoric of populist radical right candidates found that portrayals of immigrants in both cultural and economic terms are common (Sakki and Pettersson, 2016). What this paper demonstrates, and what makes it an important contribution to the overall research question of this thesis, is that people perceive asylum seekers in fundamentally different ways. While one side views asylum seekers as deserving—as people who need help, are in distress, and have vulnerabilities—the opposite side views asylum seekers as undeserving—as exploiters of the system, fortune hunters who have come to destroy Norway and the country's culture. The article also shows that people on the left side of politics are more represented among those viewing asylum seekers as deserving, while voters on the right side of politics are more represented among those viewing them as undeserving.

The results from this study underscore the results from article 3 and can help explain *why* people react strongly to the migration policy views and rhetorical style of

the Progress Party. If immigrants, asylum seekers, or minority groups are portrayed in negative terms, then this can cause reactions from voters perceiving the same groups of people as deserving human beings in need of help. This article demonstrates that people have different ideas about right and wrong when it comes to the treatment of other human beings such as asylum seekers. The results highlight important differences in attitudes toward asylum seekers and show that these differences are substantial.

Conclusion and future research agenda

This thesis has set out to explore why there is exceptional political controversy around the populist radical right and examines this from the voters' point of view. As argued by Bale (2012, 256) the populist radical right is "[e]motive, conflictual and colourful, it ticks all the boxes for newsworthiness." It is unsurprising then that scholars have been so interested in the populist radical right. However, the populist radical right is not simply colorful and conflictual by itself. Thus, I have argued for the need to consider the populist radical right from a new perspective in order to more precisely understand what it is about the populist radical right that sets it apart from other political parties.

Research on the populist radical right from voters' perspective has traditionally focused on voting. This thesis as a whole is about public opinion and the populist radical right, but none of the studies use voting as the dependent variable. Instead, two new perspectives were introduced, political tolerance and negative partisanship, combined with survey experiments and open-ended survey questions. Political toler-

ance implies the willingness to put up with ideas or groups that one disagrees with (Sullivan et al., 1979). It allows for an examination of how voters relate to the populist radical right in everyday-life settings. Negative partisanship, on the other hand, captures the notion of hostility, repulsion, or negative feelings towards a political party (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018). This allows for an examination of how voters relate to the populist radical right inside the electoral arena, but without looking at voting per se. Together these concepts complement each other and provide new knowledge about the populist radical right.

Summarizing the research findings across the four articles this thesis finds that there are large differences in public political tolerance of the far right. In particular, the thesis finds large variations in political tolerance of the populist radical right parties in five key Western European democracies. The thesis further demonstrates some of the independent factors explaining how public political tolerance of the far right increases or decreases. Further, the thesis looks closer at the party that was found to be fully tolerated by voters: the Norwegian Progress Party. Although tolerated, this party is the most disliked and has the largest share of negative partisanship compared to the other political parties. I find that ideological issues concerning the party's immigration, environmental and economic policies as well as the political style of the party contribute to explaining the negative populist radical right partisanship. Finally, by digging deeper into intergroup attitudes the thesis demonstrates the stark differences between some of these views. This can help explain why people react so strongly to some of the views promoted by the populist radical right.

Using political tolerance this thesis demonstrates that voters do not relate to the populist radical right as they do to other political parties. Specifically, populist rad-

ical right parties are faced with greater resistance from the public compared to other political parties in everyday-life settings. However, the Norwegian Progress Party is an exception. This party is equally tolerated as an ordinary center-right party. Nevertheless, examining negative partisanship sets the party apart from other political parties. Taken together, this thesis can help explain why there is exceptional political controversy around the populist radical right. The theoretical and empirical contributions of the research articles help to answer this question. The four articles combine new theoretical and methodological approaches in studying the populist radical right. All articles consistently show that the ideology promoted by the populist radical right sets it apart. Although the ideology does not necessarily prevent the populist radical right from being tolerated by the public (though there are substantial variations here), the ideology contributes to negative partisanship. In addition, the exclusionary rhetoric used by the parties and political candidates contributes to maintaining this political controversy.

An interesting discussion regarding the controversial populist radical right is the inclusion of these parties in government. Green-Pedersen and Otjes (2019) demonstrated that the populist radical right is important for the salience of immigration. They found that coalition incentives are crucial in determining whether center-right parties focus on immigration issues. If center-right parties need to cooperate with the populist radical right in order to form government coalitions, it is more likely that they will support the immigration policies of these parties. However, there might be costs of governing with the populist radical right. As shown earlier, there were heated debates and internal disputes when the Christian People's Party decided to join the government coalition with the Progress Party. Based on the results from ar-

ticle 3, the large share of negative partisanship does not seem to transfer to the other governing parties. Nevertheless, following the migration policies and rhetoric of the populist radical right, or put differently, not arguing against them, might contribute to legitimizing such views toward immigrants and minority groups.

This thesis has argued for a new research strategy in studies of the populist radical right. I have shown how the concepts political tolerance and negative partisanship can be meaningfully used in such studies. However, there are still unanswered questions. First, we do not know if the results from article 3 can be generalized to other countries. Future research should thus examine negative populist radical right partisanship in a comparative setting.

The results from article 2 indicate that a rhetorical strategy framing Islam as an intolerant religion undermining democratic rights contributes to increasing political tolerance of the far right. Simultaneously, article 3 shows that many respondents react negatively to the rhetoric used by the populist radical right. Future research could look closer at how the populist radical right uses its rhetoric to defend its views and portray itself as a defender of democracy.

This thesis has focused attention on tolerance of the far right and the ideology promoted by such parties. However, we know little about the consequences for those affected by the policies and the rhetoric promoted by the populist radical right. Recently, large antiracism protests have been organized across many established democracies emphasizing the importance of such issues. In addition, a recent study by Brekke et al. (2020) examined the effects of the revocation of refugee permits in Norway. They found severe consequences for the individuals affected by this practice. Some of these consequences have received media attention. Looking closer at an-

tiracism protests and the consequences of strict immigration policies combined with studies on the populist radical right could be an interesting research strategy going forward.

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