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Negative partisanship and the populist radical right: The case of Norway

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Abstract

With the rise and influence of populist radical right (PRR) parties in Western European democracies, research has focused on explaining the PRR vote. We know less about the reasons why many people would never vote for these parties. Recent research has pointed out that negative partisanship may be particularly prominent in the case of PRR parties. This study contributes to that line of research. It demonstrates that the PRR Progress Party in Norway has the highest share of negative partisanship of all parties in the system. Novel analysis of open-ended responses reveal that negative partisans react against both the party's policies and rhetorical style. The analysis reveals that negative partisans mirror voters of the PRR only to some extent. Notably, they emphasize disagreements with the party's views on humanity, and with environmental and economic policies. Political style is also a considerable source of negative PRR partisanship and is more important to account for never voting than to account for the support for these parties. The findings underscore that the study of negative partisanship contributes to a fuller account of patterns of PRR electoral performance and particularly its limitations.

INTRODUCTION

The study of political partisanship in electoral politics has received substantial scholarly attention. An important part of the concept of political partisanship, however, has received less attention, namely *negative* partisanship. Ridge (2022, p. 1272) explain that "negative partisanship is not the party to which a voter is attached; it is the party he hates." Abramowitz and Webster (2016) have demonstrated that while positive partisanship has remained stable for the past

decades, negative partisanship has been growing. Simultaneously, populist radical right (PRR) parties have increased in number across several European countries and become politically influential. Recent research has shown that the PRR party family has a particularly large share of such negative partisans (Meléndez & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2021; Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018) and is more intensely disliked compared to other political parties (Gidron et al., 2019). This suggests that there must be something special about this group of parties. However, studies have been more focused on explaining the PRR's success.

While such studies are essential, they are incomplete unless we also account for why these parties stand out when it comes to the share of negative partisanship. We know quite a bit about how the PRR stands out on the party level. It is a controversial party family. The parties hold exclusionary views toward immigrants and minorities, and pits people against elites. The parties have been exposed to negative reactions in both politics and media. Some parties have even been formally excluded from cooperation by other political parties. We know less about the details and drivers of citizens' negative reactions toward the PRR. The current study fills that research gap. It contributes new knowledge in the form of an in-depth account of the voters' reasons for never considering voting for the PRR in Norway.

The present study aims to explain the contributing factors of negative partisanship toward the PRR in Norway using a new measurement procedure. In this study, the voters were asked about their likelihood of *ever* considering voting for the PRR, followed by an open-ended question where they were asked to explain their response. Those voters responding that they would never consider voting for the Norwegian Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet, FrP) were considered as holding negative partisanship (e.g., Medeiros & Noël, 2014; Rose & Mishler, 1998). Relying on theoretical voting models for the PRR, the results demonstrate that there are multiple reasons explaining the high share of negative partisanship. The negative partisans strongly reacted to the party's views on humanity, economic and environmental policy positions as well as rhetorical strategies and behavior of the party's representatives.

The paper proceeds as follows: first the paper presents the theoretical foundation of the negative partisanship concept and the PRR. It then presents theoretical voting models explaining PRR support and introduces the Norwegian Progress Party as a case. The paper then presents information on measurement, data, and coding before moving on to the presentation of results. The paper ends with a discussion and conclusion.

NEGATIVE PARTISANSHIP AND THE PRR

The study of political partisanship has a long tradition of scholarly research. Campbell et al. (1960) defined partisanship as some sort of psychological attachment to a political party. Nevertheless, although recognized as a crucial

part of the partisanship concept, the focus on *negative* partisanship has been somewhat overlooked. Maggiotto and Piereson (1977) introduced the importance of including the electorate's opinions about opposition parties under the term "the hostility hypothesis." They argued that "evaluations of the opposition are independent, long-term factors which improve both our ability to explain and predict electoral behavior" (Maggiotto & Piereson, 1977, p. 745). Bankert (2021) argued that negative partisanship can be understood as the idea of strong out-party hostility that can develop without an equally strong positive view of the in-party. Other studies have identified negative partisanship as "the identification of a party that an individual would never vote for" (Rose & Mishler, 1998, p. 217), whereas Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2018, p. 1683) identified negative partisanship as "the psychological repulsion for a specific political party." Despite these different conceptualizations of negative partisanship, they all agree that the concept captures some sort of negative evaluation of a political party. The current study conceptualizes negative partisanship as never considering voting for a specific political party, corresponding to the behavioral strand of negative partisanship.

In a comparative setting, Mayer (2017) analyzed negative partisanship in 17 European multiparty systems. She found that negative partisanship increased voter turnout but had varying effects on which party the voters turned to, highlighting that negative partisanship can have different effects depending on the context. Similarly, Caruana et al. (2015) analyzed the effects of negative partisanship on political behavior in Canada and found that it had an independent relationship with several forms of political behavior. It affected, for example, vote choice, turnout, and political activity. Such studies are necessary to better understand voting patterns and negative partisanship from a comparative perspective. It is possible that these voting patterns are influenced by avoiding the parties that we dislike rather than voting for the party that we like. After all, people do react more strongly to negative than positive information (Caruana et al., 2015, p. 774).

Some political parties are particularly prone to negative partisanship. Meléndez and Rovira Kaltwasser (2021) found that PRR parties are exposed to more negative partisanship compared to all other parties. Other studies have shown that the PRR is surrounded by stigma (Harteveld et al., 2019), and more intensely disliked compared to other party families (Gidron et al., 2019, p. 33). Focusing on consideration sets, Rekker and Rosema (2019, p. 289) found that people considering voting for the PRR were relatively unlikely to also consider other parties in their consideration sets. It could be that many voters do not consider the PRR as part of their consideration set. Using propensity to vote (PTV), Boonen (2019) found that voters are *not* socialized into positive partisanship for the PRR as with other parties, but rather socialized into negative partisanship. It is particularly interesting that the PRR has such a large share of negative partisanship in multiparty systems where voters have many

political parties to choose from. It can be argued that the growing popularity and influence of PRR parties have caused this negative reaction against them. However, we know little about what these reactions are about, what causes them, and how extensive they are.

Why the PRR?

A number of studies have devoted time to explain the success of the PRR. One key element missing from these studies is the link to negative partisanship. The current literature provides limited insight into other parties' and voters' views of the PRR. Meléndez and Rovira Kaltwasser (2021, pp. 951–952) argue that "although we agree with the general idea that the PRR represents a major challenge to Western European democracy, extant research looks mainly at those who support the PRR and only marginally at those who reject it." Another promising field of studies have focused on affective polarization. As with negative partisanship, affective polarization has been conceptualized in various ways. Iyengar et al. (2019) consider affective polarization as voters of the in-party disliking voters of the out-party, whereas Druckman and Levy (2022, p. 257) consider affective polarization as "the gap between individuals' positive feelings toward their own political party and negative feelings toward the opposing party." Bankert (2021) argued that negative partisanship could lead to affective polarization. Harteveld et al. (2022) found that PRR supporters both receive and extend high levels of dislike from and toward the mainstream parties. The current study focuses on voters' reasons for never considering voting for the PRR and thus departs from studies on affective polarization.

Focusing on negative partisanship, it is important to consider whether negative partisans perceive the PRR as populist. What do they emphasize and what characteristics of the party do they notice? Populists position themselves as anti-elitist, but that does not necessarily mean that negative partisans endorse elitism. We do not yet know the extent to which a rejection of the populist mindset drives the high numbers of negative partisans that previous research has noticed in the case of the PRR. One possibility is that negative partisans reject the mindset and political style that pits people against elites.

It is possible that voters vote for specific parties or candidates not because they have strong positive feelings toward them, but because they hate the alternative (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018, p. 1683). What Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2018) seem to suggest is that what is special about the PRR is not the voters but the negative partisans. Currently, we have very limited knowledge about them.

Because few studies exist on negative partisanship and the PRR, this study will rely on what we already know. Theoretical voting models for PRR voting will be used in the study of negative partisanship and the nonvote. This study

does not turn to voting models to find the same patterns as previous studies, but to discover new patterns of similarities and differences between PRR supporters and the negative partisans. The next sections will summarize knowledge about voting models for the PRR. Then the following question will be addressed: Are negative PRR partisans driven by the same grievances as these parties' voters, or do we need to take into consideration other aspects when accounting for negative partisanship?

Nativism

It is well established that the core ideology of the PRR party family is nativism (Mudde, 2007, 2019). Following these ideological lines, a substantial number of studies concluded that opposition to immigration is the strongest and most consistent predictor of the PRR vote in Western Europe (Carter, 2005; Ivarsflaten, 2008; de Lange, 2007; Rydgren, 2005). Furthermore, voters open to immigration have almost zero probability of voting for a PRR party (Ivarsflaten, 2008). Studies have found that voters who are motivated to control their personal biases against immigrants avoid voting for PRR parties (Blinder et al., 2013). Because of the importance of immigration politics for the PRR party family, one expectation is that such grievances are also a contributing factor to negative partisanship. After all, the PRR party family has been surrounded by controversy and political debate concerning such issues (Harteveld et al., 2019). To the extent that negative partisanship is a mirror image of the PRR vote, it is expected that those who would never consider voting for them would emphasize differences about immigration and minority integration.

Other policy areas

The next factor that can help explain negative partisanship toward the PRR are other policy issues, that is, issues that are not about immigration and minority integration. After all, the PRR is about more than its nativism and opposition to immigration. In a comprehensive and influential study on the PRR in Western Europe, Kitschelt and McGann (1995) developed a theoretical framework consisting of a political space with a socialist–capitalist dimension and a libertarian–authoritarian dimension (Kitschelt, 1994; Kitschelt & McGann, 1995). Economic grievances located in the socialist–capitalist dimension and issues concerning the economy have traditionally been regarded as crucial for PRR voting (Betz, 1994; Kitschelt & McGann, 1995). The capitalist and authoritarian political space was argued to be ideal for the PRR party family (Kitschelt & McGann, 1995). This analysis was later criticized and found incomplete in more recent research (e.g., de Lange, 2007). Many PRR parties today have more centrist economic profiles (Jungar & Jupskås, 2014).

Examples of policy conflicts that have been discussed in previous research include privatization, inequality, welfare, and redistribution. Although studies have found that such issues are not essential in driving the PRR vote, they might still be important in explaining why people would *never* vote for the PRR.

Policies addressing climate change and environmental problems have been discussed in the literature on PRR voting, but limited empirical evidence has been found that this policy area drives voting patterns. Studies hypothesized early on that the rise of the PRR could result in a backlash against the environmental green movement (Inglehart, 1997; Kitschelt & McGann, 1995). According to this argument, mobilization for environmental causes has gone too far. One study found that the PRR parties in Britain and Denmark wanted to protect the landscape and beauty of the national countryside, but were unconcerned about climate change on a higher level (Forchtner & Kølvraa, 2015). Moreover, many PRR parties deny that climate change is man-made (Lockwood, 2018). Even if environmental policies have not been found to drive the vote for the PRR, it could be a central component to account for negative partisanship. This study will examine whether such issues play a part in contributing to never voting for the PRR.

Political style

More recent literature on the PRR has focused substantially on *populism* as a source for PRR mobilization (Akkerman et al., 2014). Populism is a contested concept in the literature, and scholars have given a broad range of definitions for populism and its measurement. Mudde (2007) views populism as a thin ideology and argues that populism views politics as the struggle between "the pure people" and "the corrupt elite." Jagers and Walgrave (2007) view populism as "a political communication style of political actors that refers to the people"(p. 322). In the original empirical material collected and analyzed in this study, it turns out that negative PRR partisans tend to focus on populism more as a political style.

It is important to take into account that the populist style and discourse of the party and its politicians can be a contributing factor to negative partisanship toward the PRR. Aalberg et al. (2017) emphasize that *communication* in studies of populism has been overlooked by scholarly research. Previous studies have found that the media frame populism quite negatively (Herkman, 2017; Wettstein et al., 2018). Herkman (2018) found that political scandals connected to the PRR occur from moral transgressions such as the use of unacceptable language or behavior from PRR politicians. Such negative descriptions from the media, and behavior from politicians, could potentially fuel negative partisanship. In the following, I will examine the extent to which never voting for the PRR is driven not by policy concerns but by political style.

THE NORWEGIAN CASE

The case at hand, used to dig deeper into the causes of negative PRR partisanship, is the Norwegian Progress Party (FrP). The party has gained increasing support since the late 1980s and entered government in 2013.[1] Like every PRR party, the FrP shares differences and similarities with PRR parties in other countries. The party has a broad policy portfolio and strictly regulated immigration policies are one of its primary issues. The party mobilizes voters with anti-immigrant sentiments (Ivarsflaten, 2008; Jupskås, 2015). The immigration policies and discourse promoted by the party have in many circumstances been considered indecent by other parties (Hagelund, 2003). In addition, the party has a strong economic profile, promoting low taxes simultaneously with increased use of the Norwegian State Oil Fund (Jungar & Jupskås, 2014; Jupskås, 2016).

There has been much discussion concerning whether the FrP belongs to the PRR party family. Mudde's (2007) classification excludes the FrP due to the lack of nativism as a core issue. There have previously also been discussions about the classification of other PRR parties such as the Finns Party and the AfD (see e.g., Arter, 2010; Arzheimer, 2015). There has never been any doubt that the FrP is the mouthpiece for opposition to immigration (Ivarsflaten, 2008; Jensen & Ivarsflaten, 2019; Jupskås, 2015). Jensen and Ivarsflaten (2019, p. 132) explain:

> The significance of the immigration issue has been important in Norwegian electoral politics since the end of the 1980s, and there is little doubt that it is the Progress Party that has been the central political actor on the immigration-critical side. The FrP has made itself a mouthpiece for a wide spectrum of opposition to immigration and reaped a significant voter gain through it.[2]

Discussions concerning whether a party could be classified as PRR or not is the rule rather than the exception for successful PRR parties (Daur, 2023; Ivarsflaten et al., 2019). Yet, while neoliberalism remains a central part of the FrP's political profile, there have been discussions concerning the centrality of nativism in the party's ideological portfolio. Because the FrP is the party that has played this role in Norwegian politics, the party can correctly be classified as PRR. It is likely that the results found in this study will also generalize to other PRR parties. However, because this is a heterogeneous party family, each case should be examined individually. The current study can be used as a hypothesis-generating study for future research.

MEASUREMENT AND DATA

Maggiotto and Piereson (1977) argued early on that the measurement of political partisanship was not standardized. They argued that "partisan identification is one of those multi-faceted notions difficult to capture in a single indicator" (Maggiotto & Piereson, 1977, p. 746). This was later supported by Holmberg (2007), stating that there was still no standard way of measurement. A lack of standardization is a challenge in the measurement of negative partisanship. Thus far, it has been measured in different ways. To some extent, one can regard the variety of measures a strength since it enables a broad examination of the concept. However, the lack of standardization hinders comparability across countries and contexts. A common measure in the study of negative partisanship has been the use of feeling thermometers, where respondents rate political parties according to how much they like or dislike them (e.g., Abramowitz & Webster, 2016; Maggiotto & Piereson, 1977). Other studies have asked voters about which party or parties they would *never* vote for (Medeiros & Noël, 2014; Rose & Mishler, 1998). While the first line of measurement is more related to affect, the latter is connected to the behavioral strand of negative partisanship (Ridge, 2022).

This study builds on those measures, but simultaneously introduces a new procedure of measurement. In this study, respondents were asked about their likelihood of ever considering voting for the Norwegian Progress Party (PTV) (van der Eijk et al., 2006). They were asked "How likely is it that you would ever consider voting for the Progress Party?" The respondents answered on a 5-point scale where 1 was *highly likely* and 5 was *not at all likely*.[3] This latter category indicates a party one would never vote for. The PTV item is a question about how voters consider and evaluate parties and is linked to the behavioral dimension of negative partisanship (e.g., Medeiros & Noël, 2014; Rose & Mishler, 1998). It is important to emphasize that the item is not an affective measure of views of the out-party, such as feeling thermometers. For example, a voter can disagree with a party and never vote for it without hating it.

The PTV measure has been successfully used in previous studies on negative partisanship (e.g., Boonen, 2019; Meléndez & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2021). Some studies have also used a combination of feeling thermometers and "never vote" (e.g., McGregor et al., 2015; Ridge, 2022).

New in this study is the introduction of an open-ended follow-up question. After the PTV item, respondents were asked to explain their response using their own words. This allows for the opportunity to identify the specific reasons causing negative PRR partisanship in Norway. A total of 2436 people chose to give an answer in the open text box, while 499 respondents opted out.[4] The main analysis of this study is based on the behavioral measure of negative partisanship (never vote) and the voters' open-ended explanations.

The survey items were implemented by the Norwegian Citizen Panel (NCP) collected in June 2018 (Ivarsflaten et al., 2020). The NCP is fielded three times per year and is a research-driven representative online panel. Respondents above the age of 18 were drawn directly from the Norwegian population registry. The panel members completed an online questionnaire, which took about 15 min.

NEGATIVE PARTISANSHIP ACROSS PARTY LINES

To place this study in a broader context, we take a closer look at the negative partisanship of all political parties. Meléndez and Rovira Kaltwasser (2021) showed that a larger share of the electorate holds negative partisanship toward PRR parties in Western Europe, about 50%. Figure 1 confirms this for the Norwegian case. It shows PTV measures and feelingt hermometers for the five political parties in Norway that are most interesting to this study and in a comparative context.[5] Nearly 60% of the electorate said that they would *never* consider voting for the Progress Party. In comparison, around 40% of the respondents said the same for the Socialist Left Party and the Green Party. In contrast, the Conservative Party and the Labour Party had only 20% and 17% negative partisans, respectively. These are considerable differences. Looking at the opposite side of the scale, it is noticeable that the Conservative Party and Labour Party also had a larger share of positive partisans than the Progress Party, Socialist Left Party, and the Green Party.

The results from Figure 1 show that the behavioral measure (PTV) is different from the affective measure (feeling thermometers) of negative
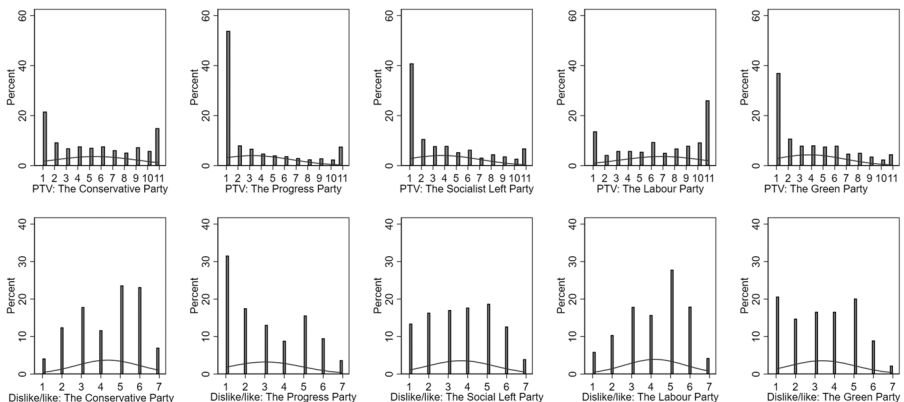
FIGURE 1 Propensity to vote and feeling thermometers of five political parties. PTV-measure: 1 = I am certain that I will never vote for this party, 11 = I am certain that I will vote for this party at some point. Like/dislike measure: 1 = intensely dislike, 7 = intensely like.

partisanship (Ridge, 2022). The patterns are similar but the values for the feeling thermometers are more evenly distributed across the scale. The FrP is the most disliked party among the political parties in Figure 1. More than 30% of the electorate answered that they intensely dislike the party, compared to less than 10% for the Conservative Party and Labour Party, a little more than 10% for the Socialist Left Party, and 20% for the Green Party. The graphs demonstrate that feeling thermometers and PTV are not the same. Both measures demonstrate that the FrP has a substantial share of negative partisans.

CODING PROCEDURE FOR THE TEXT DATA

Different procedures of analysis were considered when analyzing the data for this paper. Both deductive qualitative procedures and inductive quantitative procedures were considered appropriate techniques of analysis. The final procedure of analysis used in this paper consists of a combination of inductive and deductive. Inductive, because the open-ended responses were carefully read and anonymized. Notes were taken on frequently occurring topics to ensure that no unexpected elements from the responses were included. However, because the conceptualization of negative partisanship and the PRR is yet quite unexplored, a fully inductive quantitative approach was not used. Instead, the analysis consisted of qualitative coding of the data material. Studies have shown that automated text analysis is not necessarily better in validity and objectivity compared to manual coding of text (de Graaf & van der Vossen, 2013). The coding process performed in this study was deductive and based on predefined categories from the theoretical voting models presented earlier in this paper. The coding scheme was simple and contained four categories, shown in Table 1.

The first variable used in coding the data was labeled *views on humanity*. This variable was based on previous research on PRR voting patterns, which demonstrated that issues concerning nativism are essential (Ivarsflaten, 2008). Although we know little of the motivations of the negative partisans, it is expected that, due to the importance of such policy issues for the PRR vote, this will also be an important reason for negative partisanship. The category is

TABLE 1 Coded categories.

Variable	Description
Views on humanity	Human values, immigration, minorities, intergroup-related issues.
Other policy area	Other policy-related reasons or issues than immigration.
Political style	Political style or rhetoric of the party and its politicians. Nonpolicy-related issues.
Blank rejection	Agree/disagree with the party, with no further information.

broad to maintain the inclusion of those responses concerned with anti-immigration policy issues as well as those concerned with broader human values and anti-racism issues. The variable was coded as dichotomous (yes = 1, no = 0). Responses that contained issues concerning how we view and treat other human beings, immigration, minorities, or other intergroup-related issues, either positive or negative, were given a value of 1 in this category.

An important part of this paper is the inclusion of other policy areas, and the second variable was labeled *other policy areas*. The political platform of the PRR party family, or in this particular case, the FrP, involves more than nativism. As previously argued, issues located in the economic policy dimension, as well as environmental issues, might be more important than previous research has demonstrated, particularly when looking at negative partisanship. This study will examine to what extent other policy areas are emphasized when people explain their likelihood to ever consider voting for the FrP. The variable was coded as dichotomous (yes = 1, no = 0). Responses concerning other policy areas, such as environmental issues, economic issues, health, education, liberalism, and other issues *not* concerning immigration and minority integration, were given a value of 1 in this category.

The third variable was labeled *political style*. Studies of how populist parties are characterized by the media have shown that these parties are often described more negatively compared to other parties (Wettstein et al., 2018). It is possible that negative partisans use similar descriptions in the open-ended responses. In this study, a broad use of the concepts of populism and nonpolicy issues was applied. Respondents who explained their response with nonpolicy-related issues were coded in this category. This method allowed for important arguments from the voters that could be linked to populism to be included in the analysis. This included explanations about the party's rhetoric, aspects about the politicians, their behavior, the people versus elites, or more explicit statements of protest against other alternatives. Broad operationalization assured the inclusion of such argumentation. The variable was coded as dichotomous (yes = 1, no = 0). Responses that mentioned such nonpolicy-related issues were given a value of 1 in this category.

The final variable was labeled *blank rejection*. The responses in this category emphasized agreement or disagreement with the party but without elaborating any further on why they might agree or disagree. Because the focus of this study is on negative partisanship, the label rejection was used even though the variable as a whole also included supporters. The variable was coded as dichotomous (yes = 1, no = 0). Respondents who explain their likelihood to ever consider voting for the FrP based on agreeing or disagreeing but without referring to any policy or non-policy-related reasons were given a value of 1 in this category.

RESULTS

The first part of the results is shown in Figure 2. It shows the mean distribution of the coded categories based on the respondent's PTV for the FrP. The results show that negative partisanship is not a mirror image of support. By looking at negative partisanship, we gain a better explanation of the PRR and electoral performance. Respondents considered themselves highly likely or likely to vote for the FrP mentioned issues in the views on humanity category more frequently compared to other respondents. Almost 40% of those highly likely to vote explained their response using arguments in this category. Respondents considering themselves somewhat likely and likely to vote for the party wrote less about the same topic, whereas 28% of the negative partisans explained their response with issues related to views on humanity. Regarding other policy areas, negative PRR partisans wrote more about such issues compared to those highly likely to vote. A total of 35% emphasized other policy issues when explaining why they would never vote for the party. In political style, negative partisans, as well as those unlikely to vote, wrote more about this topic compared to other respondents. While around 30% of the negative partisans emphasized issues concerning political style, about 20% of those highly likely to vote for the party did the same. Finally, blank rejection was emphasized by many respondents, but there was no clear difference in prevalence between the negative partisans and the rest of the sample.

The results from Figure 2 clearly demonstrate that negative partisanship is not merely a mirror image of support. Specifically, other policy issues and political style stood out among the negative partisans compared to the other respondents. Regarding other policy areas, those respondents that would never consider voting for the FrP were those that emphasized such issues the most. This is an important finding because it underscores that other policy issues than immigration and minority integration are important in explaining negative partisanship, while such issues seem to matter less for PRR voting. The same pattern is found for political style. This indicates that other policy issues and
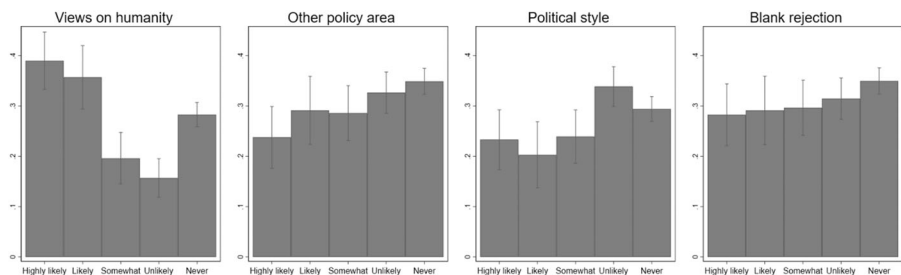

FIGURE 2 Propensity to vote for the Progress Party and the coded text data.

political style are more important in accounting for negative PRR partisanship than for the support of these parties. Importantly, such asymmetrical patterns would not have been discovered without broadening the perspective to also include negative partisans in the study of the PRR.

In the sections to follow, the results from the open-ended responses will be presented focusing on the explanations from the negative partisans—those that would *never consider* voting for the party.[6]

Blank rejection

Because the focus of this paper is on the negative partisans, the first category was labeled *blank rejection*. This was the only clearly symmetric category. This could be caused by noise from including respondents not very invested in explaining their response, as well as respondents promptly rejecting the party. Because this category only showed different versions of agreeing and disagreeing with the party's views, it was not included in detail in the further analyses. Nevertheless, the sum of responses in this category included disagreement with the party. One of these responses explained the following[7]:

> I deeply disagree on almost all parts of the FrP's party manifesto and I would feel strange if I voted for a party that I am so fundamentally against.

As the quote above demonstrates, this category includes responses explaining their deep disagreement with the party. However, the responses did not include the reasons for those sentiments. What this category demonstrates is that part of the negative PRR partisanship includes a blank rejection based on the voters' disagreement with the party.

Minority rights

Consistent with previous research, this study showed that issues related to immigration and minority integration were frequently used explanations for those considering themselves highly likely to vote for the FrP. However, the perspectives in this category for the negative PRR partisans differ starkly from those on the opposite side of the scale. Common among these responses was a view on immigrants and minority groups, and human beings in general, from a more humanitarian perspective. Negative partisans viewed the immigration politics of the party as prejudiced, highlighting that their policies affected real human beings. A number of respondents emphasized the morality perspective, explaining that immigrants and refugees are human beings in difficult situations and that the policies of the party contribute to creating divisions between

people. One of the respondents referred to this as "[a] strong feeling inside me that says no (…)." Similarly, two other respondents explained the following:

> It is the most selfish party that exists. Their immigration policies give me chills. Their way of arguing and the lack of respect for human beings in distress. The racism they promote towards human beings with a different skin-color is shameful. They forget that every human being is equally worth.

> I view the Progress Party as a prejudiced party, which is something that I do not support. I believe the party has a negative view on humanity, and I do not trust that they will take care of the weakest in our society if they were in charge.

An interesting component in the responses shown above is not only the view on the party as prejudiced, but also the view on humanity. Almost one-third of the respondents in this category (107 respondents) expressed such a view, emphasizing the way other human beings are treated as a core reason to never vote for the party. Some respondents specifically link the party's negative view on humanity to immigration and minorities, while other respondents refer to human values in an even broader perspective, linking it to how we treat other human beings in society in general. This could include ethnic minorities such as the Sami population, disabled people, or the poor. It is important to note that the responses in this category do not necessarily demonstrate a positive view on immigration and minorities but a critical view on the FrP's human values. The respondents explained their reasons for never voting for the party with its views on humanity colliding with their own views. In their opinion, we should help those that need it independent of skin color, class, ethnicity, or religion.

Furthermore, many of the respondents argued that the party contributed to spreading racism and xenophobia. For example, one respondent argued that "the FrP is a party that legitimizes and maximizes xenophobia." The following explanation emphasized this further:

> The party represents everything that I am against. They spread hatred, racism, and fear among the people. They close their eyes to the multicultural world and Norway. Instead of exploiting the advantages that can come out of helping people with integration, they want to close our borders and turn their back against what's happening out there in the world.

The open-ended responses demonstrated some core reactions toward the party's views on immigrants and minorities. Negative PRR partisans described the party as prejudiced and racist, and many respondents expressed a concern

about the party's policies contributing to legitimizing these views toward minority groups. It was argued that the party emphasizes a view of an "us" and "them" and that this contributes to divisions and distrust. Notably, the morality view from the responses in this category is essential and represents a concern about what is right and what is wrong.

Other policy areas

The literature on the PRR has to a large extent been concerned with nativism and populism. The results from this study underscored that other policy areas take part in explaining PRR voting patterns but to a larger extent for negative partisans. Using a number of quotes from the open-ended explanations, this section highlights the diversity, as well as the similarities, in the responses of the negative PRR partisans.

As much as 35% mentioned other policy-related areas when explaining why they would never vote for the party. Out of these responses, more than 20% were concerned with issues related to the environment and climate change. Two of these responses explained the following:

> The FrP promotes short-term, selfish policy positions, and to a large extent deny human emissions as a cause of climate change. [The party promotes] environmentally hostile policies on every area [and supports] negative and harmful actions.

> The Progress Party is the party that is the least concerned with the environment and the possibilities of survival for the next generations (…).

The responses above clearly react to the environmental policies of the party, which is, in the view of the respondents, not the party's priority. One of the top political issues of the FrP is transport, such as building roads and cutting tolls for cars, as well as extraction of fossil fuels. Many of the negative partisans react to the lack of policies to protect the environment, particularly from a governing party. The respondents also reacted to the expansion of more roads. As demonstrated by Lockwood (2018), environmental policies are not a top priority for the PRR. It is possible that the party's priorities in government have strengthened concerns on such issues among the public.

Another frequent explanation among the negative partisans concerned economic issues. Many of these respondents blamed the party for increased inequality. They criticized the government's privatization and tax cuts, arguing that these cuts created divisions in society, particularly affecting the poor and favoring the rich. One of the respondents argued that:

> The FrP is the party furthest to the right in Norwegian politics. Voting FrP is the same as saying no to every common good that has been fought for after the second world war. They favor those that already have much in this society and only provide breadcrumbs to those that need it the most.

Some respondents also highlighted the perceived consequences for their communities, such as a colder society which, in their view, contributes to fuel polarization among people. Another example is the focus on the poor as a consequence of the tax cuts to the rich. What most of these responses have in common is a critique of the FrP for not focusing on those issues that the respondents viewed as important. A possible interpretation along this account is that the party's policy implementations on these issues after entering government, took part in contributing to the large share of negative partisans. Importantly, the coding of these open-ended responses has shown that never voting for the PRR is also about environmental and economic issues.

Political style

Frequently recurring explanations from the negative partisans included issues concerning the political style of the politicians, the party's trustworthiness, and exclusionary rhetoric. Criticizing the political style of the politicians of the party was highlighted by the negative partisans. One response argued the following:

> The Progress Party has, despite many years not managed to recruit reflective and insightful politicians. There are too many categorical and not thought-through conclusions.

This is a frequently used statement among these respondents. The responses turn the focus toward the politicians' character and the party's ability to recruit competent candidates, as well as how these candidates speak and behave. This is in line with Mény and Surel (2002) who argued that populist candidates attract the media's attention precisely because of how they behave in political debates. They noticed that far-right politicians often attack their opponents with provocative and fiery statements. It is interesting that such tensions might contribute to negative partisanship. Two other responses highlighting these issues explained the following:

> They suggest un-reflected and short-term solutions to complex problems. They contribute to making it more difficult to discuss political issues in public debates when there are often bullies that like to talk about things outside the actual topic of the debate.

> [I] believe the party's policies are dangerous. They try to divide Norway. I despise the rhetorical remedies used by the party. It provokes me that political issues are rarely discussed, but that they more often attack their opponents. I consider the party very populist, with very few real solutions (…).

The political style of the FrP is seen as contributing to difficulties debating political issues due to the way that they speak and behave in such debates. This explanation underscored the importance of the political style of the party, as emphasized by Jagers and Walgrave (2007).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Over the past few decades, several Western European democracies have experienced the rise of successful PRR parties. Despite their success, a large share of the voters would never consider voting for these parties. Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (2018) identified a missing link between studies on the PRR and studies on negative partisanship. Following Rose and Mishler (1998), this study conceptualized negative partisanship as a party that one would *never* vote for. Studies on the PRR have missed focusing on the nonvote. This study has demonstrated that it is possible to discover new patterns about the PRR by focusing on negative partisanship. Examining responses to open-ended questions, this study was able to dig deeper into people's explanations to why they would never vote for the party. This brings important insight into the detailed contributing factors of negative partisanship.

The present study showed that about half of the voters would *never consider* voting for the PRR in Norway. Notably, this study showed that negative partisans only mirror supporters of the PRR to some extent. They emphasized disagreements with the party's views on humanity, and with environmental and economic policies. This underscores that looking at negative partisanship brings important new elements of the PRR to light. The political style is more important in accounting for negative partisanship than in accounting for the support of these parties. Based on the open-ended responses, this paper contributes three main findings: the negative PRR partisans react strongly to (1) the party's views on humanity and minority integration, (2) the party's environmental policies and economic issues concerning inequality, and (3) the rhetorical strategies used by the party and its politicians.

The first main finding was related to views on humanity and intergroup attitudes. This paper demonstrated that issues related to human values are important issues used by the negative PRR partisans. These explanations and reactions from the respondents were not necessarily a product of their own positive views toward immigrants and minority groups, but rather indicate a strong moral reaction on how we treat other human beings.

The second main finding concerned the centrality of policy issues other than immigration and minority integration to negative partisanship. Previous research has, to a very small extent, found support for the prominence of other policy areas. This study suggested that this is because they have tried to explain the vote rather than negative partisanship. One example is environmental policy issues. This is an important issue frequently mentioned in the responses of those that would never vote for the party. This might be a reaction to what Lockwood (2018) demonstrated; that some candidates of the PRR deny that climate change is man-made. The responses from this category also involved reactions to the economic profile of the party, particularly regarding issues concerning tax cuts, redistribution, and inequality. These results demonstrated that broadening the perspective to focus on negative partisanship when studying the PRR provides a fuller account of PRR electoral performance.

The third main finding was related to the importance of the political style and rhetoric used by the party and politicians. Previous research has shown that populism can be viewed as a political style or a form of communication (Aalberg et al., 2017; Jagers & Walgrave, 2007). Accounts that focused on voting for the PRR have tended to emphasize how this style helps voter mobilization. This study has shown that it is also a considerable source of negative partisanship. It is interesting that populism as a political style might mobilize voters to never vote for the party. Negative partisans react to the rhetorical strategies of the party and how PRR politicians behave in political debates. Future research could examine these patterns and tensions further.

In addition, there were some important findings from these open-ended responses related to the party's inclusion and responsibilities in government. A substantial amount of the responses reacted to the populist rhetoric or political style used by the party's politicians. Many of these explanations emphasized that the rhetoric used by the party was not worthy of a governmental party. Thus, there were some dissatisfaction and reactions related to the party's position in government. It would be interesting to determine whether negative partisanship linked to the rhetoric and political style of the party and candidates can be connected to government participation. However, the responses from the voters might also be caused by elite cues given by antipopulist discourse from other political parties criticizing the PRR and its performance in government (Mudde & Rovira Kaltwasser, 2018, pp. 1682–1683).

There are some limitations with the current study. Most importantly, it is necessary to emphasize that focusing on the behavioral measure of negative partisanship (never voting for a party) is not directly related to affect, and thus cannot speak specifically to feelings of hostility or other emotional reasons for negative partisanship. The current study found that a substantial proportion of voters would never vote for the PRR in Norway. However, it is perfectly reasonable for a voter to never vote for a specific political party without

necessarily being emotionally attached to that decision. Although negative partisanship has the potential to lead to affective polarization, it is important not to exaggerate the level of polarization in society.

This paper showed that negative partisanship can be measured meaningfully and more in-depth by combining closed and open-ended questions in surveys. By looking more closely at negative partisanship through voters' own words, this paper described in more detail the specific factors contributing to negative partisanship toward the PRR in Norway. The results demonstrated in more detail what a considerable share of voters experience as problematic concerning the PRR. Such issues should also be examined more closely also from a comparative perspective in future research.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT
The author declares no conflict of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
The data analyzed for this study are based on the Norwegian Citizen Panel wave 12, 2018. The data are provided by UiB, prepared and made available by Ideas2Evidence and distributed by Sikt. Neither UiB nor Sikt are responsible for the analyses/interpretation of the data presented here. To protect participants' anonymity, the open-ended data analyzed in this paper are only available via a restricted access secure server. Please contact digsscore@uib.no for questions regarding data access. Some of the data are available in online repositories and can be accessed for research purposes here: https://doi.org/10.18712/NSD-NSD2605-V3.

ETHICS STATEMENT
The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by The Norwegian Citizen Panel scientific committee. The NCP data have also been subject to a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA, number 118868). The participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

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ENDNOTES

[1] The party eventually chose to exit the government coalition with the Conservative Party, Liberal Party and Christian People's Party in January 2020. This was due to the incident of bringing home a woman and her children from a refugee camp after the woman had previously been a supporter of the militant group the Islamic State.

[2] Quote translated from Norwegian.

[3] A total of 2935 respondents answered the question. Of these, 261 (8.9%) answered that they were "highly likely" to vote for the FrP, 235 (8%) "likely," 367 (12.5%) "somewhat likely," 650 (22.1%) "not very likely," and 1422 (48.4%) "not at all likely."

[4] Analysis of respondent drop-out can be found in Supporting Information: Table 10.

[5] Results for all nine political parties in Norway can be found in Supporting Information: Figure 3.

[6] A selection of quotes from all the four categories across both positive and negative partisans can be found in the Supporting Information.

[7] Quotes presented in this paper have been corrected for spelling mistakes, but the structure of the language used is unchanged. In some of the quotes, words have been added in brackets [] to emphasize the content of the quote.

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Additional supporting information can be found online in the Supporting Information section at the end of this article.