Affective polarization towards new politics parties in the multiparty system of Norway

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Abstract

Scholars express growing concern over the recent upsurge in hostility between political parties and their supporters in Western democracies. The term affective polarization describes the extent to which partisans view each other as dislikes out-groups while feeling close to their own party. Existing literature largely highlight the case of the US, but a growing body of work extends the concept of affective polarization to the contexts of European multiparty systems. This assignment contributes to the comparative literature on affective polarization by exploring *to what degree and how new politics parties (NPPs) contribute to affective polarization in Norway*. NPPs are recently formed political parties that firmly advocate for specific positions on new politics issues. In Norway, this includes SV, FrP and MDG.

I conduct three types of analyses based on the *Norwegian National Election Studies*. First, I use aggregate data from 1981 to 2021 to investigate if NPPs are more affectively polarized than other parties. Second, I explore the correlation between supply-side factors and affective polarization towards NPPs. The supply side factors include NPP's electoral support, government attendance and coalition arrangements. Third, I investigate to what degree and how demand-side factors correlate with affective polarization towards NPPs. Demand side factors are measured at the individual-level and include voters' ideological position in new politics issues and their perceived salience of these, as well as voters' social background characteristics.

The results show that NPPs are more affectively polarized than other parties. Furthermore, voters' hostility towards NPPs are lower in the years when they are electorally successful. However, government inclusion of NPPs spur increased dislike towards NPPS among coalition partners that have deviating attitudes in new politics issues. Finally, I find that voters' ideological position in new politics issues is closely related to affective polarization towards NPPs, and that social background factors are less important.

Keywords: affective polarization, new politics, social group identities, logistic regression.

Acknowledgement

It feels surreal to be done with a project this large. This thesis has been in the back of my mind constantly, since I first found out what I wanted to write about. I began studying Political Science after I found out that human psychology on the mass level is what interests me most. I am therefore grateful to be in a place in life where I am submitting a Master thesis on this exact subject.

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Replication data for the analyses are available on request. Responsibility for mistakes and inaccuracies remain entirely my own.

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1 Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growing concern among political scientists regarding the growing hostility between political opponents within Western electorates. Scholars define affective polarization as the extent to which partisans view each other as disliked out-groups, while feeling close to their own party (Iyengar et al., 2012). Thus, affective polarization is something conceptually different from ideological polarization. Ideological divisions between parties represent interest-based deviances between societal groups. In contrast, affective polarization can best be described as the hostility between partisans that is spurred by people's tendency to divide the social reality into "us" and "them". Because humans are tribal beings, our party preferences are connected to the psychological concept of identity and group identity. The goal of winning over "the others" might even be considered more important, than securing the best outcome for all (Mason, 2018). In this assignment I explore the presence of affective polarization in the Norwegian population, highlighting on the role of parties that mobilize voters by taking a radical position in new politics issues.

Political polarization is often described in negative terms. However, at least some degree of ideological polarization is needed to secure meaningful policy alternatives for the voters. On the contrary, affective polarization is connected to the erosion of democratic norms because high levels of partisan animosity decrease trust, hinders political cooperation, and creates echo chambers among agreeing segments of the population (Hetherington & Rudolph, 2015; Strickler, 2018). The consequences of increased affective polarization are grave, and it is therefore imperative for researchers to detect the driving forces of partisan prejudice and hostility. The polarizing character of the presidency of Donald Trump that culminated in the storming of the Capitol on January 6, 2021, poses as a recent example of the dangerous potential of a politically aggravated mass.

Most studies of affective polarization highlight the case of the US (Druckman et al., 2021; Hetherington & Rudolph, 2015; Iyengar et al., 2019; Iyengar & Westwood, 2015; M. S. Levendusky, 2018; Mason, 2016, 2018). A growing body of work extend the research of partisan hostility to the multiparty contexts of Europe. These studies show that rising levels of affective polarization is far from limited to the US case (Gidron et al., 2020; Reiljan, 2020; Westwood et al., 2018). Partisan animosity varies a lot between European populations, but even some of the traditionally harmonious societies in Northern Europe, are not immune to the tendency of increased political tension (Kekkonen & Ylä-Anttila, 2021; Reiljan & Ryan, 2021; Ryan, 2023a). However, the investigation of affective polarization in Europe has proved to be

a challenging task. This is first and foremost caused by the complex conflict structure embedded in multiparty systems. It is reasonable to expect that partisan animosity varies greatly among supporters of different parties. So far, the study of affective polarization in multiparty systems have, with a few exceptions (Gidron et al., 2023; Harteveld et al., 2022) been concerned with country-level comparisons or analyses on the individual level. While these studies provide significant contributions to the affective polarization literature, they overlook the between-party variation within a country, thereby failing to detect the potential reasons for the voters' animosity towards different voter groups (Gidron et al., 2020; Reiljan, 2020; Wagner, 2021).

In this assignment I therefore narrow the analytical focus to the investigation of different levels of affective polarization within the Norwegian population, towards new politics parties (NPPs). I define NPPs as recently formed political parties that firmly advocate for specific positions on new politics issues (e.g. immigration and environmental protection). These parties are expected to generate excessive levels of political hostility, and thus serve as relevant objects of investigation when aiming at detecting the driving forces of affective polarization in multiparty systems. Indeed, scholars have found that the populist radical right parties, and their supporters alike, are by far more disliked than any other party family (Gidron et al., 2023; Harteveld et al., 2022). I extend the theory of populist radical right exceptionalism to encompass the new left and green party families. These parties are largely overlooked in the existing literature on affective polarization. However, like populist radical right parties, new left and green parties can be characterized as protest parties that take firm and radical positions in issues concerning identity and moral issues. Hence, they might spur aggravation among the voters who neither share their political opinions nor their world view.

Given the limited exploration on affective polarization towards Norwegian NPPs in the existing literature, this thesis takes and open and exploring approach. The investigation is divided into three parts that highlight the subject from different angles. First, it is important to detect whether NPPs are indeed more disliked than other parties. Second, I investigate supply side factors that are assumed to influence affective polarization between groups of partisans. These are electoral support in an election, government attendance and coalition arrangements with other parties. Finally, I look at demand side factors that potentially drive affective polarization on the individual level. Demand side factors are understood as political and social endowments of the voters. Ideological position in new politics issues and the perceived salience of these, constitute the political factors. Education, class, and place of residence constitute the relevant social factors.

The overarching research question is of descriptive character, and I will draw theory-based conclusions about the driving forces of affective polarization, considering the emergence NPPs. This thesis is an important contribution in the field of affective polarization in multiparty systems. It fills the research gap on the case of Norway, as well as proposing a party level approach emphasizing NPPs as assumed hotspots for excessive levels of affective polarization.

1.1 Research question

The overreaching question of the theses is as follows:

To what degree and how does new politics parties contribute to affective polarization in Norway?

This is investigated through three subordinate questions:

1. *Are voters more affectively polarized towards NPPs than other parties?*
2. *Does affective polarization towards new politics parties correlate with supply side factors?*
3. *Does affective polarization towards new politics parties correlate with demand side factors?*

Building on the knowledge from cleavage theory and evidence form studies of partisan hostility in Europe, I assume that NPPs are the main drivers of affective polarization in multiparty systems. NPPs mobilized estranged and dissatisfied parts of the electorate by capitalizing on the cultural change that transformed Western societies in the second half of the 20th century (Kriesi et al., 2006). They seized the new political space of identity politics, moral questions, nationalism, and universal and ecological justice. NPPs can be classified as adhering to the GAL (green, alternative, liberal) pole of the new politics dimension. The other pole is labeled TAN (traditional, authoritarian, nationalist) (Hooghe & Marks, 2018).

There are several reasons to expect that NPPs are generators of excessive rates of affective polarization. Most NPPs protest conventional politics. Research show that protest movements often use angry rhetoric to mobilize the masses (Jasper, 2014) Hence, the position of NPPs as new vigilant parties, are assumed to be met with a backlash from the mainstream society. Furthermore, the political perspectives of NPPs are inherently radical and emphasize issues that tap into questions of identity and moral convictions. It is reasonable to expect the

politics of "who we are" to cause stronger feelings of resentment than the more pragmatic economic politics of "who gets what" (Gidron et al., 2020). In addition, it is highly possible that both GAL and TAN parties mobilize voters from socially distinct and stigmatized segments of society. Consequently, the social prejudice attached to the supporters of NPPs are likely to spill over to these groups' political preferences.

I use Norway as the case of this analysis. Despite the relatively low and stable levels of affective polarization among the Norwegian population (Hesstvedt et al., 2023), this is an excellent case for investigating to what degree and how NPPs drive affective polarization. This is because Norway has seen the rise of no less than three NPPs, that over time have become viable political players. I categorize Sosialistisk Venstreparti (SV, Left Socialist Party) as a new left party and Miljøpartiet De Grønne (MDG, Green Party) as a green party. Hence, they serve as cases of parties on the GAL pole of the new politics dimension. Fremskritspartiet (FrP, Progress Party) is categorized as a populist radical right party on the TAN pole. In 2023, all three parties are a force to be reconned with in both the national and local elections. SV and FrP even have experience as governing parties. The political relevance and diversity of Norwegian NPPs are quite unique, and therefore make Norway a meaningful case for the investigation of the research questions.

In the next section I explain why I measure affective polarization as dislike towards out-parties. Furthermore, I argue that the dislike towards parties should be operationalized as a dichotomous variable, rather than a continuous scale of sympathy towards parties.

1.2 Analytical approach and methodological contributions

The original term of affective polarization is twofold in the sense that it denotes both the level of identification with the voters' own party, in-party sympathy, *and* the level of dislike towards other parties, out-party sympathy (Iyengar et al., 2012). When exploring affective polarization in relation to NPPs, I find that it is most relevant to investigate the *dislike towards* these parties from their political opponents. I therefore exclude the levels of in-party sympathy of the voters and focus solely on the dislike towards out-parties. In addition, the dislike expressed by the followers of NPPs towards other parties will also be neglected. The decision to investigate the *dislike towards* NPPs are partly based on the findings from existing research. Affective polarization scholars show that out-party hostility is driving levels of affective polarization (Iyengar et al., 2019; Kekkonen & Ylä-Anttila, 2021), and that controversial parties are disliked more by the mainstream population, than they dislike out-party voters in return (Harteveld et al., 2022; Helbling & Jungkunz, 2020; Reiljan & Ryan, 2021).

For the investigation of the research questions, I will use data from the Norwegian National Election Studies (NNES). The NNES is high quality, post-election survey data that includes sympathy scores for parties since 1981, as well as social and demographic variables, and questions about ideology and issue salience. When measuring dislike towards NPPs, I will use a modified version of the sympathy scores, that are the most common measures of affective polarization. Sympathy scores asks survey respondents to rate their feelings towards parties on a scale from cold to warm. The common strategy is to investigate the voters' sentiments towards parties as a continuous dependent variable (Druckman & Levendusky, 2019; Wagner, 2021). I argue that a more accurate operationalization of affective polarization is to construct dichotomous dislike variables based on the sympathy scores. The theoretical concept of affective polarization denotes the intense loathing of political opponents. Because the continuous sympathy scores include irrelevant variation, the respondents get the value 1 if they dislike a party, or they get the value 0 if they do not. This way, affective polarization is measured as out-party loathing, rather than the likelihood of supporting a party.

The analysis consists of investigations both on the party level and on the individual level. On the party level, the dependent variable is the proportion of voters who dislike a party. The investigations focus on the correlations between supply side factors, political relevance and coalition arrangements, and the levels of affective polarization towards NPPs. On the individual level, I run logistic regression models where the dependent variable gets the value 1 if the respondent dislikes a party, and 0 if the respondent does not. The relevant independent demand side variables that are expected to correlate with affective polarization include both political and social factors. Furthermore, I will conduct the analysis using 11-point sympathy scores to validate the robustness of the results, and to compare the dichotomous dislike scores to continuous measures of affective polarization. The results are viewed in appendix B.

In the section below, I shortly describe the theoretical expectations that constitute the hypotheses of this assignment and reveal the main findings from the empirical analysis.

1.3 Expectations and findings

The first question of this thesis regards the level of affective polarization towards Norwegian NPPs, compared to other parties. This is investigated on average and over time, with the six other parties in parliament as the benchmark. The results show that NPPs are substantially more affectively polarized than other parties. However, I find that there is huge variation in received dislike among the NPPs. Furthermore, Within the non-NPP party category, RV and later R stand out as a much-disliked party compared to both non-NPPs and NPPs.

In a second step, I investigate supply side explanation factors that might correlate with affective polarization towards NPPs. The political relevance and coalition arrangements of NPPs are expected to have an impact on the dislike score towards these parties. The *legitimation hypothesis* expects that the dislike of NPPs will decrease as a) the support for the party grows and b) the party enters government. Conversely the *threat hypothesis* expects that the dislike of NPPs will increase as a) the support for the party grows b) the party enters government. I use aggregated survey data, where the voters are grouped based on party preference, to investigate if the expectations are supported. The results provide substantial, albeit ambiguous, support for the legitimation hypothesis. Furthermore, coalition arrangements that include NPPs are expected to have a polarizing effect on voters' sentiments towards NPP between the governing parties and the opposition. This is because affective polarization towards NPPs is expected to decline among the supporters of the co-governing parties. The results show that the inclusion of NPPs in coalition arrangements is not coupled with a less hostile environment within the socialist or the conservative bloc. Rather, the findings show that the levels affective polarization towards NPPs tend to increase among the voters of coalition partners that oppose the NPPs position in new politics issues.

In a third and final step, I turn to potential demand side explanations for the dislike of NPPs on the individual level. One of the debates in the existing literature, concern to what degree affective polarization can be reduced to emotional expressions of ideological disputes, or if political hostility often exceeds the rational basis of attitudinal differences (Rogowski & Sutherland, 2016; Webster & Abramowitz, 2017). I explore this contradiction by investigating to what degree and how the dislike of NPPs is affected by several political and social factors. The aim is to discover if social group structures that overlaps with party preferences correlate with affective polarization towards NPP after controlling for new politics ideology. The initial results confirm that there is a strong relationship between political factors and NPP dislike, and that the social structures that is often connected to the new political dimension predicts NPP dislike. However, when demographic, social, and political factors are included in a full model, it becomes evident that political disagreements correlate much stronger with affective polarization towards NPP, than the voters social background.

This assignment is structured so that chapter 2 outlines the theoretic backbone for the investigation. In chapter 3 I will argue for why I chose Norway, and hence SV, FrP and MDG, as the case of analysis. Chapter 4 constitute a detailed explanation of the empirical approach, and the results are presented in chapter 5. Finally, chapter 6 includes a concluding discussion of the findings.

2 Theory

In this chapter, I articulate the theoretical framework that positions the thesis within the backdrop of existing literature. This framework not only establishes the groundwork for empirical analysis but also elucidates the terminology that will be employed throughout the assignment.

First, the features and origins of the term "affective polarization" will be outlined by drawing on the knowledge from social identity theory, and the theory of partisan identities. In addition, I will elaborate on the existing findings from studies on affective polarization in contemporary Western societies. Second, I present the cleavage literature to explain how the emergence of new politics parties likely intensifies levels of affective polarization. Finally, I deduce seven hypotheses that correspond to the three subordinate research questions, by combining cleavage theory with social identity theory, as well as previous findings from research on affective polarization.

2.1 Affective polarization
2.1.1 What is affective polarization?

The term affective polarization was first used in the early 1990s to describe how hostility towards political opponents reflects long-term party loyalties (Richardson, 1991). However, the concept remained mostly unexplored for the next 20 years until Iyengar, Sood and Leaks published the article *Affect, Not Ideology: A Social Identity Perspective on Polarization* (2012). While acknowledging that elite ideological polarization is indeed a characteristic of American party politics in the 21st century, the authors argue that *affective* polarization is a separate defining feature of deepening partisan divisions. Affective polarization is defined as the extent to which partisans view each other as disliked out-groups, while feeling close to their own party.

Iyengar and his colleagues demonstrate that partisanship – identifying as a Democrat or a Republican – forms the basis of a social group structure that divides the population into two distinct camps. The analysis uncovers a trend of increasing dislike towards the opposing party, and its supporters alike. Political opponents are attributed negative traits such as selfishness and closed-mindedness. Furthermore, evidence suggests that policy preferences only have a weak to moderate effect on the affective relationship between partisans. In other words, ideological polarization does not account for increasing levels of partisan animosity alone. Overtime investigation of the effect of partisanship on political affection, shows that the

correlation was weaker in 1988 than in 2004. Iyengar and his colleagues suggest that the most diagnostic feature of mass polarization in the US is not the divergence of ideological positions, but rather the strong antipathy directed towards political out-groups (Iyengar et al., 2012).

2.1.2 Social identities and objective group interests
The concept of affective polarization has its theoretical origins from social identity theory. This body of work focuses on intergroup discrimination based on individuals' tendency to discriminate against social out-groups, and the corresponding positive in-group bias. A group is defined as "a collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category, share some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves, and achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of their group and of their membership of it" (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

In an experimental study, Tajfel (Tajfel, 1970) finds that discriminatory behavior (understood as the extent to which individuals choose an unfair distribution of rewards and penalties towards other individuals) emerges extremely fast under the conditions of a clear group structure. Even when the subjects were assigned to experimental groups based on criteria that were explicitly trivial, behavior of in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination occurred. Tajfel's study shows that the motives for social conflict can exceed the objective concept of contradictory interests. The mere presence of an external social unit experienced as "The Others" is sufficient to trigger stigmatization, prejudice, and discriminatory behavior (Tajfel, 1970).

Social identity theorists aim to detect the psychological mechanisms behind intergroup behavior (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). They find that individuals categorize the social environment into several in-groups and out-groups with the purpose of self-reference in relation to other individuals. Thus, group structures provide individuals with identifications of themselves. Because group identities are inherently comparative, and therefore often competitive, intergroup relations tend to be conflictual. The relative status of groups can be objective, in the sense that one of the groups has a legitimate claim to scarce and desirable resources. Another way of viewing status is to consider it as the *outcome* of subjective comparison. Group members want to defend themselves against a relative fall in status by seeking to enhance the in-group's positive distinctiveness or devalue the traits of the out-group.

From this point, intergroup conflict can be divided into two categories, instrumental and non-instrumental. Instrumental conflict behavior refers to the act of pursuing the in-group's objective interests. Non-instrumental conflict behavior refers to redundant discrimination and

stigmatization of out-groups with the goal of enhancing self-esteem on behalf of the in-group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The next section describes how parties are understood as social groups, and hence condition conflict between political opponents. This is because partisan attachments contain a range of instrumental political preferences, as well as non-instrumental sentiments.

2.1.3 Party identity as a social identity

In their much-cited book "*The American Voter*" (Campbell et al., 1960), Campbell and his colleagues outline how parties make up a reference frame for social group identities among voters. Partisan attachments are not understood as a formal membership. Rather, the tie between parties and their voters usually manifests as a psychological identification. The concept of identification is used to characterize a person's attitudes toward a group-object in her environment. It is the attracting or repelling nature of an individual's relationship to the group that decides if she identifies with it or not.

When measuring partisan identity, Campbell and his colleagues use surveys that directly ask the respondents if they perceive themselves as loyal to a party, either the Democratic or the Republican, as well as the intensity of this attachment. They found that nearly the full sample were able to understand the concept of party identification and were able to rate their party attachment on a scale from weak to strong. Party attachments are thought to be acquired at a young age, through political socialization in the core family. Investigations show that there is a high degree of correspondence between an individual's party preference and that of her parents, underlining the validity of the assumption of early political socialization. Furthermore, partisan ties are stable over time and resilient against changes of party elites. Even in times of alterations of the political issue positions held by parties, their voter base remains relatively undisturbed. In addition, party identification affects voters' attitudes towards political objects, like issues and elites. Because politics is an abstract realm that is far removed from the regular voter's everyday life, it is reasonable to assume that people need information sources that they regard as reliable. By providing partisans with simple cues, parties act as opinion-forming agencies that structure the complex world of politics for voters. To illustrate this, Campbell and his colleagues found a strong correlation between identifying with the Republican party and holding attitudes that correlates with the Republican stance in several issues. The same goes for people that identify as Democrats and the elite positions of the Democratic party (Campbell et al., 1960).

It is important to mention that the assumed cause-effect relationship running from party identification to the formation of political attitudes have been subjected to competing theories about the direction of causality. Scholars drawing on theories of rational choice agree that partisanship and political opinions are highly correlated but assume that voters choose their party based on retrospective evaluations of the competing parties' performance. Thus, the notion of deep-rooted and prevailing partisan identities is rejected. Instead, individuals are viewed as rational actors who vote for the party they think will do the best job, based on earlier experiences (Achen, 1992; Fiorina, 1981; Gerber & Green, 1998). However, more recent studies give support to Campbell and his colleagues' theory on partisan identity (e.g. Bartels, 2002; Goren, 2005; Lewis-Beck et al., 2009). They argue that partisan bias is indeed a structuring force of the political perceptions of voters.

Given that the theory of partisanship that is outlined in *The American Voter* resonates with reality, party identification can be viewed as having both a non-instrumental and an instrumental side. First, party identification is a psychological phenomenon that ties voters to a social group – a party. This relationship is inherited and remains stable, even in times when the content of this social group changes, denoting a non-instrumental notion of partisanship. Second, partisans adopt the political preferences of the leaders of the social group – the political elites. Voters perceive their interests to coincide with the party that represents them. Thus, parties do not represent empty social categories, but are carriers of attitudes and opinions that oppose the attitudes and opinions of competing parties.

By combining social identity theory with the notion of partisan identities, it is easy to imagine that the relationship between voter groups might be conflictual at least, and hateful at most. Remember, experiments on intergroup dynamics reveal that even when groups were assigned based on criteria that were explicitly trivial or random, out-group discrimination and in-group bias emerged (Tajfel, 1970). When the social group structure coincides with opposing political attitudes, one would expect the same pattern to occur at much stronger rates. After Iyengar and his colleagues first distinguished between ideological and affective polarization, political scientists have been eager to investigate the undiscovered ground of the emotional component of mass polarization. The next section will give an overview of the comparative research that has been done on affective polarization in recent years.

2.1.4 Observing affective polarization across countries

Most studies on affective polarization highlight the tendencies of contemporary American society. Several political scientists regard affective polarization as the most striking feature of

US politics in the 21st century (Iyengar et al., 2012; Mason, 2016; Klein, 2020; Druckman et al., 2019). However, concerns about increasing partisan animosity extend across most Western democracies. In their book *American Affective Polarization in Comparative Perspective* (Gidron et al., 2020), Gidron, Adams and Horne aim to bridge investigations of interparty hostility in the US, with observations from other parts of the Western world. By comparing average feeling thermometer scores from 20 democracies from 1996 to 2017, Gidron and his colleagues show that the American society does not have particularly high levels of affective polarization. Affective polarization in the 19 countries with more than two parties, is measured as the difference in sympathy scores towards a respondent's in-party and the average sympathy score towards all the respondent's out-parties. Maybe surprisingly, the US public scores right above average, while the South-European publics of Spain, Greece and Portugal is by far the most affectively polarized. The four least affectively polarized countries include Finland, Iceland, Norway, and the Netherlands (Gidron et al., 2020). A comprehensive cross-national study conducted by Reiljan (2020) supports these findings. The American affective polarization levels are lower than in Eastern and Southern Europe, but higher than in North-Western Europe.

Apart from demonstrating the prevalence of affective polarization in the US, Gidron, Adams and Horne outline some of the potential explanations for country variations in interparty animosity. First, societies with relatively high levels of income inequality, also have high degrees of affective polarization. Second, over-time analysis shows that affective polarization intensifies when unemployment rates rise. Third, the empirical evidence suggests that first-past-the-post voting systems generally display more intense out-party dislike. Citizens in countries with more proportional electoral systems, tend to express more positive feelings towards political opponents. These cross-national findings can explain why the North-Western countries of continental Europe have the least affectively polarized populations. These countries are known for having health economies and proportional electoral systems. However, evidence points to the fact that in countries where political elites disagree strongly over questions of multiculturalism and national identity, generally have higher levels of affective polarization (Gidron et al., 2020). The Nordic countries have all, although to various degrees and different timing, experienced an uprising of populist radical right parties, as well as parties that strongly oppose these parties' views. Still, the levels of affective polarization in the five Nordic countries differs substantially.

Recently, Ryan (2023a, 2023b) has conducted the first comparative investigations that highlight levels of affective polarization in the Nordic region. The studies illustrate that similar

countries do not necessarily portray similar levels of partisan hostility. Even if Sweden and Denmark have quite similar levels of economic inequality, unemployment rates and electoral proportionality as Finland, Norway, and Iceland, they experience significantly higher rates of affective polarization. In addition, the study of time trends of affective polarization does not show a similar pattern across the Nordic region. While Sweden and Finland and Iceland show a strong upward trend in the 2010s, the curve is falling in Denmark and stable in Norway (Ryan, 2023a). This is unexpected, given that the Nordic countries often are viewed as similar cases that can be grouped together in political analyses. Ryan's findings implies that the levels and time trends of affective polarization is dependent on explanation variables that are highly specific for a country's unique political context. The enigmatic nature of partisan animosity in multiparty systems have encouraged political scientists to look more closely on the affective landscapes of European countries. The following paragraphs will outline the findings from single case analysis of affective polarization from three Nordic countries, Sweden, Finland, and Norway. Denmark and Iceland will not be included due to lack of research material from these countries.

In a Scandinavian context, the levels of affective polarization in Sweden have traditionally been relatively high. Researchers explain this by pointing to the highly politicized conflict structure between labor and capital. Before 2010, the party system consisted of a left-socialist-green bloc against a right-conservative-liberal bloc. After the attendance of a populist radical right party, Sverigedemokraterna (SD, Sweden Democrats), in parliament since 2010, partisan hostility has increased radically (Oscarsson et al., 2021). Individual-level analysis identifies a tripolar structure among Swedish partisans. The supporters of mainstream left parties and the supporters of mainstream right parties constitute opposite affective blocs. SD are disliked strongly by both mainstream blocs. Dislike towards the party even exceeds levels of animosity between Democrats and Republicans in the US (Reiljan & Ryan, 2021). Investigations of affective polarization in Sweden underlines the complexity of partisan hostility in countries with more than two parties. In addition, it is evident that the emergence of new parties, especially on the radical right, has the potential to generate strong negative reactions among mainstream voters.

Analysis of affective polarization from the Finnish context reveals a somewhat similar picture as in Sweden. Finnish politics is traditionally known for having low levels of ideological polarization, with wide and swiftly changing coalition arrangements (Kestilä-Kekkonen, 2017). Accordingly, levels of affective polarization have been measured to be among the lowest among Western societies (Gidron et al., 2020; Reiljan, 2020). However,

researchers find that levels of partisan animosity have increased radically, although volatilely, since the turn of the millennium (Kekkonen & Ylä-Anttila, 2021; Kawecki, 2022; Ryan, 2023a). The most disliked party, and hence the strongest driver of affective polarization, is the populist radical right party, Perussuomalaiset (PS, Finns Party). This is particularly evident among the supporters of left-leaning and culturally progressive parties, constituting a red-green bloc. The sentiments towards PS from right-leaning voters is mixed. Still, the average animosity between supporters of traditional right parties and the PS exceeds the levels one would expect based on their quite similar ideological positions (Kekkonen & Ylä-Anttila, 2021). The general levels of affective polarization increased sharply around 2011, when PS had their electoral breakthrough and became one of the biggest parties represented in the parliament (Kawecki, 2022).

The research of affective polarization from the Norwegian context is rather limited (Haugsgjerd & Nadim, 2023). Apart from the comparative investigation in the Nordic region conducted by Ryan, there are two contributions that have investigated the level of partisan hostility in Norway. Knudsen (2021) shows that levels of affective polarization towards parties are significantly lower in Norway, than in the US. These findings are supported by Hesstvedt and her colleagues (2023). Hence, scholars agree that the Norwegian population generally have low and stable levels of affective polarization.

It is evident that the existing research on affective polarization has gaps to fill, both in relation to affective polarization in Norway, and investigations on the party level. The next section uses cleavage theory to explain how social divisions along the new politics dimension, are expected to lay the foundation for excessive levels of affective polarization towards NPPs.

2.2 Cleavage theory
2.2.1 The social basis of contemporary party systems
Every political system, and hence party landscape, mirrors the power battle between societal groups within a given country. This chapter will elaborate on how societal divisions, also called cleavages, make up the foundation for party formation and competition. This will serve as the backbone for understanding the nature of affective polarization.

Cleavages are the manifestations of the group-based disagreements that have the potential to generate mass level hostility (Gidron et al., 2023). In addition, cleavage theory is an important building block for untangling the complexity of affective polarization in multiparty systems, because it is reasonable to expect that intergroup skepticism will vary across different societal divisions. Put differently, it is likely that a party supporter has

significantly diverging attitudes towards other parties, depending on which party that is being evaluated. As theorized by Campbell and his colleagues (1960), parties are themselves representations of social identities and they impact the voters' political outlook. However, when trying to grasp the nature of mass political polarization, it is important to understand that the underlying impetus of party formation is grounded in real societal conflicts.

Lipset and Rokkan (1967) identified four social divisions that structured Western party systems. First, the center/periphery cleavage pits the interests of the cultural majority in a country against the interests of ethnic, religious, or linguistic minorities often placed in the outskirts of the national boundaries. Second, the church/state cleavage represents the conflict between the proponents of the standardized and sovereign nation state and the voices that wish to secure some form of Christian moral in political affairs. Third, the land/industry cleavage denotes the contradicting relationship between the primary sector and the secondary sector. Ultimately, this relationship is one of conflicting economic interests because inhabitants of urban areas want access to affordable foodstuff. Rural producers want earnings to stay high and protection from competition from foreign agrarian producers. Finally, the owners/workers cleavage pits economic interests against each other within the industrial sector. This is often called the class cleavage. The conflict between the people who receive earnings – the working class – and the people who want to keep the cost of production down – the business owning middle class – has given way to the most salient social division in modern Western countries (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967).

According to Lipset and Rokkan, parties are the institutionalization of these deep-rooted group alignments in a society. At the time when the cleavage theory was developed, party systems generally reflected the same cleavage structure that was fully developed already in the 1920s. However, the following decades would see radical changes of the political landscape of Western democracies (Dalton, 2019). A new cleavage divided society and spurred the emergence of new parties as well as the realignment and dealignment of Western electorates. The next sections will describe how the class cleavage and the new politics cleavage manifests in the political realm through issue formation. It is commonly argued (Hooghe & Marks, 2018; Inglehart, 1977; Kitschelt & McGann, 1995; Kriesi, 1998) that these cleavages make up the two dimensions that are the main structuring forces of modern party systems. The way in which parties position themselves in issues related to these dimensions is expected to have important implications for levels of affective polarization in a political system.

2.2.2 The economic dimension – public or private

The economic dimension of party politics reflects the class cleavage that emerged in the wake of the industrial revolution. The class cleavage has had a special impact on the political systems of modern societies because the contradicting interests of the working class and the middle class not only taps into problems relating to the efficiency of production, but also the rights of the individual. These problems manifest into concrete political issues regarding tax rates, unemployment, inflation, and social services (Dalton, 2019). Broadly speaking, a voter's position on the economic dimension, describes his preferred degree of state intervention in economic affairs (Dalton, 2019). Owners and workers often disagree on these issues because the former view state intervention in the production cycle, by for example collecting taxes, as a violation of basic property rights (Alston & Mueller, 2008). The latter view the state as an agency that is accountable for providing citizens with the means necessary to live a decent life, by for example guaranteeing the right to education and healthcare (Kuitto, 2016). Political parties represent class interests by taking consistent positions in these issues.

Consequently, Western party systems are structured around economic conflicts of interests. In the majoritarian party systems of the US and Great Britain, the class cleavage is the social group foundation for the two big parties. In continental Europe, where multiparty systems are the norm, parties are often structured into ideological blocs along the economic dimension (Dalton, 2019). Up until the 1970s, class struggle was the crucial impetus of the political power play. In modern times, there is broad consensus among scientists that the nearly one-dimensional political spectrum indeed has changed (Hooghe & Marks, 2018; Inglehart, 1977; Kitschelt & McGann, 1995; Kriesi, 1998). The next section will elaborate on how societal developments in post-industrial societies have given rise to the cultural cleavage that has restructured the party landscapes of Western countries.

2.2.3 The new politics dimension – GAL or TAN

The second half of the 20th century saw a transformation of the cultures of post-industrial societies that resulted in a change in popular values that in turn had widespread political consequences. Completely new issues related to environmental protection, immigration, nationalism, and alternative lifestyles, entered the political arena. As did new parties that managed to capitalize on the expanded political space by taking ownership over the issues on the new politics dimension (Hooghe et al., 2002; Hooghe & Marks, 2018).

Political scientists wrote about the phenomenon of value change as early as in the 1970s. Inglehart (1977) pioneered this tradition by drawing on the insights from modernization theory.

Values would change as a consequence of improved living conditions. In the first half of the 20th century, the life of the average Western citizen evolved around creating a livelihood and surviving the crisis of war and a cracking economy. Most people put top priority to economic growth, societal stability, and conformity of group norms, so called material values. As Western societies became increasingly affluent and stable after World War II, new generations began emphasizing values that exceed the need for economic and physical safety. These include the post-material values of individual free choice and self-expression, as well as ecological self-worth and the tolerance of diverse cultures and lifestyles. People who did not experience safe conditions early in life, often experience progressive values as a threat to their perception of a healthy society. The clash between materialists holding socially conservative values, and post-materialists holding socially liberal values, lays the foundation for the cultural cleavage that divides contemporary societies (Inglehart 1977, Inglehart & Norris, 2019).

Around the turn of the millennium, scientists began to pay attention to the societal consequences of globalization, and its impact on domestic politics. According to Kriesi and his colleagues (2006), the process of globalization – or "denationalization" – is the most recent critical juncture that has given rise to the further development of the cleavages that structure contemporary Western party systems. The articulation of policies must consider the polarizing force of an increasingly integrated world order. This is because the weakening of national boundaries creates winners and losers on the domestic scene. Some societal groups, typically urban inhabitants with tertiary education who work in sectors that are open to the world market (the new middle class), benefit from open borders. Other groups, like blue collar workers in traditionally protected sectors, as well as the unskilled part of the workforce (the new working class), suffer (Hooghe & Marks, 2018). Similarly, the immigration of non-Western ethnic groups has transformed the culture of the recipient countries. For people who have a strong national identity, the growing ethnic and cultural diversity is often viewed as a challenge to the safe and predictable society they know and value (Kriesi et. al., 2006: Kriesi et al., 2012). In the wake of globalization, people who defend what Inglehart refers to as materialist values, have to an increasing degree been concerned with conserving national culture and, to the furthest degree, ethnic endowments. On the contrary, people with post-materialist values have extended the principles of equality and justice to also encompass people from non-Western countries. Paradoxically, globalization has spurred the salience of the national question and put issues concerning immigration, national sovereignty, and European integration on the political agenda (Hooghe & Marks, 2018; Kriesi et al., 2006).

The scholars of cleavage theory have given the new politics dimension (often called the cultural dimension) a multitude of labels. Post-materialist/materialist (Inglehart, 1990), green/traditionalist, libertarian/authoritarian (Kitschelt, 1994), integration/demarcation (Kriesi, 2006) and socially liberal/socially conservative (Inglehart & Norris, 2019) to mention a few important ones. This assignment follows the example of Hooghe, Marks and Wilson (2002) and uses the labels GAL (green, alternative, libertarian) and TAN (traditional, authoritarian, nationalism) to describe the two opposite poles on the new politics dimension.

The next section will describe how the restructuring of the cleavage structure of European societies has given rise to parties that have managed to capitalize on the expanded political space, by mobilizing voters on new politics issues.

2.2.4 The emergence of New Politics parties

Researchers of cleavage theory hypothesize that new social divisions will spur the occurrence of new parties. This is because established parties' attempts at adapting to the new political context, are constrained by their position in the party system as representatives for an already existing cleavage (Ignazi, 1992; Kitschelt & McGann, 1995).

Social democratic, conservative, liberal and Christian democratic parties are rooted in the Rokkanian cleavage structure. In this assignment they are broadly referred to as established parties. Hooghe and Marks (2018) find that established parties struggle with the task of addressing new problems, because they are prone to incremental evolution. Parties are densely formed and organized around socially closed groups, which in turn make them highly inflexible. Thus, in times when quick and radical change is called for by the electorate, new parties will emerge under the conditions of a proportional electoral system (Hooghe & Marks, 2018). New parties that advocate new politics issues, in this assignment referred to as New Politics parties (NPPs), gather votes from the dissatisfied and politically estranged parts of the electorate.

It should be noted that established parties are not unaffected by the restructuring of the cleavage structure. Demand side factors (e.g. issue salience) and supply side factors (e.g. the emergence of new contenders) does indeed affect the political strategies across the board. Still, established parties tend to respond vaguely, moderately, or inconsistently to new politics issues. This might be caused by internal divisions within the party, and external factors like problems with alliance building on the national or supranational level (Hobolt & Tilley, 2016; Hooghe & Marks, 2018; Kriesi et al., 2006).

The parties that take firm positions in new politics issues are new left, green and populist radical right parties. The next section will elaborate on the nature of these party families, and why they can be classified as NPPs. In line with the party family classification scheme worked out by Mair and Mudde (1998), the most viable approach for grouping together parties across countries is to look at their historical origins and ideology. First, the origins and the ideological outlook of new left and green parties will be outlined. These party families are grouped together because both consolidate the GAL pole of the cultural dimension. Hence, they share obvious similarities, especially in relation to origins. Second, the defining features of the populist radical right will be explained. These parties consolidate the TAN pole of the cultural dimension.

2.2.5 New left and green parties

The group of parties that are commonly referred to as new left and green parties emerged in the 1960s and 1970s (Gomez et al., 2016; Müller-Rommel, 2009). New Left and Green parties have their electoral appeal from the social movements that were concerned with environmental protection and the revaluation of the social identity of marginalized groups, including women, LGBTQ+ people and ethnic minorities. Furthermore, anti-nuclear and peace protests – a reaction to the threat of the Cold War and the US war operations in Vietnam – revitalized the issue of Western imperialism (Kitschelt, 1993; Staggenborg & Staggenborg, 2022). The recedors of new left and green parties were often single-issue initiatives with a decentralized organizational structure, that was dissatisfied with the political status quo (Müller-Rommel, 2009).

New left parties provide a programmatic alternative to the left of the social democratic parties, and view the established labor parties as too neo-liberal. Simultaneously, they reject the communist socialism typical for the traditional radical left, as this line of thought often is seen as authoritarian (Escalona et al., 2023). New left parties stretch the left-wing concept of equality to a universal perception of the rights of the individual, including the right to political co-determination. They criticized the capitalist world order by combining economic, feminist and environmental arguments. The Nordic New Left parties are known for opposing Western-centric international organizations like NATO and the EU. They reject the idea of a US-led defense regime as well as the neoliberal principle of European free trade and labor exchange (March, 2011).

Green parties share many of the ideological sentiments of New Left parties. This includes the concern for equal rights, solidarity with countries of the Global South, opposition to nuclear power and strong ecological thinking. Indeed, the new left and green parties are similar to the extent that they are often grouped together or used synonymously (Kaelberer, 1993). However, Green parties differ in their sentiments towards the capitalist system. In some countries "alternative green radical parties" seek fundamental changes to the existing economic paradigm. Another sub-type can be called "pure green reformist parties". These parties are not principally against free economic enterprise, as long as the profit-led development is green (Müller-Rommel, 1994). The detachment of some Green parties from the economic left-right dimension, distinguish them from parties on the New Left. This is demonstrated by Green parties clear tendency to support European integration (Hooghe & Marks, 2018). Even though the EU lays at the core of the liberal economic project, it also offers comprehensive strategies for environmental regulation, which is hard to imagine without international cooperation.

2.2.6 Populist radical right parties

The cultural cleavage that led to the formation of new left and green parties, paved the way for another new party family, namely the populist radical right. The formation of populist radical right parties is a backlash against the strengthening of socially liberal values in modern societies (Ignazi, 1992; Inglehart & Norris, 2019). The organizational origins of populist radical right parties deviate to a great extent between countries. Indeed, the diversity of origins between these parties – ranging from right-wing extremism to neoliberal populism – make party family classification a challenging task (Mudde, 2007). However, common for all populist radical right parties is that they grew out of a growing dissatisfaction towards established parties' response to progressive movements and the weakening of national borders (Ignazi, 1992; Kriesi et al., 2006).

Populist radical right parties capitalize on issues on the new politics that both conservative and christian democratic parties are perceived to neglect, especially in relation to the national question in the era of globalization. Contrary to established right-wing parties, economic policies are not perceived as a core feature of populist radical right ideology. Rather, the term "right" can more accurately depict the belief that there is a hierarchy among people, and that inequalities are natural. The ideological pillars of populist radical right parties are nativism, authoritarianism and populism. Nativism denotes the perception that states should

exclusively be inhabited by the native population. Hence, all populist radical right parties strongly oppose (especially non-Western) immigration. Authoritarianism can be defined as the adherence to strictly ordered set of rules. This includes emphasis on law and order *and* conventional norms regarding family and lifestyle. Populism refers to an understanding of society as divided into two antagonistic groups, "the true people" and "the corrupt elite". In the eyes of their followers, populist leaders embody the voice of the people while directing harsh criticism against other politicians (Mudde, 2007).

2.2.7 The affectively polarizing potential of NPPs

While there is broad consensus that NPPs have a unique position in the political landscape due to their ideological outlook (Hooghe & Marks, 2018; Kitschelt, 1994), it is reasonable to assume that the relationship between supporters of these parties and supporters of established parties, tap into the core of the term affective polarization. There are several reasons to expect NPPs to be drivers of affective polarization in multiparty systems.

First, the discourse of NPPs is known for generating feelings of anger and fair in order to mobilize voters (Betz & Oswald, 2021; Jasper, 2014). Because these parties draw voters from parts of the electorate that are dissatisfied with traditional parties and the issues they care about, NPPs have had success in exploiting collective negative emotions to spur political motivation. By identifying scapegoats for the voters' self-experienced grievances or general fear of the future, NPPs agitate the masses with the aim of generating involvement and gaining support (Marx, 2020). The hostile feelings put forward by the political elites of NPPs is expected to spill over to their supporters. This again might cause strong resentment by and towards supporters of NPPs.

Second, NPPs are not just a radical, but a *new* force to be reckoned with. It is likely that voters who are content with the status quo will be skeptical towards parties that emerge from movements that protest conventional politics (Kitschelt, 1993). Voters of mainstream parties might watch the new challengers vigilantly, without being able to stop these parties from growing. Radical, new parties should create more political tension than pragmatic, established parties.

Third, NPPs often have ownership over political issues that evolve around identity and moral convictions, in contrast to parties that focus on more pragmatic economic issues. Researchers find that the moralization of political issues leads both voters and politicians to oppose compromise (Anderson et al., 2014; Feinberg & Willer, 2019). The rigidity of new

politics issues leads people to perceive the ideological distance between opposing parties as bigger than it really is. (Anderson et al., 2014). Therefore, the politics of "who we are" is expected to cause stronger out-party hostility than "who gets what" (Gidron et al., 2020).

The subsequent sections elaborate on the potential drivers of affective polarization in relation to the emergence of NPPs. Seven hypotheses are articulated with the goal of exploring the levels of affective polarization towards NPPs, as well as possible correlations between NPP hostility and supply, as well as demand side factors. First, the analytical approach is described, deploying arguments that are rooted in the existing literature on affective polarization.

2.3 Hypotheses

2.3.1 Analytical approach

This assignment aims at filling research gaps that to a large degree have been overlooked in the current literature on affective polarization. Most of the studies on affective polarization highlight tendencies in the American society (Druckman et al., 2021; Hetherington & Rudolph, 2015; Iyengar et al., 2019; Iyengar & Westwood, 2015; M. S. Levendusky, 2018; Mason, 2016, 2018). In recent years, scholars have attempted to bridge this body of work to the European context. But the conversion of the term affective polarization from a system with two parties, to systems with multiple parties and cross-cutting cleavages, have proved to be a challenging task (Wagner, 2021). While Democrats and Republicans can be viewed as warring enemies, the affective landscapes of European party systems are inherently more complex. Country-level comparisons of levels and time trends of affective polarization tend to conceal important party-level variation *within* countries (Harteveld et al., 2022). Because it is reasonable to expect that partisan hostility varies between pairs of parties, this assignment narrows its focus to the single case of Norway.

Comparative studies have already spurred the emergence of single case analysis of affective polarization in European countries. Most of this literature focuses on individual-level variation, and how this should be measured when party supporters have more than one out-party. In these studies, researchers measure a respondent's affective polarization score by grouping together all out-parties (Harteveld, 2021; Kawecki, 2022; Kekkonen & Ylä-Anttila, 2021; Wagner, 2021). This approach has the advantage that it can reveal the individual endowments that predict variation in levels of affective polarization within a population. The downside with this approach is that the relationship between different voter groups remains undiscovered.

Studies that focus on the individual level tend to overlook two important factors. First, that partisans view out-parties differently depending on which out-party that is being evaluated (Gidron et al., 2023). Second, that the original term affective polarization denotes deepening political divides that go beyond ideological polarization (Iyengar et al., 2012). When affective polarization is measured as a quality of an individual, it is not possible to control for the share of partisan hostility that is explained by ideological distance. Therefore, affective polarization will be investigated on both the party level and the individual level, focusing on the role of NPPs as the assumed drivers of affective polarization. The NPP-oriented approach solves the problem of varying degrees of hostility the voters might have towards different parties. Furthermore, because NPPs represent ideological positions that are known, one does not need to control for the ideological distance to the party. It is sufficient to observe to what degree the ideological position of the voter correlates with the known position of the party.

The three subordinate research questions of this assignment focus on affective polarization *towards* NPPs from the supporters of other parties. This approach is arguably the most meaningful way of detecting to what degree and how NPPs are affectively polarized, compared to other parties in a multiparty context. This is because the theoretical assumptions indicate that NPPs increase the general level of affective polarization in a country by agitating broader segments of the population.

However, it is reasonable to expect that the dislike expressed by the supporters of NPPs *against* their political opponents is relatively strong. Hence, one can argue that the hostility radiated *from* NPPs is a similarly relevant object of investigation. However, evidence from several European studies suggests that populist radical right parties are more intensely disliked by mainstream party voters, than what populist radical right supporters express towards their opponents in return (Harteveld et al., 2022; Helbling & Jungkunz, 2020; Reiljan & Ryan, 2021). The same pattern is expected to occur in relation to affective polarization towards new left and green parties. In accordance with the scope of this assignment, the hypotheses will therefore be limited to the investigation of dislike expressed by supporters of other parties *towards* NPPs.

It should be mentioned that the concept of affective polarization was initially defined as the extent to which partisans view each other as disliked out-groups, while feeling close to their own party (Iyengar et al., 2012). Subsequently, the term has two components. First, the degree of identification with their own party and second, the degree of dislike against political

opponents. In this assignment, the focus is narrowed down to the investigation of the levels and possible explanations for out-party dislike. As noted above, NPPs possibly intensify levels of affective polarization by spurring anger and fear among political opponents. Furthermore, researchers have shown that increased levels of affective polarization in the US as well as in Europe, is mainly caused by intensified out-party hostility. Levels of in-party sympathy largely remain stable (Iyengar et al., 2019; Kekkonen & Ylä-Anttila, 2021; Ryan, 2023a).

The hypotheses consist of three parts. First, the levels of dislike towards NPPs will be compared with the dislike towards other parties. Second, it will be investigated to what degree and how supply side explanation factors correlate with the proportion of voters who dislike NPPs. This will be investigated by exploring the connection between electoral support, government inclusion and coalition arrangements, and the received dislike by NPPs. Finally, demand side factors are explored as potential explanations for NPP dislike. These include voters' ideological positions in new politics issues, the voters' perceived salience of new politics issues and the social background of the voters.

2.3.2 NPPs are more affectively polarized

Before investigating the factors that possibly drive partisan hostility in a multiparty context, it is important to explore the affective landscape of the Norwegian party system. Building on the knowledge from cleavage theory in combination with social identity theory, the sections above implies that NPPs are expected to have an extraordinary role in driving affective polarization.

There are several reasons why these parties should stand out as generators of political tension. Populist radical right parties will likely create hostile reactions from the supporters of other parties because their attitudes break with the norms of inclusiveness and progressiveness of modern societies. New left and green parties might infuriate the supporters of other parties by moralizing on political issues in defiance of the beliefs of their opponents. In addition, both populist radical right parties and new left and green parties mobilize their voters by evoking negative feelings. The anger and worry that is part of the rhetoric of NPPs should create a backlash of animosity among the voters of mainstream parties.

There is broad consensus among political scientists that populist radical right parties are a highly controversial force in European party systems. In the Western world, conservative and authoritarian values have for long been left by broad parts of the population (Inglehart & Norris, 2019). Populist radical right parties represent attitudes that to many are viewed as dehumanizing against people of marginalized groups, especially ethnic and religious

minorities. In adherence to the zeitgeist of inclusion and progressiveness, mainstream politicians have pursued strategies of de-legitimization and exclusion towards parties who represent deviating values (Schwörer, 2021; van Spanje, 2010). Some scientists even argue that mainstream elites demonize populist radical right parties. Demonization is understood as "the act of portraying a person as the personification of evil" (van Heerden & van der Brug, 2017). When political elites frequently direct harsh criticism against populist radical right parties for their intolerance and backward values, this is likely to spill over to the mainstream population.

New left and green parties are also vulnerable to condemnation by the followers of mainstream parties. This is because the issues on which these parties mobilize, often rests on a foundation of deeply held moral convictions. The moralization of politics typically occurs in relation to questions of identity politics (Koleva et al., 2012) and environmental issues (Anderson et al., 2014; Kidwell et al., 2013). Researchers have found that proponents of moralized issues believe the question to revolve around the fundamental question of right and wrong (Kovacheff et al., 2018). It is reasonable to assume that people who have more moderate attitudes towards identity politics and environmental issues, feel judged by the supporters of new left and green parties. The moralizing character of culturally progressive campaigns might scare off or even provoke anger towards new left and green parties, as well as their supporters.

A feature that in different ways define all NPPs is the foundation of negative emotions these parties are built upon. Remember, NPPs entered European party systems as a reaction to the limited appeal of established parties. By mobilizing on anger with the status quo and fear of the future, NPPs gather votes from estranged parts of the electorate (Hooghe & Marks, 2018). Scholars of social movement theory have investigated how negative emotions function as a mobilization mechanism. When an individual experiences political anger, it is usually because she has encountered a situation that is experienced as threatening and/or unjust. Social movements tend to exploit the aggregated anger, spurred by fear, that motivates the proponents of marginalized issues (Jasper, 2014).

Scholars find that the discourse of populist radical right parties is fueled by anger (Betz & Oswald, 2021). Research shows that politicians of the populist radical right generate negative emotions among their supporters by identifying scapegoats (eg. immigrants and mainstream politicians) for their economic grievances (Marx, 2020). Similarly, new left and green parties have their origins in movements that mobilized on resentment against existing norms towards gender, sexuality, and ethnicity, as well as ecological exploitation (Kitschelt, 1993; Kriesi et al., 1995).

Emotional responses should always be understood in relation to the objects that evokes them. In the political realm, anger is often directed towards political opponents who are often viewed as "the bad guys" (Jasper, 1998). It is likely that the hostility that is characteristic for the discourse of NPPs, is met with resentment from their political opponents. Supporters of mainstream parties might even feel like their perception of rational politics and public decency is threatened by the discourse of NPPs, thus creating reciprocally negative feelings towards these parties and their partisans alike.

H1: *NPPs are more disliked than other parties.*

Research from different countries have partly confirmed this assumption, mainly in respect to populist radical right parties. The term populist radical right exceptionalism is used to describe how these parties are disproportionately disliked by supporters of other parties, and vice versa (Gidron et al., 2023; Harteveld et al., 2022). When applying a dyadic approach for assessing levels of affective polarization in multiparty systems, where pairs of parties are the units of investigation, researchers find that the populist radical right is by far the most disliked party family across Europe. A telling example is the tendency for the supporters of moderate right parties to express warmer feelings towards the moderate left than towards the populist radical right. Furthermore, populist radical right parties are far more disliked than both green parties and parties on the radical left (Reiljan & Ryan, 2021). These findings support the populist radical right exceptionalism hypothesis but goes against the expectation that green/new left parties generate similar levels of partisan animosity. However, the affective position towards new left and green parties is to a large extent unexplored ground in the existing literature. They are therefore included in this analysis.

2.3.3 Legitimation, threat, or polarization?

This section focuses on how supply side factors can explain levels of affective polarization towards NPPs. As mentioned above, partisan hostility depends on the specific political context. One factor that is expected to affect levels of affective polarization is therefore the role of NPPs in a party system. Because populist radical right parties, as well as new left and green parties are expected to have a special role in driving levels of affective polarization, it is useful to investigate how these parties' position in the party landscape, their political relevance and coalition arrangements, affects their received hostility. Political relevance is defined by two measures, electoral success and government participation. It is not self-evident whether

increased political relevance of NPPs will lead to more friendly or hostile attitudes expressed by political opponents. Rather, it is possible to formulate two competing hypotheses. The first is called the *legitimation hypothesis*, the second is called the *threat hypothesis*. Finally, the last hypothesis regards the potential coalition effects that might lead to less hostility towards NPPs from the voters of co-governing parties. This hypothesis implies that the government inclusion of NPPs should lead to a polarization in voters' sentiments towards NPPs, between the voters of the coalition partners and the voters of the opposition.

On the one hand it is reasonable to assume that the increased electoral success of NPPs will improve their standing in the eyes of political opponents. When people experience that there is a growing support for NPPs, they might begin to accept these parties as legitimate political players. Just the fact that an increasing share of one's fellow citizens agree with the attitudes held by NPPs, might lead to a process of subjective de-radicalization of these parties. Similarly, inclusion in government can legitimize NPPs by showing that they are capable of managing political power. In addition, when the political elites of established parties give NPPs the mandate to enter government coalitions, this serves as a cue to their voters. As mentioned above, parties are opinion forming agencies who have the potential to impact their voters' outlook on political objects (Campbell et al., 1960).

H2a: *The dislike of NPPs will decrease as the support for the party grows.*
H2b: *The dislike of NPPs will decrease as the party enters government.*

On the other hand, the increased political relevance of NPPs might result in more partisan antagonism. Social identity theorists explain how tendencies of in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination might be strengthened in contexts where the out-group is viewed as a threat (Brewer, 1999; Feldman & Stenner, 1997). Political opponents might therefore be more skeptical towards NPPs as their electoral support grows and/or they gain access to governmental power.

H3a: *The dislike of NPPs will increase as the support for the party grows.*
H3b: *The dislike of NPPs will increase as the party enters government.*

In a study on dislike towards populist radical right parties in the Netherlands, the evidence gives unclear answers to whether more political relevance legitimizes or threatens their

opponents. There was no indication of either a general affective bonus or penalty over the time when the populist radical right party, Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV, Party for Freedom), grew (Harteveld et al., 2022). Research from Finland and Sweden suggest otherwise. Attitudes towards the PS (Finns Party) cooled drastically between 2011 and 2019 when the party became a major player in the parliament (Kekkonen & Ylä-Anttila, 2021). The supporters of mainstream left parties' attitudes towards the SD (Sweden Democrats), became gradually more negative after they attended parliament in 2011 (Reiljan & Ryan, 2021).

One would expect that the attitudes towards NPPs by different groups of partisans, will depend on the alliance structure within the party system. It is likely that supporters of parties that cooperate with NPPs will be more friendly towards these parties, than supporters of parties that are part of an oppositional bloc. There are three reasons for why this might be the case.

First, researchers have found that people use coalition heuristics to evaluate opposing parties. This means that partisans tend to view the politics of coalition parties and their own party as more ideologically similar than the party manifestos would suggest (Fortunato & Stevenson, 2013). It is reasonable to assume that partisans' attitudes towards opponents will be less hostile towards the out-parties that are perceived as ideologically close.

Second, parties are opinion forming agencies that shape the political outlook of their supporters, including the character-based qualities of politicians. Because political elites tend to enhance the positive traits of cooperating politicians(Green & Jennings, 2017), this might spill over to their supporters' attitudes towards coalition partners. There is also evidence that politicians that are in opposition relentlessly criticize governing parties, while launching fewer attacks on co-members of the opposition (Weschle, 2018). By listening to ques from the political elites of the in-party, partisans might perceive the politicians of collaborating out-parties as more competent than they otherwise would.

Finally, researchers of social psychology find that coalition partners often experience a sense of shared fate while governing together (Brewer, 1999; Gaertner et al., 1999). It is likely that the concept of partisan identification can be expanded to a bigger political in-group that includes other parties on the same side in the struggle over policy making. Blockwise affective polarization is a unique feature of multiparty systems that has the potential to create a more friendly public environment, than what is commonly observed in countries with less proportional electoral systems (Lijphart, 2012).

H4: *the dislike of NPPs will decrease among the supporters of the coalition partners of the NPP.*

Research that investigates the strength and persistence of coalition arrangements on levels of partisan hostility points to significant evidence that partisans of cooperating parties indeed reward each other with affective bonuses. In a study of 19 Western countries between 1996 and 2017, evidence shows that partisans value current coalition members more than their ideological distance would suggest. Furthermore, the positive relationship lingers up to 15 years after the coalition arrangement is dissolved (Horne et al., 2022).

The mainstream left-right divide in attitudes towards the populist radical right, is traceable in the Netherlands when looking at the effect of government participation on sympathy scores toward the Party for Freedom. Between 2010 and 2011, when the right-wing government enjoyed informal support from the Party for Freedom, mainstream right party supporters expressed warmer feelings towards the disliked outsiders on the far right. However, the "almost-participation" of the Party for Freedom did not spur any general legitimation process across the electorate. Rather, one should look at coalition arrangements to understand the total increase in positive feelings expressed by other partisans (Harteveld et al., 2022). The effect of political relevance on the received dislike of NPPs might be a point of discrepancy between the supporters of collaborating and opposing out-parties.

2.3.4 Controversial politics or social group structures?

Studies from the US are divergent in their evaluations of the explanation factors that potentially cause increased levels of affective polarization. A point of discussion in the existing literature, is to what degree ideological disagreements account for levels of inter party hostility. Some scholars claim that increased levels of hostility towards the opposing party is closely related to deepening ideological divisions among political elites (Rogowski & Sutherland, 2016; Webster & Abramowitz, 2017). Others point to the fact that partisan identities overlap with other social group identities, thus intensifying political animosity as a consequence of social sorting (Mason, 2016, 2018). In the individual level analysis, several demand side explanation factors will be investigated with the aim of detecting if dislike towards NPPs are caused by their controversial politics, or if NPPs represent distinct social categories that are stigmatized by mainstream society.

The ideological approach in affective polarization research emphasizes the rational foundations of partisan dislike. According to this school of thought, principled evaluations of political opponents drive out-party animosity. This body of work suggests that the followers of ideologically distant parties are inclined to express hostility towards one another, because their

diverging opinions provokes negative emotions (Rogowski & Sutherland, 2016). Remember, the term affective polarization refers to interpartisan loathing that *cannot* be explained by policy disagreements. Therefore, a pure ideological explanation for out-party dislike rejects the notion that affective polarization is a separate defining feature of deepening partisan divisions (Iyengar et al., 2012; Mason, 2018). Still, there is a growing agreement among researchers that interpartisan hostility is, at least partly, rooted in political disputes (Orr & Huber, 2020). The critical point of discussion is not *whether* ideology affects party and partisan sentiments, but *to what degree*.

In a multiparty context, it is reasonable to expect that voters evaluate parties differently depending on the ideological distance between themselves and a given party. As outlined in the chapters above, the parties in contemporary multi party systems are not only divided by ideological distance, but also along two main dimensions – economic and new politics. Scholars find that ideological divergence on new politics issues is a stronger generator of partisan loathing than economic issues, because of their principled and moralistic character (Kovacheff et al., 2018; Mudde, 2004). New politics issues tap into societal challenges where the perception of "right" and "wrong" is dependent on one's basic world view. Nativism (protection of the interests of the native-born inhabitants) versus universalism (all humans are created equal and therefore have the right to the same basic needs) exemplifies how opinions about immigration are formed by deep-rooted moral convictions. Therefore, finding a commonly acceptable middle ground in these questions is more challenging than in more pragmatic economic questions.

NPPs are characterized by their radical position on the new politics dimension. Therefore, the received dislike by NPPs is expected to be driven by voters' ideological distance to these parties in new politics issues.

H5: *The received dislike of NPPs can be explained by voters' ideological position in new politics issues*

Another plausible explanation for negative sentiments towards NPPs, is their neglect of economic questions on behalf of new politics issues. It might be that the supporters of parties that are rooted in the Rokkanian cleavage structure are critical to the reorientation of the political landscape. They will likely look with skepticism at the parties that push forward the new politics orientation of politics. It is reasonable to assume that many of the supporters of

established parties view NPPs as irrational and unknowledgeable, even when they have similar political attitudes.

One can imagine that the supporters of two parties agree on many issues, but still express hostile feelings towards one another because they prioritize differently. The difference between the traditional and the new left serve as a theoretical example. While parties on the traditional left emphasize the class struggle between the laborers and the owners of the means of production, new left parties have skewed the politics of equality to revolve around identity politics, ecological justice, and the protection of minorities (Escalona et al., 2023). The supporters of traditional left parties might look with frustration on the new left parties for undermining the discussion about the distribution of capital.

NPPs emphasize the policies and outcomes of cultural issues. Therefore, the received dislike of NPPs is expected to be dependent on whether voters perceive cultural issues as important.

H6: *The received dislike of NPPs can be explained by whether voters perceive new politics issues as important.*

H5 and H6 both explain the dislike of NPPs by pointing to their controversial politics. The third and last demand side hypothesis aims at investigating to what degree social background factors explain dislike towards NPPs. This approach assumes that NPPs denote distinct social group identities that overlap with several other social group identities. In the literature on affective polarization, this is called social sorting along partisan lines. Research from the US finds that the Democratic and the Republican voter base have become more homogeneous in respect to race and religious beliefs. Some scholars claim that social sorting has intensified partisan hostility, because the division between "Us" and "Them" is more clear cut than before (Klein, 2020; Mason, 2016). In line with social identity theory, members of a social group tend to compare themselves and compete with members of the out-group(s). This can be done by pursuing the goals of the in-group (instrumental conflict behavior) or by discriminating against and stigmatizing the out-group (non-instrumental conflict behavior) (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The subjective downgrading of political opponents is the essence of the term affective polarization.

Race and religion are two key identity markers that strongly overlap with partisanship in the US (Mason, 2018): The social fabric of North-European societies is different. First, they do not share the American history of trade with slaves from African countries. The ethnic

composition of Nordic countries has traditionally been quite homogeneous (Andreassen et al., 2014). Second, the Nordic populations are far more secular than the population of the US (Østhus, 2021). Christianity has therefore lost much of its political magnitude. Thus, it makes little sense to directly translate the racial, religious, and political context of the US to study affective polarization in a North-European multiparty system. Instead, it is crucial to detect the relevant social group identities that are assumed to be sorted along partisan lines in these countries.

The pioneering literature on the development of the cultural cleavage and modern party formation underline the importance of the expansion of mass universities, the restructuring of labor markets and urbanization (Hooghe & Marks, 2018; Kitschelt, 1994). Research on the socio-political fabric of contemporary European electorates, and the corresponding party systems, show that voters' social background indeed correlates with political preferences. The supporters of the new left and green parties are often highly educated white-collar workers who live in urban environments, while the supporters of populist radical right parties are over-represented by low-skilled service workers or industry workers and inhabitants of rural areas (Bornschier & Kriesi, 2013; Dolezal, 2010; Hooghe & Marks, 2018).

It is likely that the distinct social profiles of new left and green parties on one side, and populist radical right parties on the other, are subject to stigmatization from voters who belong to a different social group. As expanded upon by social identity researchers, group identities stem from a shared experience (Tajfel, 1970). Hence, it is likely that the voters' social background, which is an important determinant on both the physical and psychological proximity to other individuals, might spur excessive rates of hostility towards parties that represent a different social group.

H7: *The received dislike of NPPs can be explained by voters' social background, like education, class, and place of residence.*

Existing studies on affective polarization in multiparty systems confirm that ideology plays a significant role for the degree of affective polarization between political opponents (Harteveld, 2021; Kawecki, 2022; Reiljan & Ryan, 2021; Ryan, 2023b). Conversely, the effect of social group adherence on affective polarization in Europe, is highly unexplored in the existing literature. Studies from the US suggest that social sorting is one of the main reasons for the excessive hostility voters express towards political opponents (Mason, 2018). However, comparative studies from European multiparty systems find that ideological differences only

partially explain levels of affective polarization (Gidron et al., 2020; Reiljan, 2020). Furthermore, research on affective polarization towards populist radical right parties, show that these parties are far more disliked than their ideological position would suggest (Gidron et al., 2023; Harteveld et al., 2022). These findings indicate that affective polarization towards NPPs might be partly caused by the downgrading and stigmatization towards parties that represent social out-groups.

The next chapter elaborates on Norway as a relevant case of investigation, for the assessment of the hypothesis that are formulated in this chapter. The diversity of Norwegian NPPs makes it is a valuable object of investigation, and the results can be generalizable to a larger population of Northwestern European multiparty systems.

3 Case selection

3.1 The case of Norway

As pointed out in chapter 2, the existing literature on affective is highly centered around the case of the US. However, comparative analyses on affective polarization have made scholars call for further research from European multiparty systems. While partisan hostility among Americans have become strongly intensified, rising levels of affective polarization is a pressing issue also in Europe. Indeed, even some of the harmonious social democracies in the North, are not exempt (Ryan, 2023a).

Norway is the country of investigation in this analysis. The Norwegian political system is known as a consensus democracy that has high levels of both political and social trust. The economic left-right dimension has traditionally structured the voters into a socialist and a conservative bloc. It is common with minority governments that include several parties, and cross-bloc cooperation is therefore the norm rather than the exception (Lijphart, 2012). Hence, Norway is a least likely case for strong levels of antipathy between voters. However, even if researchers find low and relatively stable levels of affective polarization among Norwegian voters (Hesstvedt et al. 2023), is a relevant case of investigation. This is mainly because of its diverse party landscape, where several NPPs are relevant political players. By investigating the sympathy responses of the supporters of established parties towards the radical newcomers in Norway, generalizations can be made to a broader population of similar countries in Northwestern Europe.

3.2 Norwegian NPPs

NPPs are defined as *new parties that take a firm position in new politics issues.* In line with the party family affiliation scheme provided by Mair and Mudde (1997), that emphasizes historical origins and ideology, three Norwegian parties are categorized as NPPs. Arguably, Sosialistisk Venstreparti (SV, Left Socialist party) is a case of a new left party, Fremskrittspartiet (FrP, Progress Party, FrP) is a case of a populist radical right party and Miljøpartiet De Grønne (MDG, Green party) is a case of a green party.

It is important to note that the categorization of parties into either NPPs or non-NPP is not clear cut. Contemporary political parties often have features that are typical for both archetypes. Therefore, the category of non-NPPs not only include the so-called established parties but refer to all parliamentary parties that are not categorized as an NPP in the following sections.

3.2.1 Sosialistisk Venstreparti (SV)

SV was founded in 1975 and had strong ties to the former Sosialistisk Folkeparti (SF, Socialist People's Party). The party members were left-wing activists who were excluded from the social democratic party because of their radical stance in foreign policy issues. Hence, SF had its basis in the peace movement and advocated independence from both the US and the Soviet Union alike. SV deviated from the other radical left-wing parties, by rejecting any ties to authoritarian Communist Socialism (Jupskås, 2023).

Departing from an anti-imperialist and anti-war starting point in the 1960s, SV adopted an increasingly dogmatic form of socialism. Class struggle was the main impetus of the party's agenda. SV changed its political profile during the 1980s and 1990s from a radical left party to a typical new left party. Environmental politics became one of the greatest concerns of the party and its voters alike. SV abandoned dogmatic socialism on behalf of more pragmatic welfare issues, focusing on policies like free universal childcare and education. The progressive family policies had a feminist impetus, as the party wanted to reallocate much of the responsibility of child-rearing and caring from the mothers to the state. SV is still a party that is safely positioned on the left side in economic issues. However, the party's position on the new politics dimension is strongly on the GAL pole. The party is a self-proclaimed feminist party, who advocates the rights of LGBTQ+ people. Furthermore, SV promotes a liberal line in immigration issues and believes that Norway should strive for diversity in terms of ethnicity, religion, and culture. SV's green profile is still highly salient. As typical for new left parties, anti-capitalist attitudes are viewed through an environmental lens. SV advocates an ecologically sustainable economy, indicating that the party is willing to compromise economic growth on behalf of the environment (Jupskås, 2023).

Hence, SV is characterized as a NPP even if it takes a clear position on the economic dimension as well as the new politics dimension. First, this is because the party has its origins in the radical protest movements of the 1960s. Second, SV's ideological outlook is more similar to other GAL parties, than radical left parties that draw on either authoritarian communist or nationalist impulses (Jupskås, 2023).

3.2.2 Fremskrittspartiet (FrP)

FrP was founded in 1973 as a protest party that was initially named Anders Langes parti til sterk nedsettelse av skatter og avgifter og offentlige inngrep (Anders Lange's Party for Strong Reduction in Taxes, Fees and Public Intervention). The party combined radically liberal economic policies with populist rhetoric. In 1977 the party changed its name to Fremskrittspartiet, named after the Danish party that was a role model for Scandinavian populism at the time (Jungar & Jupskås, 2014).

FRP does not have its ideological roots in the new politics dimension. However, the party gained ownership of the immigration issue already in the 1980s. FrP capitalized greatly on the immigration issue by attracting voters who worried about the consequences of an increasingly heterogeneous population. FrP is still positioned clearly to the right in economic questions. However, the salience of economic issues has decreased significantly over time in parallel with a broadening of the party's commitment to welfare policies, especially focused on health and geriatric care (Jupskås, 2015). Strict immigration policies remain the most important issue for FrP and its supporters alike. The party's nativist position is also traceable in its "welfare chauvinist" approach to public spending. FrP advocates that the state should prioritize the needs of native inhabitants over immigrants (Jungar & Jupskås, 2014; Mudde, 2007). The authoritarianism of FrP is evident in the party's strong commitment to law and order, and high penalty policies (Jungar & Jupskås, 2014). In this respect, it should be noted that FrP does not champion conservative social norms, like anti-abortion attitudes or discrimination against LGBTQ+ people. There is broad consensus among researchers that FrP is a populist party (Jupskås et al., 2016; Mudde, 2007). Even if the party has softened its anti-establishment discourse and "charismatic party leader"-driven appeal (Jupskås, 2015), it is still committed to presenting itself as "the party for ordinary people" ("FrP – partiet for folk flest").

Due to FrP's origins as an economically liberal populist party, researchers often label the party as a borderline member of the populist radical right party family (Mudde, 2007). Some scholars have categorized FrP as a hybrid between a populist radical right party and a traditional conservative party (Jungar & Jupskås, 2014). However, the populist origins and immigration critical ideology of FrP makes the party suitable for inclusion in the NPP category.

3.2.3 Miljøpartiet De Grønne (MDG)

MDG was established in 1988 by environmental activists from the extra parliamentary organization Framtiden i våre hender (The Future in Our Hands). The leadership of MDG tried to advocate for environmental issues within the socialist democratic party without success, and the party's path to substantial power proved lengthy. The party gained its first parliamentary seat in the elections of 2013 (Heglum, 2015).

MDG was initially a pacifist, anti-authoritarian, and left leaning party with a radical ecological agenda. Hence, the party had an obvious GAL profile from the beginning. The evolution of MDG has been in the direction of the economic center. However, the economic agenda of the party has remained in the background of new politics issues, especially the question of climate and environmental challenges. Over the last two decades, MDG has gone from being a typical GAL-movement party, to adapting a more pragmatic approach to the political system. Still, this has not resulted in a broadening of the party's program. The contemporary MDG is often viewed as a green single-issue party (Jupskås, 2013).

MDG is the most obvious case of an NPP among the Norwegian parties. It was rooted in the new politics social movements as an eco-radical grassroot organization. Furthermore, the role of traditional politics has never been emphasized by the party (Heglum, 2015).

3.2.4 The demographic composition of the electorates of Norwegian NPPs

Finally, it should be mentioned that researchers find that the socio demographic composition of the voter base of SV, FrP and MDG is similar to that of other European GAL and TAN parties. The voters of SV and MDG are mainly highly educated, white-collar middle class employed in the public sector, who live in urban environments (Heglum, 2015; Jupskås 2023). FrP voters are less educated, blue-collar high-earning middle class employed in the private sector. Over time the voter base of FrP has gone from being mainly urban, to being overrepresented by rural inhabitants (Jupskås, 2015).

The next chapter will elaborate on the empirical strategy for the empirical assessment of the hypotheses regarding the Norwegian NPPs. This chapter includes the description of relevant data sources, the research design and operationalization of variables.

4 Empirical strategy

In this chapter, I elaborate on how I will conduct the empirical analysis. First, I describe the relevant data sources before moving to the elaboration on the research design. The research design is divided into two parts where the first explains how I will conduct the assessment of H1, H2(a,b), H3(a,b) and H4. This constitutes the description of the party-level analysis. The second part of the analysis is conducted on the individual level and will be described below. Finally, I elaborate on how I operationalize the variables, and display the descriptive statistics in tables. This section also includes a discussion on the measurement of the dependent variable, affective polarization.

4.1. Data sources

The Norwegian National Election Study (NNES) is the main data source of this assignment. The NNES has gathered information about the Norwegian electorate covering social background, area of residence, political attitudes and opinions, as well as questions about the respondents perceived issue saliency. Importantly, the NNES also includes the respondents' preferred party, as well as their attitudes towards parties. Hence, the NNES data cover all the variables that is needed to investigate the demand side hypotheses of this assignment. For the supply side hypotheses, where the aim is to investigate how electoral support, government inclusion and coalition arrangements affect NPP dislike on the party level, the relevant data is gathered from Polls for polls and the Norwegian Governments' website (Pollofpolls, 2023; Regjeringen, 2023).

The NNES data is conducted through comprehensive post-parliamentary election surveys since 1957. The sample size of the NNES rounds that is used in this assignment, ranges from 1596 to 2341. The response rate varies between 55 to 73 percent, which is high compared to most surveys. Hence, these are high quality data that is representative for the population of Norwegian eligible voters. Prior to the 1990s, all interviews were done face to face. Over time, the share of phone-interviews, and eventually web-questionnaires, rose. In 2021, the data gathering method is usually based on web-questionnaires (Bergh & Haugsgjerd, 2023).

The questions included in the NNES vary over the years. Therefore, the analyses will only be conducted for the years when all the relevant variables are available. In the first part – the party level analysis – the NNES is used for the survey rounds between 1981 to 2021. The

second part – the multivariate individual-level analysis – use variables that are first included in 1989. The data is restricted correspondingly.

4.2 Research design

4.2.1 Party level analysis

In the party level analysis, the dependent variable is the proportion of the supporters of out-parties who dislike each party. The main purpose of the investigations is to study the distinctiveness of affective polarization towards NPPs, compared to other parties. I will investigate H1 by detecting if NPPs are disliked more than other parties. In line with H2(a,b), H3(a,b) and H4, I will investigate possible explanations for the proportion of dislike towards NPPs on the party level, using the non-NPPs as a benchmark.

Before conducting the analysis, I make nine new datasets where the respondents who support each of the parties are filtered out. This way I can calculate the share of voters who dislike each party, excluding the in-party supporters. Even if none of the respondents dislike their preferred party, this recoding procedure is important. This is because the respondents in the dataset are not equally distributed between the parties. The share of respondents who dislike the bigger parties, would be artificially low if I used the full sample. The number of respondents who support each party in each year, is displayed in table 4.1.

Throughout this assignment, the parties will consequently be referred to using the following abbreviations: Rød Valgallianse (RV, Red Alliance) and Rødt (R, Red) are codes as the same party in the NNES. Sosialistisk Venstreparti (SV, Left Socialist Party), Arbeiderpartiet (Ap, Labor Party), Senterpartiet (Sp, Agrarian Centre Party), Miljøpartiet De Grønne (MDG, Green Party), Kristelig Folkeparti (KrF, Christian Peoples Party), Venstre (V, Liberal Party), Høyre (H, Conservative Party), Fremskrittspartiet (FrP, Progress Party).

	1981	1985	1989	1993	1997	2001	2005	2009	2013	2017	2021	Sum
Party												
RV/R	7	10	18	18	28	21	19	20	19	55	82	297
SV	63	106	223	135	118	236	174	120	67	122	134	1498
Ap	506	704	616	683	612	357	568	504	422	383	298	5653
Sp	95	129	111	316	134	93	129	97	80	170	175	1529
MDG	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	41	51	46	138
KrF	116	180	163	126	265	215	91	67	89	70	50	1432
V	59	68	78	62	84	70	98	66	106	91	65	847
H	425	561	404	278	268	428	272	291	390	418	235	3970
FrP	59	66	206	82	192	170	310	280	169	190	106	1830
Other	19	16	18	38	16	35	19	7	16	23	32	239
No vote	202	262	239	389	300	376	290	264	246	248	256	3072
NA	45	78	119	67	38	340	42	66	82	145	361	1383
Sum	1596	2180	2195	2194	2055	2341	2012	1782	1727	1966	1840	21888

Table 4.1: *Sample (N) of voters by party preference, 1981-2021.*

I calculate the received dislike of the party category of NPPs by finding the mean proportion of out-party respondents who dislike SV, MDG and FrP, aggregating the survey rounds from 1981 to 2021. For comparison, I repeat the procedure with the party category of non-NPPs. Because I am curious to see how the dislike towards NPPs has changed over time compared to other parties, I group the respondents by year. The mean proportion of respondents who dislike SV, MDG and FrP, in each year is calculated and compared with the mean proportion of dislike towards the non-NPPs in each year.

For the investigation of the legitimization or threat hypotheses – H2a, H2b, H3a, and H3b – as well as the coalition hypothesis – H4 – I narrow the focus of the investigation from party categories to individual parties. These investigations are conducted by grouping respondents based on their party preferences and the year of the survey. Hence, the units of analysis are party-years.

In H2a and H3a, the objective is to investigate whether there is a correlation between the change in the size of the voter base for NPPs, and the proportion of voters who dislike these parties. If the proportion of dislike is lower for the party-year observations where the NPPs enjoy electoral success, this would support the legitimation hypothesis. If the proportion of

dislike is higher among more successful NPP observations, this would indicate that the threat hypothesis is more accurate. The study also seeks to discern whether the relationship between electoral support and received dislike differs between NPPs and non-NPPs. Furthermore, the investigation delves into whether the potential effect of electoral success impacts different NPPs in varying ways. Hence, this analysis provides insights into the complex interplay between electoral success, party dislike, and the nuances associated with different NPPs.

H2b and H3b aims at examining how the inclusion of NPPs in government leads to lower proportions of dislike towards these parties, or if political opponents dislike NPPs more when these obtain governmental power. The first scenario would give support to the legitimation hypothesis, while the second scenario would imply that powerful NPPs are viewed as a threat. Furthermore, I aim at detecting if the government inclusion of NPPs have a polarizing effect on NPP dislike among the voters of different parties. H4 proposes that, as NPPs enter government, the proportion of dislike towards them will decrease among the supporters of the coalition parties. This implies that supporters of coalition parties might become more accepting of NPPs, compared to the supporters of the opposition. Hence, the government attendance of NPPs might split the political blocs regarding attitudes towards these parties.

The investigation of H2a and H3a is carried out by exploring the bivariate relationship between electoral support and party dislike in a graphic illustration. The results are displayed in two plots, one for NPPs and one for non-NPPs. H2b, H3b and H4 is investigated looking at dislike towards SV and Frp in each election year between 1981 to 2021. For SV, the supporters of Ap and Sp are aggregated on individual parties while the other voters are grouped as non-coalition partners. For FrP, the supporters of H, V and KrF are divided from the supporters of non-coalition partners. MDG is not included in this part of the party level analysis, because they lack government experience. For matters of comparison, I extend the investigation to include Ap and H. These parties represent the clearest examples of established parties and serve as useful points of reference. Again, the voters are divided into groups based on the coalition status of their preferred party vis-à-vis Ap and H.

4.2.2 Individual level analysis

I conduct the individual level analysis by running several multiple regression models, where the dependent variable is whether the respondent dislikes an NPP or not. The aim of the study

is to explore to what degree and how affective polarization towards NPPs correlate with demand side factors. In addition, the regression analysis will include Ap and H as the two clearest examples of established parties. This way, the correlations between demand side factors and voters' affective polarization towards SV, FrP and MDG, can be compared to the similar relationships in relation to Ap and H.

As will be expanded upon in the subsequent section, affective polarization on the individual level is measured as a dichotomous dislike variable. I therefore find it appropriate to use logistic regression modelling. When the dependent variable is binary, the probability of the outcome gradually approaches either 0 (the respondent does not dislike) or 1 (the respondent dislikes). This corresponds to an S-shaped relationship between the explanatory variables and the probability for the respondent to dislike the NPP. Contrary to OLS regression that describes linear correlations, logistic regressions are fit to describe non-linear correlations (Best & Wolf, 2014).

Because the model estimates from the logistic regressions are presented as log odds, they are not interpretable at face value. It is therefore necessary to either calculate the predicted probabilities of observing that a voter dislikes a party from the log odds estimates, or graphically display the change in predicted probabilities in a plot. For the independent variables that are dichotomous, I calculate the predicted probabilities of observing party dislike when the value on the dummy variables changes from 0 to1. The calculated predicted probabilities are displayed in a separate table. For the independent variables that are continuous however, I use graphic illustrations to display the predicted probabilities of observing party dislike over different values on the continuous variable. This is because the probability of observing that the respondent dislikes the party, changes constantly depending on the value on the independent variable (Long & Freese, 2014).

I will first investigate H5 by looking at the relationships between the voter's ideological position and the predicted probability of disliking a party. Second, party dislike is regressed on the voters perceived salience of new politics issues. This constitutes the investigation of H6. Third, I explore H7 in a regression analysis with social factors that denote education, class, and urbanity, and the dependent variable of party dislike. Finally, I conduct an analysis using a full regression model that includes all the political and social factors, as well as demographic control variables.

4.2.3 Do NPPs drive affective polarization?

Before I embark on the operationalization of the variables that are used in this analysis, it is important to underline that the results that will be presented in chapter 5 must be interpreted with caution. This is because the data and the research design outlined above is not suited for drawing causal conclusions. However, the hypotheses of this thesis do have explanatory suggestions for how the correlation between supply and demand side factors and affective polarization towards NPPs, should be interpreted. It is therefore crucial to keep in mind that the assumed causal relationships of this analysis are based in theory.

The empirical findings cannot confirm that there is a causal relationship between the independent variables and affective polarization. First, one should not neglect the uncertainty associated with the direction of causality. Second, it is not possible to rule out spurious effects that might be caused by omitted variables. If one aims at obtaining empirical knowledge that has causal ambitions, it would be safer to use panel data where the same respondents are asked in every survey round (Dahlum & Knutsen, 2017).

In summary, this thesis implicitly suggests that NPPs are the drivers of affective polarization, and that supply and demand side factors have an impact on the hostility towards NPPs. Because of the limitations in the data and research design, it is not possible to draw causal conclusions. The research questions are therefore formulated in descriptive terms. It will be a challenge for future research to investigate if the correlations discovered in this analysis indeed have explanatory features.

4.3 Operationalizations

4.3.1 Dependent variable: Party dislike

In this assignment, the dependent variable is party dislike. I operationalize this measure as a dichotomous variable that separates the voters who strongly dislike a party, from those who do not. However, scholars of the affective polarization literature do not agree on a commonly accepted measure for the phenomenon. A multitude of different approaches are currently used to capture the degree of hostility that has its foundation in political group divisions (Druckman & Levendusky, 2019). The operationalization of affective polarization as a dichotomous dislike variable has not been used in the literature so far. Therefore, I do not only explain the

operationalization of my dependent variable, but also argue for why this approach provides a more accurate description of the concept of affective polarization, compared to other measures.

What is common for all research on affective polarization is the use of surveys for capturing the degree to which opposing partisans view each other as intolerable members of a competing out-group. Some survey questions regard the respondents view of political opponents' personal traits (Iyengar et al., 2012), other ask whether respondents would be comfortable with having a partisan from an opposing party in a close by relationship (M. Levendusky & Malhotra, 2016). Questions that directly tap into the degree of interpartisan trust, is also a used measure (Levendusky, 2013). Still, the main workhorse for assessing levels of affective polarization is the feeling thermometer that asks the respondents who identify with a party, to rate their emotions towards their in-party and out-party(ies) on a scale from cold to warm. In the American two-party system, affective polarization is calculated as the difference between in-party and out-party feeling. This measure is twofold. The degree of in-party sympathy is one aspect of affective polarization, while the degree of out-party animosity denotes the other. Research shows that all the measures mentioned above, are highly correlated (Druckman & Levendusky, 2019). In countries with more than two parties, the calculation of an individual's degree of affective polarization is naturally more complicated (Wagner, 2021). Because this assignment aims at measuring the affective polarization towards NPPs, and *not* as an individual-level endowment, these methods will not be further elaborated on.

Because the theoretical expectations are suitable for understanding out-party dislike, the element of in-party liking is excluded. This is because in-party liking tends to be relatively stable over time, while the level of out-party dislike is the deciding factor for the total level of affective polarization (Iyengar et al., 2012; Kekkonen & Ylä-Anttila, 2021; Ryan, 2023a).

The scholars of the affective polarization literature inconsistently refer to partisan and party hostility. Indeed, the original term affective polarization describes loathing across *partisan* lines, and to what degree they view the *supporters* of other parties as members of an antagonistic out-group. However, most datasets (including the NNES) only measure the respondents' evaluations of parties, thus making it difficult to directly investigate interpartisan relationships. However, as pointed out by Druckman and Levendusky (2019), partisan and party evaluations correlate to a great extent. However, other scholars have found that the sympathy scores given to parties and their respective supporters differ substantially (Harteveld,

2021; Knudsen, 2021). This is an ongoing discussion in the field. The challenge of operationalizing affective polarization will be discussed in the concluding chapter.

In this thesis, the operationalization of party dislike is based on sympathy scores towards parties that range from cold – 0, to warm – 100. Sympathy scores are a commonly used measure for affective polarization but, as pointed out by Van der Eijk and his colleagues (2006), it captures the likelihood of supporting a party rather than the intense loathing towards political opponents. Arguably, the sympathy scores include substantial amounts of irrelevant variation when measuring affective polarization. Hence, it is more accurate to construct a variable that excludes the irrelevant midlevel values and focus on the voters who truly dislike a party. I therefore modify the sympathy scores by categorizing the respondents who evaluate a party equal or under 20 as 1 (dislike) and the respondents who evaluate a party over 20 as 0 (does not dislike). After looking at the data, I choose to set the cutoff at 20. This way I ensure a big enough sample of respondents in both the "dislike" and the "does not dislike" category, while still excluding a substantial part of the sample from the "dislike" category. The number of respondents who get the dislike score of 1 and 0 are viewed in appendix A.

There are five dependent variables that denote dichotomous dislike scores towards SV, MDG, FrP, Ap and H. Table 4.2 displays the descriptive statistics of the dependent variables that are used in the analysis. The first column denotes the lowest values, the second denotes the highest values, and the third denotes the mean values. Standard errors are presented in the fourth column, missing in the fifth and the full sample of respondents between 1989 and 2021, missing excluded, are included in the sixth column.

	Min.	Max.	Mean	SE	Missing	N
Dislike SV	0	1	0.23	0.003	439	15084
Dislike MDG	0	1	0.36	0.004	12107	4607
Dislike FrP	0	1	0.45	0.004	318	14829
Dislike Ap	0	1	0.09	0.003	281	12128
Dislike H	0	1	0.15	0.003	347	13521

Table 4.2: *Descriptive statistics for the dependent variables: political factors, social factors and demographic control variables, 1989-2021.*

For matters of comparison, the analysis will also be conducted with continuous sympathy scores and viewed in appendix B. I recode the scales so that 0 denotes the warmest evaluations and 100 denotes the coldest. This is done to secure the robustness of the results.

4.3.2 Explanatory variables

The assumed divers of affective polarization include electoral support, government participation and coalition arrangements on the supply side. On the demand side, ideological position, issue saliency and social background factors are listed as possible explanations for the voters' level of out-party dislike. This section will expand on the operationalization of the variables, including descriptive tables.

Supply side factors: Electoral support

Electoral support for a party is simply measured as the percentage of the total electoral turnout. Table 4.3 lists the electoral turnout for the parties in all the election years when their received sympathy is included in the NNES.

	1981	1985	1989	1993	1997	2001	2005	2009	2013	2017	2021
RV/R					1.7	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.1	2.4	4.7
SV	5	5.5	10.1	7.9	6	12.5	8.8	6.2	4.1	6	7.6
Ap	37.1	40.8	34.3	37	35	24.3	32.7	35.4	30.8	27.4	26.3
Sp	4.2	6.6	6.5	16.8	7.9	5.6	6.5	6.2	5.5	10.3	13.5
MDG									2.8	3.2	3.9
KrF	8.9	8.3	8.5	7.9	13.7	12.4	6.8	5.5	5.6	4.2	3.8
V	3.2	3.1	3.2	3.6	4.5	3.9	5.9	3.9	5.2	4.4	4.6
H	31.8	30.4	22.2	17.1	14.3	21.2	14.1	17.2	26.8	25	20.4
FrP	4.5	3.7	13	6.3	15.3	14.6	22.1	22.9	16.3	15.2	11.6

Table 4.3: *Electoral support as percentage of the total votes for each party, 1981-2021.*

Supply side factors: Government inclusion and coalition arrangements

Government inclusion and coalition arrangements is a simple "yes"/"no" category and is only relevant for four of the parties. SV and FrP are the two NPPs who have enjoyed the

governmental mandate so far. Two parties on the mainstream left and mainstream right are included in the analysis for matters of comparison. SV attended government together with Ap and Sp in 2005 and sat two full election periods leading up to the election in 2013. In 2013, FrP entered government together with H. The right parties were reelected in the fall of 2017. In January 2018, the liberal party V entered the coalition and in January 2019, the Christian conservative KrF joined in. FrP stepped into opposition in January 2020, after seven and a half years in government. Ap was in government through most of the 1970s but lost the mandate 1981. In 1986, they regained power and were in government until 1997, with only a short break between 1989 and 1990. Ap held the power for a short period between 2000 and 2001, and again for a longer period between 2005 and 2013, this time together with SV and Sp. H entered government in 1981 together with KrF and Sp, before losing the mandate to Ap in 1986. The same three parties were in government for a year from the fall of 1989. Between 2001 and 2005, was in a government coalition with KrF and V. Over the last eight years covered in the NNES, H ruled together with FrP for five and a half years between 2013 and 2018, before the coalition increased to four parties over the subsequent two years, and then to only include H, V and KrF until the election in 2021.

Political explanation factors: ideology and saliency

Ideological position has been included as a variable in the NNES since the election survey of 1989. The ideology indexes measure the respondents' attitudes in six different policy areas. The construction of the indexes is based on factor analyses that groups together survey questions about the respondents' attitudes towards political issues, that are highly correlated. The questions used to construct the ideology indexes vary to some extent between survey rounds but measure the same attitudes and are comparable over time (Hesstvedt et al., 2023). In this assignment, I use the non-solidarity/solidarity index and the growth/protection index. Solidarity questions taps into issues concerning immigration and nationalism. Growth/protection questions are concerned with the tradeoff between industrial development and environmental protection. Hence, the non-solidarity/solidarity index and the growth/protection index indicate the respondents' positions on new political issues that have been prominent on the political agenda since 1989. Respondents' placements on the new politics indexes range from 0 (indicating non-solidarity and growth) to 20 (indicating solidarity and protection). To make the analysis easily interpretable, the new politics indexes will constantly be referred to as the *immigration index* and the *climate and environment index*.

The question of issue salience has been included in the NNES since 1981. This variable is measured by asking the respondents about their most important issue. The issue salience variable contains 66 possible answers and is therefore recoded into two dummy variables. Respondents who answer "immigration" get the value 1 and the rest of the respondents get the value 0 on the new *immigration salience* variable. Respondents who answer "climate and environmental protection" get the value 1 and the remaining respondents get the value 0 on the *climate and environment salience* variable. These two variables denote the respondents' emphasis on new politics issues.

<u>Social explanation factors: education, class, and place of residence</u>

I hypothesized that education, class, and place of residence are social background factors that constitute categories of social group identities that are likely to overlap with party affiliations. The education variable is recoded into a dummy variable that is 1 for those with a university degree (universitet/høyskole). The reference category for the university dummy variable is lower education (grunnskole og videregående skole).

The class variable that is used in this assignment builds on the most widely used class scheme in sociology and political science, known as the EGP scheme. It categorizes individuals into classes based on the type of employment contract that governs their work relationship. Unlike previous categorizations that primarily divided laborers and capital owners, the EGP scheme includes various segments within the salaried middle class (Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1992). In the NNES, the class variable is a simplified version of the EPG scheme, primarily dividing respondents into four class categories: working class, lower middle class, upper middle class, and self-employed. The class variable is recoded into three dummy variables where 1 denotes belonging to 1) the working class, 2) upper middle class and 3) the self-employed. The members of the lower middle class, the largest category, get the value 0 and serve as the reference category.

As for the variable related to the place of residence, a dichotomous variable is used, where 0 represents rural areas and 1 represents urban areas. While the NNES contains several variables related to the place of residence, this analysis primarily focuses on exploring the connection between the urban/rural divide and out-party dislike.

<u>Control variables: gender and age</u>

The two control variables that are included in the analysis are gender and age. Gender is coded so that the value 1 denotes women, while 0 denotes men. The age variable refers to the respondents age measured in years.

Table 4.4 presents the descriptive statistics for the independent variables that are used in the analysis.

	Min.	Max.	Mean	SE	Missing	N
Immigration index	0	20	8.95	0.035	614	17498
Climate and environment index	0	20	10.55	0.032	610	17502
Immigration salience (ref: other issue)	0	1	0.041	0.001	2664	15448
Climate and environment salience (ref: other issue)	0	1	0.07	0.002	2664	15448
University degree (ref: lower education)	0	1	0.33	0.003	610	17502
Working class (ref: lower middle class)	0	1	0.23	0.003	3120	14992
Upper middle class (ref: lower middle class)	0	1	0.27	0.003	3120	14992
Self-employed (ref: lower middle class)	0	1	0.08	0.002	3120	14992
Urban inhabitant (ref: rural inhabitant)	0	1	0.79	0.003	229	17883
Female (ref: male)	0	1	0.48	0.004	0	18112
Age	0	79	45.56	0.123	0	18112

Table 4.4: *Descriptive statistics for the independent variables: political factors, social factors and demographic control variables, 1989-2021.*

The next chapter presents the results from the empirical analyses. First the analyses on the party level will be explored with the aim of assessing the levels of affective polarization towards NPPs, as well as correlations between party dislike, political relevance and coalition arrangements. Second, the individual level regression analysis will be conducted by investigating the potential relationships between affective polarization and political and social background factors.

5 Results

In this chapter I will display the results from the investigations of the three subordinate research questions. The seven hypothesis outlined in chapter 2 are deduced from the research questions and provides expectations that are researchable in the context of this theses. Research question 1: *Are new politics parties more affectively polarized than other parties in Norway?* and research question 2: *Does affective polarization towards new politics parties correlate with supply side factors?* are investigated in chapter 5.1 on party level analyses. Chapter 5.2 includes the individual level analyses that investigate research question 3: *Does affective polarization towards new politics parties correlate with demand side factors?*.

The first four hypotheses, H1: *NPPs are more disliked than other parties*, H2: *The dislike of NPPs will decrease as* a) *the support for the party grows* b) *the party enters government*, H3: *The dislike of NPPs will increase as* a) *the support for the party grows* b) *the party enters government*, and H4: *The dislike of NPPs will decrease among the supporters of the coalition partners of the NPP*, regards affective polarization on the party level. The dependent variable is the proportion of out-party voters who dislike a party, and denotes levels of affective polarization towards parties from groups of voters.

The second set of hypotheses, H5: *The dislike of NPPs can be explained by voters' ideological position in new politics issues*, H6: *The dislike of NPPs can be explained by weather voters perceive new politics issues as important*, and H7: *The dislike of NPPs can be explained by voters' social background, like education, class, and place of residence*, explores affective polarization on the individual level. In the individual level analyses, the dependent variable is dichotomous. 1 denotes that the voters dislike a party, and 0 denotes that the voter does not dislike a party. Hence, the logistic regression estimates denote the predicted probability of observing that an out-party voter is affectively polarized towards a party.

5.1 Party level analysis

5.1.1 H1: NPPs are more disliked than other parties

H1 regards the levels of affective polarization towards NPPs, compared to other parties. The expectation is that a larger proportion of voters dislike NPPs, than the proportion who dislike non-NPPs. The first findings from the analysis indicate that affective polarization towards NPPs between 1981 and 2021, greatly surpasses other parties. For every third person who dislikes an NPP, only two have the same negative sentiments towards a non-NPP. The results are illustrated in Figure 5.1 and provide support for the expectations outlined in H1. However, the initial picture, the widespread animosity towards NPPs, calls for further investigation of the nuances of affective polarization towards these parties, compared to non-NPPs.
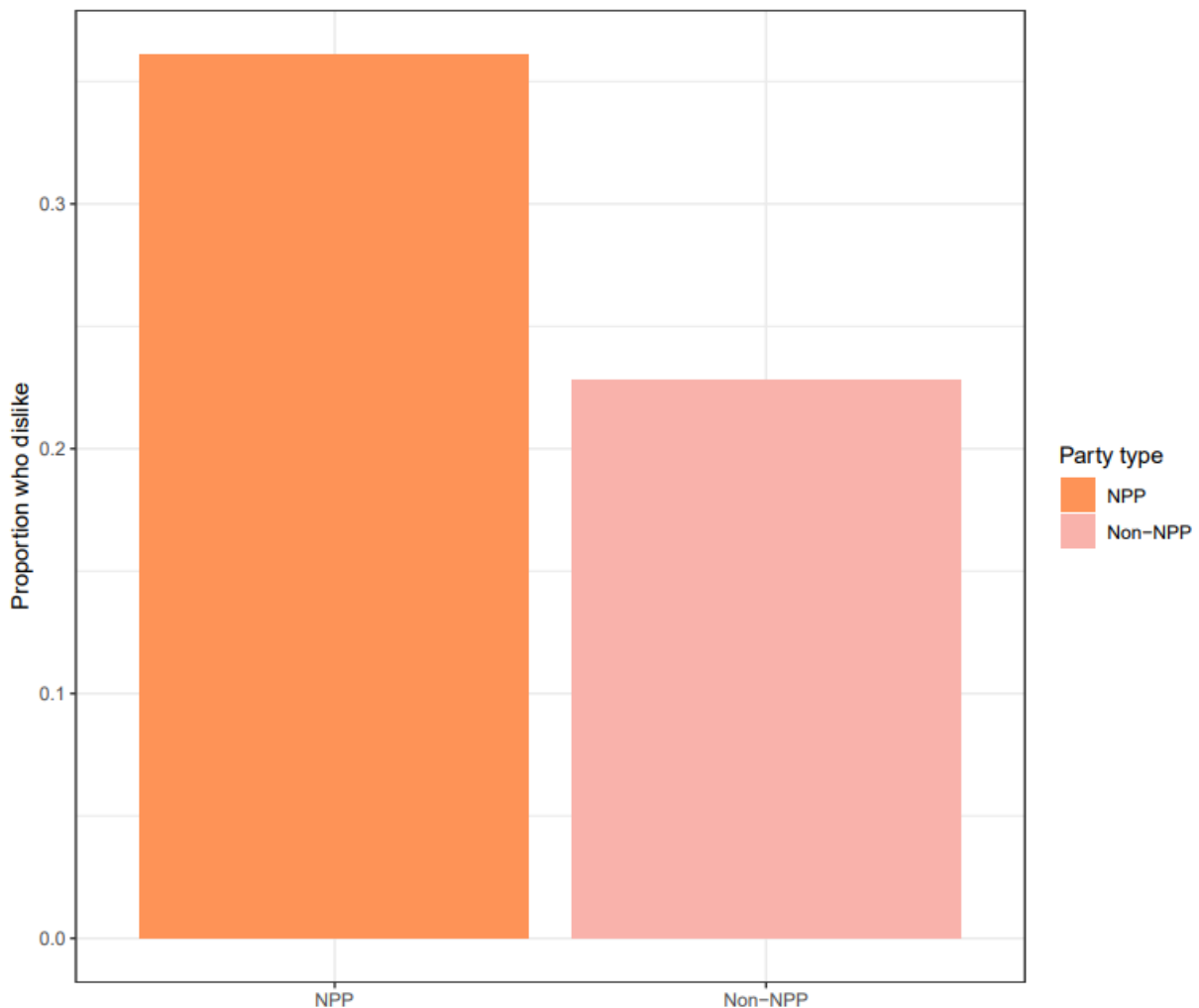
Figure 5.1: *Average affective polarization towards NPPs and non-NPPs.*

Figure 5.2 displays the affective polarization towards NPP and non-NPPs, between 1981 and 2021. The figure illustrates that there is significant variation in hostility towards both party categories over the period investigated in this thesis. The proportions of voters who dislike NPPs and non-NPPs over the years, as well as the differences between the dislike scores, are presented in Table 5.1.
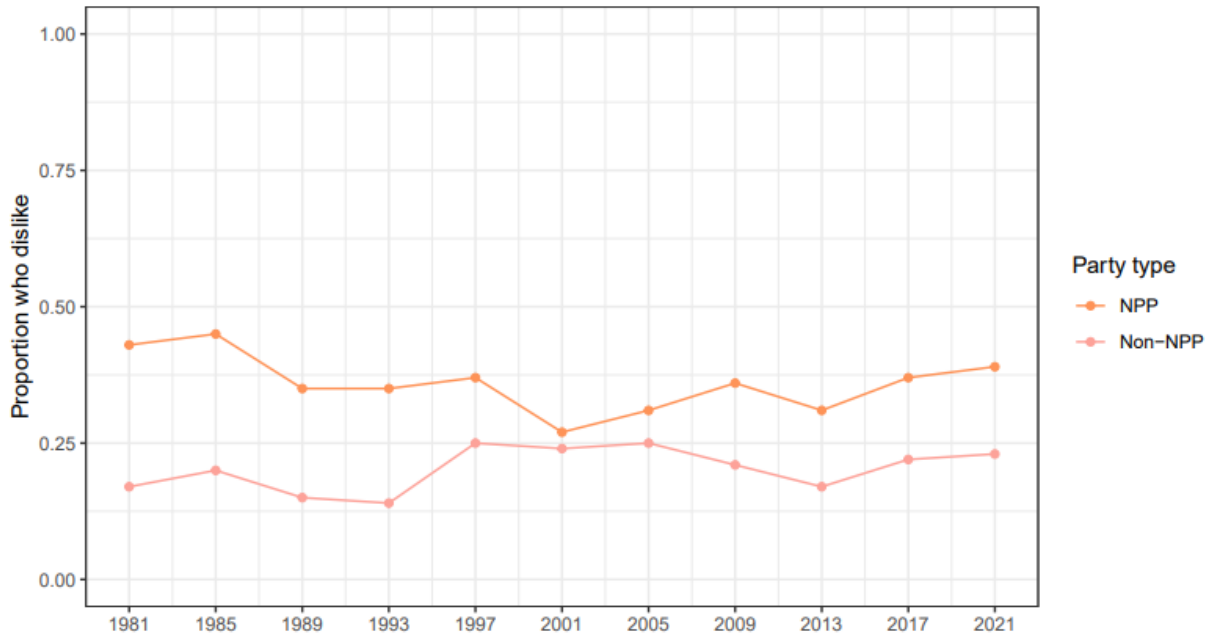
Figure 5.2: *Affective polarization towards NPPs and non-NPPs, 1981-2021.*

	1981	1985	1989	1993	1997	2001	2005	2009	2013	2017	2021
NPP	0.43	0.45	0.35	0.35	0.37	0.27	0.31	0.36	0.31	0.37	0.39
Non-NPP	0.17	0.2	0.15	0.14	0.25	0.24	0.25	0.21	0.17	0.22	0.23
Difference	0.26	0.25	0.2	0.21	0.12	0.03	0.06	0.15	0.14	0.15	0.16

Table 5.1: *Affective polarization towards NPPs and non-NPPs, and the difference between them, 1981-2021.*

The trajectory of affective polarization towards NPPs, reveals that this is not on the rise among the Norwegian population. Even if the dislike level of NPPs is higher in 2021 than in the beginning of the 2000s, the long-time overview shows that contemporary NPPs are less affectively polarized than they were 40 years ago. Contrary to what one might expect based on the previous research from multiparty contexts, the levels of affective polarization towards non-NPPs are increasing, parallel to the growing accept for NPPs.

In the early 1980s, the respondents reported the largest gap in affective polarization between the party categories. However, between 1985 to 2001, the percentage of voters

expressing dislike for NPPs decreased by 18 percentage points, coupled by a strong increase in non-NPP dislike between 1993 and 1997. In the beginning of the 2000s, the gap in affective polarization had declined from 26 percentage points in 1981, to only 3 percentage points. Over the last 20 years, affective polarization towards non-NPPs has declined slightly, while hostility towards NPPs is higher than millennial levels. Hence, the affective gap between NPPs and non-NPPs has grown wider in recent years, while still being far from approaching the level of difference in affective polarization observed in the 1980s and early 1990s.

The fluctuations in the levels of affective polarization for the party categories over the years, are enigmatic. With the aim of obtaining a more thorough understanding of the affective landscape of the Norwegian population, the party categories are disaggregated to individual parties. Figure 5.3 and 5.4 display the trajectory of affective polarization towards individual NPPs and non-NPPs between 1981 and 2021. When disaggregating the party categories, it becomes evident that the synchronized fluctuations observed in the 1980s and in the 2010, do not represent general trends that affects all the parties similarly. Rather, the affective polarization of the party categories displayed in figure 5.2 hides uneven and party specific fluctuations. Furthermore, the NNES did not include evaluations of RV before 1997 and MDG before 2013. It is evident that the inclusion of these small and radical parties indeed manipulates the general picture displayed in figure 5.2.
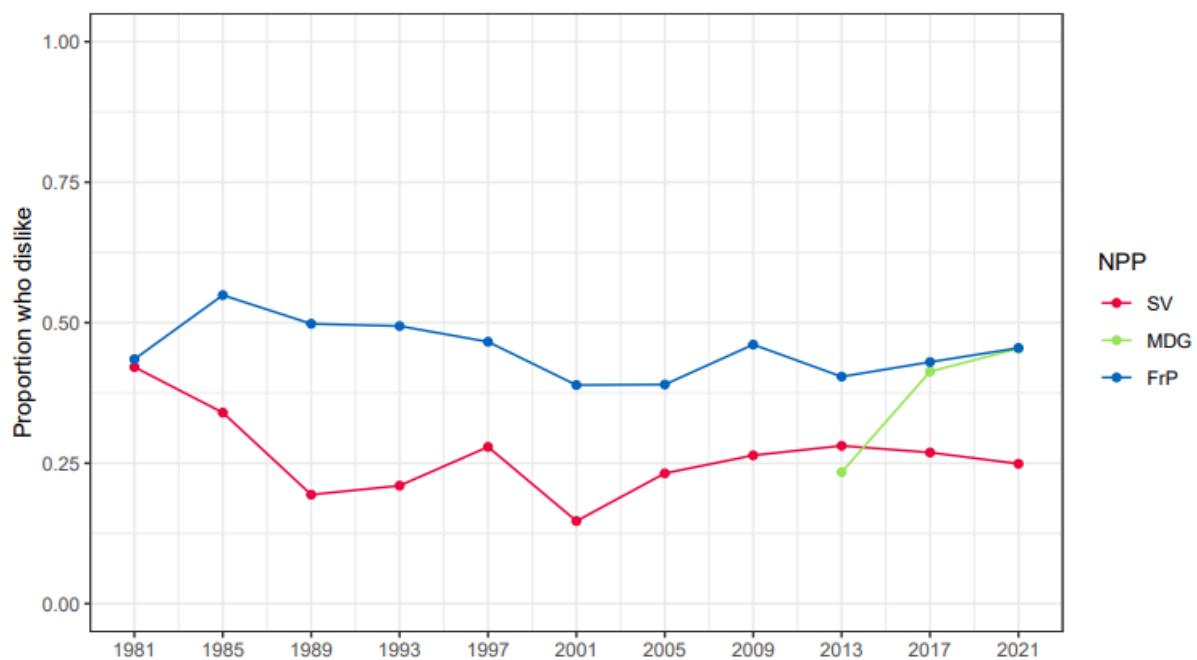
Figure 5.3: *Affective polarization towards SV, MDG and FrP, 1981-2021.*
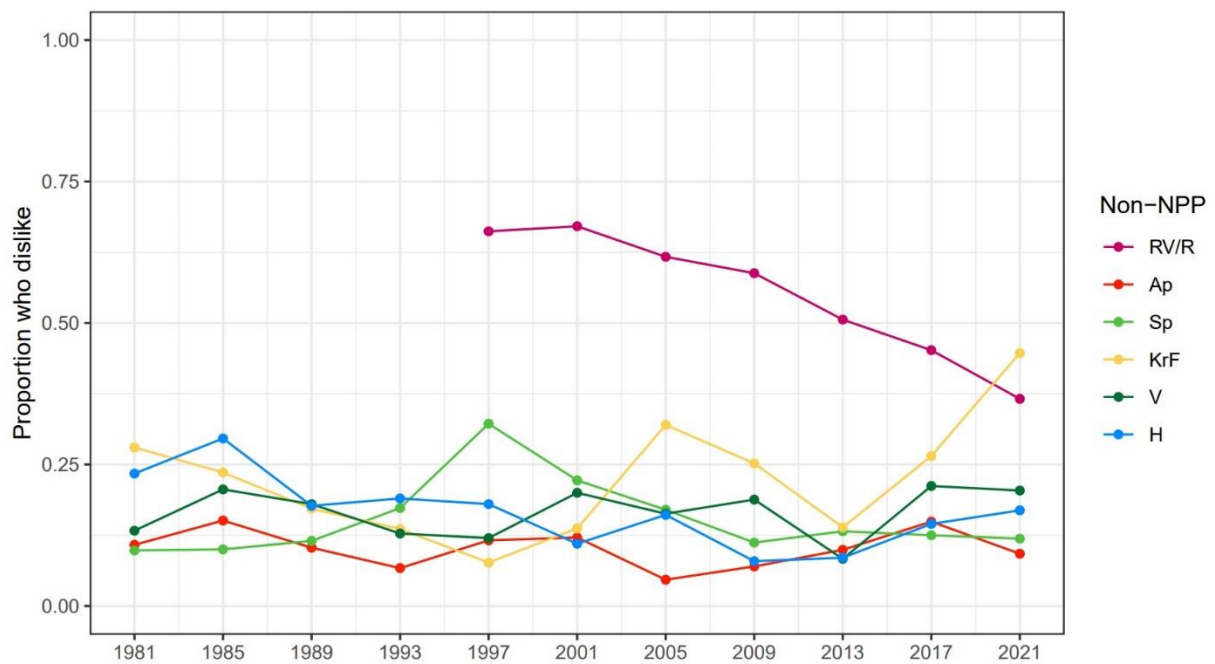
Figure 5.4: *Affective polarization towards RV/R, Ap, Sp, KrF, V and H, 1981-2021.*

One of the striking features of figure 5.3 and 5.4 is the divergence in received affective polarization within each party category. In fact, the difference between parties within each figure, is greater than the difference between affective polarization towards NPPs compared to non-NPPs.

SV and FrP had the same starting point in 1981 at around 43%, but radically different trajectories over the subsequent years. The affective polarization towards SV declined sharply already in the 1980s. In 2001, SV was disliked by less than 15% of the voters, which was lower than several non-NPPs at the time. FrP is evidently much more affectively polarized throughout the period. The party was disliked by around 50% of the voters before the turn of the millennium. The affective polarization towards FrP was at its lowest in the early 2000s but has increased over the last 20 years. While levels of affective polarization towards SV remains stable, hovering slightly over the normal level of affective polarization towards non-NPPs, FrP has not gained acceptance among broad parts of the population. The three last years of the investigations include MDG. The party has a somewhat surprising trajectory. Over the last decade, MDG has gone from being the least affectively polarized NPP, to match the dislike scores of FrP. The trajectory of affective polarization towards MDG, with almost a doubling in received dislike in eight years, deviates from the trajectory of both SV and FrP in the early 1980s.

Like in the case of NPPs, the affective polarization towards different non-NPPs is also subject to uneven fluctuation over the years. Furthermore, the dislike expressed towards non-NPPs is not unitary. The most prominent example of deviating single parties within a party category is RV. Since the inclusion of RV in the NNES, the party has been prone to affective polarization that greatly exceeds even the highest levels for FrP. However, the declining trend of affective polarization towards RV, later R, is unprecedented among Norwegian parties. In 2021, only 36% of the voters reported that they dislike R, compared to 66% in 1997. A second non-NPP that should be mentioned is KrF. The party has had the most turbulent position in the affective landscape of the Norwegian party system since the early 2000s. This is unexpected, given the low and steady levels of affective polarization before the turn of the millennium. KrF was among the most affectively polarized parties in 2021, when it was disliked by 44% of the voters.

In summary, the findings from the initial analysis support H1. However, the levels of affective polarization for both NPPs and non-NPPs deviate to a great extent between individual parties within each category. In the subsequent sections I investigate individual parties with the aim of exploring the correlations between supply and demand side factors and levels of affective polarization that is observed so far.

5.1.2 H2a and H3a: Electoral support

H2a and H3a constitutes the first part of the competing hypotheses of legitimation or threat in relation to the increased political relevance of NPPs. H2a assume that *the received dislike by NPPs will decline as the support for the party grows*. H3a assume that *the received dislike by NPPs will increase as the support for the party grows*. If H2a is supported, this is a step towards the validation of the legitimation hypothesis. On the contrary, if H3a is supported this indicates that politically relevant NPPs are viewed as threat among political opponents.

The results from the analysis of H2a and H3a provides substantial, albeit ambiguous, support for the legitimation hypothesis. For SV and FrP, a negative relationship between electoral support and levels of affective polarization is observed. Conversely, the affective polarization towards MDG increases substantially over time, despite the increase in the party's electoral support since 2013. Figure 5.5 displays the correlations between SV, FrP and MDG in each election year since 1981, and the respective levels of affective polarization. A weighted trendline is added for each party to ease the interpretation of the figure.
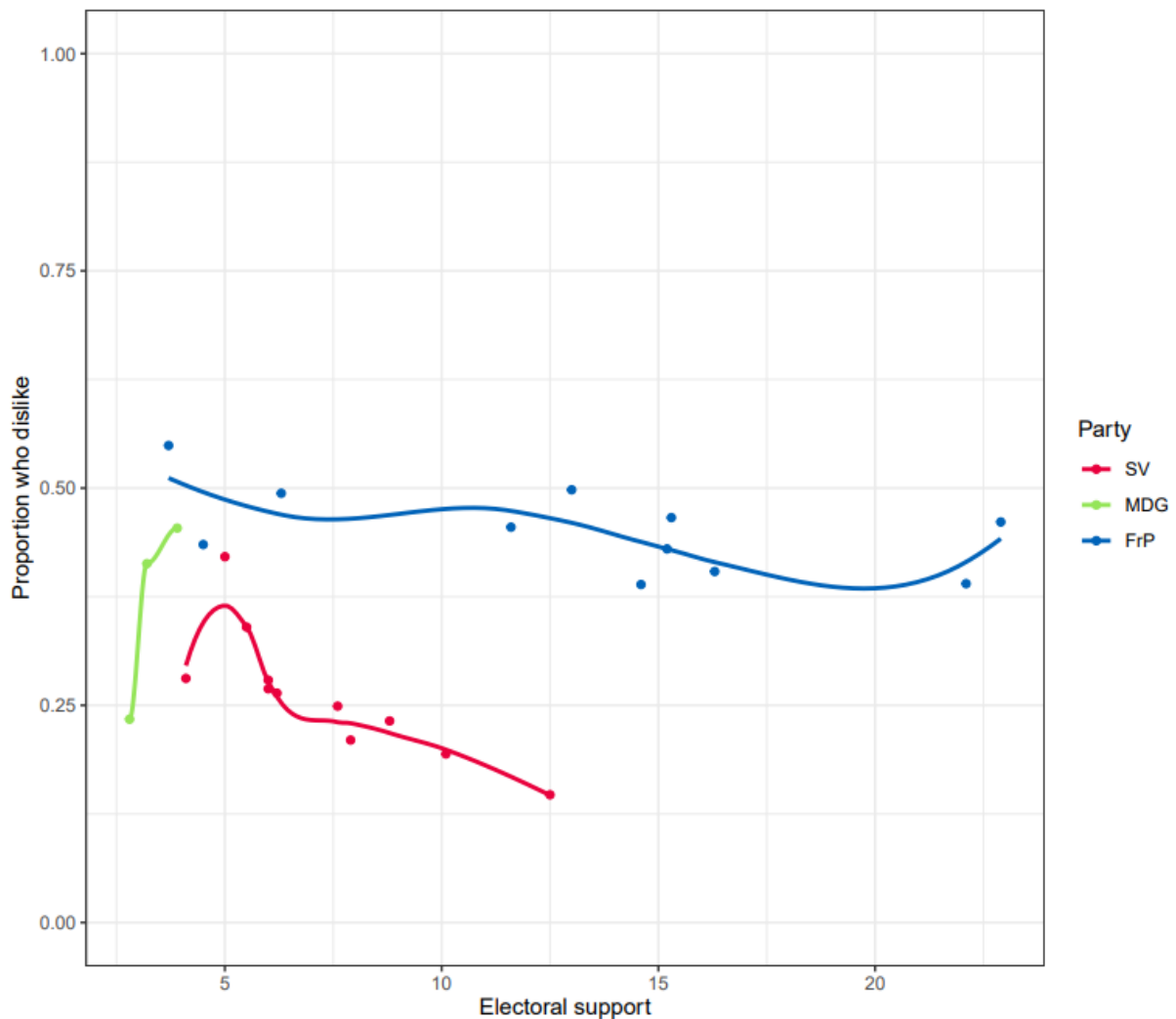
Figure 5.5: *Relationship between electoral support and affective polarization towards NPPs, with LOESS trendline.*

In the case of SV, there is no clear pattern for the three data points when the party's electoral support was at its lowest. However, the overall trend reveals a consistent decline in levels of affective polarization towards SV, as electoral support grows. The correlation between electoral support and the proportion of voters who dislike SV is close to linear, except for the observations of 1981 and 1985. A similar tendency is observed for FrP. A less pronounced, yet downward slope describes the relationship between affective polarization and electoral support. However, MDG stands out among the NPPs. While the level of affective polarization was at 23% when the electoral support for the party was 2.8%, the significant increase in votes has resulted in a doubling in received hostility.

For matters of comparison, the relationships between electoral success and affective polarization towards non-NPPs between 1981 and 2021, are illustrated in figure 5.6. The weighted trendline represent each party. The figure shows that there is no clear tendency for

parties to be more accepted while electoral support grows. Contrary to the general downward trend in dislike reported for SV and FrP, the levels of affective polarization in figure 5.6 seems to be fluctuating at an uneven pace compared to electoral support.
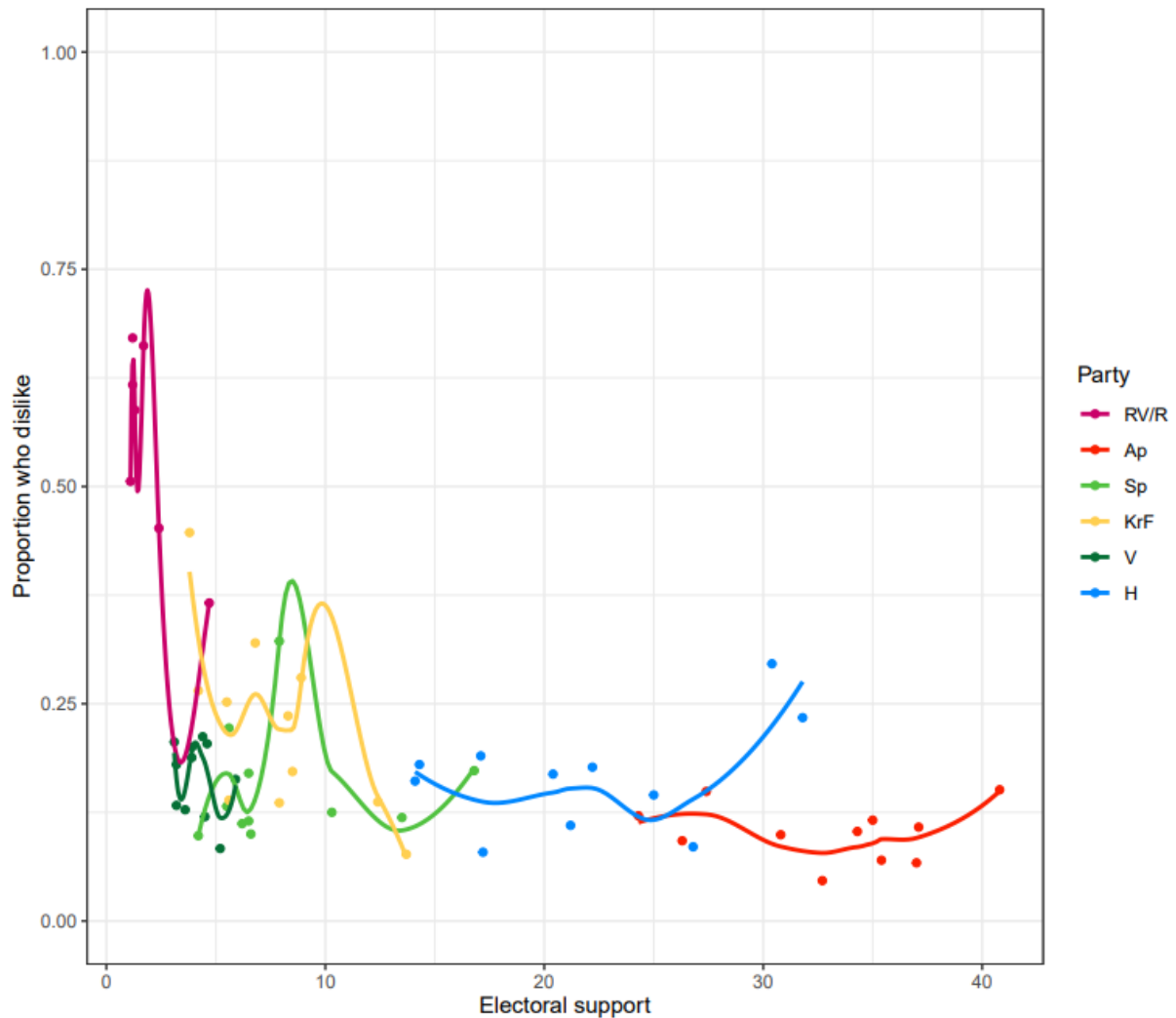
Figure 5.6: *Relationship between electoral support and affective polarization towards non-NPPs, with LOESS trendline.*

The dislike towards the two big mainstream parties, Ap and H, is largely unaffected by their electoral support. For both parties the highest levels of affective polarization are reported in the years when the parties had among the lowest *and* highest shares of the votes. For Sp, V and KrF the trendlines are volatile and does not point to any correlation between electoral support and received dislike. RV/R is represented by a steep downward, yet fluctuating, curve. This indicates that the strong decline in affective polarization towards RV/R is caused by other factors than electoral support.

In the first part of the investigation of competing hypotheses of legitimation or threat in relation to the political relevance of NPPs, the legitimation hypothesis seems more accurate than the threat hypothesis. In the next section, the second part of the legitimation and threat hypotheses will be investigated by looking at the potential effect government attendance might have on affective polarization towards NPPs, compared to the mainstream parties Ap and H. Furthermore, the coalition hypothesis, H4, will be explored by investigating how the supporters of the coalition partners of SV and FrP reacts to periods of close cooperation with the NPPs.

5.1.3 H2b, H3b and H4: Government attendance and coalition arrangements

The second part of the investigation of the legitimation and threat hypotheses focus on government attendance. H2b assumes that *the dislike of NPPs will decline as the party enters government*. H3b assumes that *the dislike of NPPs will increase as the party enters government.* The results from the analysis of H2b and H3b shows that the government attendance of NPPs correlate differently with affective polarization on long and short term. Hence it is not safe to conclude that the results strengthen either the legitimation or the threat hypothesis. Furthermore, the assumptions made in H4, *the dislike of NPPs will decrease among the supporters of the coalition partners of the NPP*, will be explored. H4 indicates that the government inclusion of NPPs will lead to a polarization of the voters' sentiments towards NPPs between their coalition partners and the opposing bloc. The results indeed suggest that coalition effects might be at play for the affective polarization, although not of the character that is expected in H4.

Figure 5.7 displays the trajectory of affective polarization towards SV from 1981 to 2021. The period between 2005 and 2013, when SV was in government, is marked with a thicker line at the year-axis. SV's coalition partners, Ap and Sp, are separated from the other parties. The years of the government arrangement of the socialist bloc, is marked with thicker lines on the trajectories representing Ap and Sp.
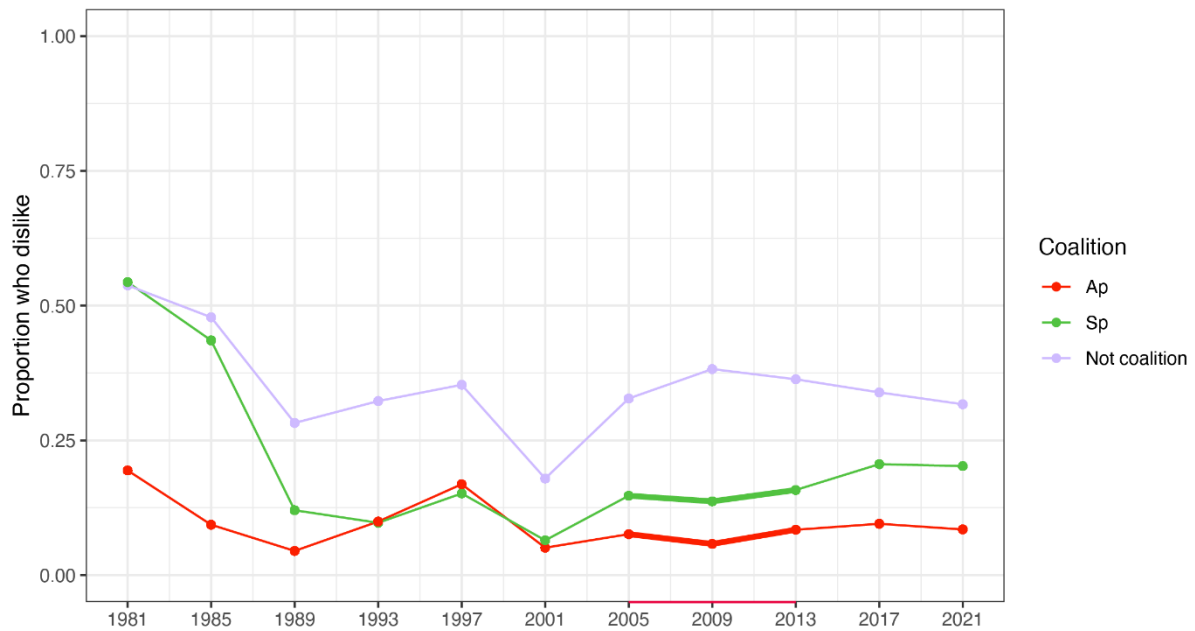
Figure 5.7: *Affective polarization towards SV from Ap, Sp and other parties, 1981-2021.*

Overall, the findings provide inconsistent support both to H2b and H3b. Initially it might look as if the government inclusion of SV in 2005 spurred hostility towards the party. Indeed, levels of affective polarization increased between 2005 and 2009 among the supporters of the opposition parties. However, over the three last election surveys, affective polarization towards SV decreased at a steady rate. Hence, the government inclusion of SV indicates that it initially proved unfavorable for the previous outsiders to be assigned substantial political power. This supports the threat hypothesis outlined in H3b. Still, the aftermath of SVs last four years as a governing party, was a period of steady decline in affective polarization. This provides support for the legitimation hypothesis and H2b. It is possible to imagine a scenario where the thought of being governed by SV seemed threatening to political opponents in the beginning, but that the long-term outcome was broader acceptance of the party.

The findings also provide ambiguous support for the coalition hypothesis outlined in H4. Contrary to among the supporters of the opposition, levels of affective polarization declined for both Ap and Sp supporters in 2009. Interestingly, the affective polarization rates from SV's coalition partners increased again in 2013. For the supporters of Sp, this trend continues over the subsequent decade. Thus, Sp shows the opposite trajectory of the non-coalition partners. In the wake of the government attendance of SV, the bloc wise polarization of affective polarization towards SV, that had been strong and stable since 1989, was diminished.

Figure 5.8 displays the trajectory of affective polarization towards FrP from 1981 to 2021. The governmental period of the party, 2013-2020, is marked with a thicker line at the year-axis. The coalition partners of FrP, H, V and KrF, are separated from the other parties. The conservative governmental period is marked with a thicker line for the parties, over the years of the coalition arrangement.
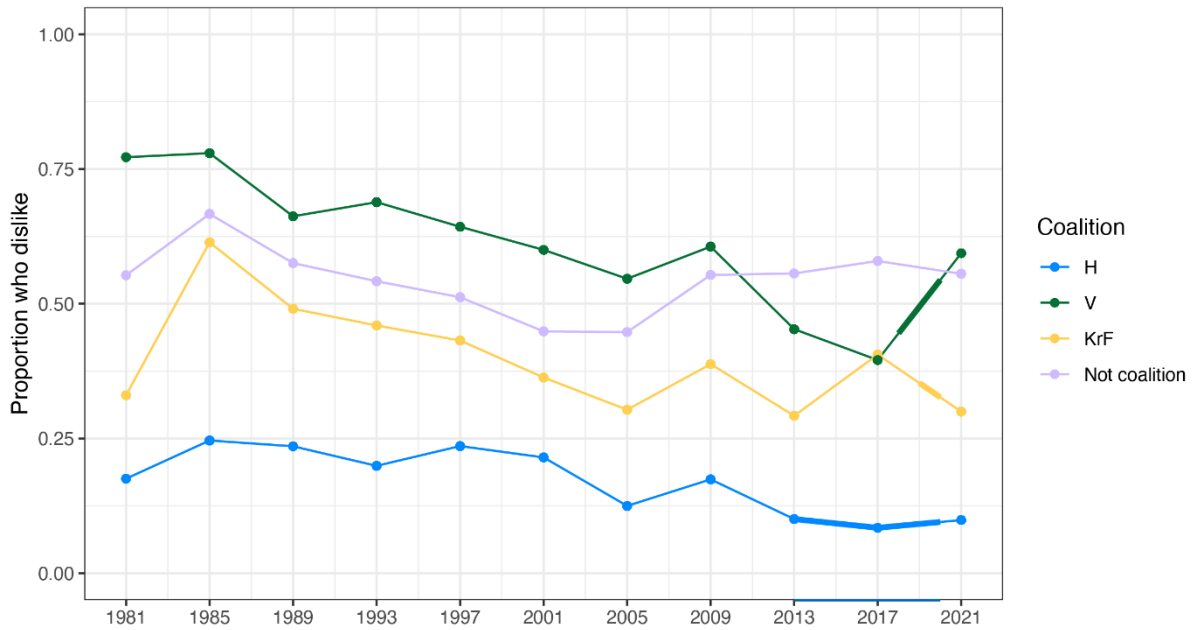
Figure 5.8: *Affective polarization towards FrP from H, V, KrF and other parties, 1981-2021.*

In some respects, the trajectory of affective polarization towards FrP while the party was in government is similar to that of SV. The supporters of the non-coalition parties report a slight increase in dislike after the first four years of FrP in government, before a slight decrease four years later. Thus, it might seem like there is a pattern for the affective polarization towards NPPs, when they enter government. First, the supporters of the opposition report stronger levels of affective polarization – providing support for the threat hypothesis – before it declines over the subsequent years – providing support for the legitimation hypothesis. It is important to note however, that SV already was a legitimized party at the time of government inclusion, contrary to FrP in 2013. FrP was disliked by almost 60% of the supporters of the socialist bloc, and well over 40% of the supporters of its future coalition partner V.

Like in the case of SV, the results displayed in figure 5.8 provide inconsistent support for the coalition hypothesis in relation to affective polarization towards FrP. The supporters of the mainstream right party H have been friendly towards FrP throughout the period investigated in this analysis. Still, 2013 marked an all-time low in levels of affective polarization towards FrP from voters of H. Affective polarization towards FrP from the supporters of KrF and V is

much stronger throughout the period. The supporters of V even dislike FrP more than the supporters of the socialist bloc. However, the government arrangement between FrP and H was paralleled with a change in the affective polarization between the conservative voters and FrP. A blocwise polarization in FrP dislike was evident in 2013. 2021 is currently the only available datapoint after the turbulent coalition arrangement between FrP and the other conservative parties. In 2021, the affective polarization between the voters of V and FrP is again more intense, than for the voters of the opposing bloc. The conservative coalition arrangement did not lead to a unification of affective polarization towards FrP. Rather, sentiments towards FrP are a highly polarized subject among the supporters of the conservative parties.

For matters of comparison, the government attendance and coalition arrangements of non-NPPs parties are investigated in relation to their received affective polarization between 1981 and 2021. The clearest examples of non-NPPs parties are the mainstream left party Ap, and the mainstream right party H. The results for Ap are displayed in figure 5.9 and the results for H are displayed in figure 5.10. The periods of government attendance are outlined on the year-axis. The coalition partners are separated from the other parties, and the periods of coalition arrangements are outlined with a thicker line.
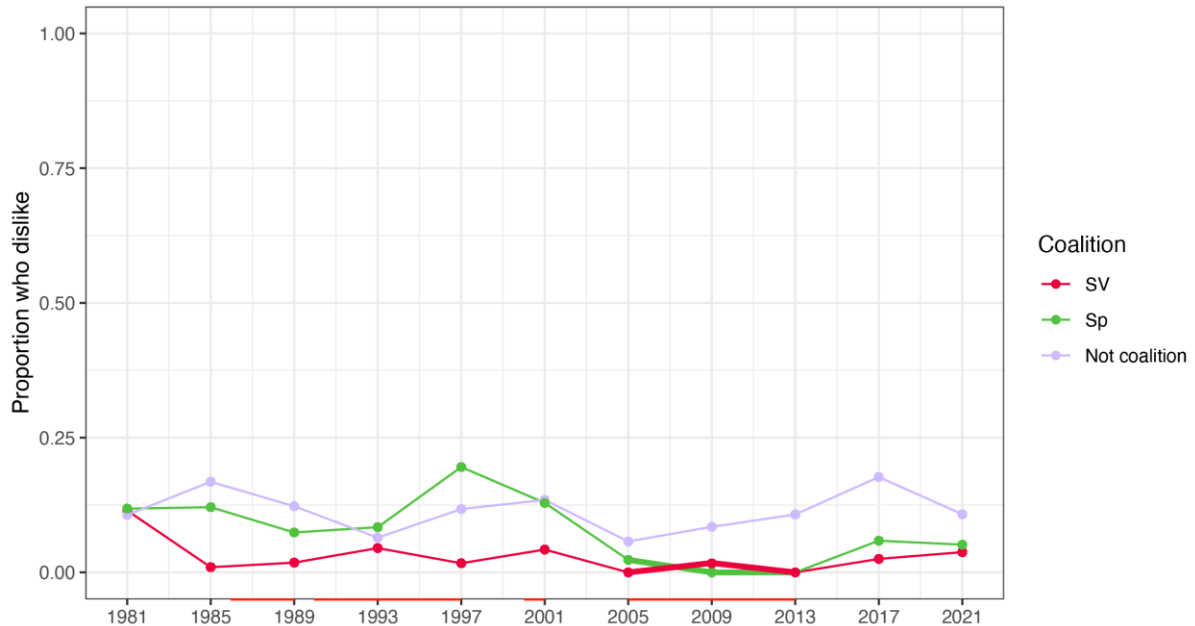
Figure 5.9: *Affective polarization towards Ap from SV, Sp and other parties, 1981-2021.*

For Ap, there is no correlation between being in government and affective polarization. In the second half of the 1980s, the proportion who dislike Ap declines. However, in the 1990 the received dislike of Ap increases. The election in 2005 was the first time Ap formed a coalition government. The affective polarization from the parties that were not in the coalition increased

between 2005 and 2013. Thus, figure 5.9 displays a bloc wise polarization in sentiments towards Ap. Before the cooperation in government, Sp voters were just as affectively polarized as the group of the later opposition parties. However, from 2005 there was a clear, yet subtle, deviation between the two political bloc's sentiments towards Ap. Even if the dislike towards Ap from the voters of Sp and SV increases after the dissolution of the government arrangement, these findings indicate that coalition partners tend to be less affectively polarized towards each other than non-coalition partners.
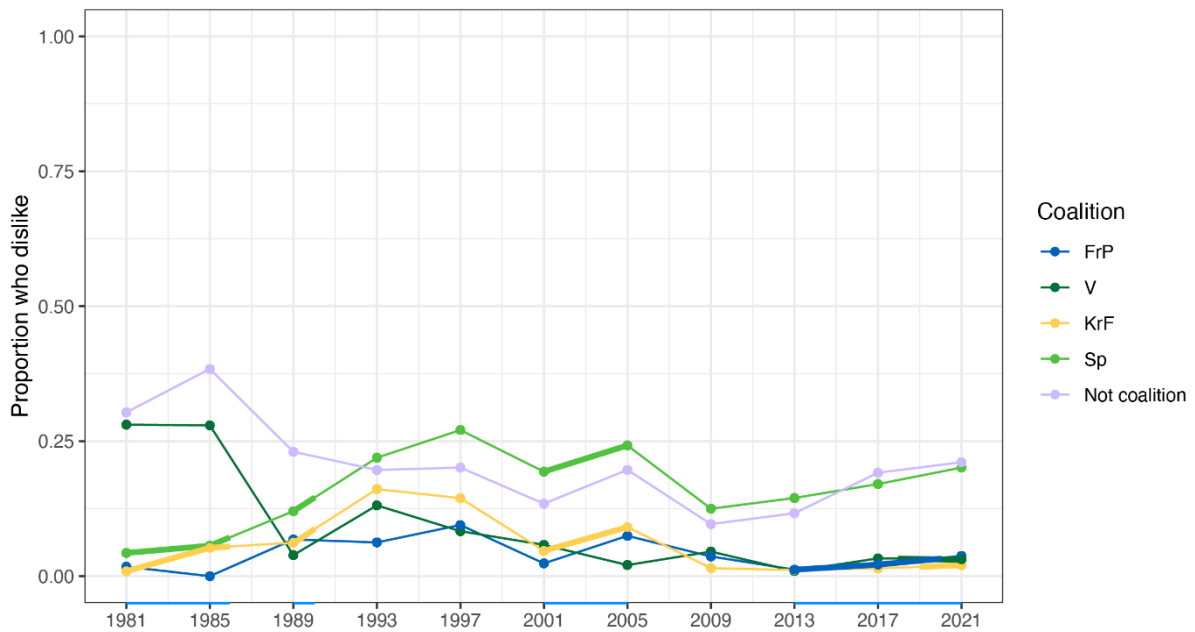
Figure 5.10 *Affective polarization towards H from FrP, V, KrF, Sp and other parties, 1981-2021.*

The trajectory of H displays that the party has usually been more affectively polarized when managing governmental responsibility. Still, the levels of affective polarization have declined over the last 40 years. It is worth noticing that dislike of H consequently falls substantially over the four years *after* the dissolution of a conservative government. Hence, it might look as if the government attendance of H has been followed by a short-term increase, but that a long-term decrease in affective polarization, thus making the party increasingly accepted since 1981. It is highly interesting that H's coalition partners expressed similarly strong increase in affective polarization towards H, as the non-coalition partners. However, after the formation of the conservative government in 2013, the coalition supporters were far more united in their sentiments towards H, than in previous governmental periods. Similar to the case of Ap between 2005 and 2013, a clear bloc wise polarization in the sentiments towards H was evident between 2013 and 2021. However, it should be noted that the conservative parties are less

affectively polarized towards H than the socialist parties long before they entered the government together in 2013.

In summary, the analysis shows that parties, both NPPs and non-NPPs, tend to experience increased affective polarization when they are responsible for the implementation of politics. However, the long-term effects of government attendance might be increased acceptance. The rates of affective polarization among coalition partners deviates to a great extent between the NPP cases and the non-NPP cases. For the NPPs, government coalitions are polarizing within the coalition bloc, while the pattern is opposite for the non-NPPs.

Before discussing the implications of the findings, the relationships between demand side factors and affective polarization towards NPPs will be investigated. The next sections present the results from the individual level logistic regression analysis. It will be explored to what degree and how political and social factors correlate with the predicted probability of voters to dislike NPPs, compared to non-NPPs.

5.2 Individual level analysis

5.2.1 H5 and H6: Political factors

In the first part of the individual level analysis, political explanation factors are investigated with the aim of exploring to what degree affective polarization towards NPPs correlates with the voters' ideological position and perceived issue saliency. The analysis consists of two sets of five logistic regression models where the dependent variable varies between "dislike party" (1) and "does not dislike party" (0). SV is displayed in model 1, MDG in model 2, FrP in model 3, Ap in model 4 and H in model 5.

H5 expects that *the dislike of NPPs can be explained by voters' ideological position in new politics issues.* In the first set of logistic regression models, two new politics indexes are included as the independent variables. The immigration index is constructed so that the value 0 denotes the strongest negative attitudes towards immigration, and the value 20 denotes the strongest positive attitudes towards immigration. On the climate and environment index, the value 0 denotes the strongest priority of economic growth over the preservation of natural resources and stopping climate change. The value 20 denotes the strongest priority to climate and environmental health, over economic growth. The results from the regression analysis of ideological positions in new politics issues and affective polarization are displayed in table 5.2.

	Dependent variable:				
	Dislike SV	Dislike MDG	Dislike FrP	Dislike Ap	Dislike H
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Positive attitudes towards immigration	-0.095**	-0.100**	0.178**	-0.115**	0.009
	(0.005)	(0.010)	(0.005)	(0.008)	(0.006)
Prioritize climate and environment over growth	-0.127**	-0.270**	0.094**	-0.028**	0.052**
	(0.006)	(0.011)	(0.005)	(0.008)	(0.007)
Constant	0.451**	2.405**	-2.604**	-1.008**	-2.190**
	(0.080)	(0.131)	(0.078)	(0.116)	(0.094)
Observations	15,067	4,590	14,812	12,111	13,504
Log Likelihood	-7,424.204	-2,253.703	-8,691.041	-3,609.537	-5,534.683
Akaike Inf. Crit.	14,870.410	4,517.407	17,404.080	7,241.075	11,091.360

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01

Table 5.2: *Ideological position in new politics issues and affective polarization, 1989-2021.*

For SV, MDG and Ap the relationship between both new politics indexes and received affective polarization is negative. This implies that voters who are more positive towards immigration and who are more oriented towards climate and environmental protection over economic growth, have a lower probability of being affectively polarized towards SV, MDG and Ap. Conversely, the relationship between both new politics indexes and received affective polarization of FrP and H is positive. The probability of disliking these parties increases as voters get more positive towards immigration and more climate and environment oriented. The relationships between ideological position in new politics issues and affective polarization is significant at the level of 0.01 for all the estimates, except for attitudes towards immigration in the H model.

The estimates in the model are presented as log odds and are therefore difficult to interpret and compare at face value. The predicted affective polarization towards the parties, for each value on the new politics indexes are therefore plotted in figure 5.11 to figure 5.15. The Y-axis denotes the predicted probability of disliking a party. In the plots to the left the X-axis is the full range of values on the immigration index. In the plots to the right, the X-axis denote the different values on the climate and environment index.
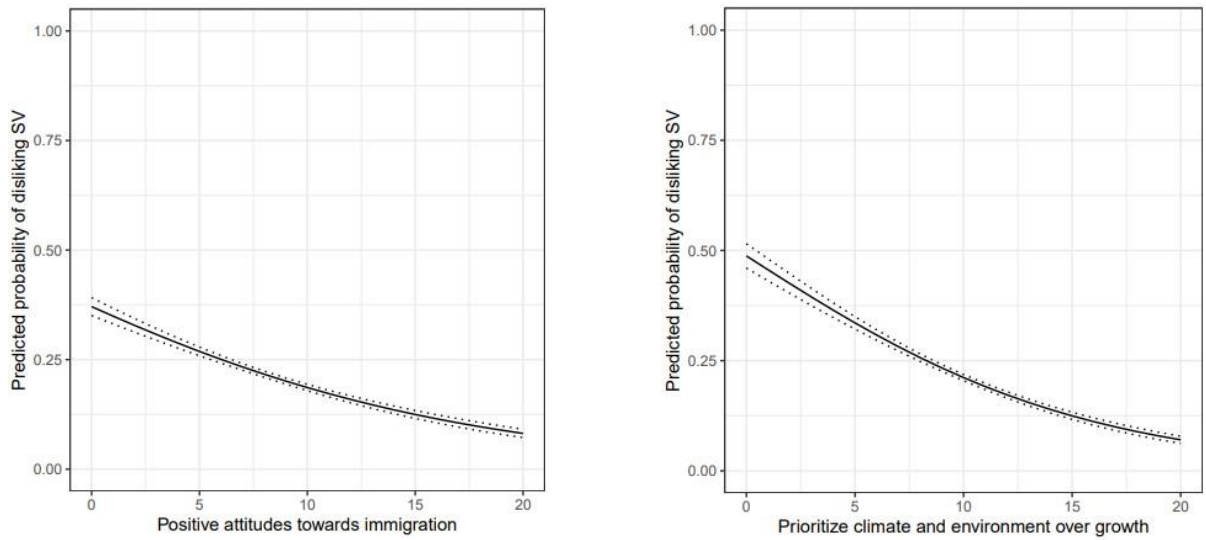
Figure 5.11: *Predicted probabilities of disliking SV over ideological positions in new politics issues.*
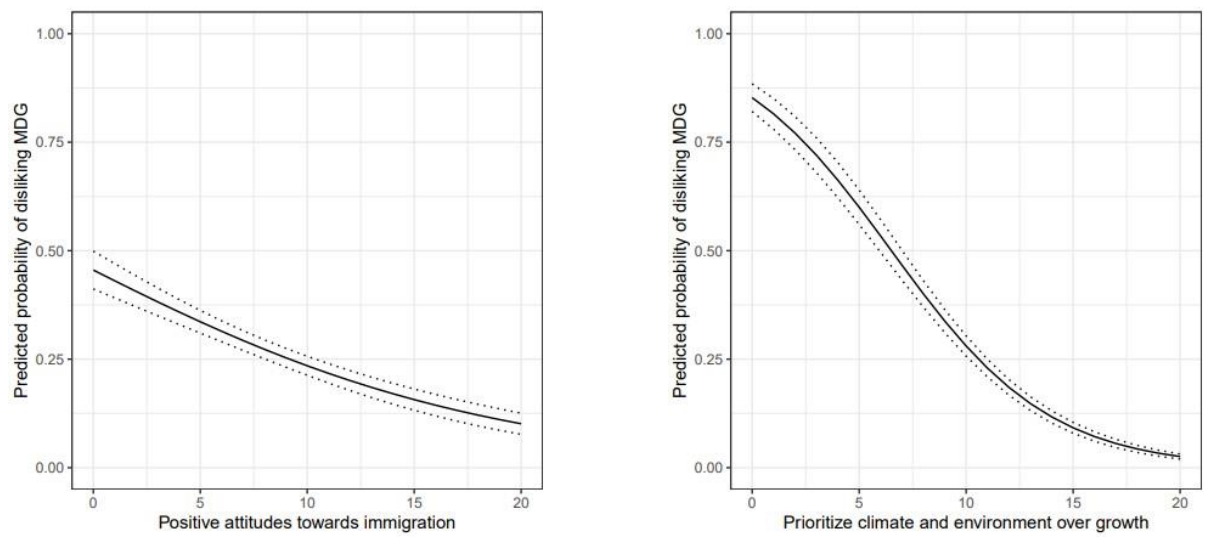
Figure 5.12: *Predicted probabilities of disliking MDG over ideological positions in new politics issues.*
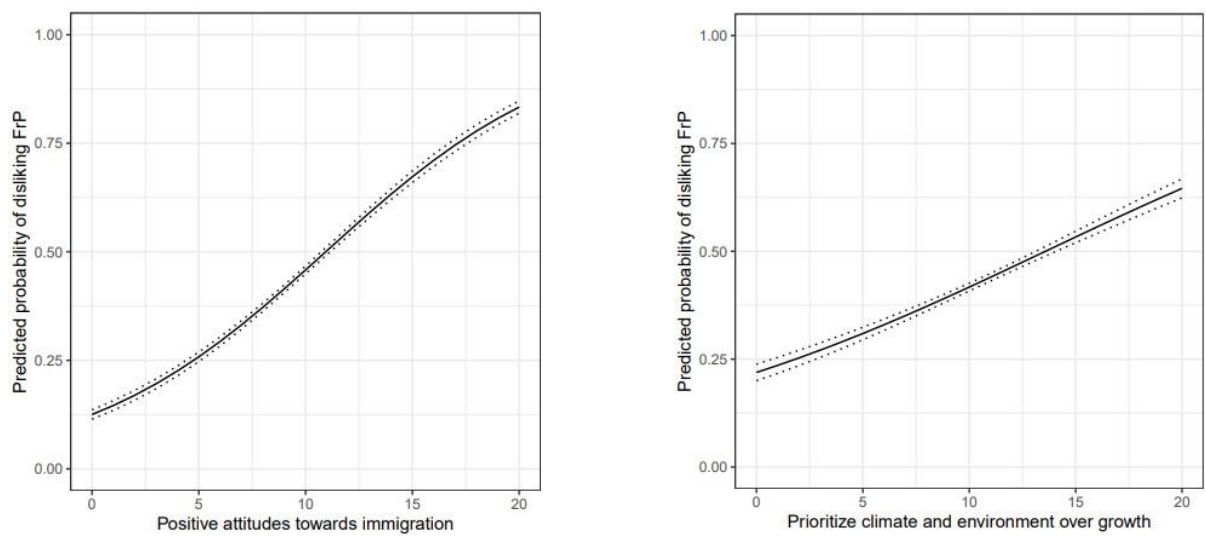
Figure 5.13: *Predicted probabilities of disliking FrP over ideological positions in new politics issues.*
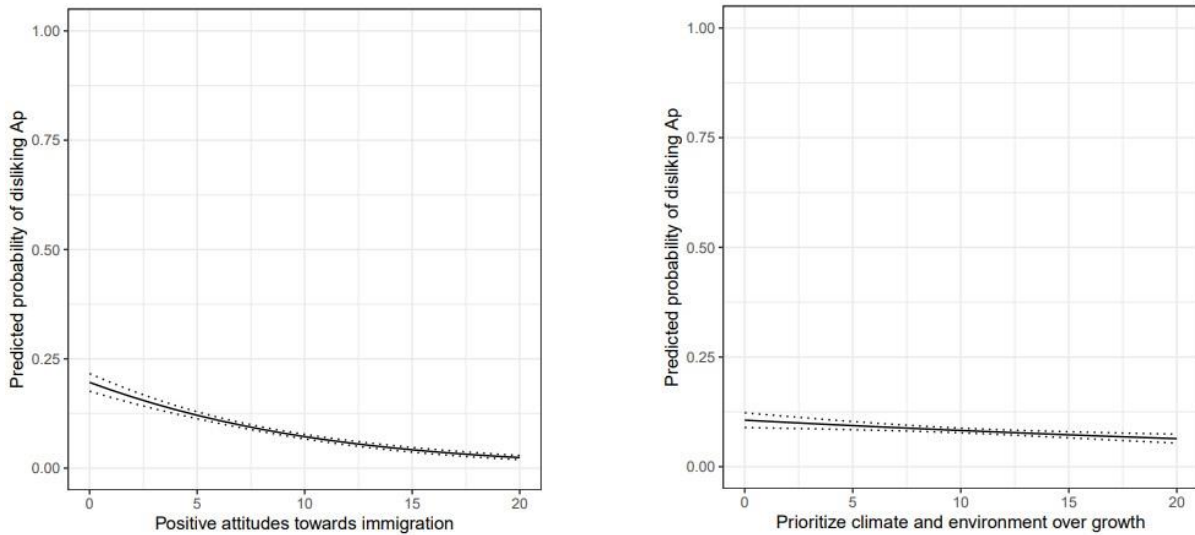
Figure 5.14: *Predicted probabilities of disliking Ap over ideological positions in new politics issues.*
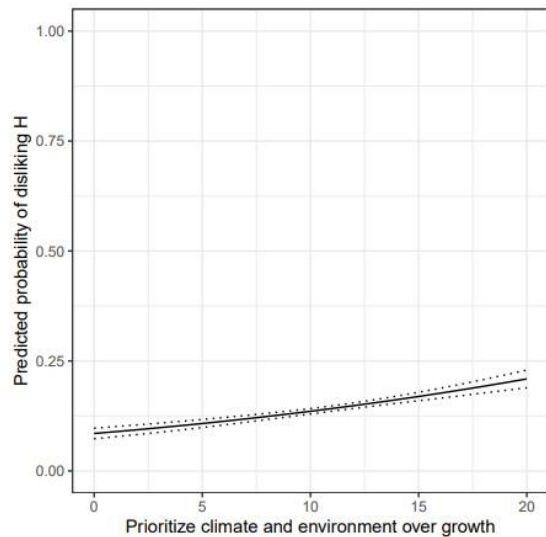
Figure 5.15: *Predicted probabilities of disliking H over ideological positions in the climate and environment issue.*

The results strongly support H5. First, the voters' ideological positions in new politics issues are correlated with the affective polarization towards NPPs. Second, the correlations are much stronger for NPPs than for the non-NPPs. The two strongest predictors of affective polarization are not surprisingly the climate and environment index in relation to dislike of MDG, and the immigration index in relation to affective polarization towards FrP. Furthermore, it should be noted that both the new politics indexes correlate stronger with the predicted probability of being affectively polarized towards MDG and FrP, than towards SV.

H6 expects that *the dislike of NPPs can be explained by whether voters perceive new politics issues as important*. The logistic regression models that predict the probability of observing that a voter is affectively polarized towards a party, includes the perceived

importance of two new politics issues. The value 1 on the immigration salience variable denotes that the voter perceives immigration as being the most important issue. The value 1 on the climate and environment salience variable denote that the voter perceives climate and environment as being the most important issue. The reference category for both dummy variables is the group of voters who perceive other issues as most important. The results from the regression analysis of new politics issues and affective polarization, are viewed in table 5.3.

	Dependent variable:				
	Dislike SV	Dislike MDG	Dislike FrP	Dislike Ap	Dislike H
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Immigration as most important issue (ref: Other issue)	0.667**	0.515**	-0.174	0.746**	-0.281*
	(0.084)	(0.117)	(0.104)	(0.112)	(0.140)
Climate and environment as most important issue (ref: Other issue)	-1.230**	-1.604**	1.096**	-0.800**	0.211*
	(0.120)	(0.162)	(0.065)	(0.149)	(0.085)
Constant	-1.327**	-1.165**	-0.220**	-2.069**	-1.575**
	(0.061)	(0.062)	(0.049)	(0.090)	(0.068)
Observations	15,084	4,607	14,829	12,128	13,521
Log Likelihood	-8,018.403	-2,852.872	-9,992.479	-3,746.228	-5,585.017
Akaike Inf. Crit.	16,058.810	5,715.745	20,006.960	7,514.456	11,192.030
Note:				$^*p<0.05$;	$^{**}p<0.01$

Table 5.3: *Saliency of new politics issues and affective polarization, 1989-2021.*

The probability of being affectively polarized towards SV, MDG and Ap increases for the voters who perceive the immigration issue as most important but decreases for the voters whose most important issue regards the climate and environment. For FrP and H, the relationships between issue salience and affective polarization is opposite from the other three parties. For SV, MDG and Ap, the estimates are significant at the 0.01 level. This is also the case for the climate and immigration variable for FrP. The relationship between issue saliency of immigration and the negative estimate of affective polarization towards FrP, is unexpectedly not significant. The estimates for H are only significant at the level of 0.05.

For matters of interpretability, the log odds displayed in table 5.3 are calculated into change in predicted probabilities, for a one-unit change on the salience variables. The predicted probabilities of observing affective polarization towards the parties, for voters who perceive new politics issues as most important compared to the voters who do not, are displayed in table

5.4. The parameters denote the change in the predicted probability of observing dislike when the salience variables go from 0 (other issue) to 1 (immigration issue/climate and environment issue). Insignificant parameters are excluded.

	SV	MDG	FrP	Ap	H
Immigration issue as most important	0.135	0.108		0.08	-0.031
Climate and environment issue as most important	-0.155	-0.205	0.264	-0.05	0.028

Table 5.4: *Change in predicted probabilities for party dislike and the perceived salience of new politics issues.*

Table 5.4 show that the expectations in H6 to a high degree are supported. The voters perceived saliency of new politics issues correlate stronger with affective polarization towards NPPs than non-NPPs, although with one mentionable exception – immigration salience and dislike of FrP. The salience of the climate and environment issue is the strongest predictor of affective polarization of all the NPPs in table 5.4. For both MDG and FrP, the predicted probability of observing dislike changes over 20 percentage points for the voters who perceive the climate and environment issue as most important.

5.2.2 H7: Social background factors

In the second part of the individual level analysis, social background factors are the focus of investigation. The aim is to explore to what degree and how the voters' values on several different social background factors correlate with the probability of being affectively polarized towards NPPs, compared to non-NPPs. The social background factors include education, class, and area of residence. The analysis consists of a set of five logistic regression models where the dependent variable varies between "dislike party" (1) and "does not dislike party" (0). SV is displayed in model 1, MDG in model 2, FrP in model 3, Ap in model 4 and H in model 5.

H7 expects that *the dislike of NPPs can be explained by voters' social background factors, like education, class, and place of residence.* The social variables that assumingly correlates with the probability of observing affective polarization towards NPPs, include five dummy variables. First, the voters with a university degree get the value 1. The voters who have secondary and high school education are the reference category. Second, voters who are working class get the value 1. Third, the voters who are upper middle class get the value 1. Fourth, the voters who are self-employed get the value 1. The reference category for the class

dummy variables is lower middle class. Finally, the voters who live in urban areas get the value 1, compared to inhabitants of rural areas who are in the reference category. The results from the logistic regression analysis of social background factors and affective polarization are viewed in table 5.5.

	Dependent variable:				
	Dislike SV (1)	Dislike MDG (2)	Dislike FrP (3)	Dislike Ap (4)	Dislike H (5)
University degree (ref: Lower education)	-0.206**	-0.570**	0.735**	-0.606**	-0.027
	(0.049)	(0.077)	(0.042)	(0.085)	(0.066)
Working class (ref: Lower middle class)	0.157**	0.519**	-0.247**	0.099	0.180**
	(0.060)	(0.107)	(0.052)	(0.095)	(0.070)
Upper middle class (ref: Lower middle class)	0.318**	0.399**	-0.262**	-0.093	-0.311**
	(0.053)	(0.085)	(0.046)	(0.092)	(0.076)
Self-employed (ref: Lower middle class)	0.687**	0.516**	-0.413**	0.235*	-0.167
	(0.074)	(0.130)	(0.072)	(0.119)	(0.111)
Urban inhabitant (ref: Rural inhabitant	0.134*	-0.292**	-0.011	-0.114	-0.201**
	(0.056)	(0.091)	(0.048)	(0.086)	(0.067)
Constant	-1.706**	-0.959**	-0.040	-2.123**	-1.412**
	(0.090)	(0.112)	(0.073)	(0.137)	(0.101)
Observations	12,503	3,714	12,212	9,813	11,037
Log Likelihood	-6,719.179	-2,287.245	-8,139.669	-2,921.414	-4,408.772
Akaike Inf. Crit.	13,466.360	4,590.490	16,307.340	5,870.829	8,845.545
Note:				*p<0.05;	**p<0.01

Table 5.5: *Education, class, area of residence and affective polarization, 1989-2021.*

The voters with a university degree are less affectively polarized towards all the parties, except towards FrP, compared to the voters with lower education. Conversely, FrP is the only party that is less disliked by members of the working class, compared to members of the lower middle class. Upper middle class voters and the self-employed tend to be affectively polarized towards SV and MDG, compared to lower middle class voters, but have a higher probability of not disliking FrP. Urban inhabitants are less affectively polarized than rural inhabitants. Somewhat surprisingly, they tend to dislike the GAL party SV. The results in table 5.5 show that all the

social background estimates are statistically significant at the 0.01 level in the NPP models, except for the urbanity estimate in the FrP model.

The log odds estimates displayed in table 5.5 are calculated into change in predicted probabilities for observing affective polarization towards a party for a one-unit change on the social background variables. The results are displayed in table 5.6. The first row displays the voters with a university degree (1), compared to voters that do not (0). The second row displays working class voters (1), the third denotes upper middle class voters (1), and the fourth displays the class of self-employed voters (1). For all the class variables the reference category is voters of the lower middle class (0). The fifth row denote urban inhabitants (1) compared to rural inhabitants (0). Insignificant parameters are excluded.

	SV	MDG	FrP	Ap	H
University degree	-0.036	-0.111	0.181	-0.045	
Working class	0.028	0.111	-0.06		0.022
Upper middle class	0.059	0.084	-0.064		-0.035
Self-employed	0.139	0.114	-0.098	0.02	
Urban inhabitant	0.023	-0.062			-0.025

Table 5.6: *Change in predicted probabilities for the social background factors.*

As outlined in the chapter 2, the new politics cleavage is expected to divide the population into social groups based on education, type of work and place of residence, that in different ways are sorted between the GAL and the TAN parties. This is also the case for the Norwegian NPPs. Indeed, the strongest correlations between the social background factors and affective polarization are for the estimates in the NPP models. The direction of the estimates is also largely consistent with the expectations in H7. Hence, one can conclude that H7 is supported by the findings displayed in table 5.6.

As expected, the predicted probability of being affectively polarized towards MDG declines strongly for the voters who have a university degree. Conversely, the same group has a much higher probability of disliking FrP. The affective polarization between the highly educated voters and FrP, is by far the strongest relationship of all the social background variables. Still, it goes against the assumptions made in H7 that university degree is a stronger predictor of affective polarization towards Ap than towards SV.

The strength of the class variable estimates portrays complete opposite tendencies for the affective polarization towards SV and MDG on the one hand, and FrP on the other. The hostility towards SV and MDG are lowest among the lower middle class, compared to all the other class categories, especially the self-employed. Conversely, both the working-class, upper middle class and the self-employed are less hostile towards FrP compared to the lower middle class. This tendency is strongest for the self-employed. It should be noted that the party that is most strongly affectively polarized based on the voters' class identities is MDG, the only party in the analysis that is not aligned along the economic left-right dimension.

One cannot conclude that the division between urban and rural inhabitants are affectively sorted between the NPPs. Contrary to the expectations, the urban inhabitants dislike SV more than the rural inhabitants, and the affective polarization towards FrP is not significantly correlated with the voters' place of residence. Still, urban inhabitants have a lower probability of being affectively polarized towards MDG than rural inhabitants. Still, the affectively polarizing potential of place of residence cannot be confirmed in this analysis and H7 is not strengthened.

In the next section, both the political and the social background factors will be explored in five full models. This is done with the aim of discovering if the findings from the regression analyses remain largely the same when controlling for all the demand side factors that evidently correlate with NPP dislike. Hence, it will be possible to investigate if affective polarization towards NPPs is mainly driven by political or social factors, or both.

5.2.3 Full demand side model

In the final part of the individual level analysis, the aim is to explore to what degree and how the voters' values on both the political and the social background factors correlates with the probability of being affectively polarized towards NPPs. The non-NPPs still serve as benchmarks. The full models include education, class, area of residence, the two new politics indexes and the issue salience variables. The direction of the variables and reference categories are unchanged compared to the investigations above. In addition, gender (female = 1, male = 0) and age is included as demographic controls. The analysis consists of a set of five logistic regression models where the dependent variable varies between "dislike party" (1) and "does not dislike party" (0). SV is displayed in model 1, MDG in model 2, FrP in model 3, Ap in

model 4 and H in model 5. The results from the five logistic regression models that include all the relevant demand side factors and the two control variables, are displayed in table 5.7.

	Dependent variable:				
	Dislike SV	Dislike MDG	Dislike FrP	Dislike Ap	Dislike H
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Female (ref: Male)	-0.411**	-0.341**	0.415**	0.089	0.250**
	(0.049)	(0.087)	(0.043)	(0.077)	(0.059)
Age	0.009**	0.015**	0.016**	0.009**	0.015**
	(0.001)	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)
University degree (ref: Lower education)	0.248**	0.036	0.199**	-0.255**	-0.243**
	(0.054)	(0.092)	(0.049)	(0.090)	(0.071)
Working class (ref: Lower middle class)	-0.242**	0.150	0.207**	-0.020	0.382**
	(0.066)	(0.129)	(0.061)	(0.101)	(0.075)
Upper middle class (ref: Lower middle class)	0.159**	0.188	-0.216**	-0.138	-0.270**
	(0.058)	(0.100)	(0.052)	(0.095)	(0.078)
Self-employed (ref: Lower middle class)	0.430**	0.194	-0.323**	0.092	-0.111
	(0.081)	(0.156)	(0.082)	(0.124)	(0.114)
Urban inhabitant (ref: Lower middle class)	0.197**	-0.193	-0.120*	-0.110	-0.220**
	(0.059)	(0.105)	(0.053)	(0.087)	(0.068)
Positive attitudes towards immigration	-0.103**	-0.086**	0.197**	-0.092**	0.040**
	(0.006)	(0.011)	(0.006)	(0.009)	(0.007)
Prioritize climate and environment over growth	-0.115**	-0.264**	0.084**	-0.018	0.054**
	(0.006)	(0.013)	(0.006)	(0.010)	(0.008)
Immigration as most important issue (ref: Other issue)	0.273**	0.106	-0.167	0.499**	-0.034
	(0.099)	(0.160)	(0.134)	(0.126)	(0.155)
Climate and environment as most important issue (ref: Other issue)	-0.598**	-0.255	0.500**	-0.372*	0.016
	(0.138)	(0.218)	(0.084)	(0.182)	(0.103)
Constant	0.018	1.675**	-3.746**	-1.612**	-3.198**
	(0.134)	(0.235)	(0.133)	(0.204)	(0.168)
Observations	12,503	3,714	12,212	9,813	11,037
Log Likelihood	-6,074.111	-1,794.865	-6,919.972	-2,814.386	-4,304.978
Akaike Inf. Crit.	12,188.220	3,617.731	13,879.940	5,668.772	8,649.957

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01

Table 5.7: *Gender, age, education, class, area of residence, ideology, salience, and affective polarization, 1989-2021.*

Table 5.7 shows that the estimates of the full models deviate from the previous investigations of the demand side explanation factors, both in relation to direction and level of significance.

This is mainly the case for the estimates of the relationships between the social factors displayed in table 5.5 and the affective polarization towards NPPs.

To be able to compare and reflect on the strength of the full model estimates, the change in predicted probabilities for a one-unit change for all dummy variables are calculated and displayed in table 5.8. The change in the predicted probability of observing affective polarization over different values on the continuous new politics indexes is best illustrated in a plot. Therefore, figure 5.16 to 5.20 graphically illustrates the relationship between the new politics indexes and affective polarization in the full model. The continuous age variable is of minor importance for this thesis. Therefore, the change in the predicted probabilities of observing affective polarization towards parties for each yearly increase in age, will not be investigated in detail. Insignificant parameters are excluded.

	SV	MDG	FrP	Ap	H
Female	-0.065	-0.062	0.101		0.028
University degree	0.04		0.049	-0.017	-0.026
Working class	-0.037		0.051		0.046
Upper middle class	0.026		-0.053		-0.029
Self-employed	0.075		-0.077		
Urban inhabitant	0.03		-0.029		-0.026
Immigration issue as most important	0.046			0.042	
Climate and environment issue as most important	-0.08		0.124	-0.023	

Table 5.8: *Change in predicted probabilities for the dummy variables in the full models.*

When including the political factors and the demographic control variables, it is evident that voters with a university degree tend to be affectively polarized towards both SV and FrP, while the non-NPPs are more accepted among the highly educated. Furthermore, the working class voters have a higher probability of being affectively polarized towards the economic right parties FrP and H, while SV is generally more accepted. The upper middle class and self-employed estimates display the complete opposite correlations in relation to the affective polarization towards SV, FrP and H. SV is still the only party that is more disliked by urban inhabitants than rural inhabitants. The biggest difference between the results displayed in table 5.7, compared to previous findings of this analysis, is the lack of significance for the social background estimates in the MDG model.

None of the estimates for the political explanation factors change direction, compared to the findings in table 5.2 and 5.3. However, the statistical significance of the salience estimates has declined for several of the parties, notably for MDG. The immigration salience estimates only come out as significant for SV and Ap. The climate and environment salience estimates are significant only for SV, Ap and FrP. However, the estimates between the voters' position in new politics issues and affective polarization remains largely unchanged, both for the immigration index and the climate and environment index. The change in the predicted probabilities of observing affective polarization over different values on the new politics indexes in the full modes, are plotted in figure 5.11 to 5.15. The figures display that the correlations between ideological position in new politics issues and affective polarization is largely unaffected by the inclusion of social and demographic factors.

In summary, the results displayed in table 5.8 and figure 5.16 to 5.20 confirm H5, and to a lesser degree H6, while largely rejecting the expectations in H7. Before the discussion of the implications of the results and suggestions for future research, the next section will sum up the main findings.

Figure 5.16: *Predicted probabilities of disliking SV over ideological positions in new politics issues, full model.*
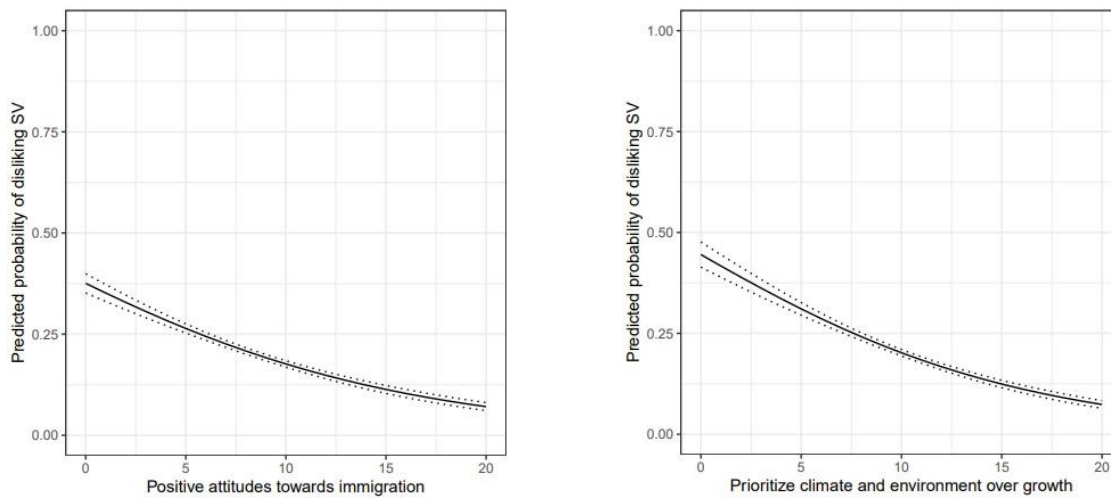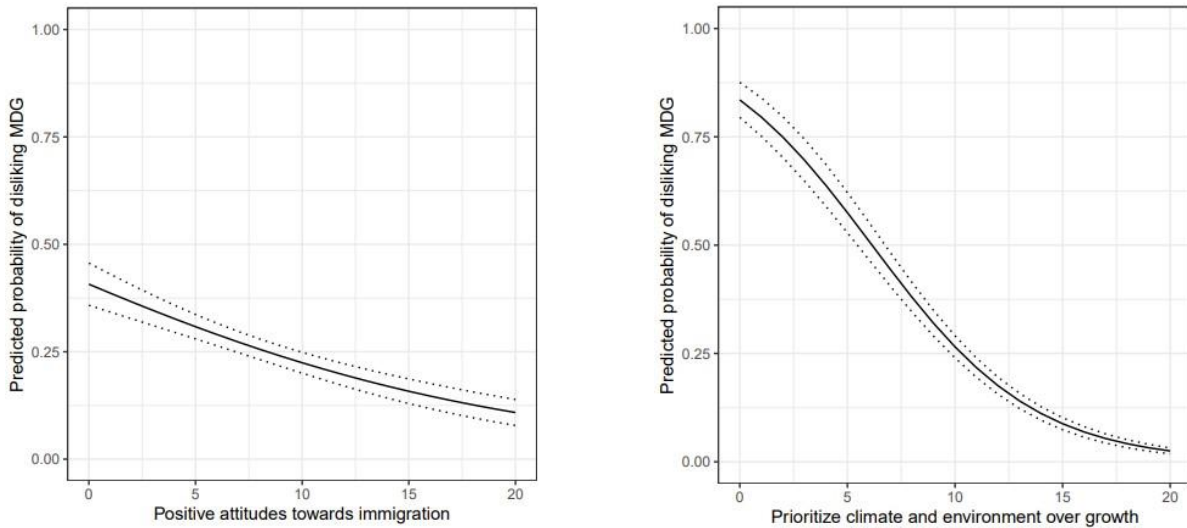
Figure 5.17: *Pred. probabilities of disliking MDG over ideological positions in new politics issues, full model.*
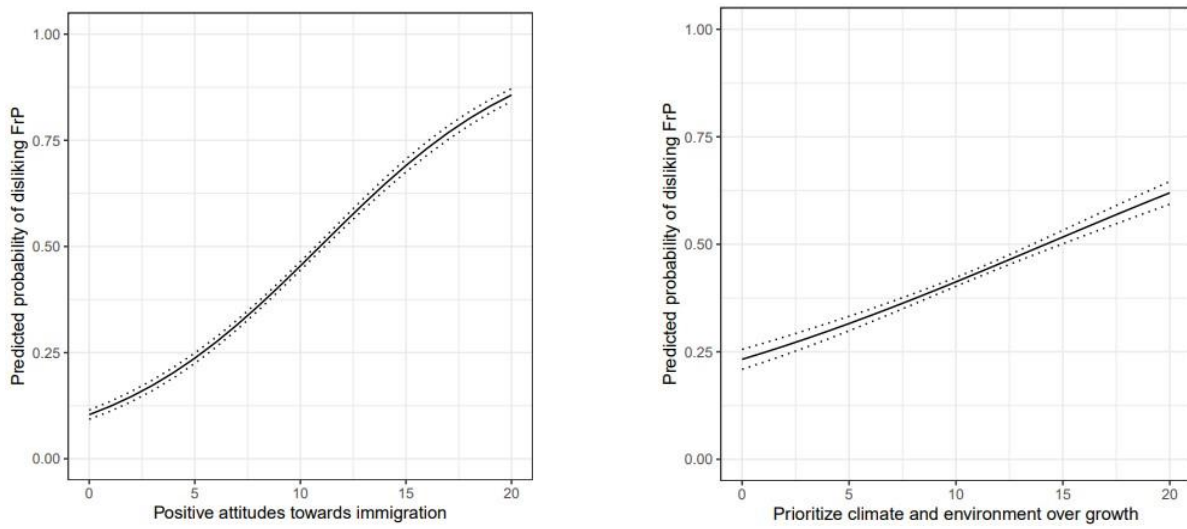
Figure 5.18: *Pred. probabilities of disliking FrP over ideological positions in new politics issues, full model.*
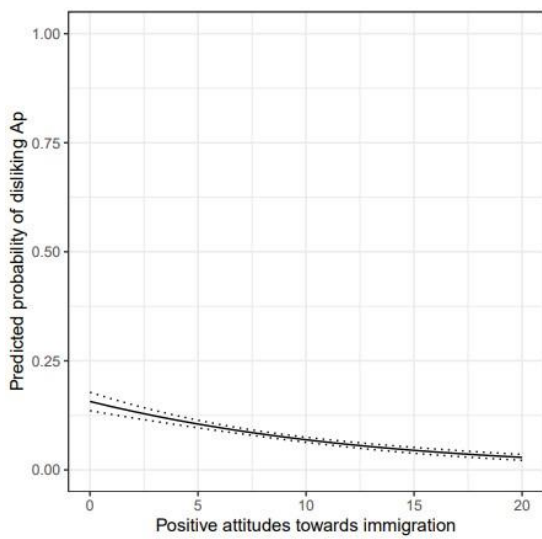
Figure 5.19: *Predicted probabilities of disliking Ap over ideological positions in the immigration issue, full model.*
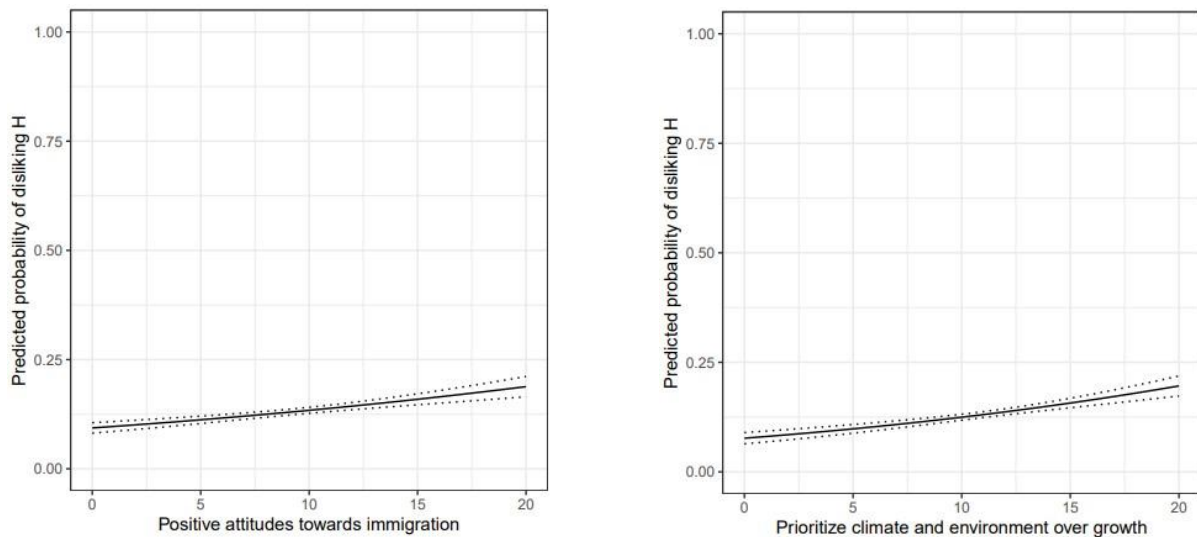
Figure 5.20: *Predicted probabilities of disliking H over ideological positions in new politics issues, full model.*

5.3 Main findings

The initial investigations of the affective landscape of the Norwegian party system focused on mapping of the received dislike of NPPs, compared to the six other parties in the parliament – the non-NPPs. The results supported the expectations in H1, *NPPs are more disliked than other parties.* However, the distance in average received sympathy varies to a large degree over the period investigated in the analysis.

The investigation of affective polarization towards individual parties, revealed that the accuracy of H1 is highly vulnerable for variations within the NPP category as well as the non-NPP category. For the NPPs, this illustrated by the diverging trajectories of SV and FrP. The affective polarization towards SV falls substantially already in the 1980s, while FrP is still broadly unpopular. These findings suggest that the phenomenon of populist radical right exceptionalism, that is evident in most European countries (Gidron et al., 2023; Harteveld et al., 2022; Reiljan & Ryan, 2021), is present also in Norwegian society. However, the latest addition to the group of NPPs, MDG, exemplifies that not all GAL parties are accepted by broad parts of the population. Most of the non-NPPs follow a more unitary trajectory than NPPs, but there are mentionable exceptions. RV, later R, is a prominent outlier and has been far more affectively polarized than any other Norwegian party. KrF is another non-NPP that was similarly affectively polarized as FrP and MDG in 2021. The conclusion will include a debate on the analytical value of the NPP approach, when studying affective polarization in multiparty systems.

The party level analysis investigated to what degree and how supply side factors, political relevance, and coalition arrangements, correlated with affective polarization towards NPPs. In the context of the analysis, political relevance was understood as a) electoral support and b) government attendance. Two competing hypotheses were articulated for the possible outcomes of the increased political relevance of NPPs. H2a and H2b assumed that *the dislike of NPPs will decrease as a) the support for the party grows, b) the party enters government.* H2 constitutes the legitimation hypothesis. Conversely, H3a and H3b assumed that *the dislike of NPPs will increase as a) the support for the party grows, b) the party enters government.* H3 constitutes the threat hypothesis. In addition, coalition arrangements were expected to be connected to affective polarization towards NPPs. H4 assumed that *the dislike of NPPs will decrease among the supporters of the coalition partners of the NPP.* H4 implies that one would observe a polarizing trend in the voters' levels of affective polarization towards NPPs, dividing the supporters of the coalition parties and the parties in opposition.

When investigating the bivariate correlation between electoral support and affective polarization towards NPPs, H2a – the *legitimation hypothesis* – is largely supported. Both SV and FrP are more disliked in the election years when their electoral support is lower. Rather than leading to frustration and fear among the mainstream society, these findings suggest that successful NPPs are more accepted by broader parts of the population. The legitimation hypothesis is also strengthened by the fact that electoral support does not correlate with the affective polarization towards non-NPPs. This indicates that the received dislike of parties that are already legitimized, is affected by other factors than electoral support. However, for MDG substantial increase in electoral support has been coupled with a sharp increase in affective polarization.

There is no clear connection between the government attendance and levels of affective polarization towards NPPs. However, it seems to be a common pattern that parties who are politically responsible for people's current grievances, experience an upsurge in affective polarization. However, both NPPs (we only have post-government data points for SV) and non-NPPs are often more accepted in the years after they manage governmental power. It is interesting however, that the expectations of H4 are not confirmed by the results. Rather than unifying the coalition partners' sentiments towards NPPs, the inclusion of NPPs in government are followed by an increase in dislike from the supporters of the coalition partners who strongly oppose these parties' position in new politics issues, like V and Sp. On the contrary, the non-NPPs are less disliked by all their coalition partners, compared to the voters of the opposition, during the governmental periods of the last decade.

Finally, the individual-level analysis aimed at exploring the correlations between political and social factors and affective polarization. H5 expected that *the dislike of NPPs can be explained by voters' ideological position in new politics issues*, which were supported to a great extent. H6 that assumed that *the dislike of NPPs can be explained by whether voters perceive new politics issues as important*, was not fully supported as the estimates were largely insignificant when controlling for ideology, social factors, and the demographic variables. H7, *the dislike of NPPs can be explained by voters' social background, like education, class, and place of residences*, was largely supported in the initial investigation. However, when included in the full model, most of the social regression estimates lost salience. Some of them also changed direction, portraying a completely different picture than expected in H7. It became evident that social groups that are typical for GAL and TAN voters are affectively polarized towards parties that represent a social out-group. However, this relationship is likely caused by the political attitudes that are common among these social groups, not social background identities per se.

In some respects, the results presented above support the expectations from the hypotheses. Hence, they affirm findings from studies on affective polarization from other multiparty systems. However, some of the findings were unexpected. The final chapter includes a concluding discussion on the significance of the empirical findings of this thesis in a comparative perspective and suggest a course for future research on affective polarization in multiparty systems.

6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I reflect on the findings from the analysis presented above. I evaluate if conducting research on affective polarization in multiparty systems through an NPP lese is a viable approach. Furthermore, I expand on the results by comparing levels of antipathy towards Norwegian NPPs to the findings from similar cases in Europe. I reflect on the role of FrP as a highly disliked party in the Norwegian society, but as a rather accepted populist radical right party in a comparative perspective. In addition, the excessive levels of affective polarization towards MDG compared to other GAL parties, are also discussed. It is also imperative to discuss the limitations of the thesis by evaluating the internal validity of the findings, as well as potential epistemological fallacies. Lastly, I reflect on the potential democratic challenge of affective polarization. On the one hand, partisan hostility can be understood as the inevitable outcome of a healthy and pluralistic democracy. On the other hand, researchers should watch increasing levels of affective polarization vigilantly, as deepening political divides might have grave consequences.

6.1 The analytical value of the NPP approach

The analytical approach of this thesis is based on the overreaching assumption that NPPs have a distinguishable role in the affective landscape of multiparty systems, compared to other parties. By building on findings from existing studies, as well as cleavage theory and knowledge from the literature on protest movements, I argued that it makes sense to study affective polarization through an NPP lens. With the empirical backbone provided in chapter 5, I will reflect on the analytical value of the theoretical distinction between NPPs and non-NPPs in relation to levels of affective polarization.

I found that the party categories of NPPs and non-NPPs have different positions in the affective landscape of the Norwegian party system. First, NPPs are more disliked than non-NPPs. Furthermore, the general observation is that both supply and demand side factors correlate stronger and in different ways with the affective polarization towards NPPs, compared to other parties. However, there is obvious diversity both among the NPPs, as well as the non-NPPs. As mentioned in chapter 3 on case selection, the categorization of parties is often not clear-cut. Rather, it is a complicated task that tends to miss information of the more fine-grained character. Thus, the analysis revealed that NPPs are objects of excessive affective polarization

from the voters, compared to established parties like Ap and H. Still, there are non-NPPs that have experienced just as much, and even more, hostility than NPPs.

The obvious outlier among the non-NPPs is the RV, later R. The party was excluded from the NPP category because of its origins in the communist movement, and hence the class cleavage. Still, RV was not only criticized for its radical economic ideology. RV was a party that previously had ties to communist and revolutionary movements (Jupskås, 2023). Hence, it is likely that the excessive levels of affective polarization towards RV, was the mainstream reaction to the authoritarian elements of the party, rather than just its position in economic disputes. In the context of this thesis, it is interesting that the steep decline in the affective polarization towards R has occurred simultaneously to the increased focus on new politics issues like LGBTQ+ rights and environmental justice (Jupskås, 2023).

A second non-NPP that should be discussed is KrF. The party was not characterized as an NPP because it is rooted in the Rokkanian cleavage structure and was established before the politcization of new politics issues. However, if one looks at the current ideological profile of KrF, it is the most socially conservative force in the party system. The affective polarization literature highlights questions regarding religious morality as a strong generator of political hostility (e.g. Gidron et al., 2020). The grey zone position of Christian parties in relation to TAN-pole politics is outlined by Kriesi and his colleagues (2006). They propose that the new politics dimension is just a transformed version of the religious dimension described by Lipset and Rokkan in 1967. This might explain the fluctuations in the dislike towards KrF. On the one hand, KrF is an established party in the center of the political spectrum. On the other hand, KrF represents a political outlook that seems completely estranged and unwanted among a highly secular and socially progressive population. However, it is not safe to conclude that the fluctuations in affective polarization towards KrF can be attributed to the party's placement in new politics issues. It is likely that the strong increase in levels of affective polarization towards KrF in 2005 is partly caused by the party's implementation of a highly controversial act that banned smoking in restaurants and bars the year before. Similarly, the record high levels of Ap in 2021 were measured right after the leader of KrF had to resign after allegations of misusing tax benefits and housing-related privileges. This implies that the affective polarization towards parties is highly context and time specific, underlining the need for expanded research on affective polarization on the party level.

In summary, the findings suggest that the NPP approach is indeed valuable for researchers who aim at untangling the complex structures of affective polarization in multiparty

systems. The affective gap between NPPs and non-NPPs are especially distinct when comparing SV, FrP and MDG to the established parties of Ap and H, leaving out the borderline cases. However, future research should be aware of the affectively polarizing potential of parties that are not part of either the new left, green or populist radical right party family, but that still champion radical societal changes. Furthermore, since affective polarization towards parties can be caused by a multitude of explanation factors, researchers should not let the NPP lens lead to biased conclusions. The next section will elaborate on how the Norwegian NPPs fit into the existing literature on affective polarization in Europe, focusing on the diverse levels of affective polarization towards SV, FrP and MDG.

6.2 Mild populist radical right exceptionalism

I chose Norway as a case for the investigation of this thesis, because of the diversity of NPPs that have gained political relevance over the last 50 years. The fact that Norway has three parties that can be characterized as NPPs, while obtaining relatively low levels of affective polarization makes it an interesting, as well as important, case. In this section, I discuss how Norway fits into the existing literature on affective polarization, focusing on the role of NPPs. In this respect, a crucial point of reflection is the different levels and trajectories of affective polarization towards SV, MDG and FrP, in comparison to other European GAL and TAN parties.

A general observation that distinguishes Norway from similar European countries, is that levels of affective polarization is not on the rise (Hesstvedt et al., 2023). Studies from Sweden and Finland show that the harmony between voters have been disrupted by the sudden occupancy of forceful populist radical right parties (Kawecki, 2022; Reiljan & Ryan, 2021). This thesis has discovered that the rise of FrP did not lead to increased levels of affective polarization. Rather, the hostility towards FrP has declined slightly and is evidently lower in the years when they gain a higher percentage of the votes. Populist radical right exceptionalism is one of the strongest tendencies that is observed in the literature on affective polarization in multiparty systems (Gidron et al., 2023; Harteveld et al., 2022). Indeed, FrP is the most disliked party among the NPPs. Furthermore, the process of broad acceptance of SV, has not been matched by FrP. The findings support the findings from other European countries that TAN parties are more affectively polarized than GAL parties. However, the party family of the populist radical right is highly diverse, both in terms of origins and ideology (Mudde, 2007). It

is therefore not surprising that the intensity of populist radical right exceptionalism deviates between party systems.

The difference in levels of affective polarization in Sweden and Norway and the corresponding roles of FrP and SD (Sweden Democrats), exemplifies that the position of populist radical right parties as antagonistic outsiders, can deviate between similar countries. SD is object of intense dislike from both left and right parties. While FrP is more affectively polarized than other parties, it was always accepted among the voters of the mainstream right. It is likely that the diverging levels of populist radical right exceptionalism in Sweden and Norway has to do with the origins of SD compared to FrP, as well as the parties' radicality in new politics issues. Indeed, SD was founded as an immigration critical extra parliamentary group (Erlingsson et al., 2014), while FrP gained a position in Norwegian politics by advocating liberal economic policies. Furthermore, it is likely that the antagonism towards FrP has been dampened by the inclusionary approach of H, compared to the strategy of cordon sanitaire that have been applied by the mainstream right in Sweden (Heinze, 2018).

The existing literature on affective polarization in multiparty systems portray populist radical right exceptionalism as one of the great challenges for the future of European democracies. Hence, it is imperative that researchers start to investigate the countries that have managed a relatively seamless inclusion of a populist radical right party, and why that is. The findings presented in this thesis is an important contribution to future research on the driving causes of affective polarization towards the populist radical right.

6.3 GAL-party unexceptionalism, and the green threat

The existing research on affective polarization finds that GAL parties are usually accepted among mainstream society. Western societies have moved in a culturally liberal direction, and the GAL values are indeed less frowned upon than the values of the TAN pole (Inglehart & Norris, 2019). The investigation of SV confirms the previous findings of GAL unexceptionalism (Harteveld et al., 2022), in the context of rising levels of affective polarization. Furthermore, other parties that promote GAL policies do not receive intensified levels of affective polarization. Two prominent examples of this are R and V. As already mentioned above, R has experienced an unprecedented steep and steady process of popular acceptance, while endorsing GAL politics. The liberal party V has combined a techno-optimistic growth perspective, with a green profile. The new politics turn of V has not been

coupled by affective penalties from the mainstream society. Rather, V is among the least disliked parties in the Norwegian party system. Hence, the unexceptionalism of Norwegian GAL parties are in line with existing research on affective polarization. Still, there is an obvious exception to the rule in the case of MDG.

The high level of affective polarization towards MDG is enigmatic and deviates from existing findings concerning affective polarization towards GAL parties. Nor does MDG fit into the broader category of NPPs. However, the tendency of GAL-party unexceptionalism was evident when MDG first entered the parliament. The strong increase in accretive polarization towards MDG since 2013 is therefore unexpected. This thesis has shown that the increase in political relevance, like electoral support, correlates negatively with affective polarization towards NPPs. MDG follows the opposite trajectory. Furthermore, this analysis has shown that MDG is excessively disliked by voters of distinct social groups. Still, the relationships between education, class and place of residence and affective polarization towards MDG is caused by the political orientations that are common for these social groups, not group identities per se. Because the other parties that emphasize green politics are not affectively penalized for their views, it is likely that MDG is excessively disliked for other reasons than the factors explored in this thesis.

I can only speculate on why MDG is a deviating case in the study of affective polarization in multiparty systems. First it must not be neglected that MDG is not aligned with either the socialist or the conservative bloc. The lack of political adherence might strengthen the voters' perception of them as antagonistic outsiders. A related problem for MDG is their single-issue approach to politics. It is likely that single-issue parties are seen as less adequate political actors. Furthermore, the rhetoric of party leaders, and hence the image of the voter base, are not investigated in this thesis. However, it is likely that the moralizing appearance of party elites, and MDG voters alike, possibly intensify levels of affective polarization. Furthermore, MDG is the party that is most strongly in opposition towards the Norwegian oil industry (Miljøpartiet De Grønne, 2023). Hence, MDG might pose a bigger threat to the comfort of people's lives, than other green parties.

This thesis has discovered that excessive levels of affective polarization is not limited to populist radical right parties. The case of MDG suggests that future research should put stronger emphasis on the role of green parties. One of the main questions that remains unanswered is whether the intensity of affective polarization towards MDG is caused by factors

that are specific for Norway, or if MDG anticipate a tendency of increased polarized potential of the climate and environment issue, and hence radical green parties. Indeed, green protest movements and civil disobedience is a frequent phenomenon across Western societies. It will be crucial to build an empirical framework for the affective polarization towards green parties, that are more radical than mainstream GAL-parties.

6.4 Limitations of the thesis

This thesis provides significant evidence about the characteristics of affective polarization towards NPPs in Norway, and how they deviate from other parties. The results enlighten trends and features of the political landscape of Norway that was largely undiscovered in the existing literature, as well as contributing to the study of affective polarization in multiparty systems. However, this thesis also has mentionable limitations.

First, the results are prone to the problem of opposite causality and spurious effects. To secure internal validity, investigations should be conducted using panel data that asks the same questions to a fixed sample of voters over time. This way it would be possible to conclude on the degree to which NPPs drive up levels of affective polarization, and why that is (Dahlum & Knutsen, 2017). Second, the theoretical concept of affective polarization can be operationalized in multiple ways. In this thesis I investigate voters' feelings towards parties. However, the original concept of affective polarization refers to hostility between. partisans. Thus, the results are vulnerable to epistemological fallacy. Indeed, scholars find that sympathy scores towards out-parties only partly correlates with affective polarization towards out-partisans (Knudsen, 2021).

Future research on affective polarization should be coupled with an expansion in relevant data gathering, both of longitudinal data and survey questions regarding members of political out-groups.

6.5 Is affective polarization a challenge to democracies?

The results from this thesis have shown that voters' social background indeed correlates worth affective polarization towards Norwegian NPPs. However, social group identities that are formed around education status, class, and place of residence, are also connected to distinct political attitudes. Especially in relation to new politics issues (Hooghe & Marks, 2018).

Consequently, one might argue that affective polarization is a legitimate expression of contradicting political attitudes.

It is not unexpected that the fundamental societal changes of the late post-war period, and the corresponding realignment of voters, has led to increased political tension. Especially in relation to the emergence of parties that protest traditional politics. This implies that affective polarization that is spurred by ideological believes, is not a threat to democratic norms. Rather affective polarization can be understood as the inevitable outcome of the pluralist democracy. Indeed, researchers find that affective polarization correlate with political interest of voters (Reiljan & Ryan, 2021) and increased turnout in elections (Harteveld & Wagner, 2023).

However, affective polarization, understood as the antipathy between political opponents, potentially have unwanted consequences for the democratic norms of Western societies (see Berntzen et al., 2023 for an overview). If supporters of different parties stop interacting with each other (Knudsen, 2021) and even condone political violence (Kalmoe & Mason, 2022), it does not matter if the source of antipathy is ideological disagreements or social stigmatization. It will be damaging in both cases. Therefore, future research should not only focus on the driving forces of affective polarization, but also be aware of the consequences of intensified political hostility.

In summary, this thesis provides a solution for the challenge of empirically assessing levels of affective polarization in multiparty systems, by narrowing the focus of investigation to the party category of NPPs. Furthermore, the study contributes methodologically by suggesting that dichotomous dislike scores capture the concept of affective polarization in a more accurate manner. Future research on affective polarization in multiparty systems should use the evidence provided by this thesis to generate more knowledge on the subject of affective polarization in multiparty systems.

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9 Appendix

Appendix A

Appendix A provides an overview of the number of respondents in that either get the value 1 (denoting a sympathy score equal or under 20) or 0 (denoting a sympathy score over 20). The tables display the number of respondents who dislike each party compared to voters who do not, for all the years between 1981 and 2021.

	1997	2001	2005	2009	2013	2017	2021	Sum
Dislike RV/R								
0	673	665	743	706	807	1053	1019	5666
1	1256	1351	1170	982	809	828	538	6934
NA	126	325	99	94	111	85	283	1123
Sum	**2055**	**2341**	**2012**	**1782**	**1727**	**1966**	**1840**	**13723**

Table A.1: *Sample of voters who dislike (1) or does not dislike (0) RV/R, 1981-2021.*

	1981	1985	1989	1993	1997	2001	2005	2009	2013	2017	2021	Sum
Dislike SV												
0	907	1398	1750	1698	1474	1746	1558	1309	1215	1415	1200	15670
1	620	665	366	419	523	261	419	427	453	485	355	4993
NA	69	117	79	77	58	334	35	46	59	66	285	1225
Sum	**1596**	**2180**	**2195**	**2194**	**2055**	**2341**	**2012**	**1782**	**1727**	**1966**	**1840**	**21888**

Table A.2: *Sample of voters who dislike (1) or does not dislike (0) SV, 1981-2021.*

	1981	1985	1989	1993	1997	2001	2005	2009	2013	2017	2021	Sum
Dislike Ap												
0	1425	1863	1974	2021	1863	1806	1923	1660	1559	1682	1452	19228
1	114	207	158	105	171	203	67	88	126	227	118	1584
NA	57	110	63	68	21	332	22	34	42	57	270	1076
Sum	**1596**	**2180**	**2195**	**2194**	**2055**	**2341**	**2012**	**1782**	**1727**	**1966**	**1840**	**21888**

Table A.3: *Sample of voters who dislike (1) or does not dislike (0) Ap, 1981-2021.*

	1981	1985	1989	1993	1997	2001	2005	2009	2013	2017	2021	Sum
Dislike Sp												
0	1391	1862	1872	1806	1411	1576	1660	1549	1457	1675	1398	17657
1	139	203	237	310	603	422	314	183	210	222	167	3010
NA	66	115	86	78	41	343	38	50	60	69	275	1221
Sum	**1596**	**2180**	**2195**	**2194**	**2055**	**2341**	**2012**	**1782**	**1727**	**1966**	**1840**	**21888**

Table A.4: *Sample of voters who dislike (1) or does not dislike (0) Sp, 1981-2021.*

	2013	2017	2021	Sum
Dislike MDG				
0	1250	1133	875	3258
1	370	770	689	1829
NA	107	63	276	446
Sum	**1727**	**1966**	**1840**	**5533**

Table A.5: *Sample of voters who dislike (1) or does not dislike (0) MDG, 1981-2021.*

	1981	1985	1989	1993	1997	2001	2005	2009	2013	2017	2021	Sum
Dislike KrF												
0	1135	1624	1789	1825	1897	1764	1381	1321	1459	1433	889	16517
1	400	451	334	288	136	246	607	422	222	475	678	4259
NA	61	105	72	81	22	331	24	39	46	58	273	1112
Sum	**1596**	**2180**	**2195**	**2194**	**2055**	**2341**	**2012**	**1782**	**1727**	**1966**	**1840**	**21888**

Table A.6: *Sample of voters who dislike (1) or does not dislike (0) KrF, 1981-2021.*

	1981	1985	1989	1993	1997	2001	2005	2009	2013	2017	2021	Sum
Dislike V												
0	1333	1650	1746	1822	1745	1610	1662	1414	1540	1513	1250	17285
1	195	413	363	261	227	388	306	312	131	389	303	3288
NA	68	117	86	111	83	343	44	56	56	64	287	1315
Sum	**1596**	**2180**	**2195**	**2194**	**2055**	**2341**	**2012**	**1782**	**1727**	**1966**	**1840**	**21888**

Table A.7: *Sample of voters who dislike (1) or does not dislike (0) V, 1981-2021.*

	1981	1985	1989	1993	1997	2001	2005	2009	2013	2017	2021	Sum
Dislike H												
0	1275	1625	1830	1764	1702	1831	1703	1625	1573	1692	1342	17962
1	256	441	298	355	318	178	276	115	111	218	226	2792
NA	65	114	67	75	35	332	33	42	43	56	272	1134
Sum	**1596**	**2180**	**2195**	**2194**	**2055**	**2341**	**2012**	**1782**	**1727**	**1966**	**1840**	**21888**

Table A.8: *Sample of voters who dislike (1) or does not dislike (0) H, 1981-2021.*

	1981	1985	1989	1993	1997	2001	2005	2009	2013	2017	2021	Sum
Dislike FrP												
0	893	967	1183	1118	1181	1294	1335	1069	1069	1173	902	12184
1	636	1096	945	1006	856	715	654	678	613	735	664	8598
NA	67	117	67	70	18	332	23	35	45	58	274	1106
Sum	**1596**	**2180**	**2195**	**2194**	**2055**	**2341**	**2012**	**1782**	**1727**	**1966**	**1840**	**21888**

Table A.9: *Sample of voters who dislike (1) or does not dislike (0), 1981-2021.*

Appendix B

Appendix B includes the findings from the investigation, where the dichotoumus dislike scores that was used in the thesis are exchanged with continuous sympathy scores that ranges from 0 to 100. Because the variables are recoded so that high values denote strong hostility, the sympathy scores are called hostility scores, to make the reading of the tables and figures more intuitive.
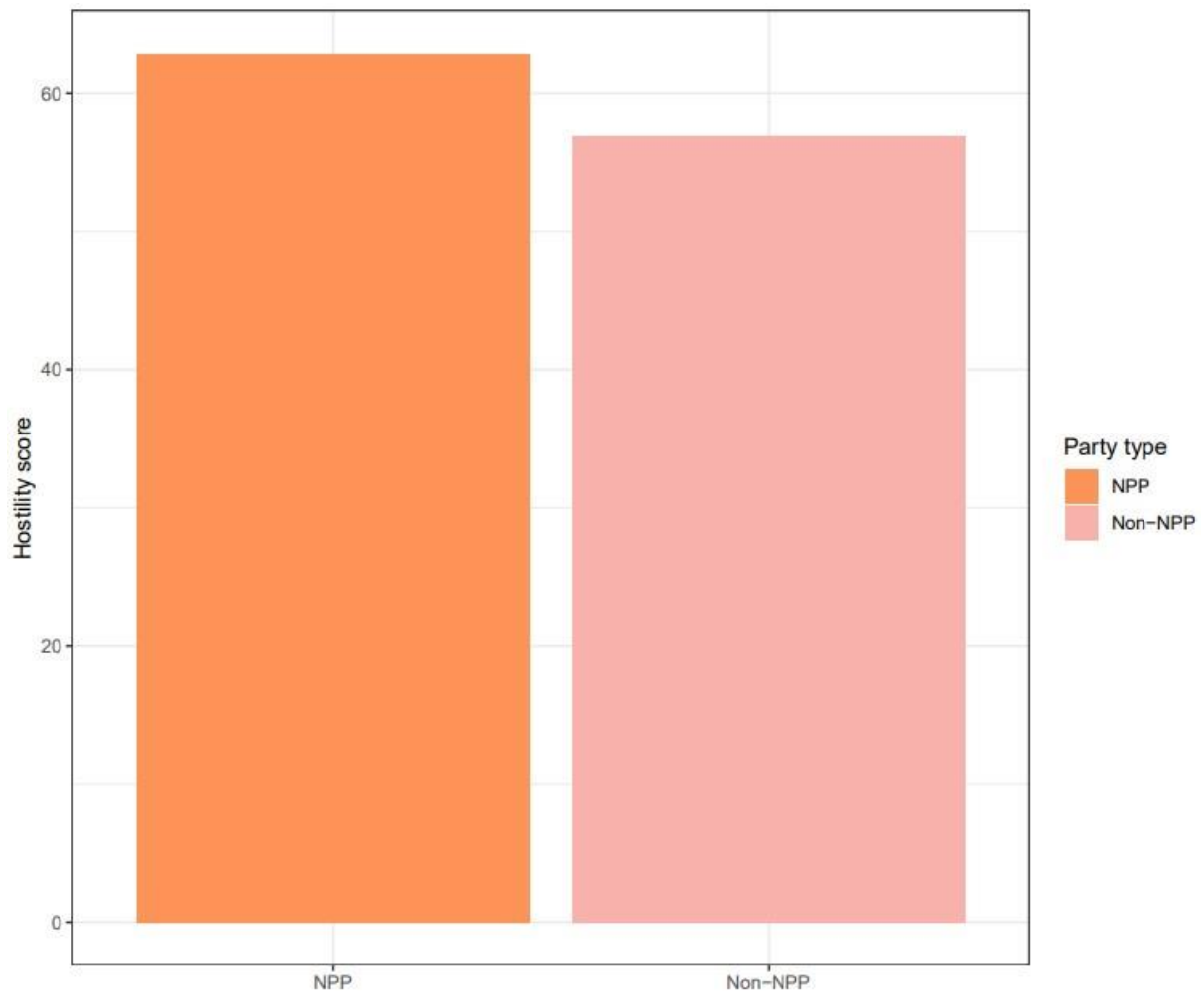

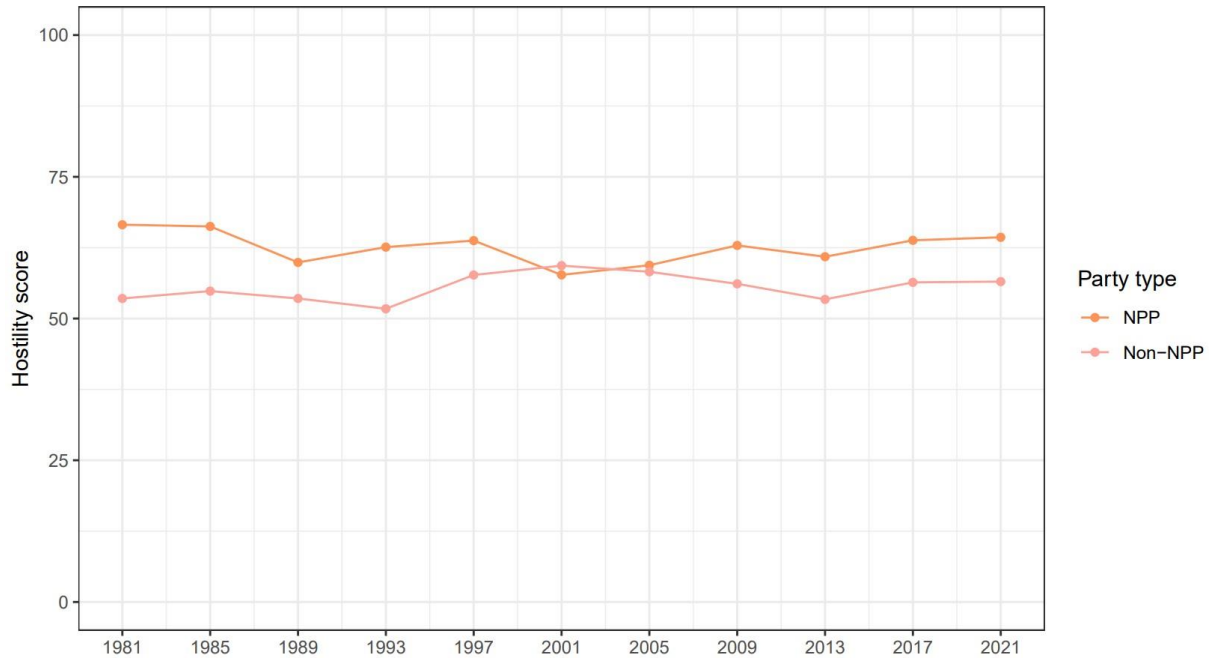**Figure B.1:** *Average hostility towards NPPs and non-NPPs.*

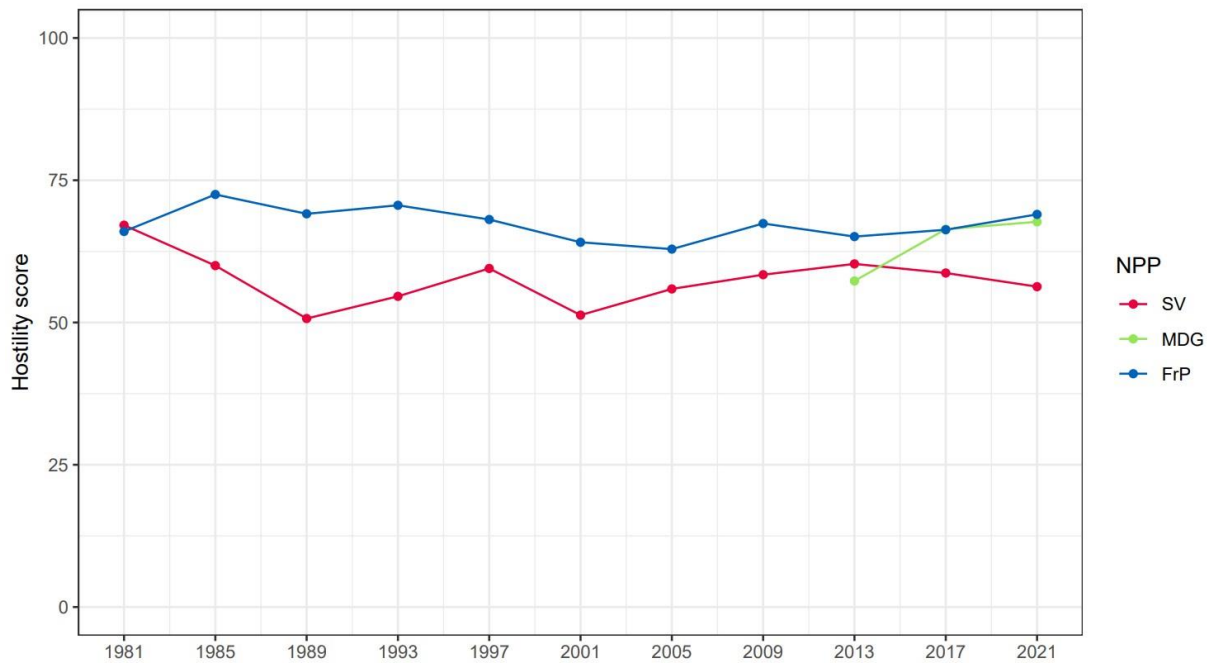**Figure B.2:** *Average hostility towards NPPs and non-NPPs, 1981-2021*

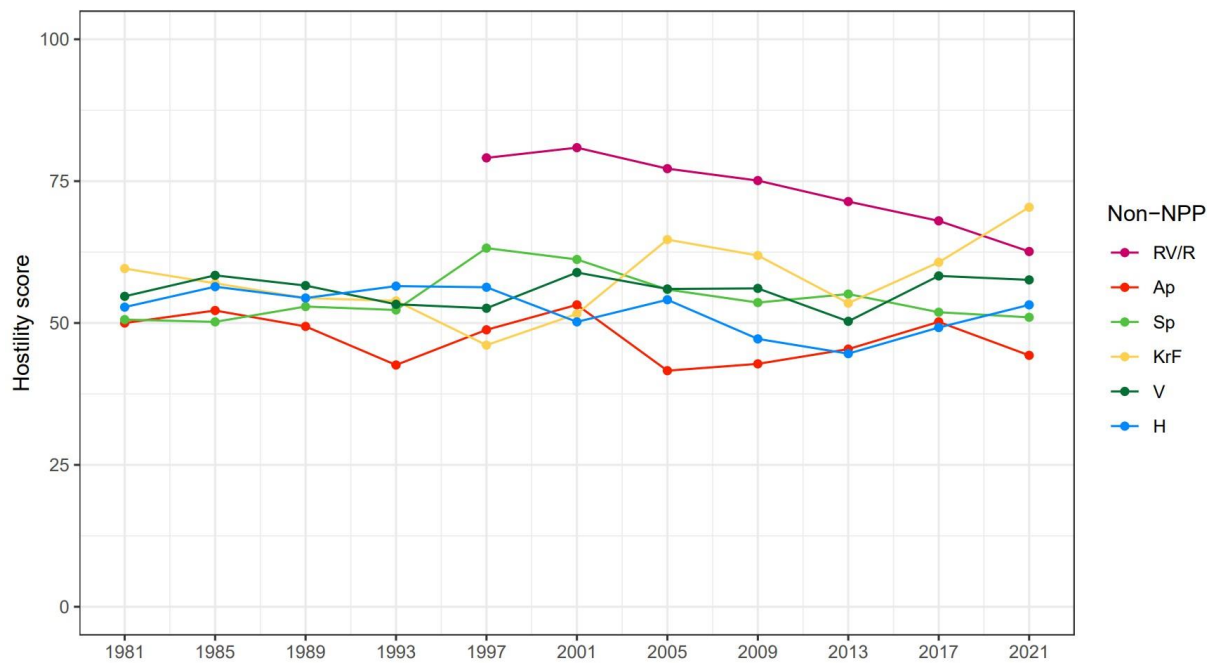**Figure B.3:** *Average hostility towards SV, MDG and FrP, 1981-2021.*

Figure B.4: *Average hostility towards RV/R, Ap, Sp, KrF, V and H, 1981-2021.*
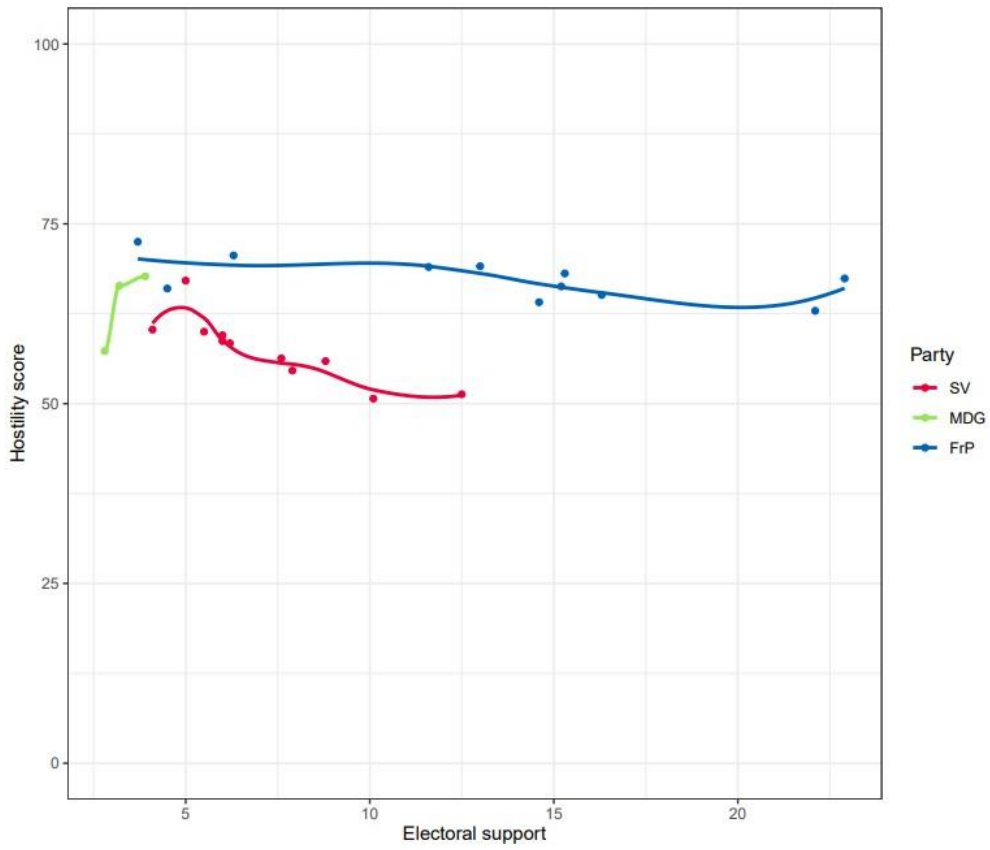
Figure B.5: *Relationship between electoral support and hostility towards NPPs, with LOESS trendline.*
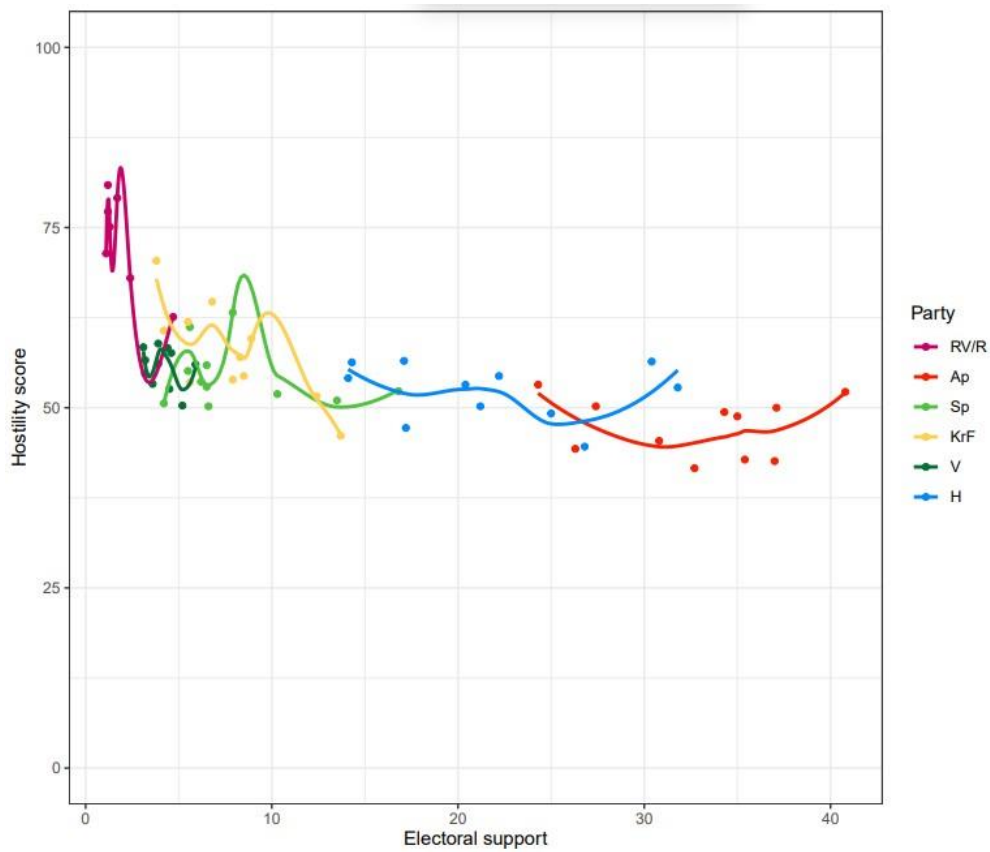
Figure B.6: *Relationship between electoral support and hostility towards non-NPPs, with LOESS trendli*
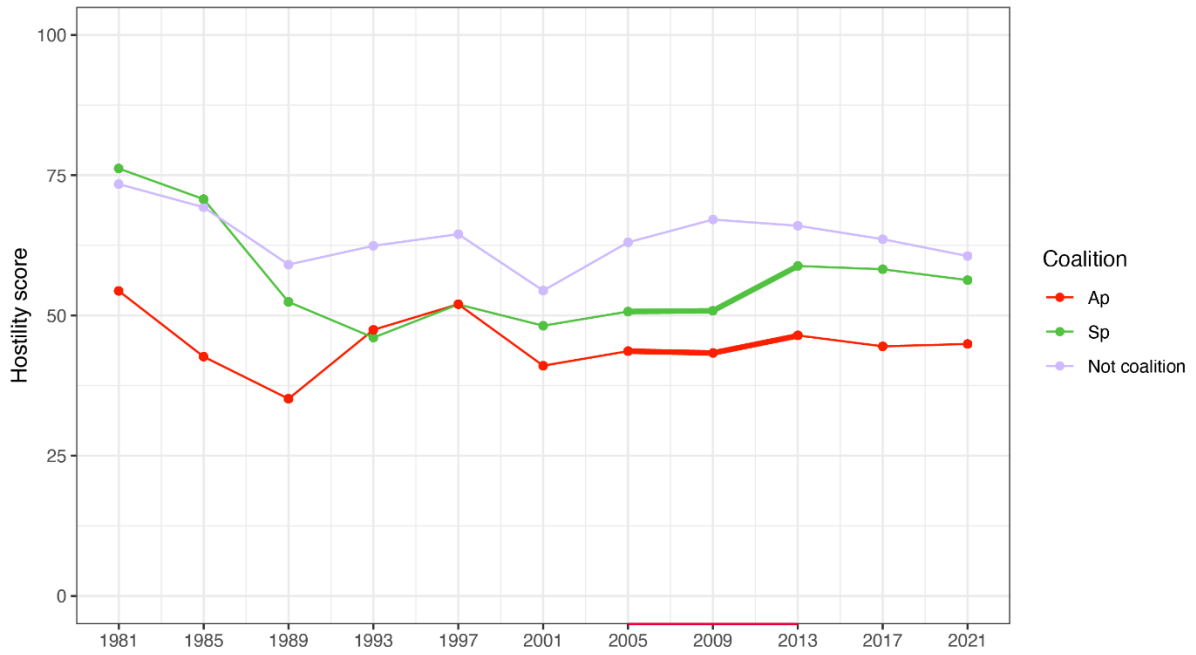
Figure B.7: *Average hostility towards SV from the supporters of Ap, Sp and other parties, 1981-2021.*

Figure B.8: *Average hostility towards FrP from the supporters of H, V, KrF and other parties, 1981-2021.*

8

Figure B.9: *Average hostility towards Ap from the supporters of SV, Sp and other parties, 1981-2021.*

Figure B.10: *Average hostility towards H from the supporters of FrP, V, KrF, Sp and other parties, 1981-2021.*

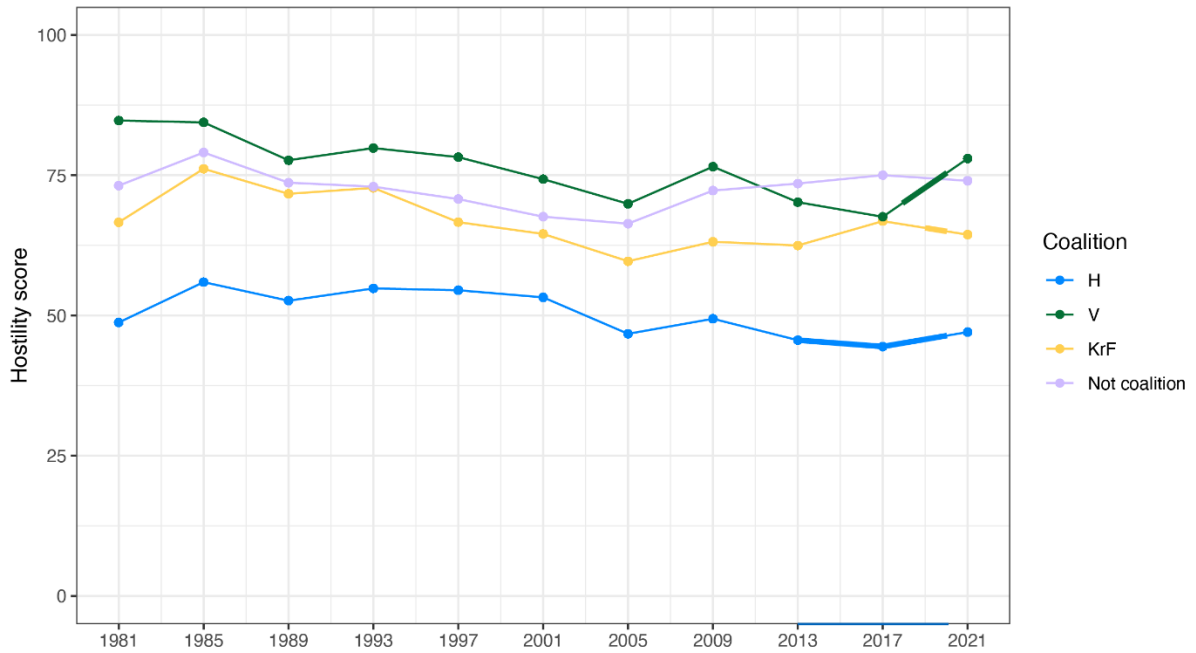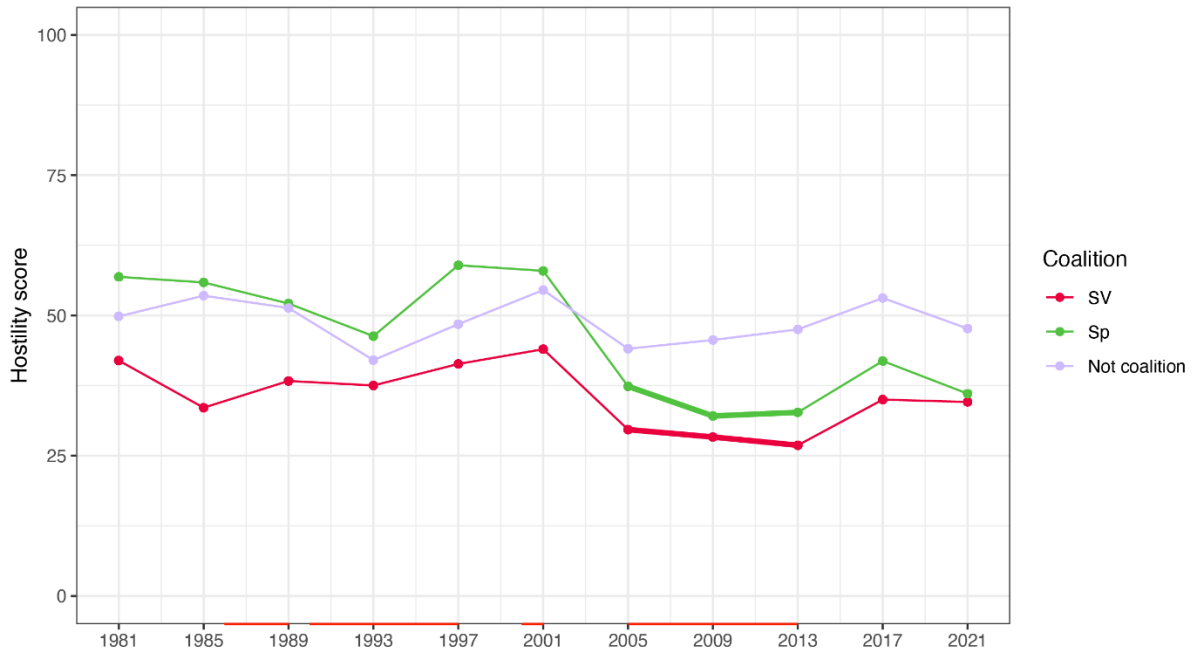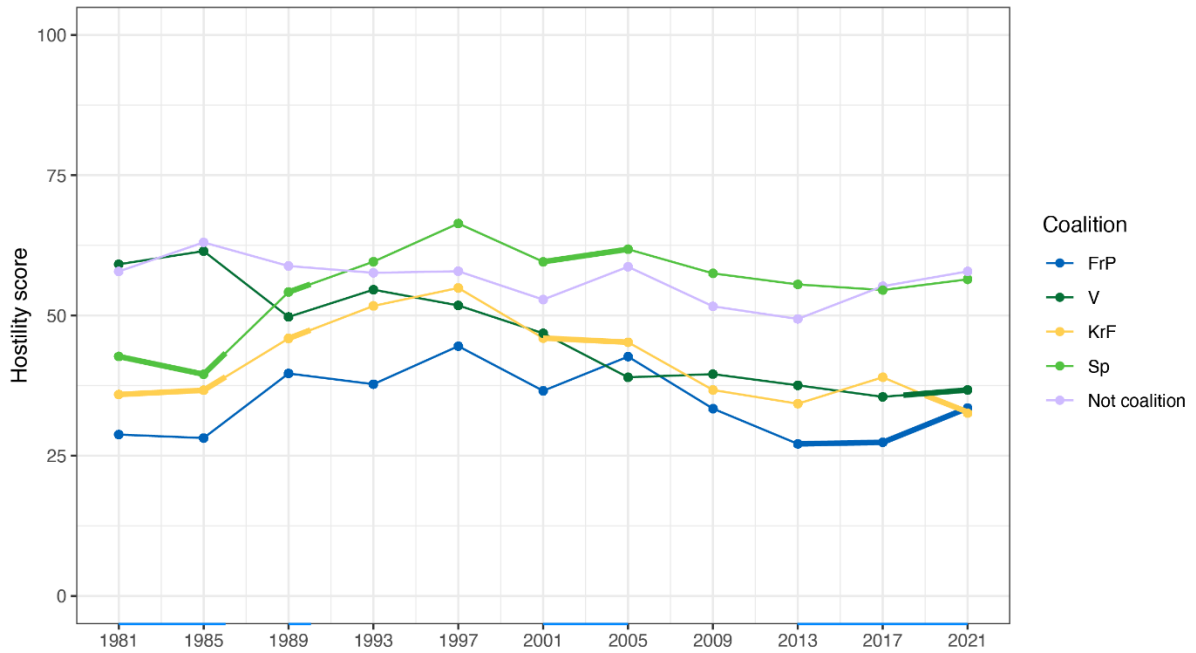|	Dependent variable:				
	Hostility towards SV	Hostility towards MDG	Hostility towards FrP	Hostility towards Ap	Hostility towards H
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Positive attitudes towards immigration	-1.159**	-0.780**	2.361**	-0.659**	0.365**
	(0.042)	(0.075)	(0.045)	(0.043)	(0.041)
Prioritize climate and environment over growth	-1.378**	-3.088**	1.094**	-0.253**	0.771**
	(0.047)	(0.076)	(0.050)	(0.048)	(0.047)
Constant	73.984**	99.585**	35.999**	57.896**	43.024**
	(0.697)	(0.951)	(0.753)	(0.717)	(0.698)
Observations	15,067	4,590	14,812	12,111	13,504
R^2	0.161	0.395	0.252	0.067	0.072
Adjusted R^2	0.160	0.395	0.252	0.066	0.072
Residual Std. Error	21.812 (df = 15056)	19.511 (df = 4585)	22.986 (df = 14801)	20.220 (df = 12100)	20.797 (df = 13493)
F Statistic	288.399*** (df = 10; 15056)	748.588*** (df = 4; 4585)	499.110*** (df = 10; 14801)	87.167*** (df = 10; 12100)	105.182*** (df = 10; 13493)

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01

Table B.1: *Ideological position in new politics issues and hostility towards parties, 1989-2021.*

	Dependent variable:				
	Hostility towards SV	Hostility towards MDG	Hostility towards FrP	Hostility towards Ap	Hostility towards H
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Immigration as most important issue (ref: Other issue)	7.360**	5.275**	-8.786**	6.416**	-6.392**
	(0.941)	(1.364)	(1.316)	(0.857)	(0.908)
Climate and environment as most important issue (ref: Other issue)	-13.851**	-22.989**	14.350**	-5.669**	4.828**
	(0.803)	(1.304)	(0.798)	(0.677)	(0.660)
Constant	52.535**	58.238**	66.347**	50.406**	53.559**
	(0.562)	(0.622)	(0.633)	(0.562)	(0.544)
Observations	15,084	4,607	14,829	12,128	13,521
R^2	0.043	0.099	0.034	0.046	0.040
Adjusted R^2	0.043	0.099	0.033	0.045	0.039
Residual Std. Error	23.287 (df = 15073)	23.806 (df = 4602)	26.127 (df = 14818)	20.446 (df = 12117)	21.152 (df = 13510)
F Statistic	68.275*** (df = 10; 15073)	126.825*** (df = 4; 4602)	51.697*** (df = 10; 14818)	58.803*** (df = 10; 12117)	56.410*** (df = 10; 13510)

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01

Table B2: *Salience of new politics issues and hostility towards parties, 1989-2021.*

	Dependent variable:				
	Hostility towards SV (1)	Hostility towards MDG (2)	Hostility towards FrP (3)	Hostility towards Ap (4)	Hostility towards H (5)
University degree (ref: Lower education)	-3.189**	-6.940**	10.272**	-2.143**	1.073*
	(0.478)	(0.844)	(0.532)	(0.457)	(0.463)
Working class (ref: Lower middle class)	1.317*	6.650**	-3.854**	-0.349	1.512**
	(0.574)	(1.214)	(0.656)	(0.579)	(0.531)
Upper middle class (ref: Lower middle class)	3.830**	4.834**	-3.129**	0.613	-2.928**
	(0.522)	(0.925)	(0.581)	(0.504)	(0.510)
Self-employed (ref: Lower middle class)	8.138**	5.541**	-5.840**	3.539**	-4.275**
	(0.775)	(1.485)	(0.896)	(0.733)	(0.780)
Urban inhabitant (ref: Rural inhabitant)	0.594	-3.392**	-0.942	-1.107*	-3.548**
	(0.534)	(1.022)	(0.603)	(0.515)	(0.497)
Constant	48.479**	60.712**	69.361**	49.977**	57.015**
	(0.828)	(1.224)	(0.920)	(0.808)	(0.778)
Observations	12,503	3,714	12,212	9,813	11,037
R^2	0.036	0.075	0.051	0.042	0.048
Adjusted R^2	0.035	0.073	0.050	0.040	0.047
Residual Std. Error	23.259 (df = 12489)	23.850 (df = 3706)	25.836 (df = 12198)	20.185 (df = 9799)	20.844 (df = 11023)
F Statistic	36.200*** (df = 13; 12489)	42.790*** (df = 7; 3706)	50.362*** (df = 13; 12198)	32.774*** (df = 13; 9799)	42.849*** (df = 13; 11023)

Note: *p<0.05; **p<0.01

Table B.3: *Education, class, area of residence and hostility towards parties, 1989-2021.*

	Dependent variable:				
	Hostility towards SV	Hostility towards MDG	Hostility towards FrP	Hostility towards Ap	Hostility towards H
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Female (ref: Male)	-5.510**	-2.508**	4.473**	-0.787	2.087**
	(0.404)	(0.669)	(0.426)	(0.426)	(0.408)
Age	0.075**	0.162**	0.219**	0.067**	0.113**
	(0.013)	(0.022)	(0.014)	(0.014)	(0.013)
University degree (ref: Lower education)	2.489**	1.030	1.696**	0.415	-2.608**
	(0.457)	(0.704)	(0.483)	(0.473)	(0.474)
Working class (ref: Lower middle class)	-3.718**	1.242	2.122**	-1.793**	4.151**
	(0.548)	(1.008)	(0.589)	(0.592)	(0.538)
Upper middle class (ref: Lower middle class)	1.604**	1.416	-2.016**	-0.084	-2.220**
	(0.486)	(0.755)	(0.510)	(0.505)	(0.500)
Self-employed (ref: Lower middle class)	4.554**	0.790	-3.788**	2.009**	-3.103**
	(0.722)	(1.207)	(0.786)	(0.737)	(0.766)
Urban inhabitant (ref: Rural inhabitant)	1.231*	-1.307	-2.117**	-0.935	-3.870**
	(0.488)	(0.817)	(0.521)	(0.507)	(0.480)
Positive attitudes towards immigration	-1.275**	-0.698**	2.506**	-0.594**	0.615**
	(0.048)	(0.085)	(0.051)	(0.050)	(0.047)
Prioritize climate and environment over growth	-1.192**	-2.898**	0.986**	-0.172**	0.806**
	(0.052)	(0.088)	(0.056)	(0.054)	(0.053)
Immigration as most important issue (ref: Other issue)	2.662**	-0.416	-7.348**	4.991**	-3.576**
	(0.931)	(1.200)	(1.216)	(0.909)	(0.946)
Climate and environment as most important issue (ref: Other issue)	-6.163**	-6.578**	4.072**	-2.749**	1.721*
	(0.852)	(1.260)	(0.797)	(0.780)	(0.737)
Constant	71.925**	90.314**	23.710**	55.073**	36.412**
	(1.130)	(1.758)	(1.216)	(1.171)	(1.135)
Observations	12,503	3,714	12,212	9,813	11,037
R^2	0.196	0.413	0.294	0.076	0.115
Adjusted R^2	0.195	0.411	0.293	0.074	0.114
Residual Std. Error	21.245 (df = 12483)	19.008 (df = 3700)	22.292 (df = 12192)	19.824 (df = 9793)	20.103 (df = 11017)
F Statistic	160.523*** (df = 19; 12483)	200.469*** (df = 13; 3700)	266.951*** (df = 19; 12192)	42.498*** (df = 19; 9793)	75.372*** (df = 19; 11017)

Note: $^{*}p<0.05$; $^{**}p<0.01$

Table B.4: *Gender, age, education, class, area of residence, ideology, salience, and hostility towards parties, 1989-2021.*