

# The Environmental Politics of the Populist Radical Right in Italy, Germany and Spain

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## Abstract

This article investigates the environmental politics of the populist radical right (PRR) by focusing on Germany (Alternative for Germany, AfD), Italy (Brothers of Italy and the League), and Spain (Vox). Drawing on a qualitative content analysis of 24 party documents, this study explores the use of identitarian, sovereignty, sceptic, and authoritarian frames, as well as the main diagnostic and prognostic narratives employed by the PRR. The findings suggest that they typically assign low salience to environmental issues and that they have increasingly resorted to sceptic and sovereignty frames in recent years. The analysis also shows that the PRR's framing of the environment has grown more confrontational over time, with a stronger rejection of transnational environmental initiatives in favour of national control. Of the cases under investigation, the AfD clearly emerges as the party with the most controversial stance as it encompasses evidence, process and response scepticism.

## 1. Introduction

Across the world, populist radical right (PRR) parties have experienced increased success and repeatedly entered national governments (Zulianello 2020), inviting scholars to explore their impact on political systems and the policy process (e.g. Bedock et al. 2023; Lutz 2019; Minkenberg 2001). Among others, the PRR is often considered to be sceptical towards climate change and related mitigation measures, especially those that involve international and multilateral cooperation (Lockwood 2018; Schaller and Carius 2019; Forchtner 2020). This has raised concerns about the potential effect of the rise of PRR parties on the so-called 'Green agenda' and its implications for environmental policies (e.g. Berker 2024; Huber et al., 2021). Existing research suggests that the PRR does not have homogeneous or straightforward stances towards the environment as they are often characterized by a conditional approach to the environment (Caiani and Lubarda 2023). Most notably, while these parties challenge supranational measures and initiatives directed at fighting climate change and protection (Schwörer and Fernández-García 2024a), they also support more traditional stances towards environmental protection measures that protect native nature, countryside and land (Forchtner and Kølvråa 2015).

Although an increasing number of studies have explored the relationship between the PRR and environmental issues (e.g. Caiani and Lubarda 2023; Huber et al. 2021; Schwörer and Fernández-García 2024a) we know little about the specific frames adopted by these parties while explicitly accounting for their intrinsic multidimensional nature

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rather than focusing on a specific aspect of this topic (e.g. climate change). Hence, this article tackles three main research questions: What are the main frames adopted by the PRR in environmental politics? What are the main diagnoses (problems) and prognoses (solutions) suggested by these parties? What salience do these parties attribute to each frame within the overall approach to environmental politics? By focusing on four Western European PRR parties Alternative for Germany (*Alternative für Deutschland*, AfD), Brothers of Italy (*Fratelli d'Italia*, FdI), the League (*Lega per Salvini Premier* since the 2019 elections, previously Northern League – *Lega Nord*, LN) and Vox we shed light on these questions by carrying out a systematic and in-depth qualitative content analysis of PRR manifestos and programmatic documents, using four main positional frame categories: identitarian, sovereignty, sceptic, and authoritarian. Our approach contributes to a deeper understanding of how these parties engage with the multidimensional nature of environmental issues, also offering a novel analysis of party evolution over time.

The analysis revealed that, overall, PRR parties, with the exception of the AfD, grant little salience to environmental politics in their documents, and although they use all the different frames, the sceptic and sovereignty frames have been the most common in recent years and represent the core of the environmental narrative of the four parties. Compared to their first manifestos, the frames of the PRR have grown more confrontational over time, with a stronger emphasis on scepticism towards the need for transnational environmental initiatives while reclaiming national competences. In terms of diagnoses and prognoses, the most critical stances are found in the case of the AfD, followed by Vox and the two Italian cases, which appear relatively more moderate in comparison with the German and Spanish cases.

The article is organised as follows. In the next section, we provide an overview of the literature on the relationship between the PRR and environmental politics. We then present the main frames explored in the present article and, subsequently, its research design and methods. Next, we provide an overview of the salience of the different frames adopted by the PRR and explore in detail how the four PRR parties under analysis resorted to the different frames in their official documents. Finally, we provide a comparative overview of the main findings and suggest some potential avenues for future research.

## **2. The populist radical right and the environment: the literature**

Recent studies suggest that the relationship between the PRR and environmental politics is more heterogeneous and nuanced than was previously expected (Buzogány and Mohamad-Klotzbach 2022; Crulli and Zulianello 2025; Forchtner 2020; Lockwood 2018). Caiani and Lubarda (2024: 606) maintain that these parties articulate a form of ‘yes-but’ and conditional environmentalism, which ‘is not entirely “either-or” [...] since the separation between ideology and practice itself is not theoretically watertight’. In particular, although PRR parties seem to be sceptical or opposed to transnational coordination and multilateralism when it comes to environmental protection, including but not limited to climate change, they are also inclined to protect native land, countryside and environment (Forchtner and Kølvråa 2015). These apparently contrasting features are primarily linked to nativism, which is the most important ideological ingredient of the PRR (Mudde 2007).

Furthermore, the PRR tends to adopt critical positions towards climate change: as Schwörer and Fernández-García (2024a: 3) underline, ‘it is the only party family that speaks out against climate protection’, and often challenge the very existence of human-made climate change (Lockwood 2018; Schaller and Carius 2019). Notably, nativism can drive PRR parties to consider the attempts to tackle climate change as being part of a project conducted by cosmopolitan elites who actively seek to undermine national interests and priorities (Lockwood 2018). In particular, the coordinated actions that would be required to ensure environmental and climate protection can be perceived as a threat to national sovereignty by both PRR parties and their supporters (Böhmelt 2021; Buzogány and Mohamad-Klotzbach 2021). For instance, actions aimed at fighting climate change are legitimate as long as they directly and/or exclusively benefit the natives (Fraune and Knodt 2018: 1). Additionally, the abstractness and complexity of the issue ‘increases the social distance between ordinary citizens and environmental politics’ (Böhmelt 2021:103), as negotiations take place in an international context, which creates a further distance from national citizens (Schwörer and Fernández-García, 2024a: 4). Considering this, PRR parties (and populist parties more generally) can easily depict global warming as an agenda of political elites, influenced by unelected scientists and environmental groups, rather than the people’s will (Buzogány and Mohamad-Klotzbach 2022). Nevertheless, as Selk and Kemmerzell (2022: 771) argue in their insightful analysis, the relationship ‘is not as simple as it might seem at first glance’ as there are considerable differences between PRR parties in terms of various environmental policies, which are influenced by contextual factors.

At the same time, however, the PRR tends to favour more traditional measures oriented towards the protection of the national domestic environment, which can be defined as ‘climate nationalism’ (Schwörer and Fernández-García, 2024a: 2). These actors, in fact, often favour more conventional actions to protect the environment; these are usually framed in terms of a symbolic connection between the land and the people, according to which the protection of domestic nature (such as rivers, forests and animals) is indissolubly connected to the idea of protecting its native inhabitants (Forchtner 2020; Forchtner and Kølvråa 2015; Lubarda 2020). Additionally, considering its ideological background, PRR is expected to trigger a nostalgic vision of the past, praising traditional lifestyles (Böhmelt 2021; Buzogány and Mohamad-Klotzbach 2021; Huber 2020; Lockwood 2018). However, even in this respect, there are considerable variations: for instance, in the field of animal welfare the analysis by Schwörer and Fernández-García (2024b: 17) ‘show(s) a substantial heterogeneity in the salience of the issue and their positions on it’. The PRR’s emphasis and position on environmental issues and climate protection may indeed be influenced by contextual factors: for instance, as maintained by Schwörer and Fernández-García (2024a: 2-3), climate issues were never a particularly salient topic for PRR parties, at least until the 2019 Fridays for Future protests.

### **3. Framing environmental politics**

While the literature provides important studies dealing with the relationship between the environment and the PRR, we know very little about the specific frames adopted by these parties, especially in view of the intrinsic multidimensional nature of these issues

(e.g. Lundquist 2024; Zhou 2013). Environmental politics is inherently multidimensional, covering a range of ecological, scientific, socio-economic and political complexities (Andonova and Mitchell 2010) and encompassing multiple policy areas, instruments and governance levels (Lundquist 2024). In the context of PRR parties, this multidimensionality acquires a specific ideological character, as environmental issues intersect with elements such as national identity, energy and food sovereignty. Focusing exclusively on one dimension, such as climate policy, risks obscuring the complexity of PRR environmental discourses. Thus, this study adopts a broad conceptualization of environmental politics, including references to nature, animal protection, energy transition, climate change, European climate policies, and novel foods, among others. Agriculture *per se* is not considered part of environmental politics in the strict sense, unless explicitly framed in environmental or sustainability terms.

The four-frame analytical framework proposed here is designed precisely to capture this multidimensionality. As Terkildsen and Schnell (1997: 881) argue '[f]raming is important whenever an issue can be presented in multiple ways which may potentially influence how people think about an issue'. Accordingly, environmental politics can be tackled in different ways by political actors and can encompass a plethora of issues and policy areas. This article explores them by focusing on the framing process of the environment by the PRR, which is essential for collective action (Benford and Snow 2000). PRR parties, like any other actor, constantly undertake framing processes to make sense of political reality and to compete with rivals. In accordance with the framing literature (Entman 1993), we understand frames as interpretive schemas that select and emphasize certain aspects of an issue. Building on this approach, we use the concept of positional frame to refer to the explicit stance that PRR parties take towards environmental politics in light of their core ideological features. Positional frames thus capture not only how PRR parties define environmental problems and solutions, but also where they position themselves in relation to mainstream environmental discourses.

Accordingly, we focus on four main types of positional<sup>1</sup> frames (identitarian, sceptic, sovereignty, authoritarian), identified following deductive logic drawing both on the existing literature on PRR parties' ideology and their relationship with environmental politics, and the core ideological features of PRR parties. The frames were therefore established prior to the content analysis and applied systematically across all documents, with the purpose of assessing their presence and salience in each case. The theoretical grounding of each frame in the secondary literature is detailed in the respective frame explications below. In addition, in our analysis we also identify diagnostic framings, which refer to the way actors identify problems, as well as prognostic framings, which aim to identify solutions (Snow and Benford, 1988: 200–201). We also measure their salience, i.e., the relative emphasis parties place on each frame within the overall approach to environmental politics. This choice is inspired by an approach used by Schwörer and Fernández-García (2024a), who find a negative linear correlation between salience and

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<sup>1</sup> The documents under analysis also included various 'neutral' frames, which are typically more depoliticized and vaguer than the others, covering general references to the environment, such as the celebration of a country's natural beauty, the general need to protect the environment, and similar themes. The distinctive feature of this frame is that it does not express a specific positional stance, and such instances are coded only if they are effectively associated with at least one of the four categories at the centre of our analytical focus.

positioning on climate change: parties more sceptical about climate protection tend to give greater emphasis to the issue. Extending this logic to the level of individual frames, incorporating salience allows us to capture not only what frames PRR parties adopt, but also how prominently these frames feature in PRR manifestos. A similar approach was used by Wonka (2016), who considered parties' frame content, position and salience, the latter understood as the relative importance attributed to different issues.

The *identitarian frame* points to the long-standing ecological tradition of the radical and extreme right (e.g., Buzogány and Mohamad-Klotzbach 2021; François & Nonjon 2021; Lubarda 2020), grounded in the nativist idea that 'each ethnic group must protect its natural territory in order to survive and thrive' (François and Nonjon 2021). The frame points to the explicit connection between national identity (a core element for the PRR) and the environment. Here, national identity originates and develops within the homeland, whose environment must be protected and preserved as a demonstration of attachment to the native land and the need to hand down a healthy environment to future generations of natives. Hence, this frame is linked to expressions like 'green conservatism', 'climate nationalism', or 'green patriotism' (e.g. Eckersley 2007; Kashwan et al. 2023; Riedel 2021). Environmental protection, seen through this nativist perspective, should start at the local level and involve concrete actions, contrasting with transnational environmentalism. Accordingly, considerable importance is placed on the rural world as an expression of tradition and a nostalgic vision of the past. Non-native elements, even when it comes to culinary traditions, are perceived as a threat.

The *sceptic frame* is inspired by several studies documenting climate scepticism as an important feature of PRR environmental discourse (e.g., Lockwood 2018; Schwörer and Fernández-García 2024a; Forchtner and Lubarda 2023). The frame includes all references that express doubts about climate change or environmental protection policies, detecting three different levels of scepticism (Rahmstorf 2004; Van Rensburg 2015). The first is associated with climate change denial or the rejection of the anthropogenic origin of climate change (evidence scepticism); the second level expresses doubts about the process by which scientific evidence is developed and communicated (process scepticism); the third points to the opposition to the environmental policies promoted by the European Union, national governments, and supranational organizations (response scepticism).

The *sovereignty frame* was derived from nativist and populist dimensions of PRR ideology (Mudde 2007), determining an aversion to globalism and the perceived erosion of national sovereignty (Lockwood 2018). Forchtner and Lubarda (2023: 58) found that a 'common argument concerns climate policies as threats to national sovereignty'. The frame covers all references to national, energy, and food sovereignty. A fundamental idea is that international cooperation aiming at environmental protection erodes national interests and the sovereignty of the people (Žuk and Szulecki 2020; Buzogány and Mohamad-Klotzbach 2021). As Forchtner and Kølvråa (2015: 217-218) underline, 'Beyond the more immediate worry that national sovereignty is being undermined by international elites and agencies, there is a fundamental concern that maintaining the nation's independence – and thus symbolic existence – is tied to the material issue of energy self-sufficiency'. Notably, energy autonomy has become increasingly important following Russia's invasion of Ukraine – on the impact of the invasion on the PRR see

Wondreys (2025) and Wondreys and Zulianello (2024). The sovereignty frame also applies to food sovereignty (Mamonova and Franquesa 2020), and refers to the emphasis placed on agricultural and food production, which is often seen as being endangered by European policies and foreign imports.

Finally, the *authoritarian frame* stems from the authoritarian dimension of PRR ideology (Mudde 2007) and from the study of Žuk 2022, who documents punitive and disciplinary demands in PRR environmental discourses. Moreover, the authoritarian ideology is linked, alongside nativism, to a nostalgic vision of the past (Schwörer and Fernández-García 2024a). The frame includes all the demands for stricter measures and penalties for certain groups or actions in relation to environmental issues. Among others, it refers to the idea of ‘penal populism’ as it points to tougher rules and severe repression, which ‘create[s] a climate and atmosphere that demand tough state actions against environmental activists’ (Žuk 2022: 11).

#### 4. Research design and methods

To investigate the environmental politics of the PRR we focus on Germany, Italy and Spain, three Western European countries that present relevant actors belonging to this party family (Zulianello 2026): Alternative for Germany (*Alternative für Deutschland*, AfD), Brothers of Italy (*Fratelli d’Italia*, FdI), the League (*Lega per Salvini Premier* since the 2019 elections, previously Northern League – *Lega Nord*, LN), and Vox. We expect a mix of commonalities and differences in the way the PRR deals with environmental politics, which can be influenced by both their ideological core (nativism, authoritarianism and populism) as well as by the incentives and constraints posed by the context in which they operate. Most notably for our purposes, the three selected countries allow us to include PRR parties operating in different contextual and competitive scenarios (Zulianello 2020; Zulianello 2025b). In Germany, the AfD, despite its electoral growth over the last few years, remains subject to a cordon sanitaire by other parties in the system and is perceived as an anti-system party (Arzheimer 2024). Instead, the PRR in Italy and in Spain is integrated into the political system, albeit to different degrees. In Italy, FdI and League have been key players in the centre-right coalition for years and governed together after the 2022 general elections (Albertazzi et al. 2021; Zulianello 2025a). Finally, Vox in Spain, despite having never taken part in national governments, was perceived as a potential coalition partner by the leading centre-right actor, the People’s Party (*Partido Popular*), shortly after its early success (Enyedi and Casal Bértoa 2022).

Drawing on the different contextual scenarios and on the inclusion-moderation thesis, we developed three different hypotheses regarding PRR parties’ positioning on environmental politics. The thesis, which has been discussed by several scholars (e.g., Akkerman et al. 2016a, Bernhard 2020), suggests that PRR parties are likely to moderate their issue positions and communication practices once they move from the opposition to the government, as ‘participation in democratic institutions and procedures will amend the radical nature and ideology of political parties’ (Akkerman et al. 2016a: 3). Inclusion in office and in coalitions requires agenda alignment with mainstream right-wing parties, the most likely coalition partners (Akkerman et al. 2016a). Beyond governing responsibilities, coalition pressures may also generate incentives for moderation even prior to office: as Akkerman et al. (2016b: 31) note, gaining coalition potential may

pressure parties to ‘mellow their programmatic positions [...] or tone down their populist stances’. Building on these theoretical considerations, and taking into account different contextual and competitive scenarios, we formulate the following hypotheses:

- H1: We expect the AfD to display the most radical positioning on environmental politics of the four cases. For instance, still perceived as an anti-system party and subject to a cordon sanitaire, the AfD faces no governing pressure to compromise or to moderate its ideology.
- H2: We expect FdI and the League to display the least radical positioning among the cases. These parties are fully integrated in the coalition game and have consistently been perceived as central actors within the Italian right-wing coalition: FdI, since its foundation, has always been perceived as a coalitionable actor and has been well integrated in the coalition game. Similarly, despite significant transformations in its core ideology, the League has remained a central actor within the centre-right coalition and has participated in different governing coalitions. Therefore, both parties have been subject to coalition pressures and have faced sustained incentives for moderation. Additionally, they have been governing together since 2022 in coalition with a centre-right political actor, and have therefore also been subject to governing responsibilities.
- H3: We expect Vox to display a mix of radical and moderate positions. Being perceived as a viable coalition partner but having never participated in national government, Vox occupies an intermediate position and may be exposed to incentives for moderation, but lacks the constraining pressures of office.

Our analysis focuses on the official manifestos and thematic documents produced by the four parties under scrutiny. The literature has suggested that party manifestos are one of the most important sources to investigate the positions of political parties (Budge 2001), having the crucial advantage of delivering the overall orientation of a given actor on specific occasions (e.g. elections) and offering a unique opportunity to improve the validity of the present comparative analysis. Accordingly, we focus on 24 programmatic documents published since 2013 (Table 1). All the parties have issued electoral manifestos in view of general and/or European elections, and three of them (AfD, FdI, Vox) have released additional documents that are relevant for the present study.

**Table 1.** List of official documents used for the analysis

<b>Name</b>	<b>Party</b>	<b>Type of document</b>	<b>Length of document</b>	<b>Year</b>
Wahlprogramm	AfD	Manifesto	4 pages	2013
Mut zu Deutschland	AfD	Manifesto	25 pages	2014
Grundsatzprogramm	AfD	Manifesto	96 pages	2016
Europawahlprogramm	AfD	Manifesto	88 pages	2019
Deutschland. Aber Normal.	AfD	Manifesto	204 pages	2021
Resolution zur Kernenergie	AfD	Thematic document	6 pages	2022
Europawahlprogramm	AfD	Manifesto	52 pages	2023
Le sfide per l'Italia	Fdl	Manifesto	28 pages	2013
Le tesi di Trieste	Fdl	Manifesto	72 pages	2017
Il voto che unisce l'Italia	Fdl	Manifesto	5 pages	2018
Programma elezioni europee	Fdl	Manifesto	15 pages	2019
Pronti a risollevere l'Italia	Fdl	Manifesto	40 pages	2022
Con Giorgia l'Italia cambia l'Europa	Fdl	Manifesto	20 pages	2024
Programma elezioni europee	League	Manifesto	39 pages	2014
Salvini premier: la rivoluzione del buonsenso	League	Manifesto	74 pages	2018
Programma di governo elezioni politiche	League	Manifesto	202 pages	2022
Più Italia meno Europa	League	Manifesto	18 pages	2024
Tu voz en el Congreso: Programa electoral	Vox	Manifesto	106 pages	2015
100 medidas para la España viva	Vox	Manifesto	33 pages	2019a (April)
100 medidas para la España viva	Vox	Manifesto	25 pages	2019b (November)
Agenda España	Vox	Manifesto	46 pages	2021
España Decide	Vox	Manifesto	14 pages	2022

Un programa para lo que importa	Vox	Manifiesto	178 pages	2023
Nos van a oír	Vox	Manifiesto	46 pages	2024

Source: own elaboration.

To carry out the analysis we used the software NVivo: all documents were read carefully, and the relevant segments of texts were coded into the four frame categories mentioned above. The problems (diagnostic framing) and solutions (prognostic framing) were also identified. In addition, following a similar procedure adopted in a study of the gender politics of populist parties (Lavizzari and Pirro 2024), we performed a holistic measure of the overall salience of the different frames. In particular, the measure enables us to assess whether a specific frame in a given document is ‘present and salient (core), present but not salient (not core), or absent’ (Lavizzari and Pirro 2024: 12). However, differently from the latter scholars who only provide a general assessment for each party (i.e. by considering all party documents at once), we perform this measurement for each individual document, by assessing its relative importance within the overall approach to environmental politics by each individual party. This choice allows us to trace the evolution over time of the different parties and across the various documents. The salience of the different frames was assessed through qualitative prominence. Operationally, each document was read as a whole and frames were classified as core, not core or absent based on their degree of elaboration within all references to environmental politics in that specific document. A frame was coded as ‘core’ when it was extensively developed and articulated across multiple passages and thematic sections, constituting a central element of the party’s environmental discourse; it was coded as ‘not core’ when it appeared in the document but received limited elaboration; it was coded as ‘absent’ when no reference to that frame could be identified. To assess the consistency of the coding procedure, an intra-observer reliability assessment was conducted, following a procedure also adopted by Basile (2016). An early round of coding was compared with a second round, completed after gaining further practical experience. The two rounds yielded a high level of consistency.

## **5. The importance of different frames in a party's overall approach to environmental politics**

Table 2 provides an overview of the saliency of the different frames within the overall approach to environmental politics of the PRR parties under analysis. In this respect, it is worth stressing that this does not refer to the saliency of environmental politics within the entire document, but rather only within their overall discussion. This is motivated by the fact that while environment issues have become more salient over time, they were never a core topic of the analysed documents as a whole, the only exception being the AfD’s (2022) Resolution on nuclear energy (*Resolution zur Kernenergie*).

**Table 2.** Presence and salience of the different environmental policy frames in PRR official documents

Party	Document	Identitarian frame	Sovereignty frame	Sceptic frame	Authoritarian frame
Alternative for Germany	2013 Federal Election Programme	-	-	(+)	-
	<i>Mut zu Deutschland</i> (2014 European Election Programme)	(+)	+	+	-
	<i>Grundsatzprogramm</i> (2016)	(+)	+	+	-
	2017 Federal Election Political Programme	(+)	(+)	+	-
	2019 European Election Programme	(+)	+	+	-
	<i>Deutschland. Aber Normal.</i> (2021 Federal Election Programme)	(+)	+	+	-
	2022 Resolution on Nuclear Energy	-	+	+	-
	European Election Programme (2023)	+	+	+	-
Brothers of Italy	<i>Le sfide per l'Italia</i> (2013)	+	-	-	-
	<i>Le tesi di Trieste</i> (2017)	+	(+)	-	-
	<i>Il voto che unisce l'Italia</i> (2018 National Election Programme)	(+)	(+)	-	-
	2019 European Election Programme	+	+	-	-
	<i>Pronti a risollevere l'Italia</i> (2022 National Election Programme)	+	+	(+)	(+)
	<i>Con Giorgia l'Italia cambia l'Europa</i> (2024 European Election Programme)	+	+	+	-
League	2013 National Election Programme	-	-	-	(+)
	2014 European Election Programme	-	+	+	-
	<i>Salvini premier: la rivoluzione del buonsenso</i> (2018 National Election Programme)	(+)	+	(+)	-
	2022 National Election Programme	(+)	+	+	(+)
	<i>Più Italia meno Europa</i> (2024 European Election Programme)	(+)	+	+	-
VOX	<i>Manifiesto fundacional</i> (2014)	-	-	-	-

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<i>Tu voz en el Congreso</i> (2015 General Election Programme)	(+)	-	(+)	-
<i>Hacer España grande otra vez</i> (2016 General Election Programme)	(+)	-	(+)	-
<i>100 medidas para la España viva</i> (April 2019)	(+)	+	+	-
<i>100 medidas para la España viva</i> (November 2019)	(+)	+	+	-
<i>Agenda España</i> (2021)	+	+	+	(+)
<i>España Decide</i> (2022)	-	+	+	-
<i>Un programa para lo que importa</i> (2023 General Election Programme)	+	+	+	(+)
<i>Nos van a oír</i> (2024 European Election Programme)	+	+	+	-

Note: The symbols +, (+) and – indicate the salience of the frame within the party's overall approach to environmental issues: + = core (present and salient), (+) = not core (present in party programme but not salient), – = absent.

Source: own elaboration.

## 6. Identitarian frame

The AfD initially placed relatively little emphasis on identitarian frames, possibly due to the fact that it did not belong to the PRR party family at its foundation (Arzheimer 2015). In the 2014 manifesto it opposed EU authorisations for GMOs, but already in 2016 the party expanded these ideas, portraying hunters as nature experts and promoting a holistic vision of forests. These ideas were further developed in 2017, when the AfD linked life in rural areas and the vitality of local communities to agriculture<sup>2</sup>, while maintaining a critical stance towards the use of GMOs. In subsequent documents, the AfD introduced new elements related to identity and a contrast between the global and local dimensions of environmental protection became evident:

Landscape as a part of regional identity – we want environmental and landscape protection to be strongly anchored in the regions (AfD 2021: 187).

Homeland and national identity are defended through the protection of the environment, but action needs to be taken at a local (and rural) level. More recently, identity has been related to scepticism: the AfD opposes existing regional development plans in Germany and their aim to invest in renewable energy, such as large-scale photovoltaic systems and wind farms, considered as a threat to landscape and nature:

Landscape and nature conservation are being subordinated or even sacrificed for the sake of supposed climate protection (AfD 2023: 35).

The identitarian frame has characterised FdI from the first programmatic document, and has been consistently used by the party. From its early years, FdI defined itself as a conservative party through its commitment to caring for natural elements, aiming ‘to pass on the inherited heritage to future generations’ (FdI 2013: 27) while criticizing the left, which is accused of pursuing an ‘ideological battle against forms of interaction between man and nature’ (FdI 2013: 27). An even more explicit reference to the identitarian frame is found in the 2017 Trieste Theses, where the land is described as ‘sacred’ (FdI 2017: 70). The identitarian frame received new impetus in 2022, when FdI directly linked traditional Italian food to Italian identity, in opposition to ‘synthetic’ foods (FdI 2022: 24). In 2022 FdI also stressed the idea that protecting the environment from climate change and pollution ‘is the only way to save ourselves and our children from the disappearance of what is beautiful in the world’ (FdI 2022: 25). Ultimately, FdI places the valorisation of rural areas and the bond between land, population, livestock, and food at the centre of its discourse, highlighting the role of Italian gastronomic excellence as part of the national cultural heritage.

In the case of the League the identitarian frame was almost absent in its early programmatic documents. The frame appears for the first time in 2022, as food is considered an expression of national identity:

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<sup>2</sup> As noted above, agricultural references are not considered part of environmental politics per se, but there are some aspects worth mentioning, such as food sovereignty, the protection of rural areas, the importance of food for national identity, the battle against cultivated meat.

Food is able to express the identity roots of our land. Thanks to our immense culinary tradition, we are immediately identified and recognised throughout the world (Made in Italy), and precisely because of the heritage we have it is necessary to defend our agri-food traditions (League 2022: 183).

In addition, the League consistently stresses the role of rural communities as bearers of shared traditional values, which should be protected and passed down. Subsequently, the League further developed the connection between food and identity by criticising ‘cellular engineering products, such as “cultivated” meat’ (League 2024: 14).

Since the first document Vox has emphasised the importance of developing the ‘rural world’ (Vox 2015: 105), which should have ‘a life of its own’. Rural development is presented as a way to achieve ‘true’ sustainability (Vox 2015: 106) as well as a way to protect the territory.

Subsequently, Vox called for a law to protect bullfighting, framing it as an integral part of rural heritage, and in 2019, it proposed a ‘Hunting and Fishing Law’ (Vox 2019a: 21) aimed at defending and protecting activities that are considered ‘necessary and traditional of the rural world’ (Vox 2019a: 21). This point is reiterated in Vox’s most important programmatic document for our purposes, *Agenda España*. Here, the party dedicates an entire chapter to the rural aspects of Spain, adopting a more sceptical and dramatized posture: rural traditions, their inhabitants, agriculture, and ways of life are all portrayed as being under threat from progressive elites and the global agenda. The goal is:

To protect Spaniards living in rural areas from the impositions of the new climate religion which attacks their production model, their way of life and their traditions (Vox 2021: 37).

Vox also emphasises that environmental protection must not undermine local communities and their modes of production, asserting that human beings must be ‘the main character’ (Vox 2021: 28) in this process, thus clearly articulating its anthropocentric view of sustainability.

## **7. Sovereignty frame**

For the AfD, sovereignty has been a leitmotif since 2014, when it stressed the importance of reducing Germany’s dependence on imported energy sources and argued that ‘energy policy is primarily a matter for the member states’ (AfD 2014: 19). In 2016 the issue of energy sovereignty was accompanied by criticism of the decision to shut down German nuclear power plants, alongside a proposal to extend their operational lifespan. The AfD also rejected the further expansion of wind energy, advocating that it should be permitted ‘on an exception basis only [...] Local residents are to be consulted in a referendum on the future location of wind turbines’ (AfD 2016: 86). In 2016, the AfD also introduced the notion of food sovereignty, advocating reduced dependence on multinationals to preserve biodiversity. Nevertheless, energy sovereignty remained crucial:

Energy policy is a sovereign task of sovereign states. In Europe, every state must remain responsible for a secure and stable energy supply for its population and industry (AfD 2019: 79).

According to the AfD (2022), a secure, efficient, and environmentally friendly energy policy should rely on fossil fuels, hydropower, and nuclear power. Notably, the party criticises the EU's coal phase-out and calls for stronger ties with Russia to expand Nord Stream 2, while nuclear power is deemed essential for energy independence. In addition, it reiterates the need for national competences and subsidiarity, criticising EU centralism in water, forestry, agriculture, and environmental policy, while advocating for regional decision-making to protect farming communities and ensure food self-sufficiency. In addition, climate change is framed in terms of sovereignty in 2023:

Responsibility for adapting to climatic conditions lies with the individual nations of the EU. In the event of any changes, it is up to the countries to decide on measures in response to their own concerns. On the German side, the climatic changes of the recent past do not require any special measures. Expending resources and regulations in response to only possible future changes is unnecessary, [and] economically and ecologically irresponsible (AfD 2023: 40).

Sovereignty has not always been a core frame for FdI but has become more salient over time. A recurring argument has been the importance of protecting national agricultural and industrial products from the unfair competition of states that do not respect minimum standards of environmental and workers protection. In 2018 this point was further developed by calling for investment in renewable energy and research to lead Italy to energy independence. In 2019 FdI reiterated the topic of unfair competition by:

call[ing] for the introduction of 'civilisation duties' against products from third countries that do not meet our standards [...] and environmental protection, to avoid dangerous social dumping in Europe (FdI 2019: 7).

After Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, energy became central to FdI's sovereignty frame. The party proposed freeing Italy and the EU from Russian gas by diversifying sources, building new infrastructure like regasifiers, exploiting national reserves, investing in nuclear research, renewables, and developing energy communities. In 2024, FdI again emphasised civilisation duties, energy independence, subsidiarity, proportionality, and food sovereignty. In particular, environmental policies should be decided nationally, while food sovereignty is closely tied to the party's identitarian frame, as the protection of Italian food and wine goes alongside the defence of cultural heritage.

The sovereignty frame is, together with the sceptic one, at the core of the League's framing strategies of the environment. It has been present since the 2014 manifesto, the first under the leadership of Salvini, where special emphasis was given to the issue of energy independence for 'the liberation from the eco-fascist autarchy imposed by the EU' (League 2014: 37) and its bureaucrats. In addition, the League (2014: 37) conditioned compliance with European and international climate duties on the commitments of 'the largest CO<sub>2</sub> emitters, such as China, the US and India'. The party proposed a carbon tax against unfair competition from countries ignoring environmental standards, and it advocated reducing dependence on foreign products and energy, exploiting deposits, diversifying suppliers, and liberalising the market. The League also called for ending renewable energy subsidies and stressed national sovereignty, particularly against the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and its requirements on 'greening' (League 2018: 26). Additionally, the League (2022: 35) seeks to oppose the catastrophism of 'globalist

ecologism', and instead to prioritise the individual, the community and the nation. Over time, the party has consistently focused on energy sovereignty, nuclear investment, and protecting Italian industry, later adding concerns about dependence on China.

Vox first addressed the sovereignty frame in 2019 (Vox 2019a; 2019b), when it initially placed the accent on energy sovereignty, specifically on the necessity to achieve energy self-sufficiency. Since then, the frame has remained at the core of Vox's environmental discourse, with a progressive hardening of its stances. In the 2021 Agenda España, for instance, it was connected to reindustrialisation and to dependency on foreign countries: the cause of the closure of energy and industrial plants is attributed to 'the globalist elites and their new climate religion' (Vox 2021: 30), and the party set out to achieve the transition to a less polluting economy without harming the jobs of Spaniards. In particular:

Spanish people must decide. The political decisions of national governments over the last decades have undermined our energy sovereignty. Their submission to globalist agendas and their compromises made behind Spaniards' backs have left our future in the hands of those who seek to impose ideologies and those who are distant from Spain's interests (Vox 2023: 120).

Regarding foreign countries, Vox stressed the fact that European green policies would benefit countries such as China, producing unfair competition that would cause the disappearance of agriculture and farming. To address the problem, the party called for subjecting foreign products to the same Spanish regulations. Besides energy and food issues, the party claimed that the protection of the environment should be of national competence, without foreign influence (including the EU): globalist impositions are rejected, and common sense should be prioritized instead. Within this context, the sovereignty frame is addressed in an even more direct and confrontational way by Vox in the 2024 manifesto, where the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the Green Deal are depicted as direct threats to national sovereignty.

## **8. Sceptic frame**

The sceptic frame has always been present in AfD programmes. In 2013 the party called for a reform of the German Renewable Energy Sources Act and expressed opposition to subsidies directed to solar and wind energy if financed through electricity prices. From the outset, the contrast between rationality and ideology also emerged: according to the AfD decisions are to be made 'on the basis of rational factual analyses instead of ideological wishful thinking' (AfD 2014:19). It put evidence scepticism at the forefront, stating that 'scientific studies on the long-term development of the climate due to human CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are very uncertain' (AfD 2014: 19). In 2016 the AfD also combined process and evidence scepticism:

The climate has been changing for as long as the earth has existed. Climate protection policy is based on hypothetical climate models based on computer-aided simulations by the IPCC ('Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change'). Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is not a pollutant, but an indispensable component of all life. [...] Under the slogan 'Climate-neutral Germany 2050' through 'decarbonisation', the German government is misusing the rising CO<sub>2</sub> concentration for the 'Great Transformation' of society, with the result

that personal and economic freedom is being massively restricted [...] The AfD therefore says ‘Yes to environmental protection’ but puts an end to ‘climate protection policy’ (AfD 2016: 79).

Notably, the AfD questioned the anthropogenic nature of climate change, criticized the IPCC, and called for Germany’s withdrawal from the Paris Agreement and all climate-protection organizations. It also argued that renewables raise costs, threaten energy security and harm landscapes, while promoting nuclear and fossil fuels. In 2019, the AfD’s stance further hardened: the party rejected all emission-reduction measures, condemned EU automotive policies for harming German industries, and claimed that e-mobility offers no real environmental benefits compared to combustion engines. In addition, according to the party, the current warm period can have benefits, while decarbonisation causes devastating consequences:

Instead of fighting a hopeless battle against climate change, we should adapt to the changed conditions, just as plants and animals do. The history of mankind proves that warm periods always lead to a flourishing of life and cultures (AfD 2021: 172-173).

In stating so, the party rejects the anthropogenic causes of climate change and the need to fight it; any measures, plans and international agreements are rejected, as well as all other ‘forms of planned economy’ (AfD 2021: 174) such as the Green Deal. When it comes to the issue of human-generated climate change, the AfD (2023: 40) states that:

It is much more a political agenda to tax the air we breathe and thus to implement social reorganisation (Great Transformation). It is an eco-socialist project that will inevitably lead to a dramatic reduction in prosperity and a totalitarian restriction of freedom.

FdI only embraced scepticism from 2022 onwards, making it central in its 2024 European election manifesto. Unlike the other PRR parties under analysis, FdI has had a less confrontational approach to the environment, stressing the complementarity of environmental respect and economic growth. However, in 2024 it used a more adversarial tone by mentioning the so-called ‘eco-follies’ and lamenting the ‘ideological drift of the left’ (FdI 2024: 6), besides the ‘ideological approaches’ that determine ‘unachievable targets and disproportionate burdens’ (FdI 2024: 6). EU environmental policies, such as the Green Deal and the Nature Restoration Law are strongly criticized; however, it is important to note that FdI addresses a response scepticism, since the party never questions the anthropogenic nature of climate change or the need for climate action.

Unlike FdI, the League has always placed much more emphasis on the sceptic frame, highlighting instead the importance of pragmatism and common sense. The League addressed the frame already in 2014, criticising the EU’s climate policy and the concept of green economy. The EU’s decisions cause de-industrialisation, thus leading to an ‘(un)happy degrowth’ (League 2014: 37): the solution proposed is ‘freeing from the “eco-fascist” autarchy imposed by the EU in Europe’ (League 2014: 37). In 2022 its stances became even harsher:

Here ends the old ideological ‘environmentalism’, the confused and contradictory policies of those who would like to stop progress, trigger a police state and lead the country towards degrowth (League 2022: 179).

The party opposed the catastrophism of ‘global ecogism’ (League 2022: 35), and EU green policies such as the Green Deal, calling out for more pragmatism, common sense and more realistic measures.

Similarly to the League, Vox has given a great deal of emphasis to the sceptic frame since the beginning, even though the frame gained core importance with Agenda España. Since its first documents Vox has presented itself as a supporter of freedom, arguing that ‘the protection of the environment is subordinate to the individual, his or her development and happiness’ (Vox 2015: 103). More recently, the party has started considering globalist elites as its main enemy, accusing them of imposing a ‘new climate religion’ (Vox 2021: 27) and advocating dangerous agendas:

The globalist agendas have no realistic plan to guarantee the preservation of the environment, and their measures are only aimed at creating a new political order that substantially changes people's lives. The so-called ‘green transitions’ are about transferring huge amounts of money from the middle and working classes to the elites pushing the climate agenda (Vox 2021: 27).

These agendas, according to Vox, ruin the present and future of Spain and Europe while favouring countries such as China. In 2022 Vox directly opposed the Climate Change Act, approved by the Spanish Parliament the previous year, which aims to follow the Paris Agreement, the Green Deal and the Sustainable Development Agenda; these measures, according to the party, impose ideologies which are alien to Spanish interests and incur high costs for citizens. For these reasons, Vox wishes to repeal the European Green Pact and to fight against the 2030 Agenda, which are seen as the ‘main exponents of radical globalism and ecogism’ (Vox 2024: 8).

## **9. Authoritarian frame**

The authoritarian frame is the one less emphasized throughout the materials analysed in this paper: it receives only a few references by FdI and Vox, while it is absent in the AfD’s official documents. Interestingly, while authoritarian frames that stigmatize climate activists’ protests – sometimes labelling them as ‘terrorists’, condemning their actions, and calling for or proposing harsher penalties – are increasingly common in the communication of PRR parties (e.g. AfD, 12 November 2022, Instagram; Matteo Salvini Instagram page, 22 November 2024), they are rarely found in official documents.

For instance, FdI employed this frame for the first time in 2022, by calling for tougher penalties for animal crimes and arsonists, while Vox also used it in its Agenda España to advocate for increased penalties for arsonists and any crime committed against Spanish forests. Notably, the authoritarian frame is comparatively more frequent in the case of the League: for instance, in 2014 it was used to fight the abandonment of pets by calling for harsher penalties. In 2022 the scope was broadened: ‘major crimes’ (League 2022: 186) against pets included not just their abandonment but also their mistreatment or killing. Furthermore, the League stressed the social dangerousness of those who use violence against animals, which is considered a warning bell for additional serious crimes in the future. Additionally, the problem of stray animals is considered a ‘battle of legality’ (League 2022: 185) against micro-criminality and the mafias behind it.

## 10. Conclusion

This paper provided a comprehensive analysis of the environmental politics of the PRR in Germany, Italy and Spain. As the PRR is often associated with climate denialism and scepticism as well as anti-scientific positions in the literature, our goal was to assess the different ways these parties deal with a multifaceted and complex topic, by carrying out a qualitative content analysis of political manifestos and thematic documents of the AfD, FdI, League and Vox. The analysis discussed the adoption and relevance of four types of frames – identitarian, sovereignty, sceptic and authoritarian, suggesting that the sceptic and sovereignty frames have been the most important for the PRR in recent years. In addition, our analysis identified the main diagnostic and prognostic frames elaborated by each party, summarized in Table 3. Tables 2 and 3 allow us to draw some conclusions about the parties' environmental politics. The tables suggest there are both similarities and differences, both in terms of salience and positioning, across the cases.

The AfD is the party that gives the most attention to environmental politics and is the only one to have produced a thematic document (AfD 2022). Additionally, the AfD addresses the most radical positioning of the parties analysed: while all PRR parties criticize the measures associated with the green transition, the AfD stands out for its climate denialism, directly challenging not only environmental policies but also the very existence of anthropogenic climate change. This is consistent with Schwörer and Fernández-García (2024a), who find a negative correlation between salience and positioning. Vox, although critical, is comparatively less radical compared to the AfD, and while the Italian cases remain relatively more moderate compared to the German and Spanish cases, recent documents indicate that both FdI and the League have adopted a more confrontational approach in recent years. These findings confirm the three hypotheses derived from the inclusion-moderation thesis: the AfD's hard posture is decisively shaped by its isolation in the German party system given its ostensibly anti-system status (H1). The AfD differs from the three other parties under analysis, especially the Italian cases that are consolidated players in the coalition game at the national level, thus subject to coalition pressures and, since 2022, governing responsibilities (H2). H3 is also confirmed by the empirical analysis, since Vox occupies an intermediate position among the cases under analysis, attempting to balance more and less moderate stances. However, the aforementioned shift towards a more confrontational tone of Italian parties from their most recent manifestos onwards, coinciding with their experience in government, partly contradicts the inclusion-moderation thesis. This apparent contradiction can be explained by two complementary factors. First, consistent with the findings of Schwörer and Fernández-García (2024a), the post-2019 period is characterized by an increased salience of environmental issues across Western European party systems, which forces PRR parties to engage with the topic more explicitly and, as the data suggest, more confrontationally. Second, PRR parties need to maintain a differentiated and strong ideological profile even when in government (Akkerman 2016), as they need to signal to their core electorate that they have not been co-opted by the establishment they now represent. As Akkerman (2016: 280) notes, 'radical right-wing populist parties tend to face relatively hard trade-offs between office, policy and votes'. This is consistent with the definition of 'negative integration', i.e., incorporation into government without ideological moderation (Zulianello 2020; Zulianello 2025b).

**Table 3.** Main diagnostic and prognostic frames used by PRR parties

	AFD		FDI		League		Vox	
	Diagnostic	Prognostic	Diagnostic	Prognostic	Diagnostic	Prognostic	Diagnostic	Prognostic
Identitarian frame	Existing regional development plans	Strengthening of rural areas	Ideological environmentalism	Care for inherited heritage	Globalism	Valorisation of rural areas and communities	Rural world under threat	Protection of the rural world
	Renewable energy plants	Valorisation of common people's knowledge as nature conservation experts	'Synthetic' food	Protection of natural elements	Modernisation	Defence of agri-food traditions as Italian identity	Loss of traditions	Promotion of traditions
	GMOs	Regional-based environmental protection		Protection of Italian food as cultural heritage	Cultivated meat	Enhancing of Italian heritage		
Sovereignty frame	Energy dependence	Mix of fossil fuels	Unfair competition	Civilisation duties	Unfair competition	Carbon tax	Closure of energy and industrial plants	Reindustrialization
	Sanctions against Russia	Investment in nuclear power	Energy dependence	Tariffs to protect production	Energy dependence	Energy mix	Global elites' climate religion	Energy independence
	Shutdown of nuclear power plants	Strong limitation of wind turbines		Investments in renewables and research	Subsidies for renewables	Elimination of subsidies for renewables	Unfair competition	Subjecting foreign products to Spanish regulations
						Valorisation of traditional values and roots		

Renewable energy targets	Food sovereignty		Diversifying of sources	EU decisions on greening	Diversification of energy suppliers	Green Deal	National jurisdiction and common sense
Food supply dependence	Preservation of rural areas and communities		New strategic infrastructure	EU bureaucrats	Nuclear power	UN SDGs	Food sovereignty
EU bureaucracy	National decisions		Nuclear research		Regional market of energy	Global impositions and agendas	
			Energy communities		Food sovereignty		
					Protection of national production		

Sceptic frame	German Renewable Energy Sources Act	Abolishment of the German Renewable Energy Sources Act	Eco-follies and climate burdens	Considering economic and social aspects in transition	Green economy	Common sense and pragmatism	Existing climate policies	New models and programmes
	Ideological thinking and green ideology	Withdrawal from the Paris Agreement	Ideological approaches	Reform of EU green policy	EU climate policy	National legislation	Globalist elites	Local initiatives
	Climate protection policy	Nuclear power and fossil fuels			Globalist ecologism	Revision of EU policies	Green transitions	Anthropogenic perspective
	Scientific models	Climate adaptation			Ideological environmentalism		Spanish Climate Change Law	Abolishment of Climate Change Law
	Paris Agreement	Abolishment of the Green Deal					New climate religion	Elimination of globalist agendas

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	<p>Green Deal and EU climate policies</p> <p>Battle against climate change</p> <p>Investments in renewable energy</p> <p>Socio-economic transition</p>	<p>Biodiversity conservation</p>			
<p>Authoritarian frame</p>			<p>Tightening of penalties</p>	<p>Tightening of penalties</p>	<p>Tightening of penalties</p>

Source: own elaboration.

By comparing the diagnostic and prognostic frames (Table 3) we also notice many similarities, with PRR parties identifying similar problems and elaborating similar solutions in the field of environmental politics, even if significant variations emerge in the degree of radicalism. For instance, concerning the identitarian frame, it can be noted that parties tend to develop it by juxtaposing the global and local dimensions: globalism and the so-called ideological environmentalism are considered a threat to the local and rural world as well as to national values, customs and traditions. The four PRR parties recognize the necessity of environmental protection, but refuse and criticise the global perspective, calling instead for concrete local solutions and for the valorisation of the rural and traditional world. For FdI and the League, this translates into an explicit defence of Italian food culture and rural traditions as expressions of national identity; for Vox, into the protection of the Spanish rural world; for the AfD, it centres on the promotion of vital rural area policy. This is coherent with PRR's ideological features, since the combination of nativism, authoritarianism and populism provokes, as prognostic frames, a call for traditional measures for the protection of the national environment, besides particular attention given to the local level and to the rural world, seen as the most profound expression of common sense and traditional values and juxtaposed with global elites.

While the authoritarian frame is the least common, and completely absent for the AfD, the sceptic and sovereignty frames are at the core of all the parties' posture in recent years, although with some differences. As regards the sovereignty frame, the main diagnoses point to energy dependence, unfair competition and supranational decisions. PRR parties advocate new national infrastructures and investments, a diversification of suppliers and of energy sources, including nuclear power and fossil fuels. Nevertheless, while FdI supports research on renewables, the AfD calls for the strict limitation of these sources, especially wind power. In addition, EU environmental and agricultural policies, along with global agendas, are generally framed as threats to national sovereignty by the PRR parties analysed, with the partial exception of FdI, which adopts a more nuanced and less openly confrontational stance. The PRR parties' sovereignty frame is coherent with their anti-elite, nationalist values and with their aversion to globalism liberalism and the loss of national sovereignty (Lockwood 2018).

Moving to the sceptic frame, this presents the sharpest point of divergence across cases. Common diagnostic frames evoke EU environmental and climate policy, most notably the Green Deal and the green transition more generally, as economically damaging and ideologically driven. The PRR parties under analysis criticize policies and measures undertaken at the national, European and international levels, and propose instead the revision or abolishment of these policies by resorting to common sense and pragmatism, placing the local level at the core of their agenda. Differently from the other parties, the AfD shows a clear tendency towards climate denialism, contesting not merely specific policies but the scientific consensus on anthropogenic climate change itself. This is reflected in its diagnostic frames (scientific models, climate protection policy, the battle against climate change) and its prognostic responses (withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, abolishment of the Green Deal, promotion of fossil fuels, biodiversity conservation and adaptation as a substitute for climate mitigation). While Vox occupies an intermediate position, Italian parties adopt only a response scepticism, focusing on

policy contestation without contesting climate science. This suggests that governing status tends to moderate the form of environmental opposition.

To conclude, this paper has made a significant contribution to the literature by providing a systematic comparative analysis of the environmental politics among PRR parties in three major Western European countries, Germany, Italy and Spain. By exploring the usage of identitarian, sovereignty, sceptic and authoritarian frames, as well as the main diagnostic and prognostic frames associated with them, it deepens our understanding of how these parties deal with a multifaceted topic like the environment, and does so by providing a unique analysis of their evolution over time. However, this is only a first step, and future research should explore the causal mechanisms driving these framing choices, examining, for instance, the role of party competition, media ecosystems, and political opportunity structures.

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