Asking with Intent*

On the functions of nonlegislative activities

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2024-10-09

Abstract

MP's participation in nonlegislative activities is considerable in parliaments around the world. Whether through hearings, questions, motions, interpellations, or other nonlegislative activities, MPs tend to engage in the arenas available to them. Studies on motivation, incentives, and intent behind participation in these activities is theoretically well-developed. One strand of this literature focus on the monitoring capabilities of parliament: how nonlegislative activities are used to gather information and hold the government accountable. Another strand argues that these activities are mainly used by MPs as a tool for issue competition and agenda setting. Finally, a third strand emphasize the potential for obstruction of the government. Empirically, however, studies on when and which of these explanations have more explanatory power for MP behavior is a lot more scarce. In this paper, we synthesize the three theoretical strands – monitoring, issue competition, and obstruction – into a generalized classification scheme for nonlegislative activities. Further, we leverage advances in large language modelling techniques to illustrate under what conditions the different functions are used in written parliamentary questions (WPQs) specifically. We find that MPs mainly use WPQs for oversight. Testing our models, we also find that MPs engage in issue competition close to elections.

*This is a very early draft. Please do not redistribute without the author's permission. The authors would like to thank the participants of the *Conflict in parliamentary parties* group at NOPSA24 and, especially, to Flemming Juul Christiansen Marcelo Jenny, Raimondas Ibenskas, and Sona Golder for helpful feedback.

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Introduction

Nonlegislative activities are essential parts of any legislature. By design, the various forms of hearings, interpellations, oral, and written question arenas are meant to keep tabs on the executive. The monitoring capabilities of legislatures have been extensively discussed, for instance, through the seminal work of McCubbins and Schwartz (1984) who made the distinction between *fire alarm* and *police patrol* oversight. But, nonlegislative activities have also been found to be important for setting issues on the agenda. For instance, members of parliament (MPs) use various types of questions to both influence, participate, and signal position on various issues (Green-Pedersen, 2010). Other studies yet, point to obstruction as a function of of activities in legislatures (Bell, 2018); MPs can hinder the government by forcing them to engage through institutions (such as questions). The multifaceted functions of nonlegislative activities is even acknowledged in the official description of parliamentary questions in the Norwegian parliament – the Storting – who recognise both the monitoring and agenda setting functions of the question arenas:

> The function of questions is to get information from the government and map its stance on political issues. Questions are not legislative, but provide important contributions to the legislative agenda.[1]

Consequently, parliamentary questioning has been found to be an important activity in parliament both for executive oversight and issue competition. However, very little attention has been given to the prominence of the functions, or the intent, behind parliamentary questions. What motivates MPs to ask questions, and under what conditions do these motivations vary?

In this paper, we we zoom in on the functions of written parliamentary questions (WPQs) in the Norwegian parliament. Our contribution is two-fold: first, we synthesize a theoretical framework with three main categories for the functions of WPQs: *oversight*, *issue competition*, and *obstructionism*. Witin these, we also make the distinction between *active* and *reactive* oversight on the one hand, and *self-promotion* and *party-promotion* in issue competition on the other. Even though the we hypothesize (and find) that *obstructionism* will be negligible in the Norwegian case, it serves as an important alternative should the framework be utilized on other cases. Second, we apply this framework to the Storting by having coders manually assign functions to randomly selected WPQs. These training data are then used to build four fine-tuned large-language BERT

[1] Translated by the author from: *Spørsmålenes funksjon er å få informasjon fra regjeringen og klarlegge dens holdning til politiske problemstillinger. Spørsmål gir ikke grunnlag for vedtak, men er et viktig bidrag til å sette saker på dagsordenen.*

model (LLM) – one for each WPQ function – for classifying the WPQs. Although we do find that coders struggle with the task, the results from our classification efforts achieve remarkably high levels of accuracy.

We use the resulting classification proportions in two stages. First, we explore which functions are more prominently used by MPs descriptively. We find that the *monitoring* functions of WPQs are used far more than *issue competition*, and that *obstruction* is very rarely used at all. Second, we use the intra-category variation to test under what conditions the four functions are used. Here, we [currently] find that MPs engage in self-promotion to a far larger degree when they ask questions closer to elections (both national and local).

In the following, we start by describing the institutional setting of WPQs in the Norwegian case. We then discuss the overarching differences between legislative and nonlegislative activities, where we argue that our classification scheme will only be valid for the latter. Next, we outline the theoretical framework for the functions of WPQs. We proceed by detailing our methodological approach both in terms of the instructions for manual coding, training of the LLM, and analytical approach to test our models. Finally, we analyze under what conditions the various nonlegislative functions.

WPQs in the Storting

[Under construction!]

The WPQs in the Storting are regulated by the rules of procedure (Stortinget, 2022). The questions should be short, but a short justification (max 1 A4 page) can be attached to the question. The Presidency, whom the questions are delivered to, is encouraged to dismiss the question if it is deemed to fall outside of the jurisdiction of the executive or if it is considered improper in language and/or form. The Presidency then forwards the question to the relevant minister, who can refuse to answer the question. MPs can, as mentioned above, ask two questions each week, although none in the month of July. Within six days after the question was sent from parliament, a government minister is supposed to have answered the question, given a justification for not answering, or just indicate that it will not be answered. The answer should be two A4 pages long at a maximum.

(Non)legislative activities

> There is evidence to indicate in nearly every country some decline from that admiration of and confidence in the system of representative government [...]

Bryce (1921, 335)

Since the seminal work of Bryce (1921), the accumulated knowledge on parliaments have increased greatly and the *decline of parliaments* thesis is mostly rebutted (Elgie and Stapleton, 2006). Institutional variation within political systems have also been found to be important for shaping the incentives and, consequently, behavior of actors (Huber, 1996). Indeed, parliaments across countries have been found to inhabit and use the wide array of tools they have at their disposal in legislation, investigation, and controlling the executive (see Müller, 2000). In our effort to map the intent of MPs in WPQs, we acknowledge the effect different types of activities have on incentives by subdividing them into **legislative** and **nonlegislative**, where our focus is concentrated on the latter.

There is, however, no consensus on a concise definition of legislative and nonlegislative activities that clearly categorizes different activities into one or the other category. Talbert et al. (1995, 384) make the distinction between activities that *generate policy* and those that do not, Kepplinger (2002) contrast decision-making to information gathering, and Green-Pedersen (2010) differentiate between legislative or nonlegislative activities, stating that "[. . .] activities such as questions to the minister and interpellations are clearly non-legislative [but v]oting on bills and law-making obviously constitute legislative activities." This does, however, as Green-Pedersen (2010) acknowledges, not capture activities in the grey area between legislative and nonlegislative, such as private member bills with no practical chance of becoming legislation (in many systems). Consequently, drawing on the discussions by Green-Pedersen (2010), Talbert et al. (1995), and Kepplinger (2002), we understand a legislative activity as *an activity conducted by procedural necessity in legislation or an activity used in the legislative process*.

Inversly, **nonlegislative** activities are understood as endeavors not used by procedural necessity for legislation and not used in the legislative process. Additionally, activities never used for legislation, such as written questions, are always nonlegislative. Following Figure 1, which visualizes this definition, when faced with any activity in a legislature, we would first ask whether the it is conducted by procedural necessity. If yes, the activity is legislative. For the activities that are not procedural necessary, we can ask whether the activity is used as part of a legislative process. If yes, the activity is legislative. If no or never, it is nonlegislative.

Our definition has several upsides. First, it makes makes some activities fall more clearly into the legislative category, even though they are not always directly consequential for legislation. For instance, plenary debates are often procedurally necessary for making legislation; the legislature has to debate the legislation in the

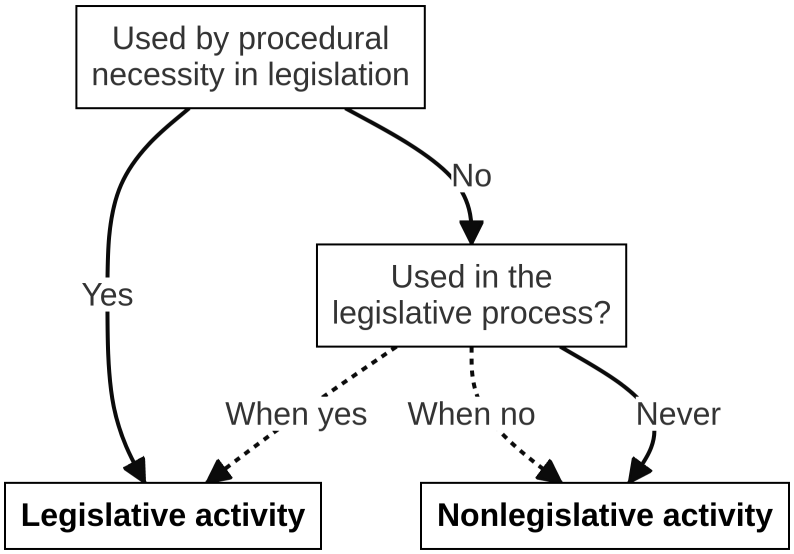

Figure 1: Conceptual map of legislative and nonlegislative activities.

plenary in order for it to ever become legislation. This is especially important in grey areas such as private member bills, often tabled despite having no chance of being adopted. Our definition place all activities spawned from such proposals in the legislative activity category. Second, the definition is not static; one activity can be legislative in one instance and nonlegislative in another. For instance, voting on bills is legislative, but motion votes are nonlegislative. Other activities, such as all forms of parliamentary questions, are always (to our knowledge, in all countries) nonlegislative (Wiberg, 1994; Saalfeld, 2000). Finally, the definition allows for cross country variation in institutional setup of legislatures. Activities can be legislative in one system and nonlegislative in another. For instance, parliamentary motions are always legislative in the Norwegian parliament, but can be both legislative and nonlegislative in the Dutch parliament[2].

Functions of WPQs

We limit our mapping of MP's intent of participation to only encompass the nonlegislative activity of written parliamentary questions (WPQs). We are also open for the possibility to use the framework outside of WPQs, especially for activities that are never legislative (far right path of figure Figure 1). However, we are hesitant to use the framework on legislative activities becasuse the structures and incentives in these activities (could) differ enough that a seperate classification scheme might be necessary. Next, we detail the

[2]See https://www.stortinget.no/en/In-English/About-the-Storting/Parliamentary-procedure/parliamentary-procedure-in-text/ and https://www.houseofrepresentatives.nl/how-parliament-works/democracy-netherlands/duties-and-rights/right-propose-motions.

theoretical framework for mapping the functions of WPQs into *oversight*, *issue competition*, and *obstruction*. The categorization is shown in Table 1. This is, of course, not to argue that a specific question falls into a

Table 1: Types of written parliamentary questions, based on oversight, issue competition and obstruction.

	Type	**Label**
Oversight	*Reactive* (Ogul and Rockman, 1990)	Accountability
	Active (Ogul and Rockman, 1990)	Information gathering
Issue competition	*Self-promotion* (Rasch, 2011)	Personal representation
	Party-promotion (Green-Pedersen, 2010)	Partisan campaigning
Obstructionsim	*Legislative obstruction* (Wawro and Schickler, 2010)	Obstruction of time

Oversight

Our first set of functions for WPQs are derived from the literature on legislative oversight. A large part of this literature utilize the principal-agent framework for analyzing political behavior. In stylized version of this framework, the legislature is seen as the principal who delegates tasks to the executive, which then stands accountable to the legislature (Strøm et al., 2006). But, with delegation there is always potential for agency loss; the agent might not be able to or willing to deliver on the task delegated by the principal. Consequently, legislatures have several oversight tools at their disposal to ensure that the executive is doing what it is supposed to do.

In the context of this paper, nonlegislative activities (and WPQs in particular) are often used as an accountability tool in the link between the legislature and the executive (King, 1976; Saalfeld, 2000; Kreppel, 2014; Martin and Whitaker, 2019). Although the amount and strength of these tools depend on the institutional setting, all parliaments have a set of institutional arenas where MPs and their parties engage in oversight of the executive. In the Norwegian case, for instance, parliament has a strong tool-box for oversight (Strøm and Narud, 2006; Rasch, 2011; Maor, 1999), both through the special *Standing Committee on Scrutiny and Constitutional Affairs*, preparing legislation in committees, different forms of questioning, and public hearings.

The ultimate goal with these monitoring activities, at least in theory, is to minimize agency loss between the legislature and the executive. As outlined by Ogul and Rockman (1990), oversight tools can be categorized

along two dimensions: *reactive* versus *active* tools and *centralized* versus *decentralized*. McCubbins and Schwartz (1984) defines *centralized* oversight as the oversight conducted in the larger parts of the legislature (e.g plenary debates) whereas the *decentralized* oversight is facilitated in lower level arenas (e.g committees). While these are important distinctions, Ogul and Rockman (1990) argues, based on Aberbach (1987), that the dimension of *reactive* versus *active* oversight is the dominant dimension because most legislative oversight is decentralized anyways; legislatures seldom do oversight as an overall headquarter, but rather through decentralized units (such as committees). *Active* (or "police patrol") oversight, however, are routine tasks that is done continuously, whereas *reactive* (or "fire alarm") oversight is spontaneous reactions to events. This dimension is also by far the most prevalent in the Storting, where almost all activities are decentralized (Rasch, 2011; Søyland and Høyland, 2021; Søyland, 2022). As shown in Table 1, we utilize this framework of oversight by labeling reactive oversight as *accountability* and active oversight as *information gathering*.

Conditions for oversight

[Temporary hypotheses:]

> H1a: MPs use the accountability function in WPQs more often on issues where coalition partners diverge (Whitaker and Martin, 2022)
>
> H1b: MPs use the information gathering function in WPQs more often on issues where they have expertise (Bendor et al., 1987)

Issue competition

Even though nonlegislative activities, such as WPQs, are arguably mainly *designed* to function as a platform for MPs a platform to engage in oversight, they are not necessarily *used* for only that purpose. As pointed out by Krehbiel (2004, 115), in all political activities, "the ability to set the agenda seems intuitively to be of strategic significance"; competition over what issues are on the agenda is an important function in the various legislative activities, including WPQs. For instance, Rasch (2011) note that PQs in general are used extensively for *self-promotion* and *agenda-setting*. That is, the institutional setting of PQs are used by MPs to promote themselves, their party, and to set the agenda. We argue that this insight should be slightly re-arranged, because both partisan and personal promotion are ways to participate in agenda setting. Of course, this also entails a broad definition of agenda setting, where not only putting something on the agenda

is agenda setting, but also participating in an ongoing debate to keep an issue salient, or to signal that the issue is salient for you (or your party). This is also indirectly echoed by Green-Pedersen (2010) who argues that nonlegislative activities – such as parliamentary questioning – are especially well suited to be utilized for what they call "selected emphasis". In other words, political actors emphasize the issues they care most about in order to attract attention and politicize such issues.

Green-Pedersen (2010)'s main focus is on how, especially opposition, parties strategically use these institutions to attract attention to issues salient to them. But, as observed by Rasch (2011), individual MPs are also able to use PQs to self-promote personally if the rules of the PQs are rigged to increase individual freedom over party control. As shown in Table 1, we split *issue competition* into two separate types: *self-promotion* and *party-promotion*. In our coding of WPQs, we label these as *personal representation* and *partisan campaigning*.

Conditions for issue competition

[Temporary hypotheses:]

> H2a: MPs use the partisan campaigning function in WPQs more often when asking a question to their own party

> H2b: MPs use the personal representation function in WPQs more often when an election is close

Obstruction

In addition to oversight and issue competition, we also recognize that institutions create opportunities for legislative obstruction if rules do not regulate behavior. Obstruction frequently occur in legislatures, most famously through the *fillibuster* in the US Senate (Wawro and Schickler, 2010). Indeed, recent studies have shown that institutionalizing obstruction can reduce the amount of brawling in legislatures (Jeong, 2024). Scandinavian politics have been known to be somewhat "gentler" in terms of such strategies (see Bell (2018) for a comparative overview). The WPQ arena in the Norwegian case does, nevertheless, invite MPs to engage in obstruction in terms of time because all MPs can ask 2 questions a week. As such, a large party group, for instance 55 seats as the Labour Party had in the 2013-2017 session, could coordinate their efforts to ask over 100 questions a week. There is, nevertheless, a safeguard against this in that the minister is not required to answer the question. Our coding scheme opened for the possibility of obstruction in WPQs (see details above), but the coders found very few questions to fill these criterea.

We do, however, also acknowledge that obstruction efforts might come in very different forms than the other functions covered here. As eluded to above, peppering the government with a lot of questions could be used as an obstruction strategy. Our approach would not uncover this strategy directly because we do not count questions, but it would be picked up indirectly if one feature of such strategies is that the quality of the questions deteriorate and become ripped of substantive content.

Methods

Our analytical approach is divided into to separate parts. In the first part, we describe our coding scheme, coder instructions, how the WPQ functions classifier was built, and how it performs. In the second part, we put our WPQ function measures to the test through a series of regression models, where we expect the different functions to be more prominent under certain conditions, as discussed above.

Data

We utilize the data from Bjørkholt and Søyland (2024), collected using the *stortingscrape* package (Søyland, 2024) for R (R Core Team, 2023). The data contains all WPQs in the Storting from the 1997-2001 through the 2017-2021 parliamentary periods accompanied by a large set of variables on the question, the MP asking the question, and the minister receiving the question.

The final data set contains 34649 WPQs, of which 95% were asked by the opposition (see Table 3).

Manual coding

For classifying the WPQs into the categories from Table 1, we hired three research assistants, who coded a subset of about between 150 and 200 questions each, using the annotation tool *doccano* (Nakayama et al., 2018).[3] These coders were all MA students in political science, with specific expertise in Norwegian politics. The only information the coders were presented with was the text of the question. They were then asked to tag the each question with a main function and potentially sub-functions because of the potential for multiple function questions. The and shown examples of these. If a question was deemed to have one or more functions outside of the main function, these were tagged as sub-functions of that question. The more fine-grained instructions, shown in Table 5, was available to the coders inside the annotation tool.

[3]We used the `Sequence Labeling` project type the doccano API.See https://doccano.github.io/doccano/ for more information.

Table 2: Individual coder counts for main WPQ functions.

Function	coder1	coder2	coder3	Sum
Accountability	28	90	59	177
Obstruction	4	0	3	7
Information gathering	76	75	95	246
Partisan campaigning	12	7	4	23
Personal representation	38	27	26	91
Sum	158	199	187	544

The task was quite challenging. For the main category, general agreement between the coders was 34, and Krippendorff's Alpha was at 0.29. Coders most often disagreed over the two oversight categories (*information gathering* and *accountability*); aggregating the results to *oversight* versus *issue competition* improved the results greatly, with an average agreement of 69 and Krippendorff's Alpha at 0.40. This is, however, still quite low, highlighting the difficulty of the task. As shown in Table **??**, the two oversight categories were dominant among all three coders, and both the *obstruction* and *partisan campaigning* categories were rarely recognized in the WPQs.

NorBERT

Because of the poor performance in terms of inter-coder reliability and inaccuracy of the various classification methods, we ruled out more classical machine learning classification approaches.[ˆclassicalML] Rather, we utilized the rich NorBERT 3 (base[4]) transformer-based language model (Samuel et al., 2023) to our task. More specifically, we built separate fine-tuned NorBert 3 for each of our 4 classes (again, excluding obstruction) through the `huggingface` AutoModel framework. Here, we use only the main function tags and the cases where at least two coders agree on the function of the WPQ through either the main og sub category tags.

In total, this amounts to 805 WPQs, where 47.6 are classified as *information gathering*, 33.7 as *accountability*, 16.0% as *personal representation*, 2.8 as *partisan campaigning*, and only 0.7% as *obstruction*. This is quite overwhelmingly skewed towards WPQs mainly being utilized for the two *monitoring* categories (combined 76.9%). The *issue competition* categories only amounts to 21.3% of the WPQs in this subset of the data. This is not an insignificant number, of course, but WPQs do not seem to be *mainly* used for issue competition. As the use of *obstruction* is only amounts to 0.7% of the questions, we opt to disregard this

[4]We are going to train on the large ("lg") version of NorBERT, but we need to do that on a cluster.

category from further analyses in this case.

Figure 2 shows the performance of our four classification models on the test-set of our training stage. More specifically, the figure shows how often the fine-tuned model agrees with our coders. Evidently, the personal representation model performs quite well with 85 accuracy. The information gathering model is also good with 70 accuracy, while the accountability model achives only 60 accuracy. Finally, the partisan campaigning model struggles quite a bit (also see Figure 3) due to much less training data.

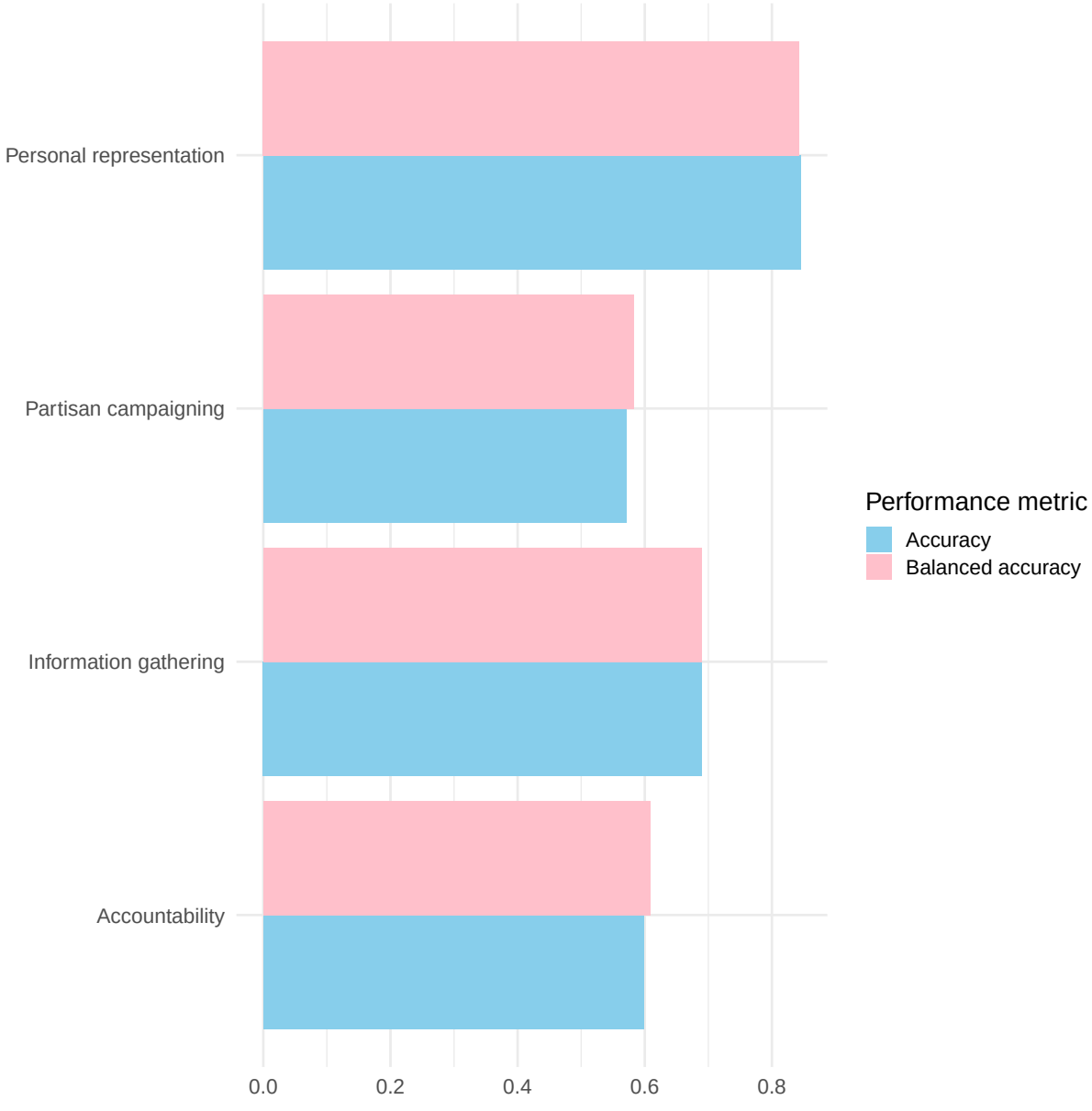

Figure 2: Accuracy of the four NorBERT models on the test-set.

We proceed by using this fine-tuned NorBERT model to classify the remaining WPQs in the 4 functions. In this step, all questions are given a proportion between 0 and 1, where the sum of all four categories for one question sums to 1. Figure 3 shows the distribution of all questions over the four categories. As is evident, the model mirrors the manual coding in that the two *oversight* functions of WPQs are observed to a larger degree than *issue competition*. But the intra-category variation might, nevertheless, be interesting. Figure 3 shows the distribution of the four functions; these are the dependent variables used to answer the oversight and issue competition hypotheses below.

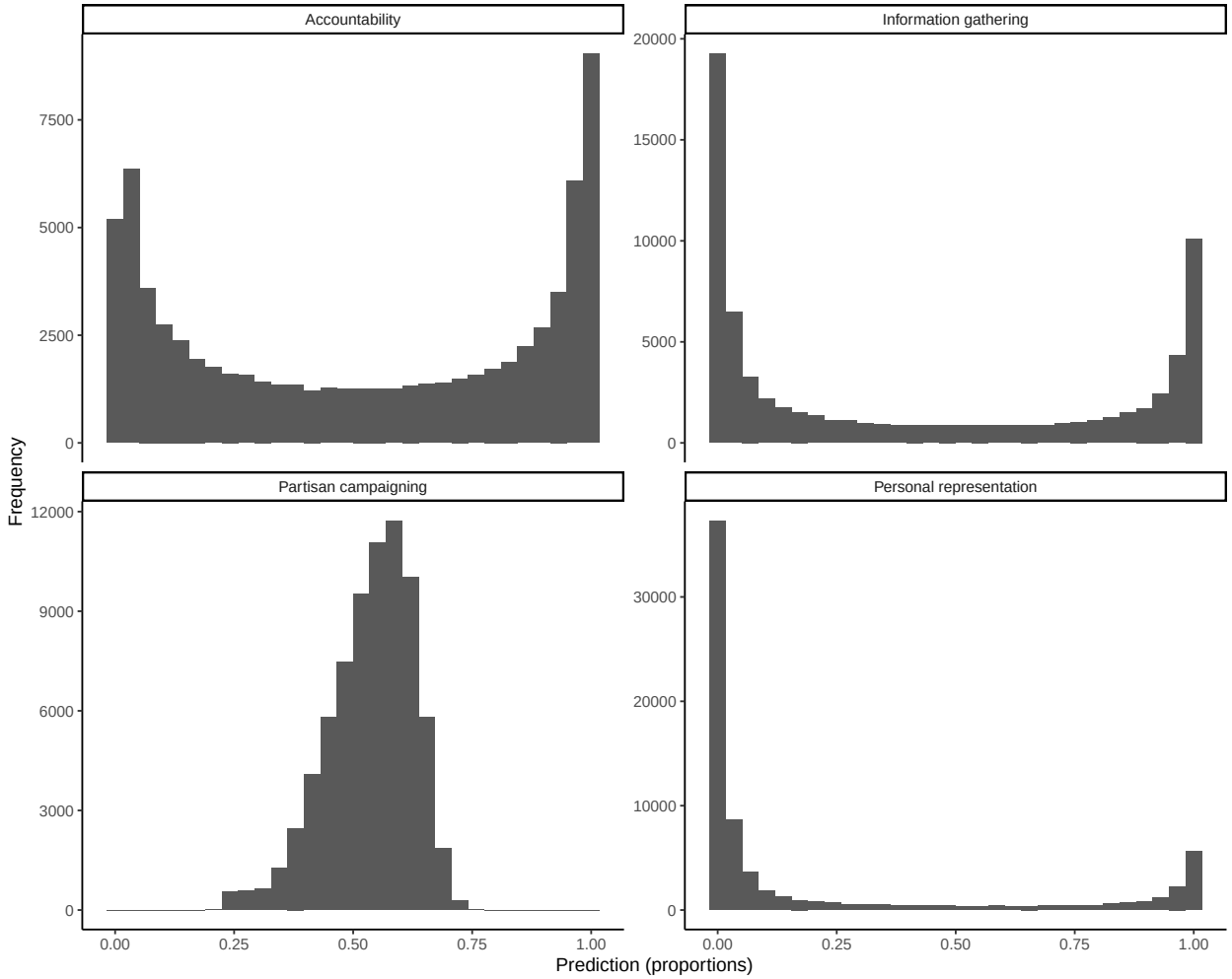

Figure 3: Distribution of class proportions over oversight and issue competition categories based on NorBERT 3 (base) classification.

Independent variables[5]

Accountability.

In order to test *H1a*, following Whitaker and Martin (2022), we will use the ideological distance (probably CMP) between the party of the minister the WPQ was directed to and their coalition partner(s) on the issues falling under the portfolio of that minister.

Information gathering.

As for *H1b*, we will connect the current committee of the MPs to the topics of the questions. Our intuition here is that MPs are more likely to gather information through WPQs on the topics they have specific expertise on, because there are large asymmetries in access to information between legislatures and executives (Bendor et al., 1987).

Partisan campaigning.

For partisan campaigning, we are uncertain about how to test the function in a good way, especially because the function proved to be far less used than we expected. On possibility we have thought of is to follow *H2a* in that MPs are instructed by ministers to ask questions on specific issues in order for the minister to get their answer to that question on record.

Table 3: Summary Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Pctl. 25	Pctl. 75	Max
Accountability	33826	0.56	0.39	0.00028	0.13	0.96	1
Information gathering	33826	0.39	0.43	0.000032	0.004	0.94	1
Party representation	33826	0.5	0.083	0.19	0.44	0.56	0.74
Personal representation	33826	0.26	0.38	0.00014	0.0027	0.47	1
Opposition	33826	0.95	0.23	0	1	1	1
Same party	33826	0.023	0.15	0	0	0	1
Coalition partner	33826	0.03	0.17	0	0	0	1
Questioner gender (male)	33826	0.6	0.49	0	0	1	1
Minister gender (male)	33645	0.58	0.49	0	0	1	1
Age	33826	47	11	21	38	55	76

[5]We have not yet gathered all the necessary data for testing the first three hypotheses, but here is our planned operationalization of them.

Personal representation.

Finally, we test *H2b* by running regressions with closeness to elections – both national and local – as independent variables of the personal representation function. This variable is coded as "close" when the question was sent within 60 days of either the local (municipal) election or the national (Storting) election.

As a temporary showcase, we present regressions for all functions with the same set of independent variables below; in addition to closeness to elections, we also include variables for the gender and relation between the minister and the MP asking the question in addition to the age of the MP. The summary statistics are shown in Table 3

Analysis

Table 4 shows the result from our (current) analyses, where each column represent models of the different functions of WPQs. All models include fixed effects on the party of the MP asking the question and the parliamentary period. Further, standard errors are clustered on the MP's party and the parliamentary period.

First, the *accountability* model shows that both coalition partners and MPs from the same party as the minister are less likely to engage in reactive oversight than the opposition (reference category). The effect is, however, not significant at conventionally accepted levels, and negligible in magnitude. All else equal, the expected probability of a question beloning to the accountability function for the opposition is 0.414, 0.388 for coalition partners, and 0.336 for same party MPs. We also note that women are found to be more likely to engage in accountability than men.

Next, the *information gathering* model shows that both same party and coalition partner MPs are more likely to engage in this type of WPQ function as stipulated by *H1b*. Although this is in the expected direction, the effects are quite small and far from significant, rendering us to to not conclude on any difference between MPs of the opposition and government parties on the *information gathering* function.

As evident from the third column of table 4, the party representation model does currently not work properly.

Finally, the personal representation model does, as stipulated by *H2b* find that MPs utilize this function a lot more when an election is approaching. The expected proportion of a question belonging to this function when there is no close upcoming election is 0.189, whereas it is 0.265 when there is an upcoming national election, and 0.261 when there is an upcoming local election.

	Accountability	Info gathering	Party rep.	Personal rep.
MP-Minister relation				
Coal. partner	−0.11	0.07	0.01	0.07
	(0.09)	(0.17)	(0.04)	(0.17)
Same Party	−0.34	0.36	−0.01	−0.00
	(0.19)	(0.25)	(0.05)	(0.13)
Election proximity				
National (close)	−0.05	−0.12	−0.01	0.44***
	(0.05)	(0.10)	(0.01)	(0.06)
Local (close)	−0.04	−0.25	−0.01	0.42***
	(0.12)	(0.10)	(0.02)	(0.05)
MP characteristics				
Questioner gender (male)	−0.23*	0.19	−0.03	0.02
	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.01)	(0.06)
Minister gender (male)	0.07	−0.05	0.01	0.06
	(0.07)	(0.10)	(0.03)	(0.17)
Age	0.00**	−0.01*	0.00	0.01***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Num. obs.	33457	33457	33457	33457
Num. groups: q_from_party	7	7	7	7
Num. groups: parl_period	6	6	6	6

$^{***}p < 0.001$; $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{*}p < 0.05$

Table 4: Fractional logit regressions with the different WPQ functions as the dependent variables. Coefficients are given in logits, with standard errors – clustered on parliamentary period and questioner party – in parentheses

Discussion

[Under construction]

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Appendix

Classification scheme

Table 5: Classification scheme used by coders to assign questions to their function.

Function	Examples
Accountability	Press for action (Wiberg and Koura, 1994)
	Test ministers on controversial topics (Wiberg and Koura, 1994)
	Critiquing ministers in difficult political situations (Wiberg and Koura, 1994)
	Force compromise on a reluctant government (Wiberg and Koura, 1994)
	Delay a strong government until other events come into play (Wiberg and Koura, 1994)
	Demonstrate a government's missteps (Wiberg and Koura, 1994)
Information gathering	Request information (Wiberg and Koura, 1994)
	Demand an explanation (Wiberg and Koura, 1994)
	Handle many and varied topics quickly and easily (Wiberg and Koura, 1994)
Personal representation	Promote local political issues (from MPs' constituencies) (Rozenberg and Martin, 2011)
	Draw attention to voters' interests (Wiberg and Koura, 1994)
	Create personal publicity (Wiberg and Koura, 1994)
	Create elements of excitement and drama (Wiberg and Koura, 1994)
Partisan campaigning	Put pressure on ministers from a party competing for votes (Otjes and Louwerse, 2018)
	Promote ownership of an issue (Otjes and Louwerse, 2018)
	Build reputation in specific fields (Wiberg and Koura, 1994)
	Stir up members of the opposition party (Wiberg and Koura, 1994)

Obstruction of time	Waste government's time (Jeong, 2024)
	No substance
	Question answers itself (more comment than question)

Question examples

Accountability

- Selvplagiering
- Opplæringskontoroppfølging
- Klimaforliket

Information gathering

- Eksamensordning
- Strynefjellet
- Arbeidstilsynet kontroller

Personal representation

- Kraftlinje vs natur
- Kinodrift Time kommune
- Sivilforsvar Narvik

Partisan campaigning

- Litteratur Sør-Samisk
- Arbeidskraft Color Line
- Intensivtilbud

Obstruction

- Samlet rike
- OsloMet

- Ganding