

# Negative Partisanship within the Social Identity Approach

## Effects of Out-Group Derogation on Vote Choice in Germany

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### Abstract:

Party identification became rapidly one of the most used concepts in empirical election studies since its first emergence in the 1950's. Although negative party identification is part of the original concept by Campbell et al. (1960), it has been rarely analyzed in empirical studies as the mainstream of party identification research concentrates on positive party identification. As negative party identification was only mentioned in passing by Campbell et al. (1960), there exist several different notions of negative party identification and its operationalization. This paper conceptualizes negative party identification and evaluations within the social identity framework and explores their applicability and effects for a complex multi-party setting. I am able to show that negative party evaluations have an effect on vote choice and the time of voting decision in multi-party systems but that these effects only exist between ideological camps.

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# 1 Introduction

Since the 1960s, party identification has been one of the most used and distinguished key concepts in empirical election studies. It is a vital factor for explaining individual voting behavior. According to Campbell et al. (1960: 121), the concept of party identification is used “to characterize the individual’s affective orientation” to a political party.

First, many authors challenged the general applicability of the concept of party identification on Germany and other multi-party systems until the concept was perceived – at least partially – as fruitful for measuring the individuals’ psychological identifications with political parties (see for an overview Kaase 1976; Falter 1977). New debates about the theoretical foundations of party identification and its measurement came up regularly each decade (e.g. Budge, Crewe and Farlie 1976; Popkin et al. 1976; Weisberg 1980; Fiorina 1981; Greene 1999; Bartle and Bellucci 2009).

However, negative party identification has rarely been analyzed. Even Campbell et al. (1960) mentioned it only in passing without any elaboration concerning the concept nor possible measures. As a consequence, the few existing studies have different notions of negative partisanship and its measurement. Most studies showed that inter-party hostility, e.g. a negative attitude towards another party, has its own effect on vote choice (Crewe 1976; Maggiotto and Piereson 1977; Richardson 1991; Vlachová 2001; Garry 2007; Medeiros and Noel 2013). What is missing so far is the concise conceptualization of negative partisanship within the social identity framework.

Building on these studies and the original notion by Campbell et al. (1960), this paper aims to conceptualize negative partisanship thoroughly within the social identity approach (Tajfel and Turner 1979; Turner et al. 1987). In line with the notion that partisanship may encompass identification and attitudinal aspects (Greene 1999; Weisberg and Greene 2003; Bartle and Bellucci 2009; Rosema and Krochik 2009), I argue that negative party identification and negative party evaluations are two distinct concepts that should be treated separately with negative party identification as a necessary but not sufficient condition for negative party evaluations. This paper aims to explore the effects of out-group derogation on vote choice and the time of voting decision in a complex multi-party system.

After taking a look at the socio-psychological notion of party identification, I will discuss the state of the art in negative partisanship research. Building on the social identity approach, I will distinguish coherently between negative party identification and negative party evaluations. Using data from the German Election Study (GLES) 2013 and from an online survey I conducted in

November 2013, I will be able to explore the applicability and effects of out-group derogation on vote choice in the German multi-party system.

## 2 Party Identification as Key Concept for Explaining Voting Choice

Two different notions about the conceptualization of party identification can be distinguished - a social identity and an attitudinal approach. The original notion of party identification dates back to the 1950's. The so-called Michigan Model (Campbell et al. 1954, 1960) became rapidly one of the most used theoretical approaches for the explanation of individual voting behavior. In this sense, party identification acts as the key concept and denotes a long-standing, affective, psychological link towards a political party (Campbell et al. 1960: 121).

Party identification acts as a perceptual screen and shapes accordingly the perception of the candidates and assessment of the issues, positions and competences as well as the identifier's voting decision (Campbell et al. 1960: 133p). It is strongly correlated with political involvement: party identifiers are more likely to vote; they assess party programs, party positions and candidates more positively and often take a more active part in campaigning than Independents (Campbell et al. 1960: 132, 144p).

The theoretical foundations of party identification are based on reference-group theory (Hyman 1942; Hyman and Singer 1968). The political party serves as the group to which the individual develops "[...] an identification, positive or negative, of some degree of intensity" (Campbell et al. 1960: 122). Additionally, "[...] especially in multi-party systems multiple identifications [should] not be surprising" (Weisberg and Hesecke 1999: 727).

If positive or negative identification is formed, political parties may act as reference groups whereas they "become reference points for the formation of attitudes and decisions about behavior" (Campbell et al. 1960: 296). While reference group theory was one of the leading theories in times of the American Voter (Campbell et al. 1960), its inconsistencies and short-comings were heavily criticized in the 1980s (Singer 1981). Building on the idea of reference group theory, social identity theory (SIT) (Tajfel 1979; Tajfel and Turner 1979) and self-categorization theory (SCT) (Turner 1982; Turner et al. 1987) took it further to a more consistent frame work that emphasizes the social comparison processes as well as the internalization of group-based values and attitudes (Turner and Reynolds 2010).

These theories, often subsumed under the label “social identity approach”<sup>2</sup>, superseded reference-group theory.

Party identification is more and more conceptualized within the social identity framework (e.g. Kelly 1988; Greene 1999; Green et al. 2002; Weisberg and Greene 2003; Mari and Rosema 2009; Ohr and Quandt 2012). Party identification in this sense is seen as the knowledge that one belongs to a party together with some emotional value of this group membership (Tajfel 1978: 63).

Party identification can also be conceived in terms of attitudes. The “revisionists” in the early 1980's modified the concept and its underlying stability assumption. Instead of an “unmoved mover” (Johnston 2006), party identification is now seen as a “running tally” of political evaluations (e.g. Popkin et al. 1976; Fiorina 1981). Much of the works from this school run well in line with the rational choice paradigm and its proposed influence of utility maximization. Bartle and Bellucci (2009) argue that attitudes towards parties are more stable than attitudes towards other political objects (candidates, government). For better distinguishing between the different notions, this conceptualization of partisanship will be called party evaluation (in accordance with Thomassen and Rosema 2009). The on-going debate about which of these two notions of partisanship should be employed seems unlikely to be resolved. Abramowitz and Saunders (2006) reconciled the two concurring views of party identification by including ideology as the factor that indeed is able to move the otherwise stable partisan. Party identification may therefore be conceptualized as a social identification as well as an attitude. Which approach one chooses may simply “depend on matters of taste” (Bartle and Bellucci 2009: 17).

However, it is easily possible to integrate both notions within the social identity approach and use both concepts, identification and (affective) evaluations to conceptualize negative party identification.

### 3 The State of Negative Party Identification Research

Even though negative party identification is part of the original concept by Campbell et al. (1960), it has been rarely analyzed in empirical studies as the mainstream of party identification research concentrates on positive party identification (Richardson 1991: 759). Campbell et al. (1954, 1960) neither conceptualized the concept of negative party identification and its

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<sup>2</sup> Although both theories rely on similar assumptions and are based on the cognitive tradition, both focus on different parts of the connection between individuals and social groups/categories, SIT emphasizes intergroup relations while SCT concentrates on the group itself, e.g. its formation, cohesion, stereotyping of groups and their members, see for a further discussion Turner and Reynolds (2008, 2010).

mechanisms nor proposed any measure. From the few times it was mentioned in passing by Campbell et al., we cannot draw conclusions if negative and positive party identifications may be independent from each other or not. If we take a look at the few existing studies, we see that different notions of negative party identifications and operationalizations are employed.

Crewe (1976) was one of the first to consider negative party identification when he analyzed the applicability of the Michigan model for Britain. Negative party identification according to Crewe (1976: 52) means the “identification with a party for negative reasons” (seen as the lesser of all other evils) or “the absence of identification with any party combined with identification against a particular party” whereas the first notion seems more substantial and common in reality. However, only three to four percent of the voters are negative identifiers that are not very strongly for the own party but very strongly against the other. Theoretically, having an identification against a party without a positive identification is not excluded but not analyzed (Crewe 1976: 52). While Crewe (1976) explores negative party identification, Maggiotto and Piereson (1977: 745) focus on the evaluations of candidates and issues in the United States. These short-term factors are influenced and affected by positive party identification “...we infer that long-term psychological attachments organize and give meaning to less durable evaluations” (Maggiotto and Piereson 1977: 746p). Negative evaluations of the opposition are hereby caused by positive party identification. Party identifiers may differ on the strength of negative feelings and evaluations, the more hostile one feels towards the opposing party, the more likely one votes according to his partisan identification (Maggiotto and Piereson 1977: 747). Using thermometer questions<sup>3</sup> to operationalize partisan evaluations, they find that negative evaluations of the other party have their independent effect on voter choice (Maggiotto and Piereson 1977: 763).

Richardson (1991: 754) refers mainly to “schema theory” by Fiske (1982) instead of Campbell et al. (1960) and sees party loyalties as a highly complex set of negative and positive feelings and evaluative images, connected with political values and issue positions. As European party systems are based on cleavages, inter-party hostility between parties “may be a common component of European partisanship” (Richardson 1991: 767). Inter-party hostility is usually highest between opposing parties from the same cleavage (Richardson 1991: 760). Negative out-party feeling (based on feeling thermometers) is seen as the logical outcome of a strong reference group attachment that affects the vote choice (Richardson 1991: 768).

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<sup>3</sup> Thermometer questions ask the respondent to rate an objects on a feeling thermometer, usually running from 0-100, where 0 denotes the “cold” and 100 the “hot” pole.

Rose and Mishler (1998) explored positive and negative party identification for post-Communist countries, but did not directly rely on Campbell et al. Both identifications may occur separately. They operationalized positive party identification as “the party one feels close to” whereas negative identification is measured by asking for which party “one would never vote for” (Rose and Mishler 1998: 222). While the first is supposed to measure some kind of weak attachment (Johnston 2006), the second asks for behavioral attitudes, therefore two different levels of conceptualization are used, probably due to restrictions from secondary data analysis. The same was done by Vlachová (2001) for the Czech Republic. She found that inter-party hostility (measured as a party the voter would never vote for) affects voter choice even when positive attachments are taken into account. As positive party identification is measured by the strength of the relationship with the party one voted for (Vlachová 2001: 498), the different levels of conceptualization are getting blurry.

Garry (2007) introduced two items that allow to measure negative and multiple party identifications simultaneously, one asking about feeling close or distant from a party and one referring to thinking of oneself as a supporter or being opposed to a party. Although he refers to social identity theory in a footnote, he does not discuss the conceptualization of negative partisanship nor explains the origins and theoretical foundations of his items. Analyzing party utilities (and hereby referring to Downs), he shows that negative as well as multiple identifications have an effect on the propensity to vote in Northern Ireland (Garry 2007: 355p).

Although analyzing it simply under the term of partisan affect without referring to it as negative party identification/evaluation, Iyengar et al. (2013) find for the United States that negative partisan affect toward the other party – measured with party feeling thermometers – increased within the last decades and is reinforced by negative political campaigns.

Recently, the “forgotten side of partisanship” was explored again by Medeiros and Noel (2013) for four electoral democracies (Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States). Referring to the works of Abramowitz and Saunders (2006) as well as social identity theory, they define negative party identification as “a relatively stable view of what is one’s rejected side” (Medeiros and Noel 2013: 5). Calling it later negative partisanship, they mainly look at negative evaluations that are preceded by positive evaluations (Medeiros and Noel 2013: 7p). Their study focuses on party systems with two dominant, bi-polar opposing parties where the (candidates of the) two biggest parties received on average about 80 percent of all votes. Negative partisanship is here mainly seen as a “commitment to never vote for a disliked party” (except for the United States where feeling thermometers had to be employed) and treated as a negative evaluation (Medeiros and Noel 2013: 14). Their results showed that negative party identification is anchored in ideology

and positive party identification. It increases the propensity to vote for the other party by 10 percentage points on average but has a lower effect size than positive party identification (Medeiros and Noel 2013: 14, 18p).

The conceptualization of negative party identification and evaluation is seldom stated clearly. It may be caused by positive party identification (Maggiotto and Piereson 1977) or exist separately (Crewe 1977; Rose and Mishler 1998). Often terms like “party attachment”, “party identification”, “partisanship” and “party evaluation” are used interchangeably (Vlachová 2001; Garry 2007; Medeiros and Noel 2013). Most studies use feeling thermometers or behavioral attitudes to measure some kind of negative partisanship, it is either operationalized as a negative affective evaluation of a party (Maggiotto and Piereson 1977; Richardson 1991; Iyengar et al. 2012) or as a negative behavioral attitude (Rose and Mishler 1998; Vlachová 2001; Medeiros and Noel 2013).

Recently, Medeiros and Noel (2013) placed negative partisanship within the social identity theory and explored it comparatively for two-party systems. The relevance of “the forgotten side of partisanship” (Medeiros and Noel 2013) was already compellingly demonstrated. Taking this further by clearly distinguishing between identification and evaluations as well as applying the concept on a complex multi-party system setting seems fruitful for further advances.

## 4 The Conceptualization of Party Identification and Evaluation within the Social Identity Framework

For exploring negative party identification, it seems necessary to look back to the original concept by Campbell et al. (1960) to develop a coherent view of party identification. Political party identification denotes a longstanding link between the individual and a political party. This party may act as a positive or negative reference for the formation of political attitudes and behavioral intention (Campbell et al. 1960: 296). This notion comes close to the concept of normative reference groups (Kelley 1952). While positive identification enforces the congruence between the group’s and individual’s standards, negative identification leads toward an opposition to the group standards and norms. The concept of negative reference groups was introduced by Newcomb (1943) but its mechanisms and determinants were never elaborated.

As reference-group theory cannot convincingly explain the perceptual screen mechanism of party identification and is seen “as old hat” (Weisberg and Greene 2003: 86), positive party identification is more and more conceptualized within the social identity framework (e.g. Kelly 1988; Greene 1999; Green et al. 2002). I will draw on this approach to conceptualize negative partisanship.

## 4.1 The Social Identity Approach

According to social identity theory (SIT), social categorizations are cognitive instruments that are used to systematically order the social environment into in- and out-groups. An individual's social identity is "that part of the individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel 1981: 255). The definition of the self is "relational and comparative" (Tajfel and Turner 1979: 47) and depends therefore on the notion of the others: „We are what we are because they are not what we are“ (Tajfel 1979: 188). It's not clear if group identifications may exist without a notion what the others are, but Tajfel (1981: 256) sees comparisons with out-groups as necessary for obtaining a significant meaning of the own identification. This differentiation process may lead to cognitive and affective mechanisms like out-group derogation that are seen by Tajfel (1981: 255) as effects of social identity.

SIT proposes that each individual strives to achieve a positive self-concept as well as high self-esteem and that social identities can be evaluated through comparisons between the in- and the out-group on a comparison dimension (Tajfel and Turner 1979: 40). Every individual holds multiple social identifications that become salient according to social context and has the tendency to seek positive evaluations for these identities. When a social identity is negatively evaluated, several reaction mechanisms may be used that take the permeability of group boundaries and the stability and legitimacy of the evaluation into account (Tajfel and Turner 1979: 43p).

If group boundaries are perceived to be permeable, individual mobility may lead to a dis-identification of the individual from the group which is mainly chosen by individuals with weak identifications (Tajfel and Turner 1979: 43; Brewer and Brown 1998: 571). However, if group boundaries are perceived to be permeable, social creativity can be used to change the perception of the group as elements of the comparison can be changed, e.g. in- and out-group can be compared on a new dimension. Otherwise, social competition can be employed to change the perceived position of the in-group (Tajfel and Turner 1979: 45). This may result in favoritism of the in-group and/or derogation of the out-group (Tajfel and Turner 1979: 44p). In reality, both phenomena do not have to occur at the same time, in-group favoritism is more common than out-group derogation (Brewer and Brown 1998: 558; Yzerbyt and Demoulin 2001: 1052). In the end, social competition eventually leads to inter-group conflicts, especially when scarce resources and interest conflicts between the groups exist (Tajfel and Turner 1979: 46p).

Out-group derogation is a broad concept that often refers generally to any kind of negative attitudes toward relevant out-groups (Johnson et al. 2012) and relatively negative evaluations and treatments of out-groups (Meeus et al. 2010). Several conceptualizations of attitudes exist;

attitudes can be seen as a multi-dimensional construct that denotes psychological tendencies to evaluate an entity that can be cognitive, affective or behavioral. Behavioral attitudes include behavioral intentions as well (Eagly et al. 1994: 12). In the broadest sense, attitudes are conceptualized as being one-dimensional, with affective evaluations (e.g. like/dislike), an individual's readiness to respond favorably or unfavorably toward a particular object, as the only dimension (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975: 6). Out-group derogation can include feelings of dislike toward a particular group, often measured with feeling thermometers running from "cold" to "hot" (Johnson et al. 2012) or items measuring prejudice with statements concerning perceived threat and general negative attitudes (persons of this group cannot be trusted, should not marry into my group etc) (Mummendey et al. 2001; Meeus et al. 2010). Out-group derogation is often positively related to in-group identification strength, at least when comparison processes are active (Brewer and Brown 1998; Mummendey et al. 2001) and moderated by social identity content (Haslam and Livingstone 2008; Meeus et al. 2010).

Self-categorization theory (SCT) concentrates on the "social identity theory of the group" and the underlying processes (Turner et al. 1987). When social identity becomes salient, depersonalization of the individual arises. Inherent to this process is a comparison with a relevant out-group to maximize meta-contrast between the own group and the others. The individuals maximize the contrast between the groups by relying on their view of a prototypical member (Turner 1982). They are self-stereotyping themselves and are trying to come close to their cognitive representation of the group's prototype, their notion of an ideal or real existing group member. Automatically and fast, certain attitudinal and behavioral patterns of this prototypical member are internalized for reducing uncertainty (Hogg and Smith 2007: 97).

## 4.2 Party Identification and Evaluations within the Social Identity Framework

Seen from within the social identity approach, party identification<sup>4</sup> means the knowledge that one actually is an adherent of a party combined with some affective/emotional value. If party identification becomes salient (e.g. in a conversation about politics), the individual tries to relate to the prototypical group member to maximize meta-contrast. They apply attitudinal and behavioral patterns that they see as typical of a group member to themselves and try to get closer to the party adherent's prototype. This act of depersonalization may explain the function of party identification as a "perceptual screen" that influences the perception of political issues and candidates (Campbell et al. 1960: 133).

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<sup>4</sup> The term party identification will refer solely to positive party identification.

Negative party identification vaguely relies on the concept of negative reference groups, the groups of what one doesn't want to become.

Reconciling this notion of negative party identification within the social identity framework is possible. Negative party identification could refer to the perception that one party is a relevant out-party which is used to maximize meta-contrast and for social comparisons: "We are what we are because they are not what we are" (Tajfel 1979: 188) Almost all social identification encompass knowledge of the relevant out-groups (Brewer and Brown 1998). In this sense, negative party identification may not be possible without positive party identification. In extremely rare cases, negative party identification may exist without positive party identification when it refers to some kind of "anti-identification" with a party. A person feels as belonging to a group that is made up of the shared knowledge that one doesn't belong to another group. This seems possible, when anti-party feelings are not represented by any political party one could refer to. Seeing oneself as an independent may be an example of such an understanding.

For obtaining a positive social identity, the individuals continue to compare their own party with relevant out-parties. In case of negative comparison results, the voter's identification may lessen partisan strength first and lead later to de-alignment from the identification party (individual mobility), when borders are perceived to be permeable. This could be the case for weak/short-term identifiers. In case of identifiers that have a deep-going link to the party, leaving the group might not be an option. Changing the perspective of comparison (compare their ideological positions instead of electoral results, social creativity) is possible as well as the derogation of the relevant out-groups and/or favoring the in-group (Tajfel and Turner 1979: 38p). In-group favoritism may explain the function of party identification as a perpetual screen (Campbell et al. 1960: 133): for obtaining positive social identity, the candidates and issue positions of the identification party may be evaluated more positively and those of the other party may be evaluated more negatively.

These consequences of party identification will be called party evaluations. According to this definition, negative out-party evaluations may be the consequence of positive party identification. However, we do not know if these negative evaluations are sometimes more stable than identifications and live on, even when the original positive party identification is not present anymore. Negative party evaluations as out-group derogation may include affective attitudes as the dislike of candidates of a political party or the party itself, cognitive attitudes as the derogation of issue competency, and the behavioral attitudes like the intention to never vote for a party. These negative attitudes may be influenced by the form of the party system. While voters in two-party systems/party systems with two dominant parties have a clear conception of in- and out-parties, things get more complex in multi-party systems. It will be expected that individuals subsume parties

within ideological camps and derogation of parties from other ideological camps is more likely (Schoen and Weins 2005; Garry 2007). These ideological camps that are usually based on cleavages may act as a superordinate category under which the specific party identifications can be subsumed as lower level identities (Ashforth und Johnson 2001: 41). Another possibility is that parties send compatibility signals to its identifiers through governing coalitions and these coalitions may act as superordinate categories (González et al. 2008; contesting findings: Meffert und Gschwend 2012). Governing coalitions within ideological camps may act as double identifications that enhance themselves (Brewer and Brown 1998; Garry 2007). As governing coalitions within ideological camps are usually more common, it can be expected that the majority of partisans derogates parties of the opposing ideological camp. It is important to note that social competition is not chosen by everybody and even if social competition is employed, out-group derogation follows not necessarily.

The hostility hypotheses by Maggiotto and Piereson (1977) may easily be integrated within the social identity approach as out-group derogation of a relevant out-party. We will therefore expect that there is inter-party hostility but not between all parties.

As every individual holds multiple social identifications, multiple (positive and negative) party identifications may – especially in multi-party systems – be very likely (Greene and Weisberg 2003; Garry 2007). Having multiple social identifications is often connected to the fact that effects of social identities are reduced, like people reduce the derogation of their out-groups (Roccas and Brewer 2002). These multiple identifications could be cross-cutting, probably with a dominant party, but could also be nested within ideological camps (Risse 2004). As the current measure of party identification in Germany (as in most countries) does not allow to measure multiple party attachments, this can not be included in the empirical analyses but could further enhance our understanding of the processes underlying the effects of negative and positive party identifications.

## 5 Complex Multi-Party Systems: The German Case

Most research on negative party identification concentrates on two-party systems with a dominant party on the left and right (Maggiotto and Piereson 1977; Iyengar et al. 2012; Medeiros and Noel 2013), or deeply divided party systems like Northern Ireland (Garry 2007). Some of these systems like the United States face increasingly elite polarization and mass polarization between both parties (Iyengar et al. 2012). It is quite clear in these case who the relevant other party is. But

if we try to analyze negative partisanship in multi-party systems with different party families, things are getting increasingly complex. It is harder to determine who actually are the relevant out-parties against whom one distinguishes and compares the own identification party.

The German party system provides an especially interesting case as East and West Germany, even 25 years after re-unification, strongly differ (Niedermayer 2013).

The dimensionality of the German party system can be approximated with the left-right-dimension (Stöss, Haas and Niedermayer 2006: 16p) but it may better be described with two dimensions: A socio-economical dimension concentrating on the welfare state conflict, the contrast between free market economy/less taxes and welfare state spending and socio-economic redistribution and a socio-political dimension with a libertarian and authoritarian pole (Stöss, Haas and Niedermayer 2006). It can be classified as a moderate pluralistic party system (Ismayr 2006: 465p), currently with five political parties holding seats in parliament.

German politics was heavily dominated by the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) that held more than 90 percent of all votes in the 1960s. However, this hegemony is declining, the shares held by both parties dropped from more than 90 percent in the 1970's to 60 percent in 2013.

The CDU (and its Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union, CSU) is a center-right party that combines Christian-conservative values with the preference for a social market economy whereas the SPD can be placed on the center-left of the socio-economical dimension (Niedermayer 2013). In 2013, they formed together a "grand coalition" which replaced the former Christian-liberal government (CDU/CSU/FDP). The Free Democratic Party of Germany (FDP) is a liberal party on the center-right of the socio-economical dimension, usually placed right of the CDU (Ismayr 2006). On the socio-political dimension, it promotes libertarian values. After holding seats in the German Bundestag since 1949, they missed the 5-percent-threshold in 2013. In the 1980s, the GRÜNEN (GREENS) entered German parliament and have since become a stable force within the German party system. They merged in 1993 with their East German sister party and form now Alliance '90/The Greens. They are placed on the center-left of the political spectrum (Ismayr 2006).

After German reunification, the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) got into the German party system as the legal successor of the ruling party of the GDR. While it received almost no votes in the West (<4 percent), it constantly achieved vote shares between 11 and 25 percent and was part of several governing coalitions on the state level in the East. In 2007, it merged with the WASG, a leftist successor of the SPD, and forms now Die Linke (The Left). While it still receives single digit-vote shares in the West, it increasingly became a stable factor in the East, often receiving, especially in state elections, almost as many or even more votes than the SPD (Niedermayer 2013). While left

wing coalitions between the SPD and the Left party happened in Berlin and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern on the state level, such a coalition, especially on the Federal level, was long declined by the SPD in West Germany. However, they seemed to get more open toward such a setting in the Federal Election of 2013 (Niedermayer 2013). Frequently, the German party system is grouped into ideological camps, with the CDU/CSU/FDP forming the conservative/center-right camp, and the SPD and the GREENS forming the center-left camp. The position of the Left party is still unsettled as its vote shares and acceptance heavily differ between the East and the West (Arzheimer and Schoen 2007).

Due to this internal difference in Germany, all further analyses will be additionally conducted for East and West Germany separately. As the CSU only participates in Bavaria, most items and analyzes will be done only for the CDU or for both, grouped together.

## 6 Hypotheses

Based on the theory presented in Paragraph 3, I will explore three hypotheses. First, I will look at negative party identification itself, the perception of the individual that a political party is actually a relevant out-party. I showed above that negative identifications and evaluations may exist between parties from different ideological camps. The position of the LINKE remains uncertain as this party has a different standing in East and West Germany.

*H1: The notion of the relevant out-parties differs for the various parties but runs between ideological camps. The left party is differently perceived in East and West: It is more often considered a relevant out-party in the West than in the East.*

Seeing a political party as a relevant out-party is a necessary but not sufficient condition for out-group derogation. Only when social competition as a strategy is chosen (which seems likely for political contexts where the stakes are high) and out-group derogation is employed, negative party evaluations may occur. Even so, its occurrence is positively related to in-group identification strength: the higher the in-group identification, the higher the out-group derogation of the others. This was already observed by Kelly (1988) and Huddy (2001) as relevant for inter-party hostility.

*H2: Strength of positive party identification is positively related with negative party evaluations.*

When voter choice is analyzed, positive party identification is usually its strongest predictor (Schoen and Weins 2005; Goren 2005; Johnston 2006). As Maggiotto and Piereson already showed (1977), negative party evaluations have a separate effect on vote choice: the more one feels hostile towards the other party, the more likely one votes for the identification party. However, in multi-party systems, it can be expected that only negative party evaluations of parties from opposing ideological camps may have a negative effect while positive party evaluations for parties from the

same camp may have a positive influence (one of the reasons for this is that multiple party attachments cannot properly be measured with the standard measure for party identification,)),

*H3a: Positive party identification and negative party evaluations for parties from opposing ideological camps have both a significant effect on vote choice although not for all parties within the system.*

The time of voting decision is usually highly correlated with party identification as party adherents decide earlier in the campaign for whom their going to vote (Schoen and Weins 2005; Lewis-Beck et al. 2008). This is related to in-group identification strength as the higher one identifies with a party, the earlier one decides to vote for it. Taking negative party evaluations into account that already acted as a catalyst for positive party identification, it is expected that holding negative party evaluations leads to an earlier voting decision.

*H3b: The time of voting decision is positively influenced by positive party identification strength as well as negative party evaluations of the other parties.*

## 7 Data and Operationalization

For exploring the hypothesis, measures for negative party identification, negative party evaluations and positive party identification are needed. Two data sets have to be used to analyze these indicators as adequate measures for negative party identification are missing in most studies.

The first data set was collected with support from the Fritz Thyssen-Stiftung, together with Respondi AG (Mayer 2014/11).<sup>5</sup> Access quotas for age and federal state, according to the micro census, were applied. Between November, 24<sup>th</sup> and December, 4<sup>th</sup>, 1,064 interviews were realized, the median length was 26 minutes. As this data set is not proportional and East Germany is not overrepresented to be able to explore differences more thoroughly, for the analysis of the effects the post-election survey wave of the German Longitudinal Election Study 2013 (GLES) will be used. This proportional CAPI survey wave was conducted between September and December 2013 with 1.908 respondents. For the calculations for Germany as a whole, weights (w\_trow) were applied.

Positive party identification was measured in both surveys at the end of the questionnaire<sup>6</sup> with the traditional single item: "Many people in the Federal Republic lean toward a particular party for a long time, although they may occasionally vote for a different party. How about you?"<sup>7</sup> Strength

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5 The data set is available from the author and will later made accessible through GESIS ([www.gesis.de](http://www.gesis.de)).

6 Although party identification is often measure at the beginning (e.g. UK) and measuring it later in the survey shows strong question-order effects (Heath and Pierce 1992), this is the standard order in most German surveys as the GLES and was therefore adapted.

7 Unfortunately, the German measure shows several shortcomings: It does not capture negative and multiple party identification and the German phrasing is rather capturing a weak feeling of attachment (Johnston 2006: 340; Ohr and Quandt 2012) compared to other wordings and may lead to an overestimation of partisan identifiers.

of party identification was measured on a five-point rating scale, ranging from 1 “very weak” to 5 “very strong”.

For measuring negative party identification as the perception of parties as relevant out-parties, I adapted an item from Ohr and Quandt (2012) that is included in data set 1: “If somebody reveals that they are an adherent of [this party], I see them as a political opponent” which was asked for all five major parties<sup>8</sup> on a five-point rating scale, 1 “do not agree at all” – 5 “strongly agree”.

For measuring out-group derogation, two different operationalizations are possible that are both well used in current studies. It is possible to use feeling thermometers to ask for affective evaluations of certain objects or measure it as a behavioral attitude asking for the parties one would never vote for (see Paragraph 3). In this paper, I will operationalize out-party derogation as an affective evaluation of a party.<sup>9</sup> First, as inter-party hostility and out-group derogation have a huge affective component, the usage of feeling thermometers seems more appropriate. Maggiotto and Piereson (1977) themselves used feeling thermometers as appropriate measures. Second, affective evaluations are seen by some authors as the most important kind of attitude (see Paragraph 2). Last, the German standard party thermometer uses a different wording than the US version<sup>10</sup>. While the US version refers explicitly to feelings and asks the respondents to indicate a warm or cold feeling towards the political party, the German wording asks more generally for an affective evaluation what people think of a party. The German standard party thermometer with the wording “What do you think of this party?” will be employed, using an eleven-point rating scale (-5 “think little of the party” to +5 “think a great deal of the party”).

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Additionally, the measure consists of a single question that is not able to capture such a complex and multi-dimensional concept adequately (Falter 1977; Arzheimer und Schoen 2005). Promising approaches with new instruments, based on the perception of party identification as part of the social identity were conducted in the last years (Ohr and Quandt 2012; Mayer 2014), but not new standard question could be established.

8 Including CDU, SPD, FDP, GREENS, LINKE, not measured for the CSU due to time restrictions in the survey.

9 However, both operationalization for measuring negative party evaluations have a high average correlation ( $r=.71$ ,  $p<.001$  for the GLES 2013) so both seem to measure something similar.

10 „We'd like to get your feelings toward some of our political leaders and other people who are in the news these days. We'll show the name of a person and we'd like you to rate that person using something we call the feeling thermometer. Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean that you feel favorable and warm toward the person [...]“ (ANES 2013: 12)

## 7.1 Who are the Others?

While the question who the others are can be easily answered for two-party systems, this is not the case for multi-party systems. It can be expected that the voters group different parties in a multi-party system by their ideological stance (Niedermayer 2013). Therefore, not every party is perceived as a relevant out-party for comparisons. Furthermore, we expect that the Left party is more positively perceived in the former GDR than in the West as it is part of governing coalitions and the successor of the former state party with large vote shares in every election.

Using the question, which party adherents are seen as political opponents, we see in Table 1 the correlations between the different perceptions of political opponents. It can be seen that these correlations are in accordance with the proposed ideological camps from Paragraph 5. The perception of CDU and FDP adherents as political opponents is highly correlated ( $r=.703^{***}$ ) as is the perception of the SPD and GREEN adherents ( $r=.753^{***}$ ). The correlation between the Left party and the SPD ( $r=.530^*$  as well as the Left party and the GREENS ( $.626^*$ ) is a bit lower.

Table 1: Correlations between the different opponent perceptions

Opponent perception	CDU	SPD	GREENS	FDP
SPD	0.372 <sup>***</sup>			
GREENS	0.342 <sup>***</sup>	0.753 <sup>***</sup>		
FDP	0.703 <sup>***</sup>	0.477 <sup>***</sup>	0.492 <sup>***</sup>	
Left Party	0.209 <sup>***</sup>	0.530 <sup>***</sup>	0.627 <sup>***</sup>	0.421 <sup>***</sup>

Significance levels: <sup>\*\*\*</sup>:  $p < .001$

Data source: Mayer 2013/11

If we look at these correlations separately for East and West Germany, they do not change much except for the correlation of the perception of SPD and Left party adherents as opponents (that lessens from  $r=.64^{***}$  to  $r=.52^{***}$ ) as well as the GREEN and Left party adherents (that lessens from  $r=.45^{***}$  to  $r=.28^{***}$ ).

Table 2 presents the shares of opponent perception according to positive party identification. For the CDU and FDP adherents, the Left party is perceived the main other party with almost one half of all partisans agree that adherents of the Left party are political opponents.

For the parties from the center-left camp, the adherents of the FDP are for two fifths of left-camp adherents the main political opponents from all major parties. A small set of respondents reported that they see adherents of their own party as political opponents. This could be simply artefacts or due to the fact that most German parties are programmatically diverse and have several internal factions (Ismayr 2006).

Table 2: Negative party identification shares by positive party identification

		Party adherents are seen as political opponents (cell percentages)				
		CDU	SPD	GREENS	FDP	Left Party
Positive party identification with	CDU	2,9%	17,3%	23,8%	15,1%	42,2%
	SPD	29,3%	3,9%	5,0%	39,2%	18,8%
	GREENS	26,8%	2,7%	1,6%	36,6%	12,5%
	FDP	3,4%	10,3%	27,6%	3,4%	51,7%
	LEFT Party	32,0%	9,7%	13,6%	41,7%	2,9%
No positive party identification		9,3%	3,7%	7,2%	16,5%	10,6%

Categories "agree" and "strongly agree" were grouped together

Data source: Mayer 2013/11

As it was shown in paragraph 5, the Left party has a different stance in the East and the West. When the perception of adherents of the Left party as opponents is analyzed separately for East and West (see table 3), we find that less partisans perceive the Left adherents as *the others* in the East than in the West. The most drastic difference can be observed for CDU adherents: While almost half of the West German adherents see the Left party as opponents, only a fourth of the East German adherents shares this notion. Only the East German adherents of the GREENS perceive the Left party 9 percentage points higher as opponents. However, only the differences for the adherents of the CDU and SPD are significant ( $t(827)=3.048$ ,  $p=.001$  for PI CDU;  $t(179)=1.934$ ,  $p=.027$  for PI SPD).

Even when separately analyzed for East and West, the Left party adherents are seen as main opponents by CDU and FDP adherents, with the FDP still as the major opponent for the center-left camp.

Table 3: Negative party identification shares for the Left party according to origin (East/West)

		Left Party is seen as political opponent (cell percentages)			
		West Germany		East Germany	
			N		N
Positive party identification with	CDU	45,2%	155	26,7%	30
	SPD	19,2%	156	15,0%	25
	GREENS	11,8%	102	20,0%	10
	LEFT Party	4,9%	61	0	42
	FDP	55,0%	20	44,4%	9
No positive party identification		12,4%	266	1,8%	55

Date source: Mayer 2013/11

Hypothesis 1 can therefore be accepted. Not every party adherent sees all other parties as "the others" and the perception of the left party differs between East and West, significantly for the adherents of the CDU and the SPD.

We know from previous studies that social competition is only one possible strategy for obtaining positive social identity. Even when somebody employs social competition, out-group derogation does not follow necessarily. Therefore, we expect that negative party identification is only a necessary but not sufficient condition for out-group derogation.

Table 4 which displays the correlations between both concepts, clearly lends support to this hypothesis. Correlations between both concepts are moderate, but highly significant. The correlations are not strongly diverging for East and West Germany.

Table 4: Correlations between negative party identification and out-group derogation

	CDU	SPD	GREENS	Left Party	FDP
	0.327***	0.263***	0.319***	0.373***	0.252***

\*\*\*:  $p < .001$

Data source: Mayer 2013/11

## 7.2 In-group Identification Strength and Negative Party Evaluations.

Kelly (1988) could already show that in-group identification strength is positively related with negative party evaluations. We therefore expect similar findings for the negative evaluations of the party from the opposing ideological camp. For the next analyses, the GLES (2013) post-election survey will be used as it offers better data quality and higher case numbers. About 30 percent of all respondents do not hold a positive party identification.

Correlations between in-group identification and party evaluations are displayed in Table 5. Except for the FDP (that has only 19 adherents in a set with almost 2000 respondents), positive party identification and negative evaluations of the parties from opposing ideological camps are correlated significantly.

Table 5: Correlations between positive party identifications strength and negative party evaluations

		Positive Party Identification Strength				
		CDU N=542	SPD N=428	GREENS N=108	FDP N=19	Left Party N=151
Negative Party Evaluations	CDU		-.217***	-.077***	.035	-.306***
	SPD	-.169***		.037	-.002	-.078***
	GREENS	-.186***	.173***		-.016	.005*
	FDP	.379***	-.142***	-.043*		-.206***
	Left Party	-.357***	.044**	.020	-.032	

\*\*\*:  $p < .001$ ; \*\*:  $p < .01$ ; \*:  $p < .05$

Data source: GLES 2013, post-election survey

Additionally, the positive party evaluations and positive party identification within ideological camps are significantly related as well. These correlations do not differ for East and West Germany. Based on these significant results, Hypothesis 2 can be accepted.

### 7.3 Effects of Negative Party Evaluations

First, the effects of negative party evaluations on vote choice will be explored. When Medeiros and Noel (2013) did this for four two-party systems/systems with two major opposing parties, they found that negative attitudes have a significant effect on vote choice for the other party in all four countries, for all eight parties, when positive party identification and education are controlled for.

In the following, basic models, only containing positive party identification, negative party evaluations and education will be employed accordingly. Additionally, full models will be calculated as well, containing all common controls like candidate evaluations, issue competency, age, gender, and education. As it was already showed in Paragraph 7.1, effect sizes and correlations differ between East and West Germany. Therefore all models will be separately calculated for the East and the West.

Table 6 presents the results of these logistic regression analyses.

Table 6: Logistic Regressions for Vote Choice (Basic Model), logits

	West Germany					East Germany					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	
	CDU	SPD	GREENS	FDP	Left Party	CDU	SPD	GREENS	FDP	Left Party	
	Logit										
Positive Party Identification	0.942*** (0.0550)	0.932*** (0.0540)	1.068*** (0.0860)		1.256*** (0.127)	1.033*** (0.108)	1.256*** (0.109)	1.480*** (0.267)		1.082*** (0.101)	
Negative party evaluations	CDU	-0.0636* (0.0379)	-0.101** (0.0498)		-0.186*** (0.0662)		-0.157** (0.0666)	-0.0197 (0.188)		-0.00815 (0.0695)	
	SPD	0.00982 (0.0452)		0.107* (0.0558)	-0.0586 (0.0782)	-0.178*** (0.0655)		0.186 (0.184)		-0.0113 (0.0684)	
	GREENS	-0.086*** (0.0431)	0.0646 (0.0411)		0.0949 (0.0745)	-0.0436 (0.0648)	-0.00538 (0.0613)			0.137** (0.0645)	
	FDP	0.0451 (0.0383)	-0.129*** (0.0426)	0.0311 (0.0539)		-0.149* (0.0867)	0.257*** (0.0634)	0.0263 (0.0853)	0.165 (0.207)		-0.205** (0.0959)
	Left Party	-0.110*** (0.0401)	-0.0304 (0.0381)	0.0864* (0.0466)			-0.129** (0.0598)	0.0550 (0.0603)	-0.0530 (0.164)		
Education	0.152* (0.0781)	-0.0246 (0.0813)	0.112 (0.102)		0.196 (0.144)	0.0262 (0.147)	0.344** (0.151)	0.0304 (0.352)		-0.0529 (0.177)	
Constant	-2.02*** (0.415)	-1.66*** (0.422)	-3.93*** (0.626)		-2.79*** (0.714)	-0.68 (0.573)	-2.94*** (0.702)	-6.13*** (2.039)		-2.52*** (0.736)	
Observations	1,178	1,177	1,179		1,186	597	599	599		598	
Nagelkerke's R <sup>2</sup>	0.446	0.401	0.316		0.422	0.454	0.443	0.397		0.465	
Log-likelihood	-404.5	-391.8	-260.9		-144.0	-203.0	-174.0	-40.05		-150.3	

Standard errors in parentheses; \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$ ; Positive Party Identification ranging from 0 no positive party identification, 1 "very weak" to 5 "very strong" for the respective vote choice party.; Negative party evaluations measured with party thermometers "What do you think of the party?" ranging from 1 "think very little of it" to 11 "think a lot of it". Education measured on 5-point ordinal scale ranging from 1 "left school before finishing grade 9 to 5 "Abitur".

Data source: GLES 2013, ZA5702

As the FDP has very adherents in the sample (N=19) and only 31 respondents reported voting for them in the West and 8 in the East, in the following analyses the model will not be calculated for the Vote of the FDP in East Germany as these numbers are nowhere near the necessary numbers (about 50 per group for the dependent variable) for performing logistic regressions (Backhaus et al. 2012).

Although differences for the effects of negative party evaluations can be found between the East and West, similarities exist as well: In both parts of Germany, a negative party evaluation of the Left party has its own effect on the vote of the CDU, even when positive party identification with the CDU is taken into account (it increases the probability for voting CDU by 9.5 percentage points in the West; 5 percentage points in the East). While the negative party evaluation of the CDU has an impact on vote choice for the SPD, GREENS and the Left party in the West, it only influences the SPD vote in the East.

Negative party evaluations of the CDU have their own positive effect on the vote of the SPD as well as negative party evaluations of the FDP on the vote of the Left party. These effects can only be found between ideological camps.

If we look at the full model that contains the other predictors from the Michigan model, most hostility effects can be found in these models as well. Negative evaluations of the CDU still have a negative effect on vote choice of the center-left camp in the West (except for the vote of the GREENS).

The only significant effects of out-group derogation in the East can be found between the SPD and the CDU; holding a negative party evaluation of the SPD effects the vote of the CDU positively (about 9 percentage points) and vice versa (+8 percentage points).

The vote for the GREENS is not affected by any negative party evaluation, neither in East nor in West Germany. This could be caused by the very different ideological stances, GREEN adherents and local GREEN party organizations hold in the different parts of the country. There may be GREEN adherents where negative evaluations of the CDU affect the vote as well as GREEN adherents that are influenced by negative attitudes against the Left party. When both are analyzed within the same model, these effects could cancel each other out.

The SPD vote, at least in the West, is influenced by negative feelings against the CDU and the FDP. Negative affective attitudes are commonly activated in political campaigns (Iyengar et al. 2012) but negative campaigning was only marginally used in the 2013 campaign. As the governing coalition at the time of the start of the 2013 campaign was a Grand Coalition, campaigns do not focus much on the differences between both major parties and are, in the beginning, often more content-orientated. Coming from a Grand Coalition, these findings are especially interesting.

Negative feelings for the CDU only affect vote choice for the Left party in the West but not in the East of Germany.

Based on the results reported in Table 6 and Table 7, Hypothesis 3a can be accepted. Negative party evaluations do have their own significant effect on vote choice, but not between all parties, even between ideological camps.

Figure 1 and Figure 2 display marginal effects for two selected, significant effects. It can be seen that the 95% confidence intervals are quite large around the “-5”-pole where huge deviations can be found if people vote for the respective party (CDU and SPD), or vote another party from the ideological camp.

Figure 1: Marginal effects of negative party evaluation of the GREENS on Vote of the CDU, West

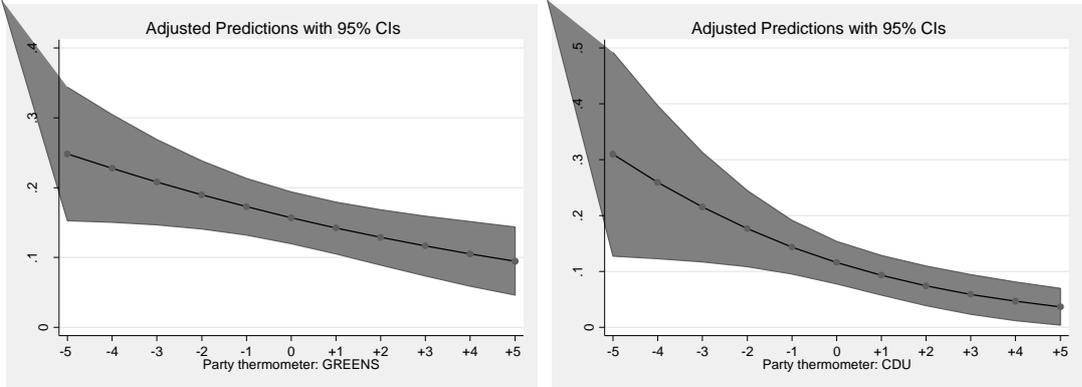


Figure 2: Marginal effects of negative party evaluation of the CDU on Vote of the SPD, East

Table 7: Logistic Regression on Vote Choice (Full Models)

	West Germany					East Germany				
	(1) CDU	(2) SPD	(3) GREENS	(4) FDP	(5) Left Party	(6) CDU	(7) SPD	(8) GREENS	(9) FDP	(10) Left Party
Positive Party Identification	2.394*** (0.226)	2.538*** (0.218)	2.752*** (0.320)		3.352*** (0.554)	2.781*** (0.352)	3.415*** (0.397)	5.037*** (1.257)		2.473*** (0.454)
Issue Competency for the most important problem	1.074*** (0.216)	1.267*** (0.223)	1.590*** (0.391)		1.238*** (0.476)	1.201*** (0.317)	1.846*** (0.414)	n.s. (1.498)		1.677***
Candidate Evaluations	0.466*** (0.0650)	0.291*** (0.0487)	0.299*** (0.0628)		0.698*** (0.117)	0.405*** (0.0747)	0.292*** (0.0836)	0.624** (0.263)		1.098*** (0.167)
Negative party evaluations	CDU				-0.140* (0.0740)					
	SPD								-0.246*** (0.0825)	
	GREENS	-0.115** (0.0473)								
	FDP									
	Left Party									
Education										
Age in years										
Gender: Female										
Constant	-5.593*** (0.783)	-3.930*** (0.665)	-4.910*** (0.874)		-6.601*** (1.348)	-3.580*** (1.078)	-5.841*** (1.228)	-7.357*** (2.855)		-11.51*** (1.959)
Observations	1,172	1,160	1,134		1,141	575	566	581		594
Nagelkerke's R <sup>2</sup>	0.537	0.471	0.373		0.577	0.564	0.540	0.471		0.655
Log-likelihood	-337.5	-341.9	-236.1		-104.2	-158.3	-135.7	-34.93		-96.57

For other operationalizations see Table 6. Issue Competency: Which party is named as competent to solve the most important problem that Germany faces at the moment?

Candidate Evaluations: The same thermometers as for party evaluations are employed for the respective candidates, Angela Merkel (CDU), Peer Steinbrück (SPD), Jürgen Trittin (GREENS), Philipp Rösler (FDP), Gregor Gysi (Left Party).

Last, the effects of negative party evaluations on time of voting decision are analyzed. The time of voting decision is expected to be positively related to positive party identification as it was already reported by other authors (Schoen and Weins 2005; Lewis-Beck et al. 2008).

As negative party evaluations already acted as a catalyst for vote choice it is anticipated that holding negative party evaluations leads to an earlier voting decision.

However, the results presented in Table 8 show that negative party evaluations do not have their own separate influence on the time of voting decision.

Table 8: Linear Regression of Time of Voting Decision

	Time of Vo- ting Deci- sion
Positive Party Identification	-0.231*** (0.0162)
Index of Negative Party Evaluations	-0.0146 (0.0275)
Education	0.0988*** (0.0243)
Age	-0.01000*** (0.00165)
Gender: Female	0.126** (0.0528)
Constant	2.757*** (0.150)
Observations	1,454
R-squared	0.183
Log-likelihood	-2063

*Standard errors in parentheses, \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$*

*Time of voting decision ranging from 1 "had already decided a long time ago" to 5 "decided on voting day".*

*Index of Negative Party Evaluations, count variable ranging from 0 to 5, for the five parties, each negative party evaluation from Table 6 with a value of -4 or -5 is counted.*

No matter if analyzed as a count variable or separately for the different political parties, no significant effects could be found – in the West as well as in the East.

Hypothesis 3 has to be rejected, the time of voting decision is not affected by negative party evaluations at all.

## 8 Conclusion

This paper aimed at exploring the effects of out-group derogation on vote choice in Germany. After showing that negative party identification and negative party evaluations can be easily and distinctly integrated in the social identity framework, I showed that negative party evaluations, called inter-party hostility by Maggiotto and Piereson (1977) can be seen as a consequence of negative and positive party identification. They correspond with the concept of out-group derogation that is used within social identity theory to denote possible negative consequences of social comparison processes. The German case provides an interesting setting for exploring inter-party hostilities in a multi-party setting as the East and the West may be seen as almost two different party systems (Niedermayer 2013).

Looking at identification as group belonging, as a common knowledge of “we”, it is always interesting to analyze who is perceived as “the others”. Findings from Paragraph 7.1 can show that the perception of “the others” runs well between ideological camps. Although the amount of people that see the Left party adherents as the others differs between East and West Germany for all partisans, the Left party is in both parts the major opponent for the CDU and FDP adherents.

Negative party identifications and negative party evaluations are highly correlated. It was shown that the higher a voter identifies with a party, the higher the out-group derogation of the parties of the other ideological camps get. Exploring the effects of negative party evaluations on vote choice, it was revealed that not every negative party evaluation positively influences vote choice. All significant effects run exclusively between ideological camps with an average effect size of 8 percentage points, even when controlling for the other factors of the Michigan model. Negative party evaluations have a bigger influence in the West than in the East, and surprisingly, the negative evaluation of the Left party is not the most influential.

The time of voting decision is positively influenced by positive party identification. However, negative party evaluations do not have a significant effect neither when they are treated as count variable nor included separately for each party.

Although results are not as coherent and clear as in two-party systems/party systems with two major parties, this paper showed that the concept can be used for analyzing voting behavior in multi-party systems as well. Using party thermometers to measure negative party evaluations agrees well with the theoretical concept of out-group derogation and offers many possibilities as these standard items are included in numerous surveys like the CSES.

The 2013 campaign in Germany was not a very polarized campaign so it would be fruitful to compare last year's result with the results from different years, especially 2002. Another interesting focus would be the analyses of the change of inter-party hostility and its effects within the election campaign, using data from Rolling-Cross-Sections. Last, comparisons of different multi-party systems with data from the CSES would enhance our understanding of these effects and their mechanism and further establish the inclusion of negative partisanship in electoral studies.

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