Beyond disdain: Measurement and consequences of negative partisanship as a social identity

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ABSTRACT

Negative partisanship, voters' rejection of a party, increasingly garners scholarly attention. Yet we lack robust empirical evidence on the nature of the concept and how it shapes attitudes towards citizens of the "other side" of politics. In this paper I argue negative partisanship should be conceptualised as a type of social identity, beyond a mere "dislike" of a party. Leveraging a three-wave online panel administered during the 2021 German federal elections, I test the measurement properties of a multi-item scale measuring negative party identification. Further, I examine the effects of negative identities on attitudes towards other citizens by combining the online panel with a nine-country survey. I find that negative identification is at least as stable as (positive) partisanship and it predicts hostile attitudes towards out-voters. These findings suggest that, when dislike of a party becomes part of one's sense of self, the consequences for social cohesion are particularly egregious.

1. Introduction

Partisanship has been a central concept to the study of political behaviour (Dalton, 2016), consistently predicting several behavioural outcomes and even informing an individual's sense of self (Greene, 2002). In the last few decades, however, partisan ties have weakened in established polities (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2002), whilst failing to take root in newer democracies (e.g. Lupu, 2016; Rose and Mishler, 1998). Yet few observers would claim that current politics is no longer "partisan". Voters are increasingly sorted into mutually hostile partisan camps (Harteveld, 2021), with partisan biases and prejudices showing few signs of abating. How, then, can parties inspire such acrimonious and socially salient divides in an era of declining partisan attachments?

A possible answer to this puzzle lies precisely in the growing relevance of *negative partisanship*, voters' rejection of a party, in structuring political competition (Bankert, 2021; Mayer, 2017; Samuels and Zucco, 2018). Rather than engaging with politics by identifying with any one side, voters are increasingly motivated by their dislike towards a particular party or ideological group (Garzia and Ferreira da Silva, 2022; Meléndez and Kaltwasser, 2021). In spite of its growing relevance, however, we still lack a deeper understanding about the nature of negative partisanship and its role in fostering rising levels of hostility between political opponents. Existing literature is often ambiguous or divided in treating negative partisanship as either a type of negative *instrumental evaluation* (Rosema and Mayer, 2020) ("party disdain") or as a type of social identity (Bankert, 2020; Mayer and Russo, 2024), akin to positive party identification (Greene, 2002). Further,

few works explicitly relate negative partisanship to perhaps its most worrying potential consequence: hostile attitudes towards voters of one's disliked party. In this paper I argue that negative partisanship encompasses both instrumental and identity-based components, and that this differentiation carries important empirical consequences for democratic politics. I focus analyses on observable implications that follow from a conceptualisation of negative partisanship as a social identity. Combining longitudinal data from an election period in Germany and evidence from nine other country-contexts, I test assumptions related to measurement, stability, and political hostility.

Firstly, I use a three-wave online panel survey fielded before and after the 2021 German federal election (Bach et al., 2023) and explore the measurement properties of a theory-driven multi-item scale that purports to capture a sense of negative identification with one's disliked party. I find that the proposed items form a coherent scale, which is independent from an analogous measure of positive identification and that provides significantly more measurement information than a simpler measure of out-party dislike using affective ratings. Secondly, I leverage the longitudinal aspect of this dataset and explore the stability of negative partisanship during the election campaign in Germany. Results suggest that the negative identity scale is as stable as an analogous measure of positive partisanship, and that it predicts stability in attitudes towards the out-party (i.e. a stable dislike). Finally, I explore the effects of negative identification on measures of hostility targeted at out-voters (dislike, intolerance, and harassment). In doing

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so, I combine the previous data with a dataset provided by Harteveld et al. (2024), which covers nine countries (Germany, Brazil, the United States, the United Kingdom, Spain, Sweden, Poland, Italy, and France), and boasts a reduced version of my measurement scale and comparable measures of political hostility. Through a series of longitudinal, cross-sectional, and cross-country models, I find that negative identification is consistently associated with hostile attitudes towards the voters of one's disliked party, even when controlling for out-party/elite dislike and positive party identification.

These analyses serve as evidence that treating negative partisanship as a social identity is not simply a matter of theoretical clarity. Negative attitudes towards political parties may be relatively widespread (Meléndez and Kaltwasser, 2021), but, when such dislike becomes part of one's sense of self, the consequences for democratic politics and social cohesion are particularly worrisome. Negative partisans are unlikely to waver in their opposition towards an out-party that shapes their political identity, extending this animosity to fellow citizens to the point of holding illiberal attitudes. Understanding how "party disdain" turns into a sense of identification and how to tackle its harmful downstream consequences requires a deeper understanding of negative partisanship, to which this paper contributes.

This paper is structured as follows. I start by reviewing the literature on negative partisanship, arguing that it can emerge independently of positive partisanship and that it can be conceptualised and measured as a type of social identity. Thereafter, I provide the theoretical bases for items that attempt to tap into this sense of negative identification, and state observable implications that guide empirical analyses. I then analyse the measurement and stability of negative identification, and then move on to studying its effects on hostile attitudes towards other citizens. I conclude by reflecting on the limitations of the paper and by pointing out possible avenues for future research.

2. Literature review and theoretical framework

Since at least Campbell et al. (1960)'s seminal study on American voters, positive partisanship, or individuals' attachment to a political party, has been at the heart of the study of political behaviour, acting as an "unmoved mover" that influences patterns of voting, political participation, news consumption, and attitudes towards the opposition (Dalton, 2016). Later works (e.g. Maggiotto and Piereson, 1977) pointed out the importance of also understanding voters' negative feelings towards other parties, which constituted an independent dimension. Whilst these studies made the crucial point that negative and positive feelings towards political parties correlate only imperfectly, they shared the basic tenet that negative and positive partisanship were different sides of the same coin (Samuels and Zucco, 2018), with the former's existence predicated upon the latter.

The notion that negative partisanship is, at best, a corollary of positive partisanship was further reinforced by the identity-based approach to the study of party identification. As partisanship started to be conceptualised as a type of social identity akin to race or religion, political scientists delved deeper into Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). SIT posits that individuals derive a sense of personal identity from the social groups to which they see themselves as belonging (the *in-group*), which political behaviouralists adapted to the realm of politics (Greene, 2002). From this perspective, affection towards a party went beyond mere instrumental or rational evaluations, but constituted a fundamental and stable part of how individuals saw themselves (e.g. "I am a Republican"). Crucially, within the SIT framework in-groups are logically prior to the definition of *out-groups*, i.e. groups to which the individual does not belong, and positive evaluations are thought to come before negative ones (Medeiros and Noël, 2014).

A decline in partisan identification in advanced democracies (Dalton and Wattenberg, 2002), and the failure of stable partisan identities to take root in newer democracies (e.g. Lupu, 2016), however, challenged

this basic assumption. Meléndez and Kaltwasser (2021), for instance, note the high rates of negative partisanship in Western Europe, far exceeding rates of positive partisan identification. Works on weakly institutionalised party systems in Eastern Europe (Rose and Mishler, 1998) and Latin America (Meléndez, 2022) have also highlighted that individuals may oppose a particular party without feeling attached to any, especially in contexts of an electorally dominant party. These works provided important evidence for the claim that dislike of a particular party does not necessarily entail preference for one, or, in other words, that negative partisanship is an independent concept from positive partisanship.

Party disdain versus negational identity

If the existence of negative partisanship as a *sui generis* concept is increasingly accepted by scholars, there are still disagreements and areas of obscurity and ambiguity about the nature of the concept. In short, it is often unclear if scholars treat negative partisanship as merely a type of disdain for the out-party, or as a type of social identity in the same vein as positive partisanship (Lelkes, 2021).

This differentiation is far from trivial, and it finds echoes in research on the nature of party identification. Huddy et al. (2015) argue that partisanship can be either *instrumental* or *expressive*. Instrumental partisans are connected to their party primarily because of reasons related to performance in office and leader evaluations (Huddy et al., 2018), and may abandon the party if the expected rewards are not delivered. Expressive partisans, on the other hand, are the true identitarians, whose party allegiance is enduring and impervious to events such as leader or even platform change (e.g. Baker et al., 2016). To expressive partisans victories and losses are a personal matter, and they strive to defend their party in the face of adversaries and conflicting information (e.g. Bolsen et al., 2014). In other words, not every partisan is an identitarian, and the instrumental and expressive partisans are two very different types of citizens.

If expressive partisanship fits neatly into the broader SIT framework, the same is not true for negative partisanship. SIT is explicitly about identities arising out of group belonging, but, as discussed before, negative partisanship can and does exist without a corresponding positive party identity, and therefore with no in-group to act as the reference for identity-formation. This poor theoretical fit has led Rosema and Mayer (2020) to claim that negative partisanship is best described as negative evaluations, analogous to instrumental partisanship, in what Lelkes (2021) calls "party disdain".

In contrast, several other researchers have put forward a conceptualisation of negative partisanship as a type of social identity, typically drawing on Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (ODT) (Brewer, 1991). ODT posits that social identities satisfy two competing and independent needs: a need for belonging (to an in-group) and a need for differentiation (from out-groups). Zhong et al. (2008) argue that identities can be formed solely (or at least primarily) around an individual's need for differentiation from certain social groups to which he or she does not belong. Such identity would be "negational" in that the individual defines oneself based on what *they are not*. This is in contrast to the typical "affirmational" identity, where the self is defined by what the social group represents. Crucially, this theoretical argumentation precludes the need of an in-group in the process of identity formation, in what Leonardelli and Toh (2015) term "outgroup-only" categorisation. Much like individuals may define themselves as "I am a Republican", they may also define themselves simply as "I am anti-Republican".

With this theoretical clarity, we can conceptualise negative partisanship analogously to its positive counter-part as either instrumental or identity-based in nature. Individuals may simply dislike a party they see as distant from themselves, be it due to negative leader evaluations, performance or policies (Garzia and Ferreira da Silva, 2022), but such dislike may not necessarily be part of their sense of self. In contrast, negative identifiers should show a "persistent aversion" (Caruana et al.,

2015, p.300) towards a particular party, which is likely to persist even with changes in party platforms of leadership. Like positive partisanship, a negative party identity can also act as an "unmoved mover" formed early in life (Boonen, 2019) and shaping individual's own policy views (Samuels and Zucco, 2018).

Rather than delineating a sharp distinction between instrumental and identitarian negative partisans, an arguably more flexible approach is to view negative partisanship as a broader concept that encompasses both instrumental and identity components (e.g. Bankert, 2024). From this perspective, the relationship between identification and evaluations, as well as their relative importance, may vary across individuals, specific outcomes, and contexts. For example, deep ideological disagreements, typically understood as instrumental, may *lead* to the formation of negative identification; however, once identity-related dynamics are in play, evaluations of parties' policies and performance are likely to be negatively biased (see Ryan, 2022; Walder and Strijbis, 2022)

This conceptual differentiation, however, is not captured by traditional approaches to measuring negative partisanship. Scholars tend to rely on affective ratings towards political parties (i.e. a 0 to 10, dislike/like scale) (e.g. Abramowitz and Webster, 2018; Maggiotto and Pierson, 1977), questions such as "Is there a party you would never vote for?" (e.g. Medeiros and Noël, 2014; Rose and Mishler, 1998), or a combination of both measures (e.g. Caruana et al., 2015; Mayer, 2017). Such measures do not allow for a clear distinction between identification and instrumental dislike (Lee et al., 2021). Individuals do not "negatively identify" with everything they dislike (Bankert, 2021), and "never voting for a party" may be due to strategic reasons related to the party's viability in the electoral arena (Mayer and Russo, 2024).

More recent works, however, have attempted to directly measure negative partisanship as a type of social identity. Bankert (2021), for instance, fielded a negative party identity scale in the United States by reversing existing measures of positive party identification, whilst Mayer and Russo (2024) developed a more encompassing measurement scale capturing dimensions related to ideological distance, voting intentions and a sense of identification.[1] These studies have provided much needed evidence for an identity-based approach to negative partisanship, both in terms of measurement and attitudinal effects. There are, however, still some limitations. Firstly, the study of negative partisanship in the bi-partisan, institutionalised, and polarised system of the United States complicates the disentangling of negative and positive party identities. Critics could argue that any effects attributed to negative partisanship are simply the consequence of prior and longstanding positive party identification, especially in a context of mutual hostility between two well-defined partisan camps (Mason and Wronski, 2018). Secondly, measures of negative identification that encompass factors related to ideological disagreements and vote choice (Mayer and Russo, 2024) may not quell arguments that negative partisanship is restricted to negative instrumental evaluations (Rosema and Mayer, 2020).

The dimensions of negative identities

I put forward an alternative approach to those outlined above in which I first define specific dimensions that are theorised to underlie a negative social identity, which directly informs subsequent measurement. In doing so, I attempt to eschew instrumental components related to ideological considerations[2] or voting preferences as a way to tap more directly into a true sense of negative identification that is distinguishable from mere negative evaluations. Deriving insights from social psychology theories on identities and past efforts on the measurement of political identities (see Rosema and Mayer, 2020), I substantiate the dimensions of *out-group categorisation*, *self-definition*, *emotional significance*, and *salience of identification*.

Since social identities emerge out of an individual's relation to a social group, perhaps the most essential dimension of a negative identity rests on *out-group categorisation*, or the extent to which individuals perceive a social group as a cohesive "them" to which the individual does not belong. This notion finds echoes in Self-Categorisation Theory (Turner et al., 1987) (SCT), which posits that individuals perceive categories when a collection of stimuli (such as other individuals) are considered to be more similar amongst themselves than they are to other stimuli outside this collection. Further, SCT argues that individuals relate themselves to these groups in a self-referential process. This may result in individuals perceiving only a cohesive out-group ("them") without a corresponding in-group (and vice-versa), or a combination of both (i.e. in-and-out-group categorisation) (Leonardelli and Toh, 2015).

To be clear, whilst out-group categorisation is necessary for negative identities, it is not necessary that such identities be entirely "negational". Indeed, there must be some "anchoring" feature about the individual that differentiates them from the out-group in the first place (Mayer and Russo, 2024). The point, however, is that such features may not themselves constitute a corresponding partisan - or indeed social - positive identity at all. Individuals may oppose a party due to deeply-held personal beliefs that do not necessarily lead to in-group formation or clearly map on to issues structuring party competition (Meléndez and Kaltwasser, 2021; Samuels and Zucco, 2018).

As foreshadowed in a previous section, we can link these out-group-based categorisations to a sense of identification through ODT. Individuals may satisfy their need for distinctiveness by defining themselves as not belonging to, or being distant from, the relevant out-group (Zhong et al., 2008). However, individuals may recognise an out-group without necessarily deriving a sense of negative identification around it, as the categorisation process described above is purely cognitive in nature (Turner et al., 1987). As such, *self-definition* should capture the extent to which non-membership in a social group inform one's sense of self. This is analogous to extant approaches to measuring positive partisanship, in which labelling oneself as a supporter of the party directly speaks to a self-categorisation dimension that informs social identification (Greene, 2002).

Individuals hold multiple social identities, however, and these identities may be more important or salient depending on contextual factors (Huddy, 2013). Indeed, *emotional significance* is a crucial part of social identities (Tajfel and Turner, 1979), and holds important effects on political behaviour. Strong identifiers tend to display negative emotions (such as anger) and to show higher levels of out-group derogation in contexts of collective threat Brewer (1999), whilst feeling more positive emotions in response to successes of their in-group (Huddy et al., 2015). Indeed, to the extent that groups inform an individual's sense of self, the group's failures and successes are felt on a personal level. As such, extant works on partisan identities have typically asked questions tapping into positive (negative) emotional reactions to enhanced (lowered) group status (e.g. Bankert et al., 2017). Analogously, we should expect negative partisans to have emotional reactions related to whether the out-party is successful or not. Similarly, researchers have also attempted to capture the centrality of social identities (Leach et al., 2008) through items that directly ask about how *salient* or important the identity is to the individual, which may vary across time and context.

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[1] See also Lee et al. (2021).

[2] Ideological labels can also be sources of identification (Devine, 2015). However, given the closeness of such identities with instrumental issue preferences, I opt to leave this dimension out of the measure. Further, negative partisanship has been shown to influence individuals' own positions away from their disliked party (Samuels and Zucco, 2018).

Hostile consequences

Negative partisanship is often related to the concept of affective polarisation, or hostility between political groups (Mayer and Russo, 2024). Both concepts are fundamentally rooted in out-group aversion, though affective polarisation has been mostly studied through the lenses of positive partisanship (Iyengar et al., 2012). The relationship between negative partisanship and affective polarisation is often under-theorised, however (see Russo et al., 2023). For the purposes of this paper, I focus exclusively on the argument that negative partisan identities can result in more hostile feelings towards voters of one's disliked party. In order to avoid further conceptual confusion, I refer to the outcome of interest as *out-voter hostility*.

This argument rests on two assumptions. Firstly, negative partisanship should be a type of identity, whilst out-voter hostility is a negative attitude (or evaluation) that emerges out of this identity (Lee et al., 2021; Russo et al., 2023). Secondly, attitudes towards voters and parties are both conceptually and empirically distinct from each other (e.g. Kingzette, 2021), with recent studies differentiating between "vertical" (that is, party-related) and "horizontal" (towards fellow citizens) affective polarisation (Comellas Bonsfills, 2022). In this paper I focus explicitly on attitudes towards other citizens associated with the out-party (out-voters).

As theorised by Leonardelli and Toh (2015), negative identities should be particularly conducive to negative attitudes towards out-group members beyond what may be expected from a mere instrumental dislike of the out-party. Indeed, to harshly judge a fellow citizen for their political allegiance should flow more naturally for negative identitarians, who may see may perceive support for their out-party as a personal and emotional threat. Though instrumental considerations may also drive hostile attitudes towards out-voters (e.g. Orr and Huber, 2020), it is unlikely to fully account for the independent link between negative identification and out-voter hostility (see Dias and Lelkes, 2022).

Empirical evidence of this relationship, however, is still scarce. This is at least partly due to a lack of appropriate measures, since a robust empirical test would require both a direct measure of negative *identification*, as well as measures of hostility targeted at other *citizens* rather than parties. Past studies have shown, for instance, that associating other citizens to the out-party label may lead to stereotyping (Samuels et al., 2023) and social distance (Haime and Cantú, 2022), and that negative identification is associated with higher levels of party-based ("vertical") affective polarisation (Mayer and Russo, 2024). It remains unclear the extent to which these effects can be attributed to negative identification rather than out-party dislike, and the extent to which identity-based hostility filters down to average citizens ("horizontal" polarisation).

Conceptual and observable implications

The theoretical discussions above covered several conceptual and empirical implications we will do well to formalise here. Fig. 1 below provides a visual summary of the model of negative partisanship I advance in this paper, as well as its relationship to the main outcome of interest, out-voter hostility. Firstly, at the conceptual level, we can define negative partisanship as aversion towards a particular political party which has an instrumental and an identity-based component. Attitudes related to a party's past performances in office, leaders' profiles, and policy platforms reflect this instrumental side of negative partisanship, generating negative evaluations of the party. When such dislike becomes part of an individual's sense of self, we are in the realms of *negative identification*, couched in the dimension theorised above. Both components contribute to a negative affective assessment of the out-party ("party disdain"), which I term *out-party dislike*. Further, though conceptually distinct, the instrumental and identity components are not necessarily independent. Negative identities may act as a perceptual

screen that negatively biases instrumental evaluations (e.g. Samuels and Zucco, 2018), leading to a more stable dislike for the out-party. For example, a party may change its leader or policy platform and still be unpalatable to a negative identifier, whilst being potentially able to persuade a mere instrumental negative partisan.

If this conceptual differentiation matters for how individuals relate to politics, we should expect to observe certain patterns in the data arising out of negative identification. I focus my analysis on three: *measurement*, *stability*, and *hostility*. Firstly, negative identification should be measurable via items that correspond to its theorised related dimensions. This measure should be independent from an analogous measure of positive partisan identities, and it should not be reducible to a measure of out-party dislike. Indeed, an implication of Fig. 1 is that, if negative identification is not measured explicitly, it will be subsumed under cruder measures of out-party dislike that cannot properly capture the added effects of the identity component. Secondly, negative identities should be relatively stable. If the concept does indeed denote a long-standing aversion to a political party, then such aversion should not disappear or change considerably in a short amount of time. Similarly, we should expect out-party dislike to be more stable amongst individuals with higher levels of negative identification. Finally, negative identities should predict more hostile attitudes towards out-voters. Such hostility must be driven independently by a true sense of negative identification, and not simply negative attitudes towards the related party.

Before moving on to empirical analyses, one point of clarification is in order. The scheme depicted in Fig. 1 is purposefully parsimonious and serves the primary goal of summarising the theoretical and empirical claims pursued in this paper. It is not to be taken as a causal or comprehensive model of negative partisanship and out-voter hostility. As discussed previously, one can plausibly argue that ideological disagreements lie at the root of negative identification, at least initially and/or for certain individuals. Similarly, prior negative attitudes towards social groups associated with the party may foster identity formation by making politics "personal" (Robison and Moskowitz, 2019). Alternative theoretical specifications should not detract from the main empirical claim of this paper, namely that negative partisanship is not reducible to a mere dislike for the out-party. Pursuing evidence for this claim is the central goal of the following sections, to which I turn below.

3. Data and methods

I use two different datasets, which allow for separate longitudinal and cross-country analyses. My main dataset is PINCET (Bach et al., 2023), a three-wave online panel administered in the weeks before (wave 1: 30 Aug – 5 Sep; wave 2: 13 Sep – 19 Sep) and after (wave 3: 27 Sep – 3 Oct) the 2021 German federal election (26 Sep) using a quota sample targeting the German population of voting age. I restrict the sample to individuals who participated in all three waves, resulting in a sample size of 1781. PINCET contains full versions of a multi-item negative identity scale, reflecting the theoretical dimensions discussed previously. Apart from a fine-grained operationalisation of negative partisanship, PICNET's longitudinal structure also allows for over-time analyses of the scale's properties and attitudinal effects.

This is complemented by a second dataset, CONAP (Harteveld et al., 2024), which provides survey data collected in March 2022 via online panels in nine countries: Brazil, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The target sample size is of around 2000 respondents in each country, and weights provided in the dataset are used throughout. CONAP contains a reduced version of the multi-item negative identity scale fielded in PINCET and comparable items measuring political hostility, though some key differences remain. As such, CONAP acts as a "soft replication" of the PINCET-based analyses, and as a first attempt at generalisability due to its cross-country design.
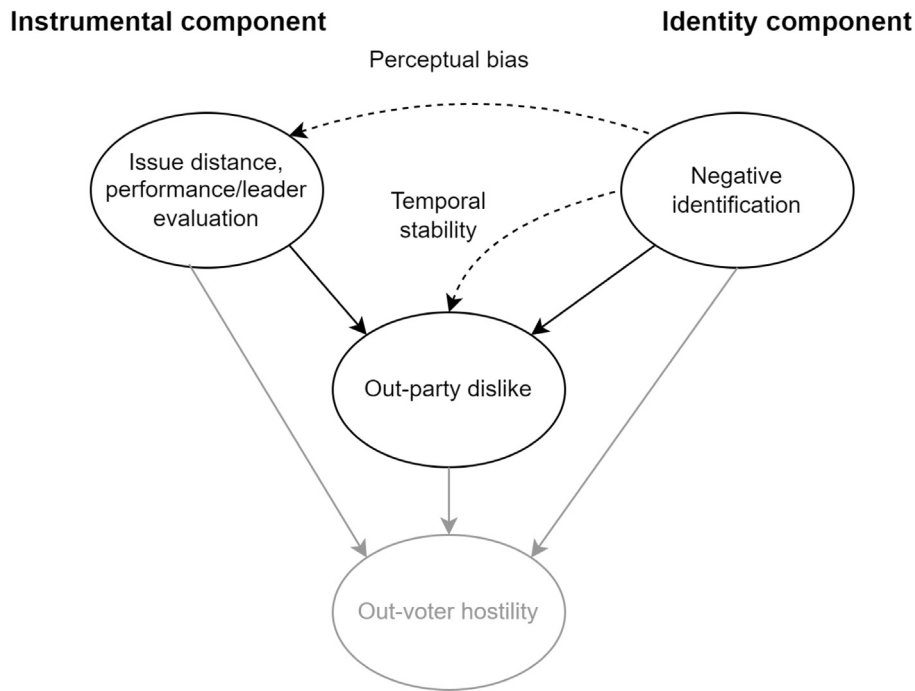
Fig. 1. Conceptual scheme of negative partisanship and its relationship to out-voter hostility.
Note: Grey scale used to differentiate between components of negative partisanship and specific outcome.

Measures

Negative partisanship The main variable of interest is a measure of the identity component of negative partisanship (see Fig. 1). In the PINCET data, negative identification is operationalised as the mean of the items shown in Table 1 (subsequent section), which were all measured in to strongly disagree (1) to heavily agree (5) scales. Respondents answered these items in reference to the party they named in a previous filter question determining their disliked party (i.e. out-party). In the CONAP data, respondents were first asked about which group of voters they liked the least/the most, with the least liked group determining the respondent's out-party. They were then asked whether they would describe themselves as "anti-[out-party]" (self-definition), and, in case they did not strongly disagree with the statement, they were also asked if being anti-[out-party] was important to their sense of self (salience of identity). The final measure of negative identification is the mean of the combined items.

In order to isolate the effects of negative party identification from negative party evaluations (the instrumental component of negative partisanship), I rely on the combination of *out-party dislike* and *ideological distance*. Out-party dislike is operationalised as the reverse-coded affective rating assigned to the out-party ("leading politicians of..." in the CONAP data), and ideological distance is measured as an individual's distance from the median position of their out-party (calculated based on that party's partisans) on items corresponding to the cultural (immigration) and economic (inequality) dimension of political competition. Whilst an ideal measure of instrumental negative partisanship would directly measure its theorised components, affective ratings are notoriously "vague" precisely because they may capture party and leader's evaluations, and broader ideological disagreements (Druckman and Levendusky, 2019; Lelkes, 2019; Wagner, 2021). Further, party dislike measures are widely available and often used as a proxy for negative partisanship. In short, though not ideal, this measure of instrumental negative partisanship assumes that out-party dislike acts as a proxy for instrumental factors not captured by ideological distance, at least when the identity component is explicitly measured.

Measures of hostility[3] I use three different measures of political hostility present in both datasets. *Out-voter dislike* is the reverse-coded affective rating respondents assigned to voters of the party they negatively identify with, ranging from 0 to 10 (100 in CONAP) and with higher values indicating greater dislike. Whilst this measure is closely linked to mainstream literature on affective polarisation, a significant weakness is that it is unclear what a high level of dislike towards out-voters may mean in concrete terms. Further, it can be argued that out-voter dislike is too closely related – empirically and theoretically – to negative identification. As such, I measure *intolerance* as whether individuals think out-voters should not be allowed to campaign in their local area, and *political violence* as acceptance of out-voters being harassed online in a manner that would make them feel threatened. Both items were inspired by Berntzen et al. (2023), who argue these measures may form a "hostility ladder", with support for violence at the highest and most egregious level. One important difference here is that the political violence item in CONAP conditions the action on its being carried out by in-party members (i.e. whether it is acceptable for in-party members to harass out-voters). This may condition effects on the degree to which one feels attached to the in-group. I return to this point when discussing robustness checks in the Appendix (see page 70).

Control variables Apart from out-voter dislike and ideological distance, a key control is *positive party identification*, which is operationalised using items provided by Bankert et al. (2017) in their study of multi-party systems in Western Europe (see Table A4). This robust operationalisation of positive partisanship is crucial to the claim that negative identities exist and can have effects independently of their positive counterpart. Further, I control for *social distance*, the reverse of social sorting (Harteveld, 2021), a commonly employed variable in the affective polarisation literature capturing the overlap political and social identities. To measure social distance, I first calculate predicted probabilities of voting for each party via a multinomial model including only socio-demographic variables. I then extract only the probabilities associated with voting for one's out-party and reverse it, such that

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[3] See Tables A1 and A2 in Appendix for full wording.

high values denote greater distance to the out-party's voter base along demographic lines. Finally, I control for socio-demographics (age, sex, education, region of residence), political interest and party dummies. When running cross-country modes using the CONAP data, I replace party dummies for a *populist* dummy to account for the extra hostility directed towards voters of these parties (Harteveld et al., 2021).[4]

Methods

I rely exclusively on PINCET to analyse the measurement properties and stability of the negative identity scale. When examining hostility as an outcome, I employ different modelling strategies in order to capitalise on the different strengths of each dataset. Firstly, I make use of PINCET's longitudinal structure and estimate a random effects within-between (REWB) model (Bell et al., 2019), which, as the name suggests, provides both within- and between-unit effects. Within-effects use only the within-respondent (here over-time) variation in the relevant variables, analogous to a fixed-effects estimator. This estimator reveals how change in negative identification over the three waves is associated with change in hostile attitudes towards out-voters, regardless of average levels of identification and hostility. With time-constant confounders accounted for, I further control for positive partisanship, out-party dislike, and political interest as time-varying variables. Between-effects, in turn, are analogous to a simple cross-sectional model, and denote whether individuals who have overall higher (or lower) levels of negative identification also show higher (or lower) levels of hostility. Only out-voter dislike is available in all waves, however, such that longitudinal analysis is restricted to this dependent variable. The other two measures of hostility are present in wave three of PINCET, where I estimate a simple OLS model. For CONAP, I run the same model for all three different variables in each country separately, and then again in a pooled model with countries as fixed-effects. Country-specific models allow us to appreciate possible heterogeneity in effects, whilst the pooled model leverages greater precision due to a larger sample size. All variables are standardised for ease of interpretation (within-country standardisation for country-specific CONAP models).

4. Analysis

Before moving on to more substantive analysis, I present descriptive results on the distribution of negative partisanship across datasets in Fig. 2. In the PINCET data, 86% of all respondents indicated disliking a party, with 45% indicating they disliked an extra party (shaded bars). In contrast, only 54% of the total sample identified as positive partisans, virtually all of which are also negative partisans, leaving 36% of respondents as pure negative partisans (i.e. those who only hold a negative party identity). The PINCET filter question is rather vague, however, and too low a bar for "identification". Using a direct self-definition item still returns a significant number of negative partisans in the CONAP data (Fig. 2(b)), with the analogous measure in PINCET standing at 76%. The populist radical-right dominates the choice of individuals' out-party, reflecting the strong repelling nature of this party family (Meléndez and Kaltwasser, 2021). Still, negative partisanship is also prevalent against several mainstream parties, as per the party-level graph for the CONAP data in the Appendix (Fig. A6). For instance, centre-left/right parties "attract" significant numbers of negative partisans in the UK, US, Brazil, France, Poland, Italy and Poland, with the Swedish Green Party and the left-wing populist Podemos in Spain also featuring prominently. Germany emerges as the country with the most unimodal distribution, with a vast dominance by the radical-right AfD amongst all partisan groups and non-voters (Fig. A5).

Measuring negative identities

More important than the prevalence of individuals disliking a particular party is an empirical test of whether such dislike can constitute a type of social identity. Following from the previous theoretical discussions, Table 1 presents items used to measure each dimension theorised to underlie a negative social identity with a political party. Individuals were asked whether they agreed (1 to 5 scale) with each statement in reference to their out-party. Cell entries show the alpha score for each item, which is similar to the correlation between the item and the entire scale (i.e. higher values indicate better fit). The original out-group categorisation item returned a poor fit in all waves, and was therefore replaced with an alternative from wave 2 onward.[5] Whilst all iterations of the scale returned Cronbach's α estimates above the conventional 0.6 cut-off point, the final iteration (wave 3) shows the highest level of reliability, suggesting the proposed items form a cohesive scale. In order to ascertain that negative identity is an independent construct from positive identification, I conduct exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, which suggest that the negative and positive partisan identity scales (in line with Bankert (2021) and Mayer and Russo (2024)) form two independent measures (see Fig. A1 and Table A5).

I further probe the measurement properties of the negative identity scale by fitting a Graded Response Model for polytomous data in order to derive an information function for each item. Information reflects an item's ability to accurately measure the latent construct at different levels, with higher scores representing more information captured by the item. Following the approach by Bankert et al. (2017), I include out-party dislike in the scale for this analysis as a way to compare the items' measurement properties against a "traditional" measure of the concept. Fig. 3 displays the information curves for all scale items and out-party dislike, with the y-axis representing the amount of information provided by the item across a normalised range of the negative identity scale (θ), with mean of zero and standard deviation of one, shown in the x-axis. Items would ideally provide high levels of information across the full range of the identity scale, accurately measuring strength of negative identification amongst low, moderate, and strong identifiers, whilst potentially compensating for weaknesses in other items.

As evidenced by the black dashed line, out-party dislike, a traditional measure of negative partisanship, provides very little information about one's strength of negative identification. In other words, knowing how much someone simply dislikes a party tells us little about how much this dislike is part of their identity. Out-party dislike performs better at providing information at very low levels of negative identification, but still to a small extent. This is in line with the notion that a measure of out-party dislike does not fully capture the theorised identity component of negative partisanship. In contrast, the identity scale items provide significantly more measurement information across a wide range of theta. The self-definition item does particularly well at low levels of negative identification, whilst salience of identification and emotional reactions are better able to detect stronger negative identitarians. This suggests that defining oneself using a negational label ("I am anti-....") may be the first "step" in establishing negative identification, whereas the salience of this label and emotional reactions to the out-party's successes distinguish moderate from strong negative identifiers.

The points made above raise the question of the extent to which the multi-item negative identity scale can discern between instrumental and identitarian negative partisans, or "mere disdain" from negative identification. Though a sharp distinction may be unrealistic (and any threshold arbitrary), the proposed items should still allow for meaningful differentiation. To explore this angle I leverage the wording of the identity items, whereby respondents explicitly agree or disagree

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[4] See Table A3 for list of parties and their populist classification, taken from Rooduijn et al. (2023).

[5] This ill-fitting item is excluded from the final measure used in the models, which is the mean of available items for each wave.
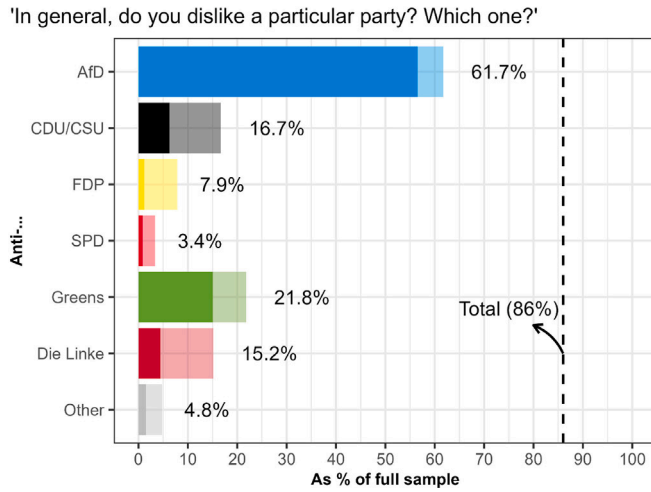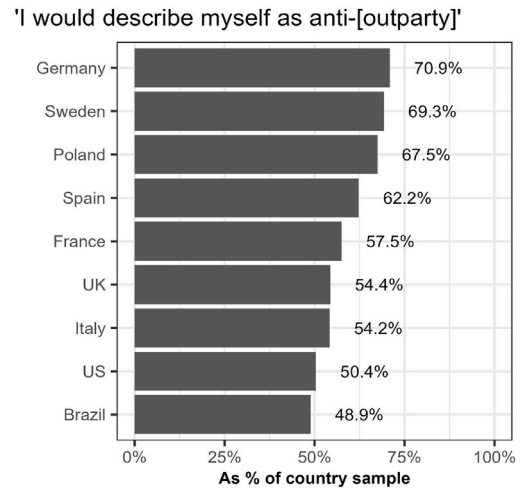
Fig. 2. Distribution of negative partisanship across datasets.

Note: Fig. 2(a): Individuals who indicated disliking a particular party were subsequently asked if they disliked another party, represented by shaded bars (not analysed in subsequent models). Fig. 2(b): Percentages refer to individuals agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement.
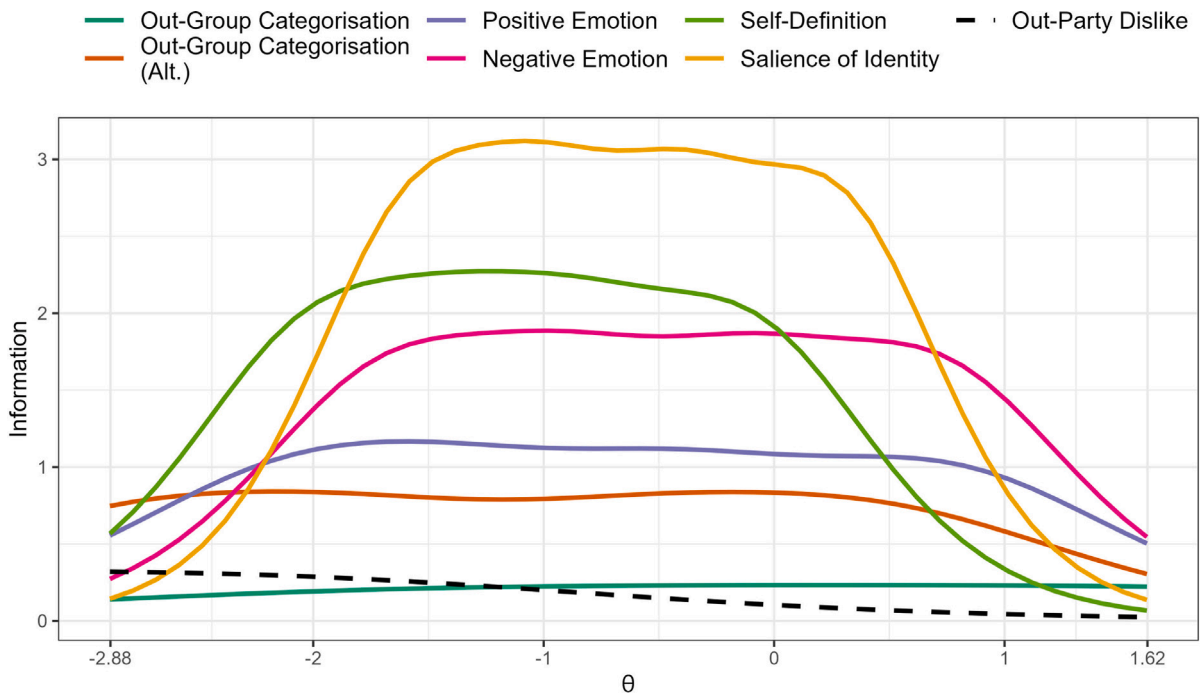

Fig. 3. Item information curves (PINCET Wave 3).

Table 1
Negative identity scale (PINCET waves 1–3).

Dimension	Item	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3
Out-Group Categorisation	When I talk about this party, I say "them" or "their party".	0.62	0.57	0.56
Out-Group Categorisation (alternative item)	Supporters of this party are very different from me.		0.72	0.70
Positive Emotional Reaction	If someone criticises this party, it makes me feel good	0.77	0.78	0.76
Negative Emotional Reaction	It makes me angry when people speak positively about this party.	0.75	0.76	0.79
Self-Definition	I would describe myself as an anti-[out-party]	0.74	0.72	0.75
Salience of Identity	It is important for me to be anti-[out-party]			0.8
Cronbach's α		0.69	0.76	0.82

Note: Cell entries show alpha score for each item. All items on five-point disagree/agree scale.

with the statements shown in Table 1, and use agreement (i.e. agree or strongly agree) as a threshold for comparison. I then derive item difficulty parameters, which denote the level of negative identification at which agreement with each scale item becomes more likely than not. "Harder" items require a higher score on the negative identity scale and could thus be more intuitively interpreted as constituting a "higher bar" for identification. As shown in Table A6, and in line with Fig. 3, emotional reactions are particularly indicative of a strong negative identifier. Similar to expressive (positive) partisans (Huddy et al., 2018), "true" negative identitarians seem to take the out-party's successes and failures on a more personal level. For more intuitive results, I also explore the association between agreeing with each identity item and holding the maximum level of dislike for the out-party (Tables A7–A12 and Fig. A7). Whilst the vast majority of negative partisans strongly dislike their out-party (85%), for many, this aversion may not be a matter of identity. For instance, 15% of negative partisans strongly dislike the out-party but *do not* apply the negational self-label, whilst the figure stands at 27% for salience of identification and as high as 47% for negative emotional reaction. Put together, these findings support the claim that "party disdain" does not necessarily translate into negative identification.

Since evidence suggests that the proposed items do form a cohesive, independent scale, I provide more descriptive findings on the negative identity scale in the Appendix. In short, though negative identification is particularly strong against the AfD, it is substantively high against out-parties (Fig. A3), and the overall measure is also considerably stronger than an analogous measure of positive partisanship (Fig. A2). Unsurprisingly, the negative identity scale correlates only weakly ($r = 0.22$) with out-party dislike, further suggesting the differentiation between these two measures (Fig. A4).

Are negative identities stable?

Past works on negative partisanship have suggested a level of stability in individuals' aversion towards their out-party (e.g. Caruana et al., 2015), and indeed stability is a core component of party identification (e.g. Huddy et al., 2018). Whilst a proper empirical test would ideally revolve around a much longer time period, the 2021 German election period can still provide informative results, both on conceptual and empirical grounds. Firstly, this period is a "most-likely-setting" for the stability of identities, such that instability here should cast serious doubts over identity-based accounts of negative partisanship. Secondly, election periods are particularly relevant for dynamics of party competition and vote choice. Thirdly, this analysis can act as a construct validity test for the scale presented in this paper. If the scale does indeed capture something beyond out-party dislike, we should expect to see greater stability amongst strong negative identifiers.

I examine the stability of negative identities across the three PINCET waves in several ways, whilst using positive party identification as a helpful point of reference. Firstly, I simply calculate the share of negative partisans that named the same out-party in all waves. If negative partisanship is indeed a core identity, then we should expect the "source" of this identity to remain constant. I find that 66% of negative partisans name the same out-party in all three waves, whereas the figure stands at a comparable 63% for constant in-party choice amongst positive partisans. If constant out-party choice is a behavioural mark of a true negative identifier, as compared to a more instrumental negative partisan, then we should expect this behaviour to be predicted by the negative identity scale presented in the previous section. Indeed, in a logistic model predicting constant out-party choice (dummy), stronger negative identification predicts stable out-party choice across waves (Fig. 4(a)). In a similar vein, if negative identifiers are stable in their aversion towards the out-party, then it follows that their levels of out-party dislike should also remain constant. As such, I calculate the within-respondent standard deviation in out-party dislike and predict it using the identity scale. Stronger identifiers are unwavering in their

dislike towards the out-party, as evidenced by the negative coefficient indicating less variation over time.[6]

Whilst the analyses above may provide indirect evidence of the stability of negative identities, an arguably better test is to directly measure the stability of individuals' strength of negative identification over time. In the absence of an objective score of construct stability, I simply compare the stability of negative identity with its positive counter-part. Given the similar measurement approaches (i.e. multi-item identity scales) and the same socio-political context, the established nature of positive identities can again provide a helpful anchor for interpreting results. I compare the stability of the two scales through a standardised measure of within-respondent variance, which should isolate over-time variation and provide a directly comparable score. I first standardise both scales across the entire dataset, and then fit an empty model (one for each identity scale, separately) with intercepts for wave and individuals. With wave- and respondent-level variance accounted for, I extract the (squared) standard deviation of the residuals (σ), which represents the over-time variance in the respective identity scale in standard deviation units (given the prior standardisation). In order to calculate a measure of uncertainty, I bootstrap this estimation and obtain 95% confidence intervals for the final variance measure.

Many negative partisans do not have a positive party identity, however, such that we are not comparing like-for-like. To further ensure comparability, I employ this method in different sub-samples. Firstly, I place no sample restrictions and simply obtain the variance for all positive and negative partisans ("all partisans"). I then compute results only for individuals who are both negative and positive partisans ("closed partisans") and, lastly, only for individuals who are either pure negative or positive partisans (i.e. hold only one of the two types of partisanship). Results can be appreciated in Fig. 4(b) and point in the same direction: the negative identity scale (NID strength) is equally stable as a measure of positive party identity (PID strength) in the period under analysis, regardless of sub-sample.[7] To be sure, this is a very short time period (around 5 weeks) during an election campaign, where political identities are likely to be activated (Singh and Thornton, 2019). This is precisely why the comparison with the PID scale is helpful, for both these criticisms would apply to the stability of a concept that is widely considered to be an enduring identity.

To the question of whether negative identities are stable, the data at hand only allow for an importantly qualified answer: *in the short campaign period under analysis*, negative identities are *at least as stable as* positive ones. It does not follow from this that such stability (and stabilising effects) will mirror those of positive party identification in the long-run, though there is some suggestive supporting evidence in that direction (Samuels and Zucco, 2018). For instance, rejection of a particular party can be learnt early in life (Boonen, 2019), demarcating voters' consideration sets and "bounding" them to one side of politics even if their positive party attachments waver over time (Zuckerman et al., 2007). Perhaps more importantly from a methodological perspective, strong negative identifiers show greater stability in their aversion towards the out-party, which supports the ability of the identity scale to differentiate between instrumental and identitarian negative partisans.

Is negative identification associated with out-voter hostility?

As a last empirical test, I investigate whether negative identities are associated with greater hostility towards out-voters independently of the more instrumental measure of out-party dislike. In other words, are there any detectable hostile attitudes towards other citizens arising out of negatively identifying against a political party rather than

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[6] Note that, given that individuals switch their out-party of choice, I restrict all longitudinal analyses to those who had a stable out-party throughout.

[7] PID results for pure positive partisans are too uncertain given the few number of individuals, hence wide confidence intervals.

(a) Results of models predicting stable
out-party choice and dislike for out-party
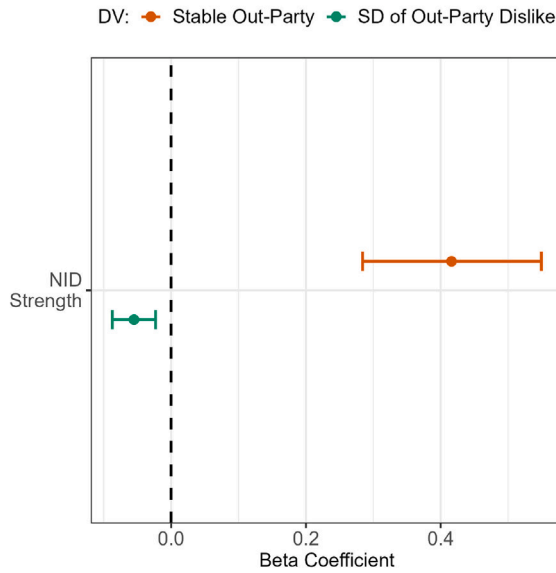
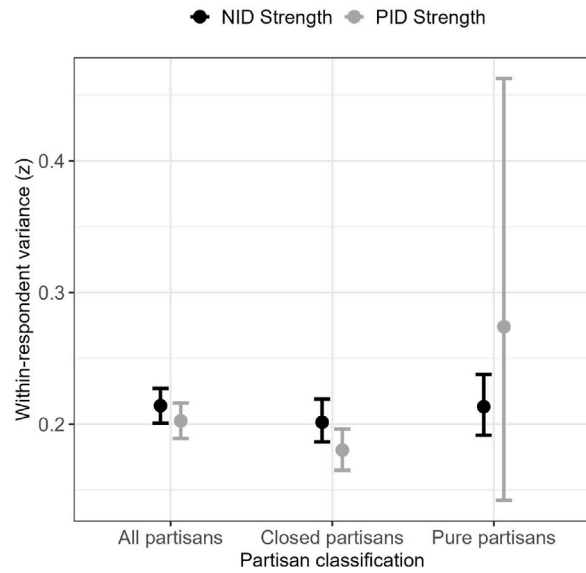**(b)** Stability of identity scales across waves

Fig. 4. Stability of NID and its effect on out-party dislike (PINCET).
Note: See Appendix (Table A13) for full regression tables. Fig. 4(a): logistic (stable out-party) and OLS (SD of out-party dislike) cross-sectional models. Fig. 4(b): Results from random-intercept models with random intercepts for wave and respondent. Bootstrapped 95% confidence intervals.

"merely" disliking it? Figs. 5 and 6 below display coefficient plots for PINCET (longitudinal and cross-sectional) and CONAP models (pooled and country-specific). I include strength of positive party identity (PID strength) in the plots again as a point of reference. Note that plotted independent and dependent variables are transformed into z-scores. In the Appendix I also provide details on a series of robustness checks that support the findings presented below (see page 70).

Starting with the longitudinal within-between model (left-hand side panel of Fig. 5), we can see that, as negative identification strengthens throughout the election period, so does out-voter dislike (within-effect).[8] The between-effect of negative identification, however, is much larger. Individuals who, in general, show higher levels of negative identification hold much more negative views of out-voters (0.34 standard deviations, or around 0.6 points on the original 0 to 10 scale of out-voter dislike). Whilst within-effects are robust to time-varying confounders, such large between-effects are still noteworthy given likely ceiling effects arising out of the like/dislike scale (i.e. out-voter dislike cannot grow any larger for many respondents), which would bias coefficients downward. We may also speculate as to the difference in magnitude of effects. Perhaps the factors that may strengthen one's identity and increase out-voter hostility over the period of an election campaign, such as salience, are fundamentally different from factors that turn an individual into a strong negative partisan in the first place, such as personality traits (Bankert, 2022), with the latter exerting stronger effects.

Out-voter dislike is an unsatisfactory measure of hostility, however, as it is vague and arguably too closely connected with the measurement of negative identities. In the right-hand side of Fig. 6, I run separate models for two concrete measures of hostility (intolerance of campaigns

and acceptance of online harassment) using only wave three of PINCET. The effects of negative identities are consistent in their statistical significance and magnitude in predicting higher levels of hostility (around 0.25 standard deviations). Unlike when predicting out-voter dislike, it should be noted, positive identification is also associated with higher hostility, though with a generally weaker effect.

Moving on to CONAP models, Fig. 6 shows results from pooled and country-specific models for the three dependent variables also analysed in PINCET. Results of pooled models (black lines) paint a coherent picture: negative identification, even when measured using only the reduced two-item scale in CONAP, is associated with all three measures of hostility towards out-voters. Effect sizes for intolerance and online harassment are similar to those of PINCET models (between 0.2 and 0.3 standard deviations), though weaker for out-voter dislike (0.05 standard deviations). Out-voter dislike also returns more mixed results in country-specific models, with only Brazil, Germany, Poland and Sweden returning a positive association at the 95% confidence level. Similarly to the PINCET model, PID also returns consistent null results when predicting out-voter dislike. The picture is much clearer for the other two hostility measures, where NID strength is associated with more hostile attitudes in every country, except for the intolerance measure in the U.S. ($p = 0.07$). A proper comparison of country contexts is beyond the scope of this paper (and hindered by a small number of cases), however, and the overall result is still one of consistent and substantive effects of negative identification on hostile attitudes towards out-voters.

The interpretation of results has so far relied on standardised measures, aiming at a reasonable level of comparability across datasets, countries, and scales. However, this does not provide easily interpretable and intuitive results. I address this by re-estimating models predicting concrete measures of hostility (i.e. PINCET wave three, and pooled CONAP models) using a dummy variable approach. I "dummify" the measures of intolerance and acceptance of online harassment by splitting responses in the respective scales' mid-point, after which responses indicate clear agreement with the statement. I then do the
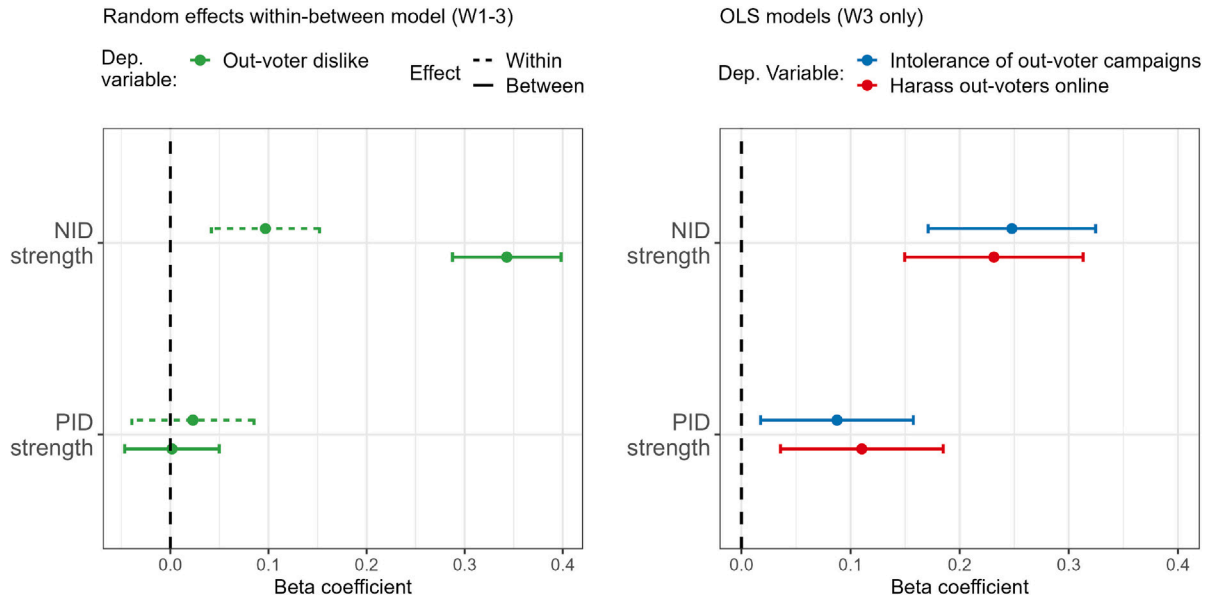
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[8] Critics could point out that identities are supposedly stable, invalidating a longitudinal model. However, identities have been found to vary in *strength* rather than direction (Huddy et al., 2018; Zuckerman et al., 2007), thus providing some over-time variation.

Fig. 5. Hostility models (PINCET).
Note: Models restricted to individuals who are both negative and positive partisans ("closed partisans"). N (REWB) = 771; N (OLS W3) = 910. See Tables A14–A15 for full results.
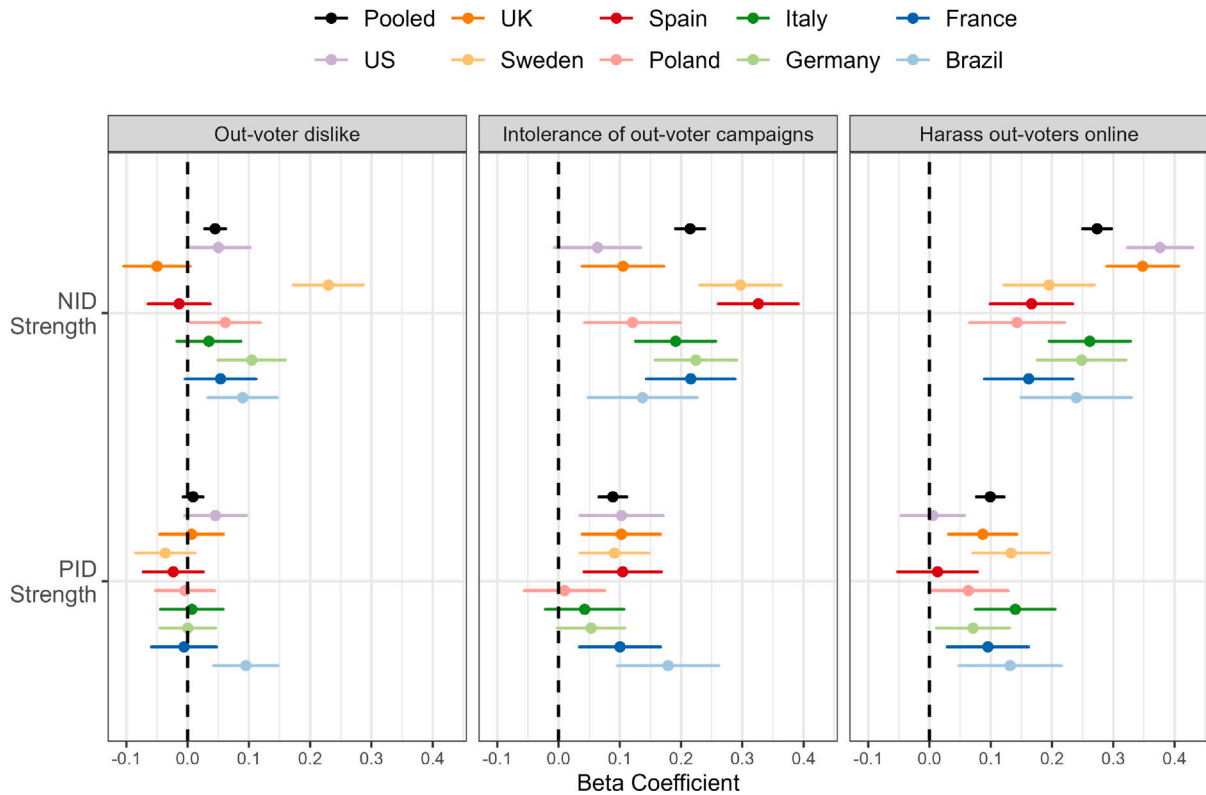

Fig. 6. Hostility models (CONAP dataset).
Note: Models restricted to individuals who are both negative and positive partisans ("closed partisans"). N (pooled) = 15,330. See Tables A16–A24 in Appendix for full regression tables.

same for negative identification, relying solely on the self-definition item ("I would describe myself as anti-[out-party]"). The item's simple wording lends itself to a more intuitive interpretation and it is arguably the most "direct" measure of negative identification, making no mention of out-voters or emotional states. Further, self-definition was

particularly effective at distinguishing negative partisans at lower levels of identification (see Fig. 3, rendering it a reasonable threshold between dislike and identity. I estimate logistic regression models, the results of which can be found in the Appendix (Figs. A8 and A9). Results are remarkably consistent: individuals who expressively label themselves

as "anti-[out-party]" are around 7%–11% more likely to be intolerant of out-voters' right to campaign and to find it acceptable that out-voters be threatened online.

One important counter-argument regarding the hostility models is that they are tautological: negative partisanship *is* out-voter dislike, especially since one of the measurement items mention out-voters and parties are said to be "socio-political brands" tied to social groups (Ahler and Sood, 2018). As Druckman and Levendusky (2019) show, however, individuals tend to think of party elites when they think of party labels, such that questions on negative partisanship likely elicit different mental objects than questions on average citizens (see also Kingzette, 2021). Further, I offer two empirical responses to this criticism. First, as a robustness check I estimate the concrete hostility models (i.e. those predicting intolerance and online harassment) whilst controlling for out-voter dislike, with effects remaining robust (Figs. A17 and A18). Second, the dummy models mentioned above use a single-item that makes no mention of out-voters and still return substantive results of negative identification on hostile attitudes (Figs. A8 and A9). Critics may still question the underlying assumptions that party identities arise primarily out of party labels and elites, and that these identities, in turn, influence attitudes towards other citizens. Admittedly, a design based on observational data and a short panel is unsuited to fully address this concern, and identities and attitudes are not fully independent (Hallajow, 2018). At the very least, and regardless of causal order, these analyses show that when individuals expressly label themselves as "anti-[out-party]", they are more likely to hold concrete hostile attitudes towards other voters and that this effect is not reduced to a mere dislike for the party or even the voters themselves. In other words, when politics becomes a matter of identity, hostility towards political opponents reaches worrying and norm-breaking levels.

5. Conclusion

Theoretical insights from past works on social and political identities suggest that rejection of a party can inform an individual's sense of self – a "negational" identity (Zhong et al., 2008) –, which is conceptually different from a mere "dislike" for the party (Lelkes, 2021). Testing observable implications of this theoretical claim has been the central goal of this paper, which focused on measurement, stability, and hostility. I have found that negative partisanship can be measured as a social identity via theory-driven items, that it behaves like an identity in terms of its stability and stabilising effects, and that it impacts individuals' attitudes (here in the dimension of hostility) like a social identity is expected to. Further, negative partisanship is stronger and more prevalent than its positive counterpart, and it is empirically distinguishable from an alternative operationalisation based on affective ratings ("party disdain"). These findings are corroborated by empirical analyses of nine countries, at different points in time, using different yet coherent operationalisations of key variables, and several alternative models and robustness checks.

There are, however, important limitations to this paper that warrant caution when interpreting results and that can motivate further research in a still nascent sub-field. Firstly, the period under analysis is short and it tell us little about how stable negative identities are in the long-run. Such research agenda is hampered by the lack of items measuring negative partisanship as an identity. To that end, and bearing survey space in mind, researchers may consider including only one or two items from the negative identity scale in their data collection efforts. The self-definition item ("I would describe myself as anti-[out-party]"), for instance, contains simple and intuitive wording, returned significant independent effects, and it is arguably a reasonable threshold to distinguish dislike from negative identification. More fine-grained analyses, however, could benefit from items related to emotional reactions and identity salience in order to further distinguish negative partisans at stronger levels of identification. Similarly, the

instrumental component of negative partisanship is not fully measured here. Longer longitudinal analyses could provide important empirical evidence on how negative identities and negative evaluations influence each other, and how negative identities are formed and maintained.

Secondly, a deeper understanding of the roots and further consequences of negative partisanship requires larger scale comparative analyses that leverage variation in contextual factors. Comparative scholars may consider, for instance, heterogeneity in the types of party: negative identification against the populist radical right may be fundamentally different than against more established mainstream parties in its causes and effects (Meléndez and Kaltwasser, 2021). In that vein, and borrowing from literature on affective polarisation (Wagner, 2021), the size of parties should be taken into account. Widespread negative identification against mainstream parties (like in Brazil and the U.S.) may carry different implications for democratic politics than wholesale rejection of smaller, radical parties (as in several Western European countries). Indeed, the relative importance of negative partisanship as an independent factor is likely to vary across contexts. Polities where positive partisan ties are weak may be particularly susceptible to a mostly "negative" electorate, as in several Latin American countries (Meléndez, 2022). Comparative studies on mass partisanship (e.g. Lupu, 2015) should not mistake "pure" negative partisans for non-partisans, and factors related to linkages between elites and voters (Samuels and Zucco, 2018) may explain why, for some citizens, hatred beats apathy or attachment.

Thirdly, the exact mechanism through which negative identities lead to hostility is not precisely laid out here. Future research may consider the role played by certain personality traits (Bankert, 2022) and emotions elicited by the out-party (Bankert, 2024). In doing so, researchers can provide more robust evidence by experimentally triggering negative identities (Lawall, 2022), potentially untangling different sources of negative identification such as elite incivility (Bäck et al., 2023), party activists, or ideological disagreements over specific issues (Hobolt et al., 2018).

These caveats notwithstanding, this paper makes a substantive contribution to the field of political behaviour by highlighting the importance of negative partisanship as a *sui generis* concept, and by providing empirical evidence for an identity-based conceptualisation. Scholars have long considered the "negative side" of political attitudes, but rarely in reference to a cohesive and independent theoretical framework. This can lead to conceptual "blindness", whereby researchers risk subsuming negative partisanship and its effects under the umbrella of positive partisanship. For instance, in what was considered to be an illustration of how *positive* partisan identities are transmitted through parental socialisation, an 11-year-old American girl is quoted as saying: "All I know is that we are not Republicans, my father isn't" (Dinas, 2016, p.265). Such strong aversion learnt early in life (Boonen, 2019) and not rooted in instrumental factors (Samuels and Zucco, 2018) is precisely in line with the notion of negative party identities. Critics may remain unconvinced about the very idea of an independent "negational" social identity, and such fundamental disagreements are unlikely to be bridged by this paper. However, we can at the very least conclude that the measurement items proposed here provide much more information about how people relate to parties and other voters than a simple measure of out-party dislike. Put simply, negative partisanship, measured as a type of social identity, goes beyond party disdain.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

João Areal: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Validation, Methodology, Formal analysis, Conceptualization.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary material related to this article can be found online at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2024.102831.

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