

Spreading the dislike. Negative norms in personal networks and their relationship with affective evaluations of political outgroups

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Extended Abstract

Rising levels of affective polarization and increased aversion towards political outgroups poses a threat to the functioning of Western democracies and could potentially erode social cohesion. Extant research has identified the partisan structure of our social networks as both a potential driver and a mitigator of affective polarization. Most notably, contact across party lines can substantively reduce hostility towards the interlocutors' political parties. However, research on interpersonal political communication has (mostly) focused on the diffusion of positive views in individuals' immediate social networks, i.e. interlocutors portray their own party or policy positions in a good light. Yet, the very foundation of research on affective polarization is the observation that citizens do not only hold positive feelings towards their own party but (oftentimes) strong negative feelings towards out-parties. It follows logically that these strong aversions will also find their way into political conversations. I argue these negative views in citizens' social networks can operate as negative social norms that can substantively increase dislike towards political out-parties. Based on the concept of negativity bias, I argue that negative norms in personal networks may exert an even stronger effect on people's attitudes towards political parties than positive norms present in the network. I test these expectations using two cross-sectional surveys fielded around the German federal elections in 2013 and 2017 which contain information on voting norms among respondents' families, friends, and acquaintances (GLES Tracking 21; GLES Tracking 37). These data allow for a test of the impact of injunctive social norms on out-party evaluations. In order to grasp descriptive norms, I use the GLES-Rolling-Cross-Section 2017 which contains information on individuals' political conversation partners and which parties these interlocutors would never vote for. Analyses show that a vast majority of citizens is aware of restrictive norms in their networks: they are more likely to be able to state which parties their conversation partners would never vote for than they are able to predict their interlocutors' exact voting decisions. And, almost all citizens perceive strong aversions towards at least one political party in their immediate networks. Results of hierarchical regression models with outgroup evaluations nested in respondents reveal that negative norms (both descriptive and injunctive) exert statistically and substantively significant negative effects on affective out-party evaluations and effect sizes are at least as large as those of positive social norms. In line with research on negativity bias, negative information provided through the network can oftentimes carry more weight than positive information. Negative norms in individuals' immediate environment serves as a better predictor of outgroup dislike than positive norms and when confronted with both positive and negative social expectations with regard to outgroup parties, the influence of negativity outweighs that of positivity. This paper sheds light on a so-far underresearched area of interpersonal communication which, however, should be addressed against the backdrop of rising concerns about affective polarization and partisan animosity across Europe.

Introduction

Many democracies are characterized by high levels of affective polarization and in particular by high (and in some countries increasing) levels of dislike towards opposing parties and their supporters (Boxell, Gentzkow, and Shapiro 2020; Garzia, Ferreira Da Silva, and Maye 2023; Iyengar et al. 2019b; Wagner 2021). This phenomenon is especially pronounced with regard to supporters of extreme parties (Harteveld, Mendoza, and Rooduijn 2021; Hudde 2022). Strong partisan animosity can erode social cohesion and lead to discrimination even outside the realms of politics (Huber and Malhotra 2017; Iyengar, Konitzer, and Tedin 2018; Michelitch 2015; Stoetzer et al. 2021).

Many scholars fear that the tendency of partisans to (increasingly) dislike other political parties and their supporters could undermine the functioning of democracy at its very core (Santoro and Broockman 2022; Broockman, Kalla, and Westwood 2022; McCoy and Somer 2019; Somer and McCoy 2018). High levels of affective polarization have been argued to lower trust in democratic institutions and support for fundamental democratic principles (Hetherington and Rudolph 2015; Torcal and Carty 2022; Graham and Svobik 2020; Kingzette et al. 2021), reduce the willingness for partisans to hold politicians of their own party accountable (Pierson and Schickler 2020) and decrease willingness to support compromise in political decision-making (Levendusky 2018).

A large amount of research has studied the impact of citizens' information environments on dislike of opposing political parties. Homogenous settings in which an appraisal of one's own views is omnipresent and where there is a lack of contact across party lines might lead people to rely on unfounded stereotypes about political outgroups (Amsalem, Merkley, and Loewen 2021; Butters and Hare 2020; Hutchens, Hmielowski, and Beam 2019; Kim 2015). A commonly applied intervention tactic tested in experimental setups is to create situations for cross-party contact (Levendusky and Stecula 2021; Levendusky 2023; Wojcieszak and Warner 2020; Bond 2018; Warner and Villamil 2017; Santoro and Broockman 2022). Overwhelmingly, these studies show, that outgroup dislike is lower for individuals embedded in heterogeneous partisan networks than for individuals who are solely surrounded by copartisans and that experimentally induced cross-party encounters lead to a reduction of affective polarization - at least short-term.

Yet, this line of research almost entirely focuses on positive views about parties held in individuals' personal networks or displayed in political interactions and their effects on outgroup affect. The central idea is that socially transmitted positive views will lead to more positive views about outgroup members among the people involved and conversely a lack of

those positive views will be associated with less positive views. In essence, from a social network perspective, dislike is explained *ex negativo*. While this perspective has yielded fruitful insights and contributed to our understanding of the factors driving differences in affect towards political parties, it has neglected one aspect of interpersonal communication and that is the transmission of negative views. Not only a lack of positive views on a political party yields negative outgroup evaluations but most importantly negativity/negative views may lead to negativity.

Unfortunately, so far, we have close to no knowledge about the prevalence and effects of negativity towards parties transmitted through personal networks. In the present work, I look into the effects of socially transmitted negative views about outparties that manifest in the form of perceived social norms in personal networks. Social norms are conceptualized as rules pertaining to attitudes towards political outgroups that individuals perceive as preferable to conform to given their belief that people in their reference networks conform to them (descriptive norm) or people in their reference networks expect the individual to conform to (injunctive norms) (see Bicchieri 2005, 11 for a similar definition). These attitudes can be negative such that the network's expectation is for the individual to dislike certain parties or positive such that an appraisal is the informal rule in a social network.

First of all, given our very limited knowledge about the prevalence of negative norms towards outgroup political parties in networks, I raise the question:

RQ1: How prevalent are negative norms about outgroup political parties in citizens' personal networks?

Secondly, the question arises whether these negative views in networks are associated with differences in individuals' affective evaluations of political parties. Basing my argument on theories of conformity, social pressure, and the larger research body on political networks, I tackle the following question:

RQ2: Do negative norms about political outgroup parties impact citizens' affective evaluations of these parties?

Based on the presumed prevalence of both positive and negative norms about political parties, I study how the influence of negative norms compares to that of positive norms. Guided by the literature on negativity bias in information seeking and processing, I lastly aim to answer the third research question:

RQ3: Do negative norms in citizens' networks carry more weight than positive views when citizens evaluate outgroup political parties?

For my inquiry of injunctive norms, I use two cross-sectional surveys that were conducted around the German federal elections in 2013 and 2017 which contain information on voting norms among respondents' families, friends, and acquaintances (GLES 2015; 2019). In order to grasp descriptive norms, I use the GLES-Rolling-Cross-Section 2017 (GLES 2022) which contains information on individuals' political conversation partners and which parties these interlocutors would or would never vote for.

Descriptive analyses show that 1) negative norms about political outgroups are at least as prevalent in German citizens' networks as positive norms. A vast majority of citizens is aware of negative norms in their networks: they are more likely to be able to state which parties their conversation partners would never vote for than they are able to predict their interlocutors' exact voting decisions. And, almost all citizens perceive strong negative injunctive norms towards at least one political party among their family and friends. 2) Results of hierarchical regression models with outgroup evaluations nested in respondents reveal that negative norms (both descriptive and injunctive) exert statistically and substantially significant negative effects on out-party evaluations and effect sizes are at least as large as those of positive social norms. 3) Negative norms have larger explanatory power when studying political outgroup evaluations and 4) when individuals are confronted with both negative and positive norms about the same outgroup party, the negative norm on balance carries more weight resulting in overall reduced affection towards the party. While having limitations with regard to the causal identification of these effects, this paper sheds light on a so-far underresearched area of interpersonal communication. With rising levels of affective polarization and the potential downstream consequences thereof, scholars would do poorly to continue solely researching the spreading of positive views through social networks but should also pay careful attention to the transmission of negativity.

Social norms and political influence

Ever since the early Columbia studies the investigation of social influence has been central to our understanding of the formation of and changes in political preferences (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1944; for an overview see Zuckerman 2005). Social influence – broadly speaking – can take two different forms: “People are obviously influenced in interactive social situations, but, importantly, this influence may be informational or normative” (Shamir and Shamir 2000, 143). For one, individuals may substantively learn about politics through political conversations (Huckfeldt et al. 1995; Huckfeldt 2007). On the other hand, influence can also occur through an individual’s desire to fit into a social group and be a valuable member of given group (Cialdini and Goldstein 2004; Parsons 2015; Sunstein 2019). In the present work, I focus on the latter and specifically investigate social norms about political outgroups that are conveyed through social networks. A social norm is understood as a rule pertaining to behavior, values or attitudes that individuals perceive as preferable to conform to given their belief that people in their reference networks conform to it (descriptive norm) and/or people in their reference networks expect the individual to conform to it (injunctive norm) (see Bicchieri 2005, 11 for a similar definition). The distinction between these types of norms can be understood as a differentiation between ‘Do as I do’ (descriptive norms) and ‘Do as I say’ (injunctive norms) (Fieldhouse and Cutts 2021). Given the focus on affective evaluations of political outgroups here, it can be rephrased as either ‘Feel/think as I think’ or ‘Feel/think as I say’.

Importantly, in the context of party competition, peers may not only signal which political parties should be preferred/voted for (positive norms) but also which parties they disapprove of (negative norms). Conceptually, this leads to a differentiation between four different types of social norms: Positive descriptive norms (‘Like who I like’), negative descriptive norms (‘Dislike who I dislike’), positive injunctive norms (‘Like who I say you should like’), and negative injunctive norms (‘Dislike who I say you should dislike’). This distinction between positive and negative norms is essential to grasp all aspects of social influence because the lack of one type of norm does not imply the presence of the other. The lack of positive norms from peers about a political party is not a sufficient condition for the presence of a negative norm. The simple reason for that is that many social networks might signal indifference towards at least some political parties. Alternatively, individuals are not aware of the presence of either a positive or negative norm in their networks either because of a lack of information or ambivalence in the network, i.e., mixed views among peers. Partheymüller and Schmitt-Beck (2012) make a similar argument in their analyses of network effects on turnout in the German

federal elections. They show that a lack of a norm to turn out at the polls is not equivalent to a norm of non-voting and this distinction is fundamental to fully understand abstention and participation at elections.

So far, we have close to no knowledge about the prevalence of negative norms towards parties transmitted through personal networks. Two aspects might have driven this scarcity in research. First, the primary interest of political communication research on social influence has been in understanding the attitudes and behaviors most central to the functioning of democracy, i.e. party preferences, vote choice, turnout, and vote switching (e.g., Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954; Huckfeldt 2007; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1948; Schäfer 2019; Schmitt-Beck 2013). Second, most of the research on networked political influence has been conducted in the context of the U.S. party system where political competition is conflictual and dualistic. In this context, how much an individual likes an ingroup party is an increasingly strong indicator of the individuals' dislike towards its outparty (Iyengar and Krupenkin 2018). In multiparty systems, in contrast, citizens do hold a complex set of views on the different parties competing in elections (Cunow et al. 2021; Schmitt-Beck and Partheymüller 2016; Van der Eijk and Franklin 2009). Therefore, knowing who people favor in a network is oftentimes uninformative regarding which parties are disliked. In line with this reasoning, I claim that to fully uncover the impact of social networks on dislike towards political parties, the empirical inquiry should include both sides of the coin of social norms.

Theory and Hypotheses

Why should negative norms be prevalent in social networks?

The first question this paper raises is to what extent negative norms are prevalent in people's social networks. This begs the question as to why this negativity should be visible at all. I argue that there are two main reasons why we should expect citizens to be abundantly aware of negative views held in their networks. The first line of reasoning is based on extant research on negative traits of politicians that are pointed out by opposing politicians, picked up by mass media and subsequently enter social networks through political conversations. The second line of argument is based on extant research on individuals' tendency to bond with their peers over shared disapproval.

Negativity is visible in all realms of political communication (for an overview see S. N. Soroka 2014). Negative campaigning, that is the criticism of opponents rather than the appraisal of a

candidate's own qualifications, is widespread around the world (Galasso, Nannicini, and Nunnari 2023; Martin 2004; Nai 2020; Poljak 2023) - likely because of the beliefs of most campaign practitioners that it works (Lau and Rovner 2009, 295). In addition, it seems to be increasing at least in the U.S. context (S. N. Soroka 2014, 18; S. Soroka, Fournier, and Nir 2019; Geer 2006; yet see Lau and Rovner 2009). Those citizens strongly engaged in politics are hence presented with plenty of negative information about political figures.

Yet, most people likely don't follow what politicians do or say directly but the information about politics spreads through mass media (Bachl and Brettschneider 2011; Chaffee and Kanihan 1997; Dunaway and Graber 2022; Partheymüller and Schäfer 2013; Schmitt-Beck 2003; 2013, 321). The mass media, in turn, disproportionally covers negative campaigning (Hansen and Pedersen 2008; Gerstlé and Nai 2019). More generally speaking, negative behavior or failures by parties and politicians are picked up more frequently by the mass media given their increased news value (Cappella and Jamieson 1997; Fournier, Soroka, and Nir 2020; S. N. Soroka 2014; S. Soroka and McAdams 2015). "In their overly negative and event-driven reporting, news media are commonly found to portray a biased reality." (Van Der Meer and Hameleers 2022, 473). This coverage bias in reporting is yet again amplified by an attentional bias on the side of the audience (Knobloch-Westerwick, Mothes, and Polavin 2017). "[A]ll around the world, the average human is more physiologically activated by negative than by positive news stories" (S. Soroka, Fournier, and Nir 2019, 18888). Numerous studies have demonstrated that citizens' selection of and attention to news stories is characterized by a negativity bias, i.e. they are attracted more by negative than by positive reporting (e.g., Fournier, Soroka, and Nir 2020; Park 2015; S. Soroka, Fournier, and Nir 2019; Van Der Meer and Hameleers 2022).

So far, this would only be an explanation why people might be aware of negative traits and behavior of political parties. Yet, the view of the audience as an "atomized population" (Robinson 1976, 304) that is influenced by the media is outdated ever since the proposition of a two-step-flow of communication (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1944). Political conversations among citizens regularly revolve around information they received from mass media and what they discuss with each other is often a secondary diffusion of news content (Chaffee 1972; Druckman, Levendusky, and McLain 2018; Katz 1957; Schmitt-Beck 2013, 95–96). Hence, if media outlets disproportionally report on negative events surrounding political parties, the audience pays more attention to these stories, and these stories are likely to be subject of conversations among ordinary citizens. Individuals should be frequently

confronted with negative views on political parties by their peers. From this shared information people should be able to get a solid understanding of the political parties disliked by their networks and accordingly perceive negative social norms in their surroundings.

However, even if one dismisses this pathway from media coverage to interpersonal exchanges (see Bennett and Manheim 2006), another line of reasoning would equally suggest a strong awareness of negative norms on the side of citizens. The observation that the majority of citizens across Western democracies hold very unfavorable views towards political outgroups is at the very core of the research strand on affective polarization (Boxell, Gentzkow, and Shapiro 2020; Harteveld, Mendoza, and Rooduijn 2021; Hudde 2022; Iyengar et al. 2019a; Knudsen 2021). For many citizens this dislike of certain political parties can even become part of how they perceive themselves politically, i.e. being against certain political parties can become an identity in its own right (Abramowitz and Webster 2016; Lee et al. 2022; Mayer 2017). These strong aversions towards certain political parties are likely to be discussed in interpersonal exchanges about politics. Both qualitative work on group discussions and quantitative studies have shown that people tend to focus on negative aspects of politics in casual political conversations (Bøggild, Aarøe, and Petersen 2021; Colombo and Dinas 2023; Saunders and Klandermans 2019; Stoker, Hay, and Barr 2016). The reason might be that citizens engaging in political exchange may experience discomfort given the complexity of politics as a whole (Eliasoph 1998; Schmitt-Beck and Neumann 2023). Instead of revealing their own views and preferences, it can serve as a self-defense mechanism to be cynical about politics and focus on the downsides of politicians and political parties (Gamson 1992, 21). Cynicism that is articulated in political conversations is likely to create a sense of community uniting ordinary citizens vis-à-vis untrustworthy politicians (Dekker 2006) which then fulfils many citizens' primary when conversing about politics that is social bonding (Schmitt-Beck and Neumann 2023). Oftentimes to share negative connotations about politics might not be an elaborate choice but rather the first things that comes to people's minds when confronted with the subject of politics (Stoker, Hay, and Barr 2016, 3; Saunders et al. 2019, 14). Given the informality, casualness and randomness with which political conversations often occur, it is highly likely that these considerations find their way into exchanges about politics among ordinary citizens. From this socially disseminated negativity, citizens can easily infer negative social norms present in their networks.

Against the background of the proposed multi-stage filter going from elite behavior to ordinary citizens' political exchanges, through negativity biases in the media and attention biases on the

side of the audience in combination with a strong willingness to share negative views as well as increased attention to the negative views shared by others, I derive the following hypothesis:

H1: Negative norms about outgroup political parties are at least as prevalent in citizens' networks as positive norms.

Why should negative norms influence affective evaluations of outgroups?

An array of research has demonstrated that an atomistic view of citizens in democratic politics falls far too short. Rather citizens are embedded in their social networks and steadily exert mutual influence on each other in forming their opinions and making sense of political matters (Huckfeldt et al. 1995; Huckfeldt 2014; Mutz 2006; Schmitt-Beck 2013). Affective evaluations of political parties have been shown to be strongly affected by the views held by conversation partners (Levendusky 2023; Levendusky and Stecula 2021; Wojcieszak and Warner 2020) and by the larger network (Amsalem, Merkley, and Loewen 2021; Hutchens, Hmielowski, and Beam 2019; Huckfeldt et al. 1995; Kim 2015). Most studies converge on the finding that talking to people supporting other parties than oneself as well as being embedded in more politically diverse networks is associated with reduced aversion towards outgroup parties. This effect is most likely partially present because of a familiarization with positive aspects of another party: party supporters can convince others about the positive characteristics of their preferred party. This mechanism thus assumes that it is a provision of information and consequently substantive learning that improves affective responses towards political parties (Huckfeldt 2007; Kim 2015; McClurg 2006). From another perspective network influence is rather an affective process. Instead of carefully considering the views of others, citizens adopt the views of their peers in order to maintain their social bonds (Mutz 1998; Schmitt-Beck and Partheymüller 2016; Sunstein 2019; Suhay 2015)¹. It works through a mechanism of perceived social pressure. Abiding by group norms generates peer approval and personal pride while deviating from group norms will cause people to feel embarrassment and shame (Cialdini and Goldstein 2004; Suhay 2015). Ultimately, not abiding by group norms can permanently damage social relationships. This fear of damaging relationships through normative deviance is by no means only a theoretical concern. In a U.S. survey, around 1 out of 4 respondents stated to have distanced themselves from a friend because of their political views (Carlson and Settle 2022, 186). Similarly, a study in the German city of Mannheim showed that about a third rather or

¹ It should be noted that the different mechanisms are not subject to an empirical test but rather to illustrate different mechanisms that lead to similar expected empirical patterns.

completely agreed with the statement that political conversations can be dangerous because they can destroy friendships (32 percent) and 21 percent rather agreed or agreed with the statement that they hesitate to talk about politics with others because such conversations can lead to personal conflict (Grill, Schmitt-Beck, and Metz 2018).

This paper deviates from this line of research in an important way. The extant literature focuses on the dissemination of positive norms (what parties are/or policies should be liked) through interpersonal exchanges and in social networks. In the present work, I empirically test whether social norms turn out to be influential if these norms convey an expectation about which parties not to like (negative norms). The literature on the dissemination of negative group norms is at best scarce in the study of (dis)like of political outgroups. Yet, Boonen (2019) has demonstrated that in the family context children learn early on which political parties not to like. Complementing the long research tradition on positive partisanship through socialization (Campbell et al. 1960), it shows that children take cues from their parents early on and adopt this aversion. Best exemplified is this process by a quote from an eleven-year old girl in the United States that said: „All I know is that we are not Republicans [...]“ (Greenstein 1965, 45). So at least for the family context, we have some evidence for a spread of negative norms regarding outgroup parties. I would argue that, this effect is to be expected for all forms of intimate networks. Liking a party that one’s network despises should be at least as damaging to the wellbeing of social relationships as disliking a party that one’s peers like. And, against the backdrop of stronger emotional arousal and attentiveness to negative information compared to positive information in the context of media consumption (S. Soroka, Fournier, and Nir 2019), it is plausible that in the same ways that positive norms generate more positive affective evaluations, negative norms should lead to more negative affect. Hence, I derive the following hypothesis:

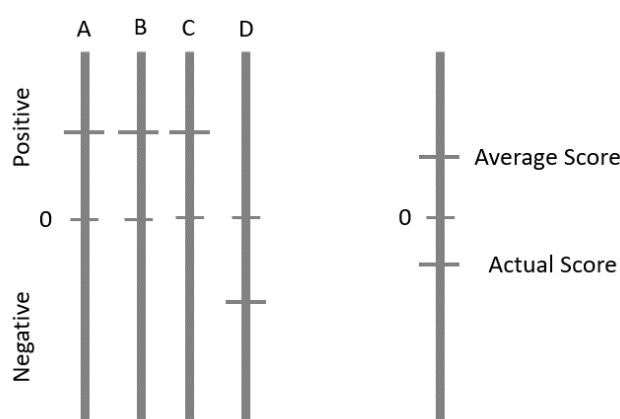
H2: Negative norms about outgroup political parties in citizens’ networks are associated with lowered affective evaluations of these parties as compared to when no negative norms are present.

Should negative or positive norms carry more weight?

Humans generally tend to not only pay more attention to negative than to positive information but also give it more weight when evaluating any subject or activity. This holds at least true based on evolutionary accounts of the negativity bias (Bebbington et al. 2017; Brosnan et al. 2007; Öhman, Flykt, and Esteves 2001). A stone age man would have significantly increased

his chance of survival if he weighted the information that a growl came out of a bush more heavily than the look of tasty berries on it when deciding whether to approach the bush or not. This simplification should convey the basic idea of humans having gained an evolutionary advantage being biased towards negativity. Figure 1 displays this process of negativity in weighting information or how Rozin and Royzman (2001) refer to it: negativity dominance. When presented with four information stimuli (A,B,C,D) of equal magnitude on a given subject, the overall evaluation will not be equal to the mean of its components but biased downwards.

Figure 1: Negativity bias



Note: Own depiction based on Soroka (2014, xiv).

This illustrates my theoretical expectation that individuals are not only more drawn to negative information than they are to positive or neutral information but that their impression formation is also guided by a disproportional consideration of negativity. “Negativity biases have been encountered in many disciplines. In political science, for example, when citizens develop assessments of governments and politicians, they tend to be swayed more by negative elements than by positive ones” (Fournier, Soroka, and Nir 2020, 774). Studies covering several U.S. presidential elections have demonstrated that negative impressions of presidential candidates’ characters are more influential on candidate evaluations than their positive equivalent (Goren 2002; Jill Gabrielle Klein 1996; Jill G. Klein and Ahluwalia 2005; S. N. Soroka 2014). In an experimental study, Avdagic and Savage (2021) show that positive media frames about immigration are more influential on support for the welfare state than positive media frames. In a similar vein, using longitudinal survey data combined with economic context data, Soroka (2006) comes to the conclusion that downwards shifts in the economy have greater negative

impact on citizens' outlook and their perception of most important problems facing the country than upwards shifts in the economy have positive effects on these variables.

Based on these findings, I expect that a negativity bias also applies to socially transmitted information that manifests in the form of social norms. The first observable implication of negativity dominance/negativity bias then is:

H3: Negative norms in citizens' networks better explain citizens' evaluations of outgroup parties than positive norms in the networks.

If negative norms weigh more heavily when citizens make up their minds about political outgroups then we should be better in understanding and predicting citizens' affective evaluations conditional on negative norms than based on positive norms. The second observable implication constitutes a more direct test of the weighting of positive and negative information received through social networks. That is, when confronted with both positive and negative norms from different network partners or in different social spheres, the net effect on the affective evaluation of outgroup political parties should be negative.

This translates into the second hypothesis:

H4: When confronted with both positive and negative social norms about outgroup political parties, individuals place more weight on the negative norms in arriving at their affective evaluation of them.

Data and Methods

Data

The data used to test the hypotheses was collected under the auspices of the German Longitudinal Election Study (GLES). I use three different surveys that allow the study of the impact of both negative and positive as well as injunctive and descriptive social norms at different time points. The first dataset, the GLES Rollings Cross-section Campaign Survey is a representative survey among German citizens (GLES 2022). I will solely rely on the pre-election wave of the survey which was collected via computer assisted telephone interviews and was carried out between July 24, 2017 and the day before the federal elections on September 23, 2017. It consists of 7,650 randomly selected German residents who were eligible to vote in the election. The second and third datasets were collected directly before the 2013 and 2017 federal elections, respectively, as online surveys (field periods: 06.09.2013 - 21.09.2013 /

12.09.2017-23.09.2017) and consist of quota samples based on age, gender, and education with around 1,000 respondents per survey (GLES 2015; 2019).

Dependent variable: affective evaluations of political outgroups

In all three surveys, affective evaluations are measured based on like-dislike scores for the major parties in the German party system (CDU/CSU, SPD, Greens, Left, AfD, FDP)². This survey item is commonly used in the study of affective polarization and validated to measure both sentiment towards political parties and their supporters (Gidron, Sheffer, and Mor 2022). Respondents were asked what they, in general, thought of the major parties on a scale ranging from -5 (not much at all) to +5 (a great deal). In order to determine an individual's outgroup parties, one first needs to establish what the respective partisan ingroup is. The most straightforward way to determine the political ingroup is based on party identification (Harteveld, Mendoza, and Rooduijn 2021; Reiljan 2020; Wagner 2021). So, for all respondents, who identified with a party (~65% across surveys), this party is considered the ingroup. To base the analyses on data of all respondents and consequently get more representative results those respondents in the survey who did not report to identify with one of the major parties, the highest rated party was considered to be the ingroup (see Harteveld, Mendoza, and Rooduijn 2021). If respondents rated more than one party highest, one of the highest rated parties was randomly selected as the ingroup. The dependent variable is recoded to range between 0 (think very little of the political party) and 10 (think very highly of the political party).

Independent variables: social norms

One of this paper's innovations lies in the measurement of both positive and negative social norms about political parties as well as descriptive and injunctive social norms. Table 1 provides an overview of the used survey items. Descriptive social norms are measured in the GLES Rolling Cross-section survey. Respondents were asked about the two people they talked to most frequently about politics. To measure negative descriptive norms, I use a question that asked survey participants to name a party each of their two conversation partners would never vote for (negative partisan). This should be closely in line with the conceptualization presented above such that respondents have a strong belief about the views held by the conversation

² Respondents from Bavaria were assigned their rating for the CSU and all other respondents their rating of the CDU.

partner about the stated party³. To capture positive descriptive norms, I use the information provided by the respondents about the political party their conversation partners are likely to vote for in the upcoming election (positive partisans). Importantly, to measure the impact of negative and positive social norms, I need a neutral base line that serves as reference point. The natural choice is to include those respondents in the analysis that are not aware of either a positive or a negative social norm among their political conversation partners. For this purpose, I assume that those people who did not talk about politics with anyone in the week preceding the interview are considered to not have perceived any immediate normative pressures. Similarly, respondents who stated that their respective conversation partners would not vote or are perceived to be undecided were coded as neutral. Subsequently, the number of positive and negative partisans was calculated per political party (0,1,2) and treated as nominal variables that measure descriptive social norms (positive and negative).

Injunctive social norms, in contrast, are not measured for individual network partners but for larger networks. In the two GLES-Online Tracking surveys, respondents indicated for each of the six parties today represented in parliament (CDU/CSU was listed as one) what their family/friends/acquaintances would think if the respondent voted for that party. If they stated that the reference network would rather approve or strongly approve of that vote choice, this was coded as a positive injunctive norm. Conversely, if the network was perceived to rather or strongly oppose a potential voting decision, this was considered as the presence of negative injunctive norms. Lastly, if the respondent was unable to assess how their network would think about a given vote choice, this was treated as the neutral baseline, i.e. the lack of any social norm. The measures will be treated as nominal variables with the absence of a social norm as reference category.

Data Structure

Following the approach proposed by Hartevelde et al. (2021), I restructure the data into a stacked data format such that each observation represents a directed respondent-outgroup party dyad. In a first step, each party evaluation and the corresponding measures of social norms are stacked. In a second step, all observations where the ingroup party is equal to the evaluated party are excluded from the dataset in order for it to be a sample of political outgroup evaluations. This entails that per respondent there are up to five observations. For illustration

³ However, it should be noted that this is a rather uncommon measurement of norms given that it is an observation of the actions other people don't take. Yet, it seems like a valuable measure to tackle negativity in networks that mirrors the perception of vote choices as positive norms.

purposes an example data structure is displayed in Table A1 in the Appendix. The dependent and independent variables are measured separately for each political outgroup party.

Table 1: Measurement of norms

	Descriptive norms (GLES-RCS 2017)	Injunctive norms (GLES-Trackings)
	Two most frequent conversation partners in the last week: <i>If you now think of the person you talked most about political parties or the federal election with during the last week, what is your relationship to this person - is he/she your spouse/partner, a relative, a friend, a work colleague or a neighbour?</i>	Norms among family/friends/acquaintances: <i>And now suppose you were to choose a particular party in the upcoming federal election or not to go to the polls - to what extent would your family/friends/acquaintances agree with that?</i>
positive	<i>Which party do you think this person will vote for in the federal election on September 24, or do you think they won't go to the polls?</i>	<i>Rather approving; strongly approving</i>
negative	<i>What do you think, is there a party or parties that this person would never vote for?</i>	<i>Rather opposed; strongly opposed</i>
neutral	<i>Don't know; conversation partner is undecided or won't vote, no conversation partners named</i>	<i>Don't know</i>

Empirical strategy

In a first step, I will use descriptive graphs to illustrate the prevalence of positive and negative social norms in citizens' networks. In order to study the association between social norms and outgroup evaluations, I use cross-nested linear regression models. I include random intercepts for respondents to a) account for the interdependence of outgroup evaluations from the same individual and b) to capture inter-individual differences in outgroup affect across individuals. Some respondents might, for instance, generally show more negative affect towards all political

parties. In addition, I include random intercepts for ingroup-outgroup dyads (see Table A1 in the Appendix). For instance, extant research has shown that radical right parties are overall disliked the most (Harteveld, Mendoza, and Rooduijn 2021; Hudde 2022) and that people generally display more positive affect towards parties ideologically close to them (Algara and Zur 2023). At the same time supporters of mainstream parties are rarely in contact with supporters of radical right parties and vice versa (Ellerbrock 2022). Adjusting for ingroup outgroup dyads should account for this systematic pattern and help avoid false conclusions.

To test for the explanatory power of negative and positive social norms, I run the analyses again, yet only with those categories of the independent variables that contain information about either the presence of negative or the presence of positive social norms. To analyze the explanatory power of negative descriptive norms, I ran a regression model that excludes the variable containing information on the number of conversation partners that support a given party. Similarly, for the analysis on injunctive norms, I exclude those dummy variables containing information on negative norms to measure the explanatory power of positive norms and vice versa (see S. N. Soroka 2014 for a similar approach). This mimics an analysis for which only data on positive/negative norms was available. I use a comparison of marginal R², which captures the explained variance in the affective evaluations explained by a model only containing positive/negative or both information. I then use bootstrapping to get information about the uncertainty surrounding the estimate of the explained variance.

Lastly, I am interested in inquiring whether citizens put more weight on negative than on positive norms when exposed to both simultaneously. For the impact of descriptive norms, I construct a new nominal variable with six categories: respondent is 1) unaware of a descriptive norm from either of the two conversation partners (reference category); 2) has one positive partisan as conversation partner; 3) has two positive partisans as conversation partners 4) has one negative partisan as conversation partner; 5) has two negative partisans as conversation partners; 6) has one negative and one positive partisan as conversation partners. The coefficient for the last category gives a direct estimate of the mean negativity bias of respondents. To study negativity bias with regard to injunctive norms, I interact the perceived social norms among respondents' family members with those among their friends. Subsequently, I predict the outgroup evaluation for average respondents who are confronted with a strong negative norm in their family and a strong positive norm among their friends and vice versa. These predictions are then compared to predictions for an individual who perceives no norm among family and friends to get an estimate of the negativity bias with regard to injunctive social norms.

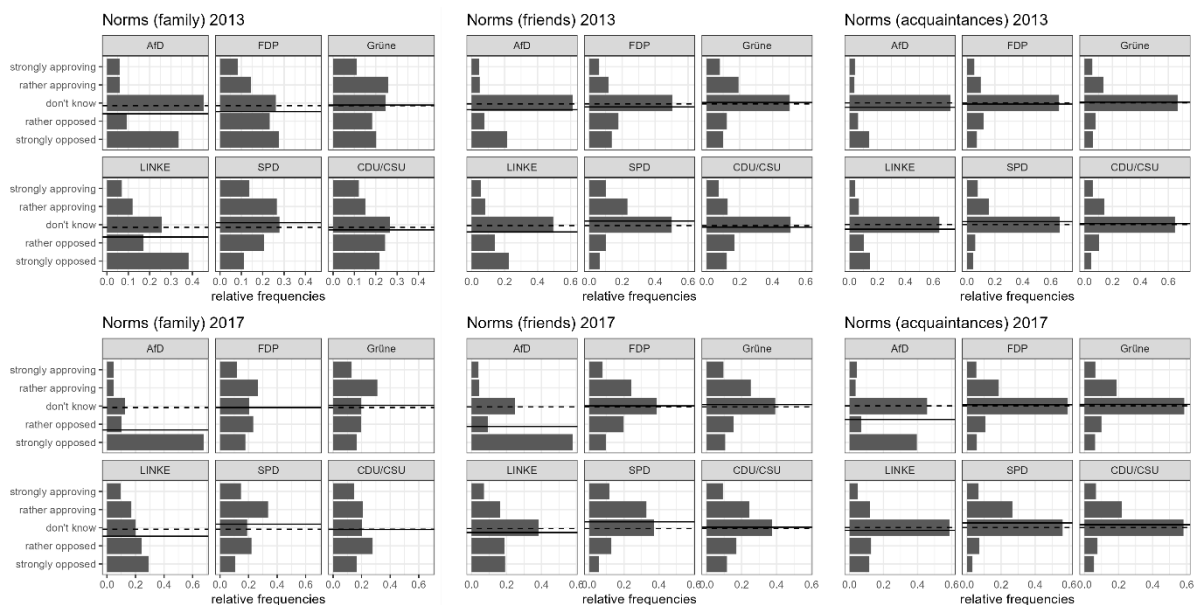
Results

Perceived prevalence of negative norms in social networks

Injunctive social norms

Overall negative injunctive norms about political outgroups are as prevalent in individuals' networks of families, friends, and acquaintances as are positive social norms. Figure 2 illustrates this finding. On average people are about equally likely to be exposed to negative social norms as they are to positive norms about outgroup parties (dashed horizontal lines). Yet, for some outgroup parties, citizens are especially likely to perceive negative injunctive norms (solid horizontal lines).

Figure 2: Perceived prevalence of positive and negative injunctive norms in networks (GLES Trackings)



Note: Displayed are the relative frequencies of positive (strongly approving; rather approving), neutral (don't know), and negative (rather opposed; strongly opposed) injunctive norms among family (left panels), friends (middle panels), and acquaintances (right panels). Data for the upper panels stem from the T21 GLES Online-Trackings and for the lower panels from the T37 Online-Trackings. Only data on respondents' outgroup parties are included. Solid horizontal lines show the mean within each subgraph (e.g., norms regarding the AfD among families in 2013) with norms being treated as continues variables from 1 to 5. Dashed lines show the mean within one panel (e.g., mean norm among families across respondents' outgroup parties in 2013).

For instance, in 2013, about one in three respondents expected their family to be very opposed to them voting for the AfD. After its transformation from a mostly Eurosceptic to a radical right party (Arzheimer and Berning 2019), this prevalence of a negative injunctive norm strongly increased. Around 60 percent of respondents in 2017 expected their family and friends to strongly disapprove of them voting for the AfD. Even regarding their acquaintances, where

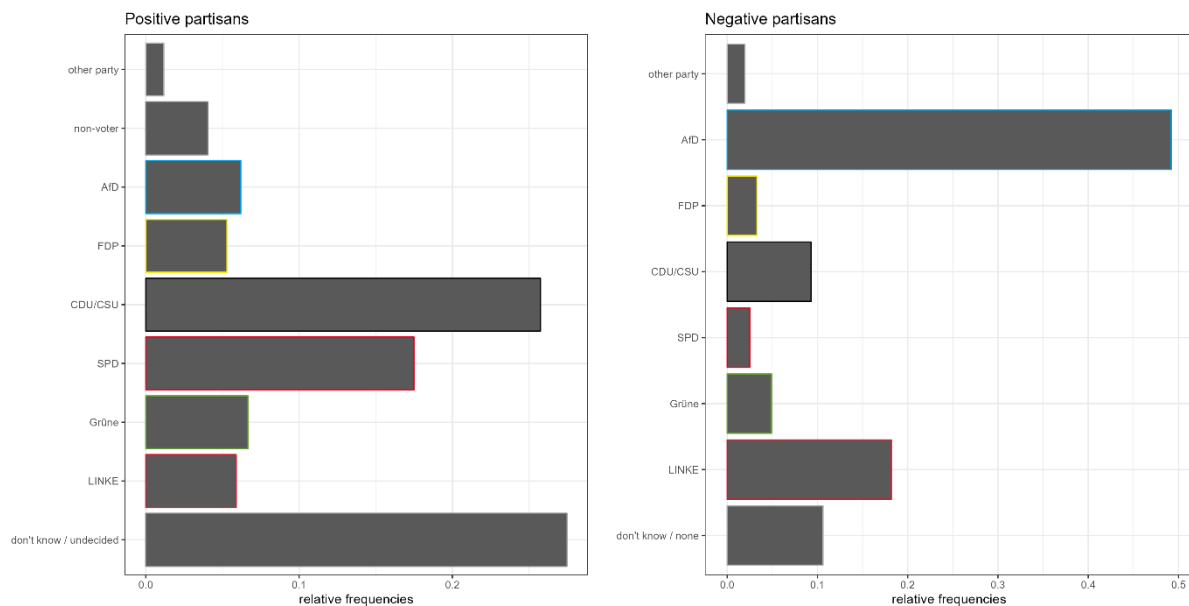
about half of respondents did not know about any injunctive social norms (across outgroup parties), 40 percent perceived a strong negative injunctive norm. Less pronounced than with norms about the AfD, favoring the party 'Die LINKE' is perceived to be rather disapproved of by family, friends, and acquaintances. The only parties for which citizens are more likely to be exposed to a positive social norm are the left-leaning social democrats and the Green party. Overall, this shows, that German citizens seem to be fairly aware of the expectations in their social circles – at least among family and friends and more so in 2017 than in 2013 – and that negative injunctive norms are equally prevalent in German citizens' immediate circles as are positive norms.

Descriptive social norms

Just like German citizens are aware of the negative injunctive norms at least among their family and friends, they are also very capable of perceiving negative descriptive norms. Only around ten percent of respondents could not name at least one party that the people they most frequently discuss politics with would never vote for (bottom bar in the right panel in Figure 3). In contrast, more than one out of four respondents were unaware of the party their interlocutors are likely to vote for (left panel in Figure 3). However, it should be noted that once again, the AfD seems to be an outlier. Almost half of all conversation partners were assumed to never vote for the AfD.

The comparison of the two bottom bars would suggest that people are more aware of negative than positive descriptive norms among their interlocutors. However, of course it may be harder to know of at least one party a person is not going to vote for than knowing which exact party they favor. At the same time to have an understanding of all upcoming voting decisions ('never vote for') requires a stronger perception about an interaction partner's preferences and underlying values than to know one likely decision at one point in time. Hence, I admit that these items are not fully equivalent for positive and negative norms. Yet, they do show the prevalence of negative norms perceived by respondents even if I cannot ultimately conclude on the comparison between positive and negative norms. To conclude that negative descriptive norms are at least equally prevalent as positive norms seems justifiable. Thus, these descriptive analyses lend support for the first hypotheses and given the strong awareness about negative norms on the side of citizens justifies investigating their relationship with affective evaluations of political outgroups.

Figure 3: Perceived prevalence of positive and negative descriptive norms in networks (GLES RCS)



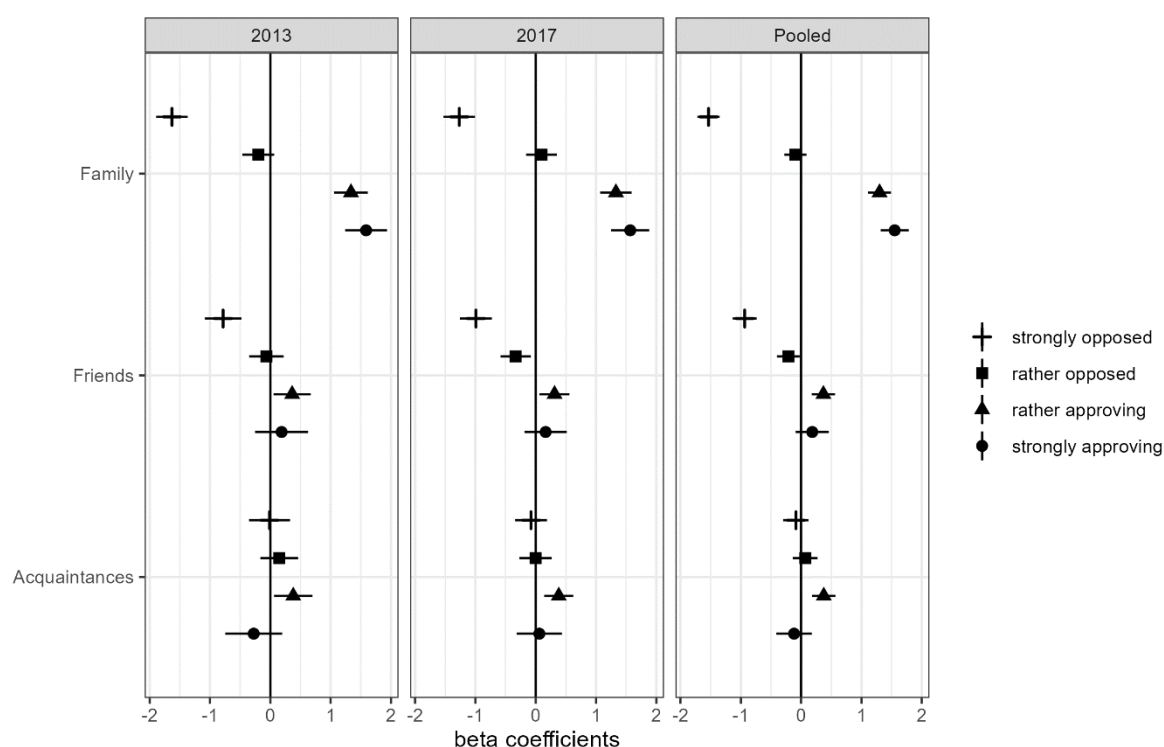
Note: Displayed are the relative frequencies of the perceived vote choice of respondents' political conversation partners (left panel) and respondents' perceptions about the parties the conversation partners would never vote for. Data: GLES Rolling Cross-section campaign study 2017.

Negative norms and outgroup affect

Injunctive social norms

The presence of negative injunctive norms about political outgroups are significantly associated with worse affective evaluations of these groups. If people perceive opposition towards a given party in their networks, they – on average – dislike that party more. However, this statement comes with several qualifications. A weak negative norm ('rather opposed') about a party does not lead to a decrease in affective evaluations. It seems that strong negative norms are required for citizens to abide by them. People whose families have strong negative norms about a given party are estimated to have on average about 1.5 points lower affective ratings of that party than citizens in whose family no norm about that party exists (see Figure 4, full model can be found in Table A2). This holds true for 2013 and 2017. The negative effect of strong negative norms in the family is similar in magnitude to the positive effects of strong positive norms.

Figure 4: Injunctive norms and outgroup affect (GLES Trackings)

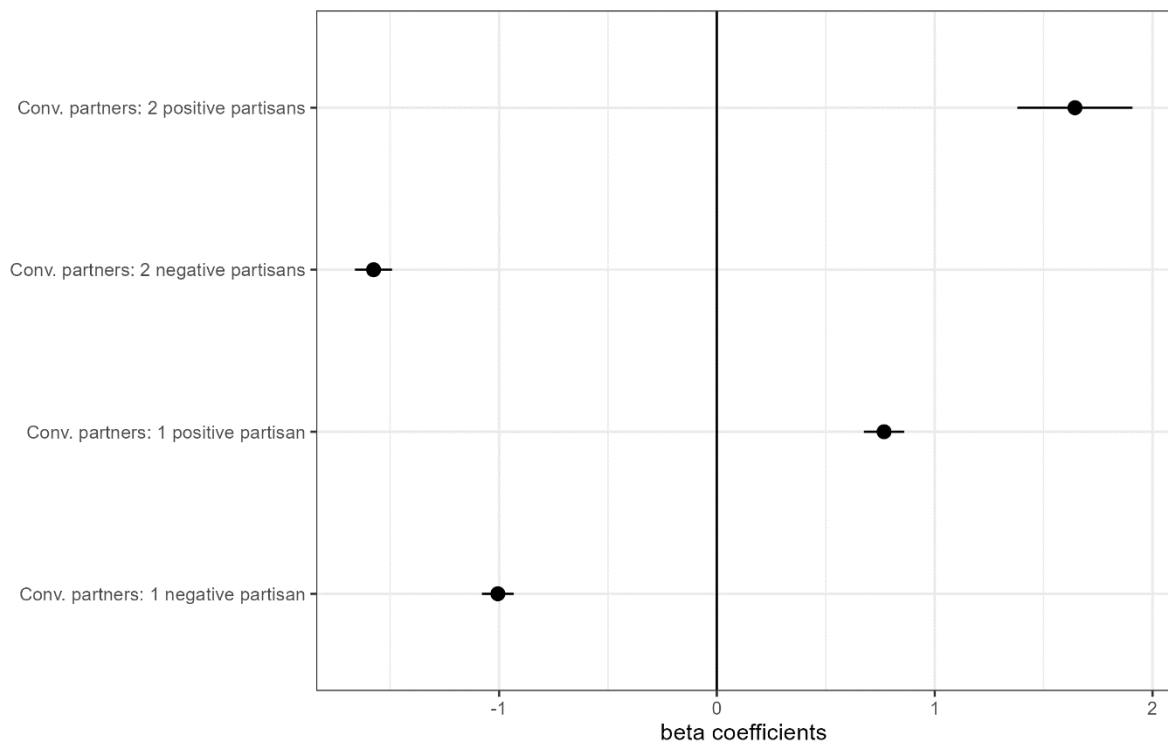


Notes: Displayed are the results (beta coefficients) of three hierarchical regression models with outgroup evaluations nested within respondents and within ingroup-outgroup dyads. Horizontal lines show 95 percent confidence intervals. Data: T21 GLE Online-Trackings (left panel), T37 Online-Trackings (middle panel), and a pooled dataset (right panel).

The association between injunctive norms and affective ratings shows a different pattern among friends. Holding, the norms in the family constant, only strong negative norms among friends are associated with substantive differences in affective ratings of outgroups. Individuals whose friends would strongly disapprove of them supporting a certain party, on average, rate that party about one scale point lower than individuals who are not aware of either positive or negative norms among their friends. So, disliking who one's friends dislike seems to be more important than liking who they like. Given that many people seem to see their friendships threatened by not abiding by group norms one could conclude that losing friends is worse than appeasing friends is good (Baumeister et al. 2001, 323). Lastly, adjusting for injunctive norms among family and friends, neither positive nor negative norms among acquaintances are associated with major differences in evaluations of political outgroups, which echoes with previous findings: "The pressure to conform to group norms intensifies with the intimacy of social ties" (Parsons 2015, 685).

Descriptive norms

Figure 5: Descriptive social norms and outgroup affect (GLES RCS)



Notes: Displayed are the results (beta coefficients) of a hierarchical regression model with outgroup evaluations nested in respondents and in ingroup-outgroup dyads. Horizontal lines show 95 percent confidence intervals. Data: GLES-Rolling Cross-section 2017.

Injunctive norms convey a clear idea about what is socially desirable. In contrast, descriptive norms rely on an individual's belief about what others do and do not necessarily imply an expectation of others for the individual to behave accordingly. Someone may never vote for a party, yet they might not mind other people supporting that party. The analysis shows that also the belief in how others in the network think (or are likely to behave) is associated with significant differences in outgroup evaluations. Having two conversation partners who are believed to never vote for a given party is associated with an average decrease in outgroup evaluations of about 1.6 scale points (see Figure 5: first row; full model can be found in Table A3 in the Appendix).

If only one network partner of an individual shows strong opposition to a party, this person rates that party roughly one scale point lower than an individual whose network partners display no opposition (second row). These effects are comparable in magnitude to those of positive descriptive norms in the network (third and fourth row). In conclusion, the analyses suggest that negative social norms (both injunctive and descriptive) are equally influential for the

affective evaluations of political outgroups as positive norms – thus lending support to Hypothesis 2. However, it is apparent that strong negative norms are required for individuals to abide by them and weak opposition in the network is ignored by citizens.

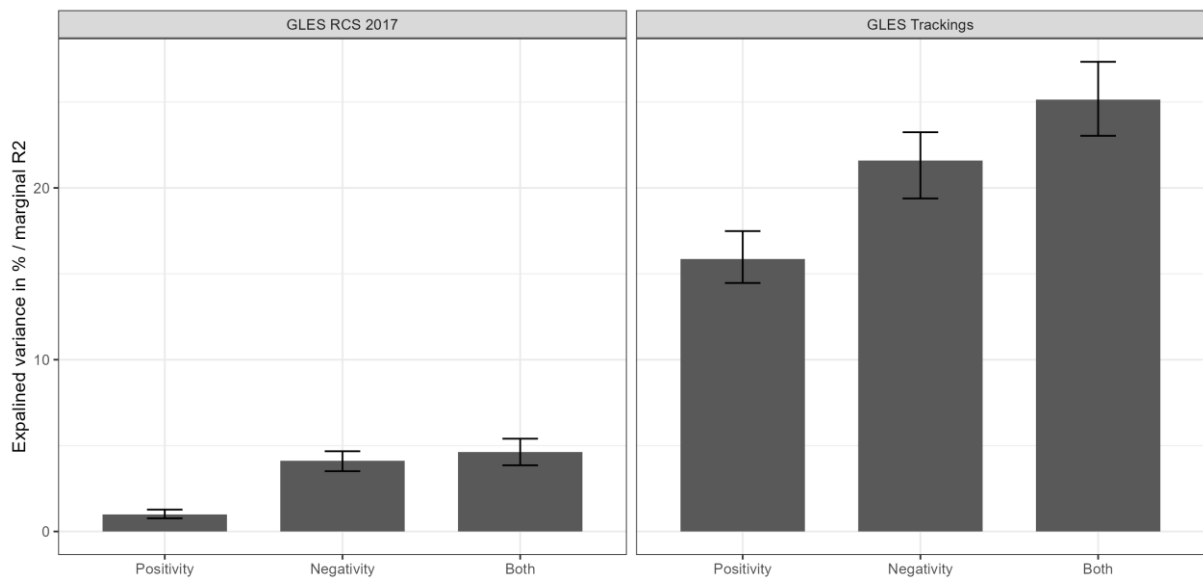
The explanatory power of negativity

One of the main arguments presented in the present work is that the investigation of negative norms in social networks would help us better understand factors driving (dis)like of political outgroups. If citizens rely more heavily on socially transmitted negativity than they do on positive norms when evaluating political outgroups, negative norms should have more explanatory power with regard to differences in affective responses to outgroups. Indeed, both descriptive and injunctive negative norms account for more variance in outgroup evaluations than their positive equivalents (see Figure 6⁴). If we solely investigate the effect of positive descriptive norms (left bar, left panel), only around one percent of the variance in outgroup ratings can be explained. When only the impact of negative norms is analyzed, the explanatory power almost quadruples (middle bar). Lastly, accounting for positive descriptive norms in addition to negative norms yields no significant increase in explanatory power. We see a similar yet much less pronounced pattern when investigating injunctive norms (Figure 6: right panel). Negative injunctive norms account for 22 percent of the variance in outgroup affect while positive norms help us explain around 16 percent, lending support to Hypothesis 3.

This yields two conclusions: First, if scholars are interested in better understanding outgroup (dis)like, affective polarization, or animosity towards outgroups, they are strongly advised to look at socially transmitted negativity as an explanation rather than focusing only on the spread of positive views through networks. Second, these findings yield first evidence that citizens rely more on negative norms in their networks than on positive norms when forming their judgements about political opponents.

⁴ The large differences between the two panels in Figure 6 should not be interpreted as a substantive finding on the importance of injunctive norms in understanding outgroup affect as compared to descriptive norms. The difference is most likely a result of very different measurement approaches. For injunctive norms, information is available for all outgroup parties while descriptive norms are based on only two discussion partners and thus any respondent could at most only have positive/negative partisans of two outgroup parties in their network.

Figure 6: Explained variance based on positive/negative social norms



Notes: Graph shows the variance that is explained by only positive norms (left bars), only negative norms (middle bars), and both negative and positive norms (left bars). Left panel pertains to descriptive norms and right panel to injunctive social norms. Data: GLESC-Rolling Cross-section 2017 (left panel); pooled data from T21 GLESC Online-Trackings and T37 Online-Trackings (right panel).

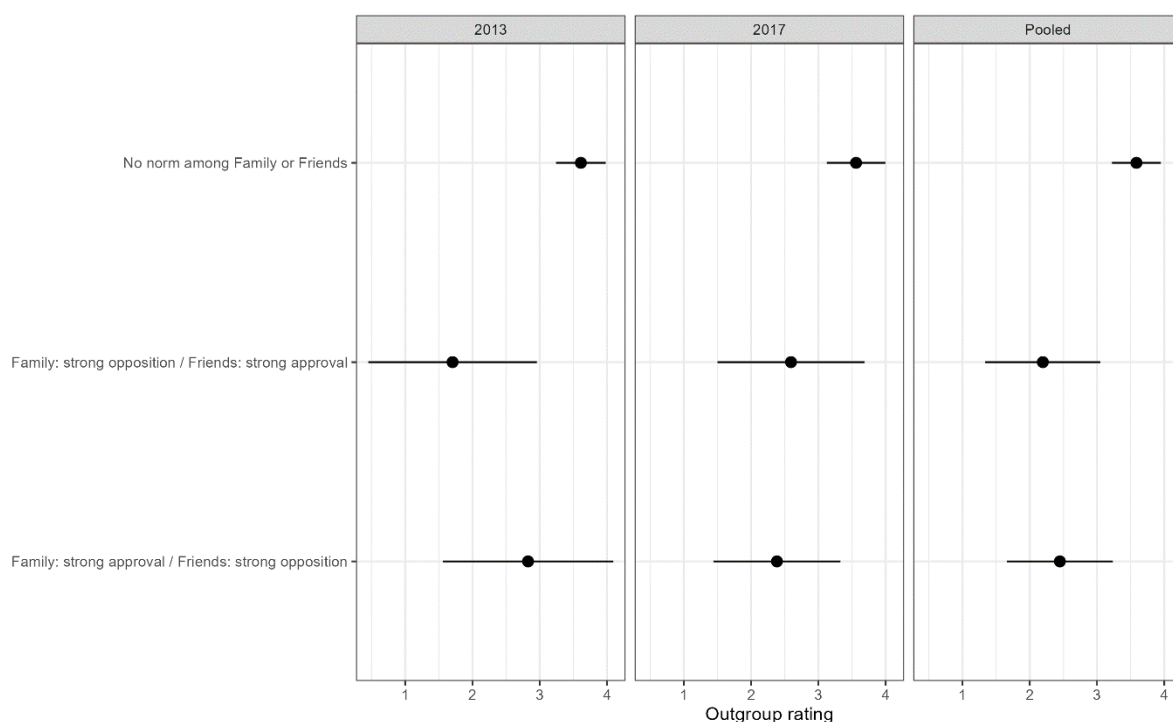
Negativity Bias

Injunctive norms

As we have seen before, differences in family norms are associated with the biggest differences in outgroup dis(like). However, injunctive norms among friends exerted effects independent of norms in the families. Now, I ask how individuals might deal with conflicting norms from the different spheres of influence they are exposed to. More precisely, what happens if one's friends strongly approve of an outgroup party and the family strongly opposes the party or vice versa. Regardless of which context approves/opposes a given outgroup on balance the negative norm seems to prevail. Figure 7 shows the predicted affective evaluation of a party for citizens whose family holds a strong negative norm and whose friends a strong positive norm about that party (second row) and vice versa (third row). The first row serves as the baseline which displays the predicted outgroup rating for individuals who are unaware of either a negative or positive norm both in their family and among their friends. If citizens assigned equal weight to negative and positive norms, we would expect all three predictions to be mutually indistinguishable. Yet - at least if we pool the two datasets from 2013 and 2017 to increase statistical power - we find a consistent negativity bias. Being exposed to conflicting social norms about an outgroup party,

is associated with a decrease of over one scale points in the affective evaluation, on average. When one group expects an individual to dislike a party and the other group expects affection, the individual gives more weight to conforming to the negative social norm.

Figure 7: Negativity bias (injunctive norms)



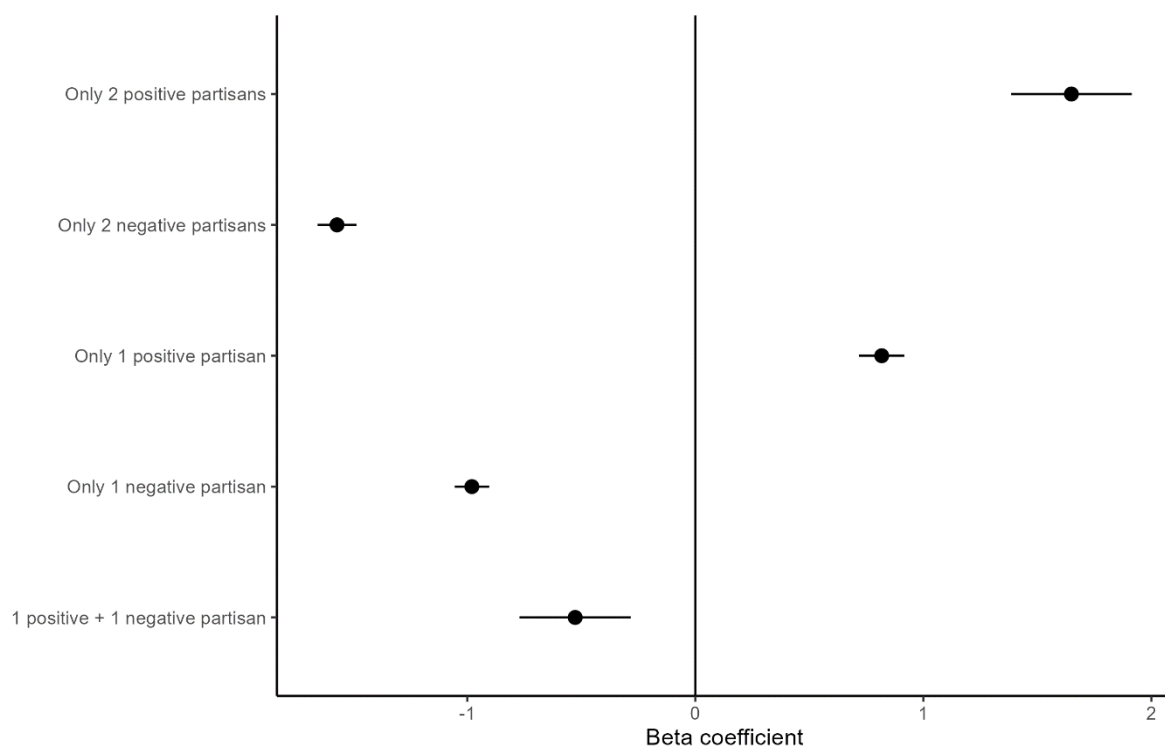
Notes: Displayed are the results (beta coefficients) of a hierarchical regression model with outgroup evaluations nested within respondents. Horizontal lines show 95 percent confidence intervals. Data: pooled data from T21 GLES Online-Trackings and T37 Online-Trackings.

Descriptive norms

Turning to the formation of affective ratings of outgroups conditional on conflicting descriptive norms, we find further support for a negativity bias in the processing of conflicting socially transmitted views. If a person regularly interacts both with someone who would never vote for a given party and someone who intends to vote for them in the near future, the negative norm about that group observed in the network carries more weight. The negativity bias amounts to about 0.5 scale points (see Figure 8: last row; full model can be found in Table A4): A person confronted with conflicting descriptive norms shows – on average - half a scale point more negative affect towards a given outgroup than someone who lacks any information about the party from her network. From these analyses, we can conclude that regardless of the conceptualization and accompanying measurement of social norms, empirical evidence

suggests that affective evaluations of political outgroups is a result of citizens giving more weight to the negative norms in the network. Socially transmitted information is processed in favor of negativity.

Figure 8: Negativity bias (descriptive norms)



Notes: Displayed are the results (beta coefficients) of a hierarchical regression model with outgroup evaluations nested within respondents. Horizontal lines show 95 percent confidence intervals. Data: GLES-Rolling Cross-section 2017.

Robustness checks

Of course, the presented analyses have a number of shortcomings. Like most analyses of social influence, the present empirical approach suffers from a potential endogeneity problem (Fowler et al. 2011). It is possible that instead of individuals being influenced by the norms in their networks, people select their peers conditional on shared political views (Hutchens, Hmielowski, and Beam 2019; Settle and Carlson 2019) including which parties are disliked. Unfortunately, given the scarcity of data on negative social norms about political parties, cross-sectional analyses presented the only feasible way to enter this perspective into the scientific discourse. However, I ran an additional analysis to at least make it more plausible that negative social norms have an impact on affective outgroup evaluations. By rerunning the analyses regarding the effect of injunctive norms in the family solely with data on respondents who were

single at the time, I create a setup where the independent variable can be considered exogenous. People can't choose the family they are born into. The results are presented in Table A4 in the Appendix and show that the results remain unchanged, and a significant effect of negative injunctive norms can be found. But for the remaining analyses, other empirical approaches would be needed to establish causality. Yet, even if the associations found in the analyses were entirely endogenous, we could still conclude that negative norms matter. It would entail that not only 'like surrounds themselves with like' but 'dislike surrounds themselves with dislike'.

In addition, the used measures to distinguish ingroups and outgroups can be subject to criticism. I included respondents who don't have a party identification in the analysis. Those respondents don't have an unambiguous distinction between partisan ingroup and outgroup. Further, these individuals tend to be more easily influenced by their networks (Thomsen and Thomsen 2022). Rerunning the analyses solely based on respondents with a party identification showed substantively unchanged results (see Appendix: Tables A2/3/4; Figure2).

Lastly, it is conceivable that the results are entirely driven by the outlier AfD. This party is by far the most disliked in Germany, and their supporters oftentimes shun away from interaction with opposing partisans (Ellerbrock 2022; Hudde 2022). Yet, robustness checks showed that all substantive conclusions hold in analyses where all respondents whose ingroup is the AfD as well as all affective ratings of the AfD were excluded (see Appendix: Tables A2/3/4; Figure A1).

Conclusion

Against the backdrop of rising animosity between supporters of different political parties, this paper set out to shed light on a thus far underresearched factor associated with outgroup affect: negative norms about political outgroups present in social networks. Based on a vast literature on negativity bias, I argue that negative views about political parties are likely to find their way into political exchanges in social networks generating expectations about which parties are/or should be opposed among political conversation partners, in families and among friends. Using three survey datasets covering two German federal elections, I show that negative norms (both descriptive and injunctive norms) about political parties are at least as prevalent in German citizens' networks as are positive norms. I further show that these negative social norms have substantive effects on affective evaluations of political outgroups. Expectations in social circles about which political parties should be disliked are not only more informative - than

expectations of which parties to favor - for our understanding of outgroup dis(like) but citizens also put more weight on them when forming their political judgements about outgroups.

This raises concerns about polarization processes in Germany and beyond. If – as some scholars believe – animosity between political opponents further increases and this dislike is further spread through citizens' networks, we might be facing a self-reinforcing process of polarization. I therefore employ scholars to further our understanding of the social dissemination of negativity.

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Appendix

Example data structure

Table A1: Example data structure of stacked survey data

Respondent	ingroup party	outgroup party	Ingroup-outgroup dyad	ingroup rating	Outgroup rating	Network norms
1	SPD	AfD	SPD-AfD	8	2	0/1/2; 1:5
1	SPD	CDU/CSU	SPD-CDU/CSU	8	3	0/1/2; 1:5
1	SPD	LINKE	SPD-Left	8	4	0/1/2; 1:5
1	SPD	Greens	SPD-Greens	8	2	0/1/2; 1:5
1	SPD	FDP	SPD-FDP	8	6	0/1/2; 1:5
2	FDP	AfD	FDP-AfD	9	1	0/1/2; 1:5
2	FDP	CDU/CSU	FDP-CDU/CSU	9	6	0/1/2; 1:5
2	FDP	LINKE	FDP-LINKE	9	4	0/1/2; 1:5
2	FDP	Greens	FDP-Greens	9	5	0/1/2; 1:5
2	FDP	SPD	FDP-SPD	9	3	0/1/2; 1:5
.....						

Full models and robustness checks

Table A2: Regression of outgroup affect on injunctive norms

	Full model	No AfD	Only party identifiers
(Intercept)	3.565*** (0.186)	4.028*** (0.211)	3.750*** (0.206)
Family: strongly opposed	-1.535*** (0.094)	-1.556*** (0.113)	-1.588*** (0.110)
Family: rather opposed	-0.095 (0.093)	-0.085 (0.107)	-0.176 (0.109)
Family: rather approving	1.300*** (0.097)	1.311*** (0.110)	1.331*** (0.114)
Family: strongly approving	1.551*** (0.119)	1.538*** (0.133)	1.548*** (0.138)
Friends: strongly opposed	-0.936*** (0.102)	-0.971*** (0.127)	-0.906*** (0.114)
Friends: rather opposed	-0.211* (0.096)	-0.279* (0.110)	-0.226* (0.108)
Friends: rather approving	0.369*** (0.099)	0.295** (0.110)	0.318** (0.111)
Friends: strongly approving	0.184 (0.141)	0.175 (0.156)	0.171 (0.159)
Acquaintances: strongly opposed	-0.087 (0.107)	-0.048 (0.144)	-0.140 (0.118)
Acquaintances: rather opposed	0.068 (0.104)	0.162 (0.119)	0.062 (0.115)
Acquaintances: rather approving	0.375*** (0.099)	0.351** (0.110)	0.343** (0.109)
Acquaintances: strongly approving	-0.117 (0.150)	-0.307 (0.170)	-0.267 (0.170)
Var (residual)	3.897	3.703	3.996
Var (~1 id)	1.400	1.770	1.198
Var (~1 party_dyad)	0.885	0.751	1.012
id	1931	1821	1443
Party dyads	30	20	30
Log-likelihood	-20160.025	-15704.408	-15186.818
N	9117	7090	6860

Significance: *** = $p < 0.001$; ** = $p < 0.01$; * = $p < 0.05$

Table A3: Regression of outgroup affect on descriptive norms

	Full model	No AfD	Only party identifiers
(Intercept)	4.125*** (0.269)	4.986*** (0.194)	4.192*** (0.297)
1 positive partisan	0.767*** (0.047)	0.668*** (0.050)	0.782*** (0.056)
2 positive partisans	1.644*** (0.135)	1.070*** (0.147)	1.588*** (0.154)
1 negative partisan	-1.006*** (0.037)	-1.034*** (0.045)	-1.011*** (0.044)
2 negative partisans	-1.576*** (0.043)	-1.807*** (0.064)	-1.483*** (0.052)
Var(residual)	3.988	3.628	4.016
Var(~1 id)	1.073	1.606	0.880
Var(~1 party_dyad)	2.155	0.738	2.613
id	7529	7170	4931
Party dyads	30	20	30
Log-likelihood	-81925.782	-62303.960	-53606.148
N	37262	28410	24457

Significance: *** = $p < 0.001$; ** = $p < 0.01$; * = $p < 0.05$

Table A4: Robustness check only including unmarried respondents

	Full model	Only singles
(Intercept)	3.549*** (0.200)	3.457*** (0.227)
Family: strongly opposed	-1.953*** (0.083)	-1.936*** (0.142)
Family: rather opposed	-0.134 (0.086)	-0.146 (0.144)
Family: rather approving	1.502*** (0.087)	1.404*** (0.144)
Family: strongly approving	1.644*** (0.105)	1.428*** (0.164)
Var (residual)	4.029	3.967
Var (~1 id)	1.402	1.550
Var (~1 party_dyad)	1.054	1.146
id	1960	696
Party dyad	30	30
Log-likelihood	-20707.326	-7417.595
N	9307	3322
Significance: *** = $p < 0.001$; ** = $p < 0.01$; * = $p < 0.05$		

Robustness Checks for negativity bias

Figure A1: Negativity bias excluding AfD (Trackings)

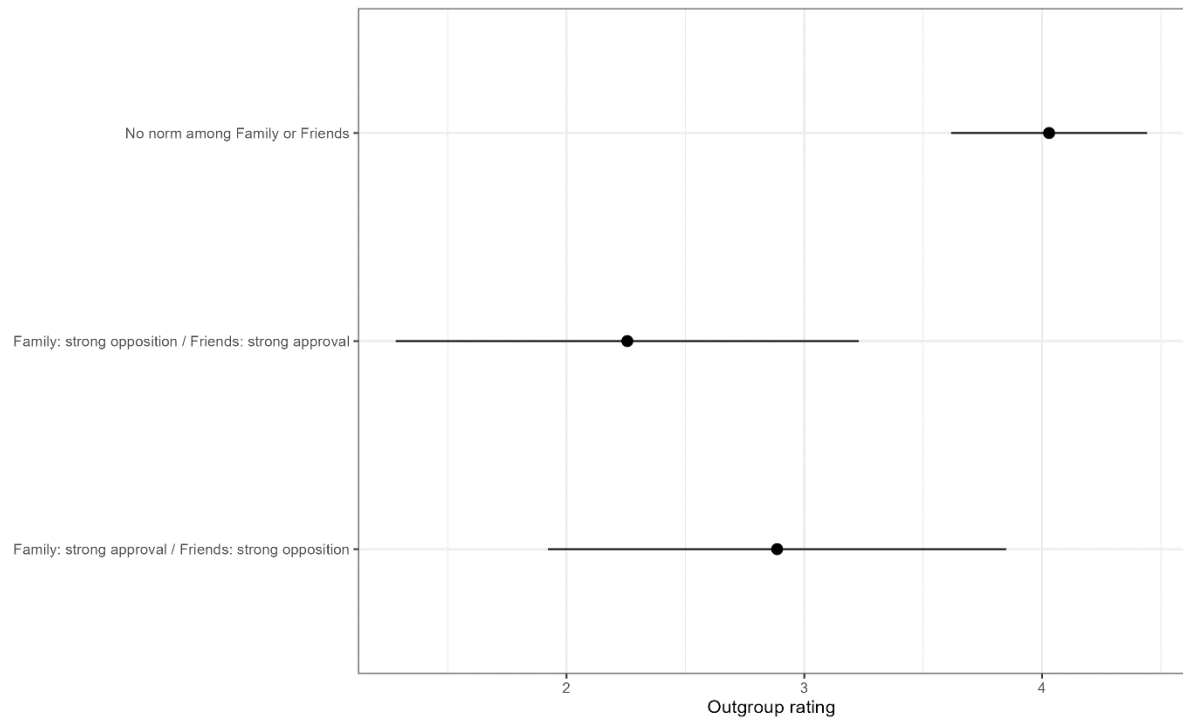


Figure A2: Negativity bias only based on respondents with a party identification (GLES Trackings)

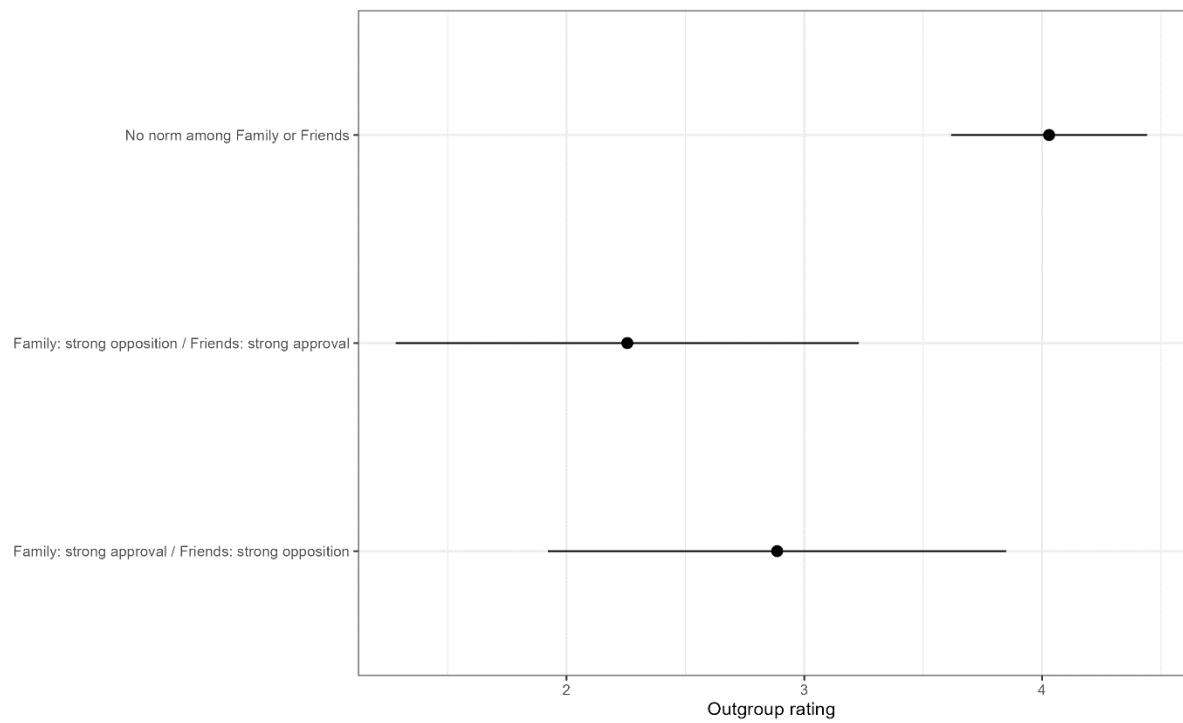


Table A4: Negativity bias robustness checks (GLES RCS 2017)

	Full model	No AfD	Only party identifiers
(Intercept)	4.122*** (0.269)	4.985*** (0.194)	4.188*** (0.296)
Only 1 positive partisan	0.817*** (0.051)	0.679*** (0.053)	0.830*** (0.060)
Only 2 positive partisans	1.649*** (0.135)	1.071*** (0.147)	1.593*** (0.154)
Only 1 negative partisan	-0.980*** (0.039)	-1.026*** (0.047)	-0.987*** (0.046)
Only 2 negative partisans	-1.572*** (0.043)	-1.806*** (0.064)	-1.478*** (0.052)
1 positive + 1 negative partisan	-0.527*** (0.125)	-0.471** (0.159)	-0.497*** (0.144)
Var (residual)	3.988	3.628	4.015
Var (~1 id)	1.073	1.606	0.880
Var (~1 party_dyad)	2.153	0.738	2.611
id	7529	7170	4931
Party dyads	30	20	30
Log-likelihood	-81923.301	-62304.539	-53604.780
N	37262	28410	24457

Significance: *** = $p < 0.001$; ** = $p < 0.01$; * = $p < 0.05$