

The psychological roots of different kinds of partisanship

PD Dr. Sabrina J. Mayer

*German Center for Integration and Migration
Research & University of Duisburg-Essen*

February 2021

Research question

- ▶ How do individual difference relate to different kinds of partisan attachments unrelated to ideological reasons?
 - › Individuals use partisan attachments to make sense of the environment
 - › Personality affects which kinds of attachments we have
 - › Party attachments of individuals can be negative, positive or both
 - › Different types of partisanship fulfil different psychological needs
- ▶ Agreeableness as well as narcissistic rivalry are central traits for different types of partisanship

Positive party ID is one of the most used concepts in election studies

- ▶ Positive party ID is a long-standing, affective attachment to one or several political parties (Campbell et al. 1960: 121-122).
- ▶ Campbell et al. (1960: 296) referred to negative party ID only briefly
 - › „the political party serves as the group toward which the individual may develop an identification, **positive or negative**“ (Campbell et al. 1960: 121-122).
 - › “**attracting or repelling** quality of the group as the generalized dimension [is] most critical” (Ebd)

Vague conceptualization and measurements for negative party identification

- ▶ Very few studies with different conceptualizations and measurements
 - › Crewe, 1976; Maggiotto & Piereson, 1977; Richardson, 1991; Rose & Mishler, 1996; Garry, 2007; Medeiros & Noel, 2014; Caruana et al, 2014; McGregor et al., 2015; Mayer, 2014, 2017a, 2017b; Bankert, 2020; Ridge, 2021
- ▶ Central problems:
 - › Does negative party ID exist without positive party ID?
 - › Terms such as attachment, partisanship & partisan affect used interchangeably
 - › No agreed-on measure: *Affect (+ behavioural component)* (e.g., Medeiros & Noel, 2014); *opponent social identity measure* (Mayer, 2017b), *reversed social identity scale* (Bankert, 2020)

Conceptualizing partisanship within the Social Identity Theory Framework

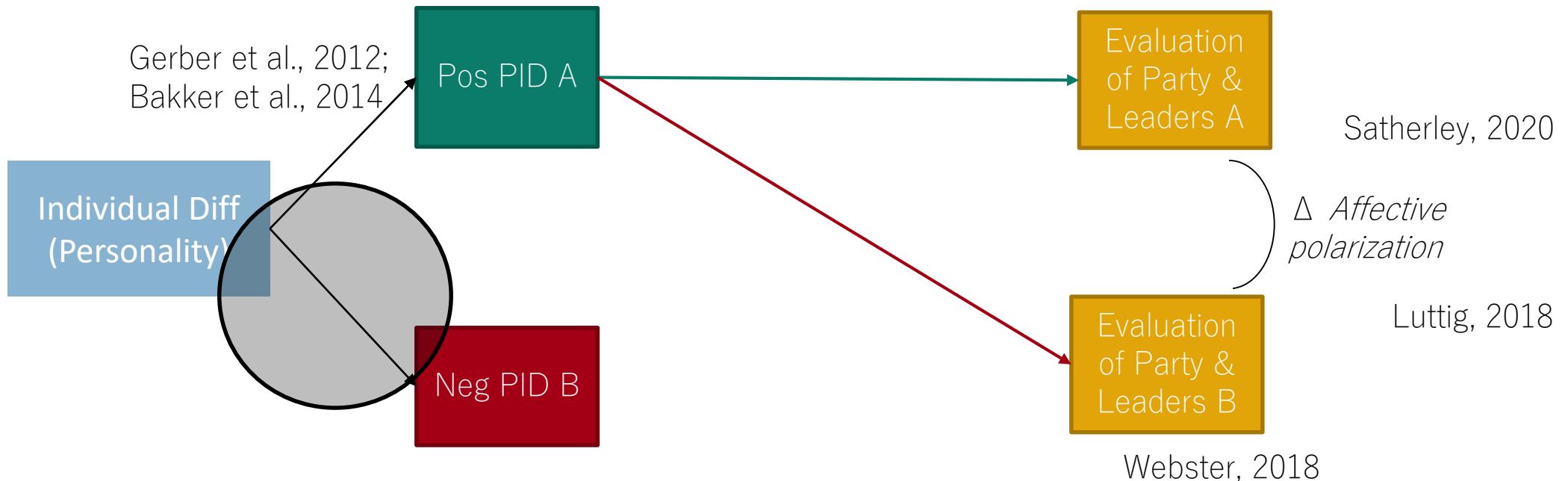
- ▶ Party ID can be conceptualized as a social identity
 - › Often done for positive, but rarely for negative party ID (Greene, 1999; Caruana et al., 2014; Mayer, 2017b, Bankert, 2020)
- ▶ Negative ID does not need positive ID (Leonardelli & Toh, 2015)
 - › Intergroup categorizations are most commonly analysed, but also ingroup categorizations (people emphasize only “us” vs. not us) as well as outgroup categorizations (based on differentiation from “them” vs. not them) possible
 1. Depends on what people emphasise when they apply meta-contrast to the political sphere

Conceptualizing partisanship within the Social Identity Theory Framework II

- ▶ Negative party ID as an identification with a social category from which people differentiate themselves
 - › A long-standing affectively based orientation against a political party whose standards & norms one opposes
 - › People might have also positive party ID but not necessarily (Rose & Mishler, 1996)
- ▶ Different partisan attachments fulfil different psychological needs
 - › Origins based on optimal distinctiveness theory: Need for differentiation drives outgroup categorizations (negative party ID), need for inclusion ingroup categorizations (positive party ID)

Theoretical model and previous studies

- ▶ Which general patterns can be observed for individual differences and negative party ID?



Personality and partisanship II

- ▶ Personality traits as dispositional patterns that affect individuals' reactions to politics and highly stable
- ▶ Big Five Framework/Five Factor Model (McCrae & Costa, 1976, 1992):
 1. Five main traits of personality: Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism
- ▶ Narcissistic Admiration and Rivalry Concept (NARC) (Back et al., 2013):
 1. Two central ways to maintain grandiose self, narcissistic admiration by self-promotion and narcissistic rivalry by self-defense and derogation of others

Hypotheses

	Personality traits	Main aspects	Strength NPID	PID Types		
				Neg	Closed	Open
Big Five	Openness	Willingness to seek new, against predefinition				+
	Conscientiousness	Dutifulness, strive for structure	+		+	
	Extraversion	Social gains, communal aspects, contacts	-			+
	Agreeableness	Non-competitive view of party system, empathy, cooperation	-	+		
	Neuroticism	Insecure, looking for structure		-		
NARC	Narcissistic Admiration	Strive for uniqueness, seeking social admiration, charmingness	-			
	Narcissistic Rivalry	Strive for supremacy, devalue others	+	+		-

Data & Methods

- ▶ Non-representative online survey based on Access Panel, quotas for age, gender, federal state applied (Respondi), fielded in January 2021 (N = 2,354), only Germans without migrational background
- ▶ Analyses of NPID:
 - ▶ Stacked data for analysing patterns, multi-level OLS regression (Unit-1 Parties, Unit-2 Individuals) with robust SE;
- ▶ Analyses of PPID and partisan types:
 - ▶ (Multinomial) logistic regressions w robust SE
- ▶ All variables rescaled to 0-1, AME for logistic regressions

Measures for dependent variables

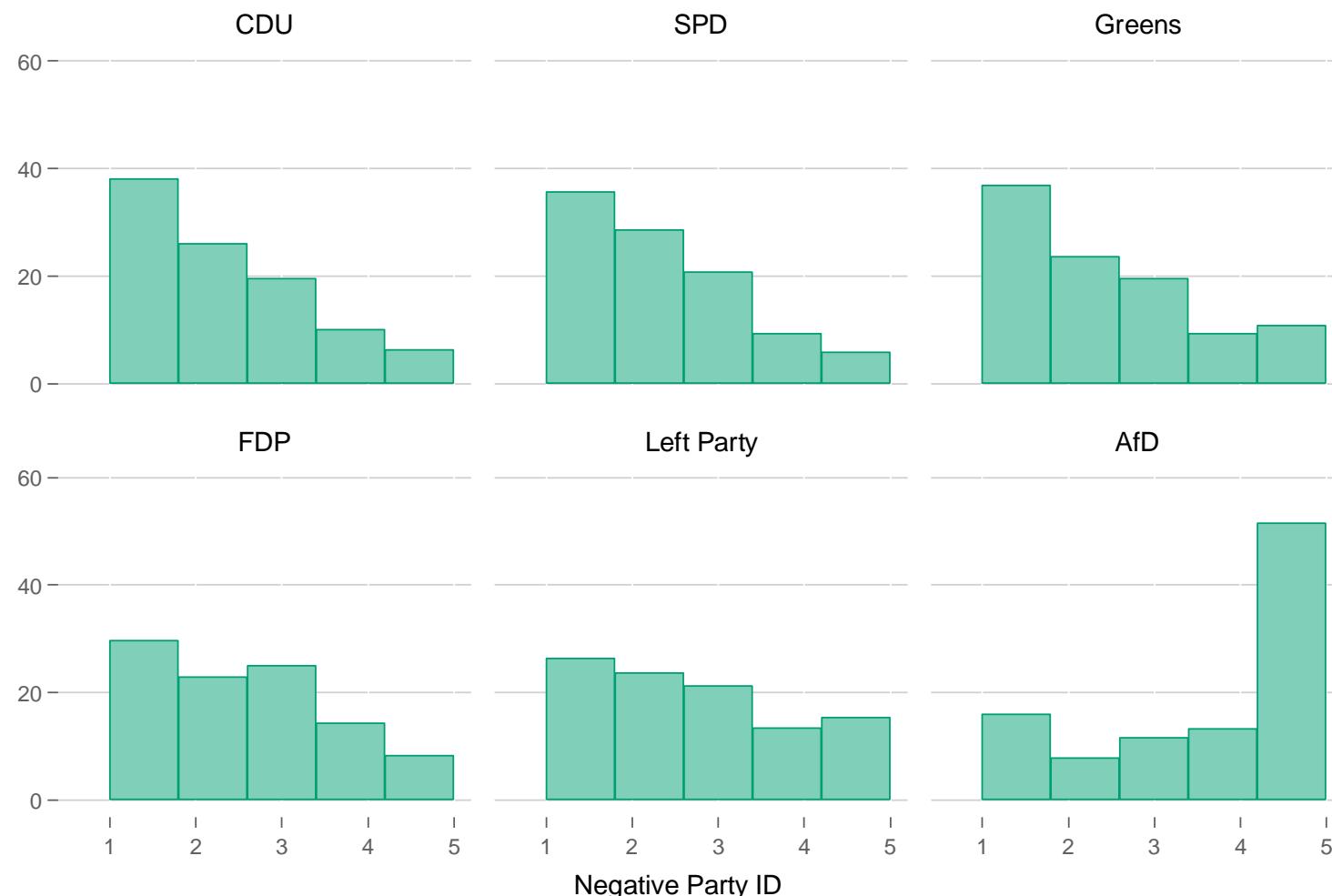
- ▶ Positive PI:
 - › „Many people in the Federal Republic lean toward a particular party for a long time, although they may occasionally vote for a different party. How about you?” (77 %)
- ▶ Negative PI:
 - › “If somebody reveals that they are an adherent of [this party], I see them mainly as a political opponent”, 1 “not agree at all” – 5 “strongly agree” (Mayer, 2017)

	Thermo meter	Never vote	Pos PID
Neg PID	-.53***	.57***	-.30***
Thermometer		-.70***	.49***
Never vote			-.27***

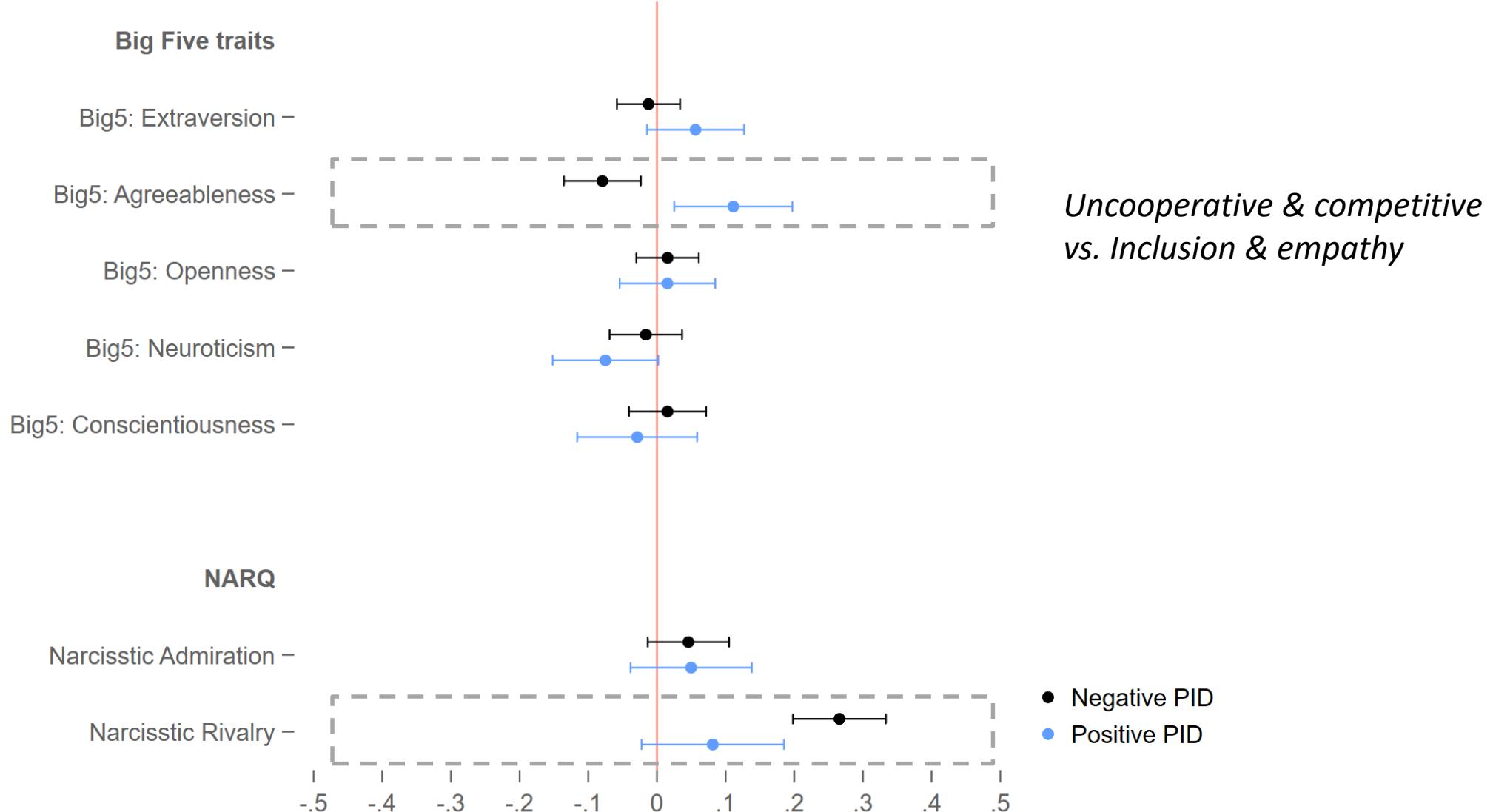
Measures for independent variables

- ▶ Personality:
 - › Big Five measured with BFI-10 (Rammstedt et al., 2014)
 - › Narcissism with NARCQ-S, 6 Items (Back et al., 2013)
- ▶ Controls for: Age, Gender, Education (1-3), East/West, Left-right self-placement (Webster, 2018)

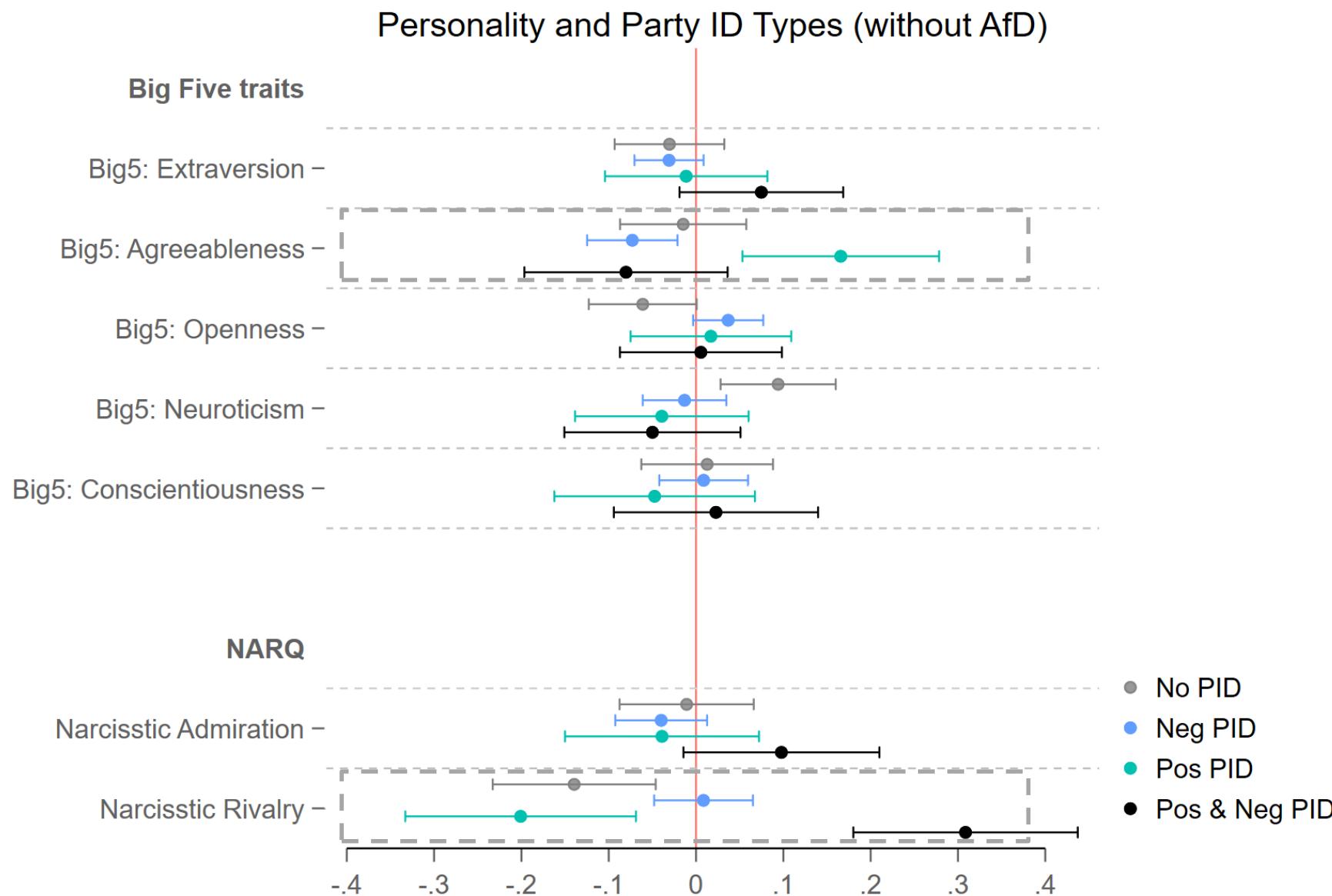
Negative PID highest towards (right) populist parties (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2018)



Regressions of positive vs negative party ID: Agreeableness and rivalry matter



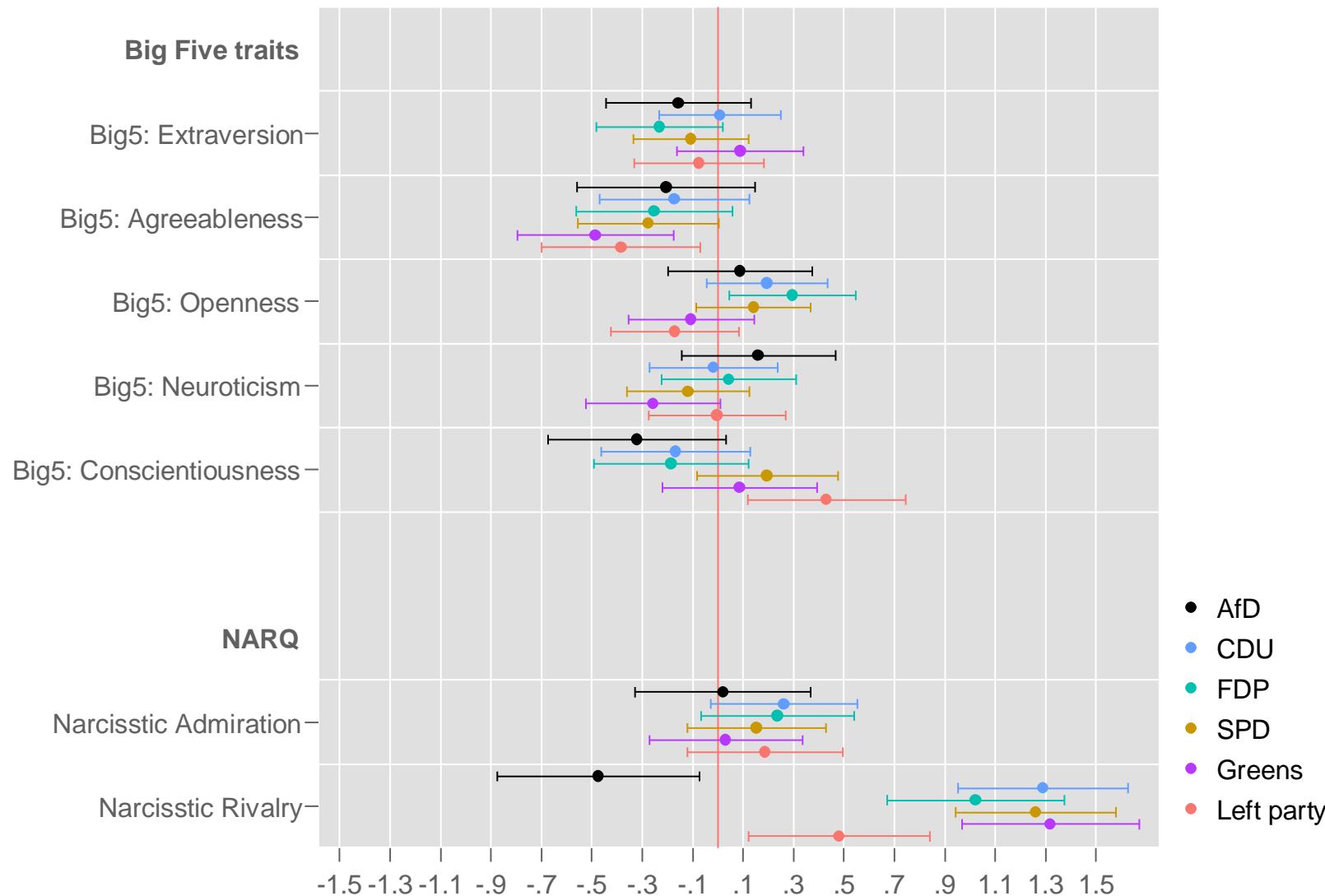
Multinomial logit on partisan types: Agreeableness and rivalry matter



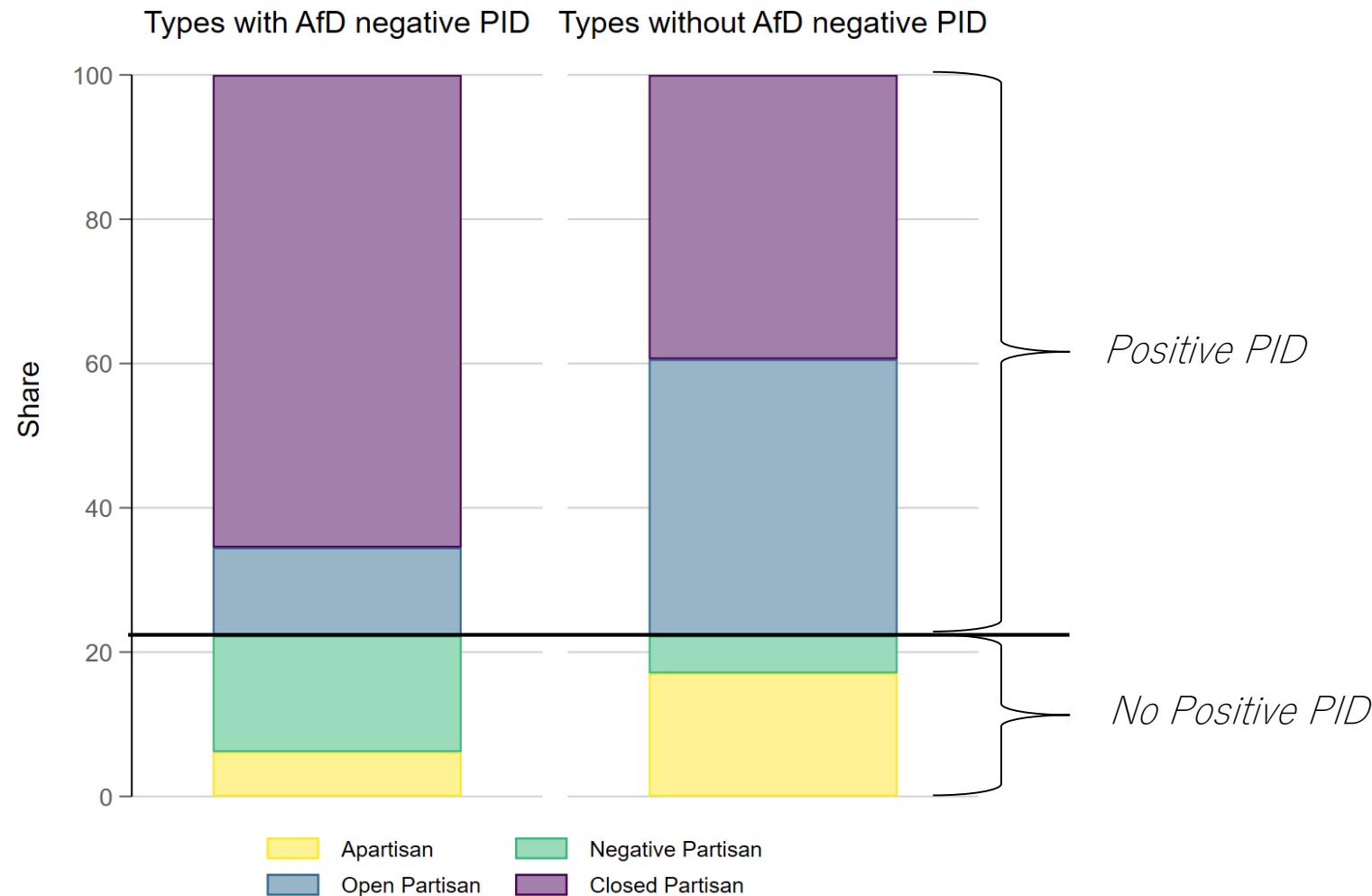
Conclusion

- ▶ Agreeableness one of the main drivers of partisan attachments:
 - › High levels of agreeableness related to positive PID, low levels of agreeableness to negative PID;
- ▶ Narcissistic rivalry
 - › drives closed partisanship where people have clearly defined in- and outgroup boundaries vs open partisanship where only the ingroup is defined
- ▶ Validate results with GESIS Panel
- ▶ Open questions:
 - › What to do with negative party ID with AfD? Exclude/Include
 - › Other measures for individual differences (e.g. need for closure?)
 - › Big5 + NARC too much?

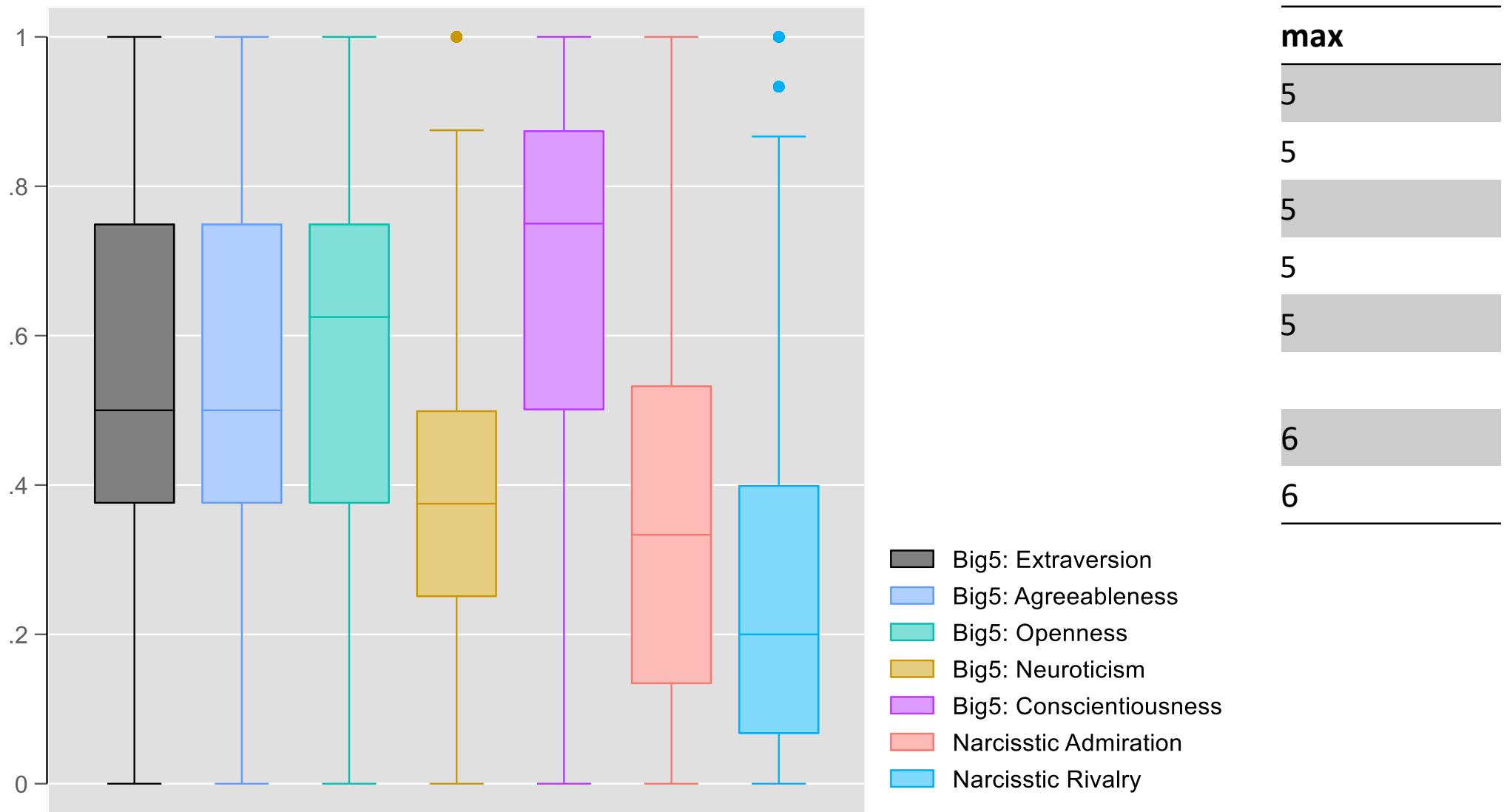
Analyses by party shows: Rivalry matters but not for AfD



How to deal with an anti-system party?



Descriptives Personality measures



Literatur

- ▶ Crewe, Ivor (1976): Party Identification Theory and Political Change in Britain, in: Budge, Ian/Crewe, Ivor/Farlie, Dennis (Hrsg.), Party Identification and Beyond, London, S. 243-274.
- ▶ Garry, John (2007): Making ‘party identification’ more versatile: Operationalising the concept for the multiparty setting. In: *Electoral Studies* 26 (2), S. 346–358. DOI: 10.1016/j.electstud.2006.07.003.
- ▶ Maggiotto, Michael A. und Piereson, James E. (1977): Partisan Identification and Electoral Choice: The Hostility Hypothesis, in American Journal of Political Science 21(4).
- ▶ Medeiros, M. und Noel, A. (2013): The Forgotten Side of Partisanship: Negative Party Identification in Four Anglo-American Democracy, in: Comparative Political Studies
- ▶ Tajfel, Henri (1981): Human groups and social categories: Studies in social psychology. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.