

**Raining on Your Parade:
Negative Party Communication in
Election Campaigns and Beyond**

Lisa Hirsch

Raining on Your Parade:
Negative Party Communication in
Election Campaigns and Beyond

PhD Dissertation

Politica

© Forlaget Politica and the author 2022

ISBN: 978-87-7335-288-5

Cover: Svend Siune

Print: Fællestrykkeriet, Aarhus University

Submitted August 31, 2021

The public defense takes place January 21, 2022

Published January 2022

Forlaget Politica

c/o Department of Political Science

Aarhus BSS, Aarhus University

Bartholins Allé 7

DK-8000 Aarhus C

Denmark

Contents

Acknowledgments	v
1. Introduction	1
1.1. Why Negative Party Communication matters	2
1.2. Empirical Approach	4
1.3. Implications and Contributions	5
1.4. How to study Negative Party Communication	7
2. Negative Party Communication: A Theoretical Framework	11
2.1. Negative Party Communication: The story so far	12
2.1.1. Negative Party Communication as a Campaign Strategy	12
2.1.2. Negative Party Communication and its Consequences	13
2.1.3. Negative Party Communication from a Comparative Perspective	15
2.1.4. The Road Ahead	16
2.2. Theoretical Framework	17
2.2.1. Negative Party Communication in Campaigns	19
2.2.2. Negative Party Communication beyond Elections	19
2.2.3. Negative Party Communication in Parliamentary Speech	24
2.2.4. Negative Party Communication and Coalition Formation	25
2.3. Conclusion	27
3. Disentangling Dimensions of Negative Party Communication	29
3.1. Negative Party Communication in Campaigns: Multidimensional Con- ceptualizations	30
3.2. Exploring the Dimension of Tone: Conceptualizing Negative Party Com- munication	38
3.3. The Way Forward	44
4. Measuring Negative Party Communication: A Question of Negative Tone	47
4.1. Case Selection	49
4.2. Comparative Campaign Dataset	51

4.3.	Measures of Negative Party Communication	56
4.3.1.	Negative Party Communication in Campaigns	57
4.3.2.	Negative Party Communication in Campaigns: Sentiment Scores	60
4.3.3.	Measures of Negative Party Communication in Campaigns: Applying a Measure of Tone	68
4.4.	Measuring Tone: How much Noise is there?	72
4.5.	Conclusion	77
5.	Negative Party Communication in Election Campaigns	79
5.1.	Hypotheses	81
5.2.	Data and Methods	84
5.3.	Replication	88
5.4.	Adding Issues to the Mix: Does it matter which Issues Parties address?	91
5.5.	Determinants of Negative Party Communication in Elections: Validating Measures	96
5.6.	Conclusion	100
6.	Negative Party Communication in Parliamentary Speech	103
6.1.	Hypotheses	104
6.2.	Data and Methods	108
6.3.	Findings	111
6.4.	Conclusion	124
7.	Negative Party Communication and Coalition Formation	127
7.1.	Hypotheses	127
7.2.	Data and Methods	132
7.3.	Findings	135
7.4.	Taking a closer look: Identifying the Mechanism	140
7.4.1.	Methodology	141
7.4.2.	Germany 2013	142
7.4.3.	Denmark 2011	146
7.4.4.	Netherlands 2010	149
7.4.5.	Coherence and Relationships Matter	151
7.5.	Conclusion	152
8.	Conclusion	155
8.1.	Contributions	157

8.2. A Framework of Negative Party Communication	161
References	165
Appendices	177
A. Measurement	179
B. Negative Party Communication in Campaigns	185
B.1. Descriptives	185
B.2. Robustness checks	189
C. Negative Party Communication in Parliamentary Speech	193
C.1. Descriptives	193
C.2. Details on Coding Decisions	196
C.3. Robustness checks	199

Acknowledgements

At first glance, the two activities that took up most of my time in the past years - writing a PhD and climbing - have little in common. One is exercising the brain, the other involves physical commitment. However, upon closer look, the similarities are striking. Both endeavours require thorough planning and, more importantly, good back-up plans in case unforeseen challenges—be they actual or metaphorical storms—arise. Both projects seem to be ultimately individual efforts but are significantly harder without a well-selected and well-functioning team. In the following pages, I would like to thank everyone who has been part of my team.

My biggest gratitude goes to my supervisors, Helene Helboe Pedersen and Christoffer Green-Pedersen. You did not only provide guidance, ask tough questions, and give unbelievably detailed feedback but also made sure I knew that your doors were always open. This tightly knit net was in place even when we could not meet physically, whether it was due to my stay abroad or working from home. Above all, you met me with kindness and understanding, and allowed me to grow into a more proactive and confident researcher and person.

Furthermore, I would like to thank Margit Tavits for welcoming me at Washington University in St. Louis, for her valuable feedback on my work and for inviting me to join department seminars. Jae-Hee Jung, Jeff Ziegler and Min Hee Seo made sure to discuss all things tangentially related to Political Science over food and beers. A very heartfelt thank you belongs to Zoe Ang, who was not only my partner for lunches on campus but made sure I saw all of St. Louis. Thank you for becoming my friend so quickly and effortlessly, and for exploring both the local farmers' market and dusty trails next to the Mississippi.

I was not expecting to find so many dear friends both in the PhD group and at the department in general, and am grateful for having been met with openness, curiosity and kindness. You welcomed me at the department, shared offices with me, took walks, challenged me to think more precisely about my project, allowed me to give feedback on your projects, and answered countless questions. You supported my interest in expensive coffee and made sure I did not have to drink it all alone, you joined me to

work from home, and became friends. I am grateful for all the hours we spent together, and your support. I would like to thank Rachel Beach, Dorte Dongstrup, Anne Pintz, Nicolas Burmester, Philip Pechmann, Jonathan Klüser, Marie Kaldahl Nielsen, Amalie Trangbæk, Ane Bak Foged, Anne Kirstine Rønn, Thomas Artmann Kristensen, Matilde Jeppesen, Dani May, Vilde Lunnan Djuve, Tobias Varneskov, Fabio Wolkenstein, Clara Neupert-Wentz, Ann-Kristin Kölln, Brooke Shannon, and Sarah Wagner. Outside of Aarhus, I would like to thank Martin Haselmayer and Marcelo Jenny for their time and energy. Last and certainly not least, I would like to thank all the TAPs for their support, patience and help.

When I decided to move to the flattest country, I did not imagine to meet such a tightly knit and supportive climbing community. Thanks to everyone in Aarhus Klatreklub for showing me a second, albeit quite dusty, living room. Special thanks go to the Pool Party crew with whom I spent many hours preparing our wall for keen competitors. This time would not have been the same without a dedicated group of people: Thank you to Alexandra Vossen for filling my daily quota of hugs and pictures of dogs, Amanda Eskelund for reminding me to not take myself too seriously, Laura Toussaint for joining me on spontaneous trips to wine bars and abroad, and Jan Stupacher for making late night bike rides in the rain more fun and sharing so many of my ideas about life. Thank you all for understanding my passion for burritos, IPAs, and raclette. In the end, it boils down to one simple thing: You caught my falls, both literally and figuratively. Climbing feels like home where ever it takes place, so it comes as no surprise that it also played a big role on my research stay abroad. Thanks to the Upper Limits Downtown crew for welcoming me into their ranks, and especially to Liz Downey and Tim Fleeger for reminding me to breathe and catching me when I needed it the most.

I would like to thank my whole family - Ulli, Tino, Bini, my grandmother, Michi, Ulli, Mathias, and Sophia - for their support and understanding during the past years. My friends inside and outside of academia are an invaluable part of my life and contributed immensely to my well-being in the past years. You make me feel at peace, picked up where we left off, you gave me places to stay whenever I visited, you made Aarhus home. Some of you made sure I showed up for swimming before work and were always up for a walk, with others I spent afternoons drinking coffee or searched for powder in the mountains. Thank you for sending sweets, postcards, music and memes: Felix Lanmüller, Julia Unteregger, Katharina Storch, Anna Ploch, Lynn Feltgen, Alena Bachleitner, Anita Bodlos, Irene Schicker, Julia Fellingner, Lukas Prebio and Levi Haunschmid-Sibitz in Vienna and Evelyn Braumann, Tenna Foustad Harbo, Tore

Frederiksen, and Vojtěch Dědek in Aarhus, Senni Tuominen in Helsinki, Kaatje Köck in Berlin, Michael Imre in Mannheim, Ashley Loh-Smith, Cameron O’Sullivan and Martin Hajek in Australia and Copper Santiago in Philadelphia. Special thanks go to Gobi Drab for her support, trust and calmness.

My deepest gratitude goes out to two people who have been my safety net in the past years. Johanna Amlacher, your humility inspires me, your kindness impresses me and your ability to be present and make your friends feel safe and seen is astounding. Miriam Sibitz, there is no way I could have done this without you. Somewhere between flying across the world to see me and always being up for sharing red wine, space, and thoughts over lunch you made sure I got through the days. Thank you for your continued support and affection.

Lisa Hirsch

Vienna, November 2021

1. Introduction

Bad and good, negative and positive, conflict and cooperation are basic concepts in human interaction. We teach children from a young age what is considered to be good or bad behavior—to treat their siblings nicely, and to resolve conflict using their words rather than their fists. Good and bad are fundamental concepts humans use to make sense of their surroundings, and it is thus not far-fetched to assume that they are central elements of political interaction as well.

Negative party communication is an example of how these concepts manifest themselves in concrete instances in the political system. Understood as addressing another political actor in a negative, or harsh way, criticizing them and their work, what they stand for, it can be contrasted to solely focusing on praising one self, or simply addressing policy issues. In this conceptualization negative party communication is more than critical policy deliberation, or voicing disagreement with regards to policy positions. Therefore, the act of "going negative"—using negative communication—is an additional strategy at the disposal of political actors. As a timely example we might remember Donald Trump's campaign in 2016, in which he did not only focus on his own policy proposals but also put a significant amount of emphasis onto discrediting his opponent Hillary Clinton. The nickname "Crooked Hillary" was coined quickly, and stuck with supporters. This is only one example of political communication that focuses on the opponent, by making negative comments that vary in rudeness, incivility, but also truthfulness. Even though this example is an extreme example, it exemplifies what negative communication in politics entails.

Negative party communication in politics in the form of negative campaigning has received extensive attention by researchers (Geer, 2006; Lau & Pomper, 2004; Walter, 2014b; Walter, van der Brug, & van Praag, 2014; vanHeerde Hudson, 2011). Disagreement—be it on the personal level, or on the level of policies—is especially pronounced during electoral campaigns: In the weeks leading up to an election, parties or candidates campaign intensely, trying to mobilize the voters who tend to favor them and convince those who do not. They face the challenge of having to highlight their own virtues and point out their previous achievements or present their bright plans for the future, but

must not forget about their opponents, who attempt to do the same. In multi-party systems, some of these opponents will even compete for the same voters, thus forcing parties to acknowledge the existence of opposing parties. In these instances, the concept of negative party communication in campaigns—or negative campaigning—makes its appearance: In order to diminish support for their opponents amongst voters, parties resort to a tactic that draws attention to their opponents’ flaws, missteps, and shortcomings (Lau, Sigelman, & Rovner, 2007).

1.1. Why Negative Party Communication matters

The central topic of this dissertation is negative party communication. To put it simply, I am interested in what negative communication is, how it can be measured, and the determinants that make parties go negative. Shedding light on negative communication matters for a multitude of reasons. Building on research on negative campaigning, most concerns put forward by scholars and the media alike are normative concerns about democracy. Some claim that negativity is inherently harmful to democracy, that voters are put off by parties that attack each other, and that it dampens their participation and ultimately lowers trust in government (Jamieson, 1993; Kamber, 1997). This claim is refuted by research that highlights the psychological background of how negativity is processed and points out that negative information might actually be more useful to voters (Soroka, 2014; Soroka & McAdams, 2015).

Going beyond these normative concerns, studying negative party communication is fruitful from the perspective of party competition. Research on negative party communication has clarified situational determinants and party characteristics that influence campaign rhetoric (Song, Nyhuis, & Boomgaarden, 2017; Nai & Sciarini, 2015; Lau & Pomper, 2004; Elmelund-Præstekær & Svensson, 2013; Dolezal, Ennsner-Jedenastik, & Müller, 2015). It is a useful tool to understand party competition during times of election campaigns, and provides an analytical lense that can be applied to campaign strategies. Applying this lense to parties’ behavior outside of election campaigns allows to see this behaviour as part of a coherent party strategy that is driven by institutional factors, party characteristics and concerns about competition.

Existing literature that has focused on negative campaigning—thus negative communication in the context of an election campaign—has shed light on four important questions. First, negative communication has been understood as a campaign strategy—a decision that rational actors make to improve their standing on election day. According to Benoit’s Functional Theory (K. Benoit, 2007), the main goal behind cam-

paings is to win as many votes as possible, specifically by winning more votes than the opposing parties or candidates.

Second, the explanatory factors of parties to go negative have been a central focal point in existing literature. One of the most prominent findings is that opposition parties face incentives to use negative communication that incumbents do not face. Incumbents are able to reference their own governmental record, and do not need to rely on a potentially risky campaign strategy (Lau & Pomper, 2001, 2004; K. Benoit, 2007; Trent & Friedenberg, 2008).

Third, potentially adverse effects of negative communication in election campaigns have been mainly studied amongst voters—both their behavior in the form of turnout and their attitudes in the form of trust in politics. Previous research has been interested in the effects that negative communication has on the electorate, and focused on whether negative campaigns result in lower turnout (Ansolabehere, Iyengar, Simon, & Valentino, 1994; Nai, 2012), reduced trust in politics (Skytte, 2020), changed evaluations of candidates (Fridkin & Kenney, 2004), or spontaneous affective reactions (Hopmann, Vliegenthart, & Maier, 2017). These potential adverse reactions amongst voters are often seen as an indication that negative communication in election campaigns can backfire and ultimately hurt parties’ or candidates’ electoral chances (Roese & Sande, 1993).

Fourth, the literature on negative party communication has shed light on the US American context, and opened up to investigating negative party communication in other political systems in recent years. This also entails shifting the focus from candidates to parties as the primary actors of interest in political systems in which the political party is the main focal point of voters and institutions alike.

Building on this existing knowledge, I identify three main gaps in the literature: Its lack of engagement with negative party communication beyond campaigns, its focus on consequences of negative party communication in campaigns among voters only, and its lack of comparative approaches.

Taken together, these gaps have resulted in a lack of both a theoretical framework of negative communication in politics beyond election campaigns and an empirical strategy to test the applicability of that framework. We do not know whether the determinants of negative communication in election campaigns are the same for negative communication beyond election campaigns, or whether negative communication in election campaigns has consequences for parties’ behavior beyond election day.

Taking together the empirical and the theoretical gaps presented above, I arrive at my main research question for this dissertation: *What are the determinants of negative*

party communication in election campaigns and beyond, and is there any spill-over from campaigns to politics after the election? In order to answer this question, several sub-questions are posed in each of the individual chapters. These sub-questions are: What is negative party communication (and how does it relate to negative campaigning), and how can it be measured most adequately and efficiently? What drives negative party communication in election campaigns? Does negative party communication in campaigns influence negative party communication in parliament? Does negative party communication in campaigns influence the duration of coalition formation processes?

1.2. Empirical Approach

This research question and its sub-questions have several consequences for how to approach the empirical part. First, it points towards the need for conceptual clarifications. I discuss the definitions of negative party communication in the form of negative campaigning that have been present in existing research and show that they implicitly assume a multidimensional concept. Negative campaigning is defined by targeting an opponent (target) on matters often not directly related to policy issues such as personal traits (content) in a negative, rude or impolite way (tone). Studying negative party communication more broadly and moving beyond the context of electoral campaigns and single-case studies is empirically demanding and may require a more simple definition and measurement. This thesis therefore proposes a one-dimensional concept and measure, and explores to what extent it is useful. Concretely, it explores how the sentiment—or tone—of party communication can be used to capture variation in negative party communication in electoral campaigns and beyond.

Secondly, the research questions point at the challenge of finding instances of interactions between political parties after elections in which negative communication can play a role. I identify two examples of such interactions: parliamentary speech and coalition formation. Both are examples of parties' post-electoral interactions that are directly related to election results. They are instances in which I propose that negative party communication could continue to be part of parties' mode of communication or impact the workings of the political system.

Whether negative communication indeed plays a role in post-electoral arenas—either by being driven by the same factors as in campaigns, or by spilling over—has not been established yet. The existence of common determinants of negative party communication across arenas would support the notion of an ongoing campaign, and hint at parliament being an arena in which parties compete for votes just as they do in election

campaigns. The absence of common determinants would hint at the role institutions play in shaping political actors' behavior. The existence of a spill-over effect from the dynamics in campaigns would support the idea that political parties actively promote a brand and are concerned with appearing coherent to appeal to voters. On the other hand, the lack of a spill-over from campaign dynamics beyond elections would point towards actors being able to overcome differences and past attacks.

I suggest that the appropriate empirical strategy to answer my research question should focus on a cross-sectional comparative design. There are two reasons for choosing this approach. Firstly, by choosing a comparative approach, I am able to capture potential variation in negative party communication both between and within countries, or between parties. Secondly, investigating several countries in both Eastern and Western Europe allows me to test the applicability of my theoretical framework in a wide range of political systems.

Chapter 5 is based on ten countries and up to three elections that the Comparative Campaign Dataset (Debus, Somer-Topcu, & Tavits, 2018) contains. In this chapter, I establish what the determinants of negative party communication in campaigns are by using data on 15,415 campaign statements in eleven Western and Eastern European countries for elections held between 2005 and 2015. Chapter 6 focuses on a subset of these countries—Denmark, Germany and the United Kingdom—in order to investigate what determinants of negative party communication in parliament are, if it is driven by the same factors as negative party communication in campaigns, and if negative party communication in campaigns spills over into parliament based on 911,767 parliamentary speeches. I discuss the details of the case selection in Section 4.1. In the third empirical chapter—Chapter 7—I address potential spill-over effects of negative party communication in campaigns into coalition government formation and test its impact on the duration of coalition formation processes. This chapter is based on those elections that resulted in coalition governments in the Comparative Campaign Dataset and draws on 16 cases, of which three are explored further in more detailed case studies to identify the theorized mechanism.

1.3. Implications and Contributions

I present a theoretical model that connects negative party communication in campaigns to negative party communication beyond campaigns. This model provides theorizing about the existence and direction of a spill-over effect of negative party communication to interactions of political parties after elections.

With regards to the concept of negative party communication the main finding is that a one-dimensional concept focusing of tone captures more than negative campaigning, but does not include positive campaigning. Following this, the contribution with regards to the measurement is that negativity—measured by capturing negative tone via sentiment analysis—captures the same variation as multidimensional measures of negative campaigning, but overestimates the absolute level of negative party communication. This occurs because sentiment scores result in false positives when trying to capture negative party communication, as negative sentiment of party communication is also related to specific issues such as immigration, war, Brexit or unemployment without targeting any political opponents specifically.

Empirically, I show that negative party communication in campaigns and parliament is driven by features of the political system. In contrast to existing studies (Papp & Patkós, 2018), fragmentation of the party system seems to have a more significant impact on negative party communication in campaigns than the polarization of the party system. Negative party communication is less prevalent in more fragmented party systems. These findings hold for negative party communication in parliamentary speech. Furthermore, my analyses show that some spill-over effect of negative party communication in campaigns on the level of negative party communication in parliament indeed can be identified, and that there are indications that negative party communication in campaigns alters parties' capacities to form coalition governments quickly though the empirical evidence for this association is less robust due to data limitations.

With these results, I show that negative party communication impacts interactions between political parties during and beyond campaigns. These findings tie into the general theoretical framework I develop and suggest that negative party communication is a useful conceptual lense to understand communication tools that parties choose to use both in election campaigns and other political interactions, and that has effects on coalition formation processes.

By answering the research question "What are the determinants of negative party communication in election campaigns and beyond, and is there any spill-over from campaigns to politics after the election?" this monograph contributes to the existing literature in five important ways.

The first contribution is with regards to the development of a framework of negative party communication that suggests the existence of a broader phenomenon beyond elections due to a spill-over effect. This applies both with regards to the occurrence of negative party communication beyond campaigns, thus speaking to literature on communication in parliament (Rheault, Beelen, Cochrane, & Hirst, 2016; Kosmidis,

Hobolt, Molloy, & Whitefield, 2018), and with regards to potential consequences that are not limited to behavior directly happening in the electoral context, thus speaking to literature on coalition formation processes (Ecker & Meyer, 2015; Sagi & Diermeier, 2015; Tavits, 2008).

Secondly, I contribute to existing research by broadening the perspective of actors who can be affected by negative party communication to include parties and move beyond a voter-centric perspective.

Thirdly, the comparative perspective taken in this thesis aligns with existing research on parliamentary multi-party systems (Nai, 2018; Walter, 2014b; Valli & Nai, 2020) and adds to the developing field.

Fourth, the conceptual contribution lies in discussing the merits and drawbacks of a one-dimensional definition of negative party communication as negative tone. I provide contextualization of existing multidimensional definitions of negative party communication in the form of negative campaigning, and a discussion of these definitions.

Fifth, the methodological contribution lies in the exploration of using sentiment analysis to measure negative party communication as a one-dimensional concept. At face value, sentiment analysis can be used to measure negativity efficiently without relying on trained coders in various political contexts and in various languages, as long as textual data is available. However, it also comes with the risk of capturing a larger phenomenon than a multidimensional measure does, or a different phenomenon from negative party communication. By carefully estimating how automated sentiment analysis can be used to study negative party communication this thesis contributes to literature applying automated text analysis in political science.

1.4. How to study Negative Party Communication

The dissertation proceeds as follows: In Chapter 2, I provide the theoretical background and overall model that I investigate in the following chapters. I discuss the main research question in more detail and provide theoretical arguments on the existence of negative party communication in the political system. In a novel theoretical framework, I argue for why I expect negative party communication to be a phenomenon that matters outside of electoral campaigns. Furthermore, I develop arguments about the implications of negative party communication in other areas of politics.

Then, the first set of chapters that focuses on conceptual clarifications and the implications for the operationalization of the central concepts follows. In Chapter 3, I discuss what the one-dimensional concept of negative party communication entails, and how it

can be related to a multi-dimensional concept negative campaigning. Starting with research on negative campaigning, an area that has been extensively studied, I show that current applications of negative party communication all implicitly rely on a multidimensional understanding of the concept. I identify these dimensions as content, target, and tonality. I conclude that if one dimension was to be selected, tone is the dimension best suitable because it is most likely to capture the essence of negative campaigning and does not, as the other dimensions would, capture positive party communication.

Chapter 4 then addresses the second part of my argument on the concept of negative party communication and how to measure it. I investigate how negative party communication as defined in the conceptual chapter can be measured and operationalized. My two main points are that in order to measure tonality if tone is accepted to be the best single dimension to use in a one-dimensional conceptualization of negative party communication, the method of sentiment analysis is a promising approach. In connection with this observation I argue that this method also allows for an operationalization of the concept that satisfies the need for a continuous measure. This argument is supported by a paper I co-authored (Haselmayer, Hirsch, & Jenny, 2020), which shows that voters indeed perceive differences in the tonality of campaign statements, although that perception is moderated by the strength of respondents' partisan attachment. However, I also highlight the potential risks of conceptualizing and measuring negative party communication using only one dimension, as I show how sentiment scores of negativity also capture negative words associated with political problems rather than targeting opponents.

After providing these considerations I present empirical tests of the arguments mentioned above in a second set of chapters. In Chapter 5, I treat negative party communication in campaigns as a dependent variable to answer the question of where it comes from and to investigate whether existing explanations hold up. The second empirical chapter, Chapter 6, addresses the question of how negative party communication in campaigns translates into negative party communication in parliament. Here, the main argument is that while parliament as an institution is functionally different from electoral campaigns, there are similar incentives for some parties to carry on the campaign dynamic and therefore negative campaigning spills over into parliamentary speech. The second empirical chapter, Chapter 7, takes a step further and treats negative party communication in campaigns as an independent variable and investigates its impact on coalition formation duration, supplementing multivariate analyses by in-depth case studies. This therefore focuses on the dimension of conflict as indicated by

conflictual electoral campaigns and seeks to answer the question of whether parties can overcome these tensions when faced with bigger incentives, such as public office.

A final concluding chapter revisits the theoretical arguments made in the beginning, ties the empirical findings back to the main arguments, and presents implications of the presented findings. Furthermore, the question of generalizability will be addressed.

2. Negative Party Communication: A Theoretical Framework

Negative party communication—i.e. communication that focuses on communicating using negative words, most often in order to address an opponent—is hardly a novel phenomenon, and has received extant scholarly attentions. Most importantly, it has been studied in the form of negative campaigning, focusing on the context of parties' election campaigns. Here, the question of what causes negative campaigning, and which consequences it brings, has been at the centre of attention. In the following chapter I argue that building on this literature allows me to introduce a more general theoretical framework to investigate the prevalence of negative party communication in general in different stages of the electoral cycle. This framework is applied to two different cases of interactions between parties in the post-electoral arena - parliamentary speech and coalition formation .

The remainder of the chapter fulfills two purposes: I review and categorize existing literature on negative party communication, and present the overarching theoretical framework of this dissertation. Most of this literature uses the term "negative campaigning" in order to refer to a specific case of what I conceptualize as a broader phenomenon of negative (party) communication. In order to build my theoretical framework, I start by reviewing existing literature on negative communication along three themes. First, I will focus on how negative communication can be understood as a campaign strategy, to then move on to the consequences of negative communication second. Third, I will address which cases negative communication has been investigated in so far and which consequences this decision has for both the concept and the results. Lastly, I present the main theoretical framework in which I conceptualize negative party communication both in and beyond election campaigns. This framework provides a way to identify the determinants of negative party communication on different levels, how they can be applied to negative party communication beyond campaigns, and in which instances of interactions between political parties negative party communication is likely to have an effect.

2.1. Negative Party Communication: The story so far

The story that research has told so far is informed by the desire to explain the assumed rise of negative campaigning (Geer, 2006). Especially in early research on negative communication, this suspected increase has served as a motivation to look into the concept further, even though there is no consensus that negative communication is actually on the rise (Buell & Sigelman, 2008). Later, the main questions that were of interest were "Why do parties choose to go negative?" and "What are the consequences?" The answers to these questions are influenced by the case on which the majority of research on negative communication has been focused: the United States (Lau & Pomper, 2001, 2004; Peterson & Djupe, 2005; Damore, 2002; Druckman, Kifer, & Parkin, 2010). The focus on the United States, a presidential system with a strong two-party system, influences not only the answers to the two questions above, but also how negative communication is defined.

Negative campaigning is generally understood as a campaign strategy of attacking an opponent rather than praising oneself (W. Benoit, 1999; Geer, 2006; Lau & Pomper, 2004; Nai & Walter, 2015). In this multidimensional understanding, attacks can be targeted at the opponent's policy position, values, record, or character traits. This directional definition – campaigning aimed at opponent – is common for the literature I review below. A detailed review of existing conceptualizations is the subject of Chapter 3, and are therefore not extensively discussed in this chapter.

2.1.1. Negative Party Communication as a Campaign Strategy

One of the defining features of the literature on negative communication is its focus on the campaign (Walter et al., 2014; vanHeerde Hudson, 2011; Valli & Nai, 2020; Ridout & Walter, 2013; Peterson & Djupe, 2005; Papp & Patkós, 2018; Nooy & Kleinnijenhuis, 2013; Nai & Sciarini, 2015; Nai, 2018; Lau & Pomper, 2001; Ketelaars, 2019; Elmelund-Præstekær & Svensson, 2013; Blumler & Kavanagh, 1999). Given the fact that the word "campaigning" is part of the central concept—negative campaigning—this hardly comes as a surprise, but it has important implications for the scope of the presented arguments and their generalizability.

Negative communication, as a campaign strategy, is embedded in research about the effectiveness of political campaigns more broadly speaking (Farrell & Schmitt-Beck, 2002). The general notion is that campaigns do matter, and that they are an effective tool at parties' disposal to alter their electoral fates by altering voters' attitudes towards parties, issues, behavior (such as turnout), but also by shaping the issue agenda and

salience of issues. Negative campaigning is then seen as strategy for how to conduct campaigns. In order to understand the theoretical motivation behind going negative, Benoit's functional theory is a useful lense (W. Benoit, 2007). Functional theory assumes that the main goal behind campaigns is to win as many votes as possible, and more votes than the opposing parties or candidates. It thus assumes that political actors are primarily vote-seeking (Lau & Pomper, 2004). One of these vote-seeking strategies then is negative campaigning: By focusing on the (perceived) flaws of opponents, parties try to diminish voters' positive affect for them (Lau et al., 2007; Budesheim, A. Houston, & Depaola, 1996). This strategy does not only aim at making opponents less popular – thus ultimately reducing their vote share – but also results in a positive effect on the net favourability of the sending party by increasing the – relative – size of its vote share. It is important to note that this scenario is based on the assumption that there are no negative consequences for parties to engage in negative campaigning.

One important question is whether this strategy—winning by diminishing voters' positive affect for opponents—works or if there are adverse consequences for the sending party. Parties need to keep in mind that attacking an opponent might be costly, and harm their own reputations. This cost-benefit analysis is at the core of the decision by parties to go negative or not (Lau & Pomper, 2004) and is driven by rational considerations about the net benefit of campaign decisions (Skaperdas & Grofman, 1995). The main argument is that parties go negative when the net effect of that decision is expected to be positive—i.e. that the strategy will result in more lost votes for the opponent than potentially lost votes for themselves. The reason why negative campaigning could backfire is the so-called backlash effect (Garrazone, 1984; Rouse & Sande, 1993; Shapiro & Rieger, 1992) that occurs if voters dislike negativity and punish the attacking party. Thus, negative campaigning may not only have the intended consequence of diminishing affect for the opposition, but also bears the risk of having unintended consequences for the attacking party itself. From a rational choice perspective, this calculus is at the center of parties' decisions about which campaign strategy to employ.

2.1.2. Negative Party Communication and its Consequences

Connected to the focus on the electoral campaign it is hardly surprising that previous research on the consequences of negative communication has focused on voters. Voters are the target of political campaigns, because political campaigns are designed to affect voters' behaviour and opinions. Therefore, in order to assess the effects of political campaigns, voters are the most likely case to examine (Wattenberg & Brians, 1999;

Nai, 2012; Lau et al., 2007; Lau, Sigelman, Heldman, & Babbitt, 1999; Kamber, 1997; K. F. Kahn & Kenney, 1999; Hopmann et al., 2017; Fridkin & Kenney, 2004; Freedman & Goldstein, 1999; Finkel & Geer, 1998; Brooks, 2006; Banda & Windett, 2016; Ansolabehere, Iyengar, & Simon, 1999; Ansolabehere et al., 1994; Banda & Windett, 2016).

When assessing the consequences negative campaigns have on voters, both behavior on election day and more general attitudes that are prevalent after election day as well are of interest. The intended consequences are connected to the function of negative campaigns—to diminish support for opponents—and whether that strategy actually works (Fridkin & Kenney, 2004).

Other claims about consequences build on the idea that negative information is a way for voters to stay informed, and receive information about political actors that they would not receive if every party or candidate were to showcase only their own strengths. Thus, the focus lies on the information environment that is created by negative campaigns and that can actually provide voters with more informed choices by highlighting the principles of deliberation: criticism and debate (Geer, 2006). Research on the mechanism behind these claims has focused on cognitive processes and the way humans perceive negative and positive information. Here, the existence of the so-called negativity bias (Soroka, 2014; Soroka & McAdams, 2015) predicts that for evolutionary reasons humans, and thus voters, give negative information more weight than positive information.

The consequences of negative communication that are not directly part of the voter's calculus of voting are where normative ideas about democracy come into play. The main argument is that voters' attitudes and beliefs about democracy in general, and the functioning of the political system can be shaped by their exposure to negative communication. The assumption is that voters dislike negativity, and are thus less willing to engage in the democratic process. Lau and Rovner (2009) identify three possible pathways through which negative communication in campaigns might depress turnout: it might simply lower voters' propensity to vote for the targeted party without boosting support for the sending party; it might dampen support for both parties and disenchant voters from the political process; or it could reduce voters' trust in politics and sense of efficacy in the political system, thus making them less likely to participate in the democratic process. Some—mainly experimental—studies have shown that negative communication in campaigns depresses turnout (Ansolabehere et al., 1994; Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1995; Ansolabehere et al., 1999; Pinkleton, Um, & Austin, 2002; P. S. Martin, 2004). Others (Finkel & Geer, 1998; Goldstein & Freedman, 2002;

K. Kahn & Kenney, 2004; Brader, 2005; Geer, 2006; Geer & Lau, 2006; Jackson & Carsey, 2007) find positive effects of negative communication on turnout. Still others find no effect on turnout (Wattenberg & Brians, 1999), and K. F. Kahn and Kenney (1999), for example, show that the effect of negative communication on turnout depends on the fashion in which the attack was launched—with legitimate criticism boosting turnout, but overly harsh statements depressing turnout.

Thus, even when focusing on only one group of actors – voters – and asking how their behavior, their opinions and their attitudes are affected by campaign styles there are competing answers: It is not entirely settled under which conditions negative campaigning has which (adverse or intended) effects. However, especially the last example points out that contradictory results might be due to variation in the type of negative communication.

2.1.3. Negative Party Communication from a Comparative Perspective

Lastly, in order to understand the scope of the findings presented above, it is relevant to keep in mind which cases existing research was especially focused on: the United States (Lau & Pomper, 2001, 2004; Peterson & Djupe, 2005; Damore, 2002; Druckman et al., 2010).

One obvious implication of the US-centeredness of research on negative communication is the question of generalizability of the findings. From a theoretical point of view, Blumler and Kavanagh (1999) made the argument that negative communication is, as a strategy, the reflection of a universal phenomenon, and a sign of the mediatization of politics that is occurring not only in the United States, but in other democratic systems as well.

This claim sparked a field of empirical research, aiming to test whether the explanations for negative communication found in the United States hold for European party systems as well. Examples of this are studies on one or a few countries including Switzerland (Stuckelberger, 2019; Nai & Sciarini, 2015), Denmark (Elmelund-Præstekær, 2008, 2010; Elmelund-Præstekær & Svensson, 2013), the United Kingdom (vanHeerde Hudson, 2011; Walter & van der Eijk, 2019), the Netherlands (Walter & van der Brug, 2013; Walter, 2014a), Austria (Haselmayer & Jenny, 2018; Dolezal, Ennser-Jedenastik, Müller, Praprotnik, & Winkler, 2016), and Germany (Maier & Jansen, 2015). There are examples that go beyond European party systems as well (Curini, 2011; Ridout & Walter, 2013). Large scale comparisons on the other hand are few (Walter et al., 2014;

Valli & Nai, 2020; Papp & Patkós, 2018; Nai, 2018) , but the need for comparative research exists for two reasons: Firstly, European systems do not support findings from the United states that point at an increase in negative communication, but without further comparison the reason for this discrepancy remains in the dark (Walter, 2014a). Secondly, going back to the discussion about the changed attack calculus for parties in multi-party system, more comparative research in multi-party systems is needed to determine the exact mechanism through which party systems, political culture and post-electoral coalitions feature in parties' use of negative communication.

While negative communication as a campaign strategy seems to be straightforward, the cost-benefit analysis I mentioned above becomes more complex in European party systems and parliamentary systems. Firstly, each party has multiple opponents. This means that attacking an opponent – which results in a higher relative win for the attacking party in two party systems – might not be sufficient to win because there are multiple races or pairings in which this calculus matters. Secondly, as there are multiple opponents, voters might indeed react to attacks on their originally favoured party by not casting their vote for them, but then decide to vote for a third party. In such a case, the benefit of the negative campaign is not reaped by the launcher of the campaign, but by another party. So in European party system systems, the calculus behind attacking is more complex. Here, each party has multiple opponents, and thus multiple potential targets. Additionally, each party is the potential target for multiple opponents, thus creating a more complex network of attack structures, which is characterized by the potential for retaliation (Dolezal et al., 2016) or rebuttal (Lau & Rovner, 2009).

2.1.4. The Road Ahead

We know a great deal about negative communication already: First of all, negative party communication as a campaign strategy is rooted in rational choice theory and part of each parties' repertoire of possible campaign strategies to perform well on election day. Thus, it is a strategy that is tailored to a specific goal and strategically used to win elections. Another strand of research is engaged with the consequences of negative communication, that are mainly understood to be located with voters. Most of the existing knowledge on negative communication originated in research on negative campaigning in the United States, their presidential system, and their two-party system. This empirical focus then is reflected in a definition of the concept of negative communication that fits the empirical context it was first applied to. All these clusters of research together paint a nuanced picture of negative communication beyond its

conceptualization as negative campaigning: It exists in virtually all political systems, although the claim that politics have become increasingly negative only holds for the US. The prevalence of negative campaigning itself ranges from 80% to 40% (Allen & Stevens, 2015), depending on the exact operationalization. Even though this points at variation in occurrence of the phenomenon, it also points to the fact that negative communication is hardly a fringe phenomenon. Thus, this collection of research serves as the point of departure for my research project that simultaneously addresses multiple of the research gaps I presented above.

Firstly, I argue that by focusing on the election day, and voters when looking for consequences of negative communication a large share of political interactions and actors are overlooked. Therefore, I suggest to take examples of political parties' interactions after election day into account to broaden the focus of existing research by going beyond elections, but also to shine the spotlight on parties instead of voters. As parties are central actors in elections, and the driving force behind negative communication, it is of vital importance to understand how well their varying goals are aligned. Secondly, in order to study parliamentary speech in an efficient manner, I suggest an alternative definition of negative party communication that focusses on the dimension of tone. In Chapter 3 I discuss how such a concept of negative party communication overlaps with established definitions of negative campaigning, and address measurement strategies in Chapter 4.

Thirdly, I use several Western and Eastern European countries to investigate the proposed connection between the electoral and the post-electoral arena, thus adding to the emerging comparative research on negative communication.

The first claim will be the focus of the following sections, in which I will explain my main argument about why parties go negative in the first place, and why that negative communication might have any consequences after election day.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

My main theoretical argument to answer the question "What are the determinants of negative party communication in election campaigns and beyond, and is there any spill-over from campaigns to politics after the election?" hinges on two steps. The first step that requires clarification is the reasons for parties to go negative. The second step hinges on the possible connection between election campaigns and the post-electoral arena, as this connection appear either in the form of common determinants of negative party communication in both campaigns and beyond, or a spill-over from election cam-

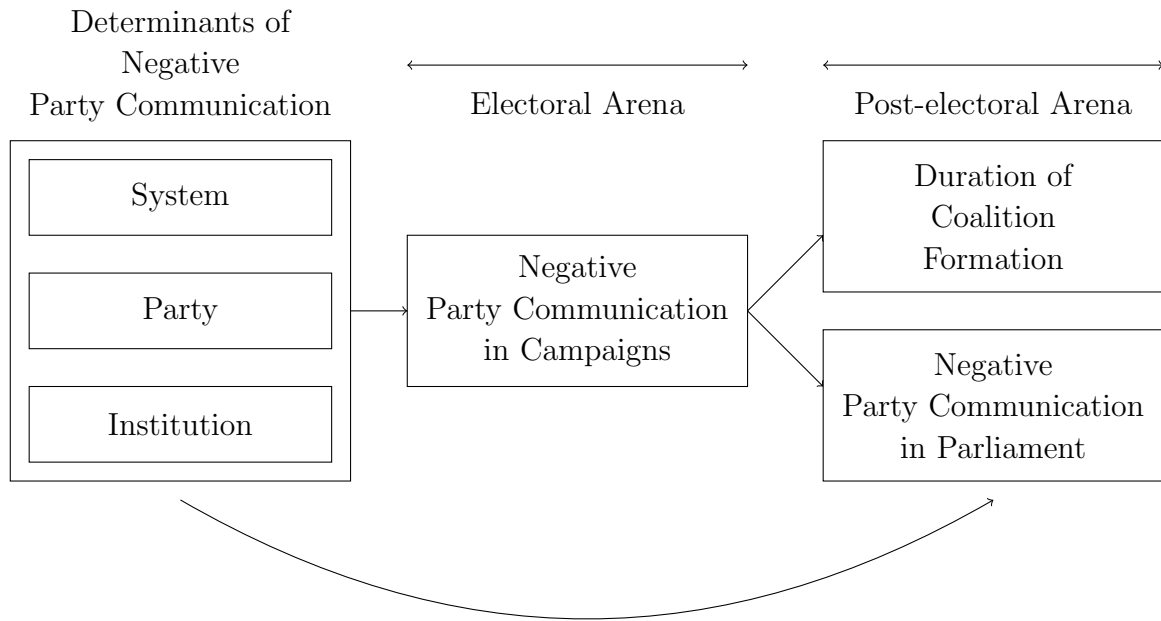


Figure 2.1.: Theoretical Model

paings into the post-electoral arena. In this second step both how election campaigns and the post-electoral arena connect and which manifestations of the post-electoral arena are of interest are important details. Another important aspect is the direction of the spill-over effect that I identify to go from electoral campaigns to the post-electoral arena.

Figure 2.2 illustrates these steps, and in which arena they are situated. It also points to the starting point of my analyses: the determinants of negative communication in campaigns, that are situated on three possible levels - the level of the political system, the level of the political party, and that of the institutional level. It also shows the next step in order to move on to the theoretical core of the argument: Is there a spill-over of negative communication from the electoral into the post-electoral arena, and is negative communication driven by the same determinants, irrespective of which arena it is situated in?

First, in order to explain why parties decide to engage in negative communication, I rely on research on negative campaigning. I focus on negative communication as a rational strategy. Similarly to existing research on negative campaigning both in the US context, but also in the European context, I draw on Functional Theory of Campaign Discourse by Benoit (W. Benoit, 1999; K. Benoit, 2007; W. L. Benoit, Hansen, & Verser, 2003). It assumes that parties are primarily vote-seeking and therefore face certain incentives to engage in negative communication in campaigns in order to tip

the scales in their favor - given that negative campaigns do not backfire. As I have laid out previously, backlash effects might make it more costly for parties to attack, as they risk to alienate their own voter base instead of simply diminishing their opponents' support.

2.2.1. Negative Party Communication in Campaigns

The determinants of negative campaigning for which existing research has found support of operate on three different levels: the level of the political system, the level of the political party, and the institutional level.

On the level of the political system, these variables include polarization and fragmentation. On the level of the political parties, they include government status, each party's ideological position as well as its issue-based nicheness. On the institutional level, the main influential factors as found by previous research are the timing—i.e the distance to an election, and the institutional features of the electoral system. The specific mechanisms for each of these variables are explained in more detail in Chapter 5, in which I provide the empirical tests of the corresponding hypotheses.

The discussion about post-electoral bargaining already hints at a challenge that Functional Theory faces in multi-party systems (and, to a certain degree, in PR systems): In these systems, the assumption, that votes directly lead to office and thus policy influence does not hold. The need for coalition governments does not allow for a direct translation of votes into office, but requires bargaining procedures. Therefore, parties need to strategically decide which goals to pursue under which circumstances, and how to balance them (Strøm & Müller, 1999), which is reflected in research focused on negative campaigning in multi-party systems (Hansen & Pedersen, 2008; Walter, 2012).

2.2.2. Negative Party Communication beyond Elections

In my initial research question, I asked what the determinants of negative party communication in election campaigns and beyond were, and if there is any spill-over from campaigns to politics after campaigns. This hints at three open questions: What speaks for and against common determinants of negative party communication in different arenas is an important first step. The second open question is concerned with the potential spill-over from election campaigns to the post-electoral arena. Third, both these points hint at the question what examples of the post-electoral arena are. I will provide arguments that clarify each of these three points in the following section.

Determinants of Negative Party Communication

First, arguments both for and against common determinants of negative party communication can be made. On one hand, negative party communication in election campaigns and beyond might be caused by the same determinants. If negative party communication is an overarching phenomenon that is driven by factors on the level of the political system, the level of the political party, and the level of the institution, these factors can determine both negative party communication in election campaigns, and beyond. If parliament is understood as another arena of electoral conflict, and parties operating in an ongoing electoral campaign, Functional Theory is as applicable to parliament as it is to electoral campaigns. Consequently, this means that parties exhibit vote-seeking behavior even in parliament, and behave similarly as during campaigns. This also means that the attack calculus in parliament is the same as in elections. The reason for parliament to be an arena of competition and parties in it mirroring campaign dynamics can be attributed to the mediatization of the political process, and the existence of social media. Even though parties do not need to rally their voters to the polls constantly, they do face the challenge of constantly being evaluated and in contact with their voters through television, and social media. Thus, the need to appeal to votes does not necessarily simply cease after polls are closed, challenges the view of campaigns as a static phenomenon (Dolezal et al., 2016).

On the other hand, a counter-argument can be made: If the incentive structure political parties face in election campaigns is fundamentally different from that they face beyond elections, there is little reason to believe that the same determinants of negative party communication have the same impact in different arenas. In political systems that commonly see coalition governments votes directly lead to office and thus policy influence does not hold. Votes might not be enough to enter office, because the need for coalition governments does not allow for a direct translation of votes into office, but requires bargaining procedures. Therefore, parties need to strategically decide on which goals to pursue under which circumstances, and how to balance them (Strøm & Müller, 1999), which is reflected in research focused on negative campaigning in multi-party systems (Hansen & Pedersen, 2008; Walter, 2012). Here, I want to point out that in this line of thought the trifecta of parties' goals consisting of policy, office and votes (Strøm, 1990) comes into play. While votes are of intrinsic importance during electoral competition, they become instrumental as soon as the goals of policy or office are taken into account as well. Both policy and office are driving parties post-electoral behavior. Thus, explanations of vote-seeking behavior should become less powerful when there is

no immediate election at hand, and hold less explanatory power in the post-electoral context. These considerations highlight the logic of the post-electoral arena that is based on cooperation, more than it is on competition. We would expect parties to face stronger incentives to cooperate. While electoral competition is exactly that – competition – that follows largely unwritten rules of behavior and relies on cultural norms about what can and cannot be said, institutions such as parliaments provide a more structured framework of rules, both written and unwritten, on how parties can and should interact.

Spill-Over Effects

Second, arguments both for and against a spill-over effect from parties' behavior in campaigns to their behavior beyond elections can be made. Irrespective of whether the determinants might be the same, the existence of negative party communication in the post-electoral arena—or simply beyond campaigns—might be explained by a spill-over effect from the electoral logic. First, I identify a "coherence mechanism" that occurs within parties, and addresses both voters and party members. Confronted with dealignment of voters and declining partisanship in Western democracies, parties need to find ways to mitigate these challenges: S. W. Nielsen and Larsen (2014) argue that parties have incentives to promote a coherent image that raises trust in their supporters' minds. Taking this approach further, I argue that parties that already cultivated a brand as attacking other parties, or refraining from attacking, will want to continue to show the same behavior in order to appear reliable to their voters, and their members. Second, a "relational mechanism" is at work between parties (or their party leaders, respectively) that operates on the personal level: On an individual level, switching from competitors to collaborators takes effort. Individual political actors might be unable to overcome being attacked by their opponents, or are unwilling to cooperate after being called names, or having their integrity questioned by other political actors.

Against the existence of such a spill-over effect speaks the professionalization of politics (Borchert & Zeiss, 2003). This mechanism operates on the individual level and highlights the understanding political actors have of their profession and of their role as politicians. The understanding of politics as an occupation points towards professionalism, and the notion that certain campaign tactics can be forgotten as they were an expected "part of the game" without actually harming inter-personal relationships. With regards to roles, Strøm (1997, 2012) highlights that politicians make strategic decisions about how to pursue their goals that depend on the institutional context they are in. This implies that politicians can change their behavior from vote-seeking in

a logic of competition to office- or policy-seeking in a logic of cooperation if need be. Thus, politicians could be able to adapt to a different way of interacting with their opponents in parliament than in campaigns, as the institutional environment of the legislature requires broader alliances for laws to pass.

In order to address which of these competing explanations can shed light on parties' behavior, I propose to investigate the possibility of a connection correlationally first.

Nevertheless, I expect this spill-over effect to go from the election campaign to the post-electoral arena for three reasons. First, most of the existing literature conceptualizes negative campaigning as a vote-seeking strategy. Thus, this strategy is most likely going to be prevalent in an institutional setting that incentivizes vote-seeking strategies. In elections, parties usually aim at receiving as many votes as they can, in order to pursue their remaining goals in the form of office or policy after votes have been cast, as votes are instrumental at this stage. Second, elections are a competitive environment per definition. There are institutional incentives to engage in behavior that betters one's own standing at the cost of one's competitors. Thus, negative campaigning is more likely to occur in such an environment than in a more cooperative setting such as parliament. Third, the way parties garner media attention is another reason why negative party communication is much more likely to occur in election campaigns first, and then disseminate to the post-electoral arena: As negative news has been shown to receive more media attention, it is most likely going to be an effective strategy in institutional settings in which media attention is important. Election campaigns are the most likely case in which media attention can benefit parties, thus making it more likely for parties to engage in negative party communication. These three reasons show that it is much more likely for negative party communication to occur in election campaigns first, and then spill over into parties' behavior after election campaigns are over.

Examples of the Post-Electoral Arena

Thirdly, the question about where to look for occurrences and effects of negative communication remains. This ties back to the research question and clarifies what "politics after elections" that I explicitly mention there are: I propose two examples of post-electoral cooperation between parties as the most likely cases in which negative party communication can resurface or show consequences: Parliamentary speech and coalition formation. Both are instances of interactions between parties that are direct outcomes of electoral competition in parliamentary systems: Both the composition of the legislature, and that of government, depend on majorities determined by the electoral outcome.

In the elected legislature, parties are engaging with each other while needing to produce legislative output. Parties behaving similarly as they do in elections – i.e. if they attack the same opponents, or take the proximity of elections into account in the same way before engaging in negative campaigning – would therefore point towards common determinants of negative party communication in election campaigns and post-electoral arenas, or a spill-over from campaigns beyond elections. On the other hand, the absence of that evidence would suggest that parties are strategic actors in the way that they are able to adapt which goal they pursue depending on which institutional context they operate in. Turning to the second example of post-electoral interaction, I focus in coalition formation. As I argued above, in parliamentary democracies, coalition formation is directly dependant on election results. Thus, if the proposed connection between the electoral and the post-electoral arena exists, the duration of coalition formation processes might be affected by campaign dynamics. In coalition formation processes parties are bargaining about who gets what, and thus determine power balances in the next executive. How long that bargaining process takes can serve as an indicator of perceived efficiency of the political system for voters, and indicate (lack of) trust between government parties. If, on the other hand, the spill-over effect does not exist, the level of negative communication between coalition partners should not hinder their cooperation, as all involved parties are focused on a new goal: gaining office.

Both parliamentary speech and coalition formation are examples of parties' post-electoral interactions that are caused by the election results. They are direct consequences of campaigns that I have chosen as cases to investigate if the connection between the election campaign and the post-electoral arena. Thus, they are both instances in which I propose negativity could either continue to be part of parties' mode of communication, or impact the workings of the political system. However, I also see them as two fundamentally different examples of post-electoral elections. Given the different goals that govern parties' behaviour in each of the cases I focus on – vote-seeking behavior in election campaigns, cooperation on policy output and position taking in parliamentary speech, the goal of gaining office in coalition formation processes – the effects of negativity in campaigns might not be uniform. If the results show that the proposed connection exists in one case, but not in the other, they still shed important light on the conditionalities surrounding the connection between election campaigns and the post-electoral arena.

2.2.3. Negative Party Communication in Parliamentary Speech

I have argued above that there might be tension between electoral goals of parties—i.e. the result of their vote-seeking behavior—and post-electoral goals of parties—i.e. their office- or policy seeking behavior.

What are then the independent effects of negative campaigning on negative party communication in parliament, or parliamentary negativity more specifically? I argue that both campaign negativity on the level of the political system as well as on the level of the political party influences discourse in parliament. Again, parties want to show voters that they are reliable actors, and do not betray the image they cultivated in their campaigns. Thus, parties that have engaged in negative campaigns will also engage in a more negative way of conducting parliamentary speech.

If negative campaigning and parliamentary negativity are indeed two sides of the same coin and both examples of negative party communication, the determinants of negative campaigning determinants should also be determinants of parliamentary negativity. This does not necessarily entail that negative communication in campaigns spills over into the parliamentary arena, but that negative communication in both arenas is driven by the same factors.

Again, similarly to the electoral arena, I argue those determinants operate on three distinct levels—that of the level of the political system, the political party, and the institution.

Additionally, I argue that due to the mediatization of politics and the rise of social media the parliamentary arena (Leston-Bandeira, 2007) is part of an ongoing campaign. This means that parties behave similar to the way they would in the electoral context, although the magnitude is affected by the institutional context they are in. The strength of the effect of the ongoing campaign is stronger the closer elections are, so negativity should, for example, increase towards the end of the legislative term.

An institutional feature of parliament that is likely to influence parliamentary negativity is the institutionalization of speech (Proksch & Slapin, 2012; Döring, 1995). In parliamentary speech, some speech serves the primary purpose of producing policy (i.e. legislative speech): This is speech that is directly connected to a bill. On the other hand, there are certain parliamentary instruments that do not have to result in actual laws, such as parliamentary questions, interpellations and other non-legislative speech. This can be an arena for parties to demonstrate alliances and criticize other parties, without jeopardizing actual policy outcomes. I therefore expect legislative speech to be

more constrained with regards to its outcome and potentially less prone to be subject to the use of negative communication than non-legislative speech.

2.2.4. Negative Party Communication and Coalition Formation

After theorizing about how negative party communication in parliamentary speech might have the same determinants as negative party communication in campaigns, another question is left to answer: The question if, and how, negative party communication in campaigns impacts coalition formation processes. Here, I view coalition formation as a second case of post-electoral interaction with parties, with parliamentary speech being the first case. Whereas I argued that parliamentary speech might be governed by the same vote-seeking incentives as electoral campaigns, coalition formation matters to parties for other reasons than maximizing their vote (share). In government formation processes the goal is to gain office, and in coalition formation processes the goal is to gain as much influence over different jurisdiction as the coalition partners can agree to (Sagarzazu & Klüver, 2015). Thus, office-oriented behavior might take over in these times, but is still dependant on parties' past behavior in election campaigns (Tavits, 2008).

Generally, the duration of coalition formation is an overlooked topic, research usually focuses on either portfolio allocation and the question of who gets what, or the survival of existing coalitions (notable exceptions include Diermeier and van Roozendaal (1998), L. Martin and Vanberg (2003), Golder (2010) and Ecker and Meyer (2015)). However, how long it takes to form a government is important for several reasons: Firstly, it may impact a given government's legitimacy and voters' perception of the political system as a whole (Conrad & Golder, 2010; L. Martin & Vanberg, 2003). There is evidence that delay in government formation influences macroeconomic indicators (Bernhard & Leblang, 2002; Leblang & Mukherjee, 2005; Bernhard & Leblang, 2006). Furthermore, caretaker governments, meaning governments that have formally resigned after an election but are responsible running business until a new government can formally be inaugurated, have limited powers: Most importantly they are not allowed to take major policy initiatives, which may result in frustration among the electorate (Golder, 2010). Secondly, how long the formation process takes has been shown to have implications for other factors such as government stability and survival (King, Alt, Burns, & Laver, 1990; M. Laver & Schofield, 1990; Strom, 1985; Warwick, 1994). In this line of thought, the formation process is seen as an first glimpse of how well future cooperation will work.

One way to think about what impact negative party communication can have on coalition governments is to address the duration of the government formation process: How does negative party communication influence the amount of time needed to form a new government (Golder, 2010)? This process can be substantially harder after an intense period of attack behaviour during the election campaign.

Although the relationship between negative communication and subsequent coalition formation processes has not been tested before, research that is concerned with negative communication in multi-party systems hints at the importance of this link. Most strikingly, it matters to parties' decisions on whom to attack (Elmelund-Præstekær, 2008; Walter & van der Brug, 2013; Walter et al., 2014). Dolezal et al. (2016) argue that "a party's goal then may not simply be to maximize its vote share but rather to maximize its bargaining power in postelection negotiations and therefore to maximize the number of potential viable coalition governments that it is part of." Another way the coalition potential matters in multi-party systems is the assumption that in multi party systems there is a lower level of negative campaigning in general because parties do not want to harm their coalition potentials (Ridout & Walter, 2013).

Turning to the exact mechanism behind this link, Nooy and Kleinnijenhuis (2015) argue that voters use parties' campaign statements as a proxy for parties' willingness to enter a coalition government together. Thus, statements that criticize opponents can be interpreted as reluctance to enter a coalition government, whereas supportive statements point in the opposite direction: "Attacks and support statements express affective relations between parties, which have a tendency to form consonant patterns, displaying reciprocity and polarisation especially when they are broadcasted in the media" (Nooy & Kleinnijenhuis, 2015, p.93). I argue that this, including parties' wish to present a coherent party brand (S. W. Nielsen & Larsen, 2014) and appear reliable to voters, means that negative communication between coalition partners negatively influences the length of coalition formation processes as parties need to spend time and resources on overcoming differences that were highlighted by attacks, but also to signal to voters that they are indeed taking said time and resources to manage previous disagreements.

Are some of the determinants of negative communication in campaigns determinants of the length of coalition formation processes as well? Here, in light of Damore (2002)'s argument that parties do not compete in a vacuum, I argue that two factors on the level of the political system matter, similarly to their role as determinants of negative communication in campaigns: the number of parties (i.e. the fragmentation of the political system) and the level of polarization (i.e. the ideological dispersion of these

parties). In line with research on coalition formation processes that highlights the role of bargaining complexity, I argue that both an increase in numbers of potential coalition partners and their ideological dispersion makes coalition formation harder, and ultimately more time consuming. The remaining ways of operationalizing bargaining complexity will be discussed in Chapter 7.

2.3. Conclusion

Negative party communication is at the intersection of various fields of studies, including political science and communication science, as well as non-academic discourses, and relevant in a multitude of political systems. The extensive amount of research on negative campaigning has shed light on many questions, such as whether negative campaigning has increased or how voters react to it. However, I argue that there are gaps in the existing research that my dissertation closes, both empirically and conceptually.

I have shown that previous research has been primarily focused on the electoral arena, both in terms of determinants of negative campaigning and in terms of consequences. I argue that in order to arrive at a more concise picture of the consequences of negative campaigning, consequences beyond the electoral arena—and beyond voters' behaviour and attitudes—matter. I have identified two instances of interactions between parties in the post-electoral arena—coalition formation and parliamentary speech—and argued that negative party communication in campaigns can have consequences for these interactions. Additionally, I have theorized how known determinants of negative campaigning on the system, party, and institutional levels can influence these interactions as well.

In order to address negative party communication—broadly speaking—in both the electoral and the post-electoral arenas, conceptual clarity of what negative party communication means beyond the electoral arena is needed. This will be the topic of the following chapters, thus adding to the literature by providing a one-dimensional conceptualization of negative party communication, and a fitting measurement strategy. Throughout the next two chapters I discuss how this conceptualization overlaps with the existing multidimensional understanding of negative campaigning. In order to empirically test the applicability of the framework I have proposed above, I will present three empirical chapters that investigate the determinants of negative party communication and the relationship between negative party communication and two examples of interaction between political parties—coalition formation and parliamentary speech—in a comparative setting.

3. Disentangling Dimensions of Negative Party Communication

In political science, negative party communication has mainly been on the table in the context of electoral competition and in the form of negative campaigning. There seems to be an intuitive understanding of what negative campaigning is. Popularized versions of that understanding make use of terms such as "smear campaign," "dirty campaigning," or "attack ads." However, the detailed definition is hard to pin down — Richardson (2001) even called negative campaigning a "suspect" category.

In the following chapter, I discuss multidimensional conceptualisations of negative party communication and explore their potential as offering a starting point to develop a one-dimensional concept of negative party communication. In order to do this, I will review the concept of negative party communication and show how previous research has conceptualized it as negative campaigning. I will argue that there is some debate about the exact meaning of the concept of negative party communication in existing literature, for two reasons: First, I point out that this is due to the fact that its multidimensionality is assumed implicitly but rarely discussed explicitly. Second, I argue that the confusion is partially rooted in how the conceptual discussion behind the concept of negative party communication in campaigns is intertwined with the more empirical discussion about the operationalization and measurement of negative party communication in campaigns. To address this problem, I present two separate chapters, and discuss the conceptual considerations first in this chapter, to then follow up on the measurement in the next chapter (Chapter 4).

In this chapter, I identify three distinct dimensions of existing conceptualisations of negative campaigning: *target*, *content* and *tone* and explore the possibility of focusing on only one dimension—tone. The dimension of target captures about whom a statement is made, usually distinguishing between self-referential statements and statements about other political actors. Content addresses what a statement is about, and captures whether a statement is about personal valence characteristics, such as honesty

and integrity, or political issues. Finally, the dimension of tone refers to how campaign communication is worded.

By clarifying these conceptual ambiguities I contribute to research on negative communication by providing a comparison of existing definitions and discussing explicitly in which instances different dimensions of the concept of negative communication are useful. I will then show how and to what extent a multidimensional concept of negative campaigning conceptually overlaps and aligns with a one-dimensional definition of negative party communication in campaigns that only focuses on the dimension of tone. I discuss how tone is preferable to target or content when developing a one-dimensional definition and clarify how and to what extent a one-dimensional definition based on tone captures the multidimensional understanding of negative party campaigning in the literature. I conclude that while a one-dimensional conceptualization broaden the concept it does have merits for studying negative party communication: focusing on tone aligns well with the purpose of this dissertation which is to investigate negative party communication in both the electoral arena and beyond, and to do this comparatively and across multiple languages in a time efficient manner. Additionally, this also feeds into the choice of measurement strategy I propose in Chapter 4: This allows me to apply a coherent framework of negative party communication to different points in the electoral cycle, and propose a cheap and effective method of measuring tone through sentiment analysis, which results in a continuous measure of negativity. I also discuss the possibility of using the remaining dimensions of target and content in a one-dimensional definition, and provide theoretical arguments for why they are less well suited for this task.

3.1. Negative Party Communication in Campaigns: Multidimensional Conceptualizations

Even though extensive research on negative party communication exists in the form of research on negative campaigning, and this research has even engaged in clarifying the concept, there still remains some debate about what negative campaigning specifically is. I argue that this is mainly due to the fact that most definitions are making implicit assumptions about the multidimensionality of the concept, but fail to explicitly point out these dimensions. This becomes especially apparent when different ways of operationalization are taken into account, where multiple dimensions become apparent that are not necessarily part of the corresponding theoretical definition of negative campaigning. In the following section, I will refer to negative campaigning instead of

negative party communication in campaigns as I am explicitly referencing the literature that is engaged with negative campaigning and want to distinguish between the multi-dimensional and one-dimensional understanding of negative campaigning and negative party communication. I introduce two readings of how to cluster existing work on the concept of negative campaigning. First, I show that existing explanations can be categorized according to their inclusion of the consequences of negative campaigning into the concept itself. This corresponds to the distinction between the so-called directional and an evaluative definition of negative campaigning. Then I show that the universe of directional definitions is far from homogeneous but different researchers highlight different dimensions, or combinations thereof.

One established way to conceptualize negative campaigning is to distinguish between directional and evaluative definitions of negative campaigning. In the evaluative understanding, the consequences of negative campaigning are its defining feature. In the directional understanding negative campaigning is often defined with regards to its goal: "Negative campaigns are designed, first and foremost, to diminish positive affect for their target, the opposing candidate" (Lau et al., 2007) or similarly as "a strategy used to win voters by criticizing one's opponent" (Walter et al., 2014). Decreasing an opponent's electoral success could be done both by demobilizing their voters, or by convincing those voters to turn out for oneself. Thus, negative campaigning is implicitly contrasted to strategies that are designed to rally one's own supporters behind one's own flag: "...talking about the opponent — the (deficient) nature of his or her programs, accomplishments, qualifications, associates, and so on. Positive campaigning is just the opposite: talking about one's own accomplishments, qualifications, programs, etc. By this literal definition, we intend to distinguish between negative campaigning and unfair campaigning" (Lau & Pomper, 2001, p.73).

This last part of Lau and Pomper's (2001) argument hints at an important distinction: They argue that their conceptualization of negative campaigning does not shed light on the (perceived) fairness of that campaign strategy, i.e. does not contain a normative judgement. This normative element is what distinguishes the directional definition of negative campaigning — which is more common — from the evaluative definition used by Jamieson, Waldman, and Sherr (2000) or Kamber (1997). In the evaluative definition, negative campaigning is viewed as an inherently harmful strategy that poisons politics (Jamieson, 1993; Kamber, 1997; Mayer, 1996). The distinction between a directional and an evaluative understanding not only occurs for theoretical reasons, but practical ones as well: A directional definition is much easier to operationalize than an evaluative definition, as it does not require researchers to engage in

normative judgements about the consequences of campaigning (Nai & Walter, 2015). Judging what is fair, unfair, honest, and dishonest is subject to subjective interpretation and experiences, thus likely a biased judgement. Additionally I want to point out that an evaluative definition conflates the empirical consequences of negative campaigning with its definition.

However, as a large amount of research has shown, the consequences of negative campaigning are inconclusive at worst, and highly context dependent – who decides to go how negative, when and where – at best. Therefore, I argue that such an evaluative understanding of negative campaigning cannot serve as a point of departure for the development of a more generalizable understanding of negativity: Defining an empirical phenomenon by only taking into account a subset of its possible consequences produces blind spots. The alternative is a directional definition that is the basis for the majority of recent research and draws explicitly on Geer (2006). However, this definitions highlights a central dilemma of research of negative campaigning: The question if all campaigning about opponents is necessarily negative, or if negative campaigning has another defining characteristic. An example illustrates this concern: In Lau and Pomper’s understanding “[negative campaigning] only means talking about the opponent” (Lau & Pomper, 2001). This carries the assumption that all talk about opponents is negative. This dilemma concerning heterogeneity of negative messages has received attention recently (Haselmayer, 2019).

The focus on the directional definition in existing literature therefore is borne out of pragmatic reasons: to avoid normative judgements by researchers (Nai & Sciarini, 2015) and because it is seemingly easy to operationalize. However, as I have shown above, it remains uncertain how that definition is able to distinguish between normal political conflict and actual negativity. Thus, a purely directional understanding is insufficient to define negative party communication to begin with, and negativity to continue with. However, upon closer inspection of existing conceptualizations it becomes evident that directional definitions are more heterogeneous than they appear by focusing on different subdimensions of the concept.

Even if we focus on the directional definition of negative campaigning, there is still uncertainty over what it actually looks like. This is due to the multidimensional nature of campaigning itself, and consequently, of negative campaigning. I argue that campaigns consist of three main dimensions—what is being said (content) about whom (target) and how (tone). In this general framework, negative campaigning refers to campaign statements referring to an opponent’s (target) character trait or issue positions (content) in a disparaging way (tone).

However, as Table 3.1 shows not all definitions include all three dimensions: It provides an overview of some of the definitions used in the existing literature. I have selected some of the over 60 sources on which I base my literature review in Chapter 2 to showcase the variance in definitions of negative campaigning. The selection of sources and definitions in the table is based on literature that focuses on negative campaigning in the United States and Europe, and shows the variety of concepts that are investigated—from attack advertisements in the case of (Ansolabehere et al., 1994) to incivility (Brooks & Geer, 2007) to negative campaigning. The central question in the definition of negative campaigning is whether all campaigning that focuses on an opponent is negative, or only a certain type of campaigning about opponents qualifies as negative. In the beginning of this chapter, I asked how negative campaigning can be distinguished from other types of conflict that are (and according to some accounts, ought to be) present in politics.

Table 3.1 also contains examples of which dimensions are addressed in different definitions. Even though the differences might be attributed to minimal differences in wording, I want to point out that these minimal differences have important implications for the precise definition of negative campaigning. For example, both Brooks and Geer’s and Damore’s understanding of negative campaigning focus exclusively on the target, without mentioning the content of statements, or the manner they are delivered in.

The most obvious and easily captured dimension in this construct is the target. This is also the dimension that is present in all of the examples above. This dimension is present from the start, even if negative campaigning is defined only with regard to its goal — diminishing support for an opponent. It is also central to both the directional and the evaluative definitions of negative campaigning I have presented in the previous section. However, if we were to focus only on the target and use “negative” synonymously with “focused on the opponent” (Damore, 2002; Brooks & Geer, 2007), we run into the same conundrum as a purely directional definition of negative campaigning: Is all campaigning that targets the opponent negative? This concern is especially valid in multi-party systems that might hinge on post-electoral coalitions, as Nooy and Kleinnijenhuis (2015) point out: “Political actors [can] publicly express positivity (support) or negativity (attack) concerning their peers.” In order to solve this problem, other dimensions come into play.

The second dimension that matters to campaigning is the content of messages. Skaperdas and Grofman (1995) refer to attacking the opposing candidate personally, the issues, or the party. Similarly, Lau and Pomper (2001) state that campaigning can

Table 3.1.: Overview over definitions of Negative Campaigning

Dimensions	Author(s)	Definition
Target	Brooks and Geer (2007)	During any campaign, candidates choose to focus on their own accomplishments (i.e., delivering a positive message) or their <i>opponents' failures</i> (i.e., delivering a negative message), or some combination thereof (p.2).
	Damore (2002)	Positive messages highlight the candidate producing the advertisement, while negative messages <i>focus on the opposition</i> (p.670).
	Lau and Pomper (2001)	We use a simple definition of negative campaigning. It only means <i>talking about the opponent</i> - the (deficient) nature of his or her programs, accomplishments, qualifications, associates, and so on. Positive campaigning is just the opposite: talking about one's own accomplishments, qualifications, programs, etc. By this literal definition, we intend to distinguish between negative campaigning and unfair campaigning (p.73).

Continued on next page

Dimensions	Author(s)	Definition
Target x Tone	Ansolahehere et al. (1994)	More often than not, candidates criticize, discredit, or belittle their opponents -rather than promoting their own ideas and programs (p.829).
	Geer (2006)	Negativity is any <i>criticism</i> leveled by one candidate against <i>another</i> during a campaign (p 23).
Target x Tone x Content	Nai and Sciarini (2015)	Negative campaigning broadly refers to the act of <i>attacking</i> the <i>opponent</i> on his or her program, values, record, or character instead of advocating his or her own program, values, record, or character (p.2).
	Walter and van der Eijk (2019)	We subscribe to the most common, and generally accepted definition in the literature, that specifies negative campaigning as <i>attacking</i> one's political opponent(s) based on their <i>character, abilities, accomplishments, and policy stands</i> .

be about "programs, accomplishments, qualifications, associates" of parties. W. Benoit (2015) distinguishes between messages about issues and personality traits, similarly to Brooks and Geer (2007), who distinguish between campaigning that focuses on personal characteristics and issue-based appeals. Thus the dimension of content, or what a campaign statement is about, captures the range of statements from being about positions on issues to addressing valence characteristics of both parties and candidates (Stone & Simas, 2010). These valence characteristics refer to personal character attributes, such as honesty, and integrity. It is the dimension of content where a large mismatch between the discussion of the definition of negative party communication and its measurement becomes apparent: Both its poles—positions on one hand, valence characteristics on the other hand—are mentioned in the conceptual discussion in most literature and usually both subsumed under negative party communication as for example Nai and Sciarini (2015) in Table 3.1 shows: "program, values, record, or character" are all mentioned as content that parties can be attacked on. However, the operationalization often differs and only includes one pole—valence characteristics, as I will show in Chapter 4 in case of the Comparative Campaign Dataset. Addressing this potential mismatch between the concept of negative party communication and its operationalization is one of the central contributions of this thesis.

Taking the first two dimensions together, there are four possibilities for parties and candidates on how to communicate: They can address their own positions on various policy issues, they can address their opponent's positions, they can choose to address their own valence characteristics, or their opponents'.

However, there is another dimension parties can alter in their communication: the dimension of tone, i.e. how negatively or positively a statement is delivered. This dimension is central to definitions of negative campaigning, but also relevant to campaigning in general. Previous research often implicitly references this dimension by referring to negative campaigning as the act of criticizing an opponent, attacking an opponent, discrediting, or belittling an opponent. However, it is not made explicit what the act of criticizing an opponent actually entails, or how to recognize it. I argue that implicitly, this refers to the way messages are transported, and which words or images are used. Note that the term "tone" is used ambiguously in research on negative campaigning. Some studies refer to the tone of a political campaign as the ratio of negative to positive campaigning (Valli & Nai, 2020), whereas I use tone and tonality to describe the sentiment of statements. Others use tone interchangeably with target, subscribing to a directional understanding of negativity and implying that negative statements are statements about opponents, and, most importantly, vice versa (Brooks & Geer, 2007).

I use the term "tone" to refer to the tonality or the sentiment of campaign statements, thus avoiding the tautological argument that conflates the dimensions of target and tonality.

I have argued for the existence of three distinct dimensions that are part of existing definitions of negative campaigning. Now, I will provide arguments and visualisations how these dimensions align, and how the concepts of positional competition, negative campaigning, and negative party communication fit into the space these dimensions build.

Figure 3.1 shows a visualization of political competition in a three dimensional space. It shows that talking negatively about opponents can be understood as part of the political game, if it is confined to positional arguments. Disagreement with regard to policy positions can even be expressed by negative tone. Examples herefore would be phrases such as 'My opponent's taxation policy is outright stupid and dangerous'. Here, by using negative words a strong disagreement in positional terms is expressed. I argue that it is to be expected that political parties disagree with regards to policy positions, even when this disagreement is expressed via negative tone. Simultaneously, an opponent's policy position could be referenced positively: Even disagreement on policy positions can be expressed via positive tone, for example when both parties agree on the direction of policy change, but disagree on the technicalities of the measures to achieve that change.

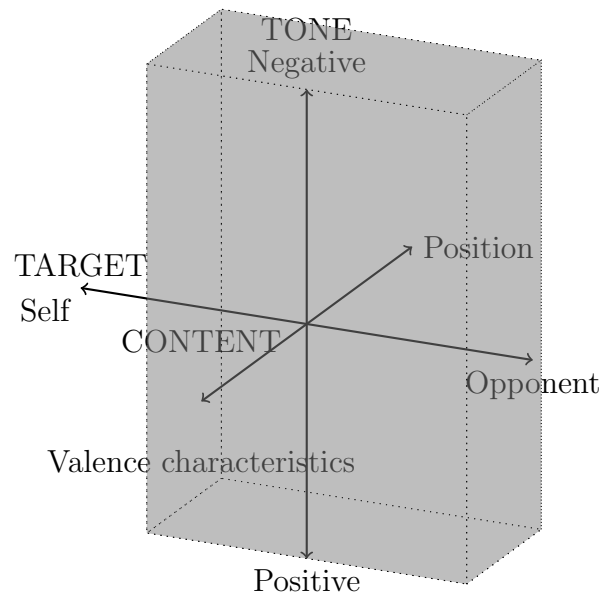


Figure 3.1.: Schematic illustration: Positional competition in a multidimensional conceptualisation of campaigning

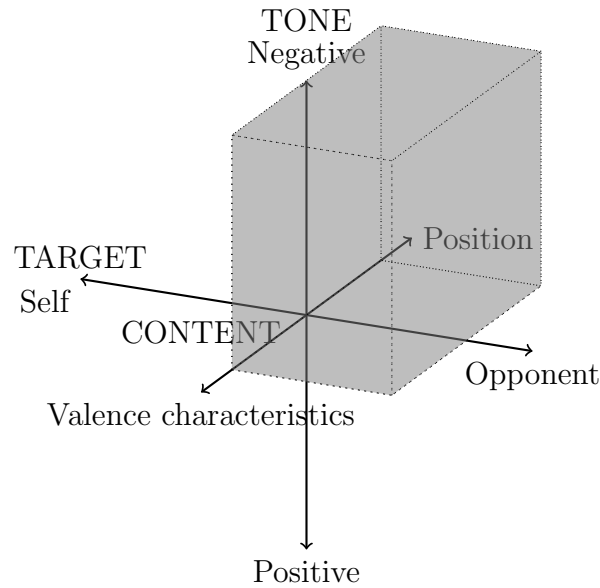


Figure 3.2.: Schematic illustration: Negative campaigning in a multidimensional conceptualization of campaigning

Going beyond differences in policy positions, Figure 3.2 then depicts where I locate most of the existing definitions of negative campaigning: in a part of the space that captures both the directional element of negative campaigning by centering on communication about opponents, but by allowing criticism of both positional differences and valence judgements to enter the equation. In this figure, valence characteristics can both be connected to issues, but also independent from them.

3.2. Exploring the Dimension of Tone: Conceptualizing Negative Party Communication

When the goal is to have a theoretical concept—negative party communication in this case—and a measure that align well with each other, there are practical challenges to a multidimensional concept, and thus, a multidimensional measurement. In the following section, how a one-dimensional conceptualization of negative party communication can be an alternative way to study negative party communication is explored. I suggest that this alternative is fruitful option under specific circumstances that relate to the scale of the research question: If it is not possible to measure all three dimensions because of the resources multi-lingual comparative studies require, measuring one dimension is a time-efficient method that nevertheless requires a well-aligned theoretical concept that relies on the same single dimension.

I have shown that there are three identifiable dimensions of campaigning that can be summarized by pointing out what is being said, about whom, and how. This corresponds to the dimensions of content, which distinguishes between statements about issues or personality traits; target, which specifies whether the statement is about one self or about the sending actor, or another actor; and tone, which corresponds to the sentiment of a statement. In a next step, I now discuss how a one dimensional conceptualization of negative party communication—that only encompasses tone—looks like, which theoretical merits it has, and how it relates to a multidimensional conceptualization of negative campaigning. I will build on these arguments in Chapter 4 where I present a sentiment-based measure. I will show that if the aim is to focus on one dimension only, the dimension of tone indeed captures negative party communication more precisely than target or content.

Moving from a multidimensional conceptualization to a one-dimensional conceptualization necessarily entails the selection of one of the underlying dimensions. Of the three dimensions that exist in negative campaigning, I argue that the dimension of tone—compared to target or content—captures most of the concept meaningfully, and thus is the dimension to focus on for negative party communication. Most strikingly, when ignoring the adjective "negative" in the underlying multidimensional concept of negative campaigning, the analytical category would be reduced to mere "campaigning" and loses any precision.

There are additional reasons why the other dimensions do not discriminate as well between negative party communication and non-negative party communication: The dimension of content distinguishes between positional statements and valence statements, which is studied by research on issue competition. The dimension of content distinguishes between positional statements and valence statements, and thus between talking about policy issues or candidates' qualities. While talking about candidates' qualities is indeed more likely to relate to negative party communication it is also a well-known fact that candidates spent time highlighting their own qualities and virtues, which is indeed positive party communication. Therefore using content as the only dimension to capture negative party communication will certainly capture positive party communication as well.

The dimension of target would simply capture if statements are self-referential or about other parties.¹ Equating this dimension to negative party communication can be

¹This dichotomous characterization of target reflects the prominent understanding of the target of campaigning in the existing literature. However, parties do not necessarily need to address anyone—be it themselves, or an opponent—in their campaign communication. Thus, there can also be statements without a target, about policy issues in general. This

an appropriate approximation in two-party-systems, and campaign contexts, but faces limitations in multi-party systems and institutional settings that emphasize cooperation rather than competition. Especially the focus on the dimension of target in early definitions of negative campaigning builds on the empirical reality of the American two-party system and is not unequivocally applicable to European multi-party systems. The reason is that in multi-party system the need for coalitions after elections complicates how parties talk about other parties during elections: Not all communication about other parties is negative, because parties can signal coalition preferences to voters. Thus, neither of these two dimensions on their own would be able to define negative party communication in line with existing definitions of negative campaigning. Either of these dimensions on their own would also capture the exact opposite of negative party communication by including communication referring to a party's own or their opponents merits.

Tone is also associated with other concepts, both in the field of political science, and others: The concepts of contest, conflict and disagreement are central to democracy and, as has been argued, are needed for a well-functioning democratic system (Mutz, 2007; Geer, 2006). Our intuition of what is negative and what is positive can be explained by evolutionary psychology: Psychological research indicates that humans process negative information faster and that it factors into judgements more heavily than positive information (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001; Ito, Larsen, Smith, & Cacioppo, 1998; Rozin & Royzman, 2001; Soroka, 2014). This bias not only applies to political opinion formation, but exists in all situations in which humans are confronted with new information (Vaish, Grossmann, & Woodward, 2008). The explanation for the existence of this bias lies in evolution: Due to this bias, humans were able to learn new skills and meet unexpected situations while navigating potentially harmful situations accordingly (Cacioppo, Gardner, & Berntson, 1999; Cacioppo & Berntson, 1999).

Negativity thus is a concept that seems to be straightforward to define — as humans, we have some sense of what the word *negative* means, and which concepts are associated

expands the dichotomous understanding of target to include a category of party communication that does not directly address an actor, which is reflected in the three dimensional nature of Figures 3.2: The dimension of target spans between the two poles of communication directed at one-self and the opponent, but can also include statements that do not contain any target. This is especially relevant for the suggestion to choose tone as the defining dimension if a one-dimensional definition and operationalisation is needed: Capturing negative sentiment of these non-referential statements risks increasing the number of false positives when the goal is to measure negative party communication. This will be discussed further in Section 4.4 in Chapter 4.

with it. Often, there is a normative judgement associated with attaching the label "negative" to an action, a consequence, or behavior. This concept of negativity has caught the attention of multiple research fields - for example communication science, psychology, and linguistics.

First, Figure 3.3 shows how I map this one-dimensional understanding of negativity as tone of statements onto the three-dimensional space generated by the dimensions of tone, content, and target. It shows that theoretically, it both encompasses the space of positional issue competition that was shown in Figure 3.1, and that of negative campaigning as shown in Figure 3.2. Additionally, it is evident that this one-dimensional definition of negative party communication incorporates more than either of these existing conceptualizations of electoral competition: It allows political actors - theoretically - to engage in negativity towards themselves. I argue that even in the light of this possibility focusing on tone is the most theoretically sound one-dimensional definition of negative party communication, especially because this is unlikely to happen from an empirical point of view. Second, it allows actors to talk negatively about issues in communication that is not directed at themselves, or other actors, but targeting a political issue or a non-party actor. As such negative party communication entails more than negative party campaigning, but in contrast to content or target, it does not capture anything directly contradicting negative party campaigning by including positive references: Figure 3.2 also shows that per definition, positive statements are not included in the definition, as the grey box does not stretch further down towards the positive pole of the axis labelled as tone.

Which other dimensions of campaigning are there, that I have not explicitly addresses in the visualizations of Figures 3.1 to 3.3? One example is incivility. Previous work on incivility is one of the few examples that have explicitly mentioned the multidimensionality of negative campaigning, often in an experimental context. In order to measure voters' perceptions of fairness, information value, and importance of campaign messages, Brooks and Geer (2007) present respondents with experimentally varied messages along three dimensions: tone (negative vs. positive), focus (issue vs. trait) and civility. I have argued above that by using both the word "tone" for the target, and using "negative" and "opponent focused" equivalently, the authors conflate two separate concepts. However, more importantly, it is worth looking further into their conceptualization of incivility: "All positive statements are, by definition, 'civil,' but among negative messages, there is variation." I argue that this formulation points to the fact that incivility can be understood as an extreme form of negative party communication that is expressed by extremely rude—thus extremely negative—words. Therefore,

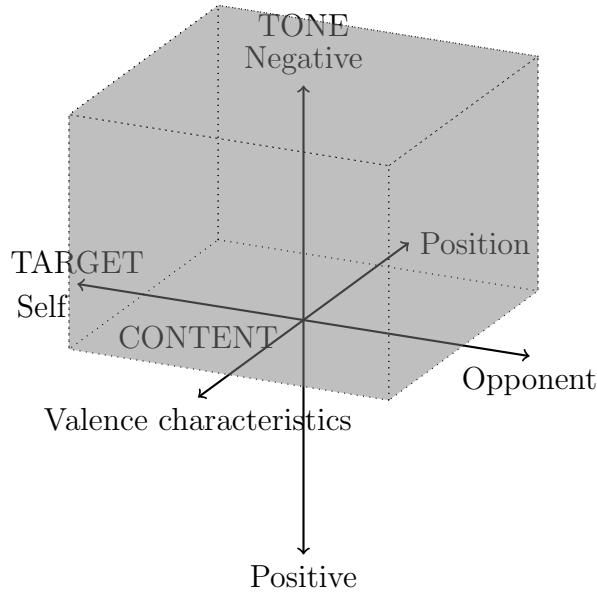


Figure 3.3.: Schematic illustration: Negative party communication in a multidimensional conceptualization of campaigning

the tonality or sentiment of statements is the focal point, and the question of how exactly statements are worded, which corresponds to the understanding of negative party communication I presented above. Another example of the explicit usage of multiple dimensions in conceptualizing negative campaigning uses tone, content (or in their terminology, "focus") and (in)civility to categorize campaigning (Hopmann et al., 2017) and finds that civil, policy-focused statements have a positive impact on voters, while person-focused or uncivil statements do not. Their dimension of "tone" is again what I have identified as the dimension of "target" above (thus using the words "negative" and "targeted at an opponent" interchangeably), but also includes some elements of the dimension of tonality by referring to the act of praising one self: "[A] positive message is seen as a message focused on the sender of the message, i.e. an appraisal of the self" (Hopmann et al., 2017, p.286).

More generally speaking, some researchers have argued that campaign communication can contain a separate dimension of (in)civility (Abou-Chadi, Green-Pedersen, & Mortensen, 2019; Brooks & Geer, 2007; Dodd & Schraufnagel, 2012; Frimer & Skitka, 2018; Hopmann et al., 2017; Mutz & Reeves, 2005; Schumacher, de Vries, & Vis, 2013; Stubager, 2017; York, 2013). However, it is unclear whether existing research sees incivility as an (extreme) example of negative party communication, or as a separate concept. Arguments for the former can be made with regard to the formal definition of incivility as "adding inflammatory comments that add little in the way of substance to the discussion" (Brooks & Geer, 2007), while others understand incivility as a con-

cept distinct from negative campaigning (Frimer & Skitka, 2018). In the remainder of this dissertation, I understand incivility as a special case of negativity in campaigns and other political rhetoric, thus being captured by the tonality of statements, and speeches.

A second dimension I have not explicitly addressed is that of personalization (Karvonen, 2010), i.e. whether the focus on campaigning lies on the party or on the individual candidate. I argue that even though personalization can be a relevant dimension in campaign communication, and might be an important driver of negative communication in campaigning, the distinction between valence characteristics and positions already captures a lot of these dynamics in multi-party systems.

It is crucial to keep in mind that negative party communication defined when it is defined as the tone of statements made by political parties or their representatives is not the same as a multidimensional definition of negative party campaigning, nor will it empirically capture the exact same phenomena. As previously discussed, reducing the theoretical concept from three dimensions to one dimension is consequential theoretically but still beneficial for comparative research. I find that tone is the best single dimension to capture negative party communication. A one-dimensional conceptualization of negative party communication has theoretical features that make it useful for answering the main research question of this thesis. In order to conceptualize negative party communication—first in campaigns, and to arrive at a one-dimensional definition of negative campaigning specifically, then in general—I propose that one of these dimensions is the core dimension of the concept: the dimension of tone. This dimension focuses on the tone, or sentiment, that is carried by words that are used.

This understanding draws on claims made by existing research such as Walter and Vliegenthart (2010), who argue that "negative appeals are made implicitly through the tone in which something is said or the combination of text and visuals". This one-dimensional definition of negative party communication in campaigns allows to distinguish between negative and positive campaigning most clearly, compared to either target or content. The directional element of many definitions that automatically understands campaigning about opponents as negative campaigning can only make sense in the electoral context in a two-party system, but fails to discriminate between negative and positive (campaign) statements in a multi-party system, or outside the electoral campaign.

Consequently, I argue that tone is the dimension best applicable to a one-dimensional understanding of negative party communication. Defining negative party communication as communication that uses negative words is applicable in both election cam-

paings, and beyond. This definition therefore also goes beyond campaigning because the remaining dimensions content and target either do not discriminate between positivity and negativity or are empirical correlates of the campaign situation the original concept of negative campaigning is most often applied in.

3.3. The Way Forward

In order to study negative party communication in campaigns and beyond, I suggested to start by exploring existing definitions by zooming in on the multidimensionality of the concept of negative campaigning. By clarifying the understanding of the multidimensionality of the concept I showcase the relevance of each dimension, and then provide theoretical arguments why tone is the most suitable dimension if a one-dimensional conceptualization is needed. I have argued that the dimension of tone captures the most central part of the concept of negative campaigning, if we choose to focus on one dimension.

Additionally, there is a theoretical and empirical advantage to using this proposed definition of negative party communication as negativity transported by the tone of statements. The focus on only one dimension of negative party communication—tone—allows for a more fine-grained understanding of negativity that moves beyond a simple dichotomy of negative as opposed to positive by allowing for a continuous understanding of degrees of negativity on the level of the unit of observation. This speaks to existing research that points towards the importance of intensity of negativity (Finkel & Geer, 1998). This also points to a more recently made point about the measurement of negativity used by Haselmayer and Jenny (2018), who use a graded measure of negativity to not only determine which parties are communicating negatively, but to capture the intensity of negative party communication as well.

How does the proposed conceptualization of negative party communication relate to a multidimensional conceptualization of negative campaigning? As I have discussed, the conceptualization of negative party communication as negative tone focuses on one sub-dimensions of the concept of negative campaigning—tone. Thus, it can be understood as narrowing the concept down. However, when looking at the figures it is evident that practically speaking, the concept is broadened. Why is it then advisable to follow my concept of tone? I have already argued that this is a way negative party communication can be understood irrespective of the context it appears in, be it in campaigns or beyond campaigns. Additionally, in order to measure negative party communication via tone

sentiment analysis lends itself as a method, that captures exactly the most useful single dimension of tone.

While computer assisted methods such as sentiment analysis are not the only way to measure tone, they are fast, and do not require labor-intensive training of coders. What are the costs of using negative sentiment as a measure though, what do we lose if we focus on just tone, but ignore the target or the content? Another central question is if a measure based on sentiment will only capture negative party communication between political actors - or communication about negatively charged topics. I will address these concerns directly in the following Chapter 4 by investigating in how many false positives a sentiment-based measure of negative party communication results.

To sum up, by using the literature on negative campaigning as a point of departure, I have shed light on how a multidimensional concept of negative campaigning-encompassing tone, content, and target-and a one-dimensional concept of negative party communication that focuses on (negative) tone exclusively are related. This rests on the assumption that a one-dimensional measure is more easily obtained in circumstances that require to analyse large amounts of data time-efficiently, thus calling for a well-aligned one-dimensional conceptualization of negative party communication. Moving forward, the need for an adequate operationalization and measurement of the one-dimensional concept arises, which will be the focus of the next chapter. I propose a measure that satisfies various requirements of a measure of negative party communication for a comparative research approach. Those requirements include alignment with the conceptual discussion, and a time- and cost-efficient way of measurement that is applicable in different political contexts. An approach that satisfies these requirements is measuring tone through sentiment analysis, thus measuring negativity. This results in a measure that reflects the one-dimensional concept of negative party communication.

4. Measuring Negative Party Communication: A Question of Negative Tone

In the previous chapter, the discussion focused on how previous research has conceptualized negative party communication. In this chapter, the focus lies on the operationalization and measurement of negative party communication, both in elections and beyond. Not only the exact definition of negative campaigning has been debated in the literature, the measurement of negative campaigning has been at the centre of recent discussions as well. The multidimensional operationalization is most prevalent in existing studies on negative campaigning (Nai, 2018; Papp & Patkós, 2018; Walter & van der Eijk, 2019). Others (Rudkowsky et al., 2018; Haselmayer & Jenny, 2018) have used computer assisted methods to capture the tonality of campaigning, which is closely related to literature on emotive rhetoric in parliament (Rheault et al., 2016; Osabruegge, Hobolt, & Rodon, 2021; Kosmidis et al., 2018).

The main purpose of this chapter is to provide two validation strategies of a sentiment-based measure of negative party communication. The first validation strategy builds on a comparison of a sentiment-based measure that operationalizes a one-dimensional understanding of negative party communication to a multidimensional measure that operationalizes a multidimensional understanding of negative campaigning using campaign data. The second validation strategy applies a sentiment-based measure of tone to parliamentary speech, and validates this measure by hand-coding a sample of parliamentary speech using a multidimensional approach to determine the number of false positives that come with a sentiment-based approach. This directly addresses concerns about measuring negative party communication that is not directly addressed at a political actor, as discussed in the previous chapter.

This is done in four steps: First, I present the case selection for the empirical chapters to follow. Second, I introduce the Comparative Campaign Data Set that is used in all empirical chapters. Additional data sets that are needed to answer sub-questions in

each chapter are introduced in those chapters. Third, I present more detailed information on the method of sentiment analysis and propose a measure of negative party communication based on sentiment analysis. Fourth, I conduct the two-fold validation process I introduced above: I present a systematic comparison of measures of negative party communication and discuss the implications of this comparison.

In order to conduct this comparison, data on the media coverage of electoral campaigns in Germany, the United Kingdom and Denmark is used to construct different measures of negative party communication in campaigns. I draw on the raw data that the Comparative Campaign Dataset (Debus et al., 2018) provides, in which direct quotes from the coded newspaper articles are saved that contain the coded campaign statements. This allows me to employ sentiment analysis directly on the exact same text that human coders base their coding on. In another step, I analyse more closely the rate of false positives given by a sentiment-based measure by taking a closer look at the data in form of parliamentary speeches. In order to do this, data from the ParlSpeech Dataset (Rauh & Schwalbach, 2020) is used.

Empirically, the comparison of measures in the campaign data yields two key results. First, the mean level of negative party communication in campaigns as measured by sentiment for statements classified as negative by hand coding is significantly higher than the mean level of negative party communication in campaigns as measured by sentiment for statements that are not classified as negative by hand coding. This means that sentiment based measures do pick up on differences that were detected by hand coding. This sheds light on the debate about how to measure negative party communication, and, even more importantly, how to measure it time and cost effectively. Second, the analyses using data on parliamentary speech show a significant amount of false positives that are detected by a sentiment-based approach. This substantiates the concerns raised in Chapter 3 that negative party communication measured as tone captures more than the multidimensional understanding of negative campaigning. However, the analysis shows that negative sentiment is indeed higher in speeches that are also identified as negative by hand coding negative statements about opponents.

The conclusions drawn—that a measure of negative party communication in campaigns that is constructed by sentiment analysis indeed captures some of the same statements as a measure built on a multidimensional understanding of negative party communication—shows that there are time efficient alternatives to manual coding if one accepts the conceptual consequences of using a one-dimensional measure as discussed in Chapter 3. This conclusion serves as a point of departure to investigate negative party

communication both in and beyond elections in the empirical chapters that follow after this chapter.

4.1. Case Selection

In this section, I focus on the cases I investigate. Table 4.1 indicates which countries are included in each of the empirical chapters.

As I am interested in explaining variation in negative party communication both between countries and between parties within countries a comparative approach provides the best way to capture this variation. I choose to use the most extensive dataset on parties' campaign styles that is available, the Comparative Campaign Dataset. The dataset covers eleven Western and Eastern European countries, as listed in Table 4.1. There are two elections per country covered, except for the United Kingdom, for which three elections are contained. These countries cover a wide variety of political systems, electoral systems, and geographical range. By using this selection of countries to investigate the determinants of negative campaign communication both in and beyond elections, and the spill-over of campaign dynamics into politics after elections I am able to show results that are robust to situational determinants, and thus lend credibility to my theoretical framework. This full selection of countries is applied in two empirical chapters that investigate negative party communication in campaigns as the main dependent variable (Chapter 5) and its impact as an independent variable on the duration of coalition formation processes (Chapter 7).

Moving beyond the selection of eleven Western and Eastern European countries covered in the Comparative Campaign Dataset but using its raw data, I construct an additional dataset including campaign statements. For this, I focus on a subset of three countries, namely Denmark, Germany and the United Kingdom. I chose to focus on a subset of countries when using the sentiment based measurement of negative party communication for three reasons. First, the selected countries maximize variance on the independent variables in this chapter—such as polarization and fragmentation of the electoral system—for the reduced number of countries. Second, knowledge of the three languages spoken in the selected countries allows me to check the results of my measure for face validity easily. Third, studying these selected countries further allows me to use validated and widely used sentiment dictionaries. Fourth, this selection of countries allows me to test all independent variables on the level of the political party in institutionally different settings, i.e. countries. This dataset is the basis for analyses

Table 4.1.: Overview over cases

Chapter	Cases	Main dependent variable
5	Czech Republic (2010, 2013)	Negative party communication in campaigns,
	Denmark (2007, 2015)	Negative party communication in campaigns:
	Germany (2009, 2013)	Sentiment scores (Denmark (2007, 2015), Germany (2009, 2013),
	Hungary (2006, 2010)	United Kingdom (2005, 2010, 2015))
	Netherlands (2010, 2012)	
	Poland (2007, 2011)	
	Portugal (2009, 2011)	
	Spain (2008, 2011)	
	Sweden (2010, 2014)	
	United Kingdom (2005, 2010, 2015)	
6	Denmark (2007 - 2015)	Negative party communication in parliament
	Germany (2009 - 2017)	
	United Kingdom (2005 - 2017)	
7	Czech Republic (2010, 2013)	Duration of coalition formation process
	Denmark (2007, 2015)	
	Germany (2009, 2013)	
	Hungary (2006, 2010)	
	Netherlands (2010, 2012)	
	Poland (2007, 2011)	
	Portugal (2011)	
	Sweden (2010, 2014)	
	United Kingdom (2010)	

in Chapter 4, for robustness checks in Chapter 5 and analyses in Chapter 6, where the ParlSpeech dataset (Rauh & Schwalbach, 2020) is subset to the same three countries.

4.2. Comparative Campaign Dataset

Throughout the dissertation, two datasets are used. The first one explained in more detail below is the the Comparative Campaign Dataset (Debus et al., 2018), or CCDS. Even though it employs a different operationalization of negative party communication than I have argued for in the previous chapter, the CCDS provides an unprecedented comparative data set on electoral campaigns. Given the richness of the collected variables their data allows to operationalize negative party communication in campaigns by focusing on the dimension of tone as well, thus adding to one of my contributions. The second data set is the linguistically annotated corpus of parliamentary speech ParlSpeech, which I will discuss in more detail in the relevant chapter on negative party communication in parliament.

This chapter draws on the Comparative Campaign Dataset (Debus et al., 2018), a unique dataset that allows both cross-sectional comparative research yet still covers multiple elections per country. The CCDS contains results of a media content analysis from the ten countries in the given election years as seen in Table 4.1: The Czech Republic, Denmark, Spain, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Sweden and the UK. Articles from two major newspaper from four weeks prior to election day up until election day were coded, including at least 60 (all front pages plus 5% of all other articles related to the election coverage) and election. In total there are 9.291 articles in the dataset as shown in Table 4.2, ranging from 502 (Germany) to 1755 (Poland). The unit of observation in this dataset is a statement in a newspaper article, however, it is nested within country and (election) year, as well as within newspaper and newspaper article.

The fact that the CCDS contains media content has important implications for the interpretation of the data itself, and the results it yields. As the data is based on news media reports, it is not directly observed behavioral data—as transcripts speeches that were held at campaign rallies, or televised debates would be. Two important questions need to be answered in this respect.

First, how accurate of a representation of actual behavior are news paper reports? With regards to the first question, there are some indications in the literature that some political news make it into papers more easily than others. Research on agenda setting processes has investigated whether parties are agenda setters—i.e. decide what

Table 4.2.: Overview of number of observations

Country	CCDS
CZ	722
DK	705
GER	502
HU	733
NL	650
PL	864
PO	1,755
ES	774
SV	859
UK	1,727
Total	9,291

becomes news by presenting media outlets with a set of issues and positions to report on—or whether media is the agenda setter and parties respond (Flowers, Haynes, & Crespin, 2003). It has been shown that the existing media agenda determines the newsworthiness of parties’ campaign messages (Meyer, Haselmayer, & Wagner, 2017): Party press releases are more likely to be reported on by journalists if the content is already a prominent part of the issue agenda, thus indicating that the media is a powerful gatekeeper in political news.

However, research has shown that not only the content, but also—and more importantly to this dissertation—the tonality of news matters to their likelihood of making it into papers: Negativity bias, a concept which I have already introduced in Chapter 2, is at work here as well. There are psychological reasons for the prevalence of negative news as they elicit stronger and longer lasting reactions in news consumers (Baumeister et al., 2001). Thus, in order to gain attention, journalists face incentives to focus on negative news in order to elicit a stronger response from the public, receive attention and traffic. However, as negative party communication is conceptualized as vote-seeking behavior, and thus directly geared towards receiving media interest, parties engage in this behavior because the outcome in the form of increased media attention is desirable.

Second, which role do journalists and media outlets play in reporting on political parties’ campaigns? An additional point can be made with regards to the autonomy of journalists, who are just as affected by the negativity bias as are their customers (Soroka & McAdams, 2015). With regards to the question if news paper reports are an accurate representation of “true” behavior, the Comparative Campaign Dataset allows

to reign this problem in by providing different datasets (Baumann & Gross, 2016): There are two datasets that contain statements by parties, either about themselves or other parties—these are the datasets about self-referential statements and statements directed at other political actors that are used in this dissertation. There is also an additional data set that contains data on journalists’ evaluations of parties, and their positions—which is not used here, as it contains evaluations of parties’ behavior, but not actual behavior by parties themselves. Therefore, the data this dissertation uses does not contain evaluations of party behavior by journalists, but only reports of party behavior, albeit made by journalists. While this does not completely alleviate the concerns about biases presented above such an approach still provides the best approach possible. Ideally, a large cross-country comparative dataset that contains data on actual observed behavior, such as transcripts of televised debates, advertisements, posts on social media, transcripts of speeches at campaign rallies, would be available, but such a dataset does not yet exist to the extent of the author’s knowledge.

As I have argued in Chapter 3, negative party communication is a multidimensional concept. This theoretical multidimensionality is reflected in the variables as shown in Table 4.3, in which I also show which variable corresponds to which dimension. The dataset offers three variables from which measures of negative party communication can be constructed: the source of a statement, the type of statement and its direction. The variable direction captures the dimension of tone - indicating whether the reference to the content of the statement is made in a positive, neutral or negative way. The type of statement corresponds to the dimension that captures the content of a statement, and can either be an issue statement (that involves no valence evaluation), a valence evaluation in connection to an issue statement, or a valence evaluation that is not related to an issue. As I will describe in more detail below in Table 4.4, in this dataset valence refers to assessments of valence characteristics of candidates and parties, capturing references to personal characteristics and attributes such as honesty, and integrity. The variable source captures the third dimension—target—and indicates whether a statement is a self-referential statement, or about another party.

Therefore, while the exact names of the variables differ from the underlying dimensions they capture, I identify the variable *source* as the variable that captures the target of a campaign statement. The variable *statement type* corresponds to the dimension of content, while *direction* corresponds to the dimension of tone.

The correspondance of the variable *direction* with the dimension of tone requires a more thorough explanation: According to the codebook provided by the CCDS (Debus et al., 2018), the variable *direction* captures two distinct matters, depending on which

Table 4.3.: Comparative Campaign Dataset: Variables connected to negative campaigning

Variable	Specification	Corresponding to which dimension?
<i>Source</i>	Self, other	Target
<i>Statement type</i>	issue, valence, issue-related valence	Content
<i>Direction</i>	positive, neutral, negative	Tone

type of statement is coded. The first type is statements in which a party refers to its own issue position, or another party’s issue position, “in a negative, neutral, positive or contradictory way” (see Table 4.4), which I refer to as issue statements from now on. For these statements the variable *direction* captures only a positional component: Neutral reference then is described as referring to the status quo, while positive references mean support of the policy issue, and negative references mean the opposite. This means that the variable refers to the desired direction of policy change for the specific issue, and captures a positional argument.

For example, in a statement a party can express support for the increase in taxes, or simply describe the status quo of taxation generally (which would result in the code 0 for the variable *direction*). However, this means something fundamentally different from how the (same) codes for the (same) variable are handled for other types of statements: For statements both about issue-related valence and general valence, the variable *direction* codes *how* an actor talks about another actor, focusing on the tone of the statement. In that case, that variable *direction* therefore captures the tone of a statement, that can either be positive, negative or neutral. Hence, only for valence statements—but not for issue statements—can the variable *direction* be used as a measure of negative party communication defined by tone.

After discussing the theoretical consideration about these dimensions, I will move on to discussing how these considerations are reflected in the data. As Table 4.5 shows, almost half of all campaign statements are coded as negative. However, both issue-related statements and statements about valence characteristics are subsumed in this definition. As the coded direction of issue statements in the CCDS actually expresses a position with regards to a specific issue, as I have shown in Table 4.4 this variable does not accurately capture the “tone” of all statements, but needs to be evaluated in combination with the content.

Table 4.4.: Coding Instructions Comparative Campaign Dataset

Statement Type	Coding instructions for the variable <i>direction</i>
Issue	We also asked coders to give information on the direction in which the subject framed the respective policy issues by indicating whether the subject mentioned the issue in a negative, neutral (This means that the subject described the status quo, just mentioned the issue or took a vague/unclear position on this issue), positive, or contradictory way. (p.10)
Issue valence	[The coders] also had to decide whether the valence category was referred to in a negative, neutral, or positive way. (p.11)
Valence	Accordingly, coders needed to decide on the (negative, neutral, or positive) direction of the valence statements. (p.11)

First, the tonality of statements is not evenly distributed across their content. The large share of negative statements about other political actors (95.01% and 89.03%) indicates that the overwhelming majority of statements that address another political actor’s valence characteristics do so in a negative way. This is in stark contrast to the values in the same column, but for self-referential statements: Here, only 9.9% and 11.90% are negative. Correspondingly, the share of positive valence statements is much higher among self-referential statements (82.74% and 75.05%) than among statements about other actors, where only 3.88% and 6.64% are negative. This does not come as a big surprise, as research on campaign communication has shown that positive communication, aimed at pointing out each party’s own record is primarily focused on issues, whereas negative party communication in campaigns tends to address valence characteristics. Second, the large proportion of neutral statements in the issue category (36.95% for statements about others, and 33.37% for self-referential statements) can be explained by the coding of the direction variable – as I already discussed above according to the codebook that was used for the CCDS, the variable direction captures the “desired direction of policy change” in a specific policy issue. This therefore means that the overwhelming majority of statements by parties about their own issue positions refers neutrally or not discernibly to that status quo.

Keeping the second point presented above in mind – that “direction” refers to the direction of policy change for issue statements – it becomes clear that simply using the tone variable to construct a measure of negative party communication is not adequate as it does not reflect the concept that variable actually measures. I therefore conclude that the most correct operationalization of negative party communication stemming from the CCDS is that of negative valence statements about other parties. However, as

Table 4.5.: Multidimensional approach to Negative Party Communication

Target	Content	Tone				Total
		negative	neutral	positive	contrad.	
Other	Issue	32.92	36.95	29.63	0.49	100
Other	Issue-related valence	95.01	1.11	3.88	0.00	100
Other	Valence	89.03	4.33	6.64	0.00	100
Self	Issue	27.65	33.37	37.80	1.19	100
Self	Issue-related valence	9.90	7.36	82.74	0.00	100
Self	Valence	11.90	13.05	75.05	0.00	100
Total		48.57	17.63	33.41	0.39	100

I have argued in the conceptual chapter before, in order to understand negative party communication in politics beyond campaigns, it is necessary to focus on only one of the dimensions – that of tone. Accordingly, negative party communication—in campaigns and elsewhere—captures statements expressed in a negative way regardless of whom or what these statements are about. This means that theoretically, parties can speak negatively about themselves and discuss policies and parties or politicians in a negative or positive way.

4.3. Measures of Negative Party Communication

The comparison of measures of negative party communication sheds light on how they relate to each other and to the different dimensions that negative party communication has been shown to consist of. In the following section, I will address two different approaches to measuring negative party communication by contrasting measures of negative party communication in campaigns based on the codings in the CCDS to measures based on sentiment scores. In order to do this, I will use the exact same statements, but measure negative party communication in two different ways.

In order to answer the overarching research question – What are the determinants of negative party communication in election campaigns and beyond, and is there any spill-over from campaigns to politics after the election? – different arenas need to be compared. To put it very simply, negative party communication in campaigns will most likely occur as negative campaigning in campaign material, or press coverage of the campaign, making these likely data sources. In my case, the comparison of different sources corresponds to different arenas being compared.

However, in the political life between electoral campaigns, other arenas might be more promising to look at. The empirical chapter on parliamentary speeches for example uses data on parliamentary speech to show patterns of negative speech. For practical reasons, these different data sources often result in different measures of negative party communication, using different measurement methods. For example, hand coding the content of a sample of campaign material as done for the Comparative Campaign Dataset is feasible. However, applying the same codebook, coding instructions and hours of work needed to larger amounts of text such as the full corpus of all campaign material, and not just a sample, is more challenging. A similar argument applies to expanding the application to other, larger corpora of texts such as parliamentary speeches in a full legislative period, instead of a limited number of weeks before an election. Here, more time-efficient methods such as computer-assisted methods that use text as data, are possibly promising.

4.3.1. Negative Party Communication in Campaigns

Using the CCDS dataset, there are three variable that can be used to construct a measure of negative party communication in campaigns, as has been shown in Table 4.5. In line with this, and anticipating the coming empirical chapters, there are two ways of operationalizing negative party communication from the dataset: negative party communication between all parties, called "campaign negativity" from now on, and negative party communication between future coalition parties "coalition negativity", respectively. Both these measures can be calculated with respect to the campaign as a whole—i.e. across all parties— to generate a score of campaign or coalition negativity for the campaign as a whole, or with respect to the individual party, to capture variation between parties.

Table 4.7 shows the values of these measures for all campaigns and countries that are covered by the CCDS. It shows that across Western and Eastern European democracies, the level of negative party communication in campaigns is not as high as research on the US American system might suggest as all numbers differ noticeably from the share of 80% that Lau and Pomper (2001) suggest. Note that the definition of campaign negativity is in line with the definition given in Table 4.6 earlier. As a reminder, both measures denote the share of statements that fulfill the most narrow definition of negative party communication in campaigns - being valence (negative issue and non-issue related) statements about another party - and are operationalized to show

Table 4.6.: Construction of Measures of Negative Party Communication based on the Campaign Data

	Variables used to construct the measure	A statement is classified as negative, if...
Campaign negativity	Direction x source x type	... the direction it has is coded as negative and it is a valence statement (issue-related valence and general valence) about other parties
Coalition negativity	Direction x source x type	... the direction it has is coded as negative and it is a valence statement (issue-related valence and general valence) by and about other future coalition parties

the share of these statements relative to the universe of all statements or statements between coalition partners, respectively.

There are three important details to notice: First, there is considerable variation between countries on both variables. Denmark for example shows consistently low values of negative party communication in campaigns: On average, only about 14% of all campaign statements—self-referential issue statements and valence statements, and issue statements and valence statements about other parties taken together—are counted as negative party communication in campaigns as defined in Table 4.6. On the other hand, Hungary shows much higher values with around a third of all campaign statements contributing to negative party communication in campaigns. Second, even though there is less variation within countries than across countries, as for example Hungary exemplifies with 8.56% points difference between the two elections. This points at the role of variables that go beyond political culture specific to each country in explaining negative party communication in campaigns. Third, and maybe contraintuitively, coalition negativity covers a larger range than campaign negativity: The range of the share of statements that can be categorized as negative party communication in campaigns in relation to all statements between future coalition partners is larger than when all statements (i.e. between future coalition parties, and between coalition parties and parties that will not be part of the governing coalition) are taken into account. This suggests that future competition parties either compete as fierce opponents, or along existing alliances, but rarely in-between.

Table 4.7.: Campaign style per country

	Year	Campaign Negativity	Coalition Negativity
CZ	2010	28.89	55.75
CZ	2013	21.53	54.39
GER	2009	24.21	54.35
GER	2013	22.40	66.67
DK	2007	16.17	0
DK	2011	12.80	0
ES	2008	34.12	0
ES	2011	23.13	50
HU	2006	38.56	54.55
HU	2010	30.07	0
NL	2010	29.01	58.49
NL	2012	27.47	57.89
PL	2007	32.82	0
PL	2011	22.86	25
PO	2009	25.48	50
PO	2011	30.97	58.21
SV	2010	17.79	40
SV	2014	20.60	33.33
UK	2005	31.19	0
UK	2010	29.36	54.81
UK	2015	28.44	0

4.3.2. Negative Party Communication in Campaigns: Sentiment Scores

While the finished version of the Comparative Campaign Dataset does not contain individual statements, the raw data files for each country do contain these statements, as I have mentioned in the introduction to this chapter. With a substantial amount of processing of the data it is possible to isolate the statements: The raw data, that is available¹ is structured in a wide format, as Table 4.8 shows. The unit of analysis is the individual subject—i.e. party—in an article that can be identified by a unique identifier, in which statements are nested. For each of these combinations of subject and article, up to fifteen issue and up to six self-referential valence statements are coded. For each of the issue statements up to five issue-related valence statements could be coded. For statements about other actors, up to twelve issue and up to six valence statements are coded, plus up to five issue-related valence statements for each issue. The raw data for Denmark contains 1.730 observations, that for Germany 1.524, and that for the United Kingdom 2.540.

The text of each statement is stored in variables named *quote*, as can be seen in Table 4.8. In order to extract this text and add it to the original dataset, I applied a three-stage process: First, I reshaped the raw data into a long format. For each row in the raw dataset—for each article—up to 147 rows—statements—were created in the long format. It is important to note that not all articles necessarily contain this maximum number of statements, so the resulting dataset has less than 147 times rows the original number of rows in each country dataset. Thus, the individual statement becomes the unit of observation, as in the finished version of the dataset.

In order to directly compare these two datasets, I needed to merge the finished dataset and the dataset that contained the statements themselves. As there is no unique identifier in the raw data, I relied on the combination of the unique identifier for each article, and the combination of country, year, sender, target, statement type and direction to identify each statement in each of the datasets. By merging the two datasets on this new and unique identifier, I added the verbatim text to the original finished dataset. This results in a lower number of observations than in the original dataset, as can be seen in Table 4.9. In this table, I show the number of statements that are self-referential statements plus those that target other actors, and compare these to the number of statements for which I have information on the verbatim text after the

¹<https://www.mzes.uni-mannheim.de/d7/en/datasets/comparative-campaign-dynamics-dataset>

Table 4.8.: Processing Data

record id	year month	newspaper title	article number	article date	...
.....
title	subject1	issue1	issue1 direction	[...]	val issue1
.....
val issue1 other	val issue1 direc	quote issue1	[...]	val1	val1 other
.....
val1 direc	quote val1	[...]			
.....			

Table 4.9.: Observations before and after adding statements

Country	Year	N (CCDS)	N (after processing)
GER	2009	723	531
GER	2013	626	487
DK	2007	910	653
DK	2011	863	569
UK	2005	1037	754
UK	2010	1106	713
UK	2015	1292	836

procedure described. As the reduction of observations in this step is equally distributed across countries, and elections, and affects all parties this should not invalidate the results: The full number of observations has been a random sample of statements on the first page of newspapers, which makes a reduced number of statements another sample, even if some statements are missing at random.

These preparation are the basis for the remaining task of this chapter: To run sentiment analysis on each of the statements, construct a new measure of negative party communication that captures negative party communication based on these results and then compare the results of this measure to the measure provided by the Comparative Campaign Dataset. Before I present this task, I will provide some additional information on the origins and application of the central method I use - sentiment analysis.

Text as data

Sentiment analysis, or opinion mining, has its root in the analysis of consumer reviews (Liu, 2012) but has been applied to broader contexts. It is a dictionary method and based on word frequencies: Generally, dictionaries contain words that are typical for a or for multiple concept(s). These words are context specific and depend on the concept of interest and while a dictionary used to detect representation of constituencies contains different words than a dictionary for sentiment analysis, they operate based on the same principle. Words that are in the dictionary and then appear in the text – either literal text such as press releases or textualized speech - indicate that the text is dealing with the concept of interest. Furthermore, this approach allows to compare different texts to each other, for example by looking into which texts use more of the context specific words than others. This allows for example to distinguish more positive from more negative texts. The advantage of this definition that focuses on

Table 4.10.: Dictionaries

Language		Source
Danish	AFINN	Young and Soroka (2012)
English	LSD	F. A. Nielsen (2011)
German	SentiWS	Remus, Quasthoff, and Heyer (2010)

tone is not only its continuous understanding of negativity that allows for degrees of negative communication, but also that it can be measured easily and efficiently through sentiment analysis.

Sentiment analysis is only one example of a broader field of methods that use text as data. Delving deeper into previous research that uses political text as data, various kinds of written texts such as press releases or party manifestos but also originally spoken text in then written form such as speeches have been used to extract policy positions of the actors producing these texts. These applications show that ordering of policy positions on a left-right dimension is computationally similar to ordering documents on a different dimension such as a positive-negative dimension (sentiment analysis). Different methods to determine (policy) positions from texts differ in the way they set up the scaling process. Wordfish (Slapin & Proksch, 2008) allows for clustering of the documents in relation to each other but does not assign any scores (either of how "left" a word is, or how "negative" a document or a word is) beforehand. Wordscores (M. Laver, Benoit, & Garry, 2003) on the other hand relies on already positioned reference documents at the extreme points. Proksch, Lowe, Wäckerle, and Soroka (2018) presented a new method that relies on scaling documents with the help of a predefined dictionary that includes a fixed and restricted list of words with known sentiment scores.

When it comes to the concrete implementation of sentiment analysis as a dictionary based method, there are two options: The first one is to count occurrences of positive and negative words. The more - speaking in terms of absolute numbers - positive words occur in a text, the more positive it is deemed to be. The more negative words occur, the more negative sentiment a text is carrying. In order to control for the overall length of a text and scale the magnitude according to the number of words used, this measure is often converted into a share of words. Although it is a seemingly simple way of conducting analyses, this non-statistical approach of frequency analysis has been shown to provide reliable measures of sentiment expressed in text (Young & Soroka, 2012). The second option takes the magnitude of the sentiment each word is

carrying into account. This is done by using the sentiment score a word is allocated by the authors of the dictionary. This approach takes into account that some words are more negative than others. The following example shows how two words from SentiWS contain different levels of negative sentiment: When comparing two negative words such as “abyss” (Abgrund) and “distraction” (Ablenkung), the first approach would see a sentence containing both of these words twice as negative as the same sentence containing only one of the words. Negative tone therefore is a linear function of the number of negative words used. The second approach however takes into account that “abyss” carries a stronger sense of negative sentiment than “distraction” and assigns scores to each of these words: “abyss” has a score of -0,34, while “distraction” has a score of -0,04. This means that “abyss” is more negative than “distraction” and weighs more into the final score of the sentence. For simplicity I will employ the first approach – following Young and Soroka (2012).

In line with the case selection presented in Section 4.1, I will use sentiment dictionaries for English (Lexicoder Sentiment Dictionary, see Young and Soroka (2012)), Danish, and German (SentiWS), see Remus et al 2010). Thus, I will be able to compare measures of negative party communication for a subset of the countries covered in the CCDS. Table 4.10 presents an overview of the dictionaries used. Some dictionaries, such as the SentiWS, contain both base forms and inflections, while other dictionaries, for example the LSD, only contain the base forms. Base forms are the linguistical stem of a word, whereas inflections are modified versions of that word used to express certain grammatical entities, such as tenses. For example, the base form abandon is the stemmed version of words such as abandoned, abandons, or abandonment. It is then assumed that all these different inflections of the word carry the same sentiment. This differentiation between dictionaries that contain base forms and inflections and those that do not contain inflections has immediate consequences for the application of said dictionaries: Especially when dictionaries are covering base forms only – what is known as stemmed forms in linguistics – it is important that the text they operate on also occurs in the stemmed form.

In order to construct a measure of negative party communication on the level of the individual statement both well-aligned with the conceptual considerations presented in Chapter 3, reflecting that negative party communication can occur along a scale and is not necessarily a dichotomous concept, and is applicable in multiple empirical contexts that go beyond the campaign, I propose a relative measure of negative campaign sentiment. By constructing a measure of negative party communication that is operationalized by the share of negative words I propose a measure that has several advantages

to existing measures. Firstly, on a conceptual level, it captures the main dimension of what negative party communication is about – the sentiment of statements. Secondly, it reflects a gradual interpretation of sentiment, and captures differences between statements that use a lot of negative words from those that use them sparingly. This reflects the intuitive guess that it matters whether an opponent uses a lot of negative words when addressing another political actor or whether they only use a few negative words. Thirdly, on the empirical level, this operationalization allows for broader applicability of the concept. Especially in connection to focusing on the main dimension, this operationalization takes a step back from the campaign context and allows to have a more streamlined measure across different political institutions and behavior. This measure is both applicable to short campaign statements, and longer parliamentary speech, for example.

In order to calculate the number of negative words per statement, the dictionary method of sentiment analysis is used: As mentioned above, each category in a dictionary contains words that are typical and common for this category. A sentiment dictionary therefore contains a list of positive words, negative words, and neutral words. In order to find out how many negative words occur in each statement, this statement is compared to the list of negative words in the dictionary. Each negative word (as given by the dictionary) that occurs in the statement counts towards the total number of negative words. To arrive at a relative measures, the total number of words needs to be calculated. What exactly constitutes a word is more of a linguistic question than a question dealt with by research on text analysis, and its answer is highly dependent on language and context. In this application, I treat sequences of one or more characters that are not divided by a space as words. This means that other characters such as apostrophes can act as separating two words from each other. While in other languages apostrophes may qualify as separators, as in words such as “it’s” which is a compound of the two words “it” and “is”, this does not apply to German. The German language however often uses hyphenated words often. Concretely, in the data at hand, reoccurring hyphenated words include combinations of parties and positions in parties, such as MPs, ministers, etc. For example, one statement starts out with what can be translated literally as “if a CDU-speaker [...]”. Here, “CDU-speaker” can be translated by “a speaker of the CDU”, or “one of the CDU’s speakers”. From the perspective of functional linguistics, this compound construction is viewed as two words, because it has two “functions”: It marks the person as having a formal position in the party (speaker), but also as being from that party (CDU). This means that “a word” means “every series of 1 or more characters that is not interrupted by a space” from

Table 4.11.: Length of statements (in number of words) per country

Country	Mean	Min	Max	n
Denmark	55.08	4	378	1,222
Germany	42.27	3	230	1,018
United Kingdom	38.69	2	200	1,614
	44.63	2	401	8,605

now on. Figure 4.1 shows the distribution of the number of words for German, Danish and English statements.

In Appendix A I provide more information on alternative ways of operationalizing negative party communication. In Table A.1 I provide five alternative ways of operationalizing negative party communication in campaigns, all of them dichotomous measures. Contrarily to the main measure I propose, they therefore cannot capture variation in the degree of negative party communication on the level of the individual coding unit—statement, sentence, speech—but simply classify the text as either negative or not negative. The first two measures use the median or mean absolute *number* of negative words as the cut off point to distinguish between negative and non-negative statements, another two use the mean or median *share* of negative words to correct for the length of statements. A final measure that classifies a statement as being negative as soon as it contains at least a single negative word is likely to overestimate negative party communication in any context, and is biased to the length of the text at hand as it would make it much more likely to find at least one negative word in longer texts than in shorter texts. As campaign statements are much shorter than other types of political text, for example than parliamentary speech, this would lead to a biased result and an overestimation of the level of negative party communication in longer texts. I provide these additional tests for robustness checks, and show that the measure of negative party communication based on sentiment that I use in this chapter—operationalized by the share of negative words—correlates with measures that result in a dichotomous operationalization (see Tables A.2 to A.5). Additionally, I show that among all these versions the operationalization of negative party communication as the share of negative words correlates best with the hand-coded measure of negative party communication in campaigns that I presented in Table 4.6 (see Tables A.6 to A.9).

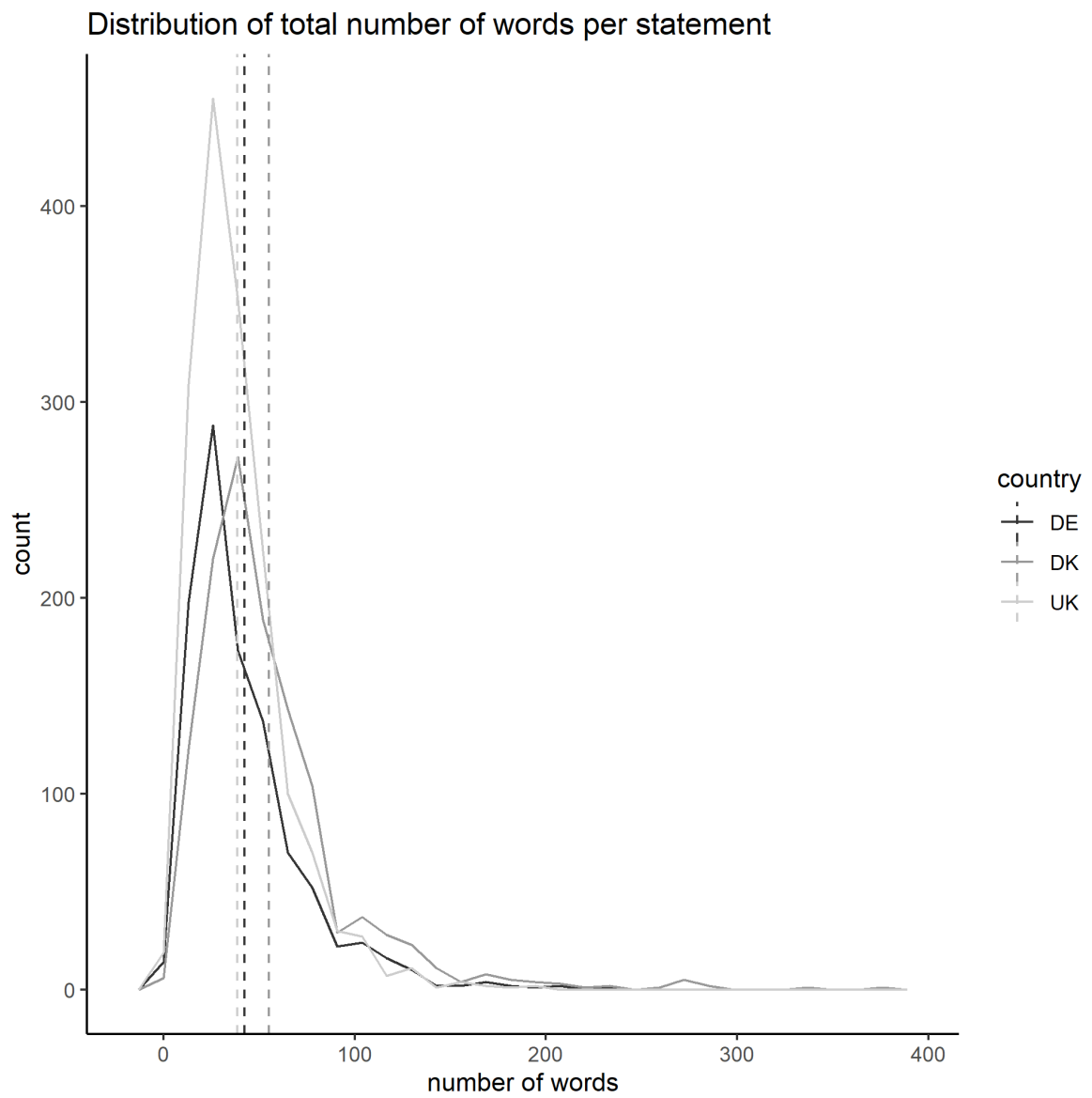


Figure 4.1.: Length of statements (in number of words) per country

4.3.3. Measures of Negative Party Communication in Campaigns: Applying a Measure of Tone

In the former section I argued for the need of a new measure of negative party communication that not only is closely related to a one-dimensional concept of negative party communication in campaigns, but also uses all information that the method offers. In the following section I will show how this measure compares to the measure of campaign negativity that I presented in Table 4.6. In order to do this, a first glance is to look at the correlation coefficient between the two measures of negative party communication in campaigns. Taking all campaign statements from the UK, Denmark and Germany ($n = 8.605$) into account, the two measures correlate positively and significantly ($\rho = 0.27$, $p < 0.001$), where the hand coded measure is dichotomous and the measure based on sentiment is continuous. See the appendix for country analyses, that show similar correlations across countries.

This provides a first glimpse at the fact that the two measures capture aspects of negative party communication, and the two measures are weakly, yet positively correlated. However, as campaign negativity is a dichotomous measure, while campaign sentiment is a continuous measure (on the interval between 0 and 1 though), there are better ways to visualize the comparison between the two. Figure 1 below shows the distribution of the measure of negative campaign sentiment (the sentiment based measure) on the y axis, over the measure of campaign negativity (the hand coded measure) on the x axis. It shows that the level of negative campaign sentiment among statements that are classified according to the measure of “campaign negativity” presented in Table 8 have a higher average level of negative campaign sentiment. The mean level of negative campaign sentiment is 3.12% for statements that are non-negative according to the measure of campaign negativity, compared to 5.70% among negative statements. A two sample t-test shows that this difference is indeed significant ($p < 0.001$).

Figure 4.2 indicates that a measure that focuses exclusively on tone can indeed replicate the results of a measure that is based on a multidimensional understanding of negative party communication. However, what is especially interesting is to investigate where the possible limitations of sentiment analysis lies. One important aspect to keep in mind is that sentiment dictionaries contain negative or positive words. They are tools to discover *how* negative or positive occurring words are. They do not capture other concepts such as irony, sarcasm, or anger. This in turn means that if parties were to engage in negative communication by exclusively talking sarcastically about their opponents or referring to their failures in an ironic way, sentiment analysis would not

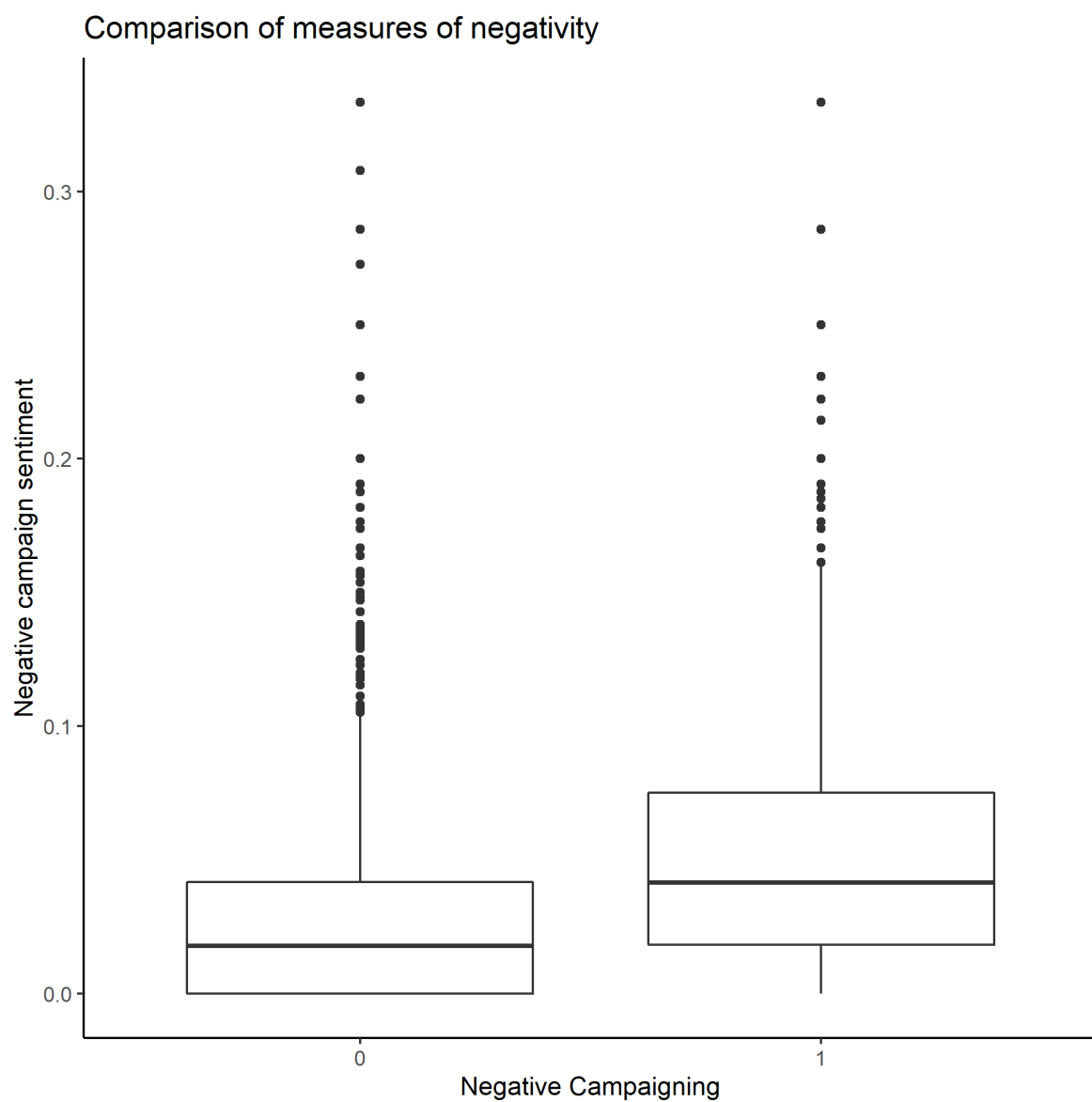


Figure 4.2.: Comparison of measures
Note: Difference in means is significant ($p < 0.005$)

be the appropriate tool. However, I argue that while these cases are within the realm of possibility, they are not a widespread empirical phenomenon: Parties want to engage in serious competition, and appear trustworthy to voters. In order to do so, they have incentives to use campaign rhetoric in a way that signals trustworthiness, stateliness and seriousness, even when the aim is to criticize their opponents. The extensive use of irony and sarcasm would undermine this goal, because it can be an ambiguous way of communicating and lead to misunderstandings. Irony and sarcasm are highly context dependent, and often not easily conveyable in written text, thus parties and candidates who want to send a clear message to voters should be incentivized to shy away from ambiguous campaign rhetoric. Furthermore, none of the existing research on campaign rhetoric in which research on negative campaigning is embedded, refers to sarcasm or irony extensively.

Table 4.12 shows some examples of campaign statements from each of the three countries studied, structured along the two different measures I have presented.² In case the two measures agree - for example when campaign negativity is not present and negative campaign sentiment is low, or when campaign negativity is present and negative campaign sentiment is high - it is obvious to see why: In the first case, in all three languages factual statements are made. There is little or no evaluation in these statements. The other extreme are those statements, in which both measures agree that negative party communication is present: In the German case, accusations of unreliability occur, in Denmark the government is accused of being afraid of voters, and in the United Kingdom accusations of lying are present. All these statements are clear examples of statements that are hardly compliments, and all target valence characteristics of parties and candidates, such as honesty and integrity.

The remaining examples show the difficulties any attempt at operationalizing negative party communication faces. In the case of those statements, that result in high values of negative campaign sentiment, although they do not contain campaign negativity according to the definition in Table 4.6, a potential reason is that the usage of negative words is not directly connected to negative party communication: In the example of Denmark, words carrying negative sentiment such as *burden* or *fallen* were interpreted as factual statements by the coders. Similarly, the phrase *destroying the rule of law* in the German example scores high on the usage of negative words. In the case of those statements that result in low values of negative campaign sentiment, although they do

²These and all statements in the following chapters have been translated into English by the author.

Table 4.12.: Examples of statements

	GER	UK	DK
campaign negativity = 0, low negative campaign sentiment	The Left is aiming for a current hour on the subject at the special session of the Bundestag next Tuesday.	Tories have 'set aside £4 bn for tax cuts.'	Bendt Bendtsen defended himself. It is important to keep taxes down if one is to lure skilled labor to the country, he said.
campaign negativity = 0, high negative campaign sentiment	Shortly before the election, politicians from the SPD and the opposition attacked Federal Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble (CDU) sharply and accused him of destroying the rule of law.	Today, government is spending too much, wasting too much and taxing too much.	The total tax burden has fallen slightly.
campaign negativity = 1, low negative campaign sentiment	The Green budget expert Bonde and the Left MP Löttsch accused Merkel of 'lack of distance' towards Ackermann after the session.	The Scottish Tory leader added: 'We are already hearing the demands Nicola Sturgeon is putting on Ed Miliband and I don't think he's strong enough to withstand them.'	I am very satisfied. The figures speak for themselves, we have excellent figures in relation to Pia Kjaersgaard, laughs Khader, who maintains that the figures do not lead him to even consider throwing himself into the fight for the post of prime minister.
campaign negativity = 1, high negative campaign sentiment	Steinbrück commented angrily about Merkel's accusation that the SPD was unreliable in European politics.	Five times he accused them of 'lying'.	This leads the Social Democrats to accuse the government of pushing the problems because it fears the voters.

Note: Translation by the author.

contain campaign negativity, a possible explanation is ambiguity of language, and the use of irony and sarcasm, as is present in the Danish example.

The main take away points are the following: Even though the correlation between measures based on a multidimensional understanding of negative party communication and measures of negative party communication based on word sentiment is only limited and does not seem to be overwhelmingly high at first glance, further analyses show that the concept of negative campaign sentiment is indeed useful. Especially comparing the performance of one specific sentiment based measure to that of campaign negativity shows that negative party communication when measured by sentiment scores is indeed higher (i.e. more negative) for statements that were classified as negative according to the multidimensional understanding of negative party communication.

4.4. Measuring Tone: How much Noise is there?

When choosing to apply a one-dimensional conceptualization of negative party communication one central question needs to be addressed: How noisy is such a measure in comparison to multidimensional measures? This closely relates to the rate of false positives—i.e. statements classified as negative party communication because of the negative sentiment they carry, despite being non-referential statements as discussed in the previous chapter. This is of relevance because one potential limitation of a sentiment-based measure is that it also captures negativity that does not correspond to the central concept of negative party communication. Instead, certain topics are inherently associated with negative word choice. Discussions of increasing risk, increasing inequality, and perceived threats—such as unemployment, crises, or immigration—necessarily include negative words, as the formulation "severe problem" above indicates.

In the following section, I present answers to three central questions: Does an approach that measures tone lead to overestimation of negative party communication? Does this approach capture negative party communication at all? What is the rate of false positives—meaning, how many units of text does this approach falsely classify as negative due to inherently negative content? It is important to find answers to these questions, as the correct interpretation of the measure, just as its applicability, hinge on them: Is this potentially a way forward that can be applied to campaign data as well? Thus the overarching question to answer here is: How well does this one-dimensional measure of tone align with multidimensional measures of negative campaigning inspired by research on negative campaigning in election campaigns?

In order to address these concerns, I chose to hand-code 450 parliamentary speeches in the ParlSpeech Dataset (Rauh & Schwalbach, 2020). For each of the three countries under consideration—Denmark, Germany, and the United Kingdom—I selected the 75 most and 75 least negative speeches to code. In case there were more than 75 speeches—as was the case for speeches that contain no negative words across all countries and languages—that fulfil this requirement, a random sample of 75 of these speeches was chosen.

For each speech, I checked if it contained a target and any classical form of negative campaigning—demeaning words, attacks, criticizing the opponent. In line with the theoretical framework of this thesis, which highlights the role political parties play in representative democracies, speeches were coded to include a target if the speaker referred to another political actor that is an agent of a political party. Thus, political actors that are not party political actors—such as international organisations or administrative entities like municipalities or agencies—are not included as targets of negative party communication. Furthermore, self-referential statements are coded as not being targeted at another political actor. Targets thus appear if MPs referred to any of the following: other parties, MPs, members of the government, ministers, the prime minister, the government, or either the coalition or opposition as a whole. Unspecified references such as a second-person address (i.e. "you", "your party") are included and counted as well, with the exception of the indefinite pronoun "man" that is found both in German and Danish. In the latter case it is unclear if a statement refers to a specific actor or to a general undefined group, similar to the use of "many", "someone", or "one" in English. Table A.10 in Appendix A shows examples of words that represent these concepts in three different languages and denotes which words are not considered relevant as targets.

Table 4.13 provides more general insights into the hand-coded material. It shows the share of statements that I classified as negative according to the "classical" definition given above that refers to negativity as it relates to negative campaigning, specifically: demeaning words, attacks, or criticizing the opponent. Thus, the first column gives the percentage of false positive statements when a one-dimensional measure of tone is applied, while the third column denotes the share of true positives. This analysis reveals three findings that I want to highlight. First, it shows that about a third of all sampled statements are true positives, as they are statements that sentiment analysis picks up as negative and are indeed negative campaigning. The remainder of two thirds are false positives, i.e. statements about issues that are talked about negatively. Interestingly, the ratio between these two numbers is different for statements that sentiment analysis

detects as having low scores of negativity. Here, the share of statements that are indeed negative campaigning is much lower, which corroborates the assumption that negative party communication is indeed expressed mainly by the use of negative words. The problem of false positives is therefore bigger than the problem of false negatives.

Table 4.13.: Share of Negative Campaigning

		Negative Campaigning (multidimensional)		
		Not Negative	Inbetween	Negative
Most negative (one-dimensional)	UK	65.42%	1.23%	33.33%
	DK	74.66%		25.33%
	GER	72.5%		27.5%
Least negative (one-dimensional)	UK	91.99%	1.33%	6.66%
	DK	87.99%	2.66%	9.33%
	GER	84%	1.3%	14.6%

This in turn means that a measure of tone indeed captures the variation in the use of negative words between more and less negative texts. The substantial share of false positives, however, means that the measure does not accurately detect the absolute level of negative party communication as reliably as a hand-coded measure but still allows for comparison between parties in settings in which hand coding of large amounts of material is not feasible.

Second, it highlights the role non-referential statements play in the rate of false positives. The share of speeches that are classified as most negative according to sentiment analysis but do not include negative party communication according to the hand-coding procedure are speeches in which MPs use negative words in reference to issues themselves. When investigating the speeches that drive this number, it becomes clear that the reason for this is the prevalence of topics that are talked about negatively in parliamentary speech. In the sample of coded speeches, these topics include crime, violence, domestic violence, war, unemployment, and tax evasion. For example, on 06/09/2019, Conservative MP asked “What action are the Government taking to combat online anti-Semitic hate crime emanating from extremist groups on campus?”, which does not include criticism towards the government but is addressing a topic that is discussed by using negative words.

Third, it draws attention to the language behind false negatives and the role that irony and satirical comments play in natural language processing. There is indeed a substantial number of false negatives. These are statements that can be classified as negative campaigning in the classical sense but are not captured by the proposed

measure of tone. An example for this is an excerpt from a speech that an MP by the liberal FDP held on 23/03/2011, in which the speaker suggests the previous speaker had been lying and spreading rumours. He does so by asking questions that do not contain overtly negative words (“Are you prepared to take note of that?”). Nonetheless, they serve as a vehicle for sarcasm and, in conjunction with the preceding words, suggest that the addressee had not been truthful: “Vielen Dank. – Sehr geehrter Kollege Nouripour, sind Sie bereit, zur Kenntnis zu nehmen, dass heute in den vergangenen zwei bis drei Stunden sowohl das Auswärtige Amt durch den entsprechenden Sprecher als auch die Bundeskanzlerin durch ihren Sprecher eindeutig erklärt haben, dass an dem Gerücht, das auch Sie hier verbreitet haben, gar nichts dran ist, sondern dass die Entscheidung zur Enthaltung von vornherein einstimmig so gefasst worden ist? Sind Sie bereit, das zur Kenntnis zu nehmen?” [Transl.: Thank you very much. - Mr. Nouripour, are you prepared to take note of the fact that over the past two to three hours both the Federal Foreign Office, through its spokesperson, and the Chancellor, through her spokesperson, have stated unequivocally that there is no truth whatsoever in the rumor that you have also spread here, but that the decision to abstain was taken unanimously from the outset? Are you prepared to take note of that?]

Fourth, this analysis shows that the share of negative party communication is indeed higher among speeches that are true positives than among those that are true negatives. An example of such an excerpt is an excerpt from a speech by a Labour MP in which I have highlighted all negative words: “Is not that a contrast with the *wriggling, squirming mess* of *opportunist hypocrisy* we see on the Opposition Benches?”. It becomes clear that the Labour MP who gave this speech criticises all opposition parties. Similarly, an MP from the German SPD stated: “Das ist stilbildend für die Koalition: Sie sind Abstauber und haben kein eigenes Konzept. Das wird sich bitter rächen. Vielen Dank.” [Transl.: This sets the style for the coalition: They are dustmen and have no concept of their own. That will take bitter revenge. Thank you very much.] on 25/11/2010, which directly expresses disdain for the coalition (parties). In other examples, negative communication is expressed more subtly and makes use of irony, like this example of a debate in the Danish Folketinget shows: “Det må være svært for Enhedslisten at forestille sig, at der kan være uenigheder i et parti.” [Transl.: It must be difficult for Enhedslisten to imagine that there can be disagreements within a party.], which was classified as negative by sentiment analysis as well.

The last key point is how a one-dimensional measure of tone relates to the dimension of target. Table 4.14 shows the results of the process of hand coding the target in speeches. It shows that across all three countries speeches are directed at other political

Table 4.14.: Occurrence of Targets in the most and least negative Speeches

Share of statements that include a target		
Most negative	UK	62.96%
	DK	64%
	GER	60%
Least negative	UK	78,67%
	DK	60%
	GER	82.66%

actors between 60 and 82% of the time. Interestingly, this applies both to speeches that are classified as negative by sentiment analysis, which can be seen in the rows called “most negative”, and for those that are classified as not negative by sentiment analysis (see rows called “least negative”). This suggests that in parliamentary speech it is common to refer to other political actors and address them formally. Additionally, this also suggests that in the parliamentary arena it is common to pose questions directly to other actors.

Furthermore, a lot of speeches are directed at a target, as can be seen in Table 4.14—even if they are not meant negatively. This speaks against any one-dimensional conceptualization which uses the choice of target as the only defining dimension. In early research on negative campaigning, it has sometimes been a useful shortcut to conceptualize negative party communication as all communication directed at an opponent. After all, statements about other political actors are highly likely to be critical, rather than endorsements. However, this shortcut does not apply as well to political interactions outside the electoral campaign, as I have argued in Chapter 3 on the concept of negative campaigning. From a theoretical perspective, the parliamentary setting itself gives ample administrative reasons for MPs to address other MPs, the government, and ministers. For instance, MPs may include targets in their speeches to thank their peers for their time and attention, rather than discussing policy issues. One example for this is an excerpt from a speech held by a Labour MP 10/7/2002, who stated that “[T]his morning, I had meetings with ministerial colleagues and others. In addition to my duties in the House, I shall be having further meetings later today”. This speech did not include any negative words, so it was not flagged as negative by sentiment analysis, and does indeed not contain what can be interpreted as negative party communication.

I have argued that a measure of tone is a useful option to measure negative party communication in parliament—which the main research question calls for—if only a single dimension can be measured. The alternative of hand-coding parliamentary speeches

requires large research networks, country expertise, and research funding that is simply not available in a doctoral dissertation.

This main question is answered by the analyses presented above which paint a nuanced picture. By hand-coding, 1 out of 3 instances in which negative party communication is actually negative campaigning can be identified. In turn, this corresponds to a rate of false positives of 2 out of 3. Thus, by using a tonality based measure of negative party communication, the amount of negative party communication is overestimated, as Figure 3.3 in Chapter 3 already indicated: The continuous dimension of target also encompasses more than just self-referential statements and statements directed at other political actors. It also captures non-referential statements—statements that are not directed at a political actor—that drive negative tone. Thus, a sentiment-based measure detects all negative party communication even if it lacks any kind of target. This means that this method shows limitations when it comes to reliably estimating absolute levels of negative party communication, but allows to capture variation: Speeches that contain negative sentiment are twice—as is the case for Denmark and Germany—or even four times—as is the case for the United Kingdom—more likely to express negative party communication in the form of negative words associated with political opponents.

4.5. Conclusion

This chapter presents the data used in this dissertation, and validates different measures of negative party communication. Based on the theoretical discussion presented in Chapter 3 that showed that negative party communication in campaigns is implicitly understood as a multidimensional concept I discuss an operationalization of negative party communication based on these multiple dimensions. I then contrast and compare this operationalization to an operationalization of negative party communication that uses sentiment or tone as the only dimension. Such an operationalization is applicable if a one-dimensional measure and concept is desired. This also enables us to track negative communication across different arenas because it does not necessarily need the context and logic of an electoral campaign to be meaningful. I show that the multidimensional and the one-dimensional measure correlate positively, yet not strongly in the campaign data, and that the one-dimensional sentiment measure results in a significant number of false positives in the parliamentary data.

Turning to the implications of these results, I argue that a reason that the measures do not correlate strongly might be due to the high level of specificity of context in which campaign statements occur. There is a high degree of country specific knowledge that

feeds into coding decisions in manual coding tasks, that are not necessarily captured by automatic processes. Whenever possible a multidimensional measure of negative party communication is therefore preferable.

However, when this is not possible, using automatic processes still allows us to measure negative party communication similarly and systematically across more contexts at lower costs. With the caveat of a non-negligible number of false positives that occur when using a one-dimensional measure of negative party communication operationalized by sentiment, sentiment-based measures can be used to detect variation in the use of negative party communication. However, analyses building on sentiment-based measures—to be clear: as sentiment alone—are unable to shed light on the absolute levels of negative party communication. This is due to the fact that negative party communication is overestimated due to negative sentiment related to issues rather than opponents.

In circumstances in which a one-dimensional conceptualisation of negative party communication is needed, the operationalization of negative party communication as negative sentiment provides some theoretical merits and is not only a pragmatic choice: First and most importantly, it is well-aligned with the theoretical concept of negative party communication I proposed. Furthermore, the continuous operationalization of negative campaign sentiment on the level of the unit of analysis provides a more nuanced picture and allows to capture differences between more and less negative party communication in the unit. This applies irrespective of which type of text the unit of analysis is—be it a statement, a sentence or a full speech of any kind. Additionally, this operationalization provides an easily applicable method to measure negative party communication beyond the campaign context and apply it to other realms of the political process as well.

This chapter marks the conclusion of the discussion of the central concept negative party communication, and its operationalizations. With these building blocks in place, I will now move on to the empirical tests of the theoretical model as presented in Chapter 2. The next chapter starts out by treating negative party communication as the dependent variable, and investigating which variables—on the level of the political system, the political party and the institutional level—influence the level of negative party communication in campaigns in all the 21 elections that are covered by the Comparative Campaign Dataset. Keeping both the theoretical discussion and the discussion about the measurement I presented above in mind, I also provide robustness checks of these findings using negative tone as the dependent variable.

5. Negative Party Communication in Election Campaigns

In this chapter, negative party communication in election campaigns is the main dependent variable. There are two central purposes in this chapter. The first purpose is to replicate and extend existing analyses to show what drives negative party communication in campaigns, and to show that the effect of polarization is potentially confounded with policy issues that are addressed in campaign statements. The second purpose is to test the construct validity of the proposed one-dimensional measure of negative party communication repeating the analyses using the one-dimensional measure of tone as the dependent variable..

To address the first point, I build on the theoretical framework that I laid out in Chapter 2 and investigate the leftmost arrow of Figure 2.2. Thus, I investigate how party, institutional and system level factors influence negative communication in parties' campaigns. In order to do this, I first present analyses replicating existing analyses done by Papp and Patkós (2018) in order to establish the basic association between the independent variables and negative campaigning. Building on this first set of analyses, I extend the empirical contribution of this chapter by conducting analyses including issues as independent variables. I suggest to include issues as independent variables for three reasons. First, as Chapter 4 indicated, non-referential statements lead to overestimation of negative party communication when it is operationalized by the single dimension of tone. Second, some issues are examples of societal problems that make them more likely to be discussed in a negative manner, because parties have difficulties competing in a positional manner on these issues. Third, as the commonly used polarization measure that captures the maximum spread on the left-right axis captures positional arguments as well effects of polarization that previous research indicates might be confounded with issues. Including issues results in an interesting corrective to (Papp & Patkós, 2018) work as fragmentation rather than polarization shows to be important for reducing negative campaigning.

To address the second point, I repeat the same analyses for three countries and six election using sentiment measures of negative party communication in electoral campaigns as the dependent variable and show that this analysis produces the same results and support the role fragmentation of political systems plays as a driver of negative party communication.

For the first part of the chapter, I thus mainly investigate negative party communication in campaigns and focus on a comparative approach to investigate negative party communication in campaigns and build on the Comparative Campaign Dataset, that treats individual statements by parties as the unit of analysis. The dependent variable is a dichotomous variable that indicates whether a statement is categorized as negative party communication. However, in order to fulfill the second purpose listed above and in line with Chapter 4 I provide additional analyses in which I conduct the same analyses for a subset of three countries, and compare the explanatory power of the independent variables for two measures of negative party communication.

I test the explanatory power of existing explanations on the level of the political system, the political party and the institution and show that fragmentation of the political system influences the likelihood that parties engage in negative party communication during election campaigns when the policy issues of campaign statements are controlled for. I show that parties are more likely to resort to negative party communication when they compete in less fragmented systems, and are less likely to use negative party communication in highly fragmented systems. This main finding is in tension with findings of existing research that points towards polarization being the most influential factor behind negative party communication, albeit in the opposite direction than it has been proposed originally in the context of the US American system. Interestingly, none of the hypothesised factors on the party level are relevant explanatory variables in the full model. This points to the importance of the political system in which parties operate, and the incentive structures in which they operate.

These findings tie into the general framework of the thesis in two important ways. First, I establish that negative party communication in campaigns is mainly driven by fragmentation, which operates on the level of the political system. Other determinants on the level of the political party and the level of the institutional setting of the election seem to be less important and less influential in explaining parties' use of negative party communication. Second, I show that the findings are robust to different methods of measuring the concept of negative party communication. Related to the first point, these findings are a stepping stone to investigate the prevalence of negative party communication in other political interactions that happen after election day. In line with

this argument, only investigating the determinants of negative party communication in campaigns allows me to settle whether these determinants drive negative party communication across the political system, or whether they are specific to the setting of the election campaign and their effects only spill over into the post-electoral arena.

5.1. Hypotheses

In line with Chapter 2 the determinants of negative party communication operate on three distinct levels: the level of the individual party, the level of the political system, and the institutional level. I will provide more insights into the mechanisms behind each of these variables in the following section.

On the level of the political system, the relevant variables of interest are polarization and fragmentation. Polarization, in terms of ideological distance between parties, is often argued to have a positive effect on negative party communication, i.e. to increase the level of negative party communication (Geer, 2006). This is based on the idea that ideological differences make it easier for parties to attack others because ideological distance might escalate existing disagreements. However, these findings stem from studying the United States, and implicitly rely on the existence of a two-party-system. In the case of European party systems, Papp and Patkós (2018) argue that in line with rational choice models the larger the ideological space is that parties compete in—i.e. the larger the ideological polarization in a political system is—the easier it is for parties to compete with each other in positional terms, thus avoiding the more risky strategy of engaging in negative campaign communication. As the main theoretical framework is built on and applicable to European multi-party systems in parliamentary democracy, I follow this reasoning and hypothesize that increased polarization is associated with less negative party communication.

Hypothesis 1 *The larger the degree of polarization is in a political system, the less likely it is that parties' campaign statements are negative.*

Another important factor is the fragmentation of the political system. It has been argued that the higher the number of parties in a political system, i.e. the more fragmented a party system is, the lower the likelihood that parties engage in negative party communication. The reasoning builds on Nai (2018) and states that the more parties are engaged in the competition for votes, the less likely it is that votes will go to the attacking party rather than another alternative. The reason is that voters do not only have one alternative—the attacking party—when turned away from their

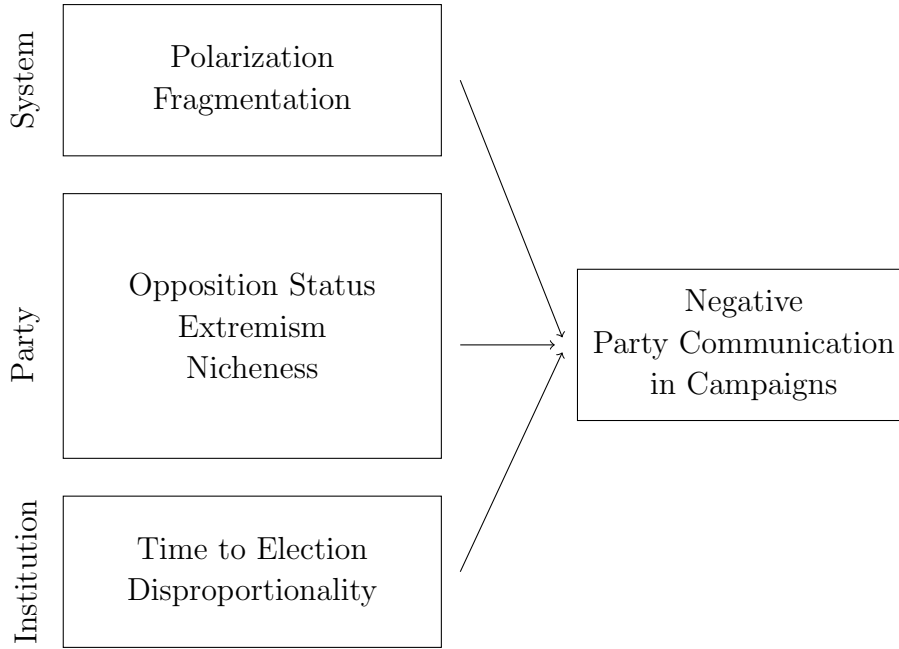


Figure 5.1.: Theoretical Model

original choice, but several other parties that are not involved in this specific attack. Given the possible adverse effect of going negative parties face in general, this increased uncertainty regarding vote gain should decrease parties' incentives of using negative party communication.

Hypothesis 2 *The higher the level of fragmentation in a political system, the less likely it is that parties' campaign statements are negative.*

Both these variables on the level of the political system—polarization and fragmentation—are potentially correlated: A larger ideological range between the two most extreme parties obviously allows for more parties to inhabit that space, whereas the same number of parties are less likely in a more confined policy space. The reason for this is that there is only a finite number of voters between any two points on the ideological scale, thus not allowing an infinite number of parties to inhabit that space.

On the level of the political parties, I have identified three characteristics that have proven to influence a party's odds to engage in negative communication in previous research: Its status as a government party or an opposition party, its ideological position or extremism, and its nicheness—understood as limited issue diversity of a party. An extremely consistent finding of existing research is that incumbents are less likely to go negative than challenger parties. This means that parties that are in the (potentially) outgoing government during an election campaign are less likely to use negative party communication than opposition parties. These findings hold for both the US case

(Lau & Pomper, 2001, 2004) and European multi-party systems (Walter & van der Brug, 2013; Maier & Jansen, 2015; Nai, 2018). The mechanism behind this relies on incumbents' ability to rely on their record (Nai, 2018; Dolezal et al., 2016). Opposition parties have more incentives to go negative than government parties, because incumbents can rely on (positively) addressing the record they could build while being in government. On the other hand this is a lost opportunity for opposition parties as they do not have the same record to rely on, thus needing to rely on an alternative campaign strategy to compete for votes. While I do not test the corresponding hypothesis as the dependent variable is negative party communication, previous research (Crabtree, Golder, Gschwend, & Indridason, 2020) has also indicated that the complementary argument—that government parties are more likely to engage in positive communication—is also supported by empirical evidence.

Hypothesis 3 *Opposition parties are more likely to release negative campaign statements.*

With regards to a party's ideological position, more extreme parties are assumed to be more negative towards their opponents by previous studies. This is connected to the notion of coalition potential and follows a similar argument as the argument I presented above and builds on Walter et al. (2014) and their median party hypothesis. The assumption is that ideologically extreme parties possess less coalition potential than ideologically more moderate parties, thus being prone to more risky campaign behaviour by anticipating future coalition negotiations.

Hypothesis 4 *More extreme parties are more likely to release negative campaign statements.*

Additionally, in line with theorizing about how the lack of availability of government record pushes opposition parties to negative party communication, each party's issue profile matters: The focus on only one or a few issues does not allow niche parties to compete on these other issues with more mainstream parties in positional terms, thus making them more likely to engage in negative party communication to compensate.

Hypothesis 5 *Niche parties are more likely to release negative campaign statements.*

Turning to the determinants of negative party communication on the institutional level, there are two potentially influential factors: the timing of a potential attack in relation to the election date, and the structure of the electoral system. The timing of the

attack speaks to the idea that parties keep potential backlash effects in mind when deciding on their campaign strategy. However, the closer the election date comes the more inclined to risky strategies parties become, and they use negative party communication as a last resort (Elmelund-Præstekær, 2008).

Hypothesis 6 *The closer to election day a campaign statement is released, the higher its likelihood to be negative.*

Additionally, the institutional rules of the electoral system matter. Turning to electoral systems, parties in PR systems face different incentives to attack than parties in majoritarian systems (Nai, 2018). As majoritarian systems (usually) result in stable majorities for a single party and (usually) do not require the formation of a coalition government, parties can attack their opponents without having to keep the possibility of post-electoral cooperation in mind. In proportional systems, on the other hand, coalition governments are common, and thus alienating potential partners (and therefore risking access to office) in order to do well at the polls is a risky strategy that parties might not want to pursue. The larger the disproportionality in an electoral system, the more the competition resembles that in a two party system. In line with research on the prevalence of negative party communication in the United States and in Europe, we have sufficient knowledge to conclude that two party systems, or systems with higher disproportionality, exhibit higher levels of negative party communication.

Hypothesis 7 *The more disproportional election systems are, the higher the likelihood that statements are negative.*

Lastly, the policy issues parties address matters. In Chapter 4 I have presented hand-coded statements of parliamentary speech to investigate whether certain topics or issues are being talked about more negatively - simply by being topics that require the use of more negative words than others. One example is the topic of foreign affairs, where frequent use of words such as war and death might drive negativity. As this chapter provides new insights by investigating the validity of a sentiment-based measure of negative party communication - that might be sensitive to specific topics that require the use of negative words - issues are included as independent variables in the main analyses.

5.2. Data and Methods

The unit of observation used in this chapter is the individual campaign statement. Thus, the main dependent variable - negative party communication - is an indicator

that denotes whether an individual campaign statement contains negative party communication, or not. For the first set of analyses and in accordance with Chapter 4 a negative statement refers to another party, is stated with regards to valence characteristics, and expressed in a negative tone. This corresponds to the multidimensional definition and measurement of negative campaigning, but allows to extend the analyses to all eleven countries in the dataset.

The independent variables used correspond to the hypotheses above. Polarization is operationalized as the maximum absolute distance of parties on the left-right scale (RILE) provided by the CMP. The RILE measure that places parties on a common left-right-scale is calculated by the sum of all right percentage minus summed left percentage per party, and thus ranges from -100 to 100. Those extreme points would mean that a party exclusively addresses right issues in their manifestos, or exclusively addresses left issues. By taking the distance between the two most extreme parties in a political system as a measure of polarization, this measure can range from 0 to 200. If the measure of polarization were equal to zero, all parties would inhabit the same point on the left-right axis. The other extreme case and the score of polarization equalling 200 would mean that both extreme points on the left and the right end of the scale are populated by parties. Polarization ranges from 10 to 97, and averages to 41.89, with Poland in 2007 showing the lowest degree of polarization and Denmark in 2011 the largest ideological range of parties in the general election¹.

This construction of the rile-index has been contested and alternatives have been heavily discussed in research (Jahn, 2010; König & Luig, 2012; Gabel & Huber, 2000). One main caveat is the assumption of a common left-right scale in different countries. Another aspect is the fact that the rile-score represents a compound score of party positions in various issue categories.

Fragmentation is operationalized by the effective number of parties on the votes level, and stems from the Comparative Political Dataset (CPDS). It is based on the index for the effective number of parties by Laakso and Taagepera (1979), and defined as $N = \frac{1}{\sum_{i=1}^n p_i}$, where i is the individual party, and p is each party's vote share². Fragmentation ranges between 2.82 and 7.62 in the dataset, with Spain in 2008 at the lower end of the range, and the Czech Republic in 2013 at the higher end. The average number of effective parties on the level of the electoral votes is 4.61, and has a standard deviation of 1.32³.

¹See Figure B.1 in Appendix B

²In Chapter 6 the same formula to calculate the effective number of parties in the legislature is used but uses a party's seat share in parliament.

³See Figure B.2 in Appendix B

On the level of the political party, government status is operationalized by dichotomous variable that indicates if a party is the incumbent at the time of the election campaign. 40% of all statements were released by government parties. In order to calculate ideological extremism, I use each party's distance on the left-right scale from the median party in a party system. Each party's position on the left-right dimension is taken from the Comparative Manifesto Project, and can range between 0 if it is the median party, and 100, if the median party is located in the middle of the scale, and the party at hand on either extreme end of the scale. In the dataset of statements I use, this variable ranges between 0 and 55.37, on average the distance to the median party is 10 scale points⁴.

A parties' nicheness score is based on Meyer and Miller (2013) definition of niche parties as parties that highlight issues more than the general salience in the party system, and operationalized by the standardized nicheness score⁵. The unstandardized score σ can range between 0 and 1 for every party p , where $\sigma_p = \sqrt{\frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N (X_{ip} - \bar{X}_{i,-p})^2}$, X_{ip} denotes a party's emphasis on policy dimension i and $\bar{X}_{i,-p}$ stands for the average emphasis on policy dimension i by all other parties without party p . The standardized nicheness score compares each party's nicheness to the nicheness of its rivals, and is calculated by $\bar{\sigma}_p = \sigma_p - \mu_{-p}$ where μ_{-p} is the average nicheness of all other parties without party p . This score is equal to zero if the party is the average party in the party system, larger positive values indicate that a party's nicheness is larger than that of its opponents, and negative values indicate that a party has a more comprehensive issue profile than its opponents. In the dataset of statements I base my analyses on this score ranges from -4.5 to 13, its mean slightly below zero at -0.21⁶.

On the level of the institution, the timing of the campaign statement is simply operationalized by the number of days elapsed between the publishing of the article in which a statement was mentioned, and the upcoming election. Thus, this variable can only range between 30 and 0 days, according to the selection of articles as described in the codebook (Baumann & Gross, 2016). I excluded all observations that did not fulfill this requirement by being published either before the 30 day period or after the election had been held. This removes 973 observations from the dataset (902 from Spain, 68 from Sweden), which corresponds to 5 % of all 19.957 cases⁷. Information on Gallaghers'

⁴See Figure B.3 in Appendix B

⁵The standardized nicheness score is implemented in the R package `manifestoR` and can be calculated directly using the raw salience scores of all policy categories via the function `mp_nicheness`

⁶See Figure B.4 in Appendix B

⁷See Figure B.5 in Appendix B

index of disproportionality stems from the Comparative Political Dataset. The index (Gallagher, 1991) ranges from 0 to 100, with higher numbers denoting higher levels of disproportionality between the shares of votes each party received and the shares of seats it received in a given election. The variable ranges from 0.61 to 16.63, with the mean at 7.18⁸. Both sets of variables on the system level and on the level of the institution are by definition invariant within country and year.

Control variables include the (political) position of the newspaper that is the source of the campaign statement as either left-leaning or right-leaning to control for the potentially biased reproduction of statements among others. An indicator if the statement occurred in an Eastern European country on the system level is included as well. In order to capture the general political mood I also include the national unemployment rate as a control variable, and thus control for a general effect of a disfavorable economic climate which might be result in generally negative speech.

So far, the presented variables replicate the approach by Papp and Patkós (2018), however, I suggest to include policy issue as an additional control variable. There are three reasons for this.

First, the main caveat of a one-dimensional conceptualization of negative party communication as highlighted in Chapter 3 is the role of negative party communication that has no direct target. This concern is particularly pronounced when negative party communication is conceptualized as a one-dimensional concept and operationalized by a measure of tone. Validation analyses in Chapter 4 confirmed this caveat by showing the relatively high rate of false positive cases of negative party communication in the parliamentary data.

A second concern is relevant not only to the one-dimensional conceptualization and measurement of negative party communication, but also the multidimensional one that is employed in this chapter. Issues that are more likely to be talked about negatively following the reasoning above are connected to societal problems that are important to voters. Parties can address these problems to demonstrate their ability to solve these problems. As all parties tend to present solutions to these problems, they are also more likely to be attacked by their competitors on these issues. These problems often tend to be connected to valence issues, such as unemployment, terrorism, or bad economical status in general, parties face incentives to move beyond positional competition: As positional competition becomes impossible on these issues, parties turn to negative party communication to distinguish themselves from competitors.

⁸See Figure B.6 in Appendix B

A third concern lies in the measurement of polarization that I have already mentioned when discussing the independent variables: As the commonly used measure of polarization is also capturing positional aspects, the effect of issues and polarization might be confounded.

Issue categories are operationalized by the variable the CCDS provides to capture the dominant issue of each news paper article, and thus the campaign statements that are reported. The reason I do not use each statement's individual coding of the issue that is present is due to how the data in the CCDS is structured: Issue categories are only coded for issue statements and valence statements that directly address an issue, but not for pure valence statements that only focus on an opponent's valence characteristics. As party communication in the multidimensional understanding of the concept only captures valence statements (both issue related, and only concerned with personal characteristics), excluding them would invalidate the measure completely. Thus, I use the dominant issue of the article in which a statement occurred in as a proxy. This is based on the assumption that individual statements are most likely going to deal with the same or at least very closely related issues as the overarching issue of the article as a whole.

As the dependent variable is a dichotomous variable that captures whether a statement is classified as negative party communication, the appropriate model to use is a logistic regression that estimates the likelihood that a statement falls into the category of negative party communication. In order to take the nested structure of the data into account—campaign statements nested within election within country—I use clustered standard errors on the level of the individual country to account for this structure. By doing this, I also gain confidence that effects of variables on the country level are indeed estimated correctly.

A first set of models are based on the full sample of eleven countries in the dataset, and replicate findings by Papp and Patkós (2018) who used the same data.

5.3. Replication

Turning to the replication of the results by Papp and Patkós (2018), Table 5.1 shows the output of the first set of analyses by showing three stepwise models and a full model.

For the discussion of the results that replicate Papp and Patkós (2018), I will primarily focus on the results of the full model, Model 4, in Table 5.1. The results lend support to Hypothesis 1 and show that indeed with increasing polarization the odds of engaging in negative communication in campaigns are lowered for all political parties. Going from

Table 5.1.: The Effect of system-level, party-level and institutional Determinants on Negative Party Communication

	(1) Model 1 system	(2) Model 2 party	(3) Model 3 institutional	(4) Model 4 full
Polarization	0.990** (0.00313)			0.991* (0.00386)
Fragmentation	0.956 (0.0395)			0.983 (0.0341)
Current government (sender)		0.898 (0.0918)		0.896 (0.0902)
Distance to median party		0.987** (0.00432)		0.996 (0.00667)
Nicheness score		1.005 (0.0213)		0.994 (0.0212)
Days to election			0.998 (0.00368)	0.998 (0.00333)
Gallagher index of disproportionality			1.031* (0.0134)	1.014 (0.00925)
Right leaning newspaper	1.077 (0.125)	1.063 (0.124)	1.060 (0.123)	1.074 (0.126)
Eastern Europe	1.006 (0.0929)	1.007 (0.116)	1.099 (0.105)	0.982 (0.126)
Unemployment rate	1.003 (0.0175)	1.018 (0.0205)	1.017 (0.0187)	1.012 (0.0215)
Observations	15415	15415	15415	15415

Exponentiated coefficients; Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Note: Dependent variable: campaign negativity

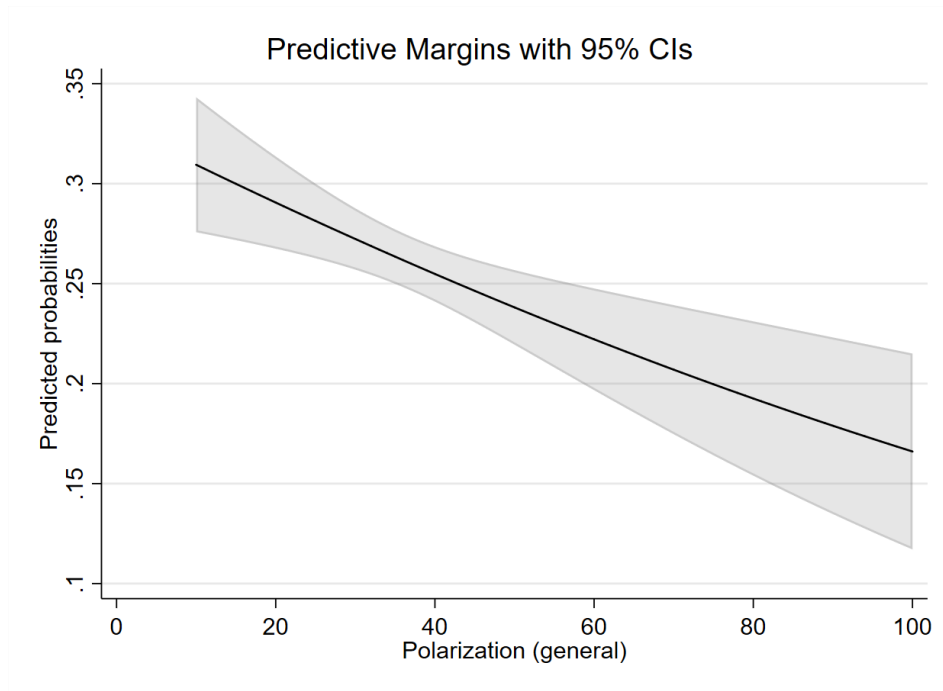


Figure 5.2.: Marginal effect of Polarization
Note: Based on Model 3 from Table 5.1

the smallest value of polarization in the data to the largest value, so from 10 to 100, the likelihood of a party using negative party communication in a campaign statement drops from 30 % to almost half, 16.7. Figure 5.2 uses the same logic I just presented and shows that polarization - on the aggregate level of the political system - is associated with lower chances that statements are negative, irrespective of which party they come from. As a reminder, the mechanism behind this hypothesis drew on the idea that the more polarized a political system is, the more likely it is that parties are actually able to engage in competition on positional terms, instead of using negative communication as a last resort.

The results for the second variable operating on the level of the political system—fragmentation—are not significant, and therefore Hypothesis 2 is not supported, as it stated that increased fragmentation should lead to a decrease in negative party communication. However, as the coefficient is smaller than one, the effect points into the expected direction.

On the level of the political parties, only a party's extremism, operationalized by the distance to the median party in the party system, has a significant effect. However, this finding points into the opposite direction than the stated hypothesis, and shows that more extreme parties are indeed less likely to engage in negative party communication. While the effect of a party's ideological position loses its significance in comparison to

Model 2, it is important to note that polarization captures this positional argument to a certain degree. In line with the argument with regards to polarization I presented previously—that increased polarization leads to less negative party communication in multi-party systems—I suggest these results confirm a similar mechanism on the level of the political party: Ideologically more extreme parties are able to present a clear policy position to campaign on, and thus do not need to engage in potentially risky negative party communication.

All other hypotheses on the level of the political party are not supported. However, the coefficient for the government status of the sending party is lower than one, thus indicating support for the hypothesised direction of the effect.

Interestingly, when it comes to the institutional variables, I do not find sufficient evidence of their influence on the likelihood that a given statement is negative: The coefficients for days to election, as well as for Gallagher's Index of Disproportionality are not significant. Thus, neither Hypothesis 6 nor Hypothesis 7 are supported. This is especially interesting with regards to the timing of the attack as previous research has indicated that negative party communication in campaigns is indeed seen as a last resort for parties that are losing ground, electorally speaking and have only very limited time left to change the odds in their favor. Even though the coefficient for days to election has a significant effect, this is an artefact because the coefficient itself equals 1, thus indicating stable odds ratios in the likelihood of the dependent variable being a 1 compared to being a 0.

5.4. Adding Issues to the Mix: Does it matter which Issues Parties address?

In order to build on the analyses in this chapter in the remainder of the dissertation and investigate if the policy issue addressed in statements influences a sentiment-based measure, I repeat the same analyses as presented above and include issues as an additional control variable. I will present the full model with all variables and add control variables for the policy issue of campaign statements by including the dominant issue of each statement as a control variable.

On the level of the political system, only fragmentation has a significant effect on negative party communication. The coefficient in Table 5.3 shows a significant negative effect on negative party communication. This is in contrast to the results I presented in Tables 5.1 that assigned a significant effect of polarization on negative party communication. In line with the main points I highlighted when discussing the opera-

Table 5.2.: The Effect of Issues on Negative Party Communication

	(1) Model 4 (system + issues)
Social Policy/Public Services	1.083 (0.393)
Inflation	1.358 (0.499)
Unemployment	1.377 (0.585)
Other Economic Performance	1.171 (0.461)
Centralization vs. Regional Autonomy	0.734 (0.507)
Environment	1.478 (0.536)
Immigration, Asylum	1.479 (0.576)
Justice System	1.542 (0.662)
Law and Order, Security, Terrorism	1.338 (0.373)
National Way of Life	0.913 (0.620)
Traditional Morality, Family Values, Religion	0.924 (0.522)
Europe/EU	2.359** (0.694)
Internationalism (not EU)	0.892 (0.373)

Table 5.3.: The Effect of Issues on Negative Party Communication (cont.)

	(1) Model 4 (system + issues)
Foreign Intervention	1.356 (0.544)
Agriculture/Rural Affairs	1.817 (0.675)
Fragmentation	0.818*** (0.0474)
Polarization	0.996 (0.00293)
Government	0.954 (0.125)
Distance to median party	1.001 (0.00813)
Nicheness score	0.973 (0.0355)
Days to election	1.000 (0.00288)
Gallagher index of disproportionality	1.000 (0.00927)
Right leaning newspaper	1.194 (0.170)
Eastern Europe	0.659* (0.110)
Unemployment rate	1.020 (0.0299)
Observations	6614

Exponentiated coefficients; Clustered standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Note: Dependent variable: campaign negativity. Reference category for issue categories: taxation.

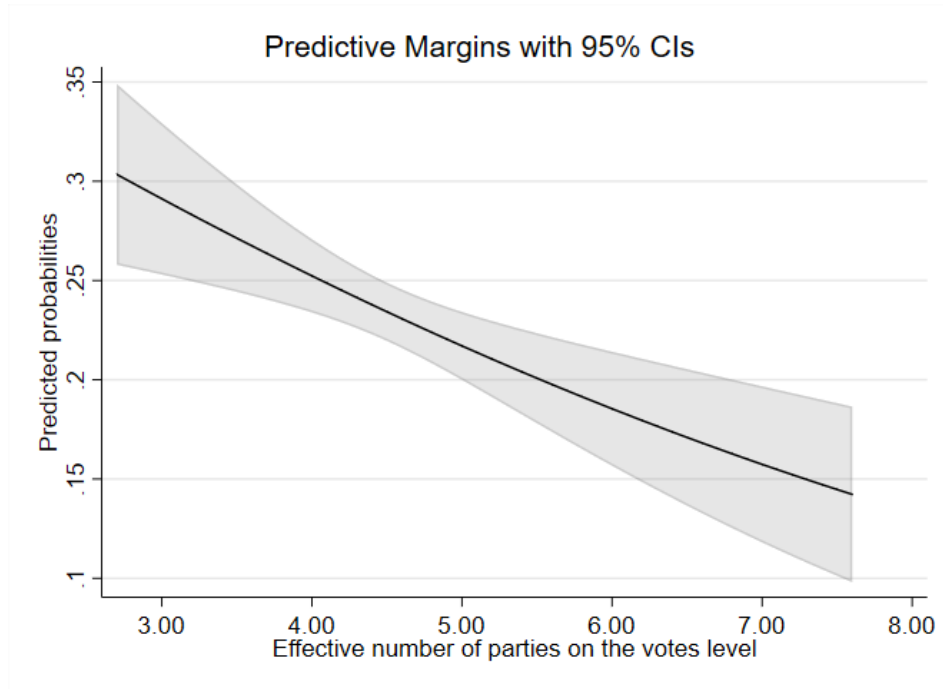


Figure 5.3.: Marginal effect of Fragmentation

Note: Based on Model 4 from Table 5.3

tionalization of the independent variables I suggest that this divergence is due to the nature of positional polarization: A lot of variation in issue salience is actually captured by polarization—operationalized as the maximum spread on the left-right axis, that is ultimately reflecting issue salience of parties—if issues are not controlled for.

As coefficients based on logistic regressions are notoriously hard to interpret and less intuitive than those of other regression techniques such as Ordinary Least Squares Regression, marginal effect plots are often more indicative of the results. Figure 5.3 shows how the predicted probability that a campaign statement contains negative party communication changes when going from the lowest level of fragmentation of the party system to the highest level. It shows that the probability a statement is negative drops from 30% in systems with low fragmentation to less than half in highly fragmented systems. This finding supports Hypothesis 2 which built on the assumption that parties face less incentives to engage in negative party communication in more fragmented system—as voters can easily find another alternative than an attacking party when being turned away from their original party.

Third, none of the variables on the level of the political party—government status, extremism, or nicheness—nor variables on the institutional level—the timing of a statement and the disproportionality of the electoral system—show sufficient explanatory power. This means that none of the hypotheses 3 to 7 are supported. One of the

control variables that captures whether the campaign statement comes from a Eastern European country significantly influences the odds of a campaign statement being negative.

Turning to the last, and central point of these first analyses, I show evidence that the policy issue of campaign statements indeed impacts their tonality and the way they are worded. There are indeed some issues that show more negative communication than others, most strikingly the European Union, as can be seen in Tables 5.2 and 5.3. Intuitively this makes sense, as the years covered in the dataset contain the years 2005 to 2015 for the United Kingdom, a time during which calls for a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty, and subsequently the membership in the European Union were on the political agenda. Importantly, these findings are not driven by the United Kingdom, but hold up if it is taken out of the sample⁹.

To sum up, the results above show that policy issues that campaign statements address matters: If there are some issues that are driving negative party communication because they are timely, heatedly debated and are salient to the political discussion including information on issue categories manages to shed light on the robustness of the findings presented above. To give two examples, a potential contender for issues that contain a lot of negative party communication could be the economy and labor market issues, as the financial crisis falls in the time period under investigation. The culmination of potential negative communication about the European Union in the British referendum on Brexit in 2016—thus shortly after the time period covered in the data—is another example of the potential importance of individual issues and their impact on negative party communication.

These results show that in the comparative dataset covering all ten countries fragmentation of the political system can explain variance in parties' use of negative party communication in campaigns when issues are controlled for. When issues are not taken into account, the results replicate findings by Papp and Patkós (2018) that point to polarization as the driving factor behind negative party communication. As I have argued above, I suggest that a significant amount of variation in issue salience is captured by the maximum spread on the left-right axis—which is how polarization is operationalized in this chapter, and previous studies. Thus, polarization can ultimately reflect issue salience of parties when issues are not controlled for separately. In the following section I show that this result is robust to different ways of operationalizing negative party communication in campaigns in Denmark, Germany and the United Kingdom.

⁹See Tables B.1 and B.2 in Appendix B.

5.5. Determinants of Negative Party Communication in Elections: Validating Measures

Comparing determinants of negative party communication as operationalized by hand coding and by sentiment analysis has important implications that speak to my conceptualization of negative party communication as negative tone and its operationalization by the share of negative words. If the analyses for two measures yield the same results there are indications that the two measures are comparable. An important implication of this is that the reduction of the number of dimensions of the concept and measure of negative campaigning to only one dimension for negative party communication is still justifiable. This is in turn important for the coming empirical chapter on parliamentary speech, in which I will exclusively use sentiment analysis in order to measure negative party communication in parliamentary speech.

Table 5.4 shows the results for these validity checks. First, as mentioned in Chapter 4 I can provide the sentiment analysis of campaign statement only for a subset of countries that are originally in the CCDS. The countries for which I do have this additional data - Denmark, Germany, and the United Kingdom - are also the ones that are the cases that are studied when it comes to parliamentary speech.

Second, the direct comparison of the measure of negative party communication that builds on the multidimensional understanding of the concept and is measured in the CCDS yields a dichotomous measure indicating whether a statement is categorized as negative party communication in a campaign or not. In contrast to that, the sentiment based measure of negative party communication that captures only a statement's tonality results in a metric measure: As I have discussed in Chapter 4 I operationalize negative party communication as the share of negative words per campaign statement, thus producing a metric, yet bound, measure. In order to assess the impact of independent and control variables on these two different approaches to measure the dependent variable, different models would have to be used: The substantial meaning of the effect of independent variables on the dependent variable is substantially different, if the dependent variable is dichotomous or if it continuous, meaning the size of coefficients can hardly be compared. Thus, in order to compare the two measures more easily to each other, I chose to dichotomize negative campaign sentiment for this application in Table 5.4 and use logistic regression to estimate the outcome in both models. I chose the mean share of negative words across all statements as the cut off point—which corresponds to measure SA4 in Appendix A— and categorize all statements that contain more than this mean number of negative words as negative.

Table 5.4.: Testing determinants of Negative Party Communication in Campaigns

	Model 1 Sentiment	Model 2 Hand coded
Polarization	0.991 (0.00466)	1.001 (0.00589)
Fragmentation	0.531** (0.114)	0.636*** (0.0705)
Current government (sender)	1.101 (0.141)	1.048 (0.180)
Distance to median party	0.988 (0.0110)	0.990 (0.0132)
Nicheness score	0.956 (0.0462)	1.004 (0.0868)
Days to election	1.008** (0.00266)	0.999 (0.00669)
Social Policy/Public Services	1.373 (0.249)	1.851 (1.425)
Inflation	0.830 (0.197)	1.008 (0.626)
Unemployment	0.655 (0.567)	0.960 (0.571)
Other Economic Performance	1.497 (0.607)	0.939 (0.744)
Centralization vs. Regional Autonomy	0.612 (0.272)	0.366 (0.553)
Environment	2.730*** (0.469)	1.140 (0.561)
Immigration, Asylum	1.360 (0.224)	1.250 (0.984)
Justice System	2.213*** (0.506)	0.881 (0.502)

Table 5.5.: Testing determinants of Negative Party Communication in Campaigns
(cont.)

Law and Order, Security, Terrorism	2.635*** (0.329)	1.006 (0.328)
National Way of Life	4.424*** (1.795)	0.302 (0.290)
Traditional Morality, Family Values, Religion	1.550 (1.227)	0.980 (0.854)
Europe/EU	2.010** (0.488)	1.385 (0.709)
Internationalism (not EU)	1.480 (0.314)	0.477 (0.311)
Foreign Intervention	2.386*** (0.289)	1.281 (1.077)
Agriculture/Rural Affairs	1.436 (0.396)	1.448 (0.966)
Right leaning newspaper	0.880 (0.214)	1.298** (0.110)
Unemployment rate	1.022 (0.0754)	1.063 (0.0510)
Observations	3324	3324

Exponentiated coefficients; Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Note: Results are for Denmark, Germany and the UK only ($n = 3324$). Model 1 uses a dichotomized version (cut off at the mean) of the sentiment based measure of negative party communication as the dependent variable, and Model 2 uses the hand coded measure of negative party communication, same as 5.1. Both models are logistic regressions, with clustered standard errors on the country level. Reference category for issues is taxation.

Third, the variable capturing the disproportionality of the electoral system which is operationalized by Gallagher's disproportionality index is not included. This is due to an issue of multicollinearity between this variable and the variable capturing fragmentation. Including both results in an extremely large coefficient for fragmentation, thus suggesting either a misspecification of the model or undetected multicollinearity. Upon closer look and calculation of the variance inflation factors it became clear that fragmentation and disproportionality are highly (-0.96 , $p < 0.001$) and significantly correlated. This speaks partially to the first point I made - the selection of countries on which I base these robustness checks on: The United Kingdom is the only political system in that list that does not use a proportional election system, but relies on a majoritarian, first-past-the-post system which produces higher disproportionality by default. Simultaneously, it is also a political system that has fewer parties than the multi-party systems of Denmark and Germany. This correlation is less strong in the full dataset because there is more variance on both variables, disproportionality and fragmentation, across countries and years. As existing literature has focused more strongly on the number of available targets, and pointed out that this number fundamentally alters the attack calculus parties face, I chose to include only fragmentation in the models, but to exclude Gallagher's index of disproportionality index for the robustness checks.

The results in Table 5.4 align with the results presented for the larger number of cases in Table 5.2 and 5.3 as fragmentation retains its statistical significance in both models: Fragmentation lowers the likelihood a given statement contains negative party communication, irrespective of how it is operationalized. In Model 1, the predicted probability that a statement is negative party communication drops from 53.52% to 25.4% when going from the minimum to the maximum—or from 3.6 to 5.7—of observed degree fragmentation. In Model 2, the probability drops from 40% to 21.51% in the same range of the observable independent variable fragmentation. In contrast to results that do not control for issues, these results show that the timing of an attack indeed plays a role with regards to its status as negative party communication, although into the opposite direction than hypothesized. The coefficient indicates that higher values of the variable *days to election* are associated with a higher probability that a statement contains negative party communication. Whereas the predicted probability that a statement contains negative party communication is 46.28% when the election is 30 days away, this probability drops to 41.04% on the day of the election.

With regards to the issues that potentially drive negative party communication Table 5.4 and 5.5 show that there are indeed issues that result in more negative party communication. The findings show that issues are particularly important in models using

a sentiment based measure of negative party communication. This is in line with what Chapter 4 indicated as this measure is sensitive to non-referential statements and likely to pick up on false positives. I will discuss the implications of these findings in Chapter 8 in more detail.

To sum up, the direction and size of the coefficients from analysing Denmark, Germany and the United Kingdom is comparable to results based on all ten countries: The effect of fragmentation points into the expected direction in all models including issues and indicates that low levels of fragmentation are associated with high levels of negative party communication, and vice versa. This is of vital importance as the next chapter on parliamentary speech will focus on those three selected countries.

I provide additional analyses in Table B.3 in Appendix B including the continuous operationalization of the sentiment based measure of negative party communication for an OLS model, and compare the results to the two models based on logistic regression. These analyses show that the coefficient for fragmentation still points into the same direction—as it is negative—for Model 1 that employs ordinary least squares regression, but is not significant. A possible explanation for this is that difference between negative and non-negative party communication can indeed be explained by the set of covariates, but that the gradual difference between negative and slightly more negative party communication cannot be explained by the covariates.

5.6. Conclusion

How do these findings contribute to our knowledge about the determinants of negative party communication in electoral campaigns then? Based on data from electoral campaigns during 21 elections in ten countries I show that is largely factors operating on the level of the political system that influence parties' decisions to engage in negative party communication. This is in line with existing research, but the chapter adds more to the understanding of determinants of negative party communication in campaigns by specifying which variable on the level of the political system matters most: First, fragmentation is an explanation of negative party communication in campaigns and polarization does not remain a significant explanation of negative party communication in campaigns. Second, this finding holds if the policy issues of statements are taken into account, thus pointing to the role of how specific issues are talked about for the prevalence of negative campaigning.

In support of the stated hypothesis, the findings show that lower levels of party system fragmentation are associated with higher chances that statements are negative.

In turn, campaign statements are less likely to be negative in more fragmented systems. I suggest that the mechanisms behind this finding lies in the multitude of alternatives that voters can turn to if they are discouraged to vote for their originally preferred party after receiving negative information about it and want to avoid the sending party as well.

This finding has important implications for studying party communication in Western and Eastern European parliamentary systems. As Maier and Nai (2021) have shown underlying conflict, for which increased fragmentation of the political system can be a sign, is associated with more negative campaigns. As political systems in Western Europe are becoming increasingly fragmented (van de Wardt & van Witteloostuijn, 2019), this has important implications for the prevalence of negative party communication in campaigns: When negative party communication is a by-product of fragmentation, and fragmentation is increasing, negative party communication might be increasing as well in the future. This speaks to the literature on the normative implications of negative campaigning, and which consequences it has for the functioning of the political system. This also highlights the relevance of the two empirical chapters yet to follow, in which the consequences of negative party communication in campaigns are investigated more thoroughly.

Furthermore, the analyses showed that the policy issues that parties talk about in campaign statements indeed matter for their odds of containing negative party communication. In line with Chapter 4 this concern was most obvious with regards to the one-dimensional measure of negative party communication that captures more than negative campaigning by also capturing general negative communication that is not directed at a specific actor. However, the analyses show that these concerns are also valid for a multidimensional measure of negative campaigning: This supports the assumption that some issues are more likely to be arenas of negative campaigning, as they relate to societal issues that require problem solving competencies. As all parties want to show their competence they are more likely to attack competitors to undermine them, thus making positional competition less likely and negative party communication more likely.

In order to address the second purpose of this chapter and to validate the sentiment based measure of negative party communication that I proposed in Chapter 4 I provided additional analyses. These analyses only include data of three Western European countries—Denmark, Germany, and the United Kingdom—I corroborate the finding that fragmentation is the main determinant of negative party communication in campaigns. These analyses served two purposes: Firstly, it provided insight into the comparability

of two methods of operationalizing negative party communication. Second, it provides the baseline for the coming chapter that will investigate determinants of negative party communication in parliament by using sentiment scores. In order to evaluate if negative party communication in parliament is driven by the same determinants as negative party communication in campaigns it is of crucial importance to compare the same cases, using the same operationalizations of key variables. In the next chapter, I am therefore interested to see if the fragmentation of the political system also influences negative party communication in parliament, or whether this factor is only relevant in campaign settings.

The next chapter is concerned with testing the assumption that the determinants of negative party communication are the same in election campaigns, and beyond. The chapter after takes a step further and investigates whether negative party communication in election campaigns has measurable consequences on the efficiency of the political system by examining the duration of coalition formation processes in more detail.

6. Negative Party Communication in Parliamentary Speech

In this chapter, negative party communication in parliament is the main dependent variable. Building on the theoretical framework in Chapter 2 there are two main steps I examine: First, I am interested in the determinants of negative party communication in parliament. More specifically, in order to gain more knowledge on negative party communication as a broader concept it is important to test whether its determinants are the same in election campaigns, and beyond election campaigns. Thus, I test if the determinants of negative party communication in election campaigns can also explain negative party communication in parliament. The second step is to test whether negative party communication in campaigns has an impact on negative party communication in parliament, independently of its determinants. The answers to both these questions speak to the potential link between election campaigns and the post-electoral arena.

In order to investigate my claims, I draw on data on parliamentary speech in three West European countries; Denmark, Germany, and the United Kingdom. The full text of all speeches held in parliament is made available by Rauh and Schwalbach (2020) in the dataset *ParlSpeech V2*. The unit of observation is the individual parliamentary speech held by an MP. For each of these observations variables on the level of the political system, the political party, and the institutional level are included. This mirrors the approach taken in Chapter 5 that employs this three-level approach as well. The main dependent variable, negative party communication in parliamentary speech, is operationalized by the share of negative words per speech and based on the same sentiment dictionaries that the measure of negative party communication in election campaigns in Chapter 4 is based on.

Descriptively I show that—as existing research on negative party communication in campaigns expects in the case of campaign statements—there is a large difference between government and opposition parties when it comes to the tone of their parliamentary speech. Government parties exhibit lower scores of negative party communication

in parliamentary speeches, and this difference is larger in the United Kingdom than in Germany or Denmark. Generally, the level of negative party communication in parliamentary speech is higher in the United Kingdom than in the other countries. This points towards the importance of system-level factors that shape campaign communication as well as communication between parties beyond campaigns. This is supported by the result that fragmentation of the legislature has a negative influence on negative party communication in parliamentary speech—which is the same result as for negative party communication in campaigns. Additionally, I show that negative party communication in campaigns (i.e. on the level of the preceding election as a whole) has a positive influence on negative party communication in parliamentary speech.

Both of these findings speak to the theoretical model and show that determinants of negative party communication in campaigns are indeed determinants of negative party communication in parliament: This shows that two examples of negative party communication in different institutional settings are driven by the same common determinants, which suggests the existence of an overarching phenomenon of negative party communication. Furthermore, the findings show that a spill-over effect of negative party communication in campaigns into parliament does indeed exist.

6.1. Hypotheses

What are the determinants behind parties' decisions to go negative in parliament? Figure 6.1 shows these determinants, ordered according to the level they operate on - the level of the political system as whole, the level of the political party, or whether they are institutional characteristics.

Most variables are familiar from Chapter 5, except for variables capturing the spill-over effect: In order to test whether these variables are determinants of negative party communication both in and beyond elections, I test the same variables and same mechanisms by applying them to parliamentary speech. All hypothesis that test the explanatory power of determinants of negative party communication in campaigns in another institutional setting—parliament—necessarily build on all arguments I presented in Section 2.2.2. in Chapter 2 in favor of common determinants of negative party communication. I will briefly repeat the main arguments and add new arguments for those variables that test whether a spill-over from campaigns exists.

In line with Chapter 5 polarization and fragmentation are relevant variables on the level of the political system. I hypothesize that polarization decreases negative party communication in parliament. The argument is the same as with regards to negative

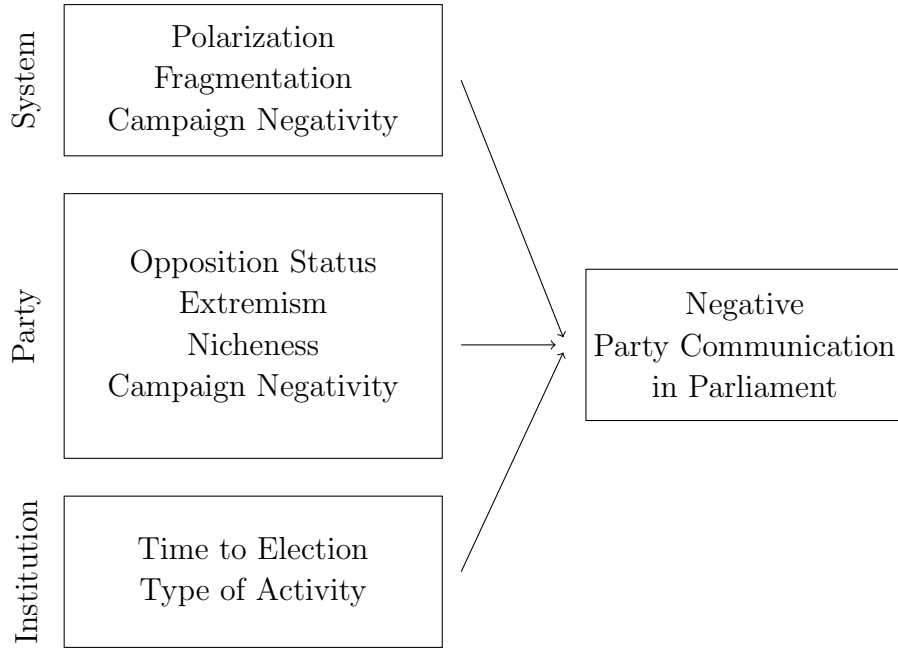


Figure 6.1.: Theoretical Model

party communication in campaigns and builds on the assumption that parties face less incentives to use negative party communication when they have safer alternatives at their disposal. In a larger ideological space, positional competition is such a strategy.

Hypothesis 8 *The larger the degree of polarization in a political system, the lower the level of negative party communication in parliamentary speeches.*

Following the same line of thought as previously presented, higher levels of fragmentation should lead to less negative party communication in parliament as well. The reasoning built on the assumption that uncertainty about which of the potentially many opposing parties would gain from a potential attack decreases parties' incentives to go negative.

Hypothesis 9 *The higher the fragmentation of a political system, the lower the level of negative party communication in parliamentary speeches.*

In order to investigate the possibility of a spill-over effect of negative party communication in campaigns to the parliamentary arena an additional hypothesis (Hypothesis 10) states that higher levels of negative party communication in campaigns lead to higher levels of negative party communication in parliamentary speech. I expect negative party communication in campaigns in general to be a sign of a certain (potentially negative) political culture and atmosphere that impacts the nature of what can be said in political competition. Thus, in countries with a high level of campaign negativity

on the system level, I expect parties to deliver more negative speeches in parliament as well.

Hypothesis 10 *The higher the level of negative party communication in campaigns in a political system, the higher the level of negative party communication in parliamentary speeches.*

On the level of the party, three variables are of interest: government status, ideological extremism, and nicheness. As on the level of the political system, this set of hypotheses mirrors the hypotheses regarding negative party communication in campaigns. With regards to government status and in line with arguments in Chapter 5 opposition parties are hypothesized to be more likely to go negative than government parties.

Hypothesis 11 *Speeches by opposition parties show higher levels of negative party communication in parliamentary speeches.*

Turning to a party's ideological position, more extreme parties are assumed to be more negative towards their opponents. In the previous chapter the mechanism behind this hypothesis was connected to a party's coalition potential—or lack thereof—in their calculus whether to use negative party communication or not, which can be applied to parliament as well.

Hypothesis 12 *More extreme parties show higher levels of negative party communication in parliamentary speeches.*

Additionally, the same argument about the lack of coalition potential applies to niche parties that only compete on a small number of issues.

Hypothesis 13 *Speeches by niche parties show higher levels of negative party communication in parliamentary speeches.*

To address the potential of a spill-over effect of negative party communication in campaigns to the parliamentary arena on the level of the political party I formulate an additional hypothesis in which I relate higher levels of negative party communication in campaigns by any party to higher levels of negative party communication in parliamentary speech by the same party. The mechanism is that parties face incentives to stay true to a party brand that has been established by behavior and campaign rhetoric in campaigns. I expect parties to signal to voters that they are reliable actors. By continuing to engage in a more negative way of conducting parliamentary speech, parties present a coherent party brand to their voters.

Hypothesis 14 *The higher the level of negative party communication by a party in the preceding election, the higher the level of negative party communication in parliamentary speeches.*

On the level of institutional factors, time to election and the disproportionality of the electoral system are determinants that I have already tested on in the case of negative party communication in campaigns. As in the case of negative party communication, the disproportionality of the electoral system should be included as an independent variable. With higher degrees of disproportionality party competition resembles that in a two-party system more, thus leading to higher levels of negative party communication. However, the degree of multicollinearity between disproportionality and fragmentation is too high in the set of countries I investigate in this chapter: The United Kingdom shows both high levels of disproportionality of the electoral system by being a majoritarian system, and lower levels of party system fragmentation than either Denmark or Germany. Of these two competing explanations fragmentation held up to be a robust finding in the previous chapter, thus is the main variable that captures

Similar as in the setting of an election, the timing of a speech matters with regards to its potential use as a communication tool in which negative party communication is prevalent: The closer election day draws, the more likely parties are to engage in negative party communication, as the vote-seeking logic becomes predominant again, even in parliament.

Hypothesis 15 *The closer to election day a speech is held, the higher the level of negative party communication in it.*

An additional variable that takes into account the institutional setting of parliament is the type of parliamentary speech. I expect the type of parliamentary speech that occurs to matter with regards to negative party communication. It is the institutional variable that captures whether an individual speech is part of the class of legislative speeches, or whether it is a non-legislative activity. I expect a difference between negative party communication in the two activities, namely that non-legislative activity is more negative than legislative activity. This is based on the assumption that legislative activity is characterized by positional differences. Agreement and disagreement is expressed in terms of positional differences, but less likely to be subject to negative sentiment. On the other hand, non-legislative activity is the realm of the opposition, and potentially speech that relies on personal judgements or accusations. Using the distinction between legislative and non-legislative speech allows me to approximate controlling for the issue content of speech.

Here it is evident that it is important to include both government status and the type of activity in models, in order to not falsely leave out one of the variables that might actually be the explanation of negative party communication in parliament.

Hypothesis 16 *Non-legislative speech is more negative than legislative speech.*

In order to investigate the relationship between election campaigns, campaign styles, and parliamentary speech, I rely on the full text of speeches held in legislatures in Germany, Denmark, and the United Kingdom.

6.2. Data and Methods

This chapter makes extensive use of the ParlSpeech V2 Dataset (Rauh & Schwalbach, 2020) which contains the full corpora of all speech produced by parliaments from as early as 1998, ranging to the present day. It contains data on Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The dataset thus has significant overlap with the countries and years covered in the Comparative Campaign Dataset on which all analyses that treat campaigning as either the dependent or the independent variable in this dissertation are based on. I have chosen to focus my analyses of negative party communication in parliamentary speech on some of these countries that are present in both dataset, and have chosen Germany, Denmark and the United Kingdom, in order to be able to read the speeches as well as laws governing parliamentary proceedings in their original language.

The main dependent variable in this chapter is negative party communication in parliament. The underlying concept is a one-dimensional understanding of negative party communication as the tone of party communication. How this definition and measurement of negative party communication means for the interpretation of results will be addressed in the conclusion. As I have mentioned above, I define it as the share of negative words per speech. The number of negative words per speech is measured by sentiment analysis, using the dictionaries from Chapter 4 and applied to the full text of speeches excluding stopwords. When I aggregate this measure to the legislative period in the remainder of the chapter, or a single day, I use the mean of all speeches held in that period to arrive at a mean level of negative party communication in parliament. I include all speeches held by MPs in their role as party representatives, but excluded all speeches held by MPs in another function, such as speech marked as being by the speaker of parliament on administrative matters.

On the level of the political system, the two variables that have already been introduced in Chapter 5 are the polarization of the political system and the fragmentation of the political system. Polarization is operationalized in the same way as before and captures the maximum distance on the left-right dimension between any two parties in each political system. It ranges between 17.63 and 97.14, while the mean is 29.83¹.

Fragmentation is operationalized by the effective number of parties on the level of the seats in the legislature, but following the same formula as the effective number of parties on the level of the votes did in Chapter 5. It ranges between 2.46 and 5.45, with the mean at 3.13².

The newly introduced variable to capture the potential spill-over effect of negative party communication in campaigns on the level of the political system is based on the multidimensional operationalization presented in Chapter 4 and relies on the hand-coded measure for two reasons. First, to increase comparability to the results on the determinants of negative party communication in campaigns. Second, as both Chapter 3 and 4 showed that the multidimensional measure captures the concept of negative party communication more precisely. The level of campaign negativity on the aggregate is operationalized by the share of negative statements—valence statements about other actors expressed in a negative tone—in relation to all statements made. The aggregated score ranges between 12.80 and 31.19% and is 26.83% on average.

The variable capturing the government or opposition status of any party is a dichotomous variable, and shows that 57% of all speeches are held by government parties, and 43% by opposition parties.

Each party's ideological extremism is again operationalized by the absolute distance on the left-right scale to the median party in any given party system. The values range between 1.66 and 54.07, with the mean distance to the median party being 24.29 scale points³.

The nicheness score is again the standardized score as described in Chapter 5 and ranges between 1 and 38 in this chapter, with the mean being at 19.9⁴.

A second new variable that captures the potential spill-over effect of negative party communication in campaigns on the level of the political party relies on the hand-coded measure, of negative party communication in campaigns. In contrast to the variable on the political system, the level of aggregation is the political party. The aggregated scores range between 0 and 39.41%, and amount to 26.66% on average.

¹See Figure C.1 in Appendix C

²See Figure C.2 in Appendix C

³See Figure C.3 in Appendix C

⁴See Figure C.4 in Appendix C

As the first of the institutional variables, time to election is operationalized by the number of days between the date a speech is held and the next election. This variable ranges between 0 and 1821⁵.

The operationalization of the content of parliamentary speech is a categorical variable that indicates whether I consider a speech legislative, or non-legislative speech, or whether it is unclassified. As ParlSpeech only contains the text of plenary debates, and information on the speakers, and their parties, but only limited information on the content of the speech—apart from the verbatim text—I relied on the included information on the point on the agenda a given speech belonged to. By distinguishing between common tools of parliamentary oversight—oral answers, written answers, interpellations—and speeches that are held while a specific bill is on the agenda I capture the distinction between types of legislative speech. The exact coding scheme can be found in Appendix C. A third of all speeches is non-legislative speech, and a fifth is legislative speech after this coding scheme. Another option would have been to use the full text of speeches and classify the content they are engaging with by unsupervised approaches such as topic modelling. Due to the limited time this research project could take I use the distinction between legislative and non-legislative speech as a proxy.

To test the stated hypotheses, I rely on ordinary least squares regression. The dependent variable is continuous, but restricted to the interval between zero and one hundred, given its definition as the share of negative words. However, as I am not interested in prediction of the dependent variable outside the existing boundaries of the covariates, OLS can still be used reliably. In order to take into account the nested structure of the data, I use clustered standard errors on the level of countries. I will present three models, entering the variables on each level (system, party, institutional) and following up with a full model. This mirrors the approach to investigate the determinants of negative party communication in campaigns in Chapter 5. I follow up with a closer investigation of legislative speech in contrast to non-legislative speech to determine if the results I find are affecting all types of parliamentary speech in the same way. In Appendix C I provide additional analyses by using the operationalization of negative campaign sentiment in campaigns that is based on sentiment scores.

Apart from these hypotheses that follow from the overarching theoretical framework of this dissertation, this section provides more contextualization of existing research on communication and patterns of speech in parliament. While these do not result in any formal hypotheses I test here, they provide important knowledge to contextualize negative party communication in parliamentary speech. While the attempt to connect

⁵See Figure C.5 in Appendix C

party behavior in campaigns to party behavior in parliament is novel, the interest in parliamentary speech is not. The richness of the data available in the form of parliamentary protocols, and the distinct role of parliamentary speeches as a visible tool for MPs to engage with voters and peers alike make it a valuable object of research interested in political behavior.

In the specific context of parliament it has been shown that opposition parties use more negative language than government parties (Rheault et al., 2016). However, not only the tonality of speeches is of interest, but also their structure and complexity: It has been shown that MPs who defect from their party line use simpler language than their peers and use more first person pronouns (Slapin & Kirkland, 2020). Kosmidis et al. (2018) show that parties tend to use more positively charged language in order to appeal to voters when they lack distinction from other political parties on the ideological scale. Similarly, Osabruegge et al. (2021) show that parties face incentives to use more emotional appeals in parliamentary speech when they appeal to a large audience, thus reinforcing the idea that behavior in parliament is indeed of public interest.

This points towards the multiple facets of parliamentary speech and the wide variety of purposes they have: Parties not only communicate their positions and virtues to voters as they do in campaigns, but also have to communicate with their peers directly. Even though legislatures have a certain arena function and allow parties and their MPs to publicly present their positions (S. Martin, 2011), the aspect of cooperation—which is not as present in campaigns, even though multi-party systems favor cooperation in light of future coalitions—is more pronounced than in the electoral arena. This is accompanied by parties being faced with the parliamentary agenda.

This also highlights an important discussion that delves deeper into what negative party communication in parliamentary speech means, and what is measured when it is operationalized as tone. Here, it is much more likely for parties to engage in speech about negative topics as part of the political agenda, than in campaigns. Therefore, concerns raised in Chapter 4 about overestimating the level of negative party communication by using a one-dimensional concept and operationalization is likely to be more severe than in campaign settings. I will take up the implications of this discussion again in the conclusion.

6.3. Findings

As the nature of the data in this chapter is fundamentally different from that of the previous chapter, I start out by presenting descriptive evidence and visualization of the

data at hand. Figures 6.2 to 6.4 show the mean value of negative party communication in parliament—the mean share of negative words per speech per day—across all days of each legislative period. The vertical dashed lines denote the election date. The gaps that can be seen in the middle of the year and are most pronounced in Denmark are the summer months in which parliament is usually not in session.

There are several observations that can be drawn from these graphs. First, the level of negative party communication in parliament—i.e. the mean share of negative words per speech per day—is quite low in absolute terms. This is striking even though the one-dimensional sentiment-based measure is overestimating the level of negative party communication. However, there is significant variation both across and within countries. In Denmark (Figure 6.2) the average level of negative words per speech ranges between 1 and 2.5% , in Germany (Figure 6.3) it ranges between 1.5 and 2.5%, whereas in the UK (Figure 6.4) the values are slightly higher and show on average between 2 and 4% of negative words per speech. The graphs show this variation within countries as well: There is no clear upward trend of increasing negative party communication in the time leading up to elections, but rather variation within the legislative period.

Second, this fairly low absolute numbers—considering the overestimation—is an indication that all languages share the feature that they do not use an overwhelming amount of negative words. This indicates that natural language is never primarily negative, as a hypothetical sentence that is 100% negative—thus uses negative words exclusively—would fail to convey any information in a meaningful way. This is crucial for the interpretation of results and inference: Even seemingly small effect sizes in the following models can indicate substantial effects within the observed range of negative party communication. To accommodate this tension between absolute effect sizes and substantial effects I am going to focus on the substantial changes in the discussion of results to come. Table 6.2 show the results of these analyses.

Moving on from an aggregate perspective, there is important variation to be explored in the data. The least negative party in parliament was the Conservative People’s Party in the Danish parliament in the period following the general election of 2007, after which it became part of the second coalition cabinet under prime minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen: On average over the whole term its speeches contained 1% negative words. In line with general expectations following from the hypotheses presented above, and from Figure 6.2 it is hardly surprising that this low level of negative party communication stems from a government party, and occurs in the Danish parliament. This is in stark contrast to the opposing end of the scale: On average, Labour MPs used 12% negative words per speech in the legislative period after the general election of 2010. Again, in

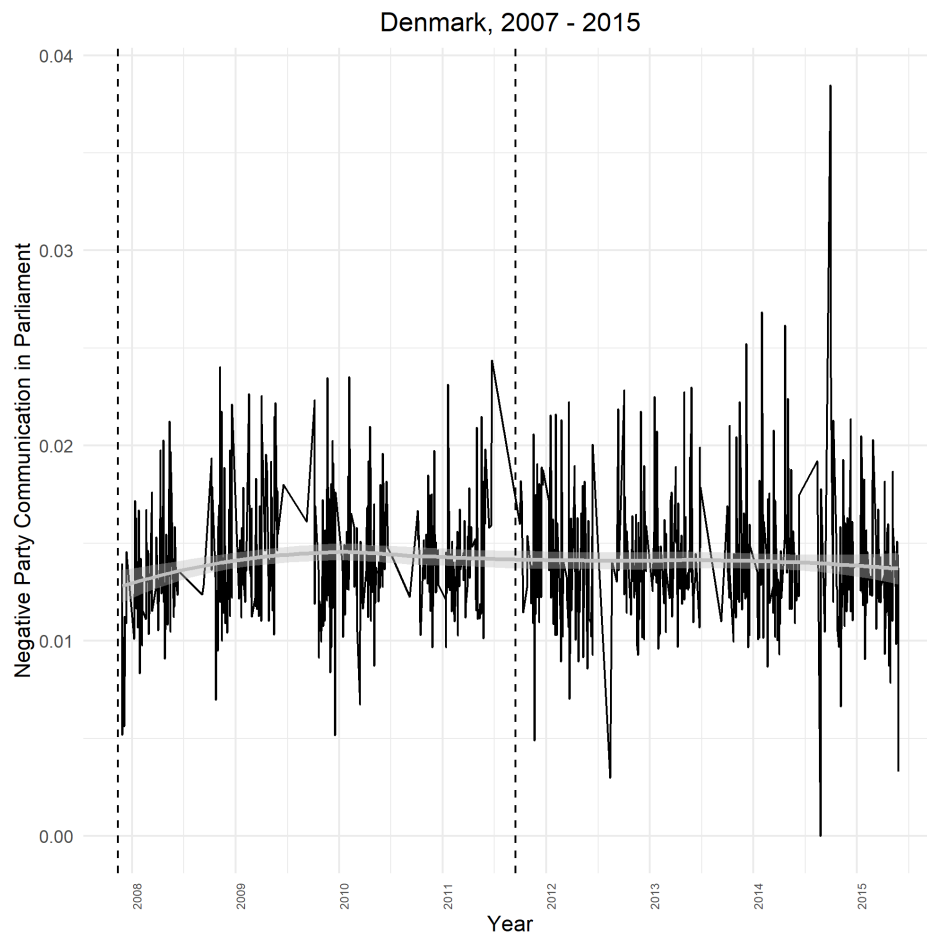


Figure 6.2.: Negative party communication in parliament (Denmark)

Note: Mean of negative party communication in parliament is calculated by day, mean negative campaign sentiment per campaign, both measures are based on sentiment scores.

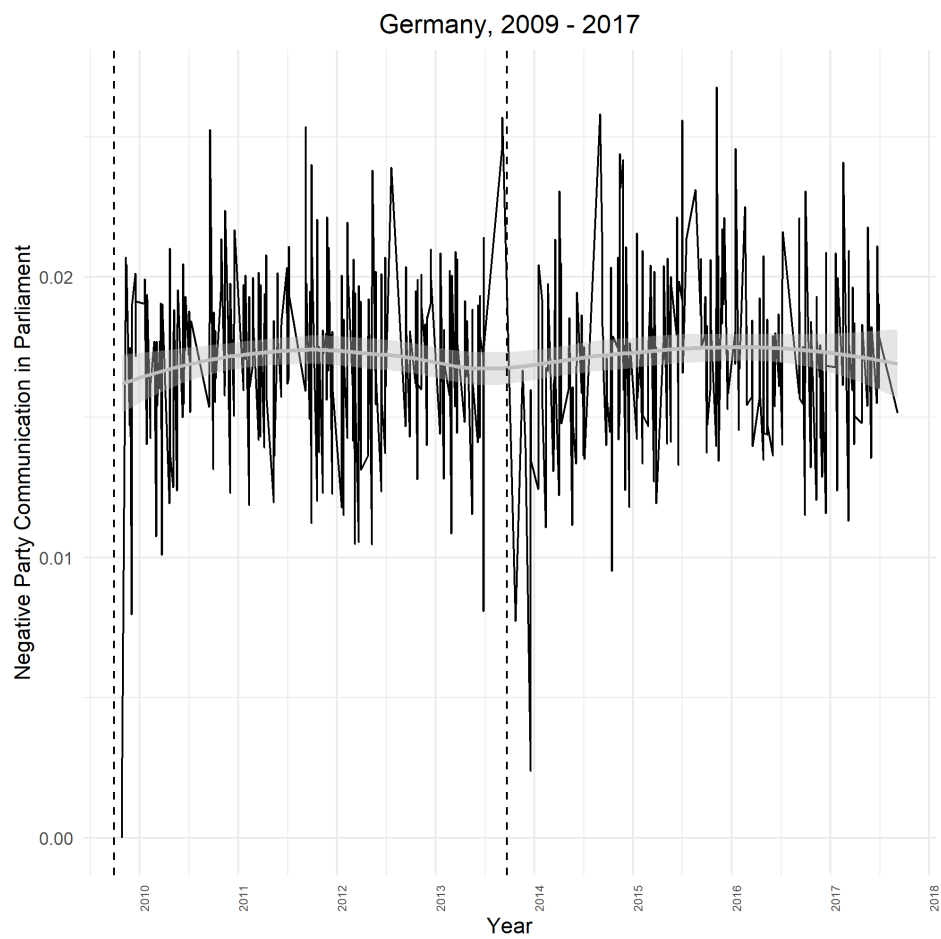


Figure 6.3.: Negative party communication in parliament (Germany)

Note: Mean of negative party communication in parliament is calculated by day, mean negative campaign sentiment per campaign, both measures are based on sentiment scores.

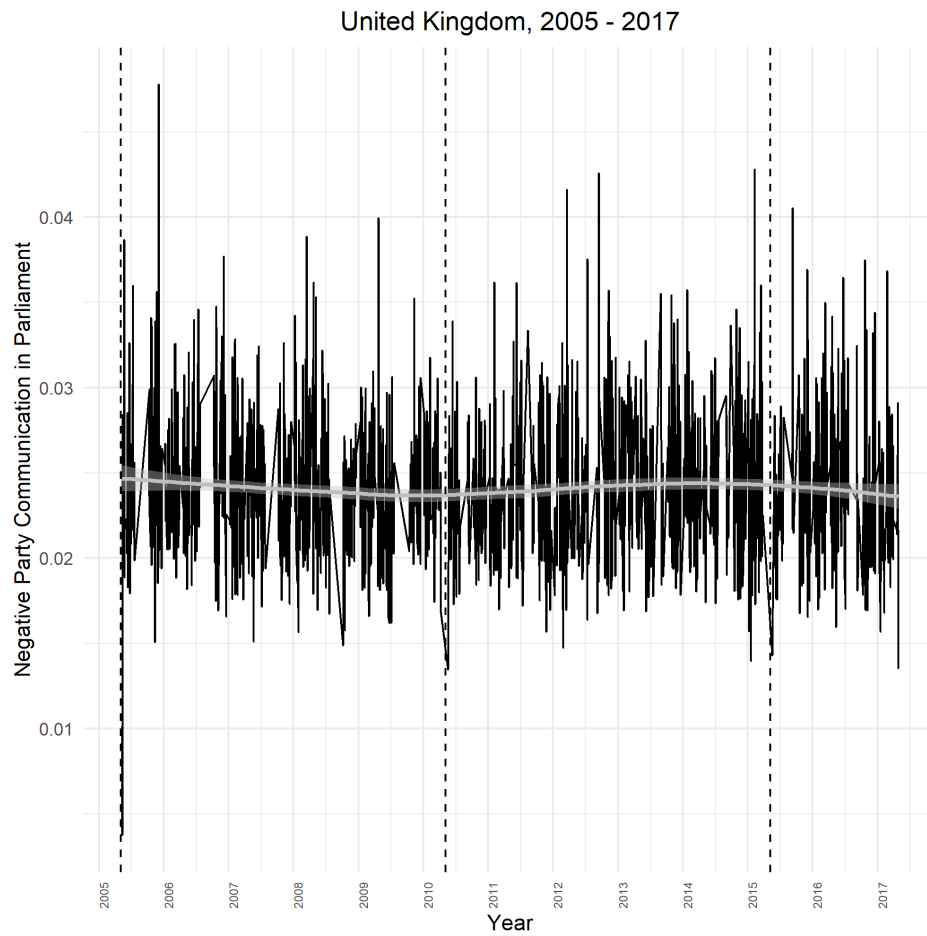


Figure 6.4.: Negative party communication in parliament (United Kingdom)
 Note: Mean of negative party communication in parliament is calculated by day, mean negative campaign sentiment per campaign, both measures are based on sentiment scores.

Table 6.1.: Share of Negative Party Communication in Parliamentary Speech

	2009		2013	
Germany	CDU/CSU	3.24	CDU/CSU	2.79
	SPD	2.93	SPD	3.39
	Left	3.17	Left	6.14
	Greens	4.12	Greens	3.37
	FDP	2.27		
	2011		2015	
Denmark	KF	1.03	RV	1.05
	V	1.92	S	1.40
	DF	2.40	SF	1.24
	EL	1.59	EL	1.04
	LA	1.30	LA	1.46
	RV	2.24	KF	1.18
	S	2.26	V	1.45
	SF	2.05	DF	1.77
	2005		2010	
United Kingdom	Labour	5.46	Conservatives	4.86
			Lib Dem	5.32
	Conservatives	5.74	Labour	4.78
	Lib Dem	5.49	Lib Dem	3.90
			Labour	5.24
			SNP	4.37
			UKIP	4.63

line with expectations generated by existing research, Labour was an opposition party in the subsequent legislative period. This shows the large amount of variation in parties' use of negative party communication in parliament.

There are three central findings from Table 6.1 that I want to highlight: First, as Figures 6.2 to Figure 6.4 indicate, the level of negative party communication in parliamentary speech is different in the three countries under investigation. This holds even under the constraint that the one-dimensional measure of tone overestimates the absolute level of negative party communication, because it does so systematically. Second, there is significant variation within countries. For example, in Germany, the Left became much more negative after the election in 2013. As I will discuss in more detail in Chapter 7 this can be understood through the lense of failed coalition negotiations between the SPD and the Left. Another example is the Danish People's Party, which acted as a supporting party after the elections of 2011, and shows much more negative party communication than the formal coalition parties. Third, the divide between opposition parties and government parties is not equally pronounced in all countries. It is for example striking that in Denmark, the future coalition parties—the Social Liberals, the Social Democrats, and the Socialist People's Party—are much more negative in the legislative period after 2011 than the incumbent coalition parties. This level drops drastically once these parties become coalition partners in the subsequent legislative period.

After these descriptive illustrations, I will move on to the presentation and discussion of the multivariate analyses in Table 6.2.

In Model 1, only the coefficient for fragmentation is significant, and points into the expected direction: The more fragmented a political system is, the lower the level of negative party communication in any speech is. In Model 2 no results are significant, just as in Model 3.

Model 4 holds the substantially most interesting results, as it is the full model including variables on all three levels—system, party, institutional. On the level of the political system, fragmentation has the expected, negative influence on the dependent variable, which was already indicated by Model 1. The substantial effect shows that negative party communication in parliament falls from 2.41% to 1.56% when going from the lowest to the highest value of party system fragmentation, as can be seen in Figure 6.5. This is equivalent to a reduction of about a third (34.27%), making this a substantial effect. I have shown that higher degrees of fragmentation lower parties' incentives to engage in negative party communication in campaigns, which is in line

Table 6.2.: The Effect of system-level, party-level and institutional Determinants on Negative Party Communication in Parliament

	(1) Model 1 System	(2) Model 2 Party	(3) Model 3 Institution	(4) Model 4 Full
Polarization	0.0000170 (0.00000992)			-0.00000633 (0.0000121)
Fragmentation	-0.00236** (0.000123)			-0.00243** (0.000150)
Campaign negativity (hand)	0.000401* (0.0000409)			0.000387* (0.0000617)
Government party		-0.00260 (0.00148)		-0.00391* (0.000599)
Distance to median party		-0.0000635 (0.0000244)		-0.0000223** (0.000000849)
Nicheness score		0.0000573 (0.0000719)		0.0000174 (0.0000204)
Party campaign nega- tivity (hand)		0.000364 (0.000118)		-0.0000684 (0.0000240)
Days to election			0.00235 (0.000000328)	-0.000000438 (0.000000102)
non-legislative speech			-0.00391 (0.00173)	-0.00120 (0.000401)
legislative speech			-0.00450 (0.00232)	-0.000609 (0.000313)
Unemployment rate	0.000180 (0.0000427)	0.000427 (0.000300)	0.000294 (0.000244)	0.000362* (0.0000789)
Constant	0.0192** (0.00168)	0.0114 (0.00445)	0.0218* (0.00242)	0.0244* (0.00309)
Observations	972349	972349	911767	911767

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Note: Dependent variable is negative party communication in parliament. Reference category for type of speech is uncategorized speech.

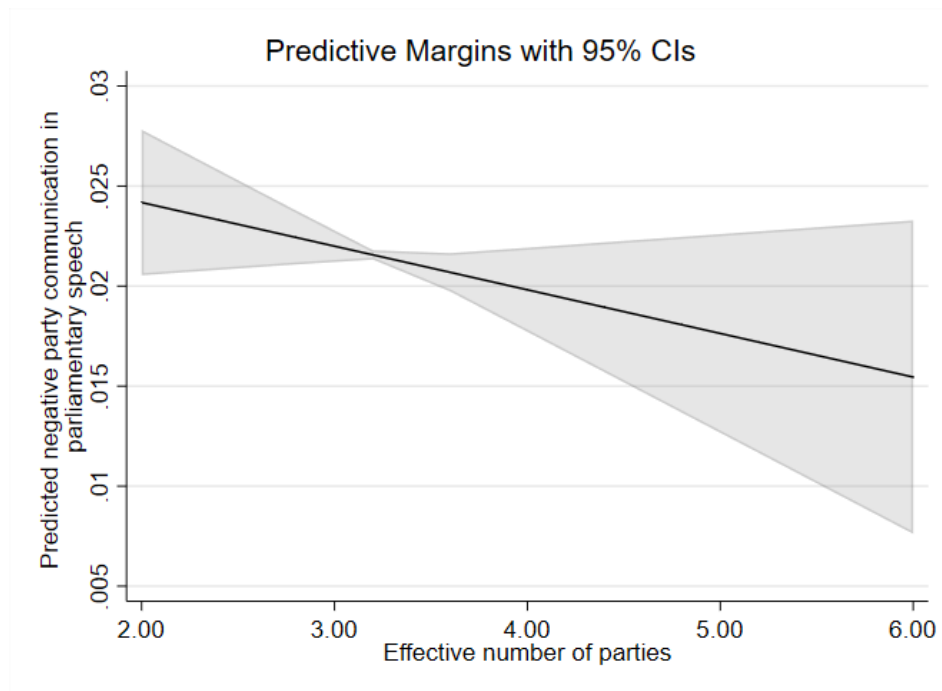


Figure 6.5.: Linear predictions for Fragmentation

Note: Dependent variable is negative party communication in parliament. Based on Model 4 in Table 6.2

with both the theoretical reasoning I have presented for fragmentation, and the findings with regards to negative party communication in campaigns.

On the level of the political system one of the newly introduced variables—negative party communication in campaigns—has the expected positive effect. Figure 6.6 shows that the predicted level of negative party communication in a parliamentary speech rises from 1.74 to 2.32% when moving from the minimum to the maximum of negative party communication. This corresponds to an increase of a third, which is a considerable increase. This points towards the existence of a spill-over effect of negative party communication in campaigns to negative party communication in parliament.

On the level of the political party, government status of a party plays a large role in explaining the level of negative party communication in parliament. Figure 6.7 shows that government parties engage in significantly less negative party communication in parliament in comparison to opposition parties. The predicted level of negative party communication in a speech by an opposition party is 2.4%, whereas this level is only 2% for speeches by government parties. Another factor on the level of the political party matters—the distance to the median party in positional terms. The substantial effect is rather small as can be seen in Figure 6.8 and changes from 2.22 to 2.1% when going from the smallest to the largest distance to the median party. As the distance to the

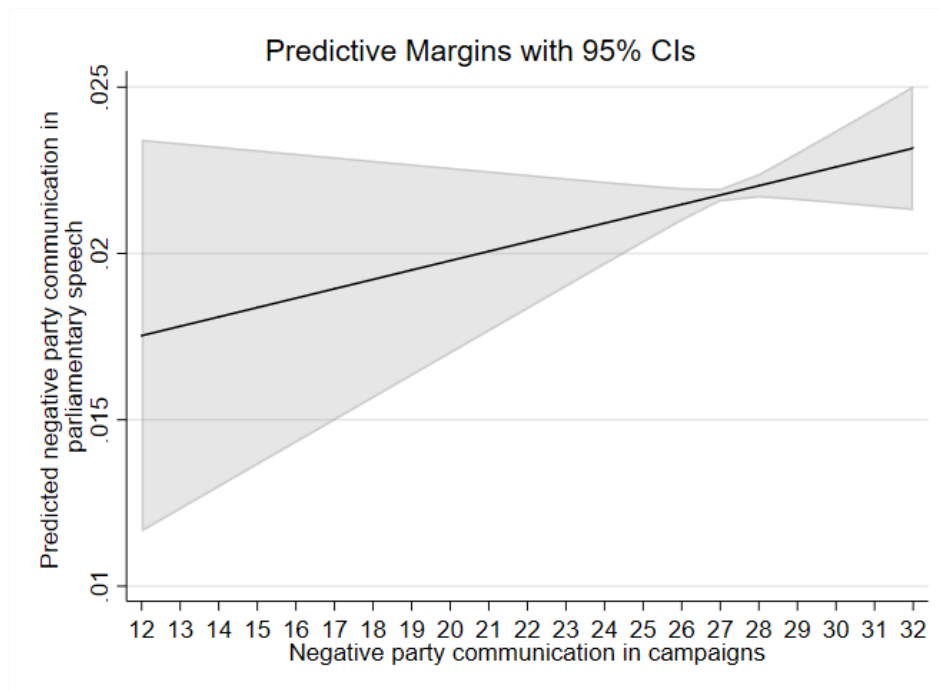


Figure 6.6.: Linear predictions for Negative Party Communication in Campaigns
Note: Dependent variable is negative party communication in parliament. Based on Model 4 in Table 6.2

mean party ranges from 1 to 55 on a scale that goes from 0 to 100, the substantial effect is indeed rather small, even when two parties are half the scale apart. In comparison to the effects of fragmentation and negative party communication in campaigns that decreased or increased, respectively, the predicted share of negative words by about a third at most, this is below 5% when parties move from being ideologically close to the median party in contrast to being ideologically distant from the median party.

Turning to the findings that are insignificant, and hypotheses that are not supported, two factors on the level of the political party do not influence its likelihood to release negative campaign statements: A party's limited issue focus in terms of its nicheness does not show significant influence on negative party communication. Furthermore, and speaking against a spill-over effect on the level of the political party, the level of negative party communication on the party level does not increase the likelihood the same party is going to go more negative in its parliamentary speeches.

On the level of the institutional variables, the proximity to an election holds no explanatory power over the degree of negative party communication in parliament. This aligns with the visual evidence I presented earlier, in which no clear upward trend in negative party communication before elections was visible.

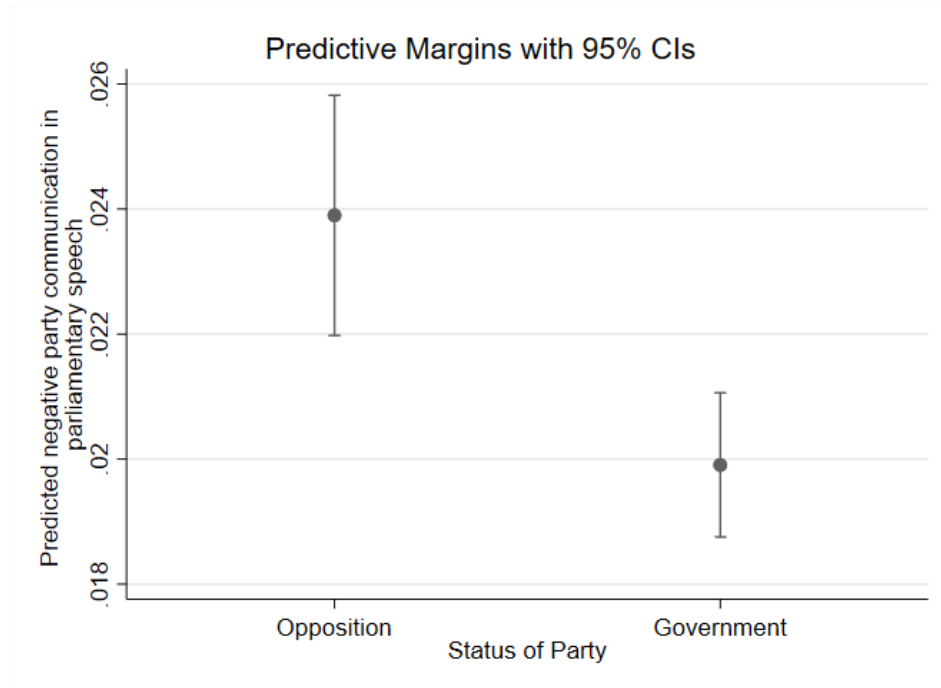


Figure 6.7.: Linear Predictions for Government Status

Note: Dependent variable is negative party communication in parliament. Based on Model 4 in Table 6.2

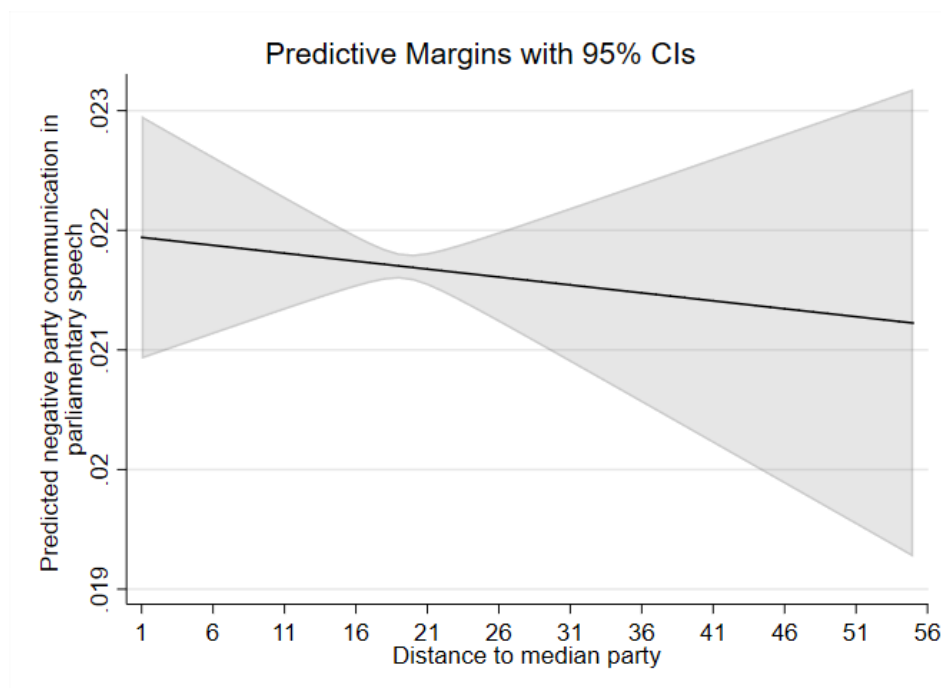


Figure 6.8.: Linear predictions for ideological distance to median party

Note: Dependent variable is negative party communication in parliament. Based on Model 4 in Table 6.2

Interestingly, the type of parliamentary speech does not influence the level of negative party communication that parties use, as the coefficients for legislative and non-legislative speech are not significant in comparison to unclassified speech. The coefficients are estimated by using the third group of unclassified speech as a reference group, but calculating the contrast between legislative and non-legislative speech separately does not show any significant differences either.

However, as Proksch et al. (2018) argue, different types of legislative speech can only be compared if the point of reference to which they are compared is being held constant. In order to address these concerns, I rerun the full model for legislative speech and non-legislative speech separately and report the results in Table 6.3.

These results show that the significant result of fragmentation as seen in Model 4 in Table 6.2 is not unique to legislative or non-legislative speech, but found in both types of parliamentary speech. Both the size and the direction of the coefficient are comparable to the results before. Interestingly, the results show that the effect of negative party communication in campaigns on negative party communication only holds for legislative speech: the linear prediction of negative party communication in legislative speech increases from 1.24 to 2.49% when moving from the lowest to the highest value of negative party communication in campaigns in the dataset, which Figure 6.9 shows. This increase is doubling the share of negative words per speech, which is a large effect in comparison to others that I discussed before.

Table 6.3.: The Effect of system-level, party-level and institutional Determinants on Negative Party Communication in Parliament (cont.)

	(1) Model 5 Legislative Speech	(2) Model 6 Non-legislative Speech
Polarization	0.0000274 (0.0000133)	-0.0000325 (0.00000758)
Fragmentation	-0.000850* (0.000178)	-0.00283** (0.000250)
Campaign negativity	0.000625* (0.000119)	0.000114 (0.000152)
Government party=1	-0.00220 (0.000643)	-0.00543 (0.00230)
Distance to median party	8.87e-08 (0.0000159)	-0.0000347 (0.0000120)
Nicheness score	0.0000435 (0.0000205)	0.0000468 (0.0000335)
Campaign negativity (party)	-0.0000309 (0.0000586)	-0.000140 (0.0000531)
Days to election	3.86e-08 (0.000000218)	-2.26e-08 (0.000000582)
Unemployment rate	0.000165 (0.0000432)	0.000309 (0.000114)
Constant	0.00687 (0.00274)	0.0327** (0.00223)
Observations	155510	293794

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Note: Dependent variable is negative party communication in parliament measured by sentiment analysis.

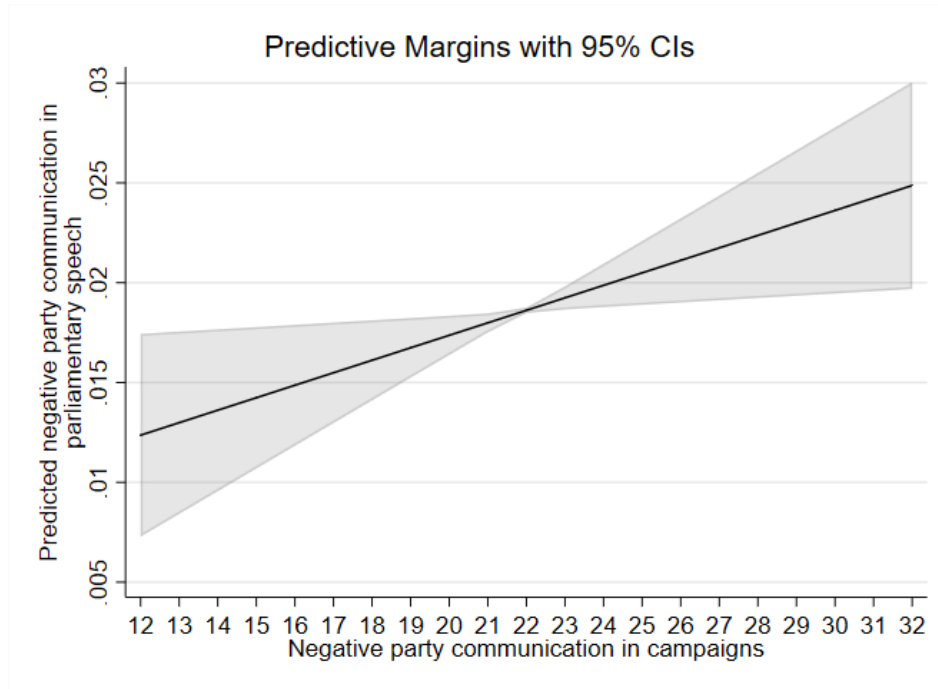


Figure 6.9.: Linear predictions for level of negative party communication in campaigns
Note: Dependent variable is negative party communication in parliament. Based on Model 5
in Table 6.3

6.4. Conclusion

This chapter investigated the determinants of negative party communication in parliament and tested whether a spill-over effect of negative party communication in campaigns into parliament existed by asking whether negative party communication in campaigns has an impact on negative party communication in parliament.

Concerning the first part of the question, the main findings point towards the existence of a common determinant of negative party communication. In the previous chapter I have shown that the fragmentation of the party system—measured by the effective number of parties—is the main driver of negative party communication in campaigns in the three countries that I selected to investigate negative party communication in parliament. In the large scale comparison that includes eleven Western and Eastern European countries the main driving factor is fragmentation as well, if the issues parties address in their campaign statements are taken into account.

In line with these findings I have shown that fragmentation drives negative party communication in parliament as well. Thus, findings for negative party communication in campaigns and in parliament point towards the role that the number of parties in a political system play for parties' decisions which communication strategy to employ. As the analyses are built on a sentiment-based measure, it is important to keep the

results from Chapter 4 in mind: The measure of the dependent variable negative party communication in parliament overestimates the absolute level of negative party communication. Therefore, the results do not allow to make accurate predictions of expected levels of negative party communication in parliament, but are able to showcase the variance across countries and parties. Furthermore, the results show the relative impact different independent variables have on negative party communication in parliament, thus being able to tell which variables have a larger or smaller effect.

My findings support that a party's ideological position matters for their decision to go negative in parliament, even though in the opposite direction than hypothesized: I show that speeches by ideologically extreme parties contain less negative party communication than more moderate parties. This indicates that the mechanism that I had proposed that builds on existing research—that extreme parties have less coalition potential and thus more incentives to go negative because the potentially risky strategy potentially reaps higher rewards—might not be applicable. I suggested that ideologically extreme parties face less incentives to engage in negative party communication because they have clear policy positions and can campaign on these policy positions in order to set themselves apart from their competitors in Chapter 5 to explain this finding. This explanation aligns well with the theoretical considerations about the role polarization plays in multi-party systems, and is applicable to parliamentary speech as well. Another potential explanation is that a party's ideological position has a different mechanism on negative party communication in the post-electoral arena than in campaigns: A potential reason for this lies in the fact that parliamentary speech occurs after coalition formation—i.e. after rewards have been distributed—thus cancelling parties' incentives to gain votes by engaging in risky behaviour.

With regards to the second part of the question, I find evidence of a spill-over of negative party communication in campaigns into parliament: The general level of negative party communication in campaigns—i.e. aggregated per election and country—influences the level of negative party communication in parliamentary speech. The relationship is in the expected direction, thus showing that higher levels of negative party communication in campaigns increase the levels of negative party communication in parliament in the following legislative period. Furthermore I show that this effect is not uniform across different types of legislative speech, but mainly driven by legislative speech. Here, a potential explanation can be the role of the agenda setter: As the agenda for laws—and thus legislative speech—is largely driven by government parties (Bräuninger, Debus, & Wüst, 2015), opposition parties are likely to use negative words and language to showcase disapproval.

7. Negative Party Communication and Coalition Formation

In this chapter, I focus on the potential spill-over of negative party communication in campaigns into the post-electoral arena, specifically into coalition formation processes. The choice of dependent variable—duration of coalition formation processes—is informed by the interest in the impact of negative party communication on the efficiency of the political system. To do this, I examine if negative party communication in election campaigns prolongs the duration of the coalition formation process that follows. This also means that the focus of this chapter shifts and differs from the two previous chapters: In Chapter 5 I presented negative party communication in campaigns as a dependent variable, while in Chapter 6 negative party communication occurs as both a dependent and an independent variable. In this chapter, negative party communication is treated as an independent variable only. The unit of analysis in this chapter is each individual coalition formation process that resulted in a coalition government in any of the 21 elections covered in the Comparative Campaign Dataset. This selection results in 16 cases, excluding those five instances in which no coalition formation process could be observed, as election results resulted in governments consisting of a single party, either in a majority or a minority situation. These quantitative analyses are supplemented with detailed case studies at the end of the chapter.

The main findings of this chapter are that there is correlational evidence that negative party communication in campaigns indeed prolongs the duration of coalition formation processes in 16 cases of coalition formation in Western and Eastern European countries. The case-studies support the existence of a "coherence mechanism" and a "relational mechanism", both of which were developed in Chapter 2 on the theoretical framework.

7.1. Hypotheses

In order to answer the question how negative party communication impacts the duration of coalition formation, and how other variables that have been shown to prolong

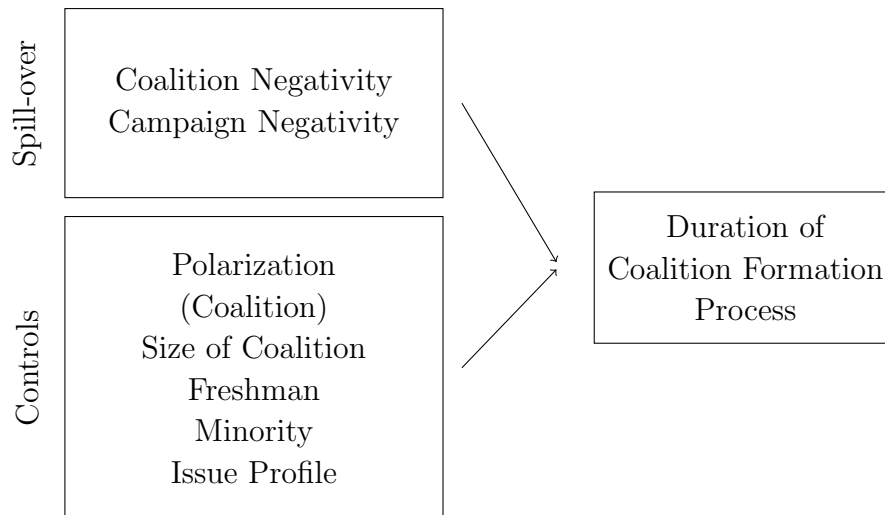


Figure 7.1.: Theoretical Model

the duration of coalition formation by existing research factor into these considerations, Figure 7.1 shows determinants of the duration of coalition formation. The main independent variables are negative party communication in campaigns, either between coalition parties or between all competing parties. The variables subsumed under control variables are existing explanations of coalition formation processes and referred to as examples of bargaining complexity and uncertainty in literature on coalition formation. Bargaining complexity refers to the complexity of the situation, for example to coalition formation attempts including a large number of parties with highly diverse policy profiles, whereas uncertainty refers to the (lack of) information on other parties' policy preferences actors face.

How exactly does the amount of negative party communication in campaigns impact the duration of coalition formation processes? I suggest that this association can be understood as being part of the already familiar concept of bargaining complexity: Building on existing research on coalition formation processes, I argue that negative party communication can be conceptualized as adding to bargaining complexity.

The argument goes as follows: The more negative party communication and thus hostility parties show during an election campaign the harder it is to cooperate afterwards. There are several possible ways this can manifest. The first mechanism I suggest in Chapter 2 highlights the role intra-party coherence plays. This "coherence mechanism" assumes that parties face electoral incentives to develop and maintain a coherent party brand. Thus, parties are also reluctant to conclude coalition negotiations too quickly. I suggest that this mechanism is one way in which negative party communication impacts coalition formation processes. Parties might be reluctant to enter coalition formation

talks with other parties they attacked during the campaign because they fear to appear weak or unreliable in the eyes of their voters.

Second, cooperation is potentially hindered on a personal level. Individual actors who are in charge of their party's coalition negotiations are faced with the need to personally overcome previous attacks, even if they were directed at the party as a whole and not at themselves. As I have argued this "relational" mechanism is at play between parties, and is the second way in which negative party communication can delay the conclusion of coalition negotiations. Candidates who attacked each other might see the need to cross the divide in order to be able to coalesce in the future.

In both of these instances a negative campaign before the coalition formation process increases the time needed for coalition governments to form, because they hinder cooperation. In any given bargaining situation coalition partners who attacked each other in the preceding election are going to face bargaining delays as they need to overcome obstacles that would not have been present in a less negative campaign: Establishing cooperation, trust and communication channels takes a longer time in a climate of attack and distrust.

The two mechanisms outlined above can be relevant for parties that end up in coalition governments together, thus focusing on the effect negative party communication between coalition partners has. However, the mechanisms can also be relevant to parties that ultimately do not end up in coalition governments together because negativity party communication between them is captured by the overall level of negative party communication.

Hypothesis 17 *The more future coalition partners have communicated negatively about each other before the election, the longer the coalition formation takes.*

Hypothesis 18 *The more negative party communication occurs in an election campaign, the longer the coalition formation takes.*

Apart from the novel suggestion that negative party communication in campaigns relates to the duration of coalition formation processes there is a rich literature on coalition formation in general to draw on in order to identify control variables. I do not include formal hypotheses for these control variables, but hint at the mechanisms behind them in the following paragraphs.

Research on the duration of coalition formation, although scarce (notable exceptions include Diermeier and van Roozendaal (1998), L. Martin and Vanberg (2003), Golder (2010), K. Laver Michael; Benoit (2015) and Ecker and Meyer (2015)) focused mainly on two concepts that influence how long it takes parties to form a coalition government:

uncertainty and bargaining complexity. Both increased uncertainty and bargaining complexity are hypothesized to lead to delays in the government formation process. The reasoning behind this is quite intuitive: Both factors challenge an actor's ability to be fully informed about other parties' preferences, which makes coalition formation more costly and harder to achieve.

Uncertainty describes actors' knowledge about other actors' policy preferences and positions - this is usually operationalized as being lower for government formation processes happening directly after an election, and higher in formation processes in the inter-election period. The reasoning for this is straight-forward: Directly after an election campaign parties cannot be perfectly sure where their potential partners stand: All potential partners need some time and cooperation to be knowledgeable about each other's preferences. On the contrary, if a new government has to be formed between elections, these uncertainties are reduced because parties already cooperated with each other in parliament up until that point. In this chapter the focus lies on government formation processes directly after elections, as the focus lies on analyzing how negative party communication in campaigns spills over into the post-electoral arena. Therefore, the level of uncertainty is constant across all cases in this chapter.

Bargaining complexity is usually operationalized by several indicators, most commonly as the number and ideological coherence of potential coalition parties (Golder, 2010; Ecker & Meyer, 2015; Blockmans, Geys, Heyndels, & Mahieu, 2016). The argument is that with an increasing number of parties a potential formateur has more possible partners to choose from, which makes retrieving all needed information and then acting on this information more time consuming and more costly. A similar argument can be put forward with regards to the polarization of the legislature: the more diverse preferences are, the harder it is for actors to find the common ground that is needed to form a coalition. I suggest including several examples of what can be understood as bargaining complexity in the terminology of research on coalition formation, as can be seen in Figure 7.1. These include the ideological polarization of a coalition, the fragmentation of the legislature, the size of the coalition, if any party in the coalition is unexperienced in coalition governance, the minority status of a cabinet and whether parties in the coalition compete on the same issue dimension.

I suggest that the ideological polarization within the coalition influences the duration of coalition government formation. This concept of polarization between coalition parties differs from the general level of polarization in the political system that I have addressed in the previous chapters. There might easily be a situation in which the polarization of the legislative body is high, because of the electoral success of extreme parties

at the fringe of the political spectrum. However, if these parties are small, or simply perceived as simply too extreme to feature in coalition formation—because other parties or actors do not even consider them to be viable partners—the general polarization of the pool has little impact on the government formation process. In contrast, it might even unite parties that are not located at the extreme ends of the spectrum and speed up the process of coalition formation. Therefore, I refrain from using the exact same measure of polarization as in the previous chapters that was operationalized by the absolute distance between the two most extreme parties in a political system—irrespective of them being members of the coalition—as the argument of ideological polarization adding to bargaining complexity addresses the coalition parties.

With regards to control variables that capture characteristics of the coalition parties, I argue that including parties with no experience in a coalition should have a prolonging effect on negotiations as individual actors in parties lack the experience of coalition governance and handling negotiations.

Another important control variable on the level of the coalition is its minority status. I suggest that minority governments can accelerate coalition formation because they allow parties to enter negotiations with ideologically proximate parties without the constraint of being backed by a majority of the legislature. On the other hand, they might be a last resort for parties if all other attempts at forming a majority coalition have failed.

Additionally, I argue that each coalition's issue diversity is of importance when it comes to conclusion of negotiations. While parties might be perceived to be far apart in terms of their policy positions on a general left-right scale, these differences might be less obstructive when they stem from positional disagreement on different policy dimensions. For example, coalition formation between two parties that both see the economic dimension as salient but disagree in positional terms require more deliberation than if parties competed on different dimensions. In line with the argument on polarization between coalition parties I made above, general differences on the left-right dimensions should make swift coalition formation processes less likely. However, there might be a key difference with regards to which dimension these differences actually occur on: Differences in salience of policy dimensions might be driving this general positional polarization. For simplicity, two parties might be reaching agreements in a short time period when they are competing on different dimensions and can agree on a division of portfolios that accommodates those differences. On the other hand, when both parties have very different policy positions on the same dimension, for example the economy

and taxation, agreeing on shared government policies and how to allocate portfolios is a more challenging task.

7.2. Data and Methods

In this empirical chapter I draw on two main sources of data. For all variables regarding elections - level of negative party communication in an election - I draw on the already familiar Comparative Campaign Dataset and supplement it with data on coalition formation processes by using the ParlGov Dataset (Döring & Manow, 2018) that records the start date of each cabinet and the election date that preceded it.

The main dependent variable is the duration of coalition formation. This is operationalized by the number of days elapsed between an election and the inauguration of the following government. According to Döring and Manow (2018), a new cabinet is recorded for "any change of parties with cabinet membership, any change of the prime minister, [or] any general election", I thus calculate the elapsed time between the election date and the inauguration date of the first government after a general election that is not a caretaker government. I validated this selection of cabinets by checking news paper reports.

As the research question is dealing with campaign dynamics and their proliferation in the subsequent government formation process, only government formation processes happening after elections are taken into account. Therefore the government formation processes included in this chapter are not an exhaustive list of all governments that occurred in the represented countries in the period of observation, and coalition negotiation processes that did not result in a coalition government are not included.¹ Therefore potentially failed coalition formation processes count towards the duration of the final successful formation process in my models.

The main independent variables capture the level of negative party communication in the previous election, both between coalition parties and on the level of the campaign as a whole. In accordance with Chapter 5 negative party communication refers to all campaign statements that express a party's opinion about another party's valence characteristics in a negative tone—by using negative words. Therefore, these variables do not capture positional differences with regards to policy profiles. Negative party communication on the level of the election campaign is operationalized by the hand-

¹In order to address this problem, Ecker and Meyer (2017) use a two-stage-estimation process in which the likelihood of a given combination of parties to start coalition negotiation is estimated in a first step. The duration of coalition formation processes is estimated in a second step.

Table 7.1.: Descriptives for the main Independent Variables

	Obs	Min	Max	Mean	Std
Coalition Negativity	16	0	66.67	38.36	25.08
Campaign Negativity	16	12.80	38.56	25.34	6.74

Note: Campaign negativity is the share of statements that are classified as negative according to the definition given in Table 4.6, which categorizes all valence statements about another party delivered in a negative tone as negative party communication.

coded measure and aggregated to the election by taking its mean. The level of negative party communication between future coalition partners denotes the share of statements counting as negative party communication in relation to all statements made by future coalition partners.

Table 7.1 shows the empirical distribution of the two variables. Surprisingly, it shows that negative party communication between coalition partners is higher than negative party communication in campaigns in general, thus indicating that the majority of negative party communication in campaigns is actually occurring between future coalition partners: The main independent variable *coalition negativity* that captures negative party communication between coalition parties shows that on average, 38.36 % of all statements made by parties count as negative party communication, with the minimum being at zero and the maximum at two thirds. This also shows that there is indeed variation in parties' communication about their future coalition partners: In some cases communication between them is much more negative than the general level of negative party communication in a campaign, while in other instances no negative party communication occurs between future coalition partners. This indicates that parties can indeed campaign as future partners and form alliances. The second independent variable *campaign negativity* that shows the level of negative party communication in a campaign as a whole—by measuring the share of negative valence statements about other parties across all parties—has a lower mean of 25.34 %, and ranges between 12.80 and 38.56 %. In contrast to the findings on coalition negativity that showed that no negative communication between coalition parties can occur this shows that some level of negative party communication exists in every campaign.

The control variable polarization between coalition partners is operationalized as the absolute distance between the parties in the coalition on the CMP's left-right dimension. This measure therefore captures the same dimension of polarization as in the previous chapters but only for coalition parties. Across all countries, the mean value of

polarization is 35.07, whereas the minimum is a distance of 10 (Poland, 2007), and the maximum is almost ten times as big (97 in Denmark, 2011).

For the remainder of the control variables, the size of the coalition government is operationalized by the number of parties formally included, while supporting parties that are common in some systems do not count towards the number of coalition parties. The rationale behind this is that these support parties do not gain control of any portfolios or ministerial posts.

I operationalize the concept of freshman coalition parties by including a dichotomous variable indicating if it is a party's first time in a coalition government and include an indicator variable if the resulting coalition government is a minority government.

In order to capture potential difference in issue profiles of coalition parties, I introduce two measures of salience of economic and non-economic issues for each party: the mean salience of the economic and the non-economic dimension for the cabinet and the absolute difference in salience of each of these dimensions within the cabinet. The operationalization is based on salience scores from the Comparative Manifesto Project, by using the distinction between economic and non-economic categories of the CMP follows Krause (2019)². The mean indicates the average issue attention to economic or non-economic issues within the coalition parties, whereas the difference denotes the dispersion of issue attention around that mean. Using this operationalization, the non-economic dimension taps into a variety of "new" issues, such as environmental protection and climate change, but also immigration.

²Krause identifies the issue categories Market Regulation: Positive (per403), Economic Planning (per404), Corporatism: Positive (per406), Keynesian Demand Management: Positive (per409), Controlled Economy (per412), Nationalisation: Positive (per413), Marxist Analysis: Positive (per415), Welfare State Expansion (per504), and Labor Groups: Positive (per701) as economic left. The categories Free Enterprise: Positive (per401), Incentives: Positive (per402), Protectionism: Negative (per407), Economic Growth (per410), Technology and Infrastructure (per411), Economic Orthodoxy: Positive (per414), Welfare State Limitation (per505), Labor Groups: Negative (per702) as economically right. With regards to the non-economic dimension he identifies Anti-Imperialism: Positive (per103), Military: Negative (per105), Peace: Positive (per106), Internationalism: Positive (per107), Democracy: Positive (per202), Anti-Growth Economy: Positive (per416), Environmental Protection: Positive (per501), National Way of Life: Negative (per602), Traditional Morality: Negative (per604), Civic Mindedness: Positive (per606), Multiculturalism: Positive (per607), and Minority Groups: Positive (per705) as non-economic left. Finally, Military: Positive (per104), Internationalism: Negative (per109), Political Authority: Positive (per305), National Way of Life: Positive (per601), Traditional Morality: Positive (per603), Law and Order: Positive (per605), and Multiculturalism: Negative (per608) as non-economic right. Summing the salience of the (non-)economic categories on the left and the right thus indicates an overall salience score of the economic or the non-economic dimension.

The formulation of hypotheses and the main dependent variable already indicate the unit of observation in this chapter: the individual successful coalition formation process. Thus, analyses on the country (election-)year level are needed. This approach has some drawbacks, as the number of observations is comparatively low. This is dictated by the time period on which I can access data on parties' campaigns, but nevertheless offers some insight into campaign dynamics. To test the hypothesis on the impact of negative party communication in campaigns on the level of the party system as a whole on the time coalition formations take analyses on the country (election-)year level are needed.

Given the structure of the main dependent variable that captures the number of days elapsed until a successful coalition formation attempt was concluded, the appropriate modeling strategy is based on a count model in the form of a negative binomial model, using bootstrapped standard errors to accommodate the number of cases.

The modeling strategy is heavily influenced by the number of cases. Ideally, including all main independent variables to test the spill-over effect of negative party communication in campaigns and all control variables in a full model provides the most comprehensive modeling strategy. As such this would result in an overdetermined model due to the low number of cases, I choose a stepwise approach. First, I present results including only the main independent variables in order to test the spill-over effect, followed up by two models including two sets of control variables: First all control variables that represent bargaining complexity and uncertainty, then all controls that address a coalition's issue profile. I conclude with a full model including the main independent variables and controls for bargaining complexity and uncertainty, as these speak most closely to existing literature on coalition formation, excluding the controls on the issue profile of a coalition. The main discussion of results will be based on this last model.

7.3. Findings

The following section first provides descriptive insights into the data at hand and continues to present the findings of the models that I outlined above. Regarding the cases that these analyses are built on, of the 21 potential government formation processes following the elections covered in the CCDS I include cases in which coalition formation processes took place. In all of cases these formation processes were successful and resulted in the formation of a coalition government. I exclude all those that resulted in governments consisting of a single party.

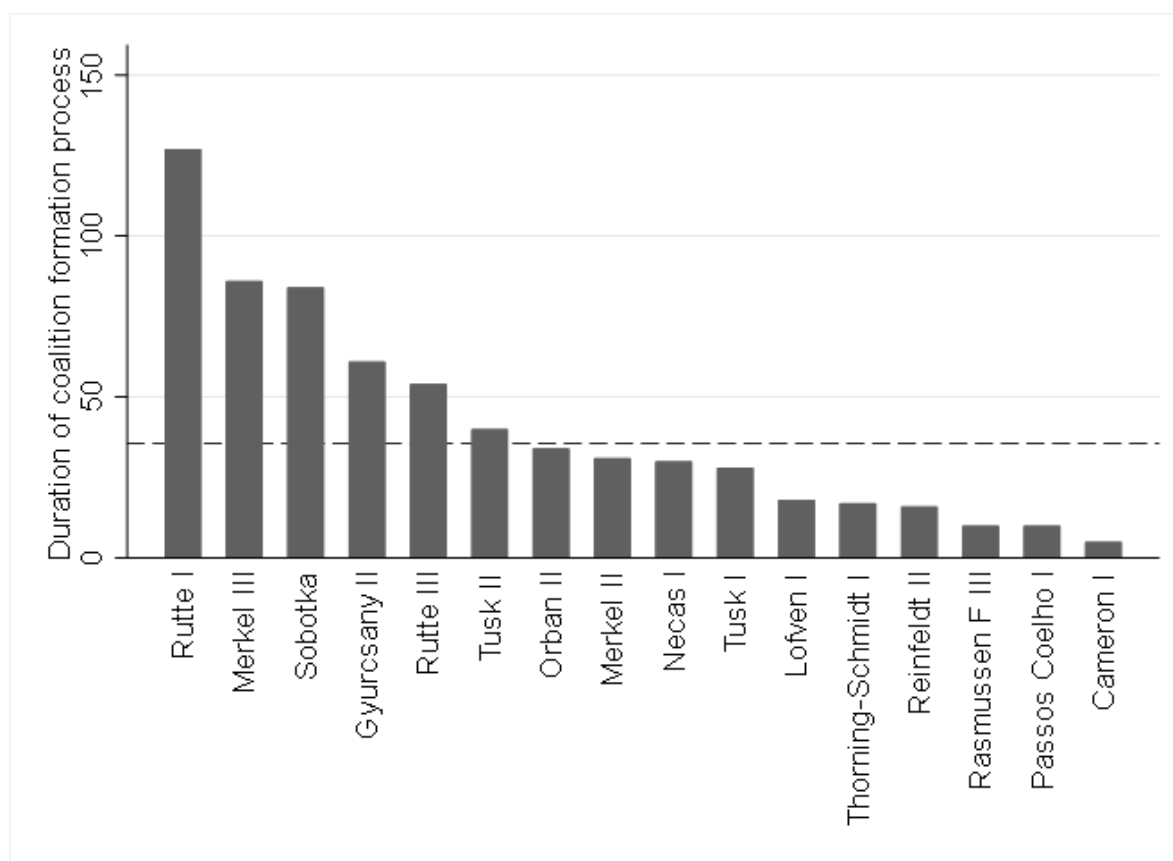


Figure 7.2.: Duration of coalition government formation process in days

Note: Includes all coalition government formation processes that were preceded by any of the elections in the CCDS

The shortest coalition formation process in the dataset follows the British general election of 2010 and lasted 5 days, while the longest one took place after the Dutch election of 2010 and lasted for 127 days or a little more than four months as depicted in Figure 7.3. On average, it takes a bit more than a month (41 days) for a government to form after an election. Table 7.2 provides more background information on the included cases.

What is the story behind these two extreme cases? The general election in the United Kingdom in 2010 resulted in the first coalition government after the Second World War. The last time election results had resulted in a hung parliament in 1974 no coalition government had been formed. Thus, the circumstances of this coalition formation were unusual, and due to the nature of the electoral system only a very limited number of coalitions were possible. On the other hand, the extreme case of the Dutch coalition formation in 2010 took a staggering 127 days to be completed and resulted in a coalition government consisting of two parties. Said coalition government still was a minority government that relied on the parliamentary support of Gert Wilders' PVV.

Table 7.2.: Overview over included cases

Country	Year	Size of coalition	Parties	Duration
CZ	2013	3	CSSD, ANO, KDU-CSL	84
CZ	2010	3	ODS, TOP09, VV	30
DE	2009	2	FDP, CDU/CSU	31
DE	2013	2	SPD, CDU/CSU	86
DK	2011	3	SF, SD, RV	17
DK	2007	2	V, KF	10
ES	2008	1	PSOE	34
ES	2011	1	PP	31
HU	2006	2	MSzP, SzDSz	61
HU	2010	2	FiDeSz-MPSz-KDNP, FiDeSz-MPSz	34
NL	2012	2	PvdA, VVD	54
NL	2010	2	VVD, CDA	127
PL	2007	2	PO, PSL	28
PL	2011	2	PO, PSL	40
PO	2009	1	PS	29
PO	2011	2	PSD, CDS-PP	10
SV	2010	4	FP, Kd, MSP, CP	16
SV	2014	2	MP, SAP	18
UK	2010	2	LibDems, Conservatives	5
UK	2015	1	Conservatives	1
UK	2005	1	Labour	1

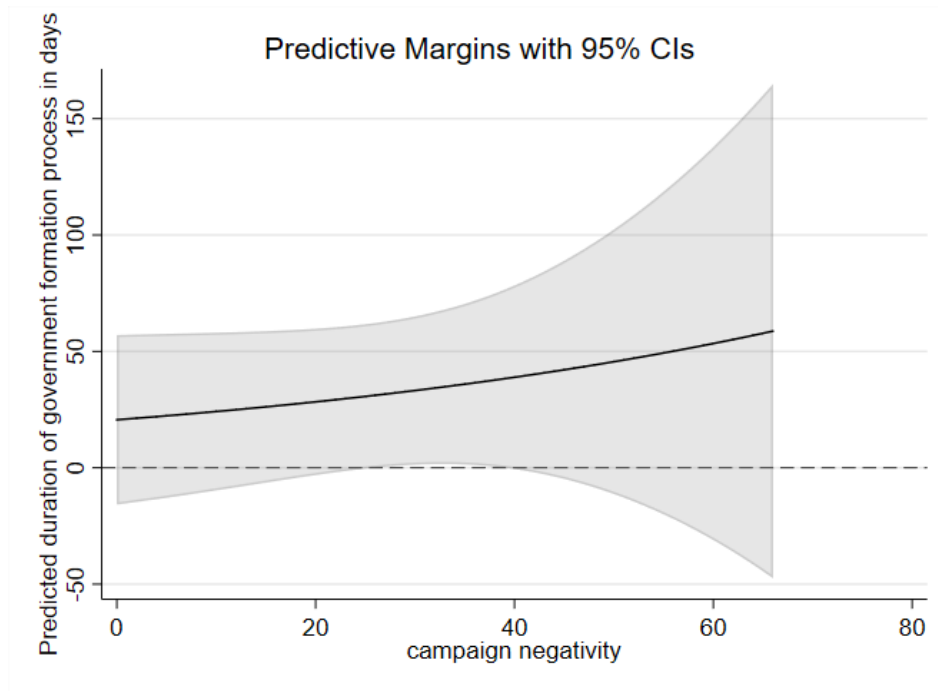


Figure 7.3.: Marginal effect of Coalition Negativity on Duration of Coalition Government Formation

Note: Based on Model 4 in Table 7.3

Table 7.3 shows that across all model specifications the direction of the effect of negative party communication in campaigns—both in the campaign as a whole, but also between coalition parties—is positive as expected. Even if the results do not reach conventional levels of significance, this indicates that negative party communication indeed has a delaying effect on the conclusion of coalition negotiations that are the subject of this chapter.

Among the control variables in Model 2 only the coefficient for polarization points into the expected direction, whereas the coefficients for the size of the coalition, experience and minority status point in the opposite direction. With regards to the control variables capturing the issue profile in Model 3, the results indicate that positional differences on the same policy dimension have a negative effect on the duration of coalition formation processes, whereas larger salience on the non-economic dimension prolongs the formation of a coalition government. I suggest that a possible explanation for this discrepancy is the heterogeneity of the non-economic dimension that captures “new politics” ranging from environmental protection to immigration policies.

In order to investigate the existence of a spill-over effect further, I use the results of Model 4 to investigate the impact negative party communication in campaigns on coalition formation processes visually.

Table 7.3.: The Effect of Negative Party Communication in Campaigns on Coalition Formation Processes

	(1) Model 1	(2) Model 2	(3) Model 3	(4) Model 4
Coalition negativity	1.015 (0.0108)			1.016 (0.0237)
Campaign negativity	1.022 (0.0544)			1.024 (0.159)
Size of coalition		0.829 (0.548)		0.815 (0.921)
Polarization (coalition)		1.002 (0.0205)		1.004 (0.0382)
Freshman		0.911 (0.536)		1.202 (1.636)
Minority government		0.890 (0.754)		1.066 (1.797)
Mean salience of economic dimension			0.946 (0.149)	
Mean difference on economic dimension			0.894 (1.132)	
Mean salience of economic dimension x Mean difference on economic dimension			1.004 (0.0343)	
Mean salience of non-economic dimension			1.016 (0.325)	
Mean difference on non-economic dimension			0.908 (1.228)	
Mean salience of non-economic dimension x Mean difference on non-economic dimension			1.000 (0.0427)	
lnalpha	0.439 (0.203)	0.568 (0.334)	0.497 (1.191)	0.428 (2.420)
Observations	16	16	16	16

Exponentiated coefficients; Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Note: Dependent variable is number of days until a coalition government was formed.

Figure 7.3 shows the marginal effect of negative party communication between coalition partners on the duration of coalition formation processes. In substantial terms this means that going from the lowest value of negative party communication between future

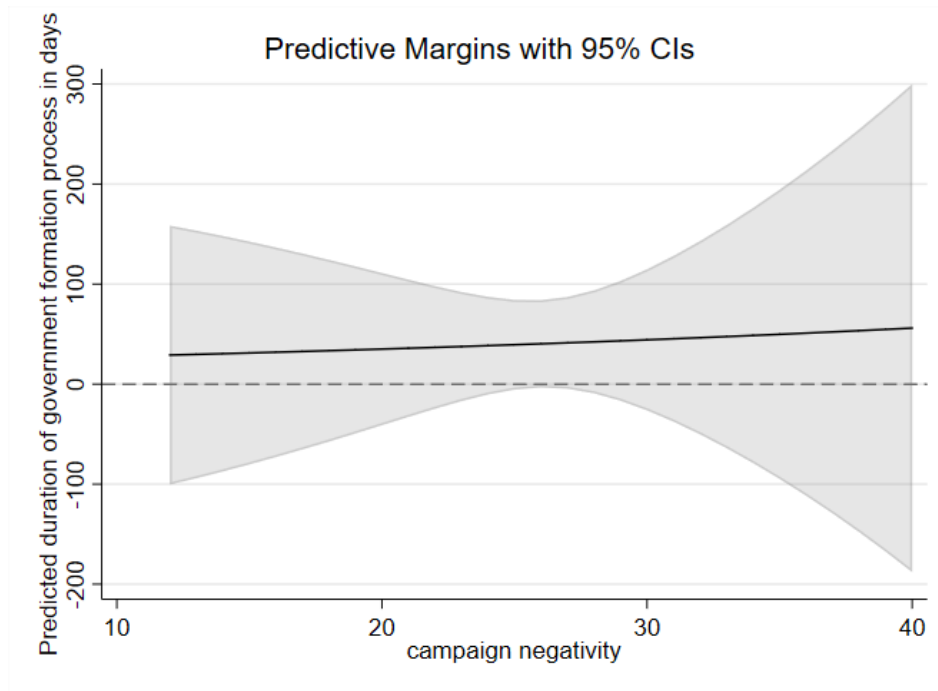


Figure 7.4.: Marginal effect of Campaign Negativity on Duration of Coalition Government Formation

Note: Based on Model 4 in Table 7.3

coalition partners to the highest value in the data—thus going from 0 to 66.67 %—prolongs the process of forming a coalition government from 21 days to 59 days. This indeed captures a large difference from three weeks to almost two months, as expected.

In Figure 7.4 I plot the marginal effect of negative party communication in campaigns on the duration of coalition formation processes. It shows that going from the least negative campaign (12.79% negative party communication in campaigns) to the most negative campaign (38.56%) increases the number of days until a successful coalition formation from 29 to 56 days. Even though the result is not significant, a slight upwards trend—in line with Hypothesis 18—can be seen. As the dependent variable is counting the number of days elapsed until a successful coalition formation is concluded, even seemingly low numbers such as seven - amounting to a week - can be a substantial amount of time when it comes to political decision making. Thus, even though the results fail to reach conventional levels of significance they indicate a potential spill-over effect.

7.4. Taking a closer look: Identifying the Mechanism

The results above indicate an association between negative party communication in campaigns and the duration of the subsequent coalition formation process. While the

two mechanisms presented in Chapter 2 are the underpinning of the hypotheses tested in this chapter, they are not directly tested here. Therefore and in order to investigate this association further, I conduct case studies to illustrate the coherence mechanism and the relational mechanism through which negative party communication in campaigns impacts coalition formation processes. These analyses supplement the quantitative approach presented before by a more case-oriented approach for a subset of cases.

7.4.1. Methodology

In the following section, I will focus on three of the 16 coalition formation processes that I base my arguments and quantitative analyses in the beginning of the chapter on: Germany 2013, Denmark 2011, and the Netherlands 2010.

I selected these cases for two reasons: First, the goal is to explain the effect of negative party communication on the duration of coalition formation processes within countries. Therefore, for each country, I chose the coalition formation process following the election with the higher level of negative party communication. The second characteristic I considered in selecting cases is the status of an incoming coalition government: I focused on newly formed governments rather than already existing coalitions being continued. This allows me to identify instances of cooperation between parties after negative electoral campaigns that do not build on existing coalition governments, in which a certain mode of cooperation has been established already.

For each of these cases, I searched relevant newspaper articles for indications of the two mechanisms. This means that in contrast to studying coalition formation processes while they are going on—through field studies, participating in meetings, shadowing negotiations—I have to rely on reports of observed behavior, as the period under study is in the past.

With regards to the coherence mechanism, this might include reports about parties having to go through additional processes, formally or informally, in order to gain the support of their party members. Another example could be reports or interviews in which party representatives publicly stress the difficulty of ongoing negotiations. Evidence of the relational mechanism, on the other hand, is harder to find, as there are hardly any newspaper reports indicating that party leaders are struggling with coalition formation on a personal level. However, it is still possible to find evidence of this mechanism in the form of smaller details, such as reports on party leaders being disappointed. This is especially relevant for the Danish case, which is characterized by low levels of negative party communication in campaigns, as I have shown in Chapter

5. However, even in this case, there are less severe forms of expressing dissent and dissatisfaction that I will return to in the case description.

As with the quantitative analyses, there is an important drawback to these case studies: I can only fully observe successful coalition formation processes, since reports on failed attempts are more scarce. All processes that did not conclude successfully are reported on in a lesser degree, as for example in case of the Dutch coalition formation negotiations processes in 2010.

One of the limitations of these case studies is that disentangling the effects of negative party communication from positional differences is not possible. While I do not claim that the level of negative party communication is the only factor that can explain the duration of coalition formation processes, I use these examples to show that it is indeed one factor that can influence how long it takes parties to form stable alliances. The main argument is that even if positional differences exist, negative party communication will add a further layer of complexity to the situation, thus delaying coalition formation processes.

7.4.2. Germany 2013

After the general election in September 2013, the CDU emerged as the strongest party from the polls. After negotiations, a coalition government was formed between the conservative CDU/CSU and the socialdemocratic SPD. This third cabinet under Angela Merkel would last until the following general election in October 2017. The following section discusses the coalition negotiation process as it was detailed in several newspaper articles. I will first present an overview of the process, to then summarize how both the coherence and the relational mechanism feature in it: I will highlight the coherence mechanism by investigating which measures the SPD took to convince its members to enter a coalition with the CDU/CSU after it had been sending opposing signals during the campaign and the relational mechanism on the side of the CDU/CSU.

In order to understand the coalition formation process of 2013, some context is required: Following the 2005–2009 grand coalition between CDU/CSU and SPD, the CDU/CSU had formed a coalition government with the liberal FDP in 2009. This shift from a grand coalition to a smaller coalition was partly rooted in the fact that the SPD had been confronted with the worst result in its history, where it had lost 11 percentage points and only won 23% of all votes. Poguntke and von Dem Berge (2014) argue that the outgoing coalition between CDU/CSU and the SPD had been unpopular and that both parties preferred coalitions with themselves as senior partner. Thus, the SPD

remained in opposition for the legislative period from 2009 onwards and tried to find its footing for the upcoming 2013 election. With regards to potential future government participation, the SPD communicated early on that it would not be willing to enter a coalition government with the Left and the Greens. The main reason was the SPD's assertion that the Left lacked internal cohesion.³

The campaign material that is coded in the Comparative Campaign Dataset supports this point of view. For example, a statement by the SPD explicitly states that “[i]t is my deep conviction that the Left Party is not fit to govern at the federal level. It takes irresponsible positions on foreign and European policy.” These descriptions of the Left as a liability are clear indications of negative party communication—attempting to diminish an opponent's support by criticizing their policies, values, and character traits.

Simultaneously, the SPD had been reluctant to enter a grand coalition again after the devastating results in the election and launched similar attacks against the CDU/CSU. These criticisms can be found in the campaign material, as well, for example when the leader of the SPD claims that Chancellor Angela Merkel is heading the “most inactive, most quarrelsome, most backward-looking, but most boastful cabinet since reunification”. This statement is an example of an attack which I have highlighted in the theoretical section on the spill-over effect of negative party communication into the post-electoral arena. Its target can be interpreted as both the government and also Angela Merkel herself.

In that section, I suggested that one potential mechanism of this spill-over effect is that attacks are potential obstacles to post-electoral cooperation and swift coalition formation processes. This is because parties need time to overcome former differences and assure the public that they are abiding by their campaign promises. Additionally, there are examples of the SPD attacking the outgoing CDU/CSU–FDP government, as well. For instance, Steinbrueck claims that the government “failed completely” and is lying to the electorate. The SPD's original wish to form a coalition government with the Greens—and only the Greens—had been communicated early on and was even referenced explicitly in the SPD's resolution at its first party convention after the election.⁴

³<https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/koalitionsaussage-fuer-bundestagswahl-2013-spd-chef-gabriel-schliesst-buendnis-mit-linken-aus-1.1266407>

⁴<https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/bundestagswahl-2013-rot-gruen-traeumt-schon-von-den-top-jobs-a-783967.html>, https://www.spd.de/fileadmin/Dokumente/Beschluesse/Bundesparteitag/20140811_beschlussbuch_bpt2013.pdf

In turn, the SPD had also been at the receiving end of criticism from both the Left and its future coalition partner, the CDU/CSU. For example, a candidate of the Left criticized the SPD leader Steinbrueck for “having to constantly contradict himself”, implying lack of consistency and untruthfulness on the SPD’s part. In turn, the CDU/CSU highlights its view on the internal disagreements of its future coalition partner by saying that “[t]he situation of social democrats is one of disruption” and also called into question the SPD’s reaction to a potential defeat at the polls as being “a sore loser”.

After the elections had been held, the majority situation in parliament did not leave the political parties much choice with regards to stable majorities: As the FDP had failed to reach the threshold for parliamentary representation, only four parties remained in parliament. Of these, the CDU/CSU had been the clear winner of the election but faced a slight majority of seats by the leftist parties (SPD, Greens, Left). In the end, this potential left-wing coalition did not form and is an example of a coalition formation process that is not observable. However, there is good reason to believe that the SPD’s harsh critique of the Left and its concerns about the Left’s capability to be fit for government that were voiced publicly and loudly during the campaign support my theory and point towards the association between negative party communication and duration of coalition formation processes. The SPD’s preferred coalition with the Greens as a junior partner became unlikely in light of the election results, as governments need to pass a formal investiture vote, which disincentivizes minority governments (Winter, 1997).

In the light of previous statements about potential coalitions, the SPD saw a grand coalition with the CDU/CSU as the most promising option but was delayed due to two factors: Firstly, the SPD had campaigned against a coalition with the CDU/CSU and now faced the problem to convince its members of the opposite. This is an example of the coherence mechanism through which negative party communication is associated with delays in coalition formation processes. Secondly, another obstacle to a swift conclusion of the coalition formation processes reflects the relational mechanism and highlights individual and collective actors’ needs to overcome differences on a personal level.

Turning to evidence on the coherence mechanism first, the SPD needed to convince its members to enter a grand coalition after the party had highlighted its reluctance to do so. As a result of this, the party leadership decided to hold a referendum for all its members to decide whether or not to agree to the coalition agreement. This reflects the first mechanism I identify in the theoretical framework about why negative party communication in campaigns might spill over into coalition formation processes

by highlighting parties' needs for a coherent brand: Entering a coalition with a sworn enemy might be perceived as being unreliable by voters. Thus, in order to showcase the efforts it takes to reach an agreement, parties can benefit from longer coalition formation processes: Their party brand would suffer if they abandoned the preferences they expressed during the campaign too quickly. Horst (2015) argues that the SPD's reluctance to enter a grand coalition before the elections took place directly translated into the party needing more time to convince its members of the need to join said coalition.

However, other political actors were not appreciative of the SPD's plan to involve its members in the decision to enter coalition negotiations. Instead, they suggested that this undermined election results. This becomes clear in an example of a statement by CDU's Kurt Lauk: "That the fate of our country lies in the hands of a few tens of thousands of SPD members is a perversion of the outcome of the Bundestag election."

⁵ Others insinuate that the SPD's attempt to involve its members would distract the party from the long-term goal of finding common ground and building a solid foundation with its coalition partner: "The membership referendum may be well-intentioned. But it leads to the fact that the SPD people in the negotiations always have only the next four weeks in mind and not the next four years. That's bad." ⁶

Irrespective of these different attitudes towards the referendum, in the end 78% of the social democratic party's members decide to cast their votes in the referendum. This results in 76% in favor of entering a coalition government with the CDU/CSU as senior partners, which could then be formally inaugurated after almost three months of negotiations.⁷

Second, there are indications that the relational mechanism was at work as well. As the electoral campaign had been fought harshly, as I have shown above, this meant that all memories of negative party communication needed to be put aside to enter coalition negotiations. As I have argued before, this is a time consuming process and requires effort, thus delaying the conclusion of negotiations. Some comments in the media refer to this mechanism and focus on the fact that both parties are working hard to be amicable. According to one such article⁸, former general secretary of the SPD,

⁵<https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/in-der-spd-waechst-widerstand-gegen-grosse-koalition-a-935332.html>

⁶<https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/union-und-spd-fehlt-in-den-koalitionsverhandlungen-das-grosse-projekt-a-932951.html>

⁷<https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/spd-mitgliederentscheid-sozialdemokraten-stimmen-fuer-grosse-koalition-a-939081.html>

⁸<https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/koalitionsverhandlungen-union-und-spd-sind-plotzlich-beste-freunde-a-929556.html>

Andrea Nahles, points out the value of inter-personal relationships in coalition formation processes: “A government is built on personal relationships, Nahles says. ‘It won’t work any other way.’” This again highlights the personal effect of attacks that I mentioned before—overcoming accusations such as leading “[the] most inactive, most quarrelsome, most backward-looking, but most boastful cabinet” (SPD about CDU, coding ID: 348) is difficult and time-consuming work if the goal is to forge good personal relationships, even if that attack is not necessarily directed at an individual actor.

In conclusion, this case highlights both potential mechanisms behind negative party communication and coalition bargaining duration. In line with the coherence mechanism, the SPD’s attempt to include its members in the decision whether to enter a coalition with the CDU/CSU by relying on a members’ referendum highlights a party’s need to present a coherent brand and not diverge from its campaign promises unilaterally. In turn, such a process takes time as well, leading to further bargaining delays. In line with the relational mechanism, negative party communication subsequently makes it necessary to overcome personal grievances after electoral campaigns, which is a time-consuming process.

7.4.3. Denmark 2011

After the general election in September 2011 and an unusually long period of negotiations, a coalition government was formed between the Social Democrats, the Social Liberal Party, and the Socialist People’s Party under the social democratic Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt.

Typically, Danish elections are characterized by relatively short government formation processes and the prevalence of minority governments. This is connected to the structure of the Danish political system and the prevalence of bloc politics—a system where coalitions are either formed on the left or the right side of the political spectrum, or minority governments rely on parliamentary support from parties within their own bloc (Green-pedersen & Thomsen, 2005). Additionally, governments do not need to pass an investiture vote in parliament in order to be inaugurated (Winter, 1997), which provides institutional incentives for minority governments.

Danish election campaigns and political interactions in general are characterized by low levels of negative party communication as Chapter 5 shows. Therefore, this case exemplifies that negative party communication does not always lead to dramatic disruptions in coalition formation processes, but that there are smaller ways parties can delay negotiations to convincingly argue that they are indeed having difficulties coop-

erating. I will first present the general context of the coalition negotiations. Then I will highlight the coherence mechanism in relation to the Social Democratic Party's attempts to reconcile with the Social Liberals after not extending their pre-electoral coalition agreement to them, and the relational mechanism on the side of the Social Liberals.

Contrary to the years before, the election of 2011 did not result in a swift coalition formation process. Instead, it lasted two and a half weeks. After the conclusion of negotiations, a coalition government consisting of the Social Democratic Party, Socialist People's Party, and the Social Liberals emerged that relied on parliamentary support by the fourth party in the "red bloc", the Red-Green Alliance (Enhedslisten). This is in stark contrast to the average duration of only four days, as was previously the case in the years 1990 to 2014 (Ecker & Meyer, 2015).

The outgoing coalition government consisted of Venstre (Danish Liberal Party) and Konservative (Conservative People's Party). The two parties had formed a minority government within the so-called "blue bloc" and had relied on parliamentary support by the Danish People's Party. During this period, two parties of the "red bloc"—the Social Democrats and the Socialist People's Party—had started to support the conservative government's restrictive immigration policy, while the Social Liberals had criticized it. This critique was not well received by the Social Democratic Party, who accused the Social Liberals of being "overly politically correct" (Qvortrup, 2015). In line with this division within the "red bloc", the Social Democrats and Socialist People's party had formed a pre-electoral coalition, thus guaranteeing to enter a coalition government with each other. The Social Liberals were excluded from this pact.

Shortly before the election had been called, the Social Liberals had entered an agreement with the incumbent coalition government and its supporting party to reform regulations on retirement and pass austerity measures. Public support for the government had been declining before the election, but calling an election offered the opportunity to receive public support for the government's austerity programs. In turn, the government's poor standing in the polls made the "red bloc" confident in their ability to win the election. Interestingly, early on in the campaign, the leaders of the Social Liberals and the Conservatives—two parties which are in opposing blocs—announced their willingness to cooperate after the election irrespective of which bloc would receive a majority of the votes (Hutcheson, 2012). This shows challenges within each bloc and hints at internal disagreements, even though this threat was not taken seriously by the Social Democratic Party.

Disagreements are also reflected in the campaign material. For example, a statement made by the Social Liberals directly criticizes a plan by the Social Democrats to use labor market contributions for anything but refunds by claiming that such a move would be “cheat[ing on] voters” (Social Liberals about Social Democrats, coding ID 333). The fact that this is the only negative statement reiterates that negative party communication comes in a more subtle form in Denmark and stems from a longer time period than just the short four week span of electoral campaign.

The election results—Venstre receiving more seats than the Social Democrats but the “red bloc” having more seats in total than the “blue bloc” including its supporting party—complicated matters further. This result rendered a coalition government reliant only on the Social Democratic Party and the Socialist People’s Party—that had been suggested in the pre-electoral coalition pact—impossible. Additionally, the Social Liberals had received one more seat than the Socialist People’s Party, which made it a more likely coalition partner for the Social Democratic Party (Hutcheson, 2012). Qvortrup (2015) argues that in this context “[a]fter all, it was Thorning who needed [Vestager] more than it was Vestager who needed Thorning”.

The impact of both the policy agreement between the Social Liberals and the outgoing government and the pre-electoral agreement between the Social Democratic Party and the Socialist People’s Party on the coalition formation process can be understood through the lens of the coherence mechanism. The need for coherent party brands hindered the Social Democratic Party to cooperate with the Social Liberals, who had openly showed support for a policy reform from the other side of the political spectrum shortly before the election. Furthermore, the Social Democratic party had openly excluded the Social Liberal Party from the pre-electoral coalition, thus signaling their reluctance to enter coalition negotiations (Hutcheson, 2012). In order to maintain trust with its members and voters, it was necessary to show time-consuming efforts to reach an agreement, even though the opposite had been indicated beforehand.

Additionally, evidence of the relational mechanism can be found in some instances. While these indicators are hard to detect in newspaper reports in all political contexts, it is even more of a challenge in the Danish case: Very low levels of negativity make very subtle expressions of negative party communication likely. These subtle instances can be detected in the Social Liberals behavior in the coalition negotiation process: Qvortrup (2015) explains that Vestager, leader of the Social Liberals, left the negotiations unexpectedly in retaliation for having been ignored by the other parties in the previous legislative period.

To sum up, the Danish case showcases both potential mechanisms that connect negative party communication to the duration of coalition formation processes. First, from the need for coherent party brands follows that pre-electoral promises of cooperation or lack thereof cannot be abandoned immediately after the election is over. Both the Social Democrats' and Socialist People's Party's pre-electoral agreement and the Social Liberals' threat to cooperate with the Conservatives meant that they had to signal to voters that negotiations are being undertaken, even if those threats of cooperation might have been empty. Second, the long-standing disagreements as well as exclusionary and negative statements that the Social Liberals were facing present a challenge to individuals and their ability to actually negotiate effectively with each other.

7.4.4. Netherlands 2010

After the general election in the Netherlands in June 2010, a new incoming government consisting of the Christian Democrats and VVD (Liberal Party) was formed under Mark Rutte. The government was formally supported by Gert Wilders' Freedom Party (PVV), an unprecedented arrangement in Dutch politics. Before the successful conclusion of negotiations multiple options were on the table and were explored in formal coalition talks. Cycling through all possible options in a formal setting takes additional time as well. I will first discuss characteristics of the coalition formation process and show how both the coherence and the relational mechanism feature in this case. I will highlight the coherence mechanism by investigating which measures the CDA took to convince its members to accept cooperation with the PVV and point out evidence of the relational mechanism on the side of the PVV.

The coalition formation process took 127 days. In comparison to the long term average of 90 days, this is well above the average (Ecker & Meyer, 2015). However, the specific coalition between Christian Democrats and Liberals that formed had been unprecedented, as this was the first time a minority government relying on parliamentary support by another party had been formed. Additionally, this was the first time the Christian Democratic Party took on the role of junior partner in a coalition government. In terms of seats, even relying in the Freedom Party's support only resulted in a marginal majority of 76 of 150 seats (Lucardie & Voerman, 2011).

During the election campaign, the resignation of Social Democratic cabinet members that led to the end of the outgoing government made it unlikely that the same parties would coalesce again in the same made it unlikely that CDA and PvdA would cooperate again. Matters were further complicated by the election results: The Christian

Democrats faced their worst election results yet, while the Liberals became the largest party before the Social Democratic Party. The Freedom Party was dubbed the winner of the election as it had seen the biggest relative win and became the third largest party (Lucardie & Voerman, 2011). This reflects the high fragmentation of the Dutch parliamentary system and makes coalition formation notoriously difficult. Usually, the largest party is appointed informateur first (Lucardie & Voerman, 2011), which was the case in the first formal rounds of coalition negotiations.

Evidence of the coherence mechanism can be found in the quick abandonment of talks between the later coalition parties VVD, CDA, and PVV and the following decision by the CDA to involve its members: The CDA had been vocal about its internal dispute about coalescing with the Freedom Party during the campaign. Several top tier politicians and former ministers agreed that the populism of Wilders posed a challenge to the Christian Democratic Party and the democratic system as such but disagreed on how to deal with these challenges. Especially former Minister of the Interior, Piet Hein Donner, pointed out that the Freedom Party's claim to represent the will of the people while excluding parts of the population stood at odds with the Christian Democrats' interpretation of being a people's party. He thus claimed that cooperation with the Freedom Party would contradict the long-standing tradition of being a broad party at the political center. Former Justice Minister Hirsch Ballin claimed that Wilders was driving a wedge into society, which again stands at odds with the Christian Democrats' image of being a people's party.

Ultimately, after more rounds of unsuccessful negotiations, the idea of a formal coalition between the Christian Democrats and the Liberals that relied on parliamentary support by the Freedom Party was formed. In order to accommodate the internal concerns, the Christian Democrats held a referendum among its members to approve the deal with agreement of 68% of its members (Lucardie & Voerman, 2011). This is another example of parties' attempt to cultivate a coherent party brand and not betray campaign promises.

The relational mechanism—negotiators having to overcome harsh criticism of themselves or their party in order to conclude negotiations—can be found in the Freedom Party's communication: Wilders claimed he felt like a “pariah” and thus was reluctant to join for a second round of coalition negotiations after the first attempt with the Christian Democrats and the Liberals failed ⁹. This is a clear example of the hard and

⁹<https://www.reuters.com/article/cnews-us-dutch-politics-idCATRE6823ZD20100903>, <http://www.rnw.nl/english/article/wilders-rejects-new-invitation-join-coalition-talks>

time-consuming process that overcoming harsh criticism entails, but it is also reflective of the strong position that the Freedom Party was in: It was hard to find a parliamentary majority without it, even though the formal coalition parties were reluctant to enter a formal coalition with a populist party.

Thus, in the Dutch case, both mechanisms which cause negative party communication to affect coalition formation processes are documented. The need for a coherent party brand made the Christian Democrats reluctant to cooperate with Geert Wilders' party as that could have been interpreted as a deviation from the long-standing tradition of a central political party that claims to represent a broad consensus and rests on Christian values. In order to signal coherence, a member referendum was conducted, similar to the German case I presented above. Additionally, the relational mechanism—individual actors and parties as a whole needing to overcome negative party communication directed at them—is present in Wilders' claims that his party has been treated poorly by the established parties.

7.4.5. Coherence and Relationships Matter

In this section I provided a more detailed account of the mechanisms that connect negative party communication in campaigns to the duration of coalition formation processes. In line with my theoretical argument, I identify instances of negative party communication between incoming coalition partners and show how they can delay bargaining processes. This delay can either happen through parties' needs to present coherent brands to their voters and stay true to their campaign promises in order to appear trustworthy or reliable, or through individuals' difficulties cooperating after being met with harsh criticism directed at either themselves or their parties.

Finally, all three cases support the main theoretical argument concerning the influence of negative party communication on the duration of coalition formation processes. I find evidence of the suggested mechanism across different political systems, different party systems, and different traditions of how to conduct campaigns, what acceptable ways of interacting with other political actors are, and what is considered polite or impolite. This lends additional credibility to the quantitative analyses that I present earlier on in this chapter.

I therefore carefully suggest that while by no means being the only explanation for long and hard coalition formation processes, negative party communication can indeed explain bargaining delays through two different mechanisms. Concerning the generalizability of these findings beyond the 16 cases I study in the quantitative analyses and the

three cases I provide supplemental information on in a more case-oriented approach, I suggest that the variety of characteristics of each case provide a basis on which to build for future larger studies.

7.5. Conclusion

This chapter provides answers to the second part of the main research question by investigating if there are any spill-over effects of negative party communication in campaigns into politics beyond campaigns. I chose coalition formation processes as a concrete example of politics beyond campaigns as the direct connection to election results makes this a most likely case of spill-over effects to manifest. The correlational evidence hints towards some influence of the level of negative party communication in a campaign on the duration of the coalition formation process, both when the level of negativity in a campaign as a whole is taken into account, and when negativity between coalition parties only is taken into account. However, due to the low number of cases this interpretation has to be cautious. The results hint at a spill-over effect of negative communication in campaigns between coalition partners into coalition formation processes: It slows down or prolongs their coalition bargaining. This reading of the results is indicated by Figure 7.3 which shows that higher levels of negative party communication tend to prolong the government formation process for coalition governments even though it is not statistically significant.

These quantitative analyses are supplemented by more detailed case studies of three elections in which I illustrate how delays in coalition bargaining procedures are associated with higher levels of negative party communication: I show examples of both the "coherence mechanism" and the "relational mechanism" through which negative party communication prolongs coalition formation duration.

The generalizability of the results presented in this chapter is limited based on the quantitative analyses alone. This is due to the low number of cases, and the political backdrop of the coalition formation processes under study as they all occur around and after the Financial Crisis. However, as additional analyses that focused on selected cases in depth are able to support these arguments and to identify the mechanism behind coalition bargaining delays I suggest that there is indeed support for the hypothesized impact of negative party communication on coalition formation that is present in various political systems and contexts. However, in order to confirm these findings additional data on both campaign strategies and coalition formation processes over a longer time period covering more countries would be beneficial.

In the next chapter I will present how these findings, and the findings from the two previous empirical chapters, tie into the larger theoretical framework and in what way they provide answers to the overarching research question what the relationship between negative party communication and parties' interactions after elections is.

8. Conclusion

In Chapter 1, I stated the main research question by asking what are the determinants of negative party communication in election campaigns and beyond, and is there any spill-over from campaigns to politics after the election? In this concluding chapter, I will revisit the theoretical and empirical approach I chose to answer this question. I will present the main findings from each chapter briefly, to then shed light onto their implications for the theoretical framework. A discussion of how the dissertation contributes to the existing literature on negative party communication follows.

I proposed a theoretical framework to conceptualize and answer the main research question theoretically. This framework proposes a way to understand the overarching phenomenon of negative party communication by theorizing about a spill-over effect from electoral campaigns to the post-electoral arena. The following section contains an overview over the main findings, starting with the theoretical chapters.

First, Chapter 3 shows that negative party communication in campaigns is a multidimensional concept, that can be used as a point of departure for a one-dimensional concept of negative party communication by focusing on the dimension that captures the underlying multidimensional concept best. I identified this dimension to be tone, or sentiment. Contrary to the dimensions of target or content, tone used on its own avoids capturing positive party communication as well. Hence, if the research context requires a one-dimensional approach, tone is the preferred dimension chose. However, such an approach does not come without shortcomings as I pinpoint in this chapter and explore further in Chapter 4.

Second, Chapter 4 presented the main source of data on election campaigns that this dissertation is based on which builds on a multidimensional conceptualization of negative party communication in campaigns. After this presentation I use the main finding from Chapter 3 to explore a new measure of negative campaign communication by operationalizing it as negative tone. This measure based on sentiment of text correlates with a multidimensional measure of negative party communication. However, due to the significant amount of false positives, this sentiment-based measure overestimates the absolute level of negative party communication both in campaigns and parliamentary

speech. I suggested that this method nevertheless allows for a time and cost efficient way of measuring negative party communication that does not require extensive training of expert coders, if resource restrictions require simplification of the concept and measurement to one single dimension. However, this measurement approach limits the interpretation to focus on relative variation of negative party communication across parties within a country rather than absolute levels of negative party communication.

Third, Chapter 5 set out to investigate the first step in the theoretical model, treating negative party communication in campaigns as a dependent variable and examining which factors on the levels of the political system, the political party, and the institutional setting influence negative party communication in campaigns. Fragmentation holds the most explanatory power for the occurrence of negative party communication in campaigns, as it is the most stable finding across different model specifications: Fragmentation drives negative party communication—when it is operationalized in a multidimensional understanding as negative valence statements about other actors—in the large comparative perspective that draws on data from ten Western and Eastern European countries. Fragmentation also drives negative party communication in campaigns when it is operationalized one-dimensionally as negative tone and investigated in an analysis of Denmark, Germany and the United Kingdom.

The findings in this chapter also highlight the role that issues play with regards to negative party communication for three different reasons. Firstly, and in connection to the one-dimensional measure, negative party communication will be overestimated, especially for issues that are talked about negatively even if parties do not address any other actors specifically. Secondly, some of these issues might be related to societal problems that parties face incentives to solve, such as unemployment, economic crises, terrorism or other relevant problems. This suggests a direct impact of issues on negative party communication. This second point is relevant for both multidimensional and one-dimensional conceptualizations of negative party communication: As positional competitions becomes harder on these issues, parties face incentives to attack each other in order to distinguish themselves from competitors. Thirdly, the effect of polarization is shown to be confounded with issues, as the commonly used *rile-index* captures a certain degree of positional competition as well.

Fourth, Chapter 6 took a step further and used negative party communication in parliamentary speech as an example of negative party communication beyond election campaigns and tested whether it is influenced by the same determinants as negative party communication in campaigns. The results can be clustered along four main lines: First, negative party communication in parliament is associated with fragmentation. As

this is the case in negative party communication in campaigns as well, negative party communication is driven by the same factors irrespective of the institutional context it appears in. Second, it is mainly determinants on the level of the political system that relate to negative party communication, whereas determinants on the level of the political party or the institutional level are less important. Third, with regards to the potential spill-over of negative party communication in campaigns to arenas beyond campaigns the results show that it can be identified: Negative party communication in campaigns tends to increase negative party communication in parliament. Fourth, the institutional standing of each political party and whether it is in government or opposition explains its use of negative party communication in parliament—which differs from fragmentation which impacts negative party communication both in both campaigns and beyond. This points towards the fact that the institutional structure of parliament highlights institutional roles more than a more egalitarian playing field in campaigns did.

Fifth, Chapter 7 used a different angle, treating negative party communication in campaigns as an independent variable and examining its effects on the duration of coalition formation processes. The results indicate the expected positive relationship between campaign negativity and duration of coalition government formation process. This interpretation is supported by case-studies in which I present empirical indicators of two mechanisms, through which negative party communication leads to longer coalition formation processes.

8.1. Contributions

In light of these findings the main contributions of this dissertation speak to the three main gaps I have identified in the literature on negative party communication in campaigns by conceptualizing and investigating negative party communication beyond campaigns, by taking effects on parties into account and by employing a comparative perspective. Additional contributions lie in the theoretical framework, the conceptual discussion and the methodological discussion I engage in.

I identified the focus on campaigns as the most prevalent case in which negative party communication has been investigated (Skaperdas & Grofman, 1995; Garramone, 1984) as a limiting factor in existing research. The focus on negative party communication as a communication tool to gain votes (Budesheim et al., 1996; Lau et al., 2007) is challenged by the notion that negative party communication can also be used by parties in the absence of an immediate looming election. To address this gap, I theorize about

the existence and direction of a spill-over effect of campaign dynamics into the post electoral arena and discuss two mechanism this spill-over effect is driven by. I build on the assumption that interactions between political parties are an ongoing process and have to be renegotiated. Thus, the focus on campaigns neglects a large variety of interactions between political parties in which negative communication can be a useful strategy. I close this gap by developing and testing a theoretical framework of negative party communication. This framework guides our understanding of negative party communication in election campaigns and beyond by incorporating a set of determinants of negative party communication on the level of the political system, the political party and the institution and by theorizing about potential spill-over effects.

A second gap I address is the narrow focus on consequences of negative party communication with regards to voters, their opinions and behavior (Lau & Rovner, 2009). Especially turnout has received extensive attention, even though the effects of negative party communication are inconclusive and subject to conditionalities (Ansolabehere et al., 1999; Geer & Lau, 2006; Wattenberg & Brians, 1999). By expanding the notion of who can be affected by negative party communication in campaigns I address this gap and suggest that negative campaign communication is a broader phenomenon that affects not just voters, but political parties as well. By using the example of coalition formation processes I show that political parties face consequences of negative party communication in the form of delayed coalition formation processes.

Thirdly, my thesis directly ties into and adds to the growing comparative literature on negative party communication in European party systems (Walter et al., 2014; Valli & Nai, 2020; Papp & Patkós, 2018; Nai, 2018) by drawing on data from up to ten Western and Eastern European countries to test the theoretical framework. Especially by addressing the first two gaps in a comparative setting this adds substantial understanding to the scope of negative party communication as an empirical phenomenon.

Cutting across these three gaps my thesis adds to research by the conceptual and methodological contributions I make. First, I add to the understanding of the concept of negative party communication. By drawing on literature on negative campaigning I clarify which multidimensional concept of negative party communication in campaigns exists, and show how this knowledge can be used to arrive at a one-dimensional concept of negative party communication. I provide theoretical reasons on why the focus on the dimension of tone is justified if the research context requires a one-dimensional approach to defining and measuring negative party communication and how this facilitates the understanding of negative party communication—in campaigns and beyond. Secondly, the methodological contribution lies in the exploration of how a corresponding one-

dimensional measure performs and if such a measure is a fruitful way forward. The suggested solution of sentiment analysis relies on a method that views (political) text as data (Lowe, 2008; Grimmer & Stewart, 2013; Slapin & Proksch, 2008; Slapin & Kirkland, 2020) and condenses meaning in text to underlying latent phenomena, such as negative communication. The use of this method contributes to a growing literature that proposes alternative ways of measuring negative party communication (Haselmayer et al., 2020). The thesis shows the strengths of such an approach in terms of efficiency and thus potential to move beyond campaigns and into multiple countries. However, it also highlights the shortcomings of the approach that are particularly relevant with regards to 'false positives'.

Lastly, I want to highlight how the theoretical and empirical results of this dissertation can be used as a stepping stone and to indicate which questions should be explored further. Concerning the avenues of future research that this dissertation suggests, and the potential for future research, I want to highlight four aspects.

First, the findings in Chapter 5 indicate that negative party communication and issues are related, and that some issues attract more negative party communication than others. I suggest that future research theorizes about the interplay between negative party communication and issues further and addresses the association empirically as well. To address the first finding with regards to issues—that a one-dimensional measure captures false positives and overestimates negative party communication because it captures non-referential communication as well—I suggest to develop a multidimensional measure of negative party communication that relies on automated text analysis as well, for example by including an extensive list of political actors to capture the dimension of target. To address the second finding that some issues might attract more negative party communication because of their status as societal problems that do not allow for positional competition I suggest to investigate communication in parliament further: Investigating which issues are talked about how, by whom, is a fruitful direction to go into. I have argued that some issues might attract more negative party communication than others, which would indicate that negative party communication is driven by certain issues. This has important implications with regards to agenda-setting of political parties and the variation or hypothesised rise in negative party communication. Non-economic issues such as the environment, nationalism and European integration seem to attract higher levels of negative party communication. I suggest that a shared characteristic of these issues is the fact that they do not belong to the traditional economic dimension, and some of them are related to national identities. How and why

parties choose to use more negative words when discussing these issues needs to be explored further.

Second, the findings have to be considered in the light of the data used. The Comparative Campaign Dataset is based on media content analysis, i.e. reports of behaviour by parties, candidates and other actors, and is the most extensive dataset on electoral campaigns that is available. The alternative—directly measuring party communication by using observable behaviour in televised debates, on social media platforms, in interviews, or in speeches at campaign events—is not only more time-consuming than processing newspaper articles, but also poses considerable practical challenges to a cross-national research project and begs the question of whether the unit of analysis would even be the same across countries. The Comparative Campaign Dataset is thus the best available option to examine parties' communication cross-nationally. However, as this does not allow for direct observations of campaign behavior, the conclusions might be biased with regards to what journalists deem newsworthy and report on. Previous research (Ito et al., 1998; Baumeister et al., 2001; Rozin & Royzman, 2001; Soroka & McAdams, 2015) has shown that negative news tends to be reported more readily than positive news, and that negative information plays a larger role in human cognition than positive news. This means that potentially I overestimate the effects of negative party communication in campaigns on negative party communication in parliament, or coalition formation processes.

Third, especially with regards to the findings on coalition formation further questions arise. After settling the hitherto unanswered question of whether negative party communication influences the efficacy of the political system with regard to its ability to produce functioning governments, with a cautious yes one open question regards whether the results hold in light of more data. My careful interpretation of the results I presented rested on the interpretation that the direction of the results reflects the actual relationship between negative party communication and coalition formation processes. This is also indicated by the case studies investigating evidence of both the coherence and the relational mechanism. However, a less favorable interpretation would be that the results do not only fail to reach statistical significance because of the small number of cases, but because negative party communication does not influence coalition formation processes. In order to solve this conundrum further research that draws on more coalition formation processes—both in a wider geographical region, and in a longer time period—is needed. Additionally, questions that delve further into the dynamics between parties are fruitful perspectives: Here the most promising way would be to focus on the question of which parties actually enter coalitions. This allows for

investigation of some assumptions: Usually, the assumption is that parties that enter a coalition are ideologically close to each other to begin with. Investigating the impact of negative party communication on government formation between these parties can provide more insight into this assumption.

Fourth, in order to investigate whether individual political actors are adversely affected by negative party communication, examining networks of cooperation in parliament would be an interesting way forward: How do MPs who engaged in negative communication against each other cooperate when it comes to the actual day-to-day work of passing laws?

Lastly, how do the findings I presented hold up in the light of concerns about reverse causality? Concretely, the concern here is that communication patterns in parliament might be influencing communication patterns in campaigns: What if negative party communication in campaigns is actually caused by negative party communication in parliament? To address this concern I have argued that campaigns are the most likely case in which negative party communication should occur, if negative party communication is understood as vote-seeking behavior that political parties exhibit. Therefore the most likely causal link to exist goes from negative party communication in campaigns to negative party communication in parliament. This also aligns with the argument of a spill-over effect which presupposes a certain temporal order. In order to confirm these assumptions longer time series are needed.

8.2. A Framework of Negative Party Communication

In the remainder of the section, I provide more arguments on what the findings mean for the validity of the proposed theoretical framework by focusing on the three main steps that the research question points to, and that I discussed in Section 2.2.2: the determinants of negative party communication, the spill-over effect of negative party communication beyond election campaigns, and the choice of post-electoral arenas I chose to investigate. This allows to provide a comprehensive framework of negative party communication.

First, I want to clarify what the summarized results mean with regards to the existence of common determinants of negative party communication. The findings in both Chapter 5 and 6 point towards the fact that determinants of negative party communication in campaigns and in parliamentary speech both highlight the importance of the political system: Characteristics of the party system determine parties' opportunity structures and shape the environment in which party competition occurs. Both in

case of negative party communication in campaigns and negative party communication in parliament the level of fragmentation of the political system has large explanatory power. The mechanism behind this relies on the assumption that in fragmented systems parties face too many potential opponents, thus not gaining votes from engaging in negative party communication and having fewer incentives to use it.

Second, the results inform the discussion about a potential spill-over effect of negative party communication in campaigns onto communication and behavior beyond election campaigns. Chapter 6 and 7 are at the centre of this argument. As negative party communication in campaigns does indeed impact the level negative party communication in parliamentary speech, this supports the theoretical arguments made in favor of such an effect. Therefore, the results indicate that parties are either concerned with presenting a coherent image that they have cultivated over the course of an election campaign, or that negative party communication hinders cooperation on a personal level: This means that the effects of an overall negative campaign—that are embedded in a culture in which negative party communication is common—trickle down to the patterns of speech individual MPs use in their role as representatives of their parties. The existence of a spill-over effect of negative party communication in coalition formation processes can be carefully supported as well, as rising levels of negative party communication in campaigns are associated with longer coalition formation processes. This is supported by a more case-centric approach that finds evidence of the two suggested mechanisms at play.

Third, I want to highlight how the choice of post-electoral arenas informs these results. Both parliamentary speeches and coalition formation are closely related to election results, and campaign dynamics. I show how negative party communication affects the behavior of political parties in these political arenas that are related to negative party communication in campaigns both in a temporal sense and a theoretical sense. However, it is unclear if this spill-over effect exists in instances that are further removed from election results and thus campaign dynamics as well. This interpretation speaks to normative concerns about negative party communication and shows that they might not be warranted.

After revisiting the theoretical framework in light of the findings, I turn to the discussion of implications. A first set of implications is concerned with the level of negative party communication, and how even a small increase in the level of negative party communication can have effects. I have shown that the level of negative party communication—even when understood as the use of negative words—is fairly low. This is even more relevant if the finding that sentiment-based measures overestimate the

absolute level of negative party communication is taken into account. This can be explained by the way natural language operates, and that a certain level of neutral words is needed in order to convey information adequately. This also implies that adding more negative words to a low number of negative words might have a stronger effect than if the absolute level of negative words had been high to begin with. Going back to the example I mentioned in the beginning, Donald Trump's utterance of "Crooked Hillary" only needed one (additional) negative word to fundamentally change the meaning of a sentence.

Another set of implications deals with the variables that drive the overarching phenomenon of negative party communication. The robust finding that fragmentation drives parties' use of negative party communication points towards the relevance of the structure of the environment that parties compete in. This also indicates that negative party communication is more common in less fragmented political systems.

I argue that these results show that negative party communication is a communication strategy that parties use in a variety of interactions, and that the underlying level is determined by the structure of the party system. The results do not hint at support for the concern that political communication in campaigns and parliament is becoming more negative in general, which corresponds to findings on negative party communication in campaigns in Europe. Furthermore, these findings speak to the origin of literature on negative party communication in the United States: As a system with low degrees of fragmentation which I have shown to be associated with higher degrees of negative party communication it has been the most likely case for negative party communication to occur. Fragmentation—as a phenomenon on the level of the political system—can thus explain the occurrence and intensity of negative party communication in campaigns and parliamentary speech in a way that is more nuanced than explanations simply addressing political culture. This finding is especially important in the light of recent developments of political systems: As fragmentation is on the rise in European party systems its effects might complicate the context of political competition that parties face (Vries & Hobolt, 2020).

Third, both the theoretical framework and the findings have important implications for the behavior of political parties. I suggest that parties are engaging in vote-seeking behavior even in the absence of an immediate election. A potential reason for this could be the importance of social media and the constant feedback loop that representatives and thus their parties are engaging in. This shows that parties constantly face incentives to compete with other parties, because the mechanism behind these incentives is not exclusive to electoral competition before campaigns. I suggest that high levels

of competition before elections make election campaigns the most likely case in which these mechanisms occur, but that formal election campaigns are not the only case.

Closely related to the previous point, the findings can be seen as a sign of (democratic) institutions' abilities to shape actors' behavior. For example, one of the main determinants of negative party communication in parliament is a party's status as government or opposition parties, with opposition parties engaging in more negative party communication. In contrast to the data on election campaigns I used which did not show this relationship in the case of negative party communication in campaigns, this shows how institutional settings shape the behavior of political parties: Parliaments are organized along the divide between government and opposition parties. In campaigns this divide exists as well—as I have argued with regards to expected differences in the use of negative party communication between government and opposition parties—but is not as engrained in institutional structures as it is the case in parliaments.

Taking all these implications together I conclude that the theoretical framework of negative party communication that I proposed informs our understanding of negative party communication in multiple ways. It allows to conceptualize negative party communication in a one-dimensional way and allows for a method to operationalize negative party communication and to arrive at an according measure. It also frames negative party communication as a phenomenon present in campaigns and every-day encounters between political parties, either directly—as in the case of negative party communication in parliamentary speech—or indirectly—as by having effects on the duration of coalition formation processes.

This proposed framework thus allows to understand why parties engage in negative party communication—why they choose to rain on each other's parade—and how they behave in the aftermath—or how they deal with the puddles, so to speak.

References

- About-Chadi, T., Green-Pedersen, C., & Mortensen, P. B. (2019). Parties' policy adjustments in response to changes in issue saliency. *West European Politics*, 1–23.
- Allen, B., & Stevens, D. (2015). What is negative about negative advertisements. In A. Nai & A. Walter (Eds.), *New perspectives on negative campaigning: Why attack politics matter*. ECPR Press.
- Ansolabehere, S., & Iyengar, S. (1995). *Going negative: How attack ads shrink and polarize the electorate*. Free Press.
- Ansolabehere, S., Iyengar, S., & Simon, A. (1999). Replicating experiments using aggregate and survey data: The case of negative advertising and turnout. *American Political Science Review*, 93(4), 901–909.
- Ansolabehere, S., Iyengar, S., Simon, A., & Valentino, N. (1994). Does attack advertising demobilize the electorate? *The American Political Science Review*, 88(4), 829–838.
- Banda, K. K., & Windett, J. H. (2016). Negative advertising and the dynamics of candidate support. *Political Behavior*, 38(3), 747–766.
- Baumann, M., & Gross, M. (2016). *Where is my party? introducing new data sets in ideological cohesion and ambiguity of party positions in media coverage*. <http://www.mzes.uni-mannheim.de/publications/wp/wp-167.pdf>.
- Baumeister, R. F., Bratslavsky, E., Finkenauer, C., & Vohs, K. D. (2001). Bad is stronger than good. *Review of General Psychology*, 5(4), 323–370.
- Benoit, K. (2007). Electoral laws as political consequences: Explaining the origins and change of electoral institutions. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 10(1), 363–390.
- Benoit, W. (1999). *Seeing spots: A functional analysis of presidential television advertisements, 1952-1996*. Praeger.
- Benoit, W. (2007). *Communication in political campaigns*. Peter Lang.

- Benoit, W. (2015). Functional theory: Negative campaigning in political television spots. In A. Nai & A. Walter (Eds.), *New perspectives on negative campaigning: Why attack politics matter*. ECPR Press.
- Benoit, W. L., Hansen, G. J., & Verser, R. M. (2003, dec). A meta-analysis of the effects of viewing u.s. presidential debates. *Communication Monographs*, 70(4), 335–350.
- Bernhard, W., & Leblang, D. (2002). Democratic processes, political risk, and foreign exchange markets. *American Journal of Political Science*, 46(2), 316.
- Bernhard, W., & Leblang, D. (2006). *Democratic processes and financial markets*. Cambridge University Press.
- Blockmans, T., Geys, B., Heyndels, B., & Mahieu, B. (2016). Bargaining complexity and the duration of government formation: evidence from flemish municipalities. *Public Choice*, 167(1-2), 131–143.
- Blumler, J. G., & Kavanagh, D. (1999). The third age of political communication: Influences and features. *Political Communication*, 16(3), 209–230.
- Borchert, J., & Zeiss, J. (2003). Professional politicians: Towards a comparative perspective. In *The political class in advanced democracies: A comparative handbook*. Oxford University Press.
- Brader, T. (2005). Striking a responsive chord: How political ads motivate and persuade voters by appealing to emotions. *American Journal of Political Science*, 49(2), 388–405.
- Brooks, D. J. (2006). The resilient voter: Moving toward closure in the debate over negative campaigning and turnout. *The Journal of Politics*, 68(3), 684–696.
- Brooks, D. J., & Geer, J. G. (2007). Beyond negativity: The effects of incivility on the electorate. *American Journal of Political Science*, 51(1), 1–16.
- Bräuninger, T., Debus, M., & Wüst, F. (2015). Governments, parliaments and legislative activity. *Political Science Research and Methods*, 5(03), 529–554.
- Budesheim, T., A. Houston, D., & Depaola, S. (1996). Persuasiveness of in-group and out-group political messages: The case of negative political campaigning. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 70, 523–534.
- Buell, E., & Sigelman, L. (2008). *Attack politics: negativity in presidential campaigns since 1960*. University Press of Kansas.
- Cacioppo, J. T., & Berntson, G. G. (1999). The affect system: Architecture and operating characteristics. *Current directions in psychological science*, 8(5), 133–137.

- Cacioppo, J. T., Gardner, W. L., & Berntson, G. G. (1999). The affect system has parallel and integrative processing components: Form follows function. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 76(5), 839.
- Conrad, C. R., & Golder, S. N. (2010, jan). Measuring government duration and stability in central eastern european democracies. *European Journal of Political Research*, 49(1), 119–150.
- Crabtree, C., Golder, M., Gschwend, T., & Indriðason, I. H. (2020). It is not only what you say, it is also how you say it: The strategic use of campaign sentiment. *The Journal of Politics*, 82(3), 1044–1060.
- Curini, L. (2011). Negative campaigning in no-cabinet alternation systems: Ideological closeness and blames of corruption in italy and japan using party manifesto data. *Japanese Journal of Political Science*, 12(3), 399–420.
- Damore, D. F. (2002). Candidate strategy and the decision to go negative. *Political Research Quarterly*, 55(3), 669.
- Debus, M., Somer-Topcu, Z., & Tavits, M. (2018). *Comparative campaign dynamics dataset*. (Mannheim: Mannheim Centre for European Social Research, University of Mannheim.)
- Diermeier, D., & van Roozendaal, P. (1998). The duration of cabinet formation processes in western multi-party democracies. *British Journal of Political Science*, 28(4), 609–626.
- Dodd, L. C., & Schraufnagel, S. (2012). Congress and the polarity paradox: Party polarization, member incivility and enactment of landmark legislation, 1891–1994. *Congress & the Presidency*, 39(2), 109–132.
- Dolezal, M., Ennser-Jedenastik, L., & Müller, W. C. (2015). Who will attack the competitors? how political parties resolve strategic and collective action dilemmas in negative campaigning. *Party Politics*, 23(6), 666–679.
- Dolezal, M., Ennser-Jedenastik, L., Müller, W. C., Praprotnik, K., & Winkler, A. K. (2016). Beyond salience and position taking. *Party Politics*, 24(3), 240–252.
- Druckman, J. N., Kifer, M. J., & Parkin, M. (2010, jan). Timeless strategy meets new medium: Going negative on congressional campaign web sites, 2002–2006. *Political Communication*, 27(1), 88–103.
- Döring, H. (1995). Fewer though presumably more conflictual bills: Parliamentary government acting as a monopolist. In H. Döring (Ed.), *Parliaments and majority rule in western europe* (p. 179 - 222). Campus Verlag.

- Döring, H., & Manow, P. (2018). *2018. parliaments and governments database (parlgov): Information on parties, elections and cabinets in modern democracies. development version.*
- Ecker, A., & Meyer, T. M. (2015). The duration of government formation processes in europe. *Research & Politics*, 2(4), 205316801562279.
- Ecker, A., & Meyer, T. M. (2017). Coalition bargaining duration in multiparty democracies. *British Journal of Political Science*, 50(1), 261–280.
- Elmelund-Præstekær, C., & Svensson, H. M. (2013, nov). Ebbs and flows of negative campaigning: A longitudinal study of the influence of contextual factors on danish campaign rhetoric. *European Journal of Communication*, 29(2), 230–239.
- Elmelund-Præstekær, C. (2008). Negative campaigning in a multiparty system. *Representation*, 44(1), 27–39.
- Elmelund-Præstekær, C. (2010). Beyond american negativity: toward a general understanding of the determinants of negative campaigning. *European Political Science Review*, 2(1), 137–156.
- Farrell, D. M., & Schmitt-Beck, R. (2002). *Do political campaigns matter?: Campaign effects in elections and referendums.* Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Finkel, S. E., & Geer, J. G. (1998). A spot check: Casting doubt on the demobilizing effect of attack advertising. *American Journal of Political Science*, 42(2), 573–595.
- Flowers, J. F., Haynes, A. A., & Crespin, M. H. (2003). The media, the campaign, and the message. *American Journal of Political Science*, 47(2), 259–273.
- Freedman, P., & Goldstein, K. (1999). Measuring media exposure and the effects of negative campaign ads. *American Journal of Political Science*, 43(4), 1189–1208.
- Fridkin, K. L., & Kenney, P. J. (2004). Do negative messages work?: The impact of negativity on citizens’ evaluations of candidates. *American Politics Research*, 32(5), 570–605.
- Frimer, J. A., & Skitka, L. J. (2018). The montagu principle: Incivility decreases politicians’ public approval, even with their political base. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 115(5), 845–866.
- Gabel, M. J., & Huber, J. D. (2000, jan). Putting parties in their place: Inferring party left-right ideological positions from party manifestos data. *American Journal of Political Science*, 44(1), 94.
- Gallagher, M. (1991). Proportionality, disproportionality and electoral systems. *Electoral Studies*, 10(1), 33 - 51.

- Garramone, G. M. (1984). Voter responses to negative political ads. *Journalism Quarterly*, 61(2), 250–259.
- Geer, J. G. (2006). *In defense of negativity: Attack ads in presidential campaigns*. University of Chicago Press.
- Geer, J. G., & Lau, R. R. (2006). Filling in the blanks: A new method for estimating campaign effects. *British Journal of Political Science*, 36(2), 269–290.
- Golder, S. N. (2010). Bargaining delays in the government formation process. *Comparative Political Studies*, 43(1), 3–32.
- Goldstein, K., & Freedman, P. (2002, aug). Campaign advertising and voter turnout: New evidence for a stimulation effect. *The Journal of Politics*, 64(3), 721–740.
- Green-pedersen, C., & Thomsen, L. H. (2005). Bloc politics vs. broad cooperation? the functioning of danish minority parliamentarism. *Journal of legislative studies*, 11(2), 153–169.
- Grimmer, J., & Stewart, B. M. (2013). Text as data: The promise and pitfalls of automatic content analysis methods for political texts. *Political Analysis*, 21(3), 267–297.
- Hansen, K. M., & Pedersen, R. T. (2008). Negative campaigning in a multiparty system. *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 31(4), 408–427.
- Haselmayer, M. (2019). Negative campaigning and its consequences: a review and a look ahead. *French Politics*, 17(3), 355–372.
- Haselmayer, M., Hirsch, L., & Jenny, M. (2020). Love is blind. partisanship and perception of negative campaign messages in a multiparty system. *Political Research Exchange*, 2(1).
- Haselmayer, M., & Jenny, M. (2018). Friendly fire? negative campaigning among coalition partners. *Research & Politics*, 5(3).
- Hopmann, D. N., Vliegenthart, R., & Maier, J. (2017). The effects of tone, focus, and incivility in election debates. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, 28(3), 283–306.
- Hutcheson, D. S. (2012). The 2011 election to the danish folketing. *Representation (McDougall Trust)*, 48(3), 335–349.
- Ito, T. A., Larsen, J. T., Smith, N. K., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1998). Negative information weighs more heavily on the brain: The negativity bias in evaluative categorizations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 75(4), 887–900.
- Jackson, R. A., & Carsey, T. M. (2007). US senate campaigns, negative advertising, and voter mobilization in the 1998 midterm election. *Electoral Studies*, 26(1), 180–195.

- Jahn, D. (2010, oct). Conceptualizing left and right in comparative politics. *Party Politics*, 17(6), 745–765.
- Jamieson, K. (1993). *Dirty politics: Deception, distraction, and democracy*. Oxford University Press.
- Jamieson, K., Waldman, P., & Sherr, S. (2000). Eliminate the negative? categories of analysis for political advertisement. In J. Thurber, C. Nelson, & D. Dulio (Eds.), *Crowded airwaves: Campaign advertising in elections* (p. 44-64). Washington: Brookings Institution Press.
- Kahn, K., & Kenney, P. (2004). *No holds barred, negativity in u.s. senate campaigns*. Upper Saddle River.
- Kahn, K. F., & Kenney, P. J. (1999). Do negative campaigns mobilize or suppress turnout? clarifying the relationship between negativity and participation. *The American political science review*, 93(4), 877-889.
- Kamber, V. (1997). *Poison politics: Are negative campaigns destroying democracy?* Insight Books, Plenum Press.
- Karvonen, L. (2010). *The personalisation of politics: A study of parliamentary democracies*. ECPR Press.
- Ketelaars, P. (2019). Position, preference and personality: A microlevel explanation of negativity in day-to-day politics. *Political Psychology*.
- King, G., Alt, J., Burns, N., & Laver, M. (1990). A unified model of cabinet dissolution in parliamentary democracies. *American Journal of Political Science*, 34, 846–871.
- Kosmidis, S., Hobolt, S. B., Molloy, E., & Whitefield, S. (2018, sep). Party competition and emotive rhetoric. *Comparative Political Studies*, 52(6), 811–837.
- Krause, W. (2019, nov). Appearing moderate or radical? radical left party success and the two-dimensional political space. *West European Politics*, 43(7), 1365–1387.
- König, T., & Luig, B. (2012, jun). Party ideology and legislative agendas: Estimating contextual policy positions for the study of EU decision-making. *European Union Politics*, 13(4), 604–625.
- Laakso, M., & Taagepera, R. (1979). “effective” number of parties. *Comparative Political Studies*, 12(1), 3–27.
- Lau, R. R., & Pomper, G. M. (2001). Negative campaigning by US senate candidates. *Party Politics*, 7(1), 69–87.
- Lau, R. R., & Pomper, G. M. (2004). *Negative campaigning: An analysis of us senate elections*. Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

- Lau, R. R., & Rovner, I. B. (2009). Negative campaigning. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 12(1), 285-306.
- Lau, R. R., Sigelman, L., Heldman, C., & Babbitt, P. (1999). The effects of negative political advertisements: A meta-analytic assessment. *American Political Science Review*, 93(4), 851-875.
- Lau, R. R., Sigelman, L., & Rovner, I. B. (2007). The effects of negative political campaigns: A meta-analytic reassessment. *Journal of Politics*, 69(4), 1176-1209.
- Laver, K., Michael; Benoit. (2015). The basic arithmetic of legislative decisions. *American Journal of Political Science*, 2, 275-291.
- Laver, M., Benoit, K., & Garry, J. (2003). Extracting policy positions from political texts using words as data. *The American Political Science Review*, 97(2), 311-331.
- Laver, M., & Schofield, N. (1990). *Multiparty government: the politics of coalition in europe*. Oxford University Press.
- Leblang, D., & Mukherjee, B. (2005). Government partisanship, elections, and the stock market: Examining american and british stock returns, 1930-2000. *American Journal of Political Science*, 49(4), 780-802.
- Leston-Bandeira, C. (2007). The impact of the internet on parliaments: a legislative studies framework. *Parliamentary Affairs*, 60(4), 655-674.
- Liu, B. (2012). *Sentiment analysis and opinion mining*. Morgan & Claypool.
- Lowe, W. (2008). Understanding wordscores. *Political Analysis*, 16(4), 356-371.
- Lucardie, P., & Voerman, G. (2011). The netherlands. *European Journal of Political Research*, 50(7-8), 1070-1076.
- Maier, J., & Jansen, C. (2015, oct). When do candidates attack in election campaigns? exploring the determinants of negative candidate messages in german televised debates. *Party Politics*, 23(5), 549-559.
- Maier, J., & Nai, A. (2021). When conflict fuels negativity. a large-scale comparative investigation of the contextual drivers of negative campaigning in elections worldwide. *The Leadership Quarterly*.
- Martin, L., & Vanberg, G. (2003, mar). Wasting time? the impact of ideology and size on delay in coalition formation. *British Journal of Political Science*, 33(02).
- Martin, P. S. (2004). Inside the black box of negative campaign effects: Three reasons why negative campaigns mobilize. *Political Psychology*, 25(4), 545-562.
- Martin, S. (2011). Parliamentary Questions, the Behaviour of Legislators, and the Function of Legislatures: An Introduction. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, 17(3), 259-270.

- Mayer, W. G. (1996). In defense of negative campaigning. *Political Science Quarterly*, 111(3), 437-455.
- Meyer, T. M., Haselmayer, M., & Wagner, M. (2017, sep). Who gets into the papers? party campaign messages and the media. *British Journal of Political Science*, 50(1), 281-302.
- Meyer, T. M., & Miller, B. (2013). The niche party concept and its measurement. *Party Politics*, 21(2), 259-271.
- Mutz, D. C. (2007). Effects of “in-your-face” television discourse on perceptions of a legitimate opposition. *American Political Science Review*, 101(4), 621-635.
- Mutz, D. C., & Reeves, B. (2005). The new videomalaise: Effects of televised incivility on political trust. *The American Political Science Review*, 99(1), 1-15.
- Nai, A. (2012). What really matters is which camp goes dirty: Differential effects of negative campaigning on turnout during swiss federal ballots. *European Journal of Political Research*, 52(1), 44-70.
- Nai, A. (2018). Going negative, worldwide: Towards a general understanding of determinants and targets of negative campaigning. *Government and Opposition*, 55(3), 430-455.
- Nai, A., & Sciarini, P. (2015). Why “going negative?” strategic and situational determinants of personal attacks in swiss direct democratic votes. *Journal of Political Marketing*, 1-31.
- Nai, A., & Walter, A. (Eds.). (2015). *New perspectives on negative campaigning: Why attack politics matter*. ECPR Press.
- Nielsen, F. A. (2011). *A new anew: Evaluation of a word list for sentiment analysis in microblogs*.
- Nielsen, S. W., & Larsen, M. V. (2014). Party brands and voting. *Electoral Studies*, 33, 153-165.
- Nooy, W. D., & Kleinnijenhuis, J. (2013). Polarization in the media during an election campaign: A dynamic network model predicting support and attack among political actors. *Political Communication*, 30(1), 117-138.
- Nooy, W. D., & Kleinnijenhuis, J. (2015). Attack, support, and coalitions in a multipart system: Understanding negative campaigning in a country with coalition government. In A. Nai & A. Walter (Eds.), *New perspectives on negative campaigning: Why attack politics matter*. ECPR Press.
- Osabruegge, M., Hobolt, S. B., & Rodon, T. (2021). Playing to the gallery: Emotive rhetoric in parliaments. *American Political Science Review*, 1-15.

- Papp, Z., & Patkós, V. (2018). The macro-level driving factors of negative campaigning in europe. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 24(1).
- Peterson, D. A. M., & Djupe, P. A. (2005). When primary campaigns go negative: The determinants of campaign negativity. *Political Research Quarterly*, 58(1), 45–54.
- Pinkleton, B. E., Um, N.-H., & Austin, E. W. (2002). An exploration of the effects of negative political advertising on political decision making. *Journal of Advertising*, 31(1), 13–25.
- Poguntke, T., & von Dem Berge, B. (2014). Germany. *European Journal of Political Research Political Data Yearbook*, 53(1), 131–139.
- Proksch, S.-O., Lowe, W., Wäckerle, J., & Soroka, S. (2018, oct). Multilingual sentiment analysis: A new approach to measuring conflict in legislative speeches. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 44(1), 97–131.
- Proksch, S.-O., & Slapin, J. B. (2012, feb). Institutional foundations of legislative speech. *American Journal of Political Science*, 56(3), 520–537.
- Qvortrup, H. (2015). *Tre år ni måneder tre dage: Det utrolige drama bag kulisserne i regeringen thorning-schmidt*. People’s Press.
- Rauh, C., & Schwalbach, J. (2020). *The ParlSpeech V2 data set: Full-text corpora of 6.3 million parliamentary speeches in the key legislative chambers of nine representative democracies*. Harvard Dataverse. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/L40AKN>
- Remus, R., Quasthoff, U., & Heyer, G. (2010). Sentiws - a publicly available german-language resource for sentiment analysis. *Proceedings of the 7th International Language Ressources and Evaluation (LREC’10)*, 1168–1171.
- Rheault, L., Beelen, K., Cochrane, C., & Hirst, G. (2016). Measuring emotion in parliamentary debates with automated textual analysis. *PLOS ONE*, 11(12), 1–18.
- Richardson, G. W. (2001). Looking for meaning in all the wrong places: Why negative advertising is a suspect category. *Journal of Communication*, 51(4), 775–800.
- Ridout, T. N., & Walter, A. (2013). Party system change and negative campaigning in new zealand. *Party Politics*, 21(6), 982–992.
- Roese, N. J., & Sande, G. N. (1993). Backlash effects in attack politics. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 23(8), 632–653.
- Rozin, P., & Royzman, E. B. (2001). Negativity bias, negativity dominance, and contagion. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 5(4), 296–320.

- Rudkowsky, E., Haselmayer, M., Wastian, M., Jenny, M., Štefan Emrich, & Sedlmair, M. (2018). More than bags of words: Sentiment analysis with word embeddings. *Communication Methods and Measures*, 0(0), 1-18.
- Sagarzazu, I., & Klüver, H. (2015). Coalition governments and party competition: Political communication strategies of coalition parties. *Political Science Research and Methods*, 5(02), 333–349.
- Sagi, E., & Diermeier, D. (2015, dec). Language use and coalition formation in multi-party negotiations. *Cognitive Science*, 41(1), 259–271.
- Schumacher, G., de Vries, C. E., & Vis, B. (2013). Why do parties change position? party organization and environmental incentives. *The Journal of Politics*, 75(2), 464–477.
- Shapiro, M. A., & Rieger, R. H. (1992). Comparing positive and negative political advertising on radio. *Journalism Quarterly*, 69(1), 135–145.
- Skaperdas, S., & Grofman, B. (1995). Modeling negative campaigning. *American Political Science Review*, 89(01), 49–61.
- Skytte, R. (2020). Dimensions of elite partisan polarization: Disentangling the effects of incivility and issue polarization. *British Journal of Political Science*.
- Slapin, J. B., & Kirkland, J. H. (2020). The sound of rebellion: Voting dissent and legislative speech in the UK house of commons. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 45(2), 15.
- Slapin, J. B., & Proksch, S.-O. (2008, jul). A scaling model for estimating time-series party positions from texts. *American Journal of Political Science*, 52(3), 705–722.
- Song, H., Nyhuis, D., & Boomgaarden, H. (2017). A network model of negative campaigning: The structure and determinants of negative campaigning in multiparty systems. *Communication Research*, 46(2), 273–294.
- Soroka, S. (2014). *Negativity in democratic politics: Causes and consequences*. Cambridge University Press.
- Soroka, S., & McAdams, S. (2015). News, politics, and negativity. *Political Communication*, 32(1), 1-22.
- Stone, W. J., & Simas, E. N. (2010). Candidate valence and ideological positions in u.s. house elections. *American Journal of Political Science*, 54(2), 371–388.
- Strom, K. (1985). Party goals and government performance in parliamentary democracies. *The American Political Science Review*, 79(3).
- Strøm, K. (1990). A Behavioral Theory of Competitive Political Parties. *American Journal of Political Science*, 34(2), pp. 565-598.

- Strøm, K. (1997). Rules, reasons and routines: Legislative roles in parliamentary democracies. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, 3(1), 155-174.
- Strøm, K. (2012). Roles as strategies. towards a logic of legislative behaviour. In B. M & R. O (Eds.), *Parliamentary roles in modern legislatures*. (p. 85–100). London: Routledge.
- Strøm, K., & Müller, W. (1999). Political parties and hard choices. In K. Strøm & W. Müller (Eds.), *Policy, office or votes? how political parties in western europe make hard decisions* (p. 1-35). Cambridge University Press.
- Stubager, R. (2017). What is issue ownership and how should we measure it? *Political Behavior*, 40(2), 345–370.
- Stuckelberger, S. (2019). Mobilizing and chasing: The voter targeting of negative campaigning – lessons from the swiss case. *Party Politics*.
- Tavits, M. (2008). The role of parties' past behavior in coalition formation. *American Political Science Review*, 102(04), 495–507.
- Trent, J. S., & Friedenberg, R. V. (2008). *Political campaign communication: Principles and practices* (M. Lanham, Ed.). Rowman & Littlefield.
- Vaish, A., Grossmann, T., & Woodward, A. (2008). Not all emotions are created equal: the negativity bias in social-emotional development. *Psychological Bulletin*, 134(3), 383-403.
- Valli, C., & Nai, A. (2020). Attack politics from albania to zimbabwe: A large-scale comparative study on the drivers of negative campaigning. *International Political Science Review*.
- van de Wardt, M., & van Witteloostuijn, A. (2019, aug). Adapt or perish? how parties respond to party system saturation in 21 western democracies, 1945–2011. *British Journal of Political Science*, 51(1), 16–38.
- vanHeerde Hudson, J. (2011). The americanization of british party advertising? negativity in party election broadcasts, 1964–2005. *British Politics*, 6(1), 52–77.
- Vries, C. D., & Hobolt, S. (2020). *Political Entrepreneurs*. Princeton University Press.
- Walter, A. (2012). *Negative campaigning in western europe. beyond the vote-seeking perspective*. Zutphen: Wöhrmann.
- Walter, A. (2014a). Choosing the enemy. *Party Politics*, 20(3), 311-323.
- Walter, A. (2014b). Negative campaigning in western europe: Similar or different? *Political Studies*, 62, 42–60.
- Walter, A., & van der Brug, W. (2013). When the gloves come off: Inter-party variation in negative campaigning in dutch elections, 1981-2010. *Acta Politica*(48), 367-388.

- Walter, A., van der Brug, W., & van Praag, P. (2014). When the stakes are high: Party competition and negative campaigning. *Comparative Political Studies*, 47(4), 550-573.
- Walter, A., & van der Eijk, C. (2019). Measures of campaign negativity: Comparing approaches and eliminating partisan bias. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 24(3), 363-382.
- Walter, A., & Vliegenthart, R. (2010). Negative campaigning across different communication channels: Different ball games? *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 15(4), 441-461.
- Warwick, P. V. (1994). *Government survival in parliamentary democracies*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Wattenberg, M. P., & Brians, C. L. (1999). Negative campaign advertising: Demobilizer or mobilizer? *American Political Science Review*, 93(4), 891-899.
- Winter, L. D. (1997). Intra- and extra-parliamentary role attitudes and behaviour of belgian mps. *The Journal of Legislative Studies*, 3(1), 128-154.
- York, C. (2013). Cultivating political incivility: Cable news, network news, and public perceptions. *Electronic News*, 7(3), 107-125.
- Young, L., & Soroka, S. (2012). Affective news: The automated coding of sentiment in political texts. *Political Communication*, 29(2), 205-231.

Appendices

A. Measurement

Table A.1.: Different Approaches to operationalizing Negative Party Communication in Campaigns based on Sentiment Scores

Measure	Specification	A statement is classified as negative, if ...
SA1	Number of negative words	the number of negative words is <i>higher</i> than the <i>mean</i> number of negative words across all statements
SA2	Number of negative words	the number of negative words is <i>higher</i> than the <i>median</i> number of negative words across all statements
SA3	Share of negative words	the share of negative words is <i>higher</i> than the <i>mean</i> number of negative words across all statements
SA4	Share of negative words	the share of negative words is <i>higher</i> than the <i>median</i> number of negative words across all statements
SA5	Number of negative words	a statement contains at least one negative word.
SA6*	Share of negative words	metric

* SA6, the share of negative words, is the measure that is used as the measure of negative party communication in campaigns in Chapter 4.

Table A.2.: Correlation of Measures of Negative Party Communication (Denmark)

	SA2	SA3	SA4	SA5	SA6
SA1	1***	0.86***	1***	1***	0.70***
SA2		0.86***	1***	1***	0.70***
SA3			0.86***	0.86***	0.74***
SA4				1***	0.70***
SA5					0.47***
Average correlation with all other measures	0.91	0.91	0.84	0.91	0.71

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

SA6, the share of negative words, is the measure that is used as the measure of negative party communication in campaigns in Chapter 4.

Table A.3.: Correlation of Measures of Negative Party Communication (Germany)

	SA2	SA3	SA4	SA5	SA6
SA1	1***	0.61***	0.62***	0.55***	0.60***
SA2		0.61***	0.62***	0.55***	0.60***
SA3			0.86***	0.70***	0.74***
SA4				0.81***	0.72***
SA5					0.66***
Average correlation with all other measures	0.68	0.70	0.73	0.65	0.66

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

SA6, the share of negative words, is the measure that is used as the measure of negative party communication in campaigns in Chapter 4.

Table A.4.: Correlation of Measures of Negative Party Communication (United Kingdom)

	SA2	SA3	SA4	SA5	SA6
SA1	1***	0.69***	0.71***	0.56***	0.64***
SA2		0.69***	0.71***	0.56***	0.64***
SA3			0.85***	0.50***	0.78***
SA4				0.58***	0.75***
SA5					0.60***
Average correlation with all other measures	0.72	0.70	0.72	0.56	0.68

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

SA6, the share of negative words, is the measure that is used as the measure of negative party communication in campaigns in Chapter 4.

Table A.5.: Correlation of Measures of Negative Party Communication (pooled)

	SA2	SA3	SA4	SA5	SA6
SA1	1***	0.70***	0.75***	0.64***	0.61***
SA2		0.70***	0.75***	0.64***	0.61***
SA3			0.86***	0.60***	0.72***
SA4				0.70***	0.69***
SA5					0.62***
Average correlation with all other measures	0.74	0.72	0.75	0.64	0.65

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

SA6, the share of negative words, is the measure that is used as the measure of negative party communication in campaigns in Chapter 4.

Table A.6.: Correlation of Measures of Negative Party Communication: Sentiment Scores and Hand-Coded (Denmark)

	SA1	SA2	SA3	SA4	SA5	SA6
Campaign negativity	0.23***	0.23***	0.25***	0.26***	0.25***	0.26***

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Note: Campaign negativity, SA1, SA2, SA3, SA4, and SA5 are dichotomous measures, SA6 is a continuous measure. Correlations are calculated treating the individual campaign statement as the unit of analysis. SA6, the share of negative words, is the measure that is used as the measure of negative party communication in campaigns in Chapter 4.

Table A.7.: Correlation of Measures of Negative Party Communication: Sentiment Scores and Hand-Coded (Germany)

	SA1	SA2	SA3	SA4	SA5	SA6
Campaign negativity	0.15***	0.15***	0.17***	0.17***	0.12***	0.20***

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Note: Campaign negativity, SA1, SA2, SA3, SA4, and SA5 are dichotomous measures, SA6 is a continuous measure. Correlations are calculated treating the individual campaign statement as the unit of analysis. SA6, the share of negative words, is the measure that is used as the measure of negative party communication in campaigns in Chapter 4.

Table A.8.: Correlation of Measures of Negative Party Communication: Sentiment Scores and Hand-Coded (United Kingdom)

	SA1	SA2	SA3	SA4	SA5	SA6
Campaign negativity	0.09***	0.09***	0.11***	0.09***	0.09***	0.13***

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Note: Campaign negativity, SA1, SA2, SA3, SA4, and SA5 are dichotomous measures, SA6 is a continuous measure. Correlations are calculated treating the individual campaign statement as the unit of analysis. SA6, the share of negative words, is the measure that is used as the measure of negative party communication in campaigns in Chapter 4.

Table A.9.: Correlation of Measures of Negative Party Communication: Sentiment Scores and Hand-Coded (pooled)

	SA1	SA2	SA3	SA4	SA5	SA6
Campaign negativity	0.19***	0.19***	0.21***	0.21***	0.23***	0.27***

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Note: Campaign negativity, SA1, SA2, SA3, SA4, and SA5 are dichotomous measures, SA6 is a continuous measure. Correlations are calculated treating the individual campaign statement as the unit of analysis. SA6, the share of negative words, is the measure that is used as the measure of negative party communication in campaigns in Chapter 4.

Table A.10.: Example of Targets

German		English		Danish	
Target = 1	Target = 0	Target = 1	Target = 0	Target = 1	Target = 0
sie,er	ich	the hon. man	International organisations such as UN	...ministeren, ministeren	Kommuner, regioner
Ihnen	wir	(the) minister			
die / der Opposition	Ministries that the party of the MP speaking holds	(the) government('s)	Ministries that the party of the MP speaking holds	Party names such as SF, Venstre, DF, S, EL, both abbreviated and spelled out	Man
Frau Kollegin / Herr Kollege , Kollege ... , Kollegin ...	man	He / She		Hr ... , Fr ...	
Herr ... / Frau ... , Herr Abgeordneter, Frau Abgeordnete		You		Ordfører(en)	
Frau Präsidentin / Herr Präsident		the Prime Minister		ministeriet	
Herr / Frau Minister		(on) the opposition benches (if government MP speaks)			

Table A.11.: Example of Targets (cont.)

Herr / Frau Staatssekre- taerIn	My hon. Friend
Die / der (Bun- des)Regierung Regierungsvertreter Koalitionsfraktionen (if opposition MP speaks) Colours of parties Das Kanzleramt	The Scottish Government Foreign Secretary Parliamentary Secretary

B. Negative Party Communication in Campaigns

B.1. Descriptives

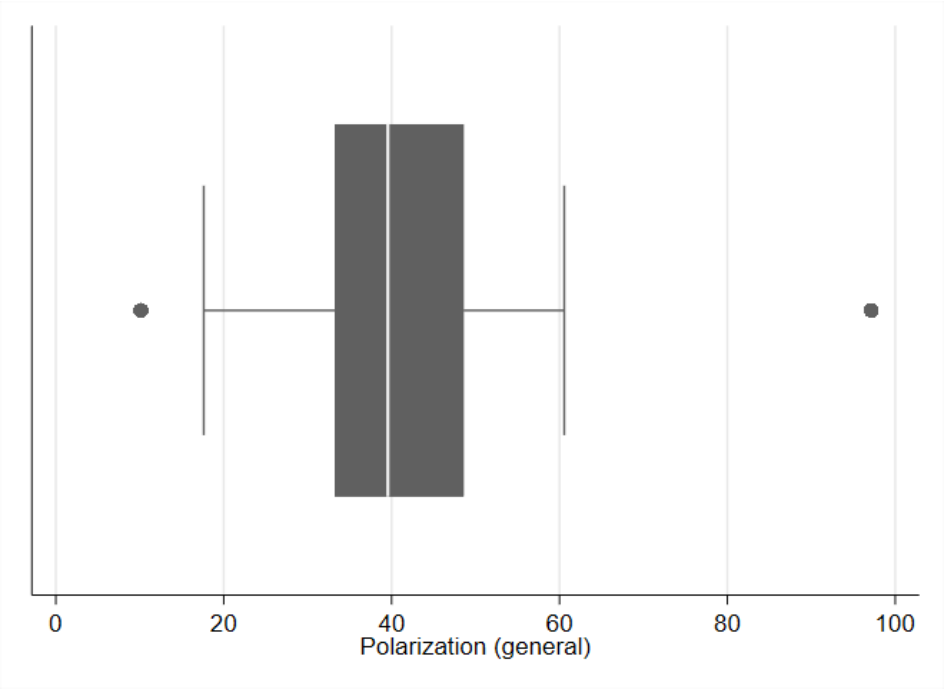


Figure B.1.: Distribution of Polarization

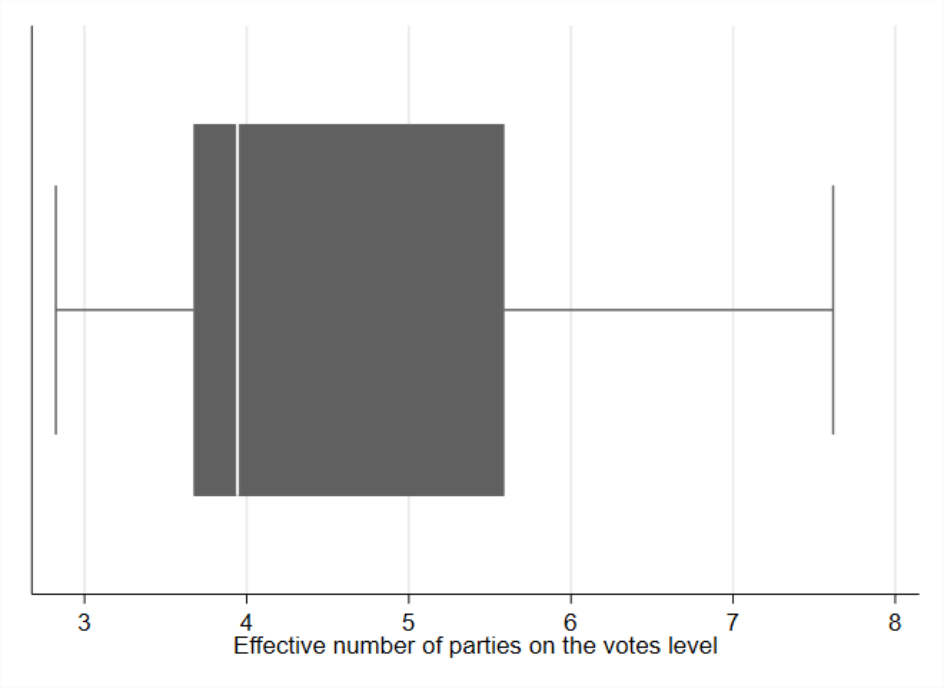


Figure B.2.: Distribution of Fragmentation

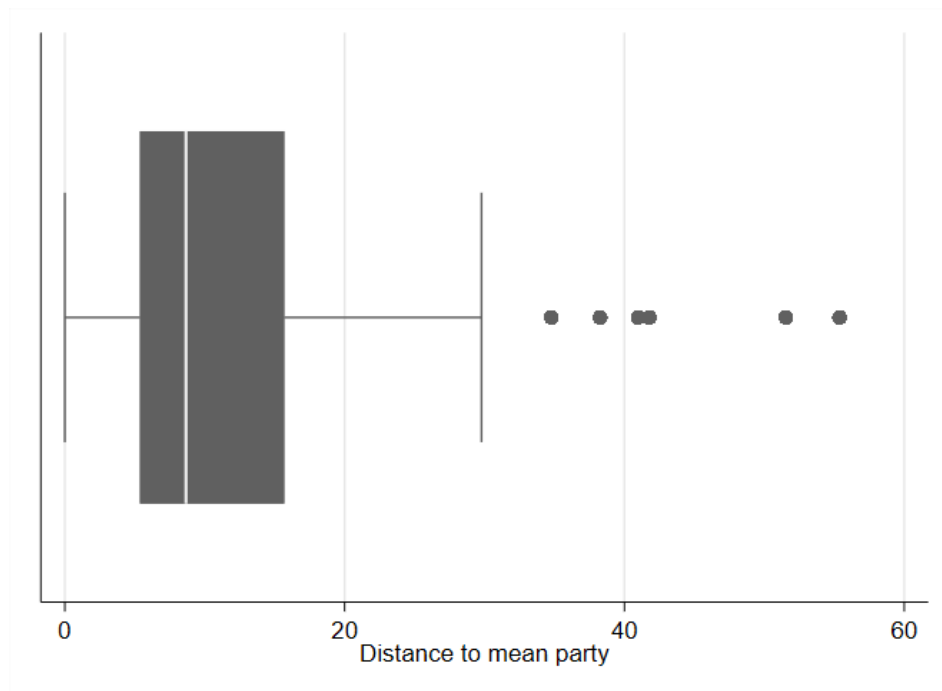


Figure B.3.: Distribution of Ideological Extremism (Distance to Median Party)

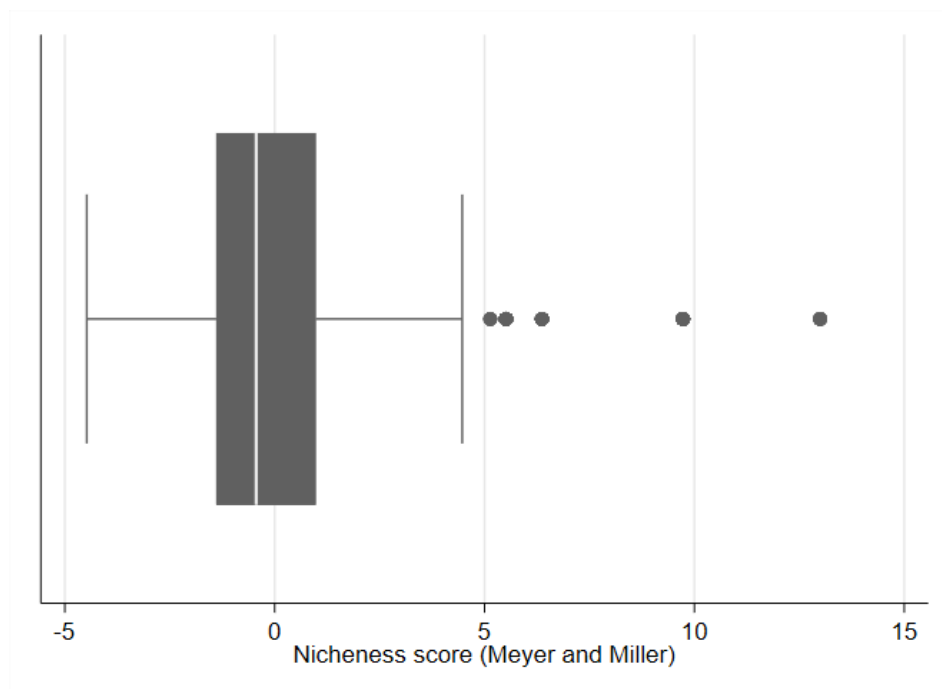


Figure B.4.: Distribution of Standardized Nichelessness

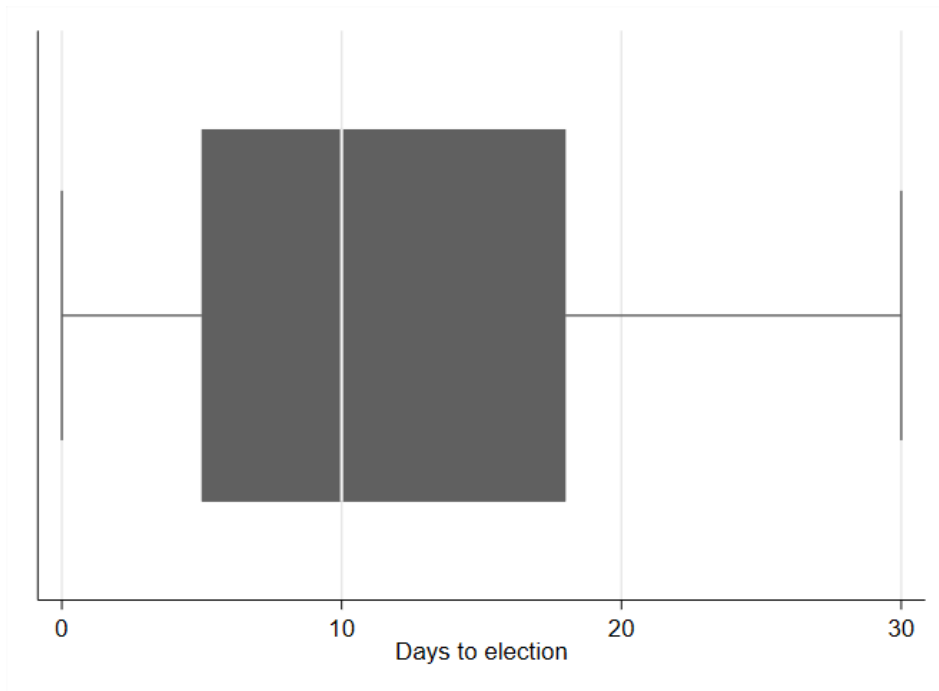


Figure B.5.: Distribution of Days to Election

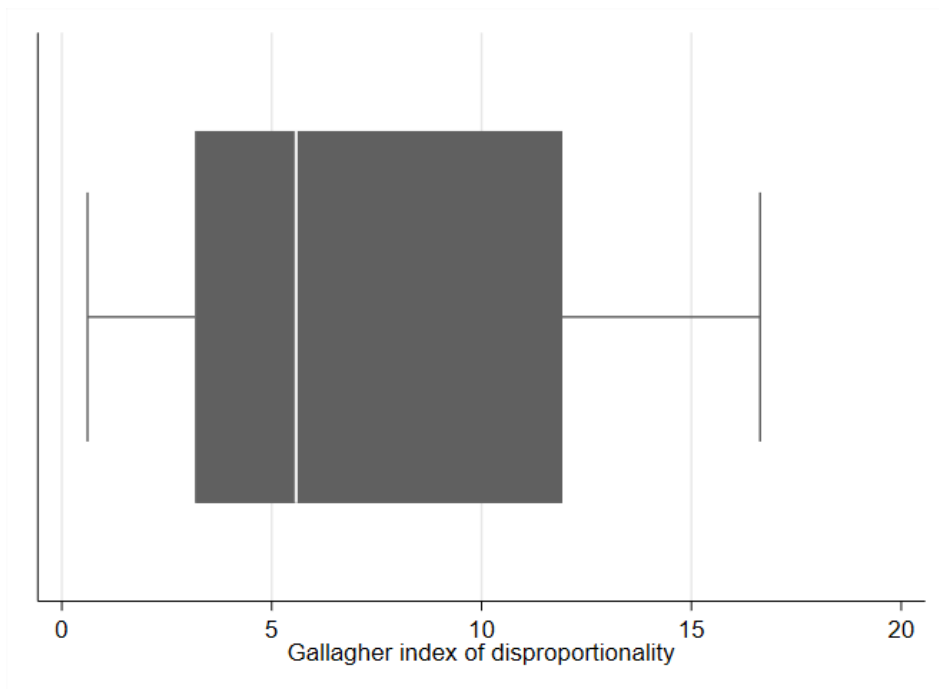


Figure B.6.: Distribution of Gallagher's Index of Disproportionality

B.2. Robustness checks

Table B.1.: The Effect of Issues on Negative Party Communication excluding the United Kingdom

	(1) Model 1
Social Policy/Public Services	1.196 (0.384)
Unemployment	1.416 (0.566)
Other Economic Performance	1.036 (0.384)
Centralization vs. Regional Autonomy	1.153 (0.556)
Environment	1.102 (0.329)
Immigration, Asylum	1.510 (0.530)
Justice System	1.422 (0.688)
Law and Order, Security, Terrorism	1.397 (0.372)
National Way of Life	0.963 (0.771)
Traditional Morality, Family Values, Religion	0.474 (0.314)
Europe/EU	2.503*** (0.576)
Internationalism (not EU)	0.985 (0.328)

Table B.2.: The Effect of Issues on Negative Party Communication excluding the United Kingdom (cont.)

	(1) Model 1
Foreign Intervention	1.427 (0.646)
Agriculture/Rural Affairs	0.976 (0.420)
Fragmentation	0.852* (0.0608)
Polarization	0.993 (0.00355)
Current government (sender)	0.735 (0.127)
Distance to median party	0.996 (0.00890)
Nicheness score	1.001 (0.0376)
Days to election	0.998 (0.00675)
Gallagher index of disproportionality	0.983 (0.0310)
Right leaning newspaper	0.891 (0.113)
Eastern Europe	0.624 (0.158)
Unemployment rate	1.051 (0.0426)
Observations	3479

Exponentiated coefficients; Clustered standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Note: Dependent variable: campaign negativity. Reference category for issue categories: taxation.

Table B.3.: Testing determinants of Negative Party Communication in Campaigns

	Model 1 Sentiment OLS	Model 2 Sentiment logit	Model 2 Hand coded logit
Polarization	-0.00014 (0.00011)	0.989 (0.00714)	0.996 (0.00528)
Fragmentation	-0.0144 (0.0035)	0.538** (0.122)	0.712* (0.0976)
Current government (sender)	-0.00068 (0.00119)	1.101 (0.0879)	0.985 (0.189)
Distance to mean party	0.00009 (0.00008)	1.000 (0.00605)	0.992 (0.00986)
Nicheness score	-0.00081 (0.00055)	0.943** (0.0199)	1.023 (0.0773)
Days to election	-0.00002 (0.00005)	1.006 (0.00434)	0.997 (0.00549)
Right leaning newspaper	-0.004665 (0.00149)	0.908 (0.149)	1.145 (0.158)
Unemployment rate	0.00045 (0.00186)	1.026 (0.0812)	1.054 (0.0341)
Observations	4270	4270	4270

OLS coefficients in Model 1.

Exponentiated coefficients in Model 2 and 3; Clustered standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Note: Results are for Denmark, Germany and the UK only ($n = 4270$). Model 1 is an OLS regression with share of negative words per statement as the dependent variable. Model 2 uses a dichotomized version (cut off at the mean) of this sentiment based measure of negative party communication as the dependent variable, and Model 3 uses the hand coded measure of negative party communication, same as 5.1. Both models are logistic regressions, with clustered standard errors on the country level.

C. Negative Party Communication in Parliamentary Speech

C.1. Descriptives

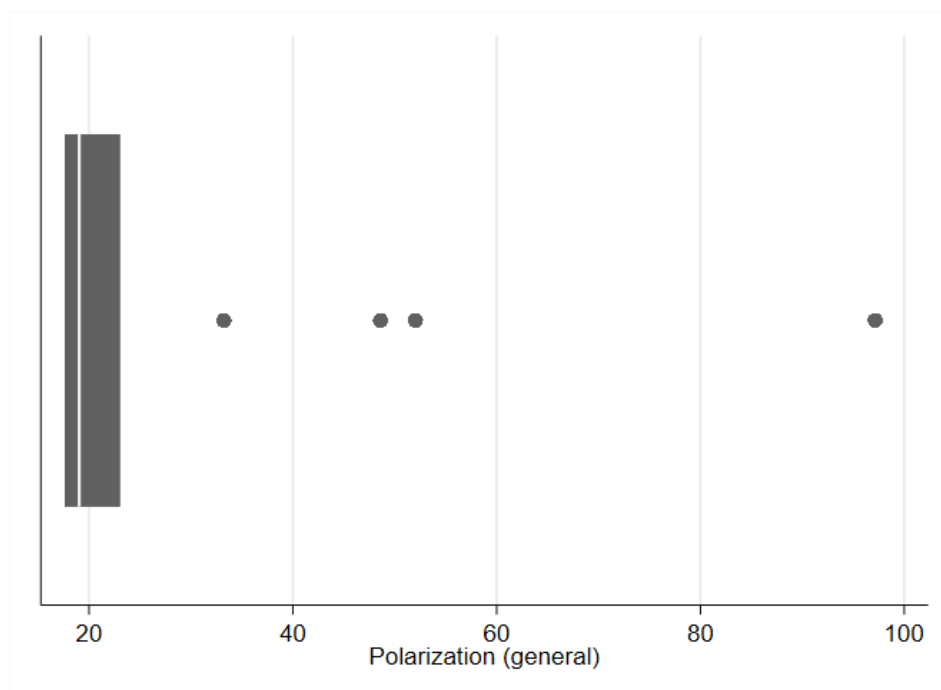


Figure C.1.: Distribution of Polarization

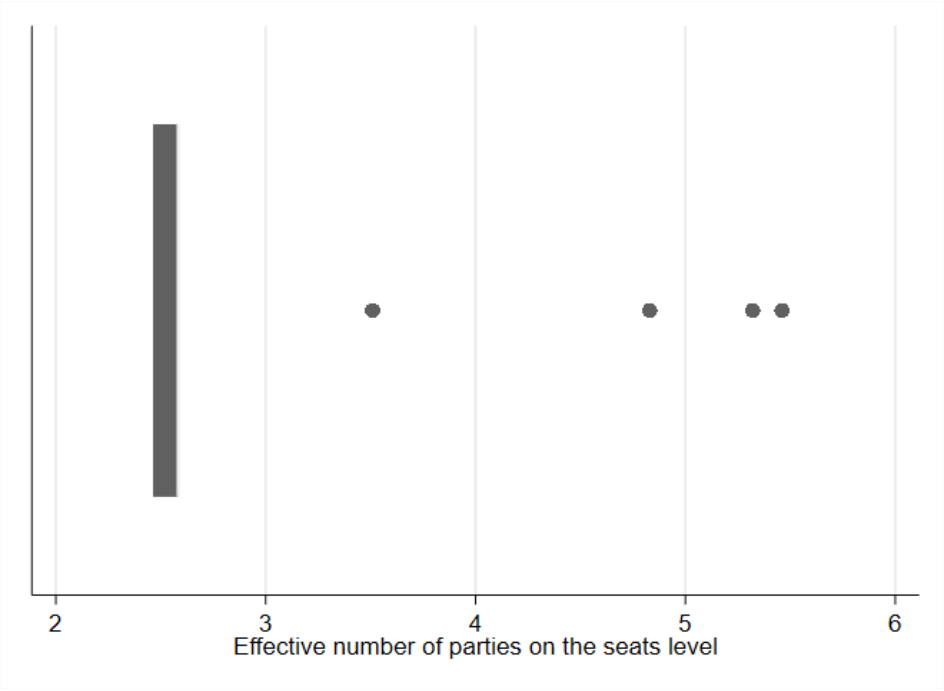


Figure C.2.: Distribution of Fragmentation

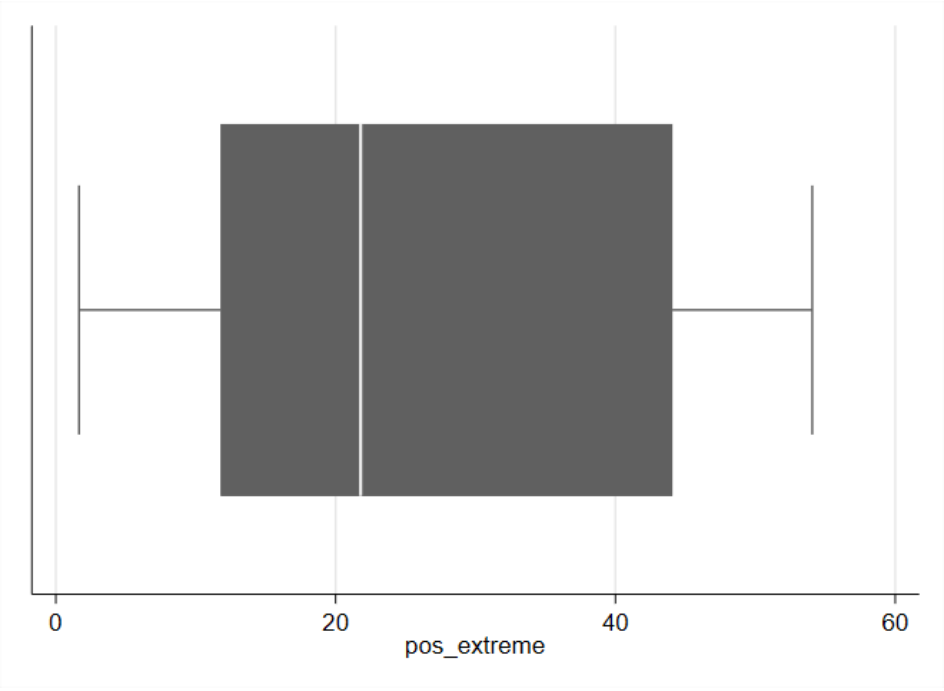


Figure C.3.: Distribution of Ideological Extremism

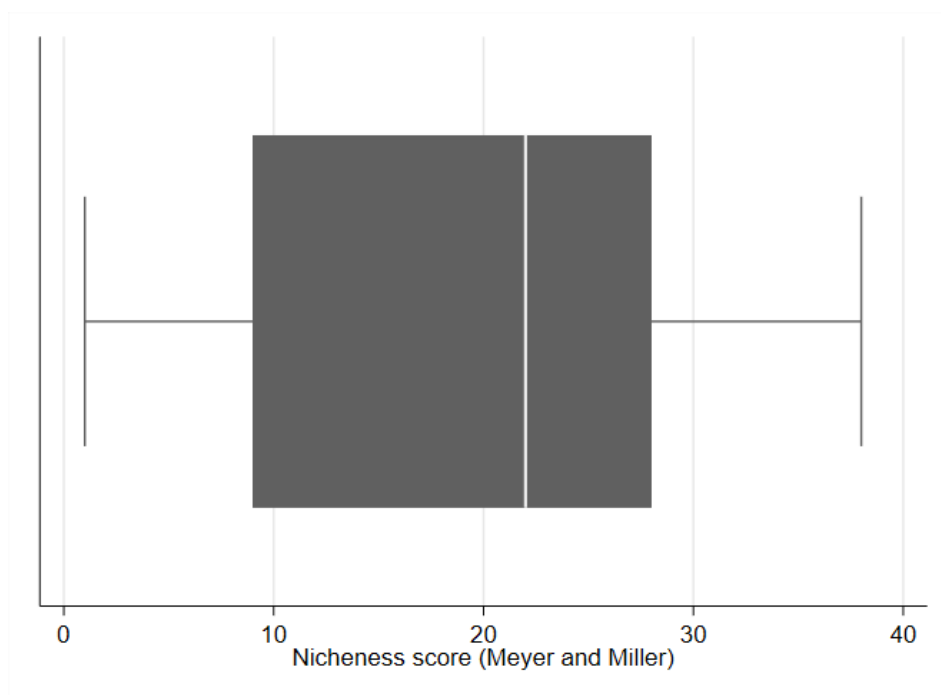


Figure C.4.: Distribution of Nicheness

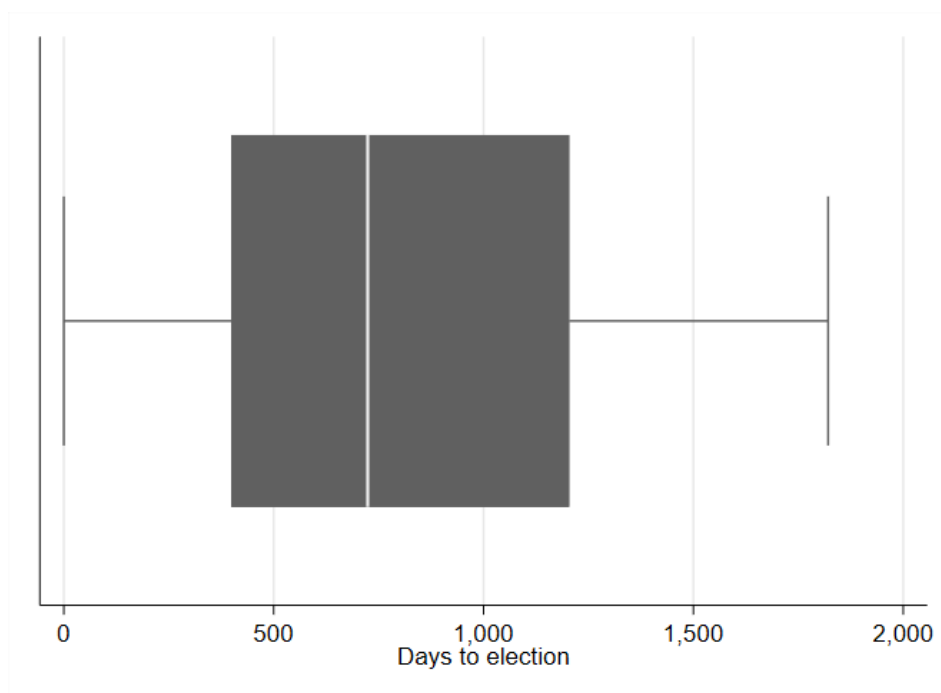


Figure C.5.: Distribution of Time to Election

C.2. Details on Coding Decisions

Table C.1.: Coding decisions: Legislative and Non-Legislative Speech

	Dictionary for non-legislative activities	n	Dictionary for legislative activities	n
DK	Forespørgsel, Spørgetime, Spørgetid, Beslutningsforslag, (t—T)il [:alpha:]†minister*+	168.517	forslag til lov, behandling af lovforslag	119.724
GER	Kleine Anfrage, Grosse Anfrage, Fragesunde, (d—D)ringliche Anfrage, Aktuelle Stunde, Befragung der Bundesregierung	40.523	Erste Beratung, Zweite Beratung, Dritte Beratung, Zweite und dritte Beratung, Beratung des Antrags der Abgeordneten, Beratung des von der Bundesregierung eingebrachten Entwurfs, Beratung des Antrags der Bundesregierung, Beratung der Beschlussempfehlung und des Berichts	56.793
UK	Oral Answers, Written Answers, Question Time	201.902	bill	72.704

Note:

Translation by the author.

Table C.2.: Coding decisions: Legislative and Non-Legislative Speech (cont.)

	unclassified	Content of unclassified	Unique agenda items	Number of speeches
DK	48.594	Election to speaker of the house, ...	7.961	344.693
GER	19.449	Start of session, election of president, ...	3.923	812.794
UK	472.781	Election of speaker of the house, administrative speech, ...	21.458	116.765
Translation by the author.				

Note:

C.3. Robustness checks

In order to assess if the results hold when the independent variables that measure negative party communication in campaigns are operationalized by sentiment analysis I include the same set of models as in Table 6.2, but measure negative party communication on the level of the campaign and the individual party by using the mean share of negative words per statement in a campaign or in a party's campaign.

There are three important implications that follow from these findings that deserve to be highlighted. First, there are substantial differences with regards to the results, as the coefficients for fragmentation and government status are not significant anymore. The other two significant findings from Table 6.2 with regards the level of negative party communication in the campaign as a whole and to a party's ideological extremism are confirmed: The aggregated level negative party communication in the campaign increases negative party communication in parliamentary speech. Figure C.3 shows that the effect corresponds to an increase from 1.6 to 2.4% negative party communication in parliament when moving from the lowest to the highest value of negative party communication in campaigns in the dataset, an increase of 50 percentage points. The increased distance to the mean party is associated with lower levels of negative party communication. Figure C.3 shows that the predicted level of negative party communication in parliamentary speech drops from 2.21 to 2.1% when parties move from ideologically moderate to ideologically more extreme positions.

Second, the coefficients for fragmentation and government status point into the same direction as before, even if they fail to reach levels of significance: This indicates that a larger degree of fragmentation decreases negative party communication in parliamentary speech, and that government parties are less likely to engage in negative party communication in parliamentary speech.

Third, the impact of fragmentation is still larger than that of polarization, which is indicated by the larger coefficient for fragmentation. This is in line with the results in Chapter 6, but also with the results on negative party communication in campaigns when issues are taken into account in Chapter 5.

Table C.3.: The Effect of system-level, party-level and institutional Determinants on Negative Party Communication in Parliament

	(1) Model 1 System	(2) Model 2 Party	(3) Model 3 Institution	(4) Model 4 Full
Polarization	0.00000785 (0.0000137)			-0.00000983 (0.00000681)
Fragmentation	-0.00148 (0.00114)			-0.00130 (0.000393)
Campaign negativity (sent.)	0.147 (0.0739)			0.162* (0.0270)
Government party		-0.000474 (0.00119)		-0.00430 (0.00119)
Distance to median party		0.00000321 (0.0000259)		-0.0000222** (0.00000145)
Nicheness score		0.0000714 (0.0000425)		-0.00000293 (0.0000327)
Party campaign negativity (sent.)		0.115 (0.0502)		-0.0143 (0.0142)
Days to election			0.0023 (0.000000328)	
non-legislative			-0.00391 (0.00173)	-0.00106 (0.000385)
legislative			-0.00450 (0.00232)	-0.000486 (0.000321)
Unemployment rate	-0.000170 (0.0000653)	-0.000642 (0.000457)	0.000294 (0.000244)	0.000152 (0.000215)
Constant	0.0202 (0.00686)	0.0184 (0.00633)	0.0218* (0.00242)	0.0217* (0.00267)
Observations	972349	972349	911767	911767

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Note: Dependent variable is negative party communication in parliament measured by sentiment analysis.

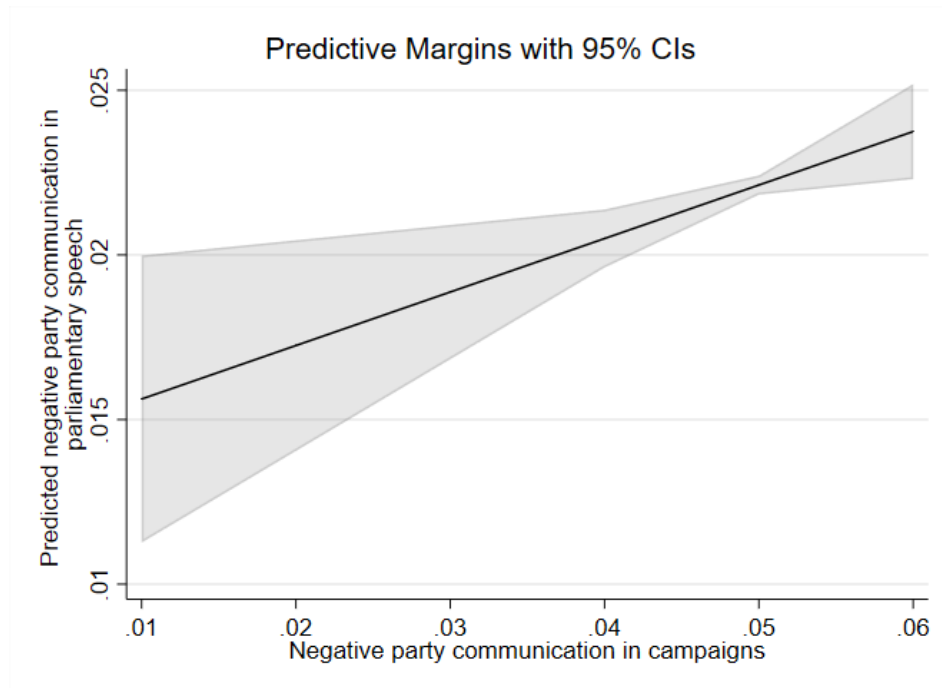


Figure C.6.: Linear predictions for ideological distance to median party
 Note: Dependent variable is negative party communication in parliament. Based on Model 4 in Table C.3

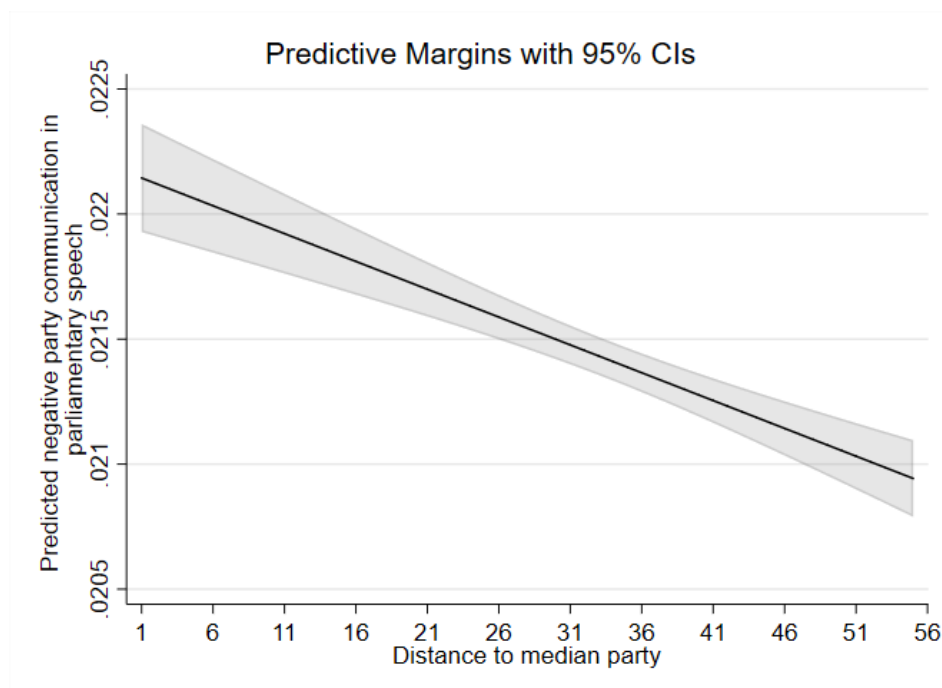


Figure C.7.: Linear predictions for ideological distance to median party
 Note: Dependent variable is negative party communication in parliament. Based on Model 4 in Table C.3

English Summary

Negative and positive are basic concepts in human interaction. Negative party communication is an example of how these concepts appear in politics. Understood as addressing another political actor in a negative, or harsh way, it is more than critical policy deliberation. Negative party communication in politics in the form of negative campaigning has received extensive attention by researchers. In electoral competition, parties face the challenge of having to highlight their own virtues, but must not forget about their opponents, who attempt to do the same. In multi-party systems, some of these opponents will even compete for the same voters, thus forcing parties to acknowledge the existence of opposing parties, or can be future coalition partners. The main research question is *What are the determinants of negative party communication in election campaigns and beyond, and is there any spill-over from campaigns to politics after the election?* By answering this question, this dissertation contributes to research on what negative communication is, how it can be measured, and which incentives political parties face to use it both in election campaigns and beyond. This addresses the three main gaps in existing literature: Its lack of engagement with negative party communication beyond campaigns, its focus on consequences of negative party communication in campaigns among voters, and its lack of comparative approaches. I argue that negative party communication can be defined as communication that uses negative words, which ties into a methodological discussion and the identification of sentiment analysis as an appropriate measurement strategy. In order to investigate negative party communication in election campaigns and beyond, and to investigate the existence of a spill-over effect, I focus on two examples of politics beyond elections: parliamentary speech and coalition formation. Both are examples of parties' post-electoral interactions that are directly related to election results, and most likely cases to find spill-over effects. Empirically, I show that negative party communication in parliament and negative party communication in campaigns are both driven by factors on the level of the political system. The fragmentation of the political system is the most robust explanation of negative party communication. Speaking for a spill-over effect I show that negative party communication in parliament is partly driven by negative party communication

in campaigns. Furthermore I show that negative party communication in campaigns also has a slight prolonging effect on the duration of coalition formation. These findings indicate that fragmentation largely drives negative party communication in campaigns and beyond, which bodes well for normative concerns about the rise of negative party communication and its feared adverse effect on democracy.

Dansk Resumé

Kommunikation opfattes forskelligt, alt efter om det er positivt- eller negativt ladet. Det gælder også inden for politik, hvor særligt negativ partikommunikation har været i fokus. Negativ partikommunikation kan forstås som adresseringen af andre politiske aktører i en negativ eller hård tone, og er mere vidtgående end kritiske politiske drøftelser. Negativ partikommunikation i form af negative valgkampagner er blevet undersøgt af mange forskere. Studierne viser, at partierne under en valgkamp forsøger at fremhæve deres egne fordele, samtidig med at de er opmærksomme på, at deres modstandere har samme taktik. I flerpartisystemer kæmper nogle partier endda om de samme vælgere, hvilket kan tvinge partierne til at anerkende tilstedeværelsen af de konkurrerende partier, da de konkurrerende partier kan være fremtidige samarbejdspartnere.

Denne afhandling tager negativ partikommunikation et skridt videre ved at undersøge forskningsspørgsmålet: Hvilke faktorer driver negativ partikommunikation under- og efter valgkampagner, og er der en spill-over effekt fra tonen i valgkampagner til den politiske virkelighed efter valget?

Afhandlingen bidrager til at klargøre hvad negativ kommunikation er, hvordan negativ kommunikation kan måles, og hvilke incitamenter politiske partier har for at anvende negativ kommunikation under- og efter valgkampagner. Denne afhandling adresserer tre huller i litteraturen: det manglende fokus på negativ kommunikation der rækker ud over valgkampagner, det manglende fokus på konsekvenser af negativ partikommunikation hos andre end vælgere samt det manglende fokus på komparative studier.

Jeg argumenterer for, at negativ partikommunikation kan defineres som kommunikation, der indeholder negative ord, hvorfor der anvendes sentiment-analyse til at undersøge forskningsspørgsmålet.

Der anvendes to forskellige eksempler på negativ partikommunikation under- og efter en valgkamp: taler i parlamentet og koalitionsdannelse. De er begge eksempler på interaktion mellem partier efter et valg, som er påvirket af valgresultatet, hvorfor det er most-likely cases for spill-over effekter.

Jeg finder, at negativ partikommunikation i parlamentet og negativ partikommunikation i kampagner begge er drevet af faktorer i det politiske system. Fragmentering i det politiske system er den mest robuste forklaring på negativ partikommunikation. I forhold til spill-over effekten viser jeg, at negativ partikommunikation i parlamentet delvist er drevet af negativ kommunikation i valgkampagnerne. Derudover finder jeg, at negativ partikommunikation i valgkampagner forlænger koalitionsdannelse en smule.

Disse fund indikerer, at fragmentering i høj grad driver negativ partikommunikation under- og efter valgkampagner, hvilket ligger i tråd med de normative bekymringer om den stigende negative partikommunikation og de afledte effekter, man frygter det har på demokratiet.