

THEMATIC ARTICLES

COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES AND THEIR METAMORPHOSIS

How Collective Identities Affect Political Interest and Political Efficacy among Migrants

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Abstract: Predicting cognitive politicization variables (i.e. political interest and internal political efficacy) often relies on the same models that predict political behavior. However, social psychology researchers have discovered further determinants, in particular with regard to minority groups: collective identities, which may be moderated or mediated by collective maltreatment and perceived collective efficacy. Therefore, this article considers these variables as predictors of cognitive politicization. Following this line of research, it may thus be assumed that both an ethno-cultural identification with the in-group as well as a national identification with the country of residence positively relate to cognitive politicization with respect to minority groups. A dual identification with both the in-group and the country of residence should be a positive predictor of these variables, whereas a separatist identification as member of the in-group but non-identification with the country of residence should be a negative predictor. These hypotheses are examined using an online panel sample of Turkish migrants in Germany. Although a separatist identification yields negative effects, the other hypotheses are not supported. Conversely, identification with Germany shows negative effects on both criteria. The findings are discussed with particular respect to the importance of sociopolitical integration of migrants.

Keywords: collective identity, collective maltreatment, Germany, internal political efficacy, political interest, social identity, Turkish immigrants

Introduction

For current democracies, the participation of citizens in politics, and particularly of socially disadvantaged people such as immigrants, is important for the legitimacy of political decision-making. It is also commonly understood that people who are more interested in politics and who feel more able to influence political decisions are more politically active. Predicting these cognitive politicization variables (i.e. political interest and internal political efficacy) often relies on the same models that predict political behavior. However, social psychology researchers have discovered further determinants, in particular with regard to minority groups: collective identities which may be moderated or mediated by collective maltreatment and perceived collective efficacy (e.g., Simon, 2004; van Zomeren, Postmes & Spears, 2008). Therefore, these variables may also predict cognitive politicization variables. By using a panel sample of Turkish migrant¹ students in Germany, this article consequently asks whether collective identities are predictors of political interest and/or internal political efficacy and, thus, might indirectly affect political behavior.

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

Models that predict political interest and political efficacy often rely on the same variables that predict political behavior which, at the individual level, is typically explained by the existence of demographics (e.g., age, gender), resources (e.g., status, income), or social capital (esp. social networks); by the political values and attitudes of individuals; and by political interest and efficacy (cf. Steinbrecher, 2009). Biological variables like, for instance, personality traits (e.g., Mondak, Hibbing, Canache, Seligson & Anderson, 2010) or genetics (e.g., Fowler, Baker & Dawes, 2008; Hatemi, Medland, Morley, Heath & Martin, 2007) have also been taken into consideration for the explanation of political participation, but are less relevant for the present study.

Countless studies have demonstrated that especially *political interest* – often defined as the “degree to which politics arouses a citizen’s curiosity” (van Deth, 1990, p. 278) and which comprises political awareness or attentiveness (cf.

¹The term “migrant” is used to refer to both first-generation immigrants and their descendants (i.e., immigrant-origin individuals).

Zaller, 1992) – and *internal political efficacy*, i.e. the feeling that one is capable to understand political facts and processes and to take political influence (cf. Almond & Verba, 1965; Balch, 1974; Campbell, Gurin & Miller, 1954) influence (socially accepted) political participation in a positive way (e.g., Finkel, 1985; Gabriel, 2004; Hadjar & Becker, 2006; 2007; Krampen, 2000).

In addition to the mentioned “traditional” predictors, however, social psychology researchers have discovered further determinants of political participation: collective identities, which may be moderated or mediated by collective maltreatment and perceived collective efficacy (e.g., Simon, 2004; van Zomeren, Postmes & Spears, 2008). Collective identity means the individual’s sense of belonging to a group or a community. It is based on subjectively shared characteristics and “provides categories by which individuals divide up and make sense of the social world” (Polletta & Jasper, 2001, p. 298). Usually, collective identities emerge in groups and through interaction, and Tajfel states that collective identities also have action potential when he writes that social is an “intervening causal mechanism in situations of ‘objective’ social change” (Tajfel, 1978, p. 86).

The work of Simon and his colleagues provides a significant amount of empirical evidence for the importance of collective identities in collective action, while also addressing the role of a dual identification with the aggrieved in-group and a more inclusive, higher-level community, such as the society as a whole (e.g., Simon & Grabow, 2010; Simon, Reichert & Grabow, 2013; Simon & Ruhs, 2008; Simon et al., 1998; Stürmer & Simon, 2004a; 2004b). Several studies also suggest that national identification is positively related to political interest and internal political efficacy (e.g., Cohrs, 2003; Huddy & Khatib, 2007; Schatz, Staub & Lavine, 1999). Shingles (1981), for instance, finds that “black consciousness” fosters political distrust and political efficacy among Blacks in America, while no such correlation exists for disadvantaged white people.

According to Stürmer and Simon’s (2004a) dual-pathway model, collective identification should be part of an affective, or automated, path to politicization. Therefore, it is hypothesized that collective identities correlate stronger with political interest than with internal political efficacy (cf. Strack & Deutsch, 2004, for affective vs. reflective pathways to social behavior). Moreover, it may be assumed that both an ethno-cultural identification with the in-group as well as a national identification with the country of residence are positively related to political interest and internal political efficacy in the case of ethno-cultural minority groups. A dual identification with the in-group and the country of residence could also be a

positive predictor of these variables, according to the politicized collective identity model from Simon and Klandermans (2001). On the other hand, a separatist identification as member of the in-group but simultaneous non-identification with the higher-level community (i.e. the country of residence) should be a negative predictor, as it may either work depoliticizing or radicalizing. Collective maltreatment and efficacy may, however, be mediators or moderators of collective identities, and in particular of a dual identity.

Sample and Method

Sample

To test the aforementioned hypotheses, this study utilizes data from an online panel of university students with a Turkish migration history in Germany. These students completed online questionnaires between 2009 (independent variables; t_1) and 2011 (dependent variables; t_p [P for panel]). The focus is on university students because student life typically provides numerous opportunities for politicization. Moreover, university students with a migration history might have comparatively better chances of exerting influence and leadership in the political arena in the future compared to less educated members of their ethno-cultural in-group. Hence, investigation into their politicization should thus provide crucial insights into the social psychological determinants of politicization among migrants.

All questionnaires used for this study were written in German and were completed by 463 students initially. For 189 students and 186 students, respectively, data for political interest and internal political efficacy, respectively, were available from subsequent measurements. In the following, aggregated scores (i.e. mean values of the variables across subsequent surveys) will be used as dependent measures.²

Dependent and Independent Measurers

Political interest was always measured by the item “How interested are you in politics?” (0 = *not at all* ... 4 = *very strongly*; $M = 2.48$, $SD = 1.16$)³, and *internal political efficacy* via three items (0 = *not true at all* ... 4 = *absolutely true*): “I am able to understand and evaluate major policy issues”, “I know a lot about politics and political issues”, and “I feel capable of actively participating in the political process.” ($M = 2.34$, $SD = 1.01$; Cronbach’s $\alpha = .85$)

² For more details on the method, please consult Reichert (2013).

³ All statistics given in this section refer to the initial survey in 2009.

Questions that had already performed well in previous studies were used to measure collective identifications (Simon & Ruhs, 2008; Simon & Grabow, 2010). The participants usually indicated their choice on a five point scale (0 = *do not agree at all ...* 4 = *completely agree*). In particular, *ethno-cultural identification with Turks* was measured using four items: “I feel strong ties with other Turks,” “To be of Turkish origin is an important aspect of my person,” “In general I am glad that I am of Turkish origin,” and “I identify with other Turks.” ($M = 2.34$, $SD = 1.02$; Cronbach’s $\alpha = .82$)

Identification with Germany was measured by five items: “I feel strong ties with Germany,” “To live in Germany is an important aspect of my person,” “In general I am glad to live in Germany,” “I identify with Germany,” and “I feel part of German society.” ($M = 2.55$, $SD = 0.93$; Cronbach’s $\alpha = .85$)

Furthermore, four items were used to measure *dual identification* as both Turkish and German: “I feel I belong to both the Turks and the Germans,” “Sometimes I feel more as a German and sometimes more as a Turk – it depends on the situation”, “I have many similarities with Germans as well as Turks,” and “I feel well in the Turkish as well as the German culture.” ($M = 2.34$, $SD = 0.98$; Cronbach’s $\alpha = .72$)

Three items measured *separatist identification* as Turkish in opposition to identification as German. The first two items were: “I often feel more Turkish than German” and “All in all I feel more Turkish than German.” In addition, respondents were presented a horizontal sequence of eleven boxes. Each box contained complementary percentages for Turkish and German ranging from *100% Turkish, 0% German* to *0% Turkish, 100% German* (with a decrement of 10% for Turkish and an increment of 10% for German), and they were asked to what percentage they felt Turkish and to what percentage German. Respondents then ticked the appropriate box, and their responses were coded from 10 to 0 such that higher scores indicate stronger identification as Turkish as opposed to German. To calculate a single index the scores from the box measure were translated into scores between 0 and 4 (by multiplying the original scores with 0.40) ($M = 2.40$, $SD = 1.21$; Cronbach’s $\alpha = .89$).

Control Variables, Mediators and Moderators

In addition, socio-demographic control variables were measured in order to be included in the statistical analyses: *sex* (59% women, 41% men), *age* ($M = 25$ years, $SD = 4.57$), *German citizenship* (55% no vs. 45% yes), *percentage of lifetime spent in Germany* ($M = 84$, $SD = 30$), *monthly net income* ($M = 452$ Euro, $SD = 396$);

and *German language proficiency* was measured on a five-point scale (0 = *very bad* ... 4 = *very good*; $M = 3.72$, $SD = 0.64$). The *political behavior* that the students engaged in before the first measurement was also considered as a control variable. The respondents ticked a yes-box for each activity in which they had participated. Eight activities were summed to an index, namely: contacted a politician, actively supported a political party's election campaign, member of a political party, signed a petition, engaged in a citizens' initiative, distributed leaflets, boycotted products for political or ethical reasons, and attended a legal demonstration. Eventually, *religiosity* was also measured by the same scale as collective identifications, because these variables might be correlated with each other (Foner & Alba, 2008; Saroglou & Galand, 2004): "I am a religious person" and "My faith is important to me." ($M = 2.38$, $SD = 1.47$; $r = .82$, $p < .001$)

Eventually, potential mediator and moderator variables resulting from social psychological research and theory were included in the questionnaires (e.g., Simon & Klandermans, 2001). *Collective maltreatment* was measured by four items (0 = *do not agree at all* ... 4 = *completely agree*): "Turks are often treated badly in Germany," "If it were up to some Germans, the rights of the Turks living here would be further restricted," "I am angry about the treatment of the Turks in Germany" and "The discrimination against the Turks living here often makes me furious" ($M = 2.31$, $SD = 1.02$; Cronbach's $\alpha = .87$). The questionnaire employed two items to measure *collective efficacy* (0 = *do not agree at all* ... 4 = *completely agree*): "I believe that the Turks living here can exert influence on political decisions in Germany" and "If the Turks living in Germany acted as a group, they could successfully fight against their maltreatment." ($M = 2.31$, $SD = 1.02$; $r = .33$, $p < .001$)

Predictors of Political Interest and Internal Political Efficacy

Bivariate Analyses

Table 1 presents the bivariate correlations between collective identities and political interest and internal political efficacy, respectively. All correlations are rather weak, but in most cases in the direction we would expect, with an emphasis on the negative correlations between a separatist identification and both dependent variables. Moreover, only these correlations were (marginally) significant.

Table 1: Pearson correlations between collective identities (t_1) and cognitive politicization (t_p)

	ID Germany	ID Turks	Separatist ID	Dual ID
Political interest	.10	.04	-.05 ^o	.07
Internal political efficacy	.09	-.04	-.12 ^o	.09

Note. Only two marginally significant correlations occurred (^o: $p < .10$).

Multiple Regression Analyses

Consequently, multiple regression analyses were employed in order to see whether these patterns might change if we control for background variables. We were interested in the *additional* contribution of collective identifications to standard predictors of politicization. Therefore, socio-demographic variables, religiosity and past political behavior as well as either political interest (if efficacy was the criterion) or internal political efficacy (if interest was the criterion) were included in a first step. In a second step, all four collective identifications were entered. The corresponding variable of cognitive politicization as measured at time one was included in a final step (e.g., t_1 political interest was included if t_p political interest was the criterion). This last step would allow to predict changes in the criteria (Cronbach & Furby, 1970; Granger, 1969; 1988).⁴ The results are presented in Table 2.

Mediation and Moderation Analyses

Previous analyses yielded only weak evidence for the statistical relevance of collective identifications in the emergence of cognitive politicization, in particular with regard to political interest. Therefore, another model included collective maltreatment and perceived collective efficacy as potential mediators and moderators. If either of these or both variables were statistically significant predictors of cognitive politicization in the fourth step, a statistical test of mediation was conducted⁵. Interaction variables of z-standardized predictors were considered in a fifth step to test for moderated effects (cf. Aiken & West, 2003; Frazier, Tix & Barron, 2004). One interaction variable was used for each identification variable, but these were entered separately for each potential

⁴ Additional steps in causal analysis were also applied as suggested by these authors.

⁵ In cases of significant mediators, the “Indirect Macro” by Hayes for SPSS was used (Version 4.1, 21 January 2011; cf. Preacher & Hayes, 2008) with 5000 bootstrap samples.

moderator. Moderated regression analyses were only conducted for significant interactions using median splits.

Table 2: Multiple regression analyses – cognitive politicization (t_p) on collective identities (t_1)

	Political interest			Internal political efficacy		
	β	t	p	β	t	p
Age	.05	0.84	.404	.07	1.27	.206
Sex (female/male)	.11	2.17	.032	.16	3.17	.002
Income	.00	0.06	.956	-.04	-0.67	.503
Percentage of lifetime spent in Germany	.09	1.45	.149	.08	1.24	.217
German Citizenship (no/yes)	-.07	-1.37	.172	-.05	-1.03	.305
German language proficiency	-.02	-0.28	.781	.02	0.41	.680
Religiosity	.05	0.87	.386	.12	1.94	.054
Past political behavior	.06	0.99	.325	.17	2.88	.004
Political interest	.64	8.84	.000	.23	3.18	.002
Internal political efficacy	.12	1.71	.090	.49	6.79	.000
Identification with Germany	-.10	-1.57	.119	-.20	-3.19	.002
Identification with Turks	.01	0.16	.872	-.04	-0.59	.558
Separatist identification	-.11	-1.42	.157	-.19	-2.44	.016
Dual identification	.01	0.12	.908	.06	1.11	.270
<i>Df</i>			171			168
(R^2)			(.611)			(.627)
$[R^2_{adj}]$			[.579]			[.596]

Political Interest

Collective maltreatment had a marginally positive effect on political interest ($\beta = .10$, $t(169) = 1.85$, $p = .066$; model step: $F(2,169) = 2.01$, $p = .137$; $R^2 = .62$, $R^2_{adj} = .58$).⁶ Mediation analyses revealed a corresponding mediation of identification with Germany ($B = -0.04$, $SE = 0.03$, $CI [-0.11 | -0.00]$), that is, the latter affected collective maltreatment ($B = -0.33$, $SE = 0.10$, $p < .001$), which then passed on this effect (Figure 2). No additional mediation was found nor was any interaction included in the fifth step significant, and collective efficacy was also not a significant predictor of political interest.

⁶ Significant coefficients given in this chapter refer to the level $\alpha \leq .10$.

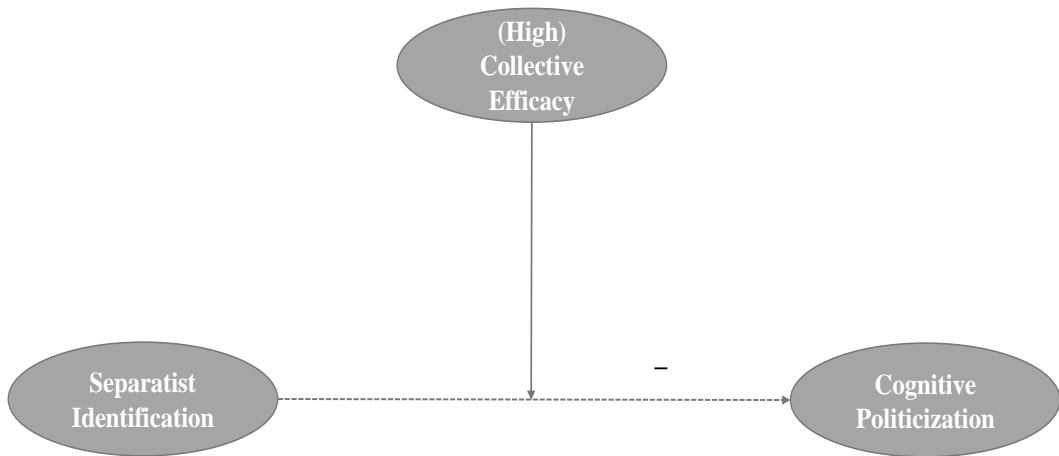


Figure 1: Illustration of the interaction effect between identification with Germany and collective efficacy in the prediction of cognitive politicization.

However, if each interaction variable was included separately in the fifth step, then collective efficacy moderated the effect of separatist identification as depicted in *Figure 1* ($B = -0.12$, $SE = 0.06$, $p = .045$; model step: $F(1,168) = 4.09$, $p = .045$; $R^2 = .63$, $R^2_{adj} = .59$): According to a median split⁷, a separatist identification was statistically irrelevant for low collective efficacy ($\beta = -.13$, $t(70) = -0.98$, $p = .330$; t_1 political interest: $\beta = .46$, $t(70) = 3.89$, $p < .001$; model fit: $F(15,70) = 9.49$, $p < .001$; $R^2 = .67$, $R^2_{adj} = .60$). On the contrary, highly efficacious respondents reported higher political interest the less separatist they identified themselves ($\beta = -.22$, $t(84) = -2.00$, $p = .049$; t_1 political interest: $\beta = .77$, $t(84) = 7.64$, $p < .001$; collective maltreatment: $\beta = .17$, $t(84) = 2.40$, $p = .019$; model fit: $F(15,84) = 10.35$, $p < .001$; $R^2 = .65$, $R^2_{adj} = .59$). The causal control analysis yielded no significance for political interest as a predictor of separatist identification ($\beta = -.10$, $t(84) = -1.06$, $p = .294$), indicating that the identified moderated effect of a separatist identification was a causal one.

Internal Political Efficacy

A similar pattern was found in the mediation analysis for internal political efficacy (*Figure 2*). Only collective maltreatment was a significant predictor in the fourth step ($\beta = .13$, $t(166) = 2.34$, $p = .020$; model step: $F(2,166) = 2.77$, $p = .065$; $R^2 = .64$, $R^2_{adj} = .60$), and the effect of identification with Germany was mediated by that

⁷Low collective efficacy ≤ 2 vs. high collective efficacy > 2 .

variable ($B = -0.04$, $SE = 0.02$, $CI [-0.10|-0.01]$); path from identification with Germany to collective maltreatment: $B = -0.32$, $SE = 0.10$, $p = .001$). However, the direct effect of identification with Germany did still persist ($\beta = -.17$, $t(166) = -2.55$, $p = .012$).

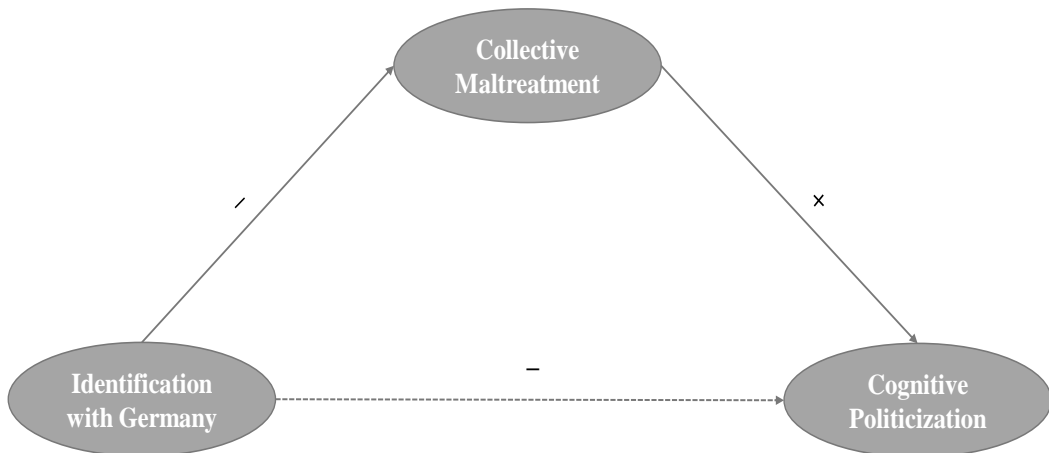


Figure 2: Illustration of the mediation effect of identification with Germany, mediated by collective maltreatment on cognitive politicization (identification with Germany kept its direct effect in the regression on internal political efficacy).

In addition, moderation analyses also yielded a statistically significant interaction between collective maltreatment and an identification with Germany ($B = -.14$, $SE = 0.06$, $p = .024$; model step: $F(2,162) = 1.46$, $p = .218$; $R^2 = .65$, $R^2_{adj} = .61$). The median split⁸ indicated that the latter was of no statistical relevance for students who felt less maltreated ($\beta = -.12$, $t(75) = -1.36$, $p = .177$; sex: $\beta = .19$, $t(75) = 2.57$, $p = .012$; past political behavior: $\beta = .20$, $t(75) = 2.19$, $p = .032$; political interest: $\beta = .27$, $t(75) = 2.11$, $p = .038$; t_1 internal political efficacy: $\beta = .39$, $t(75) = 3.08$, $p = .003$; model fit: $F(15,75) = 9.06$, $p < .001$; $R^2 = .64$, $R^2_{adj} = .57$). Those who felt that their in-group was quite maltreated, however, tended to be less politically efficacious the more they identified with Germany ($\beta = -.21$, $t(76) = -1.86$, $p = .066$; political interest: $\beta = .22$, $t(76) = 2.10$, $p = .039$; t_1 internal political efficacy: $\beta = .53$, $t(76) = 5.18$, $p < .001$; model fit: $F(15,76) = 7.87$, $p < .001$; $R^2 = .61$, $R^2_{adj} = .53$). Political efficacy was not a significant predictor in the causal control regression analysis on identification with Germany as a criterion ($\beta = -.01$,

⁸ Low collective maltreatment < 2.5 vs. high collective maltreatment ≥ 2.5 .

$t(76) = -0.07, p = .949$), so that we may conclude that we did indeed find a long-term effect of identification with Germany on internal political efficacy in the event of high perceived maltreatment of their Turkish in-group.

Similar to the regression on political interest, we did not find any significant interaction between collective efficacy and collective identities if these were included simultaneously in the fifth step. However, if each interaction variable was included in a separate model as a single predictor, the interaction with identification with Germany was marginally significant ($B = 0.08, SE = 0.05, p = .095$; model step: $F(1,165) = 2.82, p = .095; R^2 = .65, R^2_{adj} = .61$). The interaction with separatist identification was statistically significant ($B = -0.11, SE = 0.05, p = .032$; model step: $F(1,165) = 4.70, p = .032; R^2 = .65, R^2_{adj} = .61$; see *Figure 1*). Split analyses showed that an identification with Germany was a negative predictor of internal political efficacy among respondents with low collective efficacy ($\beta = -.24, t(68) = -2.26, p = .027$), whereas a separatist identification was insignificant among these students ($\beta = -.18, t(68) = -1.47, p = .147$; sex: $\beta = .17, t(68) = 2.34, p = .023$; religiosity: $\beta = .19, t(68) = 2.36, p = .021$; past political behavior: $\beta = .21, t(68) = 2.56, p = .013$; t_1 internal political efficacy: $\beta = .57, t(68) = 5.53, p < .001$; model fit: $F(15,68) = 12.10, p < .001; R^2 = .73, R^2_{adj} = .67$). The “Granger test” did not yield a significant coefficient for identification with Germany on internal political efficacy ($\beta = -.03, t(68) = -0.22, p = .825$). Hence, identification with Germany predicted decreases in internal political efficacy among students with low collective efficacy.

In contrast, a separatist identification had a significant, negative effect on political efficacy among students who felt more collectively efficacious ($\beta = -.25, t(83) = -2.11, p = .038$), while this time it was the identification with Germany which did not yield any significance ($\beta = -.06, t(83) = -0.62, p = .541$; political interest: $\beta = .28, t(83) = 2.66, p = .009$; t_1 internal political efficacy: $\beta = .37, t(83) = 3.39, p = .001$; collective maltreatment: $\beta = .23, t(83) = 3.05, p = .003$; model fit: $F(15,83) = 8.92, p < .001; R^2 = .62, R^2_{adj} = .55$). Political efficacy was not a significant predictor in the causal control regression analysis on separatist identification ($\beta = .07, t(83) = 0.77, p = .444$), indicating that a separatist identification reduced internal political efficacy if students felt that they were efficacious as a group.

Summary

To sum up, collective maltreatment appeared to mediate the influence of an identification with Germany with respect to political interest and internal political efficacy (at least partially): Identification with Germany was negatively

correlated with collective maltreatment which itself was a positive predictor of both cognitive politicization variables. This means that the more students identified with Germany, the less they felt maltreated as a group, and as a consequence, they were less interested in politics and felt less politically efficacious. On the other hand, this also implies that the less students identified with Germany, the more they felt that Turks were maltreated in Germany, which translated into more interest in politics and a stronger sense of political efficacy. However, with respect to the latter, an identification with Germany still retained its direct negative effect: the more respondents identified with Germany, the less did these individuals feel politically efficacious.

Even though collective maltreatment was a significant mediator, it was almost irrelevant in the moderation analyses. In contrast, collective efficacy was a significant moderator: A separatist identification had a negative effect on both criteria given a high amount of collective efficacy, whereas an identification with Germany resulted in decreases in internal political efficacy if students felt that their collective was less efficacious. This means that those students who thought that Turks in Germany had quite some influence and that they could fight maltreatment against Turks if they acted as a collective were less interested in politics and felt less politically efficacious as individuals the more separatist they identified themselves. On the contrary, students who held the opinion that their in-group was not effective as a collective were politically more interested and efficacious the less they identified with Germany.

Discussion and Conclusion

According to the first hypothesis, collective identities should have stronger correlations with political interest than internal political efficacy. This was not supported by multiple regression analyses, although more complex models yielded that collective identities may not merely have an effect on internal political efficacy but also on political interest.

Identification with Germany

In accordance with social psychological research, perceived maltreatment of one's own collective and the collective's efficacy as a group are important (e.g., Simon, 2004; van Zomeren, Postmes & Spears, 2008). Mediation analyses yielded that students felt higher levels of maltreatment of their ethno-cultural in-group the less they identified with Germany, and the more maltreated they felt as a collective, the more were they interested in politics. Maybe students with Turkish migration history pursue an individualized strategy of success, and the more they

identify with Germany, are well in Germany and do not perceive deprivation and maltreatment of their collective in Germany, the less there is reason to be interested in politics or to gather information about politics and policies.

Another consequence of an identification with the majority might be lower levels of internal political efficacy, although the mechanism seems more complex in this case. The direct, negative effect of identification with Germany on internal political efficacy may contradict research according to which a national identification with the majority supports politicization (e.g., Huddy & Khatib, 2007) – this might not be applicable in the context of immigration when individuals may hold multiple (national or ethno-cultural) identities, in particular when we also think of the non-effect in the regression on political interest. Moreover, we found the same mediation as with respect to political interest, but the direct effect of identification with Germany remained. However, moderation analyses revealed that this effect persisted only among two groups of students: those who felt that their group was maltreated, and those who perceived their in-group as hardly effective as a collective. Hence, the combination with perceived collective maltreatment and/or collective efficacy could explain the politicizing effect of an identification with the majority out-group.

Separatist Identification

A separatist identification was a negative predictor of political efficacy. This is exactly what we hypothesized, but we also expected a direct effect on political interest. However, detailed analyses revealed that a separatist identification was a negative predictor for both measures of cognitive politicization only if students had the feeling that their in-group was highly efficacious as a collective. Hence, when it subjectively seems particularly likely to be able to achieve something as a collective, a separatist identification causes cognitive depoliticization.

Since a separatist identification and the strategy of social demarcation from the majority or “host society” go with each other (see Berry 2001; Esser 1999), this could also imply that classical interest in politics and a general sense of political efficacy are indeed reduced. At the same time, however, the interest in one’s own in-group persists and individuals distance themselves from politics insofar as they hold the view that they would not need politics, because the representatives of their in-group would successfully care about the advancement of their own group. Such a combination could be linked with a particular contempt for and disinterest in the broader societal context: “What do I care what *you* do; *we* can still take care

of ourselves.” In sum, this form of collective identification is particularly disadvantageous for politicization.

Other Collective Identities

Our analyses did not yield evidence that either ethno-cultural identification with Turks or a dual identification with both, Germany and Turks, would operate politicizing. This result did not change when we inspected the effects of collective maltreatment and collective efficacy as potential mediators or moderators. Hence, this study also adds to research on dual identification as a politicized collective identity and suggests that existing theory (e.g., Simon & Klandermans, 2001; Simon & Ruhs, 2008; Simon & Grabow, 2010) may only apply to political behavior, but not to cognitive politicization. Other research, however, indicates that social capital – especially being involved in certain social networks – could be more relevant with respect to cognitive politicization (Reichert, 2013), and future research should also think about other boundary conditions such as the salience of anti-immigrant policies and the identification with those who fight to change these policies (Wiley, Figueroa & Lauricella, 2014).

Concluding Remarks

Social-psychological research on identity supplies a complementary contribution to the explanation of cognitive politicization. Although findings for the role of collective identities in the behavioral politicization and in social movement participation cannot be applied to cognitive politicization in the same way, existing research could be enriched with important insights. Only our hypothesis on the negative effects of a separatist identification was supported by our data, whereas we did not expect a negative effect of an identification with Germany. Moreover, neither an ethno-cultural identification with the in-group nor a dual identification operated in the way which we had expected.

It should be noted that aspects of politics and policies regarding the in-group cannot be neglected when aiming at bringing about a politically interested and competent citizenry. This holds in particular once we consider the negative effects of an identification with Germany in the multiple regression analyses when several control variables were included and which also accounted for the fact that various collective identities are involved in the context of immigration. Furthermore, the political system has to respect the origin of all people because the bond with the minority in-group that plays a certain role for acquiring the preconditions of political participation within the larger society.

However, since internal political efficacy is more often affected by collective identification, it seems that the more conventional political activities are influenced by collective identities in an indirect way (cf. Reichert, 2013). Politics thus must not preach either / or and request sole identification with Germany but accept that this kind of identity may not in all contexts be as positive for engaging people in politics as some research suggests. Yet a very one-sided form of a separatist collective identification in fact appears to be a negative condition of cognitive politicization, which is often understood as a precondition of an active participation in politics. At least university students do not seem to politicize cognitively the more they identify with the majority out-group, or the more they identify with their in-group in a very single-sided way.

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