The Transnational Ties That Bind: Foreign Parties, Transnational Politics, and Voter Perceptions

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Politics in the 21ˢᵗ century has grown increasingly inter-connected with voters and parties engaging more with information about what transpires abroad. In this project, I ask how voters update their perceptions of political parties in response to information about that party's connections and allegiances to similar parties abroad. I explore related questions in three papers.

First, using data from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems and the Comparative Manifesto Project, I argue that the closer a party is to the positions of its transnational party family's brand, the more accurate voters will be in their assessment of the party's position and find support for this argument. In the second paper, using data from the European Election Study, I argue that voters are more willing to support parties following a strong showing from the rest of their party family in preceding elections to the European Parliament. Finally, I develop a novel experiment in Norway and Sweden which takes strategic transnational branding a step further by examining the effect of a party intentionally linking itself to an ally abroad. In particular, I evaluate how hosting a party-family conference with leaders from the sister party which is in Germany's current governing coalition influences the valence attributes associated with a party's brand. I argue that by linking itself with the political brand of a foreign party that has achieved electoral success, a party's reputation and perceived viability as a governing party, credibility to fulfill its pledges, and competency to address the most important issues facing the country all improve. The findings from my study do not, however, support my expectations setting the stage for future work that delves deeper into intra-party politics to explain the occurrence of transnational branding. These studies have important implications for our understanding of voter perceptions in an increasingly globalized political environment and serve as an important steppingstone for future study on how transnational politics affects voters and what drives parties to embrace their allies abroad.

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Preface

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1.0 Introduction

In March 1977, during Spain's transition to democracy and three months before the first general elections in June that year, the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) was trying to establish itself as a credible political party after being forced to operate in exile under the Franco regime. To establish its communist credentials, the party invited communist leaders from the French Communist Party (PCF) and Italian Communist Party (PCI) to Madrid for a Eurocommunist summit as a signal of Spain's democratic opening and the PCE's alignment with the rest of its communist bedfellows in Europe.[1] Shortly after the general elections that year, in which the PCE finished in third place with 9.33 percent of the vote, the Labour Party in the United Kingdom, seeking to improve its reputation among the British public during a period of decline for the party in the late 1970s, made the historic decision to invite the leaders of the PCE, PCF, and PCI to Westminster in October to signal its embrace of some of the Eurocommunist program. Notably, it also hosted François Mitterrand of the French Socialist Party (PS) at the same event after previously hosting the leader of the Spanish Socialist Worker's Party (PSOE), Felipe González, a year earlier in 1976.[2] González himself is no stranger to the social democratic family, having maintained a close relationship with Willy Brandt of the German SPD during Spain's democratization and also leaned on the SPD to advocate for a vision of a social democratic Europe (Pérez De Arcos, 2023). As these examples demonstrate, transnational allegiances were an important part of the Spanish left's toolkit during the transition to democracy as it worked to establish itself in the new democratic Spain.

Forty years later, parties are still using their transnational alliances to their benefit. In 2017, the radical right Alternative for Deutschland (AfD) in Germany hosted a summit, akin to the Eurocommunist summit of 1977, of radical right leaders in Europe to build on the success of the populist right in 2016 and advocate for further progress in 2017. The summit included appearances from Frauke Petry of the AfD which was hosting the event, Marine Le Pen of the French National Rally (RN), Geert Wilders of the Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV), and Matteo Salvini of Italy's Northern League (LN) all linking themselves to the ideological fight for a populist right Europe. Six

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[1]https://elpais.com/diario/1977/03/03/espana/226191635_850215.html?event=go&event_log=go&prod=REGCRA RT&o=cerrado

[2] https://elpais.com/diario/1977/08/02/internacional/239320814_850215.html

years later, following the PVV's first place finish in Dutch elections in November 2023, radical right party leaders from across Europe celebrated the successful electoral performance as a victory for their parties as well. Le Pen called the election "spectacular",[3] Salvini praised the PVV, which he referred to as an "historic ally" of the LN, and Belgian leader Tom Van Grieken of the Vlaams Belang (VB) congratulated Wilders and stated "parties like ours are coming all over Europe."[4]

Beyond the radical right, party families across Europe have also taken to embracing their party family. In social democratic circles, following a decade of decline for the party family (Bandau, 2023; Benedetto et al., 2020), center-left parties have increasingly come to view their sister parties as assets, trying to associate themselves with the most successful figures in the family. In July 2022, Keir Starmer of the British Labour Party, for example, released a campaign ad in which he visited Germany and highlighted his close allegiance to the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) which unseated the Christian Democratic Union (CDU/CSU) from the Chancellorship for the first time after 16 years of Angela Merkel's center-right leadership. Hoping to follow suit in general elections in December 2024 in the U.K, Starmer highlighted how Labour was learning from the SPD about how to craft a winning social democratic message and restore social democracy to the U.K. and Europe.[5] A year later, Starmer remotely appeared alongside former PMs Magdalena Andersson of the Swedish Social Democratic Party, Saana Marin of the Social Democratic Party of Finland, and Antonio Costa of the Portuguese Socialist Party endorsing a center-left pre-electoral coalition of the GreenLeft (GL) and Dutch Labour Party (PvdA) under Frans Timmermans ahead of the 2023 Dutch elections to promote social democracy in Europe.[6]

Additionally, parties have also been developing transnational "brands" associated with their party families across Europe even in the absence of direct linkage between party leaders. Green parties are notorious for their transnational connections and desire to promote one green movement, all choosing green as their official party color, using sunflowers in their logos, and all having virtually the same name across the continent to project unity in the pursuit of a green Europe. [7] Similarly, in September 2023 the CDU/CSU in Germany redesigned its logo and changed party colors in favor of

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[3]https://www.barrons.com/news/france-s-marine-le-pen-congratulates-wilders-on-spectacular-dutch-election-5f9618c6
[4] https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/praise-fear-after-dutch-populist-wilders-election-win-2023-11-22/
[5] https://twitter.com/Keir_Starmer/status/1548605577689026562
[6] https://twitter.com/Nassreddin2002/status/1713197259783893234
[7] According to data from the CMP in the most recent national elections included in the dataset, 80 percent of parties in West Europe identified as green parties by the CMP had the word "green" in their party name. The next closest family to include the party family in the party names was the Christian Democratic family at 53 percent.

a new turquoise color that is the same shade of turquoise as the logo of its sister party in Austria, the Austrian People's Party (OVP). [8]

As these multiple instances of high-profile summits and subtle shifts in a party's identity illustrate, parties have, for a long time and with increasing frequency, been cultivating common transnational brands associated with their cross-national alliances and have frequently chosen to embrace these partnerships to make highly visible displays of working towards a common European vision. Notably, these patterns have also been identified in cross-national research, which has observed the increasing cohesion of party families around similar ideological programs (Camia & Caramani, 2012; Caramani, 2011, 2012). Evidence from the policy diffusion literature increasingly highlights how parties are paying attention to what transpires abroad and learning from their sister parties' experiences about what strategies to adopt in order to be successful (Ezrow et al., 2021; Juhl & Williams, 2022; Rydgren, 2005; Teitelbaum, 2020).

While parties have increasingly chosen to coalesce around the transnational symbols they are associated with and publicly embrace their allies abroad, politics has increasingly become more interconnected than ever before for voters. The rise of globalization connecting world economies (Aytaç, 2018; Hellwig, 2015), the continued integration of regional politics (Jupille et al., 2013), and the transnationalization of information and media markets (Bennett, 2004; Brüggemann & Schulz-Forberg, 2009; Castells, 2008; Deutschmann, 2022) have all encouraged voters to consider the political conditions beyond their immediate borders. As a result, we have seen a rise of voters paying attention to, and caring about, the politics of not just their own country, but also of their neighbors. Voters increasingly care about transnational issues such as EU integration, climate change, and immigration and whether their country should tackle the issue alone or on the global stage (De Vries, 2018b; Hooghe & Marks, 2018; Jackson & Jolly, 2021). We have also seen the continued diffusion of social movements and protests whereby the events of one country spillover into neighboring countries, such as Black Lives Matter protests in the US and Europe or Stop the Steal protests in the US and Brazil, (Gleditsch & Rivera, 2017; Keck & Sikkink, 2014; Smith, 2013). Finally, we have evidence that voters are increasingly paying attention to, and impacted by, the elections of foreign countries, with robust evidence of significant shifts in behavior and attitudes in response to foreign elections (Delis et al., 2020; Malet & Walter, 2023; Turnbull-Dugarte & Rama, 2022; Walter, 2021a).

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[8] https://page-online.de/kreation/ueber-drei-boegen-muss-du-gehen-neues-corporate-design-der-cdu/

1.1 Transnational Brands

These trends in both the transnationalization of voters and the transnationalization of parties raise new questions about the link between voters and parties in a transnationalizing political environment. How do voters, who increasingly pay attention to foreign politics, evaluate their parties, which are at the same time more frequently embracing common cross-national symbols and allies? Relatedly, how can parties utilize their transnational allegiances to influence their domestic appeal? In this dissertation, I argue that parties can leverage their transnational political associations to their advantage to improve their own domestic political appeal by using the distinctiveness of the transnational brand to help reaffirm its own brand for voters.

Political brands are the network of associations that voters hold about a political party that they use to help them identify the party. These associations commonly include the party's policy positions, the solutions they offer to address the country's most important issues, and the reputation of party leaders (Lupu, 2013, 2016; Nielsen & Larsen, 2014; Smith & French, 2011). However, a party's brand also includes colors, logos, imagery, and labels assigned to the party (Avina, 2023; Avina & Spoon, 2024; Grimmer & Grube, 2019; Rutter et al., 2018), as well as any valence trait associated with the party in the eyes of voters that can help them identify the party (Zur, 2017, 2021). To cultivate a strong political brand, it needs to first be unique, meaning voters need to be able to distinguish the party's brand from its competitors (Downs, 1957; Nielsen & Larsen, 2014). Parties that converge on similar policy positions as rivals (Spoon & Klüver, 2017, 2019) or blur their positions on issues associated with their party (Gunderson, 2024) often weaken their brand by making it harder for voters to tell it apart from other parties in the system. Strong brands also need to have favorable associations, meaning that when voters think about the party, they do so in a positive light as opposed to a negative one (Nielsen & Larsen, 2014). Parties have a strong electoral incentive to develop strong political brands as extant work has established that parties with strong brands are rewarded at the ballot box (Lupu, 2013; Nielsen & Larsen, 2014).

With the rise of both transnational voters and transnational parties, a party's brand is no longer confined to their own national boundaries. Research has shown that voters form opinions of leaders and parties from other countries, which can then shape how these voters react when the foreign leader or party associates itself with a policy or other party in the voter's party system (Balmas, 2018; Marland, 2018; Williams et al., 2022). For instance, voters in Europe have strong negative associations of

Donald Trump, which has resulted in meaningful policy shifts against policy areas that are associated with Trump's political brand in countries where he is viewed negatively (Agadjanian & Horiuchi, 2020; Minkus et al., 2019; Turnbull-Dugarte & Rama, 2022). Alongside the unique brands that parties have abroad based on what foreign publics associate with the party, there also exist transnational brands that transcend national borders. These are associations attached to a party that are informed by a party's cross-national allegiances. Most notably, parties are frequently clustered in various party families by academics and the media when discussing party politics (Mair & Mudde, 1998), such as the green family which includes all pro-environmental and green parties or the radical right family which is used to group together parties that champion anti-immigrant policies and populist right rhetoric. This family label carries its own set of associations about what it means to be a member of that party family (Bolin et al., 2022; Rydgren, 2005).

These transnational brands present an opportunity for parties interested in strengthening their own brand. They can be used to help the party distinguish itself from its rivals by campaigning as the true champion of core family values given the increasing convergence of policy preferences within families (Böhmelt et al., 2016; Camia & Caramani, 2012; Caramani, 2015; Juhl & Williams, 2022). The transnational brand can also be used to generate favorable associations, such as positive policy outcomes (Malet & Walter, 2023; Walter, 2021a) and electoral strength (Malet, 2022; Meyer & Gattermann, 2022; Turnbull-Dugarte & Rama, 2022). As a result, I argue a parties' transnational brands, primarily those of its party family and its sister parties in that family, can be effectively leveraged by political parties to strengthen their own political brand in the eyes of voters. Parties that lean into their transnational brand when those associations are politically advantageous are rewarded by voters.

1.2 Dissertation Overview

I evaluate this argument and unpack the role that transnational brands play in understanding voters and parties in the increasingly inter-connected politics of the 21st century through three related papers. The first two papers establish the potential utility for parties that exists because of the signals that the party family label assigned to a party sends to voters. Then, after establishing the signals that

already exist because of the party family label, I turn my attention to if parties can harness those signals by strategically employing them for maximum benefit to the party.

Chapter two asks if voters are paying attention to the party family label and if it factors into their assessments of a party's positions, tapping into the party family label's ability to distinguish parties. I argue that the further a party is from the ideological position of the associated position of its party family, which serves as a signal about what the party should be advocating, the less accurate voters are about its positions. Greater divergence creates a difference between what the party is claiming to fight for and what voters think its fighting for because of its party family. Using data from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) from 1996 to 2015 and panel data from the German Longitudinal Election Study (GLES) from 2009 to 2021, I find that as a party embraces its party family's positions, its positions become more distinguishable to voters who more accurately place the party on the left-right scale.

Then, in chapter three, I ask how the strength of the party family abroad influences prospective electoral support for member parties of the party family. I argue that the strength of the party family varies by family and can shape whether it is electorally beneficial to be associated with the party family. Strong party families are those that are on the rise in Europe, like the radical right currently, and weak party families are those that are on the decline, such as the social democratic family (see Bandau, 2023; Benedetto et al., 2020). It is beneficial for parties to be members of strong party families, and by being associated with a strong party family, a party becomes more appealing to voters. Using data from the European Election Study (EES) from 1999 to 2019 and the electoral results from EP elections, I find that the stronger the rest of the party family performed, the more willing voters are to consider supporting the party in subsequent elections. This effect is strongest for those moderately aligned with the party, suggesting voters are willing to sacrifice policy goals to join strong party families.

Finally, chapter four builds on the power of the party family developed in chapter two and three and addresses the effect for parties that intentionally leverage these transnational associations to bolster their domestic brand. I contend that parties engage in what I term "strategic transnational branding", or the act of leaning on strong transnational political brands, to improve their own brand. Specifically, I argue that by appearing alongside a successful member of the party family at a party conference, the hosting party can improve its perceived ability to enter government, credibility to fulfill campaign pledges, and competency to solve the most importance issues. In turn, voters also become more willing to support the party. Using a novel survey experiment in Sweden and Norway where respondents are exposed to instances of one of their parties associating itself with a successful

ally in Germany's governing coalition, I find no significant effect of a party strategically linking itself with allies abroad on its reputation in the eyes of voters. In a second step, I validate my results using an unexpected event-in-the-field design leveraging the appearance of foreign figures at the far-right right Viva'22 rally in Madrid, Spain. Taken all together, the findings from my dissertation answer important questions about the voter-party linkage in increasingly transnational political environments and raise new questions about voters and parties in the 21st century, which I discuss further in chapter five.

2.0 Do Voters Pay Attention to Transnational Politics?

"Bravo to our AfD allies for this historic showing! It is a new sign that the people of Europe are waking up…"
~Marine Le Pen, following the 2017 German elections

In 2017, following a disappointing performance in the 2013 elections where the party barely missed gaining seats in the Bundestag, the Alternative for Germany (AfD) intentionally set out to make itself more palatable to radical right voters in Germany. Notably, the party was considered relatively moderate by radical right standards in 2013, focusing predominantly on its anti-EU positions during the Greek debt crisis and fiscal conservatism (Arzheimer, 2015; Berbuir et al., 2015; Dilling, 2018; Grimm, 2015; Schmitt-Beck, 2018). However, by 2017, the party had become much more representative of the radical right family in the rest of Europe, championing more xenophobic and nativist cultural positions on immigration and adopting the now standard populist rhetorical style (Arzheimer & Berning, 2019). This push to be seen as a true champion for radical right values culminated in a rally in early 2017 in which the AfD leader, Frauke Petry, hosted prominent radical right leaders from across Europe such as Marine Le Pen of the National Rally (RN), Geert Wilders of the Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV), and Matteo Salvini of Italy's Northern League (LN). Petry's intent was to emphasize the party's shift to the right and signal its allegiance to figures who are associated with the radical right family, highlighting the AfD's arrival as a true radical right party.[9] The goal in this paper is to evaluate how this set of strategic choices to embrace the party family label, illustrated by the AfD from 2013 to 2017, influences how parties are perceived by voters. [10]

Research has shown that parties are responsive to politics that transpire abroad (Böhmelt et al., 2016; Senninger et al., 2022), yet the question remains whether voters are also picking up on the growing convergence of policy positions within party families, or if transnational politics is only a party-level phenomena. Recent work has shown that voters are responsive to elite cues and endorsements from abroad (Williams et al., 2022) and will adjust their voting behavior based on

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[9] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jan/21/marine-le-pen-leads-gathering-of-eu-far-right-leaders-in-koblenz
[10] Söderlund & Grönlund (2024) document a similar process for the True Finns which was rewarded when the party became a clearer voice for standard radical right issues following a change to a more hardline leader in 2019.

electoral returns from foreign countries (Turnbull-Dugarte & Rama, 2022), yet the literature has not tackled whether voters are paying attention to a party's relationship with its transnational allies when evaluating the party. Work on the effect of elite interactions and who a party is associated with more generally demonstrates that voter's are responsive to a party's relationship with other parties and elites (Adams et al., 2021; Fortunato & Adams, 2015; Lee et al., 2018; Williams & Whitten, 2015), which suggests that a party's decision to associate itself further with its party family label can have a meaningful impact on how it is perceived by voters.

In this paper, I argue that parties can align or distance themselves from the rest of their party family as a tool to strengthen their brand and communicate their positions to voters. Parties that embrace the rest of their party family signal commitment to ideological goals most commonly associated with the party family while parties that push back and distance themselves from their sisters abroad signal that they may not be credible champions for core issues. Therefore, how a party positions itself relative to the rest of its family should inform how voters evaluate where political parties fall on the ideological spectrum.

To test this argument, I rely on the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES, Modules 1-4) which provides valuable individual-level survey data alongside country-election level data from multiple elections and countries in Europe. Combining this survey data with data on party positions from the Comparative Manifestos Project (CMP), I find that the further a party positions itself from its transnational party family, the greater the gap between a voter's perceptions of the party's left-right ideological position and its actual positions. I then assess this relationship using panel data from the German Longitudinal Election Study (GLES) to look within individuals, finding additional support for my expectations. These results speak to the increasingly transnational nature of party politics and how voters are able to evaluate their own party relative to their associations about the parties broader transnational party family. I conclude by discussing the implications of this work and the avenues for future research.

2.1 How Voters Evaluate Party Positions

There is a large literature on if voters update their perceptions of a party's position in response to party behavior. According to Fernandez-Vazquez (2019), voters can tell the difference between

cheap talk and strategic position-taking and do not update their evaluation of a party when they deem the change to be a performative, strategic shift. Furthermore, Adams et al. (2011) find no evidence that voters respond to the policy shifts of political parties (see also Adams et al., 2014). Similarly, Fernandez-Vazquez & Somer-Topcu (2019) find that voters do not update their perceptions of a parties position unless there is a change in leadership which prompts more attention to the party's policy changes.

On the other hand, several studies challenge this conclusion that voters do not pay attention to a party's strategic position-taking. Fernandez-Vazquez (2014) finds that voters do in fact update their perceptions of a party's position in response to policy changes, contradicting the evidence presented by Adams et al., (2011). Along these lines, studies show that voters are responsive to press releases (Somer-Topcu et al., 2020), leadership changes (Fernandez-Vazquez & Somer-Topcu, 2019; Söderlund & Grönlund, 2024; Somer-Topcu, 2017), electoral debates (van der Meer et al., 2016), and policy outputs (Adams et al., 2020). This strand of literature generally argues that voters do in fact pay attention to parties and update their evaluations when they are presented with new information about a party's position. Subsequent work on the importance of information availability further supports this view with several studies finding that the more parties are covered in the overall information environment, the more voters will accurately update their perceptions of a party's positions (Adams et al., 2014; Banducci et al., 2017; Fernandez-Vazquez & Somer-Topcu, 2019).

Importantly, work on voter perceptions has established that voters do pay attention to not only what the party is doing itself, but who it is associated with (Williams & Whitten, 2015). Parties can leverage this to their advantage through strategic interactions that voters can use to evaluate the party's positions. For instance, Adams et al. (2021) find that the extent of coverage of cooperative interactions between political elites near elections results in voters evaluating those parties to be closer to each other on the left-right ideological spectrum. Similarly, Lee et al. (2018) find experimental evidence that voters evaluate the positions of political parties based on the type of interactions those parties have with other parties more than they use the party's manifestos. Cooperative interactions lead voters to place parties closer together than they may actually be on the ideological spectrum (Lee et al., 2018). Work on governing coalitions, the most public and binding form of political cooperation, demonstrates further that voters infer party positions based on who the party chooses to associate itself with. Political parties that govern together are often perceived to be ideologically similar (Falcó-Gimeno & Fernandez-Vazquez, 2020; Fortunato & Adams, 2015; Fortunato & Stevenson, 2013; Klüver & Spoon, 2020; Spoon & Klüver, 2017).

As this work demonstrates, while there is some debate over whether voters respond to the policy positions of parties, there is general agreement that who a party associates itself with shapes how voters view the party. However, this work focuses, importantly, on the associated relationships voters have of the party within a domestic polity. To date, the literature on if voters update their perceptions of a party has not examined the impact of party behavior and its transnational associations on a voter's perceptions of the party.

2.2 Embracing the Transnational Brand

2.2.1 Transnational Families

To address this gap, I argue that parties can leverage their membership in a broader party family to strengthen its brand at home by attempting to present itself as a dutiful ally for party family goals or as a distant cousin to party family allies that may be stigmatized. This, in turn, has consequences for how voters evaluate the positions of the political party based on their associations of the party family label.

Parties belong to party families, which emerged as an academic tool to classify parties based on similar emergence patterns and the shared ideological goals of member parties (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967; Mair & Mudde, 1998). However, we know that these labels play an important role in structuring European politics. On the party side, the transnationalization of the European Parliament led to the creation of European Party Groups (EPGs) that organize interests at the European level based on similar ideologies, which have come to closely mirror party family classifications (Hix et al., 2007).

For voters, I argue that party families have their own political brands that carry a set of associations about what it means to be a member of that family. Often studied at the party-level, research has shown that political brands are the set of associations voters have towards political parties that include their policy positions, leaders, and rhetoric but can also include colors, images, and the party's name (Avina, 2023; French & Smith, 2010; Grynaviski, 2010). In turn, these political brands are useful information shortcuts for voters when determining which parties to support, and parties

with weak brands, or a weaker set of identifiable associations for voters, are less likely to receive strong electoral support (Lupu, 2013, 2016; Nielsen & Larsen, 2014).

Importantly, party families have similar political brands that can help shape how voters evaluate their own political parties. For example, for the radical right, these parties are often associated with extreme positions on immigration and have become stigmatized parties that are considered taboo to support. As Bolin et al. (2022) demonstrate, policies associated with the radical right party family are often perceived to be more extreme even if the same policy is proposed by a mainstream party. Furthermore, parties associated with the stigmatized positions of radical right parties often perform poorly at the polls, while parties that can distance themselves from the stigmas surrounding the radical right are better able to establish themselves in the party system (Mendes & Dennison, 2021; van Spanje & Azrout, 2019; Van Spanje & Van Der Brug, 2007).

Beyond the radical right, other party families in Europe have their own transnational political brands. Green parties, for example, have all embraced the sunflower logo and the color green on much of their posters, leaflets, and images.[11] Case studies into party brands find that voters from different countries hold similar views of green parties as the core champions of environmental issues and are often associated with the outdoors, nature, and climate change (Grimmer & Grube, 2019; Rutter et al., 2018). These studies also identify similarities for other party families as well, such as the social democratic, liberal, and conservative families (French & Smith, 2010; Grimmer & Grube, 2019; Rutter et al., 2018). These shared associations across countries demonstrate that voters have a common understanding of what it means to belong to a certain party family. As Fortunato (2021, 53-54) observes, when asked to rank-order hypothetical parties based solely on names of the party family it belongs to, voters in the UK and the Netherlands are able to accurately discern where these parties then fall on the ideological spectrum. Taken together, this work demonstrates that party families do have a set of associations that transcend borders, creating a transnational brand that can be useful to parties when trying to differentiate themselves in the domestic polity.

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[11] According to data from the CMP in the most recent national elections included in the dataset, 80 percent of parties in West Europe identified as green parties by the CMP had the word "green" in their party name. The next closest party family to include their party family in the party names was the Christian Democratic family at 53 percent.

2.2.2 Party Families and Policy Diffusion

The question now turns to how a party families' transnational brand can influence how voters perceive a party's policy position on the left-right spectrum. Research on party policy diffusion shows that party families have become more ideologically cohesive over time and have converged on similar policy profiles across borders. Bélanger & Wunsch (2021), for instance, find when examining Euroscepticism among the radical right that these parties have become more similar in how they talk about the EU. Camia & Caramani (2012) find that all party families have converged on similar ideological positions among both parties and voters of the various families. Caramani (2015) presents robust evidence that European party systems have "Europeanized" as parties of the same family have converged such that party systems in European countries have increasingly begun to look similar to one another.

This convergence is due to transnational party policy diffusion in which policies adopted by one party spread across borders to other parties (Böhmelt et al., 2016; Gilardi, 2010, 2013; Gilardi & Wasserfallen, 2019). Evidence shows that parties learn what works and what policies do not provide much upside based on what foreign parties do abroad (Gilardi, 2010). For example, Böhmelt et al. (2017) show that the greater the vote share of the incumbent party, the more parties from other countries will emulate its policy positions as dominant incumbents send visible signals about what policy programmes are successful electoral programmes (see also Juhl & Williams, 2022; Schleiter et al., 2021). Importantly, in subsequent work, Ezrow et al. (2021) show that this emulation from successful foreign leaders is, in fact, an electorally successful strategy. The positions of a successful foreign leader signal where the median voter in the electorate is in their polity, which can signal where the median voter may fall in a party's home electorate. Work on the success of the radical right has shown that the widespread electoral relevance of this insurgent party family is a function of radical right parties learning from each other and emulating successful strategies (Kallis, 2013; Rydgren, 2005; Van Hauwaert, 2019b).

Additionally, the multi-level politics of the European Union helps national parties adopt similar policies as their allies abroad (Senninger & Bischof, 2018; Wolkenstein et al., 2020). The EU is a powerful conduit for party policy diffusion due to the presence of European Party Groups (EPGs) which coordinate parties of similar ideological interests across national boundaries to simplify legislative politics in the EU. Recent work has shown that these EPGs facilitate the transnational

diffusion of policies as parties of the same EPG are more likely to adopt policies from abroad than parties of different EPGs (Senninger et al., 2022). Importantly, work has found that these networks extend beyond institutionalized channels, with parties of similar party families using shared networks of ideological actors and activists abroad to facilitate the transnational diffusion of policies (Schleiter et al., 2021).

Taken together, this work on the convergence of party families towards similar policy profiles establishes that being labeled as a member of a certain party family carries some information about the kinds of issues the party may focus on and champion. While the transnational party family brand may be associated with certain valence traits, it can also serve as a useful heuristic for what kinds of policies a party may champion.

2.3 Consequences of Embracing the Transnational Brand

Given this work showing that party families have become more ideologically cohesive, I argue that what party family a party is associated with can be a useful heuristic for voters when determining what the party may stand for. Party families have converged on similar policy profiles within party families, suggesting that when a voter hears that a party belongs to the green or social democratic or liberal party family, they can infer that that means the party advocates for a certain set of policy proposals. Furthermore, we know from work on how voters update their perceptions of a party's position on the left-right scale that the other actors a party is associated with and interacts with plays a crucial role in shaping how voters view the party's position in the party system and their ability to differentiate parties (Adams et al., 2021; Spoon & Klüver, 2017). Therefore, how a party chooses to align, or distance, itself from the party family brand and the associations that it may carry should inform how voters evaluate the party's positions.

A party may choose to embrace the transnational brand by adopting policies associated with its allies abroad, appearing alongside prominent figures from ally parties abroad, and leaning into the label to signal its commitment to broader ideological fights. Alternatively, a party may want to distance itself from the party family to avoid being mis-associated with characteristics that could hurt its brand, such as being perceived as too extreme or as an ineffective governing option (Adams et al., 2022; van Spanje & Azrout, 2019). Importantly, the AfD's attendance at the radical right rally mentioned at the

outset captures these tensions for a party and whether it should embrace its party family. Many within the AfD feared that by appearing alongside Le Pen in 2017, their party would lose a part of its own identity by aligning itself with what was perceived to be a more radical party in the National Rally and Party for Freedom (PVV)[12]. On the other hand, others in the party argued that by appearing to be a member of a united far-right front in Europe following the Brexit referendum and election of Donald Trump could bolster the AfD's credibility as a far-right champion and highlight for voters its embrace of radical right principals.

Choosing to break from the party family brand creates uncertainty about where the party may stand. If the party family label is a brand on its own that voters are aware of to use to evaluate party positions, voters should then be more accurate in evaluating a party when that party is embracing the party family brand. If a party is distancing itself from the party family brand, a voter must weigh the party's own rhetoric and actions against what it knows about the party family brand, creating more uncertainty, reducing a voter's ability to accurately place the party. Thus, my central hypotheses are:

H1: *As divergence between a party and its party family increases (decreases), the accuracy of a voter's perceived ideological position decreases (increases).*

H2: *As the divergence between a party and its party family increases (decreases) from one election to the next, the accuracy of a voter's perceived ideological position decreases (increases).*

2.4 Data and Methods

To test these expectations, I rely on data from the CSES which provides individual level survey data on a cross-national sample of individuals from across the world and through multiple elections. The value of this survey for the purposes of this project is that it asks voters to place parties on the left-right scale based on where they think the party falls, allowing for cross-national comparisons of

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[12] See https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/21/world/europe/marine-le-pen-extols-far-right-during-speech-in-germany.html and https://www.dw.com/en/the-afd-and-fn-leaders-to-meet-in-koblenz/a-37218230

how voters perceive the positions of their parties. In this study, I focus my efforts on Western Europe. This gives me information on elections in 14 countries from 1996 to 2015.[13]

In addition to the CSES, I also rely on data from the CMP which provides comprehensive cross-national data on the positions of parties via content analysis of their manifestos and party programmes to capture a party's ideological position. Specifically, for the purposes of this study, I look at the calculated left-right (RILE) position of the party in each election as this corresponds with the scale used to gauge how individuals perceive the ideological positions of their parties in the CSES. The RILE score from the CMP data is calculated using the percent of the total quasi-sentences in a manifesto coded under the CMP codebook as left or right, with the difference between the two percentages being the overall RILE score. Ranging from -100, which represents the most left-leaning position, to 100, which represents the most right-leaning position, these values were then rescaled to a 0-10 scale to ease interpretation.

2.4.1 Perception Accuracy

To evaluate the accuracy of a voter's perceptions of a party's left-right positions, I combine the CMP data on the RILE position of parties with responses to a series of questions in the CSES that ask individuals to place the political parties on the RILE scale from 0 to 10. Each voter-party combination is a unique observation, meaning individuals are in the dataset up to nine times based on the number of parties in their party system included in the CSES (see Spoon & Klüver 2017 for a similar construction). Then, I calculate the absolute value of the difference between those perceptions with the actual position of each party as measured by the CMP (rescaled to a 0 to 10 scale) which gives me an indicator for the distance between a voter's perception and the actual position of each party. Taking the absolute value of the difference gives me the accuracy gap between a voter's perception of a party and its actual position. Higher values represent a greater accuracy gap, or lower accuracy, while lower values equal greater perception accuracy. This creates a continuous measure which ranges from

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[13] The cases include Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

0.003 to 8.53 with a mean score of 2.07. This variable is coded at the voter-party level. Figure A1 displays the distribution of this placement accuracy variable.[14]

2.4.2 Divergence from the Party Family

The key independent variable to test my hypotheses in this study is the ideological divergence of the party's RILE position from the average position of the rest of its party family.[15] To capture the ideological position of party families, I develop a novel measure of the party family position which uses the RILE position of every member of the party family and the classifications of parties into one of several party families. In this paper I focus on the most prominent eight party families. In order from left to right, these are the radical left, greens, social democrats, center, liberals, conservatives, Christian democrats, and the radical right. [16]

I then collect the ideological positions on the left-right ideological spectrum for all parties that belong to the same party family in other West European countries to calculate the average RILE position of the rest of the transnational party family. For example, to calculate the average position of the rest of the party family for the Swedish Social Democratic Party (SAP) prior to the 2014 elections, I computed the average RILE position of all social democratic parties in West European countries except the SAP from the most proximate election in the respective countries prior to 2014. This process was repeated until I had the average position of the rest of the party family for each domestic party in the dataset for each election. While I do not expect voters to have perfect knowledge of the transnational party family's exact ideological position, I do assume that they have a general sense for

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[14] One potential risk with this estimation strategy for the accuracy of one's perceptions of a party's left-right self-placement is that by using the CMP, I am comparing two different scales given that voters are not asked to place parties using the same scale that is originally used by the CMP (originally -100 to 100). As a robustness check to confirm that my results are not driven by this source of bias, I also use the CHES dataset which provides estimates of party positions based on expert evaluations of the party positions in which experts are asked to place parties on the same 11-point scale as voters. Results are substantively the same for all models.

[15] I choose to focus on the left-right dimension as this aligns with the CSES data. Additionally, research shows that the left-right dimension is cross-nationally comparable across Western Europe (Bakker et al., 2014). As a robustness check, I use the GAL-TAN dimension from the CHES dataset in place of the left-right from the CMP and results are substantively the same.

[16] I do not include regional parties or other special issue parties (for example pirate parties) as these families do not necessarily champion a broader ideological position, instead advocating for more narrow regional interests or special issues which can vary from country to country.

where these families are likely to fall on the ideological spectrum.[17] Therefore, taking the average position of the party family serves as a useful proxy for the associated position of the party family in the minds of voters.

Importantly, in many countries, party families can be represented by more than one party. For example, in Norway, there are multiple parties that belong to the "radical left" party family (Socialist Left Party and the Red Party). To compare these parties' positions to the rest of the transnational party family, when calculating the average, I exclude all domestic parties of the same party family if there are more than one in each country. Therefore, the average position for the "radical left" transnational party family in Norway, for example, does not include the Socialist Left Party or the Red Party when calculating the average. This ensures that my measure is only recording the average position of the party family using the position of foreign parties and is independent of where domestic parties are located.
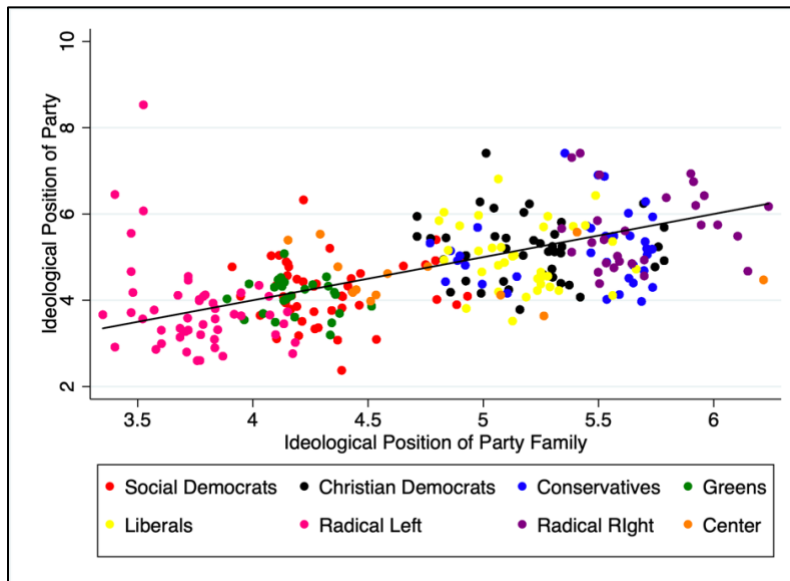
Figure 2.1. Distribution of Domestic Party and Party Family Ideological Positions

Notes: On the x-axis is the average position of the rest of the party family while the y-axis is the ideological position of each domestic party. The scale for both runs from 0 to 10, where lower values indicate more leftward positions while higher values represent rightward positions. Each dot represents one domestic party in one election. The black line through the graph represents where there is no difference between the two measures. The closer a dot to this line, the more aligned that party is with the rest of its party family. Source: Comparative Manifesto Project.

[17] Table A3 presents information on how voters perceive the positions of parties in the eight party families compared to the average position of all parties in that family. In short, voters, on average, correctly place parties of the eight party families in the correct order and in the correct direction on the left-right scale.

Figure 2.1 plots the distribution of domestic party positions and the average position of the rest of the party family. As this figure shows, there are clear ideological clusters of like-minded parties. As we would expect, there is clear clustering among green (green), liberal (yellow), and radical right (purple) parties. Social democratic parties (red), conservatives (blue), and Christian democrats (black) are more dispersed but still demonstrate clear groupings, which makes sense given these parties tend to adopt a more broad-appeal strategy centered around the middle (Somer-Topcu, 2015). The center parties of Scandinavia (orange) and the radical left (pink) are the least clustered of the party families.[18]

This clustering provides confidence in the operationalization of the transnational party family position as all clusters appear in the ideological position that we would expect for each party family. Statistically, there is very little deviation among the party's ideological positions on the RILE scale (y-axis) for much of the party families. Standard deviations, for example, are as follows in order from left to right: radical left (0.884), green (0.435), social democrats (0.667), centre (0.56), liberal (0.78), conservative (0.772), Christian democrats (0.725), and radical right (0.821). Given these standard deviations are relatively low, it alleviates some concern about weighting the measures by the size of the party or other characteristics that might make one party's position more important than another since their positions are relatively similar so it would not radically change the averages.

Importantly, these clusters demonstrate that there is variation *within* party families as not all-parties are located directly on the position of the rest of its party family. The further a party is from the black line that runs through Figure 2.1, which represents zero divergence, the further it is from the ideological position of the rest of its party family. The radical left Greek Communist Party serves as the most extreme example where the party has an ideological position of 8.529, which is the most *right-leaning* party in the dataset, yet the average position of the rest of the radical left in Western Europe at the time was 3.441, a much more left-leaning position. This divergence within party families is the key variation I use to test my hypotheses.

This measure serves as a useful proxy measure to capture a party's relationship with its transnational party family. I assume that parties that are ideologically further away from the average position of their transnational allies are unlikely to celebrate those party's successes abroad, attend party family conferences, and identify themselves as reliable members of the party family. For instance,

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[18] This is likely due to the historical legacy of these party families which at one point were associated with different ideological profiles. Centre parties were once agrarian parties, and the radical left party family is a broader category that includes both populist left parties and communist parties.

the decision by Petry and the AfD to appear alongside Le Pen, Wilders, and Salvinni in 2017 coincided with a systemic shift in the party's goals in 2017 to become a more prototypical radical right party, shifting further to the right and embracing a more right-leaning base. (Arzheimer & Berning, 2019).[19] The meeting would not have happened if the party was not also shifting its program to better align with the leaders it was hosting.

For H1, I calculate the divergence from the party family by taking the absolute value of the difference between a party's own ideological position and the rest of its party family. Lower values on the divergence scale resemble less ideological divergence, with zero representing perfect alignment between the party and the party family. Higher scores represent greater divergence between the party and the rest of its party family. This measure ranges from 0.001 to 5.005 with a mean score of 0.62.[20]

For H2, I take this measure of divergence in the current election (t_0) and find the difference from the divergence score the party received in the prior election (t_{-1}) to capture how a party has changed its position from one election to the next.[21] Positive values indicate that the party has moved further away from the ideological position of its party family, while negative values indicate that the party has moved closer to the ideological position of its party family. Values close to and at zero indicate little to no movement. This measure ranges from -2.924 to 3.778 with a mean value of -0.043.

2.4.3 Controls

I include several controls to account for extant explanations for how voters perceive parties. At the individual level, I control for conventional demographic variables including age, education, gender, and the voter's left-right ideological position to account for potential ideological differences in a voter's ability to accurately perceive the positions of parties. To account for political knowledge, I use the political information battery included in the CSES which asks respondents fact-based

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[19] According to data from the CMP, the AfD shifted one point to the right between 2013 and 2017, moving from a more-centrist party to the most right-leaning party in Germany.

[20] One question for the validity of this measure is if voters are aware of this divergence. One way to address this theoretical question is by examining the relationship between this actual divergence and the perceived divergence. Results are reported in Table A4 in the appendix. The higher the actual divergence, the higher the perceived divergence. This demonstrates that voters do pay attention to the difference between their parties and the party's party family.

[21] Party family positions change more gradually than the positions of their member parties, as these account for the positions of all members. Large-scale shifts in the position of the party family require systemic changes from all members in a similar period. The best example would be the right-ward shift of social democratic parties following New Labour's success in 1992. The average change in party family positions from one election to the next is 0.26.

knowledge questions. Responses are coded as either correct or incorrect. Since only three questions are asked in all waves, I take the count of correct responses to measure political knowledge. Higher values reflect higher political knowledge and should be associated with greater perception accuracy.

At the voter-party level, I control for whether the individual is a partisan, coded as whether the voter reported the party in each voter-party dyad as the party they are closest to. I expect them to be more likely to misperceive the party if they are a partisan as their own attachments may cloud their judgement. Additionally, I account for the distance between the voter and the party. I expect voters that are further away from a party to be more likely to inaccurately perceive the position of the party (Bakker et al., 2018; Downs, 1957).

Then, I include four party-election level controls. The first is the size of the party measured by the vote share of the party, and I expect the accuracy of a voter's perception to be lower for larger parties (Somer-Topcu, 2015). The second is the magnitude of the shift in the party's RILE position from the prior election (t_{-1}) to the current election (t_0). This is calculated by finding the difference between a party's prior position in the last election and their position in the current election and then taking the absolute value of this difference. This captures how much a party shifted between elections, which I expect to be associated with a greater accuracy gap as voters may not have picked up on the shift or the extent of it (Dahlberg 2009). Additionally, I control for the left-right position of the party weighted by the party's size to account for any outsized influence a party's position may have on how voters perceive the position of the party family averages. I weight this control by size so that smaller parties exert less influence than larger parties. Then, I account for if the party is an extreme party by using the radicalism measure described above. More radical parties should be better perceived by voters than mainstream parties which have converged on the middle (Spoon & Klüver, 2019). Fourth, I include the age of the party as measured by the number of years since the party's founding. Older parties should be more accurately perceived by voters as they have been around longer to cultivate a unique brand. Next, I include fixed effects for party family to account for other traits associated with the various party families that may impact how voters perceive parties in those families (Schleiter et al., 2021).

Lastly, at the country-election level, I control for the average district magnitude of a country in each election. The district magnitude determines the number of parties and the strategic interests

of voters, so lower values should be associated with greater accuracy in the perceived positions as there are clearer dividing lines between parties.[22]

Since the observations are nested within individuals, parties, elections, and finally countries, it is necessary to account for this hierarchical structure of the data through a multi-level model. Failure to do so may overrate the significance of the estimated effects by deflating standard errors and inflating the type I error rate (Steenbergen & Jones, 2002, 219–220). As the outcome variable is continuous, I thus estimate a multi-level linear regression with random effects at the party level and fixed effects at the country and year level. It is necessary to used fixed effects at the country and year level as I do not have enough countries or years to provide unbiased estimates in a hierarchical model (Stegmueller, 2013). Table A1 and A2 in the appendix report summary statistics for all variables for the whole sample and the estimated sample, respectively.

2.5 Results

Table 2.1 presents the results of multi-level models estimating the accuracy of a voter's perceptions of a party's positions. Model 1 tests H1 with the divergence of the party family as the key independent variable. Model 2 contains the same model as Model 1, but the key independent variable is the change in the divergence from the prior election to the current election to test H2. In this model, I include an additional control for how the party family has shifted over time to make sure the change I am capturing is due to the party's change and not the slight change in party family positions from one election to the next.

According to Model 1, there is strong support for H1. The greater the divergence of a party from the rest of its party family decreases the accuracy of a voter's perceptions of a party's left-right position. Inversely, as divergence decreases and alignment increases, accuracy increases.[23] Figure 2.2 displays these results from Model 1 graphically and highlights the positive relationship between divergence from the party family and the misperception of the positions of the party. On the x-axis is

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[22] As a robustness check, I run the same models using the effective number of electoral parties and the results are substantively the same.

[23] As a robustness check for H1, I replace the actual divergence with the perceived divergence of the party from its party family. Results are substantively the same and are provided in Table A5.

the divergence from the party family and the y-axis is the accuracy gap about the positions of the party. The distribution of party family divergence scores is presented in the rug plot. The solid line represents the estimated accuracy gap as divergence from the party family increases, while the dashed lines represent 95% confidence intervals. A one unit increase in the divergence from the party family is associated with a 0.242 unit decrease in accuracy. At perfect alignment between the party and the rest of its party family, there is a 1.96-point accuracy gap. This increases to 2.39 points at a perceived divergence score of 1.5 points. At the maximum end of divergence scores at 5.005, the accuracy gap increases to 3.17 points.[24] These results provide support for H1. [25]

Turning now to Model 2, the results provide strong support for H2. As a party moves further away from its party family, the accuracy gap increases. Figure 2.3 depicts these findings and the distribution of the change in party family divergence from one election to the next is presented on the bottom of each plot in the rug plot. As the graph shows, there is a clear positive relationship such that parties that moved closer to the party family were more accurately placed than parties that moved further away from the party family. When the party moves two points closer to the position of its party family from the last election, the average accuracy gap is 1.83 points. When there is no change in the party's position relative to its transnational party family, the average gap is 2.13 points. Alternatively, a two-point shift away from the position of the party family results in a 2.44-point accuracy gap of the party's positions. [26]

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[24] The results for H1 are robust when I look at directional patterns of divergence as the rate of increase is unchanged if a party moves to the extreme or moderate side of the party-family's position. See Figure A1 and Table A6 in the appendix.

[25] Interesting patterns emerge when I examine these patterns by party family. There is a positive and significant relationship for radical left, green, social democratic, and center parties. There is a positive but insignificant relationship for liberal, conservative, and Christian democratic parties. Lastly, there is a negative and significant relationship for radical right parties. Future work should aim to unpack why this strategy works for some families and not others.

[26] It is possible that the causal arrow could be reversed, with parties that are more inaccurately placed being those that are more likely to embrace their transnational allies. However, this concern does not pose a threat to the causal inferences in this study. Given the timing of the CSES questionnaires as post-election surveys, these measurements of voter-placements come temporally after parties must set their manifestos for the elections. This means parties set their divergence from the party family before respondents are asked to place them by the CSES.

Table 2.1. Estimated Effect of Party Family Divergence (CSES)

	Model 1	Model 2
Individual-Level		
Female	0.091***	0.09***
	(0.006)	(0.007)
Age	0.003***	0.002***
	(0.000)	(0.000)
Education	-0.031***	-0.028***
	(0.003)	(0.003)
Individual RILE	-0.029***	-0.03***
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Political Information	-0.069***	-0.054***
	(0.012)	(0.013)
Individual-Party Level		
Voter Distance	0.153***	0.157***
	(0.002)	(0.002)
Partisanship	0.055***	0.08***
	(0.009)	(0.01)
Party-Election Level		
Party Family Divergence	**0.242***	
	(0.011)	
Change in Party Family Divergence		**0.152***
		(0.007)
Party Size	0.03***	0.042***
	(0.002)	(0.002)
Ideological Shift	0.11***	0.232***
	(0.01)	(0.012)
Party Family Shift		-0.029
		(0.024)
Weighted Party Position	-0.409***	-0.698***
	(0.04)	(0.048)
Degree of Radicalism	-0.418***	-0.36***
	(0.04)	(0.013)
Party Age	0.008**	0.007**
	(0.003)	(0.003)
Country-Election-Level		
District Magnitude	-0.324***	-0.461***
	(0.024)	(0.025)
Constant	1.38**	1.414**
	(0.536)	(0.573)
N	151,574	128,294
Log Likelihood	-245,944.33	-208,358.94
Party Random Effects	0.417	0.683
Party Family FE	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes
Country FE	Yes	Yes

Note: ****p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.10.*
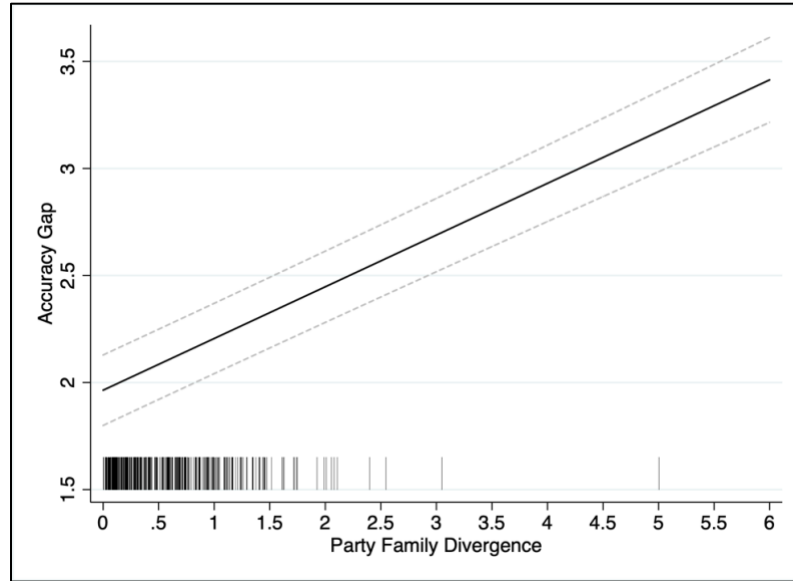
Figure 2.2. Estimated Perception Accuracy Gap by Party Family Divergence

Note: Estimates based on Table 2.1, Model 1.
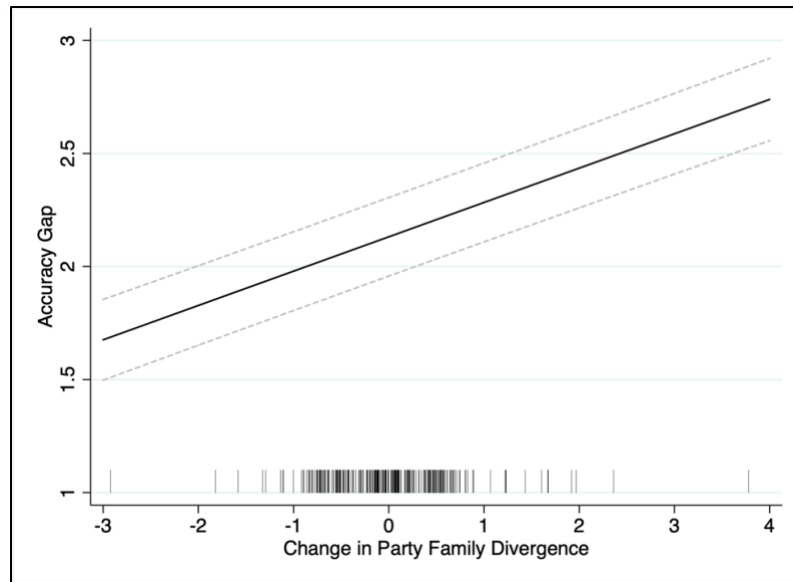
Figure 2.3. Estimated Perception Accuracy Gap by Change in Party Family Divergence

Note: Estimates based on Table 2.1, Model 2.

Regarding the controls, interesting findings emerge across all models. Women are slightly more likely to misperceive the positions of parties than men are; however, the substantive effect is quite

small at around 0.09 ideological points. As one gets older, their misperceptions of parties increase. Regarding political sophistication, both education level and political information are statistically significant. The more educated the individual, the more accurate their perceptions. Similarly, the more politically informed are more accurate in their perceptions. [27] Next, more right-leaning individuals hold more accurate perceptions. At the individual-party level, the further a voter is from the party, the further off her perceptions are. Lastly, partisans hold less accurate perceptions of their parties than nonpartisans. These two findings in tandem suggest that voters may hold higher misperceptions about parties that they are ideologically close due to partisan attachments that cloud their perceptions of their own party, making the voter think the party is closer to them than it may actually be. At the party-election level, the accuracy gap increases as the size of the party increases, which follows from research that larger parties will often adopt broad appeal strategies that blur their positions to attract a larger voting bloc (Somer-Topcu, 2015). Next, larger shifts in a party's position from the last election increases the accuracy gap as expected, suggesting that large changes in a party's position hurt a party's ability to hold distinguishable positions (Dahlberg 2009). Lastly, the older the party, the greater the accuracy gap.[28]

2.6 Evidence from Germany

The results presented above provide compelling evidence that the positions associated with the party family matters. The further a party is (H1) and becomes (H2) from the party family's positions, the more inaccurate voters become about its positions. However, while the CSES provides a good snapshot across countries and time, the inability to look within individuals limits its ability to establish a clear causal connection between the divergence of the party's position and that of its party family and how a voter subsequently perceives the party. To evaluate this causal link, I turn to panel

[27] Interactions between political information and the party-family divergence find no significant interaction, meaning that there is no heterogeneity across voters based on political knowledge for the utility of the party-family brand. This could be the result of competing mechanisms which drive both low information and high information voters to use this heuristic or a result of the nature of the measure which uses domestic knowledge as a measure of political information. While domestic knowledge and transnational knowledge should be correlated, they tap into different concepts. Unfortunately, I cannot measure transnational knowledge using the CSES.

[28] This result is robust when district magnitude is replaced by the effective number of electoral parties.

data from the German Longitudinal Election Study (GLES) from 2009 to 2021 which allows me to evaluate how shifts in German party's positions relative to the rest of their party family over time influence a voter's perceptions of those parties. In total, 47.58 percent of respondents participated in more than one of the four waves, allowing for analysis of the evolution of their perceptions of party positions over at least two elections.

The GLES is particularly useful for further testing the causal link between party family divergence and where a voter perceives her parties because they ask respondents to place, on a scale from zero to ten, where they believe German parties fall in each wave of the survey just as the CSES. Respondents are asked to place the Christian Democratic Union (CDU/CSU), Social Democratic Union (SPD), Free Democratic Party (FDP), Alliance 90/Greens, Die Linke, and beginning in 2017, the Alternative for Germany (AfD). Following my analysis using the CSES, I calculate the accuracy of a voter's perceptions by finding the absolute value of the difference between a voter's placement and the actual position of the party as identified by the CMP data for my dependent variable. This measure ranges from 0.013 to 7.096 with a mean accuracy score of 1.85.

For my independent variable, I use the divergence from the party family's position from the above CSES analysis. In the GLES data, this measure ranges from 0.23 to 0.78 with a mean of 0.27. As with the CSES analysis, I also calculate the change in the party family's position from t_0 to t_1 to evaluate if the party is embracing the party family's positions or distancing itself from the party family. Positive values signal that the divergence between party and party family has grown, while negative values indicate that the divergence has shrunk, symbolizing that the party is moving closer to the position of the party family. This measure ranges from -2.576 (Left from 2005 to 2009) to 0.519 (SPD from 2009 to 2013) with a mean of -0.139, representing a general trend towards party family alignment among German parties.

As controls, at the individual-level, I account for standard demographic controls including each respondent's age, gender, and ideological position. I also include the distance between their position and the party's, expecting voters further away from the party to be less accurate about its positions. Lastly, I include if they reported the intention to support the party in the upcoming election to account for partisan preferences. At the party level, I account for the party's size in the election, which should be negatively associated with voter accuracy (Somer-Topcu, 2015). I also control for the size of the change in the party's positions from one election to the next, which should also be negatively associated with accuracy. Lastly, at the party level, I control for the governing status of the party which should be negatively associated with accuracy (Klüver & Spoon, 2020). In models where

I use the change in party family divergence as the main independent variable, I also include a control for the shift in the party family's position to account for changes in divergence not a result of the party. [29] Most importantly, to account for the temporal dependencies in both the independent variable and dependent variable, I include both a lagged DV and a lagged IV. Doing so allows me to evaluate how perceptions of party's positions are changing from one election to the next independent of how accurate voters were in the past or how far apart the party was from the party family in the previous electoral cycle.[30] Summary statistics are available in Table A7. Since individuals are nested within parties and elections, I run a hierarchical model with both election and party fixed effects given the small number of groups, three and six respectively, for each and random effects at the individual level to account for heterogeneity between individuals.

2.6.1 Results

Table 2.2 reports the results of my analyses of voter perceptions in the GLES panel. Model 1 reports the results using the party family divergence at the time of the election as the key independent variable. Model 2 reports the results using the change in the divergence from the party family at the time of the election from the divergence in the previous election. According to both models, the results from GLES panel provide additional confidence in the general trends observed cross-nationally from the CSES. [31]

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[29] Some of the party-level controls used in the CSES analysis such as distance from the mean of the party system (*radical)* and party age (*age)* are captured by party fixed effects given the small amount of variation within parties in a single case.
[30] Both perception accuracy and party family divergence are AR(1) processes, demonstrating the need for the lagged terms for both variables.
[31] As a robustness check, I run the models using the perceived divergence between party and party family based on voter perceptions, and the results are substantively the same. The results are available in Table A8 in the appendix.

Table 2.2. Estimated Effect of Party Family Divergence in Germany (GLES)

	Model 1	Model 2
Party-Election Level		
Party Family Divergence	**0.652****	
	(0.188)	
Change in Party Family Divergence		**0.596****
		(0.228)
Party Family Divergence Lag (t-1)	0.457***	1.014**
	(0.104)	(0.324)
Party Size	0.017***	0.016**
	(0.005)	(0.005)
Ideological Shift	0.111	0.165
	(0.205)	(0.24)
Party Family Shift		0.11
		(0.254)
Governing Status	0.247***	0.246***
	(0.067)	(0.067)
Individual Level		
Female	0.038*	0.038*
	(0.021)	(0.021)
Age	-0.001	-0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Individual RILE	0.018***	0.018***
	(0.005)	(0.005)
Individual-Party Level		
Accuracy Gap Lag (t-1)	0.354***	0.354***
	(0.007)	(0.007)
Voter Distance	0.158***	0.158***
	(0.007)	(0.007)
Voter	-0.34***	-0.34***
	(0.022)	(0.022)
Constant	0.27	0.306
	(0.309)	(0.32)
N	16,732	16,732
Log Likelihood	-24631.869	-24631.776
Individual Random Effects	0.153	0.153
Party FE	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y

Note: ****p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.10.*

Starting with H1, there is a statistically significant and positive effect of the party's divergence from the rest of the party family and the accuracy gap of voter perceptions. A one-point increase in the distance between a party and its party family is associated with a 0.65-point increase in the accuracy gap of the voters' perceptions of its positions. By accounting for a voter's prior accuracy of the party's positions, this significant coefficient signifies a 0.65-point increase in inaccuracy from prior levels if the party is ideologically divergent from the positions of its associated family.[32] For example, in the 2021 elections, the SPD had the lowest distance between its positions and the rest of the social democratic family at that time with a divergence score of 0.04. In essence, the SPD had greatly

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[32] These results are robust to using the change in accuracy as the DV, highlighting how the coefficients in Table 2 are capturing the change in a voter's perceptions through time.

embraced the rest of its family and represented almost perfectly what voters likely assumed a social democratic party to represent. As a result, it was perceived more accurately by voters with an average misperception score of 1.29 points. On the other hand, the AfD was the most distant from the rest of its party family in 2021, with a divergence score of 0.78 points. While not terribly distant by European standards (this value is only slightly larger than the cross-national average), it is the largest divergence recorded in the German case. This makes the AfD in 2021 the German party most out-of-step with the rest of its family, and it was punished as my hypotheses would expect by voters who, on average, misjudged its position by 3.13 points on average.

Turning now to H2, there is also a statistically significant positive effect of the shift in the divergence from the rest of the party family. A one-unit increase in the distance between a party and its party family is associated with an increase by 0.6 points of the accuracy gap of voters' perceptions. Inversely, if a party moves closer to its party family's associated positions between elections by one-point, they are perceived more accurately by 0.6 points. When a party moves one point closer (a value of -1) to the associated positions of the party family, voters are roughly 1.17 points off from the party's true positions on average; however, when a party moves one point further away (a value of 1), voters are inaccurate in their assessments of the party's positions by about 2.36 points on average.

The FDP serves as an illustrative example of these trends. Prior to the 2013 federal elections, the FDP was the junior partner alongside the CDU/CSU, greatly hurting its ability to distinguish itself, and contributing to a disastrous cycle in the 2013 elections when the party lost nearly ten percent of its votes from 2009 and lost all of its seats in the Bundestag (Klüver & Spoon, 2020). Between 2009 and 2013, the FDP moved away from the associated positions of the liberal family by roughly 0.26 points and by 2013, the accuracy gap of its positions had increased by 0.26 points from 1.29 in 2009 to 1.49 in 2013. Desperate to recover its electoral standing and re-distinguish itself, the party embraced the liberal family in the lead-up to the 2017 elections, moving closer to the associated image of a liberal party by 0.43 points. Fortunately for the FDP, its image recovered and by 2017, voters had become 0.23 points more accurate in their evaluation of the party, inaccurately placing the party on average by 1.26 points.

Turning briefly to the controls, interesting patterns emerge. Both lagged variables are significant and predict greater inaccuracy. The higher the voter's inaccuracy in the last election, the greater it will be in the subsequent election. Likewise, the greater the distance between the party and the party family in the last election, the greater the inaccuracy of its positions in the subsequent election. Additionally, larger parties tend to be perceived less accurately. Voters also hold more

inaccurate perceptions of governing parties. More right-wing individuals tend to be more inaccurate than left-wing respondents. The further away a party is from a voter's ideological position, the more inaccurate they are about its positions. Lastly, respondents are more accurate about the positions of the party's they intend to vote for.

These results from the GLES panel provide further confidence in the cross-national findings from the CSES. Additionally, these results establish a causal connection of party family divergence on the accuracy of a voter's perceptions. By looking within-individual using the GLES panel data, and with Model 2, these results demonstrate a significant causal relationship between a party's decision to embrace or distance itself from its family and the accuracy of voter perceptions. Not only is there a strong cross-national relationship between voter accuracy and a party's position relative to its family, but these findings from Germany demonstrate a strong causal connection as well. [33]

2.7 Conclusion

In summary, voters hold more inaccurate views of a party's left-right position when it is ideologically divergent from the associated position of its party family (H1). Should a party choose to align itself with its family and adopt positions that converge with the rest of the family, the more accurate voters become about the party's positions (H2). These conclusions are supported with a cross-national analysis from the CSES from 1999 to 2015 and with panel data from the GLES from 2009 to 2021. Through both studies, these findings establish a strong association between the party's divergence from its party family and how accurately it is perceived by voters, as well as evidence of a causal connection. The findings for H2 in both the cross-national and panel data highlight the strategic calculus for parties, as embracing the party family by adopting its ideological profile helps clarify the positions of the party for voters. These results demonstrate the utility of the transnational family brand as an informational cue for voters that they can use when evaluating the positions of parties and as a strategy for parties to strengthen their brand.

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[33] The results reported in Table A9 provide additional confidence that voters respond to how a party is positioning itself relative its family. Both the actual divergence and the change in actual divergence positively predict how voters perceive the distance between party and party family. This supports the notion that a party's position is being reflected in how voters view the party.

While the question certainly remains over how voters learn about foreign parties, this study provides evidence that voters use the information that they do have about parties abroad, namely a party's party family label, to make judgements about their domestic electoral arena. With voters increasingly exposed to parties from other countries due to the spread of transnational information networks and supranational institutions that force parties to group together by ideological similarity, these findings are a start at unpacking the role this additional source of political information plays in a voter's decision-making. The use of informal conceptual categorizations as opposed to formal groupings such as the EPGs gives further confidence in these results. The informality of these groups presents a harder test as voters must make the connections between parties and transnational family themselves in order to use the information provided by the transnational brand to evaluate parties.

For parties, these results suggest that it can be a viable strategic decision to align itself with their transnational party family. Parties have a strategic incentive to distinguish themselves from their competition as this better allows them to appeal to distinct portions of the electorate (Downs, 1957). Parties that fail to distinguish themselves risk losing their ability to attract voters (Spoon & Klüver, 2019). Additionally, how a party is perceived matters and can have meaningful consequences for its electoral fate (Adams et al., 2023). The findings from this study expand the toolkit available to parties to distinguish themselves from their alternatives by leaning on their party family associations and credibly committing themselves to championing party family goals (Fernandez-Vazquez & Somer-Topcu, 2019; Nonnemacher & Spoon, 2023; Sagarzazu & Klüver, 2017; Somer-Topcu et al., 2020). The associations that voters hold about a party family brand serve as a useful information heuristic for voters and can strengthen a party's political brand by being seen as a credible champion of broader ideological fights. This finding provides more evidence that associations matter, and the alliances a party chooses to emphasize, foreign or domestic, shape how it is perceived (Adams et al., 2021; Williams & Whitten, 2015). Future work should aim to unpack what kinds of factors may explain when a party chooses to embrace a party family label as opposed to create distance from the family.

This work is an important first step into how the interaction between parties and their party families influence voter behavior and how voters engage with transnational political environments, but future work is needed. Importantly, this project examines the general strategy to embrace the family through how it adjusts its positions, but there are many different approaches parties can take to do so, including changing its rhetorical style (Rydgren, 2005), changing its colors and logos, embracing new leaders (Söderlund & Grönlund, 2024), and attending rallies with prominent international actors. Future work must be done to evaluate the effectiveness of each of these strategies

to better understand the most optimal way for parties to leverage their transnational brands. Experiments which manipulate exposure to information about a party engaging in one of the aforementioned strategies or other quasi-experimental methods can more directly estimate the effect of these more precise instances of a party embracing its allies. Furthermore, more research is needed to see how the party family label shapes evaluations on other aspects of a party's brand such as a party's reputation, legitimacy, and overall image. Understanding how voters utilize the party family brand to evaluate their own parties provides us with an important foundation for future inquiries into an increasingly transnational dimension of party politics and helps us unpack how voters, parties, and transnational brands interact with each other.

3.0 A Rising Tide Lifts All Boats

"Parties like ours are coming all over Europe!" ~ *Tom Van Grieken, Vlaams Belang, following the 2023 Dutch elections.*

In the Dutch general elections in 2023, the radical-right Party for Freedom (PVV) became the largest party in the Netherlands for the first time in history. The PVV's electoral victory caught many by surprise and follows a string of recent elections in France, Sweden, and Italy where the far-right eclipsed the mainstream right as the strongest party on the right. The radical right is a party family with momentum, but other parties have been able to successfully ride the wave of international success. Following a strong showing in elections to the European Parliament in 2019, green parties saw a short burst of momentum in regional elections in Austria and federal elections in Germany in 2021. For the social democratic party family, a string of victories in 2021 and 2022 in Spain, Norway, Germany, and Portugal gave the impression of a party family making a comeback following a decade of historic losses across the continent. These instances of shared fates within party families in proximal elections serves to highlight the increasingly inter-connected nature of elections across borders where questions remain regarding whether electoral results are contained to their borders or have spillover effects abroad. Did the PVV benefit from the success of the radical right in other Western European countries? How does the electoral performance of the party family affect the electoral fate of its member parties in subsequent elections?

While the study of electoral waves is not a new question (Kayser, 2009), especially in the literature on the radical right (Rydgren, 2005), much of the literature answers this question by looking at common domestic characteristics that shape electoral outcomes (see Kayser, 2009), with much less study on how foreign elections can impact domestic contests. Notably, Turnbull-Dugarte & Rama (2022) provide evidence that the defeat of President Donald Trump in 2020 hurt the radical right in Spain as it damaged the appeal of the populist right rhetoric of these parties. Similarly, recent work has shown significant effects of foreign elections on individual-level attitudes and behaviors (see, among others De Vries, 2017; Minkus et al., 2019; Walter, 2021a). However, this work does not yet examine how electoral results abroad influence results at the party-level and how voters perceive parties.

The goal of this paper is to fill this gap in the literature on electoral spillover to understand how the electoral performance of the party family abroad influences electoral support for party family members at home. I argue that party family fortunes, or misfortunes, abroad are shared by the rest of the family in subsequent elections. When a party belongs to a party family that appears to have momentum and is strong abroad, their electoral prospects improve at home. Inversely, a party that belongs to a family that looks weak and is struggling to curb losses abroad will face a tougher climb at home.

To evaluate this argument, I leverage the European Election Study (EES) which provides cross-national post-election surveys for EP elections to gauge how foreign electoral performances impact individual voting behavior. Using electoral returns in EP contests to capture the strength of the party family abroad, I demonstrate that voters are more likely to consider voting for parties when the party belongs to a party family that is electorally strong abroad. In what follows, I discuss the literature on electoral spillover and how election results abroad can influence attitudes. I then develop my hypotheses about party family strength and voter behavior. Then, using data from the EES, I find support for my argument, and conclude with the implications of these findings.

3.1 Electoral Spillover

Much of what we know about how electoral results have diffused from one context to another has come from the study of the radical right. In understanding the rise of the radical right over the last twenty years, scholars have argued that it is a mistake to view the success of this new party family as independent cases unrelated to one another (Van Hauwaert, 2014). Notably, Rydgren (2005) argues that the radical right family emerged as these parties learned from each other and adopted similar master frames, or *raison d'être*. This, in turn, promoted the success of these parties elsewhere (Van Hauwaert, 2019a, 2019b). Importantly though, these works view the process of radical right diffusion as an active process in which the parties are taking a direct role in emulating and learning from one another, and does not unpack how the appeal of these parties can be contagious, meaning that there is a process of diffusion in which voters respond to events abroad and adjust their own evaluations of the party separate from the party's own attempts to make that connection. Importantly, Roumanias et al. (2022) provide evidence that not only was the success of the radical right a process of parties

learning from one another, but also from contagion at the voter level, where the electoral success of a party spurred the family's success abroad.

Additionally, research has found robust evidence that foreign elections have spillover effects on voter attitudes and behaviors. For instance, following the 2016 presidential elections in the United States, research has found robust evidence for a "Trump effect" on a variety of attitudes. His election increased support for the EU (Minkus et al., 2019) and racist and prejudicial attitudes (Giani & Méon, 2021). Inversely, Trump's defeat in 2020 diminished support for radical-right parties in Spain following his defeat and subsequent insurrection (Turnbull-Dugarte & Rama, 2022). Similarly, the Brexit referendum had substantively similar "Brexit effects" as evidenced by an increase in the rise of hate crimes following the 2016 referendum (Devine 2021), an increase in support for the EU in the remaining member states (De Vries, 2017; Malet & Walter, 2023; Walter, 2021a)[34], and a decline in support for anti-system parties (Delis et al., 2020).

Beyond Trump and Brexit effects, there is some preliminary evidence that voter-level diffusion exists and electoral dynamics diffuse independent of party actions.

Caramani (2012), for example, finds early evidence for the "Europeanization" of party systems throughout the region. Importantly, party systems have converged such that party families have increasingly begun to share electoral outcomes from country to country. This has led to a harmonization of European politics where what happens in one context is likely to be repeated elsewhere, resulting in persistent waves of party family success that impact the whole region (Caramani, 2011, 2015). Kayser (2009), for example, documents how economic conditions translate into partisan waves, with voters in different contexts responding similarly to changing economic conditions (see also Kayser, 2007). Additionally, Malet (2022) finds strong evidence that Euroskepticism diffuses based on EU wide referenda. The French "No" in the 2005 EU Constitutional Referendum significantly undermined support for the Constitution in other member states by showing that voting against the EU was possible (Malet, 2022). Böhmelt et al., (2024) further demonstrate that the success of anti-immigrant parties abroad polarizes the domestic electorate around anti-immigrant issues, with some anti-immigrant voters becoming more anti-immigrant and pro-immigrant voters becoming more pro-immigrant in response.

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[34] Notably, Hobolt et al. (2022) find evidence of an opposite Brexit effect. In their study, they find no evidence of Brexit decreasing support for leaving the EU, and rather find that Brexit led to more support for leaving under certain frames.

3.2 How Foreign Results Spread

3.2.1 Learning from Abroad

Generally speaking, most voters get their information about foreign affairs from media coverage and how their own media chooses to cover the politics of foreign countries. Work from communication scholars documents the presence of transnational media markets and global information flows that allow information to spread across borders with ease (Aalberg et al., 2013; Bennett, 2004; Brüggemann & Schulz-Forberg, 2009; Castells, 2008), especially in the European context (Boomgaarden et al., 2013; Semetko et al., 2000). Importantly, voters do pay attention to this information that reaches them abroad. Evidence from the economic voting literature tells us that voters do engage in cross-national comparisons about economic conditions when holding their incumbents accountable (Aytaç, 2018), and their ability to do so is driven by media coverage of foreign economic conditions (Kayser & Peress, 2012). Beyond economics, we also know that voters do follow the political coverage that is generated abroad. For example, Boomgaarden et al. (2012) examine the effects of coverage of the 2008 American election in the Netherlands where voters' perceptions of McCain, Obama, and the race in general responded to the visibility of either candidate and the tone of the coverage in Dutch media. Similarly, Walter (2021a) observes that perceptions of Brexit in remaining member states is shaped by the media coverage of Brexit. When coverage was favorable for the UK, support for similar exits increased, and vice versa when coverage was unfavorable (see also Hobolt et al., 2022; Malet & Walter, 2023).

3.2.2 Why Voters Respond

After learning about what is going on abroad, the question then becomes why voters respond to foreign elections and events in their own domestic context. Generally, the literature provides three potential answers to this question. First, electoral success abroad can serve as a legitimizing process for political movements and ideas that can then make those ideas more acceptable in subsequent elections beyond the domestic context, which is especially the case for more fringe parties and attitudes. On the supply side, Roumanias et al. (2022) provide evidence that radical right parties learn

from each other and the success of a radical right party in one context leads other radical right parties to adopt similar positions to set themselves up for success (see also Rydgren, 2005; Van Hauwaert, 2019a, 2019b). When a radical right party succeeds elsewhere, it signals that a foreign public has deemed its positions as legitimate political positions, which in-turn makes it easier for other parties with similar positions in the future. On the demand side, we can see evidence of this from the existing work on Trump and Brexit effects. The electoral success of Trump and Brexit in 2016 lead to an increase in hate crimes (Devine, 2021) and racist attitudes (Giani & Méon, 2021). These studies largely attribute these increases to the legitimazation of these attitudes and beliefs the elections of Trump and Brexit represented. Further, Böhmelt et al., (2024) find evidence that voters predisposed to hold anti-immigrant views become more anti-immigrant when anti-immigrant parties are electorally successful abroad because these views become legitimized once a party holding those views is successful. However, this does not just apply to potentially fringe positions. As Malet (2022) argues, the French "No" on the 2005 EU Constitutional Referendum paved the way for more countries to signal discontent with the Constitution as it gave euroskeptic individuals a permission structure to act on their euroskepticism.

Second, electoral success, or failure, can create cross-national tailwinds that can generate momentum for similar parties abroad. Often referred to as the bandwagon effect, this is a phenomena in political psychology when voters update their opinions or behavior to more closely align with those of the majority in order to be a part of the majority group (Barnfield, 2020; Kiss & Simonovits, 2014).[35] This derives from a well understood aspect of human behavior which is that people like to win, or feel like winners, and being associated with the "winner" brings along intrinsic value that makes people feel good even if joining the winning side does not properly maximize their utility (Anderson & Guillory, 1997; Ashworth et al., 2008; Fortunato, 2021; Healy et al., 2010).

Extant research has shown that this bandwagon effect has important consequences for political behavior. For example, Mutz (1997) shows that when presented with information about how the consensus evaluated candidates, voters shift their opinions to be more aligned with the consensus candidate. Obermaier et al. (2017) further observe that voters are influenced by public opinion polls and even past election results which provide information on the viability of a candidate. Candidates

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[35] Importantly, this is distinct from strategic voting which can be observationally equivalent. Strategic voting is a process wherein voters pick the party that best maximizes their utility that is also most likely to win. For the bandwagon effect, what matters is not if the party maximizes a voter's utility, but rather that the party appears to be the favorite, which brings intangible benefits which shapes a voter's expressive desire to support the party.

that appear to be the majority pick are likely to gain support while those that appear to be struggling lose support (Mutz, 1997; Obermaier et al., 2017). In Belgium, Ashworth et al. (2008) show that turnout in municipal elections decreases once a party reaches a point where they hold an absolute majority, but actually increases once the party becomes a super-dominant party, suggesting that voters in uncompetitive places will support the dominant party to feel a part of the winning club as a form of expressive participation. Importantly, Turnbull-Dugarte & Rama (2022) demonstrate how cues from abroad can create a bandwagon, or in their case, "titanic effect". In their study, they demonstrate how the defeat of Donald Trump in the 2020 elections served as a meaningful cue to voters in Spain that radical right parties were no longer the party family with momentum. As a result, Trump's defeat depressed reported support for Spain's radical-right party Vox in the immediate aftermath of his defeat.

Third, elections from abroad can influence subsequent domestic contests because voters compare the policy outcomes of a foreign election outcome as a signal about the viability of a similar path for their own country. Largely studied in the context of Brexit since the policy implications of the Brexit referendum were immediately clear to a foreign audience, this literature finds robust support that voters do examine the policy implications of a foreign election when judging the potential future of their own country. As De Vries (2017) argues, the uncertainty surrounding the implications of Brexit for the United Kingdom led publics in other member states to feel more content in their own membership in the EU. Similarly, Malet & Walter (2023) find that the more voters knew about the consequences of Brexit for the UK, the less supportive they were of their own country's exit. Importantly, these policy comparisons do not just effect attitudes on the policy itself, but can translate into shifts in support for parties, especially those associated with a given policy. Delis et al., (2020) attribute the decline of anti-system parties after Brexit they observe to the uncertainty that Brexit generated which was associated with all anti-system parties that supported Brexit. Beyond Brexit, Adams et al. (2022) document that when populist parties gain power by joining a government, a backlash generally follows abroad when voters see the pitfalls of populist anti-system parties in government.

For these reasons, a party family's strength abroad should lead to an increase in support for members of the party family at home. If a member of a party family performs well abroad, it legitimizes the ideas behind the movement of the party family, opening the door for foreign audiences to feel more comfortable acting on and embracing those ideas. Party family strength abroad can also create bandwagons for similar parties by giving the party family label the momentum of being a "winning"

family, increasing their appeal to voters who especially care about being a part of the winning team. Lastly, party family strength abroad gives the family a chance to showcase its policy vision from positions of significant influence, which can make voters more likely to support that policy profile if the policies are successful. Taken together, these accounts lead to the central hypothesis of this paper.

H1: *As the party family's strength abroad increases (decreases), voters will be more (less) likely to consider voting for a party of that party family.*

3.2.3 The Role of Ideological Distance

While it is not possible in this study to directly test each of these three mechanisms that could drive the effect of the party family's performance abroad on a voter's willingness to consider party family members, the legitimization effect and bandwagon effect each suggest alternative observational implications for the role of ideological alignment between the voter and the party which can be used to probe which mechanism is the most likely culprit. [36] According to the logic of legitimization, the strength of the party family abroad should create a permission structure for individuals to act on previously held beliefs (Bischof & Wagner, 2019; Valentim, 2021). Individuals with ideological positions that align with the radical right, but otherwise support the center-right because the center-right is the more mainstream option of the two on the right, should be more willing to consider voting for the radical right if that party family's views become viewed as legitimate political options with the endorsement of foreign electorates (see Böhmelt et al., 2024). However, the importance of ideological distance should decline as ideological distance increases since voters who do not share the more legitimized beliefs are unlikely to act on them. For example, following the 2019 elections in which the green party family performed well in Europe, green voters in Europe should become more likely to support their domestic green party since it appears more socially acceptable to act on one's support for green policies (see Malet, 2022). On the other hand, the performance of the green family should not matter at all for radical right voters who do not hold green family positions on the environment. Figure 3.1 displays the idealized shape of this curvilinear relationship, where the effect of the party

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[36] Fortunately, the nature of my research design, which leverages post-election surveys from the EES, effectively rules out policy benchmarking as an explanation as not enough time has passed between the EP elections and voter responses for policies of the winning parties to be useful benchmarks for voters.

family's performance is greatest for those in close ideological alignment with the party as these voters act on the now more legitimized views they already hold. As distance increases, and voters hold less of the now more legitimized views, the effect of party family performance declines until there is a null effect.
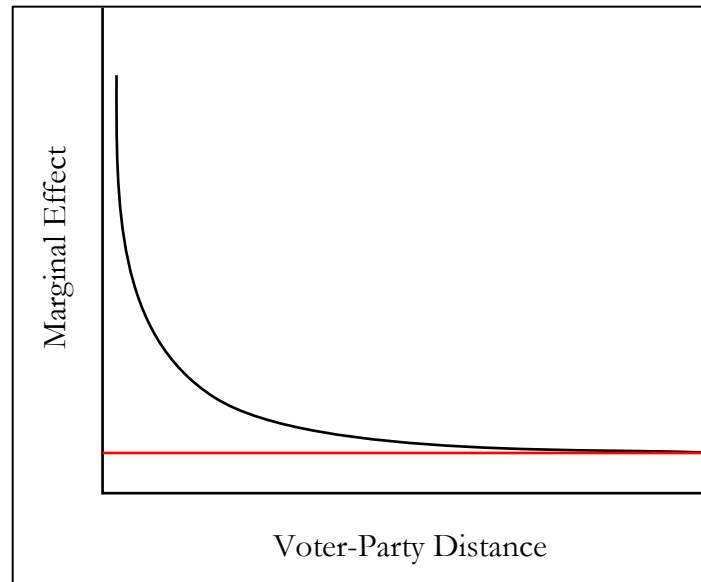
Figure 3.1. Hypothesized Legitmization Effect

Note: The red line represents no effect.

H2a: *The effect of party family strength abroad will decrease as the ideological distance between the voter and party increases until a certain point when the strength no longer matters. (Legitimization).*

Conversely, according to logic behind the bandwagon effect, voters are not only driven by their ideological proximity to the party, but by an expressive desire to identify as part of the winning team (Barnfield, 2020; Kiss & Simonovits, 2014). As a result, if voters are driven by an expressive desire to be a member of the winning team, we would expect them to be willing to sacrifice some of their ideological gains by supporting their most sincere choice in favor of a party that is winning abroad. As Turnbull-Dugarte & Rama (2022) demonstrate, it is right-leaning voters that already identify with right-wing parties, such as Vox, who were most willing to abandon Vox after Trump's defeat in the 2020 U.S. elections. This builds on the expressive model of voting behavior where voters do not necessarily vote for the most ideologically aligned party, but the one that best aligns with how

they want to express themselves (Schuessler, 2000). Voters are willing to sacrifice some of their preferences to be a member of the winning team. Therefore, under the logic of the bandwagon effect, we should expect to see an initial increase in the effect of party family strength abroad since it is those inclined to support the party but not already doing so that would be likely to shift their allegiances; however, the effect of distance on the effect of the party family's performance abroad should begin to weaken at a certain point.

Voters may be willing to sacrifice *some* of their preferences to join a bandwagon, but it is unlikely that they would be willing to sacrifice all their preferences in favor of identifying with the winner. We know that negative partisanship is a powerful force in political behavior and predicts that voters have parties that they expressly identify as not being a partisan for (Mayer, 2017). Therefore, while a voter may be willing to compromise some of her preferences to be a winner, she should become less willing to do so as the party moves further away from her preferences. Following the 2019 elections in which the green party family performed well, we would expect those closely aligned, but not perfectly aligned, such as social democratic voters, to be more willing to support green parties following the logic of the bandwagon effect. However, we would not expect radical right voters to make the same shift towards green parties since they are unwilling to sacrifice that much of their preferences to feel like they are a part of the green success. Figure 3.2 displays the idealized shape of this curve as an inverted U-shape where the greatest marginal effect of party family performance is not for ideologically aligned voters, but rather in the middle of the range for moderately aligned voters as these voters are those moved by the expressive desire to support a winning party family. The effect then declines at a certain point where the ideological sacrifice necessary to support a winning party family becomes too great and voters become less willing to consider the party.
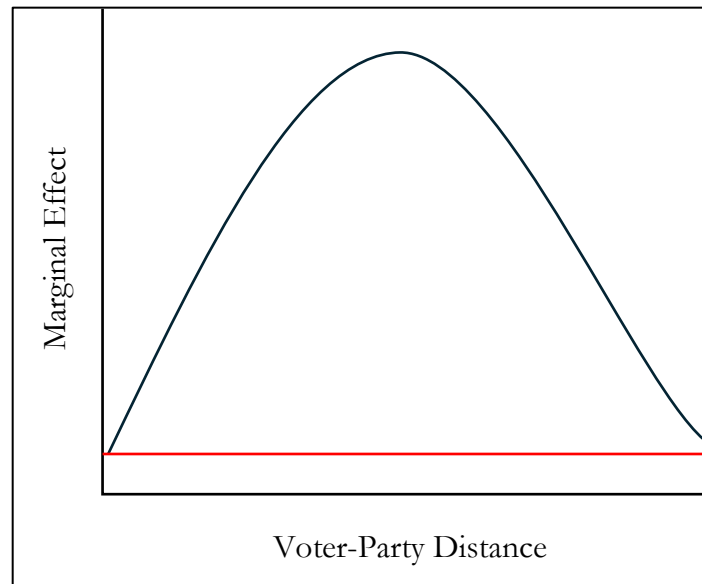
Figure 3.2. Hypothesized Bandwagon Effect

Note: The red line represents no effect.

H2b: *The effect of party family strength abroad will increase as the ideological distance between the voter and party increases, until a certain point when it will begin to decrease. (Bandwagon).*

3.3 Data & Methods

To test these hypotheses, I use the EES from 1999 to 2019 which provides valuable cross-national post-election surveys following EP elections (Schmitt et al., 2022). Importantly, while not all the post-election surveys are the same, each wave includes the same set of demographic controls and a battery of questions that measure a voter's propensity to vote for certain political parties in the future. Additionally, I rely on the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) from 1999 to 2019 which provides valuable data on political parties, including their vote share in EP elections (Jolly et al., 2022). This provides data across five EP elections in 24 countries.

3.3.1 The European Parliament

I choose to study how party family strength abroad can impact a party's domestic electoral prospects in the context of EP elections because EP elections are inherently transnational, with all voters voting at the same time across member states, and while each country uses their own national party lists, they organize around European Party Groups (EPGs) in the EP (Hix et al., 2006, 2007).[37] As a result, the outcomes of these elections are often covered in terms of their consequences for the EU and framed as reflecting the will of the entire region. For instance, following the 2019 EP elections, much of the coverage focused on the success of the radical right and greens as a broader grouping of parties. [38] Gattermann et al. (2021) demonstrate that following EP elections, parties, and party families, that have the plurality of votes or large increases in its vote share, are likely to generate positive media coverage as winners. Importantly, this coverage transcends national borders as EP elections generate transnational coverage of successful parties and party families (Meyer & Gattermann, 2022).

Since EP elections are transnational elections which draw the attention of voters, parties, and media around the same campaign, electoral results following the elections are a useful snapshot of the party family's strength at a single point in time. As a result, focusing on the EP addresses concerns about the potential impact of the transnational signal foreign results generate being influenced by the temporal distance between the foreign national election and the survey fieldwork that arise by using national elections as the source of party family strength. However, the second-order nature of EP elections in European politics warrants further discussion about the EP as a useful case.

Elections to the EP are second-order, meaning that they are low salience for voters who view them as reflections of national politics (Reif, 1984; Reif & Schmitt, 1980). In turn, this has often meant that voters do not care about EP elections, and when they do, they only focus on what is going on in their own country as they interpret the results based on how their parties performed (Flickinger & Studlar, 2007; Hobolt & Wittrock, 2011). This view of EP elections would suggest that voters are not

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[37] Notably, in the 2014 EP elections, the Spitzenkandidaten system further highlighted the transnationalization of EP politics as parties of similar EPGs and party families campaigned behind a common candidate for the European Commission president similar to how national parties campaign behind a single candidate for PM. This system was abandoned in the 2019 elections, but efforts remain to bring back the system and implement transnational lists for future EP elections.

[38] See, for example, https://www.npr.org/2019/05/27/727293356/4-takeaways-from-the-european-parliament-election-results and https://www.mischiefsoffaction.com/post/maybe-it-s-easier-to-be-green-in-2019

paying attention enough for the party family's performance abroad to matter since they are focused on their domestic results.

On the other hand, recent research on EP elections suggests that they have evolved beyond the second-order model, as some work finds evidence that voters do behave based on European issues and their preferences for the European Union (Hobolt & Spoon, 2012; Koepke & Ringe, 2006; Schmitt et al., 2020). Extant work also shows that EU citizens are fairly well versed in, at the very least, major political events of other member states (De Vries, 2018a; Walter, 2021b). This suggests that voters are paying attention to EP elections and can interpret results through a broader, transnational lens. Furthermore, the second-order model of EP elections tells us that voters are using EP elections to influence politics in the national arena (Hix & Marsh, 2007). As a result, when hearing information about the results of the EP elections abroad, voters are likely to interpret the results through the lens of their own national arena. For example, if the green party family performs well in the EP elections, and coverage is favorable to green parties, then it is likely that voters are applying that information about which parties are electorally strong to their own parties and may shift how they view their own green parties.

At the very least, EP elections can be considered a hard case since it is equally likely that voters are not paying attention as it is that they are a meaningful signal about the party family's strength abroad.[39] Existing research supports this latter view. Somer-Topcu & Zar (2014) find that parties respond to EP elections by updating their manifestos in response to how they and their competitors performed in the EP election. Furthermore, research suggests that EP elections can foster the emergence and latter electoral success of challenger (Schulte-Cloos, 2018) and new (Jorde, 2022) parties. Dinas & Riera (2018) demonstrate that the weakness of mainstream parties in EP elections further fragments the national party system. As this work suggests, EP elections **are** meaningful signals for voters and do have the ability to influence subsequent electoral returns.

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[39] One way to evaluate if second-order effects are driving potential results is by examining if there are heterogenous effects based on those who are and are not paying attention to the EP. If only those who are paying attention are responsive, that would suggest that my results are not generalizable outside the EP context. Table B5 in the appendix reports results for a model which includes an interaction with the degree to which respondents pay attention to EP elections, and the interaction term is statistically insignificant. There is no significant difference in the effect of the party family's performance abroad among those who do and do not pay attention to EP elections.

3.3.2 Propensity to Vote

To test my hypotheses, I rely on a series of questions in the EES which asks voters to report their propensity to vote (PTV) for a given party.[40] Using the PTV battery of questions as opposed to questions of vote choice allays some concern about recall bias in a voter's response to past vote choice, which is especially a concern for this project since voters might be biased to report voting for a winning party family, raising doubts that any potential findings are driven by response bias and not actual patterns in voter behavior. PTV questions resolve some of this concern by tapping into a voter's willingness to support the party in a future election, allowing voters to more honestly report how they feel about various parties. Additionally, they provide more insight into a voter's availability to political parties which better reflects how I expect party family strength abroad to impact voter behavior (Wagner, 2017; Wagner & Krause, 2023).[41] It is not that a strong foreign performance drives voters to en masse switch their votes, but rather it makes the party family seem like a more viable option leaving voters to express greater openness to consider supporting the party in the future. [42]

Since each voter is asked about multiple parties, I structure the data at the voter-party level so that each observation capture's the likelihood a voter indicates she would consider supporting the party. This measure ranges from 0 to 10, with lower values indicating a respondent would be less likely to support the party. A zero indicates they would never support the party under any circumstances, while ten indicates the respondent would absolutely vote for the party in the future. In my sample, the mean is 3.28 with a standard deviation of 3.27. Table B1 in the appendix provides summary statistics for the propensity to vote by party family.

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[40] Notably, this question does not specify in what electoral context voters would consider supporting the party, and leaves it open to the voter's interpretation whether the question is referring to their willingness to support the party in any future elections, just future national elections, or just future EP elections. There is a high correlation between a voter's selection in the EP election and her choice in the last national election (0.71) and her vote intention in the next general election (0.81), demonstrating that while the question does not specify which context voters should consider, it is reasonable to generalize their responses to both contexts.

[41] Wagner & Krause (2023) contend that a voter's availability, which is an aggregate measure of a voter's PTV scores for each party, is a better measure of electoral competition as it captures shifts in a voter's potential to change her voting decision and overperforms standard measures of electoral competition such as vote switching and electoral volatility. Importantly, their study uses PTV questions from the 1994-2019 waves of the EES.

[42] PTV questions are strongly correlated with measures of actual behavior such as vote choice (Van Der Eijk et al., 2006; Wagner & Krause, 2023). In my data from 1999 to 2014, 61% reported an intention to vote for the party they gave the highest PTV score. Furthermore, other studies examining questions of party strategies use PTV questions in order to examine the effects on a voter's baseline level of support for a party (see also Bahnsen et al., 2020; Rovny & Polk, 2020; Vezzoni & Mancosu, 2016).

3.3.3 Independent Variables

3.3.3.1 Party Family Strength

The key independent variable is the strength of the party family in the rest of Europe, as measured by its performance in the EP elections. To calculate this measure, I first turn to CHES data which provides the share of the vote the party received in the EP election prior to the expert survey wave. Since CHES does not report aggregate vote totals, and I need to combine the total number of votes a party family received across Europe, I must first convert the percentages reported by CHES to the number of votes. To do this, I use data provided by the European Union NUTS Electoral Database (EU-NED) for the number of valid votes in the EP election for each country (Schraff et al., 2022). I calculate the number of votes received by each party in the EP election by multiplying the vote share times the number of valid votes. [43]

Then, using the party family classifications provided by the CHES experts, I aggregate the total number of party votes by party family. [44] This gives me the total number of votes the entire party family received across Europe in each round of the elections. Importantly, I subtract a party's own vote total from the total of its party family to capture the performance of the party family abroad and the performance of the party family independent of the party's own performance. At the end of this process, I have the total number of votes received by the party family abroad. I then divide this value from the total number of valid votes in the EP contest from all countries to get the vote share of the party family abroad in the EP election of the survey wave. This variable ranges from 0.1 percent to 26.42 percent, with a mean share at 11.02 percent and a standard deviation of 7.03. [45]

As an additional test of H1, I also test the effect of a change in the party family's strength abroad from the last election to the current election. This takes a more dynamic view of party family strength abroad as strength in this specification is calculated not by the overall vote share, but rather if the party family abroad gained or lost votes between elections. To calculate this measure, I find the

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[43] The EU-NED database reports results at the NUTS unit level, which are subnational statistical regions in Europe. I aggregate the number of valid votes by country to get the number of valid votes in a country.

[44] I focus on the eight most prominent party families in European politics in order from left to right: radical left, green, social democratic, center, liberal, Christian democratic, conservative, and radical right.

[45] Since the EES data comes from post-election surveys, I use the performance of the party family abroad in the EP election of the survey wave as that precedes fieldwork. For example, respondents in the 2019 wave of the EES were surveyed in the summer of 2019, after the EP elections in May, making the EP election that precedes fieldwork the 2019 EP elections.

difference in my party family strength measure from above between the last election and current election. Negative values indicate the party lost strength while positive values indicate the party gained strength between contests. A value of zero represents no change in a party family's strength abroad. This variable ranges from -11.95 percent to 13.66 percent with a mean change in vote share at 0 percent and a standard deviation of 3.43.

3.3.3.2 Ideological Distance

To test H2a and H2b, I rely on data from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) which records the ideological positions of parties on a scale from 0 to 10, with 0 being the most left-leaning party and 10 being the most right-leaning party. As part of the expert survey, experts are asked to place the parties on the ideological scale from left to right. The CHES dataset then reports the average placement of the party by the experts. Using this data, I find the absolute value of the difference between a voter's self-placement using a question in the EES which similarly asks respondents on a scale from 0 to 10 to place themselves from left to right and the party's position. This produces a value that captures how far apart the voter is from the party. This measure ranges from 0, meaning the voter and party are perfectly aligned, to 10, meaning the voter and party are as far apart ideologically as possible with an average score of 2.79. The distribution of this variable is available in Figure B2.

3.3.4 Controls

I also include several control variables that may influence a voter's propensity to vote for a given party. At the individual level, I first include the standard battery of demographic controls including gender, age, education level, and ideology. Additionally, I control for whether the respondent lives in a rural or urban area as indicated by the EES. I expect more cosmopolitan urban residents to have different partisan preferences and willingness to be receptive to signals from abroad. At the voter-party-level, I account for if the voter reported voting for the party in the last national election. Voters who voted for the party in the last election should report higher PTV scores to the party in

future elections. [46] At the party-level, I control for the share of the vote the party received in the last national election to account for the party's domestic strength. I expect parties that are stronger domestically to receive higher PTV scores. Next, I control for if the party is considered an extreme party, which is a dichotomous indicator where one equals parties that are identified by CHES as having a RILE score of 8 or above and 2 or below. I expect this variable to influence voters in either direction. More extreme voters likely have more distinct positions, pulling voters into their camp (Spoon & Klüver, 2019). At the same time, extreme parties are often espousing unpopular ideas that could alienate voters (van Spanje & Azrout, 2019). Then, I account for if the party is a governing party, which should make voters less likely to want to vote for the party in the future due to the losses incumbent parties often face (Klüver & Spoon, 2020).

At the country-election level, I control for the distance between the EP election, which is held on a fixed electoral schedule every five years, and the most recent national election preceding the EP contest. The closer a national election is before the EP contest, the more salient national politics will be in the domestic information environment, and voters may be paying less attention to the EP campaign (see Nonnemacher 2021). Importantly, I interact this measure with prior vote choice so that I am accounting for the diminishing weight of past vote choice as the previous national elections becomes a more outdated snapshot of a voter's electoral history. Summary statistics for all variables are available in Table B2.

Since the data is hierarchical in nature, with observations nested in individuals, parties, elections, and countries, I employ a multi-level regression model with random effects at the party-level. I include fixed effects for party family, country, and EP election to account for any other unobserved heterogeneity between party families, countries, and elections.

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[46] Additionally, controlling for past vote choices alleviates some concern that by pooling all party families into a single model, I am omitting variables that may drive support for a single party family, such as union density for social democratic parties or immigration attitudes for radical right parties. Since those factors likely played a role in shaping a voter's prior vote choice, accounting for their prior vote choice captures these party-family specific factors.

3.4 Results

Table 3.1 presents the results for my main analysis testing H1 and the effect of party family strength abroad. Model 1 estimates the effect of the party family strength abroad through the size of the party family abroad in the EP election. Model 2 replaces the static measure of party family strength abroad with the change in party family strength, estimating the effect of electoral swings on a voter's willingness to support the party.

Starting with Model 1, there is a statistically significant positive effect of party family strength abroad on a voter's propensity to support the party in the future. A one-unit increase in party family strength abroad, which in this case covers the entire possible range of the measure, is associated with a 0.782 unit increase in a voter's propensity to support the party.[47] Since the scale of the PTV measure is from zero to ten, this is equivalent to a roughly 7.82 percent increase in a voter's propensity to support the party. A one-percentage point increase in the party family's strength abroad is associated with a roughly 0.08-point increase in a voter's willingness to support the party in the future. At the minimum party family abroad vote share of 0.02 percent, the average PTV for parties in that family is 3.63. This increases to 3.7 when the party family's strength increases to 10 percent, and to 3.83 at the maximum of 26.42 percent.

Turning now to Model 2, there is also a statistically significant positive effect of a party family's strength abroad on a voter's propensity to support the party in the future. As above, a one-percent increase in the size of the party family's electoral swing abroad is associated with a 0.1 percent increase in a voter's willingness to support the party in the future. At a value of zero, meaning the party family's vote share did not change from one election to the next, the average PTV for members of the party family is 3.73. This decreases to 3.68 at a loss of five percent and to 3.61 at the minimum value at a loss of 11.95 percent. At the same time, if a party family gains five percent abroad between elections, the average PTV for member parties increases to 3.78 and to 3.87 at the maximum gain of 13.66 percent. [48]

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[47] While it is empirically possible for a value of 1 to be recorded, it is not realistic as this would mean a party family received 100% of the vote abroad. In my sample, the max value is 0.264, or 26.42 percent.

[48] Table B4 reports the results of Model 1 including the party family's performance from the last EP election (ie. 2014 for 2019 respondents). Results are robust to the inclusion of this control.

Taken together, these results provide strong evidence in favor of H1. When a party family is strong abroad, either viewed through its vote share or the swing in its vote share between elections, voters become more open to supporting the party in subsequent elections.[49] While these effects are substantively small, we know that vote choice is a complex process and any variable that is shown to have a significant impact on which parties a voter considers is a meaningful finding.

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[49] Table B3 reports the results of Model 1 subset by party family. Interestingly, when examined within a single party family, all party families but center parties are statistically significant and negative. However, caution is warranted in interpreting these results due to smaller number of groups in the models.

Table 3.1. Estimated Effect of Party Family Strength on Propensity to Vote

	Model 1 Static	Model 2 Dynamic
Party Level		
Party Family Strength Abroad	**0.782*****	
	(0.193)	
Change in Party Family Strength		**1.019*****
		(0.216)
National Vote Share	1.705***	1.536***
	(0.114)	(0.139)
Extreme	0.294***	0.318***
	(0.028)	(0.038)
Governing Party	-0.32***	-0.378***
	(0.014)	(0.017)
Individual-Level		
Female	0.09***	0.097***
	(0.009)	(0.011)
Age	-0.011***	-0.012***
	(0.000)	(0.004)
Education Level	0.019**	0.045***
	(0.007)	(0.009)
Ideology	-0.004**	-0.01***
	(0.002)	(0.002)
Urban Resident	-0.022**	-0.016
	(0.01)	(0.012)
Interest	0.055***	0.066***
	(0.006)	(0.007)
Knowledge	0.006	0.008
	(0.005)	(0.006)
Voter-Party Level		
Voter Distance	-0.4***	-0.423***
	(0.002)	(0.003)
National Vote Choice	4.756***	4.876***
	(0.029)	(0.034)
National Vote Choice * EP Distance	-0.000***	-0.000***
	(0.000)	(0.000)
Country-Election Level		
EP-National Election Distance	0.000**	0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)
Constant	3.286***	3.676
	(0.298)	(0.265)
N	334,168	245,695
Log Likelihood	-801198.29	-591205.97
Groups	204	149
Party Random Effects	0.48	0.356
Party Family FE	Yes	Yes
EP Election FE	Yes	Yes
Country FE	Yes	Yes

Note: ****p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.10. Reference categories are radical right for party family, 1999 for EP election, and Austria for country.*

3.4.1 Legitimization vs. Bandwagon Effect

Turning now to H2a and H2b, Table 3.2 reports the results of the same models as Table 3.1, but with an added interaction term between the squared ideological distance between the voter and the party and the strength of the party family abroad. Model 1 uses the static measure of strength in the election of the observation, while Model 2 uses the dynamic measure of strength as the change in vote share from the previous election to the election of the observation. Unless otherwise noted, the results discussed below will refer to Model 1.[50] To find support for the H2a and the legitimization effect, the plotted effect of the distance on the marginal effect of party family performance would look like Figure 3.1 and the coefficient for the interaction between performance and distance would be significant and negative, while the coefficient for the interaction between performance and distance squared would be insignificant. To find support for H2b and the bandwagon effect, the plotted effect would look like the inverted-U in Figure 3.2 and the coefficient for the interaction between performance and distance would be positive and significant while the coefficient for the interaction with the squared term would be negative and significant.

According to the results reported in Table 3.2, there is strong support in favor of the bandwagon effect (H2b) and no support for a legitimization effect (H2a). Figure 3.3 plots the marginal effect of the party family strength abroad based on the distance between the voter and party according to Model 1. On the x-axis is the ideological distance of the voter and party and on the y-axis is the marginal effect of party family strength abroad. Based on Figure 3.3, there is a clear and significant increase in the marginal effect of party family strength as the ideological distance between voter and party increases. Importantly, there are limits to what voters are willing to consider to be associated with the winning team. As Figure 3.3 depicts, the marginal effect of the party family's strength abroad begins to wane as the ideological distance between the voter and the party increases. For voters perfectly aligned with the party, the party family strength abroad has a statistically significant negative effect of -0.83 that increases to 1.64 at a distance score of about 4.2 points. [51] This effect then decreases

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[50] Figure B2 in the appendix presents the results from Model 2. Interestingly, when using the dynamic measure of party family strength abroad, the curve is essentially null for perfectly aligned voters, before increasing drastically for unaligned voters. This suggests that parties that are gaining votes between elections induces voters to make greater sacrifices from their policy positions.

[51] The negative effect could be the result of a ceiling effect, as there is likely very little room for improvement in a voter's willingness to support a party that she is perfectly aligned with already. Importantly, this statistically significant effect of party family performance abroad disappears around 0.34 points.

to a negative effect around 7.57 ideological points between the voter and the party, and eventually declines all the way to -3.19 at the maximum possible distance between voter and party.

Table 3.2. Estimated Effect of Party Family Strength Abroad by Voter-Party Distance

	Model 1 Static	Model 2 Dynamic
Party Level		
Party Family Strength Abroad	**-0.83****	
	(0.248)	
Change in Party Family Strength		**1.084****
		(0.411)
National Vote Share	1.717***	1.538***
	(0.114)	(0.139)
Extreme	0.288***	0.319***
	(0.028)	(0.038)
Governing Party	-0.32***	-0.379***
	(0.014)	(0.017)
Individual-Level		
Female	0.09***	0.097***
	(0.009)	(0.011)
Age	-0.011***	-0.012***
	(0.000)	(0.000)
Education Level	0.02**	0.046***
	(0.007)	(0.009)
Ideology	-0.005**	-0.009***
	(0.002)	(0.002)
Urban Resident	-0.022**	-0.016
	(0.01)	(0.012)
Interest	0.053***	0.065***
	(0.006)	(0.007)
Knowledge	0.008	0.009
	(0.005)	(0.006)
Voter-Party Level		
Voter Distance	-0.587***	-0.491***
	(0.014)	(0.009)
Voter Distance Squared	0.023***	0.009***
	(0.002)	(0.001)
Family Strength Abroad * Distance	**1.184*****	
	(0.109)	
Family Strength Abroad * Distance Sq	**-0.142*****	
	(0.015)	
Change in Family Strength * Distance		**-0.613****
		(0.234)
Change in Family Strength * Distance Sq		**0.138*****
		(0.029)
National Vote Choice	4.751***	4.865***
	(0.029)	(0.034)
National Vote Choice * EP Distance	-0.000***	-0.004***
	(0.000)	(0.000)
Country-Election Level		
EP-National Election Distance	0.000**	0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)
Constant	3.558***	3.744***
	(0.299)	(0.265)
N	334,168	245,695
Log Likelihood	-801107.69	-591137.69
Groups	204	149
Party Random Effects	0.481	0.355
Party Family FE	Yes	Yes
EP Election FE	Yes	Yes
Country FE	Yes	Yes

Note: ****p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.10. Reference categories are radical right for party family, 1999 for EP election, and Austria for country.*
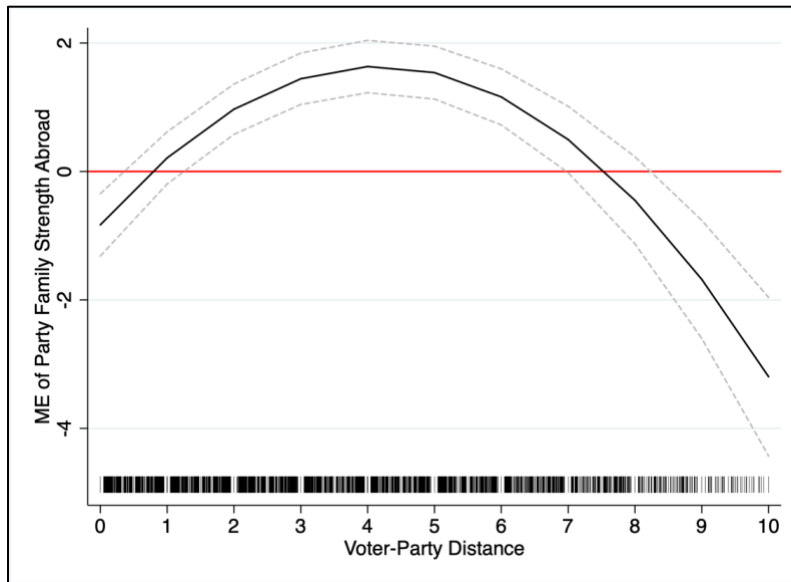
Figure 3.3. Marginal Effect of Party Family Strength Abroad by Voter-Party Distance

Note: Results based on Model 1 in Table 3.2.

Figure 3.4 displays the predicted propensity to vote scores associated with these effects, with the party family strength abroad on the x-axis and the predicted PTV scores on the y-axis by perfectly aligned, moderately aligned, and unaligned voters. For voters closely aligned to a party, at a score of zero, there is a slight negative but insignificant effect of the party family's performance abroad. For aligned voters, they report a PTV score of 5 when the party family's strength abroad is at its minimum of 0.02 percent, which increases to 4.93 when the party family's strength is at ten percent, and 4.79 at the maximum. This is a net decrease of 0.21 points. However, for voters with a moderate ideological distance between themselves and the party, we see a significant positive effect of the party family performance abroad. For moderately aligned voters, they report a PTV score of 2.99 when the party family's strength abroad is at its minimum of 0.02, which increases to 3.12 when the party family's strength is at ten percent, and 3.39 at the maximum, representing an increase of 0.4 points. Lastly, among ideologically distant voters, there is a statistically significant negative effect of party family strength on their willingness to support parties. For unaligned voters, they report a PTV score of 1.38 when the party family's strength abroad is at its minimum of 0.02, which decreases to 1.13 when the party family's strength is at ten percent, and 0.6 at the maximum. This is a decrease of 0.78 points.
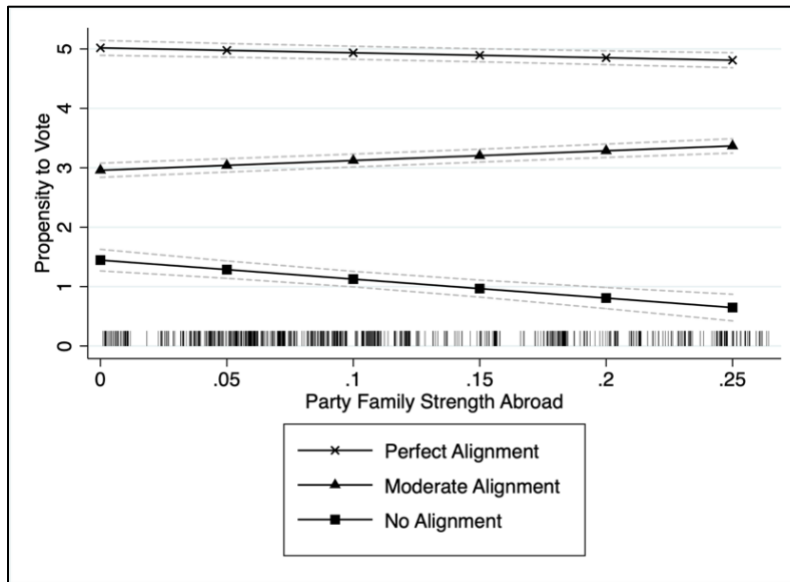
Figure 3.4. Predicted PTV Scores by Voter-Party Distance and Party Family Strength

Note: Results based on Model 1 in Table 3.2.

To put these results in context, take, for example, an idealized green voter. According to these results, this green voter initially becomes slightly less likely to support green parties if the green party family is doing well abroad. If the social democratic party family, a family in which the green voter is likely moderately aligned with, starts doing well abroad, these results suggest that the green voter is likely to increase their willingness to join the social democratic bandwagon. However, if the radical right party family starts doing well abroad, the green voter becomes less willing to support her country's radical right party in the future, which is to be expected given that the voter is likely not at all aligned with the party. This pattern of findings lends some support for the bandwagon effect. Green voters are willing to join the bandwagon of the social democratic family if it starts performing well abroad, sacrificing some of their priorities to enjoy the expressive value in being a member of the winning team. However, they are not willing to go all the way to supporting the radical right, and in fact, they become less willing to do so in response to the radical right's success abroad. For comparison's sake, if the voter was behaving as we would expect under the legitimization effect, she would become much more likely to support her green party since the party family's performance has created a permission structure to act on her green beliefs. We would expect a moderate bump in her support for the social democratic party if that family performed well and no movement for the radical right if the radical right performed well as expected in Figure 3.1.

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In summary, the findings from Table 3.2 are consistent with what we would expect if the bandwagon effect is the driving force behind the ability of party family's strength abroad to influence a voter's willingness to support party family members.[52] The initial increase in the effect of the party family's strength abroad depicted in Figure 3.3 suggests voters are willing to sacrifice some of their policy goals for an expressive desire to join a strong party family, which is inconsistent with the legitimization effect. Under the legitimization account, there should be an initial decrease as ideological distance increases, as voters become less susceptible to the legitimization forces of a strong party family's foreign performance since the views being legitimized are not in line with the voter's own preferences (see Figure 3.1). Importantly though, these results suggest there are limits to the bandwagon effect, as the party family's performance abroad matters less after the initial increase when voters become irreconcilably distant from the party. In fact, I find evidence that the party family performance may induce a backlash wherein individuals report being less likely to support parties that are winning abroad that they are also ideologically opposed. This is likely due to a desire to express their disdain for the party's family's success abroad for parties they do not agree with, akin to negative partisanship (Mayer, 2017). In total, these results lend support to H2b in favor for the bandwagon effect over the legitimization effect as the primary mechanism behind my findings for H1.

Turning briefly to the controls, several interesting patterns emerge across the four models. Women tend to be more willing to support parties than men. Additionally, as one gets older, her willingness to support parties decreases, which likely reflects older voters being holding more crystallized preferences. More educated individuals tend to be more willing to support more parties. Meanwhile, urban residents tend to be less willing to support parties. This goes against my expectations but makes some sense as there may be fewer parties that appeal to the preferences of urban individuals. As political interest increases, individuals become more willing to support a party, suggesting politically interested individuals are also more open to supporting different parties. [53]Unsurprisingly, if the voter supported the party in the past, they are much more likely to report a higher PTV score for future support of the party.[54] Interestingly, this effect wanes as the gap between the EP election and the

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[52] Table B6 and Figures B3 and B4 depict the results of a linear interaction without the squared term. The results are consistent with the bandwagon effect. As the distance increases, so too does the effect of party family strength.

[53] Table B7 in the appendix reports results of interaction effects by interest and political knowledge. As interest increases, the effect of party family strength increases. As knowledge increases, the effect of party family strength decreases. This suggest that party family performance matters most for high interest and low knowledge voters. There is no significant difference of the effect of knowledge on the effect of party family strength based on political interest.

[54] Results are robust when I control for partisanship instead of vote choice.

national contest they voted for the party in increases. Parties that are stronger nationally are also unsurprisingly more likely to receive higher PTV scores. Extreme parties are more likely to receive higher PTV scores, likely due to their ability to distinguish themselves. Finally, government parties receive lower PTV scores as they take on the costs of incumbency.

3.5 Conclusion

In this paper, I argue that a party's family performance abroad should make the member parties of the party family more electorally appealing. Using data from the EES from 1999 to 2019, I found support for my argument. As the strength of the party family increases abroad, voters report a higher propensity to support members of that party family in their country in subsequent elections. This finding is robust to a static measure of strength abroad measured by the vote share of the party in the election and a dynamic measure that captures the change in vote share from one election to the next. When a party family is large and/or winning, members of that party family see an increase in their potential pool of voters. This is especially the case when the voter is moderately aligned with the party, lending support for H2b and the bandwagon effect as the mechanism behind my findings. Voters are more willing to support parties that are moderately distant from their own position to join the winning team, but then revolt against the parties that they are extremely opposed to that are doing well abroad.

These findings have important implications for our understandings of voter and party behavior. At the voter-level, they provide additional evidence that voters are paying attention to politics abroad, and that when evaluating their own parties, they look at how the party family is performing in the region. These results also speak to the expressive factors that influence vote choice (Schuessler, 2000), highlighting how voters are willing to sacrifice supporting parties that best represent their sincere preferences for other, expressive interests such as the value of winning. Importantly though, this willingness to sacrifice their ideological goals to feel like a member of the winning team is not finite, as voters will start to punish the parties that they are unaligned with whose families are doing well abroad. This suggests that party family performance abroad has the potential to also generate a backlash effect for parties doing well abroad among negative partisans and ideologically unaligned voters (see also Böhmelt et al., 2024). A strong performance by a family the

voter has strong animosity towards or strong disagreements with can serve as a signal that political tides are unfavorable to their preferences, and something needs to be done to prevent undesirable parties and those they disagree with from gaining more momentum. Furthermore, this study helps us understand how transnational political brands, such as those associated with party family labels, impact voter behavior. My results suggest that party families performing well abroad have strong political brands, which helps raise support for all parties associated with that label.

At the party level, these findings shed light on how the party family parties are associated with can help or hurt their ability to appeal to voters. Parties belonging to party families that are struggling in the rest of the region need to take additional steps to attract voters as being associated with a losing family hurts their ability to appeal to voters. Meanwhile, parties that belong to strong party families abroad are incentivized to lean into that political brand to reap the rewards of being a member of the winning team. As a result, parties are strategically incentivized to embrace transnational symbols when these symbols have the potential to help the party's electoral prospects at home. Additionally, these results speak to an advantage of parties' taking a broad appeal strategy and obfuscating their positions so as many voters as possible can feel represented by the party (Somer-Topcu, 2015). By doing so, the party can help reduce the perceived distance between the voter and the party, improving the likelihood that the voter will consider supporting it if its party family is doing well abroad.

This paper makes an important contribution to our understanding of electoral spillover, but more work is needed to further unpack how the performance of party families abroad shapes domestic appeal for member parties. First, while the evidence presented in this paper is suggestive of the bandwagon effect, it is necessary to note that I cannot causally identify which mechanism is at work and while findings do not align with what we would expect from the legitimization effect, I cannot rule it out entirely. Future work should aim to collect survey data that allows for studies that are able to better isolate these mechanisms and determine if legitimization, bandwagon effects, or policy benchmarking are driving a voter's response to foreign electoral results. Additionally, this paper analyzed this question at the individual-level to look at the willingness to support parties, but more work is necessary at the aggregate level through spatial and temporal modelling to better unpack how geography and time influence how electoral results diffuse from abroad (Nasr & Rieger, 2023).[55] By

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[55] Table B8 reports the results of a preliminary analysis that examines the effect of the party family performance in the EP elections at the regional level based on whether the region is a border region or interior region. I find a slight negative effect of the family's vote share abroad, but there is no difference between border and interior regions. However, the substantive effect is incredibly small. See appendix B2 for more information.

addressing these questions with further studies into the electoral diffusion of electoral results across Europe, we can gain a better sense for how voters behave with an eye abroad and how their political decision-making is shaped by transnational factors.

4.0 Strategic Transnational Branding

"It is clear this was a good night for the @spdde and my friend @olafscholz in the Bundestag elections. His inspiring campaign has shown that positive leadership matters." – Keir Starmer, following 2021 German elections

Prior to elections in November 2023, the Dutch GreenLeft (GL) and the Labour Party (PvdA) entered a pre-electoral coalition under PvdA leader Frans Timmermans. To sell the partnership to voters, the new coalition highlighted the endorsements from prominent figures in social democratic circles including Keir Starmer from the Labour Party in the U.K., former PM Magdalena Andersson from the Swedish Social Democratic Party, PM Antonio Costa from the Portuguese Socialist Party, and former PM Sanna Marin from the Social Democratic Party of Finland. Each leader endorsed the coalition and urged Dutch voters to elect the center-left alliance to bring about a social democratic vision of Europe to the Netherlands. However, this is not the first instance in which social democrats have increasingly leaned on their allies abroad to bolster their credentials at home. In July of 2022, Starmer released a short campaign ad in which he travelled to Germany and appeared alongside Chancellor Scholz and emphasized the ways that the British Labour Party was learning from and modelling its approach after Scholz's successful campaign in the German federal elections in 2021.

Notably, this is not a campaign strategy exclusive to the center-left. Radical right leaders like Marine Le Pen in France (National Rally, NR) or Geert Wilders in the Netherlands (Party for Freedom, PVV) often take to Twitter to champion their partners abroad, especially following elections in which the radical right has surprising returns and electoral victories, such as the PVV's in the November 2023 Dutch elections or Chega's in the 2024 Portuguese elections. These same radical right leaders have also held rallies together and have converged for policy summits, as exemplified by a high-profile meeting in 2017 to present a unified front on far-right issues including Le Pen, Wilders, and Frauke Petry from the Alternative for Germany (AfD), Europe's then newest radical right party. Green parties across Europe too have continued to embrace other green parties as champions of a transnational cause to protect the environment. The European Green party group in the European Parliament, for instance, frequently tags its national parties on social media to celebrate their policy wins, highlight key positions, and provide a transnational symbol for the national party to embrace.

Given this range of transnational party strategies where national parties, or their leaders, associate themselves with foreign allies, the question turns to what is the effect of engaging in this transnational strategy. Extant work on party behavior tells us that parties are vote-maximizing and driven predominantly by a desire to win elections, allowing them access to office and influence over the policy-making process (Downs, 1957). In order to maximize their vote totals, parties benefit from strong political brands, which are the network of associations voters hold for political parties that make parties more identifiable (Lupu, 2013; Nielsen & Larsen, 2014). As a result, I argue that parties will choose to link themselves to their allies abroad to strengthen their domestic political brand and improve their electoral prospects. These transnational rallies are a useful way for the party to improve its standing with voters by appearing alongside figures from abroad whose brands may be stronger than the domestic party's brand (Williams et al., 2022).

Using a novel survey experimental in Norway and Sweden in which I expose respondents to a newspaper article of either their social democratic, green, or liberal party linking itself to its counterpart in Germany, I find that these transnational linkages do not significantly impact voter perceptions, with the exception of the perceived electability for Swedish Liberals. In a second step, I validate these findings using an "unexpected" event-in-the-field design, leveraging the timing of a radical right rally (Viva'22) in Madrid during fieldwork for a monthly barometer of Spanish public opinion conducted by the Center for Sociological Investigations (CIS) and find no effect of the rally on voter attitudes toward the host party, Vox.

In what follows, I discuss extant work on electoral spillovers which examines the consequences of foreign elections on domestic outcomes. Drawing on this work, I develop what I term "strategic transnational branding", which is a branding strategy in which vote-seeking parties link themselves with successful allies abroad in order to strengthen their brand by association with a stronger political brand. I then outline the experimental design and the measures I will use to test my hypotheses. After presenting the results from my study and an external validation, I conclude by discussing the implications for our understandings of voters and parties.

4.1 Influence of Foreign Elections

To understand why parties would want to link themselves to their allies abroad, especially electorally successful allies, it is first important to discuss if voters pay attention to the electoral outcomes of foreign countries. Studied prominently after the election of Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential elections in the United States, extant work on electoral consequences abroad has found robust evidence for a "Trump effect" following his victory in 2016. For instance, Minkus et al., (2019) find evidence that Trump's election increased support for the EU by broadening the base of support for the European Union (EU). This stands in contrast to other observed "Trump effects" as it suggests a unifying consequence of his election in Europe. However, other studies point to more pernicious consequences. For instance, there is evidence that Trump's election increased racism in the United States (Ruisch & Ferguson, 2022). This effect was not contained to the U.S as racism and prejudicial attitudes rose around the globe following the 2016 U.S. elections (Giani & Méon, 2021). Similar studies on the European context have found substantively similar Brexit effects on the rise of hate crimes following the 2016 referendum (Devine, 2021) and an increase in support for the EU in the remaining member states (De Vries, 2017; Malet & Walter, 2023; Walter, 2021a). Böhmelt et al., (2024) further demonstrate that the success of anti-immigrant parties abroad polarizes the domestic electorate around anti-immigrant issues, with anti-immigrant voters becoming more anti-immigrant in their views and pro-immigrant voters holding more pro-immigrant views.

Importantly, the presence of these electoral contagion effects on political attitudes raises important questions about how exactly voters are reacting to elections abroad and what the impacts are for electoral outcomes in the home country. Delis et al., (2020), for example, find substantial evidence that the success of Brexit in the 2016 referendum hurt anti-system parties abroad. More specifically, they find that anti-establishment parties in Spain were hurt by the success of the referendum; however, they attribute this effect to the increased uncertainty surrounding the EU in the aftermath of Brexit and not a result of voters connecting anti-establishment parties to Brexit itself (Delis et al., 2020). Furthermore, Turnbull-Dugarte & Rama, (2022) find that the defeat of Trump in the 2020 elections hurt support for Vox, a radical right party in Spain, because it gave radical right parties the label of "loser" which led voters to shift their support away from the party. Nonnemacher, (2024) further demonstrates that these patterns extend beyond the radical right, finding that when a party family is electorally strong abroad by performing well in EP elections, voters become more

willing to support member parties in subsequent elections. Malet, (2022) finds strong evidence that the French "No" in the 2005 EU Constitutional Referendum significantly undermined support for the Constitution in other member states.

4.2 Electoral Incentives and Party Brands

4.2.1 Political Branding

This work on electoral contagion provides valuable insights into how the events in one country travel and shape attitudes and behavior abroad. But the literature is ripe for future work to expand on how parties can leverage potentially favorable electoral outcomes abroad to strengthen their political brand at home, improving their electoral appeal domestically. Political brands are considered a network of associations that voters hold for political parties that include their policy positions, leaders, and rhetoric but can also include colors, images, and the party's name (Avina, 2023; French & Smith, 2010; Grynaviski, 2010). In turn, these political brands are useful informational shortcuts for voters when determining which parties to support, and parties with weak brands, or a weaker set of identifiable associations for voters, perform worse at the ballot box (Lupu, 2013, 2016; Nielsen & Larsen, 2014).

Importantly, a key aspect for how political brands are formed and how voters evaluate parties is based on who the party chooses to associate itself with (Williams & Whitten, 2015). For example, extant work shows that a party's reputation is damaged if it joins a governing coalition as junior partner since this role forces them to compromise their positions in favor of the Prime Minister's position (Fortunato, 2021; Spoon & Klüver, 2017). Junior partners can overcome these challenges by signalling conflict with their governing partners to remind voters that they are fighters and credible champions for key issues (Fortunato, 2021; Nonnemacher & Spoon, 2023; Sagarzazu & Klüver, 2017). Furthermore, in federal systems, research shows that a party's brand is damaged locally when subnational governors of the party are unpopular, even if the national brand is relatively strong (Erikson et al., 2015; Feierherd, 2020).

4.2.2 Strategic Transnational Branding

As this work shows, who a party associates itself with shapes how it is perceived, and parties can leverage who they are associated with to strengthen their brand. Voters perceive parties to be more similar when they repeatedly appear alongside each other and have cooperative interactions (Adams et al., 2021; Lee et al., 2018). As a result, if a party wants to strengthen its brand, it can attempt to link itself to other political actors with stronger brands than its own. In this paper, I argue that parties can leverage strong brands from abroad to strengthen their hand at home.

Work on the impact of transnational leader cues highlights the potential of such a transnational branding strategy. For instance, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has developed a strong positive international brand (Marland, 2018) which results in shifts in public opinion on positions associated with Trudeau. For example, Williams et al., (2022) show that the same COVID-19 policy of closing the border was made more popular in the United States after respondents were primed that Trudeau implemented the same policy in Canada. These findings align with similar studies which document that popular international leaders have positive spillover effects on the perception of associations with that leader (Balmas, 2018; Dragojlovic, 2011, 2013). At the same time, leaders with negative brands abroad, such as Donald Trump, weaken whatever they are associated with in the eyes of international audiences (Agadjanian & Horiuchi, 2020; Dragojlovic, 2013; Minkus et al., 2019; Williams et al., 2022). Parties that want to strengthen their hand at home and improve their brand can benefit from leaning on popular transnational parties and brands (Nonnemacher, n.d.). For instance, evidence from the European Parliament shows that new parties with weaker brands align themselves with the stronger brands of the transnational European Party Groups (EPGs) (Meyerrose, 2018).

In this study, I focus on electoral outcomes as a useful opportunity for parties to invoke the name of an ally party abroad and strengthen their brand as these are easily translatable events abroad to foreign audiences where the stakes are clear, and it has been well established that voters do respond to foreign elections as discussed above. Furthermore, I argue election outcomes can improve a party's brand in domains that are incredibly useful to a party's electoral incentives. Following elections, parties are declared "winners" or "losers" based predominantly around their electoral performance. This label can be powerful for a party's political brand as research on human psychology and behavior shows that individuals are drawn to winners and distance themselves from perceived losers (Anderson & Guillory, 1997; Fortunato, 2021; Healy et al., 2010). Studies in political behavior refer to this as the

"bandwagon effect" where voters support parties or candidates with momentum that appear to be "winning", which creates positive feelings associated with the party (see Barnfield, 2020). Moreover, Nonnemacher, (2024) finds that voters reward parties of electorally successful families abroad. When voters feel that the center-left, radical right, or any other party family is a political "winner" following an election, their positive associations of parties falling under that label should increase. Thus, the direct consequence of the "winner" association for invoking the name of an electorally successful party abroad and my first hypothesis is as follows:

H1: *If a party links itself to an electoral winner abroad of the same party family, it will be perceived to be more electable.*

Following this, voters should also be more likely to support the parties they perceive to be more electorally viable. We know that voters like to support candidates and parties that are likely to enter government and achieve some policy goals (Obermaier et al., 2017). We also know that voters are strategic in that they support parties that are closest to them that are also most likely to win, even if the party is not their sincere preference (Cox, 1997; Downs, 1957). Since voters want to support parties that they think can win, a party appearing alongside an ally that has won should increase the party's electoral appeal. My second central hypothesis is thus:

H2: *If a party links itself to an electoral winner abroad of the same party family, voters will be more likely to vote for the party.*

Additionally, a party connecting itself to an electorally successful foreign party abroad should have similar, indirect consequences, for other aspects of a party's brand unrelated to perceived electoral prospects. The first is how voter's view that party as credible to fulfill its campaign promises. By credibility, I am referring to a party's ability to fulfill its campaign pledges once it enters office. We know from research that parties vary in their ability to fulfill these pledges (Thomson et al., 2017) and that failures to deliver what was promised, such as by joining a governing coalition as a junior partner, hurt the party's credibility in the eyes of voters (Fortunato, 2021; Hjermitslev, 2020; Klüver & Spoon, 2020; Spoon & Klüver, 2017). When parties are deemed to be uncredible at fulfilling their campaign promises, their future electoral prospects suffer (Fortunato, 2021; Klüver & Spoon, 2020) and voters lose faith in the party's ability to represent their interests (Nonnemacher, 2023a). Given that credibility

is based on a governing record, why then should electoral success from a foreign country impact how credible voters rate their own parties? I argue that the election sends a signal back home about how voters in a different context deem the party of the same party family, and that this signal has a diffuse effect on voters at home. If voters in Germany find the Social Democratic Party of Germany credible enough to send them into government, then it stands to reason that voters elsewhere may begin to view their own social democratic parties as more credible if the party links itself to a successful party abroad. Thus, my third hypothesis is as follows:

H3: *If a party links itself to an electoral winner abroad of the same party family, it will be perceived to be more credible at fulfilling its promises.*

Lastly, I argue that a party's perceived competency should be stronger when it links itself to a successful sister party abroad. By competency, I am referring to the perceived ability to do the job of governing and handling the most important issues facing the country. Importantly, perceived competence is conceptually distinct from perceived credibility, and these can tap into different dimensions of a party's brand. Credibility refers to how voters evaluate the party's follow-through on its campaign pledges (see Thomson et al., 2017), whatever those may be, whereas competency relates to whether they think the party is offering the right solutions and can effectively solve problems that are salient at the time. We know that parties are considered associative issue owners on issues in which they are perceived to be the most competent on, such as green parties on environmental issues or the radical right on issues of immigration (Budge, 2015; Gunderson, 2024; Walgrave et al., 2012). Importantly, work has shown that when owned issues in which parties are deemed competent are salient, their electoral prospects increase while their prospects decrease when unowned issues are made salient (Green & Hobolt, 2008; Nonnemacher & Fitzgerald, n.d.; Volpi et al., 2020). Therefore, it is electorally beneficial for a party to appear competent on key issues in the eyes of voters by appearing to offer the right solutions to address the problems voters care about.

Given that parties care about appearing competent, the question turns to how these parties can appear more competent by attaching themselves to electorally successful foreign parties. Importantly, Ezrow et al., (2021) show that elections in other contexts send important signals about what issues are important to voters. If immigration is a salient issue for French voters, it is likely that German voters also care about this issue. Indeed, Juhl & Williams, (2022) find that parties learn from abroad which valence issues to emphasize and make more salient based on the success of party family

members abroad. Because of this, the party that wins an election is likely perceived as the most competent to tackle the issues that are important for that country's voters. A foreign party of the same party family can then take advantage of the perceived competency of their allies on those issues. By appearing alongside them, talking about the issues in the same way, and offering similar solutions, the party can strengthen its perceived competency by being associated with an electorally successful party abroad. Thus, my third hypothesis is as follows.

> **H4:** *If a party links itself to an electoral winner abroad of the same party family, it will be perceived to be more competent to address the most important issues facing the country.*

4.3 Research Design

To test these hypotheses, I develop a novel survey experiment in Norway and Sweden designed to unpack how a party linking itself to an ally party in government impacts the party's own brand. Respondents are recruited using Qualtrics' online panels. I recruit a sample of 2,151 individuals with 1,068 recruited in Norway and 1,083 in Sweden from July to August 2023.[56] In the study, respondents assigned to a treatment group are presented a fictitious newspaper article which describes a high-profile conference between the party and its sister party in Germany's government. I focus on the social democratic, liberal, and green party families as this is the makeup of Germany's traffic light coalition (SPD, FDP, and Greens) at the time and provides useful variation on party level outcomes to explore how the strategy impacts parties in different electoral positions. [57]

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[56] Each sample is quota sampled by age and gender to ensure as representative of a sample as possible to the Norwegian and Swedish cases.

[57] This study has been approved by the IRB at the University of Pittsburgh and has been pre-registered here: **osf.io/f5gpz**

4.3.1 Germany as a Reference Case

Germany serves as a useful reference country for the purposes of this study for a few reasons. First, the German party system has close alignment between its parties and party families, with only one major party for each party family. This close alignment between the major parties and the broader party families I am interested in makes it a useful comparison for Swedish and Norwegian parties as the nature of the party system translates well abroad. Germany also serves as a useful reference country for foreign parties because of its status in European politics as a very high prestige country, especially for Swedish and Norwegian audiences given the close cultural and geopolitical ties between the three countries. It is the most populous country in the EU, and as a result is commonly considered the most important actor and agenda setter in EU politics. It is also the richest country in the EU, which has made them critical actors in dealing with crises that have impacted the Union such as the debt crisis of 2010, the migration crisis of 2015, and the COVID crisis of 2020. For these reasons, Germany serves as a highly visible country throughout the continent that make its parties' useful tools for foreign parties to link themselves.

4.3.2 Sweden and Norway

Sweden and Norway serve as ideal cases for this study since they have very similar party structures as the German party system and each other, are culturally and regionally similar to each other and Germany, and provide important variation in terms of party outcomes which provides leverage to understand a broad array of party families and electoral outcomes within those families. In Sweden, following the recent elections in September of 2022, there are eight parties in the Swedish Riksdag as presented in Table 4.1. Importantly, despite being the largest party in the Riksdag, the Swedish Social Democratic Party (SAP) is in the opposition with the current governing coalition being a minority government between the Moderates, Christian Democrats, and the Liberals with the Sweden Democrats providing support for the government. In Norway, following elections in

September of 2021, there are nine parties in the Storting presented in Table 4.1 with a two-party governing coalition which includes the Labour and Centre Party.[58]

Table 4.1. Party Systems of Germany, Sweden, and Norway

Party Family	Germany	Sweden	Norway
Radical Left	Linke (4.89)	Left (6.75)	Socialist Left (7.64)
			Red (4.72)
Green	**Greens (14.75)***	**Green (5.08)**	**Green (3.94)**
Social Democratic	**SPD (25.74)****	**SAP (30.33)**	**Labour (26.25)****
Center		Centre (6.71)	Centre (13.50)*
Liberal	**FDP (11.46)***	**Liberals (4.61)***	**Liberal (4.61)**
Christian Democratic	CDU/CSU (24.07)	Christian Democrats (5.34)*	Christian Democratic (3.80)
Conservative		Moderates (19.10)**	Conservative (20.35)
Radical Right	AfD (10.34)	Sweden Democrats (20.54)	Progress Party (11.61)

Note: The share of the vote received by each party in the last elections are in parantheses. The parties under study in this design are in bold. A * denotes a member of the governing coalition and ** denotes the party of the Prime Minister.

4.3.3 The Traffic Light Coalition

In this study, I focus on the social democratic, green, and liberal party families as these three families reflect the composition of the governing coalition in Germany at the time of the survey. Parties are generally considered to be office-seeking in that they want to be able to form a government on their own or join a governing coalition with other parties (Downs, 1957).[59] Therefore, the SPD, FDP, and German Greens serve as useful political brands for non-German parties to emulate because they themselves were successful at achieving a key party goal.[60] Work on policy diffusion has shown that parties are most likely to emulate the policies of foreign parties when the foreign party is in

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[58] One important note about this case selection is that Sweden is a member of the EU, joining in 1995, while Norway is not a member of the EU. This difference between the cases does raise the issue that the different results I find between the two cases could be due to EU membership instead of differences between parties. However, while Norway is not a member state, it has a close relationship with the EU which makes it a member of the single market, but not the EU governing institutions.

[59] Gaining access to higher office is only one way in which parties can be classified as an "electoral winner". Parties can also be considered an electoral winner when they make unexpected and sizable gains from the past election, or when they defy expectations and lose less votes than anticipated, preventing other parties from clear majorities. Future work should study the impact of either of these outcomes as focal points for success within the party family.

[60] At the time of the design of this study, the German government was popular in Germany and abroad. Importantly, this changed by the time the survey was implemented as Scholz's government had become very unpopular domestically.

government as it represents an electorally successful strategy (Böhmelt et al., 2017; Ezrow et al., 2021).[61]

Beyond the theoretical importance of using the SPD, FDP, and Greens as the reference parties in my experiment, these party families also provide important variation on key party characteristics that allow me to explore the effectiveness of strategic transnational branding for different types of parties. The social democratic and liberal party families give me interesting insights into the effectiveness of this strategy for mainstream parties while the green party family represents the effectiveness for niche parties. This selection of party families also supplies variation in the size of the parties in Norway and Sweden. The social democratic parties in each country are both the largest party in their respective party system as of the most recent elections, while the liberal and green parties are much smaller in both countries. This also supplies variation within the mainstream categorization on the effectiveness for large and small mainstream parties. Additionally, the Norwegian Greens and Liberals have never entered government, while their counterparts in Sweden have been in governing coalitions, giving me leverage on the challenger-mainstream dimension of party types.

Finally, and most importantly, the electoral outcomes of these party families vary between Sweden and Norway with the exception of both Green parties, which are both in the opposition. For the liberal party family, the Swedish Liberal Party is the smallest member of the Swedish governing coalition, while the Norwegian Liberal Party is equally small, receiving the same vote share, but is in the opposition at the time of the survey.

For the social democratic party family, things get a bit more complicated due to the 2022 Swedish elections. In both cases, the social democratic party is the largest party in the party system and gained votes from the last election; however, in only Norway is the social democratic party in government. In Sweden, due to the nature of the 2022 election as a quasi-two-party election between the left bloc (SAP, Greens, Left, and Centre) and the right bloc (Moderates, Sweden Democrats, Christian Democrats, and Liberals), while the SAP gained votes, the rest of the left bloc lost enough votes such that the right bloc had a slight majority of seats in the Riksdag. As a result, classifying the SAP as an electoral loser in contrast to the successful Norwegian Labour Party comes with the caveat

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[61] Importantly, this definition of electoral success for a party excludes the radical right from this study since the AfD in Germany is not in government, and despite its success in Sweden, the Sweden Democrats are not technically in the government despite its agreement to provide support to the government. While this limits my ability to speak to a party family most associated with the usage of a transnational linkage strategy, examining green parties allow me to speak to how niche parties can use transnational linkages to their advantage.

that it did gain votes relative to the 2018 election and remains the largest party in Sweden, often markers used to evaluate whether a party "won" the election (Gattermann et al., 2021; Hobolt & de Vries, 2015).

However, this caveat does not threaten the utility of this case selection for a few reasons. Importantly, the SAP are in the opposition, which is often an indicator that a party "lost" the election, and represents a decline in their status in Sweden as they were the sole governing party in a minority government in the lead-up to the election. Research has shown that while vote increases and overall size do matter for how we classify parties as winners and losers, a party's overall status and access to the levers of power also matter as well for how voters perceive who won (Plescia, 2019; Stiers et al., 2018) and an individual's satisfaction with the election (see, among others, Blais et al., 2022; Spoon & Kanthak, 2019). From a party-perspective, this also represents a failure for the party to achieve its primary office-seeking goal. Many media outlets, when discussing the results of the election, referred to the SAP as the losers, with the right bloc as the winners. Additionally, the leader of the SAP, Magdalena Anderson, conceded defeat and resigned as Prime Minister immediately after it was clear the left bloc had lost its majority, paving the way for Ulf Kristersson, leader of the Moderates, to form a government. Table 4.2 summarizes the case and party selection.

Table 4.2. Summary of Case and Party Selection

	Study Countries		Reference
	Sweden	Norway	Germany
Social Democratic	Swedish Social Democratic Party	Labour Party	Social Democratic Party (SPD)
Liberal	Liberals	Liberal Party	Free Democratic Party (FDP)
Green	Green Party	Green Party	Alliance 90/Green Party

4.3.4 Experimental Design

Turning now to the experimental design, I employ block randomization based on partisanship to assign subjects to either a treatment or control group. Before assignment, respondents indicate in the pre-treatment questions the party they most identify with to record their partisan attachments. Then, after completing the pre-treatment questionnaire, they are then randomly assigned to one of the three party families. If their response to the partisanship question matches their party family assignment, they are coded as partisans. They are coded as nonpartisan if their response to the partisanship question does not match their party family assignment. Then, after being coded as partisan or nonpartisan, they are block randomized based on this classification into either the treatment or control.[62] This ensures that I have balance between the treatment and control group on partisanship. In total, there are six potential groups that an individual could be randomly assigned. [63]

Then, based on group and family assignment, respondents either receive a transnational branding treatment or a control for their assigned family. Both treatments appear as newspaper articles with a headline that mentions the party leader hosting a high-profile conference. The treatments also include pictures and a short vignette that explains the goal of the conference. In the control treatment, the conference is with party activists and only the party leader is pictured. There is a short vignette that highlights the issues important to the party. In the transnational branding treatment, the conference is with the leader's counterpart in Germany. For those that receive the social democratic treatments, the referenced figure is Chancellor Olaf Scholz. For green treatments, the figure is Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock. For the liberal treatments, the figure is Finance Minister Christian Lindner. The transnational branding treatment includes a picture of the foreign leader as well as an additional paragraph in the vignette where the party leader highlights their conncetion to the German party. Table C1 and C2 in the appendix provide an overview of the study in each country and the distribution of respondents assigned to control and treatment per party family.

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[62] The whole sample is not restricted to just partisans of the social democratic, green, or liberal parties.
[63] Figure C1 in the appendix breaks down treatment assignment procedures.

4.3.5 Survey Outline

Respondents enter the survey and answer a series of pre-treatment questions.[64] This includes standard demographic questions such as age, gender, education, employment status, and social class. The pre-treatment questions also include the standard partisanship battery to determine if the individual is a partisan of the party family they were assigned to for block randomization based on partisanship. Additionally, respondents are asked a series of questions to test their level of political knowledge about different political concepts and from different political contexts. Respondents are asked on a left-right scale from 0 to 10 to place the eight most prominent party families, the parliamentary parties of their domestic polity, and the parliamentary parties of Germany to gauge their knowledge of a context outside their home country.

After completing the pre-treatment battery of questions, respondents are then presented a simple attention check. Failure to answer the attention check removes respondents from the study before the assignment process begins. Respondents who correctly answer the attention check are randomly assigned to either the control or treatment group based on their party family assignment. See Figure C1 for randomization procedures. They are then presented with their assigned treatment.

After they are exposed to their assigned treatment, they are asked a series of post-treatment questions which serve as the outcome variables. To measure perceived viability (H1), respondents are asked to place on a scale from 0 to 100 how likely they think it is that their party will enter government after the next round of elections. For likelihood of voting for the party (H2), I include two questions. The first is a propensity to vote question which asks on a scale from 0 to 100 how likely they are to ever consider voting for the party. The second is a prospective vote choice question which asks respondents to indicate which party they would support if elections were held tomorrow. For H2, I expect the propensity to vote score and the likelihood of picking the party they were assigned to increase for the treated groups. For credibility (H3), they are asked, on a scale from 0 to 100, how many of the party's campaign pledges they expect the party to fulfill if they were to enter government. Lastly, for competency (H4), respondents are asked to rate on a scale from 0 to 100 how competent

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[64] All questions have been translated into the native languages of Sweden and Norway by native speakers. For each language, one translator converted the materials to Swedish or Norwegian and a separate translator then back-translated to English to ensure the accuracy of the translations. Thank you to Jon Polk, Clara Korsås, and Simon Englund for their assistance with the Swedish translations and to Bjørn Hoyland, Ian Delabie, Kristen Risa, and Kathleen Risa for their assistance with the Norwegian translations.

they think the party is to address the most important issues facing the country. The full questionnaire and treatment information is provided in the Appendix.

To test H1-H4, I calculate the average treatment effect (ATE) for treatment assignment on perceived electability, voting intentions, credibility, and competency using OLS regressions. I calculate the ATE on the outcome variable in a pooled sample of all three-party families as well sub-samples broken by party family to examine the effect for specific party families. I also run the models with a pooled sample of both countries as well as sub-samples of each country. Each model is a bivariate model where the sole IV is treatment assignment.[65] For H1, the dependent variable is the electability score assigned to the party each respondent was assigned to which ranges from 0 to 100 with a mean of 46.46 across the entire sample. For H2, the first dependent variable is the propensity to vote for the party each respondent was assigned which ranges from 0 to 100 with a mean of 37.79 in the entire sample. The second dependent variable for H2 is a dichotomous measure which indicates if the voter would vote for the party they were assigned in an upcoming election. In my study, only 11.99 percent of respondents indicated that they would vote for the party they were assigned.[66] For H3, the dependent variable is the credibility rating for the respondent's assigned party and this variable ranges from 0 to 100 with a mean of 40.18. Lastly, to test H4, the dependent variable is competency scores which range from 0 to 100 with a mean of 42.04. Table C4 in the appendix provides these descriptive statistics by country and Table C5 provides these descriptive statistics by party family.

4.4 Results

Figure 4.1 plots the average treatment effects for the pooled samples of party families and countries to display the general effect of transnational linkage for electability, propensity to vote, credibility, and competency. Across all four outcomes, while the ATE is positive, these effects are not statistically significant. There is no distinguishable difference in the perceived electability, propensity to vote, credibility, and competency among those treated with a transnational linkage treatment. These

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[65] Table C3 in the appendix reports balance tests on key demographic variables.
[66] Figure C2 and C3 appendix provide the distribution of prospective vote choice in the sample.

results fail to provide support for any of my hypotheses that strategical transnational branding will improve a party's reputation.
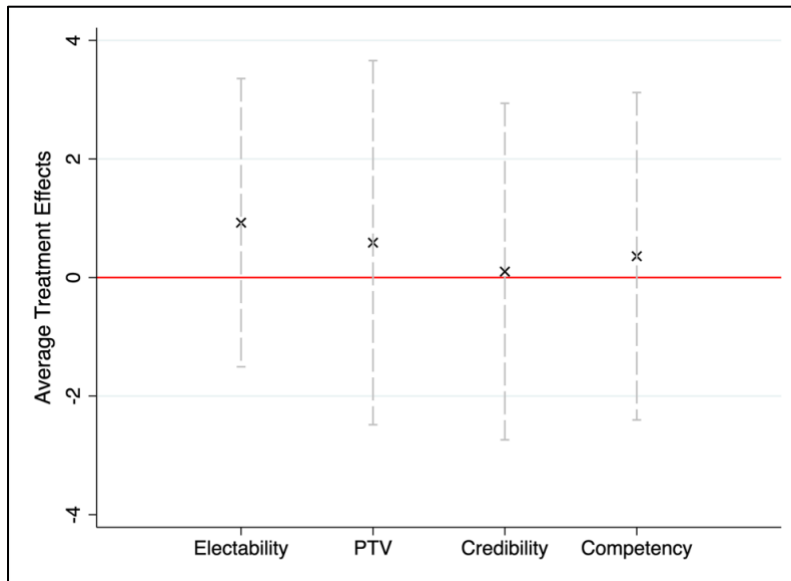
Figure 4.1. Marginal Effects of Strategic Transnational Branding

While the general findings do not support my hypotheses according to Figure 4.1, there may be patterns among countries or party families that are hidden by pooling the sample. Table 4.3 presents the results disaggregated by the party family and country sample to evaluate if the average treatment effect is significant for any country or party family combination. Each column presents the results based on the country sample with the pooled sample being both countries in the same model. Each row is a different party family sample, with the pooled row representing all three tested in the same model.

According to Table 4.3, there is overwhelming evidence that strategic transnational branding does not significantly impact a voter's perceptions of their political parties regardless of country or party family. For the propensity to vote, vote choice, and competency scores, the treatment effect is indistinguishable from zero across all samples. For credibility, the treatment effect is insignificant across all samples except for the Swedish Liberals. While not significant at traditional levels, these results provide weak evidence that strategic transnational branding does improve the perceived credibility of the Swedish Liberal party. Lastly, for electability, while all other samples have no significant treatment effect, the Swedish Liberals again benefit from strategic transnational branding.

Respondents exposed to the ad of the Swedish Liberal Party appearing alongside the German Free Democratic Party gave the Swedish Liberals a 5.38% greater chance of entering government following the next elections than those that just received the control. [67]

There are several potential explanations for the increase in perceived electability for the Swedish Liberals in particular. First, they are a small party which gives them the most room to improve their standing already and they are already in government. Notably, they are currently in a right-leaning governing coalition, but when linked with a party in a left-leaning coalition their perceived electability improves, which could reflect that voters may see them as a party that could govern across the aisle if called upon. Alternatively, unlike Norway where the Norwegian Liberals are the only liberal party in parliament, the Liberals in Sweden compete with the Centre party as the champion of centrist-liberal values (Bolin, 2019). As a result, it is likely that by appearing alongside known liberal leaders abroad, the Swedish Liberals can signal they are the more viable liberal party in Sweden. Generally speaking, this could also reflect that evaluations of valence traits for liberal parties tend to be especially malleable and important for their success (Zur, 2017, 2021).

Finally, we may expect treatment effects to potentially vary based on subgroups of potentially moderating factors; however, I also find no evidence of robust and significant heterogenous treatment effects of strategic transnational branding. For example, I ask respondents to report how frequently they consume news about the politics of countries other than their own to capture how tuned in they are to transnational news. I find no significant interactive effect of transnational news consumption on the effect of my treatments. Additionally, I ask respondents about their attachment to Europe and their country to gauge those who may identify with the EU over their own nationality, which I would expect to strengthen the treatments. I find no evidence of attachments to Europe significantly moderating my treatment conditions. Finally, knowledge may play an important role in moderating the effect of the treatments since it is likely that those who are well informed about politics are likely

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[67] Since I block randomize into treatment or control on partisanship, I have balance on the number of partisans in each of my party family assignments. Unfortunately, due to the randomization procedures, I do not have sufficient power to unpack heterogenous treatment effects by partisanship. Since respondents were assigned a party family before they reported their partisanship, the potential pool of partisans was effectively divided into three by the party family assignment. 307 individuals (14.27 percent) identified as social democratic partisans, but only 113 got assigned to the social democratic family treatments. For the green party family, 33 identified as green partisans, of which 9 were assigned to the green group. For the liberal party family, 37 respondents identified as liberal partisans, of which 10 were assigned to the liberal group. I am able to get some insight by pooling the sample, which gives 132 partisans (6.14 percent), but this is still an underpowered sample. Results are reported in Table C7 and there is no significant difference between partisans and nonpartisans.

to be paying attention to a transnational rally and understand the significance of such an event. However, when looking at knowledge of the domestic party system, Germany's party system, and understanding of what the party families in Europe are, I find no consistent patterns that knowledge significantly moderates treatment effects. In short, the lack of any robust heterogenous treatment effects provides further evidence suggesting that strategic transnational branding is an ineffective electoral strategy.

Table 4.3. ATE of Strategic Transnational Branding

		Pooled	Sweden	Norway
		Electability		
	Pooled	0.925	2.857	-1.039
		(1.191)	(1.766)	(1.37)
	Social Democratic	-0.281	0.288	-0.938
Party Family		(1.936)	(2.276)	(3.021)
Sample	Green	1.396	2.2	0.445
		(2.174)	(2.519)	(3.56)
	Liberal	1.31	**5.381****	-2.713
		(2.147)	**(2.478)**	(2.815)
		Propensity to Vote		
	Pooled	0.588	2.194	-1.064
		(1.506)	(2.184)	(1.519)
	Social Democratic	-0.171	-0.772	0.456
Party Family		(2.423)	(3.886)	(3.131)
Sample	Green	0.891	1.976	-0.497
		(2.157)	(2.13)	(3.319)
	Liberal	0.712	4.744	-3.259
		(2.418)	(2.844)	(2.93)
		Vote Choice		
	Pooled	0.016	-0.079	0.127
		(0.143)	(0.184)	(0.209)
	Social Democratic	0.134	-0.095	0.382
Party Family		(0.185)	(0.205)	(0.277)
Sample	Green	-0.412	-0.272	-0.693
		(0.305)	(0.407)	(0.481)
	Liberal	-0.274	-0.000	-0.6
		(0.3)	(0.359)	(0.486)
		Credibility		
	Pooled	0.1	0.619	-0.444
		(1.392)	(1.749)	(2.028)
	Social Democratic	-0.975	-2.49	0.576
Party Family		(1.477)	(2.116)	(2.276)
Sample	Green	-0.015	0.013	-0.259
		(2.392)	(2.727)	(3.765)
	Liberal	1.121	4.006*	-1.706
		(2.556)	(2.271)	(3.963)
		Competency		
	Pooled	0.359	0.965	-0.276
		(1.354)	(1.788)	(1.87)
	Social Democratic	-1.224	-2.059	-0.366
Party Family		(1.604)	(2.487)	(2.144)
Sample	Green	1.49	1.56	1.167
		(2.469)	(2.719)	(3.899)
	Liberal	0.605	2.955	-1.686
		(2.319)	(2.155)	(3.592)

*Note: ***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.10.* For sample sizes, see Table C6 in the appendix. Models for vote choice are logistic regressions. All models run with clustered random errors by region.

4.5 Viva'22 and Vox

While the above results fail to find support for my hypotheses, one remaining question is whether the findings are an artifact of my study or are representative of general patterns outside my experimental context. To address this concern, I examine the reaction to the Viva'22 rally held in Madrid by the radical-right party Vox in October of 2022. This rally is especially useful as a validation of my study since it featured high-profile appearances from prominent, non-Spanish, figures on the radical-right. Georgia Meloni of Italy, Viktor Orbán of Hungary, and Donald Trump of the United States all provided recorded video-messages in which they celebrated Vox and endorsed the path that Vox was championing for a new conservative Spain. [68] Notably, Meloni and Orbán both won their respective elections that year, with Meloni becoming the Italian Prime Minister following elections in September and Orbán winning re-election for a fourth term in April.[69] As a result, the events of the rally closely mirror the experimental treatments where a domestic party, in this case Vox, linked itself to successful figures from the party family.

Fortunately, this event was held during fieldwork for the Center of Sociological Investigations' (CIS) monthly barometer of public opinion in Spain. Every month, CIS conducts a short survey of Spaniards to capture public opinion about a variety of issues, including vote choice and partisan evaluations (see also Turnbull-Dugarte & Rama, 2022). In October of 2022, their survey ran from October 3rd to October 10th, with the Viva'22 rally being held on October 8th and 9th. The speeches from Meloni, Orbán, and Trump occurred on October 9th.[70] As a result, it is possible to use an unexpected-event-in-the-field analysis leveraging the timing of the Viva'22 rally during the CIS's fieldwork as a quasi-experiment and external validation of my survey experiment (Muñoz et al., 2020).[71]

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[68] See https://europeanconservative.com/articles/news/vox-viva-22-rally-in-madrid/?print-posts=print

[69] While Trump was an electoral loser and potential drag on Vox support (see Turnbull-Dugarte & Rama 2020), Vox often mentions him on its Twitter and in October 2022 his party was polling well in the lead-up to the 2022 Midterm elections in the United States.

[70] Figure C4 in the appendix presents data from Google Trends on searches for Trump, Meloni, and Vox in the first two weeks of October. For each, we see a clear uptick in searches on October 9th, suggesting that the rally attracted the attention of mainstream audiences across Spain.

[71] While the rally is not itself an "unexpected" event, the presence of the prominent foreign leaders was not advertised in advance of the rally beginning which was originally advertised as a standard Vox rally celebrating its history. Meloni's appearance was announced on October 8th while Trump's and Orbán's was announced on the morning of October 9th as surprise guests. Additionally, the content of their speeches was not known until after the videos were released.

4.5.1 Design

To evaluate the external validity of my survey experiment in the October 2022 battery of the CIS barometer, I first code if respondents were surveyed before October 9th when the foreign leaders were featured at the rally. Unfortunately, the timing of the CIS fieldwork is not evenly distributed before and after the rally, as they only collected responses for one day after the rally concluded on the ninth. In total, of the 3,713 total respondents, 92 percent (3,419) were surveyed prior to October 9th and only 8 percent (294) were surveyed on October 10th. No responses were collected on October 9th.

To address this problem, I also calculate the number of days between when the respondent was surveyed and the rally to account for how early individuals were surveyed. Then, I restrict my sample to only those surveyed immediately before the rally (the seventh and eighth) and those afterwards (the tenth). Under this restricted sample of 642 respondents, 45.79 percent (294) were interviewed after the rally and 54.21 percent (348) were interviewed before the rally.[72]

I focus on two outcomes in assessing the effect of the rally and the validity of my survey experiment. First, in line with my analysis for H2, I use a question in the CIS module which asks respondents which party they would vote for in a subsequent general election. Those who report they would support Vox in the next general election are coded as future Vox voters. In the entire sample, 8.78 percent of respondents are future Vox voters, and this increases slightly to 9.29 in the restricted sample of 642 individuals. This outcome is the most directly comparable outcome between my study and the CIS as I collect responses on prospective vote choices in my survey experiment. Unfortunately, the CIS does not ask any additional questions that are directly comparable to my other outcomes on electability, credibility, competency, or propensity to vote; however, they do ask respondents to rate party leaders on a scale from one to ten with lower values representing unfavorable opinions. While not an outcome in my study, this measure serves as a useful proxy for how respondents are shifting their evaluations of the party and its leader. For the Vox leader, Santiago

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Furthermore, CIS's fieldwork was exogenous to the rally as this is a regularly scheduled monthly survey that was not fielded in anticipation of the rally.

[72] This is a fuzzy cutoff as the rally started in earnest on October 8th. However, the surprise appearances of the transnational figures were all featured on the 9th. As a robustness check, I also restrict the sample with a stricter cutoff of the treated variable indicating if respondents were surveyed on the seventh or tenth. Under this restriction of 569 respondents, 51 percent (294) were sampled on the 10th and 49 percent (275) were surveyed on the 7th. The results are robust to this specification and reported in Table C10.

Abascal, the measure ranges from one to ten with a mean score of 2.613.[73] Following my hypotheses, we should expect the rally to have a positive effect on the likelihood of voting for Vox in the next round of elections and to make Abascal more popular. To validate my experiment, we would expect no effect on voting behavior or ratings of Abascal of the rally.

Before running any models, I run a series of balance tests to ensure that the respondents are equally distributed across the sample and evaluate the assumption that respondents were "treated" as-if-randomly. Specifically, I test for balance on age, gender, whether the individual voted for Vox in the November 2019 elections, and the ideology of the individual. Full results of the balance tests are reported in the appendix in Table C8. For the whole sample of 3,713 respondents, the post-rally sample was balanced on these four covariates with the pre-rally sample. There is no significant difference in the samples between those interviewed before the rally and afterwards in the whole sample. For the restricted sample of 642 individuals, there is a slight imbalance in favor of younger and female respondents. Prior Vox supporters and the ideology of the sample remain balanced.

4.5.2 Results

To estimate the effect of being surveyed after the Viva'22 rally, I use a difference-in-means test between the pre and post rally respondents.[74] Table 4.4 reports the results for supporting Vox in the next general election for both the whole sample and the restricted sample. Table 4.5 reports the results for the favorability of Vox leader, Santiago Abascal, for both the whole sample and the restricted sample. The first model for each sample is a multivariate model which controls for the survey timing, age, and gender. The second model adds being a Vox voter and ideology as controls for robustness. Summary statistics for all variables are available in Table C9 in the appendix.

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[73] 57.66 percent of individuals reported the minimum score of 1.
[74] Since I cannot guarantee that all respondents were exposed to the rally, these effects are the "Intent-to-Treat" (ITT) effects.

Table 4.4. ATE of Strategic Transnational Branding on Vox Support

	Whole Sample		Restricted Sample	
Post-Rally	**-0.052**	**-0.403**	**-0.881**	**-0.952**
	(0.331)	**(0.468)**	**(1.382)**	**(2.092)**
Survey Timing	-0.003	0.011	0.227	0.224
	(0.037)	(0.054)	(0.488)	(0.708)
Age	-0.022***	-0.024**	-0.018*	-0.037**
	(0.004)	(0.007)	(0.01)	(0.017)
Female	-0.0653***	-0.618**	-0.92**	-1.092*
	(0.163)	(0.229)	(0.353)	(0.623)
Vox Voter		3.71***		3.842***
		(0.246)		(0.502)
Ideology		0.43***		0.441***
		(0.069)		(0.121)
Constant	-1.002**	-4.431***	-0.53	-3.436**
	(0.299)	(0.481)	(1.038)	(1.651)
N	2,630	2,239	463	386

Note: *$***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.10$*. Models are logistic regressions. All models run with clustered random errors by region.

Table 4.5. ATE of Strategic Transnational Branding on Abascal Ratings

	Whole Sample		Restricted Sample	
Post-Rally	**-0.236**	**-0.21**	**-2.355***	**-1.632***
	(0.252)	**(0.167)**	**(1.202)**	**(0.889)**
Survey Timing	0.032	0.028	0.703*	0.473
	(0.038)	(0.026)	(0.408)	(0.299)
Age	-0.002	-0.001	0.000	-0.004
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Female	-0.298***	-0.105*	-0.616**	-0.368**
	(0.079)	(0.062)	(0.187)	(0.17)
Vox Voter		3.189***		2.55***
		(0.145)		(0.357)
Ideology		0.52***		0.552***
		(0.022)		(0.058)
Constant	3.006***	0.124	4.493***	1.295**
	(0.316)	(0.192)	(0.808)	(0.585)
N	3,552	2,614	612	444

Note: *$***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.10$*. All models run with clustered random errors by region.

Across all models and both samples, the results validate the findings of my survey experiment. According to Table 4.4, respondents surveyed after the Viva'22 rally were no more likely to support Vox in the next general election than those interviewed before the rally. This validates the findings

from my survey experiment in Norway and Sweden for H2. These transnational events do not appear to make voters more willing to support the hosting party. Turning to the evaluation of Vox's political brand, respondents surveyed after the rally did not report more favorable views of Abascal than those surveyed before the rally according to Table 4.5. In the restricted sample of those surveyed immediately before and after the rally, there appears to be a negative effect of the rally on evaluations of Abascal, however this is only significant at 90 percent confidence levels. In general, the results from Table 4.5 validate the findings from my survey experiment in Norway and Sweden that these transnational events have no distinguishable effect on improving the reputation and brand of the host party. [75]

4.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, this study casts doubt on the electoral logic behind engaging in strategic transnational branding. Existing work on party behavior tells us that parties make strategic choices for electoral purposes, with the goal to maximize their appeal and ultimately vote totals (Downs, 1957). However, the results from this survey experiment find no robust evidence that these transnational events have the expected effect on voters. Voters exposed to an instance of the party linking itself with a prominent and successful ally abroad are no more willing to view the party as electable, credible, or competent and are no more willing to vote for the party than those that were just exposed to a more traditional style campaign event. These findings are replicated using Viva'22 as an "unexpected" event and the monthly barometer from the CIS in Spain, highlighting that the findings from Norway and Sweden are not only a result of limitations within its design or case selection. The clear conclusion is that strategic transnational branding is not an effective strategy, at least in the ways we would expect it to be.

These null results still have important implications for our understandings of voters and parties in an inter-connected political environment where information about electoral politics abroad is more

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[75] Table C11 in the appendix reports conditional ITTs on whether the individual is a Vox partisan to validate the findings in Table C7 from the survey experiment. There is no significant interaction effect, providing additional evidence that partisanship does not significantly moderate the effect of transnational rallies.

accessible than ever. On the voter side, these results suggest that voters are not paying attention to everything that parties are doing, and even if they are paying attention, voters are choosing to update based on what they deem important. In multi-level political spaces where there are a variety of potential signals being sent to voters about their parties, this conclusion casts some doubt that voters care about transnational politics. Instead, these findings suggest that voters care much more deeply about their own national polity and what the parties are doing within that polity. On the party side, this study suggests that strategic transnational branding as currently utilized by parties, if the goal is to attract voters, is not an effective use of party resources and parties need to figure out new ways to leverage the success of their allies abroad. As other work has found, transnational political symbols do influence how voters view their parties (Nonnemacher, n.d., 2024), but these results suggest, at the very least, that parties have not yet figured out an effective way to leverage their transnational brands to their benefit.

Importantly, this work introduces a puzzle about why these events do not appear to change how voters view their parties. First and foremost, it's possible that these events simply do not matter. It is perhaps unsurprising that political rallies that feature potentially unknown figures to the public are ineffective at improving a party's reputation. Alternatively, it is still possible that voters are paying attention (Nonnemacher, n.d., 2024) but do not take these events seriously enough to update their evaluations of the party. Some work on voter perceptions of parties does suggest that voters are capable of distinguishing between performative acts and credible changes (Fernandez-Vazquez, 2019). However, this does not settle the underlying puzzle these findings present which is that if voters are not responding, why are parties hosting and attending these transnational events at all. It is possible that these transnational events and the strategy of transnational linkage is not an electoral strategy meant for voters but is instead intended as a strategy motivated by intra-party politics. We know that parties learn from abroad when making strategic decisions (Ezrow et al., 2021), and that parties have electoral, policy, and governing incentives to remain united (Greene & Haber, 2015). As a result, one additional explanation behind the lack of findings for voters is that parties are hosting these transnational events to settle intra-party debates and for leaders to bolster their own credibility among party members, and any improvement to their brand from voters is a bonus. Future work is necessary to test these explanations and address the puzzle behind the increasing frequency of the transnational connections that parties are making and the seeming ineffectiveness of them.

Alongside future work to address the theoretical reasons behind the non-findings presented in this study, additional research should also aim to address some of the limitations of the current

experiment that could be hiding important patterns crucial to understanding the electoral impact of strategic transnational branding. First, recruiting a larger sample size would alleviate potential concerns that the study is underpowered to detect significant effects. This is especially a limitation in my study's ability to detect significant differences between partisans and non-partisans. It is possible that partisans respond to transnational events in meaningfully different ways than non-partisans that my study cannot detect (see also Fernandez-Vazquez & Theodoridis, 2020), which would suggest parties may engage in this behavior for partisan activists. Targeted future work on the effect for partisans is necessary to unpack how parties may use these events to excite partisans over appealing to a general electorate. Second, audio-visual treatments such as fictitious news broadcasts as opposed to just visual newspaper articles may be stronger treatments that would produce stronger treatment effects. Lastly, future implementations of this survey should wait until immediately after elections in the reference country as this would reduce the amount of time for the reference party to potentially lose its post-election appeal. One potential consequence of the timing of my study is that the unpopularity of Germany's governing coalition by July 2023 made those parties ineffective transnational allies for Swedish and Norwegian parties to link themselves too. Addressing these limitations and further study to unpack the electoral effects of a party embracing its allies is crucial for understanding voters and parties in increasingly interconnected political context.

5.0 Conclusion

In this dissertation, I explore how parties can leverage their transnational associations to improve their political brand at home. This is an increasingly relevant strategy for parties as it has become much easier than ever before for voters to learn about, and form opinions about, foreign political actors. Despite a robust literature on electoral spillovers from foreign elections on domestic attitudes and behaviors (see Malet & Walter, 2023; Minkus et al., 2019; Turnbull-Dugarte & Rama, 2022) and on the diffusion of policies from one context to the next due to parties learning from abroad (see Böhmelt et al., 2016, 2017; Juhl & Williams, 2022), this dissertation serves as a next step in understanding the consequences of relevant transnational signals from abroad on how voters evaluate parties.

In the first chapter, I examine how a party's proximity to the associated position associated with its party family impacts how voters perceive the left-right positions of the party. Using Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) data with Comparative Manifesto Project (CMP), I find that the closer the party is to its party family's average ideological position, the more accurate voters are about the party's positions. Additionally, I find that voters are more accurate when the party embraces the party family's positions from one election to the next. I replicate these results using the German Longitudinal Election Study (GLES), finding with panel data that the accuracy of an individual's perceptions responds to changes in a party's proximity to its party family, with parties that are closer and becoming closer being are more accurately perceived by voters.

Then, in the second chapter, I unpack how the strength of the party family label influences the electoral appeal of its member parties. Specifically, I argue that the party family's electoral performance abroad can improve the party's standing with voters and make them more willing to consider supporting the party in the future. This can be attributed to either a legitimization effect, where the success of the family abroad creates a permission structure for individuals to support the party in the future, or a bandwagon effect, where an individual's expressive desires to be a winner pushes them to support parties that appear to have momentum. Using data from the European Election Study (EES) and the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES), I find that the stronger a party family performs abroad, the domestic member party receives higher propensity to vote scores from voters. This effect is strongest for those moderately aligned with the party, then decreases as the voter

becomes increasingly opposed to the party's positions. Eventually, voters retaliate, and become less willing to support parties that have successful families abroad. This pattern in the findings lends support to a bandwagon effect, where voters are willing to sacrifice their sincere preferences to benefit from the expressive desire to identify with the winning side.

Finally, in the third paper, I probe how voters respond to a party actively taking advantage of its party family associations, especially those of successful allies. I argue that instances of "strategic transnational branding" where a party associates itself with a successful foreign ally should strengthen its domestic political brand by helping the party appear more electable, credible, and competent and ultimately improve its electoral standing with voters. Using a survey experiment of 2,151 individuals in Norway and Sweden in which I manipulate exposure to an article about their social democratic, green, or liberal party linking itself to its successful counterpart in Germany's governing coalition, I fail to find any significant effect of strategic transnational branding on any aspect of a party's brand. In a second step, I validate these findings by leveraging the surprise appearances of Meloni, Orbán, and Trump at a radical right rally in Madrid, Spain (Viva'22) in October 2022 and the timing of a monthly CIS barometer of public opinion as an "unexpected" event-in-the-field. As with my experiment, Viva'22 had no significant impact on perceptions of the host party, Vox, or on respondents' willingness to support the party.

5.1 Implications

Through these studies, this project makes important contributions to our understanding of voters and parties in increasingly interconnected and transnational political environments. First, my findings establish that the party family that a party is associated with, and considered a member of, plays an important role in shaping how voters evaluate the party. As I found in chapter two, this association can significantly shape how accurately voters perceive the ideological position of the party, and as I demonstrated in chapter three, a party's electoral fortune can be shaped by the performance of its allies abroad. The party family label we assign to parties matters. Beyond the immediate consequences for parties, this crucial finding establishes that voters are paying attention to, and responding to, transnational political forces. While voters are often considered to be overwhelmingly focused on national politics (see Reif & Schmitt, 1980) or local conditions (see Fitzgerald, 2018), the

role of the party family label in shaping voter perceptions of a party's positions and their propensity to support the party establishes that voters are paying attention to, and factor in, the politics of abroad. This calls for renewed work understanding how voters use transnational signals to evaluate parties and weigh the potential signals from local, national, and transnational forces in the decision-making and opinion formation process.

Importantly, the findings from chapters two and three that transnational signals matter has important implications for evaluating party behavior. Since the party family association assigned to parties can be a beneficial party family label for parties hoping to raise their level of support or clarify their positions, this suggests that parties can strategically leverage these associations to their benefit. Transnational associations can play a crucial role in helping parties bolster their domestic political brands. Embracing the party family label can make a parties' brand more identifiable and favorable. However, as the findings in chapter four establish, parties need to ensure that their attempts to leverage the power of the party family are successful. It is not clear, based on my survey experiment and the ineffective Viva'22 rally in Madrid, that parties have successfully figured out how to properly associate themselves with their allies and party family members from abroad in a meaningful way for voters. These instances of "strategic transnational branding", as currently implemented, do not significantly move the needle for a voters' perceived electability, credibility to fulfill campaign promises, and competency to effectively address the most important issues nor do they make voters more willing to support the party in subsequent elections. As a result, parties may need to re-evaluate how they link themselves with foreign allies and the kinds of appeals they make when leveraging the party family label.

Taken all together, the findings discussed in this dissertation present a new puzzle of party behavior that calls into question existing theories behind what motivates party behavior. If the promise of strategic transnational branding strengthening a party's brand is not effectively realized, then why do parties continue to engage in transnational linkages with foreign parties? One answer is that parties are wasting their time and resources, as the results from my experiment would suggest, since it is not clear if voters are paying attention, and if they are, they are dismissing a party's attempts to link itself with an ally abroad as merely performative. However, parties are generally considered to be instrumental and do not likely implement new strategies, such as appearing alongside allies abroad, without deciding that doing so would effectively help the party achieve some of its goals (Dalton & McAllister, 2015; Harmel & Janda, 1994; Tavits, 2007). Therefore, the question now turns to figuring out which goals parties are attempting to achieve by embracing allies abroad.

First, strategic transnational branding events such as those used in my experiment or exemplified by Viva'22 may not be targeted at a general electorate. Instead, these events may be intended for a narrow audience of party activists and partisans. It is possible that while a general electorate may not be paying attention to a party's attempts to associate itself with successful allies and take advantage of the power of belonging to a strong party family label, the story may be different for partisans and party activists. Since these groups likely follow what the party does more closely and may be more plugged in to key figures from the broader political movement associated with the party, they may be more susceptible to the influence of these transnational events in which the party is embracing the broader movement (Fernandez-Vazquez & Theodoridis, 2020). Therefore, discounting strategic transnational branding as an electoral strategy given my findings may be premature, as it may be the case that my experiment does not capture the proper electoral audience.

Additionally, it may also be a mistake to assume that parties are aiming to strengthen their political brand by engaging in transnational linkage events. It is possible that while parties welcome any positive associations in the eyes of voters from these events, the goal instead may be to influence intra-party-political debates that may be dividing parties. As Petry's attendance at the radical right summit in 2017 highlights, these events may be meant to use transnational allies, such as Le Pen and Wilders, as endorsements for a specific faction's vision for the future of the party. While it remains unclear how closely voters are paying attention to specific parties and figures from abroad, the literature on policy diffusion has established that party members and those with internal influence over the direction of the party are learning from what is happening abroad, especially from their allies who have achieved success, and adopting similar strategies (Böhmelt et al., 2016, 2017; Ezrow et al., 2021; Juhl & Williams, 2022). As a result, prominent figures from the party family may be effective endorsements that can resolve internal debates about the future of the party and bolster intra-party unity.

5.2 Future Work

This dissertation serves as an important steppingstone for understanding parties and voters in transnational political environments where leaders and figures from different contexts are increasingly connected. However, future work is still necessary to fully understand transnational branding and the

motivations behind its use. First, future work is needed to address the limitations with the current version of the survey experiment in chapter four. The lack of power to properly identify any conditional effect for partisans and nonpartisans calls for future studies with larger samples intentionally designed to uncover potential heterogenous treatment effects for partisans. Additionally, future experiments should expand the pool of potential outcomes to evaluate the effects, if any, of strategic transnational rallies including perceived unity of the party. Future experiments should also consider the timing of the data collection to better align with the immediate aftermath of elections to alleviate concerns from this iteration that null findings are driven by the political context of the German coalition being at odds with the image of successful parties. Addressing these limitations in the survey experiment will allow for a better understanding of the electoral consequences of strategic transnational branding and if there truly is no electoral effect or if the effect is narrower in scope than I expected.

As discussed above, future work should also proceed without the assumption that parties are unity actors (see Meyer, 2012) that are primarily driven by vote-seeking motivations (Strøm, 1990). First, we need more data on the frequency of transnational events to properly identify which factors shape the organization of these events. By systematically collecting data on the frequency of these events, we can better understand when these events are held, who the host party appears alongside, and what issues are discussed to gain a better sense for what the party's goal may be in engaging in strategic transnational branding. Then, additional data examining speeches given at these events, and the transcripts from party conferences where parties organize these events and host transnational allies behind the scenes, can provide further insight into who parties may be targeting with these rallies. With this data examining how the party talks about foreign leaders and associated issues as well as the motivations behind the decision to organize a rally or not, we can gain a better insight into how parties approach these events. By unpacking the black box of a party's motivations when engaging in strategic transnational linkages, we can gain a better appreciation for what motivates parties by engaging in a more targeted analysis of the effectiveness of these strategic choices.

Aside from future work addressing the puzzle of party behavior introduced from the findings in this project, further work on voters is also necessary to adequately understand how the party family label, and other transnational associations, influences voters' decision making. Future studies into the multi-dimensionality of party positions are necessary to determine if the party family label matters in different ways on different issues and for different types of parties. While my general findings suggest divergence from the party family matters for all parties, it is possible that issue-oriented niche parties

may not benefit on the left-right dimension as much as they would on their associated issue dimensions. Additionally, my second paper examines the individual-level consequences of the party family's performance abroad, but more work is needed at the aggregate level to properly identify how electoral results from abroad spread across borders and influence the electoral fate of member parties. I focus on EP elections as this accounts for the differing timing of elections between countries, but future work is necessary to model both the geography and timing of electoral diffusion between national elections. By addressing these questions in future work, alongside the findings in this dissertation which serve as a crucial foundation, we gain a better understanding of the linkage between voters and parties in increasingly transnational contexts where the politics of one country are no longer isolated to the confines of that country's borders.

Appendix A : Chapter 2 Additional Material

Table A1. Summary Statistics of Whole Sample

Variable	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Accuracy Gap	418,239	2.087	1.486	0.003	8.529
Party Family Divergence	527,462	0.621	0.521	0.001	5.005
Change in Party Family Divergence	408,699	-0.043	0.617	-2.924	3.777
Female	527,674	0.507	0.499	0	1
Age	526,802	48.097	17.25	16	106
Education	515,991	2.192	1.163	0	4
Individual RILE	473,721	5.088	2.284	0	10
Political Info	302,086	0.668	0.3	0	1
Voter Distance	472,791	2.026	1.526	0.003	8.529
Partisanship	334,034	0.145	0.352	0	1
Party Size	524,380	14.956	12.322	0.591	46.396
Ideological Shift	485,715	0.54	0.569	0	6.201
Radicalism	527,462	0.663	0.495	0.001	2.842
Party Age	503,038	55.78	41.655	0	181
District Magnitude	528,484	25.654	48.593	1	150
Party Family Position Shift	409,721	0.264	0.2	0.001	1.168

Table A2. Summary Statistics of Effective Sample

Variable	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Accuracy Gap	128,294	2.127	1.517	0.005	8.529
Party Family Divergence	128,294	0.653	0.554	0.001	5.005
Change in Party Family Divergence	128,294	0.005	0.65	-2.924	3.777
Female	128,294	0.433	0.495	0	1
Age	128,294	50.23	16.617	16	99
Education	128,294	2.491	1.142	0	4
Individual RILE	128,294	5.044	2.432	0	10
Political Info	128,294	0.695	0.288	0	1
Voter Distance	128,294	2.199	1.55	0.005	8.529
Partisanship	128,294	0.165	0.371	0	1
Party Size	128,294	16.934	12.161	1.765	46.396
Ideological Shift	128,294	0.588	0.638	0	6.201
Radicalism	128,294	0.692	0.512	0.001	2.842
Party Age	128,294	59.335	41.004	3	181
District Magnitude	128,294	25.009	47.74	1	150
Party Family Position Shift	128,294	0.245	0.187	0.001	1.115

Table A3. Perceived and Actual Party Family Positions

	Perceived	Actual	Difference
Radical Left	2.07	3.72	1.65
Green	3.28	4.08	0.80
Social Democratic	4.03	4.26	0.23
Center	5.27	4.46	0.81
Liberal	5.68	5.02	0.66
Christian Democratic	6.37	5.29	1.08
Conservative	7.35	5.17	2.18
Radical Right	7.84	5.69	2.15

Note: Average perceived position is calculated from the average of all reported perceptions for that party family from 1996 to 2015. Average actual position is calculated from the average of all party manifesto RILE scores in that party family from 1996 to 2015. Difference is the absolute value of the difference between the two. Source: Nonnemacher (2023)

Table A4. Estimated Effect of Actual Divergence on Perceived Divergence

DV: Perceived Party Family Divergence	Model 1
Individual-Level	
Female	0.09***
	(0.006)
Age	0.003***
	(0.000)
Education	-0.026***
	(0.003)
Individual RILE	-0.031***
	(0.001)
Political Information	-0.059***
	(0.012)
Individual-Party Level	
Voter Distance	0.156***
	(0.002)
Partisanship	0.064***
	(0.009)
Party-Election Level	
Party Family Divergence	**0.091***
	(0.01)
Party Size	-0.001
	(0.002)
Ideological Shift	0.000
	(0.01)
Weighted Party Position	0.116**
	(0.04)
Radicalism	0.016
	(0.012)
Party Age	0.005**
	(0.002)
Country-Election-Leve	
District Magnitude	-0.186***
	(0.023)
Party Family Fixed Effects	
Christian Democracy	0.277
	(0.34)
Conservative	0.655*
	(0.338)
Green	0.04
	(0.387)
Liberal	-0.105
	(0.353)
Radical Left	0.52
	(0.339)
Radical Right	1.419***
	(0.356)
Social Democracy	-0.433
	(0.331)
Random Effects	
Party (n=79)	0.238
Constant	1.49***
	(0.408)
N	151,574
Log Likelihood	-244549.63
Year FE	Yes
Country FE	Yes

Table A5. Estimated Effect of Perceived Divergence on Misperception

	Model 1
Individual-Level	
Female	0.012***
	(0.003)
Age	0.000***
	(0.000)
Education	-0.008***
	(0.001)
Individual RILE	-0.001**
	(0.001)
Political Information	-0.017**
	(0.006)
Individual-Party Leve	
Voter Distance	0.017***
	(0.001)
Partisanship	-0.001
	(0.004)
Party-Election Level	
Perceived Party Family Divergence	**0.877***
	(0.001)
Party Family Divergence	0.161***
	(0.005)
Party Size	0.031***
	(0.001)
Ideological Shift	0.109***
	(0.005)
Weighted Party Position	-0.51***
	(0.02)
Degree of Radicalism	-0.431***
	(0.006)
Party Age	0.003*
	(0.002)
Country-Election-Level	
District Magnitude	-0.162***
	(0.012)
Party Family Fixed Effects (Reference: Center)	
Christian Democracy	0.517*
	(0.302)
Conservative	0.675**
	(0.3)
Green	0.591*
	(0.344)
Liberal	0.288
	(0.314)
Radical Left	0.793**
	(0.302)
Radical Right	0.726**
	(0.317)
Social Democracy	0.061
	(0.295)
Constant	0.074
	(0.34)
N	151,574
Log Likelihood	-139128.23
Party Random Effects	0.189
Year FE	Yes
Country FE	Yes
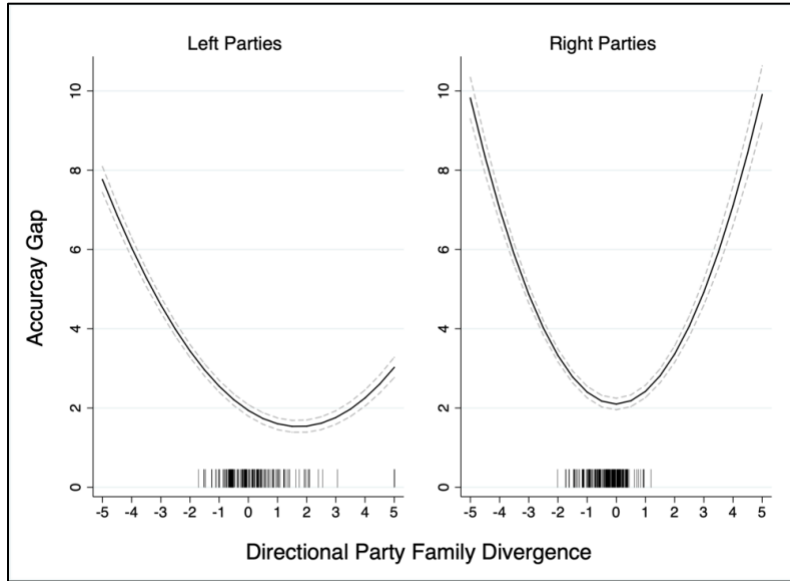
Figure A1. Estimated Perception Accuracy Gap by Directional Party Family Divergence

Note: Estimates based on Table A6

Table A6. Estimated Effect of Relative Divergence on Perception Accuracy

DV: Perceived Party Family Divergence	Model 1
Individual-Level	
Female	0.091***
	(0.006)
Age	0.003***
	(0.000)
Education	-0.03***
	(0.003)
Individual RILE	-0.029***
	(0.001)
Political Information	-0.065***
	(0.012)
Individual-Party Level	
Voter Distance	0.154***
	(0.002)
Partisanship	0.055***
	(0.009)
Party-Election Level	
Relative Party Family Divergence Squared	**0.271***
	(0.012)
Left Party	-0.172***
	(0.017)
Relative Party Family Divergence Squared* Left	**-0.146***
	(0.013)
Party Size	-0.02***
	(0.003)
Ideological Shift	0.064***
	(0.011)
Weighted Party Position	0.64***
	(0.011)
Radicalism	-0.356***
	(0.013)
Party Age	0.009**
	(0.003)
Country-Election-Level	
District Magnitude	-0.344***
	(0.023)
Party Family Fixed Effects	
Christian Democracy	0.684
	(0.443)
Conservative	1.063**
	(0.44)
Green	0.527
	(0.504)
Liberal	0.11
	(0.46)
Radical Left	1.16**
	(0.442)
Radical Right	1.845***
	(0.464)
Social Democracy	-0.291
	(0.431)
Random Effects	
Party (n=79)	0.405
Constant	1.406**
	(0.529)
N	151,574
Log Likelihood	-245221.85
Year FE	Yes
Country FE	Yes

Table A7. Summary Statistics of GLES Panel

Variable	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Misperception	164,145	1.85	1.411	0.013	7.096
Party Family Divergence	272,898	0.269	0.229	0.008	0.78
Change in Party Family Divergence	267,924	-0.139	0.461	-2.576	0.519
Prior Party Family Divergence	267,924	0.401	0.426	0.008	2.778
Party Family Shift	267,924	0.206	0.164	0.008	0.601
Misperception Lag	60,603	1.789	1.389	0.02	7.096
Gender	277,860	0.519	0.5	0	1
Age	234,246	46.136	14.66	16	98
Size	272,898	15.894	9.015	4.7	41.5
Individual RILE	175,812	4.512	2.052	0	10
Voter-Party Distance	171,422	1.786	1.403	0.013	7.095
Party Shift	267,924	0.368	0.456	0.001	2.788
Voter for Party	153,624	0.108	0.311	0	1

Table A8. Estimated Effect of Perceived Party Family Divergence (GLES)

	Model 1	Model 2
Individual-Party Level		
Perceived Party Family Divergence	**0.963*****	
	(0.002)	
Change in Party Family Perceived Divergence		**0.951*****
		(0.002)
Misperception Lag (t-1)	-0.201***	0.957***
	(0.01)	(0.002)
Perceived Party Family Divergence Lag (t-1)	0.204***	
	(0.01)	
Voter Distance	-0.004**	0.002
	(0.002)	(0.002)
Voter	0.029***	0.015**
	(0.006)	(0.007)
Party-Election Level		
Party Size	0.008***	0.011***
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Ideological Shift	0.304***	0.916***
	(0.047)	(0.062)
Party Family Shift		0.91***
		(0.055)
Governing Status	0.161***	0.233***
	(0.015)	(0.018)
Individual Level		
Female	0.025***	0.015**
	(0.005)	(0.005)
Age	-0.001**	-0.006**
	(0.000)	(0.000)
Individual RILE	0.014***	0.011***
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Constant	-0.796***	-1.119***
	(0.04)	(0.05)
N	16,732	16,732
Log Likelihood	-1998.011	-4199.675
Individual Random Effects	0.008	0.003
Party FE	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y

Table A9. Estimated Effect on Perceived Divergence (GLES)

	Model 1	Model 2
Party-Election Level		
Party Family Divergence	**0.385****	
	(0.189)	
Change in Party Family Divergence		**0.184****
		(0.082)
Party Family Divergence Lag (t-1)	-0.045	
	(0.105)	
Party Size	0.01**	0.006
	(0.005)	(0.004)
Ideological Shift	-0.05	0.141
	(0.208)	(0.237)
Party Family Shift		0.39**
		(0.188)
Governing Status	0.067	0.065
	(0.067)	(0.064)
Individual Level		
Female	0.014	0.014
	(0.021)	(0.021)
Age	0.000	0.000
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Individual RILE	0.006	0.006
	(0.005)	(0.005)
Individual-Party Level		
Perceived Divergence Lag (t-1)	0.368***	0.367***
	(0.007)	(0.007)
Voter Distance	0.167***	0.167***
	(0.007)	(0.007)
Voter	-0.382***	-0.383***
	(0.023)	(0.023)
Constant	1.443***	1.573***
	(0.311)	(0.225)
N	16,732	16,732
Log Likelihood	-24684.404	-24683.263
Individual Random Effects	0.131	0.131
Party FE	Y	Y
Year FE	Y	Y

Appendix B : Chapter 3 Additional Material

Appendix B.1 Supplemental Tables & Figures

Table B1. PTV Summary Statistics by Party Family

Party Family	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Radical Left	72,844	3.04	3.12	0	10
Green	57,032	3.81	3.19	0	10
Social Democrat	115,959	4.06	3.48	0	10
Center	19,264	3.48	2.98	0	10
Liberal	113,727	3.5	3.23	0	10
Conservative	99,955	3.51	3.4	0	10
Christian Democrat	62,466	3.62	3.26	0	10
Radical Right	76,305	2.7	3.21	0	10

Table B2. Summary Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Propensity to Vote	802,024	3.275	3.273	0	10
Party Family Strength Abroad	695,750	0.11	0.07	0.001	26.42
Change in Party Family Strength	479,059	-0.002	0.034	-0.1195	0.1366
Domestic Sophistication	1,060,229	-1.991	1.043	-10	0
Political Interest	1,278,160	2.5	0.907	1	4
Female	1,298,917	0.534	0.499	0	1
Age	1,276,453	48.51	17.122	14	101
Education Level	1,178,137	2.279	0.707	1	3
Ideology	1,118,780	5.279	2.567	0	10
Urban Resident	1,296,605	0.309	0.462	0	1
Interest	1,278,160	2.5	0.907	1	4
Sophistication	1,060,229	-1.991	1.043	-10	0
Voter Distance	646,759	2.793	2.027	0	10
National Vote Choice	901,062	0.077	0.267	0	1
National Vote Share	715,477	0.134	0.111	0.001	0.4928
Extreme	750,786	0.209	0.406	0	1
Governing Party	797,124	0.295	0.456	0	1
EP-National Election Distance	1,269,787	736.512	395.984	0	1568
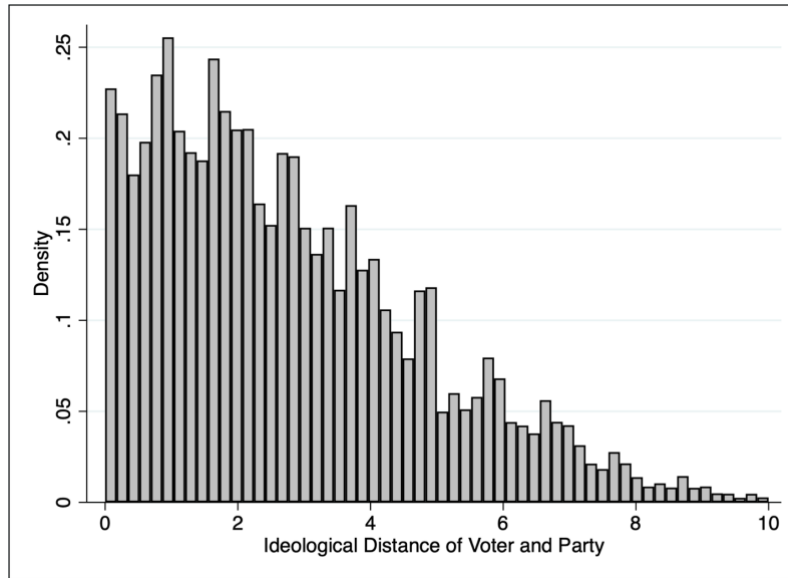
Figure B1. Distribution of Ideological Distance between Voter and Party

Table B3. Results by Party Family

	Radical Left	Green	Social Democratic	Center	Liberal	Conservative	Christian Democratic	Radical Right
Party Family Strength Abroad	-97.982***	-78.62***	-20.153***	757.76***	-101.89***	-12.971***	-9.608**	-25.174***
	(11.251)	(5.532)	(2.395)	(46.168)	(6.061)	(2.534)	(3.568)	(3.88)
Controls	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
N	42,445	32,902	61,901	11,095	61,925	49,084	31,201	43,615
Log Likelihood	-99184.80	-79509.67	-148126.54	-25750.434	-148019.8	-115731.63	-74085.212	-105092.09
Groups	22	20	33	7	45	32	16	33
Party Random Effects	0.086	0.114	0.08	0.000	0.143	0.151	0.015	0.216
EP Election FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Country FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Note: The dependent variable is the static measure of party family strength abroad.

Table B4. Effect of Party Family Strength with One Cycle Lag

	Model 1 Static
Party Level	
Party Family Strength Abroad	1.24***
	(0.225)
Party Family Strength Abroad (t-1)	0.33
	(0.436)
National Vote Share	1.441***
	(0.142)
Extreme	0.318***
	(0.038)
Governing Party	-0.376***
	(0.017)
Individual Level	
Female	0.097***
	(0.011)
Age	-0.012***
	(0.000)
Education Level	0.046***
	(0.009)
Ideology	-0.01***
	(0.002)
Urban Resident	-0.016
	(0.002)
Interest	0.066***
	(0.007)
Knowledge	0.008
	(0.006)
Voter-Party Level	
Voter Distance	-0.424***
	(0.003)
National Vote Choice	4.874***
	(0.034)
National Vote Choice * EP Distance	-0.000***
	(0.000)
Country-Election Level	
EP-National Election Distance	0.000
	(0.000)
Constant	3.56***
	(0.269)
N	245,695
Log Likelihood	-591199.62
Groups	149
Party Random Effects	0.363
Party Family FE	Yes
EP Election FE	Yes
Country FE	Yes

Table B5. Effect of Party Family Strength by Attention to EP Elections

	Model 1 Attention
Party Level	
Party Family Strength Abroad	1.242**
	(0.414)
National Vote Share	1.673***
	(0.115)
Extreme	0.294***
	(0.028)
Governing Party	-0.272***
	(0.014)
Attention * Party Family Strength Abroad	-0.232
	(0.162)
Individual Level	
Female	0.094***
	(0.01)
Age	-0.011***
	(0.000)
Education Level	0.005
	(0.008)
Ideology	-0.005**
	(0.002)
Urban Resident	-0.035**
	(0.011)
Interest	-0.002
	(0.006)
Knowledge	0.007
	(0.005)
Attention	-0.287***
	(0.023)
Voter-Party Level	
Voter Distance	-0.396***
	(0.003)
National Vote Choice	4.818***
	(0.03)
National Vote Choice * EP Distance	-0.000***
	(0.000)
Country-Election Level	
EP-National Election Distance	0.000
	(0.000)
Constant	4.12****
	(0.306)
N	321,881
Log Likelihood	-772561.27
Groups	204
Party Random Effects	0.487
Party Family FE	Yes
EP Election FE	Yes
Country FE	Yes
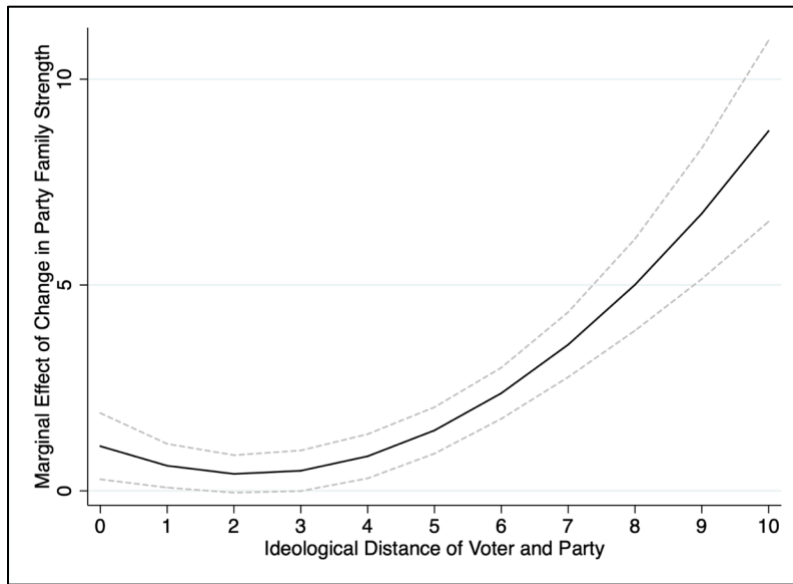
Figure B2. Marginal Effect of Change in Party Family Strength Abroad by Ideological Distance to

Party (Curvilinear)

Table B6. Effect of Party Family Strength by Ideological Distance to Party (Linear)

	Model 1 Static	Model 2 Dynamic
Party Level		
Party Family Strength Abroad	0.358	
	(0.221)	
Change in Party Family Strength		-0.323
		(0.305)
National Vote Share	1.706***	1.53***
	(0.114)	(0.139)
Extreme	0.295***	0.323***
	(0.028)	(0.038)
Governing Party	-0.319***	-0.379***
	(0.014)	(0.017)
Individual-Level		
Female	0.09***	0.097***
	(0.009)	(0.011)
Age	-0.011***	-0.012***
	(0.000)	(0.000)
Education Level	0.019**	0.045***
	(0.007)	(0.009)
Ideology	-0.004**	-0.009***
	(0.002)	(0.002)
Urban Resident	-0.022**	-0.016
	(0.01)	(0.012)
Interest	0.054***	0.066***
	(0.006)	(0.007)
Knowledge	0.006	0.008
	(0.005)	(0.006)
Voter-Party Level		
Voter Distance	-0.416***	-0.423***
	(0.005)	(0.003)
Family Strength Abroad * Distance	0.142***	
	(0.036)	
Change in Family Strength * Distance		0.464***
		(0.074)
National Vote Choice	4.759***	4.873***
	(0.029)	(0.034)
National Vote Choice * EP Distance	-0.000***	-0.000***
	(0.000)	(0.000)
Country-Election Level		
EP-National Election Distance	0.000**	0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)
Constant	3.335***	3.662***
	(0.298)	(0.265)
N	334,168	245,695
Log Likelihood	-801190.3	-591186.59
Groups	204	149
Party Random Effects	0.48	0.354
Party Family FE	Yes	Yes
EP Election FE	Yes	Yes
Country FE	Yes	Yes

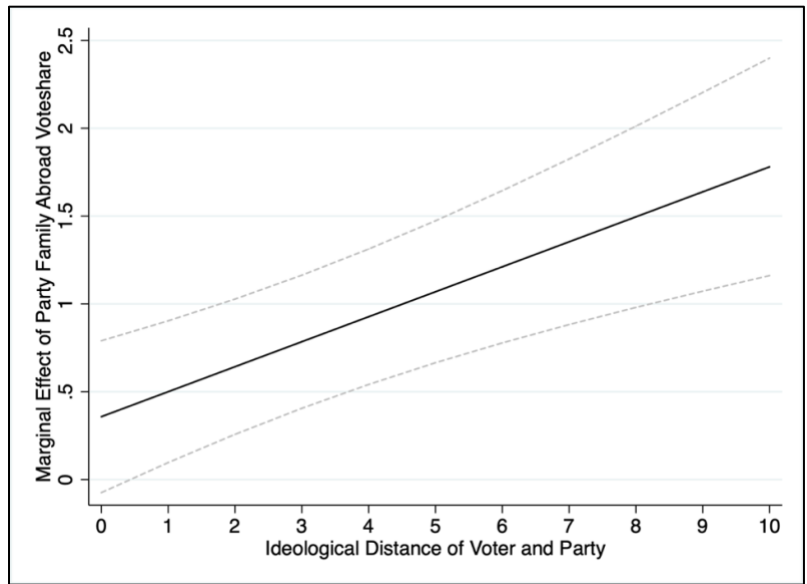**Figure B3.** Marginal Effect of Party Family Performance Abroad by Voter-Party Ideological

Distance
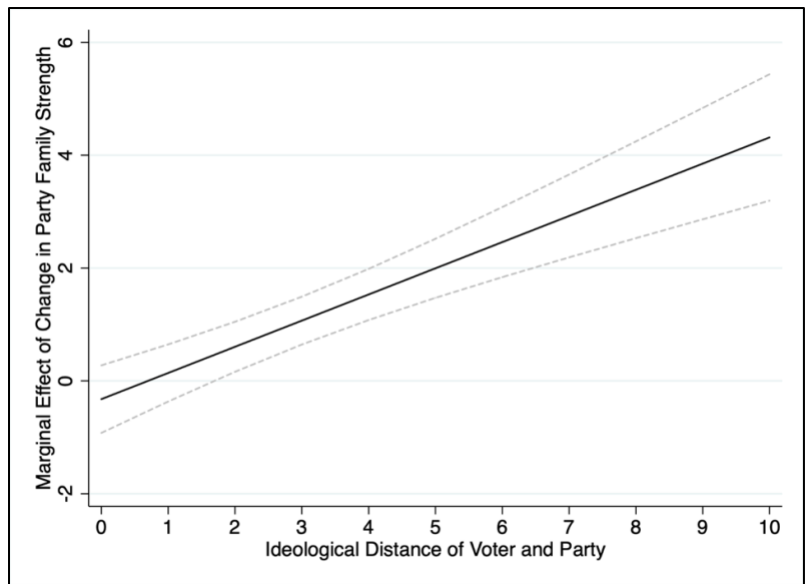
Figure B4. Marginal Effect of Change in Party Family Strength Abroad by Ideological Distance to

Party

Table B7. Estimating Heterogenous Effects of Party Family Strength Abroad

	Model 3 Interest	**Model 5** Knowledge
Individual-Level		
Female	0.085***	0.081***
	(0.009)	(0.009)
Age	-0.011***	-0.01***
	(0.000)	(0.000)
Education Level	0.023**	0.026***
	(0.007)	(0.007)
Urban Resident	-0.024**	-0.019*
	(0.01)	(0.01)
Interest	**0.016**	
	(0.011)	
Knowledge		**0.05***
		(0.01)
Voter-Party Level		
Voter Distance	-0.397***	-0.398***
	(0.002)	(0.002)
National Vote Choice	4.775***	4.76***
	(0.029)	(0.029)
National Vote Choice * EP Distance	-0.000***	-0.000***
	(0.000)	(0.000)
Party Level		
Party Family Strength Abroad	**-0.308**	**0.103**
	(0.288)	**(0.242)**
National Vote Share	1.728**	1.712***
	(0.113)	(0.114)
Extreme	0.295***	0.293***
	(0.028)	(0.028)
Governing Party	-0.32***	-0.322***
	(0.014)	(0.014)
Interest * Party Family Strength Abroad	**0.398***	
	(0.081)	
Knowledge * Party Family Strength Abroad		**-0.338***
		(0.075)
Country-Election Level		
EP-National Election Distance	0.000**	0.000**
	(0.000)	(0.000)
Constant	3.332***	3.457***
	(0.298)	(0.297)
N	340,028	335,334
Log Likelihood	-815689.8	-803980.4
Groups	288	204
Party Random Effects	0.478	0.477
Party Family FE	Yes	Yes
EP Election FE	Yes	Yes
Country FE	Yes	Yes

Appendix B.2 Preliminary Regional Analysis

Appendix B.2.1 Overview

As a preliminary analysis of the contextual factors that may influence the diffusion of a party family's performance abroad, I examine if the party family's performance abroad has a stronger impact on voters in border regions than on interior regions of a country. I expect border regions to be more responsive to what goes on abroad given these regions' proximity to other countries and the increased likelihood that residents in these areas are exposed to information from abroad and cross the border more frequently (Deutschmann, 2022). To evaluate this expectation, I turn to data from the EU-NED dataset which reports electoral results at the NUTS2 and NUTS3 statistical units used to report regional statistics in Europe. Fortunately, EU-NED reports the results for both national elections and EP elections, allowing me to evaluate how the party family's performance abroad in the EP elections shapes the electoral returns for its member parties in subsequent national elections. I focus my analysis on the NUTS3 units as these produce meaningful variation on if the region is a border or interior region. My unit of analysis is at the regional-party level, meaning each NUTS3 unit is in the dataset for as many parties received votes recorded by EU-NED. I focus on the same eight party families as I do in my analysis using the EES.

My dependent variable in this preliminary analysis is the party's performance at the national level in the NUTS3 unit. EU-NED reports the total number of votes received by the party and the total number of valid votes cast in the unit in the election. To compute the party's performance, I divide its total number of votes by the total number of valid votes giving me the party's vote share in the NUTS3 unit in the national election.

The first independent variable I use in this preliminary analysis at the aggregate level is the party family's performance abroad in the EP contest. First, I aggregate the total number of valid votes from the regional units to the European level, which gives me the total number of votes cast in the EP elections in Europe. Then I aggregate the total number of votes received by each party family to the European level, giving me the total number of votes the party family received in Europe. I then subtract from these totals the total number of valid votes and a party family's total votes at the country level so that the performance abroad variable only reports the performance of the party family not including the domestic party's performance. For example, for the German Greens in 2017, the party

family performance variable reports the share of the green party family received in every country except Germany in the 2014 EP elections.

The second independent variable that I focus on is if the NUTS3 unit touches an international border. Following Nasr & Rieger (2023), this is a dichotomous measure which records if the region borders a foreign country inside the European Union. Borders with non-EU member states are not considered given the different nature of this border from internal EU borders. I do not distinguish between regions that only border one other country and those that border multiple countries. Additionally, I code water boundaries as border regions if there is a bridge that connects the two regions. This decision effectively includes Malmö-Copenhagen border as a border region. To test my expectation that being a border region strengthens the effects of the party family's performance abroad, I interact this border region variable with the party family performance abroad.

In addition to the two independent variables and their interaction, I include several additional controls that could shape a party's electoral performance in a region. At the party-level, I control for how extreme the party is by finding the difference between the party's left-right position and the mean position of the party system. Additionally, I control for if the party was in government at the time of the election. At the NUTS level, I include the logged population density to control for differences between urban and rural areas. At the NUTS-party level, I included a lagged DV of the party's performance in the NUTS unit to control for a party's past performance in the region. I also control for how the party performed in the EP election to account for the party's strength in EP elections in the region. Lastly, at the country level, I account for the number of days between the EP election and the subsequent national election. I expect the effect of the party family performance abroad to wane as more time passes between elections. Since observations are nested in regions, countries, and elections, I run a multi-level model with party random effects with party family, election, and country fixed effects.

Appendix B.2.2 Preliminary Results

Table B8. Effect of Party Family Strength by Border Region

	Model 1	Model 2
Party Level		
Family Vote Share Abroad	**-0.082****	**-0.07****
	(0.025)	**(0.026)**
Radical	-0.036***	-0.036***
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Governing Status	-0.023***	-0.023***
	(0.001)	(0.001)
NUTS Level		
Border Region		**0.002**
		(0.002)
Family Share Abroad * Border		**-0.03**
		(0.018)
Density (logged)	-0.000	-0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)
NUTS-Party		
Party Vote Share (t-1)	0.358***	0.354***
	(0.008)	(0.008)
Party Vote Share in EP	0.414***	0.415***
	(0.008)	(0.008)
Country-Election Level		
Temporal Distance	-0.001	-0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Constant	0.038	0.038
	(0.027)	(0.027)
N	15,110	14,830
Log Likelihood	25303.658	24782.738
Groups	112	112
Party Random Effects	0.002	0.002
Party Family FE	Y	Y
Election FE	Y	Y
Country FE	Y	Y

Note: ****p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.10. Reference categories are green for party family, 2003 for year, and Austria for country. Family vote share abroad ranges from 0.001 to 0.19.*

According to Model 2 in Table B7 which includes an interaction between if the region is a border region and the party family's vote share abroad, there is no significant interaction effect meaning that voters in border regions are no more susceptible to the effect of the party family performance abroad than voters in interior regions. Interestingly, there does appear to be a significant

negative effect of party family performance on the party's subsequent election results. However, this effect is incredibly small and substantively irrelevant. More work is needed to properly analyze the impact of the party family performance in different parts of a country. Primarily, more robust spatial modelling that adequately models the auto-regressive process of foreign election results impacting domestic returns alongside the timing of elections will provide richer insights into how the performance of the party family abroad can become contagious and have spillover consequences on other regions at the aggregate level.

Appendix C.1 Supplemental Tables and Figures
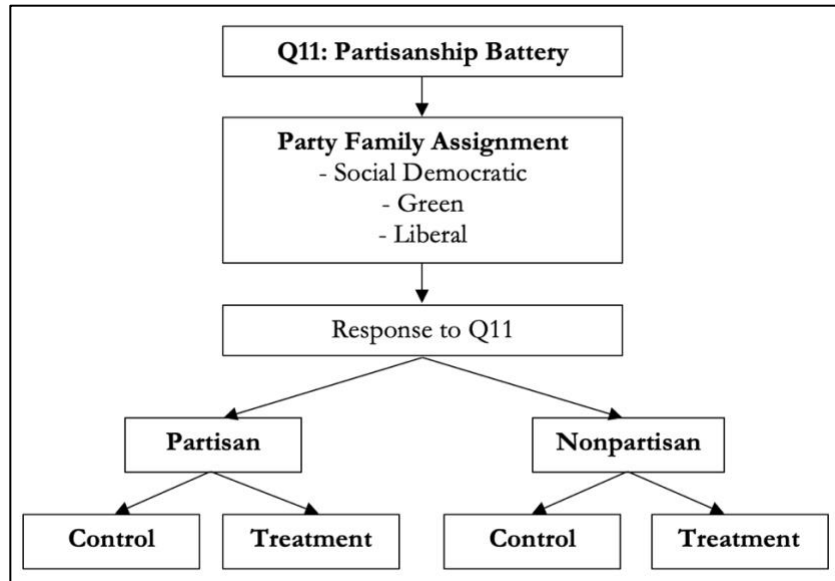
Figure C1. Treatment Assignment Procedures.

Table C1. Summary of Sweden Study (n=1,083)

		Transnational Branding Strategy	
		None (Control, n=546)	**Party-Linkage (n=537)**
Party Family	**Social Democrat (n=368)**	Swedish Social Democratic Party (n=183)	Swedish Social Democratic Party- SPD (n=185)
	Green (n=363)	Green Party (n=187)	Green Party- Alliance 90/The Greens (n=176)
	Liberal (n=352)	Liberals (n=176)	Liberals- FDP (n=176)

Table C2. Summary of Norway Study (n=1,068)

		Transnational Branding Strategy	
		None (Control, n=537)	**Party-Linkage (n=531)**
Party Family	**Social Democrat (n=359)**	Labour Party (n=180)	Labour Party – SPD (n=179)
	Green (n=352)	Green Party (n=177)	Green Party- Alliance 90/The Greens (n=175)
	Liberal (n=357)	Liberal Party (n=180)	Liberal Party- FDP (n=177)

Table C3. Balance Tests

	Pooled	Sweden	Norway
Age	0.921	1.404	0.417
Female	0.006	0.006	0.005
Unemployment	0.003	0.1	-0.09
Education	-0.01	-0.063	0.043
Social Class	-0.412	-0.59	-0.23

Note: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.10$. Values represent difference-in-means between control and treatment group.
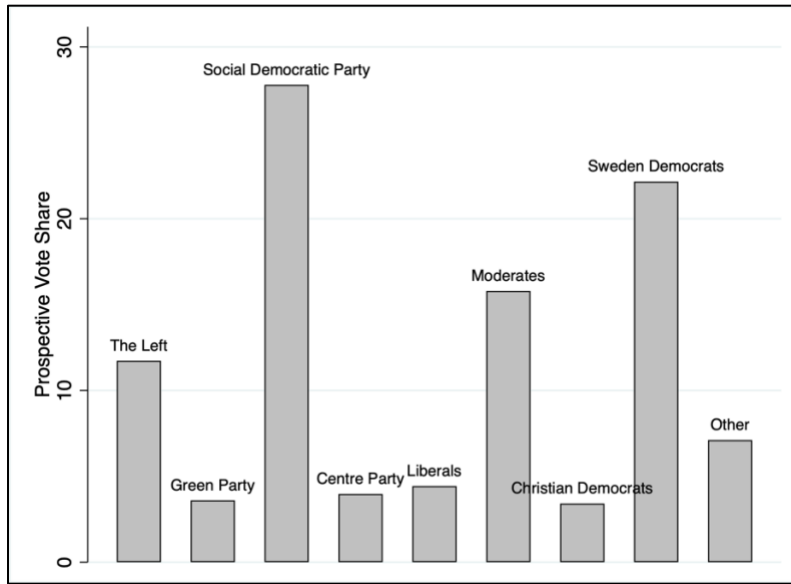
Figure C2. Prospective Vote Choice Distribution (Sweden)
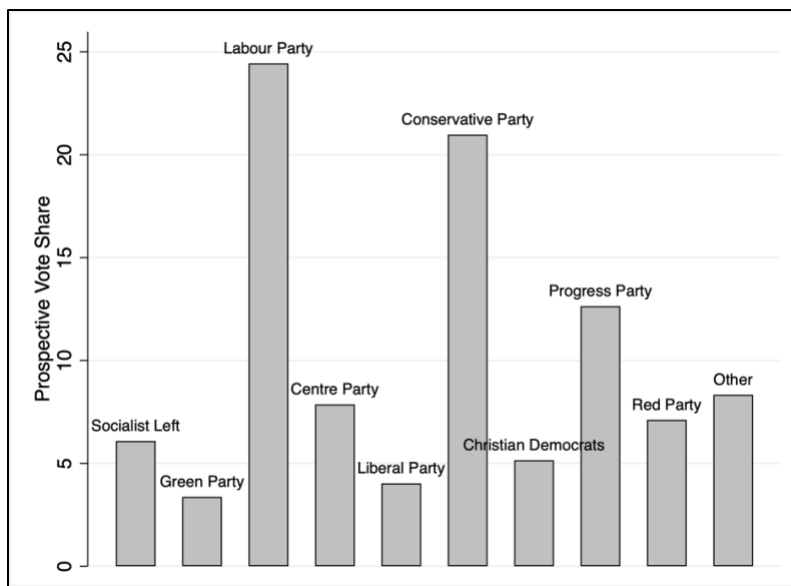
Figure C3. Prospective Vote Choice Distribution (Norway)

Table C4. Outcome Variable Descriptive Statistics by Country

	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Sweden					
Electability	1083	45.578	30.157	0	100
Propensity to Vote	1083	33.691	33.302	0	100
Vote Choice	1083	0.129	0.336	0	1
Credibility	1083	36.934	28.727	0	100
Competency	1083	38.392	29.38	0	100
Norway					
Electability	1068	47.351	29.886	0	100
Propensity to Vote	1068	41.944	33.864	0	100
Vote Choice	1068	0.11	0.314	0	1
Credibility	1068	43.476	30.631	0	100
Competency	1068	45.732	30.676	0	100

Table C5. Outcome Variable Descriptive Statistics by Party Family

	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Social Democratic					
Electability	727	57.093	29.495	0	100
Propensity to Vote	727	48.124	35.272	0	100
Vote Choice	727	0.275	0.447	0	1
Credibility	727	46.479	30.769	0	100
Competency	727	49.095	30.89	0	100
Green					
Electability	720	38.031	29.38	0	100
Propensity to Vote	720	30.189	32.09	0	100
Vote Choice	720	0.039	0.193	0	1
Credibility	720	35.687	29.419	0	100
Competency	720	37.003	29.799	0	100
Liberal					
Electability	704	44.095	27.951	0	100
Propensity to Vote	704	34.888	31.362	0	100
Vote Choice	704	0.043	0.202	0	1
Credibility	704	38.276	28.262	0	100
Competency	704	39.896	28.676	0	100

Table C6. Sample Sizes for Models in Table 4.1

		Pooled	Sweden	Norway
		Electability		
	Pooled	2,151	1,083	1,068
Party Family	Social Democratic	727	368	359
Sample	Green	720	363	357
	Liberal	704	352	352
		Propensity to Vote		
	Pooled	2,151	1,083	1,068
Party Family	Social Democratic	727	368	359
Sample	Green	720	363	357
	Liberal	704	352	352
		Vote Choice		
	Pooled	2,151	1,083	1,068
Party Family	Social Democratic	727	368	359
Sample	Green	720	363	357
	Liberal	704	352	352
		Credibility		
	Pooled	2,151	1,083	1,068
Party Family	Social Democratic	727	368	359
Sample	Green	720	363	357
	Liberal	704	352	352
		Competency		
	Pooled	2,151	1,083	1,068
Party Family	Social Democratic	727	368	359
Sample	Green	720	363	357
	Liberal	704	352	352

Table C7. Conditional ATE of Strategic Transnational Branding by Partisanship

	Electability	PTV	Vote Choice	Credibility	Competency
Treatment	0.931	0.612	-0.002	0.039	0.223
	(1.255)	(1.718)	(0.196)	(1.551)	(1.422)
Partisan	36.816***	53.245***	4.954***	36.992***	38.922***
	(2.644)	(4.356)	(0.419)	(3.522)	(3.447)
TreatmentXPartisan	**0.517**	**0.479**	**0.711**	**1.618**	**2.865**
	(2.775)	**(3.987)**	**(0.704)**	**(4.329)**	**(3.388)**
Observations	2,151	2,151	2,151	2,151	2,151
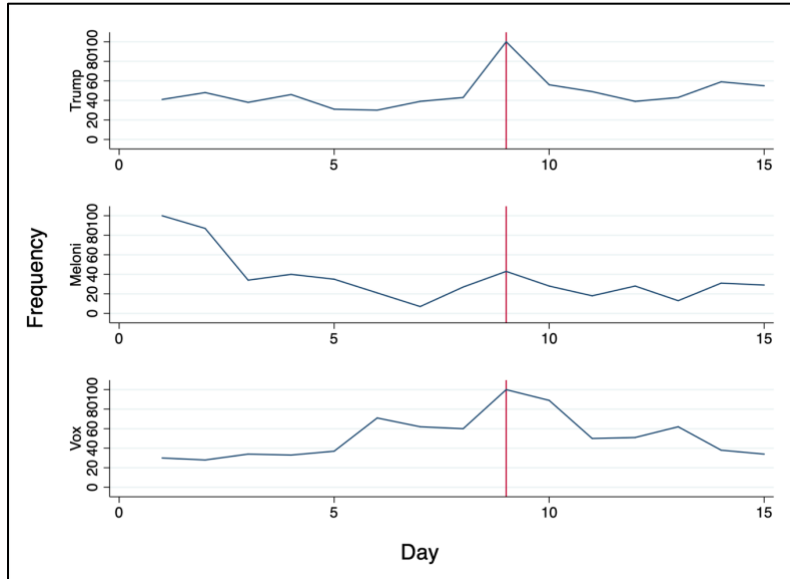
Figure C4. Salience of Viva'22 Rally Attendees in Spain (October 1 through October 15).

Source: Google Trends

Table C8. Summary Statistics of CIS Analysis

	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Vox Support	2,630	0.088	0.283	0	1
Abascal Rating	3,552	2.613	2.392	1	10
Post-Rally	3,713	0.079	0.27	0	1
Survey Timing	3,713	-4.323	2.263	-8	1
Age	3,713	51.07	16.4	18	95
Female	3,713	0.497	0.5	0	1
Vox Voter	2,700	0.071	0.258	0	1
Ideology	3,530	4.75	2.4	1	10

Table C9. Balance Tests of CIS Analysis

	Whole Sample	Restricted Sample
Age	-0.042	-2.203**
Female	1.095	2.686**
Vox Voter	-0.471	-0.29
Ideology	0.706	1.348

Note: *$***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.10$. Values represent difference-in-means between control and treatment group.*

Table C10. Intent-to-Treat Effect of Viva'22 in Most Restrictive Sample

	Vox Support		Abascal Rating	
Post-Rally	**-0.196**	**-0.312**	**-0.238**	**-0.217**
	(0.281)	**(0.525)**	**(0.201)**	**(0.148)**
Age	-0.018*	-0.025	0.001	-0.002
	(0.01)	(0.017)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Female	-0.906**	-1.096*	-0.555**	-0.37**
	(0.395)	(0.649)	(0.185)	(0.162)
Vox Voter		3.607***		2.585***
		(0.476)		(0.368)
Ideology		0.436**		0.546***
		(0.134)		(0.057)
Constant	-0.962*	-4.352***	3.019***	0.276
	(0.554)	(0.921)	(0.327)	(0.33)
N	412	348	542	401

Note: *$***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.10$.* Models for Vox Support are logistic regressions. All models run with clustered random errors by province. Survey timing not included as that is perfectly colinear with post-rally in this sample.

Table C11. Conditional ITT of Viva'22

	Vox Support			Abascal Rating		
	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**	**Model 5**	**Model 6**
Post-Rally	0.663	0.326	0.505	-0.005	-2.046*	-0.142
	(0.704)	(4.242)	(0.854)	(0.209)	(1.16)	(0.192)
Vox Partisan	6.083***	5.849***	7.358***	5.139***	4.23***	4.537***
	(0.368)	(0.768)	(1.177)	(0.149)	(0.477)	(0.433)
Rally * PID	**0.022**	**0.227**	**-1.301**	**-0.135**	**0.74**	**0.43**
	(1.253)	**(1.443)**	**(1.655)**	**(0.51)**	**(0.696)**	**(0.637)**
Survey Timing	-0.068	-0.079		-0.000	0.627	
	(0.078)	(1.42)		(0.033)	(0.391)	
Age	-0.017**	0.008	0.014	0.005**	0.009*	0.01**
	(0.007)	(0.018)	(0.018)	(0.002)	(0.005)	(0.005)
Female	-0.788**	-0.471	-0.949	-0.127*	-0.299*	-0.32*
	(0.285)	(0.585)	(0.761)	(0.075)	(0.173)	(0.172)
Constant	-3.204***	-4.227	-4.654***	2.108***	3.381***	2.083***
	(0.465)	(3.524)	(0.841)	(0.28)	(0.819)	(0.24)
N	2,430	422	375	2,875	500	447

Note: *$***p < 0.01, **p < 0.05, *p < 0.10$.* Models for Vox Support are logistic regressions. All models run with clustered random errors by province. Models 1 and 4 are on the whole sample, Models 2 and 5 are on the restricted sample including October 8th, and Models 3 and 6 are on the most restricted sample of only October 7th and 10 respondents. Survey timing not included in Models 3 and 6 as that variable is perfectly colinear with post-rally in this sample.

Appendix C.2 Questionnaires

Appendix C.2.1 Sweden Questionnaire

1. What year were you born?

2. Are you:
   a. Male
   b. Female
   c. Other

3. Which of these is your highest level of education??
   a. Not completed primary, or equivalent school
   b. Primary school or corresponding compulsory school
   c. studies at upper secondary school, folk high-school, junior secondary school (or equivalent)
   d. degree from upper secondary school, folk high-school, junior secondary school (or equivalent)
   e. tertiary education, not college/university
   f. studies at college/university
   g. degree from college/university
   h. studies or degree at the postgraduate education

4. Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?
   a. gainfully employed (could also be on sick leave or parental leave)
   b. work/training in employment measures
   c. seeking work/unemployed
   d. old age pensioner/retired/agreement pensioner
   e. have sickness and activity compensation (former early retirement pension, sickness allowances)
   f. student

5. People sometimes describe themselves as belonging a particular social class, such as the working class, the middle class, or the upper or lower class. Would you describe yourself as belonging to the:
   a. Lower Class
   b. Working Class
   c. Lower middle class
   d. Middle class

  e. Upper middle class
  f. Upper class
  g. I do not consider myself to belong to any social class.

6. Which province do you live:
  a. List of provinces (drop-down)

7. People often think of themselves as belonging to certain communities. On a scale from 0-10, how close do you feel to the following community (0 being not close at all, 10 being very close):
  a. Sweden
  b. Europe

8. How often do you consume news from other European countries?
  a. Very often
  b. Often
  c. Not very often
  d. Not at all

9. Which party did you support for the Riksdag in 2022?
  a. Social Democratic Worker's Party
  b. Sweden Democrats
  c. Moderate Party
  d. Left Party
  e. Centre Party
  f. Christian Democrats
  g. Green Party
  h. Liberals
  i. Other, please name _____
  j. Did not vote

10. Sometimes we place opinions on a left/right-scale. Where on the left/right-scale would you place yourself? (0 being the most left, 10 being the most right)

11. On a scale from 0 to 10, please place the following parties in Sweden where you think they fall on the left-right spectrum. (0 being the most left, 10 being the most right.)
  a. Social Democratic Worker's Party
  b. Sweden Democrats
  c. Moderate Party
  d. Left Party
  e. Centre Party
  f. Christian Democrats
  g. Green Party
  h. Liberals

12. Do you feel close to any political party?
  a. Yes (receive Q12 and Q13)
  b. No (skip to Q14)

13. Which party do you feel close to?
    a. Social Democratic Worker's Party
    b. Sweden Democrats
    c. Moderate Party
    d. Left Party
    e. Centre Party
    f. Christian Democrats
    g. Green Party
    h. Liberals

14. On a scale from 0 to 10, how close would you say you feel to that party? (0 being not close at all, 10 being very close)

15. Parties are often grouped together into various party families based on a variety of characteristics, including ideology. On a scale from 0 to 10, please place where you think each of the following party families is located on the left-right ideological spectrum.
    a. Social Democratic family
    b. Conservative family
    c. Christian Democratic family
    d. Liberal family
    e. Centre family
    f. Green family
    g. Radical Left family
    h. Radical Right family

Now, I am going to ask you about the German party system to get a sense for how well Swedish residents know about party systems outside of Sweden.

16. Germany recently held elections on September 21, 2021 which resulted in the election of Chancellor Olaf Scholz. Six parties entered the German parliament. On a scale from 0 to 10, please place the following parties in Germany where you think they fall on the left-right spectrum. (0 being the most left, 10 being the most right.)
    a. Social Democratic Party of Germany
    b. Christian Democratic Union
    c. Alliance 90/The Greens
    d. Free Democratic Party
    e. Alternative for Germany
    f. The Left

17. New research on decision-making shows that choices are influenced by context. Specifically, we are interested in whether you actually take the time to read each question. To show that you are paying attention, just check the "none of the above" option as your answer.
    a. Interested
    b. Distressed
    c. Excited
    d. Upset
    e. Strong

f. Guilty
g. Afraid
h. Hostile
i. Enthusiastic
j. None of the above

Now, I am going to give you a short newspaper article about a party conference. Please read it carefully and then answer the following questions.

Treatment Goes Here

18. In your own words, how does this meeting make you feel about the party?

19. On a scale from 0 to 100, please indicate the likelihood that the following parties enter government after the next round of elections (0 being no chance, 100 being an absolute certainty)
    a. Social Democratic Worker's Party
    b. Green Party
    c. Liberal Party

20. On a scale from 0 to 100, please indicate how much you trust the following parties to fulfill their campaign promises if elected to office? (0 being they won't get anything done, 100 being they will fulfill all their promises)
    a. Social Democratic Worker's Party
    b. Green Party
    c. Liberal Party

21. On a scale from 0 to 100, for the following parties, please rate how effective you think they will be at addressing the most important issues facing Sweden.
    a. Social Democratic Worker's Party
    b. Green Party
    c. Liberal Party

22. On a 0-10 scale, please indicate how probable it is that you would <u>ever</u> vote for the following political parties (0 being definitely would never vote, 10 being definitely would vote):
    a. Social Democratic Worker's Party
    b. Green Party
    c. Liberal Party

23. If an election to the Riksdag were held tomorrow, for which party would you vote?
    a. Social Democratic Worker's Party
    b. Sweden Democrats
    c. Moderate Party
    d. Left Party
    e. Centre Party
    f. Christian Democrats
    g. Green Party
    h. Liberals

      i.   Other, please name _____

24. Which of the following do you most associate with the [*insert party name here*]?
    a.   [social democratic/green/liberal] activists
    b.   Chancellor Olaf Scholz
    c.   Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock
    d.   Finance Minister Christian Lindner

Full Treatment Language & Presentation (Controls)

Andersson hosts high-profile conference with key party activists.

Figure C5. Image of Magdalena Andersson (Control)

Caption: Magdalena Andersson appears at conference with party activists

In a high-profile conference held recently, **leader of the Social Democratic Party, Magdalena Andersson appeared alongside key party activists.** Together, they discussed their shared vision of a social democratic Europe particularly focusing on **reducing income inequality, championing social justice, and creating an economy that is fair to all.**

Bolund hosts high-profile conference with key party activists

Figure C6. Image of Per Bolund (Control)

Caption: Per Bolund appears at conference with party activists

In a high-profile conference held recently, co-leader of the Green Party, Per Bolund appeared alongside key party activists. Together, they discussed their shared vision of a green Europe particularly focused on addressing the climate challenge by investing in renewable energy and promoting initiatives to cut carbon emissions.

Pehrson hosts high-profile conference with key party activists

Figure C7. Image of Johan Pherson (Control)

Caption: Johan Pehrson appears at conference with party activists

In a high-profile conference held recently, leader of the Liberal Party, Johan Pehrson appeared alongside key party activists. Together, they discussed their shared vision of a liberal Europe particularly focused on championing the free market by reducing taxes and regulations to empower small businesses and protect civil liberties.

Full Treatment Language & Presentation (Party Linkage)

Andersson hosts high-profile conference with Chancellor Scholz of Germany's SPD

Figure C8. Image of Magdalena Andersson and Olaf Scholz (Treatment)

Caption: Magdalena Andersson (left) and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz (right) appear at conference between the two parties.

In a high-profile conference held recently, **leader of the Social Democratic Party, Magdalena Andersson appeared alongside German Chancellor and leader of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD).** Together, they discussed their shared vision of a social democratic Europe particularly focusing on **reducing income inequality, championing social justice, and creating an economy that is fair to all.**

Andersson, during her keynote speech, pointed to the **SPD as a key ally** for her own party. She highlighted **the success of Scholz in Germany's election two years ago as a blueprint for the SAP** to be successful in the next round of elections. Additionally, she pointed to the SPD's governing record and **success in advancing welfare reform to expand benefits in Germany as a model** for the kinds of policies that can address economic inequality in Sweden.

Bolund hosts high-profile conference with Foreign Minister Baerbock of Germany's Greens

Figure C9. Image of Per Bolund and Annalena Baerbock (Treatment)

Caption: Per Bolund (left) and Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock (right) appear at conference between the two parties.

In a high-profile conference held recently, co-leader of the Green Party, Per Bolund appeared alongside German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock from the German Green Party. Together, they discussed their shared vision of a green Europe particularly focused on addressing the climate challenge by investing in renewable energy and promoting initiatives to cut carbon emissions.

Bolund, during his keynote speech, pointed to the German Greens as a key ally for his own party. He highlighted the success of Baerbock in Germany's election two years ago as a blueprint for the Green Party to be successful in the next round of elections. Additionally, he pointed to the German Green's governing record and success in advancing a more aggressive renewable energy policy in Germany as a model for the kinds of policies that can address the climate crisis in Sweden.

Pehrson hosts high-profile conference with Finance Minister Christian Lindner of Germany's FDP

Figure C10. Image of Johan Pehrson and Christian Lindner (Treatment)

Caption: Johan Pehrson (right) and Finance Minister Christian Lindner (left) appear at conference between the two parties.

In a high-profile conference held recently, leader of the Liberal Party, Johan Pehrson appeared alongside German Finance Minister and leader of the German Free Democratic Party, Christian Lindner. Together, they discussed their shared vision of a liberal Europe particularly focused on championing the free market by reducing taxes and regulations to empower small businesses and protect civil liberties.

Pehrson, during his keynote speech, pointed to the FDP as a key ally for his own party. He highlighted the success of Lindner in Germany's election two years ago as a blueprint for the Liberal Party to be successful in the next round of elections. Additionally, he pointed to the FDP's governing record and success in advancing key tax cuts in Germany as a model for the kinds of policies that can put more money in people's pockets in Sweden.

Appendix C.2.2 Norway Questionnaire

1. What year were you born?

2. Are you:
    a. Male
    b. Female
    c. Other

3. Which of these is your highest level of education??
    a. Not completed primary, or equivalent school
    b. Primary school or corresponding compulsory school
    c. studies at upper secondary school, folk high-school, junior secondary school (or equivalent)
    d. degree from upper secondary school, folk high-school, junior secondary school (or equivalent)
    e. tertiary education, not college/university
    f. studies at college/university
    g. degree from college/university
    h. studies or degree at the postgraduate education

4. Which of the following categories best describes your employment status?
    a. gainfully employed (could also on sick leave or parental leave)
    b. work/training in employment measures
    c. seeking work/unemployed
    d. old age pensioner/retired/agreement pensioner
    e. have sickness and activity compensation (former early retirement pension, sickness allowances)
    f. student

5. People sometimes describe themselves as belonging a particular social class, such as the working class, the middle class, or the upper or lower class. Would you describe yourself as belonging to the:
    a. Lower Class
    b. Working Class
    c. Lower middle class
    d. Middle class
    e. Upper middle class
    f. Upper class
    g. I do not consider myself to belong to any social class.

6. Which county do you live:
    a. List of provinces (drop-down)

7. People often think of themselves as belonging to certain communities. On a scale from 0-10, how close do you feel to the following community:

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      a. Norway
      b. Europe

8. How often do you consume news from other European countries?
      a. Very often
      b. Often
      c. Not very often
      d. Not at all

9. Which party did you vote for the Storting in 2021?
      a. Labour Party
      b. Conservative Party
      c. Centre Party
      d. Progress Party
      e. Socialist Left Party
      f. Red Party
      g. Liberal Party
      h. Green Party
      i. Christian Democratic Party
      j. Other, please name _____
      k. Did not vote

10. Sometimes we place opinions on a left/right-scale. Where on the left/right-scale would you place yourself? (0 being the most left, 10 being the most right)

11. On a scale from 0 to 10, please place the following parties in Norway where you think they fall on the left-right spectrum. (0 being the most left, 10 being the most right.)
      a. Labour Party
      b. Conservative Party
      c. Centre Party
      d. Progress Party
      e. Socialist Left Party
      f. Red Party
      g. Liberal Party
      h. Green Party
      i. Christian Democratic Party

12. Do you feel close to any political party?
      a. Yes (receive Q12 and Q13)
      b. No (skip to Q14)

13. Which party do you feel close to?
      a. Labour Party
      b. Conservative Party
      c. Centre Party
      d. Progress Party
      e. Socialist Left Party
      f. Red Party

g. Liberal Party
h. Green Party
i. Christian Democratic Party

14. On a scale from 0 to 10, how close would you say you feel to that party? (0 being not close at all, 10 being very close)

15. Parties are often grouped together into various party families based on a variety of characteristics, including ideology. On a scale from 0 to 10, please place where you think each of the following party families is located on the left-right scale.
    a. Social Democratic family
    b. Conservative family
    c. Christian Democratic family
    d. Liberal family
    e. Centre family
    f. Green family
    g. Radical Left family
    h. Radical Right family

Now, I am going to ask you about the German party system to get a sense for how well Norwegian residents know about party systems outside of Norway.

16. Germany recently held elections on September 21, 2021 which resulted in the election of Chancellor Olaf Scholz. Six parties entered the German parliament. On a scale from 0 to 10, please place the following parties in Germany where you think they fall on the left-right spectrum. (0 being the most left, 10 being the most right.)
    a. Social Democratic Party of Germany
    b. Christian Democratic Union
    c. Alliance 90/The Greens
    d. Free Democratic Party
    e. Alternative for Germany
    f. The Left

17. New research on decision-making shows that choices are influenced by context. Specifically, we are interested in whether you actually take the time to read each question. To show that you are paying attention, just check the "none of the above" option as your answer.
    a. Interested
    b. Distressed
    c. Excited
    d. Upset
    e. Strong
    f. Guilty
    g. Afraid
    h. Hostile
    i. Enthusiastic
    j. None of the above

Now, I am going to give you a short newspaper article about a party conference. Please read it carefully and then answer the following questions.

Treatment Goes Here

18. In your own words, how does this meeting make you feel about the party?

19. On a scale from 0 to 100, please indicate the likelihood that the following parties enter government after the next round of elections (0 being no chance, 100 being an absolute certainty)
    a. Labour Party
    b. Green Party
    c. Liberal Party

20. On a scale from 0 to 100, please indicate how much you trust the following parties to fulfill their campaign promises if elected to office? (0 being they won't get anything done, 100 being they will fulfill all their promises)
    a. Labour Party
    b. Green Party
    c. Liberal Party

21. On a scale from 0 to 100, for the following parties, please rate how effective you think they will be at addressing the most important issues facing Norway.
    a. Labour Party
    b. Green Party
    c. Liberal Party

22. On a 0-10 scale, please indicate how probable it is that you would <u>ever</u> vote for the following political parties (0 being definitely would never vote, 10 being definitely would vote):
    a. Labour Party
    b. Green Party
    c. Liberal Party

23. If an election to the Storting were held tomorrow, for which party would you vote?
    a. Labour Party
    b. Conservative Party
    c. Centre Party
    d. Progress Party
    e. Socialist Left Party
    f. Red Party
    g. Liberal Party
    h. Green Party
    i. Christian Democratic Party
    j. Other, please name _____

24. Which of the following individuals do you most associate with the [*insert party name here*]?
    a. *Party activists*
    b. *Chancellor Olaf Scholz*
    c. *Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock*

d.   Finance Minister Christian Lindner

Full Treatment Language & Presentation (Controls)

Støre hosts high-profile conference with key party activists
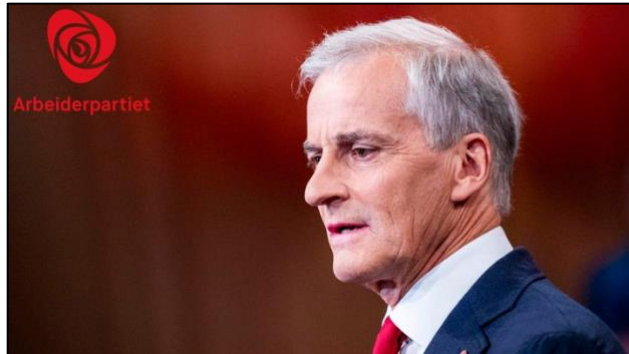
Figure C11. Image of Jonas Gahr Støre (Control)

Caption: Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre appears at conference with party activists

In a high-profile conference held recently, leader of the Labour Party, PM Jonas Gahr Støre appeared alongside key party activists. Together, they discussed their shared vision of a social democratic Europe particularly focusing on reducing income inequality, championing social justice, and creating an economy that is fair to all.

Hermstad hosts high-profile conference with key party activists

Figure C12. Image of Arild Hermstad (Control)

Caption: Arild Hermstad appears at conference with party activists.

In a high-profile conference held recently, leader of the Green Party, Arild Hermstad appeared alongside key party activists. Together, they discussed their shared vision of a green Europe particularly focused on addressing the climate challenge by investing in renewable energy and promoting initiatives to cut carbon emissions.

Melby hosts high-profile conference with key party activists

Figure C13. Image of Guri Melby (Control)

Caption: Guri Melby appears at conference with party activists

In a high-profile conference held recently, leader of the Liberal Party, Guri Melby appeared alongside key party activists. Together, they discussed their shared vision of a liberal Europe particularly focused on championing the free market by reducing taxes and regulations to empower small businesses and protect civil liberties.

Full Treatment Language & Presentation (Party Linkage)

Støre hosts high-profile conference with Chancellor Scholz of Germany's SPD

Figure C14. Image of Jonas Gahr Støre and Olaf Scholz (Treatment)

Caption: Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre (left) and Chancellor Olaf Scholz (right) appear at conference between the two parties.

In a high-profile conference held recently, leader of the Labour Party, PM Jonas Gahr Støre appeared alongside German Chancellor and leader of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD). Together, they discussed their shared vision of a social democratic Europe particularly focusing on reducing income inequality, championing social justice, and creating an economy that is fair to all

Støre, during his keynote speech, pointed to the SPD as a key ally for his own party. He highlighted the success of Scholz in Germany's election two years ago as a blueprint for the Labour Party to be successful in the next round of elections. Additionally, he pointed to the SPD's governing record and success in advancing welfare reform to expand benefits in Germany as a model for the kinds of policies that can address economic inequality in Norway.

Hermstad hosts high-profile conference with Foreign Minister Baerbock of Germany's Greens

Figure C15. Image of Arild Hermstad and Annalena Baerbock (Treatment)

Caption: Arild Hermstad (left) and Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock (right) appear at conference between the two parties.

In a high-profile conference held recently, leader of the Green Party, Arild Hermstad appeared alongside German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock from the German Green Party. Together, they discussed their shared vision of a green Europe particularly focused on addressing the climate challenge by investing in renewable energy and promoting initiatives to cut carbon emissions.

Hermstad, during his keynote speech, pointed to the German Greens as a key ally for their own party. He highlighted the success of Baerbock in Germany's election two years ago as a blueprint for the Green Party to be successful in the next round of elections. Additionally, he pointed to the German Green's governing record and success in advancing a more aggressive renewable energy policy in Germany as a model for the kinds of policies that can address the climate crisis in Norway.

Melby hosts high-profile conference with Finance Minister Christian Lindner of Germany's FDP

Figure C16. Image of Guri Melby and Christian Lindner (Treatment)

Caption: Guri Melby (left) and Finance Minister Christian Lindner (right) appear at conference between the two parties.

In a high-profile conference held recently, leader of the Liberal Party, Guri Melby appeared alongside German Finance Minister and leader of the German Free Democratic Party, Christian Lindner. Together, they discussed their shared vision of a liberal Europe particularly focused on championing the free market by reducing taxes and regulations to empower small businesses and protect civil liberties.

Melby, during her keynote speech, pointed to the FDP as a key ally for his own party. She highlighted the success of Lindner in Germany's election two years ago as a blueprint for the Liberal Party to be successful in the next round of elections. Additionally, she pointed to the FDP's governing record and success advancing key tax cuts in Germany as a model for the kinds of policies that can put more money in people's pockets in Norway.

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