

# **Party Brands in Contentious Politics**

## Movementization and its Limits in Europe

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10.02.2026

# Key questions in my research agenda

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I study **party competition, contentious politics, and participation** with comparative, mixed-method evidence.

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- 1. Party-Movement Interactions:** *When and how do electoral and protest politics influence each other?*
- 2. Participation & Representation:** *Who participates across arenas, and how does that depend on the political supply?*
- 3. Democracy & Contestation in CEE:** *How do historical legacies, and current institutions shape representation and participation?*

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These questions connect three levels of analysis: **macro** (party systems & institutions) • **meso** (parties, movements, organisations) • **micro** (citizens' participation & identities).

# The New Climate Divide (Emmy Noether)

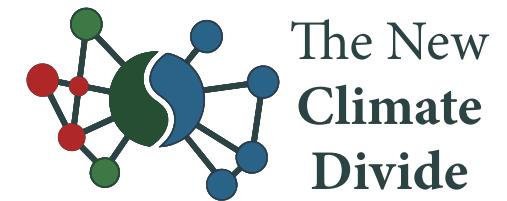
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- My Emmy Noether project examines how **climate conflict** reshapes:
  1. mobilization by coalitions of political parties and movements
    - text-as-data methods
  2. participation in electoral and contentious politics
    - survey panels and experiments
  3. group identities associated with the climate conflict
    - qualitative focus groups
- comparative across Western (Germany, France, Sweden), Southern (Italy, Spain), and CEE (Hungary, Romania), between 2010-2030



# Crisis of representation

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Across Europe, parties face a **crisis of representation**: declining membership and trust, weaker partisan ties, and higher fragmentation. (e.g., Casal Bértoa & Enyedi, 2021; Dalton & Wattenberg, 2000; Mair, 2013; van Biezen et al., 2012)

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- Citizens increasingly engage through **non-electoral** channels (protest, campaigns, civic action). (e.g., Dalton, 2017; Meyer & Tarrow, 1998; Rucht, 2007)
- Parties respond by adjusting not only **what** they offer (issues / positions), but also **how** they present and organise themselves.

# What changes? Substance vs. form

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## Substance

- Issues, cleavages, positions
- *Who mobilizes whom on which side of what conflict?*

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## Form

- Personalization, populism, movementization, communication and media-strategies
- *How do parties connect to citizens?*

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**Branding is a bridge: it translates *substantive conflict* into *organisational cues*.**

# Party brands as a lens on political change

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  - Link supply and demand -> information shortcuts for voters.

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- Brands represent parties' investment in differentiating their appeal.
  - Link supply and demand -> information shortcuts for voters.
- They provide a window to observe **transformations** associated with two sources of change, with possibly different dynamics:
  - Branding by new parties (replacement)
  - Rebranding by existing parties

# Roadmap

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- 1. Concept:** movementization as a *form* of party branding.
- 2. Supply-side evidence:** party names in Europe (1945-2023), types and diffusion.
- 3. Demand-side evidence:** conjoint experiments, voter trade-offs over movement cues.
- 4. Closing:** implications for representation and my broader research agenda.

# What is movementization?

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- It concerns **how parties construct their brands as political actors**
  - not only tactical choices
- As a **process**, movementization can be **partial, uneven, and reversible**.

# Examples of movementization

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**Name & label  
(symbolic/  
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- \* classical
- \* nonclassical

**Action repertoire  
(behavioral)**

- \* electoral
- \* contentious

**Organisation  
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- \* organisational networks
- \* supporter involvement

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- Parties' capacity to adapt differs across these dimensions.

# Dimensions of movementization

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- These dimensions need not evolve **simultaneously**.
- Parties can pick and choose: adopt **some** movement elements without others.

# Empirical focus: party names

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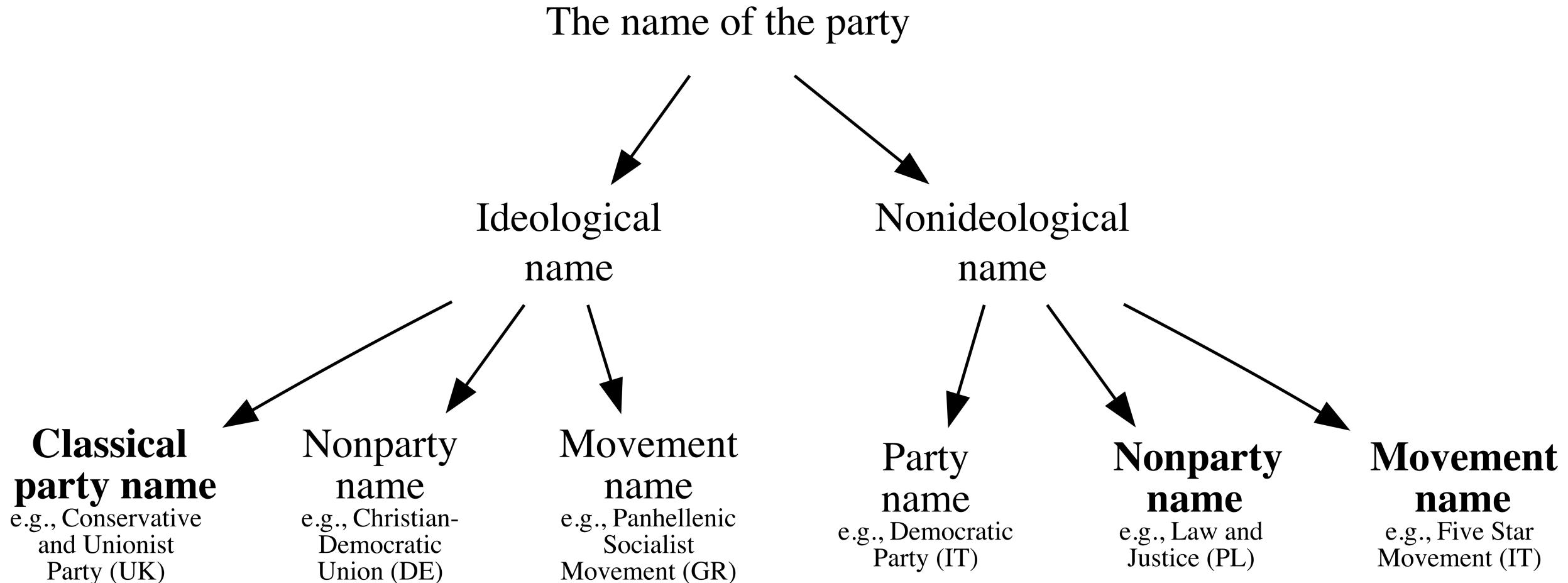
- Party names as an empirical indicator of brands (e.g., Kim & Solt, 2017; Avina, 2024)
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- Party names as an empirical indicator of brands (e.g., Kim & Solt, 2017; Avina, 2024)
  - high visibility, durable, comparable across contexts
- Content-based perspective, distinguishing between:
  - reference to the classical ideological traditions (yes / no)
  - reference to the organisational form ('party', 'movement', other/ none)

# Typology of party names



# Data: party names in Europe

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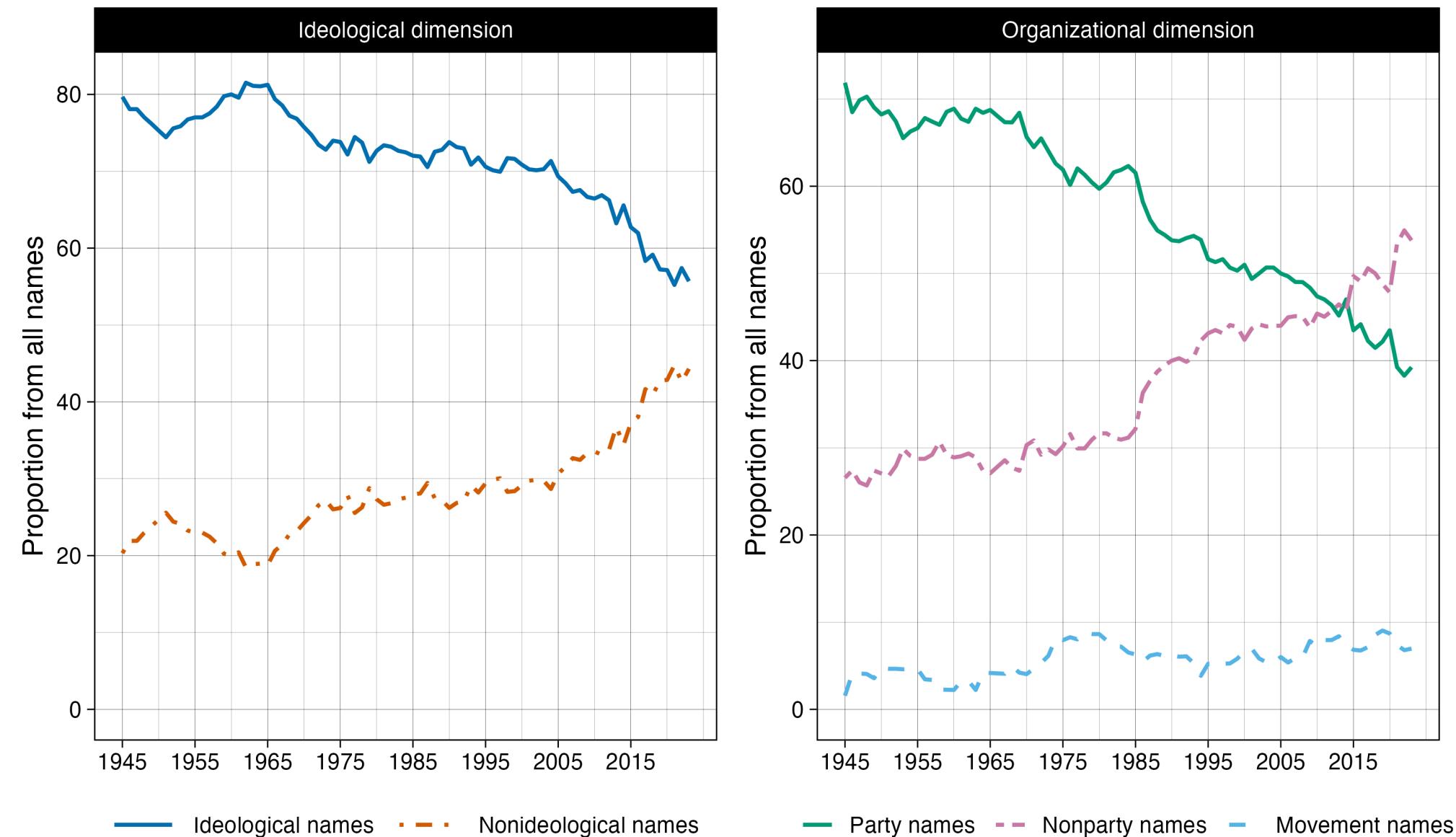
- **Source:** ParlGov (Döring et al. 2023), Wikipedia, Party Manifesto Project database (Lehmann et al. 2023) combined with manual coding
- **Units:** party name × party-year × country (659 unique parties)
- **Scope:** 28 European democracies (Northwestern, Southern, CEE), 1945–2023
- **Focus:** prevalence and types of party labels

# Survey experiments

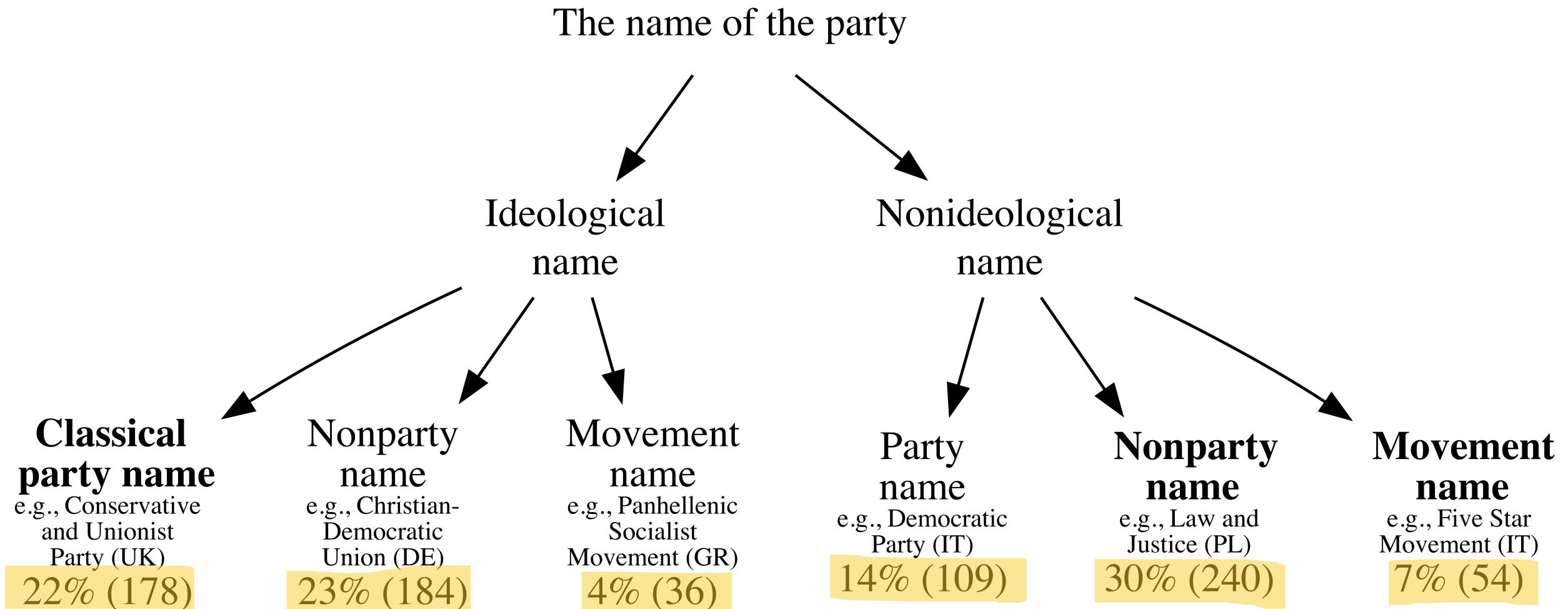
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- Survey on political attitudes, history of participation, issue positions, and socio-demographic indicators
- Four countries:
  - Austria, Italy, Hungary, Germany
- Online access panel, quota sample for age, gender, education
- Sample size: roughly 2,000 per country
- Two conjoint experiments on new party naming and renaming of established parties

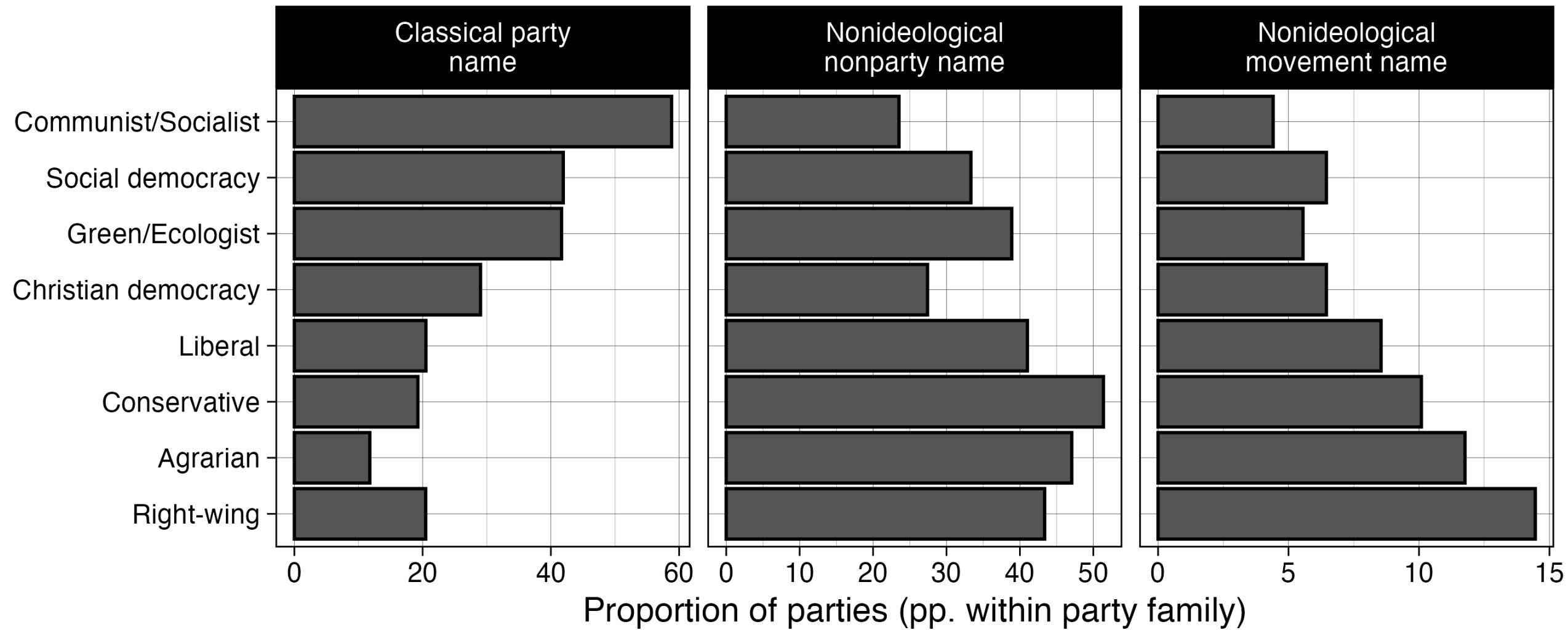
# Distribution over time by dimension (1945-2023)



# Distribution of party name types (1945-2023)



# Distribution by party family (1945-2023)



# Hierarchical regression results

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- **Party age:** strongest predictor (new party entry)
- **Party family and opposition:** matter, but opposition only for nonparty labels
- **Context** (polarization, turnout, volatility): weak and does not explain movement labels.
  - **Presidentialism** is a partial exception.

**Trend:** movement labels diffuse, but more slowly than other nonclassical names.

# From party strategies to voter responses

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1. Substantial changes in party names, suggesting that parties attribute **high importance to names as a signaling device**.
2. Movement-oriented branding is **selective and uneven** on the supply-side.
  - It often occurs in **waves**, under specific conditions.
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This raises the question of **how different voters evaluate such signals**.

- Do movement cues resonate broadly, or differently across electorates?
  - Focus on **trade-offs** with a conjoint experiment design

# Demand-side test: new party branding

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## Random profile

A new political group is coming to the *country's parliament* with the promise to fight for **program!**

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- **organisation**
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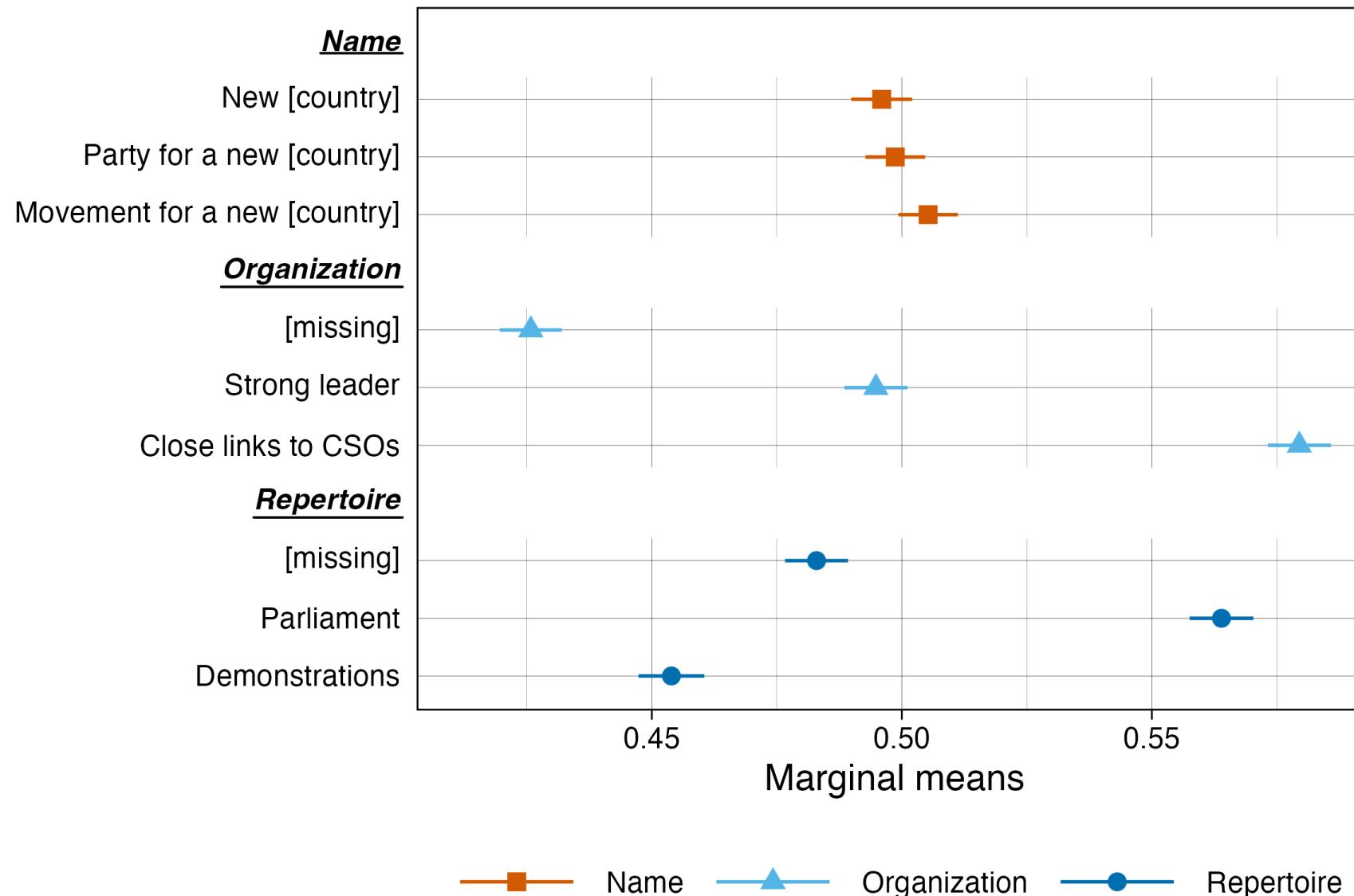
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- **Action form**:
  - empty
  - To take the fight outside of parliament and organise **public demonstrations**
  - To focus on their work and advances **in parliament**

# Average effects: what voters reward (and punish)



# Branding under heterogeneous electorates

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- Movement-oriented **names alone** do not generate broad electoral rewards.
- Voters respond more strongly to **organisational and action-based cues**.
- Party branding therefore involves **trade-offs** across voter groups rather than vote maximization.

# What does this mean for democratic competition?

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Movementization might intensify the tension between inclusion signals and credible representation.

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- **Risk 1: Symbolic representation**

- brands provide *visible* responsiveness **without deeper organisational change** (e.g., Katz & Mair, 2009; Pitkin, 1967; Scarrow, 2015)

- **Risk 2: Fragmented representation**

- selective resonance across publics results in **trade-offs** rather than broad inclusion (e.g., Bawn et al., 2012; Mansbridge, 2003)

# When does form become substance?

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Climate politics is an ideal case to examine how representational signals harden into durable camps.

# Three pillars of my research agenda

	<b>Party-Movement Interactions</b>	<b>Participation &amp; Representation</b>	<b>Democracy &amp; Contestation in CEE</b>
<b>Core question</b>	When and how do electoral and protest politics influence each other?	Who participates across arenas, and how does that depend on the political supply?	How do historical legacies, and current institutions shape representation and participation?
<b>Key concepts</b>	Movement parties; sponsorship; cleavages	Turnout; protest; volunteering; ideological preferences; emotions	Democratic backsliding; autocratization; mobilization; civil society
<b>Empirical scope</b>	Parties ↔ movements ↔ media	Electoral + nonelectoral participation	West-South-CEE comparisons
<b>Methods</b>	Event data; party/org data; text/media measures	Surveys; survey experiments; panels	Comparative designs; mixed methods; case studies
<b>Flagship</b>	<b>ClimateDivide (Emmy Noether): climate conflict • parties • movements • participation • CEE</b>		

# **Exit and Voice: a multi-level account of political withdrawal**

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# Exit and Voice: a multi-level account of political withdrawal

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- **Core question:** Why do citizens move between *participation*, *withdrawal*, and *re-entry*, and with what consequences for representation and legitimacy?
- **Mechanisms (supply-side):** organisational expectations and mobilisation rhythms -> responsiveness and efficacy signals -> strategic demobilisation.
- **Design (two work packages):**
  1. **After the Peak:** re-contacting the post-2019 climate activist cohort to map exit, substitution, and re-activation.
  2. **Re-entry under Backsliding:** how withdrawal turns into renewed participation under democratic stress (Hungary and Poland, with CEE extensions).

# Thank you for your attention!

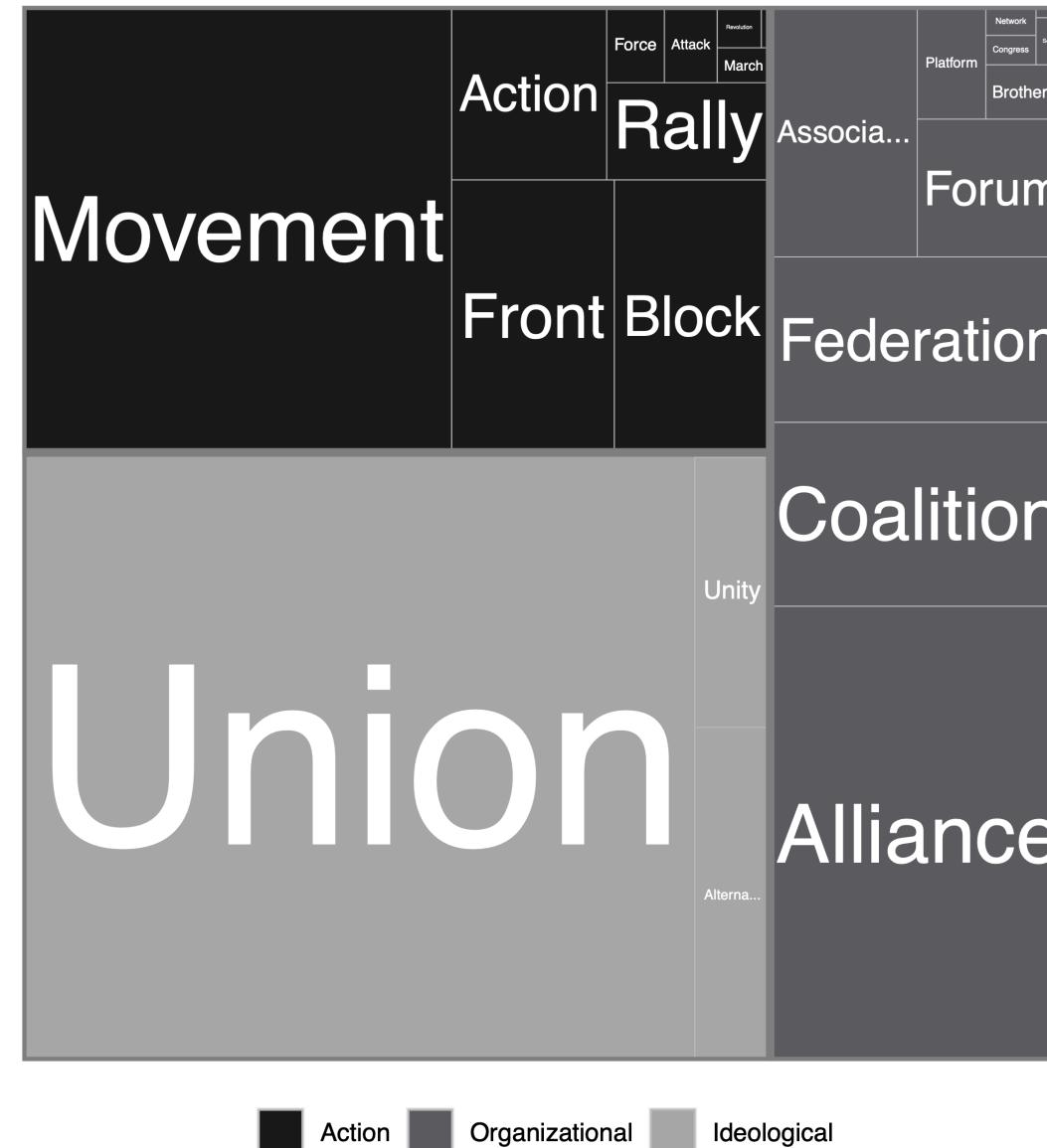


<https://endre-borbath.eu/>

# Distribution of party names in Northwestern Europe (1945-2023)

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# Classification of movement names



# Demand-side test: party re-branding

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## Scenario A / Scenario B

The party changes its image by:

- Name
- Organisation
- promises Action form to represent their program.

Many support the plan, but there are also those who argue that the proposal threatens the party's hard-earned reputation.

Sympathizers and members of the public are encouraged to voice their opinions!

- Name:

- empty
- Conditional on the name of the party:
  - changes its name and deletes the word **party** from its name
  - changes its name and now calls itself a **party**
  - changes its name and deletes the word **movement** from its name
  - changes its name and now calls itself a **movement**

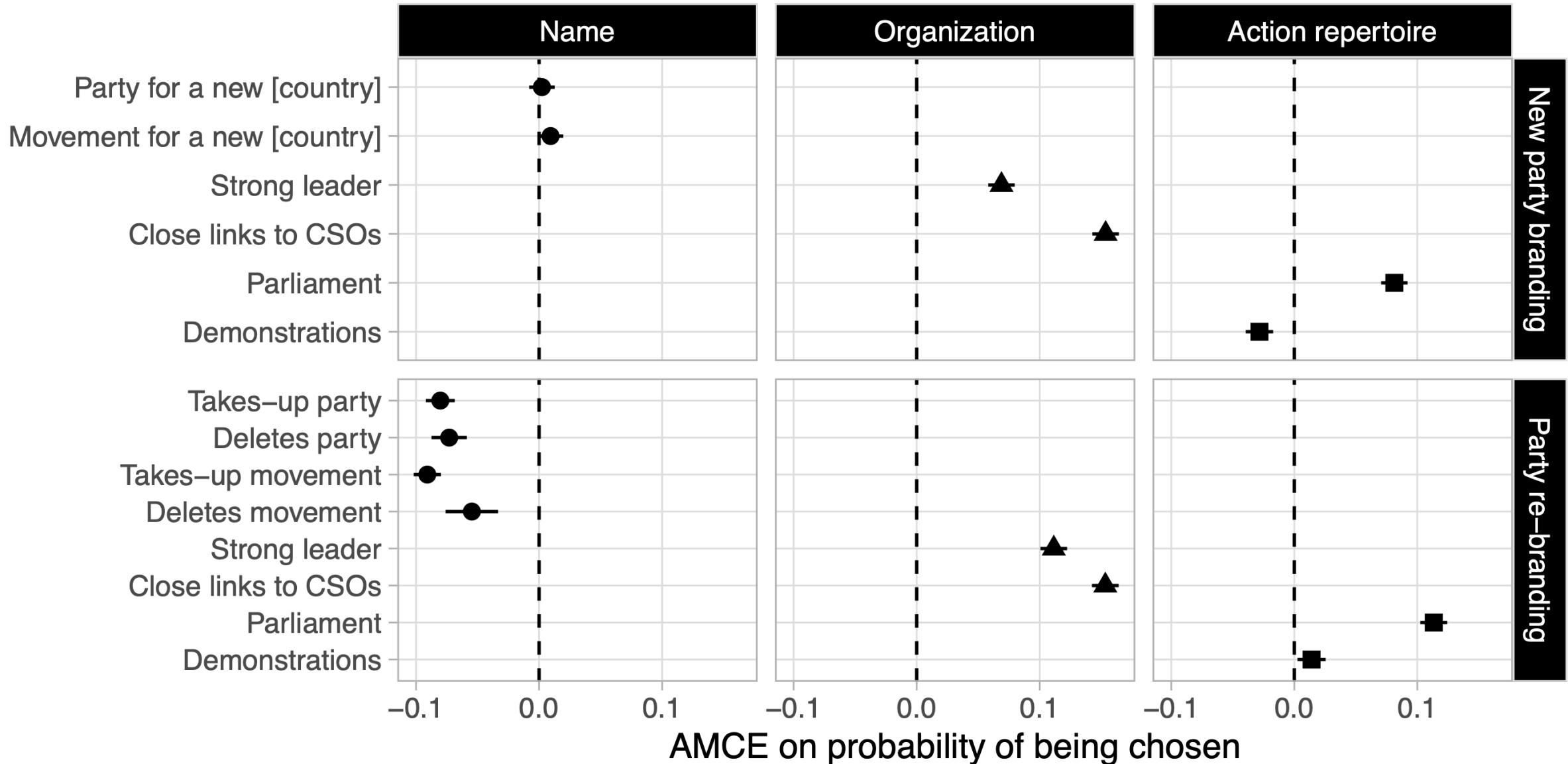
- Organisation:

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- establish a **strong personality** at the top and communicate more intensively via **traditional and social media**.

- Action form:

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- intensify the struggle outside the parliament and organise **public demonstrations**
- focus more on their work and advances in **parliament**

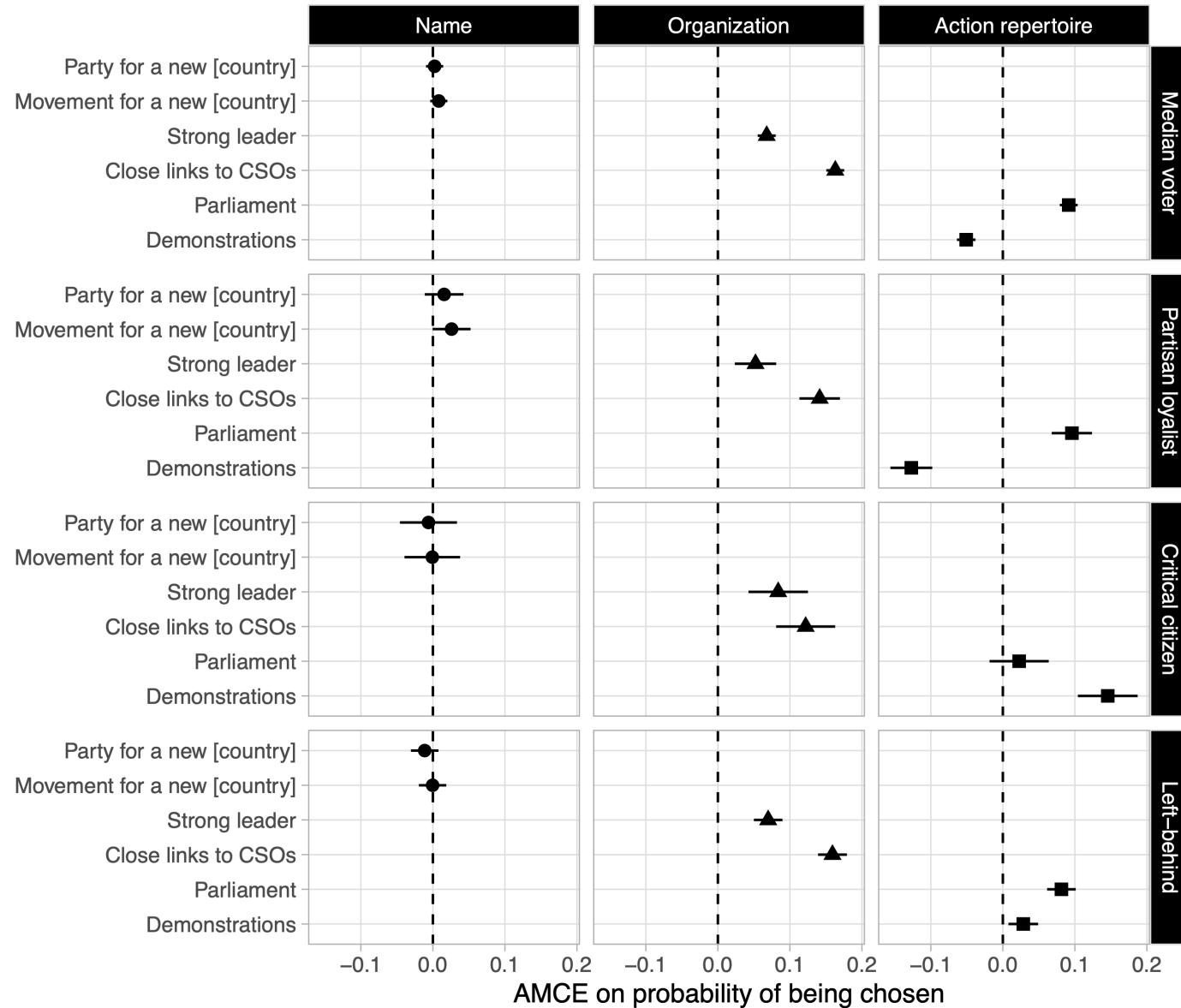
# Comparative experiment results



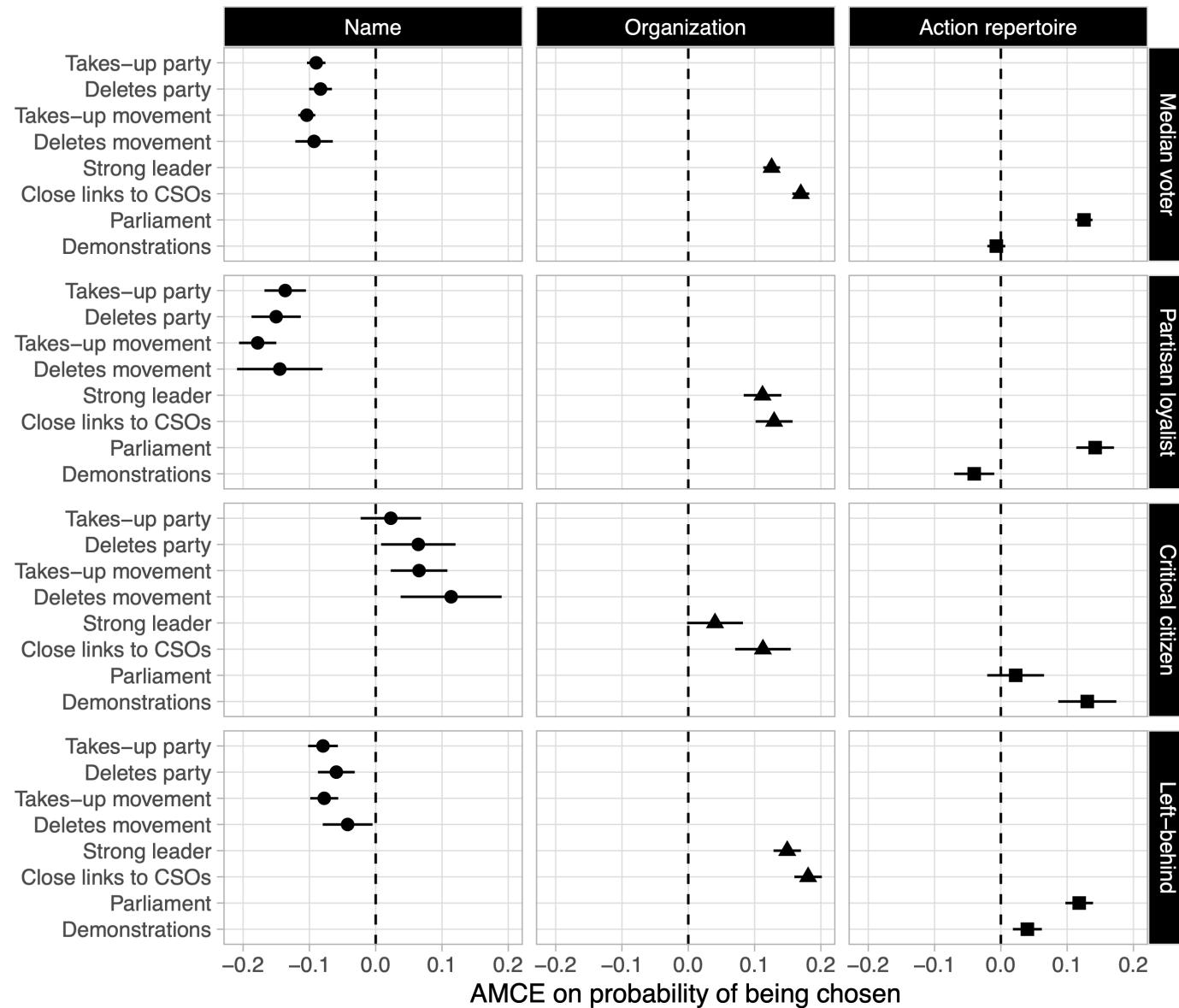
# Voter profiles used to summarize heterogeneity

	Median voter	Partisan loyalist	Critical citizen	Left-behind
Party attachment	weak	strong	none	weak
Political trust	medium	high	low	low
Populist attitudes	medium	low	medium	high
Protest experience	none	none	frequent	none

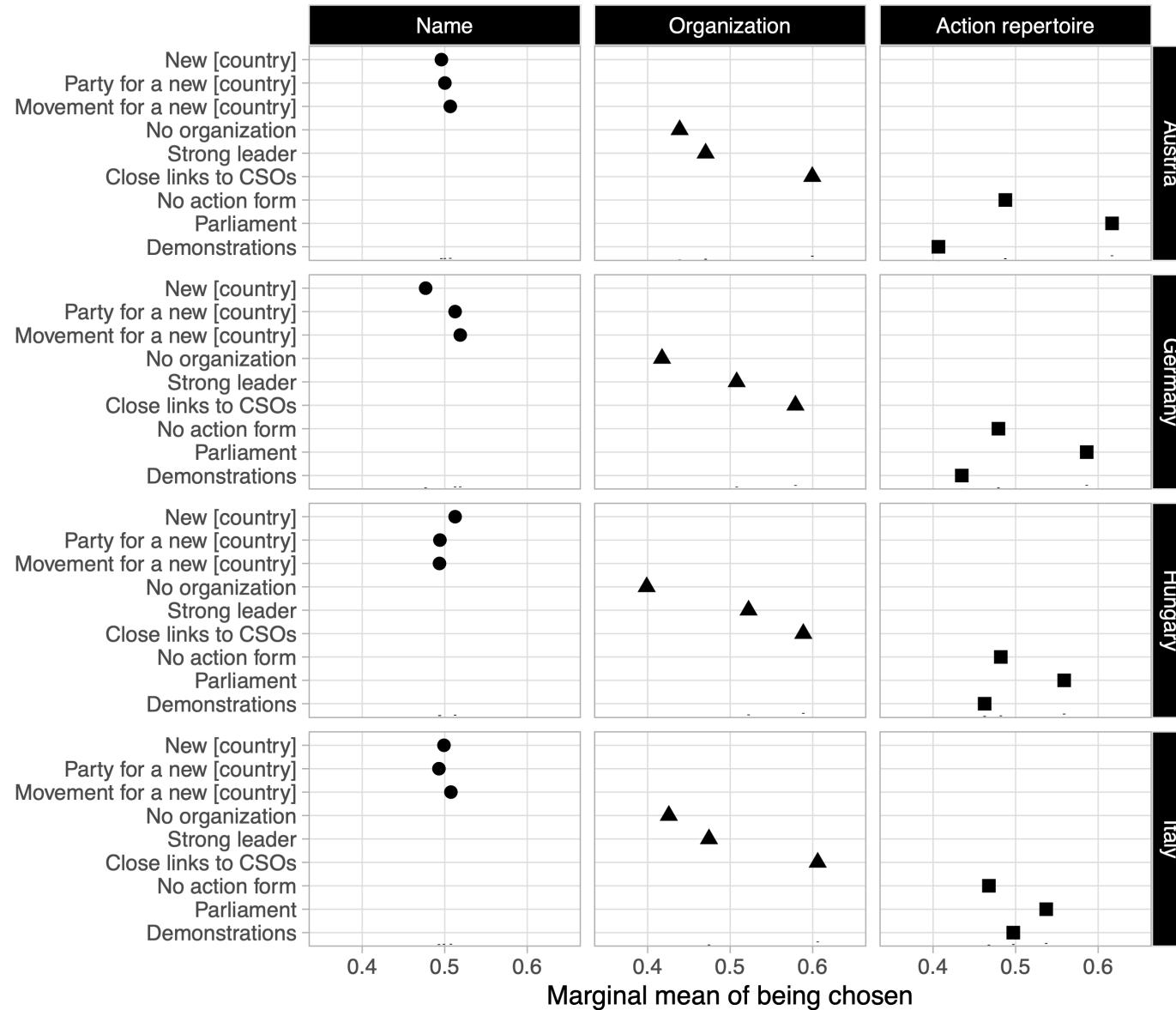
# Heterogenous effects (new parties)



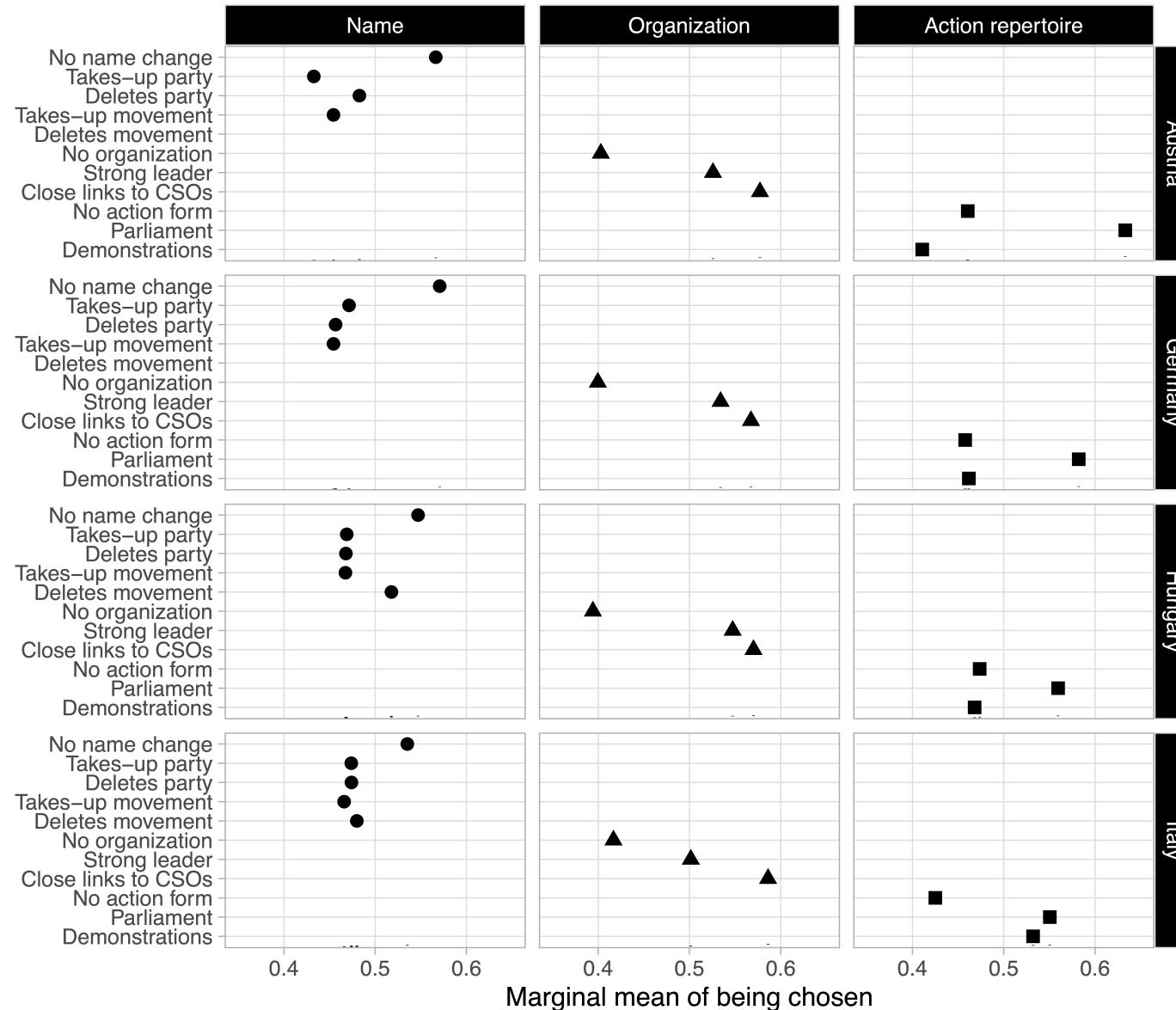
# Heterogenous effects (existing parties)



# Heterogeneity across countries (new parties)



# Heterogeneity across countries (existing parties)



# Anschlussfähigkeit (Beispiele)

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- Institut für Politikwissenschaft
  - Prof. Dr. Melanie Walter-Rogg – Schnittstelle über **Forschungsdesign, Kausalinferenz und empirische Designs** in der Parteien- und Verhaltensforschung
  - Prof. Dr. Jerzy Maćkow – Brücke über **Regimewandel/Autokratisierung** und Vergleiche mit **Transformationsprozessen der 1990er Jahre** (West–Mittel-/Osteuropa)
- DIMAS
  - Prof. Dr. Anna Steigemann – Wie **räumliche Ungleichheiten** (z. B. urbane Kontexte, Inklusion/Exklusion) **Mobilisierungspotenziale von Bewegungen und Parteien** strukturieren
  - Prof. Dr. Rike Krämer-Hoppe – Wie Parteien **Klima-/Umweltnormen** politisieren und in programmatische Angebote/Frames übersetzen
- IOS (Leibniz-Institut für Ost- und Südosteuropaforschung)
  - Dr. Fabian Burkhardt – **Mobilisierung und Partizipation** unter eingeschränkter politischer Konkurrenz (Vergleich Demokratie–Autokratie)

# Lehragenda

## Was ich lehre (Erfahrung)

- Parteien, Parteiensysteme und Parteiwandel
- Partei-Bewegungs-Beziehungen und Protest
- Klimapolitik als politischer Konflikt
- Partizipation und Nicht-Partizipation
- Quantitative Methoden (Umfragen, Experimente, Text-as-Data, Inhaltsanalyse)

## Was ich in Regensburg anbiete

### BA Politikwissenschaft

- Vergleichende Europapolitik; Parteien und Wettbewerb
- Politische Partizipation, Protest, soziale Bewegungen
- Politik in Mittel- und Osteuropa; Klimakonflikte

### MA Demokratiewissenschaft

- Demokratische Krisen und Transformationen
- Repräsentation, Polarisierung, Mobilisierung
- Zivilgesellschaft und „Demokratie von unten“

## Wie ich lehre

- Interaktiv und forschungsnah (Projektarbeit, Peer-Feedback, iterative Betreuung)
- Transparente Leistungserhebung (Schreiben, Präsentationen, digitale Formate)
- Transferorientiert (Gastvorträge, Praxisbeispiele, Kooperationen)
- Deutsch- und englischsprachig, mit Unterstützung für internationale Studierende

# Ongoing and future projects

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## Ongoing projects

### ClimateDivide

- From Valence to Cleavage: Conceptualizing the Climate Divide
- Automated Political Claims Analysis With LLMs

### Party-Movement Interactions

- Party Brands in Europe: Movementization (book manuscript)
- Movement Parties and Parliamentary Speech in Latin America
- Protest as an Anchor: Climate-related Parliamentary Speech

### Participation & Representation

- Opinion Polarisation between Educational Groups

### Democracy & Contestation in CEE

- Ingroup Leniency for Protest Violence (Hungary)

## Future plans

### ClimateDivide

- Survey experiments on climate-related communication
- In and out-group identities in open-ended survey questions
- Qualitative analysis of metaphors in mobilization

### Party-Movement Interactions

- Party brands and media coverage of climate conflict

### Participation & Representation

- Exit and Voice: a multi-level account of political withdrawal

### Democracy & Contestation in CEE

- Re-entry under Backsliding: how withdrawal turns into renewed participation