

# Between Grassroots and Elites?

## Assessing Congruence between Staffers and Party Members<sup>\*</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

This paper examines whether political professionalization causes ideological incongruence between party strata. For the first time ever, this unique study analyzes the internal opinion structure of 5 Flemish political parties by comparing the ideological preferences of staffers and party members. Breaking new theoretical ground, the paper builds on May's law of curvilinear disparity, literature on political professionalization and cleavage theory to predict and interpret (in)congruences between staffers and party members. The analysis is based on the combination of original survey data collected among the staff of 5 Flemish Belgian parties (N=560) with survey data collected among their party members by the MAPP project (N=10.022). Congruence between both groups is measured in-depth, covering 7 salient political issues including socio-economic issues, socio-cultural policies and globalization. The results demonstrate that staffers are mostly congruent with party members, with a few remarkable exceptions. As anticipated by my reinterpretation of cleavage theory, incongruences are more prevalent among mainstream parties and mostly appear on issues concerning globalization. This cosmopolitan bias among staffers is primarily driven by an educational – and generational divide with party members. In the future, these educational and generational contrasts within parties could fuel genuine disagreements between party strata, especially in mainstream parties with old, shrinking membership bases.

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**Keywords:** Political staff, Party Members, Ideological Congruence, Political professionalization

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# Introduction

Political staffers influence how parties put their ideology into practice. As unelected professionals, they are hired to support elected elites behind the scenes on a daily basis. Parliamentary aides draft legislation (Busby and Belkacem, 2013; Pegan, 2017) and assist MP's in controlling the actions of government. Ministerial advisors coordinate with coalition partners (Maley, 2000) and oversee policy implementation by civil servants (Askim et al., 2017). In parties' central offices, political marketers shape strategic communication towards voters (Tenschler et al., 2015). Despite their direct involvement in politics, however, staffers' ideological preferences have been ignored by previous research. Nonetheless, it matters whether staffers share the views of party members because they influence how party policies are voiced and implemented. An ideological mismatch between the party on the ground (members) and the daily practice at political offices (staffers) can cause dissatisfaction among volunteers (van Haute and Carty, 2012; de Vet et al., 2019; Polk and Kölln, 2017) and obscure a party's ideological position among the electorate (Greene and Haber, 2015).

To assess the degree of ideological congruence between staffers and party members, this paper compares their policy preferences for 5 Flemish (Belgian) parties. Firstly, I assess to what extent staffers and party members from the same parties are ideologically congruent (RQ1). Secondly, I investigate whether incongruences are more prevalent among specific parties or policy domains (RQ2). To address these questions, the analysis relies on a pooled dataset, combining original data collected among political staffers (N=560) (Moens, 2020) with secondary data on party members collected for the MAPP project (N=10.022) (Van Haute et al., 2018; Van Haute and Wauters, 2019). The preferences of both groups are compared on 7 specific policy domains: income redistribution, market intervention, authoritarianism, reproductive rights, climate, European integration and immigration.

This innovative paper breaks new empirical and theoretical grounds. On the empirical level, staffers' policy positions and their implications for intra-party politics are analyzed for the first time ever. Moreover, this analysis covers a broad range of issues, allowing for a fine-grained comparison between parties and policy domains. On the theoretical level, the paper introduces new insights to the study of parties' internal opinion structure by drawing from literature on professionalization (Panebianco, 1988) and cleavage theory (Hooghe and Marks, 2018). In doing so, I aim to expand the study of intra-party congruence beyond its traditional, one-sided focus on parties' internal hierarchy. Most importantly, I build on earlier critiques of May's seminal work that argue how

internal disagreements might cut across party strata instead of pitting them against each other (Kitschelt, 1989; Norris, 1995; Van Holsteyn et al., 2015).

The results demonstrate the complex, multi-faceted nature of ideological congruence. On a general level, the policy preferences of staffers and party members are relatively congruent. However, staffers position themselves more progressive or cosmopolitan within specific parties and – policy domains. This gap is particularly striking for issues concerning globalization (EU integration, immigration) and disproportionately affects traditional, long-established parties. Although these incongruences are primarily driven by educational and generational gaps, the contrasts between staffers and party members persist after controlling for these socio-demographic factors.

This paper proceeds as follows. First, I argue why the ideological positions of staffers should be included as an integral part of parties' internal opinion structure. The theory section reflects on potential incongruences by drawing arguments from May's seminal theory (1973), as well as existing literature on professionalization and cleavage theory. In the methods section, I explain the process of data collection for both surveys used in this study and introduce the 7 policy statements that were analyzed and address my operationalization of ideological congruence. After presenting the results, I reflect on the paper's implications for the study of parties' internal opinion structure and the impact of professionalization on parties' ideological coherence.

## **Staffers' political impact**

The increased presence of staffers in contemporary politics embodies the transformation from volunteer-driven mass party organizations to professionalized, capital-intensive politics (Katz and Mair, 1995; Farrell, 1996; Panebianco, 1988). Empirical studies have demonstrated how increasing staff size (Krouwel, 2012; Kölln, 2015) has coincided with dwindling party membership figures (Van Biezen and Poguntke, 2014; Van Biezen et al., 2012). According to cartel party theory, the accumulation of resources by elected elites (including staff) has marginalized the party on the ground, comprised mainly of voluntary activists (Katz and Mair, 2002; Katz and Mair, 1993). In a similar vein, it is generally acknowledged that the priorities of staff-driven organizations differ from those who are dominated by volunteers (Kreutzer and Jäger, 2011; Ivanovska Hadjievaska and Stavenes, 2020; Bolleyer and Correa, 2020). Despite a universal acknowledgement of their growing importance, staffers' opinions have not been considered by previous studies of parties' internal opinion structure (May, 1973; Kitschelt, 1989; Norris, 1995; Narud and Skare, 1999; Kennedy et al., 2006; Van Holsteyn et al., 2015).

The policy preferences of staffers matter because they are closely involved in political representation and – decision-making. Those who focus on communication have a direct impact on the framing and salience of political issues towards voters (Sabag Ben-Porat and Lehman-Wilzig, 2020; Dommett et al., 2020; Tenschler et al., 2015). Parliamentary aides prepare the activities of MP's, who voice the preferences of their constituents during parliamentary debates and introduce legislation drafted by staffers (Busby and Belkacem, 2013; Wolfs and De Winter, 2017). In coalition governments, ministerial advisors are an integral part of the deliberation between coalition partners and they coordinate with civil servants for policy implementation (Maley, 2011; Askim et al., 2017; Gouglas et al., 2015). Policy experts play a pivotal role during government negotiations, draft legislation and flesh out specific policy proposals (Pittoors et al., 2017). Moreover, they often hold the pen during the preparation of the election manifesto's that get discussed and approved at party congresses. To ensure that staffers act on their behalf during all of these activities, elected elites in parliamentary democracies prefer to recruit their staff among party members (Moens, 2020).

Although elected elites assume formal political responsibility for the activities of their personnel, existing studies show that staffers have a significant impact on political practices. Laube et al. (2020) demonstrate how staffers' informal contributions to policy formulation are actively 'invisibilized' to 'uphold the legitimacy' of formal representation by elected elites. Empirical studies in the US context demonstrate how staffers have a measurable impact on various fronts. Firstly, Montgomery and Nyhan (2017) show that staffers directly affect the productivity and policy preferences of representatives by analyzing the consequences of staff exchanges between members of Congress. Secondly, McCrain (2018) observed that connections to political staffers are of great value to lobbying firms, even more so than direct connections to elected elites. Thirdly, the descriptive representation of women (Rosenthal and Bell, 2003; Johannes, 1984) and Latino's (Wilson, 2013) among staff increases their substantive representation. In a similar vein, Landgrave and Weller (2020) have demonstrated that the involvement of staffers in constituency services significantly reduces discrimination against racial minority constituents.

## **Staffers and congruence**

Studies of parties' internal opinion structure are inextricably linked to May's infamous law of curvilinear disparity (1973). However, empirical tests of May's seminal theory have been inconclusive at best (Norris, 1995; Kitschelt, 1989; Narud and Skare, 1999; Kennedy et al., 2006; Van Holsteyn et al., 2015). While some have argued that May's theoretical framework should be modified (Kitschelt, 1989; Narud and Skare, 1999), others have proposed to abandon it altogether to enable a more open study of ideological congruence (Van Holsteyn et al., 2015). This paper aims

to join this more open-ended approach by applying new theoretical perspectives to the study of parties' internal opinion structure. First, I discuss why the preferences of both groups may or may not be congruent. On the one hand, empirical studies on political staff indicate that they hold views similar to party members (Moens, 2020; Karlsen and Saglie, 2017). On the other hand, theories of professionalization suggest the opposite (Panebianco, 1988; Katz and Mair, 1995). Second, I develop two theoretical interpretations for incongruence between staffers and party members by building on May's law of curvilinear disparity (May, 1973) and cleavage theory (Hooghe and Marks, 2018).

The vast majority of staffers is recruited among party members (Webb and Fisher, 2003; Karlsen and Saglie, 2017; Moens, 2020). This practice has several advantages for elected elites, including the fact that party members generally are unlikely to deviate from a party's ideological principles (Moens, 2020). As staffers are entrusted with tasks that directly affect political representation, appointing party members to these paid positions ensures that they will share the party's political objectives. Empirical studies of staffers in Western Europe confirm that most staffers are not just party members but highly committed party activists (Moens, 2020; Karlsen and Saglie, 2017). Even in the US context, often considered the Mecca of political professionalization, many similarities between volunteers and professionals remain (Super, 2009). Due to staffers' involvement with the party on the ground, Karlsen & Saglie (2017) argue that their presence even helps to keep elected elites aligned with the preferences of the membership base: "*Their attachment to the grassroots organisation, as indicated by their local political offices, may also prevent employees from becoming uncritical yeasayers for the leadership*" (Karlsen and Saglie, 2017: 17-18). From this perspective, staffers can be considered as true party soldiers who share the ideological orientations of party members.

**H1a: Congruence thesis: staffers and party members hold similar ideological positions.**

In contrast, influential party models suggest that political professionals and party activists take other ideological positions because they have different interests (Panebianco, 1988; Katz and Mair, 1995). From this perspective, both elected elites and staffers are office-seekers, whereas party activists are policy seekers. Echoing May's infamous law of curvilinear disparity (May, 1973), this argument draws a sharp contrast between the political involvement of staffers and party members. As activists volunteer for a party during their spare time out of dedication to its policies, they are not economically affected by a party's performance in office. In contrast, staffers' relationship to politics is an economical transaction: they deliver a range of services in exchange for remuneration (Katz and Mair, 2009). Paraphrasing Weber, party members "*live for*" politics whereas staffers and elected elites "*live off*" politics (Weber, 1921). If a party's loses parliamentary seats or drops out of

government, both elected elites and staffers are at risk of losing their position. According to May's seminal approach, these diverging incentive structures cause ideological incongruence between members and elites (1973). More specifically, sub-leaders (members) strongly adhere to a party's core principles while top leaders (elected elites) cater to voters as a matter of self-preservation. As a result, staffers' "*needs and concerns for status, security, and even their attitudes towards policies*" become part of a party's considerations (Schlesinger, 1984: 394).

**H1b: Incongruence thesis: staffers and party members hold different ideological positions.**

May's seminal theory argues that political leaders take more moderate positions than party members (1973). The underlying causal mechanism is based on two types of incentives: electoral and institutional. I argue that the same incentives apply to political staffers. Firstly, electoral competition stimulates elites to maximize support among centrist voters. This electoral incentive is a self-reinforcing mechanism: electoral competition favors ideologically moderate elites, who then focus on the median voter to ensure re-election. While Kirchheimer (1966) coined this process of centripetal competition as a key element of the *catchball* party, Panebianco (1988) discussed its organizational implications as a key feature of his *electoral-professional* party. Influenced by these seminal party models, conventional wisdom among party scholars stipulates that staffers are an a-political, office-oriented party stratum. "*Professionalization takes place both in the central office-which becomes a professional campaign organization-and at the parliamentary party-which will depoliticize into a policymaking bureaucracy* (Krouwel, 2012: 244)". Secondly, participation in elected office produces more moderate elites due to inter-party cooperation. During their time in elected office, leaders engage in deal-making with political opponents. Especially in multi-party systems with coalition governments, elites need to forge compromises to get policies implemented. More often than not, the details of such deals are hammered out by staffers by coordinating with their peers in other parties (Maley, 2011). If this process of institutional socialization moderates the views of elected elites, it should equally affect staffers. As a result, staffers from all parties can be expected to be consistently more centrist than party members.

**H2a: Moderate elite thesis: staffers hold more centrist ideological positions than party members.**

Cleavage theory offers a more fine-grained approach to intra-party congruence as it singles out specific parties and policy domains. More specifically, I apply Hooghe and Marks' work on the emerging transnational cleavage (2018) to intra-party dynamics, hypothesizing that staffers are more cosmopolitan than members in traditional, long-established parties. Hooghe and Marks

(2018) argue that the GAL/TAN dimension (Green Alternative Libertarian/ Traditional Authoritarian Nationalist) is transforming the European political landscape. Fueled by globalization, a “new cultural divide” (Kriesi, 2010; Bornschier, 2010) between universalist and particularist values is increasingly dominating political competition. I argue that this divide does not only affect competition between parties, but also fuels internal disagreement. Existing research within this framework has primarily focused on the electoral appeal of Western-European social democrats (Kitschelt, 1994; Abou-Chadi and Wagner, 2019; Oesch and Rennwald, 2018). However, Gaasendam et al. (2020) applied cleavage theory to intra-party congruence in their study of Flemish social democrats, demonstrating a mismatch between universalistic elites and particularistic voters and members.

The emergence of the transnational cleavage affects parties unequally (Hooghe and Marks, 2018). Building on the seminal work of Lipset and Rokkan (1967), Hooghe and Marks (2018) argue that the chronological sequence of cleavage – and party formation is key to understanding differences between parties. Traditional party families were formed after the cleavages described by Lipset and Rokkan (1967) were established. Hence, these parties arose as the political expression of pre-existing, entrenched collective identities (e.g. socialism as political expression of the working class). Of course, the formation of these traditional parties predates the more recent emergence of the transnational cleavage. As a result, the transnational cleavage cuts right across the support base of traditional mainstream parties, creating sharp internal tensions (Hooghe and Marks, 2018). In contrast to mainstream parties with a moderate position on this dimension, the emerging cleavage does not divide new challenger parties (greens, radical right) because they represent more extreme positions on this dimension. I argue that internal disagreements on this new cleavage can translate into incongruences between party strata because particular socio-demographic groups are overrepresented among staffers. In particular, age and level of education are important predictors: older, less-educated voters disproportionately lean towards particularist positions (Hobolt, 2016; Oesch, 2006). At the same time, staffers are known to be substantially younger and high-educated than party members (Webb and Fisher, 2003). Based on this perspective, I argue that staffers are likely to have more universalistic values than party members.

**H2b: Cultural divide thesis: staffers from mainstream parties hold more cosmopolitan positions than party members.**

## Data and method

The dataset includes 5 Flemish (Belgian) parties: Christian Democrats, Greens, Flemish Nationalists, Liberals and Social Democrats. These cases include parties with larger and smaller membership bases, accompanied by various staff sizes. Moreover, the 5 parties included in the analysis cover the bulk of the Flemish ideological spectrum, with the exception of the radical right party<sup>‡</sup>, which refused cooperation in both research projects.

**Table 1: Overview of cases**

Party	Party family	Vote share	Membership size <sup>a</sup>	Staff size <sup>a</sup>
N-VA	Flemish nationalist	32%	40.482	560
CD&V	Christian democrat	20%	44.394	521
Open Vld	Liberal	14%	57.340	417
Sp.a	Social democrat	14%	42.820	192
Groen	Green	9%	8.801	91

**Note:** Data reflect the situation during data collection (2018-2019). a: population data provided by parties

The empirical analysis is based on a combination of two sources: the existing MAPP-dataset on party members (Van Haute et al., 2018) and an original dataset on political staffers (Moens, 2020). MAPP-data were collected through an online survey between November 2017 and August 2018, with an invitation being sent to 193.837 registered party members with an e-mail address. Reaching 10.022 respondents, the survey obtained a response rate of 5%. To compensate sampling errors, post-stratification weighting was applied based on population data on sex and age (weighting factors range from 0,64 to 4,74). Staff data were collected through an online survey between November 2018 and March 2019. An e-mail invitation was sent to 1.781 staffers, followed up by an additional reminder to participate in the project. Receiving 560 responses, this survey attained a response rate of 31%. Post-stratification weights were calculated based on population data on the number of staffers within each party, party face and age category (weighting factors range from 0,63 to 1,37).

The questionnaires of both survey projects included identical questions on policy positions. Respondents were invited to evaluate policy statements on 7 salient political issues: income

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<sup>‡</sup> Vlaams Belang (VB), which represented 6% of the Flemish vote during the legislature in which data were collected (2014-2019).



redistribution, market intervention, authoritarianism, reproductive rights, climate, EU integration and immigration. Responses were structured as 5-point Likert scales (1= Strongly agree, 2= Agree, 3= Neither agree nor disagree, 4= Disagree, 5= Strongly disagree). Within each party, the evaluation of these policy statements among party members and staffers will be compared to measure their ideological congruence.

**Table 2: Policy statements**

<b>Income redistribution</b>	Income and wealth should be redistributed towards ordinary people.
<b>Market intervention</b>	The government should abstain from intervening in the economy.
<b>Authoritarianism</b>	People who break the law should be given tougher sentences.
<b>Reproductive rights</b>	Women should be free to decide on matters of abortion.
<b>Climate</b>	Stronger measures should be taken to protect the environment.
<b>European integration</b>	Our country on balance has benefited from being a member of the EU.
<b>Immigration</b>	Immigrants should be required to adapt to the customs of this country.

As the aim is to measure the ideological similarities between two groups, this type of congruence should be analyzed as a many-to-many relationship (Golder and Stramski, 2010). As pointed out by Golder and Stramski (2010), this implies that the distributions of both groups on the ideological spectrum should be an integral part of the analysis. To grasp the full scope of this type of congruence, the empirical analysis examines both the degree of overlap between members and staffers and their respective ideological positions. Firstly, the degree of overlap (0% to 100%) between members and staffers was calculated for each policy domain within each party. This value was obtained by calculating the total sum of the proportion of members and staffers with an identical response for each response category (totally disagree to totally agree) on a particular policy domain. Hence, I operationalize the degree of ideological overlap between political staffers and party members within a certain policy domain as:

$$\sum_i^n 1 - \left(\frac{1}{2} |P_{staff_i} - P_{members_i}|\right)$$

where n is the number of categories on the Likert scale (1 to 5) and P staff<sub>i</sub> and P members<sub>i</sub> refer to the proportion of staffers and party members within category 'i'. This operationalization results in a value between 0% (total incongruence) and 100% (total congruence). To illustrate this degree of ideological overlap, the distributions of both groups have also been visualized (Figure 1; Appendix A). Secondly, the positions of members and staffers are analyzed through a pairwise

means comparison to identify the particular policy domains and parties opinions with significant differences. This particular approach is based on the work of Gaasendam et al. (2020), who studied ideological congruence among the Flemish social democrats. To facilitate the interpretation of these ideological positions, values were recoded so that lower values correspond to leftist, progressive or cosmopolitan positions and vice versa.

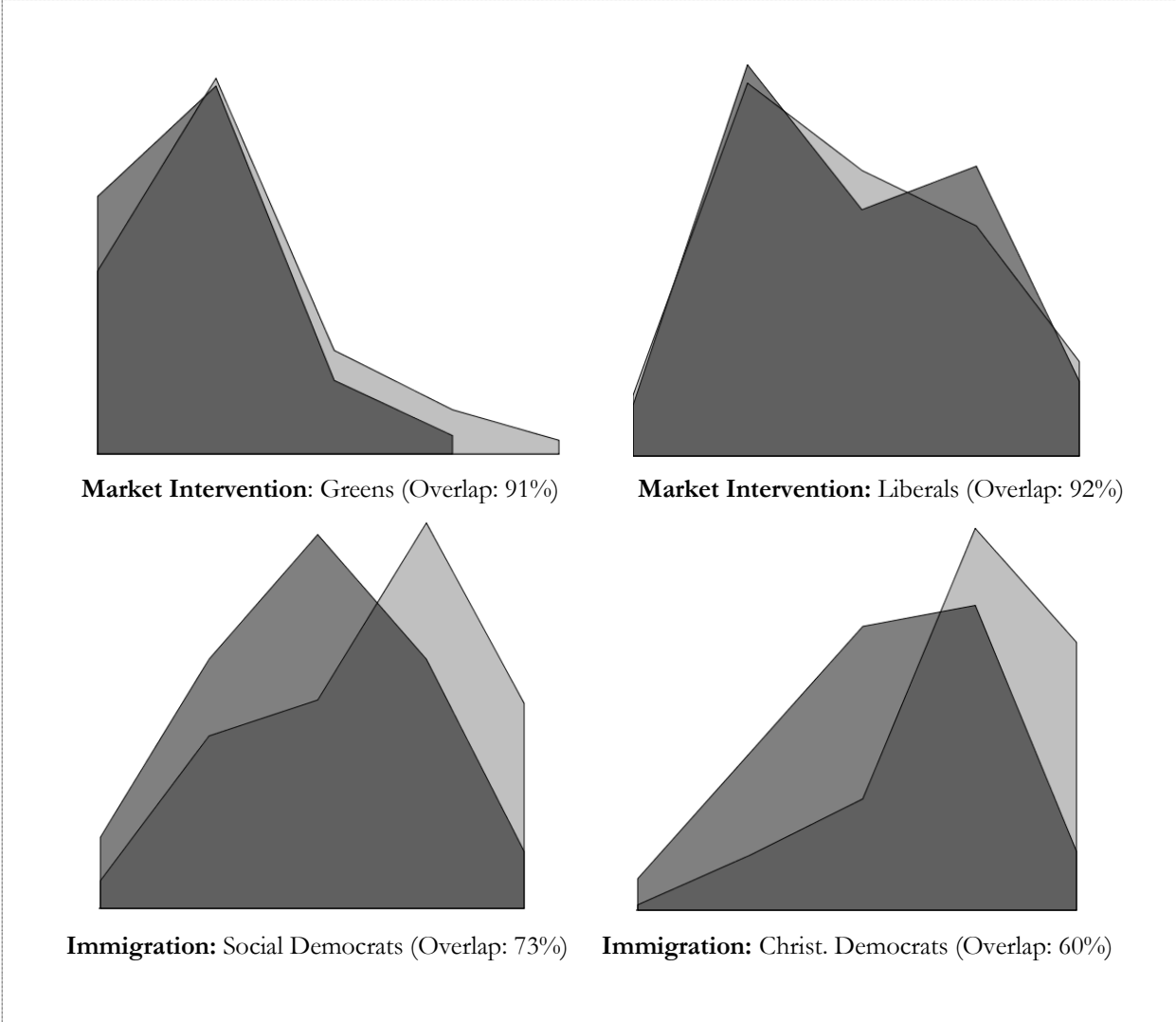
Lastly, multiple logistic regression models were estimated on each policy domain to analyze which factors explain incongruences between members and staffers. As the distribution of the dependent variables (ideological position) are not normally distributed, variables were recoded into dummies, with 1 indicating a leftist, progressive or cosmopolitan position. The three main independent variables of interest are age (18-35, 36-50 or 50+), education (no higher education, higher non-college or college) and relationship to the party (member or staffer). The models control for party affiliation (party family), which is expected to be the main predictor of the ideological position of respondents. Lastly, sex was added to control for the potentially diverging preferences among male and female respondents (e.g. reproductive rights).

## Results

To assess the ideological overlap between staffers and party members (RQ1), I examine the similarities between both groups for 7 separate policy domains (income redistribution, market intervention, reproductive rights, authoritarianism, climate, EU integration and immigration). For each policy domain, the preferences of staffers and party members within each party are compared visually (Figure 1; Appendix A) and mathematically (Table 3). To illustrate the differences between congruence and internal (dis)agreement, Figure 1 shows several typical examples of how the preferences of staffers and members can be related. Closer examination of these plots demonstrates two important points. Firstly, congruence is attainable without internal agreement. Congruence just means that the distribution of preferences among staffers and members is similar. However, internal agreement is only attained when preferences cluster around the same position. For example, the greens are relatively unanimous in their support for market intervention (agreement) and the distribution of preferences of staffers and members is very similar (congruence). In contrast, the liberal party contains both supporters and opponents of market intervention (disagreement). Nonetheless, congruence between staffers and members is high because both wings are represented equally in both party strata. Secondly, a lower degree of congruence can be the outcome of either diverging positions or the result of more pronounced support for a position. For example, social democratic staffers cluster around the center on migration while most members

prefer a closed position on this issue (diverging position). In contrast, the slight lean towards the right among Christian democratic staffers is significantly more outspoken among members.

**Figure 1: Ideological overlap between staffers and party members**



**Note:** Distribution of staffers (dark) and party members (light), scale: from left/cosmopolitan to right/particularist

In general, the results show that staffers and party members mostly take similar positions. Congruence ranges between 97% (Greens on climate) and 60% (Christian democrats on immigration), rarely dropping below the 75% threshold (Table 3). However, the degree of overlap is considerably lower for specific parties and policy domains. More specifically, ideological congruence is lower in traditional parties (Christian democrats, liberals, social democrats) and immigration clearly presents the most divisive issue.

**Table 3: Ideological overlap between staffers and members**

	Greens	Social Democrats	Christian Democrats	Liberals	Flemish Nationalists
<b>Income redistribution</b>	89%	90%	90%	88%	86%
<b>Market Intervention</b>	91%	76%	<u>75%</u>	92%	94%
<b>Reproductive rights</b>	83%	76%	85%	<u>75%</u>	89%
<b>Authoritarianism</b>	77%	92%	91%	84%	93%
<b>Climate</b>	97%	89%	91%	90%	89%
<b>European Integration</b>	81%	89%	80%	<u>72%</u>	81%
<b>Immigration</b>	<u>71%</u>	<u>73%</u>	<u>60%</u>	<u>71%</u>	81%

Note: marked values  $\leq 75\%$

What specific direction do these incongruences take (RQ2)? A pairwise comparison of the mean positions of both groups demonstrates that staffers consistently position themselves to the left of party members (Table 4). This pattern is most notable among traditional party families and for issues concerning globalization. Staffers are significantly more open to immigration than party members in all parties included in the analysis. This ideological contrast is most striking among Christian democrats and liberals: the distance between staffers and party members covers approximately 25% of the maximum distance. Similarly, European integration reflects the more cosmopolitan views of staffers: support for European integration is significantly stronger among staffers than among party members in all but two parties (greens, social democrats).

The positions of staffers and members are the most congruent on classic socio-economic issues (market intervention, income redistribution). Support for income redistribution is equal among staffers and members within all parties. On the question of market intervention, however, both social democratic and Christian democratic staffers are significantly more interventionist than party members. On socio-cultural issues (reproductive rights, authoritarianism, regionalism), results are comparable. Only Christian democratic staffers consistently position themselves more progressive than party members on these policy domains.

The observed ideological incongruences should be interpreted carefully. Staffers are by no means a cohesive group of cosmopolitan leftists. Their positions largely reflect party competition in general, clustering into three (left – center – and right block) or two groups (left – and right block), on most issues (Table 4). However, the picture is more complicated for the most divisive issue of globalization. On immigration, the staffers of traditional party families (social democrats, Christian

**Table 4: Pairwise comparison of mean positions**

	<b>Green Staff</b>	<b>Green Members</b>	<b>Social Democratic Staff</b>	<b>Social Democratic Members</b>	<b>Christian Democratic Staff</b>	<b>Christian Democratic Members</b>	<b>Liberal staff</b>	<b>Liberal Members</b>	<b>Flemish Nationalist Staff</b>	<b>Flemish Nationalist Members</b>
Income redistribution	1,67	1,9	1,72	1,85	2,53	2,54	3,26	3,35	3,39	3,26
Market intervention	1,83	2,05	1,73 *	2,28 *	1,98 *	2,47 *	2,85	2,89	2,75	2,7
Reproductive rights	1,17	1,47	1,31	1,41	2,04 *	2,27 *	1,24	1,46	1,65	1,82
Authoritarianism	3,1	3,01	3,37	3,45	3,36 *	3,65 *	3,63	3,8	4,09	4,12
Climate	1,14	1,23	1,45	1,65	1,91	1,97	2,02	2,16	1,99	2,1
EU integration	1,74	1,97	1,99	2,26	1,77 *	2,24 *	1,69 *	2,31 *	2,29 *	2,61 *
Immigration	2,32 *	2,96 *	2,97 *	3,54 *	3,16 *	4,07 *	3,44 *	4,19 *	4,36 *	4,59 *
<b>N</b>	29	1139	54	2414	162	2194	134	247	181	4002

**Note:** Values represent mean positions of groups (1= left/progressive/cosmopolitan, 5= right/conservative/particularist). \*: significant difference between staffers and party members. N refers to item with smallest N. Tukey HSD correction was applied to correct for Type I error.

democrats, liberals) hold centrist positions that are not shared by the more particularist positions of members. Despite these incongruences, the mean positions of staffers and members of the same party are never at the opposite side of the political spectrum. Even on the most divisive issues, incongruence is limited to how strongly they lean towards the left or right side of the scale. In short, staffers roughly align with members but lean towards the more progressive and cosmopolitan wing of their party.

Should these descriptive incongruences between staffers and members be considered genuine disagreements between party strata? To evaluate whether the contrasts between their preferences are indeed substantial, 7 multiple logistic regressions were estimated explaining which respondents hold more progressive/cosmopolitan positions (Table 5). As such, the models test the robustness of the descriptive findings by introducing other key factors to explain a person's policy preferences (party affiliation, socio-demographic). Not surprisingly, party affiliation by far has the strongest impact on policy preferences among staffers and party members. Party-related estimates consistently exceed socio-demographic factors and the difference between staffers and party members. More surprisingly, the models demonstrate that socio-demographic factors are the main drivers of intra-party disagreement. On most issues, a college degree is the strongest predictor of holding a more progressive/cosmopolitan position. Similarly, generational differences are more consequential than the contrast between staffers and members. Nonetheless, staffers do remain significantly more progressive/cosmopolitan on several issues after controlling for party affiliation and socio-demographic factors. The strongest effect can be observed on immigration: staffers are more than twice as likely as party members to hold a cosmopolitan position. Staffers are also more likely to support climate policies, reproductive rights and European integration. Surprisingly, staffers are more repressive on authoritarianism issues. Although this contrast does not occur descriptively (Table 4), it does arise once the strong educational differences between both groups are controlled for.

The results demonstrate that the preferences of staffers and members are mostly congruent. Regardless of the method applied to assess congruence between both groups, policy preferences are convincingly coherent in most parties. The strong impact of party affiliation partially supports the congruence thesis (H1a), as staffers and party members mostly hold similar ideological positions. Despite their different relationship to political parties, the incongruence thesis (H1b) does not seem to hold: the preferences of staffers and members do not diverge consistently in all cases. However, the preferences of staffers and party members are no perfect match either. Incongruence follows a distinct pattern: some parties and policy domains are clearly more prone to disagreements. Ideological mismatches between staffers and members are more prevalent in

**Table 5: Explaining progressive/cosmopolitan positions among party members and staffers**

	Support for Income redistribution (N=10.635)	Support for Market intervention (N=10.638)	Support for Reproductive rights (N=10.634)	Opposed to Authoritarianism (N=10.638)	Support for Climate Policies (N=10.637)	Open to EU integration (N=10.625)	Open to Immigration (N=10.613)
<b>Staffer</b>	1,05 (0,11)	0,93 (0,10)	1,36 (0,15) *	0,43 (0,18) ***	1,67 (0,14) ***	1,34 (0,11) *	2,05 (0,14) ***
<b>Age</b> ( <i>ref.: 50+</i> )							
18-35	0,85 (0,09) °	1,31 (0,08) **	1,67 (0,12) ***	1,06 (0,11)	1,04 (0,11)	1,55 (0,09) ***	2,18 (0,10) ***
36-50	0,88 (0,07) °	1,51 (0,06) ***	1,35 (0,08) ***	1,16 (0,08) °	1,21 (0,08) *	1,08 (0,07)	1,55 (0,09) ***
<b>Education</b> ( <i>ref.: No higher education</i> )							
Higher non-college	0,79 (0,06) ***	1,50 (0,05) ***	0,94 (0,07)	1,58 (0,08) ***	1,19 (0,06) **	1,62 (0,05) ***	1,43 (0,09) ***
College	0,96 (0,06)	2,23 (0,05) ***	0,89 (0,07)	2,64 (0,08) ***	1,13 (0,07) °	3,93 (0,06) ***	2,31 (0,09) ***
<b>Party</b> ( <i>ref.: Flemish Nationalists</i> )							
Greens	15,97 (0,09) ***	3,41 (0,08) ***	2,73 (0,12) ***	6,90 (0,10) ***	11,28 (0,18) ***	3,15 (0,08) ***	40,94 (0,16) ***
Social democrats	16,16 (0,07) ***	2,28 (0,05) ***	3,84 (0,10) ***	4,03 (0,09) ***	3,01 (0,08) ***	2,08 (0,06) ***	24,22 (0,16) ***
Christian democrats	3,57 (0,05) ***	1,89 (0,05) ***	0,43 (0,06) ***	2,68 (0,10) ***	1,36 (0,06) ***	2,40 (0,06) ***	6,79 (0,17) ***
Liberals	0,84 (0,13)	0,66 (0,11) ***	2,49 (0,20) ***	2,56 (0,19) ***	0,92 (0,13)	1,78 (0,12) ***	5,32 (0,24) ***
<b>Female</b>	0,82 (0,05) ***	0,89 (0,05) *	1,52 (0,07) ***	0,84 (0,07) *	1,08 (0,06)	0,50 (0,05) ***	0,96 (0,07)
<b>Constant</b>	0,41 (0,05) ***	0,62 (0,05) *	3,93 (0,06) ***	0,03 (0,09) ***	2,60 (0,05) ***	0,65 (0,05) ***	0,01 (0,16) ***
<b>Nagelkerke's R<sup>2</sup></b>	0,34	0,10	0,14	0,12	0,09	0,16	0,28

**Note:** Odds ratios (SE's) of multiple logistic regressions; ° p < .1, \* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001

mainstream parties and on issues concerning globalization. When such incongruences occur, staffers position themselves more progressive or cosmopolitan than members. This observation aligns with the cultural divide thesis (H2b), which stated that staffers are more cosmopolitan than party members on issues concerning globalization. In contrast, the results offer little support for the moderate elite thesis (H2a), which expected staffers to be more moderate than members.

I argue that cleavage theory can expand the study of intra-party congruence beyond May's classic hierarchical approach (1973). Most importantly, it offers an alternative explanation for how and why the preferences of party strata diverge. Firstly, the cultural divide thesis accurately predicts that mainstream parties are more divided and that issues of globalization are more divisive. Secondly, the impact of educational and generational differences nuances the apparent ideological contrasts between staffers and members. In fact, the models show that ideological incongruence between staffers and party members is primarily driven by staffers' comparatively higher level of education and their younger age. In this sense, the positions of staffers amplify pre-existing cleavages between different types of party members (young vs. old, lower – vs. higher-educated). Indeed, this is the case for policy domains such as immigration, reproductive rights and European integration. In contrast, the main cleavage on climate lies between staffers and party members. However, the ideological overlap between both groups is so high on climate that this can hardly be considered a substantial disagreement (Table 3).

## Conclusion

The professionalization of politics has led to the emergence of a new party stratum: professional staff. While their increased presence in parties' central and public offices is relatively well-documented (Katz and Mair, 2002; Krouwel, 2012; Kölln, 2015), this unelected elite remains chronically under-researched (Webb and Keith, 2017). In spite of their daily involvement in politics, their political preferences have never before been considered. This is especially surprising as evidence of their impact on politics is growing (Laube et al., 2020; Montgomery and Nyhan, 2017; McCrain, 2018). For the first time ever, this innovative paper examines the ideological congruence of parties by comparing their policy preferences to those of party members. The empirical analysis relies on a pooled data-set of 5 Flemish parties combining pre-existing data on 10.022 party members (Van Haute and Wauters, 2019) with original data on 560 staffers (Moens, 2020). Covering a broad range of salient issues, this in-depth study examines how staffers and members think about income redistribution, market intervention, authoritarianism, reproductive rights, climate, European integration and immigration. Results show that congruence between staffers and members in Flanders is generally high. Although parties often cover a sizeable range of the



ideological spectrum, both party strata equally reflect this diversity of opinions in most cases. The ideological overlap between staffers and party members rarely drops below 75%. These observations confirm that Flemish parties prefer to recruit loyal party members for paid staff positions (Moens, 2020). In some instances, however, staffers disproportionately lean towards the more progressive or cosmopolitan wing of their party. This systematic, cosmopolitan bias follows a distinct pattern, as it mostly occurs in mainstream parties and often concerns globalization.

Although this paper builds on May's seminal work on intra-party dynamics (1973), it encountered several limitations raised by earlier critiques of the law of curvilinear disparity (Kitschelt, 1989; Norris, 1995; Van Holsteyn et al., 2015). Following the suggestion of Van Holsteyn et al. (2015) to develop a "*more open study of the opinion structure of parties*", this paper overcame these limitations by applying recent insights from cleavage theory (Hooghe and Marks, 2018). Two particular critiques of May's law of curvilinear disparity resurfaced here: my empirical observations cast doubt on a) its claims to universal applicability and b) its one-sided focus on hierarchical disagreements.

Firstly, Kitschelt (1989) already argued why May's predictions would only materialize under specific conditions. In a similar vein, this study illustrates that incongruence only occurs in some parties and on some issues. In this case, cleavage theory explains why mainstream parties are more divided and why globalization is so divisive. According to Hooghe and Marks (2018), mainstream parties are divided on globalization because they were founded long before the emergence of the transnational cleavage. As the increasingly dominant "cultural divide" between universalists and particularists sets in motion a process of realignment, this new cleavage cuts right across the support base of long-established parties. In contrast, challenger parties (greens, radical right) hold unambiguous positions on globalization because they entered political competition during the emergence of the transnational cleavage. Of course, the impact of this new cleavage could not be foreseen by May's theory. It was developed in an era when mainstream parties dominated electoral competition, which was structured along one dominant socio-economical dimension. Admittedly, the cosmopolitan bias of staffers goes beyond the expectations of cleavage theory. While cleavage theory anticipates disagreement on globalization in mainstream parties, staffers are also more cosmopolitan than members in newer parties (greens on immigration, Flemish nationalists on EU integration). Moreover, Christian democratic staffers are also more progressive than members on more classic policy domains (market intervention, reproductive rights, authoritarianism). This is especially notable for CD&V, as it self-identifies as a political formation that transcends cleavages.

Secondly, Kitschelt (1989) and Norris (1995) have argued that May's theory wrongfully assumes that party strata are ideological monoliths. Curvilinear disparity exclusively focuses on hierarchical conflicts between leaders and followers, remaining blind to fault lines that cut across party strata.

This paper shows that a one-sided focus on party strata (staff vs. members) would obscure more important drivers of intra-party disagreement. In line with earlier observations among voters (Hobolt, 2016; Oesch, 2006), it demonstrates that education and age are key determinants explaining an individual's position on the transnational cleavage. When it comes to their ideological preferences, party members with a college degree have more in common with highly educated staffers than with lower-educated fellow members. This alternative explanation for incongruence puts the apparent division between staffers and members into perspective. Rather than creating a genuine internal cleavage between professionals and volunteers, professionalization amplifies existing disagreements because staffers are often young and highly educated. That being said, it is striking that the more progressive/cosmopolitan preferences of staffers persist after controlling for the educational and generational gap with party members. Future research could examine whether this can be explained by staffers' distinct occupational background, another central determinant of political preferences (Kriesi et al., 2006; Oesch and Rennwald, 2018).

Of course, the observations in this paper remain limited to the Flemish case. From a systemic perspective, curvilinear disparity is unlikely in the Belgian case because its institutional setting fosters tightly organized parties (Deschouwer, 2009). As a historically divided society, however, even internal disagreements along traditional cleavages (e.g. Christian democrats) are not especially surprising. Furthermore, the strong politicization of immigration since the emergence of the radical right in the 1990s (Dancygier and Margalit, 2020) could have supercharged the divisiveness of this issue within Flemish parties. However, Belgium shares both of these characteristics with plenty other European nations. For this reason, I am confident that similar patterns can be expected in other European parliamentary democracies with established party systems.

The findings signal that professionalization has potential real-world implications for party cohesion. For now, professionalization is not the main driver of intra-party disagreement. Rising tensions between groups of supporters with contrasting generational and educational backgrounds are a more likely source of internal conflicts. Yet parties should be mindful that staffers do not reflect the views of the party on the ground – even when the vast majority of them is recruited among a party's membership base. As parties will likely continue selecting young and highly educated members for staff positions, educational and generational divides could indeed crystallize along party strata in the future. This risk is especially pressing in traditional mass membership parties with older, lower-educated memberships that will keep shrinking for the foreseeable future.

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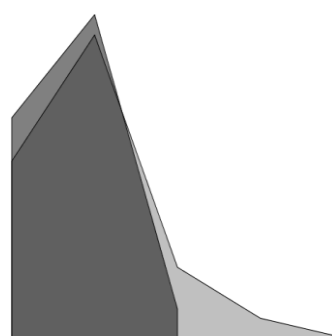
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# Appendix A. Ideological overlap

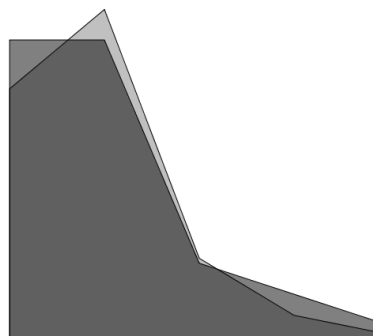
## Income Redistribution

	Overlap	Staff		Members	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Greens	89%	1,67	0,59	1,90	0,77
Social Democrats	90%	1,72	0,79	1,85	0,79
Christian Democrats	90%	2,53	0,87	2,54	1,00
Liberals	88%	3,26	1,01	3,35	1,00
Flemish Nationalists	86%	3,39	0,88	3,26	1,07

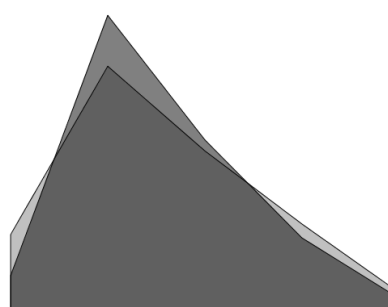
Figures: Distribution of staff (dark) and party members (light); Left = support for income redistribution, Right = opposition to income redistribution



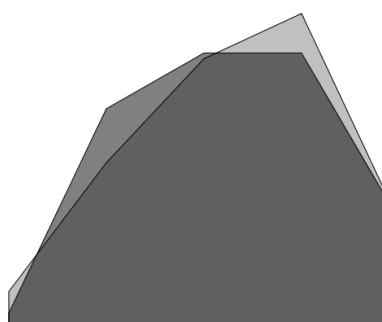
Greens



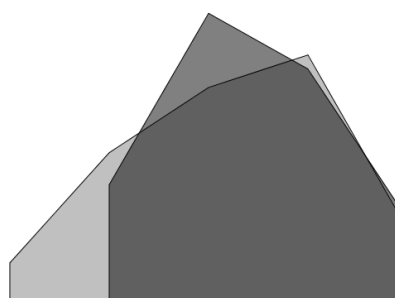
Social Democrats



Christian Democrats



Liberals

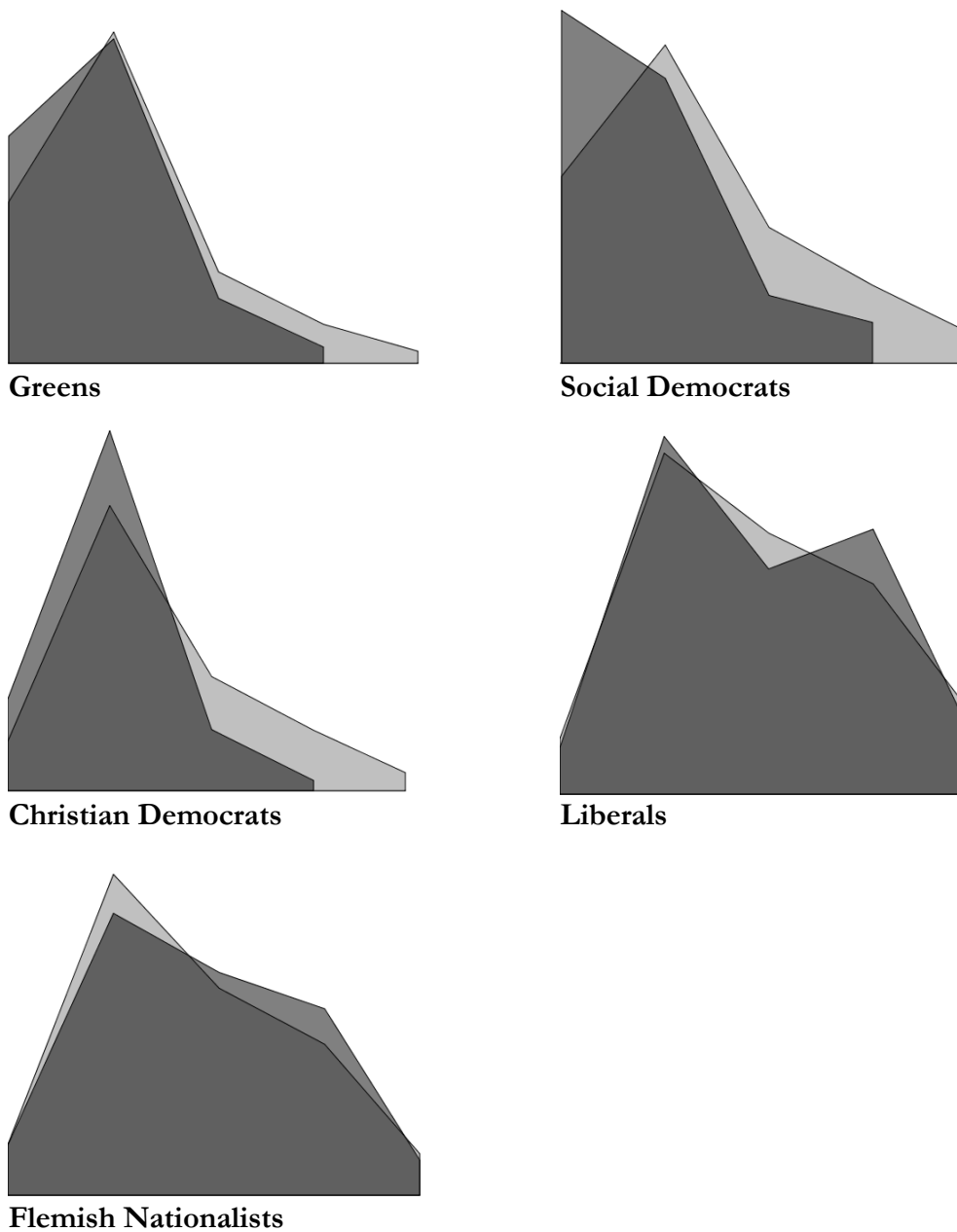


Flemish Nationalists

# Market Intervention

	Overlap	Staff		Members	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Greens	91%	1,83	0,76	2,05	0,88
Social Democrats	76%	1,73	0,85	2,28	1,05
Christian Democrats	75%	1,98	0,61	2,47	0,91
Liberals	92%	2,85	1,02	2,89	1,06
Flemish Nationalists	94%	2,75	0,97	2,70	0,98

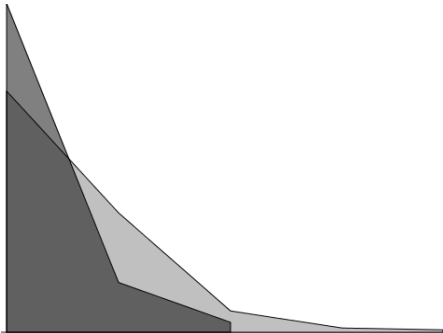
**Figures:** Distribution of staff (dark) and party members (light); Left = support for market intervention, Right = opposition to market intervention



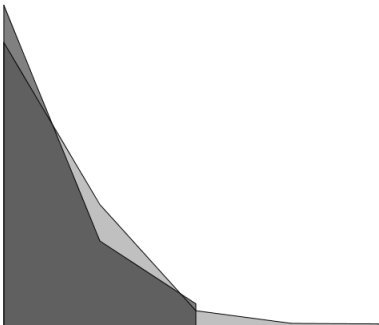
# Reproductive Rights

	Overlap	Staff		Members	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Greens	77%	1,17	0,45	1,47	0,70
Social Democrats	92%	1,31	0,56	1,41	0,68
Christian Democrats	91%	2,04	0,96	2,27	1,03
Liberals	84%	1,24	0,49	1,46	0,69
Flemish Nationalists	93%	1,65	0,85	1,82	0,97

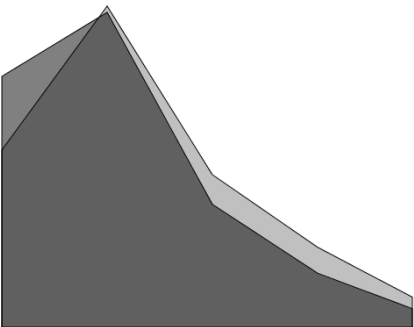
**Figures:** Distribution of staff (dark) and party members (light); Left = support for reproductive rights, Right = opposition to reproductive rights



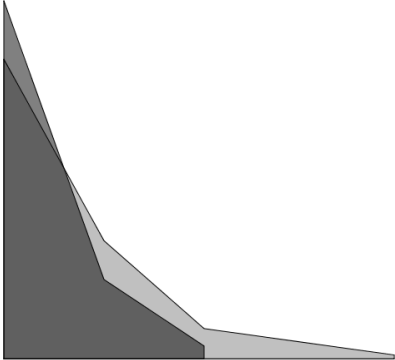
**Greens**



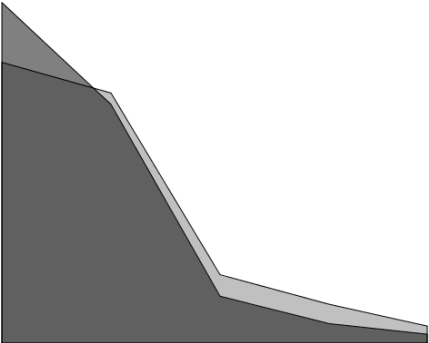
**Social Democrats**



**Christian Democrats**



**Liberals**



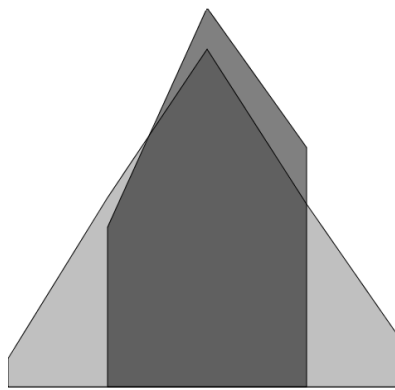
**Flemish Nationalists**



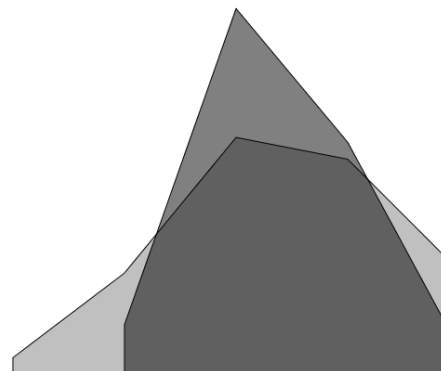
# Authoritarianism

	Overlap	Staff		Members	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<b>Greens</b>	86%	3,10	0,71	3,01	0,91
<b>Social Democrats</b>	76%	3,37	0,67	3,45	1,00
<b>Christian Democrats</b>	79%	3,36	0,79	3,65	0,94
<b>Liberals</b>	86%	3,63	0,85	3,80	0,98
<b>Flemish Nationalists</b>	90%	4,12	0,70	4,09	0,90

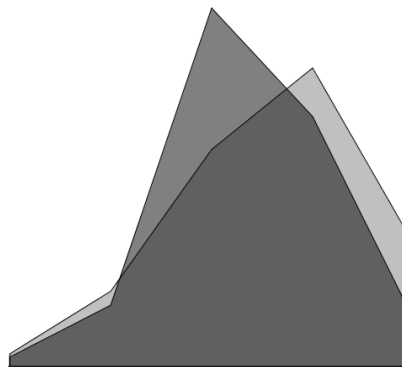
**Figures:** Distribution of staff (dark) and party members (light); Left = opposition to authoritarianism, Right = support for authoritarianism



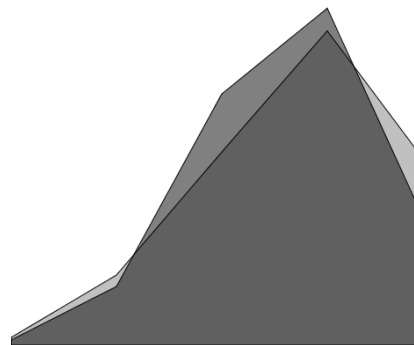
**Greens**



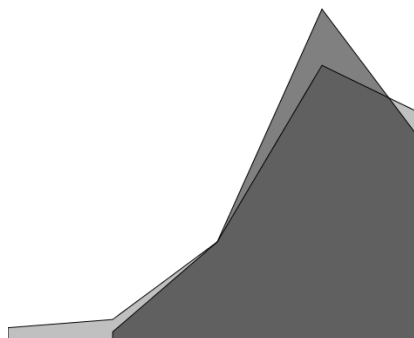
**Social Democrats**



**Christian Democrats**



**Liberals**

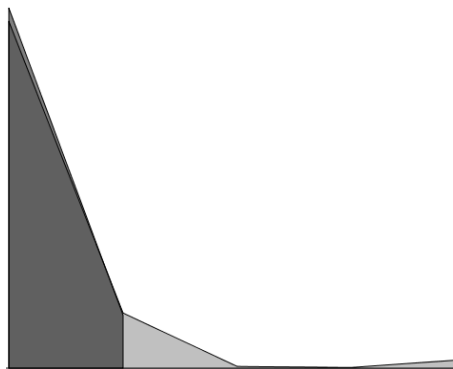


**Flemish Nationalists**

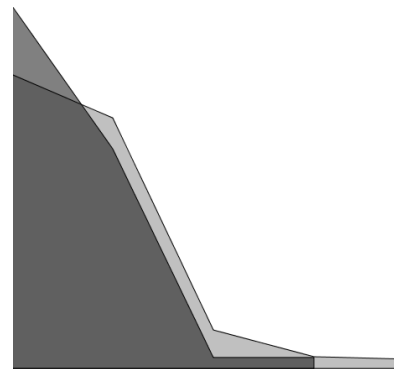
# Climate

	Overlap	Staff		Members	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<b>Greens</b>	97%	1,14	0,35	1,23	0,67
<b>Social Democrats</b>	89%	1,45	0,64	1,65	0,79
<b>Christian Democrats</b>	91%	1,91	0,74	1,97	0,84
<b>Liberals</b>	90%	2,02	0,72	2,16	0,80
<b>Flemish Nationalists</b>	89%	1,99	0,72	2,10	0,85

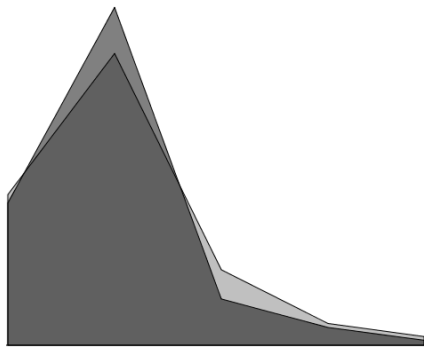
**Figures:** Distribution of staff (dark) and party members (light); Left = support for climate policies, Right = opposition to climate policies



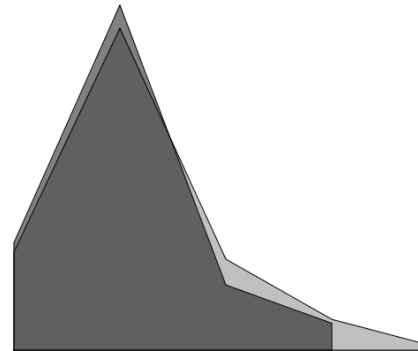
**Greens**



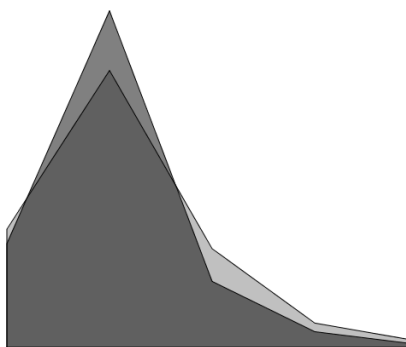
**Social Democrats**



**Christian Democrats**



**Liberals**

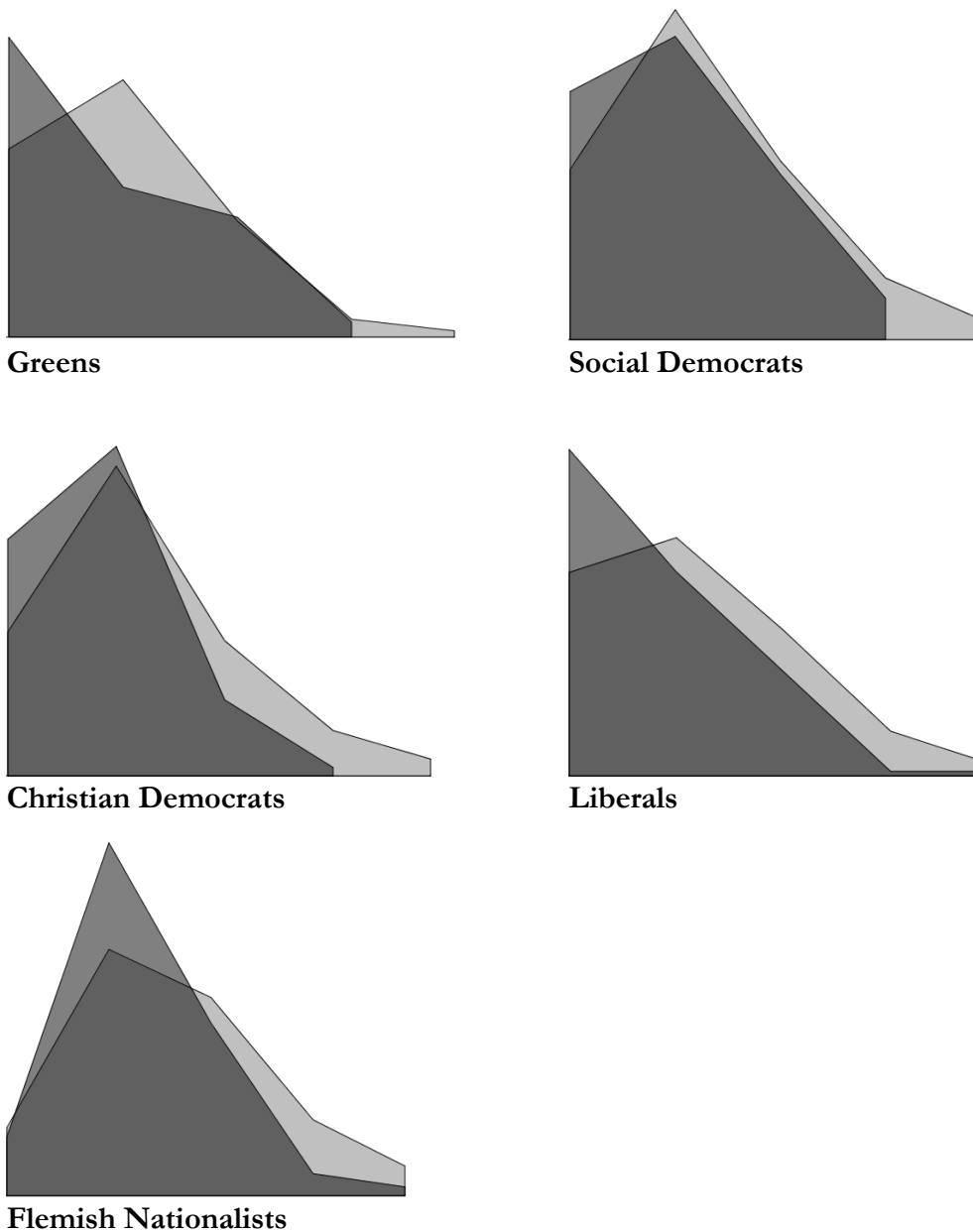


**Flemish Nationalists**

# European Integration

	Overlap	Staff		Members	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Greens	81%	1,74	0,87	1,97	0,85
Social Democrats	89%	1,99	0,88	2,26	0,95
Christian Democrats	80%	1,77	0,68	2,24	0,93
Liberals	72%	1,69	0,82	2,31	0,99
Flemish Nationalists	81%	2,29	0,75	2,61	0,99

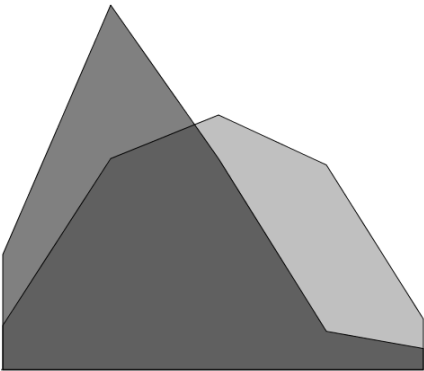
**Figures:** Distribution of staff (dark) and party members (light); Left = support for European Integration, Right = opposition to European Integration



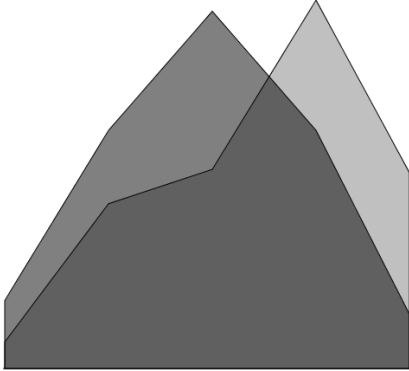
# Immigration

	Overlap	Staff		Members	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Greens	71%	2,32	0,88	2,96	0,98
Social Democrats	73%	2,97	1,01	3,54	1,06
Christian Democrats	60%	3,16	0,93	4,07	0,85
Liberals	71%	3,44	1,05	4,19	0,89
Flemish Nationalists	81%	4,36	0,68	4,59	0,65

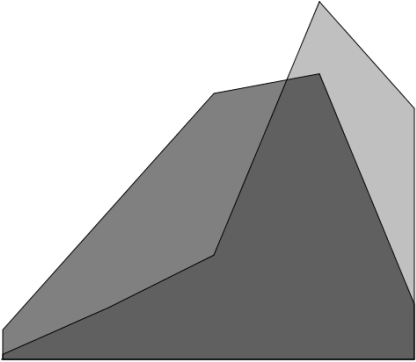
**Figures:** Distribution of staff (dark) and party members (light); Left = support for Immigration, Right = opposition to Immigration



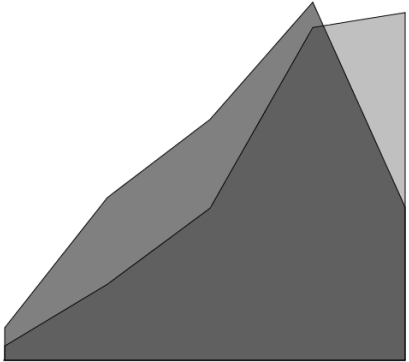
Greens



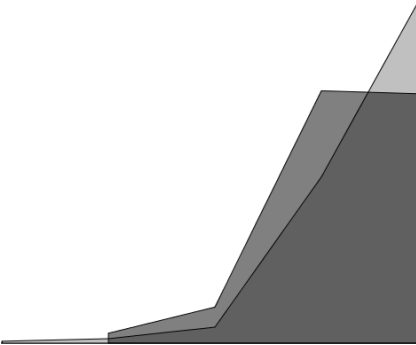
Social Democrats



Christian Democrats



Liberals



Flemish Nationalists

## Appendix B. Socio-demographic data

	Greens		Social democrats		Christian democrats		Liberals		Flemish nationalists	
	Staff	Members	Staff	Members	Staff	Members	Staff	Members	Staff	Members
<b>Sex<sup>a</sup></b>										
<i>Male</i>	52%	59%	53%	58%	56%	61%	55%	63%	66%	63%
<i>Female</i>	48%	41%	47%	42%	44%	39%	45%	37%	34%	37%
<b>Age<sup>a</sup></b>										
<i>18-35</i>	64%	21%	33%	13%	30%	8%	28%	20%	41%	12%
<i>36-50</i>	27%	22%	39%	13%	41%	12%	41%	15%	41%	15%
<i>50+</i>	9%	57%	28%	74%	29%	80%	30%	64%	18%	73%
<b>Education</b>										
<i>No higher education</i>	15%	24%	14%	36%	11%	33%	12%	34%	6%	33%
<i>Higher non-college</i>	21%	35%	27%	33%	22%	40%	14%	37%	19%	38%
<i>College</i>	65%	41%	60%	31%	66%	28%	74%	29%	75%	29%

**Note:** <sup>a</sup> Population data on sex and age of staffers were provided by participating parties

## Appendix C. Regression models

Table C.1.: Explaining progressive/cosmopolitan positions among party members and staffers

	Support for Income redistribution (N=10.635)	Support for Market intervention (N=10.638)	Support for Reproductive rights (N=10.634)	Opposed to Authoritarianism (N=10.638)	Support for Climate Policies (N=10.637)	Open to EU integration (N=10.625)	Open to Immigration (N=10.613)
<b>Relation to party</b> ( <i>ref.: Party member</i> )							
Unaffiliated staff	1,30 (0,29)	2,93 (0,35) **	2,10 (0,48)	0,87 (0,40)	2,43 (0,44) *	1,17 (0,32)	1,24 (0,41)
Party-affiliated staff	1,02 (0,12)	0,79 (0,11) *	1,29 (0,16) °	0,38 (0,20) ***	1,56 (0,15) **	1,35 (0,13) *	2,11 (0,15) ***
<b>Age</b> ( <i>ref.: 50+</i> )							
18-35	0,85 (0,09) °	1,31 (0,08) **	1,67 (0,12) ***	1,06 (0,11)	1,03 (0,11)	1,55 (0,09) ***	2,17 (0,10) ***
36-50	0,88 (0,07) °	1,52 (0,06) ***	1,36 (0,08) ***	1,16 (0,08) °	1,22 (0,08) *	1,08 (0,07)	1,54 (0,09) ***
<b>Education</b> ( <i>ref.: No higher education</i> )							
Higher non-college	0,79 (0,06) ***	1,50 (0,05) ***	0,94 (0,07)	1,58 (0,08) ***	1,19 (0,06) **	1,62 (0,05) ***	1,43 (0,09) ***
College	0,95 (0,06)	2,23 (0,05) ***	0,89 (0,07)	2,63 (0,08) ***	1,13 (0,07) °	3,93 (0,06) ***	2,32 (0,09) ***
<b>Party</b> ( <i>ref.: Flemish Nationalists</i> )							
Greens	15,97 (0,09) ***	3,42 (0,08) ***	2,73 (0,12) ***	6,91 (0,10) ***	11,29 (0,18) ***	3,15 (0,08) ***	40,78 (0,16) ***
Social democrats	16,14 (0,07) ***	2,28 (0,05) ***	3,83 (0,10) ***	4,04 (0,09) ***	3,01 (0,08) ***	2,08 (0,06) ***	24,18 (0,16) ***
Christian democrats	3,57 (0,05) ***	1,89 (0,05) ***	0,43 (0,06) ***	2,67 (0,10) ***	1,36 (0,06) ***	2,40 (0,06) ***	6,75 (0,17) ***
Liberals	0,83 (0,13)	0,65 (0,11) ***	2,47 (0,20) ***	2,56 (0,19) ***	0,91 (0,13)	1,77 (0,12) ***	5,18 (0,24) ***
<b>Female</b>	0,83 (0,05) ***	0,89 (0,05) *	1,53 (0,07) ***	0,84 (0,07) *	1,08 (0,06)	0,50 (0,05) ***	0,97 (0,07)
<b>Constant</b>	0,41 (0,05) ***	0,62 (0,05) *	3,94 (0,06) ***	0,03 (0,09) ***	2,60 (0,05) ***	0,65 (0,05) ***	0,01 (0,16) ***
<b>Nagelkerke's R<sup>2</sup></b>	0,34	0,10	0,14	0,12	0,09	0,16	0,28

Note: Odds ratios (SE's) of multiple logistic regressions; ° p < .1, \* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001

**Table C.2.: Explaining progressive/cosmopolitan positions among party members and staffers**

	<b>Support for Income redistribution</b> (N=10.635)	<b>Support for Market intervention</b> (N=10.638)	<b>Support for Reproductive rights</b> (N=10.634)	<b>Opposed to Authoritarianism</b> (N=10.638)	<b>Support for Climate Policies</b> (N=10.637)	<b>Open to EU integration</b> (N=10.625)	<b>Open to Immigration</b> (N=10.613)
<b>Relation to party</b> ( <i>ref.: Party member</i> )							
Central office staff	1,14 (0,20)	0,96 (0,20)	1,36 (0,27)	0,56 (0,29) *	1,61 (0,28) °	1,00 (0,21)	2,18 (0,23) **
Parliamentary staff	1,04 (0,19)	0,60 (0,17) **	1,71 (0,29) *	0,35 (0,32) **	1,61 (0,24) °	1,30 (0,21)	1,87 (0,23) **
Ministerial office staff	1,01 (0,15)	1,23 (0,15)	1,22 (0,20)	0,41 (0,27) **	1,74 (0,20) **	1,65 (0,17) **	2,11 (0,21) ***
<b>Age</b> ( <i>ref.: 50+</i> )							
18-35	0,84 (0,09) °	1,34 (0,08) **	1,66 (0,12) ***	1,06 (0,11)	1,04 (0,11)	1,55 (0,09) ***	2,18 (0,10) ***
36-50	0,88 (0,07) °	1,51 (0,06) ***	1,35 (0,08) ***	1,16 (0,08) °	1,21 (0,08) *	1,08 (0,07)	1,55 (0,09) ***
<b>Education</b> ( <i>ref.: No higher education</i> )							
Higher non-college	0,79 (0,06) ***	1,50 (0,05) ***	0,94 (0,07)	1,58 (0,08) ***	1,19 (0,06) **	1,62 (0,05) ***	1,43 (0,09) ***
College	0,96 (0,06)	2,24 (0,05) ***	0,89 (0,07)	2,64 (0,08) ***	1,13 (0,07) °	3,92 (0,06) ***	2,31 (0,09) ***
<b>Party</b> ( <i>ref.: Flemish Nationalists</i> )							
Greens	15,94 (0,09) ***	3,42 (0,08) ***	2,73 (0,12) ***	6,88 (0,10) ***	11,29 (0,18) ***	3,17 (0,08) ***	40,89 (0,16) ***
Social democrats	16,16 (0,07) ***	2,28 (0,05) ***	3,84 (0,10) ***	4,03 (0,09) ***	3,01 (0,08) ***	2,09 (0,06) ***	24,21 (0,16) ***
Christian democrats	3,57 (0,05) ***	1,88 (0,05) ***	0,43 (0,06) ***	2,68 (0,10) ***	1,36 (0,06) ***	2,41 (0,06) ***	6,77 (0,17) ***
Liberals	0,85 (0,13)	0,65 (0,11) ***	2,50 (0,20) ***	2,61 (0,19) ***	0,91 (0,13)	1,74 (0,12) ***	5,35 (0,24) ***
<b>Female</b>	0,82 (0,05) ***	0,89 (0,05) *	1,52 (0,07) ***	0,84 (0,07) *	1,08 (0,06)	0,50 (0,05) ***	0,96 (0,07)
<b>Constant</b>	0,35 (0,10) ***	0,83 (0,09) *	6,51 (0,13) ***	0,04 (0,14) ***	2,70 (0,11) ***	1,01 (0,10) ***	0,01 (0,18) ***
<b>Nagelkerke's R<sup>2</sup></b>	0,34	0,10	0,14	0,12	0,09	0,16	0,28

**Note:** Odd's ratios (SE's) of multiple logistic regressions; ° p < .1, \* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001