

Knowledge is Power.

The Staffing Advantage of the Party in Public Office\*

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the distribution of staff resources between party faces. While earlier studies have compared central – and parliamentary offices, this study also includes ministerial offices. To fully capture the differences in staffing, I examine both the quantity (staff size) and quality (education, experience, tasks) of their staffs. The empirical section is based on a cross-sectional analysis of original survey data collected among political staffers in Belgium and the Netherlands (N=1009). While the Belgian cabinet system includes extensive ministerial offices, ministerial staff is limited in the Dutch non-cabinet system. The results show how this institutional difference shapes the internal distribution of resources. While the *party in parliament* does not have a clear staffing advantage over the *party in central office* in Belgium, they are both eclipsed by the large, highly qualified *party in government*. In the Netherlands, the impact of ministerial offices is negligible and the staff of the *party in parliament* is both larger and more qualified than the staff of the *party in central office*.

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**Keywords:** Political staff, Political Professionalization, Cartelization, Survey research

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# Introduction

The impact of professionalization on the internal power balance of parties lies at the heart of influential party models (Panebianco, 1988; Katz and Mair, 1995; Hopkin and Paolucci, 1999). The growing presence of professional staffers is often seen as an organizational game changer, empowering elected elites at the expense of extra-parliamentary party organizations (Katz and Mair, 2002). This paper aims to contribute to this debate by comparing the staff resources of parliamentary – and ministerial offices to those of central offices. If the human resources of central offices are indeed inferior, the staffing advantage of parliamentary – and ministerial offices undermines the capacity of extra-parliamentary party organizations to control their elected elites. This matters because central offices have a crucial role as mouthpieces of a party members and activists: they safeguard parties' ideological principles and long-term policy goals while elected elites are immersed in day-to-day politics (Gibson and Harmel, 1998).

Existing empirical studies have analyzed quantitative evolutions, showing how the size of parliamentary offices has surpassed central offices in Western Europe (Krouwel, 2012; Bardi et al., 2017). However, two elements are currently missing from the discussion. Firstly, the actual qualifications of staffers merit closer examination. Building on the seminal work of Panebianco (1988), I argue that staffers' individual qualifications can amplify or reduce the staffing advantage of parliamentary – and ministerial offices. While a larger staff indicates a quantitative staffing advantage, a more highly qualified staff signals a qualitative staffing advantage. Secondly, the *party in public office* should not be reduced to the *party in parliament* as ministerial offices can strongly affect the distribution of staff resources. Ministerial staffers are an integral part of parties' human resources as they are most often recruited through the party network (Moens, 2020). Therefore, this study introduces a more fine-grained approach by disaggregating the *party in public office* into the *party in parliament* and the *party in government*.

This paper addresses two research questions. I first examine which party face has both the largest (quantitative advantage) and most qualified staff (qualitative advantage). Hence, the first research question: 'Which party face benefits from a double staffing advantage: the *party in central office*, the *party in parliament* or the *party in government* (RQ1)?' Based earlier research on parties' internal distribution of resources, I expect that parties' central office staff is smaller and less qualified than those working in parliamentary – and ministerial offices. However, I suggest that institutional factors determine whether the *party in parliament* or the *party in government* reaps the benefits of this double staffing advantage. Based on recent studies of ministerial advisors (Shaw and Eichbaum, 2018; Gouglas and Brans, 2017), I expect that the impact of ministerial offices strongly depends

on the institutional context. For this reason, I compare the Belgian cabinet system (extensive ministerial offices) to the Dutch system (small ministerial offices) to address the second research question: How does the size of ministerial offices affect the quantitative and qualitative staff distribution within political parties (RQ2)?

Political staffers are under-researched and gaining access to this notoriously elusive population is challenging (Webb and Kolodny, 2006). As a result, only a few studies have focused on their individual characteristics (Webb and Fisher, 2003; Karlsen and Saglie, 2017) and longitudinal analyses on the micro-level are beyond our reach. Instead, this paper focuses on the current state of affairs in Belgium and the Netherlands based on original survey data collected among the staff of 14 parties (N=1009). It offers an in depth, cross-sectional analysis of staffing by analyzing both its quantitative dimension (staff size) and qualitative dimension (staffers' qualifications). The quantitative dimension is studied by comparing the relative staff sizes of central – , parliamentary – and ministerial offices. The qualitative dimension is studied by analyzing the individual expertise of staffers from different party faces, including their education, professional experience and tasks.

This paper makes two innovative contributions to existing literature. Firstly, the full scope of parties' national human capital is rarely studied in depth. Whereas most existing studies focus on a specific subgroup of staffers within a specific party face such as ministerial advisors (Shaw and Eichbaum, 2018) or parliamentary staff (Hertel-Fernandez et al., 2018), I approach political staffers as a single group spread across several entities (central office, parliament, government). Secondly, the paper demonstrates how institutional factors can affect the internal working of political parties. The differences between Belgium and the Netherlands suggest that staffing might affect party organizations similarly in other political systems. Moreover, the impact of ministerial cabinets has broader relevance as ministerial advisors are becoming increasingly prominent in several political systems (Gouglas and Brans, 2017).

This paper proceeds as follows. First, I discuss the power relation between party faces and how it is linked to the distribution of human resources. After theorizing the quantitative and qualitative staffing advantage of parliamentary – and ministerial offices, the systemic differences between Belgium and the Netherlands are addressed. The methods section specifies data collection, the operationalization of key variables and on the empirical analysis. Consequently, I analyze the combined effect of staff size and staffers' qualifications (education, professional experience and tasks) to assess the uneven distribution of staff. Lastly, the implications of this staffing advantage and its variation across political systems are discussed.

# Professionalization and Power

In their seminal conceptualization of political parties, Katz and Mair (1993) distinguish between three faces of party organization: the *party on the ground* (members and activists), the *party in central office* (national party organization) and the *party in public office* (parliament and government). Moreover, they argued that this distinction was essential to understanding an internal power shift within parties because the *party in public office* had become the dominant force within contemporary parties (Katz and Mair, 1993; Katz and Mair, 2002). Katz and Mair’s claims continue to inspire research on the growing importance of the *party in public office*, including debates on the presidentialization (Poguntke and Webb, 2007; Passarelli, 2015) and personalization (McAllister, 2007; Rahat and Kenig, 2018). Similarly, the impact of cartelization on the *party on the ground* is subject to ongoing debate among scholars (Van Biezen and Poguntke, 2014; Heidar and Wauters, 2019; Loxbo, 2013). However, this paper aims to shed light on the relationship between the *party in central office* and the *party in public office* (Gibson and Harmel, 1998; Van Biezen, 2000).

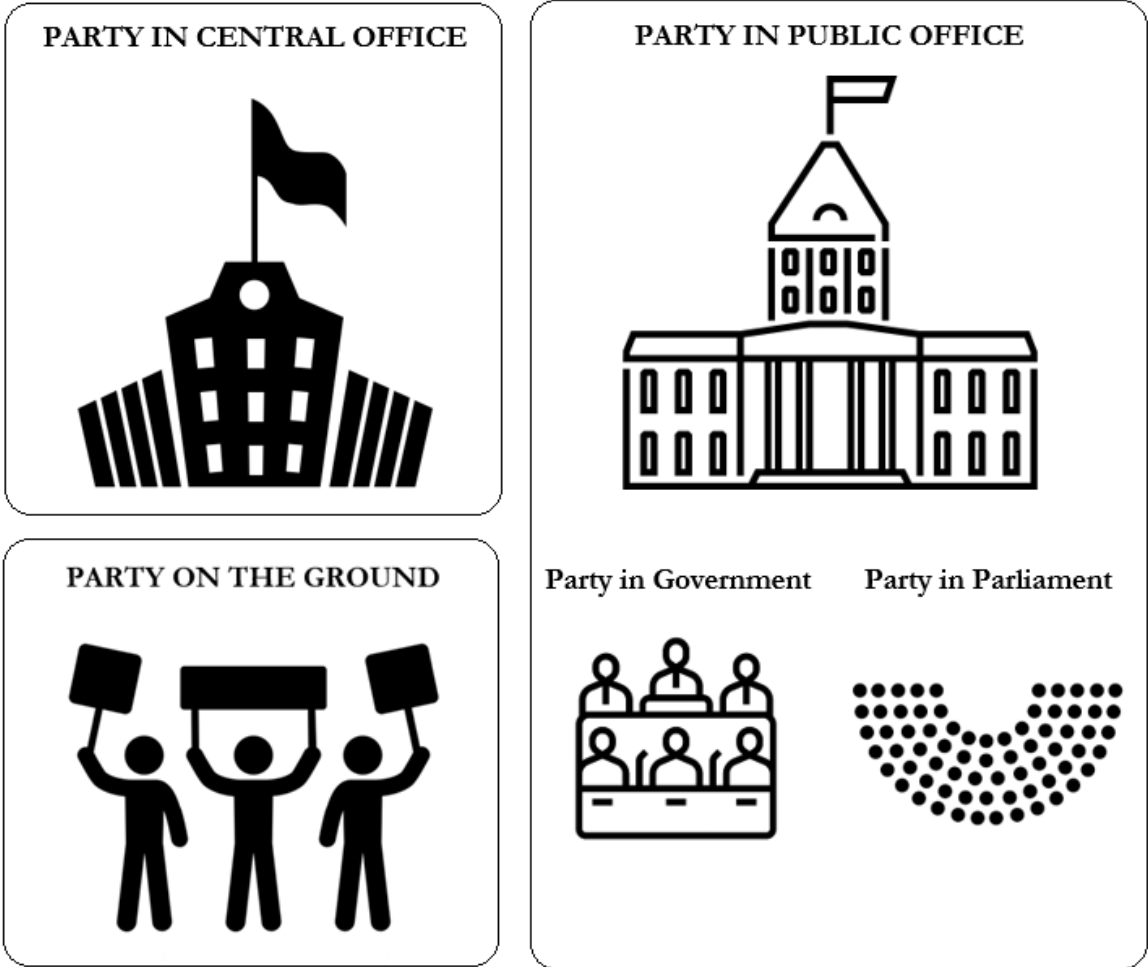


Figure 1: Three Faces of Party Organization (based on: Katz & Mair, 1993)

Koskimaa (2020) identifies three dimensions that shape the power balance between parties' central – and public offices: control of resources, leadership positions and statutory prerogatives. Instead of examining all of these power dimensions, this paper takes a closer look at one particular resource: staff. Evidently, this focus implies that the complete staff of parties' central – and public offices should be taken into account. Hence, I define this population of political staffers as “*individuals with remunerated, unelected positions that have been politically recruited within a party office, parliamentary party group or ministerial office*” (Moens, 2020). This approach to political staff is quite innovative as staffers from different party faces have barely been analyzed as a single population. Existing research is scattered across disciplines interested in specific subgroups of staffers. Firstly, legislative scholars have focused on parliamentary staffers' impact on political representation, most notably the US congress (Patterson, 1970; DeGregorio, 1988; Salisbury and Shepsle, 1981; McCrain, 2018; Hertel-Fernandez et al., 2018) and the European parliament (Busby and Belkacem, 2013; Pegan, 2017). Secondly, public administration scholars have focused on the policy advice of ministerial staffers (Maley, 2000; Brans, 2017) and the (dys)functions of ministerial offices, particularly in relation to civil servants (Connaughton, 2015).

While party politics scholars have rarely studied political staff, the few existing studies neglect ministerial staffers and limit their scope to staffers in central – and parliamentary offices. This observation applies to both in-depth studies focusing on staffers as individuals (Webb and Fisher, 2003; Karlsen and Saglie, 2017) as well as large-N analyses of their increasing presence in parties (Katz and Mair, 1993; Krouwel, 2012; Bardi et al., 2017). However, I argue that ministerial staffers should not be overlooked as they are an integral part of a party's human resources. Admittedly, parties often only directly pay central office staffers (Webb and Kolodny, 2006). Yet the mere concept of the *party in public office* clearly implies that a party's human capital extends beyond its own payroll. While the salary of elites in parliament and government originates from the state, parties are nonetheless indirectly responsible for their compensation because they are the principal recruitment channel for such positions (Schlesinger, 1984; Jun and Bukow, 2020). As pointed out by Katz and Mair (1993), “*the resources of the party in public office may not be visible in pure party terms, especially when the party in question includes a governing as well as a parliamentary face, and when key staff are appointed to positions in the public, as opposed to the party, bureaucracy*” (Katz and Mair, 1993: 606). To allow for a more fine-grained assessment of parties' internal distribution of staff, this paper distinguishes between three party faces: the *party in central office*, the *party in parliament* and the *party in government*.

The conventional wisdom among party scholars is that professionalization has strengthened the internal position of elected elites. Indeed, several empirical studies of Western European parties

show that the influx of paid staffers has disproportionately benefitted the *party in parliament* (Katz and Mair, 1993; Krouwel, 2012; Kölln, 2015; Bardi et al., 2017). More specifically, staff growth within parliamentary offices has simply outpaced central offices. Whereas central offices originally had larger staffs than parliamentary offices in most parties during the 1970s, the opposite had become the case by the 2010s (Bardi et al., 2017). Although both party faces have professionalized ostensibly, these analyses suggest that professionalization has put the *party in parliament* in control of the majority of parties' human resources. However, I argue that a full assessment of a party's human resources should a) consider the actual qualifications of staffers and b) include ministerial offices in the analysis.

## **Two dimensions of Staffing**

The relationship between parties' central – , parliamentary – and ministerial offices is shaped by both the quantity – and quality of staffers. Including this qualitative dimension of staffing is important because professionalization goes well beyond staff size. Panebianco's original argument (1988) strongly focused on staffers' individual qualifications as it described the gradual replacement of traditional party bureaucrats by more qualified professionals. Building on the seminal work of Panebianco (1988) and Katz and Mair (2002), I expect that the influx of these political professionals puts the party in central office at a double disadvantage. Public offices do not only have larger staffs, the individual qualifications of their staffers reinforce their dominance over the party in central office.

The principal difference between these professionals and traditional bureaucrats is their role within politics. Panebianco (1988) drew from private sector terminology by referring to the different assignments of employees with line – and staff roles. Whereas traditional bureaucrats exemplified the line role in politics by supporting the party machine as administrative clerks, political professionals take on advice-oriented roles towards elected elites. More recently, Karlsen and Saglie (2017) have applied Panebianco's work to the current context by distinguishing between staffers with technical – and strategic tasks. “*Strategy assistance refers to involvement in essentially political decisions, such as the development and implementation of policy and campaign strategy. Technical assistance includes administrative functions and services, such as website design or maintaining membership files*” (Karlsen and Saglie, 2017: 4). Hence, the overrepresentation of political-strategic staffers within a the *party in public office* signals a qualitative advantage.

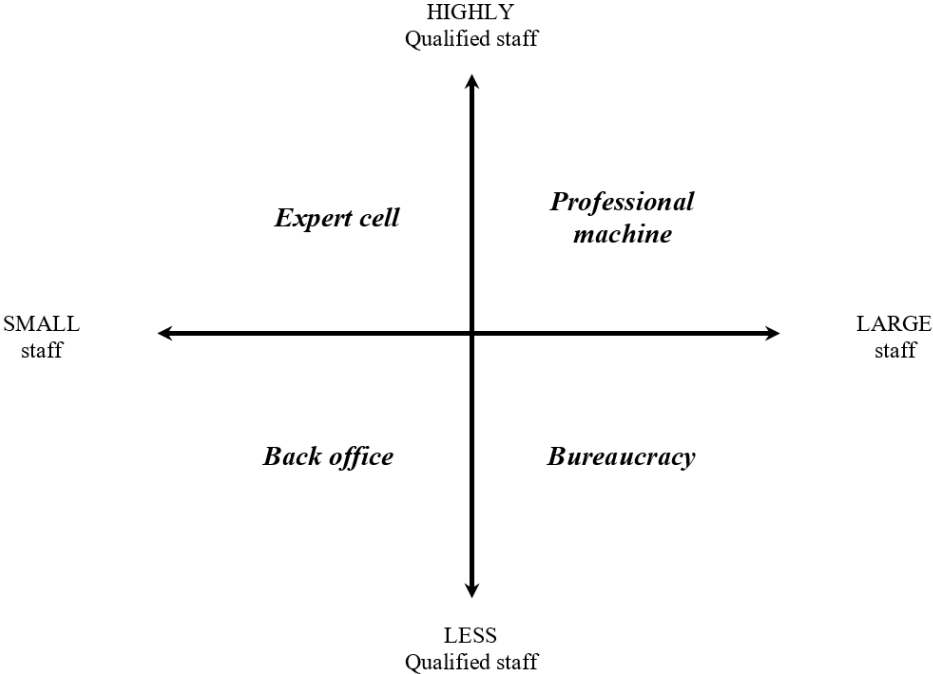
The dominance of political-strategic staffers within parties' public offices reduces the capacity of central offices to control the *party in public office*. As Panebianco (1988), described the power dynamics within electoral-professional parties were shifting because professionals are less

susceptible to control, I expect that staffers' professional expertise plays a central role in this process. Knowledge is power: staffers with extensive expertise have an informational advantage over political competitors, colleagues and elected elites. Firstly, such expertise can be accrued through education. Secondly, the most valuable expertise is accumulated through professional experience, as '*professional knowledge is obtained by practice, by an apprenticeship process or 'enculturation process'; an unwritten know-how or 'tacit knowledge' that cannot be standardized and formalized to a university course*' (Brante, 1990: 83-84). Both experience inside – and outside of politics can translate into an informational advantage. Those with extensive experience in politics excel at "*knowing the game*" (Svallfors, 2017), remaining one step ahead of others who are less familiar with political dynamics. Those with extensive experience outside politics (civil service, academia, private sector) specialize within specific policy domains or communication practices – including details that escape political generalists.

Why does all this expertise disproportionately benefit public offices? While the quantitative advantage of the party in *public office* is caused by their privileged access to state resources, I suggest that the qualitative advantage of parties' public offices is the result of environmental pressures. The *party in public office* has been at the forefront professionalization because elected elites (representatives and ministers) experience several environmental challenges more acutely. In the electoral arena, elected elites faced increased competition and volatility (Drummond, 2006) due to centripetal competition (Kircheimer, 1966) and the success of challenger parties (De Vries and Hobolt, 2020). At the same time, the emergence of mass media (and later: social media) provided new opportunities to connect with voters. As a result, communication experts were recruited to navigate new technological developments and strengthen their position towards media outlets in this permanent campaign environment (Blumenthal, 1980). In the policy arena, elected elites faced increasing complexity fueled by the expanding welfare states and the growing importance of multi-level governance (Marks et al., 1996). At the same time, interest groups (Allern, 2012), lobbyists (McCrain, 2018) and think tanks (Stone et al., 1998) increasingly sought access to elites to shape policies. As a result, policy experts were hired to navigate the increasingly complex and technical nature of policy-making. Admittedly, central offices are not immune to environmental challenges. However, I argue that the fate of the *party in public office* is affected more directly to its performance within the electoral – and policy arena. As a result, elected elites in parliament and government have a higher need for in-house expertise.

**H1: The staff of parliamentary – and ministerial offices is both larger and more qualified than the staff of central offices.**

Although earlier studies show that parties’ public offices have a quantitative staffing advantage over central offices, this supposed qualitative advantage remains untested. Moreover, parties’ internal distribution of staff is actually more complicated because the *party in public office* often includes both parliamentary – and ministerial offices. Therefore, a complete assessment of staffing requires that central offices, parliamentary offices and ministerial offices are situated on two separate, independent dimensions of staffing. To situate party faces on both dimensions, I distinguish between 4 types of party faces: professional machines, back-offices, expert cells and bureaucracies (Figure 2). While the quantitative dimension distinguishes between party faces with larger and smaller staffs, the qualitative dimensions distinguishes between party faces with highly qualified and less qualified staff.



**Figure 2: Quantitative and Qualitative dimension of Staffing**

Professional machines are dominant party faces with an extensive, highly qualified staff. In contrast, back-offices with a small, less qualified staff inevitably play a secondary role. Yet both cases reflect the conventional perspective staff distribution: party faces take similar positions on the quantitative – and qualitative dimension. When quantity and quality do not run parallel, however, party faces can be categorized as expert cells (small, highly qualified staff) or bureaucracies (large, less qualified staff). In these cases, the internal position of party faces is more ambiguous. On the one hand, the high degree of expertise might partially compensate for the limited staff size of expert cells. On the other hand, bureaucracies might be less dominant than suggested by their staff size due to the low degree of expertise among their staff.



## **Institutional setting**

The institutional setting in which parties operate determines which particular public office reaps the benefits of this staffing advantage. In most Western European parliamentary democracies, staffing puts parties' central offices at a double disadvantage. However, the *party in public office* is not monolithic and its institutional structure varies considerably between political systems. I argue that the institutional setting determines whether the *party in parliament* or the *party in government* benefits from a staffing advantage. Depending on the structure of the core executive within a political system, ministerial staffers can tilt the staffing advantage of the *party in public office* in favor of the *party in government*. In nations within the Napoleonic<sup>‡</sup> administrative tradition, members of government are supported by an extensive cabinet containing dozens of partisan staffers serving a single minister (Gouglas et al., 2015; Ongaro and Peters, 2008).

In ministerial cabinet systems, I expect that the sheer size of these ministerial offices translates into a temporary staffing advantage within the *party in government*. As a consequence, a party's internal distribution of human resources hinges on its governing status. Whereas majority parties control the government resources needed to recruit numerous ministerial staffers, they lose this privilege when leaving government and the *party in parliament* becomes the main foothold for staffers. Regardless of entering government or dropping out, the transition of power automatically triggers a restructuring of parties' human resources. These recurring cycles of organizational expansion and contraction align with Bolleyer's description of the cartel party's inherent vulnerabilities (2009), as parties' reliance on controlling of government resources leads to organizational instability. In non-cabinet systems, ministerial advisors are not numerous enough to fundamentally shift parties' internal balance of human resources towards its ministerial offices (Ng, 2018; Shaw and Eichbaum, 2018). In such political systems, the staffing advantage of the *party in public office* remains permanently concentrated within the *party in parliament* (Wilson, 2020).

**H2a: In ministerial cabinet systems, ministerial offices benefit from a staffing advantage when a party participates in government.**

**H2b: In ministerial cabinet systems, parliamentary offices benefit from a staffing advantage when a party does not participate in government.**

**H2c: In non-cabinet systems, parliamentary offices benefit from a permanent staffing advantage.**

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<sup>‡</sup> France, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria

## Case-selection and method

This study examines staffers from Belgium and the Netherlands. From an international perspective, both countries share many similarities. Both are historically divided societies which have overcome societal cleavages through consociationalism and power-sharing (Deschouwer, 2009; Andeweg and Irwin, 2009). Their highly proportional electoral systems have produced extensive, complex party systems that require cooperation through coalition government. In both countries, this institutional context has created collective staff infrastructures centered around parties, who predominantly recruit staffers within their own network (Moens, 2020). As such, this comparative study controls for the potential impact of consociationalism and a multi-party context. However, the systemic differences between both nations concern a key argument of this paper: the impact of ministerial cabinets. As Belgium and the Netherlands adhere to different administrative traditions (Painter and Peters, 2010), the institutional support structures for governments are fundamentally different (Brans et al., 2006). As a member of the European continental tradition, impartial civil servants provide the most important policy advice to Dutch ministers as they are only assisted by a handful of political staffers. As a member of the Napoleonic tradition, an extensive team of partisan ‘cabinet advisors’ provide the most important policy advice to Belgian ministers and distrust fuels the marginalization of a politicized civil service (De Winter and Brans, 2003).

### Data collection

Original survey data were collected among the paid staff of fourteen parties (Appendix A). Since the support of party leadership was indispensable for contacting the target population, face-to-face interviews with senior party management were set up to gain an official endorsement. Although parties are often reluctant to provide access to their personnel (Webb and Kolodny, 2006; Webb and Keith, 2017), this approach resulted in the participation of 14 out of 25 parties represented in the Belgian and Dutch parliaments. Apart from the radical right family (which refused to participate), these cases mirror the diversity of the party landscape in electoral size, organizational resources and ideological outlook. Before launching the online survey, a carefully-developed questionnaire was tested among party staffers during 33 face-to-face interviews.

Designed to be completed in under 15 minutes, the questionnaire contained general background questions on staffers' sociodemographic characteristics, day-to-day professional activities and previous professional experiences, but also gauged their political attitudes, future ambitions and their interactions with peers and elected elites. Between December 2018 and January 2020, the complete population of staffers from the participating parties received a digital invitation to answer

this online questionnaire, followed up by two reminders. Out of a population of 2936 individuals, the survey obtained a response rate of 34% (N=1009). To calculate response rates and check the representativeness of our findings, participating parties provided population data. Based on the weighted cases approach (Parke, 2012), X<sup>2</sup>-tests were run to test under – or overrepresentation among specific subgroups within the sample. 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).

## Variables and analysis

The analysis examines staffers' qualifications based on three indicators: their education, professional experience and tasks. Firstly, their formal education gives us an impression of their expertise. Staffers were categorized into three groups based on the highest degree they have obtained: no higher education, higher non-college and college degree. Secondly, their actual professional experience will also be examined as *'professional knowledge is obtained by practice, by an apprenticeship process or 'enculturation process'; an unwritten know-how or 'tacit knowledge' that cannot be standardized and formalized to a university course'* (Brante, 1990: 83-84). Professional experience was measured using 6-point Likert scales<sup>§</sup> surveying their prior experience in a given field, e.g. the public sector. Consequently, these scales were recoded into dichotomous variables to identify staffers with substantial experience (at least 10 years of experience). In effect, only staffers who have experienced at least two political cycles are considered as 'experienced in party politics'. The same operationalization was applied to experience outside party politics. Thirdly, I analyze what staffers actually do by considering their individual tasks. Based on their principal activities, staffers were grouped into 6 mutually exclusive categories: managers, policy experts, communication experts, political assistants, party organizers and administration & support. While a high prevalence of political-strategic staffers (policy – and communication experts) contributes to a qualitative advantage, a high prevalence of staffers with traditional bureaucratic tasks (party organizers and administration & support) contributes to a qualitative disadvantage.

The prevalence of these indicators show interesting commonalities and differences between Belgium and the Netherlands (Table 1). Firstly, staffers from both countries are highly-educated. College graduates make up the lion share of all staffers: only a small minority did not receive a higher education. Secondly, staffers' professional experiences are mostly centered around party politics. In both countries, the most common occupational track is political and only a minority of

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<sup>§</sup> 1 = no experience, 2 = a few months, 3 = several years, 4 = more than 5 years, 5 = more than 10 years, 6 = more than 20 years.

staffers has extensive professional experience in the public – or private sector. Nonetheless, Belgium and The Netherlands diverge significantly as Belgian staffers have distinctly more experience in both party politics and the public sector. This is likely driven by differences in age, as Dutch political staffers are often younger than their Belgian counterparts. Whereas staffers’ median age is 32,5 in The Netherlands, it is 40 in Belgium (Appendix C). Thirdly, around half of all staffers have political-strategic tasks (policy – or communication expert) and some 20% have classic bureaucratic tasks (party organizer, administration). Strikingly, the balance between policy – and communication experts is significantly different: whereas communication experts are more prevalent in The Netherlands, Belgian parties include more policy experts. In both cases however, political-strategic staffers are not an overwhelming majority.

**Table 1: Staffers’ individual qualifications**

	<b>Belgium</b> (N=899)	<b>The Netherlands</b> (N=110)	<b>Total</b> (N=1009)
<b>Education<sup>a</sup></b>			
No higher education	14%	11%	13%
Higher, non-college	18%	19%	18%
College degree	69%	70%	69%
<b>Professional experience<sup>b</sup></b>			
Party Politics	31% **	19% **	30%
Public sector	22% ***	6% ***	21%
Private sector	14%	12%	14%
<b>Tasks<sup>a</sup></b>			
Manager	8%	8%	8%
Policy expert	41% *	30% *	40%
Communication expert	12% **	22% **	13%
Political assistant	17% °	24% °	18%
Party organizer	6%	6%	6%
Administration & support	15%	11%	15%

a: categories mutually exclusive, b: categories not mutually exclusive  
Adjusted stand. residuals: °  $p \leq .1$ , \*  $p \leq .05$ , \*\*  $p \leq .01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq .001$

The results section undertakes several analytical steps. Firstly, the quantitative dimension of staffing is examined by comparing the relative staff size of central – , parliamentary – and ministerial offices in Belgium and the Netherlands. This categorization between party faces is based on a survey question in which respondents were asked to indicate the principal location of their professional

activities. Secondly, a bivariate analysis addresses the qualitative dimension of staffing by describing the prevalence of three indicators (education, experience and tasks) across the different party faces. Significance levels were determined based on adjusted standardized residuals ( $^{\circ}$   $p \leq .1$ ,  $*$   $p \leq .05$ ,  $**$   $p \leq .01$ ,  $***$   $p \leq .001$ ). To complement this bivariate analysis of staffers' individual qualifications, two additional regression analyses were ran to a) identify which types of staffers are most likely to work within specific party faces and b) identify which types of individuals tasks are linked to higher levels of education and professional experience. These models control for age and sex as education and professional experience are expected to be influenced by age and existing studies have shown that staffers' relationship to parties is gendered (Taflaga and Kerby, 2019; Snagovsky and Kerby, 2018; Calcagno and Montgomery, 2020; Erikson and Verge, 2020). Thirdly, a bivariate analysis examines the impact of ministerial offices on staffing by comparing the distribution of qualified staffers in government – and opposition parties. By taking the staff size of party faces as a benchmark, chi-square tests with adjusted standardized residuals<sup>\*\*</sup> were ran to examine whether the qualitative dimension amplifies or reduces the quantitative dimension.

## Results

To examine which party face benefits from a double staffing advantage (RQ1), two steps will be undertaken. Firstly, I analyze the relative staff size of parties' central – , parliamentary – and ministerial offices (quantitative dimension). Secondly, I examine which party faces have the most qualified staff by analyzing their level of education, professional experience and their individual tasks (qualitative dimension).

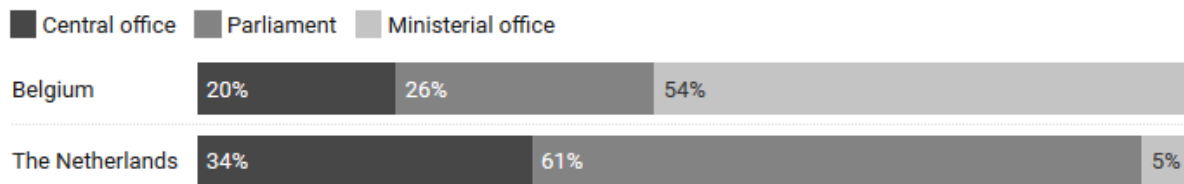
### Quantitative dimension

The quantitative staff distribution shows that Belgian and Dutch political staffers are not distributed evenly across all party faces. However, different party faces reap the benefits from this unequal distribution in Belgium and the Netherlands (Figure 3). The Dutch case reflects conventional wisdom on contemporary parties: a clear majority of all Dutch staffers are concentrated within parliament. In contrast, the Belgian case demonstrates how the party in government can be the main beneficiary of a quantitative staffing advantage: the majority of Belgian staffers work in ministerial offices. The sheer size of these extensive ministerial 'cabinets' pushes back the relative weight of central – and parliamentary offices. As a result, Dutch central offices house a larger share of their party's human resources than their Belgian counterparts. However, this does not mean that Dutch central offices have larger staffs in absolute terms. In general, the

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<sup>\*\*</sup> When expected cell counts are below 5, chi-square tests were replaced by Fisher Exact Test.

human resources of Belgian parties far exceed the staff of their Dutch counterparts (Table 1; Appendix A).



**Figure 3: Quantitative staff distribution**

### Qualitative dimension

The individual qualifications of staffers demonstrate that highly qualified staffers are indeed more prevalent within the *party in parliament* and the *party in government*. In Belgium, especially ministerial offices benefit from a qualitative staffing advantage (Table 2). Belgian ministerial staffers stand out for their professional experience and their tasks. While all party faces include a similar portion of staffers with experience in party politics, ministerial staffers bring in significantly more extra-political experience. The difference is especially striking for experience within the public sector, which shows that ministerial offices are an important gateway between politics and the civil service in Belgium. The qualitative staffing advantage of Belgian ministerial offices is also illustrated by the many policy experts among their ranks. Although not unique to the *party in government*, policy experts make up the majority of ministerial staffers. Their presence is significantly lower in other party faces.

However, the qualitative advantage of Belgian ministerial offices is not absolute. Firstly, the qualitative advantage of the *party in government* is tempered by the lack of an educational advantage. Although staffers are well-educated in general (Table 1), parliamentary staffers are actually more likely to hold a university degree than their colleagues at ministerial offices. This comparatively low level of education among ministerial staffers is linked to the presence of staffers in administrative – and supportive roles, as staffers within this category are significantly less likely to be higher-educated (Appendix E). In contrast, this group is virtually absent in parliamentary offices. Unsurprisingly, both the level of education and the prevalence of administration and support staffers at central – and ministerial offices are highly similar. Secondly, the qualitative advantage of the *party in government* is tempered by the low presence of communication experts. In fact, communication experts are most numerous at parties’ central offices. However, these nuances do not fundamentally challenge the staffing advantage of ministerial offices. The regression analysis in

**Table 2: Qualitative dimension of staffing**

	<b>BELGIUM</b> (N=898)			<b>THE NETHERLANDS</b> (N=110)		
	Central office	Parliament	Ministerial office	Central office	Parliament	Ministerial office
<b>Education</b>						
No higher education	18% °	6% ***	16% *	26% ***	4%	0%
Higher, non-college education	18%	17%	18%	26%	16%	0%
College degree	64%	78% ***	67% °	47% ***	79% *	100%
<b>Professional experience</b>						
Party politics	30%	31%	32%	16%	20%	25%
Public sector	7% ***	9% ***	35% ***	9%	3%	25%
Private sector	12%	12%	17% *	9%	11%	25%
<b>Tasks</b>						
Manager	8%	7%	9%	3%	11%	0%
Policy expert	17% ***	30% ***	55% ***	14% **	41% ***	0%
Communication expert	21% ***	5% ***	13%	25%	21%	0%
Political assistant	7% ***	54% ***	4% ***	14% °	24%	100% ***
Party organizer	30% ***	0% ***	0% ***	17% ***	0% **	0%
Administration & support	18%	4% ***	19% ***	28% ***	3% ***	0%
<b>N</b>	175	236	487	37	68	5

**Note:** Column totals; Significance levels of adjusted standardized residuals: °  $p \leq .1$ , \*  $p \leq .05$ , \*\*  $p \leq .01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq .001$

Appendix D demonstrates that ministerial staffers are robustly more experienced within the public sector and more likely to be policy experts.

In the Netherlands, the *party in parliament* benefits from a qualitative staffing advantage. Dutch parliamentary staffers stand out for their education and their tasks. Although staffers are generally highly-educated, the proportion of parliamentary staffers with a college degree is significantly higher. The qualitative advantage of the *party in parliament* is also illustrated by the large presence of policy experts. Although Dutch central offices also include staffers working on policy, they are significantly more prevalent in parliamentary offices. Moreover, only a small number of Dutch parliamentary staffers are involved in traditional bureaucratic tasks. Although it is not surprising that party organizers are concentrated within parties' central offices, very few parliamentary staffers offer administrative and logistical support.

However, the qualitative advantage of Dutch parliamentary offices is not absolute either. Firstly, the qualitative advantage of the *party in parliament* is tempered by their limited professional experience. Although this relative lack of professional experience is similar to other party faces, only a small minority of parliamentary staffers have substantial experience outside politics. Compared to central – and ministerial offices, Dutch parliamentary offices especially include few staffers with experience in the public sector. However, these differences between party faces are not statistically significant. Secondly, the qualitative advantage of the *party in government* is tempered by the lack of a communication advantage. Although insignificant, communication experts are nonetheless more numerous at parties' central offices. However, these nuances do not neutralize the staffing advantage of parliamentary offices. The regression analysis in Appendix D demonstrates that the low presence of administration – and support staffers is a robust finding. However, the educational advantage of parliamentary staffers dissipates when controlling for the low presence of lower-educated administration – and support staffers. Lastly, the estimate indicating the stronger presence of policy experts is positive but insignificant. Compared to Belgium, the contrasts between staffers' qualifications appear relatively limited in the Netherlands. However, the lack of significant results is linked to a substantially lower number of observations from the Netherlands (Table 2).

## **Institutional setting**

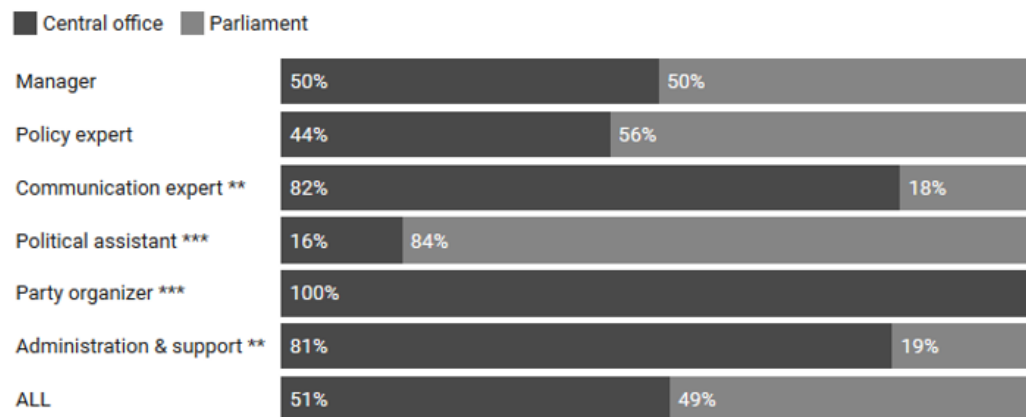
To examine how staffing is shaped by the institutional structure of the *party in government* (RQ2), I examine the impact of ministerial offices on parties' internal distribution of staff. Of course, ministerial offices can only affect parties when they participate in government. Figure 4 illustrates how government participation can strongly impact staffing in parties. While ministerial offices only



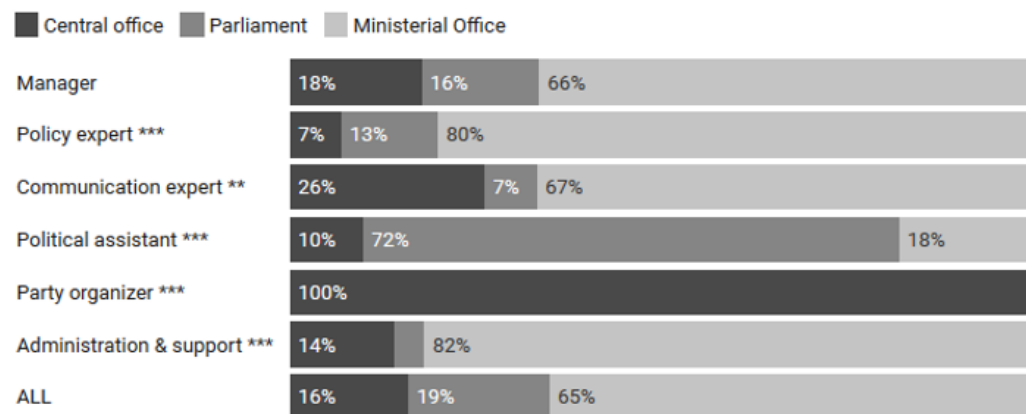
Figure 4: Distribution of staffers' tasks by country and government status

## BELGIUM

### Opposition

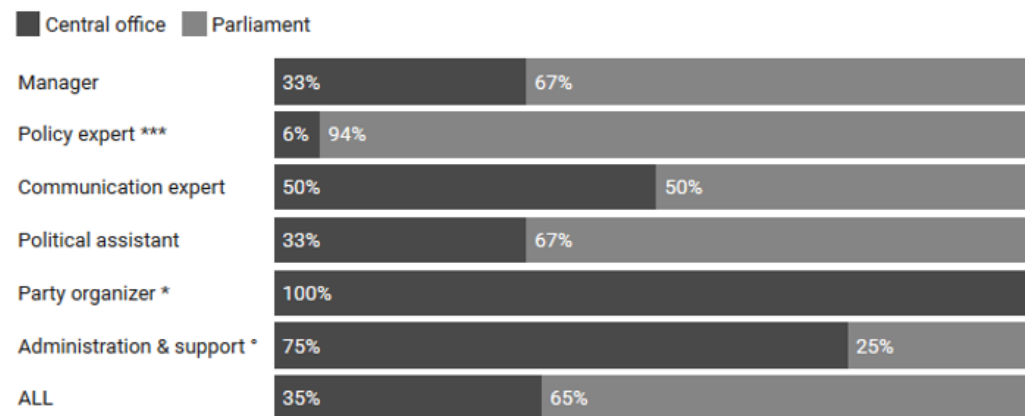


### Government

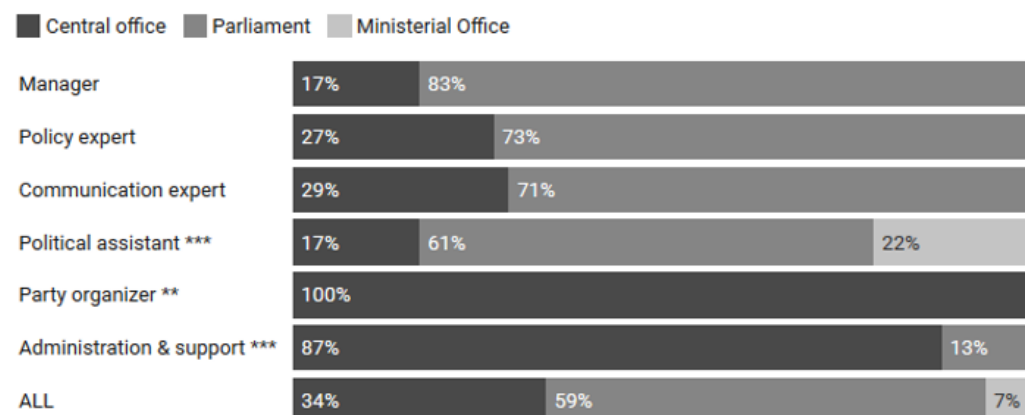


## THE NETHERLANDS

### Opposition



### Government



Note: Significance levels refer to adjusted standardized residuals: °  $p \leq .1$ , \*  $p \leq .05$ , \*\*  $p \leq .01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq .001$

have a marginal impact on Dutch party organizations, Belgian ministerial offices strongly reduce the relative weight of central – and parliamentary offices. For this reason, government – and opposition parties are analyzed separately in this section. The combined effect of the quantitative (staff size) – and qualitative distribution (education, professional experience and tasks) of staff are discussed in detail for each party face (e.g. central offices of Belgian opposition parties) to situate their position on each dimension (Figure 5).

The bivariate analyses listed in Tables 3 and 4 show that the combined effect of staff size and staffers' qualifications often leads to a double advantage. At the bottom of the table, the quantitative distribution of staffers is shown. For example, 65% of all staffers from Dutch opposition parties work within parliamentary offices. The tables also show how staffers with certain qualifications are distributed across party faces. More specifically, figure 4 visualizes how staffers with certain tasks are distributed within parties. In Dutch opposition parties for example, 94% of all policy experts work within parliamentary offices – leaving only 6% of this important group to central offices. The significance test signals a double staffing advantage: parliamentary offices include even more policy experts (94%) than expected based on their relative staff size (65%). Hence, the quantitative advantage of the party in parliament is amplified by an advantage in policy expertise. In the following paragraphs, the combined effect of staff size and staffers' qualifications will be discussed in more detail.

The results demonstrate that the balance between party faces is strongly affected by the political system and a party's governing status. In Dutch opposition parties, the party in parliament benefits from a double staffing advantage. Firstly, its relative staff size substantially exceeds that of the party in central office. Secondly, this quantitative advantage is amplified by the qualifications of parliamentary staffers. Both party faces are each other's mirror image. In parliament, staffers without higher education are underrepresented and college-educated staffers are even more prevalent than expected based on staff size. The level of education among central office staffers shows the opposite effect. While parliamentary offices include the majority of staffers with extensive experience in party politics and the private sector, this unequal distribution reflects their relative staff size. When staffers' tasks are concerned, however, the quantitative staffing advantage of the party in parliament is amplified by a qualitative advantage. While the distribution of policy experts strongly benefits parliamentary offices, party organizers and supporting staff are heavily concentrated within central offices.

**Table 3: Staffing advantage in THE NETHERLANDS**

	<b>OPPOSITION</b>		<b>GOVERNMENT</b>		
	(N=50)		(N=99)		
	Central Office	Parliament	Central Office	Parliament	Ministerial Office
<b>Education</b>					
No higher education	80% *	20% *	75% **	25% *	0%
Higher, non-college education	50%	50%	46%	55%	0%
College degree	19% **	81% **	24% **	67% °	10%
<b>Professional experience</b>					
Party politics	30%	70%	30%	60%	10%
Public sector	50%	50%	25%	50%	25%
Private sector	20%	80%	43%	43%	14%
<b>Tasks</b>					
Manager	33%	67%	17%	83%	0%
Policy expert	6% ***	94% ***	27%	73%	0%
Communication expert	50%	50%	29%	71%	0%
Political assistant	33%	67%	17% *	61%	22% **
Party organizer	100% *	0% *	100% **	0% *	0%
Administration & support	75% °	25% °	88% ***	13% **	0%
<b>ALL</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>7%</b>

**Note:** Row totals; Significance levels of adjusted standardized residuals: °  $p \leq .1$ , \*  $p \leq .05$ , \*\*  $p \leq .01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq .001$

In Dutch government parties, the party in parliament again benefits from a double staffing advantage. Firstly, the party in parliament clearly remains the party face with the largest staff – in spite of losing some of its relative weight to ministerial offices. Secondly, its staffers remain the most highly qualified of all party faces. For starters, parliamentary staffers are significantly more qualified than their colleagues at central offices. Parliamentary offices include even more highly educated staffers than suggested by their staff size. The opposite applies to their colleagues at central offices, where the group of lower-educated staffers is disproportionately high. Most experienced staffers are concentrated within parliament, which aligns with the quantitative advantage of the parliamentary party. Furthermore, parliamentary offices include significantly less staffers involved in party organization and administration and support – staff types that are strongly concentrated within central offices. Although the group of Dutch ministerial staffers appear too small to fundamentally challenge the staffing advantage of the party in parliament, the results show that they are qualified rather highly. All ministerial staffers have a college degree and they appear to punch above their weight when it comes to experience outside party politics – albeit not significant.

In Belgian opposition parties, no single party face clearly benefits from a staffing advantage. Firstly, central offices have a tiny quantitative advantage. Secondly, the qualifications of both central – and parliamentary offices are ambiguous as they point to both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, parliamentary staffers are slightly more highly-educated and they include significantly less staffers in supporting roles. On the other hand, the group of communication experts are strongly concentrated within the party in central office. However, this particular qualitative advantage for central offices does not apply to policy experts, who are equally split between central – and parliamentary offices. The professional experience of staffers does not offer clarity, as the most experienced staffers appear to be distributed relatively evenly between the party in central office and the party in parliament.

In Belgian government parties, the party in government benefits from a double staffing advantage. Firstly, the infamous ministerial cabinets undoubtedly have the largest staff. In fact, a clear majority of all staffers from Belgian government parties work in ministerial offices. Secondly, this quantitative advantage is amplified by the superior qualifications of their staff. Ministerial offices attract even more staffers with experience in the public – and private sector than suggested by their relative staff size. This adds even more weight to the fact that the majority of staffers with extensive professional experience work in ministerial offices. Moreover, the largest and most important group of policy experts are strongly concentrated within ministerial offices. Although they do not fundamentally challenge the staffing advantage of ministerial offices, there are some nuances to be

**Table 4: Staffing advantage in BELGIUM**

	<b>OPPOSITION</b> (N=188)		<b>GOVERNMENT</b> (N=747)		
	Central Office	Parliament	Central Office	Parliament	Ministerial Office
<b>Education</b>					
No higher education	61%	39%	24% *	4% ***	72% °
Higher, non-college education	60%	40%	16%	19%	65%
College degree	47% °	53% °	14% °	23% ***	63%
<b>Professional experience</b>					
Party politics	47%	53%	17%	17%	66%
Public sector	46%	55%	4% ***	8% ***	88% ***
Private sector	56%	44%	10% °	17%	73% °
<b>Tasks</b>					
Manager	50%	50%	18%	16%	67%
Policy expert	44%	57%	7% ***	13% ***	80% ***
Communication expert	82% **	18% **	26% **	7% **	66%
Political assistant	16% ***	84% ***	10% °	73% ***	18% ***
Party organizer	100% ***	0% ***	100% ***	0% **	0% ***
Administration & support	81% **	19% **	14%	4% ***	81% ***
<b>ALL</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>65%</b>

**Note:** Row totals; Significance levels of adjusted standardized residuals: °  $p \leq .1$ , \*  $p \leq .05$ , \*\*  $p \leq .01$ , \*\*\*  $p \leq .001$

made. Parliamentary staffers are slightly higher educated than suggested by their relative staff size. Nonetheless, a clear majority of highly educated staffers are concentrated within ministerial cabinets. A similar pattern can be observed concerning communication experts. Although the share of communication experts at central offices is disproportionately high, most of these communication experts work in ministerial offices. Finally, a significantly large share of administration and support staffers work in ministerial offices.

These findings largely align with the hypotheses presented in the theory section. Figure 5 illustrates the position of central offices (CPO), parliamentary offices (PPG) and ministerial offices (MO) on both dimensions, split up by country (BE: Belgium; NL: Netherlands) and governing status (Opp: opposition; Gov: government). Central office staffers are overshadowed by their colleagues in parliamentary – and ministerial offices – except in Belgian opposition parties. This partially supports the first hypothesis, which stated that the staff of parties’ public offices is both larger and more qualified than the staff of central offices (H1). Indeed, Dutch parliamentary offices are dominant professional machines with an extensive, highly qualified staff. In contrast, Dutch central offices neatly fit into the back-office category as their staff is both relatively small and less qualified. This image hardly changes when parties participate in government.

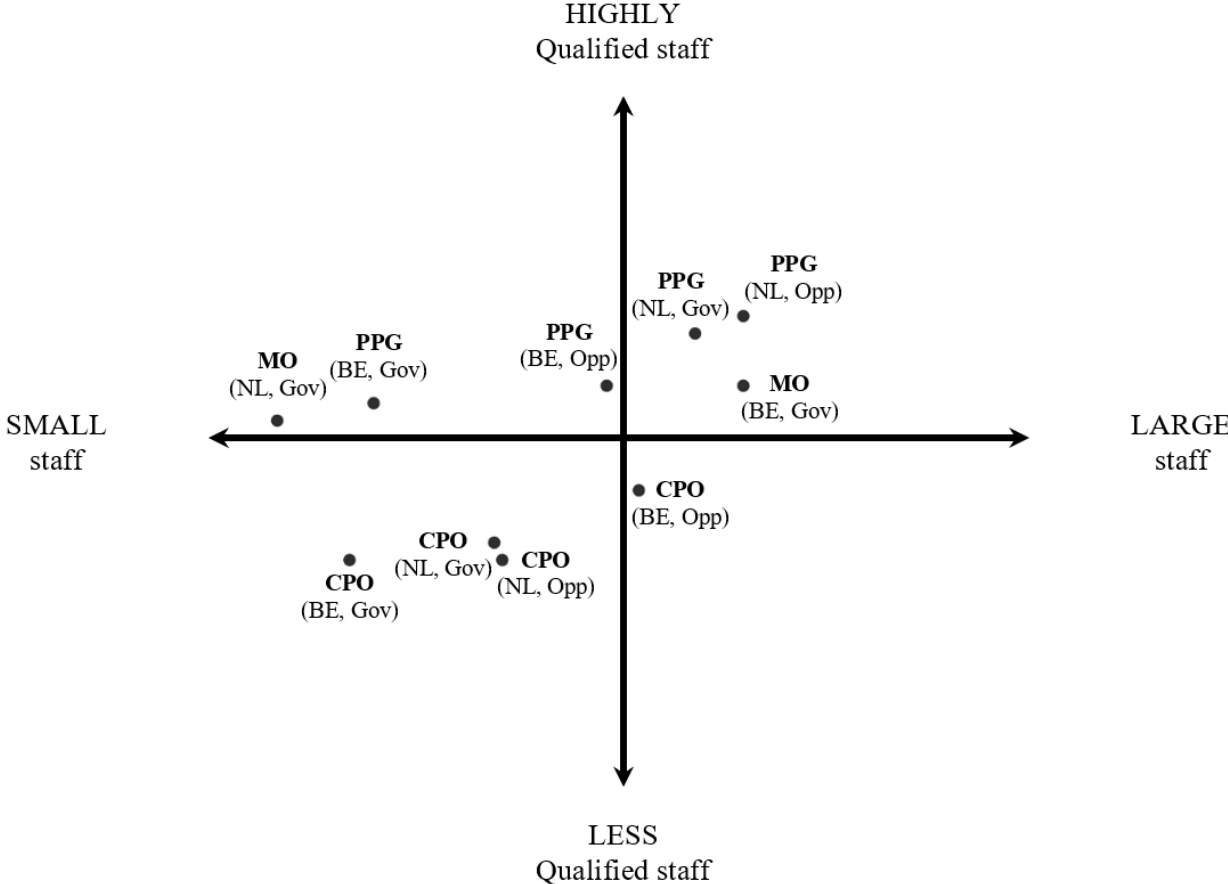


Figure 5: Party Faces on Quantitative and Qualitative dimension

Staffing patterns in Belgium substantially diverge from the Dutch situation. This finding suggests that parties' internal distribution of staff is indeed shaped by institutional factors. In the Netherlands, the *party in parliament* permanently dominates and a party's governing status has little effect on staffing (H2c). Ministerial offices do not fundamentally affect parties internal balance: the *party in parliament* does not lose its quantitative nor its qualitative staffing advantage. The comparatively high degree of experience and education among Dutch ministerial staffers suggests that ministerial offices are tiny expert cells – but the number observations is too small to yield significant results. In Belgium, however, government participation dramatically alters staffing patterns because ministerial offices are professional machines with large, highly qualified staffs (H2a). These dominant ministerial offices overshadow central – and parliamentary offices alike. Central offices in Belgian government parties act as back-offices with smaller, less-qualified staffs. The position of parliamentary offices is somewhere between back-office and expert cell because their staff is smaller but only slightly more qualified. Staffing in Belgian opposition parties is even more ambiguous as the staffs of central – and parliamentary offices are nearly equal and qualitative indicators yield mixed results.

## Conclusion

This paper examined the internal power balance of parties by studying the distribution of their human resources. While earlier research suggests that parties' parliamentary offices have a quantitative staffing advantage (Krouwel, 2012; Kölln, 2015; Bardi et al., 2017), I have argued that elected elites in parliament and government also benefit from a qualitative staffing advantage. Based on Panebianco's seminal work (1988), I have argued that the demand for highly qualified staff is higher in parliamentary – and ministerial offices because elected elites are more vulnerable to challenges in the electoral – and policy arena. As a result, both the *party in parliament* and the *party in government* were expected to benefit from a qualitative staffing advantage as their staffs are more qualified. The results confirm that the individual qualifications of staffers in parliamentary – and ministerial offices are often superior to central office staffers.

The differences between Belgium and the Netherlands demonstrate how institutional arrangements can shape parties' internal distribution of resources. Although both political systems share many similarities, the support structure of governments is substantially different due to the size of ministerial offices. While Dutch ministers only have a handful political advisors at their disposal, their Belgian counterparts rely on extensive 'ministerial cabinets' containing dozens of politically recruited staffers. The findings illustrate that such institutional factors influence which party face

is the main beneficiary of the double staffing advantage – combining both the largest and most qualified staff. The Dutch case neatly reflects the conventional view on the power balance between party faces: the *party in parliament* clearly benefits from a double staffing advantage. Moreover, government participation does not substantially alter parties' internal distribution of resources because ministerial offices include few political staffers. The Belgian case challenges this dominant image as the *party in government* benefits from a double staffing advantage. Although ministerial offices can become semi-permanent power centers within parties that frequently participate in government, party organizations are in constant flux as their human resources are strongly dependent on government participation.

This unequal distribution of human resources affects parties' internal power balance. As staffing patterns favor the elected elites in parliament and government, they undermine the capacity of extra-parliamentary parties to keep track of their elected representatives. In both Belgium and The Netherlands, controlling the actions of elected elites in parliament and government is an uphill battle for extra-parliamentary party organizations. As parliamentary – and ministerial staffers are more qualified, their expertise puts them one step ahead of their peers at central offices. However, it remains unclear whether shifting in resources (including staff) are responsible for the dominance of elected elites or vice versa. As longitudinal data are lacking, it is just as plausible that the dominance of elected elites actually preceded staff growth, enabling public offices to divert important resources towards themselves. Moreover, intra-party power dynamics should not be reduced to distribution of resources. They are just one piece of the puzzle that makes up parties' internal power balance. In fact, research shows that central party organizations can remain dominant by controlling leadership positions and statutory prerogatives despite the growth of resources in parliamentary – and ministerial offices (Koskimaa, 2020). Similarly, the Belgian case demonstrates that the dominance of the *party in public office* is not inevitable – even in a political system where parties are highly dependent on public funding (Van Biezen and Kopecký, 2014). Despite the lack of a staffing advantage, central offices are nonetheless considered as the main political power houses within the Belgian *partitocracy* (Deschouwer et al., 1996) and parliamentary party groups remain subordinate to both central – and ministerial offices (De Winter and Dumont, 2006; De Winter and Dumont, 2003).

The contrasts between Belgium and the Netherlands are relevant for other countries where ministerial advisors are prominent actors (Shaw and Eichbaum, 2018). Despite the idiosyncrasies of the Belgian case, the staffing advantage of the *party in government* is unlikely to be an international aberration. Parties' internal staff distribution can be expected to favor the *party in government* more than the *party in parliament* in other European cabinet systems as well. Moreover, the staffing



advantage of Belgian ministerial offices shows how ongoing experiments with *cabinetisation* in Australia, Canada and Sweden (Gouglas and Brans, 2017) might affect political parties internally. The findings even suggest that the existence of ministerial cabinets influences the careers of those who work in politics. Compared to the Netherlands, Belgian parties include more older and experienced staffers and rely more on policy experts. The extensive ministerial offices are likely responsible for these contrasts. Belgian ministerial staffers often pursue careers at the crossroads between politics and administration (Brans et al., 2005), resulting in higher levels of experience in the public sector and the availability of policy experts. Moreover, the extensive size of ministerial offices creates many career opportunities, which enables more staffers to pursue a career in party politics as a ‘separate occupational track’ (Katz and Mair, 2009).

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## Appendix A. Participating parties (N=14)

Party	Country	Party Family <sup>#</sup>	Vote Share	Total Staff	Governing status	Response rate	Survey period
N-VA	Belgium	Conservative	20%	560	Government	32%	November 2018 - January 2019
CD&V	Belgium	Christian-Democratic	12%	521	Government	33%	December 2018 – March 2019
PS	Belgium	Socialist	12%	565	Opposition	29%	February 2019 - April 2019
VLD	Belgium	Liberal	10%	417	Government	37%	December 2018 - March 2019
Sp.a	Belgium	Socialist	9%	192	Opposition	34%	November 2018 – May 2019
Groen	Belgium	Green	5%	91	Opposition	45%	January 2019 - March 2019
PVDA-PTB	Belgium	Radical Left	4%	65	Opposition	38%	January 2019 - April 2019
Ecolo	Belgium	Green	3%	104	Opposition	46%	March 2019 – April 2019
Défi	Belgium	Liberal	2%	103	Opposition	19%	March 2019 – April 2019
VVD	Netherlands	Liberal	21%	107	Government	51%	October 2019 - December 2019
D66	Netherlands	Liberal	12%	93	Government	47%	September 2019 - November 2019
PvdA	Netherlands	Socialist	6%	62	Opposition	48%	September 2019 - January 2020
50Plus	Netherlands	Liberal	3%	27	Opposition	22%	October 2019 - November 2019
SGP	Netherlands	Conservative	2%	29	Opposition	48%	December 2019

<sup>#</sup>: ParlGov Database

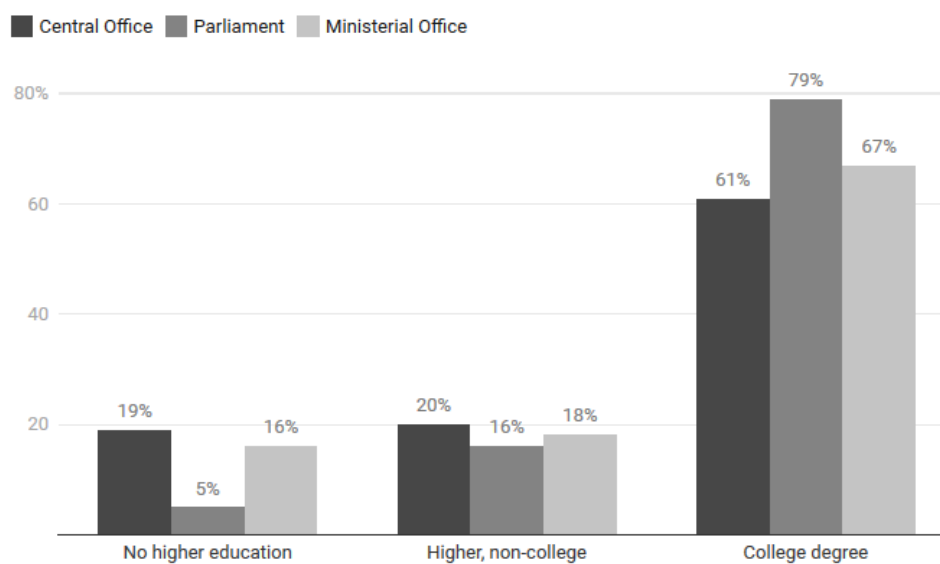
# Appendix B. Variables

## B.1. DEPENDENT VARIABLE

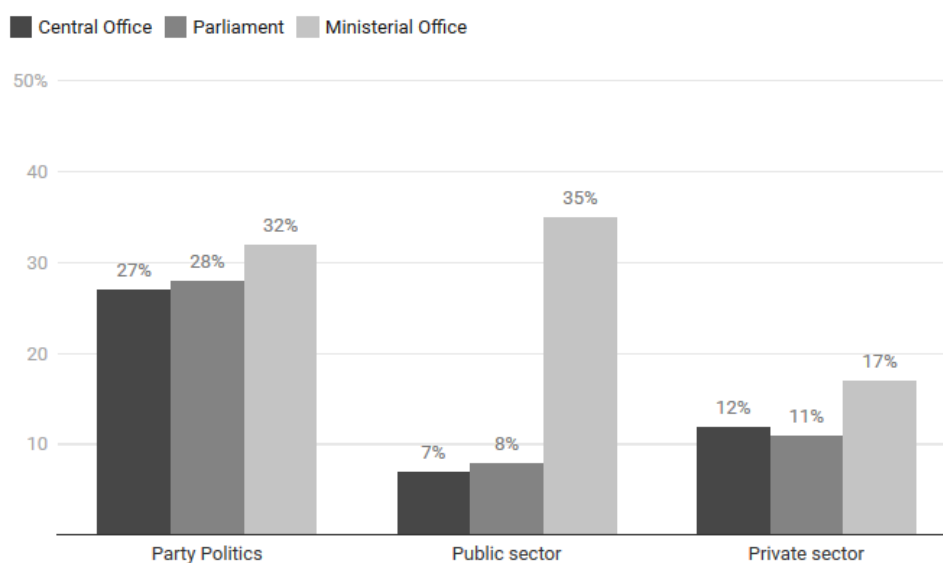
	Central office	Parliament	Ministerial office	TOTAL
Belgium	228	252	380	860
The Netherlands	59	85	5	149
TOTAL	287	337	385	1009

## B.2. INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

### B.2.1. Education by party face



### B.2.2. Professional experience by party face

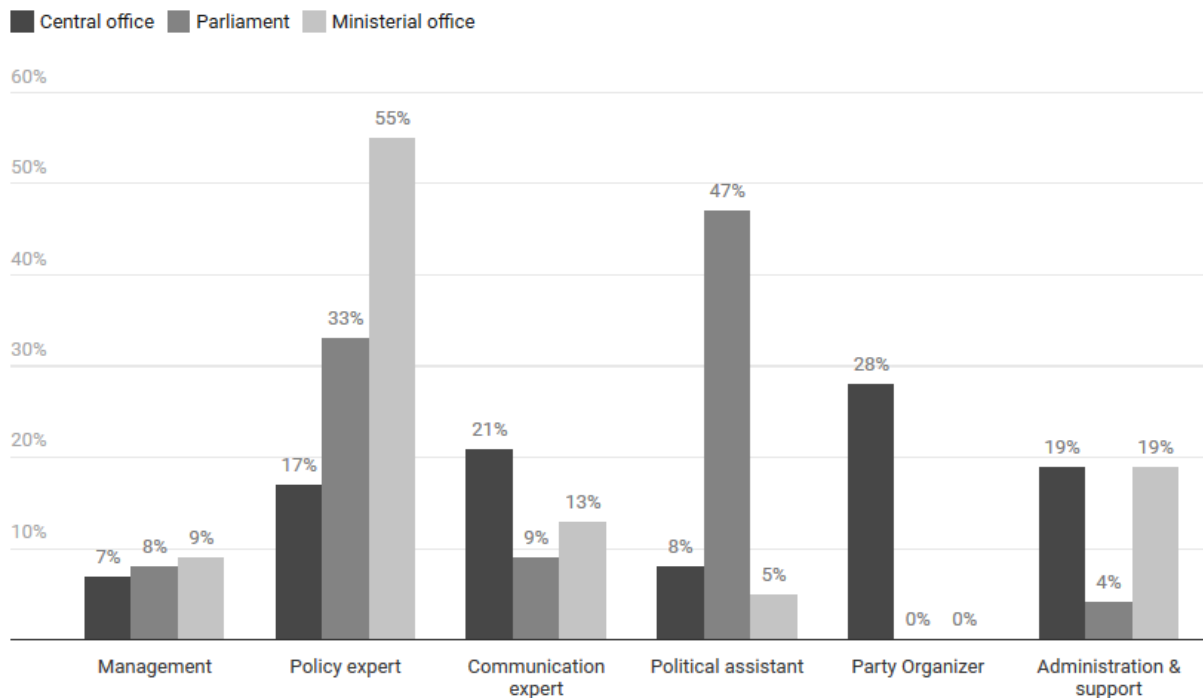


### B.2.3. Tasks

#### Staffers' individual tasks

<b>Managers</b>	Director (central office, ministerial office), party group secretary, head of general policy (ministerial office), cabinet secretary (ministerial office)
<b>Policy experts</b>	Policy advice (party study service, party group or ministerial office)
<b>Communication experts</b>	Director of communications, communication cell staff, spokesperson, internal party communication staff, translator, public relations staff
<b>Political assistants</b>	Personal assistant, parliamentary liaison (ministerial office)
<b>Party organizers</b>	Coach of local sections/campaigns, experts in local policy, assistants to party subgroups (youth, women, elderly, ...)
<b>Administration &amp; support</b>	Finance and accounting, human resources, IT, reception, administration, catering, personal driver

#### Tasks by party face



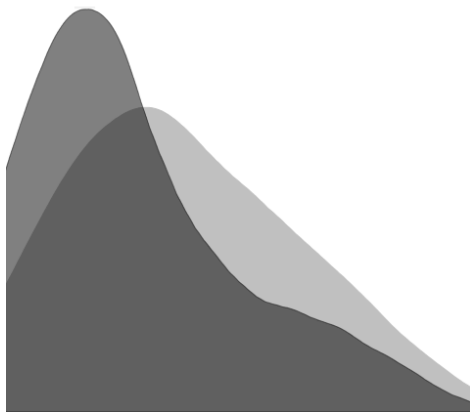
# Appendix C. Control variables

## C.1. Age

### C.1.2. Age by country

	Belgium	Netherlands	Total	Sig.
Mean <sup>a</sup>	42	36	41	***
Median	40	32,5	39	
18-35 <sup>b</sup>	34%	60%	37%	***
36-50 <sup>b</sup>	40%	25%	39%	**
50+ <sup>b</sup>	26%	16%	25%	*
N	898	110	1008	

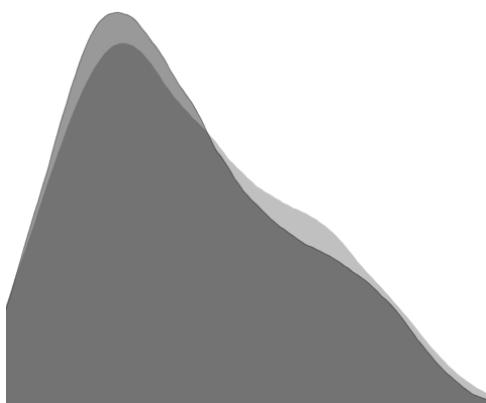
a: Independent samples T-test; b: Adjusted standardized residuals



Age distribution by country, X-axis from 18 to 65.  
Light gray area: Belgium, dark gray area: The Netherlands

### C.1.2. Age by party face

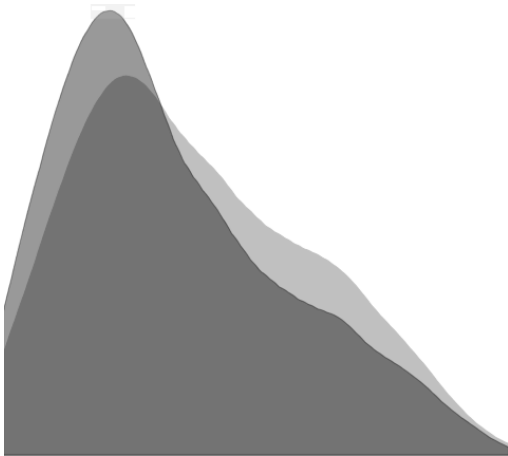
#### Central office



Age distribution by party face, X-axis from 18 to 65  
Light gray area: general distribution, dark gray area: central office

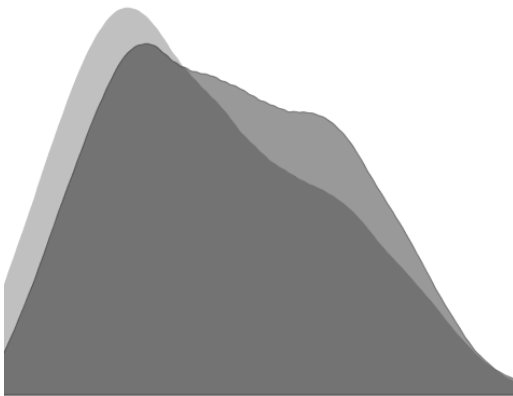


## Parliamentary office



Age distribution by party face, X-axis from 18 to 65  
Light gray area: general distribution, dark gray area: parliamentary office

## Ministerial office



Age distribution by party face, X-axis from 18 to 65  
Light gray area: general distribution, dark gray area: ministerial office

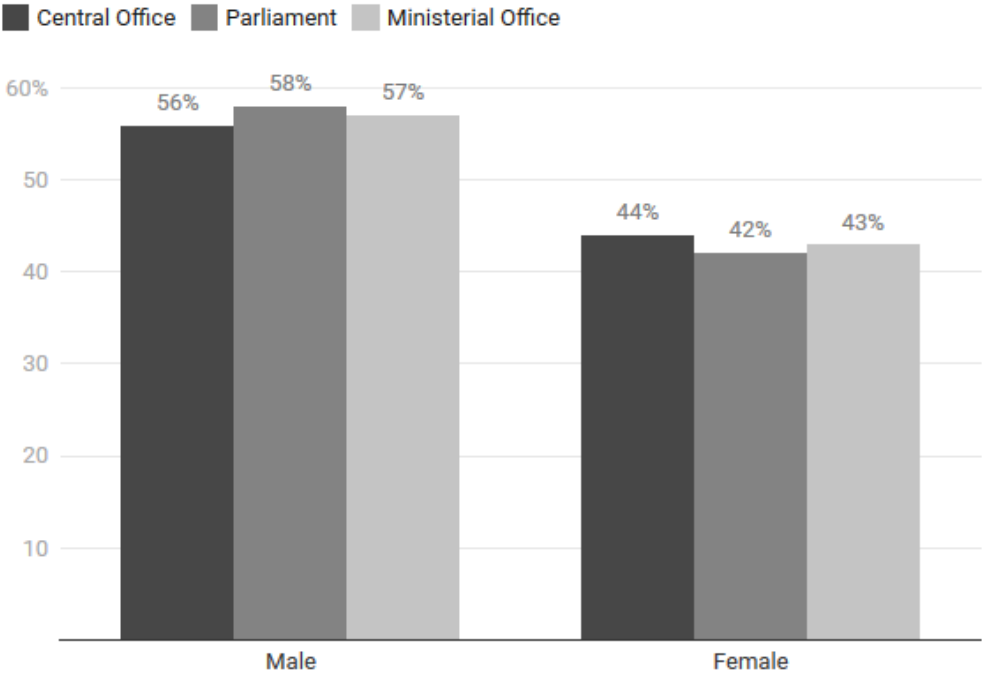
## C.2. Gender

### C.2.1. Gender by country

	Belgium	Netherlands	Total	Sig.
Male	58%	53%	57%	-
Female	42%	47%	43%	-
N	898	110	1008	

Sig. test: Chi-square, Adj. standardized residuals

C.2.2. Gender by party face



## Appendix D. Understanding the qualitative staffing advantage

	<b>BELGIUM</b> (N=898)			<b>THE NETHERLANDS</b> (N=110)	
	Central office	Parliament	Ministerial office	Central office	Parliament
<b>Education</b> ( <i>Ref. cat. No higher education</i> )					
Higher, non-college education	0,84 (0,39)	3,18 (0,49) *	0,61 (0,35)	1,09 (1,26)	1,30 (1,16)
College degree	0,70 (0,38)	3,98 (0,46) ***	0,55 (0,34) °	0,17 (1,12)	3,09 (1,03)
<b>Professional experience</b>					
Party politics	0,76 (0,30)	1,81 (0,27) *	0,78 (0,23)	0,21 (1,26)	1,80 (0,94)
Public sector	0,19 (0,45) ***	0,33 (0,35) ***	4,93 (0,29) ***	4,66 (1,29)	0,14 (1,28)
Private sector	0,85 (0,38)	1,52 (0,37)	0,85 (0,30)	0,56 (1,46)	0,58 (1,18)
<b>Tasks</b> ( <i>Ref. cat. Manager</i> )					
Policy expert	0,35 (0,39) **	0,81 (0,36)	2,16 (0,32) **	0,27 (1,44)	1,55 (1,42)
Communication expert	1,71 (0,41)	0,36 (0,49) *	1,08 (0,36)	0,78 (1,40)	0,52 (1,41)
Political assistant	0,29 (0,46) **	17,42 (0,41) ***	0,09 (0,41)	0,22 (1,41)	0,63 (1,35)
Party organizer	5E+9 (5991)	0,00 (5955)	0,00 (5935)	2E+9 (15387)	0,0 (16102)
Administration & support	0,95 (0,45)	0,45 (0,52)	1,42 (0,39)	34,84 (1,90) °	0,02 (1,92) *
<b>Controls</b>					
<b>Age</b>	1,00 (0,01)	0,99 (0,01)	1,01 (0,01)	0,97 (0,04)	1,03 (0,04)
<b>Sex</b> ( <i>Ref. cat. Male</i> )					
Female	0,93 (0,23)	0,75 (0,22)	1,28 (0,19)	0,87 (0,64)	1,92 (0,57)
<b>Constant</b>	0,60 (0,76)	0,11 (0,82) **	1,22 (0,64)	9,67 (1,98)	0,41 (1,88)
<b>Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup></b>	0,40	0,46	0,43	0,55	0,48

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

## Appendix E. Understanding staffers' individual qualifications

	Manager	Policy expert	Communication expert	Political assistant	Party organizer	Administration & support
<b>Education</b> ( <i>Ref. cat. No higher education</i> )						
Higher, non-college education	3,34 (0,64) °	2,93 (0,41) **	2,24 (0,38) *	1,51 (0,35)	0,40 (0,57) °	0,28 (0,28) ***
College degree	4,66 (0,60) **	14,31 (0,38) ***	1,06 (0,36)	1,02 (0,31)	0,56 (0,42)	0,04 (0,30) ***
<b>Professional experience</b>						
Party politics	2,17 (0,30) **	1,04 (0,20)	0,89 (0,29)	0,80 (0,26)	0,48 (0,42) °	1,15 (0,29)
Public sector	0,57 (0,37)	2,99 (0,23) ***	0,65 (0,34)	0,62 (0,31)	0,10 (0,81) **	0,98 (0,30)
Private sector	1,02 (0,42)	1,13 (0,28)	1,41 (0,36)	0,87 (0,36)	0,32 (0,63) °	1,25 (0,33)
<b>Controls</b>						
<b>Age</b>	1,06 (0,02) ***	1,00 (0,01)	0,98 (0,01) °	0,97 (0,01) **	1,03 (0,02)	1,01 (0,01)
<b>Sex</b> ( <i>Ref. cat. Male</i> )						
Female	1,07 (0,27)	0,60 (0,15) ***	0,87 (0,21)	1,19 (0,18)	1,33 (0,30)	1,75 (0,23) *
<b>Constant</b>	0,00 (0,90) ***	0,07 (0,51) ***	0,38 (0,58) °	0,87 (0,52)	0,05 (0,79) ***	0,51 (0,54)
<b>Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup></b>	0,11	0,23	0,04	0,06	0,07	0,34

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