Party Youth in Austria and Germany

A Comparison of the Youth Wings of the Social Democratic and Christian Democratic Parties

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ECPR General Conference

P294: Party Youth Wings in the Twenty-First Century

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Motivation & Research questions

- Political youth organizations are important for the future and maintenance of representative democracies
- Yet, we have little knowledge about their internal structure and their members' background and motivation
  - From which social strata are the members of the party youth recruited?
  - Why do young people join these party youth organizations?
  - In what activities do members of party youth organizations participate?
  - Why do they remain long-term members?

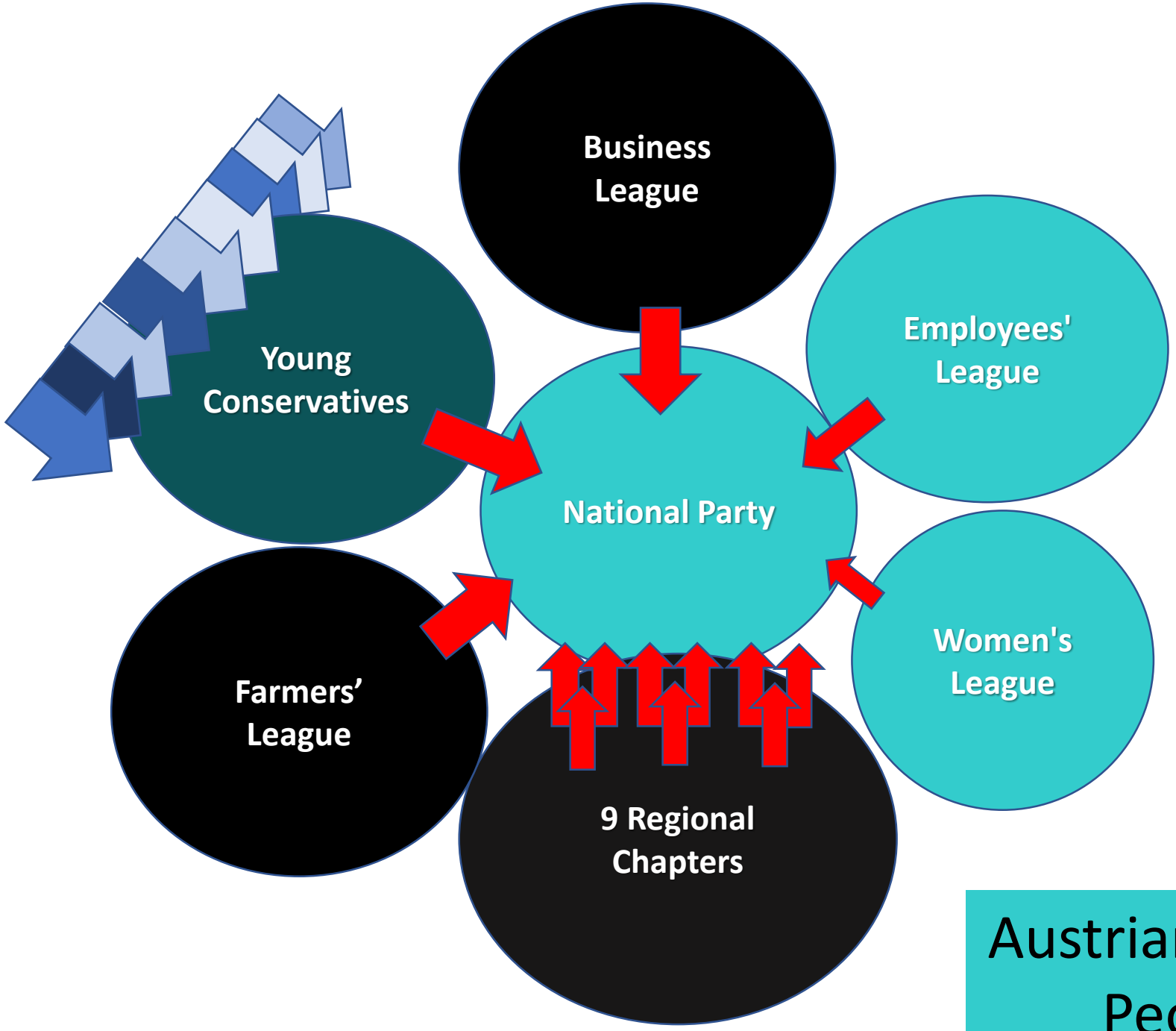
Case selection and party information

Country	Austria		Germany	
Ideology	Center-left	Center-right	Center-left	Center-right
Mother party	SPÖ	Die neue Volkspartei	SPD	CDU CSU
	Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ)	Austrian People's Party (ÖVP)	Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD)	Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU/CSU)
Youth party		JVP Die Junge ÖVP.	JUSOS	JU JUNGE UNION DEUTSCHLANDS
	Socialist Youth Austria (SJÖ)	Young People's Party (JVP)	Young Socialists (Jusos)	Young Union (JU)
Members	-	about 100.000	about 70.000	about 130.000
Structure	9 state groups 114 district groups 3589 local groups	9 state groups 2400 local groups	16 state and 6 district groups 350 sub-district groups 12.500 local groups	18 state and 37 district groups 450 sub-district groups 7.500 local groups

Data collection timeline and process

- 12/2020: Implementing and testing the survey
- 01/2021: E-mail invitations to the party youth executives to discuss the purpose and distribution of the surveys
- 02/2021: Zoom meetings with party executives
- 03/2021: Distribution in North Rhine-Westphalia via newsletter, rejection of national cooperation/distribution (Jusos)
- 04/2021: Distribution of the survey via national newsletter (SJÖ)
- 06/2021: Distribution of the survey via national newsletter (JU)
- 07/2021: Second round of e-mail invitations / reminder
- 08/2021: Distribution of the survey via national newsletter (JVP)

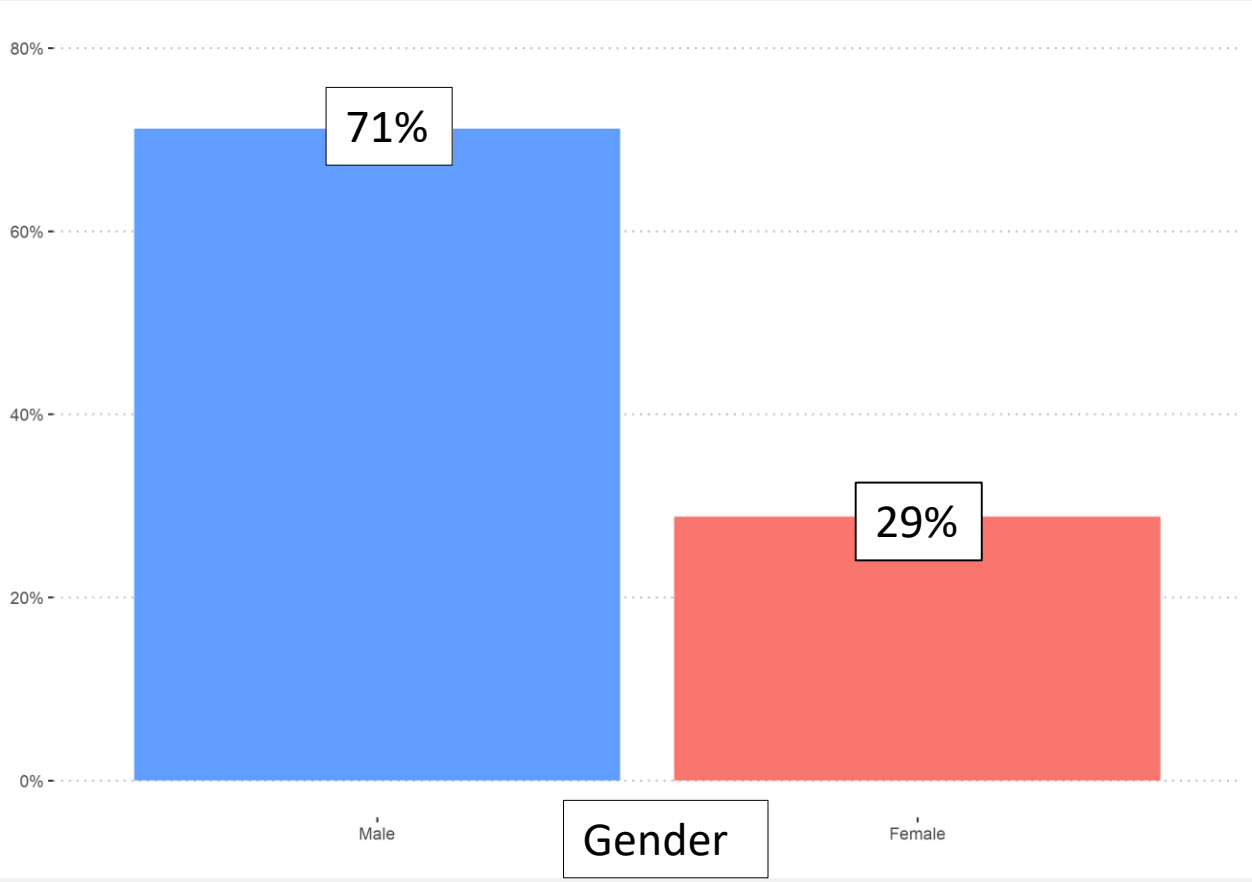
Mother party	Youth party	Partial	Full	Total
SPÖ	SJÖ	15	28	43
ÖVP	JVP	33	155	188
SPD	Jusos	4	29	33
CDU/CSU	JU	29	61	90

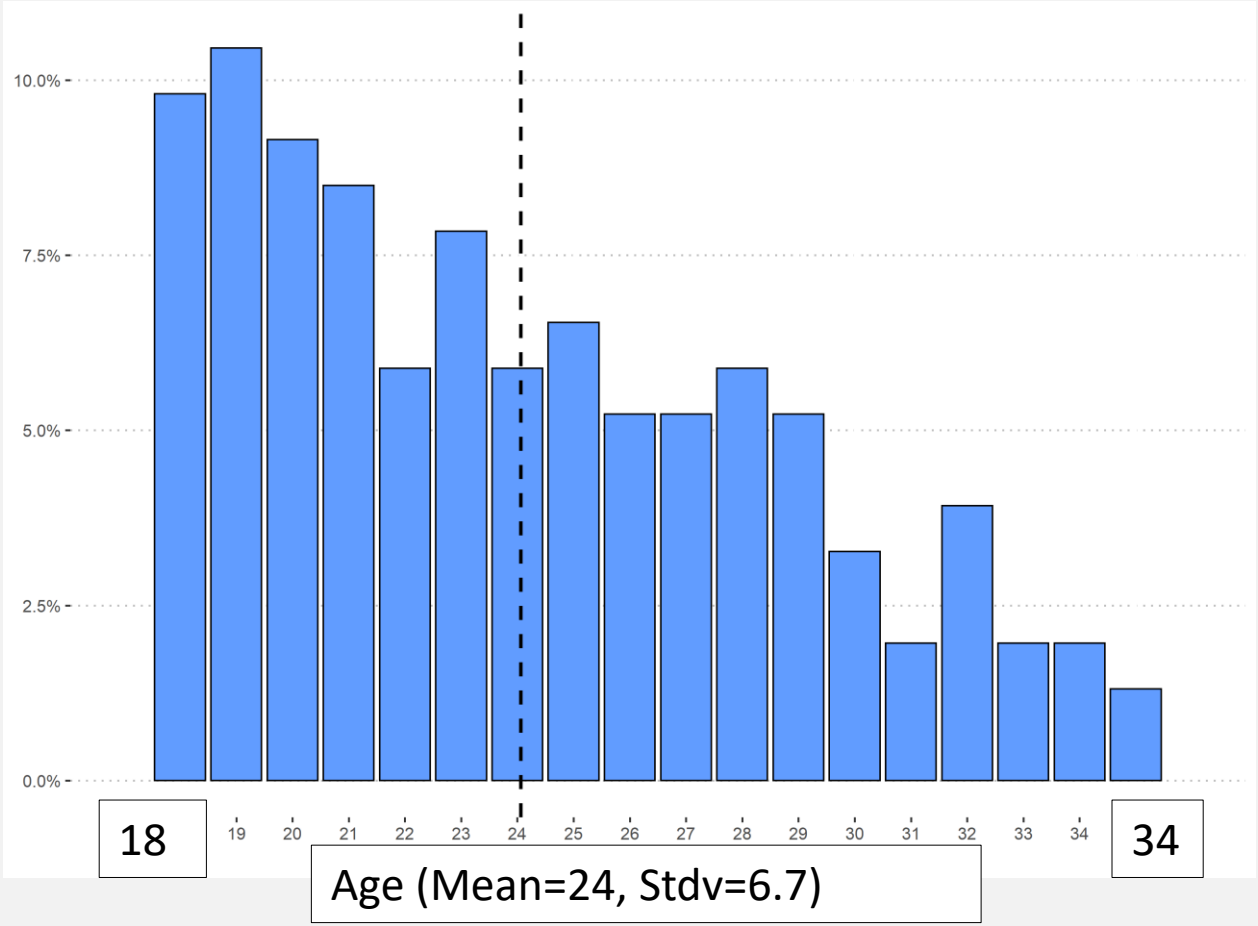


ÖVP
Die neue Volkspartei.

Austrian Conservatives People's Party

Social background Young Conservatives (JVP)



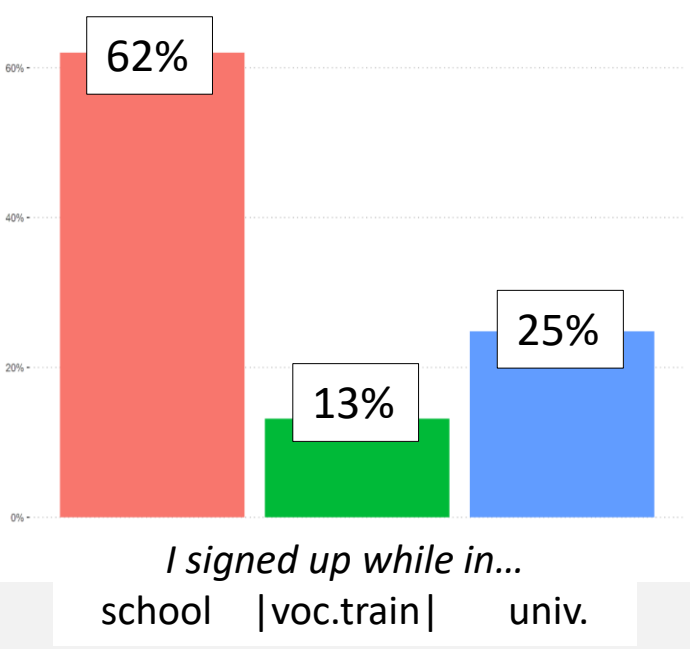


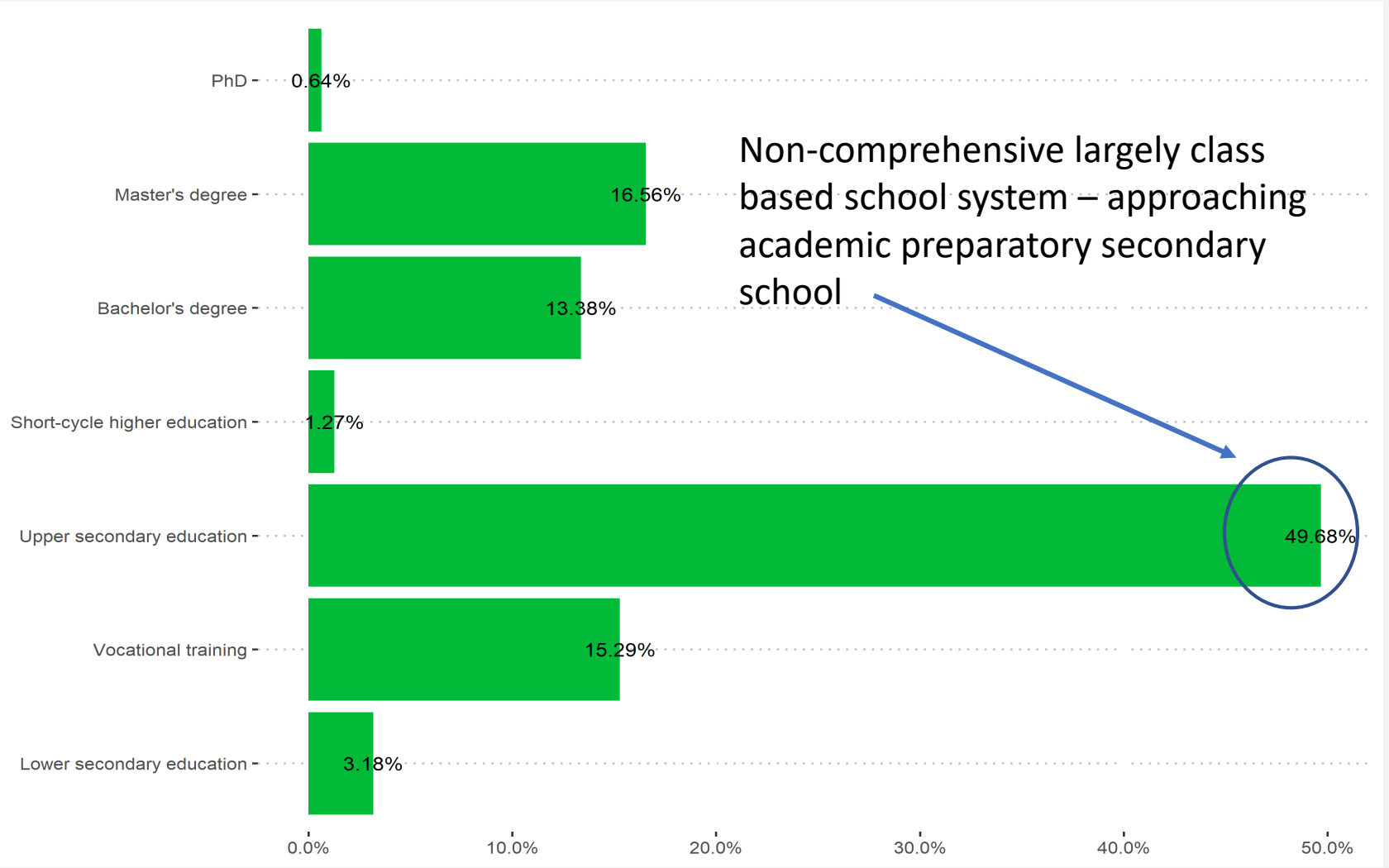
Social background Young Conservatives (JVP)

Australian National University

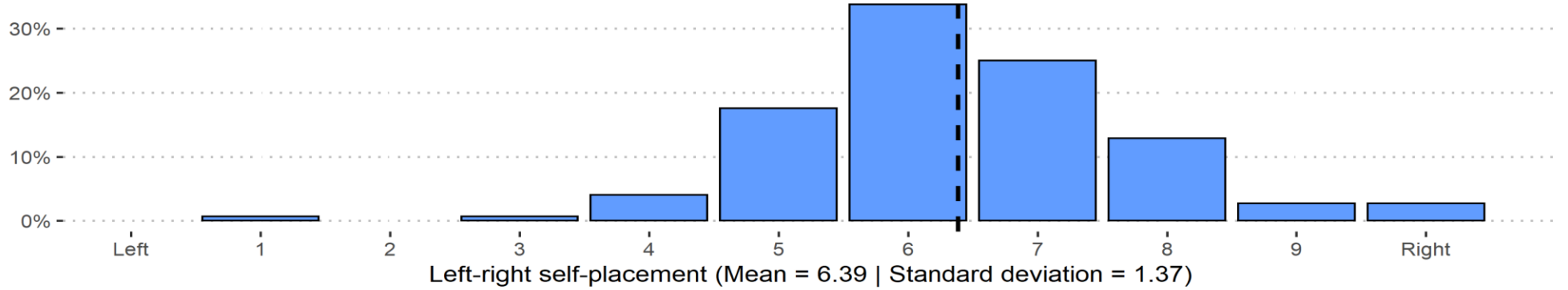
PARIS LODRON UNIVERSITY SALZBURG

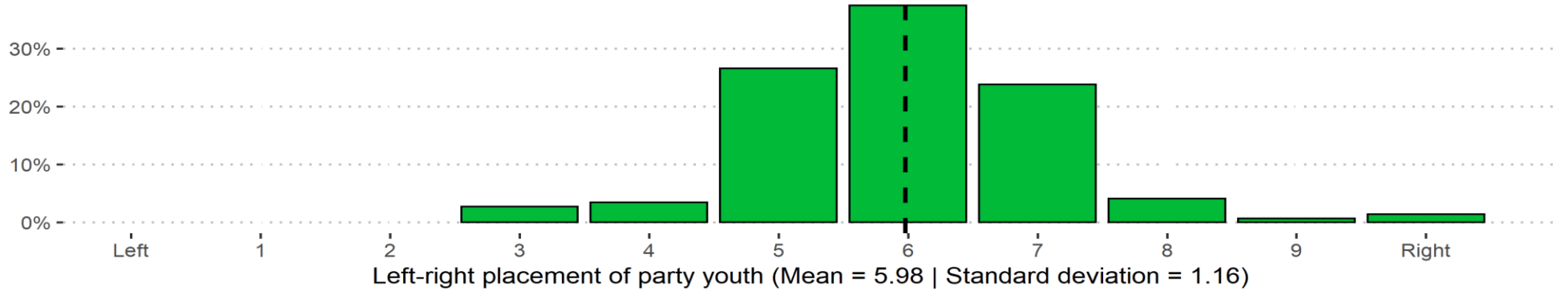
Formation/Education

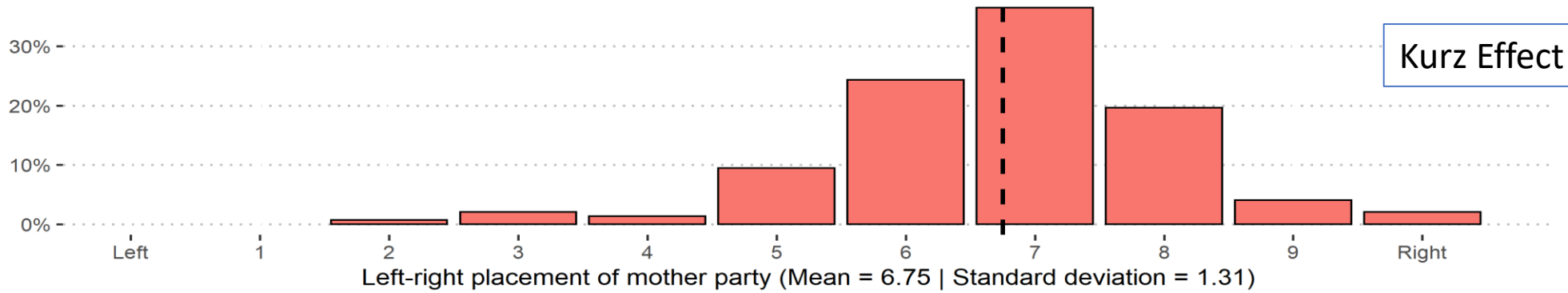




Ideological placement (JVP)







Kurz Effect ?

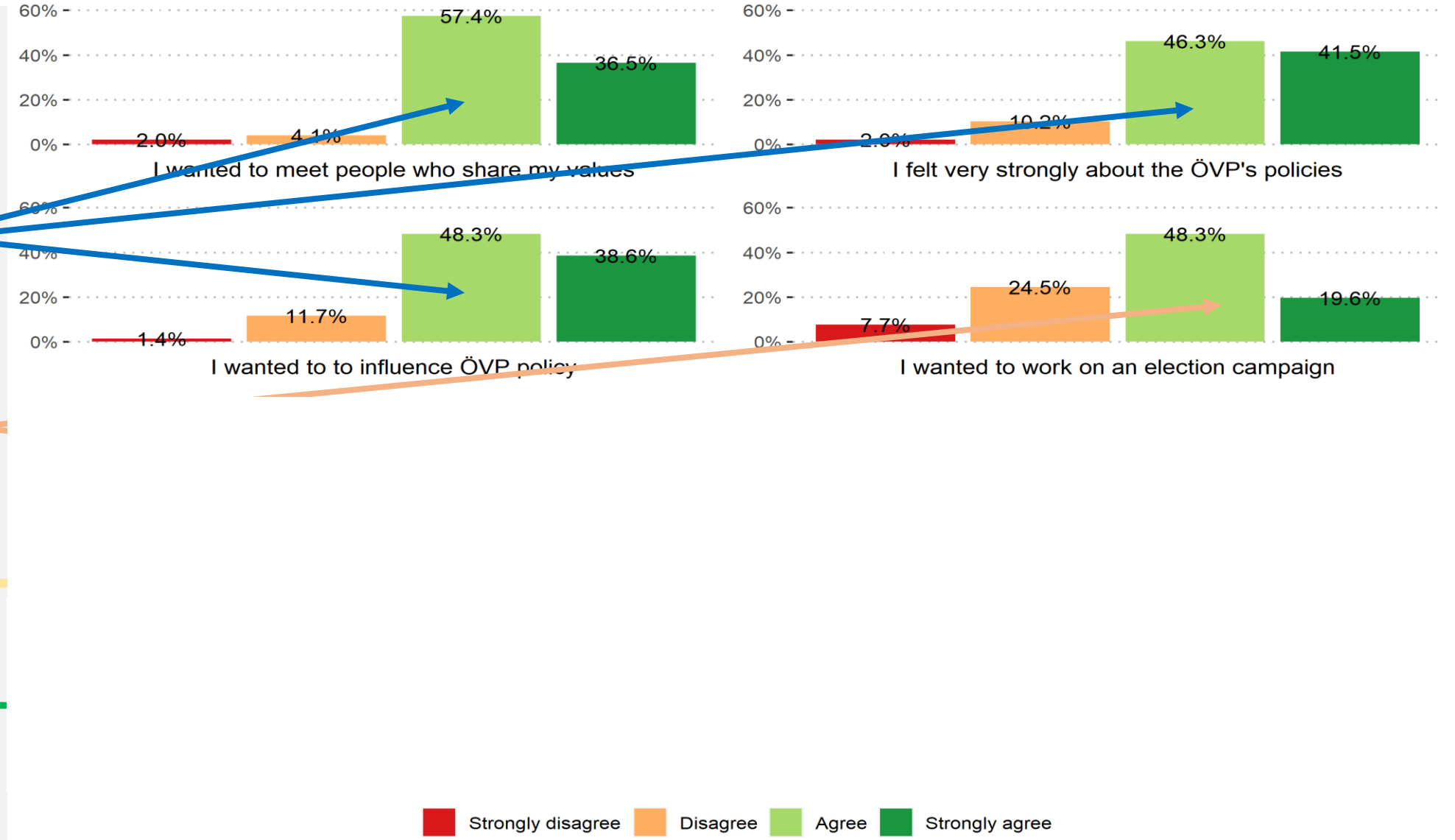
Reasons for joining (JVP)

Ideology/Policy Nexus

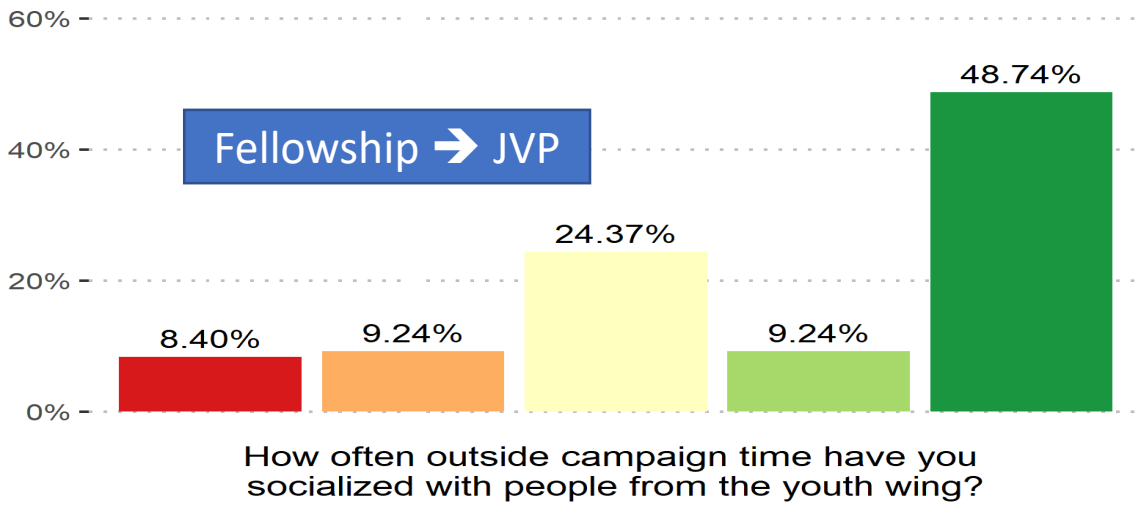
Personal Activism motive

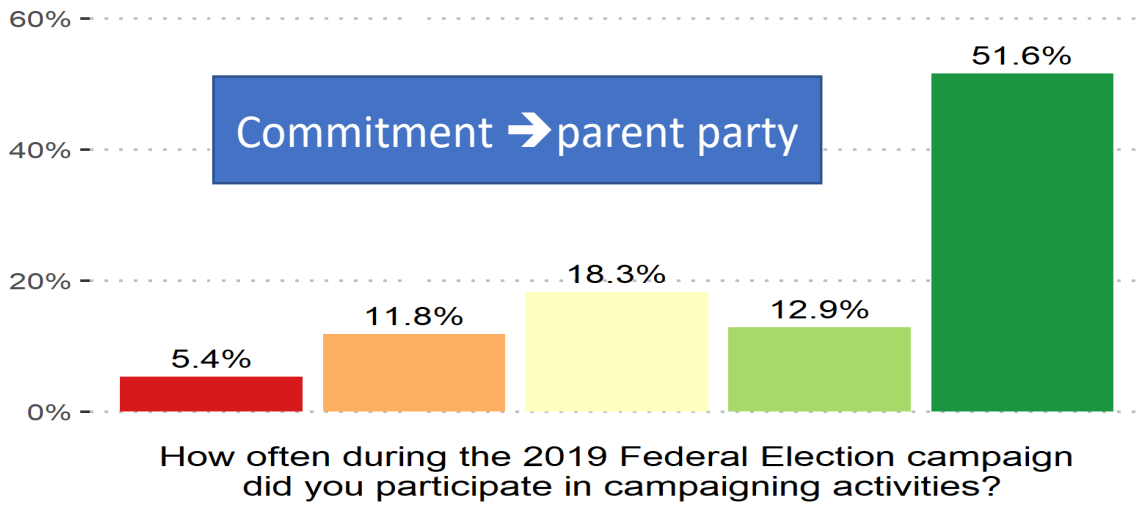
Pragmatic self-interest

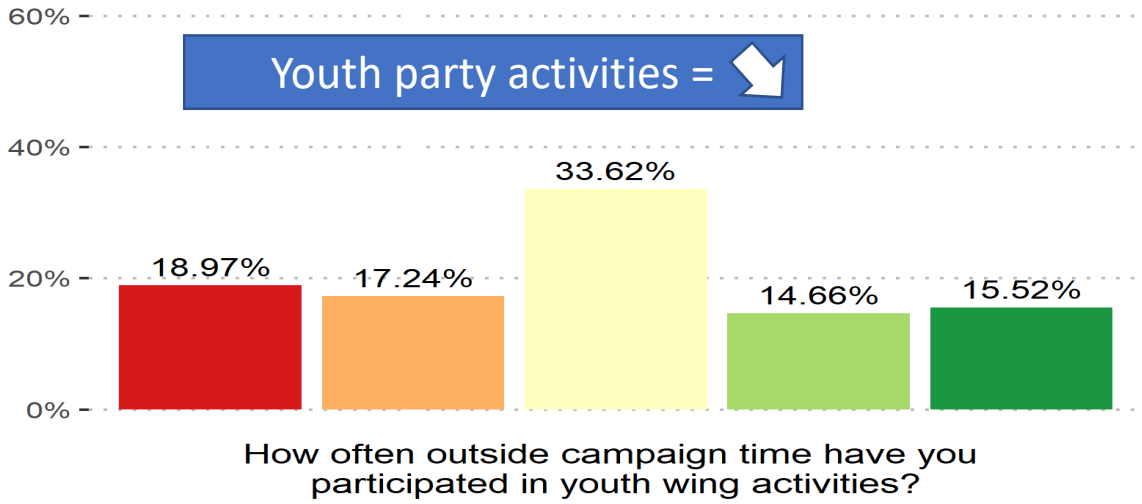
Reference persons

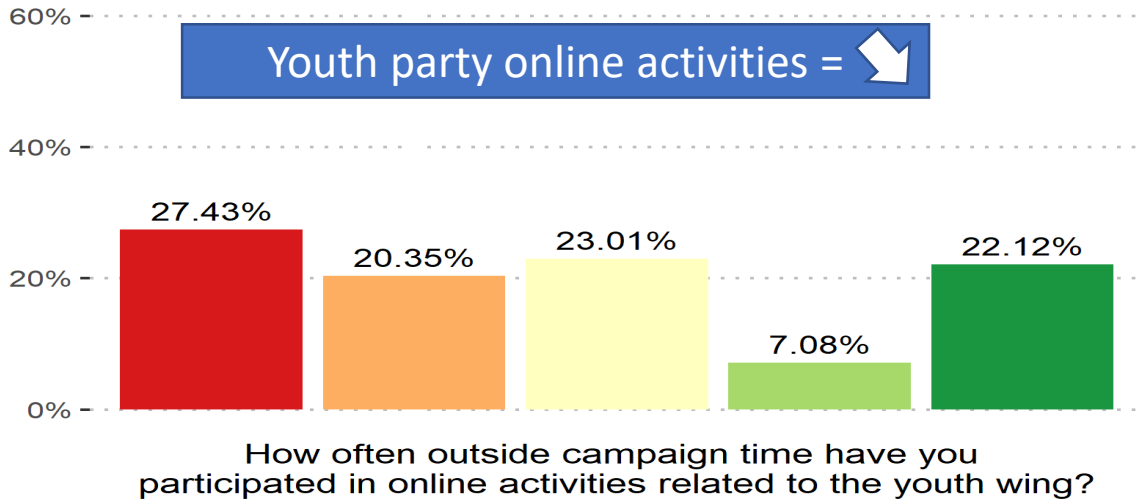


Type of activities and time commitment
JVP is stepping stone/ÖVP is commitment goal



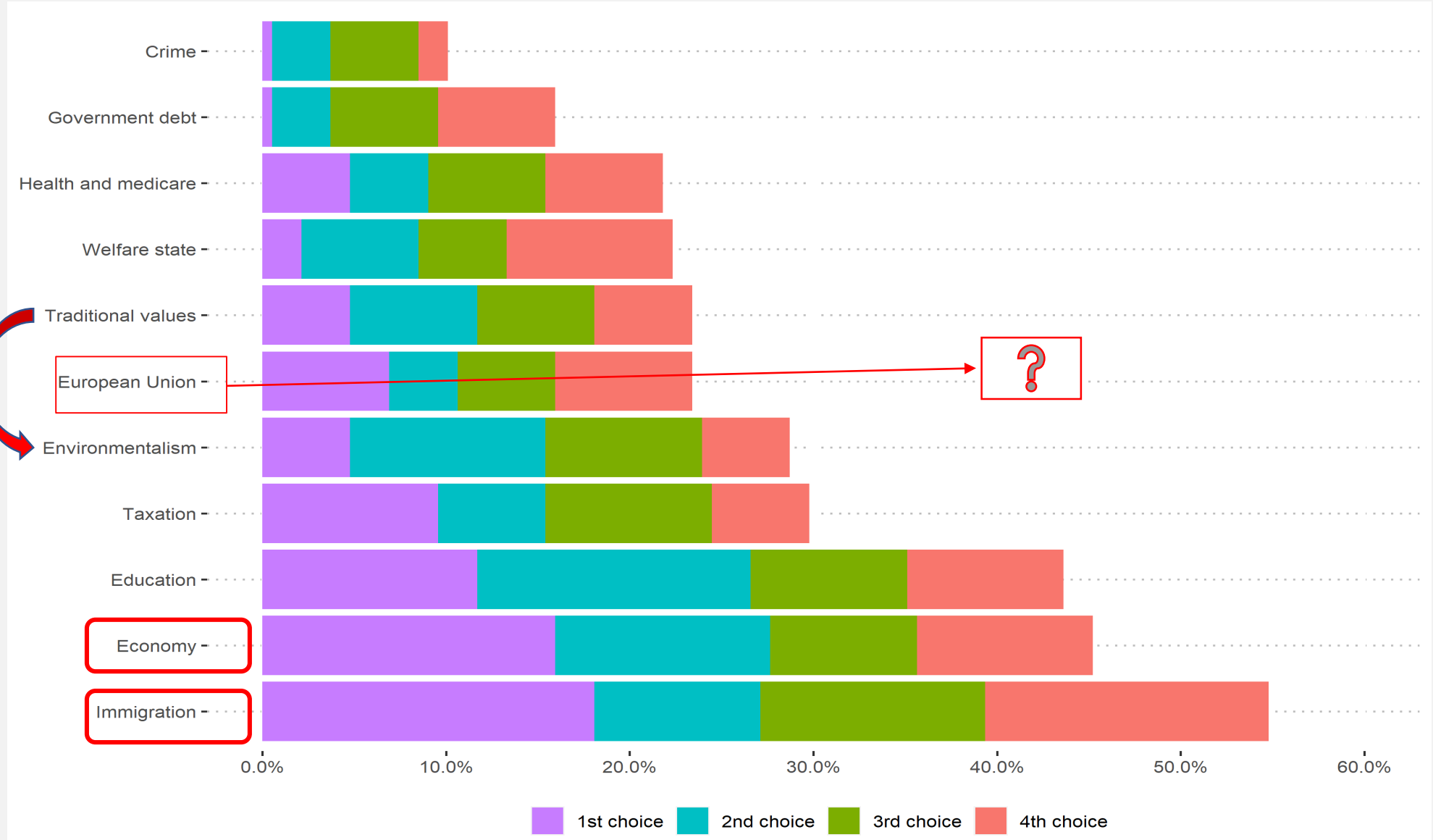






Less than once a month | Once a month | Several times a month | Once a week | More than once a week

Most important political issues (JVP)



Plan for further data collection

- **Socialist Youth Austria (SJÖ) AUSTRIA:**
  - next meeting in October
  - redistribution of the survey via national and regional newsletters

- **Young People's Party (JVP) AUSTRIA:**
  - successful first round, next meeting end of September
  - redistribution of the survey via national and regional newsletters

- **Young Socialists (Jusos) GERMANY:**
  - no cooperation at the national level so far, difficult to approach all regional organizations
  - trying to establish cooperation at the national level through contacts within the party

- **Young Union (JU) GERMANY:**
  - next meeting after national elections (September 26)
  - redistribution of the survey via national and regional newsletter
  - advertising at the national convention (October 15-17) via QR code in the documents as well as advertising the survey in the speech from the membership chair

Thank you for your attention!

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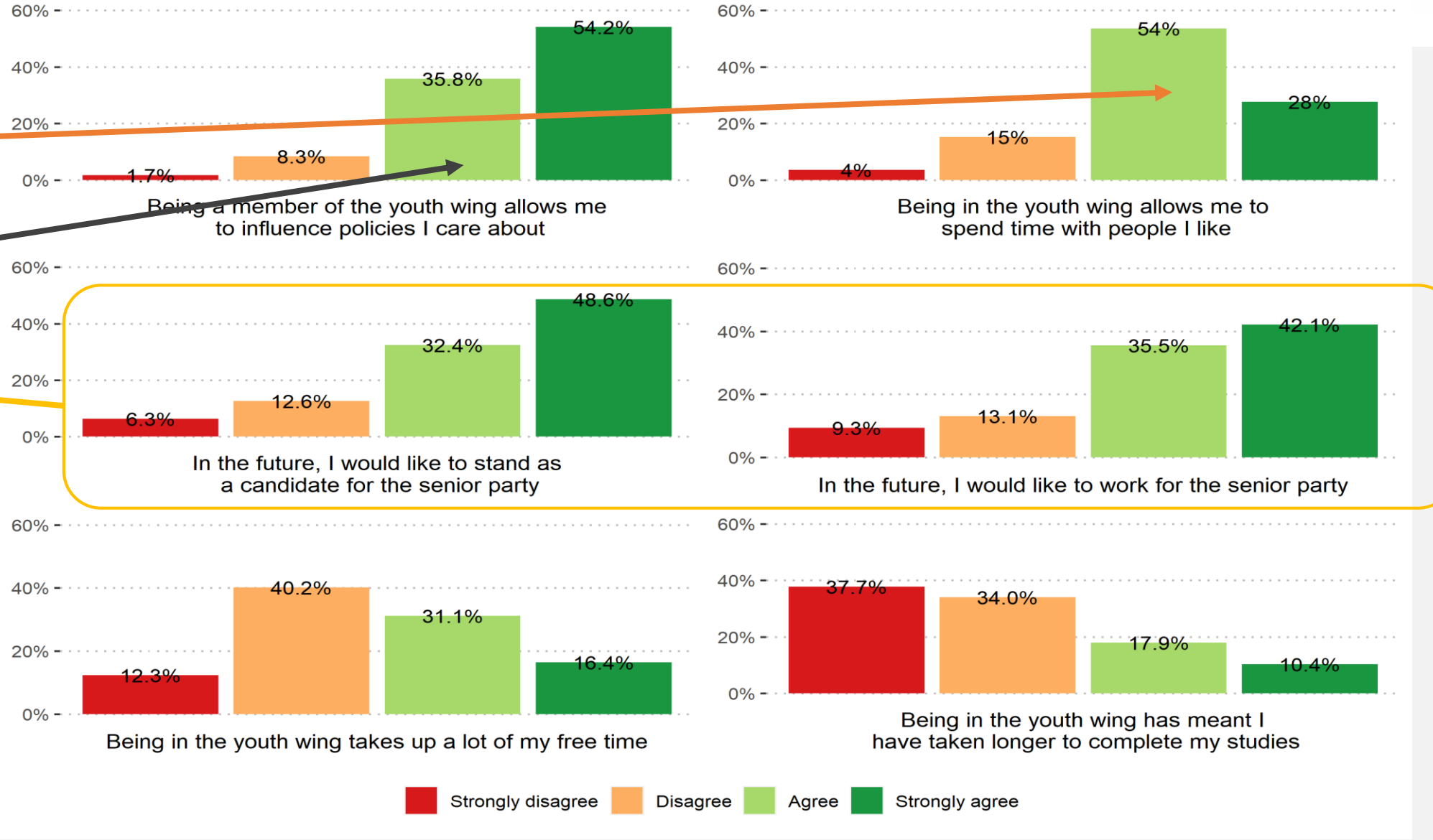
Motivations and time for engagement (JVP)

Fellowship motive

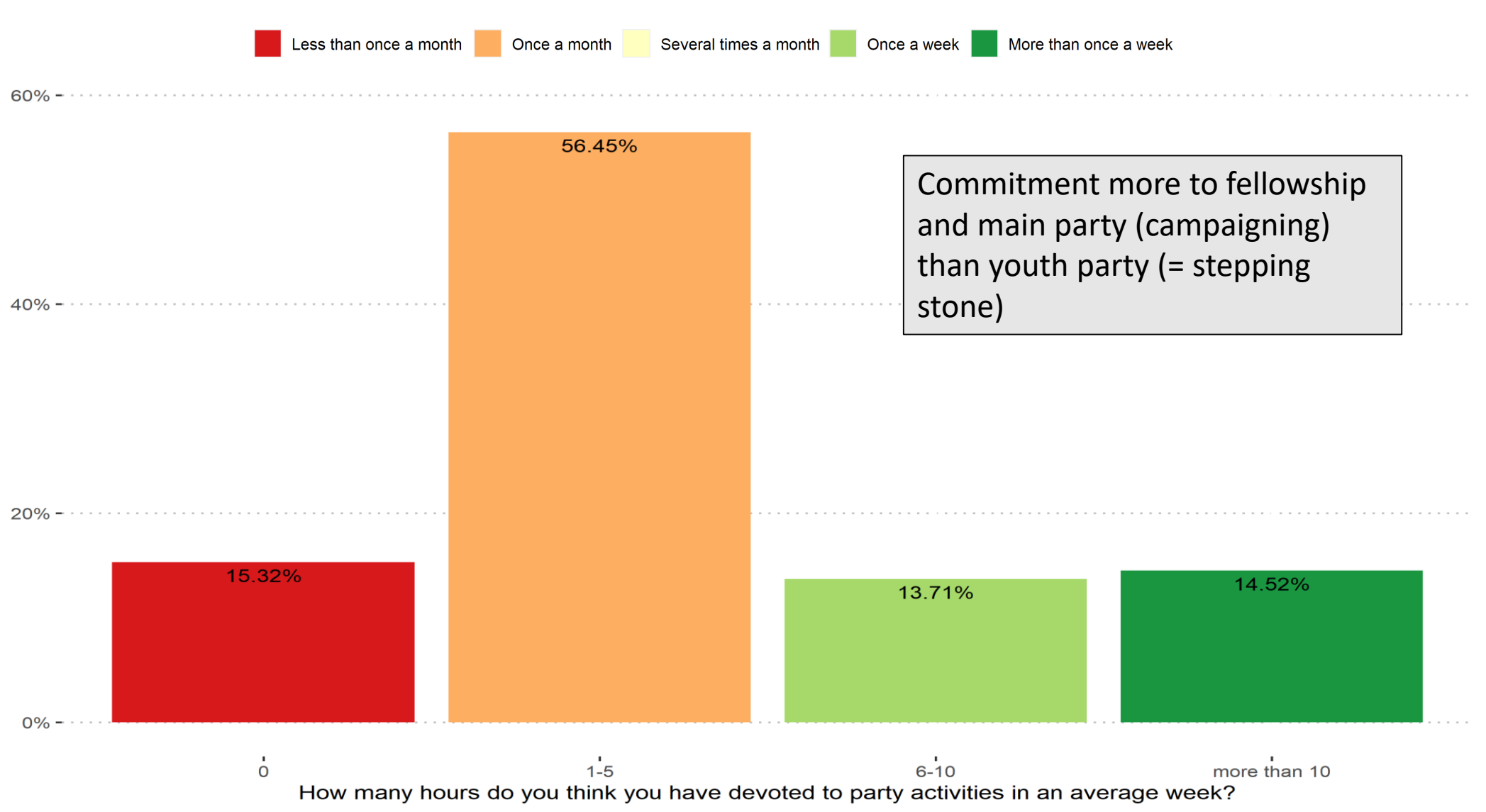
Policy motive

Party career motive

downsides

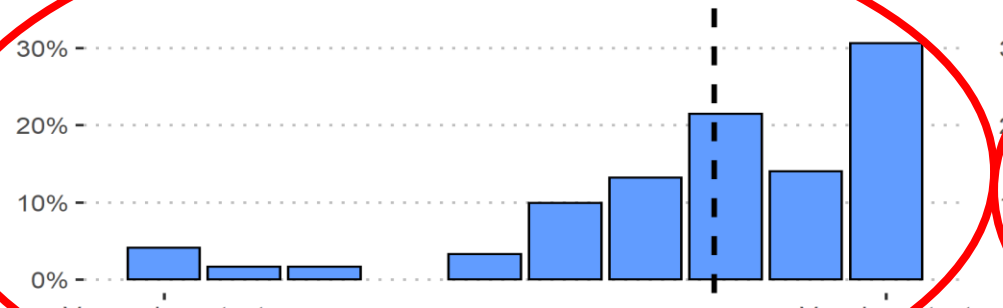


Type of activities and time commitment (JVP)

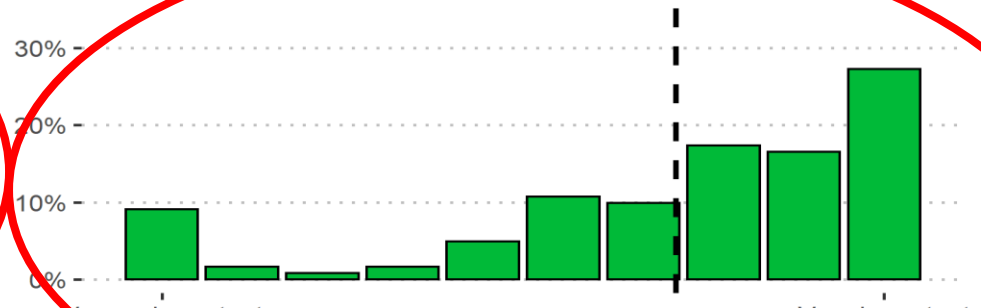


Commitment more to fellowship and main party (campaigning) than youth party (= stepping stone)

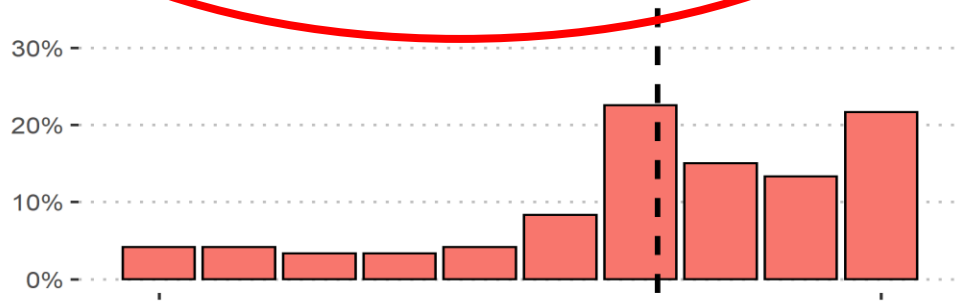
Importance of activities (JVP)



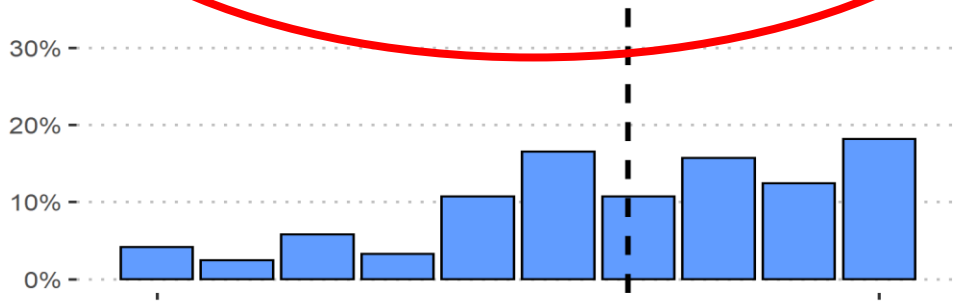
Political Discussions (Mean = 7.85 | Standard deviation = 2.29)



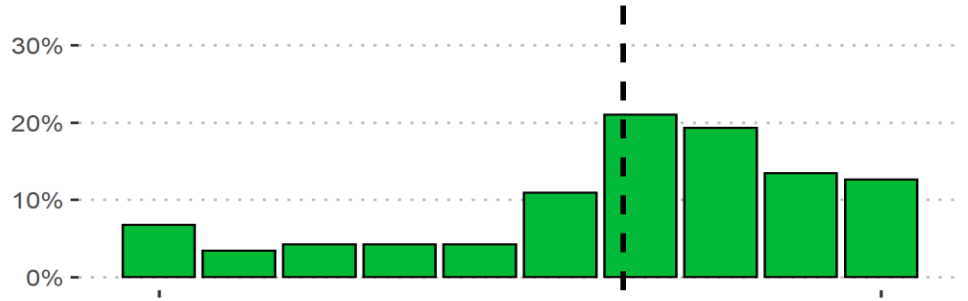
Social Events (Mean = 7.4 | Standard deviation = 2.73)



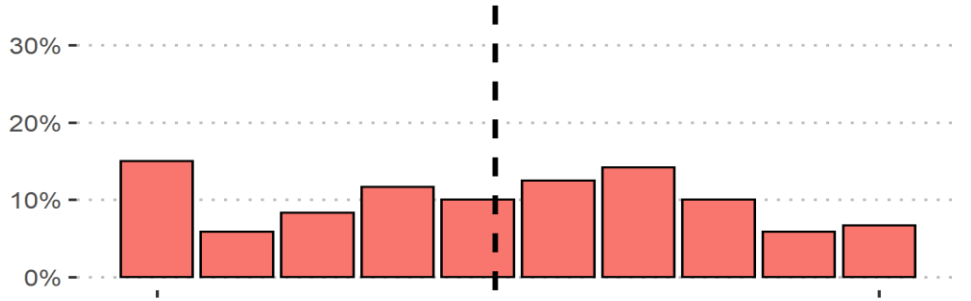
Educational Training (Mean = 7.21 | Standard deviation = 2.5)



Campaigning (Mean = 6.87 | Standard deviation = 2.5)



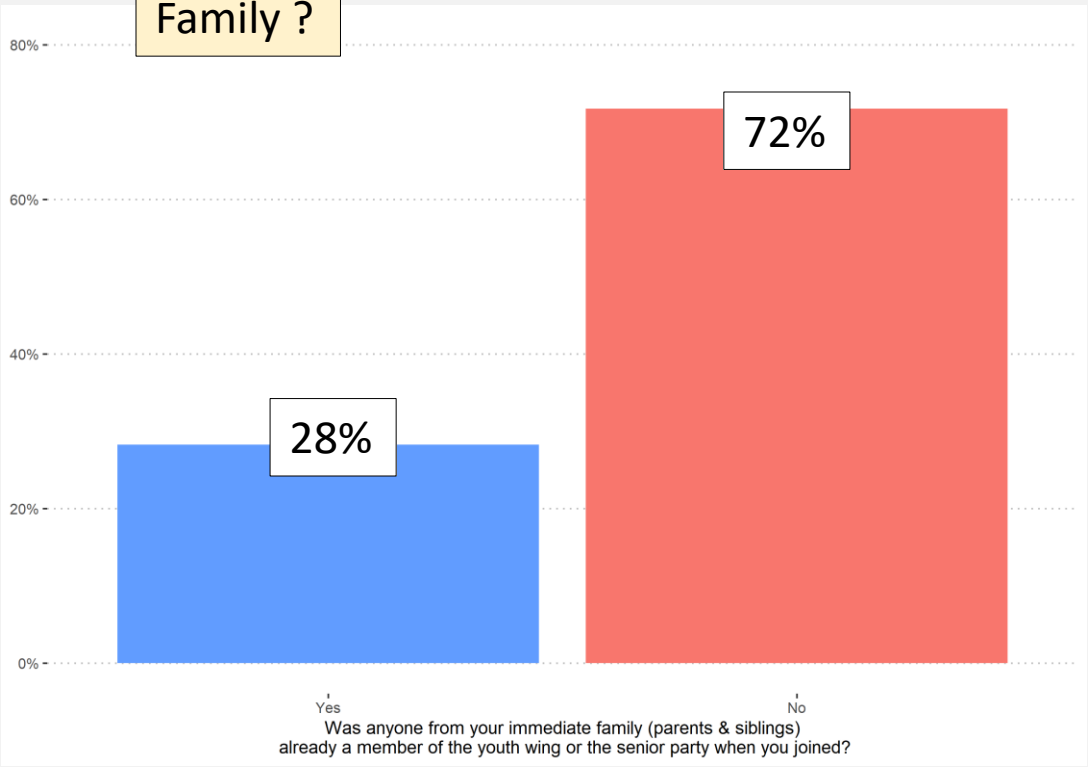
Senior Party Meetings (Mean = 6.78 | Standard deviation = 2.54)



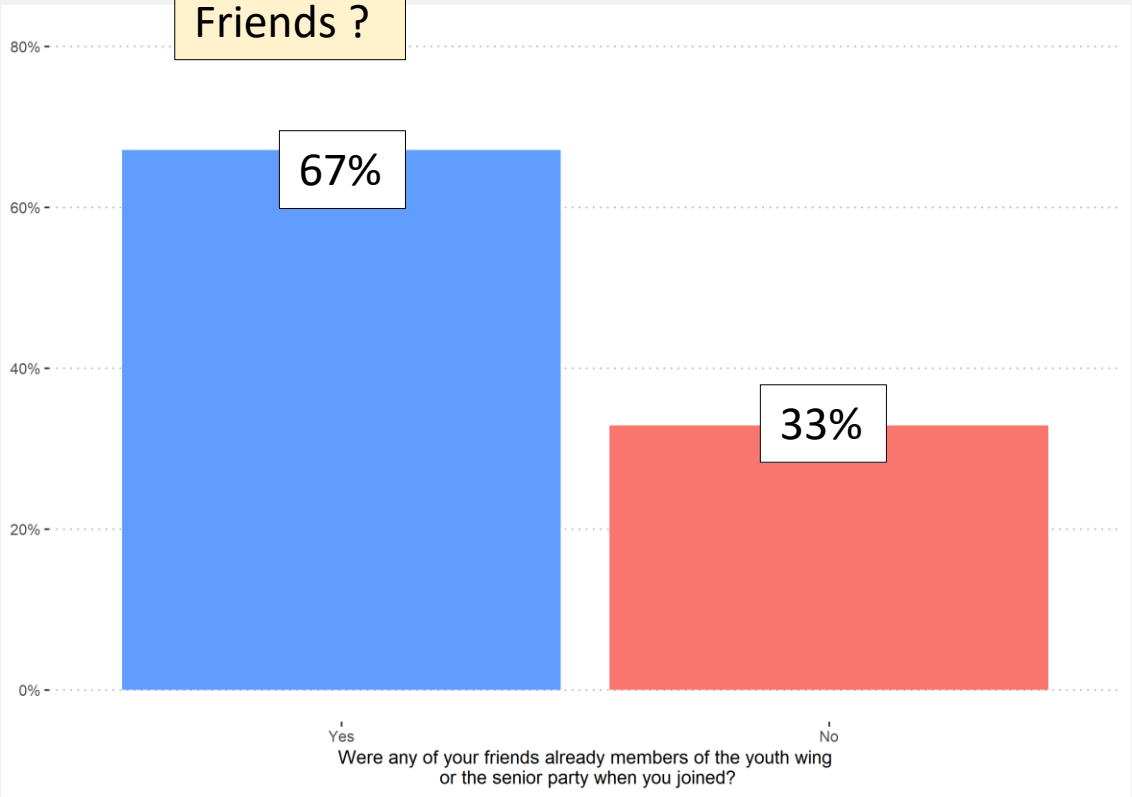
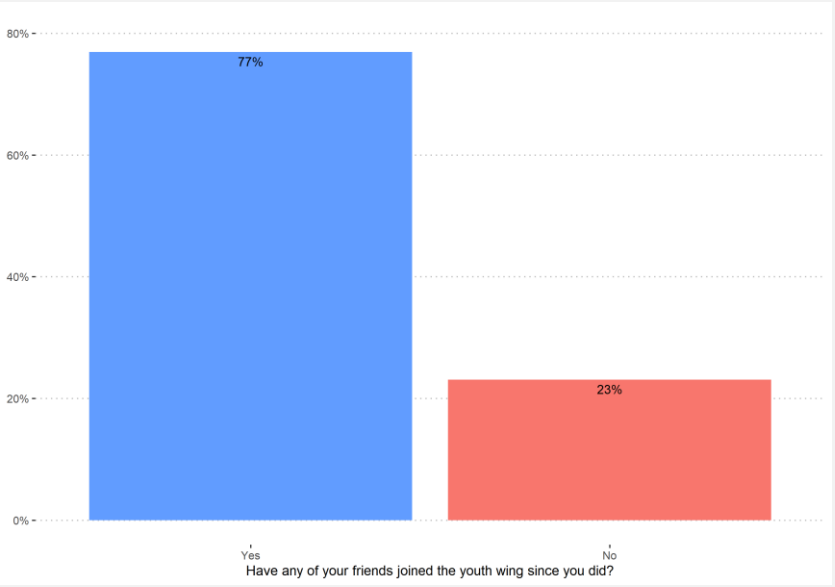
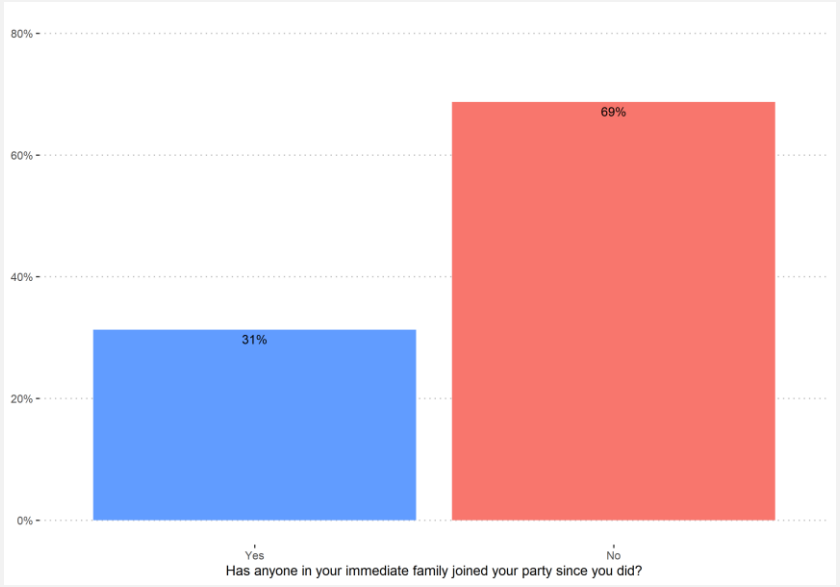
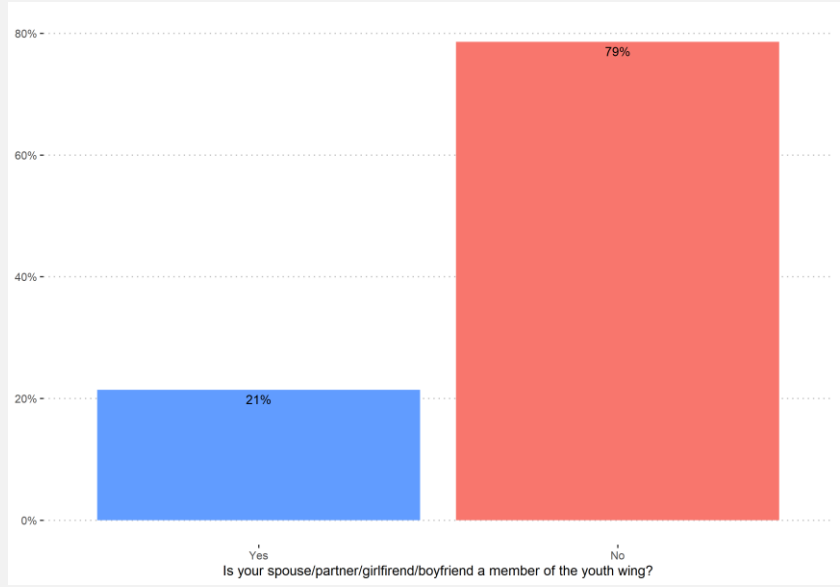
Fundraising (Mean = 5.22 | Standard deviation = 2.75)

Reasons for joining (JVP)

Family ?



Friends ?



Recruitment (JVP)