Social and ideological representativeness: a comparison of political party members and supporters in Finland after the realignment of major parties.

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Abstract

This study provides a new frame of reference for understanding intra-party dynamics by analyzing party members' representativeness with respect to party supporters regarding socioeconomic status and ideological spectrum in a multi-party system, namely that of Finland. The analysis is based on a unique member-based survey of Finland's six major political parties (N=12,427) which is combined with supporter data derived from a nationally representative survey (N=1,648). The clearest difference was found between supporters' and members' social status as members were generally in clearly higher social positions. However, there is wider gap between parties when comparing supporters than members in terms of social status. Findings showed that political opinions on income equality is still a key difference between traditional mass parties at the different levels of party stratum, while incongrounce within parties was relatively low. In contrast to the traditional parties, the newer parties, namely the Finns and the Greens, are ideologically close to the their supporters in terms of attitudes concerning immigration and environment. Together, these findings provide an interesting landscape of the last decade's changes in the Finnish political landscape and contribute to the ongoing discussion on the changing forms of political parties.

Keywords: Party members, party supporters, representativeness, Finland

Introduction

Party organizations have been in a state of change over the past decades in most Western democracies. The radical drop in the number of members, the rise of the right-wing populism and the decline in class-based voting have placed parties in a new situation (e.g. van Biezen et al., 2012; van Haute and Gauja, 2015; Oesch and Rennwald, 2018). As a result of a decline in memberships (van Biezen and Poguntke, 2014), the driving forces of parties have run the risk of being marginalized by those in strategic positions of party influence (Allern et al., 2015). To underline this, Katz and Mair (1995) argued over twenty years ago that the declining level of participation in political parties where most party members are marginalized in party organizations is evident, while the linkage between party elites, supporters and society is weaker than before.

However, parties have reacted to declining membership by increasing members' opportunities to participate in the decision-making process. In this regard, some parties are becoming a kind of democracy in which, for example, the selection process of leadership is opened to all members (Kittlison and Scarrow, 2006; Gauja, 2015; Sandri and Seddone, 2015). It has been found that the power of party members has grown, particularly among new parties where costs and benefits of party membership are reconfigured (e.g. Scarrow, 2017; Archury et al., 2018).

The development in Finland has followed other Western countries. The newer parties, namely the Finns Party (FP) and the Green League (GL) have given a great deal of power to their members, for example through instating the party chairperson through voting (Mickelsson 2015). The FP is known as a conservative and right-wing populist party, whereas the GL is known nowadays as the urban liberal party emphasizing post-material values and social equality. Both of them have also separated from the formal and hierarchical practices that are still characteristic of traditional parties in Finland.

The FP and the GL are among the minority of Finnish parties that have been able to increase the number of members significantly over the last decade. The Left Alliance (LA), has been able to reverse negative membership development in recent years. Meanwhile, the traditional major parties, namely the Centre Party of Finland (CPF), the Social Democratic Party of Finland (SDP) and the National Coalition Party (NCP), are still struggling due to diminishing party membership, as is the case in many major parties in Western European countries as well (Karvonen 2014, 50–54). The "crisis of political parties" has continued for over thirty years in Finland; the outcome of this process is connected with the rise of new parties which has resulted in a realignment of party structures from the golden age of mass parties (Karvonen et al. 2016a; Koivula et al. 2018).

What is needed is a more complete and updated look at intra-party dynamics in order to add new insight into key participants in party change and maintenance. To fill the gap in research, we provide a new frame of reference for understanding intra-party dynamics by analysing party members' representativeness with respect to party supporters at the social and ideological levels in the diverse Finnish political landscape. Although, the analyses are based on the Finnish context, the results also provide valuable information regarding the border-cutting development of party structures in most of Western democracies.

The focus here is on similarity in terms of attitudes and socioeconomic composition by drawing on the conceptualization of symbolic and descriptive representation by Hanna F. Pitkin (1967). With the help of two different datasets concerning both the members and the supporters of the major Finnish parties, we first ask how party members' and party supporters' socioeconomic position differs. We then investigate whether party members are more extreme than supporters when examining opinions regarding crucial policy issues such as income equality, environmental

problems and immigration. Finally, we are also interested in party differences across party stratum.

By answering these questions, we provide novel descriptive information concerning the members of political parties in Finland, especially from the vantage point of represented interest groups. Dependent variables consist of crucial themes for social and political scientists in assessing differences among intra-party participants (Svallfors, 2006). Thus, we also give an exceptional contribution to the present definition of Finnish political cleavages by utilizing unique data from the members of Finnish parties.

To put it more theoretically, our goal is also to assess representativeness as an indication of how old parties have failed to recruit new members. In this respect, instead of focusing solely on representativeness, we contribute to the understanding of the changes in political power and the political field through representativeness. Thus, we are also able to contribute to the theoretical elaboration of the rise of new parties, for example the populists.

The article is structured as follows: First, we develop our theoretical framework on the basis of literature on party representativeness. After that, we present our research context by examining crucial characteristics of the Finnish political spectrum. We then present detailed research questions with hypotheses. This is followed by delving into data and methods with descriptive statistics of applied variables. Subsequently, we reveal the results of comparative analysis in tables and figures. Finally, the article concludes with a discussion on changing political membership and its possible consequences at the societal level.

Representativeness of party members

In her massively cited book, Pitkin (1967) suggests that representation should be differentiated into four interconnected dimensions, namely formal, descriptive, symbolic and substantive representation. Although these dimensions are generally constructed on the basis of representation of parliamentary members, they are useful concepts when developing a theoretical approach for analysing party members' representativeness.

Formal representation focuses on the rules and formal norms of representation (Pitkin 1967, 38-39). For example, in order for political parties to function as instruments beneficial to party supporters and their policy preferences, two requirements must be met. First, parties must offer choices to supporters in terms of policy proposals and second, supporters must be able to vote according to these preferences (Thomassen, 1994; Katz, 1997). If these conditions exist, the electoral process can lead to policy agreement and thus representativeness between party members and supporters (Costello et al., 2012).

In our empirical analyses, we are interested in social and ideological representativeness, which can be translated into descriptive and symbolic representations. Pitkin defines *descriptive representation* as the extent to which a representative resembles those being represented (Pitkin 1967, 60). This was a particularly important part of party attraction in the past when considering the ideal type of traditional mass party, for example socialist party membership was a tool for the working class to improve their quality of life (Duverger, 1959). Subsequently, similar mechanisms have been seen as driving forces of agrarian, religious and conservative parties (Allern et. Al., 2015).

A substantial part of the twentieth century was a time of class-based politics, as the working class supported left-wing parties and, in contrast, right-wing parties were popular among the middle- and upper-classes (Nieuwbeerta and Ultee, 1999). Nowadays, however, median voter

competition is stronger than it used to be a couple of decades ago and the mechanisms linking class to party choice are weaker (Evans and Tilley, 2012). As a matter of fact, this is not a novel approach to party mechanism as Kirchheimer (1966) introduced the concept of the "catch-all party" over 50 years ago. According to his view, parties were seeking support from numerous societal segments instead of relying on specific social classes (Kirchheimer, 1966).

Eventually, the risk emerges where political power and participation accumulate solely at high social positions in systems where wide support is gained and leveraged by few political representatives, for example (Katz & Mair, 1995). In this system, professional party elites play a crucial role at the expense of ordinary members (Van Biezen and Poguntke, 2014). After all, the *"cartelization"* of party politics has wide-ranging effects on society, resulting in the situation where the parties are losing their legitimacy to act as a central linkage between citizens and state decision makers (Widfelt, 1995).

As a matter of fact, this progression has been confirmed by numerous studies, which have indicated that party members may not be representative of the population. Members typically have higher social status, they tend to better educated and they have a greater tendency to take part in both political and civic activities (Parry et. Al, 1992; Widfeldt, 1995). In addition, in the Nordic context, it is indicated that members are typically above average in terms of age and tend to be male (Pedersen et. Al., 2004).

However, Pedersen et. al. (2004) found that party members are similar to voters in terms of education. This is in line with the study of 12 European countries conducted by Scarrow and Gezgor (2010). They found that party members are becoming increasingly like their fellow citizens, especially in terms of income, union membership and religiosity. Conversely, studies on Finnish society have indicated that members are much older and clearly better educated than supporters across the party spectrum (Keipi, 2017). To some extent, they are also more satisfied with their lives and their financial situation is better when compared to supporters (ibid.)

Even if the members of the parties are in a higher social position, it does not necessarily mean that members do not represent citizens. Pitkin (1967, 92) describes this as *symbolic representation,* in which a representative fosters the important ideas, norms, and beliefs instead of merely personal characteristics or institutions. Here, it is suggested that party members from the high social classes understand the environment of the lower social class (Widfelt, 1995). In other words, the members of parties do not necessarily represent their own social position, but rather they represent party ideology despite their own social position. Therefore, the examination of social status in itself is not adequate to the assessment of the representativeness of members, as ideological indicators are needed as well.

When comparing members' and supporters' opinions, May's law of curvilinear disparity (1973) is often drawn upon, which puts forth that the top elites of parties are located between the party sub-elite and voters, when the party sub-elite is assumed to be the most extreme group. The significance of May's law is that the members of parties are an "extreme" group in relation to party supporters.

However, there has been a lack of empirical support for the impact of May's law. For instance, in a previously presented study, Scarrow and Gezgor (2010) conducted a periodic analysis on the relationship between ideological extremeness and party membership. They found that the strength of the relationship has diminished in the 21st century. In other words, members are closer to supporters when examining ideological distance. Furthermore, it seems that voters and party elites are far apart nowadays, while members settle in the middle of these groups, making an association linear instead of curvelinear (Van Holsteyn et al., 2017).

What is noteworthy here is that the congruence may change according to the evaluated value dimension. For example, Norris (1995) found that members and voters of the Labor party in Britain are fairly far apart when examining moral values, but close together in terms of social and economic values. In this respect, it is important to cover different kind of opinions and values when attempting to evaluate comprehensively ideological representativeness.

Finally, it is important to note that neither descriptive nor symbolic representation necessarily mean representativeness. Representativeness is not built by individual factors but is formed as part of an entirety, which the representative expresses (Pitkin 1967, 222; Eulau & Karps 1977). In this respect, Pitkin (1967, 209) also emphasizes substantive representation as the fourth part of representation, which is linked to "acting in the interests of the represented, in a manner responsive them." In other words, it would be essential to focus on the acts of representatives in addition to formal, descriptive and symbolic representation.

However, by analyzing empirically descriptive and symbolic representativeness of party members, we can understand more about the trajectories that determine the activity of members, and beyond that, we also know more about parties' decision-making. Before going into our empirical research design, we present the Finnish political spectrum more specifically.

The Finnish political spectrum

In terms of cultural and political characteristics, Finland is a fairly homogenous nation with a relatively small share of foreign national residents. Notably, a major shift toward globalization, immigration, urbanization, marketization and individualization began in the 1990s, resulting in significant changes in the society as a whole (Karvonen et al, 2016b; Niemelä and Saarinen, 2012; Kuivalainen and Niemelä 2010).

Changes in the political order have also been prevalent, as the weakening of the left-wing parties have continued (Karvonen 2014: 147), meanwhile the populist right-wing party, the FP has entered into the parliament core by gaining major election victory in 2011 (Arter, 2011, 2015). The success of this party shift continued in the 2015 elections, with the FP rising to become Finland's second largest party, surpassing the votes of the traditional mass parties, namely the NCP and the SDP. As a result, the FP[1] entered the government with the CPF and NCP (Arter, 2015). Before this pivotal election win, SDP, NCP and CPF dominated the political field for over thirty years (Arter, 2011).

The changes experienced by traditional parties in Finland have been seen elsewhere in Europe as well, with SDP, CPF and NCP having their highest membership rates in the 1970s and 1980s (Karvonen, 2014: 56). The reformation of party cleavages is a key explanation for the changes in party structures seen over the past 30-40 years. The ways that political parties are formed has evolved more and more from the basis of religious, regional and class cleavages (Lipset and Rokkan, 1967), to cleavages based on post-materialistic values combined with cultural factors (Bornschier, 2010; Knutsen, 2017) described also as the GAL–TAN dimension, which comes from words Green/Alternative/Libertarian–Traditional/Authoritarian/Nationalist (see Hooghe et al., 2002).

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[1] The party split into two conservative parliament groups after their party conference in summer 2017. Currently, the FP is in the opposition while the Blue Reform holds seats in the government.

A distribution of key Finnish parties involved in this study may be seen in figure 1, with descriptions of parties' views in terms of post-materialistic issues (GAL-TAN) and socioeconomic issues (LEFT-RIGHT). The figure is formed on the basis of the Chapel Hill Expert Survey conducted in 2014 (Polk et al. 2017). Similar results were recently obtained in an analysis of party supporters' values at the population level (Koiranen et al. 2018). Noteworthy here is the ideological gap between the new parties, as the GL and FP have filled at the poles of the liberal/postmaterialist (GAL) and traditional/authoritarian (TAN) axes.

Although the GL was originally focused on advancing environmental issues and related policy, the wide scale popularity of these issues today has caused a shift more toward acting as an liberal alternative for the new middle class but without clear left-right leanings or strong class interests (Mickelsson, 2015). The FP has strongly focused on issues such as anti-immigration, supporting traditional values, antifeminism, and positioning the people against elites and the European Union (e.g. Norocel, 2016; Herkman, 2017). The LA is concerned with income inequality and innovative efforts such as universal basic income, while also backing efforts to fight inequality related to ethnicity, sexual preference and gender (Dunphy, 2007). The SDP considers itself a modern centre-left party that focuses on equal opportunity and fairness through progressive ideals (Karvonen, 2014: 20). The interests of the upper class and entrepreneurs have been supported by the NCP with a focus on tolerance, self-determination and individualization combined with support of a free market economy (Karvonen, 2014: 20). The CPF has also been a popular party through its support of rural communities, farmers and entrepreneurs as well, fostering conservative social values with centrist economic policies (Arter, 2011).

Notably, older parties tend to have been driven by certain population group interests and social classes, but such a clear motivating factor has been difficult to establish in the case of GL and FP. For example, placing the FP on the left-right scale is difficult, as members and supporters tend to be from a low socioeconomic background (Keipi et al., 2017), yet values and attitudes concerning social policy resemble centre-right parties (Widfeldt 2018). Likewise, the GL represent high socioeconomic status yet socio-political attitudes lean toward the left (Bolin, 2016; Saarinen et al., 2018).

Given the rise of new parties that clearly distinguish themselves from traditional party cleavages, it seems that economic factors are no longer core predictors compared to cultural factors in terms of assessing voting behaviour; support for the new parties, particularly the FP, is not from the expected demographics such as the working class, but includes significant votes from entrepreneurs and professionals who have in the past been more linked to traditional parties (Oesch and Rennwald, 2018; Sivonen et al. 2018).

Figure 1. Major parties in Finnish parliament according to views on post-material (GAL-TAN) and on socioeconomic issues (LEFT-RIGHT). (Polk et al. 2017)

This study

We begin our empirical analysis by asking whether party members are at a higher socioeconomic position than supporters. In addition, we are interested in party differences. Here, we first draw on a number of observations from Western democracies that suggest that party membership is highly correlated with high social status (e.g. Gauja and van Haute, 2015). In this respect, we assume that:

> *H1: Party members are at a higher social position than supporters.*

As is the case elsewhere in Western Europe, traditional mass parties have been struggling in Finland due to diminishing party membership during recent decades (Van Biezen and Poguntke, 2014) and we expect that this is reflected in the structure of members. Accordingly, we propose that:

> *H2: Members of the traditional class-based parties, namely the SDP, the CPF and the NCP, are at a higher position when compared to supporters, while the gap is narrower among the newer parties, namely the GL and the FP.*

We aim to assess ideological representativeness by comparing members and supporters according to their perceptions about societal risks. Here, we draw on recent findings by assuming that views on societal risks are dependent on values (Koivula et al., 2018). As such, here we ask whether party members are more extreme than supporters when examining risk perceptions on income inequality, immigration and environmental problems.

Historically, one of the most crucial dividing issues between different political groups is the stance taken on income distribution. A low degree of selectivity and inequality, high coverage of social protection and publicly provided services have been cornerstones of the Finnish and Nordic social security system (Niemelä and Saarinen, 2012). In Nordic welfare states, there have always been political struggles regarding income distribution and the configuration of social security (Svallfors, 2006), and the classic cleavage is presumably manifesting in the attitudes of both supporters and members of traditional parties. Therefore, we may assume that:

> *H3: There is a small gap between members and supporters of traditional class-based parties, namely the LA, SDP, NCP, CPF when examining concerns on economic issues*

Similarly, as in many other countries, the political space in Finland has been polarizing into new social cleavages based increasingly on post-material values (e.g. Kriesi, 2010; Inglehart and Norris, 2017). New politics-related values are associated with, for instance, environmental quality, terrorism, immigration, social participation and minority rights (Knutsen, 2004). Given the fact that new ideological parties are involved with these issues, we assume that:

> *H4: The GL and the FP have stronger ideological glue and there are small ideological differences between members and supporters when examining post-material issues.*

We assume that there are differences between parties in these ideological issues. The political left has always been more positive about a strong welfare state when compared to right-wing parties (Roosma et al., 2014). At the individual-level, opinions about social security reflect the ideologies that individuals have, and political orientation is exceptionally significant in terms of these attitudes (e.g. Svallfors, 2006). The same time, the neoconservative populist party FP and liberal ecological party GL have gained success during the past decade in Finland by promoting new political questions apart from the core of traditional Finnish politics (Karvonen, 2014: 148-

149; Mickelsson, 2015: 275-281). Accordingly, it is expected that:

> *H5: Social and economic issues, such as growth of income inequality, will be a central concern for the members and supporters of the LA and the SDP especially.*

> *H6: The members and supporters of GL stand out strongly from others in terms of risk perceptions on environmental problems; conversely, the members and supporters of the FP are distinguished when examining concerns on asylum seekers and refugee immigration.*

Data and methods

In order to map Finnish party members at the societal level we utilize two different datasets concerning party members and party supporters. Here, a party member is defined as a person who is formally enrolled in a political party (Widfelt, 1995). A party supporter, on the other hand, is a person who feels that one particular party is closest to him/her.

The first of these datasets was collected from members of the six largest Finnish parties between April 2016 and September 2016. Data collection was carried out in collaboration with party offices that were responsible for the sampling method. The surveys reached over 50 000 Finnish party members from a total of 200 000 nationally. The final number of respondents were 12 427 with a resulting total response rate of 24.4 per cent.

We compare members to supporters on the basis of findings from the nationally representative data collected in spring 2017. The survey was distributed by mail to a simple random sample of 4001 15–84-year-olds who live in Finland and speak Finnish. The final sample included 3969 Finns, as those who could not be reached were omitted from the sample. A total of 1648 Finns responded, which amounted to a 41.5 percent response rate. We identify the supporters of the six largest parties on the basis of respondents' party identification, which refers to the political party that respondents feel to be closest to their preference.

Descriptive statistics with the demographic comparison of party members and supporters are presented in Keipi et. al. (2017). In terms of both datasets, we weighted respondents' distributions to meet the population criteria by taking account the probability for responding according to gender and age.

We start our empirical analysis by testing how party members' average socioeconomic status matches with the average status of party supporters. To do this, we use the standard international socio-economic index of occupational status (ISEI). ISEI is a useful status measurement due to its multidimensionality, as it is predicted by considering occupations with their associated average income and education levels (Ganzeboom, De Graaf and Treiman, 1992). ISEI scores have been used typically in terms of studying intergenerational mobility (e.g. Erola et al., 2016; Raitano and Vona, 2015).

In our questionnaire, occupation was initially asked as an open-ended question after which it was categorized on the basis of the ISCO-08 and then recoded to the ISEI scores according to the introduction of Ganzeboom et al. (2010). We do not separate retired, unemployed or studying persons into their own categories, but rather we asked them to report their prior occupation if they were not currently in working life. A total of 12.3 percent of members and 15.2 percent of supporters neglected to answer the occupation question; they were listwise deleted from the ISEI comparisons and the multivariate analyses. A significant proportion of the missing observations were either retired or students.

Additionally, 20.3 percent of member entrepreneurs and 23.8 percent of supporter entrepreneurs did not give an exact occupation, as they only answered "entrepreneur" to the occupation question. In our analysis, they were not omitted; instead, we imputed their ISEI scores by utilizing regression imputations on the basis of background information of those employers who answered the occupation question. The ISEI scores were predicted separately for members and supporters by considering gender, age, education, and financial situation in the regression model. The predicted ISEI scores were 43.7 for member entrepreneurs and 42.3 for supporter entrepreneurs.

We present the comparison of ISEI scores in figure 2. In the text we also deal with the most significant statistical effects (ANOVA) between and within party groups.

In terms of ideological measurements i.e. societal risks, the variables were initially elicited with the question, 'How would you rate the significance of the following factors as sources of societal risks?'. In this article, we used three single risk factors, namely "Environmental problems", "Rise of income inequality", "Refugees and asylum seekers".

Respondents gave their answers concerning these factors using a five-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1= 'Not at all important', 5= 'Very important'. The questions were evaluated from the same angle (as a societal risk) and with the same scale (from 1 to 5) across samples, which offer us a measure to conduct valid comparisons between parties and between members and supporters.

In analyses, we transformed variables into three categories in order to have enough observations for each category. Transformation was conducted as follows: value 1 "Not important" for those reported 1 or 2, value 2 "Medium" for those reported 3, and value 3 "Important" for those reported 4 or 5.

Our interest is in both party differences and intra-party congruence. We begin by comparing distributions of each dependent variable across party stratum. After that, we take into account the effects of background factors, namely age, gender, residence and education, treating them as covariates. As an analytic technique, we use multinomial logit models by modelling members' and supporters' likelihood of perceiving different issues as important societal risk.

When comparing nested nonlinear models, we need to bear mind that the changes in the coefficient of models cannot be addressed to the effects of confounding variables due to the problem of rescaling (e.g. Mood, 2010). In order to avoid this pitfall, we use the KHB method developed by Karlson, Holm, and Breen (2012). In addition to the robust comparison of models, we are able to evaluate the extent to which differences between and within parties are explained by the confounding variables by using this method. To do this, we decomposed total variances of dependent variables on the basis of which we then evaluated the effects of background variables across party groups at the different levels of party stratum.

Our main predictor was ISEI, but we also controlled for a total of four variables, namely age, gender, education and income situation. Together, these variables form a base for a model whose components have been found to be crucially associated with perceptions on income distribution (e.g. Pfeifer, 2009), immigration (e.g. Hainmuller and Hopkins, 2014) and environment concerns (e.g. Gifford and Nilsson, 2014).

In terms of gender, men were compared to women. Age was used as a continuous variable. In the case of education, we compared those who have completed at least a bachelor's degree with all others. Income was measured by respondents' subjective evaluations of their current financial situation. Here, it was reasonable to focus on subjective financial situation instead of real income because subjective situation likely has a stronger effect on attitudes regarding income distribution

(see e.g. Pfeifer, 2009). The single question regarding subjective financial situation was asked as a part of the following "How would you describe your current life stage in the following areas?" Respondents were asked to choose one option from the Likert scale from 1 to 5, in which 1 was described as "Very poor" and 5 as "Very good". In the models, we use this measure as a continuous variable.

Descriptive statistics for applied variables are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive overview of data and variables

| Variable | Supporters | | | Members | | |
	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Party affiliation	1 372			11 889		
CPF	295	0.21	0.41	3 739	0.31	0.46
FP	146	0.11	0.31	1 848	0.16	0.36
NCP	241	0.18	0.38	926	0.08	0.27
SDP	329	0.24	0.43	1 483	0.12	0.33
GL	249	0.18	0.39	1 615	0.14	0.34
LA	112	0.08	0.27	2 278	0.19	0.39
Dependent variables (different risks)						
Rise of income inequality	1 576	4.13	0.89	11 750	4.23	0.95
Asulym seekers and refugees	1 582	3.45	1.09	11 776	3.04	1.28
Environmental problems	1 576	4.25	0.81	11 759	4.17	0.91
Demographics						
Socioeconomic index	1 397	45.85	21.6	10 798	53.42	21.62
Age	1 619	52.55	17.8	11 889	55.18	14.56
Gender (Female)	1 614	0.54	0.5	11 827	0.42	0.49
Subjective income (1-5)	1 586	3.21	0.89	11 825	3.22	1.02
High education	1 619	0.28	0.45	11 889	0.42	0.49

Results:

The first results of the socioeconomic analysis are illustrated in Figure 2. The analysis supported our first hypothesis, as a clear difference between members and supporters across party spectrum was found. On average, the difference between parties' members and supporters was statistically significant (F=157.67; p<0.001).

However, our second hypothesis was not confirmed, as the gap between members and supporters was somewhat equal in each party and therefore we did not find differences between traditional and new parties. However, as we expected, there were relatively large difference across party stratum in the SDP. In contrast to our hypothesis, we found a similar pattern among the GL. Noteworthy here is that the supporters of the SDP were averagely located at the relatively low position, but their members were more at the high position. In contrast, the supporters of GL seem to be widely represented in different social positions, but their members were mainly from the upper positions.

With regard to other parties, the difference between supporters and members was approximately 10 index points. As expected, members of the FP were located at the lower level of the socioeconomic index across the party strata. Interestingly, their members were better represented at lower levels when compared to the left-wing party SDP.
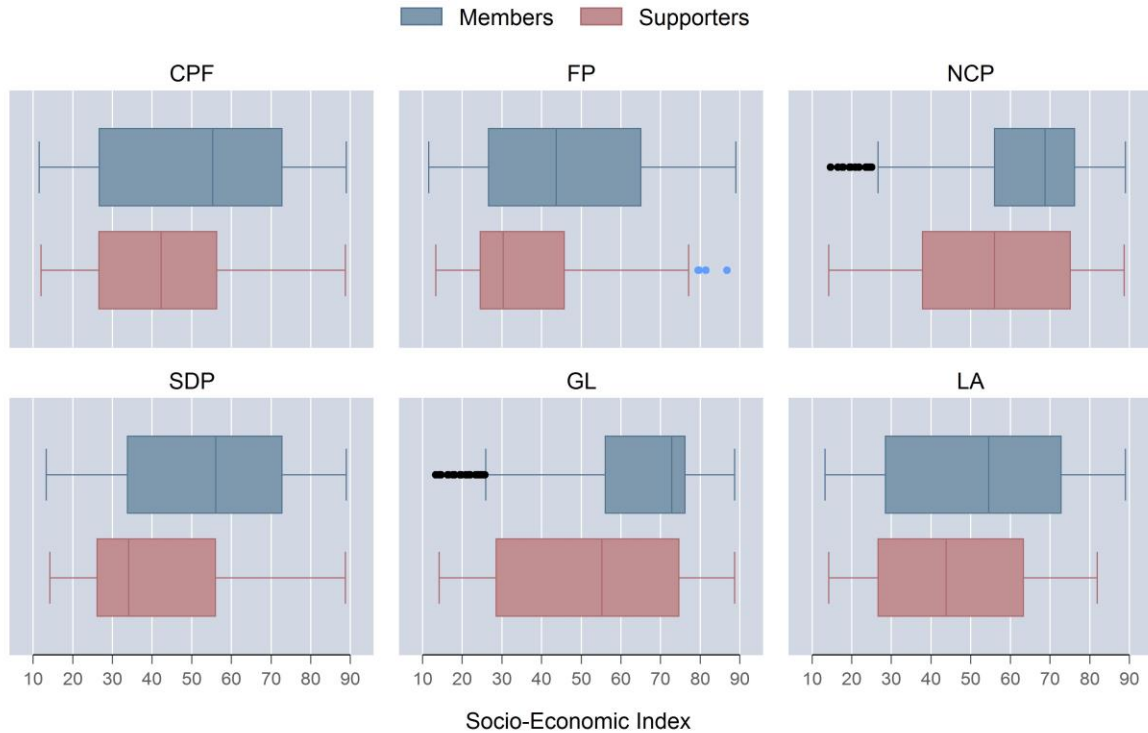

Figure 2. Members and supporters placement on socioeconomic index (ISEI) by party affiliation

We next examine the extent to which party members represent supporters in terms of the ideological spectrum. We begin with a comparison of opinions on income inequality. The results are shown in Figure 3. The results give a partial confirmation to our third hypothesis, as there was a small gap between members and supporters of traditional class-based parties, namely the LA, SDP, and CPF when examining concerns on economic issues. To some degree, we also found a small gap across party strata among the FP and the GL. In contrast to our hypothesis, the gap was relatively large among the NCP as their members were not very concerned about income inequality, but their supporters were relatively close to other parties.

When it comes to party differences, we found expected results (H5), as the increase in/growth of income inequality was a concern for the majority of supporters and members of the left-wing parties. Interestingly, the gap between the right-wing NCP and the left-wing LA increased significantly when moving from supporters to members. In fact, the supporters of these parties were unexpectedly close to each other, but the gap was extremely large when examining party members. In addition, these results underlined the position of the GL in the left side of the classic socioeconomic value dimension as the majority of their supporters and members differ significantly from the right-wing parties.
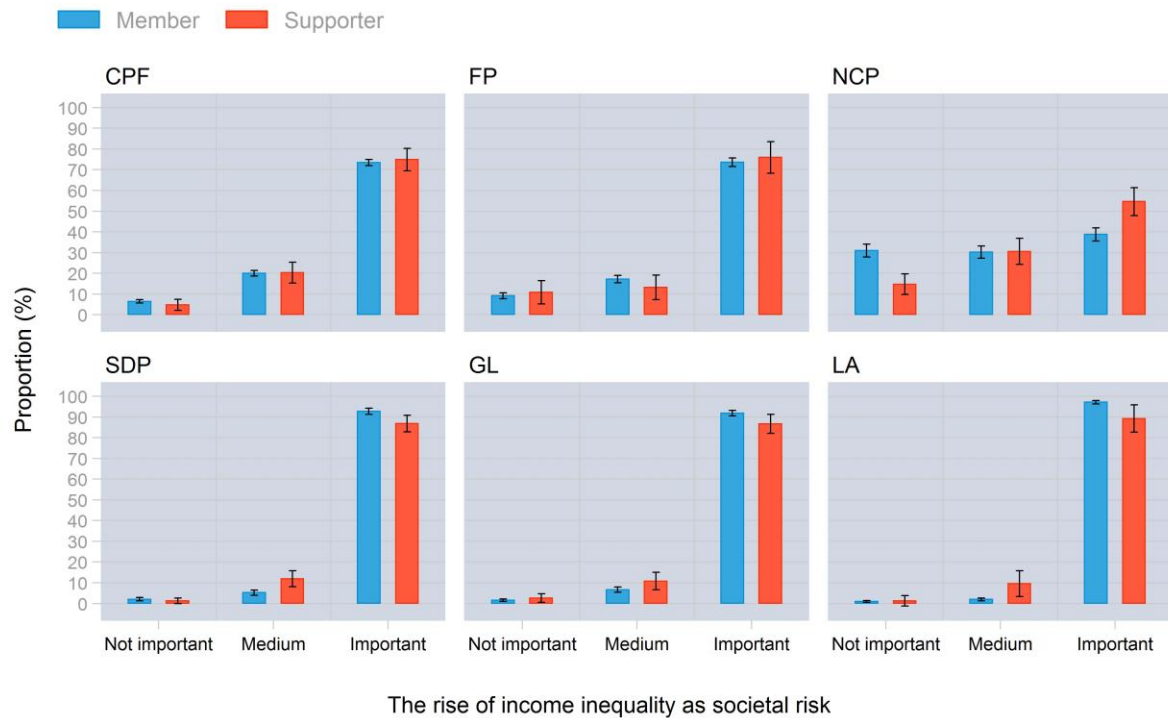
Figure 3. Members' and supporter' risk perceptions on rise of income inequality, weighted distributions

Next, we analyzed the extent to which members and supporters perceive refugees and asylum seekers as a societal risk. Descriptive results are given in Figure 4. These findings give partial confirmations for the fourth and sixth hypotheses. First, we found that the ideological glue between the supporters and members of the FP was strong, as the distributions were extremely symmetrical. Over 80 percent of the FP's members and supporters considered refugees an important societal risk. The differences between members and supporters were larger among the other parties.

Interestingly, the direction of association was fairly similar in each party. Accordingly, we put forth a conclusion that members are not as concerned as supporters when analyzing risk perceptions on refugees and asylum seekers. To underline the polarization between the new ideological parties, there were completely opposed views among the GL and the FP.
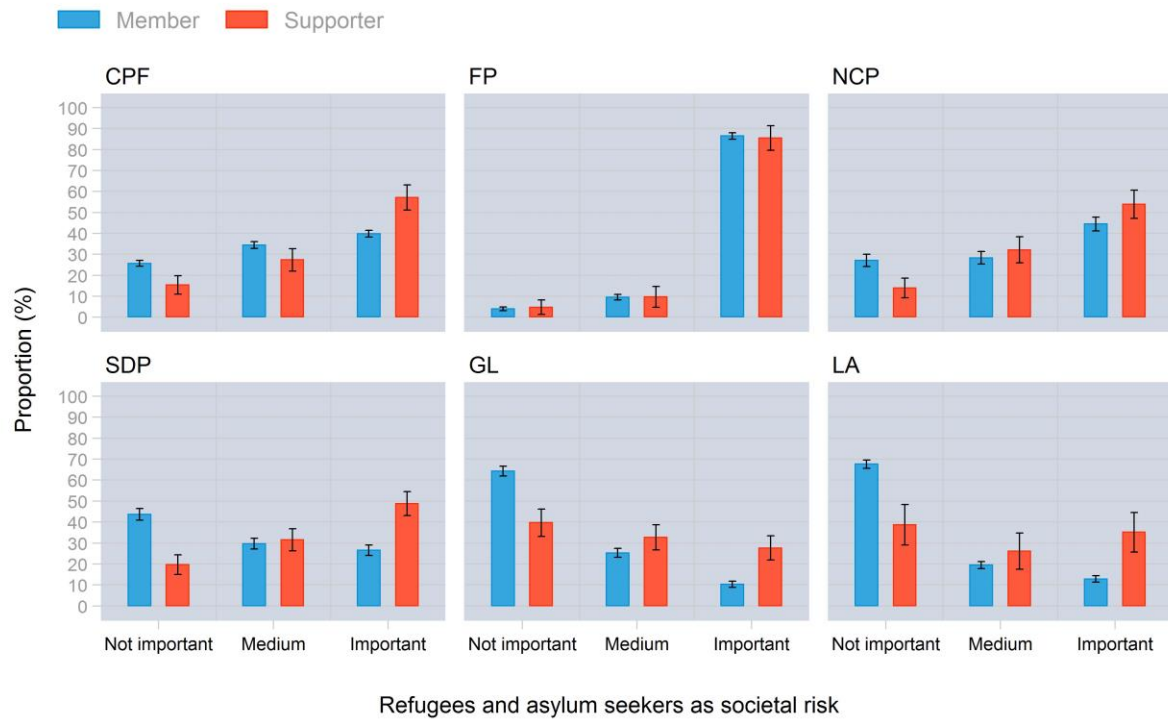
Figure 4 Members' and supporters' risk perceptions on asulym seekers and refugees, weighted distributions

When moving to societal risks concerning environmental problems (Figure 5), we found that members and supporters were generally very concerned with ecological issues. However, the alignment moved from the previous measurement to the point that the FP could be seen as most unconcerned and this held particularly true among its members. The results also confirmed the fourth and sixth hypotheses, as there was a relatively high responsiveness between members and supporters of the GL and their members and supporters were also most concerned.

It was also striking that similar results were found among the left-wing parties, namely the LA and the SDP. Instead, there was a relatively large gap between members and supporters of the CPF and NCP as their members were less concerned about environmental problems. In this sense, these results reinforce the observation that the differences between the parties are greater among members. Next we consider the extent to which these findings are related to other background factors.
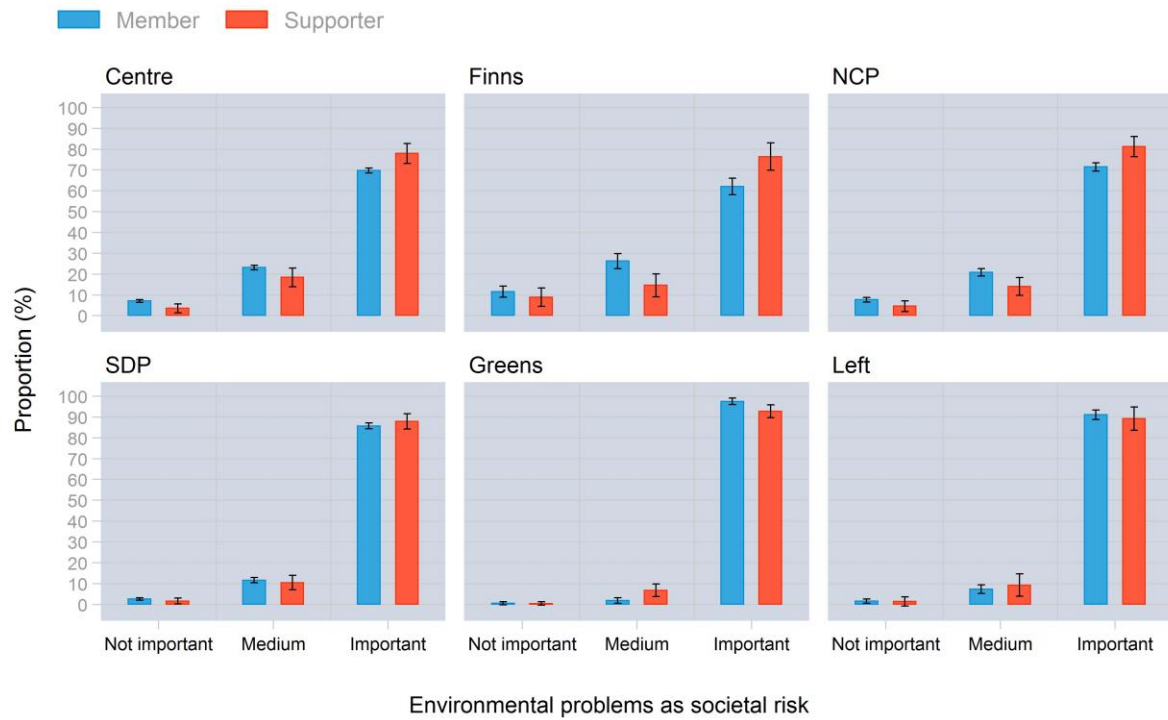
Figure 5 Party members and supporters risk perceptions on environmental problems, weighted distributions

We adjusted party differences at the different levels of party stratum by analyzing the confounding effects of socioeconomic status, age, gender, education and subjective income. Here, we predict the probability to perceive different issues as highly important societal risks according to multinomial logit models. The total effects of parties with confounders are shown as log-odds with standard errors in Table 2. The detailed effects of each background variables, i.e. confounding effects, are shown in the appendix.

Controlling for background variables reveals that respondents' societal status and demographic factors are essential when examining opinions on income equality. However, they did not completely explain party differences either for members or supporters. The detailed analysis of background variables' effects (Table A1) indicated that social factors have a fairly equal effect on the association between party affiliation and perceived risk of income inequality among members and supporters.

Similar results regarding the direction of party congruence and party differences were found for risk perceptions on immigration. The results confirm the descriptive analysis by suggesting that all the other party supporters and members differ statistically from the supporters and members of the FP. Effects of background variables were fairly similar across party strata.

Finally, risks concerning environmental problems underline the assumption that differences between the parties are greater among members than supporters. Here, the members and supporters of the GL differ significantly from others among members, but when moving to supporters, the difference is much smaller in terms of the SDP and the LA especially. Again, the effects of background variables seem to be similar across party strata.

Table 2. Predicting party members' and supporters' likelihood of perceiving income inequality, asylum seekers and refugees, and environmental problems as important societal risks, logit coefficients (detailed effects of confounders shown in Tables A1-A3

		Members		Supporters	
Source of risk:	**Rise of income inequality**	Coef.	SE	Coef.	SE
Party affiliation:	CPF	1.41***	(0.087)	0.893***	(0.231)
	FP	1.41***	(0.100)	1.034***	(0.287)
	NCP (ref)	0.000	(0.000)	0.000	(0.000)
	SDP	3.11***	(0.142)	1.494***	(0.248)
	GL	2.81***	(0.125)	1.618***	(0.269)
	LA	4.03***	(0.172)	1.988***	(0.430)
	Asulym seekers and refugees				
	CPF	-2.156***	(0.084)	-1.506***	(0.326)
	FP (ref)	0.000	(0.000)	0.000	(0.000)
	NCP	-1.897***	(0.106)	-1.732***	(0.331)
	SDP	-2.863***	(0.099)	-1.944***	(0.321)
	GL	-3.827***	(0.116)	-2.709***	(0.321)
	LA	-3.739***	(0.102)	-2.498***	(0.376)
	Environmental problems				
	CPF	-2.769***	(0.184)	-1.173***	(0.335)
	FP	-2.916***	(0.186)	-0.838**	(0.376)
	NCP	-2.731***	(0.196)	-0.778*	(0.348)
	SDP	-1.772***	(0.199)	-0.348	(0.358)
	GL (ref)	0.000	(0.000)	0.000	(0.000)
	LA	-1.203***	(0.196)	-0.002	(0.488)
Observations (full models)		10,222		1,137	

Note: Models adjusted with gender, age, ISEI, education and income by utilizing KHB method (Karlson et al., 2012)
*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

Discussion

This study put forth a novel perspective on the Finnish political spectrum by focusing on differentiating characteristics between party members and party supporters. In our empirical analyses, we focused on social and ideological representativeness, which can be divided into descriptive and symbolic representations (see Pitkin 1967, 60). Analysis was based on two survey datasets collected in 2016 and 2017. Our first hypothesis regarding members' social representativeness received partially expected results: the members of traditional class-based parties are at a higher social status when compared to supporters. In contrast to our hypothesis, social representativeness was weak across the party spectrum, as the members of newer parties, namely the GL and the FP, also had higher statuses when compared to supporters.

In some cases, it could be problematic if members are considerably higher in social position than supporters. For example, Widfeldt (1995) has suggested that this may have consequences for recruitment and also for election campaigning, as members have difficulties in communicating with supporters with whom they do not typically interact. Gauja and Haute (2015) concluded that unrepresentativeness may also weaken the ability of parties to adopt a policy that reflects the wishes of different population groups given the disconnect in needs and concerns, for example. Here, it should also be kept in mind that parties have given more and more decision-making power to their members, which emphasizes the importance of representativeness if the goal of maximally beneficial policy choices and ideological stances is sought to balance supporters' and members' differences.

However, as we suggested, it is possible that the goal of representativeness is fulfilled if members understand the environment, needs and concerns of lower social classes. We measured that by comparing members' and supporters in terms of different societal risk perceptions. In general, members have clearer perceptions of societal risks. Accordingly, it seems that party organizations are some kind of value clusters that are made up of high-class members, which can in turn lead to problems of party bias leaning toward member preferences.

Findings showed that risk perception on income inequality is a key difference between parties at the different levels of party stratum. The supporters and members of the LA placed the greatest emphasis on the importance income equality as a party value, whereas the NCP placed the lowest value on the same category. In this respect, it seems that the traditional political cleavages between the left and right continues to be reinforced by the members of traditional parties especially, namely those defined by the inherent value spectrum on which their profile is based.

In comparing party supporters' and members' answers regarding different risk items, we found that differences between members and supporters were the smallest in terms of income inequality issues when compared to others. In this respect, it seems that questions concerning social security and income distribution have become embedded in the Finnish political spectrum and, in contrast, party differences are nowadays increasingly shaped by various cultural factors and post-materialistic values such as immigration and environmental issues (e.g. Knutsen, 2017).

The striking result here was a contradiction between the new parties, namely the GL and the FP, in relation to social position and ideological questions. Members of the GL are relatively high in terms of labor market position and have a strong orientation to economic equality in addition to post-material issues. On the other hand, FP's members and supporters tend to be lower in terms of labor market position but are centre-right in terms of economic values. Accordingly, it seems that members and supporters of the new parties will have some degree of "trade-off" between their social positions and their values, especially when compared to traditional class-based parties.

The representativeness of the parties with respect to lower social positions opens explanations concerning the rise of populism in Finland. We found interesting information about the FP's base of support as they were clearly separated from other parties, being highly supported and also represented as members from lower social classes. This result underlines previous findings suggesting that the rise of the Finnish populists has been, at least to some extent, linked to a weak economic situation (Keipi et al., 2017). In this respect, it seems that the FP has managed to recruit members more effectively from the lower social classes, even when compared to left-wing parties. This finding is in line with past research that shows growth in populism in harsh economic downturns, with links to strengthening values for security, for example (Inglehart and Norris, 2017; Kriesi and Pappas, 2015).

As such, ideological leanings that resonate effectively with lower social classes that have not

been as effectively reached by other parties have resulted in advantages for the FP. At the same time, left-wing parties have clearly turned to post-materialism while the SDP, on the other hand, is composed of members from high social positions. Despite this, the party is still emphasized in terms of economic equality; it is also possible that their scope has separated from the interests of low social classes.

In order to interpret these finding, we may draw on the theory of "cultural backlash" (Inglehart and Norris, 2017), on the basis of which it seems that citizens from lower social positions are not drawing on their own position to implement improvement by traditional means, but rather look for global and cultural threats. In other words, the driving of the interests of one's own social interest group has changed to the interests of the "nation" with exclusive tendencies towards ethnic minorities and immigrants.

It is also important to keep in mind that the rise of value-based parties does not only make a major contribution to the political system, but it also affects the alignment of traditional parties (Van Spanje, 2010). Accordingly, it is not surprising that risk perceptions concerning refugee and asylum seeker issues along with environmental problems caused more variance between members and supporters among the traditional parties.

Furthermore, the LA also showed itself to be different from traditional parties, as supporters tended to be of similar social status as the average Finn, yet strongly left in terms of values. In this respect, findings provide an interesting landscape of the last decade's changes in the Finnish political environment. The transformation can also be detected in the change of party members' and supporters' background. During this decade, the LA's new members and supporters are more likely to be highly educated, young and women (Keipi et al., 2017). Furthermore, a significant portion of the traditional working class has shifted to identify with the new political option offered by the populist FP and its conservative values linked to the EU and immigration resistant stances as well. As such, the findings of the study support past research related to changes in the Finnish political field.

Naturally, our study has its limitations. First, we did not consider member activity in party organizations. When we generalize the effects of representativeness, we need to keep in mind that party members perceive their membership in a variety of ways and that there is diversity in participation activity (Van Haute and Gauja, 2015). As Pitkin (1967, 140) has suggested, "in descriptive and symbolic representation we saw hints of what that something might be, but we saw also that those views could not be directly applied in the realm of actions". Accordingly, future studies should also consider members' activity in party organizations.

In addition, as we know, party organizations and their member compositions are constantly changing. Also, it is important to note that perceived societal risks may be highly dependent on the period. For example, the number of refugees in Finland increased significantly in 2015 (Sarvimäki & Hangarter 2017), which may be reflected on the risk perceptions differently in the surveys of member and supporters, even though there was less than one year between surveys. Accordingly, the study should be repeated at regular intervals.

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Appendices

Table A1. Confounding effects of background variables on the likelihood of perceiving income inequality as important societal risk, KHB-decomposed coefficients and standard errors

	Age		Gender		SES		Education		Income	
Members										
CPF	0.033	(0.013)	0.035	(0.041)	0.016	(0.014)	0.003	(0.008)	0.019	(0.024)
FP	-0.026	(0.016)	-0.108*	(0.042)	0.014	(0.012)	0.006	(0.014)	0.112***	(0.029)
NCP (ref)										
SDP	-0.017	(0.013)	0.026	(0.041)	0.008	(0.007)	0.005	(0.012)	0.036	(0.025)
GL	-0.104***	(0.029)	0.171***	(0.044)	-0.005	(0.006)	0.000	(0.002)	0.049	(0.025)
LA	-0.001	(0.018)	0.047	(0.041)	0.012	(0.010)	0.004	(0.008)	0.109***	(0.029)
Supporters										
CPF	0.107	(0.104)	0.128	(0.130)	0.021	(0.033)	0.008	(0.019)	0.030	(0.057)
FP	-0.087	(0.103)	-0.038	(0.129)	0.032	(0.047)	0.012	(0.025)	0.058	(0.060)
NCP (ref)										
SDP	0.153	(0.106)	0.171	(0.132)	0.021	(0.033)	0.011	(0.022)	0.056	(0.060)
GL	-0.108	(0.104)	0.294*	(0.138)	0.006	(0.017)	-0.004	(0.014)	0.055	(0.060)
LA	-0.081	(0.102)	0.225	(0.134)	0.007	(0.018)	0.015	(0.030)	0.033	(0.057)

*** p <0.001; ** p <0.01; * p <0.05

Standard errors in parentheses

Table A2. Confounding effects of background variables on the likelihood of perceiving refugees and asylum seekers as important societal risk, KHB-decomposed coefficients and standard errors

	Age		Gender		ISEI		Education		Income	
Members										
CPF	-0.026	(0.014)	-0.052**	(0.016)	0.005	(0.010)	-0.005	(0.006)	-0.038*	(0.015)
FP (REF)										
NCP	-0.012	(0.008)	-0.039**	(0.015)	-0.039**	(0.014)	-0.010	(0.012)	-0.045**	(0.017)
SDP	-0.033	(0.018)	-0.048**	(0.016)	-0.018	(0.011)	-0.001	(0.003)	-0.031*	(0.013)
GL	0.034	(0.018)	-0.101***	(0.024)	-0.052**	(0.017)	-0.010	(0.012)	-0.026*	(0.012)
LA	-0.011	(0.008)	-0.056***	(0.017)	-0.008	(0.010)	-0.004	(0.006)	-0.001	(0.009)
Supporters										
CPF	-0.052	(0.043)	-0.073	(0.066)	-0.007	(0.016)	-0.003	(0.011)	-0.003	(0.011)
FP (Ref)										
NCP	-0.024	(0.033)	-0.017	(0.062)	-0.021	(0.036)	-0.009	(0.020)	-0.006	(0.015)
SDP	-0.065	(0.048)	-0.092	(0.068)	-0.007	(0.016)	-0.001	(0.009)	0.001	(0.008)
GL	0.006	(0.030)	-0.146	(0.075)	-0.017	(0.031)	-0.013	(0.026)	0.000	(0.008)
LA	-0.002	(0.029)	-0.115	(0.071)	-0.017	(0.029)	0.002	(0.010)	-0.001	(0.009)

*** p <0.001; ** p <0.01; * p <0.05

Standard errors in parentheses

Table A3. Confounding effects of background variables on the likelihood of perceiving environmental problems as important societal risk, KHB-decomposed coefficients and standard errors

	Age		Gender		ISEI		Education		Income	
Members										
CPF	0.090**	(0.035)	-0.146***	(0.042)	-0.023	(0.017)	-0.011	(0.008)	0.009	(0.008)
FP	0.051*	(0.021)	-0.299***	(0.046)	-0.021	(0.016)	-0.022	(0.014)	-0.020	(0.012)
NCP	0.069*	(0.027)	-0.184***	(0.042)	-0.006	(0.006)	0.000	(0.005)	0.015	(0.010)
SDP	0.101**	(0.039)	-0.156***	(0.042)	-0.014	(0.011)	-0.019	(0.012)	0.004	(0.007)
GL (ref)										
LA	0.068*	(0.027)	-0.133**	(0.041)	-0.018	(0.013)	-0.012	(0.009)	-0.019	(0.011)
Supporters										
CPF	0.102	(0.063)	-0.113	(0.093)	0.020	(0.030)	-0.027	(0.036)	0.003	(0.013)
FP	0.010	(0.046)	-0.227*	(0.106)	0.034	(0.044)	-0.036	(0.042)	-0.000	(0.008)
NCP	0.051	(0.051)	-0.200*	(0.102)	-0.007	(0.021)	-0.009	(0.026)	0.007	(0.024)
SDP	0.123	(0.070)	-0.084	(0.091)	0.020	(0.030)	-0.032	(0.039)	-0.000	(0.007)
GL (ref)										
LA	0.013	(0.046)	-0.047	(0.089)	0.002	(0.019)	-0.043	(0.047)	0.003	(0.012)

*** p <0.001; ** p <0.01; * p <0.05
Standard errors in parentheses