

Cross-Pressured Partisans: How Voters Make up Their Minds when Parties and Issues Diverge.¹

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Abstract

It is well known that issue preference influences vote choice. It is equally well known that partisanship influences vote choice. It is pretty obvious what happens when both coincide. Little attention, however, has been paid to the situation when they diverge. vote choice will come about easily when partisanship and issue preference point toward the same party. Which party will a voter support when she/he favours two different parties based on her partisanship and issue preference? This paper examines the actual vote choice of cross-pressured partisans and brings forward hypotheses as to when they are expected to vote for their partisan party and when they are expected to turn to the party of their issue preference. Strong partisanship is expected to increase the likelihood of voting for the partisan party while issues are expected to pull partisans away from their party when they are either salient or numerous. This account is tested by linking voters' attitudes with their parties' stances on the same policy issues based on voter/mass and candidate data collected by the 2009 PIREDEU/European Election Study.

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Introduction

The cross-pressure problem is a very long standing problem in research on voting behaviour and can already be traced back to the early studies of the Columbia School (Lazarsfeld et al 1960) and the Michigan School (Campbell et al 1960). They both observed that voters might become subject to an internal norm conflict when they – according to their group belongings, partisanship, attitudes or issue preferences – should vote for (at least) two different parties at the same time. Lazarsfeld (et al 1960) argued that '[t]he problem of determining how these cross-pressures are resolved is one of the main tasks for social research'. The Columbia (Lazarsfeld et al 1960) as well as the Michigan school (Campbell et al 1960) thus studied the consequences and effects of cross-pressures: delay of the voting decision, abstention, less interest and involvement in the campaign, or likelihood of switching between the parties. However, neither of these schools, nor any subsequent literature on the cross-pressure problem (Bélanger and Munroe 2007; Brader, Tucker and Therriault 2009; Mutz 2002), actually engage in the question of how a voter will resolve the problem and come to a vote decision when she or he is faced with competing incentives to vote for different parties at the same time.

Cross-pressured voters are usually considered the spanner in the works of smooth decision making, the error term of analysis, which does probably not do them justice. First, as Hillygus and Shields (2009) point out, cross-pressured voters are important for campaign analysts as they are receptive to and persuadable by campaign information. These scholars' findings contradict conventional wisdom that cross-pressured voters are less interested in politics. Second, cross-pressured voters give us deeper insight into the mechanisms of decision taking in general. The analysis of cross-pressuring incentives is like a stress-test of the limits of the

explanatory power of each competing incentive. How long does partisanship guide behaviour and when does issue attitude take over? And last but not least, the segment of cross-pressured partisans is likely to grow in future times. As our society gets more complex and pluralistic and as people get cognitively and socially more mobile (Dalton 2009), voters will inevitably face competing pressures when forming a vote decision.

Hence, it becomes essential to go one step beyond conventional vote choice analysis and examine how cross-pressured partisans make their voting decision. In this paper I deal with this important and largely neglected puzzle and ask which party cross-pressured partisans will turn to: the party of partisanship or the one they agree with on certain issues? And what drives their voting decision? To answer these questions, I look closely at cross-pressured partisans and examine under which circumstances partisanship or issue preference prevails.

The paper proceeds as follows. In section two I review the literature on cross-pressured partisans. In section three I develop a framework for studying the voting behaviour of cross-pressured partisans and state the hypotheses and in section four I introduce the data and the method to be employed. I test my hypotheses in part five and in the concluding section, I summarize my findings and point to issues that deserve further examination.

Cross-pressured Partisans

In election studies, we are confronted with cross-pressures any time a voter is faced with two (or more) diverging incentives that put her/him under pressure to support two (or more) different parties at the same time. Surprisingly, previous works on cross-pressured partisans have not studied their substantial vote choice. Though cross-pressures can arise in many situations,² the present paper exclusively focuses on cross-pressured partisans whose partisanship and issue attitudes diverge, that is, partisans who disagree with their party on several policy issues. I argue that these voters would choose either based on their partisanship or based on their issue preference. In what follows, I briefly delineate three strands of literature that addressed the problem of diverging partisanship and issue attitudes.

To start with, the inventors of the concepts of partisanship and issue attitudes were the first to address the possibility that partisanship and issue preference need not necessarily point towards the same party but might diverge, thus inducing an inner conflict upon an individual (Campbell et al 1960). These scholars, however, solely looked upon the general consequences of this inner conflict such as abstention, delay of voting decision or instability of choice. They did not consider the vote decision itself, that is, which of the two conflicting factors – partisanship or issue attitude – cross-pressured partisans will give way at the ballot box. True, dissonant voters have a strong motivation to avoid this kind of hard choice by not casting a ballot at all, which would render further attention to vote choice senseless. But then again, one has to bear in mind that the specific cross-pressure situation under examination nevertheless involves *partisans*, who generally have a higher probability

² Most often cross-pressures research examines social cross-pressures as, e.g., Lazarsfeld et al (1960); but see also Lefkofridi et al (2011) who examine cross-pressures between the socioeconomic and sociocultural dimensions.

to participate. It is therefore wrong to fail to consider the vote choice of cross-pressured individuals.

A second discussion ensued around the question of mutual influence. Does partisanship influence issue perception or the other way round? How do partisanship or issue attitudes change when they collide? There are reasons to assume that partisanship shapes issue orientation as modelled by the “funnel of causality” (Campbell et al 1960). Jacoby (1988) and, most recently, Bartels (2002) bring forward empirical evidence to support this initial claim. Similarly, issue attitudes might have the power to change partisanship. Killian and Wilcox (2008), for example, examine how the abortion issue can make partisans switch partisanship. Others have advocated a mutual influence, with partisanship driving issues as well as the other way round (Carsey and Layman 2006). Those approaches share the common interest of explaining how contradictory partisanship and issue preference can become aligned. Either of them is moved by the other resulting in a partisan with coherent issue preferences, and the cross-pressure problem becomes thus resolved. The present paper – in contrast – considers those voters that have not (yet) re-aligned but still suffer from cross-pressures. The question here is not which of the cross-pressuring powers influences the other. I go one step further to ask: which one prevails in the voting decision when the cross-pressure remains in force?

The most recent work on cross-pressured partisans is by Hillygus and Shields (2009), who focus on the effects campaigns have on this special segment of voters. They point to campaign strategies for these voters that go beyond the classical partisan activation effect, arguing that cross-pressured partisans are not “the least admirable segment of the electorate” (Hillygus and Shields 2009: 4). On the contrary, cross-pressured partisans are among the “most persuadable voters” (Hillygus and

Shields 2009: 3). As they are more responsive to campaigns, they often become their target. Thus, Hilligus and Shields (2009) show that the more those voters are exposed to campaign information – especially if the cross-pressuring issue is at stake in the campaign – the more likely those partisans turn away from their partisan party and vote for the competing party. These scholars’ perspective is, however, a campaign-centred one.

In sum, as none of the previous studies examines cross-pressured partisans’ vote choice at the individual level, there is a theoretical and empirical gap regarding how these voters actually behave at the ballot. In what follows, I theorize how cross-pressure partisans make their party choices.

How Cross-pressured Partisans Decide

I start out by a descriptive account of the vote choice of cross-pressured partisans. They basically have three options: either they vote for their party of partisanship, which I will refer to as ID-party in the following, or they vote for the party they agree with on cross-pressuring issues, which I will refer to as issue party in the following, or they vote for any other party. **Table 1** below presents the share of cross-pressured partisans choosing either of these options.

	Cross-pressured voters ³	
Vote for partisan party	1,877	90.85%
Vote for issue preference party	188	9.10%
Vote for other party	1	0.05%
Total	2,066	100%

Table 1: Vote Choice of cross-pressured partisans, EES 2009. For operationalisation of the variables see methodological section below.

³ Those voters are assumed to disagree with their partisan parties on at least two issues, see *below*.

As we can see, cross-pressured partisans turn predominantly to their ID-party, one in about ten times they give preference to their issue party and hardly ever they chose any other party. This actually gives a very clear picture about how cross-pressured partisans decide: more often than not, they prefer their ID-party. We could already stop the analysis here. However, we could further investigate whether this behaviour is different from congruent partisans, that is, partisans that are not cross-pressured by any issues but fully agree with their ID-party. After all, it is plausible that congruent partisans will also defect from voting for their party of partisanship. Do cross-pressured partisans defect more frequently in favour of a party they agree with on cross-pressuring issues than congruent partisans? Now, one of the central claims of Hillygus and Shields (2009) is that cross-pressures indeed do have consequences for the vote choice to the extent that partisans defect from their ID-party more often than congruent partisans. By sharing issue preferences with a party other than their ID-party, cross-pressured partisans have a potential second stimulus that gives impetus to their final decision. I expect this to hold true also for the European multiparty setting and hence hypothesise:

H1: Partisans that favour at least one other party based on their issue attitude will less frequently vote for their ID-party than other partisans.

Assuming that their behaviour is different, we face a further question. Why do cross-pressured partisans sometimes defect and other times not? What makes the cross-pressured partisans likely to stick with their ID-party and under which circumstances will they vote for their issue parties? I will turn to this question in the following. I will bring forward hypothesis accounting for why cross-pressured partisans vote for their ID-party and issue party respectively.

When will partisanship prevail?

A frequent finding in the literature on partisanship is that the closer a voter feels to a party, the more likely she will vote for this party (Thomassen and Rosema 2009). Jacoby (1988: 664), in interpreting reference group theory, argues that “it is reasonable to assume that more intense partisanship leads to a greater reliance on the party as a normative standard for guiding personal political orientations.” He concludes that stronger feelings of partisanship will more likely change issue attitudes in order to restore partisan-issue consistency. Jacoby’s claim pertained to partisans in general, but I will apply this argument also to the actual vote choice of cross-pressured partisans. If a more strongly experienced feeling of partisanship makes the party a stronger vote heuristic for partisans, then also cross-pressured partisans who experience a stronger feeling of partisanship will more likely resort to partisanship than to their issue party. Similarly, from the work of Zaller (1992) we know that partisans tend to ignore cross-pressuring information, that is, information that contradicts their political predispositions. The stronger the feeling of loyalty the voter experiences, the more powerful this filter will be. Hence, strong partisans will be less likely to notice that they disagree with their ID-party on one or several issues. I therefore hypothesize:

H2: Holding the degree/level of cross-pressuring issues constant, cross-pressured partisans who feel closer to their party will be less likely to defect than cross-pressured partisans experiencing a weaker feeling of partisanship.

When will issue preference prevail?

As we could observe in **Table 1** above, there is – though smaller in number – also a segment of cross-pressured partisans that votes for a party they agree with on cross-

pressuring issues, thus departing from their ID-party. What encourages them to do so? I bring forward two hypotheses on why issue preference might dominate the vote choice of cross-pressured partisans. Firstly, I take up the argument by Hillygus and Shields (2009) who found that the quantity of cross-pressuring issues increases the likelihood of voting for the party representing the issue preference instead of the ID-party. They examined the bipolar two-party system of the United States, where incongruence with the partisan party is per definition equal to congruence with the partisan party. That is, a partisan who disagrees with his partisan party will – given there is lack of unanimity among the two parties – automatically agree with the other party. Hence it is easy to determine in a two party system which party a departing partisan is voting for. This looks entirely different in the multiparty systems of the EU-15 countries under examination in the present paper. Here it is possible that several cross-pressuring issues are represented by more than one other party. It is thus harder to predict to which party a partisan that is cross-pressured by many issues will turn to. Nevertheless we can at least expect that:

H3: The more issues on which a cross-pressured partisan disagrees with her party, the more likely it is that she votes for any party with which she agrees on at least one issue.

Secondly, apart from quantity considerations, I consider also qualitative features of issues. Students of vote choice have come to agree that the most influential issues are the most salient issues. This is based upon insights from Political Psychology which states that important issues are cognitively more easily accessible and hence are more likely to serve as guiding heuristics (Krosnick 1988 and 1990). So, compared to non-salient issues, salient issues are more influential on vote choice. But how do salient issues relate to partisanship? Thus far, it is unknown

whether salient issues can be as strong as to dissolve partisans from their partisanship. As mentioned earlier, the previous literature on the relationship between partisanship and dissenting issue attitudes has found that issues can move partisanship. Killian and Wilcox (569) conclude that “strongly held issues can move partisanship”. Similarly, Carsey and Layman (2006: 467) find that “deeply held views on issues may result in some issue-based change in party identification.” So, there is indication that salient issues can dominate an uneasy relationship between issues and partisanship. I extend this finding also to the present case, where diverging issue attitude and partisanship remain unreconciled and the cross-pressured partisans make their choices for either of them. She or he then has the possibility to vote for the ID-party or any party she favours on the issue most salient to her. In this case I hypothesise:

H4: If one among the parties with which a cross-pressured voter agrees on cross-pressuring issues is considered the owner of the most salient issue, the likelihood of defecting from the ID-party will increase.

Data and Method

In order to explore cross-pressured partisans and to test the above hypotheses I rely on the PIREDEU/European Election Study 2009. More specifically, I merge data from the voter survey (EEVS 2009) and with relevant data collected by the candidate survey (EECS 2009). As the research question of the present paper concerns vote choice, the analysis will mainly be based on individual data. The candidate survey is aggregated at party level and provides information on the issue stances of the parties, which thus can be compared to the individuals' issue stances in order to discern the group of cross-pressured partisans. This approach presupposes that

partisans perceive the policy stances of their parties the same way as the candidates do, otherwise this might impact the qualification of cross-pressuredness. Admittedly, this is a strong assumption. There is, however, virtually no cross-national data set collecting individuals' attitudes and their *perceived* party stances on the same issues. An alternative approach would involve taking overall left-right orientation as proxy, but this would omit individuals from analysis that are cross-pressured by only a few issues (see also Hillygus and Shields 2004).

As it is less clear what party identification refers to in Newer Democracies, the current analysis is based on the old EU-15 countries only, to be precise, on Austria, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Greece, Spain, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and United Kingdom.

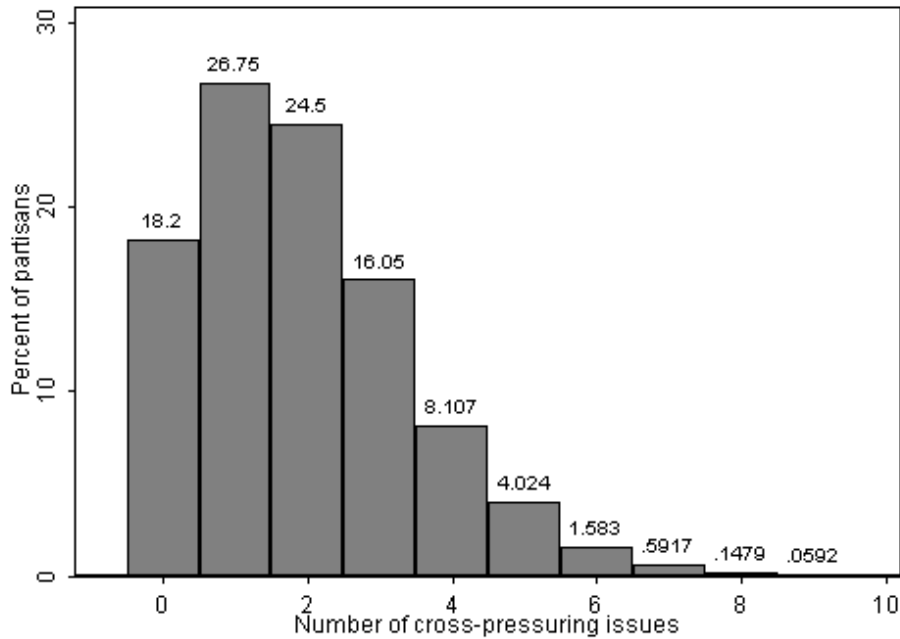
The calculation of cross-pressures:

For the calculation of cross-pressures I will compare the answers on twelve issue attitudes given by the individual voters with the aggregated mean answer given by the candidates of each party (see Annex A). The issue battery evaluates agreement and disagreement on each issue respectively on a scale from 1 to 5. I will consider *agreement* and *strong agreement* (codes 1 and 2) as general agreement and juxtapose it to general disagreement expressed as *disagreement* and *strong disagreement* by the respondents (codes 4 and 5). A partisan is regarded as cross-pressured if she either disagrees on an issue when her party agrees or, the other way round, when she agrees on an issue when her party actually disagrees. If either the party or the individual voter express neutrality (code 3), no opinion or refusal to

answer, the respondent is not counted as cross-pressured on that issue.⁴ Yet, this definition is still incomplete in a multiparty context, as it is not self-evident that there is automatically a party promoting the attitude of a respondent on an issue on which she disagrees with her partisan party. Hence, I will only count issues as cross-pressuring when there is a party offering the voter's policy stance on an issue she disagrees with her partisan party.

Finally, it appears very strict to assume a partisan as being already cross-pressured when she only disagrees on one out of the twelve issues from the issue battery with her partisan party. In Graph 1 below we can see that about 18% of the partisan voters from the EU-15 countries are not cross-pressured at all, that is, they do not disagree with their parties on any issue under examination. About half of them disagree on one or two issues and about 30% partisan voters disagree on three or more issues with their ID-parties.

⁴ As the party positions are aggregated mean functions of the individual candidates, the variables are continuous as opposed to the discrete policy stances of the individuals. Hence the cut-off points for neutrality on an issue are between 2.5 and 3.5.



Graph 1: Number of cross-pressuring issues and percentage of partisan voters cross-pressured by them. N=6,760.

As mentioned above, a partisan might not accurately perceive the party position of her partisan party and hence she might not notice that she departs from the party's stance. Also, the disagreement on one single issue, even when the partisan is cognizant of it, might not yet induce severe pressure upon her. Hence, I slightly relax the assumption of cross-pressuredness and define as cross-pressured partisans those partisans that depart on more than two issues from their ID-party.

Dependent Variable:

The dependent variable is a binary vote choice: vote for the ID-party or vote for any party the respondent agrees with on a cross-pressuring issue. This is calculated from the question on the potential vote choice give there were national elections that week. As the PIREDEU/European Election Study 2009 (EES 2009) by definition is conducted in the route of the European Parliament elections, it is not the actual vote

choice that can be considered here. Further, I omit potential non-voters and non-partisans from the analysis. Only partisans that would definitely name a party they would vote for are included in the testing.

Independent Variables:

There are three independent variables derived from the hypotheses: strength of partisanship, number of cross-pressuring issues and issue saliency. Strength of partisanship is measured as the point scale ranging from merely close to the party or fairly close to the party to merely a sympathiser of the party. Independent leaners are not considered. The quantitative degree of cross-pressuredness is the sum of cross-pressuring issues for every partisan. In **Table 2** below can be observed the amount of partisans cross-pressured by each issue in descending order. About a quarter of partisan voters disagrees with their parties on issues of privatisation, redistribution and EU-treaty referendums.

Issues	Percent of partisan voters cross-pressured by each issue.
Major public services and industries ought to be in state ownership	28.28%
EU treaty changes should be decided by referendum	27.59%
Income and wealth should be redistributed towards ordinary people	25.50%
Private enterprise is the best way to solve [COUNTRY'S] economic problems	24.36%
Immigration to [COUNTRY] should be decreased significantly	20.81%
People who break the law should be given much	19.82%

harsher sentences	
Same-sex marriages should be prohibited by law	19.39%
A woman should be prepared to cut down on her paid work for her family	16.98%
Immigrants should be required to adapt to the customs of [COUNTRY]	15.10%
Schools must teach children to obey authority	14.92%
Women should be free to decide on matters of abortion	11.39%
Politics should abstain from intervening in the economy	10.31%

Table 2: Percentage of voters disagreeing on each issue with their partisan party, in descending order. N= 5,530 (partisan voters who disagree with their party on at least one issue).

Finally, issue saliency is the subjective most important issue currently facing the respondent's country. To relate it to a party that best represents the respondent on this issue when she departs from her ID-party, I use the follow-up question on the most competent party on that issue assuming that the cross-pressured partisan is then cross-pressured between those two parties.

Control Variables

I control for variables that possibly influence whether a respondent votes for her partisan party or any other party she agrees with on any cross-pressuring issue. Those are age, as elder generations might have a different relationship towards partisanship, gender, social class and finally political interest, which might influence the susceptibility to issue positions of parties.

Findings

In the following, the hypotheses set out earlier are put to test. The first hypothesis states that cross-pressured partisans vote less frequently for their partisan party than do congruent partisans.

$$H1: \text{vote for ID-party (0/1)} = a + b_1 \text{ cross-pressured (0/1)} + \text{controls}$$

Thy hypothesis is tested by means of a binomial logit model.

	Model 1 B	SE
Cross-pressured(0/1)	-0.195*	0.096
Gender	-0.170	0.092
Age	0.005	0.003
Lower Middle Class	-0.101	0.162
Middle Class	0.021	0.123
Upper Middle Class	-0.263	0.154
Upper Class	-0.555	0.296
Somewhat politically interested	-0.303*	0.125
A little politically interested	-0.305*	0.136
Not at all politically interested	-0.136	0.244
Constant	2.603***	0.219
Log Likelihood	-1830.394**	
Number of Observations	6556	

Table 3: The difference in voting for partisan party between cross-pressured and congruent voters. Note: * significant at $p < 0.05$.

The findings corroborate the claim. Controlling for age, gender, socio-economic group and political interest, being cross-pressured increases the likelihood to depart from voting for the ID-party.

Further, hypotheses two and three maintain that - controlling for each other - strength of partisanship and amount of cross-pressuring issues influence whether a cross-pressured partisan turns to her party of partisanship or to any of the parties she agrees with on a cross-pressuring issue. Those two hypotheses are combined into one single model below.

$$H2 \text{ and } H3: \text{vote for ID-party (0/1)} = a + b_1 \text{ number of cross-pressuring issue} + b_2 \text{ strength of partisanship} + \text{controls}$$

The amount of cross-pressuring issues are entered as dummy variables with voters cross-pressured by three issues as reference group.⁵ The same goes for the strength of partisanship, whereby strong partisans serve as reference group. As we can see in Table 4 in the left column below, both contentions hold.

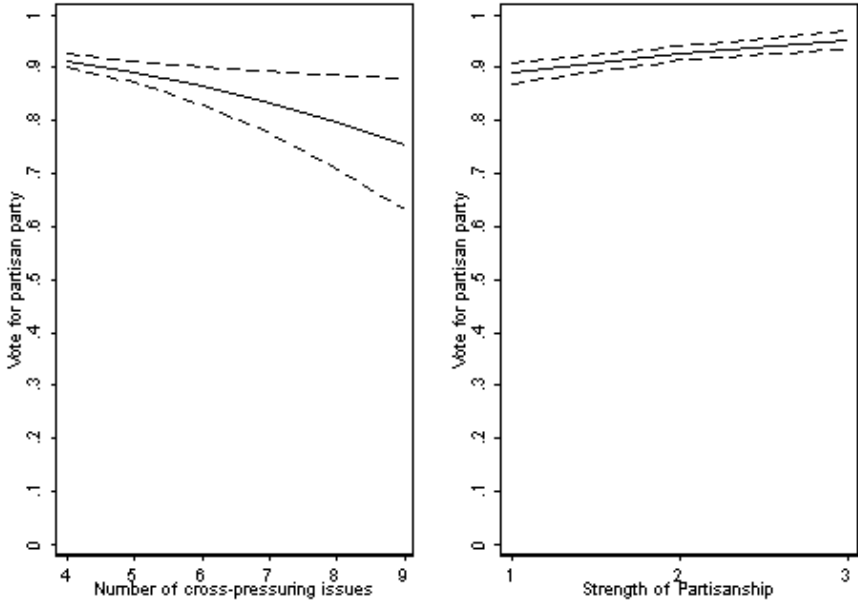
	Model 2&3 B	SE	Model 4 B	SE
Cross-pressured by 4 or 5 issues	-0.378*	0.168	-0.456*	0.200
Cross-pressured by 6 or 7 issues	-0.787**	0.285	-1.130**	0.346
Cross-pressured by 8 or 9 issues	-1.837**	0.644	-2.857**	0.947
Merely a sympathiser	-1.196***	0.311	-1.126**	0.395
Fairly close	-0.960**	0.320	-0.887*	0.408
Gender	-0.301	0.161	-0.398*	0.192
Age	0.001	0.005	0.005	0.006
Lower Middle Class	-0.420	0.249	-0.395	0.295
Middle Class	0.077	0.202	0.118	0.237
Upper Middle Class	-0.282	0.278	-0.322	0.338
Upper Class	-0.674	0.573	-0.649	0.817
Somewhat politically interested	-0.318	0.236	-0.222	0.290
A little politically interested	-0.059	0.255	0.056	0.312
Not at all politically interested	0.390	0.476	0.499	0.543
Cross-pressuring party competent / salient issue			-0.798***	0.192
Constant	3.820***	0.475	3.597***	0.588
Log Likelihood	-585.8775***		-384.5798***	
Number of Observations	1999		1100	

Table 4: The effect of amount of cross-pressuring issues and partisan strength on vote choice of cross-pressured voters. Note: dependent variable is coded 1 (vote for partisan party) and 0 (vote for any cross-pressuring issue party); * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, * p<0.001.**

Compared to strong partisans, medium partisans are more likely depart from their ID-party and weak partisans even more so. Simultaneously we can observe the contrary effect for the amount of cross-pressuring issues: the more issues a respondent is cross-pressured by, the less likely it is that she votes for her party of partisanship. For a more figurative portray, these effects are graphically depicted in the figures below. The left graph shows the change in the predicted probability of voting for the ID-party by the amount of cross-pressuring issues. The right graph shows the change in predicted probabilities of voting for the partisan party by change in partisan strength. We can see in

⁵ Note that voters cross-pressured by two or less issued are not regarded as cross-pressured and hence are not included in the analysis.

Graph 2 that holding the level of partisanship at its mean, age at its mean and all the other control variables at 0, the likelihood of voting for the partisan party decreases as the number of cross-pressuring issue increases. On the other hand, holding the number of cross-pressuring issues and age at its mean and all the other control variables at 0, the likelihood of voting for the ID-party increases with the closeness to the party.



Graph 2: Predicted probabilities of voting for the ID-party.
Note: dotted lines indicate confidence interval.

Last but not least, hypothesis four takes up the saliency argument. Partisans who disagree with their partisan party on an issue they consider most salient have a strong incentive to depart from their ID-party. The party that best represents the respondent best on the most salient issue might dissolve the partisan. Thus, if any of the issue parties that pull the cross-pressured partisan away from her or his ID-party is seen most competent on the most salient issue, the likelihood for defecting from partisanship increases.

H4: vote for ID-party (0/1) = a + b₁ any issue party is most competent on the most salient issue (0/1) + b₂ number of cross-pressuring issues + b₃ strength of partisanship + controls

The results are shown above in model 4 of Table 4. The likelihood of voting for the ID-party decreases significantly when any of the cross-pressuring party is seen best able to handle the most important problem.

Conclusion

Although the vote choice of congruent voters seems diaphanous and hence explaining their vote choice is straightforward, the vote choice of cross-pressured voters is more tricky. In the long run, we can learn a lot about the complexities generally underlying the decision making process, if we look at exactly those cases where voters face dilemmas. The present paper examines the actual vote choice of cross-pressured partisans and thus goes beyond the existing research which has solely looked upon general consequences of cross-pressures.

Cross-pressured partisans do not generally abstain from the poll and that is why their vote choice merits closer investigation. They generally feel closer to a certain party, but when it comes to issue preferences, they disagree on several issues with this party and actually favour the attitude of another party. In the multi-party context it is feasible that there are even more than one party that the cross-pressured partisan could consider an alternative option. This makes it harder to predict the exact party a voter is turning to in case she or he defects from the partisan party. Based on the available data, we see that cross-pressured partisans predominantly stick with their partisan party despite contentual disagreement. This trend is intensified the closer a voter feels to the party. That said, the more issues

voters are cross-pressured by, the more likely they turn their back to their partisan parties. The same is true for the quality of the cross-pressuring issues, that is, the saliency. The party that best represents a voter on the issue most salient to her or to him can unhinge more easily the partisan from her or his partisan relationship.

The decision of cross-pressured voters should be studied more in-depth in further research. A more comprehensive picture of the vote choice of cross-pressured partisans who overcome their partisan loyalty at the ballot box would help us grasp the mechanism underlying partisan decay at the individual level, the meaning of partisanship to the individual and, finally, the function of partisan bias in the perception of campaign information. Future research on cross-pressures could give us more insights about the cross-pressuring incentives themselves, their working and limits. For instance, studies could conduct comparisons between countries and – even more interesting – between parties and party families: which parties better manage to attract partisans from other parties by appealing to their issue attitudes? Which parties have an integrative momentum that is strong enough to prevent their cross-pressured partisans from dropping out? Similarly, it seems worthwhile to closer look at the concrete issues: which issues manage to irritate a partisan enough in order make her or him vote for a different party?

ANNEX A

Issue attitude battery of the European Parliament Election Study 2009	EECS 2009	EEVS 2009
Immigrants should be required to adapt to the customs of [COUNTRY]	Q20.1	Q56
Private enterprise is the best way to solve [COUNTRY'S] economic problems	Q20.2	Q57
Same-sex marriages should be prohibited by law	Q20.3	Q58
Major public services and industries ought to be in state ownership	Q20.4	Q59
Women should be free to decide on matters of abortion	Q20.5	Q60
Politics should abstain from intervening in the economy	Q20.6	Q61
People who break the law should be given much harsher sentences	Q20.7	Q62
Income and wealth should be redistributed towards ordinary people	Q20.8	Q63
Schools must teach children to obey authority	Q20.9	Q64
EU treaty changes should be decided by referendum	Q20.10	Q65
A Woman should be prepared to cut down on her paid work for her family	Q20.11	Q66
Immigration to [COUNTRY] should be decreased significantly	Q20.12	Q67

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