

CROSS-PRESSURES AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

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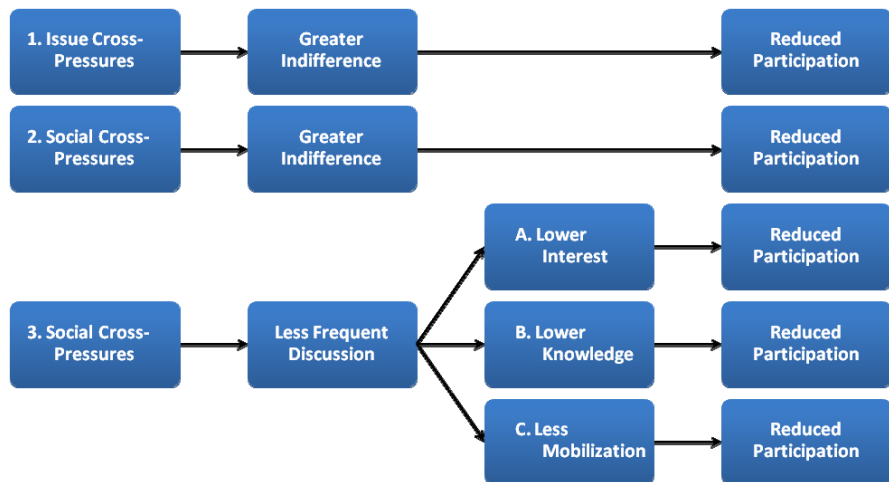
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Introduction

Cross-pressures: “contradictory and opposing influences” on an individual’s political preferences (*The People’s Choice*, p. 56)

- Early research found cross-pressured citizens less engaged; results disputed
- Renewed interest with advent of social networks analysis
- Various mechanisms and measures of cross-pressures → conflicting results
- Recent work focuses on *social* cross-pressures (conflicting messages about parties/candidates from one’s peers), but little attention paid to *issue* cross-pressures (conflicting policy preferences across issues)
- We aim to clarify the role of cross-pressures by testing a variety of types, measures, and mechanisms side-by-side

Pathways to Participation



How to Estimate Cross-Pressures

- Original approach: use intersections of particular demographics
- Two approaches for measuring social cross-pressures using networks:
 - Heterogeneity *within* social networks, *among* discussants (group-level)
 - Disagreement *between* individuals and their discussants (dyad-level)
- Two approaches for measuring issue cross-pressures using policy preferences:
 - Inconsistency *within* policy preferences, *across* issues
 - Conflict *between* policy and candidate preferences
- For studying turnout, we find that policy-vote conflict is a stronger predictor than internal policy conflict, and that social network heterogeneity is a stronger predictor than disagreement.

Mechanisms of Cross-Pressures

To assess the potential pathways from cross-pressures to participation, we analyze mediating variables (Judd & Kenny 1981). We assess models of turnout using two criteria for mediation (Baron & Kenny 1986, p. 1177):*

- 1 Mediating variable should have predicted effect on outcome
- 2 Coefficient on independent variable should be smaller in magnitude when mediator controlled for than when not

*A third criterion for assessing mediation—that the IV has the predicted effect on the mediator—is not shown here but was also verified in our analyses.

Indifference and Discussion as Mediating Variables

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Social Cross-Pressures	-0.48*	-0.41*	-0.58**	-0.50**
	(0.21)	(0.21)	(0.21)	(0.21)
Issue Cross-Pressures	-1.63**	-1.41**	-1.52**	-1.34**
	(0.40)	(0.41)	(0.41)	(0.42)
Indifference		-1.23**		-1.12**
		(0.29)		(0.30)
Discussion Frequency			0.28**	0.25**
			(0.07)	(0.07)
<i>n</i>	1540			

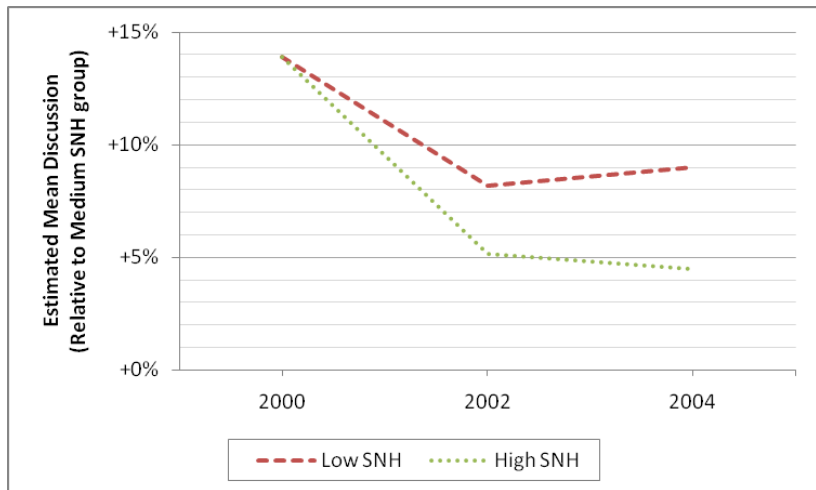
Dependent variable: self-reported turnout in 2000 presidential election (ANES data)

** = significant at 0.05 level (one-tailed), ** = 0.01 level*

Coefficients for demographic control variables not shown for brevity

Social Cross-Pressures and Discussion Frequency

Relative Discussion Frequency by Social Cross-Pressuredness



Assessing Pathways 3a, 3b, and 3c

	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Social Cross-Pressures	-0.50** (0.21)	-0.41* (0.22)	-0.49* (0.22)	-0.50** (0.22)	-0.42* (0.22)
Issue Cross-Pressures	-1.34** (0.42)	-1.18** (0.44)	-1.18** (0.43)	-1.35** (0.42)	-1.08** (0.44)
Indifference	-1.12** (0.30)	-0.95** (0.30)	-1.06** (0.30)	-1.12** (0.30)	-0.92** (0.30)
Discussion Frequency	0.25** (0.07)	0.11 (0.07)	0.20** (0.07)	0.24** (0.07)	0.08 (0.07)
Political Interest		0.74** (0.12)			0.61** (0.13)
Political Knowledge			0.40** (0.07)		0.33** (0.07)
Mobilization				0.32* (0.16)	0.34* (0.16)
<i>n</i>	1540				

Other Forms of Participation

	Attempt to Influence Others		Public Campaign Involvement		Private Campaign Involvement	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Social Network	0.46**	0.42**	-0.19		-0.21	-0.25
Heterogeneity	(0.18)	(0.16)	(0.25)		(0.27)	(0.24)
Social Network			-0.17	-0.23*	-0.03	
Disagreement	(0.10)		(0.14)	(0.13)	(0.14)	
Internal Policy Conflict	-0.25		-0.62	-0.83**	-0.49	
	(0.27)		(0.38)	(0.27)	(0.44)	
Policy-Vote Conflict	-0.40	-0.64*	-0.40		-1.15*	-1.74**
	(0.39)	(0.31)	(0.55)		(0.68)	(0.48)
<i>n</i>	1540					

Dependent variables (all from 2000 ANES dataset):

Attempt to influence others = binary indicator for advocacy on behalf of a candidate in the 2000 presidential campaign

Public campaign involvement = additive scale (0–3) using indicators of (a) displaying signs/stickers, (b) attending campaign events, and (c) working for a campaign

Private campaign involvement = additive scale (0–3) for donations to (a) candidates, (b) parties, and (c) outside groups.

** = significant at 0.05 level (one-tailed), ** = 0.01 level.*

Conclusion

- Our study shows that testing alternative measures and mechanisms of cross-pressures is critical for understanding how they affect potential voters.
- From our analysis of turnout, we have shown that:
 - Both issue and social cross-pressures are associated with decreased turnout
 - Most promising pathway way for both types is through indifference
 - Social cross-pressures may also lead to lower interest and knowledge by reducing discussion, but evidence for this is mixed
- Analyzing other forms of participation shows that the most appropriate measures and mechanisms may vary

Future Research

In future studies, we aim to:

- Explore the role of homophily (McPherson et al 2001) in moderating social cross-pressures' effects on participation
- Develop more sophisticated measures of issue cross-pressures
- Build on this understanding of cross-pressures' mechanisms through experimental research
- Extend cross-pressures research into over-time and cross-national contexts by employing "cross-pressure scores" (Brader, Tucker, and Therriault 2011)