

Until another party do us part? Party members' electoral disloyalty in Portugal*

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Abstract

This article investigates whether and why party members sometimes vote for other parties. Although often taken as parties' most loyal voters, recent evidence suggests that members' vote is not unconditional. Using novel survey data from Portugal, we examine rates of defection by members, test the validity of existing explanations and assess the extent to which traditional theories of party membership can account for such behavior. We argue that ideological incongruence, satisfaction with intra-party functioning, incentive structure and party activism play a key role in explaining why a member casts a vote for another party while maintaining a formal connection with their own party. Findings support the impact of internal discontentment and engagement in party activities, as well as instrumental motivations for members of smaller parties. We also explore how motivations relate to strategic considerations in driving defection. Results differ across parties, suggesting the importance of party models and legacy. They have important implications for party membership and mobilization, as well as for future research on membership decline and the consequences of party cohesion and factionalism.

Keywords: party membership, vote defection, disloyalty, voting behavior, Portugal

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1 Introduction

Party members are pivotal agents in representative democracies. They play a key role in spreading the party brand, acting as the party’s ‘ambassadors’ to the community and providing essential support for parties: members help in electoral mobilization, funding, communication, and political recruitment (Scarrow 1994; Bale, Webb, and Poletti 2019). They also have an important function of intermediation by linking civil society to the institutional arena, thus providing feedback for parties so that they can stay in touch with public opinion and new grievances can emerge (Dalton 2004). Ultimately, party members are assumed to be the party’s most loyal voters. They are an electoral linking mechanism supposed to supply the party with a permanent and safe pool of votes (Hooghe and Dassonneville 2014, 369) and act as ‘vote multipliers’ that expand the party’s electoral base through their regular daily contacts (Scarrow 1994, 47-48).

The effectiveness of these functions depends on party cohesion.¹ Despite their declining role (Ignazi 2017; Katz and Mair 2018), party affiliates can still harm party functioning and electoral performance. Members that are not aligned with party policies or ideology may create reputational damage (Müller 2000) as they can be a source of policy and personal demands (Katz 1990, 152). Specifically, members can make statements (*voice*) that hurt or hamper the spread of the party brand (Scarrow and Gezgor 2010), leave the party, or even join another one (*exit*) (Wagner 2017; Barnfield and Bale 2022). *In extremis*, some party members may choose to remain in the party while voting for another one (*disloyalty*) – which is ‘*sabotage*, a destructive type of voice’ (de Vet, Poletti, and Wauters 2019).

To what extent do party members defect at the ballot box and what are the main

¹Party cohesion can be defined as ‘the extent [to which] group members can be observed to work together for the group’s goals’ (Özbudun 1970, 305). We apply the term to party members, although it can also be used to analyze a more restricted group, such as MPs or party delegates.

determinants of such disloyalty? This article unveils members' betrayal of their party in general elections by using new survey data from a neglected country to test traditional theories of party membership, as well as to expand existing knowledge on the topic. We argue that ideological incongruence, satisfaction with intra-party functioning (IPF), incentive structure and party activism are associated with vote defection. The contribution is twofold. On the one hand, we rely on traditional theories of party membership to include neglected factors, capturing satisfaction with IPF and the incentive structure (instrumental and ideological motivations). Additionally, we consider ideological incongruence and party activism, adopting a more comprehensive and sophisticated operationalization of the latter. On the other hand, this case study contributes to the international literature. Building on the most recent sample of original surveys of Portuguese party members, this paper allows us to examine the extent to which existing explanations and traditional theories of party membership apply to a new case characterized by few incentives for members' defection. As further explained, the specific party and party system features make Portugal a quite robust setting to test individual-level determinants of members' disloyalty. Findings confirm the impact of internal discontentment and engagement in party activities, as well as instrumental motivations if members also take strategic considerations into account.

Portugal has three unique features that make it a crucial case for studying party members' electoral disloyalty. First, there were no new challengers until 2015, with no changes in the supply side. Second, most parties present stable programmatic and ideological orientations, combined with a high level of centralization and strong vertical hierarchies. Third, political parties have achieved their institutionalization through the state, and patterns of competition have remained constant with few incentives for strategic voting. This permits us to expand extant research not only by specifying the conditions associated with members' disloyalty and providing new empirical evidence

on an understudied phenomenon, but also by testing the robustness of existing theories in a context that provides few incentives for members' defection. Finally, studies on Portuguese party membership are scarce. This research allows us to shed light on the motivations of those who still participate through these organizations, as well as to gain insights into the motivations of other voters and the rationale behind membership decline (namely that of members who exit the party).

The next section sets out the theoretical expectations derived from the literature on intra-party politics and outlines the contributions of this work. The following section explains the rationale behind the case selection, describes the data, operationalization, and the statistical method. We then present and analyze the results. Finally, we discuss the implications in light of the theoretical framework and suggest pathways for future research.

2 Party members and electoral disloyalty: theory and evidence

The widespread decline in party membership shines the spotlight on parties' ability to adapt both through their structural transformations (Katz and Mair 1995), and the profile, attitudes and behavior of those who still participate within these organizations (van Haute and Carty 2012; Kölln 2015). While some argue that the role of members is now marginal (Ignazi 2017; Katz and Mair 2018), others still see them as an essential piece of the 'bridge' between state and society (Scarrow 1996; van Haute and Gauja 2015). Nevertheless, as Poguntke et al. (2016, 669) state, 'dues-paying members are the *polis* for most or all important decisions' in both old and new parties. Indeed, more power has gradually been transferred to individual members to shape policies and pick party candidates and leaders (Scarrow and Gezgor 2010; Sandri and Seddone 2021).

Rank-and-files are not only an important linkage mechanism, but they also improve statistics, secure volunteer work, furnish essential funds, policy ideas, and are potential candidates to present in public elections (Scarrow 1994, 2014; Hooghe and Dassonneville 2014; van Haute and Gauja 2015).²

According to the party government model, cohesion between members and their parties is relevant for political representation and the functioning of democracies (McDonald and Budge 2005; Sartori 2005). However, internal divisions promote tensions between rank-and-file and party leaders (Greene and Haber 2016). Although parties try to present themselves as united, divergence is normal for intra-party politics (Kölln and Polk 2023). For example, even in advanced democracies, more than half of party members report some kind of ideological divisions with their party (van Haute and Carty 2012; Kölln and Polk 2017). In Portugal, the number is higher,³ with most members being critical of their party’s functioning (Sanches et al. 2018).

According to Hirschman’s theory (1970), members have two options when they are aware of a disconnection and feel dissatisfied with the party: to ‘*voice*’ their disagreement and try to shape the internal functioning; or to ‘*exit*’ the party, becoming non-partisans or even joining another one. A relevant number of members choose these options. Intra-party disagreement increases the likelihood of members either casting a vote for another party (Webb, Bale, and Poletti 2017; Polk and Kölln 2018; de Vet, Poletti, and Wauters 2019) or leaving the current one (Kölln and Polk 2017; Wagner 2017; Bale, Webb, and Poletti 2019; Barnfield and Bale 2022).

This article focuses on the former situation. This is of the utmost importance, not only because voting defection indicates discontent and may be a first step towards leaving the party for good (de Vet, Poletti, and Wauters 2019, 692), but also because

²See Scarrow and Webb (2023) for an overview of the benefits of membership for political parties.

³Our data indicate that about two-thirds of party members do not align with their perceived ideological placement of the party.

whereas all party members who leave do not actually join another party, all party members who defect effectively do so in favor of another party. Members have a formal connection to a given party and are supposed to be a guarantee of a small electoral base and act as the party’s ambassadors to the community in search of votes (Strøm 1990; Scarrow 1994). An explanation of this phenomenon is crucial to understand why the ‘most loyal party voters’ switch their option in the ballot booth, ‘because these votes are most likely easier to regain compared to votes from non-members or non-identifiers’ (Polk and Kölln 2018, 542). Ultimately, the analysis of members’ defection sheds further light on the decline of party membership, intra-party dynamics or the rise of new challengers.

Although most party members still vote for their party, some degree of defection occurs in most countries (Polk and Kölln 2018). Case studies are few but demonstrate that electoral betrayal varies from 4 to 7.8 percent in Flanders (Belgium) (de Vet, Poletti, and Wauters 2019) and 10.2 percent in Sweden (Polk and Kölln 2018). In the UK, a surprising 58 percent of Conservatives admitted the possibility of voting for the UKIP (Webb and Bale 2014), though only around 5 percent did so (Webb, Bale, and Poletti 2017). In an analysis of six British parties, de Vet and colleagues (2019) find about 6 percent of members defect and, conversely, show that mainstream parties have smaller shares of defecting votes.

This study adds three main contributions to the scarce literature. The first is new variables: on the one hand, the types of motivation, and, on the other, satisfaction with IPF. As we argue below, members joining the party for ideological reasons are expected to be more loyal, while instrumentally driven members will be more prone to defect, especially if they take strategic considerations into account. Also, it is important to account for members’ perceptions of the quality of party functioning because this factor can trigger defection. The more an affiliate disagrees with the way the party functions,

the more prone he/she should be to switch his/her vote.

The second innovation is methodological. We use a more refined and systematic operationalization of satisfaction with IPF and party activism that is more suited to gauging internal dynamics. This study provides a preliminary assessment of these differences by testing the main predictors of members' defection in a new (and understudied) democracy. This is our third contribution. As explained in the research design, Portugal presents a very different context from that of advanced democracies studied so far, such as Belgium, Sweden or the UK. Membership rates are extremely low and members present an 'elitist' profile as they tend to be middle-aged, have a high level of education, and are employed mostly in the service sectors or work in the liberal professions (Table A1).⁴ Moreover, the profile of party members is quite homogeneous, especially when compared to those in more advanced democracies (Espírito-Santo, Lisi, and Costa 2018).

3 Hypotheses

The first hypothesis builds on the importance of 'push' factors, which means that intra-party ideological disagreements have an impact on members' propensity to defect (Polk and Kölln 2018).⁵ Literature argues that members mainly leave the party for ideological reasons (e.g. Kölln and Polk 2017; Wagner 2017; Barnfield and Bale 2022). Studies on voting defection follow the same vein. They claim that members are more likely to defect if they are *pushed*, i.e., when they feel a gap between the party's ideological position and their own (Polk and Kölln 2018; de Vet, Poletti, and Wauters 2019). Consequently, member-party ideological incongruence is expected to foster disloyalty.

⁴For a comparison with other countries, see van Haute and Gauja (2015).

⁵This line of research also stresses the importance of 'pull factors', i.e., cross-party policy pressures that attract members from another party that is ideologically close. Unfortunately, we do not have data to test such predictors.

H1. Member-party ideological incongruence increases the likelihood of a member casting a defecting vote.

Despite the transfer of powers to party members, they are no longer the primary source of financial support, communication, and recruitment. Contemporary political parties are characterized by the concentration of power in the upper-level elite, the personalization of the leaders, and the latter's extensive control over the organization (Ignazi 2017; Rahat and Kenig 2018). Dissatisfaction with the functioning of the party generally reflects the fact that members are increasingly considered to be irrelevant (Dalton and Wattenberg 2002; van Biezen, Mair, and Poguntke 2012; van Biezen and Poguntke 2014). Party elites can easily ignore members, treat their opinions as unimportant, and even consider grassroots as 'undesirable' (Katz and Mair 1995). Members not only feel undervalued but also disrespected (Webb and Bale 2014; Sanches et al. 2018). Indeed, recent studies find that electoral disloyalty is associated with the extent to which members like their party leader (Polk and Kölln 2018; de Vet, Poletti, and Wauters 2019), feel that (s)he performs in office (Webb, Bale, and Poletti 2017), or in the electoral campaign (de Vet, Poletti, and Wauters 2019). Therefore, members' perceptions of internal functioning seemingly matter for voting defection. We build on this assumption to test a comprehensive predictor: a subjective interpretation based on members' opinions of the quality of the party organization's functioning.

H2. The lower the satisfaction with intra-party functioning, the more likely a member is to vote for another party.

The third hypothesis builds on Whiteley and Seyd's general incentives model (e.g. Seyd and Whiteley 1992; Whiteley and Seyd 2002), one of the most widely used theories to explain party membership activism (e.g. Poletti, Webb, and Bale 2019; Webb, Bale, and Poletti 2020) but not tested for members' disloyalty. Relying on these contributions,

we argue that members who join the party for ideological reasons are more prone to stick to their commitment compared to those who join for instrumental reasons. That is, ideologically driven members are expected to remain loyal even when they are critical of leaders' programmatic orientations due to their (ideological) attachment to the party. In contrast, instrumentally motivated members – those who rely on selective incentives – reassert their allegiance in public to accrue personal benefits but may express their disagreement in a secretive and personal act such as the vote. Although scholarship finds that members mostly express political (ideological or purposive) motives for joining a party (e.g. Bruter and Harrison 2009; Webb and Bale 2023), material incentives are also key for the functioning of party organizations (Panebianco 1988). Even if parties no longer have many of the traditional incentives for membership, they still need to balance ideological and material benefits to secure a membership base in the long term, in addition to the short-term waves of (new) adherents (Young 2013). These motivations play a particularly relevant role in parties that make extensive use of patronage to facilitate members' involvement and support for parties. This is the case of Portuguese parties, which have been using material resources to strengthen loyalty and to increase party support (Jalali, Silva, and Moreira 2012).

H3a. Instrumentally motivated members are more likely to vote for another party.

H3b. Ideologically motivated members are less likely to vote for another party.

We further explore how the effect of motivations relates to another 'pull factor' in driving defection: strategic considerations. Strategic voting depends on institutional incentives, especially the electoral system (Duverger 1954). Previous studies of voters (Cox 1997) and party members (de Vet, Poletti, and Wauters 2019) show that strategic voting is more prevalent in plurality systems. However, empirical evidence suggests that tactical behavior is not completely absent under proportional represen-

tation (PR) systems (e.g. Cox and Shugart 1996; Abramson et al. 2010; Irwin and Van Holsteyn 2012). Indeed, strategic desertion of the most preferred party shapes a non-trivial proportion of voters in Portugal (Gschwend 2007a; Fernandes, Pereira, and Plescia 2016; Ferrinho Lopes, Nina, and Santana-Pereira 2022). Since instrumental and non-ideological affiliates decide on their vote from election to election based on their assessment of the potential outcome (van der Eijk, Schmitt, and Binder 2005), they are expected to be particularly prone to defect if they also take strategic considerations into account. According to Cox’s ‘electoral history heuristic’ (1997), they learn from past electoral results, anticipating parties’ viability in a given election. Hence, parties’ electoral performance at time $t - 1$ is expected to influence the effect of motivations in driving defection at time t . Instrumental and non-ideological members from smaller parties may vote for bigger parties in their respective ideological block to have a better chance of shaping government formation (Abramson et al. 2010).

It should be noted that insincere voting can also benefit ‘third’ parties by influencing coalition formation in PR systems (Gschwend 2007b). Nevertheless, empirical evidence suggests that smaller parties are more vulnerable to strategic voting, even under PR rules (Abramson et al. 2010; Irwin and Van Holsteyn 2012). Furthermore, party membership research argues that strategic considerations among party members tend to harm smaller parties and benefit larger ones (de Vet, Poletti, and Wauters 2019). We believe that this is also the case for Portugal, where tactical voters tend to avoid wasting their votes on ‘third’ parties and instead cast their ballots for larger parties (Fernandes, Pereira, and Plescia 2016; Ferrinho Lopes, Nina, and Santana-Pereira 2022). This tendency stems from the common knowledge about the functioning of the electoral system and the fact that government alternation is dominated by the two main parties. During data collection, a coalition between the main left-wing party and the smaller parties in its ideological block was not perceived as feasible due to the complete

absence of left-wing government coalitions in Portugal before the period under study. Additionally, CDS voters often switch to PSD in contexts of high competitiveness between the two main parties (Ferrinho Lopes 2023), as is the context in the current analysis, regardless of the party’s historical willingness to form coalitions (Calca 2021). Hence, this represents a specific scenario with very few incentives for defecting members to strategically vote for smaller parties.

H3c. The probability of a member voting for another party increases when instrumental incentives are stronger and their own party had a weaker performance in the previous election.

H3d. The probability of a member voting for another party increases when ideological incentives are weaker and their own party had a weaker performance in the previous election.

Finally, scholars claim that activism has relevant implications for intra-party dynamics and party orientations (Whiteley and Seyd 2002). It is associated with member-party linkage (van Haute and Carty 2012; Sanches et al. 2018; Lisi and Cancela 2019). More engaged members have higher levels of integration and are thus closer to the ideology, values, and the brand that is spread by party elites. In contrast, passive, apathetic, less engaged, and uninterested members are more likely to make critical assessments of the party since their engagement in everyday party life does not foster familiarity with party matters and proximity to leaders and, therefore, more loyalty. We follow those showing that the more engaged party members will be less likely to defect (Polk and Kölln 2018; de Vet, Poletti, and Wauters 2019). We use a different – and more comprehensive – operationalization of party activism and expect that higher levels of engagement in party activities decrease the probability of defecting.

H4. Higher levels of activism are likely to decrease party members' electoral disloyalty.

4 Research design

4.1 Case Selection

The Portuguese case is relevant for several reasons. First and foremost, the political system in Portugal has several characteristics that make it less likely members will defect compared to other advanced democracies. Hence, it contributes to the assessment of the robustness of existing theories. Party organizations were created from the top, rather than through a slower process of civil society mobilization. The levels of partisan attachments are very low in Portuguese society, which means that partisans overlap to a great extent with grassroots. Moreover, the cartelization of the party system has constrained the supply-side of political competition, limiting the 'menu' of parties.

Second, political parties cover a wide ideological spectrum and present different party models, ranging from left-libertarian forces to catch-all moderate parties and traditional conservatives. Both PS (Socialist Party) and PSD (Social Democratic Party)⁶ are close to the catch-all party model, while CDS-PP (Christian Democrats) has been characterized as a 'party without head' given the lack of a strong structure on the ground, thus adopting some traits of the cadre parties (Lopes 2004). In addition, they differ in terms of organizational development. While PS and CDS-PP followed a top-down process of penetration, local party structures were extremely important in the formation of PSD, with notables playing a significant role in party mobilization and member recruitment (Jalali 2007). We should also mention the peculiarity of BE (Left

⁶Despite its name, which reflects the legacy of the 1974 Portuguese revolution, PSD is a center-right party adopting liberal positions on economic issues.

Bloc), a radical left party close to libertarian or movement parties. BE has adopted a collegial leadership style, a much factionalized functioning, an emphasis on participatory tools and bottom-up mobilization. It also shows an intensive use of new ICT and closer linkages to social movements and civic organizations.

Third, the two main centrist parties (PS and PSD) have alternated in government (alone or in coalition) and structured the main patterns of competition, which means that they are indispensable to the formation of new governments. Yet roughly twenty parties compete in the electoral arena. This is an effect of the PR electoral system, which allows for minority representation and the emergence of new parties, thus facilitating strategic voting behavior.

Fourth, the party system displayed remarkable stability at least until 2019 (Ferreirinho Lopes 2023). Portuguese parties still maintain the monopoly of political representation and the ability to withdraw and distribute resources from the state (Jalali 2007, 129), receiving public funding and media coverage. This feature has contributed to strengthening party and party system institutionalization, thus making long-term prospects of membership and commitment toward party organizations more credible and attractive. This is quite exceptional in the context of the political, economic and social turmoil experienced by Southern European countries in the aftermath of the Great Recession. The crisis did not significantly affect the Portuguese political landscape or the cohesion of the main parties, with the exception of the BE which experienced an internal split in 2011. Since the data is collected immediately after the financial intervention, it contributes to the research on the effects of the crisis on factionalism and intra-party dissent.

Fifth, given that the Portuguese parties were formed at the time of democratization, and they needed to reinforce their electoral base in a short period (Jalali 2007), these parties quickly manifested similar characteristics vis-à-vis their counterparts in two-

party systems, such as catch-all discourse, pragmatic ideology, high levels of centralization, personalization and empowerment of the leader, and weak territorial implantation (van Biezen 2003; Jalali 2007; Lisi 2015). Data from the Political Party Database shows little variation across Portuguese parties in terms of intra-party democracy (Bolin et al. 2017), but Sanches and colleagues (2018) demonstrate that members’ evaluations of the quality of party functioning vary greatly. Therefore, they can be considered party organizations with low levels of internal democracy (both assembly-based and plebiscitary). These characteristics provide relevant conditions to test electoral disloyalty, especially from dissatisfied and passive members.

4.2 Survey and sample characteristics

The research design builds on the most recent surveys of party rank-and-file members and delegates in Portugal.⁷ The period of data collection matches the Portuguese exit from the Memorandum of Understanding with the ‘Troika’ (ECB, EC and IMF), immediately before the end of the coalition government between the PSD and the CDS-PP and the beginning of the minority government of the PS with parliamentary support from the radical left.

After elaborating the questionnaire and uploading it into ‘LimeSurvey’, we provided party headquarters (usually the party officials in charge of the management of party organization) with the link and asked for the survey to be circulated internally. The survey was then distributed by e-mail to all party rank-and-file members or delegates. The sampling methods are thus non-probabilistic and based on respondents volunteering to take part, with a risk of self-selection bias. This is common to party membership studies and impossible to control. Alternative sampling methods are unfeasible given

⁷Rank-and-file members are fee-paying affiliates with no specific role within the party, whereas delegates are members elected from grassroots members to represent local structures at party conventions.

the difficulties in accessing party headquarters and getting round internal gatekeepers. However, this did not seem to happen as the profile of party members is coherent with previous accounts of Portuguese membership (Jalali and Lobo 2007).

The sample comprises 2,771 valid answers from four political parties (Table 1).⁸ There are two caveats worth mentioning. First, data on the left-wing parties is only from rank-and-file members and on their rightist counterparts from delegates. Obtaining data from both types of members from the same party was impossible due to party gatekeepers. This prevents a systematic comparison between grassroots and mid-level elites from the same party and constrains interpretations of party-level differences, which we acknowledge when discussing the results. Although it is not possible to infer differences between party strata, the empirical analyses might add to extant scholarship by displaying the results for distinct types of membership, at least to see whether the same variables present the same effect regardless of membership level. Second, this is not only the most recent party membership data, but also the sample with the largest number of observations in Portugal. Nevertheless, the response rates of rank-and-files are low, even though two reminders were sent out by party headquarters. This is common in party membership research (see van Haute and Gauja 2015; Rehmert 2022). It should also be noted that party headquarters provide neither real estimates for their membership (and available data usually overestimate membership figures),⁹ nor the numbers of rank-and-files registered in their email contacts during the affiliation process (data which is not regularly updated). Hence, the response rates regarding the contacted members are likely to be deflated.

⁸The criterion for including parties in this analysis is that they had at least one Parliamentary seat at the time the surveys were administered. Neither the Communist Party (PCP) nor the Green Party (PEV) answered the requests to participate in the surveys.

⁹For this reason, we follow similar studies (e.g. Webb, Bale, and Poletti 2020) and decide not to weigh our sample. In addition, it has been shown that weights can alter the statistical analysis as they increase standard errors (Gelman 2007), thus making the findings less reliable.

Table 1: Party members survey details

	Party family	Type of member	N	Resp. rate (%)	Data collection
BE	Left libertarian	Rank-and-file	669 (9,600)	6.97	October-December 2014
PS	Social-democratic	Rank-and-file	1347 (50,000)	2.69	January-February 2014
PSD	Liberal-democratic	Delegates	313 (1,000)	31.30	January-February 2014
CDS-PP	Christian-democratic	Delegates	442 (900)	49.22	January-February 2014

Notes: Approximate total number of rank-and-file members and delegates in parentheses (see Lisi and Cancela 2019).

4.3 Operationalization

The outcome variable is party members’ voting defection behavior (disloyalty). It is calculated by the indication of whether a member voted for a party other than his/her own in the general elections preceding the surveys (0=no; 1=yes), held in 2011, during the crisis and after the prime-minister’s resignation (the ‘troika’ elections). We use the standard variable included in the existing party membership literature and the Portuguese Election Studies since 2002. Given the lack of panel data, this is the next best source to examine vote defection. Despite potential measurement errors with members incorrectly recalling their vote, the differences between recall data in cross-sectional and panel surveys have a very limited effect on the validity of research findings (Dassonneville and Hooghe 2017).¹⁰ Below we illustrate the operationalization of the explanatory variables. Summary statistics are displayed in Table A2.

Ideological incongruence is estimated through the distance between (1) members’ self-placement on the left-right dimension and (2) their perception of their party’s position on the same scale (1=left; 10=right). Since our aim is to understand the effect of any degree of ideological disagreement, we consider every single-point difference as it reflects a deliberate choice from members to dissociate themselves from their party (Köln and Polk 2017, 22). Presenting only absolute numbers, smaller values represent

¹⁰Unfortunately, it is impossible to consider party members that voice their dissatisfaction through abstention, nor to examine the extent of disloyalty within the same ideological block, as the surveys did not include questions related to participation nor for which party defecting members voted.

more congruence, and higher values portray more incongruence.

Satisfaction with intra-party functioning is a composite index based on members' perceptions of the party's internal functioning. We calculate the mean responses across eight indicators ranging from 1 (negative) to 4 (positive) evaluations of IPF and preserve the original scale (see Table A4). This measure captures the phenomenon rather well because it relies on a complex index comprising evaluations of the leadership, material benefits, member's role and the functioning of the organization, namely formal rules and pluralism (see van Haute 2015).

In turn, motivations build on the general incentives model. First, we conduct a principal component analysis (PCA) of the eight surveyed reasons for joining the party. Findings unpack two dimensions: one related to instrumental and the other clearly linked to ideological motivations (Table A5). Interesting but not surprisingly, most items load positively on the instrumental dimension. This is informed by the literature: there are different and mixed incentives for members to join parties (Kitschelt 1989; Norris 1995; Weber 2020) and even instrumentally driven members tend to express some degree of ideological motivations because these are the most socially desirable reasons for party activism (Bruter and Harrison 2009; Webb and Bale 2023; Rehmert 2022; Bolin, Backlund, and Jungar 2023). Moreover, instrumental motivations might be underestimated because members tend to withhold material ambitions due to social norms that discourage self-promotion. A second reason might be related to the fact that even grassroots members in Portuguese parties present a very 'elitist' profile (Table A1) which can affect the way instrumental incentives drive party members' behavior.

Second, we select the items that clearly load on a single dimension and are above the conventional 0.35 threshold. This leads to the removal of two items that load on both dimensions ('get to know politically active people' and 'influence the selection of candidates'). Third, we re-run the PCA without these items and extract the factor scores

as two separate variables. Widely utilized in the sociopsychological literature (DiStefano, Zhu, and Mindrila 2009), factor scores have more recently also been employed in regression models within party membership research (e.g. Bruter and Harrison 2009; Whiteley 2009; Hooghe and Kern 2015; Rehmert 2022). We believe that this measure is appropriate because it considers the varying weights (loadings) of each item in contributing to a specific dimension. Instrumental motivations range between -1.26 and 4.74 and ideological motivations between -4.19 and 1.36 (Table A2).¹¹

Finally, party activism is a composite index of members’ degree of participation in nine types of party activities (1=never; 5=frequently). We calculate the mean responses across all items and preserve the original scale. This measure better captures activism than the traditional operationalization through the mean number of hours devoted to party activities (e.g. Polk and Kölln 2018) since the latter is grounded on the assumption that members accurately report the time invested to the party. Moreover, it differs from de Vet and colleagues’ (2019) factor score of campaign, selection and policy activities. We include not only traditional functions (such as campaigning and recruitment), but also less demanding and ‘professional’ practices (see Table A6). This is an added value given the recent transformations of party activism in light of the increasing use of new ICT and the hybridization of party organizations (Scarrow 2014).

The moderator variable is strategic considerations. As we do not have the conventional variables associated with strategic voting, we adopt the approach of de Vet, Poletti, and Wauters (2019) and rely on the party’s past electoral results (see also Cox 1997). Specifically, we measure strategic considerations as the party’s vote share in the respective member’s electoral district in the general elections preceding defection. Lower values are expected to increase the impact of incentive structure on disloyalty.

¹¹Orthogonality prevents the two motivations from being correlated, thus remaining clearly distinct (Table A3). As part of robustness checks, we also estimate alternative models that capture motivations using different measures (see the Online Appendix).

We acknowledge that this measure captures more than just strategic considerations, which is a limitation. Nonetheless, we believe that this is not a major problem since the variable serves as a moderator.

The model controls for several competing explanations besides strategic considerations: party seniority (years of membership), age, gender, education (1=up to nine years of schooling; 5=master’s/PhD), and religious practice (1=hardly ever/never; 4=every week). Details are available in the [Online Appendix](#).

5 Results and discussion

5.1 Descriptive analysis

Figure 1 compares voting defection behavior across political parties. Around 5 percent of party members cast a defecting vote in the election preceding the survey. Disloyalty is not only below that in plurality systems like the UK, adding further evidence of PR’s fewer incentives to defect, but also less than in proportional systems such as Sweden (see Polk and Kölln 2018; de Vet, Poletti, and Wauters 2019). This highlights the effectiveness of Portugal’s proportional system in limiting member defection. However, vote-switching is not insignificant. This may have implications for political representation, namely the members’ ‘ambassador’ role and how affiliates can stabilize the party’s electoral basis and the linkage with civil society.

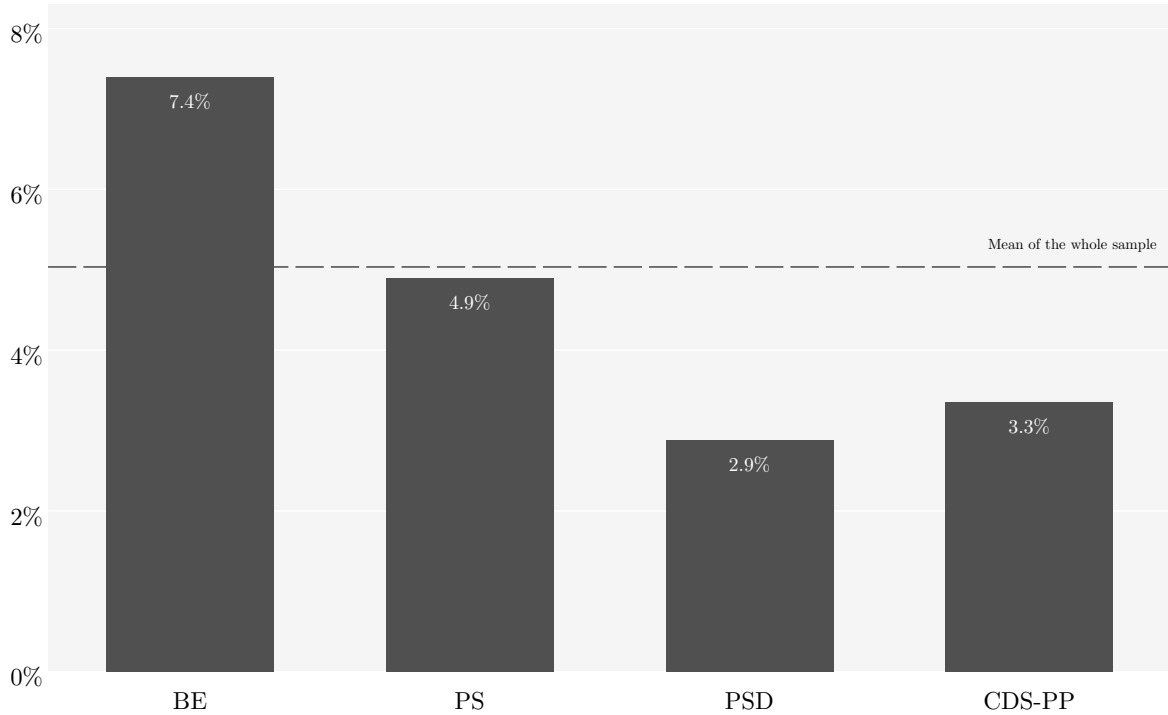
Left-wing parties display higher levels of disloyalty when compared to their rightist counterparts. The BE – the only anti-government party in the analysis – garners the most disloyal members: more than triple that of the Social Democrats. It subscribes to studies finding that mainstream parties have lower shares of defection (de Vet, Poletti, and Wauters 2019). Despite the limitation of comparing rank-and-file with delegates,

this is a relevant finding since the PSD has long been considered the most factionalized party in Portugal (Jalali 2007). The Left Bloc’s defection rates seem to be related to the importance of factionalism for the genetic party model and the impact of leadership on internal dynamics, for example by shaping flexible and unstable internal coalitions. Indeed, scholars suggest that the higher the level (and visibility) of factionalism, the greater the probability of defection (e.g. Cross and Katz 2013, 171-172; Close and Gherghina 2019). The BE confirms this expectation, as it was born as a ‘marriage’ of three political forces and has embraced a collegial leadership style and a factionalized functioning (Lourenço, Conceição, and Jalali 2023). The Left Bloc has experienced several internal splits over time. A number of party elite members left to form new parties or coalitions, such as *Livre* (Free), *Tempo de Avançar* (Time to Advance), MAS (Socialist Alternative Movement), and AGIR (a coalition between MAS and the Portuguese Labor Party). This also speaks to anecdotal evidence of newly created parties, indicating that high levels of personalization and the widespread use of (plebiscitary) digital tools foster disloyalty (see Barberà et al. 2021).

5.2 Multivariate analyses

Table 2 shows the results from binomial logistic regressions, and Figure 3 plots the predicted probabilities of electoral disloyalty by party. The second hypothesis is confirmed, the third and fourth hypotheses are partially confirmed, but the first is rejected. The key findings hold robust to covariates and remain significant when other statistical techniques (Table A7) are performed. Moreover, despite empirical research suggesting connections between the explanatory variables (e.g. Whiteley and Seyd 2002), they do not seem to confound each other, as the correlation between them is very weak (Table A3) and the main results are substantively similar if each factor is tested separately (Tables A8-A12).

Figure 1: Vote defection, by party (%)



Dissatisfaction with IPF increases the likelihood of members ‘sabotaging’ their party (H2). This is the strongest predictor of defection (Figure A1). The probability of defecting increases by 3.1 percentage points when satisfaction with IPF decreases by one unit (Table A17). It subscribes to Polk and Kölln (2018) who find that leadership dissatisfaction pressures party members to be disloyal. However, its impact is primarily evident for leftist parties (Table 2 and Figures A2-A5). A relevant proportion of party affiliates consider party organizations as overly hierarchical and not providing sufficient opportunities for rank-and-file to influence internal decision-making. This finding reflects the perceived marginalization of party members (Whiteley 2011; van Biezen and Poguntke 2014), the concentration of powers in the upper-level elite (van Biezen 2003), and dissatisfaction with IPF in Portugal (Sanches et al. 2018).

In the same vein, participation in party activities may lead to higher levels of

member-party legitimacy and commitment (H4). Results suggest that higher levels of party activism are likely to foster members' loyalty. In other words, those affiliates more involved in party activities are less prone to vote for a different party, suggesting the strict link between participation and the political integration of party supporters. Yet it fails to reach conventional thresholds of statistical significance at the party-level.

The **third hypothesis** posits that stronger instrumental incentives and weaker ideological incentives lead members to cast a defecting vote, especially if their party's past vote share (strategic considerations) is low. We find support for H3a regarding the BE, indicating that instrumentally driven members are more disloyal. This could be linked to the importance of the party's genetic model and its specific trajectory over the past decade, speaking to the factionalist nature of the Left Bloc (Lourenço, Conceição, and Jalali 2023) and its internal divisions resulting from the party's alliance strategy, which excluded government participation. These findings also point to a pragmatic shift in the party's grassroots, specifically a moderation of party members and a strengthening of instrumental incentives compared to ideological motivations. Worth emphasizing is the departure of more radical members with the establishment of a new radical force (MAS) and two new left-libertarian parties (PAN and Livre). On the other hand, the results further suggest that H3a is supported for CDS-PP. This is expected due to the party's pragmatic stance and willingness to access and distribute state resources (Jalali 2007), reflecting the importance of attaining public office for smaller parties (Poertner 2023).

Table 2: Determinants of party members' voting defection behavior

	BE	PS	PSD	CDS-PP	Whole sample		
Ideological incongruence	0.027 (0.279)	-0.017 (0.106)	-0.051 (0.536)	0.258 (0.333)	-0.006 (0.090)	0.001 (0.092)	-0.006 (0.090)
Satisfaction with IPF	-1.950*** (0.748)	-0.555* (0.329)	1.062 (1.657)	-0.678 (0.777)	-0.804*** (0.263)	-0.778*** (0.263)	-0.803*** (0.263)
Instrumental motivations	0.773** (0.330)	-0.112 (0.152)	-0.608 (0.949)	0.498* (0.297)	0.099 (0.114)	0.761*** (0.251)	0.099 (0.114)
Ideological motivations	-0.456 (0.307)	-0.133 (0.155)	-0.119 (0.726)	-0.122 (0.414)	-0.161 (0.121)	-0.155 (0.122)	-0.203 (0.241)
Instrumental motivations × Strategic considerations						-0.030*** (0.011)	
Ideological motivations × Strategic considerations							0.002 (0.010)
Party activism	-0.124 (0.359)	-0.204 (0.160)	-0.131 (0.859)	0.050 (0.454)	-0.209* (0.125)	-0.259** (0.128)	-0.208* (0.125)
Strategic considerations	0.439 (0.269)	-0.040 (0.039)	-0.099 (0.092)	-0.104 (0.165)	-0.013 (0.011)	-0.009 (0.011)	-0.013 (0.011)
Seniority	-0.145* (0.078)	-0.046** (0.020)	-0.051 (0.071)	-0.146 (0.099)	-0.058*** (0.018)	-0.060*** (0.018)	-0.058*** (0.018)
Age	-0.041 (0.028)	-0.024* (0.014)	0.017 (0.068)	-0.056 (0.038)	-0.026** (0.011)	-0.027** (0.011)	-0.025** (0.011)
Female	-0.376 (0.679)	-0.616 (0.403)	0.000 (0.000)	-0.994 (1.159)	-0.551* (0.312)	-0.524* (0.313)	-0.550* (0.312)
Education	-0.254 (0.298)	-0.113 (0.179)	0.231 (1.053)	-0.683 (0.520)	-0.235* (0.141)	-0.237* (0.140)	-0.236* (0.141)
Religious practice	-0.632 (0.657)	-0.094 (0.181)	-0.262 (0.729)	-0.305 (0.389)	-0.244* (0.143)	-0.270* (0.144)	-0.243* (0.143)
Constant	4.545 (3.026)	2.412 (1.811)	-3.588 (8.502)	5.435 (4.329)	2.918*** (1.108)	3.007*** (1.109)	2.905*** (1.110)
Log-likelihood	-45.145	-179.104	-14.198	-30.744	-286.826	-282.762	-286.806
AIC	114.291	382.209	50.395	85.488	597.652	591.524	599.612
BIC	157.247	440.798	87.923	130.857	663.764	663.145	671.234
N	265	975	224	324	1825	1825	1825

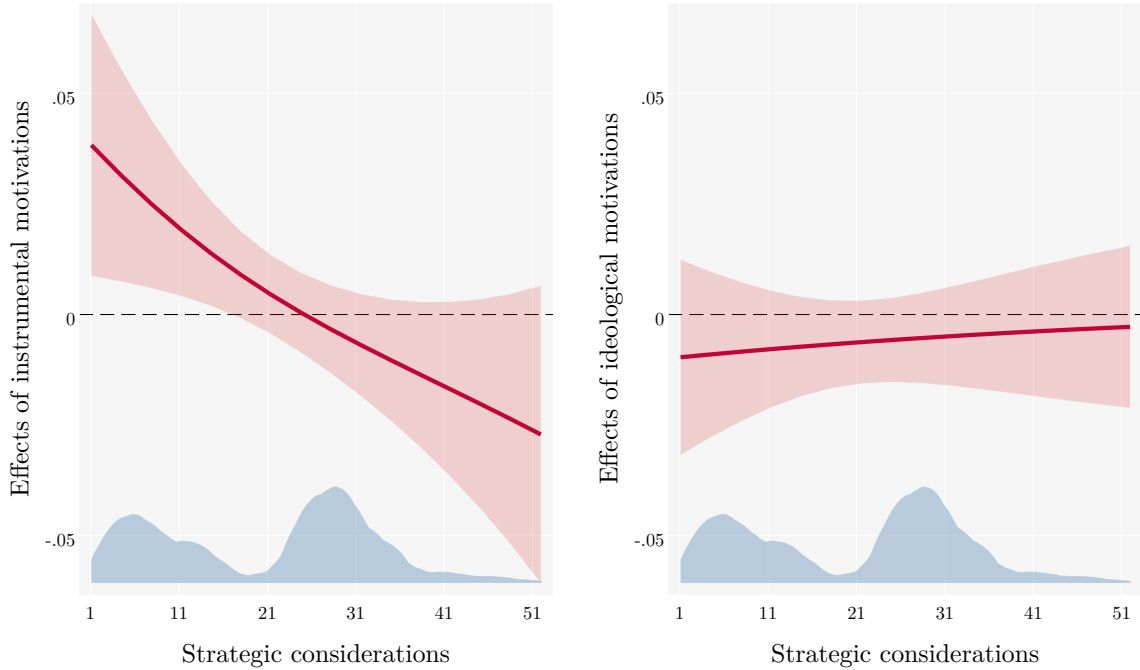
Estimated coefficients. Standard errors in parentheses.

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Delving deeper in this regard, Figure 2 displays the average effects of motivations on electoral disloyalty across a range of observed values of strategic considerations. It depicts the moderating coefficients presented in models 6 and 7 (whole sample). Results

support [H3c](#) by demonstrating that an increase of one unit in instrumental incentives fosters members’ defection when their party’s past vote share is low. This implies that members are more prone to vote for another party at time t when their instrumental motivations are strong and if their party scored lower in the previous election (time $t - 1$). Figure [2](#) also suggests that instrumental benefits do not influence members’ voting defection when strategic considerations are higher. In sum, the effect of these motivations is conditional upon the moderator variable.^{[12](#)}

Figure 2: Average effects of motivations on vote defection at different levels of strategic considerations (95% CIs)



Surprisingly, our findings do not support the expectations regarding ideology. Portuguese ‘defectors’ are seemingly not driven by a perceived ideological distance from

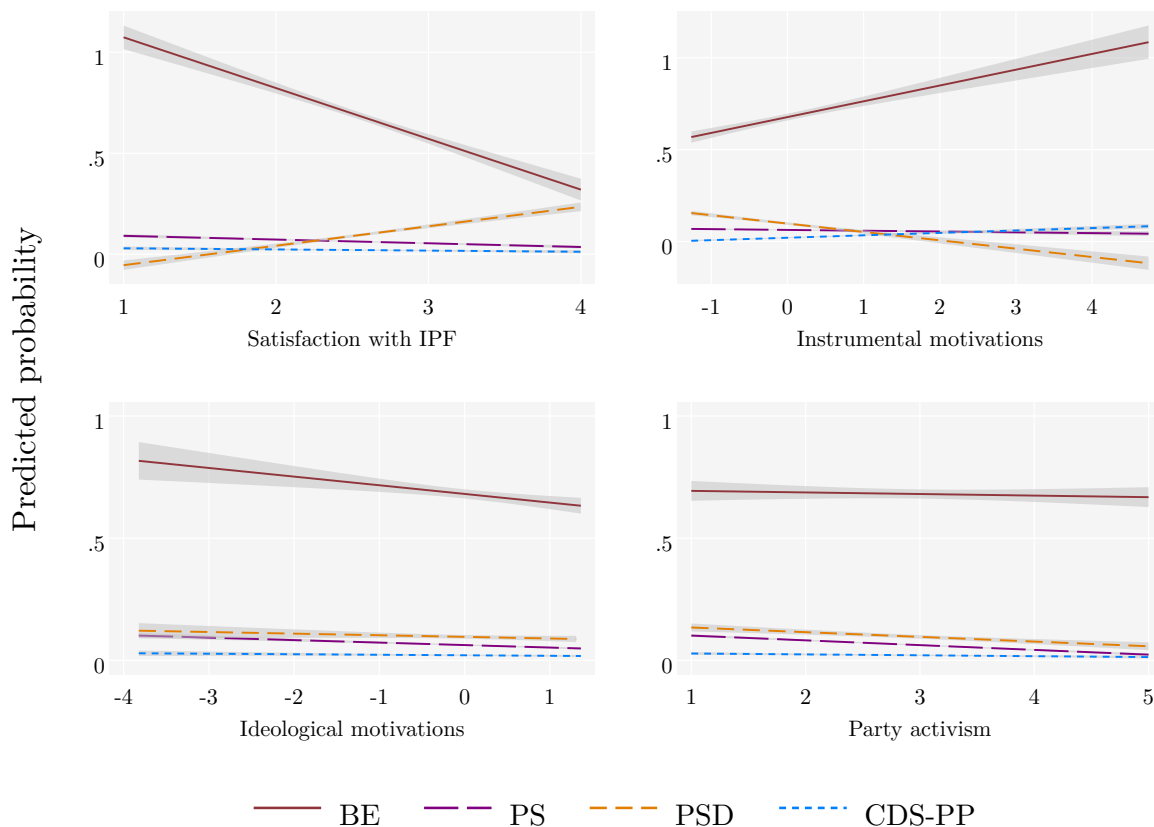
¹²We conduct several additional analyses to assess the robustness of the third hypothesis (Tables [A13-A16](#)). The findings confirm the relationship we observed. However, the coefficient for CDS-PP fails to reach statistical significance ($p=0.126$) in Table [A16](#), mirroring Table [A12](#). Therefore, the results for that party should be interpreted with greater caution.

their party or by ideological incentives. This may be a consequence of the foundations of the Portuguese party system and the low importance of cleavage politics in this third-wave democracy. Unlike other countries, in the aftermath of the Portuguese democratic transition, parties emerged to run for elections even before they had firm ideological roots (Jalali 2007). Ever since, the ideological position of such parties has been quite unchanged (Lisi 2022, 135). In a context characterized by electoral-professional parties, partisan and ideological identities are blurred, even within the parties, as they are more associated to short-term factors than to structural cleavages or long-term societal alignments. Moreover, most parties show flexible and heterogeneous bases of electoral support and voters depend mostly on short-term factors rather than strong ideological predispositions.

Figure 3 plots the predicted probabilities of electoral disloyalty by party. The Left Bloc reveals the highest estimated variance for almost every correlate. Results illustrate how the decision of left-wing members to vote for a different party is strictly associated with the evaluation of intra-party functioning. The same happens with CDS-PP, although statistical significance is not achieved. This phenomenon may be related to the different space members have in right-wing parties, which generally give greater relevance to party leadership. Internal practices of mobilization are not a key concern in Portuguese rightist parties. Notwithstanding, this pattern requires further inquiry.

Lastly, in line with extant research, disloyal party members are newcomers, younger, male, educated, and less religious practitioners (cf. Webb, Bale, and Poletti 2017; de Vet, Poletti, and Wauters 2019).

Figure 3: Predicted probabilities of vote defection by political party (95% CIs)



6 Concluding remarks

This article investigates party members' electoral disloyalty. We test the validity of existing explanations across parties in a scenario that provides very few incentives for members' vote-switching. Furthermore, we examine the extent to which theories of party membership add knowledge about voting defection behavior. In fact, most members vote for their party, confirming the lack of conditions that favor (massive) voting betrayal. Nevertheless, although members are understood to be the party's most loyal voters, their vote is not guaranteed.

Results furnish evidence that members' perceptions regarding intra-party functioning and participation in party activities are relevant factors of this 'unusual' behavior of

party adherents. The fact that satisfaction with IPF is more relevant for leftist parties seems to indicate that more open party membership (as displayed in the BE and PS) facilitates electoral disloyalty. The results also suggest that instrumental motivations have a distinct impact across different parties. We find that the instrumental motivation hypothesis is seemingly important for the BE and CDS-PP, indicating that material incentives play a greater role in smaller parties. Indeed, the surveyed evidence shows that material incentives foster vote-switching if members also take strategic considerations into account.

The rejection of the expectations regarding ideologically is also relevant because it helps qualify existing research and sheds light on the importance of the political context, in particular the characteristics of party systems. On the one hand, the Portuguese context is characterized by a relatively low level of polarization and a ‘centrist’ consensus on redistributive and welfare policies. On the other hand, party mobilization is restricted to a tiny proportion of activists who display homogeneous traits and similar attitudes towards participatory incentives. The Portuguese case suggests that defection might be associated with the inertia of party organizations and their incapacity to foster innovation in intra-party dynamics. Whether this is related to the success of new parties in 2019 (and 2022) remains to be examined. Future investigation should analyze how these contextual features explain vote defection and whether our findings can be exported to other representative democracies.

Findings have important implications for political representation. Disloyalty limits the ability of parties to strengthen partisan attachments and to consolidate their electoral basis. It may also constrain party leadership by limiting decision-making and party flexibility, especially when attempting to win votes at the center. This work also contributes to the understanding of party system change, party competition, and the decline in party membership rates since defection may endanger the continuity of

membership or disengagement from politics *tout court*.

However, this article also presents some shortcomings. The first is the low response rate. Although this is a common limitation in party membership research (van Haute and Gauja 2015; Rehmert 2022), different methodological approaches or research designs may obtain better results, improving the representativeness of the overall samples. The second is the impossibility to systematically compare rank-and-file members *vis-à-vis* delegates from the same party. As Norris (1995, 34) emphasizes, distinguishing between types of members is a *sine qua non* condition to provide an empirically convincing test of party membership. The two aspects are, to a great extent, linked to each other and call attention to the need to overcome the reluctance of party officials to this type of research. Findings can also be improved with more reliable measures of electoral disloyalty, other than vote recall. While this is a difficult issue to resolve, using panel data can help reduce potential measurement errors. Finally, there is a methodological limitation in that the research design is cross-sectional, and therefore cannot ultimately determine the causal relationship between the variables (see Wagner 2017). Again, panel data and experimental designs may overcome this shortcoming.

More work is needed to understand the conditions that can lead to activists' vote defection, particularly disloyalty arising from factionalism – internal conflicts within party elites. Another avenue is to refine our model by including other potentially relevant variables, such as party leaders' government strategy, not only in terms of cooperation/conflict with other political forces but also in terms of institutional status and political integration. That is, whether a party is available to join government coalitions or prefers to adopt an anti-government orientation and remain in opposition, which is especially relevant for populist or new parties.

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Until another party do us part? Party members’ electoral disloyalty in Portugal

Online Appendix

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A Description of the data

The survey is based on the core questionnaire of the MAPP (**Members and Activists of Political Parties**) research network. Table **A1** reports the social profile of Portuguese party members, which is more male, middle-aged, educated, full-time employed, less religious practitioners, and likely non-member of trade unions. Table **A2** displays the summary statistics and Table **A3** the correlation matrix.

Table A1: Social profile of Portuguese party members (%)

		BE	PS	PSD	CDS-PP	Total
Gender	Male	68.86	75.35	82.75	72.73	74.21
	Female	31.14	24.65	17.25	27.27	25.79
Age	≤ 34	26.05	16.94	25.64	14.03	19.65
	35-59	53.29	54.38	59.29	74.21	57.84
	≥ 60	20.66	28.68	15.06	11.76	22.51
Education	Up to nine years	10.39	9.40	2.88	2.81	7.87
	High school	23.04	26.03	16.99	20.14	23.36
	BA	39.76	44.30	57.05	52.46	45.92
	Master's or PhD	26.81	20.28	23.08	24.59	22.85
Professional status	Unemployed	15.06	7.69	3.33	5.10	8.55
	Permanent disability	0.48	0.31	0.00	0.24	0.30
	Retired	16.48	22.00	8.33	5.83	16.61
	Student	6.50	3.31	3.00	3.16	4.01
	Domestic	0.16	0.15	0.67	0.24	0.23
	Liberal	6.50	10.85	23.67	27.43	13.85
	Part-time	2.69	0.85	1.00	2.43	1.55
	Full-time	52.14	54.85	60.00	55.58	54.90
Religious practice	Hardly ever or never	85.31	48.78	19.17	13.36	48.68
	A few times per year	10.19	34.97	46.01	36.64	30.50
	A few times per month	1.65	8.17	17.25	21.89	9.78
	Every week	2.85	8.09	17.57	28.11	11.05
Trade union	Not member	78.36	74.35	77.96	91.29	78.36
	Member	21.64	25.65	22.04	8.71	21.64

Table A2: Summary statistics

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	St. Deviation
Vote defection	2741	0.00	1.00	0.05	0.22
Ideological incongruence	2152	0.00	9.00	1.38	1.43
Satisfaction with IPF	2497	1.00	4.00	2.58	0.53
Instrumental motivations	2611	-1.26	4.74	6.18e-17	1.00
Ideological motivations	2611	-4.19	1.36	-1.07e-16	1.00
Party activism	2565	1.00	5.00	2.98	1.06
Strategic considerations	2754	1.09	51.99	21.13	12.03
Seniority	2650	0.00	54.00	13.55	11.86
Age	2768	15.00	86.00	47.43	13.77
Female	2768	0.00	1.00	0.26	0.44
Education	2744	1.00	5.00	3.81	0.94
Religious practice	2761	1.00	4.00	1.83	1.00

Table A3: Correlation matrix

	Ideological incongruence	Satisfaction with IPF	Instrumental motivations	Ideological motivations	Party activism	Strategic consid.	Seniority	Age	Female	Education	Religious practice
Ideological incongruence	1										
Satisfaction with IPF	-0.32***	1									
Instrumental motivations	-0.10***	-0.07***	1								
Ideological motivations	0.04**	0.03	0	1							
Party activism	-0.02	0.18***	0.08***	0.25***	1						
Strategic considerations	0.14***	-0.23***	0.14***	-0.07***	0.06***	1					
Seniority	0.15***	-0.09***	-0.12***	-0.01	0.09***	0.30***	1				
Age	0.06***	-0.07***	-0.19***	-0.09***	-0.10***	0.08***	0.55***	1			
Female	-0.06***	0.04**	0.04**	0.00	0.01	-0.09***	-0.14***	-0.12***	1		
Education	0.02	-0.01	-0.07***	0.15***	0.02	-0.01	-0.10***	-0.24***	0.13***	1	
Religious practice	-0.07***	0.04*	0.12***	-0.08***	0.12***	0.16***	0.06***	0.05***	0.02	0.00	1

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

B Operationalization of the variables

B.1 Satisfaction with intra-party functioning

The eight surveyed perceptions of the quality of the party functioning are measured based on members' agreement with the following statements using a four-point scale: (1) 'formal rules are irrelevant to the functioning of the party;' (2) 'the functioning of the party is influenced by internal divisions;' (3) 'the party leader is not autonomous enough;' (4) 'members' internal participation depends on potential benefits;' (5) 'internal democracy should be increased;' (6) 'party structures inhibit internal pluralism;' (7) 'members do not influence party policies;' and (8) 'leaders do not care about members' opinions. Satisfaction with IPF is calculated as the mean of respondents' answers to the indicators in Table A4 (1=totally agree; 4=totally disagree), while maintaining the original scale. The composite variable ranges between 1 (negative evaluations of IPF) and 4 (positive evaluations). Details are available in Table A2.

Table A4: Composite index of satisfaction with IPF

	Correlation of item corrected	Alpha if item deleted
Formal rules are irrelevant to the party's functioning	0.042	0.785
Party functioning is influenced by internal divisions	0.421	0.722
Party leader is not autonomous enough	0.285	0.745
Members' participation depends on potential benefit	0.437	0.719
Internal democracy should be increased	0.478	0.711
Party structures inhibit internal pluralism	0.632	0.676
Members do not influence party policies	0.596	0.687
Leaders do not care about members' opinions	0.642	0.675
Cronbach's alpha (α)	0.745	

B.2 Motivations

Respondents are asked about what led them to join the party. They used a five-point scale that captures the weight of each of the following reasons in that decision: (1) ‘getting to know politically active people;’ (2) ‘being politically active;’ (3) ‘helping putting my ideals in practice;’ (4) ‘influencing the selection of candidates;’ (5) ‘making a political career;’ (6) ‘helping the party financially;’ (7) ‘obtaining professional advantage from politics;’ and (8) ‘influence of family context’ (1=not important; 5=very important).

We conduct a factor analysis of the surveyed motivations using principal component extraction and varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization. Results unpack two latent dimensions. i.e. two components with eigenvalues above 1. Table A5 shows that the first dimension is associated with instrumental reasons for joining the party, while the second dimension is clearly related to ideological motivations. We select the items that clearly load on one dimension and are above the conventional threshold of 0.35, which are marked in bold in Table A5. Reliability analyses confirm that Cronbach’s alphas are above 0.6 (instrumental motivations: $\alpha=0.613$; ideological motivations: $\alpha=0.642$), which are used to compute mean scores for the robustness check presented in Table A16. As a result, two items that loaded on both dimensions (‘get to know politically active people’ and ‘influence the selection of candidates’) are removed. We then re-run the PCA without these two items and extract the factor scores as two separate variables, which are used in the main models.

Table A5: Principal Component Analysis (PCA) of motivations for joining the party

	Dimensions	
	Instrumental	Ideological
Get to know politically active people	0.418	0.391
Be politically active	0.122	0.795
Help putting my ideals in practice	-0.124	0.818
Influence the selection of candidates	0.392	0.455
Make a political career	0.732	0.235
Help the party financially	0.517	0.195
Obtain professional advantage of politics	0.756	-0.111
Influence of family context	0.601	-0.017
Eigenvalue	2.095	1.766
Proportion of variance explained	0.262	0.221
Cronbach's alpha of selected items (α)	0.613	0.642
N	2611	

Rotation: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Selected items are marked in bold.

B.3 Party activism

Nine political activities are surveyed: (1) ‘helping organize local party’; (2) helping organize party gatherings’; (3) ‘helping organize meetings between the party and the community’; (4) ‘donation of money (besides membership fees)’; (5) ‘meeting other party members to discuss politics’; (6) ‘meeting other party members for activities other than politics’; (7) ‘meeting people from outside the party to discuss politics’; (8) ‘distributing propaganda material during campaigns’; and (9) ‘conducting other activities outside the campaign period’. We calculate party activism by the mean of the respondents’ answers to their degree of participation in such political activities in a five-point scale (1=never; 5=frequently). The original scale is retained, meaning that the composite variable ranges from 1 (lower activism) to 5 (higher activism) (see Table A2).

Table A6: Composite index of activism

	Correlation of item corrected	Alpha if item deleted
Helping in local meetings of the party	0.779	0.879
Helping in party’s activities	0.799	0.877
Helping in party’s outreach activities	0.822	0.875
Donating money (in addition to fees)	0.406	0.905
Meeting to discuss politics	0.692	0.886
Meeting to conduct non-political activities	0.616	0.892
Meeting with outsiders to discuss politics	0.435	0.904
Distributing propaganda	0.700	0.885
Other campaign activities	0.714	0.884
Cronbach’s alpha (α)	0.899	

C Additional analyses

C.1 Robustness checks

In this section, we perform several additional analyses to assess the robustness of the relationship between the dependent and explanatory variables. We start by testing whether the model holds across different statistical techniques (Table A7). Next, Tables A8-A12 present separate models that include only each predictor (along with the controls).

Furthermore, we explore alternative operationalizations of motivations to verify if the results for the third hypothesis stand. First, we consider the possibility that the absence of correlation between the two motivations, as enforced by orthogonality, might be maximizing variance. To address this concern, Table A13 presents the results obtained from extracting factor scores after rerunning two different PCAs, each incorporating only the items that load on one dimension, as conducted by Bruter and Harrison (2009, 1271). In Table A14, we employ the same method as in the main model but replace varimax with direct oblimin rotation, allowing the factors to be correlated (for previous use of this rotation in party membership research, see, e.g., Heidar 1994). The correlation between dimensions is very weak ($r=0.162$ and $r=0.137$, respectively).

Second, we account for the fact that each reason for joining parties may contribute to different sets of motivations. Following Rehmert (2022), the motivations presented in Table A15 correspond to the factor scores obtained through the original PCA (Table A5), including every item. This means we did not rerun the factor analysis and exclude the two items that also load (though to a lesser extent) on the other dimension.

Third, we replicate the models using unstandardized values. In Table A16, factor scores are replaced with mean scores (i.e., we calculate the mean of respondents' answers to the selected items derived from the PCA). This robustness check captures

instrumental motivations by computing the mean of respondents' answers to the following reasons for joining the party: 'make a political career,' 'help the party financially,' 'obtain professional advantage of politics,' and 'influence of family context' ($\alpha=0.613$). Ideological motivations are represented by the mean score of respondents' answers to the following two items: 'be politically active,' and 'help putting my ideals into practice' ($\alpha=0.642$).

The results from these analyses support the relationship we observed in the main models, though conventional levels of statistical significance are not reached for CDS-PP in Tables A12 and A16 ($p=0.126$ and $p=0.177$, respectively). Consequently, as acknowledged in the manuscript, the results for CDS-PP should be interpreted with greater caution.

Table A7: Determinants of party members' voting defection behavior. Testing the robustness of the theoretical framework with different statistical techniques

	OLS			Logit			Probit		
	(1a)	(1b)	(1c)	(2a)	(2b)	(2c)	(3a)	(3b)	(3c)
Ideological incongruence	-0.001 (0.003)	-0.001 (0.003)	-0.001 (0.003)	-0.006 (0.090)	0.001 (0.092)	-0.006 (0.090)	0.012 (0.041)	0.015 (0.042)	0.012 (0.041)
Satisfaction with IPF	-0.030*** (0.010)	-0.030*** (0.010)	-0.030*** (0.010)	-0.804*** (0.263)	-0.778*** (0.263)	-0.803*** (0.263)	-0.375*** (0.124)	-0.366*** (0.124)	-0.375*** (0.124)
Instrumental motivations	0.006 (0.005)	0.038*** (0.012)	0.006 (0.005)	0.099 (0.114)	0.761*** (0.251)	0.099 (0.114)	0.046 (0.056)	0.381*** (0.129)	0.046 (0.056)
Ideological motivations	-0.007 (0.005)	-0.007 (0.005)	-0.013 (0.011)	-0.161 (0.121)	-0.155 (0.122)	-0.203 (0.241)	-0.085 (0.058)	-0.086 (0.059)	-0.094 (0.121)
Instrumental motivations × Strategic considerations		-0.001*** (0.000)			-0.030*** (0.011)			-0.015*** (0.005)	
Ideological motivations × Strategic considerations			0.000 (0.000)			0.002 (0.010)			0.000 (0.005)
Party activism	-0.010** (0.005)	-0.011** (0.005)	-0.010** (0.005)	-0.209* (0.125)	-0.259** (0.128)	-0.208* (0.125)	-0.100* (0.058)	-0.121** (0.059)	-0.100* (0.058)
Constant	0.310*** (0.047)	0.317*** (0.047)	0.309*** (0.047)	2.918*** (1.108)	3.007*** (1.109)	2.905*** (1.110)	0.989* (0.527)	1.041** (0.530)	0.986* (0.528)
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
F-statistic	6.16	6.48	5.68						
Adjusted/Pseudo R ²	0.030	0.035	0.030	0.128	0.142	0.128	0.122	0.137	0.122
N	1825	1825	1825	1825	1825	1825	1825	1825	1825

OLS: adjusted R². Logit and probit: Nagelkerke R².

Coefficients and estimated coefficients.

Standard errors in parenthesis. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table A8: Determinants of party members' voting defection. Testing each factor separately (whole sample)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Ideological incongruence	0.046 (0.081)						
Satisfaction with IPF		-0.694*** (0.191)					
Instrumental motivations			0.061 (0.089)			0.436*** (0.162)	
Ideological motivations				-0.168* (0.092)			-0.231 (0.170)
Instrumental motivations × Strategic considerations						-0.020*** (0.008)	
Ideological motivations × Strategic considerations							0.003 (0.008)
Party activism					-0.246*** (0.092)		
Constant	-0.084 (0.726)	2.138*** (0.789)	0.155 (0.591)	0.189 (0.586)	0.920 (0.639)	0.214 (0.593)	0.184 (0.587)
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Log-likelihood	-345.590	-434.757	-452.957	-451.586	-448.747	-449.445	-451.490
AIC	707.180	885.513	921.914	919.171	913.494	916.891	920.980
BIC	752.254	931.729	968.512	965.770	959.928	969.315	973.403
N	2068	2385	2502	2502	2451	2502	2502

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table A9: Determinants of BE members' voting defection. Testing each factor separately

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Ideological incongruence	0.083 (0.216)				
Satisfaction with IPF		-0.645* (0.370)			
Instrumental motivations			0.358** (0.169)		
Ideological motivations				-0.383** (0.172)	
Party activism					-0.243 (0.163)
Constant	0.498 (1.877)	2.723* (1.601)	-0.004 (1.221)	0.431 (1.231)	0.939 (1.304)
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Log-likelihood	-62.576	-122.406	-128.806	-128.542	-129.224
AIC	141.152	260.812	273.612	273.084	274.447
BIC	171.273	295.306	308.557	308.029	309.296
N	319	551	583	583	576

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table A10: Determinants of PS members' voting defection. Testing each factor separately

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Ideological incongruence	0.027 (0.097)				
Satisfaction with IPF		-0.597** (0.259)			
Instrumental motivations			-0.088 (0.130)		
Ideological motivations				-0.096 (0.130)	
Party activism					-0.212 (0.129)
Constant	-0.356 (1.457)	1.764 (1.492)	0.229 (1.324)	0.082 (1.316)	0.718 (1.351)
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Log-likelihood	-197.067	-238.359	-233.139	-233.107	-240.024
AIC	410.134	492.717	482.278	482.215	496.049
BIC	449.885	533.603	523.125	523.061	537.064
N	1063	1225	1219	1219	1245

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table A11: Determinants of PSD members' voting defection. Testing each factor separately

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Ideological incongruence	-0.512 (0.461)				
Satisfaction with IPF		-0.875 (0.922)			
Instrumental motivations			-0.757 (0.694)		
Ideological motivations				-0.419 (0.472)	
Party activism					-0.133 (0.553)
Constant	-3.345 (4.558)	4.072 (4.468)	-3.311 (4.821)	-3.189 (4.719)	2.454 (4.967)
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Log-likelihood	-22.763	-23.529	-22.781	-23.118	-24.188
AIC	59.527	61.058	59.562	60.237	62.375
BIC	83.920	85.334	84.156	84.831	86.856
N	241	237	248	248	244

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table A12: Determinants of CDS-PP members' voting defection. Testing each factor separately

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Ideological incongruence	0.183 (0.254)				
Satisfaction with IPF		-0.782 (0.747)			
Instrumental motivations			0.306 (0.227)		
Ideological motivations				0.144 (0.313)	
Party activism					-0.020 (0.374)
Constant	2.767 (2.613)	6.750* (3.801)	2.480 (2.657)	3.000 (2.610)	2.993 (3.304)
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Log-likelihood	-47.274	-32.478	-47.062	-47.811	-37.278
AIC	110.548	80.956	110.125	111.623	90.557
BIC	142.500	111.300	142.254	143.752	121.188
N	401	328	410	410	340

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table A13: Testing the model with a different operationalization of motivations
(extraction of the factor scores after re-running the PCA separately for each
dimension not to force orthogonality)

	BE	PS	PSD	CDS-PP	Whole sample		
Ideological incongruence	0.038 (0.282)	-0.020 (0.106)	-0.035 (0.538)	0.258 (0.331)	-0.008 (0.090)	-0.001 (0.092)	-0.008 (0.090)
Satisfaction with IPF	-1.951*** (0.748)	-0.557* (0.329)	1.016 (1.632)	-0.687 (0.774)	-0.810*** (0.263)	-0.786*** (0.263)	-0.808*** (0.263)
Instrumental motivations	0.818** (0.340)	-0.117 (0.155)	-0.598 (0.921)	0.532* (0.308)	0.104 (0.117)	0.749*** (0.253)	0.103 (0.117)
Ideological motivations	-0.602* (0.327)	-0.082 (0.164)	0.337 (0.805)	-0.265 (0.426)	-0.158 (0.127)	-0.149 (0.128)	-0.205 (0.247)
Instrumental motivations × Strategic considerations						-0.029*** (0.011)	
Ideological motivations × Strategic considerations							0.002 (0.010)
Party activism	-0.079 (0.363)	-0.216 (0.160)	-0.247 (0.844)	0.089 (0.457)	-0.214* (0.125)	-0.263** (0.128)	-0.213* (0.125)
Constant	4.638 (3.020)	2.497 (1.808)	-3.308 (8.582)	5.476 (4.326)	2.978*** (1.105)	3.074*** (1.106)	2.964*** (1.108)
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Log-likelihood	-45.125	-179.235	-14.112	-30.627	-287.072	-283.252	-287.047
AIC	114.250	382.469	50.224	85.254	598.144	592.504	600.094
BIC	157.207	441.059	87.752	130.623	664.256	664.125	671.716
N	265	975	224	324	1825	1825	1825

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table A14: Testing the model with a different operationalization of motivations (replacing varimax with direct oblimin rotation to allow the factors to be correlated)

	BE	PS	PSD	CDS-PP	Whole sample		
Ideological incongruence	0.027 (0.279)	-0.017 (0.106)	-0.051 (0.536)	0.258 (0.333)	-0.006 (0.090)	0.001 (0.092)	-0.006 (0.090)
Satisfaction with IPF	-1.950*** (0.748)	-0.555* (0.329)	1.062 (1.657)	-0.678 (0.777)	-0.804*** (0.263)	-0.780*** (0.263)	-0.804*** (0.263)
Instrumental motivations	0.807** (0.332)	-0.105 (0.154)	-0.605 (0.951)	0.510* (0.300)	0.110 (0.115)	0.765*** (0.251)	0.110 (0.115)
Ideological motivations	-0.518* (0.310)	-0.125 (0.157)	-0.073 (0.724)	-0.162 (0.417)	-0.170 (0.123)	-0.165 (0.123)	-0.177 (0.243)
Instrumental motivations × Strategic considerations						-0.030*** (0.011)	
Ideological motivations × Strategic considerations							0.000 (0.010)
Party activism	-0.124 (0.359)	-0.204 (0.160)	-0.131 (0.859)	0.050 (0.454)	-0.209* (0.125)	-0.260** (0.128)	-0.208* (0.125)
Constant	4.545 (3.026)	2.412 (1.811)	-3.588 (8.502)	5.435 (4.329)	2.918*** (1.108)	3.022*** (1.109)	2.915*** (1.110)
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Log-likelihood	-45.145	-179.104	-14.198	-30.744	-286.826	-282.832	-286.825
AIC	114.291	382.209	50.395	85.488	597.652	591.663	599.651
BIC	157.247	440.798	87.923	130.857	663.764	663.285	671.272
N	265	975	224	324	1825	1825	1825

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table A15: Testing the model with a different operationalization of motivations
(factor score extraction including every item in each dimension)

	BE	PS	PSD	CDS-PP	Whole sample		
Ideological incongruence	0.026 (0.279)	-0.017 (0.105)	-0.076 (0.547)	0.262 (0.335)	-0.006 (0.090)	0.001 (0.092)	-0.006 (0.090)
Satisfaction with IPF	-1.934** (0.757)	-0.559* (0.329)	1.061 (1.680)	-0.665 (0.777)	-0.802*** (0.264)	-0.771*** (0.263)	-0.800*** (0.263)
Instrumental motivations	0.793** (0.330)	-0.071 (0.152)	-0.737 (0.911)	0.493* (0.295)	0.124 (0.115)	0.783*** (0.253)	0.125 (0.115)
Ideological motivations	-0.436 (0.298)	-0.082 (0.156)	-0.332 (0.771)	-0.089 (0.424)	-0.129 (0.122)	-0.128 (0.123)	-0.183 (0.244)
Instrumental motivations × Strategic considerations						-0.030*** (0.011)	
Ideological motivations × Strategic considerations							0.003 (0.010)
Party activism	-0.113 (0.354)	-0.215 (0.159)	-0.059 (0.875)	0.046 (0.460)	-0.217* (0.125)	-0.268** (0.128)	-0.216* (0.125)
Constant	4.419 (3.054)	2.431 (1.813)	-3.903 (8.646)	5.441 (4.332)	2.922*** (1.108)	3.018*** (1.109)	2.905*** (1.111)
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Log-likelihood	-45.050	-179.349	-13.999	-30.780	-286.717	-282.675	-286.685
AIC	114.099	382.698	49.998	85.559	597.435	591.351	599.370
BIC	157.011	441.214	87.477	130.928	663.494	662.915	670.935
N	264	969	223	324	1817	1817	1817

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table A16: Testing the robustness of the model with a different operationalization of motivations (mean scores of each subscale)

	BE	PS	PSD	CDS-PP	Whole sample		
Ideological incongruence	0.014 (0.267)	-0.020 (0.103)	-0.035 (0.544)	0.232 (0.329)	-0.008 (0.089)	-0.006 (0.090)	-0.008 (0.089)
Satisfaction with IPF	-1.870*** (0.685)	-0.554* (0.321)	1.064 (1.687)	-0.695 (0.773)	-0.809*** (0.258)	-0.805*** (0.257)	-0.807*** (0.258)
Instrumental motivations	0.738* (0.448)	-0.139 (0.223)	-1.384 (1.468)	0.692 (0.452)	0.096 (0.169)	0.760** (0.341)	0.095 (0.169)
Ideological motivations	-0.512 (0.384)	-0.085 (0.198)	0.254 (0.918)	-0.279 (0.515)	-0.138 (0.153)	-0.138 (0.153)	-0.172 (0.295)
Instrumental motivations × Strategic considerations						-0.031** (0.014)	
Ideological motivations × Strategic considerations							0.002 (0.012)
Party activism	-0.117 (0.348)	-0.206 (0.155)	-0.188 (0.856)	0.084 (0.460)	-0.224* (0.123)	-0.254** (0.125)	-0.223* (0.123)
Constant	5.552* (3.021)	2.844 (1.918)	-2.015 (9.615)	5.525 (4.897)	3.492*** (1.222)	2.380* (1.314)	3.629** (1.579)
Controls	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Log-likelihood	-49.246	-187.090	-13.892	-30.967	-298.283	-296.032	-298.273
AIC	122.491	398.180	49.784	85.934	620.565	618.063	622.547
BIC	165.805	457.073	87.410	131.303	686.925	689.952	694.436
N	273	1000	226	324	1863	1863	1863

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

C.2 Marginal effects

Table A17: Determinants of party members' voting defection behavior. Average Marginal Effects (AMEs) based on Table 2 (model 5, whole sample)

	Av. Marginal Effect (dy/dx)	95% CI	
Ideological incongruence	-0.000 (0.004)	-0.007	0.007
Satisfaction with IPF	-0.031*** (0.011)	-0.052	-0.011
Instrumental motivations	-0.004 (0.004)	-0.005	0.013
Ideological motivations	-0.006 (0.005)	-0.016	0.003
Party activism	-0.008* (0.005)	-0.018	-0.001
Strategic considerations	-0.001 (0.000)	-0.001	0.000
Seniority	-0.002*** (0.001)	-0.004	-0.001
Age	-0.001** (0.000)	-0.002	-0.000
Female	-0.022* (0.012)	-0.046	0.003
Education	-0.009* (0.006)	-0.020	0.002
Religious practice	-0.010* (0.006)	-0.021	0.001
Goodness of fit	0.957		
Nagelkerke R ²	0.128		
N	1825		

Standard errors in parentheses

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Figure A1: Average Adjusted Predictions (AAPs) of party members' electoral disloyalty (whole sample, 95% CIs) by:

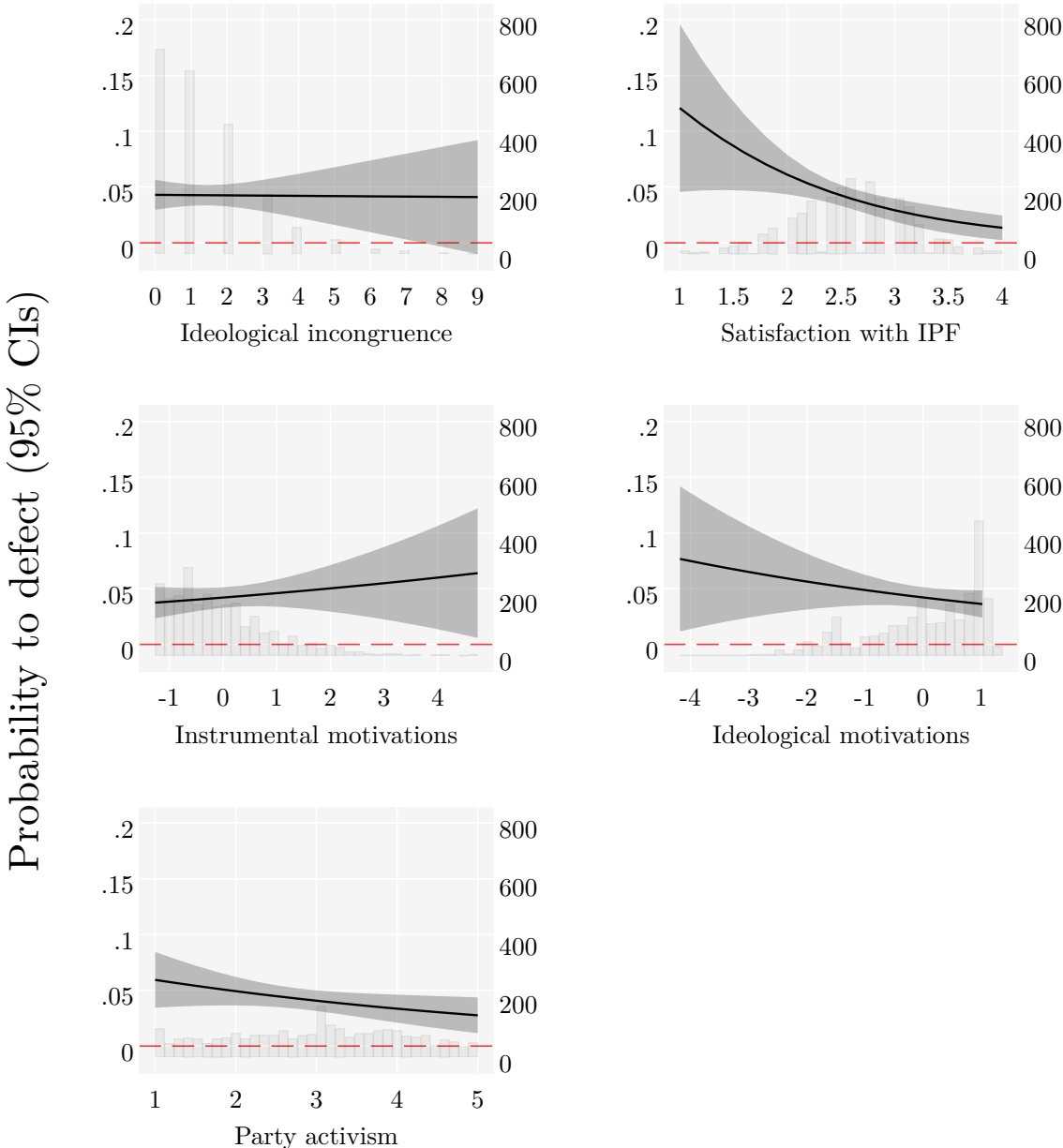


Figure A2: Average Adjusted Predictions (AAPs) of BE members' electoral disloyalty (95% CIs) by:

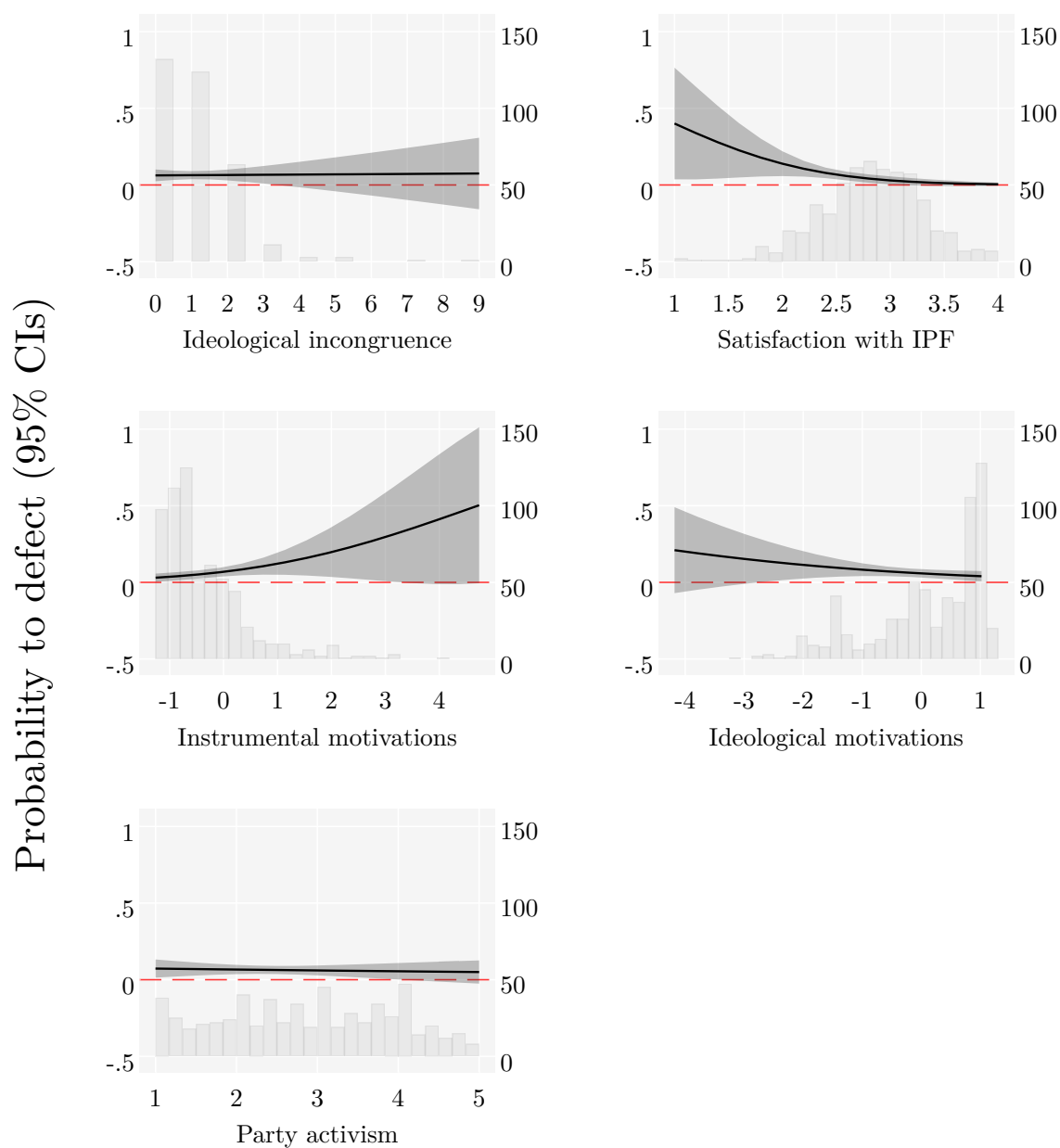


Figure A3: Average Adjusted Predictions (AAPs) of PS members' electoral disloyalty (95% CIs) by:

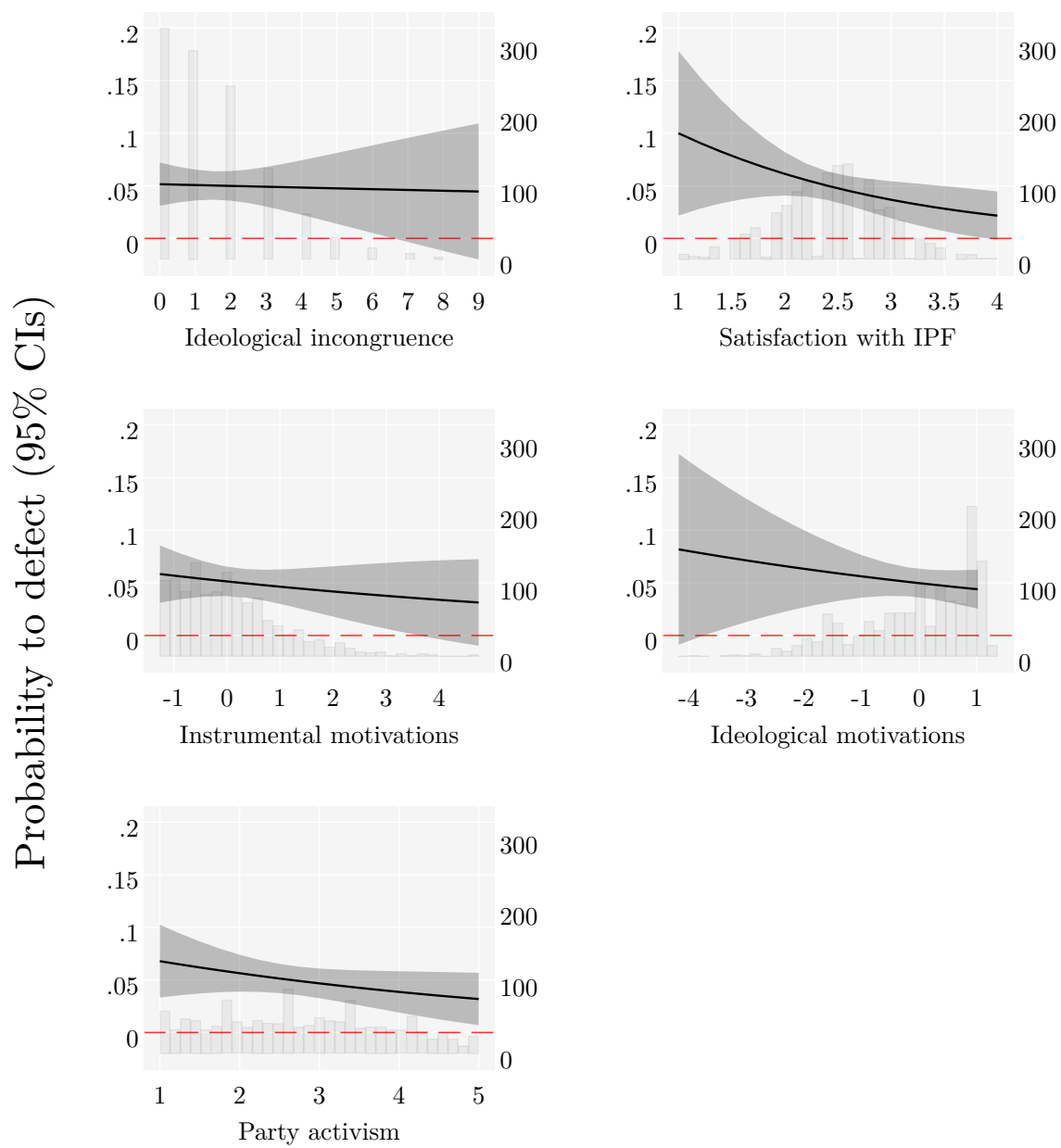


Figure A4: Average Adjusted Predictions (AAPs) of PSD members' electoral disloyalty (95% CIs) by:

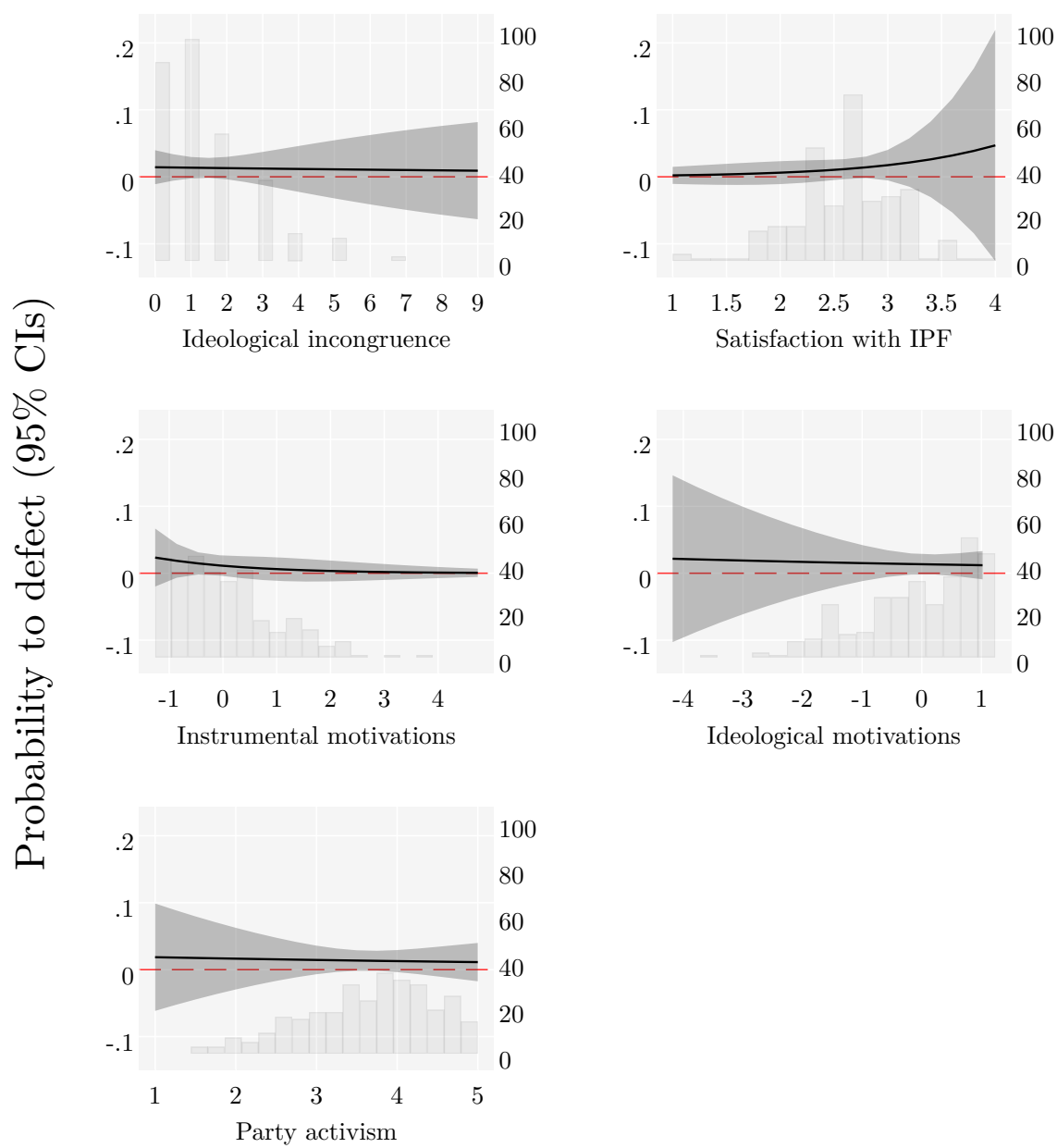


Figure A5: Average Adjusted Predictions (AAPs) of CDS-PP members' electoral disloyalty (95% CIs) by:

