Present but Not Accounted For? Gender Differences in Civic Resource Acquisition

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We investigate the sources of an important form of social inequality: the social processes by which men and women acquire participatory resources in organizations. In particular, we investigate the extent to which men and women acquire civic skills and are targets for political recruitment within churches. Integrating theory about social interaction within an organizational structure, we hypothesize that the ways in which women gain politically relevant resources from the church are simply different from those of men. Three factors explain the institutional treatment of women in churches: (1) women's political contributions are devalued; (2) women respond to social cues more than men do; (3) women respond to political cues from clergy—especially female clergy—whereas men do not. Our findings of gender differences in civic resource acquisition provide a more nuanced treatment of the mobilization process and have broad implications for the relationship between political difference and participatory democracy.

In this article we investigate the sources of an important form of social inequality: the social processes by which men and women acquire participatory resources in civic organizations. A generation of research has led scholars to consider the links between a variety of civic activities—many of which are inclusive of women—and political participation. Civic skills and recruitment are fundamental forces promoting political activity in the United States; moreover, considerable research demonstrates that American churches are an important supplier of civic skills, partially subsidizing resource deficits among their members (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Wald 1997). However, we will argue that alternative paths to the public square, such as churches, offer no simple solutions for achieving political equality. Thus, we add to the political participation literature by specifying the extent to which men and women acquire civic skills and are targets for political recruitment within churches.

In the United States, women are paid less than men (Strasburg 2005); women are more likely to belong to sex-segregated voluntary associations (McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1986); women participate more in churches (Fowler et al. 2004, 270); and women are less likely to be chosen by men to discuss politics (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995). While some scholars have suggested that these patterns result from discriminatory barriers and resource imbalances (e.g., Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001), others have advanced the notion that women respond to different cues than men. In particular, Carol Gilligan (1982) has influenced research across the social sciences exploring the idea that women speak in a different voice and care more about maintaining relationships.

The fact that women may gain civic skills from church participation—skills that subsidize economic and education deficits—does not shed light on the different ways that women and men experience the organizational

processes through which civic skills are obtained and through which recruitment into politics occurs. Thus, we focus on what Burns, Schlozman, and Verba refer to as *institutional treatment*: "what those affiliated with an institution experience once they are there" (2001, 51). While we adopt a general framework articulated in previous research explaining how organizations affect civic resource acquisition (Djupe and Gilbert 2006), we depart from it by unpacking a central assumption of that work: that all citizens can gain equally from their organizational involvements.

It is essential to consider the fact that the potency of social forces influencing rates of civic resource acquisition may differ substantially by gender. Systematic investigation has shown that men tend to devalue the political perspectives and competencies of women (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995), while feminist theorists have demonstrated that women may be particularly sensitive to maintaining relationships by shunning conflict (Belenky et al. 1986), which occurs frequently in political discussion. Therefore, political recruiters may overlook women in favor of men, who might be presumed more likely to respond. In sum, we argue that three factors explain gender differences in the acquisition of civic resources through church: (1) women's political contributions are devalued; (2) women respond to social cues more than men do and in different ways; and (3) women respond more than men to political cues from clergy—especially female clergy. These core assertions elicit how women do not receive the same returns on their organizational investments and guide the analyses to follow.

It is important to note that the implications of these gendered processes strike at the heart of our understanding of the roots of participatory and deliberative democracy (Mutz 2006). If women are sensitive to political differences and avoid conflict, they are less likely to engage in the lively debate that is essential to public deliberation over policy. Even if the groups to which women belong are politically homogenous, women may still not develop politically relevant resources through group participation, because men devalue their contributions. A homogenous gathering of women may promote resource acquisition among a few members, but by definition cannot host a deliberative exchange. Moreover, because of their closed networks, women are unlikely to be connected to other members of the organization who may recruit them into politics. Therefore, gendered responses to social cues of political difference qualify and segment the conclusions of previous research (Mutz 2002, 2006). If exposure to political difference produces a gendered response, the resulting representational problem is specific, group-centered, and

even more troubling than the one previously advanced, which is diffuse and pluralist.

Thus, we investigate whether women receive the same civic returns for their institutional investments by developing a comprehensive understanding of how and why church participation augments civic resource development differently for men and women: Do women participate in resource-building church activities at different rates than men? Are women recruited to participate in politics at lower rates than men? And most importantly, how does the social structure of congregations and women's orientations to politics contribute to these patterns?

Our dependent variables reflect the concerns of the civic voluntarism model, which focuses primarily on the social inequality that structures differential access to participatory resources. Our explanations, however, both incorporate and advance the literature analyzing the effects of social interaction on political participation. The most acknowledged finding of the social interaction approach is that exposure to political differences within a discussion network depresses political participation (McClurg 2006; Mutz 2002, 2006; but see Leighley 1990; Scheufele et al. 2004). According to Mutz (2002), exposure to difference induces attitudinal ambivalence and triggers a desire to avoid conflict (Ulbig and Funk 1999), both of which reduce the desire to pursue politics further.

To this point, it is not clear how political difference, and social interaction more generally, affect the development of the resources (skills and recruitment) specified in the civic voluntarism model as necessary for political participation (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Exploring this possibility, we both qualify and expand the reach of the social interaction perspective. Previous research has vastly underestimated the effects of social interaction by testing only for direct effects on political participation. In contrast, we argue for the utility of a social interaction approach to explain the acquisition of participatory resources.

We also expand the scope of social interaction research by situating the problem in complex organizations (churches), well beyond the level of the social network where recent research has focused (e.g., McClurg 2003, 2006; Mutz 2002, 2006). There are several problems with an exclusive focus on social networks, which an organizational setting showcases. First, people are exposed to multiple sources of social information beyond the network, including small groups, organizational leaders, and the organization's membership. Second, difference disadvantages members in organizations in concrete ways by restricting access to skill-building leadership opportunities, rather than through (or in addition to) diffuse

psychological mechanisms. That is, individuals who are similar to other group members gain more skills (Djupe and Gilbert 2006). Furthermore, social interaction effects are contingent on the broader pattern of social relations, a point explored in public opinion research (Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague 2004), but not yet examined in relation to political participation and its antecedents.

Data and Design: A Study of Clergy and Congregations

The information necessary to explore gendered experiences in churches and gendered responses to church-based political cues is not typically collected in U.S. national surveys. Therefore, to address the research questions posed here, we undertook a two-stage study of clergy and congregations in two mainline Protestant denominations: the Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). The ELCA and Episcopal Church had not previously been included in recent research on the political activities of U.S. clergy (Guth et al. 1997). With a combined membership of 7.5 million, similar worship styles, and a formal agreement on aspects of theology and worship practices, the ELCA and Episcopal Church are significant denominations within U.S. mainline Protestantism (Djupe and Gilbert 2002, 2003). One important feature of both denominations is that they ordain women as clergy. A Lutheran body that later merged with others to form the ELCA began ordaining women in 1970; in 1976 the Episcopal Church began regularly ordaining women.

In the first stage of the study (conducted in 1998 and 1999), we surveyed 2,400 clergy from the two denominations, asking detailed questions about their political activities and beliefs, their perceptions of congregational political views and activism, and their personal characteristics (including gender).[1] Following the clergy surveys, in 1999 we surveyed members in 60 congregations (38 ELCA) whose clergy had responded to our initial survey. Mail surveys were sent to a random set of members from each congregation; approximately 1,050 ELCA and 550 Episcopal congregation members responded.[2]

The congregation survey instrument paralleled the clergy survey, asking a wide range of questions applicable to political behavior research, including whether members practiced several civic skills in church (among other contexts) in the past year, and whether they were recruited by other church members to engage in a variety of political activities.[3]

This rich data set allows us to test our hypotheses about how churches generate civic resources for their members—both in terms of civic skills and political recruitment. Furthermore, because our research design is conceived specifically to connect clergy reports of their political beliefs and actions with congregant perceptions of what their clergy think and do politically, we have a unique opportunity to understand how clergy activities, including the differential effects of female versus male clergy, affect member political choices and actions.

The data were gathered from a segment of American religion that has been the most welcoming toward the involvement and leadership of women. Both denominations have long ordained women as clergy, with proportions of women clergy approaching the national average of 20% (United States Department of Labor 2004). *Thus, we argue that studying churches supportive of women's public roles sets a high bar for the hypotheses to be tested.* It is likely that any patterns identified here will be more evident in more traditional religious groups that maintain sharper distinctions between public roles for men and private roles for women (in both practice and ideology). In many conservative churches, opportunities for the exercise of

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[1] Surveys were sent to 3,000 randomly selected clergy in each denomination. We received responses from 1,450 ELCA clergy (47.5% response rate) and 930 Episcopal clergy (31% response rate). The survey cover letter indicated a clear affiliation with an ELCA college located in the upper Midwest (where the majority of ELCA congregations and clergy reside); this factor accounts for the higher response rate among ELCA clergy.

[2] Surveys were mailed to approximately 80–100 members of each congregation. In midsized to large congregations, respondents were

selected at random from the congregation's current mailing list; for congregations with less than 200 adult members, surveys were mailed to one adult member from each household on the mailing list, alternating women and men in households with more than one adult member. Two waves of surveys were sent to each selected respondent. The overall response rate was approximately 27% (30% for ELCA, 25% for Episcopal Church). While on the low side, recent research has argued that low response rates do not necessarily imply bias (e.g., Keeter et al. 2000), and sample churches are representative of churches in these denominations.

[3] The church member survey contains a significant question battery about the respondent's social network. Rather than attempt to combine or average over attributes of a social network (up to three people), we use dyads (each respondent-discussant pair is one case), meaning that respondents may be included up to three times. This choice increases the sample size, decreases estimates of the proportion naming a church member discussant (considering the falloff in naming one across the three discussants), and does not add particular kinds of church member discussants to the sample (which would affect the analysis). That is, the proportion of church member discussants who are also church small group members with the respondent is constant across the three discussants named. To alleviate the corresponding problem of correlated errors, which is slight with such a small network size, we employ robust standard errors in the regression analyses (Tables 3 and 4). The results with and without robust standard errors are quite similar.

leadership are severely curtailed and role models are relatively scarce—women clergy are heavily concentrated in a few moderate to liberal denominations (for a preliminary examination of the effects of women clergy, see Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001, 238–43). At the same time, some women in conservative religious traditions uncover empowerment in seemingly unlikely theological sources (Manning 1999) and in women's parachurch organizations (Griffith 1997), both highlighting the contextualized nature of women's political socialization.

Gendered Patterns of Civic Resource Acquisition

Most studies probing gender differences in political participation find that such differences are driven primarily by resource deficits and time demands (Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1994; Verba, Burns, and Schlozman 1997). These factors affect both the personal choice to engage in skill-building activities and the chances that any individual will be asked to lead or participate in some political activity. Highly educated people are certainly more likely to offer themselves for leadership, and they are more likely to be asked (Brady, Verba, and Schlozman 1999; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). However, the gap between men's and women's political participation is still not as large as expected given only the effects of time and resources. In particular, the gap is narrowed by organizational participation, which subsidizes the resource gap between the genders in professional and educational attainment (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001; Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1994; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Consequently, we first examine civic skill practice and political recruitment by gender, before presenting a full explanation for how men and women gain civic resources differently.

The unequal distribution of societal resources forms the partial foundation of the gender gap in political participation; in practice this means women have fewer civic resources to draw upon than men do. We operationalize civic skills as the practice of one or more of four activities in the past year: writing a letter, giving a speech or presentation, planning a meeting, and studying or discussing a political issue with a group. Overall, about 37% of men and 33% of women practiced at least one skill in church. As in national samples, women in our sample practice significantly fewer skills than men in church, on the job, and in secular organizations, although the differences are slight in all cases but the workplace. Some of those differences may be the result of higher concentrations of employed men in the sample, but we find a slightly greater difference between skills practiced by employed men and women in all settings. That is, the civic skill gap between men and women is persistent and does not respond neatly to resource differences.

The other significant civic resource we investigate is political recruitment, which is measured as a self-reported request from any of five sources (including someone from the respondent's church) to participate in various political activities.[4] Because we are interested in institutional treatment, we do not assess elite attempts to rouse the citizenry, which have been the primary focus of research on this topic (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Wielhouwer and Lockerbie 1994; though see Huckfeldt and Sprague 1992 and Brady, Verba, and Schlozman 1999 for blended perspectives). Our political recruitment question battery specifically asks about personal contacts; hence explanations of face-to-face recruiting will differ from those circumstances that involve cold contacts.

As with civic skill practice, the gender gap in political recruitment is modest, but real. Small but significant differences arise in church-, group-, and workplace-based recruiting, and we find larger differences in the recruitment of men versus women by political organizations. In these four settings, men receive more contacts to become active. Just over one-fifth of men and just under one-fifth of women are recruited by a church member to participate in at least one political activity. When we sort by employment status, few additional differences are observed, though it is interesting to note that homemakers are recruited at significantly higher rates by neighbors and groups than are working and retired women. Although our sample consists only of church members, this finding does stand in contrast to assertions that homemakers are socially isolated (and therefore unlikely to be asked to participate) because they lack access to the integrating effects of the work world (Sapiro 1983).

Determinants of Political Resource Acquisition

We rely on four factors to build our explanation for how men and women develop politically relevant resources differently, resting on the nuances of the gendered institutional treatment offered in churches. Treatment primarily refers to the social experiences with other members and

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[4] Details of all variable coding are available from the lead author: http://www.denison.edu/polysci/present_appendix.pdf.

organizational leaders within the organization, but by necessity also includes organizational engagement, which we address first.

Organizational Engagement

As noted previously, empirical studies demonstrate that more women than men participate in congregational life and with more commitment (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001; Fowler et al. 2004). Having demonstrated that a sizable minority of church members do practice civic skills and are recruited for political action, we now assess respondents' orientations toward church and their engagement with the organizational fonts of civic resources in church. If our sample women do participate more, we have come closer to demonstrating that church life helps to mitigate resource gaps between genders, and perhaps participatory gender gaps too.

In general, male respondents report attending church as often as women, though men have slightly lower levels of religious commitment, primarily due to lower levels of private religious practice. Employed men and women attend church the least, while retirees attend the most. While important, church attendance and religious commitment are known to be weak predictors of practicing civic skills in church (Djupe and Gilbert 2006, 124–25). Instead, the crucibles of civic skills are the myriad small groups and activities that compose the life of the church: Bible studies, governing boards, choirs, sports teams, prayer circles, etc. (Leege 1988). There is a significant gap between men and women in the extent of group memberships, with women clearly involved in more groups. Male retirees participate in more groups than working men (not surprisingly), but among women the group participation rates are highest among homemakers and retirees. Overall, we expect that organizational engagement by men and women will yield positive results—more civic skills practiced and recruitment attempts received. Still, *it is important to note that employed men practice civic skills in church at rates higher than all categories of women, despite participating in church groups at lower rates than women.* It seems clear that the return on men's institutional investments in church is much higher than it is for women.

Social Network Composition

A likely explanation for the disparity in these return rates involves the social composition of the groups where participatory resources are marshaled. Burns, Schlozman, and Verba acknowledge a social dynamic to skill development and small group participation in an intriguing, but brief and limited analysis of the effect of mixed-gender and gender-specific groups: women participate more, develop more civic skills, and are recruited more often in gender-specific groups, i.e., women's groups (2001, 230). However, because Burns, Schlozman, and Verba chose not to include this variable in their multivariate models, it is unclear whether this difference is real or a by-product of other forces at work. Djupe and Gilbert investigate further and find generally that social similarity structures the ability to practice civic skills in a group setting (2006, 122–25). An analysis of church-based social networks and small group composition will further articulate this crucial point.

The effects of social networks will not be identical for men and women. Since the political world is still largely organized around men's concerns, "...men will not turn to women for information and ideas about politics if women's perspectives are different and constantly devalued" (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995, 194). Huckfeldt and Sprague find that men are less likely to name women as their political discussion partners, a pattern that holds even among married couples.

Moreover, a sizable body of research suggests that women tend to be more attuned to social cues than men. Some researchers argue that women are traditionally socialized into gender roles in which they maintain relationships by avoiding conflict (Belenky et al. 1986; Gilligan 1982). This may be especially potent in church, where women are socialized into different, supportive roles, have more of their caring relationships centered, and invite more scrutiny of their behavior from a young age (Wuthnow 1999a, 118–19).

Although women and men engage in similar types of political activities (albeit at modestly different rates; Schlozman et al. 1995), the social networks that shape these activities are quite different. Table 1 examines the difference of means for several characteristics of same-gender and mixed-gender discussion partners; all included characteristics are assessed from the perspective of men and women respondents (only respondents were surveyed—this is egocentric network data). Subcategories for nonspouse discussion partners are also included in the table (three in four discussion pairs involve discussants who are not spouses of the respondent; this figure is essentially the same for women and men). The gender composition of these discussion pairs reveals the flow of political information: men were more likely to name male political discussants (61.5%) than women were to name female discussants (53.1%); moreover, almost half of women respondents identified a nonspouse man as a

TABLE 1   Differences in Social Network Characteristics by Respondent-Discussant Gender (cell entries are means; mean differences and the significance of difference of means tests are in parentheses)

	Male Respondents				Female Respondents			
	All Discussants		Nonspouse Discussants		All Discussants		Nonspouse Discussants	
Discussant Descriptors	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Church member discussant	.27	.62	.27	.24	.52	.26	.25	.26
		(.35***)		(−.03)		(−.26***)		(.00)
Small group discussant	.15	.33	.15	.11	.25	.17	.13	.17
		(.19***)		(−.04)		(−.07***)		(.04**)
Freq. of political discussion	2.53	2.48	2.53	2.32	2.50	2.22	2.35	2.22
		(−.05)		(−.21***)		(−.28***)		(−.13***)
Freq. of political agreement	2.94	3.02	2.93	2.92	2.91	3.05	2.88	3.06
		(.08)		(−.01)		(.13***)		(.18***)
Same presidential vote	.52	.58	.52	.43	.50	.49	.45	.49
		(.06*)		(−.09*)		(−.01)		(.04)
Discussant political interest	1.58	1.92	1.58	1.88	1.60	1.71	1.56	1.71
		(.34***)		(.30***)		(.11***)		(.16***)

Source: 1999–2000 ELCA/Episcopal Church Clergy and Congregational Studies.
***p < 0.01; **p < 0.05; *p < 0.10 (t tests).
Note: For male respondents: total N = 1,002 (nonspouse N = 746); men with male discussants, N = 616 (61.5% of total); men with female discussants, N = 386 (38.5% of total); men with nonspouse female discussants, N = 154 (40% of all female discussants).
For female respondents: total N = 1,844 (nonspouse N = 1,397); women with male discussants, N = 864 (46.9% of total); women with nonspouse male discussants, N = 454 (52.5% of all male discussants); women with female discussants, N = 980 (53.1% of total).

discussion partner, while only 38.5% of men identified a nonspouse woman as a discussion partner.

With spouses included ("All Discussants" columns), the difference of means test demonstrates that mixed-gender pairs are most likely to be church-based for both men and women. Without spouses included, men find women discussants in equal proportions both in and out of church. But women find more women discussants in church small groups. Although this effect is small, it suggests that on average women have less widespread social networks, limiting their social exposure and therefore access to potential recruiters. This result offers limited support for findings of sex segregation in voluntary associations (Granovetter 1973; McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1986).

Table 1 also shows differences in the perceived political information flow within the discussion pair. Intimacy clearly boosts mixed-gender political discussion—male respondents discuss politics at the same frequency with men and women when all pairs are included, but talk more with men when their spouses are excluded.

Finally, examining the discussant's presidential vote as perceived by the respondent, men perceive vote agree-ment more with women when all pairs are included and more vote agreement with men when spouses are excluded. By contrast, women perceive the same levels of agreement regardless of their discussant's gender or relationship. *The fact that women downplay disagreement with other women, despite any bias from their own perceptions, suggests that women's interactions with other women are different from those with men* (Belenky et al. 1986).

Table 1 also demonstrates that men downplay women's political engagement. Men and women both rate the political interest of female discussants much lower than that of male discussants (the difference of means from respondent men rating the interest of men versus women discussants is three times as large as respondent women's ratings—men see a larger gender gap in political interest than women do, although both see one). Even though men discuss politics with their spouses more often than with nonspouses, men find their spouses less interested in politics overall. According to Table 1, political discussion seems more integral to men than it does to women in such relationships, and interest levels are thus judged to be relatively higher.

What does this mean for political recruiters? If recruiters are rational, they will ask people who possess more civic skills, have a track record of engagement, and are likely to agree (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Brady, Verba, and Schlozman 1999). In the absence of political and civic issues that engage women's networks, rational recruiters are probably going to target men, who are perceived to be more interested and who tend to approach politics from a more individualistic perspective (Ackelsberg 1988; Gilligan 1982). So despite the fact that congregations typically have more female members, men in congregations are more likely to be contacted to become politically active. Even when social networks are populated with more women, recruiters will target men since women are perceived to be generally less interested in politics and equipped with fewer politically relevant resources. If true, this assertion continues to imply that women would rather or are relegated to serve in private capacities, such as church activities that deal with concerns like religious education, child care, and support groups.

Following from this discussion, we expect that variables capturing the content of the social network will be significant predictors more often for women than men. Differences among small group members will reduce women's civic skill development and recruitment attempts received. Moreover, recruitment of women into politics will be dependent on specific indicators of their political engagement disseminated through social networks; the recruitment of men will not be so reliant on social network interactions.

The Role of Clergy

As organizational leaders and authority figures, clergy almost certainly play a role in determining the civic skill building of women and men. While Burns, Schlozman, and Verba (2001, 238–43) examine the effect of opinions about the exclusion of women from the ministry across denominations, a more important test of gender-related disparities in churches is to assess the effects of civic cues from male versus female clergy. The potential salience of clergy should not be viewed as a constant across churches (even those in the same denomination), as there is tremendous variation in how clergy choose to engage political problems and encourage involvement in church and community activities (Djupe and Gilbert 2002, 2003; Guth et al. 1997). Djupe and Gilbert find that clergy influences are often prophetic in nature, working to stimulate civic participation among members through frequent public speech on political issues, especially when clergy perceive

their congregation to be underinvolved in community affairs (2002; see also Djupe and Gilbert 2006; Olson 2000).

But do clergy have a differential effect on men than they do on women? We suspect that the answer is yes, but the effect depends on clergy involvement levels, specific clergy cue-giving practices, and congregational receptivity to such cues. For church members who attend services and do little else, clergy are somewhat impersonal influences—they likely know members by name but are not often counted as fellow participants in informal social networks. Of course, clergy are nearly always involved in most aspects of church life; clergy and involved members become well acquainted with one another through small groups and other participatory outlets. If women are more heavily influenced by their immediate social relations than men, then direct contact with clergy would heighten the impact clergy have on women's civic skill development and recruitment levels.

Further, we argue that the gender of clergy matters in the production of politically relevant resources. On the supply side, female clergy have political agendas emphasizing women's issues and social justice issues (Djupe and Gilbert 2003; Olson, Crawford, and Deckman 2005) and are more politically involved than male clergy on most issues (Djupe and Gilbert 2003, 117). Church member demand for political cues also differs by gender. Women in this and other samples tend to be less politically engaged, even though they are exposed to more cues in church due to greater involvement. However, women's lack of attention to political cues may be attributable, at least in small part, to the presence of a man at the head of the congregation. Having a woman in a leadership role may spark women's interests and participation (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993) in the same way that descriptive representation can increase political discussion (Hansen 1997), group empowerment (Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Lawless 2004), and feelings of self-worth (Ozorak 1996).

Our research design allows us to test for the differential effects of descriptive representation within congregations, in particular to discern whether female clergy have an effect on women's religious and political engagement. Table 2 uses a difference of means test to examine the effects of clergy gender on the commitment and involvement of male and female church members. Table 2 shows women are more likely to believe clergy can influence the political views of congregants when they have a female clergyperson; men's sense of clergy efficacy does not significantly differ with clergy gender. Women are also slightly more likely than men to perceive correctly the amount of political speech by clergy when the clergyperson is female. Moreover, women are more likely to report studying a political issue in a group

TABLE 2 The Differential Effects of Male and Female Clergy (Difference of means test, female versus male clergy)

	Male Respondents	Female Respondents
Ascribed clergy efficacy	.07	.26***
Reception of clergy political speech	−.00	.03*
Religious commitment	−.73***	−.04
Church activities involved in	.12**	−.01
Studied/discussed a political issue with a group	.01	.06**
Political discussion with church discussant	.04	−.14
Church civic skills	.09	.09
Church recruitment	−.01	.04
Political interest	.16	−.00
Political activity	−.29***	−.07

Source: 1999–2000 ELCA/Episcopal Church Clergy and Congregational Studies.
***$p < 0.01$; **$p < 0.05$; *$p < 0.1$ (t tests).
Note: A positive sign indicates the mean is higher for respondents with female clergy; negative sign indicates the mean is higher for respondents with male clergy.
Men: total N = 466 (402 with male clergy, 64 with female clergy).
Women: total N = 802 (704 with male clergy, 98 with female clergy).

when their clergyperson is female. Having a female clergyperson has no discernible effect on women's religious commitment, church group activity, civic skill practice, or political engagement.

At the same time, Table 2 shows that the presence of a female clergyperson has different effects on male church members. Men have much lower religious commitment, somewhat higher rates of small group involvement, and lower rates of political activity in churches with female clergy. Men are no more or less likely to perceive clergy cues correctly based on the clergyperson's gender. That is, men appear to receive political information at the same rates, but are somewhat depoliticized in the presence of a female clergyperson.

While we have to be careful with these results, in part because the church members in our sample with female clergy are somewhat better educated and more affluent, Table 2 supports the hypothesis that the gender of clergy affects access to political information and the acquisition of participatory resources in church. As a result, we expect that women's political engagement will benefit by the presence of female clergy: women may not increase their leadership in small groups (civic skill practice), but they will be more likely to be recruited by other church members.

Community Orientations

A full understanding of political participation must incorporate additional salient individual- and community-

level factors. Individual-level variables such as education, income, and age allow us to control for whether the already resourceful are more likely to attract the attention of recruiters and exercise leadership in small groups. But we are especially concerned with specifying additional layers of difference that can lead church members toward (or away from) church-related activities. That is, difference experienced at a high level of aggregation, such as the community, can encourage individuals to seek out a consonant social context, become more involved in it, and hence augment the potential to develop politically relevant skills. In previous research, orientations toward the community have been found to be a statistically significant predictor of civic skill development among church members (Djupe and Gilbert 2006, 124–25). Moreover, clergy perceiving community isolation are more likely to be politically active, speak more about political issues, and engage in more organizing efforts (both political and nonpolitical) within their congregations (Djupe and Gilbert 2003, 77–80). Considering these findings, we expect measures of social isolation from the community to have a positive impact on civic skill building, perhaps more so among women.

Multivariate Model Results

Following now standard practice (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001), we estimate separate regression models for men and women, using nearly identical sets of

independent variables and expecting to find varied effects for women and men.[5] Two dependent variables are modeled: whether or not respondents have practiced a civic skill in their church (logistic regression, Table 3), and how often respondents have been recruited by other church members for political activities (OLS regression, Table 4). For each set of models, we test whether the coefficient estimates for men and women are statistically different.[6]

Civic Skill Practice

The individual attributes included in the Table 3 models cover several factors known to affect civic skill practice. The effects of time and resources stand out in comparing the results for women and men. Homemakers (women model only) are more likely to practice civic skills but working women are not more likely to practice skills, despite their higher education levels. In fact, age and employment do not differentiate female skill builders and education does so weakly, whereas employed and more highly educated men are more likely to practice a civic skill in church. These results suggest that men take on leadership positions based on personal prestige, whereas women participate if their busy schedules allow.

Some other individual-level effects in the Table 3 models indicate basic gender differences. For instance, women with more political interest are more likely to practice a civic skill in church, while men with greater political interest are actually *less* likely to do so. Greater religious commitment increases women's likelihood of skill practice but has no significant effect among men. Women are also more likely to practice a skill in church when they practice skills in other settings; this is also true among men, but the effect is considerably smaller (the difference between men and women is just shy of statistical significance). Pulling these findings together, women's civic skill practice is augmented when women care about

politics, value religious life, work in the home, and participate in other organizations; organizationally active men (especially educated, employed, and older men) are also likely practitioners of civic skills in church, but their religious ties are irrelevant and their political interests detract from their church activity. Hence women's participation appears to revolve around *organizational* considerations, whereas men's participation stems from their *professional* attainment—what they have individually achieved.

Perhaps it comes as no surprise, then, that women's exercise of civic skills depends more on their interactions within church social networks than is true for men. Greater involvement in church activities increases the likelihood of practicing a civic skill for both men and women, because church activities are the loci of civic skill practice. Men find inspiration from having a discussant in a church small group—that is, from interaction with *one* other person, which does not affect women's skill building (the coefficients for men and women near a significant difference). Instead, women are more likely to practice skills when they belong to *groups* with members like themselves; group member similarity has no effect on men. The more diversity in the group, the less likely women are to take on or be chosen for civic skill-building activities. Diversity in this instance likely means more men in such groups, in effect reducing the potential for skill building among women members.

Table 3 also reveals that clergy and congregational cues produce only modest gender differences in civic skill building. Interestingly, public speech by female clergy has no impact on civic skill practice; we expected a significant effect based on the Table 2 findings, but the small difference of means found in that table does not hold up in this multivariate test. The effect of satisfaction with the church is sizable and negative for both men and women. Greater satisfaction breeds a form of complacency with congregational life, reducing church involvement and opportunities to develop civic skills.

Finally, the effects of community-orienting forces in the Table 3 models yield further insight into the structural components of gendered skill development. Men who feel religiously different from their neighbors (an individual trait) are more likely to practice a skill in church; belief isolation also increases men's likelihood of skill development. Among women, skill development depends on whether the church is different from the rest of the community (belief isolation, a congregational trait); whether the individual woman feels different from her neighbors has a weak effect, though it is statistically discernible from the effect for men. Just as Djupe and Gilbert (2003) found clergy engaging in more activity when differences with the community were perceived, so too do women engage

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[5] The women's models include a dichotomous variable indicating "homemaker" status; the men's models do not include this variable, as less than one percent of male respondents identified themselves as homemakers.

[6] To test whether the coefficient estimates are significantly different for men and women, we perform a dummy variable alternative to the Chow test (Gujarati 2003, 306). This involves estimating a model combining men and women, and including interaction terms composed of gender and every other independent variable. A significant interaction term (we chose a standard of $p<.1$) indicates that the coefficient estimates for men are different than the estimates for women; the final column in our tables indicates which coefficients are significantly different for men versus women (including the homemaker dummy). We present the separate model results for ease of display only.

TABLE 3   Estimated Likelihood of Congregant Civic Skill Building (Logit estimates, robust standard errors)

Independent Variables	*Women* Coeff. (RSE)	*Men* Coeff. (RSE)	*Signif. Gender Difference*
Organizational Engagement			
Church activities involved in	0.554 (0.068)***	0.533 (0.091)***	
Religious commitment	0.076 (0.042)*	−0.032 (0.057)	Yes
Church Social Networks			
Discussant is a small group member	0.096 (0.195)	0.477 (0.249)*	
Personal similarity to small group	1.043 (0.415)**	−0.069 (0.434)	Yes
Political discussion with discussant	0.029 (0.102)	−0.101 (0.136)	
Clergy & Congregational Cues			
Personal similarity to congregation	−0.633 (0.401)	−0.451 (0.531)	
Satisfaction with church	−0.530 (0.141)***	−0.377 (0.179)**	
Female clergy public speech index	0.014 (0.081)	0.042 (0.120)	Yes
Church size	−0.000 (0.000)	−0.000 (0.000)	
Community Orienting Forces			
Religiously different from neighbors	0.120 (0.079)Ⴇ	0.322 (0.107)***	Yes
Community belief isolation	1.312 (0.437)***	0.861 (0.556)Ⴇ	
Community activity isolation	−0.167 (0.796)	−0.120 (1.088)	
Individual Attributes			
Education	0.135 (0.085)Ⴇ	0.429 (0.124)***	Yes
Age	0.007 (0.009)	0.024 (0.010)**	
Employed	0.213 (0.249)	0.993 (0.310)***	Yes
Homemaker	0.867 (0.316)***	—	Yes
Political interest	0.127 (0.077)*	−0.197 (0.097)**	Yes
Partisan strength	−0.116 (0.092)	0.160 (0.117)	Yes
Civic skills gained outside church	2.003 (0.250)***	1.401 (0.350)***	
Constant	−4.966 (0.900)***	−5.784 (1.259)***	
Number of cases	959	528	
Pseudo R^2	0.240	0.218	

Source: 1999–2000 ELCA/Episcopal Church Clergy and Congregational Studies. The final column lists whether an interaction term between gender and each variable was significant ($p < .1$) in a combined model.
*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$ (two-tailed tests); Ⴇ$p < .10$ (one-tailed test).

more (and men as well, though for more individually oriented reasons), probably because congregations in such situations offer more opportunities for civic skill practice. Once again women's access to civic skill-building opportunities depends much more on organizational concerns, whereas men's access depends on their resources and personal predispositions to participate.

Recruitment into Politics

Table 4 presents estimates of the frequency of men and women being recruited into politics by another church member. As in the case of civic skills, the models demonstrate that individual and social components combine to influence political recruitment and confirm that different conditions are necessary for women, as compared with men, to move toward political action. The results indicate that occupational prestige helps to drive men's recruitment, whereas organizational concerns are more apt to affect whether women are recruited.

Table 4 reveals that patterns of civic skill practice, especially in concert with congregational involvement, are particularly significant in determining gender-specific political recruitment patterns. Not surprisingly, practicing civic skills in church positively affects both men and women being recruited. However, the more involved

TABLE 4   Estimated Frequency of Respondent Political Recruitment by Another Church Member (OLS regression estimates, robust standard errors)

Independent Variables	Women Coeff. (RSE)	Men Coeff. (RSE)	Signif. Gender Difference
Civic Skill Practice			
Secular group-based skills	−0.047 (0.020)**	0.102 (0.029)***	Yes
Job-based skills	0.001 (0.017)	0.025 (0.025)	
Organizational Engagement			
Church-based skills	0.091 (0.027)***	0.085 (0.031)***	
Adult education involvement	0.081 (0.024)***	0.085 (0.026)***	
Religious commitment	−0.001 (0.009)	0.068 (0.019)***	Yes
Church Social Networks			
Discussant is a church member	0.191 (0.116)*	−0.095 (0.167)	Yes
Frequency of political discussion	0.095 (0.042)**	−0.015 (0.043)	Yes
Discussion with church member	−0.087 (0.052)*	0.040 (0.064)	Yes
Personal similarity to small group	0.117 (0.058)**	0.143 (0.085)*	
Clergy and Congregational Cues			
Perceived clergy political activity	−0.035 (0.008)***	0.028 (0.030)	Yes
Female clergy public speech index	0.030 (0.019)ᵃ	0.019 (0.027)	
Episcopal church	0.108 (0.044)**	0.224 (0.083)***	
Most involved in church groups	−0.038 (0.020)*	−0.042 (0.034)	
Personal similarity to congregation	−0.108 (0.058)*	−0.230 (0.128)*	
Individual Attributes			
Education	−0.007 (0.015)	−0.037 (0.034)	
Age	0.000 (0.002)	0.001 (0.004)	
Employed	0.071 (0.056)	0.174 (0.093)*	
Homemaker	0.117 (0.072)ᵃ	—	Yes
Political interest	0.045 (0.015)***	0.078 (0.026)***	
Partisan strength	−0.035 (0.019)*	−0.121 (0.035)***	Yes
Denomination should be more politically active	0.054 (0.021)**	0.030 (0.029)	
Constant	−0.144 (0.158)	−0.059 (0.411)	
Number of Cases =	1,281	774	
R^2 =	0.116	0.187	
S.E.E. =	0.608	0.781	

Source: 1999–2000 ELCA/Episcopal Church Clergy and Congregational Studies. The final column lists whether an interaction term between gender and each variable was significant ($p < .1$) in a combined model.
***$p < 0.01$; **$p < 0.05$; *$p < 0.1$ (two-tailed tests); ᵃ$p < .10$ (one-tailed test).

congregation members are in small groups, the fewer recruitment attempts women receive. Considering that women are generally more numerous and more active within congregations, these results suggest that women do not stand out to political recruiters within an active congregation—their typically greater congregational activity level is the norm. But when men increase their congregational engagement, political recruiters are particularly likely to take notice. This explains why religious

commitment is a significant and positive predictor of recruitment among men but not among women. Whereas men are recruited when they show any hint of activity and interest in congregational life, women are approached less often when the congregation has more active and committed male members.

Similarly, civic skill practice in secular groups increases recruitment attempts for men. But if women practice civic skills in secular groups, they are sought out

less often by church member political recruiters who likely know nothing of such activity. To the extent that time commitments affect civic skill practice in these settings, these findings also relate to employment status effects. Being employed increases recruitment attempts of men; among women, being employed has no effect while being a homemaker does.

Several other church-based cues in Table 4 deserve mention. Involvement in church small groups with similar members increases the political recruitment of both men and women, but church social networks have opposite effects by gender. The recruitment of men is not affected by their social networks, while women are affected by their networks in nuanced ways. Women are recruited more when they are networked in the church, specifically when they have a fellow church member as a political discussant. In part, this picks up the likelihood that the discussant is male and helps overcome the other factors that lead women to be overlooked by political recruiters. Recruitment is also higher for women when they discuss politics more often, which serves to distinguish them to potential recruiters as being interested in political activism. At the same time, however, recruitment attempts decline for women when they discuss politics more often with a church member discussant—an indication that women's networks are less open (i.e., the dyad has stronger ties), meaning women are less accessible to recruiters. This set of findings reinforces the importance of the structural placement of relationships for the recruitment of women, in sharp contrast to the individualistic nature of recruiting men.

The Table 4 results also indicate differences in how clergy cues affect men and women. Political cue giving by female clergy affects recruitment for women and not men, confirming the hypothesis generated by our Table 2 findings (testing a variety of alternate specifications of clergy cue giving did not reveal any hidden clergy effects on men). At the same time, when women perceive clergy to be more politically active, they are recruited less often, whereas men who see clergy as politically active are not recruited any more or any less often. This result again fits with the results for civic skills and congregational involvement: men are valued more for their personal achievements as long as they are socially accessible within the church, such as through participation in adult education or through visible religious commitment. Women, on the other hand, are recruited largely depending on the nature of the social context and their relationships within it.

While political interest leads to greater recruitment attempts for men and women, stronger partisanship suppresses recruitment; the partisanship effect is stronger among men than women (the difference is significant). The inverse relationship between strong partisanship and church-based political recruiting reflects two processes at work. First, previous research has shown that partisans prefer to channel their energies outside of the church (Djupe and Gilbert 2003, 2006), hence church-based political recruiters would not ask partisan members because such members are presumably already engaged in partisan activism. Second, if women have fewer opportunities to participate in the public sphere, they would channel more of their energies through the private sphere, and stronger partisanship would not suppress their recruitment in church to the same extent as it does for men. Likewise, women attract more recruitment attempts when they express a desire to see the denomination get more involved in political and social issues, which serves to connect women's higher church involvement to specific political intentions (Djupe and Grant 2001).

Conclusion

Since women become involved in church at greater rates than men, churches have been held up as potential participatory equalizers, subsidizing the gendered resource deficits generated by societal inequities and the differing employment patterns of women and men. However, the ways in which women gain politically relevant resources from the church are simply different from the experiences of men. Men seem to be able to choose to practice civic skills, whereas women's access to such opportunities is structured by organizational supply and by the relationships they develop within the congregation. Women are more affected by and respond more to their social contexts, while individual attributes more directly affect men's recruitment and practice of civic skills.

The social conditions that at first glance offer the chance for more recruitment of women turn out to have the opposite effect. The opportunity for women to develop and exercise civic skills is hampered by the social composition of groups, which does not affect men. Women participate most fully when the group is homogenous, thereby limiting the number of settings in which skills can be acquired most efficaciously. And women are not targeted more in active congregations; in fact, the recruitment of women *declines* when more congregants are active.

More specific to religion and politics research, our results underscore the point that churches cannot be adequately conceptualized as unified organizations; social scientific investigations of congregational effects must recognize that involvement means much more than church attendance (Wuthnow 1999b) or time devoted to church activities (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001; but see McKenzie 2004). While these simple measures have a solid track record in predicting individual behavior, they are best viewed as proxies, and inadequate proxies at that. The crucial factors that motivate church-based influences on individual behavior emerge only when congregational influences are operationalized through a broad range of measures tapping organizational and group characteristics, clergy activities and cues, community orientations, and individual engagement.

Finally, to return to a key motivating concern, this work bears on a problem that Mutz (2006) has recently framed as deliberative versus participatory democracy. In some important ways, our results are even bleaker than her conclusion that difference is a democratic mixed bag. While both men and women develop participatory resources, men appear to be largely immune to the debilitating effects of difference.[7] Men are recognized for their individual accomplishments, whereas women are at the mercy of their social location in congregations. Together, these effects suggest not two parallel tracks leading to resource acquisition, but two different modes of transport, which complicates attempts to remedy democratic politics.

In addition, a significant piece missing from Mutz's discussion is the "autoregressive" relationship between networks and contexts (Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague 2004), and among contexts. While networks can help to insulate an individual from the broader context, the individual builds civic resources only through collective interaction; this necessitates the incorporation of an organizational setting beyond the network but beneath the level of a more amorphous context. Moreover, awareness of political differences in one context (here, the neighborhood) can boost involvement and civic skill building in another (the church). The effects of difference play out in various ways depending on the source and the

source's relationship to the rest of the individual's social environment.

There are several ways to assess the normative implications of these patterns. Citizens are not always helpless in the face of difference; in fact, difference can motivate organizational involvement that improves the chances of political activity, which can be considered a public good. Our results echo Mutz's findings that citizens act to homogenize their social relations instead of confronting difference in a way that might moderate and inform. However, the representation of diverse viewpoints in the public square is just as important. The dynamics described here indicate that citizens underrepresented in one context, such as the community, seek out another, more congruent one—here, the church—that becomes a vehicle for the activation of their views. While this may ensure a more representative public debate, women's resource acquisition appears to be particularly constrained by the organizational social structure of such a congruent context. Agreement with another person does not guarantee that women will be acknowledged.

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[7] To be fair, Mutz focuses on ideological differences within a social network, while we engage a wider definition of individual difference, including a variety of interests that social group members might consider. Likewise, scholars in other disciplines, especially communication studies, psychology, and sociology, employ much broader measurements of personal differences in networks and groups (e.g., Carron and Brawley 2000; Harrington and Fine 2000; Keyton and Frey 2002; Scheufele et al. 2004).

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