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**THE EFFECTS OF PAID EMPLOYMENT ON WOMEN'S POLITICAL ACTIVITY:
AN ANALYSIS OF STRUCTURAL AND CONTEXTUAL WORKPLACE FACTORS**

by

RACHELLE LOUISE BROOKS

A Dissertation submitted to the

Graduate School-New Brunswick

Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

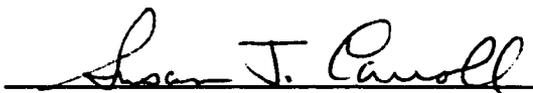
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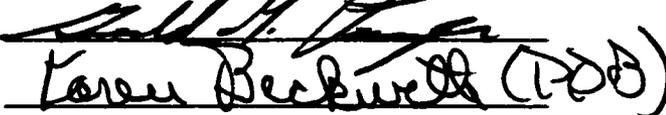
Graduate Program in Political Science

written under the direction of

Professor Susan J. Carroll

and approved by





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Abstract of the Dissertation

**The Effects of Paid Employment on Women's Political Activity:
An Analysis of Structural and Contextual Workplace Variables**

by

Rachelle Louise Brooks

Dissertation Director:

Susan J. Carroll

This study examines the effects of employment on women's political participation for a sample of white, working women obtained from the 1989-1990 Citizen Participation Study. Using regression analysis and nonrecursive path models, both direct and indirect effects on three types of participation are examined: group-based activities, individual acts, and overall participation. Workplace factors are categorized according to whether they are structural or contextual. Structural factors are related to the skills and resources obtained from performing the work, whereas contextual factors are related to the interactions within and the conditions of the workplace environment. Workplace factors are found to both promote and deter political participation through effects that are both direct and indirect. Indirect effects are primarily found in relationships to political engagements that are antecedents to participation, namely political knowledge, political interest, and internal political efficacy. Additionally, one gender orientation, involvement with a women's organization, is found to function as an intervening variable. Contextual workplace factors such as political mobilization, sex discrimination,

and working at a gender-segregated occupation have both direct and indirect effects, whereas structural factors, namely job skills, occupational status, and personal income more often have only indirect effects on participation. Those who are mobilized to participate at work, who have experienced sex discrimination, and who practice civic skills at their jobs are more likely to decide to become political actors. However, women who earn more within their job level, have a higher status job, feel free to discuss politics at work, and work at sex-segregated occupations may experience a resulting decrease in participation or political engagement levels. Two workplace factors, workplace authority and working in a full-time capacity, are found to bear no relationship to participation or its antecedents. Thus, employment is not a universal asset for women's political participation. Furthermore, to more fully understand the effects of paid employment its relationships to the more subtle political engagement variables must also be examined.

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My coursework and training in Women and Politics and American Politics in the Department of Political Science at Rutgers University prepared me for this research. Several faculty at Rutgers are owed thanks for their contributions to this project or for their guidance in my development as a researcher and scholar. They include Susan Carroll, Jane Junn, Gerald Pomper, Rick Lau, and Cynthia Daniels. In addition, at Rutgers I have also benefited from the critical thinking and intellectual engagement of several of my graduate student colleagues, namely, Caroline Heldman, Laurie Naranch, Jeff Becker, Kimberly Edens Stepno, and Sasha Patterson. As an undergraduate Political Science major at The College of Wooster, I was first exposed to the field of research in Women and Politics by my faculty advisor, Karen Beckwith. To her I extend my sincere thanks for the additional support she offered as I progressed towards the end of my graduate career.

I dedicate this work to my mother, Mary Jane Brooks, who understood all too well the concrete improvement to my life that would result from higher education, and laid the foundation which gave me the courage to begin; and to Laurence Audenaerd, my future husband, who gave me the freedom, in so many different ways, which enabled me to finish.

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INTRODUCTION: The Workplace and Politics

Women's relationship to the workforce has changed dramatically throughout the latter half of this century. Their overall number in the workforce has nearly doubled since the 1950s (Mandelson 1996), and the occupations in which women are employed are beginning to change as well. Legal measures to eliminate employment discrimination have helped women enter into many occupations from which they were previously excluded. Additionally, women have gained access to educational and training opportunities for all types of occupations, and they are increasingly expanding their presence in more prestigious and well-paying careers. Furthermore, the women who are seeking employment are no longer young, unmarried, and childless as was the norm in the 1950s. In fact, by 1990, 59% of married women with children under the age of six were members of the labor force (Mandelson 1996).¹

Many scholars have asserted that women's mass movement into paid work has led to their increasing presence in and attentiveness to politics and public life (Conway, Steuernagel, and Ahern 1997; Klein 1984; Gurin 1985; Welch 1977; Anderson 1975; Hansen, Franz, and Netemeyer-Mays 1976). They consider it no accident that as women's representation in the workforce has grown, so has their representation in the world of politics. In fact, in 1999, the 106th Congress included a record 65 women serving in the House and Senate, and their numbers in Congress have grown steadily since the mid-1970s (Center for American Women and Politics Fact Sheet, 1999). In

¹ For two excellent and very different approaches to the changes in women's workforce participation and the effects of these changes see Barbara R. Bergmann, *The Economic Emergence of Women* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1986) and Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

addition, by the 1980s, the proportion of voting-age women casting a ballot in national elections had exceeded that of men (Center for American Women and Politics Fact Sheet 1997; Conway, Steuernagel, Ahern 1997). Do women's experiences in the workforce have political implications? And if so, what, specifically, does working have to do with women's political orientations and activity?

While at work, most employees must interact with both co-workers and employers who expose them to new information and ideas through formal and informal contact. For many people the workplace is their primary means of social interaction outside of their immediate family, while for others their job is just one of many social networks in which they are involved. Nonetheless, few would deny that their job has some social influence outside of their daily work routine. Conversations over lunch, during breaks, or at business or professional functions provide the opportunity for meaningful communication about any number of non-work-related subjects.

In addition to conversations, the workplace may also provide experiences with significance to an individual that extend beyond the boundaries of the workplace. For example, opportunities to travel, learn a new skill, or train others on the job can promote personal as well as professional growth. As one scholar concluded, "Work is a central aspect of people's lives: It affects interpersonal interactions, teaches the use of and deference to authority, helps shape feelings of self-worth and autonomy, and provides specific and general skills and knowledge" (Delli Carpini 1986). But to what extent, and when, does a job provide or contribute to the impetus for political participation?

This research investigates the influence of employment on women's mass-level political involvement. In examining the separate aspects of working, both direct and

indirect influences on participation are investigated. This study shows that some employment factors have a direct relationship to participation, whereas others are connected to political activity through their impact on levels of engagement with politics, or on women's gender orientations.

Several studies of women's political participation have pointed abstractly to employment as a factor that promotes participation. Early research in this area found that when employed women were compared to housewives, those in the workforce participated in politics at higher rates (Anderson 1975; Welch 1977). However, later examinations of social status complicated these early findings. Housewives gain some social status through their husbands, and when accorded their husbands' status, political participation differences between housewives and employed women disappeared (McDonagh 1982). In addition, when employed women's occupational status was examined, housewives were found to participate at a level between that of white-collar and blue-collar workers (Beckwith 1986).

Employment outside the home has also been identified as a factor related to *how* women participate in politics, through analyses of their political preferences. Employed women are more likely to uphold feminist principles and goals (Plutzer 1988; Sapiro 1984; Banaszak and Leighley 1991; Gersen 1985), with those in the highest occupational status categories the most likely to be feminists (Conway, Steuernagel, Ahern 1997). Employment has also been found to affect working women's choices in the voting booth. Gender differences in support for Democratic and Republican candidates have been attributed to women's labor force participation in several studies (Carroll 1988; Manza

and Brooks 1998; Klein 1984), with those who are more economically independent or in nontraditional occupations the least likely to support Republicans.

More generally, scholars of American political behavior have documented repeatedly the predictive power of employment-related variables on citizens' political participation. However, many prior studies of the relationship between the workforce and political involvement have been clouded by a lack of consistency in analyzing employment (Milbrath and Goel 1977). These studies used various measures of employment, among other factors, as indicators of socio-economic status (SES).

For the last 40 years, research on SES and participation has found that those with a higher social status, as measured by their education, income, or occupation, are more often politically involved and participatory (Campbell, et al. 1960; Verba and Nie 1972; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). One of the earliest works in the field of political participation, focusing almost exclusively on voting, found that income and social class, either self-identified or as measured by occupational status, were important predictors of political involvement and behavior (Angus Campbell et al. 1960). Specifically, those with a higher income and status were more likely to be involved in politics. However, occupational status was grouped in two different ways in this study, depending on the analysis: (1) as a 6 category variable which descended from "large businessmen" to "unskilled laborers," or (2) as a 2 category variable distinguishing between "white collar" and "blue collar" occupations. Over a decade later, Verba and Nie (1972) also found a measure of SES to be a good predictor of participation, especially for campaign involvement and community work. In constructing their SES scale they took a different approach and included three

variables: the respondent's education, family income, and the occupational status of the head of household. Thus, while occupation is obviously relevant to SES, the exact relationship remains unclear.

Numerous reasons have been offered to explain this connection between SES and participation, suggesting both direct and indirect ties. With respect to income, theories usually link it with resources for participation. The environment in which wealthier individuals find themselves provides resources, such as knowledge about politics, which promotes participation, suggesting an indirect link between income and participation (Conway 1991; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). In addition, a more affluent environment is one in which participation can be learned by observing others, as more prosperous individuals protect their interests by becoming politically involved (Verba and Nie 1972; Junn 1991; Milbrath and Goel 1977). Income is also a measure of other resources, such as the money and time available for political involvement (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995).

In terms of occupation as a factor motivating participation, most research has theoretically identified it as a means of obtaining income, knowledge and civic skills (Schlozman, Burns, Verba 1994; 1999; Schlozman, Burns, Verba, Donohue 1995). As Wolfinger and Rosenstone state, "Some kinds of jobs develop bureaucratic skills or familiarize their incumbents with intangibles; some positions bring one into contact with subject matter that bears directly on politics or on issues that are the subject of political discussions" (1980, 22). In addition, occupations have also been identified as a location for political recruitment (Brady, Schlozman, Verba 1999; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). The majority of work addressing occupation,

however, has considered it secondary to other influences, such as education or income, and has spent little effort investigating the individual components of work.

A thorough empirical study of the political implications of working is important given the state of existing research on political participation, more generally, and women's political involvement, in particular. Considering the long-standing history of the socio-economic model of participation, and that working is the primary means by which individuals increase their status or income, additional research is long overdue. In addition, more recent empirical evidence is needed to support or refute the benefits of working to women's political involvement. Many of the early studies examining women's employment and political participation used data collected during the 1970s, a time when many fewer women were in the paid workforce (Anderson 1975; Beckwith 1986; McDonagh 1982; Welch 1977). In 1970, fewer than 45% of all women participated in the paid labor force, but by 1992 nearly 60% worked for pay, and more than three-quarters of women aged 35 to 44 were in the labor force (Reskin and Padavic 1994). As women's rates of employment continue to grow, the effects of work on their political participation must be reexamined to determine if earlier conclusions hold true for the larger population of employed women.

A few studies have begun to test the mechanisms by which participation and work-related factors are linked. Some of the components of employment and the work environment have been examined separately for effects on political attitudes and involvement (Delli Carpini 1986; Freedman and Rosenstone 1995; Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1999). Studies which have not disaggregated men and women have found important connections between participation and what one needs to know for a job, the

skills acquired through working, job satisfaction, and unionization (Freedman and Rosenstone 1995; Delli Carpini 1986). Conflicting findings about occupational status have been reported, with some research demonstrating a positive effect on participation from higher level jobs (Delli Carpini 1986), and other research finding no significant effect (Freedman and Rosenstone 1995). The factors found to bear *no* relationship to political activity include participation in workplace decision-making, job security, self-employment, a fulfilling work routine, and the financial rewards from working (Freedman and Rosenstone 1995; Delli Carpini 1986).

One study has examined the effects of employment separately for men and women (Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1999). The authors set out to determine why gender differences existed in political participation. Using a multistage, interactive model, they examined the selection process into paid employment, the institutional effects from it, and the ultimate consequences of employment for political participation. The authors found, first, that women were disproportionately selected into part-time and lower-level jobs when compared with men. Additionally, women faced an unexplained disadvantage with respect to the training and education needed for their jobs. Each of these factors limited the possibility of women acquiring through their jobs the tools for participation.

Second, they found that the workplace offers little in the way of enhancing the factors that motivate citizens to participate, such as through political engagement (a combination of political knowledge, interest, and efficacy) or, for women, gender consciousness. Instead, they found that the factors linking employment and women's political activity included being asked to take part in politics by someone at work,

practicing civic skills on the job, such as letter-writing or organizing meetings, and experiencing sex discrimination. These factors were also most commonly found in higher level jobs. The authors concluded that women's lower rate of participation in politics (by on average, one-third of one political act) can be partially explained by the differential employment experiences of men and women.

Taken together, these studies of different employment factors demonstrate that by dissecting employment into its various components a much fuller understanding of its relationship to participation can be gained. Drawing on the research of Schlozman, Burns, and Verba (1999) this study undertakes a detailed analysis of the exact nature of the connections between employment and participation. However, the goal here is not to explain gender differences in participation, but rather to more fully understand the political impact of working *for women*. Consequently, this research diverges from earlier work both theoretically and empirically.

Theoretically, the workplace is considered a context embedded with gendered meaning, and therefore this research *assumes* the gender disparities documented by Schlozman, Burns, and Verba (1999) and numerous other scholars of women's workplace experiences. In making this assumption, a more careful examination of the meaning of work for women can proceed, with models designed specifically for women's employment experiences. It may be the case that existing models of participation that do not disaggregate women and men are based on men's experiences.

Empirically, this study focuses primarily on the indirect paths from employment to political participation, rather than on a direct relationship, and thereby uses several different indicators of political engagements and gender orientations in the models. Four

measures of political engagement are each analyzed separately for effects from employment factors, as are three measures of gender orientations. In the following sections these theoretical and empirical differences are elaborated, beginning first with a discussion of women's workplace experiences and their potential political implications, and followed by an introduction to the data and methodological approach.

Women in the Workplace

In placing greater emphasis on women's workplace contexts and political involvement than on men's, this study gives recognition to the fact that the nature of work is gendered—in other words, gender shapes the way the institution of work is structured. Several recent studies have examined the ways in which social and political institutions have shaped and been shaped by notions of gender (Andersen 1996; Katzenstein 1990, 1998; Mettler 1998). The structure of employment is no exception.

However, one of the most troubling features of many existing political participation models incorporating employment is that they fail to account for the ways in which the workplace operates differently for men and women. In these models, working outside the home is treated as an experience or practice affecting women and men in exactly the same way. For example, in the traditional socio-economic status model (Verba and Nie 1972), employment is important to the extent that it yields income and status, both of which contribute to higher levels of political participation. This model assumes that women and men in the same jobs will acquire the same status and similar levels of income. This is also true for models which attribute the importance of working to the skills employees receive—skills which are directly transferable to political participation (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). The theory assumes that men and

women in the same job acquire similar skills, understand them in the same way, and will put them to use for similar political ends.²

Unfortunately, a number of institutionalized barriers function to create differences in men's and women's employment experiences, which render the assumption of gender similarity false. Sexual harassment at work, the glass ceiling, and pay inequities are just a few of the factors which have contributed to shaping work institutionally in ways divided by gender. These issues have come to the forefront of the political agenda, forcing employees and employers alike to publicly address women's presence in the workplace, with the result of changing the way work is conducted by both women and men (Lunneborg 1990).

Do differences such as these in women's workplace experiences have political implications? The models of work tested in this study allow for the fact that men and women have very different workplace experiences and may understand their relationship to the workplace differently (Reskin and Padavic 1994; Baron 1990). Therefore, the effects of employment on politics for women workers is examined with models designed uniquely for women's employment experiences, by building upon research about gender, employment, and political participation. In addition, a body of literature developed around the study of political contexts provides clues about the facets of employment likely to have political implications.

² The dummy variable used in the models by these scholars to *control* for gender cannot take into account the myriad ways in which gender may influence and interact with, among other things, the acquisition of job skills and the employment of such skills for political purposes.

Workplace Contexts as Political Contexts

The workplace is a social environment with the potential for many different types of social, psychological and political influences. For example, political messages can be found in employees' personal contacts and interactions with each other (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993), in their experiences of sex discrimination, or of working at a gender-segregated job. These workplace experiences have psychological implications in that they shape the way workers think about themselves and the world around them. Only by looking beyond what one gains from the job itself, to the many interactions and experiences which take place at work, can we begin to understand more completely the political implications of work. Occupations are the *process* by which individuals obtain their income or status, and the *circumstances* around this process vary greatly and shape the individual's workplace experiences. An analysis of these circumstances begins to expose the workplace as a context that has social and psychological implications for politics, in addition to the economic or civic resources to be gained from working.

In political science, the study of social contexts and their role in shaping political attitudes and behavior has primarily focused on neighborhood and familial situations. This research has demonstrated that those in one's immediate environment have the greatest political influence. For example, parents have been shown to influence their children's political orientations, and the local community has been found to affect partisan and political allegiances and the political activity of its residents (Langton and Jennings 1969; Weatherford 1982; MacKuen and Brown 1987; Putnam 1966; Giles and Dantico 1982).

Some research has also found connections specifically between the workplace context and political attitudes and behavior. Social interaction among friends at work can encourage and reward political participation (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993).

Furthermore, friendship networks can provide a protective environment for those whose beliefs are contrary to the established majority (Finifter 1974). Men's and women's sex-role attitudes have also been shown to be influenced by factors such as the length of time spent in the workforce, experiences in male-dominated occupations, the number of hours worked per day, and the social networks into which employed women are integrated (Thorton, et al. 1983; Banaszak and Leighley 1991; Plutzer 1988).

Thus, in addition to the more concrete resources gained from working which translate directly into political participation, the contexts in which employees work can have political consequences which stem from their psychological and attitudinal impact. This broader understanding of work borrows from approaches developed in research on adult political socialization. Roberta Sigel (1989) argues that the world of work contributes to political socialization for adults in many different and complex ways. Occupations may directly instill sociopolitical values; she states, "It is fairly plausible to assume that many professions require or at least induce a certain view of the political world and that such view may differ from profession to profession . . . depending on the profession's mission" (91). In addition, work routines can affect the alienation and efficacy of workers, indirectly affecting their participation, often negatively. Finally, the status one receives from an occupation is also important to political socialization and participation. Sigel argues, "occupation designates not only what one does to earn a living, it also indicates to the world at large as well as to oneself a status in society which

brings with it certain resources, skills, knowledge, and prestige" (95-96). Thus, the social context of the workplace is much more complex than most studies of political participation have allowed.

While experiences at work may result directly in a political action, for example, they may also more subtly enhance political engagements, such as levels of interest, information, or efficacy about politics. Alternatively, they might alter one's gender orientations, when, for example, one is employed in a gender-segregated occupation. This study takes a more careful look at these and other employment factors in order to broaden the conception of work beyond its role as a resource provider, and to develop the notion of work as a political context in much the same way a local community is a political context. Whether and how the politics of the workplace context are translated directly to political activity, and indirectly through the more subtle antecedents to participation, is the focus of this investigation.

Data and Methods

The data sets for this analysis were collected by the National Opinion Research Center in 1989-1990 for their Citizen's Participation Study. It includes a screener survey of 8,527 women and nearly as many men, as well as in-depth interviews with 2,517 respondents, 1072 of whom were employed women. This data set is rich in questions about both participation and employment, enabling tests of a number of theories about the political implications of work. The size of the sample provides the opportunity for a more refined analysis of occupational variables and several options for dependent variables to measure antecedents to participation and political activity.

The data for this study is the sub-sample of all white women employed outside the home, working full-time or part-time (n=609). Nonwhite working women are not included in this analysis for three important reasons. First, work as an institution has been influenced by race and ethnicity, as well as by gender (Aptheker 1989). Therefore, the workplace experiences of women of color are shaped by different forces than are white women's. For example, the sex segregation of the workforce into traditionally male- and female-dominated occupations has remained virtually constant for the last several decades. However, it is not the case that women of all races are distributed equally in female-dominated occupations. In fact, women of color have been more highly concentrated in the lowest paying service jobs.³ To deny these experiential differences between women in the workforce by analyzing all women together is theoretically unsound.

Second, because gender orientations are one focus of this study, it cannot be assumed that these variables operate in the same ways for women of all races. To do so would be to ignore possible interactions with race or class consciousness and to deny the potential complexities of the group consciousness people of color develop. For example, one study has found that African-Americans are more class conscious than whites (Schulman, Zingraff and Reif 1985), and another has identified differences between white and black women in levels of feminist consciousness (Conover and Sapiro 1992). Additionally, the ultimate effects of African-American women's feminist consciousness on participation has been debated (Fulenwider 1981, Kay 1985).

³ Mary Frank Fox and Sharlene Hesse-Biber (1984, Ch. 7) summarize many of the occupational differences between white women and women of color.

Third, the number of cases of those in other racial groups is too small to analyze separately. Too few nonwhite women are included in the data set for the types of statistical analyses undertaken in this research. Thus, for both theoretical and statistical reasons, this study will be confined to an examination of a model of white women's workplace experiences and their relationship to politics.⁴

Workplace contexts are analyzed by grouping them into two distinct categories: structural factors and contextual factors. Theoretically, we can separate those factors associated with the job one is required to do from factors existing in the workplace environment having little, if anything, to do with the work one physically performs. For example, what one does at work is distinct from whom one talks to or how one is treated at work. All of these experiences have the potential for political implications.

Structural factors are most strongly related to the job itself. They are defined as those conditions associated with a job which remain relatively consistent in different workplace settings. In this study, they include the income and skills one acquires on the job, and the occupational status and authority associated with a job. For example, elementary school teachers generally have similar salaries, skills, and authority. Although some differences in these factors may exist among teachers, the similarities are striking when teachers are compared with those in most other occupations.

In contrast to structural factors, contextual factors are the environmental conditions in an individual's workplace setting that may differ drastically from one workplace to another for the same job. An analysis of contextual factors allows us to

⁴ Political scientists in the US urgently need national samples of women of color with data about their political involvement that would allow for detailed statistical tests to model their political participation.

explore the workplace environment for political implications, rather than analyzing the job itself. The contexts within which citizens work are important, as they may directly motivate workers to engage in political activity, or they may provide experiences or situations which raise their likelihood of political involvement. The contextual factors examined in this study include engaging in political discussions in the workplace, working in male-dominated and female-dominated occupations, being mobilized by those at work to take part in politics, experiencing sex discrimination, and working at a job in a full-time capacity.

The indirect influences of employment on participation are tested by linking workplace variables to several measures of political engagement and gender orientations, which can be understood as the antecedents to political participation. Specifically, political knowledge, interest, and internal and external political efficacy are the four types of political engagements that in past research have consistently demonstrated a relationship to political involvement, and are often considered precursors to participation (Campbell et al. 1960, Verba and Nie 1972, Verba, Burns, and Schlozman 1997, Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996). A relationship between work and any of these four intervening variables would indicate that being employed has implications for participation which exist outside the realm of observable political activity. Higher rates of the structural factors of the workplace are expected to be associated with higher levels of political engagements. Likewise, most of the contextual factors are expected to have a

positive association with the measures of engagement. The exception is working at a female-dominated occupation, which is hypothesized to have a negative relationship.⁵

In addition, a number of gender orientations have also been shown to be important predictors of women's political activity. Many have suggested that women's workplace activity is partly responsible for changes in women's gender orientations. However, few have ventured to explain why this may be the case, and empirical tests of this idea are scarce. The gender orientations included in this analysis are similar to what others have labeled gender or feminist consciousness, and have been shown to be related to increased political activity (Klein 1984, Miller et al. 1981, Tolleson Rinehart 1992). Specifically, women's orientations towards other women, their beliefs about whether women have unique problems which they need to work together to solve, and their membership in women's organizations are tested for a relationship to women's workplace experiences. The structural and contextual factors of the workplace are expected to be positively associated with orientations towards women, with again the exception of female-dominated occupations, for which the opposite relationship is hypothesized.

Ultimately, the impact of employment on political behaviors is examined in the final phase of this analysis. Eight modes of political participation are grouped into two categories: group-based acts and individual political involvement. The group-based acts are political activities done in conjunction with others. They include protesting, working for a political campaign, being a member of a political organization, and working in the

⁵ A more detailed rationale for each hypothesis is provided in Chapters 4 and 5, which examine the structural and contextual workplace factors, respectively.

community to solve a problem. By contrast, individual political participation includes voting in local and national elections, participating in local council meetings, donating money to a campaign or political organization, and contacting an elected official. In addition, the overall level of political activity is examined by combining all political acts into one measure.

The relationships between employment factors and political engagements and gender orientations are examined first at the bivariate level and then through multivariate analyses. Zero-order correlations and t-tests are used in the bivariate analyses. Standard Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression is utilized to test the relationships at the multivariate level. Ultimately, a path model is used to link workplace factors through engagements and orientations to political involvement.

Although the objective of this study is to test a model of the political impact of working for women, relationships between work and the antecedents to participation will also be compared to white men, when possible. However, the models cannot be tested for white men, because theory would dictate an alternative configuration in modeling men's workplace and participation relationships. Some comparisons between women and men, however, will accomplish two objectives. First, they will provide a fuller understanding of the way work is gendered by illuminating similarities and differences in the workplace for women and men. Secondly, they will provide preliminary data to aid researchers in the development of future models testing for the political effects of men's workplace contexts.

Chapter Descriptions

The remainder of this study will proceed accordingly. Chapter 1 will provide the theoretical backdrop for the analysis, by outlining the conditions which make the workplace a gendered political context. It also provides a general overview of the full model. An examination of the data begins with Chapter 2, which models the relationship between political engagements, gender orientations, and political participation for women. This is followed in Chapter 3 by a test of the relationships between the structural factors of the workplace and the antecedents to participation. Chapter 4 examines the relationship between contextual workplace factors and participation antecedents. In Chapter 5 the role of both structural and contextual factors will be tested simultaneously as the full model is brought together. Chapter 6 discusses the implications of the findings and draws general conclusions about the relationship between employment factors and women's political involvement.

CHAPTER 1: The Workplace as a Gendered Political Context

This chapter develops a theory of the workplace as a gendered political context.

In doing so it brings theories of political contexts into a dialogue with feminist theories of the gendered nature of employment and other social and political institutions. Each group of scholarship uniquely contributes to a framework for analyzing employment. At the same time, many similarities emerge demonstrating the common perspective that contextual theorists and feminist theorists share regarding the political impact of environmental influences.

Contextual analyses take as their purpose the identification of the interactions and circumstances in one's environment which influence political behaviors and attitudes. Because working provides an opportunity for interpersonal interactions, in addition to the money and skills needed for political participation, it is useful to consider theoretically what effect these interactions may have on political involvement. Many scholars of political contexts have devoted considerable effort to analyzing environmental factors to determine their role in shaping individuals' relationship to the political world. Their theories and methods differ from those of many other scholars of political behavior in that they emphasize environmental factors rather than individual traits as explanatory variables. The theories derived from contextual analyses are useful for broadening notions of how and why working influences political behavior.

Contextual analysts have much in common with those who have studied the development of political consciousness. Many feminist scholars have asserted that women's group consciousness arises from experiences and interactions in one's environment. Sue Tolleson Rinehart describes the rise of consciousness as such: "gender

identification and gender consciousness must be stimulated by something—some event or pattern of events or features(s) of one’s environment—that causes one to begin thinking in gender identified, gender conscious terms” (1992, 50). The catalyst for group consciousness varies by individual, but is usually an occurrence which is environmentally- based. Once this consciousness has arisen, it has been shown to influence a number of political attitudes and behaviors (Conover and Sapiro 1992a; 1992b; Tolleson Rinehart 1992; Miller, Hildreth and Simmons 1988; Klein 1984; Miller et al. 1981).

Feminist scholars have also described how institutions and environments can be “gendered”, or enmeshed with assumptions about distinctions between the sexes (Baron 1991; Acker 1997; Reskin and Padavic 1994). Gendered environments provide one likely opportunity for the development of women’s group consciousness, and thus can have political effects. Thus, both contextual and feminists theories contend that the nature of one’s environment has political implications, not just at a macro level, but also for the individual.

By incorporating both of these divergent yet overlapping theories of political influence, the workplace can be described as a gendered political context. This characterization of the workplace envelops not just what one acquires individually from working, but also the components of the environment itself, many of which are tied to employees’ gender. This allows for an analysis of the personal interactions which take place at work and the social setting within which work is done. Accordingly, it captures the environmental effects which contextual scholars have traditionally found to be politically relevant, and incorporates the work of feminist scholars who have shown that

environments can be embedded with notions of gender. Further, it enables one to link gendered environments with political participation through the pathway of women's gender orientations. A complete description of a full model of these connections will be provided at the end of chapter. First, a discussion about the theories that form the basis for this framework is provided.

Theories of Political Context

The earliest research conducted by contextual analysts focused on the relationship between neighborhood environments and voting behavior. Specifically, the social status of the neighborhood was found to influence the partisanship and vote choice of its dwellers. Working class and blue collar workers were more likely to align themselves with parties and candidates supporting their class interests when their neighbors had a similar social status (Tingsten 1937; Katz and Eldersveld 1956). However, when an environment was contrary to one's own, the effect of neighborhood social status on political preferences was reduced (Foladare 1968).

Eventually, the development of improved statistical methods enabled more refined and sophisticated analyses of this "neighborhood effect." In fact, the amount of one's political activity was also shown to be tied to neighborhood social class. Those living in higher status neighborhoods participated in some political activities at higher rates. However, lower status individuals in high status neighborhoods evidenced depressed rates of participation (Huckfeldt 1979; 1986; Giles and Dantico 1982). The political activities most strongly influenced by neighborhood status were socially-based activities—in other words, those acts requiring some interpersonal interaction, such as

volunteering for a political campaign. By contrast, individual participatory acts, such as voting, were not influenced by neighborhood environments.

To what can the influence of neighborhood social status on political behavior be attributed? Three competing theories have been proposed. Many suggest that it is the social interaction taking place among neighbors which causes the effect (Putnam 1966; Fitton 1973; Weatherford 1982). This interaction and communication between individuals who are closely socially situated is also known as a primary reference group effect. This term is most commonly used to label familial influence, but some have argued it is the most likely cause of the "neighborhood effect" (Putnam 1966; Fitton 1973).

Two other possible explanations for the influence of neighborhoods have also been suggested. First, the social and psychological need for conformity may cause individuals to align their attitudes and preferences with those around them (McPhee, Smith and Ferguson 1963). Thus, one votes as one's neighbors in order to conform. Secondly, the information obtained from neighbors has been cited as an influential force on attitudes and preferences. According to some, the informational cues received from neighborhood sources may wield the greatest influence on voting and other participation-related decisions (MacKuen and Brown 1987; Books and Prysby 1991; Sprague 1982).

Other environments, such as churches, the workplace, and college campuses have also been briefly explored for political influence. For example, the conservatism of church congregations has been shown to bear an important relationship to individuals' political conservatism (Wald, Owen and Hill 1988). In addition, friendship groups formed in the workplace have a critical role in supporting the political beliefs of those

holding minority views (Finifter 1974). Other research has demonstrated that Jews are more likely to alter their preferences for Democratic candidates when exposed to contrary views at work. Likewise, their Democratic preferences are reinforced and are thus more apparent in predominantly Jewish neighborhoods and college campuses (Fuchs 1955).

In general, research in the area of political contexts has demonstrated that the environment within which one lives, works, or worships can have a great deal of influence on one's political attitudes and behavior. In fact, some contend that all political preferences may stem from interpersonal interactions which take place in local environments, and argue that one cannot understand individual political activity without considering environmental influences. For example, Huckfeldt states, "individual characteristics alone do not determine political actions and opinions. Rather, political behavior must be understood in terms of the actor's relationship to the environment, and the environmental factors that impinge on individual choice" (1986, 1). In addition, Sprague contends that, "many observations we commonly treat as individual properties acquire theoretical power precisely because they are proxy measures for rich contextual experience" (1982, 104). That is to say, it is the interactive contexts, whether at work, at home, or elsewhere, which give rise to the individual political attitudes guiding voting decisions.

A contextual approach to the study of political behavior has been neglected for some time, despite its long 60-year history in the field (Pomper 1972; Huckfeldt 1986). The methodological ease of survey research has prompted many scholars to collect data about individuals' traits and preferences rather than on their environments. However,

some survey data, such as the Citizen Participation Study, do provide the opportunity for an analysis of workplace environments.

The workplace is a likely location for identifying contextual effects. In fact, each of the three theories which have been proposed to explain the political influence of neighborhoods applies equally well to the workplace. For example, given that many individuals spend considerably more of their time with co-workers than with neighbors, it is as likely that co-worker interactions would bear some relationship to political attitudes or behavior. In addition, if it is social conformity that lies behind the “neighborhood effect”, then the desire for conformity with co-workers’ attitudes is a possible motivating force for attitude formation or change. Finally, the information flow theory of contextual analyses would also hold true for the workplace. Brief conversations at work can yield politically-relevant information which can be used in the development of political attitudes.

In addition to these types of political effects from workplace contexts, employment also derives political meaning from the embeddedness of gender in interactions between workers and in the institution itself. Judith Gerson and Kathy Peiss (1985) have defined gender as “a set of socially constructed relationships which are produced and reproduced through people’s actions” (327). This emphasis on the social interactions which create and define gender enables an analysis of how the workplace setting reinforces the system of gender relations through the actions of employers and employees. Examining and understanding the processes through which this occurs illuminates the many more subtle dynamics of gender in the workplace, rarely examined

by contextual scholars, but which have implications for political attitudes and orientations.

The Gendered Nature of the Workplace

Social institutions, such as work and family, stabilize and create distinctions between the sexes, thereby contributing to how gender is understood in our culture. As Ava Baron, labor historian, states,

Gender, then, is constituted through people's lived experience within continually redefined and contested social activities and institutions. Gender is integral not only to relations between men and women, but also to a myriad of other relations of power and hierarchy, including those between employers and workers . . . The study of gendering is concerned with how understandings of sexual difference shape institutions, practices, and relationships (1991, 36).

In working, individuals become enmeshed in any number of processes which create social and cultural distinctions between the sexes. Scholars have begun to analyze and describe how gender is embedded in the workplace. For example, how work is done, by whom, and the terms of the compensation for it are all shaped by gender and serve to recreate it. Joan Acker (1997) offers several other examples of the ways in which gender is embedded in the workplace: "Gendered assumptions may inform the classification of jobs, the level of wages or even the design of workplaces, tools and machinery. Gendered expectations affect the content of work. Work content is understood, and allocated, through images of gender, although what constitutes women's and men's work sometimes changes" (x).

Barbara Reskin and Irene Padavic (1994) have identified three general ways in which working is gendered. First, the sexual division of labor, through which jobs are delegated to one sex or the other, promotes inequality between the sexes and has created a sex segregated workforce. This stifling of opportunity based on sex continues to be

contested, and has left our society with sets of jobs which are still easily categorized as “women’s” or “men’s”.

Another way in which working is gendered is through the devaluation of women’s work. This has led to different compensation structures for men and women, and the placing of much greater value on men’s work, regardless of its contribution to society. In addition, wage gaps between men and women, even for very similar jobs, have narrowed only slightly over the last several decades.

Thirdly, Reskin and Padavic cite the construction of gender on the job, through both employees’ and employers’ actions, as a way in which work is gendered. The very creation of jobs and the establishment of working conditions by employers include consideration of the gender of the worker. Furthermore, employees’ day-to-day interactions, and verbal and non-verbal behavior also contribute to the gendering of work. In other words, employees who express sexist attitudes at work toward their co-workers or subordinates contribute to the gendering of the workplace.

In sum, Reskin and Padavic state, “Both employers and workers socially construct gender at work. . . .The result of [their] actions is a gendered work setting that reinforces the traditional sexual division of labor and exaggerates the importance of people’s sex in the work they do” (1994, 141). The workplace, then, not only reflects the current system of gender relations in society, but also serves to re-create it. As a result, working has the potential to change the way men and women view themselves and their understanding of gender in society.

Recent research on other gendered institutions has begun to identify the resulting impact on politics and women’s consciousness. Kristi Andersen (1996) examined the

U.S. political culture in the first few decades after the passage of women's suffrage to document the ways in which political institutions were gendered based upon male social norms. Political practices within parties and other electoral bodies had been based upon the separation of men and women into public and private roles. However, as women's consciousness about themselves as political agents developed after suffrage, the gendered boundaries slowly shifted, thus changing the way politics was conducted from the grass-roots levels up to the U.S. Congress. It was not possible for partisan and electoral politics to remain the same after women gained the right to vote and began entering elective office in greater numbers, because politics had been so extensively intertwined with masculine practices. For example, where voting was conducted, by whom various political decisions were made, and the rules of decision-making processes were subject to challenge and revision upon women's formal entry into the political arena.

Similarly, Suzanne Mettler (1998) argued that meanings of citizenship for men and women were constructed differently as a result of New Deal public policies. The policies themselves were differentiated by gender, improving the conditions of white men and marginalizing women's interests, primarily because men's organized interests had a powerful influence within the federal administration. In addition, many of men's policies were governed by federal authority, whereas policies geared towards women were left at the state level. For example, Old Age Insurance was administered at the federal level and was designed for men who earlier in their lives had been productive workers, with the addition of "widows" and "wives" benefits included only later. In contrast, Aid to Dependent Children was regulated by states and subjected its beneficiaries to careful scrutiny before providing benefits. Mettler pointed out that these gender differences in

New Deal policies had important implications for men and women as citizens. She stated,

The manner in which citizens are incorporated into the polity in turn determines the institutional framework within which their subsequent participation occurs and influences the choices of political goals and strategies they pursue. Accordingly, the restructuring of citizenship by gender in the New Deal organized men and women within distinct sovereignties, encouraged their organizations to seek different goals in politics, and separated groups that might have formed political coalitions (1998, 221).

Thus, the differentiation by gender in these policies and had and continues to have a profound impact on women's relationship to political institutions and politics.

Katzenstein (1990, 1998) studied contemporary institutions and identified how in the U.S. institutions continue to be controlled primarily by white males. However, through her examinations of two very different social institutions, the church and the U.S. military, she found that gender consciousness "emerges from, is negotiated in, is recreated out of, and in turn acts upon political institutions" (1990, 28). She showed that mobilization by women in response to sexist norms within each of these institutions is a means by which contemporary feminism asserts itself in the 1980s and 1990s.

Each of these examples demonstrates how gender has functioned within institutions to exclude or marginalize women. However, as women's consciousness changed they found opportunities to take political action. This activity by women, upon permeating the institutional structures, changed how gender and gender differences were played out within the institution. This study will add another dimension to understanding the ways in which institutions can be gendered, by examining the institutional setting of employment.

A Gendered Political Context

The workplace is a context relevant for political analysis not only because it is similar to other political contexts, such as neighborhoods, but also because it is a gendered institution. These two characteristics lead to two very different processes by which the workplace can be a politicizing environment. First, as with other political contexts, interpersonal interactions and the flow of information at work can have consequences for political attitudes and behavior. For example, discussing politics with co-workers can increase one's level of political knowledge. Second, the gendered nature of the workplace can serve as a catalyst for the development of women's feminist consciousness, which in turn has implications for political engagements and activity.

Each of these paths from the workplace to political participation can be tested using a number of different types of workplace contexts. Before outlining this model in greater detail, however, a complete discussion of feminist consciousness is in order since this is the process by which a gendered workplace becomes relevant for political behavior. When work experiences change understandings of gender, this creates opportunities for the development of feminist consciousness among women. As Baron notes, the articulation how gender functions in the workplace is important because "an analysis of the gendering of work inquires when and why sexual differences become culturally and politically significant" (1991, 21). The gendering of work is in part politically significant because it enables the development of feminist consciousness.

A feminist consciousness is expected to have a political role similar to that of a class-based or racial consciousness—one which would unify women's political identity and drive their political allegiances (Miller, Gurin, Gurin, and Malanchuk 1981).

Feminist consciousness has been theoretically linked to women's working lives and empirically shown to be related to political participation, partisanship, and public policy attitudes (Klein 1984, Tolleson Rinehart 1992). However, it has proven to be an evasive and difficult concept to measure, thereby limiting conclusions about its relationship to politics. Much of the research examining the political implications of feminist consciousness has faced limitations due to the lack of suitable measures for this type of group consciousness in national data sets. The following review of its various definitions and measures will further illuminate this point.

Feminist Consciousness

The concept of feminist consciousness grew out of sociological and psychological analyses of race and class consciousness. It was conceived of as the way in which gender is psychologically manifested into specific orientations towards women. Many scholars have agreed that four main criteria must be met in order to reach feminist consciousness: first, that women identify with other women and feel a sense of belonging to the group; second, that they have a discontent about the power or status of the group; third, that they have a recognition that the group's status is a result of systemic inequities and not individual inadequacies; and fourth, that they have a willingness to act as a collectivity to achieve a change in the group's status (Klein 1984; Miller, Gurin, Gurin, and Malanchuk 1981; Gurin 1985; Miller, Hildreth and Simmons 1988; Sigel 1996).

Some have labeled it gender consciousness, but because their definitions include discontent about one's status as a woman or the belief that women's status is a result of systemic inequities, the concept as so described becomes feminist (Miller, Gurin, Gurin,

and Malanchuk 1981; Gurin 1985; Miller, Hildreth and Simmons 1988). Other definitions do not preclude the possibility that conservative women might possess gender consciousness (see esp. Tolleson Rinehart 1992, 47-48; Conover and Sapiro 1992b, 7). For example, Tolleson Rinehart succinctly defines gender consciousness as such: “Gender consciousness is one’s recognition that one’s relationship to the political world is at least partly but nonetheless particularly shaped by being female or male. This recognition is followed by identification with others in the ‘group’ of one’s sex, positive affect toward the group, and a feeling of interdependence with the group’s fortunes” (1992, 32). However, because the operationalization of gender consciousness has often included an indicator related to feminism, thus changing the underlying concept being measured from gender consciousness to feminist consciousness (Gurin 1985, Miller, Hildreth, and Simmons 1988), this study will refer to the entire body of literature as feminist consciousness research.⁶

The source of women’s feminist consciousness has often been attributed to their work lives or public roles. Their involvement in the labor force is believed to shift their notions about men’s and women’s gender roles, thus beginning their development of consciousness (Sapiro 1991; Conway, Steuernagel, Ahern 1997; Klein 1984). For example, Klein (1984) asserts that women’s experiences in nontraditional roles, such as changes in their labor force participation in the 1970s, led to a development of feminist consciousness and a support for feminist politics. She asserts that the connection between working and consciousness operates as such: “When market activities became

⁶ See Conover and Sapiro (1992a) for an astute analysis of measures most often included in large data sets and recommendations for better, more refined questions to include in future surveys.

more salient to women's lives and to their self-definition, issues such as female unemployment, low pay, low advancement opportunities, and the sex segregation of occupations became matters of great concern. [T]he development of a new self-image of women as workers allowed for the recognition and rejection of unfair treatment" (46). This awareness and desire for change are two of the key components of consciousness many have identified.

Similarly, Gurin (1985) began her discussion by describing the movement by women into the labor force during the 1960s and 1970s, and the corresponding greater acceptance in public opinion about their workforce participation. She then asks, "To what extent have these status and attitude changes been accompanied by more general ideological awareness of how gender shapes the lives and fortunes of men and women? Do more women now recognize that they are objectively deprived economically and politically? Do more women believe that women are treated categorically?" (144). She seems to imply that theoretically, at least, feminist consciousness could develop out of their workforce participation.

Tolleson Rinehart (1992) offered a more general statement about the stimulus for consciousness which still allows for the possibility of working as one of its sources: "[W]e might expect that aspects of one's position in life or in society might provide especially fertile ground for the growth of consciousness" (50). One's occupation and workplace experiences often have a great deal to do with "one's position in life or in society."

These prior studies have laid the groundwork for a more systematic analysis of the specific workplace experiences which may affect the development of feminist

consciousness. Unfortunately, feminist consciousness is a very difficult concept to accurately measure with a survey instrument. The indicators currently available in most data sets are better analyzed separately or in small groupings, rather than in one overall measure of consciousness. Despite the methodological limitations associated with past analyses, such as the poor indicators available in most data sets, feminist consciousness has been shown to be related to a number of political measures and merits additional investigation. Thus, three separate measures of what I refer to as “gender orientations” are analyzed in this study. All of the indicators are similar to the items used in the past to measure feminist consciousness and are thus expected to have similar political implications.

Overview of the Model

The model tested in the following chapters provides a more detailed picture of the direct and indirect links between women’s employment and their political participation, with the aim of better understanding how and why employment and participation are related (Figure 1). The independent variables are divided into two categories: structural factors and contextual factors. The structural factors of the workplace are defined as the attributes of an occupation which are relatively stable between work sites and which are unrelated to interpersonal interactions and workplace contexts. Four measures of structural factors are included in the model. The first structural factor is personal income, to test for the effects of one’s own income independent of the overall income of the household. The second is a measure of job skills, which includes several indicators of the types of tasks one is expected to perform as part of a job, such as writing letters or organizing a meeting. The third structural factor is occupational status. It is measured by

grouping together occupational categories, such as clerical and sales jobs, professional and managerial occupations, or skilled laborer positions. A measure of the authority one is accorded on the job is the fourth structural factor. It is assessed with an index of the number of people one directly or indirectly supervises.

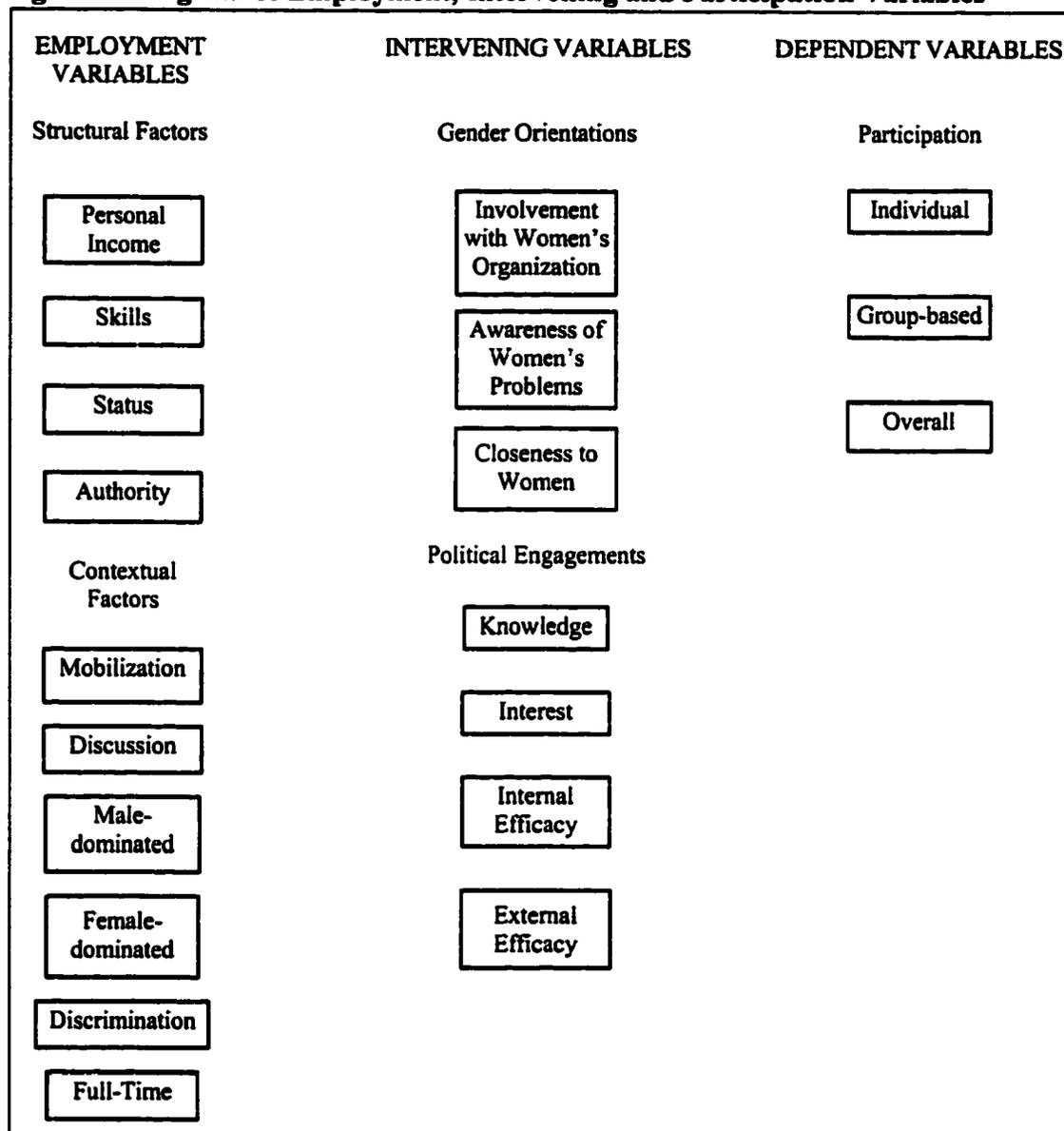
The contextual factors of the workplace are defined as those circumstances which are likely to be highly variable between work sites of individuals in the same occupation. They take into account several different types of interpersonal interactions between employees. A total of six contextual factors are included in the model. The first is political mobilization by a co-worker or supervisor, which indicates whether an individual was asked to participate in politics by someone at work. A second measure of the workplace context assesses the extent to which employees feel free to discuss politics at work. The gender segregation of occupations is assessed with two measures of the workplace context, one for male-dominated occupations and one for female-dominated jobs. They are calculated by determining the gender breakdown of employees in each occupation nationwide. Experiencing discrimination on the basis of sex is the fourth workplace context included in the model. Finally, a measure of working full-time, as opposed to part-time, is included.

Each of these structural and contextual workplace factors is tested for indirect effects on participation through the intervening variables, the antecedents to political participation, which are grouped into two sets of measures: gender orientations, and political engagements. The first gender orientation measure is an indicator of involvement in a women's organization. The other two measures assess respondents' attitudes about their relationships to other women. One measure is an indicator of how

close women feel to other women as a group, and the other measure assess respondents awareness of problems women face as a group and their belief that women should work together to solve these problems.⁷ The measures of political engagement in the model are those which have traditionally demonstrated a relationship to participation: political knowledge, interest in politics, and internal and external political efficacy.

The final set of variables in the model, the dependent variables, are the participation measures, which are grouped in two different ways, in addition to being examined together as a whole. Acts which can be undertaken individually are categorized separately from group-based political involvement. The set of group-based activities are those forms of participation which are performed in consort with others, including protesting, working for a political campaign, being a member of a political organization, and working in the community to solve a problem. The individual acts include voting in local and national elections, participating in local council meetings, donating money to an election or political organization, and contacting an elected official. Each of the workplace factors are tested for direct effects on participation, in addition to indirect effects which may be found through a relationship to the intervening variables, such as political engagements or gender orientations. The following chapter begins a test of this model by focusing first on the impact of the intervening variables on the measures of political participation.

⁷ When the three measures were included in a factor analysis the results indicated that the items did not load together. In addition, any combination of two of the items, when combined as a scale, achieved an alpha level no higher than .23.

Figure 1: Diagram of Employment, Intervening and Participation Variables

CHAPTER 2: Political Participation and its Precursors

Before exploring the relationship between structural and contextual workplace factors and the antecedents to political participation, it is first necessary to establish the link between the antecedents to participation and political involvement itself. Most studies of participation have not examined men's and women's political activity separately to test for different factors predictive of participation.⁸ Instead, men and women have been analyzed in the aggregate, with the assumption that the factors related to political activity are identical for both sexes. However, it may be the case that some variables shown in the past to predict political activity are, in fact, poor predictors of women's political involvement.

This chapter first describes the measures of political engagement, gender orientations, and political participation used in this study, and then compares the levels of these variables for women and men. The effects of the antecedents on participation are then examined for women by employing a set of variables that have traditionally been used to model participation. The goal is to determine the effectiveness of these variables for women alone.

The antecedents to participation are divided into two groups of variables: political engagements, which include political knowledge, interest, and efficacy; and gender orientations. Both of these groups of variables are modeled as causally prior to political participation, and are thus labeled antecedents to participation. Theoretically, one's initial step into political involvement requires first the psychological or intellectual

⁸ Notable exceptions include Conway, Steuernagel, and Ahern (1997), Schlozman, Burns and Verba (1994, 1997), Tolleson Rinehart, Gilmour, Hood and Shirkey (1996), and Verba, Burns, and Schlozman (1997).

capacity for it. Action is preceded, in theory, by some cognitive motivation. However, some studies have investigated individual engagements, such as knowledge or interest, and have found that the relationship is more of a reciprocal one—that is, the level of engagement is increased by the act of participating (Junn 1991; Finkel 1985; Clarke and Acok 1989; Tolleson-Rinehart, Gilmour, Hood, and Shirkey 1996). Unfortunately, given the number of variables included in the analyses for this study, a nonrecursive model would be very complex. Therefore, for both practical and theoretical reasons, this study assumes a unidirectional path from both engagements and gender orientations to political participation, with recognition that some bias in the estimates may result.

Political Engagement

Political engagement, as it is conceptualized here, is a combination of four separate factors: knowledge and interest in politics, and internal and external political efficacy. As a group these four factors are good indicators of the extent to which individuals have the intellectual and psychological tools for political participation. In their study of mass-based political activity, Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) also identified these four factors as political engagements, which they believed served as intervening variables between education and political involvement. They argued that these engagements were good indicators of a predisposition for politics, and could be used to assess the motivation one would have to take part in politics (see also Verba, Burns, and Schlozman 1997).

For example, without knowledge about politics and the political system, one is unlikely to have the ability to participate or to make participation effective. Similarly, an expressed interest in politics is an indication that one would care enough to take the time

to participate or to gather information about one's political environment. In addition, those with political efficacy—who believe they can make a difference and that elected officials are responsive—are more likely to believe involvement in politics is a meaningful activity. An extensive theoretical and empirical literature has been developed regarding the linkages between these variables and various forms of political participation. The following summarizes the significance of each of the four factors separately, and details the operationalization of each measure for this study.

Political Knowledge

Political knowledge has often been described as a concept central to the workings of a participatory democracy. At the most basic level, citizens require knowledge of by whom they are represented, and of who shares their own beliefs, in order to protect and petition for the representation of their interests (Nie, Junn, Stehlik-Barry, 1996; Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1995, 1996; Tolleson Rinehart, Gilmour, Hood, Shirkey, 1996). Political knowledge enables more *effective* political involvement by providing a framework for the evaluation of politicians, policies, and political parties (Nie, Junn, Stehlik-Barry 1996; Popkin and Dimock 1999; Junn 1991; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996). Only with knowledge are citizens prepared to play a “vital role” in matters of politics (Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1991).

Generally, those with high levels of political knowledge do choose to take on a role in the political process. That political knowledge and political participation are positively correlated has been well-established (Nie, Junn, and Stehlik-Barry 1996; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996). Voting, the activity which has been most often studied by political scientists, demonstrates a strong

relationship to political knowledge in the recent elections of the 1990s (Popkin and Dimock 1999; Hofstetter, Sticht, Hofstetter 1999), and in numerous past elections (Verba and Nie 1972; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). However, political knowledge has also been shown to bear a relationship to other forms of political activity, such as volunteering on a political campaign, protesting, and serving on a local board or council (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995).

The measure of political knowledge used in this study encompasses a broad range of political information. It assesses the level of understanding of our system of government, knowledge of political leaders and actors in the political process, and comprehension of what is at stake in politics (Nie, Junn, and Stehlik-Barry, 1996). It is an additive index of the correct answers to each of the following nine questions about national politics and government:⁹

- *If you happen to know, what are the names of the United States Senators from [respondent's state]?¹⁰*
- *Could you tell me the name of the Congressman or Congresswoman from this district?*
- *What about the name of the person who is your state representative to the [respondent's state]? Do you happen to know your representative's name?*

⁹ A principal components analysis of the 10 items identified three separate components, the first which included knowing the school head and state representative, the second which included knowledge about civil liberties, primary elections, and democracy, and the third which included the remaining 5 questions dealing with the federal government. All three of these components were significantly correlated with an overall measure of political participation, with correlations of .18, .17 and .41, respectively. Thus, all 10 items are included in an overall knowledge scale with no weighting, and this same measure of knowledge is used in each of the models. See also Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) and Nie, Junn, and Stehlik-Barry (1996) for similar use of additive indices using these knowledge variables.

¹⁰ One point is given for each correct Senator named.

- *What is the name of the head of the local public school system?*
- *On average over the past few years, did the federal government spend more money on the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) or Social Security?*
- *Does the Fifth Amendment to the American Constitution mainly guarantee citizens protection against forced confessions, or mainly guarantee freedom of speech?*
- *Who was mainly behind the increased use of primary elections in the United States to choose candidates: party "bosses" who can use them to control nominations, or reformers who want the voters to choose party candidates themselves?*
- *When people talk about "civil liberties," do they usually mean the right to vote and run for office, or freedom of speech, press, and assembly?*
- *Which is the major difference between democracies and dictatorships: that democratic governments allow private property, or that democratic governments allow citizens to choose their representatives freely?*

This index created a reliable measure of political knowledge (Cronbach's alpha = .63), and had a range from 0 to 10.

Political Interest

Closely related to political knowledge is interest in the world of politics. In fact, distinctions are not often made between knowledge and interest in discussions of the psychology of political participation. Without political interest, there is little motivation to gather political information. However, the two concepts have been measured separately in many surveys of political attitudes and behavior. The conclusion about political interest, drawn countless times in the literature of political behavior, is that low levels of it go hand-in-hand with the absence of political involvement (Campbell, et al.

1960; Bennett 1986; Flanigan and Zingale 1994; Verba and Nie 1972; Milbrath and Goel 1977; Luttbeg and Gant 1995). Both contemporary and historical reviews of voter turnout in the U.S. have attributed periods of decline to circumstances of reduced political interest (Flanigan and Zingale 1994).

This correlation perhaps provides some empirical evidence for political theorists who have argued the importance of an interested citizenry. A long tradition of democratic theorists, including Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1986) and John Stuart Mill (1988), have asserted that interest and engagement by the nation's citizens are central to the workings of a successful democracy. The arguments are continued in contemporary times by Jane Mansbridge (1983), Carole Pateman (1970), and Benjamin Barber (1984). This theoretical concern is understandable given that a governmental system based upon widespread citizen participation stands to lose a great deal if its citizens do not focus their attentions upon political matters.

The measurement of political interest in the field of political science has varied from survey to survey. Some questions ask about interest in a particular political campaign, while others have queried more general interest in local and national politics (Bennett 1986). Regardless of differences in question wording, the relationship between participation and interest has remained. Beyond voter turnout, other links between interest and participation have also been found. Campaign activities, letter writing, protest activities and other nonelectoral activities on both the local and national level have shown strong relationships to political interest (Bennett 1986; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995).

This study measures political interest with two general questions:

- *Thinking about your local community, how interested are you in local community politics and local community affairs? Are you very interested, somewhat interested, slightly interested, or not at all interested?*
- *How interested are you in national politics and national affairs? Are you very interested, somewhat interested, slightly interested, or not at all interested?*

A summated rating scale was created by adding the responses to the two questions, with zero points for each question given for the response “not at all interested”, one point given for “slightly interested”, two points given for “somewhat interested”, and three points given for the response “very interested”. The scale had a range from 0 to 6, and was reliable (Chronbach’s alpha = 0.75).¹¹

Political Efficacy

The concept of political efficacy, much like political interest, has been identified as an important component of psychological involvement in politics (Conway 1991). The importance of political efficacy perhaps lies in the fact that it has been taken as a sign of the well-being of our democratic system (Craig, Niemi, and Silver 1990). Because a basic principle of democracy is that citizens can effect change and make an impact on their government, widespread belief among the populace to the contrary is considered cause for concern.

Two different forms of efficacy, internal and external, have emerged through numerous investigations of the concept (Abramson 1983; Craig, Niemi, Silver 1990; Niemi, Craig, Mattei 1991), but both are related to political involvement. Internal

¹¹ The measures of local and national political interest had similar relationships to an overall measure of political participation, with correlations of .46 and .42, respectively.

efficacy is the belief that one can understand and effectively take part in politics, whereas external efficacy is the belief that one's representatives will listen and react to citizen demands (Abramson 1983). Both concepts have been found to have a positive relationship to political participation (Petrocik and Shaw 1991; Crotty 1991; Conway 1991; Verba, Schlozman, Brady 1995; Verba and Nie 1972; Campbell, et al. 1960). In addition, some research has shown that political activities which require a greater effort, such as campaign work, letter writing, or protesting, are more strongly related to efficacy (Verba and Nie 1972; Milbrath and Goel 1977).

This study measures political efficacy as a whole, as well as distinguishing its two components. In addition, it combines attitudes about both local and national government. The overall measure is a summated rating scale created from the following four questions:¹²

- *If you had some complaint about a local government activity and took that complaint to a member of the local government council, do you think that he or she would pay a lot of attention to what you say, some attention, very little attention, or none at all?*
- *If you had some complaint about a national government activity and took that complaint to a member of the national government, do you think that he or she would pay a lot of attention to what you say, some attention, very little attention, or none at all?*
- *How much influence do you think someone like you can have over local government decisions—a lot, some, very little, or none at all?*

¹² When the four items were included in a principal components analysis they loaded onto one factor, with factor loadings ranging from .72 to .82.

- *How much influence do you think someone like you can have over national government decisions—a lot, a moderate amount, a little, or none at all?*

Zero points for each question was given for the response “none at all”, one point for the response “a little” or “very little”, two points for responses of “a moderate amount” or “some”, and three points for each response of “a lot”. This scale had a range from 0 to 12, and was highly reliable (Cronbach’s alpha = .78). In addition, the two questions about the attention one would receive from local and national governmental officials were combined with the same point structure as detailed above to create a measure of external efficacy. Similarly, the two questions about one’s influence over local and national governmental decisions were combined to measure internal efficacy.

Although these three types of political engagement, knowledge, interest, and efficacy, are distinct concepts which can be clearly defined and measured separately, there is a great deal of overlap between them with respect to their relationship to participation. Higher levels of each yield higher levels of political involvement; however, engagement factors are also likely to wield influence on each other (Hofstetter, Sticht, and Hofstetter 1999). For example, knowledge can generate interest, which can in turn lead to more knowledge (Jennings 1996). Likewise, efficacy and interest are logically interconnected, with a change in one likely to influence the level of the other (Bennett 1986). Because of their close relationships, political engagements will at times be discussed as a unit, especially in reference to their influence on political participation. However, in all empirical tests they will be distinguished from each other, as there is much less known about the relationships between knowledge, interest, or efficacy and the various factors related to being in the paid workforce.

Gender Orientations

In 1988, Miller, Hildreth, and Simmons, in their work on feminist consciousness, stated, "How an individual woman feels about other women and the place of women in society more generally may be very important for her political behavior" (107). Research throughout the last decade has confirmed what they suspected: the development of a feminist consciousness has a political impact on both women's attitudes about politics and the amount and type of political activity they undertake. In general, women's feminist consciousness has been linked to several public policy attitudes, including negative emotional reactions to the Gulf War (Conover and Sapiro 1992b), support for preferential hiring for blacks and other aid to minorities (Conover and Sapiro 1992a, Tolleson Rinehart 1992), support for abortion rights (Conover and Sapiro 1992a; Conway, Steuernagel, and Ahern 1997) and domestic welfare programs (Miller, Hildreth and Simmons 1988; Conway, Steuernagel, and Ahern 1997), and preference for defense spending cuts (Tolleson Rinehart 1992). Attitudes toward candidates and political parties have also evidenced a relationship to feminist consciousness, with greater support for the Democratic party and more liberal/Democratic candidates found among those with feminist consciousness (Klein 1984; Miller, Hildreth, and Simmons 1988; Tolleson Rinehart 1992; Cooke 1993). Additionally, more negative evaluations of Republican presidents have been positively correlated with greater feminist consciousness (Conover and Sapiro 1992a, Klein 1984).

Positive correlations with higher levels of political involvement have also been found for feminist consciousness (Klein 1984; Miller et al. 1981; Tolleson Rinehart 1992; Conway, Steuernagel, and Ahern 1997). Conway and colleagues (1997) found that

those exhibiting a feminist consciousness turned out to vote in greater numbers in every presidential election from 1972 to 1992. Similarly, Miller and colleagues (1981) found that feminist consciousness promoted both electoral participation, such as voting, and nonelectoral participation, including contacting politicians, signing petitions, and working with others to solve political problems. Furthermore, Tolleson Rinehart (1992) found that women who believed that men and women should have equal roles in society, as well as those who identified with women as a group, were more likely to perform numerous political acts, including campaign work, attending political meetings, influencing others to vote, and voting in the presidential election (see also Tolleson-Rinehart, Gilmour, Hood, and Shirkey 1996). Her findings established a consistent pattern revealing that feminist conscious women were more participatory.

In this study, it is not possible to adequately measure women's feminist consciousness due to a lack of measures available in the data set. Instead, three separate indicators of "gender orientations" are used, which are drawn from three questions that have been used in the past as measures of feminist consciousness. The first is an indicator of women's closeness to other women, and was measured with the following question:

- *If you think about the groups you feel particularly close to—people who are most like you in their ideas, interests, and feelings about things—do you feel a lot closer to women than men, somewhat closer, or is there no difference in how close you feel to women and men?*

A dummy variable was created for this analysis, with one point given for those reporting they felt “a lot” or “somewhat” closer to women, and zero points given for those who felt “no difference” or closer to men.¹³

The second item measured women’s awareness of problems they face as a group, and their interest in working together to solve these problems. The question was asked as follows:

- *If you think about women as a group, are there problems of special concern to women which they need to work together to solve?*

Affirmative responses to this question were given the value of one, while negative responses were assigned a value of zero.

The third measure of gender orientations used in the analysis assesses involvement in women’s organizations. Respondents were asked to report on all organizations in which they were somehow involved, including being members, making monetary contributions, attending meetings, or being otherwise active. The questions asked about types of organizations (e.g. women’s organizations, veteran’s organizations, organizations for senior citizens, etc.), rather than asking respondents to name each specific organization. From these responses a dummy variable was created, with a value of one given to those who reported at least one form of involvement with a women’s organization and with zero used to indicate no such involvement.

In general, women’s organizations can be from either side of the political spectrum, or entirely non-political. For example, in addition to women’s organizations

¹³ This variable was dichotomized due to the low frequency (less than 10%) of respondents reporting they felt “a lot” closer to women.

formed within political parties or around political issues, non-political organizations may include those based upon women's health issues, such as La Leche League, women's counterparts to men's clubs like the Masons or Kiwanis, and women's athletic groups or hobby clubs organized around common interests, such as biking, gardening, book clubs, and sewing or quilting groups. Unfortunately, details about the exact type of organizations included in this variable are not available in the data set. However, due to the wide range of organizational involvement captured with this measure it should also be regarded with caution.¹⁴

Ideally, better measures of gender orientations would be used for this sort of analysis, especially those allowing for greater distinction between feminist and non-feminist attitudes. However, limitations of the data set confine analysis to these three items. Therefore, the quantitative findings about gender orientations must be considered tentative, with a need for more robust measures in future studies to complement the analyses to follow.

Political Participation

In examining the relationships between political participation and both gender orientations and political engagements, three separate measures of participation are investigated, one overall measure and two which distinguish between individual and group-based activities. Individual acts are those which can be performed alone, without contact with others. By contrast, group-based activities are those in which one usually works in consort with others. Often studies of political participation distinguish local

¹⁴ All types of involvement with a women's organization was collapsed into one category due to the low frequency of individuals reporting any form of involvement.

from national level forms of political involvement. However, theoretical considerations establish the need for an alternative distinction in forms of participation.

First, some evidence has been found that group-based activities are more heavily influenced by social contexts. For example, the social status of the neighborhood has been found to affect socially-based participation, whereas no effect on individual acts was found (Giles and Dantico 1982, Huckfeldt 1979). Because the workplace is one specific social context in which individuals can be influenced by those in their social environment, it will be useful to compare the effect of it on group activities separately from individually-based activities. Secondly, group-based activities are often more time consuming than individually-performed participatory acts. Time may be an important factor for working women in evaluating their opportunities for political involvement, as they all devote at least some hours each week to their employment. Earlier research has found that the availability of and control over free-time serves to increase political involvement beyond that which would otherwise be expected (Schlozman, Burns, Verba 1994; Burns, Schlozman, Verba 1997; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995).

The index of individual participation included the following 6 political acts: voting in local elections, voting in national elections, serving on or attending meetings of a local council, donating money to a national election, contacting an elected official, and donating money to a political organization. The index had a range from 0 to 6, with 1

point given for each form of activity. The reliability of the index was high (Chronbach's $\alpha = 0.69$).¹⁵

The group-based participation index was created from measures of the following 4 political activities: protesting, volunteering on an electoral campaign, being a member of a political organization, and working informally with members of a community to solve a community problem. This index ranged from 0 to 4, and had a more modest level of reliability (Chronbach's $\alpha = 0.46$).¹⁶ The lower reliability of this measure calls for caution in interpreting the findings as they relate to this scale. Similar analyses with a more robust measure would strengthen the confidence of the results.

In addition to measures distinguishing individual from group-based participation, an index of overall participation was also created which combined all 10 forms of political activity. This index had a range from 0 to 10, and was very reliable (Chronbach's $\alpha = 0.73$).¹⁷

Demographic Variables

In assessing the relationship between the antecedents to participation and participation itself, several demographic variables shown to have an independent relationship to participation must also be taken into account. The first is age. In general, age has been found to have a positive relationship to participation, with older individuals

¹⁵ A principal components analysis produced two separate factors, with the two voting activities distinguished from the other four acts. However, all six items loaded onto the first component with loadings ranging from .53 to .74, suggesting a common dimension in this component.

¹⁶ Each of these four items loaded onto one factor in a principal components analysis, with loadings ranging from .52 to .76. The reliability analysis demonstrated that removing any of the four items from the scale *reduced* the reliability of the index.

¹⁷ In a principal components analysis the ten items produced three components, however eight of the ten items loaded onto one of the components with factor loadings above .50. The two items below this level were protesting (.37) and campaign work (.45). In their seminal work, Verba and Nie (1972) similarly found a common first component in 13 participatory acts, with factor loadings ranging from .45 to .68.

more likely to be political involved than younger individuals. However, among the very old, participation again becomes more unlikely due to health-related and mobility factors (Campbell, et al. 1960, Flanigan and Zingale 1994, Conway 1991, Verba and Nie 1972). The measure of age used in this analysis is a continuous variable representing number of years old, ranging in this sample from 19 to 80 years. Because the sample is comprised of only individuals who are working, the few older individuals in the study, over age 64 (N=15), did not demonstrate a decline in participation, as has been found in earlier research (Campbell, et al. 1960, Verba and Nie 1972).¹⁸

In addition to age, two other demographic factors important to political activity are also included in the analysis, both of which relate to socio-economic status. As detailed in Chapter 1, those with a higher social status, as measured by education or household income have a much greater likelihood of participating in politics (Verba and Nie 1972; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Nie, Junn, and Stehlik-Barry 1996). The measure of education used in the analysis is a categorical variable indicating the highest grade of school completed, and ranges from 7th grade through 5th year of college or higher. Household income is measured as a 16 category variable, with the lowest category representing those with an annual household income under \$5,000, and the highest category for those with annual household incomes of \$200,000 or more.¹⁹

¹⁸ In fact, their level of participation was higher. Those over age 64 had a mean score of 3.38 on the overall participation index, compared to a score of 3.04 for those younger than age 65. A t-test found that this difference was not statistically significant ($p=.53$).

¹⁹ The women in the sample had an average age of 40 years (s.d. 11.7). Just over 4 in 10 had no more than a high school education, 16% had completed 4 years of college, and 13% had 5 years or more of college. Approximately half the sample (47%) reported household earnings below \$35,000 per year, with fewer than 10% earning less than \$10,000, or more than \$74,999. When compared with the women, the men

Levels of Engagement and Participation

With respect to the political engagement variables, the women in the sample had, on average, a moderate level of political engagement (Table 1). Their mean score on the political knowledge scale was 4.55 (s.d.=2.1). Only three percent could not correctly answer any of the political knowledge questions, two-thirds could answer between three and six questions correctly, and 18% knew the answers to seven or more of the ten questions. The sample had a mean score on the political interest scale of 3.68 (s.d.=1.5), with a mode of 4. Only 4% of the sample scored a zero, indicating no interest in local or national politics, and 14% scored a 6, indicating they were very interested in both local and national political affairs. Similarly, scores on the political efficacy scales were clustered around the middle range. The mean score on the overall scale was 5.32 (s.d.=2.4), and 73% of the sample had scores between 4 and 8. The remaining scores were more heavily represented on the lower end of the scale (19%), than on the upper end (7%), indicating that few had high levels of political efficacy, whereas almost 1-in-5 had very low levels. External efficacy, or the belief that governmental institutions are responsive to citizens, was higher among this group than internal efficacy. The average score on the internal efficacy scale was 2.37, while the average on the external efficacy scale was 2.96.

On the whole, the men in the sample demonstrated a greater level of political engagement than the women. Men scored almost one point higher on the political knowledge scale, and had slightly higher levels of political interest and efficacy.

exhibited very similar demographic characteristics, with slightly fewer holding a high school diploma, slightly more earning less than \$35,000 annually, and an average age of just 2 years younger.

However, when the two components of efficacy were examined separately, the difference between genders was found to be primarily attributable to men's greater sense of internal efficacy. By contrast, the difference between men's and women's external efficacy scores was half a large.

A wide range of gender attitudes and orientations were also represented by the women in the sample. Sixteen percent reported being involved with a women's organization. In addition, 31% reported feeling at least somewhat close to women as a group, and 83% believed that women have unique problems that they need to work together to solve.

Table 1: Comparison of White, Working Women and Men on Political Engagements, Gender Orientations, and Participation

Political Engagement	Women	Men	N Women	N Men
Political Knowledge Scale score, mean (sd)	4.55 (2.1)	5.42 (2.1)	577	696
Political Interest Scale score, mean (sd)	3.68 (1.5)	3.99 (1.4)	622	771
Political Efficacy Scale score, mean (sd)	5.32 (2.4)	5.66 (2.1)	616	773
Internal Efficacy score, mean (sd)	2.37 (1.4)	2.58 (1.3)	620	774
External Efficacy score, mean (sd)	2.96 (1.3)	3.08 (1.2)	619	774
Political Participation				
Overall Participation Scale score, mean (sd)	3.05 (2.1)	3.44 (2.2)	599	756
Group-based Participation Scale score, mean (sd)	.55 (0.8)	.63 (.8)	622	774
Individual Participation Scale score, mean (sd)	2.49 (1.5)	2.81 (1.6)	601	756
Gender Orientations				
Member of women's organization (% Y)	16%	N/A	624	N/A
Closeness to women (% somewhat or very close)	31%	N/A	620	N/A
Awareness of women's problems (%Y)	83%	N/A	611	N/A

In terms of political participation, most women in the sample reported undertaking some form of political action, with individual activities performed at a higher rate than group-based activities. On average, more than 2 individual acts were reported (mean=2.49, s.d.=1.5), but less than one group-based activity was performed (mean=0.55, s.d.=0.8). Furthermore, while only 13% of respondents reported no individual political involvement, 61% reported no group-based political activity. Clearly, group-based activities are less attractive forms of political involvement for the white,

working women in this sample. The men were slightly more active in politics than the women, with a greater difference found for individual activities than for group-based acts. For both working men and women, group-based acts may be too burdensome with respect to the time they have available for political participation.

Bivariate Relationships

The bivariate relationships between the three participation variables and the political engagement measures and gender orientation measures were examined by way of Pearson's correlation coefficients and T-tests. The brief review of previous research in the earlier sections of this chapter indicated that the following relationships should be evident:

- H1: Higher levels of education will be correlated with higher rates of political participation.
- H2: Higher levels of household income will be correlated with higher rates of political participation.
- H3: Older age will be correlated with higher rates of political participation.
- H4: Higher levels of political knowledge will be correlated with higher rates of political participation.
- H5: Higher levels of political interest will be correlated with higher rates of political participation.
- H6: Higher levels of political efficacy will be correlated with higher rates of political participation.
- H7: Members of women's organizations will have higher rates of political participation.

H8: Those who feel close to women will have higher rates of political participation.

H9: Those with an awareness of women's problems will have higher rates of political participation.

The three demographic variables were all significantly and positively correlated with the overall participation measure, with education demonstrating the highest correlation ($r=.35$), followed by household income ($r=.31$) and age ($r=.23$) (Table 2). Older and better educated individuals, and those with higher household incomes were more likely to be involved in politics, supporting the first three hypotheses. Similar correlations were found for these variables and the measure of individual participation; however, weaker relationships were found between group-based participation and the demographic variables. Nevertheless, both education ($r=.25$) and household income ($r=.18$) were still significantly correlated. Age demonstrated a very weak and statistically insignificant relationship to group-based participation ($r=.07$).

For men, the strength of the correlations between participation and the demographic variables was nearly identical to that found for the women, with one exception. Age was significantly correlated with group-based participation for men, while the correlation did not reach statistical significance for women. However, for men the correlation between these two variables was by far the weakest among the demographic variables examined.

Table 2: Bivariate Relationships between Participation and Demographics, Gender Orientations, and Political Engagements

Demographics	Overall Participation ¹		Group-based Participation		Individual Participation	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Age	.23**	.24**	.07	.13**	.28**	.27**
Education: Highest Grade of School Completed	.35**	.34**	.25**	.26**	.34**	.34**
Household Income	.31**	.30**	.18**	.18**	.32**	.32**
Gender Orientations						
Women's Organizational Involvement ²		N/A		N/A		N/A
Yes (mean score)	4.02**		.90**		3.11**	
No (mean score)	2.86		.49		2.37	
Closeness to women ²		N/A		N/A		N/A
Yes (mean score)	3.16		.65*		2.51	
No (mean score)	3.00		.51		2.48	
Awareness of women's problems ²		N/A		N/A		N/A
Yes (mean score)	3.12		.60**		2.52	
No (mean score)	2.78		.35		2.43	
Political Engagement						
Political Knowledge	.42**	.42**	.25**	.33**	.43**	.41**
Political Interest	.49**	.48**	.33**	.31**	.48**	.48**
Overall Political Efficacy	.33**	.35**	.22**	.26**	.33**	.34**
Internal Efficacy	.37**	.32**	.25**	.25**	.36**	.31**
External Efficacy	.20**	.29**	.13**	.21**	.20**	.28**
* Significant at $p < 0.05$						
** Significant at $p < 0.01$ level						
¹ Correlation coefficients unless otherwise noted.						
² T-test						

As hypothesized, all of the political engagement measures were significantly and positively correlated with all three of the participation measures. As expected, higher

rates of political knowledge, interest, and efficacy were associated with higher rates of political participation. The strongest relationship was found for political interest in all three cases, followed in turn by knowledge and efficacy. Again, the measures of overall participation and individual participation demonstrated the strongest correlations.

A few notable differences between men and women were found in the strength of the correlations for the engagement variables. First, a stronger relationship was found for men than for women between political knowledge and group-based participation. For men, information about politics is nearly equally important across all three types of political participation. For women, however, their level of knowledge about office-holders and general principles of democracy has less of a relationship to their participation in group-based activities.

Secondly, for women internal efficacy was more strongly related to both overall and individual participation than it was for men. By contrast, for men external efficacy had a higher correlation with all three participation variables than it did for women. This indicates that for women their sense of their own ability to make a difference in the political realm is more closely related to their decision to participate in politics. Whereas for men, both forms of efficacy bear a similar relationship to participation, and the extent to which they believe officials will listen to them has a stronger relationship to their political activity than it does for women.

Upon examination of the gender orientation measures for the women in the sample a less clear pattern emerged. For all three participation measures, those who reported involvement with a women's organization had significantly higher rates of political participation, thus providing support for hypothesis 7. However, women's

closeness to other women was only related to the measure of group-based participation, partially supporting hypothesis 8. This indicates that those women who felt a closeness to other women were more likely to be involved in group-based political activism, such as protesting and working with others on the community level. Additionally, those women with an awareness of women's unique problems were only more likely to score higher on the group-based participation scale supporting, in part, hypothesis 9. Because the gender orientation measures have a notion of women as a collective group embedded within them, it is logical that both measures are related to group-based participation. Those who think in terms of group orientations may also be more likely to take action in a group setting.

Regression Analyses

Given that the independent variables may influence each other, multiple regression analysis was used to test for the independent effects of each of these eight variables on women's political participation. Separate analyses were conducted for each of the three participation measures (Table 3).²⁰

The eight variables as a group explained 39% of the variance in overall participation. Two of the three demographic variables had significant coefficients. Specifically, the coefficients for education and age were significant and positive, indicating that as education level and age increase, so too does political participation.

²⁰ Men's political participation is not tested with this model given that the gender orientation variables are not applicable to men, thus dictating a different model specification. However, this is not to say that gender orientations do not matter for men's participation. Men's gender orientations may, in fact, be highly related to their political involvement, but variables appropriate for men to test this hypothesis were not available in the data set.

Household income also showed a positive relationship to overall participation, although it was not significant after controlling for the other variables in the model.

Table 3: Regression of Women's Political Participation on Demographics, Gender Orientations, and Political Engagements: OLS Regression Coefficients

VARIABLES	Overall Participation N=493	Group-based Participation N=512	Individual Participation N=493
Demographics	b, (se(b)), Beta	b, (se(b)), Beta	b, (se(b)), Beta
Household Income	.04, (.03), .06	.00, (.01), .02	.03, (.02), .06
Education	.15, (.04), .16 ***	.04, (.02), .12 **	.11, (.030), .16 ***
Age	.04, (.01), .20 ***	.00, (.00), .04	.03, (.01), .25 ***
Gender Orientations			
Women's organizational involvement	.39, (.19), .08 *	.16, (.09), .08 *	.23, (.14), .06
Closeness to women	-.08, (.16), -.02	.08, (.07), .05	-.16, (.12), -.05
Awareness of women's problems	.07, (.21), .01	.11, (.09), .05	-.06, (.16), -.01
Political Engagement			
Political Knowledge	.16, (.04), .17 ***	.04, (.02), .10 **	.12, (.03), .17 ***
Political Interest	.37, (.05), .28 ***	.12, (.03), .22 ***	.26, (.04), .25 ***
Internal Political Efficacy	.22, (.06), .16 ***	.05, (.03), (.09) *	.17, (.05), .17 ***
External Political Efficacy	-.06, .07, -.04	-.01, (.03), -.02	-.04, (.05), -.03
	Adj. R-Sq.=.39	Adj. R-Sq.=.17	Adj. R-Sq.=.39
* p≤ 0.10; *p≤ 0.05; **p≤ 0.01; ***p≤ 0.001 .			

Three of the four political engagement variables had significant positive coefficients, indicating that higher levels of each are related to higher rates of overall participation. External political efficacy was not related to participation, and had a coefficient in the direction opposite of what was predicted. Women's sense of the

responsiveness of political leaders was not predictive of their political activity, after the other variables were controlled.

Only one of the gender orientation measures, involvement with a women's organization, was significantly related to overall political participation. By contrast, neither feelings of closeness towards women nor an awareness of women's problems significantly predicted participation. It appears that women's psychological orientation towards women had no impact on their political activity, but contact with other women through group involvement did.

The standardized Beta coefficients indicated that political interest was by far the strongest predictor of overall participation, followed by age, education, and political knowledge. Involvement with a women's organization was the weakest of the six variables with significant coefficients.

The findings for individually-based participation were very similar to those for overall participation. A total of 39% of the variance in individual participation was explained by the eight variables. Again, both education and age had significant and positive coefficients of a magnitude similar to that found for overall participation. Household income was not a significant predictor of participation, although the coefficient was in the expected direction.

Higher levels of the same three political engagements also significantly predicted higher levels of political participation at the individual level, with political interest having the largest coefficient, followed by knowledge and internal efficacy. External efficacy was unrelated to individual participation, with a coefficient in the opposite of the predicted direction, as was the case for overall participation.

All three of the gender orientation variables were unrelated to the measure of individual participation, and only one was in the expected direction, namely involvement with a women's organization. Clearly, once controlling for the engagement measures, women's orientations towards other women are not useful in predicting these types of political activities. The standardized Betas showed that the coefficients for age and political interest were the two strongest predictors of individual participation.

The eight variables explained much less of the variance in group-based political participation (17%). Of the three demographic variables, only the coefficient for education was significant, and it was positive in direction. Both household income and age were positively related to group-based participation, but were not statistically significant.

Only two of the four political engagement variables, interest and knowledge, predicted group-based participation, although the coefficient for internal political efficacy just missed statistical significance. For group-based participation, women's sense of the potential effectiveness of their actions is less important than their knowledge and interest in politics.

With respect to the gender orientation variables, each demonstrated a positive relationship to group-based political activity, although only the coefficient for involvement with a women's organization came close to statistical significance ($p=0.10$). Thus, the gender orientation measures were, as a group, poor predictors of group-based political activism. The Beta coefficient for political interest was the largest, at .22, as was the case for the other two participation measures, followed in turn by education, and political knowledge.

Conclusions

Of the ten variables tested for a relationship to white, working women's political participation, several were found to predict none of the three measures of political participation: household income, feelings of closeness towards other women, an awareness of women's problems, and external political efficacy. This finding for household income is surprising given the strength of the relationship demonstrated in much previous research between socio-economic factors and political participation. It is possible that much of the predictive power of this variable is encompassed in the measure for education. More likely, it may be the case that for working women, their own earnings bear a stronger relationship to political participation than does the total income obtained from all of their household members. The next chapter will begin to test this hypothesis when personal income, considered a structural feature of the workplace, is examined for a relationship to the engagement and gender orientation variables.

In general, three measures of political engagement exhibited a strong relationship to political participation, with political interest found to be the strongest predictor, followed by knowledge and internal efficacy. However, internal efficacy was relevant only to the measures of overall and individual participation. Apparently, feelings of whether they can have an impact on politics are unimportant to women decision's to take part in group-based activities, whereas they are a relevant consideration when participating in a political act on one's own.

In none of the three models was external efficacy predictive of political participation. It appears that women's sense of their own capabilities is more important

to their decision to become politically involved than is their evaluation of political leaders' responsiveness to them.

The gender orientation measures produced a pattern opposite of that found for the engagement measures. Only involvement with a women's organization was at or near significance as a predictor of participation, and only for two of the three models. This variable was not even close to significance in the model of individual participation. The strength of the other variables' relationships to participation and the lack of better measures for gender orientations in the survey are two likely reasons for the lack of significant findings.

As a whole, these findings indicate that the factors which predict men's and women's political participation may not overlap entirely. Household income and external political efficacy, two variables long found to be important to political participation, did not significantly predict any of the three participation measures for white, working women. In addition, their involvement with other women in organizational activity was positively associated with their political activity.

As a result of these differences, the following chapters will continue to examine women separately from men. The next two chapters will focus on the structural and contextual factors of the workplace to test for effects from working on the political engagement and gender orientation variables. Chapter 5 will return to a consideration of the measures of political participation, incorporating them with the other findings to determine the relevance of the workplace to political participation.

CHAPTER 3: Obtaining the Tools for Political Participation from the Structural Factors of the Workplace Environment

Individuals receive many concrete resources from their employment in the paid workforce that are important to political involvement. Without these resources, some forms of political activity are impossible. For example, campaign and other political contributions require access to money, and unless one is independently wealthy, or has access to other individuals' incomes, this money is received through paid work. Other resources do not generate solely from employment, but can be cultivated and developed at work, such as communication skills.

Many of these resources from working, identified as the structural factors associated with employment, have received considerable attention in previous studies of political behavior. Specifically, the skills developed through working and the status associated with a job have a long-established relationship to participation-related variables. However, other structural factors, such as the amount of authority one has on the job or one's personal income have been examined many fewer times for political implications. Additionally, most studies emphasize the effect of workplace resources on political activity, rather than on the precursors to participation.

In this chapter I describe the structural factors of the workplace and outline the way in which each factor is measured. Next, the relationships between these variables and the antecedents to participation are examined at the bivariate level for white, working men and women, and at the multivariate level for women only. The following provides a brief overview of the state of knowledge about each of the structural factors examined in

this analysis, and proceeds to test each factor for relationships to political engagements and gender orientations.

Personal Income

The wage one earns from a job has importance and meaning not only for the wage earner, but also in the larger social and political context. In her examination of the history of women's wages, Kessler-Harris delineated the many facets of its importance:

In its tangible form, as a paycheck or a wage packet, the wage tells us something about the nature of the labor market, the opportunities it offers and those it closes off. It speaks to the choices and aspirations of workers. As it is conceived and represented by interested third parties such as employers, policy makers, publicists, social scientists, and government investigators, the wage conveys a message of social and job-related expectations, appropriate roles, and social needs. It reflects the realities of the marketplace and demarcates the differences—real, imagined, resisted, and desired—between the sexes. To the individual who earns it, the wage is simultaneously an object of struggle and a source of personal satisfaction and achievement. It is a public statement about the self and tangible evidence of social value and approval bestowed on each of us by the world (1990, 4).

Historically, the wage has been bound up with notions of citizenship and gender relations (Kessler-Harris 1990; Sigel 1996; Reskin and Padavic 1994). In the 1920s, women were prevented from earning enough at a full-time job to be self-sufficient, thereby relegating them to a limited and subordinated citizen status vis à vis men (Kessler-Harris 1990). In addition, the wage has important implications for power relations within the family. The traditional "male breadwinner" model is challenged when women earn a salary, and oftentimes wage-earning women have a higher status and greater decision-making power within their family (Sigel 1996; Reskin and Padavic 1994).

Despite the many social concepts tied up with one's personal income, the empirical evidence about its relationship to political participation is sparse. Once

demographic and other work-related variables were controlled, two studies found that the financial rewards from working did not have a significant relationship to participation at the individual level, although it was shown to have some effect on political alienation (Delli Carpini 1986; Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1999).

Other research has examined the percentage of one's individual contribution to total household income for a political effect, to test whether a greater political impact yields when one has more control over the income. The conclusions drawn were that political activity is primarily affected by overall household income, rather than by an individual's contribution towards it (Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1994; Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 1997). Only the amount of money given to political causes was found to be related to the percentage individuals contribute to household income (Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1994).

Although a relationship directly with political participation has not been found, it is possible that one's personal earnings have an impact on the antecedents to participation, such as political engagements or gender orientations. For example, one may feel more efficacious about political matters when personally earning the financial resources to participate in politics. This effect and others are examined with a 19 category personal income variable. The lowest category represents those with an income under \$1,000, while the highest category demarcates those with personal incomes of \$200,000 or more.

Job Skills

What one is asked to do for a particular job provides or cultivates certain skills that are directly transferable to the political arena. Traditionally, the civic skills

identified as relevant for political involvement have been clustered around communication activities, such as writing letters, speaking on the phone or in public settings, and organizing others for meetings or problem-solving purposes. When compared to other organizational settings, such as religious and nonpolitical groups, the workplace has been found to provide the greatest number of opportunities for the development of these types of civic skills (Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1994; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995).

Job skills have exceeded numerous other aspects of the workplace environment in their power to predict political involvement. Skills have demonstrated a stronger relationship to participation than measures of workplace decision-making, occupational prestige, and job training requirements (Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1994; Freedman and Rosenstone 1995). However, the impact of skills on participation is not a universal phenomenon. Job skills have been found to be especially relevant for particular political acts, including involvement in meetings, contacts with public officials, the expression of views to businesses, and participation in campaign activities (Freedman and Rosenstone 1995). Skills have also demonstrated significant relationships to measures of external efficacy and group membership (Freedman and Rosenstone 1995). Additionally, the acquisition of skills on the job has the *greatest* importance for the *least* educated, who may not have developed skills for political involvement through traditional educational settings (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). Furthermore, studies which disaggregate men and women have found, in some cases, skills to be important to citizens of both genders (Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1994), and in other cases, to have effects only on

women's political activity (Schlozman, Burns, Verba 1999), depending upon the variables used in the models.²¹

The measure of job skills used in this study is an additive index devised from the following set of questions:

- *Here is a list of things that people sometimes have to do as part of their jobs. After I read each one, please tell me whether or not you have engaged in that activity in the last six months as part of your job. Have you written a letter?*
- *Gone to a meeting where you took part in making decisions?*
- *Planned or chaired a meeting?*
- *Given a presentation or speech?*

One point was given for each activity for which the reply was affirmative.²² The measure had a range from 0 to 4, and was very reliable (Chronbach's alpha = .76).

Occupational Status

Occupations can be categorized into groups of jobs, based upon job title or description, with job classifications similar to those developed by the U.S. Census Bureau in the 1960s. Measures of occupational status are usually five to ten point scales, ranging from professional occupations to unskilled laborers. Once ranked, jobs within each category are associated with a similar social status. Studies which have used such rankings to compare levels of political behavior have found that those in higher status jobs are more highly participatory in political affairs (Milbrath and Goel 1977; Verba and

²¹ The authors speculated that in their 1999 study men's political activity may not have been affected because of a variable for job supervision included in the model, which was not used in the earlier study. Job supervision had a highly significant effect on men's activity, but not women's.

²² In a principal components analysis these four variables loaded onto one factor, with factor loadings ranging from .70 to .81.

Nie 1972). Various measures of occupational status have also demonstrated relationships to attitudinal measures associated with participation, including political alienation, attentiveness to politics, efficacy, civic involvement, and knowledge about politics (Verba and Nie 1972; Delli Carpini 1986).

Some studies have created measures of job status based upon the amount of education and training needed to do a job. These measures usually range from jobs requiring only a high school diploma and less than a month of on-the-job training, to jobs requiring a graduate degree, or a college degree and 2 years of training. In general, these studies have found that such measures have no impact on political participation (Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1994; 1999). In addition, disparity in job level between husbands and wives using this type of measure has evidenced no impact on either partner's level of political activity (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 1997).

The measure of occupational status used in this study has five categories grouped according to U.S. Census classifications, with jobs in each category ranking similarly in terms of their average level of income and educational requirements.²³ The 5 categories, from lowest status to highest, are: (1) unskilled laborers and service workers, (2) skilled laborers, (3) clerical and sales workers, (4) managers and administrators, and (5) professional and technical workers.

²³ See Powers (1982) for a detailed description of the methods used to originally develop the occupational categories used by the Census Bureau in the 1960s, and for an empirical demonstration of the similar social status scores for the occupations grouped into the categories used in this study. However, by following this convention for assigning occupational status some error is inevitable. For example, some managerial and administrative occupations may be of a higher status than some professional and technical jobs, although they are assigned one status level lower.

Authority

Notions of authority, autonomy, and self-determination in the workplace have often been theorized to have bearing on political participation (Almond and Verba 1963; Pateman 1970). This linkage is believed to lie in the “practice” of participation—decision-making involvement in one institutional setting (i.e., the workplace) primes one for such involvement in another (i.e., politics). Recent empirical tests of this theory have been rare and varied, ranging from in-depth investigations of a particular workplace (Elden 1981), to examinations of regional data (Freedman and Rosenstone 1995), to analyses of various sources of national data (Delli Carpini 1986; Schlozman, Burns and Verba 1999). The conclusions from these studies have been mixed.

A detailed examination of a specific manufacturing plant found that self-managed and more democratic workplace authority structures were positively related to feelings of political efficacy and confidence in control over one’s fate (Elden 1981). A study using national data found that high-quality work routines, including supervising and mentoring others at work, were related to membership in voluntary groups, but had no bearing on voting or levels of political alienation (Delli Carpini 1986). Other research found that being in a supervisory position at work promoted men’s political involvement, but had no impact on women’s (Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1999), while still other research found workplace decision-making to have no impact on political participation once job skills were controlled (Freedman and Rosenstone 1995).

The variations in these findings are undoubtedly due, in part, to inconsistency in the measurement of workplace authority. For this study, authority was measured as the

sum of the number of people supervised at work, both directly and indirectly.²⁴ In this sample, the measure of authority ranged from 0 to 229 people supervised.

Description of Structural Workplace Characteristics

The white, working women in the sample performed, on average, slightly less than two civic skills as part of their jobs (s.d.=1.5) (Table 4). About one-quarter (23%) practiced no job skills, and almost as many reported doing all four types of skills (22%). An examination of job status found that the sample was more often working in higher level jobs, such as professional and technical positions (30%), managerial or administrative jobs (17%), and clerical or sales positions (30%). Less than one-quarter of the sample worked as skilled labor (8%) or unskilled labor and service providers (14%). With respect to workplace authority, the mean number of individuals supervised was 4.9 (s.d.=22); however, two-thirds reported no supervisory activity as part of their jobs. On average, slightly less than half (45%) earned less than \$15,000 annually.

The men in the sample had a slightly higher number of skills performed on the job. They were more likely to be employed as skilled laborers, and less often in clerical or sales fields. As a group, they supervised on average ten more people than did the women, and fewer than one-in-five earned below \$15,000 annually. These differences and many others between men and women with respect to employment have been widely documented, and have been attributed to the sex segregation of occupations, systematic

²⁴ This measure was used in order to accurately rank someone in a high level position who may have only a few direct subordinates. However, this measure is biased based upon the size of the firm. Those people managing small firms, with few employees, have a great deal of authority in their workplace setting, but with this measure they are ranked among those with less authority in large firms. Unfortunately, the data do not provide a measure of the number of people employed at the firm in which the respondent works.

sex discrimination by employers, and the choices women must make to balance work and family.²⁵

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Structural Workplace Characteristics

Workplace Characteristics	Women	Men	N Women	N Men
Job Skills, mean (s.d.)	1.9 (1.5)	2.3 (1.5)	624	775
Job Status			592	718
% Unskilled laborer or service worker	14.3%	15.6%		
% Skilled laborer	8.0%	22.0%		
% Clerical or sales worker	30.2%	13.0%		
% Manager or administrator	17.0%	20.9%		
% Professional or technical worker	30.4%	28.6%		
Workplace Authority, mean (s.d.)	4.9 (22.2)	15.0 (60.3)	624	764
Personal Income, % Below \$15,000	45.3%	19.1%	588	726

Bivariate Relationships

The bivariate relationships between the participation antecedents and the demographic and structural workplace factors were tested with Pearson correlations, T-tests, and Chi-Square tests. The following relationships were hypothesized:

H1: Higher levels of job skills will be correlated with higher rates of political engagement.

H2: Higher job status will be correlated with higher rates of political engagement.

²⁵ For broad overviews of these issues, see Dubeck and Borman (1996), Jacobs (1995), Reskin and Padavic (1994), and Gerson (1985).

- H3: Greater authority at work will be correlated with higher rates of political engagement.
- H4: A higher personal income will be correlated with higher rates of political engagement.
- H5: Higher levels of job skills will be positively associated with gender orientations.
- H6: Higher job status will be positively associated with gender orientations.
- H7: Greater authority at work will be positively associated with gender orientations.
- H8: A higher personal income will be positively associated with gender orientations.

Table 5: Zero-order Correlations between Structural Factors and Political Engagements

Structural Factors	Political Knowledge		Political Interest		Internal Efficacy		External Efficacy	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Job Skills	.32**	.35 **	.31**	.29 **	.23**	.17**	.21**	.13**
Job Status	.27**	.35 **	.17**	.14 **	.21**	.16**	.21**	.10**
Workplace Authority	.05	.10 *	.05	.05	.12**	.05	.06	.07
Personal Income	.30**	.33**	.22**	.20**	.14**	.09	.16**	.02
** Significant at $p \leq 0.01$ * Significant at $p \leq 0.05$								

Two of the four structural workplace factors demonstrated consistent relationships to the political engagement variables (Table 5). Both the job skills and the job status measures had significant and positive zero-order correlation coefficients for all four dependent variables, findings supporting hypotheses one and two. The practice of more civic skills at work and working in higher status jobs is related to increased levels

of political knowledge, interest, and internal and external political efficacy. For both job skills and job status, the strongest relationship was found for political knowledge ($r=.35$).

In contrast, the measure of workplace authority was only significantly correlated with the political knowledge measure, and the strength of this correlation was weak ($r=.10$). Greater supervisory authority had no bearing on political interest, or the two measures of political efficacy. These coefficients were only slightly above zero. As a whole, the findings for workplace authority mounted higher on the side of rejecting than confirming hypothesis three. It may be the case that authority is poorly measured as the number of individuals one supervises. A measure which somehow taps into the number and/or types of *decisions* one makes on the job may better estimate workplace authority.

Personal income demonstrated a significant correlation in the positive direction with political knowledge and interest, but was not correlated with either form of political efficacy, supporting in part hypothesis four. Thus, those receiving more compensation from their jobs had higher rates of political knowledge and interest, but were no different from their less-compensated counterparts with respect to their feelings of personal political agency.

A few differences between men and women are worth noting. First, job status was much more strongly related to external efficacy ($r=.21$) than it was for women ($r=.10$). Secondly, workplace authority was not related to political knowledge for men, as it was for women, and instead it had a significant correlation with internal political efficacy ($r=.12$). For men, having more authority on the job had no impact on knowledge about politics, but was associated with their feelings of personal political impact. A third difference was found in the relationship between personal income and efficacy. Whereas

for women, income was not related to either efficacy measure, a significant correlation was found in both instances for men. In other words, men who earn more at their jobs are more likely to believe they can have an impact on politics and that elected officials are responsive to them ($r=.14$ and $r=.16$, respectively).

To test for bivariate relationships to the dichotomous gender orientation variables for women, T-tests and Chi-square statistics were examined (Table 6), as correlation coefficients are better suited for an examination of ordered categorical or continuous variables. Differences were found for several of the structural workplace factors. Those practicing a higher number of civic skills at work were significantly more likely to be involved in women's organizations, and to feel close to women or be aware of women's problems. These differences supported hypothesis five.

However, those holding managerial or professional jobs were significantly *less* likely to be involved with women's organizations or to have feeling of closeness towards other women, a difference opposite to that which was hypothesized. Only an awareness of women's problems was associated with higher status occupations, lending only partial support for hypothesis six. The length of tenure in the workforce generally required before moving into a higher status job, and the broader exposure one gains in these jobs, may make these women more aware of problems women face as a group. The higher expectations placed on those employed in these jobs may also prevent them from taking part in organizational activity, which may explain the negative relationship between job status and involvement with women's organizations.

For none of the three gender orientations was workplace authority related to greater orientations towards women, lending no support for hypothesis seven. Clearly,

at the bivariate level workplace authority has no bearing on gender orientations. In the case of personal income, two gender orientation variables demonstrated statistically significant differences, and in the hypothesized direction, partially confirming hypothesis eight. Women who earned less than \$15,000 annually were less likely to be members of women's organizations and to have an awareness of women's problems. A similar trend was found for women who felt close to women, although this difference was not statistically significant.

Table 6: Relationships between Structural Workplace Factors and Gender Orientations

Involvement with Women's Organization	Yes	No	N
Job Skills, mean (sd) ¹	2.47 (1.3)	1.83 (1.5) ^{***}	625
Job Status, % Manager or Professional ²	41.20%	54.9%**	592
Workplace Authority, mean (sd) ¹	9.31 (32.9)	4.07 (19.4)	624
Personal Income, % Below \$15,000 ¹	31.6%	48.0%**	588
Closeness to Women	Yes	No	N
Job Skills, mean (sd) ¹	2.10 (1.4)	1.85 (1.5)*	620
Job Status, % Manager or Professional ²	44.60%	56.3%**	589
Workplace Authority, mean (sd) ¹	3.76 (20.9)	5.48 (22.9)	620
Personal Income, % Below \$15,000 ¹	40.4%	47.3%	583
Awareness of Women's Problems	Yes	No	N
Job Skills, mean (sd) ¹	2.07 (1.5)	1.37 (1.3) ^{***}	612
Job Status, % Manager or Professional ²	53.6%	43.5% ^a	579
Workplace Authority, mean (sd) ¹	4.71 (21.2)	6.67 (28.0)	611
Personal Income, % Below \$15,000 ¹	42.5%	58.3%**	576
¹ T-test			
² Chi-Square Test			
*** p ≤ 0.001 ** p ≤ 0.01 * p ≤ 0.05 ^a p ≤ 0.10			

At the bivariate level, job skills, job status, and personal income demonstrated relationships to the political engagements and gender orientations, primarily in the hypothesized directions. The practice of more civic skills at work, employment in higher status jobs, and receiving higher salaries for work were each associated with increased political engagements and greater orientation towards women. With respect to workplace authority, only a relationship to political knowledge was found. From these findings it appears that several structural factors are indeed relevant to the antecedents to

participation. However, in order to draw more complete conclusions about the importance of structural workplace factors to political engagements and gender orientations, a multivariate context must also be examined.

Regression Analyses

The three demographic variables and four structural workplace factors were entered into separate regression models for each of the antecedents to participation (Table 7). Beginning with political knowledge, the seven variables explained more than one-quarter of the variance (Adj. $R^2=.29$). All three demographic variables had positive, significant coefficients, indicating that older age and higher levels of education and income are related to higher rates of political knowledge, holding all other variables in the model constant. In addition, two of the structural workplace factors had significant coefficients in the expected direction, namely those for job skills and job status. After controlling for the demographic and other structural factors, those in higher status jobs and who practice more civic skills at work have more knowledge about politics. The coefficient for personal income was negative, opposite of what was hypothesized, but was not significant. For workplace authority the coefficient was near zero and statistically insignificant. The standardized coefficients demonstrated that education was the best predictor of political knowledge, followed by household income and age. The weakest significant coefficients were for the two workplace factors, job status and job skills. Each was nearly one-third the size of the standardized coefficient for education.

Table 7: Regression of Participation Antecedents on Demographic and Structural Workplace Variables: OLS Regression Coefficients and Logit Coefficients

VARIABLES	Political Knowledge ¹ N=491	Political Interest ¹ N=531	Internal Efficacy ¹ N=531	External Efficacy ¹ N=530	Women's Org. Member ² N=416	Closeness To Women ² N= 411	Awareness of Women's Prob. ² N= 408
Demographics	b (se(b)), Beta	b (se(b)), Beta	b (se(b)), Beta	b (se(b)), Beta	b (se(b))	b (se(b))	b (se(b))
Household Income	.15 (.03), .21***	.06 (.02), .12**	.08 (.02), .18***	.05 (.02), .13 **	.10 (.05) *	-.02 (.04)	-.07 (.05)
Education	.28 (.05), .29***	.15 (.04), .21***	.24 (.04), .37***	.06 (.03), .10 ^a	-.03 (.07)***	.08 (.06)	.28 (.08)***
Age	.03 (.01), .16***	.03 (.01), .20***	.00 (.01), .03	.00 (.01), .02	.01 (.01)***	-.02 (.01) ^a	-.00 (.01)
Structural Factors							
Job Skills	.16 (.08), .11*	.25 (.06), .24 ***	-.01 (.05), -.01	.07 (.05), .08	.21 (.11)*	.03 (.09)	.43 (.12)***
Job Status	.17 (.08), .11*	-.14 (.06), -.13**	-.02 (.05), -.02	.06 (.05), .06	.11 (.12)	.11(.09)	-.25 (.12)*
Workplace Authority	.00 (.00), .02	.00 (.00), .00	.00 (.00), .03	.00 (.00), .07 ^a	.00 (.00)	-.01 (.01)	-.01 (.00)
Personal Income	-.06 (.04), -.08	-.04 (.03), -.06	-.08 (.03), -.16**	-.08 (.03), -.17**	-.04 (.06)	.03 (.05)	-.02 (.06)
	Adj. R-Sq.= .29	Adj. R-Sq.= .16	Adj. R-Sq.=.15	Adj. R-Sq.=.04	Pseud.R-Sq ³ =.07	Pseud.R-Sq ³ =.04	Pseud.R-Sq ³ =.14

¹OLS Coefficients

²Logit Coefficients

³Nagelkerke R²

^ap ≤ 0.10; *p ≤ 0.05; **p ≤ 0.01; ***p ≤ 0.001 .

The model for political interest explained only 16% of its variance, suggesting that many of the most important predictive variables are not included in this model. Again, all three demographic variables had significant, positive coefficients. Better educated, older, and wealthier working women were more interested in politics. The measure of job skills also had a positive and significant coefficient (.25), indicating that performing one additional civic skill as part of one's job translates into an increase of one-quarter of one point on the political interest scale. In contrast, job status had a significant and negative coefficient, meaning that higher job levels are related to lower levels of political interest. This finding can actually be understood as consistent with the previous finding of a positive relationship between political knowledge and job status, in the context of "free-time". Although one has greater knowledge of politics when in a higher status job, the time available to pay attention to or take an interest in politics is reduced, precisely because of one's job level.

The two remaining structural workplace factors, authority and personal income, bore no significant relationships to political interest. The negative coefficient for the personal income measure provides additional support for the "free-time" explanation. One may have to focus more time and energy on work responsibilities and even work more hours to achieve a higher personal income. An examination of the standardized coefficients in this model demonstrated that job skills had the strongest relationship to interest (.24), followed by education (.21), and age (.20).

Only 15% of the variance in internal political efficacy was explained by the seven variables. Of the three demographic variables, both household income and education had significant coefficients. The direction of these relationships were positive, as

hypothesized, indicating that higher education levels and higher household income levels predict higher rates of internal political efficacy. The coefficient for age was small and statistically insignificant.

Three of the structural workplace factors did not exhibit a significant relationship to internal efficacy, once the other variables in the model were controlled. The job skills, status, and authority measures each had very small coefficients that were all statistically insignificant. However, the personal income measure had a significant and negative coefficient, the opposite of what was expected. For women, once other workplace factors were controlled, earning more resulted in lower feelings of their ability to have an impact on politics. These women may also spend more time working, and acknowledge that to have a personal effect on politics requires a greater commitment than they can provide.

Only 4% of the variance was explained in the model for external political efficacy. Of the demographics, only household income had a significant coefficient, indicating that wealthier individuals are more likely to believe public officials are responsive to them. The coefficient for education just missed statistical significance, and was positive. Three of the structural workplace factors, namely the job skills, job status, and authority measures, did not significantly predict external efficacy, although the measure for authority came the closest to reaching significance. Higher personal income predicted a *decreased* likelihood of believing public officials are responsive, a finding opposite of what was predicted. This is consistent with its impact on internal efficacy, and thus merits further examination.

Approximately 7% of the variance in the measure of women's organizational involvement was explained by the model. All three of the demographic variables were

significant predictors of it, although the coefficient for education was in the opposite of the predicted direction. Wealthier and older women were more likely to be involved with women's organizations, but the opposite was true for the more highly educated. With respect to the structural workplace factors, only the coefficient for job skills was significant. Those whose jobs require skills such as letter writing and organizing meetings were more often involved in women's organizations.

The model explained a mere 4% of the variance in the measure of closeness to women, with none of the coefficients in the model reaching statistical significance. The coefficient for age just missed significance, but was not in the hypothesized direction. Younger women were more likely to feel close to women as a group, when all other factors were held constant. Clearly, these variables representing the structural workplace factors offer little in the way of improving understandings of women's feelings of closeness to other women. It may be the case that the contextual factors of the workplace are better predictors of this phenomenon.

The variables in the model explained 14% of the variance in women's awareness of the problems women face as a group. Education was the only significant demographic variable, demonstrating that better educated women were more likely to be aware of women's problems. In addition, two of the four structural workplace factors had statistically significant coefficients. When all other variables were held constant, those who performed more civic skills on the job had a higher awareness of women's problems. However, a higher job status predicted a lower likelihood of such an awareness, a relationship opposite of what was predicted.

Conclusions

The four structural workplace factors tested for relationships to the antecedents to participation produced mixed results. Upon controlling for household income, education, and age, the variable for job skills produced a consistently positive relationship in six of the seven models, and was statistically significant in predicting political knowledge, interest, involvement with a women's organization, and an awareness of women's problems. Thus, job skills appear to have political relevance not just because they are skills directly transferable to the political arena, but also because they have an effect on one's political engagements and gender orientations.

The measure of job status was significantly and positively related only to political knowledge, and had the opposite effect on political interest and an awareness of women's problems. This difference in effect for these two measures of political engagement may, in part, be explained by the amount of free time one has available for political matters when working in a higher level job. This finding introduces the possibility that employment may be both an asset and a detriment to political involvement, providing on the one hand the skills and other tools necessary for participation, but on the other hand consuming both physical and mental energy need to be engaged and involved in politics. In addition, those in higher status jobs may have less awareness of women's problems because they were able to overcome, or perhaps did not encounter, problems in the workplace which impede many women's career progress.

The authority one is accorded on the job had no relationship to any of the antecedents to participation, once demographic and other structural workplace variables were controlled. However, it just missed statistical significance in the model of external

political efficacy. For white, working women, greater authority in the form of supervising others at work appears to be insignificant in promoting the psychological and attitudinal resources for participation.

Personal income had a significant effect only in the two models of political efficacy. This negative effect of a higher income associated with lower feelings of political efficacy may be a factor of the time one feels able to focus on political matters. Because the model controls for job status, those earning more may be working longer hours and recognize that their impact on politics is limited given the time they have to devote to it.

As a whole, the demographic and structural factors explained only a small proportion of the variance in the antecedents to participation, indicating that other factors, not included in the models are responsible for the variation in political engagements and gender orientations. In addition, when the structural factors were significant the hypothesized relationships often did not emerge in the models. Although the practice of civic skills on the job had a consistently positive effect, the same was not true for job status and personal income. For white, working women, a higher status job and more personal income can at times have the effect of reducing levels of political engagements and gender orientations, when other demographic and structural factors are held constant. The time and energy expended at work may leave little for political endeavors, especially if family obligations are also women's responsibilities.

The analyses of the contextual workplace variables, which are the focus of the next chapter, will provide greater insight into the effects of employment on the antecedents to participation. The inclusion of these additional variables in the models

may serve to explain a larger proportion of the variation in the engagement and gender orientation variables. In addition, examining the workplace context in this way will demonstrate whether it has the potential to influence participation in ways similar to other social contexts, such as neighborhoods and churches.

CHAPTER 4: The Political Implications of Contextual Workplace Factors

In going to work and doing a job everyday, individuals are influenced by numerous aspects of their work environment. These environmental influences vary greatly from person to person at the same job level, or even between two people in the exact same type of job. Whom one speaks to and what is spoken about at work, and the conditions under which one is asked to perform a job, have numerous implications for political involvement. Some environments are conducive to political participation, for example, when supervisors regularly encourage employee involvement with a political campaign or cause. Conversely, environments may discourage participation such as when politics is a taboo subject for workplace conversations, or if one is made to feel ignorant about political matters by co-workers.

Thus, workplace environments, or contexts, are distinct from the structural factors of the workplace, both in their source and in the type of effect expected on political participation. Structural factors can usually be identified easily from a job description, and are rooted in the act of doing one's job. Through working one gains skills or receives an income or other resources needed to partake in political activity. In contrast, the workplace context is less closely related to *what* one does at work, and is instead determined by *who* is in the workplace and the type of interpersonal contact that takes place there. For the most part, contexts vary based upon the interactions with others that come about in the workplace. Therefore, their effect on politics stems from an impact on the psychological readiness to participate. One is motivated or supported by others to become involved. Instead of providing a concrete resource from working, contexts provide the psychological impetus that spurs political action.

This chapter explores the influence of several workplace contexts on political engagements and gender orientations. Some of the contexts that are examined have obvious connections to political participation, such as a request to become involved in politics from someone at work. However, less is known about the impact of such a request on one's knowledge or interest in political matters. Therefore, each contextual factor is examined in both a bivariate and a multivariate setting for effects on engagements and gender orientations. Before turning to the data, however, the following section reviews previous studies of each contextual factor and details its measurement for this study.

Workplace Mobilization

Receiving a personal request from someone to engage in a political activity is the way in which many people first become politically involved. As a result, mobilization by individuals and institutions has been identified as an important explanatory variable in models of political participation (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1992; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Requests originate from many different sources, including neighborhood acquaintances, organizational affiliations, and sometimes complete strangers who initiate requests through phone calls. When a request comes from someone at work, however, the pressure to comply may be particularly high. Not only does a personal relationship exist between the solicitor and solicited, a factor increasing the likelihood of a favorable response (Brady, Schlozman, and Verba 1999), but there may also be significant power relations affecting the decision-making process. For example, 70% of bosses who attempt political recruitment of their subordinates are successful (Brady, Schlozman, and Verba 1999).

Knowledge about the impact of mobilization, aside from its direct effect on political participation, is scarce. Individuals may, for example, investigate and gather information about a candidate or issue before agreeing to take action. A solicitation may change one's self-perception by increasing feelings of competence and efficacy about political matters. These alternative political effects are tested with a measure comprised of four questions about the person who solicited the respondent to take political action. The respondents who received a request to participate in each type of activity were asked to provide more specific information about the person who solicited them:

- *Thinking about the elections we have had since January 1988, during these election campaigns, have you received any request directed to you personally to work for or contribute money to a candidate for public office, a party group, a Political Action Committee, or any other organization that supports candidates? Think about the person who made this request. Was this someone who works where you work?*
- *We are interested in learning about the kinds of people who ask others to contact officials. Think about the person who made this request. Was this person someone who works where you work?*
- *We are interested in learning about the kinds of people who ask others to take part in protests, marches, or demonstrations. Think about the person who made this request. Was this someone who works where you work?*
- *We are interested in learning about the kinds of people who ask others to take part in community life. In the past twelve months have you received any request directed to you personally to take some active role in a local, public, or political issue in your community—perhaps to serve on a board, or to work with others on such an issue or*

to go to a meeting on some community issue? Think about the person who made this request. Was this someone who works where you work?

From these questions a dichotomous variable was created, with a positive response to any of the four questions receiving a value of “1”, to indicate workplace mobilization, and a negative response to all of the questions receiving a value of “0”.²⁶

Political Discussion

Studies of political discussion ground their work in some of the earliest research in the discipline of political science. The Columbia researchers (Lazarsfeld et al. 1948; Berelson et al. 1954) concluded that vote decisions are influenced by interpersonal networks wherein political information is transferred. Since then numerous scholars have drawn on their work, in an attempt to clarify the process by which social networks are influential. Many have emphasized the primary role of discussion partners who are one’s closest relations, such as spouses, parents, and other relatives (Jennings and Niemi 1981; Straits 1991), while others have found evidence that the intimacy of the relationship has little to do with its political influence (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1991; Huckfeldt, Plutzer, and Sprague 1993; Knoke 1990).

The political effects of discussions have been documented in several studies. For example, communications about politics have been found to influence vote choice and candidate evaluations (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1991; Huckfeldt, Beck, Dalton, and Levine 1995; MacKuen and Brown 1987) and political attitudes and partisanship (Weatherford 1982; Huckfeldt, Plutzer and Sprague 1993). In addition, one study found that the more

²⁶ The low frequency of requests to do any of the four activities originating from the workplace (11%) required that the variable be dichotomized.

people discuss politics with others, the more often they turnout to vote, attempt to persuade others' votes, engage in electoral activity, make campaign donations, and attend rallies. In addition, levels of political interest were also higher (Knoke 1990). Discussion partners have also been found influence gender attitudes. Women (working and not working) who have employed women as discussion partners are more likely to have favorable attitudes about the women's movement (Banaszak and Leighley 1991).

This research examines the effect of political discussions with a question about their acceptance in the workplace environment. It asks:

- *Which of the following statements best describes how free you feel to state your opinions about any such political issue at work? "Always feel free to speak about controversial political issues", "usually feel free", "sometimes feel free", "rarely feel free", "never feel free to speak about controversial political issues".*

A value of "5" was given for the response "always feel free", a "4" given for "usually feel free", a "3" for "sometimes feel free", a "2" for "rarely feel free", and a "1" for "never feel free".

Employment Status

Studies of employment and political participation have rarely analyzed the effects of working full-time vs. part-time. Early research on women and participation examined only the effect of having some type of workforce involvement as opposed to working only in the home (Beckwith 1986; Andersen 1975; McDonagh 1982). More recent research that has considered differential effects from full-time and part-time employment has focused primarily on the effect of working full-time on other resources for participation, such as free time, income, or job level. For example, full-time female

workers contribute more towards their family's income and have, on average, fewer free hours per day (Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1994). In addition, women employed full-time have higher-level jobs than those employed part-time (Schlozman, Burns, Verba 1999).

However, not only may resources be different for full-time and part-time workers, but they may also experience different contextual effects from the workplace. When the workplace is understood as a political context, the amount of time spent there is a logical question for examination. Contextual effects may be amplified or diminished depending upon the extent of one's exposure to the context. Those employed full-time can be said to be more deeply embedded within the workplace context, and for example, may have a greater likelihood of experiencing mobilization efforts there, or of engaging in discussions with co-workers. Furthermore, because in recent decades the pool of women who have no employment outside the home has continued to shrink, it is important to consider the possibility that part-time work and full-time work have dissimilar effects. Therefore, the following question was used to create a dummy variable for full-time employment, with a value of "1" given to those reporting they work full-time, and a value of "0" to those working only part-time:

- *Last week, were you working full-time for pay, working part-time for pay, going to school, keeping house, or something else?*²⁷

²⁷ Because the sample is comprised only of white, working women, those who reported "going to school," "keeping house," or "something else" were excluded from the analysis.

Sex Discrimination

The experience of discrimination has been cited as influential in shaping the politics of women and racial minorities in a number of ways. Perceptions of discrimination have been tied to group consciousness, which in turn influences political activity (Verba and Nie 1972; Gurin et al. 1980; Miller et al. 1981). Additionally, non-traditional gender attitudes, and gender differences in political orientations and policy preferences, have been associated with those women who have negative workplace experiences, such as discrimination (Thornton, Alwin and Camburn 1983; Conway, Steuernagel, and Ahern 1997).

Direct effects on political activity from the experience of discrimination have also been found. Those who reported racial discrimination were found to have significantly higher probabilities of voting, registering to vote, working in groups on political matters, and contacting news media and elected officials (Uhlener 1991). The perception of sex discrimination by women has also been shown to be a significant predictor of their overall level of political activity (Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1999).

In this research sex discrimination in the workplace context was measured with the following question, with positive responses given a value of "1", and negative responses a value of "0":

- *There is much talk these days about discrimination on the basis of sex or gender in jobs, or school admissions, or housing, or in other important things. In the last five years, have you yourself been discriminated against on the basis of your sex?*²⁸

²⁸ A more specific question which limits discrimination to the workplace setting would have been ideal for this research, but was not included in the survey instrument. Therefore, conclusions must be considered

Sex Segregation

The segregation of the labor force into male-dominated and female-dominated occupations is an important component of the workplace context. This sex segregation oftentimes dictates promotion opportunities, the interpersonal relations that can be developed at work, and the day-to-day experiences at a job. Therefore, the possibilities of political effects from working at male- or female-dominated jobs are vast. However, explorations of the political impact of sex segregation in the workforce are rare.

The few studies that have undertaken such an analysis have found somewhat consistent results for participation, engagement, and gender orientations. Sapiro (1986) found that women who were *not* in female-dominated occupations had higher rates of political interest and participation in electoral activities. In addition, employment in male-dominated occupations has been found to have a significant effect on women's gender attitudes. Women in these occupations were more likely to be supportive of the women's movement (Banaszak and Leighley 1991; Thornton, Alwin, Camburn 1983).

This research uses two variables created from the verbatim job descriptions provided by the respondents to the survey. Each job was categorized as male-dominated, female-dominated, or mixed based upon the percentage of females in each occupation reported in the 1996 Current Population Survey (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1996). A percentage of 39% or lower was categorized as male-dominated, 40%-60% as mixed, and over 60% as female-dominated. Two dummy variables were then created, with a value of "1" indicating those in male-dominated, and female-dominated occupations.

tentative. However, Sigel (1996) documents that workplace sex discrimination spurred lengthy discussions surpassing most other types of discrimination by the women participating in her focus groups. In addition,

The comparison category, which was left out of the multivariate analyses, was mixed-gender occupations.

Examples of male-dominated jobs include engineers, electronic technicians, shipping and receiving clerks, firefighters, and mechanics. Female-dominated occupations include therapists, public relations specialists, retail sales clerks, family child care providers, and textile machine operators. Both male- and female-dominated occupations were found across status and income levels. For example, of the white, working women in professional and managerial occupations, 74% were working in female-dominated occupations and 14% in male-dominated occupations. Of those in the lower status jobs (i.e., clerical, sales, and skilled or unskilled labor) 60% were employed in female-dominated occupations and 14% were in male-dominated occupations.

Description of Contextual Workplace Characteristics

Table 8 provides the descriptive statistics of the contextual workplace factors for the white, working women and men. Approximately 11% of the women in the sample reported being asked to perform some type of political activity by someone at work. A much greater number, approximately two-thirds, reported feeling “usually free” or “always free” to discuss politics at work (66%). An additional 17% reported feeling free to discuss political matters “sometimes” while at work. Seventy-one percent worked full-time as opposed to part-time. The experience of sex discrimination was reported by 14% of the women. A full two-thirds worked at female-dominated occupations, whereas 14% were employed in male-dominated jobs.

Uhlaner (1991) found that discrimination on the basis of race was reported more often in the workplace than in educational or housing settings, for all three of the racial subgroups she examined.

The workplace contexts of the men in the sample were slightly different. They were mobilized to participate in politics by someone at work at a similar rate (11%). More men than women, however, reported feeling free to discuss politics at work “usually” or “always” (74%). In addition, nearly all of the men were employed full-time (92%), and reports of sex discrimination were at a rate of less than half of women’s (6%).

The rates of sex-segregation were similar to the women in the sample, with nearly two-thirds of men (63%) employed at male-dominated occupations, and only 9% employed in female-dominated occupations.

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics for Contextual Workplace Characteristics

Workplace Characteristics	Women	Men	N Women	N Men
Workplace Mobilization, (% Y)	10.6%	10.9%	624	775
Discuss Politics at Work			619	773
Never Feel Free	8.4%	2.8%		
Rarely Feel Free	8.3%	4.2%		
Sometimes Feel Free	16.8%	18.9%		
Usually Feel Free	28.1%	25.7%		
Always Feel Free	38.3%	48.2%		
Full – Time, (% Y)	71.0%	92.0%	624	775
Sex Discrimination, (% Y)	14.4%	6.4%	614	771
Female-dominated Occupation, (% Y)	66.4%	9.2%	611	736
Male-dominated Occupation, (%Y)	14.3%	62.7%	611	736

Bivariate Relationships

The bivariate relationships between the political engagements and gender orientations and the contextual workplace factors were tested with Pearson correlations, T-tests, and Chi-Square tests. The following relationships were hypothesized:

- H1:** Workplace mobilization will be associated with higher rates of political engagement.
- H2:** Greater freedom to discuss politics at work will be correlated with higher rates of political engagement.
- H3:** Working full-time will be associated with higher rates of political engagement.

Workplace mobilization, or being asked to become involved in politics by others in one's workplace, should be related to higher rates of knowledge, interest, and efficacy. A request for activity is often accompanied by political information that can change one's psychological orientation towards politics. Similarly, discussions about politics in the workplace, which are more likely to occur when one feels that this environment would sanction such behavior, are expected to promote levels of engagement with politics. Additionally, greater exposure to the influences of the workplace environment, resulting from working full-time as opposed to part-time, should have a positive effect on political engagement.

- H4:** Experiencing sex discrimination will be associated with higher rates of political engagement.
- H5:** Working in a female-dominated occupation will be associated with lower rates of political engagement.

H6: Working in a male-dominated occupation will be associated with higher rates of political engagement.

The experience of sex discrimination is expected to have an impact on one's attitudes about politics. Those women reporting discrimination may have begun to become more politically engaged in order to combat or at the very least prevent further discrimination. By contrast, women in female-dominated occupations should have lower rates of political engagement. Because women as a group were found to be less politically engaged than men, the influence of other women in one's work environment should result in lower rates of political engagement when compared with those in mixed gender occupations. Likewise, women in male-dominated occupations should demonstrate higher levels of political engagement, due to a politicization by the men in their workplace environments.

H7: Workplace mobilization will be positively associated with gender orientations.

H8: Greater freedom to discuss politics at work will be positively associated with gender orientations.

H9: Working full-time will be positively associated with gender orientations.

These workplace contexts are expected to have an effect on gender orientations similar to what is predicted for their effect on political engagement. Mobilization and political discussion at work may promote women's awareness of the problems women face or their feelings of closeness with other women. These environments may also serve to encourage involvement with women's organizations. In general, mobilization for and discussion about politics are contexts expected to activate participation by encouraging psychological orientation towards politics. In addition, as with political engagement,

working full-time is predicted to promote a gender orientation towards women, because of the lengthier exposure to workplace contexts.

H10: Experiencing sex discrimination will be positively associated with gender orientations.

H11: Working in a female-dominated occupation will be negatively associated with gender orientations.

H12: Working in a male-dominated occupation will be positively associated with gender orientations.

Sex discrimination is predicted to promote women's gender orientations, as they are likely to come to a greater awareness of themselves as women through this experience. Similarly, women in male-dominated occupations may see themselves as distinct from those around them, and have increased feelings of closeness towards women and other gender orientations towards women. However, women in female-dominated occupations may be less likely to reach an awareness of gender, as they may not be in a situation in which differences between men and women at work are readily apparent.

The means and zero-order correlation coefficients are presented in Table 9.

Workplace mobilization was associated with higher rates of each of the engagement variables, supporting hypothesis one. Those asked to participate in politics at work had higher rates of political knowledge, interest, and internal and external efficacy. A similar pattern was found for the discussion variable and two of the four engagement variables, namely political knowledge and political interest. The positive correlation coefficient indicated that greater freedom to discuss politics at work was associated with higher rates

of knowledge and interest in politics. In addition, the correlation between internal efficacy and discussion just missed statistical significance, lending further support for hypothesis two. Thus, those who are mobilized to participate at work, and who feel free to discuss politics there, have higher rates of political engagement.

Much less evidence was found to support the third and fourth hypotheses. Working full-time was only associated with higher rates of political knowledge. Working women who were employed full-time were no more interested or efficacious about politics than their part-time counterparts. Therefore, only minimal support for hypothesis three was found. Sex discrimination was associated with higher rates of political interest and internal efficacy, but had no effect on political knowledge or external efficacy. Thus, partial support was found for hypothesis four.

With respect to the sex segregation of occupations, working in a female-dominated occupation was found to be associated with lower rates of all four political engagements. Furthermore, three of these four relationships were statistically significant. As expected in hypothesis five, lower rates of knowledge, interest, and efficacy about politics were found for women in female-dominated occupations.

In contrast, the hypothesized relationship was not found between any of the engagement variables and male-dominated occupations. Political engagement was not higher among women in predominately male-held occupations. One statistically significant relationship was found, however, between political knowledge and male-dominated occupations, but the direction of the relationship was opposite of that which was expected. Lower levels of political knowledge were found for women in these

occupations. Therefore, women in male-dominated occupations are, if anything, less politically engaged, providing no support for hypothesis six.

Table 9: Relationship between Political Engagements and Contextual Workplace Factors

Contextual Workplace Factors	Political Knowledge		Political Interest		Internal Efficacy		External Efficacy	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Workplace Mobilization, mean (sd)¹								
Yes	6.0 (2.1)**	6.0 (2.0) ***	4.5 (1.2) ***	4.1 (1.3) **	3.1 (1.1) ***	2.8 (1.4) **	3.5 (1.3) **	3.2 (1.1) *
No	5.3 (2.1)	4.4 (2.1)	3.9 (1.4)	3.6 (1.6)	2.5 (1.3)	2.3 (1.4)	3.0 (1.2)	2.9 (1.3)
Discuss Politics at Work²	.08 *	.13 **	.18 ***	.10 *	.06	.07 *	.01	.04
Full-Time, mean (sd)¹								
Yes	5.4 (2.1)	4.7 (2.1) *	4.0 (1.3)	3.7 (1.5)	2.6 (1.3)	2.4 (1.5)	3.2 (1.4)	3.0 (1.3)
No	5.2 (2.3)	4.2 (2.2)	4.0 (1.6)	3.8 (1.6)	2.5 (1.3)	2.3 (1.4)	3.1 (1.2)	2.9 (1.2)
Sex Discrimination, mean (sd)¹								
Yes	5.0 (2.3)	4.3 (2.1)	4.5 (1.2) **	4.0 (1.5) *	2.7 (1.6)	2.7 (1.5) *	2.8 (1.4)	3.0 (1.2)
No	5.4 (2.1)	4.6 (2.1)	4.0 (1.4)	3.6 (1.5)	2.6 (1.2)	2.3 (1.4)	3.1 (1.2)	3.0 (1.2)
Female-dominated Occupation								
Yes	5.8 (2.0)	4.4 (2.1)	4.1 (1.5)	3.6 (1.5) **	2.7 (1.3)	2.2 (1.5) **	3.2 (1.0)	2.8 (1.3) **
No	5.4 (2.1)	4.8 (2.1)	4.0 (1.4)	3.9 (1.5)	2.6 (1.2)	2.6 (1.3)	3.1 (1.2)	3.1 (1.2)
Male-dominated Occupation								
Yes	5.2 (2.1) ***	4.1 (2.3) **	3.8 (1.4) ***	3.7 (1.4)	2.5 (1.3) ***	2.5 (1.6)	3.0 (1.2) ***	2.9 (1.2)
No	5.8 (2.1)	4.6 (2.1)	4.2 (1.3)	3.7 (1.5)	2.8 (1.2)	2.3 (1.4)	3.3 (1.1)	2.9 (1.3)
<p>*** Significant at $p \leq 0.001$ level * $p \leq 0.10$ ¹T-test.</p> <p>** Significant at $p \leq 0.01$ level ²Correlation Coefficient</p> <p>* Significant at $p \leq 0.05$ level</p>								

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For men, a pattern similar to that of women was found for the workplace mobilization and discussion variables. Requests to participate in politics originating at work and the freedom to discuss politics while at work were related to higher rates of political engagement for men as well as women. However, working full-time bore no relationship to any of the engagement variables for men. This is likely due to the little variation in this variable for men—fully 92% of men reported working full-time. In addition, sex discrimination was related only to political interest, and not to internal efficacy as it was for women. Men who experienced sex-based discrimination were no more likely to believe they could have an impact on political matters. Furthermore, working at female-dominated occupations for men was unrelated to levels of political engagement, but these occupations were associated with lower engagement for women. None of the four engagement variables produced a significant relationship. However, male-dominated occupations had a significant effect for men for all four measures of engagement. In each instance, those in male-dominated fields had lower rates of engagement, but this context was only associated with less political knowledge for women.

The relationship between contextual workplace factors and gender orientation variables was also examined (Table 10). Only a few statistically significant relationships were found. Workplace mobilization was only associated with involvement with a women's organization, lending partial support for hypothesis seven. Women who were asked to take part in politics by someone at work were more than twice as likely to be involved with women's organizations. However, feeling free to discuss politics at work was related to none of the gender orientation variables, in no way supporting hypothesis eight.

Working full-time was significantly associated with involvement with a women's organization, but bore no relationship to either of the other two gender orientation variables. Therefore, only partial support was found for hypothesis nine, with those working full-time 10 percentage points more likely have women's organizational involvement. Likewise, only one gender orientation variable was related to sex discrimination, namely awareness of women's problems. Those women who experienced sex discrimination were four times more likely to be aware of problems faced uniquely by women as a group, partially supporting hypothesis ten.

Women who worked in female-dominated occupations were no different in terms of their gender orientations than women in male-dominated or mixed occupations, a finding counter to that which was expected in hypothesis 11. However, women in male-dominated occupations were significantly less likely to be involved with women's organizations, a relationship opposite of what was predicted in hypothesis 12. None of the other gender orientations were related to male-dominated employment.

In general, the bivariate relationships demonstrated that several of the contextual workplace factors were related to the antecedents to participation. Higher rates of political engagements and gender orientations towards women were found most consistently for those mobilized by someone at work to take part in politics and by those who had experienced discrimination on the basis of their sex. In addition, political engagements were higher for those who felt free to discuss politics at work, and lower for women in female-dominated occupations. However, for these two workplace contexts no impact on gender orientations was found. Finally, little or no positive effect on the

antecedents to participation was found for working in a full-time capacity or in a male-dominated occupation.

Table 10: Relationship between Gender Orientations and Contextual Workplace Factors

Women's Organization Involvement	Yes	No	N
Workplace Mobilization (%Y)	21.8%	8.6%***	625
Discuss Politics at Work (% Usually or Always)	66.3%	66.4%	619
Full-Time (%Y)	79.2%	69.4%*	624
Sex Discrimination (%Y)	16.0%	14.0%	613
Female-dominated Occupation (% Y)	72.2%	65.2%	611
Male-dominated Occupation (% Y)	4.1%	16.1%**	611
Closeness to Women	Yes	No	N
Workplace Mobilization (%Y)	11.8%	9.7%	619
Discuss Politics at Work (% Usually or Always)	66.7%	66.1%	614
Full-Time (%Y)	72.4%	70.4%	621
Sex Discrimination (%Y)	18.0%	12.7%	610
Female-dominated Occupation (% Y)	65.8%	66.4%	607
Male-dominated Occupation (% Y)	12.1%	15.3%	607
Awareness of Women's Problems	Yes	No	N
Workplace Mobilization (%Y)	10.9%	10.3%	612
Discuss Politics at Work (% Usually or Always)	67.6%	61.9%	606
Full-Time (%Y)	71.0%	70.8%	610
Sex Discrimination (%Y)	16.4%	4.2%**	601
Female-dominated Occupation (% Y)	65.9%	68.0%	598
Male-dominated Occupation (% Y)	13.9%	15.5%	599
Chi-Square Test			
*** Significant at $p < 0.001$ level			
** Significant at $p < 0.01$ level			
* Significant at $p < 0.05$ level			
° ($p < 0.10$)			

Regression Analyses

Political engagements and gender orientations were regressed on workplace factors and the demographic variables. A model for each of the antecedents to participation was constructed which included the demographic variables and the structural and contextual workplace factors (Table 11). The model for political knowledge explained 30% of its variance. All three of the demographic variables, namely household income, education, and age, were significant predictors of political knowledge and had positive coefficients. In addition, one of the structural workplace factors demonstrated a significant relationship to political knowledge, job status, and one just missed statistical significance, personal income. While higher job status was related to higher rates of political knowledge, the relationship between personal income and knowledge was negative, indicating that the more one earns personally, controlling for job status and the other factors, the less one is knowledgeable about politics.

Two of the contextual workplace factors also had significant coefficients. Those mobilized at work to participate in politics had higher rates of political knowledge, and those in female-dominated occupations were less politically knowledgeable. Both of these relationships were in the expected direction. In addition, the coefficient for male-dominated occupations just missed statistical significance, but was negative, indicating that women in these types of jobs have lower rates of political knowledge. The standardized coefficients indicated that the demographic variables were the strongest predictors of political knowledge, and that the structural and contextual factors of the workplace were similar in strength.

Table 11: Regression of Political Engagements and Gender Orientations on Demographic, Structural, and Contextual Workplace Variables: OLS Regression Coefficients and Logit Coefficients

VARIABLES	Political Knowledge ¹	Political Interest ¹	Internal Efficacy ¹	External Efficacy ¹	Women Org. Involvement ²	Closeness to Women ²	Awareness of Problems ²
	N= 475	N= 515	N= 514	N= 514	N= 401	N= 396	N= 393
Demographics	b, (se(b)), Beta	b, (se(b)), Beta	b, (se(b)), Beta	b, (se(b)), Beta	b, (se(b))	b, (se(b))	b, (se(b))
Household Income	.13 (.03), .20***	.05 (.02), .10*	.08 (.02), .17***	.04 (.02), .10*	.11 (.05)*	-.02 (.04)	-.07 (.05)
Education	.28 (.05), .30***	.12 (.04), .18***	.25 (.04), .38***	.06 (.03), .11*	-.02 (.08)	.08 (.06)	.28 (.08)***
Age	.03 (.01), .17***	.03 (.01), .21***	.01 (.01), .05	.00 (.01), .03	.02 (.01)	-.02 (.01)*	-.01 (.01)
Structural Factors							
Job Skills	.08 (.08), .06	.27 (.06), .26***	-.04 (.06), -.04	.04 (.05), .04	.16 (.12)	.03 (.09)	.55 (.13)***
Job Status	.19 (.08), .12*	-.16 (.06), -.15**	-.00 (.06), -.00	.07 (.05), .07	.09 (.12)	.10 (.09)	-.27 (.12)*
Workplace Authority	.00 (.00), .02	-.00 (.00), -.01	.00 (.00), .01	.00 (.00), .06	.00 (.00)	-.01 (.01)	-.01 (.01)*
Personal Income	-.09 (.05), -.11*	-.01 (.04), -.03	-.13 (.03), -.25***	-.11 (.03), -.24***	-.05 (.07)	.03 (.06)	-.04 (.08)
Contextual Factors							
Workplace Mobilization	.66 (.28), .10*	-.05 (.20), -.01	.35 (.20), .08 ^a	.21 (.19), .05	.59 (.35) ^a	-.02 (.32)	-.94 (.45)*
Discuss Politics at Work	.02 (.07), .01	.03 (.05), .02	.08 (.05), .07	.08 (.05), .08 ^a	-.08 (.11)	.01 (.08)	.03 (.10)
Full Time	.32 (.22), .07	-.25 (.16), -.08	.16 (.15), .05	.09 (.14), .03	.38 (.33)	-.16 (.25)	-.14 (.33)
Sex Discrimination	-.19 (.24), -.03	.49 (.18), .11**	.38 (.17), .09*	.05 (.16), .01	.17 (.34)	.44 (.27)	2.72 (.87)**
Female Dominated	-.43 (.22), -.10*	-.35 (.16), -.11*	-.24 (.16), -.08	-.38 (.15), -.14**	.15 (.31)	-.06 (.25)	.09 (.35)
Male Dominated	-.52 (.30), -.08 ^b	-.24 (.22), -.05	.09 (.21), .02	-.02 (.20), -.01	-1.32 (.59)*	.05 (.35)	.09 (.48)
	Adj. R-Sq=.30	Adj. R-Sq=.18	Adj. R-Sq=.17	Adj. R-Sq=.05	R-Sq ² =.11	R-Sq ² =.05	R-Sq ² .22
¹ OLS Coefficients	^a p≤ 0.10; [*] p≤ 0.05; ^{**} p≤ 0.01; ^{***} p≤ 0.001.						
² Logit Coefficients	³ Nagelkerke R ²						

Approximately 18% of the variance in political interest was explained by this model. All three demographic variables had significant, positive coefficients indicating that wealthier, better educated, and older women had higher rates of political interest. Of the four structural factors, both job skills and job status were significant predictors of political interest. The more civic skills performed on the job, the higher the rate of political interest. However, job status had a negative coefficient indicating that a higher job status predicted a lower level of interest in politics. A significant relationship was not found for either workplace authority or the measure of personal income.

Turning to the contextual workplace variables, both sex discrimination and female-dominated occupations had significant coefficients in the expected directions. That is, sex discrimination predicted higher levels of interest, whereas working in a female-dominated occupation predicted lower rates of political interest. Workplace mobilization, political discussions at work, working full-time, and working at a male-dominated occupation had no bearing on political interest, once the other demographic, structural, and contextual variables were controlled. The standardized coefficients indicated that the strongest predictors of political interest were job skills and age, while the weakest predictors were sex discrimination, female-dominated occupation, and household income.

The three groups of variables explained 17% of the variance in internal political efficacy. Household income and education positively predicted internal efficacy, whereas age bore no relationship to it. Thus, wealthier and better-educated women had a greater sense that they could have an impact on politics. Only one of the four structural workplace factors predicted internal efficacy. Personal income had a significant and

negative coefficient, indicating that higher personal earnings were associated with lower rates of internal efficacy.

One of the contextual factors reached statistical significance, sex discrimination, and one just missed significance, workplace mobilization. Both of these variables had coefficients with positive values, indicating that those asked to take part in politics at work and those who had experience sex-based discrimination had higher rates of internal efficacy. The other four contextual factors, namely political discussions, working full-time, and female- and male-dominated occupations, were unrelated to internal efficacy. The strongest predictors were education and personal income, as evidenced by the standardized coefficients.

Only 5% of the variation in external efficacy was explained by the 13 variables. This indicates that other factors not included in the model are better at explaining one's attitudes about the responsiveness of elected officials. Nevertheless, two of the demographic variables had significant and positive coefficients: household income and education. Those with more money and more education have a stronger believe in the responsiveness of office holders. Of the four structural factors, only personal income was a significant predictor of external efficacy. As with internal efficacy, the coefficient was negative, indicating that lower personal earnings predict higher rates of external efficacy.

Only one of the contextual workplace factors had a significant coefficient, and one just missed statistical significance. Working at a female-dominated occupation was associated with lower feelings of external efficacy, as predicted. Feeling free to discuss politics at work had a coefficient that was near significance, and in the expected direction, indicating that greater freedom for political discussion in the workplace may

predict higher rates of external efficacy. The standardized coefficients demonstrated that personal income was the best predictor of all the variables, followed by female-dominated occupations, education, and household income.

A total of 11% of the variance in women's organizational involvement was explained by the model. Only one of the demographics, household income was predictive of involvement, with a higher household income increasing the probability of involvement. None of the four structural workplace factors were significant predictors of this variable. Therefore, what women do at work and the compensation they receive from working have no relationship to their involvement in women's organizations. However, one of the contextual factors had a large and significant coefficient, that of working at a male-dominated occupation. Women employed at these types of jobs have a greatly *reduced* likelihood of involvement with a women's organization, when compared with those in jobs at which women and men work in equal numbers. Interestingly, those in female-dominated occupations were neither more nor less likely to be involved. Workplace mobilization came close to significance, and the coefficient was positive, indicating that being asked to participate in politics at work may be related to the likelihood of involvement with a women's organization.

This model, when used to predict women's feelings of closeness to other women, explained only 5% of the variance. None of the coefficients for the three demographic variables reached statistical significance, although age came close. Its negative coefficient indicated that younger women may be more likely to feel close to women as a group. None of the structural or contextual workplace factors predicted feelings of

closeness to women. Apparently, for white, working women this gender orientation is not related to factors associated with working.

As a whole, the thirteen variables were much better predictors of an awareness of the problems women face as a group than of the other gender orientation variables. More than one-fifth (22%) of the variance in this variable was explained by the model.

Beginning with the demographics, education was a significant and positive predictor of this awareness. Women who were better educated had a higher probability of recognizing the problems women face, however, no effects were found for household income and age. In addition, three of the four structural workplace factors had significant coefficients. Women who performed more job skills, who had a lower job status, and who had less workplace authority were more likely to be aware of women's problems. Two of these relationships, those of job status and workplace authority, were in the opposite of the predicted direction. This combination of higher job skills, but lower job status and authority is consistent with the workplace experiences of administrative assistants and clerical workers. Additional analyses, however, would be required to confirm that workers in these types of jobs have a greater awareness of women's problems.

Two of the contextual variables were also significant predictors of the awareness of women's problems. Being asked to participate in politics by someone at work had a negative coefficient, indicating that this reduced the probability of one's awareness. However, experiencing sex discrimination had a large and positive coefficient, demonstrating that this was related to a greater awareness of the problems women face as

a group. The freedom to discuss politics at work, working full-time, and being employed at male- or female-dominated occupations had no predictive power in this model.

Conclusions

Overall, several of the contextual factors of the workplace were found to be important predictors of the antecedents to participation. Even after controlling for demographics and the structural factors, environmental conditions such as working in a sex-segregated occupation, experiencing sex discrimination, or being mobilized to participate in politics, were found to have effects on both engagements and gender orientations. These findings demonstrate that the workplace is a location in which political motivations may be generated through social contact. It may promote or retard a psychological readiness for politics, in addition to providing the resources necessary for participation.

However, the explanatory power of the workplace variables as a whole was somewhat lacking. Even after including the contextual factors, less than one-quarter of the variance in the antecedents to participation was explained in six of the seven models. The workplace is clearly only one of many influences on political engagements and gender orientations. The inclusion of the other social contexts and life situations of these white, working women would certainly increase the amount of variance explained.

Of the six contextual workplace factors tested for relationships to political engagements and gender orientations, two were statistically insignificant in all of the models. Feeling free to discuss politics at work and working full-time were not predictive of any of the participation antecedents. The measurement of political discussion may be weak, because the question asks about how one *feels about* political

discussion at work rather than whether one actually *takes part* in it. Previous studies of discussion effects tracked actual political communication; however, such a measure was absent from the available data. The lack of a significant coefficient for working full-time in any of the models indicates that workplace factors are not influenced by the amount of time one spends on the job, but rather exposure to the workplace setting has similar effects for both full-time and part-time workers. Because structural and contextual workplace factors have demonstrated both positive and negative significant effects on the antecedents to participation, it may be that the net effect of longer workplace exposure is zero.

Workplace mobilization predicted increased levels of women's political knowledge, indicating that a request to participate may also provide political information or may motivate those who are asked to seek out more knowledge about politics. However requests to participate were associated with a reduced probability of being aware of the problems women face. A more detailed analysis of the circumstances under which these women were asked to participate, and of the kinds of activity they were asked to perform, would be necessary to shed light on the possible reasons for a negative relationship to an awareness of women's problems.

The experience of sex discrimination had a significant effect in three of the seven models. It predicted higher levels of political interest and internal political efficacy, and increased the probability that women workers were aware of women's problems. The lack of a significant coefficient for this variable in the other two models of gender orientations is somewhat surprising, but may be consistent with Sigel's (1996) conclusions. She found that although the women in her study were acutely aware of sex

discrimination, especially in the workplace, they did not develop a feminist consciousness in part due to their close association with the men in their lives. In addition, these women did not think in terms of finding a solution to the discrimination in a political setting, or any other setting outside of the workplace. These findings may help to explain why experiencing sex discrimination did not affect women's closeness to other women or their membership in a women's organization.

Working in a female-dominated occupation was associated with lower levels of political engagement in three of the four instances. It was significantly linked with lower levels of political knowledge, interest, and external political efficacy. Women in female-dominated jobs may be more insulated from men at work than those in mixed-gender occupations. This sex-segregation may promote a reduced psychological orientation towards politics. Alternatively, women in mixed occupations may gain from interaction with men's greater levels of political engagements. In contrast, female-dominated jobs had no bearing on the gender orientation variables. Women's proximity to other women at work did not translate into a greater orientation towards women in other realms of their life.

Male-dominated occupations were only significantly related to involvement with a women's organization, and came close to significantly predicting political knowledge. They had no effect on any of the other political engagements or gender orientations. Women who may find themselves with few other women in their workplace environments do not receive an added boost to their psychological orientation towards politics from the men in their workplaces, when compared with those in mixed occupations. When the results of the male- and female-dominated variables are taken

together, the stronger conclusion is that the sex segregation of one's job has a greater bearing on one's level of political engagement than on one's gender orientations.

Now that the impact of both the structural and contextual variables has been examined separately for each participation antecedent, the next chapter will bring the variables together into one overall model. Those variables demonstrating predictive power in the previous chapters will be analyzed in a path model. These models will return to the measures of political participation to test for both direct and indirect effects from workplace factors.

CHAPTER 5: The Direct and Indirect Influences of Employment on Political Participation

In the last several chapters, the linkages between ten workplace factors, seven antecedents to participation, and three participation measures have been sketched. This chapter brings together all of these findings through a recursive path model that estimates both the direct and indirect links from the workplace to participation. The insight gleaned from the earlier chapters will aid in the specification of this overall model. The following section outlines the previous findings to set the stage for an analysis of the full model.

Chapter 2 demonstrated that several variables conventionally asserted to have a significant impact on political participation bore no such relationship for white, working women. Namely, household income, external political efficacy, and two measures of gender orientations were unrelated to all three types of political activity. The factors that were found to have significant direct effects, and which will be used as intervening variables in the path models, are involvement with a women's organization, political knowledge, political interest, and internal political efficacy. Each of these factors was related to one or more of the three participation measures: individual activities, group-based activities, and overall political participation.

Next, in Chapters 3 and 4 the structural and contextual factors of the workplace were tested for effects on the seven antecedents to participation. Table 12 summarizes these findings by indicating the direction of all relationships at or close to statistical

significance.²⁹ Overall, the structural factors of the workplace were poor predictors of the gender orientation variables. No relationships were found between structural factors and either women's organizational involvement or feelings of closeness with other women.

As a group, the structural factors had a more negative than positive effect on engagements and an awareness of women's problems. Higher personal income was associated with lower levels of political engagements, and greater workplace authority was associated with less awareness of women's problems. Job status had a negative effect on both political interest and an awareness of women's problems, but was positively related to political knowledge. Job skills was the structural factor with the most consistently positive impact on the antecedents to participation, but significant relationships emerged only for two variables: political interest and an awareness of women's problems.

²⁹ Figure 1, at the end of Chapter 2, when examined in relation to this table will further illuminate the findings.

Table 12: Summary of Workplace Effects on Antecedents to Participation

	Knowledge	Interest	Internal Efficacy	External Efficacy	Women's Organiz.	Women's Closeness	Women's Problems
Structural Factors							
Skills		+					+
Status	+	-					-
Authority							-
Personal Income	-		-	-			
Contextual Factors							
Mobilization	+		+		+		-
Discussion				+			
Full-time							
Discrimination		+	+				+
Female-Dominated	-	-		-			
Male-Dominated	-				-		

With respect to the contextual workplace factors, the relationships were split between positive and negative. Political mobilization at work had a significant effect on four of the seven intervening variables. It was positively associated with two types of engagement, political knowledge and internal political efficacy. It was also related to higher rates of involvement with women's organizations, but had a negative relationship to an awareness of women's problems. In contrast, feeling free to discuss politics in the workplace was only related to higher feelings of external efficacy, and working in a full-time capacity evidenced no relationship to any of the antecedents. The experience of sex discrimination was associated with higher levels of engagement and gender orientations. It had a positive effect on political interest, internal efficacy, and an awareness of women's problems. Working at sex-segregated occupations generally had a negative effect on political engagements, for both male- and female-dominated occupations.

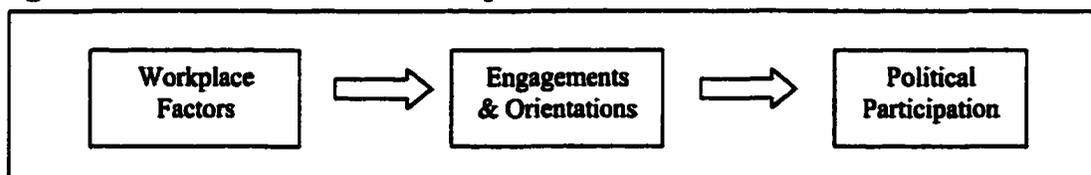
Those in female-dominated jobs had lower levels of knowledge, interest, and external political efficacy. Male-dominated jobs were negatively associated with political knowledge and involvement with women's organizations.

Overall, these findings show that working is associated with a variety of psychological orientations in both a positive and negative manner. The potential benefit or detriment to political participation from working is dependent upon both the types of resources received from a job (structural factors) and the particular set of social conditions under which one works (contextual factors). The following analyses will determine how these workplace factors are directly linked to the participation measures and which indirect links can be found connecting employment factors through the various antecedents and ultimately to participation.

Establishing causal order for the path model

In bringing together all of the elements in the model, the first step is to determine whether a recursive or nonrecursive estimation procedure is appropriate for the variables. In this case, a recursive model was chosen, meaning that the effects are all specified as moving only in one direction. That is, the workplace factors are considered causally prior to the political engagements and gender orientations, which occur prior to political participation (as shown in Figure 2). This specification was chosen for several theoretical reasons.

Figure 2: Causal Direction of Workplace Effects



First, employment has been specified as an independent variable that causes effects on participation and its antecedents in several studies. For example, the positioning of employment factors as prior to gender orientations has been justified both statistically and theoretically (Banaszak and Leighly 1991; Thornton, Alwin, and Camburn 1983). Statistically, a stronger relationship emerges when the direction is specified in this manner (Thornton, Alwin, and Camburn 1983). In addition, Banaszak and Leighly state: "We believe that previous gender attitudes influence choices in careers and friends in only a minor way, if at all. Career decisions result from a host of factors: education, job opportunities, economic necessity and location, to name a few" (1991, 176).

Similarly, studies of other social contexts provide strong theoretical arguments for the location of contexts as prior to political variables. In their study of church and neighborhood contexts, Huckfeldt and colleagues argue that overt political concerns are not central to the choice of these contexts:

. . . to what extent, and on what basis, do individuals control their locations in churches and neighborhoods? We choose a neighborhood for its schools, its services, the house or apartment we find within its boundaries. We choose a church because it is convenient to the neighborhood, because we like the pastor or priest or rabbi, because our parents raised us in its tradition, because it offers a shared community of faith (1993, 370).

Therefore, from the perspective of contextual analysts, the workplace context exists prior to political inclinations and participation.

In addition to studies of contexts, resource-focused explanations of political activity also contend this chain of causal direction is most logical. Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995) state,

... the institutional involvements out of which citizens acquire resources are, we believe, antecedent to political activity. In the absence of actual life histories collected over respondents' lifetimes, we cannot be absolutely certain that individuals make decisions about family, work, organizational involvements, or affiliations with religious institutions apart from and in advance of choices to take part politically. However, these seem to be plausible assumptions (277).

Thus, in accordance with these theoretical arguments, both the structural and contextual factors of the workplace are modeled causally prior to participation and its antecedents.

In addition, paths are estimated assuming a unidirectional relationship.

Estimating the direct and indirect paths for overall participation

Both direct and indirect paths were also calculated for the measure of overall political participation, with the results presented in Table 13. Most of the variables had a significant direct effect on overall participation. Of the antecedents to participation, three political engagements, knowledge (.15), interest (.28), and internal efficacy (.17), and one gender orientation, involvement with a women's organization (.07), had positive direct effects. Each was used as an intervening variable in the examination of indirect effects.

Table 13: Direct and Indirect Effects on Overall Participation: Standardized OLS Coefficients

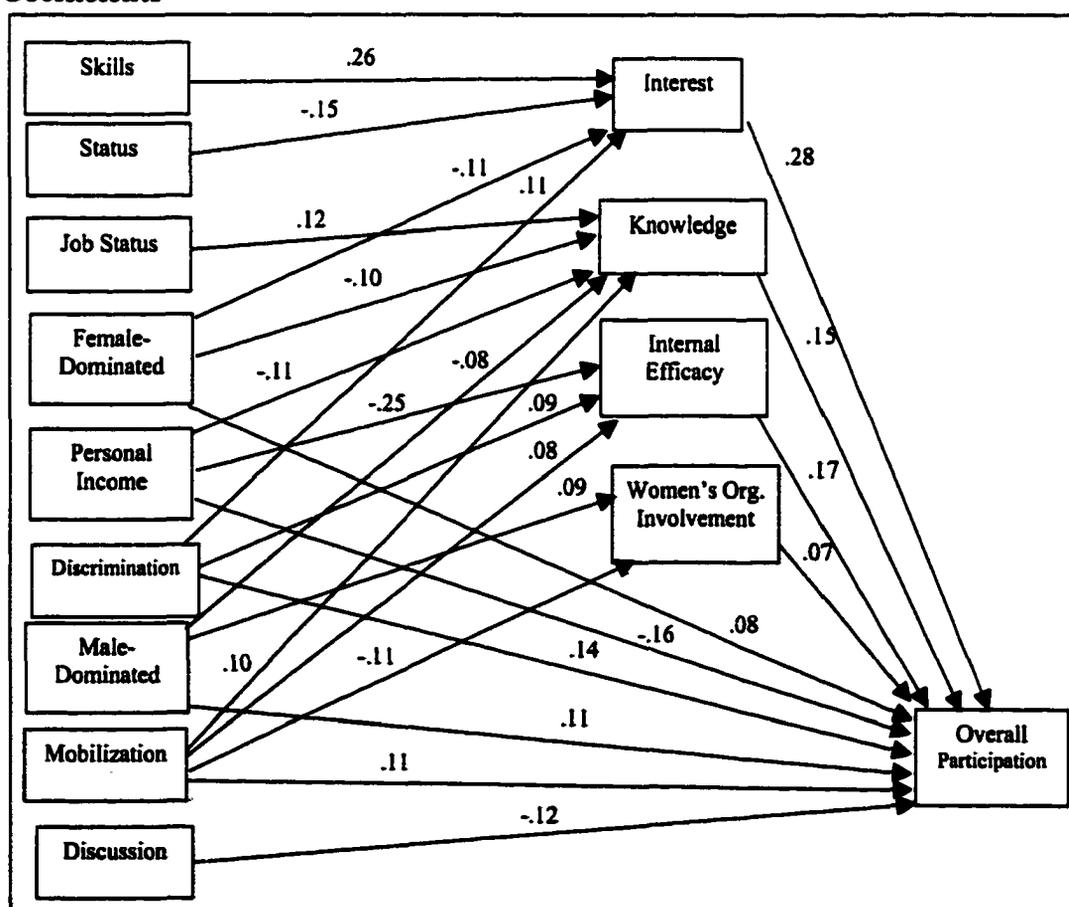
Variable	Direct Effect	Indirect Effects				Total Effect
		Knowledge	Interest	Internal Efficacy	Women's Org.	
Knowledge	.15	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	.15
Interest	.28	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	.28
Internal Efficacy	.17	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	.17
Women's Org.	.07	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	.07
Family Income	.11	.03	.03	.03	.01	.21
Education	.15	.05	.05	.06	n/s	.31
Age	.22	.03	.06	n/s	n/s	.31
Skills	n/s	n/s	.07	n/s	n/s	.07
Status	n/s	.02	-.04	n/s	n/s	-.02
Personal Income	-.16	-.02	n/s	-.04	n/s	-.22
Mobilization	.11	.02	n/s	.01	.01	.15
Discussion	-.12	n/s	n/s	n/s	n/s	-.12
Discrimination	.14	n/s	.03	.02	n/s	.19
Female-Dominated	.08	-.02	-.03	n/s	n/s	.03
Male-Dominated	.11	-.01	n/s	n/s	-.01	.09

Five of the six contextual workplace factors were directly related to overall participation, with a positive effect found most often. Those mobilized to take part in politics participated more often (.11), as did those who had experienced sex discrimination (.14). Similarly, those working in female- (.08) or male-dominated occupations (.11) had higher rates of participation. A negative direct effect was found for

feeling free to discuss politics at work (-.12). Only one structural factor of the workplace had a direct effect, namely personal income (-.16). The coefficient was negative indicating that higher income was associated with lower overall participation.

The significant indirect paths between the workplace and overall participation are presented in Figure 3. Personal income also had negative indirect effects through political knowledge (-.02) and internal efficacy (-.04). Two other structural factors, job skills and job status, had indirect effects. Both job skills (.07) and job status (-.04) influenced overall participation through political interest. Additionally, job status had a positive indirect effect through political knowledge (.02).

Figure 3: Paths from Employment to Overall Participation: Standardized OLS Coefficients



The contextual workplace factors also had several indirect effects on overall participation. Workplace mobilization influenced it through its effects on political knowledge (.02), internal efficacy (.01), and involvement with a women's organization (.01). The experience of sex discrimination also had a positive indirect effect on participation through political interest (.03) and internal efficacy (.02). Working at a sex-segregated occupation had negative indirect implications for participation. Female-dominated occupations had a negative effect through political knowledge (-.02) and interest (-.03), and male-dominated occupations influenced participation through an impact on knowledge (-.01) and involvement with a women's organization (-.01). As before, the net indirect effect of the structural factors was more negative than positive, whereas contextual factors were split evenly in their influence on overall participation.

Estimating the direct and indirect paths for group-based participation

The second model estimated is that for group-based participation. To determine the direct effects of the workplace factors, group-based participation was regressed on all of the structural and contextual workplace factors, the demographic variables, and the antecedents to participation. The second column of Table 14 displays the significant coefficients of the five variables that are directly linked to group-based participation. Only one of the workplace variables, discrimination, had a significant coefficient (.19), which indicated that experiencing sex discrimination increased levels of group-based political activity.

Table 14: Direct and Indirect Effects on Group-based Participation: Standardized OLS coefficients³⁰

Variable	Direct Effect	Indirect Effects		Total Effect
		Knowledge	Interest	
Interest	.20	n/a	n/a	.20
Knowledge	.12	n/a	n/a	.12
Household Income	n/s	.02	.02	.04
Education	.11	.04	.04	.19
Age	.09	.02	.04	.15
Job Status	n/s	.01	-.03	-.02
Personal Income	n/s	-.01	n/s	-.01
Mobilization	n/s	.01	n/s	.01
Discrimination	.19	n/s	.02	.21
Female Dominated	n/s	-.01	-.02	-.03
Male Dominated	n/s	-.01	n/s	-.01

Two demographic variables, education (.11) and age (.09), were also significant and positive, indicating that older and more educated women partake in group-based activity more often. Last, two intervening variables were also found to have significant direct effects, namely knowledge (.12) and interest (.20). None of the gender orientation variables exhibited a direct relationship to group-based activity.

The significant direct effects of knowledge and interest on group-based participation indicated the potential for indirect paths from the demographic and workplace factors, through these engagements, to group-based activity. These indirect

³⁰Only those paths significant at the .10 level or less were estimated and displayed.

paths were estimated by multiplying the coefficients linking the independent variables to the intervening variables with the coefficients linking the intervening variables to the participation variable (Asher 1976; Bohrnstedt and Knoke 1988). Figure 4 displays the workplace variables with the significant standardized coefficients used for these calculations.

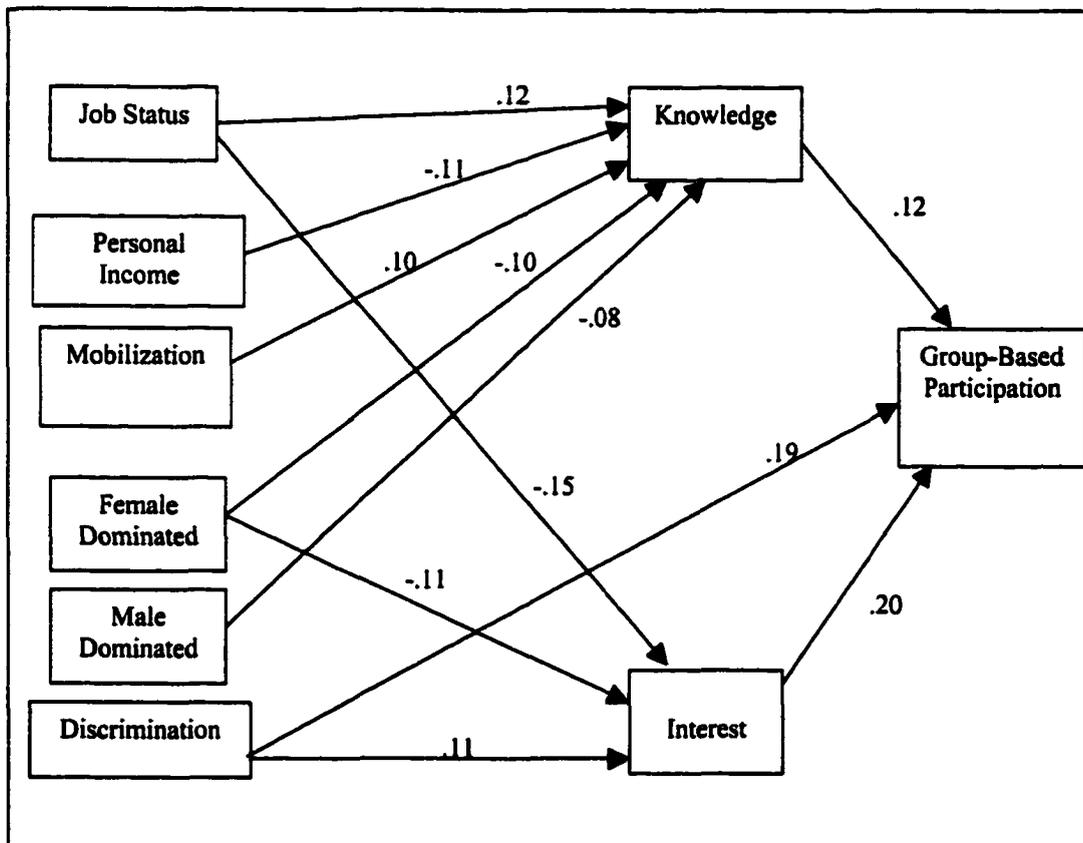
The last two columns in Table 14 present the results of these calculations. All three demographic variables, household income, education, and age, had indirect effects on group-based participation through the intervening variables, knowledge and interest. For education and age, the total of these indirect effects was only slightly smaller than each variables' direct effect on participation. In contrast, household income had only indirect effects.

Only two of the structural factors had effects on group-based activity, job status and personal income. In both cases the effects were only indirect. Job status had a positive effect through its relationship to political knowledge (.01), and a negative effect resulting from its influence through political interest (-.03). Personal income had only a slight negative indirect effect on group-based participation (-.01), due to the lower levels of political knowledge with which it is associated.

Four contextual factors had indirect effects on group-based participation. Being mobilized to take part in politics at work had a small positive effect through political knowledge (.01). The experience of sex discrimination had a significant indirect path only through political interest (.02), but its size was much smaller than the coefficient for the direct effect. Sex-segregated occupations had negative indirect effects, indicating that they result in lower levels of group-based participation. The effects of female-

dominated occupations travel through both political knowledge (-.01) and political interest (-.02), whereas male-dominated occupations have influence only through knowledge (-.01).

Figure 4: Paths from Employment to Group-Based Participation: Standardized OLS Coefficients



Of the six workplace variables with indirect effects, four had net effects in the negative direction. Higher status and higher paying jobs, as well as sex-segregated occupations, served to reduce levels of group-based activity. However, requests to become involved in politics by someone at work and the experience of sex discrimination promoted political participation in consort with others.

Estimating the direct and indirect paths for individual participation

In Table 15, the results of the regression model to determine the variables with direct effects on individual participation are found. Three measures of political engagement had direct effects: knowledge, interest, and internal efficacy. Each was used as an intervening variable to examine the indirect effects. None of the gender orientation variables had a direct significant impact on individual participation.

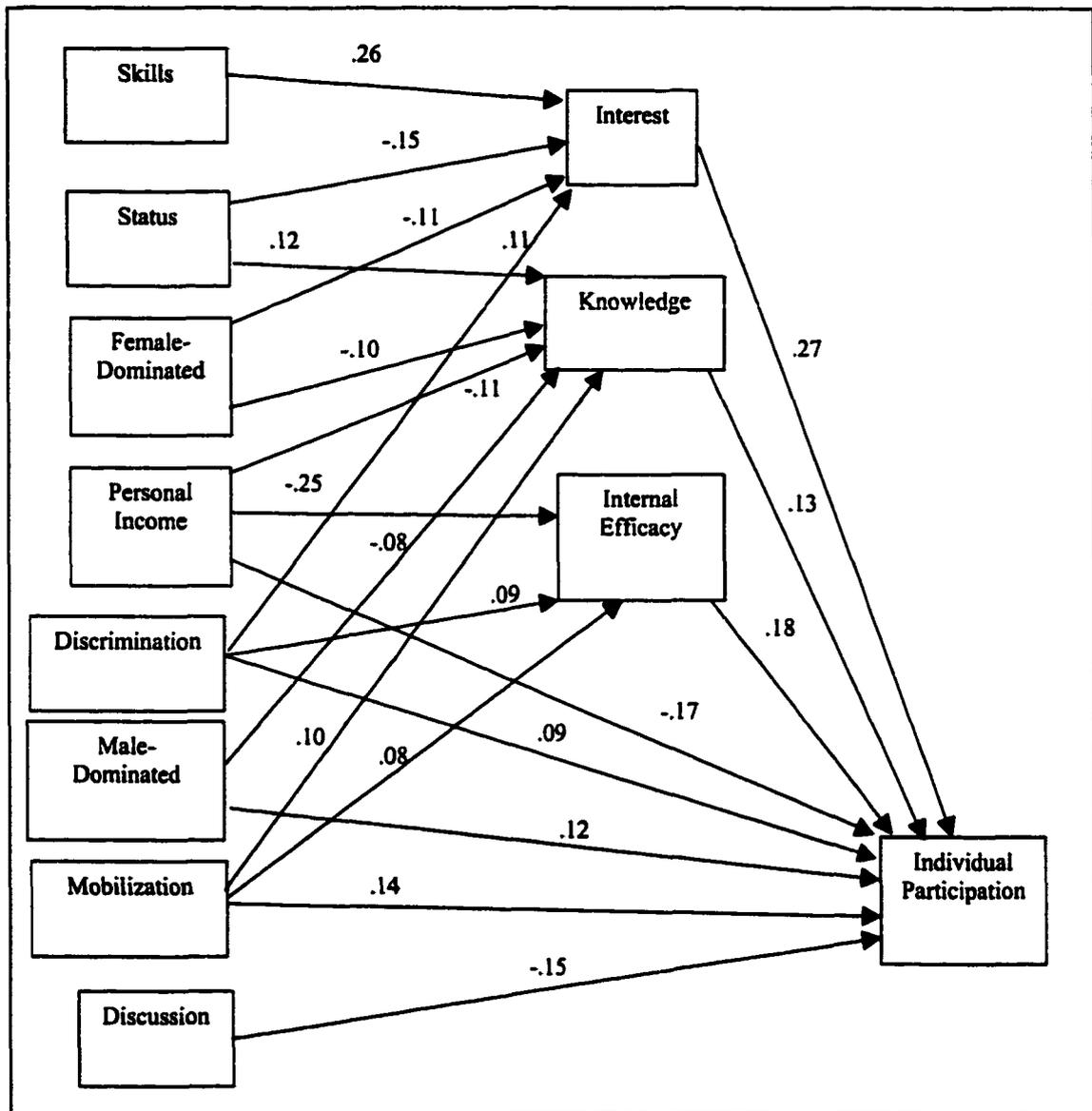
Table 15: Direct and Indirect Effects on Individual Participation: Standardized OLS Coefficients

Variable	Direct Effect	Indirect Effects			Total Effect
		Knowledge	Interest	Internal Eff	
Knowledge	.13	n/a	n/a	n/a	.13
Interest	.27	n/a	n/a	n/a	.27
Internal Efficacy	.18	n/a	n/a	n/a	.18
Household Income	.13	.03	.03	.03	.22
Education	.16	.04	.05	.07	.32
Age	.26	.02	.06	n/s	.34
Skills	n/s	n/s	.07	n/s	.07
Status	n/s	.02	-.04	n/s	-.02
Personal Income	-.17	-.01	n/s	-.05	-.23
Mobilization	.14	.01	n/s	.01	.16
Discussion	-.15	n/s	n/s	n/s	-.15
Discrimination	.09	n/s	.03	.02	.14
Female Dominated	n/s	-.01	-.03	n/s	-.04
Male Dominated	.12	-.01	n/s	n/s	.11

Only one structural workplace factor, personal income, was found to have a significant and negative direct effect (-.17), indicating that higher personal income lowered individual political participation. In addition, four contextual factors had direct effects. Mobilization was associated with increased individual participation (.14), as was working at a male-dominated occupation (.12), and experiencing sex discrimination (.09). A negative direct effect on participation was found for feeling free to discuss politics at work (-.15).

The significant indirect paths between the employment variables and individual participation are presented in Figure 4. With respect to the indirect effects, the structural workplace factors had significant paths to all three political engagement variables. In addition to its direct effect, personal income also had negative indirect effects through internal efficacy (-.05) and political knowledge (-.01). Job status had a negative influence on individual participation through political interest (-.04), and a positive indirect effect through political knowledge (.02). Job skills only had an impact on individual participation through political interest (.07). Overall, as was the case with group-based participation, the structural factors more often had a negative net effect on political activity.

Figure 5: Paths from Employment to Individual Participation: Standardized OLS Coefficients



Several significant indirect effects also emerged through the analysis of the contextual workplace factors. Being mobilized to participate in politics influenced participation positively through its effects via political knowledge (.01) and internal efficacy (.01). Experiencing sex discrimination also had a positive effect through internal efficacy (.02), as well as one through political interest (.03). Sex-segregated occupations again had negative influences on political participation, with paths through

political knowledge (-.01) and interest (-.03) for female-dominated occupations, and a path through knowledge for male-dominated occupations (-.01). These patterns were also similar to those found for group-based participation, with mobilization and discrimination serving to promote participation, and employment in sex-segregated occupations leading to lower rates of political activity.

In general, the structural factors of the workplace exerted a greater influence on individual participation indirectly. Only personal income demonstrated a direct effect, whereas two additional structural factors, job skills and job status, had indirect influences through their effects on knowledge and interest. The opposite was found for the contextual factors. Three of the four factors with direct effects also exhibited indirect effects, but which were considerably smaller. Only female-dominated occupations emerged as an additional influence when indirect effects were examined.

Summary and Conclusions

These findings demonstrate that several aspects of employment are indeed related to women's political participation, and this relationship is both direct and indirect. In other words, through working women gain experiences and resources which directly facilitate their involvement in the political arena. Even after controlling for demographics, political engagements, and gender orientations, several workplace factors remained significant predictors of the participation measures.

The analysis of the indirect effects demonstrates that certain aspects of the workplace may have an influence on politics that is not so easily observable. Some of what happens in the workplace increases women's psychological readiness for political activity, thereby increasing their likelihood of participation. Three political

engagements, knowledge, interest, and internal efficacy, and one gender orientation, involvement with women's organizations, were found to function as intervening variables, mediating between employment and participation. Recent research using the same data set concluded that working was unrelated to political engagement for women (Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1999). However, these researchers based their conclusion on an analysis of all women, not just those who were working, and used a composite measure of engagement which combined interest, efficacy, and knowledge. In addition, they only examined two measures of the workplace, full-time work and the amount of education and training needed for a job. The more detailed analysis of employment and political engagement in this study underscores the complexity of the process by which individuals become political actors, and the need for careful consideration of both direct and indirect influences before any factors can be deemed unrelated to political participation.

Overall, the sizes of the coefficients for the indirect effects are small in comparison with those for the direct effects. However, when the two types of effects are taken together the influence of the workplace factors becomes magnified. Furthermore, these data provide evidence for a connection between employment and participation that exists outside of the realm of resources. When both direct and indirect effects are analyzed, numerous other workplace factors emerge as significant influences on white, working women's political activity.

However, not all effects of the workplace are beneficial to participation. Some aspects of working reduce levels of political engagements, thus leading to a lower likelihood of political activity. Other workplace factors evidenced a direct relationship to

lower levels of political activity. The following summarizes the specific relationships to participation and its antecedents that were identified and suggests explanations for why some workplace factors had no observable impact on participation or its antecedents.

Beginning with the antecedents to participation, three measures of engagements and gender orientations were unrelated to political activity. Once other factors were controlled, external political efficacy, feelings of closeness towards other women, and an awareness of women's problems demonstrated no relationship to any of the participation measures. With respect to engagement, internal efficacy plays a much greater role in women's decisions about political involvement. It is their feelings about their own competencies, rather than their impression of their officials' responsiveness that has an influence.

The lack of a relationship to participation for the two gender orientation variables is somewhat surprising given the frequency with which these measures have been used in the past as indicators of political participation.³¹ Neither feelings of closeness with other women nor an awareness of women's problems had a role in linking workplace factors to political participation. This is not to say that gender orientations, in general, are unimportant to women's political activity. In fact, many studies have found that they play a critical role in predicting *how* women choose to participate (Conover and Sapiro 1992a, 1992b; Conway Steuernagel, and Ahern 1997; Klein 1984; Tolleson Rinehart 1992). With respect to the workplace, however, and the process by which individuals translate those experiences into political participation, political engagements matter

³¹ See Chapters 2 and 3 for further details on the use of these variables in measures of feminist consciousness.

more. Even those workplace variables which seemed deeply embedded with gender, such as the experience of sex discrimination and employment at sex-segregated occupations, often had strong relationships with engagements, but none whatsoever with gender orientations.

Therefore, these findings provide further evidence supporting the importance of the relationship between participation and variables such as political knowledge and interest. Once the influence of these large predictors of participation is controlled, psychological orientations towards other members of one's gender have little influence on participation. However, involvement with a women's organization was a significant predictor, which may indicate that it is not enough to have an intellectual or emotional attachment to women as a group for a political effect. This psychological affinity must be translated into an overt affiliation with this group, such as by becoming involved with other women in some sort of organization, in order for a political influence to be manifested.

In general, the four structural factors of the workplace, personal income, job skills, occupational status, and workplace authority were found to have a greater influence on participation through indirect effects. The only direct influence found was for higher personal income. For both individual participatory acts, and the overall measure of participation, personal income was directly related to lower levels of activity. This finding is in the opposite direction of much previous research about economic status and participation. The fact that personal income was found to be unrelated to working women's political activity will be revisited in the concluding chapter which discusses ways in which the workplace functions as a gendered institution.

Occupational status had no direct relationship to participation but influenced the three participation measures indirectly, through effects on political knowledge and interest. Those in higher status jobs had higher levels of knowledge about politics. This may be because those jobs bring one into closer contact with political matters.

Professional associations often provide information about political issues relevant to one's profession, and those at higher levels within business often need to know a good deal about the political issues of the day in order to protect their business interests.

However, needing to know about politics does not necessarily require that one be especially interested in general political matters. Instead, those in higher status jobs may need to focus their interests on keeping current with professional matters, rather than on local or national level politics. This may explain the negative relationship found between status and political interest. In sum, the influence of job status on participation is indirect and mixed. Although it is associated with higher levels of political knowledge, this goes hand-in-hand with lower levels of political interest, indicating that higher status jobs may be, but are not necessarily, a benefit in terms of participation.

The practice of civic skills on the job, such as letter-writing or organizing meetings, had a positive impact on individual and overall participation indirectly through political interest. Once other workplace factors were controlled, job skills had no direct impact on participation, a finding that contrasts with a similar study of the workplace and participation (Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1999). However, the other research included many fewer measures of the workplace in their model. The finding in this study suggests that job skills may have a much more subtle relationship to political activity than that which has been suggested in the literature (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995;

Freedman and Rosenstone 1995; Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1999). Rather than interpreting job skills as resources that are directly transferable to politics, they may be better understood as functioning to promote engagement with politics, which often leads to political activity. Further research on the skills performed on the job, such as when and how they are gained and practiced, is needed to more fully explain their role in affecting political engagement.

One structural factor of the workplace, supervisory authority at work, demonstrated no relationship to political participation, either directly or indirectly. The number of people over which one is a direct or indirect supervisor had no observable effect on women's political involvement. Previous studies have produced very conflicting findings about the political effects of workplace authority, and have used a variety of different measures. More general measures of democratic authority structures at work and high-quality work routines have been found to be positively related to a number of political measures (Elden 1981; Delli Carpini 1986). For women, supervising others does not have a similar effect, although some research has found it is predictive of men's political activity (Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1999). This measure may do a poor job of tapping into workplace authority. Those owners of small firms may have few people they supervise, but a great deal of authority. Alternatively, workplace authority may be an employment construct which functions differently for men and women, a possibility which will be addressed in the conclusion.

Several of the contextual workplace factors evidenced a direct relationship to political participation. The experience of sex discrimination was the only workplace factor directly related to group-based participation. In addition, it directly affected

individual and overall participation. This experience of bias based upon one's sex clearly served as a catalyst for political activity. In addition to a strong direct effect, it also had a positive influence on participation through political interest and internal efficacy. The experience of discrimination may for some be very isolating and alienating, however, for white, working women the opposite appears to be true. It is related to higher levels of interest in politics and an increased sense of their ability to have an impact on politics. Alternatively, it may be that after becoming more politically engaged or participatory women retrospectively evaluate their previous experiences as sex discrimination. Further examinations of the relationship between discrimination and political participation are needed to more fully explicate how this process occurs and to completely rule out the possibility that the recognition of discrimination came about only after political interest, efficacy, or participation occurred.

Requests to become involved in politics by someone at work had a positive direct effect on both individual and overall participation. The lack of a direct effect on group-based activities may indicate that those receiving requests to engage in group-based participation are less likely to acquiesce. In general, group-based participation is less frequent than individual activity among these working women. Additionally, protesting, one of the two group-based activities for which one could have received a request, is performed rarely compared to many other types of political involvement (Conway 1991; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995).

However, a positive indirect relationship between mobilization and group-based activity was found through an influence on political knowledge. Additionally, indirect effects were also evidenced for individual and overall participation with influence

through political knowledge and internal efficacy. A request to become involved in politics appears to increase women's knowledge about politics and their sense of their own political influence. They may decide to gather information about the campaign or cause about which the request was directed. They may also evaluate their level of influence differently once an opportunity for their own political involvement is brought to their attention.

In addition, overall participation was also affected through a relationship with women's organizational involvement. Those women receiving requests to become involved in politics by someone at work were more likely to be involved in some type of women's organization. This finding is consistent with previous studies which have cited the greater likelihood of requests for activity to be aimed at those who are already somehow involved (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Brady, Schlozman, and Verba 1999). Although involvement with a women's organization may be nonpolitical, those women may be seen as more willing to contribute their energy to a political undertaking.

Feeling free to engage in political discussion while at work had only a negative direct effect on overall participation, and no indirect effects. It may be that those who spend time discussing politics at their workplace have little interest in involvement with political activity during their off hours. However, this measure is weak in that it does not ask respondents to report on actual discussions, but rather only on their feelings about how accepted such discussions would be in the workplace. The lack of a relationship to measures of political engagement, such as knowledge or interest, is also a good indication that those reporting they feel free to discuss may not actually be engaging in political communication. This research thus demonstrates that a climate in which one

feels free to partake in political discussions is not sufficient to motivate political activity, or to promote levels of political engagement.

The final two measures of workplace contexts with significant effects, working at male-dominated and female-dominated occupations, yielded very mixed findings. Male-dominated occupations had positive direct effects on both individual and overall political participation. Given men's slightly higher rates of political activity, it may be that women who work in male-dominated occupations observe and learn from the political involvement of those around them. The indirect effects found for male-dominated occupations are the opposite of the direct effects. All three participation measures had negative relationships to male-dominated occupations through political knowledge. Clearly, the boost in participation found from this type of occupation did not result from increased political engagement. In addition, a negative relationship to overall participation was found through involvement with a women's organization. Women who interact primarily with men at work and whose job has been traditionally performed by men are also involved less often with women's organizations outside of the workplace.

Working at a female-dominated occupation had a positive direct impact on overall participation. Women employed in these types of jobs may find that political activity is supported by their co-workers, and that their participation levels receive a boost from being in a female-centered environment. However, as with male-dominated occupations, this type of job was associated with lower levels of political engagement, and thereby had a negative indirect effect on all three types of political participation. The paths through both knowledge of and interest in politics had negative influences on political activity. It appears that, when compared with occupations that have nearly equal proportions of men

and women, sex-segregated occupations are detrimental to levels of political engagement, but directly promote participation.

One contextual factor, employment in a full-time capacity, had no impact on participation either directly or through its antecedents. This finding indicates that the effects of women's workplace experiences are not influenced by spending either a full 40 hours or less each week at work. This effect will also be considered in light of employment as a gendered institution in the concluding chapter.

In sum, these findings demonstrate that many workplace factors, while not significant in predicting political participation, have a role in shaping women's psychological engagement with politics. In addition, those variables with direct participation effects must be considered when models of political participation are devised. Two variables, sex discrimination and the sex segregation of occupations merit further investigation to more completely understand their relationship to participation. This research indicates that, at least for studies of women's political activity, their inclusion in a model would add predictive power. The next chapter will link these many findings about workplace factors back to the gendered nature of work and demonstrate how they provide insight into the way employment functions as a gendered institution.

CHAPTER 6: Conclusions

This study began with a theoretical discussion of the workplace as a gendered political context. The findings of this research offer some insight into the ways in which employment operates as a gendered institution. Because women's experiences in the paid workforce are shaped by gender, the political effects of employment were often counter to the hypotheses and different from what other studies of political participation have found. Several variables examined in this study are obviously related to the gendered nature of employment, such as sex discrimination and the sex segregation of the workforce. In addition, other work-related variables have less obvious ties to the ways in which employment is gendered, but the results of this study indicate that gender also shapes these aspects of women's workplace experiences. The following section discusses the findings about each of the structural and contextual workplace factors when examined through the lens of gender. In doing so it illuminates some of the ways in which gender shapes employment as an institution.

The two variables most obviously related to institutional distinctions based upon gender in the workplace are sex discrimination and occupational sex segregation. Sex discrimination was found to serve as a politicizing agent for white working women. Unfair treatment of women and sex-based bias functions to connect women to politics, but not to other women, as it was unrelated to gender orientations. In a workplace in which sex discrimination takes place, women may not find other women to be resources or allies in their efforts to rectify or stop the discriminatory practices. Indeed, other women may not be able to offer much in the way of assistance or guidance, given the institutional constraints of the workplace. Because sex discrimination is an issue that has

been moved into the political sphere and legislated against, with redress commonly sought through the courts, if at all, other women and women's organizations may not be viewed as elements of the solution. However, women will need to be a part of the process for the institution to change in a way that diminishes the prevalence of sex discrimination. Efforts to bring women together in a discriminatory workplace would certainly help to begin this process.

The sex segregation of occupations continues to be a pervasive characteristic of the gendered nature of employment. Even as new occupations evolved with the computer age, segregation by sex continued with women predominately in data entry and processing jobs and men prevalent in computer technology and programming. In this study, women in male- and female-dominated occupations were found to be more active in politics than those in jobs held by men and women in equal numbers. However, in neither instance was a corresponding higher rate of political engagement or greater orientations towards women found. In fact, both types of occupations were related to lower levels of political engagement. Therefore, the process by which these types of occupations link women to politics is unclear. However, male-dominated occupations are likely to have a process different from female-dominated occupations given the vast contrast in experiences for women in traditional and non-traditional jobs. For example, women in female-dominated jobs may find that at work they are in an environment supportive and encouraging of participation, which does not make them feel like outsiders to politics. Women in male-dominated occupations may find that involvement with politics is facilitated by being surrounded by men who are involved. If the sex segregation of occupations begins to diminish, women's engagement with politics would

be expected to increase, but it is unclear whether this higher level of engagement would eventually offset the likely reduction in political activity associated with women working in mixed gender occupations.

The findings of this study also point to ways in which other structural and contextual work factors are both influenced by and serve to reinforce the gendered nature of work. For example, higher personal income was found to be related to lower levels of political participation, a result which runs counter to socio-economic status and resource models of political activity. Clearly, for women, personal income does not operate as a political tool in the same way it has been found to for men. Likewise, occupational status was shown to have no direct impact on levels of participation in politics. Women's role in the workplace has historically been viewed as secondary in importance to men's. Because women continue to earn less than men for their work, and have yet to move into many higher status jobs, they may not be able to use their incomes or the status derived from their occupation as an entree into political involvement.

In addition, within their families, many women are often only one of two wage-earners. Thus, the status and income of the family unit as a whole are more important to their participation. As this dual-income trend continues into the future, men's personal income and job status may become less influential and predictive of the extent of their involvement in politics. Unfortunately, there is also a growing number of female-headed households in the US. For these women, marginalization in the workplace may mean that other, non-work-related aspects of their lives are integral to determining when and how they choose to become politically active. Alternatively, it may mean that these women are further marginalized when it comes to political participation.

Authority at work was not a determinant of women's political activity, although some research has found that it bears a significant relationship to men's participation (Schlozman, Burns and Verba 1999). Authority is a construct deeply embedded with gender, with women having much more difficulty obtaining positions of authority at work, and once there, sometimes choosing to use leadership styles different from those traditionally employed by men. It may be the case, for example, that many women's authority at work is undermined, resulting in it having no relevance to their political activity. Although these data do not enable a clearer understanding of women's workplace authority, the findings do suggest that the meaning of workplace authority for women may be different, and that its influence outside of work diverges from men's. If women are able to permeate the barriers that have restricted their entry into leadership positions at work, this factor may become as relevant to their political behavior as it is for men. However, it may alternatively be the case that once there many women will opt to implement a more egalitarian, power-sharing work mode that may detract from the larger boost to political participation men currently receive from workplace authority, but at the same time may offer some political empowerment to subordinates.

Job skills were also not directly related to women's political activism, although they have been found to be important predictors in numerous other studies. The specific skills examined included writing letters, organizing or attending meetings, and public speaking. As a group, these four skills clearly distinguish between higher and lower level jobs traditionally held by men. Men in executive and administrative positions are much more likely to undertake these activities than those working as skilled or unskilled laborers. However, the same is not true for traditionally female-dominated occupations.

For example, two of the four skills, writing letters and organizing meetings, are commonly performed by administrative assistants whose jobs are not very high in status. It may be the case that these job skills are better at predicting men's political activity because of their relationship to higher-level male-dominated occupations. A more fully gender-integrated workforce may lead to different skills which are relevant to politics, or may result in job status, rather than job skills, becoming powerful in predicting participation.

This study also found that women in full-time jobs were no more nor less politically active than those working part-time. For women, a part-time job is often an end in itself and not a temporary substitute for a full-time job, because responsibility for children often falls on women, and careers and motherhood are still often viewed as incompatible. The absence of workplace childcare facilities and flex-time or telecommuting opportunities all contribute to a distinct institutional separation between employment and parenting. Thus, women who work part-time may do so on a long-term basis and consequently have the same level of integration into the workplace as women who work full-time. This may account for why workplace effects for part-time workers are similar to those for women employed in a full-time capacity.

Two aspects of employment for women were less closely tied to work as a gendered institution, at least to the extent that this study can determine. Workplace mobilization was associated with more political participation, a relationship consistently found in much earlier research. Working women who are asked at work to become politically involved often do so. However, they may be asked to do different activities than men, or may acquiesce to different types of requests. Unfortunately, the size of the

sample prevented a more extensive examination of the ways in which gender may be associated with political recruitment.

The freedom to discuss politics at work was associated with lower levels of political participation. While political communication has in the past been shown to promote participation, for women in the workplace topics of discussion may be of a more cynical nature, without the positive effects of either increased engagement with or participation in politics associated with it. Commentary about politics conducted in an alienated or disengaged setting would do little to encourage participation, and could in fact discourage it. Unfortunately, data about whether political discussion actually took place at work, and if so, information about the subject of the discussion and the parties involved in it were unavailable. These data would be necessary to determine if and how gender differences function with respect to political discussions.

In general, this study provides some insight into the political implications for women who serve as paid employees within a gendered institution. Further, it demonstrates that social institutions and structures have an influence on individuals as they approach political decisions and undertake political actions. Often not examined in studies of political behavior, institutions are shown here to have relevance not only because they create a political context within which individuals have daily interactions, but also because they are gendered. These findings provide evidence for a continued emphasis on understanding individual political behavior not just through an analysis of autonomous beings, but through a consideration of how individuals relate to the social institutions within which they are embedded.

As future changes to employment take place with respect to the opportunities and possibilities available to women workers, and as gender differences between men and women become a less central organizing schema for work itself, employment as an institution will undergo an evolution in many fundamental ways. Continuing research on the relationship between employment and politics will provide a means of taking stock of these changes and their political implications. Future studies which have as their goal an examination of employment as a gendered political context would be served by better data and alternative methodological approaches. A discussion of the limitations of this study provides numerous suggestions to guide other research in this area.

In conducting quantitative survey research through the use of a nationally representative sample, the ideal research design is one in which the researcher designs a questionnaire for the purposes of testing specific hypotheses. Unfortunately, due to restrictions such as money or time, many researchers must test their hypotheses using the best available data that have been invariably collected for other purposes. These data, however, often do not provide strong measures for tapping into the concepts under investigation.

In the case of this research, the Citizen Participation Study provided ample measures for examining political participation and political engagement, but was much weaker in its ability to measure gender orientations and workplace contexts. For example, the types of women's organizations represented in the responses to the questions about such involvement were unavailable. The ability to identify a pattern in the types of organizations, if one were present, would aid greatly in the interpretation of the findings about this variable.

More generally, with respect to gender orientations, it is difficult for a survey question to probe women's understanding of themselves as women, and how they relate to other women. However, a survey could certainly ask a series of questions that would allow for categorization of women as feminists or non-feminists. Straightforward issue questions about views on abortion rights, sex discrimination, sexual harassment, and workplace equality could be combined with queries about general support for or opposition to the activity of feminist organizations. Although most individuals would not uniformly take a feminist or anti-feminist position on every issue, a trend throughout most of the responses would enable categorization of those on either side, with a group remaining in the middle who are neither feminist nor strongly in support of a traditional role for women.

The Citizen Participation Study also provided only brief glimpses at the workplace as a political context. Although a survey may not be the best method for collecting data about a social context, questions about the length of time one has worked at a particular job, who one is in contact with at work on a daily basis, the nature of their workplace discussions, and the value placed on co-workers opinions about political matters, are just some of the useful information needed to begin to understand how the workplace functions as a political context.

However, it is also the case that the survey method of research is limited in the knowledge it can offer when one's questions involve the political influence of social interactions and networks of personal contact. A context is perhaps best understood through first-hand observation, using an ethnographic method of research. Seeing how people interact and listening to their discussions would provide the most detailed

information about the workplace context. Unfortunately, this method of research raises numerous other issues, such as the generalizability of the information, the economic and time investment of such research, and the level of confidence in the authenticity of observations when those in the workplace know they are being observed.

Interview or focus group data could also be collected, with individuals asked to talk about their workplaces, the experiences they have there, and the importance they place on those relationships. When used in conjunction with a large survey, this personal communication about workplace contexts may provide useful elaboration and clarification of national survey findings.

In addition to using alternative methods to collect data about workplace contexts, future research must also consider examining men and other groups of non-white women to determine how employment may function in relation to their political involvement. Questions that would allow for gender or race comparisons, as well as those designed to understand the unique experience of working for these groups, are essential to complete the picture of the political effects of working. From this study it is clear that white, working women are in some ways influenced politically by the fact that they are employed. The institutionally gendered nature of work affects not just who they are as employees, but also how they choose to involve themselves in the world of politics.

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Curriculum Vita

RACHELLE LOUISE BROOKS

EDUCATION

- 2000 Ph.D., Political Science, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey *Major: Women & Politics Minors: American Politics, Public Law*
Dissertation: "The Effects of Paid Employment on Women's Political Activity: An Analysis of Structural and Contextual Workplace Factors"
- 1996 M.A., Political Science,; Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey
- 1990 B.A.; College of Wooster, Wooster, Ohio;
Major: Political Science
Minor: Women's Studies

RESEARCH POSITIONS

Research Consultant, Consumer Health Sciences
 Princeton, NJ, 1998-Present.

Research Associate, Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, Rutgers University
 New Brunswick, NJ, 1998-Present.

Research Manager, Consumer Health Sciences
 Princeton, NJ, 1997-1998.

Research Assistant, Center for Public Interest Polling, Eagleton Institute of Politics
 Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, 1996-1997.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS

Project Assistant, The Teaching Assistant Project, Graduate School-New Brunswick
 Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, 1995-1996

Coordinator, Public Leadership Education Network (PLEN), Douglass College
 Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, 1993-1995

Inventory Field Auditor/Trainer, SuperRx Drug Stores
 Cincinnati, OH, 1990-1992

TEACHING POSITIONS

Instructor, Rutgers University
Elections and Participation, Summer 1996
Law and Politics, Summer 1993
Independent Study in Political Science, 1993-1995

TEACHING POSITIONS (cont.)

Grader, Rutgers University

1993, 1996, *American Political Parties*,

1992, *Law and Politics*, Professor Judith Mack

PUBLICATIONS***Political Science***

“An Analysis of the Violence Against Women Act,” in *Feminists Negotiate the State: The Politics of Domestic Violence*, Cynthia Daniels, editor. University Press of America, 1997.

Health Sciences

“An Economic Analysis of Donepezil in the Treatment of Alzheimer’s Disease,” with Gary Small, MD, and Jane A. Donohue, PhD, in *Clinical Therapeutics*, July/August, 1998.

“The Relationship Between Donepezil and Behavioral Disturbances in Patients with Alzheimer’s Disease,” with Jeffrey L. Cummings, MD, and Jane A. Donohue, PhD, *American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*, forthcoming.

“The Impact of Donepezil on Caregiving Burden for Patients with Alzheimer’s Disease,” with Howard M. Filit, MD, and Elane M. Gutterman, PhD, *International Psychogeriatrics*, forthcoming.