The Payoffs of Organizational Membership for Political Activism in Established Democracies[1]

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This article contributes to long-standing debates about the influence of voluntary association membership on political participation by drawing on recent advances in counterfactual analysis. Propensity score matching methods are used to assess the effects of different forms of membership (active and passive) in distinct organizational forms (civic and political) on political activism, taking selection bias into account. Results demonstrate that organizational membership increases levels of nonconventional political action—for active and passive members in both political and civic groups. The "participatory dividend" is highest for members of political organizations, but there is also support for the argument that membership in civic organizations enhances political activism, net of selection. Focusing only on the subset of joiners, however, suggests that the distinction between active and passive membership is less pronounced than skeptics of such symbolic affiliation have argued.

INTRODUCTION

The positive relationship between civic engagement and political participation in developed and developing democracies has become something

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of a truism in recent years, bolstered both by normative assumptions and an increasingly active field of empirical research. Although the mechanisms thought to explain the linkage between civic and political participation are varied, a great deal of emphasis is focused on how the development of skills, trust, and efficacy in voluntary associations translates into a broader concern with politics at the individual level, with attendant societal benefits such as generalized trust, institutional efficiency, and the more effective functioning of democracy. However, we also know that rates and forms of voluntary participation vary cross-nationally, with important differences between countries with respect to traditions of voluntarism and the extent to which the civic sector is developed (Dekker 1998; Salamon et al. 1998; Curtis, Baer, and Grabb 2001; Schofer and Fourcade-Gourinchas 2001; Van Deth, Montero, and Westholm 2006).

It is also the case that the recent emergence of new forms of voluntary association and nongovernmental organizations has thrown into question whether all types of participation are similarly productive of the kinds of resources and social capital that are thought to promote political participation and democratic institutions, broadly conceived. Galvanized by Robert Putnam's (1995, 2000) lament about the decline of social capital in the United States and Skocpol's (2003) concerns about "diminished democracy" in light of the rise of professionally managed advocacy organizations, debate has centered on the question whether new, more passive, forms of associational membership yield the kinds of individual- and societal-level benefits long thought to characterize traditional forms of more active, face-to-face forms of voluntary participation.[2] Whereas many analysts, following Putnam (2000), tend to discount the role of passive membership, others argue for a more differentiated understanding of the benefits of each form of participation (Minkoff 1997; Wollebæk and Selle 2007; with the understanding that the social capital produced by membership of all forms can have positive as well as negative consequences; see Theiss-Morse and Hibbing [2005] for a useful review).

Another aspect of this debate is the question whether the presumptive benefits of membership accrue across all forms of voluntary associations, such that involvement in nonpolitical organizations translates into the political realm by serving as "schools of democracy" (Tocqueville, Mansfield, and

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[2] See Foley and Edwards (1996) for an early summary of this debate and Dekker and Van den Broek (2005) for a longitudinal and cross-national examination that challenges the main arguments made by Putnam; for documentation of the rise and prevalence of professionally managed membership and nonmembership organizations in the United States, see Minkoff, Aisenbrey, and Agnone (2008) and Walker, McCarthy, and Baumgartner (2011).

Winthrop 2000) or "free spaces" (Boyte and Evans 1986) for developing communal trust and political engagement. Although the main precipitant for these debates has been the status of civic and political participation in the United States, analysts have also been examining similar questions from a cross-national perspective, particularly in the European context (more recent examples include Van Deth 2001; Bowler, Donovan, and Hanneman 2003; Dekker and Van den Broek 2005; Howard and Gilbert 2008; Newton and Giebler 2008; Van der Meer and Van Ingen 2009; Mascherini, Vidoni, and Manca 2011).

This article makes a novel and targeted intervention into the many recent efforts to unpack the relationship between associational membership and political participation at the individual level, by drawing on recent advances in counterfactual analysis (Morgan and Winship 2007; Gangl 2010). Using a unique data set that combines data from the 2002 European Social Survey and the 2005 Citizenship, Involvement, Democracy survey of Americans (Howard, Gilbert, and Stolle 2006), I employ propensity score matching (PSM) techniques to create comparison groups of active and passive associational members and nonmembers to isolate what can be considered the "treatment effect" of organizational membership on political participation. Doing so provides a means of directly addressing the problem of selection bias in previous research, namely, whether the observed effects of organizational membership on political participation reflect the fact that the same individuals who become members of organizations are also those who are more likely to get involved politically. In an effort to contribute to the debate about newer forms of membership, I emphasize the differential effects of passive versus active membership on political participation. In addition, in order to clarify whether participation in civic organizations such as parent-teacher associations (PTAs) and sports clubs does, in fact, politicize members or whether this is an artifact of selection bias in previous research, I examine differences across civic and political organizations.

My main interest is in political activism, such as participating in legal or unsanctioned demonstrations or engaging in ethically oriented consumer behavior, that extends beyond conventional forms of electoral politics such as voting, contacting public officials, or participating in political campaigns (actively or symbolically; see Teorell, Torcal, and Montero [2006], for a discussion of the distinction between conventional and unconventional political behavior). Although protest has become an increasingly accepted means of political expression in advanced democracies and on a more global scale (Meyer and Tarrow 1998; Norris 2002; Dalton, van Sickle, and Weldon 2010), it nonetheless represents a distinct mode of political participation (Teorell et al. 2006). In addition, focusing on unconventional political participation represents a conservative test of selection bias in analyses of organizational membership and political action: on the face of it, the link between involve-

ment in civic organizations and protest activity seems relatively dubious, whereas it is reasonable to expect that individuals who seek out membership in political organizations are also more likely to engage in a broader template of political action—especially those who volunteer more actively in these formal associations—because they are either already predisposed toward politics or more likely to encounter mobilizing agents or incentives there (Passy 2001; Walker 2008).

In the next section, I briefly reprise the central debates that frame the literature on civic engagement and political participation. I then describe how matching methods, specifically propensity score analysis, can be used to refine our understanding of the link between organizational membership and political participation. I next present results from a series of analyses that address the following questions: Does membership influence participation across different forms of membership and different forms of organization? Or, is the observed relationship a function of selection bias such that individuals who are more likely to join organizations are also more likely to be politically active? The results suggest that organizational membership increases levels of political activity for active and passive members in both political and civic groups, although there are important differences in the magnitude of effects. Not surprisingly, active membership provides the most substantial boost to political participation. The participatory dividend is highest for members of political organizations, but there is also support for the argument that membership in civic organizations enhances political activism.

The latter part of the article presents an additional set of empirical explorations that hones in on differences between active and passive organizational members of civic and political organizations. I use propensity scores to create separate groups of high, moderate, and low propensity respondents in order to examine whether the benefits of membership depend on how likely individuals are to be involved in voluntary associations to begin with, evaluating what can be considered the "conditional payoffs" of organizational involvement. Results suggest that those individuals who are least likely to become involved in either civic or political organizations compared to nonjoiners experience more significant politicizing gains from their membership, whether passive or active. Alternatively, the payoffs of active versus passive membership in civic organizations are higher for those who are more likely to participate to begin with, whereas there appear to be no significant differences across propensity levels between active and passive members of political organizations.

MOTIVATING CONCERNS

Although there is a long-standing interest in the relationship between civic participation and political life (Tocqueville et al. 2000), more recent concern

tends to focus on either the internal (individual-level) or external (macropolitical) benefits of associational activity as a key site for the production of social capital and, consequently, political engagement of various forms (Foley and Edwards 1996; Warren 2001). Research in the latter tradition tends to use aggregate data on organizational memberships and rates of political participation, in combination with measures of societal affluence, political openness, and the like, to address the correlates and consequences of social capital for various democratic outcomes (see, e.g., Putnam 1994; Norris 2002; Paxton 2002; Morales 2009). This article brackets debates oriented to macrolevel developments and focuses on the importance of voluntary organization membership for political participation at the individual level. I argue that previous research does not adequately take account of selection bias in studying the relationship between voluntary organizational membership and political participation and devotes insufficient empirical attention to whether all forms of organization or forms of membership encourage political participation.

The Political Payoffs of Organizational Membership

Two research streams in sociology and political science provide a well-established starting point for expecting that members of voluntary organizations are also more likely to be active in the political arena, although the posited mechanisms by which organizational membership promotes political activity are relatively distinct. There are also some important differences regarding the putative benefits of membership in organizations dedicated to primarily civic, as opposed to political, purposes.

The first research stream, often referred to as the civic voluntarism or social capital approach, posits that involvement in civic organizations provides skills, resources, and networks of trust that members translate into participation in the political arena. Whereas earlier research in political science emphasized the skill-building effects of associational membership (Brady, Verba, and Schlozman 1995; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995) or the intentional mobilization of members by group leaders across a range of voluntary associations (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993), more recent neo-Tocquevillian variants, following Putnam (1995, 2000), focus on the social capital–enhancing features of belonging. Voluntary associations—specifically those that are nonpolitical in nature—operate as settings within which participants gain direct experience with collective decision making, leadership, and social trust that translates into broader engagement in politics (what Pollock [1982] refers to as "unintentional mobilization"). Despite differences regarding the specification of the exact mechanism of influence, nonpolitical voluntary associations are essentially conceptualized as sites of both civic and political socialization (Van der Meer and Van Ingen 2009).

The status of political or interest-based organizations in this literature is somewhat contested. Some analysts dismiss or minimize the relevance of political groups for the production of social capital because of their tendency to be organized around narrow interests and social cleavages, which reinforces group boundaries in a way that limits generalized social trust of the sort that promotes political participation (whereas civic groups, instead of having such a potentially negative bonding effect, provide bridging social capital that is viewed more positively; see Putnam 2000). Others have argued that members of political organizations are, in fact, more likely to be politically engaged because group leaders either make more direct demands on them to get involved in the political process (Stolle and Rochon 1998) or, closely related, are more effective in mobilizing members who join the group precisely in order to gain external rewards or benefits (Leighley 1996). Whereas nonpolitical organizations are thought to unintentionally politicize their members, political organizations are expected to intentionally activate participants for various forms of political engagement (Pollock 1982; see also Foley and Edwards 1996; Walker 2008).

The second approach that informs the current analysis stems from the field of social movement research and focuses attention on the role played by formal organizations in recruitment and mobilization processes at the individual level. In brief, the argument here is that organizational affiliation increases the availability of information or the development of solidarity and activist identities that are necessary prerequisites for participation in nonelectoral politics, specifically protest politics. Rather than focusing on the civic skills or social capital acquired in organizational contexts, much of this work explains the importance of organization in terms of providing network ties that increase an individual's likelihood of being asked to participate in protest activities; that is, it is the social network formed within organizations that serves to activate members politically outside of them (McAdam 1986; Klandermans and Oegema 1987; McAdam and Paulsen 1993; Walker 2008). Other scholars ascribe different reasons for the importance of formal organizations, such as serving as sites for the development of political consciousness (McAdam 1982; Passy 2001), collective identity construction (Taylor and Whittier 1992), or the creation of feelings of political efficacy (McAdam and Paulsen 1993)—all of which promote the definition of common grievances and shared purpose that are critical for collective action.

Echoing the emphasis placed by political scientists on the socialization and trust-building functions of organizational membership, Passy (2001) demonstrates that involvement in formal organizational networks not only provides a structural connection between participants and mobilization opportunities but also socializes members to the movement's issues. Further, she argues that "once integrated in socializing networks, individuals find them-

selves in an interactive structure that enables them to define and redefine their interpretive frames about a given protest issue. By fostering identification with certain political issues, this network function forms the initial condition for an individual's framing of the movement. In other words, this function of networks creates a political consciousness and an individual disposition to participate" (p. 178). Also relevant is her finding that, when potential participants are recruited by organizational members who are themselves very active, their own levels of involvement are more intense, largely through the greater trust that such activists inspire and their consequent ability to enhance feelings of personal efficacy among new recruits (Passy 2001; Passy and Giugni 2001).

Social movement analysts tend to privilege the role of political (specifically social movement) organizations but also acknowledge that there are numerous "movement mobilizing structures" (McCarthy 1996) that are located in the civic or nonpolitical sphere that potentially animate political behavior at the individual level. Some key examples here are black churches and student organizations during the emergence of the Southern Civil Rights movement (McAdam 1982; Morris 1984) and a diversity of women's organizations at various stages of the feminist movement (Freeman 1973; Whittier 1995; Taylor 1998; Reger 2012) that mobilized members for political participation (both intentionally and indirectly). As Boyte and Evans (1986) argue, such voluntary groups and local community institutions provide critical "free spaces" where citizens have the chance to engage in democratic practices and learning without fear of coercion, ultimately providing a foundation for numerous movements for social change (but see Eliasoph [1998] for a less sanguine view). Social and professional associations may also be settings that expose members to more requests from comembers to participate in activism outside of the group; such political network effects, however, are more direct in expressly political groups (Walker 2008).

The Differential Benefits of Membership

Despite an apparent consensus that membership in voluntary associations matters for both conventional and unconventional political engagement, there is still some debate about whether all forms of organization or forms of membership are similarly productive of participation in the political arena. As already noted, most formulations in the civic voluntarism/social capital approach stress the benefits of active membership in traditional voluntary associations, especially those that are not primarily political in purpose. Here, the typical example is membership in recreational groups (such as choral societies or bowling leagues) or local chapters of national organizations that provide face-to-face contact among members and provide a means of integra-

tion into civil society and, by extension, promote the healthy functioning of democracy.[3]

An important theoretical aspect of these arguments is the direct experiences that members have in the functioning of the group. Although a strand of earlier research in the civic voluntarism tradition tests the effects of variable levels of involvement on political participation (see, e.g., Olsen 1972; Verba and Nie 1972; Rogers, Gordon, and Barb 1975), more recent versions of this debate center more explicitly on the relevance of so-called checkbook or passive membership, pointing to an increasingly common form of organizational affiliation that does not require people to actually show up but simply pay annual dues or sign up on an e-mail list (Putnam 1995, 2000; Skocpol 2003; Walker et al. 2011). The main objection to this newer type of membership centers on its form, which is dismissed on the grounds that it is low cost and sporadic and does not build important face-to-face networks, commitment, and social trust. Such thin memberships are therefore seen as antithetical to further involvement in society and politics (Newton 1997).

There is also a closely related dismissal of the forms of organization that tend to rely on such members for donations and financial support, which are disproportionately extralocal (national or international), professionally managed, and political in purpose. As Skocpol (2003) argues quite strongly for in the American case, the replacement of the federated organizational model that previously dominated the civic landscape by centralized organizations limits points of access for members to become actively involved in the functioning of the organization, creating distance between, and lack of accountability of, leaders and members. In addition, newer forms of organization are thought to be less likely to integrate diverse members of the community, reinforcing hierarchy both within and outside the group and limiting member experience with democratic decision making (Walzer 1991). National advocacy organizations also tend to be less representative of the concerns of marginalized group members, even when explicitly committed to their goals (Strolovitch 2007).

Putnam (1995) goes even further in his indictment of the form of political advocacy groups—which he terms tertiary organizations to distinguish them from supposedly social capital–generating secondary groups—that is thought to be representative of new models of organization, arguing that member-

[3] This characterization glosses over scholarship that draws attention to the "dark side of social capital" (Putnam 2000) that may be antithetical to civility and democratic practice because of the exclusive in-group focus of many of these associations (generating bonding vs. bridging social capital or promoting antidemocratic causes; see also Stolle and Rochon [1998], relevant chapters in Edwards, Foley, and Diani [2001], and Van Deth and Zmerli [2010]). Given my interest in the link between organizational participation and political action, and not the societal consequences of participation in voluntary groups per se, this literature is not directly relevant to the analysis presented here.

ship in such organizations is relatively trivial (even if the organizations themselves may be significant actors in the political arena). In an exemplary quote, Putnam argues that "the bond between any two members of the Sierra Club is less like the bond between any two members of a gardening club and more like the bond between any two Red Sox fans (or perhaps any two devoted Honda owners): they root for the same team and they share some of the same interests, but they are unaware of each other's existence. Their ties, in short, are to common symbols, common leaders, and perhaps common ideals, but not to one another" (p. 71). The implication is that the centralized structure of these groups encourages affiliation to the organization but not to other group members, which, by extension, undercuts the function of voluntary membership with respect to political socialization and social capital production.

Even so-called passive membership in political organizations, however, can provide meaningful connections and collective identities to otherwise disconnected individuals—especially those who may not have access to dense, face-to-face networks and communities of like-minded individuals (Minkoff 1997). Such remote or mediated membership provides a starting point for the processes of grievance definition, collective identity formation, and joint action that are integral to political activism. In a related vein, Warren (2001) suggests that new forms of communication diminish the importance of the kind of face-to-face interactions so central to both the Tocquevillian and neo-Tocquevillian approaches. Nonetheless, there is good reason to expect that direct contact between members remains crucial for getting them out onto the streets, especially, but not exclusively, for more high-risk/high-cost forms of activism (McAdam 1986). So-called passive membership—even in explicitly politically identified organizations—is less likely to provide this more direct mechanism of political involvement, which may account for any observed differences between active and passive membership and extra-organizational political engagement.

This brief summary suggests two tensions in the literature reviewed here, namely, the differential participatory benefits of membership in political and civic organizations and between active and passive membership. One difficulty in reaching some consensus on these issues is the variety of data, measures, and methodological approaches used to test the main theoretical arguments. In a relatively comprehensive review of the empirical literature slightly more than a decade ago, Van Deth (2001) reports that most studies find higher levels of political engagement (either behavioral or attitudinal) among people who are involved in voluntary associations compared to those who are not (or less) involved and that virtually no research finds a negative association (with the exception of Leighley 1996). He also finds that most empirical work supports a positive relationship between various measures of social engagement and conventional modes of political participation such

as voting and contacting political officials. The more limited research on so-called unconventional forms of political behavior also points in the direction of a positive and direct effect of associational membership, although it appears to have less of an impact than on conventional modes of political participation (Van Deth 2001, p. 20).

Somewhat mixed results from more recent research suggests the need for additional exploration of the relationship between organizational membership and political action across advanced democracies. For example, Howard and Gilbert (2008) demonstrate that increased levels of civic involvement are positively correlated with higher levels of political action in the United States, Western Europe, and Eastern Europe. Van der Meer and Van Ingen (2009) likewise find general support for the hypothesized positive effect between membership and political participation across the European countries analyzed later in this article, a finding that holds for both conventional and nonconventional political action. However, they find a stronger influence of membership in what they define as interest and activist organizations, compared to leisure organizations. In conjunction with finding that measures of civic skills and attitudes do not explain the observed relationship between membership and political action, they interpret their results as supporting a selection model, arguing that "voluntary associations do not contribute to their members' levels of political action; instead, their members were already more likely to participate politically" (p. 303). Armingeon also finds little support for the politicization effect of membership in nonpolitical groups, going so far as to argue that "bird watchers and members of soccer clubs are hardly more prone to participate politically than are citizens without any active associational involvement" (2006, p. 373).

Civic Joiners and Political Activists: One and the Same?

An additional, methodological, issue that merits greater attention has already been alluded to, namely, the problem of self-selection. We know that not everyone is equally likely to participate in either the civic or political spheres—even if interested in, or concerned about, particular issues or politics in general. In the most general terms, individuals with higher social and economic status are more likely to be involved in both voluntary associations and politics (electoral and nonelectoral forms, for example, from voting to protest), largely because they are thought to have the time, discretionary resources, or heightened self-interest to contribute to civic and political engagement. A similar point has been made by social movement scholars: that there are individuals who, regardless of commitment, are more or less structurally available for both organizational and political participation by virtue of their access to social networks and other resources that shape the costs and benefits of participation in protest, what is also referred to as "biographical availabil-

ity" (McAdam 1986; Schussman and Soule 2005). Here the classic comparison is between college students and salaried professionals with flexible schedules versus hourly wage earners supporting a family.

These comments point to the problem of selection bias in studies of voluntary membership and political participation: there is ample reason to expect that those individuals who are most likely to join voluntary organizations are also the most likely to be engaged in politics (both attitudinally and behaviorally; Olsen 1972; Armingeon 2006; McFarland and Thomas 2006; Van der Meer and Van Ingen 2009). This raises the question whether observed differences in political participation are really due to organizational involvement or whether they simply reflect other systematic differences between individuals related to the likelihood of both organizational and political participation. As per the civic engagement/social capital discussion, theoretically, organizational membership is considered to be a decisive mechanism that promotes political engagement, all else being equal. However, if voluntary associations themselves are "self-selective" in the sense that their members are already politically educated and active, then there is little reason to believe that political socialization is going on within these organizations (Armingeon 2006, p. 360).

Previous research on the link between organizational membership and political participation is limited by its insufficient attention to the problem of selection bias.[4] The novel methodological approach introduced in the remainder of this article provides the opportunity to explicitly test whether organizational joiners are also political activists, net of organizational membership. It also allows us to take seriously the notion that the effect of organizational membership on political participation may be heterogeneous. More specifically, I explore whether an individual's predisposition toward joining an organization is likely to influence how much of an impact such membership has on his or her willingness and ability to engage in political activism,

[4] The convention in earlier studies, especially in political science, is to juxtapose what is referred to as the "selection model" with alternative approaches such as the mobilization model (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993) or the skill-building variants described earlier (Brady et al. 1995; Verba et al. 1995). In such research, "predisposing attitudes and characteristics" (Rogers et al. 1975, p. 313), such as socioeconomic status and levels of political interest or efficacy, are conceptualized as measures of selection in that they are thought to explain both organizational and political engagement. Empirical support for the selection model is based on the significance of background characteristics, controlling for organizational or membership attributes, in models using varying measures of political participation. Most such studies find support for both selection and membership effects but acknowledge that questions of causality and selection bias remain unresolved. Some recent sociological research has attempted to deal more directly with issues of self-selection, with McFarland and Thomas's (2006) analysis of the relationship between youth voluntary participation and subsequent political participation and Brand's (2010) analysis of the influence of education on civic participation in adulthood exemplars of these alternative approaches.

what can be considered as the "conditional payoffs" of organizational membership.

COUNTERFACTUAL ANALYSIS AND PROPENSITY SCORE MATCHING

In the past decade, some social scientists have become stronger advocates of adopting a counterfactual approach to understanding social phenomena (Morgan and Winship 2007; Gangl 2010). Rather than estimating how a unit change in some independent variable influences levels of the dependent variable, counterfactual analysis poses the question in more causally direct terms: What would be the outcome if study participants were not exposed to the independent variable of interest? Or, in this case, how politically active would an individual be if she were not involved in any organizations? The classic experimental design provides a method for testing the effect of treatment exposure on otherwise similar individuals, given that subjects are randomly assigned to treatment and control groups and randomization creates statistically similar groups. However, a known issue with observational or survey data is that of sample selection bias, that is, the possibility that individuals and groups have different chances of inclusion in the study such that unobservable factors could be influencing both participation in the sample and the outcome of interest (Heckman et al. 1998). To the extent that there are missing data on these common factors it is impossible to get valid estimates of treatment effects using mean comparison, as is the convention in experimental research.

Matching methods have become increasingly popular as a means of evaluating causal effects in observational data, while offering a solution to the problem of selection bias in nonexperimental research (Heckman et al. 1998). Matching techniques approximate the logic of experimental research when using observational data and offer a potential corrective to the problem of selection bias. As summarized by Arceneaux, Gerber, and Green, "Matching compares individuals in a nonrandomly generated 'treatment group' to similar individuals in a nonrandomly produced 'comparison group.' The matching process identifies treated individuals who share the same background characteristics as untreated individuals. It is hoped that after matching on covariates, any remaining differences between groups can be attributed to the effect of treatment" (2006, p. 38). Matching is also referred to as balancing, since a key goal is to ensure that the two samples are "balanced" on essential characteristics in order to isolate the treatment effect (Arceneaux et al. 2006).

PSM is one matching approach that has gained a great deal of currency in evaluation research as a potential solution to selection bias in observational studies (Morgan and Winship 2007). The basic logic of PSM is to use avail-

able (observed) information on the covariates of treatment to calculate the predicted probability of receiving treatment for each respondent. This probability estimate, or propensity score, is then used to select a comparison group from the sample of untreated participants who are matched as closely as possible to treated participants, with the key difference being treatment exposure or not, in order to parse out the confounding effects of background characteristics (Rosenbaum and Rubin 1985). The objective is to satisfy two central assumptions: (1) the unconfoundedness assumption (i.e., that the potential outcomes are independent of treatment assignment) and (2) the common support/overlap assumption, which "ensures that persons with the same X values have positive probability of being both participants and nonparticipants" (Caliendo and Kopeinig 2008, p. 35).

As Caliendo and Kopeinig (2008) outline, the key steps in implementing PSM include choosing a model (binary or multiple treatment effects) and variables, deciding on a matching algorithm, checking for overlap/common support, assessing the matching quality and estimation of the treatment effect, and checking the sensitivity of the estimated results. Following Lechner (2002), I estimate a series of separate propensity score models and treatment effects, on the assumption that selection into different forms of membership is heterogeneous and that the program effects on treatment are distinct. Specifically, I create membership subgroups that enable me to isolate the effects of active versus passive membership in both political and civic organizations, comparing members to nonmembers and active to passive members. The treatment effect, organizational membership, is thus measured with a set of distinct binary variables (see discussion of variable measurement below).

DATA AND METHOD

Data

The analyses presented below are based on a unique combined data set that includes data drawn from the 2002 European Social Survey (ESS) and the U.S. Citizenship, Involvement, Democracy (USCID) survey fielded in mid-May to mid-July 2005 with a random sample of 1,001 Americans (Howard et al. 2006). The combined data set includes a number of shared items originally part of the European Citizenship, Involvement, Democracy module included in the ESS, allowing for a comparison of the United States and 22 ESS respondent countries.[5] Although each survey was fielded separately, there is no reason to expect that the timing of the surveys would undermine the generalizability of results within and across samples.

[5] For documentation on the integrated USCID and ESS data set, see http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/studies/4607.

The analyses focus on a subset of European respondent countries and the United States, those that Norris (2002) characterizes as "older democracies" with at least 20 years of uninterrupted experience with democratic forms of governance. In addition to the United States, the sample includes Sweden, Denmark, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Norway, Finland, Luxembourg, Austria, Belgium, Ireland, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, Greece, and Portugal (Switzerland was excluded because relevant membership data were not available). The decision to focus on these countries was based on the assumption that the structures of civil society and norms of civic participation are more institutionalized than in newer European (and other) democracies, although there is still some variation with respect to patterns of organizational membership and political participation (with North American and Northern European countries tending toward higher levels of associational involvement; see studies cited in Van Deth et al. 2006). Further, much of the research in this vein is grounded in a strong assumption that the positive association between civic participation and political action "is universal for all (Western) democratic societies" (Van der Meer and Van Ingen 2009, p. 283). My point is that the mechanism of influence is not expected to vary by country, even if there is some variation in general "participatory propensities" (Teorell et al. 2006, p. 355) underlying different modes of political action that shape individual behavior even within this narrow band of older democracies.[6]

Specification of Treatment Effects

In the most general terms, the independent variable (or "treatment") of interest is organizational membership. As noted above, however, the scholarly debate suggests that we may not want to assume a homogeneous effect across organizational forms (civic vs. political) and membership types (passive vs. active). The combined ESS and USCID surveys gave respondents the opportunity to indicate whether they were a member of up to 12 types of organizations in the previous year, as well as how extensive was their membership.

[6] Using multilevel models and similar data, Van der Meer and Van Ingen (2009, p. 294) do not find significant cross-national variation in the relationship between associational involvement and political participation. As noted by one *AJS* reviewer, this may reflect the small-*N* design of the study (17 countries and two levels of analysis) and provides weak grounds for dismissing the importance of country-level differences. A similar point is also made by Van der Meer and Van Ingen in interpreting their results: "This does not imply, however, that the institutional and cultural environment does not matter. Yet, based on these results there are no *a priori* reasons to assume that different mechanisms are at play" (p. 294). Interrogating this issue empirically is not the purpose of the current analysis, although I return to this point in the conclusion.

As central as the distinction between political and civic organizations is to debates about the politicizing potential of voluntary group membership, there is wide variation in how different organizational forms are conceptualized. Leighley, for example, defines political groups as "those groups for whom influencing public policy decisions is a major goal," in contrast to nonpolitical groups for whom this is "a minor or unimportant goal" (1996, p. 461). Morales offers a more extensive definition: "those formally organized groups that seek collective goods (whether pure public goods or another type of collective goods) and which have as their main goal to influence political decision-making processes, either by trying to influence the selection of governmental personnel or their activities, to include issues on the agenda, or to change the values and preferences that guide the decision-making process"; all other organizations are considered to be "nonpolitical" (2009, p. 25).

Treating nonpolitical organizations as a residual category is unsatisfactory, especially in light of the debates reviewed earlier about the indirect political effects of membership in the kinds of face-to-face, social capital–intensive groups praised by Putnam and others, compared with organizations that have more explicit political goals that are expected to directly mobilize members for collective political action. Van der Meer, te Grotenhuis, and Scheepers (2009) provide a more theoretically informed typology of voluntary associations, derived from conceptualizations of civil society as located at the intersection of the market, state, and family. They distinguish among what they refer to as leisure organizations (which focus mainly on the private or intimate sphere), activist organizations (focused mainly on the state), and interest organizations (aimed primarily at the market; p. 229). The category of leisure organizations, such as sports clubs and cultural associations, provides socialization and recreational benefits; this form maps most closely onto the ideal type of civic groups that are independent from state and market and expected to deliver the social capital–enhancing benefits described by Putnam and others. Activist organizations, in contrast, "primarily advocate broader societal interests that do not generally benefit the socio-economic interests of their members" (Van der Meer et al. 2009, p. 230); this definition echoes Morales's (2009) conceptualization of political organizations and aligns with what social movement researchers refer to as advocacy or social movement organizations (Minkoff 1997; Andrews and Edwards 2004). The "interest group" category includes associations such as trade unions, professional associations, and business groups that "primarily aim to represent the socio-economic interests of their members" (Van der Meer et al. 2009, p. 229; Welzel, Inglehart, and Deutsch [2005, p. 126], refer to them as "utilitarian associations").

In the analyses that follow, I draw on this framework and distinguish between what I refer to as civic organizations and political organizations. Mem-

bership in civic organizations is measured as a dichotomous variable coded 1 if respondents indicated that they held any form of membership in sports or outdoor clubs; cultural or hobby organizations; religious or church groups; organizations for science, education, or teachers and parents; and social clubs (including those for youth, women, the elderly, or friendly societies). Membership in political organizations is measured as a dichotomous variable coded 1 if respondents indicated that they held any form of membership in organizations for humanitarian aid, human rights, minorities, or immigrants; environmental protection, peace, or animal rights groups; or political parties. I do not include interest organizations in the analysis in order to isolate the effects of membership in the two more conceptually distinct organizational forms of civic and political organizations.[7] While it may be the case that there is variation within each category with respect to how directly engaged they are in politics (e.g., environmental groups that focus on conservation or religious groups that promote political action around such issues as abortion and marriage equality), the data necessary to develop more refined measures of "political content" at the organizational level are not available (but see Leighley [1996] for one approach). I follow the literature by emphasizing the primary aims of these organizational forms.

The two main membership forms are measured as (1) "passive" membership (identifying oneself as a member/donor only, without any self-reported volunteering or participating) and (2) "active" membership (contributing time through volunteering or participating, in addition to passive forms of involvement; Howard and Gilbert 2008). Of the 30,942 respondents in the

[7] The status of trade unions complicates the conceptualization of interest groups. The historical trajectory of unions as political actors would seem to distinguish them from the professional, business, and consumer organizations that are normally included in this category, while their demands for group-specific (partial) public goods and engagement with the market distinguishes them from what I have designated as political and civic organizations. In addition, the inclusion of labor unions is complicated by the fact that membership is not necessarily voluntary, at least in a number of American states; compulsory membership in the Euro zone is illegal, with the exception of Ireland, and there are strong trade union membership incentives in Scandinavian countries organized under the Ghent system, in which unions distribute unemployment insurance (Fazekas 2011; Scheuer 2011). Preliminary matching analysis including members of interest organizations (unions, business and professional associations, farm organizations, and consumer/automobile groups) suggests that selection into membership is distinct from that of the political and civic organizations included here. More specifically, it was not possible to obtain balanced samples of passive members of interest organizations (treated group) compared with nonmembers (control group) for this set of organizations; significant differences remained after matching along such variables as education, gender, and family status. Propensity score models were also run separately for men and women who were passive members of interest organizations, compared to nonmembers, and although the postmatching samples were more balanced, significant differences remained. The matching procedure did produce balanced samples of active members vs. nonmembers and active vs. passive members of interest organizations.

17 countries included here, 40% (n = 12,435) report no membership in civic groups in the prior year, with 33% (n = 10,270) indicating that they were passive members and 27% (n = 8,237) categorized as active members of such organizations. In contrast, a higher percentage, 70% (n = 21,857), listed no form of membership in political groups, with 10% (n = 3,147) coded as passive members and 19% (n = 5,938) as active members.[8]

Specification of the Dependent Variable

The outcome of interest, political activism, is measured as the number of nonelectoral political activities that the respondent participated in during the past year, on the basis of whether they signed a petition, attended a lawful demonstration, participated in a boycott (refraining from buying products from a particular firm or country), participated in a "buycott" (purposefully buying specific products in support of a company or country), or took part in an illegal protest. This conceptualization of political activism follows Van der Meer and Van Ingen's (2009) contrast between conventional political action (contacting political officials, working for a political party, wearing a campaign badge, or donating to a political organizations) and unconventional political action (which includes the same five items described above). It also aligns with Dalton (2008, p. 87) in distinguishing protest (signing a petition, legal protest, illegal protest, boycott, buycott) from electoral activity (voting, working for a candidate, displaying campaign material), direct action (contacting a political figure, donating money, working for a political group), and Internet activism (visiting a website, forwarding political e-mail, Internet political activity), along with related research that combines nonelectoral activities such as demonstrating, striking, petitioning, and boycotting in measures of political protest or nonconventional political action (e.g., Barnes and Kaase 1979; Norris 2002; Welzel et al. 2005; Teorell et al. 2006; Alexander et al. 2012). It is a continuous measure from 0 to 5, with higher values representing higher levels of political activism (similar to that used by Dalton et al. 2010).[9]

[8] See Morales (2002) on potential problems of validity and reliability of measures of associational membership in cross-national research.

[9] I conducted a factor analysis (using tetrachoric correlations as appropriate for dichotomous indicators) to validate this measure. The inclusion of all five indicators for the measurement of the complex concept of political activism was validated by the factor analysis, which showed strong evidence that there is only one factor associated with all five observed measures of political involvement. In other words, the five items measure the same dimension of political activism. The eigenvalue of 2.4 for the first factor is very strong, and, using the Kaiser (1960) rule of only retaining factors great than 1, it is the only factor that should be retained. In addition, all indicators load between 0.6 and 0.7 on the first factor, showing very strong correlations with this one factor/dimension. In response to lingering reviewer concerns about including illegal protest in the com-

The overall mean level of activism in the full sample is quite low, at 0.83 (SD = 1.099). Almost 55% (n = 16,597) of the sample reports no political activities in the prior year, followed by 21% (n = 6,532) reporting one activity and 14% (n = 4,212) reporting two activities; roughly only 10% (n = 3,125) of the sample reports doing three or more of the activities of interest (with only 85 respondents having engaged in all five).

Covariates

The covariates included in the PSM model were selected on the basis of prior research on organizational membership and political participation, drawing on the concepts of political resources (Brady et al. 1995; Verba et al. 1995) and biographical availability (McAdam 1986; Schussman and Soule 2005). These variables include gender, education, age, income, labor market participation, marital status, presence of children in the home, and native or immigrant status. I also include a measure of religious denomination, which has been found to influence political engagement and group membership in some instances (Bowler et al. 2003; Van der Meer and Van Ingen 2009; Van der Meer et al. 2009). Interaction effects between age and education and family formation variables are also included in the PSM models, along with some additional controls (see table A1 for details on variable measurement and descriptive statistics).[10] All analyses also include dichotomous country-level fixed effects for each country in the sample.

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posite measure of activism, I also conducted a set of supplemental analyses reported in the appendix.

[10] The convention in the literature is to estimate matching models that promote optimal balance between samples, regardless of the theoretical salience of the variables included. I used current theory and research as a starting point and then included some additional measures and interaction effects in order to improve sample balance. Although there are a number of other potentially relevant predictors of organizational membership, employing matching methods with cross-sectional survey data requires careful consideration of issues of causal order (see, e.g., Stuart 2010; Austin 2011*a*). Therefore, only variables that are not able, or likely, to be influenced by organizational membership were included in the PSM models. One example of the difficulty in parsing out directionality was raised by one of the reviewers, who questioned whether associational membership has exogenous effects on economic outcomes, labor market participation, or marital status. Although, theoretically, it may be the case that group members might meet their spouses or learn of a job or other opportunities that enhance their economic standing, there is limited research that takes selection bias into account to support this causal claim (but see the longitudinal study on the economic effects of voluntary association membership by Ruiter and De Graaf [2009]). My presumption here is that if such effects exist they are likely to be small and thus ignorable. A further criticism is that the propensity score models do not include measures of childhood/adolescent socialization, which are not available.

Propensity Score Matching Estimation Strategy

Propensity scores used logistic regression to estimate the probability of exposure or treatment, in this case the log odds of different forms of organizational membership. In line with my interest in heterogeneous treatment effects, propensity scores were estimated separately for each form of membership within each type of organization (e.g., probability of active membership vs. nonmembership in political organizations or the probability of passive vs. active membership in civic groups).

Matching on the propensity score was based on nearest neighbor matching with replacement. This approach randomly sorts the treated and control cases and then matches the treated case with control cases on the basis of the closeness of the propensity score; the control cases are then returned to the sample to be reused as matches for the treated cases. One advantage of matching multiple control cases to the treated case is that it lowers the variance of the estimated treatment effect; the disadvantage is that it increases the chances of greater bias due to poor matches (Morgan and Harding 2006, p. 32). A common corrective is to restrict matches to a specified distance in the propensity score between matched subjects, known as caliper matching. This additional restriction discards any cases for which there is no "good" match, effectively imposing a common support condition (Caliendo and Kopeinig 2008, p. 42). Following Austin (2011*b*), a caliper of 0.20 of the standard deviation of the propensity score was used to restrict the sample to subjects that meet this common support condition (see also Lunt 2014).

Given that the propensity score is estimated, determining whether there are any systematic differences in the distribution of baseline covariates between treated and control subjects in the matched sample is a critical test of whether the propensity score model has been correctly specified. Following conventions in this literature, matching quality was first assessed by checking the balance of observed covariates between the treatment and comparison groups before and after matching and examining the extent of bias reduction (Rosenbaum and Rubin 1985). Standardized differences in means and medians for each of the variables included in the propensity score analyses were calculated separately for the treatment and comparison groups in the matched samples in order to ensure that group comparisons are not influenced by sample size or differences in units (Austin 2011*a*, p. 412). As advocated by Austin (2011*a*) and others (Hill 2008; Imai, King, and Stuart 2008; Stuart 2008), balance in higher-order moments of covariates should also be evaluated, which was done by calculating variance ratios for each of the covariates. Sensitivity to unobserved variables (i.e., meeting the unconfoundedness assumption) was assessed by estimating Rosenbaum bounds (Becker and Ichino 2002; DiPrete and Gangl 2004).

The PSM and estimation of average treatment effects on the treated were conducted using the teffects program in Stata 13, which takes into account the fact that propensity scores are estimated rather than known when calculating the standard errors of the treatment effects (on the basis of Abadie and Imbens 2006, 2011, 2012). Following Garrido et al. (2014), the results were then replicated using the psmatch2 module in Stata 13 (Leuven and Sianesi 2014), which implements PSM and covariate imbalance testing.[11] The rbounds module was used to evaluate sensitivity to unobserved variables (DiPrete and Gangl 2004).

The matching procedure produced balanced samples of the treated and comparison groups on all covariates, including within countries in most cases (suggesting that the models capture country-specific selection biases). Standardized differences in means were between −0.04 and 0.04; as Austin (2011*a*, p. 412) suggests, differences less than 0.1 imply parity between treatment and control groups. The variance ratios ranged from a minimum of 0.84 to a maximum of 1.3; a value of 1.0 implies parity between treatment and comparison groups after matching (Austin 2009).[12] Standardized bias in the matched sample was also under 10%, a relatively strict cutoff (Harder, Stuart, and Anthony 2010; see also Rosenbaum and Rubin 1985). Sensitivity of the estimated treatment effects to unobserved variables was also within acceptable limits for all subsamples. Results from the propensity score analyses and tests are available from the author.

One aspect of the estimation strategy adopted here needs to be clarified further before reporting the results. As already discussed, I assume that organizational involvement is a general mechanism in the sense that it is expected to work the same way regardless of national context. Methodologically, this means that I estimated propensity scores across all respondents, rather than estimating country-specific propensity scores. The rationale here is that there is nothing about being a German or an American per se that

[11] The coefficients for all estimated treatment effects across all subsamples were the same; there were differences in the standard errors, as expected. For general guidelines for replicating results from psmatch2 and teffects in Stata, see also http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/sscc/pubs/stata_psmatch.htm.

[12] Balance in background covariates between treatment and comparison groups was close to parity on every variable included in each of the six PSM models estimated. Variance ratios between treatment and comparison groups higher than 1.1 were limited to a small number of country-level measures. These include that the calculated variance ratio between treatment and comparison groups was 1.22 in Italy and 1.80 in Spain in the PSM model estimating active versus passive membership in civic organizations, the variance ratio for the United Kingdom was 1.25 in the PSM model estimating passive versus no membership in political organizations, the variance ratio for Spain was 1.33 and for Finland was 1.15 in the PSM model estimating passive versus active membership in political organizations, and the variance ratio between treatment and comparison groups in Greece was 1.22 in the PSM models estimating active versus inactive membership in political organizations.

would change how organizational membership affects someone (in terms of providing skills, information, etc.). However, Germany or the United States might offer different structural opportunities and normative incentives for participation, so that countries differ in overall (i.e., aggregate) membership probabilities. In another example, until recently, studies showed that people who tried to quit smoking with nicotine replacement therapy had better chances of success than those who quit "cold turkey." The physiological effect of nicotine replacement in and of itself is not something that would vary by country—although quitters in countries that have less stringent smoking bans and higher proportions of smokers are likely to have a harder time than those in more restrictive contexts with fewer smokers.

RESULTS

I have suggested that previous studies emphasize that membership in voluntary organizations increases political participation, both conventional and nonconventional forms. The extent of organizational involvement, specifically passive or active membership, also ought to matter, but this claim has received relatively little empirical attention given how pronounced the debate is with respect to its normative concerns. That said, most research leads to the expectation that active membership should matter more than passive membership. There is reason to expect that this is the case for all forms of political participation; in the case examined here, active forms of membership should have stronger and more positive effects on activism. The question whether membership in civic or political organizations is similarly productive of nonconventional political participation also requires more targeted attention, with some studies pointing in the direction of a stronger influence of socialization within civic organizations and others relegating a privileged role to specifically political or movement-affiliated groups.

At issue here is the fact that almost all studies that support these claims are flawed methodologically, so that the arguments cannot be distinguished from selection bias, thereby risking the uninteresting conclusion that participation increases participation. This implies that a new research design is needed that enables us to test whether participation matters, net of the effect of selection factors of organizational members and taking into account the intensity of membership and the organizational contexts in which it takes place.

Does Organizational Membership Really Matter?

The analyses presented in this section reflect a broader concern with the question of whether any form of organizational membership matters for political participation. My goal is twofold: (1) to confirm that membership has

a significant effect net of selection and (2) to determine how that effect might differ depending on the form of membership (active or passive) and the form of organization (civic or political) in which it takes place. This requires estimating propensity scores separately for matched subsamples of each type of membership and then examining differences in political participation between those respondents who report each specific form of organizational membership and the matched comparison group.

Table 1 summarizes estimated "treatment effects" for each set of membership forms. Column 1 indicates the relevant subsamples used to estimate the propensity scores used in the matching procedure. Columns 2 and 3 report the mean number of nonelectoral political activities (petition, demonstration, boycott, buycott, illegal protest) for treated and comparison groups by organizational form and membership type for relevant subsamples pre- and postmatching (designated, respectively, as "unmatched" and "matched"). Column 4 presents the difference in means, or the estimated treatment effect,

TABLE 1
Average Effect of Civic and Political Group Membership Forms on Political Activism Using Nearest Neighbor Matching (Pre- and Postmatching)

	Mean Activism				95% Confidence Interval	
Sample (1)	Treated (2)	Comparison (3)	Difference (4)	SE (5)	Low (6)	High (7)
	Active	Inactive				
Civic group members:						
Unmatched	1.16	.49	.66	.015		
Matched	1.15	.73	.42	.026	.37	.48
Political group members:						
Unmatched	1.44	.60	.83	.015		
Matched	1.44	.79	.65	.024	.60	.69
	Passive	Inactive				
Civic group members:						
Unmatched	.98	.49	.48	.014		
Matched	.98	.69	.29	.022	.25	.33
Political group members:						
Unmatched	1.28	.60	.68	.019		
Matched	1.28	.74	.54	.031	.48	.61
	Active	Passive				
Civic group members:						
Unmatched	1.16	.98	.18	.018		
Matched	1.16	1.02	.14	.024	.09	.19
Political group members:						
Unmatched	1.44	1.28	.15	.029		
Matched	1.44	1.32	.12	.040	.04	.19

which conventionally indicates how much exposure to the treatment increases the outcome. The top panel reports results comparing active members to nonmembers (excluding passive participants) in civic and political organizations, respectively. The middle panel compares passive members to nonmembers (excluding active participants) for both organizational forms. The bottom panel presents the same information comparing active to passive members (excluding respondents who indicated no organizational membership).

One main finding from the analyses of the effect of organizational membership on political activism summarized in table 1 is that there are significant and heterogeneous "treatment effects" after taking selection bias into account. Mean differences between treated and comparison groups are significantly lower after matching across all different forms of organization and membership, with the exception of a relatively minor (but still statistically significant) difference between unmatched and matched samples of active versus passive members of both civic and political organizations. Further, although average levels of activism are relatively low among all respondents, those in the "treated" category consistently report higher average levels of such activism than those in the matched comparison groups—whether they are passive members of civic organizations or active members of political ones. However, the magnitude of differences in means across matched subsamples varies in important ways.

The first question of interest is whether active membership in either civic or political organizations serves to enhance political activism compared to those peers who refrain from any organizational involvement. Providing some confirmation of the argument that civic organizations provide some spillover benefits to the political arena, there is a significant treatment effect of active membership in civic organizations. Compared to nonjoiners, active members of civic organization have an estimated increase in activism on the order of 0.42 activities per year (with the average level of activism being 1.15 compared to 0.73 among nonmembers). Not surprisingly, however, the more substantial payoff is for active members of political groups compared to nonmembers, with a higher average level of activity of 1.44 activities per year compared to 0.79 (estimated difference of 0.65). Interesting as well is that the larger treatment effect for active membership in political organizations is net of selection bias, suggesting that there is a mobilizing effect of membership even for those who purposefully select into political organizations to begin with.

The second issue that structures much of the more recent debates reviewed earlier is whether passive membership matters at all with respect to encouraging political participation. The results presented here suggest that, all else being equal, passive participants in both civic and political organizations have more elevated levels of political activism than those who

have no recent organizational involvement. Although starting from a fairly low baseline of engagement in one protest action per year, passive membership in civic organizations accounts for approximately one-third more activity compared to people who report no membership in civic groups at all (treatment effect of 0.29). The effect of passive membership in political organizations compared to nonmembership is notably higher, with passive members reporting an average of 1.28 activities in the prior year compared to 0.74 among nonmembers; the treatment effect for this set of matched pairs is 0.54, only slightly lower than the effect of active organizational involvement in political groups compared to nonmembers.

Finally, looking at the effect of active membership compared to passive membership (i.e., excluding nonjoiners from the analysis reported in the bottom panel), it is clear that, for the members-only subgroup, the choice to contribute more time and effort to voluntary participation, rather than simply paying dues or making occasional financial or symbolic contributions, yields only a very small dividend with respect to participation in political activism. Among members of civic groups, those who take a more active approach are slightly more politically engaged than passive members of this organizational form (with a small but significant difference of 0.14 more political activities over the year). The difference in mean levels of activism for active members of political organizations is relatively similar (0.12 more political activities over the year). Although these effects are statistically significant by conventional measures, it is noteworthy that the payoff of active over passive involvement in civic organizations is slightly greater than for membership in political organizations. Equally notable is that the effect size is relatively minimal, which can be taken as evidence in support of arguments that suggest that it is membership per se that matters, not whether one is more or less actively engaged in the organization.[13]

[13] Although interest organizations are excluded from consideration here, there is some evidence that the influence of membership in these organizations on political activism is similar to that in civic organizations, with one very important exception (results available from author). On the basis of a parallel analysis of interest organizations, the estimated treatment effect of active membership versus nonmembership is 0.48 (compared to 0.42 for civic group members and 0.65 for political group members) and the difference between passive members and nonmembers is 0.24 (compared to 0.29 for civic group members and 0.54 for political group members). However, this estimated treatment effect must be considered with a great deal of caution since sample balance is poor; see n. 6. In contrast, the estimated treatment effect of active versus passive membership in interest organizations is substantially higher than for either civic or political group members. Active members of this organizational form participate in an average of 0.25 more protest activities than their passive counterparts (compared with 0.14 and 0.12 for civic and political group members, respectively). This greater payoff to active over passive membership in interest organizations merits closer examination in the future, as do the potentially different selection processes already noted.

Overall, the results presented in this section are substantively important. Whereas much of the debate about the relationship between organizational membership and political participation centers on the relative benefits of active versus passive membership, there is a tension with respect to whether the mechanism of influence operates across all associations or is specific to groups that center political involvement in their mission. My approach involves using the heuristic of heterogeneous program effects, that is, questioning whether the influence of "organizational exposure" varies across different kinds of organizations and types of membership. Whereas the most substantial effect of membership is, not surprisingly, for active members in politically identified organizations (compared to both nonmembers and passive members), it is also the case that membership in civic groups yields a positive dividend with respect to getting involved in the political arena. It is also worth noting that the effect of passive membership compared to inactivity heightens political activism regardless of the form of organization in which it takes place. This finding suggests caution with respect to dismissing the role of passive memberships in either civic or political groups.

The added value of active membership in civic organizations compared to passive membership in the same sorts of groups, however, is negligible; the "political dividend" of active compared to passive membership in political groups, although higher, is nonetheless quite small compared to the dividends of either passive or active membership compared to nonmembership. One interpretation of these findings is that, once the threshold of membership in voluntary organizations is crossed, being more actively involved is less directly relevant for political activism. Although it is not possible to specify the exact causal mechanism at work, if we consider the argument that membership provides information about a variety of civic and political events, such information may be readily available to all kinds of members (i.e., not just active ones), especially given the increased use of new information technologies in reaching out to members (Earl and Kimport 2011). Skill building or solidarity, however, more plausibly requires direct involvement in the organization and may have a more specific "spillover" benefit, one that tends to be larger for members of political groups than for civic ones.

Conditional Payoffs of Organizational Membership

The next question taken up in this article is whether the effect of organizational membership is conditional on an individual's probability of getting actively involved in civic or political organizations to begin with. For example, people who are least likely to become active members of political organizations—such as those with higher levels of personal constraints—might experience higher payoffs with respect to political activism than those who are already predisposed to take an active role. Logically, if those with low

propensities to become involved also have lower rates of political activism, then this low baseline allows for a greater increase after joining. Alternatively, a "Matthew effect" (Merton 1968) could be operative, such that those with higher propensities for involvement reap the highest benefit from their organizational involvement in terms of experiencing a more substantial gain in levels of political activism.[14]

To explore these ideas, the matched samples of political and civic group members were each divided into low, moderate, and high propensity levels, with approximately one-third of the sample placed into each propensity category (King et al. 2007; Lee and Staff 2007). Focusing on the hypothesized difference between the politicizing role of involvement in civic versus political organizations, figures 1–3 compare conditional effects of different types of membership across organizational forms; results from two-sample mean comparisons are reported in table 2. The comparisons of interest relate to the conditional effects of organizational membership (active, passive, inactive) in expressly civic or political associations.

Table 2 provides information on the average effect of different forms of membership on mean levels of activism by propensity levels for the matched samples of civic and political group members; as before, the difference in means is interpreted as the effect of organizational membership. As is clear, levels of political activism are, on average, significantly higher for those who participate in civic and political organizations compared to those who do not across every propensity level, regardless of membership form (active, passive, inactive). This pattern also holds across organizational form (civic or political), although the mean differences between active compared to passive participants in political organizations across propensity levels are negligible and nonsignificant, which I discuss further below.

Does organizational membership have a greater influence on political participation depending on how likely individuals are to join organizations to begin with? If so, does this vary depending on membership engagement and whether people participate in political or civic organizations? Focusing first on active members versus nonmembers of civic organizations, figure 1 suggests that there is no difference in the average number of protest activities engaged in by active members in the low and moderate propensity categories (0.50 and 0.49 additional protest activities) and a slightly decreased payoff for those in the high propensity group (mean difference of 0.44 for active vs. inactive respondents). Turning to active members of political organizations, we see a similar pattern of slightly declining returns to organizational

[14] For an example of this logic applied to the relationship between marriage and crime, see King, Massoglia, and Macmillan (2007). For a more elaborated method of analyzing heterogeneous treatment effects, with an application to the effect of education on civic participation, see Brand (2010).

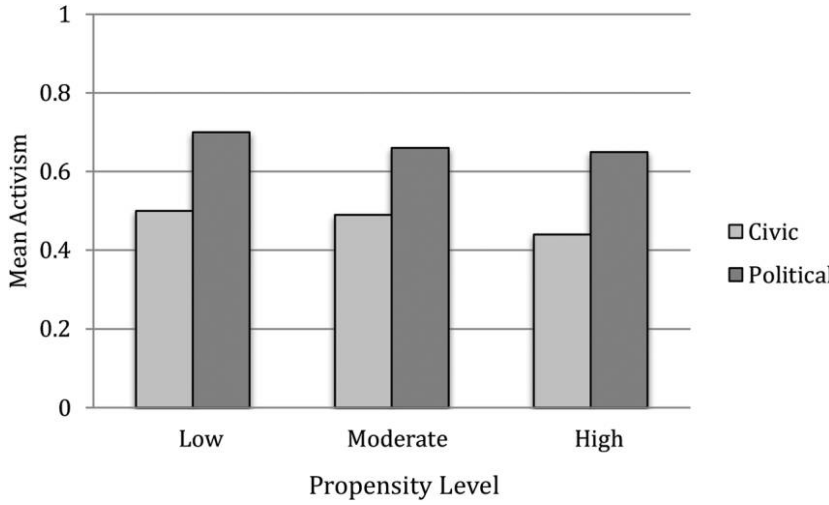

FIG. 1.—Mean differences in political activism: active membership versus nonmembership by propensity level.

involvement, with those in the lower propensity group apparently gaining the most benefit compared to those in the moderate and higher propensity levels. This finding suggests that the payoffs of organizational membership are higher for those volunteers in political organizations who are the least likely to become active members to begin with and that there is apparently little difference between members at moderate and high propensity levels. Put differently, making the choice to invest in more active membership in political organizations when one is not likely to do so provides a more substantial payoff with respect to political activism (compared to similarly situated nonmembers). Organizational exposure for these individuals appears to have a more intensive politicization effect, net of the probability of self-selection into both active membership and political activism.

Figure 2 depicts the conditional effects of passive organizational involvement in civic and political groups, compared with nonmembership. The general pattern of results is quite similar to that identified with respect to active membership compared to nonmembership. Respondents who have the lowest probability of passive membership (compared to nonmembership) in civic or political organizations report higher levels of involvement in nonconventional political activities. In the case of civic organizations, the mean difference between passive and inactive members in the low propensity category is 0.40, compared with 0.30 and 0.29 in the moderate and high propensity categories; in the case of political organizations, the mean difference for those in the lowest propensity level is 0.73, compared with 0.62 more activities for those in the moderate propensity category and 0.54 in

TABLE 2

CONDITIONAL EFFECTS OF CIVIC AND POLITICAL GROUP MEMBERSHIP ON POLITICAL ACTIVISM BY PROPENSITY LEVEL (TERCILES)

SAMPLE	MEAN ACTIVISM		DIFFERENCE	SE	*t*-VALUE	WELCH'S *df*
	Treated	Comparison				
	Active	Inactive				
Civic group members:						
Low propensity	.79	.29	.50	.04	12.84*	1,023
N	899	5,622			6,521	
Moderate propensity	1.10	.62	.49	.03	17.12*	4,574
N	2,569	3,952			6,521	
High propensity	1.26	.83	.44	.03	15.09*	4,407
N	4,458	2,063			6,521	
Political group members:						
Low propensity	1.02	.32	.70	.49	14.43*	654
N	619	8,121			8,740	
Moderate propensity	1.36	.70	.66	.03	19.87*	2,189
N	1,685	7,055			8,740	
High propensity	1.55	.90	.65	.03	25.83*	6,390
N	3,387	5,353			8,740	
	Passive	Inactive				
Civic group members:						
Low propensity	.67	.28	.39	.03	13.68*	1,854
N	1,478	5,605			7,083	
Moderate propensity	.90	.61	.30	.02	11.94*	6,766
N	3,423	3,660			7,083	
High propensity	1.13	.84	.29	.03	10.46*	5,055
N	4,710	2,372			7,082	
Political group members:						
Low propensity	1.12	.39	.73	.07	11.10*	393
N	378	7,449			7,827	
Moderate propensity	1.29	.67	.62	.04	13.78*	984
N	859	6,967			7,826	
High propensity	1.31	.78	.54	.03	16.51*	2,397
N	1,713	6,113			7,826	
	Passive	Active				
Civic group members:						
Low propensity	1.11	.98	.13	.03	3.82*	3,279
N	1,805	4,041			5,846	
Moderate propensity	1.10	.94	.16	.03	5.11*	5,564
N	2,708	3,137			5,845	
High propensity	1.23	1.01	.22	.03	7.30*	5,374
N	3,412	2,433			5,845	
Political group members:						
Low propensity	1.19	1.12	.06	.05	1.37	2,875
N	1,487	1,395			2,882	
Moderate propensity	1.42	1.36	.05	.05	1.15	1,727
N	1,972	910			2,882	
High propensity	1.61	1.52	.09	.05	1.75	1,048
N	2,236	645			2,881	

NOTE.—Two-sample unpooled *t*-test with unequal variances (Welch's *t*-test).

* $P < .01$.

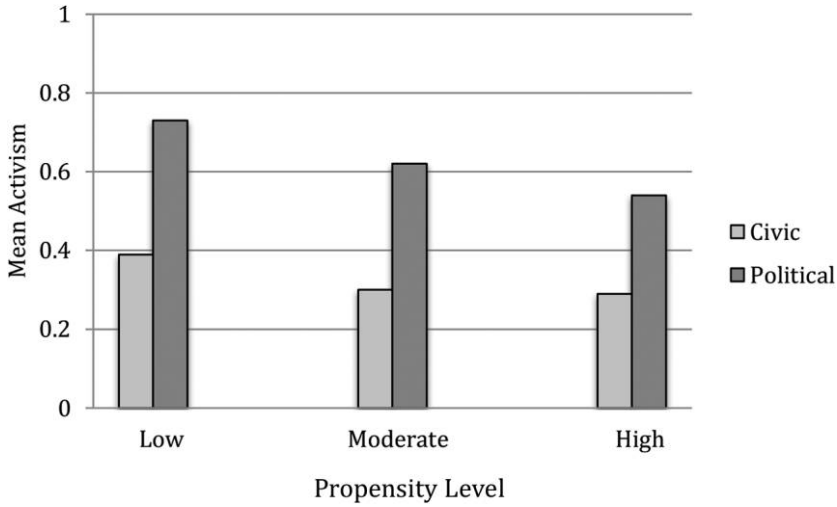

FIG. 2.—Mean differences in political activism: passive membership versus nonmembership by propensity level.

the high propensity category (note that the overall treatment effect reported in table 1 is 0.54 for passive membership in civic organizations compared to nonmembership).

The conditional effects depicted in figure 3 return to the crux of the debate regarding the relevance of active, compared to passive, membership. Here I focus on only those individuals who identify themselves as organizational members, and I try to parse out whether active involvement provides more of a boost to political participation than passive membership across different propensity levels. Although the analysis of treatment effects presented in the previous section clarifies that active membership only minimally increases protest behavior compared to passive membership (and slightly less so for individuals who select into more explicitly political groups), the results presented in figure 3 are instructive. As a first point, the influence of active versus passive involvement in civic organizations on protest involvement across all propensity levels is higher than the mean difference in active versus passive members in political groups, regardless of propensity level. Without overstating the case, this finding not only validates the approach to heterogeneous treatment effects adopted in this article but also suggests that arguments that emphasize the politicizing effects of membership in civic over political groups (and active over passive membership) may have more empirical traction when focusing on the population of joiners rather than the population at large.

Examining the conditional effects more closely, there appears to be very little difference in the treatment effect of active versus passive membership

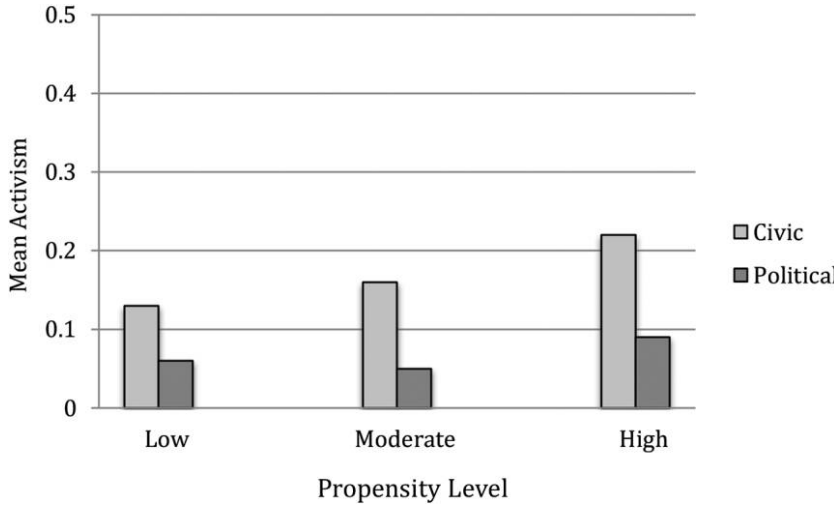

FIG. 3.—Mean differences in political activism: active versus passive membership by propensity level.

in civic organizations among the low and moderate propensity groups (mean differences of 0.13 and 0.16, respectively). However, there is a more substantial and significant boost to average levels of political activism for those who are predisposed to be active, compared to passive, members in civic organizations (mean difference of 0.22 more activities). That is, there does appear to be a Matthew effect at work: among the select group of civic organization joiners, those with higher propensities for active membership reap a somewhat heightened benefit from organizational exposure and experience a more substantial gain in levels of political activism—even if their exposure takes place in civic organizations. In contrast, the results reported in table 2 and depicted in figure 3 suggest that there are no statistically significant differences between active and passive political group members in terms of the number of different protest activities they engage in, regardless of how structurally predisposed they are to becoming organizationally involved. Those with higher propensities for active versus passive political group membership do seem to benefit slightly more than those starting from a lower baseline, but the benefits are truly negligible.

The analyses reported in this section provide some confirmation of the idea that organizational membership has differential effects on political activism depending on one's underlying propensity to select into both organizational and political activism, as well as on the form of organization one chooses to join. In looking specifically at whether active membership provides some additional boost to political involvement over and above either passive membership or no organizational affiliation at all, the answer clearly

depends on both propensity levels and organizational forms. The increase in political activism is somewhat more substantial for members of both civic and political organizations who are theoretically the least likely to be actively involved in the first place. This makes intuitive sense: by overcoming more obstacles to taking the step from nonmembership to membership, such individuals may be more receptive or responsive to the informational benefits of face-to-face contact, direct skill building, or solidarity that come from direct involvement. Importantly, and this point cannot be overemphasized, this is also the case when comparing passive members to those who decline to affiliate with any organizations (although the effects are lower in the case of civic organizations).

The opposite pattern appears to be the case for active compared to passive membership in civic organizations. Not only does there seem to be less difference between passive and active members, but the more significant "payoff" with respect to political activism is among individuals who share the highest probability of active participation in civic organizations. This suggests that not all active members of civic organizations are more politically active than passive members, as implied by the results presented in the previous section. Rather, those members who are already the most likely to pursue a higher level of organizational involvement over a passive affiliation seem to benefit more from the politicizing effects of civic membership: what I have likened to a Matthew effect. This represents an important qualification to the argument that active membership in civic groups operates as a general mechanism promoting political participation. What also becomes clearer from the analyses presented in this section is that, for those who select into political organizations, it does not really matter whether they are active volunteers or passive contributors to the cause—at least not with respect to how membership within an organization shapes their involvement in political activism outside of it.

DISCUSSION

The findings presented in this article clarify and complicate our understanding of how organizational membership influences nonconventional political participation. As a first and important point, the counterfactual approach taken here demonstrates that previous research may overestimate the effect of organizational involvement on political participation because of selection bias; regardless of the groups compared, mean differences (or treatment effects) are lower in the matched samples that take selection bias into account. Second, although the magnitude of effects differs in some predictable ways, both active and passive forms of membership trigger engagement in political activism, whether one chooses to join a political or civic organization. Further, the influence of organizational membership is heterogeneous, varying

across both membership and organizational forms. It is also contingent on an individual's underlying probability of getting involved. In an important advance over earlier research, the evidence for these claims is based on analyses that tackle the problem of selection bias directly, providing an important step in resolving the scholarly debates that animated this article, while also opening up new avenues of research.

The act of joining a voluntary association requires some decision to dedicate potentially scarce resources and energy to some collective endeavor. How scarce depends on the kinds of structural and biographical constraints that were used to estimate individual propensity scores, which capture the likelihood of self-selecting into organizational membership. Clearly not all individuals translate this potential into actual membership, whether passive forms that require little more than a symbolic or limited financial commitment or active forms that demand a more substantial level of direct engagement with the operation of the group. Across the board, those who do so also tend to translate their experience into somewhat higher levels of political activism. Importantly, the analyses presented in this article suggest that these individuals are not simply "joiners" and "activists." Rather, being a joiner tends to make one more of an activist compared to one's social-structural peers who are not. That said, the form of membership chosen, as well as the type of organization joined, clearly matters: not unexpectedly, volunteers or other active participants in political organizations experience the strongest "treatment effect" of membership, whereas the political dividend for passive affiliates of both political and civic organizations is lower (although still significant).

An important qualification to the ongoing scholarly debate regarding active versus passive membership forms is that, looking only at those individuals who have already chosen to get involved, the influence of more active participation on political activism is fairly low. This result aligns with Teorell's (2003) research on political participation in Sweden, which suggests that active memberships cannot be statistically distinguished from passive memberships in terms of their positive influence on what he refers to as "manifestations" (low-risk, legal forms of activism). There is also some suggestive evidence that active participation in civic organizations provides slightly more politicizing effect than similar involvement in political groups for the subset of members only. Overall, what seems to matter most, therefore, is the difference between being a joiner or not—and not, as argued by analysts following Putnam (2000), being more actively engaged in the life of the organization instead of affiliating symbolically (although being more active does bolster political activism). These results reconfirm Howard and Gilbert's (2008) findings using the same data that increasing levels of organizational involvement—measured by comparing passive, active, and "super active" group members with inactive respondents—promotes political

action, broadly defined. They also reinforce Van der Meer and Van Ingen's claim that "the most important difference in terms of [conventional and nonconventional] political action is between those who are and those who are not involved in a voluntary association" (2009, p. 297)—although they operationalize intensiveness of participation with a scale derived from the number of reported organizational activities (see also Welzel et al. [2005] and Dalton et al. [2010] for related research on the positive influence of more extensive group membership and nonconventional protest behavior).

As the analyses in the second part of this article suggest, however, there are important differences in the effect of organizational membership on political activism depending on one's social-structural predisposition or likelihood of membership, what I have referred to as the conditional effects of membership. Compared to nonmembers, those least likely to select into active or passive membership experience a higher gain in levels of political activism, regardless of whether they join civic or political organizations. And, although the estimated effects are relatively small, there is some evidence that the opposite pattern holds when comparing active to passive organizational members. Specifically, those whose background characteristics make them more likely to be active, rather than passive, organizational members also seem to be slightly more likely to engage in political activism as a result of their greater level of involvement, with a possibly greater effect of active membership in civic organizations.

The notion of overcoming structural barriers to participation is one way to make sense of these results theoretically. More specifically, if people who are the least structurally predisposed to joining either a political or civic organization do so, that very fact may heighten their receptivity to the information, skills, solidarity, or network connections that come from such participation in ways that encourage extraorganizational and less conventional engagement in politics. This does, indeed, seem to be the case whether organizational involvement takes the form of passive or active membership in either political or civic groups, at least when focusing on differences with nonjoiners. The barriers and benefits of joining specifically civic organizations differ, however, when focusing only on those individuals who are organizational members. In this case, it is those who are most likely to become volunteers or otherwise involved participants who are activated by that experience in ways that enhance their willingness to participate in less conventional forms of political expression. For skeptics of the hypothesized link between membership in nonpolitical organizations and political participation, it may make more sense to imagine that it is only the most organizationally inclined volunteers and participants in choral societies, soccer clubs, and PTAs who have the resources and motivations to transport those experiences into alternative political forms of engagement. That is, not all civic joiners are political activists, but those who are come to the public arena already

armed with the kinds of biographical and structural resources that are known to enhance political participation more generally.

One implication of the empirical analyses presented in this article is that we need to devote more attention to specifying and refining our tests of the theoretical mechanisms of the differential influence of more passive and active membership forms, rather than continuing to get bogged down in debates about whether there are any relevant "internal effects" (Warren 2001) of more symbolic forms of organizational membership. We also need to think more carefully about how even membership in organizations that are not expressly political in purpose might situate participants for more intensive engagement in nonconventional modes of political behavior. The results presented here suggest a more limited influence of civic organizational engagement on political activism than is the case for membership in political organizations, but additional research that isolates differences between members and nonmembers—as well as active versus passive members—can only improve our understanding of the organizational influences on political behavior.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The analyses presented in this article bracket country-level differences, assuming similarity in the mechanism of influence between associational membership and political involvement in the sample of older democracies (Norris 2002) included in this study. With our having established here that organizational membership operates as a general mechanism promoting involvement in protest politics, future research could usefully examine the proposition that there are country-specific effects that condition the influence of organizational membership on political activism, taking selection bias into account.

Along these lines, one approach might be to use the information on propensity scores that are estimated at the individual level to categorize countries as "participatory contexts" on the basis of average propensity scores at the national level. This represents a departure from comparative, macrolevel research that relies on deductively derived typologies or aggregate measures of observed rates of civic or political participation to characterize countries or country clusters. One could then ask the question whether the individual effects of organizational membership on political activism vary across clusters of countries or "country families" (Newton and Giebler 2008) whose members share similar probabilities of associational membership. This idea is similar to Welzel et al.'s (2005, p. 131) use of mean levels of community involvement as an indicator of a country's central tendency toward participation, which they conceptualize as an opportunity structure for individual involvement. The key difference is that aggregated propensity scores

represent a summary measure of the probability of organizational membership across a given population, a concept that aligns more closely with the insight that sociodemographic characteristics influence self-selection into different modes of civic and political engagement.

An exploratory examination of mean differences in protest involvement across different forms of membership in inductively classified low, moderate, and high propensity countries suggests that, similar to the conditional effects at the individual level, the payoffs of active or passive organizational membership compared to inaction are higher in countries whose citizens are least likely to get involved to begin with; this pattern holds for membership in both political and civic organizations, although the effects are larger for political group members. Conversely, the limited conditional payoffs of active over passive membership in civic organizations are somewhat higher in what can be considered as high propensity countries, with no significant mean differences in active compared to passive membership in political organizations across participatory contexts. Although these results are provisional, they are suggestive of the ways that living in a macrostructural context in which people are differentially predisposed to become organizationally involved shapes the individual-level effect of organizational membership on activism.

Another approach, which would directly test the assumption of a universal effect of organizational exposure, would estimate treatment effects of organizational membership on political activism within countries and compare them across national contexts or regime types. To the extent that significant differences exist, researchers could turn their attention to better understanding the interaction between national (or, even, subnational) contexts and the internal effects of organizational membership on political activism. Methodologically, such comparative research would provide an opportunity to interrogate whether "local" context is determinative in ways that mitigate against pairing respondents from different countries (a concern raised with respect to program evaluation studies that ignore local labor market conditions, for example; see Huber, Lechner, and Wunsch 2013; Lechner and Wunsch 2013).

Finally, with supplementary macrolevel data collection, methods developed for specifying propensity score models using multilevel data could be used to estimate the heterogeneous treatment effects documented here, although there are reasons to expect that the results using fixed effects models reported in this article would not be improved by taking unobserved contextual effects into account (see, e.g., Arpino and Mealli 2011). That said, such a multilevel data structure, combined with methods designed to take selection bias into account, could potentially improve our understanding of cross-national differences in the determinants of political (and, for that matter, civic) participation. Longitudinal studies also have obvious advantages in parsing out selection effects, but comparative research designs that include relevant data on organizational membership and political participa-

tion are rare (but see McFarland and Thomas [2006], Ruiter and De Graaf [2009], Brand [2010], and Van Ingen and Bekkers [2015] for suggestive country-specific exemplars). The aims of the current article are, however, at once more modest and more ambitious: to provide more accurate estimates of the differential effects of organizational involvement on protest behavior net of selection and to establish an agenda for future research that takes selection bias seriously in the study of political participation.

APPENDIX

TABLE A1
Description of Independent Variables Included in Propensity Score Matching Analysis

Concept	Mean	Range	*n*	Measurement
Age	47.57 (17.49)	18–98	30,713	Calculated as the year of the interview minus the reported year of birth
Labor market participation	.68 (.47)	0–1	30,713	Dummy variable coded 1 if primary source of income is from wages, salary, self-employment, or farm employment and 0 if income is from pensions, unemployment/redundancy benefits/other social benefits or grants, investments, savings, or other sources
Gender	.47 (.50)	0–1	30,092	Dummy variable coded 1 for men and 0 for women
Marital status	.56 (.50)	0–1	30,789	Dummy variable coded 1 if respondent reported being currently married
Children	.40 (.49)	0–1	30,942	Dummy variable coded 1 if respondent indicated having children living at home. ESS respondents were asked directly whether they had children living at home, whereas USCID respondents were asked to indicate the number of children living with them at least half of the time; all values greater than zero coded 1.
Employment experience	.75 (.04)	0–1	30,772	Dummy variable coded 1 if ever unemployed and seeking work for more than 3 months (0 if not)
Length of residence	23.26 (19.5)	0–98	30,553	Number of years respondent has lived in the area in which he or she currently resides

TABLE A1 (*Continued*)

Concept	Mean	Range	*n*	Measurement
Native born	.92 (.28)	0–1	30,906	Dummy variable coded 1 if respondent was born in country of residence (0 if not)
	Frequency	%		Measurement
Education:				
<High school	12,213	39.68		Categorical variable standardized across ESS and USCID data sets: (1) less than high school degree (ESS categories: primary education or first stage basic and lower secondary or second stage basic; U.S. equivalent: none, grades 1–8, grades 9–11); (2) high school or vocational-technical degree (ESS categories: upper secondary, postsecondary, nontertiary; U.S. equivalent: high school graduate or GED and post–high school business or vocational technical); and (3) college or postgraduate (ESS categories: first and second stage tertiary; U.S. equivalent: some college, college graduate, postgraduate, or professional degree). Less than high school degree is the baseline category in all analyses.
High school/ vocational	12,232	39.74		
College/ postgraduate	6,335	20.58		
Total	30,780	100		
Income:				
1st	6,950	22.47		Survey respondents were asked to select one of 11 categories that best represented total household net income. In the ESS sample, income could be estimated weekly, monthly, or annually; in the USCID sample, categories represented annual income brackets. In order to construct a standardized measure valid across countries, midpoints were calculated for each response category and recoded into quartiles. Country-specific missing values on income were imputed on the basis of gender, age, and education.
2d	10,182	32.92		
3d	8,152	26.36		
4th	5,641	18.24		
Total	30,925	100		
Religious denomination:				
None	11,296	36.51		Categorical variable based on self-reported current religious denomination
Catholic	9,793	31.65		
Protestant	5,917	19.12		
Eastern Orthodox	2,414	7.80		
Other	1,522	4.92		
Total	30,942	100		

NOTE.—Nos. parentheses are SDs.

Supplemental Analyses

In response to reviewer concerns about including illegal protest in the composite measure of activism, two additional sets of exploratory analyses were conducted (results available from the author). The first replicated the treatment effects analysis using an outcome measure that excluded illegal protest (371 reported cases). The mean differences were almost identical when comparing matched samples of active and passive members to nonmembers of both civic and political organizations (results available from the author). Excluding illegal protest from the outcome measure slightly increased the treatment effect of active compared to passive membership in civic organizations (from 0.14 to 0.19 more activities per year), whereas the differences between active and passive members of political organizations effectively disappear (reduced from 0.12 to 0.05 additional activities). Although these analyses reinforce the finding that the extent of organizational involvement does not differentially influence political activism among already committed members of political and civic associations, it is interesting to consider the idea that the politicizing effects of membership reach an outer bound when it comes to more risky or costly forms of political protest.

A second set of highly provisional analyses attempted to isolate the effects of organizational membership on participation in illegal protest. It appears that no form of membership in civic organizations significantly increases the likelihood of engaging in an illegal protest event, whereas both active and passive members of political organizations are marginally more likely than nonmembers to report having participated in an illegal protest in the previous year (0.01% and 0.02%, respectively). There is a similarly minimal and statistically significant difference between active and passive members of political organizations, but active members may be slightly less likely (−0.01) than passive members to report involvement in illegal protest. Consistent with the interpretative framework elaborated in this article, it may be that passive organizational membership has a higher "payoff" with respect to riskier or costlier forms of collective action than it does for those who are already more active members of political groups. These results are highly provisional and cannot be compared to those reported in the main body of the article because of the different measurement of the outcome variable. Nonetheless, the patterns documented in these exploratory analyses reinforce the idea that subsequent research could benefit from decoupling specific forms of political activism in order to better understand the relationship between organizational membership and political participation.

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