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Abstract

This paper provides evidence of segregation-generated differences in political recruitment networks. By taking explicit account of social-geographical differentiation in the urban landscape, we evaluate—in prior work largely neglected—contextual effects on requests for participation. Consistent with previous research, we find that those activists who try to convince others to participate in political life systematically use a set of selection criteria when deciding whom to approach. However, using recent data based on a sample of inhabitants of Swedish cities and properties of their neighborhoods, we also show that the degree of (aggregate-level) social exclusion negatively influences (individual-level) recruitment efforts. This contextual effect stems both from the disproportional population composition as such in residential areas, and from recruiters' rational avoidance of areas marked by high levels of social exclusion. We conclude that these logics jointly reinforce urban inequalities regarding the chances for ordinary citizens to be invited to political life.

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Sammanfattning

I denna uppsats studerar vi uppmaningar till vanliga medborgare att engagera sig i politiska aktiviteter. Det kan gälla förfrågningar om att gå med i demonstrationer, skriva på upprop, eller delta i konsumentbojkotter, men det kan också gälla ansträngningar som företrädare för politiska partier gör i syfte att värva nya medlemmar. Tidigare forskning har visat att sådana vardagliga försök till ”politisk rekrytering” inte sker slumpmässigt. I likhet med vad som gäller för skillnader i politisk aktivitetsgrad i stort påverkas utfallet av samhällets statusskillnader. De som i olika avseenden är bättre bemedlade och mer resursstarka tycks oftare få förfrågningar om att delta i det politiska livet. Eftersom personer i dessa grupper redan tenderar att vara mer politiskt aktiva än den genomsnittlige medborgaren ökar därigenom också skillnaderna i demokratisk delaktighet.

Tidigare undersökningar om politisk rekrytering har i huvudsak varit baserade på data från USA. Vår studie visar emellertid att likartade mönster för vem som blir tillfrågad också finns i Sverige. Därtill bidrar vi med ett nytt perspektiv genom att uppmärksamma boendesegregationens betydelse i detta sammanhang. Vi visar att fördelningen av riktade uppmaningar om att engagera sig politiskt inte endast avgörs av egenskaper på individnivå (såsom kön, nationellt ursprung och utbildningsnivå), utan också av resursnivån i det område man bor.

Enligt våra resultat påverkar socioekonomiska skillnader mellan olika stadsdelar chanserna att få förfrågningar om att delta i politiska aktiviteter. I bostadsområden präglade av arbetslöshet och bidragsberoende är chansen att bli politiskt rekryterad väsentligt lägre än i andra områden, oberoende av vilka egenskaper en given individ i övrigt har. Vår slutsats är att den urbana ojämlikhet som segregationen representerar påverkar sammansättningen av de nätverk inom vilka politisk rekrytering sker, något som i förlängningen också försämrar förutsättningarna för politisk jämlikhet.

Ordinary citizens are sometimes personally invited to take part in political life—someone asks them to join a political party, to participate in a protest-march, or to sign a petition. Previous research tells us that such endeavors are frequently worthwhile; that is, those being asked often respond positively by word and deed (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995:ch. 5; cf. Grant and Rudolph 2002; Abramson and Clagget 2001; Huckfeldt and Sprague 1992). However, it has also been shown that these *political recruitment efforts* are selective to their character; they tend to be biased in favor of socio-economically privileged groups of citizens (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995: ch. 5, 13; Brady, Schlozman and Verba 1999:157–158). Hence, examining systematic patterns in this respect should render a more complete picture of the causes of participatory stratification in democratic societies (Brady, Schlozman and Verba 1999; cf. Oliver 2000; Leighley 1995).

Contributing to this particular field of political sociology, this paper evaluates contextual effects on requests for participation. We argue that analyses of political recruitment efforts are inconclusive if they fail to consider the importance of aggregate level socio-economic and demographic differentiation. Specifically, we focus on urban inequalities, thus investigating how individual access to recruitment networks are affected by intra-city discrepancies between more and less privileged residential areas. Micro-macro relationships of this kind are seldom explicitly modeled in previous research on political recruitment, although the theoretical links accounting for individual-level variations are readily convertible to the contextual level. And consistent with the theoretical augmentation we propose, our empirical findings reveal that the odds of being approached by mobilizing activists rise and fall systematically, as one travels across city districts.

1. Political recruitment and the perspective of recruiters

Encouragement makes a difference in many areas of life. People may decide to take action in a certain direction as a result from a ‘push’ given by a friend, a neighbor, a fellow-worker or even by a (reasonably trustworthy) stranger. Including a political push factor in their Civic Voluntarism Model (CVM), Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995) were able to demonstrate that personal requests for participation can be consequential too: ‘Those who are asked...might have intended to act anyway, but the request was the triggering factor.’ (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995:273).

Accordingly, citizens who are encouraged by someone else to take part in political activities tend to show higher participation rates.¹ Political recruitment thus seems to be an important aspect of every-day political life and an independent cause of political participation.² Moreover, Brady, Schlozman and Verba's (1999:157–158) analyses suggest that political recruitment efforts are socio-economically biased. Closely resembling well-known relationships between socio-economic status and political participation, the better educated and well heeled tend to receive more requests than citizens at the lower end of the socio-economic status scale.

In causal modeling terms, a skeptic would perhaps argue that the distance is short between (the independent variable) recruitment and (the dependent variable) political participation of the CVM. Few become surprised, when taught that persons who are regularly invited to take part in political life also prove to be more active members of society. At any rate, it seems hard to imagine that personal requests for participation would constantly be turned down.³

Nevertheless, the seemingly tautological character of the relationship between political recruitment and participation has in fact proved to be of great significance in applied research. This is because a wide array of social circumstances potentially translates into

¹ Verba, Schlozman and Brady's work represents a valuable attempt to encapsulate the direct causes of political participation (explicating, that is, the *indirect* relationships between background factors such as level of education or ethnicity, and involvement in political life). In addition to 'access to recruitment networks', Verba, Schlozman and Brady discern 'resources' (such as civic skills and free time) and 'engagement' (indicated by political interest and efficacy) as the decisive explanatory factors of political participation (1995: ch. 9–12). Scholarly contributions demonstrating the empirical fruitfulness of the CVM include McClurg 2003; Jones-Correa and Leal 2001; Oliver 2000.

² The effect of political recruitment efforts is independent as the positive relationship holds even if variations in resources and engagement are accounted for (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995:388–390). It should be noted, however, that the internal ('within-model') causal relation between this factor on the one hand, and resources and engagement on the other, remains largely unspecified in the original version of the theory (Strömblad 2003:44–45, n. 12; cf. Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995:609–611; see also Brady, Verba and Schlozman 1995).

³ In fact, personal requests for participation are (as demonstrated by Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995:135, and as we will show below) more often than not successful. That is, when personally invited to participate politically, people often say 'yes'.

different individual participation levels by means of the recruitment mechanism.⁴ That is, analyzing access to recruitment networks will increase our chances to explain why certain categories of citizens are much more likely to make use of their democratic rights than others. In addition to Verba, Schlozman and Brady's own contributions in this particular respect (1995:ch. 14), empirical evaluations have, for instance, concerned the effect on participation of city population size (Oliver 2000), of having status as an immigrant in Sweden (Adman and Strömblad 2000), and of engagement in voluntary associations (Teorell 2003). In all studies mentioned, access to recruitment networks explained a substantial part of the observed relationships between the particular experience in focus and political participation.⁵

While bearing in mind the consequences of political recruitment demonstrated in earlier work, our goal in this paper is not to explain differences in participation levels. Rather, we concentrate our efforts to the opposite side of the causal chain. Focusing putative causes of recruitment efforts, we argue that a *spatial* dimension should complement previously analyzed individual-level sources of recruitment bias (Brady, Schlozman and Verba 1999). In other words, we expect requests for political participation to vary systematically not only across social groups, but also across social environments.

Such an hypothesis turns out to be reasonable, when we picture the situation of the actual stars of the scene—those who are responsible for the requests. We assume, as do Brady, Schlozman and Verba (1999), that *political recruiters* prefer to be successful (or, do not wish to see their requests turned down) and therefore strive to approach fellow citizens that could be regarded as potential participants; that is, people who probably say 'yes', when asked to participate in a political activity. In short, rational recruiters 'search for likely targets' (Brady, Schlozman and Verba 1999:153).

⁴ A similar argument could be made for the resource and engagement factors of Verba, Schlozman and Brady's model (Strömblad 2003:42–47).

⁵ These studies differ, however, with respect to the operationalization of the recruitment variable. Along with Adman and Strömblad (2000), Teorell (2003) uses the annual frequency of requests for participation, whereas Oliver (2000) dichotomizes the variable, thus defining a person as being exposed to recruitment networks if she or he had been asked to participate at least once in the past year (otherwise not). For reasons explained below, we adhere to the latter strategy in our own study.

The obvious question is then *where* they should search. Clearly, locating promising candidates demands accurate information. For instance, knowing that a certain person is an active member of a political party would probably indicate that a request is worthwhile. However, knowledge of this kind is typically limited to the narrow social network. Recruiters, like people in general, presumably possess far more information about people they know personally than about strangers. Most of us probably have a fairly good picture of our friends' and close relatives' political interest and engagement. Although to a somewhat lesser extent, the same should be true when it comes to fellow workers, fellow members of voluntary associations and other personal acquaintances. Thus, selecting likely targets for recruitment efforts within one's own primary, and perhaps also secondary, social network should not be too hard. However, if a recruiter wants to make requests outside her own networks (perhaps simply to increase the overall amount of desired political activity as much as possible) the task immediately becomes more challenging. Facing the usual constraints of limited time and energy, the recruiter has to decide which strangers to approach.

Whenever information is scarce, Brady, Schlozman and Verba (1999:156–158) argue that a wise recruiter—by intuition if not by actual insights in political science—is guided by indicators of socio-economic status. If recruiters (rightly) assume that education, income and labor-market position are related to political interest and involvement these characteristics may function as 'proxy-variables', hence providing directions for rational recruitment efforts. That is, being unaware of a certain person's political participation record, a recruiter could nevertheless choose to approach her or him, if observable characteristics appear auspicious. According to this line of thought, the person whose way of life (as far as it is observable) convey prosperity and socially privileged circumstances is assumed to receive more requests for participation than the, seemingly, less fortunate one.

Consistent with these expectations, Brady, Schlozman and Verba find that recruitment bias stems from requests that are directed towards strangers (1999:158–159). The 'visible' characteristics of socioeconomic status (along with involvement in religious and voluntary organizations) turned out to be consequential only for recruitment efforts in which the person asking and the person being asked did not know each other. As for the separately analyzed occurrences in which recruiters and targets did know each other,

less visible characteristics, such as civic skills and political engagement, instead turned out to be significant predictors of recruitment efforts (Brady, Schlozman and Verba 1999:158–159).

Although Brady, Schlozman and Verba’s findings make perfect sense, we contend that their explanatory model needs one more element. This is because it is reasonable to assume that recruitment patterns in a segregated society are rooted not only in individual characteristics, but also in contextual properties. Furthermore, paying attention also to the contextual level, recruitment bias may no longer be an outcome solely attributable to requests directed towards strangers.

2. Recruitment in segregated cities

To explore influences of urban segregation on political recruitment, we draw on insights from the contextual analysis tradition of political science. Dating back at least to Herbert Tingsten’s pioneering election studies in the early 1930’s (Tingsten 1937), scholars have found good reasons to consider the importance of contextual factors—as for instance the population composition of neighborhoods—when explaining variations in political attitudes and behavior (for overviews, see Books and Prysby 1991:ch. 1–2; Huckfeldt and Sprague 1993; Oliver 1999). Accordingly, results from numerous studies suggest that socially determined differences in individuals’ close environments are consequential. Thus, in forming attitudes and preferences, but also in acquiring resources, conditions for individuals may differ from place to place, depending for instance on which categories of people they encounter (and perhaps socialize with) on an every-day basis.

The mechanisms of such contextual influences are frequently supposed to be rooted in social contacts. Put simply, people tend to influence each other. In the present study, however, the hypothetical relationships turn out to be somewhat more complex. The influences are in this case probably best understood as a transmission of beliefs about different residential areas across the entire city. It seems safe to assume that most inhabitants of a city have a fairly good picture of the socio-economic and demographic variations of their own urban setting. Being informed, by housing market prices, media reports, and word of mouth, it is not too hard to develop a reasonably well-substantiated idea about differences in population composition between the city-districts. This should

in turn have consequences for recruiters' preference ordering of areas in which they may search for targets.

Apart from such an *externally* driven 'selection-effect', however, one may also expect that an *internally* driven 'compositional effect' at least to some extent explains urban inequalities in political recruitment efforts. It should be safe to assume that recruiters—being political activists themselves—are not uniformly represented in all neighborhoods. On the contrary, due to area-based differences in aggregate socioeconomic status one would presume that some places are rich while others are poor, also in terms of the representation of people who habitually invite others to political life.

In the urban landscape, 'social topology' thus affects the chances of being encountered by political recruiters for two different reasons. Yet one should bear in mind that these reasons have a common source: the segregation-generated inequalities in residential area population-structure.

Now, what is the implication of this contemplation in view of Brady, Schlozman and Verba's conclusion regarding the foundation of recruitment bias? As it turns out, we can no longer be sure that this bias rests exclusively with the recruiters' approaches to strangers.

To fix ideas, consider first the situation of a recruiter who wants to maximize chances of finding likely participants outside her or his own social network. Quite naturally, the first step of this enterprise would be to choose a location, in which the search may begin.⁶ Note that such a scenario by no means forecloses the possibility of the selection process described by Brady, Schlozman and Verba (1999:154–155). Instead, the process is simply modeled as having two stages—or, perhaps more precisely, two filters. In the first, the recruiter has to select an area, or domain, where potential candidates are likely

⁶ To be sure, requests for political action are sometimes made by telephone or through mail, whereby the recruiter does not have to leave home. Unfortunately, we do not have data in this study on differences in the technical form of contact. Examining possible variations in this respect is thus beyond our scope. Still, assuming that few requests are made by utilizing random-digit dialing or the like, the proposition should hold, in that a target area is probably chosen for which phone numbers and/or addresses are collected.

to be found. Once there, the recruiter may in the second stage proceed in seeking out the actual individuals—that is, people with an ostensibly high participatory potential.

Let us then focus on the contrasting logic of approaching friends and acquaintances. In such cases, the recruiter does not need to discern a certain residential area as the ‘primary sampling unit’. The targets in this procedure are simply chosen on the basis of (known) individual characteristics, wherever they may reside. In this case, however, costs would probably be minimized if the recruiter opt for people living nearby. Thus, the rational strategy appears to be that requests of this kind are made within the recruiter’s own neighborhood.⁷

To further distill the model, and possible outcomes, suppose that a city consists only of a high-status residential area A , and a low-status residential area B . We have reasons to believe that the number of recruiters living in A (denoted R_A) in relation to the total number of inhabitants in A (denoted N_A) exceeds the corresponding fraction in B .

Recruitment efforts (denoted RE) may, as previously described, be carried out among people who know each other, as well as between strangers. Assuming equal proportions of social contacts in general (that is, disregarding contacts involving recruitment efforts) in the respective areas, we may hypothesize that inhabitants of A tend to receive more requests to participate politically from people they know than inhabitants of B . Formally we may specify that:

$$RE_A > RE_B \text{ if } R_A/N_A > R_B/N_B$$

In fact, this set of inequalities also holds for the case of recruitment efforts carried out between subjects and objects that do *not* know each other. This follows from the assumption that recruiters in A , when deciding which strangers to approach, would preferably choose to sample targets from their own neighborhood (recall that only two areas are supposed to exist). On the contrary, facing the similar situation recruiters in

⁷ Obviously, the recruiter’s place of work represents an alternative setting. This possibility is, however, left outside the highly stylized model we propose here. Yet, it should be mentioned that the presence of recruitment ‘on the job’ is unlikely to confound any systematic effects of residential area characteristics. In this study, they will rather end up as a random variation in the dependent variable, that we are unable to explain with the chosen explanatory factors.

area B would rather take a trip to A, where the chances of finding potential participants are assumed to be higher.

In more general terms, the intra-city selection process we describe, may be formalized in a basic probability model:

$$p(RE_{ij}) = f(C_j, I_i)$$

Assuming a probabilistic selection process, the chances for individual i in context j to be subject to a recruitment effort, denoted $p(RE_{ij})$, depends upon both contextual factors, summarized by the vector C_j , and individual level factors, summarized by the vector I_i . According to the logic we have discussed the influences of C_j and I_i should not depend on each other. Recall that once a recruiter has chosen a location (one's own residential area, or someplace else), she or he is assumed to apply the identical set of (more or less) observable individual-level criteria for the final selection. In translating the probability model to a corresponding regression equation, we may thus stick to a pure additive specification.

Thus, in the light of potential contextual effects on political recruitment efforts we conclude that bias may result in either case of recruiter-target relationships. Residing in a low-status area may decrease one's chances of receiving requests to participate politically, be it from personal acquaintances or from complete strangers.

As for recruitment bias linked to individual-level properties, the situation is somewhat different. Regardless of geographic localization, recruiters are assumed to let detectable attributes guide their selection of potential participants when they approach strangers. Approaching persons they know, however, there is no reason to believe that visible socio-economic characteristics determine the choice of targets.

The proposed expansion of Brady, Schlozman and Verba's model appears generally justifiable. And, as emphasized, it should be of particular importance in urban settings. Drawing attention to the urban social landscape, we know that residential areas tend to show variations in socio-economic as well as demographic characteristics. The levels,

causes and consequences of housing segregation are all complicated and multifaceted topics, but there is no doubt that cities are segregated also in the welfare states of Western Europe, albeit to various degrees.⁸ This is certainly true also for Sweden—the country, from which the data we utilize in this study are gathered.⁹

In the analyses that follow, we explore to what extent recruiters consider neighborhood profiles when deciding where to operate. Neighborhoods known as poor or ‘disadvantaged’ (a label used in Swedish official reports on the segregation issue, and frequently also heard in the public debate; cf. Strömblad 2003), let alone dangerous, may then be avoided to the benefit of more prosperous and high-status residential areas (cf. Cohen and Dawson 1993:297). Thus, the chances of being asked to participate in political life may depend not only upon who you are, but also upon where you live.

3. Measuring Political Recruitment and Contextual Attributes

To put our theoretical assumptions on trial, we use data from the large-scale Swedish *Citizenship Survey 2003* (‘Medborgarundersökningen 2003’).¹⁰ This survey included a battery of questions designed to measure access to political recruitment networks. In

⁸ The conceptualization of segregation, socioeconomic as well as ethnic, varies considerably between European countries reflecting not only demographic diversity, but also differences in administrative practices and ideology (cf. Crowley 2001). As a consequence, it is inherently difficult to make comparative assessments of its levels, causes and effects. Nonetheless, influential scholars seem to agree that European cities are becoming more and more segregated, although the levels are still relatively moderate compared to most American cities (cf. Musterd 2005; Wacquant 1993).

⁹ In the Swedish case, it has been shown that both socioeconomic and ethnic segregation increased during the economic crisis of the 1990s (Andersson 2000; Bråmås 2003). Moreover, Andersson and Bråmås (2004) has demonstrated that the distressed character of poor neighborhoods is now being reproduced by processes of selective migration, so called middle-class leakage, despite large economic interventions from the government in order to prevent further deprivation in these areas.

¹⁰ Principal investigators were Karin Borevi, Per Strömblad, and Anders Westholm at the Department of Government, Uppsala University. The fieldwork was carried out in 2002 and 2003 by professional interviewers from Statistics Sweden. The interview method was face-to-face and the interviews averaged about 75 minutes in length. Funding was supplied by the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation and by the Government Commission of Inquiry about the Political Integration of Immigrants. The overall response rate was 56.2 percent (2 138 completed interviews out of a net sample size of 3 804 individuals). It should be noted, however, that the sample was divided into two parts: one representative sample of the Swedish population and one sample focused exclusively on immigrants and descendants of immigrants. The response rate in the representative part of the sample was 64.2 percent producing a total of 1 261 completed interviews, while the response rate in the other part of the sample was 47.6

addition, it also provides rich opportunities to test, and control, relationships of the kind we focus on in the present study.

Respondents were asked if they, over the past year, had received any requests, directed to them personally, to take part in a total of 19 specified types of political activities.¹¹ We use this information to construct a dichotomous dependent variable for statistical analysis. From an original additive index describing the number of requests each respondent had received, we chose to make the essential distinction between those who had been approached by a recruiter at least once, and those who were never contacted.

We have chosen this strategy for two reasons. Firstly, we find it most reasonable in substantial terms, since the crucial distinction in terms of political networking seems to be between those who are ‘in’ (i.e. those who have received at least one request), and those who are ‘out’ (i.e. those who did not receive any requests). Secondly, we suspect that the additive index may be error-prone, since many requests for the same type of activity (e.g. concerning participation in demonstrations) are only counted as one.¹²

percent producing a total of 877 completed interviews. All analyses in this paper have been conducted with proper adjustments for the stratified sampling procedure.

¹¹ The activities include *contacts* (with politicians, government officials, organizations, media, and judicial bodies); *party activities* (worked in a political party, participated at a political meeting; *protests* (worn campaign badges, participated in local activity groups, demonstrations, strikes, or illegal protest activities; and *every day manifestations* (donated money, signed petitions, boycotted certain products or bought certain products for political reasons. The question about requests for participation followed directly after respondents had been asked whether during the past year they had carried out any of the listed activities as an attempt ‘to bring about improvement or resist deterioration in society’. For each request that the respondent had received during the past year, a number of follow-up questions were immediately asked. These questions dealt primarily with the relation between the respondent and the recruiter, but it was also asked whether the respondent had assented and carried out the requested activity.

¹² Due to the construction of this part of the survey, the value of ‘6’ does not necessarily represent a higher frequency than the value of ‘3’, in terms of the (unmeasured) absolute number of requests. A respondent may have received numerous requests to participate in (different) demonstrations, but no request to become active in other ways. In such a case, the registered value in our data will only be ‘1’. It should be noted, however, that we have replicated all analyses presented below, using an additive index of requests as the dependent variable instead. This index may be regarded as count data and, accounting for ‘overdispersion’ in relation to the parameters of the underlying Poisson distribution (e.g. Long 1997:230–238), we estimated a negative-binomial regression model. However, these analyses did not yield any substantially different results.

To perform a systematic investigation on how recruiters are guided by their beliefs concerning intra-city differences, we make use of contextual information available in our data. All respondents were geo-coded, allowing us to obtain information regarding their places of residence.¹³ By matching the original survey data from official statistics on the coded geographical level we have assembled a test-bed that fulfills the requirements of contextual analysis (e.g. Books and Prysby 1991: ch. 4). The data set contains contextual-level measures, along with the individual-level dependent variable ('have been requested to participate politically, or not') and proper individual-level control variables.¹⁴

As indicators, assumed to capture recruiters' perceptions of different housing areas, we use two specific contextual measures: the proportional representation of people who are either unemployed or early retired; and the proportional representation of immigrants. The first mentioned contextual variable, which we refer to as *social exclusion*, will show high values for housing areas marked by welfare dependency and 'modern poverty'. The proportion of people facing the risk of being avoided by political recruiters should be relatively high in such areas. Consequently, their inhabitants — including those who are gainfully employed—are in general expected to receive fewer requests for participation than if they have lived in an area ranking 'low' on the social exclusion scale.

However, considering the multidimensional character of segregation in Sweden, a contextual effect of social exclusion may potentially be due to the over-representation of immigrants in poor residential areas rather than to socioeconomic deprivation itself (cf. Andersson 2000). Quite in line with earlier remarks, recruiters will have reasons to

¹³ In the geo-coding procedure, we utilized the so called SAMS (*Small Area Market Statistics*) code. SAMS boundaries—developed by Statistics Sweden, in cooperation with local authorities—are drawn to let the resulting districts, for which aggregate data then is obtainable, be good approximations of actual residential areas. The standard procedure is to construct fairly homogeneous neighborhoods in terms of housing types and tenure form. Sweden is divided into about 9 200 SAMS units, from which 1 524 are included in our data (on average, each included SAMS unit is populated by 1.4 Citizen Survey 2003 respondents).

¹⁴ In spite of the apparent hierarchical structure of our data (i.e. individuals are 'nested' within residential areas) the increasingly popular technique known as multi-level analysis is not really an option in this study. Due to the extremely few members of each cluster (more than 70 percent of the SAMS areas are 'represented' by a single respondent) a multi-level random coefficient model is ill suited for the structure of this particular data set.

suspect that a randomly selected person in such a neighborhood has a comparatively low participatory potential.¹⁵ Hence, we also take into account the contextual factor of *immigrant density* in our analyses.

4. Findings

Before proceeding with the empirical evaluation of our contextual recruitment model, we examine the overall distribution of requests for political participation. As it turns out, slightly more than one fourth of the respondents (26.7 percent) has received requests at least once (during the past 12 months). In general, then, the access to recruitment networks within the Swedish population may be regarded as fairly decent.¹⁶ Distinguishing between request for different kinds of activities¹⁷, the data tell us that recruiters in most cases have ‘every-day manifestations’ in mind. While some 18 percent of the respondents reported being asked to perform such activities, the corresponding figures for ‘party activities’ and ‘protests’ are considerably lower (3.4 and 4.8 percent, respectively). A position in between is occupied by request for ‘contacts’, which about 11 percent of the respondents have received.

Gauging the chances for a randomly chosen recruiter to be successful, the data indicates that assents are more common than refusals. A stable majority (56.6 percent) of the targets reports that they actually undertook the requested activity.¹⁸ On the whole, then, political recruitment efforts are quite likely to be transformed into actual political activity. As noted earlier, this additional nutrition to democracy is a potential source of participatory stratification. Cleavages will be enlarged if the overall sample of targets of

¹⁵ As most recruiters probably know, immigrants in Sweden tend to be significantly less active in the political life than the autochthonous population (e.g. Bäck and Soininen 1998; Adman and Strömblad 2000).

¹⁶ In the USA, however, political recruitment efforts are more common judging from Verba, Schlozman and Brady’s data from their Citizen Participation Study (collected in the early 1990s). The corresponding figure in this data is 52 percent (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 1995:135).

¹⁷ See footnote 11, for a description of the various forms of political participation that recruiters may have in mind.

¹⁸ Comparing different forms of participation, we observe some fluctuation around the general figure here too. Yet, differences are quite small, the most notable exception being request for party activities to which less than a third (31.6 percent) assented.

recruitment efforts mirrors the population categories in which the politically active already are over-represented.¹⁹

In fact, this conclusion is valid also on the aggregate level. Inhabitants of areas marked by a high level of social exclusion may, regardless of their own labor-market position, tend to experience a sense of powerlessness which will make them less inclined to take part in political life.²⁰ In view of this possibility, a negative contextual effect of our social exclusion measure on political recruitment efforts would mean that the segregation-generated stratification in political participation is further magnified.

In preparing the test-bed for empirical evaluations of urban inequalities, we trimmed the data set to include only residents of (larger or smaller) cities. To reduce the risk of error-prone measures on the contextual level, we furthermore disregarded inhabitants of areas too small to be conceived of as housing areas in any meaningful way (to accomplish this, we specified that the contextual units should display a minimum population of 500 people). Finally, in view of our focus on the significance of labor-market position on the aggregate level (necessitating that proper controls are performed for the corresponding individual-level variable) we also excluded respondents who, due to age retirement, no longer belong to the labor-force.²¹

Turning to estimation issues, our dependent choice variable will only take on the values of '1' (or 'yes', i.e. the respondent did receive at least one request) and '0' (or 'no', the respondent did not receive any requests). Hence, a binary regression model should be suitable and we employ logistic regression here.

We begin by specifying three versions of the general probability model, utilizing our entire sample of urban respondents. The results, presented in Table 1, strongly confirm

¹⁹ It should be noted that such a conclusion assumes equal differences in the likelihood of a positive response.

²⁰ Strömblad has presented some evidence for such a causal chain in earlier work (2003: ch. 3). However, in that study the similar contextual variable measured only unemployment rates on the residential area level.

²¹ After these adjustments were made, the data set includes a total of 1 223 observations (approximately 60 percent of the original total). It could be mentioned that the descriptive statistics on experiences of political recruitment effort reported above proved to be strikingly similar in our subset of urban respondents.

our theoretically derived expectations. In each of the three models, we find significant contextual effects of social exclusion in the hypothesized direction. The data tell us that fewer attempts to get people involved in politics are made in residential areas characterized by weak labor-force attachment. This effect holds after accounting for the corresponding individual-level variable; thus controlling for the unequal neighborhood representation of inhabitants who themselves are weakly attached to the labor force (being unemployed or early retired).

Table 1. Predicting Recruitment Efforts

Independent variables	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>
Contextual level						
Social exclusion	-.103*	.025	-.071*	.027	-.078*	.029
Immigrant density					-.007	.010
Individual level						
Weak labor force attachment	-.763*	.327	-.355	.342	-.355	.342
Immigrant			-.598*	.174	-.644*	.191
Male			.452*	.167	.451*	.167
Age			-.036	.041	-.036	.041
Age squared			.000	.000	.000	.000
Education			.160*	.028	.159*	.027
Income			.000	.000	.000	.000
(Constant)	.180	.200	-1.532	.902	-1.552	.903
Pseudo R^2	.03		.08		.08	
<i>N</i> (weighted cases)	1223		1223		1223	

Note: Entries are logistic regression coefficients (*B*), and standard errors (*SE B*). The sample is weighted to be representative of the Swedish urban population. See appendix for information about the independent variables. The reported Pseudo R^2 is the likelihood-ratio index (also known as McFadden's Pseudo R^2) defined as $1 - LL_1 / LL_0$, which means that it compares the full model (i.e. with all parameters) to a model with just the intercept (Long and Freese 2001:84). Statistical significance: * $p < .05$.

Model 1 represents the most basic version of the contextual model. By gradually expanding the list of relevant control variables (in Model 2 and Model 3) we find that the original contextual effect decreases in size. Apparently, and quite in line with

reasonable expectations, a part of the contextual effect estimated in Model 1 is spurious, in that this specification fails to recognize negative selection effects operating in segregated urban areas. For example, immigrants are over-represented in neighborhoods where social exclusion is high. And people belonging to this category tend to receive fewer requests regardless of where they live. Still, we find a significant contextual effect of social exclusion also when several potentially confounding variables are accounted for.

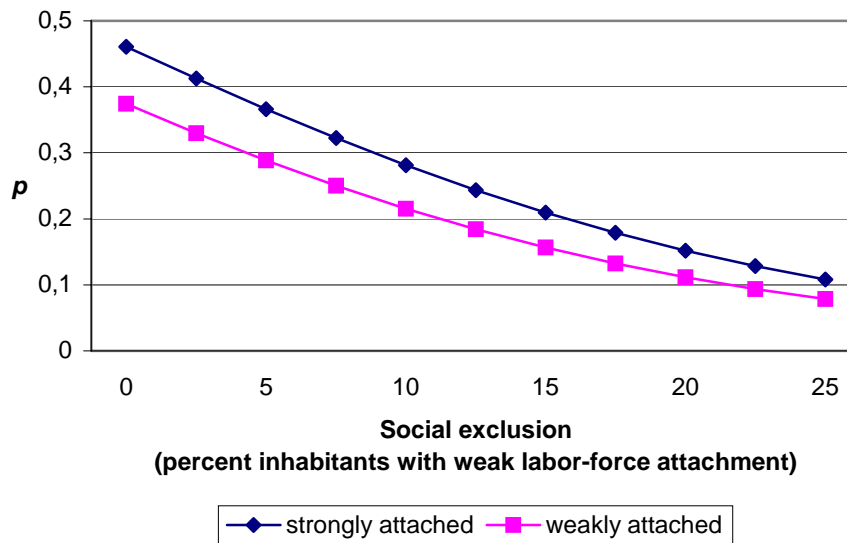
In model 2 we control for individual-level variations in immigrant status, gender, age, income and education.²² Three individual-level variables – immigrant, male, and education – show significant effects on political recruitment. Consistent with previous research—though in this case also accounting for social-geographic variations—we conclude that men more often than women become targets for political recruiters. Further, recruiters prefer to approach people who possess more educational resources, rather than those with few years of education.²³ Finally, in harmony with earlier work on the political integration of immigrants in Sweden (Adman and Strömblad 2000) we find that residents of foreign origin are significantly less likely to receive requests for political participation than residents born in Sweden.

As the result from Model 3 reveals, however, the last mentioned effect is not translated to a contextual-level relationship. Here, we let immigrant density enter as a contextual control variable along with all individual-level covariates. Interestingly, we may conclude that, once controlled for segregation based on social exclusion, ethnic segregation have no direct consequences for the neighborhood incidence of political recruitment efforts. At the same time, strong evidence suggests that the contextual effect of social exclusion is not an artifact of immigrant density. The significant negative effect of social exclusion on political recruitment efforts remains after proper controls, while the effect of immigrant density is far from being statistically significant.

²² The reader may consult the appendix for a description of all independent variables, along with corresponding univariate statistics.

²³ Interestingly, though, once controlled for the other independent variables, the income level of respondents does not seem to influence their access to recruitment networks at all.

Figure 1. Probability (p) of request by neighborhood social exclusion



The social exclusion effect must be regarded as significant also in substantial terms. Figure 1 is based on parameter estimates from Model 3 and displays how the predicted probability of political requests is related to neighborhood social exclusion. The graph depicts two typical individuals. In both cases calculations refer to a male person born in Sweden, holding income at its median and the other variables at their mean. In order to disentangle the individual and contextual effects of labor force attachment, separate calculations have been performed for individuals with strong and weak labor market attachment respectively. Evidently, individuals with strong labor market attachment run a higher probability of being approached by political recruiters than individuals with weak attachment in the same neighborhood. This difference is marginal, however, compared to the contextual effect of social exclusion.

As the graph makes clear, the contextual effect of social exclusion is quite substantial. Studying within-group tendencies (tracing the lines of the graph from left to right), we note a difference of about 30 percentage units in predicted probabilities of being asked to participate. Hence, inhabitants of the least and the most disadvantaged housing areas appear to have strikingly different chances of being personally invited to political life.

To sum up our findings so far, the results on the individual level largely confirm findings in previous research. Political recruitment serves to mobilize those who already

have the potential to make their voices heard, not the marginal and dispossessed. What we add to the picture is the importance of contextual characteristics. Rational recruiters do not let chance decide *where* they will go looking for likely targets.

Table 2. Predicting Recruitment Efforts: The Importance of Personal Relations

Independent variables	Know recruiter		Do not know recruiter	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>
Contextual level				
Social exclusion	-.068*	.033	-.069*	.032
Immigrant density	-.003	.012	.009	.011
Individual level				
Weak labor force attachment	-.458	.450	-.601	.416
Immigrant	-.006	.221	-.644*	.227
Male	.298	.205	.391*	.185
Age	-.101*	.048	-.030	.044
Age squared	.001	.001	.000	.000
Education	.083*	.027	.124*	.037
Income	.000	.000	.000	.000
(Constant)	-.361	1.023	-1.712	1.036
Pseudo R^2	.04		.06	
<i>N</i> (weighted cases)	1223		1223	

Note: Entries are logistic regression coefficients (*B*), and standard errors (*SE B*). The sample is weighted to be representative of the Swedish urban population. The reported Pseudo R^2 is the likelihood-ratio index (cf. Note to Table 1). See appendix for information about the independent variables. Statistical significance: * $p < .05$.

Next, we divide our sample according to what we know about the personal relations between recruiters and their targets. Table 2 shows the results from two re-estimations of the full model after this split-sample procedure. In the first case, we consider only recruitment efforts made by someone the respondent *knows*, while in the second case only efforts made by someone the respondent *does not know* are included in the analysis.

The reported results empirically confirm our theoretical assumptions. We note that the negative effect of area-based social exclusion is statistically significant both when the recruiter is known and when she or he is a stranger. Thus, residing in a low-status area always reduces one's chances to receive requests for political activity. In contrast, we note that the individual-level variables Immigrant and Male only produce significant effects for the cases in which the respondent did not know the recruiter. Being either an immigrant or a woman (or both) deflates your expected value, in the calculus of a recruiter to whom you are not acquainted. In harmony with theoretical expectations, recruiters only use the cues provided by these demographic factors when they seek out prospects among strangers. Education is the only individual-level variable that shows statistically significant effects in both cases, although one should bear in mind that the effect is considerably higher when no personal bond exists between the recruiter and the target. The only divergence from initial expectations is that recruiters generally seem to put less faith in older persons even if they know them personally.²⁴

In view of these results, it seems reasonable to conclude that urban inequality affects the process of political recruitment. What matters in the eyes of the political recruiters is not merely who you are, or seem to be—but also where you, in fact, live.

This conclusion, we contend, is buttressed by the compatibility between our theoretical expectations and empirical findings. In section 2 of the paper we proposed a stylized model of how inequalities in recruitment efforts may be due to intra-city selection processes. We argued that recruiters are inclined to 'sample' potential participants in more prosperous residential areas, partly because they tend to form a larger share of the population in such areas, and partly because they (wherever they may reside) tend to avoid the disadvantageous parts of the city. The analyses performed provide us with ample evidence for the latter, externally driven, selection effect. Recruiters indeed seem to visit areas with a high degree of social exclusion less frequently, thus reducing the chances for all population categories there to be invited to political life. However, to fully explain the negative contextual effect of social exclusion also the instances when the recruiter is known, we should be able to prove differences also when it comes to

²⁴ It may be noted that since the squared version of the age variable is insignificant we do not find any evidence for curve-linear tendencies in this respect.

recruiters' domicile. In fact, this proves to be feasible when utilizing another, similar, data source. In comparison to the data analyzed so far, the *Citizenship Survey 1997* ('Medborgarundersökningen 1997') included a compatible set of variables. In addition, however, the respondents in this survey were also asked if they themselves have directed a request somebody else. Although somewhat less recent, we have in this case hence data on a sample of actual recruiters.

A series of new analyses based on this source provide evidence consistent also with the first part of our explanatory model. Testing the relationship between being a recruiter and contextual properties, we find that recruiters less frequently live in areas where social exclusion is widespread. Furthermore, controlling for the same set of potential confounders as before does not alter this impression. To be sure, recruiters may be found among the members of several population categories. But they do not tend to live in neighborhoods where large shares of the inhabitants are unemployed or welfare recipients. Hence, all else equal, the chances of encountering even a known recruiter in such areas are poor.

5. Concluding remarks

The results from this study make clear that the process of political recruitment is rewardingly analyzed in a contextual framework. Thus, we propose an expansion of the Brady, Verba and Schlozman model of rational political recruitment efforts. As our empirical findings have demonstrated, the chances of being approached by mobilizing activists is better – *ceteris paribus* – for people living in high-status residential areas than for those living in areas where social exclusion is wide-spread. We have also showed that this result is valid regardless of the personal relation between the recruiter and the recruited, although presumably for different reasons. Variations in recruitment efforts within personal networks probably depend on the residential patterns of the recruiters themselves. When targeting strangers, on the other hand, recruiters seem to be influenced by a transmission of beliefs concerning which residential areas it is worthwhile to visit.

Taken as a whole, the political recruitment process thus seems to be determined both by socio-economic segregation in itself, and by a phenomenon known in the economic literature as 'statistical discrimination' (cf. Phelps 1972; Sattinger 1998; Arrow 1998).

Recruiters presumably have no interest in keeping the less advantaged members of society away from politics. However, an exclusionary tendency of the kind we see between strangers in this study is the collective outcome of their rational prospecting. In seeking out what they, for good reasons, believe to be people with a high participatory potential they unintentionally extend the cleavages between those who make their political voices heard and their silent fellow citizens.

APPENDIX

Independent variables: coding and descriptive statistics

Social exclusion is the percentage of people who are weakly attached to the labor market, i.e. unemployed and people on early retirement pension, in the neighborhood. In this study, the level of social exclusion varies from a low of 0.5% to a high of 23.0%. The mean value is 8.2% and the median is 7.5%.

Immigrant density is the percentage of people born abroad in the neighborhood. The variation in this variable is considerable and stretches from a low of 1.7% to a high of 69.9%. The mean value is 16.7% and the median is 11.7%.

Weak labor force attachment is coded 1 if the respondent is unemployed or on early retirement pension, and 0 if the respondent is gainfully employed or a student. In the weighted, restricted sample, 9.5 percent of the respondents are weakly attached to the labor force. (The corresponding figure in the unweighted sample is 11.6).

Immigrant is coded 1 if the respondent is born abroad and 0 if he or she is born in Sweden. In the weighted, restricted sample, the percentage of immigrants is 12.2. (The corresponding figure in the unweighted sample is 45.5).

Male is coded 1 if the respondent is a male and 0 if the respondent is a female. There are 51.4 percent male respondents in the weighted, restricted sample. (The corresponding figure in the unweighted sample is 50.6).

Age is the age of the respondent at the time of the interview. The youngest respondent is 19 years old and the oldest is 77. Note, however that only ten individuals in the restricted sample are 66 years or older. The mean age in the sample is 39.2 years and the median is 38 years.

Education is operationalized as years of education, including primary school. This variable ranges from 0 to 25 years. The mean value is 13.8 years and the median is 14 years.

Income is operationalized as family disposable income (SEK 1000). This variable ranges from a low of 0 to a high of 3776. The mean value is 296.2 and the median is 257.7.

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