

THE POLITICAL INFLUENCE OF CHURCHES

Paul A. Djupe and Christopher P. Gilbert investigate the political influence of churches: how membership in organized religious bodies shapes the political life of members. Djupe and Gilbert's goal in this inquiry is to recenter scholarly attention on voluntary association as an essential element of American civic and political life.

The authors develop a theoretical framework that captures the multifaceted elements of church life that affect individual political attitudes and actions. Political information from clergy, small groups, and social networks flows plentifully in churches, but individuals process that information differently depending on their motivations, and related to their status in the church. Articulating a more fully specified model of how associations expose individuals to political information and norms will help us to understand the political opinions and behavior of citizens, while also providing a clearer understanding of the contributions of churches to sustaining democracy.

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The Political Influence of Churches

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