

POLITICS AND THE AMERICAN CLERGY: SINCERE
SHEPHERDS OR STRATEGIC SAINTS?

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Scholars have evaluated the causes of clergy political preferences and behavior for decades. As with party ID in the study of mass behavior, personal ideological preferences have been the relevant clergy literature's dominant behavioral predictor. Yet to the extent that clergy operate in bounded and specialized institutions, it is possible that much of the clergy political puzzle can be more effectively solved by recognizing these elites as institutionally-situated actors, with their preferences and behaviors influenced by the institutional groups with which they interact.

I argue that institutional reference groups help to determine clergy political preferences and behavior. Drawing on three theories derived from neo-institutionalism, I assess reference group influence on clergy in two mainline Protestant denominations—the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Episcopal Church, USA. In addition to their wider and more traditional socializing influence, reference groups in close proximity to clergy induce them to behave strategically—in ways that are contrary to their sincerely held political preferences. These proximate reference groups comprise mainly parishioners, suggesting that clergy political behavior, which is often believed to affect laity political engagement, may be predicated on clergy anticipation of potentially unfavorable reactions from their followers.

The results show a set of political elites (the clergy) to be highly responsive to strategic pressure from below. This turns the traditional relationship between elites and masses on its head, and suggests that further examination of institutional reference group influence on clergy, and other political elites, is warranted.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The causes behind the political preferences and behavior of the American clergy represent an important, and not fully solved, puzzle. Though clergy lead influential political institutions (Vidich and Bensman 1968; Wald, Owen, and Hill 1988), and though they enjoy great discretion in using particular frames of reality to influence parishioner views and behavior (Snow et al. 1986; Gamson and Modigliani 1987; Wuthnow 1987; Olson and Carroll 1992; Roof and McKinney 1987), the causal story concerning why clergy think and behave the way they do politically has not been fully fleshed out. I suggest that moving toward a more complete representation of the causes of clergy preferences and behavior requires an examination of the relevant institutional environments in which these religious elites operate.

In order to gain leverage in this enterprise, I consider clergy and their relevant professional environments through a neo-institutional lens (Hall and Taylor 1996). I ask three general theoretical questions in so doing. First, in what ways do institutions, via their role as agents of socialization, implant enduring and sincerely held political preferences in clergy? Second, do institutions, through their role in generating social networks and nodes of group identification, shape, over time, clergy political preferences and behavior? Third, do institutions shape the incentive structure that confront clergy such that clergy are compelled to strategically adopt behavior that is consistent *not* with their *sincere* political preferences, but with the preferences of the proximate reference groups that they encounter?

To address these questions, I utilize three institutions-based theories, which are drawn from the sociological institutionalism and rational choice literatures. The first focuses on the role of educational institutions (specifically, seminary) as agents of clergy socialization. It assesses whether these institutions have formative and lasting impacts on clergy attitudinal development (Pillari and Newsome 1998; Meyer, Boli, and Thomas 1987). The second, following Durkheim's (1933) and Mosca's (1939) theories of group salience in shaping member preferences, examines group influence in shaping clergy political preferences over time. Different from the first theory while remaining steeped in the sociological tradition, the second suggests that as clergy contact time with their proximate reference groups increases, clergy will begin to take on the groups' fundamental political preferences. In this respect, clergy preferences will conform more to influences found in their contemporary group settings rather than to the socializing effects from institutions of prior significance (i.e., seminary).

The third theory, steeped in rational choice assumptions, considers institutions as constraining and incentivizing forces on clergy political behavior. These forces compel clergy to behave strategically. As such, clergy will engage in behavior that comports with the expectations of specific institutional reference groups that they encounter (Antonio 2004; Alba and Moore 1978), but that differs from how they would behave according to their sincerely held preferences. The institutional constraint on clergy is represented by the professional sanctions reference groups can impose on those not behaving in accordance with group preferences. Group incentives are provided through the opportunity for professional advancement and financial well-being.

Empirical testing of hypotheses steeped in the sociological and rational choice frameworks represents an important extension of the relevant clergy politics scholarship in the United States. At the very least, if American clergy are found to eschew strategic behavior in favor of acting on their sincere political preferences, I will have addressed a largely-overlooked topic of importance to political scientists, especially given the role that clergy play as political elites. If, on the other hand, reference group influence and/or strategic motives are found to impact clergy political behavior, these findings will represent an important empirical breakthrough that will set the stage for future research.

The Political Importance of American Clergy

Most intriguing to earlier religion and politics scholars, and arguably *the* reason clergy constitute an important concern for political scientists, is the role that they may play in shaping parishioner political behavior, and how this behavior may translate into public policy (Cook, Jelen, and Wilcox 1993). Interestingly, the existing record shows that clergy influence may be muted. For example, Vidich and Bensman (1968) found that clergy could serve as effective nodes of political influence, but that their ability to shape parishioner opinion and behavior was conditional, and based on factors related to their dexterity with their congregations. At issue may be whether clergy make full use of available church resources as political goods. In addition to their obvious institutional authority, Wald (2003) found that the clergy control important institutional tools, including the church building (and the capacity to display political literature in prominent areas), the church bulletin and other forms of regular communication that can contain political information, and even transportation vehicles that can be used to take

parishioners to gatherings of political significance. Clergy who are less inclined to use these institutional resources may be generally less influential over their parishioners' political views and behavior.

While a step-by-step causal process by which clergy shape parishioner political views was not elaborated in these earlier works, several recent scholars have made important strides in this regard. Specifically, Crawford and Olson (2001) and Buddenbaum (2001) found that clergy-to-congregant influence is based on the clergy's ability to highlight those issues to which parishioners should pay particular attention. Often, parishioners are found to take these recommendations to heart, especially when they coincide with issues of current personal salience (Djupe and Gilbert 2002). At the same time, Jelen (2003) discovered that clergy influence can go beyond the mere changing of congregant opinion, and move into the realm of encouraging activism. This has important consequences for political scientists, especially since ANES data continue to show that religiously affiliated voters remain a substantial electoral bloc. Yet despite the importance of these empirical breakthroughs on the clergy-parishioner relationship, much remains to be discovered. For thirty years, the lion's share of the religion and politics literature has placed clergy on the right side of any causal model. Clergy have been cast as the catalysts behind a variety of religio-political phenomena (Penning and Smidt 2000). Yet even when their behavior has been the dependent variable, seldom has it been viewed as contingent on the interplay between clergy and the institutional contexts (including specific reference groups) in which they operate.

To bridge this gap, I expand upon the extant literature to assess whether clergy political preferences and behavior are the products of not only their sincerely held

preferences (as found in Guth et al. 1997 and related scholarship), but of a desire to avoid professional sanction from certain of these groups. In doing so, I follow a trail blazed by Ammerman (1981), Iannaccone (1995), Young (1997), Gill (1998), and, more recently, Olson (2000) and Djupe and Gilbert (2002, 2003) in referencing contextual effects and/or rational choice in the study of religion and politics. These preceding works introduced the concepts of institutional and contextual effects on clergy political preferences and behavior, and, as such, set the foundation for the approach taken in this dissertation. The difference between these earlier studies and my research is that I utilize a series of specific measures that empirically account for institutional influences on clergy across two national clergy samples. Another difference is that I test theories particularly related to how institutional contexts may directly shape clergy preferences and behavior.

Arguably, institutional crosspressures on clergy are no better observed than in American mainline Protestantism (Chaves 1993; Miller 1997; Wuthnow 2002). Mainline denominations, and the broader traditions from which they are derived, have helped to define American Christianity since the first British settlements were established in the early seventeenth century. Given their longevity, the mainline Protestant churches have accrued an important degree of political influence in the United States. At the same time, the mainline's collective status as the second largest religious tradition in America (second only to Roman Catholicism) contribute to their political importance, given the large number of parishioners with whom mainline clergy have regular contact (Jones et al. 2002).¹ Institutional crosspressures on clergy preferences and behavior are arguably

¹ This contention is based on aggregating membership figures from all mainline Protestant denominations in the United States, and comparing them with aggregate counts of other traditions according to data

more observable in mainline Protestantism because these denominations underwent significant changes in their systematic theological and political identities during the early twentieth century (Roof and McKinney 1987; Marty 1990). The result was that the denominations became homes to disparate groups holding often-opposing preferences on theological and political matters. This heterogeneity exists not so much between the denominations as within them, with the generally more liberal clergy serving parishioners positioned largely to their right (Weston 2003). Given their historical importance as mainline denominations, their level of intra-denominational heterogeneity, and their structural similarities, I elect to examine the causes of clergy political preferences and behavior in both the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (PC (U.S.A)) and the Episcopal Church, USA (ECUSA).

Since the institutional rules that provide structure to both denominations include provisions for the laity to hold leadership positions (especially in the local congregations and parishes), the PC (U.S.A.) and ECUSA serve as natural backdrops for assessing the explanatory power of the sociological and rational choice theories. Given their proximity to clergy and their relative institutional power, I posit that these lay leaders serve as the reference group of greatest consequence for clergy in both denominations. Internal denomination studies show that lay leaders are generally more politically conservative than clergy (PCUSA Office of Research Services 2002, 2004, 2006; ECUSA Research and Statistics 2003). The combination of lay leader institutional authority and preference differences with the clergy suggests that clergy may encounter

compiled by Jones et al. (2002), and published in the American Religion Data Archive. I acknowledge, however, that inaccuracies in these data may exist, and that counting procedures may bias outcomes in favor of the more established, and usually mainline, institutions. Alternative sources dispute the size advantage of mainline denominations. For instance, according to the methodology used by Kohut et al. (2000), evangelicals are the largest single group within Protestantism.

reference group incentives to 1) rely on lay leader preferences to develop their political positions or 2) strategically mask their sincerely held preferences out of concern that they will encounter a negative reaction from their lay leaders if they do not.

Importantly, there are other reference groups of potential consequence in determining clergy preferences and behavior. Most obvious is the collection of professional peers and institutional superiors with whom clergy interact. Since Presbyterian and Episcopal clergy must also answer to district superiors in carrying out their responsibilities, these supervisors, logically, function as alternative reference groups. I hypothesize, however, that supervisor influence will be generally different from what may exist for lay leaders. Since the overall preferences of mainline clergy should be more naturally in-line with their institutional superiors', including the denominational bureaucracy (Wald 2003), I suggest that influence from these supervisory groups will, overall, tend to reinforce the clergy's sincerely held (liberal) preferences.

The empirical findings detailed in chapters 5 and 6 suggest that the political preferences and behavior of Presbyterian and Episcopal clergy are largely influenced by reference group ideology, and the pressure that clergy perceive from these groups to behave strategically. These findings confirm the explanatory importance of both the sociological and rational choice theories, and have important implications. First, explicitly testing for the influence of institutional forces on clergy political behavior adds contextual qualifiers to our understanding of what makes clergy tick as political elites (Wald, Owen, and Hill 1988; Huckfeldt, Plutzer, and Sprague 1993; Guth et al. 1997; Crawford and Olson 2001; Djupe and Gilbert 2002, 2003; Legee et al. 2002; Wald 2003; Brewer, Kersh, and Petersen 2003; Smith 2005). By gaining a fuller understanding as to

why clergy think and behave in specific ways politically, scholars might be better able to predict the kinds of effects that clergy may have on their parishioners' political preferences and behavior. Since results show that clergy preferences and behavior are influenced, in part, by lay leader ideology, future research might also delve into the specifics of the clergy-laity relationship in greater detail.

Second, knowing that there is a causal relationship between reference group ideologies, strategic pressure, and clergy political behavior, scholars have reason to probe more deeply into group perceptions of clergy. One of the limitations of existing clergy studies, and the broader religion and politics research in general, is that there is no explicit connection made between clergy and those with whom they regularly interact as institutional elites. Indeed, scholarship has tended to look at the preferences and behavior of either parishioners *or* clergy (and mostly the latter), but never both in the same study, at least not at the national level. Through the contributions of this dissertation, it is clear that contextual influences add explanatory value, and that future research must find a way to incorporate these influences as regular model components.

In order to more properly appreciate the manner in which this dissertation fits into the existing clergy politics scholarship, chapter 2 reviews the relevant literature. Chapter 3 provides a brief historical account of polity and political controversies in the Presbyterian and Episcopal denominations. Chapter 4 delineates the theory of clergy political preferences and behavior. Chapter 5 explicitly tests hypotheses related to the sociological foundations of clergy political preferences. Chapter 6 examines sociological and strategic influences on items related to clergy political behavior, while Chapter 7 provides concluding thoughts on this project.

CHAPTER 2

PREFERENCES AND CONTEXTUAL EFFECTS ON CLERGY POLITICAL POSITIONS

Since the political behavior of religiously affiliated Americans can be linked, at least indirectly, to clergy influence (Djupe and Grant 2001; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Putnam 2000; Wood 1999), it is important to broaden our understanding of what makes clergy believe and behave as they do politically. This inquiry is made at a time when American politics is becoming increasingly characterized by cultural and religious division. Often, and as Fiorina et al. (2006) suggest, it is political elites, including the American clergy, who are responsible for creating and perpetuating political polarization. Clearly, then, political science should be interested in the effect that institutions-based theories and contextual variables may have in both constraining and incentivizing clergy political preferences and behavior.

A survey of the prevailing literature shows an almost exclusive focus on clergy political preferences as the primary determinant of their behavior. Though this line of research has produced robust results, scholars have tended to overlook the relational dynamic that may affect actor behavior in any highly institutionalized setting. This dynamic is created and perpetuated, in large part, because clergy are dependent on relationships with key institutional reference groups for their professional success. Hence, while the extant literature's focus on clergy preferences is important, my purpose is to assess whether clergy rely not only on their sincere preferences to guide their political behavior, but may also alter their behavior based on expectations of how relevant reference groups will react to what they do. The basic question from the rational choice perspective is whether clergy sometimes behave strategically—in ways

that, according to their general ideological preferences, they should not. According to theoretical expectations, this is as much a possibility as institutions socializing clergy into long-lasting political preferences that guide their behavior. If support for the rational choice theory is found, it would suggest that clergy may tailor their political behavior to please specific reference groups of institutional consequence, even as they continue to hold personal preferences that are distinct from their behavior.

As with members of Congress who confront the competing demands of different constituencies and institutional goals, clergy encounter reference groups consisting of the laity and their elected leaders in local churches, and peers and supervisors in their respective denominational hierarchies. It is reasonable to suspect that these different reference group actors represent a unique mix of sanctions and incentives on clergy. Encountering these sanctions and incentives might mean the difference between clergy relying on their sincerely held preferences to determine their political behavior (reflecting a sociological explanation), or undertaking a strategic masking of these preferences (reflecting a rational choice explanation). Regardless of whether the sociological or rational choice theories return the greatest explanation in this assessment, the basic, institutions-centered, focus of this investigation is that clergy political preferences and behavior are the product of institutional factors.

Since 27-37% of the American public attends church weekly (Smith 1998), it is clear that clergy are in a plum position to influence the wider political process, if they so choose. Importantly though, the literature is mixed on the question of just how influential clergy are at effectively shaping parishioner preferences and behavior (Cleary and Hertzke 2005; Rozell and Wilcox 1995; Leege and Kellstedt 1993; Smidt et al. 2003;

Smith 2005). The consensus from this scholarship is that clergy possess a general, but not exclusive or absolute, political influence over their flocks. This begs the questions as to why clergy influence should be inconsistent. One possibility is that the cost of compliance with reference group expectations, and the strategic behavior that may accompany it, short circuits clergy efforts to manipulate parishioner behavior. Hence, instead of political influence spreading from the pulpit outward, this influence might exist on an inverse path. In some cases, the choir could, in fact, be preaching to the clergy, so to speak.

Of course, it is also possible that for those clergy electing to “learn the ropes” in terms of what is (and is not) acceptable behavior in her/his institutional context, there may be many who do not. Thus, it is important to test for whether strategic behavior plays a significant role in shaping the way clergy engage in the political process. If it does not, then the extant literature’s finding that socialized preferences tell most of the causal story should be considered all-the-more robust. If, however, reference group influence and/or strategic behavior are found to be part of the clergy political puzzle, a provocative vista of future research opportunities will have been opened. There is good reason to suspect that the latter may be the case. After all, if clergy never adapt to the exigencies of their professional contexts, including the avoidance of career-threatening controversies with key reference groups, churches in the United States would likely be facing extraordinary clergy turnover. That this is not occurring hints at the possibility that clergy undertake some modification of preferences in their political behavior, at least certain circumstances.

I employ a neo-institutional approach (Hall and Taylor 1996) in this dissertation. Doing so helps to account for the possibility of reference group influence and/or strategic pressure on clergy political behavior, while concurrently testing for the impact of institutional socialization on clergy preferences. Admittedly, an institutional focus on clergy behavior is not new in-and-of itself. Scholars have already documented the existence of certain institutional effects on clergy. This has been especially true in the research on clergy behavior as a response to a congregation's community status (Morris 1984; McGreevy 1996). It has also been found in Ammerman's (1981) work on the role of church bureaucrats as alternative sources of support for clergy. More recently, Djupe and Gilbert's (2002) study of the determinants of clergy public speech suggests that clergy are more likely to engage in this activity when they believe that their congregation suffers from a limited community voice. Hence, there is existing evidence that clergy are influenced by institutionally-based constraints and opportunity structures.

As such, the time is ripe to expand the institutional focus in assessing whether and how clergy are subject to the influence of group norms, expectations, sanctions, and rewards in determining their political preferences and behavior (Snow et al. 1986; Gamson and Modigliani 1987; Olson and Cadge 2002; Roof and McKinney 1987). Institutions consist of the rules governing relationships between actors and groups (see North 1981). Institutional rules distribute power to specific reference groups by granting groups the ability to impose rewards and sanctions. Some rules also detail hierarchical relationships between reference groups, known in a religious denomination as polity. At the same time, rules create perceptions of group influence on individual actors. It is

often through the perception that actors have of group influence on their preferences and behavior that institutional influence can be detected. Readers should refer to the vast literature on American legislative behavior for examples of using elite-based perceptions as an analytical basis for understanding institutional influence on their political behavior (e.g., Fenno 1978; Mayhew 1974; Cox and McCubbins 1993; Kingdon 1977; Dodd and Oppenheimer 2001; Oldmixon 2005).

Based on the neo-institutional framework, I pose three broad questions relating to the role of institutions and their influence on clergy. First, in what ways do institutions, through their role as socialization agents, create enduring and sincerely held political preferences in clergy, which then serve as the basis of their political behavior? Second, do institutions, through their role in generating social networks and points of group identification, shape, over time, clergy preferences? Third, do institutions shape clergy incentive structures such that clergy are compelled to adopt behavior that is based not on their sincerely held preferences, but on a desire to avoid sanction from specific institutional reference groups?

Three institutions-based theories are used to help address these questions. The first focuses on the role of institutions as socializing agents, and assesses whether these institutions have formative and lasting impacts on clergy attitudinal development (Pillari and Newsome 1998). It assumes that clergy, through institutional contact, develop sincerely held and durable political preferences that dictate their behavior. The second regards the primacy of group identification in shaping clergy preferences. Different from the first theory while remaining steeped in the sociological tradition, this second theory suggests that, as a clergyperson's length of contact time with her/his

most proximate reference group increases, s/he will be more likely to take on the fundamental political preferences that the group holds. In this respect, clergy preferences will conform more to influences found in their contemporary group settings rather than to the socializing effects from institutions of prior significance (including seminary). The third theory is molded from a rational choice lens, and considers institutions as constraining and incentivizing forces that help to shape clergy political behavior (Alba and Moore 1978). Constraints are represented by the interpersonal and professional sanctions that specific reference groups can impose for a clergy's lack of conformity with group expectations (be they formal or informal). Incentives for strategic behavior are found in a clergy's rational desire not to encounter sanctions that might impede their professional longevity and well being.

If the socializing impact of institutions is the most influential, then congruence should be found between the values these institutions instill and clergy political preferences and behavior. It might also be that clergy end up agreeing with the preferences held by their proximate reference groups over time, which also reflects the socializing impact of institutions. At the same time, institutions may provide incentives for clergy to behave strategically. Clergy for whom these incentives are salient should be found to behave in ways that are contrary to their ideological preferences. To consider these possibilities in greater detail, I move to a more specific consideration of both the sociological and rational choice theories.

Clergy and the Socializing Impact of Institutions

Institutions—economic, familial, social, and political—provide meaning and regulation to personal and social activity (Meyer, Boli, and Thomas 1987; Pevalin, Wade, and Brannigan 2003). As socializing agents, institutions provide the constraints, rules, myths, and norms that shape personal preferences and behavior (Meyer and Rowan 1977; Powell and DiMaggio 1991). Drawing from sociological institutionalism in the tradition of March and Olsen (1983) and Hall and Taylor (1986), I assume that institutions function as socializing agents for mainline clergy as well. Such socialization creates sincerely held political preferences in these religious elites. Perhaps the most important socializing institution clergy encounter is the seminary (Finke and Dougherty 2002). The literature has made great strides in understanding this institution as a critical influence, and one that is usually a liberalizing force for mainline clergy (Charlton 1987; McKinney and Finke 2002). However, the literature does not inquire as to whether clergy rely on their seminary experiences to form their contemporary political preferences. This is problematic since it is important to know whether the preferences developed in seminary remain salient throughout a clergy's career. It might be that more recent institutional influences have taken precedence over seminary-based values, thereby lessening this institution's importance as a socializing force. This possibility is considered via the second of the sociological theories examined in this dissertation.

While seminary represents a punctuated socialization experience, the influence of contemporary institutional reference groups in creating sincerely held preferences is ongoing, and may alter clergy preferences over time. The nature of this influence is addressed through both the sociological and political science scholarship. In the

sociological literature, Durkheim (1933) linked social group interaction to the creation of personal identity. Mosca (1939) later expanded on this notion by locating a psychological attachment between the individual and the dominant beliefs within one's primary group. Hollander (1958; 1964) posited that personal status in a group or organization was dependent on an individual's degree of conformity to group expectations. He further suggested that conformity is an important behavior that individuals use to signal their desire for group belonging, guidance, and reward (Hollander and Julian 1970).

Political scientists from the Columbia School of voting behavior expanded on this group-based framework by suggesting that social reference groups are causally responsible for individual political behavior (Lazarsfeld et al. 1944; Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955). Later, others, including Lane (1959), developed theories concerning the conditions under which individual political participation flourishes. Among them were the frequency of individual contact with certain primary groups, and "the salience and unambiguity of his groups' preferences" (189). Verba (1961), asserted the importance of face-to-face group influence on the individual (4), while Key (1961), and Merton (1957), explored the primacy of reference groups in maintaining personal political opinions.

Wald, Owen, and Hill (1988) brought the collective wisdom of these literatures into the context of the local religious congregation. They found "a strong association between the predominant theological temper within congregations and the political views maintained by church members" (545). The authors went a step further: "Once personal and congregational theology were disentangled, the evidence suggested that the collective outlook of the church was more politically influential than the worldview of

the individual church member” (545). This finding is critical in understanding the immense power of group-oriented influence on clergy political behavior.

Of course, Wald et al. (1988) examined the influence of “group think” on *parishioners*. There is no reason, however, to assume that mainline Protestant clergy are themselves immune from such influence. As suggested previously, it might be that, at least in some circumstances, clergy behave more like elected representatives—consciously aware of their key constituents’ preferences, and willing to rely on those preferences in determining their own political preferences and behavior for the sake of career preservation. This possibility represents intriguing parallels with the congressional behavior scholarship (see especially Mayhew 1974; Fenno 1978), and may help to redefine how clergy are perceived in the literature overall.

Strategic Behavior: Institutional Location and Reference Groups

Recall that the third theory is assessed through a take on institutions that derives from the conception of clergy as strategic actors. Rather than acting sincerely on institutionally socialized beliefs, clergy are believed to respond to incentives and sanctions that impact their current and future well being as institutional elites (Antonio 2004; Johnson et al. 2002; Roberts et al. 2001). This is a rational choice institutional argument grounded in March and Olsen’s contention that “political institutions . . . define appropriate action in terms of relations between roles and situations” (1989, 160). Under this view, incentives and constraints influence how clergy behave, *but not* what they truly prefer politically. This is the key distinction between the rational choice emphasis on strategic behavior and sincere preferences instilled through institutional socialization

that is either past or ongoing. However, the distinction between the two does not mean that the sociological and strategic explanations are unrelated. In fact, socialized preferences have an important role to play in the strategic calculus. After all, clergy must evaluate their own preferences in relation to those held by specific reference groups. It is only after discovering incongruities between the two that clergy may be motivated to behave strategically.

Under the rational choice assumption, clergy will undertake strategic behavior when they perceive that doing so is necessitated by the institutional context in which they operate. This reality is captured well in Olson's (2000) argument that "All clergy must reconcile the institutional rules and expectations of the organizations they serve with their own goals and preferences when they decide whether to include political involvement as an element of their official roles as clergy (1)." Olson is hinting at the broad effects of *institutional location*—the position that clergy occupy in a denominational organization—and *reference groups*—the collection of peers and other relevant parties that clergy encounter professionally—on clergy political behavior. Regarding institutional location, Finke (2004) suggested that elites who are less responsible for organizational administration (usually represented by the congregational clergy) are freer to act as innovative forces within their institutions. In the context of a mainline Protestant denomination, such innovation frequently means the expression of polarizing political preferences and behavior that follows suit. Finke's conclusions coincide with Johnson and Figa's (1988) claim that "The greater the organizational distance from the center of ecclesiastical authority, the greater the likelihood for politicized church activities" (43-44). In other words, because clergy are responsible for

only a single church within their larger denominations, they have the latitude to engage in political behavior that other institutional elites may not. Yet while institutional location may afford clergy this freedom, the preferences of, and pressure from, relevant institutional reference groups may function as a constraint on clergy acting with *carte blanche*.

The influence of institutional location and reference groups on ecclesiastical elites was prevalent in Levine's (1981) research on the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America. Differences in how the church episcopacy in Columbia and Venezuela dealt with the political needs of local populations highlighted the disparate nature of the institutional contexts in which the bishops operated. Later work by VonDoepp (2002) on Presbyterian and Catholic clergy in Malawi provided additional insight. He found that congregational elites are constrained by the degree to which their institutional locations provide behavioral autonomy. And, though not studying religious elites in the American context, Gill's (1998) research on the Catholic Church in Latin America explicitly applied rational choice assumptions to the behavior of the region's bishops and their support of authoritarian rule. Gill made use of the prevailing political and institutional contexts to outline the behavioral choices available to church leaders, and posited that bishop political behavior was based on their calculation of which actions would produce the most advantageous professional outcome. These calculations were often made as the result of elite contact with specific reference groups.

Returning to the subject of the American clergy, if reference groups and institutional location exert critical pressures such that clergy may behave strategically, what is the nature of these pressures? Campbell and Pettigrew (1959) found that they

include clergy termination for not complying with group expectations. However, there are also less extreme examples, which are perhaps more common in the layered institutional contexts of mainline denominations. For instance, Wood and Zald (1966) discovered that church attendance and financial contributions decrease when clergy take positions on political issues. Perhaps not surprisingly, Hadden (1970) concluded that congregants are generally *not* supportive of clergy political activity. Yet, as Winter (1973) found, not all reference groups necessarily restrict clergy political behavior

Clergy in more congregationally oriented denominations are less insulated from lay resistance than those in the more hierarchically organized churches. Thus, denominational leaders are, as Wood (1970:1064) finds, “more likely to press for policy in controversial areas when they have formal authority insulating them from member resistance.” Furthermore, it should be noted that obviously not all parishes oppose the prophetic or reformist activities of their pastor.

Winter’s (1973) finding suggests that reference groups in the same institutional location may have very different effects on clergy behavior. This is especially true in the congregational setting, where some congregations may expect public political behavior from their clergy, while others actively discourage it (Fowler, Hertzke, and Olson 1999). At the same time, reference group influence may cross between institutional locations and provide alternative incentives for clergy political behavior. One example of this was found in Ammerman’s (1981) work on support for civil rights legislation among seventy-two white clergy in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. She found that clergy activism was strongly influenced by bureaucratic elites in the denominations to which the Tuscaloosa clergy belonged. The bureaucrats functioned as an alternative reference group that helped encourage clergy support of civil rights policies, even as the clergy’s more proximate reference group—the congregation, was much less supportive. Apparently, then, clergy

political behavior can be influenced by the preferences and expectations of both proximate and less proximate reference groups.

In considering the competing causal mechanisms in the socialization and rational choice theories, it is important to remember the generally prevalent theme found throughout the literature: clergy behavior is multi-layered and multi-faceted.² Part of appreciating this reality involves examining the perception clergy have of the various actors and conditions in the institutional locations of critical importance to them. Since rational choice assumptions play a key role in this consideration, it is necessary to delineate specific goal orientations for clergy. Much of the literature previously reviewed suggests that job security might be the most salient reason mainline clergy elect to comport with reference group expectations in their political behavior (Smith 1973). Clearly, clergy have incentives to adopt strategic behavior that furthers their professional well being, even if such behavior is out-of-step with their sincerely held political preferences.

This does not mean, however, that clergy necessarily calculate the probability of being shown the door each time they undertake behavior that might be at odds with their reference groups' expectations (or, more accurately, their *perception* of group expectations) (Nelson, Yokley, and Madron 1973). Indeed, a singular focus on job security as the prevailing motivation for clergy is fairly unrealistic. This is because most mainline Protestant clergy, by virtue of denominational polity, are somewhat insulated from direct reference group retaliation in the form of job loss. Instead, there are other,

² Porter and Miles (1974) identify the following variables as salient motivators in organizational settings: individual characteristics (including personal interests, security, and achievement) and work environment characteristics (including immediate work environment consisting of peers and supervisors, reward practices, and individual climate).

perhaps more common, sources of strategic motivation. To the extent that clergy are in the business of moral suasion, it stands to reason that an equally powerful reference group sanction would manifest as general disregard for what clergy have to say, thereby resulting in a loss of clergy influence over their groups.

For mainline clergy, motivational factors pertaining to their need to influence their flocks are especially interesting (Mueller and McDuff 2004). Nauta (2002), based on Bloom (1971) and Meloy's (1986) exploratory work, posited that clergy are in a perpetual state of needing to assist their parishioners as part of their professional self-actualization. Most of the time, clergy are not interested in being efficient in doling out their assistance, as bringing resolution to serious problems would mean that their vocational justification is attenuated. Whether one accepts Nauta's thesis fully, it is possible to extract from his work the notion that clergy have a desire to be wanted by those they serve. As such, the specter of congregational ire, or even indifference, may compel clergy to do what it takes to avoid this outcome. The possibility of losing influence over their most proximate reference groups makes clergy risk averse, and potentially willing to undertake strategic behavior. This outcome can be effectively modeled as a sequential game in which clergy make decisions based on a ranking of their preferred outcomes, as well as their anticipation of how the other relevant actors (represented by the key reference groups in question) will behave. Strategic behavior is manipulation in that clergy are consciously electing to misrepresent their true preferences so as to secure a preferred outcome. The manipulation of represented preferences within groups is described in the Gibbard-Satterthwaite Theorem. According to Shepsle and Bonchek (1997)

Assume a group G of at least three individuals and a set A of at least three alternatives. Also assume that any member of G may have, as his or her true preferences, any preference ordering over A (universal domain). Then every nondictatorial social choice procedure, F, is manipulable for some distribution of preferences (153).

Despite the possibility for coercion between reference group members, there is very little possibility for dictatorship of individual choice. As such, the possibility exists for at least one actor in each group to reveal her/his preferences strategically. An actor's strategic preferences can be represented through the following technique. Supposing that the sincere preference ordering of group members G over the alternatives found in A are P1, P2, . . . PN, one can then look at Actor One's (the clergy's) revealed preference in the group setting where s/he is (theoretically) expected to reveal her/his sincere preferences to see whether revealed preferences (represented as Q1) are the same as sincere preferences (represented as P1). If $Q1 \neq P1$, then it can be assumed that clergy are behaving strategically (Shepsle and Bonchek 1997). Using the findings of the socialization-based literature (see especially Guth et al. 1997; Smidt et al. 2003) regarding clergy preferences as a baseline, behavioral deviation from a clergy's sincere preferences will denote strategic behavior in the empirical tests in chapters 5 and 6.

Having delineated the basic components of the three neo-institutional theories, it is now appropriate to consider in greater detail the specific Protestant clergy that will serve as the subjects in this study. The decision to examine mainline Protestant clergy is based, in part, on the rich preference differences between these clergy and the reference groups with which they interact. These differences are based on what Marty (1970) described as the "two-party system" of American Protestantism (179). Though it has been criticized as too blunt a characterization of the Protestant community, the two-

party approach remains a helpful heuristic, especially given its overlap with partisanship in secular politics. According to this characterization, Protestants fall into either the mainline group, in which clergy and denominational elites are informed by more modernistic approaches to practicing and interpreting their faith, or the evangelical group, in which elites are largely orthodox in orientation (Kellstedt and Green 1993).

Of course, and as with any broad characterization, there are exceptions to the rule. Ironically, this is perhaps no more evident than in mainline Protestantism where, despite the concerted transition toward modernism over the last century, there remain pockets of evangelical-minded clergy and congregations who purport themselves to be moderate-to-conservative on theological and political matters (McKinney and Finke 2002; Smidt 2004). Given the institutional diversity they confront, mainline clergy find themselves embroiled in controversial debates that may be largely the product of an inability to find common ground within their institutional contexts. These clergy are center stage in contemporary debates over gay rights, Middle East politics, and other highly divisive political issues.

While it is true that almost all religious communities have elites, mainline denominations are perhaps the most reliant on the professional clergy for several reasons. The first regards the mainlines' institutional connectivity. Though not as hierarchically organized as the Roman Catholic Church, mainline Protestant denominations consist of a myriad of administrative layers, including denominational agencies and district and regional governing bodies. The institutional maturity of most mainline denominations, and the long history of intra-denominational accountability between clergy and denominational leaders, makes mainline denominations much more

reliant on the ordained clergy than comparably younger, and less institutionally mature, religious groups. At the same time, the relatively high socio-economic characteristics of mainline parishioners suggest a higher level of reliance on professionalized leadership, as educational attainment and standardized vocational competence are *de jure* expectations within these more affluent communities (Iannaccone 1990).

Mainline denominations occupy a unique position in the American religious community. They are not, by definition, part and parcel of the Christian Right (Wilcox 2000), but neither are they so monolithic that scholars should consider their clergy and congregants unsympathetic to calls for moral and religious traditionalism (Smidt 2004). While the intellectual heritage of most mainline denominations is located in the American north, which, by the 1930s, was turning increasingly to modernism and science to interpret religious belief (Wald 2003), the reunification of the denominations' northern and southern branches in the mid-to-late-twentieth century created new institutional structures that joined both progressive northern values and more traditional southern preferences under single denominational tents. Hence, while mainline Protestants may not have been carrying the more aggressively conservative political banners of their evangelical and fundamentalist brethren over the last thirty years (Smidt 1988; Wilcox 2000; Wald 2003), there are significant conservative constituencies in these denominations, most of which occupy pew space on Sunday mornings.

It is the potential tension created between the generally conservative laity, the generally liberal denominational leaders, and the clergy placed in between these groups that provide a compelling hook for this investigation. The influence of less proximate reference groups in the denominational hierarchy, combined with the general

conservatism of the laity and their elected leaders in the local churches (representing the clergy's most proximate reference groups), creates a very unique institutional context that may compel mainline clergy to vacillate between acting on their sincere preferences and masking these preferences through strategic behavior. This outcome would be reflective of clergy balancing the competing demands of their closest constituents with their concurrent desire to receive approbation and increased prestige from less proximate, but more institutionally powerful, groups.

The Institutional Contexts

Though the theoretical and empirical questions I examine in this dissertation are well grounded in the mainstream political science literature, the institutional contexts in which clergy in this study operate—the Presbyterian and Episcopal Churches—are not necessarily well known to readers. As such, I delineate certain of the historical, political, and institutional developments that have characterized the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Episcopal Church, USA from their 18th century roots to the present. To be clear, the exploration of both denominations is not devised as a comprehensive or definitive account of either tradition. After all, this is not a project on church history. The explorations of the Presbyterian and Episcopal Churches in the following chapter are devised instrumentally. Their joint goal is to provide the reader with 1) a basic understanding of Presbyterian and Episcopal polity, and 2) a general overview of the most contentious, contemporary political debates within the denominations, including a delineation of the relevant actors involved. Based on this information, a clear foundation

from which to launch into an evaluation of both the sociological and rational choice theories in later chapters will be apparent.

CHAPTER 3

THE PRESBYTERIAN AND EPISCOPAL CHURCHES AS POLITICAL CONTEXTS

The PC (U.S.A.)

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (PC (U.S.A.)) and its clergy make good candidates for examination in this dissertation for two reasons. First, there is arguably no other mainline denomination (except perhaps for the Episcopal Church!) as divided over contentious political issues. The second reason regards the denomination's organizational structure, or polity. Unlike the organizational systems in most of its sister mainline denominations (including the Episcopal Church), the PC (U.S.A.) has only one rank of ecclesiastical officer—elder. It is only appropriate, therefore, that the Presbyterian tradition takes its name from the Greek word for elder: *presbuteros*. It is various collections of elders that constitute the specific legislative bodies that create policy at all levels of the denomination. As Stockton (2006) described it, Presbyterian polity resembles a federated hybrid of the Westminster system. It has the equivalent of a national parliament (the General Assembly), but decision-making authority is shared between bodies at the local (congregational), district, regional, and national levels. Presbyterian polity places tremendous formal emphasis on representation. Elders are elected by specific constituencies to serve in their positions (each with varying limitations on terms of office and institutional responsibilities).

As hinted, all ordained Presbyterian ministers (known officially in the PC (U.S.A.) as Ministers of the Word and Sacrament) are elders in Presbyterian polity. There are also those elected officers who are not Ministers of Word and Sacrament, and are part of the laity. These are known simply as elders. All elders (be they Ministers of the Word

and Sacrament or lay persons) are considered ordained (which is the basis of their theoretical equality), although virtually all PC (U.S.A.) ministers go through a series of examinations from a presbytery following the completion of a three-year seminary degree, and many more have also obtained a doctorate or other terminal degree (Presbyterian Church, Office of Research Services 2002).

The combination of the Ministers of the Word and Sacrament and elders in a local Presbyterian congregation constitute the session. According to Presbyterian polity, all elders are equal in their role as session members. Though there are other positions in a local Presbyterian church, including the office of deacon and other professional, semi-professional, and volunteer staff positions, it is the session, and only the session, that exercises governing authority over the congregation. In addition to its representativeness and single officer rank, Presbyterian polity is also unique in its connectedness. There are four types of governing or legislative bodies in the Presbyterian system, each comprised of elders, each having a clerk and moderator, and each with a specific set of institutional responsibilities. The first, already identified, is the session. The second is a district level body known as a presbytery. Presbyteries have authority over congregations; they are also charged with ordaining and overseeing the conduct of congregational clergy within their boundaries. Presbytery officers with both voice and vote consist of all ordained ministers in the district, and an equal number of elders from the congregations (with the number of elders from a local congregation based on a congregation's membership size). Synods have oversight of three or more presbyteries, and work with the presbyteries to select and oversee their leadership, as well as to develop presbytery capacities to carry out mission and ministry programs.

Synod officers are selected from members of presbyteries within synodical jurisdiction (Gray and Tucker 1999).

The highest legislative body in Presbyterian Church is the General Assembly, which holds jurisdiction over all church-wide concerns. All of the upper three governing bodies have several agencies and administrative organs that assist in their oversight functions. The higher governing bodies have direct oversight over those directly below them. The General Assembly, which meets every two years (a change from annual assemblies was enacted in 2004), consists of commissioners elected from the *presbyteries*, not the synods, as the hierarchical pattern might suggest. As Stockton (2006) explained

The General Assembly has two major officers, a professional Stated Clerk who handles polity issues and speaks for the denomination, and a Moderator who serves for two years and interacts mostly with the congregations. As anyone who knows organizational behavior would guess, commissioners are highly dedicated, involved, and committed to the organization and its principles. This means that there is an inevitable disconnect between those in the pews and those who adopt resolutions at higher levels (4).

Stockton's (2006) point about the dedication of assembly commissioners is important—the commissioners do not generally mirror the median preferences of the rank-and-file laity. This is likely because commissioner selection is controlled by specific presbytery committees, not the laity. Though the General Assembly can take administrative action that affects any of the bodies under it, almost all business conducted at the assembly is proposed by individual presbyteries through overtures (Stockton 2006). Some overtures may propose that the denomination express a specific political view. They may also request a change to the denomination's constitution. Any revisions made to the constitution, known as the *Book of Order*, in addition to majority

passage by the General Assembly, require ratification from 2/3 of the presbyteries. This is why the PC (U.S.A.) has been described as organized from the presbyteries out, rather than according to more hierarchical or grassroots polity models (Weston 1997, 2003).

Presbyterianism Divided

It was the introduction of Higher Critical views of the Bible that began circulating in Germany, and made their way to American seminaries in the 1870s, that helped set the stage for the PC (U.S.A.)'s current level of internal conflict. The first and most important proponent of the Higher Criticism was Charles Briggs, a professor at Union Seminary in New York City. Briggs' views opened the door to changes in the way the Presbyterian Church, and what became mainline Christianity in general, conceived of itself, its theological identity, and, most importantly for purposes here, its political mission (Jeschke 1969). Briggs, like many of his contemporaries, believed that the distinctives of any denomination must ultimately give way to overarching Christian unity. At the same time, and much to the consternation of Presbyterian conservatives, Briggs believed that all doctrine was the product of historical circumstances and human development, not necessarily divine inspiration. He, therefore, stressed life experiences over traditional doctrine in determining the church's role in society. Not surprisingly, Briggs was highly ecumenical, becoming a priest in the Episcopal Church, and also cultivating ties with Roman Catholics (Weston 2003).

To counter Briggs's efforts, conservatives, led by Princeton Seminary professors Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield and J. Gresham Machen, sought to have certain

fundamentals of Christian belief made essential and necessary for ordination in Presbyterianism (Weston 2003).³ These fundamentals were approved by the church's General Assembly in 1910. Though this appeared to be an institutional victory for conservatives, it precipitated an unexpected reaction from what Weston has termed "Presbyterian loyalists" (2003, 24). It was these loyalists who were instrumental in assisting conservatives in sanctioning and removing Briggs from the ministry in the 1890s. These same loyalists, however, became concerned that, in adopting the five fundamentals, the General Assembly had violated one of Presbyterianism's basic values—personal interpretive liberty.

In 1925, a special commission was established to examine the causes of the Presbyterian Church's own version of the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy. The committee's final report, crafted by commission loyalists, endorsed the importance of toleration among believers

The principle of toleration when rightly conceived and frankly and fairly applied is as truly a part of our constitution as are any of the doctrines stated in that instrument. . . . Toleration as a principle applicable within the Presbyterian Church refers to an attitude and a practice according to which the status of a minister or other ordained officer, is acknowledged and fellowship is extended to him, even though he may hold some views that are individual on points not regarded as essential to the system of faith which the Church professes (1925, 19-20).

The commission placed responsibility for discerning what was, and was not, essential to the faith in the hands of each presbytery. According to Weston (2003), this approach represents the most institutionally loyal strategy for the PC (U.S.A.) to abide by. It also, in Weston's view, presents the best chance of averting institutional schism. Of course, Weston's views are mere conjecture. Objectively, there is nothing that makes

³ These became known as the five fundamentals, and consisted of the inerrancy of Scripture, the virgin birth of Christ, Christ's vicarious atonement, Christ's bodily resurrection, and Christ's miracles.

the loyalist view of institutional polity (to the extent that it is effectively articulated) necessarily able to avert a denominational collapse. Regardless of the effect these loyalists and others in the denomination have on clergy, it is clear that the PC (U.S.A.) is a unique environment in which to assess reference group influence in determining clergy behavior, be it sincere or strategic. There are several contemporary and controversial issues that may compel Presbyterian clergy to undertake strategic behavior in order to avoid difficulty with key reference groups. Certain of these controversies are discussed in the sections that follow.

Gay Ordination

One of the most rancorous and contemporary debates within the PC (U.S.A.) regards whether non-celibate homosexuals can be ordained as clergy. The 1996 General Assembly set the framework for the current controversy. Its Human Sexuality and Ordination Committee proposed a fidelity and chastity amendment to the denomination's constitution (Weston 2003). The committee's decision was based, in large part, on the reasoning that if the presbyteries were given a local option in deciding whether homosexuality is (or is not) an essential standard for ordination, the denomination's connective fabric would be in grave jeopardy. Hence, the committee recommended, and the 1996 General Assembly passed, a constitutional amendment that prohibits the ordination of those who do not pledge to abide by "fidelity within the covenant of marriage of a man and a woman . . . or chastity in singleness" (Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Book of Order 2001).

The presbyteries began voting to ratify or reject the amendment in late 1996. The amendment passed on March 18, 1997 with 97 presbyteries for, 75 against (Weston 2003). At that time, the amendment became part of the *Book of Order* as section G-6.0106b. Though the prohibition against gay ordination was covered by the adoption of G-6.0106b, church liberals were undeterred in their attempts to either overturn or significantly modify the standard. Several overtures were sent to successor General Assemblies seeking a local option, or some other accommodation, that would open the door to gay ordination. Each attempt, including another round of votes by the presbyteries in 2001 and 2002, was met with a preference for the status quo—no ordination of sexually active homosexuals in the PC (U.S.A.).

The continued controversy led to the establishment of the denomination's Theological Task Force. It presented its findings in 2005. Most explosive was the recommendation that, while the denomination's constitution, including G-6.0106b, not be changed, each presbytery should be allowed to decide how it might interpret the ordination standard—meaning it can decide *not* to enforce it if it so decides. Since the task force's recommendation centered on issuing the General Assembly guidance to change church interpretative standards, no ratification by the presbyteries would be required. The change would be the equivalent of an Executive Order that determines how the church bureaucracy operates, but does not go through the standard legislative process. Ironically, instead of settling the ordination issue, as many had hoped, the report has likely set the stage for a renewed season of conflict between sides in the debate. Approved by the 2006 General Assembly in June, the vote was met with veiled

discussion by some conservative groups of leaving the denomination (Walker 2006), although, as of spring 2007, no serious attempt to do so has been mounted.

Deciding to Divest

Another contentious conflict within the PC (U.S.A.) was generated by the 2004 General Assembly's decision to explore a denominational divestment from companies that have enabled what the denomination perceives to be Israeli mistreatment of the Palestinians via territorial occupation. Importantly, and as with gay ordination, the divestment issue has been festering for years. Though one can argue that the PC (U.S.A.) has taken an affirmative stance in regard to Israel, especially through its strong admonition of Anti-Semitism and Middle East terrorism, as is often the case in the world of zero-sum political conflict, any attempt to support the goals of both parties is often viewed by one or both sides as a posture of non-support. This is likely the case with the PC (U.S.A.) and Israel, especially since the denomination's initial involvement in the region came in the form of educational opportunities for Arabs (the Presbyterian Church founded both the American University of Beirut and the American University of Cairo in the early twentieth century). Concomitantly, the PC (U.S.A.) has been a strong advocate for the Right of Return and a two-state option for Israel and Palestine, neither of which are favored policies among conservative Jewish groups (Stockton 2006).

For a state whose very existence creates enmity among its closest neighbors, it is not difficult to see how the denomination's divestment policy would be viewed with suspicion and outrage by Jewish groups and their allies. After almost two years of encountering fallout from the controversy, the denomination attempted to change

course. By a vote of 438 to 28, the 2006 General Assembly adopted a revised resolution, crafted by its Peacemaking and International Issues Committee, that replaced the term “divestment” with a commitment that denominational investments in Israel and the Palestinian territories be directed toward peaceful interests. The assembly also apologized for whatever pain its 2004 policy caused the Jewish community. However, and as Stated Clerk of the General Assembly Clifton Kirkpatrick later mentioned at a news conference, the new resolution *does not* overturn the 2004 policy itself. If anything, the 2006 resolution hints that divestment, to the extent that it occurs, will be broadly aimed at realigning denominational investments in the region (Stockton 2006). Given that economic and international business investment in Israel is much higher than it is in Palestine, it is likely that divestment decisions will invariably affect Israeli interests more than Palestinian ones. This likely makes the divestment issue a continuing concern among Presbyterian clergy and their relevant reference groups. Of course, the PC (U.S.A.) is not the only mainline denomination embroiled in political controversy. A strong case can be made that the Episcopalians may even surpass their Presbyterian brethren in this regard.

Episcopal Church Controversies

The Episcopal Church, USA (ECUSA) has made banner headlines with some of its recent institutional decisions. Most notable are the ordinations of the first openly non-celibate homosexual bishop in 2003, and the election of the denomination’s first female presiding bishop in 2006. The latter of these is perhaps far less controversial in the United States, where ECUSA has been ordaining women as priests and bishops since

1976. However, the new primate (the ecclesiastical distinction given to the presiding bishop of an Anglican province), Katherine Jefferts Schori, faces opposition to her institutional legitimacy among the majority of the 38 provinces that constitute the Worldwide Anglican Communion. With the exception of the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and New Zealand, no other Anglican provinces recognize the ordination of female priests, let alone bishops. Hence, it is unclear whether and how Jefferts Schori will be able to work effectively with her fellow primates during her nine-year term. Nor is it clear what the election will mean in terms of the continued relational strain between ECUSA and the majority of its territorial counterparts.

This tension is largely attributable to the 2003 election and consecration of Bishop V. Gene Robinson. The Bishop is an openly gay, divorced, father of two, who has been living with his current partner for over a decade. Though openly gay priests have been ordained in ECUSA for decades, the American church, and the Anglican Communion in general, appeared willing to tolerate these aberrations because of their localized nature (Gill 1998). However, to supporters of Robinson's election, his ecclesiastical elevation was justified in part by ECUSA's willingness to allow the ordination of openly gay priests. Robinson's proponents may have been shocked by the response incurred after the 2003 election. Though he won a comfortable majority in both the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies (the chambers constituting the bicameral, triennial General Convention of the Episcopal Church), the election produced a vociferous response from ECUSA and Anglican bishops opposed to Robinson. It also garnered objections from the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev. Dr. Rowan Williams, who stated that he would not recognize the Robinson consecration, or allow

him to exercise ecclesiastical authority in the Church of England. Clearly, the American church has undertaken a course of inclusiveness that places it at odds with both elements of its own episcopacy, and the wider Anglican Communion. The factors leading to this situation are best understood in the context of ECUSA's polity and history.

ECUSA Polity and History

ECUSA polity is similar to the PC (U.S.A.)'s in two important ways. First, it has a federated structure that establishes connection between local parishes (headed by vicars or priests), dioceses (headed by a bishop), and the afore-mentioned General Convention, which is ECUSA's national legislature. Second, Episcopal laity have an active role in determining both local and national church policies. At the same time, ECUSA is different from the PC (U.S.A.) in one important way—it is officially part of a worldwide body of denominations with linkage to the Church of England.

A vast majority of the Anglican Communion, including the American church, was established through British colonization. The Anglican Church in the new colonies held its first services in 1607 at the Jamestown settlement in what is now Virginia. Anglican congregations were found throughout the colonies by the latter half of the seventeenth century, with the largest concentrations existing in Maryland and Virginia. In 1789, the Anglican Church in the American colonies was disestablished from the Church of England, and organized as an independent episcopacy (Zahl 1998). The Archbishop of Canterbury is the spiritual leader of the Church of England only (Queen Elizabeth II and future monarchs maintain the title of Supreme Governor of the Church of England,

Defender of the Faith). The Archbishop is only the titular head of the Anglican Communion. As such, he has few available institutional mechanisms to compel communion members to conform to specific doctrinal or political positions (hence ECUSA's ability to ordain women and sexually active homosexuals). There are, however, semi-regular meetings between primates and the Archbishop (imitating somewhat the meetings that the Pope has with Catholic archbishops). In addition, the Anglican primates gather together every ten years for the Lambeth Conference, hosted by the Archbishop. During this time, primates meet to consider resolutions pertaining to matters of theological, social, and/or political concern. Conference resolutions express the sense of the Anglican Communion regarding particular issues, but are not binding on the individual provinces (Kater, Jr. 1999).

The term episcopal is a reflection on the church's polity in which overseers or bishops (taken from the Greek word *episkopoi*) are the responsible administrative class. It is the bishops who have the ecclesiastical authority to decide on issues concerning church doctrine and the ordination of priests. However, it is not accurate to characterize ECUSA polity as wholly episcopal in the traditional sense. Unlike the Roman Catholic Church, which vests total institutional authority in its ordained elites, ECUSA, perhaps reflecting its ties to the democratic spirit of the American Revolution, established a polity that blends the episcopal and presbyterial forms. As such, lay representation and participation in decision-making are critical denominational characteristics (Cross and Livingstone 1997).

As in the PC (U.S.A.), ECUSA parishioners elect their parish's local governing board, known as the vestry. The number of vestry members depends on the size of the

local parish. Unlike the PC (U.S.A.), there is no office of elder. Vestry members take the place of the elders. Just as the presbytery is responsible for clergy ordination in Presbyterianism, so is the local bishop in episcopal polity. Hence, all priests must meet with a bishop's approval before being placed in a diocesan parish. Candidates must also incur the favor of the local vestry prior to installation, which is similar in arrangement to the Presbyterian procedure. The office of bishop assumes many of the presbytery's jurisdictional roles. Just as the Presbyterian Church has the General Assembly to consider denominational policy at the national level, ECUSA convenes its triennial General Convention. The House of Bishops, as its name suggests, is comprised of the denomination's active bishops. A presiding bishop is elected to lead this chamber. This bishop also has authority over the national church bureaucracy, including the General Council, comprised of bureaucrats serving as the church's central authority when the General Convention is not in session.

However, the presiding bishop is not like a Roman Catholic archbishop. S/he does not have jurisdiction over a specific diocese, nor does the presiding bishop have hierarchical authority over any diocesan bishop. The presiding bishop is truly a first among equals. The House of Deputies, which serves as the lower chamber of the General Convention, is comprised of deputations from each diocese, with each usually containing four to eight members. Membership is comprised of four lay and four clergy delegates. As with the U.S. Congress, both General Convention chambers must approve denomination policies by a majority vote in order for them to take effect. Though there are clear differences in their institutional structures, it is clear from this basic polity overview that ECUSA, much like the PC (U.S.A.), contains a very rich set of

institutional relationships that likely help to structure and incentivize the political preferences and behavior of ECUSA priests.

ECUSA Controversies

While the PC (U.S.A.) is dominated by two major controversies—divestment and gay ordination, ECUSA’s continued institutional viability is wrapped up mainly in one—human sexuality. Hence, while the divestment issue has some importance to ECUSA, the lion’s share of attention in the following discussion focuses on the sexuality debates taking place within the denomination. Relative avoidance of the divestment controversy occurred, in part, because ECUSA had the benefit of witnessing the negative publicity the PC (U.S.A.) received when it became the first mainline denomination to pursue divestment in 2004. As such, ECUSA managed to avoid following its Presbyterian brethren into the tricky waters of Middle East politics.

In contrast, ECUSA’s struggle with sexuality issues is robust, and traces its roots to the denomination’s late nineteenth century identity transformation. The end of the Civil War, and the tremendous social, political, and economic changes created by the onset of industrial capitalism in the final decades of the nineteenth century, presented ECUSA with an opportunity to expand its ministry into the burgeoning urban areas. Ironically, ECUSA, which was the spiritual home to many “robber barons” of the era, opened parishes that catered to the flux of new immigrants seeking a better life in the New World. Some parishes even went so far as to offer services in the immigrants’ native languages (May 1949). Through the encouragement of reform-minded elites, ECUSA began to position itself as a champion of both economic justice and civil rights.

As it did so, however, the scope of social groups included under its civil rights agenda broadened. No longer were civil rights concerns limited to the right of racial minorities to vote. Women and homosexuals begged attention for equality of opportunity, political or otherwise. Having come a long way from its high church, patrician roots, ECUSA was poised to take up the cause of these newly recognized minorities.

By the 1960s and 1970s, both American society and ECUSA were faced with serious challenges to conventional understandings of gender, social, sexual, and political norms. In response, ECUSA allowed women to serve as deputies for the first time at the 1967 General Convention. Importantly, that convention also approved women to serve as deacons and vestry members. In 1976, women became eligible to serve as priests (Lewis 2001). Having accorded women these institutional roles, the critical question confronting the denomination became whether sexually active homosexuals wishing to take part in church governance should also be allowed to do so. Unlike the gender controversy, human sexuality, and homosexuality in specific, are more complicated issues. This is because the primary characteristics of those in question—sexual preference and behavior—are not considered by some to be immutable. Since the medical and academic communities have not been of one mind concerning why some wish to engage in same sex behavior, the door is open for opponents to claim that homosexuality is actually a condition, and, as such, can be corrected (Rimmerman 2002). This was, in fact, the position of the American Psychiatric Association until it revised its views in the 1970s. Once behavioral scientists began to seriously consider the possibility that homosexual orientation could be an inherited trait, the socio-political battle lines were drawn (Button, Rienzo, and Wald 1997).

This was no truer than in the mainline Protestant churches, which, despite clinging to a basically orthodox view of homosexual behavior as sinful, sought to provide comfort and ministry to their gay parishioners. At the same time, politically conscious denominations, such as ECUSA, began to view civil rights issues from both a theological *and* political schema. Homosexuals, as the 1969 Stonewall riot helped crystallize, began to be seen as an oppressed group clearly in need of support from friendly institutions (D'Emilio 2000). Hence, the stage was set for decades of theological and political debate on just how inclusive ECUSA should be in terms of sexuality.

Most of the institutional changes in ECUSA regarding homosexuality began at the 1976 General Convention. There, a group of Episcopalians, known as Integrity, began lobbying for the inclusion of gay Christians in positions of denominational leadership (Lewis 2001). On its face, Integrity's position was not unusually radical, especially since ECUSA was already lobbying for gay civil rights protections. In addition, the truly thorny issue of 1976 was women's ordination, which overshadowed whatever agenda Integrity was attempting to further. In an effort to gain publicity, and move the issue of gay rights within ECUSA to the fore, the Bishop of New York ordained a lesbian to the priesthood in 1977. This produced a sharp outcry throughout the denomination. So, the 1979 General Convention passed a resolution backing traditional marriage, and withheld its support of gay ordination (Sedgwick 1996).

Though it did not have the effect of institutional enforcement, the 1998 Lambeth Conference was significant in its condemnation of homosexuality. ECUSA and its similarly-minded sister denominations in Canada and New Zealand were found to be largely out-of-step with the vast majority of Anglican primates, especially those

representing developing states in Africa. The African leaders took an especially conservative stance against homosexuals in the communion. Many of them stated publicly that gays must not only be kept from leadership roles, but must also repent of their sexual deviancy so as to avoid eternal punishment (Bates 2004).

Matters were not helped by Newark Bishop John Shelby Spong's presence at the conference. Spong's full-throated advocacy for a reformulation of Christian doctrines made both liberals and conservatives uncomfortable (Bates 2004). Spong had previously suggested that "Unless theological truth can be separated from pre-scientific understanding of reality, the Christian faith will be reduced to one more ancient mythology that will take its place alongside the religions of Mount Olympus" (1991, 31). His perspective had not changed by 1998, and Spong was seen as a catalyst for the acrimony between Western and African bishops. However, in the end, the African archbishops and their conservative allies in the West, including Dallas Bishop James Stanton, carried the day. The conference passed a resolution that advised against the ordination of non-celibate gays and the blessing of their relationships.

This brings the consideration back to the election of V. Gene Robinson as Bishop of New Hampshire in 2003. ECUSA conservatives were bolstered by their Lambeth gains, but were under no delusions that the ECUSA debate was over, especially given the strength of gay rights interests within the denomination. In response to Integrity and other similar advocacy groups, conservatives established the American Anglican Council in 1996. Its goal was to act as an organizing force for traditional ECUSA parishes and bishops. Both sets of interests were heavily lobbying for their preferred

outcome at the 2003 General Convention, where Robinson was elected by approximately a 2/3 majority in both houses (Bates 2004).

The response among ECUSA conservatives was swift. Almost immediately, primates in over twenty Anglican denominations declared that Robinson was not welcome in their territories. Several went so far as to break their official ties with ECUSA entirely. The Archbishop of Canterbury appealed to ECUSA to be sensitive to the responses from the other churches in the communion, while ECUSA conservatives mounted a response of their own. They organized the Anglican Communion Network, whose initial national meeting in Plano, Texas in 2003 was a widely covered media event. The conservatives' efforts received public support from officials throughout Christendom, including then-Roman Catholic Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. Since most conservatives viewed the Robinson election as an event affecting not only the New Hampshire diocese, but all of ECUSA, the network members, led by Pittsburgh Bishop Robert Duncan, sought a program of alternative oversight by which conservative parishes might find relief from any backlash from what they considered to be apostate overseers (Bates 2004).

In response to the network's request, the House of Bishops offered a program of Delegated Episcopal Pastoral Oversight, whereby the diocesan bishop could request that another bishop minister to alienated parishes. However, for many of the parishes concerned, the plan did not go far enough in offering institutional security. Under the plan, parishes would still remain under the oversight authority of their own, geographically designated, bishop, who could terminate the relationship with the outside bishop at any time. Very few parishes requested the plan due to its perceived

inadequacies. Given that the 2006 General Convention came and went without any type of apology for Robinson's election, or a moratorium on the election of gay bishops (concessions that conservatives were looking for), it is not unreasonable to consider the possibility of denominational schism.

However, much as with the PC (U.S.A.), the decision of individual parishes and/or dioceses to pull out of the denomination rests in large part on the status of parish and diocesan property. The Rt. Rev. Leo Iker, Bishop of the Diocese of Fort Worth, which is perhaps the most conservative in ECUSA, offered that "I think we could avert a schism and avoid more congregations departing . . . if a provision were to be made whereby conservative parishes could be transferred to conservative dioceses, but I do not see the establishment allowing this to happen. The institutional response to the crisis may force conservative dioceses to defy the canons in this regard" (Personal interview with Calfano 2006).

Whether such an outcome would occur remains to be seen, especially since all parties involved would risk tremendous financial loss and formal disciplinary charges against the instigating bishops themselves, including Iker, Stanton, and Duncan. According to Iker, "A bishop may be brought up on charges before the House of Bishops for violating canons or for an open renunciation of the doctrine, worship and discipline of the church. The case is heard before an ecclesiastical trial court, and if found guilty, the bishop may be deposed and removed from office. . . . I am aware that my opponents may well choose to pursue this option at some time in the future" (Personal interview with Calfano 2006).

ECUSA clergy are quite obviously subject to institutional crosspressures as it concerns gay rights and bishop oversight concerns. The exact nature of this crosspressure is part of ongoing developments. On June 27, 2006, *The Dallas Morning News* reported that Christ Church in Plano, Texas, the largest ECUSA congregation in the United States in terms of active members, was leaving the denomination (Weiss 2006). This sets up an intriguing dynamic for both Bishop Stanton and Christ Church itself. As with PC (U.S.A.) congregations, ECUSA parish property is held in trust for the benefit of the entire denomination. A stumbling block for many parishes looking to leave ECUSA is that their diocesan bishop is not sympathetic to their reasons for wanting to do so, especially if it concerns the Robinson election. Hence, bishop discipline, ranging from a removal of the priest, to the parish community being physically locked out of the church by diocesan officials, can be implemented at any time.

It only requires a cursory examination of the current controversies in both denominations to see that, from an institutional standpoint at least, ECUSA is in far more peril than the PC (U.S.A.). Indeed, when entire dioceses are scheduling votes on whether to depart from the denomination, as the Diocese of San Joaquin voted to do on December 2, 2006 (Burke 2006), it is clear that Episcopal clergy exist in a much more difficult set of institutional circumstances than their Presbyterian counterparts, at least for now. As such, it will be interesting to see whether systematic differences between how Episcopal clergy respond to their vestry and parishioners exist, and whether they are more likely to pursue strategic behavior to navigate these difficult professional circumstances.

Having delineated some of the most critical aspects of both Presbyterian and Episcopal polity, as well as the most controversial issues currently threatening the institutional health of both denominations, it is now possible to turn to a consideration of the theoretical explanations offered for clergy political preferences and behavior in the PC (U.S.A.) and ECUSA. Chapter 4 also helps to crystallize the theoretical expectations associated with the role that reference groups play in determining clergy preferences and behavior, while setting the stage for the research hypotheses explicitly tested in chapters 5 and 6.

CHAPTER 4

THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF CLERGY POLITICAL PREFERENCES AND BEHAVIOR

Chapter 3 details several instances in which denominational political controversies might make the job clergy have as institutional elites more difficult. Given the internecine conflict engulfing the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (PC (U.S.A.) and the Episcopal Church, USA (ECUSA), it is clear that clergy political behavior might carry a heavy price, at least in certain circumstances. This is because clergy, through their political behavior, may invite negative reactions from the reference groups with which they must regularly interact, and on which their professional well-being depends. Compounding the problem is the reality that clergy often hold strong ideological preferences, and seek to share these preferences with those around them (see especially Guth et al. 1997). These twin conditions set up a dynamic in which clergy may be forced to choose between expressing their sincerely held political preferences, and subordinating those preferences through strategic behavior. This chapter fleshes out the specific theoretical relationships between institutional influences and their effect on clergy.

Recall that I ask three general theoretical questions to help tease out the causal influences behind clergy political preferences and behavior. First, in what ways do institutions, via their role as agents of socialization, implant enduring and sincerely held political preferences in clergy? Second, do institutions, through their role in generating social networks and points of group identification shape, over time, clergy preferences and behavior? Third, do institutions shape the incentive structure that confront clergy such that clergy are compelled to strategically adopt behavior that is consistent *not* with

their *sincere* political preferences, but with the preferences of the proximate reference groups that they encounter?

To address these questions, I outlined three institutions-based theories in chapters 1 and 2. Two are drawn from the sociological institutionalism scholarship. The third is based on the rational choice literature. The first, reflecting the assumptions of sociological institutionalism, focuses on the role of educational institutions (specifically, seminary) as agents of clergy socialization. The theory assesses whether these institutions have formative and lasting impacts on clergy attitudinal development (Pillari and Newsome 1998; Meyer, Boli, and Thomas 1987). The second theory follows Durkheim's (1933) and Mosca's (1939) discoveries concerning the salience of group identification in shaping member preferences. It assesses group influence in molding clergy preferences over time. Different from the first theory while remaining steeped in the sociological tradition, the second suggests that, as clergy contact time with their proximate reference groups increases, clergy will begin to take on the groups' fundamental political preferences. In this respect, clergy preferences will conform more to influences found in their contemporary group settings than to the socializing effects from institutions of prior contact (i.e., seminary).

The third theory considers institutions as constraining and incentivizing forces on clergy. These forces compel clergy to adopt strategic behavior that comports with the expectations of the proximate institutional reference groups that they encounter (Antonio 2004; Johnson et al. 2002; Alba and Moore 1978). The institutional constraint is represented by professional sanctions that reference groups can impose on clergy for not behaving in accordance with group preferences. Group sanctions include the denial

of professional advancement and well-being for clergy who do not behave in comportment with group expectations.

The purpose of this chapter is to take the three theoretical questions and weave them into a causal explanation as to why clergy political preferences and behavior should be affected by both sociological and strategic factors. At the heart of this consideration are the institutional contexts that clergy encounter on a regular basis. These contexts consist primarily of the reference groups with which clergy interact. The importance of reference groups is based on the underlying neo-institutional assumptions of both the sociological and rational choice theories (Hall and Taylor 1996). As such, I develop theory around the role that reference groups play in determining clergy political preferences and behavior.

The Role of Reference Groups

Institutional reference groups are theorized to play two types of roles regarding clergy preferences and behavior. According to the sociological perspective, groups shape the sincere preferences that clergy hold. Acting as points of reference, the groups hone clergy perception of their sincerely held preferences in relation to those held by the group. One group of particular professional importance is the seminary. It is a sociological context that represents a potentially long lasting institutional influence on clergy. As such, I characterize seminary's anticipated role as an educational experience that has a significant and ongoing effect on clergy political preferences and behavior.

As the Durkheim (1933) theory suggested, reference groups may also change clergy preferences over time. Specifically, longer exposure to these groups, and their

preferences, should have a significant influence on clergy by transforming their sincerely held preferences to match the groups'. However, a corollary of the socialization theory, and one that seems inherent in the notion that institutions socialize clergy preferences, is that reference group influence may shape clergy preferences even without time being a factor. Specifically, it may not take clergy a significant amount of time to sincerely adopt a reference group's preferences. This might be especially the case if clergy have previously existed as political blank slates. Indeed, there may be no need for clergy to take on the characteristics of their relevant reference groups by updating existing beliefs, especially if such beliefs were non-existent in the first place.

Arguably, the socializing function that reference groups play is far less controversial than their role in convincing clergy to subordinate their sincerely held preferences through strategic action. I suggest that any strategic behavior in which clergy engage can be attributed to a process-based outcome in which an environment of relevant actors and forces play distinct and influential roles. In this case, the process includes clergy assessment of whether behaving sincerely or strategically will provide a preferred professional outcome. Clergy who engage in strategic behavior are theorized to believe that said behavior is in their best interest professionally. I further theorize that reliance on strategic behavior depends on the perceived importance of specific groups to clergy in facilitating certain professional goals, including vocational security and professional advancement (Wald 2003). It is realistic to expect that if denominational politics present clergy with an array of reference groups with which they must cooperate to secure their professional well-being, clergy will find a way to simultaneously satisfy the differing expectations these groups have. I suggest two ways in which clergy might

do so. Both involve clergy assessment of relevant reference groups in an attempt to obtain information about the groups' political preferences. The first involves clergy assessment of the relative ideological positions of specific groups in determining their behavior, and engaging in behavior that comports with group positions. The second is for clergy to gauge any group pressure to behave strategically in undertaking political behavior.

Though there are multiple reference groups of institutional importance to clergy, I make the basic distinction between a clergy's proximate and less proximate reference groups, and will maintain this distinction throughout the analysis chapters to follow. The proximate groups for clergy consist of their parishioners and their elected lay leaders on the session or vestry. The less proximate groups include those at the district supervisory level, specifically the presbytery and diocese. This leads to the question of why clergy should be concerned with preferences and pressures from multiple groups, and I borrow from Kingdon's (1977) goal-oriented model of legislative behavior to provide explanation. I theorize that the pursuit of institutional goals functions as the causal mechanism behind clergy concern over group preferences and strategic pressure. Clergy will take group political preferences and strategic pressure into account in determining their political behavior because doing so allows them to pursue specific institutional goals.

Importantly, there is substantial similarity between Kingdon's goals of "satisfying constituents" (see also Mayhew 1974 and Fenno 1978), intra-institutional influence, and "good public policy" (246-247) and those that clergy may wish to achieve—namely, job security and denominational influence. That said, too much concern with the

preferences of one reference group might alienate others, especially if the mean ideological preferences between these groups is dramatically different. This will be problematic for clergy if the alienated group is in close proximity. Rational clergy will want to keep their most proximate reference groups (consisting of the laity and their elected leaders) satisfied as much as possible because clergy must interact with these groups on a regular basis. Given the collaborative relationship between lay leaders and clergy in both denominations, it is appropriate to refer to clergy concern with what these proximate groups prefer, and any strategic pressure they impose, as pursuit of the “collegial goal.” While both congregants and lay leaders jointly constitute the clergy’s most proximate reference groups, it is the lay leaders who are elected to operate the local churches in conjunction with clergy. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that clergy look to these lay leaders as colleagues in church affairs. Hence, maintaining good relationships with session elders in the PC (U.S.A.) and vestry members in ECUSA is of utmost professional importance for clergy.

Yet since clergy must also cultivate good relationships with less proximate groups, they will be concerned with the preferences of these groups as well. In so doing, clergy may be seen as pursuing goals related to increased denomination influence, good denominational policy, or both. Since these “non-collegial” goals are successfully realized by effectively appealing to the views of their institutional supervisors, it is important for motivated clergy to calibrate their public political behavior according to their perception of what those in their presbyteries or dioceses might prefer. To not do so would likely mean that aspiring clergy wishing to move up the institutional ladder could be prevented from doing so.

I suggest that the important causal triggers in the strategic behavior decision for clergy are 1) differences between clergy and group political preferences, and 2) perceived pressure from these groups on clergy to behave strategically. Ideological differences between clergy and their most proximate reference groups may be found to push clergy into undertaking political behavior that is the opposite of what they sincerely prefer. If this is the case, clergy can be considered to be strategic actors as a result of reference group influence. I further theorize that the sociological and rational choice influences on clergy preferences and behavior are direct. Figure 1 provides a visual depiction of the influence these factors have on clergy.

FIGURE 1:

Sociological Institutionalism:

Rational Choice:

Socialized preferences

Strategic pressure from group

Clergy political preferences and behavior

Reference group ideology

Reference group ideology

Importantly, the direct relationships visually depicted in figure 1 suggest that reference groups play an essential role in determining clergy political preferences and behavior. However little, if anything, can yet be said about the direction of these effects. To fill this gap, I transition now to a consideration of preliminary data that evaluate the

role of reference groups as both socializing and strategic forces on clergy. It appears that in the PC (U.S.A.) and ECUSA, and mainline Protestantism more generally, clergy occupy a delicate institutional space between the laity's general conservatism, and the general liberalism of denominational leaders (Tamney, Burton, and Johnson 1989). What remains to be unpacked concerning reference group influence is the degree to which clergy are aware that these groups represent important nodes of institutional influence over their professional conduct, and, as such, seek to maintain constructive relationships with them either through sincere or strategic behavior. The most appropriate way to lay the foundation for more elaborate testing of both theoretical frameworks is to first assess the basic perceptions that clergy have of the reference groups with which they interact. The issue at hand is not whether clergy are aware that they interact with specific reference groups, for this is a given of their professional responsibilities. Instead, the concern regards whether clergy are found to react to the groups in such a way that points to either sociological or strategic (or perhaps both) factors as influential on their political preferences and behavior.

Group Influence on Clergy Preferences and Behavior: Interview Data

The best way to explore the clergy-reference group relationship is to begin with an examination of clergy interview data. Obtaining a sense of how clergy perceive their reference groups of consequence is an important part of testing the sociological and strategic theories. In order to facilitate this assessment, I conducted a series of personal interviews with Presbyterian and Episcopal clergy between 2004 and 2005. All five clergy were senior pastors or rectors at churches in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. They

agreed to sit for interviews in the fall of 2004 and spring of 2005. Clergy and congregation names are not published in keeping with the wishes of each respondent and IRB guidelines. Though the interviewees are distinguished by their denominational affiliations, I suggest that an even more appropriate point of difference is the degree to which each appears affected by the sociological or strategic influence of their relevant reference groups.

The first interviewee can be considered affected by strategic influence. He was quite open about feeling constrained in expressing his “complete and true feelings” on a variety of issues—a sure indication that he perceives pressure from reference groups to behave strategically. This pastor chalked up his hesitation in expressing sincere preferences to the fear that doing so would significantly alienate portions of his congregation (Personal interview with Calfano 2004). For example, he believed that if he took a decisive position on the denomination’s gay ordination standard (he supports the current restrictions discussed chapter 3) it would please some in the congregation, while alienating others. The clergy predicted that by taking a public position on the issue, a good portion of his congregation would leave the church, reduce its monetary contributions and volunteer involvement, or some combination thereof. When asked why he thought this was a possibility, the clergy offered that he presides over a diverse congregation. Despite that the majority of his congregants hold conservative preferences, this clergy perceived enough diversity in both the congregation and session to make consensus building on controversial issues difficult. Given these institutional conditions, this clergy does not openly express his sincerely held preferences on gay ordination in the PC (U.S.A.).

At the same time, the clergy was asked whether he supports specific affinity (or interest) groups within the PC (U.S.A.). These groups, much like political interests in secular politics, lobby for particular changes in denominational policy, especially at the General Assembly level. As in secular politics, some groups are single-issue oriented, while others support a systematic agenda along an ideological dimension. The certain sign that this clergy is more of what Weston (1997) termed a loyalist in chapter 3 came in his response: “I view almost all affinity groups as schismatic. We are one Presbyterian Church, and there should be no effort to divide the denomination along policy lines” (Personal interview with Calfano 2004). These lines include topics ranging from relations with Israel to denominational divestment to gay rights.

Finally, in terms of the influence of less proximate reference groups on his political positions, the clergy identified his presbytery as an “on-again, off-again” influence (Personal interview with Calfano 2004). Its salience depended on whether he believed that presbytery concerns were worth paying attention to on a particular issue. Though he discussed the liberal tendencies of the denomination’s bureaucracy, this clergy declined to mention that these leaders in any way influenced his political behavior. In sum, his responses reflect the institutional influence of three specific reference groups—his congregation, session, and presbytery. From what this clergy described, both proximate and less proximate reference groups have a significant impact on his decision not to express sincerely-held political preferences. This constitutes evidence that reference groups may encourage strategic behavior among clergy.

The second Presbyterian interviewee made statements similar to first as it concerns choosing his public words carefully on controversial issues. Unlike the first interviewee, however, this clergy is a member of several conservative affinity groups within the PC (U.S.A.) (Personal interview with Calfano 2004). Despite his own conservative views, this pastor perceived his session as being even more politically conservative than he, a condition that reflects the findings of various denominational panel studies on the subject (PC (U.S.A.) Office of Research Services 2002; 2004; 2006). As a conservative brandishing public credentials in several denominational interest groups, the clergy is cognizant that his preferences and conservative affiliations may cause problems with his reference groups. This might be why he admitted to choosing “his battles wisely” at session meetings (Personal interview with Calfano 2004). If this is not an indication of strategic behavior, it is at least a reflection of the impact that reference groups have on clergy and their public behavior. So, as with the first clergy interviewee, anticipation of negative reference group reaction is a causal influence on behavior.

The third Presbyterian clergy interviewed stands in contrast to the first two. First, he may be characterized as a liberal (Personal interview with Calfano 2005). Second, there is evidence that he undertakes behavior that is in accord with his socialized preferences. Importantly, and unlike the first two clergy, this third interviewee was less likely to hide his true preferences on political matters from his congregation and session. This might be due to the homogeneity of his particular church. Most of his congregants are openly gay, and the pastor tailors church ministries to serve this constituency. As such, he likely meets far less resistance in expressing his sincere,

generally liberal, views on an array of political issues. This is not to suggest that gay congregants are in lockstep with liberalism on all issues. It is, however, fairly safe to assume that because those electing to openly express a homosexual orientation challenge traditional notions of sexuality, they would be much more likely to lean toward political liberalism (Oldmixon 2005).

Importantly, the liberal clergy identified both his seminary experiences (which neither of the previous subjects mentioned) and presbytery as important influences on his political preferences and behavior. This is interesting because the same presbytery licenses all three interviewees, and all agree that their presbytery generally takes liberal political stands (Personal interviews with Calfano 2004, 2005). However, the liberal pastor, unlike his counterparts, finds encouragement among like-minded actors in his reference groups of critical import. This suggests an influence on clergy preferences and behavior that reflects the institutional socialization of seminary, and, potentially, the socializing group effect outlined in the Durkheimian theory. In contrast, the first two clergy appear caught in the process of navigating the complex currents of dealing effectively with disparate reference groups. Each group represents a specific set of institutional responsibilities and ideological preferences, and each contributes to strategic behavior in these clergy. What is ironic about the liberal pastor is that his situation is somewhat anomalous in a denomination where clergy are systematically more liberal than their congregations and sessions (PC (U.S.A.) Office of Research Services 2002, 2004, 2006). In most PC (U.S.A.) congregations, the liberal pastor would be facing the same strategic pressures confronting his two counterparts.

Lest this consideration devolve into a one-sided assumption that clergy exist only to have their political preferences and behavior determined by institutional reference groups, it is important to note that all three PC (U.S.A.) interviewees stated that they try to find ways to influence the political views of their congregants and session colleagues (Personal interviews with Calfano 2004, 2005). Admittedly, this is much more difficult to do in the heterogeneous congregations headed by the first two clergy. However, that it remains a goal nonetheless adds an important dimension to the pastor-reference group relationship. It seems that clergy remain interested in shaping the views, political or otherwise, of their congregants and lay leader colleagues, even as clergy are, themselves, subject to reference group influence.

Turning to the ECUSA interviews, it appears that the distinct sociological and strategic reference group effects influence clergy in that denomination as well. In 2004, I conducted an interview with one of the clergy leading a major Episcopal parish in the Dallas-Fort Worth region. During the interview, this clergy suggested that he and the parish were more than willing to leave ECUSA if circumstances dictated (Personal interview with Calfano 2004). He also expressed confidence that his local bishop would support this decision, in part, because this bishop did not support the Robinson election and, in this clergy's words, "we have a good personal relationship with him" (Personal interview with Calfano 2004).

According to the rector, his parish believes that it has more in common with conservative congregations in other denominations than it does with most other ECUSA parishes and bishops. As such, this clergy and his parish are willing to forge strong relationships with congregations they consider to be "partners in the mission of bringing

Christ's good news to . . . the world" (Personal interview with Calfano 2004). An obvious boost to the rector's confidence is the endorsement he receives from his proximate reference groups of critical import—the vestry and parishioners. Though an anomaly in a denomination with a generally liberal political posture, it is clear that the reference groups with which this clergy interacts reinforce his sincerely held preferences in a manner that reflects sociological influence. Indeed, he apparently has no motive to behave strategically given the overlap in preferences with his proximate groups.

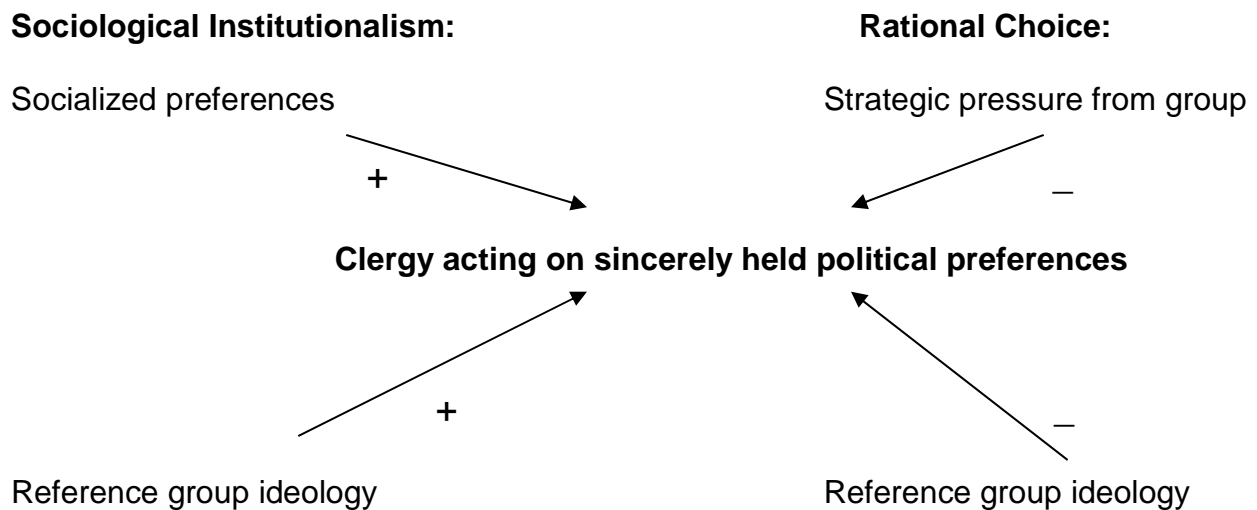
Of course, there are other parish clergy in ECUSA who do not function in these broadly supportive circumstances. An interview with a liberal clergy in the same diocese revealed that, in addition to the parishioners and vestry, a priest's relationship with the bishop matters greatly (Personal interview with Calfano 2004). According to him, it is not important who holds the distinction of liberal and conservative in the relationship. Whenever leaders in the church differ on salient and volatile political issues, there is a need for the lower ranking official to behave strategically. This clergy stated that while he has never had a confrontation with his more conservative bishop directly, he has encountered certain "resistance" to some of his programmatic ideas for the parish from the bishop (Personal interview with Calfano 2004). The rector believes that he is in a difficult position as he tries to maintain a good relationship with his parishioners and vestry, many of whom are conservatives, while attempting not to draw negative attention from a conservative bishop. Interestingly, there is symmetry between the various reference groups of institutional importance to this clergy, but there is dissonance between the groups and his sincerely held political preferences.

Overall, these interviews are noteworthy in that they show that clergy in both denominations identify the need to be responsive to the perceived ideological predispositions of various institutional reference groups. It is striking that almost all respondents made mention of the importance of their most proximate reference groups—their congregants and lay leader colleagues, in affecting their political behavior. Also mentioned by these clergy was the influence of their less proximate groups, specifically those at the presbytery/diocesan level. Given their differences in proximity to clergy, it is possible that reference groups have different degrees of influence on clergy preferences and behavior. Those groups closest to the clergy in terms of proximity and frequency of contact are arguably more important because of these factors. One cannot forget, however, that chapter 3 describes a delicate relationship between both proximate and less proximate groups, and their unique institutional importance to clergy. Hence, all institutional reference groups should matter to clergy in some way, even as group effects may differ.

Based on information from these interviews, it is possible to classify the direction of reference group effects. Since the rational choice theory deals strictly with clergy political behavior, and not the formation of preferences, figure 2 concentrates on the effect of both theoretical frameworks in determining clergy political *behavior* (with the assumption that institutional socialization has a direct and positive influence on clergy preferences). Given these interview data, it appears that reference groups can reinforce the clergy's socialized political preferences, thereby suggesting a positive and symmetrical relationship between group preferences and clergy behavior. At the same time, and as was found in a majority of the interviews, reference groups pressure clergy

to modify their political behavior so that clergy behave in ways not in keeping with their sincere preferences. This indicates a negative group effect on clergy political behavior. Finally, and though it was not well represented in these interview data, it stands to reason that, under rational choice assumptions, differences between clergy and group political preferences have a negative influence on clergy behaving sincerely.

FIGURE 2:



Though we can now estimate the direction of group effects on clergy behavior, the next step is to better ascertain the mechanism by which clergy perceive group preferences and/or strategic pressure. From the interviews, it appears that clergy perceive signals from their reference groups to change the way they express their sincerely held preferences. However, it is not yet clear how clergy perceive these signals—do they approximate a cue, or is a more subtle reading of group ideology and/or strategic pressure involved? The next section aims to shed light on these

questions by assessing whether clergy rely on group cues in determining their political views.

Group Cues and Clergy Goals

The interview data suggest that clergy look to their relevant institutional reference groups as both strategic guides and sociological reinforcements for their existing preferences. The task in this section is to determine how clergy pick up on group expectations in the first place. At the heart of this examination is the possibility of clergy reliance on reference group cues. As stated previously, reference group influence on clergy conjures comparison to Kingdon's (1977) model of legislative voting in which members of Congress function as goal seekers who rely on group cues to pursue specific outcomes.

Though the analogy between members of Congress and mainline Protestant clergy is not entirely direct, I suggest that more similarity exists between the two than might be first assumed. For instance, clergy, like congressional representatives, must be concerned with how their core reference group constituents—those in closest proximity to them—evaluate their performance in office (Mayhew 1974; Fenno 1978; Mann 1978; Mann and Wolfinger 1980; McCubbins and Schwartz 1984). Though congregants do not usually get to “re-elect” their clergy at specified intervals, most American Protestant denominations, including the PC (U.S.A.) and ECUSA, accord congregations, through the local session or vestry, the right to initiate clergy removal. The most provocative linkage between legislators and clergy is the latter's potential reliance on group cues to determine their political preferences. Through the five

interviews, clergy demonstrated an awareness of reference group preferences, but it is not yet clear the extent to which clergy may go so far as to rely on group cues in developing their political views.

The theoretical importance of group cues is based on the premise that cues provide clergy the information necessary to successfully navigate their professional responsibilities and pursue institutional goals. Depending on the circumstances, group cues may function as both sociological and strategic influences. This may be no more the case than with group socialization of clergy preferences over time (as suggested in the second sociological theory). For instance, if clergy hold vastly different preferences from the group, group cues may initially function as strategic guideposts. Yet as group-to-clergy socialization occurs, the cues may actually begin to inform clergy preferences, thereby becoming sociological in nature. However, if the sociological process is incomplete—meaning that clergy and group preferences are closer than before but not completely in sync, cues may vacillate between functioning as both sociological and strategic influences.

Because of the ambiguity of their influence, I suggest that the best way to discern when group cues may function as strategic forces is to look for instances where clergy rely on cues from *both* their more and less proximate reference groups. The point here is not that reliance on single group cues necessarily discounts a strategic influence, only that it is more difficult to distinguish between sociological and strategic effects on clergy with a single group cue. By contrast, clergy reliance on multiple group cues, especially from groups in different institutional locations, moves more toward the strategic explanation. This is because, based on existing denominational panel studies

(PC (U.S.A.) Office of Research Services 2002, 2004, 2006) and the interview data presented above, the proximate and less proximate reference groups clergy encounter often hold opposing ideological preferences. Therefore, it would be difficult to conclude that clergy look to multiple groups to develop their sincerely held preferences when the groups themselves possess vastly different views. Realistically, the group holding preferences furthest from the clergy's should be the one that clergy deal with strategically. Clergy should change their political behavior to suit this group, while keeping their sincerely held preferences intact, perhaps with the assistance of cues from the group with which they are in greater ideological agreement.

Before moving to a consideration of clergy reliance on multiple group cues, it is important to assess whether clergy admit to using reference group cues in the first place. The surveys conducted for this dissertation asked respondents to identify which, if any, professional reference groups they rely on to determine their "public political views." Admittedly, there may be some perceived difference between one's political "views" and "positions," especially if views may be kept private. However, that the survey item inquires about a respondent's "public" views means that the preferences must be expressed, and, therefore, constitute a form of behavior. This should alleviate any problems with the survey word choice.

Respondents were instructed to list up to three reference groups on whose political cues they rely. There were five groups from which clergy could pick. These were the seminary clergy attended, denominational bureaucrats, congregants, their presbytery or bishop, and their session or vestry. When a respondent identified cue reliance on a particular group, that group was coded "1." Table 1 provides the initial

breakdown of the percentage of respondents who listed each of the five reference groups. Respondents may be counted more than once in these tables because of their latitude in listing more than one group.

TABLE 1: Frequency Distribution for Clergy Reliance on Reference Group Cues (Expressed as Percentages)

	PRESBYTERIAN (<i>n</i> = 389)	EPISCOPAL (<i>n</i> = 454)
Seminary	10	23
National Bureaucrats	21	28
Congregants	22	19
Presbytery/Bishop	17	45
Session/Vestry	51	43

Certain differences manifest between Presbyterian and Episcopal clergy. By far, Presbyterians rely the most on their session colleagues in developing their public political views. A healthy number also indicate taking cues from their presbytery and denominational bureaucrats. Episcopal priests are also reliant on their proximate reference group colleagues, but a slightly higher percentage take cues from their local bishop. This suggests that both a clergy’s proximate and less proximate reference groups are important political influences, as the interview data suggested they would be. This evidence of cue taking is, in itself, a novel addition to the clergy politics literature, as no existing studies have asked clergy about this aspect of their relationship with institutional reference groups.

Yet it is not clear whether cue reliance tells us anything about the institutional pressures at work on clergy. Neither does it indicate whether the cues are specifically sociological or strategic influences. As stated, it is reasonable to expect that in order for

cue reliance to indicate strategic behavior, clergy should be found to use cues from reference groups in different institutional locations. The general liberal/conservative ideological distinctions between one's proximate and less proximate groups should introduce competing ideological crosspressures that would be impossible for clergy to resolve by sincerely adopting both groups' preferences.

In order to assess whether clergy rely on cues from multiple reference groups, I run a series of tabulations that compare every combination of group cues that respondents listed. I also include a coefficient for Fisher's Exact Test, which is a measure of association similar to Pearson's r , but is more appropriate for items with expected values below ten. The various group cue pairings, and the p value for Fisher's test of association, are listed in table 2. The numerical counts represent the percentage of instances where respondents indicated that they rely on cues from both groups in the pair. Highlighted pairs show reference groups with expectedly distinct ideological preferences, and are instances in which clergy might engage in strategic behavior to satisfy both groups.

TABLE 2: Frequency Distribution of Group Cue Pairs (Expressed as Percentages with Fisher’s Exact Test *p* Value)

	PRESBYTERIAN (<i>n</i> = 389)	EPISCOPAL (<i>n</i> = 454)
Seminary & Session/Vestry Cues	02 (.000)	09 (.500)
Bureaucrat & Session/Vestry Cues	01 (.000)	12 (.090)
Congregation & Session/Vestry Cues	10 (.230)	11 (.090)
Presbytery/Bishop & Session/Vestry	02 (.000)	17 (.540)
Seminary & Bureaucrat Cues	01 (.130)	05 (.200)
Seminary & Congregation Cues	N/A	01 (.000)
Seminary & Presbytery/Bishop Cues	02 (.480)	07 (.010)
Congregation & Bureaucrat Cues	02 (.000)	06 (.290)
Congregation & Presbytery/Bishop	09 (.000)	08 (.300)
Presbytery/Bishop & Bureaucrat	02 (.050)	07 (.000)

Across most of these pairings, the Fisher’s coefficient is highly significant for the Presbyterian respondents, but is not so for the Episcopalians. Hence, for some Presbyterian clergy at least, the possibility exists that reliance on cues from groups in both proximate and less proximate locations creates strategic pressure on clergy (although the existence of pressure cannot be directly confirmed by this test).

Unfortunately, the relative numbers of clergy claiming cue reliance on any group pair is quite small, especially for Presbyterians. The largest percentage is in the ECUSA column, with 17% of respondents claiming dual cue reliance on both their bishop and vestry. While this is intriguing, it still represents less than 1/5 of ECUSA respondents.

The lack of evidence of reliance on multiple group cues raises the possibility that clergy are not subject to institutional crosspressures brought on by distinct reference groups. This might also mean that clergy are less likely to be motivated to behave strategically. Yet reference groups are not necessarily unimportant because there is

limited evidence that clergy rely on multiple group cues. This section of the chapter has shown that the majority of Presbyterian and Episcopal clergy rely on cues from at least one reference group. This, in itself, suggests that clergy are willing to take group concerns into account when developing their public political views. What table 2 demonstrates is that clergy are unwilling, or perhaps unable, to provide a detailed ranking of the group cues on which they rely. There may be any number of reasons for this, not the least of which might be the clergy's own lack of recognition that they intentionally take cues from the reference groups with which they interact. In fact, none of the interviewees explicitly suggested that they rely on group cues to determine their political preferences or behavior. They did, however, mention a general awareness of their key groups' ideological preferences. Hence, it might be that when asked about cues, clergy are willing to identify a single group, but are hesitant to list multiple groups because they do not think in terms of multi group cues.

In order to effectively isolate cue reliance as strategic and/or sociological influences on clergy, models controlling for clergy and reference group ideology would be necessary. However, the propriety of using the multiple cue variables in any statistical model is in question when so few respondents indicate multiple cue reliance. Coupled with the limitations of the cue measure itself (i.e., it is not clear how respondents use the cue, even if they admit to relying on it), an alternative approach to testing for the sociological and strategic influences of reference groups on clergy is needed. As such, I focus on more indirect clergy assessments of group expectations. These indirect measures are based on clergy perception of reference group ideology, and the pressure to undertake strategic behavior. Ideology and the perception of

strategic pressure are potentially more fruitful measures in that they focus specifically on clergy perception of group characteristics. In order to begin teasing out the influences that these indirect measures of group influence may have, chapter 5 introduces a series of models designed to assess whether institutions and reference groups effectively socialize clergy into holding specific political preferences. The chapter begins with a summary description of the survey instruments used to collect data from clergy in both denominations.

CHAPTER 5

THE SOCIOLOGICAL ROOTS OF CLERGY POLITICAL PREFERENCES

As indicated in chapters 1 and 2, my goal is to ascertain the role that institutions play in determining clergy political preferences and behavior. The extant literature has found clergy political preferences to be the dominant player in determining behavior. In contrast, we know little about the role that reference groups and/or strategic influence may play in the process. In order to test for a possible reference group or strategic effect on clergy, the following two chapters 1) assess the role that institutions play in creating clergy political preferences and behavior, and 2) evaluate whether various clergy-reference group interactions create incentives for clergy to behave in ways that depart from their sincerely held preferences.

In this chapter, I address the first two major research questions outlined in chapter 1. Specifically, I assess whether institutions, through their role as socialization agents, implant enduring and sincerely held political preferences in clergy. Second, I evaluate whether institutions, via their role in generating social networks and points of group identification, shape, over time, clergy political preferences. Drawing from the sociological framework, I develop models that enable the teasing out of institutional influences on clergy preferences. The primary dependent variables in this chapter's models measure clergy political preferences both generally, and on two issues of political importance for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (PC (U.S.A.) and the Episcopal Church, USA (ECUSA). However, prior to moving to the empirical discussion, I discuss the survey instruments used to test the theoretical propositions.

Surveying the Clergy

Two original surveys have been employed to collect data from Presbyterian and Episcopal clergy. The first survey was directed at congregational ministers in the PC (U.S.A.), with the second for parish priests in ECUSA. The Presbyterian clergy surveys were developed with the generous assistance and collaboration of the denomination's Office of Research Services. PC (U.S.A.) researchers provided detailed input into how to strengthen survey design and delivery techniques so as to maximize response rates from this specialized population. Their input has assisted the development of question wording and survey layout, both of which are important in order to achieve as high a response rate as possible. Though ECUSA has a far less developed research services department, the vast similarity between the denominations' polity, and the surveys themselves, helps to ensure the quality of the ECUSA instrument.

In seeking to maximize responses, I relied on two methods of instrument distribution. The most obvious, and traditional, was the mail-based approach. In order to make the data gather process more technologically sophisticated and efficient, I also deployed Internet-based versions of both surveys. Though Internet surveys are becoming more common in political research, the requirement of computer hardware, an Internet connection, and a basic level of competence in operating Internet software, contribute to a moderately high possibility of selection bias among clergy respondents. This possibility is especially apparent when considering that the PC (U.S.A.) national office in Louisville, Kentucky, does not have an e-mail address for approximately 30% of the denomination's congregations! As such, the congregational clergy survey for both denominations is administered through a combination of regular mail and Internet

survey formats, or what Parackal (2000) referred to as the hybrid approach. Parackal found that data collection using this hybrid strategy compensates for response biases, and actually improves the overall response rate compared to the use of a single collection method alone.

The most recent nation-wide survey of PC (U.S.A.) congregational clergy was Weston's 2000-2001 effort as part of the Cooperative Clergy Project (see Smidt 2004). Weston, after various follow-ups, obtained a final response rate of 41%. His methodology relied on a random sample of 1,000 PC (U.S.A.) ministers taken from the total population (at that time) of the roughly 8,700 denomination ministers holding a congregational post. I follow Weston's basic approach with certain modifications. First, the clergy samples drawn here are based on a *stratified* random sample that accounts for differences in local church membership. The vast majority of PC (U.S.A.) congregations are not "mega" churches. Owing to the denomination's historically rural roots, around 70% of the PC (U.S.A.) congregations have a membership of 375 or less (and 40% have less than 250 members). Of course, this says nothing of weekly attendance rates, which are often lower than the official membership figures (PC U.S.A.) Office of Research Services 2002).

Given the centrality of theories in this research pertaining to clergy interaction with their proximate institutional reference groups, it is necessary to account for systematic, size-based distinctions between congregations so as to control for size differences within the reference groups themselves. In this case, the size of one's proximate reference groups would be best controlled through the stratified sample. This is important because it is quite possible that clergy in larger congregations, where

greater size might mean increased heterogeneity among the congregants and session, will perceive any reference group influence quite differently from those leading much smaller congregations. Another departure from Weston's methodology is found in the drawing of the stratified random sample from the existing population of PC (U.S.A.) *congregations* (as provided by the denomination's Office of Research Services). Weston created his sample from a published denominational directory of Presbyterian *ministers*. However, there are inherent benefits in drawing from the congregational list. The most obvious concerns the possibility that ministers may have moved from their listed positions between the time of the directory's publishing and survey distribution. Sending the survey to specific churches alleviates this problem, and helps to increase the response rate.

Regarding ECUSA, it is interesting that despite the denomination's internecine political controversies, scholars have been slow to study ECUSA priests. The most recent, and perhaps only, Episcopal clergy survey came from the Djupe/Gilbert scholarship in 2002/2003, which garnered a 31% response rate (although their original sample size was 3,000, thereby increasing their potential *n* threefold over Weston's). Djupe and Gilbert, like Weston, employed a mail survey that was not stratified according to parish size. Hence, this survey of ECUSA clergy represents one of the few conducted on this population, and the only to employ the stratified approach.

The initial round of mail-based surveys for PC (U.S.A.) clergy was distributed to respondents on the third week of April 2006. Clergy were mailed a paper copy of the survey, which included a self-addressed, stamped return envelope. Clergy on the list with e-mail addresses were also e-mailed an electronic link to complete the survey on-

line, if they so desired. A series of postcard and e-mail reminders were sent to respondents on the second week of May 2006, with a second full wave of paper and electronic surveys sent to those who had yet to reply on the fourth week of May 2006. The first round of ECUSA surveys was distributed the last week of September 2006, with follow-up reminders sent out the second week of October 2006. A second full wave of surveys was sent in the last week of October to respondents who had not replied.

In keeping with the University of North Texas Institutional Review Board standards, all clergy respondents were anonymous to me. Clergy identity was especially guarded because I was relying on congregational mail and e-mail lists with clergy name identification deleted. In order to reduce the possibility of respondents returning two surveys (one paper, one electronic), respondents were tracked for their participation according to their church or parish zip code. While this approach is not as accurate as assigning a generated response number to each survey, this zip code tracking method provides the respondent a greater sense of anonymity. Follow-up post-card and e-mail reminders were sent to those congregations with zip codes not matching codes on the returned surveys. Given the sample's stratified basis, few congregations and parishes share zip codes. This cut down on the number of erroneously sent reminder cards, and made the respondent tracking system generally effective. The rate of usable responses for the clergy surveys (as of April 2007) is just over 38% for the PC (U.S.A.) ministers, and slightly over 45% for ECUSA priests. Though one would like the highest response rates possible, these are well in line with what is expected for anonymous surveys (Weisberg, Krosnick, and Bowen 1996). With the specifics of the survey instruments delineated, I turn attention to the development of the research hypotheses that will test

the role institutions play in forming, and perhaps altering over time, clergy political preferences.

Clergy Political Preferences: The Roots of Liberalism

Until now, clergy political preferences have been treated as a generic item. In this section, I focus on clergy preferences in the form of liberal ideology. Drawing from chapter 2's discussion of institutions as nodes of educational and socializing import, I offer two primary and contending hypotheses concerning the development of liberal preferences in clergy. The first focuses on seminary's socializing influence. As the literature suggests, seminary is the most important institution in terms of clergy professional development. (McKinney and Finke 2002). Unfortunately, studies have not assessed whether seminary represents a deliberately selected, ongoing influence on clergy once they leave the institution and assume professional responsibilities. While all Presbyterian and Episcopal respondents have attended seminary as part of their mandatory training, it is not necessarily a given that seminary alums look to their educational experiences for contemporary guidance. Since seminary is generally presumed to be a liberalizing influence on mainline clergy preferences (Roof and McKinney 1987), I link contemporary clergy reliance on seminary to their current political preferences by hypothesizing

H1: The more clergy indicate that their seminary experience serves as a guide for their current political preferences, the higher the level of clergy liberalism.

Hypothesis two focuses on more recent, and proximate, sociological influences, in particular the influence of proximate reference group ideology on clergy. As Key

(1961) and Hollander (1958, 1964) found, reference groups enjoy conforming influence over their members, especially when group proximity to the member is high and interaction is frequent. It is, therefore, logical to examine the effect that group ideology might have as a socializing effect on clergy political preferences. Specifically, the general ideological disposition of the clergy's most proximate colleagues—the board of lay leaders in both Presbyterian and Episcopal churches—is suggested to have a contextual influence on clergy political liberalism.

H2: Increased political liberalism among the clergy's proximate reference groups produces higher levels of liberal preferences in clergy.

Hypothesis 2 is focused on reference group ideology as a general sociological influence independent of the Durkheim (1933) theory concerning change in clergy preferences over time. This is because group ideology may have a socializing effect on clergy irrespective of the longevity of their relationship with the group. However, statistical indication that clergy contact time with their proximate reference groups is a significant influence on clergy liberalism will be taken as evidence to support Durkheim's theory (the second of the two sociological theories considered). Another necessary qualifier when discussing reference group preferences throughout the rest of this dissertation is that all preference measures are the product of clergy perception only. In other words, there is no independent measure of group preferences independent of how Presbyterian and Episcopal clergy perceive them. Since this is a study of clergy and their perception of specific institutional reference groups, these perception-based measures are actually of greater usefulness than a more objective measure would be (although, ideally, one would have both types of group measures for comparison).

Hypotheses 1 and 2 are potentially contending. Both purport to have a direct influence over clergy liberalism, even though one sociological agent (the seminary) is situated in past experiences, while the others represent current contextual forces. Despite being sociological in nature, it is not clear that these different influences should work in tandem in contributing to clergy liberalism. In fact, there may be a crowding out effect in which clergy are so strongly influenced by either their seminary or proximate reference group ideologies that the other sociological actor is pushed out of the causal picture.

Variables and Data

The dependent variable for the first model determining the sociological causes of clergy liberalism is a generic measure of clergy political preferences. It is taken from a survey item that asked respondents to identify their current political views: worded as “my current political preferences are.” Responses were ranked on a 1-7 scale, with “1” representing “strongly conservative” and “7” “strongly liberal.” Table 3 examines the clergy liberalism variable according to its arithmetic mean and frequency distribution (expressed as percentages of the total responses) for both the Presbyterian and Episcopal respondents.

TABLE 3: Arithmetic Mean and Frequency Distribution for Clergy Liberalism (Expressed as Percentages)

1-7 Scale with "7" "Strongly liberal"	PRESBYTERIAN (<i>n</i> = 387)	EPISCOPAL (<i>n</i> = 508)
Arithmetic Mean	4.61	5.18
"1" Strongly Conservative	05	04
"2"	13	03
"3"	10	05
"4"	14	14
"5"	19	24
"6"	26	35
"7" Strongly Liberal	14	15

It is clear from the means and percentages that ECUSA priests are generally more liberal than their Presbyterian counterparts. However, for clergy in both denominations, the majority of respondents associate themselves with a 5, 6, or 7 on the ordinal scale. This suggests that these mainline clergy are generally liberal politically. In table 4, I include a comparison of mean preferences between Presbyterian and Episcopal clergy and their relevant institutional reference groups. Reference group preference measures are based on respondent perceptions of how liberal or conservative the groups are compared to their own preferences. In other words, group appraisals are relative to where clergy stand in terms of their own liberal or conservative political preferences. The reference group preference measures are derived from a survey item that asked respondents whether each of the three reference groups in question (congregants, lay leaders, and presbytery/bishop) are "more politically conservative/liberal than I am." As with the clergy preference measure, responses were

arranged along a 1-7 scale, with “1” representing “more conservative and “7” “more liberal.” The table also includes the standard deviation for each mean.

TABLE 4: Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviations for Key Reference Group and Clergy Political Preferences

1-7 Scale with “7” “Strongly liberal”	PRESBYTERIAN (<i>n</i> = 387)	EPISCOPAL (<i>n</i> = 508)
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Current Political Preferences	4.61 (1.70)	5.18 (1.82)
Session/Vestry Political Preferences	3.46 (1.18)	3.68 (1.03)
Congregation/Parish Political Preferences	3.29 (1.21)	3.89 (1.13)
Presbytery/Bishop Political Preferences	4.09 (1.74)	5.92 (1.21)

Data from both clergy surveys confirm the basic findings of existing denominational studies as referenced in Chapters 2 and 3: clergy are generally more liberal than their more proximate groups, and are generally as or less liberal than those in their less proximate groups. Specifically, ECUSA clergy had a mean ideology of 5.18 on the seven-point scale (with 7 representing “very liberal”), while their assessment of vestry ideology was 3.68, and parishioners a 3.89. ECUSA priests considered their bishops more liberal than themselves, with a mean assessment of 5.92. Presbyterian clergy had a mean self-evaluation of 4.61. They showed a mean assessment of their sessions’ ideology at 3.46, and their congregations’ at 3.29. PC (U.S.A.) ministers view their presbyteries as a bit less liberal than themselves, with a mean assessment of 4.09.

The importance of these mean comparisons is first to show the general evaluations clergy give to themselves and their relevant reference groups. The second is to confirm that clergy tend to hold a middle ideological ground, with their more

proximate reference groups holding more conservative preferences, and less proximate groups generally more liberal ones (with the slight exception of the presbyteries). In order to strengthen the case that these differences systematically impact clergy preferences, I test for the statistical significance of differences between the means. To do so, I run an ANOVA test. Reference group means are statistically distinguishable from the clergy means if the “Prob > F” value produced by the test is lower than .05. As table 5 shows, the means between reference group and clergy preferences are statistically significant for all test pairs save Presbyterian ministers and their session colleagues.

TABLE 5: Difference of Means Test between Clergy and Reference Group Preferences (ANOVA)

Clergy Preferences	PRESBYTERIAN (n = 387)	EPISCOPAL (n = 490)
	F (Prob > F)	F (Prob > F)
Session/Vestry Political Preferences	1.51 (.186)	16.46 (.000)
Congregation/Parish Political Preferences	3.19 (.008)	11.48 (.000)
Presbytery/Bishop Political Preferences	20.23 (.000)	4.16 (.003)
Root MSE	1.43	1.66
Adjusted R-Squared	.29	.18

Model 1, which explicitly tests hypotheses 1 and 2, includes several independent and control variables.

Seminary Guides Current Ministry: The first primary independent variable is seminary influence in determining clergy liberalism. This variable is taken from a survey

item that asked respondents whether “I draw on the values and education received in seminary to guide my conduct as a minister/priest.” Responses were coded on a 1-7 scale, with “1” representing “disagree strongly” and “7” “agree strongly.”

Clergy Perception of Session/Vestry and Presbytery/Bishop Preferences:

Considering the theorized importance at the end of chapter 4 of reference group preferences as indirect influences on clergy, it is necessary to incorporate potential effects from various groups of institutional importance in these models. Arguably, the most important are clergy perceptions of the political ideology of both the congregational lay leaders (representing proximate reference groups), and those in the presbytery or diocese to which clergy belong (representing a less proximate reference group). The operationalization for these variables was discussed in reference to table 3.

Though the ANOVA test contains a separate survey item for clergy perception of congregation/parish ideology, lay leader and congregant preferences are found to correlate at .7, while the next highest correlation is .38 (most other variables correlate at .1 and lower). This high correlation is expected given the representative nature of Presbyterian and Episcopal polities. Since parishioners select local lay leaders in both denominations, one should anticipate a strong similarity between how clergy perceive parishioner and lay leader political preferences. Because lay leaders are charged with making local decisions on behalf of parishioners, and to avoid multicollinearity, only the clergy perception of their lay leader’s political ideology is included in the models.

Clergy Sex: Given that females have had a comparatively difficult time gaining access to the clergy ranks, and based on the work of Olson (2000) and Olson et al. (2005) that found female clergy to be significantly more liberal than their male counterparts, I include clergy sex as a control, which is coded “1” if clergy are female.

Years as Clergy; Years in Current Church; Average Sunday Attendance: I also use three variables to evaluate the impact of several contextual influences on the clergy. These are 1) the length of time clergy have been ordained ministers in their denominations, 2) the number of years clergy have served in their current church, and 3) the average number of parishioners who attend Sunday morning services. It is not clear that any of these variables contribute to clergy liberalism. Yet they are necessary inclusions in the models since they provide context concerning clergy institutional service.

*Session/Vestry Preferences * Years in Church:* Also incorporated is an interaction term that links session and vestry preferences with the number of years clergy have spent in their current local church. This is in an effort to tap the socialization over time possibility—the second of the two sociological research questions—expressed in Durkheim (1933) and Mosca’s (1939) research. The expectation is that as clergy spend longer amounts of time with their proximate group colleagues, their political preferences will begin to take on those of the session or vestry.

Served in Denominational Legislature: Finally, I include a variable that connects clergy preferences with their experience serving, albeit temporarily, in their denomination's legislature. Based on Wald (2003) and Ammerman's (1981) findings that higher placed denominational elites are politically liberal, I suggest that clergy who have official contact with these elites through service in denominational legislatures have a higher likelihood of adopting liberal political preferences themselves. This indicator is based on a survey question that asked respondents if they previously served in the denominations' legislative bodies: the General Assembly (for Presbyterians) or the House of Deputies (for Episcopalians). Affirmative responses are coded "1."

The first pair of models testing hypothesis 1 and 2 are located in table 6. Since the dependent variable consists of an ordinal scale, I use ordered probabilistic regression analysis. Since probit coefficients cannot be directly interpreted as to the magnitude of their effect on the dependent variable, I have calculated predicted probabilities as measures of marginal effects using King's Clarify program. The probabilities are derived as the difference between the minimum and maximum value of respondents being in the most liberal political preference category on the scale (a "7"). Probabilities are calculated only for statistically significant independent variables in each model, with all other variables held at their means. The baseline probability is the mean value for category "7" of the dependent variable (King 1989). Since these are survey data, I use the Huber-White estimator in calculating robust standard errors, which helps to account for the effects of heteroskedasticity.

TABLE 6: Determining Clergy Liberalism

Clergy Liberalism	PRESBYTERIAN (<i>n</i> = 381)	EPISCOPAL (<i>n</i> = 458)
	β (SE) PP ⁴	β^5 (SE) PP
Seminary Guides Current Ministry	.137*** (.030) .14	.182*** (.041) .05
Presbytery/Bishop Preferences	.322*** (.038) .38	-.078 (.041)
Session/Vestry Preferences	-.057 (.070)	.312** (.105) .13
Clergy Sex	.421** (.143) .22	.191 (.137)
Served in Denom. Legislature	.247* (.128) .05	.160 (.107)
Years as Minister/Priest	.008 (.005)	.015*** (.004) .06
Years in Current Church	-.0003 (.0002)	.097 (.061)
Average Sunday Attendance	-.0004 (.0002)	-.001***(.0001) .62
Session/Vestry * Years in Church	.005 (.006)	-.033 (.016)
Baseline Probability	.117	.028
Wald Chi2	140.12	112.56
Prob > Chi2	.0000	.0000
Log-Likelihood	-616.057	-703.086

Immediately obvious from these results is that clergy reliance on seminary to guide their current professional ministry is strongly and positively associated with clergy liberalism. The seminary coefficients in both models are signed positive, and are significant at .000. The predicted probabilities show that the likelihood of liberal preferences in clergy relying on seminary increases by .14 for Presbyterians and .05 for Episcopalians. In addition to confirming hypothesis 1, these findings also confirm the role of institutions as socializing agents, which affirms the first sociological theory and

⁴ PP represents the predicted probability for variables of statistical significance in the model. This figure is calculated as the difference between the minimum and maximum value of the independent variable, holding all other variables at their mean.

⁵ * = $p < .05$ ** = $p < .01$ *** = $p < .001$

research question. Given seminary's unique role in clergy professional development, these results serve to enhance our understanding of seminary and its effect on the American clergy. As stated, no research has attempted to connect seminary influence with contemporary political preferences. The findings from table 6 provide this linkage.

Hypothesis 2 focuses on the relationship between reference group and clergy preferences, and posits that as proximate group ideology moves to the clergy's left, clergy preferences will follow suit. This relationship represents a sociological phenomenon based on reference group influence. Importantly, the hypothesis distinguishes between the influence of more and less proximate reference groups. It is the group closest to clergy—their lay leader colleagues—that are presumed to have causal influence on clergy preferences. However, and as the results in table 6 suggest, it is actually *both* the proximate and less proximate groups that have a significant effect. In the Presbyterian model, it is the less proximate reference group—the presbytery—that functions as the causal force. Conversely, ECUSA priests are affected by their lay leader colleagues on the vestry, thereby affirming the proximate group's importance.

The positive and significant (at .000) coefficient for the presbytery preference indicator shows an increase in likelihood of .38 that as presbytery liberalism increases, so do clergy preferences. On the Episcopal side, the positive and significant (at .01) coefficient indicates an increased likelihood of .13 that greater vestry liberalism increases clergy liberalism. Hence, increased group liberalism begets increased clergy liberalism. Though they only partially comport with the hypothesized relationship between proximate group and clergy preferences, these findings confirm the causal and sociological importance of institutional reference groups in determining clergy liberalism.

Interestingly, the professional goals outlined in Chapter 4 anticipated the importance of these less proximate groups on clergy preferences. The influence of these less proximate groups suggests clergy pursuit of intra-institutional influence and/or the development of “good” denominational policy. Since Ammerman (1981) and Wald (2003) have identified a general overlap between the preferences of mainline clergy and their denominational superiors, it is not surprising that sociologically based influence between clergy and less proximate groups should exist.

There are several control variables that return significance. The first is the clergy sex variable in the Presbyterian model. Its coefficient is positive and significant (at .01), and the predicted probabilities show that female clergy have an increased likelihood of .22 of holding liberal political preferences. This finding is in line with Olson et al.’s (2005) conclusion that female clergy are generally more liberal than their male counterparts (although the authors were not able to actually compare their results with data from male clergy). Without delving too much into the argument that the nature of female socialization leads to their increased political liberalism, it seems that such is the case with female Presbyterian ministers.

Also significant in the Presbyterian model is clergy service in the denominational legislature. The positive and significant (at .01) coefficient shows that PC (U.S.A.) ministers with previous experience as commissioners to the General Assembly are .05 more likely to hold liberal political preferences. I suggest that exposure to the denominational legislature itself represents a type of institutional socialization on clergy. To the extent that these legislatures are comprised of a broad array of personnel and issue perspectives from throughout the denomination, it is not surprising that legislative

service represents a liberalizing influence on clergy. Indeed, all of the controversial (and liberal) policies that have engulfed the PC (U.S.A.) and ECUSA in recent years have met with the approval of each denomination's legislature. That service in this decision-making body should increase clergy liberalism, at least for Presbyterians, is an important addition to our understanding of reference group influence on clergy preferences.

Finally, two controls in the ECUSA model require comment. The first regards the number of years respondents have been ECUSA priests. The positive and significant (at .01) coefficient shows that an increase in years as an ECUSA priest increases the likelihood of clergy liberalism by .06. In contrast, a higher average number of attendees at Sunday services decrease the likelihood of liberalism, by a huge .62 (coefficient significant at .000). On the surface, these findings appear contradictory. However, when considering that many clergy who attended seminary in the 1960s and 1970s have been found to be more politically liberal than their younger peers (McKinney and Finke 2002; Smidt 2004), it seems logical that ECUSA priests with longer tenures in the denomination should be more liberal. If anything, this finding may represent the indirect influence of seminary on ECUSA priests over and above the seminary variable itself.

I suggest that these findings should be viewed in conjunction with the overall ideological differences apparent between ECUSA priests and their proximate reference groups in table 5. While vestries to the left of clergy are found to contribute to clergy liberalism, these vestries are, overall, an exception to the rule. The difference in means test indicates that clergy usually operate in environments in which their proximate reference groups hold more conservative political preferences than they do. As such, an

increase in exposure to these groups should, according to the basic expectations of the sociological theory, have a conservative effect on the political preferences of many ECUSA priests. Lastly, and in terms of the negative effect an increase in church attendance has on clergy liberalism, it might be that with an increase in attendance comes an increase in the size of the conservative, proximate reference groups with which clergy must interact. This finding is in contrast to the preceding expectation that an increase in parish size would contribute to increased heterogeneity in local parishes. When encountering larger congregations, ECUSA priests may be even more motivated to adopt conservative preferences as a way to better relate to these more proximate reference groups.

Interestingly, while they could have been contending sociological influences on clergy, both seminary and reference group ideology contribute to the causal picture of clergy liberalism. As further evidence of the importance of both institutional influences, rerunning the models without the seminary variable does not make either the session or bishop preference indicators significant (results not shown). In addition, the Durkheimian theory, reflecting the influence of group preferences and expectations on a member's sincerely held preferences over time, is not supported in table 6. It is unclear whether this non-finding is the result of clergy resistance to change brought on by group preferences, or is an artifact of the non-panel data collected. Future research employing the panel method may be better equipped to examine the Durkheimian possibility.

Having examined some of the basic causal forces at work in determining clergy liberalism as a generic concept, I expand the consideration to include clergy positions on issues of political importance and denominational controversy. As the review of

Presbyterian and Episcopal controversies in chapter 3 uncovered, gay rights and divestment from companies doing business in Israel are the most provocative issues currently facing the denominations. Yet while these issues are critical, there are differences between them that warrant attention. Specifically, an argument can be made that while the PC (U.S.A.)'s divestment policy garnered a great deal of internal denomination and secular political attention after its proposal, the issue is far too complex for many clergy, and their most proximate reference groups, to possess a clearly formed opinion on the policy. Divestment stands in certain contrast to gay ordination, in which sides have been long drawn over the theological propriety of allowing sexually active homosexuals to serve as church officers. Opinions may have been especially long formed on ordination because that policy has often been cast in stark "yes" or "no" terms, drawing parallels to the "easy" issues Carmines and Stimson (1980) described in their research.

The authors suggested that certain issues are "hard" if they require careful consideration of technically difficult choices. "Easy" issues, on the other hand, are those familiar to large portions of the mass public. Such issues may be effectively addressed through gut level responses. Given the inherent geo-political factors and consequences inherent in the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is appropriate to consider divestment as a "hard" issue for Presbyterian clergy and their proximate reference groups to address. However, the issue should be less difficult for the presbytery reference group, as it was many presbytery officials, working in the 2004 General Assembly, who were responsible for crafting the divestment policy in the first place. The importance of the easy vs. hard distinction might manifest in the Presbyterian

divestment model as a non-effect concerning session influence on clergy. In contrast, the session would be expected to be influential in the gay ordination models.

For reasons having to do with their relative tardiness in addressing the divestment issue, the easy vs. hard distinction, while still theoretically important in the ECUSA model, may be less useful in understanding reference group influence on clergy in that denomination. This is because ECUSA, and its sister mainline denominations considering whether or not to follow the PC (U.S.A)'s lead, were quick to distance themselves from the unpopular policy as early as 2005 (Clarke 2005). As such, it might be that reference groups have a significant effect on ECUSA clergy not because divestment is any easier for Episcopalians to understand, but because their collective behavior represents an institutional response designed to avoid the type of international controversy that the PC (U.S.A.) incurred in 2004.

As with the table 6 models, those in the following two tables represent direct tests of hypotheses 1 and 2. However, since the new dependent variables are measures of liberal positions clergy have on gay rights and divestment, both represent more specific assessments of clergy political preferences. The divestment dependent variable is taken from a survey item that asks respondents whether their denomination "should pursue a phased, selective sale ('divestment') of the stock it owns in multinational corporations whose dealings in Israel support the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories." The gay marriage dependent variable for ECUSA priests asks respondents whether "marriage between two people of the same sex should be made legal by the government." Finally, the gay ordination dependent variable for PC (U.S.A.) ministers asks respondents whether "G-6.0106b should be repealed by the General Assembly

and sent to the presbyteries for ratification.” Responses to all three variables are arranged along a 1-7 scale, with “1” representing “disagree strongly” and “7” “agree strongly.” I begin first by examining clergy preferences on denominational divestment.

TABLE 7: Clergy Position on Divestment

Clergy Position on Divestment	PRESBYTERIAN (<i>n</i> = 381)	EPISCOPAL (<i>n</i> = 458)
	β (SE) PP ⁶	β^7 (SE) PP
Seminary Guides Current Ministry	-.025 (.031)	.091* (.039) .03
Presbytery/Bishop Preferences	.095* (.031) .14	-.129***(.031) .06
Session/Vestry Preferences	.096 (.068)	-.153* (.063) .06
Sex	-.099 (.136)	384** (.142) .03
Served in Denom. Legislature	.029 (.133)	-.240* (.103) .02
Years as Minister/Priest	-.008 (.006)	013** (.004) .05
Years in Current Church	-.014 (.021)	-.0003 (.040)
Average Sunday Attendance	-.0002 (.0002)	-.0002 (.0001)
Session/Vestry * Years in Church	.001 (.005)	-.001 (.010)
Baseline Probability	.013	.031
Wald Chi2	29.10	50.43
Prob > Chi2	.0006	.0000
Log-Likelihood	-599.586	-813.344

The results from table 7 show the Presbyterian model to be quite sparse in terms of explanatory power. However, this was expected given the divestment policy’s technical nature. Only the presbytery preference indicator is found to have a statistically significant effect on clergy divestment position. The positive and significant (at .05)

⁶ PP represents the predicted probability for variables of statistical significance in the model. This figure is calculated as the difference between the minimum and maximum value of the independent variable, holding all other variables at their mean.

⁷ * = *p* < .05 ** = *p* < .01 *** = *p* < .001

coefficient shows that when presbyteries are to the left of clergy preferences, clergy are .14 more likely to support the denomination's divestment policy. The result is a clear indication of reference group influence. However, and as expected on the divestment issue, the finding does not point to *proximate* reference group influence, which is the focus of hypothesis 2. Though this is a null finding, that presbyteries are causally significant bolsters the importance of this less proximate reference groups in determining clergy preferences.

The causal story is much richer on the Episcopal side. There, no fewer than six of the model's nine variables return significance. Seminary continues to matter as a primary shaper of clergy political preferences. This confirms hypothesis 1, but is somewhat surprising given divestment's technical or "hard" policy nature (recall that seminary was not a significant influence on Presbyterian clergy). The coefficient's positive direction and significance (at .05) shows that as ECUSA priests increase their reliance on seminary experiences to guide their current ministry, their likelihood of divestment support increases by .03. Yet, in contrast to hypothesis 2, the vestry coefficient is signed negative and is significant (at .05), showing that vestries to the left of ECUSA priests reduce clergy support by .06. An effect on ECUSA clergy of the same magnitude and direction (though with an indicator significant at .000) is found for liberal ECUSA bishops.

Taken together, these findings appear counterintuitive. After all, reference group liberalism should be *positively* related to clergy liberalism. It is here that the denomination's desire to avoid controversy provides the greatest insight into these results. For reasons that arguably had everything to do with a rational attempt to avoid

the onslaught of negative publicity that the PC (U.S.A.) garnered in 2004, ECUSA, led by its liberal leadership, backed away from supporting divestment. It is not clear whether vestry liberals picked up on the denomination's decision to avoid the controversial policy in 2005, but this may help to explain why liberal vestries have a dampening effect on clergy divestment support. Indeed, position taking on this hard issue may have been made easier for vestry members because they were aligning with denominational concerns over the policy's controversial nature, not developing finely honed positions on the merits and drawbacks of the divestiture itself.

The bishop and vestry effects are joined by the negative influence that clergy service in the denominational legislature has on their divestment preferences. The negative sign and significance (.05) of the legislature coefficient shows that clergy serving in that body are .02 less likely to support divestment. This would be expected for clergy who are likely conditioned to take a broader, denominational view of the issue and possible institutional fallout. However, there appears to be great personal impetus for divestment support among ECUSA clergy, especially as it regards seminary influence. Logically, clergy looking back on the values and ideals developed during their professional education, which took place prior to them being situated in the environment of denominational politics, should be more likely to support the policy.

At the same time, other long-term socializing characteristics have a liberalizing effect, including clergy sex. The positive and significant (at .01) indicator shows that female ECUSA priests are .03 more likely to support divestment than their male counterparts. It is also interesting that the length of a priest's tenure in ECUSA returns a positive and significant (at .01) coefficient. Priests with longer tenures in the

denomination are .05 more likely to support divestment. These clergy may be more likely to respond to the issue according to their longer settled ideological values, values that may effectively coincide with seminary-based influences. Another explanation may come from Smidt's (2004) finding that younger clergy have trended more orthodox in their personal political preferences since the 1970s. Though his study does not look at ECUSA, it may be that longer serving clergy are indeed significantly more liberal, and would be more supportive of divestment, than their younger counterparts. These results also suggest that ECUSA clergy, via their seminary experiences, may be more willing to form opinions on hard issues compared to Presbyterians. Admittedly, it is not possible to isolate seminary influence in testing for this effect, but it would make an interesting topic for future research.

I now turn to clergy positions on gay rights issues. Presbyterian respondents were asked about their preferences on gay ordination in their denomination. Episcopal priests were asked about gay marriage. Ideally, the same question would have been posed to both sets of respondents. However, given space constraints in the survey instruments, these separate indicators were used. Since gay ordination, as chapter 3 discussed, is a hot button topic in the PC (U.S.A.), I elected to substitute this question over gay marriage. Though they do not represent the same issue, both are good proxies for affinity toward the gay and lesbian community more generally.

TABLE 8: Clergy Position on Gay Ordination (PCUSA) and Gay Marriage (ECUSA)

Clergy Position on Gay Issues	PRESBYTERIAN (<i>n</i> = 381)	EPISCOPAL (<i>n</i> = 458)
	β (SE) PP ⁸	β ⁹ (SE) PP
Seminary Guides Current Ministry	.111*** (.032) .26	.052 (.045)
Presbytery/Bishop Preferences	-.048 (.037)	.177*** (.038) .16
Session/Vestry Preferences	.088 (.071)	.109 (.083)
Sex	-.263* (.128) .20	.130 (.127)
Served in Denom. Legislature	-.079 (.146)	.132 (.107)
Years as Minister/Priest	-.008 (.005)	-.011** (.004) .09
Years in Current Church	.049 (.030)	.095 (.049)
Average Sunday Attendance	.0004 (.0002)	.0009***(.0002) .50
Session/Vestry * Years in Church	-.014 (.007)	-.019 (.013)
Baseline Probability	.543	.152
Wald Chi2	22.90	100.60
Prob > Chi2	.0064	.0000
Log-Likelihood	-431.890	-811.885

As the positive and significant (at .000) coefficient for the seminary variable shows, Presbyterian clergy relying on their seminary experiences to guide their current ministry are .26 more likely to hold liberal preferences on gay ordination. This, again, provides confirmation for hypothesis 1. Unfortunately, neither the Presbyterian nor the ECUSA model provides additional evidence for hypothesis 2. In fact, in the ECUSA model, it is one's *less proximate* reference group—the bishop—that is found to have the causal importance. As would be expected with a reference group significantly more

⁸ PP represents the predicted probability for variables of statistical significance in the model. This figure is calculated as the difference between the minimum and maximum value of the independent variable, holding all other variables at their mean.

⁹ * = $p < .05$ ** = $p < .01$ *** = $p < .001$

liberal than the denomination's priests, liberal bishops are found to have a positive and significant (at .000) effect on priestly support for gay marriage. Priests encountering bishops more liberal than themselves are .16 more likely to support gay marriage. However, the variable with the largest positive effect on ECUSA priest preferences is average attendance at Sunday services. The positive and significant (at .000) coefficient for the attendance variable shows that higher Sunday attendance increases the likelihood by .50 that priests support gay marriage.

I suggest that this effect is based more on the relative freedom that larger parishes afford ECUSA priests than any groundswell for gay marriage among the significantly more conservative ECUSA laity. Though table 6 put in doubt the notion that increased parish size necessarily leads to the heterogeneity of laity preferences, it is arguable that larger parishes increase the laity's inability to articulate a clearly discernable issue preference to clergy. Though more research is needed on the ability of laity in large religious communities to effectively communicate their preferences to clergy, this explanation seems plausible given the relative inability of larger groups to send clear ideological messages (Zimmerman and Just 2000). Finally, and regarding clergy sex, it is not clear why female clergy, who have been theorized to be more liberal than their male colleagues (and actually found to be so in tables 6 and 7), should be significantly (at .05) more *conservative* on gay ordination (as determined by the negative coefficient) than their male counterparts. Indeed, the likelihood of support for gay ordination is reduced by .20 for female PC (U.S.A.) ministers. A similar finding is returned in the ECUSA model for the length of time a priest has served in the denomination. Recall though that both the sex and years as a priest variables were

positively associated with support for divestment. What might explain the difference in effect as it concerns gay rights?

I return to Carmines and Stimson's (1980) "easy" vs. "hard" distinction to provide explanation. Issues pertaining to human sexuality tap an array of cultural and social concerns (Oldmixon 2005) that are not present in the divestment debate, thereby making sexuality more gut level in terms of comprehension. These easy issues may leave Presbyterian and Episcopal clergy more exposed to negative reactions from their proximate, and more conservative, reference groups. Therefore, female Presbyterian ministers, who Olson et al. (2005) found are predisposed to avoiding institutional conflict, and longer serving ECUSA priests, who may have previously encountered negative reactions from the laity for following their bishop's liberal preferences on gay marriage, may be less likely to support gay rights because it helps to keep harmony with their proximate groups. This discussion opens up the possibility that clergy pursue strategic behavior in dealing with their reference groups, and I will explore this more fully in the following chapter.

Before closing, it is worthwhile to recap this chapter's findings. First, and in confirmation of the sociological institutionalism theory outlined in chapter 2, seminary was found to be a strong and contemporary influence on the development of political preferences for clergy in both denominations. Specifically, clergy reliance on their seminary experiences was strongly and positively related to clergy liberalism, which is an expected result for mainline clergy (McKinney and Finke 2002). Second, there was general evidence throughout the models that reference group liberalism has a positive effect on clergy liberalism. Though hypothesis 2 specifically posited an effect from the

clergy's most proximate groups, both more and less proximate reference groups were found to affect liberal political preferences in clergy. That both sets of references groups influence clergy preferences helps to confirm chapter 4's theoretical model. The model suggested that although the clergy's proximate reference groups possess key influence because of their frequency of contact, less proximate groups are also important, and may be elevated in their causal stature by clergy pursuing goals outside of their local churches (Ammerman 1981; Wald 2003).

Importantly, there was no evidence that clergy preferences move closer to their proximate reference groups' over time. This relationship was suggested in the second sociological theory reflecting Durkheim's (1933) research. Despite only finding confirmation for the first theory and the role of institutions in developing clergy political preferences, it is clear that these preferences are built on a sociological foundation. Given this, it is necessary to extend the neo-institutional analysis to include not only clergy political preferences, but their political behavior as well. In the following chapter, I examine how institutions may influence clergy political behavior, and extend the theoretical analysis to include the possibility that, in undertaking said behavior, clergy may perceive group pressures to strategically mask their sincerely held, and institutionally influenced, preferences.

CHAPTER 6

PREACHING TO THE CHOIR? SOCIOLOGICAL AND STRATEGIC ROOTS OF CLERGY POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

What determines whether clergy take spoken liberal or conservative positions on key political issues? What causes them to encourage parishioners to become more involved in the political process, and to, as clergy, take a greater part in this process themselves? In this chapter, I focus empirical attention on these two basic questions by testing both the sociological and rational choice theories developed in chapters 2 and 4. This chapter is divided into two major sections. The first looks at the reasons behind clergy taking spoken positions on issues of political controversy in their sermons. The second expands the examination of clergy behavior to include five items of political activism, ranging from personal membership in political interest groups to the encouragement of increased political participation among their flocks.

This chapter's importance can be seen in its contrast to its predecessor. Chapter 5 was focused exclusively on evaluating institutional influence on the creation of clergy preferences, with seminary and reference groups providing key explanations. The premise of this chapter, following rational choice expectations, is that there may be differences between clergy preferences and political behavior, differences that are steeped in clergy perception of strategic pressure from their proximate reference groups. Hence, in addition to including sociological items from chapter 5, chapter 6 assesses whether strategic pressure is a key determinant of clergy behavior. In order to test the strategic behavior possibility, and control for the ongoing influence of

sociological institutionalism, I introduce three new hypotheses concerning the public political positions that clergy take.

The chapter's first hypothesis builds on the sociological findings in chapter 5, and takes these influences a step further by suggesting a positive relationship between clergy spoken positions and their sincerely held preferences. This is, in fact, the central finding of the extant clergy politics literature (Guth et al. 1997; Smidt et al. 2003), and relates back to the first sociological theory outlined in chapter 2. The empirical evidence presented in chapter 5 linking clergy liberal preferences with a contemporary reliance on seminary adds weight to the institutional socialization argument. Hence, I hypothesize that

H3: As clergy political liberalism increases, so does the likelihood that they take liberal spoken positions on political issues.

Hypotheses 4 and 5 are based on chapter 5's generally robust findings showing reference group preferences to exert a statistically significant influence on clergy liberalism. From a group socialization perspective, reference group influence represents approbation, identity formation, and sanction for members (Merton 1958; Verba 1961). Groups function as socializing agents, which pull clergy behavior into line with their preferences. This introduces hypothesis 4:

H4: As reference group liberalism increases, so does the likelihood that clergy take liberal spoken positions on political issues.

The importance of group socialization notwithstanding, chapter 4 also suggested that clergy are rational pursuers of specific institutional goals. Therefore, clergy should rationally seek to maintain good relations with their proximate groups and/or avoid the

sanctions they may impose. In pursuing this “collegial goal,” clergy may perceive pressure mask their sincerely held (and statistically more liberal) political preferences. Masking will be detected, in part, by reference groups influencing clergy spoken positions in a manner opposite of clergy preferences. A second indicator of strategic behavior is whether clergy perceive pressure from their most proximate reference groups to behave strategically. This leads to hypothesis 5

H5: As clergy perceive greater pressure from their proximate reference groups to behave strategically, the likelihood that clergy take liberal spoken positions on political issues decreases.

In order to test these new hypotheses, I estimate two models that use clergy sermons on gay rights and denominational divestment as dependent variables. The dependent variables in the gay rights models reflect the specific gay-centered issues confronting each denomination. For the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (PC (U.S.A.)), it is the gay ordination policy; for the Episcopal Church, USA (ECUSA), it is gay marriage. Both dependent variables are ordinal measures that reflect three possible actions taken by clergy. Data were culled from two survey items. The first asked whether clergy preached a sermon on a controversial political topic in 2004-2005. The second asked the issue and position taken by the respondent in the sermon. Clergy who stated that they gave sermons in support of gay ordination or marriage were coded “2.” Those who gave sermons opposed to gay ordination or marriage were coded “0.” Since presenting no sermon on these issues can be characterized as a position in itself (albeit one that is more for than against gay rights), I code no sermon on the issues as “1.” The

divestment models follow this same coding procedure, with “2” reflecting support for the policy, “0” for opposition, and “1” for no sermon.

Prior to discussing the results from the models themselves, I provide a frequency breakdown of the dependent variables in tables 9 and 10. Importantly, the highest percentage of clergy responded that they gave no sermon on either topic. It is not clear whether this finding is the result of clergy intentionally not delivering sermons on these issues, or if respondents simply decided to skip the question’s topic section. Since the majority of respondents completed survey items in close proximity to the sermon question, it is arguable that the lack of response in listing a controversial sermon topic is the result of clergy intentionally avoiding the delivery of sermons on gay rights and divestment. It is also arguable that failure to deliver a sermon on an issue is as much an example of strategic behavior as changing one’s articulated position. These will be important possibilities to keep in mind when analyzing the statistical results to follow. Since it is not entirely clear why respondents did not indicate a sermon topic, and in order to account for any resulting differences created by including respondents who did not specify gay marriage or divestment, I run each pair of models twice. The first set incorporates all respondents. The second uses only those who indicated the delivery of sermons on gay rights and divestment.

TABLE 9: Frequency of Clergy Sermons on Gay Rights (Expressed as Percentages)

	PRESBYTERIAN (<i>n</i> = 387)	EPISCOPAL (<i>n</i> = 508)
0 = Sermon Against	27	31
1 = No Sermon on Topic	46	40
2 = Sermon For	28	29

TABLE 10: Frequency of Clergy Sermons on Divestment (Expressed as Percentages)

	PRESBYTERIAN (<i>n</i> = 387)	EPISCOPAL (<i>n</i> = 508)
0 = Sermon Against	11	14
1 = No Sermon on Topic	60	61
2 = Sermon For	29	25

As with the preceding models, the use of ordinal dependent variables necessitates ordered probabilistic regression analysis. Those models with binary dependent variables use probit analysis. In both cases, I follow the same procedures in relation to the Huber-White estimator as in chapter 5. The dependent variable category of interest in the first set of models, which include all respondents, is “2.” In the second set, which incorporates only respondents who specifically presented a sermon on gay rights or divestment, the variable category of interest is “1.” Predicted probabilities are calculated for all significant independent variables as the difference between the minimum and maximum value of category 2 (or 1) of the dependent variable, holding all

other variables at their means. For the reader's convenience, I review each of the variables in the models prior to discussing the statistical results.

Clergy Political Preferences: The first independent variable is a measure of clergy political preferences. Recall that this was the dependent variable of note in the chapter 5 models. The importance of including this indicator in these new models is to assess whether the political preferences clergy hold are an independent influence on their political behavior. This variable is arranged on a 1-7 scale, with "1" being "strongly conservative" and "7" being "strongly liberal."

Perception of Pressure to Behave Strategically: The next variable is a direct measure of whether clergy perceive pressure from their most proximate reference groups to behave strategically in taking spoken political positions. Chapter 4 lists several potential professional concerns that may induce this pressure perception. Arguably, the most important of these is clergy fear of losing influence over congregants and lay colleagues due to behavioral missteps. Alternatively, one might argue that actual removal from office would be the biggest contributor to clergy pressure. However, I suggest that this fear is not entirely realistic for Presbyterian and Episcopal clergy given that presbyteries and bishops have an equal say in clergy employment decisions. Concomitantly, given the role clergy play as agents of moral suasion, a perceived loss of influence over one's most proximate reference groups should generate a requisite level of clergy sensitivity to any group pressures that exist.

The pressure indicator is taken from a survey item that asked respondents whether they “feel pressured by my congregation/parish and session/vestry to take public positions on controversial political issues that I would not take otherwise.” The response categories were arranged along a 1-7 scale, with “1” representing “disagree strongly and “7” “agree strongly.” Importantly, the pressure indicator represents a measure of clergy behavior that has yet-to-be used in any portion of the religion and political literature. To better assess whether clergy in each denomination perceive strategic pressure from these groups, I provide the arithmetic means and frequency breakdown for this variable in table 11.

TABLE 11: Arithmetic Mean and Frequency Distribution for Strategic Pressure (Expressed as Percentages)

1-7 Scale with “7” “Strongly agree” to perceiving strategic pressure	PRESBYTERIAN (<i>n</i> = 387)	EPISCOPAL (<i>n</i> = 508)
Arithmetic Mean	2.73	5.80
“1” Strongly Disagree	39	05
“2”	25	05
“3”	05	01
“4”	05	04
“5”	10	09
“6”	08	30
“7” Strongly Agree	07	46

As this distribution shows, the denominations are virtually the inverse of each in terms of perceived pressure, with ECUSA priests having a much higher rate of responding in the affirmative on this question than their Presbyterian counterparts. This may reflect the ECUSA clergy’s more protracted experience in dealing with

controversial political concerns (experience that might lead to heightened sensitivity to strategic group pressures) within their denomination, but a definitive explanation cannot be offered by these data.

Seminary Guides Current Ministry: A primary independent variable carried over from chapter 5 is the measure of contemporary seminary influence on clergy. This variable is taken from a survey item that asked clergy whether “I draw on the values and education received in seminary to guide my conduct as a minister/priest.” Responses were coded on a 1-7 scale, with “1” representing “disagree strongly” and “7” “agree strongly.”

Session/Vestry and Presbytery/Bishop Preferences: Considering the importance of reference group influence as a socializing effect in chapter 4’s theoretical model, it is important to assess the potential effects from the various groups of institutional importance to clergy. Arguably, the most important of these effects are clergy perceptions of both their congregational lay leaders’ (representing proximate reference groups), and presbytery or diocese’s (representing a less proximate reference group) political preferences. Group preference measures are based on clergy perceptions of how liberal or conservative these groups are compared to their own preferences. In other words, group appraisals are made relative to clergy ideology. The reference group preference measures are derived from survey items that asked respondents whether each of the three reference groups in question (congregants, lay leaders, and presbytery/bishop) are “more politically conservative/liberal than I am.” Responses were

arranged along a 1-7 scale, with “1” representing “more conservative” and “7” “more liberal.”

*Strategic Pressure * Session/Vestry Preferences:* The next item is an interaction term between clergy perception of proximate reference group pressure to behave strategically and session/vestry political preferences. Since the causal theory concerns the role that group preferences and pressure play in determining clergy political behavior, testing for a joint effect between these two variables is essential.

Clergy Sex: Given that females have had a comparatively difficult time gaining access to the professional clergy ranks, and based on the work of Olson (2000) and Olson et al. (2005) that found female clergy to be significantly more liberal than their male counterparts, I include sex as a control variable, coded “1” if clergy are female.

Years in Current Church; Years As Clergy; Average Sunday Attendance: I, again, include three institutional context variables: 1) the length of time clergy have been ordained ministers in their respective denominations, 2) the number of years clergy have served in their current church, and 3) the average number of parishioners who attend Sunday morning services. It is not clear that any of these three variables, on their own, contribute to clergy political behavior, but they are important inclusions nonetheless.

Served in Denominational Legislature: I also control for prior clergy service in their denominational legislature. Based on Wald (2003) and Ammerman's (1981) findings that higher placed denominational elites hold more liberal preferences, I suggest that clergy who have official contact with these elites via service in the denominational legislature have a higher likelihood of undertaking liberal behavior. This indicator is based on a survey item that asked respondents whether they served previously in their denomination's legislative body. These include the General Assembly (for the Presbyterians) and the House of Deputies (for the Episcopalians). Affirmative responses are coded "1."

*Session/Vestry Preferences * Years in Current Church:* Rounding out the models is an interaction term that links session and vestry preferences with the years clergy have spent in their local church. This is in an effort to tap the socialization over time theory expressed in Durkheim (1933) and Mosca's (1939) research (representing the second of the sociological theories outlined in chapter 2).

As with the gay rights and divestment models in chapter 5, these issues can be distinguished according to Carmines and Stimson's (1980) "easy" vs. "hard" characterization. Recall that divestment is believed to represent a more technically difficult political issue, and, as such, clergy and their proximate reference groups may be less willing to form strong positions on the policy. This hesitation may spill over into clergy behavior in the form of reduced reference group and personal preference influence on the delivery of divestment-related sermons. Because of its more gut level nature, the opposite would be expected for the gay rights issues.

TABLE 12: Preached Sermon on Gay Ordination (PCUSA) and Gay Marriage (ECUSA) in 2004-2005

Gay Ordination/Marriage Sermon	PRESBYTERIAN (<i>n</i> = 381)	EPISCOPAL (<i>n</i> = 454)
	β (SE) PP ¹⁰	β^{11} (SE) PP
Seminary Guides Current Ministry	-0.005 (.031)	.016 (.047)
Presbytery/Bishop Preferences	.049 (.038)	.125* (.047) .31
Session/Vestry Preferences	-.054 (.093)	-.032 (.158)
Clergy Sex	.077 (.160)	.227 (.143)
Served in Denom. Legislature	.137 (.150)	-.081 (.115)
Years as Clergy	.002 (.005)	.002 (.005)
Years in Current Church	.014 (.024)	-.057 (.046)
Average Sunday Attendance	-.0002 (.0002)	-.0003 (.0002)
Perception of Session/Vestry Pressure to Behave Strategically	-.497*** (.084) .52	-.243* (.107) .23
Session/Vestry * Years in Church	-.006 (.006)	.015 (.012)
Clergy Political Preferences	-.023 (.040)	.060* (.034) .12
Pressure * Session/Vestry Preferences	.044 (.028)	-.005 (.023)
Baseline Probability	.22	.26
Wald Chi2	104.83	25.53
Prob > Chi2	.0000	.0125
Log-Likelihood	-336.209	-478.848

The results in table 12 confirm hypothesis 3-5, although the ECUSA model performs more robustly than the Presbyterian. The perception of strategic pressure indicator performs as expected for Presbyterian clergy. In fact, it is the only significant variable in that model. Its negative and significant (at .000) coefficient demonstrates that

¹⁰ PP represents the predicted probability for variables of statistical significance in the model. This figure is calculated as the difference between the minimum and maximum value of the independent variable, holding all other variables at their mean.

¹¹ * = $p < .05$ ** = $p < .01$ *** = $p < .001$

clergy perceiving session pressure to behave strategically were .52 less likely to deliver a sermon in support of gay ordination in 2004-2005. Given the magnitude of this variable's effect, hypothesis 5 is robustly confirmed as it pertains to gay ordination in the PC (U.S.A.). A similar effect exists for this same variable regarding pro-gay marriage sermons in ECUSA. There, the variable's negative signage and significance (at .05) demonstrates that ECUSA clergy were .23 less likely to preach a pro-gay marriage sermon when perceiving strategic pressure from their vestries.

This effect is in stark contrast to the other two significant variables in the ECUSA model. Confirming the importance of personal preferences in determining clergy political behavior, the clergy preference variable is signed positive and is significant at (.05), which points to a positive relationship between clergy liberal preferences and their delivery of liberal sermons. Specifically, more liberal ECUSA clergy were .12 more likely to present a pro-gay marriage sermon. Reference groups are also of consequence in the ECUSA model, although it is the less proximate bishop, not the more proximate vestry, holding causal influence. In fact, bishop preferences hold the greatest magnitude of effect in the model, increasing the likelihood that ECUSA priests preached a pro-gay marriage sermon in 2004-2005 by .31. Again, given that the majority of ECUSA priests report not giving a gay marriage sermon at all, it might be that the positive influence from personal and bishop preferences is responsible for convincing clergy to support the policy. Table 13 looks only at those respondents specifically indicating delivery of a pro-gay sermon. These models are tested using binary probit.

TABLE 13: Preached Sermon on Gay Ordination (PCUSA) and Gay Marriage (ECUSA) in 2004-2005 (Specific responses only)

Gay Ordination/Marriage Sermon	PRESBYTERIAN (<i>n</i> = 206)	EPISCOPAL (<i>n</i> = 306)
	β (SE) PP ¹²	β^{13} (SE) PP
Seminary Guides Current Ministry	-.062 (.067)	.034 (.064)
Presbytery/Bishop Preferences	.042 (.076)	.176* (.076) .31
Session/Vestry Preferences	-.072 (.196)	-.187 (.125)
Clergy Sex	.087 (.280)	.255 (.205)
Served in Denom. Legislature	.606* (.286) .23	-.104 (.164)
Years as Minister/Priest	-.001 (.010)	.002 (.008)
Years in Current Church	.034 (.040)	-.129* (.053) .66
Average Sunday Attendance	-.0001 (.0004)	-.001* (.0003) .34
Perception of Session/Vestry Pressure to Behave Strategically	-.736*** (.127) .93	-.005* (.002) .65
Session/Vestry * Years in Church	-.018 (.013)	.069 (.025)
Clergy Political Preferences	.032 (.079)	.026 (.051)
Pressure * Session/Vestry Preferences	.079* (.042) .66	.160* (.079) .31
Baseline Probability	.48	.43
Wald Chi2	89.57	21.83
Prob > Chi2	.0000	.0395
Log-Likelihood	-84.751	-179.236

In contrast to the preceding model pair, dropping the non-specific respondents produces more robust results for the Presbyterian model. Specifically, and as suggested in hypothesis 5, the perception of strategic pressure from their proximate, and statistically more conservative, reference groups compelled Presbyterian clergy not to

¹² PP represents the predicted probability for variables of statistical significance in the model. This figure is calculated as the difference between the minimum and maximum value of the independent variable, holding all other variables at their mean.

¹³ * = $p < .05$ ** = $p < .01$ *** = $p < .001$

publicly support gay ordination in 2004-2005. The negative and significant (at .000) coefficient for strategic pressure demonstrates that Presbyterian ministers perceiving this pressure are a whopping .93 less likely to have favored gay ordination in their sermons. Importantly, the interaction term between strategic pressure and session liberalism is also significant (at .05), but is signed positively. This suggests that clergy who perceive strategic pressure *and* encounter sessions to their political left are .66 more likely to have made a pro-gay ordination sermon in 2004-2005.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of these joint findings. For the first time in the clergy politics scholarship, the messages clergy broadcast to their congregants are found to be dependent not on personal and sincerely held preferences, but on whether clergy perceive reference group pressure to behave strategically. At the same time, and as an example of the effect less proximate reference groups can have on clergy behavior, clergy having served in the Presbyterian General Assembly—the denominational legislature—are .23 more likely to have presented a pro-gay marriage sermon in 2004-2005 (coefficient significant at .05). Given that all denominational policies must be set by the General Assembly, and given the liberal nature of most national policies in mainline churches, including the PC (U.S.A.), clergy exposure to the denominational legislature likely represents liberal group socialization. This can be considered a confirmation of hypothesis 4.

Turning to the ECUSA model, the results are, again, much more robust than those in table 12. Hypothesis 4 is again confirmed, as liberal bishops have a significant influence over ECUSA priests delivering pro-gay marriage sermons in 2004-2005. Bishops more politically liberal than priests increase the likelihood of priests presenting

a pro-gay marriage sermon by .32 (coefficient significant at .01). In addition, and as with the Presbyterian model, ECUSA priests respond to strategic pressure brought on by their most proximate reference groups. The positive and significant (at .05) coefficient for the strategic pressure variable shows that ECUSA priests who perceive strategic pressure from their most proximate reference group colleagues were .65 less likely to have delivered a pro-gay marriage sermon in 2004-2005. And, as with the Presbyterian model, the interaction term between strategic pressure and session liberalism is significant and signed positive. This means that ECUSA priests perceiving strategic pressure from vestries more politically liberal than themselves are .31 more likely to have delivered a gay marriage sermon. Taken with the strategic pressure base variable's significance, the ECUSA model demonstrates that the delivery of pro-gay marriage sermons is largely determined by both reference group preferences and strategic pressure.

Interestingly, the negative sign and significance (at .05) of the years in church indicator shows that ECUSA priests serving for longer periods in their parishes were .66 less likely to have given a pro-gay marriage sermon. This effect is in-line with expectations concerning clergy proximity to the statistically more conservative laity and vestry members. Also reducing the likelihood of a pro-gay sermon is ECUSA parish attendance. The negative and significant (at .05) variable shows clergy serving in churches with more regular attendees were .34 less likely to present a pro-gay marriage sermon. It is not always clear what to make of the attendance control in these models. Since little research has been conducted on the impact of parish size on clergy political behavior, this issue is certainly ripe for further research.

Having considered the causal influences at work in determining clergy sermons on gay rights issues, I now turn attention to models that address clergy sermons on denominational divestment. The issue has been much more problematic for the PC (U.S.A.) than ECUSA. This was largely due to the Presbyterians being the first to unveil their policy (and the first to receive worldwide condemnation from various quarters). To begin consideration of clergy divestment sermons, I run a pair of models that include all clergy admitting to preaching a controversial political sermon using the same “2-1-0” coding scheme as for the gay rights models in table 12.

TABLE 14: Clergy Divestment Sermon in 2004-2005

Clergy Divestment Sermon	PRESBYTERIAN (n = 381)	EPISCOPAL (n = 454)
	β (SE) PP ¹⁴	β^{15} (SE) PP
Seminary Guides Current Ministry	.040 (.030)	.274*** (.051) .32
Presbytery/Bishop Preferences	-.009 (.041)	.039 (.047)
Session/Vestry Preferences	.056 (.040)	-.103 (.158)
Clergy Sex	-.242 (.165)	.007 (.152)
Served in Denom. Legislature	-.188 (.155)	.194 (.121)
Years as Minister/Priest	-.004 (.006)	.002 (.006)
Years in Current Church	.038 (.040)	.012 (.043)
Average Sunday Attendance	-.0002 (.0002)	.0002 (.0002)
Perception of Session/Vestry Pressure to Behave Strategically	-.230** (.085) .28	-.288** (.097) .40
Session/Vestry * Years in Church	-.011 (.008)	.002 (.011)
Pressure * Session/Vestry Preferences	-.036 (.028)	.026 (.022)
Clergy Political Preferences	.004 (.044)	.050 (.035)
Baseline Probability	.18	.21
Wald Chi2	118.44	102.93
Prob > Chi2	.0000	.0000
Log-Likelihood	-313.967	-372.928

Clergy perception of strategic pressure from their most proximate reference groups is the dominant influence determining whether clergy gave sermons in support of denominational divestment in 2004-2005. In the Presbyterian model, the negative and significant (at .01) coefficient shows that clergy who perceive strategic pressure

¹⁴ PP represents the predicted probability for variables of statistical significance in the model. This figure is calculated as the difference between the minimum and maximum value of the independent variable, holding all other variables at their mean.

¹⁵ * = $p < .05$ ** = $p < .01$ *** = $p < .001$

from their proximate reference groups were .28 less likely to deliver a pro-divestment sermon. The same effect is found for ECUSA priests perceiving strategic pressure, with clergy being .40 less likely to have delivered a pro-divestment sermon in those cases. These findings again confirm hypothesis 5—as strategic reference group pressure increases, liberal political behavior among clergy decreases. With the large percentage of clergy in both denominations giving no divestment sermon, strategic behavior might manifest through clergy saying nothing on the issue, rather than taking a position that might be the opposite of their preferences. Interestingly, seminary influence, the major player in the preference models from the preceding chapter, returns with causal impact on ECUSA clergy. The positive and highly significant (at .000) coefficient shows that those priests relying on their seminary experiences to guide their current ministries were .32 more likely to deliver a pro-divestment sermon. Table 15 examines only those clergy who actually presented a divestment sermon in 2004-2005.

TABLE 15: Clergy Divestment Sermon in 2004-2005 (Specific responses only)

Clergy Divestment Sermon	PRESBYTERIAN (n = 207)	EPISCOPAL (n = 163)
	β (SE) PP ¹⁶	β ¹⁷ (SE) PP
Seminary Guides Current Ministry	-.078 (.060)	.390*** (.110) .69
Presbytery/Bishop Preferences	.102 (.068)	-.005 (.112)
Session/Vestry Preferences	-.187 (.183)	.023 (.212)
Clergy Sex	-.537* (.250) .39	.171 (.306)
Served in Denom. Legislature	-.398 (.251)	.218 (.248)
Years as Minister/Priest	-.005 (.010)	.027* (.012) .22
Years in Current Church	.020 (.041)	.059 (.109)
Average Sunday Attendance	-.0001 (.0004)	-.001 (.0004)
Perception of Session/Vestry Pressure to Behave Strategically	-.300** (.118) .59	-.308* (.185) .22
Session/Vestry * Years in Church	.006 (.013)	.022 (.064)
Pressure * Session/Vestry Preferences	-.004 (.040)	-.004 (.008)
Clergy Preferences	.109 (.079)	.141* (.080) .21
Baseline Probability	.65	.84
Wald Chi2	59.29	44.76
Prob > Chi2	.0000	.0000
Log-Likelihood	-102.223	-63.800

With only specific responses included, the Presbyterian model becomes more robust. The strategic pressure variable maintains its significant (at .01) and negative effect on pro-divestment sermons, although the magnitude increases to .59. This, again, serves as confirmation for hypothesis 5. An added indicator of significance (at .05) is

¹⁶ PP represents the predicted probability for variables of statistical significance in the model. This figure is calculated as the difference between the minimum and maximum value of the independent variable, holding all other variables at their mean.

¹⁷ * = $p < .05$ ** = $p < .01$ *** = $p < .001$

clergy sex. The negative coefficient shows that females were .39 less likely to give a pro-divestment sermon in 2004-2005. This might be evidence that female clergy wish to avoid controversy in their local churches, and will not present sermons on political topics they believe will do so. The ECUSA model is also more robust than its predecessor, and includes confirmation of hypothesis 5. Specifically, clergy who perceive proximate reference group pressure to behave strategically are .22 less likely to have presented a pro-divestment sermon. Returning significance from the previous divestment model is seminary influence. That indicator's positive and significant (at .000) coefficient demonstrates that ECUSA priests relying on seminary to guide their current ministry are .69 more likely to have preached in support of divestment. Reinforcing this effect are two additional variables. First, clergy with liberal political preferences are .21 more likely to have presented pro-divestment sermons in 2004-2005 (variable significant at .05), a confirmation of hypothesis 3. Second, those with longer tenures as priests are .22 more likely to have been pro-divestment (significant at .05). Since these longer-serving clergy are generally older, this might reinforce Smidt's (2004) finding concerning the relative liberalism of clergy who attended seminary prior to the 1970s.

The role that strategic pressure plays in determining clergy spoken positions on controversial political issues stands out clearly in these models. That clergy respond to pressure from their proximate reference groups represents two advances on the extant literature. First, it shows that institutional reference groups are an important influence on clergy political behavior. Second, it demonstrates that rational choice theory is an effective tool for studying religious elites. In order to broaden our understanding of these

institutional and strategic influences on the American clergy, I expand the examination by incorporating additional measures of clergy political behavior.

Beyond the Sermon

Delivering sermons is perhaps the most obvious form of clergy political behavior. However, sermons may be complemented by clergy undertaking activities that reinforce the political cues delivered in their weekly messages to the congregation. In this section, I examine two examples of clergy political behavior that are natural outgrowths of sermon delivery. Each focuses on partisan behavior. The first concerns clergy membership in political interest groups. While potentially less public than sermon political messages, interest group membership links clergy to the political or policy concerns that the group champions. In addition, the information that group membership provides clergy may function as a basis for their political sermons, even if clergy are less than public about their group membership. The second behavior measure examines clergy encouragement of their parishioners to support a political party (without providing specific candidate endorsements). Party encouragement is seen as a corollary of political sermons since these weekly messages are an obvious vehicle through which clergy can call their parishioners to party support.

Recall from the preceding section examining sermons on gay rights and divestment that clergy reliance on seminary, personal preferences, proximate and less proximate reference group ideology, and their perception of proximate group pressure all played some statistical role in determining whether clergy preach sermons on items of political controversy. I expand on these findings by testing for whether this same set

of sociological and rational choice-based influences explain clergy political behavior on items that complement sermon delivery. To do so, I incorporate elements from the five preceding hypotheses, and posit an additional five.

Recall that seminary is generally presumed to be a liberalizing influence on mainline clergy preferences (Roof and McKinney 1987), and that chapter 5 strongly confirmed this expectation. I build on these findings in hypothesis 6 by positing a connection between contemporary clergy reliance on seminary and their current political behavior. However, this new hypothesis deals not with seminary influence and personal liberalism. Instead, it examines the decision to undertake political behavior in the first place. Since seminary is a time of professional development, and because it heightens awareness of clergy efficacy as institutional elites (Charlton 1987; Calhoun-Brown 1996), I suggest that clergy relying on their seminary experiences to guide their current ministries have an increased likelihood of engaging in political behavior

H6: The undertaking of clergy political behavior reflects ongoing seminary influence, as indicated by reference to seminary in guiding their current ministry.

Hypothesis 7 focuses on more proximate sociological influences, in particular the ideological positions of key reference groups. As Key (1961) and Hollander (1958, 1964) found, the role of reference groups in convincing individual actors to conform to group expectations is a powerful one, especially for those groups in closest proximity. Hence, it is again necessary to examine the effect that group ideology might have as a socializing influence on clergy political behavior. In chapter 5, a clergy's colleagues—the board of lay leaders in both the Presbyterian and Episcopal denominations—were suggested to have a contextual influence on clergy *preferences* through their general

ideological positions. Since evidence was found linking proximate group liberalism to clergy liberalism, it is important to extend the examination to clergy political behavior as well. As such, I suggest that

H7: Clergy political behavior reflects increased political liberalism among their proximate reference groups.

A necessary qualifier made in the previous chapter when discussing reference group preferences is that all preference measures are based on clergy perception. There is no independent measure of group preferences independent of how they are perceived by Presbyterian and Episcopal clergy. And, as with hypotheses 1 and 2 in chapter 5, hypotheses 6 and 7 are potentially contending. Both purport to have a direct influence on clergy political behavior, even though one sociological agent (the seminary) is situated in prior experience, while the proximate reference groups represent current contextual forces. Despite being sociological in nature, it is not clear that these different influences should work in tandem. In fact, there may be a crowding out effect in which clergy are influenced so strongly by either their seminary or proximate groups that other sociological actors are pushed out of the causal picture entirely.

I continue to look at the sociological influences on clergy behavior in hypothesis 8, and suggest a positive relationship between clergy political behavior and their sincerely held preferences as found by Guth et al. (1997) and Smidt et al. (2003). By “sociological,” I am referring to the institutional processes at work in developing a clergy’s sincerely held preferences throughout her/his lifetime. This is not necessarily the same as reference group influence, which, while representing a specific kind of sociological cue, may be merely one of several socialization-based influences that

clergy encounter. Specifically, liberal clergy preferences will have a direct and positive influence on clergy political behavior because strongly held preferences serve as a critical motivating force. This is not to suggest, however, that conservative clergy are any less motivated to engage in political behavior (Guth et al. 1997). The hypothesized relationship instead reflects the general ideological liberalism that Presbyterian and Episcopal clergy hold. This liberalism often places clergy to the left of their most proximate reference groups. As such, testing for whether and how clergy liberalism motivates behavior in these sociological conditions is more appropriate given the institutional circumstances

H8: As clergy political liberalism increases, so does the likelihood that clergy engage in political behavior.

Hypotheses 9 and 10 are based on the generally robust findings in chapter 5 showing reference group preferences to exert a statistically significant influence on clergy liberalism. The importance of reference group influence is based in both the sociological and rational choice theories as defined in chapter 2. From a group socialization perspective, reference groups represent approbation, identity formation, and sanction for their members (Merton 1958; Verba 1961). As such, groups were shown to be socializing agents that pull clergy preferences into line with group preferences. If groups have this effect on clergy preferences, it is possible that they also serve as a motivating influence on clergy political behavior. While similar to hypothesis 7, hypothesis 9 does not regard group liberalism as determining clergy liberalism. Instead, hypothesis 9 speaks to the likelihood that clergy undertake political behavior in general.

H9: As reference group liberalism increases, so does the likelihood that clergy engage in political behavior.

The importance of group socialization notwithstanding, chapter 4's theoretical model also situates reference group influence within a decidedly strategic dimension. Clergy are seen as rational pursuers of specific institutional goals. Pursuit of these goals, especially among one's most proximate or "collegial" reference groups, may present clergy with pressure to strategically mask their sincerely held preferences. Given the statistical difference between clergy and proximate group preferences, clergy seeking good group relations may mask their sincerely held (and generally more liberal) preferences when interacting with their most proximate groups. I take this relationship a step further by suggesting that the strategic motive also suppresses clergy political behavior, as behavior represents the tangible manifestation of liberal preferences for the majority of Presbyterian and Episcopal clergy. Strategic influence will be detected in the models, in part, by reference group preferences holding influence on clergy behavior that runs the opposite of their preferences. It will also be observed through clergy perception of proximate reference group pressure to behave strategically. This leads to hypothesis 10

H10: As clergy perceive greater pressure from their proximate reference groups to behave strategically, the likelihood that clergy engage in political behavior decreases.

I use two dependent variables to test aspects of clergy political behavior that complement their delivery of political sermons. Both are dichotomous. The first models consider causal factors on clergy joining/belonging to liberal political interest groups. The dependent variable is coded "1" "if respondents joined or maintained membership

in a liberal political interest group since 2004.” Respondents indicated their membership status and the group(s) name in their survey responses. These were then coded on the basis of group liberalism. Prior to running the models, I provide a frequency distribution of the percentage of Presbyterian and Episcopal clergy who identify as belonging to a liberal political interest group. As the percentages demonstrate, a little over one third of the respondents in both denominations have held membership in a group since 2004. That the percentages are not higher suggests that they may be certain sociological and/or strategic effects that suppress membership. I examine this possibility in discussing the results from table 17.

TABLE 16: Frequency of Clergy Joining/Belonging to Liberal Political Interest Groups in 2004-2005 (Expressed as Percentages)

	PRESBYTERIAN (<i>n</i> = 381)	EPISCOPAL (<i>n</i> = 458)
0 = Non-member	63	62
1 = Member	37	38

TABLE 17: Clergy Joining/Belonging to Liberal Political Interest Groups in 2004-2005

Clergy Join/Belong to Liberal Political Interest Groups	PRESBYTERIAN (n = 381)	EPISCOPAL (n = 458)
	β (SE) PP ¹⁸	β ¹⁹ (SE) PP
Seminary Guides Current Ministry	.041 (.037)	.191*** (.055) .30
Presbytery/Bishop Preferences	.024 (.048)	.304*** (.060) .37
Session/Vestry Preferences	.408** (.139) .65	.274* (.096) .43
Clergy Sex	.018 (.195)	-.019 (.170)
Served in Denom. Legislature	-.059 (.162)	-.133 (.138)
Years as Minister/Priest	.008 (.006)	-.029*** (.007) .35
Years in Current Church	.014 (.034)	-.040 (.037)
Average Sunday Attendance	.0004 (.0002)	.0003 (.0003)
Perception of Session/Vestry Pressure to Behave Strategically	.007 (.010)	-.175** (.061) .39
Session/Vestry * Years in Church	-.008 (.010)	.002 (.015)
Pressure * Session Vestry/ Preferences	-.020 (.032)	.002 (.002)
Clergy Preferences	-.049 (.049)	.071 (.045)
Baseline Probability	.36	.29
Wald Chi2	30.49	50.57
Prob > Chi2	.0024	.0000
Log-Likelihood	-230.298	-247.966

These models provide confirmation for hypotheses 6, 7, 9, and 10. Specifically, the positive and significant (at .000) sign for the Episcopal seminary indicator shows that ECUSA priests were .30 more likely to join or belong to a liberal political interest group when they rely on seminary to help guide their current ministry. Pointing to the

¹⁸ PP represents the predicted probability for variables of statistical significance in the model. This figure is calculated as the difference between the minimum and maximum value of the independent variable, holding all other variables at their mean.

¹⁹ * = $p < .05$ ** = $p < .01$ *** = $p < .001$

influence of more liberal proximate reference groups on clergy behavior, a relationship discussed in hypothesis 7, both Presbyterian and Episcopal respondents were significantly more likely to join or belong to liberal interest groups in 2004-2005 when encountering sessions and vestries to their political left. The positive and significant (at .01) coefficient for Presbyterian sessions shows that clergy in that denomination were .65 more likely to join or belong to a liberal group, while their ECUSA counterparts were .43 more likely to do so (coefficient significant at .05). Yet it is not only the proximate reference groups that are influential. ECUSA clergy encountering bishops to their political left were .37 more likely to join or belong to liberal interest groups. This finding reflects the relationship in hypothesis 9. And, as hypothesis 10 expected, ECUSA clergy perceiving strategic pressure from their most proximate reference groups were .39 less likely (coefficient significant at .01) to join or belong to liberal interest groups in 2004-2005.

Clearly, clergy interest group membership, which has potentially strong linkage to the delivery of political sermons, is affected by reference group influence. However, group membership does not necessarily take on a strong public dimension. As such, it will be interesting to compare the interest group results with those from clergy encouragement of parishioner support for a political party—certainly a very public form of political behavior. In this case, the dependent variable is taken from a survey item that asks respondents whether they “suggested to parishioners that they support a political party *without* providing a formal candidate endorsement” per IRS regulations for tax-exempt organizations. Because of the partisan overlap with clergy membership in liberal political interest groups, respondents who indicated support for the Democratic

Party are coded “1.” Interestingly, it appears from the frequencies in table 18 that advising the conservative laity to support the Democratic Party has a relatively chilling effect on ECUSA priests, as this activity registers the highest percentage of priests claiming no action on a behavior item.

TABLE 18: Frequency of Clergy Advising Parishioners to Support the Democratic Party in 2004-2005 (Expressed as Percentages)

	PRESBYTERIAN (<i>n</i> = 381)	EPISCOPAL (<i>n</i> = 439)
0 = No Advice	72	63
1 = Advice	28	37

TABLE 19: Clergy Advising Parishioners to Support the Democratic Party in 2004-2005

Clergy Advised Parishioners to Support the Democratic Party	PRESBYTERIAN (<i>n</i> = 381)	EPISCOPAL (<i>n</i> = 439)
	β (SE) PP ²⁰	β^{21} (SE) PP
Seminary Guides Political Positions	-.018 (.036)	.069 (.054)
Presbytery/Bishop Preferences	.169*** (.046) .37	-.067 (.052)
Session/Vestry Preferences	-.064 (.122)	-.008 (.094)
Clergy Sex	.038 (.179)	.252 (.167)
Served in Denom. Legislature	.249 (.160)	.109 (.133)
Years as Minister/Priest	-.006 (.007)	-.018** (.006) .27
Years in Current Church	.045 (.029)	.016 (.039)
Average Sunday Attendance	.0003 (.0002)	.00004 (.0003)
Perception of Session/Vestry Pressure to Behave Strategically	-.137 (.087)	-.065 (.059)
Session/Vestry * Years in Church	-.008 (.009)	-.025 (.020)
Pressure * Session/Vestry Preferences	.051* (.029) .52	.003 (.002)
Clergy Preferences	-.042 (.050)	.087* (.041) .18
Baseline Probability	.41	.33
Wald Chi2	21.04	21.19
Prob > Chi2	.0498	.0476
Log-Likelihood	-246.105	-269.224

This pair of models provides confirmatory evidence for hypotheses 8 and 9. Beginning with hypothesis 8, and as would be expected of clergy with more liberal political preferences, the negative and significant (at .05) coefficient for the ECUSA preference variable shows that liberal Episcopal priests were .18 more likely to

²⁰ PP represents the predicted probability for variables of statistical significance in the model. This figure is calculated as the difference between the minimum and maximum value of the independent variable, holding all other variables at their mean.

²¹ * = $p < .05$ ** = $p < .01$ *** = $p < .001$

encourage their parishioners to support the Democratic Party in 2004-2005. The only countervailing effect on ECUSA clergy is the number of years spent in the denomination. The negative and significant (at .01) coefficient suggests that clergy with longer tenures were .27 less likely to call for Democratic Party support. It might be that these clergy have experienced negative reactions to their political behavior from reference groups over the years, and have pulled back in their activity. Unfortunately, it is not possible to say for sure given the nature of these data.

Evidence supports hypothesis 9 on the Presbyterian side. The positive and significant (at .000) coefficient shows that PC (U.S.A.) ministers serving in presbyteries to their political left were .37 more likely to advocate support for the Democratic Party among their parishioners in 2004-2005. This effect is logical given that clergy may be pursuing the policy and/or denominational influence goals with presbytery officials. Yet there is tension in the Presbyterian model. Clergy perception of strategic pressure from their most proximate reference groups has a negative and significant (at .05) effect on clergy encouraging support for Democrats. Interestingly, the effect comes not from the base variable measuring strategic pressure. Instead, it exists in the interaction term between the perception of strategic pressure and session preferences. This means that clergy who perceive strategic pressure from sessions to their political left were statistically more likely to encourage support of the Democratic Party in 2004-2005. In fact, the effect's magnitude is the largest in this pair of models, increasing the likelihood by .52. This indicator registers an effect that is the exact opposite of hypothesis 10's expectation, but that makes sense in light of the interaction with session liberalism. The conclusion drawn is that reference group preferences matter as a causal influence on

clergy political behavior, even when clergy are more *conservative* than the group. It is important that results from this section's model pairs reflect sociological and strategic influence on partisan political behavior. This is because interest group membership and the encouragement of party support represent activities that enhance sermon delivery. Group membership provides clergy with political knowledge and resources to help them craft parishioner cues. At the same time, advocating political party support is a logical step for clergy when encouraging parishioner activism, especially if pro-gay rights and/or divestment sermon cues are included.

Thus far, this chapter has examined the sociological and strategic influences on clergy sermonizing, their membership in liberal political interest groups, and their advocacy of parishioner support of the Democratic Party. In each of these preceding analyses, the dependent variables were focused on partisan or issue specific political behavior among clergy. In contrast, this chapter's final section analyzes clergy efforts at promoting political behavior of a non-partisan nature.

Non-Partisan Clergy Behavior

Zald's (1982) work helps to flesh out why clergy can promote political behavior among their followers. He found that clergy are able to define their religious ministries along a political dimension. It is this definition, and the tone it carries in the local church, that provide clergy legitimacy as political elites among their followers. Coupled with Johnson and White's (1967) finding that religious group members share a common identity shaped largely by clergy cues, and that clergy are significantly interested in political activities (Quinley 1974), clergy are positioned to act as significant catalysts for

parishioner political behavior. The extant scholarship has usually considered clergy encouragement of parishioner political activism to be the direct product of their political preferences (Nelson et al. 1973; Guth et al. 1997). Findings in this chapter reflected this relationship somewhat, as ECUSA clergy liberalism was found to be a significant predictor of their encouragement of parishioner support for the Democratic Party. Yet findings also pointed to the influence of strategic reference group pressure on clergy behavior. Because mainline clergy often interact with proximate reference groups that are more politically conservative than themselves, it is not clear that, controlling for reference group ideology, clergy are necessarily willing to encourage parishioner political activity. Thus, is it possible that strategic pressure might reduce the likelihood of clergy advocating general political participation among their followers?

In order to assess this possibility, and build on the findings in this and the preceding chapter, I generate four additional hypotheses. These test for the influence of seminary, clergy preferences, reference group ideology, and ideological differences between clergy and their parishioners on clergy encouragement of parishioner political activism. Hypothesis 11 focuses on seminary's contemporary role in the process, and is steeped in the notion that seminary, which was found to be a strong influence on clergy preferences in chapter 5, will induce clergy to solicit participation among their followers.

H11: Clergy encouragement of parishioner political participation reflects ongoing seminary influence, as indicated by reference to seminary in guiding their current ministry.

In preceding models, clergy preferences mattered in determining the nature of their gay rights and divestment sermons. In those instances, liberal ECUSA clergy were

significantly more likely to deliver sermons supporting gay marriage and denominational divestment. In a related way, clergy liberalism should increase their support for parishioner participation since liberals were the first to call for the inclusion and enfranchisement of political minorities in both religious communities and secular politics (Levine 1981; Lewis 1998; Olson 2000). Hence, I suggest that

H12: As clergy political liberalism increases, so does the likelihood that clergy encourage parishioner political behavior.

Models in both this and the preceding chapter have demonstrated the importance of reference group influence on both clergy preferences and political behavior. I expand on these findings by positing a relationship between reference group liberalism and clergy support for parishioner political behavior. This relationship is based on the notion that liberal reference groups will reinforce clergy motives to encourage participation among local parishioners.

H13: As liberalism among their reference groups increases, so does the likelihood that clergy encourage parishioner political behavior.

This section's strategic behavior hypothesis departs from the prior focus on group pressure in determining clergy behavior. While such pressure remains an important factor to consider, and is included in the models that follow, I believe that a more fruitful way of exploring the strategic motive is to assess whether clergy are moved away from their desire to encourage parishioner activism because of large ideological differences with their followers. I suggest that the larger the gap in preferences, the less likely clergy should be to encourage participation. This is because the ANOVA and frequency distribution results from chapter 4 suggest that a large

ideological difference will often mean that the laity is positioned to the right of clergy politically. As such, clergy should be less interested in spurring political activism among those who would behave in ways opposite of what clergy prefer politically.

Concomitantly, if a large preference difference exists, clergy may be inviting the wrath of their followers since appeals to increased participation would likely expose clergy (liberal) preferences. Given this, I hypothesize that

H14: As the numerical difference between clergy and congregant ideology increases, the likelihood that clergy encourage parishioner political behavior decreases.

The following pairs of models concern whether clergy, in 2004-2005, 1) started petitions on topics of political importance, 2) placed literature of a political nature in the church, and 3) encouraged parishioners to contact political leaders to express their views. The set of independent variables in the following three models is the same as for preceding models in this chapter with the exception of the added ideological difference indicator. The variable measures the numerical difference between clergy and reference group preferences. It is computed by subtracting congregational from clergy ideology. For example, in cases where the clergy are a “6” on the 1-7 ideological scale (with “7” representing “strongly liberal”), and the congregation is a “2,” the ideological difference variable value is “4,” which constitutes a large difference in liberalism between clergy and parishioners. The theoretical expectation is that higher liberal difference values will produce a negative effect on clergy encouragement of parishioner participation.

The dependent variable in the first model pair asked respondents whether they “encouraged parishioners to contact political leaders to express their political views.” Affirmative responses were coded “1.” As seen in table 20, the majority of both

Presbyterian and Episcopal clergy elect *not* to encourage parishioners in this manner, although ECUSA priests outpace their Presbyterian counterparts nonetheless.

TABLE 20: Clergy Encouraging Parishioners to Contact Political Leaders in 2004-2005 (Expressed as Percentages)

	PRESBYTERIAN (<i>n</i> = 381)	EPISCOPAL (<i>n</i> = 458)
0 = Not Encourage	73	56
1 = Encourage	27	44

TABLE 21: Clergy Encouraging Parishioners to Contact Political Leaders in 2004-2005

Encouraged Parishioners to Contact Political Leaders	PRESBYTERIAN (<i>n</i> = 381)	EPISCOPAL (<i>n</i> = 458)
	β (SE) PP ²²	β ²³ (SE) PP
Seminary Guides Current Ministry	.068 (.042)	.269*** (.076) .13
Presbytery/Bishop Preferences	-.163** (.054) .28	.049 (.076)
Session/Vestry Preferences	-.104 (.145)	.344** (.135) .28
Clergy Sex	-.428* (.234) .17	.508* (.228) .08
Served in Denom. Legislature	.105 (.182)	.201 (.188)
Years as Minister/Priest	.005 (.007)	-.010 (.008)
Years in Current Church	-.026 (.033)	-.025 (.041)
Average Sunday Attendance	.0003 (.0002)	.0001 (.0004)
Perception of Session/Vestry Pressure to Behave Strategically	-.079 (.010)	.088 (.068)
Session/Vestry * Years in Church	.008 (.010)	.005 (.020)
Pressure * Session/Vestry Preferences	.018 (.034)	-.001 (.002)
Clergy Preferences	-.048 (.105)	.126 (.082)
Clergy/Congregation Ideological Difference	-.169*** (.076) .59	-.268*** (.063) .66
Baseline Probability	.22	.07
Wald Chi2	72.54	57.60
Prob > Chi2	.0000	.0000
Log-Likelihood	-176.326	-124.049

The findings for hypothesis 13 are mixed. Less proximate reference groups to the clergy's left do not increase their encouragement of parishioner activism in the PC (U.S.A.). As the negative and significant (at .01) coefficient shows, Presbyterian clergy

²² PP represents the predicted probability for variables of statistical significance in the model. This figure is calculated as the difference between the minimum and maximum value of the independent variable, holding all other variables at their mean.

²³ * = $p < .05$ ** = $p < .01$ *** = $p < .001$

serving in more liberal presbyteries were .28 less likely to encourage their parishioners to contact political leaders in 2004-2005. Conversely, more proximate reference groups to the left of ECUSA clergy had an encouraging effect on participation. ECUSA priests were .28 more likely (coefficient significant at .01) to encourage participation when encountering vestries to their political left. This effect is reinforced for ECUSA priests relying on seminary experiences to guide their current ministry, thereby confirming hypothesis 11. Those clergy were .13 more likely (coefficient significant at .000) to encourage participation when drawing on their seminary experiences. What might explain this difference in reference group effects? Though it is not possible to determine for sure, it might be that liberal presbyteries are concerned with how the laity's political activation might impact the liberal policies they (the presbyteries) wish to pursue. In many instances, laity participation might translate into conservative resistance. As such, presbyteries may discourage clergy from seeking greater political involvement by their flocks.

However, clergy serving in presbyteries to their political left have an added incentive in avoiding negative attention. Keeping the presbytery satisfied is especially important for clergy pursuing goals related to increased institutional influence and/or "good" denominational policy. At the same time, district level supervisors are not the only dampening effect on clergy political encouragement. Olson et al.'s (2005) finding that female clergy try to avoid inciting church controversy sheds light on why female Presbyterian clergy are .17 less likely (coefficient significant at .05) to encourage their flocks to contact political leaders. After all, for clergy to encourage the laity's political involvement means that underlying political differences within local congregations might

be exposed, thereby contributing to the institutional conflict female clergy wish to avoid. That said, it is noteworthy that female ECUSA clergy have an *increased* likelihood of .08 (coefficient significant at .05) of encouraging laity participation. It is not clear why this difference in effect exists. At the very least, it suggests that female clergy are not as risk averse as some of the more recent scholarship suggested (Crawford and Olson 2001; Olson et al. 2005).

Finally, the ideological difference indicator in both models performs as expected, confirming hypothesis 14. PC (U.S.A.) clergy confronting larger liberal ideological differences with their laity were .59 less likely (coefficient significant at .000) to encourage their flocks to contact political leaders in 2004-2005. ECUSA clergy were .66 less likely (coefficient significant at .000) to do the same. Larger preference differences mean clergy are more politically liberal than their followers. It stands to reason, therefore, that clergy may find reason to dampen their calls for activism so as not to activate large numbers of voters who would likely behave in ways opposite of clergy preferences. Coupled with the influence of strategic reference group pressure discovered earlier in this chapter, the finding that clergy pull back in their encouragement of laity political activism is an important contribution to the literature.

To this point, the basic model of clergy political behavior centered on personal preferences in determining action, including calls for the laity to become more politically involved. Now, with the discoveries that clergy perceive pressure to strategically mask their preferences, and are less likely to encourage political participation when leading conservative parishioners, a much more nuanced view of clergy political behavior emerges. Clergy appear to behave as rational actors—calibrating their behavior

according to the contextual environments they encounter, environments that are largely determined by institutional variables such as reference group preferences and location. The sincere preferences clergy hold are not without influence, as suggested by the continued importance of seminary experiences. Yet clergy behavior is not the direct effect of a preference-based cause alone. Along the way, reference groups and ideological differences with their followers create incentives for clergy to deviate from their preferences. It will be interesting to see whether these incentives exist in the remaining models.

The dependent variable in the next pair of models is based on a survey item that asked respondents whether they “started a petition on a matter of political importance” in 2004-2005, and is coded “1” if answered in the affirmative. The growing trend in these frequency tables appears to be that ECUSA priests are much more willing to encourage laity participation than their Presbyterian counterparts. This is relevant because there has been little comparison in the literature of ECUSA with other mainline denominations (see especially Guth et al. 1997). As such, that ECUSA priests are much more willing to generally encourage laity participation is itself an interesting finding.

TABLE 22: Frequency of Clergy Starting a Petition on an Item of Political Importance in 2004-2005 (Expressed as Percentages)

	PRESBYTERIAN (<i>n</i> = 381)	EPISCOPAL (<i>n</i> = 458)
0 = No Petition	77	57
1 = Petition	23	43

TABLE 23: Clergy Starting a Petition on an Item of Political Importance in 2004-2005

Started a Petition on Item of Political Importance	PRESBYTERIAN (<i>n</i> = 381)	EPISCOPAL (<i>n</i> = 458)
	β (SE) PP ²⁴	β^{25} (SE) PP
Seminary Guides Current Ministry	-.077 (.040)	.084 (.052)
Presbytery/Bishop Preferences	-.076 (.050)	-.047 (.053)
Session/Vestry Preferences	-.045 (.126)	.023 (.088)
Clergy Sex	.119 (.209)	.124 (.163)
Served in Denom. Legislature	.177 (.173)	-.028 (.129)
Years as Minister/Priest	-.008 (.007)	-.011 (.006)
Years in Current Church	.035 (.028)	-.040 (.039)
Average Sunday Attendance	-.0001 (.0003)	.0001 (.0003)
Perception of Session/Vestry Pressure to Behave Strategically	-.072 (.086)	-.018 (.053)
Session/Vestry * Years in Church	-.009 (.009)	.008 (.015)
Pressure * Session/Vestry Preferences	.028 (.029)	.001 (.001)
Clergy Preferences	-.051 (.093)	-.169** (.055) .38
Clergy/Congregation Ideological Difference	-.145* (.066) .52	.033 (.044)
Baseline Probability	.50	.39
Wald Chi2	55.00	26.73
Prob > Chi2	.000	.0135
Log-Likelihood	-194.329	-293.855

In contrast to the previous model set, these results provide a limited glimpse into clergy encouragement of political behavior. In the ECUSA model, only clergy preferences are a significant influence, albeit one that runs counter to hypothesis 12's

²⁴ PP represents the predicted probability for variables of statistical significance in the model. This figure is calculated as the difference between the minimum and maximum value of the independent variable, holding all other variables at their mean.

²⁵ * = $p < .05$ ** = $p < .01$ *** = $p < .001$

expectations. Specifically, liberal ECUSA clergy are .38 less likely (coefficient significant at .01) to have started a petition on a political issue. The hypothesized expectation was that liberal clergy would promote participation. It is not clear why this countervailing effect exists, but it might provide cause to reconsider the notion that personal liberalism encourages political participation. Certainly, the more liberal PC (U.S.A.) clergy are compared to their flocks, the less likely they are to have started a political petition. Clergy encountering a large liberal ideological difference in their congregations were .52 less likely (coefficient significant at .05) to have started a political petition. Results from both denominations suggest that clergy liberalism, whether alone or in comparison to parishioner preferences, has a limiting influence on clergy encouragement of political participation. Liberalism's effect will be something to watch in the third and final pair of participation models in this chapter.

The third model pair focuses on whether clergy place political literature in their churches. The dependent variable is based on a survey item that asked respondents whether they “place literature of a political nature in public areas in the church” in 2004-2005, and is coded “1” for affirmative responses.

TABLE 24: Frequency of Clergy Placing Political Literature in Public Church Areas in 2004-2005 (Expressed as Percentages)

	PRESBYTERIAN (<i>n</i> = 381)	EPISCOPAL (<i>n</i> = 458)
0 = No Literature	62	58
1 = Literature	38	42

TABLE 25: Clergy Placing Political Literature in Public Church Areas in 2004-2005

Clergy Placed Political Literature in Public Church Areas	PRESBYTERIAN (<i>n</i> = 379)	EPISCOPAL (<i>n</i> = 458)
	β (SE) PP ²⁶	β^{27} (SE) PP
Seminary Guides Political Positions	-.050 (.041)	-.067 (.052)
Presbytery/Bishop Preferences	.010 (.049)	-.026 (.052)
Session/Vestry Preferences	-.076 (.141)	.378*** (.104) .62
Clergy Sex	-.270 (.219)	-.064 (.173)
Served in Denom. Legislature	.856*** (.172) .33	.071 (.131)
Years as Minister/Priest	.050*** (.008) .80	.130* (.056) .74
Years in Current Church	.076* (.035) .62	.011 (.006)
Average Sunday Attendance	.001*** (.0003) .63	.0007* (.0003) .42
Perception of Session/Vestry Pressure to Behave Strategically	-.202* (.097) .39	.032 (.055)
Session/Vestry * Years in Church	-.020 (.011)	-.032 (.019)
Pressure * Session/Vestry Preferences	.064* (.032) .61	.006 (.002)
Clergy Preferences	-.130 (.104)	-.120** (.056) .27
Clergy/Congregation Ideological Difference	.080 (.072)	-.156*** (.046) .58
Baseline Probability	.43	.44
Wald Chi2	124.26	58.04
Prob > Chi2	.0000	.0000
Log-Likelihood	-191.726	-274.364

Table 25 provides evidence of reference group crosspressures on clergy placement of political literature. The most obvious example in the Presbyterian model concerns the role of strategic pressure and session ideology. Specifically, the negative

²⁶ PP represents the predicted probability for variables of statistical significance in the model. This figure is calculated as the difference between the minimum and maximum value of the independent variable, holding all other variables at their mean.

²⁷ * = $p < .05$ ** = $p < .01$ *** = $p < .001$

sign and significance (at .05) of the strategic pressure variable shows that Presbyterian clergy perceiving strategic session pressure were .39 less likely to place political literature in their churches in 2004-2005. Yet when sessions are politically situated the clergy's left, the interaction between strategic pressure and session liberalism has the opposite effect. Specifically, clergy perceiving strategic pressure from more liberal sessions were .61 more likely (coefficient significant at .05) to place literature. A similar set of opposing influences is also at work on ECUSA clergy. While outright strategic influence was not a factor in that model, both clergy liberalism and a large liberal ideological difference between clergy and their parish reduced the likelihood of clergy placing political literature by .58 (coefficient significant at .000), confirming hypothesis 14. However, that ECUSA clergy liberalism reduced their likelihood of placing literature by .27 (coefficient significant at .01) runs counter to hypothesis 12's expectations.

This is the second piece of evidence showing clergy liberalism to undermine clergy support for the laity's general political participation. Unfortunately, these data are not able to explain why personal liberalism should have this effect. It might be that, despite liberalism's historical importance as a catalyst for social and institutional change, liberal clergy are hostile to encouraging non-ideological political participation among their flocks. By contrast, and in confirmation of hypothesis 13, ECUSA clergy encountering vestries to their political left are .62 more likely (coefficient significant at .000) to place political literature. Though affirming the importance of reference group influence on clergy behavior, the disconnect between clergy preferences and vestry ideology is intriguing. Is it possible that clergy elect to go along with their liberal vestries in placing political literature despite personal ideological objections? I am not able to

determine for sure from these results, but this is a possibility worthy of further empirical attention.

The remaining variables of significance in both models perform in more expected ways. For instance, PC (U.S.A.) clergy with experience in the denomination's General Assembly were .33 more likely (coefficient significant at .000) to place political literature in their churches. Legislative experience might serve to heighten clergy awareness of political issues in both the denomination and secular politics, thereby encouraging literature placement. Concomitantly, clergy longevity plays a very significant role in the process. The years as clergy indicator in both models, and the years in current church variable on the Presbyterian side, represent positive influences on literature placement. The PC (U.S.A.) minister variable shows significance at .000, and increases the likelihood that clergy placed political literature in 2004-2005 by .80. For ECUSA clergy, the likelihood increases by .74 (coefficient significant at .05). The Presbyterian years in church variable is significant at .05, and increases the likelihood that political literature was placed by .62. Taken together, these findings suggest that longer tenured clergy are much more willing to display political literature than their younger counterparts. This may reflect Smidt's (2004) contention that older clergy are more politically liberal and active because of their experiences in seminary, although the effect certainly does not carry over to the Episcopal ranks. Finally, clergy serving in churches with higher attendance at Sunday services are .63 more likely in the Presbyterian model (coefficient significant at .000) and .42 more likely in the Episcopal (coefficient significant at .05) to have placed political literature in their churches in 2004-2005. This effect may be due to the reality of serving in larger churches where the laity's political homogeneity may be

reduced, thereby lessening the possibility of strategic pressure and/or parishioner backlash over the types of literature displayed.

Results from this chapter suggest that clergy political behavior is the product of both socialized preferences and institutional influences. The latter exist in the form of reference group ideology, strategic pressure, and significant differences between clergy liberalism and laity conservatism. Seminary was also found to exert behavioral influence, thereby reinforcing the importance of this educational institution on clergy. This chapter's two most provocative findings concern 1) clergy willingness to behave strategically in relation to perceived pressure from their most proximate institutional reference groups, and 2) the dampening effect differences in clergy and laity ideology have on the former's political encouragement of the latter. Though religious elite behavior has been considered according to rational choice frameworks in the past, this study represents the first systematic attempt to understand how the strategic motive impacts American clergy across a national sample. While demonstrating that clergy are rational actors, results from both this and the preceding chapter show clergy behavior to be very much the product of socialized preferences. As such, this research reflects the importance of the sociological foundations of clergy preferences and behavior while expanding scholarly understanding of religious elites into new areas. I further situate these findings within the relevant literature, and explore possibilities for future research, in chapter 7.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS

Overall, results from this dissertation reinforce the importance of neo-institutionalism in understanding clergy political behavior. Reflecting the extant literature's findings, chapter 5 showed that institutions inculcate enduring and sincerely held political preferences in clergy. Based on results in chapter 6, institutions also motivate clergy to strategically engage in public political behavior. Specifically, when perceiving strategic pressure, clergy behave in ways contrary to their sincerely held preferences. At the same time, when there is a large ideological difference between clergy and their parishioners, the former, most often positioned to the laity's ideological left, actually discourage political participation by their more conservative followers. Though religious elites have been the subject of countless empirical inquiries, and while this project is not the first to invoke rational choice principles in understanding clergy preferences and behavior, this is the first study to link theoretical expectations of strategic behavior with systematic, quantitative evidence that clergy may be strategic actors, even as their sincerely held preference continue to affect their behavior.

In conducting this study, I used two neo-institutional frameworks: sociological institutionalism and rational choice theory. From these, I derived three basic research questions. First, in what ways do institutions, through their role as socializing agents, implant enduring and sincerely held political preferences in clergy? As the results in chapters 5 and 6 demonstrate, it is a clergy's experience in, and continued reliance on, seminary that represents a profound institutional socializing influence. While the literature has considered seminary's role in developing clergy preferences, the

educational experience was often treated as a distant institutional encounter. The importance of the findings from chapters 5 and 6 is that they show seminary-based values to be a potent and contemporary influence on clergy political preferences and behavior.

The second research question, also steeped in the sociological tradition, considered the influence of institutional reference groups as conduits of sincere change in clergy political preferences over time. Specifically, longer contact with their most proximate reference groups should increase the likelihood that clergy preferences reflect the groups'. Unfortunately, the models presented no clear evidence to answer this question affirmatively. I suggest that this non-finding may be the partial result of limitations in the data gathering techniques employed. Panel data would best assess any change in sincerely held clergy preferences over time. Hence, the assessment of this second sociological theory may still bear fruit, albeit in future research. That said, reference group preferences were found to be significant influences on clergy preference and behavior, thereby strengthening the sociological explanation overall.

The third research question examined whether institutions shape clergy incentive structures such that they are compelled to strategically adopt behavior consistent not with their sincere political preferences, but with the preferences of their most proximate reference groups. Importantly, this possibility has never been assessed through statistical survey research. This is due, in part, to scholars overlooking the potential role that rational choice assumptions play in explaining clergy political behavior. Importantly, the most consistent indicators in the chapter 6 models were those measuring proximate reference group pressure on clergy to behave strategically. Though the models do not

show sincere clergy preferences and strategic pressure to be significant and signed opposite of each other, that the pressure variables should be frequently significant across models points to a rational choice-based explanation for clergy political behavior.

According to the theoretical model outlined in chapter 4, it is not difficult to understand why this would be so. According to that model, clergy are active pursuers of specific institutional goals. One of these goals involves maintaining good relations with proximate reference groups in the local church. Given the contact frequency and proximity clergy have to these groups, pursuit of what I termed the “collegial goal” is a rational undertaking for clergy. It may be that in pursuing the collegial goal, clergy become sensitive to the perception of group pressure to behave strategically on political issues. That said, evidence from the chapter 6 models suggests that clergy pursue goals outside of the local church as well. Their sensitivity to the preferences of less proximate reference groups, and the liberalizing impact that clergy service in the denominational legislatures had, suggests that clergy pursue intra-institutional influence and/or specific public policy within the national churches. Another intriguing finding was the dampening role that Episcopal clergy liberalism has on the encouragement of their parishioners to engage in the political process. Assuming that liberalism functions as a positive force on participation, the contrary effects in the last three models in chapter 6 may constitute evidence of strategic behavior in ECUSA priests, although more research will be needed to effectively tease out this possibility.

Overall, these results point to the merits of both the sociological and rational choice theories in explaining clergy political preferences and behavior. The certain innovation from this dissertation is testing the latter theory while confirming the former's

relevance. Indeed, I do not make the argument that clergy preferences and behavior can be successfully understood without the empirical leverage that *both* theoretical lenses provide. This point is clearly made in several of the models where the sociologically-based indicators provide the greatest explanatory information. Though statistical testing of rational choice assumptions is a nascent addition to the study of clergy politics, it is important to keep in mind that both the sociological institutionalism and rational choice theories are derived from the same set of neo-institutional assumptions (Hall and Taylor 1996). Namely, institutions function as the contextual and structural causes of the political preferences clergy hold, and the behavior in which they engage.

Importantly, while future research possibilities may be greatly expanded through the dual use of the sociological and rational choice lenses, certain of the theoretical assumptions in chapter 4 may need modification when expanding the focus beyond mainline clergy. For example, one must be careful not to assume general applicability of the three institutional goals (collegiality, institutional influence, and “good” public policy) to clergy in other religious traditions. The difficulty with assuming the collegial goal for Roman Catholic priests, for instance, becomes clear when realizing that the Catholic laity does not exercise institutional leadership that is in any manner on par with their Protestant counterparts. While Catholic priests are not necessarily interested in alienating their parishioners, there is no institutional mechanism that requires them to collaborate with the laity in determining parish policy. Hence, for all intents and purposes, the collegial goal, as it exists in the Presbyterian and Episcopal Churches—is non-existent for Catholic priests. On the other hand, and given Roman Catholicism’s

well-developed institutional hierarchy, a case can be made that the pursuit of denomination policy and influence are important goals for priests, and should be emphasized in neo-institutional research on the Catholic Church. At the other end of the institutional spectrum are those local churches that have little or no denominational linkage. Though they may have some type of cooperative relationship with regional or national organizations, these congregations have no formal connection to a set of sister churches or bureaucratic agencies. As such, it is not possible to sustain the relevance of the policy or denominational influence goals for clergy in these contexts.

What makes the three institutional goals a fairly successful explanation for mainline Protestant clergy is that liberal and conservative political preferences clash at various institutional points. This is most clearly seen in the statistical divide between clergy and the laity, but exists between denominational leaders and clergy as well. In the absence of a preference clash between denominational actors, one or more of the goals might lose their explanatory power. Take away preference differences between reference groups and clergy, and there is little systematic reason for clergy to change their public positions because of group pressure or other strategic concerns. Thus, given the preference *homogeneity* between clergy and laity in evangelical Protestant denominations, reference group influence might not muster much explanatory power. It is likely no accident that the literature on contextual influences (see especially Djupe and Gilbert 2002, 2003, and Olson et al. 2005) focuses exclusively on the mainline Protestant clergy.

Hence, there appear to be clear limitations in extending the choice theoretic assumptions and professional goals beyond mainline Protestantism. While this is

certainly disappointing, it is important to remember that American mainline Protestantism is second only to Roman Catholicism in terms of adherents (see footnote one for further discussion on this point). Hence, to the extent that this study can be exported to examinations of the United Methodist, Lutheran, Disciples of Christ, and United Church of Christ denominations (among others), a good deal will have been discovered about clergy in an important segment of American Christianity, which, despite its general signs of decline, remains a relevant topic of interest for religion and politics scholars.

One of the ways that this dissertation could be extended within mainline Protestantism would be to incorporate laity perceptions in the analysis. At this point, almost all of what we know about clergy behavior comes from studies that rely on clergy perceptions. Yet perhaps the greatest assumed linkage in the religion and politics literature is the relationship between clergy behavior and the laity's response. The inherent assumption made is that, because churches have been found to be important political contexts for their members (Wald et al. 1988), clergy behavior must play a consistent and significant role in galvanizing parishioners to undertake political behavior.

Unfortunately, this connection has never been explicitly made in the research, and there is good reason for this. To create anything resembling a generalizable study of this phenomenon would take considerable resources, not the least of which would be the cooperation of hundreds of churches and clergy from a national random sample. Perhaps a more realistic study would entail a manageable number of churches across the country drawn from methods other than random selection. Scholars already have an

account of the clergy's perception of the laity, and how those in the pew affect clergy political behavior. By completing the loop, scholars would have insight into whether directly measured laity characteristics comport with clergy perceptions of the same thing. The discovery of inconsistencies between clergy perception and laity reality would be of obvious theoretical and empirical significance.

In whatever direction future research moves, it is clear that there is still much to do in understanding clergy political preferences and behavior. Through this dissertation, I have attempted to add institutional context to the analysis, context that opens the door to new research agendas in the study of clergy politics. The contextual variables developed here have proven useful in understanding the sociological and rational choice aspects of clergy and their approach to politics. I have demonstrated that an equally good case can be made that mainline Protestant clergy are affected by both sociological and rational choice motives in their political preferences and behavior. The existence of both conditions makes the study of clergy political behavior an exciting one, and suggests that clergy may act as both sincere shepherds *and* strategic saints.

APPENDIX A
PRESBYTERIAN QUESTIONNAIRE



ANONYMOUS SURVEY OF PC (U.S.A.) CLERGY

Please answer these questions to the best of your ability. Some questions may appear to be similar or the same. Try to answer all questions regardless.

YOUR CONGREGATION AND SESSION:

(1=More Conservative 4= Generally the Same 7= More Liberal)

1) My <u>congregation</u> is more POLITICALLY conservative/liberal than I am.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2) My <u>congregation</u> is more THEOLOGICALLY conservative/liberal than I am.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3) My <u>session</u> is more POLITICALLY conservative/liberal than I am.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4) My <u>session</u> is more THEOLOGICALLY conservative/liberal than I am.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

(1 = Agree Strongly 4= Neutral 7 = Disagree Strongly)

5) I take the general views of my congregation and session into account when FORMING my views on a POLITICAL issue.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6) I take the general views of my congregation and session into account when EXPRESSING my views on a POLITICAL issue.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7) It is important for me to feel that I am helping to shape the POLITICAL views of my congregation.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8) I will change my expressed views on a THEOLOGICAL issue if I encounter resistance to them from my session.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9) I feel pressured by my congregation and session to take positions on controversial POLITICAL issues that I would not take otherwise.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10) I feel pressured by my congregation and session to take positions on controversial THEOLOGICAL issues that I would not take otherwise.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11) I will change my expressed views on a POLITICAL issue if I encounter resistance to them from my congregation and session.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
12) I tend to agree more with the POLITICAL views of my congregation and session now than when I began my current call.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13) I tend to agree more with the THEOLOGICAL views of my congregation and session now than when I began my current call.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

(1 = Agree Strongly 4= Neutral 7 = Disagree Strongly)

14) I will change my expressed views on a POLITICAL issue if I encounter resistance to them from my session.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
15) I will stop expressing certain POLITICAL views (although I will not stop holding them) if I know expressing them could cost me influence over my congregation.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
16) I will stop expressing certain THEOLOGICAL views (although I will not stop holding them) if I know expressing them could cost me influence over my congregation.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
17) Generally, my session ends up siding with my preferences on POLITICAL matters.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
18) I will stop expressing certain POLITICAL views (although I will not stop holding them) if I know expressing them could contribute to my removal from my current congregation.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
19) I will stop expressing certain THEOLOGICAL views (although I will not stop holding them) if I know expressing them could contribute to my removal from my current congregation.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
20) I will stop expressing certain POLITICAL views (although I will not stop holding them) if I know expressing them could contribute to a decrease in congregant monetary giving.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
21) I will stop expressing certain THEOLOGICAL views (although I will not stop holding them) if I know expressing them could contribute to a decrease in congregant monetary giving.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

YOUR PRESBYTERY:

(1=More Conservative 4= Generally the Same 7= More Liberal)

22) My presbytery is more POLITICALLY conservative/liberal than I am.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
23) My presbytery is more THEOLOGICALLY conservative/liberal than I am.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

(1=Agree Strongly 4= Neutral 7= Disagree Strongly)

24) I will change my expressed views on a POLITICAL issue if I encounter resistance to them from ministers in my current presbytery.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
25) I will change my expressed views on a THEOLOGICAL issue if I encounter resistance to them from ministers in my current presbytery.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
26) I had to publicly modify certain personal POLITICAL view in order to avoid conflict with my presbytery.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
27) I had to publicly modify certain personal THEOLOGICAL views in order to avoid conflict with my presbytery.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
28) I tend to agree/disagree more with my presbytery on POLITICAL issues now than when I became a minister.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

YOUR GENDER and the MINISTRY:

(1=Agree Strongly 4= Neutral 7= Disagree Strongly)

29) The expectations associated with my gender make it more difficult for me to express my POLITICAL views as a minister when I know it will create conflict within my congregation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30) The expectations associated with my gender make it more difficult for me to express my THEOLOGICAL views as a minister when I know it will create conflict within my congregation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31) I believe that because of my gender I am expected to avoid encouraging conflict within the PCUSA	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The PCUSA:

(1=Agree Strongly 4= Neutral 7= Disagree Strongly)

32) The PUP recommendation for presbyteries to decide essential doctrines for ordination should be adopted.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33) The PC (U.S.A.) should pursue a phased, selective sale ('divestment') of the stock it owns in multinational corporations whose dealings in Israel support the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34) G-6.0106b should be repealed by the 2006 General Assembly and sent to the presbyteries for ratification.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

YOUR THEOLOGICAL VIEWS:

(1 = Strongly Conservative 4 = Moderate 7 = Strongly Liberal)

35) The theological views instilled in me during my home life growing up were	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
36) The theological views instilled in me during my church experiences growing up were	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A N/A = Did not attend church growing up
37) My overall theological views BEFORE seminary were	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
38) My overall theological views UPON GRADUATION from seminary were	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
39) My CURRENT overall theological views are	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

YOUR POLITICAL VIEWS:

(1 = Strongly Conservative 4 = Moderate 7 = Strongly Liberal)

40) The political views instilled in me during my home life growing up were	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
41) The political views instilled in me during my church experiences growing up were	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A N/A = Did not attend church growing up
42) My overall political views BEFORE seminary were	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
43) My overall political views UPON GRADUATION from seminary were	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
44) My CURRENT overall political views are	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

YOUR SEMINARY EXPERIENCES:

(1 = Agree Strongly 4 = Neutral 7 = Disagree Strongly)

45) I draw on the values and education received in seminary to guide my conduct as a minister.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
46) I decided to attend my particular seminary because of the recommendations of my presbytery at the time.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A = Was not Presbyterian while attending seminary
47) I decided to attend the seminary from which I received my M.Div. or B.D. because of the general theological views its faculty espoused.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
48) My experiences in seminary made my views more POLITICALLY liberal.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

For the following questions, please select and numerically rank the TOP THREE (in order from 1st to 2nd to 3rd) from the list of ten factors that you use to determine the following on the items below. Each factor has its own letter for you to place in the answer boxes. If none of the ten factors adequately capture an influence on a particular item, please write “other” in the particular answer box, and elaborate in writing on page six.

(A) Clergy Peers (PCUSA Only)	(B) Attitudes of Family and Friends	(C) The Media	(D) Bible Study and Prayer	(E) Sessions Attitudes
(F) Congregants' Attitudes	(G) Seminary Experiences	(H) College Experiences	(I) Prevalent Attitudes of Ministers in your Presbytery	(J) Position of PCUSA National Leaders

49) Personal Political Beliefs	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
50) Personal Job Satisfaction	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
51) Personal Self-esteem	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
52) Personal Theological Beliefs	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
53) Sermon Topics	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
54) Engaging in Public Political Behavior (excluding voting)	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
55) Publicly Taking a Position in the Divestment Debate	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
56) Your Vote Choice in Session Meetings	1 st	2 nd	3 rd

57) Publicly Taking a Position in the Debate over G-6.0106b	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
58) Publicly Taking a Position on the PUP Recommendation for Presbyteries to Discern Essential Ordination Standards	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
59) Public Political Views	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
60) Revising Existing Views on Political Issues	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
61) Displaying Books and Similar Educational Materials in Your Church	1 st	2 nd	3 rd

62) I DID THE FOLLOWING SINCE 2004(Check all that apply):

Encouraged congregants to contact political leaders to express their political views

Wrote letters/called political leaders to express personal political views

Preached a sermon on a controversial political topic (List topic and your position:

_____)

Gave money to a political party or cause (List party/cause:

_____)

Gave advice to congregants on the appropriateness of being educated on political issues

Started a petition on an issue of political importance

Joined or maintained membership in a political party (List party:

_____)

Placed literature of a political nature in public areas in the church

Joined OR maintained membership in a political interest group (List group: _____)

Suggested to congregants that they support a political party *without* providing a formal candidate endorsement (List party: _____)

Encouraged the congregation to develop or otherwise support a community soup kitchen or related organization

Encouraged the congregation to develop or otherwise support a gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender support program

Encouraged the congregation to develop or otherwise support a crisis pregnancy center

Encouraged the congregation to develop or otherwise support ecumenical/inter-faith ministries with other Christian denominations and non-Christian religions

63) How many years have you been a Presbyterian minister? _____

64) What year were you born? _____

65) How many years have you served in your current call? _____

66) Annual salary (including allowances)? \$_____

67) Do you currently serve in the same presbytery in which you were ordained?

68) Race/ethnicity _____

69) Is your congregation in an urban area? _____

70) How many paid staff do you work with in your church? _____

71) How many years at your longest call? _____

70) What is your sex? _____

72) Church zip code _____

73) What seminary did you attend, and what year did you graduate?

74) Size of current church membership _____

75) Average attendance at regular Sunday services _____

76) Have you been a Commissioner to the General Assembly? _____

APPENDIX B
EPISCOPAL QUESTIONNAIRE



ANONYMOUS SURVEY OF ECUSA CLERGY

Please answer these questions to the best of your ability. Some questions may appear to be similar or the same. Try to answer all questions regardless.

YOUR PARISH AND VESTRY:

(1=More Conservative 4= Generally the Same 7= More Liberal)

1) My <u>parish</u> is more POLITICALLY conservative/liberal than I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2) My <u>parish</u> is more THEOLOGICALLY conservative/liberal than I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3) My <u>vestry</u> is more POLITICALLY conservative/liberal than I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4) My <u>vestry</u> is more THEOLOGICALLY conservative/liberal than I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

(1 = Agree Strongly 4= Neutral 7 = Disagree Strongly)

5) I take the general views of my parish and vestry into account when FORMING my views on a POLITICAL issue.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6) I take the general views of my parish and vestry into account when EXPRESSING my views on a POLITICAL issue.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

7) It is important for me to feel that I am helping to shape the POLITICAL views of my parish.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8) I will change my expressed views on a THEOLOGICAL issue if I encounter resistance to them from my vestry.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9) I feel pressured by my parish and vestry to take positions on controversial POLITICAL issues that I would not take otherwise.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

10) I feel pressured by my parish and vestry to take positions on controversial THEOLOGICAL issues that I would not take otherwise.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11) I will change my expressed views on a POLITICAL issue if I encounter resistance to them from my parish and vestry.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
12) I tend to agree more with the POLITICAL views of my parish and vestry now than when I began my current call.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13) I tend to agree more with the THEOLOGICAL views of my parish and vestry now than when I began my current call.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

(1 = Agree Strongly 4= Neutral 7 = Disagree Strongly)

14) I will change my expressed views on a POLITICAL issue if I encounter resistance to them from my vestry.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
15) I will stop expressing certain POLITICAL views (although I will not stop holding them) if I know expressing them could cost me influence over my parish.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
16) I will stop expressing certain THEOLOGICAL views (although I will not stop holding them) if I know expressing them could cost me influence over my parish.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
17) Generally, my vestry ends up siding with my preferences on POLITICAL matters.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
18) I will stop expressing certain POLITICAL views (although I will not stop holding them) if I know expressing them could contribute to my removal from my current parish.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
19) I will stop expressing certain THEOLOGICAL views (although I will not stop holding them) if I know expressing them could contribute to my removal from my current parish.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
20) I will stop expressing certain POLITICAL views (although I will not stop holding them) if I know expressing them could contribute to a decrease in parishioner monetary giving.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
21) I will stop expressing certain THEOLOGICAL views (although I will not stop holding them) if I know expressing them could contribute to a decrease in parishioner monetary giving.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

YOUR DIOCESE & BISHOP:

(1=More Conservative 4= Generally the Same 7= More Liberal)

22) My bishop is more POLITICALLY conservative/liberal than I am.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
23) My bishop is more THEOLOGICALLY conservative/liberal than I am.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

(1=Agree Strongly 4= Neutral 7= Disagree Strongly)

24) I will change my expressed views on a POLITICAL issue if I encounter resistance to them from priests in my current diocese.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
25) I will change my expressed views on a THEOLOGICAL issue if I encounter resistance to them from priests in my current diocese.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
26) I had to publicly modify certain personal POLITICAL view in order to avoid conflict with my diocese.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
27) I had to publicly modify certain personal THEOLOGICAL views in order to avoid conflict with my diocese.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
28) I tend to agree/disagree more with my diocese on POLITICAL issues now than when I became a priest.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

YOUR GENDER and the MINISTRY:

(1=Agree Strongly 4= Neutral 7= Disagree Strongly)

29) The expectations associated with my gender make it more difficult for me to express my POLITICAL views as a priest when I know it will create conflict within my parish.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30) The expectations associated with my gender make it more difficult for me to express my THEOLOGICAL views as a priest when I know it will create conflict within my parish.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31) I believe that because of my gender I am expected to avoid encouraging conflict within the ECUSA	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The ECUSA:

(1=Agree Strongly 4= Neutral 7= Disagree Strongly)

32) Marriage between two people of the same sex should be made legal by the government	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33) The ECUSA should pursue a phased, selective sale ('divestment') of the stock it owns in multinational corporations whose dealings in Israel support the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34) The office of Bishop in the Episcopal Church should be open to self-affirming, sexually active homosexuals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

YOUR THEOLOGICAL VIEWS:

(1 = Strongly Conservative 4 = Moderate 7 = Strongly Liberal)

35) The theological views instilled in me during my home life growing up were	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
36) The theological views instilled in me during my church experiences growing up were	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
N/A = Did not attend church growing up								
37) My overall theological views BEFORE seminary were	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
38) My overall theological views UPON GRADUATION from seminary were	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
39) My CURRENT overall theological views are	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

YOUR POLITICAL VIEWS:

(1 = Strongly Conservative 4 = Moderate 7 = Strongly Liberal)

40) The political views instilled in me during my home life growing up were	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
41) The political views instilled in me during my church experiences growing up were	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	N/A
N/A = Did not attend church growing up								
42) My overall political views BEFORE seminary were	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
43) My overall political views UPON GRADUATION from seminary were	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
44) My CURRENT overall political views are	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

YOUR SEMINARY EXPERIENCES:

(1 = Agree Strongly 4 = Neutral 7 = Disagree Strongly)

45) I draw on the values and education received in seminary to guide my conduct as a priest.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
46) I decided to attend my particular seminary because of the recommendations of my bishop at the time.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 N/A = Was not Episcopal while attending seminary
47) I decided to attend the seminary from which I received my M.Div. or B.D. because of the general theological views its faculty espoused.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
48) My experiences in seminary made my views more POLITICALLY liberal.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

For the following questions, please select and numerically rank the TOP THREE (in order from 1st to 2nd to 3rd) from the list of ten factors that you use to determine the following on the items below. Each factor has its own letter for you to place in the answer boxes. If none of the ten factors adequately capture an influence on a particular item, please write “other” in the particular answer box, and elaborate in writing on page six.

(A) Clergy Peers (ECUSA Only)	(B) Attitudes of Family and Friends	(C) The Media	(D) Bible Study and Prayer	(E) Vestry's Attitudes
(F) Parishioners' Attitudes	(G) Seminary Experiences	(H) College Experiences	(I) Prevalent Attitudes of Priests in Your Diocese	(J) Position of ECUSA National Leaders

49) Personal Political Beliefs	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
50) Personal Job Satisfaction	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
51) Personal Self-esteem	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
52) Personal Theological Beliefs	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
53) Sermon Topics	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
54) Engaging in Public Political Behavior (excluding voting)	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
55) Publicly Taking a Position in the Divestment Debate	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
56) Your Vote Choice in Vestry Meetings	1 st	2 nd	3 rd

57) Publicly Taking a Position in the Debate over Gay Marriage	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
58) Publicly Taking a Position in the Debate over Gay Ordination of Bishops	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
59) Public Political Views	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
60) Revising Existing Views on Political Issues	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
61) Displaying Books and Similar Educational Materials in Your Church	1 st	2 nd	3 rd

62) I DID THE FOLLOWING SINCE 2004(Check all that apply):

Encouraged parishioners to contact political leaders to express their political views

Wrote letters/called political leaders to express personal political views

Preached a sermon on a controversial political topic (List topic and your position:

_____)

Gave money to a political party or cause (List party/cause:

_____)

Gave advice to parishioners on the appropriateness of being educated on political issues

Started a petition on an issue of political importance

Joined or maintained membership in a political party (List party:

_____)

Placed literature of a political nature in public areas in the parish

Joined OR maintained membership in a political interest group (List group:_____)

Suggested to parishioners that they support a political party *without* providing a formal candidate endorsement (List party:_____)

Encouraged the parish to develop or otherwise support a community soup kitchen or related organization

Encouraged the parish to develop or otherwise support a gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender support program

Encouraged the parish to develop or otherwise support a crisis pregnancy center

Encouraged the parish to develop or otherwise support ecumenical/inter-faith ministries with other Christian denominations and non-Christian religions

63) How many years have you been an Episcopal priest? _____

64) What year were you born? _____

65) How many years have you served in your current call? _____

66) Annual salary (including allowances)? \$_____

67) Do you currently serve in the same diocese in which you were ordained?

68) Race/ethnicity _____

69) Is your parish in an urban area? _____

70) How many paid staff do you work with in your parish? _____

71) How many years at your longest call? _____

70) What is your sex? _____

72) Parish zip code _____

73) What seminary did you attend, and what year did you graduate?

74) Size of current parish membership _____

75) Average attendance at regular Sunday Eucharist _____

76) Have you been a Commissioner to the House of Delegates? (Please list time of service)

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