

The word "Tufts" is written in a large, bold, brown serif font. A blue swoosh underline starts under the 'T', goes under the 'u', and then loops back over the top of the 'f' and 't's.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL ACTIVISM DURING COLLEGE

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Office of Institutional Research & Evaluation (OIR&E)

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SOCIAL ACTIVISM



STOP
WORLD WAR 3
OVER IRAQ
NUCLEAR
HOLOCAUST

DEMOCRACY
IS AN
ILLUSION

ONE CURRENCY
ONE COUNTRY

CAPITALISM ISN'T
WORKING

NO BORDERS ANYWHERE!
ONE





- ◆ Decreasing trends in civic and political engagement of youth
 - ◆ Decline in voting and knowledge about political candidates (Putnam, 1995; Bennet & Rademacher, 1997)
 - ◆ Decline in volunteering among youth with college experience (Lopez et al., 2006; Marcelo, 2007)
- ◆ This declining trends may lead to disengaged society

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Role of Higher Education



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BACKGROUND

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Civic Engagement at Tufts

- ◆ Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service
- ◆ Focuses on four key areas:
 - ◆ Students
 - ◆ Faculty
 - ◆ Community Partnerships
 - ◆ Alumni

Tufts Tisch College Outcomes Study

- ◆ Six-Year Longitudinal Study with Classes of 2007 – 2010
- ◆ Four cohorts split into three research groups
 - ◆ Tisch Scholars
 - ◆ High-School High Participators (HS High)
 - ◆ High-School Low Participators (HS Low)

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Scholars Program

- ◆ Multi-year, leadership development program engaging students as catalysts for change
- ◆ Academic
- ◆ Experiential
- ◆ Community
- ◆ Advising



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**RESEARCH
QUESTIONS**

Main Research Questions

- ◆ How do students vary in their initial commitment to social activism?
- ◆ To what extent are students' rates of change in their commitment to social activism influenced by civic values, demographic characteristics, academic information, and pre-college civic activity levels?

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PARTICIPANTS

Participants

Table 1. Comparing the Demographics and Academic Information for Tufts University's Classes of 2007 - 2009 to the Tisch Scholars, HS Highs, and HS Lows

| | Tisch Scholars | HS Highs | HS Lows | Class of 2007 | Class of 2008 | Class of 2009 |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------|------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| N | 58 | 70 | 67 | 1621 | 1527 | 1536 |
| Sex | | | | | | |
| Male | 32.8% | 45.7% | 47.8% | 47.0% | 49.1% | 47.7% |
| Race/Ethnicity | | | | | | |
| White | 67.2% | 52.9% | 61.2% | 47.3% | 53.4% | 51.3% |
| Asian | 6.9% | 15.7% | 9.0% | 6.8% | 10.9% | 9.5% |
| Black | 8.6% | 10.0% | 3.0% | 5.5% | 5.3% | 2.9% |
| Latino | 6.9% | 8.6% | 9.0% | 5.7% | 6.1% | 5.3% |
| Multiracial | 1.7% | 1.4% | 0% | 0.2% | 1.8% | 1.4% |
| International | 0% | 1.4% | 1.5% | 1.0% | 2.4% | 2.0% |
| Other | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0.5% | 0.2% | 0.3% |
| Missing/Unknown | 8.6% | 10.0% | 16.4% | 33.1% | 19.9% | 27.3% |
| Academics | | | | | | |
| Engineering | 3.4% | 21.4% | 16.4% | 11.0% | 12.0% | 11.4% |
| GPA | 3.51 | 3.35 | 3.46 | 3.30 | 3.34 | 3.34 |

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METHODOLOGY

To Model Change in Social Activism

$$\text{Level 1: } Y_{ij} = \pi_{0i} + \pi_{1i}a_{it} + \pi_{2i}a_{it}^2 + \dots + \pi_{pi}a_{it}^p + e_{it}$$

Level 1 is individual growth trajectory of social activism

$$\text{Level 2: } \pi_{pi} = \beta_{p0} + \sum_{q=1}^{Q_p} \beta_{pq}X_{qi} + r_{pi}$$

Level 2 uses individual-level variables to predict initial status and growth of social activism

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DATA

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Civic & Political Activities and Attitudes Survey

- ◆ Key components:
 - ◆ Activities
 - ◆ Activities at Tufts
 - ◆ Activities outside of Tufts
 - ◆ Political involvement
 - ◆ Attitudes
 - ◆ Personal ability to affect change
 - ◆ Personal responsibility to counteract problems
 - ◆ Societal responsibility to counteract problems

TISCH College Outcomes Evaluation Administration Schedule

Academic Year

| | Class of 2007 Cohort | | Class of 2008 Cohort | | Class of 2009 Cohort | | Class of 2010 Cohort | |
|---------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2003-04 | 1st Year | Participant Survey CPAAS | | | | | | |
| 2004-05 | Sophomore | Interviews CPAAS | 1st Year | Participant Survey CPAAS | | | | |
| 2005-06 | Junior | CPAAS | Sophomore | Interviews CPAAS | 1st Year | Participant Survey CPAAS | | |
| 2006-07 | Senior | CPAAS Interviews | Junior | CPAAS | Sophomore | Interviews CPAAS | 1st Year | Participant Survey CPAAS |
| 2007-08 | 1 Year out | Alumni CPAAS | Senior | CPAAS Interviews | Junior | CPAAS | Sophomore | Interviews CPAAS |
| 2008-09 | 2 Years out | Alumni CPAAS | 1 Year out | Alumni CPAAS | Senior | CPAAS Interviews | Junior | CPAAS |
| 2009-10 | | | 2 Years out | Alumni CPAAS | 1 Year out | Alumni CPAAS | Senior | CPAAS Interviews |
| 2010-11 | | | | | 2 Years out | Alumni CPAAS | 1 Year out | Alumni CPAAS |
| 2011-12 | | | | | | | 2 Years out | Alumni CPAAS |

Current Academic Year

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Outcome Variable: Social Activism

Summing and standardizing 5 survey items:

1. Participation in a protest, march, or demonstration
2. Signed a petition about a political or social issue
3. Wore a button, put a sticker on my car, or placed a sign in front of my house in support of an issue or candidate
4. Not bought something because of the conditions under which the product was made
5. Bought a certain product or service because I liked the social or political values of the company

Level 1 Variables

- ◆ Discussion of social and political issues
 - ◆ Survey item: "How often do you discuss politics or social issues with family or friends?"
- ◆ Level of participation in community activities
 - ◆ Five survey items (summed and standardized)
 - ◆ Alpha = 0.748

- ◆ Participant was a registered voter
- ◆ Participant completed the CPAAS during a year with a national election (Years 2004 and 2008)
- ◆ Six civic attitudinal items

- ◆ Demographic characteristics
 - ◆ Sex
 - ◆ Race/Ethnicity
 - ◆ SES
- ◆ Academic characteristics
 - ◆ Major by discipline: Arts & Humanities, Social Science, Natural Science, & Engineering
- ◆ Financial Aid
- ◆ Program group
 - ◆ Scholars, HS High, HS Low
 - ◆ Cohort effect (Classes of 2007 – 2009)

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FINDINGS

- ◆ Examined Three Level One Models
 - ◆ Explains individual growth trajectory for social activism
- ◆ ICC for finalized level 1 model is 0.662 for initial status and 0.0920 for growth rate.
- ◆ Variance components are significant to warrant further modeling at level two

- ◆ Examined Three Level Two Models
 - ◆ Uses person-level variables to predict the initial status and growth of social activism
 - ◆ Three models were: Pre-college effects (Research group), Demographic effects (sex, race/ethnicity, SES, and financial aid), and Academic effects (Major, Class) models

Level 1 Model:

$$Y_{ti} = \pi_{0i} + \pi_{1i}(time)_{ti} + \pi_{2i}(time^2)_{ti} + \pi_{3i}(commact)_{ti} + \pi_{4i}(discuss)_{ti} + e_{ti}$$

Level 2 Model:

$$\pi_{0i} = \beta_{00} + \beta_{01}(Black) + \beta_{02}(Latino) + \beta_{03}(Asian) + \beta_{04}(Other) + \beta_{06}(NatSci) + \beta_{07}(Engr) + \beta_{08}(SocSci) + r_{0i}$$

$$\pi_{1i} = \beta_{10} + \beta_{11}(Black) + \beta_{12}(Latino) + \beta_{13}(Asian) + \beta_{14}(Other) + \beta_{15}(FinAid) + \beta_{16}(NatSci) + \beta_{17}(Engr) + \beta_{18}(SocSci) + r_{1i}$$

$$\pi_{2i} = \beta_{20}$$

$$\pi_{3i} = \beta_{30}$$

$$\pi_{4i} = \beta_{40}$$

Findings: Time

In general, participants in the study had high initial average values for Social Activism (0.52 std deviations)

Every year in college, Social Activism decreases at an average rate of 0.30 std deviations

Fixed rate of change for Social Activism growth increases the declining slope each year

Findings: Time Varying Covariates

- ◆ Increases social activism
 - ◆ Involvement in community activities
 - ◆ Frequently discussing political and social issues with friends
- ◆ No effect on social activism
 - ◆ Being registered to vote
 - ◆ Taking survey in an election year (2004 & 2008)
 - ◆ Values on six civic attitudinal items

- ◆ Initial Status
 - ◆ Asian students were lower than White students
 - ◆ Black, Latino, and Other were not significantly different than White students
- ◆ Growth
 - ◆ Black students increased at a faster rate than White students
 - ◆ Latino students increased at a faster rate than White students
 - ◆ Asian and Other students grew at the same rate as White students

Findings: Majors

- ◆ Initial Status
 - ◆ Engineering students are lower on Social Activism compared to Arts & Humanities majors
- ◆ Growth
 - ◆ Engineering majors increase at a faster rate than Arts & Humanities majors
- ◆ Natural Science and Social Science majors are not significantly different than Arts & Humanities majors for initial status or growth

- ◆ Initial Status
 - ◆ Aided and non-aided students had relatively the same value for Social Activism
- ◆ Growth
 - ◆ Students who received financial aid declined at a faster rate on social activism compared to non-aided students

- ◆ Non-significant person-level variables for initial status or growth of social activism
 - ◆ SES
 - ◆ Sex
 - ◆ Cohort effect (Classes 2007 to 2009)
 - ◆ Program effect (HS High, HS Low, Scholars)

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LIMITATIONS

Limitations

- ◆ Survey instrument changed three years into data collection
 - ◆ Examined only questions on “old” version of survey
- ◆ Initial status is end of freshmen year
 - ◆ Not a “true” measure of initial status
- ◆ Model explains only 45% of variance in initial status and 15% of variance in growth rate

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**CONCLUSION
&
FUTURE
RESEARCH**

- ◆ Highlights
 - ◆ Declining Linear and Quadratic Trends for Social Activism
- ◆ Recommendations
 - ◆ Target first or second year college students
 - ◆ Plan programs to involve students in the community
 - ◆ Provide students with opportunities to discuss social and political issues with peers

Future Research

- ◆ Why are Tisch Scholars not displaying in increased commitment to social activism?
- ◆ Explore the effect of race/ethnicity on the development of social activism during college
- ◆ Examine experiences of Engineering majors at Tufts

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QUESTIONS ???



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Slides will be available at:

<http://institutionalresearch.tufts.edu/?pid=6&c=4>