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Student Political Advocacy: Professors, Parents and Volunteer Service as Key Social Forces

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Student Political Advocacy:

Professors, Parents, and Volunteer Service as Key Social Forces

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Abstract

Many scholars claim that the current generation of college students tend toward disengagement from political activism. While the explanations focus on macro-level processes, they can be used to make predictions about variations in individual level political engagement. To test these explanations I surveyed by email a simple random sample of four hundred students enrolled at a small Midwestern College in the fall of 2009. My objective was to answer the question: what distinguishes students that become engaged in political advocacy from the counterpart who do not? Analyzing my results through logistic regression generated three significant empirical findings. Students who are currently engaged in volunteer service were found to have an increased likelihood of engaging in political advocacy. Both parents and professors were found to be important sources to generate engagement. Lastly, student's belief of the relative value of public policy versus community service is mediate by students who are currently engaged in volunteer service. The results confirm, at this small campus, professors, parents and students involved in civic engagement value political advocacy. I propose this implies that political advocacy has evolved since the 1960s and has taken a new form evolving within the current historical context.

Introduction

In a Boston Globe News article, "Anxieties Define Generation Y", Michael Kryzanek, a Professor in Political Science at Bridgewater State University, claimed that current college students have "scant interest in politics, a poor understanding of history, and an almost fanatical attachment to celebrity status and popular culture" (2006:2). Kryzanek is just one of the many scholars who claim that college students are apathetic toward politics and national issues. Similar to Kryzanek, the theory of "new localism", claims students focus on becoming involved locally in their community and neighborhood rather than participating in national political activism (Levine & Cureton 1998:36). This indicates that students who are involved in volunteer service would not be inclined to be engaged politically; fueling apathy. A second argument claims this decrease in national unity and political activism has been a trend for several decades (Skocpol 2003, Putnam 2000). Putnam examines civic engagement through social capital theory, claiming that society has grown disconnected and individualistic causing social capital to decrease with each preceding generation (2000). According to Putnam social capital directly affects society's level of civic engagement. The third theoretical perspective, agent of socialization theory, claims that as individuals we are a product of our childhood and continued adult socialization through agents such as: parents, peers, and education that foster general norms of reciprocity within society (De Lameter 2007, Arnett 1995). This theory is significant to the

topic of political engagement because it proposes the agents have an influence over the value system a student may hold that can affect their engagement in political advocacy.

Theda Skocpol, in her book *Diminished Democracy,* argues that changes in U.S. society after 1960 promoted professionalized advocacy groups to form alliances between business associations, governments, and nonprofits; causing old-line membership to erode (Skocpol 2003:19). According to Skocpol, within the "old line membership" civic engagement was meant to unite Americans across classes to help lobby and influence political and social conditions (2003). While some explanations predict societal wide decreases in political activity due to changes in socio-political organizations, I will be testing for theories that propose mechanisms that operate through individual engagement. Accordingly, two of my three overarching theories: social capital, new localism, and agent of socialization theories, explain generational differences in political participation by differences in individuals motivations, values, experiences, or social capital. Since political activity may be shaped by wider societal opportunity structures (Della Porte 2008), analysis of individual levels of political engagement can demonstrate the extent to which these factors may have an influence.

To explore these three overarching theories at the individual level of analysis, I have conducted a study of a small mid-western college, which I will reference in pseudonym in my report as Northgate College, to protect the identity of the school. I have gathered data through a survey that asks a variety of questions about the type and level of political activism at the college. Based on previous research, I have selected 11 independent variables to test against my dependent variable political advocacy. Through this study my goal is to understand what distinguishes students who become engaged in political advocacy from the counterpart who do not?

The topic of civic engagement is a heated debate. Several scholars have written books and performed surveys and interviews to answer questions regarding the general state of civic engagement within the U.S. Some scholars propose that civic engagement has not gone extinct.

I propose the types of activities have evolved with the change in society and it is not historically relevant to compare political activism to the 1960s generation (Altbach & Cohen 1990, Rotolo & Wilson 2004). From my case study I argue that political advocacy is not absent at Northgate College; rather it has value to the students. My survey produced three empirical findings significant to the topic of politically advocacy. First, of students who are currently volunteering they are more likely to engage in political advocacy than their counterparts who are not engaged in volunteer service. This illustrates the two types of civic engagement, volunteer service and political advocacy, are not mutually exclusive. Second, both parents value of political advocacy and professors as a source of motivation to engage students in political advocacy were significant. Lastly, of the students who are engaged in volunteer service their relative belief in public policy or community service mediates whether or not they will become engaged in political advocacy. To understand the importance of these three main empirical findings I will discuss the logic behind my selection of eleven independent variables in my literature review followed by analysis of research methods, and results section.

Literature Review: Previous Research & Theoretical Framework

The purpose of this literature review is to highlight previous research on the variables I have selected to measure for my three overarching theories used to predict political engagement: social capital theory, new localism, and agent of socialization theory. Accordingly, some of the existing literature for these three theories analyzes generational differences in political engagement. Since, these theories argue that political engagement is shaped by wider societal forces (Della Porte 2008), analysis of individual level of political engagement can demonstrate the extent these forces has influence in engagement and, in turn, how effective the three theories are at predicting political engagement at an individual level. A closer analysis of the three theories and relating literature will illustrate how they can be useful when using individuals as a unit of analysis to predict political engagement for young adults.

Social Capital Theory

A person's social capital is derived from their relationships and networks with friends, family, peers, and co-workers (Putnam 2000, Musick & Wilson 1997). These networks are valuable because they are means to engage people within a society. Social capital is important to the topic of civic engagement because it makes "volunteer work more likely by fostering norms of generalized reciprocity, encouraging people to trust each other, and amplifying reputations" (Putnam 1995: 67). Therefore, the networks and relationships fostered by strong social capital would increase the likelihood that a person would become engaged politically.

Robert Putnam utilizes social capital theory to analyze the level of political and volunteer work within U.S. society across generations in his book, *Bowling Alone.* Putnam claims that our personal networks have value and U.S. society has seen a decline in the capital of civic engagement (2000). Putnam concludes that throughout the entire U.S., across age groups, genders, and classes, American society has experienced an "anti civic contagion" and this issue increases with the "most recent cohort" (2000:248). Putnam claims that Americans have several routes, groups and arenas to express their political views in the U.S. Some of these include: "contacting local and national officials, working with out neighbors, attending public meetings, joining in election campaign, etc." (2000: 32). However, Putnam explains that the civic activities that bring communities together have withered away and Americans are more likely to engage themselves in forms of political engagement that are individualistic such as writing an article instead of attending a town hall meeting (2000). Therefore, the types of networks built by political town hall meetings have been replaced by an inactive generation that is "tuned out" of politics; perhaps from their distrust in political institutions (Putnam 2000). In order to understand how Putnam's theory of social capital relates to an individuals likelihood of being engaged in political advocacy I have selected four variables to test for this theory. The variables include: Religion, socializing with friends, student's year in school, and Friends influence. A

closer analysis of the importance of these variables in previous studies will illustrate why I have chosen to include them in my study as measures of social capital.

Social Capital Theory: Peers/ Friends & Socializing

The social force of peers is found to be more powerful in high school than parents; however, the socialization by peers becomes "narrower" and less significant in adulthood as a person comes to a grounded view of themselves (Arnett 1995: 621). Instead of focusing on the role the agent of friend plays in instilling value and norms through socialization I am interested in the networks they create for greater involvement in political advocacy. Putnam claims informal socializing with friends is viewed as an important source to build trust, cooperation, and meaning within a community (2000). This building of relationships and meaning is important because it helps people value social capital and the networks is creates for more involvement within the community; both civically and politically. Putnam reports informal socializing has decreased with the rise of T.V. viewing, urbanization, marriage, children, careers, etc. (1995). This indicates that social capital has decreased which has a negative relationship with political particpation. Putnam claims that "...it is not merely 'do good' civic activities that engage us less, but also informal connecting" (2000: 115). Putnam's claim indicates that having a strong connection with peers and friends has a positive impact on social capital and is the first component to integrating a person into their community leading to a greater likelihood of being engaged politically. Musick & Wilson contend Putnam claiming that people who have more contact through conversations or meetings with friends are more likely engaged in civic activities (1997:669). Therefore, friends or peers become an important variable to analyze at Northgate College as a gateway to building strong social capital. Given this information I have three predictions contending my variables of study. Based on social capital theory: students who are engaged in political activism are more likely to be motivated by friends to participate than non-participants. Secondly, students that are more social outside of class with friends will have higher social capital and will be more engaged in political activism than students who are not.

Lastly, Juniors and Seniors will me more likely to be engaged in political advocacy than first years and sophomores due to their higher level of integration, friends, and social capital established over their time at the college.

Social Capital Theory: Religion

Several scholars have reported that people who belong to a religious congregation and are involved with various church related activities are more likely to be engaged in a form of civic engagement (Skocpol 2003, Verba et al. 1995, Smith 1999, Musick & Wilson 1997). Musick and Wilson claim that religion creates benevolent capital that is found to create more institutional channels to involve people in civic service (1997). Verba et al. claims parents often pass on values of engagement in religion to their children, which integrates a person within their community, linking them to issues that in turn will require political particpation (Verba et. al 1996). According to Verba et al. religion is an institution that can provide a more "alternative path to political activity" through this process of connecting a person to their local community (1996: 456). Other studies have analyzed the type of religious denomination, claiming mainline protestant and catholic churches engage members in civic activity more than mainline protestant churches (Campbell 2004). Campbell claims denominations such as evangelical protestant churches disengage members from civic and political engagement because they demand more time and commitment to direct church related activities (2004). Since the students at Northgate College are stereotypically liberal I chose to focus on the student's level of religious involvement and its correlation to political engagement rather than on the type of religious denomination. Given the fact that religion creates networks and integrates a person into their local community, I predict that religious students will be more likely to be engaged in political advocacy than non-religious students due to the networks established from their congregation.

Agent of Socialization Theory

The second theory I will be utilizing in my analysis is agent of socialization theory. Socialization theory claims that family, peers, and education are the three main agents of socialization (De Lamater 2007, Arnett 1995). These agents are responsible for teaching individuals social and cultural norms of their society. Socialization is a life long process, while most intense in childhood, it is ongoing throughout adulthood. Socialization includes learning value orientations, role "preparation" such as gender or occupational roles, and development of a conscience (Arnett 1995: 618). As referenced earlier, Professor Kryzanek claims current college student's values are to be "tolerant" of topics such as "gay marriage or interracial couples" and driven to succeed academic and monetarily (2006). Kryzanek claims college students are apathetic to politics and therefore would not value political engagement. However, Kryzanek does relate this lack of political values to one agent of socialization, parents. Kryzanek claims "money and good life is their primary career objective, making them no different than their parents in this regard" (2005). Kryzanek situates this apathetic set of values as part of the socialization process. Therefore, I have been prompted to see whether agents of socialization are powerful enough in young adulthood to continue shaping our central values.

Agent of Socialization: Parents & Family

Several studies conclude that parents and families have been found to have a significant effect on the level of political engagement due to their role as primary socializers (Braungart 1971, DeLamater 2007, Verba et al. 1995, Arnett 1995*)*. DeLamater explains that in early childhood the family is the first key agent socializing children from "birth through adolescents" (2007: 56). Several scholars have studied the type of parenting, parent's education level, and parent's political party to determine a person's type of civic engagement (Braungart 1971, Verba et al. 1995, and Arnett 1995). Braungart's 1971 study of student activists in the 1960's found that family politics, religion, and social class were found to be significant variables in predicting a student's "political identification". Students were also found to have similar political values as

their parents (Braungart 1971). The theory of agents of socialization is important because it claims our beliefs are often directly correlated to the social and cultural norms we were brought up in. Both Verba et al. and Braungart's studies conclude that a person's upbringing in various economic, political, and religious norms make parents an important subject to study in order to understand who is and is not politically engaged.   Instead of focusing my study on the type of parenting technique, I would simply like to identify if a student who is engaged in political activism is engaged due to the beliefs of their parents. As key agents of socialization I predict parents value of political advocacy will have a positive influence on students who are engaged in political advocacy to their counterparts who are not.

Agent of Socialization Theory: Professors

Several scholars contend that education has been an institution to give citizens skills and provide opportunities for them to become engaged civically and politically (Rotolo & Wilson 2004, Verba et. al 1996, Brisbin & Hunter 2003, Colby et al. 2003). Rotolo & Wilson's study concluded, "the higher rates of volunteering for young women (baby boomer cohort)… are a function of their higher education" (2004:1104). Brisbin & Hunter (2003) and Colby et al. (2003) are two additional studies that focus only on education and college professors' engagement in civic education. Brisbin and Hunter conducted a study of political science professors nation wide asking them a variety of questions in a survey format to identify a professor's use and value of civic education in the classroom. Brisbin and Hunter (2003) found a majority of political science professors in the U.S. hold that they have a duty to teach civic responsibility, which many professors uphold by integrating political or civic engagement as part of a course requirement. The Colby et al. 2003 study of twelve undergraduate colleges throughout the U.S. was executed to understand the type and level of "moral" and civic engagement in three main areas: "the curriculum, campus culture, and extracurricular activities and programs" (282). Colby et al. claims that this integration of civic engagement is necessary

because "education is not complete until students not only have acquired knowledge but can act on that knowledge in the world" (2003:7). Colby et al. analyze three types of schools: "community connections approach", "moral and civic virtue approach" and the "social justice approach" also referred to as "systemic social responsibility" (2003). The "social justice approach" is defined as "…contributing to social change and public policies that will decrease gender and racial inequality, end discrimination of various kinds, and reduce the stark income inequalities" (Colby et al. 2003:65). The colleges that epitomize the "social justice approach" have required courses that address the topic or through specific community outreach projects. The information on the Colby et al. study was included to illustrate that there are colleges that recognize their integral role in socializing students and engaging them in civic and political engagement. From this discussion of theoretical sources, it is clear that not only education but also professors are key agents to instill civic knowledge and motivation. Following this literature, I predict that, as key agents of socialization, professors have positive influence on students who are engaged in political advocacy relative to their counterparts who are not.

New Localism

Levine and Cureton's comprehensive five-year study from 1992 to 1997 of the student population presents findings within the scope of critics that claim college students are apathetic towards political engagement. Levine and Cureton found trends where students have become more individualistic, less involved in the campus community, and more focused on their majors and careers than civic engagement; compared to Levine's previous research on college students. Although Levine and Cureton do not focus their study only on civic engagement the topic is highlighted throughout their book. Levine and Cureton label this group of students as the era of "New Localism" where students have focused on becoming involved locally in their community and neighborhood rather than participating in political activism on a national scale (1998: 36). The reasoning for this is that students want to be engaged in activities that produce tangible results where they function as an important actor. Therefore, students find themselves more apt

to make change locally than at the national scale. Levine and Cureton also discuss the general distrust and disconnection of politicians and government students have adopted (1998). In order to test for the theories of New Localism to predict non-involvement in political engagement I had two variables of study volunteer service (whether students are engaged or not) and Belief in Policy or Community, which tested for belief in public policy or community service work. Following the New Localism theory, I hypothesized that students who are involved in volunteer service will not be more likely to be engaged in political advocacy. Second, students who are engaged in political advocacy will have more belief in policy than students who are engaged in volunteer service.

Background Variable: Gender

The topic of gender and its association with types of civic engagement in the American population is a highly debated topic with several differing perspectives. Several studies suggest that women are more likely to engage in volunteer service than men because it is an extension of their role as either a mother or homemaker (Rotolo & Wilson 2004, Putnam 2000, Musick & Wilson 1997). Rotolo & Wilson (2004) claim the opposite in their study of two cohorts of women and their level of engagement in volunteer service concludes volunteer work has declined for women due to the fact that education has allowed women to enter into more demanding careers and have less time to volunteer.

Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1996) challenge the prevailing argument of the "gender gap" that women are more likely to engage in volunteer work and are less likely to be politically engaged than men. Verba et al. claims the societal perception of women's lack of participation is due to an "overemphasis on voting and electoral activities" in previous studies (1996: 253). Verba et al. (1996) cites that women and men have been equally engaged in alternative forms of political engagement such as protesting. Verba et al. claims that women are not "insensitive to

political cues"; rather men and women just participate in different types of political engagement (1996: 256). Women are cited as more likely to participate in an organization that takes a stand on politics such as in: "youth groups, religiously affiliated organization and literary discussion or study group" (Verba et al. 1996: 259). The previous research does contend that men are more engaged in voting than women; but relying on this information would present an overly narrow conception of political engagement. Based upon this information I conclude that gender will not be important for predicting political engagement because the difference between the genders is marginal. Therefore, I predict that male students will not be more engaged in political advocacy than female students.

Data & Methods

In order to test the hypotheses from the literature review about variation between students' political engagement I conducted a survey of a simple random sample of four hundred currently enrolled students at Northgate College, a small liberal arts college in the Midwest. The study population did not include students who were studying abroad; traditionally students in their junior year of school[1]. I administered the survey online during the fall of 2009 and maintained confidentiality and anonymity by having a faculty advisor send a blind copied email to the simple random sample of students[2]. As noted in the introduction a pseudonym was adopted to protect the reputation of the college of study and I have not disclosed information that will make it possible to identify an individual subject in my paper or presentation. The response rate was low with seventy-six students responding out of a SRS of four hundred students. This

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[1] Students who were abroad were not included in the sample because they would not be at the school, which the case study was focused on. Students who are abroad are focused on traveling and learning more about the country and culture they are visiting rather than tending to activities they participated while at home. Also my study was of college students at a Midwest college in the U.S. and my theoretical sources focused on students political activity within the U.S. and not abroad.
[2] The researcher received Institional Review Board (IRB) approval at the college. This included taking measures to protect the research subjects by maintaining confidentiality and anonymity.

response rate less than the target of 50% may be due to the fact that the survey was sent out before the students went on a fall break and were busy with last minute essays and exams.

Through my study I will be offering more specific research on the college student's engagement and perception of civic involvement, volunteering, and political advocacy; instead of a broad portrait of college students in Levine & Cureton's 1998 study. My goal is to come to a grounded conclusion on what forces motivate, affect, and determine which college students are or are not engaged in political advocacy. Also, I looked at one college in order to hold constant intuitional effects and closely analyze the difference between students who are or are not engaged in political advocacy. I utilized the survey method because it allowed me to gather data on several independent variables to test for association with the dependent variable Political Advocacy. Levine & Cureton claim that since the 1970s student activism has been focused on local issues, such as multiculturalism or the rising cost of tuition (1998). I hope to generate a better understanding of the current form of activism present on the Northgate College campus and whether political issues are important to the student body. Through this research of student involvement, perception, and definition between volunteer and Political Advocacy work I hope to gauge whether this case study falls within critic's stereotype of a college generation that is apathetic to political issues or if the type of issues and activism has evolved since the 1960s, making it not historical reference to use the 1960s generation as a benchmark.

Variables & Operationalization

The dependent variables for my study comes from a question that I asked students concerning how many hours per week they were engaged in political advocacy. The survey explained that for the purposes of the questions, political advocacy included "this semester I am spending on average the following hours per week in form of political advocacy"[3]. For analytical purposes, I converted students' answers into a dichotomous variable: whether or not

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[3] Definition: For this survey Political Advocacy is defined as an individual or club engaged in activities such as: giving time for electoral campaigns, publicly expressing opinions on issues, or protesting. A person participating in political advocacy is working for institutional or policy change.

they were currently engaged in political advocacy. (The descriptive Statistics for all variables are in table 1)

In my analysis I use eleven independent variables to test the hypotheses about explaining variation in political advocacy among students.

Social Capital.   To measure the importance of social capital I used four dichotomous independent variables: *Friends Influence*, S*ocializing > 6 hours per week, Religion, and Student Year in School* to measure for integration with friends and institutions outside of class. The variable Friends Influence was measured by the statement: "my friends on campus motivated me to be involved in volunteer work." This variable was used to measure the importance of peers, a form of social capital.   The answers were recorded 1=Yes, 0=No.   The variable Religion measured by the statement "religion plays an important role in my life," with 1=yes, 0=No. The goal of this question was not to gage the type or amount of religiosity in each respondent, rather just to gauge whether the student is religious or not. The amount of informal socializing was measured in the statement "this semester, I spend on average the following hours per week socializing with friends outside of class, clubs and organizations". The responses were 1= 6 or more hours, 0= less than 6 hours per week. Through these three variables I hoped to measure the importance of peers, the level of informal socializing which Putnam claims precedes civic engagement, and the importance of religion. Student Year in School (three dummy variables, first year as the reference category) were included as background questions and measurement of social capital theory

Agents of Socialization.   To measure the importance of the beliefs and norms instilled in a students from their parents and education experiences I chose to include Parents' Value of Political Advocacy and Professors Engagement in Political Advocacy as two variables. Parents' value was measured by the statement: "my parents place a high value on political advocacy". The responses were coded as 1=Yes, 0=No. This was then measured against students who are engaged in political advocacy to assess the relative significance of parental values. In order to

measure the importance of educational experience in college I measured the variable "Professor Engagement" through the statement: "my professors on campus helped me get engaged in political advocacy". Responses were again dichotomous.

New Localism. To test for the New Localism theory I included two variables: *Volunteer Service and Belief in Policy or Community.* In order to differentiate between volunteer service and political advocacy, two types of civic engagement, I asked students about their level of involvement in each. The survey provided definitions that distinguished between these activities; as with the political advocacy variable, the survey asked students about their current semester involvement in volunteer service (definition in footnote below)[4]. I coded responses into a dichotomy of currently volunteering and not currently volunteering. The second variable was executed to measure a student's relative belief in public policy or community service. Using a set of likert-scaled questions, I created a composite scale measure (hypothetical range 5-14) concerning the relative important of policy or community work. Actual responses on the composite scale ranged from 4 (strong belief in policy) to 14 (strong belief in community work) and were normally distributed throughout the range of beliefs. See footnote for the three questions[5].

Background Variable. Student's *Gender* was the only background variable. The variable was dichotomous like the others (1=Male, 0=Female).

Results

Of the 76 respondents 72.3% were female and 30.1% were male. More freshman and seniors responded to the survey compared to sophomores and juniors. Of the 76 respondents:

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[4] Definition: For this survey Volunteer Service will be defined as any individual or club engagement activity to help better the lives and organizations within a community. A person engaged in volunteer service is motivated to provide service or support to people for community change. Volunteer service is free of charge and the respondent cannot include on or off campus jobs under this category. Note: although volunteering for a campaign or an advocacy group is voluntary work, for the purpose of this study it will be classified as political advocacy.

[5] The questions were: (1) Changing public policy leads to greater change in society than serving individuals and community organization, (2) I can as effectively work to change public policy as I can serve individuals and community organizations, and (3) Serving individuals and community organizations proves more tangible results than changing public policy.

27.6% were first years, 22.4% were sophomores, 18.4% were juniors, and 32.9% were seniors. This distribution may be because the researcher was a senior and the faculty advisor (who sent out the survey) is primarily teaching freshman and seniors this semester. Despite critics' attempts to label college students as apathetic to politics or a generation of "new localism" (Kryzanek 2006, Levine & Cureton 1998), about half of the respondents were involved in a form of political advocacy.

The descriptive statistics provide more detailed information about the types and extent of Political Advocacy than I can analyze due to the sample size. Of the students who are involved in Political Advocacy dedicating 1-3 hours per week to Political Advocacy seems to be the norm. 32.6% of all students spend 103 hours week on advocacy, compared to 5.8% spending 4-6 hours, and 4.3% spending 6 or more hours in Political Adocacy this semester. The top five most common forms of political advocacy for students were: demonstration 43.5%, political/social advocacy 34.8%, volunteering for a campaign 34.8%, writing an opinion letter 24.6%, and organizing a campus function to create awareness about a political candidate or cause 21.7%. When testing for the median number of frequency of engagement in Political Advocacy I found that more than two-thirds of the 76 respondents had engaged in more than one form of political advocacy. Also, just under half of the respondents had engaged in three or more forms of political advocacy on the survey. This indicates that students are not just one-time participants in their political engagement. Putnam found in his study of the general U.S. population that more citizens were signing petitions, writing letters to congressmen/women, or writing a letter to a newspaper (2000). However, at Northgate College demonstration was the most popular form of political advocacy. This suggests students are engaged in causes with other students, clubs, and perhaps citizens of the local community.

Logistic Regression Model

I analyze my data using a logistic regression model because my dependent variable, student engagement in Political Activism, was dichotomous. The regression model allowed me

to measure the association between the independent variables and generate the probability that students will be engaged in political activism (Menard 1995). When tested in a series of four models, the data presented three significant empirical findings. First, students who are currently volunteering (variable "Volunteer Service") are more likely to engage in Political Advocacy. This indicates a correlation between Volunteer Service and engagement in Political Advocacy. Therefore, the two types of civic engagement, volunteer service and political advocacy, are not mutually exclusive. A second important finding was that of the twelve independent variables, both parents' value of political engagement and professors as a source of motivation was significant when the other independent variables were held constant. Third, the independent variable testing for belief in policy or community work interacts with volunteer service, signaling a negative relationship between the two variables. To understand the importance of these results in relation to the importance of the other independent variables I will discuss each of the four models in more detail. Table two presents the results of the logistic regression analysis.

Model one tested the background variables gender and the four social capital variables Student Year In School, Religion, Socializing more than six hours per week, and Friends Influence. None of these first seven variables were found to be significant and the overall model fit was relatively poor, suggesting that social capital and gender do not have strong associations with variation in individuals' engagement in political advocacy. Despite the fact that the variables were not significant (even at the relaxed level of .1) the association between the independent variables and political advocacy followed the predicted positive association between the variables.

In model two, two variables are added to test for New Localism: the composite scale Belief in Policy or Community and Volunteer Service. The two new variables are marginally significant ($p < .01$). Meanwhile, the six previous variables remain insignificant except for Friend Influence, which also becomes marginally significant. Also, both volunteer service and belief in policy or community have associations opposite to the new localism hypotheses that

claims students who are engaged in volunteer service would not engage in political or value public policy work. The overall model fit with the addition of these two variables, while not remarkably strong, is much better than model 1.

In Model 3, I include variables to test for agent of socialization theory. The inclusion of Professors Engagement in Political Advocacy and Parent's Value of Political Advocacy makes the effects of Friend Influence and Belief in Policy or Community variables insignificant. This finding indicates that the socialization of Parents Value and Professors Engagement have greater effect on a student's engagement in political activism than Friends Influence. This is a very important finding because it indicates that authority figures such as Professors and Parents are more likely to influence students who are engaged in Political Activism than the students general peer group. The results also suggest that a student's belief of relative value of policy or community engagement may reflect socialization through experience in an activity professors or parents encouraged. Consequently, the null hypotheses six and seven are rejected. This suggests that both independent variables have a positive influence on students who are engaged in political advocacy to their counterparts who are not. This follows Arnett's claim that the socialization by peers becomes less significant and "narrow" in adulthood (1995). As young adults, college students are transitioning into becoming financially independent from their parents and may value authority figures that represent adult values. Overall, model three has a significant improvement in model fit, which is measured by the increase in Chi-square value in comparison to model 2[6].

Since the new localism theory posits that a shift toward community service and away from political engagement results from a shift in values, model four tests for interaction between current volunteer service and belief in the relative value of community and policy engagement.

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[6] To examine for overall model fit I tested for outliers for Model 3 and found only two studentized residuals with an absolute value of two or more (under the expected number of 3.7). Additionally I checked for collinearity between the eleven variables in the model and found the lowest tolerance level to be .645 (well within acceptable levels). These findings indicate that the model fits well for the cases as a whole.

Further, since belief and experiences may influence each other (Levine & Cureton 1998, Arnett 1995, DeLameter 2007), it seems important to test for potential interaction. Adding this interaction term significantly improves overall model fit as measured by the chi-square statistic for model 4 and demonstrates that belief in the relative value of policy or community work has an influence on the likelihood of political advocacy for those who are currently volunteering in community service, while there is essentially no effect of this belief for those who are not currently engaged in community service work. In addition, the effect of current volunteer service on political activism depends on the relative belief in the value of policy and community work. Voluntary service work trades off with political advocacy only at high levels of belief in community work. Rather, the two variables are correlated meaning if a student is engaged in volunteer service they have an increased likelihood of also being engaged in political advocacy. Chart one illustrates the net effects of the interaction between current service and belief in the relative value of policy and community work. Looking at the graph allows for a better understanding of how the belief in the relative value of public policy and community service interacts with students who are currently volunteering. Students who are engaged in volunteer service and strongly believe in policy are extremely likely to engaged in political advocacy. The probability of being engaged in political advocacy has a negative relationship to belief in policy or community. Comparing students who are engaged in volunteer service to those who are not illustrates that belief alone does not motivate involvement. Rather, belief and experience volunteering predict higher involvement. Although, the line is downward sloping and decreases as the beliefs shift more toward the community end of the belief scale the students in the middle of the policy-community scale are more likely to be politically engaged if they are involved in volunteer service than their counterparts who are not engaged. It is also important to recognize that of the students who are not engaged in Volunteer Service they have a near constant 20% likelihood of being engaged in political advocacy. Before controlling for the interacting variables a student who strongly believed in policy had a 66.42% chance of predicting engagement in

political advocacy compared to 98.93% in the interacting variable. Therefore, the predicted probability significantly increases when the interaction between the two variables is controlled for. My results illustrate a student's belief in policy or community has a strong correlation with students who are volunteering that in turn reflects the predicted probability of the student engaging in Political Advocacy.

Lastly, I must also note that the significance of Parents Value decreases to being less than .1 in model four. This illustrates that the relative belief in policy or community has a more positive influence on predicting Political Engagement when it is controlled for with students who are engaged in volunteer service. Consequently, I would reject both null hypotheses eight and nine. I would accept hypotheses eight that students already engaged in volunteer service are more likely to be engaged in political advocacy than students who are not engaged in volunteer service. I would also accept hypothesis nine that students who are engaged in political advocacy will have more belief in policy than students who are not.

Conclusion

The purpose of my study was to identify significant social forces that distinguish students who are engaged in political advocacy to their counterparts who are not engaged. The logistic regression analysis provided three important empirical findings: First, both Parents Value of Political Advocacy and Professors Involvement were found to be significant agents of socialization motivating students to be involved in Political Advocacy. Second, students who were currently engaged in Volunteer Service were found to have an increased likelihood of engaging in Political Advocacy. Additional, engagement in Volunteer Service mediates a student's Belief in Public Policy or Community Service. There is a strong negative correlation between the two variables. This indicates that of student who are engaged in Volunteer Service compared to students not engaged, their relative belief in Public Policy will make them more likely to be engaged in Political Advocacy. Despite the fact that variables used to test for social capital theory had a positive relationship predicting Political Advocacy none of them were

significant in my logistic regression model. The results suggest that Agent of Socialization and New Localism were two important theories to test at the individual level of political advocacy.

Implications for Agent of Socialization Theory

My results indicate that the agent of socialization theory was an important indicator of what social forces influence a student's engagement in Political Advocacy. Of the two agents, Professors were found to be more influential that Parents. This may be due to the fact that most students at Northgate College have moved out of their parent's house and professors become an adult role model within the classroom setting. These results are important for Professors and Colleges to recognize because they hold an influential role in shaping a students engagement in Political Advocacy. As the Colby et al. (2003) study has noted several colleges and universities have recognized this influence and have re-shaped their mission and course requirement to instill a better understanding of civic engagement. Colby et al. clearly illustrates that students must realize their potential for power and ability to make change within the general frameworks of society, which can be facilitated by professors. The topic of professors influential role in shaping a civically engaged student population could be further researched to see what department, type of requirement, and teaching methods have proven to be the most influential in strengthening the political advocacy of students. The significance of Parents Value of Politcal Advocacy at predicting Political Advocacy, more than friends, illustrates the decreasing role of peers in early adulthood. My findings also suggest that parental values are important to the students at Northgate College. This finding follows several of the claims of Braungart's (1971) study of college students and their family. Braungart's claims that students in his 1971 Study had a strong value of parental politics and were found to follow the same political orientation or belief system as their parents. Brangart also claims that the family's social class, religion, and political orientation were the three most significant variables affecting "student political identification"(1971: 127). In my study I broadly focused on the role of parents. I measured the

parent's value of political advocacy to see if Parents were an important source of socialization. The significant of the role of Parental Values signals that more research could be conducted on the type of parenting, level of discussion, and also to see if the political identification between student and parent were the same like in Braungart's study.

Implications of New Localism

Levine & Cureton (1998) and Kryzanek (2005) both claim that college students have grown apathetic to politics and are more inclined to become engaged in their local community through volunteer work. My findings that students engaged in volunteer service have an increased likelihood of also becoming engaged in political advocacy suggests the two types of civic engagement are not mutually exclusive; contrary to all three scholars. Also, the fact that experience in volunteer service is mediated by belief in public policy suggests that my student respondents do not view political engagement as a non-effective means for change within society.

Given that currently 46% of the 73 respondents are currently engaged in Political Advocacy at Northgate College, political engagement is valued on this campus. Cohen's study of the anti-apartheid movement in the 1980's led him to conclude: "the revolution in attitudes and values started in the sixties has not completely disappeared" (Cohen 1990:32). Consistent with Cohen, I argue that political engagement has not deteriorated at Northgate College. Rather, the claims that students are apathetic to political issues may be due to the wider trend of comparing current students to the 1960s movement. This comparison is not fair because the social, historic, and political issues of the 1960s are not the same issues facing students today. Therefore, scholars must take into account the current historical events; such as the war on Iraq and the 2009 election, into account when comparing students from various generations. The significant negative relationship with my variables used to test for New Localism implies that this study could be replicated and further researched at several other college campuses. Previous studies focusing on college students are either written for the teacher, such as Colby et al., or are

outdated, such as the Levine & Cureton study. Therefore, a replication of my study of political advocacy could offer a portrait of college students in the current historical context and in a variety of college environments from liberal to conservative and large universities to small liberal arts colleges.

Implications of Social Capital Theory

My finding that social capital had little influence predicting political advocacy may reflect the characteristics of the population that I studied, since previous studies that tested for social capital were of large middle-aged populations. Additionally, the total number of respondents in the study was 76 students, which is smaller than the expected response rate. Consequently, more respondents in a re-test of the study could strengthen the significance of the social capital variables. However, at this time, I am led to conclude that Religion, Socializing six or more hours, and Friends Influence are not significant variables for predicting student Political Advocacy.

My study is unique in its reassessment of the current 2008 political engagement focus of college students. My conclusions could be more robust if this study were replicated at other college campuses, since one could test for institution-level effects on political engagement as well as examine whether any of the findings about the influence of service work or value placed on policy and community work reflect some idiosyncrasy of the particular college that I studied. Overall, I conclude that my study has successfully re-assessed and confirmed the results of several prior studies and has confirmed college students in the year 2008 are still politically active with parents, professors, and prior experience in local volunteer service fostering political engagement at Northgate College.

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Table I: Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range
Independent Variable			
Gender			
Male (Female=0)	.70	.462	0-1
Social Capital			
Religion	.26	.440	0-1
Socializing > 6 Hours	.61	.490	0-1
Friends Influence	.67	.475	0-1
Year in School (Freshman=0)			
Sophomore	.20	.406	0-1
Junior	.17	.377	0-1
Senior	.30	.462	0-1
New Localism			
Belief Scale: Policy/Community	9.34	2.069	4-14
Volunteer Service	.39	.492	0-1
Agent of Socialization			
Professor Engagement	.35	.479	0-1
Parents Value of Political Advocacy	.49	.503	0-1
Dependent Variable			
Political Advocacy	.47	.502	0-1

Table II: Logistic Regression of Political Advocacy as Dependent Variable

Independent Variable	Model 1 b	Model 2 b	Model 3 b	Model 4 b
Gender				
Male	-.068	-.267	-.797	-.619
(Female=0)	(.549)	(.575)	(.662)	(.688)
Social Capital				
Religion	.563	.161	.271	.271
	(.567)	(.618)	(.702)	(.726)
Socializing > 6 Hours	.196	.150	-.137	-.278
	(.523)	(.538)	(.603)	(.626)
Friends Influence	.808	.900^{+}	.431	.727
	(.127)	(.554)	(.635)	(.684)
Year In School				
(Freshman=0)				
Sophomore	.258	.330	1.096	1.151
	(.711)	(.717)	(.832)	(.857)
Junior	.269	.145	.776	.775
	(.716)	(.759)	(.872)	(.899)
Senior	-.151	.012	.841	.998
	(.625)	(.654)	(.783)	(.799)
New Localism				
Belief in Policy or Community		-.192^{+}	-.175	-.013
		(.130)	(.146)	(.165)
Volunteer Service		.934^{+}	1.064^{+}	8.151*
		(.539)	(.620)	(3.914)
Agent of Socialization				
Professors Influence			1.564*	1.475*
			(.653)	(.669)
Parent Value of Political Advocacy			1.421*	1.039^{+}
			(.602)	(.635)
Policy or Community				-.734^{+}
Vs. Volunteer Service				(.396)
Constant	-.983	.596	-.449	-2.008
	(.771)	(1.443)	(1.640)	(1.840)
Model Chi-Square	4.740	4.506	13.620	4.028
Significance	.692	.105	.001***	.045*

Note: Number of cases = 74; b= unstandardized regression coefficient with standard error in parentheses.
$^{+}$p < .1 *p <.05 **p < .01 ***p <.001 (two-tailed test)

Interaction Variables: Volunteer Service and Belief in Relative Value of Public Policy or Community Service
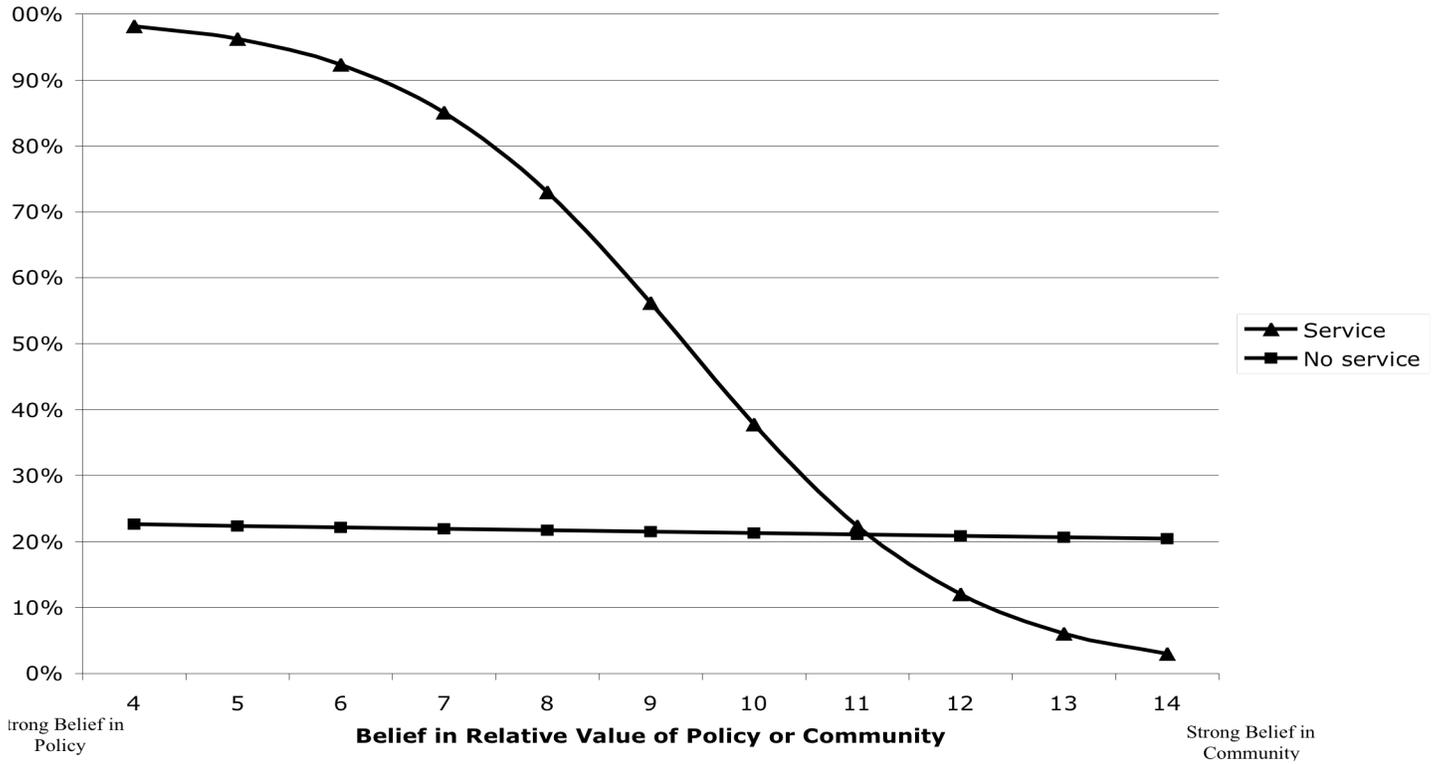
Note: Other variables set to modal values to calculate predicted probability at different levels of belief in relative value and currently volunteering.