

College Student Leadership & Social Change

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Driven to DiscoverSM

College Student Leadership

- Connections between leadership development and civic involvement
- Growth in four areas (Cress, et al., 2001)
 - Leadership understanding and commitment
 - Civic responsibility
 - Multicultural awareness and community orientation
 - Leadership skills

Civic Engagement & Social Change

- Increasing calls to educate students for civic and community engagement
- Renewal of civic engagement at the heart of higher education's mission and purpose
- Creating leaders for social change

Social Change

- Holistic engagement in factors promoting change in community and society:
 - Reflection on personal responsibility for change
 - Suggesting solutions to community problems
 - Discussing community solutions with others
 - Acting on community and social problems outside of the classroom

Purpose of the Study

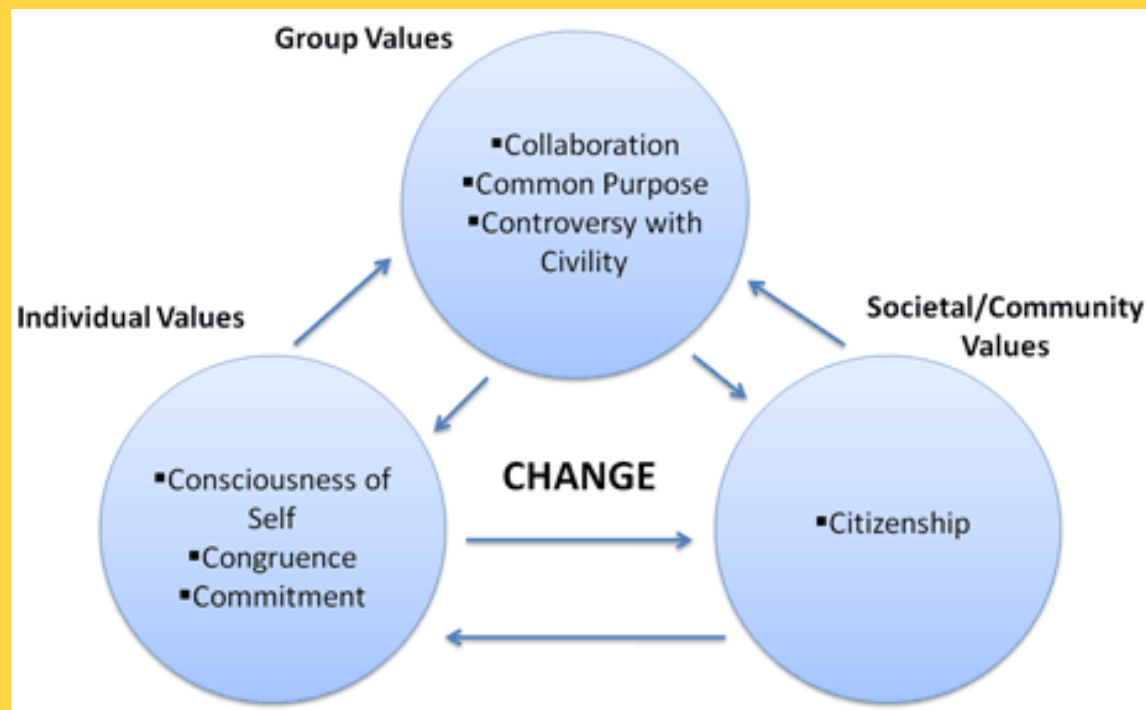
- Prior studies have not investigated whether
 - Students' participation in co-curricular leadership is associated with students' engagement in social change
 - Students' participation as leaders in different types of co-curricular activities yields different relationships with engagement in social change

Research Questions

- Is students' participation in leadership positions associated with engagement in social change?
- Is leadership in particular types of student clubs or organizations positively associated with students' engagement in social change?

Conceptual Framework

Social Change Model of Leadership Development



Astin & Astin (1996)

Methods

- Instrument:
 - SERU survey
 - Civic and community engagement module (20% randomly assigned)
- Participants:
 - 213,160 undergraduate students, spring 2011, nine large public research universities
 - 38.1% response rate, $n = 81,135$
 - 20% randomly assigned to civic engagement module ($n = 15,611$)

Measures

- Demographics: age, gender, race/ethnicity, first-generation
- Leadership antecedents:
 - Interest in opportunities for leadership and community work
- Social change antecedents:
 - Acknowledging personal differences; appreciating the world from someone else's perspective; comfort/ability to work with people from other cultures

Measures

- College Experience:
 - Academic Major
 - STEM
 - Arts/Humanities
 - Social Sciences
 - Business
 - Medical
 - Education
 - Undeclared (Referent)
 - Credits and GPA

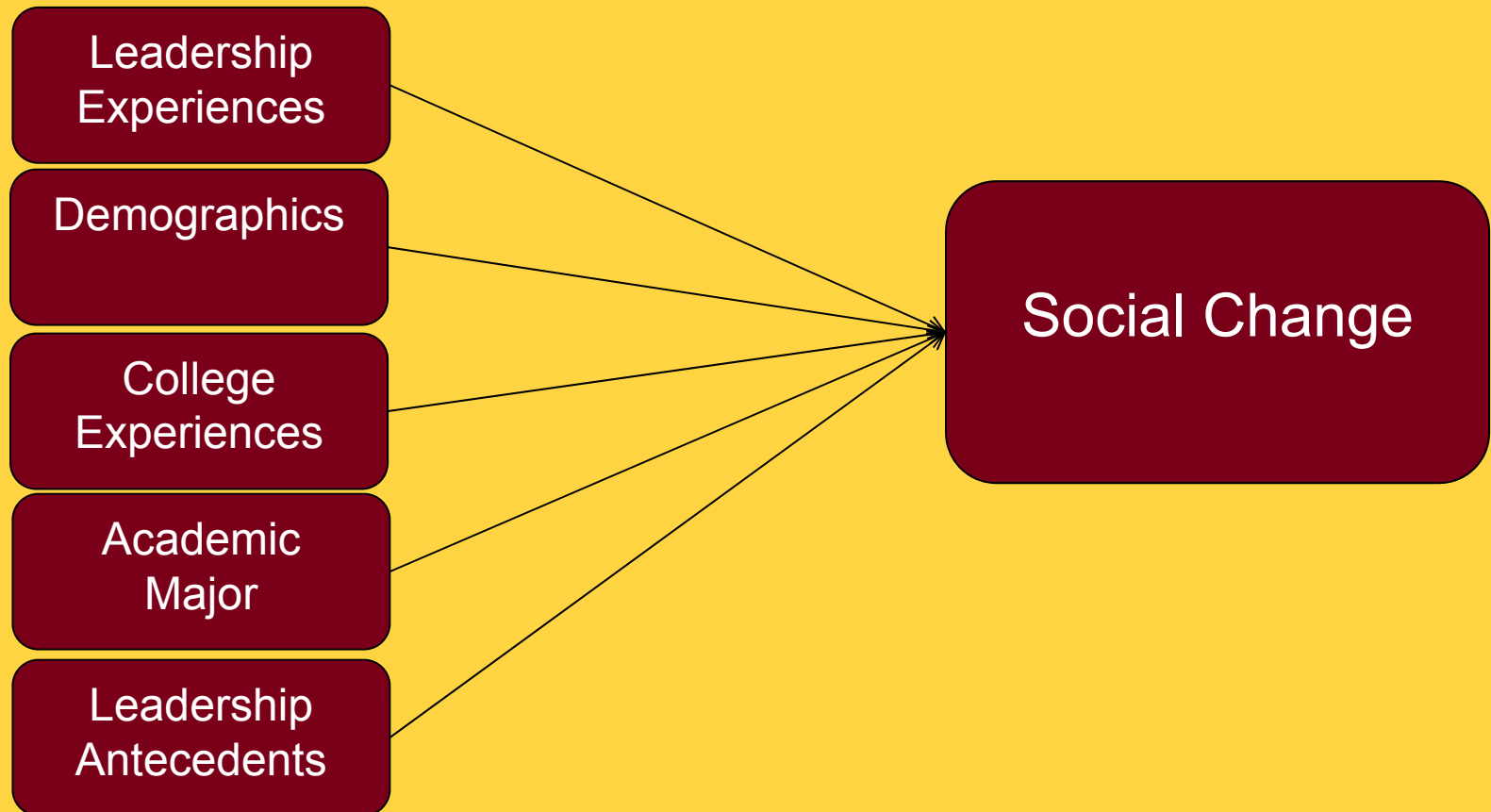
Measures

- Academic Activism
 - Reflect on community or social issues as a shared responsibility
 - Discuss and navigate controversial issues
 - Reflect upon the solution of an issue or challenge
 - Reflect on your individual responsibility for community or social issues
 - Define an issue or challenge and identify possible solutions
 - Appreciate the world from someone else's perspective
 - Implement a solution to an issue or challenge
 - Acknowledge personal differences
 - Interact with someone with views that are different from your own
 - Act on community or social issues

Measures

- Engagement in social change: how often students engaged in the following tasks outside of class:
 - Reflect on community or social issues as a shared responsibility
 - Reflect on your individual responsibility for community or social issues
 - Implement a solution to an issue or challenge
 - Reflect upon the solution of an issue or challenge
 - Define an issue or challenge and identify possible solutions
 - Discuss and navigate controversial issues

Conceptual Map



Leadership Participation

	n	%
Greek fraternity or sorority	1114	8.0
Academic (e.g. math club, philosophy club)	924	6.6
Service (e.g. Special Olympics Volunteers Club,)	772	5.6
Governing bodies (e.g. student government, IFC, etc.)	564	4.1
Religious (e.g. Korean Campus Ministry)	509	3.7
Advocacy (e.g. Amnesty International, etc.)	466	3.4
Campus sports clubs (e.g. rugby club, Kendo club)	412	3.0
Performing group (e.g. school band, dance team)	378	2.7
Honor society	388	2.3
Media (e.g. campus newspaper, radio station)	261	1.9
Recreational (e.g. chess club, bike club)	242	1.7
Political (e.g. Young Republicans, College Democrats)	163	1.2
Campus varsity team (e.g. basketball, softball, soccer)	100	.7

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Procedures

- Factor analysis: 24 items
 - Social change ($\alpha = .95$)
 - College experiences
 - Academic activism ($\alpha = .95$)
 - Leadership antecedents
 - Diversity recognition ($\alpha = .90$)
 - Diversity skills ($\alpha = .84$)
- Linear regressions predicting social change

Results

	B
Leadership	.13***
Academic	.03
Advocacy	.29***
Campus Sport Clubs	-.04
Campus Varsity Team	.02
Governing Bodies	.06
Greek Fraternity or Sorority	.06*

	B
Honor Society	.01
Media	.09
Performing Group	-.03
Political	.18*
Recreational	-.12*
Religious	.16***
Service	.11***

Results

	B
Asian	.09***
Age	.01*
Academic Activism	.39***
GPA	-.06***
Opportunities for Leadership	.02* (Model 2)
Opportunities for Community Work	.12***
Diversity Recognition	.24/25***
Diversity Skills	.09***

Discussion

- Leadership is positively associated with students' engagement in social change
- Leadership in the following groups is also significant:
 - Advocacy
 - Religious
 - Greek
 - Service
 - Political

Recommendations

- Examine the experiences of students in the five groups positively associated with social change
- Infuse similar values/goals/opportunities into other student organizations
- Students who participate as leaders in any organization can effect social change

Recommendations

- Increase student engagement in organizations that enhance student awareness and responsibility for social change
- Examine the means through which students engage in social change through these activities

Thank you!

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