Critical Community Involvement at CSUEB: Exploring Barriers and Motivators

Thesis Presentation Isobel Marcus
Overview

- Background and Purpose
- Literature
- Methods
- Findings
- Discussion
- Implications
Background and Purpose

- How can social workers increase community involvement?
- PEIL Diversity and Social Justice Planning Project
- What motivates university students to advocate for their communities?
"Social workers seek to enhance the capacity of people to address their own needs. Social workers also seek to promote the responsiveness of organizations, communities and other social institutions to individuals and social problems."

Preamble, NASW Code of Ethics
What are the barriers to and motivators of community involvement at the university? How does diversity influence the pursuit of social justice-oriented community engagement?
Literature

- Community Involvement Umbrella
- Civic engagement
- Community engagement
- Extensive literature on Civic engagement and Community engagement
- Micro, Mezzo, Macro- barriers and motivators
Literature

- Little inclusion in the research of minority and Low SES students
- Focus on "engagement gap" or seen as a deficit in low SES minority students
- Rubin's (2007) importance of questioning civic structures
Methods

- **Focus groups:** (n=47), 11 Groups: 6 undergraduate, 2 faculty, 2 graduate 1 staff, a total of 27 students, 8 staff, and 11 faculty

- **Student Cultural Orgs:** 4-15 students per meeting, 5 clubs interviewed

- **Key Informant Interview**

- **Recruitment Challenges:** Access & follow through
## Methods

### Sample Characteristics

#### Race/Ethnicity of Focus Groups Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American, Black</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caucasian/white</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiple Ethnicities</td>
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<td>Latino/Hispanic</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
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#### Age of Participants

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Number of Participants</th>
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<tr>
<td>18-22</td>
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<tr>
<td>23-30</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>31-40</td>
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<td>51-60</td>
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<td>61-70</td>
<td>3</td>
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#### Sexual Orientation

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Sexual Orientation</th>
<th>Participants</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Straight or Heterosexual</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBTQ</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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</table>
Methods

- **Coding:** 1) Definitions; 2) CE motivators; 3) barriers 4) community awareness; 5) community involvement; and 6) co-curricular involvement

- **Inter-rater reliability:** Kappa 48, 55, 90

- **Model Formation:** Literature, data analysis, Stages of Change Model, graduate student experience
Findings

● **Motivators**
  ○ Social Motivation and Belonging, Culture and Diversity, Modeling and Mentorship, Curricular Support

● **Barriers**
  ○ Time and Socio-Economic Status, Lack of Social Support, Co-curricular disorganization, University Policy, Faculty Commitment and Curricular Implementation
Social Motivation
Gotten involved politically with the pop 30 just did tabling actually and that was fun because then you meet with all kinds of people.

Diversity
Just getting to know all these people from different schools, from different backgrounds, and just getting to know different traditions so that my ignorance level would be lower, it was just the most mind-blowing experience I had.
Quotations: Barriers

Curricular Implementation
I think that a lot of teachers do a pretty good job of saying, "Oh, these are the issues that need to be addressed in our community." But they don't do a very good job of telling us how to go about doing that.

Time and Socio-Economic Status
They are very busy, so when I hear, like we should incorporate classes with civic engagement, I'm like, "Oh, why don't you ask the students if they're already doing and civically engaged?" They're busy. They're feeding people. They're doing all that stuff, and then we turn around and say, "You have to do this," and they're going, "Why?"

Age and Social Support
...like I told them that I wanted to start a parent support group for transfer students. Instead of them guiding me to like something that already pre-existing or something they just gave me a big packet of papers and said hey go start your own club. I’m thinking to myself I don’t want to start my own club. I don’t want to do that.
Pre-problem Posing: I feel that there is a sense of pervasive pessimism about the state of the country today. That a lot of people are becoming so and so embittered by it that’s it’s moved on past from even just [inaudible]. It’s become a sort of fatalism that well, whatever I do doesn’t matter, it’s going to happen anyway.

Community Involvement: I would say I got involved with a Hayworth project, there is a neighborhood project that the school got a grant for $25 million and one of the professors in the [inaudible] department was one of the directors for that program. So, I volunteered to help out because I said, “I speak Spanish, I’m working on my masters, I can help out.” So, I went over a couple times, I loved it, but I wish I could’ve do more.

Problem Posing: So, just thinking about as I’m learning to do the therapy and mental health thinking also about the larger issues. Why is it in that neighborhood, why is it there? Why is it so much stress, so much trauma, why is it in that population?

Critical Awareness: I think looking at history and looking at how social justice has not occurred with different groups, and understanding the past to know and presently what is still going on as an injustice in the world around them. So being able to have knowledge about that so that they can know what needs changing.

Community Action: Protest all the time. Even protested for the Seeks actually in Washington, D.C. I was part of that because of all the terrible things that happened again.
Discussion: Barriers and Motivators

- The research shows the importance of integrating SES, culture, sexual orientation and age into community involvement programming and curriculum

- Interviews uncovered the need to improve administrative policy that influences student community involvement at CSUEB

Image: Huffington Post
Discussion: Stages of Critical Community Involvement

- Strength-based
- Importance of uncovering social justice issues and related diversity factors
- *Community involvement, problem posing, and critical awareness* were the most discussed stages
- The study contradicted literature on engagement "gap" of low SES minority students
## Implications

| Social Motivation and Belonging, Culture and Diversity, Modeling and Mentorship | Center connected to diversity/organized around multiple diversities, working with student orgs |
| Curricular Support, Faculty Commitment | Incorporate class assignments, support praxis learning, encourage advocacy |
| Time and Socio-Economic Status | Paid student positions, incentivize in class |
| University Policy | Sustainable budget, Departmental Goals |
Implications

- Continued research on the Model to reframe community involvement on a continuum
- Important addition to the field concerning advocacy
- Further research is needed to test and explore model as an implementation tool