

# Students for Peace: Contextual and Framing Motivations of Antiwar Activism

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*This article traces the development of peace activism among undergraduate social work students. In doing so, it explores how social statuses, political contexts, and collective action frames affect the likelihood of joining the movement against the Afghanistan war (2001 to current). After analyzing data from a multi-campus sample of Bachelors in Social Work (BSW) students (n = 159), results show that peace activism was predicted by level of education as well as perceptions of proper foreign policy, the relative efficacy of social movement tactics, and identification with specific activist ideals. Finally, being situated in activist networks fostered greater peace activism while the ascribed statuses of race, class, and gender were poor predictors of peace activism.*

*Key words: peace activism, students, antiwar, BSW, social movement, collective action*

In the last twenty years, the United States has initiated three major wars: twice in Iraq, and once in Afghanistan. In each war, most Americans initially supported the war policies, but a noticeable segment of the U.S. population also mobilized

into new incarnations of U.S. peace movements (Meyer & Corrigan-Brown, 2005). While demonstrations against the Afghan and Iraq wars were large, little analysis exists about who joined these recent peace movements (Bogdan Vasi, 2006; Duncan & Stewart, 1995; Verhulst & Walgrave, 2007). To date, no studies have explored the extent to which employed social workers or social work students have contributed to the recent protests against the U.S. invasions of Middle Eastern countries.

In its most abstract terms, the social work profession has a commitment to achieving global and local peace through political and non-political means. The social work literature contains many essays on why and how social workers can work for peace making and human rights at international, national and local levels (e.g., Adams, 1991; Lundy & van Wormer, 2007; Moshe, 2001). The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) code of ethics reads: "Social Workers promote social justice and social change with and on the behalf of clients." Some of the ways to achieve social justice is through "direct practice, community organizing, social and political activism." Moreover, the NASW Peace and Social Justice Committee has urged social workers to work for an absence of war as well as reducing the size of the federal military budget, greater cooperation with the United Nations, total nuclear disarmament, stopping the poverty draft and a general de-escalation of violence.

While professional organizations have urged social workers to engage in peace activism, there is an absence of empirical studies on how often or why social workers join social movements against an ongoing war. When addressing political activism in general, many impressionistic essays suggest that the social work profession has become too "micro orientated" and has neglected its activist mission (Abramowitz, 1998; Davis, Cummings & MacMaster, 2007; Specht & Courtney, 1993). Coates (2003) warned that "many social workers consider the area of policy and actions to change policy to be the concerns of others—administrators, academics, government—but not themselves" (p. 138). Likewise, when discussing social work's role in international relations and peacemaking, James Midgley wrote (2001): "It cannot be claimed that social activism has

been popular in social work or that it has inspired many social workers" (p. 10).

College students have often been a central force in peace movements in the past (Van Dyke, 2003) but there is little knowledge of how social work students might fit into these dynamics. On the other hand, there is some research on the reformist tendencies of social work students. The empirical literature suggests that only a small percentage of social work students see social reform as a primary role for social workers. While one study contends that a "desire to create social change" is a major motive for students choosing social work (Hanson & McCullagh, 1995), other studies suggests that social work students are not enamored with political activism and prefer a career in micro practice (Aviram & Katan, 1991; Butler, 1990).

To address peace activism among social work students, this paper asks two related questions: (1) What proportion of undergraduate social work students have protested against the U.S. war in Afghanistan?; and (2) What are the factors that differentiate the students who have and have not joined this recent peace mobilization in the United States?

With a focus on factors that may inspire and hinder activism, this work integrates insights from many academic disciplines. The much cited "resource" model of political science guides our theoretical conceptualizations (Brady, Verba, & Scholzman, 1995), as do the sociological theories of "mobilization structures" (McAdam & Paulsen, 1993; Passy, 2001) and "collective action frames" (Gamson, 1992; Klandermans, 1997; Snow & Benford, 1992). This work also taps the nascent literature on peace activism among social work faculty (Davis et al., 2007; Van Soest, Johnston, & Sullivan, 1987) and political participation among social work students (Aviram & Katan, 1991; Butler, 1990; Rocha, 2000; Weiss, 2003) and employed social workers (Dudziak & Coates, 2004; Ezell, 1993; Hamilton & Fauri, 2001; Parker & Sherraden, 1992; Reeser, 1992; Ritter, 2008; Wolk, 1981).

## Literature Review

Variable selection in this study is partially guided by the "resource-model" of political participation (Brady et al., 1995).

Offering a succinct answer as to why people refrain from politics, the resource-model asserts: "because they can't, because they don't want to, or because nobody asked" (p. 271). "They can't" suggests a dearth of necessary resources to be political. While crucial resources may come in many forms, these authors emphasize the importance of financial situations, free time, and civic skills in civic engagement. "They don't want to" deals with a lack of psychological engagement in politics. This indifference to politics is sometimes seen as political ignorance, but the resource model assumes that this is a reaction to a lower sense of political efficacy and greater levels of individualism. "Nobody asked" implies that people are isolated from the recruitment networks that move citizens into action.

### *They Can't: Class, Race, and Gender Cleavages*

According to "resource-model" scholars (Brady et al., 1995), socioeconomic standing (SES) is a powerful variable that drives political participation for members of every social group in society (e.g., SES works across race, gender, and occupational boundaries). In the simplest of terms, a person's class location grants or impedes access to opportunities and financial resources that make political activism easier. Consequently, people in higher socio-economic levels amass and retain the structural elicitors of activism (be it more money, wider educational opportunities, or greater amounts of free time).

Numerous studies argue that affluence predicts political activism in samples of the general public (Barkan, Cohn, & Whitaker, 1995; Brady et al., 1995; Leighley & Vedlitz, 1999; Oliver, 1984; Tate, 1991; Wallace & Jenkins, 1995) and collegiate undergraduates (Paulsen, 1994). When moving to social workers, the impact of income on activism is a bit less clear. A few studies argue that social workers are more political when they have higher incomes and more financial assets (Parker & Sherraden, 1992; Wolk, 1981). However, other studies find no such relationship (Andrews, 1998; Ezell, 1993; Hamilton & Fauri, 2001; Ritter, 2008).

The resource model also asserts that greater educational attainment leads to greater political engagement (Finkel & Muller, 1998; Hillygus, 2005; Kingston & Finkel, 1987; Leighley & Vedlitz, 1999, Lim, 2008; Stake & Hoffman, 2001; Verhulst

& Walgrave, 2007; Wallace & Jenkins, 1995). Studies among social workers often highlight the effects of education. Higher levels of educational attainment seem to inspire greater levels of activism among practicing social workers (Andrews, 1998; Chui & Gray, 2004; Ezell, 1993; Parker & Sherraden, 1992; Wolk, 1981). Among social work students, it is possible that the completion of certain classes can make students more politically active (Rocha, 2000; Van Soest, 1996). However, Van Soest (1996) cautioned that finishing a class on oppression did not lead to higher advocacy intentions, while Weiss & Kaufman (2006) noted that BSW students were less willing to engage in social action after they did a field placement in organizations that emphasized political change. Finally, educational attainment measures were insignificant in the only multivariate study on social worker political participation (Ritter, 2008).

Previous studies sometimes found links between political participation and one's gender and racial background (Niemi & Hanmer, 2010). For example, African-American high school and college students protested more regularly than did Euro-American students in the 1970s (Paulsen, 1994) and the 1990s (Dolan, 1995). Social work studies have occasionally confirmed this pattern. Two studies found that African-American social workers and MSW students wrote more letters to Congress, attended more political meetings, and joined more community organizing efforts than white Euro-Americans with lesser academic degrees (Ezell, 1993; Rocha, 2000). Another study found that minority social work faculty were more likely to wear a peace button or attend an antiwar rally than their Euro-American counterparts (Van Soest et al., 1987). Nevertheless, four studies argued that the race of respondents was irrelevant when addressing the electoral activities of social workers in Michigan (Wolk, 1981), South Carolina (Andrews, 1998) and in national samples (Parker & Sherraden, 1992; Ritter, 2008).

The relationship between gender status and political participation is far from certain. Some studies suggest that until the 1970s women were slightly less likely to vote or join political protests (Barkan et al., 1995; Kingston & Finkel, 1987; Wallace & Jenkins, 1995). Conversely, studies on contemporary populations suggest that this gender gap disappeared or has even been reversed (Eckberg, 1988; Hillygus, 2005; Hritzuk &

Park, 2000; Leighley & Nagler, 1992; Niemi & Hanmer, 2010; Paulsen, 1994; Schussman & Soule, 2005; Tate, 1991). Studies on a political action "gender gap" among peace activists and social workers were more conclusive. A study on protests of the second Gulf War found that women outnumbered men (Verhulst & Walgrave, 2007) as did a study on peace activism among social work professors (Van Soest et al., 1987). Only one study of social workers in Hong Kong found that male respondents were more politically active (Chui & Gray, 2004), while gender failed to predict the political engagement of social workers in most other studies (Andrews, 1998; Ritter, 2008; Rocha, 2000; Wolk, 1981).

Some studies suggest that the transition into marriage or divorce can influence a person's political activities (Fahs, 2007; Stoker & Jennings, 1995). The early stages of marriage can suppress political engagement for men and women (Cole, Zucker & Ostrove, 1998; Kingston & Finkel, 1987; Opp, 1990; Stoker & Jennings, 1995) while other studies contend that long-term married people are more likely to vote (Leighley & Vedlitz, 1999). Ending marriages can also politicize women, since divorced women are more likely to engage in feminist activism (Cole et al., 1998). Conversely, another set of studies concluded that marital status was a poor predictor of political practices (Dolan, 1995; Hillygus, 2005; Hritzuk & Park, 2000; Paulsen, 1994; Schussman & Soule, 2005).

### *They Don't Want To: Framing Grievances, Efficacy, and Collective Identities*

Frames are generally conceived as cultural tools or schemas that provide "tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters" (Gitlin, 1980, p. 6). While frames help with the classification and organization of incoming stimuli, they also serve a political function. Conventional frames acquire the consent by portraying the social order as proper, normal, and inevitable. By seeking widespread conformity, mainstream narratives get people to subscribe to values, ideals, and self-definitions that bind them to their social location. While conservative frames prioritize deference to conventional standards, collective action frames do the exact opposite. Collective action frames are the set of beliefs that motivate people into joining

collective efforts that publicly seek social change.

Movement theorists have identified several dimensions of collective action frames (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLughlin-Volpe, 2004; Gamson, 1992; Klandermans, 1997). First, collective action frames initially render some societal norms as wrong, unacceptable, and unjust. By naming the injustice, Snow and Benford (1992) suggested these frames serve as “accenting devices that either underscore or embellish the seriousness and injustice of a social condition or redefine it as unjust (or/and?) immoral” (p. 137). These injustice frames can highlight many sorts of maltreatments but they often generate greater salience when they focus on violations of fairness or equity norms. Second, frames identify the causes of the injustice. By serving a diagnostic function, frames are etiologies that explain why problems exist and assign levels of blame or capability to different entities. By making these attributions, frames highlight the sorts of practices that should be modified, transformed, or eliminated. Third, frames also convince bystanders that they should use political tactics to stop these violations. This prognostic aspect of frames usually emphasizes the urgency of political action and a sense that challenges from less powerful constituencies can force concessions from a reluctant target (this confidence in movement tactics is sometimes called “agency” or a “sense of collective efficacy”). Finally, frames must foster a collective or shared identity among the aggrieved. In doing so, collective identities establish social boundaries of “us” and “them” by specifying who belongs to the righteous in-group of the mistreated and who represents the antagonistic wrongdoers against whom the in-group must be mobilized. These collective identities often contest and refute societal claims that members of their group are inferior, worthless, sick, or maladjusted. Instead, collective action frames offer narratives about the virtues of similar people and claim that their group is illegitimately threatened, deprived, or treated badly. These collective identities enhance a sense of solidarity and loyalty for the people who share the same problems, while fostering some distrust or contempt for the people or institutions that maintain these problems.

Numerous studies concur that injustice frames are relevant to joining social movements (Finkel & Muller, 1998). Feminist



activism occurs more often when women notice power imbalances among men and women (Cole et al., 1998; Kelly & Breilinger, 1995; Stake & Hoffman, 2001) while civil rights activism is more common when African-Americans see systematic forms of racial discrimination (Beyerlein & Andrews, 2008; Tate, 1991). Antinuclear activists believe that atomic energy is dangerous (Opp, 1990) and antiwar activists see foreign policy as immoral or driven by corporate profit seeking (Duncan & Stewart, 1995; Swank, 1993; Verhulst & Walgrave, 2007; Woehrlé, Coy, & Maney, 2008; Wood & Ng, 1980).

Social work research on political participation has mostly ignored the role of injustice frames. Two of these rare studies noted that MSW Students who believed in a just world were less likely to advocate on the behalf of women, people of color, and homosexuals (Morrison Van Voorhis & Hoestetter, 2006; Van Soest, 1996). Moreover, a study from Israel found that BSW students endorsed political activism more freely when they saw poverty emanating from a lack of jobs and discrimination (Weiss, 2003). Finally, social work faculty were more likely to join a peace march when they thought there was excessive spending on military issues and that the U.S. should stop embarking upon military interventions in Central America (Van Soest et al., 1987).

While perceptions of social biases and discriminations offer an impetus for political activism, these thoughts by themselves do not guarantee political action will occur. People who see unfair practices may be resigned to endure or cooperate with oppressive institutions when they think the status quo is unable to be changed or altered by non-elites. Accordingly, some argue that sympathetic bystanders must feel that their contributions will add to a movement's success before they join political movement.

To date, the role of power interpretations in political activism is far from settled. Some studies contend that perceptions of personal efficacy (Hritzuk & Park, 2000; Leighley & Vedlitz, 1999; Lim, 2008), and/or collective efficacy, are crucial to activism (Barkan et al., 1995; Beyerlein & Andrews, 2008; Stake & Hoffman, 2001; Verhulst & Walgrave, 2007). Accordingly, it has been found that college students are more likely to be politically active when they think that the government is responsive to



citizen demands (Dolan, 1995), while women were more likely join feminist mobilizations when they felt they understood political affairs and felt the women's movement was powerful (Cole et al., 1998; Stake & Hoffman, 2001). Conversely, some studies insist that a sense of efficacy has little to do with participation in the women's movement (Kelly & Breilinger, 1995), liberal activism (Schussman & Soule, 2005), antinuclear protests (Opp, 1990), youth movements (Paulsen, 1994) and antiwar protests (Swank, 1993).

The occasional social work activism studies have found credence in the efficacy hypothesis (Ritter, 2008). Hamilton and Fauri (2001) noted that politically engaged social workers expressed more political efficacy; Pawlack and Flynn (1990) noted that social work administrators refrained from political activism when they believed that their activism could lead to negative repercussions for themselves or their place of employment.

Issues of collective identities and self-concepts can change a person's political behaviors in many ways. Advocacy on behalf of oneself and others is often interwoven with issues of self-conceptions, moral obligations, and the personal salience of political events (Hillygus, 2005). Accordingly, activist identities are often connected to narratives of how to display a desired or idealized self and how to live a principled life (Kelly & Breilinger, 1995; Oliver, 1984; Opp, 1990; Polleta & Jasper, 2001). To people who internalize activist identities, political engagement can be conceived as an opportunity to express key moral convictions and to act upon obligations of reciprocity, fairness, and concern for the common good.

Empirical studies have noted that the purposive incentives of adhering to moral codes and commitment to social justice were strong predictors of antinuclear activism in Germany (Opp, 1990), feminist activism in Britain (Kelly & Breilinger, 1995), and peace activism in the United States (Swank, 1993). In studies of social workers, ethical reasons for activism seem especially important. A study of Israeli social work students discovered a greater willingness to be politically involved when the students saw a congruency between social work and social action (Weiss & Kaufman, 2006). Similarly, two studies found higher political participation among professors who

thought social work was “inherently political” and that it was an ethical responsibility to engage in political activities (Mary, 2001; Van Soest et al., 1987); another found that social work agency directors were less politically active when they thought such actions were inappropriate for a person in their profession (Pawlak & Flynn, 1990). Finally, Ritter (2008) noted that interest in politics motivated activism among licensed social workers, while Reeser (1992) discovered that social workers whose primary loyalty was with clients were more committed to social action than employees who voiced a stronger loyalty to their agency’s rules and regulations.

*Nobody Asked: Social Networks and Mobilizing Structures*

The proposition that social networks shape political behaviors has drawn considerable interest in movement and participation studies (Cole et al., 1998; Finkel & Muller, 1998; Lim, 2008; Passy, 2001; Tate, 1991). While the exact mechanism for this relationship is still up for debate, many movement scholars agree that personal networks often inspire and draw people into political mobilizations.

Many sorts of contextual and institutional settings can make people predisposed or receptive to political activism. The messages received in familial and peer groupings can have a major impact on political inclinations (Chorn-Dunham & Bengston, 1992; Dolan, 1995). Accordingly, studies of the general population suggest that citizens are more likely to be antinuclear, civil rights, and gay rights activists when they think that their friends and acquaintances approve of such actions (Beyerlein & Andrews, 2008; Duncan & Stewart, 1995; Opp, 1990; Simon, Lowry, Sturmer, Weber, & Freitag, 1998). Such associations may be linked to the emotional rewards of adhering to the directives of significant others who encourage political engagement.

While general population studies often discover a link between referent attitudes and political activism, this has not always been the case in studies on social work activism. Some studies confirm this socialization argument. Recently both Ritter (2008) and Chui and Gray (2004) concluded that social workers were more engaged in activism when they discussed politics with colleagues and family members. Nevertheless, other studies have yielded contradictory results. Ezell

(1993) and Hamilton and Fauri (2001) found no relationship between the frequency of political conversations among one's coworkers, one's family of origin, and the amount of political activism among employed social workers.

While social networks either encourage the acceptance or rejection of specific collection action frames, they also serve as conduits of important information about political events. Political parties, committed partisans, and movement activists often try to motivate activism through different persuasive techniques (e.g., face-to-face conversations, phone calls, email, direct mail, etc). While each of the recruitment pitches convert some sympathetic bystanders into activists, people engage more often in political actions when encouraged or asked to be active by someone whom they personally know (Finkel & Muller, 1998; Hritzuk & Park, 2000; Lim, 2008; McAdam & Paulsen, 1993; Nepstad & Smith, 1999; Niemi & Hanmer, 2010; Ritter, 2008; Schussman & Soule, 2005).

## Method

### *Sample*

This study drew on the responses of 159 BSW students from throughout the United States. To establish a stratified research design, this study selected participants through two means. By seeking a pool of fully engaged student activists, the lead researcher distributed surveys at several college-based protests throughout the Midwest and South (Indiana University, Ohio State University, University of Kentucky). Two of these protests focused on antiwar activism (protests occurred from Winter 2001 through Spring 2002). To maximize the likelihood of receiving completed surveys, we asked the protesters to complete the survey before they left the event. Eight of 37 BSW students from these protests said that they had done some form of peace activism.

To create a comparison group of non-activists, this study also distributed surveys to students who belonged to twelve colleges through the entire U.S. (Fall 2000). To create this comparison group, we initially separated all public campuses into research, doctoral, masters, or baccalaureate clusters using the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education.

This creation of four clusters enabled access to students from many sorts of colleges, including large research campuses and smaller, state-run commuter colleges. Next, three schools were randomly selected from each of the four strata<sup>1</sup>.

After selecting these twelve colleges, we contacted faculty from each institution (via email). Professors in the natural sciences, humanities, social sciences, and business were asked to administer surveys in their classrooms, since student attitudes have previously differed by such majors (Astin, 1993). With participation being purely voluntary, 28 of the 338 contacted professors decided to distribute and collect the surveys during one of their class sessions (8.2%). Four of these professors taught in BSW programs and these four provided the comparison data for this study.<sup>2</sup>

In total, 159 BSW students completed the survey. As expected, this sample had a higher proportion of women (89.3% female). The racial breakdown seemed to mirror that of many public institutions, since 85% of the sample was Euro-American, 7% was African-American, 5% was Latino/a and less than 1% were Native or Asian-American. Likewise, the age pyramid conforms to familiar trends, since the mean age was 26.4 years and 48% of the students were between 18 and 22 years of age. Finally, the social-class composition of the sample was slightly skewed toward lower-middle incomes. Twenty-seven percent of the students report a family income of less than \$20,000 a year, another 28% had incomes between \$21,000 and \$40,000, 40% had incomes from \$41,000 to \$80,000, and 15% had incomes above \$81,000.

### *Measures*

Participation in the peace movement was based on a political activities approach. Respondents were given a checklist of 17 ways to be politically active. Eleven of the behaviors dealt with electoral means of influencing governmental policies (e.g., voting, making financial contributions to elected officials, writing a letter to a politician, signing a petition) while six items dealt with more unconventional and protesting tactics (going to a legal demonstration, doing civil disobedience, boycotting products, protesting another group). Students were also asked about the political causes that motivated such actions. If the

students indicated that they engaged in any of these political actions for antiwar or peace reasons, they were deemed peace activists. In the end, 10 of the 159 students were considered peace activists through this approach.

Most of the demographic variables were measured through dichotomous dummy variables. For sex, respondents were asked "What is your sex?" (Female = 1, Male = 0). Responses were recorded as being single or not since studies suggest that married and single are the crucial distinctions for predicting political activism (Single = 1, Other = 0). Race was determined by their response to the question: "How would you classify your race/ethnicity?" Although it is often methodologically more sound to identify variance by all races, the small number of Asian, Latino/a, and Native-American students lead to two binary variables for race (Euro-American = 1 and Others = 0; African-American = 1 and Others = 0).

Some of the other demographic factors were measured through closed-ended scales. Social class was determined through a family income scale (10 categories that started at under \$10,000 and ended with above \$151,000). For educational attainment, students were asked, "Please indicate your highest level of education." People who said they were first-year students were coded 1 while senior students were coded 4.

The concept of mobilizing structures has been operationalized several ways in earlier studies of political participation. Most often, studies have explored the value expressed by other people, the way a person was recruited to activism, and types of group affiliations. The "Activist Friends" measure dealt with the approval of activism among peer referents (see Opp, 1990). The prompt asked respondents if their friends generally condoned activism: "My friends think that activism is a positive thing" (Strongly agree = 5). The "Activist Networks" question dealt with the availability of "micro-mobilization moments" in which bystanders may meet political recruiters. To address explicit face-to-face requests for participation, we asked: "Have any friends ever asked you to go to a political event?" (similar to Eckberg, 1988).

All of the collective action frames were measured through Likert scales. The "Foreign Policy Injustice" item dealt with the debunking of the United States as the protector of freedom and

democratic processes: "American foreign policy supports democracies throughout the world" (Strongly disagree = 5). We also inquired if students recognized heterosexism by asking participants to respond to the statement: "Too often heterosexuals are unfairly accused of being homophobic" (Strongly disagree = 5).

The concept of collective efficacy was assessed through interpretation of the potential efficacy of protests and demonstrations (Finkel & Mueller, 1998). A single item declared that political demonstrations helped a social movement achieve its goals ("helped a lot" = 5, "hurt a lot" = 1).

The attributes of social identities have often been delineated as an individual's awareness that he or she belongs to a certain social group, together with the evaluative and emotional significance of that membership (Kelly & Breilinger, 1995). While closeness to one's social groups can inspire collective action, some studies suggest that the best predictor of activism is overtly defining oneself as an activist (Kelly & Breilinger, 1995). Accordingly, activist identities were traced through a four-item composite scale that dealt with several dimensions of politicized self-concepts (Cronbach alpha = .736). The first two questions addressed the internalization of protest norms or the extent that people felt obliged to protest: "I see myself as someone who is involved in promoting social justice" and "I feel guilty when I am politically active" (Kelly & Breilinger, 1995; Opp, 1990). Activist identities also compensated for the "free-rider" dilemma of people benefiting from activism even if they remained politically disengaged (Oliver, 1984). Accordingly, one item tapped the conviction that participants are personally active in order to atone for the political apathy of others: "I must be politically active since most people are politically inactive" (Strongly agree = 5). With activist identities concentrating on the need to generate new recruits and political sympathizers, participants responded to the statement: "I try to initiate political conversations" (Strongly agree = 5).

### *Analytical Strategy*

Given the binary nature of our dependent variables, we deemed a discriminant analysis the most appropriate multivariate technique (Aldrich & Cnudde, 1975; Klecka, 1980; Sherry, 2006). Approaches like discriminant analysis

proficiently highlight crucial independent variables that maximize the likelihood of a participant belonging to a particular group (i.e., doing a political action or not). Discriminant analysis shares many qualities of more familiar general linear regression models. By exploring the squared canonical correlations, researchers can also uncover the amount of total variance explained by all of the independent variables found in the regression (this effect size is akin to  $R^2$  in Ordinary Least Square Regressions). A Wilks' Lambda ( $\lambda$ ) provides the chi-squares ( $\chi^2$ ) that test the significance for the entire function.

When exploring the importance of specific variables, the calculated standardized discriminant functions are analogous to  $\beta$  weights in Ordinary Least Squares regressions. As such, standardized discriminant functions convey the unique contribution of each independent variable after the contributions of other independent variables are controlled. Like  $\beta$  weights, the relative strength of the predictors can be gleaned by comparing the size of the standardized discriminant functions (strength is determined by how far the coefficients move away from zero).

## Results

Our primary objective was to determine, using a discriminant regression approach, the effects of resource, mobilizing, and collective action frames on participation in the current peace movement. To assess the relative strength of resource, mobilization and framing variables, Table 1 displays the effects of different variable types through a series of step-wise regressions.

Model 1 suggests that the resource variables were relatively inept predictors of peace activism among undergraduate students. The cumulative effects of the resource variables generated could only account for 9.7% of the variance in peace activism and the  $\chi^2$  of 15.37 rejects the null hypothesis ( $p < .05$ ). Among specific independent variables, the variables of educational attainment and being single were the only significant predictors of peace activism (.583 and .359,  $p < .05$ ), while income, gender, and race variables did not significantly predict peace activism.



Table 1. Standardized Discriminant Coefficients of Involvement in the Peace Movement (n = 159)

Independent Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Resources			
Family Income	-.285	-.213	-.076
Education Level	.583*	.389*	.430**
Female	.118	.068	.041
Single	.359*	.247	.111
Euro-American	.135	-.094	-.088
Afro-American	.149	-.103	-.060
Mobilizing Structures			
Activist Friends		.392**	.250*
Activist Networks		.442**	.419**
Collective Action Frames			
Foreign Policy Unjust			.409**
Recognize Heterosexism			.387*
Activist Identity			.354*
Activist Tactics Efficacious			.299*
Wilks' $\lambda$	.903	.858	.773
$\chi^2$ test of Wilks'	15.37*	22.82**	37.70***
Squared Canonical Correlation	9.7%	14.2%	21.8%
Overall % correctly classified	79.2%	88.1	93.1

Note: \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$

The mobilization factors in model 2 offered better predictors of activist outcomes. When inserting the two contextual factors into the formula, the  $\chi^2$  grew to 22.82 ( $p < .01$ ) and the squared canonical correlation grew to 14.2. Both of the network factors showed significance, as activist networks were the most important predictor of peace activism (.442,  $p < .01$ ), and having activist friends also inspired peace activism (.392,  $p < .01$ ). Similar to the earlier regression, education levels still influenced political involvement but the importance

of being single lacked significance. This suggests that single people probably have greater access to the sort of mobilizing structures that generate more activism.

The framing variables in model 3 provided better predictors of activist outcomes. When adding the three framing variables, the  $\chi^2$  increased to 37.70 ( $p < .001$ ) and the amount explained increased to 21.8%. All four framing factors also attained significance. Net of other factors, seeing an unjust U.S. foreign policy had the strongest association with peace activism (.409,  $p < .01$ ). Recognizing discrimination against gays and lesbians and having an activist identity were almost as strong as having grievances with U.S. foreign policy (.387 and .354,  $p < .05$ ). Lastly, students who thought that protest tactics were relatively effective were more likely to join the peace movement than the students who considered movement tactics unproductive tools of social change (.299,  $p < .05$ ). Finally, educational attainment, activist friends, and activist networks remained significant in the last regression as well.

## Discussion

### *Strengths and Limitations*

This study offered some theoretical and methodological rigor. Our list of predictor variables was theory-driven and the breadth of variables lessened the chance of having extraneous or spurious variables. Moreover, our use of a stratified design allowed for a sufficient comparison of students who did and did not join these peace protests. Also, our sample of students from different colleges throughout the nation lowered problems of representativeness because this study is less inclined to suffer from the idiosyncratic side effects of studying a single campus.

That said, research designs can also play havoc with the accuracy and generalizability of research findings. We caution that these findings may not perfectly apply to students from all majors, since social work students are often more politically engaged than business or natural science majors but less engaged than sociology, political science and women's studies majors (Astin, 1993; Hillygus, 2005; Niemi & Hanmer, 2010). Several research decisions could have undermined this study's

external validity for the social work student population. First, the small sample size can lead to Type II errors in hypothesis testing (e.g., there are few men and racial minorities in the sample of undergraduate social work students). Second, the sampling procedures were not identical for activist and comparison groups, so problems of selection bias can exist. Third, measurement errors regularly haunt survey data. Problems of over-demanding recall could hurt our mobilization measures, in that people may have difficulty remembering whether anyone asked them to join a political event. Questions of social desirability may be especially relevant to our activist identity measures, as participants may want to sound socially desirable to themselves by overstating the amount that they fight for social justice. Moreover, students may have difficulty identifying the actual amount of income that their families have, as other family members may not share such information or people may not similarly judge who “counts” as a member of their family.

## Conclusions

When exploring peace activism among BSW students, this study offers a unique look into a retrospective sample of activists and non-activists. While peace activism was relatively rare among our sample, our analysis reveals the value of an integrated theoretical model. Variables from each of the resource, framing, and mobilization theories yielded significant results.

Only one of the resource factors consistently drove involvement in the peace movement. With greater educational attainment being significant in each regression, it is clear that activism was more prevalent among the students who have completed more course work. This finding might be the result of effective classroom interventions or issues of self-selection among social work majors, as students less inclined to protest wars may remove themselves from the social work major during their junior and senior years in college. While both options suggest that social work curricula inspire greater peace activism, future research should identify what classroom content and assignments are better at inspiring political participation and activist commitment.

Marital status was the only resource factor that was temporarily significant. Being single initially was important but this importance notably disappeared when mobilizing structures were entered into the mix of variables. This might suggest that single students were more active than married or divorced students because they were more likely to have activist friends. Perhaps married students embraced more traditional and conservative values compared to single students (especially given their age cohorts and young people generally delaying marriage more). Further, single students may have more free time to participate in activism due to fewer caretaking responsibilities or living situations that contain more like-minded activists of the same age cohort (e.g., dorms or student ghettos).

The rest of the resource variables were irrelevant to peace activism. Levels of family income never swayed involvement in this peace movement. This suggests that students from affluent, middle-class, and working-class backgrounds are equally drawn to antiwar activism. This result may have occurred since social work majors have less variance in family incomes than students in other majors (Caputo, 2004), or because framing factors were simply more important than resource variables for people who attend college (itself a relatively narrow demographic).

Matters of gender and racial status seemed equally inept at forecasting peace activism. While women and racial minorities were more likely to object to the Afghan and Iraqi wars (Kaufman, 2006), the demographic forces behind war opinions and political activism were not the same. That is, being a woman or person of color might make students slightly more suspicious of war rationales, but these differences in attitudes didn't always translate into greater peace activism behavior. Instead, the true catalysts of peace activism were the collective action frames and mobilizing networks that motivated action against the American invasion of Afghanistan.

This study also highlighted the importance of mobilizing structures. Peer attitudes were crucial to peace activism. Predictably, students who socialized with activists were more likely to be peace activists themselves. However, there could be temporal ordering problems in this association, in that students who were already politically active may have

intentionally sought out people who supported such tendencies. Additionally, being embedded in pre-existing activist networks certainly predicted future peace activism. Accordingly, these findings suggest a couple of things: first, substantial political tutoring must occur before a social work student takes up the struggle against U.S. war policies; and second, students who attended colleges that lack thriving activist networks may never transform their political attitudes into political behaviors.

Our data also suggested that framing variables were especially important in predicting peace activism. Grievances with the federal government led to more peace activism among our sample. Students who disputed the nobility of U.S. foreign policy and challenged issues of heterosexual privilege were more likely to join the peace movement. Also, activism was more prevalent among students who characterized themselves as workers for social justice. That is, peace activism was partially contingent upon the internalization of a personal commitment to working for oppressed peoples. Some constructed this as desire to be an "honorable" citizen and some responded to the guilt of implicitly supporting injustice through political inactivity. Activists also had greater confidence in social movement tactics and clearly believed that these were an effective way to enact social change. This suggests that some students were opposed to U.S. war efforts but remained politically inactive because they felt that social movement tactics were unable to alter the George W. Bush administration's war plans.

### Implications for Social Work Education

This paper can inform social work education in several ways. With injustice frames being essential to protest activities, social work programs should try to reveal the discriminatory and exploitative nature of many U.S. institutions (e.g., unjust foreign policy or heteronormativity). Similarly, because activist identities mattered in predicting peace activism, professors must reveal the connections between client well-being and injustices in families, agencies, and political arenas. Moreover, instructors should find ways to move students beyond a narrow focus on the well-being only of U.S. citizens. That is, professors

must help students become committed to improving the lives of people who live outside of the U.S. by expanding notions of what an “us” actually looks like. Likewise, educators should convince students that politics is not a “spectator sport,” that is, social work ethics requires involvement in political struggles. More concretely, educators should create assignments and exercises that offer opportunities to practice advocacy. The social work profession as a whole can also modify its curricula. Programs should provide a greater emphasis on foreign policy and the ways that the United States supports dictators throughout the world. Content can also explore the relationships between war and economic hardships, governmental debt, PTSD for soldiers and civilians, forced migrations, systematic rape, and spillover effects of greater familial violence in the U.S. and elsewhere. Departments can augment their policy classes by providing more social work classes on social action and by enrolling students in the sorts of sociology and women’s studies classes that inspire the most progressive activism among their students (Hillygus, 2005; Niemi & Hanmer, 2010; Stake & Hoffman, 2001). Practice classes can also connect students to issue-based advocacy groups, and typically offer greater access to political field practicums (Rocha, 2000; Van Soest, 1996). Finally, programs can emphasize international travel or studying abroad, since these experiences can enhance students’ cultural awareness and their commitments to social justice (Lindsey, 2005).

#### *Broader Implications for Education*

Ultimately, these findings also suggest that teaching about antiwar activism can enhance existing curricula in other departments, particularly sociology, psychology, ethnic studies, women’s studies, and American studies. Such classes often focus on the relationship between individuals and social movements but too often fail to precisely examine the differences between those who are politically active and those who remain more politically disengaged. Further, the study of peace broadly defined allows students to imagine not only how peace functions in a conflict and military sense, but also how peace might inform other social relationships in their lives; for example, by engaging in peace activism, they might learn to value the

diverse lived experiences of their fellow activists, or they may gain exposure to new ways of seeing or embodying identity (e.g., heterosexual students confronting the lived experiences of homophobia in their peers' lives). Moreover, the study of peace from a social justice perspective can also work against the more intimate manifestations of violence (e.g., domestic violence, racism, sexism and homophobia). Because most classes in social work, sociology, and critical fields have as their goal the cultivation of critical thinking and enhanced political engagement in students' social environments, the examination of political socialization, political activism, social relationships, and peace studies plays an integral part in shaping the future of socially-engaged education.

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(Endnotes)

1. Research schools: University of Delaware, University of Oregon, University of Texas; Doctoral: University of North Carolina-Greensboro, University of Mass-Lowell, Rutgers; Masters: Longwood College, University of Southern Maine, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay; Baccalaureate: Evergreen State College, Mesa State College, Southeast Arkansas College
2. Clearly this response rate was neither high nor random. Professors who never read email automatically removed themselves from the sample and the willingness to distribute the surveys was not constant throughout the different sorts of schools and disciplines. For the sample of all professors, around 2% of the Research professors distributed surveys, while 13% professors at masters granting universities did so. Likewise, less than 1% of Chemistry, Biology, and Physics professors assisted in this project while professors in Political Science, Sociology, and Social Work were most receptive to our requests (11%). Of the social work professors who actually distributed surveys, all of them either taught research or policy classes.

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