

# **Democratic Political Socialization on University Campuses**

Penn Democracy Project 2010-2011

**By**

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**This thesis is submitted for fulfillment of**

**Bachelor of Arts Degree  
Department of Political Science  
College of Arts and Sciences  
University of Pennsylvania**

**2011**

## **Dedication**

*To Professor Henry Teune, whose faith in this project has been a source of encouragement and whose relentless passion for cultivating active, moral citizenship in students inspired my desire to embark on this journey*

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## **II. Abstract**

This paper intends to contextualize early research on political socialization with recent developments that provide new considerations for the transmission of democratic political learning at a more advanced learning stage. It attempts to demonstrate this literature on political socialization as the foundation for evaluating the continuing research of the Penn Democracy Project in the field of democratic political socialization of undergraduate students. In light of the political socialization literature, this paper reveals the results of the most recent iteration of the Penn Democracy Project research study, which provide insight into the state of citizenship at the University of Pennsylvania. The overarching conclusion of this study supports the notion that while the University of Pennsylvania offers resources and opportunities for undergraduates to foster civic values, through specialized courses; centers; and funding for clubs, it fails to actively cultivate a shared culture of citizenship among its students. Finally, this paper evaluates strategic policy initiatives to effectively increase democratic citizenship education for undergraduate students at the University of Pennsylvania and introduces possible considerations to transplant this “Penn Model” on other university campuses.

### III. Introduction

Since the 1990s, college brochures, websites, and mission statements have brandished lofty visions of citizenship building, establishing it as a central aspect of higher education. This focus on liberal education parallels developments in the field of political socialization research in the 1990s. According to Alexander Astin of the University of California, Los Angeles, “The typical college or university will use language that focuses on ‘preparing students for responsible citizenship,’ ‘developing character,’ ‘developing future leaders,’ and ‘preparing students to serve society,’ as the goals of higher education (211). If these purported institutional priorities reflected the current reality of higher education, college and university campuses would witness a growing cultivation of democratic citizenship among students. As Astin continues to assert, “If we are to believe our own rhetoric, those of us who work in the academy see ourselves as *serving* the society and promoting and strengthening our particular form of democratic self-government... the central focus on responsible citizenship and service” (211).

Analyzing civic and political participation patterns among college-age students, it quickly becomes clear that these putative missions have lapsed in implementation and that there is a general lack of accord among those who create and affect education policy. As Anne Colby, et al. explain in *Educating Citizens*, these traditional goals of liberal education are slowly disappearing. Further illustrating this shift from traditional liberal education views, recommendations outlined in a 2005 commission appointed by former Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings, posit that the central concerns of higher education relate largely to increasing global competitiveness and economic prosperity. In

the report, *A Test of Leadership: Charting the Future of U.S. Higher Education*, there is no mention of preparing students for lives of active democratic and civic engagement; rather, the recommenders reinforce the notion that the university should be solely concerned with producing competitive, economically successful professionals.

Much of this disagreement revolving citizenship education of undergraduates revolves around the prospect of political socialization in higher education. Holistic research on political socialization of college-age students has remained relatively sparse, as the majority of political socialization studies have focused on childhood years. However, recent studies on political socialization provide new insights into the critical role of the classroom in teaching moral and political values. Although there is not extensive research on this demographic, these studies that have revisited this notion of higher-level political learning in colleges and universities. They have found that a number of factors, including those discovered through parallel advancements in other disciplines, establish the undergraduate years as critical in the value formation that becomes so central to democratic citizenship development.

As a committed endeavor that explores the possibilities of this citizenship development, The Penn Democracy Project is focused, at its core, on applying the findings of political socialization research into a framework that can explore and support democratic citizenship building at the university setting. Using the University of Pennsylvania as a model, it collects quantitative and qualitative data regarding student conceptions of a civic education through focus studies and a citizenship survey. This longstanding study, designed to assess the democratic political development among undergraduate students, analyzes student responses to questions concerning citizenship

values. Based on this data and the work of the Penn Democracy Project at the University of Pennsylvania, there is opportunity to create a lasting impact on students at a time when they develop complex judgment skills that are necessary for a democratic framework of increasing complexity. This research attempts to establish, based on continuing research of the Penn Democracy Project, that the university, although not currently serving as an ideal model of democratic citizenship development, can serve as a site for building democratic citizenship in all students. Based on the current findings of the Penn Democracy Project (2010-2011), there are significant opportunities to encourage students to become more active citizens with a higher degree of efficacy, civic responsibility, and political participation.



## IV. Political Socialization

### Defining and Historicizing

The existence and effective sustenance of a democratic polity depends on the participation of a citizenry whose democratic values and political beliefs produce prudent decisions. This active democratic citizen, serving as an autonomous individual capable of making complex moral judgments, inevitably *learns* these beliefs through a composite set of life experiences. Political socialization research has been at the hub of this “life study,” analyzing the formation of individual political behavior. Judith Torney defined political socialization in 1975 as a study of “what is learned about political life, from whom, at what stage in life, under what mediating conditions, and with what effects for the individual (and the political system)” (Torney, Oppenheim, and Farnen 26). Barrie Stacey expanded this definition two years later, defining political socialization specifically as the “developmental processes whereby each person acquires the knowledge, skills, beliefs, values, attitudes and dispositions” which govern the actions of a democratic citizen (2).

The formation of these early conceptions of political socialization, which originated in the 1960s and continued through the 1970s, defined what became one of the first subfields in political science. As Kenneth Prewitt explains,

political socialization as a sub-field was born during a brief and uneasy marriage between social anthropology and political science. If society had a culture, so also did the polity. Thus, reasoning by analogy, it was held that a thing called "political culture" could be empirically identified and thence applied to the study of politics. The analogy continued. If a political culture could be assumed so also could the processes whereby each new generation came to know the expectations and obligations of that culture. These processes and the agencies of their transmission came to be known as ‘political socialization.’ Conceptual and methodological weaknesses of this early formulation have now been thoroughly documented (105).

Inevitably, these early conceptions of political socialization and the rapid expansion of political socialization research produced contention regarding the validity of the initial premises upon which many studies depended. The standing formulations of political socialization, based on anthropological assumptions of interpersonal relationships, oversimplified the process of political maturation and sophistication.

Kenneth Prewitt bases this oversimplification on two critical premises that were inevitably present in even the most prominent studies on political socialization. These two premises, to which Prewitt devotes his critical paper on political socialization research, refer to the notions that:

1. Things happen to children which are relevant to how they will conduct themselves as adult citizens.
2. Those adult political values and behaviors rooted in childhood experiences aggregate in ways significant to the life of the political community—including, even, the very persistence of the polity, as well as such "lesser" phenomena as social stability, democraticness, etc. (106).

These two premises embody the vast bulk of political socialization research to date. Namely, the focus on values aggregated in childhood—acquired by the family milieu—remain the basis of most political socialization research. In the founding years of political socialization, while there was a modicum of research dedicated to adolescent and adult years, most studies almost exclusively focused on these early development years (106).

This early research on political socialization emerged in the late 1950s, reflecting a growing interest in the field of political behavior (Niemi, and Hepburn 7). The shift in political science research interest to the psychology of political learning grew in response to the growing understanding that democratic

citizenship and political values were not instantaneous and isolated experiences; they were not concomitant simply with the donning of adulthood in and of itself. Instead, they emerged as a result of a rather long process of learning. In considering this early interest in political behavior, Niemi and Hepburn aptly point to political socialization pioneer Herbert Hyman, who asserted that “politics [is] not... ‘an abrupt event of adult life, quite different from other developmental processes that had been studied again and again’ ...No switch was flipped on at age twenty-one, changing young people from completely apolitical to completely political beings” (Hyman 18; Niemi, and Hepburn 7). Civic behavior and political ideology do not emerge suddenly, but rather, they begin in early childhood and continue throughout adolescence and adulthood (Niemi, and Hepburn 7).

The early interest in political socialization produced several findings that pointed to childhood experiences and the family unit as the ultimate causal explanation for the political maturation of individuals within a democracy. According to Niemi and Hepburn, there were two major flaws with this early research. The first major defect was the acceptance of the *primacy principle*, which held that all political learning, especially the ideologies acquired in childhood and adolescence, remained preserved throughout one’s life; namely, childhood and adolescent experiences directly translated into lifelong values. This *primacy principle* was expanded into the second pervasive flaw of early research on political socialization. The second premise held that all learning prior to adulthood significantly impacted the experiences of adult life. Not only was ideology preserved, but all major life experiences in adulthood came as a result of this ideology

acquired in youth. These early impressions of learning behavior and political psychology have had far-reaching consequences and have created the lasting impression that all early learning holds great significance, regardless of age and cognitive capability. Moreover, these early writings have created the notion not only that all early learning affects adult life, but also that early learning is the most critical of all learning (Niemi, and Hepburn 7).

However, as the field of political socialization expanded, the most patent flaws began to surface. New findings challenged the assumptions that childhood ideology—even the most blatantly false political information learned in childhood and adolescence—was retained for life. As these misconceptions quickly arose, the field of political socialization research began rapidly declining. Despite its abrupt rise in popularity in the 1960s, political socialization as a subfield of political science declined in the 1970s and appeared as though it would entirely disappear in the 1980s (Niemi, and Hepburn 7).

Following decades of negligible research, the field began experiencing a slow revival in the 1990s, as a result of three notable events. The first central event that fomented this revival was the fall of communist political regimes and the subsequent appearance of new democracies. As fledgling democracies with vastly different political values grew, researchers wondered how and whether the countries' youth would acquire liberal democratic values. Prior to the 1990s, research on the acquisition of liberal democratic values for such a demographic was nil (Morello et al. 3).

The second leading factor for the growth of political socialization research in the 1990s was the rapid advance in the field of neuroscience. Deemed by President George

H. W. Bush as the *Decade of the Brain*, the 1990s witnessed great developments in the field of political socialization due to advances in brain research. As the study of cognitive neuroscience penetrated the behavioral social sciences, there were immediate implications for the prospect of citizenship education. Developments in neuroscience revealed findings of late development of the brain related to the process of complex judgment. This advanced maturation of the brain between the ages of 19 and 24 corresponds with the heightened requirements of an adult citizen living within a democracy of increasing complexity. This age group, which inevitably suffers from dismal political participation and the lowest voter turnout levels, remains the target for proponents of increased citizenship education (Morello et al. 3).

The apprehension regarding civic participation of these young adults grew concerning in the 1990s and, as a result, produced the final event that incited the resurgence in political socialization research. It became clear that isolated youth-targeted voter turnout campaigns and similar campaigns, regardless of size, would not create a sizeable and lasting impact on increasing political participation and political efficacy of American youth, despite the increasing funds devoted to such initiatives. As a result, in an effort to increase the civic participation of this age group, scholars became exceedingly interested in the socialization factors, or lack thereof, which contribute to the alarmingly low levels of civic participation (Morello et al. 3).

## Family Socialization and the Direct Transmission Model

*The human baby is born into an organized society and from birth takes his or her place in that society. Every baby is physically helpless and completely dependent on older people. Parents... minister to the baby's needs – if competent, providing adequate nourishment, care and stimulation (1).*

--Barrie Stacey, *Political Socialization in Western Society*

The majority of early research on political socialization focuses on the learning acquired during the childhood years. Gordon Allport divides this early research into four “conditions characterizing the formation of attitudes... through (1) the accumulation and accretion of experiences, [which] then become more specific through (2) the individuation or differentiation of earlier diffuse attitudes in the face of experience and/or (3) through the occurrence of trauma and/or (4) through adoption directly from parents, teachers, peers and other individuals” (Gillespie, and Allport 8; Hyman 39-40). While Allport’s formulation recognizes the presence of these four conditions, the focus of research in the 1960s and 1970s remained on the fourth condition, specifically on the direct adoption of political learning from parents. In *Learning About Politics*, Roberta Sigel provides an extensive literature review of political socialization research until 1970 and concludes that, regarding the family transmission of political knowledge,

families as the major matrix for individual political maturation have endured intact a centuries-long transition from feudalism to pluralism and individualism in the Western world. And individuals in transition have similarly remained intact. There is no reason to assume that the experience thus accumulated will not both facilitate and accelerate the process in the rest of the world (116).

Barrie Stacey maintains this same understanding of political socialization research seven years after Sigel’s *Learning about Politics*, underscoring this notion of the pervasive

influence of the family on political and social learning. Stacey refers to the *transfer of affect* hypothesis, explaining that it has existed “at least since the time of Confucius... the belief that early feelings towards and evaluations of family authority figures are directly projected on to more remote authority figures in society, including political ones; that parental loyalty begets political loyalty” (16). After analyzing considerable empirical evidence, Stacey rejects this complete *transfer of affect*, contending that there is no credibility for the psychoanalytic transfer or generalization of affect from idealizing parents to remote political figures (18).

Nevertheless, Stacey accepts the family as a critical actor in childhood political socialization. In *Political Socialization in Western Society*, Stacey assumes as inherent logic that, because offspring are naturally dependent upon their parents, they are compelled to assume similar beliefs and values. Referring to parents, Stacey reasons that, “Since the young human is dependent on older people [parents] for many years and is in daily contact with them, he has ample opportunity to learn about their physical, emotional and behavioural characteristics” (1). It is further reasoned that these values are not only solidified by the preteen years, but that they are “in good measure enduring” (9).

In 1967, Hess and Torney congealed the notion that childhood learning is permanent learning. In their formulation, they assert that the majority of political learning occurs in childhood and changes barely, if at all, from childhood to adolescence (Hess, and Torney). As Stacey explains, Hess and Torney’s study emphasizes the view that political preferences learned in childhood are “exceedingly resistant to argument and change. They found it is in late childhood that conventional justifications for patriotic feelings – freedom, democracy, the right to vote, etc. – begin to be used...the majority of

American children early in life acquire some powerful obstacles not only to radical change but also to even limited change” (Stacey 10). According to Easton and Hess, the period of critical socialization begins at the age of three and is complete by the age of thirteen, after which political beliefs remain largely unchanged for life (Easton, and Hess; Sigel 108). James Davies further paints a vivid picture for this direct transmission model, positing that the “family provides the major means for transforming the mentally naked infant organism into the adult, fully clothed in its...personality” (Sigel 108).

Although much of this early research, especially that of Hess and Torney, focuses on white Americans, Stacey reasons that these findings can be applied *mutatis mutandis* to American youth in general. Furthermore, beyond race and ethnicity, most studies on childhood socialization also show very few differences in socialization patterns between males and females (Stacey 14).

While the early transmission of political knowledge is not entirely comprehended at childhood, early research finds a development of political ideology in childhood, which creates the ideological lens through which individuals can later understand political values (12). Moreover, while most—especially early—political socialization research concentrates on the childhood years, socialization findings on adolescents further the notion of partisan political formations, ultimately acquired from the family. According to Jennings and Niemi, mid-teens perceive partisan differences “in terms of factors such as conservatism, liberalism, differential group benefits, welfare expenditure, helping the rich and unemployed” (Jennings, and Niemi 463; Stacey 25). Not only is this partisan ideology inherited from family beliefs, but the degree of partisanship that individuals acquire is also inherited from the family: “nonpartisanship, like partisanship, is...passed



on from generation to generation” (Stacey 24). This question of how individuals assume partisan leanings embodied empirical political research throughout the 1950s and 1960s, as researchers questioned the sustenance of the industrial capitalist political system (24). If the youth continued to acquire the political values of the generation before it, as studies demonstrated, intergenerational stability would persist, and the fabric of society would remain unchanged (24).

It was not until decades later, in the 1990s, that these initial notions of direct transmission and preservation of political knowledge from parents to offspring began to be challenged. After decades of decline in political socialization research, recent studies provide new insight into the influence of the family on political values acquired in childhood. Although there is still a dearth of research, current studies seriously question most of the premises upon which early political socialization studies rested. In *The Rebirth of Political Socialization* (1995), Niemi and Hepburn assert that, “Research on political socialization, as constituted in the 1970s, perhaps deserved to die. To assume that what happened early in life was fully determinative of later thinking and behavior was a gross oversimplification” (7). Niemi and Hepburn encourage future researchers to accept that not everything learned in early years is significant to later political life—in order to truly understand the transmittance of political learning, it is critical to understand what information is actually relevant and what is extraneous (7).

In *Continuities in Political Participation across Multiple Generations*, M. Kent Jennings and Laura Stoker further underscore the necessity of reevaluating the early impressions of family transmittance of political values. Considering the composite research on political socialization since the 1960s, Jennings and Stoker conclude that it

has “rarely gone beyond demonstrating an association that persists in the face of multivariate controls and most often has relied upon retrospective reports of parent activity levels” (32). A critical element of Jennings and Stoker’s recent longitudinal research involves the understanding of previously overlooked, indirect factors of influence that parents provide their offspring. Presented at the Midwest Political Science Association Convention, Jennings and Stoker’s paper shows that parental influence on political learning does not simply lead to the direct assumption of parental political ideologies but rather, that the degree of parents’

psychological involvement in politics, socio-economic status, and involvement in voluntary associations exert an impact on political participation...offspring participation rates will also come to resemble their parents’ rates inasmuch as these traits are handed down. The quality of the school the child attends, itself partly shaped by parent choices, will also likely influence offspring participation rates in turn. All of these parental traits and contexts are intertwined and tend to reinforce one another. Highly educated parents tend to send their children to better schools, to pay attention to politics and feel efficacious about acting politically, to be involved in community organizations and to be active participants as citizens. The result is the reproduction of bias in who participates in the political system across generations (35).

These indirect causal factors also explain the often-transient nature of early learning acquired from parents. Jennings and Stoker find that if parents do not remain constant in their political involvement and if parental political participation differs between parents, it is unlikely that the direct transmission model would be applicable as an effective paradigm of childhood political socialization. Jennings and Stoker also discover that the direct transmission model is more effective when parents are not politically active and offspring assume a similarly low level of political participation than when offspring assume the high level of political participation from their parents.

Based on their longitudinal, multivariate study, Jennings and Stoker conclude that—based on the most recent research on political socialization—offspring participation levels are most closely related to the political participation level of parents not in childhood, but in the key years when adolescents approach voting age. At this cusp, when pre-adults become inquisitive about political behavior, the level of parental activity has shown to directly affect the participation of offspring—not simply in early adult years, but also throughout their lives. Another key implication of this finding is the discrediting of the previously held belief that regularity in parent political behavior is necessarily indicative of offspring political participation levels. While consistently high levels of political participation carry greater weight, Jennings and Stokers’ findings demonstrate that there is a disproportionately high significance that the pre-adult years hold in predicting future participation (34). In these years, parents who are “politically interested, knowledgeable, attentive, and efficacious... provide some boost to offspring participation” (32). Jennings and Stoker conclude, however, the actual level of political participation that parents display, not simply the level of knowledge or efficacy that they possess, is of greatest significance.

## Socialization in Higher Education

The focus of the Penn Democracy Project and the objective of this paper relate to the political socialization of students. Current research devotes increasing attention to this key demographic; however, political socialization in higher education remains the most understudied of political socialization research. The research that exists on political socialization of students largely focuses on primary and secondary school. Despite recent findings that establish higher education as a formative stage of political learning, research on college-age students remains meager.

The United States enrolls the highest percentage of 18-24 year olds in colleges and universities compared to other countries, yet this is the very demographic whose political participation has been steadily declining. While this demographic has shown increasing involvement in voluntary social and service organizations, the political participation of this age group remains low. Despite brief periods of increased voter turnout in the elections of 1992; 2004; and 2008, the stimulation that these political phenomena piqued proved to be ephemeral (Morello et al. 2).

While early researchers did not extensively analyze political socialization of college-age students, many recent studies support the notion that the university can serve as a fundamental site for political socialization. In *Education and democratic citizenship in America*, Norman Nie; Jane Junn; and Kenneth Stehlik-Barry (1996) introduce and explain the *absolute education model*, which aligns increased educational attainment with higher levels of political participation. The *absolute education model* proposes a positive, direct relationship between higher education levels and all aspects of democratic citizenship. Presenting a significant departure from early research on political

socialization, which identified the family as the ultimate agent of socialization, Nie; Junn; and Stehlik-Berry establish that “education is the most important explanatory variable in analyses in individual-level political behavior” (97). Although this model does not specifically consider citizenship education at length, but rather higher education in general, it palpably illustrates the transition from the family to the university or college classroom.

In their 2008 paper, *Another and Longer Look at the Impact of Higher Education on Political Involvement and Attitudes* delivered at the Midwest Political Science Association Convention, M. Kent Jennings and Laura Stoker expand the *absolute education model* and present the most holistic of recent studies on political socialization in colleges and universities. By analyzing four explanations for the increasing influence of higher education on civic participation, they highlight the importance of higher education in encouraging political participation. They conclude, based on recent research, that educational attainment increases social capital and proves to be a key factor in determining political knowledge, political efficacy, and political participation. According to Jennings and Stoker, despite periods of ambiguity regarding the role of education, there are strong indications, based on research findings that control for a number of possible variables, that education remains a critical factor in determining future political activism.

The simplest of their four explanations establishes collegiate learning—namely citizenship education through both formal and informal means—as a direct cause for inciting future political participation. As students become members of an academic and social community that values civic responsibility and political participation, they

eliminate the barriers to political engagement. As a result, they gain the key skills and values necessary to suitably participate as a citizen in a liberal democracy (Jennings, and Stoker *Another and Longer Look* 3).

The second explanation that Jennings and Stoker introduce also relates to increased levels of engagement through education; however, this explanation refers to general, not necessarily civically oriented, learning. By studying an advanced body of knowledge, students increase their cognitive faculty, which produces “higher levels of information seeking, processing, and organization. Individuals with greater proficiency, which is strongly associated with more education, have more cognitive skills conducive to political understanding and engagement (Luskin 1990; Nie, Junn, and Stehlik-Barry 1996, chs. 3-4)” (Jennings, and Stoker *Another and Longer Look* 3). This explanation relates to the fundamental understanding of the *absolute education model*.

The third explanatory factor differs from the previous two by shifting the focus from academic learning to social learning. This explanation associates increased political engagement with a sudden increase in social and professional engagement: “The social allocation hypothesis rests on the indisputable fact that educational attainments lead to a host of subsequent status ...differences [, which] in turn, mean that better educated individuals more often wind up in social networks that are... targets of political mobilization efforts (e.g., Goldstein 1999, ch. 6; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993, ch. 4)” (Jennings, and Stoker *Another and Longer Look* 3). Through the opportunities available on a college or university campus for networking, students connect with a community of professionals that values, and is compelled to value, increased democratic engagement (Jennings, and Stoker *Another and Longer Look* 3).

The final explanation, called the *pre-collegiate socialization argument* is defined as the “product of cognitive developments, social learning within the family, and exposure to the larger social milieu provided in substantial part by the family’s socio-economic status” (Jennings, and Stoker *Another and Longer Look* 3-4). According to this explanation, adults face drastic status differences due to varying economic capabilities, which afford different opportunities in adulthood. As a result, higher education serves to buttress and stimulate learned citizenship behaviors by connecting with a similar community (Jennings, and Stoker *Another and Longer Look* 3-4). While this final explanation is least commonly applied, it provides insight into a possible explanatory factor that may play a role after controlling for the previous three variables.

Expanding on the early understandings of political socialization, post-1960s research establishes the salience of higher education in formation of more complex political values. Synthesizing all noteworthy research findings concerning adult political socialization, Jennings and Stoker assert in *Another and Longer Look at the Impact of Higher Education on Political Involvement and Attitudes* that

study after study of American adults demonstrates the seemingly salutary effects of higher education on most forms of political involvement and engagement (e.g., Brady 1999; Kaase 1989; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba and Nie 1972; and Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1996). Perhaps the most memorable phrase associated with this relationship is Converse’s assessment that “education is everywhere the universal solvent” with respect to political cognition, motivation and behavior (1972, p.324). Similarly, higher education also consistently appears to encourage support for one principal component of the democratic creed, namely, civil liberties (e.g., Dalton 2008, ch. 5; Hyman and Wright 1979; McClosky and Brill 1983; Nie, Junn, and Stehlik-Barry 1996; Nunn, Crockett, and Williams, 1978; Stouffer 1955) (Jennings, and Stoker 2).

These political values correspond with the necessities of an autonomous democratic citizen to effectively participate in an increasingly democratic international system. The understanding of and advocacy for civil liberties is associated with the more complex development of democratic judgment. The level of democratic understanding that involves political advocacy occurs almost entirely in the adulthood stage; similarly, the values that promote this political advocacy are learned as a part of advanced political sophistication in early adulthood. Political advocacy is almost entirely absent in studies of childhood and adolescent behavior. This finding, hence, strongly supports the notion of higher-level democratic socialization taking place during undergraduate years and provides support for the prospect of increased citizenship education at the undergraduate level.



## Future of Political Socialization Research

*Political socialization can again become a vibrant field of study. It will provide a much-needed emphasis on some of the most exciting questions we confront in studying political behavior*

--Richard Niemi and Mary Hepburn

Based on recent developments, the future of political socialization research appears promising. Since the 1990s, new research on political socialization analyzes longitudinal, cross-generational studies and integrates early research with parallel developments across disciplines. As the *Decade of the Brain*, the 1990s witnessed new findings in the field of cognitive neuroscience, which proved invaluable for research on political socialization (Peterson 265-88). Brain research, which associated the donning of complex judgment skills with the average age of undergraduate students, was synthesized with studies on political behavior and agents of socialization to reveal a novel understanding that significantly increases the potential for civic learning in higher education (Morello et al. 3). The future of political socialization integrates such new findings with previous research, while addressing and correcting flaws.

The most notable weakness that the growing body of political socialization research has corrected is the notion of direct and complete transmission of political values in all stages of childhood and adolescence, from parents to offspring. In *The Rebirth of Political Socialization*, Richard Niemi and Mary Hepburn establish the importance of accepting such failures in the field for the expansion and revival of political socialization as a legitimate and relevant subfield in political science. In this 1995 paper, Niemi and Hepburn succinctly analyze the history of political socialization,

introduce present understandings, and make a case for the importance of future research.

They assert that

Resurrecting the field makes sense. If we recognize at the outset the need for more careful theoretical work, if we concede that early learning of political science is of little consequence, if we recognize that schools are worth studying, and if we do away with the artificial barrier between late adolescence and young adulthood, there is every reason [sic: reason] to believe that political socialization can again become a vibrant field of study. It will provide a much-needed emphasis on some of the most exciting questions we confront in studying political behavior (7).

In their formulation, they emphasize the specific needs for future research. While current research moves the focus to collegiate youth, there is a dearth of research addressing the long-term effects of democratic political socialization of students through citizenship education. Niemi and Hepburn emphasize the need for both theoretical writing and empirical research on all aspects of political socialization, explaining that because of the great want of relevant knowledge, it will take many years before any questions can be confidently answered (7).

In *New Directions for Political Socialization Research*, Roberta Sigel analyzes these early flaws and illustrates the rapid rise and decline of the field of political socialization. Considering the history of the field, she explains that—as a

newcomer to the field of political science—[it] was variously hailed as a growth stock (Greenstein 1970), an enormous success (Renshon 1977), and the fastest growing subfield of the discipline (Sigel and Hoskin 1977a). Dennis (1973) marveled at the field's 'phenomenal rate of growth,' and Merelman (1986) described its initial reception into the discipline as a halcyon period for an understanding of politics. Barely two decades later, as Merelman (1986,279) and others noted, 'the halcyon period has clearly passed,' leading some commentators to pronounce the field moribund if not actually dead (17).

Sigel analyzes four flaws in early political socialization research: "lack of conceptual clarity, choice of subjects, insufficient attention to historical and cultural factors, and

inappropriateness of methodology” (17). Research that outlines clear questions, tests a representative sample of subjects, establishes a logical and repeatable methodology, and assumes an understanding of the transformative changes in geographical diversity and cultural milieus of social units is imperative. Studies that follow these principles can reestablish the prominence of political socialization both as a field of theoretical, academic understanding and as a pragmatic, objective-based discipline that fosters greater democratic citizenship. An understanding of each of the potential weaknesses, Sigel reasons, will enable researchers to revive political socialization as one of the most essential of political science subfields. In response to pronouncements of the field’s demise, she asserts that “these obituaries, to paraphrase Mark Twain, are premature and highly exaggerated” (Sigel 17).

## **V. Penn Democracy Project**

### Project Overview

The Penn Democracy Project serves as a longstanding study designed to provide a comprehensive framework for democratic political development among undergraduate students. This research study analyzes student responses to the proposition of democratic development—political socialization—as an ongoing and dynamic process, continuing through the university level. The 2010 survey represents the eight iteration of this research, using the University of Pennsylvania as the model for a global study on democratic political socialization on university campuses. Because the University of Pennsylvania serves as the model, students focused their responses on the effectiveness of initiatives undertaken by Penn and the civic and political engagement of Penn students (Morello et al. i).

This study targets student conceptions and participation regarding three key themes: political efficacy, civic responsibility, and political participation. Political efficacy questions gauge student impressions regarding the degree to which they feel they impact the political process. The second cluster of questions explores the level of civic responsibility students possess to both the surrounding West Philadelphia neighborhood and the greater community. Finally, survey questions on political participation contribute to the greater question of what level of political participation qualifies an individual to be considered a truly democratic citizen—whether students define an active citizen simply as one who consistently votes or as one who makes a palpable impact on the political process through higher levels of political activism. The results of the Penn Democracy

Project focus on the prospect of this latter notion of the democratic citizen and analyze the role of the university in developing this active citizen.

The 2010-2011 Penn Democracy Project makes two key contributions to the field of political socialization, in accord with Roberta Sigel's vision for future political socialization research in *New Directions for Political Socialization Research*. First, through both quantitative and qualitative data, it contributes to a greater academic understanding of the character and responsibilities of a democratic citizen and gives greater insight into the university as an agent for creating this citizen. Second, it provides a practical application of this understanding by increasing the overall awareness of citizenship development on campus and introducing prospective university policies aimed at increasing democratic citizenship in students (Morello et al. 8).

### Focus Group Methodology and Subject Demographics

Focus studies were performed to supplement the citizenship questionnaire in order to gauge student opinions in a more personal environment that enabled active discussion. For both focus study groups, students were informally approached in a variety of campus settings and asked to participate in an evening focus study on university citizenship; students were given the incentive of a pizza dinner and a meaningful contribution to a global study on citizenship. Before the focus group began and any questions were asked, participants were asked to provide basic demographic information. Of the two focus studies conducted, the eight participants in each study represented a similarly diverse cross-section of the University of Pennsylvania demographic. Students were almost equally divided between male and female, and they represented diverse ethnic groups. Finally, focus study participants represented three (College of Arts and Sciences, Wharton School of Business, School of Engineering and Applied Sciences) of the four undergraduate schools (no students were represented from the School of Nursing).

### Focus Group Findings

Focus group respondents offered unique perspectives on topics ranging from student government to community involvement and political participation. Overall, student responses analyzed the role of higher education in democratic development in three main areas: the specific characteristics of the Penn community and its culture, student engagement in politics and in West Philadelphia, and the state of citizenship education at Penn. Discussion concluded with participants providing policy suggestions for fostering citizenship and democratic development, both at Penn and on other campuses.

Although there was significant consensus among participants, there were certain questions that divided the group. When asked about engagement in the Penn community, students in both focus studies agreed that most students are highly engaged in university activities; however, certain university requirements, such as those placed on Engineering students and athletes, make active political and civic involvement almost impossible. Similarly, because most freshmen tend to be most concerned with establishing themselves academically, they do not involve themselves in extracurricular activities as much as students in other classes. Furthermore, respondents were divided between students who felt that Penn's environment is more collaborative and those who felt that Penn's environment is more competitive. Both focus groups, however, agreed that the culture of Wharton is more competitive than that of other undergraduate schools. Students agreed that Wharton's pre-professionalism discourages students from becoming as involved in extracurricular activities as students in the College of Arts and Sciences. Based on the discussions, it was generally found that students viewed College students as

actively engaged in Penn activities, while Wharton's hallmark of pre-professionalism and Engineering's academic focus limit the extracurricular involvement of these students.

Further demonstrating the divide among classes and schools, underclassmen believed that students do not actively engage in politics and are not involved in Penn's neighboring communities. They noted that they knew few students who engage in such activities. Upperclassmen, however, believed Penn to be very engaged in the broader community, especially when compared to other universities. Furthermore, Wharton students were again considered to be less involved in neighboring communities and in political activism than students in the College. Notably, the first focus group believed that Penn students do not possess a sense of responsibility to the neighboring West Philadelphia community, while students in the second group believed that while students perceive a responsibility to serve the neighboring community, they do not implement this responsibility due to other priorities.

Most fundamentally, virtually all respondents supported the overarching notion that Penn does little to encourage citizenship, in terms of culture, recruitment, or curricula. Students pointed to disparities in school: the faculty in the Wharton School and the School of Engineering avoid discussion of citizenship and political engagement altogether, and although College faculty do not avoid discussion of citizenship, they do not promote a united effort, with other undergraduate colleges, to cultivate civic values. While students cited a plethora of opportunities for students interested in citizenship and democracy to become active, they maintained that students must actively search for these activities. Although opportunities for fostering civic engagement are present, respondents contend that the responsibility of finding the opportunities rests entirely on students.



### Questionnaire Methodology and Subject Demographics

The questionnaire served as the primary source for evaluating student perceptions of democracy and citizenship. Compared to the focus groups, the citizenship questionnaire asked more detailed and specific questions. The Statistical Program for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to perform statistical analysis on student responses and make correlations among clusters of students. The questionnaire revolved around three general themes: political efficacy, civic responsibility, and political participation. In order to perform more meaningful correlations and factor analyses on student responses, questions were divided among these three themes.

Ninety students completed the questionnaire via a secure online survey, providing their understanding of citizenship on university campuses. Students who participated in the online survey questionnaire, like the focus studies, represented a diverse cross-section of the Penn demographic. Fifty respondents were female and forty were male. Fifty-nine participants were enrolled in the College of Arts and Sciences, twenty-one in the Wharton School of Business, eight

in the School of

Engineering and Applied

Sciences, and five in the

School of Nursing. To the

right is a chart that

portrays a fairly even

distribution by

undergraduate class as well.

Class	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Freshman	23	25.6	25.6	25.6
Sophomore	28	31.1	31.1	56.7
Junior	22	24.4	24.4	81.1
Senior	17	18.9	18.9	100.0
Total	90	100.0	100.0	

## Quantitative Data Analysis

	Political Efficacy Rotated		
	Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>		
	Component		
	1	2	3
poliadvocacy_2_7	.226	.327	.765
goodjobinpublicoffic	-.054	.748	-.048
e_12_2			
wellqualifiedforpoliti	.087	.848	.184
cs_12_3			
myvotemeaningless	-.172	-.024	-.117
_12_5			
publicquestions_12	.064	.264	-.479
_6			
citizensinfluencepol	-.072	.116	.103
icy_12_7			
noparticipifconsolid	.165	-.085	.023
power_12_14			
personalimpact_13	.242	.721	.000
demorequirescitize	.224	.082	-.363
nachievepotential_			
18_4			
challrace_9_1	.744	.046	.099
challgender_9_2	.545	-.129	.431
challreligion_9_3	.726	.190	.276
challprofessor_9_4	.401	.114	-.184
challsexorint_9_5	.750	.129	-.195

A series of questions in the survey addressed the question of political efficacy, asking whether students believe that they can impact the political process. In the matrix to the left, it is apparent that the first cluster of politically efficacious students is likely to challenge professors and likewise challenge derogatory comments pertaining to race, gender, religion, and sexual orientation. There is a second cluster of students who believe they can do as good a job in public office as most, believe they are well qualified to participate in politics, and believe they can personally impact problems in society. Component three shows a correlation among students who participate in political advocacy and challenge derogatory comments pertaining to gender; furthermore, there is a negative correlation between this group and the group that believes that the complexity of modern day issues requires that only the more simple questions be considered publicly. This follows the intuitive notion that politically efficacious students are more likely to participate in politics.

### Activities Rotated Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>

Activities Component Matrix	Component		
	1	2	3
forcredit_2_1	.764	.102	.276
noncredit_2_2	.782	.121	-.040
athletic_2_3	-.208	-.166	.170
studgovt_2_4	.249	.047	.643
cultorsupport_2_5	.702	.394	.059
preprofessional_2_6	.190	.029	.303
poliadvocacy_2_7	.361	.478	.572
religious_2_8	.116	.858	.138
publmedia_2_10	-.112	.082	.791
performarts_2_11	.175	.797	.103
greek_2_12	-.060	.012	-.048

In the survey, respondents identified the extracurricular activities in which they participate at Penn. As this matrix illustrates, there are three significant clusters of student activities. The first component shows a correlation among students participating in for-credit and not-for-credit community service and students participating in cultural support groups. There appears to be a second cluster of respondents that

is likely to participate in political advocacy, religious, and performing arts groups. The third cluster of students is likely to be involved in student government, political advocacy, and public media. The formation of these clusters supports the central finding of the focus studies; while the opportunities are present for higher levels of political and civic participation, there exists a culture of fragmented diversity at the University of Pennsylvania. Students at Penn independently pursue their individual interests and segregate accordingly.

Civic Responsibility Rotated Component Matrix	Component		
	1	2	3
forcredit_2_1	.529	.105	.557
noncredit_2_2	.243	.025	.600
numABCS_3	.417	.048	.379
imptofABCS_11	.869	.118	.158
treatpeopleequally_12_1	.047	-.008	.273
personalresponsibility_12_9	.078	.106	.175
mychoicetohelppl_12_10	.149	.129	.219
specialresponsibilities_12_11	.159	-.158	-.010
goodpersonenough_12_13	-.014	.187	-.149
ABCSandfutureengagemen t_14	.899	.054	.223
workeduniversitycity_15_1	.088	.076	.139
workphiladelphia_15_2	.019	.003	.032
workhomecommunity_15_3	.069	.071	.669
diffbackgroundsdiffrights_18_2	.041	.077	.056
demorequiresschooling_18_3	-.012	.347	-.193
requiredABCS_21_1	.582	.457	-.170
ABCSpresentation_21_2	.137	.468	.637
finaidforABCS_21_3	.116	.781	.313
requirevolunsemester_21_4	.103	.820	-.012
makecontributiontosociety_24_4	.253	.450	.098
socialresponsibility_24_7	.278	.082	.098

The questions in this matrix are centered on the overarching level of civic responsibility in students. Component one reveals the first correlation among those who participate in and believe in the importance of Academically Based Community Service courses (ABCS), participate in other for credit community service, and believe that a service-learning course should be made mandatory. The second component of students illustrates a correlation among students who believe that there should be incentives for and presentations of community service, students who believe that there should be required service learning courses and a mandatory semester of community service, and students who believe that making positive contributions to society is important to democratic citizenship. Finally, the third component portrays a correlation among students who have worked to solve problems in a home community, participate in community service, and those who believe that there should be a presentation of ABCS courses.

**Political Participation: Rotated  
Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>**

	Component		
	1	2	3
poliadvocacy_2_7	.811	-.052	.218
marchprotestrally_5	.629	.367	-.097
contactedpubofficial_6	.850	.136	.182
canvasser_7	.290	.097	.736
votestateandlocal_10	.433	.349	.000
goodunderstandofissues_12_4	.655	-.169	-.518
notparticipifconsolidpow_12_14	-.053	-.223	.598
voteandtaxes_24_1	.016	.760	-.379
obeylaws_24_2	-.123	.858	-.111
stayinformed_24_3	.327	.638	-.003
participateindemocracy_24_5	.209	.700	.228

The associated similarity in political advocacy, likelihood of participating in a march or rally, contacting a public official, voting in state and local elections, and possessing a good understanding of issues portrays a convergence of students actively involved in higher levels of political participation. Likewise, there is a cluster of students believing that citizenship depends simply on voting and paying taxes, obeying laws, staying informed, and participating in democracy. Finally, there is a correlation between students who canvass and those who do not believe participation is unnecessary if decision-making power is left in the hands of the few. Although this supports the intuition of civic responsibility and political participation, there is a negative correlation between this group and the group that believes it has a good understanding of issues. This contradicts the hypothesis that politically active students possess a good understanding of issues.

<b>Political Participation Component 1 and Question 13 Correlations</b>		REGR factor score 1 for analysis 5	personalimpact_13
REGR factor score 1 for analysis 5	Pearson Correlation	1	.296*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.033
	N	52	52
personalimpact_13	Pearson Correlation	.296*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.033	
	N	52	90

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

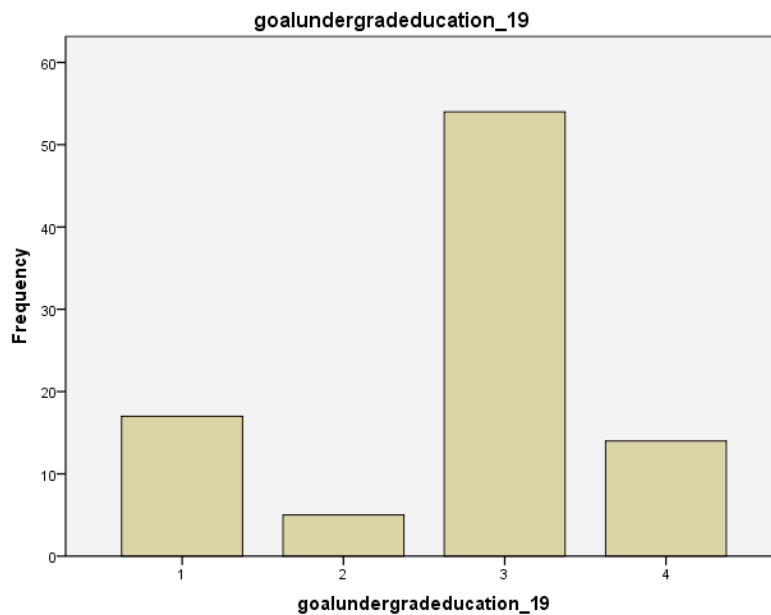
This matrix further illustrates a second correlation between the cross-section of students engaged in political participation and the students who believe they can make a significant impact on society. Component one of political participation represents a cluster of students who perceive the importance of political participation beyond simply voting, paying taxes, obeying laws, and staying informed—these respondents participate in marches or rallies, contact public officials, participate in political advocacy, maintain a good understanding of issues, and vote in state and local elections. This group, in turn, is compared to students who responded positively to the one question that most accurately embodies political efficacy: “reflecting on the problems you see in society, how much of a difference do you believe you can personally make in working to solve the problems you see?” The statistically significant, positive correlation demonstrated here quantitatively illustrates the key relationship between higher levels of political participation and perceived political efficacy.

Inverse Correlations		athletic_ 2 3	greek_2 12	haveviews chall_16_ 2	contacted pubofficia 1 6	leadership position_ 23
athletic_2_3	Pearson Correlation	1	.112	-.269*	-.008	-.259*
greek_2_12	Pearson Correlation	.112	1	.196	-.257*	-.089

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The above matrix illustrates the negative correlations surrounding questions of political participation and political efficacy. Those respondents who claimed an involvement in Penn athletics and Greek life supported the commonly held notion that such students would be less likely to actively engage in political, civic, and university participation. The cluster of athletes demonstrates a negative correlation when compared with the students who claim to engage in practices that challenge their views and those who hold leadership activities. Students who participate in Greek life demonstrate a similar lack of political participation. The cluster of students that participates in Greek life demonstrates a negative correlation when compared with students who contact public officials. These negative correlations further demonstrate the qualitative understanding presented in the focus studies: students who are active in political and civic participation do not coincide with students who are involved in non-civic activities. Rather, these two groups of students independently participate in their individual activities of interest. Such isolated sectors of university students corroborate the culture of fragmented diversity at the University of Pennsylvania.

Ultimately, this fragmented nature of college campuses presents the question of the function of undergraduate education. As shown in this frequency bar graph, the most common perception among respondents is that the goal of undergraduate education is to develop “highly creative, intelligent students.” Civic responsibility and participation, represented in question four, drew the second fewest answers.



- 1 – Preparing students for specific careers
- 2 – Preparing for admission to top grad programs
- 3 – Developing highly creative, intelligent students
- 4 – Fostering in students an inclination and ability to serve the common good



### State of Citizenship: University of Pennsylvania

Using the University of Pennsylvania as a model, the state of citizenship at Penn can provide key insights into the prospect of citizenship cultivation in universities around the world. In the two focus studies, with eight students in each group, participants were initially asked about activities in which they participate at Penn and their perception of overall student involvement. Unsurprisingly, because the focus groups comprised of a diverse set of students, there was a broad spectrum of results for each question. While certain students believed there to be no hierarchy of activities at Penn, others found student government or programs in the Wharton School of Business to be most prestigious. Similarly, while several students found the culture of the university to be collaborative, others found it to be more competitive.

Despite the disagreements in student experiences, there were notable conclusions on which all students agreed. When asked about how actively students engage themselves, civically and politically, in Penn's neighboring communities, opinions differed; some claimed an active role, while most claimed a minor or nonexistent role. Most students, however, agreed that the level of participation is fragmented: it depends on the academic and social milieu in which students find themselves. For science majors and students in the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, academic obligations can be quite limiting, especially because these obligations, unlike in the social sciences, do not relate to, encourage, or involve civic engagement or political participation. Similarly, students participating in varsity athletics devote nearly all of their time to athletics. Furthermore, students in the Wharton School of Business are often too immersed in its competitive, pre-professional academic and social culture to devote time

to, or even consider, opportunities outside of the corporate arena. Hence, measuring a unified, overall level of civic engagement at the University of Pennsylvania becomes very difficult.

For students who participate in extracurricular activities, there was a consensus that opportunities for students are plenty and diverse. However, the responsibility to take the initiative to pursue individual interests relies on the student. Forcing students to engage in extracurricular activities runs contrary to the Penn culture. Likewise, students interested in political activism and civic engagement pursue a wide range of activities—volunteering in West Philadelphia, creating voting drives, heightening political awareness, and traveling to Washington to meet policymakers. However, such associations are isolated. Students who participate in such activities actively seek them, while others who may find this engagement important but do not have the time, motivation, or circumstances to discover them are left isolated from such involvement.

The perception of the state of citizenship, based on the focus studies, is further corroborated in the citizenship survey, which was completed by 90 students. The questionnaire measured student responses to questions of political efficacy, political participation, and civic responsibility quantitatively via SPSS and qualitatively by asking respondents to provide a written response to their perception of a good citizen. As the survey further proves, although the University of Pennsylvania offers various means through which students can develop democratic citizenship, it falls short of creating a culture that encourages citizenship.

As found in focus studies, there is little promotion of citizenship during university recruitment and perhaps even less institutional support after matriculation. Class-wide

programs such as New Student Orientation, university-wide messages, and similar initiatives do not portray a unified goal of citizenship development. As supported by both the focus studies and the questionnaire, segregation according to class, undergraduate school, and activities fragments students into pursuing individual interests.

### Political Participation: Rotated

#### Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>

	Component	
	1	2
poliadvocacy_2_7	.811	-.052
marchprotestrally_5	.629	.367
contactedpubofficial_6	.850	.136
canvasser_7	.290	.097
votestateandlocal_10	.433	.349
goodunderstandofissues_12_4	.655	-.169
noarticifconsolidpow_12_14	-.053	-.223
voteandtaxes_24_1	.016	.760
obeylaws_24_2	-.123	.858
stayinformed_24_3	.327	.638
participateindemocracy_24_5	.209	.700

One such fragmented group actively participates in civic engagement and political participation. Members of this group, as illustrated by factor analyses, are also likely to be more politically efficacious. Questionnaire responses demonstrate that these students are highly active in civic and political participation. As shown in the rotated component matrix, these students participate in a variety of community service and engage in a higher degree of political participation, compared to component two, beyond simply obeying laws and paying taxes. The first cluster of student activities represents this higher level of political engagement; it includes those who engage in political advocacy—marches, protests, or rallies—contact public officials, vote in state and local elections,

and cultivate a good understanding of issues. Indeed, this group of students assumes this political behavior within the context of higher education: these students perceive and employ the university a site for fostering citizenship.

However, this self-segregated cohort of university students does not represent the diversity of the student body as a whole. This group of students discovers this civic niche due to university resources, but not because of university encouragement. As a whole, the majority of the student body presents the goal of undergraduate education as developing “highly creative, intelligent students,” supporting the pervasive view that the University of Pennsylvania is highly pre-professional. Penn produces career-minded rather than civic-minded liberal arts students. Following this culture of pre-professionalism, question four, which proposes civic responsibility and participation, drew the second fewest responses; those who supported question four likely represent this same cohort of self-segregated civic-minded students.

The qualitative question one of the survey, which asks respondents to describe their idea of a good citizen, further supports this fragmented state of citizenship at the University of Pennsylvania. The response to question one overwhelmingly supports the notion that the university does little to encourage active political participation. By far, the most popular response to this question follows the view that citizenship is defined namely by voting. Some respondents asserted that a citizen should stay informed in addition to voting; however, few students—likely representing the same segregated group of active citizens—related citizenship with significant community involvement, civic engagement, and political activism.

While these findings strongly support the culture of fragmented diversity, student responses are not entirely bleak; students do perceive a feeling of responsibility. Student responses portrayed this sense of duty to increase civic responsibility—they maintained that it would be both valuable and plausible to increase institutional initiatives to foster a greater degree of civic engagement. Hence, the state of citizenship at the university level, based on the “Penn Model,” presents the need for a unified, institutional move to foster a culture of citizenship in spite of the great diversity of the student body.

## VI. Analytical Conclusion

### Citizenship: Begging the Question?

Is undergraduate citizenship education plausible—or perhaps more fundamentally, is cultivating active citizens even a worthwhile task? University faculty appear satisfied with the status quo: course syllabi rarely reflect or encourage civic activity; professors and students alike seem largely occupied within their respective academic fields. Engineering students and athletes have no time to be citizens. Wharton students have little interest. University of Pennsylvania’s pre-professionalism creates professionals, not citizens. And as reflected in both the citizenship survey and the focus studies, students perceive little institutional incentive to pop the “Penn Bubble” (venturing beyond the unofficial boundaries demarcated by 34<sup>th</sup> to 40<sup>th</sup> and Baltimore to Market Streets).

Yet students *feel* a responsibility to impact the neighboring community. According to a student in the second focus study, in spite of institutional ambivalence, “Students realize the importance of civic responsibility; even though everyone may not be actively participating...we are *living* in West Philadelphia and must give back.” Fellow participants agreed. Further prompted to consider whether such a democratic culture would be attainable, students unanimously agreed that it would be an achievable goal. The current state of citizenship at Penn falls short because the initiative to engage depends largely on the individual; there is little institutional promotion of democratic citizenship. In spite of this, no student considered the idea of dismissing civic engagement as an essential undertaking at the undergraduate level.

In *Educating Citizens: Preparing America's Undergraduates for Lives of Moral and Civic Responsibility*, Anne Colby et al. explain that, in spite of the current lack of citizenship education, traditional educators also still believe that “preparation for citizenship, honorable work, and personal integrity lies at the heart of preparation for life” (276). According to Peter Levine, a citizen is an active participant, and this active political and civic participation is the fundamental basis of a democracy. He asserts, “indeed, no reasonably just regime of any type—can manage without...associations...who have certain relevant skills, habits, and virtues” (Levine 17). Universities can certainly serve as sites of such associations. To cultivate citizenship, Derek Bok points to education as the “obvious means to foster the civic commitment and intellectual competence that citizens need to participate effectively in public life. That must be what John Dewey had in mind when he declared, ‘Democracy has to be born anew every generation, and education is its midwife’” (172). As Alexander Astin remarks, “If we genuinely believe that it would be in our best interests—not to mention those of our students and the society that supports us—to introduce a central focus on citizenship and democracy into our curriculum and other campus activities, we have the autonomy and the intellectual skill to do it” (223).

Not only is undergraduate citizenship education possible with these resources, but it is also *necessary*. Peter Levine contends that, “If justice and good government depend on the virtue of both rulers and subjects, perhaps the state *must make* people altruistic, responsible, brave, deliberative, and kind” (14). This process that Levine espouses, of *making* such democratic citizens, is reliant on active political socialization in higher education.

## Creating a Culture of Citizenship

*“In order to promote genuine student interest in civic initiatives, in order to truly create democratic citizens at Penn, we have to make citizenship sexy”*

-Anonymous College sophomore

Considering Levine’s plea that “good government requires vigilant citizens” (18) and Norman Nie’s proposal that the university serve as the critical site for this cultivation, the state of citizenship at the University of Pennsylvania can serve as the microcosmic model to which this citizenship education can be globally applied. Because the focus studies were based on discussion, questions of the state of citizenship at Penn naturally produced the question of what can and should be done to improve student involvement in democratic citizenship practices. Students suggested a variety of options, such as the possibility of mandatory requirements, increased problem solving learning (PSL) and Academically Based Community Service (ABCS) courses, and changes in recruitment. Student responses generally varied, and drawbacks were introduced for each proposal. However, there were significant points of agreement among students in the focus studies.

Foremost, students agreed that it would not be in the culture of Penn to force beliefs. Moreover, if the University of Pennsylvania were to mandate a requirement, it would not produce significant change; students naturally develop little taste for activities that are forced upon them. Recent additions to requirements in the Penn curriculum produced resentment, instead of appreciation, for the principle behind creating the course requirement, according to the surveyed students and—as they claimed—most of their



peers. Furthermore, institutional impediments and conflicting opinions, according to students, would prevent a citizenship requirement from immediate implementation.

While the process of creating a culture of citizenship is gradual, steps toward this goal can also begin immediately. Hence, it would not be acceptable to students nor would it be institutionally expedient to attempt to create citizenship course requirements or community service mandates. Most importantly, forcing beliefs on students contradicts the culture of academic and personal freedom at Penn and would produce resentment of citizenship education among students.

Furthermore, students agreed that increasing the level of citizenship would depend on a comprehensive, not localized, approach. If the University of Pennsylvania were to become a site for democratic citizenship, it must change its culture. Implementing soft factors involved in student perception would be a *sine qua non* for cultivating citizenship on campus. Despite the reputation of Wharton, Penn must recruit different types of students who seek to excel not only academically, but also civically. To appeal to this type of student, Penn can make minor changes, such as replacing the Penn Reading Project with a civic-related activity. Though citizenship cannot be forced, the President can find means to promote it, through school-wide emails or speeches. Such soft factors are often more effective and plausible than attempting to drastically change the deep-rooted norms of the University.

Pre-professionalism, for example, is an identity of Penn; changing this will not genuinely increase citizenship. The Wharton School of Business is a source of international recognition for Penn; it prides itself on attracting corporate talent; the world's most eminent firms look to Wharton for hiring future corporate world leaders.

Perhaps a more damaging effect of changing the pre-professional focus of Wharton students, though, lies in its heavy funding and considerable endowment; as Derek Bok explains in *Avoiding Bias*,

Caught between conflicting pressures, university officials can easily become confused. The most obvious way to proceed is to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of each commercial opportunity... What risks will it run, what costs might it incur, and do these risks outweigh the tangible rewards of going forward (32)?

Penn clearly must avoid the risk of losing the considerable funding it receives due to the Wharton School. These entrenched special interests, which draw significant funds, would make it nearly impossible to significantly alter the Wharton curriculum or its associated pre-professional culture.

Similarly, Penn also must avoid changing its approach to other pre-professional subject areas. The University of Pennsylvania creates undergraduate students who become preeminent engineers, doctors, and scientists. This diversity in career path is a hallmark of Penn's success and recognition. It represents an integral aspect of Penn's diverse culture. However, this pre-professionalism should not hinder the development of democratic citizens. The goal of democratic citizenship education should not be to avoid producing professionals—businessmen, doctors, or engineers—but to create citizens of *all* students, regardless of profession or course of study.

Such a concerted, united effort to produce civically minded students must be comprehensive. It must include both soft and hard factors. Soft factors can promote an internal, implicit perception in the university community that democratic citizenship is an important aspect of an undergraduate education. According to an applauded response by a focus study participant, "*We must make citizenship sexy.*" Such soft initiatives can be

presented through specialized presidential speeches made in collaboration with Penn's active citizens. Such an initiative, which promotes a discussion of democratic citizenship and identification with the neighboring West Philadelphia community, and the larger Philadelphia community, can assist in changing the perception of university priorities.

University recruitment is another key factor in promoting the importance of active citizenship. Through recruitment strategies, universities can identify themselves as institutions committed to impacting society and creating active citizens. This simple move, which identifies the university as a civic-oriented institution, can effectively promote a change in culture. Recruitment holds a distinctive position in cultivating citizenship; by creating an *a priori* classification of a university as a site for civic education, citizenship becomes among the first impressions students develop about the university.

Beyond recruitment and soft factors, greater institutional initiatives can strengthen the implicit notion that the university, through political socialization, serves as a site for citizenship cultivation. Such hard factor initiatives can actually create citizens out of students. According to Timothy Stanton of Stanford University, in *New Times Demand New Scholarship*,

there is much more that research universities can and should do... [there are] significant opportunities civic and community engagement offers to research institutions seeking to renew their civic commitments; strengthen their research and teaching; and contribute positively and effectively to their local communities and those more distant (21).

Such institutional changes at the University of Pennsylvania can include increasing the number of Academically Based Community Service Courses, widening the scope of ABCS courses for students pursuing non-social science courses of study, increasing

funding for initiatives—such as Problem Solving Learning, Civic Scholars, and the Barbara and Edward Netter Center for Community Partnerships—and creating programs for an undergraduate course of study in citizenship.

However, while such hard factors are critical in transforming the culture of the University of Pennsylvania to one of civic virtue and political participation, they are not immediately attainable. Institutional impediments prevent these initiatives from implementation chiefly because of limited funding available for citizenship education. Competing interests and institutional bureaucracy further encumber the process of implementation. Certainly, such initiatives take significant resources, effort and, most importantly, time. Instituting these changes would undoubtedly be a time-intensive undertaking, and creating unified support for such institutional citizenship programs would be equally difficult. Classes of students would likely graduate before a civic department could be created. Therefore, to create a culture of citizenship, it is necessary to begin with soft factors, which can be implemented immediately. While university leaders continue to promote institutional initiatives and raise funding and support for long-term initiatives, soft factors such as university recruitment and presidential addresses can instill a unified sense of civic purpose in the student body. Together, these broad initiatives can work concurrently to foster a culture of citizenship at the University of Pennsylvania, which can ultimately be transplanted to colleges and universities around the world.

### Conclusion: Transplanting the “Penn Model?”

According to Timothy Stanton, in order to transplant this model of a civically active campus, it is necessary to put forth a vision of what a civically active institution would look like (36). He introduces the findings of a research group of 23 scholars interested in promoting civic and community engaged scholarship; in *New times demand new scholarship*, he outlines the ten characteristics that the research group proposes for transplanting a civic and community-engaged campus. Such a model of “civic- and community-engaged institutions” must

- 1. Have a firmly held, widely shared belief that improving the life of communities will lead to excellence in the core missions of the institution*
- 2. Cultivate reciprocal relationships with the communities...and enter into ‘shared tasks’*
- 3. Have a collaboratively developed institutional strategy for contributing to the social, economic and community development of the institution’s local community*
- 4. Collaborate with community members to design partnerships*
- 5. Support and promote the notion of ‘engaged scholarship,’*
- 6. Encourage and reward faculty members’ engaged research, community-focused instruction including service-learning, professional service and public work*
- 7. Provide programs, curricula and other opportunities for students*
- 8. Promote student co-curricular civic engagement opportunities*
- 9. Have executive leaders who inculcate a civic ethos throughout the institution [through] public forums, creating infrastructure, and establishing policies [to] sustain it.*
- 10. Develop and allocate sufficient financial resources to achieve these goals (Stanton 36-8).*

These research findings strongly support the process of promoting citizenship through institutional hard factors. However, while this model represents an important end goal of a civically active campus, it does not consider the breadth of challenges in implementation. Furthermore, while the fifth and ninth points involve promoting the notion of an overall perception or *ethos* of the university as dedicated to citizenship, through expedient and practical soft factors, this model does not outline what would be required of such soft factors. It does not provide details on how to create this “citizenship culture” in any detail.

For any institution of higher education, the process involved in transforming a campus into a hub for citizenship cultivation can take considerable time, effort, and funding. Collaborating with communities, increasing scholarship, and increasing programs and opportunities are challenging initiatives. Although these factors are critical in cultivating democratic citizenship on university campuses, it would be most effective to begin with soft factors that can make an immediate difference in college culture. Universities can more expediently begin with such initiatives, which can manifest themselves in the proclamations and beliefs of university officials. Creating a transplantable model depends on this creation of a unifying culture—truly making citizenship “something for everybody.”

Establishing this “something for everybody,” however, is not such a rigid model. According to the Council of Europe’s *Active Citizenship Indicators*, “the process of developing a model and framework for the development of... active citizenship in a learning context [demonstrates] that the perfect model does not exist” (7). Each institution must consider the individual needs of each institution: what is the current state

of citizenship at the institution; what resources are available; and to what extent can it promote citizenship without changing the diverse culture of the campus? The allocation of funds and associated consequences must also not be overlooked; considering Derek Bok's commercialization tradeoff and risk analysis is critical in considering each initiative. As the Council of Europe further asserts, "What is required is that the choices made are clear. Theoretical models such as the active citizenship framework have greater flexibility and can represent greater complexity" (7). This flexibility is key in improving the state of citizenship education at a university. At the University of Pennsylvania, where student engagement is characterized by fragmented diversity, it, like other similar institutions, must propose a unique plan based on both soft cultural factors and hard institutional factors in order to effectively foster greater democratic citizenship among the undergraduate student body. Considering the findings of the Penn Democracy Project in both the survey and the focus studies; the clear link demonstrated in all political socialization research between environment and political learning; the promising new developments in this research that establish the undergraduate years as critical in value formation; and the bold conclusions from theorists like Peter Levine and Derek Bok, which establish higher education as the fundamental site for citizenship development, the need has grown evermore pressing for democratic political socialization to spread through universities around the globe.

## VII. Appendix

### 2010 Fall Survey

- 1) Before you begin, what is your idea of a good citizen in a democracy?
- 2) If you are an upperclassman, how involved are you in the following activities at Penn? If you are a freshman, how involved to you plan to be in the following activities?

	Not at all	A little	Somewhat	Very	Null
Academically-Based - Community Service Course	1	2	3	4	9999
Non-Credit Community Service	1	2	3	4	9999
Varsity/Club/Intramural Sports	1	2	3	4	9999
Student government (includes Undergraduate Advisory Boards)	1	2	3	4	9999
Cultural/Support Organization	1	2	3	4	9999
Pre-Professional Groups	1	2	3	4	9999
Political/Advocacy Organizations	1	2	3	4	9999
Religious Groups	1	2	3	4	9999
Academic/Honors Organizations	1	2	3	4	9999
Publications and Media	1	2	3	4	9999
Performing Arts	1	2	3	4	9999
Greek Life/Social Clubs or Societies	1	2	3	4	9999
Work-Study Employment	1	2	3	4	9999
Non Work-Study Employment	1	2	3	4	9999
	1	2	3	4	9999

- 3) How many service-learning (ABCS) courses have you taken (upperclassman) or do you plan on taking (freshman) for credit at Penn?
  1. 0
  2. 1-2
  3. 3-4
  4. 5+



- 4) Did you vote in the last student government election?
1. No, did not vote
  2. Yes, voted
- 5) Have you taken part in a march, protest, demonstration, or rally?
1. No
  2. Yes, have done it but not in the last 12 months
  3. Yes, have done it, but not sure whether it was in the past 12 months or not
  4. Yes, have done it within the last 12 months
- 6) Have you contacted or visited a public official – at any level of government – to ask for assistance or to express your opinion?
1. No, have not done it
  2. Yes, have done it but not in the last 12 months
  3. Yes, have done it, but not sure whether it was in the past 12 months or not
  4. Yes, have done it within the last 12 months
- 7) Have you worked as a canvasser – having gone door to door for a political or social group or candidate?
1. No, have not done it
  2. Yes, have done it but not in the last 12 months
  3. Yes, have done it, but not sure whether it was in the past 12 months or not
  4. Yes, have done it within the last 12 months
- 8) Have you enrolled in a class that you thought might challenge your political or cultural beliefs?
1. No
  2. Yes

- 9) How likely are you to do the following?

	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very likely	Null
Challenge derogatory comments pertaining to Race	1	2	3	4	9999
Challenge derogatory comments pertaining to Gender	1	2	3	4	9999
Challenge derogatory comments pertaining to	1	2	3	4	9999

Religion					
Challenge a professor with whom you disagree	1	2	3	4	9999
Challenge derogatory comments pertaining to Sexual Orientation	1	2	3	4	9999

10) How often do you vote in local, state and national elections?

1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Always

11) Overall, how would you evaluate the importance of service learning (ABCS) courses to your college education?

1. Not applicable
2. Not at all important
3. Somewhat important
4. Important

12) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Null
If people were treated more equally, we would have fewer problems in this country.	1	2	3	4	9999
I feel that I could do as good a job in public office as most people.	1	2	3	4	9999
I consider myself well-qualified to participate in politics.	1	2	3	4	9999
I feel I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country.	1	2	3	4	9999
So many other people vote in the national election that it doesn't matter if I vote or not.	4	3	2	1	9999

The complexity of modern day issues requires that only the more simple questions should be considered publicly.	4	3	2	1	9999
Every citizen should have an equal chance to influence government policy.	1	2	3	4	9999
The government has a responsibility to make sure everyone has a job.	1	2	3	4	9999
It is my responsibility to get involved to make things better for society.	1	2	3	4	9999
It is my choice to get involved to make things better for society.	4	3	2	1	9999
Being a good citizen means having some special responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	9999
Being a good person is enough to make someone a good citizen.	4	3	2	1	9999
Participation of the people is not necessary if decision-making power is left in the hands of a few competent leaders.	4	3	2	1	9999

13) Reflecting on the problems you see in society, how much of a difference do you believe you can personally make in working to solve the problems you see?

1. No difference at all
2. Almost no difference
3. A little difference
4. Some difference
5. A great deal of difference

14) Overall, how would you evaluate the importance of service learning (ABCS) courses to your future engagement in civic and community activities such as voting and volunteering?

1. Not applicable
2. Not at all important
3. Somewhat important
4. Important
5. Very important

15) Have you ever worked informally with someone or some group to solve problems in the following areas?

	No	Yes, but not in the last 12 mo.	Yes, but unsure when	Yes, within the last 12 mo.	Null
University City/West Philadelphia community	1	2	3	4	9999
Philadelphia region	1	2	3	4	9999
Your home community	1	2	3	4	9999

16) How often do you engage in the following practices?

	Not often	Somewhat often	Often	Very often	Null
Working cooperatively with diverse people	1	2	3	4	9999
Having your views challenged	1	2	3	4	9999
Discussing and negotiating controversial issues	1	2	3	4	9999
Engaging in political or social debate with your friends	1	2	3	4	9999

17) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Null
Almost all humans are competitive with most other humans.	4	3	2	1	9999
Almost all humans have a potential for good that exceeds their potential for bad.	1	2	3	4	9999
Almost all humans have a potential for honesty that exceeds their potential for dishonesty.	1	2	3	4	9999
Almost all humans have a	1	2	3	4	9999

potential for collaboration that exceeds their potential for personal ambition.					
Almost all humans have the potential to make intelligent, moral decisions.	1	2	3	4	9999
Almost all humans put their own self-interest ahead of the common good.	4	3	2	1	9999
Almost all humans are prejudiced or intolerant of others.	4	3	2	1	9999
Almost all humans have the capacity to collaborate with others.	1	2	3	4	9999

18) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Null
The world is divided into two parts: the weak and the strong.	4	3	2	1	9999
People of different backgrounds should have different rights and responsibilities.	4	3	2	1	9999
Democracy requires schooling systems that produce citizens who work for the common good.	1	2	3	4	9999
Democratic societies are only possible if almost all citizens can achieve their potential for good.	1	2	3	4	9999

19) What should be the primary goal of an undergraduate education?

1. Preparing students for specific careers
2. Preparing students for admission to top graduate programs
3. Developing highly creative and intelligent students
4. Fostering in students an inclination and ability to serve the common good

20) Where do your views fall generally speaking?

1. Very conservative
2. Conservative
3. Moderate
4. Liberal
5. Very liberal

21) How strongly would you recommend the following to students at Penn?

	Not rec.	Rec. for certain majors only	Rec. for all students	Strongly rec. for all students	Null
A required service learning course	1	2	3	4	9999
A presentation of service learning courses with recommendations for students	1	2	3	4	9999
Additional financial aid for students doing community service	1	2	3	4	9999
A required semester of volunteer community service	1	2	3	4	9999

22) How many courses have you taken in which discussion is a significant part (including current classes)?

1. None
2. Very few
3. Few
4. Many
5. Most

23) Have you ever been elected or chosen for a leadership position at an organization at Penn?

1. No
2. Yes

24) Please rate how important the following traits are to being a democratic citizen.

	Very unimportant	Unimportant	Important	Very important	Null
Voting/Paying taxes	1	2	3	4	9999
Obedying the laws and similar duties of a citizen	1	2	3	4	9999
Staying informed about current events	1	2	3	4	9999
Making positive contributions to society	1	2	3	4	9999
Participating actively in the democratic process	1	2	3	4	9999
Respect for/tolerance of others	1	2	3	4	9999
Social responsibility	1	2	3	4	9999

25) School

1. College
2. Engineering
3. Wharton
4. Nursing

26) Major

1. Hard science
2. Soft science
3. English/humanities
4. Business
5. Math
6. Language

27) Class

1. Freshman
2. Sophomore
3. Junior
4. Senior

28) Sex

1. Female
2. Male

29) Are you a US citizen?

1. No
2. Yes

30) Are you currently registered to vote for state/national elections?

1. No
2. Yes

31) Please indicate the group or groups in which you would include yourself (check all that apply):

1. Hispanic or latino
2. American Indian or Alaska native
3. Asian (including Indian subcontinent and Philippines)
4. Black or African American (including Africa and Caribbean)
5. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (original peoples)
6. White (including Middle Eastern)

32) What type of high school did you attend?

1. Public
2. Private
3. Parochial
4. Other

33) What is the highest degree your mother attained?

1. Some high school
2. High school or equivalent
3. Some college
4. College
5. Graduate or professional

34) What is the highest degree your father attained?

1. Some high school
2. High school or equivalent
3. Some college
4. College
5. Graduate or professional



35) What is your approximate household income?

1. <\$50,000/year
2. \$50,000 - \$75,000/year
3. \$75,001 - \$125,000/year
4. \$125,001 - \$250,000/year
5. \$250,001 - \$500,000/year
6. > \$500,000/year

36) How religious do you consider yourself?

1. Not religious
2. Somewhat religious
3. Religious
4. Very religious

37) When you were growing up, how often was politics discussed in your household?

1. Never
2. Rarely
3. Sometimes
4. Regularly

38) We would like to do a follow up survey in a year or two. If you would be willing to participate, please fill out your email. Your responses will remain confidential and your e-mail will only be used for a follow up.

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