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# Creating Citizens: Civics Education, Civic Socialization and Engagement Patterns

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**Creating Citizens: Civics Education, Civic Socialization and Engagement Patterns**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement  
for the degree of Bachelors of Arts in Government from  
The College of William and Mary

by

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Williamsburg, VA  
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## **Chapter 1: America's Need for Better Civics Education**

In the past sixty years, political participation in America has steadily declined. “Twenty-five percent fewer citizens go to the polls today than in 1960,” despite the passage of the Twenty-Sixth Amendment in 1971 which lowered the voting age to eighteen (Kahne and Westheimer 2003b, 34). Participation in political parties is down 42 percent, participation in town meetings down 35 percent and today, 23 percent fewer Americans take advantage of writing their congressmen (Putnam 2000 45). But political participation is only a small piece of the overwhelming trends that show civic engagement of all kinds has decreased (Putnam 2000; Mann and Patrick 2000). From service activities to block parties, Americans spend less time together, less time in their communities, less time in politics, and hence less time developing the social capital that their personal and collective lives need to thrive (Putnam 2000).

This trend is most evident among the youngest generation. While Americans as a whole are spending less time engaged in the civic world, young people show the largest gap in their participation rates with the exception of volunteering (Putnam 2000). Voters between the ages of 18-34 turned out at a rate of 52 percent in the 1972 presidential election while only 24 percent showed up at the polls in 2004 (Campbell 2005). “Mocking the cynicism” of their baby-boomer parents, young Americans have found little motivation or reason to be politically engaged (Gagnon 2003, 6).

Current trends suggest that political participation will only continue to decline (Campbell 2005, 64). Recognizing this crisis in civic engagement, many have turned to government classes as a place to rekindle citizenship (Gagnon 2003). New civics standards instituted in Maine, New York, and Mississippi exhibit this trend. In 2000,

Maine added a one-half credit course of civics and American government to the graduation requirements for high school students. Explaining this change, the Associate Commissioner, Betty Sternberg, suggested that previously “there was a mistaken belief that by simply growing up in a democratic society, democratic understanding and behaviors would somehow be imparted on the next generation” (Sternberg 2000). This perceived political socialization has proven false. Provided no formal training to develop civic skills and competence, young Americans flounder when they become part of the voting-eligible public (Ahmad-Llewellyn 2003; Kahne and Westheimer 2003b).

What can be done to reverse these trends in civic disengagement? With education level remaining the number one predictor of civic engagement, the logical place to turn is to the schools (Jennings and Niemi 1981; Hess and Torney 1967). As one of their most basic premises, schools in America are commissioned to teach democratic citizenship (McDonnell 2000; Campbell 2000; Gorgon 2000). Yet, while education undoubtedly affects engagement levels, evidence dating back to the 1950s suggests there is little-to-no relationship between civic education and young people’s political engagement (Gutmann 1987; Niemi & Junn 1998; Campbell 2005). Testing for political knowledge and interest between students who have taken civics courses and those who have not, researchers found only a slight increase in test scores. This increase was so minimal that the efficacy of teaching civics education in schools is seriously called into question (Gutmann 1987).

This puzzle led me to my first research question: How is it that education affects engagement level while civics education does not? Furthermore, can civics education be designed to be more effective at encouraging civic engagement in the future? Theorists

who study civics education suggest the answer to this question is yes. Current classes, they say, often focus on static descriptions of governmental structures, taught in a passive learning environment (McDonnell 2000). These classes disconnect students from what citizenship really entails—an active engagement with their democracy and the civil society surrounding it (Putnam 2000; Kahne and Westheimer 2000a). In addition, these theorists argue for the importance of civic skills to explain how and why citizens engage (Verba et al 1995; Kirlin 2003). Civic skills include the ability to communicate with strangers, think critically about and articulate ideas and to problem solve both in groups and alone (Kirlin 2003).

While many have proposed the importance of civic skills for explaining engagement, few have tested this theory. In fact, the causal mechanisms that drive education as a primary socializing agent are largely unknown. The absence in the literature pertaining to this topic and the puzzle surrounding the effectiveness of civics education is what brought me to my overall hypothesis. Combining theories on political socialization, citizenship theory and civic skills, my hypothesis suggests that high school government classes which require an active engagement among students complete with debates, simulations and extra curricular opportunities to engage, will make students more likely to participate in college activities of a political, democratic or social-justice nature. Specifically, I suggest that the development of civic skills paired with an active study of citizenship combines to make students more capable and thus, more likely to engage.

To test my hypotheses, I conducted an original panel study of recently graduated seniors. Administering two different surveys over the course of the students' freshman

year of college, I studied curricular variations in high school government classes to see how these variations translated into engagement levels among college students. To collect the data for this research during the 2008-2009 academic year, I electronically administered two stages of surveys to the same 500 freshman students at The College of William and Mary. I first surveyed these students at the very beginning of their freshman year when they were recently-graduated high school seniors and again six months into their college experience. The first survey collected detailed information on the students' civics education in high school (i.e. the independent variable) in addition to data on control variables such as demographics, behavioral tendencies, and familial socialization. The second survey collected information on the students' engagement patterns in college after their first six months (i.e. the dependent variable). Knowing that these students all had a roughly equal opportunity to engage, due to their equal environment, I was able to assess who took advantage of these experiences.

Comparing the information received from my first and second surveys, I used two different statistical tests for my hypothesis. To begin my analysis I studied variations in the independent and dependent variable to see the kind of education students were receiving as well as their general engagement patterns. Then, creating indexes out of the independent variables, I ran t-tests to look at significance levels by each dependent variable measure. Finally, adding in the controls of family socialization and personal behavioral characteristics, I ran OLS and logit regressions to test the effect and significance of each independent variable when controlling for other important factors. These tests allowed me to tighten the causal rather than simply correlational relationship between my variables.

In the first step of my analysis, I found evidence of significance in the direction my hypothesis suggested. However, when running my final regressions which added the two major control variables, all of the significance shifted to these control variables. My final tests suggest that a single civics course, no matter how much it encourages the development of civic skills, is unable to overwhelm years of familial socialization. However, because the model is able to explain about 25% of the variance, my results still provide pertinent information about how civic socialization works. These results encourage future research to focus on the development of civic skills overtime and the mechanisms behind familial socialization which can help inform education policy and possibly work to reverse the current trends of civic disengagement.

The next chapter of this thesis introduces the literature surrounding my research question. Pulling from political socialization literature and civics education theory, I explain the causal mechanisms behind my hypothesis. I discuss the rise, fall and lasting effects of political socialization as a discipline and the final conclusions of education as the number one predictor of engagement levels. I define and explain the importance of civic skills and capacities as they relate to my theory on education. Finally, I discuss the implications of my work for both policy and the discipline.

In chapter three, I explain the method I employed in this research. I explain the collection of my original data via a panel survey. I outline the dimensions of both my dependent and independent variable and then explain the five causal hypotheses underlying my claims. Chapter four details the conclusions drawn from the data. Explaining the significance and process of each data test, I show the results of these tests

on the independent and dependent variables. I examine the effects of various skills, the general trends and important conclusions about the effects of the control variables. In chapter five, I explain the significance of these findings and suggest possible directions for future research. I discuss the usefulness and importance of these findings as they relate to civil society and education policy.

## **Chapter 2: Political Socialization, Education, and the Possibilities of an Active Civics Curriculum**

### **Understanding Civics Education**

Understanding civics education and its effects requires the examination of several disciplines. Political theories on socialization, education research and citizenship theory all play in to understanding the complex nature of civics education and its effects. In this chapter, I will begin by looking at the changing notion of political socialization in the literature over time, including the importance of education as the main socializing factor. I will expand political socialization theory to explore the concept of civic socialization, or the processes by which individuals adopt civic patterns, behaviors, dispositions and develop skills to interact with their government and the civil society surrounding it. From there, I will investigate theories on why civics education has been unsuccessful in the past and different theories on how civics education works. I will finish by presenting my own hypothesis proposing that civic skills and democratic content are the main ingredients for successful civics education.

### **The Origins of Political Behavior**

While political structures dominated the research of political scientists until the 1940s, the 1950s initiated a new focus on the study of political behavior (Niemi and Hepburn 1995). At the very heart of this field of research was a focus on political socialization, defined as the processes by which people adopt political patterns,

behaviors, and dispositions (Easton and Dennis 1969)<sup>1</sup>. Over the next twenty years, political scientists explored the realm of socialization fervently. Hess and Torney, trailblazers in the field, define three general contexts for socialization (1967). The first is well-defined institutions, including families, schools, churches and neighborhoods. These institutions influence political attitudes, knowledge and behaviors through direct interaction and intentional teaching. The second context is larger social settings including socio-economic class, ethnic groups and geographical location. Finally, Hess and Torney suggest individual characteristics are a defining piece of the socialization puzzle. Together, these socializing contexts prepare young people for their future role as citizens in a democracy.

But politics is not the only way citizens engage in their democracy. In his book *Bowling Alone* (2000), Robert Putnam argues that civic engagement through neighborhood groups, professional associations, religious organizations and philanthropies has equal value to traditional political engagement. Engagement in these additional facets of civil society helps to maintain the health of a democracy. Verba, Scholzman and Brady (1995) also provide measures for understanding the many aspects of civil society. Their indexes for measuring democratic engagement levels include political activity such as campaign work, contributions, and contacting representatives; community activity such as participating in town councils and school boards; activist work such as protesting; and finally, charitable work and religious affiliations. As these political scientists show, engagement in a democracy can take many forms, all of which

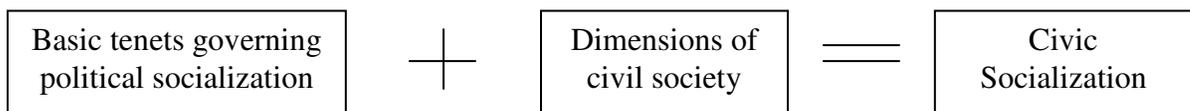
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<sup>1</sup> Some of the criticisms of political socialization research of the past discuss the large variation in the definition of political socialization. Other variations of the definition have included factors such as political knowledge, behaviors, norms and attitudes towards politics, as well as the process of developing this knowledge and its continuity over time. See "New directions for political socialization research" by Roberta Sigel (1995).

are necessary and useful for maintaining a well engaged populace and thus, functioning democracy (Putnam 2000).

While engagement in all aspects of civil society proves important for a democracy, political scientists have generally focused their research on socialization that pertains directly to politics. This focus in socialization research misses important elements of the democratic socialization process. To remedy this disconnect between the field of political socialization and civic engagement, I present a new term, civic socialization. Civic socialization is the processes by which individuals adopt civic patterns, behaviors and dispositions and develop skills to interact with their government and the civil society surrounding it. Figure 1 shows how these disciplines combine to results in this new theory of civic socialization. As this figure shows, the basic tents of political socialization are applied to engagement in the many dimensions of civil society. Civic socialization uses the research already developed for political socialization to explain the mechanisms for engagement into all facets of civil society.

**Figure 1. Elements of Civic Socialization**



I apply the following research and findings about political socialization to this new idea of civic socialization. Attempting to explain political socialization, researchers explored many factors that influence behavior and engagement patterns. An important focus was on the family which commands considerable power as a socializing agent.

Functioning as the “precursor, prototype, and bulwark of political relationships in the larger society,” family was believed to be the main socializing agent for children (Greenstein 1965, 3). Overtime however, family lost its clout as the number one predictor of political activity and behavior. In a panel study continuing over a series of generations, Niemi and Jennings concluded that while there is a “strong case for a moderate degree of sustained parental impact in the late adolescent years,” less emphasis should be placed on family when considering how young people develop into their attitudes and engagement patterns for the political world (1981, 102).

By the 1980s, political socialization had disappeared from the field of political science research due to general lack of clarity and coherence in the discipline (Sigel 1995)<sup>2</sup>. Outlasting this field’s life span one discovery has remained irrefutable. Holding up against fifty years of political science inquiry, level of education remains the number one predictor of engagement habits. This trend remains true for different generations and for all demographic categories (Jennings and Niemi 1981; Hess and Torney 1967; Putnam 2000).

Thus, as general education levels have increased in the United States in the past sixty years, one would expect to see a similar and proportional increase in engagement. Instead, the opposite seems to be true. Providing hundreds of pages of statistical evidence, Robert Putnam (2000) shows that civic engagement in almost every aspect of civil society has declined since the 1960s. This leads to the first puzzle driving my research: If education is the number one predictor of civic engagement, why is it that as

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<sup>2</sup> Once again, many point to the inability of researchers to coherently define “political socialization.” See note 1 for more information on this.

education levels have increased in the United States, civic engagement has continued to decline?

The second puzzle behind my research deals with civics education specifically. While education remains the number one predictor of engagement levels, research on civics education historically shows no effect on civic participation after graduation. Building off research by Langston and Jennings (1968), Richard Niemi and Jane Junn (1998) found little to no correlation between civics education and political socialization (see also Gutmann 1987). In fact, “despite assiduous efforts, [researchers] have found...no discernable relationship” between civics classes and political engagement, which questions the utility of investing in such classes (Campbell 2005, 65; see also Gutmann 1987). How then, can education be the number one predictor of political socialization while civics classes seem to have no effect on engagement levels in the future?

The first step to answering these puzzles is to identify the causal mechanisms that link education to socialization, and thus to engagement. Some suggest that as knowledge about the political system increases, citizens develop the attitudes and behaviors that lead them to be politically engaged (Verba et al. 1995). But this causal argument has never been confirmed. In fact, what “it is about the schooling experience that results in different socialization outcomes is often vaguely defined” (Jennings and Niemi 1981, 231). What I suggest in my research is that it is not the knowledge that leads to the behaviors of increased engagement, but the development of skills that leads to the behaviors and thus, the knowledge. I argue that education increases a citizen’s ability to engage by empowering them with civic skills and capacities. Through these abilities,

citizens gather their political knowledge and begin to solidify their political patterns. It is like cooking. Good cooks do not learn the theory of blending spices first. Rather, they learn by practice, by developing their skills and feeling out the terrain. Later, a cook may be able to map out the theory and structure behind what he does—but the skills are the most important part. Engaging politically and civically is like this. Students develop skills to develop knowledge, not vice-versa.

## **Reassessing How Civics Education Works**

How did I get to this causal mechanism of civic skills as the driving force behind civic socialization? In her book *Democratic Education*, Amy Gutmann (1987) suggests that the reason political scientists find no connection between civics education and engagement levels is because current civics classes are poorly designed. Current research examines classes as they are currently constructed, and not how they could be potentially structured in the future. Gutmann (1987) does not rule out civics classes as a means of rising political participation but rather suggests that alternative teaching formats, such as the Socratic method, might have a long-term positive effect on political socialization of students (106). Many agree; case studies of high school civics and community service programs conducted by Joel Westheimer and Joseph Kahne (2003a) conclude that variations in citizenship education do have an effect on student participation rates. Studies of Catholic schools and citizenship show similar results (Campbell 2000).

What then, are current civics and government courses lacking? Literature by Lorraine McDonnell explores the movement of civics classes away from citizenship education and towards “static descriptions of governmental institutions” (McDonnell, 2000, p.3; Sternberg, 2000). Civics education must be more “than formal instruction in

history and government. The school itself can be the ‘practice grounds’ for democratic civic education” (Battistoni 2005, 17; Nie, Junn, Stehlik-Berry 1996). A thoughtful and lengthy exploration on the meaning of democratic citizenship is a basic component of any successful civics course, yet it is a component often lacking in current curriculum models (Westheimer and Kahne 2003a). More often, classes are focused on governmental structure and processes, resulting in a tedious experience “that can quickly lead to a disconnect [between students and] their everyday lives” (Sternberg, 2000).

This disconnect is even more evident in the absence of application. While “schools provide many opportunities ‘to know,’” few provide “opportunities ‘to do’” (Kahne and Westheimer 2003b, 58). Words that continually appear in literature addressing effective democratic education include civic skills, competence, and capacity (Kahne and Westheimer 2003a,b; Campbell 2001; Ahmad-Llewellyn 2003; Mann and Patrick 2000). Yet, these words and ideas take more than content knowledge; they take cultivation, practice, and application (Neimi and Junn 1998, 9; Misco 2007, 267; Kahne and Westheimer 2003b; McDonnell 2000). Students must be encouraged to explore the meaning of citizenship, and through this exploration, apply and practice civic skills necessary to be an engaged citizen. These skills include the ability to “give speeches, hold meetings, and write letters. Those who lack these skills are extremely unlikely to participate in politics” (Campbell 2001, 23; see also, Verba et al 1995; Kirlin 2003).

But civic skills are not just an additive to explaining civic engagement—they are a main ingredient (Kirlin 2003; Verba et al 1995; Mann and Patrick 2005). In their work, *Voice and Equality*, Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995) explain that civic skills become a resource for citizens, just like time and money, and that they influence confidence,

effectiveness and efficiency within the political sphere (see also, Patrick 2005). Civic skills however, are not just a variable in determining engagement habits. In fact, “civic skills are more significant in predicting political participation than job level, organizational affiliation, religious attendance, free time, and whether English is spoken at home,” (Kirlin 2003, 5). The only other predictors that have at least equal weight are education levels, vocabulary and citizenship status (Kirlin 2003).

Thus, when civically socializing students to be citizens, “instructional knowledge is not enough” (Niemi and Junn 1998, 9). Students must gain an understanding of the meaning and importance of participatory democracy, but they also must possess the skills to put these ideas in action. From this premise, my hypothesis suggests that civics classes which encourage the cultivation of civic skills while emphasizing principles of democratic theory will create citizens who are more likely to civically engage after graduation.

This hypothesis has a range of empirical and theoretical implications for education policy specifically and political science generally. If successful, my hypothesis fills a hole in current political socialization theory by explaining the causal mechanisms leading to the capabilities of education to predict engagement levels. It explains why civic education in America is currently unsuccessful while education is very successful. Niemi and Hepburn suggest that few have studied civics classes prior to college, that “even during the 1970s, in the heyday of socialization work, political scientists paid scant attention to pre-collegiate studies” (Niemi and Hepburn 1995).

Beyond this, “our understanding of how to measure participatory civic skills lags significantly” (Kirlin 2003, 10). If successful, my research will be able to point to small,

but influential changes, that can be made to help increase the effectiveness of civic education. These policy changes would be low cost—something as simple as requiring group work every class. More generally, this research suggests a possible way of reversing current trends of decreasing civic engagement. By identifying how to develop capable citizens, and situating the work in the context of public schools, I suggest a plausible social policy change for the future.

In the next chapter, I explain how I tested this claim using an original large-N panel study. I begin by explaining the indexes I used to measure the dependent variable, civic engagement. I then explain the different indexes I used to measure the independent variable, civic skills. Each of these independent variable indexes is then used to justify five smaller causal hypotheses. Finally, I conclude by explaining the models applied to the independent and dependent variables to test the hypotheses.

## **Chapter 3: Defining the Hypotheses and Method of Inquiry**

While many have theorized about what constitutes civic skills and what their effect would be on student engagement patterns, few have actually tested this hypothesis (Kirlin 2003). In this chapter, I will explain the specifics of my independent and dependent variables, the method of gathering information on each of these variables, and the justification for the original large-N panel study. Furthermore, I will outline five causal hypotheses that derive from each of the indexes designed for the independent and dependent variables. Finally, I will explain the tests used to examine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, as well as the two main control variables: family socialization and personal behavior characteristics.

### **Why High School?**

Drawing from a broad array of disciplines, my overall hypothesis suggests that civics classes which encourage the cultivation of civic skills while emphasizing principles of democratic theory will create citizens who are more likely to engage civically after graduation. My hypothesis identifies the causal mechanisms that link education to engagement levels and suggests how civics education can be reformatted to be more effective in the future.

Researchers who study the field of political socialization have focused their efforts on studying the political socialization of young children, but few have studied how civics education in high school works as a socializing agent. High school students are citizens who have not yet fully engaged in the political system but are capable of understanding

the complex workings of politics and a democracy (Niemi and Hepburn 1995).

Therefore, high school civics classes have an opportunity to play an important role in shaping students understanding of citizenship.

In addition, high school education generally reaches most of the American population, thus serving as a more effective transmitter of democratic knowledge than colleges (Niemi and Hepburn 1995). Thus, there are three important reasons to study high school education: 1) little work has been done on the age group, 2) high schoolers will soon be full citizens and 3) high school civics education reaches almost all young people in the United States.

For these reasons, I chose to study high school civics classes over elementary or middle school civics education programs. I was interested in studying the period of time between students' civics course in high school (generally during their last two years) and the first year of their college careers. This window allowed me to rule out many confounding variables, such as the effect college often has on students. In addition, examining this window allows for a closer study of the potential causal link between certain civics courses and student engagement levels.

### **Testing the Hypothesis: Survey Design**

To test my hypothesis, I designed a two-part panel survey. The first part of this survey was administered in August 2008 and the second, in February 2009. These surveys were distributed electronically via email to a sample of the incoming freshmen class at The College of William and Mary, a public university in Virginia, using the

Opinio Survey Program. All the materials for this survey, including the complete questions, order and consent emails are included in Appendix 1.

The first survey was administered to 500 freshmen at William and Mary. This survey began by asking students to do the following:

*Think about the government, politics or citizenship class you took in high school. If you took more than one, think about the content of those classes and how they were structured.*

*Some classes may have provided you a chance to participate more often than others. Think about the government, politics, or citizenship class that **ALLOWED YOU TO PARTICIPATE THE MOST** by including activities such as in-class discussions, simulations, community projects or hands-on involvement in politics.*

Students were then asked to answer all of the questions in the first survey based on this class. The purpose of this first survey was to collect information on my independent variable, students' civics education in high school. Students were asked a series of questions about the content of their civics class and the civic skills it developed. In addition, this survey collected basic demographic information about the students who participated and information on the two main control variables: family socialization and personal behavioral characteristics.<sup>3</sup>

The second survey was administered in February 2009 to the same sample of students who received the first survey. Although some students who did not complete the first survey completed the second survey and vice versa, I used the data from the roughly 300 students who answered both surveys. The second survey measured the dependent variable, students' engagement levels in their first semester of college. Given the equal environment and ample opportunity to engage that a university provides, I measured who

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<sup>3</sup> These factors are discussed in more detail later in this chapter. See the section called "Controls: Family Socialization and Basic Personality Characteristics.

took advantage of these opportunities. While Putnam (2000) suggests that all types of social capital developed from engagement are politically useful, I looked at only engagement choices that translated directly into politics, social policy, student government, and community action.

## **Measuring the Dependent Variables: Civics Engagement Levels**

My dependent variable was students' engagement levels in their first six months of college. The design of my dependent variable was based largely on Verba, Scholzman and Brady's (1995) measurement index of political and civic engagement in *Voice and Equality*. This was a comprehensive study of how and why citizens engage. In measuring engagement levels of their participants, Verba, Scholzman and Brady divided engagement into two main categories: political and non-political activity. These two categories are then broken into a series of behaviors such as voting, campaigning, protesting and volunteering. I used Verba, Scholzman and Brady's system of measurement as a guide because I too was measuring engagement level of citizens as my dependent variable.

The first column of Table 1 shows the two main categories of my dependent variable, Political and Non-Political Activity, which I will refer to as Indexes. Like Verba, Scholzman and Brady's (1995) measure, these two indexes are broken down into a series of smaller engagement behaviors. The second column of Table 1, called Behaviors, lists these actions next to their appropriate index. The third column of Table 1, called Measures, lists the questions I asked in my survey to gather information about each of these behaviors, and thus of the overall engagement level of each index.

I made two important alterations to the engagement model Verba, Scholzman and Brady (1995) use in their text. In their measures, Verba, Scholzman and Brady included a behavior of monetary contributions to both political and non-political civic institutions. I dropped this behavior from both indexes because my population was college students who generally do not have the financial means to contribute.

The second alteration I made to their measures was the addition of a non-political behavior called student government. In college, student government is another way that students can participate democratically in their community. Verba, Scolzman and Brady do not include it in their measures because it is not applicable to most citizens. Under this behavior of student government, I included two measures: did the students run for a position in the student government or did they participate through some non-elected capacity in the student government.

**Table 1: Indexes of the Dependent Variable**

Indexes	Behaviors	Measures
<b>Political Activity:</b>	Voting	• Voted in the 2008 election
	Campaign work	• Worked on a political campaign for a local, state or national office
	Contacting officials	• Contacted a local, state or national official about a problem of issue that concerns them
	Protesting	• Participated in a march or protest
<b>Non-Political Activity:</b>	Charitable work	• Been part of a day-long, weekend-long or week-long service trip • Volunteered regularly through a community service program
	Non-political organization	• Participated in an organization that works to solve community problems or lobbies for political change
	Student government	• Run for a student government position

- 
- Participated in the student government in some capacity other than as an elected representative
- 

## **Measuring the Independent Variables: The Hypotheses and their**

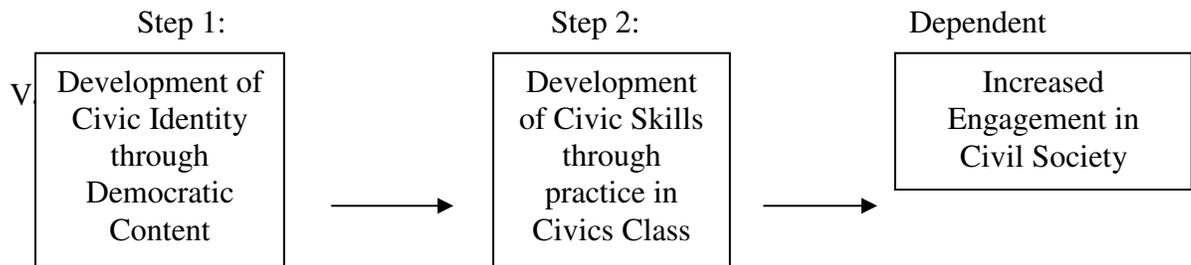
### **Indexes**

Can civic socialization in high school civics classes explain why some citizens engage more than others? My hypothesis suggests a two step causal mechanism that makes students more likely to engage after graduation. The first part of this causal logic is based in the content of students' civics classes. My hypothesis suggests that students require more than a passive study of governmental structures, but rather an *active* learning that includes the discussion of democratic principles and citizenship theory. These discussions help students develop a democratic identity, one that infuses in them a feeling of responsibility to engage as a basic premise of democracy.

The second part of the causal logic is based in a students' *ability* to engage. My hypothesis suggests that students require not only a knowledge of democracy to engage, but need civic skills that help them do it effectively. Civic skills make students more capable and more comfortable engaging, and thus more likely to engage. Civic skills though, are partly dependent on a students' democratic identity as suggested in the first part of the causal logic. Students are more likely to engage if they possess both a sense of civic responsibility and the civic skills to help them engage.

Figure 2 charts this two-step causal mechanism of my hypothesis. Step 1 shows the development of a civic identity. This step combines with the development of civic skills (Step 2) to lead to an increase in engagement.

**Figure 2: Causal Mechanisms of the Hypothesis**



To measure these two pieces of my hypothesis, I broke the independent variable into four indexes that measured the democratic content of civics education and the civic skills developed during the course. Each of these indexes has a specific causal mechanism attached to it. The following section explains each of these indexes and how they relate to the five causal hypotheses I later tested with my data.

### **Indexes of the Independent Variable and their Related Hypothesis**

To study my independent variable—variations in civics education as they pertain to democratic content and civic skills—I broke it into four measurable indexes. Table 2 shows these four independent variable indexes listed in column one. These indexes are Democratic Content of Classes, Contact with the Political System and/or Civil Society, Communication Skills and Democratic Problem Solving. The second column of Table 2, called Measures, lists the questions asked in the first survey that pertain to each of these

indexes. In the next four sections, I will explain each of these indexes and how they are grounded in the literature. In addition, I will explain the five causal hypotheses developed in association with these indexes.

**Table 2: Measuring the Independent Variable**

Indexes	Measures
Index 1: Democratic Content of Classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss current events</li> <li>• Discuss a citizen’s role in a democracy</li> <li>• Discuss challenges that democracies face</li> <li>• Discuss philosophical writings on democracy from authors such as Plato, Locke, Hobbes, Rousseau, Jefferson, Madison, etc.</li> </ul>
Index 2: Contact with Political System and/or Civil Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have an opportunity to register to vote</li> <li>• Contact an elected official (e.g., local, state, or national) about something that concerned you</li> <li>• Participate in simulations, such as mock congress, mock elections, or mock court</li> <li>• Work on a political campaign</li> <li>• Attend a rally</li> <li>• Participate in a demonstration or fundraiser for a social problem, political issue or cause</li> <li>• Attend a local board meeting such as school board or zoning board etc.</li> <li>• Participate in Model United Nations, We the People Assembly, the Close Up Program</li> <li>• Do community service</li> </ul>
Index 3: Communication Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work in groups</li> <li>• Have structured debates</li> <li>• Make speeches or give presentations</li> <li>• Conduct interviews or oral histories</li> <li>• Discuss controversial issues such as abortion, gun laws, death penalty, etc.</li> </ul>
Index 4: Democratic Problem Solving Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have structured debates</li> <li>• Analyze political communications such as political cartoons, articles, pamphlets, or commercials</li> <li>• Discuss controversial issues such as abortion, gun laws, death penalty, etc.</li> <li>• Feel encouraged to express your own opinions</li> <li>• Develop a plan of action for public problems, social concerns or community issues</li> </ul>

- 
- Did you help to plan any of these activities
  - Work in groups
- 

### **Index 1: Democratic Content of Classes**

“Education for democratic citizenship is much more than formal instruction in history and government,” Battisoni suggests (2000, 9). It requires an engaged understanding of democracy, its challenges, and the roles and responsibilities citizens must accept for a democracy to function. Focusing civics education on static descriptions of governmental structures, as many high school classes do across the nation, disconnects students from the engaged and active role of citizenship that a democracy requires (McDonnell 2000; Battisoni 2000). Focusing on critical theories of democracy and a citizen’s roles develops students’ understanding of their role in a democratic society, thus investing them with a feeling of responsibility and an understanding of why engagement is important. This content develops students’ interests and when combined with civic skills (see hypothesis below), students become more likely and capable of engaging. Thus, as H1 below suggests, students who have the opportunity to discuss theories of citizenship and democracy in their high school civics classes will have a better understanding of the importance of their engagement as well as how to do it. This will lead to students who are more engaged after graduation and suggesting, **H1:** Students who are provided with a civics education that allows them to think critically about democracy and develop their ideas on democratic citizenship are more likely to engage in their first six months of college in both political and non-political aspects of civil society. I will call this hypothesis the Democratic Content hypothesis.

## **Index 2: Contact with the Political System and Civil Society**

Direct contact with the political system and other aspects of civil society, such as community decision boards, familiarizes students with the workings of a democracy. Through this process, students develop an understanding of the importance of engaging in a democracy and the many ways engagement manifests itself for citizens. In addition, hands on practice with the political system helps students develop civic skills that make them more capable of engaging later. Included in this category are measurements such as participation in simulations and debate competitions, such as “We the People”. Although these do not allow students to see and participate in actual democratic workings, they foster the same senses of responsibility and target similar skills groups. This logic leads to my second and third hypotheses:

**H2:** Interacting directly with the political system and other aspects of civil society helps familiarize students with the system and impress upon them the importance of their engagement, making them more likely to engage in their first six months of college in both political and non-political aspects of civil society. I will call this hypothesis Sense of Responsibility from Direct Interaction.

**H3:** Students who are provided opportunities to engage directly in the political system of civil society as part of their civics education develop skills in the process that make them more likely to engage in their first six months of college in both political and non-political aspects of civil society. I will refer to this hypothesis as Civic Skills from Direct Interaction.

### **Index 3: Communication**

At the root of democratic skills is the ability to communicate ideas clearly and effectively. Comfort communicating with strangers and the political system empowers students to take risks and engage at a higher level. The development of communication skills comes from practicing speeches, arguments and articulating opinions (Kirlin 2003). But communication goes both ways and thus the development of listening skills through interviews and oral histories also fits into this category (Battistoni 2000). While practicing speaking skills makes students more comfortable engaging, listening skills cue students into the needs of others in a democratic society. This brings me to hypothesis four, **H4**: Students who are given an opportunity to develop communication skills as part of their civics education will be more capable and more comfortable engaging and thus, are more likely to engage in their first six months of college in both political and non-political aspects of civil society. I will call this hypothesis the Communication Skills hypothesis.

### **Index 4: Democratic Problem Solving Skills**

Democratic problem solving skills include the ability to identify and explain issues, strategize, deliberate, prioritize, and collectively make decisions (Peng 2000; Battistoni 2000; Kirlin 2003). The development of these skills helps students face the challenges, alone and with others, that they will inevitably encounter while working within a democratic system. The development of these skills fosters more capable, efficient and comfortable engagers, increasing their likelihood to engage after college and

thus leads to my final hypothesis, **H5**: The development of democratic problem-solving skills creates students who are more capable and comfortable engaging and thus more likely to engage in their first six months of college in both political and non-political aspects of civil society. I will call this hypothesis the Democratic Problem Solving Hypothesis.

### **Measuring the Index Scores:**

When running my analysis, I sometimes used individual behaviors of both the independent and dependent variables, but more often used the over all index scores for the independent and dependent variable categories. Think back to the section entitled, Measuring the Dependent Variable. Here I outlined two main indexes, Political Activity and Non-Political Activity. Each index was made up of a number of behaviors such as voting, volunteering, or running for student government. If students participated in these behaviors in the first six months of college, they received a “1” for each behavior they undertook. For each behavior they did not participate in, they received a “0”. The behaviors for each index were added up to create the students’ over all engagement score, one for their political engagement and one for their non-political engagement in their first six months of college.

A similar coding system was used for the four independent variable indexes: Democratic Content of Class, Contact with Political System of Civil Society, Communication Skills and Democratic Problem Solving Skills. Each of the measures associated with these indexes was placed on a coding scale. All the behaviors measured in the Democratic Content index were on a scale of 0-5, with 0 representing “not at all” and 5 representing “every day.” Thus, the student whose education contained the most

democratic content possible, according to my model, would receive a score of 20 for this index, while a student whose education had no democratic content would received a 0. The next three indexes had a coding system of 0,1, with 0 representing that the students did not have the behavior as part of their civics education and 1 meaning they did. The highest possible score for Contact with the Political System and/or Civil Society was a 9. The highest possible score for Communication Skills was a 4 and the highest for Democratic Problem Solving Skills was a 6.

### **Controls: Family Socialization and Basic Personality Characteristics**

As the literature suggests, there are many variables that play into explaining why and how people engage. Two of the most important are familial socialization and personal behavioral characteristics (Hess & Torney 1967; McIntosh et al 2007; Putnam 2000). Familial socialization refers to the way young people learn civic norms and practices from their family. Personal behavioral characteristics refer to the innate personality traits of an individual person<sup>4</sup>. Some individuals possess certain traits that make them more likely to engage and thus, I needed to control for these traits in my research.

In addition to basic demographics, I collected data on these two other theories of socialization from my survey participants. These theories are not necessarily competing theories, but complimentary. My hypotheses do not suggest that family socialization and personal behavioral characteristics have no effect, but rather that the development of

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<sup>4</sup> Refer back to Hess and Torney's (1967) research of the three main contexts that explain socialization discussed on page 10. Hess and Torney explain that individual characteristics are a defining piece in the socialization puzzle. In addition, Putnam (2000) suggests that some people are just more likely to be joiners.

civic skills through civics education also has an effect. By controlling for these other socializing factors, I further validated my measure and strengthened the causal, rather than simply correlational, relationship suggested in my hypotheses.

To measure family socialization, I used the same Verba, Scholzman and Brady (1995) scale but applied it to the family of the survey participants rather than the participants themselves. Table 3 shows the measures included in this index. Students were asked if their parents or guardians had participated in political campaigns, had run for office or worked in community organizations.

To measure personal behavioral characteristics, I asked students to rank themselves as compared to their peers in a number of venues. Were they generally leaders among their peers? Were they comfortable talking with strangers or in class? Were they generally involved in many school activities? A complete list of these measures can be found in Table 4. I used this information to assess the students' personal tendencies to be active members of their communities simply because of their personality.

To measure these two important control variables, I used a similar index system as explained above for the independent and dependent variables. Table 3 shows the behaviors and measures included in the index for Familial Socialization. Seven total measures were included in this index (see column two). Each measure was on a 0,1 scale so that if a parent or guardian had undertaken the behavior, students received a 1, if they did not, they received a 0. My model suggests that students with the strongest civic socialization from their family would receive a score of 7 on their Familial Socialization index.

**Table 3. Measures included in index for Familial Socialization**

Behaviors	Measures
<b>Campaign work</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work on a political campaign for local, state or national office</li> </ul>
<b>Run for office</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Run for local, state or national office</li> </ul>
<b>Contacting officials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact a local, state or national official about a problem of issue that concerns you</li> </ul>
<b>Protesting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in a march or protest</li> </ul>
<b>Charitable work</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteer in the community or in a non-profit/ community program</li> </ul>
<b>Non-political organization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteer for or was elected to a local or community board</li> <li>• Hold a leadership role in the community or run a non-profit/ community program</li> </ul>

**Table 4. Measures included in the index of Personal Behavioral Characteristics**

**Think about yourself in comparison with your peers through your middle school and high school years. Use the 1-5 scale found below to rate yourself on the seven statements that follow.**

- I was a good public speaker
- I was comfortable speaking up in class
- I was comfortable sharing my opinions with people
- I was a leader among my peers
- I was a good organizer
- I was active in many groups, sports, or clubs
- I was interesting in politics
- I was involved in community service or community projects

As shown in Table 4, eight measures were included in the Personal

Characteristics index. Each of these eight measures was coded on a 0 to 4 scale, with 0 representing “Not at All” and 4 representing “All the time.” Thus, students scoring the maximum score of 32 would be those whose basic personality makes them highly likely to

engage. Students receiving the lowest possible score of 0 would be those whose personality makes them very unlikely to engage.

## **Data Analysis**

My analysis took on three main parts. The first part was a simple descriptive study of variations in both the independent and dependent variable. From this, I was able to pull conclusions about the kind of civics education students were receiving and their amount of engagement in their college community. The second part of my analysis looked at the relationship between the four independent variable indexes (Democratic Content, Contact with the Political System and/or Civil Society, Communication Skills and Democratic Problem Solving Skills) and each of the individual measures of the dependent variable. To do this, I used a two-tailed t-test. The third and final part of my analysis added the two main control factors of Familial Socialization and Personal Behavioral Characteristics to my study of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. To do this, I used both OLS and logit regressions.

In the next chapter I will discuss the results from these tests. Beginning with an exploration of the variation I saw in both the independent and dependent variable, I break the chapter into two sections, one for each of the tests I administered. In these sections, I discuss the value of the specific test, the results from the test, and the conclusions that can be drawn from each test as they relate to the five hypotheses listed earlier in this chapter.

## **Chapter 4: Connecting Civics Education with Engagement: The Results**

This chapter begins by looking at the variations in my independent and dependent variables. From there, I will outline the results from my two main tests: independent t-tests and multiple regressions. I conclude the chapter by discussing the meaning of these results on the five hypotheses listed in the prior chapter.

### **Examining Variation in the Independent and Dependent Variables**

One contribution my research makes is the collection of original data about high school civics classes. From these data, I was able to analyze trends in the kinds of civics education students received. Of the William and Mary freshman surveyed, 85 percent took a high school government class. Out of these students, 77 percent took the class as a requirement for graduation. Of these students, about 60 percent reported enjoying the class and roughly the same amount said the class increased their interest in politics, community problems or public service.

Table 5 charts the results of the variation in the independent variables by the four indexes of civics education discussed in chapter 3: Democratic Content of the class, Contact with the Political System and/or Civil Society, Communication Skills and Democratic Problem Solving skills<sup>5</sup>. Some variables show almost no variation. For instance, 90-100 percent of students surveyed reported discussing current events at least

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<sup>5</sup> For more information on these indexes, how they were created and what they included, refer back to Table 2 on page 24.

once a week, giving speeches or presentations in class, analyzing political communications and discussing controversial issues. Generally, however, students fall within a range of 40-60 percent of development of the civic skills.

**Table 5. Variations in the Independent Variable: Civics Education in High School**

Indexes	Variations in Civic Curriculum
<b>Democratic Content (4Qs)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% discussed current events at least once a week</li> <li>• 78% discussed democratic philosophers at least once a week</li> <li>• 71% discussed citizen roles and challenges every day or every few days in class</li> </ul>
<b>Contact with the Political System and/or Civil Society (10Qs)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 72% had an opportunity to register to vote in class</li> <li>• 65% participated in simulations</li> <li>• ~60%: developed plan of action for community problem; participated in community service</li> <li>• 37% contacted a public official</li> <li>• &gt;20% attend a rally, protest, or fundraiser; worked on political campaigns</li> </ul>
<b>Communication Skills (5Qs)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24% attend a board meeting</li> <li>• 95% gave speeches in class</li> <li>• 78% had structured debates</li> <li>• 88% worked in groups at least once a week</li> <li>• 45% conducted interviews or oral histories</li> </ul>
<b>Democratic Problem Solving (5Qs)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ~100% analyze political communications; discussed controversial issues; felt encouraged to express their opinion</li> <li>• 88% worked in groups at least once a week</li> <li>• 78% had structured debates</li> <li>• 66% develop a plan of action; ~25%: helped plan activities</li> </ul>

It was originally a concern that there would not be enough variation in the dependent variables. Students who attend college are not typical high school students and students who attend William and Mary are an even more selective group. Generally very active and involved before they ever enter college, William and Mary students are likely to exhibit strong personal characteristics as leaders and joiners.

Despite these concerns, I saw variance in the results of the dependent variable, but generally erring on the side of students being less engaged rather than more so. Table 6

shows the variation in the dependent variable, student engagement patterns. The first and second columns categorize the measures by their indexes and behaviors (as discussed in chapter 3). The third column, labeled measures, shows the general trends for each of the behaviors measured. This table also includes an additional index, interest level, which shows students' commitment to talking about politics, reading newspapers and discussing community problems.

**Table 6. Variation in the Dependent Variable: Civic Engagement in the first six months of college**

Indexes	Behaviors	Measures
<b>Political Activity:</b>	Voting	• 87% Voted in the 2008 election
	Campaign work	• 13% worked on a political campaign for a local, state or national office
	Contacting officials	• 18% Contacted a local, state or national official about a problem of issue that concerns you
	Protesting	• 9% Participated in a march or protest
<b>Non-Political Activity:</b>	Charitable work	• 36% Participated in a day long, weekend long or week long service trip • 30% Volunteered regularly through a community service program
	Non-political organization	• 30% Participated in an organization that works to solve community problems or lobby for political change
	Student government	• 17% Run for a student government position • 21% Participated in the student government in some other way than as an elected representative
<b>Interest Level:</b>		• 77% Discuss politics, current events, or community problems with your friends every day or every few days • 73% watch the news or read a newspaper (either a hard copy or online) every day or every few days

As the table shows, less than 20 percent of students worked on a political campaign, contacted an official, participated in a march or ran for student government in their first six months of college. The percentages were slightly higher for service oriented engagement. About 30 percent of students reported working in an organization focused on solving community problems and 36 percent attended a service trip in their first six months.

An interesting finding in the other direction dealt with voting. Almost 90 percent of William and Mary freshmen who were eligible to vote in the 2008 election, did. In addition, about 75 percent said they discuss politics and community problems or read the news every day or every few days.

### **Analysis Step 1—T-Tests: Indexes of Independent Variables by Each Dependent Variable**

After examining the variations in the variables, the next step of my analysis involved measuring each of the four indexes of the independent variable (Democratic Content, Contact with the Political System and/or Civil Society, Communication Skills, Democratic Problem Solving) by each of the nine dependent variable measures of behaviors<sup>6</sup> using a t-test. Although all my hypotheses were directional (ie. an active civics education should have a positive relationship with engagement level), I chose to use a two-tailed test because it is more statistically demanding. Thus, the first step of my analysis was to examine the sign of my difference in means to ensure it was positive. I subtracted the average score of those who had undertaken the behavior in their high

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<sup>6</sup> For more information or an explanation of what these behaviors were, please refer back to Table 1 on page 21.

school class from those who had not. The second step of my analysis for these tests was to examine this difference using a two-tailed test.

Providing a table for each of the independent variable indexes, Tables 8, 9, 10 and 11 chart the results from these tests. The first column of each table lists the nine measures of the dependent variable, ie. engagement behaviors in the students' first six months of college. The second column of each table shows the mean index score of the independent variable for students who **did not** engage in the behavior in their first six months. The third column of each table shows the mean index score of the independent variable for students who **did** engage in that behavior in their first six months of college. The fourth column of each table shows the difference between these two mean scores and their significance level.

Table 7 lists the five hypotheses outlined in chapter three. Each of these five hypotheses suggests that the mean score of each independent variable index should be higher for students who engaged in the dependent variable behavior than those who did not.

Table 8 shows the results from the independent variable index Democratic Content of classes. The hypothesis for this test was H1, Democratic Content Hypothesis. As the fourth column of Table 8 shows, there was a difference in the mean scores in the direction the hypothesis suggests (meaning the mean score for yes was higher than the mean score for no) for each of the nine behaviors. Thus, students who had more democratic content in their civics class were more likely to participate in each of the nine civic engagement behaviors. However, as the fourth column shows, only "participate in a non-elected student government position" proved statistically significant. Thus, while the

directional relationship is in the direction the hypothesis suggests, the confidence placed in the validity of the hypothesis is called into question.

**Table 7. Five Hypotheses**

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**Hypotheses:**

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**H 1 (Democratic Content Hypothesis):** Students who are provided with a civics education that allows them to think critically about democracy and develop their ideas on democratic citizenship are more likely to be engaged in their first six months of college in both political and non-political aspects of civil society.

**H2 (Sense of Responsibility from Direct Interaction):** Interacting directly with the political system and other aspects of civil society helps familiarize students with the system and impress upon them the importance of their engagement making them more likely to engage in their first six months of college in both political and non-political aspects of civil society.

**H3 (Civic Skills from Direct Interaction):** Students who are provided opportunities to engage directly in the political system of civil society as part of their civics education develop skills in the process that make them more likely to engage in their first six months of college in both political and non-political aspects of civil society.

**H4 (Communication Skills Hypothesis):** Students who are given an opportunity to develop communication skills as part of their civics education will be more capable and more comfortable engaging and thus, are more likely to engage in their first six months of college in both political and non-political aspects of civil society.

**H5 (Democratic Problem Solving Hypothesis):** The development of democratic problem-solving skills creates students who are more capable and comfortable engaging and thus more likely to engage in their first six months of college in both political and non-political aspects of civil society.

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Table 9 shows the results of the t-tests for Contact with the Political System and/or Civil Society by each of the nine dependent variable measures. The hypotheses that correspond to this index were H2: Sense of Responsibility from Direct Interaction and H3: Civic Skills from Direct Interaction. Like Democratic Content of Classes, these hypotheses suggest that students who engaged in the dependent variable behaviors will have a higher index score than those who did not. As Table 9 shows, this relationship appears in the t-test results. For all nine dependent variable behaviors, the difference in means is in the direction the hypotheses suggest. In addition, unlike the previous index, results are generally statistically significant across the board with the exception of volunteering on a political campaign, voting in the 2008 election and doing community service work. These findings seem to confirm H2 and H3.

**Table 8. Democratic Content of Classes by Civic Engagement Behaviors in the first six months of college**

Democratic Content of Classes	Average Index Score by Doing Behavior			
	No	Yes	Diff	N
Volunteer on a Political Campaign	15.50	15.77	.55	200
Contact an elected official	15.53	15.70	.41	200
Participate in a march or protest	15.50	15.84	.47	200
Vote in 2008 election	15.60	15.36	.24+	198
Run for a student government position	15.53	15.55	.32	200
Participate in student government, non-elected	15.40	16.07	.74*	200
Do community service	15.67	15.27	.18	200
Work in a community organization	15.58	15.43	.15	200
Participate in a service trip	15.64	15.37	.01	201

\*p<.10 \*\*p<.05 + difference in the opposite direction from what hypotheses suggest

**Table 9. Contact with Political System and/or Civil Society by Engagement Behaviors**

Contact with Political System	Average Index Score by Behavior			
	No	Yes	Diff	N
Volunteer on a Political Campaign	4.72	5.19	.25	183
Contact an elected official	4.50	5.97	1.18**	183
Participate in a march or protest	4.67	5.72	1.00*	183
Vote in 2008 election	15.80	15.50	.83	181

<b>Run for a student government position</b>	4.60	5.54	.93**	183
<b>Participate in student government, non-elected</b>	4.60	5.40	.93**	183
<b>Do community service</b>	4.60	5.13	.41	183
<b>Work in a community organization</b>	4.52	5.40	.77**	183
<b>Participate in a service trip</b>	4.07	4.84	.68**	184

\*p<.10 \*\*p<.05 +difference in the opposite direction from what hypotheses suggest

The next independent variable index was Communication Skills. The hypothesis for this index was H4: Communication Skills Hypothesis. Table 10 shows the results from the t-tests for this index. Once again, the difference in means is in the direction the hypothesis suggests—students who spent more time developing communications skills in their civics class (and thus had a higher mean score) were more likely to engage in the nine dependent variable behaviors. The significance tests on these results however, are mixed. Of the nine dependent variable behaviors, only five appear significant and only two are significant past the .05 level. Thus while the development of communication skills seems to have some effect on certain engagement patterns, it is not true across the board.

**Table 10. Communication Skills by Engagement Behaviors**

<b>Communication Skills</b>	<b>Average Index Score by Doing Behavior</b>			
	No	Yes	Diff	N
<b>Volunteer on a Political Campaign</b>	2.96	3.42	.46**	200
<b>Contact an elected official</b>	2.98	3.25	.27*	200
<b>Participate in a march or protest</b>	3.01	3.26	.25	200
<b>Vote in 2008 election</b>	3.07	3.02	.04	197
<b>Run for a student government position</b>	3.00	3.14	.14	200
<b>Participate in student government, non-elected</b>	3.04	2.95	.09	200
<b>Do community service</b>	2.93	3.21	.28**	200
<b>Work in a community organization</b>	2.96	3.21	.25*	200
<b>Participate in a service trip</b>	2.95	3.17	.22*	201

\*p<.10 \*\*p<.05 +difference in the opposite direction from what hypotheses suggest

The final index to be tested was Democratic Problem Solving Skills. The hypothesis for this index was H5: Democratic Problem Solving Hypothesis. Table 11

shows the results from the t-tests for this index. Like the prior three indexes, the difference of the means is in the direction the hypotheses suggests. For this test, significant results are also mixed. Only four of the nine behaviors show significant results. While the hypothesis seems to pass the test for some engagement behaviors, it does not seem to hold true for all of them.

**Table 11. Democratic Problem Solving Skills by Engagement Behaviors**

Democratic Problem Solving Skills	Average Index Score by Doing Behavior			
	No	Yes	Diff	N
<b>Volunteer on a political campaign</b>	4.55	4.96	.41**	192
<b>Contact an elected official</b>	4.57	4.75	.18	192
<b>Participate in a march or protest</b>	4.59	4.74	.15	173
<b>Vote in 2008 election</b>	4.50	4.61	.11	189
<b>Run for a student government position</b>	4.55	4.85	.30*	192
<b>Participate in student government, non-elected</b>	4.59	4.66	.07	192
<b>Do community service</b>	4.46	4.88	.43**	192
<b>Work in a community organization</b>	4.49	4.88	.39**	192
<b>Participate in a service trip</b>	4.52	4.75	.22*	193

\*p<.10 \*\*p<.05 +difference in the opposite direction from what hypotheses suggest

The results from these tests generally indicate a higher mean score for students who engaged in the dependent variable behavior. While this directional relationship confirms my hypotheses, the significance tests point to certain nuances in the results. The independent variable Democratic Content shows generally insignificant results across the board, rejecting H1. The independent variable Contact with the Political System and/or Civil Society shows generally significant results across the board, confirming H2 and H3, while the last two independent variable indexes, Communication Skills and Democratic Problem Solving Skills, show mixed results, with about half of the behaviors proving significant. The results suggest that actually engaging in the political system or interacting with civil society seems to be more important than simply talking about it, or for that matter, practicing skills in class.

While the results of these tests seem convincing, none of them account for the main control factors of family socialization and personal behavioral characteristics. Thus, the results can only speak tentatively to the hypotheses. In the next section, I will look at how these control variables are related to the independent and dependent variable and come to more concrete conclusions about the fate of each of the five hypotheses.

### **Analysis Step 2— Multiple Regressions**

To test my hypotheses while controlling for the important variables of family socialization and personal behavioral characteristics<sup>7</sup>, I used two different tests. The first were OLS multiple regressions. In these tests, I used the two indexes of the dependent variable (Political Activity and Non-Political Activity<sup>8</sup>) and measured them against each of the four independent variable indexes while also adding the control variable indexes of Family Socialization and Personal Behavior Characteristics. Table 12 presents the results from these tests. The first column of the table lists the independent variable indexes, the control indexes, and then the constants and R-squared scores. The first six rows of the second column report the betas and significance levels associated with each of indexes for Political Activity. The first six rows of the third column report the betas and significance levels associated with each index for dependent variable index Non-Political Activity.

The final rows of Table 12 report the adjusted R-squared scores and the constants for each of the dependent variable indexes. For Political Activity, the R-squared score

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<sup>7</sup> These variables and their indexes are discussed in detail on page 28. See the section called “Controls: Family Socialization and Basic Personality Characteristics”.

<sup>8</sup> A discussion of these indexes, how they were created and what they included can be found on page 20. Table 1 on page 21 outlines the behaviors and measures included in each of these indexes.

was .22, suggesting that my overall model was able to explain 22 percent of the variance for this dependent variable. Similarly, the adjusted R-squared score for Non-Political Activity was .28, suggesting my model was able to explain 28 percent of the variance for this variable.

If my hypotheses were correct, I should see at least some of this variance explained by my four independent variable categories. However, on closer examination of the betas, all significant results appear in the control categories and not the independent variables.

**Table 12. Regressions of Independent Variable Indexes by Dependent Variable Indexes, controlling for Familial Socialization and Personal Behavior Characteristics**

IV Indexes	Betas	
	Political Activity	Non-Political Activity
Democratic Content	-.01	.05
Contact w Political System	.04	-.02
Democratic Problem Solving	.01	.09
Communication	-.04	-.13
Familial Socialization	.04**	.07**
Personal Characteristics	.15**	.09**
Constant	.16	-1.12*
Adjusted R-squared	.22	.28
N	138	139

\*p<.10 \*\*p<.05

These results confirm the conventional wisdom suggested by the literature. Familial socialization and the personal characteristics of citizens seem to define students' engagement patterns. Civics education that incorporates civic skills and the development of a democratic identity provides no explanatory value while familial socialization and personal characteristics alone explain on average, 25 percent of the variance. These results undermine the hopeful results of the t-tests of the last section.

I used Logit for the second set of regression tests. I once again used the four indexes of the independent variable, but instead of using the indexes of Political and Non-Political Activity for the dependent variables, I once again looked specifically at each of the nine individual dependent variable behaviors. Because these specific behaviors were measured on a 0,1 scale, I used logit. The results of this test can be seen in Table 13.

Similar to the OLS regression tests, almost all statistically significant results are found in the control variables. While the t-tests of the prior section suggest a significant connection between the independent and dependent variables, these final two tests conclude that this connection is best explained through the control variables. Thus, the five hypotheses suggesting the importance of an active civics education are undermined. However, the results from these tests point to the importance of family socialization and personal behavioral characteristics.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the implications of these results. First studying methodological reasons and then the theory, I suggest future research questions and projects to explore this topic further. I discuss what these conclusions mean to both the field of political science and education policy.

**Table 13.** Logit regression of independent variable indexes by dependent variable behaviors controlling for familial socialization and personal behavioral characteristics.

	Volunteer on a political campaign	Contact an elected official	Participate in a march or protest	Vote in 2008 election	Run for a student government position	Participate in student government, non-elected	Work in a community organization	Community service	Participate in a service trip
<b>Democratic Content</b>	.11	-.06	-.06	-.11	.01	.07	-.10	-.07	-.08
<b>Contact w Political System</b>	-.09	-.17	.13	.17	.10	.18*	.01	.03	.05
<b>Democratic Problem Solving</b>	.30	-.25	-.39	.34	.05	.02	.38	.46	.03
<b>Communication Family</b>	.08	-.04	-.14	-.61	-.32	-.60*	-.14	-.04	-.02
<b>Personal Characteristics Constant</b>	.26 .25** -12.20**	.60** .15** -5.10**	.50** .04 .42	.08 .09* 1.47	.20** .35** 26.25	.21 .19** -6.15**	.41** .18** -5.90**	.20 .01 -2.45*	.30** .09** -2.21
<b>Chi-squared</b>	24.78	30.56	7.41	34.43	26.25	29.87	.00	9.36	16.42
<b>N</b>	141	140	141	139	140	140	140	141	141

\*p<.10 \*\*p<.05

## **Chapter 5: Where to Go from Here—Conclusions on Family Socialization and Suggestions for Future Research**

While the t-tests presented in the last chapter showed support for four of the five hypotheses, the regressions showed that all significant connections between the independent and dependent variables were explained by the two main control factors: familial socialization and personal behavioral characteristics. In the next two sections, I will discuss the possible conclusions that can be derived from these results. First, I will examine the possible flaws in the research design that led to the results of this study; then I will discuss the more important conclusions dealing with the theory proposed in this thesis and the implications these results have on future research.

### **Research Design**

There are three possible methodological reasons that could have led to the results of this research: a problem with the measures, the model and general research design, and the sample. I will discuss each of these problems and their implications below.

First, it is possible that my measures were inadequate to study the relationship between the development of civic skills and engagement levels. This conclusion would suggest that the questions asked in either or both surveys did not gather enough information about the variables, did not measure enough of the variation in the variables, or measured the wrong variables. If this were the case, the theory behind the hypotheses may still hold true, but the information gathered to prove them was inadequate.

For instance, the Democratic Content index measured only four behaviors: discussion of current events, a citizen's role, challenges facing a democracy, and important democratic philosophers. This omits other possible ways of transmitting citizenship theory such as historical case studies, comparative politics or modern political theory. Similarly, the Democratic Problem Solving index could have included measures on the development of a democratic imagination. Many theorists argue that an expanded democratic imagination allows students to think creatively about public problems in order to develop multiple possible solutions (Battistoni 2000; Perrin 2006). An enhanced democratic imagination may be a critical piece to understanding students' engagement behaviors.

While each of these examples speaks to additional behaviors that could have been incorporated into the indexes, an entire additional index on the development of civic virtues could have been included in this study. Many argue that values such as a sense of self-discipline, civility, honesty, and tolerance are an important component of civic development and democratic engagement (Battistoni 2000; Kirlin 2003). I neither measured these values nor their development in the survey.

Second, it is possible there was a problem in the modeling or research design of this study. This conclusion would suggest an error in the typology I created for studying civics education (i.e. the four indexes of civic skills and democratic content) or a flaw in the use of a survey as a means of producing data. The most direct way to test the overall hypothesis associated with this study would be through an experiment. Students would be randomly assigned to different civics classes, each utilizing a different type of curriculum—one that emphasized the use of civic skills and democratic content, and one

that did not. Students would be surveyed before and after this civics education experience. After graduation, the level of engagement between the two sample groups would be compared. Instead of a randomized experiment, my study relied on students' assessment and memory of their civics class.

In addition, problems could rest on the coding system. I used a 0,1 scale for many of my measures. This scale may have been too generalized, resulting in the loss of observation of important variations in the data. The typology of my survey could have combined indexes incorrectly, hiding variation of certain independent or dependent variables. If this conclusion is true, it would suggest that a more detailed model for measuring variation would confirm the hypotheses.

The third possible conclusion is that there was a problem with my sample. The sample for this survey was not made up of typical eighteen-year-olds, but rather was drawn from students who had been accepted to and were attending one of the top public universities in the country. In addition, while my sample population started at 500 students, only 300 completed both the first and second survey. When running the OLS and logit regressions, this sample size was decreased even further to roughly 125 survey participants due to missing values in the data set. This may mean that while the original 500 students were a random sampling of William and Mary students, the final 125 whose data I used for the regressions could have potentially no longer been a random sample but instead expressed certain important characteristics as a group.

All or part of these variables could have played into the results found by this research. While these factors are important to consider, even more important is the possible implications this research has for the theory proposed by this thesis. In the

following section, I will address this issue of theory and draw some conclusions about what this research means for the future of policy studies in this area.

## **Theory**

The results from this research present a number of implications for the theory behind this thesis. The first could be simply that the theory presented in chapter two is wrong. This conclusion would suggest that the development of civic skills and the discussion of democratic content may have no effect on student engagement patterns. If this is true, researchers and policy makers must seriously consider the value of civics education. But while my results seem to disprove the usefulness of cultivating civic skills in a single high school government class, they do not disprove the entire theory; rather they suggest an additional nuance.

It seems that a single civics class, no matter how active, is incapable of overwhelming years of familial socialization. My regressions show that all significance in my model is explained by either family socialization or personal behavioral characteristics. As civic engagement continues to decline in the United States, strong socialization from the family to engage in civil society will continue to decrease. Policy makers cannot legislate increased family socialization but that does not mean they cannot learn from it. As a result, my research encourages future studies to focus on understanding the causal mechanisms behind familial socialization. As I highlighted earlier, the study of political socialization has generally died out since the 1980s; my results call for its revitalization. If the field can learn how this process occurs, it can use these causal mechanisms to inform education policy.

For instance, one main difference between a single civics class and years of familial socialization is that the latter is both continuous and constant. Able to develop a lasting effect through repetition and reinforcement, parents and guardians who engage themselves emphasize the importance of engagement on their children. Civic skills may have a lasting effect if given the same type of incubation. Thus while the cultivation of civic skills in a single class does not seem to affect engagement level, it is possible that the cultivation of these skills continuously over time might. Thus, future research should focus on two main ideas: How civic socialization from the family occurs, and how civic skills that are taught over a continuous period of time effect student engagement levels. Currently, the causal mechanisms that link education to engagement level are unexplained. This research would work to fill this hole in the literature.

Understanding and emphasizing this link is at the core of education's purpose. Literature dating back to Thomas Jefferson and Alexis de Tocqueville suggests that public education has two main purposes (McDonnell 2000; Campbell 2000, 2005; Kahne and Westheimer 2003b; Gorgon 2003). The first is to ensure economic fluidity. Based on the equality of opportunity doctrine, public education provides students with the tools they need to move up the economic ladder (McDonnell 2000; Campbell 2000, 2005). The second democratic purpose of education is to ensure an active and knowledgeable citizenry (McDonnell 2000; Kahne and Westheimer 2003b; Campbell 2000, 2005; Gorgon 2003). Without political participation, democracy dies (Putnam 2000). Without accountability standards, government becomes corrupt. Providing citizenship training in public education ensures that each generation is equipped with the skills it needs to continue a strong civil society (Kahne and Westheimer 2003b). Like the economic

purpose of schooling, a commitment to citizenship education still exists among modern-day educational theory. In fact, thirteen state constitutions go so far as to say “the central purpose of their educational system is to promote good citizenship” (Campbell 2005, 63).

But increasingly schools have turned away from the second tenet of democratic purpose in favor of the first (McDonnell 2000, 3; Kahne and Westheimer 2003b, 34, 35). The back-to-basics movement and legislation like *No Child Left Behind* emphasizes reading, math and science, ostracizing social studies as the red-headed step-child of educational necessity (Kahne and Westheimer 2003b). Economic purpose, as compared to citizenship, appeared as the number one educational concern in the former President Bush’s State of the Union Addresses for the past four years (Woolley & Peters, 2007). Focusing on the need to be competitive in both the domestic and foreign market, President Bush called for the revitalization of the American educational system. But these speeches focused on math and science, suggesting the revitalization is based in the need for new innovations in technology not in a revitalization of civic engagement.

This absence of the second democratic tenet of education has only worsened as school districts struggle to meet Adequate Yearly Progress in the categories ordained by the federal government (Hess and Petrilli 2006; Kahne and Westheimer 2003b; Battistoni 2000). With concerns over reading level and math performance taking center stage, democratic education is little more than an afterthought in curriculum development and provisions of course space (Kahne and Westheimer 2003b; Battistoni 2000).

My research calls for the recognition of this second democratic purpose of schooling. By studying civic socialization, schools can begin to effectively influence engagement patterns of young people and thus of the citizenry at large. As civil society

continues to decline, understanding the causal mechanisms behind education and how it relates to engagement levels will become increasingly more significant. If we can better understand civic socialization then we can produce better engaged citizens. Hidden in the process of education and socialization is the casual key to creating these more engaged and informed citizens that a democratic society needs. As researchers and educators, we share a responsibility to understand and implement this relationship.

## Appendix 1

Three main elements are provided in this index. The first is the application to the IRB Human Subjects Committee at William and Mary. This is the approved application for the surveys used for this thesis. The second element is the complete first survey, including the original e-mail and two reminder e-mails sent to the sample population asking for their participation. This survey collected information about the students' civics education history as well as basic demographics. The third element is the second survey, which collected information on the students' engagement levels in college. This third section also includes the original e-mail and two reminder e-mails sent to participants.

**1—IRB Application- Below are the full contents of my application for review to the Human Subjects Committee at William and Mary as well as their approval.**

### **View Details for PHSC-2008-09-03-5479-pmanna**

#### **Basic Info:**

**Protocol ID:** PHSC-2008-09-03-5479-pmanna

**Protocol Title:** Honors Thesis: Civic Education Survey

**Overall Status:** active

**Protocol Timeline:** Year 1 of 1

**Committee(s):** PHSC

**Campus:** Main

**CC Email Addresses:** apanol@wm.edu

#### **Comments:**

##### **Comment by**

**mrdesc** Dear Prof Manna and Ms. Anoll,

**(Deschenes,** Please understand that this ruling permits you to conduct your survey only among **Michael R)** William & Mary students. You must obtain approval from JMU's IRB committee **2008-09-05** before you can conduct your survey there.

**16:01:33**

**Status Information**

**Submitted:** 2008-09-03 09:15:32 by pmanna  
**Overall Status:** active since 2008-09-05 16:01:42  
**PHSC Status:** exempt since 2008-09-05 16:01:42

**Date Info:**

**Submitted:** 2008-09-03 09:15:32 by pmanna  
**Protocol Current Year Duration** 2008-09-05 through 2009-09-05  
**Project Entire Duration** 2008-09-05 through 2009-09-05

**PI Infor (apanol)**

**Name:** Anoll, Allison P  
**Acceptance:** accept since 2008-09-03 09:50:26  
**Role** Undergraduate Student  
**Department** Government  
**Day/Work Phone** 571 330 5014  
**Day/Work Ext.**  
**Home/Evening/Emergency Phone**

**PI Infor (pmanna)**

**Name:** Manna, Paul F  
**Acceptance:** accept since 2008-09-03 09:15:32  
**Role** Faculty  
**Department** Government  
**Day/Work Phone** +1 757 221 3024  
**Day/Work Ext.**  
**Home/Evening/Emergency Phone**

**Admin- Additional Information**

Please provide any information not requested in previous sections which you think would be needed or useful as the committee reviews this protocol.

**If Funded, Agency  
Name(s):  
If this is a  
modification, please  
describe:**

**Protocol/Project** Honors Thesis: Civic Education Survey

**Title:**

Survey v.6 JMU is the version of the survey that will be administered at James Madison University. The only difference is the omission of three **Additional information:** questions-- Are you a Sharpe Scholar? A Murray Scholar? a Monroe Scholar?. These questions are not applicable to JMU students.

PHSC- Protocol Description

To collect my data, I will conduct a panel study involving two surveys. The first survey will be administered during the last week in August, 2008 or the first few weeks of September. The second survey will be administered during January 2009. These surveys will be sent electronically to the incoming freshman class at The College of William and Mary and at James Madison University. The electronic survey program, Opinio, will be used to administer the surveys at William and Mary. JMU will use a similar electronic survey program to administer the survey to their students. All students surveyed will be over the age of 18.

**Methods - Describe methods used to collect and analyze your data.**

The first survey will collect information on the students' high school civic education history and various controls including parental civic engagement levels and basic demographics. Students will be asked to identify the classes they took in high school that qualify as civic education and then answer questions about the content and method of those classes. These questions will elicit information about my independent variable.

The second survey, administered at the end of the students' first semester of college, will measure student engagement levels during their initial months in college. Given the equal environment and ample opportunity to engage that the university provides, I will measure who takes advantage of those opportunities. I will only ask about engagement that translates directly into politics, social policy, student government, and/or community action.

After collecting this data, I will analyze the effects of curriculum variations in high school civic education on civic engagement in college. While looking for the general correlation between survey

1 and survey 2, I will also look at the effects of specific curricular variations on engagement behaviors. In addition, I will determine whether education variations or family feelings and behaviors have more of an effect on students' levels of engagement. Results will be reported as aggregate statistics. Individual students will not be identified.

**Participants - Describe how/where subjects will be recruited, how many will participate in research, and their general characteristics such as age and gender. When appropriate, describe unique characteristics required for subjects' participation in study.**

The first survey will be sent out via e-mail to the entire incoming freshman class or a sample of the freshman class at both William and Mary and James Madison University in the fall of 2008. The students will then have a choice of whether to complete the survey. For students not initially responding, reminder e-mails will be sent out after the first notification. The second survey will be sent out to the same group of students. Students will once again be sent reminder e-mails after the initial notification.

**Brief Rationale - Within context of literature, explain why this work is important.**

Recent studies suggest that civic engagement over the past half a century has been steadily decreasing. This decrease is specifically visible among the youth. It seems one way to solve this decrease would be to provide students coming through public education a better civics education. But both historic and recent studies also suggest that civics education has fairly little effect on students future engagement and civic knowledge level. These studies have looked at civic education as it is currently designed, without theorizing on how it could be revitalized. My hypothesis suggests that students whose civic education is based in active learning, including the cultivation of civic skills, are more likely to be civically engaged after high school. This study will look at how curricular variations make a difference in teaching students about civic responsibility.

**Privacy and Confidentiality - Include any statements necessary about protecting the privacy or confidentiality of collected data. 'Anonymous' is used when subjects' identities are not known. 'Confidential' is used if even indirectly - i.e. coding system - it is possible to connect a subject's responses/data to his/her true identity. If confidentiality is used, proper security must be assured by keeping code key**

These surveys will be confidential. Respondents will have a unique identifying code which will allow me to match up the information gathered from survey one and two. Information collected will be saved on the University's H drive which is password protected. Only I and my advising Professors will have access to this information.

**under 'lock and key' conditions with only the investigator having access to that key.**

**Results - Explain how subjects will be apprised of outcome.**

After the completion of my thesis, I will send an e-mail to survey participants notifying them of its completion and that I can send them a copy of my thesis upon request. Additionally, I will invite the respondents to public presentations of my results. This is likely to include the Undergraduate Honors Colloquium held in the spring.

In E-mail Form:

Dear Student,

You have been randomly selected to participate in a survey regarding your civic education history and engagement level.

**Consent Form - Include the text of the form to be used in obtaining informed consent. In certain circumstances where the signed informed consent form could link subjects to the data, the investigator may request waiving the requirement to obtain signed informed consent. If requesting such a waiver, please include justification. The investigator must still obtain informed consent, even if only verbally, after explaining to the subject the purpose of the research, procedures to be used, and subject's rights.**

This survey should take no more than 10 minutes. All your answers are confidential and your name will not be associated with any of the results of this study. You may refuse to answer any question asked and may discontinue participation at any time. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate in this study and by clicking on the link below you acknowledge this fact.

Please direct any questions regarding the survey to Professor Paul Manna at pmanna@wm.edu

Please click on the link below to access the survey. By clicking the link, you acknowledge the facts above. Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Allison Anoll

## **PHSC- Personnel Qualification**

**List personnel who will be performing the proposed procedures/research and indicate the training and number of years of experience of each person performing the procedures proposed. Personnel who will** Professor Paul Manna has been an Assistant Professor at the College since August 2003. He has experience designing and administering surveys.

**be collecting or potentially coming in contact with human tissues or fluids (e.g. blood or saliva collection), Allison P Anoll is an undergraduate at must be trained and ALSO obtain approval from the the College. She has taken GOVT 301: Institutional Biohazard Committee (IBC) by completing Research Methods and the GOVT 455 and submitting the IBC HUMAN TISSUE/FLUID Seminar: Education Policy and Politics REGISTRATION FORM. This form will need to be which have provided her a substantive updated and resubmitted if any personnel changes background on the topic. occur.\***

### **PHSC—General Registration Information**

**Your William and Mary role:\*** Student (faculty member required as co-PI)

**Advisor's Name:** Paul Manna

### **PHSC—General Protocol Information**

**Will the participants be from a William and Mary course?** No

**If No, they will be from:** Participants will include all willing freshman at William and Mary and James Madison University during the Fall 2008- Spring 2009 school year.

**Will the participants be under 18 years old?** Yes

**Can proper informed consent be obtained in advance of research?** Yes

If No, explain in "Participants," located in the Protocol Description section, how consent will later be obtained, or what precautions will be taken in lieu of proper consent.

**Does this study involve any procedures likely to produce psychological or physical stress (e.g., No failure, anxiety, pain, invasion of privacy, etc.)?**

If Yes, identify in "Brief Rationale," located in the Protocol Description section, the extra precautions that will be taken to protect the subjects' well being.

**Is deception (active misleading) involved in the study?** No

**If Yes, describe the debriefing procedure:**

**Will subjects be informed that they may terminate participation at any time without Yes penalty?**

If No, explain in "Participants," located in the Protocol Description section, why this will not be done.

**Even allowing for unusual circumstances, might any participants be disturbed by their No participation?**

If Yes, explain in "Brief Rationale," located in the Protocol Description section, what will be done to

reduce or eliminate the lasting effects of any negative reactions.

**Must this form be reviewed by other institutions? Yes**

**If Yes, please list each institution below, and James Madison University's IRB board. The indicate approval status:** survey is in the process of being approved.

*Note: As suggested in this application, it was originally planned to also survey students at James Madison University. The same survey, sample size, and population was going to be used. The first survey was in fact administered to this population, but the second survey was never completed.*

***2—Survey 1: Provides all the questions, order and categories of the first survey as well as the consent emails that were sent to students.***

***Survey 1: Administered August 2008***

***Collect control variables and high school curriculum information***

**PART 1: CONTROLS**

***Page 1-10 questions***

**CATEGORY 1: FAMILY SOCIALIZATION (9 Qs)**

While you were in high school, did one (or both) of your parents or guardian...

1. Work on a political campaign for local, state or national office?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Not sure
2. Run for local, state or national office?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Not sure
3. Volunteer for or was elected to a local or community board (e.g., town council, a school board, a zoning board)?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Not sure
4. **Volunteer** in the community or in a non-profit/community program?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Not sure
5. **Hold a leadership role** in the community or run a non-profit/community program?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Not sure
6. Participate in a march or protest?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Not sure
7. Contact a local, state, or national official either in person, by phone or by letter about a problem of issue that concerned them?
  - a. Yes

- b. No
- c. Not sure

8. Did you ever go to the polls to vote with a parent, grandparent, or guardian?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not sure

9. On average over the past year, how often would you say you have discussed politics, current events or community problems with your family?

- a. every day
- b. every few days
- c. once a week
- d. every few weeks
- e. less than every few weeks
- f. never

10. On average, how often do people in your immediate family watch the news or read a newspaper (either a hard copy or online)?

- g. every day
- h. every few days
- i. once a week
- j. every few weeks
- k. less than every few weeks
- l. never

*Page 2- 9 questions*

**CATEGORY 2: PERSONAL TENDENCIES (8Qs)**

Think about yourself in comparison with your peers through your **middle school and high school years**. On average over this period, use the 1-5 scale found below to rate yourself on the seven statements that follow.

- 1—Not at all
- 2—Sometimes
- 3—About half of the time
- 4—Most of the time
- 5—All of the time

Generally during this time period—

- 1. I was a good public speaker.
- 2. I was comfortable speaking up in class.

3. I was comfortable sharing my opinions with people.
4. I was a leader among my peers.
5. I was a good organizer.
6. I was active in many groups, sports, or clubs.
7. I was interested in politics.
8. I was involved in community service or community projects.

***Group this with prior set of questions***

**PART 2: CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION**

**CATEGORY 1: BASICS (2Qs)**

1. During high school, did you take any government, politics, or citizenship classes?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. I don't remember
    - a. **IF NO OR I DON'T REMEMBER, SKIP TO PAGE 6**
    - b. **IF YES, CONTINUE TO PAGE 3**

***Page 3- 8 questions***

For the following questions, please think about the GOVERNMENT, POLITICS, OR CITIZENSHIP CLASS you took in high school. If you took more than one, think about the content of those classes and how they were set up.

Some classes may have provided you a chance to participate more often than others. Think about the government, politics, or citizenship class that **ALLOWED YOU TO PARTICIPATE THE MOST** by including activities such as in-class discussions, simulations, community projects or hands-on involvement in politics.

For the following questions, please answer them about this class. If you do not think that any class was more participatory than the others, choose any of the classes you took to answer the questions.

1. Was this class required for graduation?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. Not sure

**CATEGORY 2: CONTENT (4Qs)**

On average in your high school class did you...

1. Discuss current events?
  - a. every class
  - b. every week
  - c. every few weeks
  - d. every few months
  - e. never
2. Discuss a citizen's role in a democracy?
  - a. every class
  - b. every week
  - c. every few weeks
  - d. every few months
  - e. never
3. Discuss challenges that democracies face?
  - a. every class
  - b. every week
  - c. every few weeks
  - d. every few months
  - e. never
4. Discuss philosophical writings on democracy from authors such as Plato, Locke, Hobbes, Rousseau, Jefferson, Madison, etc.?
  - a. every class
  - b. every week
  - c. every few weeks
  - d. every few months
  - e. never

**CATEGORY 3: SKILLS (13Qs)**

5. Work in groups?
  - a. every class
  - b. every week
  - c. every few weeks
  - d. every few months
  - e. never

***Page 4- 10 questions***

In your high school government class, did you...

6. Have an opportunity to register to vote?
  - a. once
  - b. more than once
  - c. not at all

- d. Not Sure
7. Contact an elected official (e.g., local, state, or national) about something that concerned you?
- a. once
  - b. more than once
  - c. not at all
  - d. Not Sure
- etc....
1. Have structured debates?
- a. once
  - b. more than once
  - c. not at all
2. Participate in simulations, such as mock congress, mock elections, or mock court?
- a. once
  - b. more than once
  - c. not at all
3. Make speeches or give presentations?
- a. once
  - b. more than once
  - c. not at all
4. Conduct interviews or oral histories?
- a. once
  - b. more than once
  - c. not at all
5. Analyze political communications such as political cartoons, articles, pamphlets, or commercials?
- a. once
  - b. more than once
  - c. not at all
6. Discuss controversial issues such as abortion, gun laws, death penalty ETC.?
- a. once
  - b. more than once
  - c. not at all
7. Feel encouraged to express your own opinions?
- a. once
  - b. more than once
  - c. not at all
8. Develop a plan of action for public problems, social concerns or community issues?
- a. once
  - b. more than once
  - c. not at all

***Page 5- 8 questions***

1. As part of your class, either as a requirement or for extra credit, did you do any of the following?

- a. Work on a political campaign
    - i. yes
    - ii. no
    - iii. not sure
  - b. Attend a rally
    - i. yes
    - ii. no
    - iii. not sure
  - c. Participate in a demonstration or fundraiser for a social problem, political issue or cause
    - i. yes
    - ii. no
    - iii. not sure
  - d. Attend a local board meeting such as school board or zoning board etc.?
    - i. yes
    - ii. no
    - iii. not sure
  - e. Participate in Model United Nations
    - i. yes
    - ii. no
    - iii. not sure
  - f. Participate in the We the People Assembly
    - i. yes
    - ii. no
    - iii. not sure
  - g. Do community service
    - i. yes
    - ii. no
    - iii. not sure
  - h. Participate in the Close Up Program
    - i. yes
    - ii. no
    - iii. not sure
9. Did you help to plan any of these activities?
- a. yes
  - b. no

**CATEGORY 4: EXPERIENCE (2Qs)**

Consider your overall experience in this class.

1. On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate your experience?
- a. 1 not interesting or useful at all
  - b. 2 rarely interesting or useful
  - c. 3 interesting or useful about half the time

- d. 4 interesting and useful more than half the time
- e. 5 almost always interesting and useful

2. Do you think it had an impact on your interest level in politics, community problems, or public service?
- a. It made me MORE interested
  - b. It made me LESS interested
  - c. It had little or NO EFFECT on my interest level

**Page 6**

**CATEGORY 5: SERVICE LEARNING SUPPLIMENTS (4Qs)**

1. Did you take a community service class in high school?
- a. yes
  - b. no
2. Was daily reflection part of this class?
- a. yes
  - b. no
  - c. Not applicable
3. Were you required to do community service to graduate from your high school?
- a. yes
  - b. no
- BRANCH→
4. How many hours were required?
- d. 0-20
  - e. 21-40
  - f. 41-60
  - g. 61-80
  - h. 81-100
  - i. 100 or more
  - j. Not applicable
5. Was your service supervised by an advisor or teacher?
- k. Yes
  - l. No
  - m. Not sure

**CONTINUE PART 1: CONTROLS**

**CATEGORY 3: BASIC DEMOGRAPHICS (5Qs)**

1. Are you...?
- a. female
  - b. male
2. What racial or ethnic group best describes you?

- a. White or Caucasian
- b. African American, African, Black
- c. Native American, Alaska Native
- d. Asian American
- e. Asian, including Indian Subcontinent
- f. Hispanic, Latino
- g. Mexican American, Chicano
- h. Puerto Rican
- i. Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander
- j. Other

3. Which of these choices best describes your family's TOTAL, OR COMBINED, income?

- a. Under \$10,000
- b. \$10,000-29,000
- c. \$30,000-59,000
- d. \$60,000-89,000
- e. \$90,000-120,000
- f. Over \$120,000
- g. Not sure

4. What is your mother's furthest level of education?

- a. Less than or some high school
- b. High School Graduate or the equivalent
- c. Some College
- d. Bachelor's degree (four year college)
- e. Master's Degree
- f. Doctorate (PhD)
- g. Law Degree (LLB, JD)
- h. Medical Degree (MD, DDS, DVM, MVSA, DSC, DO)
- i. Other w/ box

5. What is your father's furthest level of education?

- a. Less than or some high school
- b. High School Graduate or the equivalent
- c. Some College
- d. Bachelor's degree (four year college)
- e. Master's Degree
- f. Doctorate (PhD)
- g. Law Degree (LLB, JD)
- h. Medical Degree (MD, DDS, DVM, MVSA, DSC, DO)
- i. Other w/ box

6. In what kind of area do you live?

- a. Large city

- b. Small city
- c. Suburb
- d. Town
- e. Rural

**Page 7**

Would you be willing to participate in a focus group discussion on the issues raised in this survey?

If you have any additional comments or reactions to any of the questions, please fill them in below.

Provide box

Thank you for taking this survey.

**Survey 1 Consent E-mails:**

*Below is the content of the consent e-mails sent to all students for the first survey. The reminder e-mails were sent to students who did not complete the survey after the first e-mail.*

**Email 1—**

Sent Date: 9/12/08—2:40 PM

Subj: Honors Thesis Survey on Civic Engagement

Hello Fellow Student,

I'm doing a senior honors thesis this year and would like your help. My project is investigating levels of civic engagement among students. You have been randomly selected to participate in this survey regarding your civic education history and engagement level. I'd really appreciate your participation.

This survey should take no more than 10 minutes. All your answers are confidential and your name will not be associated with any of the results of this study. You may refuse to answer any question asked and may discontinue participation at any time. You must be

18 years of age or older to participate in this study and by clicking on the link below you acknowledge this fact.

Please direct any questions regarding the survey to Professor Paul Manna at [pmanna@wm.edu](mailto:pmanna@wm.edu).

To access the survey, click on the link below.

[https://opinio.wm.edu/opinio//s?s=1356&i=\[ID\]&k=\[KEY\]&ro=\[REOPEN\]](https://opinio.wm.edu/opinio//s?s=1356&i=[ID]&k=[KEY]&ro=[REOPEN])

Sincerely,

Allison Anoll

THIS PROJECT WAS FOUND TO COMPLY WITH APPROPRIATE ETHICAL STANDARDS AND WAS EXEMPTED FROM THE NEED FOR FORMAL REVIEW BY THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE (Phone 757-221-3966) ON 2008-09-05 AND EXPIRES ON 2009-09-05.

## **E-mail 2**

Sent Date: 9/12/08—12:54 PM

Subj: REMINDER: Honors Thesis Survey on Civic Engagement

Hello again,

I sent you an e-mail about my honors thesis research about a week ago; I'm still hoping to hear your responses to the survey provided in the link below. Every response is important and I'd appreciate you taking the time to participate.

As before, you have been randomly selected to participate in a survey regarding your civic education history and engagement levels. Your participation in this study is confidential and your name will not be associated with any results of the study. The study should take less than 10 minutes. You may refuse to answer questions at any time and may discontinue your participation at any time. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate in this study and by clicking on the link below you acknowledge this fact.

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Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Allison Anoll

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**Email 3—**

Sent Date: 9/22/08—12:54 PM

Subj: FINAL REMINDER: Honors Thesis Survey on Civic Engagement

Hello one last time,

This is the final reminder about my honors thesis research. Once again, I have included the link to my survey below. If you do not wish to participate, please disregard this email. You will not receive any more e-mails about this survey.

As before, you have been randomly selected to participate in a survey regarding your civic education history and engagement levels. Your participation in this study is confidential and your name will not be associated with any results of the study. The study should take less than 10 minutes. You may refuse to answer questions at any time and may discontinue your participation at any time. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate in this study and by clicking on the link below you acknowledge this fact.

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**3—Survey 2: Engagement Levels—This section shows the complete second survey, including questions, order and categories. Also provided in this section is the consent e-mails sent to the sample populations.**

*Survey 2- Administered December 2008/ January 2009*

*Page 1- 9 questions*

**PART 1: ENGAGEMENT LEVEL (12Q)**

Since the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year, have you...

1. worked on a political campaign for a local, state or national office?
  - a. yes
  - b. no
2. Contacted a local, state or national official about a problem of issue that concerns you?
  - a. yes
  - b. no
3. Participated in a march or protest?
  - a. yes
  - b. no
4. Voted in the 2008 election?
  - a. yes
  - b. no, I am NOT 18
  - c. no, although I am over 18
5. Participated in an organization that works to solve community problems or lobby for political change?
  - a. yes
  - b. no
6. Run for a student government position?
  - a. yes
  - b. no
7. Participated in the student government in some other way than as an elected representative?
  - a. yes
  - b. no
8. Been part of a day long, weekend long or week long service trip?
  - a. yes
  - b. no
9. Volunteered regularly through a community service program?
  - a. yes
  - b. no

If yes, how many hours a week?

10. On average, how often do you discuss politics, current events, or community problems with your friends?

- a. every day
- b. every few days
- c. every few weeks
- d. rarely
- e. never

11. On average, how often do you watch the news or read a newspaper (either a hard copy or online)?

- a. every day
- b. every few days
- c. every few weeks
- d. rarely
- e. never

12. Did you do this as part of a class?

- a. yes
- b. no
- c. Not applicable

*page 2- 7 questions*

**PART 2: CONTROLS**

**CATEGORY 1: ACADEMIC CONTROLS (5Q)**

1. What is your intended major? If you are not sure, please write **NOT SURE**.

Fill in the blank

2. What was your GPA at the end of the Fall 2008 semester?

Fill in blank

3. How many government, politics or citizenship classes did you take this semester?

- a. 0
- b. 1
- c. 2
- d. More than 2

**CATEGORY 3: RELIGIOUS SOCIALIZATION (3 Qs)**

1. How often, if at all, do you attend religious services?

- a. Once a week or more
- b. Once or twice a month
- c. Every few months

- d. Only for holidays and special events
- e. Never

Branching question→

- 2. Have you gotten involved with volunteer community programs or initiatives through your religious organization?
  - a. Very often
  - b. Once or twice
  - c. Never
  
- 3. What kind of programs have you been involved in?
  - a. Service activities in your community, such as a clothes or food drive.
  - b. Mission trips
  - c. political activities, such as a march or strike
  - d. other- box for answer

**Page 3**

Would you be willing to participate in a focus group discussion on the issues raised in this survey?

If you have any additional comments or reactions to any of the questions, please fill them in below.

Provide box

Thank you for taking this survey.

**Survey 2 Consent E-mails:**

*Below is the content of the consent e-mails sent to all students for the second survey. The reminder e-mails were sent to students who did not complete the survey after the first e-mail.*

**Email 1—**

Sent Date: 2/6/09—5:03PM

Subj: Honors Thesis: Follow-Up Survey

Hello,

I'm doing a senior honors thesis this year on civic engagement levels among students. You were randomly selected to participate in my survey last semester regarding your

civic education history and engagement level. This is a short follow-up survey. I'd really appreciate your participation.

This survey should take no more than 5 minutes. All your answers are confidential and your name will not be associated with any of the results of this study. You may refuse to answer any question asked and may discontinue participation at any time. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate in this study and by clicking on the link below you acknowledge this fact.

Please direct any questions regarding the survey to Professor Paul Manna at [pmanna@wm.edu](mailto:pmanna@wm.edu).

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Sincerely,

Allison Anoll

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**Email 2—**

Sent Date: 2/10/09—2:08 PM

Subj: Reminder: Honors Thesis Follow-Up Survey

Hello again,

I sent you an e-mail about my honors thesis research about a week ago; I'm still hoping to hear your responses to the survey provided in the link below. Every response is important and I'd appreciate you taking the time to participate.

As before, you have been randomly selected to participate in a survey regarding your civic education history and engagement levels. Your participation in this study is confidential and your name will not be associated with any results of the study. The study should take less than 5 minutes. You may refuse to answer questions at any time and may discontinue your participation at any time. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate in this study and by clicking on the link below you acknowledge this fact.

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Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated.

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**Email 3—**

Sent Date: 2/16/09—2:08 PM

Subj: Final Reminder: Honors Thesis: Follow-Up Survey

Hello,

This is the final reminder about my honors thesis research. Once again, I have included the link to my survey below. If you do not wish to participate, please disregard this email. You will not receive any more e-mails about this survey.

As before, you have been randomly selected to participate in a survey regarding your civic education history and engagement levels. Your participation in this study is confidential and your name will not be associated with any results of the study. The study should take less than 5 minutes. You may refuse to answer questions at any time and may discontinue your participation at any time. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate in this study and by clicking on the link below you acknowledge this fact.

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