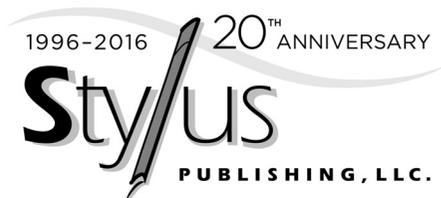# RESEARCH ON STUDENT CIVIC OUTCOMES IN SERVICE LEARNING

Conceptual Frameworks and Methods

EDITED BY

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INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND STUDENT CIVIC OUTCOMES

Emily M. Janke and Jennifer M. Domagal-Goldman

To what extent does attendance at a particular college or university influence the likelihood of future civic engagement? To what extent does the college or university matter to student civic outcomes? Answers to these questions are intended to inform decisions that are pedagogical, practical, political, and personal. Related questions may include: What practices improve student learning and development outcomes? What structures, policies, and resources make a difference? What is the public value of higher education to taxpayers? Is this college a good fit for a given student and that student's commitment to civic engagement?

Institution-level effects, as they relate to student civic outcomes, are a specific subset of student outcomes that focus on students' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors related to their interactions with their communities and with others to make a difference in these communities. Which institutional characteristics make a difference in the likelihood that students vote in elections or volunteer for a nonprofit, among other civic outcomes? For example, is there a relationship between student civic outcomes and characteristics of the organizational structure of the campus, such as size of enrollment, selectivity, demographic composition, or public/private governance? Alternatively, does a relationship exist between certain elements of the organizational context, such as types of policies and practices related to faculty scholarship and culture that may include promotion, tenure, and reappointment policies as well as faculty workloads and articulated civic outcomes for students? Are student civic outcomes connected to the presence of a central community engagement office on campus and whether such an office

has directors with faculty lines or student affairs appointments? Knowing what differences exist among the effects of varying institutional structures, policies, and cultures on student civic outcomes is an important first step in designing institution-wide plans to improve such outcomes. Identifying potential levers for change can surface recommendations for strategic planning and intentional decision-making and action by institutional members.
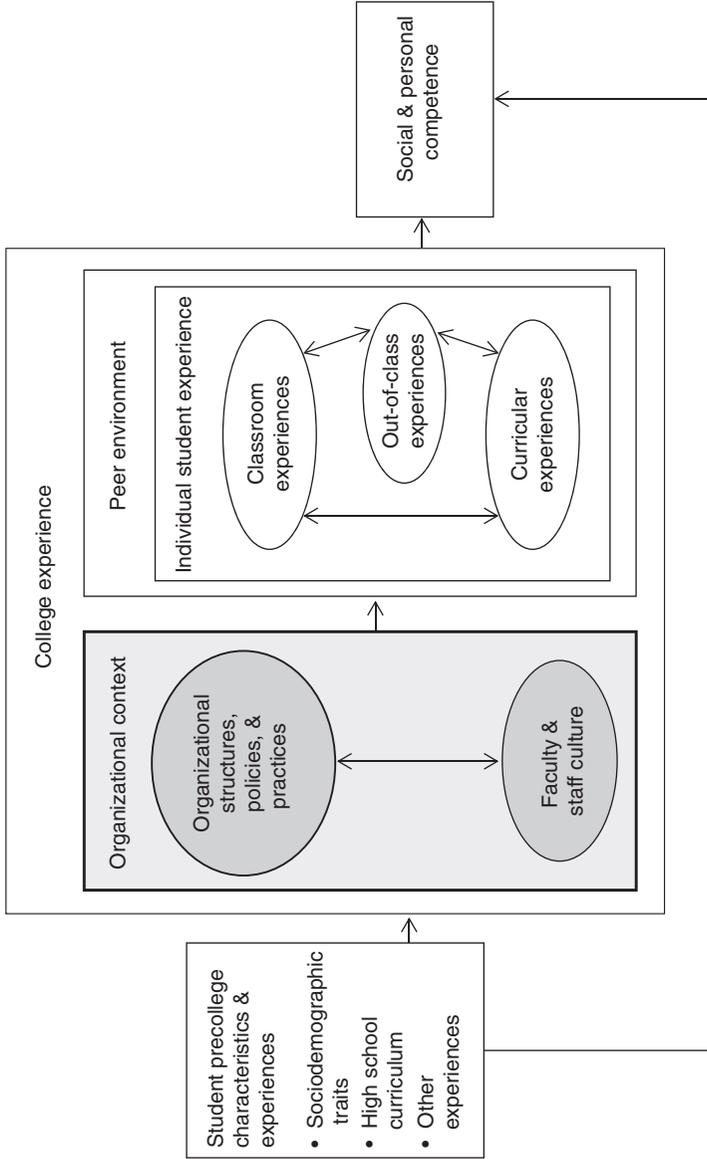
Literature Review

On the whole, very few studies examine *institutional effects*, or what are also termed *between-college effects* (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005), on student outcomes. These include considering the institutional climate as shaped by the organizational structures, policies, and practices and faculty, staff, and student experiences and cultures. Even fewer studies focus on civic outcomes specifically (Finley, 2011). Additionally, the terminology used to describe and study the connections between certain characteristics of a higher education institution (HEI) on student civic outcomes is confusing, as terms are often used synonymously when clearer distinctions would improve conceptual clarity. For instance, scholars may use the terms *institutional* and *organizational* interchangeably when describing characteristics of an HEI. In this chapter, we use *institutional* when discussing an HEI as a single proper entity and *organizational* to address the features and functions that make up the work of an institution.

Additionally, the terms *climate*, *culture*, *context*, *experience*, *environment*, and *ethos* are also regularly used synonymously in student outcomes literature with little to no construct definition. The proliferation and conflation of terms can make it difficult to understand whether meaningful differences exist in *philosophy*, *phenomenology*, *methodology*, or *practical application*. At a minimum, introducing the various terms is likely to give pause to readers and researchers as to whether their interpretation of the ideas aligns with the intentions of the authors. This also creates challenges in understanding and synthesizing the literature as well as presenting it in a review such as this. Throughout this chapter we define these terms and articulate the importance of each in relationship to student civic outcomes.

Input-Environment-Outcomes

Conceptual understanding of institutional effects on student outcomes has been grounded for the past three decades in Astin's (1993) Input-Environment-Outcomes (I-E-O) conceptual approach depicted in Figure 3.3.1 (e.g., Barnhardt, Sheets, & Pasquesi, 2015; Bowman, 2014; Kisker,

Figure 3.3.1. Comprehensive model of influences on student learning and persistence.

Social & personal competence

College experience

Peer environment

Individual student experience

Classroom experiences

Out-of-class experiences

Curricular experiences

Organizational context

Organizational structures, policies, & practices

Faculty & staff culture

Student precollege characteristics & experiences

- Sociodemographic traits
- High school curriculum
- Other experiences

Source. Adapted from Terenzini & Reason (2005) as cited in Reason, Terenzini, & Domingo (2007).

Figure 3.3.2. Comprehensive model of institutional climate on student civic outcomes.
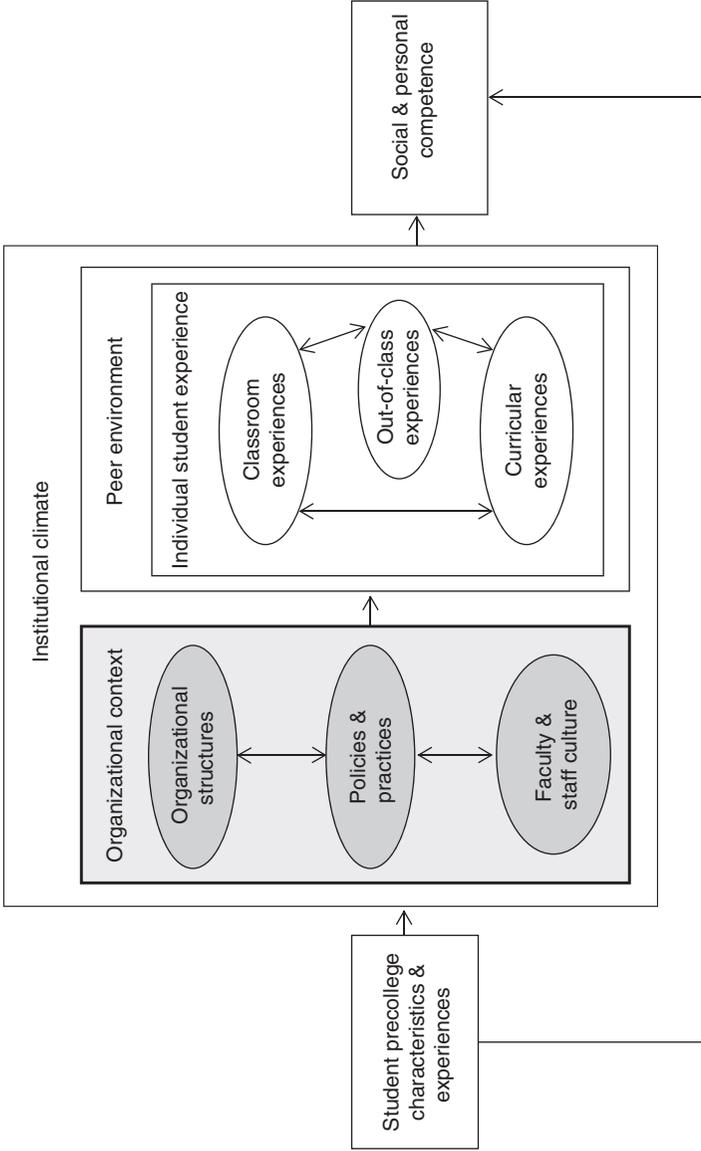
Weintraub, & Newell, 2015; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005; Pike, Kuh, & Gonyea, 2003; Reason, Terenzini, & Domingo, 2007; Terenzini & Reason, 2005). The I-E-O approach hypothesizes that students come to higher education with a range of demographic, personal, and academic characteristics and experiences (*input*). While enrolled in college, students interact with peers and experience various aspects of the institution, including curricular, classroom, and out-of-class experiences and conditions (*environment*). The dynamics that occur between the personal characteristics and campus characteristics result in student learning and development (*outcomes*).

The I-E-O conceptual approach introduced, among other ideas, the inclusion of institutional characteristics, along with students' curricular and cocurricular experiences, as part of their environment—or as we label it, organizational context—that influences student outcomes. Although the I-E-O framework includes many potential influences on student outcomes, this chapter focuses narrowly on the organizational context: the features and functions that shape the work of the institution.

A "Fourth Domain": Organizational Context

In several studies, Terenzini and Reason (Reason et al., 2007; Terenzini & Reason, 2005) argue for research on organizational context as an "often overlooked fourth domain" (Reason et al., 2007, p. 276) in the study of student outcomes. Based on findings from Pascarella and Terenzini's meta-analyses (1991, 2005) and subsequent research (e.g., Barnhardt et al., 2015; Terenzini & Reason, 2005), this additional domain refines and extends the environment component of Astin's I-E-O approach to suggest a more comprehensive and integrated view of students' experiences while attending an HEI. The organizational context comprises "an institution's organizational characteristics, structures, policies, and practices, and the campus's faculty and peer cultures and environments" (Reason et al., 2007, p. 276) (see Figure 3.3.1). Hence, the model suggests that students come to an HEI with a range of demographic, personal, and academic characteristics and experiences. These precollege characteristics may influence how students experience the HEI that they attend, including (a) curricular, classroom, and out-of-class experiences and conditions, which are shaped by (b) their peer environment, and (c) organizational contexts. Together, precollege characteristics and the college experience are likely to affect students' social and personal competence outcomes.

For the purpose of advancing research and practice in student civic outcomes, we offer an adapted version of Terenzini and Reason's (2005) model (see Figure 3.3.2). Because we are specifically interested in student civic outcomes, we are focused not on the broad ways in which students experience

campus, but specifically on students' perceptions of their experience and the organizational structures, policies, and practices of their institutions as they relate to all things civic. For the purpose of emphasizing focus on institutional factors that may affect student civic outcomes, specifically, we have renamed "college experience" to "institutional climate." Organizational context is comprised of two distinct but related aspects: (a) organizational structures, and (b) organizational policies and practices. This decision to "pull apart" the initially single construct of organizational context is motivated by research findings that suggest distinct differences in regard to significance, or whether a connection likely exists between student civic outcomes and these constructs.

Institutional Climate

Institutional climate is the way in which students, faculty, staff, and other self-described members of the institution view and interpret institutional structures, policies, programs, practices, and cultures. It is the various meanings that members ascribe to "interrelated bundles" of experiences they have within the context of the institution (Schneider, Ehrhart, & Macey, 2013, p. 13). Hence, the focus on institutional climate places importance on meaning-making about experiences to create perceptions; experience alone is not sufficient.

Organizational culture is defined as the basic assumptions about the world and values that guide life in an organization (Schneider et al., 2013). Organizational culture and organizational climate are different constructs. Cameron (2008) clarifies the differences in her comparison of each to the other:

> Climate refers to temporary attitudes, feelings, and perceptions of individuals (Schneider, 1990). Culture is an enduring, slow to change, core characteristic of organizations; climate, because it is based on attitudes, can change quickly and dramatically. Culture refers to implicit, often indiscernible aspects of organizations; climate refers to more overt, observable attributes of organizations. Culture includes core values and consensual interpretations about how things are; climate includes individualistic perspectives that are modified frequently as situations change and new information is encountered. (p. 432)

Throughout this chapter, then, we differentiate between the terms *climate* and *culture*. We opted to use the term *climate* to describe members' perspectives and opinions of what the institution is about and what it stands for, and we use *culture* to describe the core values that are embodied within the organization and communicated and reified through faculty, staff, and

student interactions and interpretations. This decision is based on institutional climate research described in the following sections, though future research will further clarify in what ways meaningful distinctions exist within a campus and across campuses.

Research on organizational, faculty, and student climate is a rich area of higher education scholarship that has been used by provosts, presidents, and other HEI leaders to understand members' experiences and perceptions of the institution. Climate studies may be administered to understand specific areas or outcomes of interest, such as openness and support for diversity (e.g., Rankin, Blumenfeld, Weber, & Frazer, 2010; Reason et al., 2007), and personal and social responsibility (e.g., Ryder, Reason, Mitchell, Gillon, & Hemer, 2015). An institution's climate related to a certain value or interest is important for understanding the aggregated experiences, attitudes, and behaviors of its members.

The Personal Social Responsibility Inventory (PSRI) is one climate tool that suggests the relevance of institutional climate on student civic outcomes. The PSRI is an institutional inventory that assesses students' self-reported behaviors and perceptions of campus climate along five dimensions of personal and social responsibility for college students, including "striving for excellence, cultivating academic integrity, contributing to a larger community, taking seriously the perspectives of others, and developing competence in ethical and moral reasoning and action" (Ryder et al., 2015, p. 5). Exploring data collected from the PSRI, Ryder and colleagues (2015) found via a multilevel modeling approach that civic-related student outcomes like openness to diversity and conflict are positively related to students' perceptions of the learning climate on campus. Although some of this may be due to self-selection into institutions, and the study is limited to the extent that it included only 15 institutions, the finding suggests the need for continued investigation into the effects of institution-level characteristics, particularly climate, on student civic outcomes.

Organizational Structures

One of the three dimensions of organizational context is structure. Organizational structures are the relatively fixed features and characteristics of an institution and include measures such as type of control (public/private), size, mission, urbanicity (i.e., urban, suburban, rural), admissions selectivity (e.g., SAT or ACT score), and racial/ethnic demographics. In their meta-analysis Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) repeatedly used the terms *modest*, *inconsistent*, and *unconvincing* to describe differences among various student outcomes, including cognitive development, academic performance, psychosocial and attitudinal change, and persistence, as they related to institutional

type, size, and racial and gender composition. These conclusions were used for the studies they reviewed on civic development generally, though because between-college effects were written as summaries of large reviews, it is not always clear which studies specifically examined between college effects on student civic development.

Organizational structure variables are often confounded with other institutional characteristics that describe policies and practices (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). For example, when examining selective liberal arts colleges what is the influencing factor in the admissions process—the private control in terms of governance and funding, the liberal arts curriculum, or selectivity? Determining plausible and statistically significant measures of what characteristics make a difference in student outcomes is challenging. Ultimately, organizational structures, such as institution type, may be too remote from the student experience to have much, if any, relationship to student learning (Astin, 1993; Dey et al., 1997; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005; Reason et al., 2007), despite some findings that suggest potential correlations (e.g., Lott, 2013). On the whole, organizational context is more complex and dynamic than can be described by organizational structures alone; context is shaped by organizational policies and practices, as well as by faculty and staff cultures.

Organizational Policies and Practices
Although researchers are somewhat dubious about the level of the impact of an institution's organizational structures, such as public/private, size, mission, and selectivity on student outcomes (e.g., Astin, 1993; Dey et al., 1997; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005), they note that organizational policies, practices, and cultures (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 2005) are likely to have relatively more, and possibly statistically significant, influences on student learning outcomes (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Reason et al., 2007). To the extent that an institution's characteristics interact in some meaningful way with what students do while attending college, it is plausible, and perhaps likely, that these characteristics may subsequently influence student outcomes (Kuh et al., 2005). Some promising evidence exists for linkages between organizational policies and practices and student civic outcomes. Organizational policies are codified guidelines for how campus stakeholders are expected to interact and engage with their institution and include student recruitment, admissions, enrollment, and curriculum policies that shape students' academic pathways as well as faculty and staff recruitment, hiring, workload, and review and reward policies such as promotion and tenure.

Organizational policies that pertain to students' experiences within the institution shape students' perceptions about the values and expectations

of the institution. Organizational policies may include whether service learning or community-engaged academic experiences are mandatory for completion of general education, well-integrated into disciplinary majors, or required for graduation. Other examples include whether community service is incorporated into orientation, first-year, and residential experiences and the policies that govern the extent to which students have voice and decision-making authority in institutional governance. Policies shape important ways in which an institution encourages and includes student engagement in academic, cocurricular, and extracurricular programming (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005).

Organizational policies related to faculty and staff may also affect students to the extent that such policies shape the way in which faculty and staff interact with students. Policies may encourage or discourage faculty and staff interactions with students outside of the classroom. These policies may include providing paid time for staff to participate in alternative break trips with students or rewarding service learning and other forms of community-engaged scholarship in promotion, tenure, and reappointment policies. Our review of the student civic outcomes literature reveals very little about the effect of the presence of organizational policies on student civic outcomes within or across institutions.

Organizational practices are the ways in which organizational members act on behalf of the institution to operationalize its policies and work more generally. Examples of practices that might be relevant to student civic outcomes include how an institution's civic mission is expressed in its orientation events and campus rituals, how campus leaders talk about and include the local community in campus life, and the degree to which a campus tends to include students in important conversations and student voice in decision-making. We point out a relative dearth in this research area as much of the literature is focused on specific teaching pedagogies (e.g., service learning) and structured out-of-classroom experiences. One promising example, however, is the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement at Tufts University. This study, which measures student voter turnout in midterm and presidential-year election cycles, is examining the organizational policies and practices of institutions with higher-than-predicted student voter turnout to determine what role organizational context might play on this aspect of student civic outcomes (Brower & Benenson, 2015).

Faculty and Staff Culture

Terenzini and Reason's (2005) model focuses on faculty culture to the exclusion of other professionals, such as academic affairs staff, student affairs staff, librarians, and instructional technology professionals, but the model

presented here includes a broader array of higher education staff as relevant and pertinent to understanding organizational context and students' experiences. For example, professional staff may teach courses, and they may assume meaningful roles in facilitating students' service learning and cocurricular experiences with communities. Therefore, faculty and staff culture is an important component of an organization's context as their perceptions of institutional policies and practices (i.e., faculty culture) shape faculty and staff interactions with students. In this way, the faculty and staff members may be viewed by students as an embodiment of the campus's values and ethos. Faculty and staff culture as it relates to service learning, but academic work more broadly, is shaped by faculty and staff members' views and interpretations of the values conveyed by organizational policies and practices as well as those of their own academic and professional disciplines (e.g., Holland, 1999; O'Meara & Jaeger, 2006).

One illustrative example of how faculty culture is associated with student outcomes is found in the literature on students' openness to diversity, an important civic outcome. Reason, Cox, Quaye, and Terenzini (2010) examined faculty and institutional factors that "promote (student) encounters with difference" (p. 392) in first-year courses, as research shows that more frequent and higher quality encounters with diverse ideas, worldviews, and people can positively enhance students' civic and community involvement (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Terenzini & Reason, 2005). Reason and colleagues (2010) found a positive and significant correlation between faculty promoting student encounters with difference and the extent to which faculty members perceived institutional emphasis on teaching, and specifically, institutional support for active teaching and assessment pedagogies. We did not find research that specifically examined the correlation between faculty and staff culture and student civic outcomes; however, research on how organizational structures, policies, and practices interact with faculty attitudes and behaviors toward civic and community engagement supports the expectation that such organizational structures may play an important role in faculty members' choosing a campus for employment as well as valuing, expressing, and practicing democratic and engaged pedagogies (Domagal-Goldman, 2010; Holland, 1999; O'Meara, 2011; O'Meara & Jaeger, 2006; Saltmarsh et al., 2009). These faculty and staff cultures are subsequently conveyed to students through in and out of class interactions.

On the whole, the body of research on the effect of institutional characteristics on student learning and development generally, and civic outcomes specifically, is relatively sparse and the findings are limited in regard to generalizability. Even in the most robust studies, institutional participants tend to come from only one or a few institutional types. This leads to a

decreased ability to describe differences across institutional types, though admittedly it allows for greater understanding of particular types of institutions and their effects on student civic outcomes. Findings may ultimately be representative regardless of classification type; however, further research is required before generalizing across types. The dearth of such research is likely related to the complexity of institution-level research on student outcomes, especially if one attempts to study between institution effects (see chapter 3.6). The consequence of these limitations is that understanding of institutional effects on student civic outcomes is not conclusive; we must bring new light to bear on initial findings before drawing firm conclusions. In the following section we describe several broad research areas that warrant further inquiry and investigation.

Recommendations for Future Research

The literature review reveals the need for deeper understanding about institutional characteristics and organizational contexts and understanding how these sets of variables influence student civic learning and development. This section suggests recommended research areas and identifies important questions as well as approaches to improve research.

Building a Theory Base

Much of the research on institution-level effects on student outcomes is correlational research. The approach is used to identify whether relationships among factors are present, but it does not attempt to explain causation. A psychosocial cognitive approach, or how individuals think of and make sense of the world around them (e.g., Albert & Whetten, 1985; Scott, 2003; Weick, 1995), may be applied to the study of the interplay among institutional characteristics, faculty and staff culture, and student learning outcomes (Kezar, 2014). Psychosocial theories and findings extend beyond the more traditional focus on students' psychological beliefs to emphasize the processes through which students make meaning of their campus's climates—what campuses expect of them (Barnhardt et al., 2015; chapter 2.1). These theories posit that students' awareness and perceptions of an institution's policies and practices interact with and inform students' beliefs about an institution's climate, which then influences students' attitudes and behaviors (e.g., Kuh et al., 2005; Reason et al., 2010; Reason et al., 2007).

Suggesting the importance of student *perception* of civic context, and cognition's role as a mediating variable, Barnhardt, Sheets, and Pasquesi (2015), in a mixed-methods study of students' civic commitments and capacities for

community action, found that institutional messages that advocate proso-
cial civic qualities may contribute, among other things, to student civic
outcomes. Applying both social identity and organizational theories, the
researchers suggest that, controlling for precollege characteristics, campus
contexts (campus size and selectivity), and college experiences (composite
measures of curricular, cocurricular, and out-of-class experiences), "students'
acquisitions of commitments to and skills for contributing to the larger com-
munity are largely influenced by *the extent to which students perceive their
campus as one that advocates for its students to be active and involved citizens*"
(p. 622, emphasis added). That is, students who see their institution's fac-
ulty, administrators, and students advocating for civic actions, particularly
in community-engaged classrooms and common spaces, are more likely to
acquire the skills for and be committed to contributing civically to their
communities.

   In another study developed at De Anza College, early analysis of self-
report survey data collected from more than 1,750 student surveys at nine
community colleges suggest that institutional intentionality (civic engage-
ment being stated in the institution's mission and goals statements) posi-
tively and significantly correlated with whether students correctly answered
questions about civics, suggesting increased civic knowledge. Also support-
ing, indirectly, the role of faculty culture in organizational context, the study
found that higher levels of full-time faculty also positively and significantly
correlated to students' civic agency and civic knowledge (Kisker, Newell, &
Weintraub, 2016). Student exposure to campus-based public advocacy likely
influenced students' own perceptions of their civic skills and social respon-
sibility.

   Together, these studies suggest important campus practices and processes
that may be mediating influences in the effective development of student
civic engagement, hence supporting Pascarella and Terenzini's (2005) claim
that in determining the effects of institutional climate on student learn-
ing and development, "causal mechanisms are probably more indirect than
direct, mediated by other factors, such as by peer environments *and student
perceptions of their institutions' priorities*" (p. 598, emphasis added).

   Investigations into how institutional climates and organizational con-
texts are interpreted by students may be well served using sensemaking (e.g.,
Weick, 1993) and identity theories (e.g., Albert & Whetten, 1985; Haslam,
2004; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Whetten, 2006). First developed by Weick
(1993), applied extensively in organizational psychology, and now increas-
ingly utilized in higher education (e.g., Eckel & Kezar, 2003; Janke, 2012;
Kezar, 2014), sensemaking is a primarily retrospective "interplay of action
and interpretation" (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005, p. 409), a process

through which an individual or a group of individuals, such as students attending an HEI, make sense of and ascribe meaning to their experiences and actions (Weick, 1995).

Whereas sensemaking theory examines how individuals make sense of and understand events and responses that happen in the physical world, identity theories examine how individuals define themselves as members of informal and formal groups and organizations (chapters 2.1 and 2.3). Formal affiliation with an organization, such as employment, membership, or in the case of students, enrollment, can create emotional ties because one's own *social identity* (Haslam, 2004; Tajfel & Turner, 1986) is connected to an *organization's identity*, or members' collective sense of "who we are as an organization" (Whetten, 2006, p. 219). Amid the rising attention paid to organizational identity theory (e.g., Barnhardt, Sheets, & Pasquesi, 2015; Janke, 2009, 2012; Janke, Medlin, & Holland, 2015; Kezar, 2014; Weerts & Freed, 2016; Weerts, Freed, & Morphew, 2014)*,* greater attention to the role of *organizational image,* how others external to the institution view its identity, on student civic outcomes may be warranted, especially given increased efforts of HEI's to tell compelling stories of civic engagement (Weerts & Freed, 2016; Weerts et al., 2014) and the rise of online tracking and sharing platforms (Janke et al., 2015).

These theories may be useful in answering questions such as, how is faculty and staff culture expressed to and experienced by students? What facets of faculty and staff culture are conveyed to students and the broader public, and which ones matter as they relate to student civic outcomes? Is it the organizational culture of faculty and staff on internal governance? Is it the messages that faculty and staff send about the value of community engagement and public service as legitimate and important faculty, staff, and academic work? Which students are aware of which specific institutional programs, policies, and practices, and how does their awareness affect how they view the identity of the institution as it relates to civic and community engagement?

Refining Measures of Organizational Context

Effectively, clearly, and consistently organizational structures, policies, and practices that suggest institutional support for community engagement is becoming better defined. First, rubrics for institutionalizing service learning and community engagement (e.g., Furco, Weerts, Burton, & Kent, 2009; Holland, 2006) have been used widely in institutional self-assessments of civic engagement as well as scholarship. Second, the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification application requests evidence for how institutions track and report on specific indicators of an institution's commitment to civic and community engagement.

The Carnegie Community Engagement Classification provides a framework for a coherent and comprehensive system for summarizing evidence of an institution's civic- and community-focused structures, policies, and practices. The Carnegie Classification framework reflects the dimensions of rubrics previously mentioned (e.g., Furco et al., 2009) and requires documentation and description of the various ways in which the institution has integrated its commitment to civic and community engagement into its core features and functions.

Recent research explores "second generation" (Sandmann, 2009; Welch & Saltmarsh, 2013) infrastructures to support civic engagement activities. Describing the defining features of successful centers, Welch and Saltmarsh (2013) provide a comprehensive review of practice and structural elements of campus centers, arguing that "substantial infrastructure in the form of a community engagement office, center, or division is a key feature of a highly engaged campus" (p. 25). Examining over 100 campus applications to the Carnegie Foundation for the Community Engagement Classification, Welch and Saltmarsh identify the following "critical" (p. 27) features of institutional structures and practice: (a) institutional architecture/policy, including reporting lines, funding, strategic plan, course designation process, transcript notation; (b) center infrastructure, including space, advisory board, center vision/mission statement, database tracking system, staff; (c) center operations, including assessment mechanisms, inventories of faculty and student involvement, student/faculty/community partner recognitions; (d) programs that support faculty, staff, student, and community partner development in research, service, and teaching; and (e) in- and out-of-class civic learning experiences. Which of these organizational structures, individually or as a combination of structures, correlate to student civic outcomes?

Although not included in earlier studies as the measure of institutional structure, we suggest that future studies will find that Carnegie Community Engagement Classification can serve as a proxy for substantial institutional support for community engagement. If so, then it would be useful to study the relationship between this measure as a potential proxy of institutional community engagement in the study of student civic outcomes. Is there a significant and meaningful relationship between students' civic outcomes and whether they attend a Carnegie Community Engagement-classified HEI? This would require researchers to collect institution-level inventory of civic infrastructure and measures of student civic outcomes and then evaluate how the two interact. The Democracy Commitment's civic outcomes study is an example of a study that collects both institutional inventory of civic infrastructures as well as surveys of student perceptions (Kisker et al., 2016; Kisker et al., 2015). This type of research would advance questions about whether

the presence of institutional policies, programs, and practices are significantly related to student civic outcomes using correlational research approaches.

Ultimately, understanding the relationship between institutional policies and practices and how students, faculty, staff, and community partners perceive them as part of the institution's climate requires further study. This could be accomplished intra-institutionally, such as by studying the salience of civic mission among students and their relative civic growth, or inter-institutionally, such as by exploring how different campuses with differing levels of civic context relate to an index of student civic-mindedness. This requires more theory-grounded understanding of students' awareness and interpretations of organizational structures, policies, and practices to understand why and how these features relate to the civic ethos of the institution. Theory-based research may also help to identify whether certain groupings of organizational policies and practices are likely to make a difference in student civic outcomes. For example, are there policies and practices related to faculty, student, staff, or community partner development that influence student civic outcomes? Is it more important to offer professional development and policies that incentivize civic engagement to faculty than to staff, students, and community partners?

Additionally, it is not enough to evaluate the presence of policies in student handbooks, or student enrollments in academic service learning programs or community engagement in cocurricular experiences. Scholars must also attend to the individual and social sensemaking processes that occur. This leads to other research questions, including: How does the act of tracking, recording, synthesizing, and reporting civic activities influence an institution's climate as it relates to civic engagement? What is the role of other institutional offices and units in conveying an engagement identity message? This also leads to the necessity of refining measures of institutional structures, policies, and practices as they relate to student civic outcomes.

Implications for Practice

In this era of increased accountability, tracking, measuring, and reporting, there is an improved opportunity to collect and examine institution-level data and its effects on various student, faculty, and community outcomes (Janke, 2014). We are aware of the proliferation of instruments used by campuses to assess students' levels of activity and learning outcomes—see, for example, the civic learning and engagement assessment instruments inventory compiled by the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU)

(2015) as well as by Reason and Hemer (2015). However, this chapter focuses on research that examines how institution-level factors correlate with overall rates of civic outcomes, not how individual student experiences influence civic outcomes (as these assessments do). Many existing assessment tools hold promise for future research on tracking between college effects, but few studies exist. We suggest that one promising implication for practice is for HEIs to better map and measure student civic outcomes with a variety of quantitative and qualitative approaches and tools. Another implication for practice is for national instrument teams (e.g., NSSE, PSRI) and organizations (e.g., AAC&U and AASCU) to work collaboratively to advance understanding of what organizational contexts (i.e., structures, policies and practices) and cultures best help foster student civic outcomes (chapter 3.6).

The value of collecting information from students, faculty, and staff about their work in civic engagement is that it provides a particular view of the institution—a perspective of "who we are" (organizational identity) as it relates to an institution's civic and community engagement agenda, and indeed, organizational identity. The development of, for instance, applications for the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification (in which data are collected and synthesized) capture moments in which institutional members engage in meaning making about an institution's identity as a civically engaged campus. Elucidating ways in which members of the institution make sense of the policies, programs, and practices for civic engagement requires additional and more precise research. Such research will provide insight as to the influence of organizational contexts on student civic outcomes.

Although many civic engagement reporting and assessment measures exist (e.g., Carnegie Community Engagement Classification; NSSE; PSRI), each collects different data on institutional characteristics and students. Higher education associations and networks could leverage their ability to convene civic engagement scholars to advance the cooperation between existing research teams and tools and to further develop and refine reporting and assessment measures to advance understanding of student civic outcomes as they are influenced by various institutional characteristics. Encouraging discussions of potential overlaps, gaps, and ways to more intentionally foster data collection and analysis around civic learning outcomes would benefit the researchers, associations, and their member HEIs. Such efforts could be similar to the joint initiative of AAC&U and AASCU (2015) to develop a database of civic engagement assessments. Another example would be to leverage the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification and other tools to procure foundation or other grant funding to spur research collaborations and investigations as to the impact of organizational contexts and cultures on

student civic outcomes. Finally, it is likely that our understanding of institutional effects on student civic outcomes will be enriched as mechanisms and databases for collecting institution-wide data on civic engagement increase in number, scope, and rigor. The proliferation of instruments for institutional self-assessment, if managed and used effectively, will help to inform institution-level research and advance practice.

Conclusion

This chapter focuses on the potential role that organizational characteristics of higher education institutions, including institutional climate; faculty and staff culture; and organizational structures, policies, and practices, may have on student civic outcomes. A greater understanding of which organizational characteristics contribute to student civic engagement and why can improve cross-institutional research by creating clearer parameters for selecting or grouping campuses within a study. On a practical level, knowing which institutional policies and practices contribute to student civic outcomes, beyond curricular and cocurricular student programming and opportunities, can assist academic leadership to understand how decisions made in nonacademic units can have positive student outcomes. Although most studies focus on what faculty, students, and support staff can do to support civic development, university and public relations, marketing, advancement, and alumni affairs staff may also be critical agents in the creation of an institutional climate that supports and influences civic outcomes. Building on studies that examine connections between organizational characteristics and student learning outcomes, we propose additional questions and discuss relevant organizational and psychosocial theoretical perspectives to explain the connections and interplay between organizations and the people who associate with them.

One path toward increasing scholarship and practice is to establish well-defined institutional variables that are likely to have some meaningful connection to student civic outcomes. For example, little evidence exists that suggests that grouping institutions by institutional size, selectivity, or Carnegie Classification type is likely to contribute to differences in student outcomes, civic or otherwise. Recent efforts to cluster together meaningful, organizational, civic-related characteristics provide valuable advances for future investigations about what sets of characteristics matter and why. Given the data provided by hundreds of campuses that are classified by the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification, future research can investigate what clusters of institutional variables may best serve as control variables

when examining the effect of institutional climate, organizational structures, organizational policies and practices, and faculty and staff culture on student civic outcomes.

The study of institutional effects on student civic outcomes will also benefit from greater attention to and use of theories that explain why and how institutional characteristics interact with and shape student civic outcomes. Recent studies provide some indication that institutional climate may influence student as well as faculty and staff outcomes (e.g., Brower & Benenson, 2015; Lott, 2013; Rankin et al., 2010; Reason et al., 2007; Ryder et al., 2015). Theories and approaches from the fields of social psychology and organizational psychology point to the interplay between individual- and organizational-level cognition. Theoretical investigations may help administrative leaders establish strategies to cultivate civic engagement through an array of mechanisms beyond curricular and cocurricular pedagogies and programs. Identifying how aspects of organizational context (e.g., organizational structures; policies and practices; faculty and staff culture) and students' perceptions of these contexts influence student civic outcomes could and should influence a campus' approach to advancing civic engagement. Further research on institutional characteristics and contexts will advance understanding of how staff and faculty at HEI can best contribute to students' understanding of who they are as members of higher education institutions, and as members of the civic community more broadly.

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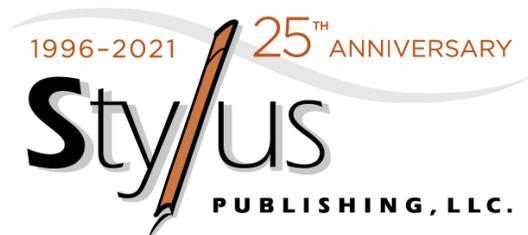## Conceptual Frameworks and Methods

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