



HARVARD
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

May 7, 2014

Dear Professor Gross,

In January, the *International Journal of Communication* published, “The Personal is Political on Social Media: Online Civic Expression Patterns and Pathways Among Civically Engaged Youth.” Thank you for publishing the paper. As you may recall, the manuscript described an investigation of the online civic expression patterns of 70 young civic actors. We proposed three patterns to describe different approaches to online civic expression and found that a majority of the civic youth in the study tended toward blended approaches, sharing their civic views and work on their social media pages.

My colleagues Margaret Rundle, Carrie James and I recently completed a follow-up to the original study in which we successfully re-contacted 41 of the original participants approximately two years after our initial interviews. We were interested in whether and how participants’ expression patterns changed over time. We found that nearly half of the participants changed their expression patterns over the two-year period, with most in the direction of quieting or silencing online civic expression. The changes also correspond to a group-level shift: at our second data collection point, we found that a bounded expression pattern– withholding any civic expression from social media – was most common.

The second round of data collection and findings flag an important shift for online civic expression. In addition, they highlight the need for both repeated and longitudinal investigations of communication practices in the rapidly shifting context of the digital world. We hope that you will find the present paper suitable for publication in the *International Journal of Communication*.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Emily Weinstein

Doctoral Candidate, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Researcher, The Good Participation Project at Harvard Project Zero

Harvard Presidential Scholar

HGSE/Spencer Foundation Early Career Scholar in New Civics