

THE DEVELOPMENT OF U.S. HIGHER EDUCATION
POLICY AND ITS IMPACT ON THE GENDER DYNAMICS
OF AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP

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Treating federal higher education policy as an indispensable component of the American welfare state, this dissertation examines how it has influenced the gender dynamics of American citizenship since the mid-twentieth century. In recent decades, the U.S. has seen both a striking increase in women's higher educational attainment and a narrowing of the gender gap in political engagement. I examine how landmark higher education policies have affected these outcomes, analyzing the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958, the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Using qualitative analysis of historical documents and archival resources, including legislative statutes, Congressional Record transcripts, and oral history interview materials, I examine how these ground-breaking social policies were fashioned and probe how—in contrast to other landmark social welfare programs—they included women on equal terms with men. Then, I draw upon quantitative techniques, such as logistic and OLS regression, to explain how federal higher education policies have influenced the gender dynamics of social and political citizenship in the United States. This empirical analysis draws upon several datasets, including the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS) and the Higher Education Research Institute's Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey. I find that by providing crucial resources and experiences, these policies have contributed to women's promotion to first-class citizenship in the United States, revolutionizing the way in which the state interacts with women and promoting gender equality in terms of social and political citizenship.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Deondra Rose holds a Ph.D. in Government from Cornell University, with a specialization in American politics and public policy. A *summa cum laude*, Phi Beta Kappa graduate of University of Georgia in Athens, she earned her B.A. in political science in 2005; and in 2009, she received her M.A. in Government from Cornell.

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To “The Fantastic Four”:

My Mother, Donna E. Rose;

My Aunt, Dionne C. Rose-Johnson; My Uncle, Donald D. Rose;

and

My Grandmother, Shirley A. Lynch

And to the Memory of my Father:

David L. Walton

(1965-1986)

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CHAPTER ONE

From Policy to Parity: Higher Education Policy and the Increase of Gender Equality in American Citizenship

Like many young women earning college degrees in the United States, Michelle—a psychology major at the University of Missouri-Kansas City—could be described as a “go-getter.” As an undergraduate, she has focused squarely on moving toward a career in family therapy. In addition to pursuing an excellent academic record, looking for internships, and preparing to apply for graduate school, Michelle takes advantage of a broad range of campus resources, such as career counseling, in hopes of strengthening her chances of gaining acceptance into a first-rate graduate program. When considering her approach to higher education and her future career, she does not hesitate to characterize herself as a “perfectionist.” Michelle views her higher education as a prerequisite to long-term success (Rosin 2010).

As is the case with many young women, Michelle’s high level of performance in college and her clear career focus contrast dramatically with the performance and outlook of her male counterparts. Consider, for example, Michelle’s fiancé. Unlike Michelle, he has repeatedly changed his undergraduate major, devoting himself to a career in dentistry one week and environmental science the next. While Michelle is preparing for graduate study, he has no plans for advanced training—in fact, his fluctuating interests cause Michelle and her friends to question whether he will actually complete his undergraduate degree. They anticipate that Michelle and her fiancé will settle into a family life that challenges traditional gender norms. Michelle, they predict, will assume the traditionally masculine role of “breadwinner” for their family, while her fiancé will devote his

addition to the private sphere, taking on the role of stay-at-home dad—and, incidentally, the customarily feminine duties of childcare, cooking, and housework (Rosin 2010).¹

Women’s attainment of college degrees and their strong presence in the paid labor force have represented increasingly integral factors in women’s socioeconomic independence. The example above highlights a significant trend in the gender dynamics of American higher education: the fact that women now outperform men as the recipients of postsecondary degrees. Women currently earn approximately 60 percent of undergraduate degrees—a credential that journalist Hanna Rosin (2010) characterizes as “the minimum requirement...for an affluent life.” High levels of educational attainment among American women have promoted their enhanced engagement in the labor force. According to a report published by the Center for American Progress, women have comprised approximately half of the paid U.S. labor force since 2009—up from 35.3 percent in 1969 (Edwards et al. 2007).

In recent decades, women’s success in higher education has enabled an increasing number of American women to participate as equal—or principal—players in the socioeconomic well-being of their families. In 2010, 63.9 percent of American families with children included a mother who was either the sole breadwinner or a co-breadwinner (Glynn 2012).² Among these families, a significant proportion was headed by single mothers. In 2011, 12 percent of American families with at least one child under the age

¹ I should note, at the outset, that gender—as opposed to sex—is the focus of this analysis, as the concept of gender includes the socially, culturally, and politically constructed categories in which I am interested. Gender, race, class, and other constructs intersect with one another in ways that preclude the possibility that gender works in the same way for all women and all men. Bearing this in mind, I recognize that gender is not an independent force.

² A co-breadwinner is a wife who brings in at least 25 percent of the family’s earned income but less than her partner’s income (Glynn 2012).

of 18—more than 83 million families—were headed by a single mother (U.S. Census Bureau 2012).³ For the millions of American families that rely on the income generated by female householders, women’s participation in paid labor tends to be especially important. When we consider the contributions that women make to the socioeconomic well-being of their families and the high levels of educational attainment that have fueled those contributions, it may be difficult to remember that, before the 1960s, women were disadvantaged in U.S. higher education. In the decades since, American women have come to not only meet but exceed the rates at which men complete college degrees.

A New Explanation for the Increase in Women’s Status since the 1960s

Political scientists, economists, and sociologists have offered various explanations for the citizenship-enhancing progress that American women have achieved over the past fifty years. Existing studies have focused on the importance of demographic, economic, and social factors—such as declining fertility rates, women’s movement into the labor force, and the emergence of feminism in the 1970s—in facilitating women’s participation in the public sphere and, as a result, enhancing gender equality in American citizenship.

The dramatic growth in women’s economic independence, the contributions that they make to the socioeconomic well-being of their families, and significant increases in women’s involvement in the public sphere have been fueled by dramatic shifts in the gender dynamics of higher educational attainment in the United States. In 2011, 51 percent of working women over the age of 25 held a college degree, compared to 45

³ Single fathers represent a much smaller proportion of American single-parent families. In 2011, 2 percent of American family groups (1.7 million families) with children under the age of 18 were headed by single fathers (Census Bureau 2012).

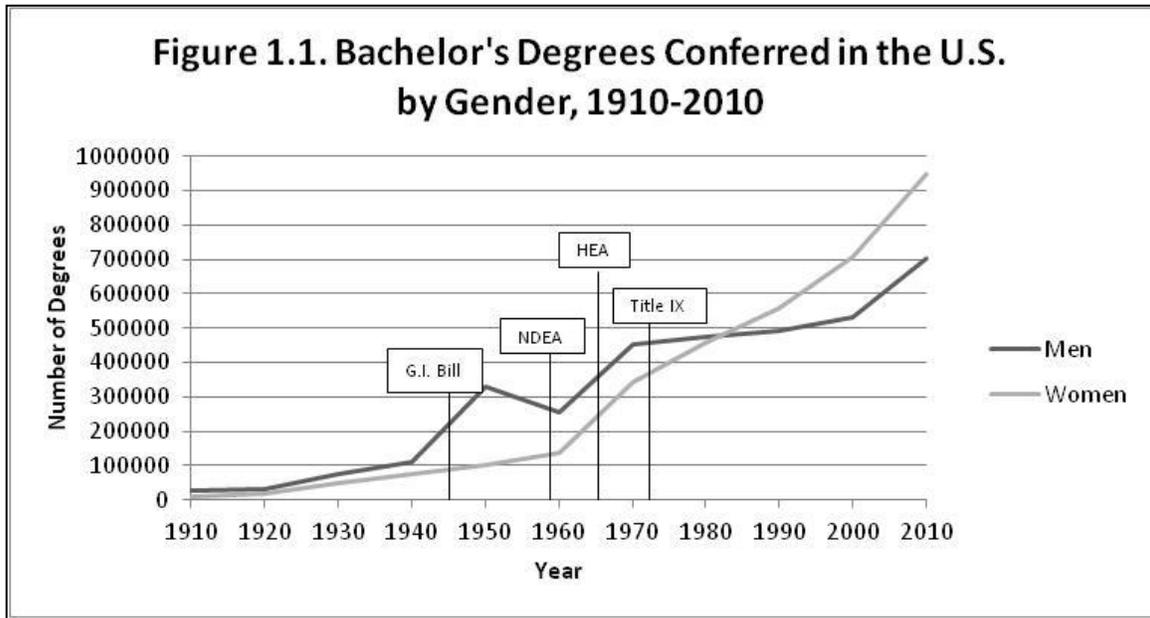
percent of employed men (U.S. Census 2011). This high level of educational attainment among working women is particularly interesting when we consider historical trends in the gender dynamics of higher educational attainment in the United States. Relatively few Americans earned college degrees prior to the 1940s, and—among those who did—men consistently earned more degrees than women. In 1910, for example, men earned more than three times as many bachelor's degrees than women. In the year 1940, although women were more likely than men to earn high school diplomas, they were less likely than men to complete four years of college (Conway, Ahern, and Steurenagel 2005, 6). Throughout the remainder of that decade, a significant increase in the number of degrees earned by men—which was fueled by the passage of the G.I. Bill in 1944—precipitated the emergence of a considerable gender gap in the number of bachelor's degrees earned by Americans. Moreover, women's presence in higher education was suppressed by active discrimination in college admissions. While some schools simply refused to admit women, others limited women's presence by invoking strict gender quotas or by only permitting women to matriculate into particular degree programs. In the year 1960, there were 1.6 male undergraduates for every female undergraduate in American colleges and Universities (Goldin, Katz, and Kuziemko 2006, 1).

Through the 1960s and 1970s, there was a significant increase in women's college degree attainment (NCES 2011), and by the beginning of the next decade, the gender gap in college degree attainment had virtually disappeared. In 1981, in an astounding reversal of the historical trend whereby men obtained higher education at higher rates than women, women began to earn bachelor's degrees at higher rates than men (NCES 2011). Since then, a new gender gap has emerged with women steadily earning more

degrees than their male counterparts. By 2003, there were 1.3 female college students for every male student (Goldin, Katz, and Kuziemko 2006, 1).⁴ Women's advances in higher educational attainment were not limited to undergraduate degrees. In recent years, American women have earned an increasing proportion of advanced degrees. In 2008, women surpassed men as the recipients of doctoral degrees for the first time; and by 2010, they earned a full 60 percent of the master's degrees awarded in the United States (Jaschik 2010). Not only has increased educational attainment enhanced women's opportunities in the labor force, it has yielded a combination of social and political advancements that have contributed to an increase in women's status in the United States and altered the gender dynamics of American citizenship.

Although political scientists have long recognized a positive association between educational attainment and citizenship in terms of social incorporation and political engagement, we have yet to fully consider the role of public policy in shaping that relationship. Taking a step in that direction, this dissertation investigates how, using a combination of redistributive and regulatory higher education policies, the federal government has reshaped the gender dynamics of U.S. citizenship since the 1960s. How, I ask, have the National Defense Education Act of 1958, the Higher Education Act of 1965, and Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments affected the gender dynamics of

⁴ This figure is particularly noteworthy when we consider that in 1947, at the high point of gender inequality in higher education, there were 2.3 male students for each female student in American colleges and universities (Goldin, Katz, and Kuziemko 2006, 1).



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

citizenship in terms of status within the polity, socioeconomic stability, and political engagement over the last fifty years?⁵

It seems more than coincidental that striking shifts in the gender dynamics of higher educational attainment have been punctuated by the creation of landmark higher education policies—particularly federal student loans, Pell Grants, and the Title IX regulation—that have expanded women’s access to higher education by providing valuable financial aid and by prohibiting sex discrimination in college admissions (see Figure 1.1). The significant expansion of women’s access to higher education—and the socioeconomic and political benefits associated with it—worked against the medley of social, economic, and political inequality that had historically relegated American women to second-class citizenship in the United States. Thus, federal aid for higher education

⁵ I employ the term “political engagement” to refer to interest in politics, political efficacy—citizens’ feelings that they can be effective and influence public affairs—and participation in political activities, such as contacting government officials, volunteering for and contributing to campaigns, and participating in protests.

represents a significant, though frequently overlooked, component of the American welfare state.⁶ In what follows, I will explore how federal higher education programs came to be designed in a manner that promoted first-class citizenship among women and I will also examine the process through which they reshaped the gender dynamics of American citizenship.

To consider the influence that landmark higher education policies have had on the extent to which women are incorporated as full citizens in the United States, I begin by examining the political development of these path-breaking programs, paying particular attention to how these ground-breaking social policies were fashioned and probing how—in contrast to other landmark social welfare programs—they included women on equal terms with men. Then, I draw upon quantitative analysis to examine how federal higher education policies have shaped the gender dynamics of social citizenship in the United States. Finally, I use empirical analysis to explore how these programs have shaped gender equality in terms of political citizenship. These questions warrant careful examination because their answers will shed light on the effectiveness of social policy for altering citizens' life chances and promoting equality and full citizenship for marginalized populations.

⁶ Scholars have begun to explore the relationship between federal support for higher education and citizens' socioeconomic status, life chances, and political participation. Prominent examples include Suzanne Mettler's (2005) *Soldiers to Citizens* and Suzanne Mettler and Eric Welch's (2004) "Civic Generation: Policy Feedback Effects of the G.I. Bill on Political Involvement over the Life Course," *British Journal of Political Science* 34(3):497-518.

Gender Equality and American Citizenship

The progress that women have made in recent decades, which reflects women's movement from a status of second-class to first-class citizens, has reshaped the gender dynamics of American citizenship. In the most general sense, citizenship characterizes the relationship between individuals and the state. In *American Citizenship: The Quest for Inclusion*, Judith Shklar asserts that citizenship is tantamount to one's status, or "standing," in the polity, which provides individuals with "a sense of one's place in a hierarchical society" (1991, 2). In the United States, a tradition of unequal standing among groups has made this aspect of citizenship a particularly interesting one for students of political science. "It is because slavery, racism, nativism, and sexism, often institutionalized in exclusionary and discriminatory laws and practices, have been and still are arrayed against the officially accepted claims of equal citizenship," says Shklar, "that there is a real pattern to be discerned in the tortuous development of American ideas of citizenship" (1991, 13-14). While the nation's political creed centers upon the principles of equality, democracy, and liberty, history abounds with instances in which equal standing in the polity was limited to privileged groups and overt inequality went unaddressed. The Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution, for example—which was ratified in 1868—explicitly provides that all American citizens are entitled to fair treatment and equal protection under the law. Nevertheless, for nearly a century, the government continued to employ different standards when dealing with women and men, and gender inequality in citizenship represented an egregious affront to the nation's purported core values. Women's second-class citizenship in America reaches back to the colonial era in which the status of married white women was rooted

in English common law. Under this legal system, the principle of “coverture” shaped their citizenship status. “Under this doctrine,” Burns, Schlozman, and Verba note, “a married woman became, more or less, a legal non-person” (2001, 9). The exclusion of women—as well as racial minorities and some white men—from the privileges of full citizenship in the United States served to signal their subordinate status in the polity while indicating that full-citizenship was a valued commodity (Shklar 1991, 16).

From the first, women’s exclusion from the right to suffrage cast them as subjugated members of the polity. Even after women gained the right to vote in 1920, U.S. social policies routinely differentiated between women and men in ways that made clear men’s status as first-class citizens and women’s status as second-class citizens.⁷ Prior to the 1930s, veterans’ pensions and support for widows and their dependent children comprised the bulk of social provision in the United States. As beneficiaries of the nation’s nascent welfare state, women’s inclusion was generally predicated on their roles as wives and mothers (Skocpol 1992). With the New Deal came social programs that stratified women and men by incorporating white men under the auspices of national social programming and by subjecting women and black men to the variability of state government standards for relief (Mettler 1998). As a result, New Deal programs yielded two distinct, gender stratified standards of citizenship for Americans. As a result of such gender stratification in the ways in the state interacted with men and women, American men enjoyed a status as first-class citizens, while women were relegated to second-class citizenship.

⁷ This suffrage did not, however, include black women who would generally have to wait until the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 for guaranteed suffrage.

In his essay “Citizenship and Social Class,” political philosopher T. H. Marshall focuses on the specific requirements of first-class standing, defining citizenship as “a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community” (1950, 28). He goes on to say that “[a]ll those who possess [citizenship] are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed” (28-29). By this definition, the criterion of equality is central to the achievement of full citizenship; and, one’s status as a first-class citizen requires that she or he possess certain rights. Marshall identifies three types of rights—civil, social, and political—which, taken together, are part and parcel of full citizenship (1950, 10-11). The civil element of citizenship, which corresponds most closely to what we think of legal citizenship, includes individual rights and freedoms as well as the responsibilities associated with membership in a society. This includes a number of personal freedoms, such as freedom of speech and religion, as well as the right to property ownership and equal protection under the law.

The social element of citizenship refers to the right of socioeconomic security and the ability to enjoy a standard of living that reflects the standards of contemporaneous society. Moreover, it includes the right of individuals to participate as full members of social society. The social element of citizenship includes access to social and economic security as well as the right to “share to the full in the social heritage [of the society] and to live a life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in society” (Marshall 1950, 11). As Ann Shola Orloff (1993) notes, social policy is seen as a viable mechanism for improving social citizenship, as it has the potential to enhance a central factor associated with full citizenship: independence. Historically, women’s status as dependents has severely limited their control over their own lives. Their ability to

participate in social life has been largely shaped by the socioeconomic status of their husbands, fathers, brothers, or other male relatives. Marshall highlights the education system and social programs as the primary institutions shaping social citizenship.

Marshall characterizes the political element of citizenship as “the right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the members of such a body” (11). The nation’s democratic system of government is predicated upon the notion of popular sovereignty and the presumption that the expressed will of the governed reflects the preferences of the nation’s *entire* citizenry. In the United States, full citizenship includes the ability to participate in activities that are “aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or the actions they take” (Verba and Nie 1972, 2) through activities like voting, contributing to political campaigns, volunteering on campaigns, and contacting elected officials (Campbell 2003, 28-32; Verba and Nie 1972, 2-3). American women have faced a history of participatory inequality fueled by disenfranchisement, unequal presence in governing institutions, and limited political voice.⁸ As such, women have had to fight a sustained battle for full citizenship. The national legislative body and local governmental bodies, according to Marshall, are the primary institutions shaping this element of citizenship.

⁸ Although the scope of this analysis centers upon women’s political participation at the mass level, it is important to recognize that, in spite of resilient gender inequality in representation among elected officials, women’s presence in U.S. political institutions has grown since the mid-twentieth century. The percentage of women winning election to the United States Congress increased steadily after Jeannette Rankin became the first woman to win election to the House in 1917. This steady increase gave way to a dramatic jump in 1993, the “Year of the Woman,” which saw an unprecedented 47 women elected to the national legislature.

Explaining Women's Improved Status

Studies examining women's progress since the 1960s have emphasized the significance of social, cultural, and economic shifts. For example, scholars recognize the importance of the decline of "domesticity"—meaning the rejection of the notion that the private sphere represented the most appropriate arena for American womanhood—and the influence of the U.S. civil and women's rights movements as catalyzing women's increasing engagement in mass politics. At the dawn of the twentieth century, changes in American industry began to loosen women's ties to the private sphere. With the emergence of innovative information technologies, employers found themselves in need of additional office and clerical staff, and found women to be suitable candidates for such jobs (Goldin 2006, 5). As a result of increasing participation in paid labor, women were less reliant upon the traditional structure of domesticity for economic survival. Women's large-scale movement into the labor force rendered significant shifts in the nature of their citizenship (Andersen 1975). Scholars have shown that experience with particular work-related activities such as supervising others, organizing meetings, and public speaking often translates into "human capital" that facilitates civic and political engagement (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001, 214). Moreover, men and women who participate in the work force are more likely to be mobilized to take part in political activities (202).

As women gained financial independence and devoted more energy to engaging in careers outside of the home, important demographic changes followed. Women not only got married later and had fewer children, but the nation's divorce rates increased precipitously (Goldin 2006, 13; Goldin, Katz, and Kuziemko 2006, 153). Scholars also point to the emergence of oral contraception—known popularly as "the pill"—in the

1960s and the legalization of abortion in 1973 as having yielded increased control over family planning and labor force participation for women (Goldin and Katz 2002; Goldin, Katz, and Kuziemko 2006, 152-153). By way of more extensive and sustained labor force participation, American women now comprise a significant proportion of the once male-dominated labor force and more fully engage their role as citizens.

In addition to focusing on the effects of women's increasing economic independence scholars have offered social movements as perhaps the dominant explanation for women's increased enhanced citizenship since the mid-twentieth century. Some consider the civil rights movement of the 1960s to be the turning point of women's political engagement because it provided lessons in how to effectively demand equal treatment as citizens (Solomon 1985, 201-202). Others argue that the women's liberation movement of the 1970s marks the turning point for women's civic and political engagement (Andersen 1975, 441). Many of the women who became politically involved to support—or to oppose—the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) gained the important experience of working through government institutions to pursue political, social, and economic interests (Mansbridge 1986). Indeed, by providing women with tools needed to engage fully as U.S. citizens and by altering their expectations regarding citizenship, social movements made women increasingly aware of the importance and effectiveness of civic and political engagement to their status in the polity.

Scholars have also recognized the importance of educational attainment to the progress that women have made since the mid-twentieth century. Studies have consistently revealed education to be a central component of socioeconomic status and, not surprisingly, a weighty factor in the calculus of political engagement. Americans

who have higher levels of education tend to enjoy higher incomes, access to more prestigious occupations, and are significantly more likely to be politically engaged than those who have less education (Verba and Nie 1972; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Furthermore, one's educational attainment shapes the extent to which she or he will engage in political activities (Verba and Nie 1972; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). Not only does education provide information and skills that facilitate political learning and participation (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001, 142), scholars have argued that it also increases the normative impetus to engage in politics, as educational institutions may bestow upon students a heightened sense of civic duty (Menand 1997, 3; Kimball 1997; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980, 18). In terms of recruitment and mobilization, citizens with higher levels of education are most likely to be tapped for participation by political parties, interest groups, candidates, and other political activists (Brady, Schlozman, and Verba 1999, 162; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993).

From Policy to Parity: A Policy Feedback Explanation for Declining Gender Inequality in American Citizenship

While scholars have established the importance of education to the various elements of citizenship, we have yet to consider the role of federal higher education policies in shaping the gender dynamics of U.S. citizenship in terms of gender since the mid-twentieth century. This dissertation will take a step in that direction by examining the relationship between federal higher education policies and the gender dynamics of U.S. higher educational attainment, attitudes toward the government, and mass political

involvement. I posit that government education programs enacted since the late 1950s (the NDEA, the HEA, and Title IX) (a) altered the nature of the federal government's interactions with women, (b) enhanced women's social citizenship by significantly expanding access to higher education, and (c) strengthened women's political citizenship by contributing to the narrowing gender gap in political engagement that we have seen in recent decades. I suspect that in expanding access to higher education lawmakers played a pivotal role in decreasing gender inequality in the United States in terms of citizenship.

A history of social, economic, and political inequality had cast American women as second-class citizens well into the twentieth century. Prior to the passage of landmark higher education programs, women's status as second-class citizens was evident in their treatment by government social programs. The gendered treatment of Americans via social programming continued with the creation of the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944 (popularly known as "the G.I. Bill"), which privileged an entire generation of male citizens by providing veterans of the Second World War with generous government financial aid for those pursuing college education and technical training. Because the veterans who were eligible to take advantage of G.I. Bill benefits were overwhelmingly male, the federal government essentially paved the way for millions of American men who would otherwise not have obtained college degrees to do so, while doing little to expand higher educational access for women.

By setting a new standard for how federal social policies treat women and men, the landmark higher education programs that were enacted after the mid-1950s yielded a significant change in the gender dynamics of American citizenship. The National Defense Education Act of 1958 engendered a new relationship between the federal

government and American women by incorporating women as equal beneficiaries of the student aid that that was created by the path breaking program. Rather than tying higher education benefits to gendered requirements like military service or requirements that student aid beneficiaries pursue training in traditionally male fields like engineering, these programs granted valuable financial support to students on the non-gendered basis of financial need. The Higher Education Act of 1965 continued in this vein, allocating federal support broadly to both men and women. Seven years later, when lawmakers passed Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments, the federal government made clear women's full and equal standing in society and in the polity by prohibiting sex discrimination in federally supported education programs. The development of the NDEA and the HEA initiated a watershed change in women's status as citizens in the United States, and the passage of Title IX signaled the government's commitment to asserting women's right to equal standing and full social citizenship. While conventional wisdom suggests that such momentous advances would occur as a result of organized activity on the part of women's rights activists (see, e.g., Skocpol 1993; Weir, Orloff, and Skocpol 1988, 16), in fact these important advances occurred prior to the development of the contemporary feminist movement.

By expanding women's access to higher education through a combination of redistributive and regulatory higher education programming, the federal government has also enhanced women's social citizenship. The financial assistance provided by the National Defense Education Act and the Higher Education Act and Title IX's prohibition on sex discrimination in college admissions significantly expanded women's access to college. This promoted significant increases in women's socioeconomic status by

providing them with greater access to college degrees. As a result, by helping women gain the qualifications necessary to work in well-paying jobs that require higher education, these programs have been crucial to helping American women achieve greater socioeconomic status and greater independence. With greater access college degrees and the socioeconomic benefits that tend to come with them, women have become increasingly able to support themselves and their families.

In addition to strengthening women's citizenship by treating women as first-class citizens and strengthening women's social citizenship, the nation has witnessed a transformation in women's incorporation in the polity. Political scientists have long recognized that higher educational attainment represents one of the most consistent predictors of political engagement. Americans who have more education are more likely to express interest in politics, to possess high levels of political efficacy, and to participate in a range of political activities. As American women and men have increasingly participated in American life as equals, women have advanced beyond their long-standing second-class citizenship to achieve first-class standing. By employing higher education policy in a way that has transformed the gender dynamics of American citizenship, the federal government has played an important role in this process.

Higher Education Policy: A New Approach to Equal Opportunity

The benefits provided by federal financial aid programs enacted since 1958 represent an important departure from U.S. social policy precedents. Previous welfare state policies treated women and men differently, reinforcing inequality (Gordon 1994; Mettler 1998; Skocpol 1992). Federal financial aid programs, by contrast, were

distinctive because they treated women and men equally. Title IX, went further still, specifically addressing sex discrimination in college admissions. In so doing, I suspect, this policy dealt a devastating blow to gender inequality in higher educational access and precipitated a further increase in women's college degree attainment.

By expanding women's access to college and by facilitating their access to the socioeconomic benefits of higher educational attainment, I hypothesize, federal student aid programs have revolutionized women's status within the polity by facilitating their advancement to full-citizenship status. I suspect that, while the G.I. Bill privileged the generation of men who fought in World War II by enhancing their social and political citizenship, subsequently enacted education programs that extended benefits broadly to women as well as men significantly increased women's educational attainment. If evidence supports this, then the data would suggest that the dramatic increase in women's higher educational attainment that we have seen since the mid-twentieth century may be directly related to the creation of these government programs that provided women with greater access to college education.

Because higher education provides knowledge, skills, and exposure to norms that facilitate political participation, there can be little doubt that government efforts to expand access to college have had significant outcomes for women's political participation and, hence, their equality. By providing millions of women with funds to attend college, the United States government women may have catalyzed demographic shifts that we have seen in recent decades, such as the nation's declining birth rate and increases in the average age of first marriage, as well as women's movement into the workplace, welfare state-related activism, and social movement participation.

Surprisingly, few studies have focused on the relationship between public policies, citizens' educational attainment, and their engagement in politics. Nevertheless, recent studies have shed considerable light on this relationship by examining the impact of the G.I. Bill for educational attainment and civic and political engagement among veterans (Mettler 2002; Mettler 2005; Mettler and Welch 2004). Evidence has shown that G.I. Bill adoption promoted high levels of educational attainment for an entire generation of American men (Bound and Turner 2002; Mettler 2005; Olson 1973; Olson 1974; Stanley 2003). Scholars note that the G.I. Bill "dramatically reduced the cost of attending college" (Bound and Turner 2002, 809); as such, this policy provided financial resources that made higher educational attainment a feasible goal for many veterans who would not have otherwise undertaken postsecondary training.

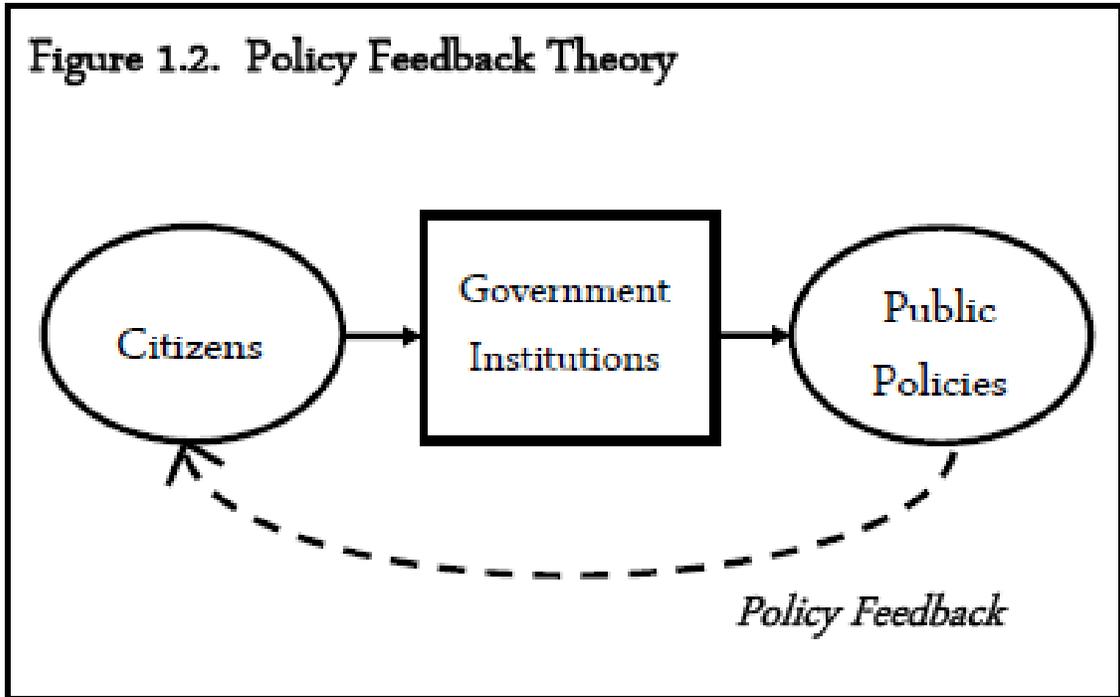
Research has also shown that G.I. Bill adoption promoted higher levels of political efficacy. Recognizing the positive nature of veterans' experiences as G.I. Bill beneficiaries, Keith Olson notes that recipients construed benefits as "a veteran's bonus in an educational guise" (1973, 597). Thus, in addition to the resources offered by the G.I. Bill program, adoption of its benefits for college education and vocational training provided veterans with an experience that influenced their perception of and feelings about the state. As Suzanne Mettler notes, the use of G.I. Bill benefits yielded "attitudinal effects" that "coalesced to make recipients more cognizant that government was for and about people like them..." (2005, 110). This finding supports the notion that federal higher education policies have the capacity to increase citizens' levels of political efficacy and to shape their conceptualizations of themselves as citizens.

While studies have shown that the G.I. Bill promoted greater civic and political involvement among its users, the fact that the beneficiaries of this path-breaking government program were overwhelmingly male has important implications for American gender politics. Of the 2.2 million World War II veterans who attended college using the education benefits of the G.I. Bill, only 64,728—fewer than 3 percent—were women (Bennett 1996, 202). Thus, American women were largely excluded from the socioeconomic mobility and the enhanced civic engagement that G.I. Bill usage facilitated for an entire generation of American men. Unlike their male counterparts, American women did not broadly receive federal funds to support higher educational training that would usher millions of citizens into the middle class. They were virtually excluded from the experiences of G.I. Bill participation, which transmitted the message that, as first-class citizens, beneficiaries have a claim to political inclusion. In their exclusion, women did not have the opportunity to develop a sense of gratitude for the state's generosity or the related desire to engage in civic activism as a way of showing appreciation for benefits received. The creation of federal student loans under the 1958 National Defense Education Act changed all of this. Departing from the gendered construction of the G.I. Bill, which allocated benefits on the basis of military service, the NDEA provided assistance on the gender-neutral basis of financial need. For the first time, a significant proportion of American women had the opportunity to attend college with the support of government financial aid. And that was only the beginning, as the Higher Education Act of 1965 and Title IX, enacted in 1972, would soon reveal.

Reconceptualizing the American Welfare State

Public policies represent an important mechanism by which the government can promote full citizenship in terms of civil, social, and political equality. At the heart of the progress that women have made in the last fifty years was the American welfare state and a series of landmark higher education programs that departed from the precedent of heavily gendered outcomes of U.S. social policies. While prominent social programs like welfare and social security were structured in ways that distinguished between men and women and generally cast women as second-class citizens, the federal higher education programs enacted after the mid-1950s were path-breaking in that they promoted equal treatment for women and men. These policies are distinctive, however, because they are not fraught with the same negative connotations that surround programs that we typically associate with the term “welfare.” Federal student aid programs resemble welfare policies in that they provide public assistance in order to promote socioeconomic stability and well-being among the population. Nevertheless, when we think of social policies in the United States, programs like Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, and unemployment insurance typically come to mind. It is with less frequency that federal education programs like Pell Grants, Perkins Loans, and Stafford Loans are placed into this category, although these programs promote the same end of increasing socioeconomic stability by extending government support to millions of Americans.

The first task of this dissertation is to examine the creation of the landmark National Defense Education Act, Higher Education Act, and Title IX programs. As such, I aim to understand how—in contrast to other landmark social policies—they came to

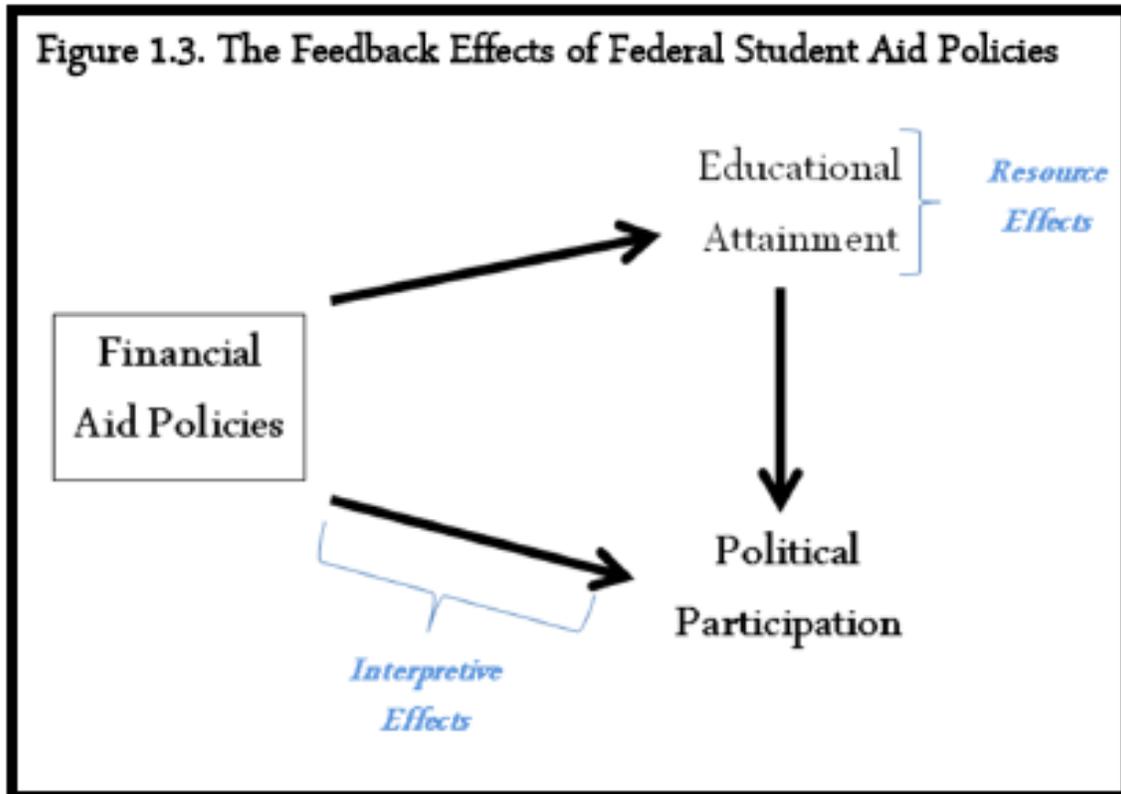


empower women by (1) including women and men on equal terms—as was the case with the NDEA and the HEA—or (2) by promoting women’s equality—as did Title IX.

Public Policy Feedback and Gender Equality in U.S. Citizenship

My hypothesis that federal higher education programs enacted after the mid-twentieth century expanded women’s access to higher education and contributed to the narrowing gender gap in U.S. political engagement is rooted in what public policy scholars call the theory of policy feedback effects. Policy feedback theory centers upon the idea that public policies have the capacity to act as both outputs of and inputs into the political process (see Figure 1.2). As such, policies can alter citizens as well as the political environment (Esping-Andersen 1990; Hacker 1998; McDonnell 2009; Mettler and Soss 2004, 60; Pierson 1993) by reshaping not only the social, and economic

orientations of citizens, but also their rates of involvement in politics and what they come to expect from government (Campbell 2002; Lowi 1964, 688-690). Scholars have recognized two primary mechanisms through which policy feedback effects are transmitted. The first is through resource effects. Resource effects occur in the form of incentives—such as monetary payments, goods, and services—that have implications for citizens’ material well-being and their life opportunities. These effects typically reshape the costs and benefits of engaging in politics. Providing an example of the resource effects of public policy adoption, Andrea Campbell (2002; 2003) has shown that the Social Security program provides valuable benefits that make its most dependent beneficiaries more likely to maintain a high level of interest in politics and to engage in political activity if they suspect that their benefits are in danger. Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry Brady (1995) have argued that possessing resources, such as higher levels of education, income, and political capital, makes citizens more likely to participate in politics. I suspect that federal higher education policies have altered the calculus of political participation by providing citizens with a resource—educational attainment—that significantly increases the probability that they will engage in politics (see Figure 1.3).



In addition to resource effects, policy feedback may also be transmitted through a second mechanism—interpretive effects. Interpretive effects are the ways in which policy usage, in and of itself, serves as a source of information and meaning that shapes citizens’ inclination to participate in politics. Scholars note that policies send messages to program participants that indicate their value as citizens (Pierson 1993; Soss 1999; Soss and Mettler 2004, 62; Mettler 2005) while also teaching the appropriate roles of citizens and the government (Schneider and Ingram 1993, 334). Anne Schneider and Helen Ingram (1993) contend that public policies send messages reflecting the social construction—or “cultural characterizations or popular images”—of the individuals that they affect (1993, 334). These messages, in turn, shape citizens’ orientations toward government. This type of effect is closely related to features of policy design, the form

that benefits take, and the scope of eligibility. Suzanne Mettler and Joe Soss argue that policies shape citizens' "goals, beliefs, and identities" (2004, 56). Joe Soss (1999), for example, has shown that welfare beneficiaries learn to expect subpar treatment from the government by way of their experiences with government agencies. This yields a decreased sense of external efficacy and makes welfare beneficiaries less likely to participate in politics. In another example of interpretive effects, Suzanne Mettler (2005) has demonstrated that the G.I. Bill sent messages that veterans were first-class citizens. In doing so, it promoted strong feelings of civic duty and heightened political efficacy among beneficiaries, thereby contributing to high levels of political engagement among beneficiaries. I suspect that the higher education policies enacted since the late 1950s exerted similar interpretive effects by providing women with a positive interaction with the government (i.e., government-facilitated access to higher education) and by signaling women's status as first-class citizens.

In examining the claim that federal student aid adoption influences the gender dynamics of educational attainment, attitudes toward government, and political participation in the United States, I do not undervalue the importance of previously identified demographic and socioeconomic background characteristics. Instead, this analysis provides a serious consideration of the influence of public policy on U.S. gender politics vis-à-vis these established explanations.

Data and Methods

To examine the supposition that federal higher education policy represents a dramatic break with social policy precedent that expanded women's higher educational

attainment and contributed to a narrowing of the gender gap in political engagement, I will draw upon a mixed-methods research approach that incorporates data from a broad range of sources. The first portion of the dissertation employs qualitative analysis to examine the development of the National Defense Education Act of 1958, the Higher Education Act of 1965, and Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments. In considering the gender-neutral development of the NDEA and the HEA on one hand, and Title IX's overt emphasis on gender equality on the other, I draw upon a range of primary and secondary documents. These materials include elite interviews, transcripts of congressional committee and subcommittee hearings, presidential commission reports, archived congressional papers, oral history interviews, newspaper articles, and historical poll data. These sources will permit me to examine the political and historical context within which each of these policies unfolded.

After drawing upon qualitative analysis to consider the development of these landmark federal higher education policies, I turn to quantitative analysis to examine the effectiveness of federal financial aid programs for expanding women's access to higher education as well as the effect of student aid adoption on the gender dynamics of political engagement. To do so, I draw upon data from three national surveys: the Social and Governmental Issues and Participation Study (SGIP), the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS), and the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey. These data sources are particularly valuable because they measure citizens' receipt of federal student aid such as student loans, Pell Grants, and the G.I. Bill, as well as their educational attainment, attitudes toward government, and rates of involvement in political activities. Using a combination of descriptive statistics and

regression analysis, I test whether federal student aid programs have had significant feedback effects on the gender dynamics of higher educational attainment and political engagement. Although scholars have long recognized education to be a significant determinant of political involvement, this analysis provides the first empirical investigation of the effects of federal higher education policies on gender parity in political engagement.

This analysis demonstrates that—in a show of surprising gender-egalitarianism—lawmakers dramatically altered the gender dynamics of U.S. higher educational attainment when they passed the NDEA and the HEA, essentially paving the way for women to surpass men as the recipients of college degrees. These programs not only promoted greater gender parity in socioeconomic status by significantly expanding women’s access to college, they also promoted gender parity in political engagement. While the student aid provided under the NDEA and HEA mounted an assault on gender inequality in U.S. higher education by providing women with financial support for pursuing college degrees, the Title IX regulation dealt a devastating—and arguably fatal—blow to gender inequality in higher education by prohibiting gender discrimination in college admissions.

In what follows, I argue that federal student loans, Pell Grants, and Title IX reshaped the gender dynamics of American citizenship by facilitating greater higher educational attainment among women and contributing to a narrowing of the gender gap in political engagement. Federal higher education programs enacted since 1958 have not only augmented women’s status within the polity by altering the standard by which the government interacts with women, but they have also facilitated women’s advancement

from second-class to first-class citizenship. By considering the importance of federal higher education policy to the gender dynamics of citizenship in the United States, this dissertation aims to enhance our understanding of gender equality in the United States, recognizing that the federal government began to promote gender equality apart from—and, indeed, prior to—the feminist movement. In what follows, we will see that federal higher education policy has played a significant, though overlooked, role in the gender dynamics of American citizenship. In addition to significant societal changes that have promoted gender equality in the last fifty years, the federal government has promoted gender equality in the United States through the use of higher education policy.

Chapter Outline

This analysis builds upon a considerable body of political science scholarship that has established educational attainment as a strong and consistently positive determinant of political engagement. In examining the possibility that lawmakers have contributed to the narrowing of the gender gap in political engagement by providing women with greater access to college education, this dissertation emphasizes the importance of public policy—a heretofore overlooked factor—in the established relationship between education and political engagement. As such, this analysis takes seriously the role of public policy in the gender dynamics of American citizenship.

To understand the importance of federal higher education programs to the gender dynamics of citizenship in the United States, we must have a clear understanding of the historical and political context within which federal higher education policies were developed. In Chapter 2, I sketch the history of higher education in the United States,

placing an emphasis on the differential experiences of women and men. Then, I provide an overview of the landmark higher education programs that were enacted since the mid-twentieth century.

Continuing in the vein of historical analysis, Chapter 3 examines the political development of the National Defense Education Act of 1958 and the Higher Education Act of 1965 and their effects for the gender dynamics of citizenship in terms of status. The creation of the NDEA marked the unlikely birth of federal programming for higher education. Taken together, the NDEA and HEA constitute the core of government provisions for student financial aid. In considering the political factors that shaped the development of these programs, this chapter provides insight into their significance for initiating a new standard by which the state interacted with the nation's women.

In Chapter 4, we turn to the development of Title IX, which invoked the regulatory powers of the state to ensure that women and men enjoyed equal access to higher education. Here, I consider why this policy was fashioned in the way that it was and its effects for men's and women's status in the United States. While lawmakers had previously used redistributive policies to expand access to higher education under the NDEA and HEA, this analysis suggests that the use of regulatory policy proved necessary for lawmakers to remove institutional barriers to gender equality in college admissions.

Turning from historical analysis to empirical analysis, Chapter 5 employs quantitative analysis of nationally representative survey data to investigate the effects of federal student aid adoption for social citizenship in terms of gender. This analysis explores the relationship between federal student aid usage and women's and men's educational attainment. Chapter 5 continues the use of empirical analysis to examine the

feedback effects of federal financial aid adoption for the gender dynamics of political citizenship in the United States. Here, I present an education-policy model of political engagement that reveals that federal student aid programs have significant resource effects that have narrowed the gender gap in political participation.

The seventh, and final, chapter of the dissertation considers the implications of this analysis for the future of American gender politics and the welfare state. I begin by considering the impact of higher education policies on the style of U.S. social provision. How, I ask, have higher education policies influenced the type of society in which we live, and how have various groups been affected by this type of social provision? I then reflect upon whether higher education policies create divisions within groups and across groups and conclude by considering the future of higher education policy in the United States.

CHAPTER TWO

The History of Higher Education and Higher Education Policy in the United States

*Why should girls be learne'd and wise?
Books only serve to spoil their eyes.
The studious eye but faintly twinkles
And reading paves the way to wrinkles.*

—John Trumbull, *The Progress of Dulness*
(1773)

Through much of American history, higher education was reserved for the most privileged citizens. From the founding of the nation's first college in 1636 to the post-World War II era, the beneficiaries of higher education were overwhelmingly white, male, and well-to-do. Women, racial minorities, and low-income Americans remained at the margins of postsecondary training until the mid-twentieth century, when dramatic social, economic, and political changes effectively democratized higher education in the United States (see, e.g., Lucas 2006, 109; Solomon 1985, 2). As a result of crucial changes that emerged during and after the late 1950s, groups that were long denied equitable access to higher education and excluded from full participation in postsecondary programs now maintain a strong presence in the nation's colleges and universities.

American women represent the most prominent example of this phenomenon. Prior to the twentieth century, women found limited access to higher education via land-grant colleges and state universities, particularly those in the Midwest and the West

(Tidball et al. 1999, 10). Land-grant institutions were generally more amenable to the idea of educating women than their private counterparts, a fact that reflected their central objective of educating the broader public with a wide range of skills. Women moved rapidly into higher education in the twentieth century—particularly after the 1960s—and this movement represents perhaps the most striking change that has occurred since the early days of American higher education.⁹ In 1870, for example, women comprised only 21 percent of the nation’s postsecondary students (Newcomer 1959, 46); but, by 1981—little more than a century later—women had surpassed men as the recipients of bachelor’s degrees (NCES 2011). Over the decades that followed, the number of women attending American colleges continued to grow. By 2009, women represented 56.3 percent of students in American colleges and universities (U.S. Census Bureau 2012).

Given the complicated history of women’s higher education in the United States, the rapid increase in women’s bachelor’s degree attainment since the 1960s is particularly remarkable. The movement of women into higher education has occurred in tandem with a dramatic increase in federal support for higher education since the mid-twentieth century. Although the federal government long resisted intervening in higher education, it has come to provide extensive support for college students and their families in the last seventy years. As Lawrence Gladieux, Jacqueline King, and Melanie Corrigan note, contrary to political rhetoric suggesting otherwise, in recent decades, “the federal government has actively and extensively supported higher education to serve a variety of

⁹ It comes as little surprise that throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, women’s higher educational attainment has been correlated with their labor force participation: women who have earned college degrees are more likely to enter the labor force than their less-educated counterparts (Sicherman 1988, 135).

national purposes” (2005, 163).¹⁰ This government involvement has been explained as actions taken to meet “clear need[s],” such as expanding access to college, ensuring national security, and improving the quality of American higher education (Carleton 2002, 5). Since the postwar era, the government has allocated a substantial share of tax dollars to expanding young Americans’ access to college. Although broad-reaching, direct federal provision for higher education represents a relatively recent phenomenon in American public policy, these programs will likely continue to shape higher educational access in the United States for years to come. As Lawrence Gladieux and Arthur Hauptmann note, “some features [of student aid policies] have been demolished, altered or incorporated into new structures but generally, once something has been built, it remains standing” (1995, 1). Before we can address this dissertation’s central question of whether federal higher education policies have influenced the gender dynamics of higher educational attainment and political engagement in the United States, we must first contextualize this discussion within the history of American higher education and the federal government’s historical role in shaping who has access to it.

The Birth of American Higher Education in the Colonial Era (1636-1776)

The 1636 founding of Harvard College marked the birth of higher education in America. In its early years, Harvard demonstrated a firm commitment to Calvinism,

¹⁰ As sociologist and past president of the American Council on Education Logan Wilson notes, those who insist that the federal government has historically refrained from intervening in higher education tend to be uninformed about the government’s “heavy commitment” to higher education or reluctant to admit that the nation’s government and its college students are engaged in a “permanent and growing partnership” (1965, 60). Historically, the political currency of localism has held more weight in regards to primary and secondary education as opposed to postsecondary education (Carleton 2002, 6).

training young men typically bound for careers in the clergy (Geiger 2005, 39).¹¹ In 1693, the British monarchy chartered the College of William and Mary, and in 1701 a third college was added to the nation's roster of higher educational institutions with the founding of Yale. The original colonial colleges set the tone for the nation's early institutions of higher education. They heralded the creation of institutions that had small faculties and student bodies, that maintained strong ties to the church, and whose students were typically destined to assume leadership positions therein. During this period, a prominent responsibility of colleges was to produce gentlemen and to provide what was termed "Republican Education"—a curriculum that cultivated "selflessness, patriotism, and virtue in the citizens as leaders of the new republic" (Geiger 2005, 42-43). Education scholar Roger Geiger describes Harvard, the College of William and Mary, and Yale as "schools of the Reformation" that were founded as "adjuncts of their respective churches" (2005, 39). For the nation's earliest colleges, the church represented an important partner in their establishment and growth.

Over the following years, American higher education continued its slow expansion with the founding of the College of New Jersey (later renamed Princeton) in 1746, the College of Philadelphia in 1751, and the King's College (which later became Columbia) in 1754. The church's stronghold on colleges began to decline with the founding of the College of New Jersey. Unlike its predecessors, this institution was structured around a compromise struck between the Presbyterian Church and the New

¹¹ Harvard's movement away from its strict Calvinist roots in the eighteenth century reflected the rise of tolerance and cosmopolitanism at the institution (Geiger 2005, 39).

Jersey colony (Geiger 2005, 41).¹² With the completion of the original colonial colleges by the mid-eighteenth century, college enrollments grew steadily. In the years immediately preceding the Revolutionary War, approximately 750 students were enrolled in colonial colleges. The four oldest colleges accommodated a full 75 percent of them (Geiger 2005, 42; see also Lucas 2006, 109).

Higher education in the colonial era was a strictly male arena built around the objective of training the nation's future leaders—particularly, religious, political, economic, and military leaders (Gladieux and Wolanin 1976, 4). None of the existing higher educational institutions offered college training for women (Kerber 1988, 21; Thelin 2011, 55). Women's absolute exclusion from higher education during the colonial period was rooted in the widely held notion that they—as the weaker sex—were incapable of advanced learning.¹³ This view centered on two premises: first, that women were mentally inferior to men and, second, that they possessed a physical and emotional frailty that was unsuited to the rigors of higher learning (Lucas 2006, 161; Miller-Bernal 2004, 4; Newcomer 1959, 26-28; Tidball et al. 1999, 6). Such views proved resilient and had great influence on the trajectory of women's higher education throughout the nation's history. Further, these notions fostered the long-standing assumption that men's and women's education must—by virtue of their fundamentally dissimilar natures—be different (Kerber 1988, 41). As historian Linda Kerber notes, women's education “required special justification” through much of American history (1988, 41). Further,

¹² Nevertheless, we should note that churches funded the majority of the nation's colleges and universities until the end of the Civil War (Newcomer 1959, 6).

¹³ Although women were not among the exceedingly small portion of the population who received college education during the colonial period, citizens were a bit more lenient when it came to the gender gap in basic education, which is illustrated by improvements in women's literacy rates by the late seventeenth century (see, e.g., Kerber 1988, 20).

she continues, “[w]omen had to find room for their educations without eliciting male hostility and contempt” (1988, 41).

The Growth of Higher Education in a New Nation (1777-1879)

In the wake of the American Revolution, as they gathered at the Constitutional Convention in 1787, the nation’s founders considered and rejected proposals that would have institutionalized federal support for higher education. As a result of the framers’ firm commitment to localism, the United States Constitution makes no formal provisions for higher education (Carleton 2002, 4-5; Gladieux, King, and Corrigan 2005, 163; Gladieux and Wolanin 1976, 3). This set an important precedent that would, for centuries, shape lawmakers’ decisions regarding higher education.

In the early years of American independence, the number of higher educational institutions operating in the new nation continued to grow, and it was during this era that higher education was referred to as the nation’s “cottage industry” (Thelin 2011, 41). Between 1782 and 1791, Maryland, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Vermont passed policies to support college education in their states (Geiger 2005, 43). With the creation of the state-chartered University of Georgia in 1785 and University of North Carolina in 1789, this period marked the beginning of significant—albeit limited—federal intervention in higher education.¹⁴ For 65 years after 1796, the federal

¹⁴ As education scholar John Thelin notes, the question of whether the University of Georgia or the University of North Carolina can claim to be the nation’s first state university “is a matter of dispute” between the two schools (2011, 45). While the University of Georgia received its state charter in 1785 the University of North Carolina received its charter in 1789. Still, UNC began to admit students in 1795, while UGA enrolled its first students in 1801 (Thelin 2011, 45).

government supported college building in the states through the provision of 17 congressional land grants (Thelin 2011, 75).

In the nineteenth century Americans viewed higher education as a mechanism for developing discipline in young Americans, while also crafting and organizing “the furniture of the mind” (Spring 2008, 316). Throughout this era, the nation’s system of higher education continued to grow, serving a variety of purposes and providing new opportunities for various groups of Americans. In the South, the College of South Carolina and the University of Virginia exemplified higher education in the region, catering to the sons of politically and socially prominent planters (Geiger 2005, 50). New institutions were established to provide women, blacks, and Catholics—groups that the nation’s colleges and universities had typically discriminated against—access to higher education (Peril 2006, 49; Thelin 2011, 42). The 1820s and 1830s saw a continued expansion of higher education in the United States, and in the 1850s, free African Americans gained access to higher education via Pennsylvania’s Ashmun Institute (later called Lincoln University) and Ohio’s Wilberforce University (Geiger 2005, 51). By 1860, the number of colleges had grown from the original 9 colonial colleges to approximately 250 institutions (Loss 2012, 3; Thelin 2011, 41-42).

Debating Higher Education for Women

With the expansion of colleges in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Americans began to debate the propriety of extending advanced education to women. Mary Wollstonecraft’s 1792 *Vindication of the Rights of Women* stirred this debate, boldly advocating education for women and arguing that women’s education

would ultimately strengthen society. Those sharing the British feminist's view that women ought to have equal access to education faced staunch opposition from those who believed that women were inherently unsuited for higher learning. One line of reasoning held that women's inherent intellectual shortcomings precluded their ability to benefit from advanced education (Lucas 2006, 121-122). Although Thomas Jefferson was a vocal supporter of broad-reaching education who found great amusement in educating his daughters at home, he viewed this undertaking as a mere hobby—one that could, at best, serve his daughters in their roles as mothers (Solomon 1985, 12).¹⁵

Others argued that the frail constitution of the female sex made women wholly unsuited for college learning, fearing that higher education would precipitate nervous breakdown or moral corruption among the nation's young women. Reverend John Todd articulated this view in the early 1870s: "Must we crowd education on our daughters, and for the sake of having them 'intellectual,' make them puny, nervous, and their whole earthly existence a struggle between life and death?" (Lucas 2006, 161). Women's supposed frailty meant that higher education could prove hazardous. Dr. Edward Clarke's 1873 book *Sex in Education; or a Fair Chance for Girls* provided a most compelling account of this frailty (Gordon 1990, 18; Miller-Bernal 2004, 4). Based on case studies of seven Vassar College students, Dr. Clarke asserted that the mental exertion involved in pursuing the same advanced education as men rendered women susceptible to "neuralgia, uterine disease, hysteria, and other dangerments of the nervous

¹⁵ In correspondence to a friend, he described his motives for educating his daughters as such: "The chance that in marriage [Martha] will draw a blockhead I calculate at about fourteen to one," he said. "The education of her family will probably rest on her own ideas and directions without assistance" (NWHM 2007). According to Jefferson, although his daughter's education may have eventually proven convenient—for example, in the case that she made an unfortunate match in marriage—it was not essential.

system” (Esbach 1993, 83; Newcomer 1959, 29; Peril 2006, 43).¹⁶ In addition to fearing the potential health hazards of women’s education, others feared that extensive education would make women reluctant or unable to undertake their “feminine duties”—namely, marriage and childrearing (Gordon 1990, 16; Lucas 2006, 161).¹⁷ One Vanderbilt student captured this attitude well saying, “No man wants to come home at night and find his wife testing some new process for manufacturing oleomargarine, or in the observatory sweeping the heavens for a comet” (Lucas 2006, 161-162). The prospect of women’s higher education represented a potential threat to the traditional family structure that many Americans had come to revere. Finally, opposition to women’s higher education considered the possibility that women would not only meet the challenges of advanced education but thrive. In this regard, women were viewed as a potential “threat to masculine superiority” (Newcomer 1959, 49-50). Such thinking represented another source of reluctance to extend higher educational access to women.

While opponents of women’s higher education emphasized the irrationality of educating women and the deleterious outcomes that such an ill-advised course could yield, others recognized the pragmatism of providing women with higher education. Some argued, for example, that cultivating women’s intelligence would enable them to better perform their roles as wives and mothers. College-educated women, according to this line of reasoning, could provide intelligent wives for the clergy. Moreover, they

¹⁶ Supporters of higher education for women raised doubts regarding Clarke’s findings, pointing out that the small sample of students upon which his analysis rests proves insufficient for making his grave conclusions (Esbach 1993, 85).

¹⁷ As historian John Faragher notes, historical data indicate there may have been some truth to these fears. Among women who graduated from college prior to World War I, for example, at least 25 percent of them never married. Moreover, the movement of women into higher education occurred in tandem with a decline in the nation’s fertility. By 1900, the total fertility rate for American women had fallen to fewer than four children (1988, xi).

would be especially suited for the vital role of what Kerber calls “Republican Motherhood,” which cast women as the cultivators of patriotism, duty, and morality in the next generation’s citizens (1976; see also Eisenmann 1998, xii; Gordon 1990, 14; Peril 2006, 19; Spring 2008, 143).¹⁸ In this regard, “[m]otherhood was discussed almost as a fourth branch of government, a device that ensured social control in the gentlest possible way” (Esbach 1993, 11).

In addition to strengthening their ability to serve the nation as wives and mothers, supporters of women’s higher education held that the presence of women could have a good influence on college men. Highlighting the potential institutional effects of educating women, some college faculty members supported the idea of coeducation on the grounds that women’s presence would act as a “civilizing influence,” taming male student populations that were prone to fighting and that exhibited ever-increasing apathy toward academics (Esbach 1993, 44; Gordon 1990, 21; Tidball et al. 1999, 11).¹⁹ Furthermore, as historian Linda Gordon notes, the presence of women was viewed as useful for providing “practice for future ministers in dealing with women who would one day be their congregants or spouses” (1990, 17). Finally, the need for teachers provided a particularly noteworthy impetus for including women in advanced education. In addition to allowing women to work in an area that was viewed as “a natural extension of [their]

¹⁸ It is important to note that the concept of Republican Motherhood applied primarily to white women. The omission of women of color from Republican Motherhood reflected the fact that effectively performing this duty was largely predicated on the ability to wield spiritual authority in the private sphere. Stereotypical depictions casting women of color as lacking self control and possessing easily compromised morals and values invalidated their claim to moral authority in the home and precluded their assumption of this vital role (see, e.g., Peril 2006, 99).

¹⁹ At the turn of the century, it was not uncommon for male students to frown upon unabashed academic consciousness among their peers. Not only was enthusiastic study “frowned upon as excessive,” common wisdom held that “it was ‘poor form’ to earn anything better than the ‘gentleman’s C’ in one’s courses.” (Lucas 2006, 208).

maternal nature,” those who supported training women as teachers noted that female teachers could be compensated at lower rates than male teachers and that the professionalization of women teachers would strengthen education in the nation’s common schools (Miller-Bernal 2004, 4; Newcomer 1959, 58; Rosenberg 1988, 110; Spring 2008, 143). As more Americans recognized the utility of extending college education to women, the inevitability of their inclusion in advanced education became increasingly apparent.

A New Frontier: Women’s Movement into Higher Education

Institutional Changes

Women’s welcome into higher education was an uneven one. Beginning in the early nineteenth century, women gained access to seminaries (also known as academies) that provided gender-specific training for women, and normal schools provided them with teacher training (Lucas 2006, 121). Troy Female Seminary became the first institution to train women for the teaching profession when it opened in 1821 (Spring 2008, 143); and, in the late nineteenth century, the nation saw the rapid creation of women’s colleges, beginning with the Georgia Female College (now known as Wesleyan College) in 1836 (Peril 2006, 35; Solomon 1985, 24).²⁰ Women’s colleges offered some of the earliest opportunities for women to pursue advanced education. Prior to the high-profile establishment of Vassar in 1861, approximately forty women’s colleges offered

²⁰ There is some debate as to whether the Georgia Female College was truly the nation’s first women’s college. Some historians argue that the curriculum at Georgia Female College—a school that was known to admit twelve year olds—was not rigorous enough to merit the distinction. Mary Sharp College, which was founded in 1853 in Winchester, Tennessee and the Elmira Female College, which was founded in 1855 in Elmira, New York have each been recognized as the first college to admit women (Peril 2006, 35-36; Solomon 1985, 24).

degrees to women (Geiger 2005, 51). However, there was broad-reaching concern that these women's institutions provided an education that was inferior to that received by men at male colleges (Rosenberg 1988, 109). By many accounts, early higher educational institutions that catered to women were little more than high schools or "finishing schools" that aimed to produce suitable wives (Gordon 1990, 16; Lucas 2006, 160). Between 1861 and 1875, Matthew Vassar, Henry Wells, Sophia Smith, and Henry Durant established women's colleges that were intended to provide the same standard of higher education that characterized the nation's most elite male colleges, which staunchly refused to admit women (Gordon 1990, 26). In the decades that followed, Wellesley College (1875), Smith College (1875), Spelman College (1881), Bryn Mawr (1885), and Barnard College (1889) were founded with the purpose of providing further educational opportunities for women (Kerber 1988, 20).²¹

After being excluded from the colleges that had taught their brothers since Harvard's 1636 founding, women finally gained the opportunity for coeducation in 1833, when Oberlin College became the first higher educational institution in the United States to admit both men and women (Geiger 2005, 50; Graham 1978, 764; Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001, 142; Lucas 2006, 122; Miller-Bernal 2004, 3; Tidball et al. 1999, 11).²²

Land-grant colleges and state universities in the Midwest pioneered coeducation in the

²¹ The most prominent of these women's colleges became popularly known as "the Seven Sisters": Barnard, Mount Holyoke, Radcliffe, Smith, Tulane, Vassar, and Wellesley (Thelin 2011, 180-181).

²² Oberlin also had the distinction of being the first college to integrate by admitting black students in 1833 (Eisenmann 1998, xv; Miller-Bernal 2004, 3).

Upon women's admission to Oberlin, women's rights activist Lucy Stone prognosticated that comprehensive coeducation was eminent. Her prediction proved incorrect, as prestigious institutions like Harvard and Yale would not admit women and men on equal terms for more than a century (Rosenberg 1988, 108-109).

United States (Lucas 2006, 162; Newcomer 1959, 35; Thelin 2011, 55). In subsequent decades, a number of women's institutions appeared in the South, as many southerners thought it best to send young southern women to local colleges where they could ensure the curriculum's moral and religious propriety, rather than to the "renegade" colleges of the North (Thelin 2011, 84). Catholic families' similar concerns drove the increase in Catholic women's institutions during the late nineteenth century (Thelin 2011, 84).

A number of institutions that adopted coeducation relatively early—such as the Universities of Iowa, Wisconsin, and Kansas—were reluctant to do so but were compelled to admit women at "the insistence of female taxpayers about the nature of these schools" and their responsibility to "serve women as well as men" (Eisenmann 1998, xv; Kerber 1988, 41).²³ In fact, in every region of the United States in the nineteenth century, women's campaigns for admission played an important role in their newfound inclusion. As Linda Gordon explains, "parents, teachers' associations, [and] women's organizations, using the rhetoric of domesticity, petitioned legislatures and boards of regents to provide vocational preparation for the daughters of taxpayers" (1990, 21-24). A number of older women applied pressure to existing colleges to admit women, and some of the wealthiest sympathizers, as economist Mable Newcomer puts it, "bought women's way in" (Newcomer 1959, 153; Gordon 1990, 24). At the University of Michigan and at the Johns Hopkins Medical School, for example, women gained admission only after female activists raised \$100,000 for each school and declared that the gifts' bestowal was contingent upon the admission of women (Newcomer 1959, 153).

Although many prestigious men's schools continued to deny women access, some college

²³ The University of Iowa was the first public institution of higher education to adopt coeducation, when it admitted women as one-third of its student body in 1855 (Peril 2006, 44).

founders like Ezra Cornell and John Purdue, worked to ensure that women had equal opportunities at land-grant colleges (Geiger 2005, 53).²⁴ By 1869, 41 percent of postsecondary academic institutions were open to coeducation, and women comprised approximately 21 percent of the nation's college students (Peril 2006, 51; Tidball et al. 1999, 10).²⁵

While many American women gained greater access to higher education during the late nineteenth century, black, Jewish, and Catholic women did not.²⁶ In 1860, the U.S. population included 4.5 million blacks; a full 4 million of them were slaves who were subjected to laws that prevented their learning to read and write (Eisenmann 1998, xiv). For blacks residing in non-slave holding states, advanced education was reserved for men. Historians estimate that, before 1840, bachelor's degrees were awarded to 15 black men but no black women (Peril 2006, 40).²⁷ With the founding of Spelman College in 1881, higher educational opportunity for black women increased substantially. Catholic and Jewish women also faced discrimination in higher education. During the

²⁴ At Cornell University, founder Ezra Cornell expressed a commitment to founding a university where "any person" could find support to undertake "any study." However, Ezra Cornell's egalitarian sentiments seem to have been most closely tied to his commitment to ensuring poor students the same access to high quality education as their well-heeled counterparts because women were not included among the University's initial matriculants. During the university's early years, Ezra Cornell insisted that, while the schools' administrators sincerely wanted to include women, a lack of appropriate accommodations for female students precluded their admission. Women's rights activists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony pressured him to uphold the promise of "any person, any study" when it came to women (Esbach 1993, 105-106; Gordon 1990, 23).

²⁵ Although 41 percent of colleges were open to women in 1869, fewer than 1,400 women received degrees that year, compared to the 8,000 men who did (Newcomer 1959, 37; Tidball et al. 1999, 10-11). It is similarly important to note that, for some institutions, the term "co-education" was used to signify the presence of exactly one female student (Tidball et al. 1999, 12).

²⁶ According to Barbara Solomon, black women's absence from higher education reflected the fact that their parents were poor and the simple fact that "most schools did not want them" (1985, 76).

²⁷ The first black woman to receive a bachelor's degree in the United States was Mary Jane Patterson. The daughter of fugitive slaves earned a degree from Oberlin College in 1862 (Esbach 1993, 153; Peril 2006, 40).

late nineteenth century, as Lynn Peril notes, Catholic and Jewish women were admitted into women's colleges "by ones and twos" . . . as long as they didn't rock the boat" (2006, 69). Considering the prevalence of such discrimination, these women eventually benefited from the creation of institutions that were established with them in mind. The 1896 founding of Maryland's College of Notre Dame, for example, provided greater access to higher education for Catholic women (Peril 2006, 49). While American women saw progress in higher educational attainment throughout the nineteenth century, this progress did not occur at the same rate for all women.

Double Standards on Campus

By the 1840s, women were increasingly permitted to learn beside their male counterparts. They were, nonetheless, subjected to glaring double standards on campus. Oberlin College, the institution that pioneered coeducation in the United States, provides an excellent example. In terms of curriculum, men and women were typically segregated into "sex-traditional" fields (Tidball et al. 1999, 11). From women's earliest inclusion at Oberlin, they were automatically enrolled in the "Ladies' Course," which provided a curriculum deemed appropriate to women's preordained roles as wives and mothers. Beginning in 1841, women were given the option of enrolling in the men's course of study. Nonetheless, they were not permitted to engage in public speaking, and the school invoked a strict, gendered division of labor. According to Elizabeth Esbach, "the female appendage" were required to cook, to sew, and to do male classmates' laundry (1993, 44). In fact, no classes were held on Mondays so that the women students could do the men's laundry. Their own laundry, however, had to be tended to during each woman's

free time. The male students, on the other hand, handled “heavier” chores (Esbach 1993, 44; Gordon 1990, 17).

On campus, women were often greeted with hostility and found themselves treated as secondary students. Upon entering classrooms, for example, women students at the University of Wisconsin during the late nineteenth century, were expected to remain standing until their male classmates were seated (Lucas 2006, 162). While some male and female students forged friendships in coeducational institutions, some social organizations maintained an “anti-coed” policy that discouraged male students from fraternizing with women students (Rosenberg 1988, 114). As one male alumnus of the University of Wisconsin noted in 1877, male students’ feelings of hostility toward coeducation was “exceedingly intense and bitter” (Lucas 2006, 213-214). Many men at newly coeducational eastern colleges felt that women’s presence signified their lower status vis-à-vis eastern, all-male schools like Harvard and Yale (Esbach 1993, 108; Rosenberg 1988, 111). Women’s academic excellence was not met with the same esteem as their male counterparts’, and they were often denied honors like Phi Beta Kappa keys on the grounds that granting such awards to women would come at the unnecessary expense of men (Esbach 1993, 107; Newcomer 1959, 27). As one woman was told, “when it came to finding a job, men needed [academic] honor[s] more than women did” (Rosenberg 1988, 113). Although women students were required to pay student activity fees, they were denied the opportunity to participate in the most student organizations (Thelin 2011, 182). Women’s second-class status on coeducational campuses was also evident in their limited access to college facilities. “The spacious dormitories and well-equipped gymnasiums of the eastern women’s colleges,” noted

historian Rosalind Rosenberg, “rarely existed for women at coeducational institutions before 1900” (1988, 113). All things considered, women’s second-class status at coeducational institutions served as a palpable reminder that they were somehow less deserving of college education than their male counterparts.

Early Higher Education Policies

The Civil War represents a critical juncture in the history of American higher education. This historical moment rendered a substantial number of young women without male familial support, compelling many to turn to the labor force—and higher education—in hopes of better supporting themselves (Rosenberg 1998, 109; see also Gordon 1990, 14-15). By the end of the war, women represented the preponderance of the nation’s teachers, and over time teacher education programs catered primarily to women (Spring 2008, 143).

In addition to marking the beginning of an era in which higher education took on a measure of exigency for many American women, the Civil War also represents a pivotal political moment that enabled lawmakers to successfully pass legislation that had previously languished in Congress (Geiger 2005, 51; Thelin 2011, 75). Among the most prominent of these policies was the Morrill Land Grant program, which had been vetoed by President James Buchanan in 1859.²⁸ Three years later, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862, which provided government land to each state for establishing and supporting at least one college (Gladieux and Wolanin 1976, 5),

²⁸ President Buchanan’s veto revolved around Southern lawmakers’ objection to the prospect of federal intervention into education (Thelin 2011, 75).

thus marking the beginning of federal intervention in higher education. This policy allocated government support for the establishment of some of the nation's earliest and most important state universities (Gladieux, King, and Corrigan 2005, 164; Thelin 2011, 75). Further, the policy held that the resources generated from federal lands would be used to support education in "agriculture and the mechanic arts in such a matter as the legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life" (Carleton 2002, 30; Esbach 1993, 101; Solomon 1985, 44; Spring 2008, 317-318).²⁹ The Morrill Act supported the establishment of land-grant institutions that welcomed both men and women and, thus, promoted women's inclusion in higher education (Gordon 1990, 18; Graham 1978, 762; Peril 2006, 44). These institutions would serve the national objective of providing practical education that would prove useful for common citizens. In this vein, providing women with training for crucial occupations like teaching served important national goals. Although the Morrill Land Grant Act did not specifically mention gender, it promoted coeducation by supporting the establishment of higher educational institutions in the sparsely populated western states, where the admission of women and men proved an economically advantageous policy. Lincoln's signing of the first Morrill Land Grant Act resonated with his expressed commitment to providing all Americans with "an unfettered start, and a fair chance in the race of life" (Brant and Karabel 1989, 3); and, in passing the landmark program, lawmakers distinguished the United States as "the first nation in the world, whether in peace or war, to systematically

²⁹ This emphasis on promoting practical education reflects Congressman Justin Morrill's 1848 assertion that American colleges would do best to "lop off a portion of the studies established centuries ago as the mark of European scholarship and replace the vacancy [with] those of a less antique and more practical value" (Lucas 2006, 153-154).

commit its resources for the support of higher education” (Carleton 2002, 34). Of the more than 100 land grant colleges that were supported by the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862, many became leading academic institutions in the United States (Carleton 2002, 27).

After a show of lobbying support from the presidents of land grant colleges who were interested in securing “direct annual infusions of federal funds,” a second Morrill Land Grant was passed in 1890 (Geiger 2005, 52). This policy reinforced the federal commitment to higher education by institutionalizing annual appropriations to benefit state colleges, including land-grant colleges in the South that catered to black students (Carleton 2002, 53; Esbach 1993, 101; Lucas 2006, 155).

American Higher Education during the Progressive Era (1880-1920)

The Progressive Era provided the backdrop for sweeping changes in American higher education. By the end of the nineteenth century, the primary purpose of higher education had shifted from imparting broad learning and intellectual discipline to producing an educated labor force that would meet the needs of the nation’s rapidly growing economy (Spring 2008, 316). The period saw continued growth in the number of colleges operating in the United States and a continuous movement of women into higher educational institutions. Although the total proportion of the American population pursuing advanced education remained low—a mere 3 percent of Americans between 18 and 21 years old were enrolled in college in the 1890s (Lucas 2006, 213)—and although colleges continued to represent the domain of the elite, higher education became a celebrated ideal for white males. Furthermore, college education became increasingly

associated with socioeconomic mobility. As John Thelin notes, “[i]n addition to increasing earning power, a bachelor’s degree was perceived as a way for a nouveau riche family to gain social standing” (2011, 155; see also Peril 2006, 17). In terms of growth in higher education during the Progressive Era, coeducation stood out as an area experiencing significant expansion (Gordon 1990. 6). As a result, the “college woman” emerged as a cultural figure during this period (Thelin 2011, 169). For men and women in the United States during the Progressive Era, higher education began to represent an increasingly beneficial undertaking.

Reaching a “High-Point” in Women’s Postsecondary Education

The Progressive Era saw important changes in women’s higher education in the United States. First, women were becoming increasingly prepared for advanced learning. In 1890, girls outnumbered boys as high school graduates, but few Americans had more than a fifth grade education (Brant and Karabel 1989, 4; Solomon 1985, 46). During that same year, the majority of women students were enrolled in women’s colleges, which were typically less rigorous than men’s colleges (Geiger 2005, 55). The University of Chicago’s 1892 founding was noteworthy due to college president William R. Harper’s, strong commitment to equitable coeducation. During the institution’s earliest years, Harper recruited women undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty members. By this point, Cornell University, Syracuse University, Boston University, Stanford University, the University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin, and a

number of other postsecondary institutions had already transitioned into coeducation and worked to provide more rigorous training for women (Miller-Bernal 2004, 5).³⁰

While a number of colleges in the northeastern and southern United States continued to resist coeducation, institutions in the nation's Midwestern and western regions—which were more prone to the challenges of financial pressure—proved more amenable to coeducation (Miller-Bernal 2004, 5; Rosenberg 1988, 111). In the South, state colleges in Texas, Arkansas, and Mississippi were the first to adopt coeducation, as were the historically black colleges. Schools in the Old South, however, were among the last to permit women and men to pursue advanced education side-by-side (Miller-Bernal 2004, 5). In the year 1900, fewer than 30,000 Americans—a mere 0.04 percent of the population—had earned bachelor's degrees, and of those who had, approximately 81 percent were men, and only 19 percent were women (Snyder and Dillow 2010; U.S. Census Bureau 2000). In terms of the entire population of young Americans between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one years old, only 2.8 percent of women earned bachelor's degrees that year (Pearson, Shavlik, and Touchton 1989, 16).

Women college students in the late nineteenth century tended to hail from middle class families in which the fathers worked in the professions, in business, or in agriculture (Pearson, Shavlik, and Touchton 1989, 16; Solomon 1985, 64-65). Although women enjoyed greater access to advanced education during the Progressive Era, they faced many challenges. On one hand, women were still discriminated against by institutions. Schools, like Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Columbia resisted calls to admit women. Instead of inviting women students into their institutions, such schools established

³⁰ In the case of the University of Michigan, the school's reluctant administrators adopted coeducation as a more cost-effective alternative to building a separate school for women (Rosenberg 1988, 110).

coordinate colleges—essentially, “sister schools”—to accommodate women (Esbach 1993, 109; Thelin 2011, 184).³¹ The increasing inclusion of women in many of the nation’s colleges evoked considerable backlash on campuses from coast to coast. Fearing that their schools would be taken less seriously or that they would be mistaken for “women’s schools,” a number of institutions, such as the University of Michigan and Stanford University, adopted gender quotas that restricted the number of women who would be granted admission to the college (Esbach 1993, 107; Gordon 1990, 43; Lucas 2006, 214). Consider Stanford University in 1899. Stating a commitment to ensuring that Stanford University did not become a female seminary, the founder’s widow unilaterally institutionalized a gender quota that permanently capped female enrollment at the university—which had reached 40 percent of the student body in the late nineteenth century—at 500 students (Peril 2005, 46). The University of Rochester, Tufts University, and Western Reserve University established separate schools for women, while the University of Chicago placed women and men in sex-segregated classes during their first two years of study (Gordon 1990, 43-44). Boston University mounted a “More Men Movement” to recruit more men. Wesleyan University, on the other hand, simply stopped admitting women between 1902 and 1915 (Gordon 1990, 43; Rosenberg 1988, 116).

Many women also faced the significant challenge of financing their own higher educational pursuits. In the early twentieth century, scholars note, colleges saw a growth in the number of self-supporting college women (Solomon 1985, 70). By 1917, college

³¹ Prominent coordinate colleges included Harvard’s “Harvard Annex” (later named Radcliffe); Brown’s Pembroke College; Tufts’s Jackson College; and Tulane’s Sophie Newcomb College (Thelin 2011, 180-184).

deans had begun to recognize and publicize the need for increased financial support for students (Solomon 1985, 71). Compared to men, women had considerably less access to scholarship funds, and they often had great difficulty working their way through school, although some women worked as teachers to earn money for college (Newcomer 1959, 151-152; Pearson, Shavlik, and Touchton 1989, 16; Solomon 1985, 71-72). On some campuses, young women organized funds to help support their self-supporting classmates. Other financial assistance came from outside of the educational institutions. *Ladies' Home Journal*, for example, hosted a contest that offered funding for a four-year education at Vassar, Wellesley, or Smith College to the young woman who sold the most magazine subscriptions (Solomon 1985, 73). As the publication noted, many parents understand the “thousand and one advantages which college education means for a girl” and desire higher education for their daughters but, too often, “the desire is there, but not the means” (Solomon 1985, 73).

World War I and Its Effects on American Higher Education

During World War I, the nation saw declining male enrollments in institutions of higher education as students were drafted into combat. At Harvard and Yale, for example, enrollments declined by approximately 40 percent in one year due to the war (Thelin 2011, 199). This precipitated a shift in the gender dynamics at American colleges and universities, as women grew increasingly present during the war.

With the end of World War I, budget constraints and increasing application pools led elite colleges to become more selective in admitting students. With this new emphasis on selectiveness, schools became increasingly concerned regarding the social

backgrounds of their students and whether these backgrounds reinforced or undermined their elite images. As a result, during the post-World War I era, American colleges became more likely to discriminate against applicants on the basis of demographic factors. Columbia University, for example, developed an admissions system that limited the number of Jewish students accepted into the institution. Soon thereafter, Princeton, Yale, and Harvard adopted similar guidelines to restrict the number of Jewish students attending their institutions (Geiger 2005, 59-60). Thus, elite institutions worked in opposition to the increasing accessibility of higher education that had characterized the nation's postsecondary education system in preceding decades.³²

The Dawning of the Second World War and Fluctuating Access to Higher Education (1921-1943)

During the interwar period, the nation saw modest growth in women's presence in higher education. This period also saw the rise of junior, or community, colleges in the United States. By 1920, the number of Americans with 4-year degrees rose to more than 48,000—0.05 percent of the population. During the same time frame, normal schools, which continued to supply the nation with a steady stream of trained teachers, provided postsecondary education to an increasing number of students, many of whom were women (Geiger 2005, 58). Teachers' colleges also maintained a strong presence throughout the country, educating a growing number of students (Lucas 2006, 232); as well as two-year colleges, which enrolled approximately 10,000 students (Brant and Karabel 1989, 5-6).

³² In an attempt to strengthen vocational education during this period, federal lawmakers passed the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, which provided federal support for vocational education at the high school level (Carleton 2002, 7).

Over the next decade, the number of Americans earning bachelor's degrees increased dramatically, and the nation's colleges and universities saw doubled enrollments. In 1930, more than 120,000 Americans reported having earned at least a bachelor's degree. During that year, the gender gap in educational attainment continued to narrow, as 60 percent of Americans with bachelor's degrees were men, compared to approximately 40 percent who were women (Snyder and Dillow 2010).

During the Second World War, women maintained a substantial presence in American colleges and universities, occupying seats that were vacated by men who were serving in the armed forces (Eisenmann 2006, 3; Miller-Bernal 2004, 8). As scholars have noted, American higher educational institutions founded with the purpose of educating men have become increasingly amenable to the prospect of admitting women when male enrollments were in decline or when financial pressures compelled them to admit a larger number of students (Peril 2006, 46; Tidball et al. 1999, 12).³³ World War II signaled the beginning of a dramatic, world-wide expansion of higher education. In the immediate postwar era, approximately 30 percent of Americans between the ages of 18 and 22 were enrolled in the nation's colleges and universities (Altbach 2005, 20). However, women's presence as a proportion of college students declined significantly during the postwar era (Eisenmann 2006, 3-4; Pearson, Shavlik, and Touchton 1989, 16-17). As historian Linda Eisenmann notes, in hopes of creating space for returning veterans, some schools implemented quotas for women and non-veterans immediately after the war (2006, 49). "Many women," notes Eisenmann, "were rejected from schools that, five years earlier, would have welcomed their presence" (2006, 49).

³³ The former scenario was illustrated as early as the Civil War when the University of Wisconsin and a number of other male colleges admitted women in order to fill their classrooms (Miller-Bernal 2004, 4)

Picking Up the Pieces: Higher Education During the Post-War Era (1944-1960)

The rates at which women and men obtained college degrees had increased steadily throughout the early twentieth century. After World War II, the gender gap in U.S. higher educational attainment increased dramatically. Although men had consistently earned college degrees at higher rates than women, they began to outpace women by a significant margin around 1930 (Goldin, Katz, and Kuziemko 2006). Much of this trend is directly related to federal intervention into higher education during the postwar era. With the creation of the Serviceman's Readjustment Act (the "G.I. Bill") of 1944, the federal government significantly expanded access to higher education for military veterans—98 percent of whom were men (Mettler 2005, 7-11; see also Bound and Turner 2002, 787). When lawmakers implemented this program at the end of World War II, they fundamentally changed the gender dynamics of American higher education while setting an important precedent for federal higher education policy.

The G.I. Bill of 1944

On June 22, 1944, lawmakers signed the G.I. Bill into law. This ground breaking program provided a variety of benefits to veterans returning home from World War II.³⁴ Those who served in active duty for more than 90 days and who had been honorably discharged were eligible to take advantage of the bill's generous grants for higher education. To reward veterans for their service in World War II and to temper the effect

³⁴ The creation of the G.I. Bill was a truly ground breaking event. Before the creation of the G.I. Bill in 1944, the federal government's activity in the area of higher education was confined to the donation of federal land for college-building (the Morrill Land Grant Acts) and federal assistance for vocational Education (the 1917 Smith-Hughes Act). In 1944, however, lawmakers institutionalized direct student aid in the form of grants to help military veterans pursue postsecondary training.

of their return to the labor force, the federal government provided veterans with grants to cover college tuition and fees, hoping to steer a significant portion of them into institutions of higher education. In addition to generous tuition grants, G.I. Bill benefits also provided a monthly stipend of \$75 for single veterans, \$105 for veterans with one dependent, or \$120 for those with two or more dependents (Bound and Turner 2002, 789-90; Gladieux, King, and Corrigan 2005, 174; Mettler 2002, 354; Miller-Bernal 2004, 8-9).³⁵

The G.I. Bill was undeniably successful in expanding veterans' access to higher education in the postwar era. More than 2 million citizens took advantage of program benefits, costing the federal government more than \$5.5 billion (Olson 1973, 596). It is important to note, however, that these federal resources were awarded overwhelmingly to American men, while the nation's women received virtually no federal student aid. Historical data indicate that the G.I. Bill was a resounding success in promoting increased access to higher education for veterans, and this success is closely associated with the program's effectiveness in expanding access to higher education (Eisenmann 2006, 54; Thelin 2011, 267). Immediately after World War II, approximately 70 percent of male students enrolled in America's post-secondary institutions were veterans (Bound and Turner 2002, 785; Conway, Steuernagel, and Ahern 2005, 22; Eisenmann 2006, 28; Mettler 2005; Rosenberg 2008, 166). Compared with 1.5 million total students before

³⁵ The exception to the criteria of honorable discharge and 90 days of service is early discharge due to disability sustained during duty.

The G.I. Bill went beyond providing direct financial support for higher education, by also offering veterans low-interest home mortgages and business loans. For further discussion of the specific benefits and provisions of the G.I. legislation, see Eckelberry (1945, 121), Eisenmann (2006, 47), and Rosenberg (2008, 143).

World War II, an astounding 1.1 million World War II veterans were enrolled in postsecondary programs in 1947 (Geiger 2005, 61).

Women had a markedly different experience with the G.I. Bill. During World War II, American women actively contributed to the war effort, fighting on the home-front by stepping into positions that were previously held by men. As non-veterans, however, these women were not eligible to receive the benefits of the G.I. Bill. At the end of the war, they were encouraged to act as “responsible citizens” by returning to the home and reserving jobs in the labor force for male veterans (Eisenmann 2002, 133). The resulting exodus of women from the work force coincided with an emphasis on the notion that men had the greatest claims to higher education because they had an economic imperative to participate in the labor force. They were, according to dominant gender norms, the rightful beneficiaries of the skills and capacities that higher education would provide. While, at the mass level, women were largely ineligible for G.I. Bill benefits by virtue of their non-veteran status, a small number of women—comprising 2 percent of soldiers serving in active military duty during World War II—were eligible veterans (Mettler 2005, 144). Considering this small proportion, it comes as little surprise that fewer than 3 percent—or “64,728 of the 2,232,000 World War II veterans who attended college under the G.I. Bill”—were women (Bennett 1996, 202). Of the female G.I.s who were eligible to take advantage of the G.I. benefits, many did not use them because they were not aware of their eligibility, their family responsibilities precluded the use of education benefits, or they did not believe that they were entitled to the same benefits as their male counterparts (Eisenmann 2006; Mettler 2005). Because female World War II veterans generally hailed from more privileged socioeconomic

backgrounds and were typically encouraged to pursue higher education as children, low rates of program adoption among female veterans points to the potency of postwar gender norms (Mettler 2005, 146).

The small percentage of women who did take advantage of G.I. Bill benefits were often granted benefits that were “inferior” to those enjoyed by their male counterparts and faced “hostility from the veterans’ organizations that helped so many male veterans obtain their G.I. Bill benefits” (Canaday 2003, 956). Thus, gender inequality in the allocation of G.I. Bill benefits advantaged men while placing women at a significant disadvantage. As Suzanne Mettler notes, “had the female veterans been different in only one regard—sex—they would have used the G.I. Bill at higher average rates than male veterans did. Gender was the sole factor that stood in the way of their G.I. Bill usage” (2005, 146). Edward Humes concurs, noting that the administration of the G.I. Bill program was fraught with discrimination against women (2006, 204). Banks and post-secondary institutions, in particular, were notoriously less-than-helpful—if not downright hostile—to women claiming benefits.

Thus, the incredible effects of the G.I. Bill for expanding access to higher education were primarily reserved for men. While women had comprised almost half of all students during the war, they represented only 28.8 percent of students in 1948 (Eisenmann 2006, 55). Although the G.I. Bill provided access to higher education for a significant portion of Americans who otherwise would not have obtained advanced training, women were largely excluded from these benefits.

The Family Calculus of Education Funding and Education in the Postwar Era

In addition to the role that the G.I. Bill played in expanding veterans' access to higher education during the post-World War II period, social norms further contributed to a decline in higher educational attainment among women by encouraging women to devote themselves to raising families (Eisenmann 2002, 133).³⁶ Americans who were ineligible for the G.I. Bill—an overwhelmingly female group—continued to have difficulty securing funds for college. For families pressed by limited resources, the decision to invest in a son's education often trumped investing in a daughter's. According to political scientist Frederick Hess, “[a] widespread practice was for parents to designate one son among their several children who would be groomed to go to college, with all family members pitching in to raise money for expenses” (2007, 21-22). Economist Mabel Newcomer echoes this sentiment, noting that parents were rarely willing to spend as much on their daughters' education as their sons' education. “It is difficult to persuade parents to pay what a good education costs for their sons,” she explained. “It is even more difficult when it is the daughter's education that is under consideration” (Newcomer 1959, 152). In addition to the challenges women faced in securing financial support from family members, women had difficulty securing college funding from other sources, as scholarships for women were scarce, and women faced limited opportunities to work their way through school.³⁷

³⁶ Data from the U.S. Department of Education illustrate these trends. After 1940, the rates at which men earned bachelor's degrees increased sharply, peaking around 1950 and then declining (NCES 2011)—perhaps as a result of male participation in the Korean War from 1950 through 1953.

³⁷ In the case of scholarships during the 1950s, Michael McPherson and Morton Schapiro note that “the policies schools adopted in awarding scholarships were largely uncoordinated and idiosyncratic, often reflecting the views of particular donors” (1998, 6).

Higher Education Since the Mid-Twentieth Century (1960-Present)

In the following chapters, I will consider whether and how federal student aid programs have acted as significant intervening variables in the relationship between educational attainment and political engagement among in the United States. While scholars have paid a great deal of attention to the importance of higher education for Americans' socioeconomic well-being and their political engagement, we have yet to explore the role that government programming has played in this relationship. Examining landmark federal higher education policies created in the mid-twentieth century—namely, the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958, the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965, and Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments—I consider the value of public policies for not only promoting greater higher educational attainment among women, but also for narrowing the gender gap in U.S. political engagement. Thus, this dissertation recognizes higher education programming to be an important, albeit overlooked, component of the American welfare state—one that is crucial to the democratic principles of equal opportunity and broad political involvement. After examining the historical development of landmark federal student aid programs that have significantly expanded women's access to higher education, I study the effectiveness of these programs for promoting social and political equality among women and men.

CHAPTER THREE

Accidental Egalitarianism: How the National Defense Education Act of 1958 and the Higher Education Act of 1965 Promoted Gender Equality in Terms of Status

The creation of the Serviceman’s Readjustment Act—popularly known as the “G.I. Bill”—in 1944 marked the birth of federal student aid in the United States and established the first of four programs that would ultimately constitute the pillars of American higher education policy. Throughout the early decades of the twentieth century, rates of male and female college enrollment had increased steadily. Prior to World War II, men tended to earn college degrees at a higher rate than women, but the gender gap in degree attainment was relatively narrow. In creating the G.I. Bill, the federal government significantly altered this trend by expanding access to higher education for millions of American veterans, the vast majority of whom were men. The G.I. Bill promoted high levels of male enrollment in U.S. colleges and universities in the postwar era: veterans comprised approximately 70 percent of the male population in America’s post-secondary institutions (Bound and Turner 2002, 785; Conway, Ahern, and Steuernagel 2005, 22; Eisenmann 2006, 28; Mettler 2005; Rosenberg 2008, 166). Of the 2.2 million World War II veterans who used the G.I. Bill to pursue college degrees, fewer than 65,000—a mere 3 percent—were women (Bennett 1996, 202). Because beneficiaries of G.I. Bill benefits were disproportionately male, the program did little to promote higher educational attainment for American women (Keppel 1987, 49; Mettler 2005). As a result, the gender gap in American college degree attainment grew

considerably in the postwar era, a trend that had significant ramifications for gender equality in the United States.

But, fourteen years after creating the G.I. Bill, U.S. lawmakers deviated from its gender-biased style of allocating higher educational support by passing the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958. This program emerged in the wake of the Soviet Union's *Sputnik* launches on October 4th and November 2nd of 1957. Viewing this demonstration of Soviet prowess in science and technology as a decided victory for communism, Americans sought to identify the root of the nation's failure to keep pace with the Soviets in the space race. A disproportionate amount of criticism fell upon the nation's educational system (Clowse 1981, 13; Flemming 1960, 134; Marsh and Gortner 1963, 24), which citizens regarded as directly related to the nation's ability to survive in an increasingly competitive international arena. Citizens expected the federal government to secure the nation's safety by providing support for education. Seven years after passing the NDEA, lawmakers provided additional federal support for higher education by offering need-based loans and grants to women and men under the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965, which continued the trend of gender egalitarian targeting of student aid. The "Title IV Programs" contained in the HEA's eponymous core title extended the NDEA's National Defense Student Loan program, created the new Guaranteed Student Loan (GSL) program, and offered need-based Basic Educational Opportunity Grants.³⁸ The NDEA and the HEA revolutionized American higher education by providing federal support to low-income men and women as they pursued

³⁸ In 1972, Basic Educational Opportunity Grants were renamed Pell Grants in honor of Sen. Claiborne Pell (D-RI). Guaranteed Student Loans were renamed Stafford Loans in honor of Sen. Robert T. Stafford (R-VT) in 1988.

college degrees. The creation of these programs represents the first time that the federal government provided gender-egalitarian support for higher education. Why did the NDEA and HEA—absent intense mobilization on the part of women’s organizations—break from precedent by including women as equal beneficiaries of federal student aid absent intense mobilization on the part of women’s organizations? Why did these programs depart from the heavily gendered tradition of American social welfare policies, which had typically treated men and women differently by structuring benefit receipt around the masculine role of military soldier and the feminine roles of mother and widow (Gordon 1994; Mettler 1998; Mink 1995; Skocpol 1992; Sapiro 1990)? The inclusion of women as the beneficiaries of NDEA and HEA benefits is particularly puzzling, considering the lack of intense mobilization among women’s groups during the 1950s and early 1960s.

This chapter examines these surprising and highly significant departures from the social policy precedent by considering how the programs were fashioned and the impact that they have had for gender equality in terms of status in the polity. In this examination of the development of the National Defense Education Act and the Higher Education Act, I take seriously the importance of a political context shaped by Cold War politics on the international stage and contention over civil rights on the domestic front. Fully appreciating the link between these issues and federal education policy is crucial to understanding how the NDEA and the HEA successfully institutionalized gender egalitarian support for college students and how they narrowed the gender gap in higher educational attainment that had been exacerbated by the G.I. Bill. Additionally, recognizing the importance of domestic and foreign policy concerns to the development

of these landmark policies is crucial to comprehending why the NDEA and HEA radically departed from the gendered style of previous social policies and how it significantly altered the gender dynamics of citizenship in the United States.

I find that three political forces facilitated the creation of federal student aid programs that were truly inclusive of women. First, the Soviet Union's launch of the *Sputnik* satellites provided what John W. Kingdon (2003) calls a "window of opportunity" that enabled lawmakers to successfully move existing goals and proposals for federal higher educational aid through Congress. In the aftermath of the *Sputnik* launches, which were broadly interpreted as signifying the U.S.'s weakness in science and technology, education loomed large in the national psyche. Citizens expected lawmakers to enhance national security by implementing educational reforms that would strengthen Americans' ability to compete with the Soviet Union. Recognizing the window of opportunity provided by the U.S.'s disappointing showing in the space race, policy entrepreneurs took advantage of this occasion to promote student financial aid programs that they had been previously unable to pass. Throughout the 1940s and early 1950s, Sen. Lister Hill (D-AL) and Rep. Carl Elliott (D-AL) had attempted, unsuccessfully, to pass legislation that would provide federal funding to Americans pursuing college education (Elliott and D'Orso 1992, 151). They recognized the opportunity that the *Sputnik* crisis presented and took great pains to develop a proposal that would successfully clear the House and the Senate. Working with representatives from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Hill and Elliott reframed their previous policy proposals into a bill that was sensitive to—and in some ways empowered by—the day's most pressing political issues. They understood that the only way that they

could take advantage of the window of opportunity provided by *Sputnik* was to devise a bill that failed to incite intense opposition.

The second force that contributed to the passage of gender egalitarian federal student aid policies was the domestic struggle over civil rights. Central to Lister Hill's and Carl Elliott's efforts to enact a student aid program was a keen interest in directing federal resources to support education in southern states (Clowse 1981, 43; Urban 2010, 17), a region that was taxed by the strain of maintaining segregated, thus dual, school systems. Their efforts were thwarted by Southern Democrats' aversion to the prospect of federal control over education. Opponents of federal student aid feared that such aid would permit the federal government to force integration upon southern states or to penalize segregated schools by withholding funds. They also disagreed about the propriety of granting federal funds to private institutions—particularly, at the elementary and secondary levels, Catholic schools. Taking seriously Southern Democrats' mistrust of federal control and their fear that federal education support would ultimately force rapid desegregation in Southern schools, Hill and Elliott intentionally omitted references to race, religion, and sex from their proposal for federal student aid. Thus, the path-breaking gender neutrality of the National Defense Education Act, I argue, resulted from a political strategy that prioritized successfully channeling federal education funds to economically needy regions, rather than promoting gender equality in higher educational attainment. Based on the precedent established by the G.I. Bill, we might have expected policy makers in 1958 to enact a student aid program that approximated its national security-centered approach by targeting federal education funds to students who would embark upon careers in the crucial—and male dominated—fields of engineering and

science, the military, or other areas deemed directly related to national security. Instead, the NDEA provided federal loans to undergraduates, absent requirements that students pursue any particular area of study (Davenport 1982, 32; Sundquist 1968, 176).³⁹ Similarly absent from the program were eligibility conditions related to race, ethnicity, religion, or gender. By incorporating broad, highly generalized criteria for student loan eligibility into the NDEA, Hill and Elliott could assure liberals that the bill was inherently anti-discriminatory, while simultaneously promising Southern Democrats that the program would have little bearing on the racial composition of southern colleges and universities.

Finally, I find that Cold War politics represents the third force that promoted women's inclusion as beneficiaries of federal student aid in the mid-twentieth century. When the Soviet Union launched *Sputnik I*, Sen. Lister Hill (D-AL) and Rep. Carl Elliott (D-AL) strategically harnessed the conservative rhetoric of anticommunism and public anxiety over Soviet technological advances to promote their existing proposals for federal funding for education at all levels (Anderson 2007, 21-56; Carleton 2002, 113; Clowse 1981, 49; Cross 2010, 12; Elliott and D'Orso 1992, 141; Hamilton 1987, 224; Kimberling 1995, 69-70; Sufrin 1963, 2; Twight 2002, 143; Urban 2010, 77).⁴⁰ I hypothesize that the

³⁹ A widely held misconception is that the NDEA provided money primarily for science and technology fields. While the program did provide money for the purchase of science equipment for grade schools, support for higher education was much more general. Although students who had demonstrated strong performance in science, mathematics, and foreign language were given "special consideration" during the review of applications for undergraduate loans, awards were ultimately provided irrespective of the area of postsecondary study that the recipient pursued. As Wayne Urban notes, popular conceptualizations of the NDEA as a science and mathematics program are "grossly oversimplified" (2010, 5).

⁴⁰ The Eisenhower administration—facing the pressure of public opinion favorable to federal education aid—reluctantly went along with these proposals. Neither the president nor conservative members of Congress believed that the *Sputnik* "crisis" was as grave a situation as others claimed it to be (Anderson 2007, 44; Clowse 1981, 136; Divine 1993, 165; Twight 2002, 145). It has even been suggested that the magnitude of the threat posed by the Soviet Union's space innovations was intentionally amplified by

gender-neutrality of the National Defense Education Act reflects a political imperative specific to Cold War politics. It seems plausible that the authors of the NDEA refrained from incorporating sex-based restrictions into their legislative proposals to drive home the Cold War argument that the nation's security depended on its ability to harness *all* available intellectual resources, or "manpower," in competition with an increasingly sophisticated Soviet Union.⁴¹ Scholars have shown that Cold War politics aided the efforts of civil rights activists by highlighting the hypocrisy of U.S. advocacy for democracy and fairness abroad, while a significant portion of the nation's own citizens were subjected to race based discrimination (Borstelmann 2001; Dudziak 2000). The politics of the Cold War may have promoted women's inclusion as beneficiaries of student aid. Federal aid proponents emphasized the need to construct a higher education program with broadly allocated education benefits that would strengthen the national security, keeping the nation at the forefront of scientific and technological discovery by expanding the pool of citizens who gained advanced training in fields related to science and engineering.

We will see that, by the time Congress considered the Higher Education Act, the success of the NDEA and a political context that advantaged liberal lawmakers who favored federal assistance for education facilitated its passage. As Michael Parsons notes, because the Democrats won decided victories in the 1964 elections, "most of the opponents to direct aid had been voted out of office" (1997, 37). The passage of the

lawmakers and members of the media who saw an opportunity to pass federal education legislation (Clowse 1981, 136; Twight 2002, 144).

⁴¹ I should note that, historically, "manpower" has been conceptualized as a gender-neutral concept that refers to the work of both men and women. During the Cold War, the term was used to describe the productive potential of the population in its entirety.

HEA further entrenched the federal government in the role of expanding access to higher education by providing federal student aid broadly to men as well as women. In the seven years between the passage of the NDEA and the HEA, Americans increasingly regarded higher education as a solid mechanism for improving socioeconomic status. They also became even more aware of the relationship between higher educational opportunity and women's socioeconomic well-being. By 1965, higher education represented a central component of the Johnson administration's War on Poverty.

Taken together, the National Defense Education Act and the Higher Education Act set a new standard for federal involvement in higher education and for the incorporation of female citizens as the full and equal beneficiaries of federal social policies. In so doing, these programs not only dramatically reshaped the gender dynamics of higher educational attainment in the United States, they also revolutionized the gender dynamics of American citizenship in terms of status by treating women as first-class citizens.

Institutionalizing Equal Opportunity through the Policymaking Process

A dominant approach to explaining the public policymaking process emphasizes the incremental nature of program development. From this perspective, the policies that lawmakers produce tend to differ marginally from existing programs (Lindblom 1959; Wildavsky 1964). "Policy does not move in leaps and bounds," asserts Charles Lindblom (1959, 84). Instead, he claims, public administrators in Western democracies choose to enact policies that differ incrementally from existing programs, which permits them to both simplify the range of proposals under consideration and to ensure that these

proposals are relevant (84). Historical institutionalists have emphasized the tendency of policymakers to build upon previously enacted programs when developing new policies (see, e.g., Amenta et al. 1987; Hecllo 1974; Mettler 1998; Pierson 1993; Pierson 1994). Paul Pierson argues that “[b]y accelerating the momentum behind one policy path,” the feedback effects of already established policies “render previously viable alternatives implausible” (1993, 609). Drawing upon this framework that emphasizes the “lock-in” effects that emanate from previously enacted public policies, we would expect that lawmakers enacting a federal education program in 1958 would have designed a policy that closely resembled existing federal education programs—namely, the Morrill Land Grant Acts, the Smith-Hughes Act, or the G.I. Bill—or previously enacted social policies. Had they adhered to an incremental approach to policymaking in 1958, the National Defense Act would have reflected the style of the Morrill Land Grant Acts by allocating federal funds for classroom construction or the approach taken by the Smith-Hughes Act by providing assistance for the sole purpose of enhancing the quality of instruction in a particular academic area. Similarly, it might have resembled the G.I. Bill by providing federal grants to military veterans or to students who were enrolled in programs specifically related to national security.

If policymakers had built primarily upon existing social programs, the education program that emerged in 1958 would have treated men and women differently—most likely targeting student aid to men, whose use of education benefits would presumably enhance their capacity to act as breadwinners for their families. Instead, lawmakers produced the National Defense Education Act—a gender-neutral, federal aid program that provided National Defense Student Loans directly to individual college students,

irrespective of their fields of study (P.L. 85-864; see also, Anderson 2007, 50). Because it provided federal funds directly to students on the non-gendered basis of need, the NDEA represents a dramatic departure from the G.I. Bill as well as other programs that had provided federal funds to support college infrastructure and academic programming.

While the incremental approach fails to capture the emergence of the National Defense Education Act in 1958, the theories of agenda setting and policy design offered by John W. Kingdon (2003) and Frank R. Baumgartner and Bryan D. Jones (1993) provide insight into the dramatic change that lawmakers successfully institutionalized in passing the NDEA. Policy windows, Kingdon argues, offer occasional “opportunities for action on given initiatives” that “open infrequently and do not stay open long” (2003, 166). The *Sputnik* crisis provided such a window. Political entrepreneurs capitalized upon the opportunity presented by this perceived crisis to institutionalize federal support for higher education.

Baumgartner and Jones provide further theoretical support for understanding the dramatic change precipitated by the passage of the National Defense Education Act and the subsequent enactment of the Higher Education Act. They argue that “policymaking in the United States is punctuated by bursts of activity that modify issue understandings and lead to non-incremental policy change” (1993, 54). Central to fully understanding agenda-setting and policy change is fully appreciating the generation and maintenance of issues or “public policy problems” (Baumgartner and Jones 1993, 42). Lawmakers who supported federal student aid drew upon the *Sputnik* crisis as a focusing event that enabled them to dramatically alter the national discourse regarding appropriate government support for education. Prior to the fall of 1957, lawmakers focused primarily

upon the problems presented by a national classroom shortage, and proposals for federal education support generally revolved around aid for school construction. The *Sputnik* launches facilitated a significant shift in Americans' understanding of the educational demands facing the nation, and this shift shaped federal higher education policy for years to come.

After political entrepreneurs capitalized upon the opportunity presented by this perceived crisis to institutionalize federal support for higher education, lawmakers drew upon auspicious political circumstances to further entrench individual-level aid for higher education with the passage of the 1965 Higher Education Act. Seven years after the passage of the NDEA, legislative proposals for federal student aid mirrored the landmark program in providing student aid benefits broadly to men and women. In its gender-neutrality, the HEA exemplifies the fact that, as Paul Pierson notes, “[p]ublic policies often create ‘spoils’ that provide a strong motivation for beneficiaries to mobilize in favor of programmatic maintenance or expansion” (1993, 599; see also Skocpol 1992).

Lawmakers and interest groups who recognized the political value of the NDEA's broad-reaching federal support for higher education advocated for expanded federal support in the form of direct aid to students that would permit their middle-class constituents to benefit from the federal largesse. This locking-in of the federal government's role in providing higher education exemplifies the effects of path dependence, as this new relationship between the federal government and student aid beneficiaries can be described as “greatly increasing the cost of adopting once possible alternatives and inhibiting exit from a current policy path” (Pierson 1993, 608). This analysis will illustrate the process by which lawmakers—whose primary objective was to strategically

avoid obstacles that would prevent them from providing federal funds to higher education—inadvertently revolutionized the gender dynamics of American higher education. By passing the National Defense Education Act of 1958, these political actors promoted gender egalitarianism in college affordability, while paving the way for the Higher Education Act of 1965, which would provide additional support for women and men as they pursued postsecondary degrees.

When Opportunity Knocks: Cold War, Civil Rights, and the Gender-Neutral Construction of the NDEA

Against All Odds: The Improbability of Passing Gender-Neutral Federal Student Aid in the Postwar United States

In the 1950s, the longstanding tradition of state and local predominance in the area of education made the prospect of expanding the federal role in educating citizens a dim one (Anderson 2007, 1-7; Cross 2010, 2; Twight 2002, 134). As the 85th congressional session got underway in January of 1957, the probability of passing a program for federal aid for higher education seemed particularly bleak. For years, Sen. Lister Hill (D-AL) and Rep. Carl Elliott (D-AL) had proposed legislation that would channel federal funds toward higher education but had been unable to successfully produce a program due to political challenges. Federal support for higher education faced formidable opposition from a range of political actors, including President Dwight Eisenhower and conservative Republicans who were suspicious of expanding the reach of the federal government in an area traditionally left to state and local governments. Southern Democrats also opposed federal student aid, arguing that federal education

policies would enable the government to force integration in slowly desegregating school systems.⁴²

For the president—who embraced a “God helps those who help themselves” philosophy on social policy—support for education was best left to state and local governments. Although the administration expressed tepid support for modest education proposals like federal aid for school construction and tax credits for families paying college expenses, it refrained from taking initiative in the area of education.

Additionally, the Eisenhower administration did not count gender equality in education among its chief concerns. During his 1956 State of the Union address, for example, Eisenhower expressed concern about gender inequality in employment. He did not, however, comment on the sizeable gender gap that characterized U.S. higher educational attainment (*Congressional Quarterly* 1956, 8). In August of 1957, the President’s Committee on Education Beyond High School, which Eisenhower had created the year before, encouraged the president push for increased federal support for higher education in familiar forms—land grants, G.I. Bill benefits, and funding for the recently established National Science Foundation. The committee also suggested that the federal government implement a system of tax deductions to assist low-income students and their families in financing college education. With the exception of tax deductions, which represented a novel proposal for student aid, these recommendations reflected a strong inclination to

⁴² Eisenhower’s previous efforts suggested that, while he disagreed with federal aid for students, he considered the task of improving school infrastructure to be worthy of federal intervention. During the early years of his presidency, he presented—albeit unsuccessfully—numerous proposals for school construction (Anderson 2007, 42; Clowse 1981, 46). The strength of the administration’s commitment to providing support for school infrastructure seems questionable, however, considering the failure of a unified Republican government to act on proposed legislation (Cross 2010, 7). Reluctance on the part of the Eisenhower administration and ambivalence among conservatives in Congress regarding the desirability of expanding the federal government’s role in education likely inhibited action in this area.

build upon programs that were already in place. Of the financial aid policies proposed—G.I. Bill benefits and tax deductions—the latter could have promoted gender parity in higher educational attainment because the tax credits would have been granted on the gender-neutral basis of need, as opposed to the masculine criterion of military service. However, lawmakers would not seriously consider higher education tax credits until the late twentieth century.

In Congress, existing proposals represented a much greater span of alternatives than the school construction and tax deduction possibilities being considered by the Eisenhower administration. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, educational reformers prioritized curriculum improvement in the areas of science and mathematics (Reese 2005, 225). In the mid-1950s, members of Congress had proposed scholarships for needy students, federal student loans and loan assistance, financial aid for students studying to become teachers, and the establishment of a United States Science Academy. They also presented more Eisenhower-friendly proposals for school construction and grants to the National Science Foundation. In the national legislature, policymakers presented financial aid proposals that had the capacity to increase women's access to college; yet without fail, these proposals became casualties of political battles over racial discrimination. When federal aid proposals were considered, liberal reformers like Rep. Adam Clayton Powell (D-NY) —an African American representative from Harlem, New York, who was a vocal proponent of civil rights—insisted that the legislation explicitly denounce racial discrimination. As a result, the programs in question typically suffered defeat at the hands of Southern Democrats.

As members of Congress considered early proposals for federal student aid, interest groups were quick to weigh-in on the issue.⁴³ Supporters of federal student aid included the National Education Association (NEA), the AFL-CIO, and the military-defense industry (Spring 1995, 59; Spring 2008, 403; Valenti 1959, 192).⁴⁴ The AFL-CIO established the Conference on Federal Aid to Education, which included numerous interest groups such as the American Federation of Teachers, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the National Veterans' Committee, the American Association of University Women, and the National Council of Jewish Women. Supporters of federal aid for education disagreed as to whether the government should provide general aid—which would provide schools with unrestricted financial support—or categorical aid—which would grant federal funds to the states and to local school systems for specific, predefined purposes or for select groups of students. Professional educators were stalwart supporters of general aid, while other federal aid supporters rejected the idea on the grounds that the government could not be trusted to effectively allocate federal funding (Anderson 2007, 47; Kliebard 1995, 228; Marsh and Gortner 1963, 25-26; Spring 1995, 59).

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, the American Legion, and various businessmen's and taxpayers' associations were vocal opponents of federal student aid measures (*Congressional Quarterly* 1957, 495-496;

⁴³ See Appendix A.3.1

⁴⁴ The NEA was a strong supporter of general aid to education, but the organization had a difficult time advocating for such aid in the face of weakened credibility stemming from many Americans' association of the NEA with progressive (also known as "life adjustment") education. Progressive education—which emphasized students' ability to cope with society and various life situations over a rigorous focus on traditional academic subjects—was viewed by many as a failing pedagogical framework and as the cause of the shortcomings in American education (Anderson 2007, 41; Kliebard 1995, 226).

Valenti 1959, 193). These groups were particularly suspicious of categorical aid proposals, which they saw as a “Trojan horse for federal control” (Anderson 2007, 8). Historically, the threat of federal control represented perhaps the most “rhetorically and politically potent” argument inhibiting lawmakers’ efforts to enact programs that would provide federal support for higher education (Anderson 2007, 51; see also Clowse 1981, 42; Twight 2002, 145-146).⁴⁵ The possibility that student aid policies could provide the federal government with an additional mechanism by which to control the states provoked the ire of Southern Democrats, who would mount the most vocal opposition to proposals for federal student aid. The objections of Southern Democrats posed a serious obstacle to passing any federal financial assistance program, let alone aid that overtly expanded college access for groups that were underrepresented in higher education, like women.

While women participated in many of the interest groups that advocated on behalf of federal student aid, the interests of women’s groups lay elsewhere. In the mid-1950s, these organizations did not consider higher education to be a central “women’s issue.” When, for example, the League of Women Voters and the General Federation of Women’s Clubs—two of the nation’s largest women’s organizations—produced policy statements alerting Congress of their primary political concerns in the spring of 1956, neither higher education nor education at the primary and secondary level were listed among their principal policy concerns (*Congressional Quarterly* 1956, 677). Granted,

⁴⁵ Interestingly, the issue of federal control had such political currency that it was even appropriated by proponents of federal student aid who favored extensive general aid, as opposed to aid narrowly allocated for particular academic areas. From their perspective, the federal government had no right to target federal support to students pursuing training in particular fields of study. Doing so, they argued, would involve an inappropriate level of federal control over American college students.

the National Women's Party had brought the issue of women's rights before Congress on numerous occasions in supporting the Equal Rights Amendment (*Congressional Quarterly* 1958, 575); but, the goal of increasing gender equality in higher educational opportunities failed to generate organized support from women's groups. Not surprisingly, women's issues did not represent a central part of Democrats' or Republicans' legislative agendas in the 1950s. This may have reflected the fact that women's political activism in the 1950s did not resemble the women's suffrage movement that had immediately followed World War I or the women's liberation movement that would occur in the late 1960s and 1970s.⁴⁶ After World War II, as A. Lanethea Mathews-Gardner notes, the influence of women's organizations was "especially limited" in the social welfare domain of national policy, as their bureaucratic allies—particularly the Children's and Women's Bureaus—had experienced a substantial decline in political power (2005, 553). Additionally, women's organizations faced the confines of Cold War politics, whereby vocal advocates for liberal policies intended to combat inequality could be labeled communist sympathizers.

While the muted nature of women's groups' political activism in the postwar era did little to promote the passage of a federal college aid program that would help women as well as men, the prospect of Congress' producing such a policy was augmented by the emergence of increasingly egalitarian public opinion. Two postwar surveys revealed Americans' progressive views regarding the higher education of women. In a January

⁴⁶ Rather than interpreting women's subdued mid-twentieth century activism as "the doldrums" (see, e.g., Rupp and Taylor 1987), A. Lanethea Mathews-Gardner offers a revisionist interpretation of this period that views the post-War activities of women's groups as "a critical period in which women remained politically active and feminist ideas germinated in a variety of institutions and organizations" (2005, 551). In so doing, Mathews-Gardner recognizes the importance of the 1950s and early 1960s as a "critical period" wherein women's civic organizations "became political," adopting more centralized, professionalized, and modernized structures (549-550).

1945 survey conducted by the Roper Organization, 73 percent of Americans said that if they had a daughter graduating from high school, they would prefer for her to attend college. Five years later, in July of 1950, a Roper Commercial Survey reported that 68 percent of Americans thought that women and men should be taught the same curriculum in college. These trends indicate that Americans increasingly viewed higher education as a worthwhile pursuit for men as well as women. Thus—in the event that lawmakers decided to enact a federal student aid program—the decision to provide aid to both genders would have resonated with public opinion.

Scaring Up Money for College: How the Politics of Crisis Promoted Gender Egalitarian Financial Aid

Although the Eisenhower administration, members of Congress, and various interest groups held defined positions on the propriety of federal involvement in education, the issue failed to gain traction until October 4, 1957. On that day, the Soviet Union won the race to space in spades. By successfully launching *Sputnik*, the first satellite to orbit the Earth, Soviet scientists debunked Americans' belief that the United States was the most technologically advanced nation in the world.⁴⁷ In the midst of Cold War tensions, this surprising demonstration of scientific prowess was seen as a decided victory for communism and facilitated the ascent of education to the top of the nation's political agenda. As Americans sought to identify the root of the nation's failure to keep pace with the Soviets, many pointed to the perceived failures of the nation's scientists, disaccord at the Pentagon, and suboptimal prioritizing of Cold War concerns by President

⁴⁷ Americans' concerns intensified on November 2nd, when the Soviet Union launched *Sputnik II*. This time, the satellite launched by Soviet scientists carried a dog, giving the Soviet Union the additional distinction of being the first country to successfully send a living organism into outer space.

Dwight D. Eisenhower. Others directed their frustration toward the educational system. Critics pointed to shortages in school infrastructure, a chronic lack of science equipment in many high school classrooms, American students' underachievement in mathematics, perilous secondary school dropout rates, and underwhelming levels of college attendance as reasons for the nation's disappointing showing on the space science and engineering front as well as indicators of vulnerability in the area of national security.

As Barbara Barksdale Clowse points out, the *Sputnik* crisis reflected the Zeitgeist of the Cold War, growing from an “all-inclusive ideology” characterized by “a grim rhetoric of survival” (1981, 8). Capitalizing on Americans' surprise following the Soviet triumph and the disappointment with which they viewed the U.S.'s comparative capabilities, political entrepreneurs who favored federal aid for education instigated public fears regarding the nation's security in the face of Soviet scientific—and presumably militaristic—advantage. This method of securing support for federal education policy drew upon Cold War politics to achieve the arguably unrelated goal of steering federal funds toward higher education. Lawmakers emphasized the necessity of shoring up U.S. “manpower” and preventing the waste of talent to ensure the nation's ability to survive in the face of increasingly sophisticated communist nations. By successfully juxtaposing Cold War politics with the shortcomings of American education, lawmakers and the media took advantage of the window of opportunity that the *Sputnik* crisis provided for expanding access to higher education.

Unlike progressive era social policies that benefited women at the behest of women's groups (Skocpol 1992), the gender-neutrality of the NDEA was rooted in lawmakers' resolve to take advantage of the window of opportunity presented by the

Sputnik crisis. Their strategic subversion of Cold War politics coupled with extreme caution regarding disputes over civil rights enabled proponents of federal student aid to significantly expand the nation's commitment to supporting citizens' higher educational pursuits. The accidental establishment of gender egalitarianism in U.S. higher education was a byproduct of this noteworthy feat.

In the Cold War context, the political currency of emphasizing American women's civic engagement and asserting their full integration into democratic society (Eisenmann 2006, 14-15) enhanced the likelihood that U.S. lawmakers would pass a gender-neutral federal student aid program. They had an incentive to emphasize women's active participation in electoral politics and to promote the nation's full utilization of women's skills and talents. Compared to the Soviet Union, however, the United States failed to fully utilize the talents of its women. While many Soviet women obtained advanced education, worked in crucial science and engineering fields, and directly contributed to the nation's prowess in science and technology, American women obtained higher education at much lower rates than men and were rarely employed in fields related to science and technology. Lawmakers argued that, to compete with the Soviet Union and to protect American democracy, it was imperative that the United States take advantage of all available "manpower." Just as "showcasing American women's political involvement became a particularly common way to deprecate Soviet life" (Eisenmann 2006, 15), educating women and drawing upon their talents in the name of democracy resonated with Cold War politics.

In addition to this emphasis on fully utilizing the nation's human resources, the domestic struggle over civil rights also shaped lawmakers' gender egalitarian approach to

pursuing student aid during this window of opportunity. Given their Alabama roots, Sen. Lister Hill and Rep. Carl Elliott were unlikely champions of federal student aid. Why, when Southern Democrats typically opposed higher education policy, did Hill and Elliott spearhead proposals for federal support for college students? For most Southern Democrats, federal student aid was viewed as a potential mechanism for federal intrusion into the affairs of individual states. Many of these lawmakers represented constituencies that would have been angered by the possibility that a student aid program could force integration upon southern colleges and universities by withholding funds from institutions that were not in compliance with the Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. Although Hill and Elliott hailed from the South, they were nonetheless national politicians who recognized the value of federal higher education aid for their region. They also hailed from northern Alabama, a region known for its populist politics. Thus, for Hill and Elliott, the benefits that could be derived from steering federal funds to their impoverished region outweighed the potential political costs of championing this type of program. They wanted a broad-reaching student aid program that would provide a large number of young citizens with human capital that could yield economic gains for the South. For Hill, a strong interest in education had emerged from his earliest days of campaigning in northern Alabama, a region that was historically characterized by populist political views (Hamilton 1987, 224). By the 1950s, Hill had distinguished himself in the Senate as a strong proponent for public health programs. His interest in student aid represented an extension of his commitment to using social welfare programs to support citizens. For Elliott, his personal experience as a struggling college student shaped his commitment to expanding higher educational access for young

Americans. After setting off to college at the University of Alabama with only \$2.38 in his pocket, Elliott spent his college years hustling between a full load of courses and the numerous jobs that he held to pay for tuition and living expenses. Knowing firsthand the challenges that low-income students faced in financing higher education, passing a federal student aid program represented one of the central legislative goals of his career (Elliott and D’Orso 1992, 43-58; 126-127).

Recognizing the potential to use national concerns regarding the *Sputnik* launches as an occasion to promote their goal of creating a broad-reaching federal student aid program, Hill and Elliott had to frame their education program in a way that would be agreeable to Southern Democrats. At the same time, they wanted to prevent Rep. Adam Clayton Powell (D-NY) from insisting that the federal student aid legislation include an antidiscrimination clause. The infamous “Powell Amendments,” as these riders were known, proposed that the policies to which they were attached—typically school construction aid and military programs— prohibit benefit allocation on the basis of race, color, religion, nationality, or sex. These amendments proved especially controversial because, in addition to gaining the support of “big-city Democrats” who agreed with their central premise (Cross 2010, 10), they garnered the votes of Republicans and Southern Democrats who wished to kill the legislation. These lawmakers would vote in support of the antidiscrimination amendment and then vote *against* the entire bill on the grounds that the antidiscrimination amendment made the proposal disagreeable to their constituents. To save the National Defense Education Act from such a fate, Hill and Elliott carefully structured the program in a way that was vague enough to be interpreted by liberals as inherently nondiscriminatory and by Southern Democrats as innocuous.

This was done by omitting Powell's antidiscrimination amendment and offering a means-test and enrollment at a U.S. institution of higher education as the only formal criteria for financial aid eligibility. The fact that the bill would provide federal aid to any student who satisfied these criteria satisfied the liberals in Congress, while Southern Democrats were reassured by the enrollment criteria. By this standard, the government would offer support to any needy college student; but students could only use this aid where they successfully gained admission. For colleges and universities in the segregated South, the criteria for financial aid eligibility had no bearing on race-based admissions policies and, thus, satisfied erstwhile opponents of federal aid. While this framing did little to expand African Americans' access to southern colleges and universities, it inadvertently institutionalized gender equality in college affordability.

The Politics of Enactment: Design, Deliberation, and the Passage of the National Defense Education Act

Designing Federal Student Aid: Two Proposals

Having already convened subcommittee hearings on the topic of education in 1957, Rep. Carl Elliott (D-AL) recognized the political currency of the *Sputnik* launches and made plans to strategically argue that providing federal support for education in general—and higher education in particular—was crucial to ensuring the nation's security (Elliott and D'Orso 1992, 151). Taking advantage of the unique opportunity presented by the *Sputnik* launch, Elliott worked with Sen. Lister Hill (D-AL) to quickly produce a viable federal student aid proposal that they would present to their respective legislative chambers when Congress reconvened in January of 1958. Over the December

1957 holiday season, Hill and Elliott worked to successfully tie their previous proposals for educational aid to national security in a way that would preclude both rejection by conservative members of the legislature and the presidential veto. To construct such a proposal, they worked closely with Elliot Richardson, Associate Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW). Their work was geared toward achieving one primary goal: constructing legislation that could withstand three controversial issues which had long precluded the passage of federal education proposals: the prospect of federal control over education, maintaining the separation of church and state, and dealing with segregated schools.⁴⁸ The Hill-Elliott measure, which was strategically named the “National Defense Education Act,” authorized \$1.6 billion over the course of five years to provide 40,000 merit-based scholarships to undergraduate students, federal student loans, a work study program, and money for vocational education (*Congressional Quarterly* 1958, 34).⁴⁹ In addition to providing scholarships and loans to talented students pursuing higher education, the proposal also included funding for teacher training centers and instructional equipment to enhance learning at all levels of education (Elliott and D’Orso 1992, 153-154).

Understanding the political benefits of “coupling solutions to problems” (Kingdon 2003, 20) and recognizing that the policy window presented by the *Sputnik* crisis would be “of short duration” (169), Carl Elliott worked to quickly and effectively tie his aid

⁴⁸ In a telling characterization, Sen. Lister Hill described the challenge of passing a federal education bill as simultaneously avoiding “the Scylla of race and the Charbydis of religion” (Hamilton 1987, 225; see also Urban 2010).

⁴⁹ The student loan component of the Hill-Elliott proposal coincided with contemporary public opinion regarding the use of loans as a mechanism for increasing higher educational access. In response to a Gallup poll conducted in January of 1958, 77 percent of Americans agreed that the federal government should establish long-term loans for students who wished to attend college. Only 15 percent of respondents disagreed.

proposal to the contemporaneous Cold War crisis. Although Elliott and Hill packaged their proposal as a temporary response to this particular crisis, they had no intention of scaling back federal aid to education once it had been enacted. As Elliott later wrote:

“Although training scientists and engineers was a primary focus, we were looking far past the immediate crisis. We were looking at opening the doors of education across the board, in the humanities as well as the ‘hard’ sciences. The crisis gave us a focal point to get our bill made into law—that’s how we came up with the title the National *Defense* Education Act. But we realized this bill’s effects would extend beyond the current climate of that time. It was education in general, from physics to philosophy, that we wanted to make available to the best young minds of this country” (Elliott and D’Orso 1992, 153; Emphasis his).

Elliott’s assertion makes clear his intent in crafting the NDEA. Hill and Elliott knowingly and purposefully took advantage of the window of opportunity provided by the *Sputnik* launches to successfully involve the federal government in providing support for higher education.

Another important component of Hill’s and Elliott’s strategy for constructing a viable bill was their inclusion of individual scholarships in the NDEA. In the midst of controversy over whether federal student aid programs would require segregated schools in the South to integrate, Hill and Elliott recognized that providing federal aid directly to individuals, rather than to schools, would successfully avert the segregation issue. As Barbara Barksdale Clowse recognizes, by awarding scholarships, states “could still practice segregation as long as their commissions made these [federal financial aid] awards without discrimination” (1981, 121). In other words, any low-income student

could feasibly receive a federal grant, but the student would still have to gain admission to an institution of higher education to utilize the award. Therefore, institutions—including segregated colleges in the South—would retain the ability to control the racial composition of their student populations.

In the final months of 1957, the Eisenhower administration also worked to design a proposal for federal education support in response to heightened national interest in education that was precipitated by *Sputnik*. Early on, the president consulted HEW Secretary Marion B. Folsom and Associate Secretary Elliot Richardson; U.S. Education Commissioner Dr. Lawrence G. Derthick; and HEW Undersecretary John A. Perkins to formulate the administration's proposal. Charging Elliot Richardson with the task of crafting the administration's bill, Eisenhower emphasized his preference for a program that would promote the retention of national talent via testing programs to identify gifted students, enhance guidance counseling services, provide support for the National Science Foundation, allocate funds to improve foreign language instruction, allocate additional money for increasing the number of science teachers in American schools, and provide equipment for science instruction in secondary schools (Spring 2008, 403). Bearing in mind the president's priorities, Richardson began a process of negotiating, moving between HEW, the White House, and Congress to craft the administration's proposal for higher education aid. He also sought the input of educators and college administrators (Urban 2010, 88).

The result of Richardson's efforts, the "Educational Development Act of 1958" was "much more bare-bones" than the Democrats' NDEA proposal (Elliott and D'Orso 1992, 154). It proposed awarding 10,000 need-based scholarships to students with

exceptional academic records. Although it did not require that recipients pursue higher education in any particular fields, it did target scholarships to students with solid backgrounds in science and mathematics. The administration's proposal was presented to Congress by Sen. H. Alexander Smith (R-NJ) and Rep. Carroll D. Kearns (R-PA). The Smith-Kearns bill proposed a \$1 billion program that centered upon modest scholarships for students and grants to the National Science Foundation. It also allocated money for the improvement of education-related statistical services and foreign language programs. As per Eisenhower's insistence, the Republican proposal emphasized the temporary, emergency-related nature of the proposed legislation.

Hill's and Elliott's central objective in proposing the National Defense Education Act was raising the intellectual level of all Americans (see, e.g., Kliebard 1995, 229). As such, it comes as no surprise that the Democrats took issue with Eisenhower's insistence that aid should be awarded on the basis of merit. Under such a system, the federal government would provide assistance to a smaller group of especially talented students instead of granting aid broadly, on the more inclusive bases of citizenship and need. Lister Hill and Carl Elliott adamantly objected to Eisenhower's proposal, which flew in the face of their overall goal of liberalizing access to college. Analogously, the inclusion of gender-based requirements for qualifying for NDEA benefits would have been similarly politically unacceptable.

Enacting Federal Student Aid during the Era of Strong Committees

In Congress, the battle over federal student aid was a bipartisan struggle that pitted conservative Republicans and Southern Democrats against liberal Democrats

(Anderson 2007, 1-2; 55). In the late 1950s, the House of Representatives was the more conservative of the national legislature's two chambers, as Southern Democrats in the House tended to be more conservative than liberal Republicans in the Senate. This meant that the successful passage of the NDEA depended upon Carl Elliott's ability to win the support of moderate Republicans in the House, a feat that would enable him to compensate for a lack of support from Southern Democrats (Clowse 1981, 71). The House of Representatives represented a crucial hurdle for federal education aid proposals, and the success or failure of the National Defense Education Act would depend largely upon that chamber's deliberations.

Because congressional committee chairs were particularly powerful during this period, committees represented decisive battlefields for social policy proposals—points at which many met their demise. When lawmakers began what would be an eight-month process of considering educational proposals on January 27, 1958, Lister Hill and Carl Elliott in Congress and Elliott Richardson at HEW knew that getting a viable bill through the necessary committees would require a great deal of work. In the House, Education and Labor Committee Chair Graham Barden (D-NC) proved a formidable opponent of federal aid for education, and his opposition to federal education support generally meant that such proposals never survived committee deliberations. However, members of a new guard of liberal lawmakers had joined the Education and Labor Committee—Representatives Carl Elliott (D-AL), Edith Green (D-OR), Frank Thompson (D-NJ), and Stewart Udall (D-AZ)—forming a coalition that championed the cause of federal support for education (Elliott and D'Orso 1992, 142).

Chairman Barden was not the only formidable opponent of federal education proposals. For the better part of the eight months that they were considered by Congress, the Hill-Elliott and Smith-Kearn bills would languish in the House Rules Committee. Chaired by another conservative Democrat, Howard W. Smith (D-VA), this committee had been a virtual graveyard for previous education proposals.⁵⁰ Commenting on the significance of clearing the Rules Committee for successfully passing higher education legislation, Carl Elliott recalled that “[d]elivering the National Defense Education Act to the Rules Committee was like sending it into a black hole,” and if Chairman Smith prevailed, “it would never have been heard of again” (Elliott and D’Orso 1992, 157).

Under other circumstances, complicated political and ideological issues would likely have made it impossible that either the Hill-Elliott or Smith-Kearns bills would enjoy a fate different than the host of unsuccessful federal aid proposals that had been presented to Congress in the postwar era. The politics of the Cold War, however, gave these proposals a fighting chance. It was also fortunate that lawmakers were already working toward producing federal education legislation when *Sputnik I* launched. Their readiness to take advantage of this opportunity significantly increased the probability that an education proposal would gain passage during the 85th Congress. Within the House Education and Labor Committee, Chairman Barden’s decision to reject the dominant practice of adhering to seniority when selecting subcommittee chairs in 1957 may have also enhanced the probability that an education bill would successfully emerge from the

⁵⁰ As the chairman of the House Rules Committee in the late 1950s, Smith wielded considerable power and was described as “perhaps more powerful than any other single man in Congress at that time” (Elliott and D’Orso 1992, 156).

The Rules Committee of the 1950s has even been characterized as the “third branch of Congress” because its members “have the power to stall or completely stop any piece of legislation that they choose” (Elliott and D’Orso 1992, 156).

committee (Elliott and D’Orso 1992, 142-144).⁵¹ In filling the last of five subcommittee chairs, Barden made the unconventional decision to skip over Rep. Adam Clayton Powell (D-NY) to appoint a fellow southerner, the more-junior Carl Elliott. While Elliott acknowledged that Chairman Barden’s decision may have been based on racism, he maintained that “...for me and the rest of the committee members eager to finally get an education bill in motion” the decision was fortunate because “any subcommittee headed by Adam Clayton Powell was dead in the water from the beginning” (Elliott and D’Orso 1992, 143). This view was rooted in the political controversy created by Powell’s insistence that federal education programs be nondiscriminatory, which invoked the ire of Southern Democrats who represented locales that would presumably use federal funds to support segregated school systems. Elliott and other members of the Education and Labor Committee believed that the Representative from Alabama could produce higher education proposals that dealt with school segregation in a fashion that would be less inflammatory than any method that Powell was sure to adopt.

Accidental Egalitarianism: the Political Necessity of Gender-Neutrality for the Successful Passage of the NDEA

Once appointed chairman of the House Special Education Subcommittee, Carl Elliott immediately consulted with national education lobbyists, including the American Council on Education, the Association of American Colleges, and the National Education Association as he and his staff began to craft an education bill. He also charged his legislative aides with studying existing higher education statutes (Clowse 1981, 52;

⁵¹ The very existence of these subcommittees represented a veritable coup for federal aid supporters. As Carl Elliott noted, “the subcommittee is typically the first step—through its research and hearings—toward launching a bill” (1992, 142). This triumph for the liberal coalition represents one of the earliest harbingers of the NDEA’s imminent success.

Elliott and D’Orso 1992, 143-146).⁵² Beginning in August of 1957, Elliott chaired cross-country hearings before a Special Education Subcommittee, traveling from Washington, DC to cities in Wisconsin, South Dakota, Utah, and Oregon. After the launch of *Sputnik I* and after Hill and Elliott devised the strategy to connect their education proposals to the Cold War crisis, subcommittee members began to emphasize the necessity of providing federal educational support so that the nation could redeem itself from its disappointing loss in the race to space. To aid his early efforts to persuade his congressional colleagues of the necessity of federal support for education and the importance of moving the NDEA through the Rules Committee, Carl Elliott turned to a wealthy woman from New York named Mary Lasker, who had been a solid supporter of Lister Hill’s efforts to improve health care in the United States. The widow of wealthy businessman Albert Lasker, Hill’s benefactress was one of the richest women in the world. Using an estimated \$8 million inheritance, she supported a variety of progressive causes (Elliott and D’Orso 1992,). Lasker took great interest in the Hill-Elliott proposal for education aid, and underwrote early efforts to disseminate informational materials to members of Congress and the media in hopes of rallying support for the measure (Clowse 1981, 127; Elliott and D’Orso 1992, 157-158).

Hill and Elliott used NDEA committee hearings to construct a solid case for the necessity of federal support for education. They engaged a broad range of witnesses who offered testimony that pointed toward education as the solution to the nation’s defense troubles. Elliott later characterized these witnesses as “heavy artillery”—“some of the

⁵² Among the previously enacted federal programs that Elliott and his staff studied were the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862, the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, and the George-Barden Act of 1946 (Clowse 1981, 103).

most recognizable and influential minds of the time” and “voices neither Howard Smith nor anyone else involved with this bill could ignore” (Elliott and D’Orso 1992, 159).

Leading the roster of witnesses were administration officials, including HEW Undersecretary John A. Perkins; Dr. Lawrence G. Derthick, U.S. Education Commissioner; Marion B. Folsom, HEW Secretary; and Ralph C.M. Flynt, Director of the Higher Education Programs Branch of HEW’s division of Higher Education.

Additional witnesses included university officials, male and female undergraduates, and representatives from the National Education Association⁵³, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the national Academy of Sciences, the National Research Council, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the American Chemical Society, the National Science Foundation, the American Association of Land-Grant Colleges and State Universities; and the State Universities Association.

It was at this stage of deliberation that Cold War politics ensured women’s inclusion as NDEA beneficiaries. As lawmakers debated the necessity of federal student aid and the appropriate forms that it should take, several members of the House and the Senate made references to the Soviet Union’s extensive use of women in science and engineering (see, e.g., Eisenmann 2006, 15-16). This contrasted with American women’s meager presence in these fields, as revealed by expert witnesses Kenneth L. Holderman,

⁵³ The National Education Association (NEA) maintained a strong presence throughout the hearings on the NDEA, emphasizing their preference for general aid to schools (Elliott and D’Orso 1992, 154; Spring 2008, 403). Greatly surpassing the \$1 billion proposed by the Hill-Elliott measure, the NEA advocated for a program of federal student aid that would provide \$4.5 billion to be allocated over a five-year period. This proposal included provisions for at least 20,000 scholarships for high school graduates pursuing college education (*Congressional Quarterly* 1957, 1340).

Calling the demand “enraging,” Carl Elliott noted that the NEA lobbied for general aid in an amount that was almost five-times as much as the \$1 billion requested in the Hill-Elliott proposal. He complained that “the NEA folks could never seem to understand that the only way to get some pie is a slice at a time” (Elliott and D’Orso 1992, 154).

the Assistant Dean of Pennsylvania State University's School of Engineering and Alden Waterman, director of the National Science Foundation. Bearing in mind this contrast with the Soviet Union, lawmakers emphasized the necessity of educating American women to fully utilize the nation's available brainpower. Driving home this theme, Sen. Wayne L. Morse (D-OR) insisted that "we need to watch out that we do not waste brainpower in our country. I do not think we have any right to deny to a boy and girl a college education if he or she has the mental potential to do satisfactory college work" ("Science and Education for National Defense" Subcommittee Hearings 1958, 1138). From this perspective, the nation's security depended on its ability to fully and effectively utilize all available "manpower." The first line of defense in the post-*Sputnik* battle against communism, then, was to cultivate the skills and talents of every capable man, woman, and child through education.

In addition to emphasizing the competitive value of educating women, the lawmakers and professional educators providing testimony during the NDEA hearings also noted the value of educating women for strengthening the nation's families. Rep. Donald W. Nicholson (R-MA) raised the issue of whether educating women could be deemed a waste, pointing out that, even if girls and women were to go to college, they would probably get married and "miss out on all the things [they] could do" with that education ("Scholarship and Loan Program" Subcommittee Hearings 1957, 14). HEW Secretary John A. Perkins made clear the administration's position that federal aid should be targeted to women as well as men, asserting that:

"[W]omen usually do not attend college in the numbers which their abilities indicate they should. If a family is perhaps pressed financially and they have sons

and daughters, they are apt to educate the sons before they will extend themselves to educate the daughters. Then, too, it is more difficult for ladies to work themselves through college than it is for a young man to do so” (14).

He continued by addressing Nicholson’s assertion that marriage frequently precludes women’s ability to gain the full value on the returns of higher education saying, “There is an interesting quip, ‘You educate a man and you have educated one person; but you educate a mother and you have educated a family.’ There is some great truth to that” (19). These deliberations demonstrate an emphasis on the propriety of including women as the beneficiaries of federal student aid and the value that doing so would have for the nation.

Although their support for women’s equality in higher education did not come in the form of intensive, organized lobbying by female constituents or women’s groups, women were, nonetheless, important participants in the congressional hearing phase of NDEA consideration.⁵⁴ While the support of a woman, Mary Lasker, aided Carl Elliott in raising early support for the NDEA, a number of female witnesses who testified during congressional hearings on federal education aid provided important information that enabled the successful passage of the program. While differing dramatically from the prior participation of women’s groups during the fight for women’s suffrage during the interwar period or the subsequent fight for women’s rights in the late 1960s and 1970s (Eisenmann 2006; Rupp and Taylor 1987), women’s involvement in the design and

⁵⁴ The mid-20th century represents a transitional period for women’s activism in the United States. As Jo Freeman notes, “[b]y 1950, the 19th century organizations which had been the basis of the suffrage movement—the Women’s Trade Union League, the General Federation of Women’s Clubs, the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, the National American Women’s Suffrage Association—were all either dead or a pale shadow of their former selves” (1973, 40).

enactment of the NDEA could be described as a “quiet storm.” In the context of the Cold War, where those who vocally demanded equality or political change were often labeled communist sympathizers (MacLean 2009, 7), women expressed their interest in equality and equal opportunity via membership in mainstream groups that weighed in on policy proposals being considered by lawmakers, but rarely attempted to set a feminist agenda.⁵⁵ Thus, women generally focused on the political issues that emerged from male-dominated political institutions and drew upon the political techniques that were generally awarded therein. When federal student aid came under consideration, for example, social activist Agnes E. Meyer adopted Cold War rhetoric in advocating for federal student aid, urging Americans to “wake up and realize that the cold war has shifted from a competition in arms to a competition in brains” (Clowse 1981, 27). All things considered, Cold War politics played an important role in shaping women’s interest in and activity related to the National Defense Education Act in 1958. For women’s groups, however, federal support for education was not embraced as a women’s issue and, thus, was not a focus of their political activism.⁵⁶

Supporters and opponents of federal student aid brought their most compelling arguments to the debate over the higher education proposals. For decades, the specter of federal control had effectively thwarted lawmakers’ attempts to enact federal aid for higher education (Anderson 2007, 21). Opponents of federal student assistance objected to national government intervention on the grounds that such support would

⁵⁵ One exception to this trend is the fact that the National Women’s Party actively advocated for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) in the 1950s (Congressional Quarterly 1958, 575).

⁵⁶ The issue was also dropped by organizations not wanting to broach the topics of federal control and the ways in which a federal higher education program would affect states’ rights. In 1952, for example, the General Federation of Women’s Clubs jettisoned education from its policy agenda due to the controversy that the issue caused regarding civil rights issues (Mathews-Gardner 2005, 560).

inappropriately involve the federal government in education—a policy area traditionally and best reserved to state and local governments. Previous champions of federal student aid countered this argument with assurances that any federal program would be modest, temporary, and allow the state and local governments to remain the principal arbiter on matters related to education. Opponents countered, however, that large federal programs are rarely temporary and that they tend to grow rather than being reigned in, becoming increasingly unwieldy over the course of their existence.

The issue of federal control over education proved so politically potent that it was even appropriated by supporters of federal student aid, like Rep. George McGovern (D-SD), who objected to policy proposals that would limit the scope of federal student aid by targeting it specifically toward students pursuing education in fields deemed directly related to national security (Anderson 2007, 52-53). In the Senate, Strom Thurmond (D-SC) and Barry Goldwater (D-AZ) took issue with the prospect of federal intervention in the area of education and raised loud objections to the proposal. Thurmond questioned the relevance of the NDEA for promoting national security, citing the absence of a requirement that students pursue postsecondary training in disciplines directly related to defense as a glaring omission. For Goldwater, the federal aid proposal represented what would surely become a non-retractable, ever-expanding demand on the federal government (Clowse 1981, 125-126; Cross 2010, 12; Elliott and D’Orso 1992, 168-169; Valenti 1959, 194).

Contention also revolved around the effects that federal involvement in education would have on the issues of race and religion in the United States. Some feared that federal support for education would blur the separation of church and state by permitting

the federal government to provide funds to Catholic schools (Clowse 1981, 43). This issue had thwarted the efforts of President Harry Truman and members of the 81st Congress who had shown interest in enacting federal aid for education but abandoned that objective when opposition to allocating federal aid to parochial schools appeared to mount a substantial political challenge (Clowse 1981, 45). Others took issue with the possibility that the national government could use education funding to influence the nature of (de)segregation in southern schools (Clowse 1981, 43; Elliott and D’Orso 1992, 152). In the wake of the Supreme Court’s landmark 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, which ruled school segregation to be a direct violation of the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, congressional representatives from the South saw federal education aid as a potential tool that would allow the federal government to punish segregated schools by withholding federal funds, effectively forcing desegregation upon schools that had been integrating with “all deliberate speed” (see *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, 1955). It is interesting to note that while Rep. Carl Elliott and Sen. Lister Hill emphasized the nondiscriminatory nature of the bill when working to secure the support—or to preclude the opposition—of Catholic churches, Adam Clayton Powell, and the NAACP, both Hill and Elliott had signed the 1956 “Southern Manifesto” in which Southern Democrats protested the Supreme Court’s ruling on the *Brown* case.⁵⁷

Regardless of where Hill and Elliott stood on the issue of school desegregation, however, their strategic framing of the NDEA so that it was vague enough to provide nondiscriminatory aid while failing to effect the racial order of southern educational

⁵⁷ Spearheaded by Southern Democrats, such as Senators Strom Thurmond (D-SC), Walter George (D-GA), William Fulbright (D-AK), and Harry Byrd (D-VA), a group of lawmakers criticized the Supreme Court’s desegregation decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*.

institutions ultimately promoted greater inclusion of women in American higher education. Throughout the congressional hearings for the NDEA, the topic of gender was far less contentious than that of race or religion. Hill and Elliott framed their education proposal in terms of general provisions that would support the higher educational pursuits of both men and women. This tone of gender egalitarianism was established from the first, as is evinced by Carl Elliott's opening statement before the Special Education Subcommittee. Framing men's and women's education as a national imperative, Elliott asserted that "America is rich in native intelligence.... We need only to shape our talents, to educate with discernment to develop to the utmost the latent endowments everywhere among us, to train each boy and girl to the highest attainable degree, consistent with his or her ambition" ("Scholarship and Loan Program" Subcommittee Hearings 1957, 2). During subcommittee hearings, lawmakers invited male and female undergraduates to testify before the committee, evoking testimonies that emphasized the benefits that access to federal educational support would provide for hard working women and men who faced the often daunting task of funding their own education.

While women's groups had not been actively involved in lobbying for the NDEA, they nonetheless supported the bill as it made its way through the final stages of the political process. Once the bill emerged from committee deliberations, it remained captive in the House Rules committee for a considerable amount of time. On July 28, 1958, a number of groups—including important women's groups, such as the American Association of University Women, the American Federation of Teachers, Delta Kappa Gamma (honor society of women legislators), the National Association of Colored

Women's Clubs, the National Council of Jewish Women, the National Council of Negro Women, the YWCA, and the United Church Women—submitted a letter to House Speaker Sam Rayburn insisting that Congress remain in session until it had successfully acted on the federal education aid bill (*Congressional Quarterly* 1958, 1001). As the legislative session moved rapidly toward adjournment, Carl Elliott and other federal student aid supporters grew anxious. An August 11, 1958 *Time* editorial noted that as “the *Sputnik*-inspired sense of urgency” subsided, “the fair weather for the school bills [had] turned into dead calm.” As panic over the *Sputnik* launches cooled, and as the United States successfully launched its own satellites, Elliott recognized the necessity of acting on the NDEA before the window of opportunity provided by the Soviet triumph closed.

The momentum generated by committee hearings and the media propelled the NDEA forward, as it emerged from the Rules Committee during the first week of August and headed to the floor of the House for consideration by the Committee of the Whole.⁵⁸ At this point, members submitted a number of amendments in anticipation of a final vote on the proposal. Rep. Adam Clayton Powell successfully submitted an anti-discrimination amendment that would ensure the award of financial aid “without discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, or sex” (*Congressional Record* 1958, 16715; see also Clowse 1981, 130; Valenti 1959, 192).⁵⁹ In what proved a

⁵⁸ Lister Hill, Carl Elliott, and other proponents of federal student aid understood that by successfully clearing the formidable hurdle represented by the House Rules committee with a 266-108 vote, the NDEA had achieved an important triumph (Elliott and D’Orso 1992, 168).

⁵⁹ The Powell amendments emerged at the behest of civil rights advocates, particularly Clarence Mitchell of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) (Cross 2010, 9-10; Sundquist 1968, 177). Arguing against the allocation of federal funds to school construction aid programs that supported segregated schools, Powell complained that “Negro people have waited many, many years for

stunning blow to Carl Elliott’s and Lister Hill’s original intentions in designing the National Defense Education bill, House members voted to remove its scholarship provision during the final stages of consideration. Because the scholarship provision represented one of the most controversial items in the bill, one that faced solid opposition from conservative members of the House, Rep. Walter Judd (R-MN) successfully submitted an amendment that struck scholarships from the bill, moving the proposed authorizations to a title providing student loans (Clowse 1981, 130; Divine 1993, 164). Toward the end of consideration of the NDEA in the House, Rep. H. Alexander Smith (R-NJ) created further controversy by appending a loyalty oath to the bill. The attachment of this amendment exemplified what Barbara Barksdale Clowse described as the “leitmotif” of the Cold War—“an obsession with national survival” (1981, 19).⁶⁰ Nevertheless, on August 9, 1958, the House of Representatives voted to pass its version of the NDEA by a roll-call vote of 265-108, thus sending it to the Senate.⁶¹

Once the bill was presented on the floor of the Senate in August, its consideration was relatively smooth. While the passage of the NDEA by the House of Representatives may have signaled its promise for many in the Senate, some remained unconvinced. Senators Strom Thurmond (D-SC) and Barry Goldwater (D-AZ) were particularly

this hour of democracy to come and they are willing to wait a few more years rather than see a bill passed that will...build a dual system of Jim Crow Education” (Cross 2010, 10; Sundquist 1968, 165-166).

⁶⁰ This Cold War ideology shaped President Dwight Eisenhower’s posture toward defense in the 1950s. As David L. Snead notes, he was primarily concerned with achieving three goals—“preserving a way of life, building a strong military, and overseeing a prosperous economy” (1998, 17). While the loyalty oath outraged many liberals, it helped to reconcile the bill with Cold War objectives.

⁶¹ Citing their dissatisfaction with the basic premise of the NDEA, Representatives Ralph W. Gwinn, Clare Hoffman, and Donald Nicholson in the House and Sen. Strom Thurmond in the Senate signed their respective committees’ reports as members of the minority opposed to the measure (Anderson 2007, 49-50).

skeptical of the NDEA. Unlike the House of Representatives, the Senate retained the scholarship measure that was included in the original Hill-Elliott proposal. Repeating the actions of Rep. Smith in the House, and demonstrating the Cold War politics surrounding the enactment of the NDEA, Sen. Karl Mundt (R-SD) attached a rider to the bill that required student aid recipients to give an oath, providing proof of their loyalty to the United States. Shortly before midnight on August 13, the Senate passed its version of the National Defense Education Act by a 62-26 roll-call vote (*Congressional Quarterly* 1958, 1059). While 35 Democrats and 27 Republicans supported the bill, 10 Democrats and 16 Republicans voted against it. The Democrats who opposed the bill hailed primarily from the deep South, while the Republican objectors tended to represent districts in the Midwest and West (Clowse 1981, 132).

Upon passage of the NDEA by the Senate, House Speaker Sam Rayburn appointed seven representatives and five senators to a conference committee charged with producing a compromise bill that, upon approval by the House and Senate, would be submitted to the president for adoption into law.⁶² In the resulting bill, the scholarship provision and Adam Clayton Powell's anti-discrimination amendment were high-profile casualties of the political process. Conference committee members attempted to allay the concerns of liberal Democrats by arguing that the bill was inherently non-discriminatory. The deliberate scrapping of the anti-discrimination amendment was part of a political strategy employed by congressional proponents of federal aid who intentionally left parts of the legislation vague so as to preclude prohibitive actions on the part of conservatives—particularly Southern Democrats—who would likely reject the bill if they

⁶² The conference committee included Representatives Barden, Elliott, Bailey, Metcalf, Kearns, Gwinn, and Haskell and Senators Hill, Smith, McNamara, Allott, and Yarborough (Clowse 1981, 133).

feared extensive federal control (Anderson 2007, 53; Clowse 1981, 130; Elliott and D’Orso 1992, 168-170). To reassure liberals in the House who had reservations about approving the conference bill absent the “Powell Amendment,” Elliott presented a letter written by HEW Associate Secretary Elliot Richardson that declared the NDEA to be “inherently antidiscriminatory”—making Powell’s amendment unnecessary (Clowse 1981, 136-137). To appease Catholic Americans and others who criticized early proposals that excluded parochial schools from federal funding, lawmakers made Catholic schools eligible to receive federal loans for the purpose of improving teaching in the areas of science, mathematics, and foreign language (Hamilton 1987, 229; Urban 2010, 66).

The compromise bill that the conference committee produced gained bipartisan support, as well as bipartisan opposition, in the House and the Senate. While Republicans tended to hold more conservative views, members of the Democratic Party—who represented “a conflicting mix of white Southerners, Catholics, urban blue-collar workers, and ethnic and minority groups” (Spring 1995, 59)—were divided ideologically. In the final legislative action on the National Defense Education Act, the House of Representatives passed the bill on August 23, 1958—the penultimate day of the 85th Congress—by a roll-call vote of 212 to 85. President Eisenhower signed the NDEA, PL-864, into law on September 2, 1958 (Elliott and D’Orso 1992, 170-171). While partisanship was not an important source of division on this legislation, ideology was, as liberals and conservatives in both chambers failed to see eye to eye on this bill (Anderson 2007, 55). In addition to ideological considerations, as Barbara Barksdale Clowse notes,

the looming elections may have served to garner additional support for this federal student aid legislation (1981, 138).

The Enactment of the National Defense Education Act represents a critical juncture in the politics of federal support for higher education and for gender egalitarianism in college access. Although the NDEA's authorized appropriations were relatively modest, there can be no doubt that "the precedent established open the floodgates for future [higher education] legislation" (Twight 2002, 146; see also Carleton 2002, 110; Sufrin 1963, 10-11). Following the successful passage of the National Defense Education Act, U.S. Education Commissioner Lawrence Derthick celebrated the program's creation, calling it an act that would "open up many opportunities for increasing our vital reservoir of trained manpower, a reservoir we need to provide leaders in all fields from science to statesmanship."⁶³

In addition to making college affordable for thousands of American women and men, the NDEA dramatically altered the federal government's posture toward education. Writing four years after the program's passage, Homer D. Babbidge, Jr. and Robert Rosenzweig recognized that the distinctiveness of the National Defense Education Act lay in the fact that "the Congress of the United States had never before declared that it was a goal of *national* policy that 'no student of ability will be denied an opportunity for higher education because of financial need' " (1962, 51; Emphasis theirs; see also Rivlin 1961, 119). The NDEA dramatically altered Americans' conceptualization of appropriate government support for education, heralding a shift in the dominant form of federal education aid from support for expanding school infrastructure and improving academic

⁶³ *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, September 4, 1958.

programming to assistance provided directly to students in the form of student financial aid.

The creation of the NDEA set an important precedent that framed education aid as a security issue and “spawned new interest groups” (Skrentny 2002, 185; see also Kliebard 1995, 229). Women, in particular, represent one such group. In the years following its passage, the NDEA successfully expanded access to higher education for tens of thousands of American women (Hamilton 1987, 275; see, e.g., Rivlin 1961, 78). Although men tended to borrow slightly more money from the NDEA’s National Defense Student Loans than women, many were surprised by the willingness of American women to borrow funds for higher education (Rivlin 1961, 77). In 1959, National Defense Loans were awarded to 7,199 women and 14,958. By 1960, the numbers increased dramatically, with 38,886 women and 67,487 men receiving these benefits (Rivlin 1961, 78). The loan forgiveness provision for students planning to teach in primary and secondary schools made the NDEA particularly attractive for students pursuing degrees in education—most of whom were women (77). By 1961, women comprised approximately 33 percent of American students and the same proportion of student loan beneficiaries (Rivlin 1961, 77). In the years following the NDEA’s passage, Americans became accustomed to receiving federal funds for higher education, and government support for college students became an increasingly salient issue on the political stage.⁶⁴ Between 1955 and 1965, college enrollments increased considerably, as the number of

⁶⁴ As a November 5, 1965 *Time* editorial noted just days before the passage of the Higher Education Act, the higher education programs included in Lyndon Johnson’s “Great Society” initiative, the NDEA, and other federal programs that performed “good deeds” for individual Americans altered the nature of federal support for citizens, turning “Uncle Sam” into “Big Daddy.” In other words, the author felt that the federal government had assumed the generous—albeit deviant—role of a “Sugar Daddy,” offering “a wonderland of federal paternalism that stretches from cradle to grave.”

students attending American postsecondary institutions grew from 2.4 million to 4.8 million (*Congressional Quarterly* July 23, 1965, 1419).

Reinforcing Gender Parity in College Aid: the Higher Education Act of 1965

The problem of educating young people is not confined to low-income families. Middle-income families, faced with the prospect of educating more than one member of the family, are often hard pressed either to find the funds or to select which child should be educated. The case is often presented where the oldest member is enrolled in school but when his younger brothers and sisters reach college age they are unable to attend due to expenses already incurred.

—Rep. Harrison “Pete” A. Williams, Jr. (D-NJ), June 1, 1965
(Remarks from statement made during the “Higher Education Act of 1965 [H.R. 3220]” Subcommittee Hearings)

In the next school year alone, 140,000 young men and women will be enrolled in college who, but for the provisions of this bill, would have never gone past high school. We will reap the rewards of their wiser citizenship and their greater productivity for decades to come.

—President Lyndon B. Johnson, November 8, 1965 (Remarks made in HEA signing statement)

While the National Defense Education Act initiated a new relationship between the federal government and the nation’s women by making federal student aid available to them for the first time, the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965—which provided the first federal scholarships for needy students and funds for school infrastructure, developing institutions, and urban extension programs—took this relationship to a new level. While the NDEA initiated women’s inclusion as student aid beneficiaries, the HEA entrenched that status and allocated significant amounts of federal money for expanding higher educational opportunity for women and men. The early political development of the HEA can be traced to the 1960 presidential election, when

Republican Party nominee Richard Nixon capitalized on the political currency of the NDEA, advocating for more federal student loans and the creation of a federal scholarship program (Reese 2005, 226; see also Graham 1984, 69; Kizer 1970, 93). Democratic Party nominee John F. Kennedy also proposed increases in federal support for higher education (Graham 1984, 7-9; Kizer 1970, 93).⁶⁵ Shortly after taking office in 1961, President Kennedy appointed Purdue University's president, Frederick L. Hovde, as chairman of a task-force on education. The Hovde Commission provided the president with recommendations that included the allocation of approximately \$9.4 billion for grants and loans to students between 1961 and 1965 (Graham 1984, 12). As Hugh Davis Graham notes, "the Hovde report envisioned a massive and *permanent* [government] role in education..." (1984, 12). In addition to the Hovde Commission, Kennedy established the President's Commission on the Status of Women, which emphasized the importance of higher education for women's socioeconomic status. In its final report to the president, the committee noted that "[m]en and women are equally in need of continuing education, but at present women's opportunities are more limited than men's" ("American Women" 1963, 10). In explaining the cause of women's limited opportunities, the report pointed to the fact that women are typically excluded from "the substantial arrangements for advanced training provided by businesses for their executives" as well as "the educational and training of the armed forces" (10). The President's Commission on the Status of Women emphasized the importance of higher

⁶⁵ The platform set forth by the Democratic Party included a program for higher education aid that would provide grants to the states to address their most pressing educational needs, particularly classroom shortages and low teacher salaries. The education proposal included in the Republican Party's platform, on the other hand, focused on providing federal funds for elementary and high school classroom construction in needy districts (Kizer 1970, 93).

education to women's well being and recommended that the federal government increase its efforts to promote women's college attendance.

In 1961, the Kennedy administration produced a higher education bill that proposed the provision of need- and merit-based federal scholarships for undergraduate students as well as institutional loans to tackle the ongoing problem of classroom shortages. Kennedy emphasized the fact that the administration's proposal dodged the perennially contentious issue of maintaining the separation of church and state while providing much-needed federal assistance for education, saying that "[w]e are aiding the student in the same way the GI bill of rights aided the student. The scholarships are given to the students who have particular talents and they can go to the college they want. In that case it is aid to the student, not to the school or college, and, therefore, not to a particular religious group" (Graham 1984, 20). The president's proposal, however, was ultimately unsuccessful; old disagreements concerning the effects of federal student aid on the scope of government power proved insurmountable. The following year, Kennedy's college aid proposal met a similar fate. Because Republican lawmakers objected to the bill's scholarship provisions and because many non-Catholics objected to providing grants to religious higher educational institutions, Kennedy's 1962 proposal for expanded federal support for higher education failed (Graham 1984, 44; Kizer 1970, 93-94).⁶⁶ By 1963, the Kennedy administration had jettisoned the student scholarship

⁶⁶ The issue of religion represented one of the most formidable challenges to Kennedy's efforts in the area of education. As Kizer notes, "[a] significant number of Protestants and non-Catholics were concerned with the impact John Kennedy's religion might have on educational issues in spite of reassurances from the candidate during his campaign" (1970, 93). Additionally, Kennedy also had to deal with criticism from members of the Catholic Church who objected to the "double taxation" of Catholics that would almost certainly occur in the event that the federal government succeeded in passing a comprehensive federal aid program. If Catholic schools are excluded from federal funding, parents who pay for their children to attend such schools must also contribute to the pool of federal tax dollars that supports public education

component of its higher education bill, limiting its new proposal to federal funds for school construction. In February of that year, *New York Times* columnist Fred Hechinger noted that the administration's proposal was distinctive because it was the first post-War education proposal that did not directly address Cold War objectives (Graham 1984, 45). On December 16, 1963, in the wake of President John F. Kennedy's assassination, Congress passed, and recently inaugurated President Lyndon B. Johnson signed, the Higher Education Facilities Act (P.L. 88-204; also known as the Morse-Green bill), which provided federal funds to support campus infrastructure.⁶⁷

The 1964 elections brought major victories for the Democratic Party. Johnson's defeat of Barry Goldwater in the presidential election and large Democratic majorities in Congress heralded the emergence of a political climate that would prove amenable to educational reform. Moving forward, the Johnson administration sought to take unprecedented action in expanding educational opportunity. Reflecting this objective, as James Hearn noted, the mid 1960s "brought the seeds of extraordinary change to federal policy in education" with lawmakers undertaking "a wide-ranging initiative in education, passing more than two-dozen acts aimed directly at American schools and colleges" (2001, 273). Johnson intended to use this era of unified Democratic government to tackle

(94). Ironically, as Edith Green noted in a June 1963 article in the *Journal of Higher Education*, arguments asserting the unconstitutionality of providing federal funds for private, church-related colleges failed to recognize that "Baptist, Catholic, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and other denominational colleges have been receiving research grants for years from the Department of Defense, the National Institutes of Health, the Atomic Energy Commission, and other federal agencies" (Green 1963, 332).

⁶⁷ Upon signing the Higher Education Facilities Act of 1962, President Johnson emphasized the significance of the legislation, calling it the "the most significant education bill passed by the Congress in the history of the Republic" and adding that "[the 1963] session of Congress will go down in history as the Education Congress of 1963" (Graham 1984, 52). This statement, which Hugh Davis Graham characterizes as "hyperbolic," offers a preview of the strong and favorable attitude toward active federal intervention in higher education that would characterize the Johnson administration's subsequent policy initiatives.

inequality head on, emphasizing the value of higher education as a mechanism for promoting equal opportunity and combating poverty (Davenport 1982; Keppel 1987, 50; Parsons 1997, 35-37; Spring 1995, 60).⁶⁸

In 1964, Johnson clearly outlined his goals for education in a series of speeches and public statements. For higher education, he expressed a commitment to expanding and improving colleges and to making greater access to college a central priority for his administration (*Congressional Quarterly* 1965, 61; see also Chávez 1975, 52-56; Davenport 1982, 43-46). During this same year, Johnson appointed John W. Gardner, the president of the Carnegie Corporation, as chair of a task force charged with identifying the greatest challenges facing education in the United States and recommending specific policy proposals that could be incorporated into an education bill (Chávez 1975, 53).⁶⁹ Members of the Gardner Task Force included U.S. Commissioner of Education Francis Keppel; U.S. Bureau of the Budget's Division of Education, Manpower, and Sciences chief William B. Cannon; Hedley W. Donovan, editor of *Time* Magazine; White House liaison Richard Goodwin; and numerous university presidents, professors, and business leaders. The resulting report—which was evaluated by the U.S. Office of Education—emphasized the necessity of expanding the federal government's efforts in higher education, particularly those intended to promote greater college access for less-

⁶⁸ Joel Spring quotes Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan as remarking that “[o]nce again higher education policy was deployed by the national government to serve external political needs, in this case to press further to fill out a central theme of the Kennedy and Johnson administration[s]—that of equality...Higher education was a means of obtaining goals elsewhere in the political system” (1995, 60).

⁶⁹ Taking note of the challenges that President Kennedy had encountered when trying to promote his education agenda, Johnson used secret taskforces during the policy design phase of the Higher Education Act. Doing so enabled the administration to craft its proposal sans public scrutiny (Graham 1984; Parsons 1997, 36).

privileged Americans (Chávez 1975, 53; Graham 1984, 66).⁷⁰ One mechanism by which the task force proposed to do this was via a program of guaranteed student loans (Chávez 1975).⁷¹

The Politics of Presidential Leadership: Enacting the Higher Education Act

President Lyndon Johnson’s forceful leadership represents perhaps the biggest factor contributing to the successful passage of the Higher Education Act and its capacity to expand gender egalitarianism in U.S. higher educational attainment. As Sally Davenport notes, the HEA reflected social policy themes that, in 1965, had recently emerged. For Johnson, college education represented a powerful anti-poverty measure that offered “a means of mainstreaming the poor, not just providing minimum levels of ‘welfare’ ” (1982, 133). From this perspective, federal higher education programs could potentially raise the educational attainment—and standard of living—of a significant segment of the U.S. population. The president’s use of higher education policy to promote equal opportunity was heavily influenced by the precedent set by previously enacted federal higher education policies, particularly the National Defense Education Act (Flemming 1960, 133; Gladieux and Wolanin 1976, 15; Hannah 1996, 503).

The political context of the mid-1960s provided a “perfect storm” for Johnson’s pursuit of federal legislation that would significantly expand college access. Taking

⁷⁰ Included in the report submitted by the task force was Gardner’s prescient recommendation that lawmakers establish a separate U.S. Department of Education with the purpose of better coordinating the government’s education programs (Graham 1984, 66). Although this suggestion did not gain traction during the Johnson administration, the Department of Education Organization Act of 1979 (P.L. 96-88) separated the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) into the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services.

⁷¹ Prior to that point in time, National Defense Loans (NDSLs), which were created as part of the NDEA, provided the bulk of federal student aid (Hearn 2001, 274).

advantage of sweeping Democratic victories in 1964, the president prioritized pushing a comprehensive student aid proposal through the legislature that would further the NDEA's efforts to expand college access for the nation's young men and women (Parsons 1997, 35-36). Johnson also benefited from the fact that, by the time the Higher Education Act came under consideration, political issues that had long-dogged proposals for federal student aid had become less contentious. The 1964 Civil Rights Act had prohibited the transfer of federal dollars to segregated schools, thus setting a standard for subsequent programs. The NDEA's provision of financial aid directly to students rather than to institutions settled arguments that federal student aid would jeopardize the separation of church and state. The successful passage of the National Defense Education Act in 1958 and the Civil Rights Act in 1964 provided a winning strategy for successfully passing the HEA. Furthermore, the recent passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (P.L. 89-10) on April 11, 1965 placed education on the minds of legislators and their constituents.

Designing the Higher Education Act: A Unilateral Process

Fueled by Johnson's vocal commitment to passing an extensive program of support for higher education, the policy design phase of the Higher Education Act centered upon the White House and its liaisons in the Office of Education, the Bureau of the Budget, and the Treasury. With the goal of successfully passing legislation that would significantly expand access to higher education, the president and his administration spent much of 1964 constructing its proposal so that it could "hit Congress with a full package of legislative proposals, rush the bills through committee, and then

force a floor vote before [Johnson] lost his election momentum” (Parsons 1997, 37).⁷²

Throughout the process of constructing the administration’s student aid proposal, President Johnson wielded “tight executive control” over the policy’s design (Graham 1984, 80; see also Chávez 1975; Parsons 1997, 36). As Michael Parsons notes, “Congress would have input, but it would come after the administration had formed the policy, thus forcing Congress to respond on Johnson’s terms” (1997, 36).

In adopting this hands-on approach, Johnson worked closely with his staff to construct a bill that would succeed at providing federal scholarships, a goal that had eluded Democratic lawmakers since the 1940s. Douglas Cater, a special assistant to the president, was known as the “education man” in the White House. Cater acted as a chief liaison for matters related to education. During the formulation of the Higher Education Act, Cater—in communication with President Johnson—was responsible for crafting the proposal that would be submitted to Congress (Chávez 1975, 57-58). Working closely with Education Commissioner Francis Keppel and U.S. Office of Education officials Peter Muirhead, and Samuel Halperin, Cater actively sought the input of representatives from the higher education establishment, who were closely aligned with the Office of Education. Doing so ensured their political support once the proposal came under congressional consideration (Chávez 1975, 60-62). Cater also consulted with the United States Bureau of the Budget, which “determined the feasibility of the [HEA] in terms of cost and funding levels,” and the Department of the Treasury, which offered a second opinion on the feasibility of the administration’s proposal and actually constructed the Guaranteed Student Loan Program (Chávez 1975, 63).

⁷² Earlier that year, the same strategy had enabled the Johnson administration to move the Elementary and Secondary Education Act through Congress in only three months (Parsons 1997, 37).

Taking into account the interests of actively engaged groups like the American Council on Education (ACE), the American Library Association, and the Association of Research Lobbies who actively lobbied the United States Office of Education, the administration produced a proposal that provided support to numerous areas related to higher education. The proposed Higher Education Act included \$25 million in federal support for an urban land-grant extension program that would provide financial support to urban universities (Title I); \$65 million in funding for college libraries (Title II); and \$30 million in aid to struggling postsecondary institutions, such as historically black colleges and universities (Title III) (“Higher Education Act of 1965 (H.R. 3220)” Subcommittee Hearings 1965, 30). The core of the HEA, however, was found in Title IV, which provided student financial assistance in the form of need-based scholarships, guaranteed student loans for middle-class students, extended the need-based loans established by the NDEA, and updated the work-study program by shifting its jurisdiction from the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) to the Office of Education (OE) (Graham 1984, 81-82; Parsons 1997, 38).

On January 12, 1965, Johnson delivered a special message to Congress wherein he stressed the importance of providing equal educational opportunity for all Americans and offered a preview of the administration’s higher education aid proposal (*Congressional Quarterly* 1965, 76-79; Chávez 1975, 52-53), asserting that “[h]igher education is no longer a luxury, but a necessity” (*Congressional Quarterly* 1965, 78). During his address, Johnson emphasized the necessity of providing \$130 million of federal assistance to support needy men and women who wished to attend college, asserting that “[l]oans authorized by the National Defense Education Act currently assist

nearly 300,000 college students,” nonetheless, “an estimated 100,000 young people of demonstrated ability fail to go on to college because of lack of money” (78). In addition to requesting that Congress authorize additional support for student financial aid, Johnson proposed expanding the work-study program to include middle-class students (*Congressional Quarterly* 1965, 63). On January 19, 1965, seven days after the president delivered this special education message, the Johnson administration submitted its higher education proposal to Congress along with a letter from the president emphasizing the proposal’s utmost importance to the administration.

Enacting the Higher Education Act during an Era of Democratic Control

The political context within which the Higher Education Act made its way through Congress differed greatly from that which had surrounded the National Defense Education Act only seven years earlier. Unlike the NDEA, which was largely propelled by congressional initiative, the president provided the driving force behind the HEA. In Congress, a Democratic majority facilitated the bill’s relatively smooth journey from subcommittee deliberations to floor consideration and, ultimately, to successful passage. Contributing to the propitious political context surrounding the passage of the Higher Education Act was the replacement of Rep. Graham Barden (D-NC)—a stalwart opponent of federal education aid—with Rep. Adam Clayton Powell (D-NY) as the chair of the Education and Labor Committee in the House of Representatives. The probability of successfully passing the HEA was further enhanced by substantial public recognition of and concern regarding the challenges of funding higher educational opportunity. According to a poll conducted by Louis Harris & Associates in March of 1965, 48

percent of Americans identified financial worries as the most challenging problem facing their children in their attempts to obtain higher education.

On May 30, 1965, the Johnson Administration's higher education proposal was presented to Congress with Rep. Edith Green (D-OR) acting as chief sponsor. The bill proposed federal student loans as well as grants—which resembled the scholarships that, seven years prior, were jettisoned from the National Defense Education Act—a work-study program for undergraduates, and assistance for developing institutions, among other provisions. Soon after the bill's introduction, the Education and Labor Committee's Special Subcommittee on Education, which was chaired by Rep. Green, commenced hearings on the proposal, as did the Senate's Labor and Public Welfare Committee's Subcommittee on Education, which was chaired by Sen. Wayne Morse (D-OR). In both chambers, professional organizations, academics, and student aid officers were particularly engaged in the process of providing lawmakers with information to help them determine what measures would ultimately be included in the bill that the Johnson administration had so enthusiastically endorsed. As Chávez notes, the HEA subcommittee hearings offered higher education officials and others interested in student aid “perhaps their last opportunity for participating in the policy-making process for the HEA” (Chávez 1975, 70). Not surprisingly, the Johnson administration closely monitored congressional action at this phase of the legislative process, drawing upon active lines of communication between President Johnson and Douglas Cater at the White House and Rep. Green and Sen. Morse at the Capitol (72).

Between February 1 and May 1, 1965, the Special Education subcommittee of the House held hearings on the HEA proposal. A broad array of lawmakers, Johnson

administration officials, professional educators, university administrators, and other interest group representatives provided information and recommendations to the members of the subcommittee. On the first day of the hearings, an exchange between Anthony J. Celebrezze, Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and Rep. John Brademas (D-IN) exemplified the gender-inclusive tone that would characterize the debate over government efforts to promote equal opportunity in higher education:

Secretary Celebrezze: At this point in our history I think we are trying to pinpoint [higher education] to the lower economic group, to the elimination of poverty. I am hopeful that as this program takes root and as these young men get out into the professional world, into the academic world—

Mr. Brademas: And women, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary Celebrezze: And women, as they get out, they, themselves, will start lifting the rest of the family up.

(“Higher Education Act of 1965 (H.R. 3220)” Subcommittee Hearings 1965, 61-62)

As this exchange illustrates, lawmakers were attuned to the relevance of the Higher Education Act for both women and men and intended to consider the proposed legislation in that gender-neutral vein.⁷³

⁷³ Evidence provided to the subcommittee from a document entitled “Financial Aid to College Students, 1963-64” by Elizabeth W. Haven and Robert E. Smith further illustrates this gender-neutral approach to considering the Higher Education Act. The authors of this publication note that, while women were once widely regarded as less likely to assume the responsibility of a college loan, women and men were equally likely to obtain student loans to pay for college. In 1960, for instance, 49 percent of college freshmen who had received student loans were women (“Higher Education Act of 1965 [S. 600]” Subcommittee Hearings 1965, 455).

Table 3.1. Percentage of High School Graduates Who Did NOT Enter College within 1 Year of Completing Grade 12				
	Family Income			
	Less than \$3,000		\$12,000 and up	
Aptitude Level	Males	Females	Males	Females
Top 10%	10.2	33.1	2.9	4.4
Top 25%	18.4	36.9	6.3	7.4
Top 50%	37.9	57.9	10.5	15.6
Below 50%	80.4	82.6	50.3	52.4

Source: "Higher Education Act of 1965 (H.R. 3220)" Subcommittee Hearings 1965, pp. 32-39; Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; Office of Education

In addition to this gender-impartial goal of expanding access to higher education, the HEA subcommittee hearings reflected an emphasis on expanding college access for low-income students. During his testimony, Secretary Celebrezze presented data from the Office of Education that highlighted the fact that women were less likely than men of similar scholastic aptitude to enter college within one year of completing high school. As his data illustrated, this was particularly true for students whose annual family income was less than \$3,000 (see Table 3.1). Among especially talented students who fell in the 90th percentile (top 10 percent) for aptitude, 10.2 percent of male students did not enter college immediately after completing high school, whereas a full 33.1 percent of women failed to do so. For students of similar aptitude whose family income is at least \$12,000 per year, the difference is not nearly as stark: 2.9 percent of highly talented male students did not move directly from high school to college, compared to 4.4 percent of similarly talented female students. Among students from low income families who were ranked in

the top 50th percentile in terms of academic aptitude, the data presented by Secretary Celebrezze showed that females were considerably less likely than men to attend college directly after high school. For students falling in the top 25 percent of their peers in terms of aptitude, twice as many females than males (36.9 compared to 18.4) failed to enter college within one year of completing the twelfth grade. For students in the top 50 percent, 57.9 percent of women failed to enter college immediately after high school, compared to 37.9 percent of men. Echoing Celebrezze's emphasis on the difficulty of attaining higher education for low-income students, American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) representative Lawrence Rogin called H.R. 3220 a "badly needed and long-overdue mechanism that can be used by many of our youth to help overcome the otherwise prohibitively high cost of higher education" ("Higher Education Act of 1965 [H.R. 3220]" Subcommittee Hearings 1965, 659).

Like the debate in the House subcommittee, many witnesses who came before the Senate's Subcommittee on Education between March and June of 1965 expressed fervent support for the legislation. Prominent voices from the administration emphasized what Office of Economic Opportunity director R. Sargent Shriver called the "birthright of opportunity." According to Shriver, "[t]he war on poverty is an integral part of the establishment of the Great Society. And the pursuit of excellence in education follows direction from this Nation's commitment to secure" the promise of equal opportunity. The HEA, asserted Shriver, offered a powerful step toward reclaiming this entitlement for women and men in the United States ("Higher Education Act of 1965 [S. 600]" Subcommittee Hearings 1965, 502). Other witnesses focused on the role of financial hardship as the central challenge to broad higher educational opportunity in the United

States. U.S. Education Commissioner Francis Keppel emphasized financial disparity and the ways in which it inhibits equal access to postsecondary education. “The evidence is very strong,” he declared, “that young men and young women without family means to help them out are not going into college in numbers—and it is into the one hundred thousands—because they know they don’t have the financial support” (“Higher Education Act of 1965 [S. 600]” Subcommittee Hearings 1965, 301).⁷⁴ For these witnesses, the federal financial aid proposed by the HEA would provide crucial assistance that would greatly expand higher educational opportunity for American men and women.

In addition to the voices of support and objection that colored the debate over the Higher Education Act, others argued that the proposed Higher Education Act did not do *enough* to expand access to higher education in the United States. A representative from an organization called Americans for Democratic Action critiqued the student aid component of the bill, complaining that “Title IV unnecessarily pennypinches” (“Higher Education Act of 1965 [S. 600]” Subcommittee Hearings 1965, 1289). Vincennes

⁷⁴ Thelma Thomas Daley of the American Personnel & Guidance Association submitted a statement to the committee that offered high school students’ thoughts regarding the proposed Higher Education Act of 1965. Reflecting on the program, a young woman named Joan remarked that “[o]ne of the major problems I face is money and so many scholarships are for such a little bit...” (“Higher Education Act of 1965 [S. 600]” Subcommittee Hearings 1965, 856). Mike, the son of a steelworker concurred: “I was exposed to the framework of Government loans in the 10th grade. It was like alleviating a hanging problem; it gave me a feeling that the money will be there and I’ll have a chance” (856). George, whose father was blind and who was supported by the welfare department in his county, echoed the financial concerns expressed by Joan and Mike: “[o]n the road to college are many problems to be faced—the biggest of these is money. Money can affect grades and handicap functional participation. I want aid. I want my life to mean something” (857). A final example of needy high school students’ thoughts regarding the provisions of the Higher Education Act can be found in the comments of Lucy, a tenant farmer’s daughter who said, “I would love to be able to attend a good school. Maybe this bill is my salvation.... If I could obtain a loan, a grant, and a scholarship, maybe my dreams will come true” (857). As this sample of quotes illustrates, the financial assistance provided by the HEA resonated with both male and female students.

University president Dr. Isaac K. Beckes concurred, asserting that the United States should focus on providing its citizens with free public higher education (1118).

For the Higher Education Act—as was the case with the National Defense Education Act—federal support for education failed to incite intense mobilization on the part of women’s organizations.⁷⁵ How policy issues are defined significantly influences which groups and individuals become involved in their politics (Goss and Skocpol 2006, 323). As Kristin Goss and Theda Skocpol note, during the 1960s women’s groups were “reluctant or unable to use their presumptively ‘different voice’ ” to advocate for social policy issues—such as federal support for higher education—that were important to them (2006, 324). While women have historically been highly interested in the provision of student loans (Goss and Skocpol 2006, 329), women’s organizations did not focus intensely upon the Higher Education Act of 1965 and its potential benefits for women. This failure reflects the fact that lawmakers continued to employ the gender-neutral framing of federal higher education support that was an artifact of the National Defense Education Act. Expanding access to higher education, especially for needy citizens, was viewed as an issue of general concern—rather than a “women’s issue.” Not surprisingly, only a small handful of women’s groups, like the American Association of University Women (AAUW), expressed vocal support for the Higher Education Act in 1965. During committee deliberations, the AAUW submitted a statement in support of the

⁷⁵ The activities of national women’s organizations faced numerous challenges in the 1960s, particularly significant declines in membership. As Kristin Goss and Theda Skocpol note, the mid 1960s marked the beginning of significant declines in membership for women’s organizations. In the American Association of University Women, for example, the percentage of female college graduate members “dropped by 4 percent between 1945 and 1965, and then plunged by 80 percent” in the three decades after 1966 (2006, 348). Rather than boasting broad memberships drawing upon women from all racial and socioeconomic backgrounds, women who engaged in feminist politics in the 1960s tended to be well-educated, middle class women (Gelb and Palley 1996, 38).

legislation. According to the association's General Director, Dr. Pauline Tompkins, the AAUW was "impressed" by the proposed HEA and expressed enthusiastic support for its passage ("Higher Education Act of 1965 [H.R. 3220]" Subcommittee Hearings 1965, 701-705).

Although women's groups were not particularly engaged in lobbying for the Higher Education Act, historical analysis reveals that many of the men and women testifying during HEA subcommittee hearings recognized the importance of expanding higher educational access for American women. In arguing for increased federal financial support for students from low income families, witnesses who testified in favor of the bill noted the interaction between gender and financial hardship for young people struggling to afford college. George O. McClary, President of the American School Counselor Association, noted that in large, female-headed families, "[t]here is no money for savings which might be used for financing college. There is usually financial brinksmanship. The financial struggle is communicated to the girl in the form of "get yourself a husband" and to the boy in the form of "be a man on your own and find yourself a job to help out" ("Higher Education Act of 1965 [H.R. 3220]" Subcommittee Hearings 1965, 601-602)." As such, McClary expressed strong support for the scholarship provisions included in the HEA (598).

Women's access to educational resources has grown in tandem with changing social perceptions of women's roles (McBride-Stetson 2004, 143). During congressional debate over the HEA, Rep. Donald M. Fraser (D-MN) alluded to dominant gender roles in his reference to the saying that "if you teach a woman you teach a family, whereas if you teach a man that is all you have taught" ("Higher Education Act of 1965 [H.R.

3220]” Subcommittee Hearings 1965, 649). He goes on to characterize the fact that many young women did not go to college as “a national waste” (649). Others highlighted the ways in which the HEA could provide capable workers for businesses—including women, who represented an often untapped economic resource—thus providing valuable support for the U.S. economy. Dorothy McBride-Stetson notes that 1960 marked the beginning of an era in which higher education became linked with the economic status of women as well as their employment opportunities (2004, 144). This notion is apparent in a statement submitted to the House subcommittee by the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, noting that the extension portion of the proposed Higher Education Act would provide needed support for “groups that have not had adequate opportunities,” like women. The HEA would provide women who have left the labor market with training to reenter “useful professions” such as nursing (“Higher Education Act of 1965 [H.R. 3220]” Subcommittee Hearings 1965, 6627).⁷⁶

Unlike these enthusiastic supporters of the Higher Education Act, some witnesses voiced staunch opposition to the bill. Bankers associations were particularly averse to the provisions of the HEA. Speaking on behalf of the American Bankers Association, Keith G. Cone complained that the administration’s subsidized loan program posed “a very real danger” because it created “an incentive for parents to disregard their fundamental obligations to make at least a partial contribution to the education of their children”

⁷⁶ Echoing this idea that the HEA could support women as they pursue skills that would promote valuable labor force participation, Walter J. Tribbey, president of the Draughton School of Business in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma submitted a column authored by Dr. Benjamin Fine for the record. In it, Fine emphasizes the need for women in many fields, saying: “With the increasing complexity of American business and professional life, there is a growing demand for educated young women with stenographic skills who are versed in specialized fields such as legal medical, engineering or technical secretaries...Because of the scramble by business executives, the young lady—an occasional young man—with a specialized training can count on an excellent salary and sound job security” (“Higher Education Act of 1965 [H.R. 3220]” Subcommittee Hearings 1965, 535-536).

(“Higher Education Act of 1965 [S. 600]” Subcommittee Hearings 1965, 1097-1098).⁷⁷

A representative testifying on behalf of an interest group known as the Liberty Lobby asserted that the HEA “promotes, glorifies, and finances the ideology of socialism, through its support of the ‘social worker’ approach to social and economic problems.” “As a ‘pork barrel’ bill,” he continued, “it should be rejected....” (“Higher Education Act of 1965 [S. 600]” Subcommittee Hearings 1965, 1284). The Liberty Lobby spokesman went on to suggest that the federal government should instead adopt a program that emphasized income tax credits for parents, students, and school taxpayers.

It is interesting to note that while opposition to the Higher Education Act mirrored NDEA opponents’ qualms with the prospect of expanding federal control in the area of education, the note of skepticism over women’s inclusion as student aid beneficiaries that colored NDEA debate was absent from HEA deliberation. For the Higher Education Act, opponents were skeptical of the propriety of using federal funds to provide scholarships and additional loans to students. Led by Senators Abraham Ribicoff (D-CT) and Winston Prouty (R-VT), conservative members of Congress—particularly Republicans, though some Democrats shared this view—argued that proposals for tuition tax credits, which would permit students coming from middle-class backgrounds to take advantage of federal assistance for higher education, represented the only responsible mechanism for expanding access to college. Moreover, they argued, the idea of providing federal tax credits for higher education enjoyed considerable public support. According to a Gallup

⁷⁷Once it became clear that federal student loans were likely to be included in whatever higher education proposal emerged from Congress, representatives from the banking industry, including the American Bankers Association and the United States Aid Fund, Inc., made clear their support of government subsidies to banks offering student loans. They did, however, express opposition to government discretion over the interest rates attached to the loans and the terms of repayment.

poll conducted in January of 1958, when asked “Should parents with children in college be able to deduct from their income tax the amount of money spent for tuition, board and room at college?” 81 percent of Americans agreed that families should be able to make such deductions, compared to only 13 percent who said that they should not. Democratic leaders managed to fend off attempts to make tuition tax credits a central mechanism by which the federal government provided aid for higher education by emphasizing the potential cost that such credits could place upon the government (Albright 1964). Additionally, the fact that the Higher Education Act—unlike the NDEA—made federal student loans available to students from middle-class backgrounds garnered the support of lawmakers who may have otherwise pushed for higher education tax credits (Graham 1984, 82). Although tax credit proposals failed to gain approval by Congress in 1964, they became a staple in future debates over federal aid for higher education.

Over the course of subcommittee deliberations, lawmakers accepted a number of amendments that largely enhanced the requests made by the Johnson administration. The House subcommittee did away with library research grants, but increased the funding authorizations for community extension programming and provided increased funds for extending the Higher Education Facilities Act. It also enhanced the program’s capacity to promote greater higher educational access for American women and men by expanding eligibility for Title IV scholarships to include all students in need of financial support, and not simply those from low-income families. The House subcommittee’s revised bill did, however, depart from the administration’s proposal in one major respect: it abandoned the Student Guaranteed Loan Program (SGLP), which provided loans to students from middle-class families (Chávez 1975, 117-118). Some members of the

subcommittee viewed this alteration as an unresolved issue, even after they approved the HEA on May 18, thus sending it to Chairman Powell's Education and Labor committee for consideration. The Senate's Education Subcommittee also added amendments to the proposed HEA during the hearings phase, including the addition of provisions for creating a National Advisory Council for Extension and Continuing Education; additional funds for junior colleges and developing institutions; loan forgiveness for student borrowers who enter the field of teaching; and additional scholarship funding for students from low-income families who exhibit exceptional academic achievement (Chávez 1975, 125-134).

On August 26, 1965, the House of Representatives debated the Higher Education Act. During this debate, some lawmakers took issue with the bill's proposed scholarships. In the past, the Senate had approved scholarship provisions in proposed education legislation only to have such measures stripped from the House version of the bill. In a dramatic break with political precedent, House members rejected an amendment to jettison the scholarship proposal in the HEA by a 58-88 standing vote (*Congressional Quarterly* 1965, 1765; 2117). The House of Representatives approved the HEA by a 367-22 roll-call vote that same day.⁷⁸ The successful passage of the Higher Education Act by the House of Representatives was particularly significant because it marked the first time that the House had approved a proposal for federal scholarships for college students. Six days later, on September 1, 1965, the Senate Labor and Public

⁷⁸ Differences in the speed with which each chamber acted on the Higher Education Act suggests that the Senate provided less contentious ground for proposed higher education legislation than the House of Representatives. As John Walsh (1965) notes, the HEA emerged from the House Education and Labor committee on July 14, 1965 but went without activity until August 26. In the Senate, on the other hand, the HEA emerged from committee on September 1 and passed the following day (Walsh 1965, 592).

Welfare committee reported its version of the bill to the Senate; and on September 2, that chamber approved the legislation with a 79-3 roll-call vote (*Congressional Quarterly* 1965, 1827).⁷⁹ In the Senate, John C. Stennis (D-MS), A. Willis Robertson (D-VA), and James O. Eastland (D-MS) opposed the HEA's passage.

Once the HEA was approved by both chambers of Congress, their respective proposals were streamlined in a conference committee. Conference debate centered upon two items: the HEA's scholarship provision for needy students and the Teacher Corps program. Some lawmakers, such as Rep. Green, objected to the entitlement format of Basic Education Opportunity Grants, preferring instead merit-based aid for needy students. Lawmakers also disagreed about the propriety of the Teacher Corps program, which involved providing federal funds to select, train, and pay teachers who would volunteer to teach at schools in impoverished areas of the country (Walsh 1965, 592). Conservative members of the conference committee argued that such a program would require an inappropriate level of federal control over personnel in participating schools. Ultimately, although Congress authorized funding for the Teacher Corps program, it failed to appropriate funds for the program.

⁷⁹ Surprisingly, once the HEA came up for debate on the Senate floor, the bulk of debate pertained—not to the aforementioned amendments—but to a disagreement as to the bill's effects for the level of control wielded by the federal educational bureaucracy over fraternal organizations. The primary source of contention was the appropriate reach of the U.S. Education Commissioner's power. Specifically, lawmakers disagreed as to whether the Commissioner could deny federal higher education benefits to students attending institutions at which fraternities engaged in racial, religious, or creed-based discrimination (Chávez 1975, 134-135). Once members inserted language clarifying that control over the practices of fraternities and sororities fell outside of the Education Commissioner's purview, the Senate passed its version of the Higher Education Act on September 2, by a vote of 79-3. The bill that emerged from the Senate differed from the House measure in two main respects: first, the Senate proposal included items geared toward improving elementary and secondary school teaching—particularly the establishment of a National Teacher Corps. Second, the Senate bill authorized \$4.7 billion for fiscal years 1966-70, while the House bill included only authorizations for fiscal year 1966 (*Congressional Quarterly* 1965, 1827).

On October 19, 1965, a conference committee of House and Senate members filed a compromise version of the Higher Education Act that closely resembled the Senate's version of the bill including the annual student aid appropriations set forth in the Senate bill and its provisions for amending the National Defense Student Loan Program (Chávez 1975, 121; 136-137). Commenting on the conference bill as it returned to each House for final approval, Rep. Adam Clayton Powell (D-NY), the chairman of the Education and Labor Committee, proclaimed that “[b]oth chambers and both sides of the aisle sought compromise with one goal in mind—the enactment this year of legislation that will revitalize the tired blood of our anemic colleges and universities and pump needy students into the all too upper class main stream of academic life” (Walsh 1965, 591).

On October 20, both the House and the Senate approved the conference report with a vote of 313 to 63 in the House and a unanimous voice vote in the Senate.⁸⁰ The HEA emerged from Congress replete with eight titles that met the requests made by President Johnson in his January 12th education message. The legislation authorized more than \$800 million for higher education in fiscal year 1966, approximately \$42 million for interest subsidies for student loans, and financial aid to developing institutions (*Congressional Quarterly* 1965, 2117).

On November 8, 1965, Lyndon Johnson signed the Higher Education Act into law at his alma mater, Southwest Texas State College. In his signing statement, Johnson proclaimed that “[i]n the next school year alone, 140,000 young men and women will be enrolled in college who, but for the provisions of this bill, would have never gone past high school” (*Congressional Quarterly* 1965, 2337). He went on to assert that the nation

⁸⁰ In the House, 75 Republicans favored the HEA, while 41 opposed it; 238 Democrats voted for the bill, while 22 opposed it.

would “reap the rewards of their wiser citizenship and their greater productivity for decades to come” (2337). The Higher Education Act was immensely popular among Americans. When a December 1965 Harris Survey asked respondents whether they approved or disapproved of specific legislation passed by Congress that year, a full 89 percent indicated that they approved of the college scholarships that were created by the HEA, while only 11 percent expressed disapproval.

After its passage, the Higher Education Act successfully expanded college access for millions of American men and women. By 1970, the HEA provided 2 million federal grants, loans, and student loan interest subsidies (Graham 1984, xiv). As Parsons notes, the “HEA marked the beginning of higher education’s emergence as an independent policy issue supported by its own policy arena” (1997, 38). Further, it “tied together a diverse group of constituents—higher education associations, teacher unions, historically black institutions, urban institutions, librarians, civil rights groups—that would fight to defend HEA and to expand ‘their’ programs in the years ahead” (Parsons 1997, 38).

Conclusion

The creation of the National Defense Education Act and the Higher Education Act represent watershed moments in the history of American social policy. By institutionalizing gender equality in college affordability, these programs expanded equal opportunity in the United States. While the G.I. Bill significantly expanded college access for a substantial portion of American men during the postwar era and dramatically increased the gender gap in U.S. higher educational attainment, the NDEA and HEA counteracted this effect by providing federal funds for men and women as they pursued

college degrees. By enabling a broad spectrum of American women to qualify for federal student aid, the NDEA and the HEA significantly expanded women's higher educational opportunity. Thus, these programs critically altered the nature of higher education in the United States. The NDEA broke with the tradition of previously enacted federal higher education policies that either provided financial support for school infrastructure and programming or granted financial aid on the gendered basis of military service. In addition to promoting equal opportunity for women and men in higher education, the National Defense Education Act and the Higher Education Act altered the gender dynamics of American citizenship by treating women as first-class citizens under social policy. By incorporating women as full and equal beneficiaries of the NDEA and the HEA, the federal government signaled a momentous change in women's status relative to men.

As we have seen, the path-breaking gender-neutrality of NDEA and HEA benefit allocation is a function of international and domestic political forces that shaped the historical moment at which the National Defense Education Act was created. The 1957 *Sputnik* launches provided a window of opportunity that enabled lawmakers to successfully pass student financial aid programs. In the context of the Cold War, lawmakers who supported the NDEA emphasized the necessity of strengthening American higher education to ensure that the nation could effectively compete with the Soviet Union. Because the Soviets efficiently utilized all available national resources by fully integrating women as well as men into the fields of science and engineering, the failure of the United States to do the same would place democracy at risk. On the domestic front, contention regarding racial discrimination influenced how lawmakers

framed their student aid proposals. To appease liberals who wished to include language condemning racial discrimination in the provision of federal aid and Southern Democrats who would object to such framing, lawmakers intentionally left the NDEA's allocation criteria vague awarding aid irrespective of students' race, religion, area of study, or gender. They were able to assure liberals that the bill was inherently anti-discriminatory, while also assuring Southern Democrats that the program would have little bearing on the racial order in southern higher educational institutions. Thus, lawmakers allocated federal student aid in a gender-egalitarian fashion not because they were particularly interested in gender equality, but because they wanted to avoid potentially harmful controversy on the issue of race.

Although women's organizations did not vocally participate in the politics surrounding the creation of the National Defense Education Act, women's interests were incorporated in the design of the program as a result of proponents' subversion of Cold War ideology and rhetoric for the purpose of passing long-standing student aid objectives. Political entrepreneurs working to tie their federal student aid proposals to the panic that resulted from the *Sputnik* launches emphasized the necessity of fully developing and utilizing American brainpower in the interest of national survival. All things considered, the *Sputnik* crisis provided a window of opportunity that permitted lawmakers to commit the federal government to providing higher educational aid to the nation's young people while also paving the way for future programs that would expand this relationship.

The Higher Education Act significantly expanded the federal government's role in facilitating access to higher education for American men and women. For President

Lyndon Johnson, higher education represented a powerful anti-poverty tool, and he was committed to construct a higher education program that would surpass the efforts of the NDEA. Strong presidential leadership and a fortuitous political context enabled Democratic lawmakers to successfully pass the HEA, thereby fortifying the government's commitment to expanding access to higher education with a combination of federal grants and student loans that provided a broad segment of men and women with financial support to help them attain college degrees. Like the NDEA, the HEA was constructed as a gender-neutral policy that provided benefits to women and men on a non-gendered basis. By expanding women's access to higher education, the National Defense Education Act of 1958 and the Higher Education Act of 1965 not only narrowed the gender gap in higher educational attainment that emerged after the G.I. Bill's enactment during the postwar era and paved the way for women to eventually surpass men as the recipients of college degrees, they altered the gender dynamics of American citizenship in terms of status by institutionalizing a standard of full incorporation of women under U.S. social programs.

CHAPTER FOUR

Opening Doors for Women: How Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments Employed Government Regulation to Promote Gender Equality in Terms of Status

“With Title IX, we affirm what can be accomplished when we allow all Americans—men and women—an equal opportunity to be their best. What strikes me the most about the progress that has been achieved since Title IX was passed in 1972 is that there has been a sea change in our expectations of what women can achieve....[W]omen have shown skeptics again and again that females are fully capable of being involved as successful and active participants in every realm of American life.”

—Richard W. Riley, U.S. Secretary of Education⁸¹

In June of 1997, U.S. lawmakers paused to commemorate the 25th anniversary of Title IX. Adopted as part of the 1972 Education Amendments revising and reauthorizing the Higher Education Act of 1965, Title IX prohibited sex discrimination in federally funded education programs. Occupying a brief paragraph in an otherwise rambling omnibus bill, the pithy statute established that:

“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance” (P.L. 92-318).⁸²

This landmark legislation dealt a devastating blow to gender discrimination in U.S. higher education, challenging the final barrier to women’s’ equal inclusion: discriminatory admissions policies characterized by gender quotas at many schools and the absolute exclusion of women at others. In addition to significantly increasing

⁸¹ Excerpt from “Title IX: 25 Year of Progress,” a report by the U.S. Department of Education, June 1997.

⁸² See also Castaneda, Katsinas, and Hardy (2008, 93); Martinez and Penn (2002, 237); and von Lohmann (1995, 177).

women’s access to college, vocational training, and graduate school, Title IX successfully fostered gender equality in faculty hiring and compensation, promoted fair treatment for pregnant and parenting students, and prohibited sexual harassment in schools. By prohibiting sex discrimination in federally supported educational programs, lawmakers invoked the regulatory powers of the state to ensure that higher educational institutions treated women and men equally.⁸³ In doing so, they affirmed women’s status as first-class citizens, demonstrating a commitment to their incorporation as full and equal inclusion in the nation’s colleges and universities.

On the anniversary of Title IX, lawmakers—and Americans, more broadly—had a great deal to celebrate. Speaking on the floor of the House of Representatives twenty-five years after voting Title IX into law, Representative Patsy Mink (D-HI) lauded the program that had “opened the doors of educational opportunity to millions of girls and women” by challenging discriminatory admissions policies and by prohibiting discrimination against pregnant and parenting students and girls and women interested in participating in athletics programs (*Congressional Record* 1997, H4217). Representative David Bonior (D-MI) paid further tribute to the program, recognizing that it had “opened doors and allowed our daughters to entertain big dreams.” Echoing Education Secretary Richard Riley’s observation that Title IX yielded “a sea change” in how the nation viewed women’s capabilities, Rep. Bonior noted the significance of Title IX for “not only fighting barriers, bringing down walls and opening doors, but also [for] trying to establish a norm.” With each successive cohort that embarks upon a path of education, he noted,

⁸³ While Title IX is widely recognized as having expanded women’s and girls’ opportunities in the area of athletics, the importance of Title IX for ensuring women’s inclusion in American higher education—the central purpose of the legislation—often goes un(der)appreciated.

“young women are establishing another layer of accomplishments, another layer of firsts and another layer for younger girls to see, so that by the time their turn comes, *they feel not fortunate to be given a chance, but that it is their right to have a chance*” (*Congressional Record* 1997, H4212; emphasis mine).

Historical trends support these laudatory statements. In 1971, only 18 percent of young women and 26 percent of young men had completed at least a bachelor’s degree; but by 1994, that number had increased to 27 percent for both women and men (U.S. Department of Education 1997, 3). Before Title IX’s passage in 1972, women received only 9 percent of medical degrees, 7 percent of law degrees, and 1 percent of dental degrees. By 1997, women earned 38 percent of medical degrees, 43 percent of law degrees, and 38 percent of dental degrees (*Congressional Record* 1997, H4212). Noting women’s rapidly increasing presence in higher education after the landmark regulation’s passage, Title IX expert and former U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) staff member Valerie Bonnette recognized the importance of Title IX for achieving rapid progress. “I don’t think that the number of women in higher education would be anywhere near what we see today were it not for Title IX.” She continued, “I think we would have made progress very, very gradually” (Interview with V. Bonnette 2012).

Prior to the passage of Title IX, discriminatory admissions policies limited women’s presence at U.S. colleges and universities, and it was not uncommon for women to be denied college admission as a direct result of gender discrimination.⁸⁴ Many

⁸⁴ Gender discrimination was not limited to students: those who were hired into college faculty positions earned less money than their male counterparts and were less likely to be promoted (Stimpson 1973, 47).

colleges limited the number of women students on the grounds that higher education would be wasted on women who would likely retreat from the labor force upon getting married and having children.⁸⁵ Men, on the other hand, were viewed as the rational beneficiaries of higher education because they would likely assume the role of breadwinner in their families. “In the early 1960s,” note Katherine Hanson, Vivian Guilfooy, and Sarita Pillai, “most colleges had quotas on the number of women they would admit” (2009, xvi; see also Davis 1991, 207; Peril 2006, 46; Rosenberg 1988, 116; Tidball et al. 1999, 11-13). At the University of North Carolina, for example, administrators kept the number of female students low by requiring women to live on campus, where accommodations for women were limited. Male students, on the other hand, faced no such restriction and could live on campus or off campus, as they pleased (“Title IX at 30” 2002, 8). As a result of gender quotas restricting the number of women allowed, institutions routinely admitted significantly fewer women than men. To win one of the coveted “women’s seats,” female applicants generally had to have better grades and higher test scores than their male counterparts (Hanson, Guilfooy, and Pillai 2009, 4; McDonagh and Pappano 2008, 79). In a 1972 survey of college freshmen that illustrated trends prior to the implementation of Title IX, the American Council on Education found that 44 percent of women students had earned a grade point average of at least a B+, compared to only 29 percent of male students (Matthews and McCune 1977, 2). As Title IX activist Bernice Sandler recalls, “I knew that I needed higher grades when I went to

⁸⁵ In one such example, a college followed up on a woman’s admissions application to check into her family status. She received a letter from the school that said, “[W]e notice in your application that you’re married. Can you explain to us how this will affect your position?” (Interview with B. Sandler 2011).

college, I mean they told us: girls need higher grades to get in than boys....That's the way it was" (Interview with B. Sandler 2011).

In addition to discriminating against women in college admissions and requiring female applicants to meet higher admissions standards than male applicants, colleges also subjected their women students to unequal treatment. College students who became pregnant were often asked to leave (Davis 1991, 207). Scholarship awards typically included restrictions on the sex of beneficiaries (Matthews and McCune 1977, 2-3; Solomon 1985, 72). Few colleges offered women equal opportunities to participate in school activities. In collegiate athletics, for instance, when women had the opportunity to participate in sports, women's teams rarely received the same level of institutional support that men's teams received (Blumenthal 2005; Martinez and Penn 2002, 238). As a result of such broad-reaching sex discrimination, American colleges and universities were long characterized by chronic gender imbalances. The Title IX regulation single-handedly reformed how higher educational institutions treated women. By prohibiting sex-based discrimination in the majority of U.S. colleges and universities, Title IX promoted greater higher educational attainment among American women.

Given Title IX's departure from the gender-neutral, redistributive construction of landmark student aid policies—specifically, the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958 and the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965—lawmakers' bold use of federal regulation to increase women's access to higher educational institutions seems surprising. When lawmakers enacted the NDEA and the HEA, thereby allocating federal dollars to expand access to college, they promoted greater gender equality in higher educational attainment by providing male and female students with financial assistance that enabled

many who could not otherwise afford to go to college to pursue higher education. While these financial aid programs did not specifically target benefits to women, they significantly increased women's access to college by including women as the beneficiaries of government assistance in a way that the G.I. Bill—which had targeted student aid to a significant proportion of citizens who were overwhelmingly male—did not. Because landmark higher education policy precedents had emphasized student assistance in the form of grants and loans, we might have expected lawmakers in 1972 to take a similar approach to increase women's access to college. Such incremental policy change that builds upon past experience exemplifies a pragmatic approach to policymaking (Lindblom 1959). Thus, lawmakers interested in expanding women's access to college could have constructed a new financial aid bill in the style of the G.I. Bill, this time, providing grants or loans exclusively or overwhelmingly to women. Instead, policymakers took a regulatory approach to expanding women's access to college. Calling Title IX “the coercive component of the sex equity legislation,” Nelly Stromquist notes that the program's prohibition against sex discrimination in education programs is backed by the threat of discontinued federal funding for institutions that fail to comply (1993, 380). This brings us to the central question driving this chapter: Why, in 1972, did lawmakers so forcefully attempt to institutionalize gender equality in higher education? To answer this question, we must consider the political development of Title IX, paying particular attention to the feedback effects of contemporaneous anti-discrimination policies that provided a template for effectively combating institutional discrimination. In addition to exploring how Title IX was fashioned, I will also explore

the impact of this landmark regulation for the gender dynamics of status in the American polity.

To understand the timing of Title IX, its redistributive structure, and the impact that it has had on the gender dynamics of American citizenship, I utilize historical analysis to investigate the political development of Title IX and its significance for promoting women's status as first-class citizens in the United States. Using a combination of primary and secondary sources, such as elite interviews, oral histories, transcripts from House and Senate deliberations, and the historical literature on Title IX, we will see that lawmakers successfully invoked the regulatory powers of the state to ensure women's full inclusion in the nation's colleges and universities. Working in a political context shaped by the success of powerful civil rights policies that used federal regulation to fight discrimination in American institutions, policy makers recognized that sex discrimination in college admissions—also an institutional barrier to equality—constituted an affront to women's status as first-class citizens and the final barrier to gender equality in U.S. higher education. Understanding the currency of regulatory policy for effectively challenging discrimination, policymakers invoked this technique in hopes of defeating sex discrimination in higher education. As a result, they enhanced gender equality in equal opportunity and made clear the government's commitment to full citizenship for women.

Policy Feedback Theory: Explaining a Paradigm Shift in Higher Education Policy

To fully appreciate the path-breaking development of Title IX—particularly the historical moment at which the regulation was passed and the novelty of invoking federal

regulation in higher education policy—we must take seriously the politics surrounding its creation and implementation. Thus far, analyses of Title IX have largely overlooked the politics surrounding its passage and the program’s central objective, which was to end gender discrimination in college admissions. Rather, scholars have focused almost completely on the effects of Title IX for promoting gender equality in athletics. As Anna Edwards (2004) notes, athletics became the focal point of Title IX when the executive branch, in implementing the legislation, charged the judicial branch with reviewing the policy in sports-related court cases. Analyzing Title IX’s effectiveness for promoting gender equality, political scientist Eileen McDonagh and journalist Laura Pappano (2008) focus solely on the regulation’s influence on athletics. Title IX, they contend, has had negative effects on gender equality because it has institutionalized sex-segregation in sports. They argue that by constructing requirements for equal access to athletic opportunities around the assumption that women and girls should play on separate teams from men and boys, Title IX perpetuates the notion that women and men are not equal (McDonagh and Pappano 2008).

Although existing analyses have enhanced our understanding of the relationship between Title IX and gender equality in athletics, scholars have yet to fully consider the regulation’s effectiveness in light of its original objective of expanding gender equality in college admissions. Furthermore, scholars have yet to recognize Title IX as having dealt a devastating blow to sex discrimination in U.S. higher education. Taking a step in that direction, this chapter considers the political development of Title IX and its effectiveness in accomplishing the central objective of ending sex discrimination in college admissions. Tracing the statute’s development from a failed proposal in 1970 to

a bona fide federal regulation in 1972, I consider why policymakers crafted Title IX as a regulatory policy that specifically combated discrimination against women in college admissions. Taking an historical developmental research approach to understanding Title IX, we recognize that a failure to consider a policy's development over time may obscure the nature of unintended consequences (Pierson 2005), such as the emergence of sports as the principal issue shaping the post-enactment politics of Title IX, and preclude fully understanding the effectiveness of regulatory policy for expanding access to higher education.

I hypothesize that lawmakers invoked regulatory policy to end sex discrimination in college admissions because this type of policy had recently proven to be the most effective means of combating institutional discrimination in the United States. In 1970, when Representative Edith Green (D-OR) crafted the measure that would eventually become Title IX, recently enacted civil rights policies had invoked the power of the state to successfully combat race and sex discrimination in employment and race discrimination in education. As a result, these policies provided valuable blueprints for successfully challenging sex discrimination in higher education. My supposition that the policy context of the early 1970s explains why Title IX took a regulatory approach to increasing women's access to higher education draws upon policy feedback theory, which holds that public policies have the capacity to change politics by altering citizens and the political environment.

I suspect that the development of title IX exemplifies how major policies can influence the behavior of policymakers on subsequent political occasions—shaping, for example, the types of policy alternatives that lawmakers consider. Throughout the 1960s,

regulatory policies like the Equal Pay Act (1963), the Civil Rights Act (1964), and the Voting Rights Act (1965) had successfully removed barriers to race and gender equality in American institutions while also highlighting institutional discrimination in American society. Only after the passage of these landmark policies did proponents of gender equality in higher education view sex discrimination in college admissions policies as a form of institutional discrimination that should be corrected by federal regulation. The effectiveness of civil rights policies placed federal regulation on the menu of policy alternatives available to Rep. Edith Green (D-OR) and her allies. By backing the public denouncement of gender discrimination in education with the specter of revoked federal funding, Title IX not only echoed civil rights policies, it also sent the strong message that discrimination on the basis of gender had no place in American higher education.

In addition to the importance of Title IX's regulatory nature for effectively challenging sex discrimination in colleges and universities, the political context of the early 1970s shaped the politics surrounding the statute's passage. Because Rep. Green strategically suppressed advocacy for Title IX in hopes of securing a smooth passage for the statute, the regulation provoked limited objection as it made its way through Congress.⁸⁶ These objections centered around the effects of the Title IX regulations for

⁸⁶ An unsung hero, Representative Green's keen political acumen was crucial to the development and eventual implementation of Title IX and other landmark higher education policies that expanded women's access to higher education. As Marilyn Stapleton, Green's former Chief of Staff, noted, the congresswoman had a strong record of successfully championing legislation—a fact shaped, no doubt, by her intelligence and courage, her work ethic, and her excellent skills as a debater. As Stapleton noted, “when Mrs. Green got up to speak, a hush would go over the [House] floor” (Interview with M. Stapleton 2012). These skills proved indispensable in championing equal opportunity for American women.

A great deal of Rep. Green's effectiveness as a legislator was a function of her commitment to being well-prepared. As her son, Richard Green, noted, “She had a reputation as being one of the members of Congress who did her homework. Something that most of them did not do.” As a result, Green's office was often characterized as “a hardship office” (Interview with R. Green 2012). Describing her experience on Edith Green's congressional staff, Marilyn Stapleton recalls that legislative aides “would spend all-

the gender dynamics of elite, male-dominated colleges that were adamantly opposed to any federal regulation that would require them to admit women and men at equal rates. Although muted, these objections laid the groundwork for subsequent attacks on the legislation. As Theodore Lowi notes, “the impact of regulatory decisions is clearly one of directly raising costs and/or reducing or expanding alternatives of private individuals” (1964, 690). The “individuals” bearing the perceived costs of the Title IX regulation, then, were the nation’s colleges and universities.⁸⁷ It is interesting to note, however, that in the political context of the early 1970s—following the Civil Rights movement and only three months after the House and the Senate passed the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)—forceful advocacy of gender discrimination in colleges would have represented a risky tactic for most opponents. Recognizing that policies create incentives that motivate groups to become politically involved if they feel the need to protect their resources (see, Pierson 1993, 599; Campbell 2002, 2003), Title IX’s opponents found it politically expedient to re-frame their objections so as to focus on the redistributive possibilities inherent in the regulation. In other words, they focused on the costs of Title IX for colleges, isolating higher educational institutions as the presumptive losers in Title IX’s success.

Challenging Title IX on the House floor, Representative John Erlenborn (R-IL) characterized the regulation as an “attempt to impose what amounts to financial penalties upon many of the institutions because of the composition of their student bodies”

nights compiling notebooks and, days ahead of time, answering questions that [Rep. Green] thought might come up or challenges to what she was trying to accomplish” (Interview with M. Stapleton 2012).

⁸⁷ Not surprisingly, these elite institutions counted a number of House representatives and Senators among the ranks of their distinguished alumni. For example, John Erlenborn, an opponent of Title IX, attended the University of Notre Dame. Another opponent of Title IX’s ban on sex discrimination in admissions was Peter Peyser (R-NY), who was an alumni of Colgate University, which did not admit women until 1972.

(*Congressional Record* 1971, 39249). Emphasizing the redistributive implications of the Title IX regulation evoked the most intense objections to the law. The contentious politics surrounding a redistributive policy revolve around uncertainty “about what [it] *can* be [and] what it threatens to be” (Lowi 1964, 691; emphasis his). Title IX’s opponents emphasized the policy’s potential to redistribute resources in hopes of alarming a broader group of citizens—extending beyond the administrators of colleges and universities—who could potentially bear the costs associated with the reform. Thus, political opponents recognized that emphasizing the possible redistributive effects of the Title IX regulation could decimate support for the policy.

While hesitant to openly object to banning sex discrimination in college admissions, opponents could safely object to the redistribution of resources in areas that were more closely in line with traditional gender roles. Thus, they focused on how Title IX would affect sports programs and the student bodies at all-male military academies. While lawmakers might have focused on other areas that would be directly transformed by Title IX, such as sex discrimination in faculty hiring, gender discrimination in vocational education, and policies regarding pregnant and parenting students, these issues did not offer the same political accessibility or redistribution-based contention that athletics and all-male military academies did. Thus, Title IX’s opponents portrayed the potential outcomes of Title IX as a zero-sum game in which these traditionally masculine arenas would be the losers. Although these issues failed to prevent the passage of Title IX, they set the tone for subsequent political battles long after the principals had left the ring.

Problematizing Sex Discrimination in Higher Education

“One of the basic concepts upon which our democracy was founded was the idea that people can only be free and equal where there is equality of opportunity. If women are unreasonably denied access to public places and public educational institutions (which they support with taxes), then women cannot be considered full and equal citizens. Women should be fully integrated into the educational institutions of our Nation as students (and teachers), and accepted as mature individuals with potential and worth.”

—Ms. Virginia A. Allen, Chair of the President’s Task Force on Women’s Rights and Responsibilities⁸⁸

“Legislation is vitally needed if women are to be accorded the fair treatment that is the birthright of their brothers.”

—Dr. Bernice Sandler, Chair of the Action Committee for Federal Contract Compliance in Education, WEAL, 1970⁸⁹

In the early 1970s, sex discrimination posed a significant challenge to American women. Although women represented a majority of the population in 1972 and more than half of registered voters, they held only 11 of the 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives and only 1 of the 50 seats in the Senate (*Congressional Quarterly* 1972, 597). Although women comprised one-third of the labor force, they were paid, on average, \$3 for every \$5 earned by their male counterparts (597). Women also experienced discrimination in higher education. Schools like Harvard, Princeton, and the University of North Carolina set strict gender quotas that limited the number of women permitted to study in their institutions, while schools like Dartmouth excluded women entirely (Davis 1991, 212; Blumenthal 2005). The National Defense Education Act of

⁸⁸ Quoted from a statement made during the 1970 congressional hearings on Discrimination against Women (Stimpson 1973, 131).

⁸⁹ Ibid.

1958 and the Higher Education Act of 1965 had expanded women's access to higher education by providing individual students with need-based financial aid; however, lawmakers had yet to address institutional barriers to gender equality in American higher education. Although women enjoyed access to federal funds that helped to meet the costs associated with earning a postsecondary degree, sex discrimination in college admissions limited the number of women who would have the opportunity to utilize such financial aid, in the first place.

In the wake of the civil rights movement, demands for equality gained a prominent place in the political arena, and lawmakers began to think seriously about discrimination against women in college admissions. The previous decade marked a defining period in American politics in which U.S. policymakers invoked the power of the state to challenge inequality. Congress took steps to alleviate sex discrimination in employment wages with the Equal Pay Act of 1963. The following year, lawmakers passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which made it illegal to discriminate against students and employees on the basis of race, color, or nationality (Hanson, Guilfooy, and Pillai 2009, 8). In Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, lawmakers banned such discrimination in any program receiving federal financial aid. Title VII of the Act prohibited sex discrimination, but only in the area of employment. Although these landmark civil rights programs promoted race and gender equality in employment and race equality in education, lawmakers had yet to address the significant barrier that discriminatory admissions policies posed to gender equality in higher education.

Neither the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution nor Title IV of the 1964 Civil Rights Act ensured that women received equal treatment by higher

educational institutions (Greendorfer 1998). As Representative Martha Griffiths noted in advocating for the ERA, the Supreme Court had never recognized women as a class that is entitled to equal protection of the law as provided under the Fourteenth Amendment (*Congressional Quarterly* 1972, 597). The Supreme Court first considered whether sex classifications were in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment in *Myra Bradwell v. State of Illinois* (1873), when the Court upheld an Illinois law that prohibited married women from practicing law (Goldstein 1988 [1979], 66-72). Prior to the 1970s, no Supreme Court case had successfully challenged sex-based laws on the basis of the Equal Protection Clause (Erickson 2001, 766).

Almost a century after the *Bradwell* decision, the Court continued to uphold sex-based laws that were rooted in accepted gender norms. The Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Reed v. Reed* (1971) marked the first time that the Court had invalidated a law that abridged women's right to equal protection under the Fourteenth Amendment. In this case, the Supreme Court issued a decision invalidating a state law that discriminated against women by privileging men as the administrators of wills (Cushman 2001, 37-42). While this marked a watershed moment for women's equality under the law, it is important to note that this case did not create a precedent whereby sex would be considered a "suspect classification" in the way that race was. While attorneys for the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), under the leadership of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, had submitted a brief to the Court that emphasized their belief that sex-based preferences should be subject to the standard of strict scrutiny, the Court essentially ignored this line

of reasoning, overturning the Idaho law on the grounds that it failed to meet the rationality standard.⁹⁰

Higher Education and Gender Inequality: When Political Issues Collide

The politics of the early 1970s paved the way for lawmakers to take decisive steps to reduce sex discrimination in higher education. From February through August of 1970, members of the Education Subcommittee of the Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee held hearings on S659, an omnibus bill introduced by Senator Claiborne Pell (D-RI) to reauthorize the student aid provisions of the National Defense Education Act and the Higher Education Act, which were scheduled to expire on June 30, 1971. In a special message to Congress on March 19, 1970, President Richard Nixon emphasized the administration's commitment to enhancing federal support for higher education in the form of student loans, grants, and aid to community colleges (*Congressional Quarterly* 1970, 1700). This placed the topic of higher education in a prominent position on the political agenda. The following month, President Nixon's Taskforce on Women's Rights and Responsibilities issued a report entitled "A Matter of Simple Justice," highlighting the problem of sex discrimination in the United States (Califano 1981, 263; *Congressional Record* 1971, 30156).

⁹⁰ To consider whether laws violate citizens' right to equal protection under the Fourteenth Amendment, the Supreme Court has relied heavily on two standards: the "rationality test" (the most lenient) and the "suspect classification" (which warrants the most rigid scrutiny). The "rational basis" test bases the validity of laws differentiating between groups on whether differential treatment is rooted in a reason that is rationally derived from the law's purpose, rather than hostility toward the group. The more stringent "strict scrutiny" standard, on the other hand, places the burden on the government to demonstrate that differential treatment is necessary to achieve "compelling" government purposes (Erickson 2001, 766; Goldstein 1988, 88-90; Lindgren and Taub 1988, 43-46).

Considering the focus on higher education, the currency of anti-discriminatory policy, and increasing interest in the topic of sex discrimination, it comes as little surprise that a small, but determined, group of women politicians and activists began to demand an end of overt gender discrimination in American institutions. Spearheading the group was “the Mother of Higher Education,” Representative Edith Green. Also known as “the Mother of the Equal Pay Act,” Green had played an integral role in the passage of the 1963 policy guaranteeing women’s equality in hiring and employment, as well as the passage of the National Defense Education Act and the Higher Education Act, which provided valuable financial aid that significantly expanded women’s access to higher education. Edith Green’s role in passing the landmark student aid programs significantly influenced her decision to take a regulatory approach to ending sex discrimination in college admissions. As social policy expert and early Title IX advocate Margaret Dunkle notes, “there is a long-established tradition at the federal level of coupling a stick—[such as] a prohibition against discrimination or a requirement to do something—with a carrot, [like] student aid” (Interview with M. Dunkle 2012). In the 1960s, a similar pairing generated a significant expansion of higher educational opportunities to African Americans. While the National Defense Education Act and the Higher Education Act extended need-based student aid to low-income African Americans, the Civil Rights Act prevented racial discrimination in higher educational institutions from severely restricting black students’ usage of that aid. In the case of the Title IX regulation, lawmakers were “basically playing catch up” by challenging sex-based discrimination that hindered women from broadly using the financial aid benefits that were provided under the NDEA and the HEA (Interview with M. Dunkle 2012).

Assisting Representative Green in steering Title IX through the political process was Dr. Bernice Sandler of the Women's Equity Action League (WEAL). Characterized in the *New York Times* as "the Godmother of Title IX," Sandler had worked with Vincent Macaluso, the Assistant Director of the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance to challenge sex discrimination in faculty hiring. Citing Executive Order 11246, which the Johnson Administration had established in 1965 to regulate federal contractors by prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex, race, religion, or national origin in hiring and employment decisions, Sandler inundated the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) at the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) with hundreds of charges against American colleges and universities that were not in compliance with the order.⁹¹ As the OCR investigated these complaints, the government withheld federal grants from a number of institutions until they produced plans for improving the treatment of women faculty, graduate students, and staff (*Congressional Quarterly* 1972, 599).⁹² Meanwhile, Bernice Sandler forwarded copies of her complaints to Representative Edith Green, piquing the congresswoman's interest and contributing to her decision to organize congressional subcommittee hearings on the topic of sex discrimination in employment and education (Interview with B. Sandler 2011).

Sandler's early efforts and the subsequent development of Title IX are particularly noteworthy when we consider that, prior to the late 1960s and early 1970s,

⁹¹ The higher educational institutions that Sandler cited qualified as government contractors because they engaged in interaction with the federal government that generated at least \$10,000.

⁹² The situation at Columbia University exemplified the disdain that many institutions held for this type of federal oversight. Administrators at Columbia flatly refused to submit a proposal for improving sex discrimination in hiring and employment on campus, and they also refused to provide the Office of Civil Rights with institutional data on women and minorities. As a result, the government withheld all federal grants from Columbia from November of 1971 until March of the following year (*Congressional Quarterly* 1972, 599).

sex discrimination had not been widely viewed as a systematic barrier to women's equality, but as isolated experiences related to individual misfortune. The emergence of political efforts to end sex discrimination emanated not from a large and organized women's movement but from a small cadre of elites who had first-hand experiences with sex discrimination. The women's rights movement had not yet become an organized force that could support the fight against sex discrimination in higher education.

Margaret Dunkle recalls that contemporary women's organizations were just beginning to form at the time that Title IX was created and considered by Congress (Interview with M. Dunkle 2012). A 1972 *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report* described the nascent women's movement as a "disorganized, heterogeneous, and fragmented" movement that struggles with "disagreements on the proper tactics" to employ to achieve equal rights (*Congressional Quarterly* 1972, 597). The established women's groups, such as the American Association of University Women—which boasted an excess of 100,000 members—the Business Professional Women, and the League of Women Voters, they had limited knowledge regarding equity issues and remained at the sidelines during the early stages of Title IX's development (Interview with M. Dunkle 2012). Rather than emerging from strong and broad-reaching activism, the development of Title IX, as Margaret Dunkle describes it, "was really a few people who made a huge change" (Interview with M. Dunkle 2012).

A New Focus in Congress: Considering Title IX and the Ban on Sex Discrimination in Higher Education

In Congress, liberal lawmakers began to highlight issues related to sex discrimination. In June of 1970, Representative Martha Griffiths (D-MI) and Senator Birch Bayh (D-IN) began lining up support for the Equal Rights Amendment (Blumenthal 2005, 47), which proposed amending the United States Constitution to guarantee women and men equal rights.⁹³ That same month, as chair of the House Committee on Education and Labor's Special Subcommittee on Education, Representative Edith Green (D-OR) held hearings on discrimination against women in education and employment. Title IX author and a stalwart champion of gender equality in the House of Representatives, Edith Green had first-hand experience with sex discrimination in higher education. After achieving an exemplary record as a student in Oregon and establishing herself as an award winning debater, Green hoped to pursue a career in law. However, because a legal career would have been incongruous with accepted gender norms of the day, Green's family and academic advisors urged her to pursue a more gender-appropriate profession: teaching. Although Edith Green distinguished herself as a first-rate educator, she forever regretted relinquishing her dreams of becoming a lawyer. After winning election to the Congress in 1955, Green was appointed to the House Committee on Education and Labor where she immediately emerged as a devoted advocate for issues related to education, earning the nickname "Mrs. Education" (Blumenthal 2005, 25). Perhaps Green's unyielding, no-nonsense support for women's rights issues in the male-dominated House explains the origins of

⁹³ The ERA had been introduced in Congress every year since 1923, repeatedly failing to garner enough support to amend the Constitution (*Congressional Quarterly* 1972, 2590).

her other nickname—“The Wicked Witch of the West” (Blumenthal 2005, 25). During her tenure in Congress, Green paid particular attention to issues related to the fair treatment of men and women. During a subcommittee hearing in the late 1960s, Rep. Green recalled in a 1978 interview, she was dismayed to find that school superintendents advocating programs to prevent boys from dropping out of school were unabashedly unconcerned with the fortunes of girls. While these educators provided special courses to support boys struggling with poor academic performance, they offered no such support for girls. The educators and Green’s male colleagues on the Education and Labor Committee took for granted that the academic well-being of boys was more important than that of girls because, as Green recalled, “[boys] were going to be the breadwinners” (Harrison 1978, 18). A 1967 survey revealed that many college freshmen shared this view. When asked whether they agreed with the statement, “The activities of married women are best confined to the home and family,” 57 percent of students responded in the affirmative—67 percent of men and 44 percent of women (Astin 1998, 121). Over the course of her congressional career, Representative Green worked to combat such views, proving herself to be a capable proponent of gender equality in education.

Representative Green’s hearings on sex discrimination coincided with the House Education and Labor Committee’s consideration of Section 805, Edith Green’s proposal to amend Title VI of the Civil Rights Act (H.R. 16098) to include a prohibition against sex discrimination in federally funded programs (*Congressional Record* 1997, H4217). Green’s subcommittee hearings yielded valuable testimony confirming the need for legislation that would protect women and girls from sex discrimination in education, and they marked the genesis of Title IX. Witnesses providing testimony during these crucial

hearings included women's rights activists; college professors; a number of Green's female congressional colleagues; and representatives from colleges, professional organizations, and advocacy groups like the American Association of University Women and the Women's Equity Action League (WEAL).

Beyond these groups, interest in Representative Green's investigation into sex discrimination in education and employment was sparse. Catherine Stimpson recalls the lack of seriousness with which the Education Subcommittee's fifteen male members treated the hearings, noting that "no more than four of them ever appeared at one time to listen to the testimony, a comment either on the nature of congressional subcommittee hearings or on the prevailing attitude of men in government towards the issue of women's rights" (1973, xiii). Also conspicuously absent from the hearings on sex discrimination were the major education organizations like the National Education Association (NEA), the American Council on Education, and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). These groups paid little attention to the proceedings because they did not regard sex discrimination in education as a particularly pressing issue (Fishel and Pottker 1977, 96; Interview with B. Sandler 2011).

The testimonies presented at the subcommittee hearings suggested otherwise. While witnesses highlighted the many forms of discrimination that challenged American women in a range of areas, chronic gender disparity in higher education soon became a focal point of the hearings. Among the discriminatory practices that witnesses discussed, their remarks regarding gender discrimination in university admissions were particularly striking. Although men had always pursued post-secondary education at higher rates than women, the gender gap in enrollment was expanding in the late 1960s and early

1970s (Stimpson 1973, 23). A major source of this trend was the fact that many colleges and universities maintained quota systems that restricted the number of women admitted each year (62). For example, a few years before the hearings, 21,000 women applied for college admission in the state of Virginia and were rejected, while not a single man who applied for admission was rejected (165; also Interview with B. Sandler 2011). Many schools made it clear that, to gain admission, women needed to be “especially well qualified” (*Congressional Record* 1971, 30156). Men, however, were not held to such standards. It was not unusual for incoming freshman classes to be characterized by substantial gender imbalances. In 1970, the University of North Carolina’s freshman class consisted of 1,900 men and only 426 women (Blumenthal 2005, 31). Such inequality characterized the gender dynamics of American higher education more broadly. In 1971, 26 percent of young men had completed at least four years of college, compared to only 18 percent of young women (U.S. Department of Education 1997, 3). Representative Green’s subcommittee hearings demonstrated the magnitude of gender inequality in American higher education. When the hearings came to a close, Representative Green placed a special order with the federal printing office to produce a whopping 6,000 copies of the hearing transcripts, which she promptly mailed to the presidents of major colleges and universities as well as members of committees and organizations that dealt with education (Interview with B. Sandler 2011).

Although the Education Subcommittee’s sex discrimination hearings revealed gender inequality to be a significant national problem, it became apparent when the hearings concluded in July of 1970 that appending Section 805 to the Civil Rights Act might not be the most effective means of combating sex discrimination in higher

education. Beseeking proponents of Section 805 to tread carefully around the fragile progress that Title IV of the 1964 Civil Rights Act had achieved, Assistant Attorney General Jerris Leonard suggested that they present Section 805 as separate legislation that would specifically target sex discrimination as an education policy, as opposed to a civil rights amendment.⁹⁴ Working as a central member of the Nixon Administration whose primary role was to oversee civil rights legislation, Leonard's central focus was the desegregation of schools. Rather than amending Title IV, he suggested, supporters of Section 805 could use it as a blueprint for a separate regulation (*Congressional Quarterly* 1970, 2055). African American leaders also expressed concern that an amendment prohibiting sex discrimination would imperil the progress that the Civil Rights Act had achieved in the area of racial discrimination (*Congressional Record* 1997, H4218; Hanson, Guilfooy, and Pillai 2009, 8). After Section 805 died in committee, Representative Green decided to act on Leonard's advice during the following legislative session.

⁹⁴ Title VI of the Civil Rights Act denied federal financial assistance to programs and activities that engaged in discrimination on the basis of race, nationality, or religion-based discrimination (Skrentny 2002, 231).

The Politics of Enactment: How Title IX Challenged “the Last Acceptable Social Prejudice”

“Passage of Title IX would establish a dangerous precedent.... [I]f Congress permits the Federal Government to take away from colleges their right to determine the composition of their own student bodies, it will plant the seed of destruction for our system of higher education as we know it.”

—Rep. John N. Erlenborn (R-IL), 1971⁹⁵

“Any college or university which has an undergraduate admission policy which discriminates against women applicants...is free to do so under our bill, but such institutions should not be asking the taxpayers of this country to pay for this kind of discrimination...[J]ust as we insist that schools be color-blind, we must insist also that they be sex-blind as well.”

—Rep. Patsy Mink (D-HI), 1971⁹⁶

With the beginning of the 92nd Congress in January of 1971, the Republican president and the Democratically controlled House and Senate prioritized the task of reauthorizing the landmark federal student aid programs that were created under the National Defense Education Act and the Higher Education Act. In a message to Congress on February 22, 1971, President Nixon proclaimed that it would be “a year of national debate on the goals and potentials of our system of higher education.” The year could also provide “a time of opportunity to discover new concepts of mission and purpose, which are responsive to the diverse needs of our country” (*Congressional Quarterly* 1971, 483). Nixon revealed the administration’s proposal for continuing federal aid for higher education, which was drafted by Secretary Elliot Richardson and the staff at HEW. Known as H.R. 5191, “The Higher Education Opportunity Act of

⁹⁵ U.S. House. *Higher Education Act of 1971*, 1st sess., H.R. 7248, *Congressional Record* 118, (4 November 1971): H3249.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, H39252.

1971,” Nixon’s proposal expressed a commitment to continued financial aid for needy students but revealed a new interest in providing assistance for higher income students, as well (*Congressional Quarterly* 1971, 483). While Nixon expressed a strong commitment to providing funds to colleges and universities that traditionally serve black Americans—calling these institutions “an indispensable national resource” (*Congressional Quarterly* 1971, 484)—he placed no such emphasis on the importance of providing aid to women’s colleges.

After failing to pass the ban against sex discrimination in education as an amendment to the Civil Rights Act, Representative Edith Green decided to append the sex discrimination proposal to H.R. 7248, the congressional version of the omnibus reauthorization bill, which was known simply as “the Education Amendments.” As Senator Birch Bayh notes, Edith Green was a stalwart proponent of gender equality in higher education; and, in the politics surrounding the anti-sex discrimination regulation, “the real trooper in the House” (Interview with B. Bayh 2011). Using Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act as a model, Green drafted the ban on sex discrimination in education as Title IX of the omnibus education bill.⁹⁷ Recognizing the value of the landmark 1964 legislation in providing a blueprint for ending discrimination, Green drew upon the exact language used in the Civil Rights Act, which had banned discrimination on the basis of race, color, or nationality in all federally funded programs, when drafting Title IX (Interview with M. Dunkle 2012). Bernice Sandler remembers Representative Green’s approach to drafting the statute saying, “she changed it, took the wording from

⁹⁷ In early drafts of H.R. 7248, Edith Green’s anti-sex discrimination regulation actually appeared as Title X, but by the end of deliberations it became Title IX. Throughout this analysis, I will refer to it as Title IX.

Title VI—put ‘sex’ instead of race, color, national origin in it and limited it to education” (Interview with B. Sandler 2011). Occupying no more than a paragraph in the lengthy reauthorization bill, Green’s proposal prohibited sex discrimination in federally funded education programs (Hanson, Guilfooy, and Pillai 2009, 8; Matthews and McCune 1997; McDonagh and Pappano 2008, 101-102; Skrentny 2002, 231). The purpose of Title IX was to outlaw the use of federal funds to support education programs that engaged in sex discrimination. Title IX addressed a broad range of issues related to gender equality in education, providing legal recourse for gender discrimination in admissions and employment (Salomone 2002; Valentin 1997), sexual harassment (Martinez and Penn 2002, 239-241), and discrimination against pregnant and parenting students and faculty members (Fishel 1976, 102; Martinez and Penn 2002, 239; Martin 2003). Along with congressional representatives Shirley Chisholm (D-NY) and Patsy Mink (D-HI) and senators Birch Bayh (D-IN) and George McGovern (D-SD), Representative Green and her allies in Congress began working to secure support for the regulation in both legislative chambers.

A crucial component in the successful passage of Title IX was Edith Green’s strategy for maneuvering the regulation through Congress. To avoid provoking intense objection to Title IX, Green adopted a strategy of “stealth politics” (Interview with M. Dunkle 2012; see also Robinson, Walters, and Lamber 2008), asking allies and activists like WEAL’s Bernice Sandler to forgo lobbying on behalf of the proposal (Blumenthal 2005, 35; Hanson, Guilfooy, and Pillai 2009, 8-9; Interview with B. Sandler 2011; Skrentny 2002, 247). Margaret Dunkle describes Edith Green’s strategy as keeping Title IX “under the radar,” submitting it nonchalantly—as something that simply followed the

pattern of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act (Interview with M. Dunkle 2012). As Bernice Sandler recalls, “Edith Green was a superb politician.” She continues:

I remember this meeting, there were maybe, I don’t know, seven, eight of us, in ’72, and we came and we said, “We’re ready to lobby. You just tell us what you want us to do, and we’ll do it.” She said, “I don’t want you to lobby at all.” And we thought, “What?” And she said, “If you lobby, people are going to ask what’s in this bill, and if they find out what’s in it, they’re not going to vote for it.” She said, “They’re going to vote for it, it’s going to pass.” And she was absolutely right. We were horrified—we thought she was wrong. We didn’t know as much as she did (Interview with B. Sandler 2011).

This low key approach to steering Title IX through Congress can be credited with averting demands for exemptions that would significantly weaken its ability to promote women’s access to college.⁹⁸ If Title IX had attracted too much attention, says Dunkle, “[it] would have had so many exclusions that it would have looked like Swiss cheese” (Interview with M. Dunkle 2012).

In March of 1971, the Special House Subcommittee on Education commenced hearings on the Education Amendments. Consideration of five issues dominated the proceedings: (1) whether the federal government should provide financial assistance to institutions or directly to students, (2) whether to approve the newly proposed Pell

⁹⁸ Given the importance of Title IX for promoting gender equality in higher education, it comes as little surprise that fabled accounts of the program’s development have emerged in the wake of the program’s passage. However, claims of fierce advocacy for the program at its birth are merely tall tales, in the view of Margaret Dunkle. As she notes, people who say that they “marched for Title IX and they did this and they did that...are blowing smoke. There was just a handful of people who were [working on behalf of Title IX]. It’s kind of like people who say they were at Woodstock.” In actuality, “nobody marched for Title IX” says Dunkle, “it just wasn’t done because it was under the radar” (Interview with M. Dunkle 2012).

Grants, (3) the effects that proposed financial aid policies would have on middle-income students and private institutions, (4) how to best use tax information to determine individual aid amounts, and (5) how to meet the financial needs of historically black colleges and universities. The primary focus of subcommittee deliberation was the allocation of federal financial aid to students. Considerably less time was spent considering Title IX. On a small number of occasions, members of Congress acknowledged the problem of sex discrimination in higher education and even alluded to evidence presented during Representative Green's earlier subcommittee hearings on sex discrimination (U.S. House 1971, 273-278). Supporters of Title IX voiced objection to the allocation of federal funds to support institutions engaging in discriminatory admissions policies. As such, they appealed to the right of all women who contributed into the federal treasury to withhold their tax dollars from supporting institutions engaging in sex discrimination (*Congressional Record* 1971, 39252).

Although Edith Green's strategy of minimizing fanfare around Title IX in hopes of avoiding intense opposition afforded the regulation a relatively smooth journey through the political process, and although the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment had recently signaled lawmakers' interest in promoting gender equality in higher education, Title IX was not without opposition. Title IX's opponents some took issue with the idea of the federal government regulating college admissions. Speaking on behalf of Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Notre Dame, and other elite private institutions, Representative John Erlenborn (R-IL) disagreed that the federal government should force colleges to admit women and men equally. Such a policy, he argued, would place undue burden on those institutions (U.S. House 1971 H38639; H39248). In a letter to Edith

Green, the chair of the Special Committee on Education, John Honey, Vice President of Governmental Affairs and Research at Syracuse University, urged the exclusion of Title IX from H.R. 7247, saying that the proposal does not represent “an appropriate subject for congressional action” (U.S. House 1971, 1078). Some universities objected on the grounds that gender-egalitarian admissions policies could prove detrimental to the financial well-being of their institutions. Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and other elite institutions claimed that male alumni donated more money to their schools than female alumni and that admitting a greater proportion of women could significantly reduce financial support (Hanson, Guilfooy, and Pillai 2009, 9). While some opponents took overt exception to the notion of admitting women and men to higher educational institutions on an equal basis, others framed their objections as rooted in concerns regarding an over-reaching of government power, rather than objections to equal opportunities for women.

That same month, the Education Subcommittees of the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare and the House Education and Labor Committee commenced hearings on S659, its version of the Education Amendments. As senators considered the proposed higher education reauthorization bill, busing emerged as the most contentious education issue. Busing became a part of the debate over higher education when a desegregation assistance package was added to the higher education aid proposals under consideration, and controversy surrounding the proposal significantly slowed Senate action on the bill (*Congressional Quarterly* 1972, 2617).

On August 5, 1971, Senator Birch Bayh introduced the Title IX prohibition against sex discrimination in education on the floor of the Senate, asserting that the

proposed amendment would “guarantee that women, too, enjoy the educational opportunity every American deserves” (*Congressional Record* 1971, 30155). Senator Bayh’s interest in issues related to gender equality was rooted in the inequality experienced by his first wife, Marvella. When Marvella Bayh completed high school in the early 1950s, she set her sights on attending college at the University of Virginia. Academically gifted and an awarding winning public speaker, Marvella’s lengthy list of accomplishments included service as Governor of Girl’s State and President of Girl’s Nation. Despite her excellent credentials, Marvella was heartbroken when her application to UVA was returned in the mail along with a note that simply said, “Women need not apply” (Interview with B. Bayh 2011).

Unlike Title IX’s trajectory in the House, Bayh’s amendment was not considered during Senate subcommittee deliberations (Fishel and Pottker 1977, 99-100). Pointing to the recommendations offered by President Nixon’s Task Force on Women’s Rights and Responsibilities and the 1964 Civil Rights Act’s failure to include sex discrimination, Bayh asserted that passing Title IX would yield “a forward step, both in higher education and in protecting equal rights for all Americans” (*Congressional Record* 1971, 30156). When the Senate considered Title IX, the topic of sex discrimination in college admissions proved an area of contention. Although most accounts of the passage of Title IX note that the policy passed through Congress with relatively little fanfare, analysis of Senate deliberations reveals that some members of the Senate harbored reservations regarding the prospect of prohibiting sex discrimination in college admissions.

In probing the effects that the bill would have on universities, Senator Peter Dominick (R-CO) made a point of questioning how Title IX would affect a number of

areas far removed from college admissions. It was through this probing that opponents managed to capitalize on the potential redistributive effects of Title IX, and it was along these lines that the question of sports was raised. Senator Dominick asked whether the ban on sex discrimination would require women and men to play on the same football teams and to share athletic equipment and facilities. The senators were particularly amused by this line of questioning, and at one point Dominick quipped, “If I may say so, I would have had much more fun playing college football if it had been integrated” (Blumenthal 2005, 44). Realizing that emphasizing the preposterousness of the amendment could offer a politically safe way to defeat the proposal, discussion shifted to the slippery slope of complicated outcomes that could emanate from Title IX. In addition to requiring women and men to play on the same sports teams, to use the same locker rooms, and to share athletic equipment, they argued, Title IX would fly in the face of appropriate gender norms. Senator Strom Thurmond (R-SC) expressed outrage at the possibility that Title IX could require gender integration in military academies like the Citadel, which was located in his home state (Blumenthal 2005, 44).⁹⁹ Despite Senator Bayh’s feeble attempts to emphasize that gender equity in college admissions was the primary aim of the law, this line of questioning provided opponents with the tools to significantly shape the long-term trajectory of Title IX. By emphasizing the amendment’s impact on activities outside of admissions that would challenge society’s dominant gender roles and conventions, opponents successfully emphasized Title IX’s

⁹⁹ Commenting on the idea of admitting women to military academies, General William Westmorland provided further evidence of contemporary views regarding appropriate social roles for women and men, saying “Maybe you could find one woman in ten thousand who could lead in combat, but she would be a freak and we’re not running the military academy for freaks” (Atkison 1999, 408; see also Bose 2007.)

redistributive effects in a way that piqued the attention of organized interests—namely, sports groups—that would come to dominate Title IX politics.

Once the topic of sports entered the political scene, Birch Bayh had a difficult time keeping Senate debate focused on the amendment's central objective: ensuring gender equality in higher education by providing women and men with equal access to college admissions. Contesting the germaneness of Title IX to S659, Strom Thurmond prompted the Senate chair to abruptly end its consideration (Skrentny 2002, 247). This sequence of events marks the point at which sports became a dominant issue in the politics of Title IX. Opponents like Peter Dominick and Strom Thurmond recognized the benefits of emphasizing the potential redistributive effects of Title IX—that it could require schools to reallocate resources for women wishing to play sports and that military schools could be forced to accommodate women, and, thus, turn away male applicants. The sports issue was a particularly potent point of disagreement because it cast doubt on the amendment while not taking the politically risky approach of directly opposing women's right to equal access to higher education. Once sports became a topic of interest, athletic directors at top programs became concerned. Senator Bayh notes that the athletics directors of Notre Dame and the University of Alabama were among the earliest opponents to Title IX. Expressing fears that the regulation would “destroy” their football programs, they asked the Senator to reconsider his support for the bill (Interview with B. Bayh 2011). As former Office of Civil Rights staff member Valerie Bonnette recalled, “When it became clear that athletics was going to be covered by Title IX in the early 1970s, many people thought it would be the end of college sports as we knew them” (Interview with V. Bonnette 2012). Bernice Sandler remembers typical lamentations

about the burden that Title IX would place on athletics programs. As a typical argument went, “we have football; we don’t have money for an extra program for girls. It’s going to cost money, and where are we going to get the money?” (Interview with B. Sandler 2011). As such, controversy over the sports issue provided opponents with an opportunity to galvanize well-organized interest groups that could mount formidable opposition to Title IX’s potential redistributive effects.¹⁰⁰

By early 1972 it was clear that, in the wake of civil rights policies that challenged race discrimination in the United States, Americans were becoming increasingly concerned about the problem of sex discrimination.¹⁰¹ One women’s rights advocate poignantly characterized sex discrimination as “the last socially acceptable prejudice” (*Congressional Quarterly* 1971, 597). During his State of the Union address on January 20, 1972, President Nixon expressed support for extending the authority of the Civil Rights Commission to include sex discrimination (*Congressional Quarterly* 1972, 112), and in Congress, lawmakers continued to strategize how best to guide Title IX through the political process.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ This technique is analogous to the mass-level mobilization techniques described by Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) who note that political parties strategically target efforts toward those likely to participate in activities like voting and volunteering for campaigns. We can apply their logic to this attempt by lawmakers to mobilize interest groups that would likely feel as though they had something to lose if Title IX were passed. Lawmakers in opposition to the policy effectively focused on its redistributive effects to “encourage or inspire them to take part” (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993, 161) in a way that would weaken the bill’s effects for regulating college and university admissions.

¹⁰¹ A few months earlier, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) by a 354-23 roll-call vote, then the Senate passed it by a vote of 84-8 (*Congressional Quarterly* 1971, 2590). If the statute won support from $\frac{3}{4}$ (or 38) of the states, it would become the newest amendment to the United States Constitution. The passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) by the House and Senate demonstrated lawmakers’ recognition that Americans were generally opposed to overt gender discrimination, just as they had opposed overt racial discrimination in the 1960s.

¹⁰² Considering the longstanding correlation between traditional views regarding acceptable gender roles and conservative ideology, this Republican president’s support for gender equality may seem surprising.

As more people began to recognize the potential regulatory and redistributive effects of Title IX and to understand the weight of the reform under consideration, additional resistance surfaced. After the Senate debate and the initial discussion of the sports issue, the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* produced multiple editorials in opposition to the law (U.S. House 1971, H38639). In the House, Representative John N. Erlenborn (R-IL) emerged as a strong opponent of the amendment. The federal government, he argued, had no place dictating whether institutions of higher education should admit women and, if they do, how many they should agree to accommodate. Such regulation, he asserted, would create “a dangerous precedent” that would threaten “the autonomy of our institutions of higher education and the American higher education system as we know it” (*Congressional Record* 1971, 38639). To support his argument, Erlenborn produced a number of letters from elite higher educational institutions decrying the prospect of having to admit women and men at equal rates. He responded to these objections by proposing an amendment that would exempt all undergraduate institutions from the Title IX regulation (U.S. House 1971, H39248-39249). Citing support from Civil Rights Commission Chair, Father Theodore Hesburgh, and Harris Wolford, a former member of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Representative Erlenborn assured his colleagues that they need not worry that supporting an amendment exempting undergraduate programs at all higher educational institutions from Title IX

However, it is important to note that members of the Republican Party had been among the early supporters of the Equal Rights Amendment. Opposing the protective labor laws that were championed by New Deal Democrats, Republicans in the late 1930s and early 1940s supported a law that would entitle women to the same treatment as men under the law. Women’s reform groups and New Deal Democrats, on the other hand, opposed a constitutional amendment that would institutionalize equal treatment for women and men, fearing that such an amendment would weaken labor laws that provided women with needed support. Democrats did not begin to express support for the Equal Rights Amendment until 1944 (Mettler 1998, 207-208; see also Sarvasy 1992, 35-38).

would signal a lack of support for civil or human rights (*Congressional Record* 1971, 39248).¹⁰³ Providing for gender equality in graduate and professional degree programs, he argued, would provide a great deal of opportunity to women without burdening undergraduate programs. Approved by a margin of five votes, the Erlenborn amendment significantly weakened Title IX in the House version of the Education Amendments by exempting all undergraduate programs from the prohibition against sex discrimination (U.S. House 1971, H39261; Fishel and Pottker 1977, 101). The House of Representative passed H.R. 7248 on November 4, 1971.

Meanwhile, Senator Bayh was unable to raise the issue of sex discrimination in education again in the Senate until February of 1972, when the chamber revisited the omnibus education reauthorization bill. Taking into account the controversy evoked by the inclusion of military academies in his previous proposal, Bayh submitted a revised amendment that exempted these institutions from the ban on sex discrimination. The revisions satisfied his colleagues, and on February 28, 1972, the Senate passed S659, Title IX and all.

Three months later, the House and Senate conference committee worked to reconcile H.R. 7248 and S659, their respective versions of the Education Amendments. In the wake of Congress's passage of the Equal Rights Amendment on March 22, 1972, members of the House and the Senate worked carefully to reconcile how their respective higher education reauthorization bills dealt with the issue of sex discrimination. A chief

¹⁰³ Representative Green expressed exasperation regarding the irony of Hesburgh's support for Erlenborn's exemption: "How a person as Chairman of the Civil Rights Commission of the United States can make eloquent statements about having to end discrimination in this country and then say it is perfectly all right to continue the discrimination against over 50 percent of the people in the country I do not know" (*Congressional Record* 1971, 39250).

difference between the House and Senate bills was that the House version had severely weakened Title IX's power to challenge sex discrimination in higher education by exempting all undergraduate institutions from the regulation. Members of the conference committee managed to strengthen Title IX by adopting the Senate language, which only exempted private undergraduate institutions and traditionally single-sex institutions, such as women's colleges and military academies, from the regulation (Fishel and Pottker 1977). Although the exemption of undergraduate programs at private institutions limited the reach of Title IX, it is important to note that the majority of American undergraduates students attended public institutions. Conferees submitted the compromise bill—officially entitled “The Education Amendments of 1972”—to the House and the Senate on May 22nd and 23rd. On May 24th, the Senate approved the bill by a vote of 63-15 after defeating an amendment that would strengthen the bill's anti-busing provisions (*Congressional Quarterly* 1972, 1371). On June 8th, the House of Representatives passed the bill by a 218-180 vote. Both parties were fairly similarly divided regarding support for the omnibus education bill: 129 Democrats supported the legislation, while 104 voted against it; and 89 Republicans voted for the bill, compared to 76 who did not. Among Democrats, those representing districts in the North were more likely to support the bill than those from the South. Among northern Democrats, 109 members supported the Education Amendments, and 44 members opposed it. For Democratic members from southern districts, 20 voted for the education bill, while 60 voted against it (Califano 1981, 263; *Congressional Quarterly* 1972, 2805-2810). Opponents of the legislation generally took issue with its treatment of the busing issue. Conservative opponents wanted the bill to include more forceful anti-busing measures, while liberal opponents

felt that the bill's language was too conciliatory on the issue of busing (*Congressional Quarterly* 1972, 2805).

On June 23, 1972, President Richard Nixon signed the 1972 Education Amendments (P.L. 92-318) into law. The successful passage of Title IX marked a pivotal moment for U.S. higher education policy. As political scientist Eileen McDonagh and journalist Laura Pappano note, Title IX was intended “to gain for women the educational access that the G.I. Bill paid for and secured for economically disadvantaged men and that Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 guaranteed successfully to African American men” (2008, 101). This brief, unprepossessing paragraph effectively banned sex discrimination in public undergraduate and all vocational, graduate, and professional programs receiving federal funding. The only programs not subject to the regulation were private undergraduate programs, schools whose single-sex nature was based on long-standing religious tenets, military schools, social fraternities and sororities, youth programs like Girls and Boys and Girls Nation and Boys and Girls State, father-son/mother-daughter activities, and scholarship pageants. Departing from the financial aid approach to expanding access to higher education that had long characterized federal higher education policies, Title IX mirrored civil rights policies, invoking the regulatory powers of the state to reform postsecondary access. Although the Title IX regulation received relatively little fanfare at the time of passage due to preoccupation with the omnibus bill's anti-busing measures, its passage marked a momentous occasion in U.S. gender politics.

Taking IX for the Team: Interest Groups, Enforcement, and the Emergence of Sports as the Center of Title IX Politics

Historical evidence suggests that a political context characterized by heightened sensitivity to issues concerning women's rights and the success of previously enacted regulatory policies that extended civil rights to African-Americans enabled lawmakers to invoke federal regulation to ban sex discrimination in college admissions. Having successfully passed the Title IX statute, the question remained as to how well the unprepossessing law would be enforced. The compact paragraph in the 1972 Education Amendments provided little in the way of details about how the law was to be applied to specific education programs. After Title IX was signed into law, the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) was entrusted with its implementation. As such, HEW became responsible for dealing with claims of discrimination, reporting institutional noncompliance with Title IX, and revoking federal funding when institutions failed to comply. Upon Edith Green's retirement from Congress in 1974, Representative Patsy Mink became the most visible protector of Title IX in the House of Representatives, spearheading efforts to ensure that the federal government make good on its promise that women would be treated equally in higher education in implementing the landmark legislation. Patsy Mink's fierce commitment to gender equality in higher education was rooted in her own personal experiences with sex discrimination in education. Upon graduating from high school, Mink applied to medical school, only to be denied admission on the basis of her sex (Bassford 2008; Davidson 1994; Russell 1977). This early experience influenced her advocacy for equal treatment for men and women by higher educational institutions. In the wake of Title IX's passage, equal

opportunity for women and girls in athletics emerged as a prominent issue, sparking intense debate from women and girls who invoked Title IX to support their claim to equal opportunities in athletics and male coaches and athletic associations who feared that the Title IX regulation would disadvantage male sports programs.

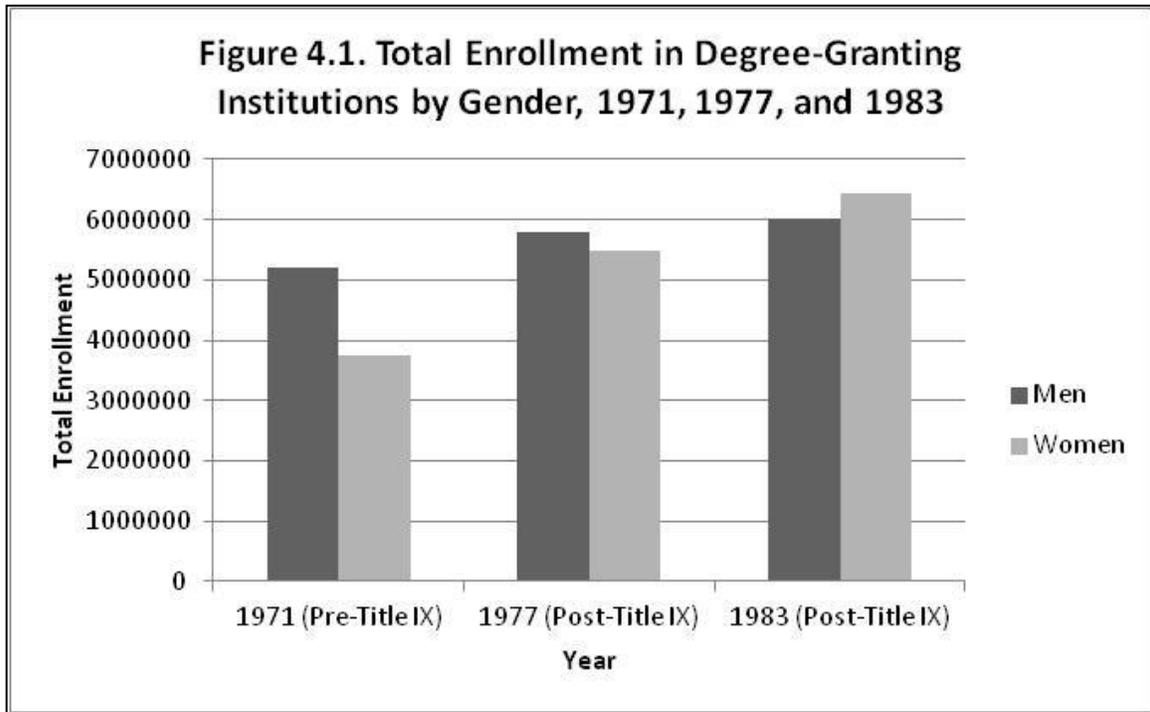
Having become aware of Title IX's potential to redistribute athletic opportunities, national athletic associations, university sports coaches, and women's groups urged HEW to provide guidelines for interpreting what the vague Title IX statute meant for gender equality in sports. Members of the sports community demanded clarification as to how the bill would affect their programs. Women and girls who had been previously excluded from athletics programs and women's teams fed up with subpar support from their institutions filed thousands of complaints with HEW and the Office of Civil Rights (OCR), charging that their Title IX rights were being abridged. As the demand for specific Title IX regulations grew, contention between, the policy's well-financed, highly-organized opponents and its passionate, legally-empowered supporters came to dominate the politics of Title IX. In 1973, bombarded with lobbying efforts from those on both sides of the issue, HEW staff members urged department secretary Casper Weinberger to issue Title IX regulations and to clarify whether athletics programs were to be included under the regulations. In 1974, Weinberger set out to produce concrete implementation guidelines to supplement the Title IX statute that would provide specific guidelines for applying Title IX to various programs (Blumenthal 2005, 64).¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ In addition to the creation of the vital Title IX regulations, 1974 also saw the passage of the Women's Education Equity Act (WEEA), which allocated federal grants and contracts to higher educational institutions with the objective of promoting gender equality in schools. To achieve this end, funds supported gender-egalitarian learning materials and educational activities (Stromquist 1993, 282-283).

With Title IX enforcement regulations in the works, a coalition of the NCAA, athletic directors, and coaches faced off against women's rights activists who championed equal treatment for women and girls in sports. In 1974, on behalf of the former alliance, the NCAA convinced Senator John Tower (R-TX) to propose an amendment to Title IX that would exempt revenue-producing sports, like football, from having to comply with the Title IX regulations. Although the this amendment was ultimately abandoned during conference committee discussion during which Congress decided that all sports would be subject to the Title IX regulations (Blumenthal 2005, 68; Fishel and Pottker 1977), consideration of the Tower amendment represents a crucial point in Title IX's political development because the formal consideration of the sports-centered amendment initiated a resilient intertwining of Title IX and athletics. In June of 1974, before submitting them to Congress for approval, Secretary Weinberger revealed HEW's proposal for the much anticipated Title IX regulations. This unveiling ignited a period of intense lobbying by the regulations' opponents and supporters. Weinberger's regulations made clear the HEW's interpretation that sports were, indeed, included under Title IX and that the law required schools and athletics programs to provide male and female students with equal opportunities and the resources necessary to participate in sports. As the regulations went to Congress for approval, women's groups, the NCAA, and their respective allies descended on Capitol Hill to lobby lawmakers. Groups like the Association of American Colleges' Project on the Status and Education of Women, the Project on Equal Education Rights (PEER), the Women's Legal Defense Fund, and the National Women's Law Center were vocal supporters of Title IX and strong advocates for a policy interpretation that fostered equality for women and girls in all areas of

education (Interview with M. Dunkle 2012). Ultimately, supporters of women's rights in athletics—who lobbied on behalf of Weinberger's proposal—won a decided victory: HEW's Title IX implementation regulations were approved by Congress.

Despite the dominance of sports in Americans' understanding of Title IX, there can be no doubt that, on a broader level, it was one of the most significant anti-discrimination policies of the twentieth century. By banning sex discrimination in college admissions, Title IX launched an assault on “the last socially acceptable prejudice.” In providing women with a legal claim against sex discrimination in higher education, Title IX forever reshaped American higher education. As a result of its passage, overt sex discrimination in college admissions has declined precipitously, and awareness of women's issues was institutionalized on college campuses across America (“Access to Higher Education” 2009; Conway, Ahern, and Stuernagel 2005, 23-24; Hansen, Guilfoy, and Pillai 2009; Martinez and Penn 2002). By banning gender quotas and women's complete exclusion in public colleges and universities, Title IX significantly increased women's access to college. Figure 4.1 illustrates the gender dynamics of U.S. college enrollment before and after the passage of Title IX. In 1971, the year immediately preceding the adoption of Title IX, men outnumbered women as students at degree-granting institutions by more than 1.4 million people. By 1977, only five years after the passage of Title IX, the gender gap in college enrollment had narrowed considerably, with male college students outnumbering their female counterparts by fewer than 300,000 people. Six years later, in 1983, women students outnumbered men by more than 400,000 people. Since the passage of Title IX, the U.S. has also seen remarkable increases in the rates at which women earn professional



Source: The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Digest of Education Statistics

degrees. In the 1971-72 academic year, men outnumbered women as the recipients of medical, veterinary, and legal degrees (NCES 2007). While men continued to outnumber women as recipients of these degrees a decade later, women’s presence in medicine, veterinary medicine, and law increased dramatically by the 1981-82 academic year.

While it is safe to say that Title IX has contributed to a significant expansion of opportunity for women as students in higher educational institutions, the regulation’s effectiveness for promoting gender equality at the level of college faculty is less apparent. Dr. Donna Nelson, chemistry professor and expert on women’s and minorities’ underrepresentation in science, notes that while Title IX has effectively expanded gender equality in students’ access to higher education, the regulation has been “severely underused” in applying the principle of gender equality at the faculty level (Interview with D. Nelson 2011). In 2006, for example, women comprised 26.8 percent of full

professors in life science fields, 22.8 percent of full professors in the social sciences, and a mere 8.3 percent of full professors in the physical sciences (Burrelli 2008).

Conclusion

In passing Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments, U.S. lawmakers effectively utilized the regulatory power of the state to not only institutionalize gender equality in college admissions but also to demonstrate the federal government's commitment to ensuring that American women are treated as first-class citizens. By pairing the objective of women's equal inclusion with the specter of federal retribution in the form of discontinued funding, this landmark regulation dealt a devastating blow to the gendered admissions policies that represented the final barrier hindering women's access to higher education. Unlike the G.I. Bill, the National Defense Education Act, and the Higher Education Act, which expanded access to college via federal financial aid, Title IX broke with higher education policy precedent by invoking federal regulation to increase women's access to college. In doing so, this landmark policy contributed to an enormous shift in the gender dynamics of U.S. higher educational institutions. After Title IX's passage in 1972, the proportion of women attending American colleges and universities increased precipitously; and, by 1981, women had surpassed men as the recipients of bachelor's degrees.

We have seen that the successful passage of civil rights legislation in the years immediately preceding lawmakers' consideration of Title IX yielded a political context in which lawmakers took seriously the problem of sex discrimination in higher education and provided Representative Edith Green with a powerful template to use when drafting

the ban on sex discrimination. Drawing directly upon the language used in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Green crafted an unprepossessing amendment that evoked relatively little attention from lawmakers who were preoccupied with other measures included in the large omnibus bill, particularly those related to busing and funding for desegregation assistance. In addition to carefully crafting the amendment so as not to provoke intense opposition, Rep. Green and her small cadre of political allies embraced a political strategy of minimal activity related to Title IX. While this strategy was successful in averting intense opposition, elite higher educational institutions and their allies in Congress successfully championed exemptions that relieved private undergraduate programs and traditionally single-sexed programs from regulation under Title IX.

Nevertheless, Title IX successfully compelled women's equal admission to public undergraduate programs—which serve the greatest number of American college students—and all vocational, professional, and graduate programs. As a result, this landmark higher education policy significantly increased women's access to college and paved the way for dramatic increases in women's higher educational attainment. Additionally, Title IX acknowledged women's standing as first-class citizens in the polity by requiring federally supported institutions to subject women and men to an equal standard of treatment.

CHAPTER FIVE

Fortunate Sons and Daughters: Federal Higher Education Policies and the Gender Dynamics of Social Citizenship

“I know in my generation there was just simply no state or federal help for women to go [to college]. Families, I think, made the decision that if there were limited resources, that money would be spent on the boys of the family. I can remember the shock when a brother-in-law of mine, as late as the mid-sixties, said, ‘We’ve got to save enough money to put the two boys through college.’ I said, ‘What about Kathy?’ He said, ‘Well, she’ll get married soon.’...I think that while education bills cannot be labeled as women’s issues, they probably had as much or more to do with the progress that women have made than anything else.”
—Rep. Edith Green (D-OR)¹⁰⁵

Growing up on a farm in Alabama’s Limestone County, Mildred “Millie” Rowe distinguished herself as an excellent student with a bright future. After graduating from high school at the age of 16, this daughter of two school teachers set her sights on a college education. When Millie began her studies at Athens College in the fall of 1936, there were no federal student loans or grants available to help fund her education. For Millie and her family, private funds represented the only available resources for meeting the cost of attending college. Millie’s parents could not afford to fund their daughter’s education, so she worked her way through school, maintaining a job in the college dining hall. Millie’s parents were, however, able to supplement their daughter’s earnings by donating produce from the Rowe family farm to her school. Athens College credited these donations toward Millie’s tuition costs. In 1939, after three rigorous years of

¹⁰⁵ Excerpt from Cynthia E. Harrison’s Oral History interview with former congresswoman Edith S. Green. 18 December 1978.

course work and on-campus employment, Millie completed her bachelor's degree and embarked upon a career as an educator (Sanders 2012).

Millie Rowe's reliance on private means to fund her higher education contrasts greatly with the experience of her younger brother, George. As a military veteran who had served in the armed forces during World War II, George Rowe was eligible to receive education benefits under the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944, a policy more commonly known as the "GI Bill." Under this program, the United States government provided George and millions of veterans—who were overwhelmingly male—with grants that covered college tuition and fees and even provided a generous stipend to support them and their families as they worked toward their degrees.

When we consider Millie's story in light of the trends characterizing American women's education prior to the 1960s, we can see that her completion of a baccalaureate degree is unusual. In 1940, only 4.9 percent of American women over the age of 24 had completed at least four years of college; and the median American woman completed fewer than nine years of school (U.S. Census Bureau 2011). While dominant gender norms frequently dissuaded women who shared Millie's interest in obtaining postsecondary training—like Millie's elder sisters, who had briefly attended nursing school—from going to college, encouraging them to focus on marriage and raising families, women were also frequently hindered by a lack of financial resources for attending college. Men, on the other hand, enjoyed access to federal support for pursuing higher education as early as 1944 when U.S. policymakers passed the G.I. Bill.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ Unlike women, American men also enjoyed access to a broad range of scholarships that offered a valuable source of private funding for those pursuing college degrees. David Drennen, for example, attended Marietta College on a partial football and basketball scholarship. The youngest of six children

Prior to the 1960s, gender inequality was woven seamlessly into the fabric of American higher education. In 1957—the year before the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) extended federal student loans to both women and men—women comprised only 34.7 percent of students enrolled in degree-granting institutions. As Dr. John A. Perkins, Undersecretary of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, noted during the 1957 congressional subcommittee hearings on the proposed NDEA legislation, a lack of funds represented one of the most pressing barriers to women’s pursuit of higher education. According to Dr. Perkins,

“Women usually do not attend college in the numbers which their abilities indicate they should. If a family is perhaps pressed financially and they have sons and daughters, they are apt to educate the sons before they will extend themselves to educate the daughters. Then, too, it is more difficult for young ladies to work themselves through college than it is for a young man to do so” (“Scholarship and Loan Program” Hearings 1957, 19).

The year after Congress passed the NDEA, 7,199 women and 14,958 men took advantage of the program’s benefits. By 1960, the number of men taking advantage of student loans under the NDEA increased by 300 percent, and the number of female beneficiaries increased by more than 400 percent.

When lawmakers considered the financial aid programs to be included in the 1965 Higher Education Act, HEW Secretary Anthony J. Celebrezze presented data supporting

born and raised in Marietta, Ohio, David excelled in both academics and sports. In high school, he was a member of the National Honor Society, but it was his talent in football, basketball, and track that proved especially helpful when he began college in 1951. The availability of sports scholarships helped David to fund his degree in physics (Drennen 2012). Prior to the 1970s, only a small number of scholarships—especially sports scholarships—were available to women.

Perkins's observation that financial hardship suppressed the higher educational attainment of academically talented women. Between 1945 and 1965, low-income young women whose aptitude placed them in the top 10 percent of high school graduates were much less likely to enter college after completing the twelfth grade than low-income men falling in the top tenth of graduates. During this period, 10.2 percent of men whose annual family income was less than \$3,000 did not enter college after high school, compared to 33.1 percent of women in this income bracket. The gender gap was considerably more narrow for students whose annual family income was at least \$12,000: among this group, 2.9 percent of men did not enter college after completing high school, compared to 4.4 percent of women ("Higher Education Act of 1965 [H.R. 3220]" Subcommittee Hearings 1965, 32-39). Given American women's erstwhile reliance on private funding for financing higher education, the creation of need-based public aid in the form of federal student loans and grants under the National Defense Education Act and the Higher Education Act unlocked the door to higher education for hundreds of thousands of women.

Women's virtual exclusion from the G.I. Bill and the limited availability of other types of funds, such as sports scholarships, were not the only factors that exacerbated gender inequality in U.S. higher educational attainment prior to the 1960s. Before 1972, many colleges and universities employed discriminatory admissions policies that excluded women outright or invoked gender quotas to limit the number of women admitted each year. According to a report issued by the Virginia Commission for the Study of Educational Facilities in 1964, 21,000 female applicants were denied admission to colleges and universities in the state of Virginia, while not a single male applicant was

rejected (Stimpson 1973, 419). In 1970, the University of North Carolina (UNC) circulated a brochure explaining that under the school's gendered admissions policy, women's acceptance to the University would be restricted to those who were deemed "especially well qualified." That year, UNC's first-year class included 1,900 men and 426 women (Blumenthal 2005, 30-31).

The difficulty that many American women faced in pursuing higher education posed a significant barrier to their ability to achieve full social citizenship. To become fully incorporated into society, citizens must possess social rights, which include the right to income and the right to education (Marshall 1950, 25; Orloff 1993, 305-307). As T. H. Marshall notes, the achievement of this type of social integration requires the democratization of "material enjoyment"; and, he highlights the importance of education for spreading "the components of a civilized and cultured life, formerly the monopoly of the few" throughout society (1950, 47). He notes that, among a nation's youngest members, education represents a crucial mechanism for providing future adult citizens with the tools that they need to participate fully in society. Analogously, higher education facilitates full inclusion in society because it promotes socioeconomic well-being among those who gain it. Historically, limited access to college degrees restricted women's access to the knowledge, skills, steady income, and economic independence that are associated with higher educational attainment. Considering the centrality of educational attainment to social citizenship, the difficulty that women faced in obtaining college degrees prior to the passage of landmark federal programs that used redistribution and government regulation in a way that promoted gender equality in higher educational attainment represented a significant barrier to women's achievement of full-citizenship in

the United States. The knowledge and skills that citizens derive from higher education foster high levels of social and economic stability and independence which, in turn, promote citizens' full incorporation into society.

Public higher education policies enacted since the mid-twentieth century produced sweeping change in the gender dynamics of U.S. higher education. With the creation of gender-neutral federal financial aid in 1958, its reinforcement in 1965, and the 1972 passage of regulatory policy mandating gender-inclusiveness in higher educational institutions, American women gained unprecedented access to higher education. After the federal student aid programs enacted under the NDEA and HEA opened the door to higher education for American women, Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments removed the final barrier that limited women's access to higher education by prohibiting sex discrimination in college admissions and educational programming.¹⁰⁷ Building on the progress initiated by gender-neutral federal financial aid programs, Title IX dealt a devastating blow to gender inequality in higher education. Taken together, these programs changed the face of U.S. higher education and the gender dynamics of U.S. social citizenship.

¹⁰⁷ The Title IX regulation applies to public undergraduate schools as well as professional and vocational programs that receive federal funds. Although private undergraduate programs were exempted from the Title IX regulations (see, e.g., Blumenthal 2005, 49), they rapidly followed their public counterparts in adapting co-education.

Higher Education Policy and the Evolution of Women's Citizenship in the United States

In 1944, the United States government initiated a new relationship with its citizens. With the creation of the Serviceman's Readjustment Act (the "G.I. Bill")—the first federal program providing student aid directly to citizens—the government established a commitment to aiding citizens interested in pursuing college degrees. In so doing, it set a new standard for government support whereby the United States government assumed a measure of responsibility for the higher education of its citizens. Since the institutionalization of direct student support with the creation of the G.I. Bill, the availability of federal financial aid has become a pivotal component in the calculus by which many families make decisions regarding their children's education. The availability of financial aid may not only determine where sons and daughters obtain postsecondary training but whether they pursue higher education, in the first place.

As such, the creation of the G.I. Bill represents a watershed moment for higher education policy. Unlike existing precedents of federal support for higher education that centered upon land grants and aid given directly to institutions, the G.I. Bill provided direct funds to students that covered college tuition and fees while also offering a monthly stipend for living expenses (Bound and Turner 2002, 789-90; Mettler 2002, 354).¹⁰⁸ To be sure, the G.I. Bill extended government support to a select group of citizens—the overwhelmingly male population of World War II veterans who had been honorably discharged after serving in active duty for at least 90 days. The existence of compulsory military service prior to 1973 meant that the generous benefits of the G.I. Bill

¹⁰⁸ In addition to generous support for the pursuit of higher education, the G.I. Bill also provided veterans with funding for vocational training, low-interest home mortgages, and small business loans.

were granted to virtually an entire generation of American men. As Suzanne Mettler notes, among American men born in the 1920s, “fully 80 percent were military veterans” (2005, 70). Through the student financial aid provisions of the G.I. Bill, the federal government expanded access to college for millions of men who might otherwise not have pursued higher education.

While the G.I. Bill paved the way to higher education for a considerable number of American men, an extremely small number of women utilized these benefits. Thus, women were largely excluded from early efforts by the federal government to support college students. Women would not experience these benefits *en masse* until fourteen years later, when lawmakers created federal student loans under the National Defense Education Act of 1958. The gender-neutral construction of this program, which provided student loans on the basis of need, effectively extended the federal commitment to supporting college students while offering women their first broad-reaching opportunity to receive government financial support for higher education. Federal Pell Grants, which were created in the 1972 amendments to the Higher Education Act of 1965, shared the non-gendered eligibility requirements of the existing federal student loan programs, thus furthering the trend of gender egalitarian support for higher educational attainment.¹⁰⁹ Each of these policies—the G.I. Bill, the National Defense Education Act, and the Higher Education Act—were developed with the goal of expanding access to higher education and, thus, promoting Americans’ socioeconomic well-being. The question remains as to whether these programs actually succeeded in promoting higher socioeconomic status by

¹⁰⁹ In 1972, lawmakers amended the Higher Education Act of 1965 to include the Basic Educational Opportunity Grants (BEOG) program, which was renamed the “Pell Grant” program in 1980. The program that emerged in 1972 was derived largely from the need-based Educational Opportunity Grant program that had originated in Title IV of the 1965 bill.

increasing educational attainment. Further, variability in men's and women's access to these programs begs the question of how they have shaped the gender dynamics of socioeconomic status in the United States.

In the years following the creation of federal student loans and Pell Grants—programs that offered financial aid on the non-gendered bases of need and college enrollment—the rate at which American women earned college degrees increased dramatically, and the gender gap in socioeconomic status narrowed considerably. While scholars recognize the value of higher education to Americans' socioeconomic well being (e.g., Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001; Converse 1972; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995), we have yet to consider the effects that federal higher education policies have had for gender parity in educational attainment and the gender dynamics of socioeconomic status in the United States. How prevalent has higher education policy usage been among men and women since the mid-twentieth century, and have men and women had equal access to these programs? How does higher education policy usage affect socioeconomic status? Have federal student aid programs contributed to the narrowing of the gender gap in socioeconomic status that we have seen in recent decades?

Scholars have long recognized the value of higher education to Americans' social and economic well-being. Those who attain college degrees tend to earn higher annual salaries (U.S. Census Bureau 2010), and they are more likely to be employed in jobs that provide employee benefits such as pension plans, paid vacation and sick time, parental leave, and options for flexible work arrangements.¹¹⁰ Citizens who attain higher

¹¹⁰ Through much of the twentieth century, a high school education was widely regarded as sufficient training for Americans wishing to obtain employment in positions offering job security and a comfortable salary. Steel production, automobile and textile manufacturing, and other areas of the nation's thriving

education are more likely to enjoy high social status, as the human capital gained in colleges and universities may render skills and experiences that facilitate active civic and political engagement or even translate into advantageous social and professional networks resulting in well-matched marriages, friendships, and business associations (see, e.g., Brooks 2001). They are also more likely to vote, to contribute money to political campaigns, and to volunteer their time for political causes (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). Considering the many benefits that emanate from the attainment of a college degree, it seems understandable that Americans have come to view higher education as a necessity—so much so that families frequently take on significant financial debt to fund postsecondary training for their children (Warren and Tyagi 2003).

While scholars recognize the importance of higher education to citizens' socioeconomic well-being, we have yet to empirically examine the relationship between federal higher education program usage and gender parity in socioeconomic status. Taking a step in that direction, this chapter examines the question of whether federal higher education policies—which have reduced the financial burden of pursuing advanced education for millions of women and men—successfully promote higher socioeconomic status by facilitating greater educational attainment. Like the federal Social Security program and Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF), programs that are traditionally included under the conceptual umbrella of the “welfare state,” federal student aid constitutes a mechanism employed by the state to promote greater socioeconomic status among its citizens. Federal financial aid programs are distinct,

industrial sector provided jobs that tended to pay well, while not requiring workers to devote years to postsecondary education. With the nation's shift from an industrial economy to one dominated by service professions, postsecondary training has become crucial to producing the educated workforce needed to accommodate increasingly sophisticated technological advances (Goldin and Katz 2008).

however, in that they promote greater socioeconomic status not through income support, but by financing undergraduate education. Additionally, this analysis focuses upon the gender dynamics of federal student aid usage and the resulting effects for men's and women's educational attainment.

The point of departure for this inquiry is the theory of policy feedback, which contends that public policies have the capacity to alter citizens as well as the political environment. From this perspective, we consider the possibility that federal student aid programs have helped citizens attain more education—a possibility that, as we will examine in Chapter 6, may facilitate greater gender parity in political participation. In this chapter, I examine the gender dynamics of federal higher education program usage and consider the effects of program adoption for men's and women's educational attainment, which policy feedback scholars would describe as “resource effects” of policy adoption. The central hypothesis driving this analysis is that while the G.I. Bill exacerbated gender inequality in socioeconomic status by expanding educational attainment for men but not women, subsequently enacted financial aid programs that were broadly accessible to both genders have increased educational attainment for both men and women and have, thus, promoted greater gender parity in the socioeconomic status. To test this hypothesis, I analyze the gender dynamics of G.I. Bill, federal student loan, and Pell Grant usage and the effects of these programs for men's and women's educational attainment using data from three national surveys: the 2008 Social and Governmental Issues and Participation (SGIP) Study, the 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS), and the Higher Education Research Institute's 1978-1998 Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Surveys. A combination

of descriptive statistics and multivariate analysis will permit me to examine men's and women's higher education policy usage over time and the effects of program usage for gender equality in educational attainment.

We will see that while the G.I. Bill significantly expanded men's access to college, federal student loans and Pell Grants were accessible to both men and women. While the G.I. Bill appears to have fostered gender disparity in educational attainment, the subsequently enacted financial aid programs appear to promote gender parity in socioeconomic status by increasing the probability that women and men will attain advanced levels of education. Making college more affordable; increasing the amount of time that students can devote to academic work, as opposed to paid work; and promoting undergraduate degree completion represent central mechanisms by which federal student aid programs promote greater educational attainment and, thus, greater socioeconomic status. It comes as little surprise that citizens place a great deal of value in federal student aid programs; and, although they are more recent beneficiaries of direct government aid for education, we find that women assign particularly high value to these programs.

Data and Research Methods

Using data from three national surveys—the Social and Governmental Issues and Participation (SGIP) study (n=1,400), the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS) (n=137,800), and the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshmen Trends Archive (n≈200,000)—this chapter takes a multivariate analytical approach to examining the gender dynamics of federal financial aid access and the effects of benefit usage for men's and women's educational attainment. Each of these datasets

offers unique insights into federal financial aid adoption and its effects. The CIRP Freshman survey provides data on the usage of federal student aid programs by men and women in their first year of college, while the NPSAS offers data on student aid usage for all enrolled college students. These datasets are especially useful for understanding trends in students' usage of federal financial aid over time. While CIRP and NPSAS data are limited to undergraduate students, the SGIP dataset provides data for a representative sample of Americans between the ages of 18 and 92. These data are especially valuable to this chapter's analysis because they not only permit us to consider higher education policy adoption for citizens born between the years 1916 and 1990, they also enable us to use inferential statistical tools to empirically examine the relationship between financial aid policy usage and educational attainment.

The analysis that follows will proceed in two stages. The first stage explores descriptive statistics to understand general trends in the gender dynamics of federal student aid usage. Here I consider the rates at which women and men use any financial aid, as well as the gender dynamics of G.I. Bill, student loan, and Pell Grant usage. After considering historical trends in financial aid usage, the second stage of the analysis employs multivariate regression to investigate the determinants of financial aid usage. The dependent variable in these regression models—policy adoption—is measured using three dichotomous variables that correspond to whether or not (1 for an affirmative response, 0 for a negative response) respondents have used any federal student aid program, G.I. Bill benefits, federal student loans, or Pell Grants. These models control for age, race, childhood socioeconomic status, and mother's educational attainment— independent variables that have been documented as strong predictors of social policy

adoption (Campbell 2002, 2005; Mettler 2005; Mettler and Welch 2004). Of particular interest to this analysis is the effect that gender has on program usage. To evaluate this effect, I include gender as the key independent variable in these models.

After considering who uses higher education programs and the determinants of that use, the second phase of the analysis draws upon multivariate statistics to examine the influence that federal student aid usage has on men's and women's educational attainment. Throughout these models, educational attainment represents the dependent variable of interest. To measure respondents' highest level of completed education, I use an ordinal variable that is coded on a six-part scale: (1) less than high school, (2) high school diploma/G.E.D, (3) technical school or some college; (4) 2-year degree, (5) 4-year degree, (6) post-baccalaureate study/graduate or professional degree. To measure G.I. Bill, student loan, and Pell Grant adoption, the central independent variables of interest, I use the aforementioned dichotomous variables (coded as 1 for policy adoption, 0 for no policy adoption). I also include numerous variables representing additional indicators that scholars have shown to be significant determinants of educational attainment. Studies have shown that demographic and socioeconomic factors may shape educational attainment differently for women and men (Alexander and Eckland 1974; Sewell and Shah 1967).¹¹¹ As such, I incorporate gender-separated models throughout this analysis,

¹¹¹ When considering the different factors that influence whether women and men earn college degrees, scholars have focused heavily upon the influence of socioeconomic status and intellectual ability. For young women, socioeconomic status is a stronger determinant of college plans, attendance, and graduation than is intelligence (Sewell and Shah 1967). For men, intellectual ability provides a particularly strong determinant of college success (Alexander and Eckland 1974; Sewell and Shah 1967). Scholars have also focused on the role that dominant gender ideologies play in educational attainment. In their analysis of the influence of egalitarian gender attitudes on the higher educational expectations of adolescent girls and boys, Davis and Pearce (2007) find that high school girls and boys who have more egalitarian attitudes regarding the work-family gender balance in families anticipate attaining higher levels of education. "Believing that women should have the same kinds of opportunities as men to have a career

which permit me to examine the influence of these independent variables on educational attainment separately for women and men. To account for the influence of age on educational attainment, I include a variable measuring age in years (from 18-92). I expect older men and women to have significantly lower levels of educational attainment than their younger counterparts due to the dramatic increase in Americans' attainment of college degrees that we have seen in recent years. Because men enjoyed access to G.I. Bill benefits at higher rates than women, I suspect that older women will be significantly less likely than their male counterparts to attain high levels of education.

Scholars studying the relationship between race and educational attainment have found contradictory results when comparing white Americans with black Americans. Thomas, Alexander, and Eckland found that, compared to whites of comparable status, blacks are somewhat more likely to attend college than their white counterparts (1979, 151). A later study by Wolfle (1985), on the other hand, revealed no significant differences in the educational attainment of blacks and whites who hail from similar socioeconomic backgrounds. The relationship between race and educational attainment is similarly complex for Latinos. For this group of Americans, scholars have found that educational attainment tends to differ significantly according to ethnic groupings. Research has shown that Mexicans, for example, are significantly less likely than other Latinos to complete college degrees (Garcia and Bayer 2005). To control for the effects of race, I include two dichotomous variables that correspond to whether respondents identify as black (1 if black, 0 if white) or Hispanic (1 if Hispanic, 0 if white).

and that men should help equitably with household work and childcare inspires high school girls to expect to attain more education," they argue (2007, 265). For boys, they find that "having a more or less egalitarian work-family gender ideology is related to whether he will invest in higher education, but the effects are less pronounced" (265).

Other scholars have argued that socioeconomic background provides the strongest predictor of college attendance and graduation, as students from less privileged backgrounds are the most disadvantaged when it comes to higher educational access (Thomas, Alexander, and Eckland 1979).¹¹² Research has shown that higher levels of parental income and wealth promote children's completion of bachelor's degrees (Conley 2001; Hauser and Wong 1989; Hill and Duncan 1987).¹¹³ To operationalize socioeconomic status, I include control variables for childhood socioeconomic status (five-point scale of family income compared to others at age 16, ranging from "far below average" to "far above average") and mother's educational attainment (nine-point scale ranging from "less than high school" to "Ph.D. or professional degree").

¹¹² MaryBeth Walpole notes that scholars have recognized students from low socioeconomic families as "educationally disadvantaged," but in focusing on educational inequality for students on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation, some have failed to recognize the importance of social family's socioeconomic status to college (2003, 45-46).

¹¹³ Parents also provide educational resources—such as access to reference books, dictionaries, and encyclopedias and a designated study space in the home—that are positively associated with higher educational attainment (Teachman 1987). Such resources appear to be particularly important to the ultimate postsecondary attainment of women. "The effect of women's resources," claims Jay Teachman, "may increase level of schooling attained by reducing the likelihood of choosing to enter roles (marriage, parenthood) that compete with additional education" (1987, 554).

Aside from the resources provided by families, scholars have also shown that family composition has some bearing on educational attainment. Sheila Fitzgerald Krein (1986) finds that, for young men, having a single-parent family is negatively associated with educational attainment. Scholars have emphasized the importance of fathers' presence in predicting children's educational attainment, arguing that attainment differences between black and white students disappear when controlling for the presence of fathers (List and Wolfle 2000).

The influence of family on educational attainment is not limited to parental influence: siblings may influence one another's educational attainment. Charles Nam (1965) argues that family members tend to resemble one another in educational attainment. This resemblance may result from the presence of various resources within families. Evidence also suggests that, in families with multiple children, greater educational attainment among older siblings—especially brothers—is positively and significantly associated with higher levels of educational attainment of younger siblings (Benin and Johnson 1984; Hauser and Wong 1989).

Public policy scholars often find it difficult to isolate and control for endogenous personality characteristics that may bias observed relationships between independent variables and policy adoption. The CIRP Freshman survey data are particularly useful for addressing this challenge, as this data source includes measures that permit me to construct an index to control for ambitious personality characteristics that may condition whether individuals use federal student aid. This “Go-Getter” index consists of five parts: students’ self-assessments of their (1) drive to achieve, (2) leadership ability, (3) competitiveness, (4) intellectual self-confidence, and (5) social self-confidence. For each variable, respondents rate themselves in relation to their peers (responses are on a five-point scale, ranging from “Lowest 10 %” to “Highest 10 %”). I suspect that having a “Go-Getter” personality will significantly increase the probability that men and women will use federal student aid but that controlling for this variable will not mitigate the influence of demographic and socioeconomic factors.

Part I: The Usage of Higher Education Policies

A central objective of federal financial aid programs is to increase citizens’ socioeconomic status by increasing their access to higher education. This goal is derived from the idea that if the government provides financial support that will increase the affordability of higher education, it will provide a significant expansion of opportunity that permits more citizens to complete postsecondary degrees and to enjoy the social and economic benefits—such as increased income, financial stability, and greater social status—that they frequently yield. From that perspective, increasing access to higher education has been framed as a democratic imperative. Opening debate on the first

federal student loan programs in 1957, Representative Carl Elliott (D-AL) argued that “America’s future success at home and abroad, in peace or war, depends on the education of her citizens. Democracy is based on that foundation. Whatever happens in America’s classrooms during the next 50 years will eventually happen to America” (“Scholarship and Loan Program” 1958, 1). Eight years later, when lawmakers debated proposals for the Higher Education Act of 1965, U.S. Education Commissioner Frances Keppell testified as to the necessity of federal support for increasing access to higher education (“Higher Education Act of 1965 [H.R. 3220]” Subcommittee Hearings 1965, 301). Thus, the G.I. Bill, federal student loans, and Pell Grants were developed with the intention of substantially expanding access to higher education.

How effective have these programs been for achieving this end? This analysis considers the role that federal student aid programming has played in increasing Americans’ access to college and whether these programs have promoted gender equality in higher educational attainment since the 1950s. In examining this potential resource effect of federal student aid adoption, we must first consider the gender dynamics of historical trends in student aid usage. Have women and men taken advantage of federal education benefits at equitable rates, or has one gender tended to use financial aid at higher rates than the other? What determines higher education policy usage, and how valuable are these programs to beneficiaries? Given that American women, considered broadly, were infrequent beneficiaries of the generous education aid provided by the G.I. Bill in the postwar era, I suspect that federal student aid usage was an overwhelmingly male phenomenon prior to the advent of the National Defense Student Loan (NDSL) program in 1958. Created under the National Defense Education Act, the NDSL program

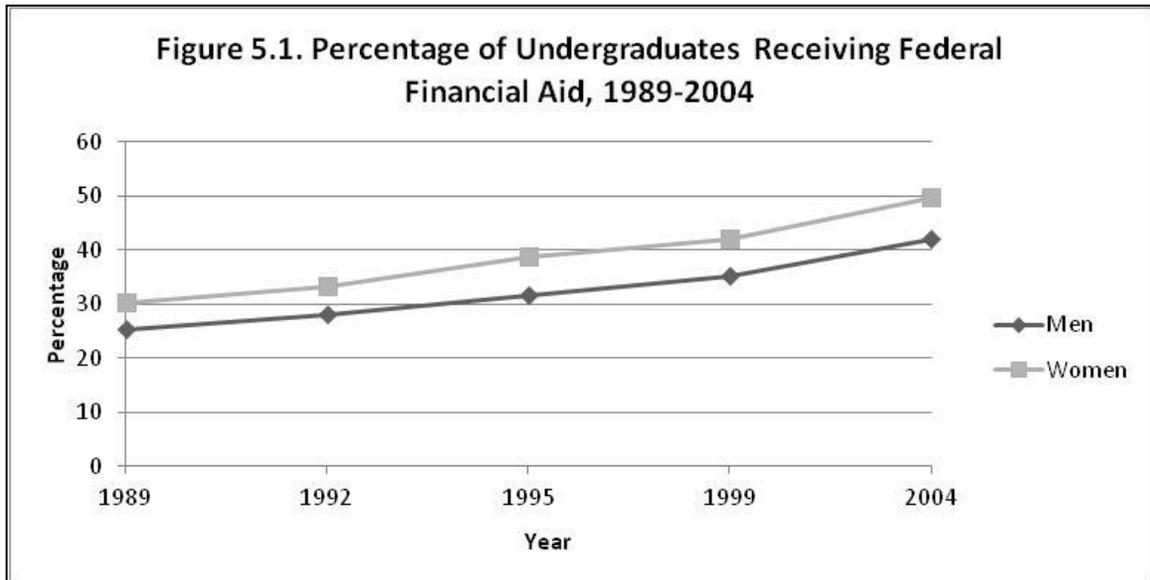
provided low-interest, need-based loans to undergraduate students on the non-gendered basis of need.¹¹⁴ It seems plausible that the number of women receiving federal student aid increased substantially in the 1960s and continued to increase after 1965, with the creation of the need-based federal Pell Grant Program and the Guaranteed Student Loan (GSL) program. Unlike National Defense Student Loans, the GSL program guaranteed low-interest federal loans to students enrolled in accredited U.S. higher educational institutions, irrespective of financial need.¹¹⁵ Thus, I predict that this loan program also increased higher educational access for women and men, this time expanding opportunities for those who need financial support but who do not pass the means tests associated with the need-based programs. To assess the validity of these expectations, I begin by examining data indicating trends in overall financial aid usage and then consider data corresponding to each respective program.

Trends in Overall Federal Student Aid Usage

In assessing the relationship between financial aid adoption and higher educational attainment, understanding the reach of federal student aid is just as important as understanding its effects. The effectiveness with which the G.I. Bill, student loans, and Pell Grants have expanded educational opportunity is contingent upon how accessible these programs have been to Americans. Thus, the point of departure for this analysis is the question of whether women and men have historically enjoyed equitable

¹¹⁴ In 1965, the National Defense Student Loan Program was reauthorized under the Higher Education Act and renamed the National Direct Student Loan program. In 1987, the program was renamed in honor of Rep. Carl D. Perkins (D-KY), thus becoming known as Perkins Loans.

¹¹⁵ In 1988, the Guaranteed Student Loan program was renamed in honor of Senator Robert Stafford (R-VT), becoming popularly known as Stafford Loans.



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS)

Notes: For each of these years, the gender difference is statistically significant at $\alpha=0.01$.

access to federal student aid. I suspect that data will confirm scholars' finding that the G.I. Bill provided a significant source of educational support for American men (see, e.g., Bound and Turner 2002; Mettler 2005)—especially those in the most senior age cohorts. I posit that student loans and Pell Grants, on the other hand, have been broadly accessible to both women and men because they have been constructed around the non-gendered bases of need and college enrollment. Because student loans and Pell Grants have been allocated without regard to military service or any such heavily gendered criterion, I suspect that women and men are equally likely to take advantage of benefits.

Considering the gender dynamics of overall federal student aid program usage in recent decades, Figure 5.1 shows the percentage of male and female undergraduates receiving federal financial aid for select years.¹¹⁶ Over the fifteen years presented, we see

¹¹⁶ Because data from the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS)—which the federal government, higher education associations, and researchers rely upon as the primary source of federal financial aid data—are only available for years beginning in the mid-1980s, these data can only provide insight into the trends of federal student aid program usage by undergraduates and outcomes for educational attainment in recent decades. To examine trends over a longer-term, I also consider data from

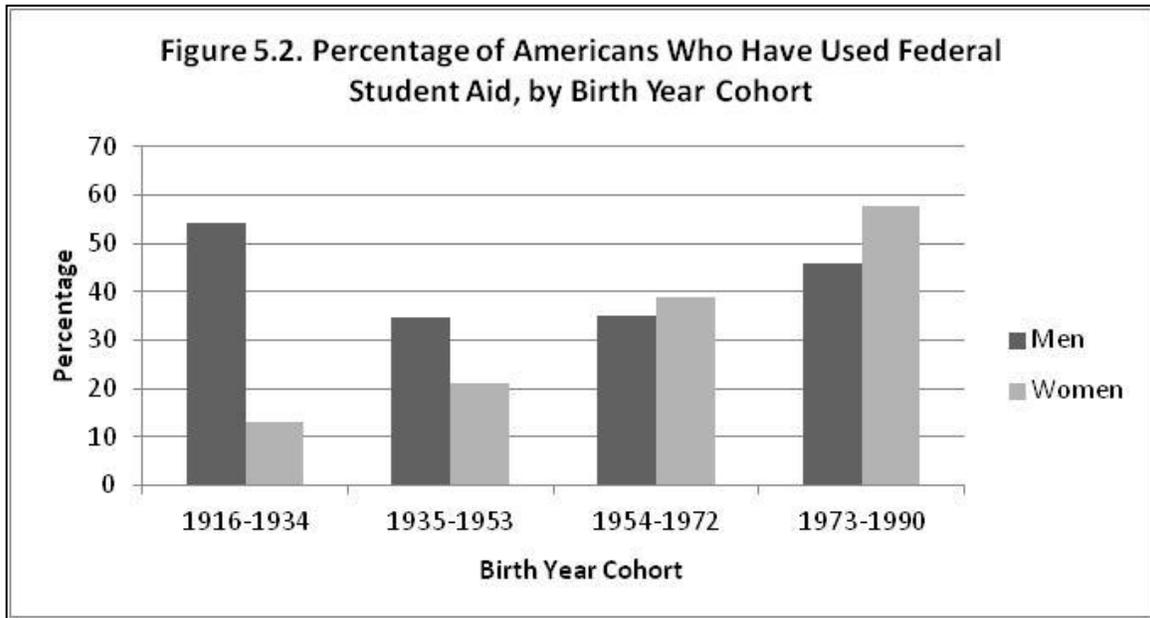
that the proportion of women and men who use any type of federal student aid increased steadily, with women consistently taking advantage of federal benefits at higher rates than men. Contrary to my prediction that women and men will take advantage of federal student loans and Pell Grants—the preponderance of federal aid offered in the years considered in this figure—at equal rates, we see that women have taken advantage of benefits at higher rates than men in recent decades. From 1989 through 2004, a statistically significant gender gap characterized federal student aid adoption; the proportion of undergraduate men reporting that they benefited from student aid programs trailed that of women by an average of 6 percentage points.¹¹⁷

Although women have used federal financial aid at higher rates than men in recent decades, cohort analysis reveals that this was not always the case. Figure 5.2, which shows the percentage of Americans who have used federal student aid by age cohort, offers an idea of the gender dynamics of financial aid adoption over time.¹¹⁸ In accordance with my expectations, a broad and highly significant gender gap in student aid adoption characterizes financial aid usage among the most senior cohort of Americans, who fall between the ages of 74 and 92. This sharp difference in policy usage, I believe, reflects the broad access to G.I. Bill benefits that men in this cohort of

the CIRP Freshman surveys, which span from 1974 to 1998 and cohort analysis of SGIP data, which include a representative sample of Americans.

¹¹⁷ The significance of the difference between women's and men's responses was determined using a Chi-square test. Using an $\alpha=0.01$ level of significance, we fail to reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between proportions when p-values are >0.01 .

¹¹⁸ I construct age cohorts using the following categories: 18-35 (born 1973-1990), 36-54 (born 1954-1972), 55-73 (born 1935-1953), and 74-92 (born 1916-1934). The mean age of college freshmen taking the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) survey is 18 years old. Considering this typical age of college entry, these age cohorts—ranging from the most senior to the most junior—correspond to students who would have begun their undergraduate education in four periods: 1934-1952, 1953-1971, 1972-1990, and 1991-2008.



Source: The Social and Governmental Issues and Participation (SGIP) Study

Notes: These gender differences are statistically significant at $\alpha=0.05$ for the 1973-1990 cohort, at $\alpha=0.01$ for the 1935-1953 birth year cohort, and at $\alpha=0.001$ for the 1916-1934 birth year cohort. The gender gap for the 1954-1972 cohort is not statistically significant.

Americans enjoyed as they pursued higher education, in contrast to the extremely limited availability of federal aid for women in this group who pursued higher education.

While 54.3 percent of men born between 1916 and 1934 report having used federal student aid, only 13 percent of women born between these years report having done so.

Men in the slightly younger cohort of Americans between the ages of 55 and 73 are also significantly more likely to have used federal student aid than women in that age cohort.

Approximately 34.8 percent of men in that group have used government benefits for higher education, compared to 21.2 percent of women. While men in the most senior cohorts of Americans are significantly more likely to have been the beneficiaries of federal student aid, this trend does not hold for younger cohorts of Americans who were born between 1954 and 1990. For men and women between the ages of 36 and 54, women are slightly more likely to use federal student aid benefits than men: 38.9 percent

of women and 35.1 percent of men adopted student aid benefits. Among the youngest Americans who were born between 1973 and 1990, women are significantly more likely to report having used federal student aid than men: 57.7 percent of women between 18 and 35 have used government financial support for higher education, compared to 45.8 percent of men in this age group.¹¹⁹

In accordance with my expectations, data suggest that federal student aid has provided a significant source of support for American undergraduates and that the dynamics of aid adoption vary according to age. Among men and women between the ages of 55 and 92, who would most likely have begun college prior to 1972—the year that marked the creation of Pell Grants and the establishment of the Student Loan Marketing Association (Sallie Mae)—men are significantly more likely than women to have benefited from financial aid. For this group, only 17.3 percent of women report that they have received federal student aid benefits, while 35.8 percent of men report having done so. This contrasts sharply with the gender dynamics of financial aid receipt for the more junior cohorts of Americans who would likely have attended college after 1972. Data confirm that, since the mid-twentieth century, a significant portion of American women have joined men as the beneficiaries of federal student aid. As Figure 5.2 shows, women born after 1954—who fall between the ages of 18 and 54—use financial aid benefits at higher rates than their male counterparts: 43.7 percent of women have used federal student aid, compared to 38.4 percent of men. The absence of a significant difference in student aid adoption for men and women born between 1954 and 1972

¹¹⁹ These gender differences are statistically significant at a 99.9% confidence level for the 74-92 age cohort, a 99% confidence level for the 55-73 age cohort, and a 95% confidence level for the 18-35 age cohort.

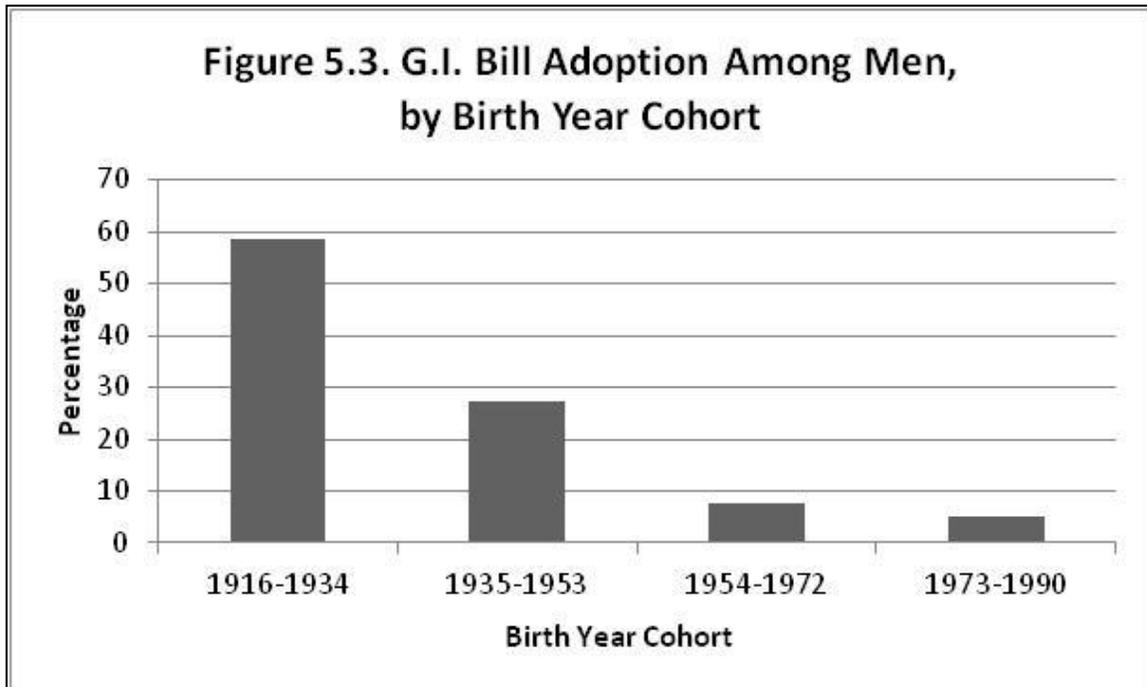
signifies a period of gender parity in education policy usage; for the most junior cohort of Americans born between 1973 and 1990, we find that women are significantly more likely to benefit from federal aid than men.

Since the mid-1980s, the average amount of federal aid received by American undergraduates has increased steadily. This escalating amount likely reflects the ever-increasing cost of attending college in the United States. Although younger women are significantly more likely to use federal student aid than their male counterparts, men have received slightly greater amounts of student aid than women in recent years (see Appendix B, Figure B.5.1). In 2008, for example, the average amount of federal aid received by undergraduate women—measured in current dollars that reflect actual amounts prevailing during specified years—was \$6,472, compared to an average of \$6,703 for men. This difference may reflect the fact that women outnumber men as part-time students and as enrollees in two-year programs. Because the amount of aid awarded from means-tested programs reflects student need as well as institutional costs, women's overrepresentation in these lower-cost programs may affect their average award amounts. Another possibility for the observation that men tend to receive higher amounts of financial aid than women is that men may still be more likely than women to receive veterans' benefits for higher education. Three percent of American undergraduates were veterans in the 2007-08 academic year. Of those students, 73.1 percent were male, and 26.9 who were female (Radford, Wun, and Weko 2009, 1). Although it is difficult to identify one particular cause for the observation that men tend to receive somewhat higher amounts of federal aid than women, women's greater presence in less-costly postsecondary programs and the fact that men continue to comprise the majority of G.I.

Bill beneficiaries may contribute to this trend. In line with my expectations, overall higher education program adoption has increased in recent decades, as has the amount of federal aid awarded to students. Data from the U.S. Department of Education's National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS) as well as the Social and Governmental Issues and Participation Study suggest that federal student aid has reached an increasing proportion of American undergraduates over time. Moreover, these data indicate that there has been a significant shift in the gender dynamics of policy adoption since the mid-twentieth century.

To Have and to Have Not: The Gender Dynamics of G.I. Bill, Student Loan, and Pell Grant Usage

The prevalence of higher education policy usage among men in the most senior birth year cohort of Americans is striking. As we have seen, men born between 1916 and 1934 report having received federal student aid at dramatically higher rates than their female counterparts. Although the gender gap is not quite as impressive for the cohort of Americans born between 1935 and 1953, the trend holds: men are significantly more likely to have received federal support for funding higher education. Prior to the creation of federal student loans in 1958, the G.I. Bill was the only federal program that offered financial aid to students pursuing higher education. After its creation in 1944, more than 2 million citizens took advantage of G.I. Bill benefits, costing the federal government more than \$5.5 billion (Olson 1973, 596). Given the existence of conscription and the highly gendered nature of military service during the World War II era, it comes as no surprise that these veterans' benefits were awarded overwhelmingly to men. Of the 2.2 million World War II veterans who used the G.I. Bill to pursue college degrees, fewer



Source: The Social and Governmental Issues and Participation (SGIP) Study

than 65,000—a mere 3 percent—were women (Bennett 1996, 202). The significance of the G.I. Bill in promoting high levels of male enrollments in U.S. colleges and universities in the postwar era is clear, as veterans comprised approximately 70 percent of the male population in America’s post-secondary institutions (Bound and Turner 2002, 785; Conway, Ahern, and Steuernagel 2005, 22; Eisenmann 2006, 28; Mettler 2005; Rosenberg 2008, 166). Figure 5.3 reports G.I. Bill usage among men across age cohorts using data from the Social and Governmental Issues and Participation (SGIP) Study.¹²⁰

Although the G.I. Bill has provided financial support for generations of men pursuing college education, its effects were particularly important for men born between 1916 and

¹²⁰ Gauging women’s G.I. Bill usage is difficult using data from the Social and Governmental Issues and Participation (SGIP) study because only 15 women responded to the question of whether they have ever received G.I. Bill benefits. One-hundred-sixty men, in contrast, responded to this question. Thus, while the number of male respondents who responded to this question yields meaningful usage statistics, the number of women responding to this question is prohibitively small. Nonetheless, secondary data sources (e.g., Bennett 1996; Eisenmann 2006; Mettler 2005) confirm women’s vast underrepresentation among G.I. Bill beneficiaries.

1934.¹²¹ For this group of men, 58.6 percent took advantage of the G.I. Bill. Although men in successive birth year cohorts have also benefited from G.I. Bill benefits, these proportions are considerably smaller: for men born between 1935 and 1953, 27.4 percent report receiving G.I. Bill benefits; 7.6 percent of men born between 1954 and 1972 report having used the program's aid; and 5.1 percent of men born between 1973 and 1990 report that they have received aid from the G.I. Bill. Although the G.I. Bill has provided valuable support for generations of veterans pursuing higher education, it was particularly important to the most senior cohort of American men whose large numbers likely reflect the existence of military conscription during World War II and the Korean War. This program represents the original, albeit gender-biased, foundation of federal support for college students.

If the creation of the G.I. Bill is distinctive because it initiated federal support for financing higher education while providing aid to a considerable number of men as they pursued college education, the creation of federal student loans is equally significant because it dramatically altered the gender dynamics of federal student aid adoption. Since the creation of federally-subsidized student loans in 1958 and their expansion in subsequent years, student loans have become the dominant source of government support for both male and female college students. Thus, the creation of federal student loans marked the dawning of an altered, gender-egalitarian commitment to Americans pursuing postsecondary training. Data from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program's (CIRP) Freshman Survey reveal that the percentage of men and women receiving

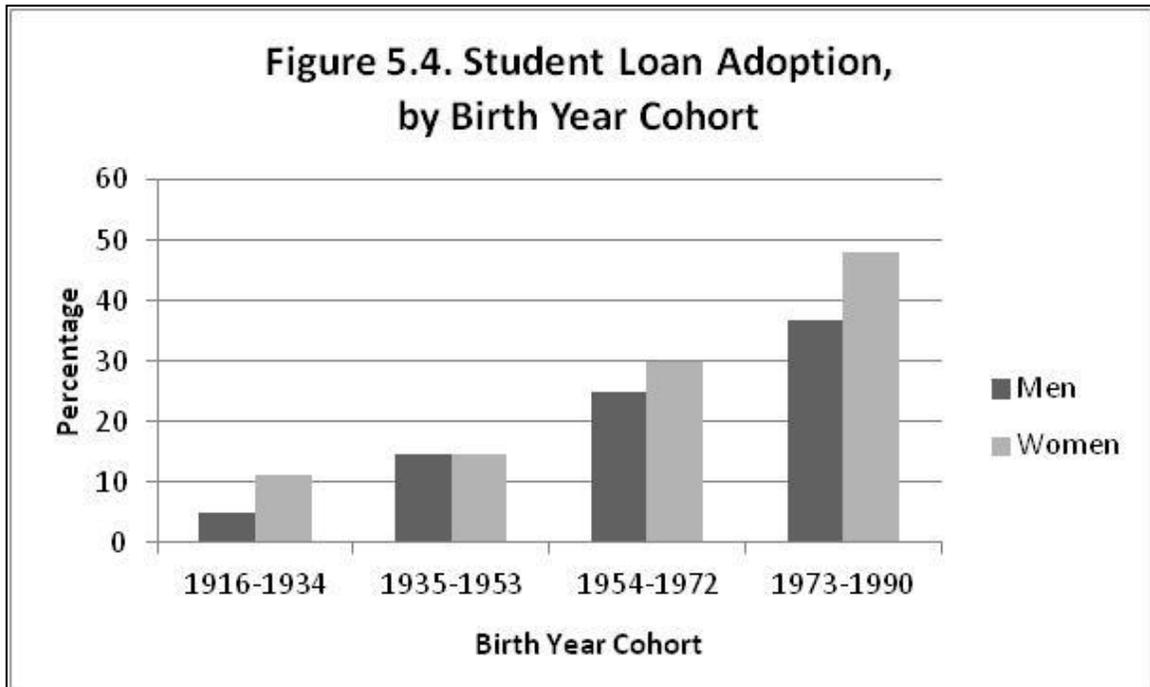
¹²¹ It is important to note that, in addition to expanding access to college for a significant proportion of American men in the postwar era, approximately two-thirds of beneficiaries under the 1944 G.I. Bill used federal aid for vocational training. While 2.2 million World War II veterans used G.I. benefits to attend college, a full 5.6 million veterans used these benefits to attain vocational training (Mettler 2005, 42).

National Direct Student Loans (NDSL; popularly known as “Perkins Loans”)—which are allocated irrespective of financial need—during their first year of college has fluctuated over time but has generally increased after the 1980s (see Appendix B, Figure B.5.2). Between 1974 and 1998, on average, 12.7 percent of female college freshmen and 12.2 percent for male freshmen used NDSL benefits. Through most of the program’s history, women received benefits at a slightly higher rate than men.

Like need-based loans, federal loans granted without regard to students’ financial means have become increasingly available to men and women since the 1970s. Although women have tended to use need-based Perkins Loans at higher rates than men, men have been slightly more likely to use Guaranteed Student Loans (GSL; popularly known as “Stafford Loans”), which are broadly targeted to students enrolled in accredited postsecondary institutions (see Appendix B, Figure B.5.3). In 1974, 12.6 percent of male college freshmen reported that they received Guaranteed Student Loan benefits, compared to 11.4 percent of women. By 1989, 45 percent of women and 42.5 percent of men received Stafford Loans.¹²² In less than 25 years, the proportion of men and women using non-need based loans increased from approximately 10 percent to more than 40 percent.

Given the growth of student loan adoption in the years following the creation of the NDSL and GSL programs, it comes as little surprise that more recent data point to steady increase in the proportion of men and women benefiting from federal student loans. In a continuation of aforementioned trends, more recent data from the National

¹²² Although these gender differences may not seem substantial—in 2008, for example, 45 percent of women compared to 42.5 percent of men received Guaranteed Student Loans—these differences are statistically significant at the $\alpha=.001$ level.



Source: The Social and Governmental Issues and Participation (SGIP) Study

Notes: The gender difference for the 1973-1990 cohort is statistically significant at $\alpha=0.05$. The remaining gender differences are not statistically significant.

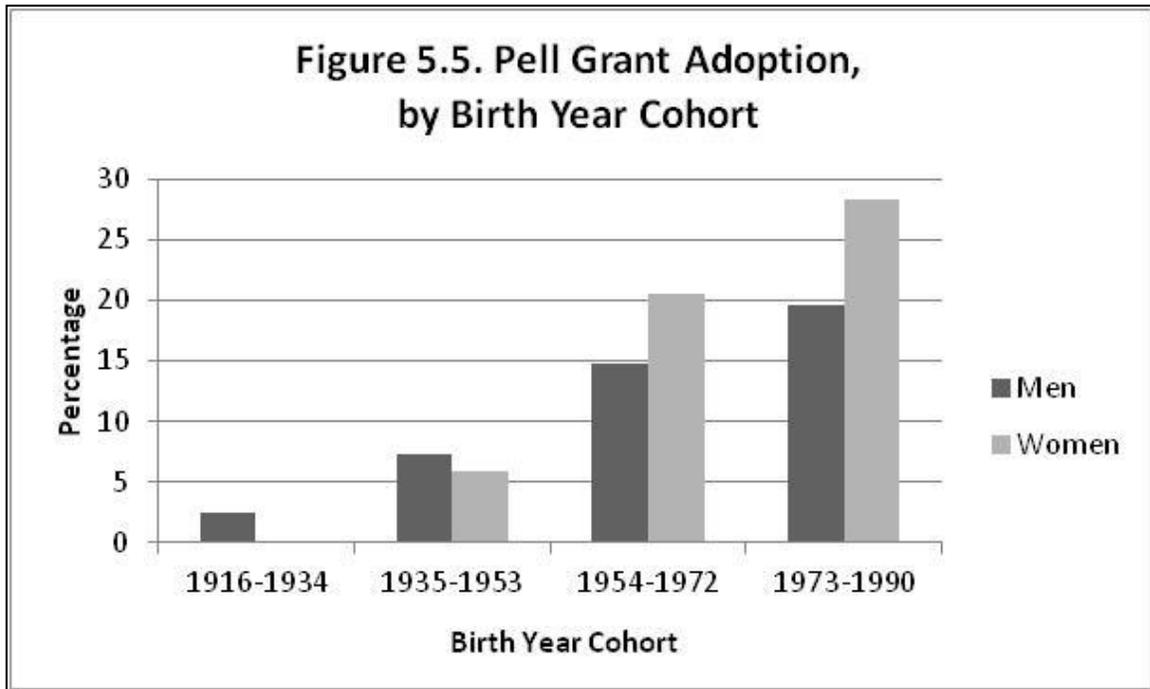
Postsecondary Student Aid Study indicate that the proportion of men and women adopting student loans has increased substantially in recent decades (see Appendix B, Figure B.5. 4). Among all undergraduates in 1989, 18 percent of women and 16.3 percent of men received federal student loans. By 2008, the percentage of female college students receiving federal student loans had increased to 37.6 percent, and the proportion of men using federal student loans reached 30.8 percent. Cohort analysis of student loan adoption among all Americans corroborates this finding that student loan usage has increased considerably in recent decades. Figure 5.4 reveals that student loan adoption increases as respondents' birth years ascend. In other words, the most junior cohorts of Americans use federal student loans at higher rates than their more senior counterparts. For men and women born in the 1916-1934 cohort, the 1954-1972 cohort, and the 1973-

1990 cohort, a greater percentage of women report having used federal student loans than men.¹²³ Although these gender differences for the most senior cohorts of Americans do not reach statistical significance, women in the most junior cohort—those born between 1973 and 1990—are significantly more likely to adopt student loans than their male counterparts (SGIP 2008). Overall, this evidence supports my expectation that federal student loans have been broadly accessible to both women and men. They also suggest that, in recent decades, this type of financial aid has become a particularly important source of support for women pursuing college degrees.

Pell Grants represent the other part of the newer, gender-egalitarian efforts of the federal government to expand access to postsecondary education. Survey data suggest that this program has worked in concert with student loans to promote greater access to higher education for American women and men. In the years following the creation of Pell Grants, the need-based program consistently provided financial aid for one-quarter to one-third of male and female college freshmen (see Appendix B, Figure B.5.5). With the exception of 1974—when 24.7 percent of male freshmen and 23.6 percent of female freshmen received Pell Grants—women took advantage of Pell Grants at slightly higher rates than their male counterparts. By 1998, 32.6 percent of female college freshmen and 29.2 percent of male freshmen benefited from Pell Grants.¹²⁴ Overall, the percentage of men and women using Pell Grants remained steady in the years immediately following the program's creation. These data suggest that, as per my expectations, federal Pell

¹²³ For the 1935-1953 birth year cohort, women and men used student loans at virtually equal rates: 14.8 percent of women and 14.7 percent of men used federal student loans.

¹²⁴ These differences are statistically significant at the $\alpha=.001$ level; however, this may reflect the large sample size of the CIRP Freshman Survey.



Source: The Social and Governmental Issues and Participation (SGIP) Study

Notes: The gender difference for the 1973-1990 cohort is statistically significant at $\alpha=0.05$. The remaining gender differences are not statistically significant.

Grants have provided a significant source of financial support for students pursuing college degrees. Further, evidence supports the notion that—like federal student loans—the benefits of this program have been widely accessible to both male and female citizens. Because of the means-tested nature of Pell Grant eligibility and the significant percentage of women and men who adopt benefits, evidence suggests that this program has successfully expanded access to higher education for citizens from less-privileged socioeconomic backgrounds. Cohort analysis of SGIP survey data, as seen in Figure 5.5, reveals that Pell Grant adoption has been most prevalent among the youngest cohorts of American women and men. For Americans born after 1953, Pell Grants have provided a particularly important source of financial aid for women. Among those born between 1916 and 1953, relatively small proportions report having received Pell Grants. Consider the most senior cohort of Americans surveyed. For men and women born between 1916

and 1934, only 2.5 percent of men received Pell Grants, and no women benefited from the program. Among those born between 1935 and 1953, 7.3 percent of men report having used Pell Grants; compared to 5.9 percent of women. A significant shift occurs for the cohorts born after 1953. For these groups, considerably greater percentages of respondents received Pell Grants, and women report using benefits at higher rates than their male counterparts. While 20.6 percent of women born between 1954 and 1972 indicate that they have received Pell Grants, 14.7 percent of men in birth cohort indicate that they have benefited from the need-based grants. Similarly, for citizens born between 1973 and 1990, 28.4 percent of women report that they have used Pell Grants, compared to 19.6 percent of men.¹²⁵ These data suggest that citizens' usage of Pell Grants resembles that of student loans. In the decades after the program's creation, increasing proportions of men and women took advantage of benefits. Also, in recent years women have adopted program benefits at significantly higher rates than their male counterparts. Pell Grants have been integral to promoting equal educational opportunity for low-income men and women—especially those born after 1953. Now that we have a sense of historical trends in G.I. Bill, student loan, and Pell Grant usage; the accessibility of each respective program; and the gender dynamics that characterize policy usage, we can consider the determinants of financial aid adoption.

¹²⁵ The gender gap between women and men ages 18-35 represent the only statistically significant differences in Pell Grant adoption across these four cohorts. This difference is significance at the $\alpha=.05$ level.

Determinants of Federal Student Aid Usage

Thus far, we have seen that the gendered nature of G.I. Bill eligibility meant that this program, which provided the first federal financial aid for college students, was accessible primarily to men and was heavily used by those born between 1916 and 1934. The benefits of the federal student loan and Pell Grant programs that emerged after 1958 were allocated on the basis of gender-neutral criteria and, thus, were equally accessible to both women and men. The creation of student loans and Pell Grants heralded the birth of a new, gender egalitarian support for higher education in which women enjoyed access to federal support for the pursuit of higher education along with men. Given what we have observed about the dynamics of men's and women's access to federal student aid, the question remains as to the determinants of higher education program usage. When financial aid is available, what determines whether someone will actually use it?

A primary objective of the G.I. Bill was to reward World War II veterans for their military service by offering generous financial support for those pursuing higher education. Thus, it seems plausible that gender and age—characteristics that we have identified as strong correlates of program adoption—would be significant predictors of G.I. Bill usage. Because so few women received benefits under this program in the postwar era, it would stand to reason that men are significantly more likely to use this program than women. Among men, I suspect that survey respondents who are older—and who are more likely to have served during military conflicts and to have been subject to the military draft—would be more likely to use these benefits than their younger counterparts.

While lawmakers created the G.I. Bill to reward military service, their original objective in providing student loans and their sustained purpose for providing Pell Grants was extending higher educational opportunity to capable but financially-needy men and women. Thus, I predict that socioeconomic background will provide a strong determinant of student loan and Pell Grant adoption. For men and women from families with limited financial resources, I suspect that these federal programs offer benefits that are particularly attractive because they make higher education more affordable. Because student loans and Pell Grants represent the newest components of the federal government's student aid provisions, I suspect that age will also provide a significant predictor of policy adoption. While the benefits of the G.I. Bill were most accessible to older men, student loans and Pell Grants were targeted broadly to women and men. In recent years, federally subsidized student loans have come to replace grants as the government's preferred mechanism for aiding students. As a result, it seems plausible that younger Americans would be significantly more likely to take advantage of student loan benefits than older citizens.

In addition to socioeconomic background and age, I suspect that gender represents a significant determinant of student loan and Pell Grant adoption. Although these programs were made broadly available to both women and men, the possibility remains that families factor gender into the calculus that governs whether they allocate limited financial resources for the higher education of their sons and daughters. As this chapter's introductory quote demonstrates, and as economists have suggested (see, e.g., Becker 1975, Behrman, Pollack, and Taubman 1986), families have historically incorporated gender into their decisions regarding economic investment in their children's education.

Many families have been dubious about spending limited funds to educate daughters who would presumably exit the labor force upon marriage. To avoid “wasting” money in this type of imprudent investment, some families reserved funds for sons who—in preparing for their roles as husbands and fathers—would use higher education to segue into stable and lucrative careers that would permit them to support their own families. If this is the case, federal student loans and Pell Grants may represent an important source of financial support for women—especially those from less-advantaged socioeconomic backgrounds—who may be less likely to procure private resources to fund higher education.

Table 5.1 presents the results of a series of binary logistic regressions that consider the determinants of higher education policy usage among Americans who have earned at least a high school diploma or its equivalent.¹²⁶ In line with my expectations, the first model indicates that gender and age provide statistically significant predictors of G.I. Bill adoption: women are 10 percent less likely than men to use G.I. Bill benefits, and a man who was born in 1935 is 9 percent more likely to have used G.I. Bill benefits than a man who was born in 1972. These findings underscore the importance of the G.I. Bill for men and for more senior Americans, supporting previous evidence pointing to substantial G.I. Bill usage among men during the postwar era. The lack of statistical significance among the model’s remaining coefficients suggests that race, childhood socioeconomic status, and mother’s education offer little explanation for G.I. Bill use.

¹²⁶ The regression analyses presented in this chapter include only Americans who have obtained at least a high school diploma or a G.E.D., as this level of education represents a fundamental requirement of federal student aid eligibility.

Table 5.1. Determinants of Higher Education Policy Usage

	<u>G.I. Bill</u>	<u>Student Loans</u>	<u>Pell Grants</u>	<u>Any Higher Education Policy</u>
Gender	-2.858*** (.424)	.391** (.144)	.463** (.173)	.010 (.132)
Age	.057*** (.010)	-.042*** (.005)	-.037*** (.006)	-.026*** (.004)
Black	-.241 (.458)	.536** (.186)	.473* (.209)	.511** (.178)
Hispanic	--	.143 (.371)	-.574 (.488)	.039 (.356)
Childhood SES	.035 (.170)	-.082 (.081)	-.184 [†] (.096)	-.124 [†] (.075)
Mom's Education	-.101 (.086)	.055 (.037)	.008 (.044)	.049 (.035)
-2 log likelihood	355.36	1171.36	900.70	1335.18
Goodness of Fit	103.60	110.80	62.53	60.85
Cox & Snell R ²	.102	.101	.058	.057
N	1028	1105	1104	1105

Source: The Social and Governmental Issues and Participation (SGIP) Study

[†]p ≤ .1, *p ≤ .05, **p ≤ .01, ***p ≤ .001

Notes: Cells consist of binary logistic regression coefficients in the numerator and standard errors in parentheses.

Analysis includes respondents who have earned at least a high school diploma or its equivalent.

Given that G.I. Bill benefits have been provided without absent means tests and on the basis of military service, the insignificance of demographic predictors is understandable.

The second model considers determinants of student loan usage among Americans. Here, we see that survey data support our initial expectation that gender, age, and race would provide significant predictors of policy adoption. Gender represents the first statistically significant predictor of student loan adoption: women are more likely to use this program than men. When we consider the substantive effect of gender on student loan usage, we find that woman are 8 percent more likely to use federal student loans

than men.¹²⁷ We also find that older Americans are significantly less likely than younger Americans to have received loans. Compared to someone who was born in 1972 (who would have been 36 years old in 2008), a citizen born in 1935 (who would have been 73 year old in 2008) is 27 percent less likely to have benefited from federal student loans. Like gender and age, race provides an additional factor that significantly shapes student loan adoption. Being African American corresponds to a .12 increase in the probability of using student loans. These results suggest that federal student loans have provided a particularly important source of aid for women and African Americans—groups that have borne much of the burden of U.S. socioeconomic inequality—as they pursue college degrees. Additionally, these results confirm earlier evidence that student loans have been widely used among younger Americans, suggesting that the growing availability of student loans has been met with substantial usage among young citizens.

Consistent with my expectations and mirroring the model predicting student loan usage, the model presented in the third column of Table 5.1 indicates that gender, age, and race provide significant predictors of Pell Grant adoption. When we consider the effect of gender on Pell Grant adoption, survey data indicate that women are significantly more likely to receive this type of aid than men. Results suggest that women are 6 percent more likely than men to have benefited from Pell Grants. We also find that age has a considerable effect on whether Americans have taken advantage of Pell Grants. For example, a citizen who was born in 1935 is 15 percent less likely to have used Pell Grants than a citizen who was born in 1972. When we consider the significant effect of race on

¹²⁷ To facilitate the interpretation of logistic regression coefficients throughout this analysis, I present substantive effects that have been generated using Gary King's CLARIFY software for statistical analysis (see King, Tomz, and Wittenberg 2003).

Pell Grant adoption, we find that being African American is associated with a .07 increase in the probability that a citizen will use program benefits. In addition to gender, age, and race, this model also reveals that childhood socioeconomic status provides a significant predictor of Pell Grant usage. This contrasts with the statistically insignificant relationship between childhood socioeconomic status and student loan adoption. Moving from a childhood socioeconomic status that is “far below average” to one that is “far above average” yields a .09 decrease in the probability of using Pell Grants. The significant effects of childhood socioeconomic status for Pell Grant adoption may reflect the means-tested nature of this program. Although Perkins loans are need-based, Stafford loans are not; thus, socioeconomic background may not offer as robust a predictor of student loan usage as it does for Pell Grant receipt.

Moving beyond this focus on the determinants of usage for individual financial aid programs, the fourth model in Table 5.1 examines the determinants of using any type of higher education benefits. This model allows us to gain an overall sense of the factors that influence citizens’ use of the benefits that emanate from landmark student aid policies. Results suggest that age, race, and childhood socioeconomic status emerge as central factors shaping financial aid adoption. Compared to those born in 1972, citizens born in 1935 are 21 percent less likely to have taken advantage of federal higher education programs. Although race and childhood socioeconomic status have more modest substantive effects for the probability of using federal student aid, both of these variables influence the likelihood of using student aid programs. Shifting one’s race from white to black corresponds to a .12 increase in the probability that a citizen will use federal student aid. For socioeconomic background, we find that shifting childhood

socioeconomic status from “far below average” to “far above average” corresponds to a .12 decrease in the probability that a citizen will take advantage of federal student aid.

Overall, these results presented in Table 5.1 suggest that gender represents an important determinant of federal student aid usage and that its effect varies by student aid program. While women are significantly less likely than men to have taken advantage of G.I. Bill benefits, they are significantly more likely to use student loans and Pell Grants. Although older Americans are significantly more likely to use G.I. Bill benefits, federal student aid usage is significantly more prevalent among younger citizens, as they are more likely to use student loans and Pell Grants. We also see that African Americans and citizens from less-privileged socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to use federal student aid.

The binary regression analysis presented in Table 5.2 considers the determinants of policy usage for women and men separately. When we consider only men, we find that age represents a significant determinant of G.I. Bill adoption: compared to a man who was born in 1972, a man born in 1935 is 35 percent more likely to have benefited from the G.I. Bill. We find that race, childhood socioeconomic status, and mother’s education provide insignificant predictors of G.I. Bill adoption. This corroborates my prediction that the G.I. Bill’s military service-based targeting rendered these demographic and socioeconomic characteristics less consequential than they would prove for citizens’ use of subsequently enacted federal student aid programs. The gender-disaggregated findings in the second and third columns of Table 5.2 generally support our previous finding that demographic factors shape student loan adoption. For both men and women, those who are younger and those who are African American are significantly more likely

Table 5.2. Determinants of Higher Education Policy Usage, by Gender

	<u>G.I. Bill</u>	<u>Student Loans</u>		<u>Pell Grants</u>		<u>Any Higher Ed Policy</u>	
	Men	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Age	.070*** (.011)	-.033*** (.008)	-.049*** (.007)	-.020* (.009)	-.050*** (.008)	-.002 (.006)	-.050*** (.007)
Black	-.646 (.569)	.558 [†] (.295)	.539* (.244)	.331 (.353)	.580* (.267)	.644* (.277)	.467 [†] (.242)
Hispanic	--	-.300 (.564)	.540 (.522)	-1.182 (.931)	-.205 (.600)	-.514 (.529)	.582 (.542)
Childhood SES	.058 (.188)	-.140 (.125)	-.034 (.107)	-.329* (.152)	-.087 (.123)	-.076 (.111)	-.157 (.105)
Mom's Education	-.098 (.093)	.097 [†] (.052)	.015 (.053)	.047 (.065)	-.014 (.061)	.074 (.047)	.024 (.052)
-2 log likelihood	270.52	551.23	615.48	400.89	490.53	661.84	640.94
Goodness of Fit	56.47	37.72	73.83	13.38	52.93	9.82	83.32
Cox & Snell R ²	.123	.073	.128	.027	.093	.019	.143
N	421	493	612	492	612	493	612

Source: The Social and Governmental Issues and Participation (SGIP) Study

[†]p ≤ .1, *p ≤ .05, **p ≤ .01, ***p ≤ .001

Notes: Cells consist of binary logistic regression coefficients in the numerator and standard errors in parentheses. Analysis includes respondents who have earned at least a high school diploma or its equivalent.

to use student loans than older respondents and those who are white. When we compare more senior citizens to their younger counterparts, we find that men who were born in 1935 are 20 percent less likely to have used federal student loans than men who were born in 1972. For women, those born in 1935 are 33 percent less likely to have used federal student loans. Race is another demographic factor that shapes student loan adoption for women and men. For both genders, blacks are 12 percent more likely to use student loans than whites. Moving beyond demographic factors, we find that mother's educational attainment provides an additional significant predictor of student loan usage for men but not women. Data suggest that men whose mothers have more education are more likely to use student loans: increasing the educational attainment of a man's mother from a high school diploma to a four-year degree corresponds to a .08 increase in the probability that he will use student loans.

The next two columns present the determinants of Pell Grant usage for men and women. As was the case for student loans, we find that older men and women are significantly less likely to take advantage of Pell Grants than those who are younger. Compared to those born in 1972, men born in 1935 are 8 percent less likely to be Pell Grant users. In an analogous comparison, we find that age has an even greater effect on whether women use Pell Grants. Compared to women born in 1972, those born in 1935 are 22 percent less likely to be Pell Grant beneficiaries. While race does not provide a significant determinant of whether men use Pell Grants, it appears to have significant effects for whether women use this program. We find that black women are 10 percent more likely to take advantage of Pell Grants than white women. While race influences program usage for women but not men, the reverse is true for socioeconomic background. Childhood socioeconomic status provides a significant predictor of men's Pell Grant usage: shifting a man's childhood socioeconomic status from "far below average" to "far above average" yields a .15 decrease in the probability that he will have used Pell Grants.

Finally, we turn to consideration of the variables shaping overall financial aid usage for women and men. Perhaps a reflection of the fact that men have consistently benefited from federal financial aid programs since their creation in the 1940s, age appears to have no significant effect on whether men adopt federal education benefits. For women, on the other hand, age represents a strong predictor of student aid adoption. Older women are significantly less likely to have benefited from federal financial education aid programs. Compared to a woman born in 1972, a woman born in 1935 is 37 percent less likely to have used any federal student aid. We also see that race

significantly predicts financial aid policy usage for both women and men. Data suggest that blacks are significantly more likely to have taken advantage of federal student aid and that black men are 16 percent more likely than white men to use federal student aid, while black women are 11 percent more likely than white women to use these benefits. As these data indicate, demographic factors—particularly age and race—provide the strongest determinants of whether men and women use federal student aid.

Data from the 1998 Cooperative Institutional Research Program's (CIRP) Freshman Survey corroborate these findings, and suggest that demographic factors shape student aid adoption, even when we control for endogenous personality traits that could presumably shape whether individuals use federal student aid. Table 5.3 shows the results of binary logistic regression analysis of the determinants of higher education policy adoption among college freshmen. The first model shows that women, African Americans, those whose parents have less income, those whose mothers have less education, and those who could be described as having ambitious, "Go-Getter" personalities are significantly more likely to adopt federal student aid. For both women and men, race (black) and having a "Go-Getter" personality are positively and significantly associated with higher education policy adoption. Parent's income and mother's education are significantly, but negatively, associated with using federal financial aid programs.

Overall, these findings suggest that, while American men are significantly more likely than women to have used G.I. Bill benefits, women are more likely to have used student loans and Pell Grants. Among men, G.I. Bill adoption is most prevalent among those who are older. In contrast, the benefits of federal student loans and Pell Grants

Table 5.3. Determinants of Higher Education Policy Usage Among College Freshmen: Logistic Regression Results

	All	Men	Women
Gender	.035*** (.006)		
Age Group	.000 (.006)	-.007 (.008)	.006 (.008)
Black	.185*** (.011)	.110*** (.016)	.241*** (.014)
Parent's Income	-.303*** (.001)	-.294*** (.002)	-.310*** (.002)
Mother's Education	-.068*** (.003)	-.090*** (.004)	-.049*** (.004)
"Go-Getters"	.080*** (.005)	.132*** (.007)	.031*** (.007)
-2 log likelihood	693684.63	316839.18	376623.08
Goodness of Fit	90959.96	37473.82	52999.46
Cox & Snell R ²	.145	.134	.152
N	144447	62578	81869

Source: The 1998 Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey

†p≤.1, *p≤ .05, **p≤ .01, ***p≤ .001

Notes: Cells consist of binary logistic regression coefficients in the numerator and standard errors in parentheses.

have had been significantly more available to younger citizens—both women and men.

With the creation of the G.I. Bill in 1944, the federal government provided higher educational support for a generation of American men. Women, however, were excluded from this experience. By creating the federal student loan and Pell Grant programs, the United States government provided financial support that would reach both women and men. These findings support my expectation that the creation of federal student loans and Pell Grants marked the emergence of a federal commitment to promoting greater educational attainment among the nation's citizens.

The Fortunate Ones?: How Student Aid Beneficiaries Think about Federal Education Program Usage

How do the beneficiaries of federal student aid view their usage of these programs? Central to this consideration of how program participants think about their use of education policies is whether they recognize student aid benefits as part of government social programming. According to Paul Pierson, traceability “involves two distinct tests: can visible outcomes be linked to government policy and can those policies be linked to someone who can be given credit or blame?” (1993, 622). For student financial aid policies, are women and men equally likely to trace these benefits to the federal government? I suspect that men—many of whom received generous G.I. Bill benefits from the state as a token of gratitude for military service—may be more likely than women to trace federal education policies to the government.

As shown in Table 5.4, we see that G.I. Bill beneficiaries appear to be acutely aware that program benefits were government social provisions. Sixty percent of G.I. Bill users trace program benefits to the federal government, while 57 percent of Pell Grant beneficiaries and 48 percent of student loan beneficiaries do so. Of the G.I. Bill, student loans, and Pell Grants, male beneficiaries are most likely to recognize the G.I. Bill as a government social program. Sixty-one percent of men who use the G.I. Bill confirm that they “have used a government social program,” compared to 53 percent of men who used Pell Grants and 44 percent of men who used student loans.¹²⁸ Gender differences in traceability do not reach statistical significance.

¹²⁸ It seems plausible that G.I. Bill traceability has fluctuated over time. For example, the program may have become less visible as the system of U.S. military conscription was replaced with an all-volunteer military force in 1973.

Program	Percentage of Higher Education Program Recipients Saying: “Yes, I have used a government social program.”		
	All Respondents	Men	Women
G.I. Bill	60	61	50*
Student Loans	48	44	49
Pell Grants	57	53	60

Source: The Social and Governmental Issues and Participation (SGIP) Study

Notes: These differences do not reach statistical significance. This may reflect the relatively small sample size included in this analysis.

* An extremely small number of women surveyed actually used G.I. Bill benefits. Of the 15 women who responded to the question of whether they have every received G.I. Bill benefits, 8 indicated that they had.

The finding that the G.I. Bill represents the most traceable higher education program for men while the federal Pell Grant program represents the most traceable higher education program for women may indicate that these programs were widely recognized by their respective beneficiaries as having emanated from the federal government. Moreover, because receiving federal support in the form of monetary grants generally represents a positive experience, it would follow that those linking program provisions to the state would be likely to assign credit to the federal government for its generosity. For both men and women, federal student loan recipients are the least likely to recognize the federal government as the source of their benefits. This may be related to the process of applying for student loans. Given that students may apply for financial aid on their college campuses or in the comfort of their home, thanks to the internet, applying for this type of government support typically does not involve a trip to a government building or direct interaction with a government employee. Moreover, when students fill out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) form to apply for student aid, they may simply fail to realize that the aid for which they are applying comes from the United States government.

What about the perceived value of federal student aid program usage? Do male and female program beneficiaries perceive benefits as helping to make education accessible and affordable? I expect that because student aid programs provide assistance that reduces the financial burden of obtaining a college degree, both women and men will perceive higher education programs as helping to make college accessible and affordable. Furthermore, I suspect that women will be especially likely to assign great value to financial aid usage because, at least historically, financing higher education through family support; full-time, part-time or summer employment; or securing support from other private sources has been more difficult for women (see, e.g., Becker 1975; Harrison 1978; “Higher Education Act of 1965 (H.R. 3220)” Subcommittee Hearings 1965).¹²⁹

When asked whether they agreed with the statement, “I would not have considered higher education without benefits,” 42.2 percent of women and 37.2 percent of men answered in the affirmative (SGIP 2008). In regards to student loans, the principal mechanism by which the federal government supports students pursuing college degrees, women are again more likely to view federal financial aid as providing valuable assistance. When asked to characterize the extent to which student loans expanded educational opportunity, 47 percent of female college graduates responded that they expanded opportunity “a great deal,” while 34.7 percent of male college graduates

¹²⁹ In 1958, U.S. Undersecretary for the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Dr. John A. Perkins, alluded to these trends during debate over the first student loan programs. “If a family is perhaps pressed financially and they have sons and daughters,” he stated, “they are apt to educate the sons before they will extend themselves to the daughters.” He went on to describe women’s difficulty securing alternative sources of support for higher education, explaining that “it is more difficult for young ladies to work themselves through college than it is for a young man to do so” (“Scholarship and Loan Program” Subcommittee Hearings 1957, 19). Throughout the course of testimony offered during this hearing, witnesses explained that the types of jobs offered to women students rarely offered enough remuneration to cover tuition and living expenses.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Neither	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree		
<i>“I could not have afforded acquiring additional education without education benefits.”</i>							
Men	24%	21	0	18	38	=	101%
Women	14%	23	0	23	41	=	101%
<i>“I would have attended a college of lesser cost, quality, or reputation without education benefits.”</i>							
Men	24%	16	1	30	28	=	99%
Women	23%	15	2	33	27	=	100%
<i>“It would have taken me longer to acquire additional education without education benefits.”</i>							
Men	20%	17	1	27	35	=	100%
Women	19%	7	0	31	43	=	100%
<i>“The education or training that I paid for with my student loan(s) was worth it.”</i>							
Men	8%	3	1	19	70	=	101%
Women	12%	3	1	11	74	=	101%

Source: The Social and Governmental Issues and Participation (SGIP) Study

Notes: The total percentages may not equal 100 percent due to rounding. These differences do not reach statistical significance.

offered this same response (see Appendix B, Figure B.5.6). Male and female student loan beneficiaries generally view these programs as having effectively expanded educational opportunity. Further, data suggest that women are particularly likely to view federal student loans as having significantly expanded their access to higher education.

Table 5.5, which further examines male and female college graduates’ perceptions of how valuable federal student aid benefits were to their pursuit of higher education, provides additional evidence that student aid recipients—particularly women—assign considerable value to student aid benefits.¹³⁰ Among college graduates who report having used federal student aid, women are more likely than men to perceive these benefits as having enabled them to afford college: 41 percent of women and 38 percent of men strongly agree that, absent federal student aid, they would not have been able to

¹³⁰ The gender gaps presented in Table 5.5 do not reach statistical significance.

afford higher education. Data also suggest that higher education policies help students attend high-quality institutions, minimize the total time needed to complete a college degree, and are viewed as facilitating access to valuable training. This evidence indicates that many male and female financial aid recipients recognize the value of government student aid for facilitating the successful completion of their degrees. In contrast to early experiences whereby women were largely excluded from G.I. Bill benefits, these findings suggest that women and men have come to share similar experiences with federal student aid programs.

Another way to gauge federal student aid beneficiaries' views of their program participation is to consider whether they have more positive attitudes toward the government than non-users. Are financial aid recipients more likely than policy non-users to agree that the federal government has provided opportunities for socioeconomic mobility and valuable assistance to those in need? It seems plausible that federal student aid users will have significantly more positive attitudes toward the government than those who do not benefit from these programs because higher education program adoption offered a positive interaction with the government that facilitated long-term benefits—chiefly, the completion of a college degree.

Table 5.6 considers male and female college graduates' attitudes toward the government according to whether or not they received any type of federal student aid. For both male and female college graduates, higher education policy adoption is associated with more positive attitudes toward the government. Generally, college graduates who have received federal student aid are more likely to agree that the government has provided opportunities to improve living standards; however, the data

Table 5.6. Attitudes Toward Government Among College Graduates, by Gender and Higher Education Policy Usage and Non-Usage

		Disagree	Neither	Agree		
<i>“Government has given me opportunities to improve my standard of living.”</i>						
Men	Non-Users	48	6	47	=	101%
	Users	32	1	68	=	101%
Women	Non-Users	43	7	50	=	100%
	Users	41	2	58	=	101%
<i>“Government social programs have helped me in times of need.”</i>						
Men	Non-Users	59	11	30	=	100%
	Users	42	6	52	=	100%
Women	Non-Users	49	15	37	=	101%
	Users	36	10	55	=	101%

Source: The Social and Governmental Issues and Participation (SGIP) Study

Notes: The sum of the percentages in some rows may not equal 100%, due to rounding. The Disagree category includes the responses “Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree Somewhat,” and the Agree category includes the responses “Strongly Agree” and “Agree Somewhat.”

suggest that men are significantly more likely to agree with this notion.¹³¹ When we consider women and men separately, we again find that policy users are more likely than non-users to agree that the government has provided opportunities to increase living standards.¹³² Higher Education program beneficiaries are also more likely to agree that government social programs have provided help during times of need.¹³³ Federal student aid beneficiaries tend to view their participation in higher education programs as one characterized by receiving valuable support from the state.

Thus far, we have found that federal financial aid programs have provided valuable support for Americans pursuing higher education. The gender egalitarianism with which federal resources have been targeted, however, varies by program. The

¹³¹ This gender gap is statistically significant at an $\alpha=.05$ level.

¹³² These between-gender and within-gender differences do not reach statistical significance.

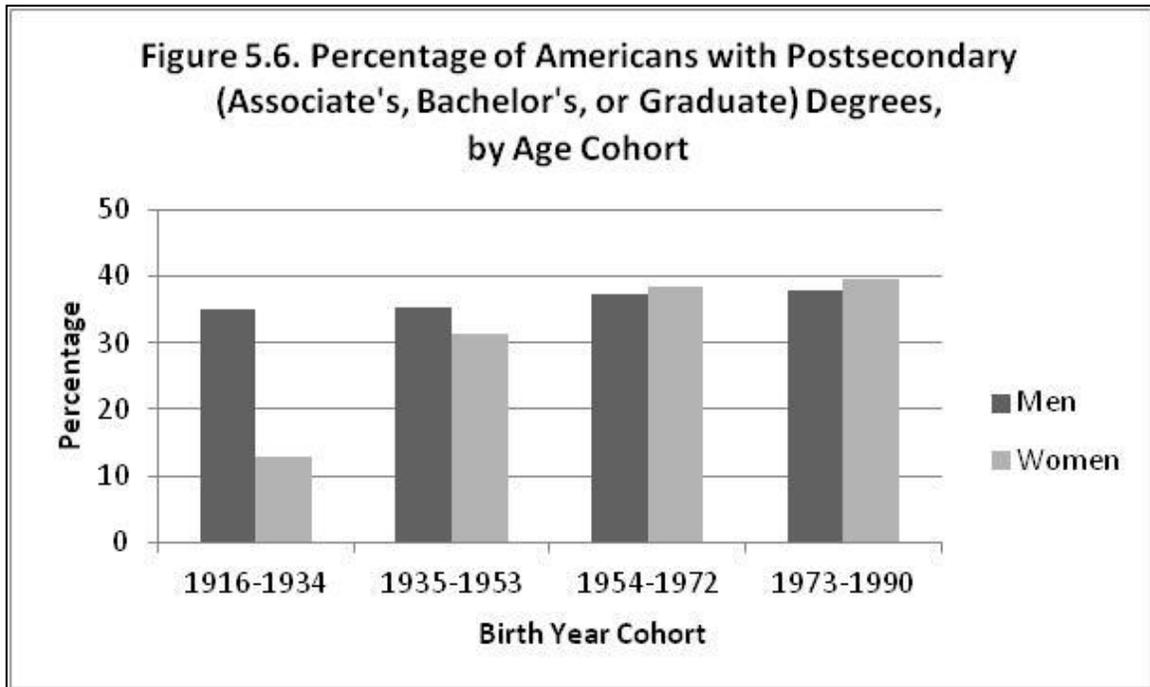
¹³³ The differences between women and men and the differences between female education policy users and non-users do not reach statistical significance. The difference between male policy users and non-users is statistically significant at an $\alpha=.05$ level.

benefits of the G.I. Bill—the first federal program to offer direct financial aid to citizens pursuing college degrees—reached an overwhelmingly male population of veterans in the post-World War II era. Men born between 1916 and 1934 claimed benefits at considerably higher rates than their younger counterparts. While the G.I. Bill was a significant source of support for American men during the postwar era, we find that federal student loans and Pell Grants have been used by substantial portions of college students, both male and female. With the growth of student loan programs in recent decades, we have seen that these programs have come to represent a considerable source of support for younger citizens. In recent decades, student loans and Pell Grants have become the dominant source of federal support for college students. When we consider the factors that compel citizens to adopt federal student aid—assuming the availability of said aid—we find that gender, age, and race provide strong predictors of G.I. Bill, student loan, and Pell Grant adoption. For the G.I. Bill, age and the gendered condition of military service prove the most powerful predictors of program adoption. Student loans and Pell Grants are widely used by both women and men, although women and younger Americans are significantly more likely to take advantage of these programs. While a significant proportion of American college students receive federal loans, fewer than half of beneficiaries recognize that these benefits come from the government; men and women are more likely to identify the G.I. Bill and Pell Grants as government social programs. For both genders, policy users largely view their use of federal student aid as a positive experience. Having considered the gender dynamics of federal student aid usage and beneficiaries' views regarding program receipt, we turn now to the effects of financial aid programs on higher educational attainment in the United States.

Part II: How Higher Education Program Usage Shapes Educational Attainment

Thus far, we have seen that while the benefits of the G.I. Bill reached a broad but predominantly male segment of Americans during the postwar era, subsequently enacted federal student loans and Pell Grants have been widely used by both women and men. We have also seen that, since their creation, the student loan and Pell Grant programs have become the dominant mechanisms through which the federal government provides financial aid to students. Moreover, data indicate that the benefits of these programs have reached a considerable percentage of women and men. Armed with an understanding of the gender dynamics of G.I. Bill, student loan, and Pell Grant adoption, we can now consider whether these programs have succeeded in their central objectives: expanding access to higher education and increasing educational attainment in the United States.

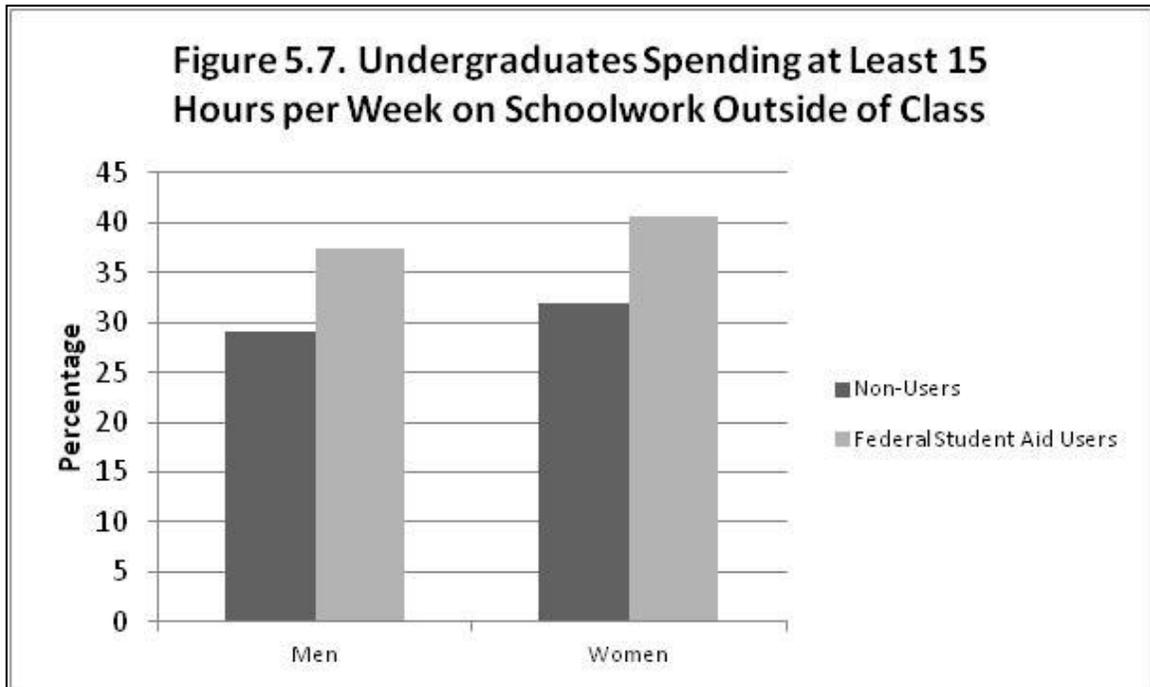
In general, the gender dynamics of higher educational attainment vary across age cohorts (see Figure 5.6). Among the most senior cohort of Americans who were born between 1916 and 1934, men are significantly more likely than women to hold associate's, bachelor's, or graduate degrees. While a statistically significant gender gap in postsecondary degree attainment exists for the most senior cohort of Americans, the gender differences that characterize degree attainment for the remaining birth year cohorts do not reach statistical significance. Among survey respondents born between 1935 and 1953, 35.4 percent of men and 31.4 percent of women hold college degrees. For the cohort of Americans born between 1954 and 1972, survey data reveal that women hold advanced degrees at a slightly higher rate than men: 38.3 percent of women in this age group have college degrees, compared to 37.4 percent of men. Among the youngest cohort of Americans who were born between 1973 and 1990, women again hold college



Source: The Social and Governmental Issues and Participation (SGIP) Study

Notes: The gender difference for the 1916-1934 cohort is statistically significant at $\alpha=0.05$. The remaining gender differences are not statistically significant.

degrees at slightly higher rates than their male counterparts. For this group, 39.5 percent of women and 38 percent of men hold college degrees. As this analysis has emphasized, the G.I. Bill was allocated primarily to male war veterans, while federal student loans and Pell Grants have been widely distributed among both men and women. For younger cohorts, as Figure 5.6 shows, convergence in the percentage of men and women receiving college degrees may reflect the impact of federal student aid programs that offered gender egalitarian educational assistance. As a result, I expect that a causal relationship exists between federal student policy usage and higher educational attainment. I suspect that the G.I. Bill provided significant resources to male beneficiaries that increased the probability that they would complete higher education. I also suspect that student loans and Pell Grants provided similar resources to women and men, thus increasing the likelihood of higher educational attainment for both genders.



Source: The 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS)

Notes: These differences between federal student aid users and non-users are statistically significant at $\alpha=0.001$.

Another mechanism by which federal student aid adoption can increase higher educational attainment is by increasing the time that low-income students can devote to academics. By precluding the necessity of working while attending college, I predict that federal student aid benefits significantly increase the time that students can devote to academics. Figure 5.7 displays the percentage of undergraduate men and women who, on average, devote fifteen or more hours per week to schoolwork outside of class. In line with my expectation, there appears to be a positive correlation between federal student aid usage and time devoted to academic work. Among male undergraduates, 37.5 percent of student aid beneficiaries spend at least fifteen hours each week doing academic work, compared to 29 percent of policy non-users. Similarly, 40.6 percent of female undergraduates spend fifteen or more hours on schoolwork each week, while 31.9 percent

of women who do not receive federal student aid do so.¹³⁴ The data suggest that undergraduates who benefit from federal student aid devote a significantly greater amount of time to academic work than those who do not. This represents an important mechanism by which federal student aid adoption increases the probability that students will successfully complete higher levels of education. This resource effect appears to be particularly beneficial to female student aid users, as they are significantly more likely to spend a substantial amount of time on academics.

Higher Education Policy Usage, Educational Ambition, and Educational Attainment

Thus far, descriptive statistics have suggested that federal student aid usage is positively correlated with greater educational attainment. Federal student aid makes college more affordable for men and women from less-advantaged socioeconomic backgrounds and enables students to spend more time on school work. Now, we turn to the question of whether a causal relationship exists between student aid adoption and educational attainment. To examine whether such a relationship exists, I empirically examine two relationships: (1) the relationship between federal student aid adoption and educational ambition and (2) the relationship between financial aid usage and actual educational attainment.

Educational ambition may provide a useful harbinger of educational attainment. I suspect that the usage of federal student aid programs may indirectly increase educational attainment by increasing the educational ambition of low-income students. Absent

¹³⁴ These differences are statistically significant at the $\alpha=.001$ level. Significant gender differences also exist among federal student aid users and non-users, respectively. Among both of these groups, women are significantly more likely to report spending at least fifteen hours per week on school work outside of class (at the $\alpha=.001$ level).

Table 5.7. Determinants of Ultimate Educational Plans Among Low-Income College Students, by Gender and Federal Student Aid Usage

	Men	Women
Age	-.050 (.039)	-.047 (.029)
Race (Black)	.069 (.122)	.432*** (.094)
Mother's Education	.042 (.042)	.063† (.035)
"Go-Getters"	1.792*** (.247)	.785*** (.183)
Federal Student Aid Usage	.670*** (.141)	.426*** (.115)
-2 log likelihood	2508.47	4207.08
Pseudo R ²	.033	.016
N	1030	1700

Source: The 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS)

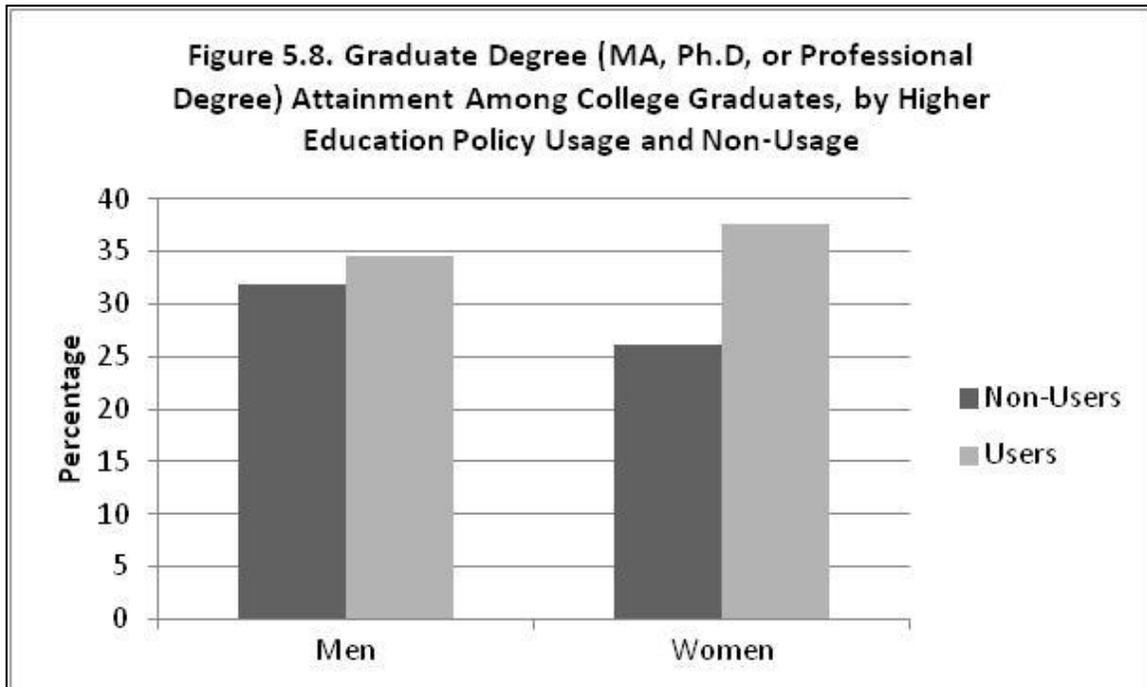
†p ≤ .1, *p ≤ .05, **p ≤ .01, ***p ≤ .001

Notes: Cells consist of ordinal logistic regression coefficients in the numerator and standard errors in parentheses. "Low-income" students are those whose annual family income is less than \$30,000.

federal financial aid, undergraduates from less-privileged socioeconomic backgrounds who face the burden of funding their own higher education may view the pursuit of advanced degrees as a prohibitively costly undertaking. Federal student aid beneficiaries, on the other hand, may be more likely to view advanced education as a feasible pursuit because federal support allows them to reserve limited financial resources for the task of financing advanced degrees, rather than undergraduate degrees. To test this possibility, I consider whether federal student aid adoption increases educational ambition among low-income students using data from the 2008 National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS). The central question driving this analysis is whether low-income undergraduates who benefit from federal student aid are more likely to plan on pursuing advanced education than those who do not.

The ordinal logistic regression analysis presented in Table 5.7 supports my suspicion that student aid adoption promotes greater educational ambition for students coming from less-privileged economic backgrounds. Controlling for age, race, mother’s education, and the possession of “go-getter” personalities, we find that federal student aid adoption provides a significant determinant of ultimate educational plans among low-income college students.¹³⁵ For dependent undergraduates coming from low-income backgrounds—even when controlling for age, race, and ambitious, “go-getter” personality traits—federal higher education policy usage provides a statistically significant predictor of women’s and men’s intended higher educational attainment. The data presented in Table 5.7 suggest that women and men who use financial aid policies are more likely to express high levels of educational ambition than those who do not. The results of the first model indicate that low-income male undergraduates who use federal student aid are 8 percent more likely to plan on earning a doctoral or professional degree than men who do not use these programs. Among their female counterparts, this analysis suggests that women who receive student aid are 6 percent more likely to plan to earn a doctoral or professional degree than women who do not. These findings support my hypothesis that federal student aid adoption indirectly promotes higher educational attainment by increasing the educational ambition of low-income students. In addition to revealing a significant relationship between federal student aid usage and educational ambition, these findings underscore the importance of higher education programs for making college more affordable for needy students.

¹³⁵ The “Go-Getters” variable measures the extent to which respondents can be characterized as ambitious or enterprising using a six-part index. For more information on variable coding, please refer to Appendix A, Table A.5.2.



Source: The Social and Governmental Issues and Participation (SGIP) Study

Notes: The difference between male student aid users and non-users is not statistically significant. The difference between female student aid users and non-users is statistically significant at $\alpha=0.10$.

What about the relationship between federal student aid adoption and actual educational attainment? The descriptive statistics presented in Figure 5.8 offers evidence that financial aid adoption is associated with higher levels of advanced degree completion for men and women. For men, 34.5 percent of college graduates who received federal student aid complete either a master’s degree, a Ph.D., or a professional degree, compared to 31.8 percent of those who did not use financial aid. We find that female college graduates who use federal financial aid are significantly more likely to earn advanced degrees than those who do not benefit from these programs. For female college graduates, 37.6 percent of those who have used federal student aid programs have earned graduate degrees, compared to 26.1 percent of those who have not.¹³⁶

¹³⁶ This difference is statistically significant at $\alpha=0.10$.

Table 5.8. Determinants of Educational Attainment Among Americans, by Gender and Higher Education Policy Adoption

	<u>Basic Model</u>		<u>G.I. Bill</u>	<u>Student Loans</u>		<u>Pell Grants</u>	
	Men	Women	Men	Men	Women	Men	Women
Age	.015** (.005)	-.006 (.005)	.021*** (.006)	.026*** (.006)	.009 [†] (.005)	.019*** (.006)	.000 (.005)
Childhood SES	.212* (.098)	.164 [†] (.087)	.185 [†] (.104)	.274** (.100)	.183* (.089)	.296** (.100)	.169 [†] (.088)
Black	-.365 (.250)	-.085 (.206)	-.426 (.261)	-.642* (.258)	-.269 (.210)	-.449 [†] (.254)	-.166 (.208)
Hispanic	.473 (.440)	-.434 (.453)	.492 (.444)	.628 (.446)	-.589 (.464)	.740 [†] (.447)	-.361 (.454)
Mom's Education	.233*** (.043)	.394*** (.046)	.270*** (.046)	.224*** (.043)	.419*** (.047)	.226*** (.043)	.403*** (.047)
G.I. Bill Usage			.641* (.280)				
Student Loan Usage				1.629*** (.199)	1.479*** (.187)		
Pell Grant Usage						1.383*** (.238)	.780*** (.205)
-2 log likelihood	1346.92	1414.90	1186.27	1234.08	1393.48	1346.92	1345.12
Goodness of Fit	1539.50	1751.43	1436.97	1633.86	1881.91	1623.08	1856.58
Cox & Snell R ²	.095	.179	.127	.219	.272	.160	.202
N	498	541	428	498	541	497	541

Source: The Social and Governmental Issues and Participation (SGIP) Study

[†]p ≤ .1, *p ≤ .05, **p ≤ .01, ***p ≤ .001

Notes: Cells consist of ordinal logistic regression coefficients in the numerator and standard errors in parentheses. Analysis includes respondents who have earned at least a high school diploma or its equivalent.

Regression analysis provides further support for the notion that federal student aid adoption promotes greater educational attainment among Americans. For this portion of the analysis, I use ordinal logistic regression because the dependent variable, educational attainment, is coded using ordered categories. The results of this analysis reveal a striking relationship between federal student aid adoption and educational attainment for

both women and men.¹³⁷ In Table 5.8, we consider the determinants of educational attainment, paying particular attention to differences between women and men. The central independent variables in these models are G.I. Bill, student loan, and Pell Grant adoption. The basic models that appear in the first two columns of the table consider the influence of age, childhood socioeconomic status, race, and mother's level of education on educational attainment. The results indicate that for men, age, childhood socioeconomic status, and mother's education represent significant determinants of educational attainment. Older men, those who had higher childhood socioeconomic status, and those whose mothers have higher levels of education are likely to have high levels of educational attainment. For women, childhood socioeconomic status and mother's educational attainment provide strong predictors of educational attainment, as those who had higher childhood socioeconomic status and whose mothers have more education are, themselves, likely to have high levels of education.

The next model includes an additional independent variable that controls for G.I. Bill usage among men. Here, we see that men who are older, who had higher childhood socioeconomic status, whose mothers had more education, and who received G.I. Bill benefits are likely to attain high levels of education. In terms of substantive effects, results indicate that a man born in 1935 is 7 percent more likely to have earned a college degree than a man born in 1972. Compared to a man whose childhood socioeconomic status was "far below average," one whose background was "far above average" is 7 percent more likely to earn a college degree. Increasing a man's mother's educational

¹³⁷ Men and women who have obtained less than high school education are omitted from this analysis, as possessing a diploma or a GED is a prerequisite for entry into postsecondary education and, thus, eligibility to receive federal higher education benefits.

attainment from a high school diploma to a bachelor's degree corresponds to a 10 percent increase in the probability that he will earn a college degree. Finally, these data indicate that men who use the G.I. bill are 6 percent more likely to earn a college degree than those who do not. As this study has shown, G.I. Bill beneficiaries are overwhelmingly male, and the majority of these men (60.3 percent) were born between 1916 and 1953. This suggests that, by virtue of women's general exclusion from the powerful effects of the G.I. Bill for promoting higher educational attainment, this program represents a potent source of gender inequality in educational attainment that was particularly significant for women in the most senior cohorts of Americans.

The next pair of models in Table 5.8 controls for men's and women's student loan usage. Again, we see that federal student aid adoption significantly increases the probability that Americans will obtain higher levels of education. For women and men, student loan usage is positively and significantly associated with greater educational attainment. These data suggest that men who use federal student loans are 15 percent more likely to obtain a 4-year degree than men who do not. Student loan adoption has an identical effect for women, as those who use this type of aid are 15 percent more likely to earn a bachelor's degree than women who do not. As the final pair of models in Table 5.8 reveal, Pell Grants appear to have a similar effect on educational attainment. When we control for Pell Grant usage we find sufficient evidence to conclude that this program provides a substantively and statistically significant predictor of educational attainment for both women and men. In accordance with my expectations, those who use Pell Grants are significantly more likely to have high levels of education than are those who do not. Among men, Pell Grant users are 12 percent more likely to obtain a 4-year

Table 5.9. Determinants of Educational Attainment Among Americans, by Gender and Higher Education Policy Adoption

	Basic Model		G.I. Bill	Student Loans		Pell Grants	
	Men	Women	Men	Men	Women	Men	Women
Born 1916-1934	.676 [†] (.371)	-.694* (.330)	.534 (.440)	1.220*** (.381)	.003 (.341)	.833* (.374)	-.427 (.337)
Born 1935-1953	.255 (.224)	-.142 (.221)	.464 [†] (.264)	.696** (.233)	.445 [†] (.234)	.360 (.226)	.084 (.227)
Born 1954-1972	.280 (.197)	-.066 (.199)	.355 [†] (.205) [†]	.479* (.203)	.265 (.206)	.247 (.199)	.003 (.201)
Childhood SES	.204* (.098)	.168 [†] (.088)	.174 [†] (.104)	.256** (.100)	.190* (.089)	.281** (.100)	.174* (.088)
Black	-.389 (.249)	-.096 (.205)	-.435 [†] (.261)	-.680** (.257)	-.297 (.210)	-.478 [†] (.253)	-.183 (.207)
Hispanic	.447 (.440)	-.458 (.454)	.482 (.443)	.615 (.445)	-.586 (.465)	.710 (.446)	-.390 (.455)
Mom's Education	.222*** (.043)	.388*** (.046)	.253*** (.046)	.213*** (.043)	.411*** (.047)	.210*** (.043)	.395*** (.046)
G.I. Bill Usage			.777** (.287)				
Student Loan Usage				1.604*** (.199)	1.456*** (.186)		
Pell Grant Usage						1.343*** (.238)	.758*** (.205)
-2 log likelihood	774.58	790.40	771.51	871.38	913.83	856.47	911.71
Goodness of Fit	585.41	540.36	687.74	765.97	751.48	711.18	718.55
Cox & Snell R ²	.088	.184	.116	.209	.274	.150	.206
N	498	541	428	498	541	497	541

Source: The Social and Governmental Issues and Participation (SGIP) Study

[†]p ≤ .1, *p ≤ .05, **p ≤ .01, ***p ≤ .001

Notes: Cells consist of ordinal logistic regression coefficients in the numerator and standard errors in parentheses.

Analysis includes respondents who have earned at least a high school diploma or its equivalent.

degree than those who do not use this type of aid. For women, Pell Grant users are 8 percent more likely to earn a 4-year degree than women who do not benefit from Pell Grants.

Building upon the analysis presented in Table 5.8, Table 5.9 provides a cohort analysis of the determinants of educational attainment using data from the SGIP survey. The basic models presented in the table's first two columns examine the relationship between birth year cohorts, childhood socioeconomic status, race, and mother's education

on educational attainment for women and men. Here we see that, being born between 1916 and 1934, childhood socioeconomic status, and mother's level of education provide significant predictors of educational attainment. Citizens born among the most senior cohort of Americans (born 1916-1934) are the only respondents for whom birth cohort provides a significant predictor of educational attainment. For men, those born between 1916 and 1934 are significantly more likely to attain higher levels of education than those who are not members of this cohort. Substantive results indicate that men in the 1916-1934 birth cohort are 6 percent more likely to hold bachelor's degrees than men who are not in this cohort. The reverse is true for women. While their male counterparts are significantly more likely than younger men to possess higher levels of education, women born between 1916 and 1934 are significantly less likely than their younger counterparts to attain high levels of education. Substantive results indicate that women in the 1916-1934 birth cohort are 6 percent less likely than younger women to hold a 4-year degree. Shifting childhood socioeconomic status from "far below average" to "far above average" yields a .08 increase in the probability that a man will earn a four-year degree and a .07 increase in the probability that a woman will do so. For both sexes, mother's educational attainment appears to have the greatest substantive effect on the probability of earning a college degree: shifting his or her mother's level of education from high school to a bachelor's degree corresponds to a .08 increase in the probability that a man will earn a four-year degree and a .14 increase in the probability that a woman will earn a four-year degree.

When we control for G.I. Bill usage in the third column of Table 5.9, we find that using G.I. Bill benefits corresponds to a 7 percent increase in the probability that a man

will earn a college degree. In line with my expectations, student loan adoption again appears to promote higher levels of educational attainment for women and men. For both genders, using student loans yields a .15 increase in the probability of obtaining a college degree. While Pell Grant usage has the similar effect of significantly increasing the probability that a man or woman will earn a four-year degree, the magnitude of this effect is not as great as the effect that student loan adoption has on men's and women's educational attainment. Pell Grant usage yields a .08 increase in the probability that a woman will earn a bachelor's degree, it corresponds to a .11 increase in the probability that a man will do the same.

The striking results of these logistic regression analyses corroborate our findings from descriptive statistics that suggested a positive correlation between higher education program adoption and educational attainment. The results of inferential statistical analysis support my expectation that federal student aid adoption promotes greater educational attainment for male and female beneficiaries. As we have seen, G.I. Bill, student loan, and Pell Grant adoption appear to significantly increase the probability that citizens will attain high levels of education.

Fortunate Sons and Daughters: The Development of Federal Higher Education Policies and the Gender Dynamics of Educational Attainment

The creation of the G.I. Bill marked the birth of direct federal support for college students, whereby the United States government employed student financial aid as a mechanism for promoting the socioeconomic interests of its citizens. While the gendered criteria governing G.I. Bill eligibility have resulted in men's representing the principal

recipients of this program's valuable benefits, the subsequently enacted federal student loan and Pell Grant programs—which extended benefits broadly to both women and men—have promoted gender parity in educational attainment in the United States. Moreover, by expanding access to higher education for American women, these programs have also promoted greater socioeconomic stability and independence for women. As such, these programs have promoted women's full incorporation into society and have, thus, enhanced women's status as full social citizens.

This chapter has considered the gender dynamics of federal student aid usage and the effects of policy adoption on men's and women's educational attainment. At the outset, I hypothesized that the gender dynamics of federal student aid adoption vary across programs and that financial aid adoption promotes greater educational attainment. Empirical analysis of data from multiple surveys corroborates these predictions. Our examination of trends related to men's and women's financial aid adoption confirmed that men and women have enjoyed differential access to federal financial aid. The main source of this disparity is the fact that women were largely excluded from the benefits of the G.I. Bill during the postwar era. Federal student loans and Pell Grants, on the other hand, have been allocated on a more gender-egalitarian basis. This analysis has also found that federal student aid adoption significantly increases educational attainment for women and men. By making college affordable for low-income students and increasing the amount of time that students can devote to academic work, federal financial aid increases educational attainment among Americans.

The empirical analysis presented in this chapter has confirmed that, to fully appreciate the impact that federal financial aid programs have had on gender equality in

the United States, we must consider the historical contexts from which they emerged. The G.I. Bill was the first federal policy that expanded access to higher education via the direct provision of financial aid. By providing millions of G.I.s with the opportunity to pursue higher education, the state essentially acted *in loco parentis* for an entire generation of American men, providing them with a new, relatively privileged brand of citizenship. In supporting veterans' pursuit of higher education, the federal government became a generous parent, and millions of G.I. Bill beneficiaries became its fortunate sons.

While the state assumed the responsibility of financing higher education for millions of American men, women were left to their own devices when it came to paying for higher education. Instead of receiving public aid to help pay for college, women continued to rely upon private sources. Thus, the responsibility of paying for women's higher education was typically borne by families—assuming, of course, that it was undertaken at all. By reserving its generous financial support to men, the G.I. Bill exacerbated gender inequality in higher educational attainment and, in effect, socioeconomic status. American women would not experience the state's generosity in the form of higher education benefits until the creation of federal student loans and Pell Grants. Upon the emergence of these programs in the late 1950s and 1960s, both women and men could benefit from federal financial support as they pursued post-secondary education. As this analysis has shown, the usage of Pell Grants and student loans significantly increases women's and men's educational attainment. This is a highly significant finding, considering that no previously enacted policy had this effect for women. The creation of Pell Grants and student loans marked the beginning of an era in

which the state provided generous educational financial aid benefits to its sons as well as its daughters. The results of this chapter suggest that federal financial aid policies have had important equalizing effects for the gender dynamics of American socioeconomic status. Not only have these policies significantly increased women's educational attainment, they have also enhanced gender equality in social citizenship in the United States. By significantly increasing women's access to college degrees and the social and economic benefits that are associated with higher education, landmark higher education policies supported women's full incorporation into American society.

CHAPTER SIX

The Feedback Effects of Financial Aid Adoption on the Gender Dynamics of Political Citizenship

The 1960s marked a turning point for gender inequality in the United States. As a result of economic, social, and political disparities predicated upon women's and men's supposedly different natures, abilities, and roles, women's political voice—at least through formal channels—was a muted whisper well into the twentieth century. Because women's second-class civil, social, and political status suppressed their engagement in the public sphere, the nation's political landscape was a predominantly male arena, characterized by gender inequality in terms of political citizenship. T. H. Marshall asserts that this component of citizenship consists of “the right to participate in the exercise of political power” (1950, 11). Although the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920 guaranteed women the right to vote and provided women with full civil citizenship, their status as second-class political citizens continued for decades following women's suffrage. Throughout these years, women's participation in political activities like voting, contacting elected officials, and contributing to political causes trailed that of men. Although women had participated in protests, rallies, and various forms of grassroots activism to advocate causes like abolition, temperance, and women's suffrage, their social movement activity had historically occurred outside of the male-dominated institutions of American government (see, e.g., Conway, Steuernagel, and Ahern 1997, 9). Inequality in the rates at which men and women engaged in political activities at the mass level represented a chronic challenge to gender parity in terms of political citizenship.

With the dawning of the 1960s came important changes in the gender dynamics of mass politics in the United States.¹³⁸ Over the subsequent fifty years, women’s political participation increased substantially, and the gender gap in U.S. political engagement narrowed considerably (Andersen 1975, 439-447; Conway 2001). Although studies show that the gender dynamics of contemporary U.S. politics can be characterized by residual inequalities—women are still, for example, less likely than men to express high levels of interest in politics, to feel efficacious, to serve as elected officials, and to contribute money to political candidates (CAWP 2010; Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001, 261; Conway 2001, 231; Verba, Burns, and Schlozman 1997, 1051)—women’s participation in activities like voting and volunteering on political campaigns began to increase significantly in the 1960s and 1970s (Andersen 1975, 441).

Given that the overall rates at which Americans engage in political activities like voting and attending political meetings have declined in recent decades, it is interesting to note that the decline has been more pronounced for men than for women. As Table 6.1 illustrates, 72 percent of men reported voting in the 1964 presidential election, compared to 67 percent of women (CAWP 2011). Since 1980, however, American women have voted at higher rates than their male counterparts; and, in every subsequent presidential election, the percentage of eligible women voting has been higher than the proportion of

¹³⁸ This analysis centers upon the gender dynamics of political engagement at the mass level, however it is important to note that, since WWII, women have made great strides in elite politics as well. The percentage of women winning election to the United States Congress increased steadily after Jeannette Rankin became the first woman to win election to the House in 1917. This steady increase gave way to a dramatic jump in 1993, the “Year of the Woman,” which saw an unprecedented 47 women elected to the national legislature. In 2010, women held 16.8 percent of the seats in the U.S. Congress.

Table 6.1 Percentage Change in Participation in Various Political Activities by Gender			
	1964	2004	% Change
Voted in Presidential Election			
Men	71.9%	56.3%	-16.2
Women	67.0	60.1	-6.6
Attended Political Meetings			
Men	9.9	6.9	-3.0
Women	7.8	7.4	-0.4
Donated Money to Political Campaign			
Men	12.2	12.5	+0.3
Women	9.5	12.6	+3.1
Contacted by a Major Party			
Men	27.4	39.8	+12.4
Women	24.8	45.6	+20.8
	1984	2004	% Change
Discussed Politics with Family			
Men	69.5	80.2	+10.7
Women	65.4	79.4	+14.0

Sources: The Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP); The American National Election Study (ANES) Cumulative Data File, 1948-2004

eligible men.¹³⁹ In 2004, 60 percent of women and 56 percent of men turned out to vote (CAWP 2011). From 1964 to 2004, the voter turnout of male citizens has declined by 16.2 percentage points, compared to 6.6 percentage points for women. Thus, the decline in men's voter turnout is almost 150 percent greater than the decline in women's turnout.

Since the mid-twentieth century, the amplification of women's political voice and the narrowing gender gap in political engagement have extended beyond voter turnout to include a number of political activities. We have seen a shift in the relative rates at which men and women attend political meetings. In 1964, 9.9 percent of men said that they had attended political meetings, compared to 7.8 percent of women. By 2004, 6.9 percent of

¹³⁹ It is important to note that this trend does not hold for the oldest cohort of American men and women. During the 2008 presidential election, for example, men who were 75 years of age and older voted at higher rates than their female counterparts.

men and 7.4 percent of women reported having attended political meetings (ANES 1948-2008). Although Americans now attend political meetings at lower rates than they did in the 1960s, the decline for men has been steeper than the decline for women. Over that 40 year period, the rate at which men attend political meetings declined by 3 percentage points, while the rate at which women attend political meetings declined by only 0.4 percentage points. As such, the decline for men was more than six times greater than the decline for women.

Historical data also reveal increasing gender parity in the rates at which men and women contribute money to political campaigns. In 1964, 12.2 percent of men reported contributing money to a political campaign, compared to 9.5 percent of women. Forty years later, both men and women were more likely to contribute to campaigns, and there was virtual gender parity in the rates at which they reported doing so: 12.6 percent of women and 12.5 percent of men said that they had contributed money to political campaigns in 2004 (ANES 1948-2004). As Table 6.1 shows, the rate of increase in women's participation by contributing money exceeded the rate of increase for men. From 1964 to 2004, the rate at which women contributed money to campaigns increased by 3 percentage points, while the rate at which men did so increased by only 0.3 percentage points.

In addition to these shifts in the gender dynamics of electoral participation, political meeting attendance, and contributing money to political campaigns, scholars have suggested that, since the 1990s, women and men have been equally likely to contact

congressional representatives and sign petitions (Conway 2001).¹⁴⁰ It appears that political parties have taken note of women's increasing political engagement in recent decades. Since 1964, women have increasingly indicated that they were contacted by at least one of the two major political parties. In 1964, 27.4 percent of men and 24.8 percent of women reported contact with either the Republican or the Democratic Party. In 2004, women were more likely than men to be contacted by a major party: 45.6 percent of women compared to 39.8 percent of men (ANES 1948-2004). Between 1964 and 2004, the rate at which men were mobilized by major political parties increased by 12.4 percentage points, compared to an increase of a full 20.8 percentage points for women. Over the course of 40 years, the rate of increase in women's mobilization by political parties increased 67 percent more than that of men.

To take a final example of the narrowing gender gap in U.S. political engagement, consider the rates at which male and female Americans discuss politics with their families. In 1984, 69.5 percent of men and 65.4 percent of women discussed politics with family members. By 1994, both men and women were more likely to discuss politics with their families than they were a decade prior, but men were still more likely to do so than women. In 2004, we saw virtual parity in the rates at which women and men reported discussing politics with family: 80.2 percent of men and 79.4 percent of women participated in this form of political engagement (ANES 1948-2008). While discussing politics with family members has become an increasingly popular political

¹⁴⁰ These data from the American National Election Study and Margaret Conway's findings contradict those of Burns, Schlozman, and Verba who contend that "[f]or each kind of [political] activity except for attending protests, there is a gender difference, with women less active than men" (2001, 64). These data and Conway's reference to scholarship produced in 1995 indicate that trends have changed since Burns, Schlozman, and Verba conducted their Citizen Participation Survey in 1990.

activity for all Americans, this increase has been greater for women than for men. From 1984 to 2004, the percentage of men who report discussing politics with their families increased by 10.7 percentage points, while the percentage of women who report doing so increased by 14 percentage points. Thus, while women's and men's participation in this form of political engagement grew, the rate of women's participation outpaced men's by 30 percent. As these trends illustrate, the 1960s marked a turning point for the gender dynamics of mass politics in the United States. Substantial increases in women's political interest, efficacy, and participation promoted greater gender parity in political engagement and, thus, women's movement from second-class to first-class political citizens.

A New Day: Higher Education Policy, Educational Attainment, and Increasing Gender Parity in U.S. Political Engagement

Scholars have characterized historical differences in men's and women's political engagement as a function of gender inequality in the possession of resources that facilitate political activity. Among these resources, political behavior scholars highlight education as one that has a particularly strong association with political engagement (see, e.g., Verba, Burns, and Schlozman 1997, 1052; Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1994). Numerous studies have demonstrated a strong relationship between educational attainment and political engagement (see, e.g., Nie, Junn, and Stehlik-Barry 1996; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Verba and Nie 1972), yielding the conventional wisdom among political scientists that higher levels of educational attainment are associated with high levels of political involvement. Philip

Converse calls education “the universal solvent” of political engagement, due to its “uncommonly strong” relationship with a broad range of factors associated with high levels of political participation, such as factual knowledge, attention to politics, and voter turnout (1972, 324-435). “The educated citizen,” he writes, “is attentive, knowledgeable, and participatory, and the uneducated citizen is not” (324). According to this school of thought, the mechanisms by which education promotes political participation include increasing knowledge, cognitive abilities, and skills (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001, 142; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995); piquing political interest (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980); teaching skills that lend themselves to civic and political participation, such as public speaking and organizational skills; increasing socioeconomic status (Verba and Nie 1972; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980); providing access to social networks that promote participation (Nie, Junn, and Stehlik-Barry 1996); and creating a sense of civic duty (Campbell 2006; Menand 1997, 3; Kimball 1997; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980, 18). Studies have also shown that citizens with higher levels of education are more likely to be mobilized by interest groups, candidates, and other activists (Brady, Schlozman, and Verba 1999, 162; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993).

While scholars have emphasized the positive association between education and political participation, in considering the narrowing of the gender gap in U.S. political engagement, we have yet to consider whether public policy has played a role in shaping this trend. Dramatic increases in women’s attainment of college degrees emerged in the wake of lawmakers’ creation of both federal financial aid policies that provided valuable student aid and Title IX, which prohibited sex discrimination in college admissions. As

we saw in Chapter 5, federal higher education programs have expanded equal opportunity for men and women in the United States by significantly increasing the probability that women will earn advanced education. This chapter examines whether federal support for college students has any influence on gender equality in terms of political citizenship. How, I ask, have the landmark higher education programs enacted since the late 1950s influenced the gender dynamics of political engagement in the United States?

This chapter examines empirically the feedback effects of federal student aid programs for promoting gender equality in political citizenship in the United States. I focus on mass politics—particularly the influence of student aid adoption on men’s and women’s political interest, political efficacy, and participation in political activities. Analyzing data from the Social and Governmental Issues and Participation (SGIP) study, I test education-policy models of political engagement. These models combine previous explanations for political attitudes and involvement, which emphasize individual-level demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, with an institutional-level explanation that underscores the feedback effects of public policies. To address one of the most formidable challenges to the study of policy feedback—the possibility that endogenous personality factors, rather than policy usage, shape users’ attitudes and behaviors—I use two-stage regression modeling. This technique permits me to minimize the effects of selection bias that could distort observed outcomes of policy adoption for political interest, efficacy, and participation.¹⁴¹ Throughout this analysis, I draw upon a combination of gender-aggregated and gender-disaggregated models that provide insight

¹⁴¹ This two-stage approach to regression analysis has been used in other empirical examinations of policy feedback. See, for example Mettler and Welch (2004).

into the gender dynamics of political engagement in the United States and permit me to predict the effects that higher education policy adoption has for gender equality in mass-level politics.¹⁴²

I hypothesize that federal student aid programs promote gender equality in U.S. political engagement by promoting high levels of political interest, efficacy, and participation for American women. This effect could happen in two ways, which I will outline briefly here and describe in depth below. On one hand, federal student aid programs could have significant resource effects that promote gender parity in political engagement. That is, higher education policies could provide resources that restructure the costs and benefits associated with political engagement. Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry Brady (1995) have argued that possessing resources, such as higher levels of education, income, and political capital, makes citizens more likely to engage in politics. On the other hand, federal higher education policy usage could have significant interpretive effects that contribute to an increase in political involvement. In this way, higher education programs could convey messages to beneficiaries and provide experiences that shape their attitudes toward government and their inclination to participate in political activities. As such, I suspect that federal higher education policies have promoted gender egalitarianism in political engagement through a combination of resource and interpretive effects. By providing women with resources—particularly

¹⁴² Adopting the gender-disaggregated modeling approach that dominates political participation scholars' analyses of the gender dynamics of political involvement (see, e.g., Verba, Schlozman, and Burns 2001), I construct separate education policy models of participation for women and men. This approach takes into account "the heterogeneity within these two groups and, thus...differences among women and men" (Burns, Schlozman, and Burns 2001, 39). This technique does not, however, permit me to directly assess the differential effects of significant variables for women and men. To do this, I test gender-aggregated education-policy models of political interest, efficacy, and participation that incorporate gender as a control variable.

educational attainment—and experiences that signal their status as first-class citizens, I posit, higher education programs have contributed to gender equality in terms of political citizenship.

In what follows we will see that the adoption of federal student aid is associated with gender equality in U.S. political engagement, primarily due to significant resource effects that promote higher levels of political interest, efficacy, and participation among women. Although American men are more likely than women to express high levels of political interest and to be efficacious, and although men are slightly more likely than women to engage in political activities like contributing money to political candidates, this analysis suggests that federal higher education policies may played a role in the decline of gender inequality in mass political engagement. In considering these results, it is important to recognize that the association between higher education policy adoption and political engagement is contingent upon how benefits have been targeted throughout the history of American federal student aid programming. Because G.I. Bill beneficiaries have been overwhelmingly male, that program promoted high levels of political interest, efficacy, and participation for an entire generation of American men, while doing little for the mass civic and political engagement of American women. In structuring subsequently enacted student loans and Pell Grants, lawmakers allocated benefits broadly to women and men, thereby promoting high levels of political interest, efficacy, and involvement for both genders. Overall, this analysis suggests that federal student aid programs have made a significant contribution to the declining gender gap in political engagement that we have seen in the last fifty years.

Higher Education, Public Policy, and the Gender Dynamics of Political Citizenship

The fact that the narrowing of the gender gap in political engagement has occurred in tandem with significant increases in women's higher educational attainment

comes as little surprise to scholars who extol the benefits of educational attainment for strengthening political citizenship (see, e.g., Conway 1972; Rosenstone and Hansen 1993; Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1994; Verba, Burns, and Schlozman 1997, 1052; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). The claim that education yields political engagement, however, does not go uncontested. Richard Brody (1978) cast doubt on the notion that education and political participation are causally related when he pointed out that recent increases in Americans' educational attainment was accompanied by a decline in electoral participation, rather than an increase, as the conventional wisdom would lead us to expect. As a result of Brody's thought-provoking observation, scholars have debated the nature of the relationship between educational attainment and political engagement.

Some scholars argue that the two are spuriously related, as observed relationships between educational attainment and political engagement are the result of confounding factors, rather than education. Cindy Kam and Carl Palmer (2008) use propensity score matching to examine the existence of a causal relationship between educational attainment and participation, taking into account pre-adult experiences and predispositions. They argue that the relationship between education and political involvement is one of correlation rather than causation, as education serves as a proxy for individual-level predispositions and experiences. Adam Berinsky and Gabriel Lenz (2011) reinforce the call to observe greater caution in assessing the relationship between education and political participation. Using the high rates of educational attainment resulting from attempts to dodge the Vietnam War draft as a natural experiment, they find evidence that college education may not cause greater political participation. After

demonstrating that high rates of education driven by draft avoidance did not yield higher rates of voter participation in the United States, Berinsky and Lenz suggest that “factors such as family background or cognitive skills may lead individuals to both attend college and participate in politics” (2011, 371).

While some scholars reject the conventional wisdom that educational attainment causes political participation, others are slow to discard the possibility that education and political involvement are causally linked. In a response to Brody’s (1978) observation that increases in individual-level education have occurred in tandem with a decline in mass-level electoral participation, Rachel Sontheimer and Donald Green (2010) draw upon experimental evidence to argue that education has a strong influence on voter turnout. Referring to their experimental and quasi-experimental studies as “an important turning point in a literature that has for decades found itself mired in uncertainty about whether to attach a causal interpretation to the correlation between education and political participation,” they conclude that educational attainment has a “profound” affect on voter participation (Sontheimer and Green 2010, 185).

In separate studies, Alexander Mayer (2011) and John Henderson and Sara Chatfield (2011) take issue with Kam and Palmer’s assertion that “higher education is not cause, but proxy” (2008, 613). These scholars take issue with Kam and Palmer’s propensity score matching technique, asserting that their analysis was based upon biased estimates. Repeating Kam and Palmer’s analysis using an alternative research design to correct for bias, Mayer finds evidence that college education “has a positive and substantively important causal effect on political participation” (2011, 644). Henderson and Chatfield assert that the flaws in Kam and Palmer’s analysis cast a shadow on their

claim that education serves as a proxy for other factors. While not out ruling the possibility that pre-existing factors may play a role in the relationship between education and political involvement, Henderson and Chatfield argue that higher education may cause increased political participation “on top of” the pre-existing factors that Kam and Palmer emphasize (2011, 648).

In light of this ongoing debate regarding the nature of the relationship between education and political participation, and considering the limitations inherent in using regression analysis of survey data to examine the relationship between policy adoption and political engagement—namely, the possibility that confounding variables, rather than public policies, shape significant associations—I will take caution in interpreting the results of this analysis , stopping short of inferring causality in any observed relationships between higher education program adoption and involvement in political activities.

From Policy to Politics: The Feedback Effects of Government Programs on Political Engagement

Moving beyond models of political engagement that emphasize the centrality of individuals’ demographic characteristics (Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001; Plutzer 2002; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995) and socioeconomic status (Andersen 1975, Leighley and Nagler 1992; Solt 2008; Verba and Nie 1972; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980) to political attitudes and participation, scholars studying the feedback effects of federal policy adoption for political involvement take seriously the possibility that public policies can alter citizens as well as the political environment. Scholars have defined policy feedback

as the ways in which policies, “once enacted, restructure subsequent political processes” and, as a result, may alter “the identities, political goals, and capabilities of social groups” (Mettler and Soss 2004, 60; Skocpol 1992, 58; see also Lowi 1964; Pierson 1994). This concept of policy feedback introduces an additional element into the classic model of democratic policymaking: not only do citizens influence policies, but these policies also shape citizens. Studies examining the feedback effects of public policies recognize the importance of government programs to American politics and, as a result, provide rich, increasingly comprehensive models of political engagement. Policy feedback scholars have emphasized two mechanisms by which policy feedback operates: resource effects and interpretive effects.

Resource Effects

The resource effects of public policy adoption are transmitted by way of incentives, such as monetary payments, goods, and services—that have implications for citizens’ material well-being and life opportunities (Mettler and Soss 2004, 62; see also Mettler 2005, 12). These effects typically reshape the costs and benefits of engaging in certain political activities. Andrea Campbell’s (2002) analysis of the relationship between Social Security usage and political engagement provides a useful example of the resource effects of public policies. Her analysis demonstrates that Social Security provides valuable benefits that make its most dependent beneficiaries more likely to pay attention to politics and to engage in political activity if they suspect that their benefits are in danger. While high-income Americans tend to participate in political activities at higher rates than those with less income, Campbell finds an inverse relationship between

income and Social Security-related participation: as income increases, political involvement actually declines (2002, 569; see also Campbell 2003). In this case, the receipt of Social Security support—a valuable resource for many lower-income senior citizens—elevates their interest in politics, making them more likely to become politically involved should those benefits appear to be imperiled. By providing senior citizens with valuable financial resources and by entitling them to targeted government provisions, the state effectively uses government resources in a way that promotes political participation among low-income citizens—a group that is often found at the margins of American politics. Suzanne Mettler’s (2005) study of the G.I. Bill provides further evidence of the resource effects that federal policies may have on mass political engagement. She finds that the use of higher education and vocational training benefits provided by the G.I. Bill is significantly associated with greater educational attainment among veterans. By providing funding to veterans pursuing college degrees, the G.I. Bill made college affordable for many citizens who would not have otherwise been able to afford higher education; for many beneficiaries, it decreased the amount of time that it took to complete their degrees; and it affected the trajectory of many veterans’ careers, “enhancing their employment prospects and standard of living” (Mettler 2005, 88).

The central goal of this analysis is to explore whether the student aid programs enacted since the late 1950s—which significantly expanded women’s access to college degrees—have exerted significant resource effects on the gender dynamics of political engagement in the United States. I suspect that the resource effects of financial aid are transmitted through increased educational attainment. Thus, in the regression analysis

that follows, I use the independent variable “Educational Attainment” to operationalize resource effects.

Interpretive Effects

In addition to the possibility that public policies might influence political engagement through resource effects, they could also shape Americans’ political behavior by way of interpretive (or cognitive) effects. Interpretive effects are the ways in which policies serve as sources of information and meaning that shape citizens’ inclination to participate in public affairs (Mettler and Soss 2004, 60; see also Pierson 1993, 624). In this way, scholars note, public policies can send messages to program participants that indicate their value as citizens (Pierson 1993; Soss 1999; Soss and Mettler 2004, 62; Mettler 2005) while also teaching the appropriate roles of citizens and the government (Schneider and Ingram 1993, 334). Interpretive effects tend to be closely related to the features of policy design, the form that benefits take, and the scope of eligibility. Suzanne Mettler and Joe Soss assert that lawmakers have the capacity to shape citizens’ “goals, beliefs, and identities” through government programs (2004, 56). Suzanne Mettler’s study of the effects of G.I. Bill usage for civic and political engagement revealed significant interpretive effects, as G.I. Bill usage influenced beneficiaries’ perceptions of their worth as citizens, sending messages indicated their status as first-class citizens. Mettler notes, for example, that the “fair and efficient” implementation of the G.I. Bill made veterans “feel treated as respected citizens” and as though “government was for and about people like them” (112). As a result of these

interpretive effects, the G.I. Bill promoted high levels of civic and political participation among veterans.¹⁴³

The feedback effects of public policy adoption, however, do not always promote political engagement. In his study of the relationship between the use of government assistance and political engagement, Joe Soss (1999) demonstrates that participation in the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program suppresses political engagement due to beneficiaries' negative encounters with the government agencies charged with administering benefits. He asserts that welfare recipients came to view themselves as low-status clients and were less likely to assert themselves when faced with program-related grievances. "These beliefs," according to Soss, "are strong enough to make clients retreat from decision-making processes that have the most profound and immediate consequences for their family" (1999, 367). Program participants generalize their experiences to characterize the broader political system. Because welfare policy receipt yields a decreased sense of external efficacy among program beneficiaries, it has the effect of suppressing their participation in politics (367).

This analysis considers the interpretive effects that higher education policy adoption has had on the gender dynamics of U.S. political citizenship. In exploring whether the use of federal aid is associated with greater political engagement among women, I take seriously the possibility that landmark student aid programs have contributed to increasing gender equality in the United States. To consider this possibility, I draw upon statistical models that use the variable "Predicted Higher Education Policy Usage" to operationalize the interpretive effects of student aid adoption.

¹⁴³ This finding exemplifies Schneider and Ingram's (1993) argument that the social construction of groups targeted by public policies can have important effects for political outcomes.

The statistical significance of these coefficients would suggest that program usage shapes political engagement through political learning, through the transmission of political messages, or by otherwise altering how beneficiaries conceptualize their roles as citizens.

An Education-Policy Model of Political Engagement

The purpose of this empirical analysis is to further our understanding of how public policies influence mass political attitudes and behavior by examining the feedback effects of federal higher education program usage on the gender dynamics of U.S. political engagement. Does higher education policy adoption (or usage) by individuals narrow the gender gap in political interest, efficacy, and participation? Driving this investigation is an education-policy model of political participation that incorporates higher education policy adoption as a central determinant in the model of mass-level political involvement. This examination will test my hypothesis that the adoption of student financial aid has significantly increased the propensity that women will participate in political activities and have, thus, contributed to the narrowing of the gender gap in political engagement that we have seen since the 1960s.

The education-policy model of political engagement resembles previous policy-centered models of political participation that emphasize the feedback effects of public policies and the mechanisms by which they influence mass political behavior. This is not to say that federal education policies are the only factors that matter for gender parity in citizens' political attitudes and political involvement. This analysis acknowledges and draws upon existing scholarship that emphasizes the demographic and socioeconomic determinants of political attitudes and participation. In doing so, I combine the

individual-level insights of the political participation literature with the institutionally-centered focus of the emerging literature on policy feedback.

Because federal student aid programs were created with the central purpose of expanding higher educational access and increasing the probability that students would attain high levels of education, I am particularly interested in the effectiveness of financial aid programs for promoting gender equality in political engagement by way of greater gender egalitarianism in educational attainment. Drawing from the notion that public policies can “provide resources and create incentives for mass publics” (Pierson 1993, 605), I hypothesize that by promoting the resource of greater educational attainment, education policies decrease the costs associated with participating in politics, thereby increasing beneficiaries’ ability to engage in political activities. In that vein, I suspect that the higher education programs that have been enacted since the mid-twentieth century—which have contributed to significant increases in women’s educational attainment—have increased gender parity in political interest, efficacy, and participation.

Moreover, I suspect that these programs have conveyed to women the message that they are full and equal members of the political community and have, thus, promoted increased political engagement via resource effects. In the course of this analysis, we may see that higher education program adoption transmits positive interpretive effects, signaling beneficiaries’ privileged status as full and equal citizens. As a result of such cues, higher education policy usage may promote greater gender equality in political engagement by strengthening women’s ties to the polity and, thus, increasing the probability that they will engage in political activities. The education-policy model of

political engagement emphasizes the resource and interpretive effects of higher education programs and their importance for subsequent political participation.

Data and Research Methods

Adopting the multivariate analytical approach often employed in quantitative examinations of policy feedback (e.g., Campbell 2003; Mettler 2002, 2005; Bruch, Ferree, and Soss 2010), this chapter examines empirically the feedback effects of federal higher education policy adoption on gender equality in political citizenship in terms of political engagement. Drawing on data from the 2008 Social and Governmental Issues and Participation (SGIP) Study, a nationally representative data set, this analysis will proceed in three parts. First, I will use a combination of descriptive statistics and ordinal logistic regression analysis to consider the relationship between federal student aid adoption and the gender dynamics of political interest. Using the same framework, the second portion of the analysis will consider the effects of student aid usage on men's and women's political efficacy, and the final portion of the empirical analysis will explore the feedback effects of financial aid adoption on gender parity in political participation.

Addressing Endogeneity through Comprehensive Controls and Two-stage Modeling

Policy feedback research is challenged by the possibility of endogeneity bias, which occurs when seemingly significant effects of policy usage merely represent correlation between policy adoption and the error term.¹⁴⁴ The possibility that

¹⁴⁴ While scholars of policy feedback are acutely aware of the challenge posed by endogeneity bias and the imperative to effectively grapple with it (see, e.g., Mettler and Welch 2004), this challenge is by no means prohibitive. Many empirical investigations face the challenge of effectively dealing with this type of

preexisting variables condition the outcomes that we observe for political attitudes and participation represents one of the most pressing challenges facing policy feedback analysis. There may be ways in which those who utilize federal student aid policies differ from those who do not. In such cases, the effects of higher education policy usage could simply mask the effects of ambitious, “go-getter” personalities that predispose individuals to not only take advantage of student aid but to engage in political activity as well. These differences—rather than the effects of program participation—may cause the outcomes that we observe. One way to combat the effects of endogeneity is by working to minimize omitted variable bias, controlling for explanatory variables that have been established in the literature as significant influences on political engagement—particularly, gender, age, race, income, and educational attainment. In addition to comprehensive controls, policy feedback scholars have identified two-stage regression analysis as a valuable method for controlling for this type of selection bias. This technique involves a multi-step regression procedure that enables us to more confidently predict the influence that higher education policy usage has on political engagement.

Stage One

Using two-stage modeling enables me to control for characteristics that could potentially obscure the effects of higher education policy usage on political

bias—indeed, scholars have gone so far as to argue that “there is not a single empirical paper that does not have endogeneity issues” (Chenhall and Moers 2007, 174). As such, policy feedback scholars must work to minimize the influence of endogeneity and selection bias in the analysis of data presently available and consider these challenges when constructing future survey instruments.

engagement.¹⁴⁵ This approach uses instrumental variables that reflect the propensity of adopting higher education policies, which allows me to minimize the effects of selection bias. In the first stage of the analysis, which appears in Chapter 5, I used binary logistic regression models to produce an instrumental variable that predicts higher education policy usage. This permits me to generate propensity scores for the entire sample of respondents that correspond to the likelihood that they will use federal student aid. The dependent variable for these models is a binary measure of federal financial aid adoption (1 for an affirmative response, 0 for a negative response). The independent variables used to measure the effects of demographic factors are age (measured in years) and race (1 for black, 0 for white). To account for socioeconomic background, I include a self-assessment of childhood socioeconomic status relative to the respondent's peer group (five-category scale from "Far below average" to "Far above average") and a variable measuring mother's educational attainment (nine-point scale from "Less than high school" to "Ph.D. or professional degree"). Because the second stage of this analysis uses both gender-aggregate and gender-disaggregate models to examine the relationship between higher education policy adoption and political participation, I generate propensity scores that will comprise the central independent variables. These scores

¹⁴⁵ This two-stage approach to regression analysis has been used in other empirical examinations of policy feedback. See, for example Mettler and Welch (2004) and Campbell (2003).

Adopting the gender-disaggregate approach that dominates participation scholars' analyses of the gender dynamics of political involvement (see, e.g., Verba, Schlozman, and Burns 2001), I construct separate education policy models of participation for women and men. This approach takes into account "the heterogeneity within these two groups and, thus...differences among women and men" (Burns, Schlozman, and Burns 2001, 39). This technique does not, however, permit me to directly assess the differential effects of significant variables for women and men. To do this, I test gender-aggregate education-policy models of political participation that incorporate gender as a control variable. This allows me to use interaction variables to assess the magnitude and significance of differential effects.

correspond to each individual model: the aggregate model, which includes all respondents; the disaggregated model for men; and the disaggregated model for women.

Stage Two

The regression models presented in this chapter reflect the second stage of the two-stage modeling process. These Stage-Two models predict political interest, political efficacy, and political participation using an education policy model of political engagement. Because, as Chapter 5 has shown, the use of federal student aid is positively associated with educational attainment, I use the independent variable “Educational Attainment” to operationalize the resource effects of higher education policy usage. Resource models of political engagement have indicated that citizens who have more education, more prestigious occupations, and greater income tend to participate in politics at higher levels than those who do not share these socioeconomic characteristics (Leighley and Nagler 1992; Solt 2008; Verba and Nie 1972; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). Education is a particularly important factor in the calculus of political participation. In addition to providing information and skills that facilitate political learning and, thus, involvement in political activities (Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001, 142), scholars have argued that education increases the normative impetus to engage in politics, as educational institutions may bestow upon students a heightened sense of civic duty (Menand 1997, 3; Kimball 1997; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980, 18). The regression analysis in Chapter 5 has suggested that men and women who use federal higher education programs are significantly more likely to attain high levels of education. In controlling for educational attainment in this chapter—using

an eight-point scale (with values corresponding to levels of educational attainment ranging from “High school diploma/G.E.D.” to “Graduate Degree”)—I control for the resource effects of higher education policy adoption.¹⁴⁶

To capture the remaining influence of federal student aid usage—namely, the interpretive effects, which are derived from the experience of policy adoption, in and of itself—I use the instrumental variable “Predicted HE Adoption” (with scores corresponding to probabilities ranging from 0 to 1), which I generated in Stage One of the analysis.¹⁴⁷ This method is useful because it corrects for the possibility that, because higher education policy usage is not a randomly assigned “treatment,” its observed effects for political participation may simply reflect characteristics that are endogenous to program participants, rather than the effects of policy usage. This technique enables us to consider how citizens’ experiences with federal financial aid programs—and the messages that these programs transmit regarding their value as citizens—affect political engagement.

In addition to these key independent variables, the Stage Two regression models presented in this chapter also include comprehensive control variables aimed at minimizing problem of omitted variable bias. As such, I incorporate independent variables to control for competing explanations that scholars have offered for political engagement. First, I control for demographic factors that have been consistently shown to influence political attitudes and involvement. Research has demonstrated that age

¹⁴⁶ This analysis excludes survey respondents who have not completed at least a high school diploma or its equivalent, as attaining this level of education is a prerequisite for eligibility for applying for admission to postsecondary education and, thus, for participation in higher education programs.

¹⁴⁷ See Chapter 5, Tables 5.1 and 5.2.

provides a significant determinant of political engagement and that older Americans tend to participate in political activities at higher rates than younger Americans (Plutzer 2002; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995). I operationalize age using a variable that measures age in years (ranging from 18 to 92). Scholars have also shown race to be a significant determinant of political engagement. While Anglo-Whites and African-Americans exhibit similar levels of political involvement, Latinos tend to have lower levels of participation (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995, 231). I measure race using binary variables that signify whether respondents are black (1 if black, 0 if white) or Hispanic (1 if Hispanic, 0 if white). Finally, gender represents an additional demographic predictor of political engagement—one that is particularly important to this analysis. Scholars have noted the importance of gender as a determinant of political involvement, arguing that, for most political activities, women tend to be less politically engaged than men (Schlozman, Burns, and Verba 1994; Verba, Burns, and Schlozman 1997; Welch 1977). In this analysis, aggregate models of participation include Female (0= male; 1= female) as a control variable; and, disaggregated models divide the population according to this characteristic. Scholars have also shown that political participation is higher among those who have more income (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). Models include a control variable for annual household income (ten-point scale ranging from “less than \$10,000” to “\$150,000 or more”).

In the regression models examining the determinants of political interest, efficacy, and participation for women, finding significant, positive coefficients for educational attainment would suggest that federal student aid adoption has resource effects that promote gender parity in political engagement. Similarly, models revealing positive,

statistically significant coefficients for the instrumental variable predicting higher education policy usage would suggest that student aid policies may increase gender parity in political engagement through interpretive effects.

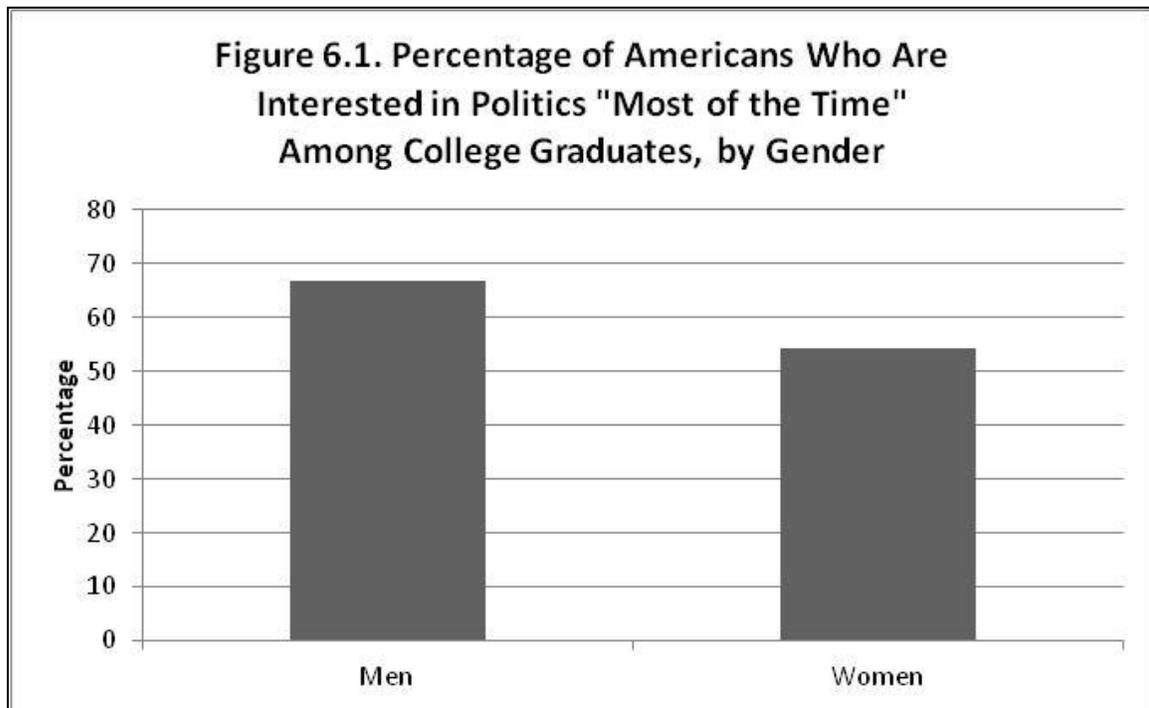
Fostering Engagement?: Examining the Feedback Effects of Federal Student Aid Adoption

Each year, federal higher education programs provide thousands of American men and women with financial aid that supports their educational pursuits. Does the adoption of federal education benefits promote gender parity in U.S. political engagement? I posit that student aid adoption promotes higher levels of political interest, efficacy, and involvement among American women, which counteracts historical gender disparities in Americans’ political attitudes and participation. In the “Stage-Two” regression analyses that follow, I examine the influence of federal student aid adoption on gender equality in political engagement, paying particular attention to the resource and interpretive effects of program adoption, as indicated by the coefficients corresponding to educational attainment and predicted higher education policy adoption, respectively.

Higher Education Policy Adoption and the Gender Dynamics of Political Interest

What effect does federal student aid adoption have on the gender dynamics of political interest? This question is central to any analysis of political engagement, as citizens who are more interested in politics are more likely to engage in political activities (Verba, Burns, and Schlozman 1997). SGIP survey data confirm scholars’ assertions that





Source: The Social and Governmental Issues and Participation (SGIP) Study

Note: Gender difference is statistically significant at $\alpha=0.05$.

men are more likely than women to express high levels of political interest. As Figure 6.1 shows, men are significantly more likely than women to express high levels of political interest. When asked to describe the extent of their interest in government and politics, 66.9 percent of male college graduates report that they are interested in politics “most of the time,” compared to 54.3 percent of their female counterparts.

Does federal student aid policy usage have any effects on this inequality? To consider the relationship between federal student aid adoption and gender equality in political interest, I use multivariate regression analysis to test the education-policy model of political interest alongside dominant explanations for citizens’ attention to politics. I measure political interest using a categorical variable that indicates the level of attention that respondents pay toward politics. Responses range from 1 (interested in politics

Table 6.1. Determinants of Political Interest: Ordinal Logistic Regression Results (Stage 2)

	Any HE Policy		Basic		Any HE Policy	
	Basic	Any HE Policy	Men	Women	Men	Women
Female	-.512*** (.126)	-.576*** (.131)				
Age	.031*** (.004)	.038** (.014)	.032*** (.006)	.031*** (.005)	.033*** (.007)	.034 (.025)
Black	.042 (.162)	-.048 (.321)	.112 (.251)	.041 (.215)	.385 (.534)	.015 (.331)
Hispanic	-.780* (.316)	-.697* (.332)	-1.418 (.449)	-.014 (.457)	-1.490* (.585)	-.053 (.569)
Educational Attainment (Resource Effects)	.153*** (.035)	.149*** (.036)	.128** (.051)	.185*** (.049)	.126* (.053)	.183*** (.050)
Income	.048 [†] (.026)	.045 [†] (.027)	.064* (.040)	.036 (.035)	.051 (.042)	.039 (.036)
Predicted HE Policy Usage (Interpretive Effects)		1.026 (2.095)			-1.102 (2.774)	.214 (2.302)
-2 log likelihood	2044.33	1975.35	921.05	1117.58	868.02	1102.41
Goodness of Fit	2774.86	2895.58	1412.37	1399.64	1422.72	1503.99
Cox and Snell R ²	.097	.101	.098	.083	.096	.085
N	1032	976	498	533	468	507

Source: The Social and Governmental Issues and Participation (SGIP) Study

[†]p<.1, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Notes: Cells consist of ordinal logistic regression coefficients in the numerator and standard errors in parentheses. Analysis includes respondents who have earned at least a high school diploma or its equivalent.

“hardly at all”) to 4 (interested in politics “most of the time”).¹⁴⁸ The stage-two results of this ordinal logistic regression analysis are presented in Table 6.1, where I first consider the determinants of political interest for all Americans and then separately for men and women.

The first column presents a basic, gender-aggregated model of political interest. This model suggests that gender represents a significant determinant of political interest: men are significantly more likely than women to express high levels of political interest.

¹⁴⁸ Please refer to Appendix A, Table A.6.1 for detailed information related to variable coding.

Substantive results indicate that women are 12 percent less likely than men to report that they are interested in politics “most of the time.” This model also shows that age, race, educational attainment, and income provide significant determinants of political interest. A 73 year old American is 26 percent more likely to report being interested in politics “most of the time” than one who is 36 years old. Compared to white Americans, Hispanics are 18 percent less likely to express this high level of political interest. The data suggest that shifting one’s level of education from a high school diploma/G.E.D. to a 4-year degree corresponds to a .15 increase in the probability that he or she will express interest in politics “most of the time,” while shifting one’s annual income from between \$20,000 and \$30,000 to between \$40,000 and \$50,000 yields a .04 increase in the probability that she or he will express this high level of political interest.

The model presented in the second column of Table 6.1 also examines the determinants of political interest for all Americans, this time controlling for predicted federal student aid usage. Federal student aid usage does not appear to have a significant direct effect on political interest. This suggests that these higher education policies do not convey interpretive effects that boost political interest. The trends demonstrated in the previous model hold: women are significantly less likely to express high levels of political interest; and, increases in age, educational attainment, and income promote greater interest in politics. Because federal student aid adoption significantly increases educational attainment, the significance of this variable for promoting high levels of political interest indicates that federal student aid programs have important resource effects.

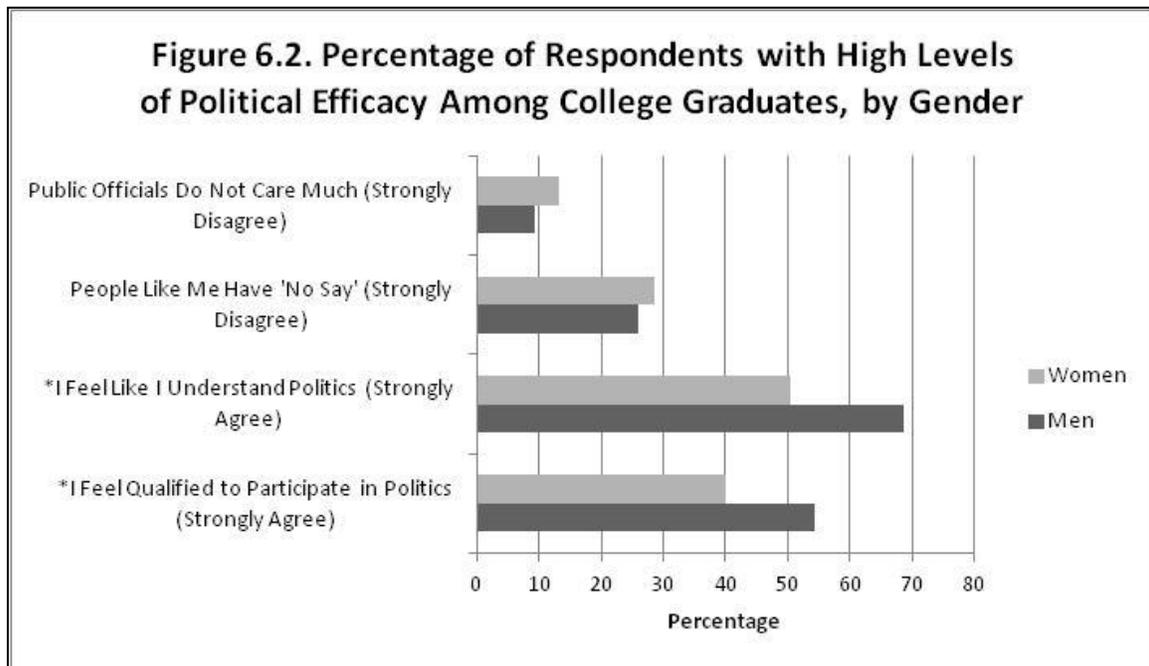
The remaining models in Table 6.1 consider the determinants of political interest for men and women separately. The models presented in columns three and four show that, for both men and women, those who are older and who have more education tend to express higher levels of political interest. Compared to their 36 year old counterparts, 73 year old men are 25 percent more likely and 73 year old women are 28 percent more likely to express that they are interested in politics “most of the time.” Shifting educational attainment from a high school diploma/G.E.D. to a 4-year degree increases the probability of reporting interest in politics “most of the time” by 12 percent for men and 18 percent for women. For men, income provides an additional, statistically significant predictor of political interest: men who earn between \$40,000 and \$50,000 each year are 4.6 percent more likely to express a maximum level of political interest than men whose annual income falls between \$20,000 and \$30,000.

The final pair of models presented in Table 6.1 examines the determinants of political interest for men and women, controlling for predicted higher education policy adoption. As was the case with the gender-aggregated model in column 2, the coefficient for predicted policy usage is not statistically significant. When controlling for predicted higher education policy adoption, results indicate that Hispanic men are 34 percent less likely than white men to report being interested in politics “most of the time.” We also see that, while income provided a significant determinant of men’s political interest in the basic model, it is no longer significant when controlling for policy adoption. For women, age is no longer a significant predictor of political interest when we control for higher education policy adoption. This may suggest that federal student aid adoption has an important equalizing effect for aged-based differences in political interest among women.

The most interesting finding that emerges from the analysis presented in Table 6.1 is that, although women are significantly less likely to express high levels of political interest than men, we see that educational attainment—which we have already found to be significantly increased by student aid adoption—is positively associated with high levels of political interest for men and women. This suggests that, by increasing educational attainment, federal student aid programs have important resource effects that increase women’s interest in politics and, thus, promote greater gender parity in political interest. The coefficients for federal student aid adoption are not statistically significant, which suggests that policy adoption fails to influence political interest by way of interpretive effects.

Higher Education Policy Adoption and the Gender Dynamics of Political Efficacy

Thus far, empirical analysis has suggested that, by significantly increasing educational attainment, federal student aid adoption has had the important resource effect of promoting high levels of political interest among women. This, in turn, contributes to increasing gender parity in political interest. Now, we consider another indicator of political engagement: political efficacy. Scholars examining the determinants of political efficacy and attitudes toward government have found significant differences according to gender (Bennett and Bennett 1989; Burns, Schlozman, and Verba 2001; Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960; Verba, Burns, and Schlozman 1997). Analysis of SGIP survey data corroborates these findings. The descriptive statistics presented in Figure 6.2 reports the rates at which male and female college graduates express high levels of political efficacy using responses to two questions related to external efficacy



Source: The Social and Governmental Issues and Participation (SGIP) Study

*Gender differences in high level of political efficacy are statistically significant at $\alpha=0.05$ for the responses "I feel like I understand politics" and "I feel qualified to participate in politics."

and two questions related to internal efficacy. Significant gender disparities characterize the possession of high levels of internal political efficacy among Americans. While 68.8 percent of male college graduates strongly agree that they “have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing this country,” 50.4 percent of women strongly agree with this statement. When asked whether they consider themselves well qualified to participate in politics, 54.3 percent of men strongly agree, compared to 40 percent of women. These high levels of internal political efficacy among male college graduates suggest that men are somewhat advantaged when it comes to political efficacy.

Does federal student aid adoption have resource or interpretive effects that influence gender parity in Americans’ political efficacy? To consider this question, I again draw on an education-policy model to examine the relationship between federal

student aid adoption and the gender dynamics of political efficacy. I operationalize political efficacy using a five-part index consisting of respondents' feeling that public officials care about citizens' preferences, agreement that people like them have a say in government, how well they feel they understand politics, how qualified they feel to participate in politics, and the extent to which they feel like "full and equal citizens." Using a combination of gender-aggregated and gender-disaggregated models, I use multivariate regression analysis to examine the influence of federal student aid adoption on gender parity in political efficacy.

The education-policy model of political efficacy examines the effects of federal student aid adoption on political efficacy while also testing competing explanations for political efficacy. Scholars have found that age represents an important determinant of political efficacy, as evidence indicates that Americans who are younger and those who are middle-aged tend to have higher levels of efficacy than elderly citizens (Wu 2003). To control for the effects of age, I include a control variable for age in years (from 18-92). Scholars examining the effects of race on political efficacy have found mixed results. While some have found lower levels of political efficacy among minority groups (Form and Huber 1971), others have found that minorities are no less likely than similar whites to express high levels of efficacy (Buehler 1977; Wu 2003). I control for the effects of race using dichotomous variables that represent self identification as black (1 if black, 0 if white) and Hispanic (1 if Hispanic, 0 if white). Carole Pateman notes the "striking correlation" between socioeconomic status and political efficacy (1970, 48). For adults and children, those of lower socioeconomic status—particularly in terms of income—tend to express lower levels of efficacy (Pateman 1970; Wu 2003). Scholars

Table 6.2. Determinants of Political Efficacy: Ordinal Logistic Regression Results (Stage 2)

	Any HE Policy		Basic		Any HE Policy	
	Basic	Any HE Policy	Men	Women	Men	Women
Female	-.226* (.110)	-.279* (.114)				
Age	.011** (.003)	-.001 (.012)	.006 (.005)	.015*** (.005)	.008 (.006)	-.001 (.022)
Black	-.077 (.146)	.189 (.285)	.106 (.219)	-.226 (.198)	.041 (.456)	-.015 (.299)
Hispanic	-.156 (.297)	-.210 (.309)	.040 (.421)	-.431 (.425)	-.011 (.531)	-.229 (.520)
Educational Attainment (Resource Effects)	.237*** (.031)	.243*** (.031)	.234*** (.043)	.253*** (.044)	.236*** (.045)	.252*** (.045)
Income	.079*** (.023)	.077*** (.024)	.064 [†] (.034)	.087** (.032)	.039 (.036)	.100** (.034)
Predicted HE Policy Usage (Interpretive Effects)		-1.814 (1.858)			.627 (2.364)	-1.399 (2.073)
-2 log likelihood	5465.56	5281.33	2619.53	2814.84	2510.17	2741.65
Goodness of Fit	17612.25	18388.46	7749.20	9321.72	8014.43	9790.64
Cox and Snell R ²	.115	.118	.098	.127	.092	.133
N	1023	970	493	530	464	505

Source: The Social and Governmental Issues and Participation (SGIP) Study

[†]p<.1, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Notes: Cells consist of ordinal logistic regression coefficients in the numerator and standard errors in parentheses.

Analysis includes respondents who have earned at least a high school diploma or its equivalent.

have also noted the importance of education on political efficacy. Those with higher levels of education are more likely to feel politically efficacious and to express positive attitudes toward politics (Almond and Verba 1965; Pateman 1970). To account for the effects of socioeconomic status, I include controls for annual income (ten-point scale ranging from “less than \$10,000” to “\$150,000”) and educational attainment (nine-point scale ranging from “less than high school” to “Ph.D. or professional degree”).

Table 6.2 presents the stage-two results of this ordinal logistic regression analysis.

The first column provides a basic model of political efficacy for all Americans. Here, we

see that gender, age, educational attainment, and income provide statistically significant determinants of political efficacy. The significant negative coefficient for gender confirms previous scholarship that argues that men are more likely than women to have high levels of political efficacy. We also see that older Americans, those with greater educational attainment, and those with more income are more likely to have high levels of political efficacy than those who are younger, who have less education, and who have less income. The model in column two, which controls for student aid policy usage, is largely similar to the basic model, except for the fact that age becomes an insignificant predictor of political efficacy. This could suggest that federal student aid adoption may have equalizing effects that moderate the effect of age on political efficacy. Higher education adoption does not appear to directly influence political efficacy, which casts doubt on the existence of interpretive effects; however, educational attainment is significantly associated with higher levels of political efficacy, which suggests that federal student aid adoption has important resource effects that promote high levels of political efficacy for Americans. The next pair of models considers the determinants of political efficacy for men and women, absent controls for student aid adoption. Here, we see that for men and women, those with more education and those who have more income tend to be more efficacious than their less educated, lower-income counterparts. Additionally, for women, those who are older tend to have higher levels of political efficacy than those who are younger. The final pair of columns in Table 6.2 considers the determinants of political efficacy for women and men, this time controlling for federal student aid adoption. As we observed in the basic models, men and women who have more education tend to be more efficacious than their less-educated counterparts.

Because federal student aid adoption is positively associated with educational attainment, we can infer that student aid usage has important resource effects that promote high levels of political efficacy for women and, thus, counteract the gender disparity in political efficacy that we observed in the aggregate models. For both men and women, federal student aid usage provides an insignificant predictor of political efficacy, which indicates that—as has been the case throughout this analysis, thus far—the importance of higher education policy for increasing gender parity in political efficacy lies in resource effects, rather than interpretive effects. It is interesting to note that, when we control for student aid adoption, income is no longer a significant determinant of men’s political efficacy, and age loses its significance as a predictor of women’s political efficacy. This suggests that federal student aid adoption may temper the effects of income and age on efficacy for men and women, respectively.

Higher Education Policy Adoption and the Gender Dynamics of Political Participation

The third part of this empirical analysis considers the relationship between federal student aid adoption and the gender dynamics of political participation. By participation, I refer to involvement in activities geared toward directly altering the political system. Thus, I consider American’s participation in mass political activities including voting, volunteering for political candidates, contributing to campaigns, contacting government officials, and participating in protests.¹⁴⁹ Data from the SGIP survey suggest that, among

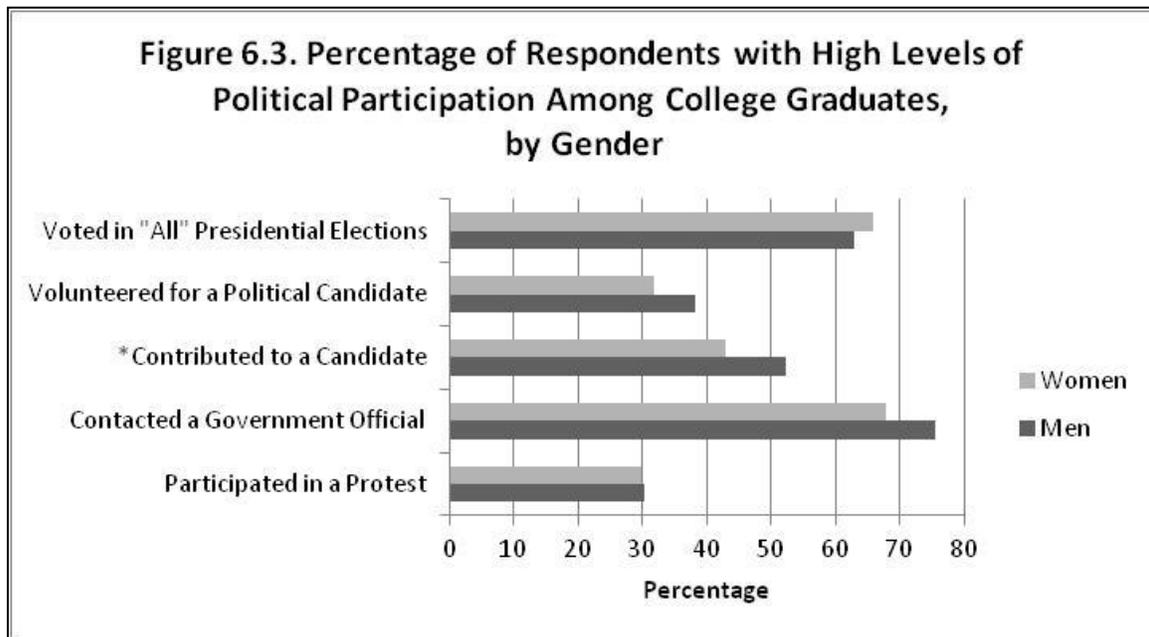
¹⁴⁹Although activities like debating political issues with a friend or family member may be geared toward changing political outcomes, they would not be the types of activities included in this analysis because they do not do so directly.

college graduates, the gender gap that has historically characterized political participation in the United States has narrowed significantly. In Figure 6.3 we see that, although men tend to engage political activities at slightly higher rates than women, these gender differences are largely insignificant. The exception to this finding is men's significant advantage in contributing to political campaigns. While 52.2 percent of male college graduates have contributed money to political candidates, 43 percent of their female counterparts have done so.

How has federal student aid adoption affected the gender dynamics of U.S. political participation? To explore this question, I use SGIP data to test an education-policy model of participation. I measure the dependent variable in these models, political participation, using an index of involvement in political activities that is comprised of four dichotomous indicators (which are coded as 1 for affirmative responses and 0 for negative responses): whether respondents ever (a) volunteered on a campaign, (b) contributed to a political candidate, (c) contacted a government official, and (d) participated in a protest or demonstration. This overall measure of political participation takes the form of an ordinal variable with scores ranging from 0 (representing the lowest level of political participation) to 1 (representing the highest level of political participation).

Table 6.3 shows the stage-two regression analysis for the determinants of political participation for all Americans and for women and men separately. The dependent

As participation scholars have noted, we must be cautious when considering reported electoral participation, as Americans tend to overreport the rates at which they vote (Anderson and Silver 1986; Clausen 1968; Karp and Brockington 2005; Silver, Anderson, and Abramson 1986). Thus, while I consider the gender dynamics of voting in presidential elections in my analysis of descriptive statistics, I omit this measure of political participation from the regression analysis.



Source: The Social and Governmental Issues and Participation (SGIP) Study

*Gender differences in high level of political participation are statistically significant at $\alpha=0.05$ for contributing to a political candidate.

variable, political participation, is measured using a four-part index that consists of whether respondents have ever volunteered on a political campaign, donated money to a political candidate or cause, contacted a government official, and participated in a protest or demonstration. Individual scores range from 0 to 1, with lower values corresponding to participation in fewer of these activities and higher scores corresponding to participation in more of them.¹⁵⁰

Column 1 provides a basic model of political participation that reveals significant gender inequality in U.S. political involvement, as men are more likely than women to engage in high levels of political participation. We also find that those who are older, white (when compared to Hispanics), and who have higher levels of education and

¹⁵⁰ Throughout this discussion of the substantive effects of these determinants on respondents' scores on the political participation index, I define a "high score" as a score of 0.75 (on a scale ranging from 0 to 1.00) on the index.

income are more likely to engage in high levels of political participation than their younger, Hispanic, less educated, and lower-income counterparts. In terms of substantive findings, results indicate that women are 4 percent less likely than men to achieve a high score on the political interest index. Compared to citizens who are 36 years old, 73 year old Americans are 13 percent more likely to achieve this score. Hispanic Americans are 8 percent less likely to have a high score on the participation index than white Americans. The educational attainment variable, which provides an indicator of the resource effects of federal student aid adoption is associated with a significant increase in the probability that Americans will have high levels of political participation. Shifting one's education from a high school diploma/G.E.D. to a 4-year degree corresponds to a 14 percent increase in the probability that she or he will achieve a high score on the political participation index. Finally, results suggest that shifting an American's income from between \$20,000 and \$30,000 to between \$40,000 and \$50,000 yields a 2 percent increase in the probability that she or he will achieve a high score on the participation index. Of these indicators, educational attainment appears to have the greatest influence on Americans' political participation.

The second model in Table 6.3 adds a control for federal student aid adoption to our model of political participation. While the significant effects of the basic model remain, we find that federal student aid adoption is associated with high levels of political participation. Again, we find that the coefficient for educational attainment suggests significant resource effects of federal student aid adoption: someone who holds a bachelor's degree is 14 percent more likely to have a high score on the participation index than someone who holds only a high school diploma/G.E.D. In addition to this

Table 6.3. Determinants of Political Participation: Ordinal Logistic Regression Results (Stage 2)

	Basic	Any HE Policy	Basic		Any HE Policy	
			Men	Women	Men	Women
Female	-.335** (.115)	-.363** (.119)				
Age	.029*** (.004)	.055*** (.012)	.024*** (.005)	.034*** (.005)	.035*** (.006)	.017 (.028)
Black	.016 (.153)	-.447 (.298)	-.041 (.230)	.098 (.208)	-1.137* (.479)	.248 (.313)
Hispanic	-.876** (.334)	-.891** (.346)	-1.531*** (.476)	-.066 (.469)	-.634 (.580)	.120 (.567)
Educational Attainment (Resource Effects)	.322*** (.032)	.313*** (.033)	.294*** (.045)	.369*** (.047)	.267*** (.047)	.359*** (.048)
Income	.057* (.024)	.065** (.025)	.103** (.036)	.022 (.034)	.109** (.037)	.022 (.035)
Predicted HE Policy Usage (Interpretive Effects)		4.279* (1.947)			7.661** (2.486)	-1.498 (2.179)
-2 log likelihood	2804.21	2724.63	3171.03	1421.24	1306.90	1400.92
Goodness of Fit	3656.71	3677.01	1772.86	1896.75	1758.89	1941.22
Cox and Snell R ²	.182	.189	.197	.171	.218	.169
N	1030	974	497	532	467	507

Source: The Social and Governmental Issues and Participation (SGIP) Study

†p≤.1, *p≤.05, **p≤.01, ***p≤.001

Notes: Cells consist of ordinal logistic regression coefficients in the numerator and standard errors in parentheses.

Analysis includes respondents who have earned at least a high school diploma or its equivalent.

significant resource effect of federal student aid usage, this model also suggests significant interpretive effects of student aid adoption, as the coefficient for student aid usage is statistically significant. Substantive results suggest that—controlling for gender, age, race, educational attainment, and income—federal student aid users are 29 percent more likely to have a high score on the political participation index than those who do not use education benefits. Thus, these results suggest that federal student aid adoption is

associated with high levels of political participation for Americans by virtue of its resource and interpretive effects.

The remaining models in Table 6.3 examine the determinants of political participation for men and women separately. The first pair, which presents basic models, reveals that older men and women and those who have more education are significantly more likely to engage in high levels of political participation. Shifting one's age from 36 years old to 73 years old increases the probability of achieving a high score on the participation index by 12 percent for men and 14 percent for women. For both genders, those who hold bachelor's degrees are 14 percent more likely to earn this high index score than those who only hold a high school diploma/G.E.D. While age and educational attainment represent the only significant determinants of women's political participation, this analysis suggests that white men (when compared to Hispanic men) and those who have greater income tend to have higher levels of political participation.

Columns five and six consider the determinants of men's and women's political participation, controlling for higher education policy adoption. For men and women, education continues to provide a strong determinant of political participation, as those who hold bachelor's degrees are 14 percent more likely to earn a high score on the participation index than those who hold only a high school diploma/G.E.D. Although federal student aid adoption does not appear to significantly influence women's political participation, these data suggest that program usage significantly increases the probability that men will engage in a high level of participation. Substantive results indicate that men who use federal student aid programs are 17 percent more likely to achieve a high score on the participation index than men who do not use these benefits. This may reflect

an important contrast between the strength and tenor of the messages transmitted to G.I. Bill recipients during the postwar era and those received by federal student loan and Pell Grant beneficiaries. Because the G.I. Bill represented the first time that the federal government had offered financial support to students pursuing higher education, and because the program was framed as a reward for valued military service, it may have sent important messages to beneficiaries that indicated their high value as citizens and promoted high levels of political engagement. By the time lawmakers created federal student loans and Pell Grants, the novelty of federal funding for college may have diminished, making it less likely that male and female beneficiaries were as attuned to messages that the program transmitted regarding their value as citizens.

Mirroring previous findings, this examination of the relationship between federal student aid adoption and political participation suggests that federal student aid usage promotes gender equality in political engagement via significant resource effects. The results of this analysis suggest that, while men are more likely than women to engage in high levels of political participation, high levels of educational attainment significantly increase the probability that women will engage in high levels of political involvement. Thus, federal student aid usage provides an important resource that mitigates gender inequality in political participation in the United States. In a departure from our findings related to political interest and efficacy, this analysis suggests that federal student aid adoption is associated with high levels of political participation among men as a result of significant interpretive effects.



The Financial Aid Effect: Higher Education Policy Feedback and the Gender Dynamics of U.S. Political Engagement

This analysis suggests that federal higher education programs have had important feedback effects for the gender dynamics of U. S. political engagement. While existing models of political engagement have rightfully emphasized the importance of demographic and socioeconomic factors to political involvement, scholars are only beginning to attend to the significant feedback effects of public policy adoption on political engagement in the United States. Building on the work of policy feedback scholars who recognize that government programs are institutional factors that have the capacity to alter citizens and the political environment, this analysis has examined the feedback effects of federal education policy adoption for gender equality in U.S. political engagement. Throughout the analyses presented in this chapter, educational attainment proves to be positively associated with political engagement. For women and men, the use of federal student aid is correlated with greater educational attainment; and educational attainment is significantly associated with high levels of political interest, efficacy, and participation.

The central finding of this chapter is that federal student aid programs appear to have contributed to greater gender parity in political engagement via significant resource effects—particularly, educational attainment. By promoting higher educational attainment for women, federal financial aid programs have helped to narrow the gender gap in political engagement and have, thus, promoted greater gender parity in the United States. Evidence suggests that the higher education-policy model of political participation provides a more comprehensive model of the determinants of political

involvement than models that overlook the effects of public policies. While demographic and socioeconomic factors go a considerable way in explaining male and female political participation, these factors fail to account for the importance of public policy usage.

Higher education policies appear to have contributed to increasing gender equality in political engagement through important resource effects, but we do not find significant interpretive effects. A number of factors could explain why student aid does not appear to send messages that increase the probability that women will engage in politics. The fact that women were largely excluded from the benefits of the G.I. Bill may provide one explanation for this. The G.I. Bill had important interpretive effects that promoted high levels of political engagement among beneficiaries. Whereas G.I. Bill benefits were framed as rewards for service to the nation, subsequently enacted federal student aid programs—namely, federal student loans and Pell Grants—have allocated benefits on the basis of financial need or enrollment in accredited institutions of higher education. These programs have not been framed in a way that transmits clear, distinctive messages regarding beneficiaries' value as citizens in the way that the G.I. Bill did. Moreover, while G.I. Bill benefits were widely recognized as emanating from the federal government, many student loan and Pell Grant recipients may fail to recognize the federal government as the source of their benefits. As a result, beneficiaries may be less likely to think of their experiences with federal financial aid programs in a way that would influence their attitudes toward government or their inclination to participate in political activities.

In recognizing the value of federal student aid programs for promoting gender equality in U.S. political engagement, we must note that, historically, this effect has been

contingent upon the rates at which women and men have actually adopted financial aid benefits. Because G.I. Bill benefits were used primarily by male veterans in the postwar era, the resource and interpretive feedback effects of this program—which, as Mettler (2005) notes, emanated from (1) the provision of generous resources that expanded access to higher education and (2) the transmission of positive messages indicating beneficiaries' first-class citizenship—served to increase the political participation of beneficiaries who were overwhelmingly male.

Subsequently enacted federal student loans and Pell Grants have contributed to the narrowing of the gender gap in political participation by increasing the educational attainment—and, thus, the political interest, efficacy, and participation—of American women. The provision of resources represents the central mechanism through which Pell Grants and student loans have increased gender equality in political engagement. The centrality of resource effects to the relationship between higher education policy adoption and political engagement mirrors Andrea Campbell's (2003) analysis of the federal Social Security program. The difference between these policies, however, is that while Social Security provides valuable retirement benefits that prompt self-interested program recipients to guard their benefits via political participation, federal student aid programs promote political participation by providing resources that empower beneficiaries, rendering them better-able to engage in political activities.

The results of this analysis yield important implications for policymakers interested in promoting the welfare of American citizens by increasing gender parity in political engagement. Lawmakers interested in promoting equal opportunity can implement social policies that provide citizens with resources that enhance their capacity

to engage in politics. By providing valuable resources that significantly increase the probability that beneficiaries will attain higher levels of education, broad-reaching financial aid policies have contributed to significant increases in women's political interest, political efficacy, and their involvement in political activities. These increases have contributed to a narrowing of the gender gap in American political engagement. In this way, federal higher education programs are instructive. Not only do they help to realize the promise of full and equal citizenship by promoting political engagement among a group that has traditionally been underrepresented in mass politics, they also provide lessons as to how the state can successfully use social policy to promote gender equality in terms of political citizenship.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion

The consideration of how higher education policies matter for American democracy and the promise of full citizenship in the United States represents previously uncharted territory for students of political science. This dissertation has shown that, since the mid-twentieth century, student financial aid policies and the Title IX regulation have influenced American politics by institutionalizing women's treatment as first-class citizens under U.S. social policy and by strengthening gender equality in social citizenship and political citizenship in the United States. In this way, landmark higher education policies have empowered women, a group that has historically occupied the margins of social society, the economic landscape, and mass politics. By promoting higher levels of educational attainment for women—a variable that significantly increases the likelihood that they will achieve socioeconomic stability and that they will participate in politics—federal higher education programs have promoted women's full incorporation as American citizens. As a result, these policies have dramatically reshaped the gender dynamics of status in the United States, paving the way for women to achieve great strides as economically independent, socially integrated, politically engaged members of the American citizenry.

Given the significance of federal higher education policies for increasing women's educational attainment and for contributing to the narrowing of the gender gap in socioeconomic status and political engagement in the United States, this dissertation

has furthered our understanding of how public policies can influence the political landscape by promoting equality between citizens. Engaging and bridging a broad range of literature in the field of political science, this analysis has offered insights into American public policy, the politics of citizenship, political participation, and gender politics.

As we conclude this study of the landmark federal higher education policies and their feedback effects for gender parity in terms of status, social citizenship, and political citizenship, we will consider the implications of these findings for the field of political science. In addition to discussing the significance of federal higher education policies for gender equality in the United States and the effectiveness of redistributive policy and regulatory policy for promoting gender equality, we will consider the significance of higher education programs to our conceptualization of the American welfare state. This concluding chapter will also consider the importance of federal higher education policy for expanding higher educational opportunities for various groups of women—bearing in mind the intersectionality of gender, race, class, and age—as well as the implications of this analysis for the social and political citizenship of American men.

Promoting Democracy by Empowering Marginalized Citizens

For much of the nation's history, as a result of socioeconomic and political inequality, American women were relegated to a status of second-class citizens. In terms of social citizenship, women were disadvantaged by difficulty achieving economic independence and full incorporation into the public sphere. Moreover, the fact that women tended to participate in political activities at significantly lower rates than men

through much of the nation's history weakened women's political citizenship. While men actively engaged in mass-level political activities like voting, contacting elected officials, participating in political meetings, and contributing money to political causes and candidates, women generally sat on the side-lines, leaving the power to determine the nation's course to men. Women's second-class citizenship belied the democratic ideals upon which the nation was founded, thereby representing a significant challenge to the authenticity of America's expressed political values.

Since the 1960s, the gender gap in political engagement has narrowed as women's engagement in politics has increased. Women now represent the majority of American voters, and they participate in a range of political activities, such as contacting elected officials and contributing money to political campaigns, at much higher rates than they did prior to the mid-twentieth century. The nation has also seen a significant increase in the number of women participating in politics at the elite level. Although women have yet to reach the highest elected offices in the national executive branch, women have run for and won local and state-wide offices in increasing numbers over the past fifty years. This dissertation had indicated that—in addition to significant demographic shifts, women's increasing presence in the labor force, social movements, and other factors that scholars have found to promote women's engagement in politics—higher education policies have made a substantial contribution to these trends. As such, this analysis expands our understanding of American politics by showing how federal lawmakers can use public policies to empower marginalized groups. By significantly expanding women's access to higher education, lawmakers contributed to women's increasing

participation in politics and simultaneously promoted full citizenship and, thus, democracy.

Higher Education: A Key to Democratic Citizenship

Political scientists have long highlighted higher education as a strong and consistent determinant of socioeconomic status and political engagement. Studies have shown that Americans with greater educational attainment tend to enjoy greater socioeconomic status. They have also shown that Americans who have higher levels of education are more likely to express strong interest in government and political affairs, to have high levels of political efficacy, and to participate in a broad range of political activities, such as voting, contacting government officials, and contributing money to electoral campaigns or other political causes. While scholars have highlighted the strong relationship between higher educational attainment and political engagement, this analysis contributes to a small group of studies that have seriously considered public policy as a significant variable in that association.

Women faced a lengthy history of marginalization in American postsecondary institutions. This was partially due to institutional barriers that minimized—or unabashedly prohibited—women’s presence in colleges across the country. Following the institutionalization of higher education in America with the founding of Harvard College in 1636, American women waited 185 years to access teacher training at all-female seminaries and 197 years to be permitted to learn beside men at coeducational institutions. For more than a century, many colleges denied women access on the sole

basis of their sex, while others invoked gender quotas limiting the number of women who would be permitted to occupy seats that were presumably more valuable for men.

In addition to institutional barriers that contributed to women's diminutive presence in higher education prior to the 1960s, women's access to higher education was also limited by gender norms that shaped the calculus by which families decided to invest in their children's education. Families faced with limited resources generally adopted a rational approach to contributing to children's higher educational pursuits, whereby they would invest so as to optimize long-term returns. Due to the assumption that any higher education that a young woman attained would be wasted when she inevitably married and retreated from the labor force, investing in higher education for sons rather than daughters represented the most rational investment decision. Thus, when families were forced to choose between educating sons and educating daughters, daughters often came up short. Scholarship programs generally employed a similar logic. While a range of private benefactors would offer financial aid to assist college students, these funds were awarded overwhelmingly to male students. Before the mid-twentieth century, American women faced discriminatory admissions policies that limited their access to college. Women also struggled to find financial support for pursuing higher education. These challenges limited women's access to college education and all of the social, economic, and political benefits associated with it.

Beginning in 1944, with the creation of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of (popularly known as "the G.I. Bill"), lawmakers allocated federal funds to assist the overwhelmingly male population of World War II veterans as they pursued college degrees, causing the gender gap in college graduation rates to bulge and the male

advantage to soar. Fourteen years later, however, U.S. lawmakers significantly expanded women's access to higher education by creating federal student loans and grants under the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958. Seven years after that, they provided additional federal aid under the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965. While these landmark financial aid programs provided women with valuable resources that increased the probability that they would obtain high levels of education, women would not enjoy unrestricted access to colleges and universities until Congress passed and President Richard Nixon signed Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments. By prohibiting sex discrimination in college admissions, this landmark policy removed the last major barrier to women's equal inclusion in higher education. In gaining equal access to higher education, women also gained access to the knowledge, skills, and other socioeconomic benefits that political participation scholars have found to promote involvement in politics. Thus, it makes sense that, as this dissertation has shown, federal higher education policies have promoted high levels of educational attainment for women and, thus, higher levels of political interest, efficacy, and participation.

The Equalizing Effects of Federal Higher Education Policies

The United States federal government has effectively shaped both the gender dynamics of higher educational attainment and American gender politics—and, more broadly, the gender dynamics of social and political citizenship in the United States—by wielding considerable influence over who enjoys access to higher education. In creating landmark higher education programs, federal lawmakers have shaped who gains the knowledge, skills, and socioeconomic benefits derived from higher education—benefits

that facilitate political interest, efficacy, and involvement. As the historical analysis presented in this dissertation has shown, U.S. lawmakers institutionalized women's treatment as first-class citizens under social policy by crafting the National Defense Education Act and the Higher Education Act as gender-neutral provisions. Shortly thereafter, they traded the redistributive format of the NDEA and the HEA for the regulatory format of the Title IX. In passing this program, law makers demonstrated their commitment to ensuring women's status as first-class citizens. The empirical portion of this analysis has shown that student aid policies exert significant resource effects that promote gender equality. By providing women with greater access to higher education through the provision of federal grants and loans, the federal government opened the door to greater educational attainment, socioeconomic stability, and independence for a significant number of women.

This analysis confirms that, as political scientists have shown, high levels of educational attainment promote high levels of political engagement. Americans who have more education typically possess knowledge, skills, income, social networks, and experiences that facilitate political involvement. Moreover, they are significantly more likely to be mobilized to take part in political activities than their less-educated counterparts. By promoting greater higher educational attainment among women and, thus, greater socioeconomic status, social integration, and political engagement, U.S. lawmakers used public policy to usher women into the nation's colleges and to promote their full incorporation as American citizens. As a result of women's increasing educational attainment and the related growth in their engagement in politics, the nation has seen enhanced gender parity in terms of status within the polity, social inclusion, and

political participation. Thus, federal policies enacted since the late 1950s which have increased women's access to higher education have been central to increasing gender parity in American citizenship.

The Old College Try: Empowering Women through Higher Education Policy

By providing women with access to state support for higher education, federal higher education policies enacted since 1958 have provided women with substantial support for pursuing college degrees, much as the G.I. Bill had for men during the postwar era. With the creation of the NDEA in 1958, the HEA in 1965, and Title IX in 1972, the United States government took an active role in promoting and securing women's socioeconomic welfare by supporting them as they pursued college degrees. In this regard, lawmakers demonstrated their commitment to satisfying a significant function of the state: promoting the well-being of its citizens. Although the federal government had excluded women from early attempts to promote the social welfare by providing access to higher education under the G.I. Bill, there can be no doubt that policymakers empowered women using subsequently enacted higher education programs. The equal inclusion of women as beneficiaries of federal financial aid under the NDEA and the HEA and the government's refusal to tolerate women's systematic exclusion from the nation's higher educational institutions with the passage of the Title IX regulation broke with precedent and clearly signaled women's equal value as citizens. These signals likely explain why private undergraduate institutions, although exempt

from Title IX's prohibition against sex discrimination in higher education admissions, rapidly tailored their admissions policies after 1972 so as to comply with the regulation.

Women's full inclusion in higher education has precipitated a reshaping of gender politics in the United States. This reshaping has strengthened American democracy.

Democratic theory centers upon the notion of popular sovereignty and holds that authority over governmental actions and outcomes rests with the governed. The model of representative democracy is a simple one: citizens hold preferences, they convey these preferences to policymakers; and, policymakers act in ways that reflect the will of the nation's citizens. A central assumption in this model is that citizens are capable of full and equal political participation. By providing women—a group whose voices had historically sung *sotto voce* in mass politics—with greater access to higher education, national lawmakers significantly increased the probability that women would participate as full and equal members of the polity. As such, at the level of mass politics, federal higher education policies have proven crucial to promoting women's electoral participation as well as increasing the probability that they will express high levels of interest in politics, high levels of political efficacy, and that they will engage in political activities, like attending political meetings, contributing money to political parties and candidates, and contacting elected officials. By increasing women's educational attainment, these policies have also increased the probability that political parties and candidates will mobilize women for political participation.

Future studies could move beyond the scope of mass politics to consider the effect that federal higher education programs have had on politics at the elite level. Scholars have shown that lawmakers' personal identities shape policy outcomes and that the

political views of women and men diverge on a number of pivotal issues.

Congresswomen are more likely than their male counterparts to support bills related to women's issues (Dodson 2006; Swers 1998; Swers 2002; Thomas and Welch 1991). As the number of women earning college degrees has increased, so too has the number of women running for and winning election to local, statewide, and national political office. Although, at the time of this writing, women have yet to reach the highest echelons of the nation's executive branch, women are serving in city councils, county commissions, the national and state-level legislatures, governor's mansions, and courthouses in increasing numbers. The women who attain these positions are overwhelmingly college graduates, and many of them have obtained advanced degrees. Considering the significant influence that federal higher education programs have had for gender equality in mass-politics, it seems likely that these policies also shape elite politics.

From Student Aid to Title IX: A Two-Pronged Approach to Promoting Gender Equality in Higher Education

From the service-based and, thus, overwhelmingly male targeting of the G.I. Bill in 1944 to the bold prohibition of sex discrimination in college admissions established by Title IX in 1972, there can be no doubt that lawmakers have had extensive influence on gender egalitarianism in American colleges and universities. The effectiveness of higher education policies for expanding women's access to higher education and, thus, contributing to the declining gender gap in U.S. political engagement has important implications for how we think about public policy and its value as a mechanism for achieving national goals. The National Defense Education Act, the Higher Education

Act, and Title IX, which reshaped the gender dynamics of American colleges and universities, were part of a two-pronged approach to effectively utilizing federal programming to increase women's access to college. First, lawmakers invoked redistributive policy to expand access to higher education with the creation of federal financial aid programs. The NDEA and the HEA provided need-based student loans and grants that made it possible for low-income students to pursue higher education. Because these benefits were allocated on the gender-neutral basis of need, they were broadly utilized by men as well as women. However, these programs are significant to gender equality because they provided women—who had been virtually excluded from the benefits of the G.I. Bill in 1944—with federal assistance for higher education for the first time. These landmark policies essentially redistributed federal resources in a way that empowered women by facilitating their movement into postsecondary institutions.

In addition to utilizing redistributive policy to expand individuals' access to higher education via federal financial aid, U.S. lawmakers invoked regulatory policy to eradicate institutional barriers to women's equal inclusion in colleges and universities. With the passage of Title IX, policymakers prohibited sex discrimination in college admissions, thereby removing the last substantial barrier to women's higher education in the United States. While previously enacted student aid programs provided women with access to financial support for pursuing college degrees, Title IX prevented institutions from systematically limiting the number of women admitted to their programs. Title IX provided a valuable supplement to previously enacted redistributive policies that had created federal financial aid because of its indirect redistributive effects. By prohibiting gender discrimination in college admissions, the Title IX regulation compelled many

higher educational institutions to change their admissions policies, thus paving the way for a dramatic increase in the number of women obtaining college degrees. As a result, Title IX provided women with greater access to a valuable resource that fosters socioeconomic well-being.

The successful coupling of these redistributive and regulatory approaches would have been impossible were it not for the handiwork of a small, but effective, group of policy entrepreneurs—particularly, Representative Edith Green (D-OR), Representative Carl Elliot (D-AL), and Senator Lister Hill (D-AL). The successful passage of the NDEA, the HEA, and Title IX and their effectiveness for expanding access to higher education are largely the result of these lawmakers' commitment to expanding access to higher education, their keen appreciation for the contemporaneous political context, their extensive knowledge of the political institutions within which they worked, and their strategic approaches to steering education policy proposals through the political process. As a result of their efforts, the federal government reshaped the gender dynamics of U.S. higher education and political engagement.

This combination of redistributive policy and regulatory policy has proved to be particularly effective for combating gender inequality in higher educational admissions. It also set the foundation for women's rapid movement into the public sphere in the latter half of the twentieth century. This two-pronged approach was necessary to effectively increase women's access to higher education. Although the NDEA and the HEA provided women with valuable financial support to help finance the pursuit of college degrees, these programs would not reach maximum effectiveness until Title IX removed institutional barriers that suppressed women's admission to college. The redistributive

student aid policies were not enough to correct the problem of discriminatory admissions policies that limited the helpfulness of student financial aid. Although the federal government provided women with financial aid for paying for college, many schools refused to admit women at rates that equaled—or even approached—those at which men were admitted. In order to maximize the effectiveness of the individual-level student aid that emanated from redistributive programming, lawmakers had to pair that aid with federal regulatory policy in the form of Title IX’s prohibition against discriminatory admissions.

Indeed, federal redistributive policy—the National Defense Education Act of 1958 and the Higher Education Act of 1965—paved the way for Title IX’s regulatory policy. Political context represents a central factor shaping lawmakers’ effective coupling of redistributive and regulatory policy approaches to expand women’s access to higher education. In 1958, proponents of federal student aid faced the enormous challenge of convincing lawmakers to significantly increase the federal government’s involvement in the area of higher education. In so doing, the successful passage of the NDEA in 1958 was a coup, in and of itself. It is certain that, in the political context of the late 1950s and the early 1960s, lawmakers would not have enacted a Title IX-style regulatory policy compelling colleges and universities to subject women and men to equal admission standards. At that point, the idea of even limited federal intervention in the area of higher education evoked vocal objection. To propose that the federal government regulate admissions policies at higher educational institutions would have been unimaginable.



Before the passage of Title IX, women enjoyed access to government financial support to assist them as they made their way through college degree programs, but institutions blatantly suppressed the number of women attaining higher education through the widespread use of discriminatory admissions policies. By 1972, federal student aid programs had placed the government squarely in the arena of higher education; and, Americans increasingly turned to federal lawmakers for solutions to problems related to education. After providing women with federal funds that expanded their access to college, lawmakers further increased women's access to higher education by threatening to revoke federal funding from institutions that discriminated against women. In the political context of the early 1970s—in the wake of landmark civil rights legislation that promoted the inclusion of racial minorities in American institutions—the idea of invoking federal regulation to ensure gender equality represented a reasonable prospect and, ultimately, the most suitable mechanism for increasing women's inclusion in higher education.

While the NDEA's and the HEA's redistributive federal student aid programs and the Title IX regulation took contrasting approaches to achieve the common end of increasing access to higher education, both approaches have been equally important to enhancing gender equality in higher education and political engagement. Although Title IX boldly promoted women's access to the nation's colleges and universities by banning sex discrimination in admissions policies, the NDEA and the HEA helped the nation to fathom the revolutionary idea of women's equal presence in postsecondary institutions. These early financial aid policies reshaped how Americans conceptualized higher education and conventional notions of which citizens are best suited for higher learning.

As women gained more opportunities to venture into higher educational institutions, gender discrimination became increasingly apparent; and as women excelled in college—meeting and often exceeding the performance of their male counterparts—such discrimination became increasingly intolerable. These experiences shaped the testimony that women brought before lawmakers in the early 1970s as they contemplated passing a federal regulation that would end such discrimination.

The two-pronged, redistributive policy/regulatory policy, method of expanding women's access to higher education provides valuable lessons for scholars of public policy. First, this effective approach highlights the centrality of political context to the extent to which lawmakers can address social problems. In the case of women's restricted access to college degrees, lawmakers working in 1958 could not remove all of the barriers that limited women's access to higher education at once. Objections to an extensive federal role in higher education limited the range of action they could take to promote broad inclusion in colleges and universities. Accordingly, the NDEA took a measured step in that direction by providing women and men, broadly, with financial support for college. Seven years later, in passing the HEA, policymakers extended this support. Again, they invoked redistributive policy, which best suited the political context of the 1960s. In 1972, the policy context had shifted to one that privileged regulatory policy, and lawmakers effectively invoked federal regulation to compel higher educational institutions to provide women and men with equal access to college admission. In addition to highlighting the importance of political context to the viability and effectiveness of particular policy alternatives, this analysis has also demonstrated the power of this two-pronged, mixed-policy approach for ameliorating inequality that is

rooted in both individual- and institutional-level challenges. In the case of combating gender inequality in higher education, it seems unlikely that the use of only redistributive policy or only regulatory policy would have proven as effective as the two-pronged approach.

Giving the Gift of Class: Higher Education Policy and the American Welfare State

The creation of broad-reaching federal support for individuals interested in pursuing higher education represents an important innovation in American social policy. Federal student aid has significantly expanded access to colleges and universities for millions of citizens. Without the financial assistance provided under the National Defense Education Act and the Higher Education Act and the egalitarian access to higher educational institutions that Title IX guaranteed, it is unlikely that women would currently represent the majority of American college students. These programs significantly expanded women's access to higher education and the social and economic benefits that emanate from it. Federal higher education programs enacted since the mid-twentieth century have provided valuable lessons for successfully utilizing social policy to achieve national goals. Hence, these programs have important implications for how we conceptualize the American welfare state, for the future of higher education policy, and for the long-term effectiveness of higher education programs as a component of U.S. social policy.

The purpose of the welfare state is to safeguard the social and economic well-being of the nation's citizens. As such, federal student aid programs represent an innovative approach to pursuing this end and cause us to expand our conceptualization of

the welfare state. Unlike the nation's most prominent welfare state programs—such as Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF), Food Stamps, and Medicaid—which are often demonized as the hallmarks of “big government” and criticized for providing handouts to the undeserving poor, financial aid programs have largely avoided such criticism by attaching federal resources to the generally respected pursuit of higher education. The beneficiaries of government grants and loans use this support to attain higher education—a credential that is associated with greater access to well-paying jobs and long-term socioeconomic stability. Although the government helps students access the path to higher education, it is incumbent on them to actually complete an academic program. Most Americans who receive federal benefits are expected to repay them; and, all beneficiaries engage in academic work toward a college degree. Therefore, federal student aid policies institutionalized what I would term an “earned redistribution” of government funds, challenging the politically inflammatory representation of federal assistance as government handouts.

Considering the vitality of federal higher education programs to the socioeconomic and political well-being of American citizens, expanding these programs could represent an effective and politically-viable way to increase economic opportunity in the United States and to, thus, strengthen the welfare state. Emphasizing the “earned” nature of redistributive student aid programs could provide an effective way to secure support for additional higher education programs that provide women and men with valuable resources. Using this type of framing that emphasizes the task-oriented nature of federal financial aid, student assistance programs would likely join popular and politically resilient programs like Social Security in casting beneficiaries as worthy

recipients of the government's largesse. This dissertation has demonstrated that federal higher education policies have promoted increased higher educational attainment and political engagement among women, a group that has been historically marginalized in education and mass politics. As such, it is in the nation's democratic interest that we not only protect these programs but that we strengthen them in order to provide politically underrepresented groups with access to higher education.

The success of these landmark policies for increasing access to higher education also has important implications for the methods by which lawmakers use public programming to support college students. As government support for higher education has expanded to reach more Americans—irrespective of income or financial need—and as lawmakers have come to rely most heavily on student loans, this form of support now dominates the student aid landscape. Federal grants, on the other hand, represent an ever-dwindling item on the menu of student assistance. In a political context characterized by considerable hostility toward policies that resemble traditional welfare state programs like TANF and food stamps, federally subsidized student loans represent the most politically viable method of redistributing federal funds to assist college students.

Considering the value of higher education for promoting socioeconomic stability and political engagement among the nation's citizens, American lawmakers would do well to find ways to continue expanding higher educational access for citizens and to provide them with support as they pursue college degrees. As would be expected from the prevalence of student loans, American students now face an ever-increasing amount of debt. To decrease the amount of debt that Americans take on when pursuing college degrees, policymakers might consider expanding the availability of federal grants and

scaling back the nation's dependence on student loans. One way to do this would be to adjust the criteria that the government considers when determining students' dependency status and the amount of money that families are expected to allocate toward higher education. Under the current system, regardless of students' actual living situation, most single, childless undergraduate students under the age of 24 are considered financial dependents for the purposes of calculating financial aid rewards. Even if these students are not actually financially supported by their parents, they are required to provide their parents' financial information as they apply for federal financial aid. This system effectively limits the number of students who are eligible for federal grants. Allowing more students to apply for federal aid as independents would render many more students available for this type of aid.

Moving Forward: Continuing the Study of the Feedback Effects of Higher Education Policies

This dissertation contributes to the growing political science literature on public policy feedback, corroborating scholars' previous findings which indicate that policies can shape politics. My empirical analysis has revealed that, by providing valuable resources that promote higher educational attainment, federal higher education policies exert significant feedback effects on the gender dynamics of political engagement. Similarly, I find that by prohibiting sex discrimination in college admissions, Title IX significantly increased women's access to higher education. By providing women with financial aid and gender egalitarian admissions policies that have increased the probability that they will attain high levels of education, U.S. lawmakers have

empowered American women by promoting their socioeconomic and political equality. In the final segments of this chapter, I will consider how we can move beyond these findings to further explore how federal higher education policies have influenced gender equality as well as democracy and citizenship in the United States.

Different Women: Intersectionality and Higher Education Policy

Given the intersectionality of gender, race, class, and age, it is unlikely that federal higher education policies have had an identical influence on all American women. I suspect that the benefits provided by federal student aid programs have been particularly valuable to minority women, whose status as “double minorities” is accompanied by intensified social and economic challenges. As such, it seems plausible that black women and Latinas, for example, would be particularly receptive to higher education policies and particularly sensitive to their feedback effects for civic engagement and political participation. Because of minority women’s early integration into the labor force and their frequent omission from the gendered division of labor that emphasized the virtue of domesticity and “Republican Motherhood,” these women may have been especially amenable to the benefits that completing a college degree could yield. I suspect that programs facilitating access to higher education provided highly valued benefits to minority women, such as increased income and pathways to more prestigious, better paying occupations, as well as positive interactions with the federal government. For women relegated to the margins of society, higher education programs may have also represented an effective anti-poverty mechanism that increased the probability that beneficiaries and their families would achieve socioeconomic stability.

Furthermore, for women who had long been relegated to domestic work, college degrees could yield substantial social mobility, providing access to professions like teaching, social work, and nursing, which were associated with heightened social prestige. Considering the findings of this analysis—especially the valuable resource effects that federal student aid policies have transmitted to all women—it seems likely that such resource effects would be particularly valuable to minority women. Future studies might consider the relationship between federal student aid adoption and women’s political activism during the struggle for civil and women’s rights. In addition to increasing access to higher education, federal higher education programs have facilitated women’s involvement in mass politics. It remains to be seen whether government aid for students shaped the activism of female political elites working in political action committees and in formal governmental institutions, like the United States Congress.

In addition to the importance of federal higher education policies for minority women, the relationship between federal education programs and political engagement for women of different age cohorts represents an area ripe for study. I suspect that, although landmark higher education programs have benefited women of all ages, these policies have been particularly valuable for the younger cohorts of American women. For women in the most senior age cohorts, who came of age during and immediately after the postwar era, the federal government provided virtually no financial aid to women who were interested in pursuing college degrees, and higher educational institutions routinely discriminated against women in their admissions decisions. The cohort of women who entered college in the 1960s enjoyed expanded access to higher education because the

government had passed landmark student aid policies that made federal assistance available to women for the first time. Nonetheless, only the “most qualified” women were able to pursue postsecondary training because gender quotas and other discriminatory admissions policies posed a formidable barrier to women’s equal access to higher education. The youngest cohorts of American women, on the other hand, have enjoyed the combined benefits of federal financial aid and the Title IX prohibition on sex discrimination in college admissions. As such, the federal government took an active and effective role in ensuring that the youngest cohorts of women could pursue higher education if they wished to do so. A generational study of the importance of federal student aid for educational attainment and political engagement could shed light on the feedback effects of federal higher education policies for women across age groups.

Not Your Daddy’s Education Program?: Federal Higher Education Policies and American Men

Following the creation of federal policies expanding women’s access to higher education, we have seen significant change in the status of American men in higher education. A puzzling trend that has occurred in tandem with recent increases in women’s higher educational attainment is a decline in the rate at which men earn bachelor’s degrees. The year 1981 marked the beginning of a significant gender gap, whereby women consistently outpaced men as the recipients of undergraduate degrees. By 2010, women earned 57 percent of Bachelor’s degrees, compared to just under 43 percent for men (NCES 2011). This substantial gender gap in college degree attainment is puzzling, especially when we consider that this dynamic was reversed in the 1960s.

This raises the important question of whether the federal government, in expanding women's access to higher education, has somehow contributed to the significant decline in men's higher educational attainment and, further, their declining political engagement.

Did the passage of Title IX, which overtly promoted women's inclusion in colleges and universities, precipitate the decline in men's higher educational attainment? To be clear, women and men have enjoyed equal access to federal grants and student loans under the programs created by the National Defense Education Act and the Higher Education Act. Moreover, Title IX has not promoted bias against men in higher education; it merely says that there will be no sex discrimination in admissions decisions. Both women and men are covered by that protection. As such, it would be difficult to make the case that Title IX is directly responsible for men's declining presence in higher education. Nonetheless, in making it illegal to discriminate against women in college admissions, the passage of Title IX marked the end of an era in which men were guaranteed a majority of seats at American higher educational institutions. Thus, after 1972, men and women would have to compete for each of those seats. While Title IX is not responsible for the declining presence of men in American colleges, the regulation has contributed to significant societal shifts that have challenged traditional gender norms in higher education.

Title IX has also challenged traditional family norms. As women have obtained higher education in greater numbers, and as they have moved into the public sphere at greater rates, women have come to enjoy greater economic independence than their foremothers. It could be the case that, as women have obtained higher levels of education and the socioeconomic benefits that come with it, the traditional family

structure—which has long placed men in the role of “breadwinner”—has broken down. As a result, men may not feel as compelled to attend college for the purpose of getting high-paying jobs that will provide the primary source of income for their families. Another possibility is that, since the 1980s, high rates of incarceration have contributed to the decreasing rates at which men graduate from college and to their declining political participation. These potential explanations fall beyond the scope of this dissertation; however, on the whole, women’s large-scale movement into higher education appears to have significantly altered the gender dynamics that traditionally governed men’s and women’s family decisions. Understand why men have fallen behind in college degree attainment represents an important puzzle for scholars of political science and public policy.

From Policy to Parity: Higher Education Policy and Increasing Gender Equality in American Politics

Taking seriously the capacity of public policies to reshape citizens as well as the social and political environment, this dissertation has demonstrated that landmark federal higher education programs enacted since the mid-twentieth century have significantly increased American women’s higher educational attainment, while contributing to increasing equality in status in the polity, social citizenship, and political citizenship in terms of gender. This study contributes to the growing literature on policy feedback by providing the first empirical evidence that lawmakers have successfully utilized higher education policy to promote socioeconomic and political equality. In addition to these significant empirical findings, this dissertation also contributes an in-depth historical

analysis that enhances our understanding of the origins and development of landmark higher education programs.

In addition to confirming scholars' finding that higher educational attainment provides a robust predictor of political engagement, this analysis provides insight into the government's role in that relationship, highlighting federal policy as a significant—albeit largely overlooked—intervening variable in political participation. While the G.I. Bill promoted men's political participation in the postwar era, I have shown that subsequently enacted Pell Grants and student loans promoted greater gender parity in American politics by significantly increasing the likelihood that women would obtain higher levels of education.

Although scholars have recognized the positive relationship between higher educational attainment and full citizenship in terms of socioeconomic well-being and political engagement in the United States, few have seriously considered the pivotal role that the federal government has played in determining who has access to higher education. This dissertation contributes to the field of political science by providing the first scholarly analysis of the development of the landmark federal higher education policies enacted since the mid-twentieth century and their influence on the gender dynamics of U.S. citizenship. In doing so, this study has enhanced our understanding of policy feedback, political participation, gender politics, and the politics of inequality. By demonstrating how government provisions for higher education can promote democratic citizenship, this dissertation prompts public policy scholars to adopt a more comprehensive conceptualization of the welfare state. At the same time, it encourages scholars of political behavior to attend to the feedback effects that public policies have on

mass political participation.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Supplementary Tables

Table A.3.1. Interest Groups Active in the Debate over Federal Aid to Education in 1957			
Supporters	# Members	Opponents	# Members
AFL-CIO	15,000,000	American Legion	2,800,000
National Congress of Parents and Teachers	10,130,000	Chamber of Commerce of the U.S.	1,700,000
The General Federation of Women's Clubs ^a	5,500,000	American Farm Bureau Federation	1,623,222
National Education Association	659,190	American Medical Association	150,000
United Mine Workers	600,000	National Assoc. of Real Estate Boards	58,000
Nat'l Assoc. for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)	300,000	National Assoc. of Manufacturers	21,500
National Farmers' Union	274,119	National Economic Council	2,000
Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen	210,708	Southern States Industrial Council	2,000
American Assoc. of University Women	136,738	Investment Bankers Assoc. of America	— ^b
Amer. Veterans of World War II and Korea	125,000	Nat'l Conference of State Taxpayers Assns.	— ^c
National Council of Jewish Women	107,000	Defenders of the American Constitution	— ^d
International Assoc. for Childhood Education	81,000		
American Federation of Teachers (AFL-CIO)	50,000		
Jewish War Veterans	45,000		
Americans for Democratic Action	39,000		
American Assoc. of University Professors	37,000		
Order of Railway Conductors and Brakemen	35,000		
American Vocational Association	32,000		
American Veterans Committee	25,000		
American Home Economics Association	24,000		
American Library Association	20,000		
National Association of Social Workers	20,000		
National Child Labor Committee	13,000		
American Institute of Architects	10,700		
National Consumers League	10,000		
American Assoc. of School Administrators	9,200		
Unitarian Fellowship for Social Justice	400		
American Parents Committee	400		
National Jewish Welfare Board	— ^e		
Council of Chief State School Officers	— ^f		
National School Boards Association	— ^g		
Railway Labor Executives' Association	— ^h		
Cooperative League of the USA	— ⁱ		

Source: "Who's For, Against U.S. School Aid?," *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*. Week ending April 19, 1957, pp. 495-496.

^a The General federation of Women's clubs attended the first meeting of the Conference on Federal Aid to Education, but it did not formally testify in favor of or against federal school aid.

^b 799 banks and investment houses

^c 37 states

^d Membership unavailable

^e 350 Jewish community centers and Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Associations

^f 53 state school officials

^g 43 state school boards

^h 22 chief executive officers of railway labor organizations

ⁱ 20 cooperative organizations

Table A.5.1. Variables Used in Analysis of Social and Governmental Issues and Participation Study Data		
Variable	Range	Coding
Educational Attainment	1-9	As an independent variable: Indicates highest level of education coded into nine categories: (1) less than high school; (2) high school diploma/GED; (3) technical or vocational school; (4) some college; (5) 2 year degree; (6) 4 year degree; (7) Some graduate school; (8) Master's; (9) Ph.D. or professional degree
	1-6	As a dependent variable in ordinal logistic regression models: Indicates highest level of education coded into six categories: (1) less than high school; (2) high school diploma/GED; (3) technical school or some college; (4) 2 year degree; (5) 4 year degree ;(6) Post-college Study/Graduate or professional Degree.
Employment Status	0,1	Indicates whether respondent is employed (1) or not (0).
Employer-Provided Health Plan	0,1	Indicates whether the respondent possesses an employer-provided health plan. Coded as yes (1) or no (0).
Any Higher Education Policy Usage	0,1	A combined variable measuring whether respondents took advantage of one or more of the following programs: Pell Grants, student loans, and the G.I. Bill.
Pell Grant Usage	0,1	Indicates whether respondent ever received Pell Grants (1) or not (0).
Student Loan Usage	0,1	Indicates whether respondent ever received student loans (1) or not (0).
G.I. Bill Usage	0,1	Indicates whether respondent ever received G.I. Bill benefits (1) or not (0).
Gender	0,1	The respondent's gender, coded as 1 for female and 0 for male.
Age	18-92	The respondent's age in years.
Black	0,1	The respondent's racial self-identification. Those identifying as black or African-American are coded as 1; those identifying as white are coded as 0; all others are coded as missing.
Hispanic	0,1	The respondent's racial self-identification. Those identifying as Hispanic are coded as 1, those identifying as white are coded as 0; all others are coded as missing.
Childhood SES	1-5	Respondent's family income compared to others at age 16; ranges from 1 ("Far below average") to 5 ("Far above average").
Income	1-10	Respondent's annual total household income coded into ten categories from 1, which corresponds to less than \$10,000 annually to 10, \$150,000 or more.
Mother's Education	1-9	Indicates mother's highest level of education coded into nine categories: (1) less than high school; (2) high school diploma/GED; (3) technical school; (4) some college, no degree; (5) 2 year degree; (6) 4 year degree ;(7)some post-college education; no degree; (8) Master's degree; (9) Ph.D. or professional degree.
Homeownership	0,1	Whether the respondent is a homeowner (1) or not (0)
Political Information Index	4 parts	Index consisting of respondents' ability to identify the vice president, the branch that determines whether laws are constitutional, the percentage of congressional votes necessary to override a presidential veto, and the party controlling the House of Representatives
Political Efficacy Index	5 parts	Index consisting of feeling that public officials care about citizens' preferences, people like the respondent have a say in government, understanding politics, feeling qualified to participate, and feeling like "full and equal citizens"
Government Opportunity	1-5	Belief that the government has offered opportunities to increase standard of living: coded 1 (strongly disagree) through 5 (strongly agree)
Full Citizenship	1-5	Feeling like a "full and equal citizen," organized into five categories from (1) disagree strongly to (5) agree strongly
Qualified to Participate	1-5	Feeling qualified to participate in politics, organized into five categories from (1) disagree strongly to (5) agree strongly
Owe Back to Country	1-5	Indicates respondents' agreement with the notion of owing back to the country, organized into five categories from (1) disagree strongly to (5) agree strongly

Political Interest	1-4	General interest in government and public affairs coded as 1 (hardly ever) through 4 (most of the time)
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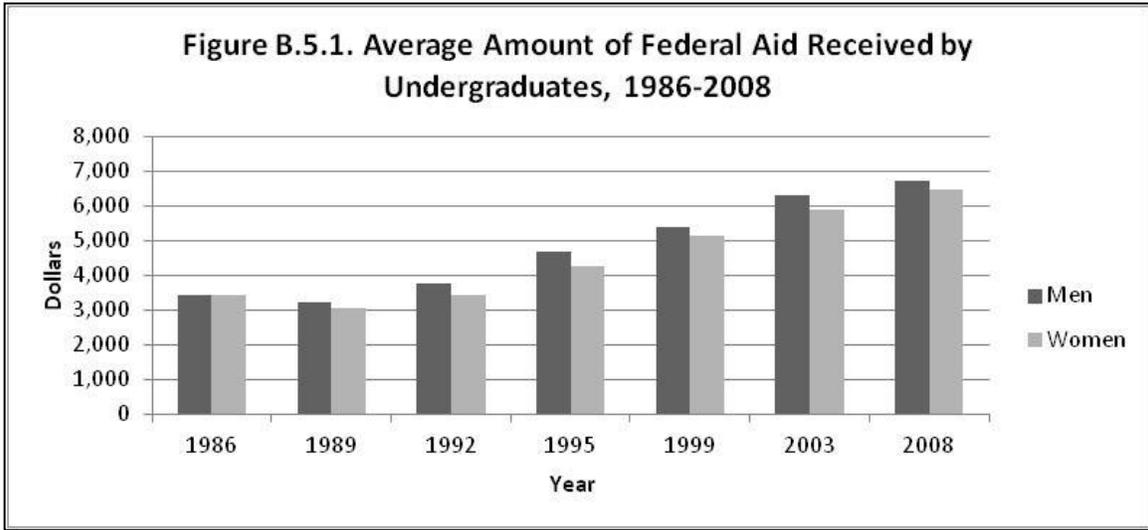
Variable	Range	Coding
Ultimate Education Planned	1-4	Indicates the highest level of education that the student intends to attain, coded into four categories: (1) associate's degree or professional certificate; (2) bachelor's degree; (3) Master's degree/post Master's certificate; (4) Ph.D. or professional degree.
Age	12-76	Indicates the respondent's age on August 1, 2007.
Race (Black)	0,1	Indicates whether the respondent identifies as black (1) or white (0).
Mother's Education	1-6	Mother's highest level of educational attainment: (1) less than high school; (2) high school diploma/G.E.D.; (3) Vocational training/some college; (4) Associate's degree; (5) Bachelor's Degree; (6) Master's/Ph.D./or first professional degree.
Go-Getters	6 parts	A six-part index of student's participation in high school activities that correspond to confidence, ambition, and leadership characteristics: (1) participation in student government; (2) participation in departmental clubs; (3) membership in a high school fraternity or sorority; (4) participation in community service organizations; (5) membership in a special interest group; (6) received any type of leadership award. Each individual activity is represented by a dichotomous variable.
Federal Student Aid Usage	0,1	A combined variable measuring whether respondents took advantage of one or more of the following programs: Pell Grants, Stafford Loans, Perkins Loans, and veterans' benefits.

Variable	Range	Coding
Gender	0, 1	The respondent's gender, coded as 1 for female and 0 for male.
Age Group	1-6	Indicates the respondent's age bracket, coded into six groups: (1) 16 years old or younger, (2) 17 years old, (3) 18 years old, (4) 19 years old, (5) 20 years old, and (6) age 21 or older.
Black	0,1	The respondent's racial self-identification. Those identifying as black or African-American are coded as 1; those identifying as white are coded as 0; all others are coded as missing.
Parent's Income	1-14	Indicates parent's annual income, by brackets ranging from (1) "less than \$6,000" to (14) "\$200,000 or more".
Mother's Education	1-5	Indicates mother's highest level of educational attainment: (1) less than grammar school/some high school, (2) high school graduate, (3) non-degree postsecondary training/some college, (4) college degree/some graduate school, (5) graduate or professional degree
Go-Getters Index	5 parts	Index consisting of respondent's self-assessment of competitiveness, drive to achieve, leadership ability, intellectual self-confidence, and social self-confidence relative to peers.
Any Higher Education Policy Usage	0,1	Indicates whether respondent has used one or more of the following federal student aid policies: Pell Grants, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOGs), work-study, Stafford Loans (GSL), Perkins Loans (NDSL), or "Other federal student aid". Affirmative responses are coded as 1, negative responses as (0).

Table A.6.1. Variables Used in Analysis of Social and Governmental Issues and Participation Study Data

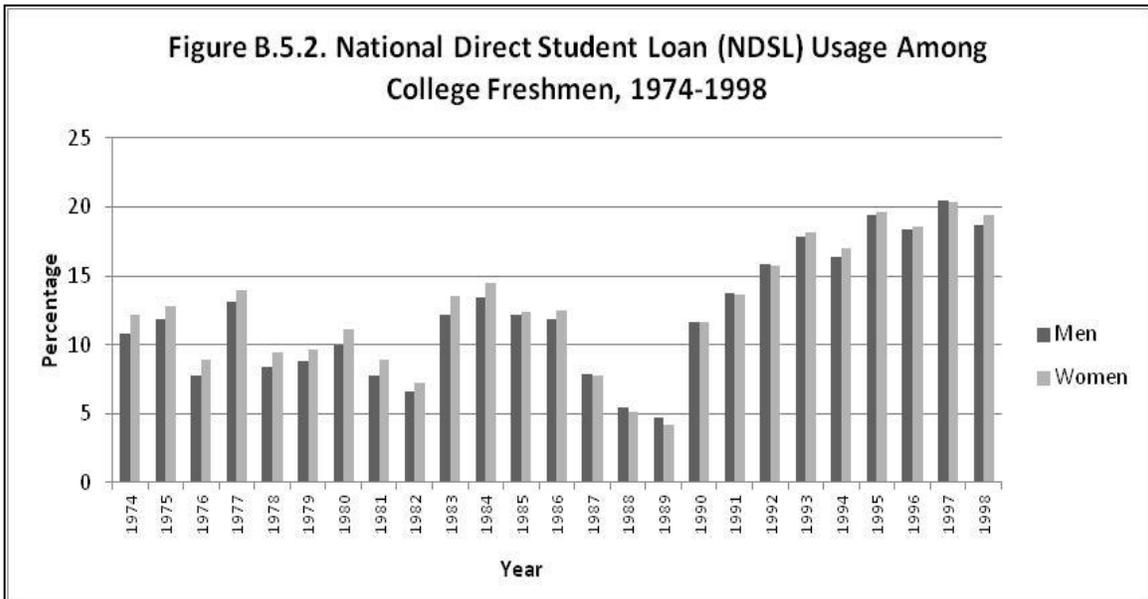
Variable	Range	Coding
Female	0,1	The respondent's gender, coded as 1 for female and 0 for male.
Age	18-92	The respondent's age in years.
Black	0,1	The respondent's racial self-identification. Those identifying as black or African-American are coded as 1; those identifying as white are coded as 0; all others are coded as missing.
Hispanic	0,1	The respondent's racial self-identification. Those identifying as Hispanic are coded as 1, those identifying as white are coded as 0; all others are coded as missing.
Childhood SES	1-5	Respondent's family income compared to others at age 16; ranges from 1 ("Far below average") to 5 ("Far above average").
Income	1-10	Respondent's annual total household income coded into ten categories from 1, which corresponds to less than \$10,000 annually to 10, \$150,000 or more.
Mother's Education	1-9	Indicates mother's highest level of education coded into nine categories: (1) less than high school; (2) high school diploma/GED; (3) technical school; (4) some college, no degree; (5) 2 year degree; (6) 4 year degree ;(7)some post-college education; no degree; (8) Master's degree; (9) Ph.D. or professional degree.
Educational Attainment	1-9	As an independent variable: Indicates highest level of education coded into nine categories: (1) less than high school; (2) high school diploma/GED; (3) technical or vocational school; (4) some college; (5) 2 year degree; (6) 4 year degree; (7) Some graduate school; (8) Master's; (9) Ph.D. or professional degree
Veteran	0,1	Indicates whether the respondent has served in the armed forces (1) or not (0).
Any Higher Education Policy Usage	0,1	A combined variable measuring whether respondents took advantage of one or more of the following programs: Pell Grants, student loans, and the G.I. Bill.
Predicted Higher Education Policy Usage	0-1	Propensity scores representing the probability that the respondent would adopt Pell Grant, student loan, or G.I. Bill benefits.
Voting in Presidential Elections	1-5	Rate of voting in presidential elections: (1) "Never voted", (2) "Rarely voted", (3) "Voted in some", (4) "Voted in most", (5) "Voted in all".
Campaigned	0,1	Indicates whether respondent ever volunteered on a political campaign (1) or not (0).
Contributed	0,1	Indicates whether respondent ever donated money to a political candidate or cause (1) or not (0).
Contacted	0,1	Indicates whether respondent ever contacted a government official (1) or not (0).
Protested	0,1	Indicates whether respondent ever participated in a protest or march (1) or not (0).
Political Participation Index	4 parts	Index consisting of whether respondents have ever volunteered on a political campaign, donated money to a political candidate or cause, contacted a government official, and participated in a protest or march.
Political Efficacy Index	5 parts	Index consisting of feeling that public officials care about citizens' preferences, people like the respondent have a say in government, understanding politics, feeling qualified to participate, and feeling like "full and equal citizens"
Political Interest	1-4	Indicates the respondent's level of interest in politics: (1) "Hardly at all", (2) "Only now and then", (3) "Some of the time", (4) "Most of the time".

Appendix B: Supplementary Figures



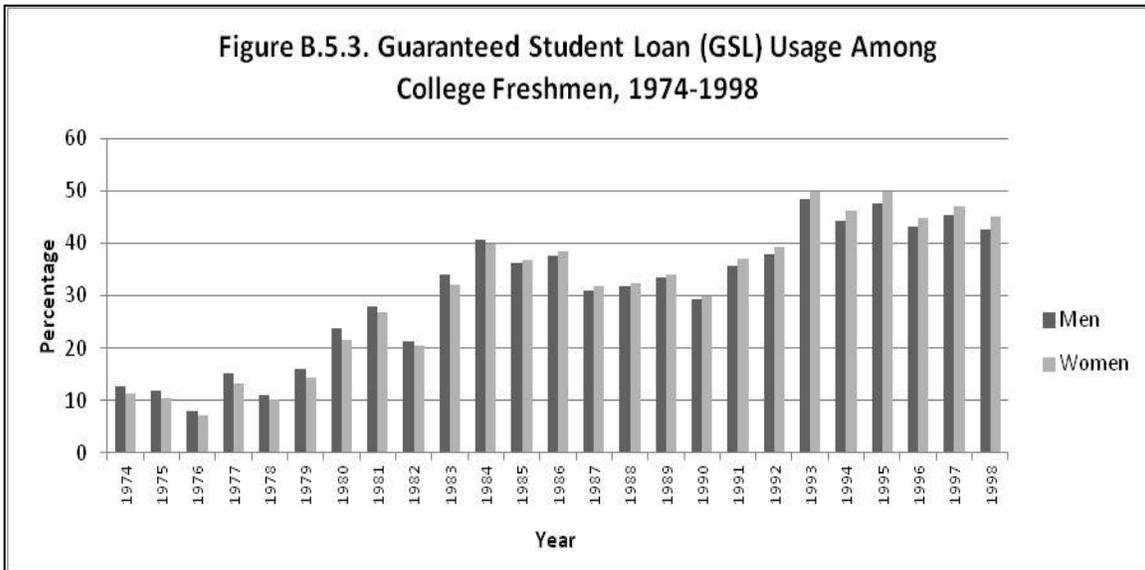
Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS)

Notes: Dollar amounts are given in current dollars, thus reflecting actual amounts prevailing during specified years.



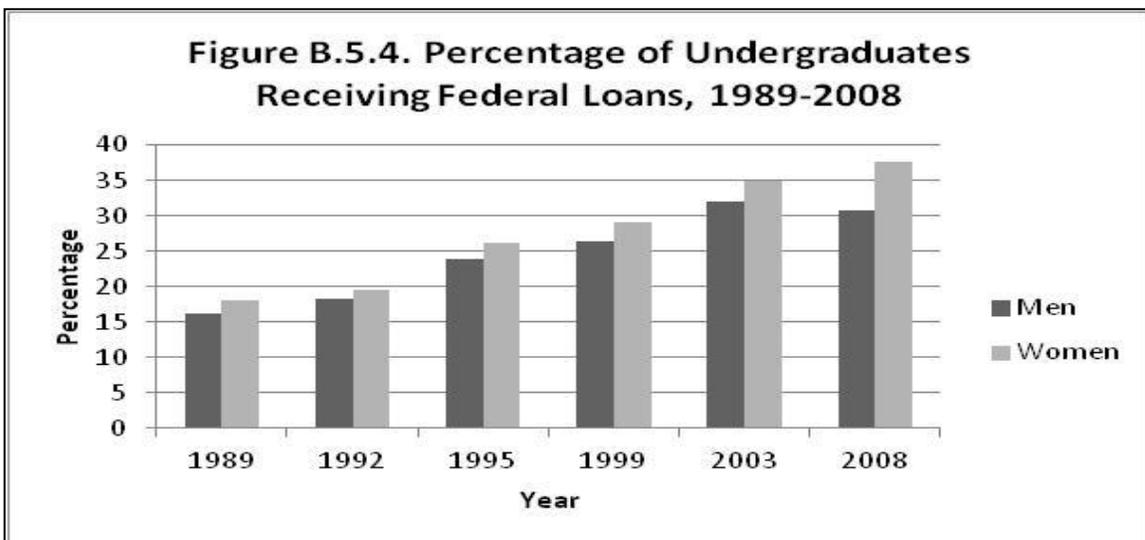
Source: Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey

Notes: These gender differences are statistically significant at $\alpha=0.001$.

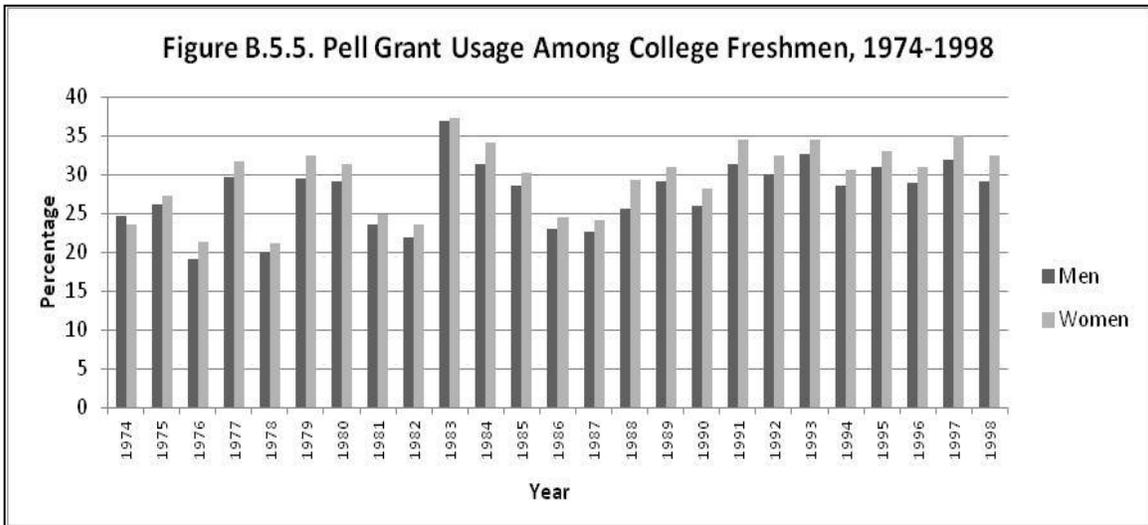


Source: Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey

Notes: These gender differences are statistically significant at $\alpha=0.001$.

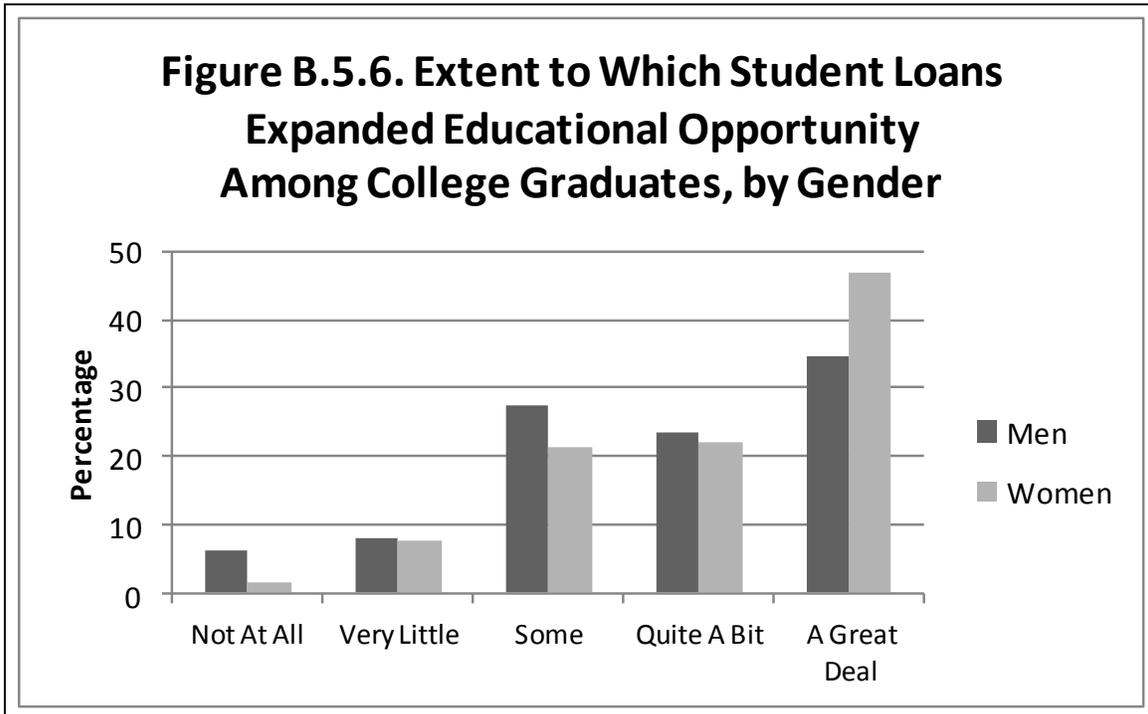


Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS)



Source: Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey

Notes: These gender differences are statistically significant at $\alpha=0.001$.



Source: The Social and Governmental Issues and Participation (SGIP) Study

Notes: These gender differences do not reach statistical significance.

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