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Making Politics Personal: Leadership Programs as a Tool for Developing Political Interest and Efficacy in Young Women

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Making Politics Personal: Leadership Programs as a Tool for Developing Political Interest and Efficacy in Young Women

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University of Missouri–St. Louis in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

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<u>Advisory Committee:</u>

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Abstract

Encouraging young women to pursue careers in electoral politics is seen

as one strategy for ameliorating the gender disparity that has characterized

American political institutions for decades. This multi-method project focuses

on outcomes obtained by participants in four "NEW Leadership™" Training

Institutes that claim to "educate and empower the next generation of women

leaders." Using original survey data from 2011, participant observations, and

interviews with program alumnae, I explore the relationship between

program participation and political interest and efficacy. The findings suggest

that graduates of the NEW Leadership™ program report increased knowledge

of women in politics and methods for participating in politics. They express

greater confidence in speaking to elected officials, and are more likely to

contact an elected official to voice their opinion on an issue. They are more

confident in their ability to affect change related to issues that matter to them.

Most importantly, they leave the program more likely to run for public office.

Acknowledgements

I've often maintained that pursuing a Ph.D. is a lot like running, and it's more a marathon than a sprint. The distance may seem daunting at first, but if you put the miles in day after day, eventually you'll cross the finish line. Some days you could run forever; other days you just have to grind it out. It's your mind that will determine whether or not you keep going, and it's always easier to keep going when people are cheering you on.

I owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Farida Jalalzai, who was a fabulous dissertation advisor and will continue to be a role model and friend. I also wish to thank the members of my dissertation committee, Dr. Brady Baybeck, Dr. David Kimball, and Dr. Christina Wolbrecht for their collective wisdom and willingness to help me finish what I started so many years ago.

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This project would not have been possible without the cooperation of the NEW Leadership™ Development Network, specifically Dr. Sasha Patterson, Debbie Walsh and Dr. Kelly Dittmar at CAWP; Cindy Holodnak, Dr. Stacia Kock and Liz Shirey at The Ohio State University; and Summer Burke at UNLV. I appreciate the warm welcome I received at each of your programs, and am inspired by your tireless efforts to encourage women's leadership.

I extend my deepest gratitude to my friends and family members, some of whom had no idea what I was doing but loved me enough to ask about my progress anyway. Heartfelt thanks to Vivian Eveloff at the Sue Shear Institute for Women in Public Life, Dr. Gloria Galanes at Missouri State University, and my fellow graduate students in political science for their support. I also acknowledge Dr. Sarah Brewer, who nudged me to get started, and Dr. Valerie Hennings who provided valuable advice along the way.

Mom and Dad, thanks for giving me the confidence to pursue my dreams, no matter how unconventional they may seem to you. Sudarsan, thank you for reminding me not to take myself too seriously, and for allowing me to read aloud to you while I was writing. It helped. I was inspired throughout by the support of my grandfather, Lloyd Stock. Grandpa, I'm proud to share this with you.

Finally, this dissertation is dedicated to my nephews, Cameron and Garrett, my niece, Rachel, and Brigita. May your lifetime see shared leadership between women and men that is reflective of the population and brings us closer to a truly representative democracy.

Making Politics Personal: Leadership Programs as a Tool for Developing Political Interest and Efficacy in Young Women

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Chapter 1
Introduction

Jasmine Davis* has a master's degree in social work and a law degree

from Northeastern University Law School in Boston. She knew when she

attended the NEW Leadership™ program in 2007 that she wanted to go to law

school, but attributes the program with sparking her passion for public service.

"…Being exposed to women in politics who had made a career out of it really

increased my interest," she said. Jasmine now puts the likelihood that she will

run for office in the next 10 years at 60 to 70%. Her long-term goal is to become a

district court judge, but she doesn't discount the possibility of running for

another public office.

Leata Long is a teacher for Teach for America-Metro Atlanta Corps. When

she attended the NEW Leadership™ program in 2010, she was hoping to get an

idea of what she could do – now and later – to effect change in her community

from the vantage point of education, and she found it. "I have an education

background and with that in mind I never thought I could go down the path of

politics, but hearing the panelists and learning how people got into politics and

public policy made it more tangible," she said. Now Leata plans to teach for a bit

and then shift her focus to the political arena.

Ashley Paine went to an all-girls high school where, she says, the

importance of women leaders had been "drilled into my head," so she was well-

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* Not her real name. Names have been changed throughout for privacy purposes.

prepared when she attended NEW Leadership™ as a rising sophomore at The Ohio State University. Even so, Ashley says that she gained a "ton of confidence" at the program, returning to campus to serve as vice president, and later president, of the student body. She is currently pursuing a master's degree in criminal justice, and plans to pursue a career with the CIA or FBI. When asked about the prospect of running for office she says, "I think that's definitely in the future for me."

Jasmine, Leata and Ashley are just three of the over 4,000 college women to have participated in a "NEW Leadership™" program since 1991. NEW Leadership™ is an annual six-day, campus-based, residential training institute that focuses on women's civic engagement. Graduates of the program are serving in state legislatures and hold leadership positions on state political committees; they are working on Capitol Hill and in the White House; they have started civic organizations; and, like the women above, many attribute their skills and inspiration to NEW Leadership™.

While these stories make a compelling case for the success of NEW Leadership™, they obscure the fact that Jasmine, Leata and Ashley may have eventually found a passion for public service even if the program were not in existence. Furthermore, the ambitions and accomplishments of select graduates may not be representative of the majority of participants. A more critical perspective is justified.

This dissertation measures the effectiveness of the NEW Leadership™

Training Institute model as a vehicle for putting young women in the "political

pipeline." It critically and empirically examines the assumption that political

ambition can be developed through formal, institutional channels. Do

participants leave NEW Leadership™ with a heightened sense that they can

"make a difference"? Are young women who participate "educated and

empowered" as the programs claim? Do feelings of empowerment translate into

enhanced political ambition and careers in positions of political influence? This

project engages these questions in a systematic, rather than anecdotal way, and

concludes that the NEW Leadership™ program does, in fact, instill young

women with skills and confidence that not only prepare them for public service,

but inspire them to pursue it.

The Central Argument

The case for women's representation, and the importance of studying it, is

one that gender scholars are obliged to make. The normative argument hinges –

primarily – on two aspects of representation: the substantive, and the symbolic

(Lawless 2004; Lawless and Fox 2005). Substantively speaking, the presence of

women in positions of political influence increases the likelihood that salient

gender issues will be addressed (Diamond 1977; Thomas 1994; Burrell 1998).

Women are more likely than men to advance legislation that takes into account

women's concerns around issues of health care, education, and equality (Dolan

2001; Caiazza 2002). In addition, women's varied life experiences often result in

their having a different perspective than their male colleagues; they bring a "different voice" to the legislative process (Thomas 1994; Rosenthal 1998).

Symbolic representation emphasizes the attitudinal and behavior effects that accrue in women citizens from the presence of women in positions of political power (Mansbridge 1999; Lawless 2004). Scholars argue that the symbolic effect of electing women to office leads to mobilizing effects (Hansen 1997; Sapiro and Conover 1997; Verba, Burns and Schlozman 1997; Atkeson 2003; Reingold and Harrell 2010) more positive feelings about democracy (Schwindt-Bayer 2010) and development of a "gender consciousness," the "recognition that one's relationship to the political world is at least partly but nonetheless particularly shaped by being female or male" (Tolleson-Rinehart 1992, 32).

The persistent underrepresentation of women numerically, therefore, has implications for the extent to which women's policy concerns will be addressed, and the perception women have about the representativeness of our democracy. It is with this in mind that I approach the issue of young women's political ambition. Without sufficient numbers of women "in the pipeline" to pursue positions of power and authority in the political arena, there is concern that they may never achieve representation in numbers that reflect adequately their share of the population.

Encouraging young women to pursue careers in electoral politics is seen as one strategy for ameliorating the gender disparity that has characterized political institutions for decades. In April 2000, the White House Project

Education Fund[1] commissioned a study to identify ways to help young women "envision a greater participatory and leadership role for themselves in the public realm" (5). The objective of the research program[2] was to mine young people's perceptions of political leadership, assess their perception of barriers to women and youth, and identify tactics and messages to engage young women in the political process.

Among the recommendations advanced by the study, the researchers concluded that "the most effective role that organizations seeking to involve more women in running for elected office can play is in providing mentoring, training, advice, and models for young women to follow" (27).

There is an implicit assumption that providing mentoring, training, advice and models will stimulate in young women the political interest and efficacy that are precursors to political ambition and participation. Political interest represents a connection or engagement with politics. It can be demonstrated by a stated commitment and active pursuit on behalf of a particular concern, or take a more passive form such as following current events or a range of political, constitutional and international issues (White, Bruce and Ritchie 2000). Political efficacy reflects a sense of competence, and the belief that one can participate

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[1] The White House Project Education Fund is a project of the Women's Leadership Fund, an initiative dedicated to enhancing public perceptions of women's capacity to lead, changing biases against women's leadership ability, and fostering the entry of women into positions of leadership.

[2] The study was conducted by Lake Snell Perry & Associates (2000) and Youth Intelligence. The first phase of the study included 11 focus groups of young women ages 18-24, held in four cities in February 2000. Information from the focus groups was used to develop a telephone survey that was administered to 800 young people nationwide (600 women and 200 men, also ages 18-24) in March 2000.

successfully in civic life. Both are necessary for political mobilization because without interest, one may possess the skills to participate but choose not to, and without efficacy, one may wish to participate but be unsure of where to begin.

For reasons that will be discussed, more men than women aspire to and seek positions of political influence. Men, it is often assumed, are groomed for positions of political leadership in much the same way they are taught to succeed in other fields; through informal networks and mentoring. Even at a young age, however, women are less interested in politics than their male peers, raising concerns that future generations will fail to close the gap without some sort of intervention.

Putting Representation in Context

Historically, young people of both sexes have been the least likely to participate in electoral politics at even the most fundamental level, voting (CIRCLE 2008; Wattenberg 2008). The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (Godsay and Kirby 2010) reports that youth voter turnout in 2008 was the highest in history, with over 20 million 18-29 year-old citizens voting in the Presidential election. This record turnout, however, still represented only 51.1% of eligible voters in this age cohort, markedly less than the turnout for those over 30 which topped 66%.[3] The results of recent Republican Presidential primaries reinforce the age gap in voting. Though the

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[3] According to The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), in the 2008 presidential election, 48.5% of 18-24 year old citizens voted compared to 70% of citizens 65 and older (Kirby and Kawashima-Ginsberg 2009).

reported voter turnout was dismal across all age groups, the share of under-30

primary goers topped out at a mere 15% in Iowa. The under-30 share of primary

goers in other states was lower: 12% in New Hampshire, 9% in South Carolina,

and 6% in Florida.[4] Youth engagement beyond voting, such as working on

campaigns or even following politics in the news, has been markedly lower

among youth than older generations as well (Colby et al 2007, 33).

A recent CIRCLE report stresses the heterogeneity of the "Millennial

Generation," as this cohort is often referred. In a cluster analysis of data from the

Current Population Survey, CIRCLE identified six broad groups of 18-29 year-

old youth differentiated by patterns and levels of civic engagement in 2008 and

2010 (Kawashima-Ginsberg 2011). Three clusters were common to both years:

the "Broadly Engaged," young people likely to participate in all types of civic

and political behaviors and vote at very high rates; "Political Specialists,"

characterized by moderately high political participation but relatively low

service engagement; and the "Civically Alienated," young people almost

completely disengaged from political and civic life. Political Specialists (19.3%)

comprised the dominant cluster in 2008, reflecting clearly the excitement around

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[4] Young people are, however, more likely to identify as Democrat than Republican which partially explains lower voter turnout among this group in the 2012 Republican primaries. National Election Poll (NEP) exit poll data from 2008 indicates that 38% of men and 51% of women under 30 self-identified as Democrat, versus 27% of men and 25% of women who self-identified as Republican. The rest self-identified as Independent or "something else." Nonetheless, turnout in the 2008 Presidential Primaries which featured races on both major party tickets, averaged roughly 13% among eligible voters under 30, far less than other age groups (Godsay and Kirby 2010).

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the presidential election. In contrast, the most salient cluster in 2010 was the Civically Alienated (23.2%).

While the demographic breakdown revealed notable educational and economic gaps across clusters, the differences by gender were modest. Table 1.1 shows the cluster break-down by gender. In 2008, a higher percentage of young women were in the Political Specialist cluster than young men and the same held for the Broadly Engaged. Slightly more than 14% of women fell into the category of Civically Alienated, compared to 18.2% of men.

Table 1.1. Cluster break-down by gender, 2008 and 2010 (percent)

	Civically Alienated	*Broadly Engaged*	*Political Specialists*
2008			
All youth	16.1	19.0	19.3
Male	18.2	16.3	18.3
Female	14.2	21.5	20.3
2010			
All youth	23.2	21.3	17.5
Male	25.0	19.3	18.6
Female	21.5	23.2	16.6

SOURCE: Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, 2011.

The gender breakdown was different in 2010, but only slightly. Men were more represented in the Political Specialist cluster than women, but a larger

share of men also fell into the Civically Alienated cluster. The largest share of women were Broadly Engaged.

Despite slight differences, the data nonetheless suggest that young women are as, or more, engaged than young men. On their face, these data are encouraging, and would seem to bode well for women's political representation. This assumes, however, that these trends persist into adulthood and there is evidence that they do not.

Recent data from the American National Election Studies (ANES) suggest significant differences in the media men and women use to engage politically, and their levels of political interest. Table 1.2 illustrates that similar percentages of women and men followed the 2008 campaign on TV and in newspapers. But as shown in Table 1.3, the gender gap with respect to listening to campaign radio programs and reading magazine articles – activities which require a greater investment of time and attention than watching a TV ad or skimming a newspaper article - was significant.

Table 1.2. Gender Differences in Political Engagement: TV and newspapers, 2008 (percent)

	Percent		*Difference*	
Political Engagement				
	Male (n=507)	Female (n=559)	t-statistic (DF=1064)	p-value
Listened to campaign radio programs	57	45	3.66	0.0003**
Read magazine articles on the campaign	30	26	1.65	0.10*

*p<.10   **p<.001

SOURCE: ANES 2008 Time Series Study. University of Michigan, Center for Political Studies.

Table 1.3. Gender Differences in Political Engagement: Radio and Magazines, 2004 (percent)

	Percent		*Difference*	
Political Engagement				
Watched campaign on TV	Male (n=443)	Female (n=600)	t-statistic (DF=1041)	p-value
	86	88	0.71	0.48
Read about campaign in newspapers	Male (n=341)	Female (n=459)	t-statistic (DF=798)	p-value
	69	65	1.18	0.24

SOURCE: ANES 2008 Time Series Study. University of Michigan, Center for Political Studies.

Questions about radio and magazines were not asked in the 2008 panel study,

but in 2004, men were far more likely than women to listen to campaign radio

programs (a 12% difference), and also reported that they read magazine articles

about campaigns more frequently.

Measures of political interest reported in Table 1.4 further substantiate the

gendered habits of men and women related to political engagement.

Table 1.4. Gender Differences in Political Interest, 2008 (percent)

	Percent		*Difference*	
	Male (n=999)	Female (n=1324)	t-statistic (DF=2321)	p-value
General Interest in Public Affairs				
Most of the time	36	25	5.60	0.0001**
Some of the time	30	33	-1.49	.0136
Only now and then	9	12	-2.40	0.02*
Hardly at all	5	7	-2.11	0.03*
Interest in the current campaign				
Very much/extremely interested	50	47	1.25	.211
Not much interested	9	11	1.67	0.09^
Care who wins presidential election				
Don't care/don't know	21	18	1.49	0.14
Care a good deal	79	82	1.49	0.14

^p<.10   *p<.05   **p<.001

SOURCE: ANES 2008 Time Series Study. University of Michigan, Center for Political Studies.

With respect to general interest in public affairs, 36% of men report having

a general interest "most of the time," compared to only 25% of women, and this

difference is statistically significant at the .0001 level. This measure probed the

respondents' likelihood of following what's going on in government and public

affairs regardless of whether or not it was an election season. Also significant:

The proportion of women who reported being interested "only now and then,"

12%, or "hardly at all," 7%, are higher than the proportion of men who reported

the same.   Finally, a higher percentage of women said that they were "not much

interested" in the 2008 campaign than men.

Surprisingly, depressed interest and engagement do not correlate with

decreased levels of participation in campaign-related tasks. The data in Table 1.5

suggest that among political activists, there are no statistically significant gender

differences in terms of influencing how others vote, attending a political meeting,

working for a party or candidate, making political contributions and displaying a

button, sticker or yard sign. [5] While men report higher levels of participation in a

few activities, such as influencing how others vote, the differences are slight and

insignificant. These results reinforce the notion that women are comfortable in

supporting roles, such as working on a campaign or urging others to support a

particular candidate or issue.

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[5] It is important to resist, however, overstating the narrowing gap in participation when such a small percentage of the total population – women and men – claim to have participated in these activities at all. Only 7% of the survey respondents indicated that they gave money to a candidate; only 3% worked on a campaign. Activists possess an intense level of interest that leads them to volunteer time and money for a political cause. They represent a small segment of the population.

Table 1.5. Gender Differences in Campaign Participation, 2008 (percent).

	Percent		Difference	
	Male (n=902)	Female (n=1200)	t-statistic (DF=2100)	p-value
Tried to influence how others vote^	45	42	1.50	0.13
Attended a political meeting	10	9	0.66	0.51
Worked for a party or candidate	4	5	1.27	0.21
Wore a button or put a sticker on the car	19	21	0.81	0.42
Gave money to help party or candidate^^	11	11	0.38	0.70

^female n-1199 and DF=2099
^female n=1199 and DF=2099
^^male n=900 and DF=2098

SOURCE: ANES 2008 Time Series Study. University of Michigan, Center for Political Studies.

One very important measure of political participation that is missing from the ANES data, however, is running for office. Though most studies have failed to uncover evidence of voter bias for or against women candidates (Seltzer, Newman and Leighton 1997; Dolan 2004; Fox 2006; Palmer and Simon 2006; Sanbonmatsu 2006a) the gender disparity in the candidate pool for public office is well-documented. One factor that may influence a woman's decision to run is political ambition. In 2001, Jennifer Lawless and Richard Fox (2005, 2010) conducted a comprehensive empirical analysis of political ambition, surveying

over 4,000 men and women in fields recognized as feeder occupations for political candidacy. They conclude that women are less likely than men to have ever considered running for office, and those who entertain the thought often talk themselves out of it for fear that they cannot compete (also Sanbonmatsu 2006b).

A follow-up study in 2011 suggests that little has changed over the last decade. Using a new sample of potential candidates, Lawless and Fox (2012) find that men are still 16 percentage points more likely to have considered running for office, and almost 60% more likely to assess themselves as "very qualified" to run for office. Furthermore, women are approximately 50% more likely than men to think it "very unlikely" that they would win their first race.

Taken together, the findings of the ANES and the Citizen Political Ambition Study reveal an American polity that is dividing along gender lines when it comes to important aspects of political engagement. Though a woman is as likely as a man to participate in a political campaign, it's unlikely to be her own. She is only slightly more likely to hold a state level cabinet position, which would give her considerable influence over state policy priorities (Women's Campaign Forum Foundation 2007). Most troubling is the fact that the "barriers to entry" are now largely internal. Vestiges of the "good ol' boy" network still exist, to be sure, but in some respects, it's the perception of exclusion that keeps women from even considering what they might have to offer.

When women serve in positions of political leadership, their presence is not only felt through differing policy preferences and leadership styles. Their presence extends a level of legitimacy to government, giving – in this case - other women, a way to relate to it. As Jane Mansbridge (1999, 650) explains so eloquently: "Seeing proportional numbers of members of their group exercising the responsibility of ruling with full status in the legislature can enhance de facto legitimacy by making citizens, and particularly members of historically underrepresented groups, feel as if they themselves were present in the deliberations." Mansbridge stresses that she is speaking of relations among and between groups, and not of individual "psychological effects" that are the product of what she calls "descriptive surrogate representation" (651). Other scholars, including Burrell (1994, 151), have addressed the individual effects directly: "Women in public office stand as symbols for other women, both enhancing their identification with the system and their ability to have influence within it."

Though the CIRCLE data suggests that young women are as or more engaged than their male peers when it comes to politics, the important work of Lawless and Fox (2005, 2010, 2012) is a reminder that men are far more likely to exercise the ambition necessary to pursue political leadership. In order to approximate political parity, this issue will need to be addressed. The gender gap in political leadership will close when women collectively develop a sense of political agency on par with men, and individuals of both genders recognize the

legitimacy of a democracy that is wholly representative. The latter can only be

achieved over time, but the former can be expedited through efforts to develop

political ambition in women. That is the focus of this research.

Is NEW Leadership™ the Answer?

This project assesses institutional efforts to intensify political interest and

efficacy among young women by exposing them to women leaders in public life

who – among other things - serve as symbols of inclusion, relevance and

legitimacy in government. Given the glacial pace of progress towards political

parity, organizations like the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers

University and the Sue Shear Institute for Women in Public Life at UM-St. Louis,

have introduced programs to cultivate political ambition in college women with

the goal of putting them "in the pipeline" to political leadership. This study is an

unprecedented empirical attempt to understand if and how these programs

work.

Two important questions shape the foundation of this investigation:

1) Does exposure to mentoring, training, advice and role models increase young

women's political interest and efficacy? and 2) If so, how? In addition to

measuring the effectiveness of existing political leadership programs, I aim to

deepen the collective understanding of the causal mechanisms that precipitate

heightened ambition. Representation theory suggests that symbolic effects are

one explanation, so programs that leverage women leaders to inspire future

women's leadership are fertile grounds for inquiry. It is not enough, however, to

verify whether or not such efforts produce the desired outcome; in order to replicate the effects, one needs to know what to replicate. The second question, therefore, is as important as the first.

Scope of the Study

As the above section illustrates, I am asking specific questions with respect to young women's political ambition: Does participation in the NEW Leadership™ program lead to increased political interest and efficacy? And if so, how? As noted earlier, both interest and efficacy are necessary for political mobilization because efficacy without interest is essentially wasted, and interest without efficacy may leave one unsure of how to engage effectively.

As constructs, interest and efficacy are difficult to observe, unless they are made manifest through political participation. While encouraging women to consider careers in politics is an explicit goal of the NEW Leadership™ program, whether or not participants pursue political leadership is beyond the scope of this inquiry. I do not track outcomes. At no point do I claim that participants in NEW Leadership™ run for office more often than their non-participating peers, only that they report that they are more likely to do so in the future. Thus, my analysis is based on self-reported levels of interest and efficacy before and after the program.

I am also interested in the specific curricular components that help explain the survey findings, and use interviews with program graduates to gain insight into the elements of the NEW Leadership™ program that they found most

valuable. Here again, the aim of the interviews is not to track graduates and their activities to see if they have applied what they learned at NEW Leadership™. It is only to gain a more complete picture of how NEW Leadership™ influenced them, and in particular, how the interactions with women leaders serving as faculty shaped their views of themselves, their capabilities, and the opportunities open to them should they choose to pursue careers in politics.

Finally, I have been asked whether the curriculum for these training programs is rooted in feminist pedagogy. Are young women taught to play politics "like men" or empowered to lead with strengths that may be particular to their gender? Are they taught how to "work the system" or challenge and change the system? These questions are valid, but again, they are beyond the scope of my project.

The Theory of Representation

The essential questions that frame this study extend from the theory of representation. Arguably complex, representation has been conceptualized as consisting of four distinct, yet interrelated, dimensions: the formal, the descriptive, the substantive and the symbolic (Pitkin 1967). I entertain a more thorough discussion of representation in chapter 2, but since substantive and symbolic representation were referenced earlier, I will elaborate on them briefly here.

Substantive representation implies agency. It refers to the extent to which representatives "act for" the interests of a particular group, encompassing the "policy and procedural differences" that women may bring to the political process (Lawless 2004). Symbolic representation concerns the attitudinal and psychological effects conferred to citizens when they see someone like themselves in power. In the case of women, seeing other women in positions of political leadership may impart feelings of inclusion and, as mentioned earlier, legitimacy.

If one accepts the normative assumption that the substantive and symbolic effects of representation are fundamentally positive, then equal representation is a desirable status quo. This study places emphasis on the theoretical conception of symbolic representation, as feelings of political empowerment are passed from one generation of women leaders to the next. The other three dimensions of representation, however, are equally important. In order for women to be in a position to make substantive changes, they have to be elected (formal representation) in sufficient numbers (descriptive representation) to have influence. To the extent that their presence stimulates feelings of interest and efficacy in young women (symbolic representation), more women are likely to follow in their footsteps.

This integrated approach to representation informs the four hypotheses that are tested in this study. They are described in the section below.

An Empirical Study of Efforts to Empower Young Women

My research tests the notion that mentoring, training, advice and role models are the keys to increasing young women's political ambition. I argue that exposing college women to an environment where women candidates and leaders are the norm leads to enhanced political interest and efficacy. Through mentoring and teaching, we can positively influence students' confidence and sense that they can make a difference in the political world.

To test this, I analyze the beliefs and political behaviors of participants in four NEW Leadership™ Training Institutes offered around the country. Faculty for the programs is comprised of women elected officials, business leaders and political professionals who offer advice and mentoring to the students in a quasi-informal setting. It is hypothesized that interaction and direct exposure to women leaders results in increased confidence and political participation among the young women attendees.

Four hypotheses are tested in this study. All measure participation in the NEW Leadership™ program as a catalyst for increased political engagement:

Hypothesis 1.   Students who complete NEW Leadership™ programs will report increased interest in politics.

Hypothesis 2.   Students who complete NEW Leadership™ programs will demonstrate higher levels of internal efficacy, evidenced by increased knowledge of women's participation in politics and methods for participating in politics.

Hypothesis 3.   Students who complete NEW Leadership™ programs will demonstrate higher levels of external efficacy.

Hypothesis 4.   Graduates of NEW Leadership™ programs will indicate an increase in the likelihood that they will pursue elected office or another position of political influence.

Since the goal of this project is to examine the outcomes and causal influences of the NEW Leadership™ program, a program evaluation format is conceptually useful. In the context of most program evaluations, the "stakeholder" groups include department heads or executive directors, program administrators and staff, board members, funders; anyone accountable for a program's success. Since the objective of this program evaluation is to increase understanding of institutional efforts to stimulate young women's political ambition, the stakeholder group is expanded to include the community of scholars for whom this is a topic of interest. While the findings of this study certainly have important implications for NEW Leadership™ program directors, the aims of this project are broader.

A theory-driven outcome evaluation framework was appropriate to assess the relationship between participation in NEW Leadership™ and political ambition and provide insight into the hypothesized effects. I used a multi-method approach to inform the analysis, utilizing the strengths of quasi-experimental design, original survey research, participant observations and semi-structured interviews to examine if and how NEW Leadership™ works.

Definition of Terms

This section outlines some of the commonly referenced terms and concepts used throughout the study.

Political interest. I derive my definition of political interest from the ANES measures related to interest in public affairs which probe a person's tendency to "follow what's going on in government and public affairs.[6]" My view is a bit more expansive, however, in that I believe that interest can also take the form of stated or demonstrated commitment or action on behalf of a particular issue. Whether active or passive, interest implies a connection or engagement to politics.

Internal and External Efficacy. Researchers have identified a strong correlation between efficacy and civic participation (Kahne and Westheimer 2006), making it important to understand as a catalyst for political engagement among young women. Those who study political engagement make a distinction between external and internal efficacy (Balch 1974). External efficacy refers to feelings about government's responsiveness to citizen's concerns. In some cases, low external efficacy may motivate individuals to participate politically in an effort to prompt greater institutional accountability. It might also have the opposite effect, causing individuals to feel less empowered to engage in civic life if they feel a lower sense of external political efficacy.

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[6] New question wording, introduced in 2008, asked how closely respondents "pay attention to information about what's going on in government and politics." A similar question, designed to measure campaign interest, asks specifically, "How interested are you in information about what's going on in government and politics?"

Internal efficacy, on the other hand, refers to an individual's sense of competence with respect to civic affairs. Generally, internal political efficacy has been found to be positively related to political activity (Kahne and Westheimer 2006). People with high degrees of internal efficacy have a sense that they can participate effectively in the political process, and often, they do.

I examine both internal and external efficacy in the context of this study, but the noted relationship between internal efficacy and engagement makes it of particular interest. Measures of external efficacy will be tested, and significant results will certainly help explicate the relationship between external efficacy and political engagement, which previous scholars have found to be inconsistent (Shingles 1981; Ennis and Schrener 1987). Of paramount interest, however, is the effect of increased internal efficacy on young women's political motivations.

Role models. References to role models should be interpreted as women leaders in the public sphere. This definition is broad in the sense that it considers leadership beyond elected office to include lobbyists, consultants, appointed policy makers, and public employees with significant responsibility for policy making. It does not include role models outside the public sphere – mothers, grandmothers, sisters, or role models who are deceased – although these women may certainly have an influence on young women's sense of possibility and aspirations. Nor do I consider the impact of male role models, but acknowledge that men can also be influential.

Political participation. Political participation is also construed in a broad sense. While women outpace men in a number of political actions, including voting, they are still underrepresented in leadership roles. They are quick to campaign for others, give money, write their elected officials, etc…but less likely to see themselves in, or aspire to, positions of political leadership. Therefore, I am interested in the impact of role models on political participation as it relates to leadership and influence. I am not only interested in the exercise of leadership, because many of the women in my sample have yet to mature to a place where this is feasible or likely. Some are still in college. Rather, I am interested in the development of traits and competencies that position young leaders for public sector leadership roles, including political interest and internal efficacy.

Conclusion and Roadmap of the Dissertation

Over time, scholars have built a robust literature to explain why women have been absent from political life in numbers that reflect their share of the population. Gender differences in political interest and methods of engagement are at risk of becoming cliché, but they are documented and real, and the findings of the most recent Citizen Political Ambition Study suggest that the gap is not closing on its own.

Women's political organizations, and others, have been working to effectively "rewrite" the literature by addressing the barriers that women candidates or would-be candidates face. Specific efforts have focused on

redressing the "pipeline problem," and encouraging young women to pursue a political path. NEW Leadership™ is one such attempt to stimulate political ambition in young women so that they will fill the political pipeline. After 20 years of implementation, it is prudent to critically examine the impact of the program, to see if its goals are being met.

This chapter outlined the parameters of the dissertation, which examines the NEW Leadership™ training program as a model for developing the next generation of women leaders. Chapter 2 provides a summary of the literature related to women's political socialization, and the relationship between representation and young women's political engagement. Previous research has given us a limited – and at times, contradictory – understanding of representation's symbolic effects. Young women are less likely than young men to anticipate engaging in activities that will lead to positions of political influence (Hooghe and Stolle 2004), but in two years when women were front and center on the national political stage, young women's anticipated involvement increased (Campbell and Wolbrecht 2006). Taft (2006) finds that girls actively distance themselves from the term "politics," and Anderson, Mariani and Mathews-Gardner (2007), find no correlation between viewing a directory depicting higher numbers of women officials, and the increased political intentions of young women. They did find, however, a positive relationship between viewing the directories and the political intentions of young men.

Chapter 3 provides a detailed description of the NEW Leadership™ training model, and the four programs included in the sample. It introduces the program logic model, which elaborates the assumptions of the program and its curriculum, and outlines the program theory conceptual framework of the study.

After a discussion of methodology in Chapter 4, Chapters 5 and 6 discuss the findings of the Role Models and Political Ambition Survey, and the interviews with program graduates. The findings suggest that participation in NEW Leadership™ leads to higher levels of internal and external efficacy, and increases the likelihood that participants will run for public office.

While much has been done to document and explain the anemic progress of women pursuing and achieving positions of political influence in the United States, little scholarly attention has been focused on efforts that claim to address the problem. The findings of this study will advance the conversation about women's political ambition by providing the first empirical analysis of efforts to stimulate and encourage ambition in young women. Previous scholarship has focused on measuring and explaining women's lagging participation, but thus far little has been done to analyze the efficacy of attempts at redressing the disparity. This study picks up where others leave off, and suggests a means for bridging the current understanding of women's political ambition with efforts to further close the gender gap.

The practical implications of this project are equally compelling. Though the findings will be of particular interest to NEW Leadership™ program

directors at Rutgers, UNLV, The Ohio State University and UMSL, the results of

this research will offer practitioners across the political leadership development

spectrum an evidence-based approach to address the "pipeline problem."

Concern about the persistence of apathy among young women with

respect to politics makes it hard to imagine how remaining gender gaps in

political ambition will close. I will argue that political ambition can be

developed through programs that amplify descriptive and symbolic

representation by creating mentoring opportunities that cultivate political

interest and internal efficacy in young women. If programs like NEW

Leadership™ are successful at stimulating political agency in young women,

accelerating the proliferation of the model to all states is one practical way to

increase the number of women who pursue paths to political power.

Chapter 2
Representation: Unlocking the Black Box
Of Women's Political Participation

The data in chapter 1 suggest an electorate divided along gender lines with respect to political interest and ambition. Men are more likely to indicate a general interest in public affairs "all or most of the time," and women "hardly at all or never." While women are as likely as men to engage in campaign-related activities, such as working for a candidate or donating to a campaign, they are less likely to seek public office themselves or even consider it. Perhaps most troubling is the rate at which women assess themselves as unfit or "not at all qualified" to run (Lawless and Fox 2012).

These findings illustrate one aspect of scholarship on women's political participation, which has focused on two themes, primarily: 1) Rates of women's engagement relative to men's engagement, and 2) the reasons why women participate less than men. Thus, emphasis has been placed on measuring and explaining women's lagging participation, or documenting and elaborating the "pipeline problem." Explanations have evolved over time, as women have gained traction in professional settings and increased their presence in "public spheres" (see Habermas 1962), giving them experiences and access that more closely resemble their male colleagues than the women of their mothers' generation. Women have demonstrated, first through civic organizations and more recently in the workplace, that they are capable of fundraising, organizing,

and leading others. They have also shown increasing willingness and capacity for balancing work and family obligations. Each election cycle that fails to achieve significant representation for women, however, raises new questions of why and gives rise to new theories, recent among them media bias against women (Woodall and Fridkin 2007; Gidengil and Everitt 2003; Heith 2003; Kahn 1994, 1996)[7] and the influence of political parties in women's electoral opportunities and success (Niven 2010; Cheng and Tavits 2009; Sanbonmatsu 2006a; Sanbonmatsu 2006c).

This project advances the literature by moving the conversation beyond explanations and rationalizations. It examines efforts to engage a new generation of women politically, shifting the focus from *why* women are lagging behind in political representation to the question of *how*, as in, "How can the pipeline issue be addressed?" Before answering this question, however, one must understand the myriad of ways that one can represent another, in order to appreciate why the pipeline issue needs addressing. Thus, this chapter provides a discussion of representation, emphasizing the theoretical assumptions that frame the study of women's political participation. Maintaining engagement with young women in the political process also requires an appreciation for "where they are" with respect to notions of politics, and an understanding of the

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[7]In contrast, Jalalzai (2006) argues that gendered media coverage has declined. Analyzing coverage of men and women senatorial and gubernatorial candidates running between 1992 and 2000, she finds that newspaper coverage of candidates has become increasingly gender-balanced and in some cases, even favors women candidates.

messages that they receive about political participation. That is where this chapter begins.

Explaining women's reluctance to participate

Historically, gender differences in adult political participation were explained by situational factors (Andersen 1975; Welch 1980; Schlozman, Burns and Verba 1994; Burns, Schlozman and Verba 2001) and access to resources (Welch 1977; Burns, Schlozman and Verba 2001) including, historically, educational attainment (Welch 1977; Powell, Brown and Hedges 1982; Schlozman, Burns and Verba 1994; Sapiro and Conover 1997; Verba, Burns and Schlozman 1997). [8] More recent explanations center on media bias (Woodall and Fridkin 2007; Gidengil and Everitt 2003; Heith 2003; Kahn 1994, 1996), party gatekeepers' unwillingness to recruit and support female candidates (Niven 2010; Cheng and Tavits 2009; Sanbonmatsu 2006a; Sanbonmatsu 2006c), and women's lower levels of political ambition (Lawless and Fox 2005, 2010). These theories however, are less useful to explain the depressed political participation in young adults where political pursuits, career choices, household responsibilities, and income disparity have yet to emerge.

Political Socialization. One explanation for young women's tendency to disengage from political life relates to gender-role stereotypes and perceived

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[8] Recent statistics, however, indicate that the gender gap in educational attainment may be closing. In 2011-2012, for example, women were projected to earn roughly 62% of Associate's degrees, 57% of Bachelor's degrees, 59% of Master's degrees, and 54% of Doctorates (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

cultural norms. Political socialization – the process by which people learn what is expected of them politically – is one of the most durable theories to explain women's political behavior. Women are simply not socialized to regard politics as an appropriate or relevant concern. The earliest research into this area, done in the late 50s and 60s, argues that socialization happens at a young age when girls are conditioned to adopt a less active political orientation than boys (Hyman 1959). Because women have been traditionally absent from political life, girls learn to associate politics with men.

The "childhood socialization" view has persisted, despite claims in the 1970s that the feminist revolution would profoundly alter the messages conveyed to girls, making them less accepting of politics as a "male" sphere and thereby making gender socialization obsolete (Orum et al 1974). Owen and Dennis (1988) offer evidence of continuing gender disparity in measures of political knowledge, interest in politics, and attention to public policy matters – in both pre-adult and adult survey respondents - leading them to conclude that such optimism was premature. More recently, Hooghe and Stolle (2004) report that eighth grade boys are more likely to anticipate joining a political party, or running for office than their female peers. They find that a higher percentage of girls (83%) than boys (75%) anticipate voting in national elections when they are eligible, indicate a higher inclination to participate in civic and political activities overall, and are almost 13% more likely to express an intention to volunteer in a campaign. Nonetheless, the girls are less likely to see themselves participating in

activities that would lead to their holding public office (such as joining a party or becoming a candidate).

As the Hooghe and Stolle (2004) findings suggest, though young women's interest in politics is contingent, their interest in volunteerism and civic engagement is strong. In a 2006 CIRCLE survey of 15-25 year-olds, women were more active than men in five of six civic activities including volunteering and raising money for charity (Marcelo, Lopez and Kirby 2007). Conversely however, men outnumbered women in five of six categories of electoral activities ranging from donating money to a political candidate or group to persuading others in an election. The exception was group membership: 17% of women and almost 15% of men reported being in a member of a group involved in politics.[9]

Conway, Steuernagel and Ahern (2005) assert that "As girls, women learn to be more passive than boys and to care about things not commonly thought of as political (23)." Though the family is traditionally seen as the primary agent of political socialization, differences in mass media use perpetuate socialization patterns that favor boys (Owen and Dennis 1993). Not only is the relationship between mass media use and politicization stronger for men than for women, but media images serve to reinforce the male role in national politics.

Regardless of the messenger, if young women are socialized to believe that politics is "not for people like them" they are less likely to engage. Jessica

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[9] Oddly enough, women reported voting less than men, even though the estimates suggest that they have greater voter turnout rates.

Taft uncovered many illustrative examples of this in her 2006 study of teenage girls in Washington DC and rural New England. Through the use of focus groups and in-depth interviews, Taft mined the perceptions of the teens related to political power and participation. Though the girls expressed knowledge and passion of public issues, and demonstrated commitment to community concerns and social change, they "actively distanced themselves" from the term "politics" (337). Many girls articulated strong negative connotations associated with politics and government, attributed in part to disagreement with government policies, but also as a question of legitimacy and the lack of diversity. Taft notes, "This problem of exclusion led to girls' twofold rejection: On the one hand, politics is done by people who are not like them, and so they do not see themselves as political; and on the other, the political system is currently unfair in terms of who holds power, and so they do not want to associate with or legitimate it (342)."'

Linking Representation to Participation

For the young women in Taft's study, for example, a lack of women in positions of authority conveyed something about the relevance of politics to their lives. The absence of visible representation was synonymous with a lack of legitimacy. Credibility, or *de facto* legitimacy, is just one implied role of representation that can be enhanced by women's participation (Darcy, Welch and Clark 1987). In her seminal work, *The Concept of Representation,* Hanna Pitkin

(1967) conceives of representation as having four distinct, yet interrelated, dimensions: formal, descriptive, substantive and symbolic.

Formal representation refers to the institutional arrangements that determine who is eligible to hold office, how they are held accountable, and what they are authorized to do. Formal representation is typically operationalized as rules that govern elections. *Descriptive representation* refers to the extent to which the composition of representative institutions reflects the composition of the governed. It is typically conceived of in terms of numerical representation, and is therefore the most common conception because it is easy to measure. *Substantive* and *Symbolic* representation were introduced in chapter 1. Substantive representation implies action or "acting for" the interests of a particular group. It assumes congruence between the policy preferences of the representative and the represented, as well as agency or "policy responsiveness," (Eulau and Karps 1977) to see that needs and demands are met. Finally, symbolic representation refers to the attitudinal and emotional response perceived by constituents when they see someone like themselves in power. Like descriptive representation, the symbolic conception implies "standing for," but in a deeper, more compelling way. Symbolic representation emphasizes the psychological effects that accrue to citizens from the presence of a representative who embodies government and politics. For women, for example, a woman representative is a symbol of the possibility of a participatory democracy that is inclusive of all citizens, regardless of gender.

Formal and Descriptive Representation. The application of representation theory to women's political participation has been a fruitful line of inquiry for political scientists. Links between the formal and descriptive forms have been explored through analyses of district magnitude (Matland and Brown 1992), the effectiveness of quota policies as a means of advancing women's representation (Kittilson 2005; Mansbridge 2005; Baldez 2006; Krook 2006b; Nanivadekar 2006; Krook 2009; Zetterberg 2009; Schwindt-Bayer 2010; Yoon 2010) institutional structures such as incumbency (Darcy 1992; Dolan 2004; Fox 2006; Lawless and Fox 2005; Palmer and Simon 2006), and term-limits (Carroll and Jenkins 2001; Berman 2005; Cain and Kousser 2005; English and Weberg 2005; Farmer and Little 2005; Straayer and Bowser 2005). All consider the ways that formal electoral institutions structure opportunities for women's descriptive representation.

Descriptive and Substantive Representation. A number of scholars have posited a relationship between descriptive representation and substantive representation, arguing that the presence of women in positions of political influence increases the likelihood that salient gender issues will be addressed (Diamond 1977; Thomas 1994; Burrell 1994), increases legislatures' responsiveness to women's concerns (Scwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005), and brings a "different voice" to the legislative process (Thomas 1994; Rosenthal 1998). A related literature concerns the threshold of descriptive representation, or "critical mass" required for women to enact substantive changes (Kanter 1977;

Dahlerup 1988; Rosenthal 1998; Childs and Krook 2006; Childs and Krook 2008; Schwindt-Bayer 2010), with some scholars countering that its impact "has been inflated" (McAllister and Studlar 2002, 247; Grey 2006, 495).

Descriptive and Symbolic Representation. Others have engaged the descriptive and the symbolic forms, arguing that the symbolic effect of electing women to office could lead to greater psychological engagement (Carroll 1994; Koch 1997), mobilizing effects (Hansen 1997; Sapiro and Conover 1997; Verba, Burns and Schlozman 1997; Atkeson 2003; Krook 2006a; Reingold and Harrell 2010;) more positive feelings about democracy (Schwindt-Bayer 2010), overall empowerment (Burnet 2011), and development of a "gender consciousness," the "recognition that one's relationship to the political world is at least partly but nonetheless particularly shaped by being female or male" (Tolleson-Rinehart 1992, 32). The recent work of Beaman, et al (2012), suggests direct effects of female leadership on the aspirations and educational attainment of girls (and the expectations of their parents) in village councils in India where quotas mandate reserve seats for women.

It is within the descriptive-symbolic link that I situate my inquiry. I theorize that in the context of structured programs like NEW Leadership™ that amplify descriptive and symbolic representation, young women's political interest and efficacy is strengthened by interactions with women in positions of political leadership. My primary interest is representation in the symbolic form; in particular, the psychological and attitudinal benefits that accrue to young

women when they interact with women in positions of power. It is important to keep in mind, however, that representation in its symbolic and substantive forms is only possible after descriptive representation is achieved. In fact, Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler (2005, 422) amplify descriptive representation as the "keystone to the representation of women." Using an integrated model of representation (which will be discussed momentarily) they suggest, "The percentage of women in the legislature is a principal determinant of women's policy responsiveness *(substantive representation)* and of women's confidence in the legislative process."[10]

As has already been discussed, descriptive representation is heavily influenced by rules that define formal representation. Therefore, the argument can be made that formal representation begets descriptive representation, which enables substantive representation and collectively, the presence of women in power produces symbolic effects. To examine one form or dimension of representation in isolation is to miss Pitkin's (1967) point that they are "properly conceived of as integral parts of a coherent whole" (in Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005, 407).

The following section provides a detailed discussion of the integrated model of representation, which takes into account the four dimensions simultaneously. It is the integrated model that serves as the framework for this study.

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[10] Emphasis added.

An Integrated Model of Representation

Leslie Schwindt-Bayer (2010; with William Mishler 2005) has assumed the task of reminding scholars of the integrated nature of representation, as conceived by Pitkin (1967). In a 2005 journal article, she and William Mishler argue that the interconnections between dimensions of representation cannot be ignored:

> "…despite the frequency and approval with which Pitkin's work is cited, most empirical work on representation ignores her integrated conception. Scholars, typically, choose one or two aspects of representation while ignoring others that are not of interest or for which data are lacking. This not only contributes to a 'blind man's understanding of the elephant' but also fails to provide an adequate empirical test of a fundamental aspect of Pitkin's conception: its integrated structure" (407).

Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler test the integrated model of representation empirically by examining 31 democratic countries to measure the influence of formal, descriptive, substantive and symbolic linkages on women's representation. They find strongest links stemming from descriptive representation, and argue that the relationships are nonlinear, that is, substantive and symbolic effects accrue exponentially as descriptive representation reaches "critical mass."

In a subsequent book, Schwindt-Bayer (2010) examines women's representation in 18 Latin American countries and finds that in some countries where they are represented in the descriptive sense, they nonetheless lack the political power to enact substantive policy changes. She cites a gendered

legislative environment and systematic marginalization (assignment to less

powerful committees and fewer opportunities to assume leadership posts, for

example) as the most salient explanations for women's inability to achieve full

political equality despite their increasing numbers. Her analysis is predicated on

the integrated model presented in figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1. An Integrated Model of Representation.
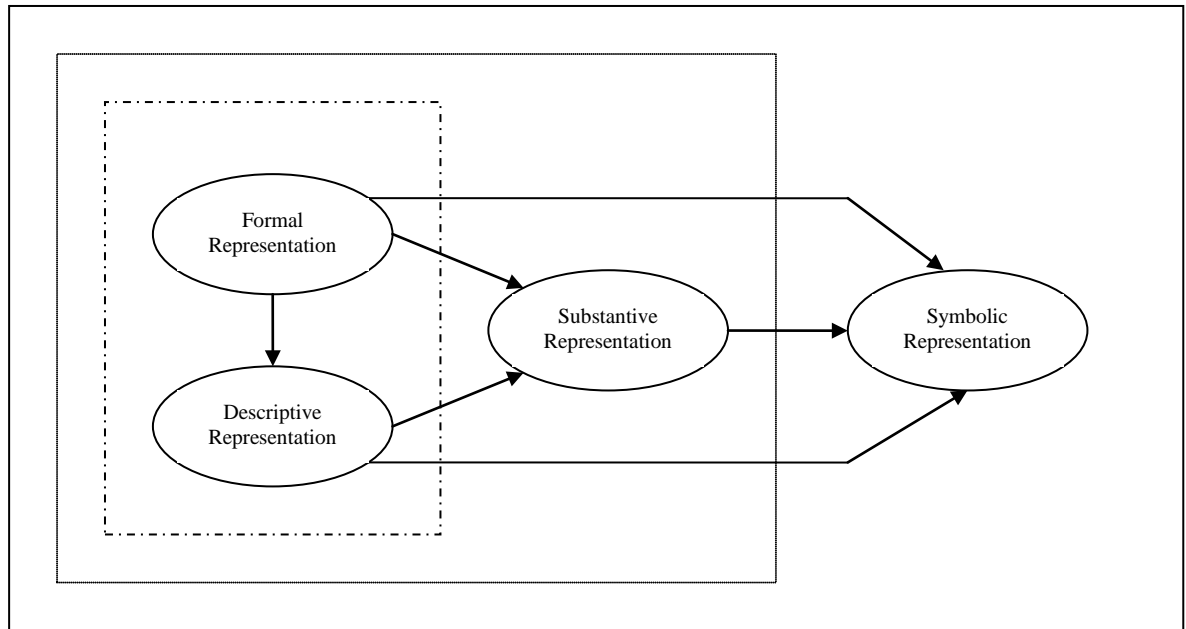
SOURCE: Schwindt-Bayer, 2010, Figure 1.1, p.8

 As the model illustrates, three sets of relationships are emphasized. First,

formal representation shapes descriptive representation.[11] The rules and

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[11] With respect to women, this is perhaps easiest to consider in terms of the way formal rules have historically produced representation that is descriptive for white men.

institutions that govern elections – the presence or absence of quota policies, for example – influence the diversity of individuals who hold political authority. Secondly, formal and descriptive representation constrain substantive representation. Electoral pressures, such as the desire to be re-elected, may influence an individual's willingness to "stand for" his or her descriptive constituency on matters that are controversial. Finally, the formal, descriptive and substantive forms all contribute to public perceptions of government as accountable and legitimately "representative." In this respect, symbolic representation is the "final form," because it relies on the symbols engendered in the formal, descriptive and substantive.

Applying the integrated theory of representation to the question of women's leadership programs as a stimulant for political ambition is fairly straightforward. Formal and informal rules clearly shape the opportunity structure for women in politics, making formal representation a significant determinant of women's descriptive prospects. Once in positions of authority, women must balance the expectation that they "stand for" women with their ability to do so given formal parameters (committee assignments, leadership roles, etc…) that influence their substantive priorities. Their presence, defined by personal attributes and policy responsiveness, leads to increased psychological engagement among young women who see the women leaders as symbols of a representative government and are inspired to pursue a similar path.

One aim of this project is to elaborate the symbolic dynamic that is the essence of the NEW Leadership™ program. Though the curriculum touches on elements of formal, descriptive and substantive representation, it is no coincidence that the "faculty" for the programs is comprised, almost entirely, of women in public life. There is an implicit assumption that their presence will arouse symbolic effects in the college women participants; one objective of my study is to determine if this is the case. The final section of this chapter traces the literature specific to women's political ambition as it relates to symbolic representation. The discussion exposes questions yet to be reconciled, so I conclude with a review of how my research fills in the gaps.

Representation and Young Women's Political Ambition

Much of the existing research suggests that symbolic effects are mediated by electoral context. Context implies that it is the particular political scenario, rather than an interest in politics generally, that leads to engagement. In cases where women candidates are running in highly visible races, the interest of other women is heightened. Multiple empirical analyses confirm that under certain conditions (namely the presence of a viable woman candidate in a visible race) women are more likely to engage.

Several scholars use as a case study the presidential election of 1992, a year when large numbers of women ran for office.[12] Sapiro and Conover (1997)

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[12] Widely touted in the media as the "Year of the Woman," 1992 was unique in many ways. The end of the cold war had changed the agenda from foreign policy and defense to domestic issues that were salient to women. A large number of open seats existed because of redistricting and retirement, and

and Hansen (1997) find that women were more attentive to news about the campaigns and more likely to engage in campaign activity (Sapiro and Conover 1997), specifically political persuasion (Hansen 1997), in states with female candidates for the U.S. Congress or Governor. Koch (1997) reports similar results, noting that women demonstrated elevated interest and greater ability to recall the names of candidates in states with a female Senate candidate, a finding replicated by others (Verba, Burns and Schlozman 1997, 1065; also Burns, Schlozman and Verba 2001, 342). Other studies find that women demonstrate a greater propensity to engage in political discourse in races where women candidates stress women's issues (Herrnson, Lay and Stokes 2003; Stokes-Brown and Neal 2008), offer more positive evaluations of their members of Congress when they are women (Lawless 2004) and post higher levels of external efficacy in states with a higher proportion of female state legislators (Atkeson and Carillo 2007). Carlisle (2011) reports that the presence of a female governor is positively related to the percentage of women serving in that state's legislature.

The research is far from conclusive, however. Though she finds that women are more likely to approve of their Congressperson when she is a woman, Lawless (2004) does not find the presence of women in Congress to affect women's political trust, efficacy, competence and engagement. Similarly, Kathleen Dolan (2008) finds conditional support for symbolic effects, particularly

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women challengers capitalized on an anti-incumbency mood by representing "a change." The Anita Hill/Clarence Thomas hearings angered and energized women, and a pool of qualified women around the country were poised to run (Woods 2001).

in races for the U.S. House, but cautions that there is "no general or clear pattern to the influence" (96). Such dissenting views are shared by Karp and Banducci (2008) who failed to find gender differences in political engagement and attitudes tied to level of descriptive representation cross-nationally.

It is reasonable to expect that even more variation will emerge when the engagement of young women is considered. For women in high school and college, political participation may be something they associate with adults. This is especially likely to be true for women under the voting age of 18. Research on young women, therefore, focuses on anticipated behavior, or the likelihood that one will engage in political activities in the future. Though future behavior is speculative, the attitudes that prompt someone to indicate a willingness to engage at a later date are no less real or relevant. Political ambition can develop long before political achievement can be realized.[13] One question, therefore, concerns the level of "knowing" required for young women to realize the symbolic effects of representation. Is seeing more women in positions of political authority enough to change young women's perceptions about politics and stimulate their political ambition?

Three recent studies have pursued this line of inquiry with mixed results. Campbell and Wolbrecht (2006) offer evidence that the visibility of female

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[13] In his 2004 memoir, *My Life,* President Bill Clinton reveals that his ambition for public office developed when he was a teenager. "Sometime in my sixteenth year, I decided I wanted to be in public life as an elected official," he says. "I loved music and thought I could be very good, but I knew I would never be John Coltrane or Stan Getz. I was interested in medicine and thought I could be a fine doctor, but I knew I would never be Michael DeBakey. But I knew I could be great in public service" (82).

candidates influences young women's anticipated political involvement. Using

data from the Monitoring the Future (MTF) series, the authors gauge the

anticipated political participation of high school seniors between 1976 and 2001.

At two points in time, the anticipated involvement of adolescent women spikes

sharply and surpasses their male classmates. The first spike followed the 1984

election in which Geraldine Ferraro became the first woman vice presidential

nominee on a major party ticket; the second was in 1992, when an unusually high

number of women ran for (and were elected to) the House and the Senate (237).

Campbell and Wolbrecht (2006) argue that the increased media attention

enhanced the visibility of female role models, leading to an increase in young

women's expression of anticipated political participation as adults.[14]   A

subsequent study found similar results cross-nationally (Wolbrecht and

Campbell 2007).

    Andersen, Mariani, and Mathews-Gardner (2007) used photographic

directories of state legislators to test whether young women who observe the

presence of more female representatives are more likely to express political

ambition than those who view fewer women in power. In their study, college

women and men were asked to indicate the likelihood that they would work in a

political campaign, be a candidate for local office, and be active in a political

party. Interestingly, they found little evidence for the hypothesis that seeing

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[14] Respondents were surveyed on their plans to write to public officials, give money to a political campaign or work on a political campaign (236).

more women representatives motivates young women, but they did find a correlation between viewing a directory depicting higher numbers of women and the (increased) political intentions of young men. While there were no statistically significant differences in response to questions about campaign work or party activity, men were more likely than women to view themselves as political candidates. They also scored higher on measures of political knowledge and internal efficacy.

As this chapter illustrates, previous research has given us a limited –and at times, contradictory - understanding of descriptive representation as a context cue for young women's political engagement. The work that has been done finds that young women are less likely than young men to anticipate engaging in activities that will lead to positions of political influence (Hooghe and Stolle 2004), that girls actively distance themselves from the term "politics" (Taft 2006), and that *seeing* role models alone is not enough to stimulate young women's political ambition (Anderson, Mariani and Mathews-Gardner 2007). Furthermore, it has been shown that in two years when women were front and center on the national political stage, 1984 and 1992, young women's anticipated involvement increased (Campbell and Wolbrecht 2006).

Little work has examined young women's internal efficacy, their sense of political competence and understanding. Likewise, much remains unclear about the socialization of young women today, and the current gender norms and stereotypes to which they are exposed. Does the presence of role models change

the cues that young women interpret? What messages are they getting, and how do these messages shape their perception of what is appropriate? If, as Andersen, Mariani and Mathews-Gardner (2007) conclude, seeing women representatives is not enough to stimulate engagement, what is?

These inconclusive and contingent results justify further inquiry and make questions of symbolic representation all the more salient. The influence of symbolic effects on young women is a topic that has been largely unexplored. Unlike Anne Phillips (1995), who is largely skeptical of symbolic representation as an argument for raising the proportion of women politicians, I contend that role models matter. Phillips articulates my general thesis perfectly: "When more women candidates are elected, their example is said to raise women's self-esteem, encourage others to follow in their footsteps, and dislodge deep-rooted assumptions about what is appropriate to women and men" (p.63). Yet she goes on to dismiss this argument as "uninteresting" and without "purchase on politics *per se*" (ibid), and instead argues that the achievement of substantive policy outcomes is the only true measure of the politics of presence.

By honing in on the substantive dimension of representation exclusively, however, Phillips (1995) misrepresents the integrated nature of Pitkin's (1967) theory. She fails to account for the fact that substantive representation is shaped by representation in its formal and descriptive forms. Like other scholars who adopt a singular or dyadic lens with which to view representation, Phillips

ignores Pitkin's point that the only way to fully understand representation is by examining the relationships between all four dimensions as an integrated whole.

I avoid this error of omission by acknowledging upfront that the symbolic effects my research measures are in many ways the product of representation in its alternative forms. In order for women to be in a position to make substantive changes, they have to be elected (formal representation) in sufficient numbers (descriptive representation) to have influence. To the extent that their presence stimulates feelings of interest and efficacy in other – in this case, young - women (symbolic representation), more women are likely to follow in their footsteps. This integrated idea of representation is the most accurate conception of Pitkin's theory and forms the basis for my research.

Summary

For over 40 years, gender scholars have been documenting the absence of women in politics and offering explanations for why they are less engaged than men. Of all the theories for women's lagging participation, political socialization has proven the most durable, and its manifestations are evident time and again in reports like the latest Citizen Political Ambition Study, detailed in chapter 1. One striking finding is that women simply do not possess the interest or confidence to pursue a political path (Lawless and Fox 2005, 2010, 2012). Another is the age at which political socialization patterns become apparent, in girls as young as 8th grade (Hooghe and Stolle 2004).

Questions of women's political engagement are intertwined with the theory of representation, a complex concept that contends with how representatives are chosen and what their selection means for those they represent, both substantively and symbolically. The influential work of Hannah Pitkin (1967) defines the concept of representation as multi-dimensional, comprised of four interrelated parts. Despite Pitkin's emphasis on representation's integral character, scholars routinely examine one or two dimensions in isolation, neglecting the potential influence of the unspecified forms. The work of Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler (2005; also Schwindt-Bayer 2010) is an effort to refocus attention on representation as an integrated whole, but more work needs to be done in this regard.

The literature on formal, descriptive, and substantive representation is quite well-developed, but the literature on symbolic representation is limited, in part because symbolic effects are difficult to operationalize and measure. "The Year of the Woman," 1992, is often the context for symbolic studies, because of the unmatched attention focused on women political candidates that year by their campaigns and the media. It is difficult to imagine that anyone – especially a woman - could have been oblivious to the unprecedented victory of so many women at once, so researchers use this scenario as an opportunity to measure women's attitudes. "Will this be another `Year of the Woman?'" has been asked over and over again by journalists since 1992, but so far, the answer has been no. In fact, in 2010 the numbers of women serving in Congress and in state

legislatures trended in the negative direction for the first time in over 30 years (CAWP 2011a).

Young women's political attitudes, and the effect of symbolic representation on young women's political ambition, have been relatively unexplored by political scientists. Only a few scholars have endeavored to examine the relationship between women in public office and the anticipated political behavior of girls. Wolbrecht and Campbell (2007; also Campbell and Wolbrecht 2006) have examined the effects on high school seniors, and Anderson, Mariani and Mathews-Gardner (2007) have done preliminary studies of college women, but their work constitutes the literature on the subject.

Another neglected area of scholarship is the proliferation of recruitment and training programs to increase women's capacity for public life, and their effectiveness. Once the domain of political parties, candidate recruitment has become the focus of many women's organizations working to address the shortage of women in office. Emerge America™, She Should Run™, and the 2012 Project are three national efforts that recruit women to run for office and link them to training opportunities where they can gain skills to be effective campaigners. Carlisle (2011) and Hennings (2011) have initiated a conversation about the impact of campaign training programs on women's political achievement, but thus far, no efforts have been made to examine college women's leadership programs that aim to get a head start at filling the pipeline.

Thus, while much has been done to document and explain the anemic progress of women pursuing and achieving positions of political influence in the United States, little scholarly attention has been focused on efforts that claim to address the problem. This study corrects that omission by empirically examining the NEW Leadership™ training model as strategy for putting college women on a path to public leadership. NEW Leadership™ is a national program initiated by the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP), boasting over 4,000 graduates nationwide. The next chapter describes the NEW Leadership™ model and outlines the parameters of my research.

Chapter 3
Empowering Women Through NEW Leadership™

"I'm not what I ought to be,
Not what I want to be,
Not what I used to be,
but thankful for what I'm going to be."
- NEW Leadership™ New Jersey

This chapter begins with a brief history of efforts to encourage young women's political participation, followed by a discussion of the NEW Leadership™ Summer Institute training model. Two program evaluation tools are used to describe the program: a program logic model and the program theory conceptual framework. Understanding the assumptions and activities that form the foundation of NEW Leadership™ is essential to measuring its success, so the last section of the chapter maps the process of preparing for NEW Leadership™, starting with the request for proposal and ending with program implementation.

Addressing the Pipeline Issue

Organized efforts to funnel young women into the political pipeline date back almost 35 years, and are led by non-profit organizations, public and private universities, and the U.S. Government.

The Public Leadership Education Network (PLEN), founded by then-President of Wells College, Frances Tarlton (Sissy) Farenthold, initiated campus-based public sector leadership programs in the late '70s. Since 1983 PLEN has hosted Washington, DC-based seminars for college women, including a 10-week "Women and Public Policy Summer internship." It is the only "national

organization whose sole focus is preparing college women for leadership in the public policy arena."[15]

Washington, DC-based Running Start offers two programs to promote women's leadership: the *Young Women's Political Leadership* program for girls in grades 9-12, and *Elect Her: Campus Women Win*, a program to encourage college women to pursue campus-based elective office. *From Harvard Square to the Oval Office*, a year-long program of the Women and Public Policy Program at the Kennedy School of Government, offers Harvard graduate students exposure to a "Political Campaign Practicum" that teaches them to run for office and connects them with women leaders in public life. Finally, the *Women in Public Service Project Summer Institute* will make its debut at Wellesley College in Summer 2012, bringing together 50 emerging women leaders from around the world for intensive training and mentoring. Established by the U.S. Department of State in partnership with five women's colleges, the Summer Institute aims to "…educate and train a new generation of women to enter the public sector with the strategic leadership skills, energy, and commitment required to tackle today's global challenges."[16]

Any of these programs would be viable subjects for a study of institutional efforts to stimulate young women's political ambition. The focus of this study, however, is the NEW Leadership™ summer institute, developed by

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[15] http://plen.org/about-us/ (February 9, 2012)
[16] http://womeninpublicservice.org/ (February 9, 2012)

the Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP)[17]. For almost four

decades, CAWP has been the leading source of scholarly research and current

data about American women's political participation in the United States.[18] In

addition to being a clearinghouse for current and historical statistics on women

candidates and office holders, CAWP maintains an extensive outreach program

designed to encourage women of all ages to assume leadership roles in public

life. CAWP's NEW Leadership™ program is a nationally-recognized model for

preparing college women to be leaders in the public sphere.

History of NEW Leadership™

The NEW Leadership™ program was developed by CAWP as a strategy

for getting young women into the political pipeline for public leadership. First

offered in 1991, NEW Leadership™ is an annual six-day residential training

institute that teaches college women the value of civic engagement, and gives

them an opportunity to establish networks of current and future leaders

committed to the expansion of women's leadership in the public sector.

The flagship program is NEW Leadership™ New Jersey, hosted at Rutgers,

The State University of New Jersey, which is the academic home of CAWP.

Participants in NEW Leadership™ New Jersey are selected through a competitive

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[17] The Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP), a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, is nationally recognized as the leading source of scholarly research and current data about American women's political participation. Its mission is to promote greater knowledge and understanding about women's participation in politics and government and to enhance women's influence and leadership in public life.

[18] http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/about_cawp/index.php (February 27, 2012).

application process and represent a variety of backgrounds and academic majors.

Undergraduates at any New Jersey college or university, or New Jersey residents

attending out-of-state schools are eligible to apply. Effort is made in the selection

process to assemble a cohort that is diverse in a multitude of ways: ethnically,

racially, ideologically, and socioeconomically. To assure that ability to pay is not

a barrier to participation, there is no fee for students to attend; each participating

college or university is asked to pay $500 per participating student to help defray

the costs of housing, food, and transportation.[19]

NEW Leadership™ New Jersey takes place, typically, in early June, after

the spring semester ends. During the six-day program, students learn how to

influence politics and policy through training in direct action organizing,

participate in mock legislative scenarios (such as testifying in support or

opposition to a bill or debating a bill in mock legislative session), and work in

small groups to resolve a policy problem or issue. They practice leadership skills

such as conflict resolution, negotiation, public speaking and networking, and are

engaged by women office holders, business and non-profit leaders, and policy

advocates who offer wisdom and advice through presentations and interactive

panel discussions.

Most of the sessions are held at the Eagleton Institute of Politics on the

campus of Rutgers University. One day during the week, however, the students

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[19] Participating students are required to seek funding from their sponsoring institution, with help from
CAWP. A limited number of scholarships are available to students who are unable to obtain funding from
their schools. CAWP solicits corporate and individual sponsorship to cover the shortfall.

are bused to the State House in Trenton and are met in the legislative chambers by women from the state legislative delegation. It is also common for participants to observe legislative committees in action, or meet with statewide elected officials, time permitting.

The program faculty is comprised of women holding public sector leadership positions, including elected officials from all levels of office (city/county to Governor or US Senate), judges, representatives from advocacy organizations, executive and legislative staffers, and women leaders from the for-profit and non-for-profit sectors, as well as experts in leadership skills development. Most of the speakers participate in a designated session and then leave, but several "Faculty in Residence" stay for the duration of the program. As the title suggests, the Faculty in Residence (affectionately referred to as FIRs) live in community with the student participants, and are on hand 24/7 throughout the week to provide context and continuity to the sessions. Typically, FIRs are women leaders in public life who donate a week of their time to the cause of young women's leadership development. They are offered a modest honorarium, and campus accommodations.

NEW Leadership™ Development Network

The early success of the NEW Leadership™ New Jersey program at Rutgers led the Center for American Women and Politics to partner with other colleges and universities around the United States to establish state and regional NEW Leadership™ programs on their campuses. In 1999 the NEW Leadership™

Development Network (NLDN) was established as "a national network of colleges and universities committed to women's political leadership education" (CAWP 2009). Up to three institutions are invited to join the NLDL each year, and receive training and support from CAWP to implement the NEW Leadership™ curriculum. As of December, 2011, the network included 18 NEW Leadership™ programs in 23 states, with four additional programs planned for 2012.

Network partners agree to establish a state or regional public leadership education program that incorporates a six-point NEW Leadership™ curriculum within two years. The six-point curriculum specifies that all partner programs will: 1) Teach students about the diversity of women's historical and contemporary participation in politics and policymaking; 2) Connect participants with women leaders who make a difference in the public sphere; 3) Help students explore the demands of leadership in a diverse society, 4) Cultivate students' leadership skills; 5) Enable students to practice leadership through action; and 6) Engage students in activities that will enhance their career development and expand their career opportunities.

The Research Sample

While it would have been preferable to include all 18 of the existing NEW Leadership™ programs in this paper, the practical resource constraints of time and money made it necessary to choose four 2011 NEW Leadership™ Development Network partners for the research sample: NEW Leadership™ New

Jersey, NEW Leadership™ Nevada, NEW Leadership™ Ohio, and the 21st Century

Leadership Academy at the University of Missouri–St. Louis. These four

programs are all well-established (the "youngest" has been in existence for nine

years), and none of them charge students to attend.[20] This is important because

making ability-to-pay a prerequisite of the program would most certainly change

the applicant pool, eliminating those students for whom the expense is a barrier

to participation. As it stands, the only prerequisites for participation in the NEW

Leadership™ program are status as a student, and demonstrated interest in

women's leadership.

A brief discussion of each 2011 program follows. These descriptions were

informed by interviews with program directors and participant observations

conducted in June, 2011.[21] The methodology for the interviews and observations

will be discussed in chapter 4.

NEW Leadership™ New Jersey. The NEW Leadership™ New Jersey

program was held at Rutgers University, June 9-14, 2011. Sixty students applied

for the 2011 program and 34 students, representing 16 New Jersey colleges and

universities, participated.

NEW Leadership™ New Jersey was well-staffed, reflecting the reality that

it was hosted by the nation's premier institute for women and politics. It was led

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[20] The economic environment of the last five years has required some programs to assess students a participation fee; in one case the fee is as much as $500.

[21] Since I am the program director for the 21st Century Leadership Academy, I did not conduct interviews or "observe" the program at UM-St. Louis. The description here is based on my personal knowledge of the program's history and operations.

by the NEW Leadership program manager (a full-time position), but the Director

of the Center for American Women and Politics also had a consistent presence,

and the Director of the Eagleton Institute (a woman, who is also the founding

director of CAWP) was in attendance for several of the sessions, serving as

moderator for a panel. It was not uncommon to observe another 15-20 staff

members, including student interns, from CAWP and the Eagleton Institute

giving their full attention to the NEW Leadership™ program at any given time.

NEW Leadership™ Nevada. The first NEW Leadership™ Nevada

program was hosted by the Women's Research Institute of Nevada at the

University of Nevada-Las Vegas (UNLV) in 2003. Though it adheres to the six-

point NEW Leadership™ curriculum, the Nevada program places a strong

emphasis on women in business, a decision the current program director

attributes to the business climate of the state: "…We're a small business state,

that's what Nevada's known for, so we have to train women in the areas that we

really think will be useful for that" (personal interview, June 17, 2011).

In addition, the Nevada program places a greater focus on advocacy and

activism than do the other partner programs in the sample, due in part to the

influence of many graduates of the program who have chosen this path and

return as faculty to share their experiences.

NEW Leadership™ Nevada 2011 was held at the University of Nevada Las

Vegas (UNLV), June 13-18. Twenty-two women from eight Nevada institutions

participated in the program. Leadership was provided by a first-time NEW

Leadership™ director, who is a full-time graduate student and part-time employee of the Women's Research Institute. She lived in residence and was the clear authority throughout the program. The Director of the Women's Research Institute hosted the welcome reception on the first evening of the program (at her home), and was in attendance for the keynote dinner, but was not present for the rest of the conference.

Funding for NEW Leadership™ Nevada is underwritten entirely by corporate sponsorships and individual donations. The program does not collect fees for participation – from students or institutions. One unique aspect of the Nevada program is the creation of a paid internship in Ceasars Entertainment's Corporate and Social Responsibility department, exclusively for NEW Leadership™ program graduates. Applications for the one-semester internship were made available after the program. To my knowledge, none of the other programs in the study offer this kind of opportunity for their graduates.

NEW Leadership™ Ohio. NEW Leadership™ Ohio was first offered in 2002 and is a joint effort of The John Glenn School of Public Affairs and the Department of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies at The Ohio State University. Like the Nevada program, NEW Leadership™ Ohio is funded through private gifts, corporate underwriting, foundation money, and support from the two primary sponsors (The John Glenn School and the Department of Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies). No student or institutional fees are collected.

Eighteen students from 13 colleges and universities attended the 2011 program, June 20-24. The program was five days long, one day shorter than other partner schools in the sample, but the schedule nonetheless aligned with the six-point curriculum. While most of the sessions were held at The John Glenn School, the students spent one day in downtown Columbus, interviewing women leaders in their offices in the morning and visiting the Statehouse in the afternoon.

Leadership for the program was provided by a team under the direction of the NEW Leadership™ Director, who is semi-retired and works part-time (30%) at The John Glenn School. Other team members included a recent graduate of the Department of Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies, and a graduate assistant at The John Glenn School who also served as a FIR and lived in residence with the program participants.

21st Century Leadership Academy. NEW Leadership™ Midwest was one of the first NEW Leadership™ expansion programs, hosted by the then Institute for Women in Public Life at the University of Missouri–St. Louis in August, 1997. The "Midwest" designation reflected the participation of participants from institutions in Kansas, Illinois, Minnesota and Iowa, as well as students from Missouri. In 1998 the program refocused its efforts on students at Missouri public universities exclusively, and was renamed the "21st Century Leadership Academy."

Like the other NEW Leadership™ partner programs, the Leadership

Academy is a six-day residential program, but the participant selection process –

though competitive – is decentralized. Nine public Missouri universities

participate in the Leadership Academy by selecting four students – "Shear

Fellows" - to represent their campus each year (for a total of 36 participants).

Each institution has a campus advisor who administers the recruitment and

selection process, which includes a written application and, more often than not,

interviews. Graduate and professional students, as well as undergraduates, are

eligible to apply. The sponsoring universities pay a fee of $150 per student to

help defray the costs associated with the program. Fellows live on the campus of

the University of Missouri-St. Louis where most of the sessions are held.

Thirty-three Shear Fellows participated in the 2011 program, held May 22-

27. Leadership was provided by the manager of the Sue Shear Institute for

Women in Public Life, who has held the position and directed the Leadership

Academy for 15 years. She and the director of the Sue Shear Institute resided on

campus throughout the Academy week. Two Academy graduates served as

interns and also lived in the dorm with the program participants.

In addition to workshops on campus, the Fellows traveled to the State

Capitol in Jefferson City one day, and had several dinners off campus with

women in the community.

Program Similarities and Differences. Each program is conscribed by its

physical location (i.e., proximity to the state capitol and/or a major city) and the

faculty resources available to it. Program directors may emphasize different aspects of the curriculum, and may incorporate different activities into the week. During NEW Leadership™ New Jersey, for example, participants complete an "action project" which emphasizes a particular policy issue and culminates in a role play on the program's last day. Students at the 21st Century Leadership Academy in Missouri engage in a mock legislative session at the State Capitol, followed by a luncheon at the Governor's Mansion.

Each program is unique, but there are similarities too. With the exception of the Ohio program, all distributed customized business cards to the students, to facilitate networking. Similarly, all of the programs included faculty bios and contact information in the program materials, making follow-up easier. The number of faculty ranged from about 30 in New Jersey to 65 in Missouri, with Ohio and Nevada at 40 each. Missouri had only one Faculty in Residence, the other programs had three.

A common battery of goals and assumptions inform the programs, reflected through shared inputs and manifesting in uniform desired outcomes. These common elements are easily described through a program logic model format.

The Logic Behind the NEW Leadership™ Model

One useful tool employed by evaluators to develop a thorough understanding of a program is a program logic model (Daponte 2008). Done

correctly, a program logic model does exactly what it says: models the operations of a program and the logic behind it.

A program logic model (PLM) is comprised of eight columns independent of one another (i.e., there are no "rows"). The first, left-most column, includes the assumptions that are the basis for the program. The last column includes the outcome measures, the quantitative evidence that the goals have been met. The columns between articulate the logic that connects assumptions to goals and measureable outcomes.

The program logic model for the NEW Leadership™ program is depicted in Table 3.1. An explicit description of each component part follows.

Figure 3.1. Program Logic Model, NEW Leadership™ Program.

1. Assumptions	2. Goals	3. Target Population	4. Inputs	5. Activities	6. Outputs	7. Outcomes	8. Outcome Measures
There need to be more women in politics Women need encouragement to consider careers in politics Women need formal education in order to feel competent and confident about participating in politics Symbolic effects accrue when women meet other women who are politically engaged	Encourage college women to consider careers in politics Educate college women about politics and policy making Enable college women to develop the skills and confidence necessary to become leaders in politics, the non-profit sector, and business Help college women embrace a broad definition of women's issues and concerns	College women College women from a wide range of backgrounds and academic majors; emphasis on diversity	CAWP staff, Program directors, Interns Women leaders in business, government and the non-profit sector who serve as program faculty; includes elected officials Funding from participating and host universities, private foundations, associations and individual contributors In-kind contributions of food, meeting space, Student travel to and from program	Teach students about women's participation in politics and policymaking; historical/contemporary context Connect participants with women leaders Help students explore the demands of leadership in a diverse society Cultivate student's leadership skills Enable students to practice leadership through action Engage students in activities that will enhance their career development and expand opportunities Connect participants with one other through residential requirement	Number of students who participate in NEW Leadership each year	Students Increased interest in politics Increased likelihood of running for political office Increased knowledge of women's participation in politics Increased personal and political efficacy (sense of skills and confidence to become leaders) Increased understanding and appreciation for diversity, and the importance of women's representation	Participant evaluations

SOURCE: Adapted from Daponte 2008, p.21

Assumptions. The program is premised on a normative assumption that there needs to be more women participating in politics, and a feminist commitment to women's equal representation in public life. Lawless and Fox (2012, 2) underscore this assumption eloquently in their most recent report, *Men Rule: The Continued Under-Representation of Women in U.S. Politics*: "It should come as no surprise…that women's under-representation in American politics raises grave concerns regarding democratic legitimacy and fundamental issues of political representation."

Additional assumptions guiding NEW Leadership ™ are informed by theory. As the architects of the most comprehensive study of the role gender plays in the decision to run for political office, Lawless and Fox (2005) posit the gender-gap in self-perceived qualifications as the "most potent explanation" for the gender gap in political ambition. They conclude that "in order to consider themselves qualified to run for office, women must overcome a series of complex perceptual differences and doubt that result from longstanding patterns of traditional gender socialization" (117). One assumption of NEW Leadership™ is that encouragement will help women overcome this barrier.

Another assumption is that formal education engenders feelings of competence and confidence about the process of participating in politics. On this claim, Lawless and Fox (2012) emphasize the importance of political and women's organizations in addressing the negative perceptions women hold about the personal toll of political involvement. Citing training programs and

technical assistance specifically, the authors note, "These resources can also go a long way in combating women's tendency to identify themselves as unqualified to run for office, despite equal or superior resumes and accomplishments when compared to me who opt to run" (17).

Finally, it is assumed that symbolic effects accrue when women see other women who are politically engaged. As the discussion in chapter 2 illustrates, political interest and attention (Sapiro and Conover 1997; Hansen 1997; Herrnson, Lay and Stokes 2003; Stokes-Brown and Neal 2008) and knowledge (Verba, Burns and Schlozman 1997, 1065; Burns, Schlozman and Verba 2001, 342) increase among women when other women assume high profile leadership roles. For the college women participants, the women leaders they meet represent the possibility of a participatory democracy that is inclusive of all citizens, regardless of gender. This is the crux of the argument for symbolic representation, which is the foundation for this study.

Goals. The goals for the program are straightforward, extending from the assumptions outlined above: Encourage college women to consider careers in politics, educate them about politics and policy making, and enable them to develop the skills and confidence they need to become leaders. These goals are outlined explicitly in NEW Leadership™ materials. The fourth goal, to help college women embrace a broad definition of women's issues and concerns, was articulated by the program director at NEW Leadership™ Ohio. This goal is evident, if not explicit, by virtue the women leaders who comprise the faculty at

each program, each with their own personal policy priorities ranging from education to globalization. Issues are not the focus of the program, but exposure to the scope of women's concerns is inevitable (and desirable).

Target Population. The target population for the program is female college students. CAWP describes the NEW Leadership™ population as:

> "…undergraduate women from a wide range of backgrounds and academic majors. Each NEW Leadership™ program includes women from a variety of socioeconomic, ethnic, racial and educational backgrounds" (CAWP 2010).

The 21st Century Leadership Academy at UM-St. Louis invites graduate and professional students, in addition to undergraduates, to apply to be Shear Fellows. In 2011, the Ohio program admitted two law students as part of a funding arrangement with The Ohio State University Law School. The expansion of the target population to include students doing post-graduate work adds another level of diversity to the NEW Leadership™ program. Typically, graduate students are older than the undergraduate participants, embodying diversity of age and perspective.

Inputs. Program inputs take two forms: 1) Human resources, including program staff and faculty, and 2) Financial resources, including funding and in-kind donations.

CAWP supports NEW Leadership™ Development Network partners by maintaining a website that serves as a library for program agendas and other curriculum resources shared by partner programs. CAWP also hosts conference

calls twice a year where best-practices are discussed, and organized a national

retreat for program directors in 2006.[22]

All four programs in the study are administered through a university-

based institute or center which employs a program director tasked with leading

NEW Leadership™.[23] Additional institute or center staff may also have

significant responsibility for the program, and alums may be recruited to return

as interns. Faculty for the programs is comprised of women leaders from the

public, private and non-profit sectors, who serve as keynote speakers, panelists,

and facilitators. They may also host events at their home during the NEW

Leadership™ week, creating an informal environment for interactions to occur.

With a few exceptions, the speakers are not paid for their time; all participate on

a volunteer basis. Modest honorariums and travel funds were given to a few

individuals (mostly keynote speakers and FIRs), but the majority of the speakers

are unpaid.

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[22] The NEW Leadership program manager from CAWP also organized a regional retreat at the University of Chicago in 2008 that coincided with her participation in the Midwest Political Science Association Annual Meeting. In addition to the author, retreat participants included representatives from partner programs at NEW Leadership™ Wisconsin, NEW Leadership ™ Illinois, NEW Leadership™ Iowa, and New Leadership™ Ohio. A similar retreat was prompted by the Western Political Science Association meeting in Seattle in 2010, and included representatives from NEW Leadership™ Inland Northwest and NEW Leadership™ Puget Sound (both in Washington State), NEW Leadership™ Oregon, and NEW Leadership™ Nevada.

[23] Roughly a third (8) of all partner programs are hosted by a university center or Institute whose title reflects a focus on women and government or politics (or is named after a woman, such as the Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center at the University of Maine). The remaining programs are led by university faculty, who are also balancing teaching and research responsibilities, so the director responsibility may be shared with another professor or graduate student. They may also receive support from interns and staff from their respective departments. NEW Leadership™ Illinois is unique in that it hosted at the University of Illinois-Chicago, in partnership with the Conference of Women Legislators (COWL).

The funding structure for each respective program varies, but all programs receive some degree of financial support from the host institution. This may include salary for the program staff, grants from affiliated alumni or university women's groups, or support from the development office for fundraising activities. NEW Leadership™ New Jersey and the 21st Century Leadership Academy also collect fees from participating institutions. Corporate sponsorship and association and foundation support constitute the bulk of the budget for the Ohio and Nevada programs. All rely on individual donors and in-kind contributions of food, off-campus meeting space, and speaker participation to make their budgets work.

Students provide their own transportation to and from the program, but are not charged for participation. All meals and accommodations are provided, as is transportation during the week.

Activities. The six-point NEW Leadership™ curriculum (see page 52**)** frames the activities listed in column 5 of the program logic model (Figure 3.1). There is sufficient program autonomy with respect to the agenda, so each partner program develops its own set of specific activities to meet curricular objectives. All four programs studied assigned students to introduce each of the presenters, as an applied exercise in public speaking. Other common activities include panel discussions, speakers, small group activities and networking events. Three of the four programs included a day-trip to the State Capitol, where participants met

with women staffers and elected leaders, and spent time observing or touring legislative chambers.

All programs have some sort of public event, where women and men from the neighboring community are invited to join NEW Leadership™ participants and listen to a keynote speaker. The talk is preceded by a reception and/or a dinner, both of which serve as opportunities for the students to practice their networking skills and connect with women leaders.

Another common activity is connecting participants to one another through shared accommodations. CAWP says the following about the residential requirement of the program:

> "…we consider the residential nature of the program an integral component of the NEW Leadership™ experience….Living in the dorms together for five nights builds a sense of *esprit de corps* among the group and encourages friendly interaction among a very diverse group of participants. The learning experience extends beyond the formal sessions as conversations continue over meals and back in the dorms, where students can share ideas, challenge opinions they heard during the day, reflect and discuss in a way that would not occur if they went their separate ways after the day's formal program ended."   (CAWP 2010; emphasis in original)

Outputs. Outputs are the evidence that a program is actually operating (Daponte 2008). In this case, the output is the number of students who participate in NEW Leadership™ each year. A typical NEW Leadership™ class averages between 25-35 students, though that number varies depending on funding and the number of applications received. In a tough economic environment, like the one that formed the backdrop for 2011, students may forgo

programs like NEW Leadership™ in order to maximize earnings at their summer

job. Taking a week off for leadership training can be an expensive trade-off for

students in certain fields, like engineering. Knowing that they have to provide

transportation to and from the program can be a deterrent as well, especially in a

large state like Nevada, where the 450 mile trip, one-way, from Reno to Las

Vegas (where the program is held) takes eight hours by car. Fuel prices can

make such a trip expensive by car or bus, but the alternative of flying may be

cost prohibitive.

Outcomes. In contrast to outputs, which indicate only whether a program

is happening, outcomes describe the desired impact or evidence that the

program actually *works* (Daponte 2008). NEW Leadership™ outcomes relate

directly to the goals specified in Figure 3.1, column 2. As a result of participating

in the program, students will demonstrate increased interest in politics, increased

likelihood of running for office, increased knowledge of women's participation

in politics, and increased skills and confidence that will enable them to be

leaders. Another important outcome is that students have an increased

understanding and appreciation for diversity, including the diversity of women's

issues and concerns.

The focus of this study is to measure and explain the attainment of

outcomes listed in column 7. My hypotheses test all but the final outcome:

increased understanding and appreciation for diversity, and the importance of

women's representation. The decision not to focus on diversity was not made on

normative grounds, but practical ones. I believe that the question of whether or not NEW Leadership™ leads students to be more accepting of diverse perspectives and teaches them "why it matters" that women have a voice politically, is important enough to warrant its own inquiry. Whether NEW Leadership™ fosters an attitude of acceptance toward other people and viewpoints (for example, a more tolerant view of bi-partisan cooperation than is typically seen in contemporary US politics), or increased "gender-consciousness" (Tolleson-Rinehart 1992) among participants is beyond the scope of this project. It is, however, an important topic that should be explored.

Outcome Measures. A program evaluation is administered at the conclusion of each program. Each NEW Leadership™ partner has the flexibility to create their own outcomes instrument, so they vary in terms of the kind of information that is collected. Some use the survey to measure outcomes (programs in Ohio and Missouri use a pre-post- design), and others place greater emphasis on feedback about the program speakers, logistics, etc…

In 2009, NEW Leadership™ Ohio conducted a survey of its alumni to benchmark progress toward a specific Ohio program goal of graduates running for office. In the same year, CAWP administered a survey to the entire population of graduates of partner programs. By 2009, over 3,700 college women had participated in NEW Leadership™, some at sites that had 10 years of experience delivering the program (CAWP 2009). I discuss the results of the

survey in chapter 6, but it is worth noting here that the focus was on program outcomes.

Program Theory

The preceding section provided a systematic description of the NEW Leadership™ program by tracing the milestones depicted in the program logic model. The strength of the program logic model as an evaluation tool is that it catalogs the component parts of the NEW Leadership™ program in a coherent way. More importantly, it establishes indicators or measures of performance, and quantifies the desired program outcomes (Chen 2005). For evaluators, the program logic model is a tool to help stakeholders conceptualize a program. It will expose a program's vulnerabilities (faulty logic, ill-defined goals, unfocused activities) (Daponte 2008) and enable an assessment of program evaluability (Chen 2005). Developing a program logic model is analogous to running descriptive statistics in quantitative analysis. It gives one a sense of the data; in this case, an overview of the program.

A program logic model does not, however, provide insight into the relationships between the program components. For this level of analysis, a holistic understanding of the program theory is required. Chen (2005, 16) defines program theory as "the analysis of the explicit and implicit assumptions underlying a program." Continuing the parallel with quantitative analysis, a program theory is like a regression model; it specifies relationships and explains how the component parts (variables) relate to produce the desired goals.

Conceptual Framework. The program theory conceptual framework has two distinct parts: The Action Model, which prescribes the mechanics of the program – the how-to - and the Change Model, which maps the transformation process from intervention to outcomes. Together, they advance a set of prescriptive and descriptive assumptions that illustrate the causal chain missing in the program logic model. Patton (2002, 163) juxtaposes the PLM and program theory this way: "Logic models are *descriptive*. Theory of change and theory of action models are *explanatory* and *predictive*."

Comprehensive Form. Figure 3.2 illustrates the comprehensive program theory underlying the NEW Leadership™ program. The action model and change model are specified, and linked through program implementation.

Figure 3.2. Conceptual Framework of the program theory underlying the NEW Leadership™ program, comprehensive form.

Resources

Environment

Action Model

Center for American Women and Politics (CAWP)

Collaborating with women in public life who serve as faculty,

Developing the NEW Leadership™ program and service delivery protocols

NEW Leadership™ program directors

With support from participating universities and especially the host university

Recruiting college women leaders

Change Model

Program Implementation

Students participate in NEW Leadership™

Students are exposed to New Leadership™ curriculum

Changing students' political ambition

SOURCE: Adapted from Chen (2005, 31)

Double-banded arrows indicate a sequential relationship, thus illustrating that

the action model precedes the change model, which is activated through

program implementation. The rectangle surrounding both models represents the

program boundary. Exogenous to the program is the environment, which could

be construed as the political and economic climate, public opinion, the academic

community, etc…Resources flow in to implement the action model, which

activates the change model. It is the change model that leads to desired program

outcomes.

The dotted lines represent feedback loops. Feedback from the change

model informs program implementation, which in turn informs the action

model. It is also possible for feedback about implementation to flow back to the

action model, independent of the change model. Similarly, the change model can

inform the action model directly, as information about the causal process of the

change model is used to improve program planning. Notice that the feedback

loops extend outside the program boundary, illustrating that the program is

susceptible to external pressures.

Action Model. I conclude this section with an explanation of the NEW

Leadership™ Action Model, which is depicted in Figure 3.3. Understanding the

theoretical and procedural underpinnings of the program is essential to making

causal inferences.

Here again, the double-banded arrows indicate sequentiality,

underscoring the contingent nature of the relationships between certain

components. For example, an institution cannot start a NEW Leadership™

program without the endorsement of CAWP. The two-way double-banded

arrows suggest a collaborative relationship, which can be initiated by either

party.

Figure 3.3. Action Model of the program theory underlying the NEW Leadership™ program.
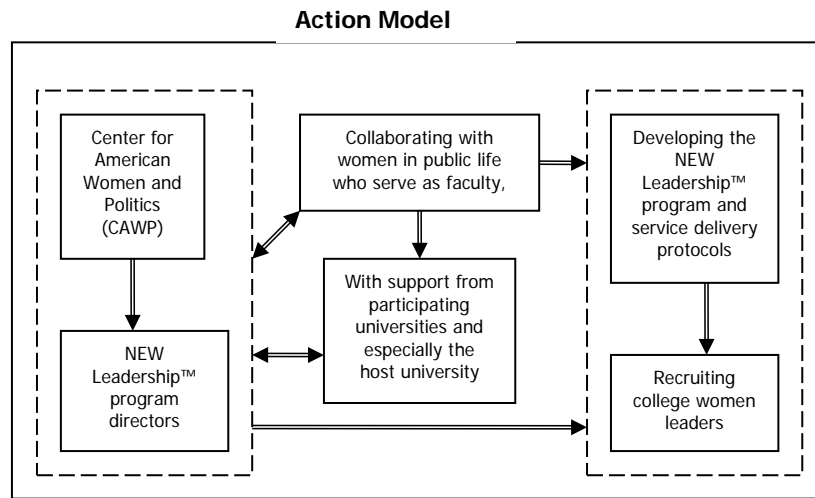
Action Model

SOURCE: Adapted from Chen (2005, 31)

Predicated on the inflow of resources, the action model of the program

theory for the NEW Leadership™ program unfolds as follows: CAWP selects a

program partner in response to a request for proposal. Once selected, the NEW

Leadership™ program director develops the program and delivery protocols

(possibly in collaboration with women leaders and universities, but not

necessarily). Finally, college women are recruited to participate, and the learning

begins.

Summary

This chapter traced the development of the NEW Leadership™ training institute as a national model for encouraging young women to consider careers in politics and public life. Over the past 20 years, the program has expanded to reach upwards of 650 college women annually, and the network continues to expand by adding up to three new programs each year.

The four NEW Leadership™ programs included in this study - NEW Leadership™ New Jersey, NEW Leadership™ Nevada, NEW Leadership™ Ohio, and the 21st Century Leadership Academy at the University of Missouri–St. Louis – are as alike as they are different. Each program is adapted to the realities of its home state, and each operates within a unique opportunity set of human and financial resources. But all of the programs in the NEW Leadership™ development network are guided by the same curricular mandate, expressed in six-points: 1) Teach students about the diversity of women's historical and contemporary participation in politics and policymaking; 2) Connect participants with women leaders who make a difference in the public sphere; 3) Help students explore the demands of leadership in a diverse society, 4) Cultivate students' leadership skills; 5) Enable students to practice leadership through action; and 6) Engage students in activities that will enhance their career development and expand their career opportunities.

The latter part of the chapter outlined the NEW Leadership™ Program Logic Model (PLM), mapping the program's assumptions, goals, target

population, inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and outcome measures. The PLM was supplemented by a discussion of the program theory, or implicit and explicit assumptions that form the causal chain linking NEW Leadership™ to young women's increased political ambition. A comprehensive framework of the program theory was introduced, and the action model was explained in detail.

The next chapter provides an overview of the methodological considerations that frame this study. It begins with a review of the research questions and hypotheses and a discussion of the program evaluation framework. The program theory conceptual framework is revisited and the NEW Leadership™ Change Model is explored.

Chapter 4
Methodology

This chapter provides an outline of the methodological framework of the dissertation and a description of the data collection processes. Using the Program Theory Conceptual Framework described in chapter 3, a theory-driven outcome strategy was applied, making use of large- and small-N approaches including statistical analysis of primary survey data, participant observations, and interviews. The limitations of the chosen methods and data will be discussed at the end of the chapter.

Research Questions

The goal of this project is to explicate the theorized relationship between women's representation and young women's political ambition. By definition, the symbolic dimension of representation arouses feelings of identity with government when one perceives people "like them" to be a part of it. I am interested in the extent to which connecting with women political leaders gives college women a sense that they have a role to play in our democracy, and have the skills necessary to do so successfully.

Two questions form the nexus of this investigation: 1) Does exposure to mentoring, training, advice and role models increase young women's political interest and efficacy? and 2) If so, how? The NEW Leadership™ program was selected as the focus of study because it is a national model that leverages the symbolic effects of representation by using women leaders to teach college

women about the value of civic engagement. In 2012, roughly 650 college women in the United States will spend an intense week with women political leaders who will help them begin to make sense of the political world they live in. Will their perceptions of politics, and more importantly, themselves, change as a result? After 20 years of program delivery and proliferation, it is important to ascertain the extent to which NEW Leadership™ effectively "empowers the next generation of women leaders," as it claims. Rigorous empirical analysis in the form of a program evaluation is appropriate to assess the effectiveness of NEW Leadership™ as a tool for building political interest and efficacy, necessary precursors to young women's political ambition.

For reasons that will be explained, I applied a multi-methods approach to these questions. Applicants for four 2011 NEW Leadership™ programs were surveyed before and after the program, to uncover changes in beliefs about themselves and their political participation. I attended the programs in June 2011 to get a clearer picture of the program culture, and observe the interaction of students and women leaders. Finally, I conducted interviews with program alumni in an effort to understand the continuous effects of participation in NEW Leadership™, and make causal inferences about program activities and resulting attitudes.

I hypothesized four effects of participation in the NEW Leadership™ program as a catalyst for increased political ambition:

Hypothesis 1. Students who complete NEW Leadership™ programs will report increased interest in politics.

Hypothesis 2. Students who complete NEW Leadership™ programs will demonstrate higher levels of internal efficacy, evidenced by increased knowledge of women's participation in politics and methods for participating in politics.

Hypothesis 3. Students who complete NEW Leadership™ programs will demonstrate higher levels of external efficacy.

Hypothesis 4. Graduates of NEW Leadership™ programs will indicate an increase in the likelihood that they will pursue elected office or another position of political influence.

I will revisit these hypotheses in the next section, after a discussion of the program evaluation framework.

Program Evaluation Framework

Theory-Driven Outcome Evaluation. Program evaluation can be conducted at the program planning, implementation and outcome stages, and is used for program monitoring, or the periodic collection of quantitative data about a program's process or outcomes (Chen 2005).[24]   Since this project examines the cause-effect relationship between participation in NEW Leadership™ and indicators of political interest and efficacy, an outcome evaluation is justified.[25] Unlike traditional outcome models, such as efficiency or effectiveness evaluations, which focus exclusively on the intervention-outcome paradigm, this evaluation is also concerned with the transformative processes

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[24] Program monitoring data is often communicated to funders and other partners invested in a program's implementation and success.

[25] Chen's Practical Taxonomy for Program Evaluation Means and Ends (2005, 48) was enormously helpful in choosing an appropriate evaluation strategy.

that mediate the relationship. In addition to asking, "what are the merits of the intervention?" this study probes the underlying causal mechanisms that explain how and why the outcomes are what they are. I posit that graduates of the program report higher levels of political interest and efficacy than non-participants. Why is this so? Do symbolic effects help explain why college women express greater political ambition after spending a week with women leaders in public life?

This level of inquiry requires more than a black box, input-output evaluation, making theory-driven outcome evaluation the best approach. Theory-driven evaluation takes into account the causal determinants that bridge the divide between program implementation and outcomes. It enlightens stakeholders through an examination of program processes as well as results.

Chen (2005) notes that when done well, theory-driven outcome evaluation has several empirical advantages over other outcomes measures. First, theory-driven outcome evaluation demands thorough defining and operationalizing of relevant constructs. It enhances construct validity by specifying how an evaluation will measure what it claims to measure. Secondly, theory-driven outcome evaluation attenuates internal validity concerns by focusing explicitly on causal determinants as well as outcomes. Internal validity pertains to the extent to which an account accurately represents or measures the social phenomena of interest (Hammersley 1990). It is concerned with the accuracy of the causal connections. Finally, from an academic perspective, theoretical

grounding makes theory-driven outcome evaluation best suited for the rigorous

examination that scholarship requires. "By investigating underlying causal

mechanisms, theory-driven outcome evaluation has potential to contribute to

substantive knowledge or science in general" (Chen 2005, 232).

Explicating the Change Model. The descriptive assumptions and causal

links of the NEW Leadership™ program theory were outlined in chapter 3.

Recall that program implementation was preceded by the action model, which

specified the parties and processes involved in developing the NEW

Leadership™ program. It was followed by the change model, shown in Figure

4.1, which maps the theorized causal order linking participation in NEW

Leadership™ to changes in students' political ambition. I posit that by

participating in NEW Leadership™, students are exposed to the NEW

Leadership™ curriculum which leads to increased political ambition.

Figure 4.1. Change Model of the program theory underlying the NEW Leadership™ program
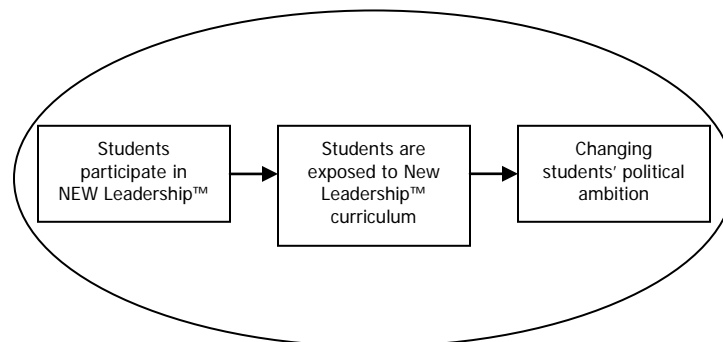
SOURCE: Adapted from Chen (2005).

Figure 4.2 explicates the change model by specifying the objectives of the

NEW Leadership™ curriculum. Column A represents the intervention; Column

C, the outcomes, and Column B, the causal mechanisms or "determinants" that

explain how one gets to C from A (Chen 2005). It is hypothesized that the

implementation of these objectives will lead to specific indicators of change in

political ambition documented in the last column (Column C). The four

indicators represent the four hypotheses tested in this study.

Figure 4.2. Explicated Change Model

```
┌─────┐              ┌─────┐                    ┌─────┐
│  A  │              │  B  │                    │  C  │
└─────┘              └─────┘                    └─────┘
```

```
                    ┌──────────────────────────┐
                    │  Students are exposed to  │   ┌──────────────────────────┐
                    │      New Leadership™      │   │        Changing          │
                    │        curriculum:        │   │   students' political    │
                    │                           │   │        ambition          │
                    │ ┌──────────────────────┐  │   │                          │
                    │ │ Knowledge of women's │  │   │ ┌──────────────────────┐ │
                    │ │ historical and       │  │   │ │ H1: Students will     │ │
                    │ │ contemporary         │  │   │ │ report increased      │ │
                    │ │ participation in     │  │   │ │ interest in politics  │ │
                    │ │ politics             │  │   │ └──────────────────────┘ │
                    │ └──────────────────────┘  │   │                          │
                    │ ┌──────────────────────┐  │   │ ┌──────────────────────┐ │
                    │ │ Connection with women│  │   │ │ H2: Students will     │ │
┌──────────────┐    │ │ leaders in the       │  │   │ │ demonstrate higher    │ │
│  Students    │    │ │ public sphere        │  │   │ │ levels of internal    │ │
│ participate  │    │ └──────────────────────┘  │   │ │ efficacy              │ │
│   in NEW     │──► │ ┌──────────────────────┐  │──►│ └──────────────────────┘ │
│ Leadership™  │    │ │ Exploration of the   │  │   │ ┌──────────────────────┐ │
└──────────────┘    │ │ demands of leadership│  │   │ │ H3: Students will     │ │
                    │ │ in a diverse society │  │   │ │ demonstrate higher    │ │
                    │ └──────────────────────┘  │   │ │ levels of external    │ │
                    │ ┌──────────────────────┐  │   │ │ efficacy              │ │
                    │ │ Cultivation of       │  │   │ └──────────────────────┘ │
                    │ │ leadership skills    │  │   │ ┌──────────────────────┐ │
                    │ └──────────────────────┘  │   │ │ H4: Graduates will    │ │
                    │ ┌──────────────────────┐  │   │ │ indicate an increase  │ │
                    │ │ Leadership skills    │  │   │ │ in the likelihood     │ │
                    │ │ practice             │  │   │ │ that they will pursue │ │
                    │ └──────────────────────┘  │   │ │ elected office        │ │
                    │ ┌──────────────────────┐  │   │ └──────────────────────┘ │
                    │ │ Engagement in        │  │   └──────────────────────────┘
                    │ │ activities that will │  │
                    │ │ enhance career       │  │
                    │ │ development and      │  │
                    │ │ expand opportunities │  │
                    │ └──────────────────────┘  │
                    └──────────────────────────┘
```

SOURCE: Adapted from Chen (2005), Multiple Determinant, No Sequential Order Model.

Multiple methods were used to assess the relationships outlined above. A survey, administered with an untreated control group design, provided insight into the relationship between participation in NEW Leadership™ and changes in political ambition. Differences in the treatment group but not the control group,

post-intervention, serve as evidence that participation in NEW Leadership™ explains the change.

To make claims about the role of specific determinants of change listed in Column B, two additional pieces of information were needed: 1) The extent to which the specified curricular components in Column B fairly and accurately describe the NEW Leadership™ program experience, and 2) the relationship between the six points of the curriculum and the hypothesized outcomes in Column C. I employed two qualitative methods to address the need for contextual analysis, and develop more in-depth causal inferences: participant observation and interviews.

Research Design

Methodological Triangulation. As a practical matter, a theory-driven outcome evaluation – which emphasizes cause as well as effect – makes it well-suited for a "triangulated" methodological approach. Borrowing from surveying, where different bearings give the correct position of an object, social scientists use "triangulation" in reference to the use of multiple methods, theories, and empirical materials in research design (Fielding and Fielding 1986). The assumption behind triangulation is that the use of multiple approaches or views gives one a more accurate and complete picture of the phenomenon of interest (Denzin 1970).

Another way of thinking about triangulation is that it uses the strengths of one method to address the shortcomings of another (Denzin 1970 ; Tarrow

2004).[26] Statistical tests, like those used to analyze the survey responses of the 2011 NEW Leadership™ applicants, provide precise estimates of the strength of relationships. Measures of statistical significance, for example, express the degree of likelihood that observed differences are the result of hypothesized effects, rather than error. They do not, however, reveal anything about the causes of the observed differences in question. Qualitative methods are better tools for answering questions that start with "why" or "how." The mixed-method approach used in this study triangulates, or leverages, the descriptive power of quantitative analysis with the explanatory power of interviews and observations to provide a more complete view of the NEW Leadership™ experience.

Quantitative Method. I used a quasi-experimental design to measure the effect of the intervention – in this case, participation in NEW Leadership™ – on the outcomes of the program. Surveys were administered to all NEW Leadership™ applicants before and after the program and outcomes were compared, conditioned on participation. The survey design and administration protocols are discussed in detail at the end of the chapter, but a description of the methodology follows.

An untreated control group design with pretest and posttest was selected because it enables one to postulate causality. This design includes two observations – a pretest and posttest – and two groups: one that receives the

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[26] For an alternative perspective, see Fielding and Fielding (1986).

treatment, and one that does not. The first observation (or pre-test), which is

taken before the intervention, is a baseline recording of the respective groups'

performance on the outcomes before the treatment. Ideally, differences between

the groups will be slight, because this strengthens the argument that differences

on the post-test can be attributed to the intervention.

Figure 4.3. Untreated control group design with pretest and posttest.

$$O_1 \quad X \quad O_2$$

$$\text{-------------------}$$

$$O_1 \quad\quad\quad O_2$$
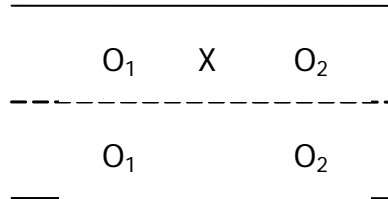
SOURCE: Cook and Campbell (1979, 104)

As figure 4.3 illustrates, one group receives the intervention, and one (the

control group) does not. If the posttest reveals an increase in outcomes for the

treatment group ($O_2 > O_1$), but no change is observed in the control group

($O_2 = O_1$), one can begin to make a case for the treatment as a change agent.

Because all four NEW Leadership™ programs included in this study have

competitive application processes and limit the number of program participants,

there are students who apply but are not admitted. These students are a

desirable control group because they possess the requisite interest necessary to

apply to the program; their ability to seek out the opportunity and apply makes

them more similar to the applicants who are selected than the average college student. The expectation is that in the absence of the intervention – in this case, participation in a NEW Leadership™ program – the interest and efficacy of the applicant or control group will remain unchanged. In contrast, interest and efficacy levels of program participants are expected to rise as a result of their program experience.

Controlling for program participation strengthens causal inferences linking the NEW Leadership™ program experience and the dependent variable. The control group design with pre-and post- test measures also reduces selection threat (Cook, Cook and Mark 1977) or unexplained variability among applicants. Selection threat, or bias, is a common concern in quasi-experimental designs where subjects are selected by a nonrandom process, and it has implications for internal validity. The pretest helps establish the homogeneity of the applicants before the program, so that differences on the post-test can be attributed to NEW Leadership™ and not selection-related factors.

Qualitative Methods. The quasi-experimental design enables one to correlate changes in outcomes with participation in NEW Leadership™. More information is needed to move from merely observing the correlation to understanding the dynamics of the relationship. As Reichardt and Cook (1979, 23) assert, "Quite simply, researchers cannot benefit from the use of numbers if they do not know, in common sense terms, what the numbers mean."

Returning to figure 4.2, I used participant observations, primarily, to substantiate and elaborate causal claims related to the extent to which the specified curricular components in Column B fairly and accurately describe the NEW Leadership™ program experience. The Center for American Women and Politics designed the curriculum for the NEW Leadership™ program, and adherence to the curriculum is an expectation of all NEW Leadership™ Development Network partners[27]. Since data collection occurred at four program sites, it was important to ascertain uniformity of curriculum delivery across programs in order to strengthen the external validity of the project overall.

It is reasonable to assume that if a student attended any of the 18 NEW Leadership™ programs, she would be exposed to a similar experience, but verification of program homogeneity was important. The main objective of participant observation was to confirm that the programs were comparable with respect to how effectively they implemented the program curriculum. If, for example, one program failed to expose students to two of the six objectives of the curriculum – knowledge of women's historical and contemporary participation in politics, and connection with women leaders in the public sphere – any causal attribution predicated on symbolic representation would be tenuous, because it would only apply to three of the four program sites. It would put a chink in the causal chain. In order to generalize the findings across the program sample, and

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[27] See Chapter 3 for more detail.

more importantly, generalize the findings to the NEW Leadership™ Development Network more broadly, establishing uniformity was key.

A second goal of participant observation was to critically examine the role and influence of the program faculty, and the quality of their interactions with the students. If symbolic effects are a salient explanation for college women's increased political ambition, I needed evidence that the women leaders played a significant role in the students' program experience.

This theoretical logic was tested further through interviews with NEW Leadership™ alumni. Engaging with the graduates about their experience provided "depth" to the analysis and shed light on the curricular components that had lasting impact. Munck (2004, 116) speaks to the valuable evidence that in-depth interviews can provide, beyond data gathered through quantitative means: "In such interviews, informants not only answer the specific, prepared questions that the researcher poses, but often offer their own more nuanced responses and unprompted insights." For the purposes of this research, unprompted insights were particularly useful to the extent that they illuminated and substantiated causal claims. Some of the interview subjects had participated in the program 10 years earlier. The things about NEW Leadership™ that they remembered were important clues to how the change model works.

The timing of the interviews was important. It would have been possible to interview the 2011 program participants who completed the survey, to gain a richer understanding of their experience. Given the recency of their

participation, however, I was concerned that their enthusiasm for all aspects of the program would make it difficult to discern between lasting and transient effects. Talking to graduates provided for the possibility of more reflective and tempered interviews, based on enduring perceptions and recollections. It is possible that some formative experiences were forgotten, but seems more likely that "symbolic" effects would be recalled.

Additional interviews were conducted with program administrators to develop a complete understanding of the NEW Leadership™ program, and uncover site-specific nuances that could potentially bias the results. These interviews supplemented the observations as a tool for confirming uniformity of program philosophy and similarity of program activities.

Role Models and Political Ambition Survey

Having established the rationale for a multi-method approach, the remaining sections of this chapter document the specific data collection methods in greater detail. Data collection was conducted between May 2011 and January 2012, starting with the administration of the "Role Models and Political Ambition Survey."

Sample. While it would have been preferable to include applicants from all 18 of the existing NEW Leadership™ programs in the project, the practical resource constraints of time and money made it necessary to choose four 2011 NEW Leadership™ Development Network programs to include in the research sample: NEW Leadership™ New Jersey, NEW Leadership™ Nevada, NEW

Leadership™ Ohio, and the 21st Century Leadership Academy at the University of Missouri–St. Louis. The unit of analysis was the individual program applicant.

Methodology. A "Role Model and Political Ambition Survey" was developed using political participation questions adapted from the 2009 NEW Leadership™ Alumni Survey and internal and external efficacy questions from the American National Election Studies (ANES). On both the pre- and post- test, survey respondents were asked to indicate if they had participated in any of 13 political activities. The list of 13 activities ranged from membership in a campus organization to running for political office, and respondents were instructed to "check all that apply." In order to assess extent of political participation, a participation index was constructed by calculating the sum of activities reported by each respondent. Because there were 13 activities, the participation index therefore ranged from 0-13 depending on the number of activities reported.

Respondents were asked to rate their level of interest in politics and assess their political knowledge and confidence using a Likert scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). Finally, they were asked whether they agree or disagree with external efficacy questions that mirror those used in the ANES. As an objective measure of political knowledge, respondents were asked to make their "best guess" of the percentage of women in the U.S. Congress and the Missouri Legislature, by choosing from a range of options.

The survey was administered through Flashlight Online.[28] A copy of the survey is included in Appendix A. E-mail addresses of program applicants were obtained from program directors at each of the institutions. Pre-notification is one way to increase response rates (Mehta and Sivadas 1995), so a preliminary e-mail was sent to each applicant a few days before the survey was administered, notifying them that another email with the survey link would arrive in a few days. The e-mail stated explicitly that the subject line of the e-mail would read "Role Models and Political Ambition," and instructed the respondent to watch for the message and not to delete it.

The pre-test was administered to 160 program applicants on-line during May and early June 2011, prior to each respective NEW Leadership™ program. Consent was obtained when the student clicked "Begin," a process that was made explicit on the introductory screen. There was some concern that the students who were not selected for the program would be less likely to participate in the survey if they knew that their inclusion in the survey was the result of their NEW Leadership™ application. Potential respondents were therefore informed that they were asked to participate "because they had been identified as a student with expressed interest in women's political leadership." Neither the preliminary message nor the e-mail that included the survey link

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[28] Since 1998, Washington State University (WSU) and the TLT Group have collaborated to provide online surveys and other assessment tools for higher education institutions across the United States. The Skylight Matrix Assessment System (also known as Flashlight Online 2.0) was one of these survey services. Skylight accounts based on Flashlight subscriptions were phased out in December 2011.

made any mention of NEW Leadership™ or the 21st Century Leadership

Academy.[29]

Potential respondents were given 17-18 days to complete the survey.[30] At

least two follow-up messages were sent urging participation. The overall

response rate for the pre-test was 65%.

An on-line post-test was administered during the month of August,

2011.[31] The questions on the post-test were the same as on the pre-test, plus

several additional questions that were posed only to program participants.

These questions referenced the participant's NEW Leadership™ experience

explicitly, and measured increased interest in politics, greater confidence in one's

ability to work within the political system, and greater confidence in one's ability

to create political change. Participants were also asked to choose from a list of

statements those which were true of their NEW Leadership™ experience. For

example, "I found a mentor and plan to stay in touch with her for career advice

and guidance."

The post-test was administered to pre-test respondents only, as

completion of both measures was required for inclusion in the sample. Once

again, preliminary e-mails were sent, thanking respondents for their

participation and alerting them to the timeline for the second survey. Two

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[29] Only one respondent asked how her e-mail address was obtained and was told that it came from the Center for American Women and Politics.

[30] The response window for the NEW Leadership™ New Jersey applicants was 36 days. This was because they had the largest number of applicants. Many were not selected, providing an opportunity to build the non-participant cohort.

[31] The follow up survey was actually sent to non-participants on July 29.

follow-up e-mails were sent to all non-respondents. Two additional personally

addressed e-mails were sent to each non-participant non-respondent, in an

attempt to retain as many of them as possible and derive an adequate N for the

(non-participant) control group.

A total of 83 individuals (59 participants and 24 non-participants)

responded to both the pre- and post- tests. As shown in Table 4.1, the overall

response rate for participants and non-participants was 82% and 77%,

respectively.

Table 4.1. Response rates for NEW Leadership™ participants and non-participants by program.

Program	Participants	Non-Participants	Totals
	(% Response: Post/Pre)	*(% Response: Post/Pre)*	
NEW Leadership™ Nevada	11 (79)	2 (100)	13
NEW Leadership™ New Jersey	12 (67)	7 (70)	19
NEW Leadership™ Ohio	10 (83)	5 (83)	15
21st Century Leadership Academy	26 (93)	10 (77)	36
Total	**59 (82)**	**24 (77)**	**83**

Participant Observations

Methodology. In June, 2011, I observed programs in New Jersey, Nevada

and Ohio where I was introduced as a researcher, but also as someone who

directed the program in Missouri. All of the student participants had been

invited to participate in the pre-survey, so I had introduced myself to them

previously via e-mail. I attended most of the program sessions and activities, but did not immerse myself entirely in the program culture. Though I stayed on campus I was never assigned to the same residence as the participants and did not attempt to ingratiate myself into any informal late night discussions or social outings.

For the most part, I was an inconspicuous presence at the programs. I interacted informally with the participants – during meals, during travel to off-site locations, etc… It was my perception that they regarded me as just "one of those faculty people." Silverman (2006, 84) notes that "Your gender in relation to the gender of the people you are studying may turn out to be very important in relation to how you are defined and, therefore, what you find out." I do believe that the fact that I am a woman helped me merge seamlessly into the background of the NEW Leadership™ programs I observed. Had I been a male researcher, I would have been much more conspicuous as perhaps (and probably) the only man in the room most of the time.

My observations focused on several general themes and core questions: Do the programs appear to "educate and empower" students, as they claim? What role do faculty members play in empowering the students? What messages are being transmitted about politics and government? How is leadership portrayed in these programs? These questions were prepared in advance as part of an observation checklist that I used to focus my attention. I took extensive

field notes, recording my observations on a yellow legal pad. A copy of the observation checklist is included in Appendix B.

NEW Leadership™ is a comprehensive immersion program, with numerous components that could serve to "educate and empower" students; the experience of being with other strong young women, for example, or insights gained through activities that reinforce career interests or personal passions. I was looking for indications that the women leaders who served as faculty provided mentoring and shared advice, and interacted with students in such a way that they could be ascribed "role model" status. I was especially looking and listening for explicit offers to mentor or "help" students get ahead.

Interviews

Sample. I conducted semi-structured interviews with each of the program directors to inform my understanding of individual program similarities and differences, and develop a complete picture of the program philosophy. Interviews with directors from NEW Leadership™ Nevada and NEW Leadership™ Ohio were conducted during their respective programs. The interview with the program director for NEW Leadership™ New Jersey, who also serves as the NEW Leadership™ program manager for CAWP, was done over the phone in January 2012. All interviews were recorded and transcribed for accuracy. A list of the questions used to guide the program administrator interviews is included in Appendix C.

The population for the alumni interviews included all graduates from the four programs included in the study (excluding 2011 participants), for whom e-mail addresses were known. This provided a total of 824 potential interview subjects from which to draw a sample.

Interview subjects were selected from lists provided by program directors. The lists were formatted in Excel and sorted based on the results of the random number generator function. The lists were incomplete. Some were partial lists, retroactive to some degree, but not to program origination; others had missing or inaccurate e-mail addresses. In either case, the incompleteness of the data is important to consider when generalizing the findings. Failure to keep in touch, on behalf of the program participant, may reflect a difference in experience with implications for the interview findings.

Ultimately, four alumnae per program were interviewed, for a total of 16 interviews. This is admittedly a small sample, given the size of the population. Since the interviews were used to elaborate the findings of the survey, providing in-depth analysis of a few cases, the smaller-n is justified but not without a caveat: Caution should be exercised when generalizing the interview findings to the larger population of participants. The limitations will be discussed more thoroughly at the end of the chapter.

Methodology. Interviews with program alumni were conducted over the phone between October 10, 2011, and January 15, 2012. Potential subjects were e-mailed a request for an interview, starting at the top of the randomly ranked list.

This e-mail outlined the goals of the study, and indicated that the interview would last approximately 20-25 minutes. The consent form, which provided more detailed information about the study, risks and benefits, privacy and confidentiality was attached to the interview request.

Due to resource constraints these interviews were not recorded but were transcribed in real-time. Since I was not assured access to a speaker phone, which would have enabled me to record and conduct the interview simultaneously, this was the best option. Every attempt was made to capture the interviews word for word, and all transcripts were reviewed immediately to correct any typing errors that could have been misinterpreted later.

The interviews were not intended to "test" the outcomes of the survey, but illuminate them. Interview subjects were asked a series of open-ended questions about their general impressions of NEW Leadership™. These questions were deliberately vague, designed to uncover the student's perception of the more valuable aspects and benefits of the program without explicit references to anything in particular.

Subsequent sections probed the student's perception of her political interest and knowledge by presenting a series of indicators and asking for a self-reported ranking on a rating scale of 1-5 (5 being the highest). A similar set of questions measured self-reported rating on measures of internal efficacy. The respondents were asked explicitly what effect they thought their NEW

Leadership™ experience had on their understanding of politics and the ways that they could impact the political process.

They were also asked to recall any women faculty from the program, and indicate if and how they had kept in touch. I deliberately placed the inquiry regarding the faculty of women leaders late in the interview, to see if the topic came up earlier without prompting. The interview concluded with a series of questions about the respondent's activities since NEW Leadership™, and future plans, including the following: What is the likelihood that you would consider running for public office? The findings of the thematic assessment of interview responses are the topic of chapter 6.

Limitations

The Validity Trade Off. It is noted that The Scientific Method, characterized by the use of randomized controlled experiments, is the standard for scientific research. However, as is often the case with evaluation studies, this project was constrained by environmental factors that made a laboratory setting and randomized selection infeasible: NEW Leadership™ is an established program, with protocols that dictate participant selection, and locations that are site-specific. "Methodologically speaking, quasi-experimental designs cannot compete with randomized experiments in achieving internal validity" (Chen 2005, 223). However, citing Gosset's "half-drill strip" design in agricultural research, Chen illustrates how real-world settings, like the one used here, can strengthen external validity by enhancing generalizability (222).

Validity is the most important consideration when conducting credible research, because failure to achieve validity is failure to approximate truth (Daponte 2008), and what good are research findings if they cannot be presumed to be true? Four kinds of validity must be considered: internal validity, external validity, construct validity and statistical validity. Briefly, internal validity concerns the accuracy of causal inferences; external validity refers to the generalizability of the results; construct validity measures the extent to which theoretical constructs have been operationalized accurately; and statistical validity balances the threat of Type I error (erroneously concluding that a relationship exists) and Type II error (erroneously concluding that it does not). Maximizing one type of validity often means compromising another, so trade-offs have to be made.

In addition to the validity issues raised by the use of quasi-experimental design, construct and statistical validity were taken into account during the construction and analysis of the survey. I attempted to minimize construct validity concerns by using questions "borrowed" from credible sources, such as the ANES, which conducts extensive validity testing. Standard thresholds for significance were observed during statistical analysis, and causal inferences about outcomes were reserved for more appropriate measures. The small number of non-participants, 24, posed a modest threat to statistical validity so every effort was made to increase the response rate. It was not feasible to wait another year to collect additional data.

Next to selection bias, which will be discussed momentarily, selection maturation was the greatest threat to the integrity of the survey sample. This was mediated by the use of a control group. If increased political efficacy was a natural evolution among young women, (or if an exogenous event caused a spike in political interest), increases should have been observed in both the participant and non-participant groups.

With respect to the qualitative methods used, the biggest validity concern was subjective bias. Subjective bias poses a threat to internal validity by clouding or distorting causal inferences. It is most commonly attributed to interpretation, and therefore rests, to a large degree, on the shoulders of the researcher. Anecdotalism, or the practice of deriving inference from "exemplary cases" is one commonly cited violation (Bryman 1988; Silverman 2006; Mehan 1979).

Triangulation and deviant-case analysis, the inclusion of contrary cases, are two strategies offered by Silverman (2006) for strengthening the credibility of research, and both were exercised in this study. It is worth repeating that the theory-driven outcome approach used here enhances construct and internal validity as well, through clear articulation of theoretical assumptions and constructs, and emphasis on causal connections.

A Note about Selection Bias. The threat of selection bias was touched on in the discussion of quasi-experimental design, but it is of serious enough importance to merit additional attention here. Selection bias is a legitimate

concern anytime a nonrandom sample is used. The absence of random assignment exposes the possibility that the two groups differ in ways that distort causal inferences and compromise internal validity. The question at hand concerns whether the outcomes should be attributed to the intervention, or to some "other" factor that explains why some students were selected to participate, and some were not.

Randomization was not an option for this study. Care was taken to select a control group that demonstrated a level of interest that matched those who were eventually selected to participate in the program. We cannot know if their interest was precisely the same, but we do know that they showed more interest than the average college student who did not bother to apply. Descriptive statistics will be presented in chapter 5 showing the two groups – treatment and control – to be similar demographically. Thus, there is no clear evidence that would heighten concern.

Ultimately, I assented to the wisdom of Hollister, Kemper and Wooldridge (1979, 155) who aver, "Although selection bias is a potential problem, it is important to keep perspective on this issue and not to forego analysis which can be useful even when the degree of bias is uncertain."

Researcher Relationship. The final relevant methodological consideration to address relates to the dual role of the principal investigator who, for the past 15 years, has directed the 21st Century Leadership Academy at UMSL. Subjectivity is one concern, and face validity is another.

Myers-Walls (2000) cautions that bias is a particular concern "when the people conducting the evaluation are the same people whose jobs and well-being depend on the evaluation to demonstrate particular outcomes." Without question, a program director has a vested interest in evaluation findings, particularly if they impact his or her performance appraisal. Pressure to produce results that appeal to funders may also threaten the objectivity of an evaluation conducted "in-house." It should not be assumed that cross pressures will result in the deliberate distortion of evaluation findings, but should be acknowledged that subtle biases and personal pride could cloud results in ways that make validity suspect.

A distinction should be made, however, between a process undertaken by someone with no formal training in evaluation methods, and an evaluation conducted by someone with a deep appreciation and respect for the methodological rigor required for an evaluation to be credible. A trained evaluator may still possess biases that complicate her ability to assess her own program objectively, but should also have knowledge of tools and best-practices to mediate subjective tendencies. The use of such protocols strengthens the *prima facie* credibility of any evaluation, but is especially important when the program director and evaluator are one in the same.

The possibility of researcher bias was a perennial consideration throughout this study. No pretense was made of doing participant observation at the 21st Century Leadership Academy, because it would be unreasonable to

believe that I could objectively evaluate or even observe what transpired during

a week where I, in the role of program director, was as much a participant as

anyone else. That is not to say, however, that I discard my own experiences and

deep understanding of the program philosophy, assumptions, objectives, and

activities as somehow "off-limits" within the context of this study. On the

contrary, a historical perspective proved helpful to the discussion in chapter 3,

long-standing relationships with other program directors made it easy to access

information from other programs, and it is reasonable to think that sensitivity to

the disappointment that some students feel when they are not selected increased

response rates on the survey. I am mindful of the legitimate questions this issue

raises, but will demonstrate the appropriate methodological steps were taken to

mediate the concern.

Summary

This study explores the effectiveness of the NEW Leadership™ training

model as a vehicle for putting young women in the "political pipeline." Two

questions frame the research: 1) Does exposure to mentoring, training, advice

and role models increase young women's political interest and efficacy? and 2) If

so, how? I hypothesize that students who participate in a NEW Leadership™

program will report increased interest in politics, demonstrate higher levels of

internal efficacy, evidenced by increased knowledge of women's participation in

politics and methods for participating in politics, demonstrate higher levels of

external efficacy, and indicate an increase in the likelihood that they will pursue elected office or another position of political influence.

A theory-driven outcome evaluation framework was appropriate to assess the relationship between participation in NEW Leadership™ and political ambition, provide insight into the hypothesized effects, and demonstrate the theoretical rigor expected of academic research. The conceptual framework introduced in chapter 3 was elaborated to explain the theory of change, or change model, which was presented in detail.

I used a multi-method approach with a quasi-experimental design, original survey research, participant observations and semi-structured interviews with program administrators and alumni. Data samples and collection procedures were presented, followed by a discussion of the limitations of the study including validity tradeoffs and selection bias.

The remaining chapters present the research findings, and explore what they mean with respect to the future of women's political representation. The next chapter, chapter 5, presents encouraging findings from the Role Model and Political Ambition Survey. The results suggest that NEW Leadership™ offers new promise for the political pipeline.

Chapter 5
NEW Leadership™ Outcomes: Do the Programs Deliver?

In this chapter, I present the findings of the Role Models and Political

Ambition Survey, administered to applicants at four NEW Leadership™ training

sites in 2011. The goal of the survey was to uncover changes in political interest

and efficacy that accrue to participants in the NEW Leadership™ program. Of

particular interest is whether or not participating in NEW Leadership™ increases

ones likelihood of seeking elected office.

Role Models and Political Ambition Survey

The Role Models and Political Ambition Survey was completed by 83

NEW Leadership™ program applicants in May and June, 2011, and again

between July and September, 2011. The longitudinal nature of the study enables

a measure of political interest and efficacy in two points in time, before and after

the program, providing a sense of changes that might be attributed to

participation in NEW Leadership™.

Sample Demographics. Some students applied to NEW Leadership™,

but were not selected to participate. I refer to them as non-participants. The

demographic characteristics of all participants and non-participants are shown in

Table 5.1.[32]

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[32] One standard demographic characteristic missing in the table is gender. The reasons for this are likely fairly obvious; it was assumed that all of the respondents would be women since the focus of the program is women's leadership. Through the process of participant observation, however, I surmised that there were participants who did not self-identify as women, but rather as transgendered individuals. In hindsight, it would have been prudent to include gender as a demographic variable.

Table 5.1. Demographic characteristics of survey respondents (n=83).

Demographics	Participants n=59		Non-Participants n=23		Difference
Mean Age	22.9		24.9		
	Frequency (percentage)	Mean (SD)	Frequency (percentage)	Mean (SD)	t-statistic (p-value)
Year in College^		3.24 (1.07)		3.58 (1.18)	1.30 (0.20)
Freshman	2 (3.3)	.034 (.183)	2 (8.3)	.083 (.282)	0.09 (0.35)
Sophomore	16 (27.1)	.271 (.448)	2 (8.3)	.083 (.282)	-1.90 (0.06)
Junior	13 (22.0)	.220 (.418)	5 (20.8)	.208 (.415)	-0.12 (0.91)
Senior	22 (37.2)	.373 (.488)	10 (41.6)	.417 (.504)	0.37 (0.71)
Graduate Student	6 (10.1)	.102 (.305)	5 (20.1)	.208 (.415)	1.30 (0.20)
Race^^		2.05 (1.61)		2.04 (1.66)	-0.03 (0.98)
White	30 (53.6)	.508 (.504)	12 (52.2)	.500 (.511)	-0.07 (0.94)
Black	14 (25.0)	.237 (.429)	7 (30.4)	.292 (.464)	0.51 (0.61)
Hispanic	4 (7.1)	.068 (.254)	1 (4.3)	.042 (.204)	-0.45 (0.65)
Asian	1 (1.8)	.017 (.130)	0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	-0.64 (0.53)
Native American	1 (1.8)	.017 (.130)	0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	-0.64 (0.53)
Other	6 (10.7)	.102 (.305)	3 (13.0)	.125 (.338)	0.31 (0.76)
Marital Status		1.20 (.518)		1.17 (.491)	-0.23 (0.81)
Single	50 (84.7)	.847 (.363)	20 (87.0)	.833 (.381)	-0.16 (0.87)
Married/Engaged	6 (10.2)	.102 (.305)	2 (8.7)	.083 (.282)	-0.25 (0.80)
Divorced	3 (5.0)	.051 (.222)	1 (4.3)	.042 (.204)	-0.17 (0.86)
Political Party		2.50 (1.20)		3.17 (1.20)	2.28 (0.03)**
Republican	7 (12.1)	.119 (.326)	0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	-1.76 (0.08)
Democrat	33 (56.9)	.559 (.501)	8 (33.3)	.333 (.482)	-1.88 (0.06)
Independent	7 (12.1)	.119 (.326)	9 (37.5)	.375 (.495)	2.77 (0.01)*
No Preference, None, Neither	6 (10.3)	.102 (.305)	4 (16.7)	.167 (.381)	0.82 (0.42)
Don't Know	3 (5.2)	.051 (.222)	1 (4.1)	.042 (.204)	-0.17 (0.86)
Other	2 (3.4)	.034 (.183)	2 (8.3)	0.83 (.282)	0.95 (0.35)

^ Non-Participant n=24
^^ Participant n=56
* <.01
** <.05

SOURCE: Role Model and Political Ambition Survey

On most measures, there are no appreciable differences between the groups. The
mean age of the participants is almost 23, of non-participants, almost 25. Most of
the students in both groups are seniors; one quarter of the participant group is
comprised of sophomores, and the non-participant group includes more

graduate students. The racial composition of the groups is similar, and respondents are predominantly single.

The only statistically significant difference is in political party: Respondents in the participant group are more than twice as likely to identify with one of the two major parties – Republican or Democrat. A closer look exposes sizeable disparity in the major party distribution: Only seven women self-identified as Republicans, while 41 said they were Democrats. This is not entirely surprising, since young people, ages 18-29 are more likely to self-identify as Democrats than Republicans, a finding particularly true for young women (Godsay and Kirby 2010).[33] Nonetheless, this finding has implications for the party gap in women's representation, where more current women officeholders align with the Democratic than Republican Party (Lawless and Fox 2005, 78). All seven respondents who identified as Republican on the Role Model and Political Ambition Survey were participants, but they were outnumbered (by Democrats) by more than 4:1. That none of the non-participants self-identified as Republican says more about prospects for the Republican pipeline than it does the survey sample.

Once again, it is apparent that students who are selected to participate in the program see themselves as aligned with one of the two dominant parties of

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[33] Using National Election Poll (NEP) exit poll data, Godsay and Kirby (2010) find that among youth age 18-29 who voted in the 2008 Presidential Election, 38% of men and 51% of women self-identified as Democrats and 27% of men and 25% of women self-identified as Republicans. Among voters over 30, the percentage of women identifying as Republican increased to 32%, but more – 41% - still identified as Democrats.

the American political system, and in this way, they differ from their non-participant counterparts. A greater percentage of non-participant respondents identify as independents, or report that they do not identify politically or have no party preference. The implications of this are unclear. It is plausible that students with stable party attachments were somehow able to articulate their political interest in ways that made them more attractive candidates for the program, or that political id was an implicit (because it was not made explicit) prerequisite for program participation. As interesting as these explanations are to consider, they are merely conjecture. They should not obscure the more salient question, which is this: Did a difference in party attachment or identification translate into differences in political interest and efficacy between the respondent groups? To answer this requires an examination of the findings of the pre-test, administered to both groups before the intervention.

Political Interest and Internal Efficacy

  Pre-test Results. A two-tailed t-test was used to analyze the difference in means of the pre- test responses for the participant and non-participant groups. The respondent groups reported similar levels of political participation and interest in politics, and confidence speaking to and likelihood of contacting an elected official. They offered comparable self-assessments of their knowledge of current events, women's involvement in politics and methods for participating in politics. Table 5.2 illustrates that the *non-participant group* actually expressed higher levels of confidence in their ability to affect change, and greater likelihood

that they would consider running for office, but not at levels that differed

statistically from the participants.

Table 5.2. Difference in means of participants and non-participants on participation and internal efficacy measures, pre- program.

	Mean (SD)		*Difference*	
	Non-Participant Group (n=24)	Participant Group (n=59)	t-statistic (DF=82)	p-value
Participation index	5.50 (2.50)	5.64 (2.79)	-0.22	0.83
Interest in politics	3.71 (1.04)	3.73 (1.00)	-0.08	0.93
Speaking to an elected official	3.96 (1.04)	3.53 (1.16)	1.58	0.12
Likely to contact elected official	3.21 (1.35)	3.05 (1.22)	0.52	0.61
Knowledge of current events	3.04 (0.91)	3.30 (0.91)	-1.12	0.27
Knowledge of women in politics	2.71 (1.04)	2.97 (1.12)	-0.96	0.34
Knowledge of methods	2.75 (1.15)	3.07 (1.32)	-1.03	0.31
Ability to affect change	3.83 (1.17)	3.44 (1.14)	1.50	0.14
Likely to run for office	2.75 (1.39)	2.64 (1.44)	0.31	0.76

The modest differences on all measures, however, failed to meet the threshold

for statistical significance.

The results of the pre-test suggest that despite differences in party id, all

of the students who sought to participate in the NEW Leadership™ program

possessed similar levels of political interest and internal efficacy, providing

further rebuttal against claims of selection bias. If higher levels of interest or efficacy increased ones odds of being selected to participate, we would have observed differences in the participant and non-participant groups in the pre-test results. Ideally, we would randomly assign respondents to one group or the other –participant or non-participant (control). Even though we did not, we can be confident that pre-program, the groups are essentially the same.

Post-Test Results. To test the hypotheses that the NEW Leadership™ program experience leads to increases in political interest and internal efficacy, I turn now to the results of the post-test. If the program is successful at strengthening these traits in college women, the expected result is higher means for program participants. No change is expected in the self-reported responses of the non-participants, because they did not receive the stimulus.

Table 5.3 displays the difference in means of participants and non-participants in August, 2011, several months after the NEW Leadership™ program. On several important measures, the reported difference between participants and non-participants is significant. Participants rate themselves higher than non-participants with respect to knowledge of women in politics and the difference is statistically significant at the .01 level (two-tailed test). The same is true for knowledge of methods for participating in politics (significant with a p-value of .0028) and likelihood of considering a run for public office (significant at .05).

Table 5.3. Difference in means non-participants and participants on participation and internal efficacy measures, post- program.

	Mean (SD)		Difference	
	Non-Participant Group (n=24)	Participant Group (n=59)	t-statistic (DF=81)	p-value
Participation index	4.96 (2.27)	5. 53 (2.85)	-0.87	0.39
Interest in politics	3.67 (1.17)	3.93 (0.96)	-1.07	0.29
Speaking to an elected official	3.79 (1.18)	4.05 (0.99)	-1.02	0.31
Likely to contact elected official	3.38 (1.56)	3.44 (1.25)	-0.20	0.84
Knowledge of current events	3.17 (1.13)	3.36 (0.93)	-0.79	0.43
Knowledge of women in politics	3.00 (1.06)	3.59 (0.87)	-2.63	0.01*
Knowledge of methods	2.88 (1.30)	3.73 (1.08)	-3.08	0.0028***
Ability to affect change	3.58 (1.18)	3.95 (0.92)	-1.51	0.13
Likely to run for office	2.42 (1.38)	3.15 (1.35)	-2.24	0.03**

*<.01 **<.05 ***.001

Possible causal mechanisms for the increases in participant means will be discussed later in the chapter, but it is worth emphasizing the importance of the differences reported here. Recall that there were no statistically significant differences between groups on the pre-test. Participants and non-participants assessed themselves similarly in terms of their knowledge of women in politics and methods for participating in politics. The same is true for likelihood of running for office: On the pre-test, the non-participants actually reported that

they were more likely than participants to consider running. On the post-test,

their reported likelihood of running decreased slightly, while the self-reported

likelihood of the participants increased significantly. These findings suggest that

"something" changed the way the participants see themselves with respect to

their knowledge of various aspects of political participation, and their interest or

preparation for seeking public office. It is reasonable to surmise that

"something" was participation in NEW Leadership™.

NEW Leadership™ Outcomes. Having established the differences in post-

test outcomes across groups, a closer look at the within-group results for the

NEW Leadership™ participants provides further support for the claim that the

program effectively cultivates internal efficacy in college women. The pre- and

post- test data for non-participants are displayed in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4. For non-participants, comparison of pre- and post- test means on participation and internal efficacy measures.

	Mean (SD)		Difference	
	PreTest (n=24)	PostTest (n=24)	t-statistic (DF=46)	p-value
Participation index	5.50 (2.50)	4.96 (2.27)	0.78	0.44
Interest in politics	3.71 (1.04)	3.67 (1.17)	0.13	0.90
Speaking to an elected official	3.96 (1.04)	3.79 (1.18)	0.52	0.61
Likely to contact elected official	3.21 (1.35)	3.38 (1.56)	-0.40	0.69
Knowledge of current events	3.04 (0.91)	3.17 (1.13)	-0.42	0.67
Knowledge of women in politics	2.71 (1.04)	3.00 (1.06)	-0.96	0.34
Knowledge of methods	2.75 (1.15)	2.86 (1.30)	-0.35	0.73
Ability to effect change	3.83 (1.17)	3.58 (1.18)	0.74	0.46
Likely to run for office	2.75 (1.39)	2.42 (1.38)	0.83	0.41

None of the differences meet even a generous threshold for statistical significance, nor is there substantive change. On some measures the mean response on the post-test is actually lower, reflecting a lower interest in politics, for example, or decreased confidence in one's ability to effect change. These findings are consistent with expectations because without the treatment, there is little basis for increased outcomes.

In stark contrast, on all but one efficacy measure, program participants' self-reported confidence, knowledge, and likelihood of political engagement

increased after the program, at levels that were statistically significant. Table 5.5

reveals that participants reported, post-program, that they were more likely to

contact an elected official to voice their opinion on an issue, not surprising given

the fact that they also reported higher levels of confidence speaking to an elected

official generally.

Table 5.5. For participants, comparison of pre- and post- test means on participation and internal efficacy measures.

	Mean (SD)		Difference	
	PreTest (n=59)	PostTest (n=59)	t-statistic (DF=116)	p-value
Participation index	5.64 (2.79)	5.52 (2.85)	0.23	0.82
Interest in politics	3.73 (1.00)	3.93 (0.96)	-1.13	0.26
Speaking to an elected official	3.53 (1.16)	4.05 (0.99)	-2.64	0.009**
Likely to contact elected official	3.05 (1.22)	3.44 (1.25)	-1.71	0.09*
Knowledge of current events	3.29 (0.91)	3.36 (0.92)	-0.40	0.69
Knowledge of women in politics	2.97 (1.13)	3.60 (0.87)	-3.37	0.001***
Knowledge of methods	3.07 (1.32)	3.73 (1.08)	-2.97	0.004***
Ability to affect change	3.44 (1.13)	3.95 (0.92)	-2.68	0.009**
Likely to run for office	2.64 (1.44)	3.15 (1.35)	-1.98	0.05*

*<.05   **<.01   ***<.001

They also expressed greater confidence in their ability to affect change

related to issues that matter to them. As discussed previously, they rated

themselves higher on knowledge of women's involvement in politics, and methods for participating in politics. Most notably, they expressed a greater likelihood that they would consider running for political office. This is not only statistically significant at the .05 level, it is substantively very important as evidence that programs like NEW Leadership™ are effective at stimulating political ambition in young women.

There is one measure that failed to register significant changes with either group, which makes it substantively important. The Participation Index was constructed based on responses to the question, "Have you participated in any of the following activities?" All of the activities were political in nature – donating money to a political campaign, running for student government, participating in a political rally, try to influence how others vote, etc… Thirteen activities were presented, and respondents were instructed to "check all that apply."

Given the relatively short period of time between the administration of the pre-test, and administration of the post-test (at most, 4 months), I did not expect respondents to increase their number of activities pre- to post-. Even if the participants were inspired during their NEW Leadership™ experience to become more involved, the window of opportunity to do something before the pre-test was very narrow. Therefore, I did not expect change on this issue, and no change was observed.

The participation question is (substantively) significant because it serves as a sensitivity test. Reported change on this measure would have been suspect,

given the nature of the question and the time frame of the survey. To my knowledge, no elections were held during the pre- to post- window, and universities were on summer break so there was little potential to get more involved on campus, thus the potential to engage in activities specified in the question was limited. The absence of change speaks to the integrity of the self-reported responses. Though we cannot automatically impute certainty to the other responses on the survey, this question serves as evidence of construct validity and respondent accuracy. Observing no change when no change was expected gives us confidence that change observed is change indeed.

Verification of Political Knowledge

I hypothesize that students who complete NEW Leadership™ programs will demonstrate increased knowledge of women's participation in politics and higher levels of internal efficacy. The theoretical assumption is that awareness of women's descriptive and substantive representation will result in symbolic effects, leading the college women to believe in their potential to bring about political change. One graduate of the program articulated this point more eloquently that I can explain it: "Before, if someone had asked me, `do you think that women can do all these things,' I would say `yes, yes, yes,' but after (the program) I really felt like I believed it because I had seen the proof of it" (personal interview with Vanessa, October 10, 2011).

As discussed earlier (see Table 5.5), participants in NEW Leadership™ rated their knowledge of women's involvement in politics substantially higher

on the post-test, resulting in an aggregate increase statistically significant at the .001 level. As a means of objectively verifying their self-reported increases in knowledge, survey respondents were also asked to give their "best guesses" of the percentage of women serving in the U.S. Congress, and in their state legislature. The findings pertaining to these questions are interesting and worthy of discussion.

Estimates of Women in Congress. The number of respondents who "guessed correctly" when asked about the percentage of women in Congress increased by 10% pre-test to post-test. These gains were significant, statistically speaking, when compared to the non-participants who failed to move the needle in any appreciable way (the difference between groups was significant at the .01 level). Within the participant group, however, the 10% increase amounts to 51% of participants guessing correctly on the post-test, compared to 41% on the pre-test. Even after participating in the program, only half of the participants could "guess" that the percentage of women in Congress was somewhere between 11% and 20%.

Perhaps more interesting is the fact that on both the pre-test and post-test, more than twice as many respondents guessed too high than too low. The histograms in Figures 5.1 and 5.2 illustrate the distribution of responses, pre and post. The correct "guess" was 2, a coded response representing range of 11 to 20% (the precise answer is 16.6). Columns 3, 4 and 5 represent ranges of 21-30, 31-40, and 41-50%, respectively.

Figure 5.1. Pre-test frequency distribution of participant responses to the question, "What is your best guess regarding the percentage of women serving in the U.S. Congress?"

Figure 5.2. Post-test frequency distribution of participant responses to the question, "What is your best guess regarding the percentage of women serving in the U.S. Congress?"
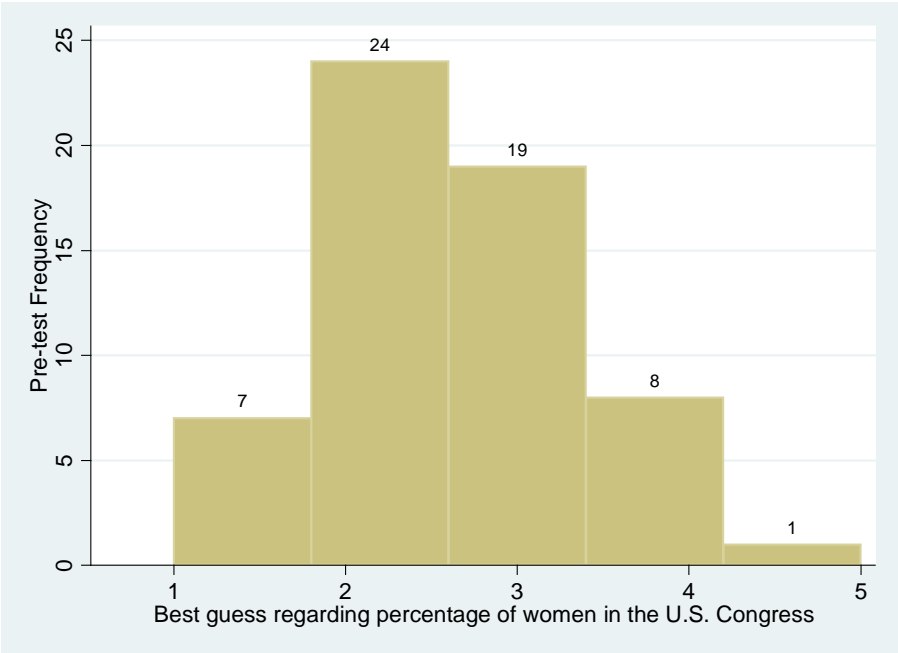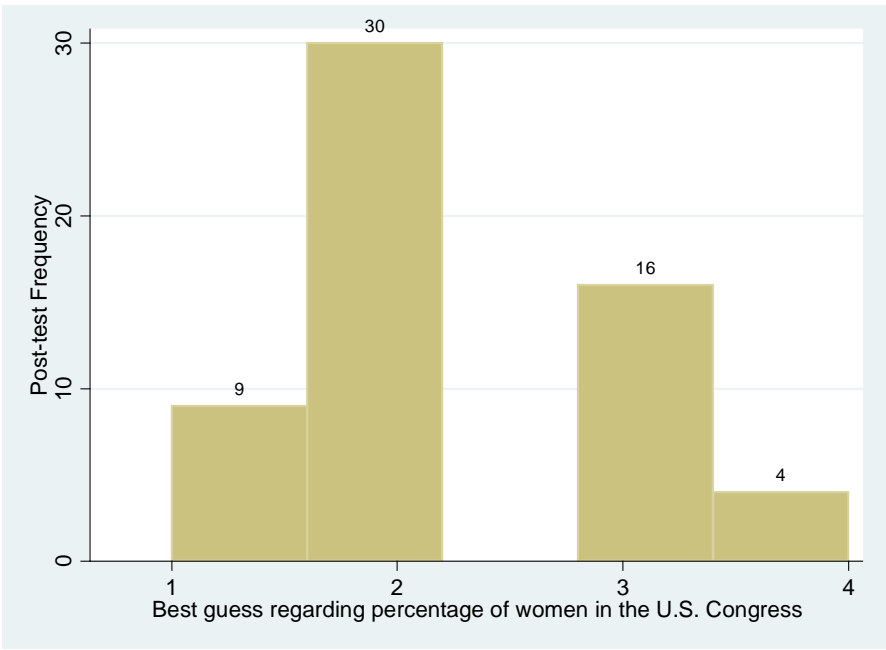
Even after participating in NEW Leadership™, survey respondents were twice as likely to overestimate, than underestimate, the number of women serving in Congress.

Estimates of Women in State Legislatures. Because of differences in question wording, it is not productive to compare guesses on the percentage of women serving in the state legislature, pre to post. On the pre-test, all respondents were asked for their best guess of the percentage of women serving in the Missouri Legislature. This was, admittedly, a mistake. For respondents in Missouri, this question would make sense, but for students in Ohio, Nevada and New Jersey, making a guess may have been more like making a stab in the dark.

The question wording was changed on the post-test, so each respondent was asked to make a best guess of the percentage of women serving in her respective state legislature. Even though it is not possible to assess changes in knowledge attributable to the program, the post-test responses alone are worthy of note. Here again, a surprisingly small number of respondents guessed correctly. Perhaps more interestingly, in contrast to their overestimation of the percentage of women in Congress, their estimates of women in state legislatures were disproportionately low.

In all states, the percentage of women legislators ranged between 21 and 30%. As the histogram in Figure 5.3 illustrates, 25% of the non-participants guessed correctly. In this case, a correct guess was coded "3."

Figure 5.3. Post-test frequency distribution of non-participant responses to the question, "What is your best guess regarding the percentage of women serving in the Missouri/Ohio/New Jersey/Nevada legislature?"
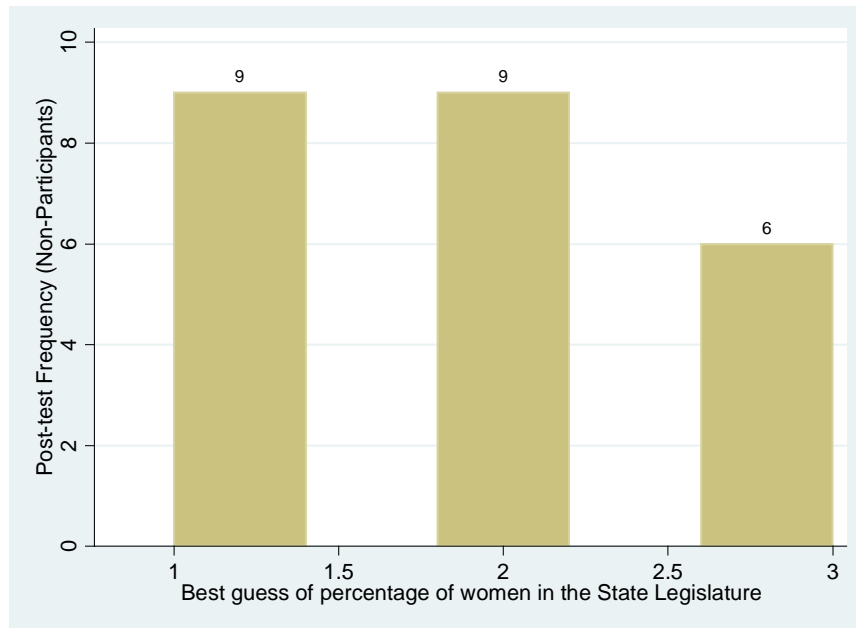
The remaining 75% estimated the percentage to be lower than reality, evenly split between 0-10%, and 11-20%.

For the participants, a response to such a question should be more than a guess, even an educated one. It is reasonable to assume that the NEW Leadership™ participants, having spent a week immersed in a culture of women's political empowerment, would demonstrate greater knowledge of women's descriptive representation. Recall that their self-reported levels of knowledge of women's involvement in politics increased on the post-test, suggesting that they had a better sense of their own understanding after the program. They were, in fact, right more often than the non-participant group;

39% "guessed" correctly (compared to 25% of non-participants). Yet less than 50% of them answered the question accurately.

Such a low percentage of correct responses led me to question the distribution of responses by program. Did students in all NEW Leadership™ programs guess poorly? Or were responses from one or two programs depressing the mean? Disaggregating the participant group by program would result in numbers too small to conduct reliable statistical analysis, but on a strictly substantive basis, the inter-program results are nonetheless revealing. Sixty-two percent of the 21st Century Leadership Academy participants answered correctly, compared to 8% of the participants in NEW Leadership™ New Jersey. Ohio and Nevada respondents answered accurately 27 and 30% of the time, respectively.

The disparity in the responses is surprising, and difficult to explain, given the uniform curricular emphasis on women's historical and contemporary participation in politics. Having observed the Ohio and New Jersey programs, I can attest to the emphasis placed on women's leadership at the state level. Both programs took students to the State Capitol while it was in session, giving them a firsthand look at the composition of the legislature. Why respondents from these two programs were the least likely provide an accurate answer is confounding, as is the relatively high percentage of respondents from the Missouri program who "got it right."

While unable to provide a precise accounting of the proportion of women serving in their legislature, the students clearly have a sense that it is a small percentage. In fact, like the non-participants, the participants woefully underestimated the percentage of women legislators in their states, as shown in Figure 5.4.

Figure 5.4. Post-test frequency distribution of participant responses to the question, "What is your best guess regarding the percentage of women serving in the Missouri/Ohio/New Jersey/Nevada legislature?"
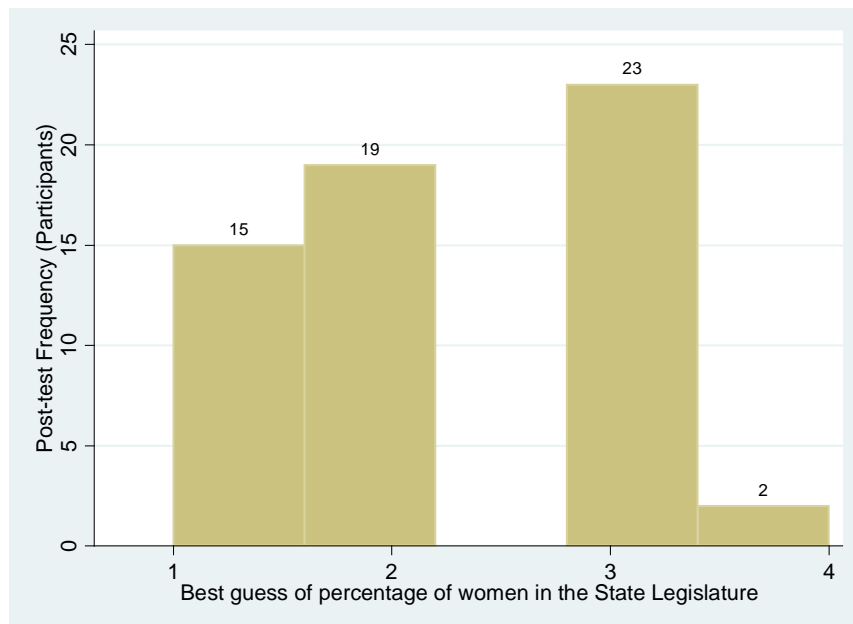
Again, the correct response was 3, coded to represent 21-30%. More than half of the participants "guessed" that less than 20% of their state legislators were women, and a quarter estimated the proportion to be less than 10%.

This perception is particularly interesting in light of the students' overestimation of the percentage of women in Congress, discussed earlier. It is likely that the students meet more women state legislators than women in Congress, so one might expect them to have a more optimistic view of women's representation at the state level than nationally. The results, however, suggest that the opposite is true.

As the literature review in chapter 2 suggests, women's political engagement and anticipated political behavior is particularly attuned to the national stage (Campbell and Wolbrecht 2006; Sapiro and Conover 1997; Hansen 1997; Verba, Burns and Schlozman 1997; Burns, Schlozman and Verba 2001; Wolbrecht and Campbell 2007) with certain exceptions (Lawless 2004; Dolan 2008; Karp and Banducci 2008). It could be that the visibility of women in Congress makes the percentage of women there seem much higher. Although, of the four states represented by NEW Leadership™ in this study, none has a disproportionately high number of women in its own Congressional delegation; the Ohio and Nevada delegations are 20% women and Missouri is 27 (New Jersey had no women in its Congressional delegation in 2011).

Regardless, one thing is clear: Even graduates of the NEW Leadership™ program have a skewed sense of women's descriptive representation, in Congress and in their home states. This does not mean that their self-reported ratings of knowledge of women's involvement in politics were a misrepresentation. It is entirely possible that they interpret "knowledge" to

mean more than the ability to recount statistics. In fact, the results in chapter 6 will show that after participating in the program, students have a better sense of the myriad ways women leaders are involved politically, and a better understanding of the challenges they face. They've heard women officials talk about what they do and how they got their start politically, hence they report having greater knowledge of women's involvement in politics.

What About Political Interest?

To this point, I have focused the discussion on measures of internal efficacy. The nuance of student's knowledge of women's participation in politics notwithstanding, the findings suggest that participation in the NEW Leadership™ program results in higher levels of internal efficacy, and a self-reported higher likelihood of pursuing elected office. There is support for hypotheses 2 and 3. Before turning to the topic of external efficacy, I conclude this section with a note about hypothesis 1, related to interest in politics.

I hypothesized that participants would report increased interest in politics as a result of their participation in NEW Leadership™. Though they reported gains in political interest on the post-survey, the increase was not statistically significant. In examining the coefficients, the level of interest on the pre-test was actually quite high – almost 4 on a 5 point scale – leaving some room for growth, but not a lot.

Even before examining the survey results, doubts existed about this hypothesis. Observations of the various NEW Leadership™ programs confirmed

that political interest among participants was high on day 1, and was evidenced

by the engagement and explicit verbal expressions of interest that were made

throughout the week. It was my assessment then that rather than stimulating

interest in politics, the NEW Leadership™ provided access to women leaders who

help participants understand and envision themselves *applying* their interest.

The lack of significant change on the interest measure suggests that I was at least

partially correct: the program did not appear to stimulate interest in politics

among participants. Whether NEW Leadership™ helped the participants

understand their interest and motivate them to act on it is a subject that will be

discussed in the next chapter.

External Efficacy

Before considering implications and interpretations of the results of the

Role Models and Political Ambition survey, there is one final measure to be

discussed: external efficacy. External efficacy refers to feelings about

government's responsiveness to citizen's concerns. It is important to consider

because low external efficacy can manifest in one of two ways: it may motivate

individuals to engage in the political process in an effort to enhance institutional

accountability, or it may prompt them to disengage entirely, if they feel

powerless to bring about change where they feel it is needed.

Recall that the participant and non-participant groups were

demographically similar with the exception of party identification. It is prudent

to consider the difference in party affiliation now, as previous research has

uncovered a positive correlation between party attachment and external efficacy (Lambert et al 1986).[34] I am interested in the strength of this relationship as it relates to the sample, and the extent to which pre-existing levels of external efficacy impact the interpretation of the findings reported here. If participants are predisposed to higher levels of external efficacy as a correlate of their party affiliation, NEW Leadership™ may or may not be the stimulant that I hypothesize it to be.

The pretest was administered to measure existing attitudes about government responsiveness, and would expose differences between the groups that may result from party attachment. Once again, a two-tailed t-test was used to analyze the difference in means of the pre- test responses for the participant and non-participant groups. The results are shown in Table 5.6. None of the differences approached statistical significance, suggesting that participants and non-participants shared similar notions regarding government's attentiveness to their thoughts and concerns, and the complexity of politics and government overall.

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[34] Wu's (2003) research, contextualized within the 1994 New Orleans Mayoral Election, is interesting because it moves political efficacy from the right side of the model to the left, making it dependent variable. Wu examines factors that influence political efficacy and finds party identification to have little effect.

Table 5.6. Difference in means of participants and non-participants on external efficacy measures, pre- program.

	Mean (SD)		Difference	
	Non-Participants (n=24)	Participants (n=59)	t-statistic (DF=82)	p-value
People like me don't have a say about what government does	-0.58 (0.72)	-0.66 (0.54)	0.54	0.59
Public officials don't care what people like me think	-0.38 (0.82)	-0.4 (0.73)	0.54	0.59

The same set of questions was asked on the post-test, and the results are shown below. Only one difference was significant, in response to the statement "Public officials don't care what people like me think." A mean response approaching -1 suggests that respondents' disagree with the idea that public officials don't care. The difference was significant at the .05 level.

Table 5.7. Difference in means of participants and non-participants on external efficacy measures, post-program.

	Mean (SD)		Difference	
	Non- Participants (n=24)	Participants (n=59)	t-statistic (DF=81)	p-value
People like me don't have a say about what government does	-0.79 (0.59)	-0.80 (0.45)	0.04	0.97
Public officials don't care what people like me think	-0.13 (0.90)	-0.53 (0.65)	2. 62	0.03*

*<.05

This is congruent with the findings discussed previously. Participants reported, post-program, that they were more likely to contact an elected official to voice their opinion on an issue, and also reported higher levels of confidence speaking to an elected official generally. Table 5.7 suggests that their confidence in speaking to an elected official is positively correlated with an increasing belief that the official cares what they think, statistically significant at the .05 level.

Discussion

Much to the dismay of proponents of women's public leadership, more men than women aspire to and seek positions of political influence. Historically, politics has been characterized by a masculine ethos, and at times unwelcoming and even hostile to women. Increased emphasis on women's representation in recent decades has led to the emergence of organizations such as The Sue Shear

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Institute for Women in Public Life, the White House Project, the National Women's Political Caucus, the Center for American Women and Politics, the Women's Campaign Fund, The National Federation of Republican Women, the Women's Campaign School at Yale, and Emerge that provide campaign skills training and encouragement to women seeking public leadership.

These organizations, however, can only teach women who want to be taught. They can recruit and encourage women to run for office, but so far, these efforts have not uncovered enough women candidates to close the gender gap in elected bodies. The lack of women positioning themselves for power is sometimes referred to as a "pipeline issue" as it relates to women's political progress. Without sufficient numbers of women "in the pipeline" to pursue positions of power and authority in the political arena, there is concern that they may never achieve representation in numbers that reflect adequately their share of the population.

Encouraging young women to pursue careers in electoral politics is seen as one strategy for ameliorating the gender disparity that has characterized political institutions for decades. Men, it is often assumed, are groomed for positions of political leadership in much the same way they are taught to succeed in other fields; through informal networks and mentoring. Even at a young age, however, women express less interest in politics than their male peers (Conway, Steuernagel and Ahern 2005; Hooghe and Stolle 2004; Owen and Dennis 1993), raising concerns that future generations will fail to close the gap without some

sort of intervention. The results of this study suggest that the NEW Leadership™

program is a mechanism for closing the gap.

Connecting, cultivating, enabling, and engaging are some of the key

objectives of the six-point NEW Leadership™ curriculum. Participants are

exposed to a multitude of stimuli on each day of the program, all with the end

goal of inspiring and empowering them to act. They meet informally with

women leaders who share their career paths and offer insight and advice to those

seeking to following in their footsteps, and teach them the ways of the political

world. They are given opportunities to practice and improve personal leadership

skills such as public speaking, when they are assigned to introduce a faculty

member to the group. They receive praise and encouragement from program

staff and faculty who affirm their goals and aspirations. And they are repeatedly

asked to use their talents in a public leadership role.

It's important to explore the causal mechanisms so that we can begin to

understand how and why the program "works." Unpacking the students'

experiences to explain precisely which element or elements of the NEW

Leadership™ curriculum attribute to the outcomes detailed in this study requires

thoughtful qualitative analysis, and is the focus of chapter 6. In the remainder of

chapter 5, I begin to outline the hypotheses that frame the qualitative interviews

with program graduates. To do this, I engage the theoretical links established in

the integrated model of representation outlined previously. By situating the

outcomes of the NEW Leadership™ program within the existing theory of

representation, I argue that increased understanding of the descriptive,

substantive and formal aspects of representation produces symbolic effects.

NEW Leadership™ and Descriptive and Substantive Representation.

The NEW Leadership™ faculty is comprised almost exclusively of women in

positions of political leadership, including elected officials, judges, and

appointed office holders. While they may only represent a fraction of the elected

bodies in which they serve, they constitute (with rare exception) 100% of the

elected leaders with whom the participants interact during the week. Their

descriptive representation at NEW Leadership™ belies reality.

As analysis of the objective knowledge questions revealed (see Figures 5.1

and 5.2), many of the students entering the program woefully overestimate the

gains that women have made in Congress in recent years, and believe that

women enjoy greater levels of participation than they do. Teaching students

about the diversity of women's historical and contemporary participation in

politics and policymaking is an explicit component of the NEW Leadership™

curriculum. Focusing on descriptive representation by pointing out the current

numbers (and proportion) of women in the U.S. Congress, state legislature, or

executive office gives the students a realistic picture of gains that have been

made, and challenges that remain.

As interesting (and disappointing) as it is, one should resist overstating

the graduates' failure to report accurately the percentage of women serving in

various levels of government as a measure of how much they know. The faculty

members themselves play a critical role in enhancing the students' knowledge of women in politics. By sharing their political journeys and paths to leadership, as well as their roles in the policy process, these women provide firsthand accounts that help participants understand the contributions women leaders make, as well as the challenges they confront. Their stories often begin with concern over a particular public policy issue or desire to change the way government works as the motivating factor in their decision to seek a leadership role.[35] Policy priorities, or issues that define their personal political platform are also a frequent topic of discussion. These discussions provide an opportunity for the students to contrast substantive differences in the priorities of the women they meet, with the priorities of the male leaders that – by sheer force of number - most likely dominate their political world. More importantly, it enables the students to assess the extent to which the women leaders they meet are "acting for" them," as substantive representation implies.

NEW Leadership™ and Formal Representation. An important precursor to engaging in politics is knowing "how the game is played." Understanding the rules and institutions that govern the political process is paramount to effectively achieving formal representation.

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[35] This comports with the literature on women's decisions to run for office (Carroll and Sanbonmatsu 2010) although as Lawless and Fox (2005) point out, even when experiences or issues engage women in the political process, they frequently need to be recruited in order to consider translating their passion on an issue into a run for public office.

For three of the four programs in the sample, a visit to the Statehouse was a part of the curriculum, giving the students an opportunity to witness officials at work. In addition to passively observing government in action, the students engaged in activities that simulated actual legislative processes, including a mock floor debate (Missouri) and mock committee hearings (New Jersey). These experiences serve to "demystify" settings that may have seemed closed or intimidating to them previously.

While mimicking methods for participating in politics, the hypothetical scenarios may also serve to give the students the increased confidence that is reflected in their post-program responses to the question: "How confident would you be speaking to an elected official?" Graduates report that they are more likely to contact a public official to voice their opinion on an issue as well. It is entirely possible that assuming the role of a public official gives the student insight into the value and importance of outside perspectives, and in tandem with newfound confidence, this understanding results in a higher likelihood of making such contact.

It is also possible that interacting – at times informally - with so many women elected officials throughout the week makes elected officials as a whole seem more approachable. To the extent that the women faculty members *encourage* such contact by distributing business cards or issuing explicit verbal invitations, the students may feel confident that their input will be valued, or at least well-received. This would explain the increases in external efficacy

reported in Table 5.7. My observations confirmed that the women leaders were very candid in their interactions with the students, at times sharing "unwritten rules" and perspectives that suggest to the students that they were already accepted as "insiders."

Feeling like they leave the program with an understanding of the mechanics of formal representation – how officials are held accountable, what they are authorized to do and how they do it – is an empowering experience for the NEW Leadership™ participants. Learning from women officials, who they may perceive as lacking sufficient descriptive representation, may be especially inspiring and motivating. It is this dynamic I turn to now, in a discussion of symbolic representation.

NEW Leadership™ and Symbolic Representation. As noted earlier, symbolic representation emphasizes the psychological effects that accrue to citizens from the presence of a representative who embodies government and politics. The symbolic effects of NEW Leadership™ are of particular interest, because it is a women-centric program that operates on the premise that women can empower other women to answer the call of leadership. It is no coincidence that the staff and faculty for these weeklong programs are almost exclusively comprised of women.

Graduates of the NEW Leadership™ program report greater confidence in their ability to affect change related to issues that matter to them. While all of the measures I've already discussed provide evidence of increased internal efficacy,

this question dispels any ambiguity. It asks specifically about confidence in one's ability to affect change, and the response is positive and significant.

There are numerous ways to account for the self-assurance reported by program graduates with respect to their capacity to affect change. Intuitively, we might attribute increased confidence to increased knowledge and expect this response to be at least somewhat correlated with students increased knowledge of methods for participating in politics, though the coefficient is a mere .40. We might also attribute increased confidence in one's abilities to affect change to increased confidence overall; All six aspects of the NEW Leadership™ curriculum are designed to build confidence and promote empowerment, certainly.

The most reliable explanations, however, reside in the words of the participants themselves. In the one open-ended question on the post-survey, program participants were asked, "Looking back on your experience as a participant in NEW Leadership™, what was the most valuable aspect of the program?"[36] Responses varied, but answers that referenced "female public leaders," "the people," "the women," and "the speakers," were most common. For example, one participant from New Jersey wrote:

> *"The most valuable aspect of the program was learning that women can make a difference. Having such a large staff of successful women was very inspiring. The program destroyed all the negative connotation that I once associated with politics and people in politics."*

Another said that for her, the most valuable aspect was,

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[36] Students in the Missouri program were asked about their experiences at the 21st Century Leadership Academy, which is the specific name of the NEW Leadership™ program in Mo.

"…learning how women have a say so in politics and how we can become more involved in politics and how our leadership will help out a lot."

Many of the responses reflected a sense of empowerment or inspiration, as these two comments do. One Nevada participant summed up her experience and the value of the program this way: *"As a woman I am able to do anything. There is no limit on what I am capable of."*

Recall that people with high degrees of internal efficacy have a sense that they can participate effectively in the political process, and often, they do (Kahne and Westheimer 2006). To this point, some respondents went so far as to comment explicitly about how the program – specifically the women – helped concretize their goals of running for office. An Ohio participant wrote:

> *"…the most valuable aspect of the program was the strong sense of support and sisterhood. After the program I felt confident in my abilities and strengths. Instead of thinking I could eventually run for office, I knew I would eventually run for office. The women of the program helped me reach that point in my own personal development and I think other women reached that point too."*

Similarly, a student in the Missouri program said that the most valuable part was

> *"…hearing how different women got their start in politics. They were all normal women with extraordinary courage and strength. Their stories made running for public office more obtainable in my future."*

This sampling of comments illustrates the symbolic effect of the women leaders – "all normal women with extraordinary courage and strength" – on the

student participants. Though they reference the speakers and staff, the respondents' comments speak to personal gains that were achieved through the program. Phrases that begin with "I felt" and include "my future" reflect psychological shifts that the students themselves link to the women leaders they met.

Summary

Whether the students internalize and recall the effects of meeting women leaders later, after they have returned to busy lives that often bear little resemblance to the public policy-focused environment of NEW Leadership™, is the topic of chapter 6. My goal there is to establish credible causality, which statistical analysis alone cannot provide.

Exploring causality, however, would be moot if not for the findings in this chapter. The most important outcome of this study is that graduates of NEW Leadership™ say that they are more likely to consider running for public office after completing the program. To the extent that NEW Leadership™ is a boot camp for future women political leaders, it has the potential to change the complexion of the political arena as program participants graduate from college and begin their political careers.

On all but one internal efficacy measure, NEW Leadership™ graduates' self-reported confidence, knowledge, and likelihood of political engagement increased after the program, at levels that were statistically significant. Post-program, participants reported that they were more likely to contact an elected

official to voice their opinion on an issue, and reported higher levels of confidence speaking to an elected official generally. They expressed greater confidence in their ability to affect change related to issues that matter to them, and rated themselves higher on knowledge of women's involvement in politics, and methods for participating in politics.

The findings of this study also suggest that students enjoy increased levels of external efficacy as a result of participation in NEW Leadership™. At statistically significant levels, graduates of the program are less apt to agree with the idea that public officials don't care what they think than are their non-participating peers. Their confidence speaking to an elected official is reinforced by the belief that the official is interested in what they have to say.

Graduates of the program do not, however, exhibit the level of factual knowledge about women in politics that one might expect of student leaders having recently participated in a political leadership program. Only 41% of graduates completing the survey provided an accurate estimate of the percentage of women serving in the U.S. Congress, and a similar 39% failed to identify the proportion of women serving in their state legislature. Perhaps more interestingly, respondents *overestimated* the number of women in Congress, and *underestimated* the number of women state legislators.

The disparity between perceptions and reality has implications for women's representation, particularly with respect to Congress, as a sense of urgency is important for making the case for change. To the degree that students

believe that parity has been achieved, they may not feel as compelled to engage as fully as they might otherwise. This dynamic is an important area of inquiry that needs to be explored.

Over time, scholars have built a robust literature to explain why women have been absent from political life in numbers that reflect their share of the population. Simultaneously, women's political organizations, and others, have been working to effectively "rewrite" the literature by addressing the barriers that women candidates, or would-be candidates face. Specific efforts have focused on redressing the "pipeline problem," and encouraging more women to pursue a political path.

Progress on the later front has been slow, and little evaluative work has been done to assess the efficacy of efforts to increase women's political participation. To my knowledge, this is the first attempt at evaluating programs designed to stimulate young women's political ambition. It is an effort to understand what works, so that more of whatever it is that motivates women to pursue careers in the public sector can be implemented.

The next chapter, chapter 6, takes a closer look at the specific mechanisms that lead to increased efficacy and ambition. Drawing on interviews with program graduates, I offer insight into the lasting effects of NEW Leadership™ and the causal relationships between the curriculum and outcomes.

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Chapter 6
Practicing Leadership: Perspectives from Graduates

The data in chapter 5 suggest that participants in NEW Leadership™ programs exhibit higher levels of political efficacy and a greater likelihood of seeking public office than their non-participating peers, evidence that supports hypotheses 2, 3, and 4. While this is not "proof" of a causal relationship between NEW Leadership™ and the outcomes presented, it's enough to reject the null hypothesis that no relationship exists.

Chapter 6 is an attempt to close the causal loop and explain the relationship between participation in NEW Leadership™ and increased political ambition. It presents the findings of qualitative interviews with graduates of the four NEW Leadership™ programs that comprised the survey sample. Interview candidates were selected randomly from lists provided by program administrators, and their participation represents a span of 11 years (1999-2010). Findings are presented using the respondents' words as much as possible to provide adequate context and give depth to their comments. Their experiences, and the meaning they attach to them, are powerful data sources that inform our understanding of the symbolic effects that result from participation in the NEW Leadership™ program.
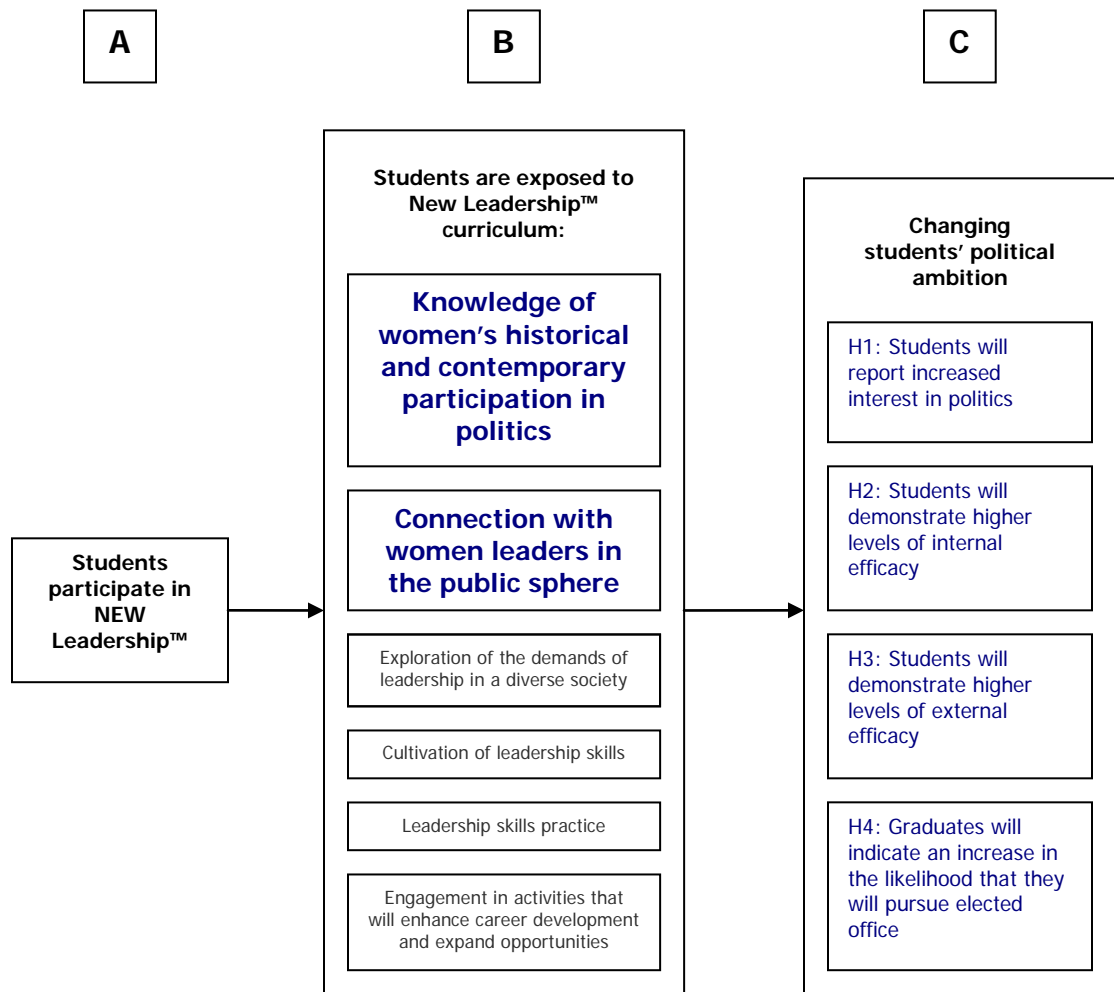
"She is Me": Theoretical Expectations

The central question framing this chapter explores the causal relationship between the NEW Leadership™ curriculum and the outcomes of the program. I want to understand why and how the program leads participants to self-assess as more confident about their political engagement, and more likely to put themselves forward as candidates. I am also interested in measuring the long-lasting or "continuous" effects of the program because they are a better predictor of future behavior than self-reported post-program survey responses that are no less truthful, but may be prejudiced by enthusiasm and subject to atrophy over time. I argue that political ambition can be developed through programs, like NEW Leadership™, that amplify descriptive and symbolic representation by creating mentoring opportunities that cultivate political interest and internal efficacy in young women. The goal, then, is to demonstrate the relationship between women leaders and participants, and document the symbolic effects that are transmitted from one generation to another.

My argument is premised on the understanding that formal representation shapes descriptive representation, as institutional rules and norms of electoral politics determine who is elected. It is also worth reiterating that substantive representation is a function of descriptive representation, because it concerns "whose interests one represents" (which assumes that one is in a position to represent). Therefore, the attitudinal changes inherent in symbolic

representation are the product of the integrated model of representation,

discussed at length in chapter 2.

To understand the relationships between the program curriculum and the

outcomes that I am measuring, it is helpful to revisit the change model from

chapter 4. Two aspects of the curriculum highlighted in Figure 6.1 fit within the

symbolic representation rubric: 1) Knowledge of women's historical and

contemporary participation in politics, and 2) Connection with women leaders in

the public sphere. If these two curricular mandates are met, I would expect to

observe evidence of symbolic representation in the analysis of the alumnae

interviews.

Figure 6.1. Explicated Change Model, emphasizing the hypothesized relationship between symbolic representation and program outcomes.

A	B	C

Students participate in NEW Leadership™

Students are exposed to New Leadership™ curriculum:

Knowledge of women's historical and contemporary participation in politics

Connection with women leaders in the public sphere

Exploration of the demands of leadership in a diverse society

Cultivation of leadership skills

Leadership skills practice

Engagement in activities that will enhance career development and expand opportunities

Changing students' political ambition

H1: Students will report increased interest in politics

H2: Students will demonstrate higher levels of internal efficacy

H3: Students will demonstrate higher levels of external efficacy

H4: Graduates will indicate an increase in the likelihood that they will pursue elected office

SOURCE: Adapted from Chen (2005), Multiple Determinant, No Sequential Order Model.

The effects of symbolic representation would be most apparent and measureable through direct references to the women leaders made by NEW Leadership™ alumnae. If students attribute increases in political interest and efficacy to their interaction with women they met at NEW Leadership™, it should be accepted as evidence of a symbolic effect. Inspiration, empowerment,

and increased self-confidence that results from hearing other peoples' stories are psychological shifts that can manifest in one person due to the actions of another. To the degree that the students express increased confidence in government, and see a place for themselves in it, the threshold for symbolic representation is being met.

Probing the Perspectives of NEW Leadership™ Alumnae

Mine is not the first effort to assess the impact of NEW Leadership™ through follow-up surveys with program graduates. In 2009, CAWP embarked on a comprehensive survey project, engaging 856 alumnae from all NEW Leadership™ Development Network (NLDN) partner programs.[37] The results of their evaluation were convincingly favorable, with significant majorities of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that NEW Leadership™ increased their understanding of politics (90%), increased their desire to participate politically (83%), increased their self-confidence (85%) and increased their leadership capabilities (89%). Over 95% of the respondents said that NEW Leadership™ made them more aware of the need for more women in political office, and over 85% indicated that their participation left them motivated to create social change (CAWP 2009).

With respect to role models, the 2009 NEW Leadership™ Alumnae Survey Report (CAWP 2009) indicates that "In the open ended questions, many of the responses referred to being inspired by the women leaders they met during the

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[37] The survey was conducted online through "Constant Contact." The response rate was 36.7%.

program, as well as the other participants"(5). Though four brief quotes are presented to illustrate the participants' feelings of inspiration, the report lacks the "thick description" demanded of credible qualitative research, enabling a reader to draw his or her own conclusions about the meaning and significance of the findings (Patton 2002; Collier, Brady and Seawright 2004).

The NEW Leadership™ program manager at CAWP acknowledged the limitations of the survey project, saying "We didn't do nearly the analysis we thought we might" (personal interview, January 13, 2012). CAWP's evaluation produced the desired results, generating information that may be persuasive to potential partners and funders, but the project lacked the methodological deliberation and empirical rigor characteristic of reliable scholarship. Its greatest limitation was a one-group only post-test design, making it vulnerable to all threats of internal validity (Daponte 2008). Causation cannot be shown without considering the outcomes of a comparator group that did not participate in NEW Leadership™, and while the outcomes reported by the respondents were positive, changes in attitudes cannot be confirmed in the absence of a pre-test. Furthermore, without good qualitative data, the results do nothing to *explain* the outcomes and enhance understanding of how NEW Leadership™ works.

In order to understand the symbolic effects of NEW Leadership™ and gain insight into the specific components of the curriculum that are most impactful, I conducted interviews with 16 program graduates from the four

programs included in this study. The next section offers analysis of the interviews and a discussion of the findings.

Interviews with NEW Leadership™ Graduates. All but one interview was conducted by phone and transcribed in real time; one student was living abroad in China and offered to respond to the questions in writing. Each phone interview lasted approximately 20-25 minutes.

The purpose of the interviews was to learn what program graduates recalled and attached significance to, years after their NEW Leadership™ experience. Interview respondents were asked questions about their interest in politics, and the effect of NEW Leadership™ on their understanding of politics and ways that they could impact the political process. They were prompted to talk about their future plans, and asked to comment on the likelihood that they would consider running for office or otherwise assume a position of political leadership.

I was not only curious to know whether or not the political efficacy and ambition reported by the 2011 participants persisted; I also wanted to know what role the women leaders played in the students' long-term experience. My approach was largely inductive. I started with general inquiries –Do you recall what made you interested in applying to the program? What were some of the most valuable aspects of the program? etc… -- to see what factors or characteristics surfaced as significant. Questions that made explicit references to women faculty were presented near the end of the interviews, giving

respondents ample opportunity to refer to them voluntarily if they regarded interactions with the women leaders to be significant.

The outcomes reported by the students reflect individual experiences, and were therefore predictably diverse. Furthermore, the meanings that they assign to their experiences vary in relation to their values, their expectations, and their "openness," or willingness to meet new people and learn things about themselves and others. The interviews captured personal experiences, but it is possible – and important – to step back and look at them as a collective, to observe patterns or themes that transcend the specifics of person or situation.

I used content analysis to identify convergence and divergence in the interview response data. This process exposed reoccurring ideas, experiences, themes and patterns, as well as "outliers" or deviant cases. In the remainder of this chapter, I present and analyze the results. In order to minimize interpretation and provide context, direct quotations are completely as much as possible.

Personal Outcomes. During the week-long program, participants are exposed to a number of opportunities to practice and develop their leadership skills, meet inspiring women, make new friends, and reflect on their talents and abilities as they relate to the public sphere. There are a number of desired outcomes inherent in the program curriculum, and those affiliated with the implementation of the program know what they hope students will find

valuable. Nonetheless, it is important to hear the students' appraisal of what they gained through their participation.

The students were asked, explicitly, what they thought they gained by attending NEW Leadership™ (the Leadership Academy). One respondent said that she "learned how to network," and provided little elaboration. Most of the students, however, reported that they left the program with increased confidence or a sense of empowerment. Even if they framed their response in terms of skills, or the importance of connecting with others (as several did), the psychological effects of the program were palpable.

Several students spoke of confidence as it related to their leadership abilities:

> *I think through attending the program I met a diverse group of really motivated people. I think in some ways, a sense of defining oneself as valuable from a perspective of being ready to lead, not self-esteem really, but a self-image, a construct to build upon…just a sense of "I can do this." – Angela (NV, '05)[38]*

> *I got a ton of confidence in terms of my own leadership abilities. I never had a problem with my personal confidence, per se, but didn't know how to translate that to a larger scale, envision and work toward that and know that there are always other goals… Back at my university, I applied to a ton of things, and more involved. In organizations, instead of just being a member I would ask myself, "Is this an organization I can lead, or how can I make a positive contribution to this organization?" It definitely made my college experience better, I can say that for sure. -- Ashley (OH, '09)*

The majority of respondents spoke of confidence in a broader sense, making explicit references to views of themselves after the program:

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[38] All names have been changed out of respect for respondent confidentiality.

…New perspective, honestly, a new perspective. If I could sum it up in two words, allows me to see that I'm unstoppable… It's been 2 ½ years since I've been there but it still impacts me today. I'm not in the political spectrum, but I'm in leadership a lot. I still have that perspective. It really altered my way of thinking, which I think is the greatest thing I could get from there. It really altered my thinking. – Tamara (OH, '09)

…Probably a greater sense of self, which is a pretty broad thing. But I think it definitely boosted my confidence and my ability to do big things in life. When you see so many women doing great things it makes those things possible on an individual level. – Jasmine (MO, '07)

I think for me, the biggest thing was just knowing who I am, in a sense of confidence. I think I had it before but broke out of shell a lot more after the conference, after the week. –Patricia (MO, '00)

Others said that they gained "inspiration" and "empowerment" during their program experience, making the connection between the women they met and their view of the future:

I think again it was just that sense of empowerment and also I guess appreciating womanhood – I think it's just often looked at as a weakness, especially given the history in America. There is just so much to be down about – glass ceilings and barriers – but I left feeling like those things wouldn't hold me back. – Cecilia (OH, '07)

I gained a lot of inspiration – I was really inspired by a lot of those people and that's something I can hold onto and remind myself of throughout my life. When things are difficult – as they often are – that something to keep me motivated. Not only the women who came and spoke to us, but also the women in the program – had really done so many inspirational things. They motivated and inspired me. – Vanessa (NV, '09)

Only one student mentioned the benefit of NEW Leadership™ as a resume-builder, but even she acknowledged that her participation may have had a more profound effect, prompting her to quit her job at a car wash:

"It was a great experience… obviously, a line on my resume. It was a great thing to add on my resume. Actually, maybe in a roundabout way it

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had an effect…Right after the conference ended, I quit my job… maybe it was a sense of empowerment, subconscious sense of empowerment; I was working at a car wash and I just went after the conference and said, "Look, I'm not coming back anymore, this is not for me." – Farrah (NV, '06)

Considered together, these responses paint a picture of an experience that left the students with a much more positive view of themselves. Some felt more confident in their ability to lead others, specifically, but the majority of the group expressed an overall sense of empowerment that transformed the way they see themselves in relation to the world, with higher expectations of what they will achieve, and greater confidence that they can "do big things."

Interest in Politics and Public Policy. All of the respondents said that the program enhanced or expanded their interest in politics in some way. For some the effect was simply greater awareness of "what is going on" in politics; for others, the experience was more profound.

Ashley said that she knew there weren't as many women in U.S. government as she would like there to be, and she recognized that there weren't women leaders in student organizations. The program motivated her to do something about it.

When I came back (to the university), I encouraged people to be involved. I ran for student body VP and the next year President: I held both of those positions for the student body. I recruited a ton more students to become involved in their organizations and pursue leadership positions. There was a growth in student organizations and I definitely saw more participate in the programs that we were doing and also, in the city of our college, all of the city council was men. I took it upon myself to get behind a female candidate and get them a voice on the city council. I thought it was ridiculous, these men, not getting a female opinion. So I became more

aware on a smaller scale, how I could work for change on smaller scale and make change…if we could start small. – Ashley (OH, '09)

She was one of only a few women who spoke of how the program prompted her to *act*. The dominant theme – in response to this question, and in the interviews generally – related to how NEW Leadership™ provoked shifts in thinking, from a macro perspective to a personal level.

One student shared the story of a conversation that revealed, for her, the way that gender intersects with policy priorities and why that mattered:

> *I would say that it made me learn about some of the more subtle or more – I guess, littler ways that policy can matter. One thing that stuck out, there was a speaker – I forget who, she was in politics – there was a discussion about what kinds of things to designate as tax free…food is one, some states do children's clothing…. She was saying that during this policy discussion, the only person who thought to include women's period products was the one woman in the room. I hadn't really thought about that before…I hadn't really thought about how they would decide what gets sales tax and what doesn't. What is considered essential, that everyone has to buy … It's something men wouldn't think of because they don't have to buy them, and probably don't know how expensive they can be. It exposed the subtle way that gender can influence the decision-making process that can have an effect on people. – Ariel (OH, '05)*

Ariel's level of expanded awareness was admittedly unique among the respondents. For her, the discussion of the sales tax holiday brought the interplay of gender and policy into sharp relief, and, as a woman who would be impacted, made public policy more relevant to her life. The conversation was

something of a "light bulb" moment, shining light on subtleties of politics and policy that had previously eluded her.

Other students emphasized the way the program simply broadened their interest in politics and made them more aware of the myriad ways they could follow their political passion:

> *It just gave me a much broader perspective. I was very narrowed, like, in terms of political science, law school. But when I went there I thought it was really interesting because they talked to you not only about women in politics but campaigns, and other avenues that I wasn't aware existed before. Thought that was really neat. – Lexi (NJ, 08)[39]*

Similarly, respondents spoke of how the program helped them reconcile the practical aspects of political participation, like how it would fit with their lives. Previously, they viewed politics as simply "running for office," but NEW Leadership™ helped them recognize how they could synchronize political involvement with other personal interests and plans.

> *It gave me things to consider, in terms of how like I would want to start a family if I went into politics, how that would work out, or how I would go from teaching to politics, how I could work my way up, through networking. I think it just gave me, like…Just baseline, I would say it made it a bit more tangible for me because before I thought I wouldn't be able to do it. I think that now, given the situation I'm in I would have to consider ways of getting in, but now, I have ideas of what it could be like, through all the different women that we met and the positions they held or are holding. I have a better idea of trials and tribulations, expectations, things of that sort. –Leata (NJ, '10)*

> *It made me realize that there were multiple ways of accessing public policy and politics and that my only avenue wasn't running as a candidate. It made me realize that there was an opportunity and it was feasible for me to be involved.– Noemi (MO, '08)*

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[39] Though she acknowledged that she has become disillusioned subsequently, Lexi was quick to point out that her participation in NEW Leadership was the height of her political interest: "…that got me," she said.

It encouraged my concept of grassroots improvement, which is what I do in my job now. Early literacy Issues absolutely connect to the personal is political, enabling individuals to improve their lives. I told people I am mentoring and supervising at work: If kids have a positive connection to libraries… If they think of the library as a place they have good feelings about – when they are older they will vote to support libraries. Libraries are public institutions governed by public consent… – Angela (NV, '05)

Like Angela, many students stressed the effect of the program on their understanding and engagement in politics on a "smaller scale." Greater awareness of the spectrum of political involvement, and understanding of how politics could be part of a portfolio of professional activities – rather than a focal point – were reoccurring themes in the interviews. They were echoed in the responses to a question about how NEW Leadership™ affected the students' understanding of ways to impact the policy process, discussed in the next section.

Understanding of Politics and Ways to Impact the Political Process. "What effect did your NEW Leadership™ experience have on your understanding of politics and the ways that you could impact the political process?" Ambiguity aside, the themes that emerged were strikingly clear. As they did in response to the question about NEW Leadership™ and their interest in politics, respondents conveyed a better grasp of the innumerable ways they could participate politically, especially at the local level:

It definitely gave me a lot of different ideas, from volunteering to help someone get elected mayor or like ways you can help on a small, tiny level, just by volunteering your time, all the way up to higher levels. I think we met the – wasn't the Governor – but right under that… the Lt. Governor.

We got to meet her and talk to her and a couple of other women in a variety of positions, so it just like gave different ideas and defined the whole spectrum from small level to mid- level to even the community level, like with getting a bill passed and how you would advocate and getting people behind you, and how it works in the statehouse – holding meetings, and getting votes – it gave a nice variety, because not everyone is looking for the same thing. – Leata (NJ, '10)

I think it helped a lot more at the local level. It removed the intimidation factor. Even in being in Youth in Government and Young Republicans, it seemed logically challenging to get involved… (The Academy) showed examples of how you could get involved at city level. (It) removed the fear factor. Maybe not fear… the ignorance factor. – Madeline (MO, '99)

I think hearing women's stories there, made me realize that I can do it. I think there was a woman when I did it who started out wanting a stop sign near her house or railroad crossing or something, and was running for a state office level…It made me realize it can be that simple to go to your city council and make changes in your community and that could be a stepping stone. -- Patricia (MO, '00)

They also reiterated a newfound understanding that one could be involved in politics while simultaneously pursuing a career in another field:

I learned that the … I don't necessarily have to be – my career doesn't have to be around politics in order to be involved in public policy. My interest has always been in health policy and I was concerned about how I could be a physician and still pursue my interest in public policy and the Academy gave me insight into how physicians could still be a part of the public policy process. – Noemi (MO, '08)

In a related way, students expressed greater awareness that political participation is fluid and flexible in relation to their station in life. NEW Leadership™ dispelled the "all or nothing" myth of political involvement, and helped the respondents see that their level of participation could evolve over time. Two respondents articulated this clearly:

(I became) …more aware as a student of the political process and how to get involved. Even if not running, helping a candidate; understand better that I can make a difference and my position as student is not stagnant, in the future can change the ways that I'm political involved.
– Casey (NJ, '10)

I think that I remember specifically, there was a girl who is very involved in immigration issues; she had a Latina background and had gone to a lot of protests, had organized a lot of protests, and I remember thinking "she's in college, she's about my age…maybe if I had a cause I could do that too." I had always been a perfectionist, and realizing now there is really no one way to do something – not one path…Realizing that I could always go back and do something else later. – Farrah (NV, '06)

The perspective offered by Casey and Farrah, however, was not universal. As I said before, each student's experience is unique, so what might be true for one may not necessarily true for others. Though it is one student's perspective at one program, in one year, the contrast between the following passage and the previous responses is worth noting. In reflecting on her NEW Leadership™ experience in relationship to her understanding of and methods for impacting the process, Ashley said:

I don't think it had much of an effect … because I wasn't at a stage in my life where I had time to make use of the suggestions they would make. There was another student who was older, and said she had decided to run for office after finishing the program. I was going to graduate school. (It would have been helpful, I think, if they could have focused on) the kinds of things you could do if you couldn't devote your life to it. And not just voting, that's obvious, but other ways you can be engaged in the political process…. on a smaller scale while you're doing other things in your life. That I think would have been more useful for me, at the time then. - Ashley (OH, '05)

Overall, the responses to questions probing the effects of NEW Leadership™ on the participants' interest in politics and policy, and their general

understanding of politics and ways to impact the political process, were notably positive and consistent. Two clear patterns emerged: 1) Respondents indicated that the program gave them a broader perspective on the ways that they could make a difference politically, especially on a smaller or local scale. Ariel's experience notwithstanding, NEW Leadership™ expanded the participants' thinking, moving politics from something done by others, far away, to something central to their lives that they could influence, even as students. Similarly, 2) NEW Leadership™ helped the participants understand that they didn't have to commit to a full-time career in politics in order to have an impact; they could still be teachers and physicians and mothers while engaging politically.

Most Valuable Aspects of the Program. Like the program graduates who completed the post-program Role Models and Political Ambition Survey, interview respondents were asked what they found valuable about their NEW Leadership™ program (21st Century Leadership Academy) experience. Consistent with the comments shared by the 2011 participants, program graduates stressed the value of meeting and interacting with women leaders. This was a dominant theme, with references to networking or meeting women leaders appearing in almost two-thirds of the interviews.

Roughly half of the interviewees cited meeting women leaders, explicitly, as one of the beneficial aspects of the program. In particular, the participants valued the speakers' candor and accessibility. When asked, "What were some of the most valuable aspects of the 21st Century Leadership Academy, Noemi said:

The access to the women that were coming to speak to us. Because they were from a variety of disciplines and they were completely honest with the questions that we asked. Additionally, thinking- being forced to think about how, ourselves as women, what challenges we might run into and what were the previous experiences of women, helped me to prepare for those challenges myself. – Noemi (MO, '08)

Students from New Jersey, Ohio and Nevada offered similar assessments about the NEW Leadership™ programs they attended.

You know, the one thing that stands out in my mind is there were two women: I know Rachel Weston from Vermont. I went to UV and worked with her a bit. She is a state legislator. She and another woman sat us down at the State House in Trenton and said, "This is what it's really like." They sat us down and let us have a question/answer session – that was the most intimate and it was really revealing about being in politics, so that definitely jumped out at me. – Lexi (NJ, '08)

…one was being in the same room, and being at banquet with women leaders, especially political Leaders. (We) got to have conversations with women politicians, women leading and heading up organizations, and women who are actually out there trying to make a difference for what they are passionate about…that is one area, the exposure, that I really liked. They just tried to expose us to different perspectives and make our own opinions, and hopefully spark a passion inside whatever it is. – Tamara (OH, '09)

…To meet with these women who have made their mark in a positive manner in a very predominantly male industry, whether it is the law or government or whatever facets, the path they chose, they stuck with it. I think that's why I was star struck. Seeing the Supreme Court justices, without their robes on, not in their chambers…to sit in the same room with Ruby Duncan, Harriet Trudell, Renee Diamond, it was so fortifying as a female. – Tracy (NV, '10)

Continuing the theme of expanded options discussed in relation to the earlier questions, seeing women in positions of power helped expand the students' notions of what was possible:

Well I definitely think on a broad level just realizing the accessibility of the political system to women and to young women. I think that before that I

really didn't think that going to politics was an option for anyone under 50…so participating in that and having the women come and speak opened up the playing field a bit. – Jasmine (MO, '07)

About a quarter of the respondents cited networking as one of the most valuable aspects of the program. Not all mentioned the women leaders specifically, yet by definition, networking implies meeting people and making connections that could result in advantages and opportunities at a later time. In this case, the most likely candidates with whom such informal relationships might be established were the women leaders who served as faculty. It is possible that the respondents who mentioned networking as a value were referring to connections they made with other participants, though their peer relationships would be less likely to prove advantageous in the future.

Several students did, however, specifically cite meeting and bonding with the other participants as the most valuable feature of the program:

I think my favorite part of the program was getting to meet girls from across the state. I went to John Carroll University; it's relatively small, and you see the same people all the time. It was really cool to meet girls like myself who I hadn't encountered before… – Ashley (OH '09)

I really enjoyed spending time with the other girls and learning about their backgrounds. A lot were mothers, non-traditional students coming back to school; my roommate had battled/overcame a drug problem. Seeing where these other women had come from, their trajectories… – Farrah (NV, '06)

I think it was part, part of it looking back, is that you're in this small little group of people, it bonds you…when I was in DC for a while, it was great to know that there were other fellows[40] there. – Patricia (MO, '00)

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[40] Shear Fellow is a title given to participants in the 21st Century Leadership Academy. Graduates often refer to one another as "fellows."

These responses project emphasis on the personal benefits of the program ("cool to meet girls like myself"), in contrast with the professional benefits inherent in meeting and networking with accomplished women. Regardless of where the respondents placed higher value, the responses suggest that being with women, other students as well as women leaders, was the most valuable aspect of the NEW Leadership™ program. One participant from Nevada summed up the sentiments of almost all of the interview respondents in her answer:

> *I think that a lot of the networking, the exposure to so many successful women, bonding with the other women in the program – that was something really important; it allowed me to develop close relationships with people maybe I would have never met. – Vanessa (NV, '09)*

Discussion

One caveat to interviewing NEW Leadership™ participants several years after their experience is that they may not remember things accurately. Time and distance can erode details, dull the memory, and shift things out of context. For at least one of the women interviewed, almost 13 years had passed since she participated in the program. Expecting someone to remember the precise details of an experience that occurred over a decade earlier is an arguably tall order.

In this case, however, distance and time allow for perspective. The meaning that individuals attach to an experience in hindsight is real, even if the details – like names - are a little fuzzy. As I explained in chapter 4, I was less

interested in judging the accuracy of the participants' memories than I was in understanding what aspects of the NEW Leadership™ program "stuck." What experience does one recall after the excitement of meeting a U.S. Senator recedes?

Though participant experiences were highly individualized, three clear patterns emerged during the content analysis of the interview responses: 1) Respondents stressed positive personal outcomes, including greater confidence and feelings of efficacy and empowerment; 2) In hindsight, graduates expressed increased interest in politics, or greater understanding of the many ways they could be involved in politics, as a result of their participation in NEW Leadership™. Many also articulated a new awareness of the ways that they could participate in politics, while also pursuing other personal goals and professional careers; Finally, 3) the respondents indicated that the most valuable aspect was interacting other women, especially women leaders who could show them "what it's really like" to be involved in politics. All of these broad themes were strongly supported by the data. Some exceptions were noted and presented in the discussion of the findings, but for the most part, these outcomes were widespread across the respondent group.

Building a theory to explain these outcomes is a speculative enterprise. It is important to attach meaning and significance to the findings, with the caveat that such musings, however informed, are merely conjecture; "proof" is always illusive. To assure the rigor of credible interpretation, Patton (2002, 480) advises three things: 1) confirm what the data makes explicit, 2) disabuse the reader of

misconceptions and 3) illuminate important things that the reader doesn't know, but should. To infer the relationship between women leaders and NEW Leadership™ participant outcomes, I will venture to do all three.

The findings of the qualitative analysis strongly suggest a relationship between the women leaders who serve as faculty for NEW Leadership™ and the continuous effects reported by the program graduates. A majority of interview respondents referenced "women in office," "successful women," "women leaders," women "politicians," or specific faculty members in their assessment of the most valuable aspects of the program. Over 80% of the respondents referred to women faculty members before being asked about them explicitly. Some said meeting the women was most valuable; others talked about how being exposed to so many women leaders exceeded their expectation for the program.

The data clearly support the assertion that the women leaders function as role models for the participants, representing a broad spectrum of opportunities to engage politically. The interview respondents repeatedly emphasized how their participation in NEW Leadership™ expanded their thinking about the ways that they could be involved, especially on a smaller scale. Seeing women leaders who were serving in public office while also raising families or maintaining active professional careers outside of politics, made public service seem more accessible, as did meeting women who were influencing policy without serving in an elected capacity – as members of public boards, or staffers, or active community members.

That participants came to NEW Leadership™ equating politics with the image of someone wholly devoted to a political career is not surprising, given the fact that most of the highly visible women in politics are serving at the national level. The perspective of many citizens is that national politics is dominated by political elites who possess something that the common person lacks, be it ego, money, connections or power. It is perceived by many as an exclusive club. The scarcity of women at this level makes the women who have achieved it seem extraordinary, and may suggest to the average college woman that a career in politics is unattainable. It may also seem that to pursue such a career takes uncharacteristic courage and persistence, since until women achieve parity, any woman who runs for office will (consciously or not) be trying to change the course of history.

Once the students were disabused of the notion that "being in politics" and "having a life" are mutually exclusive, their interest deepened. Understanding and appreciating that they could affect change on a smaller level, by serving on the local school board, for example, or rallying neighbors to petition the city council to close a residential street, reinforced their sense of political efficacy. They also expressed satisfaction in knowing that their level of participation could evolve over time as they transitioned from being a student to being a working adult.

One surprising finding was that even though the students were overwhelmingly impressed and inspired by the opportunity to meet so many

accomplished women leaders, very few kept in touch with women they met after leaving the program. Those who said that they did (keep in touch) almost universally listed program administrators as those with whom they had maintained a relationship, not the women in public life, and most cited social media (i.e., Facebook) as the way they kept in contact, though some said that they exchanged emails periodically.[41] With the exception of those who mentioned exchanging occasional e-mails with program organizers, none said that they were in current contact with any of the women they met.

Only one graduate mentioned later working with a woman that she got to know while participating in NEW Leadership™. The majority struggled to even recall individual women by name. When asked if they considered any of the women to be a mentor, the answer was generally "no." A few of the respondents said "yes," but in one case the participant named women with whom she had not maintained contact, and others cited program administrators as their mentors.

This finding makes it clear that though the women leaders embodied possibility and were sources of inspiration, their role did not extend to active mentor. With a few exceptions, their affiliation with NEW Leadership™ participants was limited to one interaction. The increased efficacy and interest in politics reported by the participants were not the result of coaching or ongoing

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[41] Some would argue that being Facebook "friends" barely meets the threshold for keeping in touch, as many politicians have Facebook accounts that they use as a vehicle for reaching as many people as possible, without regard for strength of relationship. It can be an impersonal tool, and can be very unidirectional.

encouragement, or ease of access that is often the byproduct of mentoring relationships, when one's mentor acts as a sponsor and works to actively create opportunities for their protégé. The mere presence of the women leaders, sharing their stories, was enough to inspire and motivate NEW Leadership™ participants to consider deeper engagement politically. This is powerful evidence of symbolic representation.

In one sense, this finding suggests that a relatively small investment on the part of women leaders can yield significant dividends in terms of enhancing young women's political ambition. It is not clear from the survey or the interviews whether the effects of meeting one woman are the same as the cumulative effect of interacting with so many; it is possible that the unceasing parade of inspiration, day after day, is key. But from the perspective of an individual woman leader, taking just one hour to meet with college students and sharing her political path can have a powerful impact.

On the other hand, the lack of follow-up and mentoring is a missed opportunity, especially when the students leave the program so eager to be involved. One can only speculate as to what the impact of post-program mentoring would be. All of the questions posed to the survey respondents and interview participants were framed in terms of the future. Their responses were projections of anticipated behavior, for example, the likelihood that they would run for office. It is possible that their short-term priorities – finishing school, going to grad school, starting their careers, etc…- trump any plans to get

involved politically, so the students felt less urgency about finding a mentor to guide them through the political process (although the women leaders could certainly provide mentoring on relevant things like applying to law school, etc…). It is also possible that mentoring relationships may develop at a later date, as the college women start to gain clarity about their career goals and plans, and attempt to reconnect with women they met at NEW Leadership™ for help and advice.

Summary

Though this is not the first attempt at follow-up with NEW Leadership™ program participants, it is the most empirical. It is also the only effort, thus far, to move beyond individual outcomes to a deeper understanding of the causal mechanisms that make the program "work." It is one thing to say that participants leave the program inspired and empowered; it is another to explain why. I argue that understanding the effects of the program is essential to replicating it in a theoretically responsible way, increasing the potential for lasting impact.

The findings of this chapter suggest a robust relationship between the NEW Leadership™ curriculum, and changes in participants' political ambition. By expanding knowledge of women's ways of participating politically and enabling connection with women leaders, the program arouses higher levels of political interest and efficacy in program graduates. Though each student's NEW Leadership™ experience is unique, clear patterns emerged to substantiate

the claim that the program "educates and empowers the next generation of women leaders" through women role models who make participation in politics seem relevant and realistic.

An analysis of qualitative interviews with 16 NEW Leadership™ graduates provided insight into the most valuable and durable effects of the program. The participants' responses indicate that the interactions with women faculty members have lasting impact, shaping the way the participants view their capacity for political engagement. Respondents stressed positive personal outcomes, including greater confidence and feelings of efficacy and empowerment, as a result of their participation in NEW Leadership™. They cited a greater understanding of the many ways they could be involved in politics, and new awareness of the ways that they could participate while also pursuing other personal goals and professional careers.

Strong evidence exists to support the theory of symbolic representation. Over 80% of the interview respondents made positive reference to women faculty members before being asked about them explicitly. When asked what they thought they gained by attending the program, the majority of participants cited increased confidence and a sense of empowerment. It is reasonable to infer that the self-reported "most valuable" aspect of the program is causally connected to the personal gains that accrued to participants in the NEW Leadership™ program; that meeting women leaders inspired and motivated participants to reconsider or re-conceptualize their place in the political realm.

Ideally, these conclusions would be supported by interviews with all NEW Leadership™ participants, or at least a larger sample of cases. Sixteen graduates represent a small fraction of the total number of students who have completed the program. Though the interview subjects were selected randomly from lists provided by program directors, the analysis is based on the responses of NEW Leadership™ graduates who responded to my e-mail request for an interview, and were willing to share their reflections. There were others who did not respond to my invitation, and their experiences may have told a different story.

This is a limitation of the research but it does not negate the strength of the qualitative findings discussed, which are the product of careful and thorough analysis. The data are credible, and the conclusions and inferences are sound. More interviews would strengthen the outcomes and give them nuance; I do not believe it would change them.

Chapter 7
Conclusion

In the 92 years since women earned the right to vote, they have
demonstrated, increasingly, their concern for civic affairs in the most
fundamental way, surpassing men in voter turnout in every election since 1980
(CAWP 2011b). In the 2008 election, nearly 10 million more women voted than
men (CAWP 2011b; Lopez and Taylor 2009).

Women's transition from voter to candidate, however, has been slow, and
the road to political parity has been fraught with fits and starts. After years of
progress, the 2010 elections saw the first drop in the number of women in
Congress since 1979 and the first significant decline in women state legislators in
decades (CAWP 2011a). Women now comprise 17% of Congress and 23% of
state legislatures (CAWP 2012). To put these numbers in perspective, it helps to
consider their converse: Men continue to dominate the political realm,
comprising 83% of Congress and more than three-quarters of state legislatures.

There is a reason why the glacial progress of women politically has been
labeled a pipeline "problem." While men have been cruising along the political
Autobahn in finely-tuned driving machines, women have been trying to find the
on-ramp by way of a gravelly side road, in a golf cart. Some women make their
way to the candidate superhighway, while others are forced off the road; but we
also know that many are sidelined by lack of confidence and ambition.
Accelerating the pace of women's election to public office, or at least reversing

the decline of 2010, will require a commitment on multiple fronts. It will

challenge the will of political parties to recruit and support women candidates,

tax the resources of organizations that provide campaign skills training, and

demand the persistence of women candidates themselves. It will also require

foresight to prepare the next generation of women for leadership, and maintain a

pipeline that is full and robust.

Recent reports imply that young women, ages 18-29, are as or more likely

than young men to engage in political and civic activities (Kawashima-Ginsberg

2011), but polling data from the American National Election Studies and findings

of the Citizen Political Ambition Study suggest that differences in engagement

emerge as people age. Engagement among young women does not translate into

ambition as adults. Overall, men are more likely than women to report a general

interest in public affairs (ANES 2008), and more importantly, are more apt to

consider running for public office (Lawless and Fox 2005, 2010, 2012).

Since 1991, NEW Leadership™ programs across the country have worked

to "educate and empower" college women to consider careers in politics by

exposing them to women leaders who demystify the political process, affirm

their aspirations, and represent a full spectrum of opportunities for engagement

in public life. This project examined the efficacy of the NEW Leadership™

model, and explored the causal mechanisms that underlie the program's success.

Three of the four hypotheses were supported by the findings, suggesting cause

for optimism: Students who complete NEW Leadership™ programs report

higher levels of internal and external political efficacy, and indicate that they are more likely to run for public office than their non-participating peers.

The importance of this last point cannot be overemphasized: The relationship between participation in NEW Leadership™ and self-reported likelihood of running for public office is positive and significant (at the .05 level). Women leave the program with greater confidence in their ability to effect change, and an enhanced willingness to consider seeking elected office. This is strong evidence that programs like NEW Leadership™ are effective at building political ambition in young women, and it holds promise for the political pipeline.

Like Wolbrecht and Campbell (2005), I am sensitive to the fact that questions of anticipated political activity leave open the possibility that involvement is contingent. Under any circumstance, demonstrated behavior is more compelling evidence than anticipated behavior. Therefore, what happens to NEW Leadership™ graduates' political ambition over time is one important topic for future research. In his book, *Why We Vote: How Schools and Communities Shape our Civic Life,* David Campbell (2006) cites evidence that civic norms internalized in high school persist into adulthood, suggesting that high school students who volunteer in high school have a higher probability of volunteering and voting when they become adults. He also finds that political interest is a consistently positive predictor of electoral activism (volunteering for a political campaign or donating to a political candidate or party) and "political voice" (e.g.,

writing to public officials, or participating in a political demonstration) for up to 10 years after high school (which is where his data stops). Drawing on years of longitudinal data, he makes a compelling case that norms of civic behavior are more persistent than fleeting.

Nonetheless, durability of the findings is a legitimate question that calls for continued longitudinal analysis of NEW Leadership™ graduates to ascertain whether future rates of political engagement exceed or differ from those of other women. A study 20 years from now, to determine where the graduates are and what they are doing politically, will be important. In the short-term, it would be ideal to survey applicants for all of the NEW Leadership™ programs, rather than a sample from a few states, to get a fuller picture of program outcomes and impact. A full program evaluation would provide a richer and more robust appraisal of the NEW Leadership™ Development Network and allow for the assessment of individual programs.

Replicating this study to examine other leadership programs – such as those offered by PLEN or Running Start - would provide greater insight into the overall impact of political education and socialization of young women today. This project provides a template that has been tested and could easily be adapted to measure similar efforts. It would also be interesting to incorporate questions that mirror the Citizen's Political Ambition Study related to perceived qualifications for seeking public office. Do college women harbor doubts about their qualifications or the likelihood that they would win their first race, as their

older sisters and mothers do? Or is ambivalence something that develops over time, the result of professional realities and disappointments that cause women to have misgivings about their political prowess? It would be interesting to know when the doubts materialize, so that efforts can be made to address them.

The second question this project dealt with concerned the importance of role models in the development of young women's political ambition. I argue that role models matter, a hypothesis that is echoed by the comments of NEW Leadership™ program graduates. Over three-quarters of the women I interviewed made impromptu references to the women they met at NEW Leadership™, and many said that meeting and interacting with women leaders was the most valuable aspect of the program. Referencing women they met, many graduates used words like "inspired" or "empowered." The dominant theme was that over the course of six days with women leaders, the students developed greater self-confidence and a new sense of themselves as political actors, as they learned about the numerous ways that they could make a difference politically.

From a methodological perspective, this study underscores the importance of looking at more than a snapshot in time to measure symbolic or role model effects. Laboratory or short-term school-based studies, like the model used by Anderson, Mariani and Mathews-Gardner (2007) which used photographic directories reflecting different proportions of women as a stimulus for young women's political ambition, might not be adequate to measure

symbolic effects. Like Campbell and Wolbrecht (2006), this study takes a longer

look, measuring perceived ambition at different points in time with positive

results. The long view, it would seem, is a more fruitful approach.

Thus, this study makes two important contributions to the literature. It is

the first scholarly attempt to measure the effectiveness of college women's

leadership programs to building political ambition. The findings suggest that at

least one program, NEW Leadership™, produces positive outcomes that bode

well for the future of women in politics. Secondly, it makes a meaningful

contribution to the collective understanding of symbolic representation and how

to measure it. It is my hope that the evidence presented will help reinvigorate

the discussion of representation, as questions of intersectionality and identity

politics make such a conversation increasingly important.

The findings of this study also impart a powerful message to three other

constituencies: funders, program directors, and women in public life.

Foundations, institutions and other NEW Leadership™ funders (and potential

funders) should read these findings as evidence that the program is working,

and is therefore worthy of continued investment. An immersion program like

NEW Leadership™ is not inexpensive, but the reflections of graduates

demonstrate that it has lasting effects that may well be the key to closing the

gender gap in elected office.

Program directors have asserted for years that NEW Leadership™ is an

effective tool for building efficacy in college women; now their anecdotal stories

of success are backed with the weight of empirical evidence. The emphasis for programs moving forward should be to leverage the experiences of as many women leaders, representing as many civic, political and public policy-related roles as possible, to inspire and motivate the next generation. Programs should maximize interactions and expose participants to as many women as possible, because this is what graduates say makes a difference.

Finally, these findings should be a clarion call to women in public life. The presence of women leaders matters – to their constituents – but also to young women who benefit from their time, wisdom and experience. Women leaders who participate in programs like NEW Leadership™ are powerful symbols of possibility. By sharing their paths to power with candor and modeling the many possibilities to get involved, they make politics seem more accessible. By making the political, personal, they help young women envision a place for themselves in public life.

Graduates of NEW Leadership™ say that after participating in the program, they understand that there are many ways to be involved in politics, both now and later. What happens between now and later remains to be seen. Only time will tell whether or not the symbolic effects propagated by NEW Leadership™ will translate into political action. This study makes it clear, however, that political ambition can be encouraged and developed, which means that looking forward, anything is possible.

"I'm not going to do the Tour de France today," one program graduate said, "but maybe in 5 years." Because of NEW Leadership™, she added, "I know there is always a bike waiting for me."

Appendix A

Role Models and Political Ambition Survey
You are invited to participate in a research study about role models and women's political ambition. You have been asked to participate because you have been identified as a student with expressed interest in women's political leadership. The purpose of this research is to learn more about the impact of role models on young women's political interest and sense that they can "make a difference" politically. If you agree to participate in this research, you will be asked a series of questions related to your community and political activities, and your knowledge and interest in politics. You will be asked to complete 2 on-line surveys: one now and one in about 3 months. The surveys can be completed at a time that is convenient for you, at any computer you choose. Each survey should take you about 5 minutes to complete. There are no anticipated risks or benefits to you from participation in this study. Your participation in this research is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time without penalty. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study. Your responses to the surveys, including demographic data, will be stored on a computer in a locked office. You will only be referred to by a number and I will keep a guide that links your name to your responses in locked storage. Individual responses to survey questionnaires will be destroyed following analysis of the data and completion of the study. You may ask questions about the research at any time. Please contact Dayna Stock at (314) 516-6623 or via email at dstock@umsl.edu. If you have complaints about this survey that you cannot resolve by contacting the researcher named above, please contact the University of Missouri-St. Louis Institutional Review Board Office at (314) 516-5928. By clicking "Begin," you are indicating your agreement with the following: "I have read the above statement and have been able to express concerns, which have been satisfactorily responded to by the investigator. I believe I understand the purpose of the study and understand that no risks or benefits are involved. I hereby give my informed and free consent to be a participant in this study."

Interest in and knowledge of politics
For each of the following questions, use a scale of 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest).

[▼] Rate your level of interest in politics

[▼] How confident would you be speaking to an elected official?

[▼] How likely are you to contact a public official to voice your opinion on an issue?

[▼] How would you rate your knowledge of current events/political issues?

[▼] How would you rate your knowledge of women's involvement in politics?

[▼] How would you rate your knowledge of methods for participating in politics?

[▼] How confident are you in your ability to affect change related to issues that matter to you?

[▼] What is the likelihood that you would consider running for public office?

Community and Political Activities
Have you participated in any of the following activities? Check all that apply.

☐ Working for a political party or candidate (paid or volunteer)

☐ Donating money to a political campaign

☐ Running for political office

☐ Running for student government

☐ Organizing around an issue on your campus

☐ Organizing around an issue in your community

☐ Participating in a political rally

☐ Lobbying for an issue you care about

☐ Membership in a campus advocacy organization

☐ Membership in a community advocacy organization

☐ Attend a political meeting in support of a candidate

☐ Vote

☐ Try to influence how others vote

Feelings About Government and Public Officials
Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements:

	Agree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Don't Know/Depends
Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on.	●	●	●	●
People like me don't have any say about what government does	●	●	●	●
Public officials don't care much what people like me think.	●	●	●	●

Women in Elected Office
What is your best guess regarding the percentage of women serving in the U.S. Congress?

☐ 0-10%

☐ 11-20%

☐ 21-30%

☐ 21-40%

☐ 41-50%

☐ Over 50%

What is your best guess regarding the percentage of women serving in the Missouri Legislature?

- ☐ 0-10%

- ☐ 11-20%

- ☐ 21-30%

- ☐ 31-40%

- ☐ 41-50%

- ☐ Over 50%

Indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: "More women need to be elected to public office."
Agree/Disagree/Don't Know

Role Models
Role models are persons who distinguish themselves in such a way that others admire and want to emulate them. Many people identify role models who help them envision the person they hope to become. What about you? Can you think of a role model whom you admire and want to emulate?
Yes or No

If so, which word best describes this person?

- ☐ Family member

- ☐ Friend

- ☐ Celebrity

- ☐ Community Leader

- ☐ Teacher

- ☐ Boss

- ☐ Other: (please specify)

Is your role model a woman? Yes or No

Demographics
What is your country of birth?
Do you have children?   Yes or No
What year in school are you?   Freshman/Sophomore/Junior/Senior/Graduate Student
What is your age?
What is your marital status?
What is your ethnicity?
Generally speaking, how would you identify your party affiliation?
        Democrat/Republican/Independent/No Party Affiliation/Don't Know/Other (Please
        specify)
Generally speaking, how would you describe the strength of your partisan identity?

Strong Partisan/Weak Partisan/No Party Affiliation/Don't Know

State where you attend school
Please select the state where you attend college.
Missouri/Nevada/New Jersey/Ohio/Oklahoma/Washington/Other (Please specify)

Post-survey questions for respondents who attend a NEW Leadership program:
Looking back on your experience as a participant in NEW Leadership, what was the most valuable aspect of the program?

NEW Leadership Outcomes
Which, if any, of the following statements apply to your NEW Leadership experience? Check all that apply.

☐ I found a mentor and plan to stay in touch with her for career advice and guidance

☐ I became more interested in politics and government

☐ It gave me confidence in my ability to affect issues that are important to me

☐ It expanded my network of professional contacts

☐ It helped me improve my leadership skills

☐ It made me want to be more involved in politics and government

Interest in Politics
Has participating in NEW Leadership increased your interest in politics?
Very much/Somewhat/A little/Not at all

Confidence in ability to work within the political system
Do you feel greater confidence in your ability to work within the political system?
Very much/Somewhat/A little/Not at all

Confidence in ability to create change
Do you feel greater confidence in your ability to create political change?
Very much/Somewhat/A little/Not at all

Keep in touch
Do you plan to keep in touch with any of the women speakers you met at NEW Leadership?
Yes or No
If so, who?

Appendix B

<u>**Participant Observation Checklist**</u>
The following checklist outlines the questions I am going to ask myself as I observe the NEW Leadership training programs.

GENERAL THEMES
> Do the programs appear to "educate and empower" students, as they claim?
> What role do faculty members play in empowering the students?
> What messages are being transmitted about politics and government?
> How is leadership portrayed in these programs?

PROGRAM CHARACTERSITICS
Environment
> Is the program a full-time, immersion experience?
> Do the students leave the program to interact with others not participating in the
> > program?
> Is the environment supportive and empowering? Indicators?
> What is morale like? High/low? Indicators?
> Is there a sense of community among participants, program administrators, faculty?
Curriculum
> What topics/skills are covered?
> How are the topics/skills taught?
> How is the field of politics portrayed in the program curriculum?
> How are women in politics portrayed in the program curriculum?
> Does the curriculum take into account differences in political ideology?
> Are there specific activities to strengthen or build political efficacy?
Other
> Does the program offer formal opportunities for faculty and participants to reconnect
> > after the program?
> Does the program content seem appropriate for the level of interest and knowledge of
> > the students?

ACTORS
Faculty
> Who comprises the faculty for these programs?
> Are faculty diverse in terms of race, age, political affiliation, ideology, etc?
> Is there a Faculty in Residence? If so, what is her relationship to the students?
> What makes a faculty member a role model?
> Are there any specific faculty members who seem to really connect with the group? If so,
> > why? (personality, status, etc…)
Student Participants
> Do students express an obvious interest in politics and public life?
> Do the students seem comfortable with the faculty members? Are they deferential?
> Do they make overt references to faculty as role models?
> Do the students seem interested in the sessions?
> Do students make comments that reflect a sense of belonging or not belonging to the
> > group?
> Are there indications that the students' are gaining self-confidence through the
> > experience?
> Do students make any overt references to increased political interest or efficacy?
Program Administrators

What are their personal characteristics (race, age, partisanship, faculty or staff)?
Are there differences in leadership linked to these characteristics?
What is their level of involvement and interaction with the students?

Alumni
Are program alumni involved in any way?
If so, are they working in positions of public leadership, and do they refer to their program experience?

INTERACTIONS
How much interaction occurs between faculty and the students?
To what extent are faculty interactions with the students formal and professional, versus informal and personal?
Are there any male faculty members and if so, do gendered differences exist in interactions with the student participants?
How are interactions encouraged/discouraged by program structure and operation?
Are faculty treated deferentially by program administrators, or are they portrayed as "just one of us"?
Do faculty members make explicit offers to mentor or "help" students get ahead?
Are there indications that students and faculty are in the beginning stages of relationship building, i.e., exchange of business cards, offers to meet and follow-up, etc?

Appendix C

<u>Interview Questions: Program Administrators</u>

PROGRAM HISTORY
What year was the program first offered?
Help me understand the philosophy behind the program…What are your primary objectives and
        how do you go about achieving them?
                If one goal is leadership skill-building: What skills are covered and how do you
                teach them?
                How do you define leadership?
Does the curriculum pretty much stay the same year-to-year, or do you change it up?

PROGRAM STRUCTURE
Walk me through a typical NEW Leadership program.
        How many days long?
        What activities are included?
        How are students housed? Is living on-campus a requirement of the program?
Is there a formal mentoring component to the program?
Does the curriculum include a session on mentoring?
What, if anything, do you do to facilitate interactions between students and faculty?
What, if anything, do you do to facilitate ongoing contact between students and faculty?
About how many women leaders would you estimate the students come into contact with during
        a typical program?

PARTICIPANT SELECTION
How are students selected to participate in the program?
Are there specific criteria that are used in the selection process?
How many students typically apply?
Is there a cost for students to attend?

FACULTY
How are faculty selected?
        Specific criteria?
        Do you contact them or do they contact you?
        Are they compensated?

ALUMNI
Do alumni participate in the program? If so, how?
Do you offer formal opportunities for alumni to reconnect with faculty members after the
        program?
Tell me about a few of your "most successful" program graduates…
        What are they doing?
        What makes them successful?
        Is there tangible evidence that their success was related to contacts, skills or knowledge
            received at the program?

OUTCOMES
What are the desired outcomes of the program?
How do you measure outcomes?
What evidence do you have that the outcomes are being achieved?

Appendix D

<u>**Interview Questions: Program Graduates**</u>

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS
Which NEW Leadership program did you attend? What year?
Do you recall what made you interested in applying to the program?
Thinking back to your experience, did the program meet your expectations?
     Please elaborate.
What were some of the most valuable aspects of the NEW Leadership program?
What do you think you gained by attending NEW Leadership?

POLITICAL INTEREST
Were you interested in politics before attending NEW Leadership?
On a scale of 1-5:
     How would you rate your level of interest in politics now?
     How would you rate your knowledge of current events/political issues?
     How would you rate your knowledge of women's involvement in politics?
What effect, if any, did NEW Leadership have on your interest in politics and public policy?

EFFICACY
What effect did your NEW Leadership experience have on your understanding of politics and the ways that you could impact the political process?
Again, on a scale of 1-5:
     How confident would you be speaking to an elected official?
     How likely are you to contact a public official to voice your opinion on an issue?
     How would you rate your knowledge of methods for participating in politics?
     How confident are you in your ability to affect change related to issues that matter to you?

MENTORS/ROLE MODELS
Do you remember any of the women faculty from the NEW Leadership program?
Have you kept in touch with any of them? How?
Would you consider any of them a mentor? If so, whom and in what way?
Do you remember who served as Faculty-in-Residence?
Have you kept in touch with her/them? How?

PRESENT ACTIVITIES / FUTURE PLANS
Tell me about your professional life since NEW Leadership. What do you do?
What are your future plans?
What is the likelihood that you would consider running for public office?
Can you see yourself pursuing a position of political leadership (i.e., serving on a public board or commission, taking a leadership role in a political party, becoming a judge, etc…)?

Appendix E

Summary of Qualitative Data

Themes   **N**
         Sub-themes

What do you think you gained by attending NEW Leadership™?

Confidence – in leadership skills and in self, broadly	8
Inspiration/Empowerment	5
Positive View of Politics	1
Networking Skill	1
Emerging Interest	1

What effect, if any, did NEW Leadership™ have on your interest in politics and public policy?

Enhanced/Expanded interest

Generally	6
Re: state issues	1
Showed may ways to effect change/	
on a smaller scale	5
Personal inspiration/awareness	6

* several respondents mentioned multiple themes, thus the total is >16

What effect did your NEW Leadership™ experience have on your understanding of politics and the ways that you could impact the political process?

Exposure to multiple ways one could participate – broader perspective	7
Expanded awareness of politics on a smaller scale	4
Greater understanding that politics didn't have to be a full-time career/confidence that I can do it	3
No effect	1

* one respondent did not really answer the question

What were some of the most valuable aspects of the NEW Leadership™ program?

Meeting women leaders	7
Networking	4
Meeting other participants	3
Realizing accessibility of politics	1
Structure of the program	1

Appendix F

Office of Research Administration

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DATE: August 19, 2011

TO: Dayna Stock
FROM: University of Missouri-St. Louis IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [239459-2] The Impact of Role Models on Young Women's Political Participation
REFERENCE #: 110407S
SUBMISSION TYPE: Amendment/Modification

ACTION: MODIFICATION APPROVED
DECISION DATE: August 19, 2011
EXPIRATION DATE: May 1, 2012
REVIEW TYPE: Full Committee Review

This modification was approved by the University of Missouri-St. Louis IRB or the term of this protocol. The University of Missouri-St. Louis IRB must be notified in writing prior to major changes in the approved protocol. Examples of major changes are the addition of research sites or research instruments.

An annual report must be filed with the committee. This report should indicate the starting date of the project and the number of subjects since the start of project, or since last annual report.

Any consent or assent forms must be signed in duplicate and a copy provided to the subject. The principal investigator must retain the other copy of the signed consent form for at least three years following the completion of the research activity and they must be available for inspection if there is an official review of the UM-St. Louis human subjects research proceedings by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Protection from Research Risks.

This action is officially recorded in the minutes of the committee.

If you have any questions, please contact Carl Bassi at 314-516-6029 or bassi@umsl.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

Generated on IRBNet

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