Institutionalizing Inequity Anew: Grantmaking and Racialized Postsecondary Organizations[1]

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Abstract

This paper combines theories of racialized organizations with insights on institutionalization to empirically analyze the role of grantmakers in unsettling postsecondary racial inequity. Using longitudinal data on federal grantmaking to institutions of higher education, we examine whether and how grantmaking policies (re)produce or diminish institutionalized racial inequities. To do so, we develop and apply the concept of the *frame-enactment bundle*—a multi-part unit of analysis—as a mechanism that either supports or challenges the (re)production of racialization. First, we ask, how does a federal grantmaking agency's frame-enactment bundle shift over time? Second, did a 2013 change to the frame-enactment bundle have a causal effect on funding in terms of the types of colleges and universities that benefit? We use archival analysis to trace the agency's changing frame-enactment bundle over time. We then test the effects of these bundles on grant distribution using a difference-in-difference-in-differences critical quantitative analysis. We find the adoption of an equity-conscious frame increased grant funding to minority-serving institutions after years of under-resourcing this organizational type. And yet, the grantmaker's enactment of that frame created novel and more deeply institutionalized mechanisms for maintaining racialized access to resources and agency. This study exposes the deleterious trade-offs policymakers create when they center inequity in their framing even as they create new organizational mechanisms of racialization via policy enactment. We mark this as the process of institutionalizing inequity anew.

Keywords: race and racialized organizations, neo-institutional theory, grantmaking, federal policy, racial frames

Both private foundations and public grantmaking agencies commonly position themselves as agents for change that, if their projects are successful, would diminish the relative advantages of the privileged few. This is particularly salient among today's educational grantmakers (Dougherty & Natow, 2015; Haddad, 2021; Miller & Morphew, 2017; R. Quinn et al., 2014a; Reckhow & Snyder, 2014). Although scholars have long studied how elites drive or resist social change in ways that preserve their power, there is limited empirical research on how postsecondary grantmakers work within or push beyond the racialized status quo (Brandtner et al., 2016; Francis, 2019; Wooten, 2010, 2016). We know even less about the cumulative effects of postsecondary grantmakers on racial inequity over time. We take up this puzzle in the context of one grantmaker—The Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), a federal agency established in 1973 to invest in models for improved postsecondary outcomes. Modeled in form and process after private philanthropy, congress created FIPSE as a vehicle for transformation within institutions of higher education following the civil rights wins embedded in the Higher Education Act of 1965 (Edgerton, 1973). FIPSE was tasked with making grants primarily to postsecondary organizations, funding projects—e.g., student support programs, pedagogical innovations—that would increase student success.

We combine theories of racialized organizations with insights on institutionalization to shed light on processes of persistence and change in higher education (Colyvas & Jonsson, 2011; Ray, 2019; Scott, 2015). In doing so, we develop the concept of the *frame-enactment bundle*—a multi-part unit of analysis—as a mechanism that either supports or challenges the (re)production of racialization. A frame-enactment bundle is the amalgamation of a problem frame and the operationalization of that frame within an organization. We mobilize the frame-enactment bundle as a mechanism, within racialized contexts, that either (re)produces or diminishes

institutionalized inequities. We test the effects of frame-enactment bundles on modes of reproduction that perpetuate racial inequity in postsecondary education. First, we ask, how does FIPSE's frame-enactment bundle shift over time? Second, did the 2013 "First in the World" program have a causal effect on funding in terms of the types of colleges and universities that benefit? We first use archival analysis to trace FIPSE's changing frame-enactment bundle. We then use a difference-in-difference-in-differences (DDD) statistical analysis to test the effects of these frame-enactment bundles on grant distribution.

We find that FIPSE's adoption of an equity-conscious frame-enactment bundle under FITW had significant causal consequences on the types of colleges and universities it funded. Despite the discursive move to frame equity explicitly, FIPSE simultaneously amended key grantmaking features. Instead of diminishing sources of inequality, this change to the frame-enactment bundle elaborated grantmaking routines and created more deeply institutionalized structures of benefit and burden that perpetuated stratification. We make three primary contributions. First, we expose the deleterious trade-offs funders and other policymakers create when they attempt to address racial inequity without problematizing mechanisms of racialization embedded in organizations. Second, we surface the types of organizational actions that would weaken and replace mechanisms that reproduce racial inequality. Third, we extend the analytical purchase of Ray's (2019) theory of racialized organizations by attending to core features of institutionalization as both a process and an outcome. Taken together, these contributions help explain how well-intentioned change agents may contribute to racially stratifying processes, even as they strive to undermine them.

Grantmaking, Frames, and Colorblind Organizations

Grantmaking—both via private foundations and public agencies like the National Science

Foundation—has a historic and growing role in shaping postsecondary policy and practice (Bozeman & Youtie, 2017; Bushouse & Mosley, 2018; Haddad, 2021; Reckhow & Snyder, 2014; Reckhow & Tompkins-Stange, 2018). These actors largely focus their work on issues like college access, broadening participation, and more recently the "college completion agenda"—a movement implicitly associated with equity aims (Gandara et al., 2017; Miller & Morphew, 2017; R. Quinn et al., 2014b). However, we know little about how and if postsecondary grantmaking disrupts or maintains institutionalized racism.

The majority of postsecondary grant funds are directed to wealthier, more prestigious institutions (Kelly & James, 2015; McClure et al., 2017), even though these organizations systematically underserve minoritized populations. This funding pattern is one instantiation of institutionalized racism, whereby it is legitimate and expected that white organizations are better resourced. Moreover, despite espoused equity orientations, many foundations have supported dismantling core civil rights policies, such as court-ordered and voluntary school desegregation (see e.g., Arnove, 1980; INCITE!. et al., 2007; Morey, 2021; O'Connor, 2009; Ravitch, 2013) or shifts from disruptive to assimilationist interventions (Francis, 2019; Jenkins & Eckert, 1986; Rojas, 2010; Rooks, 2006; Shiao, 2004; Wooten, 2016). We know little about how to model the gap between grantmakers' espoused racial equity commitments and their contributions to inegalitarian outcomes in higher education. This is particularly urgent given that many grantmakers are taking up new equity discourses as a type of intervention in postsecondary policy. Indeed, the act of changing racial equity discourses has itself become a theory of change in educational grantmaking (see, e.g., Jones & Nichols, 2020; Russell, 2017). And yet, the empirical question remains: does adopting changed discourses translate to reductions in racial inequity in postsecondary education?

Empirical work across disciplines supports the hypothesis that discourses—or frames—about inequality can have material effects. Frames are an arrangement of concepts that actors use to legitimize and mobilize proposals in an organization or movement (Béland, 2005; Benford & Snow, 2000; Bensimon, 1989; Pedriana, 2006), particularly around inequalities (Levitas, 2005; Mehta, 2011, 2013; D. M. Quinn et al., 2019). Frames focus actions on specific educational problems or promoted strategies (Byrd, 2019; Gándara & Jones, 2020). For example, Morphew & Miller (2017) demonstrate how grantmakers used frames to advance the adoption of performance-based funding models (PBFs). These frames, echoed by adopting states, positioned PBF as a college completion mechanism and delegitimated empirical evidence demonstrating PBFs inequitable consequences that cast doubt on its efficacy.

For every study that bolsters the claim that centering race is a necessary move toward postsecondary equity, there is a counterpoint that surfaces potential unintended consequences (Apfelbaum et al., 2012; Schneider & Ingram, 1993, 2019). For example, social psychologists and political scientists demonstrate how frames that center minoritized communities can weaken white-centered policy and practice, while also initiating undue policy burdens or political backlash (Lowndes, 2008; Norton & Sommers, 2011; D. M. Quinn et al., 2019; Ray et al., 2020; Schneider & Ingram, 1993). Indeed, organizations often adapt to changing frames and diversifying contexts in ways that maintain or even expand educational inequity (Alon & Tienda, 2007; Christian et al., 2019). In postsecondary education, we can see multiple junctures at which race-conscious frames (e.g., affirmative action) are met with elaborated criteria for measuring educational quality that delegitimate predominantly Black or other non-white institutions (McCambly & Mulroy, 2019). This is aptly captured in the early 20th century plight of Black medical schools that ended in the shutdown of six of eight of their number (Bailey, 2017; Smith,

2019). This coup for the American Medical Association against its Black counterpart, the National Medical Association, was facilitated by Abraham Flexner's creation of racialized quality metrics fit to white medical schools' capacity and models.

In order to draw a causal arrow between frames and racially equitable outcomes, we must account for how frames are combined with organizational processes to dismantle or reproduce the status quo (Burke, 2016; Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Hughey, Mebrick, & Doane, 2015). Ray and Purifoy (2019) extend Bonilla Silva's (2017) concept of colorblind frames to interpret organizations that perpetuate racial inequalities while operating as race neutral. Colorblind frames are instantiated in organizational procedures in ways that (re)create racial outcomes even as they avoid the open racial animus (Ray & Purifoy, 2019). For example, while Latinx enrollment is used as a qualifier for Title V grants by the federal government, funded HSIs are not required to demonstrate a race-conscious theory-of-action for serving their Latinx students (Garcia, 2017). Instead, a majority of successful Title V applications propose programs that serve "all" of their students—a colorblind frame that fails to trouble racialized inequalities within institutions (Vargas & Villa-Palomino, 2019). We propose a conceptual framework to analyze how equity-conscious frames and policies change (or fail to change) inequitable arrangements maintained under colorblind conditions. Doing so requires a sharper specification of the organizational dynamics that (re)produce persistent inequalities. We thus conceptualize our unit of analysis not as a frame alone, but frames and their operationalization in an organizational context, a unit we call the frame-enactment bundle.

Racialized Organizations and Persistent Inequity

The role of organizations in shaping persistence and change is a long-time concern of postsecondary scholars (Bastedo & Bowman, 2010; Bastedo & Gumport, 2003; Bastedo &

Jaquette, 2011; Kezar, 2013). So, too, are issues of race and the maintenance of racial inequality (Berrey, 2011; Byrd, 2017; Harper et al., 2009; Jack, 2019; Posselt et al., 2017; Smith, 2019; Yosso et al., 2004). Ray's (2019) theory of racialized organizations argues that racial attitudes and biases are enabled by, and have their material effects through, organizations. This theory replaces race-neutral notions with the view that organizations—as schemas connecting organizational rules and routines to resources—(re)create racial outcomes by routinizing values associated with racial hierarchies (Ray & Purifoy, 2019). In doing so, Ray develops four tenets of racialized organizations. The first tenet is the core definition of racialized organizations as "meso-level social structures that limit the personal agency and collective efficacy of subordinate racial groups while magnifying the agency of the dominant racial group" (2019: 36). The remaining three tenets describe mechanisms by which racialized organizations enhance or diminish the agency of racial groups: 1) racialized organizations legitimate the unequal distribution of resources via differentiation between white and non-white organizational types, 2) Whiteness acts as an organizational credential—that is, an organizations' claim to Whiteness ascribes status that legitimates "bureaucratic means of allocating resources by merit" (p. 41), and 3) decoupling of formal rules from organizational practice such that rules are enforced that benefit the dominant group, whereas commitments to equity or inclusion are decoupled from practice. From our institutional theory lens, we interpret these three tenets as core modes of reproduction by which racialization is (re)produced over time.

Critical to the study of higher education, Ray's theory posits that racialization is enabled, in part, by the differentiation between what he calls white and non-white organizational types. "While white organizational types are seen as normative and neutral, non-white organizations are…often stigmatized" in ways that legitimize unequal resource distribution (Ray 2019: 38;

Harris 1993). In postsecondary education these distinctions began with the development of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) as a response to racial segregation (Harris, 2021; Williamson-Lott, 2018). Due to evolving processes of educational segregation, the white/non-white organizational divide in higher education extends beyond historical categories like HBCU or Tribal designations to include non-white organizational types that emerge based on their degree of service to people of color (Garcia, 2017). From both state coffers and grantmakers, non-white types are systematically under-resourced compared to predominantly white organizations (e.g., Gándara & Rutherford, 2020; Hagood, 2019; Harris, 2021; Hillman, 2020; McClure et al., 2017). Addressing racialization empirically requires attention to both historical and emergent categories of—in postsecondary terms—minority-serving institutions.

Institutionalization as an Outcome and a Process

If racial structures are institutionalized when they are replicated across organizations (Ray, 2019), then we must shift our aperture to capture not only the categorization of organizations but also the processes by which racially determined conditions are longitudinally (re)produced. Indeed, an order's level of institutionalization is not determined by a dearth of dissenters but by how impervious it is to challenges (Colyvas & Powell, 2006). It is difficult to think of a domain in which more equity initiatives have been launched only to achieve limited results than in postsecondary education. Neo-institutional theory's identification of institutionalization as a process and an outcome helps us map the relationship among interventions, persistence, and change in racialized organizations.

As an Outcome. Through a neo-institutional lens, racialization is institutionalized if it is "chronically reproduced" by "self-activating social processes," otherwise known as modes of reproduction (Jepperson, 1991, p. 45; Scott, 2013). An outcome, like racialization, is

institutionalized when it is taken for granted and self-reproducing by both material and symbolic means within a shared meaning system, networks of exchange, and status and power relationships (Colyvas & Jonsson, 2011). Of course, these shared meaning systems do not serve all actors equally—they are overdetermined by the interests of dominant actors (Clemens & Cook, 1999). By this definition we can identify racial inequality as institutionalized in postsecondary education because values associated with it are self-reproducing and integrated into society (Colyvas & Powell, 2006).

As a Process. Institutionalization –or the "manner of attaining a social order that reproduces itself" (Colyvas & Jonsson, 2011: 38)— is also a dynamic, ongoing process (Colyvas & Maroulis, 2015; Mahoney & Thelen, 2009). Studying racialized organizations in these terms requires attention to both the modes of reproduction that make the schema-resource connection persistent *and* the means by which these modes are created or diminished. Given racism's persistence over time, some argue that rather than a story of racial progress, American racism is an evolution account where white privilege takes on new mechanisms even as old ones erode (Christian et al., 2019). If we treat this pattern empirically, we capture two processes: the process by which old modes of reproduction are weakened (dismantling loci of racism) and the process by which new modes of reproduction emerge (creating new loci of racism).

From Schemas to Frame-Enactment Bundles

Ray's theory of racialized organizations deploys Sewell's (1992) concepts of schemas and resources to sketch the contours of structural continuity underlying existing racial orders (see also, Emirbayer & Desmond 2015). When schemas are materially connected to resources, they become durable. Such is the case when preferences for historically white organizations—a broader pattern in education—are legitimated and codified. We can thus identify organizations as

racialized when they connect to resources in ways that magnify the privileges of dominant racial groups (Ray 2019). For example, even as the NSF broadens its calls to appeal to diverse research teams, applicants with access to state-of-the-art scientific and grantwriting infrastructures maintain a steep competitive advantage in routine, quantifiable ways. These infrastructures correlate with both the whiteness of the institutions and of the researchers (Kameny et al. 2014; Mazur et al. 2016; Villalpando & Delgado-Bernal 2002; Taffe & Gilpin, 2021).

Since racialized organizations are schemas that are reproduced insofar as they are connected to resources, grantmakers' attempts to publicly reframe their positions on race are attempts to modify extant schemas. Based on neo-institutional theory, schemas are a combination of meanings and practices (Colyvas, 2007). Racialized organizations are thus composed of meanings that legitimate ongoing rewards to the dominant racial group and practices that enact these meanings. Through this lens, racialization is institutionalized insofar as its meanings and practices support self-activating modes of reproduction. The process of institutionalization can be observed in the generation and deepening of these modes of reproduction. And vice versa—deinstitutionalization occurs via the weakening or replacement of modes of reproduction (Colyvas and Jonsson, 2011)—e.g., the legitimacy of unequal resource distribution to white universities or the use of status, built on whiteness, as a measure of a university's quality.

In grantmaking contexts, the expression of a schema's meanings surfaces as a grantmaker's frame for mobilization in relation to inequality. A schema's practices arise as the categories and routines used to move frames into action. These frame-enactment bundles therefore provide the causal link to equal or unequal resource distribution. Grantmakers' moves to change are not just about frames but about how frames are translated to practice.

Frame-Enactment Bundles' Effects on the Distribution of Resources

If a racialized organization functions to legitimize the dominant group's monopolization of resources and respect, then challenges to that order need to unsettle extant practices and structures that reward and objectify this monopolization. A frame-enactment bundle that deinstitutionalizes racialization would dismantle self-activating, unequal modes of resource distribution generally, and Ray's tenets of racialized organizations specifically. Figure 1 illustrates the anatomy of racialized organizations comprising frame-enactment bundles as mechanisms for creating or weakening modes of reproduction that produce inequitable distributions of resources and agency.

Our lens emphasizes that weakening a racial order would mean weakening the relationship between racialized schema and resource distribution. The primary recipients of postsecondary grant funds are whiter, better resourced, and more prestigious colleges and universities (Kelly and James 2015). These organizations possess key legitimacy markers (e.g., rankings, resources) that correlate to their relative status as white organizational types (Espeland & Sauder, 2016; Ray, 2019). Grantmakers' preference for these types reproduces racialized conditions wherein non-white organizational types are also the most poorly resourced. We thus expect that colorblind—or as we will refer to them equity-evasive—frame-enactment bundles that fail to problematize the racialized distribution of benefits will support the status quo by directing resources to white organizations. However, frame-enactment bundles that problematize racialized resource distribution are more likely direct resources to non-white organizations.

Methodology

This analysis focuses on FIPSE and its funded recipients (1995-2015) using a longitudinal, mixed-methods research design whereby multiple data types—archival and

administrative—were concurrently collected and analyzed using multiple methods (Small, 2011). This design merges two separate strands of data and analysis, leveraging the advantages and strengths of data and analytic approaches to answer interrelated research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Greene et al., 1989; Small, 2011). We use qualitative, archival methods for three interconnected purposes. First, we identify heterogeneity in FIPSE's frames over time, which also produces a variable for causal, quantitative analyses. Second, we analyze the policies and procedures through which FIPSE's frames are enacted, as the link between frames and funding outcomes. And third, we used qualitative analysis to check our interpretation of quantitative outcomes. We used critical quantitative analyses for two purposes (Garcia et al., 2018). First, to explore the correlation between FIPSE's frame-enactment bundle and funding leading up to the 2013 frame change. And second, we use quasi-experimental methods to examine the causal effects of this frame change on FIPSE funding. These data not only build on each other but are used in concert to deepen theoretical and empirical contributions (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017; Small, 2011). We illustrate the links between our primary methods and conceptual framework in Figure 1.

Since 1973, FIPSE's legislative charge was to invest in projects that create innovative reform to expand opportunities for, and success among, underrepresented groups. FIPSE is an apt setting for three reasons. First, FIPSE had a uniquely flexible authority to behave like a private foundation, thus permitting insights across grantmaking domains as processes (e.g., format for soliciting proposals) and actors (e.g., program officers with domain expertise) mirror those common to multiple grantmaking forms. Second, the FITW shift parallels in form and timing the trend across educational philanthropy to explicitly reframe equity. Third, part of FIPSE's founding mandate was to diminish postsecondary inequality, permitting us to analyze

the effects of variation from implicit to explicit emphases on equity in frame-enactment bundles over time. Table 1 provides a summary-by-year of FIPSE's grantmaking from 1998-2015, which provides descriptive context for the changes to FIPSE's grantmaking model described in our findings.

Tracing FIPSE's Changing Frame-Enactment Bundle

We collected FIPSE's grant guidelines from 1995 to 2015 (N=92), permitting ample years ahead of FITW to explore the stability in FIPSE's policies and frames prior to the 2013 FITW change.[2] Grant guidelines provide a contemporary, public-facing communication about FIPSE's procedures and priorities. Guidelines provide both the external cue about what FIPSE will fund and the internal tool used to identify worthy projects.[3] We employed a deductive content analysis method (Miles et al., 2013), isolating and longitudinally comparing key elements of FIPSE's frames and enactments. Using Benford and Snow's (2000) frame analysis model, we coded for target beneficiaries, problem identification (diagnoses), and promoted solutions (prognoses). We analyzed the resulting codes for persistence and change using a chronological data matrix, and emergently categorized frames as either amplifying (i.e., "equity-evasiveness") or problematizing (i.e., "equity-consciousness) the unequal distribution of resources or outcomes. Table 2 illustrates our definitions for these constructs which build from Bonilla Silva's (2013) "colorblind" frames, while eschewing ableist language. We also coded each document for four policy design features (Schneider & Ingram, 1993) as indicators of frame enactments with emphasis on the level of benefit and freedom awarded to beneficiaries (Ray et al., 2020): restrictive v. unrestrictive policy mandates, broad v. narrow distribution, high v. low accountability requirements, and an analysis of accountability metrics.

[2] FIPSE often, but not always, released multiple grant guidelines each year.
[3] This combination produces a consistent dataset for longitudinal analysis (Ventresca & Mohr, 2017).

Measuring the Effects of the Frame-Enactment Bundle on Resource Distribution

Qualitative analysis of FIPSE's frame-enactment bundles revealed that the agency abruptly moved in 2013 from espousing an equity-evasive frame to one squarely focused on non-dominant populations, particularly minoritized students. We analyzed the causal effects of the FITW frame-enactment bundles on the distribution of resources—i.e., our dependent variable is a measure of dollars awarded to a given institution in a given year—by statistically testing the following two hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: When an equity-evasive frame-enactment bundle is used, grant funds will be disproportionately directed toward more prestigious and well-resourced organizations that serve a larger proportion of non-minoritized students (i.e., white organizations).

Hypothesis 2: When an equity-conscious frame-enactment bundle is used, grant funds will be disproportionately directed toward less-prestigious and resourced organizations that serve a larger proportion of minoritized populations (i.e., non-white organizations).

We used two types of metrics to differentiate types of colleges and universities as primary independent variables: the populations they serve (whether minoritized based on race or class) and the degree of prestige and resource capacity they possess as an organizational type, which is highly correlated with the race of enrolled students. We use these organizational metrics to operationalize, in diverse ways, Ray's conceptualization of white and non-white organizations.

***Identification Strategy*.** We use a DDD design to estimate the effect of the 2013 FITW change to FIPSE's frame-enactment bundles on the distribution of funds to different organizational types.[4] The intuition behind this strategy is the same as a difference-in-difference

[4] Changes to grant guidelines may affect funding by two primary mechanisms: 1) guidelines may signal new agency preferences, encouraging a new set of organizations to apply, 2) guidelines may initiate new criteria for selecting projects. Qualitative reports from FIPSE staff indicate that a combination of these mechanisms likely occurred. Data to measure these mechanisms separately are unavailable. We thus measure the net effect of the FITW change.

(DD) design, which measures the effect before and after a treatment on a group relative to the changes in an untreated group (Gangl, 2010; Schwerdt & Woessmann, 2020). Note: the change of interest occurs at a single point in time, thus many contemporary concerns about DD models do not affect our estimates (Gándara & Rutherford, 2020; Goodman-Bacon, 2018).

Grant dollars, as an outcome variable, measures how much a particular type of institution— e.g., a minority serving institution (MSI)—is expected to receive in a given year. However, one must consider the possibility that all federal programs were changing in the same way due to political or social changes that could be correlated to the pre-post FITW change. To rule this out—we introduce a comparison program, which is the second difference in this model. We use TRiO Student Support Services (SSS), another federal agency that awards grants to colleges and universities, as an untreated comparison case. The comparison group provides us with an estimate of the changes in applicant behavior and funding decisions that would have happened over time, even if FIPSE had not instituted the 2013 FITW change. Table 1 includes a summary of SSS's grantmaking from 1998 through 2015. SSS is another federal grant program with a similar mission (to make grants to postsecondary institutions that fund student support programs that improve postsecondary outcomes), founding circumstances (as federal responses to civil rights era demands), target population (underserved students in postsecondary education), and is located within the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) under the assistant secretary for postsecondary education. The FITW policy change was not applied to SSS. SSS shares with FIPSE the same context in terms of trends in funding levels and political administration changes. Unlike FIPSE, SSS's legislative mandate was more explicitly equity-conscious given its focus on delivering supplemental student supports to minoritized students. If FIPSE's 2013 adoption of an equity-conscious frame impacts its funding patterns, we would thus predict funding to look *more*

like SSS post-FITW than it had done. The core assumptions of parallel pre-trends is not directly testable, but Figures 4-7 provide visual evidence for similar pre-treatment fluctuations.

To control for factors that could bias the average treatment effect—that is, the average causal effect of the FITW program on the grant funding outcomes as compared to the comparison group—we add a third difference to rule out threats to validity that might originate in changes to the organizational population (St.Clair et al., 2014). For example, returning to our MSI example, we use the DDD framework to measure the differential effects of FITW on MSI v. non-MSI institutions. This puts the effects in context not only of a comparison grant program but also the impact on MSIs relative to the non-MSI population. Our model is as follows:

$$Y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1(Post_t) + \beta_2(FIPSE) + \beta_3(FIPSE_{it}*Post_t) + \beta_4(CHAR_{it}) + \beta_5(CHAR_{it}*Post_t) + \beta_6(CHAR_{it}*FIPSE_{it}) + \beta_7(CHAR_{it}*FIPSE_{it}*Post_t) + \alpha_t + \gamma_i + \varepsilon_{it}$$

The dependent variable Y_{it} is the dollar amount a college or university received in a given year from either of the grant programs; if it received no funding, it receives a zero. We selected this dependent variable in alignment with our theoretically formulated research questions about the equity or inequity in the distribution of resources. Independent variables fall into three categories: treatment (pre and post the 2013 FITW adoption), grantmaking agency (treated/FIPSE and untreated/SSS), and organizational characteristics (e.g., MSI, US News and World Reports Top 100 schools). While each of our main analyses focuses on one of eleven organizational characteristics, described below, we explicate the model above using a generic variable for these characteristics ("CHAR"). FIPSE takes a value of 1 if the record is part of the FIPSE half of the dataset and 0 if it is in the SSS half. CHAR takes a value of 1 if it meets the criteria for the institutional characteristic. Post takes a value of 1 if the condition after the policy change (FITW) is met; γ are sector fixed effects to control for time-invariant characteristics by

sector (e.g., public v. private colleges); α are time fixed-effects to account for inflation and changes in grant funding availability (e.g., under different administrations); and ε is an error term. The subscript *i* indicates the specific institution, and *t* indexes time measured in years. We estimated this regression using clustered standard errors at the organizational level. The coefficient of interest here is β_7, which measures the causal effect of the frame-enactment bundle on a grantee characteristic relative to the comparison group and to grantees without this characteristic. The identifying assumption of a DDD is twofold: 1) funding outcomes would not have changed at differential rates between FIPSE and SSS in the absence of the policy change and 2) no shock occurred at the point of treatment that affected one category of institutions in the model but not the other (Clair & Cook, 2015; Schwerdt & Woessmann, 2020).

Data. Both FIPSE and SSS grantmaking data—including grant amounts and recipient institutions—were collected directly from public data published by the DOE. The independent variables comprise three categories: treatment (pre and post the 2013 FITW adoption), grantmaking agency (treated/FIPSE and untreated/SSS), and organizational characteristics (Appendices 1-2). Dependent (grant dollars), treatment and agency variables are sourced directly from the FIPSE and SSS datasets. The dataset is organized by institution (college or university) and year, with each institution-year combination appearing twice: one record documents the FIPSE grant the organization received in dollars that year (a "0" if no award), and the other record documents the SSS grant the organization received in dollars that year (a "0" if no award). A dummy indicates whether the record occurs before or after the "treatment" period (implementation of FITW) based on the year in which the grant occurred (before or after 2013). We dropped 2012 and 2013—the years in which FIPSE did not make any grants as it developed the FITW frame—to generate estimates using a balanced panel.

The regressions in the findings section each focus on one of eleven organizational characteristics comprising student population variables and organization-level prestige/capacity variables. These variables were generated by matching FIPSE and SSS data to the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), which annually collects data from every organization eligible to receive federal aid, as well as to Carnegie Classifications and US News and World Reports data. Student population variables and minority-serving/high-Pell status are measured annually—i.e., the demographic data used in this study reflect the changing demographics of these institutions over time—specifically in terms of race and class enrollments at each college/university. Where IPEDS categories changed over time—e.g., the new race/ethnicity categories rolled out in 2008-2011—we reconstructed categories in the later years to match old categories (Jaquette & Parra, 2014).

Organizational prestige and capacity variables measure the classification (highest degree offered), relative ranking of the institution (U.S. News and World Reports [USN]), and existing wealth (endowment and instructional spending) available to the organization. IPEDS also provided endowment and instructional spending measures. Classification variables came directly from the Carnegie Classification System. Relative ranking variables came from USN documenting the top 50 ranked universities and top 50 ranked liberal arts colleges annually. Where time-invariant data were missing in certain records, we imputed using the most recent non-missing record in the dataset. Where time-variant data were missing, we imputed an average value by sector and year. Summary statistics for the organizational variables represented in IPEDS are in Table 3. This table splits summaries by pre- and post-FITW eras, and also by institutions in the IPEDS universe, as well as those that received FIPSE or SSS grants between 1998-2015. Those that received FIPSE grants pre-FITW table illustrates means and standard

deviations for selected variables for all colleges and universities from 1998 to 2015, and for FIPSE and SSS grantees. This table provides context for shifts in the general institutional population among key variables as compared to shifts within grantee populations.

Findings

An Abrupt Change to FIPSE's Inequality Frame

Prior to the adoption of FITW, FIPSE's frame-enactment bundle was open to, but not motivated by, solutions that reduce racial inequality—a stance we categorize as equity-evasive (Table 2). Analyzing the published guidelines prior to the introduction of FITW, we find that FIPSE only mentions inequality issues in nine out of seventeen years.[5] Importantly, in these nine instances, inequality concepts are peripheral rather than central to the agency's argument about the grants it intends to fund. For example, FIPSE's 1995 guidelines described:

> [T]he main activity of [FIPSE] is an annual competition for grants to support innovative reform projects which promise to be models for [solutions] in postsecondary education. The more important the problem, the more far-reaching the innovation, and the more long-lasting the reform, the more likely a project is to be supported.[6]

In this excerpt, the motivating theme, rather than inequality, hinges around "innovation." Although innovation was not explicitly defined, throughout the 1995 guidelines, FIPSE refers to key innovation foci including technological change, engaged pedagogy, and models for measuring student learning, foci which align to markers of organizational legitimacy in the broader postsecondary field and operate without reference to inequality concerns. Instead, the guidelines urge applicants to amplify educational strengths in which the U.S. was already,

[5] Between 1995-2000 and 2003-2005 there were one to three references to diversity or "gaps" among racially minoritized populations. Between 2001-2002 and 2006-2001 there were no specific references to race, but some mention of other "high need" populations. Prior to 2014, none of these references were either a competitive or absolute priority (see online Appendix 1).

[6] 1995 FIPSE Comprehensive Program Grant Guidelines, page 1

purportedly, the world leader. This trend was further confirmed in interviews with former program officers who report FIPSE's purpose in this period as providing the "venture capital" to the field for "creativity and experimentation."[7]

FIPSE's 1995 guidelines outlined eight invitational priorities. According to federal regulations, an invitational priority signals a general interest but is neither a preference (a "competitive-preference priority") nor a requirement (an "absolute priority") for a winning grant. Only *one* of the eight priorities refers to a target population:

> FIPSE wants to support new ways of insuring equal access to postsecondary education, [but a]ccess is not meaningful unless students have a chance at real success… especially for low-income and underrepresented minority students.[8]

In this document, FIPSE gestured toward college access and success goals with reference to minoritized target populations. This excerpt illustrates that inequality concerns were not excluded from the agency's frame. However, identity-specific elements were positioned as one of multiple (eight), optional priorities, the rest of which omit any reference to inequality, focusing instead on values such as "learning quality" or "technological advancement and innovation." Indeed, prior to FITW, equity references, when present, never escalate beyond a single invitational interest. Years later, in 2006, FIPSE's equity-evasive framing persisted:

> If you embark upon a funded grant project… keep in mind that the project may not…achieve significant impact nationally for six to eight years. Changes such as the dramatic rise of information technology, the increasing diversity of postsecondary learners, the renewed demand for accountability, or the rise in competition among

[7] These interviews come from a dataset comprised of 28, one-hour interviews with current (at the time) and former FIPSE staff in the summer and fall of 2017. A manuscript from this dataset is currently in preparation. We reference these data to note convergence of the archival data with concurrent actor retellings.
[8] 1995 FIPSE Comprehensive Program Grant Guidelines, page 4

> postsecondary providers are powerful enough to shape the immediate future... We urge you to anticipate these dynamic forces… to develop bold new project ideas….[9]

In this text, FIPSE makes a passing reference—this time simply to "increasing diversity"—to diversity, which is the only such reference in a list of invitational priorities. This 2006 excerpt, as a continuation of the 1995 frame, demonstrates that FIPSE theorized a set of social problems only marginally engaged with reimagining institutional arrangements around issues of race, class, or identity. Indeed, this consistent frame did not obligate the agency to interpret or carry out grantmaking as a way to direct resources or solutions to minoritized organizations or students.

A New, Equity-Conscious Frame Emerges. In post-2013 documents, a new frame emerged that placed minoritized populations at the center of FIPSE's prognostic and diagnostic frame. At the initiation of FITW, named inequalities drive the agency's argument to the field. FIPSE articulated its purpose not as a general interest in innovation to advance American interests but rather through a distinct, neoliberal concern for national economic well-being for which college completion is a proxy:

> The President has set a clear goal for the nation's education system. By 2020 the United States will once again lead the world in the proportion of its citizens holding college degrees or other postsecondary credentials.[10]

This articulation included an appeal to international competitiveness embodied in a goal to "lead the world." The 2015 guidelines drew out the reasoning underlying the president's rhetoric, explaining:

> Earning a postsecondary degree…is a prerequisite for the growing jobs of the new

[9] 2006 FIPSE Comprehensive Program Grant Guidelines, page 7
[10] 2014 FIPSE FITW Grant Guidelines, page 28,495 Federal Register, Vol. 79,

> economy and the clearest pathway to the middle class…jobs requiring education beyond a high school diploma will grow more rapidly than employment in jobs that do not.[11]

In the guidelines that followed FIPSE's call to action for economic competitiveness, the agency structured its program via five priorities—now absolute rather than invitational:

> I) Increasing Access and Completion for Underrepresented, Underprepared, and Low-Income Students [(UULIS)]. II) Increasing Community College Transfer Rates to Four-year Colleges for [UULIS]. III) Increasing Enrollment and Completion of [UULIS]… [STEM] Degree and Certificate Programs. IV) Reducing Time to Completion, Especially for [UULIS]. V) Improving College Affordability, Especially for [UULIS].[12]

FIPSE led each of its five priorities with a mandate to attend to benefits for underrepresented, underprepared, or low-income students. These mandates produced a sharp contrast to FIPSE's passing references before FITW to increasing diversity in postsecondary education or to underserved student success. Using this structure, FIPSE, in effect, required applicants to develop equity-conscious intervention strategies for minoritized student benefit.

In addition to deploying equity as a structural foundation for its grant guidelines, FIPSE treated references to underrepresentation in a qualitatively different way. First, the agency developed its equity arguments with greater specificity throughout the text by naming specific racial identities as underrepresented in the first several pages of the grant guidelines ("Black," "Native," "Hispanic," or more generally "minorities") and providing income thresholds with which applicants were to calculate their low-income student enrollments. Indeed, while FIPSE did not set specific eligibility thresholds (e.g., applicants *must* serve a particular percentage of minoritized or low-income students to apply), the guidelines now required all applicants to report

[11] 2015 FIPSE FITW Grant Guidelines, page 27,036 Federal Register, Vol. 80, No. 90
[12] 2014 FIPSE FITW Grant Guidelines, Federal Register, Vol. 79.

on their student demographics *and* to qualitatively describe how the proposed project would specifically serve minoritized students. Moreover, the agency detailed its policy stance. For example, in FIPSE's description of "Absolute Priority I" the agency explained:

> The proportion of Americans earning postsecondary credentials is unacceptably low… We must both increase the number of low-income, underprepared, or underrepresented students enrolling in [and completing] postsecondary education.

Taken together, these features of FIPSE's grant guidelines communicated to potential applicants FIPSE's stance on 1) why these populations matter in service to economic thriving; 2) how systemic, educational practices and structures have produced these outcomes over time; and 3) how organizations that serve minoritized students are central to the enacted theory of change. Post-FITW, FIPSE's move to name a problem, identify its source, and specify a necessary change are a precursor to how the frame emerges in the organization of the rest of the text. This new frame conveyed to the field that FIPSE is motivated by a concern for addressing disproportionate educational success with repeated references to race or "underserved"-ness, as well as other minoritized categories.

The post-FITW texts argue for service to minoritized groups by first appealing to a specific concern: American economic competitiveness. In the post-FITW texts, the agency argues that demographically, the nation will never achieve its former level of thriving if the success of minoritized students is not drastically improved. In doing so, specific organizational types—community colleges and those that predominantly serve minoritized students—are cited throughout the guideline text as valuable. FIPSE's inequality frame changed abruptly under FITW, moving from an equity-evasive to an equity-conscious approach by specifically problematizing a racialized distribution of benefits.

The Frame-Enactment Bundle. The shift in FIPSE's inequality frame corresponded to

transformations in FIPSE's frame enactment. Summaries of the frame-enactment bundles for each period are represented in Figures 2 and 3. The text in the boxes on the left-hand side of both figures display the three components of the policy's racial frame (comprised of target beneficiaries, diagnosis, and prognosis). These frames are linked to the boxes on the right-hand side of each figure which contain descriptions of the policy's enactment (comprised of the policy's construction of restrictiveness, funding generosity, accountability/surveillance, and metrics). In the equity-conscious condition, FIPSE's grant strategy changed from a flexible invitation to propose multiple types of innovation to an invitation to test a limited menu of educational remediation tactics. Critical enactment elements shifted as demonstrated in the right-most boxes of both figures, favoring increased accountability and surveillance demands, increased prescriptiveness in terms of how FIPSE dictated its preferences to the field, and a decrease in the number of potential beneficiaries.

FIPSE's coupling of an equity-conscious frame with a novel emphasis on causal performance metrics and more restrictive design standards is crucial to understanding the impact of the frame-enactment bundle. Nowhere in the pre-FITW text is there a demonstrated emphasis on, or guidance relevant to, requirements for empirical evidence or evaluation methods. Instead, we confirm in congressional records that FIPSE primarily based its reports of program efficacy to Congress on its own data collection regarding "institutionalization" and "dissemination"—in other words, the degree to which programs became permanent and how they spread to other organizations, a process expected to take up to "six to eight years." By contrast, FIPSE's post-FITW grant guidelines mandate strict and short-term evidence for all proposed interventions and requirements for research-driven design and rigorous evaluation planning:

> *Quality of Project Evaluation*: ... The extent to which the methods of evaluation will… produce evidence about the project's effectiveness that would meet the What Works

> Clearinghouse Evidence [WWCE] Standards without reservations… **Note:** Successful applications will be those that have an evaluation design that has the potential to meet the WWCE Standards without reservations…Finally, applicants should also address whether the person or firm conducting the independent evaluation… has experience in the design and management of evaluations designed to meet WWCE Standards.[13]

FIPSE provided specific, technical metrics to which winning projects must attend, metrics which would be measured by a panel of contracted evaluation experts. These metrics were largely focused on immediate market-based outcomes like the economic returns of college completion measured at the level of the individual student. Ultimately these metrics inextricably coupled service to minoritized communities with standards for experimental or quasi-experimental evaluation methods on student-level rather than system-level outcomes.

On one hand, this increase in surveillance could signal FIPSE's seriousness about making a difference for minoritized students. On the other hand, and not mutually exclusive, this increase in surveillance under the FITW framing also elaborates the implementation chain of the grants—that is, expands the number of people and bureaucratic burdens involved in both applying for and administering benefits. In other words, more highly trained applicants and expensive processes, both of which are characteristic of the infrastructure of white-serving organizations, are required inputs for successful grant proposals; they are also racialized administrative burdens (Ray et al., 2020). FIPSE's newly complexified implementation chain also necessitated the concentration of funds in fewer institutions: each grant had to be larger, with fewer grants made, to pay for evaluation and surveillance procedures (not for expanded student services) by professionals who are predominantly white (Li & Koedel, 2017).

[13] 2015 FIPSE FITW Grant Guidelines, page 27,063-4 Federal Register, Vol. 80, No. 90.

In the pre-FITW era, FIPSE guidelines did not place restrictions on proposed projects, opting instead to let the field shape the direction of innovation from within. Under FITW, FIPSE dictated the best ideas via a prescriptive set of intervention categories. The agency invited applicants to test rather than generate strategies—a stark contrast to FIPSE's "field-driven" method of practitioner-informed systemic change under pre-FITW, equity-evasive conditions. When resource distributions expanded to minoritized populations, surveillance and restrictions increased. Not only did FITW limit applicants' agency, but it shifted the educational purpose from encouraging expansive frameworks for learning to remedial strategies intended to bridge individual minoritized students to existing educational systems.

The Causal Effect of the FITW Frame-Enactment Bundle on the Distribution of Resources

The documented shift in FIPSE's frame-enactment bundle provides a natural experiment demonstrating the effect of this bundle on resource distribution. First, we examine the relationship between the FITW frame-enactment change and awards to institutions with a high proportion of minoritized students. These findings are summarized in Table 4. We operationalize the institutional characteristic in six ways, using dummy variables for whether 1) an institution is a general MSI, which we define, as FIPSE did under FITW, as institutions that serve 50 percent or more of enrolled students are underrepresented minorities (Model 1)[14]; 2) an institution is a historically minority serving institution (HMSI), i.e., an HBCU or Tribal college (Model 2); 3) an institution is in the top two quintiles within its sector (e.g., public two-year college, private research university) for serving Pell-grant students (Model 3); 4) an institution is in the top two

[14] There are multiple parameters that may determine an MSI designation according to the DOE. These include historically established categories (recognized in this paper as HMSIs) as well as enrollment-based measures (e.g., Hispanic-Serving Institutions). In addition, there is a more general "minority institution" category that is optionally invoked by federal programs determined by a 50% threshold for underrepresented minority student enrollment. All MSI types were encouraged to apply during FIPSE's FITW grant solicitation cycles. We chose to test the most inclusive category, as well as continuous, enrollment-based variables, as these capture within them the general trends occurring in other types, including HSIs.

quintiles in enrollment of Black students within its sector (Model 4); and 5) an institution is in the top two quintiles in enrollment of underrepresented[15] students within its sector (Model 5).

Causal Estimates: Student Population Measures. Results reported in Table 4 partially support Hypotheses 1 and 2 regarding changes in student populations at funded colleges. The pre-trends demonstrate that prior to FITW, FIPSE was less likely to award funds to institutions that serve higher proportions of minoritized students on all racial measures, including whether or not an institution was an MSI (based on enrollments) (b=-14,884, p<0.01), an HMSI (b=-105,900, p<0.01), a high-Pell serving institution (b=-24,967, p<0.01), a high-Black serving institution (b=-39,369, p<0.01), or a high-URM serving institution(b=-56,084, p<0.01), and the scaled Pell grant award per student as a proxy for service to low-income students (b=-22, p<0.01). Interpreting these coefficients, on average, an MSI received an estimated $14,884 less in FIPSE funds than a non-MSI in the years prior to the policy change relative to SSS.

Consistent with Hypothesis 2, FITW had a significant effect on grants to colleges that serve minoritized populations (underrepresented minority and poor students) as measured by average grant awards to MSIs (b = 12,129, p<0.01), high-Pell serving institutions (b=13,872, p<0.01), and high-URM serving institutions (b=49,412, p<0.01). High-Black serving institutions (b=9,786*)* and HMSIs (b=23,837) also saw an increase in the post-period at FIPSE relative to SSS, but this change was smaller in relative magnitude to their pre-period disadvantage and not statistically significant. Figure 4 illustrates the pre-trends and causal effects of the FITW change on benefits awarded to MSIs and high-Pell serving institutions relative to their counterparts (i.e., non-MSIs and low-Pell institutions). This figure demonstrates that FIPSE consistently awarded less funding to MSIs relative to non-MSIs than SSS and that both FIPSE and SSS awards to

[15] The term “underrepresented minorities” is comprised of students who identify as Black, Indigenous, Alaskan Native, Pacific-Islander, or Latinx.

MSIs and high-Pell institutions were trending downward prior to the policy change.

Causal Estimates: Organization-Level Measures. In this section we measure other organizational parameters including measures of capacity like endowment and instructional spending or prestige measures like organizational type or USN rankings, finding that FIPSE's funding pre-trends are largely undisrupted. These analyses are counterintuitive: FIPSE's historic tendency to fund higher prestige, higher capacity institutions that serve substantially less minoritized students does not change. In Table 5, we analyze the relationship between FITW and awards to organizations with higher prestige and capacity. We operationalize prestige and capacity in six ways: 1) whether the organization is a doctoral-granting university (Model 7), 2) whether the organization is classified as a Research 1 doctoral granting university in that year according to Carnegie Classifications (Model 8), 3) whether an institution has ever been in the USN Top 100 colleges and universities (Model 9), 4) whether the organizations is classified as a community college (Model 10), and 5) a dummy variable for whether an institution is in the top quintile for endowment wealth within its sector (Model 11).

Under Hypothesis 1, we predict that prior to FITW, FIPSE would favor higher prestige and better resourced organizations. The results provide support for this hypothesis, showing significant correlations in favor of funding research organizations (measured by R1 doctoral-granting status) (b= 51,185, p<0.01) and more prestigious (measured by USN Top 100 rankings) (b= 46,045, p<0.01). Similarly, pre-trends show a significant, negative relationship between community colleges (b=-42,044, p<0.01) and FIPSE grant dollars. Measures for high-institutional capacity, including high endowment wealth (b= 10,024, p<0.01) also reflect this preference for highly resourced organizations.[16]

[16] This preference for highly resourced organizations is consistent when operationalized using instructional spending per student as an alternative specification.

Surprisingly, while resource allocation in favor of minoritized communities gained traction post-FITW compared to SSS, the advantages awarded to institutions with higher prestige and capacity as measured by R1, doctoral-granting, endowment wealth, and instructional spending are not significantly changed by FITW, although all show descriptive funding increases. FIPSE's preference for higher-capacity institutions is also exacerbated at the most prestigious and well-resourced institutions: USN Top 100 schools (b=25,829, p<0.1). Figure 6 demonstrates that the magnitude of relative FIPSE benefits to higher-prestige organizations varies across time periods and is net-positive and significantly higher than SSS in both pre- and post-periods. In contrast, low-prestige public two-year colleges, as illustrated in Figure 5, are at times at a net-negative relative to their higher-prestige counterparts and significantly lower than SSS in both pre- and post-periods. Similarly, the pre-trend showing a negative relationship between public two-years and FIPSE funds (b=-24,071, p<.01) is, in fact, exacerbated by FITW.

Causal Estimates: Interaction of Organization- and Student-Level Measures. Though the predicted change in benefits to general MSIs using multiple enrollment measures bore out in the data, the predicted change for historical categories like HBCUs and Tribal colleges did not, nor did the predicted change in the prestige and capacity of funded organizations. This is counterintuitive. Less-prestigious, low-endowment, and low-instructional spending colleges in U.S. postsecondary education serve a disproportionately high share of minoritized students (see online Appendix 2). To better understand this contradiction, we ran our regression model again, this time limiting the sample to MSIs to interrogate the heterogenous effects of the FITW treatment on different types of MSIs. By disaggregating these organizations into smaller cells, we lose the statistical power to see significant results in the triple interaction. However, the trends illustrated in Figure 7 (also see online Appendix 3) demonstrate that while associate-

granting MSIs and all other MSIs see limited, negative shifts in their funding after FITW, MSI-doctoral granting universities increase sharply in the post-period above and beyond the control program. This closer analysis suggests the primary mechanism through which MSIs saw their increased advantage: via doctoral granting organizations and *not* among community colleges, and non-doctoral HBCUs or Tribal colleges. This finding and the general persistence in organizational prestige and capacity among FIPSE grantees in the post-period is counterintuitive: the effect in favor of MSIs is driven by the types of organizations that, overall, serve the lowest proportion of poor and minoritized students.

Robustness, Limitations, and Alternative Explanations

Our results indicate that FITW significantly increased distribution to a subset of organizations serving minoritized students but did not diminish the greater benefits awarded to organizations with higher levels of prestige and capacity. One can imagine a scenario in which FIPSE had always served the same set of organizations, but only after FITW did organizations achieve MSI designation. To test this, we created a measure of MSI status that is stable from 2010 through 2015 using the 2010 share of minority students enrolled and re-estimated our main model. Using a stable identifier does not alter the significance or direction of the results (analyses available upon request). Another concern with our model could be the pause in FIPSE funding in 2012 and 2013. Our standard model drops out 2012 and 2013 at SSS, thus creating a balanced panel of observations. However, we also ran this model with an unbalanced panel including 2012 and 2013 data from SSS to test the sensitivity of our results. Although this model is likely to attenuate the study's results, we find the resulting causal coefficients do not substantively differ in either direction or magnitude (see the online Appendix 4-6). Finally, in the context of our larger study, some interviewees noted that Congress' role in influencing grantee

selection was also diminished in the post period. While Congress was ostensibly bound by the same frame-enactment restrictions as FIPSE staff, it is reasonable to ask if this process change, rather than the bundle, explains the effect. To check this, we re-ran analyses dropping out congressionally directed grants. The same trends persist, albeit with fewer observations (analyses available upon request). We use the model with all observations because it is the most complete representation of FIPSE's activity, and grantees that received congressionally directed funds are otherwise removed from the applicant pool, which would bias ensuing analyses.

Discussion

Today's postsecondary grantmakers almost ubiquitously claim to fund work toward greater equity. However, there are no clear boundaries around what "equity" is, who it is for, and how these definitions matter to whether racial equity campaigns achieve meaningful change or more of the same. While past work has offered insights as to how inequity persists and even escalates within the postsecondary domain via processes of adaptation and exclusion (e.g., Alon, 2009), the drivers underlying such escalation have often been studied at the individual rather than the organizational level. This paper sheds light on the process of inequitable adaptation via racialized organizations and embedded mechanisms of institutionalization.

Our statistical analysis demonstrates that FITW had its intended effect on student-level target metrics—more students of color and poor students stood to benefit from this grant program than in FIPSE's prior years. However intuitive, contextualizing this finding is critical. FIPSE was *always* tasked with addressing inequalities through institutional improvement, albeit via an equity-evasive lens. Yet, the organizations predominantly serving these populations were at a disadvantage in their likelihood to receive FIPSE funding during the two decades prior to FITW. This finding lends descriptive credence to the argument that frame-enactment bundles

that do not problematize the racial status quo will uphold it, even if they gesture at equality.

However, our deeper analysis challenges any treatment of FIPSE's equity-conscious frame-enactment bundle as disruptive to racialization. FIPSE persisted in its funding preference to more prestigious and resourced organizations that correlate with white organizational types. The resources and infrastructure necessary to fulfilling FIPSE's new research and accountability requirements were highly correlated with colleges' prestige and historically white features. This finding illuminates one mechanism by which an organization may neutralize a frame's disruptive potential by creating other, ostensibly neutral modes of reproduction that maintain and even deepen the durability of racialized resource distribution. By deepening durability, we mean that under FIPSE's equity-evasive regime the distribution of resources to white, prestigious colleges occurred tacitly under meritocratic ideology that decoupled gestures at equity work from organizational routines or formal rules. In the new, equity-conscious regime, evidence and surveillance logics created acceptable and explicit rules, metrics, and routines supporting the outsized delivery of resources to white organizational types.

In terms of service to minoritized populations, our findings are counterintuitive; grantees were not representative of the marginalized colleges that serve most minoritized students nor are they the types of institutions likely to upset the racialized and settler colonial status quo. We thus conclude that this equity-conscious policy did not simply shift funds to the least advantaged students at the institutions that predominantly and historically serve them (i.e., community colleges, HBCUs, Tribal colleges). Rather, a particular subset of organizations that enroll minoritized students received preference—those with the strongest connections to whiteness as a credential. By contrast, most broad-access MSIs have—by political design—long been overworked and under-resourced. Although nuanced, it is critical in higher education to

understand how equity campaigns may inadvertently maintain the marginalization of this class of institutions and the students they serve. We thus demonstrate how racialized organizations perpetuate limitations on the resourcing and agency of minoritized populations, even as they motion toward change.

Giving FIPSE's policy enactment further attention, content analysis surfaced how, in earlier eras, when FIPSE selected white and well-resourced organizations, guidelines focused on institutional transformation in favor of liberal conceptions of deep student learning, pedagogical experimentation, civic engagement, and global knowledge. Under equity-evasive conditions, applicants were expected to pilot new, untested solutions as part of the drive for innovation. These expansive values did not withstand the shift toward equity-consciousness. Instead, learning and innovation priorities were eclipsed in grant guidelines in favor of attention to economic contributions and remedial interventions intended to fix students, not institutions. FIPSE's shift from institutional to individual remediation is critical and deserves attention in future work. Moreover, this neoliberal turn occurred in tandem with FIPSE's shift from innovation to scientific objectivity via accountability metrics as a form of legitimacy. Taken together, FIPSE's post-2013 enactment required the agency to make fewer grants but in larger amounts than previous years to fund an expensive implementation chain. Critically, the technical requirements of this implementation chain specifically demanded a narrow class of evaluation scientists. Not only are such experts more plentiful and resourced at research universities, but they are demographically whiter than an already white professorate (Li & Koedel 2017).

In institutionalization parlance, instead of diminishing sources of persistence that reproduce inequities, FITW shifted the modes of reproduction. Only by examining this puzzle through our combination of lenses—racialized organizations and institutionalization—can we

see how, as FIPSE challenged one mode of reproduction via its inequality frame, it deepened others via its enactment that left the larger, field-level terms of racialization unchanged. While the demographics of enrolled students at funded institutions changed, FIPSE persisted in its distribution of resources to whiter and more prestigious organizational types, now with heightened surveillance and restricted, remediation-focused designs for minoritized students. In short, FITW did not result in an unqualified response favoring non-white organizations. FIPSE continued to preference well-resourced organizational types whose success is determined by how they rank against the most elite (and white) universities even as they leverage minoritized enrollments in the pursuit of grant funding. These rankings—as metrics—preserve stratification, giving the funded organizational class little to no incentive for upending the field's racial hierarchy and stratifying practices (Espeland & Sauder, 2016).

We can make sense of FIPSE's counterintuitive evolution by returning to tenets of racialized organizations as modes of reproduction (see Figure 1). As FIPSE employed a frame that weakened the legitimation of greater resource distribution to white organizations (tenet 2), its enactment diminished the relative agency afforded to those organizations by deploying whiteness as a credential for competing for grant funds (tenet 3) and by creating routines that more tightly couple practice to formal criteria (tenet 4). Under the new condition, a traditional source of legitimacy among academic elites—quantitative scientific evaluation of interventions on individuals of color—begets a new mode of reproduction that protects the preference for higher-ranked and resourced colleges and universities by using whiteness as a credential. And similarly, rather than emphasizing learning and institutional transformation, FIPSE's enactment emphasized individual-level intervention built on assumptions of student deficits as the driver of postsecondary inequity. This enactment codified and deepened modes of reproduction that limit

the relative agency of minoritized organizations and students and the types of education they are expected to pursue. We mark this as the process of institutionalizing inequity anew.

Implications & Conclusion

This paper contributes to theoretical understandings of racialization in higher education, as well as matters of policy and practice. Beginning with the latter, our findings challenge funders—both federal and private—to give renewed attention to how their ontological attunements toward scientific rigor, the purpose of higher education, and "best" practices for funding postsecondary projects and organizations may reinscribe the very inequities they set out to diminish. Such re-inscription occurs when grantmakers center inequality but fail to problematize—or perhaps even understand—racialization itself as a target for reform. For example, the standards set by the What Works Clearinghouse—a pillar of FIPSE's new mechanisms for racialization—and the funding criteria of the Institute for Education Sciences have hardened definitions of rigor and intervention around hegemonic understandings of student-level intervention and causal measurement (Towne & Shavelson, 2002). However, these and other field-level norms have material and reproductive impacts on core processes of racialization via the legitimation of inequitable resource distribution and the use of whiteness as a credential.

This study also sheds light on how funders can either create or restrict the space for students to (freedom) dream (Kelley, 2002) as part of their educational experience. Even if both MSI and white-serving institutions receive equal grant funding, racialization can be (re)produced when expansive opportunities—e.g., building institutional capacity to support engaged pedagogy, democratic and civic engagement, or global learning—are limited to white organizations and the students within them. Further, concentrating programs and policies that center remedial or workforce-oriented possibilities at MSIs not only reduces the scope of the

student experience, but systematically (re)creates settler colonial hierarchies and the racialized connotation that relegates MSIs to a "lesser" organizational category (see, e.g., Garcia, 2018; Grande, 2018). Funders and researchers must reimagine policy ontologies—embedded in frame-enactment bundles—that create the space for some to dream and others to assimilate. Such reimagination may open grantmakers up to new ways of funding minoritized students and organizations to center commitments to Indigenous and Black life, agency, joy, creativity, and engaged learning. Congruent with tenets of equity-mindedness (Bensimon & Malcom, 2012), we conclude that race- or equity-consciousness is insufficient for racial transformation if it remains bound to deficit-based assumptions about individuals or organizations.

This paper also offers contributions back to our original puzzle: how can we better understand the role of racialized organizations in maintaining postsecondary inequity, even in the face of ostensive challenges? We found that FIPSE's frame-enactment bundle evolved in a one-step-forward-two-steps-back dance endemic to sequences of racial progress and retrenchment. We thus underscore the need for analytic attention to two components of equity campaigns: 1) Whether and how modes of reproduction that link racialized schemas and resources are diminished or not by equity projects, and 2) Institutionalization as a process in which new modes of reproduction may develop as existing modes are diminished. FIPSE's adopted frame challenged one mode of reproduction—the legitimacy of equity-evasive funding that benefits white organizations. FIPSE's ensuing enactment, however, more deeply institutionalized the racialized connection between schemas and resources through the creation of new routines and metrics (i.e., modes of reproduction) toward racialized ends. These shifts reduced the potential of FITW as an equity project by placing barriers to entry for marginalized organizational types and a restrictive, remedial scope around educational projects. If FIPSE's goal was to reach more

minoritized students, then FITW was a success. If, on the other hand, the goal was to dismantle systemic racism or settler colonial funding practices, then FITW failed. This distinction brings clarity to how variation in frames and their enactments can affect outcomes, while preserving the scaffolding of a racialized field. This finding, when combined with our analytic lens is portable across educational as well as other social policy domains. Moreover, using a neo-institutional lens, we speak to how narratives of racial progress can perniciously end as stories of racial retrenchment by institutionalizing inequity anew.

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Tables

Table 1.
FIPSE's & SSS's grantmaking 1998-2015.

	Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE)			TRiO Student Support Services (SSS)		
	Grants Awarded	Average Grant Size (Dollars)	Total Funds Distributed (Dollars)	Grants Awarded	Average Grant Size (Dollars)	Total Funds Distributed (Dollars)
1998	113	211,959	23,950,000	797	215,946	171,893,687
1999	40	294,695	11,790,000	755	223,432	168,700,000
2000	142	285,474	40,540,000	689	230,783	159,000,000
2001	118	338,028	39,890,000	803	37,463	24,800,000
2002	95	369,654	35,120,000	797	276,302	219,400,000
2003	79	338,264	26,720,000	822	281,068	231,000,000
2004	414	373,745	154,700,000	827	280,788	232,200,000
2005	423	344,090	145,600,000	861	286,490	246,400,000
2006	75	409,879	30,740,000	874	284,884	249,000,000
2007	64	387,798	24,820,000	859	285,561	245,300,000
2008	380	297,122	112,900,000	851	299,132	254,600,000
2009	433	280,782	121,600,000	855	298,345	255,100,000
2010	400	395,391	158,200,000	888	294,365	261,400,000
2011	37	409,889	15,170,000	883	283,992	250,800,000
2012	-	-	-	889	285,190	253,500,000
2013	-	-	-	884	268,694	237,500,000
2014	28	2,787,000	78,030,000	887	282,599	250,700,000
2015	32	2,108,000	67,460,000	886	277,288	245,700,000

Note. FIPSE data sourced from the now-defunct comprehensive database hosted by FIPSE on the US Department of Education's website. TRiO SSS data sourced from .csv files posted to the U.S. Department of Education's website. FIPSE did not issue new grant guidelines in 2012-2013 as it reworked its grantmaking framework. Some of the grants awarded in a given year go to the same institutions, but for the most part grants-per-year give an estimate of the number of recipient institutions.

Table 2.
Inequality frame coding definitions.

Frame	Definition	Relationship to Inequality
Equity-Evasive	Frames normalize institutionalized processes of unequal distribution or achievement via an underlying ideological ontology (e.g., meritocracy); may present as color-blind or even multicultural as frames celebrate diversity within organizations. This frame is aligned with Bonilla Silva's (2013) description of core colorblind ideologies: 1) Abstract liberalism: Uses ideas associated with political liberalist (e.g., equal opportunity) and economic liberalism (individualism, choice) in an abstract manner to explain racial matters. 2) Naturalization: Allows whites to explain away racial phenomena by suggesting they are natural occurrences (e.g., segregation as natural because people gravitate towards like people). 3) Cultural racism: Relies on culturally based arguments such as "Mexicans do not put much emphasis on education" to explain the standing of minorities in society. 4) Minimization: Suggests discrimination is no longer a central factor affecting minorities. (e.g., it is better now than in the past) As well as: 1) Multiculturalism: Acknowledges and even celebrates diversity across "all" identity dimensions, but does not overtly problematize racial inequality or necessitate systemic remediation.	Does not overtly problematize patterns of inequality in resource, agency, or power distribution.
Equity-Conscious	Frames problematize inequalities as socio-politically constructed and contingent rather than as taken-for-granted. Frames thus center the primacy of race and other minoritized identities in the U.S. context and emphasizes the need for specific modes of redress to achieve social equity.	Overtly problematizes patterns of inequality in resource, agency or power distribution.

Table 3.

Means and Standard Deviation for organizational characteristics (independent variables) before and after FITW.

	All Colleges & Universities				FIPSE Grantees				SSS Grantees			
	Pre-FITW (1998/99-2011/12)		Post-FITW (2014/5-2015/6)		Post-FITW (2014/5-2015/6)		Post-FITW (2014/5-2015/6)		Post-FITW (2014/5-2015/6)		Post-FITW (2014/5-2015/6)	
Mission and capacity variables	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd
US News Top 100 School	0.0243	0.154	0.024	0.153	0.0777	0.268	0.111	0.317	0.028	0.165	0.026	0.159
Research 1 Universities	0.0277	0.164	0.0271	0.162	0.129	0.335	0.195	0.399	0.0689	0.253	0.0668	0.25
Doctoral granting	0.0364	0.187	0.0404	0.197	0.266	0.442	0.27	0.447	0.141	0.348	0.159	0.366
Community Colleges	0.159	0.366	0.141	0.348	0.245	0.43	0.226	0.422	0.479	0.5	0.475	0.5
Population variables	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd	mean	sd
MSI	0.218	0.413	0.335	0.472	0.0889	0.285	0.302	0.463	0.176	0.381	0.283	0.451
HMSI	0.0167	0.128	0.0167	0.128	0.0481	0.214	0.0794	0.272	0.0784	0.269	0.0632	0.243
Pell Grant Scaled Per Student	2,274	3,230	2,511	2,832	1,174	836.4	1,524	1,070	1,464	931	1,587	766.3
Instruction Scaled Per Student	13,427	80,506	15,132	87,118	10,348	23,125	13,474	25,712	6,567	11,130	7,958	13,589
Endowment Scaled Per Student	118,605	1,980,000	190,509	3,699,000	41,521	204,100	70,753	321,257	11,986	53,832	16,472	60,909
Proportion Black Student Enrollment	0.207	0.756	0.181	0.217	0.136	0.208	0.176	0.227	0.161	0.235	0.146	0.203
Proportion URM Student Enrollment	0.392	1.459	0.38	0.282	0.242	0.263	0.326	0.251	0.31	0.285	0.344	0.254
Mean, Per-Year Institution Count*	8,893		8,110		8,893		8,110		8,893		8,110	

*The number of institutions represented in the IPEDS universe varies by year. The numbers in this table represent the mean per-year count in the relevant timeframe. However, the total number of institutions—some opening, closing or changing unique identifiers over time—for the pre-FITW period is 12,350 and in the post-FITW timeframe is 8,217.

Note. Unless otherwise specified, data are from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. Research 1, Doctoral, and Community College data from the Carnegie Classifications home page hosted by Indiana University. US News & World Reports rankings sourced from Andrew G. Reiter's "U.S. News & World Report Historical Liberal Arts College and University Rankings," available at: http://andyreiter.com/datasets. All data limited to the years 1998-2015. Dollar amounts converted to 2015 dollars. MSI = >50 percent URM enrollment; HMSI = HBCU or Tribal College; Pell Grant Scaled Per Student = Total Pell grant dollars scaled per FTE; Instruction Scaled Per Student = Reported instructional spending per full-time enrollment (FTE); Endowment Scaled Per Student = Reported endowment wealth per FTE. See Table 1 for total grants across these timeframes.

Table 4.

Effects of FITW on grant awards to organizations based on student demographics.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	"Org. Characteristic" Defined As:				
Outcome = Grant Award in Dollars	MSI (> 50% URM)	High Pell Inst.	HMSI	High Black Serving	High URM Serving
FIPSE Award (0/1)	-25762***	-17794***	-15984***	-85835***	-82401***
	(1312)	(1408)	(338)	(2759)	(2713)
Org. Characteristic	12883***	24529***	101270***	33785***	41905***
	(1048)	(1023)	(3751)	(4635)	(4274)
Post-2013 (0/1)	5370***	6668***	339	15466***	22151***
	(1714)	(1694)	(1327)	(5748)	(6559)
Post-2013 X Org. Characteristic	-4930**	-8732***	-22690*	16916	-15105
	(2473)	(2754)	(13770)	(21423)	(11212)
FIPSE Award X Post-2013	-7542***	-9585***	-8304***	-22729***	-30933***
	(1970)	(1945)	(1302)	(5556)	(7528)
Org. Characteristic X FIPSE Award	-14884***	-24974***	-105900***	-39369***	-56084***
	(1078)	(1120)	(4112)	(4858)	(4633)
Org. Char. X FIPSE X Post-2013	12129***	13421***	23387	9786	47941***
	(3227)	(3397)	(16286)	(25282)	(15741)
Constant	47044***	31824***	51741***	100670***	96601***
	(3882)	(3899)	(588)	(14135)	(14372)
Observations	202614	202614	202614	202614	202614
Sector FE*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time FE*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Standard Errors in parentheses clustered at the institution level

* $p < .1$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

Note. Difference-in-difference-in-differences regressions with year and sector (i.e., public, for-profit, private status) fixed effects, includes all institutions in the IPEDS universe for the years 1998-2015. MSI = >50 percent URM enrollment; HMSI = HBCU or Tribal College; High Pell Inst. = Institution in the top two quintiles by sector of Pell grant per student; High-Black Serving = Institution in the top two quintiles by sector in enrollment of Black students; Institution in the top two quintiles by sector in enrollment of URM students. All organization characteristics are dummy variables.

Table 5.

Effects of FITW on grant awards to organizations based on prestige or capacity.

	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
	"Org. Characteristic" Defined As:					
Outcome = Grant Award in Dollars	Doctoral	Research 1	US News Top 100	Community College	High Endowment	High Instruction
FIPSE Award (0/1)	-22242***	-21107***	-23274***	-13784***	-25985***	-40673***
	(868)	(924)	(974)	(875)	(1080)	(1579)
Org. Characteristic (0/1)	55011***	43052***	-15178***	59619***	-4872***	-15879***
	(5948)	(10296)	(4103)	(2969)	(1504)	(1456)
Post-2013 (0/1)	25132***	26231***	25524***	17663***	29118***	28043***
	(2187)	(2195)	(2454)	(2675)	(2786)	(3642)
Post-2013 X Org. Characteristic	-10408	-46070	-24299***	26895***	-12323**	-10722**
	(26423)	(34901)	(7353)	(5740)	(5279)	(4980)
FIPSE Award X Post-2013	-11664***	-12970***	-13777***	-7617**	-16033***	-14312***
	(2167)	(2678)	(2986)	(3320)	(2959)	(4443)
Org. Characteristic X FIPSE Award	10733	51185***	46045***	-42044***	10024***	32476***
	(7447)	(13375)	(5381)	(2258)	(1616)	(1719)
Org. Char. X FIPSE X Post-2013	-12064	30450	25829*	-24071***	7692	6658
	(31432)	(50505)	(13710)	(6890)	(6249)	(5900)
Constant	22512***	21925***	20908***	9911**	33058***	39555***
	(1133)	(1172)	(1165)	(4422)	(4027)	(4084)
Observations	119268	119268	119268	119268	119268	119268
Sector FE*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time FE*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Standard Errors in parentheses clustered at the institution level

* $p < .1$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

Note. Difference-in-difference-in-differences regressions with year and sector (i.e., public, private status) fixed effects, includes all institutions in the IPEDS universe, dropping for-profit institutions for whom endowment, Research 1, and US News Top 100 status do not apply, for the years 1998-2015. High Endow. Inst = Institution in the top quintile for endowment wealth within its sector; High Instruction Institution = Institution in the top quintile within a state for dollars spent per student on instructional costs.

Figures

Figure 1.
A model of racialized organizations' mechanisms, modes of reproduction, and outcomes

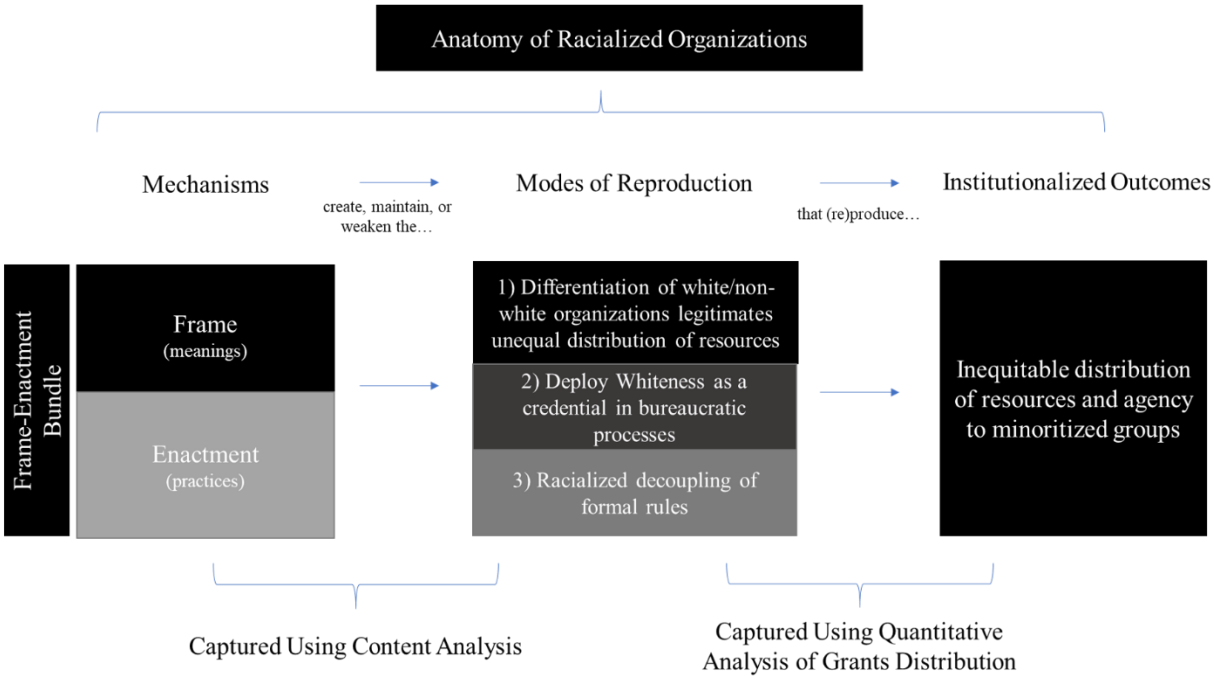


Figure 2.
FIPSE's Frame-Enactment Bundle 1995 – 2011 (Pre-FITW)

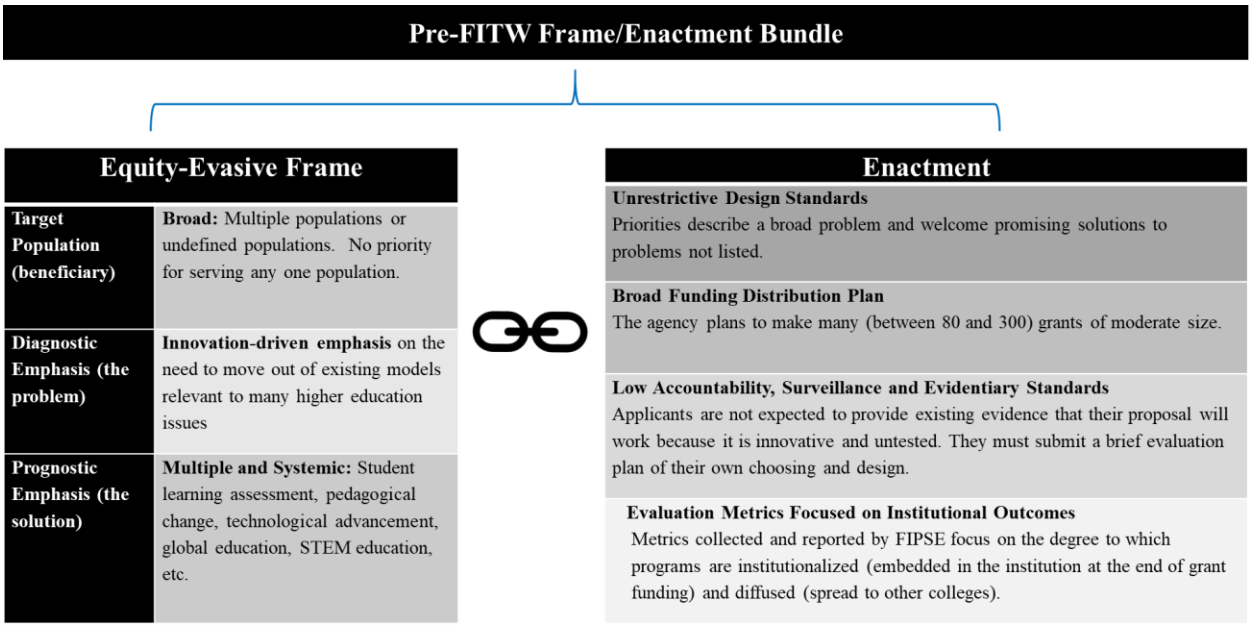


Figure 3.
FIPSE's Frame-Enactment Bundle 2014 – 2015 (Post-FITW)

Post-FITW Frame/Enactment Bundle

Equity-Conscious Frame	
Target Population (beneficiary)	**Narrow:** Specific marginalized, minority populations are emphasized frequently and are given funding preference.
Diagnostic Emphasis (the problem)	**A decline in national standing and economic competitiveness** due to lagging college completion which is a detriment to all Americans, and which requires more minorities to graduate college.
Prognostic Emphasis (the solution)	**Singular and Student Focused:** Highly specific tactics targeting student-level remediation.

Enactment

Restrictive Design Standards
Priorities each describe a single, categorical intervention type. Solutions to unlisted problems are not considered.

Broad Funding Distribution Plan
The agency plans to make only a few (between 30-70) grants of large size.

High accountability, Surveillance and Evidentiary Standards
Applicants are expected to provide robust, existing evidence that their proposal will work in the form of published literature or their own randomized control trials. They are required to submit a rigorous evaluation plan using either an RCT or quasi-experimental model that must be approved by the "What Works Clearinghouse."

Evaluation Metrics Focused on Individual Outcomes
Metrics required and reported by FIPSE measure intervention impacts on individual students using quasi-experimental or experimental methods

Figure 4.
The Effect of FITW Change on Grant Dollars Based on Student Population

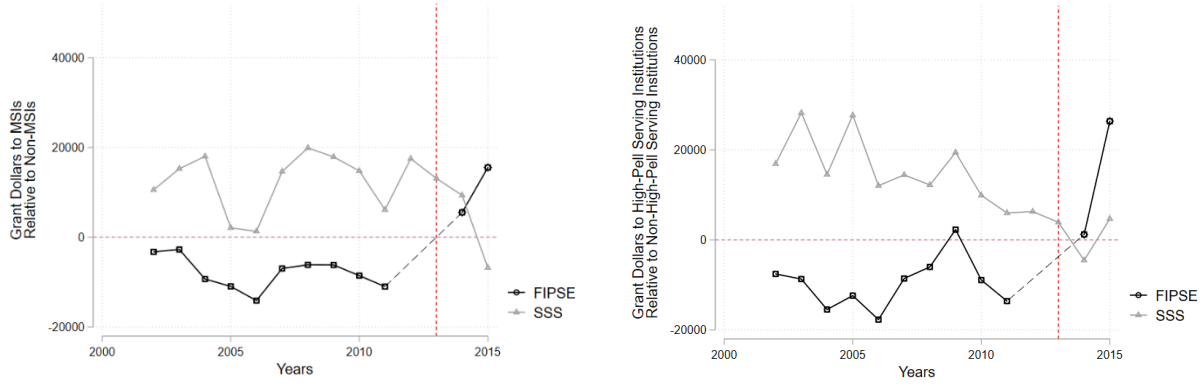


Figure 5.

The Effect of FITW Change on Grants Awarded to Low-Prestige/Low-Capacity Organizations

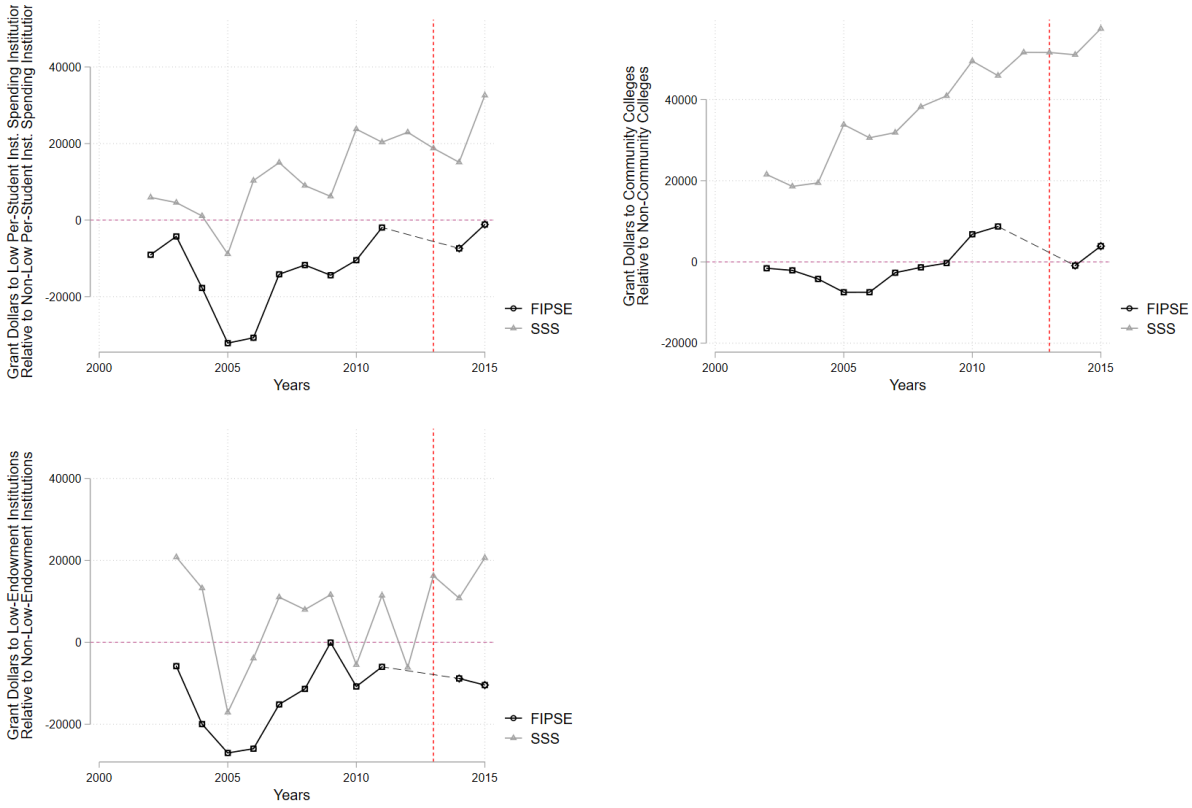


Figure 6.

The Effect of FITW Change on Grants Awarded to High-Prestige/High-Capacity Organizations

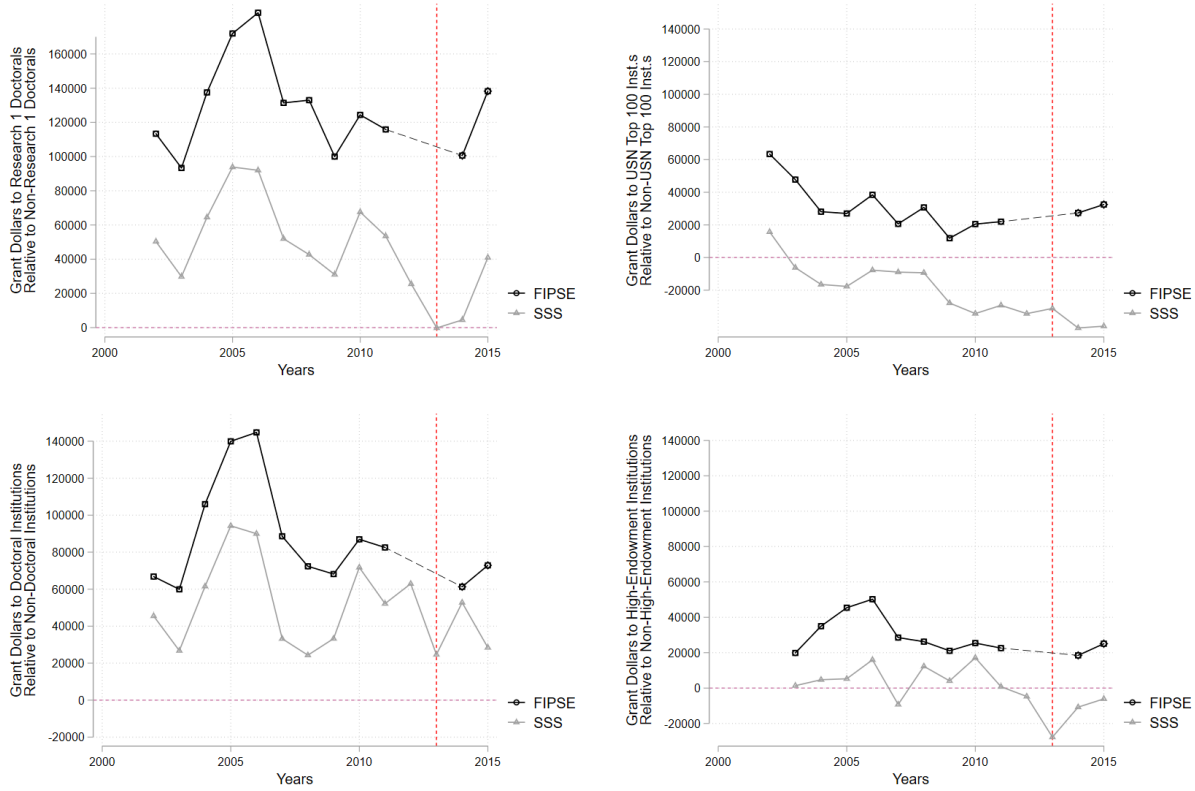
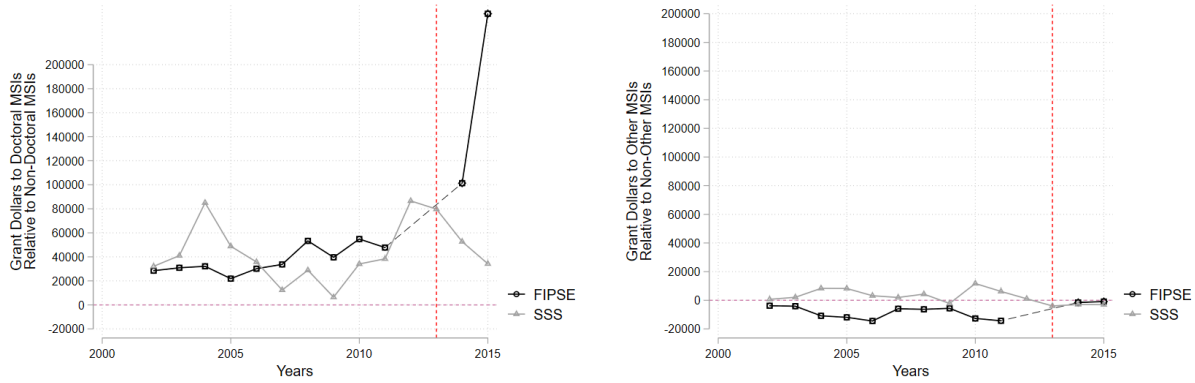
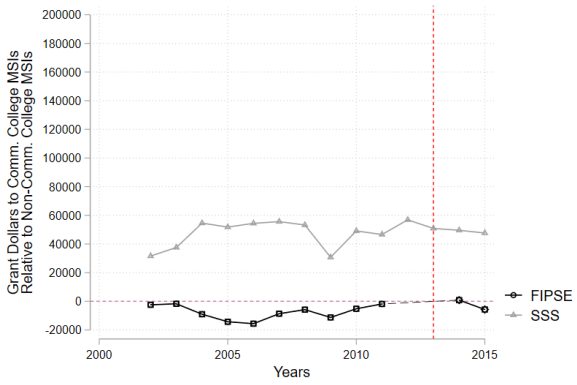


Figure 7.

The Effect of FITW Change on MSI's Disaggregated by Doctoral Universities, Associate Granting Colleges, and Other MSI Type




Grant Dollars to Comm. College MSIs
Relative to Non-Comm. College MSIs
200000
180000
160000
140000
120000
100000
80000
60000
40000
20000
0
-20000
2000
2005
2010
2015
Years
FIPSE
SSS