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# DESCRIPTIVE REPRESENTATION, REPRESENTATIVE BUREAUCRACY AND BILINGUAL EDUCATION POLICY: EXAMINING IMPLEMENTATION

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

# DESCRIPTIVE REPRESENTATION, REPRESENTATIVE BUREAUCRACY AND BILINGUAL EDUCATION POLICY: EXAMINING IMPLEMENTATION

In this study, I examine the factors that influence school districts' commitment to implement ESL (English as a Second Language) education in compliance with the federal Bilingual Education Act of 1968. To explain variation in implementation effort, I focus on several features of the local implementation environment, including the role of Latino descriptive representation. Utilizing data on all public school districts in Texas, I employ a Heckman two-stage estimation procedure that accounts for factors that influence school districts' decisions to implement bilingual education programs as well as factors that affect the amount of resources school districts are willing to allocate towards bilingual education. The results indicate that Latino school board and teacher representation play a positive and statistically significant role in determining: 1) whether school districts implement bilingual education programs; and 2) the level of expenditures and teacher positions allocated towards bilingual education. Thus, policy implementation outcomes translate into substantive representation.

KEYWORDS: Bilingual Education, Representative Bureaucracy, Latino Descriptive Representation, Bureaucratic Discretion, Policy Implementation

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May 4, 2011

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THESIS

Victoria Marie Ibáñez

The Graduate School

University of Kentucky

2011

# DESCRIPTIVE REPRESENTATION, REPRESENTATIVE BUREAUCRACY AND BILINGUAL EDUCATION POLICY: EXAMINING IMPLEMENTATION

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THESIS

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the
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By

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## Chapter One – Review of Literature

### Introduction: Developments in Bilingual Education

The most common Latino educational accommodation policy is bilingual or ESL[1] (English as a Second Language) education. Systematic implementation of bilingual education programs did not appear until federally mandated programs were formulated in the late 1960s. The Bilingual Education Act of 1968—an amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act—made bilingualism a national education policy that specifically mandates that all individual schools with twenty or more language-minority students in any one grade level must provide bilingual education classes. While federal law specifically mandates the general parameters for bilingual education policy, actual policy formulation and implementation devolves down a structural hierarchy.

Aside from specifying federal mandates via the 1968 act, state and local bilingual education policy is essentially free from formal federal influence. The Supreme Court, in *Lau v. Nichols* (1974), ruled that schools' failure to provide specialized instruction for ESL students constitutes a federal civil rights violation (Beck and Allexsaht-Snider 2002). However, local school districts often do not implement enforcement procedures in compliance with federal law. According to the Georgia State Department of Education, for example, 32 Georgia school districts were noncompliant with the 1968 Act in 1998 (Cumming 1999). Unless the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR) initiates a compliance review, or unless a parent initiates a lawsuit to address noncompliant ESL education procedures, state-level and local school administrations

[1] The terms bilingual and ESL will be used interchangeably to refer to this specific educational policy and in classifying linguistic minority students.

have the discretion to disregard federal civil rights law (Beck and Allexsaht-Snider 2002).[2]

In theory, federal education policies state the general policy parameters, the individual American states enumerate further specialized parameters, and local school boards eventually implement programs that are deemed necessary. We cannot categorize minority language education policy formulation and implementation as occurring in clearly delineated hierarchical tiers (i.e., "made at only one level" and implemented at another) (Hamann 2002, 70). Political posturing, advocacy, and strategic maneuvering interact and vary across policy domains. Whereas state-level superintendents may hold substantial influence over minority language education policy in one state, local-level school superintendents—or local level curriculum coordinators—may wield considerable influence in another state. This is fairly common across a wide range of policy implementation arenas. Moreover, some education policy domains may incorporate policy arenas where teachers, parents, and individual students can voice their input. The extant research has attempted to assess patterns in bilingual education formulation and implementation.

## Bilingual Education Policy Implementation: Policy Actors

### Bilingual Education Implementation as a Representation Issue

I examine bilingual education implementation under the framework of descriptive representation. Given that local-level bureaucratic authorities are granted a considerable amount of discretion in determining whether to implement ESL education, as well as the

[2] And lower-tier curriculum coordinators often are reluctant to report noncompliant educational practices they may observe in schools due to concerns over losing their jobs via state-level defunding (Beck and Allexsaht-Snider 2002).

level of resources allocated toward ESL education, I focus on local-level policy actors as potential agents of representation. Descriptive representation, or "the circumstances in which a citizen shares ascriptive characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, and so forth with his [or her] representative," has been examined in the literature on minority politics (Pantoja and Segura 2003, 443). Many studies of Latino descriptive representation take a political empowerment approach in examining the effects of Latino descriptive representation in state assemblies, state senates, and/or the U.S. House of Representatives (see Pantoja and Segura 2003). These studies typically contend that minority political empowerment, as a result of descriptive representation, may lead to decreased levels of political alienation and increased levels political efficacy and political trust, which may yield increased minority political participation.

A much larger literature has attempted to shed light on how descriptive representation may lead to substantive representation, where "the pursuit of policies or goals that benefit the particular group" being descriptively represented occurs (Berman and Salant 1998). The primary challenge in this literature lies in conceptualizing minority group interests, "and the impact of political decisions on minority interests" (Robinson 2002, 53). Minority groups and Latino groups specifically, are not structurally monolithic and undifferentiated. Language, as a cultural identity marker, serves as a primary indicator of Latino acculturation—with increased English-speaking capabilities typically indicating higher levels of acculturation. Linguistic minority children enter the socio-political arena with a linguistic barrier that can arguably lead to future structural disadvantages. Therefore, descriptive representation at the school board level may be

especially important when the substantive goal entails overcoming linguistic barriers, and when the quality of education for linguistic minority students may be at stake.

Dovi (2002) contends that descriptive representatives who "possess strong mutual relationships with dispossessed subgroups of historically disadvantaged groups" are most likely to serve as effective minority group representatives. Descriptive representation arguably facilitates substantive representation for members of minority groups. Substantive representation occurs when policies or other governmental action is advanced in order to promote a given minority group's political interests. Minority representatives at times have been deemed ardent advocates on issues and policies that are meant to target minority groups in beneficial ways. The literature has established clear linkages between descriptive representation and substantive representation at the local governmental level, among elected officials on city councils and school boards (see Dye and Renick 1981; Kerr and Mladenka 1994; Campbell and Feagin 1975; Marschall 2005; Meier and England 1984; Eisinger 1982; Polinard, Wrinkle, Longoria, and Binder 1994; Robinson and England 1981). For instance, some have found that when minority groups are descriptively represented on school boards, issues on local school quality are raised in favor of minority students (Marschall 2005; Tate 2003). However, a necessary caveat should be made when making assumptions about descriptive representation. Descriptive representation does not necessarily constitute *substantive* representation. In fact, some would argue that descriptive representatives in educational administrative posts

occasionally are strategically appointed to present an image of representation rather than substance of representation[3] (Galindo 1997).

Given that local-level authorities have considerable amounts of implementation discretion at their disposal, they arguably have the ability to influence bilingual education implementation and resource allocations. Are descriptive representatives at the school district level *substantively* representing linguistic minority students? High levels of bureaucratic discretion in this policy arena may provide the opportunity to find empirical evidence that local education bureaucrats are motivated to serve as advocates for the linguistic minority subset of the student population. The evidence from studies of whether descriptive representation leads to substantive representation has been mixed; most studies conclude that, "Descriptive representation may lead to substantive representation sometimes, but the relationship is complex and uncertain" (Robinson 2002, 54). By focusing at the policy implementation level, this study may contribute a more nuanced understanding of descriptive representation as it relates to substantive representation. That is, by modeling bilingual education policy implementation as a political outcome in assessing whether descriptive representation leads to substantive representation, this study moves beyond notions of "passive" representation and focuses on the possibilities for "active" representation (Meier and O'Toole 2006).

[3] For example, the aforementioned anti-bilingual education Schrenko-led Georgia Department of Education hired a Cuban American educational statistician as Title I director and supervisor for ESOL and Migrant Education Programs in 1997 (Beck and Allexsaht-Snider 2002). This political appointee proceeded to publicly state that, "It was the patriotic duty of ESOL administrators and teachers to turn over any suspected illegal alien students to the Immigration and Naturalization Service" (Beck and Allexsaht-Snider 2002, 48). The Supreme Court's *Plyer v. Doe* (1982) ruling would deem any such actions by administrators or teachers unconstitutional, as "policies that have a chilling effect upon the enrollment of Hispanic migrants or undocumented alien children" (Beck and Allexsaht-Snider 2002, 49).

Descriptive Representation: The Theory of Representative Bureaucracy

Theories of representative bureaucracy generally are applied to analyses of outcomes of the policy process. Scholars of representative bureaucracy contend that federal and/or state policies are generally viewed as impediments to the local governance process (Meier and O'Toole 2006). Consistent with Meier and O'Toole (2006), and given the discretionary nature of bilingual education implementation policies, this paper adopts a "bottom-up" approach to policy implementation. According to this approach, local bureaucrats serve critical roles in representing the interests of local citizens. Moreover, "Bureaucrats are not drags on responsiveness, as the top-down model might suggest, but rather essential links in translating preferences into policy *as implemented*" (Berkman and Plutzer 2010, 9).

On the one hand, bureaucratic decisions may be constrained by institutional rules and arrangements and/or available resources. In the context of this paper, for example, rules mandating the implementation bilingual education fall directly under the auspices of the 1968 Bilingual Education Act. However, policy implementation may also reflect bureaucrats' ideological predispositions and political preferences. Where policy implementers are permitted to act under bureaucratic arrangements that involve considerable amounts of local implementation discretion, policy implementation is quite often political.

The policy-making literature frequently demonstrates that local-level bureaucrats and bureaucratic administrators[4] exercise discretion (Rourke 1984), and "because

[4] In the context of this paper, "bureaucratic administrators" include school board members and school district administrators involved in the policy implementation process. The literature in representative bureaucracy includes school board members and

bureaucratic discretion exists, the representativeness of the bureaucracy becomes an important political question" (Mosher 1968, 103). The education policy arena involves a unique level of administrative discretion because school board positions are rarely full-time positions; therefore, bureaucratic discretion is perhaps more influential in comparison to discretion in other bureaucracies (Tucker and Zeigler 1980; Meier and Stewart 1991). Consequently, I expect descriptive bureaucratic representation will be a major indicator of the types of education policies that will be yielded, as directly influenced by bureaucratic discretion. While much of the existing literature on representative bureaucracy focuses on African Americans (see Eisinger 1982), few have attempted to examine representative bureaucracy as it relates to Latinos.

Meier and Stewart (1991), in examining behavioral characteristics of Latino school board members in the educational system, note that administrative discretion plays a role in determining whether representative bureaucrats influence education policy. Given the underlying assumption that Latino administrators "should be more sensitive to the cultural norms and mores in the Hispanic community…[and] likely to become leaders in the Hispanic community" (Meier and Stewart 1991, 11), Latino administrators generally are assumed to be more likely to make educational policy decisions that are perceived as beneficial to Latino students.

Furthermore, some have found evidence that indicates Latino administrators serve a meaningful role in assuring that Latino descriptive representatives are present in multiple levels of the policy implementation process. Descriptive bureaucratic

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school district administrators in this larger category, but I note a distinction between school board members as elected officials and school district administrators as non-elected officials. Teachers are included in the local bureaucracy, but are treated as a separate category of non-elected officials.

representation is a multi-tiered phenomenon at the school district level. Districts with a higher percentage of Latino school board members generally employ a larger percentage of Latino school administrators (Meier and Stewart 1991). Subsequently, administrators (especially in larger school districts) have the discretion to hire teachers, and Latino administrators are more likely to hire Latino teachers (Meier and Stewart 1991). Shockley (1974) conducted a Latino education policy case study of Crystal City, Texas following an election that resulted in Latino majorities on the school board and city council. His analysis revealed that following the election, not only were more Latino school administrators and teachers hired, but also a variety of "bilingual-bicultural" education policies were implemented (Shockley 1974).

Teachers as Representative Bureaucrats

Teachers serve as the "street level bureaucrats" in the education policy bureaucracy. It assumes that teachers are "the equivalent of implementation bureaucrats in a school system, [and] use discretion when they apply guidelines issued by administrators or policies passed by the school board. Someone must decide if a particular policy is applicable in a given situation, and that person is usually a teacher [sic]" (Meier and Stewart 1991, 108). I expect that Latino teachers may be more receptive to potential language needs among the Latino student population, as these teachers may be more adept at identifying the need for a bilingual education program in compliance with the 1968 law.

Heller, Holtzman, and Messick (1982) found that teachers frequently serve as the descriptive representatives most likely to influence policies regarding access to bilingual education. Correspondingly, Meier, Stewart, and England (1989) found that African-

American descriptive teacher representation served as the most substantively influential factor in reducing discrimination against African-American students. Laosa (1977) contends that teacher discrimination is based as much—if not more—on language as on ethnicity. In addition to being more likely to recognize potential differences in Latino students' cognitive learning skills, Latino teachers generally are more likely to advocate education that is aimed toward accommodating ESL students' language needs (Ramirez and Castaneda 1974). Moreover, Latino teachers arguably are more likely to recognize language difficulties as an education issue that should be addressed, rather than characterize language-minority students as "unable to learn" (Fernandez and Guskin 1981). These teachers arguably possess a systematic cultural sensitivity towards the linguistic minority student population. Latino teachers are more likely to have experienced socialization experiences that mirror the social origins of ESL students and, thus, may raise awareness of classroom issues that may necessitate education policy reform.

## Chapter Two – Toward a Systematic Model of Bilingual Education Policy Implementation

Minimal research has focused on the effects of minority representation on policy implementation outcomes. The Bilingual Education Act of 1968 constitutes introduced institutional rules regarding education for linguistic minority students. Where ESL education programs previously did not exist, school districts that fell under the auspices of the legislation were legally required to implement education reform. The law arguably introduced an institutional mechanism for protecting linguistic minority students' interests (Robinson 2002). With this mechanism in place, descriptive representatives arguably could wield the power and authority "to implement public policy in a manner consistent with their ideology and priorities" (Berkman and Plutzer 2010, 6). Ultimately, my ultimate goals in this research include: 1) assessing whether favorable institutional rules and arrangements motivate descriptive representatives to act on behalf of a minority group; 2) developing a nuanced understanding of descriptive representation as it relates to substantive representation in a policy arena; and 3) introducing an improved empirical modeling technique that recognizes the two-stage nature of a policy implementation process.

### Research Design

Existing studies of bilingual education policies typically employ case study methods (see Baquedano-Lopez 2004; Gibson 1976; Havighurst 1976; Serrano 1974; Torres-Trueba 1976). Most studies are limited to one state or one school district (see Beck et al. 2002; Villenas 2002). Some have found patterns of interplay between "official" and "unofficial" policy practices (Wortham et al. 2002). The extant literature on bilingual education is methodologically limited insofar as case studies do not permit a

systematic quantitative analysis of theoretical propositions, do not utilize control variables to ensure that research findings do not result from spurious relationships between explanatory variables, and are not necessarily generalizeable to a variety of policy jurisdictions. According to Meier and Stewart (1991), "three qualities are necessary for a measure of public policy to be useful in linking minority representation to policy: 1) measures must represent policies that policymakers can influence; 2) the policies must be tied closely to minority interests so that policymakers can see the benefit of certain policies for their constituents; 3) the policies need to be measured over a wide variety of school districts so that the findings can be generalized" (13-14).

**Data**

My universe for analysis consists of 1,043 public school districts in Texas for the years 1995-2000. The large geographically dispersed Latino population in Texas makes this state particularly relevant for my analysis, given that I am interested in examining a subset of the Latino population, bilingual students. Furthermore, Texas is a large, heterogeneous state with diverse school districts (see Meier and O'Toole 2006), thus allowing for a wide range of demographic and geographic variation across school districts. We also know that the language minority student population in the state is comprised primarily of Spanish-speaking Latinos (Meier and O'Toole 2006). Therefore, Texas school districts permit the analysis to focus on examining theories of Latino descriptive representation. Finally, extensive school district-level data are available for Texas, including representation, budgeting, and bilingual education-specific and demographic measures.

I utilize data from two primary sources: the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the National Association of Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO). The TEA is

required to conduct an annual survey of all public school districts in Texas and collects data on student demographics, school district expenditures, and teacher composition and assignment. Specifically, TEA data include budgetary information on bilingual education programs, bilingual education teacher allotments, and bilingual education students. Data on Latino school board representation were obtained from annually published rosters of Latino elected officials collected by NALEO.

## Explaining Bilingual Education Implementation in School Districts

I aim to assess the effects of descriptive bureaucratic representation, among other things, on school districts' commitment to comply with the Bilingual Education Act of 1968. I conceptualize bilingual education policy implementation as a two-stage process in which 1) school districts make the decision to implement an ESL education program, and 2) school districts make decisions regarding the level of resources to allocate toward ESL education when they implement a program. From a basic legal standpoint, I expect that school districts consider the 1968 Act—and its ESL student threshold—when evaluating the relative need for a bilingual education program. Moreover, I expect that descriptive representatives (i.e., Latino school board members and Latino teachers) serve a critical advocacy role in addressing the educational needs of the linguistic minority student population in Texas school districts.

### Modeling Bilingual Education Implementation: Stage One

The extant literature on representative bureaucracy and Latino education almost uniformly has conceptualized the dependent variable in terms of Latino student performance outcomes. Studies typically operationalize their dependent variable as a measure of standardized test scores (see Meier and Stewart 1991; Meier, Wrinkle, and

Polinard 1999; Meier, Polinard, and Wrinkle 2000; Ross et al. 2010). This study diverges from previous research in that I do not focus on student performance outcomes. Instead, I am interested in examining the factors that influence the policy implementation process itself. For language minority Latinos in Texas, the bilingual education policy arena is well suited to examine the influence of descriptive representation and school district contextual variables on commitment to comply with the Bilingual Education Act. The first stage of my conceptual model examines the factors that influence school districts' decisions to implement a bilingual education program. The dependent variable *ESL Implementation* takes the value 1 if school districts are observed as implementing a bilingual education program and 0 otherwise.

Explanatory Variables

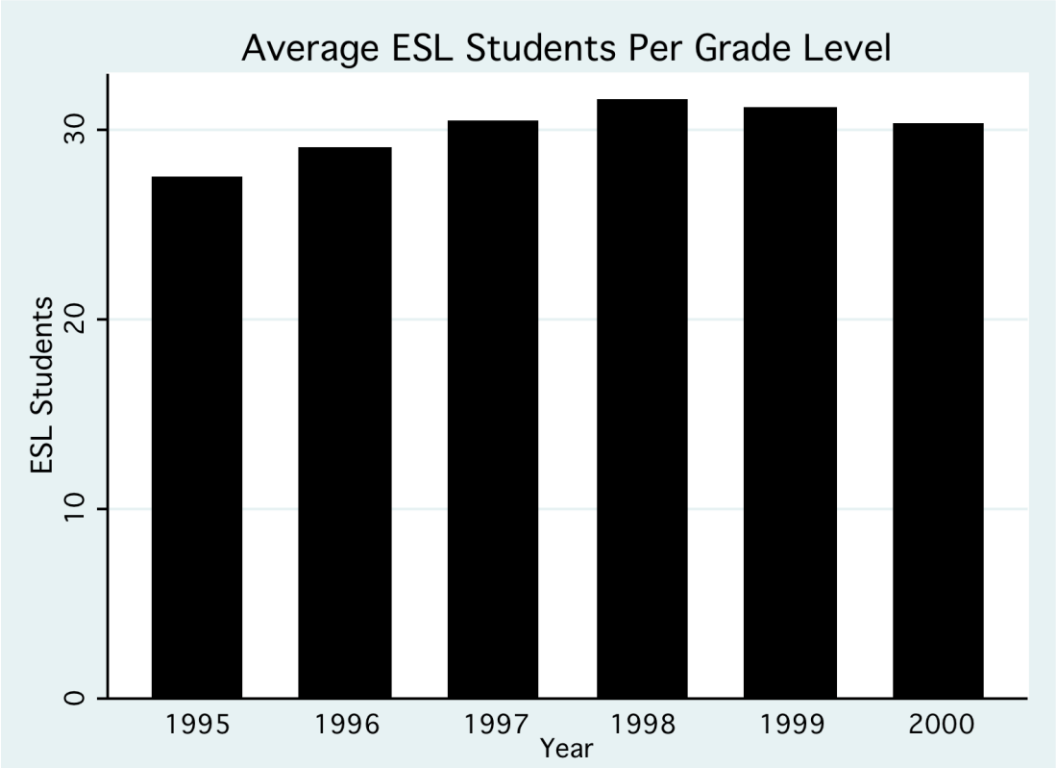
Given that the 1968 Bilingual Education Act mandates that school districts must provide ESL programs when there are 20 or more ESL students in any grade level, my primary explanatory variable in the first stage of bilingual education implementation is a measure that captures the size of the linguistic minority student population in each school district. The TEA reports the number of ESL students as a percentage of total student enrollment. I transformed this percentage measure into a variable that captures the average number of *ESL Students* per grade level.[5] This transformation places the measure

[5] The Bilingual Education Act requires that school districts with 20 or more ESL students in any grade level provide bilingual education. Therefore, I divided the total number of ESL students in a school district by the total number of grade levels (the Texas public school system has 14 grade levels). The TEA data do not disaggregate the number of ESL students by grade level; therefore, this measure is somewhat less than ideal. Ultimately, the measure underestimates the number of ESL students in the lowest grades, as ESL students are most likely identified in the earliest grades in elementary school.

into the framework of the 1968 legislation by allowing the analysis to distinguish between the relative size of the ESL student population across school districts.

As previously noted, state and local bilingual education policy is essentially free from formal federal influence (Meier and Stewart 1991). Thus, individual school boards are given flexible discretion in developing, or failing to develop, their individual bilingual education programs. At the most basic level, a manual examination of the data revealed that, for the most part, Texas school districts with an average of 20 or more bilingual students per grade level are technically in compliance with the Act. That is, school districts that typically cross the bilingual student threshold and fall directly under the mandate of the federal legislation report either allocating a portion of their instructional expenditures towards bilingual education programs, or allocating teachers to bilingual education positions, or both. Only the Abilene school district—in central west Texas—technically was noncompliant for five out of the six years examined. Figure 1 depicts the average number of bilingual students per grade level across all Texas school districts for the years 1995-2000. Central tendencies indicate that the average school district has more than 20 ESL students per grade level. Moreover, the average school district complies with the federal legislation to some degree—at least with regard to bilingual expenditures and/or bilingual teacher allotments.

**Figure 2.1: Average ESL Students Per Grade Level**



Descriptive Representation

Bilingual education programs are implemented via a formal and informal policy process. This analysis focuses on the role that local education bureaucrats play in affecting school district policy implementation decisions and budgetary allocations. Some have found that the policy preferences of the agents of implementation are a crucial factor in explaining policy-related compliance (Bali 2003). Because bilingual education programs are implemented under conditions where local policymakers have a high degree of discretion, and because bilingual education is a high salience issue for Latino teachers and parents, I argue that Latino school board members may be receptive to language minority interests. That is, at the school district level, descriptive representatives may be more receptive to the policy preferences of their local constituency, and descriptive representation may develop into substantive representation.

To test for the influence of descriptive representation, I include a variable that accounts for *Latino Descriptive Representation* on school boards. This variable is operatonalized as the percentage of Latinos serving on school boards as a total of all school board members in a district. Moreover, teachers who serve as the street-level bureaucrats at the "front lines" of the education policy implementation process may play an important role in recognizing ESL students and the need for a stronger commitment to bilingual education in a given school district (Meier, Wrinkle, and Polinard 1999; Hess and Leal 1997). Thus, I employ a second measure of bureaucratic descriptive representation, *Latino Teacher Representation*, operationalized as the percentage of Latino teachers in a school district as a total of all teachers in a given district. I expect

that increased numbers of Latino school board members and Latino teachers will positively influence bilingual education implementation:

> **Primary Hypothesis (Stage 1): School districts with a higher average of ESL students per grade level and with higher levels of Latino representation on school boards and among teachers are more likely to implement bilingual education programs.**

I also include a variable that controls for *Average Teacher Experience* (in years) to account for the possibility that experienced minority teachers may be more adept at recognizing an increased need for bilingual education implementation.

My model accounts for the composition of the linguistic minority population and the Latino composition on Texas school boards. I expect that as the linguistic minority (i.e., Spanish-speaking) student population increases, commitment to bilingual education implementation should increase. Furthermore, my conceptual model hypothesizes a possible interaction between Latino school board representation and the average number of ESL students per grade level. That is, the relative size of the linguistic minority population may serve as a moderating factor that influences the effect of Latino descriptive representation on bilingual education implementation. Latino school board members may be reacting to their perceptions of the policy preferences of the larger Latino population in a given school district—and may advocate ESL education implementation as a factor in their calculus for getting reelected. On the other hand, in school districts where there is a highly visible language minority student population, we may assume that bilingual education implementation is almost guaranteed. Therefore, descriptive representation may ultimately matter most where English is least common among the Latino student population. Thus, I account for the potential interactive effects of *Latino Descriptive Representation * ESL Students.*

Modeling Bilingual Education Implementation Effort: Stage Two

The second stage of my model of bilingual education implementation examines the factors that influence school districts' commitment to bilingual education. I model commitment to implementation in terms of ESL education resource allocations. Specifically, school districts in Texas are required to report their yearly allocation of bilingual expenditures as a percentage of total instructional expenditures. School districts also report the number of full-time equivalent bilingual education teaching positions that they allot as a percentage of total full-time equivalent teaching positions. I utilize both of these measures as alternative dependent variables because some school districts report allocating no bilingual education expenditures while reporting bilingual education teacher allocations, and vice versa.

The TEA data report bilingual expenditure data as a percentage of total instructional expenditures. I transformed the percentage measure into actual bilingual education expenditure amounts. Similarly TEA reports bilingual education teacher allotments as a percentage of total teachers in a given school district. These transformations allow me to compare the disaggregated numbers of ESL subpopulations in a school district—measures based on absolute numbers—with bilingual education budgetary allotments in absolute numbers (Robinson 2002). In order to compare ESL education resource allocations across Texas school districts, I will include total instructional expenditures and the total number of full-time equivalent teaching positions (the denominators in these transformed percentage measures) as control variables in the analysis that follows. Thus, my dependent variables measure *ESL Expenditure Effort* and

*ESL Teacher Allotment Effort.* As such, other things equal, higher values of these variables indicate higher levels of school district commitment to bilingual education.

Explanatory Variables

The second stage of my conceptual model takes into account representational and school district contextual factors that may influence the bilingual education implementation process. Thus, I selectively utilize variables from the first stage of the model but now examine how these variables affect bilingual education resource allocation levels. Other studies have examined bilingual policy implementation as a one-stage process of resource allocations (see Robinson 2002). I have theoretical reasons for modeling bilingual education implementation as a two-stage process. Conceptually, I seek to distinguish between the conditions that influence whether a school district implements a bilingual education program and the factors that explain the level of resources are willing to allocate toward ESL education once a program is established. Thus, because school districts that have implemented an ESL program constitute a censored sample, failure to account for the two-stage nature of this policy implementation process may threaten any inferential leverage obtained from the empirical findings. Despite the presence of Latino school board members and/or teachers in a given school district, said district would have little reason to implement a bilingual education program if there are no ESL students who would utilize the program if implemented.

Consistent with the first stage of the model, I expect that the average number of *ESL Students* per grade level will have a positive effect on bilingual education expenditures and teacher allocations, other things being equal. That is, as the number of ESL students increases, we may expect school districts to pump more resources into their

ESL programs—if we can assume those resources are available. I also include the *Latino Descriptive Representation* variable from the first stage of my model into the second stage. There is reason to suppose that Latino school board members may be instrumental in ESL education resource allocation decisions in addition to influencing whether bilingual education is implemented in a given school district.

School District Context

In addition to the potential influence of descriptive representation, a variety of school district level contextual variables may influence bilingual education budgetary allocations—and policymakers' decisions on school board budget and/or teacher allocations. Individual school districts undoubtedly vary in their potential resource constraints. Therefore, I include a variable that accounts for school district *Wealth* as measure of total school district revenues. I control for school district *Size* with a variable that measures total student enrollment. I expect that larger school districts are more likely to be ethnically diverse and be comprised of higher levels ESL students when compared with smaller school districts. However, larger school districts may face higher levels of resource constraints and be less financially capable of adequately addressing the needs of linguistic minority students. Finally, I include measures that control for *Total Instructional Expenditures* in my bilingual expenditure model and *Total Teachers* in my ESL teacher allotment model. These variables allow the analysis to take school districts' relative resource allocations and/or constraints into account. My conceptual model hypothesizes a positive link between school district wealth, school district size, and per pupil instructional spending on bilingual education budgetary allocations.

My model also accounts for the economic demographics of the student population. The variable that captures the percentage of *Low-Income Students*[6] in a school district was not transformed into an absolute number of the total number of low-income students, simply because it is a contextual measure of the school district as a whole—and not a language minority population that may or may not require bilingual education (see Robinson 2002). Given that Latinos are disproportionately poor, I expect that higher levels of low-income students in a school district will negatively influence bilingual education budgetary allocations—as poor Latino populations have less political clout and influence over their local representatives. Furthermore, non-linguistic minority low-income students arguably have greater educational needs than their wealthier counterparts—potentially placing additional constraints on ESL education spending.

> **Primary Hypothesis (Stage 2): School districts with a higher average of ESL students per grade level and with higher levels of Latino representation on school boards and are more likely to demonstrate increased effort toward allocating resources toward bilingual education programs, other things being equal.**

A table of descriptive statistics for the dependent and explanatory variables can be found in the Appendix.

Estimation Technique

I conceptualize bilingual education implementation as a two-stage process and specifically employ the Heckman two-stage statistical estimation procedure (see Heckman 1979). The first stage estimates a model that predicts the presence of bilingual education programs for school districts in Texas. Summary statistics reveal that around

[6] The low-income variable is derived from a measure that captures the percentage of students who are eligible for free or reduced price lunches in a school district.

48.6% of the sample of Texas school districts have implemented a bilingual education program by allocating instructional expenditures toward ESL education, and 54.6% of school districts have implemented ESL education by hiring ESL teachers. Thus, bilingual education implementation may be a nonrandom event (see Heckman 1979) for the sample of Texas school districts if there are variables that distinctively influence: 1) whether a school district chooses to implement a bilingual education program, and 2) the level of instructional expenditure and/or teacher allocation resources. That is, if selectivity exists in this sample, the coefficients from a standard OLS regression may not be applicable to all school districts in Texas—both those with and without a bilingual education program.

Modeling the factors that influence resource allocations alone, without taking into account that some school districts will not require bilingual education in the first place, could lead to biased estimation results and erroneous inferential conclusions. That is, my conceptual model posits that a sample that consists of only school districts that choose implement bilingual education programs may differ considerably in certain unmeasured ways from school districts that do not implement ESL education. According to King, Keohane, and Verba (1994), "In these cases, something can be said about the causes of the dependent variable; but the inferences are likely to be biased, if the explanatory variables do not take into account the selection rule, *any selection rule correlated with the dependent variable attenuates estimates of causal effects on average*" (130). For these reasons, the first stage of my models analyzes all Texas school districts, those with and without bilingual education programs, and attempts to correct for this nonrandomly selected event in the second stage by examining only those school districts that have implemented ESL education programs. Thus, my study constitutes an attempt to

disentangle the factors that explain of the existence or nonexistence of a bilingual education program from the factors that explain the actual amount of resources allocated towards these programs. My conceptual model treats school districts that have not implemented a bilingual education program as missing on the dependent variable and the Heckman statistical procedure estimates a two-stage model that controls for the likelihood that school districts have engaged in ESL education implementation. The specific formula for the statistical estimation is as follows:

**Stage 1:** $z^*_i = w_i\gamma + u_i$

$z_i = 1$ if $z^*_i > 0$
$z_i = 0$ if $z^*_i \leq 0$

**Stage 2:** $y_i = \beta x_i + \varepsilon_i$ if $z^*_i > 0$
$y_i =$ unobserved if $z^*_i \leq 0$

**Assumptions:** $u_i \sim N(0, 1)$
$\varepsilon_i \sim N(0, \sigma^2)$
corr $(u_i, \varepsilon_i) = \rho$

where Stage 1 represents the selection equation and Stage 2 represents the outcome equation. The Heckman procedure essentially estimates two separate regressions: a probit model for the first stage of the analysis and an OLS regression for the second stage of analysis. The probit and OLS results are run simultaneously in the Heckman procedure to account for the fact that the results for both stages of the model are correlated with each other. The Heckman model assumes a bivariate normal distribution with means of zero and correlation $\rho$ (Heckman 1979).

## Chapter Three – Findings

The empirical results for the models of bilingual education implementation are presented in Tables 1 and 2. Table 1 includes results for a two-stage estimation of 1) the factors that influence bilingual education program implementation, and 2) the factors that influence bilingual education expenditure level effort. Table 2 includes results for a two-stage estimation of 1) the factors that influence bilingual education program implementation, and 2) the factors that influence bilingual education teacher allotment effort.

**Table 3.1: Explaining Bilingual Education Implementation & Expenditures, 1995-2000**

| Heckman Two-Stage Procedure | Coefficient | Std. Error | Z | P>\|z\| |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Stage 1: ESL Implementation** | | | | |
| ESL Students | 0.014 | 0.001 | 16.42 | 0.000 |
| Latino Descriptive Representation | 0.001 | 0.002 | 5.20 | 0.000 |
| Latino Teacher Representation | 0.001 | 0.002 | 4.60 | 0.000 |
| Teacher Experience | 0.018 | 0.007 | 2.52 | 0.012 |
| Latino Descriptive Representation * ESL Students | -0.000 | 0.000 | -4.96 | 0.000 |
| Constant | -0.471 | 0.087 | -5.41 | 0.000 |
| **Stage 2: ESL Expenditure Effort** | | | | |
| ESL Students | 5401.114 | 587.922 | 9.19 | 0.000 |
| Latino Descriptive Representation | 17914.98 | 3096.353 | 5.79 | 0.000 |
| Low-Income | 14321.89 | 2752.187 | 5.20 | 0.000 |
| Size | -75.252 | 34.333 | -2.19 | 0.028 |
| Wealth | -10.882 | 58.19 | -0.19 | 0.852 |
| Total Instructional Expenditures | 0.088 | 0.012 | 7.58 | 0.000 |
| Latino Descriptive Representation * ESL Students | -95.285 | 9.077 | -10.50 | 0.000 |
| Constant | -2990662.0 | 350967.8 | -8.52 | 0.000 |

Stage 1 dependent variable: *ESL Implementation*
Stage 2 dependent variable: *ESL Expenditures*
Mean of dependent variable = $764,099.60
Number of observations = 6210; Censored = 3096, Uncensored = 3114
Wald test of independent equations: $\chi 2$ (7) = 3965.12; Prob > $\chi 2$ = 0.000

**Table 3.2: Explaining Bilingual Education Implementation & Teacher Allotments, 1995-2000**

| Heckman Two-Stage Procedure | Coefficient | Std. Error | Z | P>\|z\| |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Stage 1: ESL Implementation** | | | | |
| ESL Students | 0.094 | 0.003 | 31.97 | 0.000 |
| Latino Descriptive Representation | 0.012 | 0.002 | 6.85 | 0.000 |
| Latino Teacher Representation | 0.001 | 0.002 | 0.39 | 0.694 |
| Teacher Experience | 0.018 | 0.008 | 2.44 | 0.015 |
| Latino Descriptive Representation * ESL Students | -0.001 | 0.000 | -12.91 | 0.000 |
| Constant | -0.539 | 0.09 | -6.00 | 0.000 |
| **Stage 2: ESL Teacher Allotment Effort** | | | | |
| ESL Students | 0.388 | 0.008 | 48.67 | 0.000 |
| Latino Descriptive Representation | -0.041 | 0.037 | -1.13 | 0.258 |
| Low-Income | 0.308 | 0.039 | 7.92 | 0.000 |
| Size | 0.005 | 0.001 | 6.61 | 0.000 |
| Wealth | -0.000 | 0.001 | -0.02 | 0.985 |
| Total Teachers | -0.052 | 0.012 | -4.18 | 0.000 |
| Latino Descriptive Representation * ESL Students | 0.001 | 0.000 | 11.42 | 0.000 |
| Constant | -26.574 | 3.379 | -7.87 | 0.000 |

Stage 1 dependent variable: *ESL Implementation*
Stage 2 dependent variable: *ESL Teacher Allotments*
Mean of dependent variable = 28.86
Number of observations = 6210; Censored = 2699, Uncensored = 3511
Wald test of independent equations: $\chi 2$ (7) = 34269.75; Prob > $\chi 2$ = 0.000

**Stage One: Bilingual Education Implementation**

As both tables illustrate, the process that dictates whether school districts in Texas make the decision to implement bilingual education (Stage 1) generally comports with my primary hypotheses. School districts are predictably responsive to the presence of ESL students who may benefit from ESL education—especially in response to the average number of ESL students per grade level. Table 1 reveals that the presence of Latino school board members and Latino teachers positively, and statistically significantly, influences ESL education implementation in the teacher allocation model. Thus, the raw results indicate that Latino school board members and Latino teachers appear to be serving as advocates for linguistic minority students.

Table 2 shows that the presence of Latino school board members significantly improves the prospects for ESL education implementation, but the presence of Latino teachers does not significantly influence whether school districts implement bilingual education. This finding is understandable, given that school board members generally have considerable influence over teacher allotments. Latino teachers may play an instrumental role in making recommendations about the need for ESL education and bringing it to school board members' attention. Under this logic, Latino teachers may pay an indirect role in influencing whether school board members decide to implement bilingual education. However, teachers generally do not have a meaningful amount of control over how school boards decide to allocate the "types" of teaching positions available in a given school district.

Teacher experience is statistically significant in both models, indicating that more experienced teachers may be more adept at recognizing ESL students and speaking out on these students' behalf. At first glance of the data, the results for the interaction terms in both models demonstrate a deviation from what was expected. Tables 1 and 2 indicate that the interaction between Latino school board representation and the average number of ESL students per grade is statistically significant in a negative direction, contrary to what was hypothesized. This divergence could be explained by the notion that linguistic minorities may be perceived as wielding limited social capital. Latino school board members may not consider the larger linguistic minority population a threat to their reelection prospects. If students are characterized as "limited English proficiency", then we may assume that they come from homes where English is not the primary spoken language. Furthermore, if Spanish-speaking Latinos are marginalized among societal structures, the presence or absence of descriptive representatives may influence the extent to which Spanish-speaking Latino parents are willing to interact with or confront school authorities and/or administrators. This realization would raise the question of whether Latino school board members are genuinely engaged in substantive representation of their Latino linguistic minority constituents.

Finally, the significant chi-squared result for the Wald test of independent equations in the estimation of both models provides empirical support for my conceptual model. That is, failing to take into account the two-stage process that determines bilingual education implementation biased results and potentially erroneous statistical inferences. There are systematic and nonrandom differences between school districts that implement ESL education and those that do not. Specifically, all school districts in Texas

do not meet the ESL student threshold requirements mandated by the Bilingual Education Act of 1968. By modeling this policy process as a two-stage procedure, I control for this selection bias.

Raw coefficients, however, tell only part of the story. Therefore, I utilized CLARIFY (see King, Tomz, and Wittenburg 2000) to generate predictions to illustrate the substantive impact that my explanatory variables have on bilingual education policy implementation. These predictions were derived from 1,000 simulations based on the probit covariances in the first stage of my models. Table 3 presents the results of the probit analysis. It is not surprising that the results, for the most part, are virtually indistinguishable from the Stage 1 results in Tables 1 and 2. Next, I estimate the predicted impact of a series of "hypothetical" school districts at key explanatory variable values.

**Table 3.3: Explaining Bilingual Education Implementation, 1995-2000**

| Probit | Model 3A Expenditure Model | Model 3B ESL Teacher Model |
|---|---|---|
| ESL Students | 0.014*** | 0.094*** |
| | *(0.001)* | *(0.003)* |
| Latino Descriptive Representation | 0.008*** | 0.012*** |
| | *(0.002)* | *(0.002)* |
| Latino Teacher Representation | 0.009*** | 0.001 |
| | *(0.002)* | *(0.002)* |
| Teacher Experience | 0.018** | 0.018** |
| | *(0.007)* | *(0.008)* |
| Latino Descriptive Representation * ESL Students | -0.000*** | -0.001*** |
| | *(0.000)* | *(0.000)* |
| Constant | -0.471*** | -0.539*** |
| | *(0.087)* | *(0.09)* |
| Observations | 6210 | 6210 |
| Pseudo-$R^2$ | 0.107 | 0.229 |

Standard errors reported in parentheses. *** p < .01 ** p < .05 * p < .1

In order to generate implications for the probit stage of my empirical models, I estimate the impact of specific explanatory variable values on the predicted probabilities of bilingual education implementation. For instance, if all of the explanatory variables in Model 3A (see Appendix for descriptive statistics) are held at their means; that is, where the average number of ESL students per grade level is approximately 30 students, Latinos comprise about 8.2% of school board members and 8.76% of teachers, and average teacher experience is 11.4 years, the likelihood that a school district will implement ESL education program by allocating ESL expenditures is approximately 59.4%. Contrastingly, the likelihood that school districts will implement ESL education by hiring ESL teachers is 98.2%. Taking the 1968 Act into account, this means that likelihood estimates would characterize school districts as technically non-compliant about 40% of the time if one were operationalizinng the dependent variable in terms of ESL expenditures. These findings may serve as an example of the importance of considering alternative measurements of variables of interest in specifying empirical models. In this case, we might infer that school districts employ divergent methods in classifying bilingual education resource allocations. When the ESL student threshold is set at the legally-mandated threshold of 20 ESL students—and all other explanatory variables are held at their means—the likelihood that a school district will implement bilingual education drops to 53.1% for Model 3A and 85.3% for Model 3B. Ultimately, these inconsistencies across models underscore the limitations of reporting simple coefficient significance tests.

When there are an average 20 ESL students per grade level, and Latino school board members and Latino teachers are held at their maximum (100%) values for the

sample of Texas schools (other variables held at their means), the likelihood that school districts will implement bilingual education skyrockets to 94.5% for Model 3A and 98.8% for Model 3B. Contrastingly, when the ESL students variable is held at 20 and the Latino school board and teacher representation variables are held at their minimum values (0%), with all other explanatory variables at their means, the bilingual education implementation likelihood value drops to 47.7% for Model 3A and 82.6% for Model 3B. For the ESL expenditure model, this constitutes a nearly 50% drop from full descriptive representation. These findings hold substantively important implications for my hypotheses on the effects of Latino descriptive representation on bilingual education budgetary allocations. It appears that even when school districts barely fall under the legal parameters of the 1968 legislation, Latino descriptive representation plays a consequential role in the ESL education policy process when money is involved. The second stage analyses (see below) may shed some light on the effect of the explanatory variables on relative resource allocations.

Finally, ESL education implementation predictions when Latino school board and teacher representation is set at 50% hovers around 75% for Model 3A and 94% for Model 3B, when school districts meet the 20 student threshold. Similarly, a school district with either 100% Latino school board members or 100% Latino teachers, other things equal, is about 75% likely to implement bilingual education for Model 3A and 99% for Model 3B. Thus, whether we are characterizing Latino school board members and/or Latino teachers as potential descriptive representatives, it appears that linguistic minority students are categorically and demonstrably represented by their coethnics.

**Stage Two: Bilingual Education Resource Allocations**

Implementation as Expenditure Effort

Turning to the second stage of my models, we can examine the factors that influence the level of resources school districts are willing to allocate toward bilingual education. Looking at the second-stage results in Table 1, we see that increased levels of ESL students per grade level and Latino school board representation positively statistically influence bilingual education expenditure amounts. The significance of *ESL Students* suggests, for example, that as the average number of ESL students per grade level increases by one unit, the average school district increases its bilingual education expenditures by about $5,401.11.

Results for the *Latino Descriptive Representation* variable indicate that as Latino school board representation increases by 1%, the average Texas school district increases bilingual education expenditures by $17,914.98. As in the first stage of the model, the interaction term between Latino school board representation and average ESL students is statistically significant in a negative direction. As stated previously, this finding may be reflecting school board members' perceptions of the larger linguistic minority population as electorally non-threatening.

Overall, it appears that the average Texas school district is financially responsive to the linguistic minority student population, and Latino school board members may play an instrumental role as political advocates for these students. Contextual and demographic school district characteristics also significantly influence bilingual education expenditures. For instance, a 1% increase in the proportion of low-income students in a school district positively increases bilingual education expenditures by

about $14,321.89. This finding is interesting for several reasons. First, one might assume that ESL students—or ethnic minority students for that matter— are more likely to come from low-income homes. Given this assumption, one might posit that ESL students would be among those with the lowest levels of socio-political capital to influence the local education policy. However, if we assume that linguistic minority students generally will fall into the low-income category, we might expect that—to a certain extent—increased levels of ESL students coincide with increased levels of low-income students. Thus, the results for the *Low-Income* variable would not be entirely surprising.

School district size, as measured by total student enrollment, has a negative statistically significant influence on bilingual education expenditures. As student enrollment numbers increase, school districts are faced with additional resource constraints. Some assert that providing bilingual education opportunities to ESL students is "limited by the structural nature of the American school system" (Meier and Stewart 1991, 70). School districts typically must raise a significant portion of their funding by relying on property taxes—with local school district funding varying significantly among districts within a given state (ibid). The U.S. Latino population, as a group, is appreciably affected by the variation in school district funding, as a considerable segment of the population resides in primarily urban poor areas with limited—and declining—tax bases (ibid). Furthermore, if additional student enrollments generally do not include limited English proficiency students, then school districts would not necessarily be expected to increase their ESL education expenditures. Finally, my control for total instructional expenditures is positively statistically significant, indicating that the aforementioned results are applicable even when controlling for the reality that school districts operate

under different instructional education expenditure constraints. School districts with more overall instructional expenditures are inherently more capable of allocating increased levels of instructional expenditures to the various expenditure categories.

Implementation as Teacher Allocation Effort

Table 2 presents results for bilingual education resource allocations in terms of ESL teacher allotments. Consistent with the ESL expenditure model, the second-stage results indicate that as the average number of ESL students per grade level increases, the number of teaching positions allocated towards bilingual education increases. However, unlike the bilingual expenditures model, the Latino descriptive representation variable is not statistically significant. It appears that the presence of Latino school board members does not have a substantively meaningful effect on how many ESL teachers are hired. These findings are consistent with previous analyses (see Robinson 2002) that do not find a statistically significant relationship between Latino school board representation and ESL teacher allocations. Of course, Robinson's (2002) findings may be an artifact of model specification and the one-stage nature of his analysis. Furthermore, his analysis did not examine bilingual education implementation in terms of ESL expenditures.

Interestingly, the interaction term between Latino school board representation and average ESL students is statistically significant in a positive direction in the ESL teacher allotment model. It could be the case that school board members operating under budgetary constraints are indeed recognizing the need for ESL education. In times where budgets do not appear friendly toward bilingual education, Latino school board members turn to their power over to determining how many bilingual education teacher positions to allocate for a school year. In this vein, the interaction term *does* reveal a level of

Latino school board member responsiveness and may constitute an example of substantive representation. Latino school board members may, in fact, play a strategic role in assuring that ESL students' educational needs are being met, specifically in the classroom.

Just as in the bilingual expenditure model, the low-income variable has a positively statistically significant relationship with ESL teacher allocations. Higher low-income student populations may be located in urban or extreme rural areas. Linguistic minority Latino students may be disproportionately poor. Ultimately, the analysis indicates that despite potential resource constraints that come with the realities of predominantly low-income student populations, school districts are generally responsive to the educational needs of linguistic minority students.

School district size, as measured by total student enrollment, has a positive and statistically significant influence on ESL teacher allocations. As student enrollment numbers increase, it appears that school districts may be responding to the unique teaching needs that linguistic minority students may require—especially if school districts traditionally have not encountered a substantial number of ESL students in the past. Finally, my control for total full-time equivalent teaching positions is statistically significant in the negative direction, indicating that as the total number of teachers in a school district increases, the total number of ESL teacher allotments decreases. This finding makes logical sense. Bilingual education teachers do not typically comprise a substantial proportion of total teaching positions in a Texas school district. They are hired to address the specific needs of a subset of students. Barring any major changes in the linguistic demographic characteristics of the student population, the relative number of

ESL teachers would not necessarily increase linearly in proportion to total teacher increases—assuming that students' bilingual education needs have been met.

## Chapter Four – Conclusion

### Limitations, Implications and Future Research

I have argued that in order to explain and understand the bilingual education policy implementation process, researchers must examine the interdependent relationship between bilingual education implementation and bilingual education resource allocation. School districts must first decide whether to implement a bilingual education program, and then decide how to allocate resources toward ESL education once a program is implemented. The Heckman two-stage estimation procedure provides a noteworthy improvement over past model specifications that have relied on OLS regression alone. Generally, the empirical results indicate that Latino descriptive representatives (i.e., school board members and teachers) serve as advocates for linguistic minority students by wielding their administrative authority over the bilingual education resource allocation process. Perhaps most encouragingly, the results indicate that school districts in Texas are, for the most part, attempting to address the educational needs of linguistic minority students.

My analysis contributes to the literature by providing a systematic empirical examination of the factors that determine bilingual education policy implementation in a diverse, heterogeneous setting. Specifically, theoretical and conceptual models attempt to delineate direct policy linkages between politics, bureaucracy, and minority representation. The preceding study moves beyond descriptive representation as it relates to the extant literature's ambiguous findings regarding feelings of political trust, empowerment, and efficacy. When linguistic minority students introduce a potential

problem with the educational system, researchers are well-positioned have to assess whether descriptive representation, in fact, leads to *substantive* representation.

Future Research and the "New Latino Diaspora"

Throughout the 1990s, large segments of the Latino population—immigrant and non-immigrants—began settling "outside the major urban centers and agricultural corridors they had previously occupied" (Wortham et al. 2002, viii). A growing Latino presence has been exhibited in cities and counties throughout the American northeast, southeast, Midwest, and mountain west including states such as: North Carolina, Maine, Georgia, Indiana, Arkansas, rural Illinois, and Colorado (Hamann et al. 2002). Murrillo and Villenas (1997) assert that these Latino migrations constitute a fundamental demographic shift that has led to the development of a "New Latino Diaspora." As Latino families are expanding into geographic areas that have not been traditionally inhabited by Latinos—and because a large segment of the Latino population is comprised of recent immigrants—the ways in which educational policy actors respond to, accommodate, or disregard ESL students yield substantial implications for whether public schools "best meet the educational needs of new Latino immigrants" (Wortham et al. 2002, ix). In California, the percentage of ESL students "has risen 12% since 1994 and 300% since 1980; in California, 79% of ESL students are Spanish-speaking; they represent 25% of the total public school population" (Martinez Aleman 2006, 28). In New York, 14% of the total public school population is comprised of Latino ESL students (New York State Education Department, Office of Bilingual Education, 2004). Forty percent of Latino students in the U.S. are identified as "English language proficient," and Ginorino and

Huston (2001) note that the percentage of limited English proficient (LEP) Latino students may be even higher in geographic areas where Latino students are newly arrived.

The academic debate over language minority instructional models (e.g., bilingual education versus sink-or-swim English submersion) "has tended to focus almost exclusively on areas with large, long-established populations of immigrant and non-English speaking families" in states such as: California, Texas, Arizona, Colorado, Florida, New York, and Illinois (Beck and Allexsaht-Snider 2002, 38). Furthermore, very little is known about the overlap and dissimilarities in the formulation and implementation of bilingual education policy in the comparative sense in the New Latino Diaspora (Hamann et al. 2002). My analysis is limited in that it does not benefit from the merits of a comparative state analysis.

The bilingual education policy process—and language policy more generally—are well suited to provide a plethora of political research questions and analyses. For instance, in the political behavior arena, local media outlets and national media representations of the Latino population influx into new incidence areas have spawned numerous English language initiatives. According to the Intercultural Development Research Association, 19 U.S. states had "official English" laws in effect as of 1996—of these 19 states, 11 were located in the South. Given that English language political debates find fertile ground in American politics, responses may then translate into educational policy backlash. Politically charged initiatives undoubtedly influence the policy process.

California's 1998 "Education for Children" Proposition 227 initiative and Arizona's Proposition 203 initiative attempted to dismantle bilingual instruction across

these respective states (Beck and Allexsaht-Snider 2002). Baquedano-Lopez (2004) argues that after the ballot initiative was ruled unconstitutional, an increased emphasis on English-only instruction in California served as an alternate way of marginalizing Spanish-speakers, as "Spanish-speakers were constructed as having a set of traditions that differ from the norm" (221). Beginning in 1994, Georgia's State Superintendent of Schools, Linda Schrenko, led an educational bureaucracy "seemingly hostile or, at best, facile understanding of the challenges and needs of immigrant, language minority, and Hispanic students." Schrenko publicly announced her support for "Official English" policies on her 1998 reelection website, and appointed bureaucrats who expressed congruent language education ideology to fill Georgia Department of Education administrative vacancies (Hamann 1997; Beck and Allexsaht-Snider 2002). By constructing a problematic identity for Spanish-speaking Latinos, Americanization programs that target ethnic and linguistic minorities may be legitimized as policy that accords with mainstream American norms (Baquedano-Lopez 2004; Crawford 1992).

According to Bali (2003), policy preferences of the agents of implementation are a crucial factor in explaining policy-related compliance. Popular ballot initiatives—including California's Proposition 227 and Arizona's Proposition 203—have mandated reductions or eliminations of bilingual education programs in public schools. While federal law still mandates that bilingual education be provided in schools with 20 or more ESL students per any one grade level, bilingual education and/or English-only initiatives may, in fact, significantly influence whether individual school districts comply with federal law.

Future research must consider the unique contextual environment that immigrant Latino families inhabit. Do descriptive education policy actors serve as a mechanism for parental engagement in the bilingual education policy process? Trueba (2004) finds that despite Spanish-speaking immigrant parents' structural (i.e., language) barriers to policy engagement, many immigrant parents *do* successfully engage in the education policy process. That is, some parents overcome the odds and "manage to have stronger, more powerful, and more successful school engagement experiences than others" (Perez Carreon 2005, 471). Therefore, we may inquire as to what forces may influence informal parental involvement in the bilingual education policy process. Furthermore, what kinds of bilingual education policies do actively engaged Latino parents advocate? Previous findings indicate that foreign-born Latinos with low levels of acculturation are more supportive of public policies that provide benefits to immigrants (including bilingual education) than their native-born, highly acculturated counterparts (Miller, Polinard, and Wrinkle 1984; Polinard, Miller, and de la Garza 1984). Before scholars can begin asking what constitutes "good" policy with regard to the education of linguistically diverse students, we should continue to examine whether policy actors/policy environments are predisposed to implement—or fail to implement—policies that attempt to accommodate these students.

## Appendix

Descriptive Statistics: Explanatory and Dependent Variables

| **Variable** | N | Mean | SD | Min. | Max. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ESL Students | 6,494 | 29.93 | 172.72 | 0.0 | 3668.05 |
| Latino Descriptive Representation | 6,210 | 8.203 | 19.35 | 0.0 | 100 |
| Latino Teacher Representation | 6,494 | 36.28 | 164.57 | 0.0 | 2164.6 |
| Teacher Experience (in years) | 6,493 | 11.40 | 2.68 | 0.0 | 20 |
| Total ESL Teachers | 6,494 | 15.76 | 94.02 | 0.0 | 2211.22 |
| Latino Descriptive Representation * ESL Students | 6,210 | 726.38 | 5209.92 | 0.0 | 120786 |
| % Low Income Students | 6,494 | 46.56 | 19.91 | 0.0 | 100 |
| Size | 6,494 | 3552.25 | 11018.68 | 3 | 210988 |
| Wealth | 6,493 | 1.99e+07 | 6.17e+07 | 14.0 | 1.35e+09 |
| ESL Students/Grade Level | 6,494 | 29.93 | 172.72 | 0.0 | 3668.05 |
| Instructional Expenditures Per Student (in dollars) | 6,491 | 3,283.08 | 1,118.7 | 0.0 | 35,839 |
| ESL Implementation (Expenditures) | 6,494 | 0.4861 | 0.4998 | 0 | 1 |
| ESL Expenditures | 6,489 | 371,746.4 | 2,911,152 | 0.0 | 1.05e+08 |
| ESL Implementation (Teachers) | 6,494 | 0.546 | 0.4979 | 0 | 1 |
| Total ESL Teachers | 6,494 | 15.76 | 94.02 | 0.0 | 2211.22 |

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