GUIDED BY GOVERNANCE: NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE POLITICAL DYNAMICS OF LATINO EDUCATION

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

In the United States, it is widely recognized that racial and ethnic minorities now constitute an ever-expanding share of the general population. While this growth has catapulted minorities to the forefront of the public sector's clientele, its implications for how bureaucracies serve these groups remain understudied. Using the Latino demographic and educational organizations as a policy setting, I estimate a series of statistical models to assess the determinants of group access to positions of authority in publicly governed school districts and what this access portends for minority student outcomes. While I find that a strong numeric presence in surrounding communities dictates Latinos' access to school district leadership, I also find that institutional design moderates the extent to which their numeric stength translates into organizational influence. Contrary to conventional wisdom, statistical analyses herein indicate that citizenship status and patterns of in-school policy implementation are related in a manner that underscores unique behavioral incentives. The findings also indicate that once Latinos become leaders in the policy-making process, performance-related pressures influence their decision to improve certain policy outcomes over others. Through these findings, my dissertation sheds new light on the ways in which representation in locally elected governance and bureaucratic hierarchies shapes Latinos' footing in the American education system. Importantly, the results of this dissertation also lead to the conclusion that Latinos' prospects for political incorporation is a function of institutions that shape the composition of governmental bureaucracies, along with organizational pressures to improve the performance of governmenal programs.

DEDICATION

For my Mother.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The best way to begin my acknowledgements is by admitting that I am truly grateful. I am grateful for the opportunity to be at this curious point in life, both in the personal and professional sense. And I am grateful that thanks to so many people I miraculously remained at Texas A&M University, somehow surviving my doctoral program. Now, I suppose that I should try to answer the following question: To *whom* am I indebted?

The truth is that first and foremost, I cannot take sole credit for any of my life's achievements. I am but one piece of a larger puzzle composed of many individuals who lifted me up, time and time again, when I needed it the most. All I've done is put to good use (or at least what I believe to be good use) the tools, gifts, and support that so many wonderful people have so selflessly given me. My first year as a doctoral student was one of the most trying periods of my life. I was alone. I was miserable. I was deeply depressed. Were it not for the support of my closest friends and family, I would've left for a full-time job in a city many miles from College Station.

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I come from a relatively small family. During the holidays or other special occasions, when we're all under the same roof, there are no more than 7 or 8 of us. I thank all of them. In particular, I would like to thank my two sisters, Nadia and Bianca, and my grandmother, Lucia Orozco. My grandmother spoiled, loved, and protected me to help give me an amazing life. I miss her dearly every day. I would also like to thank my father, Angel Luis Molina. He has been extremely supportive of me, pushing me to make decisions that I won't regret when I'm his age. We've always had an interesting relationship, one that has been far from perfect. Still, he's there for me precisely when I need him the most. I love and respect him beyond measure. He is a big part of why I'm finally able to write a letter of acknowledgments attached to a dissertation.

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This dissertation – along with anything else that I've accomplished up until now – belongs to my mother, Norma Molina. My mother inspires me every single day. Without fail, my mother encourages me to be a better person with her guidance, her lessons, and her love. She is without question the strongest person in my life, stronger than I could ever hope to become. She is accomplished, loved, admired, and respected by more people than anyone else I know. But most importantly, she is the only person in my life who has always put me first. Even though I fail at doing so from time to time, I try never to take her for granted.

Often times, I say to people that the only reason I've come so far is that I come from an amazing family. But what I really mean is that I come from an amazing mother. As the years pass, she doesn't slow down. Sometimes I wish that she would. But then I'm reminded of all the gifts that my mother has to offer, and I smile. I smile because I know that my mother has given the very best of her to my sisters and I. The sacrifices that she has made for me, and that she continues to make, are both countless and invaluable. And so I'll end my acknowledgements with what is undoubtedly the most meaningful acknowledgement of all. This dissertation is yet another product of my mother's tenacity and perseverance, and yet another product of her love for me. She made it possible for me to write it. Thank you, Mom. I owe you so much.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Change, Public Organizations, and the Latino Demographic

In a recent study of population change in the United States, the geographer Rachel Franklin (2014, 18) noted that "As a whole, the U.S. population is undergoing a significant transition from majority White, non–Hispanic to a majority composed of racial and ethnic minorities." Today, groups in society that were once only sparsely present now occupy a much larger and continually growing share of the population. Understanding the broad implications of this demographic shift is a critical pursuit for contemporary scholars, and one that may be grounded in numerous theoretical and methodological approaches. Still, many of the challenges relating to the rise of minority groups unfurl within the context of public policy and organizations that operate within the sphere of government.

As the demographic face of the United States continues to change, the increase of racial and ethnic minorities is likely to result in profound impacts on the performance of public organizations and the quality of policy outcomes they facilitate. At the same time, there is much uncertainty regarding the ability of such organizations to enfranchise the interests of groups that continue to shed their status as numerical minorities. Are the ideal organizational structures in place? Has the organization hired the best people to implement the best policies? A passive observation of demographic change offers little insight into these questions and the mechanisms that determine how public organizations determine the standing of racial and ethnic minorities within the larger polity. Adding clarity to this impor-

tant issue requires a new look beneath the surface of important factors that alter the interplay between governmental bureaucracies and their minority clientele. ă

While the ramifications of a growing minority clientele for public-sector bureaucracies are not confined to one policy area, they are perhaps the most critical within the context of education. As the demographic composition of the general population has shifted, so to have the demographics of our nation's students, the key clientele served by public schools throughout the country. Once the largest group consuming educational services, White students now occupy a progressively smaller presence; the K-12 system now serves a majority-minority body of students.[1] Still, school bureaucracies across the country have struggled with this change. A wealth of empirical analyses document the often bleak educational circumstances faced by non-White communities (San Miguel 1983; Fraga, Meier, and England 1986; Meier, Stewart, and England 1989; Reyes and Valencia 1993; Hess and Leal 2001; Kozol 2005).

Of the growing minority population, the Latino demographic has been at the fore of demographic change both in and out of the classroom. Latinos are now the largest minority contingent in the United States, and since the year 2000 have contributed the majority of population growth (Passel, Cohn, and Lopez 2011). Current projections reveal that by the year 2060 Latinos will eclipse 30 percent of the general population. [2] The ramifications of their growth for the education sector are striking. By the year 2050, some anticipate that the majority of America's school-age population will be Latino (Fry and Gonzales 2008). Because Latinos already account for a substantial share of all students enrolled in the K-12 system,

[1] According to data released by the National Center for Education Statistics Institute of Education Sciences in their *Projections of Education Statistics to 2022, 41st Edition.*

[2] Census projections at www.census.gov/newsroom /releases/archives/population/cb12-243.html.

one must answer the following question in order to understand the macro-level success or failure of our nation's K-12 education sector: What are the factors that shape the ability of education organizations to meet the needs of their Latino clientele?

With this question in mind, the goal of this dissertation is to contribute new perspectives on how local political and organizational factors impact Latino communities. It is composed of various sections, each with an emphasis on public school districts – the systems comprised of a governing board and the organizations they oversee – because they serve as exchanges of political and policy influence for Latinos. At present, there is little buffer between the decisions and actions ongoing within local schools and an array of political influences (Meier 2002). The ramifications of the decisions made in these organizational settings reach beyond the classroom, influencing how the broader community residing within a school district's boundaries experiences democracy (Feuerstein 2002).

I argue that Latinos' standing in public education is a function of local political, administrative, and organizational factors. These factors are of practical importance in what Gándara and Contreras (2009) refer to as a Latino education crisis. This crisis requires a renewed emphasis on the various facets of local school systems that impact Latinos students. But why? One answer relates to the considerable presence that school board members occupy in what can be conceptualized as Latinos' broader public-sector influence. In other words, their ability to influence local organizations and public policies at the local level. The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) reports that in 2012, well over one third of all Latino elected officials in the United States were school board representatives.

The figure reported by NALEO reveals that a considerable share of Latinos' public-sector influence was concentrated within K-12 bureaucracies. Improving our understanding of how such influence comes to pass, and what it portends for Latino students, will advance our understanding of place that Latinos occupy in the most local and frequently encountered form of governance in America's decentralized democracy. Because the Latino population is also significantly comprised of individuals with immigrant status (Fraga et al. 2012), the political and organizational determinants of education outcomes are also important predictors of Latinos' broader political and social incorporation.

1.2 Setting the Broader Stage

1.2.1 Latinos and the Process of Influence in Public Organizations

Research has firmly established that Latinos highly value educational opportunity. As it relates to their attitudes towards various policies, education is among the policies that Latinos have displayed the most concern for (Fraga et al. 2012). In their extensive analysis of Latino focus groups, Fraga et al. (2010, 64) find that "Latinos...indicated that they valued education as a means to facilitate securing gainful employment and achieving upward mobility in the United States generally." The findings are indicative of Latinos' preferences for pathways to academic advancement. But why haven't these preferences been translated into broad academic success?

Within any organizational setting, the translation of policy-related aspirations into positive outcomes requires access to positions of organizational influence. In the context of public education, Meier, Stewart, and England (1989, 12) argue that "determining overall policy, translating overall policy into administrative rules

and procedures, and implementing rules and procedures by applying them to individuals" are the three decision areas that shape policy outcomes. Individually, the various sections of this dissertation engage different dimensions of these vital decision-making points. Collectively, they tell a story about the process of influence in school districts, and other public organizations, that determines how bureaucracies serve Latino communities. Focusing on some of the core elements in this process can help interested parties understand an important source of the disconnect between Latinos' education preferences and their observed education outcomes. This process begins with ethnic attachments and access to seats on elected school boards.

1.2.2 Population, Ethnic Attachments, and Organizational Leadership

With the exception of scholars concerned with questions of bureaucratic representation, researchers of public organizations generally ignore the significance of ethnic attachments between public-sector decision makers and private citizens. Yet, the fact that many service-providing organizations are governed by a publicly elected board indicates that this omission is problematic. A bureaucracy's elected officials make crucial decisions that sway organizational behavior, suggesting that the ramifications of shared ethnic identification are not confined to an organization's street-level or managerial tier. In studies that focus on Latinos, one must rely on political science scholarship that examines how ethnic identification influences Latinos' broader political behavior in order to understand how it can shape the governance of public organizations.

Ethnic attachments are influential when a Latino runs for a seat on the board of a public utility, community college, hospital, or any publicly elected board that

serves Latino communities. These attachments can help explain the relationship between the demographic makeup of an organization's elected board and the characteristics of its clients. According to Barreto (2010), the presence of Latino candidates creates an ethnic political context wherein Latino communities exhibit a greater interest in elections and mobilize in favor of Latino candidates. Indeed, research finds that shared ethnicity prominently influences Latinos' mobilization (Shaw, Garza, and Lee 2000; Michelson 2003) and their support for candidates with ethnic ties to the Latino community (for example, in such works as Leighley and Vedlitz 1999; McConnaughy et al. 2010; Manzano and Sanchez 2010; Barreto 2010; Schildkraut 2012).

Ethnic connections become particularly salient when the electoral setting involves political activities that bear direct implications for Latino groups (Pantoja, Ramirez, and Segura 2001; Sanchez 2006). School board decisions are examples of such activities. Indeed, ethnic attachments are thought to be an important mechanism within research that uncovers a strong association between measures of Latino population size and the presence of Latinos serving on school boards (Leal, Martinez-Ebers, and Meier 2004; Fraga and Elis 2009; Meier and Stewart 1991). The first section of this dissertation adds to this remarkably limited body of work by analyzing new data that cover more time points than many existing studies.

The first section also considers the role that electoral institutions play in determining who governs organizations. Many of these institutions are the remnants of Progressive-era reforms that created the modern-day institutional foundation of local elections in the U.S. (Trounstine 2010). In the realm of public education, Progressive reforms have had significant impacts on school board elections (Kirst and Wirt 2009). As Meier (2002, 219) notes , "The structural designs common to most

U.S. educational systems did not remove education from politics; it only transformed the politics of education, advantaging some interests and disadvantaging others." Institutional features of school board elections can impact school district governance by moderating the extent to which Latinos' population numbers (and hence their education preferences) are translated into school board seats.

The differential effects of at-large and single-member elections have been the prominent focus of contemporary research on minority representation in local settings. Indeed, my first study examines the role of these, as I investigate the extent to which population leads to school board seats under either system. The system of election, although an important determinant of minority access to boards seats in general, is not the only institutional element of local elections that can affect Latinos' access to important decision-making points. Far less is known about the impact of two prominent institutions: election timing and partisanship. Therefore, I expand an under-studied area of Latino education by exploring levels of representation within districts that hold either November or non-November elections, and within partisan and nonpartisan school board elections.

1.2.3 Access: Inside the Bureaucracy

This dissertation is also concerned with providing new insights regarding previously unexamined factors that can impact the quality of Latinos' educational outcomes. Once Latinos occupy positions of influence in a school district, there is an overarching assumption that Latino students will benefit. In other words, education outcomes are thought to improve in response to different levels of representation within the organization. Here, perhaps the most basic benefit that organizational influence generates for minority clientele is the appointment or hir-

ing of minority administrators, and the hiring of minority bureaucrats (Saltzstein 1989; Eisinger 1982; Kerr et al. 2013). What's more, many studies highlight the relationship between the presence of minority personnel and outcomes that align with minority interests in the context of educational services (see for example Leal, Martinez-Ebers, and Meier 2004; Fraga and Elis 2009).

However, Latinos continue to face a variety of hurdles when it comes to improving policy outcomes. This is the case with the implementation of school policies that generate a racial imbalance in how different groups of students are sanctioned for similar behaviors (Skiba et al. 2011), most notably Latino students (Stader 2004). Latino students are also frequently placed into low-ability groups that diminish the long-term quality of education they receive (Meier and Stewart 1991). Despite the considerable influx of Latino immigrants in recent years (Passel and Cohn 2011), analyses that account for the salience of noncitizenship are missing from the scholarly discussion of Latinos and public organizations. The second second presents a study that attempts to help close this gap in the literature through an analysis of Latino students and education policies that accounts for undocumented students.

Why is this an important addition to the literature? It is an important addition given that immigrants of Latino origin are commonly painted as a threat to American institutions (see Huntington 2004*b*). Given this, conventional wisdom might suggest that the presence of undocumented students would create an unfavorable policy environment for Latino students in general. However, systematic analyses find that many of the popular myths surrounding Latino immigrants are not empirical realities. For example, research now demonstrates that they are less likely to commit crimes than native-born Americans (Perez 2009).

Additionally, the tenuous situation of Latino immigrants incentivizes the kind of productivity and social interactions that would eschew unwanted attention from the media, general public, or law enforcement agencies (Kasinitz et al. 2009). It stands to reason that undocumented Latino students possess a similar set of incentives, based on their unique circumstances. Undocumented Latino students likely reside in households with parents and other family members who share their undocumented status. For these students, the fear of deportation and separation from their family is a reality (Arbona et al. 2010). Because of this, undocumented Latinos hold greater incentives to assimilate and incorporate themselves into their academic settings. I argue that these unique circumstances are important for understanding interactions between Latinos students and education bureaucracies.

In the third empirical section, yet another contribution to the research on minorities in public organizations is provided. Here, I depart from existing literature by providing a new theoretical account of how the performance oriented nature of public education - and of public organizations more generally - influences the outcomes of representation that are now anticipated in the presence of minority public administrators. This new theory is entitled *Strategic Representation*, and it is concerned with the actions and decisions of superintendents.

Representative bureaucracy provides the theoretical platform for this portion of my dissertation. In a broad sense, scholarly researchers of public administration have, for many decades now, sought to shed light on the role of bureaucratic organizations as democratically representative institutions (Kingsley 1944; Krislov 1974; Selden 1997; Meier 1993*b*; Wilkins and Williams 2009; Bradbury and Kellough 2011). At the core of representative bureaucracy theory is the notion that

when bureaucratic demographics match the demography of policy consumers, those consuming the policies become passively and actively represented.

Today, a prominent line of research explores the relationship between racial representation and the performance of educational organizations (Meier 1984; Meier and Stewart 1991; Pitts 2005, 2007; Roch, Pitts, and Navarro 2010; Roch and Pitts 2012). Although such research carries important practical implications, current studies fail to consider how performance pressures and pursuit of multiple objectives can influence this form of representation. I argue that such factors have important implications for how bureaucracies serve their Latino clients. The theory that I propose in this dissertation's final empirical section is intended to depict the ways in which the salience of performance in the course of managerial decision making can influence how organizations and their administrators represent minority groups.

2. INSTITUTIONS AND LATINOS' ACCESS TO POLITICAL REPRESENTATION IN PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS

2.1 Public Organizations and Their Political Puzzle

How do elements of the political process infuse public organizations with the interests of certain clientele while suppressing the preferences of others? Because the general public relies on such organizations for the delivery of essential public services, the implications of this puzzle are sprawling. Across multiple spheres of public policy, institutional constraints determine which clientele gain access to crucial organizational deliberations. The purpose of this study is to analyze how electoral institutions moderate Latinos' access to positions of political power within public organizations.

In a broad sense, Latinos and other racial and ethnic minorities have experienced comparatively less access to the policy-making arena. For these groups, institutional barriers this limit this access are particularly salient. Their demographic intensity notwithstanding, racial and ethnic minorities continue to grapple with institutionalized ceilings that constrain their ability to influence politics and policy (Ramakrishnan 2005). These ceilings are present in public organizations that are governed by an elected board of representatives. Given the vital role that these boards occupy in the provision of local goods and services, institutional ceilings that make them less representative of minority groups may be among the most detrimental.

While public organizations governed by elected boards provide opportunities for participation in the policy process, they also provide venues for the insertion

of racial and ethnic minority preferences, values, and aspirations into the larger political system. And although such pathways vary, minority representation in local governance has been instrumental in the creation of policy arenas that enfranchise a plurality of interests (Browning, Marshall, and Tabb 1984; Hero 1992; Wolbrecht and Hero 2005; Harris, Sinclair-Chapman, and McKenzie 2005; Barreto 2007; Marschall and Ruhil 2007; Vernby 2013). This has been particularly crucial in the context of organizations that serve large Latino communities (Leal, Martinez-Ebers, and Meier 2004).

Despite the increasing salience of these institutions, only a relative handful of scholars have attempted to uncover what they portend for Latinos. New insights are required because of the limited research, but they are also required given recent legislation. The decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* (2013) weakened Voting Rights Act protections against election plans that dilute the political influence of minority groups. Many jurisdictions responded to this by swiftly proposing election plans that would limit the ability of minority voters to win locally-elected seats (Tokaji 2014).

Many legal battles – grounded in voting protections – persist over certain aspects of local elections in regions that serve large Latino communities. The California Voting Rights (CVRA), signed into law in July of 2002, paved the way for challenges to the implementation of at-large elections in that state (Leoni and Skinnell 2009). Many of these challenges have significant ramifications for various public policies. For example, in 2014 California's San Benito Healthcare District, charged with the oversight of a major hospital and various subsidiary facilities, faced litigation over its use of at-large elections to select its five-member board [1] In 2007, the

[1] http://www.sanbenitocountytoday.com

Tulare Local Healthcare District faced similar litigation over how its board members were elected.[2] In both cases, these healthcare districts serve largely Latino communities.

In public education, persistently low levels of Latino representation on school boards is thought to be the product of institutional biases. The CVRA was cited in the case of Rios v. ABC Unified School District (2013) filed after Latinos consistently failed to win school board seats in districts with at-large races, despite comprising considerable numbers in the surrounding community. In the state of Texas, Rodriguez v. Grand Prairie Independent School District was filed in March of 2013 to repeal the use of at-large elections not long after Latinos failed to win school board seats within a district whose student population is majority Latino. Post-secondary educational boards have also come under scrutiny. At-large elections were also the cause of a lawsuit filed against the Lone Star College System who implemented this plan to elect a board tasked with the oversight of its eight branch campuses.

The timing of local elections also remains a contested issue. In a 2014 case, a lawsuit was filed against the Tarrant Regional Water District in state of Texas after its proposed changes in the timing of its board-member elections.[3] The timing of elections continues to shift in response to the preferences of state and local officials often resulting in off-cycle contests. However, scheduling of elections at times other than November was a component of effort to reduce minority representation (Kirst and Wirt 2009). Although recent work has focused on the larger political consequences of election timing (Allen and Plank 2005; Berry and Gersen 2011; Anzia 2014), these analyses deemphasize the implications for the representation

[2] ear.berkeley.edu
[3] http://www.fwweekly.com

of Latinos and other minority groups. Similar to proposed changes to the timing of elections, nonpartisan systems were initially designed to enfranchise the preferences of affluent groups (Trounstine 2010). That some local elections remain partisan contests suggests that there are consequences for the degree to which Latinos gain policy representation. This study also explores the impact of this institution.

The broad consequences of election structures for Latinos' representation in policy organizations remain uncertain. However, they appear to have a disproportionate impact on America's public school districts. While there exists no panacea for Latinos' gaps in academic opportunity and achievement, representation on school boards is a political means of improving how educational organizations serve Latino communities (Meier and Stewart 1991; Leal and Hess 2000; Leal, Martinez-Ebers, and Meier 2004). For this reason, when the representation of the Latino population in school governance is limited, their prospects for sustainable academic progress also suffers.

The data analyzed in this study are taken from urban school boards during the decade of the 2000s, a period that can be characterized by the Latino demographic's remarkable growth (Passel, Cohn, and Lopez 2011). While it may be difficult to generalize to all organizations that serve Latinos, the span of school boards in this analysis encompasses a large percentage of them over the course of several years. With their share of the US populace continually increasing, Latinos will become increasingly salient to future conceptions of public organization performance, policy outcomes, and the new roles that historically marginalized groups play in shaping public-sector outcomes.

2.2 Election Institutions Latino Representation: Advancing a New Understanding

2.2.1 At-large and Single-Member School Board Elections

According to the National League of Cities, at-large elections are implemented by approximately 64 percent of all US municipalities. Compared to single-member (or ward) systems, candidates in at-large elections must appeal to a larger voting base in order to win an election. In contrast, in single-member elections, candidates can focus their efforts on voters who are divided into individual districts constituting the geographic area that ultimately they would represent (Bedolla 2012). Yet, commenting on the political consequences of each system, Shah (2010, 86) notes that

> "Electoral structure is purported to influence the probability of representation because of two persistent factors: (a) most U.S. cities are segregated spaces and (b) non-Whites tend to be a minority within jurisdiction. At-large systems thus create an additional burden for minority candidates: Minority candidates must secure not only their constituencys support but also engender substantial cross-over voting from non-minority voters."

To date, most analyses of the relationship between at-large elections and minority representation focus on African American communities (for example in works such as Davidson and Korbel 1981; Engstrom and McDonald 1981; Welch 1990; Polinard et al. 1994; Trounstine and Valdini 2008). While the majority of this work finds that at-large systems yield lower levels of representation than single-member systems (Engstrom and McDonald 1981; Karnig and Welch 1982; Trounstine and Valdini 2008; Marschall, Ruhil, and Shah 2010), the recent work of Meier and Rutherford (2014) challenges this perspective. In that study, African Ameri-

cans appear to have surmounted some of the biases inherent in at-large elections. According to Meier and Rutherford (2014), African American communities are now overrepresented within many at-large systems, particularly on school boards in regions with strongly Democratic constituencies.

For Latinos, population size is the strongest predictor of their representation on locally elected boards (Fraga and Elis 2009). Unlike the recent work on African Americans, however, Latinos are underrepresented by both at-large and single-member systems (Fraga, Meier, and England 1986; Meier and Stewart 1991; Leal, Martinez-Ebers, and Meier 2004; Meier et al. 2005; Reyes and Neiman 2011). Levels of representation are at their lowest, however, when at-large systems are implemented in areas with a non-Latino voting majority (Meier and Stewart 1991).

Within the current study, I anticipate a positive relationship between Latino group size and the percentage of board seats that are held by Latino representatives. While this expectation may not be surprising, it is important to consider its underlying mechanism. Latino communities have preferences for Latino candidates due to deep ethnic connections (Barreto 2010), and the assumption that Latino public officials will advance a policy agenda that institutionalizes the preferences of Latino communities. However, the strength of the connection between population and seats depends on the election plan in place, and whether Latinos constitute a majority of the population. In districts where Latinos comprise a numerical majority of the surrounding population, single-member and at-large election systems are likely to exert similar effects on representation. When Latinos constitute less than half of the surrounding population, the election system in place effectively determines the efficiency with which Latino population strength translates into strength in representation. In this case, Latinos comprise a numerical

minority, the greatest degree of school board representation should be observed in districts that implement single-member elections.

2.2.2 *Breaking New Ground: Accounting for Timing and Partisanship*

In addition to reconsidering how different election systems shape Latinos' presence on school boards, this study also aims to provide theoretically justifiable expectations regarding the impact of different election schedules. For this, recent studies of how different election schedules impact voter turnout provide a useful starting point. Although the focus of this analysis is not on group turnout per se, for Latino population size to translate into elected seats, Latinos must turnout to vote. The nascent work on the connections between election timing and turnout is, therefore, important for the current effort.

It is important to note that citizens participate in school board elections far less then than they do in other elections (Allen and Plank 2005). While some of this low participation may be traced to comparatively low interest in locally elected boards, much of it might also be linked to the costs of participating in elections with institutional arrangements that inflate participation costs. Since the work of (Downs 1957), it has been well established that the decision to participate in any election implies a willingness to absorb the related costs. Timing matters in this regard since elections scheduled at different times produce unequal costs (Anzia 2014). When elections for local offices are consolidated with state and federal elections, voters are provided with a greater flow of information regarding the various candidates. This minimizes the costs of acquiring information, and increases the likelihood that at least one of the contests will motivate voters to go to the polls (Lijphart 1997).

Although turnout in school board elections tends to be greater when elections are held in November, most school board elections are not November affairs (Hess 2002). In a study of Michigan school board elections, Allen and Plank (2005) find that the media coverage of elections, including coverage of school candidates and their policy platforms, was greater in cities with consolidated elections. Allen and Plank (2005) argue that holding school district elections concurrently with other elections increased the flow of political information to the communities in their sample, which was critical in motivating turnout. Similarly, the study by Hajnal and Lewis (2003) conclude that timing is among the most crucial predictors of participation on local elections. Using data from California local elections, Hajnal and Lewis (2003) find that voter turnout in municipalities that held their elections in tandem with general elections sharply outpaced turnout in municipalities with off-cycle election schedules.

Recent studies also find that off-cycle elections institutionalize the preferences of politically powerful groups by effectively determining the composition of the electorate that turns out in the first place (Meredith 2009; Berry and Gersen 2010, 2011; Anzia 2011). Because they are thought to have more at stake in the outcomes of local elections, turnout rates for organized interest groups such as teachers and other public employees tend to be higher than median turnout (Anzia 2011). As the costs of participation increase in off-cycle contests, voters with the most invested in the electoral outcome become the most willing to absorb the rising voting costs, thus increasing the odds that their preferred candidate will win the election (Berry and Gersen 2010; Anzia 2014).

For Latino representation on school boards, the timing of elections could result in two distinct patterns. First, November elections might lead to high-information

environments that provide Latino communities with greater information concerning the various political candidates, including any Latinos who are on the ballot. Under this scenario, November elections would bolster the proportion of Latino-held seats. This logic suggests that in comparison to districts that conduct off-cycle elections, representation would be higher in districts with November elections. At the same time, however, November elections have the potential to increase the participation of other racial and ethnic groups, or groups with a greater material stake school board outcomes. For that reason, if the Latino population/seats relationship is stronger in November districts, this would imply that the increase in Latino participation outpaces the increased participation of others groups.

Still, an additional factor must be accounted for. November elections imply longer ballots, and longer ballots increase the chances that roll-off (or voter fatigue) will occur. In a recent study of voter fatigue in November concurrent elections, Lott Jr. (2009) finds that Latino voters displayed higher patterns of roll-off than other voter groups. If indeed it is the case that Latino voters are less likely to cast votes for down-ballot contests in on-cycle elections (such as school board seats), then political representation in school districts with November elections would be lower. Here, non-November elections would result result in more Latino-held seats.

The partisan dimension of school board elections is the third institutional feature of this study. Similar to the push for off-cycle elections, Progressive reformers believed that local governments and bureaucracies would function more efficiently in the absence of partisan influences (Trounstine 2010). By removing party labels from school district elections, reformers also sought to eliminate the corrupt and inefficient use of resources that had been designated solely for educational pur-

poses (Kirst and Wirt 2009). Yet, the removal of party politics from local elections has had significant consequences for democratic accountability of local governments, including many urban school systems. In nonpartisan elections, the two major parties become less likely to support the campaign and mobilization efforts of candidates on the ballot, creating a scenario that disadvantages candidates from groups with low levels of socioeconomic influence, such as racial and ethnic minorities (Davidson and Fraga 1988).

In nonpartisan elections, one also observes an absence of political cues that constituents would otherwise rely upon (Karnig and Walter 1983; Hajnal and Lewis 2003; Wood 2002; Caren 2007). This has contributed to lower levels of political engagement and participation in local elections (Hajnal and Lewis 2003). If nonpartisan systems bring with them a decrease in political resources (such as voter information and campaign resources), school districts that conduct their elections without formal ties to either major political party might also have a comparatively smaller proportion of Latinos on their district's board. If the absence of important political cues that Latinos rely on dampens participation, then the link between Latino group size and representation would likely be weaker in nonpartisan districts than districts whose representatives with formal party ties.

2.3 The Empirical Setting

Within previous studies of minority representation at the local level, the majority of statistical analyses are cross-sectional in their approach. This is a potentially important limitation given the political landscape that encompasses the broader Latino demographic, the increase and spread of Latino populations throughout the United States, and the additional element of citizen status. Observations over

multiple years would allow for a more expansive coverage of such factors. Relying on several sources, the current study analyzes several years of figures measured at the school-district level. Demographic and socioeconomic indicators are taken from the 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census school district data files. These files provide information on the size of the Latino population, the citizenship of the Latino population and a variety of potentially meaningful socioeconomic resources (Latino high school graduates, the Latino/White income ratio, and the White poverty rate).

Original surveys provide the data for Latino representation on school boards, along with data regarding the structure of public school board elections. Conducted in 2001, 2004, and 2008, these surveys offer potentially expansive insights. All public school districts in the U.S. with student populations that exceeded 5,000 as of 1999 are included in this survey. The total number of district years in the panel is 5,493, and, of these, 5,192 provided answers generating a 94.5 percent response rate. It is important to highlight that these districts contain over 95% of the Latino population in the United States. Due to missing observations for the various independent variables, the number of cases included in each model specification varies.

The dependent variable is the percentage of school board seats held by Latino officials. In examining the relationship between population and school board seats, two measures of Latino population at the school district level are utilized. The first measure is the percentage of local (school district level) population that, according to Census estimates, is classified as Latino. Previous studies have taken similar approaches in analyzing the population/representation relationship on school boards, though their use of a static measure of Latino population fails to account

for changing population levels. The use of a static population measure would also inadequately capture the association between population and school politics over time given the rapidly growing Latino population. To improve upon the now standard approach, in this study Census data are used to create an adjusted population measure that accounts for Latino population growth between the years 2000 and 2010 in this sample. In addition to this, a similar metric of the Latino population whot are noncitizens, in percentage terms, is utilized.

Although I am primarily concerned with how various election institutions determine the extent of Latino representation on school boards previous studies point to the importance of African Americans (Rocha 2007) and liberal Whites (Browning, Marshall, and Tabb 1984) as allies in the political process. Two indicators are used to account for the potentially important influence of political allies in local elections. First, the percentage of African American population in the district is included in the fully specified models. The second indicator is the measure of Democratic voting taken from the online replication data for the Meier and Rutherford (2014) analysis.

Furthermore, groups require the material resources needed to influence the political process. In previous studies of school board representation, Latinos' education levels and financial resources (relative to White resources) have proven to be important predictors (Leal, Martinez-Ebers, and Meier 2004). Similar indicators will be included in this analysis.

As noted in the previous sections, several measures of Latino community resources are also incorporated. These include a metric of Latino human capital and relative economic status (the ratio of Latino/White income). Related studies account for the possibility that white voters view middle-class minority candidates

more favorably than white candidates with lower-class backgrounds (for example in Rocha 2007). The models in this analysis account for this possibility by including the percentage of Whites living below the poverty line. As an additional precaution, a set of dichotomous year dummy variables in each model. Each model was estimated using ordinary least squares regression with robust standard errors clustered by school districts.

2.4 Empirical Results

Before focusing on the institutions of interest, this analysis investigates the direct political impact of population size. At the local level, Latinos' population size has to date been the most important predictor of how much representation they receive. In the absence of high numbers in the surrounding community, one might not expect to observe any Latinos on the local school board. Given this, it is important to establish a connection between group size and seats within the current sample *before* analyzing how this connection is shaped by institutional factors.

Looking to Table 2.1, one observes a significant relationship linking school board representation to Latinos' population size in the initial model. Here, Latinos gain approximately .70 percentage points in representation for each percentage point increase in population. While this could indicate that Latinos experience 70 percent of the representation their population numbers call for, one must take into the threshold that is present. In this case, a negative and significant intercept indicates that Latinos receive no representation at all until they comprise approximately 6 percent of the population.

However, the first model groups together Latino minority and Latino majority jurisdictions. To understand the differences between the two, the second model in

Table 2.1 includes a dummy variable for school districts where Latinos are a majority of the local population, along with the interaction of this indicator with the Latino population. This second model can be decomposed into a simple equation for districts where Latinos comprise less than 50 percent of the population, and those where they are the majority. To be clear, in districts where Latinos hold less than half of the population, the dummy indicator for majority and the interaction term are equal to zero, resulting in the following seats equation:

$$\text{Minority Districts Seats} = -1.357 + .399\ \text{Population}$$

This equation reveals that when Latinos comprise less than half of the population, just 40 percent of the school board representation population calls for is created. This is subject to a modest threshold effect of 3.4 percent of population. When they are a majority, majority equations can be derived by combining the various slope coefficients as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Majority Districts Seats} &= (-1.357 - 66.070) + (.399 + 1.276)\ \text{Population} \\ &= -67.43 + 1.675\ (\text{Population})\end{aligned}$$

The third model in Table 2.1 includes the measure of Latino noncitizenship. Here, the anticipated negative result is observed, indicating that as the percentage of noncitizens increases, Latinos receive less representation on their school's elected board. Interestingly, the addition of this variable also reduces the equation intercept to zero. This suggests that the population threshold present in the local electoral process can be a function of citizenship, as opposed to an actual threshold that limits representation below a certain level of population.

The final model in Table 2.1 begins to examine the role of the various election systems. In order to determine how the different election plans matter, a technique similar to the method most recently applied in Meier and Rutherford (2014) is used. In this approach, a dummy variable representing a particular election system is interacted with an indicator of minority population size. Drawing from the survey response data, election-system indicators, that measure the proportion of school board members elected under ward elections and the proportion that are appointed by a governing entity such as a mayor or other city board, are calculated.

These indicators are then interacted with the Latino population measure. Conducting the analysis in this manner allows for the retention of all cases. It also suggests that the interpretation of how the various structures impact representation must be conducted in terms of pure at-large, ward, and appointive systems. Also included in this model are the various control variables for community resources discussed earlier in this study.

From this fully specified equation, one can see that at-large election plans impose significant limits on representation in areas where Latinos comprise less than 50 percent of the population. Although the population coefficient alone indicates a strong and positive effect of group size on the percentage of school board seats held by Latinos, the intercept for this coefficient is significant and negative. What's more, its size suggests that Latinos are largely underrepresented when they are a minority of their school district's surrounding population. From this model, the following equations for ward and at-large elections from can be calculated:

Representation in At-Large Districts = -4.14 + .39 Latino population

Representation in Ward Districts = (-4.14 + .130) + (.392 + .084)

$$= -4.01 + .48 \text{ Latino Population}$$

In comparison to the at-large relationship, ward election systems offer a slightly different picture of representation. The ward interaction term is positive and significant, which reveals that Latinos experience higher levels of representation in districts that utilize this plan. Here, a one percentage point increase in the Latino population translates into a .48 percentage increase in representation, compared to .39 in at-large districts.

Previous research finds that appointee systems, relative to the two other systems in this analysis, lead to the highest levels of expected representation (Meier and Stewart 1991; Leal, Martinez-Ebers, and Meier 2004). Here, the results indicate that there is no significant between appointed and the other election systems. Concerning the control variables in the model, only two appear to matter: White poverty and Democratic partisanship. The positive relationship for White poverty is consistent with the literature that contends Latino representation is greater when the social distance between Latinos and Whites is lower (Leal, Martinez-Ebers, and Meier 2004). For the Democratic variable, the coefficient suggests that Latinos experience gains in representation in districts with a liberal electorate.

The election system in place is not the only institution that can influence Latinos' representation on school boards. Election timing and partisan (or nonpartisan) elections might also affect representation since both are associated with lower levels of turnout. In order to test how these institutional elements of school board elections shape representation in this study, models containing all the control variables in this analysis, omitting the appointed variables, are estimated for the following: districts with November elections, districts with elections held during an-

Table 2.1: Representation and Population

	Latino Population	Majority Districts	Latino Noncitizenship	Socioeconomic Controls
Intercept	-3.953***	-1.357***	0.106	-4.137***
	(0.264)	(0.196)	(0.279)	(1.372)
Latino Population	0.696***	0.399***	0.410***	0.392***
	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.027)	(0.032)
Majority Districts		-66.07***	-65.20***	-62.15***
		(6.673)	(6.620)	(6.950)
Majority x Population		1.276***	1.257***	1.220***
		(0.096)	(0.095)	(0.101)
Latino Noncitizens			-0.066***	-0.059***
			(0.010)	(0.010)
Ward Elections				0.130
				(0.351)
Ward x Latino Population				0.084**
				(0.037)
Appointed Systems				1.072
				(0.794)
Appointed x Latino Population				0.084
				(0.084)
Democratic Percentage				0.052***
				(0.017)
Black Population				0.010
				(0.011)
White Poverty				0.123***
				(0.040)
Latino High School Graduates				0.011
				(0.011)
Latino/White Income Ratio				-0.196
				(0.312)
N	5,092	5,092	5,092	4,897
R squared	0.63	0.73	0.73	0.75
F	245.5	345.2	294.9	129.6

Standard errors in parentheses
Year dummy variables not reported
* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

other month, districts with partisan elections, and those that select board candidates in nonpartisan systems.

When considering these other electoral elements, one needs to be cognizant of both the changes in the size of the population to representation coefficient and the changes in the intercepts. A negative intercept indicates all other things being equal, Latinos must overcome a population threshold before their group size translated into school board seats gained. At the outset of this analysis that threshold was found to be 6 percent. In the fully specified equation reported Table 2.2, without accounting for timing and partisan school board races, the threshold nearly doubles in size to 11.55 percent in at-large elections. Clearly, this lowers the expected level of representation that would be observed in areas with lower concentrations of Latinos.

Beginning with the time of year in which elections are held, the impact of ward elections is generally insignificant except in the case of elections not held in November. The reduced equations for November election districts generate the following relationships:

Representation in At-Large Districts = -2.78 + .36 Latino Population

Representation in Ward Districts = (-2.78 + .151) + (.02+.36)

= -2.63 + .38 Latino Population

The following equation applies to districts with non-November elections:

Representation in At-Large Districts = -7.07 + .46 Latino Population

Representation in Ward Districts = (-7.07 + .48) + (.09+.46)

= -6.59 + .55 Latino Population

Several aspects of these equations should be noted. First, in November elections, the choice of electoral structure matters little, and Latinos are substantially underrepresented. Second, while it appears that non-November elections generate higher representation coefficients for Latinos (.46 and .55 compared to .36 and .38), at low levels of population this is countered by more negative intercept terms (approximately 7 percent in months other than November versus 2 percent in November). Comparing the two suggests that if all other variables are zero, the threshold effects in November are 7.6 percent Latino population in at-large elections and 6.9 percent in single member districts; these respective thresholds are 15.4 percent and 12.0 percent in elections held in other months. Here, a comparison also indicates that Latinos are marginally better-off as a result of at-large elections held in November, until their population exceeds 44.2 percent. Still, the differences are very minor. For Latinos in single member district systems, they do better in November elections, until they have 23.8 percent of the population.

To clarify this finding, expected representation levels at different population percentages can be calculated. At 30 percent of the population, Latinos would occupy just over 8.1 percent of school board seats in districts that hold at-large elections in November. In contrast, the same population percentage would yield 6.7 percent of school board seats in those same districts in other months. For districts holding their elections in the traditional non-November time period, 3 percent Latino population predicts 8.1 percent representation in at-large systems, and 9.9 percent representation in single member districts.

Two other relationships merit note in the discussion of electoral timing, citizenship, and partisanship. The noncitizenship percentage has a larger negative impact when elections are not held in November. The higher level of turnout in November

could suggest that impact of Latino group size faces upper limits as the result of citizenship that become more crucial in these situations. In addition, the impact of Democratic partisanship is 46 percent greater in non-November elections.

In Table 2.2, the final two specifications assess the different effects of partisan and nonpartisan elections. The expectations of this institution's effect are based on the importance of political cues to participation in local elections. When these cues are removed, it is anticipated that lower levels of representation will result. The results reported in Table 2.2 indicate the following for partisan election systems:

Representation in At-Large Districts = -5.48 + .35 Latino Population

Representation in Ward Districts = (-5.48 + -.78) + (.35+.20)

= -6.2+ .55 Latino Population

In nonpartisan elections, the following relationships are observed:

Representation in At-Large Districts = -3.79 + .40 Latino Population

Representation in Ward Districts = (-3.79 + .26) + (.40 + .06)

= -3.53 + .46 Latino Population

The findings illustrate that whether or not elections are partisan, single member districts always generate a higher level of Latino representation. In both cases the population/ward interaction is significant, and it actually triples in size in partisan systems. The intercept changes are not significant, so the change in slopes is the determining factor in representation. In sum, single member districts produce better Latino representation whether the elections are partisan or not. At the same time, partisan elections can enhance the pro-Latino impacts of a single member district system, but they have a slight negative impact in an at-large system.

Table 2.2: School Board Representation, Timing, and Partisanship

	November Elections	Non-November Elections	Partisan Elections	Non-Partisan Elections
Intercept	-2.778*	-7.074***	-5.481	-3.793**
	(1.625)	(2.379)	(3.846)	(1.514)
Latino Population	0.363***	0.460***	0.352***	0.402***
	(0.041)	(0.052)	(0.105)	(0.034)
Majority Districts	-56.14***	-66.20***	-94.40***	-60.04***
	(8.957)	(10.69)	(15.43)	(7.342)
Majority x Population	1.155***	1.223***	1.636***	1.185***
	(0.135)	(0.149)	(0.245)	(0.106)
Latino Noncitizens	-0.041***	-0.073***	-0.049***	-0.064***
	(0.013)	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.012)
Ward Elections	0.151	0.476	-0.782	0.260
	(0.483)	(0.519)	(0.595)	(0.402)
Ward x Latino Population	0.020	0.090*	0.195*	0.066*
	(0.051)	(0.049)	(0.104)	(0.040)
Democratic Percentage	0.050**	0.073***	0.052	0.056***
	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.036)	(0.019)
Black Population	0.023	-0.014	0.010	0.011
	(0.018)	(0.014)	(0.023)	(0.012)
White Poverty	0.031	0.255***	0.244**	0.115**
	(0.056)	(0.059)	(0.107)	(0.045)
Latino High School Graduates	-0.001	0.027*	0.028	0.006
	(0.013)	(0.016)	(0.021)	(0.013)
Latino/White Income Ratio	-0.192	-0.314	-0.029	-0.255
	(0.497)	(0.347)	(0.350)	(0.366)
N	2,581	2,146	631	4,096
R squared	0.66	0.84	0.84	0.74
F	62.27	114.0	39.70	136.1

Standard errors in parentheses
Year Dummy Variables Not Reported
* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

2.5 Discussion of Findings and Implications

Although their community interactions may be rare, school board representatives are charged with translating community interests into policy (Allen and Plank 2005). This study analyzed the relationship between various electoral institutions and Latinos' voice on elected school boards. A wealth of studies highlights the connection between the Latino demographic and the election of Latino officials in a variety of political settings. This includes a sparse body of work in an education policy context that underscores the connections between Latinos' growing demographic presence and the number of Latinos that serve as school board representatives (Leal, Martinez-Ebers, and Meier 2004; Fraga and Elis 2009).

While previous studies find that while Latino population size is a key predictor of whether Latinos occupy school board seats, Latinos must first surpass a population threshold before they can formally enter this policy-making arena. The results of the empirical analyses in this study are consistent with this. When Latinos comprise a majority of the population within a school district's geography, the level of representation in the current sample increases markedly. Although this finding may not be particularly surprising, it should not be understated. The significance of population size in the current study underscores the important relationship between population strength and political influence, a relationship that has been, and is likely to remain, at the center of the broader narrative concerning Latinos and their place within the broader political system.

At the same time, this study also highlight the inescapable reality that population size alone is no guarantee of influence. This study supports the notion that certain political institutions play an important role in shaping Latinos' access to key

positions of organizational influence. Although the findings of other studies are somewhat divided in their assessment of electoral structures and their various impacts on the election of Latino school board candidates, they have generally found that at-large elections are detrimental to the representation of Latinos. In this vein, the percentage of school board seats held by Latinos is higher under ward systems in the districts studied within the current effort. While this study also lends support to the notion that both at-large and single-member school board elections are associated with the underrepresentation of Latinos, it finds that other institutions matter as well.

To be sure, underrepresentation is less problematic within single-member systems when Latinos are a minority of the local population. As noted early in this study, there is now evidence that the biases inherent in at-large systems may be less pronounced in African American communities than previously thought (Meier and Rutherford 2014), as they now find themselves overrepresented in certain jurisdictions. For the Latino community, however, this is far from the case. Neither at-large or district-based elections in the current study can be associated with instances in which Latinos gain a percentage of seats that outstrips their share of the local population; Latinos are always underrepresented in this study.

Despite early reforms intended to separate politics from governmental organizations, school districts and their elections remain among the politicized arenas in the United States. One of these reforms was the implementation of nonpartisan elections. Based on this study, however, the partisan dimension that appears to have the greatest effect on representation is the partisan voting patterns of the local electorate. Although this important fact may be generally underappreciated, researchers note that American school boards represent the largest number of locally

elected governments in the United States, and the politics of American school districts determine the distribution of policy benefits and burdens to students (Leal, Martinez-Ebers, and Meier 2004). This section of my dissertation makes important additions to current studies by demonstrating that the timing of school board elections has implications for how much representation Latinos receive, in particular through its effect on the population threshold that the Latino demographic must surpass before they become represented.

Research finds that once elected, Latino school board members increase budgetary support for programs that benefit Latino students, favor the hiring of more Latino administrators, which in turn bolsters Latino teacher hiring (Leal and Hess 2000; Leal, Martinez-Ebers, and Meier 2004). Such policy environments have the potential to vastly improve the political conditions encompassing Latino students, while at the same time providing an important foundation for the social, political, and economic integration of the larger Latino demographic. At the same time, the results of this study underscore the role played by local institutions in determining the strength of such a foundation. If institutions suppress Latinos' place on the elected boards of schools and other public organizations, they may also place significant downward pressure on the ability of Latinos to influence other areas of governance.

The results of this study also underscore the association between Latino representation and Latino noncitizens. A now general expectation is that in areas with high numbers of Latinos who lack US citizenship, the formal influence of Latinos is limited. Yet, in the context of education and other policy arenas, the number of noncitizen Latinos consuming services has likely risen substantially in recent

years. Today, many noncitizen Latinos are also enrolled in and are the product of America's public schools.

The inability of noncitizen Latinos to cast votes and formally influence the outcomes of school board elections should not result in the exclusion of their needs from a district's policy agenda, particularly in regions of the country that are immigrant destinations. This includes regions of the US where various immigration, economic, and social incentives have led to the rise of newly established Latino communities. Assuming that an organization's elected leadership is concerned with improving the quality of outcomes facilitated by their managerial and bureaucratic personnel, decisions that disenfranchise a growing clientele would have dire consequences for performance.

Latino communities regard educational opportunities as fundamental in their pursuit of social and economic progress (Fraga et al. 2010). Understanding the political mechanisms that shape Latinos' standing in this critical policy domain remains an important agenda ripe for further research. One important question for future studies to consider is whether the political dynamics of regions where new Latino populations are appearing differ from those where Latinos occupy a strong historical presence. Addressing this question will further the current understanding of the role played by school districts and other local organizations in constructing Latinos' position in the polity.

Furthermore, as more data become available, scholars should address whether the results of this analysis persist over a longer time period. Such analyses will be required in order to ascertain whether Latinos and other minority groups are able to overcome many of the institutional barriers they currently face. While this study adds new evidence to a critical arena of politics and policy, school board elections

are but one piece of a larger puzzle facing Latino communities. In the future, the outcomes of these and other local elections will determine whether or not public policies meet the needs of this growing demographic.

3. UNDOCUMENTED LATINOS AND THE POLITICS OF LATINOS' EXPOSURE TO PUNITIVE SCHOOLING

3.1 From a Long-Standing Problem Comes a New Puzzle

Within many host countries, the influx of undocumented immigrants continues to give rise to important policy debates(Freeman 1995; Simon and Lynch 1999; Scheve and Slaughter 2001; Hollifield, Martin, and Orrenius 2014). Perhaps the most visible of these debates are the often contentious discussions that surround U.S. policies that impact immigrant and immigrant proximate groups. Of the nearly 11 million undocumented immigrants in the US, recent estimates indicate that the majority are of Latino origin (Passel and Cohn 2011). Indeed, one the most salient characteristics of today's Latino population is the presence of undocumented Latinos.

It is not surprising then that much of the extant debate over undocumented immigrants centers on the Latino demographic, fueled by disputes over policies such as Arizona's S.B. 1070, Deferred Action of Childhood Arrivals (DACA), and the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act. At its core, the larger discourse over the presence of undocumented immigrants may be characterized as a debate over the interactions between key arms of the bureaucratic state and groups who are perceived as illegitimate clientele, threatening to siphon off quality and quantity of public services reserved for bureaucracy's legitimate consumers.

The scholarly discourse on the undocumented and the provision of public goods is alive and well, as scholars from various disciplines have displayed a keen inter-

est in adding clarity to an increasingly salient, yet often murky, question of public policy. As an illustration, economists have concerned themselves with what the presence of undocumented Latinos in the labor force portends for the earnings of other labor market participants (Bean, Lowell, and Taylor 1988; Rivera-Batiz 1999). In public health, scholars have begun to analyze patterns of healthcare consumption that occur within communities where undocumented immigrants reside (Berk et al. 2000). And, more recently, criminologists have explored the association between undocumented immigrants and the incidence of various crimes in immigrant-host communities (Lee and Martinez 2009).

The provision of educational services by school bureaucracies that serve Latino immigrant groups has also received growing attention (Green 2003; Abrego 2006; Nuñez 2013; Jefferies 2014). Still, an issue that has gone largely unexamined is the relationship between undocumented Latino students and the policy outcomes of all Latino students, their citizenship status notwithstanding. This omission is most alarming in the context of policies that have been demonstrated to place undue burdens on Latinos in public schools. As prominently implemented policies, grouping and disciplining represent two long-established forms of educational inequity in Latino communities.

Almost without fail, Latinos are disciplined and assigned to low-ability groups at clips greater than those reported for non-Latino students (Meier and Stewart 1991; Gregory, Skiba, and Noguera 2010; Skiba et al. 2011). As a consequence, many Latino students are also prevented from experiencing educational services and programs alongside students from other racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. This is in spite of the significant upward effects that diverse learning environments have on various forms of student achievement (Hallinan 1998).

To date, undocumented Latino students and the policy-related biases confronted by Latinos in U.S. public schools have been treated largely as two distinct issues. In an attempt to connect the two, in this study I engage a new puzzle by analyzing the relationship between the presence of undocumented Latino students and two types of punitive school policies - grouping and disciplining - that are applied to *all* Latino students within the same school district. From the outset, it should be well noted that the current effort *is not* an analysis of how undocumented Latino students directly affect their documented, or U.S. citizen, Latino peers. It is, however, an investigation of the following broader question: How does the manner in which school bureaucracies engage Latino students change when a portion of those Latino students are undocumented?

The central question addressed in this portion of the dissertation engages a critical dimension of bureaucracy-Latino interactions in education. Disciplinary sanctions, meted out under adverse circumstances, represent a punitive form of such interactions. However, in addition to formal disciplinary policies, the placement of Latinos in low-ability groups can also bear punitive outcomes because it distances Latino students from quality learning opportunities and rigorous instruction, much in the same way that separation through formal punishment would.

In order to understand how undocumented Latinos factor into this larger scenario, this study argues that the circumstances surrounding undocumented students instill in them a unique set of incentives. These incentives are, for key reasons, distinct from the incentives held by students whose citizenship status is not in question. Accounting for such incentives allows me to develop and test hypotheses about the association between undocumented Latino students and the school

district environment that encompasses all Latino students, the documented and undocumented included.

The data for the current study are taken from public school districts in Texas, a state where Latinos occupy a significant contemporary presence and are now the majority of all students enrolled in public schools. I utilize a novel measure of Texas' undocumented Latino students advanced by (Hill and Hawes 2011). In what follows, I discuss several strands of relevant literature along with my theoretical and quantitative analysis. After presenting the empirical findings, I engage the ramifications of my results for the Latino-bureaucracy relationship in education and contact with another critical set of public organizations.

3.2 Barriers Confronting Latino Students

Policies that have exerted pronounced effects on the interactions between school bureaucracies and their Latino clients are an important dimension of this study. Regardless of citizenship, the contemporary place of Latino students as an underserved segment of policy consumers is a function of previous attempts to reform the relationship between schools and students, making it useful to consider some of these. In general, Latinos did not experience the early political and social gains that African American communities experienced owing to the Civil Rights Act and related litigation over the provision of education services (Acuña 1988). Even after the passage of federal legislation aimed at equalizing pathways to quality education for students of color, Latinos' claims to equitable education were seen as illegitimate, and the early political gains that eluded the Latino demographic also left Latino students on unequal footing (Acuña 1988).

Latinos were also separated from the benefits of the Supreme Court's 1954 landmark decision *Brown v. Board of Education* that rendered unconstitutional *Plessy v Ferguson's* separate but equal standard (Meier and Stewart 1991; Guajardo and Guajardo 2004). Although legally classified as White during this time, Latino students were not treated as such in the classroom (Donato and Hanson 2012). Moreover, many Latino communities did not perceive school segregation, discrimination, and substandard instruction to be the products of structural biases against them, and, as a result, did not mobilize against such barriers (San Miguel 1983). Thus, despite *Brown*, separate classrooms for Latinos – almost exclusively of Mexican origin – were a reality in Texas and California until the mid-twentieth century (San Miguel 1982). It was not until 1975 in the case of *Keyes v. Denver* that the U.S. Supreme Court for the first time acknowledged that Latino students faced the same educational discrimination as African Americans (Meier and Stewart 1991).

While policies such as the DREAM Act have fueled recent debates over undocumented students and their access to public education, these debates are not new. During the decade of 1970s, Latinos' immigration status and public education access were highly contested in the state of Texas (Rincon 2010). The ensuing efforts to exclude immigrants from classrooms eventually led to the Supreme Court's ruling *Plyler v. Doe* in 1982, ensuring that undocumented immigrant students gained cost-free educational services in public schools (Green 2003). As Rincon (2010, 12) aptly notes, "*Plyler* extended a right that does not exist, education, to those who ostensibly have no rights – the undocumented."

Although *Brown v. Board* eliminated the de jure exclusion of Latinos and other students of color, the implementation of school policies that produce segregation-like outcomes remains in tact. Some have referred to this as a second generation

of discrimination characterized by the differential grouping and disciplining of students driven by characteristics such as their race or ethnicity, or socieconomic class (Meier, Stewart, and England 1989; Meier and Stewart 1991). While the justification for student discipline ranges from minor classroom disruptions to more serious offenses, such as physical and other violent encounters, previous studies highlight persistent racial discipline gap between minority and non-minority students in the face of similar violations of school conduct policies (Skiba et al. 2002; Gregory, Skiba, and Noguera 2010; Rocque 2010). Comparatively harsher disciplinary measures are imposed on Latino students, and recent findings indicate that they absorb an undue share of the disciplinary practices implemented within their schools (Stader 2004). This unequal punishment may be particularly troublesome for Latino students because it has the potential to exacerbate drop out rates, inferior employment prospects, and other problems that typically plague Latino communities.

The implementation of seemingly benign grouping and tracking policies that aim to improve academic achievement can also produce biased outcomes. The practices of grouping and tracking are intended to place high achieving, high potential students in direct interaction with similarly skilled students; at the opposite end of the performance spectrum, low ability learners are grouped alongside peers whose skill levels are akin to their own. Such policies are also implemented under the assumption that they are an efficient means of minimizing performance gaps, increases teaching efficiency, and preventing low performing students from slowing the progress of high achievers (Argys, Rees, and Brewer 1996).

Today, whether such practices generate the desired outcomes is an important debate within education policy. While there is some indication that ability group-

ing matters very little for student development (Betts and Shkolnik 2000; Slavin 1990), other findings suggest that under certain circumstances, students placed in higher-ability groups draw greater benefits than students placed in lower-end categories (Kerckhoff 1986).

Students of color are more often grouped into lower ability classrooms where they experience second-rate instruction (Braddock and Slavin 1992). As a result, grouping and tracking policies have come under heavy scrutiny because of their potential to institutionalize disparities in academic achievement. They are also heavily critiqued because they require teachers and administrators to sort students into different groups in ways that effectively re-segregate school (Eyler, Cook, and Ward 1983). The phenomenon of resegregation in public school systems is the separation of students by race or ethnicity within de jure integrated schools. It can be generated by the degree to which racial or ethnic minorities are overrepresented in classes for low-achieving pupils, and underrepresented within those reserved for high-ability learners.

Not only does this process severely limit interaction between students who are ethnically and racially heterogeneous, it places undue burdens on educational opportunities for minority students (Lee 2002). There is strong evidence that Latino students, despite their rising numbers, are being pushed into separate environments. Frankenberg and Lee (2002) note while the segregation of black students has trended downward over time, with few exceptions Latinos in school districts across the U.S. have experienced increasing segregation.

3.3 Theoretical Expectations: Fitting Undocumented Students Into the Picture

To date, there has not been a single investigation that grapples with the complex relationship between the grouping and disciplining of all Latino students and the presence of undocumted Latino students. Hill and Hawes (2011) argue that because of the legal constraints, school districts do not report the official citizenship status of their students. This data limitation is likely an important justification for why efforts have not been made to explore the link between undocumented Latinos the implementation of various school policies. As a consequence there are currently no testable hypotheses regarding this relationship. At best, for the purpose of examining the relationships of concern to this study, one is required to theorize based on the general discussion regarding immigrant children in order to arrive at testable hypothesis.

A question that arises in the context of grouping and disciplinary polices is whether undocumented Latino students influence the representation of Latino students in negative policy areas. Immigrants of Latino origin are often painted as a threat to a variety of American institutions (as in Huntington 2004*a*), and popular conceptions might suggest that undocumented students would lead to unfavorable policy environment for Latino students in general. However, systematic analyses find that many of the popular myths surrounding Latino immigrants are not empirical realities.

Research now demonstrates that they are less likely to commit crimes than native-born Americans (Perez 2009). What this finding points to is the presence of an immigrant demographic that has the potential to contribute in a positive manner to the standing of the Latino population in a variety of contexts. Additionally,

the tenuous situation of Latino immigrants incentivizes the kind of productivity and social interactions that would not result in unwanted attention from the media, general public, or perhaps even from law enforcement agencies (Kasinitz et al. 2009).

It stands to reason that undocumented Latino students possess a similar set of incentives. Their undocumented status suggests that there is much more at stake for them and their families. Undocumented students likely reside in households with family members – be they parents, siblings, or other relatives – who are also undocumented. The fear of deportation and separation from their family is a reality for undocumented Latino youth (Arbona et al. 2010). Because of this, undocumented Latinos hold greater incentives to assimilate and incorporate themselves into their academic settings. Other students face only in-school repercussions for disruptive behavior in the class.

However, disruptive behavior has potentially more severe implications for undocumented Latino students. If undocumented Latino students exhibit behavior that warrants suspension or expulsion, this has the potential to bring unwanted attention to their undocumented family. Attention from school officials may be perceived as a threat to their ability to remain in the U.S. This suggests that they will avoid engaging in the kinds of behavior that justifies suspension or expulsion. Consequently, I do not expect the presence of undocumented Latino to be associated with increases in the disciplining of the Latino population in public schools.

Hypothesis 1: The presence of undocumented Latino students will not be associated with the negative policy treatment of Latino students

At the same time, undocumented Latinos are likely to have less experience with U.S. education, and are likely to be less acclimated to the language and culture of American classrooms. While these are limitations that can significantly limit their academic development, undocumented Latinos face additional economic obstacles not directly linked with cultural limitations that come in the form of severe economic pressures. Some research notes that in many cases immigrant Latino families tend to migrate frequently in search of employment (Gibson and Hidalgo 2009). These economic pressures place additional burdens on undocumented Latinos that severely limit their prospects for academic success. Therefore, I do not expect that their presence will be positively associated with the placing of Latino students into favorable policy areas such as classes for the gifted and talented.

Hypothesis 2: The presence of undocumented Latino students will not be positively associated with the grouping of Latino students in favorable policy areas

Because school districts engage in a variety of political decisions that determine who gets what in today's classrooms (Meier and Stewart 1991), this study also controls for the influence of Latino school board members and teachers on the outcomes of interest. Not only are Latino school board members likely to pursue policy choices that benefit Latino students, but in the classroom Latino teachers also play a critical role in ameliorating educational inequities. Together, these two sets of actors have enfranchised the interests of Latino students in a variety of settings (Leal, Martinez-Ebers, and Meier 2004; Fraga and Elis 2009). In addi-

tion, Meier and Stewart (1991) find that the presence of Latino educators improved Latinos' placement in gifted and talented programs, and decreased Latino dropout rates while reducing the percentage of Latino students suspended and expelled.

3.4 Empirical Setting

To empirically assess my theoretical expectations, I collect data from two primary sources: the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) conducted by the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR), and a set of indicators for public school districts in the state of Texas reported by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The OCR CRDC survey gathers data regarding civil rights and classroom outcomes in U.S. school districts disaggregated by race and ethnicity. The sampling period used in this study is 2002, 2004, and 2006. The OCR CRDC provides the most appropriate and reliable data currently available for this study.

I examine two forms of disciplinary measures – suspensions and expulsions. Suspensions refer to the number of students excluded from attending school for a period of no less than one day. In this case, students are ultimately allowed to return to their classrooms. Expulsions refer to the number of students prohibited from attending school for disciplinary reasons. Data for students enrolled in gifted and talented programs, often referred to simply as GT courses, are used as a measure of student grouping. In relation to their peers, gifted and talented students are students who are deemed to be academically superior. The OCR definition indicates that this figure represents the number of students enrolled in courses specifically tailored for students who possess unusually high academic ability or talents. Students who require intermittent and episodic support to perform academic functions, interaction with others, and other daily activities fall into the OCR

CRDC category of mild retardation, referred to herein as intellectual disabilities. Lastly, I analyze CRDC data on high school graduates.

These OCR data are used to construct the various dependent variables in my analysis. Here, I develop a series of representational ratios similar to those developed in earlier studies (Meier, Stewart, and England 1989; Meier and Stewart 1991). These ratios indicate how likely Latino students are to be subjected to specific policies relative to all other students enrolled in their school district. It should be noted that this ratio assumes that Latinos should be disciplined or grouped into specific classes in patterns that closely approximate their share of the student population. Thus, an index resulting in a figure greater than one would indicate that Latinos are overrepresented. Conversely, an index of less than one indicates underrepresentation. In order to deal with the skewed nature of these figures, the log of each odds ratio is used as the dependent variable with the models estimated.

In order to measure how undocumented Latino youth impact the differential treatment of all Latinos, I incorporate a measure of undocumented Latino students in Texas public school districts developed by Hill and Hawes (2011). The state of Texas maintains a tracking system for students that designates a unique identifier tied to each student's individual security number. When a student registers, he or she must provide a social security number; when one is not provided, students are assigned an alternate number by their school district. This process yields the number of Latinos wihtout such identification served by each district, who are then assigned alterntative identification numbers. From this, the percentage of undocumented Latino students, as proxied by the districts' identification system, is derived.

In addition to the aforementioned variables, other district-level factors could be influencing the outcomes of interest in this study. On the one hand, the composition of important political actors in the district need to be accounted for. In an attempt to account for this, the models estimated in this analysis include measures of the percentage of Latino teachers in the district along with a measure of school board representation. This allows me to account for the potent impact of representation within the classroom and on the school board.

For example, a district's financial resources can help improve the quality of instruction and general learning environment for all students, but during periods of scarce financial resources and budget austerity Latino students will likely be dealt the largest blow as programs that enhance Latino performance are exposed to financial cuts. To control for this, I include a measure of district-level financial resources. In addition, I control for the presence of African American and low-income students in the district. Finally, in each of the models estimated the district's student-to-teacher ratio is controlled for. Here, all data are reported by the Texas Education Agency (TEA).

The data being analyzed are a sample of Texas public school districts over several years. The spatial and temporal characteristics exhibited by panel observations suggest that heteroskedasticity could be cause for concern. A set of Breusch-Pagan tests to formally test for heteroskedasticity was estimated for each model in this study. To be sure, unequal error variance does not result in biased estimates; however, the use of OLS will not generate parameter estimates with the smallest variance in this case (Gujarati and Porter 2009). As such, random effects generalized least squares models with robust standard errors and clustering by school district are estimated.

3.5 Findings

3.5.1 Latino Student Suspensions and Expulsions

The quantitative analysis begins by focusing on Latino student suspensions and expulsions. Students who are suspended are eventually permitted to return to their classroom. In contrast, when a student is expelled, she or he is removed from attendance rolls entirely. While removal from the classroom is a considerable barrier in itself, the considerable time it takes for a student to enroll in another school district can result in significant burdens, as the process of adjusting to new classroom environments may take an additional toll on one's educational integration.

The models reported in Table 3.1 shed light on the relationship between the presence of undocumented Latino students and the disciplinary practices of concern in this study. As it relates to the Latino suspension ratio, the results suggest that the presence of undocumented Latino students is not associated with increases in this policy ratio. According to these findings, an increase in the percentage of undocumented Latino students significantly decreases the odds of Latinos being suspended within the same school district.

Although the size of this effect is not large, it is present in both models including the one controlling for the influence of teacher and school board representation. In both models of suspensions, teacher and board representation have little influence over this outcome. The coefficient estimates for the percentage of low-income and African American students are both statistically significant. This indicates that as the presence of Black and low-income students increases at the school district level, Latino students are less likely to be suspended relative to all others enrolled.

Table 3.1: Modeling Latino Suspensions

Dependent Variable: Suspension Ratio	Model 1	Model 2
Undocumented Latino Students	-0.009***	-0.008***
	(0.007)	(0.003)
Latino Teacher Percentage		-0.001
		(0.001)
Latino Board Member Percentage		0.002
		(0.001)
Revenue Per-Pupil	-0.273***	-0.286***
	(0.057)	(0.057)
Low-Income Students	-0.004***	-0.005***
	(0.001)	(0.001)
African American Students	-0.007***	-0.007***
	(0.001)	(0.001)
Student-Teacher Ratio	-0.043***	-0.047***
	(0.013)	(0.015)
Intercept	1.220***	1.313***
	(0.235)	(0.272)
N	543	543
R squared	0.15	0.16
F	18.68	14.47

Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

In Table 3.2, models of Latino expulsion ratios are presented. Whereas the relationship between undocumented Latino students and Latino suspensions was significant, there appears to be no significant association between the presence of undocumented Latinos and the suspension of all Latino students in their school district. However, teacher representation is statistically significant indicating the as district's employ more Latino teachers, Latino students are less likely to be suspended. More surprising, however, is the relationship that is observed for Latino board membership.

Several potential mechanisms could help explain this finding. First, it might be the case that Latino parents encourage administrators to impose stronger oversight of their children, leading to school districts with more reactionary expulsion guidelines. If this is indeed the case, the coefficient for Latino school board representation might suggest administrators are responding to such demands in ways the promote the implementation of comparatively harsh disciplinary sanctions. Second, performance-related motives to keep low-performing students – in this case Latino students – from deflating districts' overall achievement on important benchmarks could incentivize actions that keep low performers out the classroom. Again, the percentage of low-income students, African Americans, and larger classes are meaningful predictors.

3.5.2 Latino Grouping and Graduation

The next indicator evaluated in this analysis measures the odds of Latino students being categorized as intellectually disabled. Interestingly, in each of the models the results indicate that Latino students are less likely to be placed into this category in response to a greater presence of undocumented Latino students

Table 3.2: Latino Student Expulsions

Dependent Variable: Expulsion Ratio	Model 1	Model 2
Undocumented Latino Students	-0.003	-0.001
	(0.006)	(0.006)
Latino Teacher Percentage		-0.004*
		(0.002)
Latino Board Member Percentage		0.006***
		(0.002)
Revenue Per-Pupil	-0.365	-0.462
	(0.319)	(0.315)
Low-Income Students	-0.0101***	-0.013***
	(0.001)	(0.002)
African American Students	-0.006**	-0.004
	(0.003)	(0.004)
Student-Teacher Ratio	-0.051**	-0.070***
	(0.021)	(0.025)
Intercept	1.843***	2.247***
	(0.436)	(0.509)
N	318	318
R squared	0.20	0.22
F	14.81	10.87

Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

in the school district. Bureaucratic and elected representation, however, are not related to this outcome. In both models the percentage of low-income students is negatively related to outcome of interest in Table 3.3, but the relationship is somewhat inconsistent in this regard. Similar to the models of school discipline, Latinos are less likely to represented in this category as the district's share of African American students and student-teacher ratio increase.

Table 3.3: Latino Intellectual Disability

Dependent Variable: Intellectual Disability Ratio	Model 1	Model 2
Undocumented Latino Student	-0.012**	-0.017**
	(0.008)	(0.008)
Latino Teacher Percentage		-0.001
		(0.004)
Latino Board Member Percentage		-0.001
		(0.003)
Revenue Per-Pupil	-0.302	-0.270
	(0.234)	(0.243)
Low-Income Students	-0.007***	-0.006*
	(0.002)	(0.003)
African American Students	-0.018***	-0.019***
	(0.003)	(0.004)
Student-Teacher Ratio	-0.104***	-0.096***
	(0.028)	(0.033)
Intercept	2.455***	2.285***
	(0.556)	(0.633)
N	183	183
R squared	0.32	0.33
F	16.56	12.50

Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

Table 3.4 reports the findings for the Latino gifted and talented ratio. Enrollment in gifted and talented courses gives students exposure to high quality instruction and provide the foundation needed for long-term academic success. However, undocumented Latinos, due to the barriers they likely face in the classroom , might be less likely to be enrolled in gifted and talented programs relative to other students.

The significant and negative coefficients for undocumented Latinos are suggestive of this, as the results indicates Latino students in general are less likely to be represented among the ranks of gifted and talented students as the presence of undocumented Latino students in their school district increases. This indicates that Latino students will experience greater underrepresentation within this group of high ability learners. Within the sample being analyzed, model 2 also reveals that increase in Latino teachers and school board members within a district can help bolster the likelihood of Latinos being enrolled in gifted and talented classes.

The tangible benefits of a high school diploma are almost innumerable. Though it is not a sufficient condition for various forms of mobility, it is unquestionably a necessary one and it marks an important benchmark in the educational trajectory of Latinos. In Table 3.5, the results reveal that increases in undocumented Latinos students are negatively related to high school graduation of the larger Latino student population. This result is not surprising given the significant burdens that undocumented Latinos face. Such burdens are often enough to put an early end to their educational development, and effectively end their incorporation through education. This is observed in both models. In the equation that controls for representation, the effects of increases in Latino teachers are line with theoretical expectations and increase the odds that Latinos will graduate from high school.

Table 3.4: Latino Gifted and Talented Students

Dependent Variable: Gifted and Talented Ratio	Model 1	Model 2
Undocumented Latino Students	-0.013***	-0.009**
	(0.004)	(0.004)
Latino Teacher Percentage		0.006***
		(0.003)
Latino Board Member Percentage		0.004***
		(0.001)
Revenue Per-Pupil	0.358***	0.223***
	(0.083)	(0.077)
Low-Income Students	0.011***	0.003**
	(0.001)	(0.001)
African American Students	0.001	0.008***
	(0.002)	(0.002)
Student-Teacher Ratio	0.024*	-0.020
	(0.013)	(0.014)
Intercept	-1.806***	-0.932***
	(0.242)	(0.260)
N	628	628
R squared	0.22	0.29
F	39.04	111.1

Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

Table 3.5: Latino Diploma Recipients

Dependent Variable: Diploma Ratio	Model 1	Model 2
Undocumented Latino Students	-0.011***	-0.010***
	(0.003)	(0.003)
Latino Teacher Percentage		0.003***
		(0.001)
Latino Board Member Percentage		0.001
		(0.001)
Revenue Per-Pupil	0.055	0.016
	(0.053)	(0.053)
Low-Income Students	0.003***	0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)
African American Students	-0.005***	-0.002
	(0.002)	(0.002)
Student-Teacher Ratio	-0.009	-0.025**
	(0.009)	(0.011)
Intercept	-0.196	0.101
	(0.166)	(0.194)
N	642	642
R squared	0.13	0.14
F	20.33	40.50

Standard errors in parentheses
* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

3.6 Discussion of Findings and Implications

Using previous research as a point of departure, I reexamine some of the educational practices that have come to be known as second generation discrimination while bringing undocumented Latino students into this discussion. Since the findings of earlier studies, most notably Meier and Stewart (1991), the Latino population in the United States has changed dramatically. This change is visible not only in terms of Latinos' rising numbers, but also in terms of the composition of the Latino population. The sheer increase in Latinos alone means that there are now far more Latino students, and the significant growth in the number of undocumented families brings with it an increased presence of undocumented Latino students. This study addresses the more difficult question of what increases in undocumented Latinos suggest for the punitive policies levied upon Latino students in school districts across the state of Texas.

Several aspects make these school districts an ideal fit for the current study. For one, Texas is a state with a significant Latino population that continues to expand. Latino students are now the majority demographic enrolled in Texas public schools. Texas is also a particularly salient setting because of its close proximity to the largest sender of Latino immigrants to the U.S., and the presence of undocumented Latino youth in its public school districts has likely increased in recent years.

Using a recently developed proxy of undocumented Latino students in the state of Texas, I find that their presence does not significantly increase the representation of Latinos among the body of students sanctioned within Texas' public school districts. I have argued that this is reflective of the incentives that undocumented

Latino students have to avoid bringing unwanted scrutiny to themselves and, more importantly, their families. Yet, there is yet another side to this story. The findings indicate that as the percentage of undocumented Latino students increases, the Latino student population in general is not only less likely to be enrolled in gifted and talented programs, they are also less likely to be represented among the ranks of high school graduates.

Entrance into gifted and talented programs occurs early on in a student's academic development. Although students may be required to pass exams or display a certain level of aptitude before being enrolled in gifted and talented courses, teacher recommendation early on can be an important step in this process. If a greater undocumented student presence results in less Latino gifted and talented enrollment, this could suggest that fewer teacher recommendations are occurring. The question then becomes, how do teachers distinguish *citizen* Latinos from the undocumented ones? While it is unlikely that teachers have direct access to a student's citizenship status, they observe the students on a daily basis, they recognize who the Latinos English speakers are versus the native Spanish-speaking students, and they are also likely to interact with parents periodically during parent-teacher conferences and other meetings.

All of these are signals that teachers and administrators may rely upon to classify Latino students, and these signals may be used to determine which students are given the opportunity to be in gifted and talented programs. To be sure, the data used in this study are not fully capable of explicitly measuring such mechanisms. It must also be understood that the data in this *do not* measure the direct impact of undocumented Latinos on documented Latinos; to claim that the data in the analysis shed explicit light on such a relationship would be an ecological

falacy. While this study captures the various associations between education policy trends encompassing all Latino students and the presence of Latino students who, based on the measure used in this study, are undocumented, it is important to consider the mechanisms of this relationship because it sets an important stage for future research efforts.

For Latinos, educational opportunities are the lifeblood of mobility and incorporation. Gándara and Contreras (2009, 13) assert that "Education is the single most effective way to integrate the burgeoning population of Latinos into the U.S. economy and society." However, a now consistent finding is that Latinos, through the application of some of the policies examined in this study, are often separated from this form of integration by schools and other bureaucracies that punish minority groups. Perhaps the most insidious form of this is the growing presence of a school-to-prison pipeline, the now institutionalized process that disproportionately disciplining and removes minority students from public schools, increasing their odds of being sanctioned by the larger criminal justice system.

While much of the related research focuses on African American students, there is mounting evidence that Latino youth are increasingly subjected to harsher forms of school discipline than other students (Stader 2004), and are more likely to be removed from the classroom than students from other racial groups for virtually identical infractions (Skiba et al. 2011). The school-to-prison pipeline for Latino is without question the result of many variables that reach beyond the scope of the current effort. Still, the current effort is salient in this regard as it provides an initial glimpse into what the presence of undocumented Latino students portends for forms of in-school discipline that have now become an important predictor of Latinos' experience with the larger, and ever expanding, carceral state.

4. STRATEGIC REPRESENTATION, LATINOS, AND EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

4.1 On Performance and Bureaucratic Representation

For scholars and practitioners alike, understanding how public organizations perform is a fundamental objective. The pursuit of this objective has produced an expansive literature spanning the fields of sociology, psychology, and, naturally, public administration, with much of it emphasizing the importance of management in organizational life. Though how organizations function tends to be driven by an array of internal and external forces, researchers continually place public managers at the forefront of organizational performance (Simon 1957; Nicholson-Crotty and O'Toole 2004; Walker and Boyne 2006; Nicholson-Crotty, Theobald, and Nicholson-Crotty 2006; Moynihan and Pandey 2010; O'Toole Jr. and Meier 2011).

In a public sector characterized by increasing complexity in the design and implementation of policy, performance serves as a ubiquitous cue that guides managerial decisions. The premium placed on the performance of governmental programs, and organizations' multiple performance objectives are primary reasons for this (Box 1999; Rainey 2009). Today there is little doubt that performance occupies a central role in the culture and governance of public organizations (Romzek and Ingraham 2000; Moynihan 2008; Moynihan and Hawes 2012). Simply put, public managers influence and are influenced by performance.

At the same time, the confines of democratic governance suggest that public organizations and their managers are tasked with more than enhancing performance (Box et al. 2001). Public organizations bridge the expanse between policymakers

and the public by delivering essential services in education, law enforcement, and social welfare. As a consequence, while managerial decisions sway performance, they also bear significant implications for clientele who rely on the effective delivery of public programs to meet their policy-related needs. Here, the choices that managers make influence citizens through their impact on the outcomes of policy. And while one cannot ignore that managerial decisions are driven performance objectives, that administrative decisions can be shaped by management's personal identification with certain social groups must also be taken into account.

This is particularly the case with public managers from groups that lack representation in governing institutions. For these managers, decisions can be driven by both extrinsic performance related and intrinsic socially oriented motives. These motives combine to affect how minority managers make decisions. Yet, precisely *how* remains unclear. When faced with the confluence of multiple performance objectives and clientele-attachments, how do minority managers choose which area of performance to pursue? An answer to this essential question of contemporary decision-making in public organizations is absent from existing literature. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to introduce an initial theoretical response, along with an empirical depiction of the policy outcomes that ensue.

Any serious effort to formulate and empirically assess new theory begins with a point of departure grounded in an established literature. Relative to other prominent literatures in public administration, studies of representative bureaucracy offer the most useful starting point for understanding how a manager's identification with certain clientele can influence her or his decisions. As a theoretical lens, representative bureaucracy underscores both the symbolic and practical implications of a convergence between organizational and clientele demographics. Indeed, there

appears to be growing evidence that representation in organizations is more than symbolic given its tangible affect on various measures of performance (for example see Meier, Wrinkle, and Polinard 1999; Meier and Nicholson-Crotty 2006; Keiser et al. 2002). Still, despite the long-standing concerns surrounding representation and democratic responsiveness of the public sector (Kingsley 1944; Krislov 1974; Selden 1997; Meier 1993*b*; Wilkins and Williams 2009; Bradbury and Kellough 2011), researchers have failed to account for how performance and decision-making shape the representation-responsiveness link. This study marks an effort to improve upon this deficiency.

Although there are salient connections among multiple performance objectives, administrative decision-making, and bureaucratic representation, this study is the first to advance a theory of precisely how they are intertwined — and why it matters — by introducing a theory of strategic representation. Strategic representation is concerned with the relationship between multiple performance objectives and representation by an organization's managers. The core contention of this theory is that minority administrators will not abstain from pursuing the interests of specific groups when deciding which area of performance to engage; they will instead be strategic by focusing on their organization's most salient area of performance, effectively enhancing one area of performance over others.

An empirical test of the theory proposed herein is developed using representation in the context of racial and ethnic identification, with the performance of educational organizations as the policy setting. To be sure, the quantitative analysis presented herein does not directly test managerial behavior. The goal of the analysis is to establish initial empirical support for the theory being proposed by demonstrating how organizational performance would essentially *look* if, in this

case, theory comports with real-world behavior. As discussed in subsequent sections, the analysis arrives at strong initial support. Further, while racial and ethnic identification is the focus of the analysis, the theory is not limited to representation based on race. It is intended to generalize to other salient identities such as gender or, given the recent developments in the literature, previous professional experiences (e.g one's status as a milary veteran).

Public education is the policy setting of this study. The education outcome gaps that persist between students from different racial groups continue to fuel substantial theoretical and practical debate. While the practical implications of this article matter for organizational performance and service to clientele more generally, they also underscore the conditions under which representation in public schools is an effective means of improving minority student achievement.

4.2 Representative Bureaucracy: Where the Theory Stands

At its core, the theory of representative bureaucracy addresses the political legitimacy of public organizations. Policies that foster a diverse labor force offer policymakers an important means of increasing the political legitimacy of governmental organizations since a demographically diverse organization is thought to embody the diverse preferences of the general public. Initially proposed by Kingsley (1944) in his study of the British civil service, Kingsley observed that elected representatives and bureaucrats hailed from similar social cleavages. Since these groups held similar values and preferences related to issues of political salience, at the time of Kingsley's study the composition of British bureaucracy ensured that the implementation of governmental policies would reflect ruling-class preferences.

In the context of organizations in the U.S., while the theory of representative bureaucracy engages the social origins of public personnel, scholars have built upon normative claims to argue that a representative public sector enfranchises a plurality of interests. Recognizing that modern democracy brought with it an increase in bureaucratic governance, Levitan (1946, 566) argued that "The very continuance of the democratic system depends on our ability to combine administrative responsibility with administrative discretion." Levitan (1946) also held that the democratic responsiveness of American bureaucracy is at its highest when the composition of public organizations mirrors that of the public it serves. Others supported Levitan's position by contending that bureaucratic representation could improve deficiencies in general representation that were left by unresponsive elected institutions (Long 1952).

Building upon early normative perspectives, contemporary research has sought to uncover the causal mechanisms linking organizational demographics with how organizations actually perform. According to Mosher (1982), bureaucratic representation embodies a *passive* form that is observed when bureaucrats and their clientele can be grouped into a single demographic. This commonality implies a sharing of life experiences that result in a common set of values and preferences. Organizations passively represent these values when their personnel and their clientele come from the same demographic. Some have argued that passive representation can itself improve organizational outcomes, albeit indirectly, when minority bureaucrats influence the behavior of their non-minority employees (Lim 2006). Indirect impacts can also result when passively representative organizations appears increasingly amenable to minority interests, leading minority clientele to

engage in behaviors that influence how an organization serves them (Meier and Nicholson-Crotty 2006).

While the indirect consequences of passive representation have received moderate attention, the direct implications appear to have captured the bulk of scholarly attention. Mosher (1982) underscored the potential for direct effects by arguing that bureaucratic representation also embodies an *active* form. Active representation occurs when the symbolic bonds shared by members of the same group influence the behavior of those within the organization, resulting in benefits for members of a specific group (Meier 1993*b*). The implication here is that public employees cognitively identify clientele with whom they descriptively identify. These clientele then become part of what some have referred to as a target-group (for example Lim 2006). Bureaucrats then advance policies and programs that can improve target-group outcomes. This process suggests that social identities such as race, age, or gender can have a meaningful impact on the implementation public policy.

Some have found that these identities become particularly influential when minority administrators assume the role of minority representative. For example, Sowa and Selden (2003) find that when administrators focus their efforts on traditional objectives such as efficiency and aggregate performance, they are less likely to take risks on behalf of certain groups. The same study also finds that when administrators embrace their status as a representative of minority-group preferences, outcomes for minority clientele are more likely to improve.

4.2.1 Searching for Evidence of Bureaucratic Representation

To date, empirical analyses fall into one of two subsets. The first of these probes for passive representation by examining whether certain indicators of bureaucratic demography match general population demographics. Using this approach, Meier (1975) finds that the degree of similarity in age, income, and education of bureaucrats depends on the level of bureaucracy in question. Meier and Nigro (1976) arrive at a similar conclusion, and also find little support for the presence of attitude congruence, or the degree to which policy preferences of bureaucrats match the public's preferences. In a related context, Riccucci and Saidel (1997) develop an aggregate measure of representation among political appointees within state government. Their study points to the underrepresentation of racial minorities and women among the ranks of state-level policy officials. More recent work by Lewis and Pitts (2011) concludes that the representation of gay men and lesbian women in bureaucracy is higher in states with policies that protect gay and lesbian rights.

Does the presence of minority personnel affect organizational responsiveness to minority preferences? The second subset of empirical literature addresses this question. A growing consensus in the literature establishes a significant association between the presence of minority employees and favorable outcomes for underrepresented groups (Meier and Stewart 1992; Coleman, Brudney, and Kellough 1998; Keiser et al. 2002; Meier and Nicholson-Crotty 2006; Wilkins and Keiser 2006). As an illustration, there is now evidence that female representation in the bureaucracy can increase the scope of attention devoted to women's issues (Park 2012).

Against the backdrop of law enforcement, Meier and Nicholson-Crotty (2006) study the relationship between female representation and gendered policy out-

comes. While an increased presence of female police officers resulted in a higher volume of arrests related to sexual assault in that study, the presence of these female bureaucrats was also linked to the decreased reluctance of female sexual assault victims to report crimes committed against them.

4.2.2 Race, Representation, and Performance in Education

A prominent line of existing work explores the relationship between racial representation and the performance of educational organizations. In important ways, such work builds upon the work of education policy scholars that argues a lack of racial representation in schools disadvantages minority students. One disadvantage stems from negative perceptions of minorities that shape how white teachers approach their minority students. These perceptions can be the result of a cultural disconnect (Kea and Utley 1998) that fosters biases regarding minority-student ability (Persell 1977). Such perceptions can lead white teachers to dedicate less time and effort to addressing the needs of minorities in their classroom (McCarthy et al. 2005).

However, when racial representation is observed, the likelihood of minority students gaining access to rigorous coursework that bolsters future academic development increases (Klopfenstein 2005). Given that teachers occupy roles akin to what Lipsky (1980) referred to as street-level bureaucrats, public administration research has focused largely on the relationship between teacher demographics and student outcomes, much of it concluding that minority students benefit from minority representation because it fosters equitable learning environments for minority students, and is also associated with improvements in minority student per-

formance (Meier 1984; Meier and Stewart 1991; Pitts 2007; Roch, Pitts, and Navarro 2010).

Considerably less attention has been devoted to understanding the circumstances under which minority school administrators improve how their organizations serve minority students. Of the studies that have been conducted, the implications of top-level representation for appearance appear to be mixed. For example, Meier (1993*a*) finds that administrative representation results in positive outcomes when principals and students are of the same race, but only after a critical mass of administrators is observed. In a separate study, Pitts (2005) develops a measure of representation that combines top and mid-level administration into a single metric. That study finds a strong positive relationship between overall student performance and administrative representation. In another study of management, Pitts (2007) also finds that administrative representation affected black student outcomes, but mattered little for white or Latino outcomes. Insignificant relationships are also reported by recent studies that examine the effect of administrative representation on the use of disciplinary policies on minority students (Roch, Pitts, and Navarro 2010; Roch and Pitts 2012).

4.3 Taking Decision Making Seriously: A Theory of Strategic Representation

Diverse actors in public organizations make decisions that benefit disadvantaged groups, and in doing so help bolster general levels of public sector responsiveness. This is perhaps the broadest and most valuable perspective generated by representative bureaucracy research. However, a significant weakness in such analyses has been the lack of consideration for decision-making processes, and how they might affect organizational performance in the context of representation.

As Jones (2003, 395) claims, "Most people who study politics and government care little about the fine details of the specifics of human cognition; they are quite content to leave that to biologists, psychologists, and cognitive scientists. What they cannot escape, however, is the need for some firm foundation that can link human behavior to macropolitics." This statement can be applied directly to representative bureaucracy studies. Only by taking decision making seriously can this line of research begin to uncover the conditions under which representation in organizations yields the anticipated outcomes, as well as the conditions under which it does not.

In private as well as public organizations, managers are required to navigate environments rife with uncertainty. For the public manager, this uncertainty forces them to maximize performance by selecting from a set of alternative paths, or policy options, with limited information at their disposal. This limited information can result from time and resource constraints, or from a lack of relative expertise. In either case, managers make decisions under conditions of bounded rationality (March 1978; Simon 1991; Kahneman 2003). Bounded rationality is an alternative to the rational, full information understanding of decision making (Conlisk 1996). Rationality implies that decision makers possess essentially perfect information regarding the optimal course of action to take given a finely specified objective (Conlisk 1996). However, this view has been regarded as untenable given uncertain conditions in practice, and the ability of bounded rationality to more appropriately explicate the actions and choices of policymakers (Jones 2002, 2003).

Recent work has set out to develop a formal theory of how public managers use performance information to make strategic decisions under the assumption that managerial decisions are driven entirely by organizational performance (Meier

2012). Taking into account the constraints on the stream of information managers can acquire, this study makes two key assumptions. The first key assumption in this study is that managers use performance as a decision rule. But why?

The answer lies in the nature of public management as a profession. Minority managers, like all other managers, often times do not set their organization's agenda. Generally, it is rare that public managers experience levels of autonomy akin to the level experienced by managers in private firms (Wilson 1991). They are unable to distribute privately earned benefits to public sector bureaucrats, and unable to acquire and use factors of production without oversight. But most importantly, public managers do not select their own objectives. Their goals are dictated to them in a top-down political process, where signals from political officials dictate the salience of various performance objectives.

Therefore, by using performance as a decision rule, managers are able to mitigate the risk associated with uncertainty in choosing among a set of policy alternatives. This use of performance as a decision rule is also important because it suggests that managers will not make decisions without first taking into account the political signals that determine their organization's most salient performance objectives. Deviating from a performance-enhancing path would be irrational, since pursuing a path that does not bolster performance can result in their eventual removal from the organization.

The second key assumption is that while minorities in management are concerned with performance, they are also concerned with the preferences of minority clientele. It is plausible that minority managers feel a strong identification with clientele of the same racial, ethnic, or age group. They may feel as though they belong to them, have lived similar lives, and as a result have intrinsic incentives

for identifying ways to improve how these clients perceive their organization and how their organization serves them.

Yet, even in cases where minority managers do not feel intrinsically attached to minority clients, there are clear extrinsic motives for improving service delivery to minorities, such as avoiding negative claims by minority groups, preventing unwanted press, and avoiding calls for management's removal. For the minority manager, therefore, utility is a function of both organizational performance and minority satisfaction.

The presence of these seemingly competing utility inputs has important implications for management's impact on various policy outcomes. Since public organizations pursue multiple objectives simultaneously, multiple outcome gaps are likely to be present. Here, performance gaps between minority and non-minority outcomes are particularly salient because they inform management that corrective measures are required to ameliorate an existing disparity. Previous scholars argue that organizations approach multiple objectives in a sequential fashion (Cyert and March 1963). From a managerial vantage point, even without stipulations about the rank-ordering of objectives, a sequential approach implies that one objective is given more weight than others. The next logical step is to distinguish which performance gap will receive the most attention from minority managers.

As with non-minorities who occupy administrative positions, minorities in management are concerned with retaining their positions of organizational authority. To do so, they must be keenly mindful of their agency's most politically salient performance objectives. As it relates to the potential for active representation, this does not imply that a minority manager will abstain from substantively representing minority clientele, and it does not imply that minority managers will exacer-

bate minority outcome gaps. Resource constraints and competing demands suggest that they will *focus their representation* on one area over others. When faced with multiple outcome gaps, minority managers will channel active representation through their organization's primary goal by addressing the outcome gap linked to the most salient performance objective. They will do so because this is the outcome gap that is the costliest to ignore. *When considering multiple performance gaps relating to minority client outcomes, this leads to the general hypothesis that the direct influence of minority managers on performance will be strongest for their organization's most salient outcome gap and less pronounced in other areas of performance*.

4.4 The Empirical Setting

An empirical test of the theorized relationship between management and performance requires an organizational setting with multiple outcomes that are salient to minority groups. Given this, the policy setting for the empirical analysis in this study is public education. Specifically, the focus is on the relationship between Latino representation and Latino student outcomes. The analysis is conducted at the school-district level.

Educational organizations provide a rich empirical setting for addressing the focal question for several reasons. For one, public school districts are now the largest number of public agencies in the United States (O'Toole Jr. and Meier 2011). While the lack of multiple objective performance measures for a single organization can pose an analytical constraint, public school districts are required to submit myriad performance data to their state's education agency. This creates a large cache of data that capture numerous aspects of how these organizations function, including various indicators of performance. In addition, independent school dis-

tricts are governed by a locally elected group of board members in charge of selecting the superintendent of their district. Superintendents exert substantial influence over personnel, budgetary, and curriculum decisions that shape how their school districts function.

The data set used in this study includes indicators from 1,050 school districts in the state of Texas during the period of 1999 through 2010.[1] Table 4.1 reports the number of Latino and white superintendents in the state of Texas during the time period in the sample. According to Table 4.1, since 1999 the number of white superintendents in Texas has trended downward. In 2010, there were 89 Latino superintendents, marking an increase of approximately 35 percent relative to the first year in the sample.[2]

Table 4.1: Superintendents in Texas: 1999-2010

Year	White Superintendents	Latino Superintendents
1999	947	66
2000	943	68
2001	930	69
2002	932	71
2003	905	74
2004	905	75
2005	901	75
2006	893	84
2007	885	88
2008	890	88
2009	876	93
2010	859	89

[1]Data analyzed in this study are published online via the Texas Education Agency (TEA) Academic Excellence Indicator System at http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/aeis. Superintendent race data were obtained via a TEA open records request. All charter schools operating during this period are excluded from my analysis.

[2]During the time period in this analysis, the number of African American superintendents also increased, albeit at a rate much slower than that of their Latino counterparts. In 1999, the TEA reports that only 15 superintendents of Texas school districts were African American. By 2010, this figure had risen to just 28.

During this period, approximately 5 percent of the superintendents in my data sample were African American, and less than 1 percent were from another racial category. Thus, superintendents that did not fall under the Latino or white category were omitted from the sample. In order to examine whether top-level minority managers focus more attention on one minority outcome gap over others as my theory suggests, I construct a dichotomous measure equal to 1 if a superintendent is Latino, and equal to 0 if otherwise. White superintendents are left as the uncoded category. As a measure of Latino representation within the organization's lower-level, the percentage of teachers within school districts who are Latino is used.

Three areas of school district performance are used to test the proposed hypotheses. These include standardized test pass rates (TAAS/TAKS)[3], average SAT exam performance, and the percentage of students scoring above 1110 on the SAT test (otherwise referred to as the *college-bound gap* or *college-ready gap*). In general, analyzing more than one area of performance is ideal, because it yields a broader picture of how an organization is serving its clientele. Rather than focusing on a measure of how one group of students is performing, the outcome gap between Latino and white student achievement in each of these areas is used as the dependent variable analyzed. These gaps are calculated by subtracting the measure of Latino student performance from the white performance measure. This approach allows one to speak directly to the issue of whether Latino superintendents focus most of their attention on the gap that is linked to the most salient performance area. Performance gap summaries are reported in Table 4.2.

[3]Until 2002, the standardized exam implemented in the state of Texas was the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) exam. That test was replaced by the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) exam in 2003.

Table 4.2: Performance Gap Summaries

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Gap in State Standardized Exam Pass Rate	15.66	11.82	-47.50	85.60
Gap in SAT Exam Performance	89.86	61.13	-207	444
Gap in College-Ready Performance	16.76	12.59	-70.90	80
Percentage of Latino Teachers in District	9.32	19.07	0	100
Teacher Salaries	$35,256	$6,140	$17,822	$72,393
Student-Teacher Ratio	12.72	2.54	1.4	57.4
Average Teacher Experience	12.01	2.37	0	28.4
Instructional Expenditures Per Pupil	$3,984	$1,352	$226	$21,206
Latino Student Percentage	29.30	26.86	0	100
African American Student Percentage	8.09	12.03	0	92
Low Income Student Percentage	49.15	19.25	0	100

As a policy setting, Texas education is strongly characterized by an emphasis on performance driven accountability, as the state was among the first to implement substantial accountability reforms during the 1980s (Palmer and Rangel 2011). Further, Texas style accountability has come to be recognized as an influential force in the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Heilig and Darling-Hammond 2008). The performance-focused culture of public education in Texas offers a fruitful setting for examining whether minority managers place more emphasis on one performance gap over others, particular since performance driven accountability in this state centers almost entirely on state standardized test scores. In this analysis the gap that is linked with the most salient performance area is the gap in state standardized test performance (the TAAS/TAKS gap).

The other gaps reported in Table 4.2 are secondary gaps. These gaps are “secondary" because they fall beyond the direct purview of performance accountability. To be sure, this is not to say school administrators fully disregard how their organization performs in areas other than standardized tests. It is to say, however, that schools do face a variety of oversight mechanisms linked solely to performance on statewide standardized exams, and also face penalties for consistent low per-

formance in this regard. Additionally, as Table 2 reports, each gap ranges from positive to negative values. A focal element of this study is the distance, or gap, between minorities and non-minorities as it relates to policy outcomes, or settings where minority clientele are underserved by the organization. Here, it is important to note that when the data indicate a negative outcome gap, these are school districts where Latino students are outperforming whites. Because situations where Latino student performance lags behind white performance are of primary theoretical concern in this analysis, negative gaps are not analyzed.

A vast literature indicates that student outcomes are subject to numerous forces in their environment (for example Hanushek 1986, 1997). Several control variables account for some of the relationships that are typically included within quantitative analyses of educational performance. Since performance gaps are analyzed, the variables might only be significant if they produce a different effect for Latino and white students. The differential effects that these variables have on various performance gaps have not been the subject of theoretical or empirical concern within existing literature. Nonetheless, several control variables account for other potential drivers of performance. The influence of financial resources on student performance is accounted for by including teacher salary and instructional expenditures per-pupil, both measured in thousands of dollars. Teacher experience can also matter, as one might expect that more experienced teachers would be a generally positive force in classrooms. On the constraint side, controls for the student-to-teacher ratio and the percentage of low-income students are also included. The analysis also controls for the percentage of students who are Latino.

Ordinary least-squares regression models are utilized herein. However, the panel data set contains some important characteristics. First, diagnostics indicated

the presence of heteroskedastic error variance in each of the models.[4] To account for this, all models are estimated with robust standard errors. A lagged dependent variable is also included in each model. Including the lagged outcome gap as a regressor in each equation accounts for the relationship between performance in period *t* and performance in period *t-1*.

To account for the potential common effect of unobserved factors that may have influenced the performance of all school districts during the years in question, a set of dichotomous year dummy variables is included in each specification. Since the period under question is 1999 to 2010, 1999 is the base year. The final model specifications reported in this study are robust to several alternative specifications, including ordinary least squares without year dummy variables, models with panel corrected standard errors, and generalized least squares specifications with fixed effects.

4.5 Empirical Results

In order to test the general hypothesis proposed, two separate sets of equations are estimated. Three models are estimated within each set, with each model separately examining how representation within different levels of the educational organizations in question influences Latino student gaps in the areas of standardized tests, SAT exams, and the percentage of Latino students deemed to be college-bound. The purpose of the first set of equations is to elucidate management's effect on performance in the absence of minority bureaucrats, since from management's standpoint, the hiring of minority bureaucrats may be the most prominent means of indirectly influencing performance. Given this, each equation models perfor-

[4] A series of Breusch-Pagan tests generated chi-square statistics that in each model rejected the null hypothesis of constant error variance

mance gaps as a function of Latino representation in top-level management, the outcome gap exhibited for the prior year, and several control variables.

In this way, the first three equations speak to the relationship between Latino superintendents and Latino student gaps without direct consideration of the effect Latino teachers have on the outcomes of interest[5].

According to Table 4.3, with respect to the TAAS/TAKS equation, there is a significant and negative relationship between the presence of a Latino superintendent and the standardized test gap. This finding supports the theoretical claim that minority outcome gaps can be improved when the organizations serving them provide representation within top-levels of administration. Some of the control variables reported in the first column of Table 4.3 also merit discussion. First, the coefficient for the student-teacher ratio is somewhat surprising. A higher student-teacher ratio often implies larger individual rooms, and larger classrooms can diminish a teacher's ability to focus on students' individual needs. This can be particularly important for Latino student gaps, as one might expect more individual attention would be required to improve disparate performance.

While the exact mechanisms underlying this result are unclear, in column 1 the student-teacher coefficient appears to imply the opposite relationship. The relationship reported between average teacher experience and the standardized test gap is also interesting. Conventional wisdom suggests that more experience improves one's ability to perform. Insofar as closing the gaps would be considered

[5]Analyzing only the positive gaps can lead to concerns regarding selection based on the dependent variable. There are strong theoretical reasons for focusing solely on situations where Latino student performance lags behind white student performance. However, in order to address concerns regarding this approach, a separate set of models were estimated using all gaps as the dependent variable. Is it important to note that the impacts of managerial representation on the primary performance gap reported in this and subsequent sections hold in models with all gaps included in the analysis as well.

favorable performance, the average teacher coefficient suggests that an increase in average teacher experience widens the Latino achievement gap on standardized tests. Similar relationships for these control variables are found within each model reported by Table 4.3.

In the second column of Table 4.3, management's influence on the gap in average SAT test performance of Latino students is tested. Although there is a negative relationship between managerial representation and the SAT gap, this coefficient estimate is not statistically different from zero. To be sure, this finding does not suggest that the distance separating Latino and white students on the SAT test widens within school districts headed by Latino superintendents. However, it does suggest that in this case the influence of representation by top-level education administrators falls short of the effect that would be required to substantially improve the average SAT performance of Latino students.

According to the results reported in Table 4.3, while Latino managers appear to have no significant influence on the average performance of Latinos on the SAT test, Latino superintendents are significantly associated with a decrease in the performance gap between Latino and white students performing above the mean on the same test. Why might managerial representation matter for the performance of high-achieving minority students but not those whose scores are average? Although the process underlying this particular finding is unclear, one possible rationale is that Latino superintendents could potentially be advancing school-district initiatives or developing programs aimed at increasing the chances that higher-scoring Latino students will move on to pursue a post-secondary education. While the potential existence of such initiatives does not necessarily imply a trade-off between the success of average and high performing Latino students, it could sug-

gest that the presence of such programs is not enough to substantively improve the performance of Latinos who score near their district's average Latino scores. Again, this is but one possible rationale, and understanding whether it is the best explanation would require a separate analysis.

The theory advanced in the article argues that minority managers will focus their efforts on the outcome gap tied to their organization's foremost performance objectives. Therefore, the positive impact of minority managers should be strongest for their organization's most salient outcome gap. Collectively, the results reported in Table 4.4 support the theoretical predictions for performance. In this study, the most salient performance gap for educational organizations is the gap in Latino TAAS/TAKS pass rates. As Table 4.4 reports, the relationship between this gap and Latino representation in management is negative and significant. This suggests that Latino superintendents are associated with improvements in this Latino outcome disparity that go above and beyond other mechanisms such as playing a direct role in the hiring of minority bureaucrats.

Within this analysis the secondary outcome gaps are those related to Latino student SAT performance and the percentage of Latino students who are college-ready. Here, Table 4.4 reports that these secondary gaps are not significantly influenced by Latino representation within management. It appears that when taking into account the influence of Latino teachers, Latino superintendents are no longer linked in a significant manner to the secondary gap reported in the final column of Table 4.4. The lack of a significant relationship between the presence of a Latino superintendent and gaps in secondary areas of performance is suggestive of the notion that minority managers focus most of their efforts on one area of performance.

Table 4.3: Latino Superintendents and Outcome Gaps

	TAAS/TAKS Pass Rate Gap	SAT Exam Gap	College-Bound Gap
Latino Superintendents	-0.656**	-2.433	-1.010*
	(0.287)	(3.247)	(0.594)
Prior Period TAAS/TAKS Gap	0.399***		
	(0.0107)		
Prior Period SAT Exam Gap		0.251***	
		(0.021)	
Prior Period College-Bound Gap			0.175***
			(0.017)
Teacher Salary ($1,000s)	-0.185***	0.705	0.076
	(0.0336)	(0.443)	(0.076)
Student-Teacher Ratio	-0.236***	-2.013*	-0.361**
	(0.0719)	(1.173)	(0.179)
Average Teacher Experience	0.109***	1.108**	0.364***
	(0.040)	(0.540)	(0.096)
Instructional Expenditures Per Pupil ($1,000s)	0.00029*	-0.000	0.000
	(0.00016)	(0.003)	(0.000)
Latino Student Percentage	0.039***	0.119	0.041***
	(0.006)	(0.103)	(0.015)
Black Student Percentage	0.039***	0.413***	0.118***
	(0.008)	(0.111)	(0.019)
Low Income Student Percentage	-0.009	0.370***	-0.024
	(0.007)	(0.100)	(0.018)
Constant	13.89***	42.47*	12.13***
	(1.404)	(23.130)	(3.584)
N	9,894	2,602	3,819
R^2	0.33	0.18	0.08
F	178.7	23.66	12.45

Standard errors in parentheses
Year dummy variables not reported
* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

To be clear, exactly how minority managers focus on one area is not fully explicated by these models. In general, public managers influence organizational performance in a variety of ways. Yet one of the arguments presented herein is that managers will "focus" on the gap in performance linked to their organization's politically salient performance objectives. Here, focusing on one area of performance conceivably includes a variety of actions. This could include spending more time with important actors that can influence politically important areas of performance (e.g. mid-level managers or outside consultants). It might also include creating an organizational culture that rewards improvements in one area of performance, which in turn could make additional efforts to improve other areas less appealing to organizational personnel. In the same way that a CEO emphasizes profit maximization at their firm's annual gathering of stockholders, a focus on a single area of performance could also suggest that top-level managers are engaging in a form of political rhetoric that underscores one performance objective at organizational meetings or with reporters in mass media. All of these are plausible rationales, and to the extent that they occur, these focusing-activities would presumably result in at least some of the intended outcomes.

It should also be noted that within the first column in Table 4.4, the results also indicate that the presence of Latino teachers is not significantly linked with improvements in the standardized exam performance gaps. Within academic literature and general public discourse, much has been made about "teaching to the test" in pubic schools (Menken 2006). To the extent that this occurs, one might expect that Latino teachers significantly influence this area of Latino student performance. The finding reported in the first column of Table 4.4 suggests otherwise, and also runs contrary to what other researchers have found regarding the perfor-

mance improvements that come as a result of teacher representation (for example Pitts 2007; Roch and Pitts 2012).

Representation within the organization's street level is negatively related to both secondary gaps, but the coefficient estimates indicate that this relationship is significant only in the case of the Latino SAT exam gap. Here, Latino teachers are significantly associated with improvements in this area of performance. While this finding suggests that the presence of Latino teachers can help diminish the gap that separates Latino and white students in terms of average SAT performance, the same conclusion cannot be reached in terms of the college-bound gap.

4.6 Discussion and Implications

In this paper a theory of strategic representation in public organizational settings was presented. The theory is concerned with active representation and minority policy outcomes, a theme that many in the literature have discussed within a variety of public settings. Whether public organizations serve the needs of minorities is important because the face of the United States continues to diversify. The theory advanced by this study adds to existing knowledge by focusing on *how* active representation in public organizations occurs from the perspective of minority managers that engage in a decision-making process that bears important social implications.

Performance objectives are not a set of considerations reserved solely for private sector firms. Performance is now at the fore of agendas throughout the public sector. It stands to reason that a discussion of minority managers as active representatives should not disregard the significance of performance objectives, specifically as it relates to the pursuit of multiple performance objectives. Public managers are

Table 4.4: Latino Superintendents, Teachers, and Outcome Gaps

	TAAS/TAKS Pass Rate Gap	SAT Exam Gap	College-Bound Gap
Latino Superintendents	-0.681**	3.560	-0.555
	(0.335)	(3.420)	(0.672)
Latino Teacher Percentage	0.001	-0.430***	-0.026
	(0.008)	(0.104)	(0.019)
Prior Period TAAS/TAKS Gap	0.399***		
	(0.011)		
Prior Period SAT Exam Gap		0.245***	
		(0.021)	
Prior Period College-Bound Gap			0.174***
			(0.017)
Teacher Salary ($1,000s)	-0.185***	0.799*	0.086
	(0.033)	(0.441)	(0.076)
Student-Teacher Ratio	-0.237***	-1.288	-0.297
	(0.074)	(1.193)	(0.188)
Average Teacher Experience	0.109***	1.235**	0.362***
	(0.040)	(0.542)	(0.096)
Instructional Expenditures Per Pupil ($1,000s)	0.000286*	-0.000	0.000
	(0.000162)	(0.003)	(0.000)
Latino Student Percentage	0.042***	0.416***	0.055***
	(0.007)	(0.121)	(0.018)
Black Student Percentage	0.039***	0.416***	0.117***
	(0.008)	(0.110)	(0.019)
Low Income Student Percentage	-0.009	0.303***	-0.026
	(0.007)	(0.102)	(0.018)
Constant	13.92***	25.19	10.64***
	(1.435)	(23.650)	(3.786)
N	9,894	2,602	3,819
R^2	0.33	0.19	0.08
F	170.6	23.74	12.02

Standard errors in parentheses
Year dummy variables not reported
* $p < .10$, ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .01$

constrained in their decision making and must decide which areas of performance will take precedent over others. This is a decision that has direct implications for minority clientele who require substantial improvements in how they are served by various public programs.

If indeed minority managers take it upon themselves to pursue the interests of minorities, then focusing on one area of organizational performance suggests that only certain policy outcomes can be improved. In this way, addressing the performance-driven culture that influences managers, including those for whom minority issues are highly salient, can help researchers understand organizational settings where the hiring of minority managers fails to yield the intended performance outcomes. Theorizing about the process of active representation by minority managers while accounting for the salience of performance is not only a useful and insightful endeavor, it is also an imperative one given the increasing complexity of today's public sector demands.

This study provides initial evidence of strategic representation within educational organizations using a large-*N* quantitative approach. It finds that within public school districts, the benefits that Latino students derive from representation by Latino superintendents appear to be highest in the context of high-stakes testing. The findings suggest that superintendents place less emphasis on other areas of performance. There are surely a variety of mechanisms that shape the decisions made by Latino superintendents, and some of these important mechanisms are beyond the scope of the current study. For example, existing theory posits that minority bureaucrats can change the behavior of minority clientele in a way that produces favorable minority outcomes.

However, current research tells us little about this relationship in the context of organizations that are already failing to meet certain expectations. Therefore, one can not rule out the possibility that Latino superintendents are doing something that changes the way Latino students approach their own scholastic development. It could also be the case that Latino representation changes the way that non-Latino students perform. Either relationship could influence gaps in educational achievement. Unfortunately, one of the potential limitations of this study is the lack of individual level data required to examine these possible relationships. As researchers begin to examine disparities along the lines of race, gender, or professional occupation in other types of organizational performance, individual-level indicators should be examined in an attempt to overcome this limitation.

In the vein of how performance influences management's response to minority clientele, future research should be mindful of any cross-racial dynamics that influence organizational outcomes. For instance, how might African American administrators respond to Latino student performance in high pressure settings? Does this response differ from that of Latino managers and, if so, then why? As the data in this study suggest, Latinos occupy the largest presence of minority superintendents in the state of Texas. Yet, Texas schools are but one setting within a specific policy context where performance accountability is omnipresent.

Taken alone, the current study cannot account for any social dynamics that might drive non-Latino minorities to respond more or less favorably to students who are Latino. Had the focus of this study been on African American students, a question that might naturally arise is how their performance figures look not only when African Americans are at the helm, but under the guidance of other minorities as well. Therefore, is it difficult to ascertain whether the theory and

evidence offered herein generalize to organizational settings comprised of greater levels of diversity in management.

This study sheds important and much needed empirical light on a broader question that carries significant theoretical and practical implications; some of the findings are suggestive and supportive. There do appear to be differential managerial influences in the context of multiple outcomes gaps. However, this initial support is found within the context of one policy setting. In order to understand the decisions made by minority managers, and whether performance objectives attenuate their ability to serve minority interests, the relationship between performance gaps and representation in public bureaucracies should be explored in additional settings. The findings of such research have the potential to deepen the current understanding of those policy areas most likely to be improved by representation in public sector management.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Educating Latinos: Will Demographics Ever Become Destiny?

As the Latino population in the U.S. has grown, so to have the claims regarding the ways in which this demographic is poised to transform prominent segments of the country's landscape. These claims are made despite many empirical indications that demographic strength, taken alone, has not led to the transformation that many have anticipated. The numbers do not lie; Latinos' demographic presence in the U.S. is growing. Still, this trend is not new. Latinos' share of the population has trended upward for decades now. Many still await the day when demographics will become destiny.

The growth of the Latino demographic has given rise to an abundance of scholarship that encompasses multiple disciplines. Within much of this work, Latinos are referred to as a *sleeping giant*. It is a monicker intended to encapsulate the disconnect between Latinos' growing population presence and their paradoxical lack of influence in the social, political, and economic arenas. If there is a common thread that unifies the broadening research on the Latino demographic, it is the evidence concerning the relationship between population size and Latinos' position in the polity; in their pursuit of upward mobility, population strength is a necessary condition but not a sufficient one. In education, the Latino clientele that K-12 bureaucracies serve also represent a giant that has yet to awaken. It is therefore crucial to ask the following question: Will future generations of Latino students experience parity in educational opportunities and outcomes?

Any acceptable answer to this question must be situated within the broader context of the political and policy disparities that persist along racial and ethnic lines, for such inequality provides strong evidence that numbers alone do not result in substance. For decades now, these inequities have left many minority groups on unequal footing within society's most critical spaces, and have placed many in a state of seemingly perpetual disadvantage.

For the Latino demographic, perhaps the most egregious manifestation of such inequities are the disparate conditions that many Latino students face in school systems across the county. The in-school disparities confronting Latino students are not only long-standing, they appear to be deepening in many cases. And while there is no panacea for Latinos' educational disparity, this dissertation is an attempt to reveal that the political and bureaucratic forces that dominate educational organizations are important drivers of the dilemmas in Latino education.

Although the inner-workings of school bureaucracy can help explain these conditions, they alone cannot account for *all* of the obstacles that Latino students face. The disparate policy outcomes and lack of access to equitable learning environments that are emblematic of many Latinos' school experiences can be attributed to many of the challenges facing the broader Latino community. Such obstacles include questions of citizenship, discrimination, and marginalization in settings other than schools. In addition, many Latino students must work to shoulder economic burdens at home that make educational attainment a secondary consideration.

Still, inequality is now a permanent feature of American education, to the degree that one might consider it bizarre to observe a school system operating without disparities. The institutions that govern the selection of school board members,

the decision to hire more (or less) minority bureaucrats, and the choice to implement certain policies over others are among the key determinants of how much inequality one observes.

I have argued that these features of the education system shape where Latinos find themselves in the mosaic of U.S. democracy. At the same time, there are also implications for non-Latino populations that should not be understated. Performance-driven accountability is now a cornerstone of K-12 education. Schools and teachers across the country have focused their efforts on improving their performance on key tests, all in according with internationally-accepted performance metrics. The Common Core State Standards initiative is the most recent policy that has emanated from the performance culture in education. In the future, Latino students will be too numerous to ignore. And any and all policy initiatives linked to aggregate performance benchmarks will be unachievable in the presence of institutions, organizations, and policies that hinder Latinos' academic progress.

5.2 Moving Existing Literature Forward

Public school systems represent a set of organizations that are more than passive deliverers of education policies. They are also public organizations subject to many of the same pressures that governmental bureaucracies in general must confront. Furthermore, they are also arenas of electoral politics where local communities vie for a political voice in the policy process. To date, the politics and public administration of Latino education are areas of research that remain underdeveloped in comparison to other strands of Latino-focused scholarship.

Furthermore, there have been few attempts to weave together literatures from various disciplines in a manner that produces meaningful insights. Education

scholars have generally placed little emphasis on the variables that political scientists have traditionally concerned themselves with. At the same time, most political scientists have left much of the work to be done in Latino education in the hands of education experts with less knowledge of politics' influence on policy outcomes or, in many cases, a comparatively narrow conception of politics in general. This has limited the development of the literature on Latinos and education.

In addition to all of this, two elephants in the room remain: the divide between politics and public administration (and policy), and the absence of race as an important mainstream issue within the broader public administration literature. Somewhere in the middle, studies in the field of public administration, largely regarded as separate from mainstream political science literature, have shouldered some of the burden by studying Latinos. There have, however, been some meaningful contributions in this regard.

Still, such contributions have been limited in number and also limited in their scope; beyond a relative handful of representative bureaucracy studies, public administration scholarship lags well behind political science in its treatment of the Latino demographic as one deserving of any meaningful and sustained attention in their literature. Approaching the Latino demographic as a segment of policy consumers that will have meaningful impacts on how many organizations perform in the future is one way to overcome this.

The pursuit of a meaningful leap forward in the existing literature requires serious efforts to bind together research insights from multiple disciplines in a manner that breaks down artificial disciplinary boundaries. There is much room for improvement in scholarly approaches to studying organizational phenomena characterized by a real-world interdependence of politics and public administra-

tion. Such an improvement would require that scholars acknowledge intrinsically related literatures – such as political science and public administration – can be of greater utility when considered as pieces of the same larger puzzle.

As an example, public organizations governed by a publicly elected board are, by their structural nature, subject to the influence of politics. Nonetheless, this is but one example of the intersection of politics and administration that is ripe for future studies. Even in the absence of a governing board, how organizations engage with Latinos and other communities of color is bound to be influenced by political forces. A deeper understanding of how policies affect Latino students must account for Latino-salient features such noncitizenship and marginalization or discrimination in governmental settings. In the context of Latinos in education and other policy areas, a greater recognition, and broader conceptualization, of the politics-administration confluence should prove highly useful in future research efforts.

5.3 Deriving Sustainable Solutions for an Unsustainable Problem

It is also important to consider the practical implications of this project. This dissertation examines various institutional and administrative elements of the educational process that have significant ramifications for Latinos' academic achievement. Some of the most salient features of this dissertation's analyses represent aspects of school governance that district officials can change to increase Latinos' chances of succeeding academically. Officials modify the institutions that shape the outcomes of their school board elections and influence Latinos' chances of winning school board seats. Administrators can decide to hire more Latino teachers, and Latino teachers can to decide how and when to implement certain policies.

Policymakers and school administrators would do well to recognize opportunities to modify these elements in ways that equalize opportunities for Latinos – and other students of color – to improve their school performance. With an increasing presence of Latino students, our education system's success or failure to achieve its macro-performance objectives will be predicated upon its ability to create political and policy environments that do not hinder Latinos' academic mobility. It is also important to consider the impact of these institutions as organizations that implement policies in communities of Latinos and other groups that are traditionally underserved by public sector bureaucracies.

Education has been the policy focus of this dissertation. However, the components of this dissertation speak to much more than education outcomes alone. Latinos' future education outcomes and relationship with school bureaucracies are bound to influence their relationship with other crucial organizations. As other scholars have noted, a group's relationship with governmental organizations also shapes that group's much broader standing in society. As such, interplay between Latino communities and public school systems will continue to determine where the Latino group stands in relation to other groups in a democratic system. This dissertation takes an important step towards improving our understanding of where Latinos' standing with one set of essential organizations portends for where they might stand in the future.

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