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The Hard Work Is Worth It: Overcoming Unfavorable Determinants to Pass Pro-Immigrant Education Policy in a Conservative State Legislature

Megan Cardwell Godfrey
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

The Hard Work Is Worth It: Overcoming Unfavorable Determinants to
Pass Pro-Immigrant Education Policy in a Conservative State Legislature

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by

Megan Cardwell Godfrey
University of Arkansas
Bachelor of Arts in Spanish and Latin American Studies, 2006
Loyola Marymount University
Master of Arts in Elementary Education, 2008

May 2022
University of Arkansas

This dissertation is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.

_____
Jason Endacott, Ph.D.
Dissertation Director

_____   _____
Freddie Bowles, Ph.D.   Chris Goering, Ph.D.
Committee Member   Committee Member

_____
Janine Parry, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Abstract

Immigrants, English learners (ELs), and culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students often lag behind their White, monolingual peers in academic achievement and English language proficiency. While there are policy solutions to improve academic and linguistic opportunities and outcomes for immigrant/EL/CLD students, such as implementing bilingual instructional models and increasing teacher diversity, these pro-immigrant policies can be hard to come by in some legislative contexts due to unfavorable economic, social, or political determinants. This qualitative case study analyzed the multifaceted political work that contributed to the passage of two pro-immigrant education policies in the Arkansas 93rd General Assembly: a bill for bilingual education and dual immersion programs and a bill to expand teacher licensure to noncitizens with DACA. The three-phase qualitative methodology led to four key findings: the unfavorable determinants for pro-immigrant policy adoption within the legislative context, the primacy and centrality of interest convergence in the political work that mitigated those determinants, the unexpected salience of educational interests in the policy debate, and the influence of educator expertise and practice in garnering support for the two proposals. These findings led to the development of the "5E" framework of political work: emulate prior successes, ensure bipartisan support, employ interest convergence, educate using best practices, and elevate heroic voices. This framework, while context-specific, has implications for pro-immigrant education policy advocacy in other challenging contexts.

Dedication

To my dad, Gary Cardwell, who taught me that the hard work is worth it.

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Chapter One: Introduction

When I say the pledge of allegiance, I add a little extra emphasis to the last two words. Whether in my classroom as a young teacher or now in the chamber of the Arkansas House of Representatives, I have always pledged to ensure liberty and justice *for all* and have taken that commitment seriously. Although I believe wholeheartedly in the American ideals of opportunity and equity, I know that they are not inevitable, especially for marginalized communities, and are only realized with hard work. The purpose of this dissertation is to examine how some of that work, even in an unlikely context, led to the advancement of the values of liberty and justice for all. My career as an "educator-legislator," first as a teacher of immigrants, English learners (ELs), and culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students, then as a district-level EL curriculum specialist and director of EL programs, and now as a second-term state representative of a diverse legislative district in Arkansas, has led me to a persistent pursuit of educational equity and to the work under investigation in this study: the passage of two pro-immigrant education policies in the Arkansas 93rd General Assembly. My professional experience and my commitment to the core values of advocacy, empowerment, and elevating diverse voices motivated me to champion bills for bilingual education and immigrant teachers in the most recent legislative session. Both bills, even in Arkansas' economic, social, and political climate that made their passage unlikely, were successfully passed into law. These successes, when considered alongside the unfavorable context in which they occurred, raise questions about the political work that contributed to the passage of these pro-immigrant education policies. The purpose of this study is to answer those questions.

This introductory chapter serves as the theoretical and contextual background for this investigation and will include: (a) my theoretical framework; (b) an explanation of the problem;

(c) the purpose of the study; (d) the relevance and importance of the study; (e) the research question and methodology; (f) definitions of key terms; and (g) an outline of the rest of the dissertation.

Theoretical Framework

Throughout my career as an educator and legislator, four broad themes have grounded and motivated me and my work: (a) Educational equity is an American ideal; (b) Educational inequality is the unfortunate reality; (c) We can and should do something about it; and (d) Hard, strategic work can effect widespread or small-scale change, and both are valuable. These themes will also play an important role in guiding the research conducted for this study.

Educational Equity as an American Ideal

Educational equity is an ideal worth championing. A strong education system provides empowerment and opportunity, and schools have the potential to foster "the maximum development of all individuals" (Mann, cited in Brick, 2005, p. 171). Horace Mann, known as the father of public education, believed in the "equalizing effect that the common schools could have in a democratic society" (Brick, 2005, p. 171), and his mission of equal educational opportunity through public schools was categorized by the belief that all students could develop and improve rather than having absolute or fixed abilities (Brick, 2005). Similarly, John Dewey advocated for equal opportunity in and through education, not by granting all individuals the same opportunities and thereby "perpetuating the inequalities of the past" (Dewey, 1960, p. 296) but rather by viewing equality as dynamic and being willing to reform and reconfigure our institutions to adapt to the emerging social, political, economic, and technological needs of our society (Gordon, 2016, p. 1088). The idealistic theoretical foundation about the promise of

public schools continues to provide hope and vision for equity and empowerment for all students.

Educational Inequality as the American Reality

However, not everyone in education understands the difference between sameness of opportunity and sameness of outcome, nor do they necessarily care to participate in the work of reforming and reconfiguring our educational institutions. Therefore, instead of realizing the ideals of equality and democracy established long ago for public education, what persists instead is educational *inequality.* Critical theorists acknowledge the inequities in both opportunities and outcomes for students of color, students in poverty, and students from other marginalized communities. Ladson-Billings (1998) argued, "If we look at the way public education is currently configured, it is possible to see the ways that critical race theory can be a useful explanatory tool for the sustained inequity that people of color experience" (p. 18), noting injustices in curriculum, instruction, assessment, school funding, desegregation practices, and mindsets about students and families. More specifically, LatCrit theorists use "race and its intersectionality with language and other issues related to Latina/o education (i.e., sociopolitical history, immigration, class) to bring into focus the unique experiences, identities, and oppressions of Latinas/os in the education system" (Freire et al., 2017, p. 277). Solorzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) described the advantages of LatCrit in providing a framework for "theorizing about the ways in which educational structures, processes, and discourses support and promote racial subordination" (p. 315) for Latinx students. These critical frameworks, contextualized in the field of education, acknowledge the equitable ideals public education was founded upon but also highlight the injustices that persist.

Imperative for Change through Advocacy and Transformation

Fortunately, however, the inequalities are not so inevitable or insurmountable that there is nothing we can or should do about them. Rather, we must envision ourselves as changemakers and believe we can make things better. A belief in one's own ability to effect change, particularly among educators, is both necessary and helpful in the work of championing educational equity. Although Bandura's (1986) theory of self-efficacy is most often applied to students, its theoretical underpinnings are also relevant to those who want to advocate for expanded fairness, opportunity, and success for marginalized students.

> According to Bandura' s (1986) social cognitive theory, these self-efficacy beliefs help determine the choices people make, the effort they put forth, the persistence and perseverance they display in the face of difficulties, and the degree of anxiety or serenity they experience as they engage the myriad tasks that comprise their life (Usher & Pajares, 2008, p. 751).

Advocates for educational equity must be confident that they can and should make improvements for students who are not receiving equitable or empowering educational experiences. In regards to immigrant students, English learners (ELs), or other culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students specifically, theories about teachers as advocates provide inspiring and instructive ways for educators to develop the mindset for "understanding the need to take action to improve ELL's access to social and political capital and educational opportunities, and willingness to do so" (Lucas & Villegas, 2013, p. 101), calling on teachers to speak up and act on behalf of their immigrant/EL/CLD students (Athanases & de Oliveira, 2007; Dubetz & de Jong, 2011; Linville & Finner, 2019; Lucas & Villegas, 2011; Lucas & Villegas, 2013; Staehr Fenner, 2014).

Within the field of education, advocacy as **voicing** is a central theme as teachers speak *up*, speak *out*, speak *with* and speak *for* their EL students (Athanases & de Oliveira, 2007). Advocacy includes actions on behalf of ELs both inside the classroom and beyond, "working for ELs' equitable and excellent education by taking appropriate actions on their behalf… [and] stepping in and providing a voice for those students — and EL families — who have not yet developed their own strong voice in education (Staehr Fenner, 2014, p. 8)... Here we see the common threads of advocacy in **noticing** an issue or an injustice and **taking action**, such as speaking up (Linville & Fenner, 2019, p. 342).

This teachers-as-advocates theory highlights the importance of teachers who believe in the work of identifying, shining light on, and correcting the injustices their students are experiencing, not only through strong teaching in their own classrooms but also in policymaking spaces in schools, districts, and beyond. These postures of advocacy for immigrant/EL/CLD students have the transformative potential to improve educational opportunities and outcomes within existing educational institutions and structures. Educational "transformers" (Zeichner & Peña-Sandoval, 2015), in contrast with "defenders," who support the status-quo, or "reformers," who advocate for wholesale deconstruction and reconstruction, see a great need for significant change within educational institutions "but do not support 'blowing up' the current system" (p. 4), nor do they desire to "profoundly disrupt" (p. 4) education as it is now. Rather, transformers have strong self-efficacy, identify problems, gaps, and inequalities, and advocate for change that will improve education for immigrant/EL/CLD students within our current system. The theoretical foundations of self-efficacy, teachers as advocates, and educational transformers provide support

for the idea that, even though educational inequality pervades our institutions, we must believe that we can and should do something about it.

Effecting Widespread and Small-scale Change

Once we dedicate ourselves to the work of pursuing educational equity, there are a number of strategic moves we can make, depending upon our role, our context, and our access to and influence with decision-makers. Regardless of whether the impact of those moves is widespread or incremental, the hard work that leads us closer to educational equity is worth it. Two different theories of changemaking, punctuated equilibrium theory (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993) and the theory of small wins (Weick, 1984), present the arguments that changemaking is possible when the conditions are right. Punctuated equilibrium theory "posits that large-scale change can occur when an issue is defined differently, when new actors get involved, or when the issue becomes more salient and receives heightened media and broader public attention" (Stachowiak, 2013, p. 4). This theory highlights the potential of change to come "in sudden, large bursts that represent a significant departure from the past, as opposed to small incremental changes over time that usually do not reflect a radical change from the status quo" (Stachowiak, 2013, p. 4). While there is a great need for educational equity to come in sudden, large bursts, smaller, more gradual wins are also valuable for immigrant/EL/CLD student advocacy. Small wins theory calls out the powerful snowball effect of incremental gains:

> Once a small win has been accomplished, forces are set in motion that favor another small win. When a solution is put in place, the next solvable problem often becomes more visible. This occurs because new allies bring new solutions with them and old opponents change their habits. Additional resources also flow toward winners, which means that slightly larger wins can be attempted (Weick, 1984, p. 43).

Both big wins and small wins are worth putting in the work to achieve. In each instance, we move closer to educational equity for marginalized students.

The four broad themes of this theoretical framework ground the present study. The success of the two pro-immigrant education policies under investigation would not have been achieved without the underpinnings of an idealistic vision of educational equity, a critical acknowledgement that inequality is our reality, the belief that we can and should advocate for our students and transform our institutions, and the pursuit of change, whether revolutionary or incremental. This theoretical foundation undergirds this problem and the purpose of this study.

The Problem

Despite the American ideal of equality through education, not all students have equitable access, opportunity, or outcomes in school. Students of color, immigrant students, and culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students, on average, achieve at lower rates than their White, English-speaking peers (Hemphill, 2011; National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2011; Spees et al., 2016). Immigrant students, particularly those who are Hispanic or Latinx, comprise the fastest growing subpopulation of students in the United States (Hemphill, 2011; Spees et al., 2016), and many of these students are English learners (EL), also known as limited English proficient (LEP). Stees et al. (2016) found that "no matter their state of residence, LEP youth lag behind their non-LEP peers across a variety of academic outcomes" (p. 2) and that "national trends indicate a linguistic achievement gap with 71% of LEP youth scoring lower on standardized math and reading tests than their English proficient non-Latino white peers" (p. 2). This achievement gap does not exist because immigrant/EL/CLD students are less capable than their monolingual peers, lack support at home, or are culturally deficient. Although these negative stereotypes pervade, the achievement gap between these students and their native

English-speaking peers is more accurately explained by the lack of support for immigrant/EL/CLD students in public schools.

> This linguistic gap in academic performance is partly a result of the lack of LEP educational support systems in US schools—a problem of particular concern for new immigrant destinations… Shortages of ESL teachers, bilingual staff, ESL courses, and translation services in these states create language barriers and cultural divisions that alienate LEP families and hinder student aspirations and achievement (Spees et al., 2016, p. 2).

Since the problem lies in the system and not the student, it is therefore incumbent upon educators and policymakers to find solutions that will enhance and expand educational opportunities and outcomes for immigrant/EL/CLD students. Fortunately, there are two such solutions that have been proven to support the learning needs of immigrant/EL/CLD students: (a) implementing bilingual education instructional programs instead of English-only models; and (b) hiring teachers who share the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of their students. The efficacy of both bilingual education and diverse teachers is well supported by the literature, discussed in detail in Chapter Two; however, pro-immigrant education policies such as these can be hard to come by. Unfortunately, the United States has a long history of anti-immigrant sentiment that influences our policymaking tendencies. This sentiment, along with other economic, social, and political determinants that make pro-immigrant policy adoption unlikely, can impede passage of proposals that support immigrant students, even if those proposals are backed by educational research. In the absence of policy advocates and champions who will do the work to overcome the obstacles that stand in the way, pro-immigrant education policies have the potential to stall out, perpetuating educational inequity for immigrant/EL/CLD students. It is therefore vital that

those who care about correcting those inequities join in advocacy for immigrant students, thoughtfully identify the benefits of the policies they are proposing, acknowledge the contextual obstacles in their way, and do the necessary political work to overcome them. Because of the unequal access, opportunities, and outcomes immigrant/EL/CLD students experience in American schools, we must pursue policy solutions that close this gap, even though there are many determinants that impede their likelihood of success.

The Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate the political work that contributed to the passage of two pro-immigrant education policies in the Arkansas 93rd General Assembly. Although the conditions for this legislative victory were unfavorable given the economic, social, and political determinants for policy adoption in Arkansas, the bills, which allowed bilingual and dual immersion programs to be adopted by Arkansas schools (H.B.1451) and permitted immigrants with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA) status to be licensed as Arkansas teachers (H.B.1594), were still successfully passed. Therefore, this dissertation will analyze the political work that led to this unlikely success. This study is contextualized through the existing literature on the sociopolitical history of immigrant education policy, the research-based benefits of bilingual education and diverse teachers, the determinants for policy adoption, and political work done by lawmakers to pass their bills. It is also grounded in my experience as a member of the Arkansas 93rd General Assembly and the lead sponsor on the bilingual education bill and an influential co-sponsor on the DACA teachers bill, as well as the lead sponsor of the successful 2019 DACA nurses bill (H.B.1552), the bill DACA teachers was emulated after. These legislative experiences, in addition to the existing literature, have led me to the development of an analytical framework that outlines key components of political work: (a)

encourage bipartisanship and collaboration; (b) emulate prior successes; (c) employ interest convergence; and (d) elevate heroic voices. This framework, which is covered in more detail in the literature review, will serve as the foundation for the organization and analysis of data.

Research Question & Methodology

I utilized a qualitative case study methodology to answer this research question: *What political work contributed to the passage of two pro-immigrant education policies in a state legislature with unfavorable determinants for policy adoption?* Qualitative methods allowed me to dig deeply into the complexities of the political work that took place during the Arkansas 2021 legislative session. I used data from observations and transcripts of the committee hearings and floor hearings of the bills, documents from media stories about the legislation, and legislative artifacts, such as the bill text and legislator-created infographics. I employed a three-phase coding protocol, beginning with typological coding based on my analytical framework, followed by open or inductive coding and axial coding within and across the typologies in the latter phases. These qualitative methods led me to uncover patterns, themes, and insights about the political work that facilitated the passage of the pro-immigrant education policies in Arkansas.

Importance of the Study

This study has yielded important findings for the fields of education and political science. The findings are both theoretical and practical, beneficial for researchers as well as practitioners, and potentially applicable beyond this particular case. They are relevant not only to those who contributed to and were impacted by these two particular proposals in Arkansas but also more broadly to any pro-immigrant policymaker, educator of immigrant students, or advocate for pro-immigrant education.

Lawmakers who find themselves "legislating against the odds" will find this study relevant. By building on the research of legislator behavior that facilitates policy passage in unlikely conditions, this study looked specifically at four components of political work: (a) encourage bipartisanship and collaboration; (b) emulate prior successes; (c) employ interest convergence; and (d) elevate heroic voices. By analyzing what worked, what didn't, and why or why not, this study can give insight to policymakers who want to effect change in their own challenging legislative contexts.

Although this study investigated political work in a state legislature, educators and others who want to advocate for immigrant students and for equitable and empowering policy in their own contexts are also likely to take away important insights. Pro-immigrant educators and advocates often also find themselves in conditions that are unfavorable for pro-immigrant progress; therefore, the findings from this study have the potential for relevance for educators, advocates, activists, and immigrants themselves. It is possible that the findings from this study about effective political work are applicable across contexts and could apply to pro-immigrant changemaking in schools, districts, communities, and other institutions.

This case study, although narrowly and locally contextualized within Arkansas and the political work done within the legislative process during the 2021 session, is relevant to political scientists, education researchers, educators, policymakers, and other pro-immigrant education advocates.

Definition of Terms

The following terms and acronyms will be used throughout this dissertation. It is important to define each term clearly in this section, as the terminology I will use going forward does not fully encapsulate the meaning of each term.

pro-immigrant education policy: a policy that expands an educational opportunity currently prohibited by state law to students who are non-citizens of the United States, English learners (ELs), or culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD). I understand the limiting nature of the term "immigrant," as not all immigrants are ELs/CLD, and vice versa. However, throughout this dissertation, the politically relevant term *immigrant* will be used heretofore to describe education policies that positively impact immigrants, English learners, and/or culturally and linguistically diverse students. Specifically, the two pro-immigrant education policies under investigation in this dissertation are bilingual education and DACA teachers.

bilingual education: an instructional model that utilizes English and another language (often the native language of immigrant/EL/CLD students) rather than an all-English immersion approach. The bill that permitted these types of models in Arkansas (H.B.1451) will also be known as "bilingual education."

DACA teachers: licensed teachers or teacher candidates who are also immigrants with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status. The bill that permitted DACA teacher licensure in Arkansas (H.B.1594) will also be known as "DACA teachers."

political work: concrete actions taken by legislators or other policy advocates to garner support and gain votes for a policy proposal. The four components of political work under investigation in this study are (a) encourage bipartisanship and collaboration; (b) emulate prior successes; (c) employ interest convergence; and (d) elevate heroic voices.

determinants for policy adoption: economic, social, and/or political factors that facilitate or impede adoption of a particular policy proposal in a given policy context. A context's determinants can create favorable or unfavorable conditions for policy passage.

This qualitative case study investigated the political work that contributed to the passage of two pro-immigrant education policies in the Arkansas legislature: bilingual education and DACA teachers. Although the study focuses on a state legislative context, there are likely important takeaways for educators of immigrant students and other pro-immigrant education advocates. In Chapter Two, I review the existing literature on the sociopolitical history of immigrant education policy, the benefits of bilingual education and culturally and linguistically diverse teachers, the determinants of policy adoption, including unfavorable determinants, and the components of political work that comprise my analytical framework. Chapter Three is a review of my methodology, including the rationale for choosing a qualitative case study, my positionality and role as the researcher, the specifics of my data collection and analysis, and considerations for ensuring trustworthiness and credibility. Chapter Four introduces the four key findings that resulted from my analysis: the relationship between the unfavorable determinants and the political work that overcame them, the centrality and primacy of interest convergence, educational interests, and the impact of educator expertise and practice. Chapter Five introduces the reconfigured framework with five components of political work and discusses this new framework's implications and applications. Overall, this dissertation provides the theoretical, contextual, and methodological foundation for the investigation as well as the findings about and applications of the political work that contributed to the passage of the policies for bilingual education and DACA teachers in the Arkansas 93rd General Assembly, even though the determinants for policy adoption were unfavorable.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

In order to contextualize the specific inquiry into the political work that contributed to the successful passage of two pro-immigrant education policies in the Arkansas legislature, it is important to review the literature in the fields of political science and education that gives insight to the topics and themes applicable to this study. This chapter will provide an overview of the relevant scholarship in four key areas: (a) immigrant education policy broadly; (b) bilingual education and diverse teachers specifically; (c) determinants for policy adoption, including unfavorable determinants; and (d) political work that facilitates policy passage. These themes from the existing literature provide important historical, social, political, and educational context and have inspired the research-based political work framework under investigation in this study.

Sociopolitical History of Immigrant Education Policy

The story of immigrant education policy in the United States is one of ebbs and flows, of highs and lows, of wins and losses, of progress and pushback, and researchers have given us insight into the pattern of advocacy that characterizes the decades-long pursuit of equitable and empowering policy for immigrant students. This pattern, from the founders to the future, highlights three primary themes that encompass the types of immigrant education policy that emerge from national and state governments: (a) bilingual education vs. English-only instruction; (b) undocumented students in K-12 schools; and (c) educational and professional opportunities for postsecondary noncitizens. Although there are similarities between the themes and the scholarship about them, researchers have used these policy topics to tell a compelling story about the trials and triumphs for immigrant students.

Bilingual Education vs. English-Only Instruction

The overplayed and offensive trope, "This is America. Speak English!" has infiltrated and influenced American political thought for centuries. By focusing on the sociopolitical history of

English language policies, education and political science researchers have studied the *where, when, how* and *why* of "official English," "English only," and monolingualism vs. multilingualism. These inquiries have their roots in our nation's founding and continue to be asked and answered today. Over thirty years ago, Baron (1990) claimed, "The conditions producing today's official English-only movement have been present in the United States since before the country's founding two centuries ago... In short, little has changed in the past two hundred years" (p. xiii). To this day, American policymakers and policy actors continue to grapple with the tension between the benefits of bilingualism and the advantages of English:

> The American linguistic situation produces an almost inescapable paradox. Minority-language speakers are encouraged to abandon their native tongues and become monolingual in English to demonstrate their patriotism, their willingness to assimilate, and their desire to enter the economic mainstream. Once they do this, they are encouraged - with the same arguments of patriotism and economic advantage, to learn a foreign language in order to strengthen their country's position in the international arena (Baron, 1990, p. 15).

These competing sentiments, of Americanism vs. global competitiveness, of assimilation vs. advantage, of patriotism vs. progress, have shaped the seemingly dichotomous policy debate over bilingual education vs. English-only instruction and have remained topics of interest for researchers in both the education and political science fields for decades.

From the Founding Fathers' uneasiness with non-English languages to the myth of the Melting Pot, America's foundations rest on the idea that *language* and *nation* are inextricably linked. Linguistic diversity has always been an American feature, yet policymakers have attempted to quell and quiet these non-English voices with English-only, monolingual mandates.

Although bilingual schools were common in the mid-1800s, (Crawford, 1989), the nativist Know Nothing movement of the 1840s and 1850s fueled policies that excluded non-English languages in schools. According to Crawford (1989), "For the 19th century education establishment, linguistic assimilation was the ultimate goal for immigrant students" (p. 19), and by 1880, legislation was enacted in several states that mandated English as the basic language of instruction.

Whereas the xenophobic and nativist trends of the 1800s were seen as extreme and fringe, the "Americanization" movement that followed was viewed as more centrist and mainstream, favoring education of immigrants rather than exclusion. However, the primary focus of these efforts was still Americanization through English only, and several anti-bilingualism policies were also enacted during this post-war era. Baron (1990) claimed, "World War I accentuated the perception that Americanization via English was essential" (p. 136), and the policies that emerged at the time championed the democracy-building benefits of English and highlighted the perceived anti-American threats of non-English languages. Forced Americanization meant that "proficiency in English was increasingly equated with political loyalty. For the first time, an ideological link was forged between language and Americanism" (Crawford, 1989, p. 22). This sentiment resulted in restrictive education policy for non-English speakers. Between 1919 and 1921, 20 states enacted Americanization statutes, a federal English literacy mandate was proposed in 1920, and by 1923, 34 states had passed laws requiring elementary instruction in English (Baron, 1989, p. 150). As Crawford (1989) noted, "By the late 1930s, (bilingual instruction) was virtually eradicated throughout the United States… Within a generation, Americanization's goal of transforming a polyglot society into a monolingual one

was largely achieved" (p. 22, 24). Bilingual instruction faded from American schools and American policymakers' bill drafts.

During this time, immigrant communities pushed back against these repressive, assimilationist policies and ideologies, establishing a pattern of oppositional advocacy from immigrants and non-native speakers of English throughout American history. Crawford (1989) noted, "The Melting Pot mythology obscures the diversity of cultures that have flourished in North America since the colonial period, and the aggressive efforts to preserve them, among both immigrants and indigenous minorities. In this history, bilingual education has played a central, if overlooked, role" (p. 19). Alvarez (1973) described the decades-long evolution of collective Latino identity, including responses to policies that create systemic and institutional barriers to equity, such as English-only policies. Throughout both the Creation Generation of the mid-1800s and the Migrant Generation of the 1920s and 1930s, the Mexican-American community engaged in a collective struggle for fairness and progress (Alvarez, 1973). Since the beginning, immigrant communities have advocated for their languages, cultures, and rights, a worthy fight that continues across a myriad of policy contexts.

The next few decades were shaped by the advent of English as a Second Language (ESL) pedagogy and policy in the 1930s, an improvement over the sink-or-swim English-only instructional requirements for immigrant students but not without its inadequacies. ESL instruction failed to fully equip English learners (ELs) with English proficiency and also discouraged and embarrassed immigrant students by minimizing their cultural and linguistic identities (Crawford, 1989, p. 27). Therefore, in 1968, when the Bilingual Education Act was signed into law by President Johnson, it was met with optimism and seen as "equal opportunity for the disadvantaged" (Schmidt, 2000, p. 12), even garnering bipartisan support in Congress

with little political controversy over bilingual education at the federal level (Crawford, 1989). This law was the foundation of the contemporary policy for language minority students, especially immigrant and Latinx students. However, over the next four decades, the policy debate continued (and continues to this day) about whether, why, how, and for whom bilingual education should take place in American schools.

The landmark case of *Lau vs. Nichols* in 1974, which found that public schools in San Francisco were not meeting their Chinese-speaking students' educational needs and were therefore violating their civil rights and the 14th Amendment, more effectively paved the way for bilingual education in American schools, not just because it could be implemented, but because it should. However, "the decision stopped short of mandating bilingual education, an omission that the program's critics have since interpreted as 'upholding flexibility' for school districts to use alternative methods" (Crawford, 1989, p. 36). This so-called flexibility resulted in inconsistent implementation of bilingual programs in states, districts, and schools, and confusion about the purpose or process of bilingual education planted seeds of doubt about its efficacy. Throughout the mid-1970s and 1980s, particularly during the Reagan administration, the proverbial pendulum began to swing the other way, and critics of bilingual education began to make the familiar case that classroom instruction should be delivered only in English. State legislatures again began to adopt English-only and official-English initiatives and to focus their attention on maintenance vs. transitional bilingual education, with many states preferring transitional programs that prioritized English proficiency as quickly as possible without necessarily maintaining the student's primary language (Schmidt, 2000, p. 14). Several research studies, including an extensive comparative analysis of bilingual education by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) in 1978, eroded confidence about the efficacy of bilingual programs. Crawford

(1989) noted, "Policymakers began to ask: Why mandate a pedagogical approach whose benefits had yet to be demonstrated? Why not adopt a policy of 'local flexibility'... Why not explore English-only alternatives?" (p. 43). With bilingual education now on the defensive, a renewed English-only movement gained momentum. English-only advocates once again tapped into the familiar themes of immigrant restrictionism, language as a symbol of national unity, and cultural assimilation (Crawford, 1989, p. 14). Fortunately, the Reagan administration and the influential English-only lobby were not able to completely dismantle bilingual education, thanks in part to counter-lobbying and advocacy efforts by immigrant and Latinx groups, such as the League of United Latin American Citizens and the Spanish-American League against Discrimination. In contrast to English-only, these groups advocated for a policy of "English Plus," noting an English Plus policy "would promote equal opportunities, increase cross cultural understanding, safeguard minority rights, and enhance the nation's position in world trade and diplomacy" (Crawford, 1989, p. 65). Immigrants and their allies continued to advocate for the benefits of bilingualism and the need to protect and promote bilingual education.

In the 1990s and 2000s, bilingual education again found support from researchers and policymakers alike. President George H.W. Bush and President Bill Clinton expressed support for maintenance bilingual programs, and in 1994, the Bilingual Education Act was reauthorized by Congress. However, unlike its bipartisan origins in 1968, this time the bill was much more partisan, with Republicans opposing the legislation and ramping up similar partisan attacks on bilingual education at the national and state level (Schmidt, 2000, p. 17). One of the most significant Republican-led attacks on bilingual education came in California in 1997. Proposition 227 outlawed bilingual education, replacing it with a one-year English immersion model. Due to its success at the polls, which surprised and dismayed bilingual education advocates, the

proposal was replicated in other state legislatures across the country (Schmidt, 2000, p. 19). Still, scholarly research about bilingual education blossomed in the 2000s and gave credence to the program's effectiveness, countering some of the doubt cast by English-only-supportive research efforts in the 1970s and 1980s. Kelly (2018) found that, after the enactment of Proposition 227, "researchers have since conducted various evaluations of the effectiveness of English-only policies and found them ineffective for promoting the long-term academic achievement of English learners in California," and according to MacSwan et al. (2017), "This extensive body of (longitudinal, narrative, and meta-analytic) research on the effectiveness of bilingual education programs has consistently found the use of home language at school to be more effective than English alone at promoting ELL children's academic achievement" (p. 220). Even though districts and schools continued to struggle with implementation of and results from bilingual programs, by the 2000s, it was seen as standard and best practice, with up to 39 states permitting and enacting two-way immersion programs by 2012 (American Institutes for Research, 2015). In 2014, California overturned their controversial ban on bilingual education, and just months ago, Arkansas amended its English-only instructional requirement and became the penultimate state to permit bilingual and dual immersion programs after the passage of H.B.1451, one of the pro-immigrant education policies under investigation in this study. The history of bilingual education in the United States has, to this point, led to progress for these policies, yet advocates must remain vigilant to continue to pursue and defend them in the face of inevitable pushback.

Undocumented Students in K-12 Schools

Language learning is not the only issue of interest when it comes to policymaking for immigrant students. For decades, Americans have grappled with whether undocumented students deserve to go to school at all. This question of worthiness has marked the existing literature as

well as the policy debate about what rights (or "benefits") undocumented immigrants deserve, including the right to a free public education and their right to a meaningful, equitable, and inclusive experience once they are there.

As acknowledged in the previous section, there is no shortage of anti-immigrant sentiment in the United States, and these biases become even more hardened in regards to immigrants without legal authorization. Olivas (2012) claimed, "I have seen a coarsening of the public discourse, especially the rise of nativist hate speech and organized racial violence, enabled and spread by restrictionist demagoguery, the Internet, cable television, and other media" (p. 3, 4). Quoted ten years ago, Olivas (2012) had not yet seen the rise of the restrictionist demagoguery of Republican candidate and eventual President Donald Trump who launched his campaign with anti-immigrant rhetoric and marked his single term in office by championing regressive and exclusionary immigrant policy. These sentiments do not stay in the Capitol and state houses and city halls; they seep their way into school board meeting rooms and classrooms and teacher's lounges. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge the historical and political contexts of undocumented immigrant students in order to better do the work of making their experiences in school more inclusive and equitable.

In 1975, the Texas legislature enacted a law that permitted public school districts to charge tuition to undocumented students. Only citizens of the United States or legally admitted aliens, the statute said, were entitled to a free public education. School districts became permitted and empowered to require undocumented families to pay for their children to attend public schools, and some districts went further and excluded undocumented students from enrolling all together. This legislation triggered legal action from the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF), with brave but anonymous undocumented students as the plaintiffs,

resulting in a strategic, and arguably fortuitous (Olivas, 2012, p. 30), legal battle that ended up before the Supreme Court. In 1982, the Court, in what would become a landmark case for undocumented immigrants and public education, ruled in favor of the schoolchildren in *Plyler vs. Doe.* The case affirmed that undocumented students were entitled to equal protection under the law and therefore guaranteed an education regardless of their immigration status. Furthermore, the case suggested that education is a fundamental civil right, not a privilege of citizenship (Radoff, 2011, p. 438), and that undocumented immigrants were not excluded from constitutional protection. The impact of *Plyler vs. Doe* has been significant, not only because it affirms that undocumented students can enroll in American public schools but also because of its broader implications:

> *Plyler v. Doe* always stood for its resolution of the immediate issue in dispute: whether the state of Texas could enact laws denying undocumented children free access to its own public schools. But it also dealt with a larger, transcendent principle: how this society will treat its immigrant children. Thus, for the larger polity, *Plyler* has become an important case for key themes, such as how we treat children fairly, how we guard our borders, how we constitute ourselves, and who gets to make these crucial decisions. To a large extent, *Plyler* may also be the apex of the Court's treatment of the undocumented, a concept that never truly existed until the 20th century (Olivas, 2012, p. 8).

Still, *Plyler* was not without its challenges, both legally and practically, as additional attacks on the rights of the undocumented continued over the next four decades.

The most overt and high-profile challenge to *Plyler vs. Doe* was California's Proposition 187 in 1997. Against the backdrop of heightened partisanship regarding immigration policy, "Prop 187 was clearly intended by its sponsors to rescind *Plyler*, to restrict access to public

benefits, and to expel aliens from the state" (Olivas, 2012, p. 40). Fortunately, it was struck down

in federal court in 1997, thanks to the legal precedent set by *Plyler vs. Doe*, and while additional

federal and state legislative attempts to exclude undocumented immigrants from public schools

pervaded, "there have been no serious legislative threats to undocumented schoolchildren at the

congressional level since 1996 or the state level since 1997" (Olivas, 2012, p. 47). In addition to

the steadfast advocacy from immigrant parents, public schoolteachers joined in the fight for the

rights of their undocumented students. In 1996, a proposed federal amendment to undo the *Plyler*

protections was defeated in part because of strong opposition from teachers' unions (Olivas,

2012). Thanks to *Plyler*, schools are viewed as safe havens for students, and educators have

become some of their immigrant students' biggest advocates.

Even though undocumented students have no official barriers to enrollment in public

schools, they face challenges once they are there. Erosions of *Plyler*'s protections, whether

inadvertent or intentional, happen when schools require a social security number or other

documentation for enrollment, cooperate with immigration enforcement, or fail to engage

immigrant families effectively or responsively. In the mid-2000s, a time of heightened tension

for the undocumented community due to divisive federal legislation and rhetoric (Silber

Mohamed, 2017), schools across the nation learned, or at least heard rumors, that Immigration

and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials were targeting schools and parents who were

suspected of being in the country without documentation (Olivas, 2012, p. 50-56). This new and

often unwanted relationship between immigration enforcement and public education ushered in

new conversations about school policies and practices for undocumented students. As fears of

deportation began to affect students' achievement, attendance, and overall wellbeing in school,

researchers have focused on these impacts in American classrooms. Kirksey et al. (2020) found a

negative correlation between immigration enforcement and student achievement, as well as between enforcement and student attendance. Even though, thanks to *Plyler*, undocumented students are legally permitted to enroll in classrooms, the fact that they or their family members face deportation from their community has serious impacts on their experiences in school.

It is unsurprising, then, that the academic and social-emotional needs of undocumented students can be significant, and teachers, counselors, and school leaders benefit from opportunities to bolster their relationships with their immigrant students. Crawford and Witherspoon Arnold (2017) argued for an "ethos of reception" in their research about the effects of school climate on undocumented students' schooling experiences. Crawford and Valle (2016) zoomed in further and focused on the potential that school counselors have to foster strong and supportive relationships with their undocumented students. These current research trends on enhancing educator capacity to care for their immigrant students point to the need for positive relationships between immigrants and educators as well as the significant academic and social-emotional challenges that undocumented students face in school. It also strengthens the case for culturally and linguistically diverse teachers, including bilingual and immigrant teachers.

Educational and Professional Opportunities for Noncitizens

Even throughout the decades of contentious immigration policy and politics, the majority of Americans have remained supportive of undocumented children who immigrated with their parents. The phrase "through no fault of their own" categorizes the debate over whether and how undocumented minors and young adults should receive educational and professional opportunities: proponents for these opportunities such as in-state tuition and professional licensure for undocumented youth argue that these young people are not to blame for their parents' unlawful entry into this country and should not be excluded from the American dream.

While *Plyler vs. Doe* protects undocumented students through twelfth grade, the law does not extend protections or opportunities to students after high school. Two key policy proposals, the DREAM Act of 2001 and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) in 2012, as well as similar state-level initiatives, have become the most significant immigrant education policies in the past two decades and continue to drive national and state immigration policymaking, as well as educational and political research, today.

In 2001, in a bipartisan attempt to address the restricted access to postsecondary educational opportunities for undocumented students, Senators Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and Dick Durbin (D-IL) sponsored the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act. The proposed legislation would have permitted unauthorized immigrants who entered the U.S. before age 16, lived here for at least five years prior to the enactment of the law, and were 35 years old or younger to apply for conditional immigration status that would allow them to work, study, and travel without fear of deportation. If at the end of the waiting period the applicants had pursued postsecondary education or served in the military and had "good moral character," they could apply for legal permanent residency (Schwab, 2013). However, even with favorable public opinion and bipartisan support for the bill, the DREAM Act stalled out in Congress, and two decades of subsequent attempts have yet to be successful. Schwab (2013) acknowledged the arguments made by those who oppose the DREAM Act and other legislative efforts like it: undocumented students are criminals who broke the law; the DREAM Act would incentivize more undocumented immigrants to come to the United States; undocumented immigrants are a tax burden; and immigrants are changing our national character for the worse and will not assimilate into our melting pot (Schwab, 2013). However, he also refuted each claim, affirming that the children of undocumented immigrants are blameless for their parents'

actions; that no legislation would or could ever detract immigrants from seeking a better life in

the U.S., especially those who are fleeing desperate and dangerous conditions; and that

immigrants pay more in taxes than they receive in benefits (Schwab, 2013). Several state

legislatures across the nation agreed with this view and, frustrated by the lack of federal

movement, proposed and passed state-level legislation for educational benefits for

undocumented students, such as in-state tuition and access to state-sponsored scholarships

(Schwab, 2013). These arguments also framed the Obama administration's landmark executive

order, DACA, in 2012. Similar (although not identical) to the 2001 DREAM Act, DACA

allowed qualified undocumented immigrants to apply for a new deferred immigration status with

permission to work and study in the United States. DREAMers celebrated but with caution: "Of

course we are thrilled. But we've heard promises before," one undocumented student shared upon

learning about the executive order (Schwab, 2013). The hesitancy is not undeserved: DACA has

been fairly criticized, especially in contrast to the DREAM Act. Not only is it an executive order

and policy directive rather than a law, and therefore less permanent and enforceable, the policy

itself is not as comprehensive or protective. Deferred action is not legal permanent residence.

The requirement to be misdemeanor-free is problematic. And the high annual application fee is

limiting. (Schwab, 2019). Still, the success and popularity of DACA persist, even through the

Trump administration's attempts to cancel it. DREAMers and their advocates and allies have

rallied around the policy and the immigrants it impacts, so effectively that even conservative

states like Arkansas passed a tuition equity bill for DACA recipients in 2019 (H.B. 1684, 2019),

and President Biden reauthorized and protected DACA his first day on the job in 2021. Although

a federal judge found DACA unlawful and blocked new applicants in July of 2021, current

DREAMers remain protected, and the disappointing judicial action has motivated DREAMers

and their allies to pursue legislative solutions with even more urgency. For many immigrants, the dream for DREAMers lives on through DACA for now, and Congress continues to fight for (and over) a clean DREAM Act.

In the meantime, states and institutions of higher education are finding ways to make educational and professional opportunities accessible to undocumented students and DACA recipients. In addition to expanding in-state tuition and scholarships, states are also passing laws to grant professional licenses to immigrants. Barred from access to licensure by the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Responsibility Act "unless the state passes an affirmative law making them explicitly eligible" (Ballerini & Feldblum, 2021, p. 168), immigrants cannot be licensed as teachers, nurses, engineers, or any other career that requires an occupational license unless their state has passed a law to permit it. In response, higher education institutions and educators are acknowledging the challenges for their immigrant students and are creating systems of support. Even in the face of financial stress, fear of deportation for family members, mental health concerns, lack of academic capital, food insecurity and other poverty struggles, many immigrant students excel, especially with the right support. Ballerini and Feldblum (2021) pointed out,

> It is important to note that despite many of the challenges... undocumented students also demonstrate remarkable resilience and motivation. They also have high levels of civic engagement, including social service, volunteering, community work, or activism. Most importantly, undocumented activism has driven (policy solutions), as undocumented students have often led the development of programs and policies (p. 117).

Postsecondary educators have found success in supporting their immigrant students through structured mentorships and bridge programs; however, the greatest successes come when

students see the faculty as their advocates and allies beyond the classroom. Punti and Peterson (2019) noted, "To fully enhance the changes of academic attainment of these students, English language educators need to become their mentors and trusted members of the undocumented/ DACA higher education family" (p. 833). By becoming activists for their students' rights, educators build trust that is vital for students who come to school with the challenges that exist because of their immigration status.

Current research about education policy for postsecondary immigrants speculates on what happens next. Will Congress be able to find consensus on this volatile but popular issue? The DREAM Act is worth fighting for, and immigrants and their allies will continue their pattern of advocacy to fight for legislative action.

The robust literature about the sociopolitical history of immigrant education policy highlights the decades-long pursuit of fair and empowering policy for immigrant students. Champions for immigrants are not alone, but their work does not come without criticism and obstruction. Researchers have allowed us to situate any current and future work for pro-immigrant education policy adoption within a context that inspires continued advocacy, even in the face of challenges, because the benefits of the policies make the hard and perpetual work worth it.

Benefits of Bilingual Education and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Teachers

The two specific pro-immigrant education policies under investigation in this dissertation are a bill allowing school districts to adopt approved bilingual education programs ("bilingual education," H.B.1451) and a bill permitting teacher licensure for noncitizens with DACA immigration status ("DACA teachers," H.B.1594). The existing literature about the benefits of bilingual education and teachers from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds provides a

compelling rationale for these types of policies. In the current scholarship, researchers have

advocated for the use of an EL's native language to support language and literacy development

and have highlighted the compelling need to recruit, equip, and retain teachers from diverse

backgrounds. The benefits of these two pro-immigrant education policies, affirmed by the

existing literature, provide strong arguments to be used by advocates for their adoption.

Benefits of Bilingual Education & Dual Immersion Programs

Bilingual education's long and politically-charged history makes it a popular area of

interest for researchers. While political scientists have focused on its policy history and

implications, education scholars have studied its impact in school systems and classrooms. Over

the past three decades, researchers have focused on the benefits of bilingual instructional models,

particularly in contrast to English-only approaches. The existing literature has identified the key

strengths of bilingual education: its efficacy (August & Shanahan, 2006; Hakuta & Gould, 1987;

Krashen, 1991; Krashen & McField, 2005; Lindholm-Leary, 2012), its affirming and inclusive

nature (Amaro-Jimenez & Semingson, 2011; August & Shanahan, 2006; Lindholm-Leary, 2018;

Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992), and its economic and cross-cultural advantages (Hakuta,

1997, 2011; Hakuta & Gould, 1987; Lindholm-Leary, 2004).

The broad term "bilingual education" encompasses other more specific instructional

models with a variety of names, sometimes interchangeable and sometimes distinct. Also known

as dual language, transitional bilingual, early-exit bilingual, dual immersion, two-way

immersion, two-way bilingual, and perhaps others, the key distinction between the two main

bilingual education program types is whether it is intended for ELs or for a combination of ELs

and native English speakers. It is worth noting again that not all ELs are immigrants; however,

for the purpose of this dissertation, bilingual education is categorized as pro-immigrant education

policy, even though it can better be described as pro-EL or pro-CLD policy. The U.S. Office for English Language Acquisition (2015), which provides guidance for all states, districts, and schools in implementing programming for ELs, delineates the two program types: Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) or Early-Exit Bilingual Education vs. Dual Language or Two-Way Immersion. Transitional/Early-Exit is defined as a

> program that maintains and develops skills in the primary language while introducing, maintaining, and developing skills in English. The primary purpose of a TBE program is to facilitate the ELs' transition to an all-English instructional program, while the students receive academic subject instruction in the primary language to the extent necessary (p. 10).

In contrast, a dual language or two-way program is

> a bilingual program where the goal is for students to develop language proficiency in two languages by receiving instruction in English and another language in a classroom that is usually comprised of half primary-English speakers and half primary speakers of the other language (p. 10)

The Center for Applied Linguistics (2021) also called out this difference, describing two-way immersion as one type of bilingual education that "integrates native English speakers and native speakers of another language for academic content instruction through both English and the partner language beginning in elementary schools" (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2021, para. 2). Lindholm-Leary (2012) introduced the two program types as the 90:10 model vs. the 50:50 model, describing the ratio of instructional time in the target language to the instructional time in English, and she pointed out that "the principle factors distinguishing these two… programs are the distribution of language for instruction and the language in which reading is taught" (p. 257).

Despite the structural differences between the two models, there is consensus in advocating for both program types when contrasted with English-only models, due to the key benefits of bilingual education over English immersion. Broadly, language researchers agree that "Bilingual and Dual Language programs promote bilingualism and biliteracy, grade-level academic achievement and cross-cultural competence in all students" (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2021, para. 3). In short, bilingual education works.

Advocates for bilingual education are adamant about its efficacy, and the research supports their claim. Leaders in the field of second language acquisition research and practice have found time and time again that bilingual programs are more effective than English-only models (August & Shanahan, 2006; Hakuta & Gould, 1987; Krashen, 1991; Krashen & McField, 2005; Lindholm-Leary, 2012). Hakuta & Gould (1987) helped establish this claim, finding that the research studies at the time showed the effectiveness of programs with "substantial native-language components" (p. 42). Hakuta & Gould (1987) also found that

> the reason is that a strong native-language foundation supports the subsequent learning of English, and most of the learning that goes on in the native language transfers readily into English. Thus, rather than being an intellectual handicap, bilingualism may be a cognitive asset (p. 42).

Steadfast in his support for bilingualism, Krashen (1991) claimed that the case for bilingual education comes from the well-established research on second language acquisition in general: language learners need comprehensible input, background knowledge, and the opportunity to develop literacy skills in both languages (p. 1-2), and bilingual education provides those opportunities. Thirty years ago, Krashen (1991) argued that "the research is remarkably consistent: properly organized bilingual education programs do work" (p. 12), and fourteen years

later, he and McField (2005) found the same in their "meta-meta-analysis" (p. 7) of bilingual education research inquiries:

> Study after study has reported that children in bilingual programs typically outperform their counterparts in all-English programs on tests of academic achievement in English. Or, at worst, they do just as well… "Despite slightly different criteria for including studies and different dates of publication, the average effect sizes are remarkably similar, with students in bilingual education showing a small but consistently positive impact versus those in all-English classrooms (p. 7, 8).

Other researchers have found the same pattern of efficacy in their reviews and analyses. August and Shanahan's (2006) key findings about effective instruction for ELs gave strong support for the efficacy for bilingual education. Their analysis resulted in six foundational and compelling findings: 1) Activating first-language literacy is advantageous to ELs. 2) Oral proficiency in an EL's first language facilitates second-language oral discrimination and production. 3) First-language literacy is related to English literacy development for ELs. 4) ELs who are literate in their first language are likely to have an easier time learning to read in English. 5) Instructional programs are effective when they provide opportunities for students to develop native language proficiency. 6) Research studies have shown that ELs who are a part of an instructional program that utilizes their native language and English perform better in literacy than ELs who receive English-only instruction (August & Shanahan, 2006). Lindholm-Leary (2012) found support for efficacy of bilingual education for all types of students, from ELs to native English speakers, from elementary to secondary, and from star students to struggling learners: "DLE (dual language education) programs are capable of promoting academic performance for students of different backgrounds, including those subpopulations identified at risk for academic difficulty"

(p. 258). The research has been overwhelmingly clear: bilingual programs are effective. They help ELs learn English, they help ELs learn to read, and they help all kids improve their academic achievement, regardless of their native language or background.

Not only do bilingual programs get results, they also provide the vital benefit of establishing an affirming and asset-minded culture for and about ELs. August and Shanahan (2006) cautioned against the bias that comes from monolingualism and the tendency to have a deficit mindset about ELs. In contrast, bilingualism promotes affirming views about ELs and their families and acknowledges the assets and funds of knowledge they bring with them to school. Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg (1992) first coined the term "funds of knowledge" to describe the valuable experiences Mexican-American students glean from their cultural and familial backgrounds. They claimed that

> we should pay greater attention to providing teachers with opportunities to learn how to incorporate the funds of knowledge from their students' households… As well, literacy instruction must maximize its use of the available literacy skills within the home as a means to tap the vast funds of knowledge that parents have, but are never given, the opportunity to share and express (p. 330).

Bilingual education provides such opportunities, and other researchers have built upon the idea of funds of knowledge to encourage the benefits of asset-mindedness rather than deficit-mindedness in regards to language-learning students. According to Amaro-Jimenez and Semingson (2011),

> Researchers have argued that a focus on assimilation and devaluing of students' language and culture can result in notions of subtractive schooling. In contrast to such deficit models, an additive model seeks to build on students' and family's strengths and abilities

and transform teachers' and schools' ways of perceiving the families with an overall goal

of increasing student achievement (p. 5).

This additive mindset, where students' primary languages are affirmed as worthy and

advantageous, is a key benefit of bilingual education. Lindholm-Leary (2018) recently reviewed

the literature on the positive impact of bilingual programs for ELs, noting that "both language

minority and majority students should have access to an additive bilingualism environment in

which both languages and cultures are equally valued, and all students are treated equally" (p.

49-50). Purposeful integration of students and equal affirmation of their home languages will

promote positive cross-cultural relationships and mindsets among all students, a clear and

compelling benefit of bilingual education.

A third advantage of bilingual education over English-only programs is more pragmatic

and future-focused: bilingualism provides economic competitiveness and enhanced cross-cultural

opportunities. Lindholm-Leary (2004) described these advantages well: "There are two major

reasons for helping students become bilingual: the demographic landscape of the United States is

changing — and so is the job outlook" (p. 56). Hakuta (1987, 1997, 2011) acknowledged the

strengths of bilingualism as a workforce skill that leads to career opportunities, enhanced

communication and cultural value, and even national security:

Americans are often frustrated by their failure to master foreign languages. Poor

linguistic skills are clearly a disadvantage in diplomatic and commercial as well as

intellectual spheres… Bilingual immersion programs could be an important step in the

conservation and development of an invaluable national resource (Hakuta & Gould,

1987, p. 44).

By promoting the economic and cultural asset of bilingualism through bilingual education

programs, students of all language backgrounds have access to a wider variety of opportunities for their futures.

Those who want to make the case for bilingual education have the backing of the research community. Previous scholarship confirms the benefits of bilingual and dual immersion programs, not only for ELs but for native English speakers. Students in bilingual programs learn a new language better and faster, improve their academic achievement, gain cross-cultural competence, experience an affirming and additive classroom culture, and become equipped with valuable communication and workforce skills. The research-backed benefits of bilingual education are hard to deny.

Benefits of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Teachers

As American classrooms become increasingly diverse, with immigrant students being the fastest growing subpopulation, the American teaching force remains "stubbornly white" (Burns Thomas, 2020, p. 217). Policymakers, researchers, and educators have highlighted the need to adapt teacher education in response, and over the past several decades, there has been a considerable effort to equip White, middle-class, monolingual teachers to be more multicultural, culturally responsive, critically conscious, or anti-racist in their teaching practice. However, more pertinent to this dissertation is the trend to recruit and retain more teachers of color, who better reflect the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of their students. As previously acknowledged, immigrant students often struggle in school, whether linguistically, academically, or socially and emotionally. Again, while not all immigrant students are Latinx, and not all Latinx students are immigrants, these particular student populations have become a focus for researchers studying the benefits of more Latinx teachers, particularly Latinx teachers who are immigrants themselves. The existing research has highlighted the benefits of diverse teachers as

role models, their ability to improve student achievement, their enhanced capacity for developing

a critical consciousness that can impact and influence fellow educators, and their role in reducing

the teacher shortage.

It is hard to deny the fact that diversifying the teaching force is necessary and sensical.

There is a large body of research on the benefits of having teachers of color in American

classrooms (Achinstein & Aguirre, 2008; Ball and Tyson, 2011; Cole, 1986; Dee, 2004; Egalite,

Kisida, &Winters 2015; Elfers et al., 2006; Foster, 1994; Gandara & Maxwell-Jolley, 2000; Gist,

2014; Graham, 1987; Haycock, 2001; Ingersoll et al., 2019; King, 1993; Kirby et al., 1999;

Meire, 1993; Mercer and Mercer, 1986; Murnane et al. 1991; Palmer, 2018; Pitts, 2007; Rubio et

al., 2021; Scafidia et al. 2007; Sleeter and Milner, 2011; Villegas & Irvine, 2010; Waters, 1989),

building consensus around the idea that diverse teachers are not only good for kids of color; they

are good for White kids, too. There is strong support for the positive impact that diverse teachers

have for their students, not only in serving as role models of success and providing a welcoming

classroom environment but also in facilitating academic growth. Mercer and Mercer (1986)

explained how the racial makeup of the teaching force sends strong messages to students about

power and opportunity, or lack thereof, in American society. By seeing adults of color in only

non-professional positions in schools rather than in teaching positions, students of color were

implicitly learning that White people are better suited to hold positions of power and authority.

Other researchers have found similar evidence of the importance of teachers of color as role

models boosting students' self-worth, motivating them to strive for academic and social success,

and create a sense of welcome and inclusion in schools and classrooms (Cole, 1986; Gist, 2014;

Graham, 1987; King, 1993; Sleeter & Milner, 2011). Villegas and Irvine (2010) found that

having a teacher of color as a role model is good for all students, not just students of color (p.

177). Students who see their teachers as role models are more likely to envision and realize their own potential for academic achievement. This advantage lays the foundation for improved academic achievement for students of diverse teachers, another benefit of teachers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. A myriad of studies have found evidence that diverse teachers are able to get results. Dee (2004) and Egalite, Kisida, and Winters (2015) found that students with a same-race teacher showed better academic outcomes than students with a different-race teacher. Pitts (2007) found that students performed better on high school graduation exams when the teacher force more closely mirrored the student population in terms of racial and ethnic diversity. In regards to Latinxs specifically, Meire (1993) found that the Latinx students in districts with a greater representation of Latinx teachers were more successful in passing their high school graduation examinations. As researchers have acquired result after result that diverse teachers enhance the academic potential of their diverse learners, the question becomes, "How?" Diverse teachers bring many assets and skills to their classrooms that facilitate their ability to teach well: high expectations for their students, culturally relevant teaching and cultural synchronicity, and caring and trusting relationships. The potential pedagogies of diverse teachers, "a culturally specific pedagogy, a pedagogy of cultural translation, and a pedagogy of caring" (Ball and Tyson, 2011, p. 26), support all learners, and students of color who see their teachers as cultural translators and bestowers of high expectations (Gist, 2014, p. 12; Sleeter and Milner, 2011, p. 83l) are more likely to envision and realize their own potential for academic achievement. Villegas and Irvine (2010) found,

> Compared to White teachers, teachers of color have more favorable views of students of color, including more positive perceptions regarding their academic potential. We believe this difference in expectations, and the interactions those expectations trigger in

classrooms and schools, help explain the overall academic benefits students of color

derive from a same-race teacher (p. 181-2).

Diverse teachers are also able to effectively and empathetically draw on their own cultural

experiences to connect with students who share their backgrounds, a term many researchers call

"cultural synchronicity" (Achinstein & Aguirre, 2008; Foster, 1994; Gandara & Maxwell-Jolley,

2000; Haycock, 2001; Ingersoll et al., 2019). This connection gives teachers "insider knowledge"

(Ingersoll et al., 2019, p. 1) about their students and facilitates learning by bridging school

experiences to students' lived experiences. Ingersoll (2019) found that cultural synchronicity was

an asset for strong teaching and learning, and Villegas and Irvine (2010) claimed that consistent,

culturally-relevant practices employed by diverse teachers can facilitate narrowing the

achievement gap:

> Such teachers tend to be knowledgeable, sensitive, and comfortable with students'
>
> language, style of presentation, community values, traditions, rituals, legends, myths,
>
> history, symbols, and norms. Using their cultural expertise, they help students make
>
> appropriate adaptations and transitions into mainstream culture (p. 184).

It is unsurprising, then, that teachers who value cultural sensitivity and comfort for their students

are able to establish and maintain caring and trusting relationships with their students. Teachers

from diverse cultural backgrounds bring with them a "pedagogy of caring" (Ball and Tyson,

2011, p. 26), which leads to warmth, trust, and genuine investment in their students' lives and

well-being. In regards to Hispanic or Latinx immigrant teachers specifically, the benefits of

cultural translation, empathy of experience, and high expectations apply and extend to their

immigrant students. According to Treviño et al. (2017), "Immigrant teachers might be best

positioned in serving immigrant and diverse students because of their affinity with language and

culture practices as well as the experience of migration and adjustment to a new country" (p. 643). Villegas and Irvine (2010) reviewed the research about the pedagogy of caring among Latinx teachers:

> The term *cariño* reported by Rueda et al. (2004) literally means caring. Examples of *cariño* in their work include instances where Latino paraprofessionals referred to their Latino students with kinship terms like *mijo/mija* (my son/my daughter) or *mi amor* (my love). The Latino teachers in this particular study believed that it was important to establish and foster a sense of confianza (trust), which includes sharing cultural experiences with students, and listening and relating to them as culturally connected relatives… Similarly, Nieto (1994) contends that Hispanic teachers work to create a family atmosphere in the classroom in which the teacher is perceived by the students as a mother or godmother. In her view, the sense of trust these relationships inspire enables the students to feel at ease in the learning environment (p. 183-4).

This advantageous positioning allows Spanish-speaking immigrant teachers to not only better engage their students but also develop their own critical consciousness and emerge as leaders among their professional peers (Palmer, 2018; Rubio et al., 2021). Palmer (2018) noted, "Bilingual teachers in particular provide a crucial support as the bridges between their nonbilingual colleagues and the increasingly linguistically, culturally, racially diverse families and communities we find in our nation's public schools" (p. 215). These invaluable assets, a pedagogy of caring, critical consciousness, culturally relevant pedagogy, and serving as a role model for their students, help facilitate learning and academic achievement.

An additional benefit to recruiting diverse teachers is that more teachers means a less severe teacher shortage. Teachers are in short supply, especially in diverse and urban schools

(Elfers et al., 2006; Kirby et al., 1999; Murnane et al. 1991; Scafidia et al. 2007; Villegas & Irvine, 2010), and by focusing on teacher recruitment efforts among diverse teacher candidates, we are meeting a workforce need while also providing the aforementioned benefits of having culturally synchronous teachers in classrooms where we need them. According to Villegas and Irvine (2010), teachers of color, in contrast with White teachers, are more likely to seek opportunities to teach students of color, particularly in hard-to-staff urban settings, and are more likely to persist in those settings (p. 186). Therefore, "recruiting and preparing more people of color for the teaching profession has the potential to not only expand the overall supply of teachers for the most demanding and difficult-to-staff schools but also to alleviate the high rate of attrition in those settings" (p. 186). Research shows that recruiting more teachers of color has economic benefits as well as educational ones.

The benefits of bilingual education and diverse teachers are overwhelmingly supported by the existing literature. As policymakers, educators, and immigrant education advocates work to garner support for these policies, they can rest assured that they have the backing of the research community for their efficacy and impact.

Determinants for Policy Adoption

Just because a policy is a good idea, makes sense, and is backed by empirical research does not guarantee its adoption. One look at the headlines coming out of state legislatures will prove that plenty of evidence-lacking policies become signed into law, and many research-based policies never make it out of committee. It is not merely the soundness of a policy that ensures its passage but rather a combination of economic, social, and political factors in the legislative context where it is being pursued. Dye (1973) found "causal linkages between differences in policies and differences in social, cultural, economic, and political and institutional conditions"

(p. 652), and other researchers have corroborated the connections between these conditions and the likelihood of policy adoption. The existing literature provides a helpful framework for deciding whether a policy will be adopted by a particular state. If the economic, social and political conditions are favorable, the policy is likely to be adopted. If they are not, policymakers must acknowledge the obstacles in the way of passage in order to overcome them.

Economic Determinants for Policy Adoption

Although policymaking is inherently political, researchers have found that the economic conditions within a state have a significant impact on a state's likelihood to adopt a particular policy proposal. In fact, Dye (1973) found that economic determinants mattered even more than political determinants: "On the whole, economic resources were more influential in shaping state policies than any of the political variables previously thought to be important in policy determination" (p. 653). Other researchers have had similar findings, noting that "economic explanations proved to be useful in determining which states are the first to adopt laws" (Gray, 1973, p. 1185) and identifying wealthier, more innovative, more economically competitive states as more likely to innovate (Berry, 1994; Gray, 1973; Mallinson, 2020; Walker, 1969). Hill and Leighley (1992) identified the upper class bias present in policymaking decisions in states, finding "bias in favor of the wealthy in every state electorate" (p. 354). These economic determinants influence how likely a state is to adopt a new policy as well as the types of policies that are adopted.

Social Determinants of Policy Adoption

In addition to economic factors, social and demographic determinants influence policy adoption in states. Urbanization, race and ethnicity, and religion and morality all impact whether or not a state takes on a particular policy innovation in its context. Similar to his findings on industrialization and income, Walker (1969) found that the more urbanized a state was, the more likely it was to adopt a policy innovation. Berry (1994) concluded the same by including the level of urbanization in his internal determinants model for policy adoption and found that more urbanized states were more likely to innovate. The racial and ethnic makeup of a state also affects how likely a state is to adopt a particular policy. Hero and Tolbert (1996) claimed, "Racial/ethnic contexts shape the beliefs, attitudes, and ideologies of individuals and groups associated with the political culture thesis" (p. 854). They discussed the variation in policy outcomes among states depending on the level of minority diversity and found that "in the aggregate, greater minority diversity (bifurcation) is associated with worse policy outcomes. But when policies are disaggregated by race/ethnicity, we find that policy outcomes for minorities are especially poor in homogenous contexts" (p. 868). The racial and ethnic makeup of a state's population, both in overall percentage and in level of bifurcation, has impacts on what types of policies are adopted. Another social determinant for policy adoption is the influence of religion and morality within a state. In some contexts, the role of religion and morality can be more compelling than economic factors. Mooney and Lee (1995) asked if policies that regulate morality or evoke strong moral reactions have significantly different patterns of adoption by states when compared to policies that are economically focused. The answer was yes: "Since the debate over these policies often involves polarized positions with little room for compromise, morality policy reinvention may not proceed in the typical pattern of social learning-based

incremental policy reinvention" (p. 600). Frendreis and Tatalovich (2010) found similar evidence of "the persistence of religion as a vital factor in some public policy debates, especially those falling into the realm of morality politics" (p. 315). Therefore, the social determinant of religion and morality is particularly influential for policy adoption. Policymakers should consider the role of both race and religion within the policy context where they are trying to effect change.

Political Determinants of Policy Adoption

Although a state's economic and social determinants have a large impact on whether or not it adopts a particular policy, the internal and external political conditions also influence which policies resonate. Dye (1973) noted the chagrin of many political scientists who "insist that political variables must influence public policy simply because our traditional training and wisdom in political science has told us that political variables are important" (p. 655) and cautioned scholars to not overlook the importance of socioeconomics in regards to policy adoption. Still, political determinants, both within the legislature and externally, are not without their influence on which types of policies are compelling.

Internal Political Determinants. The political factors within the state legislature itself play a role in policy adoption. The level of professionalization of the legislature and the partisanship and ideological makeup of the legislative body influence a state's likelihood to adopt a policy innovation. Several researchers have noted that the more professionalized a state legislature is, in contrast to a part-time or citizen legislature, the more likely it is to adopt a new policy (Berry, 1994; Mallinson, 2020; Walker, 1969). Walker (1969) argued that "the presence of competent staff, superior clerical facilities, and supporting services would allow (legislators) to give serious consideration to a number of new proposals" (p. 885). The better informed the legislators are, the more likely they are to innovate, and legislative support staff and structures

facilitate that competency. The internal partisan makeup and ideology of the legislature also influence policy adoption in the states. Zingher (2014) described it well:

> Ideological congruence is a necessary precondition for the passage of any legislation; the party that controls the legislature must be ideologically willing to adopt a specific law for any given piece of legislation to have a chance of being voted on and eventually passed (p. 95).

The policy innovation under consideration is more likely to stick if it is an ideological fit with the majority of the legislature. Some types of policies are more political than others; for example, Gray (1973) found that education laws were adopted in a more regular pattern than civil rights laws, "evidence that education may be the least politicized of the policy areas" (p. 1182) under investigation. Mallinson (2020) found that regulatory policy was more likely to be adopted by liberal legislatures, and the aforementioned role of morality and religion in a particular policy can also skew its adoption pattern to follow more overtly political trends. Overall, researchers have found that liberal and Democratic states are expected to be more innovative (Matisoff, 2018; Mallinson, 2020), and states are less likely to innovate when Republicans control the legislature (Mallinson, 2020). Not only does a legislature's general ideology impact policy adoption, the level of partisan competition within the legislature also affects the level of success of legislative proposals. According to Walker (1969), "It would seem that parties which often faced closely contested elections would try to out-do each other by embracing the newest, most progressive programs and this would naturally encourage the rapid adoption of innovations" (p. 885), and Berry (1994) also noted the trend of high interparty competition leading to greater likelihood of policy adoption. However, both Sellers (2017) and Mallison (2020) found that a divided government can stifle innovation due to gridlock. Regardless, the internal ideological

dynamics within the legislature can impact how likely a state is to adopt a particular policy proposal.

   External Political Determinants. Political factors beyond what happens inside a state legislature also impact policy adoption. While the partisan composition of a legislature is one factor, another is the role of partisanship in regards to the electorate. According to Zingher (2014),

> The electoral ramifications of adopting any piece of legislation depends on voters' perception of a bill. Will passing the bill gain the party more votes than it costs them?... From the perspective of a party, it makes the most sense to pursue legislation when the potential electoral benefits are high and costs are low (p. 96).

Therefore, the will of the voters, particularly in regards to partisanship, is an influencing factor in whether or not states adopt certain policies. Another external factor is the vertical relationship that states have with the federal government. Both federal action and inaction can inspire legislatures to make policy moves at the state level. Allen et al. (2004) found that "national government incentives can have a strong influence on state policymaking. But we also found that state policy adoption is more likely when national government action is clearly not forthcoming" (p. 336). Policy movement or stagnation at the federal level can urge states to act in their own contexts, particularly if the electoral impacts are advantageous.

   These economic, social, and political determining factors influence whether a particular policy is likely to be adopted by a state legislature. By identifying the strengths or limitations of the conditions of the legislative context, policymakers and advocates can better gauge their likelihood of success. Researchers have also zoomed in to study the determinants of the adoption of particular policies, including immigrant policy. While most of the research has focused on the

economic, social, and political determinants of punitive anti-immigration policy, these findings illuminate the challenges and obstacles that champions for pro-immigrant policy must face in these conditions.

Determinants of Immigrant Policy Adoption

Consistent with the research that economic factors influence policy adoption, economic anxieties are a compelling motivator for policy adoption of anti-immigrant proposals. Ybarra et al. (2016) pointed out the tendency of policymakers to scapegoat immigrants and other racial minority groups for economic troubles and highlighted the connection between poor economic conditions and negative framing used by politicians to blame immigrants for rising unemployment (p. 318). "During periods of economic contraction such as the Great Recession, anti-immigrant anxieties increase among racial majorities" (Ybarra et al., 2016, p. 318); therefore, states with shaky economic conditions are more likely to adopt anti-immigrant policy in response. Browne et al. (2018) found that economic factors were more influential in determining anti-immigrant policy support than even social or political ones. Even Democratic legislators, both Black and White, showed support for anti-immigrant bills if the bills were framed as immigrants presenting an economic threat: "When the bill topic restricts immigrant employment, Black and White Democratic legislators maintained strong, equal support for these labor market 'threat measures'" (p. 1714). The fear of economic threat from immigrants is real and is a powerful unfavorable determinant for pro-immigrant policy adoption.

Immigration policy is also impacted by states' social conditions of urbanization, race, and religion and morality. Although Zingher (2014) found that anti-immigrant legislation was less likely in states with a relatively large and well-established Latinx population, he and others have confirmed that anti-immigrant policies are likely to be adopted in states with a new and growing

Latinx population (Browne et al., 2018; Ybarra et al., 2016; Zinger, 2014). According to Ybarra et al. (2016), "Although we argue that heightened anti-immigrant anxieties are driven in large part by economic insecurity, it is not expressed in the absence of a large or growing proportion of racialized immigrants" (p. 319). Browne et al. (2018) showed "how race and symbolic politics are connected in shaping elite behavior toward immigration policy" (p. 1715), describing the tendency of Black Democratic legislators to put racial solidarity over economic anxieties in their unlikeliness to support discriminatory anti-immigrant policies that threatened immigrants' civil rights. Therefore, Ybarra et al. (2016) claimed correctly that immigration is a racialized issue as well as an economic one, both for better and for worse, and policymakers who want to see pro-immigrant legislation adopted in states with challenging racial and social dynamics must acknowledge the challenge of framing the issue as a moral imperative against a backdrop of anti-immigrant sentiment.

Several researchers have also investigated the political conditions surrounding the adoption of immigration policies by state legislatures. Partisanship and electoral considerations play a role in the adoption of either anti-immigrant or pro-immigrant policies. According to Ybarra et al. (2016), "State ideology and partisanship significantly contribute to enactment of punitive state immigration policies such that enactment of more punitive policies is associated with more conservative ideology and more Republican partisanship" (p. 320). Zinger (2014) claimed the same:

> It is important to understand why some state legislatures target undocumented immigrants with increased enforcement but others do not because these laws have sweeping social and economic implications. I argue that a mixture of ideological and

electoral factors determines the likelihood a state will adopt legislation increasing immigration enforcement (p. 91).

Zinger (2014) found support for his hypothesis that the more Republican a state was, the likelier it was to adopt anti-immigrant legislation. The trend of regional adoption of anti-immigrant policies among the Nuevo South supports this claim as well, as many of these states (including Arkansas) have Republican majorities and conservative lawmakers championing the bills. However, in states or regions with large Latinx populations, lawmakers may find it electorally advantageous to oppose anti-immigrant bills. Zingher (2014) found support for this hypothesis, and other political scientists have noted the changing behavior of Republicans in response to changing racial and ethnic demographics. Schwab (2013) described the increased Republican motivation to support the DREAM Act as "political relevance, not the common good," (p. 14), and Parry (as cited in Mitchell, 2021) recently remarked on Arkansas Republicans' support for a pro-immigrant professional licensure bill in the most recent legislative session:

That's just straight up political calculus. They know there's going to be another election, there's going to be more redistricting. They see the writing on the wall in terms of the changing demographics in America, but in their own districts specifically (para. 25).

Still, political challenges remain within and across states, particularly conservative ones, and acknowledging the uphill battle of passing a pro-immigrant bill in a Republican legislature is an important, albeit discouraging, step in the policymaking process.

Given the aforementioned sociopolitical history of pro-immigrant education policy advocacy and its inevitable and steadfast opposition, it is no surprise that there is pushback to its adoption. The existing literature illuminates these challenges, particularly in contexts where the economic, social, and political determinants are unfavorable, and policymakers and advocates

who want to champion pro-immigrant education policy in these conditions must first acknowledge the obstacles in order to overcome them.

Determinants of Immigrant Policy Adoption in the Arkansas 93rd General Assembly

Based on what we can learn from the existing scholarship on the determinants of policy adoption, it is evident that the conditions for adoption of pro-immigrant education policy in the Arkansas 93rd General Assembly were unfavorable. The economic, social, and political conditions surrounding the 2021 legislative session were aligned with what the research says about the likelihood for anti-immigrant policy rather than pro-immigrant policy. (See Table 1.) Arkansas is a poor state that just experienced an economic downturn with high unemployment. It has a small percentage of Latinx and immigrant residents but a high growth rate of the same populations. Morality and religion play a large role in influencing policy adoption. And the unprofessionalized, Republican-led legislature represents a conservative-identifying electorate. These factors categorize the policy landscape of the Arkansas 93rd General Assembly and illuminate the difficulty of passing the two pro-immigrant policies under investigation.

Economic Conditions. The 2020-2021 economic conditions of Arkansas align with the factors that create unfavorable conditions for pro-immigrant policy adoption. Consistently, Arkansas ranks in the bottom 10 of states in terms of household income, with 17.2% of Arkansans living in poverty (Horpedal et al., 2019). Walkenhorst (2020) noted, "That puts Arkansas in sixth place among states and Washington, D.C., for highest poverty rates" (para. 3). The COVID-19 crisis exacerbated poor economic conditions for Arkansans, with unemployment rates skyrocketing during the spring of 2020. Prior to the pandemic, Arkansas had an unemployment rate as low as 3.7%, a statistic touted by Republicans for their strong economic leadership, with unemployment claims hovering around 1,000-2,000 per month (Walkenhorst,

2020). However, after the pandemic hit and new restrictions were put in place, tens of thousands of Arkansas workers were laid off or unable to continue employment, causing a joblessness surge. According to the policy network Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families (2020),

> There were 47,800 unemployed workers in Arkansas as of February 2020, which together total more than 80,000 jobless workers in March. One estimate based on unemployment claims suggests Arkansas's true unemployment rate in March was 10.5 percent, already higher than our peak unemployment during the Great Recession. And things will get worse before they get better (para. 3).

Arkansas economists also highlighted the economic instability and its long-term impacts. Jebaraj (2020) noted that, while necessary, the COVID mitigation measures had "immediate economic impacts across the state of Arkansas" (para. 4) and cautioned that "with uncertainty over how long some of these measures will be in place, small businesses in these industries may permanently close, prolonging the path to economic recovery from this temporary economic crisis" (para 6). Lupton (2021) predicted that "there are going to be after effects because it's just been too long of a recession… there's going to be an adjustment period that will last at least two or three years, I'd say" (as cited in Breen, 2021, para. 4). These economic conditions that led up to the 2021 legislative session are ripe for anti-immigrant policy, not innovative, pro-immigrant policy. As previously mentioned, wealthy states are more likely to adopt policy innovations (Berry, 1994; Dye, 1979; Gray 1973; Mallinson, 2020; Walker, 1969), and economic anxieties lead to support for anti-immigrant policy because immigrants are seen as an economic threat in times of economic downturn (Browne, 2018; Ybarra et al., 2016; Zingher, 2014). Therefore, the economic determinants in Arkansas did not create favorable conditions for passage of pro-immigrant education policy.

Social Conditions. The social conditions in Arkansas were no more favorable. In regards to racial and ethnic demographics, Arkansas' Latinx or Hispanic percentage is 8.4%, up from 6.4% in 2010 (DeMillo, 2021), with around 60,000 eligible Hispanic voters, ranking 38th nationwide (Pew Research Center, 2016). However, even though the overall percentage of Latinx Arkansans is relatively low, the growth rate has been significant. According to data from the Arkansas Bureau of Legislative Research (2007), "From 1990-2000, Arkansas' Hispanic population grew by 337%, the second highest growth rate in the nation" (p. 5) with sustained growth from 2000 to present. These demographic indicators— low Latinx-White bifurcation but high Latinx growth — mirror the social conditions proposed by Zingher (2014) as conducive to anti-immigrant legislation. Furthermore, religion and morality play a role in influencing Arkansas politics. Both the Arkansas Family Council and Arkansas Right to Life have robust lobbying efforts and legislator accountability metrics for their policy goals. Family Council, whose mission is "to promote, protect, and strengthen traditional family values found and reflected in the Bible by impacting public opinion and public policy" (Family Council, 2021) has a voter guide to provide "accurate, non-partisan information about candidates running for office in Arkansas to help voters make informed decisions at the ballot box" (Family Council, 2021). Similarly, Right to Life, which aims to "foster and protect society's traditional respect for life by supporting the civil and human rights of the unborn, the defenseless, the aged, the disadvantaged, and all human life" (Arkansas Right to Life, 2021) publishes a "Pro-Life Report" of voting records of members and encourages Arkansans to "see how your legislator did" (Arkansas Right to Life, 2021). These accountability measures show the influence of religion and morality in policymaking in Arkansas, and if "illegal immigration" is framed as morally wrong or a threat to religious or cultural values, then pro-immigrant policy is unlikely, since social issues like

morality, religion, and race can influence policy adoption more than economic or political factors
(Mooney & Lee, 1995; Frendreis & Tatalovich, 2010). Like the economic determinants, the
social determinants in Arkansas also fostered an unfavorable environment for the passage of pro-
immigrant policy.

      Political Conditions. The political conditions were not much better, although some
legislators found more favorable political conditions in their particular legislative districts.
Overall, the internal and external political determinants matched what the research has shown
creates an unfavorable political environment for pro-immigrant policy adoption. The Arkansas
legislature is "considered a part-time citizen legislature (where) most House Members have full-
time careers in addition to their legislative obligations" (Arkansas House of Representatives,
2021), with only two legislative analysts per congressional district, creating a 12.5:1 ratio of staff
to members (Arkansas House of Representatives, 2021). This lack of professionalization
disadvantages pro-immigrant policy innovators, since more professionalized legislatures are
more likely to adopt policy innovations (Berry, 1994; Mallinson, 2020, Walker, 1969).
Furthermore, the internal political environment of the legislature is one of overwhelming
Republican control and conservative ideology. Republicans hold the governorship, all seven
constitutional offices, and supermajorities in both chambers of the legislature. Ideologically
speaking, the already-Republican membership of the legislature shifted further to the right.
Brock (2021) described Arkansas politics as "more nationalized and partisan" (para. 5), and
according to Jared (2021),

      The legislative body, dominated by Republican supermajorities in the House and Senate,

      made national headlines for passing a broad range of laws aimed at socially conservative

      constituents. Bills passed include one that would all but outlaw abortions in the state,

another that restricts transgender rights, and other bills that impacted everything from gun

rights to religion (para. 2).

This rightward shift internally is reflective of the growing conservatism of the Arkansas

electorate. According to Parry's (2020) Arkansas Poll, the approval ratings of Governor Asa

Hutchinson (R), Senator John Boozman (R), Senator Tom Cotton (R), and President Donald

Trump (R) all increased from 2019 to 2020. 40% of Arkansans identified as Republicans,

compared to 20% of Democrats, and 52% identified as conservative, with just 16% of Arkansans

claiming to be liberal (Parry, 2020). Therefore, both within the legislature and among the

Arkansas electorate, strong conservative ideology and Republican partisanship do not facilitate

favorable conditions for pro-immigrant policy, since the more conservative or Republican a

legislature is, the more likely it is to adopt anti-immigrant policy (Ybarra et al., 2016; Zingher,

2014), and the will of the voters and their ideological congruence with the electorate is a

motivating factor for legislators (Zingher, 2014). Still, there are a few legislators whose

particular districts have political conditions that are favorable for pro-immigrant policy adoption,

even if the state as a whole does not. Legislators who have a relatively significant and

established percentage of Latinx constituents are more likely to see electoral advantage in

supporting pro-immigrant policy (Schwab, 2013; Ybarra et al., 2016; Zingher, 2014); therefore,

for some members, the political determinants are more favorable in their legislative districts.

Table 1

Determinants of Pro-Immigrant Policy Adoption in the Arkansas 93rd General Assembly

Determinants	Arkansas 93rd G.A.	Research	Favorable?
Economic	• Poor state • Economic downturn • High unemployment	• Wealthy states are more likely to adopt policy innovations (Berry, 1994; Dye, 1979; Gray, 1973; Mallinson, 2020; Walker, 1969). • Economic anxieties lead to support for anti-immigrant policy; immigrants are seen as an economic threat in times of economic downturn (Browne, 2018; Ybarra et al., 2016; Zingher, 2014).	No
Social	• Low level of racial bifurcation / small percentage of Latinx residents • High importance of morality/religion in policymaking; "illegal immigration" framed as a moral issue	• Anti-immigrant policies are likely to be adopted in states with a small percentage of Latinx residents and/or a high growth rate of Latinx/ immigrant residents (Browne, 2018; Ybarra et al., 2016; Zingher, 2014). • Social issues like morality, religion, and race can influence policy adoption more than economic or political factors (Mooney & Lee, 1995; Frendreis & Tatalovich; 2010).	No
Political (Internal)	• Part-time legislature / not professionalized • Republican supermajority; conservative ideology	• More professionalized legislatures are more likely to adopt policy innovations (Berry, 1994; Mallinson, 2020, Walker, 1969). • The more conservative / Republican a legislature is, the more likely it is to adopt anti-immigrant policy (Ybarra et al., 2016; Zingher, 2014).	No
Political (External)	• Conservative electorate • Some, but not most, legislators would gain electoral advantage from supporting pro-immigrant policy	• The will of the voters / ideological congruence with the electorate is a motivating factor for legislators (Zingher, 2014).	No/Yes

The previous scholarship on the determinants of policy adoption is beneficial for establishing the likelihood of policy passage. Depending on a state's economic, social, and political conditions, success may be hard to come by. By acknowledging the challenges and

limitations in place within the legislative context, policymakers can better develop and execute a plan to overcome them.

Political Work

Although the term "determinant" evokes a sense of inevitability, policymakers should not consider failure a foregone conclusion if the determinants for adoption of the policy are unfavorable. The political work a legislator puts in to garner support for her proposal is crucial in securing its passage, especially if other economic, social, or political factors make it harder to come by, and a variety of legislative behaviors can indeed lead to legislative success in the face of challenging conditions. At the most fundamental level, legislators must do the work necessary to secure votes for their bill. More specifically, this work can (and often must) happen during various stages of the legislative process, such as bill drafting, agenda-setting, committee hearings, and floor debates (Hayes Clark, 2017). This is often even more challenging for members of the minority party. However, lawmakers who *encourage* bipartisanship and collaboration, *emulate* prior successes, *employ* interest convergence, and *elevate* heroic voices are doing the political work necessary to achieve their policy goals in unlikely contexts for policy adoption. These "4 Es" – the components of political work that contribute to legislative success when the determinants for policy adoption are unfavorable – are supported by the research (Bell, 1980; Chang & Koebel, 2020; Dormer et al., 2020; Enrique & Aleman, 2010; Epstein, 1998; Gilardi, 2016; Gray, 1973; Hayes Clarke, 2017; Jones, 1969; Kelly, 2018; Lopez & Lacoste, 2014; Maske, 2016; Matos, 2020; Morales & Maravilla, 2019; Rippere, 2016; Rubio et al., 2021; Shanahan et al., 2013; Stewart, 2012; Sung, 2017; Swift & VanderMolen, 2016; Thomas & Groffman, 1992; Treviño et al., 2017; Trubowitz & Mellow, 2005; Walker, 1969; Wilkerson et al., 2015) and will frame my analysis of the political work that contributed to the

passage of the two pro-immigrant education policies in the Arkansas 93rd General Assembly.

Encourage Bipartisanship and Collaboration

Logic dictates that members of the minority party who want to pass bills must encourage their majority-party colleagues to buy in. Bill passage requires a majority vote; therefore, minority-party legislators are only able to have legislative success if they cultivate bipartisan support. Bipartisanship can come collaboratively by securing majority-party cosponsors on a bill or, more sacrificially, by handing over a bill to an influential member to the majority party to serve as the primary sponsor. Jones (1969) described these strategic moves employed by minority-party members as part of the majority coalition-building process, depending on the existing external and internal political conditions. If the political conditions are favorable, minority-party lawmakers may consider *innovation* to propose their own proposals and build their own majorities or *cooperation* to work with the majority party on a particular legislative effort. If a minority party is more "severely restricted by political conditions" (Jones, 1969, p. 482), they may employ the strategy of *support* of the majority-building efforts. Both of these strategies to encourage bipartisanship and collaboration can have efficacious results.

If a lawmaker chooses to innovate with her own proposal and cooperate with the majority party, securing bipartisan cosponsors is worthy political work. According to Rippere (2016),

> Often soliciting cosponsorships requires social interaction and collaboration among members, perhaps through conversations held following a committee hearing or markup or on the floor during a vote… Recent work has found that examining patterns of cosponsorship… is necessary in order to understand the extent of legislative cooperation that goes on behind the scenes (p. 251).

This behind-the-scenes work is worth it, as researchers have found that minority-party legislators

are more likely to achieve policy success by engaging bipartisan cosponsors. In her in-depth study of minority party influence and legislator effectiveness, Hayes Clark (2017) found:

> The results of the analysis demonstrate that majority party proposals are no more likely to pass than minority party proposals… It could be the case that minority party proposals are more likely to reach the floor only when there is considerable consensus that they are broadly supported and will pass… Moreover, these results do not tell us whether minority party members are making concessions and compromises to pass their bills. Nonetheless, this does show that minority party members can successfully affect public policy.
>
> Bipartisan bills are significantly more likely to pass (p. 142).

Rippere (2016) similarly found that the "ability to establish a network of supportive colleagues often determines one's capacity in the policymaking process, and evidence suggests that legislators who are 'better connected' through bill cosponsorship are more successful in passing their amendments to bills" (p. 251-2). Not only is a primary sponsor more likely to pass her bill with a long list of names on it, there are also benefits for the majority-party member who chooses to say yes to cosponsorship. Trubowitz and Mellow (2005) argued that bipartisanship is plausible under certain conditions and that lawmakers use it not as a way to be apolitical but rather as a political strategy to intentionally "go bipartisan" under three conditions. First, a strong economy gives lawmakers flexibility to act in less partisan, more cooperative ways. A second condition is one of electoral advantage for lawmakers. While some elected officials have a better advantage at the polls by being partisan, others in more competitive or politically diverse districts need to be seen as collaborative across the aisle to persuade moderate or crossover voters. Third, if more centrist or moderate lawmakers are in power or wield greater influence in the legislature, then there is more incentive to act in a bipartisan manner (p. 437). Under these conditions, it is not

only advantageous for the primary bill sponsor to "go bipartisan;" there are benefits for the cosponsors as well. As lawmakers are doing the political work to encourage bipartisan cosponsors to sign on, they would be well-positioned to identify, target, and engage majority-party members who would benefit from these advantages. Another strategic move minority-party members can make is to secure cosponsorships from the chairs of the committees and subcommittees that will hear the bill. Thomas and Grofman (1992) found that not only the number of cosponsors helped facilitate a bill's passage but also that cosponsorship from committee leadership was particularly effective (p. 241), and Maske (2016) claimed that "leaders may view the participation of 'high quality' cosponsors as an informative signal" (p. 361). This political work is important because majority-party cosponsors cue other majority-party members that the policy is worth supporting, too (Maske, 2016; Rippere, 2016). According to Swift and VanderMolen (2016), "What (cosponsorship) does capture are members' individual interest and the level of substantive agreement on policy at the beginning stages of the collaborative policymaking process" (p. 200). By encouraging majority-party cosponsors to sign on to a bill, legislators are providing opportunities for their colleagues to gain the benefits of bipartisanship and signaling to others in the majority that the bill is worth supporting, thereby gaining votes for passage.

If minority-party bill sponsors acknowledge that the political determinants are too unfavorable to have their name on the top of the bill, even if they could draft several bipartisan cosponsors, another option is to hand the bill over to a member of the majority party. Jones (1968) noted that the strategy of supporting the majority party is still a way to be influential in policymaking (p. 482), even if lawmakers are not getting due credit for a policy proposal that a majority-party member runs. Epstein (1998) found the same, arguing that bipartisanship is more

attractive when policy uncertainty is high and interparty preferences are less polarized. Like Jones (1969), he claimed that minority parties under these circumstances may remain influential, not through enacting their own policy agenda or through obstruction but rather through lending their approval to policies that transcend common political or social divisions. Therefore, finding a "policy champion" (Maske, 2021) who is an influential member of the majority party to carry the bill is a strategic move that lawmakers working against unfavorable conditions can make. According to Maske, "The identity of a bill's champions may identify its success… certain members have stronger agenda positions from which they may champion innovations, shape the ideological nature of proposals, and influence their ultimate success" (p. 361). Therefore, sometimes the political work necessary for minority-party members to pass their bills is to allow someone else to do the work instead.

The task of encouraging bipartisanship and collaboration through securing cosponsors or majority-party policy champions does not come without behind-the-scenes, collaborative, and even humbling and sacrificial work. However, for policymakers who are working from a partisan disadvantage, bipartisanship and collaboration with their majority-party colleagues can facilitate the enactment of their policy goals.

Emulate Prior Successes

An oft-asked question in the early stages of garnering support for a policy innovation is, "Has this been done before?" By pointing to the success of an identical policy in other states or a similar policy within their own state, the bill sponsor can inspire their colleagues to emulate that success in their own legislative context. According to Walker (1969),

> If a legislator introduces a bill… and can point to its successful operation in a
>
> neighboring state, his chances of gaining acceptance are markedly increased. In fact, once

a program has been adopted by a large number of states, it may become recognized as a

legitimate state responsibility, something which all states ought to have (p. 890).

States are motivated to adopt a policy innovation from other states via the mechanisms of

learning, emulation, or competition. Walker (1969) described these cue-taking processes as "an

important phenomenon which determines in large part the pace and direction of social and

political change in the American states" (p. 890). The adoption of a policy by another state gives

it legitimacy and provides momentum to "overcome the natural reluctance of any institutional

structure to risk the consequences of change" (p. 891). Gray (1973) also described the way state

governments take cues from legislation passed by other states, noting that "a gain in adoption is

due to nonadopters' emulation of adopters" (p. 1176). Gilardi (2016) distinguished between the

three broad classes of policy adoption mechanisms, describing *learning* as seeing the success of

the policy in another context, *emulation* as wanting a political or symbolic "win," regardless of

policy's success, and *competition* as attracting or retaining resources due to adoption of the

policy (p. 10-11). Clearly, what other states do in regards to policy innovation and adoption is

compelling to other states; therefore, political work should include making the case for emulating

states that have achieved enviable policy success. In addition, lawmakers can emulate similar

policy previously passed within their own state and build upon the effective political work of the

lawmakers who successfully passed it the first time. Researchers have utilized text reuse

methodology to analyze similar or identical legislative language in order to study policy

adoption. Wilkerson et al (2015) focused on legislative text similarity and its implications in

regards to legislator effectiveness:

> We are interested in when a policy idea proposed in one bill ends up becoming law as
>
> part of another bill. Two bills share a policy idea when they include similar conferrals of

authority… We are interested in identifying when two sections of two different bills

propose the same policy idea (p. 946).

The researchers gained important insights about legislators who emulated prior policy by

utilizing identical text to a previous bill: the bill's primary sponsor of an emulated bill gets undue

credit while the legislators who originally advocated for the policy get none.

A policy ideas perspective suggests that bill success both understates and overstates

legislative effectiveness. It overstates effectiveness in the sense that the law's sponsor

receives all the credit for what a bill contains… Bill success understates legislator

effectiveness by providing no credit to the lawmakers… who successfully advocated for

policy ideas that became law as provisions in other bills (p. 952).

Therefore, if policymakers are emulating same-state policies, it is important to consider the

political work done by the lawmakers who championed the policy the first time around. Whether

they are mirroring policy success across state lines or within their own chamber, lawmakers can

engage in the work of policy emulation to shore up success for a similar legislative proposal.

Employ Interest Convergence

A feel-good favorite in the glossary of policymaking terminology is "win-win." It is easy

and enjoyable for lawmakers to coalesce behind a policy that seems to benefit everyone

involved; therefore, another effective strategy is for lawmakers to employ interest convergence.

By tapping into the economic, social, or political interests of their colleagues who might be

hesitant to support a particular proposal, legislators can gain support across ideological lines.

Bell (1980) first coined the term *interest convergence* in his analysis of *Brown vs. Board

of Education*, noting that the Supreme Court only diverged from its longstanding pro-segregation

position because the decision to desegregate was advantageous to Whites. According to Bell

(1980),

> Here, as in the abolition of slavery, there were whites for whom recognition of the racial
>
> equality principle was sufficient motivation. But, as with abolition, the number who
>
> would act on morality alone was insufficient to bring about the desired racial reform (p.
>
> 525).

His critical claim that "the interest of blacks in achieving racial equality will only be accommodated when it converges with the interests of whites" (p. 523) has since expanded beyond theories and analyses of race and is now "used today by some to describe any situation where the majority will only support the minority, or sometimes common, interests to the extent that there is 'something in it for them'" (Lopez & Lacoste, 2014, p. 143). Interest convergence is therefore applicable in policymaking where the conditions for passage are unlikely without highlighting the advantages for the majority, and the theory has particular relevance for pro-immigrant policy in an overwhelmingly White, conservative legislature.

Employing interest convergence is worthy political work because of its effectiveness. Lopez and Lacoste (2014) described interest convergence theory as "a tool of strategy and prediction" (p. 143), and Sung (2017) claimed that "the idea that interest convergence is also prescriptive, rather than simply descriptive, has led to sustained debate over whether interest convergence offers a broader social justice strategy or even a viable legal strategy" (p. 305). The work of tapping into a variety of interests to garner support for a particular proposal can result in a diverse coalition supporting the *what* even if they do not share the *why*. In regards to pro-immigrant policy specifically, there are several interests to leverage. Lopez and Lacoste (2014) highlighted the societal, economic, and political interests of immigration reform, pointing out that immigrant workers often take on caretaking jobs for the aging Baby Boomer population,

emphasizing the rapid growth of the Latinx electorate, and pragmatically claiming that "as far as the economic interest in immigration reform, it is simply labor market economics" (p. 145). Researchers have identified interest convergence in framing around bilingual education, starting with the 1967 Bilingual Education Act. Sung (2017) described the interests that converged between policymakers and immigrant activists:

> Although culture and race did matter, neither was a sufficient argument for bilingual education. Rather, policymakers and activists both focused on the economic struggles of Latinos who were moving into cities and, unable to find jobs, falling into poverty (p. 308).

These shared interests for social control and economic advancement allowed both groups to "find contingent ideological space" (p. 304) and pass the policy collectively. More recent research has focused on the similar economic interest framing of bilingual education. Kelly (2018) highlighted the way bilingual education is presented to speak to the economic interests of 21st century skills, global competitiveness in the job market, economic advancement for bilingual students, and producing productive members of our society, all compelling arguments for those whose interests are focused on the economy and workforce development. Other research has focused on how bilingual education is framed around the shared advantages for immigrants and non-immigrants. In their analysis of interest convergence in a dual language program, Morales and Maravilla (2019) made the claim that the interests of the families of their ELs and their middle class White kids "fortuitously converged" (p. 148) to benefit both parties:

> In this time of antibilingual education, the principal noted that the school, in all probability, would not be thriving without the support of the middle-class community, who had a stake in the success of the school. Thus, in a time of increased racial and

socioeconomic segregation, schools can play a role in cultivating and leveraging a need

for one another… The advocacy of middle class families on behalf of multilingual

education models is valuable (p. 148)

Additionally, research on DACA and the DREAM Act has claimed that the reason Americans

support these policies while simultaneously supporting punitive anti-immigration proposals is

that these policies highlight the ideals of exceptionalism, meritocracy, and egalitarianism and

that converging with these interests garners strong support for DREAMers:

Framing around agentless children who have grown up to be hardworking and productive

members of society taps into strongly held beliefs of egalitarianism. This framing leads to

widespread support for the DREAM Act (Matos, 2020, p. 425).

The research shows that employing interest convergence is a strategic and effective move to

broaden support for policies that have an uphill battle.

However, many researchers caution those who employ interest convergence, particularly

around immigrant-related policies, to not reinforce harmful messages or lose sight of the purity

of their advocacy. Enrique and Aleman (2010, cited in Sung, 2017) criticized interest

convergence as "a limiting racial justice prescriptive because it encourages people of color to

strategically foreground issues that converge with White interests, thereby potentially

minimizing focus on race and racism where interests with whites often diverge" (p. 305). Kelly

(2018) contextualized the same argument for bilingual education, calling out the "hegemonic

interest in preparing students from the dominant culture for a complex global economy, rather

than a desire to support students from linguistic minorities," Dorner et al. (2020) warned of the

"gentrification" of bilingual programs because of interest convergence, and Matos (2020)

critiqued interest convergence in the DREAM Act, saying "the DREAM Act is seen as

exceptional and does not run counter to supporting punitive immigrant legislation. In fact,

support for anti-immigrant legislation is made that much more prevalent *because* of the moral

framing of DREAMers" (p. 436). Still, some researchers acknowledge the climate and

complexities that surround the passage of pro-immigrant policies: "Some feel that the push for

bilingual education for economic purposes marginalizes the concerns, needs, and funding of ELs,

and others see it as the only viable way forward for bilingual education in hostile policy

climates" (Kelly, 2018, p. 17). Similarly, Morales and Maravilla (2019) acknowledged, "One of

the lessons from CRT is that there will always be structural racism and white supremacy; so how

can multiple communities' resources be leveraged towards an ideal of mutual benefit?" (p. 151).

Therefore, even though the cautions and critiques are valid, employing interest convergence is

not only strategic, it provides the opportunity to elevate the needs of marginalized communities

in otherwise challenging or even hostile contexts.

Elevate Heroic Voices

A final strategy for lawmakers championing policies in unfavorable conditions is to

elevate heroic voices, and, more specifically, immigrant voices. Chang and Koebel (2020)

describe the political work of constructing compelling policy narratives:

> Actors will strategically construct narratives in ways that they believe will influence the
>
> views and actions of other participants in the policy process. This phenomenon may be
>
> particularly evident when individual policy actors produce narratives intended to
>
> persuade specific audiences such as legislators (p. 620).

Researchers have studied the effectiveness of strong policy narratives, and stories that evoke

positive emotions and feature heroic characters are more likely to result in policy victories for

the heroes. Shanahan et al (2013) described this "angel shift" in policy narratives as "a policy

story that emphasizes a group or coalition's ability and/or commitment to solving a problem,

while de-emphasizing the villain" (p. 457), and the researchers found in their investigation that

"the winning side developed a victory narrative, had solutions, used themselves as a hero, as well

as diffused benefits and concentrated costs when promoting their own policy" (p. 476). In

regards to immigrant policy narratives specifically, Stewart (2012) studied the issue of driver's

licenses for undocumented immigrants as a case study of contrasting policy narratives. On the

one hand, proponents for the policy used a "lower mimetic narrative that highlighted pragmatic

concerns and procedural efficiencies. The policy narrative was successful because it was so

routinized that it was barely noticed by potential critics" (p. 595). However, that particular

narrative did not hold up under the counter-narrative — an apocalyptic narrative — that

emphasized immigrants as villains and citizens as victims and evoked fear and anger with a

dramatic plot and powerful imagery (p. 595). This example offers vital insight into the political

work of constructing effective narratives for pro-immigrant policy: "If your policy does not have

a strong story, with powerful imagery, it will be unlikely to resist apocalyptic attack" (p. 596).

To develop the necessary strong story, policymakers should use narrative devices such as

metaphors to "humanize, or make concrete, an abstract issue" (p. 598) and synecdoches:

"Synecdoches — in which a part represents the whole — are often at the heart of public policy

battles. Synecdoches are important in politics because support for public policies is often based

on examples believed to be representative of a larger universe" (p. 598). The personal stories and

experiences that immigrants have to tell, known by some researchers as *testimonios,* are often

particularly heroic and can drive the narrative of resilience and sacrifice. *Testimonios*, Treviño et

al. (2017) described,

are real-life, first-person accounts that "bear witness" to significant events or experiences. In *testimonios*, participants critically reflect on personal experiences with a particular sociopolitical context. They are often presented as novel-long oral narratives produced in print, told in the first person with the narrator as protagonist or witness of the narrated events, and have a sense of urgency for social justice in the telling of the story (p. 630).

This storytelling method comes from the Mexican-American cultural tradition of sharing and learning from stories that "not only convey a living truth but also are a testament to resiliency and triumph" (Rubio et al., 2021, p. 47). *Testimonios* can serve as the foundation of a narrative for pro-immigrant policy adoption, centering the experiences of the immigrants who are most closely impacted by the proposed policy. In order to garner support for a pro-immigrant policy, legislators should do the political work of weaving and telling pro-immigrant policy narratives that elevate the voices of the community they are advocating for.

The political work necessary to facilitate policy passage in unfavorable conditions is not easy. However, research has shown that unfavorable determinants for policy adoption are not insurmountable. Lawmakers can do the work of encouraging bipartisanship and collaboration, emulating prior successes, employing interest convergence, and elevating heroic voices to achieve their policy goals.

The existing literature in education and political science highlights many of the important themes relevant to this particular case study of the political work that led to pro-immigrant policy passage in an unlikely context. The robust sociopolitical history of immigrant education policy allows us to situate our work within a decades-long pattern of advocacy for fair and empowering policy for immigrant students. The research-backed benefits of the particular policies under investigation (bilingual education and diverse teachers) give us strong evidence of their merits.

The scholarship about the economic, social, and political determinants of policy adoption helps us to acknowledge the limitations and obstacles in the way of passage. And studies about political work help us to establish a strategic and effective action plan to pass the policy anyway. This research-based framework provided a strong and insightful foundation for this investigation specifically as well as for any pro-immigrant education policy advocacy in unfavorable conditions. These 4 Es: *encourage bipartisanship and collaboration, emulate prior successes, employ interest convergence,* and *elevate heroic voices* served as the framework for the analysis of this investigation as I answered the research question: *What political work contributed to the passage of two pro-immigrant education policies in a state legislature with unfavorable determinants for policy adoption?*

Chapter Three: Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology that I used to analyze the political work that contributed to the passage of two pro-immigrant education policies in the Arkansas 93rd General Assembly. A qualitative case study allowed me to dig deeply into the complexities (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 4) of the political work done to facilitate passage of the bills to counter the unfavorable economic, social, and political determinants in the legislative context. As the researcher, a career-long educator of immigrant students, and a member of the 93rd General Assembly who played a key role in passing both of the bills under investigation, my positionality afforded me a pro-immigrant perspective, insider knowledge of the case, and access to relevant data sources, such as observations and transcripts of the committee and legislative hearings, media documents, and legislative artifacts. By analyzing the data utilizing my 4E framework (*encourage bipartisanship and collaboration, emulate prior successes, employ interest convergence*, and *elevate heroic voices*), I was able to identify, develop, and connect broad themes and patterns that were relevant to this particular case and might also be applied to other contexts of pro-immigrant education policy advocacy with unfavorable conditions. Components of this chapter include: (a) justification for qualitative research and case study; (b) site and context selection; (c) researcher's role; (d) data collection; (e) data analysis; and (f) trustworthiness and credibility.

Justifying Qualitative Research

Qualitative case study is the most fitting methodology for this particular study for three key reasons: the concepts under investigation are holistic and subjective, the research took place in a natural setting, and as the researcher, I am intimately connected to the case and the data. My research question — *What political work contributed to the passage of two pro-immigrant education policies in a state legislature with unfavorable determinants for policy adoption?* —

contains complex, holistic, and subjective concepts. What is "political work"? What qualifies as an "unfavorable determinant"? What does it mean to encourage bipartisanship and collaboration, emulate prior successes, employ interest convergence, or elevate heroic voices? These big-picture concepts deserved in-depth analysis that could be achieved qualitatively. Creswell (2014) identified the benefits of qualitative research in tackling complexities and subjectivities: "Qualitative researchers try to develop a complex picture of the problem or issue under study. This involves reporting multiple perspectives, identifying the many factors involved in a situation, and generally sketching the larger picture that emerges" (p. 186). The centrality of meaning, wholeness, and complexity are key features of qualitative research (Hatch, 2002), and this study warranted an extensive look at the complexities of the political work.

In addition, the fact that this investigation took place in its natural setting made it a worthy candidate for qualitative research (Creswell, 2014; Hatch, 2002). I was able to see and study the political work in the context where it happened, utilizing primary source data from legislative meetings, hearings, documents, and artifacts. According to Creswell (2014), "Up-close information gathered by… seeing (people) behave in their natural context is a major characteristic of qualitative research" (p. 185). In regards to case study specifically, the Arkansas 93rd General Assembly served as an apt case. Saldaña (2011) described case studies as focusing on one person, one group, one event, or one organization (p. 8):

The purpose is not necessarily to develop an argument for how the single case represents or reflects comparable individuals or sites. Unlike studies that research a large number of settings or participants to gather a broader and more representative spectrum of events, the case study in and of itself is valued as a unit that permits in-depth examination (p. 8).

By closely and solely studying the case of the 2021 Arkansas legislative session, I was able to conduct the analysis in a natural setting that helped me answer my research question about successful political work in an unlikely context.

Furthermore, my positionality gave me a unique and advantageous perspective to be the primary instrument conducting this qualitative inquiry, even though it was a closeness I needed to be cautious about. Qualitative researchers are often closely positioned to their site and participants. Hatch (2002) highlighted the benefits of extended firsthand engagement among qualitative researchers: "If researchers are to understand participant perspectives in natural contexts, it makes immanent sense that they must spend enough time with those participants in those contexts to feel confident that they are capturing what they claim" (p. 8). Additionally, Hatch (2002) pointed out that objectivity is not a requirement of qualitative research; in fact, "instead of pretending to be objective, the stance of qualitative researchers is to concentrate on reflexively applying their own subjectivities in ways that make it possible to understand the tacit motives and assumptions of their participants" (p. 9). Still, reflexivity is vital in qualitative research, as the backgrounds and biases of the researchers can shape the direction of the study (Creswell, 2014). According to Saldaña (2011),

> Your autobiography and identity — life experiences, training, emotions, values, attitudes, beliefs, gender, ethnicity and so forth — influence and affect how you navigate through the enterprise and approach other important elements, such as the relationship between you and your participants and the analysis of your data. Who you are (or are becoming) determines to a large extent what and how you research (p. 22).

Therefore, it is important that I as the researcher highlight my own views, values, and lived experiences, so that my positionality is seen as an asset and not a liability in my qualitative research.

Who I am, what I do, and what I believe all deeply influence my research, educational, and legislative interests. My identity as an "educator-legislator" comes from a career-long commitment to educational equity, particularly for EL and immigrant students. Although you cannot tell by looking at me (I'm a green-eyed, blonde, 38-year-old White woman), I speak fluent Mexican-influenced Spanish as my second language. I have worked intimately with immigrant and Latinx communities throughout my career, first as an educator of ELs and CLD students and now as the second-term state representative of the legislative district with the highest percentage of Latinx constituents in the state of Arkansas (Arkansas Secretary of State, 2021). My core values of compassion, equity, and inclusiveness, as well as my commitment to elevating diverse voices, expanding opportunity for success, and advocating for marginalized communities, led me to both jobs, as well as to this particular research study. In all professional contexts, I have a reputation for working hard and am frequently described as "passionate," (sometimes it is a compliment, but often it is not). As a legislator, I bring many of my skills from my work as an educator, such as strong and clear communication, purposeful planning, differentiated methods, relentless pursuit of results, and fierce and focused advocacy for immigrant students and their families. I also intentionally employ the skills of strategic collaboration with unlikely allies and charm and likeability, which are as vital in my legislative work as they are in the classroom and school district conference rooms. These core values and skills have helped me achieve legislative successes in my first two terms, even though I am a Democrat in the Republican supermajority and am a novice lawmaker. In 2019, my first term, I passed the landmark DACA licensure bill in

Arkansas, H.B.1552, which allows DACA recipients to be licensed as nurses. I gained broad

bipartisan support, with a Republican Senate sponsor and a vote of 90-0-8 in favor in the House

of Representatives. This bill was emulated in 2021 by the sponsors of the DACA teachers bill

(H.B.1594) under investigation in this study, a bill I had planned to run myself until it became

clear that its success would be guaranteed if Republican Representative DeAnn Vaught would

serve as the primary sponsor and I would take a step back and be a cosponsor. I collaborated

with Representative Vaught on the language of the bill (nearly identical to the DACA nurses bill)

and on her remarks she made to the committee when presenting the bill. She was successful in

passing it, with a vote of 84-0-8 in the House. The bill I did take the lead on in 2021 was the

bilingual education bill, H.B.1451, the other bill under investigation in this study and a bill I had

worked on for months in collaboration with other legislators and stakeholders, drafted myself,

and set as my number one legislative priority for the session. With Democratic Senator Clarke

Tucker as the Senate sponsor of the bill, I knew I would need to do a lot of work to get a pro-

immigrant, Democrat-led bill to pass. This political work, as well as the work done by my

legislative colleagues such as Senator Tucker, Representative Vaught, and others who vocally

supported the bill, and by advocates who shared their support in committee hearings or in the

media, is what I analyzed in this study. Although grounded in research, the 4E framework of

encourage bipartisanship and collaboration, *emulate prior successes*, *employ interest*

convergence and *elevate heroic voices* was also based on some of the tactics I utilized and

facilitated while trying to garner support for both bills. Since I was the one doing most of the

political work under investigation in this study, I had the potential to be too close to the data and

the findings. It is important that qualitative researchers, particularly those with positionality like

mine, be mindful of the temptation to erroneously fill in the gaps in the data or to draw

conclusions based on what we thought happened rather than what the data truly showed. It was possible that I could overemphasize my own role without considering factors that also contributed to the passage of the bills that were absent from my data. Holmes (2020) elevated these cautions:

> New researchers also need to realize that reflexivity is not a panacea that eradicates the need for awareness of the limits of self-reflexivity. Reflexivity can help to clarify and contextualize one's position about the research process for both the researcher, the research participants, and readers of research outputs. Yet, it is not a guarantee of more honest, truthful, or ethical research.... No matter how critically reflective and reflexive one is, aspects of the self can be missed, not known, or deliberately hidden (p. 4).

It was therefore vital for me to be aware of my pro-immigrant perspective, my role in leading and facilitating the political work under investigation, and the potential of both of these things to trip me up during my analysis. However, overall, my positionality as both the researcher of this study and the legislator who played a key role in the development and passage of both bills gave me invaluable insight and access in this in-depth, qualitative investigation of political work that I was a part of.

Clearly, a qualitative case study was the best fit for the methodology of this investigation. By employing qualitative methods, I was able to dig deeply into my research question's big-picture concepts, collect data from its natural setting, and leverage my positionality. Using the Arkansas 93rd General Assembly as my case provided me the opportunity to extensively study the political work that contributed to the passage of the bilingual education bill and the DACA teachers bill.

Site and Context Selection

I selected the Arkansas 93rd General Assembly as the case for this study. Although it is a case that I am obviously connected to, the advantages of using the Arkansas legislature go beyond mere convenience. Saldaña (2011) described the reasons that qualitative researchers select their cases:

> A case may be chosen *deliberately* because of its unique characteristics, thus presenting itself as a rich opportunity and exemplar for focused study… At other times, a case may be chosen *strategically* because it is deemed to represent the most typical of its kind…
>
> Yet at other times, a case may be chosen simply and purposively for *convenience*. (p. 9)

In the case of this case, using Arkansas was deliberate, strategic, and convenient. It is true that it is a case I was a part of and am knowledgeable about; however, Arkansas' legislature told a compelling story about passing pro-immigrant policy within an unfavorable context. The economic, social, and political conditions in Arkansas during the 2021 legislative session all met the criteria for being unfavorable for pro-immigrant policy adoption (see Table 1; Berry, 1994; Browne, 2018; Dye, 1979; Frendreis & Tatalovich; 2010; Gray 1973; Mallinson, 2020; Mooney & Lee, 1995; Walker, 1969; Ybarra et al., 2016; Zingher, 2014), and the bilingual education bill and DACA teachers bill both expanded opportunities to immigrants that were previously prohibited by state law. Therefore, the deliberate choice to study Arkansas provided me the opportunity to gain meaningful insights into how these two policies passed in the face of the unfavorable determinants.

Researcher's Role

My role as the researcher of this particular case was one of *complete participant*. I am a member of the Arkansas House of Representatives and served during the 93rd General

Assembly. I sponsored the bilingual education bill (H.B.1451) and sponsored the 2019 DACA nurses bill (H.B. 1552) that the 2021 DACA teachers bill (H.B.1594) was emulated after. I utilized and analyzed data sources of myself doing political work: speaking in committee hearings and on the House floor, bill text I drafted, media documents I was interviewed for, and legislative artifacts I created. This "data intimacy" (Saldaña, 2011) was advantageous:

> Analysis is accelerated as you take cognitive ownership of your data. By reading and rereading the corpus, you gain intimate familiarity with its contents and begin to notice significant details as well as make new insights about their meanings. Patterns, categories, and their relationships become more evident the more you know the subtleties of the database (p. 95).

However, it was important that I stayed aware of my role and took the cautions about "backyard research" (Creswell, 2014; Hatch, 2002) to heart. Creswell (2014) warned that backyard research, the study of one's own organization or work setting, has the potential to compromise the researcher's ability to collect fair and accurate data.

> When researchers collect data at their own workplace… the information may be easy and convenient to collect, but it may not be accurate information and may jeopardize the roles of the researchers and the participants. If studying the backyard is essential, then researchers hold the responsibility for showing how the data will not be compromised and how such information will not place the participants or the researcher at risk. In addition, multiple strategies for validation are necessary to demonstrate the accuracy of the information (p. 188).

It is important that qualitative researchers studying their own "backyards" (such as myself) put guardrails in place, such as regular reflection, journaling, member checking, or critical friends

(Burns Thomas, 2020; Creswell, 2014) to ensure credibility. However, the benefits of my being a full member of the case under investigation outweighed the cautions. I was still intentional to structure my analysis to prioritize trustworthiness and credibility while utilizing the robust data that I was intimately familiar with.

Data Collection Methods

For this study, I needed to collect data that would give me evidence of the four components of political work under analysis: *encourage bipartisanship and collaboration*, *emulate prior successes*, *employ interest convergence*; and *elevate heroic voices*. Fortunately, the Arkansas legislature provides public access to legislative hearings, which are recorded, live-streamed, and archived, and all bills and amendments are catalogued online. I therefore had access to three key data sources: observations and transcripts from committee hearings and floor sessions where the bills were heard and voted on, media documents about either or both of the pro-immigrant education policies, and legislative artifacts, such as the text of the bills and a legislative infographic I created about the bilingual education bill. Creswell (2014) encouraged researchers to "include creative data collection types that go beyond typical observations and interviews" that "create reader interest… and can capture useful information that observations and interviews may miss" (p. 190), and Saldaña (2011) noted three key benefits of triangulating data from a variety of sources:

> First, data gathered from different sources will better guarantee a spectrum of diverse perspectives for analysis and representation… Second, the limitations of one data-gathering method can be addressed by using an additional method… Third, multiple data-gathering methods (and sources) enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of a study

through what is known in the field as triangulation -- generally, the use of at least three

different viewpoints (p. 76).

By collecting data from observations, documents, and artifacts, I had access to robust data that

allowed me to study the complex components of the political work that contributed to the

passage of both policies and to ensure my analysis was credible.

Observations

The Arkansas House of Representatives and the Arkansas Senate, as well as their

respective education committees, heard, deliberated, and voted on both bills under investigation

in this study: the bilingual education bill (H.B.1451) and the DACA teachers bill (H.B.1594).

These hearings, March 11, 2021 for H.B.1451 and H.B.1594 in the House Education committee;

March 16, 2021 for H.B.1451 and H.B.1594 on the House floor; March 22, 2021 in the Senate

Education committee for H.B.1594, March 29, 2021 on the Senate floor for H.B.1594, March 29,

2021 in the Senate Education committee for H.B.1451; and April 1, 2021 for H.B.1451 on the

Senate floor, were transcribed verbatim for content analysis. The intentional inclusion of pauses,

verbal tics, smiles, and laughs gave important interpersonal and non-verbal data during the

committees and floor sessions. I was able to collect evidence of encouraging bipartisanship and

collaboration through questions and expressions of support made by both Republicans and

Democrats. I had data about emulating prior successes with testimony about what other states

have done with bilingual education and what Arkansas had done previously in regards to DACA

licensure. Data about employing interest convergence came from the framing of both policies in

committee and on the floor, both in the initial presentations of the bills and in the response to

questions and criticism. And I had my best evidence of elevating heroic voices in the

observational data, analyzing the testimony of the non-legislators (immigrant students, educators

and other school leaders, and immigrant advocates and allies) who came to speak in favor of the pro-immigrant education policies. The data I collected from these observations provided crucial insight into the political work that led to the success of these two bills.

Documents

Media documents were another important data source for this analysis. Media accounts of both bills provided perspectives from outside the Capitol and included additional insights into the work that facilitated their passage. There were six news stories that were written before, during, or after the passage of the bilingual education and DACA teachers bills. Three stories, from the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, 40/29 News, and Arkansas Soul, reported on both bills together. Three additional stories focused on one of the policies, with KUAF Public Radio doing individual stories on bilingual education and DACA teachers and KAIT News discussing DACA teachers. These media documents served as "powerful indicators of the value systems operating within institutions… (giving) the researcher a sense of history related to the context being studied" (Hatch, 2002, p. 117) and provided rich and relevant data for analysis. The components of political work were evident in these media documents. The news stories reported on the bipartisan nature of the bills, highlighting the cosponsors from different parties and the legislative success in a Republican supermajority. There was significant data about employing interest convergence as well, as the framing of the bills and the salient arguments that emerge in the media are important components of political work. The stories also elevated non-legislator voices through interviews and photographs. Therefore, these documents were useful for collecting data for the analysis of political work.

Artifacts

The final data source for this study was legislative artifacts. According to Hatch (2002), "Artifacts are objects the participants use in the everyday activity of the contexts under examination" (p. 117). In this case, the artifacts were the bills themselves and an infographic I created to explain and garner support for the bilingual education bill. The text of the bill, including names of the sponsors, co-sponsors, and the process of adding amendments, provided further evidence of bipartisanship. The text also provided evidence of emulating prior successes, as both bills were modeled after exemplar policy. The infographic for bilingual education yielded evidence of emulating prior successes and employing interest convergence since it was developed to highlight the economic and cultural benefits of bilingualism in the overwhelming majority of states that permit bilingual programs. These artifacts allowed me to triangulate my data with my observations and documents, providing varied sources of data for analysis. Ultimately, the full data set included observations and transcripts from three committee meetings and three floor sessions, six media documents, two bills, and one legislator-created infographic.

The following tables, Table 2, Table 3, Table 4, and Table 5, show the individuals included in each data source (those who spoke during the observation, were interviewed in the media document, or are listed as cosponsors in the legislative artifact) and the typological codes that were present in each source after the first phase of qualitative coding. All of the observations, documents, and artifacts are public record and publicly available; therefore, no names or identifying details were redacted in this chapter.

Table 2

Data Sources: Observations of Bilingual Education

Observations (Bilingual Education)	Individuals	Typological Codes Found
Observation: Bilingual: House Committee	Rep. Bruce Cozart (R, cosponsor, committee chair), Rep. Richard Womack (R, cosponsor), Rep. Megan Godfrey (D, sponsor), Rep. Charlene Fite (R, political ally), Rep. Brian Evans (R, cosponsor, committee vice chair), Alondra Altamorano (immigrant), Jax Nalley (social ally), Judith Yanez (immigrant), Luis Restrepo (educator ally, immigrant), Tina Howlett (educator ally), Trish Lopez (educator ally, social ally), Steve Clark (economic ally), Giovanni Saramiento (economic ally, immigrant), Rep. Mark Lowery (R, committee member), Rep. Gayla McKenzie (R, committee member, votes no)	Economic Determinants Social Determinants Political Determinants Bipartisan Emulate Interest Voices Educate **(166 total)**
Observation: Bilingual: House Floor	Rep. Michelle Gray (R, sitting Speaker), Rep. Megan Godfrey (D, sponsor), Rep. Jim Wooten (R, opposed), Rep. Mary Bentley (R, opposed), Rep. Richard Womack (R, in favor), Rep. Charlene Fite (R, in favor)	Economic Determinants Social Determinants Political Determinants Bipartisan Emulate Interest Voices Educate **(121 total)**
Observation: Bilingual: Senate Committee	Sen. Missy Irvin (R, cosponsor, committee chair), Sen. James Sturch (R, cosponsor, committee member), Rep. Megan Godfrey (D, sponsor), Sen. Linda Chesterfield (D, committee member), Trish Lopez (educator ally, social ally), Giovanni Saramiento (economic ally, immigrant)	Economic Determinants Social Determinants Political Determinants Bipartisan Emulate Interest Voices Educate **(100 total)**
Observation: Bilingual: Senate Committee (Amendment)	Sen. Missy Irvin (R, cosponsor, committee chair), Sen. Clarke Tucker (D, Senate sponsor),	Political Determinants Bipartisan Interest Educate **(12 total)**
Observation: Bilingual: Senate Floor	Sen. Clarke Tucker (D, Senate sponsor)	Economic Determinants Political Determinants Bipartisan Emulate Interest Voices Educate **(29 total)**

Table 3

Data Sources: Observations of DACA Teachers

Observations (DACA Teachers)	Individuals	Typological Codes Found
Observation: DACA: House Committee	Rep. Bruce Cozart (R, committee chair), Rep. DeAnn Vaught (R, sponsor), Rep. Brian Evans (R, committee vice chair), Steve Cole (educator ally), Jared Cleveland (educator ally), Bobby Hart (educator ally), Maria Colorado (immigrant), Rep. Stephen Meeks (R, committee member), Maria Garcia (immigrant), Jennifer Carmona Garcia (immigrant), Muriel Rodriguez (immigrant), Ana Rodriguez (immigrant), Carol Fleming (educator ally), Diana Gonzales-Worthen (educator ally, immigrant), Rosa Velazquez (immigrant, social ally)	Economic Determinants Social Determinants Political Determinants Bipartisan Emulate Interest Voices Educate **(150 total)**
Observation: DACA: House Floor	Rep. Michelle Gray (R, acting speaker), Rep. DeAnn Vaught (R, sponsor)	Economic Determinants Social Determinants Political Determinants Bipartisan Emulate Interest Educate **(14 total)**
Observation: DACA: Senate Committee	Sen. Lance Eads (R, sponsor), Sen. Missy Irvin (R, committee chair), Sen. Chesterfield (D, committee member), Jennifer Carmona Garcia (immigrant), Laura Kellams (social ally), Sen. Joyce Elliott (D, committee member), Bobby Hart (educator ally), Rosa Velazquez (immigrant, social ally)	Economic Determinants Social Determinants Political Determinants Bipartisan Emulate Interest Voices Educate **(114 total)**
Observation: DACA: Senate Floor	Sen. Lance Eads (R, sponsor)	Economic Determinants Social Determinants Political Determinants Bipartisan Emulate Interest Voices **(24 total)**

Table 4

Data Sources: Media Documents of Bilingual Education, DACA Teachers, or Both

Documents	Individuals	Typological Codes Found
Document: Both: ARSoul	Antoinette Grajeda (journalist), Rep. Megan Godfrey (D, sponsor), Rep. Jim Wooten (R, against), Rep. Charlene Fite (R, in favor)	Social Determinants Political Determinants Bipartisan Emulate Interest Voices **(39 total)**
Document: DACA: KUAF	Kyle Kellams (journalist), Antoinette Grajeda (journalist), Rep. DeAnn Vaught (R, sponsor), Karla Palma (immigrant, social ally), Maria Garcia (immigrant), Maria Colorado (immigrant)	Economic Determinants Social Determinants Political Determinants Bipartisan Emulate Interest Voices Educate **(35 total)**
Document: Bilingual: 40/29	Cole Zimmerman (journalist), Rep. Megan Godfrey (D, sponsor), Mireya Reith (social ally)	Economic Determinants Social Determinants Political Determinants Bipartisan Emulate Interest Voices Educate **(61 total)**
Document: Both: Arkansas Democrat-Gazette	Rachel Herzog (journalist), Rep. Megan Godfrey (D, sponsor), Maria Colorado (immigrant), Judith Yanez (immigrant, educator ally)	Economic Determinants Social Determinants Political Determinants Bipartisan Interest Voices Educate **(30 total)**
Document: DACA: KAIT	Logan Whaley (journalist), Mireya Reith (social ally)	Economic Determinants Social Determinants Political Determinants Emulate Interest Voices Educate **(65 total)**
Document: Bilingual: KUAF	Kyle Kellams (journalist), Rep. Megan Godfrey (D, sponsor)	Economic Determinants Social Determinants Political Determinants Bipartisan Emulate Interest Voices Educate **(72 total)**

Table 5

Data Sources: Legislative Artifacts

Artifacts	Individuals	Typological Codes Found
Artifact: Bilingual: Bill Text	Sponsor: Rep. Megan Godfrey (D), Senate Sponsor: Sen. Clarke Tucker (D), Cosponsors: Rep. Bruce Cozart (R), Rep. Brian Evans (R), Rep. DeAnn Vaught (R), Rep. Richard Womack (R), Sen. Bart Hester, Sen. Lance Eads, Sen. James Sturch, Sen. Joyce Elliott (D), Sen. Breanne Davis (R), Sen. Missy Irvin (R)	Social Determinants Political Determinants Bipartisan Emulate Interest Educate **(24 total)**
Artifact: DACA: Bill Text	Sponsor: Rep. DeAnn Vaught (R), Senate Sponsor: Sen. Lance Eads (R), Cosponsors: Rep. Megan Godfrey (D), Rep. Delia Haak (R), Rep. Spencer Hawks (R), Rep. Lee Johnson (R), Rep. John Maddox (R), Sen. Bart Hester (R), Sen. James Sturch (R), Sen. Dave Wallace (R)	Political Determinants Bipartisan Emulate **(11 total)**
Artifact: DACA: Infographic	Infographic Creator: Rep. Megan Godfrey (D)	Economic Determinants Social Determinants Political Determinants Emulate Interest Voices Educate **(47 total)**

I uploaded all data sources into MAXQDA, a software program for qualitative research, and organized the sources by type: observations (nine transcripts), documents (four radio/television transcripts and two written news stories), and artifacts (two bill texts and one infographic). Once I imported my data sources into MAXQDA, I was ready to use the software to facilitate my three-phase qualitative coding methodology.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is a search for broad patterns and themes, a way to make meaning from the concrete to the abstract. Creswell (2014) noted, "In general, the intent is to make sense out of text and image data. It involves segmenting and taking apart the data (like peeling back layers of an onion) as well as putting it back together" (p. 195). Saldaña (2011) described humans as "pattern-making beings" (p. 26) and explained that qualitative analysis is a process of organizing, reorganizing and grouping data into categories and themes as patterns

emerge (p. 26). In this case, my qualitative analysis took place in three phases: typological coding, open coding, and axial coding in order to arrive at the themes and patterns that were relevant to this investigation about the political work that contributed to the passage of bilingual education and DACA teachers.

Three-Phase Coding Overview

I employed typological coding for my first round of data analysis. LeCompte and Preissle (1993) describe typological analysis as "dividing everything into groups on the basis of some canon for disaggregating the whole phenomenon under study" (p. 257). Similarly, Hatch (2002) described the typologies a researcher would use as "generated from theory, common sense, and/or research objectives, and initial data processing happens within those typological groupings" (p. 152). In my case, the typological codes came from the literature on the determinants for policy adoption and the components of political work. Hatch (2002) outlined this process for typological analysis in detail:

    1) Identify typologies to be analyzed

    2) Read data, marking entries to your typologies

    3) Read entries by typology, recording main ideas on summary sheet

    4) Look for patterns, relationships, themes within typologies

    5) Read data, coding entries according to patterns identified and keeping a record of what entries go with which elements of your patterns

    6) Decide if your patterns are supported by the data, and search the data for nonexamples

    7) Look for relationships among the patterns identified

    8) Write your patterns as one-sentence generalizations

    9) Select data excerpts that support your generalizations (p. 160).

This process for typological coding had the advantage of efficiency and, even though it began deductively, Hatch (2002) pointed out that just because "typological analysis starts with a deductive step does not preclude the researcher's being aware that other important categories are likely to be in the data or prevent the researcher from searching for them" (p. 161). This caveat led to my second phase of analysis, which was open coding within each typological code. Hatch (2002) recommended this as the follow up to typological coding, and open coding within each typology allowed me to identify additional patterns and themes within each determinant and component of political work. This was an important step so that I did not get pigeon-holed within the constraints of my initial typologies and could instead "remain open to all possible theoretical directions indicated by (the) readings of the data" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 46). During this phase, I read through the data in each category, identified meaningful topics and patterns that emerged, created new codes, and applied the codes to the data. The third phase of my analysis was to employ axial coding to make connections among and between the original typologies and the newly discovered patterns and themes from open coding. According to Saldaña (2013),

> This method 'relates categories to subcategories [and] specifies the properties and dimensions of a category' (Charmaz, 2006, p. 60). Properties (i.e., characteristics or attributes) and dimensions (the location of a property along a continuum or range) of a category refer to such components as the contexts, conditions, interactions, and consequences of a process – actions that let the researcher know "if, when, how, and why" something happens (p. 62).

Axial coding allowed me to make connections across the typologies and the coded findings that emerged within and between the categories so that I could land on broader themes from the analysis as a whole. This three-phase qualitative analysis of typological coding, open coding, and

axial coding allowed me to dig deeply into my data while also identifying themes that reveal a cross-category picture of the complex and interconnected components of political work that contribute to the passage of pro-immigrant education policies.

Qualitative Analysis: Typological Coding

The first phase of qualitative analysis was typological coding. In order to collect data about the determinants for policy adoption in Arkansas during the 93rd General Assembly, I first coded my data using three typologies: ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, and POLITICAL. These typological codes aligned with the determinants for policy adoption discussed in the literature review. I also coded the data that showed evidence of political work using the four typologies of the 4Es: encourage BIPARTISANship, EMULATE prior successes, employ INTEREST convergence, and elevate heroic VOICES. In my first phase of coding, if any data seemed significant but did not fall into one of the typologies for determinants or 4Es, I coded this discrepant data as SOMETHING ELSE. Figure 1 shows how the data was first typologically coded with the three determinants, four components of political work (4Es), or as discrepant data.

Figure 1

Phase 1: Typological Coding
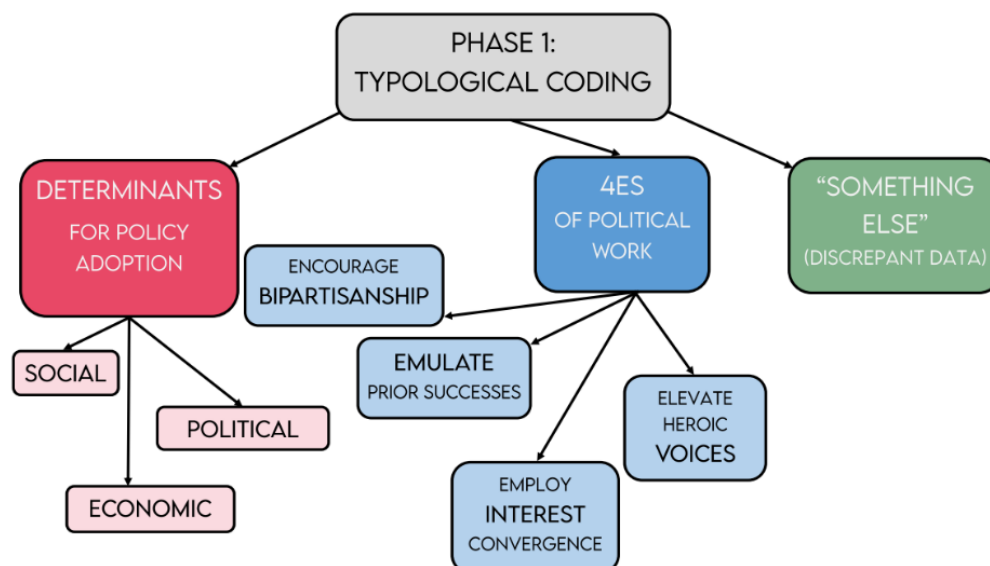
Typological Coding: Determinants. In the first phase of coding, I coded all data that showed evidence of the economic, social, or political determinants for policy adoption in the Arkansas 93rd General Assembly. In regards to ECONOMIC determinants, multiple data sources showed evidence of challenging economic conditions in Arkansas and a need to focus on economic development in the state. There were 39 individual data coded as ECONOMIC determinants for policy adoption in the first round of typological coding. The SOCIAL determinants for policy adoption showed up in a variety of data sources across all three source types. While economic determinants were easier to identify in the data and therefore code, social determinants were more complex. Grounding my definition of social determinants in the existing literature, I coded all data that gave evidence of social demographics (Browne, 2018; Ybarra et al., 2016; Zingher, 2014) or of lawmakers' willingness to make policy decisions based on morality (Mooney & Lee, 1995; Frendreis & Tatalovich; 2010) as social determinants. There were 72 total data coded as SOCIAL determinants. The POLITICAL determinants for policy

adoption were also evident across all data source types. There was a variety of data showing Republicans' powerful majority and the conservative ideological preferences of the legislature. Republican committee chairs, Republican sponsors and cosponsors, Senate and House legislative rosters and vote counts, evidence of far-right opposition, and data showing particular conservative ideologies all provided evidence of the political conditions for pro-immigrant policy adoption in Arkansas. There were 69 data coded as POLITICAL determinants. All three typological codes for the determinants for policy adoption – ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, and POLITICAL –were evident in the data set and emerged in the first phase of coding.

    Typological Coding: 4Es (Political Work). The first round of typological coding also consisted of coding the data with the "4Es" of political work: encourage BIPARTISANship, EMULATE prior successes, employ INTEREST convergence, and elevate heroic VOICES. Many of the same data that were coded as determinants were also coded as 4Es of political work, showing the emerging connections between the unfavorable determinants for policy adoption and the necessary political work to overcome them.

    Data coded as BIPARTISAN showed evidence of Republicans and Democrats working together in support of either or both of the pro-immigrant education policies through cosponsorship, vocal support in committee or on the floor, or in votes in favor of the legislation. The legislative artifacts showed bipartisan cosponsors on both bills, with two Democrats as lead sponsors and nine Republicans as cosponsors on bilingual education and two Republicans as lead sponsors, seven additional Republican cosponsors, and one Democratic cosponsor (me) on DACA teachers. All of the voting records in committee and on the floor, in both chambers and for both bills, showed evidence of bipartisanship, as all Democrats and a majority of Republicans voted in favor each time either bill was up for a vote. Other data showed evidence of highlighting

the bipartisan nature of the bill during the bill presentations, public testimony, or in the media, with descriptions such as, "this bipartisan bill," "I'm here to speak for Representative Vaught and Representative Godfrey's bill," "I'm pleased to support this critically important bill and appreciate Representative Vaught and Representative Godfrey's work on this issue," "the bill also has broad bipartisan support, and "a special thank you to Senator Tucker as well as my bipartisan co-sponsors," "there's no opposition that I'm aware of, and I want to thank the, the group of bipartisan sponsors on the bill." Overall, there were 55 data showing evidence of the political work of encouraging bipartisanship across all three data source types.

Data that showed evidence of the political work of emulating prior legislative successes was coded as EMULATE. Data about "a very similar bill, "something similar to what we did in 2019 for the, the DREAMer students," "just like we did last session," "48 other states allow programs like these," and the "success of the Arkansas Seal of Biliteracy" all showed the political work of emulating prior legislative successes. In the case of DACA teachers, it was emulated after an identical bill for DACA nurses that I passed in 2019. In regards to bilingual education, Arkansas was among the last states without a bilingual education bill, so we were emulating the 48 other states that allow bilingual and dual immersion programs. There were also other Arkansas pro-immigrant education policies that were similar in topic or theme to either DACA teachers or bilingual education, and some data showed that the two pro-immigrant education policies under investigation were emulating each other. There were 44 data that showed evidence of the political work of emulating prior legislative successes.

The political work of employing interest convergence showed up most frequently in the data. Any evidence of appealing to lawmakers' varied interests was coded as INTEREST. While pro-immigrant education policy is most obviously in the interests of pro-immigrant education

advocates, attempts to converge with other interests emerged from the data. Many of the data that were coded as economic, social, and political determinants were also coded as economic, social, and political interests. Data such as "I agree, "we heard compelling testimony," "that's exactly right," "I'm certainly not opposed," "there's support from a lot of different sectors," "it's only if it makes sense for a district", and "all of Arkansas benefits," show the effort to converge with the interests of lawmakers in an attempt to build consensus and agreement. These data are a small selection of the 102 total data that showed significant evidence of interest convergence, calling my attention to the centrality of this complex component for the next phase of coding.

Any data of someone speaking in favor of a bill or affected positively by its passage was coded as VOICES. Data such as "people are here to testify," "I'm a child advocate," "I'm a graduate," "this is my home," "I'm pleased to support this bill," "twelve people signed up for your bill," "leaders in business and industry are in support of this bill," "sharing her testimony," and "I know just how important it is," were all coded as VOICES. 96 data were coded as such, with many of the data consisting of multiple sentences. The large quantity of VOICES data was coded into additional, more helpful categories in the open coding phase.

Typological Coding: Discrepant Data. During the first phase of coding, several data emerged that seemed relevant, either in regards to determinants for policy adoption or political work or both, but did not fit one of the predetermined typologies of ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, or POLITICAL, or BIPARTISAN, EMULATE, INTEREST, or VOICES. In multiple data sources, there was evidence of factual, informative explanations of the policy or its components. These data were more explanatory than persuasive and were therefore not coded as INTEREST but rather went into the SOMETHING ELSE category. Other data showed evidence of the political work of politeness and charm, not categorizable into one of the 4Es but worthy political work

nonetheless. These data were also coded as SOMETHING ELSE. Another important data trend was the use of bilingualism during presentations of the bills, especially the bilingual education bill. These data, such as "*Gracias*, Madam Speaker", "*apreciaría un buen voto*", "Hi, good morning*, buenos días*, Mr. Chair, committee", and "*algunos, como yo, son bilingues*" were all coded as SOMETHING ELSE. All of this discrepant data was important to identify and yielded relevant findings in the following phases of coding.

The initial "big sort" of data into the typological codes resulted in two important patterns: a general consistency with what the existing literature says about unfavorable determinants for pro-immigrant policy adoption and political work and a well-organized data structure for the next phase of open coding. Organizing the data into the three determinants for policy adoption: ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, and POLITICAL, the four components of political work (4Es): BIPARTISAN, EMULATE, INTEREST, and VOICES, and the relevant discrepant data into a SOMETHING ELSE hodgepodge began to show me that the conditions for passing pro-immigrant policy were indeed unfavorable but that there was intentional and effective political work employed to counteract those determinants. The second phase, open coding, allowed me to dig deeper into the complexities of each typology and yielded a more robust picture of the political work that led to the passage of bilingual education and DACA teachers.

Qualitative Analysis: Open Coding

During the second phase of coding, I took all of the data coded into the typologies for determinants, 4Es, or discrepant data and categorized them further. These subcategories often aligned with themes from the existing literature about policy determinants or political work or emerged as distinct enough from the original typologies.

Open Coding: Determinants. Additional categories for the data coded as ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, or POLITICAL determinants came from themes from the literature about determinants for policy adoption. The data for ECONOMIC determinants was not coded further. The data for SOCIAL determinants were coded into the literature-based subcodes DEMOGRAPHICS and MORAL IMPERATIVE, aligning with the research that shows policy adoption is influenced by a state's demographic trends and its willingness to make morality-based policy decisions. The demographics data highlighted racially and ethnically diverse populations and disparities, immigrants and specific communities with large immigrant populations, and English language learners. The moral imperative data was broken down further into moral arguments for expanding OPPORTUNITY, promoting INCLUSION, and REDUCING HARDSHIP and were coded as such. The POLITICAL determinant data was coded again with the subcodes PARTISAN and IDEOLOGY, tracking with research that both partisan makeup and ideological bent of the legislature can influence whether a policy is likely to be adopted.

Figure 2

Phase 2: Open Coding for Determinants
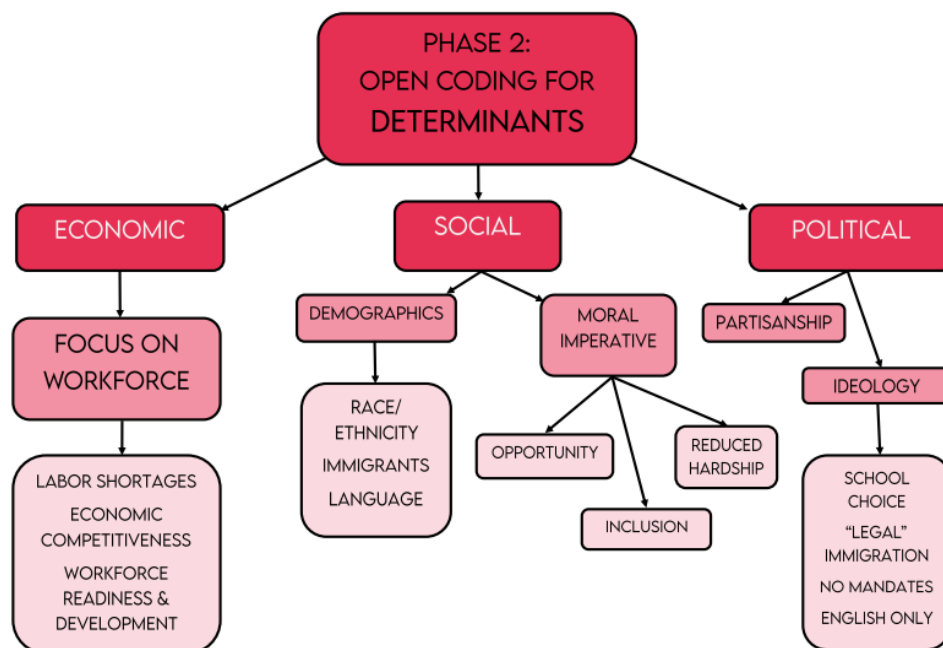
Open Coding: 4Es. Other important patterns and relationships emerged during the second phase of coding of the 4Es data. The BIPARTISAN data did not warrant additional subcodes, as the data about bipartisanship in cosponsorship, vocal support, or votes was relatively straightforward. The data for EMULATE was subcoded with either AR POLICY or OTHER STATES, which was also easy to identify. The data for INTEREST and VOICES, however, was extensive, and coding it with additional subcodes highlighted important findings about the complexities of the political work. In regards to INTEREST, there were three clear interests that those speaking in support of the pro-immigrant policy attempted to appeal to: ECONOMIC INTEREST, SOCIAL INTEREST, and POLITICAL INTEREST, which matched the original typologies of the determinants for policy adoption. Similar to the subcodes for the determinants data, the social interests were coded further as MORAL IMPERATIVE and

DEMOGRAPHICS, and political interests were coded again as PARTISAN or IDEOLOGY.

During this coding phase, a fourth interest also emerged from the data: EDUCATIONAL

INTEREST. The data for VOICES were coded with subcodes TYPE and PURPOSE allowing

me to better make sense of the *who* and the *why* of the voices being elevated. Among the types of

voices, there were IMMIGRANT voices and ALLY voices, with ALLY voices coded further as

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, POLITICAL and EDUCATOR allies. The purposes of the voices being

elevated also matched the pattern of constructing NARRATIVES that were ECONOMIC,

SOCIAL, POLITICAL, or EDUCATIONAL. This open coding phase showed clear patterns and

connections between the economic, social, and political determinants in Arkansas and the type of

political work done to align with and mitigate those unfavorable conditions.

Figure 3

Phase 2: Open Coding for 4Es
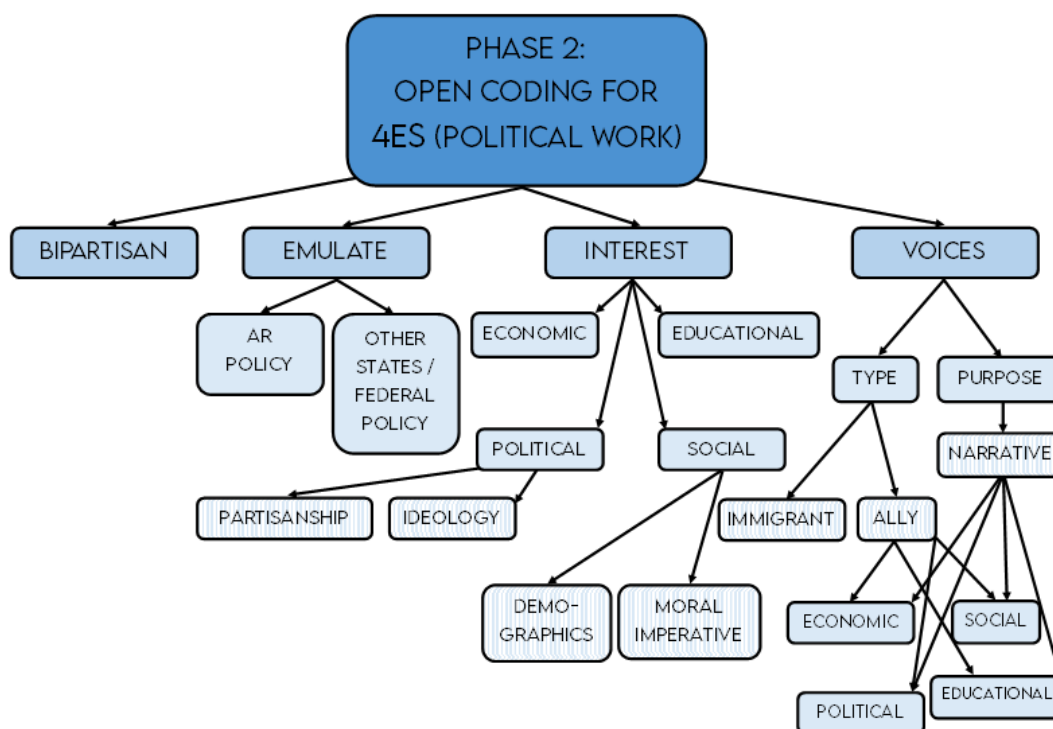
Open Coding: Discrepant Data. Perhaps my favorite pattern that showed up during the open coding phase was the initial emergence of a fifth "E." It became clear that there was a direct connection between the economic, social, and political determinants for policy adoption and the economic-focused, socially-minded, and politically-aware political work that had to be done to mitigate the unfavorable determinants. However, the quality and quantity of data that focused on education, not economics, demographics, morality, or politics, was compelling to me and significant enough to be coded as its own component of political work. There were data showing the political work of converging with educational interests, constructing educational narratives, and elevating heroic educator voices, particularly the voices of legislators who were also educators. This mindset motivated me to look at the discrepant "something else" data through a new lens – as instructional best practices. The data showing clear, informative explanations of DACA or bilingual education were evidence of strong CONTENT KNOWLEDGE, just like educators must have to be effective instructors. The data of legislators modeling the use of two languages and using an infographic to provide context and visual support showed STRONG PEDAGOGY, instructional practices that worked in a non-classroom context because, as we say, they are just good teaching. The data that showed the political work of charm and politeness gave evidence of the RELATIONSHIPS AND RAPPORT that good teachers know are necessary for learning. Therefore, the discrepant data and the data for educational voices, educational narratives, and educational interests all began to converge into a fifth "E" of political work: educate with best practices.

Figure 4

Phase 2: Open Coding for "Something Else" (Discrepant Data)
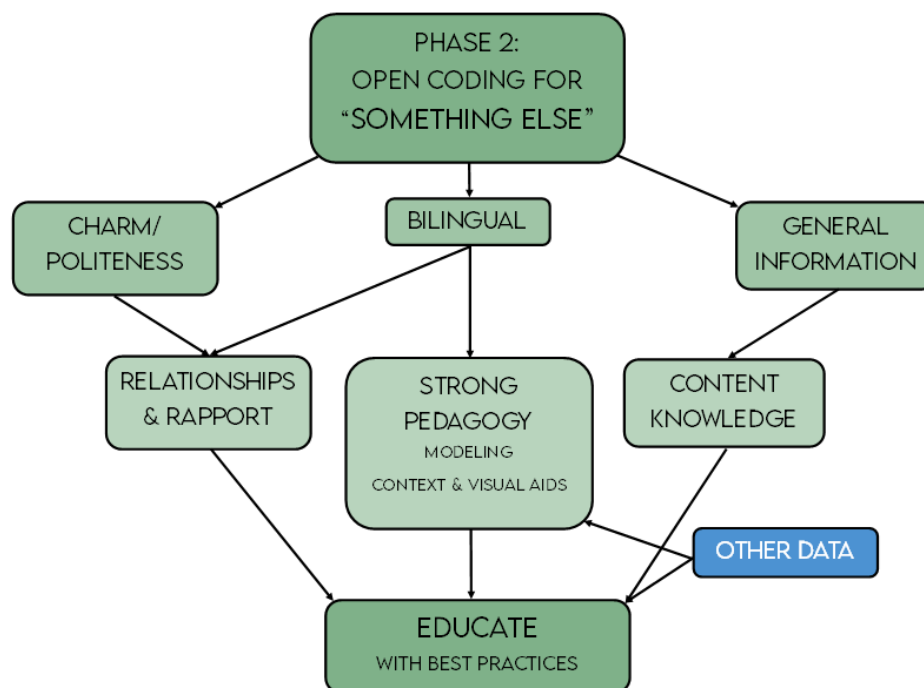
The open coding phase allowed me to see clear connections and relationships between the determinants for policy adoption during the Arkansas 93rd General Assembly and the political work done to mitigate the unlikelihood of passing the bilingual education and DACA teachers bills. These connections made it easy to identify my axial codes during my final phase of coding.
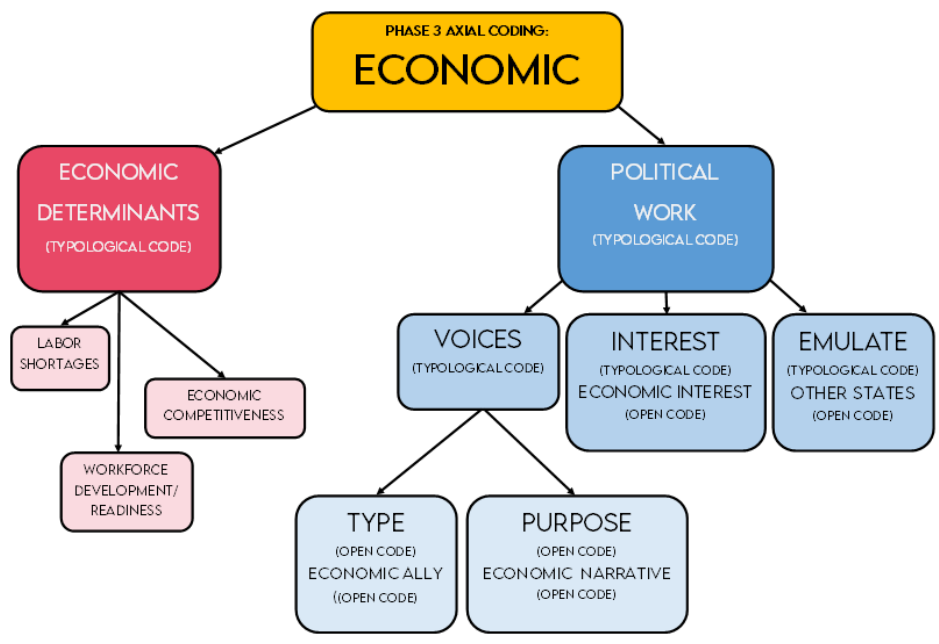
Qualitative Analysis: Axial Coding

By this point in my coding methodology, my axial codes became obvious. The political work matched up with the determinants based on ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, POLITICAL, or EDUCATIONAL factors; therefore, these themes were my four axial codes.

Figure 5

Phase 3: Axial Coding for Economic
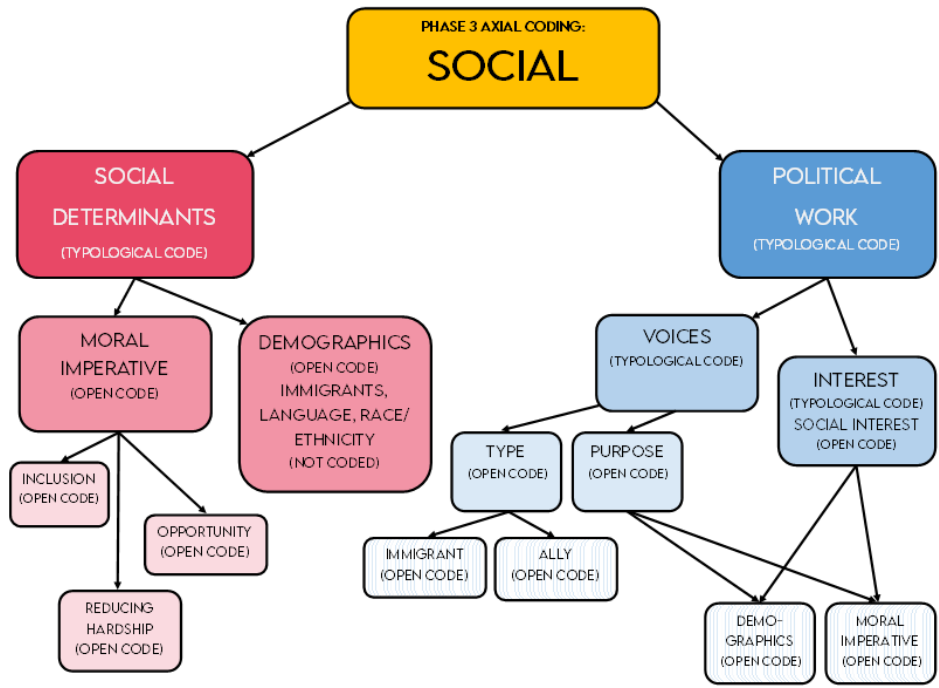

Figure 6

Phase 3: Axial Coding for Social

Figure 7

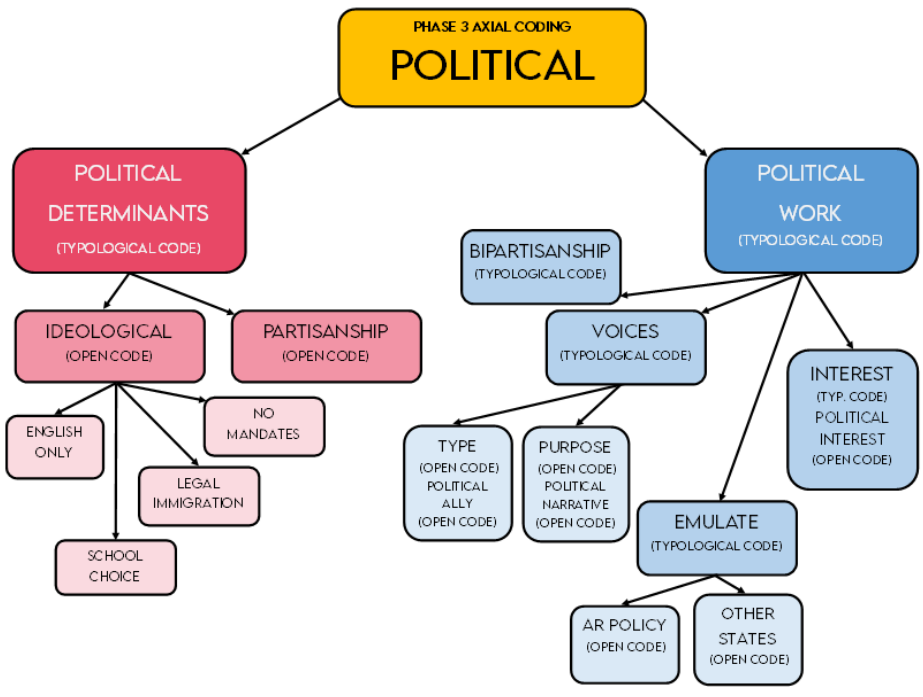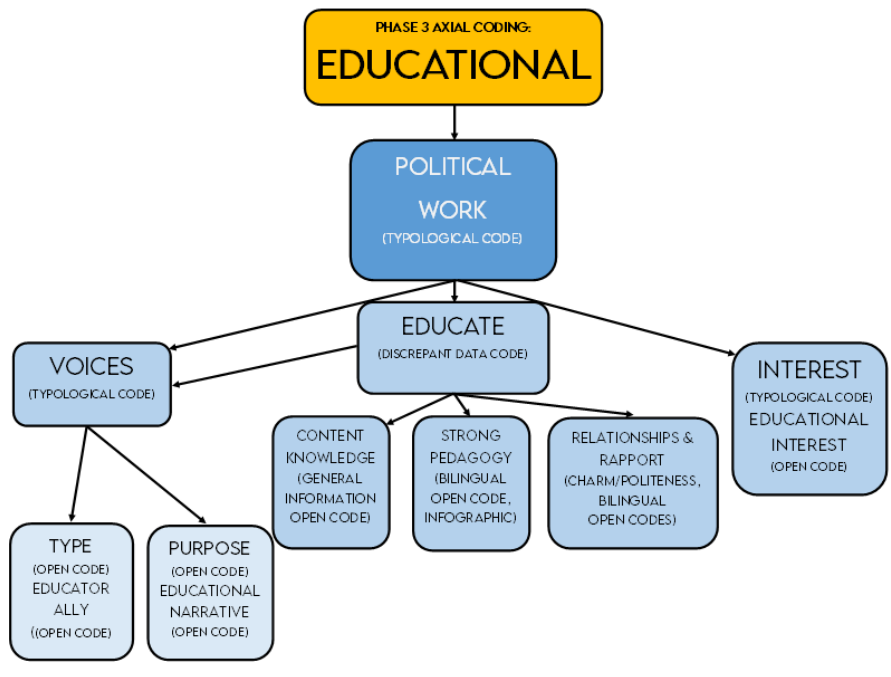*Phase 3: Axial Coding for Political*

Figure 8

Phase 3: Axial Coding for Educational

After connecting the relevant data under each axial code, I continued the process of writing analytical memos. These memos for each code highlighted the important findings about complexity of the political work, discussed in more detail in Chapter Four. This multiphase qualitative coding methodology allowed me to analyze the political work in a way that led me to uncover relevant patterns, themes, and findings about what contributed to the passage of the two pro-immigrant policies under investigation.

Trustworthiness & Credibility

Although qualitative methodology is apt and advantageous for this study, it was important to prioritize the credibility of my findings, particularly because of my role as complete participant and my pro-immigrant positionality. I intentionally and strategically employed the following strategies, recommended by Creswell (2014) and other qualitative researchers, to bolster the trustworthiness and credibility of my methodology: (a) use of a theoretical framework and the existing literature to ground the analysis of the political work; (b) triangulation of multiple data sources in the form of observations, documents, and artifacts; (c) mindfulness of my pro-immigrant positionality and my role as a complete research participant; (d) identification of discrepant data in all three phases of the coding and analysis process; and (e) utilization of analytical memos throughout the analysis. These guardrails helped ameliorate possible confounding elements within my research methodology and allowed me to effectively employ the qualitative methods to intimately analyze the robust data about political work while still prioritizing credibility and trustworthiness.

A qualitative case study was an ideal methodology for studying the political work that facilitated the passage of two pro-immigrant education bills in a state legislature with unfavorable conditions for their adoption, and the Arkansas 93rd General Assembly is an ideal

case for such analysis. By delving deeply into the complexities of the political work that resulted in the legislative success of bilingual education and DACA teachers in Arkansas using the methodology outlined here, I learned more about what worked, why it worked, and what lessons we can learn about pro-immigrant education policy advocacy in unlikely contexts.

Chapter Four: Findings

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings of the qualitative case study I conducted to answer the research question: *What political work contributed to the passage of two pro-immigrant education policies in a state legislature with unfavorable determinants for policy adoption?* My analysis of this multifaceted political work in the context of the Arkansas 93rd General Assembly resulted in the redevelopment of my initial 4E framework. After analyzing the data collected for this study, four key themes emerged: (a) the legislative context reflected specific unfavorable economic, social, and political determinants, (b) employing interest convergence was the prime and central strategy for garnering support for the two pro-immigrant education policies, (c) educational interests emerged as an additional consideration that was important for lawmakers, and (d) educators, particularly educator-legislators, used their professional expertise and educational best practices in a political context to garner support for the pro-immigrant education policies. These themes illuminated the components of the political work that contributed to the passage of the two pro-immigrant education policies under investigation, even in the face of the challenging economic, social, and political conditions in Arkansas. This chapter will provide an in-depth description of these four key themes: (a) the determinant-driven legislative context, (b) the centrality and primacy of interest convergence, (c) educational interests, and (d) the impact of educator expertise and practice.

Determinant-Driven Legislative Context

The first theme to emerge from the data was an affirmation of the unfavorable determinants for pro-immigrant education policy adoption within the legislative context under investigation. As anticipated from the previous literature, I found that the economic, social, and

political determinants in Arkansas during the 93rd General Assembly created challenges for the passage of the two pro-immigrant education policies.

Economic Determinants

The economic determinants in Arkansas for this particular legislation took the forms of economic challenges and a need to improve the state's economic competitiveness and workforce preparedness. The use of language such as "losing talent," "a shortage of teachers," "a talent war," the "talent pool," "economic development," "losing Arkansas homegrown talent," the need for Arkansas to become "more workforce ready," and "competitive(ness) in a global marketplace" were used in various contexts to describe the economic conditions in Arkansas. Within the legislature, economics took on a significant role within the educational policy debate. Republican Senator Lance Eads, the Senate sponsor of the DACA teachers bill, acknowledged Arkansas' need to retain highly skilled workers in various sectors in the economy when he presented DACA teachers on the Senate floor: "I just want to say that we talk a lot about a talent war in a lot of different areas of our economy, and this is one area that we have a chance to actually close the gap on with some talented, very talented people that we can keep here in, in Arkansas." Representative DeAnn Vaught, the Republican House sponsor of DACA teachers, reminded the House members of the role that the 2019 DACA nurses bill played in filling a critical labor gap that was caused by the COVID-19 pandemic: "We didn't know when we passed that legislation that we would go into a pandemic, and how that, us passing that helps relieve the workforce of our health care sys— of our healthcare system." Whether in committee, on the floor, or behind the scenes, in every presentation of both bills, the legislators sponsoring bilingual education and DACA teachers were intentional to speak to the economic realities in Arkansas and the need to improve the economy through jobs-focused policymaking.

Interest in economic competitiveness and workforce development was not limited to elected officials. For example, an immigrants' rights activist in northwest Arkansas stated in an interview about bilingual education, "Arkansas is trying to be a leader in the global economy, and yet we are not giving our kids the skills they need to be competitive in that global economy… That is affecting Arkansas' ability to be competitive." A public school superintendent also highlighted the low-wage jobs that the immigrants who work for his school district are limited to when he appealed to the Senate education committee about DACA teachers: "Right now, the only jobs in our school district that I can offer students that this bill impacts is a classified position, and while those are fantastic jobs, they're not always a pass to the middle class." Many of the voices who came to speak in favor of the bills, even if they were not directly connected to the work of economic development, highlighted the economic challenges in Arkansas and the need to improve Arkansas' economic outlook. The prioritization of economic issues in the Arkansas legislature emerged from the data as a key challenge in passing pro-immigrant education policy.

Social Determinants

Analysis of the data revealed two important themes of the social determinants in Arkansas, which were categorized as *demographic shifts* and *lawmakers' willingness to make legislative decisions based on morality*. These trends align with what the existing literature says about the challenges of pro-immigrant policy passage when immigrant growth is recent and rapid and when anti-immigrant sentiment is framed as the moral imperative.

Demographic Determinants. The demographic trends in Arkansas showed certain communities with significant and growing immigrant and English learner populations. Cities and

towns like Springdale, Hope, DeQueen, and Little Rock have relatively large percentages of immigrants in their communities and English learner students in their schools, which are continuing to grow. Data showing "considerable growth in multiple people groups," "the largest Marshallese [population] outside the Marshall Islands" and "a really robust Vietnamese community in several parts of the state," "the largest percentage of English learners in the state," "a large migrant population," "77,000 children of immigrants in Arkansas," the fact that the "Hispanic community continues to grow," and "roughly 4440 individuals with DACA status" in Arkansas all painted a picture of the changing demographic conditions of Arkansas. According to the literature, these trends were likely to have fostered anti-immigrant fervor among legislators and other citizens from these communities, making the passage of bilingual education and DACA teachers unlikely.

Moral Determinants. Morality can be a compelling factor in policymaking; the previous literature shows that it can be a more powerful determinant for policy adoption than economic or political factors. In Arkansas, morality proved to be an influential motivator in lawmaker decision-making. Lawmakers wanted to "do the right thing," to respond compassionately to emotional appeals, and to help those they deemed less fortunate. However, if anti-immigrant sentiment is framed as the moral imperative – if the "right thing" is to exclude immigrants and protect "real" Arkansans from physical harm or cultural threat – this can be detrimental to pro-immigrant political efforts. This sentiment was evident in the data, such as when a conservative Republican legislator argued against the bilingual education bill that was up for a vote on the House floor:

If they're going to be Americans, they need to speak American. They need to talk English… Now I recognize that we have a tremendous migrant population in our state.

But here again, the United States of America is the United States of America, and they

need to speak, and we need to have one language. In Arkansas, the language is English.

This legislator's attempt to frame monolingualism, rather than bilingualism, as the moral

imperative highlights the impact that morally-framed arguments could have had and the resulting

need to address them intentionally and thoroughly with compelling political work to change the

narrative of what is good, fair, and right.

Political Determinants

The political determinants in Arkansas, in regards to both partisanship and ideology, were

not conducive to pro-immigrant policy adoption either. With a 78-22 Republican supermajority

in the House and a 27-7-1 Republican supermajority in the Senate, nothing was going to pass in

the Arkansas legislature without Republican votes, and Republicans were unlikely to pass pro-

immigrant policies without seeing a political advantage. A bill sponsored by two Democrats

(bilingual education) and another emulated after a bill championed by a Democrat in the

previous term (DACA teachers) would not stand a chance without Republican support or a

Republican takeover. Other political factors were in play besides pure partisanship. Conservative

ideological preferences for "legal" immigration, policies that do not "do away with the English-

only language of instruction," charter schools and "parents' right to choose the best educational

environment for their child," and permissive allowances that were "not a mandate" categorized

the political appetite of Republican lawmakers. These political conditions also made pro-

immigrant policy adoption unlikely and required political work to highlight the political

advantages for Republicans of voting on the bills for bilingual education and DACA teachers.

The economic, social, and political determinants for pro-immigrant policy adoption were all unfavorable, as predicted by the existing literature and confirmed by the data of this analysis. The economic conditions were shaky with a strong need to improve Arkansas' economic outlook. The social conditions showed demographic trends of recent and rapid immigrant growth and a tendency for lawmakers to legislate using morality as a motivating factor. The political conditions, in regards to both Republican partisanship and conservative ideology, also created challenges for pro-immigrant policy passage. Therefore, the political work that was required to overcome these challenging determinants needed to directly converge with the interests of the lawmakers who would otherwise oppose the two pro-immigrant education policies.

Centrality and Primacy of Interest Convergence

The second theme that emerged from the data was the centrality of interest convergence to the political work employed throughout the legislative process as well as its primacy amongst the initial components of the 4E framework. While all four components of political work from the 4E framework were strategically and successfully employed throughout the legislative process for both bilingual education and DACA teachers, my analysis of the data revealed that *employing interest convergence* became paramount, and all of the other components of political work ultimately highlighted the connection between the benefits of the bills and the varied interests of the lawmakers voting on them. Given the salience of the unfavorable determinants, the political work that employed interest convergence also targeted one or more of these determinants simultaneously. Some of this work was planned and executed intentionally, and some was done reflexively and organically, showing up in the data as a theme I found in my investigation but not pre-planned or purposeful at the time. Regardless, the data showed a clear emergence of *employing interest convergence* – the need to illuminate and align with the

interests of the majority when advocating for the rights of the minority – as the prime and central strategy that was effective in mitigating the unfavorable economic, social, and political determinants that would have otherwise stood in the way of passing bilingual education and DACA teachers.

Economic Interest Convergence – Improve Arkansas' Economy

The sentiments surrounding Arkansas' economic conditions aligned with the existing literature on unfavorable conditions for pro-immigrant policy adoption: Arkansas was a state with economic challenges, including labor shortages, lack of economic competitiveness, and an underskilled workforce. Therefore, the political work to mitigate these conditions needed to highlight the ways bilingual education and DACA teachers actually improved the economy in Arkansas. This was primarily accomplished in three ways.

First, emulating other states with DACA teacher licensure and bilingual education programs promoted economic competitiveness. This emulation tapped into the interests of lawmakers who wanted to improve Arkansas' competitiveness and seize an opportunity to eliminate the economic advantages our neighboring states had over us. In each presentation of the bilingual education bill, Senator Tucker and I highlighted the fact that "48 states allow programs like these." On the infographic, I included a map with every state but Arkansas and Arizona shaded in, showing Arkansas as a lonely holdout among our neighbors, as shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9

Map from the Bilingual Education Infographic of All States that Permitted Bilingual Education

Programs before Passage of Arkansas' Bill
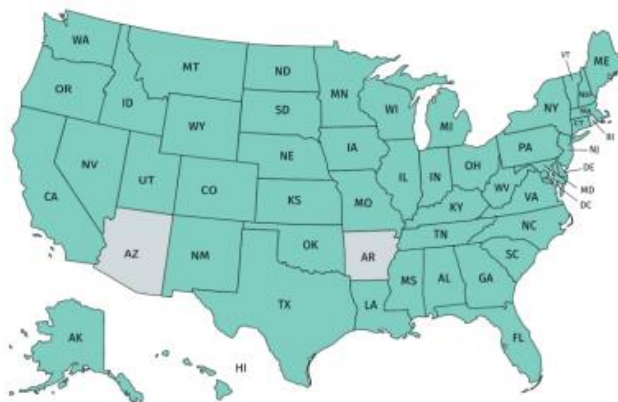
In the DACA teachers debate, Senator Eads highlighted the competitive advantage Arkansas

would have by expanding teacher licensure to DACA recipients: "Currently we're losing talent

for people that want to stay in our state and be able to help out, but they're, they can get certified

in Oklahoma, Texas, and Louisiana. Currently we are not allowed for them to be licensed as a

teacher here in Arkansas." A Republican representative on the education committee spoke to the

same benefit when he asked the leading question,

> Um, so, we've got this barrier here in Arkansas that is preventing you from going into the
>
> teaching profession. Are other states allowing you to teach, or are the same barriers
>
> there? So, in other words, kind of the intent of my question is: are we going to be losing
>
> Arkansas homegrown talent to other states by not doing this?

These arguments illustrated the perspective held by many of the legislators that the bills were an

economic advantage rather than a threat, and that we were actually decreasing our economic

competitiveness if we failed to pass them.

Second, highlighting the benefits of expanding the teacher workforce by including DACA recipients and equipping students with global workforce skills like bilingualism converged with the interests of lawmakers who prioritized workforce development. Representative Vaught emphasized the value workforce development held for her caucus colleagues with her presentation on the House floor: "Today, I bring you a bill that will actually help with our shortage that we have in teachers. And we do have a significant shortage of teachers. We have a solution though. We have what you call DACA students." For my part, in regards to bilingual education, I repeatedly made the case that "bilingualism is an asset" when highlighting the workforce benefits of the bilingual education bill and argued that "whether you're a language learner or a native English speaker, knowing a second language makes you more culturally competent and competitive in the workforce" in my bill presentations in committee and on the floor. These benefits were crucial to highlight as a way to garner support from our colleagues whose interests focused on workforce development.

Lastly, highlighting the perspectives of economic developers from the business and industry community gave credibility to the economic benefits of the policies. In an interview about bilingual education, I highlighted its economic benefits and gave a nod to the voices of the economic allies who also supported the bill: "They (business and industry leaders) appreciate that global competitiveness, that workforce advantage of being bilingual in an increasingly global marketplace, and so there's a lot of support from lots of different sectors." Two executives from northwest Arkansas chambers of commerce came to testify in favor of bilingual education, bolstering the arguments that bilingualism is good for Arkansas' economy because of talent recruitment and retention, improved economic competitiveness, and growing diversity in the workforce. A northwest Arkansas chamber of commerce president said in support: "We see this

bill is a workforce bill. Uh, it's about recruiting new talent, it's about enabling existing talent. It's about giving us a level playing field, competing on a worldwide stage, so we urge you to adopt it." Another chamber executive from a neighboring city highlighted his personal and professional experience with bilingualism:

> We have incorporated a lot of programming for our community, our entrepreneurs, people that want to start a business and employ our, our, our citizens, um, and we incorporate programs that are done in Spanish specifically. We have seen a record number of participants in those programs… so I am in support.

These economic allies provided needed credibility to both bills by arguing for them from their formal roles in business and industry, thereby converging with the interests of lawmakers who prioritized economic competitiveness and workforce development.

This political work – of emulating other states to promote competition, converging with economic interests, and elevating the voices of economic developers – helped mitigate the unfavorable economic conditions in Arkansas and contributed to the passage of both bills by showing how each pro-immigrant policy was an economic asset rather than a threat. All of this political work was in service of employing interest convergence by speaking to the economic interests of those in the majority party.

Social Interest Convergence – Do the Right Thing

The data revealed evidence of moral determinants that aligned with the existing literature on the impact of immigrant growth and morally-driven lawmaking: the social conditions in Arkansas were also unfavorable for adoption of pro-immigrant policy like bilingual education

and DACA teachers. Therefore, there was considerable and compelling political work that sought to mitigate these conditions, particularly by immigrants and allies from strong and growing immigrant communities who appealed to lawmakers to do the right thing – sentiment that coalesced around demographic and moral interests.

Demographic Interest Convergence. The data of the social determinants in Arkansas showed worrisome evidence of punitive anti-immigrant, monolingual sentiment and demographic trends of recent and rapid immigrant and English learner growth in communities across Arkansas. However, it was legislators and other voices from those communities most impacted by this growth who advocated for the pro-immigrant policies. Several of the bipartisan cosponsors who led or signed onto the bills represented such communities. Senator Eads and I represented Springdale in northwest Arkansas, Senator Tucker represented Little Rock in central Arkansas, and Representative Vaught represented DeQueen and Horatio in southwest Arkansas. All of these communities had large and growing immigrant populations, and having this bipartisan group of lead sponsors for the two bills come from communities that were most impacted by demographic shifts was effective in mitigating the unfavorable social determinants. Other voices from similar communities made the same appeal – superintendents from Springdale and Hope, immigrants' rights advocates from Little Rock and Springdale, and students and teachers from DeQueen, Springdale, Rogers, and Little Rock all made the argument that these pro-immigrant bills were in their community's best interest. The chancellor of a community college in southwest Arkansas, "the only Hispanic-serving institution in the state of Arkansas," advocated for his diverse community when speaking in favor of DACA teachers in the House education committee:

At the time, the work Representative Vaught and I did to plan and coordinate these voices who would come to speak in favor of the bills was focused on their roles and their stories, not their geography. However, this inadvertent political work of securing advocates from areas with large immigrant communities helped to mitigate the unfavorable demographic conditions by validating bilingual education and DACA teachers as helpful and beneficial for those particular regions in Arkansas. By showing up for their diverse and growing communities with the position of being pro-immigrant rather than anti-immigrant, the proponents for the bills highlighted the community-specific benefits of bilingual education and DACA teachers. While not an intentional move, this unplanned political work of securing sponsors and validators from the communities most impacted by demographic shifts helped to mitigate any potential or perceived sociocultural threat.

Moral Interest Convergence. Proponents for both bills knew that they faced tough headwinds against the anti-immigrant sentiment in Arkansas. Rather than relying solely on economic, demographic, and political arguments, the bill sponsors called upon immigrants and their allies to share their emotional and personal testimonies during the committee process in order to appeal to lawmakers' interest to do the right thing and flip the moral imperative to pro-immigrant advocacy rather than anti-immigrant restrictionism. Because of this work, negative sentiment did not resonate as much as the themes of expanding opportunity, reducing hardship, and promoting inclusion, all of which emerged as the new moral imperative and led to strong and heartwarming support for bilingual education and DACA teachers. One DACA teacher teared up as she spoke to the House education committee, vulnerably telling her story of trial and triumph as a young immigrant:

Going into high school, I realized that I want to be a teacher because I want to be able to be that person to bridge that language barrier and give the students the skills that I wish I had growing up. And, ooh I'm getting emotional. But, um, like I said, I want to be that person to make the difference for their, for our students.

Another immigrant who spoke in favor of bilingual education in the House education committee shared personal details about his own life and his family, highlighting the power of bilingualism in expanding opportunities:

I am bilingual. I was born in, in Latin America. I have had a lot of opportunities in this country and I'm very, very grateful for everything that I have been able to accomplished, and I think a lot of that, it is because of my ability to speak two languages Not only that, but in my household, um, we had many opportunities because my wife is also bilingual and my kids now are bilingual. And on top of that, my last child, nine years old now, she was born with Down syndrome, and she is bilingual. So you provide the right learning environment for our children in Arkansas, I know they will be successful in also learning a language.

This political work of elevating voices and converging with the moral interests of lawmakers made a clear and compelling case that supporting these bills was the new "right thing to do." Lawmakers had an interest in expanding opportunity, promoting inclusion, and reducing hardship for immigrants, rather than excluding and punishing them. In the face of the unfavorable social determinants, both demographic and moral, the voices of those most intimately impacted by the life-changing benefits of these two policies were powerful in

combatting the xenophobic and monolingual sentiment that was present in this legislative context.

Political Interest Convergence – Pragmatic Ideology

The political conditions in the Arkansas legislature, in regards to both partisanship and ideology, made passing pro-immigrant bills unlikely. Fortunately, the political work of ensuring bipartisanship and emulating prior successes was effective in giving political palatability to both bills. Although some of this political work was done behind the scenes and is therefore not available in my data sources, evidence of these political determinants is reflected in the political work undertaken to mitigate them. In order to snag my first two Republican cosponsors, the chair and vice chair of the education committee, I leaned heavily on my friendship and positive rapport with each cosponsor. Once those two signed on, somewhat begrudgingly but as a personal favor to me, others on the House education committee did too, as did other Republican senators. DACA teachers took a different path. I was originally the lead sponsor for this bill, too, emulating it after my successful effort for DACA nurses in 2019. However, once I learned that its legislative success would be guaranteed if I would give it up to Republicans, I decided the most effective political work was to ensure bipartisanship by stepping aside as lead sponsor and taking a back seat as a cosponsor, allowing the opposing caucus to emulate my prior success and get the political credit I got in 2019. With Republican names at the top of both bills – nine Republican cosponsors on bilingual education and two primary Republican sponsors with nine Republican cosponsors on DACA teachers, they now looked like Republican bills. This political work gave an instant signal to other Republicans that it was okay to support these two policies.

In addition to partisanship, there were ideological challenges to passing pro-immigrant legislation, such as preferences for "legal" immigration, English-only policies, permissive rather than mandatory language, and charter schools and "school choice." It was therefore important to speak to those ideologies and converge with the political interests of conservatives. By emulating the 48 other states that have bilingual education and emulating our own passage of the nearly-identical DACA nurses bill in the previous session, lawmakers felt more at ease knowing that other conservative states and other conservative legislators (including themselves) had taken a vote in favor of policies like these. Throughout the legislative process, the bill sponsors and other supportive Republican legislators made the case for the ideological advantages of the bills, including Senator Eads' clarification that DACA immigrants are "completely 'legal' at every aspect," Senator Tucker's assertion that the bilingual education bill "does not change the English-only requirement or mandate this type of program in any school," since I intentionally wrote the bill as an exception to the English-only requirement and not a strikethrough of it, and a conservative colleague's needed assurance that bilingual programs would be permissible for charter schools, not just public schools, because "it could end up being an equity issue if we're, we're just helping on the level of some schools but not the other level." In response to the conservative claim that immigrants need to "speak American," I responded with a smile and a nod to some of my own surprisingly conservative leanings:

To Representative Wooten's point about students needing to speak English, I actually joked with some of my colleagues on the committee as I was talking about this bill that when I take those political quizzes for, you know, how do you align and, and what side are you on, I, (*smiles*), I get dinged a little bit as a conservative about questions about speaking English and about the importance of English fluency and proficiency. I believe

wholeheartedly that students should learn English, should, should be empowered with the

English language for success in school and success in life. And what we know as

educators and also scholars in the field of language development that these types of

programs actually facilitate language development.

This politically-focused work of securing Republican validators on the front end and converging

with ideological interests throughout the process helped bring the majority of Republicans along

and guaranteed passage of both bills.

The political work that focused on economics, demographics, the moral imperative,

partisanship, and ideology was successful in mitigating the unfavorable determinants for pro-

immigrant policy adoption in Arkansas during the 93rd General Assembly. This finding also

illuminated the centrality and primacy of interest convergence in this political work. However,

my analysis also led to the identification of educational interests as another point of convergence

for lawmakers. This discovery led me to dig deeper into the effectiveness of the arguments for

the educational benefits of the bills and the influential role that educators had in converging with

lawmakers' varied interests.

Educational Interests – Acting in the Interests of Students and Schools

Throughout my analysis, the relationship between the determinants and the political work

became clear. The unfavorable economic, social, and political conditions in Arkansas were met

with compelling arguments for the economic, social, and political benefits of the bills, with the

political work of interest convergence driving the alignment. However, the appeal to educational

interests also emerged as a prevalent theme. Increased student achievement, more supportive

learning environments, and improved language proficiency were highlighted as educational

benefits of the bills, and these arguments were particularly compelling when made by students, educators, or educator-legislators. These proponents made the case that the pro-immigrant education policies "help students learn English better and faster," "enhance their experience at school," provide opportunities for "some of the very best and brightest that come from our schools," and create environments for students to "excel in school and become a competitive student on the national stage." Three legislators who had previously been teachers – Republican Representative Charlene Fite, Democratic Senator Joyce Elliot, and I – shared our classroom experiences when speaking in favor of bilingual education or DACA teachers, offering enhanced credibility about the educational benefits of the bills from our professional expertise of teaching diverse learners. The three of us bolstered the arguments that bilingual instruction is educationally sound and that having teachers who share your culture is an invaluable asset for students. In an interview, I couched my arguments for bilingual education in my professional experience as an educator and scholar in the field of language acquisition:

> I've taught language learners, I've been an ESL teacher, a curriculum specialist, a director of the program, and I know just how important it is for students to become more proficient in English so that they're successful in school and successful in life. But what research has shown, what other professionals know, and what students of language development know is that by using a student's first language, they're actually more likely to learn English better and faster.

Interestingly, opponents of the bilingual education bill also attempted to converge with educational interests, elevating concerns that school administrators did not sufficiently advocate for the bill and that there may be undue burdens on a school's personnel, budget, or teachers who are implementing the new program. The conservative representative who shared that he wanted

students to "speak American" when he spoke against the bilingual education bill on the House floor also made arguments based on the impact these programs would have on schools.

> I urge you to look very carefully at this because of the effort, the cost, that it will have for our school district in addition to our teachers. In addition to that, we have put so much on our teachers that their responsibilities grow and grow and grow, and now they've had to deal with the pandemic, and now we're going to put another area of expertise in the classroom.

Another opposing representative, known for being outspokenly conservative and framing her arguments based on her vision of moral values, made her case that English-only instruction was the right thing to do educationally:

> Where are we gonna get the personnel to do this? I just spoke with, I have two school districts in my district that have fifty perc-- fifty perc-- fifty percent Hispanic students are doing a phenomenal job. Every time I do our Take Your Legislators to School month and go out there I just see so many amazing success stories with what we have now with English as a second language. I see the students out in the district being the interpreter for their parents and doing a phenomenal job. So when I spoke to those principals and shared this program with them, they had some real concerns, so I think it's something to look at, but at this point I would urge a no vote, thank you very much.

Immediately after this testimony, however, Representative Fite rose to speak in favor of the bill, validating the concept politically as well as educationally with her experience as a former teacher of English learners:

In the early 90s, I was a teacher of English as a second language in a large junior high school in the River Valley, and at that time we had a dual immersion program, as Representative Godfrey has explained. And I saw the benefit to my students, most of whom were Laotian speakers at that time, in that they were able to learn math, history, science, all the subjects that they needed in their native language while they were learning English. And that way they were able to keep up and not fall further and further and further behind as they were acquiring language competence. So for those reasons I think this is a great bill and, again, it's permissive language, no school district has to do this, but I think for some of our school districts it will be very helpful.

This educator-legislator testimony, paired with other instances of converging with educational interests in the education committee and on the House floor, resulted in successful – albeit not unanimous – passage of the bill. Although there was some pushback on bilingual education from opponents who claimed to worry about the educational challenges these new programs would present to schools, the personal stories from educators who had years of valuable lived experience teaching immigrant students and English learners were particularly powerful in contrast and helped facilitate the 63-20-8 vote in favor of the bill.

There was no such pushback on DACA teachers. No one argued that students should not be taught by teachers who share their cultural and linguistic identities or that allowing DACA recipients to become teachers would have detrimental effects on education. Based on the social determinants in Arkansas – with monolingual and anti-immigrant sentiment present among some legislators – they could have. However, the educational benefits of diverse teachers, when argued by an influential Republican on the education committee, went unchallenged and therefore

converged with the interests of lawmakers who saw the advantages of teacher diversity, or at least were not threatened by it enough to vote no.

The Fifth "E" – Educating with Best Practices

This evidence of educational interest convergence inspired me to look at my data, particularly my discrepant data of political work that did not originally fall into one of the 4Es, through a new lens. In a way that I did not previously anticipate, educators and educational interests had a significant impact in garnering support for the two proposals, especially bilingual education, which was more challenging politically. This was initially a pleasant surprise that began to make perfect sense once I thought about it more, especially when I remembered the time a colleague lovingly quipped, "You're such a teacher," when I showed her my bilingual education infographic. Not only were educators and educator-legislators successful in our attempt to converge with educational interests, we were also successful in doing what we do best – educating with best practices. In addition to emulating prior successes, ensuring bipartisanship, employing interest convergence, and elevating heroic voices, the political work of "good teaching" showed up over and over again. Being knowledgeable about the content and being able to articulate key concepts clearly and factually; using strong pedagogical practices, such as modeling, visual aids, and individualized instruction; and cultivating intentional, positive relationships built on mutual respect and trust all showed up as educational-political work that contributed to the passage of bilingual education and DACA teachers. Not only did my positionality as an educator lead me to these research findings, these best practices allowed me to educate my fellow legislators on how these two pro-immigrant education policies converged with their varied interests.

Content Knowledge

Originally coded as discrepant data, the clear and accurate explanations of bilingual education, dual immersion programs, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), and teacher diversity proved to be important and effective political work. While not explicitly persuasive, these informational or explanatory overviews of the key concepts were helpful to build background knowledge for legislators who were unfamiliar with the details of the policies. At the end of the presentations for each bill, the legislators should have been able to describe bilingual education programs, compare and contrast them with dual immersion programs, describe DACA recipients and contrast them with other immigrants, and explain the benefits of having teachers who share their students' language and culture.

Before attempting to talk my colleagues into bilingual education and dual immersion programs, I had to explain to them what they were:

> Bilingual education and dual immersion are similar, but bilingual education utilizes a student's native language as a language of instruction and gradually phases in more and more English. A dual immersion program is for native speakers of English and native speakers of the target language with the goal of all students becoming proficient in both languages.

Representative Vaught did the same for DACA teachers, reminding legislators what DACA is and who it is for:

> We have what you call DACA students, who go through the same training, the same testing, the same schools as our other students go through. They pass all the same tests.

They get everything completed, and they actually have a right to work here, but then we

don't let them get their license.

It was vital that those of us who were advocating for bilingual education and DACA teachers did

the educational-political work of sharing our content knowledge about these initiatives to

facilitate understanding for our colleagues.

Strong Pedagogy

While some political work is done with handshakes and promises in smoke-filled rooms,

other political work happens in one-on-one tutoring sessions with visual aids and graphic

organizers. In this case, instructional practices usually seen in classrooms were evident in the

political arena and were effective in meeting the objective of garnering support for the two pro-

immigrant education policies. Before I presented the bilingual education bill in committee, I sat

down with every committee member individually, differentiating my instruction based on who I

was meeting with. I used the infographic I created that highlighted key themes and used context

and visual aids to explain the key concepts.

Figure 10

Infographic about Bilingual Education Presented Individually to Each House Education

Committee Member

I knew that the concepts of bilingual education and dual immersion programs would be brand

new to most of my colleagues, so I created a visual representation of the two models to facilitate

understanding. I also highlighted different benefits of the bill depending on the interests of the

colleague I was meeting with, and I answered their questions or cleared up their

misunderstandings responsively and immediately. This educational-political work helped me

secure many of the votes from committee members before the committee presentation began.

Another pedagogical practice in play was modeling. The abstract concept of bilingual education

became more concrete when I and others modeled the use of bilingualism with high-leverage

phrases like "*buenos días*," "*gracias*," and our formulaic pleasantry "*apreciaría un buen voto*" ("I'd appreciate a good vote"). The Republican Senate education committee chair called upon a bilingual proponent of the bill to give his testimony in his native language:

> Irvin: Thank you. Um, I think it's appropriate for me to ask you to state what you just said in your other language.

> Saramiento*: Por supuesto. Gracias*.

> Irvin: *De nada*.

> Audience: (*laughs*)

This educational-political work of modeling bilingualism demystified it for legislators who were not bilingual and were not familiar with the concept in practice. These strong pedagogical methods – of one-on-one differentiated instruction, visual aids, and modeling – were evident in a political context, not just an educational one.

Positive Relationships and Rapport

Good teachers know that the deepest content knowledge and the strongest lesson plan will fall flat without positive relationships with their students. The educational-political work of cultivating and leveraging positive relationships and rapport was helpful in garnering support for the two pro-immigrant education policies. Politeness, lighthearted jokes and teasing, being accommodating, and giving credit and praise all showed up as strategic and effective ways to win others' support for the bills. Resulting in a big laugh from the committee audience, I teased

the House education committee chair who admitted he would have trouble pronouncing the names of some of the Latinx advocates who came to testify for the bill:

> Cozart: Mr. Chairman, Im'ma let you call the names; you're good at those. (*laughs*) Some of these names I will not, we will not get pronounced correctly.

> Godfrey: It's because you didn't have bilingual education!

> Cozart: Yeah, you're right.

> Godfrey: (*laughs*)

> Audience: (*laughs*)

By leveraging my positive relationship with the committee chair, I was able to highlight a concrete benefit of bilingual education and create an opportunity to look likable and fun in front of the rest of my colleagues. Just like intentional, caring relationships between teachers and students can help cultivate success in the face of educational obstacles, being pleasant and affable goes a long way in the face of unfavorable determinants in a political context. Taking time to meet with my colleagues individually was helpful for me, but it also made them feel respected and valued. Being professional and polite in committee and on the floor, paired with a few smiles and jokes, helped bolster my reputation of being someone who people like to work with and support. In the case of bilingual education and DACA teachers, leveraging positive relationships and rapport showed up as worthy work in a legislative context, just like it is in the classroom.

The fifth "E," *educate with best practices*, is a welcome addition to the now-5E framework of political work I have developed and will describe further in Chapter Five. The role of educator expertise and practice was important and impactful. Teachers and other educators, especially educator-legislators, brought professional credibility when arguing for the educational benefits of the bills and utilized best educational practices – content knowledge, strong pedagogy, and positive relationships and rapport – to further garner support. This fifth "E" inspired me to rework my initial 4E framework of political work, reorganizing it based on the key themes that emerged from this qualitative investigation.

Conclusion

The key findings of this case study are a validation of the unfavorable determinants for pro-immigrant policy adoption in Arkansas – economic challenges, demographic shifts, and a conservative legislature – and a complex and effective framework for mitigating those challenges. The centrality and primacy of interest convergence and the impact of educators in this determinant-driven political work illuminated what worked and why. This investigation found that challenging legislative conditions can be overcome by *emulating prior successes*, *ensuring bipartisan support*, *employing interest convergence*, *elevating heroic voices,* and *educating with best practices*. The final chapter discusses this newly revised 5E framework and the implications and applications of these findings.

Chapter Five: Discussion

The purpose of this qualitative case study of the Arkansas 93rd General Assembly was to analyze the political work that contributed to the passage of the bilingual education bill and the DACA teachers bill. This chapter will introduce the newly revised 5E framework and speak to the potential it has for future investigations and applications with sections on: (a) the 5E framework of political work, (b) interpretations of the findings, (c) implications for future research, (d) applicability for other pro-immigrant education advocates in other contexts with unfavorable conditions, including limitations and cautions, and (e) a personal reflection on this work that I am extremely proud of.

The New 5E Framework of Political Work

Based on the findings of this investigation, I reconfigured my initial 4E framework into a new holistic picture of the 5Es in action from beginning to end. Arkansas' unfavorable legislative conditions – economic challenges, demographic shifts, and a conservative legislature – were overcome by the complex political work that mitigated those conditions: initially laying the groundwork of *emulating prior successes* and *ensuring bipartisan support* and executing the fieldwork of *employing interest convergence* by *educating with best practices* and *elevating heroic voices*.

The previous literature about the determinants for policy adoption provided me with the context that the economic, social, and political determinants in Arkansas during the 93rd General Assembly would create unfavorable conditions for adopting pro-immigrant education policy (Berry, 1994; Browne, 2018; Dye, 1979; Frendeis & Tatalovich, 2010; Gray, 1973; Mallison, 2020; Mooney & Lee, 1995; Walker, 1969; Ybarra et al., 2016; Zingher, 2014). Workforce challenges, recent and rapid demographic shifts, morally motivated lawmakers, and Republican supermajorities are all factors that can cultivate an anti-immigrant policy environment, and all of

these trends/' were confirmed in my Arkansas-specific analysis. Arkansas' economy suffered from labor shortages, an underskilled workforce, and a lack of economic competitiveness. The demographic trends showed notable immigrant and English learner population growth in communities across the state. And the supermajority of the legislature was made up of Republican lawmakers who made their legislative decisions based on their version of morality and on conservative ideological preferences for policies that promote school choice, are permissive rather than mandatory, do not eliminate English-only requirements, and promote "legal" immigration. These findings are consistent with what the existing literature says about the likelihood of passing pro-immigrant policy: things were not looking good.

Since the conditions were unfavorable for the passage of bilingual education and DACA teachers, a considerable amount of political work was required to mitigate those conditions. I came into this investigation with my "4E" framework, conceived from the political work I conducted during the legislative session and from strategies of effective legislator behavior from the existing literature (Bell, 1980; Chang & Koebel, 2020; Dormer et al., 2020; Enrique & Aleman, 2010; Epstein, 1998; Gilardi, 2016; Gray, 1973; Hayes Clarke, 2017; Jones, 1969; Kelly, 2018; Lopez & Lacoste, 2014; Maske, 2016; Matos, 2020; Morales & Maravilla, 2019; Rippere, 2016; Rubio et al., 2021; Shanahan et al., 2013; Stewart, 2012; Sung, 2017; Swift & VanderMolen, 2016; Thomas & Grofman, 1992; Treviño et al., 2017; Trubowitz & Mellow, 2005; Walker, 1969; Wilkerson et al., 2015). These components of political work, *encourage bipartisanship*, *emulate prior successes*, *employ interest convergence*, and *elevate heroic voices*, all emerged from the data as expected. Securing bipartisan sponsorships and votes, piggybacking off of previous legislative successes, and calling upon others to tell their compelling stories in order to appeal to the economic, social, and political interests of the lawmakers who would vote

on the bills all proved to be effective strategies in garnering support for the two pro-immigrant proposals.

These components of political work were complex, nonlinear, and impactful in different ways and at various stages of the legislative process, with *employ interest convergence* emerging as the most prevalent and necessary. It became clear that the vast majority of the political work was executed to appeal to lawmakers' interests in order to earn votes, whether that was showing it was in a Republican's political interest because there were several Republican cosponsors, appealing to the moral interest of wanting to do the right thing with an emotional personal testimony from a DACA teacher candidate, or emulating other neighboring states as a way to appeal to the economic interest of increased competitiveness. The centrality and primacy of interest convergence illuminated the connection between the unfavorable economic, social, and political determinants and the political work that was necessary to directly converge with the economic, social, and political interests of the majority of legislators within that unfavorable context.

Although there was a clear match-up between the economic, social, and political determinants and the political work done to appeal to economic, social, and political interests, a fourth interest emerged during my analysis that did not align with one of the original determinants: educational interests. The work of employing interest convergence to make the case for the educational benefits of each proposal was particularly compelling when it was done by educators or educator-legislators. Not only did educators' experience and expertise give us credibility when making the case for the bills, we also brought instructional strategies with us from the classroom to the committee room. This evidence of educator impact resulted in the fifth "E" – educating with best practices. The educational-political work of fostering strong content

knowledge, utilizing sound pedagogy, and leveraging positive relationships and rapport

facilitated interest convergence and garnered support for the pro-immigrant education policies in

a political context.

Ultimately, my findings about the determinant-driven legislative context, the centrality

and primacy of interest convergence, and the impact of educators led to the redevelopment of my

political work framework, shown in Figure 11. The revised "5E" framework has been

reorganized to better demonstrate the political work process from start to finish. The initial phase

of *laying the groundwork*, which includes *emulating prior successes* and *ensuring*

bipartisanship, and the more intensive subsequent phase of *executing the fieldwork* of *employing*

interest convergence by *educating with best practices* and *elevating heroic voices* provide the

opportunities necessary to create new economic, social, and political factors that make pro-

immigrant policy adoption more favorable.

Figure 11

5E Political Work Framework
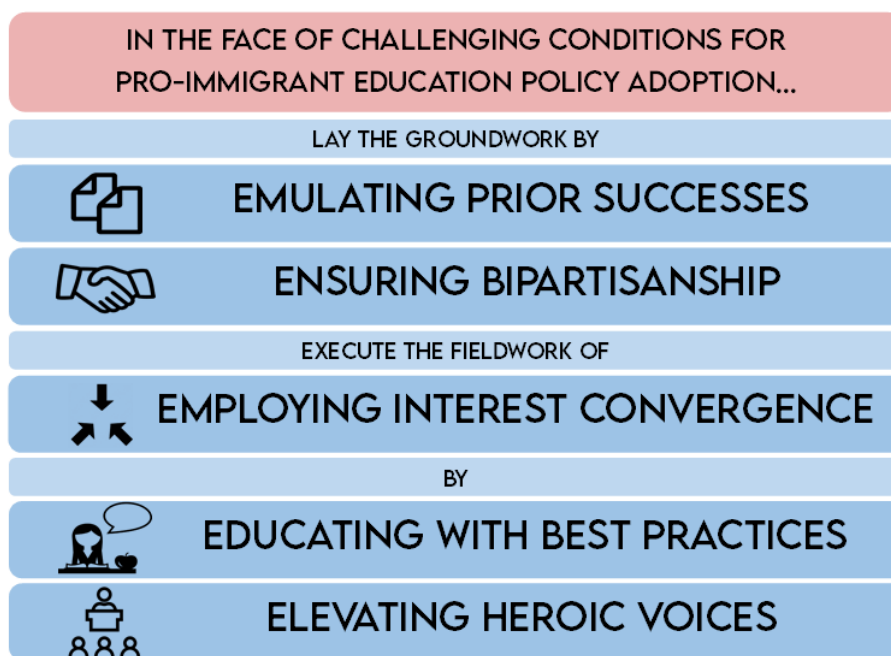
Laying the Groundwork

The political work of *emulating prior successes* and *encouraging bipartisanship* were both effective strategies in the initial stage of *laying the groundwork* to garner support for the pro-immigrant proposals. By emulating prior successes in the initial development of the bills, both policies had immediate credibility for lawmakers who might have been hesitant to try out something that had not been previously tested and proven. Bilingual education was emulated after 48 other states' comparable policies, and DACA teachers was emulated after the successful 2019 DACA nurses bill. The theme of "This has been done before," was a compelling argument, particularly in a context like Arkansas that was unlikely to adopt novel policy innovations. This finding aligned with previous studies on policy innovation and the effectiveness of emulating another state's legislative success (Gilardi, 2016; Gray, 1973; Walker, 1969) or using a previously drafted bill as a starting point for a similar policy (Wilkerson et al., 2015). Additionally, the work of *encouraging bipartisan support* was necessary on the front end to create political palatability for the majority party. Swift and Vandermollen (2016) likely would have agreed with me that the political work of bipartisanship belongs in the initial groundwork stage, as they described cosponsorship as capturing "individual interest and… substantive agreement on policy at the beginning stages of the collaborative policymaking process" (p. 200). Securing high-leverage early adopters who were influential Republicans – a collaborative technique also discussed in studies by Maske (2021), Rippere (2016), and Thomas and Grofman (1992) – was vital to ensure other Republicans felt comfortable coming on board throughout the rest of the legislative process**.** In fact, the data showed that this "E" is better described as *ensuring bipartisanship*, as it was not enough to merely *encourage* bipartisanship; it was required. By laying the groundwork through emulating prior legislative successes and ensuring

bipartisan support, two of the potential "non-starters" for hesitant lawmakers – that it had never been done before or that it was only a Democratic bill – were eliminated. Without this initial work, it is quite likely that the bills would not have been viable and would not have moved to the next phase of political work: executing the fieldwork.

Executing the Fieldwork

Once the groundwork had been laid by emulating a prior legislative success and ensuring the support of bipartisan early adopters, the real work began. The political work "in the field" to continue securing votes in committee and on the floor required collaboration, strategy, and agility. In order to mitigate the unfavorable economic, social, and political determinants for policy adoption, proponents for the pro-immigrant education policies employed interest convergence to appeal to the economic, social, political, and educational interests of the lawmakers whose votes were needed. Previous research studies on the utilization of interest convergence within pro-immigrant policy contexts, such as immigration reform (Lopez & Lacoste, 2016), the launch of a dual immersion program (Morales & Maravilla, 2018), the original Bilingual Education Act (Sung, 2017), and DACA (Matos, 2020) all showed evidence of its efficacy. Similarly, the data from my investigation showed that the work of *employing interest convergence* was vital to the two bills' success and was effective via two key strategies: *educating with best practices* and *elevating heroic voices*.

Hearteningly, the role and expertise of educators, particularly educator-legislators, was compelling and influential in the legislative process, not only because we were taken more seriously because of our experience in the field but also because we utilized best teaching practices. Being knowledgeable and well-prepared, utilizing strong pedagogical practices like visual aids, modeling, and one-on-one instruction, and leveraging positive relationships and

rapport proved to be effective political tactics that crossed over from best practices in educational contexts. Although this finding originally surprised me, it should not have. Research about the professionalization of state legislatures has shown that more the more knowledgeable or informed a legislator is, the more likely he or she is to adopt a policy innovation (Walker, 1969, p. 885), and the research about instructional practices for English learners like modeling, visual aids, and differentiated instruction (August & Shanahan, 2006; Coleman & Goldenberg, 2021; Echevarria, Frey, & Fisher, 2015; Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2010) and research about positive relationships based on warmth, trust, and high expectations (Cole, 1986; Gist, 2014; Graham, 1987; King, 1993; Sleeter & Milner, 2011) has shown strong evidence of these strategies' ability to yield results. In addition to teacher voices, heroic voices of immigrants and their allies also contributed to the fieldwork of highlighting the economic, social, and political benefits of the two policies. Business executives spoke to the workforce development interests, DACA teacher candidates and bilingual students made the case for the moral imperative through their emotional and personal *testimonios* (Rubio et al., 2021; Trevino et al., 2017), White allies from Arkansas communities with large immigrant populations spoke in favor of the benefits for their region's demographic needs, and Republican validators affirmed the political advantages of supporting the bills. However, there was also a lot of crossover between role and interest, with educators making demographic arguments, immigrants making political arguments, and social allies making economic arguments. These voices were effective in humanizing an abstract issue like immigration and shifting the narrative to make bilingual students and DACA teachers the heroes of the story rather than the villains (Shanahan et al., 2013; Stewart, 2012) The political work of tapping into lawmakers' economic, social, political, and educational interests in an unfavorable legislative context required collaboration, complexity, and compromise, but ultimately,

employing interest convergence through *educating with best practices* and *elevating heroic voices* was effective in contributing to the passage of both pro-immigrant policies.

The findings that led to the redevelopment of the 5E framework illuminate the power of the political work that was executed to achieve legislative success for bilingual education and DACA teachers amid the unfavorable conditions in the Arkansas legislature. This work – executed in committee, on the floor, and behind the scenes – is what contributed to the passage of the two pro-immigrant education policies in the Arkansas 93rd General Assembly.

Interpretation of Findings

The 5E framework of political work is a synthesis of the findings from this qualitative case study. While context-specific, this framework illuminates the political work that was effective in contributing to pro-immigrant education policy adoption in a state legislature with unfavorable conditions, and the broad themes that have emerged from this investigation are both aligned with the existing literature and encouragingly applicable in other contexts:

- Unfavorable conditions for pro-immigrant educational policy adoption are real, but they are not insurmountable. Acknowledging your context-specific challenges will allow you to identify the work you need to do to overcome them.

- In addition to knowing your context well, you must also know your policy well. Deep knowledge of the interests of the majority as well as the benefits of your proposal will illuminate the ways the interests can converge.

- Don't start from scratch – emulate a prior success to eliminate unease about the risk of innovation.

- Illuminate the ways your proposal converges with the interest of the majority, starting with influential early adopters who can serve as validators, and expanding your work to

others whose support is vital. Converge with their interests while staying true to your own.

- o Educate others about the details and benefits of the policy by sharing your expertise, using engaging methods, and leveraging positive relationships.

- o Elevate the voices and experiences of others by highlighting the stories of those who are most impacted by the policy, especially if the stories can tug on heartstrings.

- The work is complex and nonlinear; the 5E framework is not a formula or a checklist but rather a description of the winding and collaborative process that worked in Arkansas for bilingual education and DACA teachers. However, there are important takeaways for others who care about pro-immigrant education advocacy but find themselves constrained by unfavorable conditions.

These broad and relevant findings are encouraging and illuminate intriguing implications for future research and applications beyond this particular context.

Implications for Future Research

This investigation was grounded in a research-based theoretical framework and robust literature about the determinants of policy adoption and components of political work. The previous literature and the findings of this study create opportunities for new research angles, both in political science and in education. Inquiries about the educational determinants for policy adoption, the use of the 5E framework in expanded or additional legislative case studies, an expansion of teachers-as-advocates theory using pedagogical practices, and employing interest convergence in pro-immigrant advocacy spaces are all relevant and worthy next steps for research inspired by the learnings of this investigation.

Educational Determinants of Policy Adoption

The existing literature about determinants for policy adoption in state legislatures was foundational to this study. Seeing the interaction between the economic, social, and political determinants and the economic, social, and political interests that proponents of the bills converged with gave light to the type of political work that was necessary to highlight the shared interests between pro-immigrant advocates and Republican lawmakers. However, one of the interests that emerged in this investigation was *educational interests*, which led me to wonder about whether there are *educational determinants* for policy adoption. Although there is some existing literature about the education level of the electorate as a determinant, this area was not a broad theme I came across in my research of policy determinants and diffusion. What, then, can we learn about the educational conditions that influence the types of education policies that are adopted or the likelihood that they are adopted? Does higher student achievement lead to a greater willingness to innovate, just like a wealthier state and more economic stability leads to policy innovation? Do student demographics influence whether policies are more punitive or expansive? What influence does the tension between rural schools and urban schools have in the political environment? By first identifying the educational determinants that influence policy adoption broadly and then looking at those determinants in the context of pro-immigrant education policy adoption specifically, proponents of pro-immigrant education policy would have a better understanding of how to mitigate any unfavorable determinants by more effectively converging with educational interests.

Comparative Legislative Case Studies Utilizing the 5E Framework

Although this particular case study illuminated the components of political work that facilitated the passage of bilingual education and DACA teachers in the Arkansas 93rd General

Assembly, there have been several instances in state legislatures where pro-immigrant policies did not have the same success. How, then, can the findings of this investigation be used to conduct additional or expanded case studies of other legislative contexts where pro-immigrant policy was attempted? By continuing the analysis of political work in unfavorable conditions for pro-immigrant policy adoption, researchers could learn from other obstacles and attempts in state legislatures where the unfavorable determinants were not able to be overcome. Not only would this teach us more about the magnitude of the challenges and the complexity of the political work required to mitigate them, it would also give us an opportunity to test the 5E framework in a new legislative environment.

Teachers-as-Advocates Theory: Intersection of Politics and Pedagogy

The teachers-as-advocates theory, introduced in my theoretical framework in Chapter One, highlights the importance and effectiveness of teachers advocating for their immigrant students' needs and rights in and out of the classroom. The 5E framework provides additional context for this theory, showing the efficacy of using pedagogical practices in a political environment. This intersection of politics and pedagogy deserves more attention. What are the mindsets and moves that make educators effective advocates for their immigrant students? What instructional practices – in addition to the ones that emerged in this study – are effective in pro-immigrant advocacy work? How are teachers able to leverage their expertise and warmth that equip them so well in the classroom in political contexts? What else can we learn from other educator-legislators in regards to effective policy advocacy? This research would help us see if the findings from this case study are more broadly generalizable to other political or educational contexts. *Educating with best practices* as political work is an area of research with potential for more illuminating findings under the existing umbrella of the teachers-as-advocates theory.

Interest Convergence in Pro-Immigrant Contexts: Tension and Criticism

Based on the existing literature, I know that there will be scholars who will critique my political work framework because of the strategic use of interest convergence, and especially because of its centrality in the work of pro-immigrant education policy advocacy. This critique is not unfair and comes from a shared interest in advocating for immigrants with dignity. The criticism of interest convergence is that it upholds a White hegemony and unfairly centers the needs and elevates the successes of the majority – in this case, White Republicans – and often at the expense of those in the minority. However, it worked. Therefore, additional research could be done to see if critics of interest convergence in pro-immigrant advocacy see it as a necessary evil but give it a "pass" if it leads to successful results that chip away at a White hegemony or if it is always a problematic strategy, no matter how effective it is. This research could also be done in the context of punctuated equilibrium theory vs. small wins theory. I argued in my theoretical framework that both widespread and small-scale change are important; in this case, bilingual education and DACA teachers were small wins in the larger fight toward educational equity. However, I chose to employ interest convergence to achieve those wins, and some would say I diluted the purity of my pro-immigrant positionality by doing so. Additional research could teach us about this tension about whether interest convergence should be used as a way to gain the snowball effect from the small wins that are necessary to lead to structural, revolutionary change, or if true immigrant advocates should avoid it because of its problematic centering of White interests.

While countless other seeds of ideas for additional research sprouted up throughout my investigation, these four – the educational determinants of policy adoption, additional comparative legislative case studies utilizing the 5E framework, expanding teachers-as-advocates

theory to further connect politics and pedagogy, and the tensions and critiques of interest convergence in pro-immigrant advocacy – would be worthy additions to the scholarship that has grounded this investigation.

Applications to other Contexts

As is the case for all case studies, this investigation was specific to this particular context, and the 5E framework is based on the political work that was employed within the Arkansas 93rd General Assembly for two specific pro-immigrant education policies. It is descriptive rather than prescriptive and is not the end-all-be-all of how to champion pro-immigrant change. However, the framework and its components are worth considering in other contexts, whether legislative, educational, or other areas of immigrant advocacy.

The 5Es in Legislative Contexts

The most similar context to the one that was studied in this investigation would be another state legislature with unfavorable determinants for pro-immigrant policy adoption. Other states in the Nuevo South have similar economic, social, and political conditions to the ones in Arkansas, and other pro-immigrant Democrats are likely to find themselves facing a similar uphill battle when championing policies like bilingual education or DACA teachers. Therefore, these policymakers might find it advantageous to utilize some or all of the components of the 5E framework. Fortunately, policy networks, both formal and informal, exist to help with the first "E" of emulating prior successes. In this case, it is worth trying to emulate not only a successful policy but also the successful political work that was employed in Arkansas. Pro-immigrant Democratic legislators in the Nuevo South may find similar success in ensuring bipartisanship, employing interest convergence, educating with best practices, and elevating heroic voices to speak to economic concerns, changing demographics, or tricky politics. While the economic,

social, political, and educational interests themselves may be specific to a particular state, the strategic political work of converging with those interests may prove to be successful in any challenging legislative environment.

The 5Es in Educational Contexts

The role of educators in successfully contributing to the passage of bilingual education and DACA teachers pointed out the power teachers have to effect change for their immigrant students. Pro-immigrant educators, such as classroom teachers of language minority students, EL teachers and specialists, EL program coordinators and directors, federal and state program funding directors, and other educators who are advocating on behalf of their immigrant/EL/CLD students often feel that they, too, are fighting an uphill battle when it comes to the unique needs and priorities of their students, and the literature about the unfortunate realities of educational inequality for immigrant/EL/CLD students affirms that sentiment. While not the same as state legislatures, educational settings can also be spaces where the conditions for pro-immigrant policy adoption are unfavorable. Curriculum choices, instructional approaches, assessment models, teacher development and training, parent engagement strategies, and mindsets about students and families are policies implemented at the classroom, school, and district level, and the determinants for adoption for these policies may not be favorable either. How, then, can pro-immigrant educators leverage the 5Es of political work within their educational-political context?

There are potential crossovers from the two phases of work: laying the groundwork and executing the fieldwork. If an educator is advocating for a particular pro-immigrant policy in her educational context, emulating a prior success might be effective. Just like legislators, some educational decision-makers are reluctant to innovate and challenge the status quo, and

emulating a prior success (e.g., an EL-specific curriculum from a publisher that had been used before, a trainer-of-trainers model that a different department successfully enacted, high-yield instructional practices that a neighboring district uses) has the potential to mitigate the risk of a brand-new initiative. In addition, securing influential early adopters has the potential to create palatability for other decision-makers down the line. Snagging an administrator, a well-respected classroom teacher, or the person in charge of the funding for the initiative can be valuable groundwork in an educational context, just like ensuring bipartisanship was in the legislative context.

Similarly, the strategy of executing the fieldwork by employing interest convergence has the potential to effect change in an educational context. There may not be economic, social, and political determinants for policy adoption in the same way they exist in a state legislative context; however, there are likely multifaceted interests at play among decision-makers in any educational environment. Identifying these interests is the first step in converging with them, and pro-immigrant educators can reflect on what the motivating factors are for those in positions of leadership and influence. Do they want higher test scores? A better public image? Higher staff morale and camaraderie? Better parent engagement? Improved student behavior? What are the interests of those with decision-making power, and how can you converge with those interests? It is possible that the strategies of educating with best practices and elevating heroic voices are also applicable in educational cases to facilitate the work of interest convergence, especially since educators are particularly good at this. Teachers know how to teach, and they know how to let others shine. It is probable, then, that these strategies of educational-political work would also be effective in garnering support for classroom-, school-, and district-level pro-immigrant education policies. The 5E framework, birthed out of political work done by educators in an unfavorable

context, is likely to have relevance for other pro-immigrant educators trying to promote positive policy for their students in their educational environments.

The 5Es in Other Pro-Immigrant Contexts

There are questions about the applicability of the 5Es of political work in other pro-immigrant advocacy contexts, not only because we move further away from the specifics of the case if we are no longer advocating for pro-immigrant education policies in a state legislature, but also because questions around the appropriateness of employing interest convergence arise in other pro-immigrant advocacy spaces. Still, there are opportunities to see if and how the components of political work are relevant in other pro-immigrant advocacy efforts. Modeling after similar successes, securing influential validators on the front end, highlighting the effort as a win-win, using instructive strategies and positive relationships, and giving immigrants and their supporters the opportunity to share their stories all have the potential to be impactful when going up against the obstacles that stand in the way of expanding rights and opportunities for immigrants in any advocacy context.

Personal Reflection

Although this investigation has the potential to be relevant to other legislators, educators, and immigrant advocates, no one is more interested in – or excited about – these results than I am. This was my political work, and it worked. This work – to thoughtfully emulate a policy that I knew the vast majority of states had already enacted without technically striking Arkansas' English-only statute; to secure cosponsors in a political climate where few Republicans wanted to take a political risk by helping a Democrat; to give up my DACA teachers bill to Republicans because I knew they wanted the credit and attention I got after successfully passing DACA nurses in the previous session; to research the economic, cultural, and educational advantages of

bilingual education so I could communicate them clearly and compellingly; to create an infographic and take the time to sit down with every committee member individually; to identify and organize those who would tell their stories as a way to converge with the varied interests of lawmakers around the committee table, inviting them to Little Rock and helping them coordinate logistics; to amend the bill to include charter schools, even though it slowed down the process; to laugh and smile and shake hands and play nice when all I wanted to do some days was cry; and to stand in front of my colleague who had slurred that we needed to "speak American" and boldly say, "*Apreciaría un buen voto"* on the floor of the Arkansas House of Representatives – was all so hard, but it was worth it. This is the work that contributed to the passage of the bilingual education bill and the DACA teachers bill. I know there were other factors that did not show up in my data (such as the full details of Republican caucus meetings I only heard whispers about or the leverage other influencers had on individual members behind the scenes), and I cannot overemphasize the impact the heroic voices of immigrants, educators, and other allies had in the process, independent of anything I planned or coordinated. Still, knowing how difficult this process was, how emotionally invested I was in it, what sacrifices I had to make without sacrificing my integrity or my pro-immigrant position, it is extremely satisfying and encouraging to see how and why my political work overcame the unfavorable determinants for pro-immigrant policy adoption in the Arkansas 93rd General Assembly.

Pro-immigrant educational advocacy in a context like Arkansas is exhausting and heartbreaking. I want so desperately to be able to go to the end of the committee table and say, "This bill is good for immigrants. I'd appreciate a good vote," and have that be enough. And throughout my career as pro-immigrant educator, I also wanted to be able to say, "This curriculum initiative/learning engagement/investment in personnel/mindset shift/leadership

change is good for ELs; please give me the go-ahead with all necessary support, enthusiasm,

funding, and time. ¡*Gracias*!" However, as evidenced by this study and by the experience of so

many pro-immigrant education advocates like myself, being purely pro-immigrant is

unfortunately not the primary interest of many educational decision-makers and policymakers.

This reality can feel disappointing and disillusioning, but the findings of this study provide hope

and tangible suggestions for those working to effect change despite these conditions. It is both

possible and productive to highlight the mutual interests you share with these decision-makers

and policymakers while maintaining an unwavering commitment to immigrant advocacy. This is

what I am known for as a legislator – for being staunchly pro-immigrant as an advocate but also

admirably and surprisingly effective as a lawmaker. In fact, I proved to be so effective that while

I was writing this dissertation, I was gerrymandered out of my Latinx-majority legislative district

by an all-Republican redistricting committee in a successful attempt to tarnish my electoral

viability and sever me from my beloved constituency. While devastating and infuriating, and at

great personal and professional cost to me, this only proves the importance and power of the

political work in the 5E framework. This work, which in this case was powerful enough to

overcome partisan divisiveness, xenophobia, and competitive threat, has the potential to effect

positive change for immigrants in classrooms, communities, and Capitols all over the country.

  The hard work is worth it because it changes lives. Immigrant students in Arkansas can

now come to school and have their home language affirmed and validated. They can walk into

their classroom and see a loving, talented teacher who looks like them and speaks like them. And

White, monolingual students can have new opportunities for cultural and linguistic empathy and

enhanced learning experiences alongside their immigrant peers. This is what breaks down a

White hegemony. These small wins will get us closer to our American ideal of educational

equity. No, we do not yet have liberty and justice *for all*. But because of the political work that led to the passage of bilingual education and DACA teachers, we have liberty and justice *for more* And I will keep doing the work, no matter how hard and no matter how challenging the conditions, until my emphasis on the last two words of the pledge of allegiance becomes a celebration of what we have accomplished. I hope you will join me.

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