

The Story of California Proposition 227 (1998):
How History, Immigration, and Direct Democracy Shaped the Policy Narratives
in the Battle for Bilingual Education

A Capstone project presented
in fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in Policy Studies

John Anthony Bassett
University of Washington Bothell
School of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences
Advisor: Dr. Camille Walsh
Second Reader: Dr. Keith Nitta

Abstract

In the 1990s, political actors across the United States, such as Ron Unz, seized on simmering tensions against immigrants to push discriminatory policies. In Unz's case, he created Proposition 227: "English for the Children" in 1998 to end bilingual education in California, the country's most linguistically and culturally diverse state. He was able to gain success by carefully crafting policy narratives that exploited popular stereotypes and fears related to immigrants, California's ballot initiative system, and ever-increasing pushback against the gains of the Civil Rights movement. Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) and historiographical research methods were used to examine each side of the Prop. 227 debate as it occurred in televised programming, local newspapers, and other primary sources of the period. This theoretical and methodological approach allowed this paper to deeply explore the larger legal, historical, political, and social contexts of the time that made Unz's particular narrative approach so effective. When the initiative was proposed, it appeared to present a concrete and straightforward solution to a complex systemic problem that had been brought to the attention of many Californians. However, the reality and subtext of the eventual law were much more divisive and discriminatory. The findings of this paper show that policy narratives, in general, have a powerful impact on shaping public opinion, building coalitions, and instituting solutions to social and policy problems. In the case of Proposition 227, policy narratives were operationalized by conservatives to limit access to resources for marginalized groups, force citizenship and immigration debates into the public square by connecting them to a seemingly tangential policy issue, and perpetuate systemic racism and institutionalized inequality.

Acknowledgments

This project is dedicated to the countless immigrant children that have come to the United States from around the world. The story belongs to them. Even though they are the individuals most affected by policies such as Proposition 227, their voices are the least heard and valued. They deserve to be seen, respected, and granted the dignity they deserve as human beings.

The following work would not have been possible without the support of the M.A.P.S. cohort and faculty. A huge debt of gratitude is owed to Dr. Camille Walsh (my advisor), Dr. Shauna Elbers Carlisle, and Dr. Keith Nitta. Their wisdom, guidance, and support throughout the entire program were vital to my growth as a learner and researcher.

Finally, and most critically, I would not be at this point today without my family. To Brandi, William, Jane, Gordon, and Matilda, I owe you the world. This was indeed a group project in the sense that you lent me strength and encouragement during the most challenging parts of the research and writing process. Thank you for giving me the love I needed to follow my passion and tell this particular story.

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Chapter I

Introduction and Purpose of Study:

“Bilingual education has led to nothing more than costly experimental language programs whose failure over the past two decades is demonstrated by the current high drop-out rates and low English literacy levels of many immigrant children. We must support ‘English for the Children’ and eliminate the grievous mistake of bilingual education if we really care about the future of our state.” -Ron Unz, author of Proposition 227, during a public speech on March 18th, 1998

With those words, Ron Unz succinctly summed up his campaign to the voters of California in the form of ballot initiative Proposition 227. After almost a decade of seeking political relevance and importance, Unz had finally crafted a message and movement that seemed to capture the public’s attention, at least sufficiently enough to gain a potential victory. Unz previously attempted an unsuccessful run for governor on a broader conservative platform. His work on Proposition 227 was finely tuned, carefully crafted, and cleverly addressed issues that predominantly white Americans had raised in the wake of the Civil Rights movement of the late 20th century. These were issues of citizenship, multiculturalism, and equal access to public resources. Many conservatives feared the United States was becoming too diverse, too ethnic, and separated from its white, Judeo-Christian identity of the past. Such anxieties were reflected in the political rhetoric and emerging Republican policy decisions of the time. Unz identified a space where a carefully crafted narrative rooted in those particular issues could galvanize voters into a coalition strong enough to win. As such, he focused on bringing together two matters that were already important to Californians, immigration and education.

Unz was hardly the first to espouse such policy narratives. The latter half of the 20th century saw vocal segments of the conservative base argue the number of immigrants coming into the country needed to be reduced and even eliminated in some instances. Supporters of strict immigration and immigrant-related laws often portrayed immigrants as posing a threat to racial

and ethnic demographic power dynamics, white socio-cultural value structures, and the composition of political institutions. Anti-immigrant groups explicitly directed their attention toward non-white immigrants and communities with high numbers of undocumented immigrants. With state and federal immigration reforms being challenging to attain, conservative policymakers in California turned their attention toward smaller and more specific policies that would theoretically deter immigrants from entering the country or, in some way, punish immigrants already residing here (Gutierrez and Zavella, 2009).

Proponents described California Proposition 227 (1998) as a means to repair a broken element of the California public education system (bilingual education) that allegedly negatively impacted marginalized students and wasted taxpayer money. The policy's most prominent voices went out of their way to assure the public that eliminating bilingual education was not racist or xenophobic (Jacobsen, 2008, p.32). The purpose, as they explained, was to provide a better education environment for learners. This improved educational experience would help bilingual children assimilate faster, reduce so-called "identity politics" in schools, and save taxpayers millions of dollars each year. However, in reality, the proposition and others like it represented the intersection of several historical, political, and social issues surrounding citizenship, chiefly access to public services and resources and the role of minority communities in the democratic process (Ono, 2002, p. 26).

Proposition 227 proved to be one such case of the heated public debate on citizenship and immigration emerging in a tangential or seemingly unrelated policy field. Even with the considerable opposition mounting at the local, state, and federal levels, the pro-Prop 227 groups won at the ballot box by building and controlling a narrative that played on historical fears and stereotypes of immigrants, growing trends in nativism, and ambiguous and ever-changing

policies around bilingual education. The campaign supporting Proposition 227 was ultimately so successful that the measure passed with nearly 62% of the vote and would remain the state's law for almost two decades (Rodriguez, 1999, 191). Pro-227 groups' success is primarily attributed to the effectiveness of the messaging around core issues that resonated with the majority white population of California and the careful construction of its narratives. Thus, this study is ultimately concerned with understanding how policy narratives around immigration, citizenship, and multiculturalism shaped public policy creation and implementation, specifically regarding bilingual education in the form of California Prop. 227, in the late-20th and early-21st centuries.

Building on the work of scholars and researchers such as Daniel Martinez HoSang and his seminal book "Racial Propositions: Ballot Initiatives and the Making of Postwar California," this project explores what can be the fraught space of the California ballot initiative system. In that book, HoSang explores how individuals and groups exploited and manipulated the state's version of direct democracy to enact laws that ultimately deprived public services of undocumented immigrants, repealed affirmative action programs, and even banned bilingual education from public schools. He outlines how these propositions came to define the meaning of race and racism in California's governing principles and institutions. HoSang's focus is primarily on the political and legal aspects of ballot initiatives. This paper more specifically examines how the policy narratives, or stories told through and surrounding a specific policy, shape and galvanize public opinion and create inequalities beyond strict legal and political terms. Policy narratives have very real practical and social implications in people's everyday lives in the United States, ranging from what types of celebrations can occur in school to how a non-native born individual is viewed and accepted by the people of their community. This paper aims to expand upon the many ways in which policy narratives can potentially divide communities,

deprive immigrants and historically marginalized people of such services as healthcare and education, and shape public perception of issues such as citizenship.

Chapter II

Literature Review:

Theory-Narrative Policy Framework:

The analysis contained within this study is ultimately a case of understanding the policy process and the implications of narratives on said process. A review of theories regarding the policy process reveals that such approaches seek to explain, among other things, how policy is created, instituted, and impactful. While these theories are utilized in different ways that provide both qualitative and quantitative insights, they are all generally concerned with understanding the intersection of the political nature of policymaking and policy development and implementation. More recent theoretical frameworks built on interdisciplinary and intersectional concepts have endeavored to apply new lenses to understand the connections between politics and policy better. While some of these frameworks are more well-known and utilized in other fields ranging from literature to economics, they are still relatively new in their applications to policy studies. Among the theories gaining more attention over the past decade is the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) (McBeth, Shanahan, & Jones, 2014).

As can be inferred from its name, the NPF seeks to explore, detail, and explain the role of policy narratives in the public policy process. At its theoretical core, the NPF accepts the social construction of reality as a guiding assumption (McBeth et al., 2014, p. 229) and argues that narrative plays a heuristic role that can reduce ambiguity in a policy. At the same time, policy narratives can manipulate and sway public understanding to have negative consequences for the issue addressed in the policy (McBeth et al., 2014, p. 231). Narratives can be tools for promoting

more sound and responsible policy and creating problematic narrative offshoots within the general public (Roe, 1994, p.15).

Based on the work by Deborah Stone (2012), the NPF (McBeth et al., 2014, p. 228) explains that a policy narrative consists of a setting, characters (heroes, villains, and victims), a plot, and a policy moral or solution. Additional explanation of the NPF also asserts that narrative analysis can include studies of policy character motivations, discourse analysis, the impact of character actions on others, and much more. (Veselkova, 2017). At the meso-level of research, the NPF focuses on how groups use policy narratives to influence public opinion and policy. The NPF is mainly concerned with how individuals are affected by policy narratives at the micro-level, including the influence of such concepts as confirmation bias and identity protection cognition (McBeth et al., 2014, p. 234). The NPF advances the study of narrative in public policy in many ways and is adaptable to research rooted in various methodological traditions. Many contemporary NPF studies have evolved to be more quantitative. Strong examples of these types of studies include McBeth, M. K., et al. (2010), Jones, M. D., & Song, G. (2014), and Lybecker, McBeth, M. K., Husmann, M. A., & Pelikan, N. (2015). At the same time, others have taken to empirical examinations using content analysis, experimental design, survey research, and other traditional social science methods (Shanahan, Jones, & McBeth, 2018).

Narrative Policy Framework studies can successfully illuminate the power of narratives in shaping policy and perception. NPF studies point out that the narrative emanating from the problem stream (or focusing event) helps to eventually influence public opinion and push policy characters in different directions. Additionally, NPF studies attempt to explain how policy narratives play some role in constructing focusing events. Such so-called focusing events occur when policy characters make policy problems out of situations that are not necessarily

problematic or controversial or shift the nature of an issue to make it seem complicated and need a solution (Liu, Robinson, & Vedlitz, 2016). In this way, policy narratives are about attaining attention, ensuring media coverage, and building increased public discourse. With increased notoriety, policy characters enhance their ability to shape policy image (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993), further expand the scope of an issue (Liu et al., 2016), and exercise other qualities such as drama building (Stone, 2012, p. 101). Simply put, policy characters use policy narratives to construct problems that “need to be solved” by a particular solution presented by the policy characters themselves.

In an NPF study, the evidence includes factual points, supporting studies, or elements that would otherwise be considered “proof” that a policy will solve the problem it claims to be addressing. NPF studies expect policy characters to use evidence in their efforts to define focusing events through narratives. When evidence is used within a policy narrative, it is understood that the evidence is in service of the policy character’s agenda. In this way, policy narratives are an essential element of the policy character’s toolkit in that they create opportunities for policies to be made and presented. This is not to say that the majority of policies lack factual or accurate rigorously tested data. Many policies are based on years of testing and peer-reviewed research and are created to solve genuine problems. The problems usually arise when narratives misrepresent or withhold evidence to promote policies more favorable to the policy actor’s cause. Properly centering evidence is an approach that allows the analyst to identify biases and place a policy within a proper context (Blair & McCormack, 2016).

Historical Research and the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF):

The Narrative Policy Framework is far from perfect or comprehensive, and critics have pointed out narrative analysis itself is not sufficient for fully understanding or explaining the

complexities of the policy process. As discussed previously, NPF was developed and introduced in policy studies a little over a decade ago as a positivist, quantitative, and structuralist approach to studying policy narratives. However, suggestions have been made that NPF studies must continue to augment and complement their theoretical framework specifically with more qualitative approaches and elements from agenda-setting, multiple streams, and coalition building frameworks, to name but a few (Weible and Schlager, 2014). Due to time and logistical constraints, this study focuses primarily on NPF's core elements. Still, it fully acknowledges that multiple streams and coalition-building components are at play in the story of Proposition 227. Future studies should focus on such details to provide a more comprehensive assessment of the policy's narratives. This study of California Proposition 227's policy narratives relies on a textual and contextual analysis of the main characters, setting, the historical, social, and political background of the policy, and the policy morals that emerged during and after the campaign.

The primary way chosen in this study to demonstrate compatibility between qualitative methods and the Narrative Policy Framework is through traditional historical research methods and techniques, as this project is fundamentally an examination and reconstruction of a past event. While NPF and various other forms of adapted narrative analysis are relatively new and novel lenses in policy studies, they have long sat at the heart of historical and social science research. Therefore, the narrative policy examination in this study borrows extensively from historians and the methods that they have established over decades of work. The research design of the study will be further outlined in the methodology section to follow. It is essential to highlight historical research's general role and importance and why it improves the NPF research in policy studies.

Rousmaniere (2004) wrote that “there is no history until historians tell it, and it is the way in which they tell it that becomes what we know of as history” (p. 33). Narratives exist at the core of this process of telling, shaping, and re-telling stories. They are a significant way for people to record and make sense of the world, society, and individual and shared experiences. Denzin (1989) clarified that “A life lived is what actually happens...A life as told is a narrative, influenced by the cultural conventions of telling, by the audience, and by the social context” (p. 30). Additionally, as will be highlighted in this study, narratives can influence how communities are shaped and policy actors gain power.

Historical research or historiography “attempts to systematically recapture the complex nuances, the people, meanings, events, and even ideas of the past that have influenced and shaped the present.” (Berg & Lure, 2012, p. 305). As such, historical primary documents and media are important because they represent a specific point in time. Likewise, they serve as the basis for researchers and others to understand the past, build new narratives, or even perpetuate old ones. In the case of this capstone project, the historical heart of the research shows how the narratives of Proposition 227 were built on a long history of previous narratives and how now, over two decades later, scholars are still unpacking them.

In historical research, it must be noted that the researcher “is the primary instrument for gathering and analyzing data” (Merriam, 1998, p. 20). The determination of the authenticity and accuracy of documents is part of the analysis process. For the historian, interpretation of past events is intricately related to the sources describing those events. The historian must assess the origin and intent of the source and its trustworthiness. The historical case study “presents a holistic description and analysis of [the case]...from a [sic] historical perspective” (Merriam, 1998, p. 35). We gather and analyze this data to reveal meaning and make sense of our past

experiences in the context of our present situation. “For many educational historians, the driving question of their research is simultaneously historical and contemporary” (Rousmaniere, 2004, p. 36).

The search for information about the past begins with questions such as, what happened, why it happened, who was involved, and what can be learned from past experiences? These questions more often than not originate from the researcher, and it is the researcher’s task to set about answering said questions. In historical research, this means that the researcher occupies a unique position as the collector, examiner, and interpreter of sources and data. Such positionality can place several limitations on a study due to the researcher’s individual biases, limitations in the data set selected, and/or types of secondary resources utilized in the process of understanding a phenomenon. Any limitations in this study will be elaborated upon further in the methods sections. Still, it is crucial to explain that the historical researcher clearly defines the period studied, settings, sources utilized, and even where sources were obtained.

Unpacking Immigration and Citizenship Narratives:

As has been established, the United States has seen several periods in its history where the backlash against immigrants has been substantial. Driving factors for opposition to immigrants can primarily be found in the narratives that have been constructed about factors such as race, the economy, or the preservation of socio-cultural norms. Most individuals do not want to outwardly say that they oppose immigrants due to race or religion, so they construct narratives that serve as proxies for those values. Contemporarily, these narratives are built on the idea of the immigrant as a criminal or as a terrorist (Waters & Kasinitz, 2015). These characterizations, which researchers call the criminal and terrorist narratives, “represent a stark contrast to findings indicating either no relationship or a small negative relationship between

immigration and crime rates.” (Ousey & Kubrin, 2018). A primary question occupying researchers is how these narratives impact individuals and why they are so effective at shifting views on immigrants, despite all of the data that can construct truthful and factual counternarratives.

Claims of relatively greater criminality among some immigrant groups are statistically unfounded (Lee & Martinez, 2009). Such claims may nevertheless alter the structure of the cognitive representations of immigrants as a whole—for example, dividing and subdividing immigrants into “good” and “bad” and “capable” and “incapable” subgroups, or more specifically, “White” and “non-White” subgroups (Flores & Schachter, 2018). Racialization of immigrants, under the contemporary definition of whiteness to different immigrant groups, matters because it “leverages race-related stereotypes to reinforce subgrouping of “good” versus “bad” kinds of immigrants.” (Brown, 2013). The proliferation of anti-immigrant policy positions from the highest levels of government in the United States only further re-enforces and entrenches these deeply divisive and historically powerful othering beliefs.

Because policy creation and perception are value-laden, narratives can build causal frames ‘around exaggerations and outright lies playing on the fears and prejudices of the public’ (Chong and Druckman, 2007). Many social and policy theories, such as “Integrated Threat Theory,” postulate that anxiety develops from threats to a group’s political and economic power, as well as symbolic threats that arise from ‘perceived differences in morals, values [and] norms’ (Stephan et al., 2000). While both can lead to prejudice, the latter subjective threat is most relevant to ‘symbolic racism’ wherein the out-group, due to the ‘cognitive classification’ attributed to them, is perceived to violate the cultural or moral status quo (Osborne et al., 2008). As Westen (2009) notes, individuals do not easily empathize with those ‘who do not share their

language or...their culture.’ Jost (2003) attributes this inclination to a desire to ‘minimize group conflict by developing...belief systems that justify the hegemony of some groups over others.’ Narratives assist these attitudes by distilling certain understandings of political reality and, therefore, beliefs about participants’ places in the world (Feldman et al., 2004), socially and, in the immigration context, territorially.

Narratives based on ideologies that capture people’s preferences for how society should be structured unsurprisingly play a role in individuals’ acceptance or rejection of belief systems. However, narratives can gain a sense of validity and broader public acceptance through greater media distribution and proliferation and endorsement from prominent figures (Osborne et al., 2008). This greater acceptance happens because, in general, people view the media and elected officials as having some level of institutional credibility. Such credibility has been called into question in recent years. Still, any hits to reputation have mainly been compensated for by the growth of social media to share news and belief systems (Flores & Schachter, 2018).

Ideologies embedded in narratives are also vital in constructing the physical borders and social boundaries at the heart of the immigration debate. Fairclough (2003) defines ideologies as ‘representations of aspects of the world’ that shape societal arrangements and power relations. Policy narratives, then, preach specific interpretations of how ‘the world ought to be’ in an attempt to ‘resolve the imbalance’ precipitated by the perceived problem (Patterson and Monroe, 1998). Causal issue frames anchor those interpretations and gives them power. These factors make ideology a critical building of the narrative and a force that drives the narrative into the public’s minds.

Although pivotal, ideology is only part of the persuasive formula in the immigration debate. At its core, immigration policy and the discourses surrounding it establish a bond

between people and place, and in so doing, stir a ‘reaffirmation of national identity’ (Lynn and Lea, 2003). Narratives play a crucial role here: they enable the expression of ideas of belonging and ‘contribute to understanding[s] of the political universe’ (Andrews, 2007). The immigration debate thus represents a ‘deep-seated conflict’ over values as well as group interests (Boswell et al., 2011). In their cultural cognition thesis, Kahan (2007) asserts that groups seek to protect their identities based on perceptions of risk-informed by their core values. As discussed, narratives not only have the power to organize those understandings but also construct relational identities. Facilitated by narratives, causal frames in the immigration debate anchor ideologically resonant meanings within policy positions and guide participants in selecting identity-protective courses of action. At the heart of the debate over immigration reform, then, lies the question of who is in and who is out, and more precisely: Who is American?

Immigration and Citizenship Narratives:

To fully engage with the literature and its connection to Proposition 227’s narratives, it is necessary to define and understand the issues driving the policy. In this case, the policy narratives are squarely rooted in the issues of immigration and citizenship. Tying the discussion back to those two points is essential as the initiative’s proponents, unlike supporters of similarly controversial movements, continuously reiterated that their policy was not anti-immigrant or discriminatory of communities based on citizenship status (HoSang, 2010). Analysis of the policy narratives themselves and their outcomes later in the paper will show why those claims are spurious, though. As was said of Proposition 227 and similar policies soon after their passage, “Laws and policies that predominantly impact immigrant groups cannot be detached from matters of immigration and citizenship.” (Escobedo, 1999). In this way, even bilingual

education laws that fundamentally impact immigrant groups are directly about legal and social belonging (citizenship) in the United States.

Policies regarding immigration have historically been contentious in the United States. On one side, such policies are portrayed to be necessary to keep a stable national identity and secure borders. Conversely, immigration policies have often led to discriminatory practices predominantly against people of color and non-native English speakers (Olsen, 2008). Immigration narratives tend to focus on the rhetoric of nationalism, protectionism, and defensive and nativistic postures. Bloemraad, Korteweg, Yurdakul (2008) contend that this happens because “Immigration challenges- and in some cases reaffirms- notions of national identity, sovereignty, and state control that have historically been linked to citizenship.” (p. 2). In this sense, immigration is more than the mere act of individuals or groups moving from one nation to the next. It is about citizenship and belonging within national borders and challenges to the actual borders themselves. Thus, by their very nature, immigration debates and policies address the potential reshaping of both the boundaries and makeup of a nation. These challenges are often viewed as adverse and destabilizing events that become catalysts for tensions between those already living in a place and those immigrating through narratives, discourse, and policy actions.

A primary explanation given for the animosity and anger toward immigrants is realistic group conflict theory. This theory holds that immigrants are resented for allegedly endangering natives’ economic and material well-being in the form of job loss, increases in crime rates, impacts on social services, and strains on the tax base (Valenzuela, 2017). This stance tends to be especially popular and potent in times of economic instability, such as recessions, when the general population thinks resources and opportunity to be most limited (Marrow, 2011). Such

resource-driven mindsets use the logic that immigration will change the country's economic standing in one form or another, which will, in turn, devalue the country's international reputation and ability to defend itself (Chavez, 2017). Over the past several decades, public opinion research has repeatedly confirmed that natives' perceptions of national economic performance influence their support for an open immigration policy. Such a connection between the economy and immigration persists even though economic impact studies show immigrants do not burden resources (Harris, 2015). In fact, immigrants (both documented and undocumented) make substantial contributions to local, state, and federal tax programs, take up in employment in sectors that boost other segments of the economy, make up for drops in birthrates in the workforce, and children born of immigrants with citizenship were found to be more productive workers than native-born individuals of the same age group (Young, 2017).

The next most prominent defense of stricter immigration policies is that of national security. However, the national security argument has been primarily based on fabricated narratives and misleading evidence over the sources of potential terror threats by those whose primary agenda is not advancing national security but rather restricting immigration. The Center for Immigration Studies (CIS), which advocates for restrictive immigration policies, lists 170 publications from 1986 through September 2001. In all of those volumes, not a single one focused on immigration policy and national security. However, since the September 11th attacks, approximately half of CIS publications have focused on the ways U.S. immigration policies threaten national security (Alden, 2017). September 11th indeed caused many to see the potential that weak or poorly enforced immigration laws could pose certain security risks.

Simultaneously, it is accurate that after 9/11, the terrorist threat became a well-used argument in favor of policies that conservatives and anti-immigrant groups had long advocated.

These policies revolved chiefly around reducing immigration levels as low as possible and stricter crackdowns on illegal immigration (Alden, 2017). The latter point is significant to consider, as there have been few credible instances of terrorist threats due to documented or undocumented immigration in the past twenty years. In actuality, the most significant threats for criminal activity occurring at the border are human and narcotics trafficking. However, such activities have not impacted the United States on the scale described by some media outlets and politicians. The predominant narratives surrounding all forms of trafficking are regularly based on misleading rhetoric and agenda bias. Trafficking narratives are almost entirely about protecting American communities and property instead of addressing the multinational crises driving the activities at their point of origin and the tangential human rights violations left in their wake (2016).

Regardless of the motivations of policy actors, two things are clear about the connection between national security and immigration reform in the post 9/11 era: “First, the United States in the past decade has greatly expanded its immigration enforcement efforts, largely in response to the terrorist attack. Secondly, the overwhelming majority of those affected by this stepped-up immigration enforcement do not pose any sort of national security threat, terrorist or otherwise.” (Alden, 2017, p.487). Alden further states, “What role can immigration policies play in preventing another terrorist attack in the United States?” The answer is a minimal role.” (2017, p. 489). From this perspective, narratives that meet at the intersection of national security and immigration primarily cause fear that immigrants are a threat to achieving political ends with little to do with security or immigration.

Even though research and evidence provided by the federal government indicate that immigration is not a threat to the economy or safety of our borders, such factors still impact the

perception of immigrants in the general public. There is growing recognition that immigrants today, regardless of the impact on the native-born material interests, economic conditions, or national security, are seen as a pressing threat to the culture that unifies Americans (Chavez, 2017). Possibly the most alarming development, the rate of violent acts committed against immigrants, particularly those of color, has increased sharply over the last 5-10 year span. The key for many researchers is uncovering the deeper socio-cultural concerns that serve as the foundation, either implicitly or explicitly, for anti-immigrant policies. Unsurprisingly, most of the more recent literature connected to immigration reveals that many narratives come down to creating fear and uneasiness around race, ethnicity, religion, and linguistic diversity (Iwama, 2018).

The reasons that immigrants of color, those from non-Judeo-Christian religions, and non-native English speaking backgrounds are perceived as threats to “American culture” are multiple. We can begin with the United States’ long history of slavery, racism, and poor track record on civil and human rights matters. More significant numbers of people coming into the country from backgrounds other than white, Anglo-Saxon backgrounds are perceived and presented by many as potentially upsetting the order of white supremacy that the country was founded upon (Alba & Nee, 2003). This stance has been supported by countless narratives from individuals and groups with large platforms and significant influence. Pat Buchanan, the Reform Party’s 2000 presidential candidate: “Uncontrolled immigration threatens to deconstruct the nation we grew up in and convert America into a conglomeration of people with almost nothing in common-not history, heroes, language, culture, faith, or ancestors.” (Huntington, 2004). Phrases such as “culture,” “ancestry,” and “faith” are all not-so-subtle dog whistles that mean non-white is non-compatible, less than, and dangerous. This same policy stance was echoed

seemingly ad nauseum with chilling effect by Donald Trump and was one of the central planks of the platform that led to his presidency. The Trump presidency generated a wave of other politicians with similar positions; most notably of late was the news that Georgia Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene (R) would be founding a political caucus to preserve “Anglo-Saxon values” (Mathis-Lilley, 2021).

The argument against non-white and non-native English speakers, rooted in white supremacist philosophies, is also about immigrants’ perceived inability to assimilate or integrate into the new culture. Just as an economic threat is held as the key concept in understanding material intergroup relations, assimilation is crucial in understanding cultural intergroup relations (Marrow, 2011). A feeling of threat can exist because assimilation is not automatic for any immigrant. Complete assimilation is unattainable for many because of previously mentioned factors like race, ethnicity, and religion. Anti-immigrant proponents argue that society will be weakened without assimilation to the receiving country’s culture and norms. These types of narratives usually stoke fear and animosity. It likewise sets up antagonistic relationships between the immigrant and the residents of the receiving state (Marrow, 2011). Immigrants are then torn between the cultures of their old and new countries, so that competition for cultural advantage inevitably follows (Gibbs & Bankhead, 2001).

Assimilation tension also puts the immigrant at other risks, such as acts of physical violence, discrimination, and abuse. This competition can be challenging to navigate and can be the source of great pain and conflict. As Portes, Parker, & Cobas (1980) state, it is essential to consider that “Change in the receiving culture is as possible as change in the immigrant culture. The reduction of prejudice against newcomers is thus seen as being essentially dependent on their assimilation into mainstream behaviors” (p. 202). In short, the pressures to fully assimilate

are tremendous and placed squarely on the shoulders of the immigrant to a mostly negative effect on the individual and social stability. Narratives regarding immigration should adjust accordingly to create more inclusive and supportive attitudes.

Assimilation anxiety is especially pronounced when it comes to participation in democratic institutions (voting, holding elected office, etc.) and access to public resources (schools, healthcare, etc.), rights many believe should be reserved for those with legal citizenship. The logic of anti and reduced-rate immigration supporters is that increased levels of immigrant participation in the systems mentioned above mean that the power, influence, and public resources available and historically afforded to white native citizens will be diminished or eventually eliminated (Yeng, 2014). Limiting, restricting, and redefining citizenship is one of the sharpest tools in the movement to implement more restrictive and punitive immigration policies, as citizenship is both a legal and social construct that ideally permits full participation in society. Without citizenship or at least clear pathways to citizenship, any true or near-complete sense of assimilation is hard to attain (Chavez, 2017).

Bloemraad, Korteweg, Yurdakul (2008) define citizenship as “a form of membership in a political and geographic community” (p.3). They state that membership can be further broken into four dimensions: legal status, rights, political and other forms of participation in society, and a sense of belonging. This conception of citizenship allows for an analysis and understanding of the extent to which immigrants and their descendants are incorporated into societies. Legal citizenship deals specifically with the rights that accompany citizenship, as citizenship can be described as a “relationship between individuals and the state as a contract in which both sides have rights and obligations” (Chavez, 2017, p. 25). The state guarantees fundamental rights to individuals to uphold the citizenship agreement.

Meanwhile, the individual must pay taxes, complete compulsory education, and obey the country's laws. The rights approach ideally presents the promise of complete legal equality but fails to resolve how to achieve full social equality and inclusion. The narratives around legal and undocumented status are rhetorically divisive, as they are designed to restrict others. These narratives often take on a dehumanizing tone to eliminate an individual or groups' ability to participate in society. In this context, not having the proper documentation disqualifies the person from any level of citizenship, regardless of their records or length of time living in a place (Bloemraad, Korteweg, & Yurdakul, 2008).

Citizenship is much more than a legal construct, even though the popular public discourse in the United States regularly boils down to the legal aspects of citizenship. Bloemraad et al. sum up this very point by stating, "Citizenship debates today continue to reflect tensions between citizenship as participation, political or otherwise, and citizenship as legal status, with or without accompanying rights and obligations. These debates reflect a continuing struggle with the exclusionary aspects of citizenship, particularly those based on gender, sexuality, class, race, ethnicity, and religion." (p.8, 2008). As they indicate, in the debate over immigration, citizenship cannot be detached from rights. At the same time, narratives from more conservative immigration policies often undermine and ignore that immigrants of all documentation and legal statuses have rights regardless of their status (Young, 2017).

The idea that immigrants possess rights regardless of status is a point of serious contention amongst legal and constitutional scholars. Immigration advocates believe that the U.S. Constitution is inclusive and protective of all people residing in the country regarding fundamental rights. The Constitution, in many sections, uses the term "people" or "person" rather than "citizen." As a result of this language, many fundamental rights, like the freedom of

religion and speech, due process, and equal protection, apply to citizens and noncitizens alike. The Constitution's provisions should apply based on personhood and jurisdiction in the United States (Gibbs & Bankhead, 2001). Unfortunately, an anti-immigrant double standard is prevalent in the United States' criminal justice system and nearly all policies and laws governing entry into the United States, immigration detention, and deportation. With such a double-standard in place, narratives about immigration can be crafted in such a way to detach the individual immigrants from rights that they should have and creates a false sense in the public that rights are contingent on citizenship (Young, 2017).

Political and social participation in the activities of the state is a core aspect of citizenship (Bloemraad, Korteweg, Yurdakul, 2008). Historically, the privileges and benefits of citizenship that allow for participation, such as voting, receiving social safety net benefits, and access to specific resources, have been restricted along gender, racial, ethnic, religious, and economic class lines (Valenzuela, 2017). In efforts against exclusionary barriers, more participatory and liberal philosophies regarding citizenship “converge as political participation is increasingly seen as an individual right and, in some cases, a human right that should be detached from legal status” (Bloemraad, Korteweg, Yurdakul, 2008, p.10). Some expand the participatory dimension of citizenship further, underscoring that the capacity to participate politically depends in part on social and economic inclusion (Urrea, 2004). The divisions between the more liberal portions of the country and conservatives wishing to limit the participation of certain groups are sharp, and narratives from both groups stand in stark contrast to one another. The differences in narrative tone and content come back again to the ideas of resource, economic, and power scarcities, as well as factually inaccurate stereotypes that must be continually addressed (Feinstein & Bonikowski, 2021).

A final dimension of citizenship that must be examined in conjunction with participation is belonging. Notions of belonging “inherently have exclusionary tendencies; some must fall outside the community for a “we” to exist. Such exclusions are often justified to protect the so-called need for social cohesion, leading to questions regarding what type of social cohesion is required for contemporary societies (Waldinger, 2001). Immigrants must experience a sense of safety and an ability to maintain their core identity, which is essential in sustaining belonging to their native communities. For immigrants to achieve belonging, access to certain resources is necessary. Unfortunately, many immigration narratives today focus on stripping away the individual’s native culture and values.

The argument is that any resources allocated for use by immigrants from the public should assimilate the immigrant. This debate is most seen and felt in education, where views on what constitutes best practices are diverse, to say the least, from one locale to the next. Some call for a complete assimilationist pedagogy that strips linguistic and cultural characteristics outside white, English-only normative practices. Others propose bilingual and multicultural programs that are more stabilizing and more inclusive for the learner. However, bilingual and multicultural education plans meet the same types of resistance immigrants face, namely that such programs will divert resources away from other programs and slowly weaken the country’s foundations (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2010). This argument against bilingual and multicultural education lies at the heart of Proposition 227’s narratives.

Summary:

As explained in the introduction, Proposition 227, on the surface, is about access to a particular public service (bilingual education) by non-native English speakers. However, this policy represents a critical point of convergence for multiple issues related to immigration and

citizenship. It was both the culmination of decades of simmering anti-immigrant and anti-multicultural sentiment and a jumping-off point for the anti-immigrant policies that would emerge in the decades that followed. A critical review of literature on several interrelated topics is needed to understand how such a controversial and problematic policy was created and implemented in the most liberal state in the country. This review attempts to provide a thorough examination of sources related to immigration, citizenship, rights, bilingual education, and the mechanisms of democracy in the United States. Together, these various sources illustrate thematic points used to build Proposition 227's base narratives and the larger societal and systemic forces at play regarding immigration. That said, additional time and space could be devoted in future literature reviews to expanding all of these thematic areas with more detail and specificity. Some of the work creating more in-depth discussions of these topics will occur in the remainder of the paper.

Chapter III **Methodology:**

Overview:

The primary purpose of this study is to examine how policy narratives shaped the fight for bilingual education in California in the late 20th century. To properly analyze the narratives found within and surrounding California Proposition 227 (1998), thematic and theoretical considerations must be made to contextualize the policy. The main areas of focus critical to understand the evolution of Prop. 227's narratives are: 1) citizenship and immigration, 2) the historical debate over access to public resources and services (bilingual education), and 3) the mechanisms of democracy (the ballot initiative system) utilized by Proposition 227 proponents to achieve their ends. Such an approach to establishing thematic research parameters is possible because matters like access to public resources and services and the utilization of and

participation in the democratic or ballot initiative processes connect to how individuals and communities are legally defined and allowed to participate in the system. Additionally, a proper theoretical framework was needed to support an in-depth analysis of Proposition 227's narratives. As such, this project utilizes the Narrative Policy Framework and traditional historical research methods, as they allow the analyst to define, evaluate, and contextualize a narrative's various components and conduct archival examinations of primary source documents from a previous era.

As described in this paper's literature review and analysis sections, those narratives around Proposition 227 were not merely related to education. They were rooted in a long history of social and political narratives surrounding the very definition of citizen and what it means to belong in the United States. This project employs a theoretical and methodological lens based on a historiographical approach. Using Proposition 227 as a case study, the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) theory is utilized to examine primary sources such as political speeches, historical documents, newspaper articles, legal papers and court decisions, media interviews, and more. These materials were selected from archives (the University of Washington, National Archives, and the University of California), academic databases (EBSCO JSTOR, ERIC, LexisNexis, and Westlaw), and media websites (YouTube, Google, New York Times, and Washington Post). Due to Covid-19 restrictions, all archival work took place remotely. Secondary sources were drawn from academic texts such as scholarly articles and books, all of which are listed in the bibliography. Primary sources are analyzed and discussed primarily in chapters 4-9 of the study, which explore the historical and legal legacies of bilingual education policies in the United States, the California ballot initiative system, and the various parties that supported and fought against Proposition 227.

Data:

This study applies classic qualitative and historical research criteria to an illustrative case examining policy narratives. With primary source materials ranging from media interviews to legal decisions and court documents, a clearer picture can be made of the social and cultural impact of policy narratives that define how citizenship and belonging are defined, how coalitions are built within the public, and the ways policy actors build compelling narratives by building on and exploiting historical narratives. This incorporation of qualitative methods within the narrative policy framework is critical for the framework's overall development, as it provides opportunities for more detailed description, inductive forms of inquiry, and grounded theory development in policy areas where sample sizes and access may limit quantitative approaches.

The primary period of focus for this study ranges from roughly 1995 to 2000. This serves as the main timeframe for creating and implementing Proposition 227, the public debate and campaign to pass it into law, the election, and the immediate aftermath of the election. That said, documents and materials from the decades immediately preceding and following the 1990s are analyzed as part of the study. Also, historical information related to citizenship, immigration, bilingual education and more dating back to the 19th and early 20th century is included to support framing the project's core issues. Many of the materials, both primary and secondary, were explicitly related to Proposition 227 and the state of California. However, due to the historically complicated nature of immigration, citizenship, and education issues in the United States, many sources focus on cases from other states and issues that arose over time on the national level. Such an approach allowed for breaking down the policy narratives of Proposition 227 but the larger historical contexts that spawned and fomented them.

Resources were analyzed based on their connection to the proposition, impact on the public, and actions of the policy characters during the primary period of the Proposition 227 campaign. Pertinent data were selected for parties both for and against the proposition. However, the most significant attention was given to the individuals that supported Proposition 227 and their contributions to its larger narratives. The decision to focus on Pro-227 actors was based on the lasting impact of the narratives they created and espoused. Great effort went into choosing and including data representing as many aspects of the Proposition 227 debate as possible. The diversity of voices is demonstrated in the expansive set of primary sources for the period and cross-referencing those sources with scholarly work in the subsequent years. Sources included in this work range from the policymakers drafting and advocating for the proposition and its counter policies to ordinary citizens in the communities and schools impacted by the policy. Academic and historically-centered texts were also chosen for inclusion in this study based on their usefulness in understanding the core issues of the study and their role in fostering the conditions surrounding Proposition 227.

The Role of Theory:

Narrative Policy Framework research is adaptable and flexible, offering researchers the opportunity to look at policy narratives from several angles and lenses. NPF studies using some iteration of experimental design are typically centered on looking at policies from the micro (or individual citizen's) level. These studies tend to use some variation of a control group in which subjects are exposed to a non-narrative condition and one or more policy narrative experimental treatments. These tests will vary in content according to the research questions. In such experiments, narratives or individual narrative components are independent variables of interest where the researcher attempts to discern their effect on dependent variables focused on in the

study; the dependent variables are typically related to some aspect of the policy process (e.g., the strength of individual policy preference). Other types of NPF studies focus on non-experimental designs. This is most commonly the case when researchers attempt to understand the impact of policy narratives at the meso-level (e.g., government agencies, policy characters, coalitions, etc.). Researchers have found this approach to be especially helpful when comparing two or more policy narratives, analyzing the role of a narrative or narrative component over time or across different policy domains, or understanding the development of a particular narrative. Case studies, panels, and time-series projects are prime examples of this type of non-experimental design.

This particular research project is a variation of existing non-experimental NPF research centered on traditional historiographical approaches. The research questions in this study are concerned with the impact of one specific policy's narratives and the actions of the policy actors. The research that follows in this study is done through a historical lens after two-plus decades of Proposition 227's existence. All data comes from sources of the period or resources on the subject after the fact. The role of the interviewee, focus group member, or survey respondent is replaced by historical documents, media related to the policy debate, and analysis.

Policy Narrative Analysis:

The analytical work of the paper is organized so that critical terms, theory, and literature review are established before the analysis of the history and narratives surrounding Proposition 227. Since this study uses Narrative Policy Framework as its theoretical frame, many sections will examine and define the critical components of this lens (narratives, plot, setting, characters). According to Shanahan, Jones, and McBeth (2018), narratives are stories about and around a particular policy. As narratives are stories, they are told by and about individuals seeking to

promote a specific agenda with defined goals. In the context of a narrative policy study, these individuals are known as “policy characters” or “actors.” The actions carried out by policy characters and the motivations driving their efforts define the purpose or plot of the policy narrative. Lastly, the setting is the time and location in which the policy narratives are created, argued, implemented, and experienced by individuals.

This project deals with how the policy characters incorporated historical narratives, arguments, stereotypes, and institutional mechanisms to promote their agendas of eliminating bilingual education and restricting access to public services and resources. Another plot thread followed in this study relates to how opposition groups fought against the narratives created by pro-227 advocates. The setting for this case was previously described in this section of the paper as California in the years ranging from 1995-2000. However, policies related to limiting and redefining immigration, citizenship, and multiculturalism were gaining prominence across the country during this period. Conservative politicians and groups were especially inclined at the time to support and sponsor such policies. As such, these policies emerged in several states and local municipalities. Debates on these matters also extended to the highest levels of the federal government. Due to these factors, it is impossible to separate the events transpiring in California from the greater national debate on the matter. Likewise, this study cannot detach itself from the events and narratives of previous times either. The narratives of Proposition 227 are both a product of the historical developments and contemporary social and political trends as well.

The policy characters discussed in this paper are perhaps the most essential part of this study’s analysis. As the creators, promoters, and supporters of the narratives surrounding Proposition 227, they are responsible for every aspect of the policy and its introduction and debate in the public square. On the pro-227 side, this paper looks at the main author and

advocate of the proposed policy, a wealthy businessman named Ron Unz. It was Mr. Unz that built a coalition of conservative donors, politicians, and citizens, which he called “English for the Children,” to address alleged concerns with the system of bilingual education used in California in the 1990s. Yet, as the study of Mr. Unz unfolds, it becomes clear that his motivations and actions extend beyond mere concern for the well-being of non-native English-speaking learners. His desire to become a prominent national political figure and his affiliation with anti-immigrant groups call into question his policy choices and how he constructed Proposition 227’s narratives.

The opponents of Proposition 227 are equally important policy characters as well. Anti-227 advocates consisted of teachers’ unions in California, Democratic lawmakers, immigrant and civil rights advocates, and donors that included media magnates and wealthy businesspeople. Their strategies, attitudes, and actions constitute the alternate policy pathway that voters in California could have chosen. The narratives they created and the inability of those coalitions to collaborate and create cohesive messaging ultimately proved to be why most Californians saw the narratives of Proposition 227 as a better solution. These actions, counternarratives, and particular coalitions are deeply explored in subsequent chapters of this project.

The remaining chapters of this study look at other elements that allowed Proposition 227 narratives to exist and thrive. One chapter is dedicated to examining the California ballot initiative process, a type of direct democracy that theoretically enables any citizen to place a proposition on a statewide ballot if they meet the qualifying criteria. Through this democratic process and mechanism that 227 proponents gained notoriety, support, and an eventual place on the ballot in 1998. Another chapter focuses on the history of bilingual education in the United States. The content of this chapter is necessary to understand how the narratives of Proposition

227 were developed and steeped in anti-immigrant and anti-multicultural policies and movements that stretched across decades of American history.

Significance of this Study:

This study is particularly relevant because it shows how policy narratives shape laws and governing institutions and public opinion of critical issues. By using the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) and historical research methods, a thorough analysis of the speech, images, and archival documents of the Proposition 227 campaign revealed key insights regarding: 1) the role of policy actors, 2) ideological values expressed either directly or indirectly by said policy actors, 3) how direct democracy systems can be exploited and manipulated to enact an agenda, and 4) the potential power of policy narratives to further entrench inequalities and racism into laws and governing institutions. In the case of Proposition 227, key policy actors carefully constructed narratives that stopped short of campaigning on overt racism. Nonetheless, their narratives were deeply rooted in a history of racism, xenophobia, and systemic inequalities. The law they brought forth erased the bilingual education system in the country's most linguistically and culturally diverse state.

This study brings a new light to specific topics that are still significant in American policy discourse and politics in general. The policy debates around immigration, Critical Race Theory, multiculturalism in general, and the ability of people of all backgrounds to access public resources and services is as heated and divided as it ever has been. The intensity of these debates is the direct result of the tone policy actors and narratives take. These debates become weaponized by incorporating language, imagery, and a long history of de jure and de facto racism. In an age of alternative facts in which policy narratives, rhetoric, and charismatic policy actors occupy a prominent place in our governing institutions, more time needs to be seriously

spent in all segments of society to unpacking and understanding policy narratives. This might ultimately be one of the primary strategies for dismantling policies and politicians that undermine the public good and the democratic institutions of the country.

Finally, this study was also important because it addresses stated gaps in the Narrative Policy framework itself. As mentioned previously, Weible and Schlager (2014) state that the basic iteration of NPF is insufficient for explaining deeply complex policy issues. They suggest that the frame can be improved by incorporating other schools of thought and other tools for analysis. The work in this study deviated from the basic quantitative approach of the original NPF by using time-tested and well-known qualitative tools such as historical methods. Narrative studies have been carried out in numerous disciplines for generations, but they are still relatively new in policy studies. Thus, this project is a case study for using emerging methods to better understand public policies. Further research is needed to more fully understand what additional methodological and theoretical tools can facilitate the most rigorous understanding of policy narratives.

Limitations of this Study:

This study focused on a singular and specific case, Proposition 227. While it was just one policy, I attempted to present a detailed account of how policy actors used narratives to garner support or opposition to the initiative. As I have stated previously, I used the Narrative Policy Framework and historical methods to conduct an interpretive analysis of the policy itself and the narratives surrounding it. Such an approach revealed the social and historical contexts of the initiative, the meanings the initiative had for the policy actors, and the impact that narratives had on the public. While the research and findings were conducted and obtained with an eye toward impartiality and rigor, there were obvious limitations on the study. First of which is my

positionality as the researcher. Interpretation is always by its very nature partial and subject to reinterpretation (Spindler & Spindler, 1982). There are no precise and perfect interpretations that can explain a phenomenon in its entirety (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2003). I must acknowledge that my background is that of an educator and immigrant rights activist and researcher. Much of my career has been spent in the service of English language learners and children immigrating to the United States from various parts of the world. This has undoubtedly shaped my opinions on matters like Proposition 227 and my own interpretation of such narratives. I can only acknowledge and work to make sure my own biases are defined as clearly as possible.

I endeavored to overcome as much of my limited view as possible by studying as many primary sources as possible in both English and Spanish. It must be noted that the amount of materials available tilted heavily in favor of English. That fact alone also reveals its own limitations to the study in terms of the media coverage and biases that might exist amongst different segments of the population. Regardless of the language disparities, I examined as large of a sample as was feasible to collect in the limited timeframe of the study and additional restrictions caused by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

Another method I used to overcome holes in my own interpretive lens as well as any issues related to primary sources was through a thorough reading of secondary sources. The scholarly discussion around such topics as Proposition 227, bilingual education, and immigration is immense. The breadth and depth of this discussion span all points of the political and ideological spectrum. To have a more well-rounded view of the issues, I read and examined a wide-ranging selection of materials. Once again, there was a limited amount of time that I had to read and study materials. Also, there were limitations on my ability to access and obtain

resources. Any future studies on this topic would permit an expanded literature and material review.

Next, the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) is a considerably new theoretical field in relation to policy studies. The available literature for NPF studies using qualitative methods is even more scarce. I used the work of Shanahan, Jones, and McBeth (2018) as the foundation for the NPF component of the study, layering on elements from other researchers as appropriate. Reading their work helped me conceptualize my data and report my findings. Similar to many of their studies, my study did not include interviews. As such, the narrative analysis was based on written texts, transcribed interviews conducted during the Proposition 227 campaign, and videos.

Furthermore, this project attempted to address some of the NPF weaknesses voiced by Weible and Schlager, 2014, principally that the effectiveness of an NPF is contingent on supplementing the base theory with other theoretical concepts and methodological approaches. To achieve this, I focused on historical approaches to understanding policy and narratives. Following such researchers as Chavez (2009) and (2017), HoSang (2010), and Ngai (2004), I added to my conceptualization of the NPF. While this did account for an enhanced take on the NPF, more could be done in future studies to more deeply incorporate concepts from other frames such as advocacy coalition building, policy streams, agenda-setting, and political spectacle. Some of those concepts were only included in this study on a limited basis.

Finally, there are thematic elements that I simply did not have the time or resources to examine in this study. A deeper dive into Reaganism and the English-only movement would help better frame some aspects of the modern conservative movement. It would also be helpful to look more deeply at the ramifications of Proposition 227 in the classroom and any legal challenges that mounted after its passage. This would help scholars see with more certainty the

far sweeping implications of controversial policy narratives like Proposition 227. The last area that needs intense scrutiny is the role of the media in campaigns such as these. The media have a tremendous platform, power, and responsibility to the public. Their handling of rhetoric and narrative has a tremendous impact on how the public receives and interprets policies. Likewise, the media since the 1990s has taken on a vastly different position in American society as reporters of the news and content creators and generators. With this new position, such terms as “fake news” and “alternative facts” have taken hold and shaped the public’s opinion of everything from appropriate behavior by elected officials to what is and isn’t science. The media’s role in policy narratives deserves more scrutiny.

Chapter IV **The Ballot Initiative Process in California:**

The next piece to understanding the creation and historical background of Proposition 227 comes from an examination of the ballot initiative process and system in California. The current method for placing items on statewide ballots came into being in 1911 when the state legislature adopted constitutional measures to allow for what they saw as a more direct democracy. Any initiative can be introduced by petition with a prescribed number of signatures established by the constitution, as was the case with Proposition 227, or the legislature. The rules for the initiative process dictate that a proposition can only concern one subject. Additionally, a proposition can be an amendment to the California constitution, but it cannot revise the structure of the constitution. The difference is that an amendment is intended only for narrowly targeted changes to the constitution. In contrast, a revision “affects broad structural changes in our governmental framework. Only a constitutional convention or a legislative initiative can effect changes substantial enough to be called revisions.” (Werdegar, 2012).

Historically, the California Initiative process has generated a significant amount of controversy with its proposed initiatives. It should be mentioned here that the overwhelming majority of attempts to change state law through ballot measures have failed to garner the necessary voter support to become law. The Secretary of State's office has reported that about 90 percent of petitions filed with the state fail to make it to the ballot. Of those that did qualify to go before the voters, nearly two-thirds have been rejected by the voters (HoSang, 2010, p.10). When an initiative does pass, it is usually the subject of direct and swift legal challenges. A proposed initiative cannot be brought before the California Judiciary system until after its passage. This is because the constitutionality of the initiative is moot if the proposition fails to become law. Additionally, Californian courts have tended to proceed cautiously when evaluating the legality of an initiative. It is viewed by state law as being the will of the people through direct democracy. The exceptions to this tendency usually occur because the initiative violates the rules regarding the single-subject law or due to clear and apparent violations of the constitutions of California or the United States (Werdegar, 2012).

On the surface, this system would seem like an excellent approach for empowering citizens to take a more hands-on role in addressing problems in the state. However, author and political scientist Daniel Maritnez HoSang in his book "Racial Propositions: Ballot Initiatives and the Making of Postwar California," contends that California ballot measures are often far more complicated and problematic than they might appear. He states: "Once an issue moves from the legislature or courts to the ballot, the outcome of the conflict is not the only factor altered. As public spectacles, ballot measure campaigns can shape the very definition of public good and establish the boundaries of legitimate political discourse for the future." (HoSang, 2010, 11). While legislative decisions, court rulings, and executive orders impact the public,

most of the discourse of this type occurs behind closed doors and the public is not necessarily privy to the entire process or debate. These actions usually are established and executed after lengthy deliberation, negotiation, and some levels of compromise.

By their very nature, publicly sponsored ballot initiatives are quite different. The highest-profile initiatives “create public spectacles where competing political interests necessarily seek to shape public consciousness and meaning.” (HoSang, 2010, 11). The process becomes entirely about moving consensus to a mere ‘yes’ or ‘no’ battle in which both sides claim to have the true solution and best interests of the long-term public good at heart. This creates a process where people decamp to hardened and often homogenized beliefs that run against more diverse and open social trends. Outcomes in these situations more regularly than not result in divisive public policies that alienate and marginalize. As HoSang states, “In this sense, ballot measures transform conditional propositions into unconditional political and ideological truths.” (HoSang, 2010, 11). As is the case with many of the propositions brought forward in California in the 20th Century, especially those in the 1990s, the initiatives expose and exploit racial fault lines to attain passage. In their wake, the tone and tenor of public discourse are altered in ways that are not easily repairable and life is breathed into harmful and hateful ideologies that promote white hegemony and nationalism over most everything else.

The ideological points discussed above do not take into account the role of money in the initiative process. In many ways, initiatives in the modern era are all about which side of the argument can obtain the most funding and amass the deepest war chests. Mary-Beth Moylan, a professor at the McGeorge Law School in Sacramento said, “The realities of the initiative process today are that if you don’t have money, you won’t be able to get a statute or a constitutional amendment through. It really is so expensive and cost-prohibitive for many.”

Moylan estimates that it easily costs between \$2 million and \$7 million just to get an initiative on the ballot (CapRadio, 2018). The process begins with a \$2,000 filing fee, initial marketing campaigns, and funds to cover legal advisors. The costs start to soar when campaigns commence the difficult process of collecting the necessary signatures to get the initiative to qualifying status. With an item requiring a minimum of 5 percent of votes cast in the previous election, that means nearly half a million signatures are needed to meet the mark. With such a high signature standard to meet, initiative campaigns often hire signature gathering specialists to canvas the state. Such a massive endeavor requires the resources and organizational infrastructure that can only come from a well-funded group. Most professional signature gatherers charge upwards of \$25/hour during peak seasons.

The issues surrounding these for-hire signature gatherers or harvesters extend beyond the cost as well. The initiative groups hire them for one purpose and one purpose alone that has nothing to do with the issue itself: gather the requisite number of signatures. Signature gatherers go to great lengths to meet the goals and use the latest technology, analytics, and even data mining to identify communities where they are likely to have the highest success. Harvesters are versed in the rhetoric around the issues and regularly use targeted and charged language to convince individuals to sign. Scott Schultz, a veteran signature gatherer, describes his tactics as a cross between fast-talking people skills, knowing which political and verbal buttons to push and when, and knowing the right ways to physically approach and engage a signer. He says, “You can kind of lean in and kind of just place the board with the petition in front of them, take your pen and kind of lead it to that empty spot so that they can just reach for it and finish. Then I make sure to use the right keyword to reel them in. Stuff like “Hey, did you know conservative

Governor XYZ is up to this?” or “can you believe the liberals and the ACLU are pushing to do this thing? I’d like to tell you about how you can stop that from happening.” (CapRadio, 2018).

In his book “California Crackup: How Reform Broke the Golden State and How We Can Fix It,” journalist Joe Matthews explores several incidents related to the rise of the lucrative cottage industry of signature gathering. One of the more infamous examples he cites happened with the 1984 California Lottery Initiative. He tells the story of one signature gathering firm, Kimball Petition Management, looking to create new business for itself. After the firm issued and reviewed some statewide polls, Matthews writes that they determined that a lottery initiative held high favorability ratings amongst likely voters and would pass without any problems. The firm scheduled several presentations with companies that make lottery supplies to convince them to support the initiative. The plan was for the lottery suppliers to contract Kimball’s firm to collect signatures and, if the initiative passed, the companies would be able to sell their goods in the largest markets in the country. The sides agreed to terms and the plan was a success. Kimball Petition Management received a lucrative new signature gathering client, the voters passed the initiative, and the state hired one of the companies to run the lottery. Proceeds from the lottery do benefit the California public education system, but they only make up about 1.5 percent of the public education budget. Matthews argues that this is a far cry from direct democracy. As he says, “The whole thing has become mostly about profit. It’s very much just buying and selling.” (Matthews & Paul, 2010).

Currently, the initiative process is hardly what progressive, pro-direct democracy advocates conceived in the early 1900s. The whole purpose of the system in the first place was to limit the influence of corruption, money, and special interests at the highest levels of state government. They had advocated for and willed into existence this system to curtail the sway of

railroad tycoons in the state; a group that had exerted their financial clout to buy politicians and influence legislation in a way that directly benefited the growth of their fortunes. Harold Meyerson, editor-in-chief of the progressive magazine “The American Prospect,” contends that those early proponents of the initiative process would likely be utterly confused over what their system has become. He writes, “The way would confound them that the laws regulating campaign finance have grown so friendly to wealth that it can now dominate the initiative and referendum processes they launched as a counterweight to corporate influence. They would surely demand, as should we, a new legal order that again breaks big money’s hold on the ways we make laws.” (Meyerson, 2019). There are ideas to reform the process, but none of them have taken hold. There have been legislative attempts to limit how signature gatherers get paid and how they conduct their work. Likewise, there have been efforts to limit the influence of lobbyists and special interests groups by the legislature, but the governor’s office has vetoed those to this point. In theory, any individual or group with enough money and the right message to capture the hearts and minds of voters can get an initiative before the people to potentially become the law of the state.

Chapter V

Legal and Judicial Precedents for Bilingual Education in the United States:

Language and immigration have long been a contentious matter in California, especially since it became a territory of the United States in 1848. Upon the conclusion of the Mexican-American War, the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo granted the land that now makes up Arizona, California, Colorado, and New Mexico to the United States. The treaty allowed all those remaining in the newly ceded U.S. territories to maintain their native languages and cultural practices. This element of the treaty was held up and honored to varying extents for a

few years following the agreement, as Spanish remained in use in many public venues, including schools, courts, and other government settings (DelCastillo, 1992, p. 19).

The allowance of such practices eventually shifted as public outcries for greater assimilation and populist and nationalist trends took hold across the country. “Schools were used to propagate the sense of nation to create the hegemony needed by the new elite to maintain their power relationship over the Indios and mestizos. Schooling was the tool to disseminate the ideals of a new society.” (Flores & Murillo, 2001, p.190). Almost immediately from the inception of these territories as states, nationalistic rhetoric shaped schools into sites of forced assimilation, segregation, and exclusion. The clearest example of this is that white students attended schools apart from Mexican or Indigenous descent students. The schools for white learners enjoyed significantly larger budgets and more plentiful resources. Inexperienced teachers and classes staffed the schools for Mexican American and Indigenous students were often held in less than ideal conditions for the time. Beginning in the early 1850s, California placed restrictions on the teaching of Mexican history and culture. Within another 15 years, the state mandated in 1870 that all instruction must be conducted in English. Learners that spoke English as their non-native language had difficulty adapting and often participated less in formal education (San Miguel, Jr. & Valencia, 1998).

Segregated schools for Mexican American students continued in California until 1946. In that year, the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit made its historic decision in *Mendez v Westminster*. In its ruling, the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, in an *en banc* decision, held that the forced segregation of Mexican American students into separate "Mexican schools" was unconstitutional and unlawful, not because Mexicans were "white," as

attorneys for the plaintiffs argued, but because as US District Court Judge Paul J. McCormick ruled,

"The equal protection of the laws pertaining to the public school system in California is not provided by furnishing in separate schools the same technical facilities, textbooks, and courses of instruction to children of Mexican ancestry that are available to the other public school children regardless of their ancestry. A paramount requisite in the American system of public education is social equality. It must be open to all children by a unified school association regardless of lineage." (Arriola, 1995).

Judge McCormick added later, "The evidence clearly shows that Spanish-speaking children are retarded in learning English by lack of exposure to its use because of segregation, and that commingling of the entire student body instills and develops a common cultural attitude among the school children which is imperative for the perpetuation of American institutions and ideals." (*Mendez v Westminster*, 1946, p. 9). This monumental decision would pave the way for the full integration of schools for Mexican American and other non-white students. Unfortunately, districts and communities continued to find ways to circumvent the court's ruling and further practice segregation. These actions continued even after the landmark *Brown v Board of Education* decision nearly an entire decade later that made school desegregation the law of the land. It would not be until the governorship of Ronald Reagan in 1967 that the state-mandated English-only instruction policy would be fully repealed.

The late 1960s would prove to be an active and important time in creating more equitable schools and learning environments for all children in the country. On the back of the advances of the Civil Rights movement and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, activists in districts across the nation championed crucial causes. On January 2, 1968, the Bilingual Education Act became law. This was the first law of its kind in that it addressed language within the American public schools. It highlighted the importance of addressing the needs of learners with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) backgrounds. This law also apportioned critical federal money to districts and

programs fostering bilingual education. The legislation was not without its problems, though. At first, it did not provide clear parameters and definitions for what constituted bilingual instruction. Additionally, it did not include provisions requiring schools to implement bilingual programs. As such, many schools opted not to offer any bilingual services at all. (Crawford, 1995, p.41).

During 1968 and 1969, in the early days of the Bilingual Education Act, it was revealed that schools serving LEP learners in several states with large Spanish-speaking populations were only adequately meeting the needs of about 6% of these LEP students (Crawford, 1995, p. 51). These substandard conditions eventually led to over 200 Mexican American students walking out of Wilson High School in Los Angeles in March of 1968. The actions at Wilson prompted a series of school protests across Southern California. Within a week, more than 15,000 students had participated in these events. The student protestors issued a series of demands that included recommended school reforms, improved and more comprehensive bilingual education instruction, and more supportive and inclusive school environments for the celebration of Hispanic heritage and culture. The large-scale nature of the protests caught the attention of the national media and forced leaders and community members to consider changes to policies. One result of the protests was the creation of the Education Issues Coordinating Committee (EICC) in the Los Angeles School District. This group consisted of Mexican American parents and college students and was charged with monitoring the conditions in schools. Similar models began to pop up in other areas with positive results at the outset, paving the way for change to happen (Rosales, 1997, pgs. 184-185).

Amendments and improvements to the Bilingual Education Act were made by 1970. Under the recommendations of the Office of Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education, changes were made to create benchmarks and requirements for public school districts. Any

school with an LEP population exceeding 5% of the school's population was required by law to implement programming to address the language needs of the LEP learners (Rodriguez, 1999, p. 193). It is essential to understand that these improvements to the law mostly came due to Latino and Chicano activists' growing role and influence like those in Southern California in 1968 in cities such as Miami, Dallas, Houston, Phoenix, Albuquerque, and Los Angeles. Their application of pressure on institutions and elected officials and their significant persistence in driving discrimination cases before lower courts brought much-needed light to the inadequacies of the laws on the books (Crawford, 1995, p. 51).

Crucial legal advances were made in 1974 when the case of *Lau v. Nichols* was brought to the U.S. Supreme Court. This lawsuit was filed on behalf of a group of Chinese students in San Francisco who could not understand the bilingual language instruction they had received at their school. The court held that since non-English speakers were denied a meaningful education, the disparate impact caused by the school policy violated Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the school district was required to provide students with "appropriate relief" (*Lau v. Nichols*, 1974). Following the court's unanimous decision, the Office of Civil Rights started observing and auditing schools to ensure that LEP student needs were adequately satisfied. These observations led to additional amendments to the Bilingual Education Act, which gave further assurances that students would receive at least some level of instruction in their first language and that some focus of instruction should focus on preserving the learner's native culture. The amended act described this as "education on equal terms" (Crawford, 1995, p. 48).

The decision in *Lau* opened the door for what was at the time described as the most progressive and crucial bilingual legislation in the country. In 1976, California State Assemblyman Peter Chacón and State Senator George Moscone sponsored and passed the

Chacón-Moscone Bilingual-Bicultural Education Act. This legislation made it so that all California schools had to identify each student's primary language and that primary language instruction be used in conjunction with cultural heritage teaching. The teaching of cultural heritage was mandated in each school with ten or more students from the same linguistic or cultural background. Personalized English-language acquisition plans had to be created and implemented in elementary schools with fewer than 10 LEP learners from the same background. The law required that at least one-third of the learners within each bilingual program speak English as a primary language to pass desegregation requirements. Chacón-Moscone further mandated that bilingual education instructors obtain state certification and that non-bilingual teachers working with LEP learners can best work with children from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds (*Encyclopedia of Bilingual Education*, 2017).

The progress made in bilingual education and immigrant rights in the mid to late 1970s was soon met with resistance. The apparent bipartisan support for bilingual programs and greater access to many services began to evaporate as a renewed public backlash against the Civil Rights Movement, non-whites, and foreigners residing in the United States took hold. There was considerable anger directed at the constantly evolving Bilingual Education Act and so-called "radical liberal and anti-American" laws such as Chacón-Moscone. A controversial report issued by the American Institute of Research at the time added to the uproar on the subject of bilingual education. Their report claimed that there was no actual proof that bilingual programs provided any better support to students than English-as-a-second-language or immersion instruction. The study likewise claimed that schools were holding students in bilingual programs for longer than was necessary. In subsequent years, the study was debunked as having little academic merit due to weaknesses and inconsistencies in its methodologies. Unfortunately, the damage was done and

anti-immigrant groups and those opposed to bilingual instruction used the report as evidence to support their message. This proved to be the tipping point that allowed groups to begin seriously pushing for the dissolution of bilingual education programs in their entirety once again (Crawford, 1995, p. 49).

Politicians eager to take advantage of the opportunity created by the American Institute of Research report quickly pushed for further changes to the Bilingual Education Act. In 1978, a new round of revisions to the law made it so that bilingual education focused on moving students out of those programs and into “mainstream instruction” in the fastest methods possible. The hastily written and added sections to the law did nothing to address the assessment of learner language skills, nor did it implement intervention suggestions for students that could not acquire the requisite language skills needed to exit bilingual programs. In the aftermath, schools around the country began diverting funding and resources away from bilingual programs and merely pushed children through said programs with little thought of the long-term outcomes (Carleton, 2002, p. 162). The changes also opened up the possibility that schools could organize children in separate classes based on their language abilities. Districts throughout the country quickly used this opening to craft segregated systems within their schools.

The new iteration of the Bilingual Education Act set off another string of court proceedings. The most notable among them is *Castañeda v. Pickard*, which was tried in the United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas. This case was brought forward by Roy Castañeda, the father of two Mexican American children, against the Raymondville Independent School District (RISD) in Texas. Mr. Castañeda claimed that the RISD had provided discriminatory education services against his children because of their ethnicity and native language. He argued that the classrooms his children were being taught in were indeed

segregated. The case showed that RISD had used a grouping system for classrooms based on ethnically and racially discriminating criteria. Castañeda further argued that the RISD failed to create adequate bilingual education programs, which would have supported his children to overcome the language obstacles preventing them from participating equally in the classroom (Mora, 2005).

On August 17, 1978, The *Castañeda v. Pickard* case was tried, and the court ruled in favor of the RISD. The court stated that the district had not violated the children's constitutional or legal rights. Mr. Castañeda filed for an appeal soon after on the grounds that the court had committed an invalid and unjust ruling. The case was brought before the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in the spring of 1981. This time the court ruled in favor of the Castañedas. As a result, the court decision established a three-part assessment for determining how bilingual education programs would be held responsible for meeting the requirements of the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974. The criteria were: The bilingual education program must be “based on sound educational theory,” the program must be “implemented effectively with resources for personnel, instructional materials, and space,” and after a trial period the program must be proven effective in overcoming language barriers/handicaps (*Castañeda v. Pickard*, 1981).

The ruling in *Castañeda* also coincided with the first few months of Ronald Reagan’s first term in the White House. One of the central planks of Reagan’s platform was to create a smaller federal government that had less regulation, oversight, and spending. This approach to governance was widely celebrated within the Republican party and a base of voters that had swept him into office with a sizable electoral win. Two of the primary targets of many conservative groups were the ramifications of the *Lau* decision almost a decade prior and Title

VII, as Reagan supporters felt these both took too much power away from individual states. Republican policymakers looked for different methods of weakening bilingual programs and supported further changes to the Bilingual Education Act.

Chapter VI

The Pathway to Proposition 227:

Reaganism marshaled in an era of great chaos and uncertainty for bilingual education programs. Increasingly, more of the decision-making power was handed back to the state and local school districts. This made progressive and inclusive policies at the state level such as Chacón-Moscone the target of fierce partisan attacks. Despite increased funding and indications that the measures taken in the law effectively met the needs of learners, heavy criticism was heaped upon it. Most of the attacks came from English-only activists but soon included prominent politicians, members of teacher unions, and Republican-leaning citizens. The pressure became so great and intense that amendments were made to weaken its original purpose and effectiveness. The law was weakened to such an extent that the California Legislature chose not to consider recertifying the program when it expired in 1987.

Heartened by the successful efforts of amending and weakening bilingual legislation at the federal, state, and local levels, and with growing public support, conservative-centric initiatives began to take an organized and aggressive shape. By the early part of 1983, a lobbying group named “U.S. English” gained prominence with a highly financed agenda to make English the official language and mandate English-only instruction in public schools (Flores & Murillo, 2001). “U.S. English” became so popular that wealthy and influential public figures including Walter Cronkite, Gore Vidal, Arnold Schwarzenegger, and members of the DeVos family took on advisory positions within the group over the years. This group also inspired, instigated, and supported multiple states to push legislation to declare English their official language by law.

Beginning with California in 1986, followed by Arizona, Colorado, and Florida in 1988, Alabama in 1990, and Alaska in 1998, six states all adopted “official English” legislation by ballot initiative. No such initiative has been defeated at the polls, and all but one passed easily. The exception was Arizona's proposition 106, an especially restrictive measure that was later ruled unconstitutional by state and federal courts. An additional 17 states have declared English their official language by other means, for a total of 22 such laws currently in force (DeParle, 2011).

In their wake came other similar groups with nearly identical agendas. Some of the more notable of these groups include “ProEnglish” and “English First.” At some point, all of these groups faced excessive scrutiny and controversy as some of their most notable members were caught making controversial statements. Many leaked documents through the years showed that much of their work was based on clearly racist and xenophobic motivations (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2002). One of the most notable examples that exposed the inner workings of “U.S. English” came when a batch of internal memos from the group was made public shortly before the 1988 Arizona referendum to make English the state’s official language. The documents revealed that John Tanton, a retired ophthalmologist from Michigan and the group’s chairman at the time, felt the United States faced grave consequences if the flow of immigration from Latin America was not curtailed. He claimed that immigrants would overturn the American way of life by infiltrating our political system, changing cultural practices and norms, and permanently shifting demographics. His statements were littered with references to eugenics and limiting the Hispanic fertility rate. He also called for dramatic steps to limit the influx of immigrants to a rate that would enable them to be assimilated quickly and easily. The memos were full of shocking and appalling questions for the group to consider: "Will Latin American migrants bring with

them the tradition of the *mordida* (bribe), the lack of involvement in public affairs, etc.?", "What are the differences in educability between Hispanics (with their 50% dropout rate) and Asiatics (with their excellent school records and long tradition of scholarship)?", and "On the demographic point: perhaps this is the first instance in which those with their pants up are going to get caught by those with their pants down!" (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2002).

The fallout of these correspondences being leaked to the press was immediate. Tanton was forced to resign, but argued that this was all part of a media smear campaign to paint him as a racist and stop the work of "U.S. English." While the controversy was significant enough to lead to his ouster from "U.S English," it was not enough to remove him from public life or his work in the field of English-only and anti-immigration advocacy. Tanton would later take prominent roles in several groups, some of which were eventually labeled as hate groups by the Southern Poverty Law Center (DeParle, 2011). Tanton and some of his contemporaries in their movement would serve as models of sorts for politicians and conservative activists.

Anti-immigration and English-only initiatives drew attention from the public and were easy ways to gain political capital in certain parts of the country that were still confronting societal changes in a post-segregation America and/or higher numbers of immigrants from Latin America. This trend continued throughout the early 1990s on to today. Two of Tanton's acolytes, Jon Feere and Julie Kirchner, would end up in the highest levels of government serving in the Trump administration (Santana, 2017).

Building on the anti-immigrant and nativist movements that were once again burgeoning in America due to people like John Tanton and groups like "U.S. English," a new wave of initiatives and legal cases were brought forward in the state. The first, and one of the most controversial, measures brought forward at the time was Proposition 187 in 1994, also known as

the “Save Our State” initiative. The purpose of Proposition 187 was to establish a state-run citizenship screening system and bar undocumented immigrants from using non-emergency health care, public education, and other services in California. The proposition faced immediate opposition in the media and public at large. Human rights and immigration activists decried the proposed legislation as xenophobic, racist, and little more than using fear to consolidate political power around the Republican Party. However, there was also significant support fueled by ongoing anti-immigrant rhetoric espoused by conservatives at the local, state, and federal levels. Supporters argued that their concerns were based on simple economics when California was still recovering from the recession of 1990. They contended that the state could not afford to provide social services for potentially millions of people who had entered the country illegally or overstayed their visas. Despite the vocal forces pushing against the initiative, voters passed the proposition into law at a referendum on November 8, 1994, with nearly 59% voting in favor of it (Margolis, 1995, pgs. 370-375).

In the eyes of anti-immigration groups, this was a significant victory and validation. Even as the new law was challenged in court on its shaky-at-best constitutional grounds, it provided a spark to an ever-expanding conservative movement. No longer was this just a fringe movement with minor victories here and there over the previous few decades. This was a decisive win at the polls in the most populous state in the country. It has to be noted that Proposition 187 spent most of its existence in court undergoing one appeal after another. That trend continued until 1999 when newly elected Democratic Governor Gray Davis withdrew all appeals and allowed certain parts of the law to expire (McDonnell, 1999). The remnants of the law would not be fully repealed until 2014 (Mehta, 2016). While the law itself was relatively short-lived, the damage

was done. The time between its passage and its repeal opened many opportunities for anti-immigration and English-only groups to strike.

Proposition 187 was followed shortly thereafter by another measure in the form of proposition 209, otherwise known as the California Civil Rights Initiative (CCRI), in 1996. Where 187 focused on issues related to undocumented immigrants, 209 was centered on removing affirmative action practices from public employment and public education in the state. The heart of the law was that preferential treatment would not be given to “any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the operation of public employment, public education, or public contracting.” (California Secretary of State, 1996). While the authors of 209 modeled their work after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 on the surface with its language, the initiative actually would have severe consequences to minority groups if enacted. The most direct impact would be felt in college admissions programs designed to diversify campuses and open up pathways for higher education to underrepresented groups. Likewise, it would end policies that sought to create equitable hiring practices in the public sector. Once officially on the ballot and in front of the voting public, Proposition 209 would become the first electoral test on affirmative action policies in the United States (The New Social Worker, 2013).

The campaign to place CCRI on the California ballot as a constitutional amendment was supported by Joe Gelman (president of the Board of Civil Service Commissioners of the City of Los Angeles), Arnold Steinberg (a pollster and political strategist) and Larry Arnn (president of the Claremont Institute). It was additionally endorsed by Governor Pete Wilson and funded by the California Civil Rights Initiative Campaign, chaired by the University of California Regent Ward Connerly, a prominent Wilson surrogate. The principal co-chair of the campaign was law

professor Gail Heriot, who served as a United States Commission on Civil Rights member. On the national level, 209 was supported by prominent Republican leaders such as soon-to-be GOP Presidential nominee Bob Dole and controversial figures like former Grand Wizard of the KKK David Duke. The initiative was vehemently opposed by influential Democratic lawmakers like Barbara Boxer, affirmative action advocates, traditional civil rights groups led by influential figures such as the Rev. Jesse Jackson and Coretta Scott King, chancellors from several of California's major public colleges, and liberal activist organizations. Despite the opposition groups' efforts, Proposition 209 would have a resounding victory at the poll garnering 55 percent of the vote (The New Social Worker, 2013).

Chapter VII

The Rise of Ron Unz and the “English for the Children” Movement:

With two major, though controversial ballot victories under their belts within two years, conservatives in California began to look for their next policy target. It was becoming more apparent in the eyes of many that the fight would be waged over K-12 public education in the state, and the most likely target would be bilingual education. From 1980 to 1996, the number of LEP students enrolled in California public schools increased by nearly 254%. By 1997, California schools were home to roughly 1.4 million learners that required some form of language assistance or intervention. This number constitutes about 25% of the total enrollment in the state. By this point, 30% of students designated as LEP were receiving instruction in mainstream classes. Roughly 40% were instructed in specialized English classes. The remaining learners under that designation were taught in primary language classrooms (Rodriguez, 1999, p. 195). Those numbers showed no signs of declining, either. These demographic trends made California ground zero in the debate over matters of immigration and bilingual education.

Everything reached a critical point in early 1996 when several stories ran in the *Los Angeles Times* regarding issues between the Latino community and some school districts in Southern California. Two major headlines read “Latino Parents Boycott School Bilingual Plan at Ninth Street Elementary” and “80 Students Stay Out of School in Latino Boycott.” These stories were followed by a string of other protests that saw parents of elementary school-aged students advocating for English-only instruction to be implemented in schools across Los Angeles County. It is critical to understand that many of these initial protests were not protests against bilingual education in its entirety. Still, the demonstrations were directed at drawing attention to underfunded and resource-starved programs that left LEP learners struggling. The string of protests and walkouts garnered the attention of administrators and school board officials. Conversations were now underway to alter the instruction plans in school for the following school year to reduce the amount of bilingual instruction that learners would receive (Haver, 2013).

These actions quickly drew the attention of the man who would eventually become the face of the Proposition 227 movement, Ron Unz. Unz had gained notoriety a few years prior in the 1992 California governor’s race. He had lost the election by more than 34% but had made a lasting impression for his firm conservative stances on hot-button issues. His campaign ads were edgy and controversial, as they often attacked Republican incumbent Governor Pete Wilson. One commercial in particular accused Wilson of “sitting on his hands and holding back the National Guard as mobs and criminals burned Los Angeles in 1992.” (HoSang, 2010, p.231). It also helped that he was a financial supporter of conservative groups such as the Heritage Foundation and the Manhattan Institute. Other than that failed attempt in the governor race, Unz was still a political outsider. He was a businessman by trade, having become wealthy in the early booms of

Silicon Valley. He was also armed with a Ph.D. in Physics from Harvard and powerful connections brought about by his lucrative analytics firm. While he was much more successful in business, he had his eyes on being a political power player. The fight for English-only instruction in California and what would eventually become Proposition 227 were the perfect ways to seize a public platform and earn his political stripes (Foster, 1999).

In writing the policy that would become Proposition 227, Unz immediately seized on the imagery of those 1996 protests against bilingual education. Ninth Street Elementary School in downtown Los Angeles, a school predominantly populated by students of color from immigrant backgrounds would be co-opted by a movement designed to deprive them of the ability to deprive them of educational services in their first languages. Unz proclaimed:

“Immigrant parents were forced to begin a public boycott after the school administration refused to allow their children to be taught English. Enormous numbers of California schoolchildren today leave years of schooling with limited spoken English and almost no ability to read or write English. We believe that the unity and prosperity in our of society is gravely threatened by government efforts to prevent young immigrant children from learning English.” (Ron Unz, Bob Navarro’s Journal, KCBS/LA, aired on December 1, 1997)

This approach of appropriating Ninth Street and other similar protests was, by all accounts, highly effective in generating support for the initiative.

In another interesting move, Unz initially backed Proposition 187 before pulling support as the campaign escalated. He felt Republicans had been too overt in their intentions and tone. Unz argued that such openly strict mandates, as prescribed in the initiative, would ultimately damage the party and conservative initiatives in the near future by driving minorities into the Democratic Party. Surprisingly, Unz would end up speaking at an anti-187 rally attended by an estimated 75,000 people. He also wrote an op-ed piece against the measure in the Los Angeles Times (HoSang, 2010, 232). Both of these approaches would ultimately prove to be strategically

advantageous for Unz, as they allowed him to get his name out there once again and build valuable trust in the Latino and Asian communities. Support from those communities would be vital in the English-only fight that Unz would wage within a few years.

Contrary to previous anti-bilingual education advocates, Unz went to great lengths to openly separate opposition to bilingual education from ‘anti-immigrant and anti-Latino views.’ He publicly rejected the support of Governor Pete Wilson, the most outspoken politician behind Proposition 187, the previously referenced attempt in California to punish and crackdown on undocumented immigration in 1994. Unz refused to be seen with nativist groups, even though there is intense speculation that he colluded with them to reduce their wide-scale support of the initiative. He filled campaign posts with Latinos and Asians. Rather than attack immigrants for speaking other languages, Unz campaigned in their communities for children’s ‘right’ to learn English. In short, he posed as their advocate against unresponsive schools.

In short order, Unz went about putting a team of people together to help him craft the perfect English-only campaign. The first vital additions to the group were Gloria Matta Tuchman and Jaime Escalante; both were long-serving and well-regarded educators. They also happened to be Latino. Tuchman had worked in the Santa Ana school district for decades in elementary education. She prided herself on never using Spanish in the classroom and even went so far as to refuse the use of any Spanish resources (Haver, 2013). Tuchman had also served as a board member under John Tanton in the “U.S. English” group. Escalante was known throughout the state for his work as a math educator in East Los Angeles. He had gained extra notoriety when his teaching career was portrayed in the critically acclaimed film *Stand and Deliver* in 1988. Escalante was also the parent of two LEP learners, one of whom was fully enrolled in mainstream classes and the other in primary language instruction programs. Escalante agreed to

serve as the campaign's honorary chairman (Rodriguez, 1999, pgs. 191-195). Unz would enlist Henry Gradillas, a Hispanic high school principal from East Los Angeles, to serve as a special spokesperson. The group announced their intent on placing an English-only instruction measure on the 1998 ballot. Their initiative and group took on the name "Proposition 227: English for the Children."

From an education standpoint, the proposition's goal was to transition LEP learners in California into English fluency as quickly as possible. The text of the proposition was unambiguous:

"All children in California public schools shall be taught English by being taught in English. In particular, this shall require that all children be placed in English language classrooms. Children who are English learners shall be educated through sheltered English immersion during a temporary transition period not normally intended to exceed one year. Local schools shall be permitted to place in the same classroom English learners of different ages but whose degree of English proficiency is similar. Local schools shall be encouraged to mix together in the same classroom English learners from different native-language groups but with the same degree of English fluency. Once English learners have acquired a good working knowledge of English, they shall be transferred to English language mainstream classrooms." (Unz & Tuchman, 1998)

Additionally, Proposition 227 mandated that public schools only teach in English. LEP students would be put in a one-year program that would immerse them in English before they would be placed in mainstream classrooms; students with high enough English levels could bypass this with a waiver. With this programming in place, not only was it supposed to reduce the number of necessary specialized classes, but it also was projected that it would reduce California's spending on public schools as well (Gullixson, 1999, 515).

Unz, Tuchman, Escalante, and Gradillas became fixtures on television news shows throughout the state as they built momentum for English-only instruction and their proposition. They participated in heated debates with the opposition as well as interviews. Unz spent

considerably more time campaigning and on-air than his colleagues. While Unz very much relied on the efforts of Tuchman and Escalante in promoting the cause, he wanted there to be no mistake that he was leading the charge. After all, over half of the \$1.2 million used to fund the campaign for Proposition 227 came directly out of Unz's pocket (Foster, 1999). Interestingly, the Proposition 227 campaign did not receive much official verbal or financial support from the state Republican Party or many of its most prominent figures. Unz chose to forgo hiring professional consultants or experienced campaign operatives. However, the campaign received the support of a handful of wealthy and influential donors with connections to far-right groups like the Heritage Foundation and the Club for Growth. After it was concluded, analysis of the campaign showed that the top contributors to the 227 efforts were "wealthy white and English-speaking men." They also all identified as Republicans or conservatives and favored strict immigration laws (HoSang, 2010, 239).

While still collecting signatures to get Proposition 227 on the ballot, Unz outlined his main arguments in his blog, which in the late 1990s was still a relatively new means of disseminating information in politics, *The Unz Review*. He repeatedly argues that bilingual education was a failing program since its inception. Unz contended that LEP children in California were not learning English because they were not being taught English in bilingual programs:

"...Many of America's own public schools have stopped teaching English to young children from non-English-speaking backgrounds. Influenced by avant-garde pedagogy and multiculturalist ideology, educational administrators have adopted a system of bilingual education that is usually "bilingual" in name only." (Unz, 1997)

Additionally, Unz attributed the failure of bilingual education to the funding streams the government set up to provide LEP students services. He contended that schools were incentivized to keep students in bilingual classes longer to allow them to receive more funding.

As such, teachers were encouraged to not teach students English at all (Unz, 1997). This was a highly controversial stance that appeared to have little merit at the time and has been outright debunked in the intervening years (Parrish, 2006).

For those reasons, Unz argued that California desperately needed an allegedly feasible and straightforward solution to its bilingual problem in the form of Proposition 227. As Unz himself concluded on his blog, “All of California’s immigrant schoolchildren finally will be granted the right to be taught English, the universal language of advancement and opportunity, supplementing their own family languages.” (Unz, 1997). Unz vowed that Proposition 227 would teach children English rapidly and efficiently, reversing decades of poor instruction from schools and inadequate political policy from liberal legislators.

Chapter VIII **The Fragmented Opposition to Proposition 227:**

The opposition response to the English-only movement following the passage of Proposition 187 was slow and often disorganized. When Unz and “English for the Children” filed petitions with the state for their initiative in the spring of 1997 and formally began public campaigning in July, opponents waited until the winter of that year to raise a response. This delay alone gave “English for the Children” a head start of many months. The delay was compounded even more by the bilingual education community’s silence on the matter. Harry Pachon, a highly regarded scholar of Latino politics and public policy, was highly critical of the lack of response. He warned that not mounting a swift and forceful response would lead to dire consequences for bilingual education in the state. Pachon contended that people in the bilingual field were coasting on the hard-won victories of the 1960s and 70s. As he stated, the education establishment needed “to realize that in California, nothing is sacred.” (HoSang, 2010, 236).

Even when the opposition to Proposition 227 began to speak out, there were divisions amongst the various stakeholders on which strategies would be most effective for defeating the measure. These divisions led to an unclear message and disputes. The California Association of Bilingual Educators (CABE) and the California Teachers Association came together to form “Citizens for an Educated America.” This new group’s first move was to hire experienced Democratic consultant Richie Ross to run their campaign. Ross’ advice for pushing back against Unz was to focus on the proposition as a policy based on political extremism that would have unforeseen consequences due to the untested nature of the program “English for the Children.” Ross felt that attempting to defend the merits of bilingual education in these instances would be ineffective in the long run. He also thought that this strategy would play better amongst suburban and more affluent Republican women (Sacramento Bee, 1997).

Some other prominent groups and figures felt otherwise and thought that bilingual education deserved a vigorous and direct defense. Boycotts and demonstrations were organized at the grassroots level across the state. Reuben Rey, a parent and citizen in the Santa Barbara School District, was quite outspoken about his belief in the virtues of bilingual programs. When his district announced that they were planning on discontinuing such programs, Rey explained that discarding bilingual education “has tremendous impact on kids’ self-concept, self-growth, self-esteem. It’s not just about eliminating the language...By eliminating these programs what you’re saying is what you’re bringing to the classroom is not good.” For Rey and others like him, this initiative was not just an attack on their children’s rights to receive a proper education on the same level as their white and native English-speaking counterparts. Proposition 227 was a weapon forged in the historic fires of racism, segregation, and xenophobia of past generations to be used against people whose heritage traces back to Mexico and Latin America. Proposition 227

represented an attempt to push the state backwards when speaking of Spanish was not even permitted in public schools (HoSang, 2010, 237).

Several prominent educators decided to break ranks with the state's teacher associations in defense of bilingual education. Mara Bommarito, principal of Woodlawn Avenue Elementary in Los Angeles, and Vicky Castro, a Latina member of the Los Angeles Board of Education, spent considerable time speaking to the media to advocate for the protection of programs throughout California. Bommarito stated that only about 5 percent of parents in her school opted out of bilingual programs and that those enrolled in said programs were scoring better on assessments than English speakers (KABC-TV, Los Angeles, 1998). Similarly, Castro explained that her communities took great pride in the bilingual programs and ultimately served the students' overall best interests. She added that while there was still debate in her district regarding language acquisition and the mechanics of bilingual education, those issues were not a sign that bilingual education was failing or needed to be discarded altogether. Such an approach would be shortsighted and catastrophic for the children being served by the system (HoSang, 2010, 237). In one rather contentious episode in the campaign, the Santa Ana school board, the board in charge of the district where "English for the Children" co-author Gloria Matta Tuchman had taught for decades, came out in a straightforward rebuke of the proposition. They stood by their bilingual programs and unanimously declared their opposition to the measure in one of the clearest defenses of bilingual education made by a school board in the campaign (Hamashige, 1998).

Unfortunately, the tone taken by people like Rey, Bommarito, Castro, and the Santa Ana School Board was mainly ignored by the more mainstream and establishment elements of the 227 opposition campaign. The lack of unity in the message even came despite efforts by national

civil rights groups to bring components of both groups together. For whatever reason, large-scale coordination and collaboration could not happen. This was reflected as well by the reactions of prominent political figures on the national level. There was a sense of either ambivalence or doubt over how to best argue against the initiative.

A prime example of this is the stance taken by President Bill Clinton. Even though advocates from both factions of the opposition appealed to him for several months for support, he withheld weighing in on the matter until a month before Californians would be headed to the polls. When he finally offered his thoughts, they were brief and provided little detail about why the proposition should be struck down. He only said that Proposition 227 was the incorrect path to follow because it would leave children of immigrants and non-native English speakers in “intellectual purgatory.” (Broder, 1998). Clinton’s Secretary of Education, Richard Riley, offered a bit more of a response to 227, “Proposition 227 is not the way to go. This one-year time limit and one-size-fits-all approach to learning flies in the face of years of research that tells us that children learn in different ways and at different speeds.” (Portner, 1998). Those comments ended up being the only support the anti-227 campaign received from the administration.

The anti-227 campaign did receive substantial financial backing from a handful of groups. The majority of those funds went to the “Citizens for an Educated America” group. Their initial goal was to attain \$5 million to cover the expenses of their efforts. They met that goal thanks in large part to two sizable donations. The first was a \$1.5 million contribution from Jerry Perenchio, the majority owner of the Spanish-language television company Univision. The other came from the California Teachers Association (San Diego Union-Tribune, 1998). These donations granted the campaign the ability to spend nearly \$3 million on television and radio advertisements. Still, these ads would only arrive in the final weeks leading up to the vote.

The publicity efforts also stuck to the message of denouncing the initiative, its provisions, and Unz himself. There was no mention of discussing the effective elements of bilingual education or the learners served by the programs. As HoSang describes it, this was a fatal error on the part of the anti-227 campaign. An error that he contends has been repeated repeatedly in the initiative process era of California history. He writes, “This strategy reproduced an assumption...that the only way to defuse the appeal of a racialized measure was to affirm its basic premise (here, that bilingual education indeed deserved to be abandoned) and to focus on other extreme or hidden provisions.” (HoSang, 2010, 238). Even the advertisements aired on Spanish-language networks and radio stations in Spanish made no attempts to defend bilingual education.

Chapter IX

The Election, Impact, and Lasting Legacy of Proposition 227:

The fateful day of June 2, 1998, finally arrived and millions of Californians headed to the polls to vote on Proposition 227 and a handful of other issues like the U.S. Senate primaries. Unz and “English for the Children” would walk away with a resounding victory by the end of the day. Their measure had passed 61 to 39 percent. A CNN/Los Angeles Times exit poll revealed many fascinating aspects of the election. First, most respondents cited Proposition 227 as the primary reason they decided to vote in this election. Second, Republican women voters back Proposition 227 by a staggering 72 to 28 percent margin. This result proved that the strategy supported by Ross and the “Citizens for an Educated America” was an abject failure. Finally, the sentiments most often stated for voting in support of the campaign were “If you live in America, you should speak English” and “Bilingual Education is not effective.” The only region of the state where Proposition 227 did not receive the majority of the vote was the Bay Area. Even there, 227 were only lost by a small amount (HoSang, 2010, p.239).

The results left many shocked and dismayed, though most were not surprised that the results came in as they did. Regardless, the outcome sparked immediate debate amongst 227 opponents about what happened, why it had happened, and what was to come next. Laurie Olsen, a spokesperson and prominent figure for the anti-227 campaign, says she saw the outcome months before the vote. She argued that an undercurrent of xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiments had been building for a while and that those feelings had been stoked with just the right message. From the early days of the campaign, internal polling conducted by her team revealed "a reservoir of anger, distrust, and even hate focused on bilingual education, bilingual educators, and immigrants- particularly Spanish-speaking immigrants" (Crawford, 2014, p.2). Proposition 227 successfully exploited "a set of fears and beliefs of a voting California [that was] unrepresentative of the state-whiter, older, only 15 percent with children in public schools." A majority of this electorate expressed "the sense of Spanish ruining this country, the sense of our nation in threat. The sense that upholding English as the language of this nation is a stance of protecting a way of life--this outweighed every argument we could wage to try to defeat 227. This is what we were up against and still are." Such minds were closed to considering the case for bilingual education, Olsen concludes. "It's not just that they don't understand it, they don't like it." (Olsen, 1998, 7-10).

Different opponents of Proposition 227 did concede that anti-immigrant and xenophobic sentiments had an impact, but were quick to point out that the anti-227 efforts caused numerous self-inflicted wounds that turned away voters from casting their vote against the measure. Jim Shultz, the long-time director of the Democracy Center in San Francisco, stated that the loss boiled down to an inconsistency in the message and fragmentation amongst different groups soon after the election. "Citizens for an Educated America" refraining from a defense and

explanation of bilingual education, an unwillingness by bilingual education advocates to seriously consider overhauling programs at both the local and state level that were ineffective, and a total failure to mobilize grassroots groups in language-minority communities that supported and benefited from bilingual education programs. Even in defeat, it appeared that the anti-227 camps could not coalesce around a conclusive explanation for their failure. In actuality, all of the parties were correct in that there was no one single cause. Bilingual education, immigration, and civil rights activists were forced to go back to the drawing board.

On the other side, Ron Unz became a popular figure in California amongst conservatives in the election's immediate aftermath. One publication called him "The Man that Controls California" (Miller, 1999) and other media outlets hailed his savvy in organizing an efficient and successful campaign. With a relatively small investment of personal funds and a simple message that relied more on emotions than any factual evidence against bilingual education, Unz appeared to single-handedly overturn generations of policies and programs that students, parents, communities, activists, and civil rights groups had fought tirelessly to obtain. James Crawford states:

"Unz's work provided the first test of his ideas for modern conservative coalition-building: Could the fears of English speakers be assuaged without alienating too many language minorities? Was opportunity-through-assimilation an idea that could be sold to immigrants and natives alike? Would it be credible to attack bilingual education on behalf of those it was designed to benefit?" (Crawford, 2014, p. 15).

Unz's short-term strategy had a broad appeal among Californians. Despite a disproportionate turnout of liberal and Democratic voters, the initiative passed easily, defeating other conservative ballot measures. Ethnic opposition was considerably weaker than it had been over Proposition 187 four years earlier: 37 percent of Latinos and 57 percent of Asians voted for the anti-bilingual initiative versus 23 percent of Latinos and 47 percent of Asians for the anti-immigrant initiative.

Unz may have come far short of the 80 to 90 percent support among Latinos that he predicted at the outset of his campaign, but in the June election they opposed the initiative by nearly 2 to 1 (CNN/*Los Angeles Times*, 1998). However, he was able to strengthen and increase the conservative base around a controversial topic and deliver it so that it peeled off enough minority voters to achieve success. This all gave Unz the feeling of political power and recognition for which he yearned, at least at the moment.

Following his success in California, Unz turned his attention to pursuing a more significant national footprint for his anti-bilingual education crusade. With the support of influential right-wing figures and increased financial backing, Unz initiated and supported successful ballot measures in Arizona and Massachusetts. An attempt to pass a similar initiative in Colorado lost out by the slimmest of margins (HoSang, 2010, 241). In actuality, these would be the last political victories that Unz would enjoy in his political career. As the national focus on many topics shifted in the wake of 9/11, Unz struggled to gain the type of mainstream traction that he had with “English for the Children.”

Of late, Unz has mostly taken to posting controversial articles on his blog and speaking in favor of fringe theories and policies with much of his political capital spent. For a time, he was also the publisher of the far-right magazine *The American Conservative*. Unz was eventually driven from that publication due to comments and writings deemed too controversial regarding American foreign policy. He has also come under fire for anti-Semitic remarks, Holocaust denial, and racist and xenophobic comments about many different groups. Unz’s articles have received praise from noted white supremacists such as David Duke and Jared Taylor (Woodruff, 2013). Unz staged a run for the U.S. Senate seat opened up by the retirement of Democrat incumbent Barbara Boxer. He only garnered 1.2 percent of the vote in the primary race. The seat was

eventually won by future U.S. Vice President-Elect Kamala Harris of the Democratic Party (California Secretary of State, 2016).

The lasting impact of Proposition 227 is multi-faceted and extends to many segments of society. Once passed into law, the initiative had definitive ramifications on California's schools. It "severely limited students' access to bilingual programs and effectively eliminating bilingual education programs in the state, thereby creating inhospitable learning environments that are culturally, educationally, and linguistically unresponsive." (Crawford, 2014, p.25). The proposition mandated that students receive instruction primarily and overwhelmingly in English by placing them in Structured English Immersion (SEI) classes. The goal is for them to gain academic language skills in English. According to the legislation, English language learners would be permitted to remain in SEI classes for a period not to exceed two years. Such classes would utilize curricula and strategies to support students as they acquired English.

With this new law, SEI classrooms were legally defined as "multi-age classes with students at the same level of English proficiency in which the focus of instruction was to be the development of English skills" (Gándara, 2000, p.2). These classes were designed foremost to teach students English, with only a secondary focus on academic content. As Jim Cummins has argued, it takes five to seven years for English learners to attain the *cognitive-academic language proficiency* necessary to be sufficiently fluent in English to succeed in the context-reduced, cognitively demanding reading, writing activities, mathematics, science, and other academic subjects. Therefore, students cannot be expected to learn academic concepts in grade-level content classes if they are not proficient in the highly demanding language of the teacher or the even more complex language in content-area curricula and textbooks (Cummins, 1986).

Proposition 227 did include a waiver for parents who wanted their child to continue in a bilingual program. Parent waivers were considered according to the following three conditions: (a) the child already possessed strong English language skills, as measured by standardized tests of English vocabulary comprehension, reading, and writing in which the child scored at or above the state average for their grade-level or at or above the 5th-grade average; (b) the child was over ten years of age and school personnel determined that a bilingual approach would best serve this child, or (c) the child needed modifications due to a specific learning disability. Additionally, “the new law specified that children must be placed ‘for a period no less than 30 days during the school year in an English language classroom’ before a parent waiver would be able to move the child into an ‘alternative’ (i.e., bilingual) program” (Palmer & Garcia, 2000, p.169). In other words, the legislation required that all youth be immersed in an English-only environment for a period of time regardless of the desires or needs of the students and their parents or guardians. Lastly, Proposition 227 included “a provision allowing parents and others to assign personal legal liability to any teacher, school, or district that does not implement the English language program as designated in the initiative” (Maxwell-Jolly, 2000, p.38). The legal responsibility this proposition placed on school personnel had rarely, if ever, been implemented before in California’s state educational policy.

Furthermore, school districts in California that were willing and able to maintain primary language classes through the waiver process are increasingly turning to English-only instruction for students at an earlier age due to the expansion of English language testing now required through the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation (Au, 2009). NCLB and the increased testing it required, coupled with the challenges districts faced to maintain primary language classes in the wake of Proposition 227, put pressure on many schools to dispense with

their effective bilingual programs in favor of early-exit bilingual programs that transition students to English-only classes earlier in elementary schools. These students were not given the time necessary to attain sufficient skills in their primary language before shifting to English-only curricula, thus reducing the effectiveness of their primary language classes.

The passage of Proposition 227 coupled with the expansion of English language testing reduced the number and availability of primary language classes available to English language learners, effectively crippling bilingual programs and making it more difficult for LEP students to attain the same quality of education and opportunities as their fluent and native-speaking peers. Even with legal challenge after legal challenge, the law remained in place and bilingual education languished. This approach continued for nearly two decades until the law created by Proposition 227 was overturned and repealed by another ballot initiative, Proposition 58.

Equally devastating were Proposition 227's long-term impacts on politics and social issues on both the state and national levels. The era in which this proposition and those like it came into being proved that certain topics could be used to exploit underlying racial and nativistic tendencies. Unz and Proposition 227 had indeed arrived at the right time to capitalize on certain social trends and polarizing beliefs. Ron Unz appeared from the political ether and displayed that "even in a state dominated by Democratic voters professing strong commitments to racial tolerance and inclusion, programs like affirmative action and bilingual education could be criticized and politically undermined." (HoSang, 2010, 242). With a succinct campaign message grounded in populist rhetoric, Unz did what some inside the political establishment considered unthinkable. He exploited the system of supposed direct democracy to significant and appalling effect with a compelling narrative campaign.

It must be stated that Ron Unz did not create this blueprint for electoral success. He just seized on the debates stirred up by predecessors from the right and finely tuned his message to achieve maximum impact. In the years following the passage of 227, two other controversial propositions were put to the vote in California. Proposition 21 was a harsh youth criminal-sentencing measure, and Proposition 22 banned the recognition of same-sex marriage. The two initiatives passed with overwhelming support from voters (HoSang, 2010, p.242). The victories of these measures were primarily attributed to the simplicity of their message and their ability to portray the alternatives as detrimental to the stability and well-being of the state and its citizens. While Unz himself was not directly involved with the campaign efforts of either measure, those initiatives' supporters noted the influence his methods had on the way they framed their work. His techniques would also be followed in the years to come by those in conservative movements like the Tea Party and eventually with more overt racism and xenophobia in the successful 2016 presidential campaign of Donald Trump. On the flip side, the political era of Proposition 227 is credited with the demise of the Republican Party in California with the rise of multi-ethnic and diverse coalitions of democratic voters ascending in the two decades since.

Chapter X

A Story of Discrimination and Exclusion- A Final Reflection on Prop. 227's Narratives:

The Proposition 227 campaign unfolded in many different ways. There were elements of the fight that were entirely unexpected. For example, the disunity amongst the "No to 227" camp was a particularly shocking turn. The lack of pushback from national Democratic party leaders was equally as surprising. However, much of the discourse and the narratives that emanated specifically from the initiative's supporters were very much a repetition of history and exclusionary ideologies that have existed in this country since before its foundations. The

appropriation of policy issues that predominantly impact historically marginalized groups by white politicians, the various manifestations of racism and xenophobia, and the public relitigation of rights that had already been granted to minorities are well-entrenched aspects of the American body politic. These painful and unfortunately predictable characteristics become increasingly more apparent when Proposition 227's narratives and policy actors are carefully examined with close historical scrutiny. Yet even with the all too visible markings of the policy's true nature, the initiative was passed into law by well over half of the voting public in California of all places. At its core, this study is very much about unlocking how such an event could ever take place.

Proposition 227's narratives were carefully crafted to hide the true purposes of the policy. Symbolic language such as metaphor was used to influence likely voters in the Proposition 227 campaign. Key facts regarding the efficacy of bilingual education programs were distorted or presented as half-truths. Policy actors like Ron Unz used wealth, whiteness, and the co-opting of people of color into their cause to give the illusion that there was overwhelming support for the initiative in communities composed predominantly of English-language learners. Supporters of Proposition 227 presented narratives saturated with assimilationist ideology that was congruent with the political values and supposed socio-cultural ideologies of the majority of voters (Kahan et al., 2013; Lakoff, 2004; Wolfe, 1999). Finally, Unz took advantage of a perfect policy window to introduce his masterwork. The economic downturn of the early 1990s and the recent adoption of the North American Free Trade Agreement brought about a more vocal protectionist push, one that had already been simmering since the Civil Rights movement, by conservative groups wishing to curtail immigration particularly from Latin America. Unz became the right man at the right time with the perfect approach and funding.

Even though proponents of the Proposition 227 campaign exclaimed that the policy was strictly about helping children, the lasting impact of the policy on children was never really broached by Unz. Every element of the discourse, debate, and messaging placed the children on the periphery of the discourse. Immigrant children and English-language learners presented onstage as the beneficiaries of reining in multilingual and multicultural programs in schools, while backstage proponents hoped to gain voter support for their viewpoint and, possibly, higher political status. The consequences of these actions triggered a further entrenchment of institutionalized inequality and presented a blueprint that future conservative policymakers could follow.

Proposition 227 is prime evidence that policy narratives do not exist in a legal or political vacuum. Policy narratives, as discussed here, shape the way American communities are brought together. They define the country's social, cultural, and economic priorities and goals. They represent who we are and what we want to be as a collective whole. Narratives are also a powerful agent in defining who is an "American" and how people can belong in the country. "English for the Children" did not invent racist, xenophobic, or nativistic narratives, but they breathed life into such movements. Their narratives were so powerful that we are still unpacking them today.

Summary of Findings:

Power of Policy Narratives

The historical analysis of this study lays bare the power and potential brutality of policy narratives. The story and legacy of Proposition 227 are defined by racialization, division, and its ability to garner well over half of the vote for a conservative policy in extremely liberal California. The success of this racist and discriminatory proposition has been largely credited to

the Unz campaign's ability to build a simple and clear message that voters can easily identify. Their campaign had simple goals and a unified front, even if those goals ran contrary to the state's supposed political culture and cultural diversity under the surface. By providing voters with a basic message, conservative groups could unify their base and attain just enough support from minority groups to achieve their goals. Meanwhile, liberal activists and pro-bilingual education supporters were fragmented and gave different and conflicting explanations to the public. This chaotic approach drove voters to what was seen as a more organized and sensible policy measure, even though it may have gone against their equality, equity, and inclusion values.

The power of policy narratives is not contingent on just one message or element of political discourse. More often than not, narratives gain their strength through a confluence of strong policy actors, cohesive and compelling story elements, and an open policy window (appropriate conditions for a policy to gain needed support) influenced by history and setting. In the following sections, this study will discuss the impact of some of these elements on Proposition 227 and the implications that such conclusions have regarding both the policy itself and subsequent policy implications. It is only through a thorough assessment of these narrative components that a clear understanding can be understood.

Analysis of the primary resources related to the initiative campaign show overwhelmingly that Unz did not succeed due to the soundness of his policy proposal or the accuracy or truthfulness of his claims. Unz and his team won due largely to a brief, clear, and hard to counter-message. The simplicity and effectiveness of Proposition 227's core narrative are best demonstrated by the campaign's very name, "English for the Children." That name is both an emotional appeal to the voting public and a mission statement that is hard to counter by

opposing policy actors. To conservative voters, “English for the Children” was precisely what many of them had advocated for through the things like the English-only movement of the preceding decades. For liberal-leaning voters without a nuanced understanding of bilingual education policy, the name pulled at the heartstrings as it evoked a sense that marginalized immigrant children were being deprived of vital learning resources. From the outset, opponents of Proposition 227 were at a disadvantage in conveying their message. In just a few words, decades of bilingual education policy and legal victories ensuring equal access to educational resources and services were put in critical condition.

The narrative Unz constructed, along with the seemingly sympathetic appeal, gained Unz massive media coverage. Unz understood that journalists enjoyed a good sound bite and that the average voter had little bandwidth for complicated and nuanced policy conversation. In the final six months of the Proposition 227 campaign, more than 600 newspaper articles and numerous radio and television broadcasts were placed before voters in California. Most of these reports featured brief but inflammatory charges by Ron Unz. The opposition rarely responded with anything remotely resembling a compelling counter-narrative. The conversation shaped by Unz was not “How can programs for English learners be improved?” or “Do school districts need greater flexibility in teaching these students?” but “Is bilingual education necessary in a country that is built on English” and “Should bilingual education be eliminated in favor of supposedly less expensive and more intensive English instruction?” This way of framing the narrative gave the policy actor great power and created a false and misleading dichotomous decision for the voters to make- yes for equality through English-only instruction and no for more failed and wasteful liberal education policy.

It is important to not be dismissive of why exactly Unz's seemingly simple narrative worked so incredibly well. Unz was able to distill the racial angst of generations of white voters, the complex history of bilingualism and multiculturalism, and longstanding attitudes and fears around immigrants. Many of these elements are hard to decipher unless a thorough analysis of the policy and its narratives is undertaken. California voters in 1998 did not have the luxury of time to thoroughly vet the policy. Unfortunately, they were not given counternarratives that adequately addressed the subtle, and often not so subtle, racially motivated grievance politics of right-wing conservative movements at the time. The unfortunate part is that Ron Unz did not invent these racist and xenophobic tropes and narratives. They have always been a part of the United States since its foundation. He merely tapped into them effectively enough to build a coalition of voters that would carry him to victory.

Policy Actors and the Parts that they Play

_____ In the greatest novels, movies, and dramatic works, actors, and characters are chosen and developed to cause emotional responses and connections to a story. Heroes, villains, and supporting players serve essential purposes in propelling a plot to resolution and maintaining the audience's attention. Actors in the policy world are created and selected for much the same reasons. The goal of any policy group is to have their concept enacted as laws or governing principles. Policy heroes are those that supposedly have the answer that will bring about a resolution to a public problem. Policy villains are those that impede the desired policy outcomes. Once the public decides which policy actors play which roles, it is hard to change opinion. In the case of Proposition 227, Unz got a head start on publicity and consolidated his message around digestible and seemingly benevolent soundbytes.

Due to this effective narrative strategy, Unz gained a favorable status in the public's eyes that was further aided by a generous relationship with the media at the time. He was regularly described in the print and news media as a "wealthy computer executive," "Silicon Valley entrepreneur," and "Ivy League educated savant." These are descriptors that project images of high intelligence, success, and high socioeconomic status. Even though he had no particular expertise in the fields of bilingual education or public policy, the messaging surrounding him made it easier for the public to trust his intentions. Conversely, Holly Thier, the primary spokesperson of the opposition, was usually identified by her affiliation with the "No on 227" organization, Citizens for an Educated America. The media often ignored Thier. When she did receive coverage it was usually to frame her weak leadership or narrow professional background. The public narrative surrounding Thier also regularly took on sexist and misogynistic tones as well. Unz and his group could refrain from going negative against the anti-227 team because the public narrative was already doing a sufficient job in that regard.

Additionally, both the proponents and opponents described themselves as caring for immigrant students and language learners, thus casting themselves as sympathetic actors. At the same time, they cast their adversaries in pejorative terms. Language used to describe the anti-227 advocates commonly came down to such words as "greedy," "heartless," and "lawbreakers." Opponents of the initiative cast their adversaries as "uncaring," "mean-spirited," and "misleading the public." One example of this back and forth casting came from a southern California school board member in a Daily News of Los Angeles article. He questioned their motivations by saying, "They don't have the students as their top priority. They want grades to rise and test scores to be high, but yet they're chopping them [English-language learners] off at the legs." (Maeshiro, 1998). The dramatic image of a young student being crippled and the portrayal of

policy actors as greedy and uncaring may trigger emotional reactions rather than rational thinking in the minds of the public. This interplay builds narratives that are difficult to disassemble because they are predicated upon visceral reactions and not statements of facts that can be countered with other facts (Smith, 2014).

Immigrant students and English-language learners were portrayed by the policy actors and in the media in three basic ways. First, they were seen as objects that could be moved from one learning environment to another without either serious conversation of the consequences or their input. This created the sense that they were commodities or possessions that had little to no agency. Second, they were described as an invasive population that threatened to overwhelm and undermine social and public programs like the school system. Such a description aligns with time-worn stereotypes and racist tropes that cast foreigners as a threatening force. Finally, they were portrayed as victims. Without severe and direct intervention, immigrants and English-language learners would be lost, disabled, and incapable of succeeding in the United States. This type of casting falls in line with ideologies of Western white supremacy that place people of color and non-English speakers as inferior in every way to their white counterparts. Recipients of bilingual education were hardly ever described as autonomous and capable. They barely received representation in the public debate. Their role was not to act but to be acted upon, which deprived them of their humanity, rights, and ability to advocate for themselves.

Time, Place, and Setting-Keys to Capitalizing on Policy Windows

In the case of this study, the setting is California in the mid to late 1990s. This location is vital to exactly how this policy was created and eventually implemented. Besides the actual geographic and temporal characteristics, California had a long and complicated history with immigration, bilingual education, and a system of direct democracy that more often than not

deprived instead of empowered the will of the people. This section will unpack the elements of setting that made the state a fertile ground for such a controversial policy and provide further evidence of the importance of setting in establishing a compelling policy narrative.

In a broad sense, California as a critical setting for a bilingual education battle is perfectly logical. Geographically, it shares a border with Mexico to its south and its territory once belonged to that nation. Ethnically and culturally, the state is home to the most diverse population in the United States with residents coming from countless countries and backgrounds. Such diversity means by default that linguistic variety will be present as well. California is also the fifth largest economy in the world, meaning that it is an attractive market for those looking to work in any number of fields from farming to technology. Finally, as was discussed in the preceding chapters, California's history and political system show that it has been fighting the bilingual education battle since it joined the United States in the mid-1800s. Direct democracy also made it so that the right person with the right resources and message could potentially bring anything before voters. The conditions were long in place. All that was needed was for the right policy window to open.

The timeframe of the Proposition 227 campaign also aligned perfectly with the "English Only" that had only grown in prominence for conservatives since the late 1970s and 80s. By the mid-1990s, 22 states had already enacted laws that established English as their official language. This was done either through legislative action or ballot initiatives. Many of these states would be considered traditional Republican strongholds in the Deep South and Southwest. However, states that have come to be seen as more liberal-leaning in electoral politics like California itself declared English as their official language as recently as 1986 (California Constitution Article III § 6, 1986). These nationwide debates put language at the forefront of the public's mind as an

issue worth considering. Conservative policy actors capitalized on the attention generated by the various referendums, including Ron Unz.

Though this paper did not spend any extended time on the idea of policy windows or streams as they are also called, it ties closely into the ideal setting in a policy narrative. Leslie Pal (2014) defines policy windows as “unpredictable openings in the policy process that create the possibility for influence over the direction and outcome of that process.” A significant part of the policymaking process is contingent on these unpredictable situations and the actors that take advantage of them. Massive changes in economic circumstances or powerful shifts in technology also have a way of rippling through the political system and generating issues for public discussion. However, these structural explanations can “illuminate only the broad shape of the public agenda. Much depends on political jockeying, policy entrepreneurs, and combinations of complex and unpredictable forces.” (Pal, 2014, p.113). As was the case in California in the 1990s, the issues surrounding immigration and bilingual education were driven into the political and cultural consciousness by the characteristics unique to that place. Ron Unz filled the leadership role with charisma, a solid and straightforward central message, and a deep understanding of California’s cultural and political climate.

Much of the anti-immigrant angst was focused on battling against public programs and resources. The enrollment of limited-English-proficient children had more than doubled in the decade preceding Proposition 227. At the time, well over 1 million students were enrolled in bilingual education programs in California public schools. This exponential growth stemmed not only from rising immigration but also from higher birth rates in language-minority communities, which also played into historical false and dangerous narratives about immigrant reproduction. Between 1990 and 1996, as the state’s population increased by 2.6 million, nine out of ten of the

new Californians were Latinos or Asian Americans. These groups expanded to 29 percent and 11 percent of state residents, respectively, while African-Americans held steady at 7 percent and non-Hispanic whites slipped to 53 percent. Approaching minority status for the first time since the mid-19th Century, many white Californians feel threatened by the impending shift in political power and resentful about paying taxes to benefit 'other' people's children (Schrag, 1998). Still, in the June 1998 election, they accounted for 69 percent of the voters statewide, African-Americans 14 percent, Latinos 12 percent, and Asians 3 percent (Los Angeles Times–CNN Poll, 1998).

Political events coalesced perfectly around the larger socio-cultural angst for Unz and Prop. 227 supporters. The critical political event of the immigrant parent boycott at places like the Ninth Street Elementary School and the failure of the California legislature to reauthorize the Bilingual-bicultural Education Act of 1966 created a critical policy gap that needed to be remedied. A policy window opened that Unz was all too happy and prepared to step through. A definite swing in public sentiment or mood against special treatment for underprivileged groups was indicated by California Propositions 187 and 209. This resentment and pushback had been simmering in some communities since the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 60s. Also, there seemed to be a growing mistrust of educators and teachers' unions as indicated by Propositions 223 and 226, which appeared on the same ballot as 227. Rather than events within government such as specific policy debates or party politics, the state legislature's lack of ability to reach consensus and their constant battle over bilingual education provided a policy gap that policy actor Unz's proposed Proposition 227 filled. All of these conditions permitted Unz an ability to eventually build the coalition needed amongst the voting public to convert the initiative

into a law, even though it ran contrary to so many of the supposed characteristics that were assumed about the political and cultural attributes of California.

The Struggles and Pitfalls of Direct Democracy

This study confirms many issues with the direct democracy process as it is currently instituted in California. As is the case with many of the propositions brought forward in California in the 20th Century, especially those in the 1990s, the initiatives expose and exploit racial fault lines to attain passage. In their wake, the tone and tenor of public discourse are altered in ways that are not easily repairable and life is breathed into harmful and hateful ideologies that promote white hegemony and nationalism over most everything else. Furthermore, the battle for Proposition 227 shows that measures that do not truly represent the public good can gain acceptance with the proper financial and political support. In those cases, laws may be enacted that take years, millions of dollars, and protracted legal battles to overturn. Those who suffer most due to these actions are those already struggling on the margins of society.

Many in the United States advocated throughout the 20th century to institute proposition or initiative style mechanisms in the country's democratic system. Today, some variation of this style of democracy is practiced in more than half the states. In 1998 alone, close to 100 propositions appeared on statewide ballots and more than half of those were voted into law. These propositions ranged from bilingual education in California to lottery measures in various and election term limits in others. Variations of direct democracy are so widespread that today 26 US states have initiative and/or veto referendum processes at the statewide level. All states have at least one form of legislatively-referred processes: 49 states have at least a legislatively-referred process to amend their constitutions, and one state, Delaware, has a

possibility of legislatively-referred ballot measures to pass new statutes only. In all of these states except Delaware, to modify the state constitution, at least one form of ballot measure is mandatory.

Even though many of the ballot initiative measures relate to tax issues or bond measures. Recent years have seen states take on increasingly more politically and socially divisive matters. California once again proves to be one of the best case studies for this continued evolution of the ballot initiative process. This study has already documented Proposition 187 (1994): “Save our State” and the deceptively named Proposition 209 (1994): “California Civil Rights Initiative.” The types of initiatives placed before the voters continue to vary across a variety of issues. Some include matters related to criminal justice like Proposition 184 (1994): “The Three-Strikes Initiative,” gambling to fund education like Proposition 20 (2000), legalization of Marijuana like Proposition 20 (2010), and banning same-sex marriage like Propositions 20 (2000) and 8 (2008). As with almost all of these propositions, there were detrimental effects and steep social prices paid by minority and marginalized groups. Proposition 184 was tied directly to a rise in the incarceration rates for people of color and Propositions 20 and 8 required decades of battles in court to permit the legalization of same-sex marriages. For better or worse, the power to decide some of the most fundamental parts of American society has been pushed into ballot measures.

In theory, an approach to governance that bestows policy-shaping power upon each individual voter would be logical, sensible, and highly democratic. However, as Proposition 227 demonstrates, the reality is significantly more nuanced and potentially more problematic for community and state governments. The initiative system has allowed many politicians to abdicate responsibility and involvement in controversial or complex matters. The avoidance of taking a public stance on ballot propositions by elected officials also creates a vacuum that has

unfortunately become filled with wealthy donors, special interests groups, lobbyists, and political action committees (PACs). These types of actors tend to be better positioned to make an impact with their resources than individual voters and less organized groups. Such was the case in Prop. 227, when many political leaders refused to take a public stance on the “English for the Children” measure. The lack of leadership and advocacy undoubtedly had an impact on undecided or confused voters.

The potential for direct democracy systems to undermine equity and equality with racist propositions increases dramatically with serious economic downturns, underperforming public programs, and other similar larger scale problems. History has proven through episodes like Proposition 227 that these conditions lead many voters to lash out at others that are different from the mainstream through ethnicity, religion, citizenship status, or language. The initiative system has far too often been overrun by actors employing the politics of exclusion or ideologies of scapegoating those in society that possess the least amount of power. The 1990s happened to be a period when a primary target against whom weaponized ballot measures were aimed were immigrant communities.

What is Citizenship?- Testing the Boundaries of Belonging through Education Policy

Defining citizenship and belonging in the United States is truly one of the most divisive political and social tasks in American society today. There are undoubtedly legal regulations that determine and dictate the status that one can possess in the government’s eyes while living here. The federal and state governments all have various ways that they interpret and thus enforce such regulations. Attaining legal citizenship status also confers upon the citizen certain rights and privileges that non-citizens do not enjoy, such as voting, holding federal employment, and receiving certain types of government benefits and services. Yet, legal definitions of citizenship

and public debates around the subject regularly fail to acknowledge or engage with the complicated nature that comes from being a person without a legal and acceptable status.

A significant point that is overlooked when discussing undocumented immigrants, in particular, is their contributions to the U.S economy and presence in society at large. In 2019, undocumented immigrants from Mexico alone were estimated to have contributed around \$9.8 billion in local, state, and federal taxes. The same demographic group also added roughly \$90 billion to the economy (New American Economy Research Fund, 2021). A significant portion of taxes is paid into the system by undocumented immigrants knowing that they will receive no tax return or eligibility for social benefits due to not meeting residency and citizenship legal thresholds. Even heads of families with members or children eligible to receive benefits often forego what could be critical resources to escape possible government scrutiny. This results in more economic insecurity and hardship, with long-term negative consequences, particularly for children. Despite being productive and contributing members of society economically, marginalization occurs because undocumented immigrants do not meet institutionalized requirements for legal recognition.

Dwelling on strictly legal constructions of citizenship also fails to acknowledge that millions of undocumented people participate in and contribute to communities across the country. They provide several vital services and add essential aspects to the cultural fabric of the nation. In many cases, they have children born in the country who attend schools and participate in other walks of American life. A large portion of the undocumented immigrants in the United States meet other metrics for measuring citizenship defined by their participation and engagement that are critically overlooked by individuals and interest groups advocating for stricter immigration policies.

It is this nebulous space created at the junction of legal citizenship and participatory citizenship that we find policies such as Proposition 227. Actors like Unz found education policies to be particularly interesting places to promote conservative and nativist remediations to immigration problems they saw. Education policies are so attractive because most of the electorate supports improving schools and learning environments for children. All public schools are funded by tax dollars and/or public funds allocated by local, state, and federal governments. With the amount of money involved in public education, voters and taxpayers cannot help but notice when events impact or potentially change aspects of schooling. Also, schools are sites where students participate in society as citizens of the larger community. Controlling who can attend schools and what and how students learn can dictate how generations of children perceive and embody conceptualizations of citizenship.

Recognizing education's significance, the Supreme Court of the United States characterized schooling as essential to preserving the underlying fabric of our country. Congress codified education as “fundamental to the development of individual citizens and the progress of the Nation.” (USC 05 20 USC 3401, 1979). Additionally, the U.S. Supreme Court case of *Plyler v Doe* (1982) established that it is unconstitutional to deny a child present in the United States an education based on citizenship status. Yet, despite the proclaimed significance of education and constitutional protections granted by the courts, no explicit right to education exists within the U.S. Constitution, nor is there an assurance of the type of education that children will receive. Therefore, courts and legislatures continually struggle to determine the educational opportunities to which students are entitled and how these opportunities are delivered. Since education has never been recognized as a constitutional right, great deference is given to a state legislature’s determinations of educational policy. As has been noted, in a state where initiative systems exist.

The right policy actor can drive a narrative into the public consciousness that usurps an unresponsive legislature and engages voters in public discourse in ways that might ultimately be entirely unhealthy and destructive.

As they are with bilingual education policies, narratives around citizenship or even tangentially related to citizenship are and always will be about belonging. Notions of belonging “inherently have exclusionary tendencies; some must fall outside the community for a “we” to exist. Immigrants must experience a sense of safety and an ability to maintain their core identity, which is essential in sustaining belonging to their native communities. For immigrants to achieve belonging, access to certain resources like education is absolutely essential. Unfortunately, many immigration narratives by conservatives such as Ron Unz focus on stripping away the individual’s native culture and values. The argument is that any resources allocated for use by immigrants from the public should assimilate the immigrant. Some call for a complete assimilationist pedagogy that removes linguistic and cultural characteristics outside white, English-only normative practices. Others propose bilingual and multicultural programs that are believed to be more stabilizing and more inclusive for the learner. However, bilingual and multicultural education plans meet the same types of resistance immigrants face, namely that such programs will divert resources away from other programs and slowly weaken the country’s foundations (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2010).

During the campaign, Ron Unz may not have explicitly said that he was out to protect the superiority of white, Christian culture in the United States. He was always careful to steer his policy away from anything that could directly implicate him as a racist or xenophobe at the time. Furthermore, he was deliberate in his efforts to keep his campaign detached from the immigration debates of the time. He did not want the public narrative to convert Proposition 227

into a referendum on citizenship. Yet, in hindsight, it is apparent that this separation of the policy narratives from such topics was an intentional decision made by “English for the Children” to deceptively lead the voting public to enact a policy that very much sought to limit and define how non-white and non-native English speakers participated in the public and civic square.

The convergence point between immigration, citizenship, and education over the last decade has occurred around policies like the D.R.E.A.M. Act (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act) (2001) and D.A.C.A. (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) (2012). Those policies are not entirely about education, but they both include significant provisions related to teaching individuals who immigrated to the United States at an early age without documentation. In both policies, such young people would be provided a pathway to full citizenship if they meet certain criteria like obtaining a GED or high school diploma. As with Propositions like 227 and the many others like it that sprung up around the country in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, the D.R.E.A.M. Act and D.A.C.A. have been met and challenged by conservative groups and politicians. The narratives around them have specifically centered on the same stereotypes and tropes about immigrants that have been used time and again. The fight to pass the D.R.E.A.M. Act continued for years until the legislation lost all momentum for passage around 2012.

D.A.C.A. was created as a follow-up of sorts for the D.R.E.A.M. Act. It continues to be a source of political and judicial contention. The rhetoric around D.A.C.A. became even more combustible in the era of Donald Trump. One of his key campaign pledges was to repeal the D.A.C.A. executive order on day one of his presidency. In September 2017, during the Trump administration’s first year, Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced that the program was being repealed. Sessions stated that the DACA-eligible individuals were lawbreakers who adversely

impacted the wages and employment of native-born Americans. Sessions also attributed D.A.C.A. as a leading cause behind the surge in unaccompanied minors coming to the United States from Central America. President Trump said that “virtually all top legal experts” believed that D.A.C.A. was unconstitutional. Fact-checkers have said that only a few economists believe D.A.C.A. adversely affects native-born workers, that there is scant evidence that D.A.C.A. caused the surge in unaccompanied minors, and that it is false that all “top legal experts” believe D.A.C.A. to be unconstitutional.

Sessions added that implementation would be suspended for six months; D.A.C.A. status and Employment Authorization Documents (“EAD”) that expired during the next six months would continue to be renewed. D.A.C.A. recipients with a work permit set to expire on or before March 5, 2018 would have the opportunity to apply for a two-year renewal if U.S.C.I.S. received their application by October 5, 2017. In a follow-up statement, Trump said, “It is now time for Congress to act!” The approximately 800,000 immigrants who qualified for enrollment in D.A.C.A. would become eligible for deportation by the end of those six months. A White House memo stated that D.A.C.A. recipients should “use the time remaining on their work authorizations to prepare for and arrange their departure from the United States.” A string of notable court cases ensued with *New York v. Trump*, *Regents of the University of California v. U.S. Department of Homeland Security*, and *Trump v. NAACP (D.A.C.A.)*. All of these cases prolonged the life of D.A.C.A., but none of them made D.A.C.A. the law of the land.

On July 17th, 2021, U.S. District Judge Andrew S. Hanen sided with Texas and other states in his ruling that President Barack Obama overstepped his executive authority when he created the D.A.C.A. program. Hanen’s ruling called D.A.C.A. an “illegally implemented program” and said “the public interest of the nation is always served by the cessation of a

program that was created in violation of law.” He prohibited the Department of Homeland Security from approving new applications, issued a permanent injunction vacating the memo that created D.A.C.A. in 2012- when President Biden was vice president- and remanded the issue to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for reconsideration.

Now President Biden described the ruling as “deeply disappointing” and said the Department of Justice would appeal the decision “in order to preserve and fortify D.A.C.A.” Biden further added, “While the court’s order does not now affect current D.A.C.A. recipients, this decision nonetheless relegates hundreds of thousands of young immigrants to an uncertain future.” The long-awaited knockdown spurred a political outcry and intensified pressure on the White House and Congress to pass an immigration measure this year. Biden on Saturday renewed his push for Congress to pass the American Dream and Promise Act “through reconciliation or other means.” (Sacchetti & Wang, 2021).

The Inescapable Truth- Proposition 227’s Racist and Xenophobic Foundations and Outcomes

The entirety of this paper has been spent unpacking how Proposition 227 gained success. While this investigation did not yield one overarching reason for how the initiative passed, every possible explanation and piece of evidence comes back to historical and institutionalized racism and xenophobia. Look no further than the legal and political context of California during the 1990s and early 2000s. Proposition 227 was only one of six propositions in this period that either explicitly attempted to repeal gains made during the Civil Rights movement or disproportionately impacted historically marginalized communities of color. Each of the propositions in question sought to either remove access to public services from certain groups, eliminate practices such as affirmative action, or re-define criminal codes in ways that would

target people of color. Some of these ballot measures failed, but the shocking majority passed with strong majorities before spending years entangled in legal battles.

Proposition 227 was the descendent of several discriminatory education policies in California since its earliest days as part of the United States. Despite decisive court victories, decades of legislative advancements, numerous progressive bilingual and multicultural education programs, and immigration reform, there still existed a tension between nativist and white-centric beliefs about society and the use of social resources to minority groups. Over time, the tone and tenor of those laws changed to appear less racist, anti-immigrant, and xenophobic on the surface, but the effect was all the same. The cumulative impact of these racial proposition battles led to what Daniel Martinez HoSang described as a “genteel apartheid” or a separation and othering of groups to maintain white supremacy.

The desired outcome of this attempt at re-imposing de jure segregationist policies is to derail the possibility of equity, diversity, inclusion, and true social justice in a multicultural democratic United States of America. These initiatives work in two historically effective ways to meet those ends. First, they bring controversial debates directly to the public. This public discourse legitimizes White racial supremacy through supposed democratic institutions. The problem is that these democratic institutions have been historically and legally constructed to favor whites and maintain a socio-cultural hegemony. Systems of oppression and discrimination can never be expected to produce greater equity for groups and individuals that those same systems have continually marginalized. This is especially true when fear and race-centered narratives are used to drive voters to make decisions that eliminate the rights of minorities.

Second, these propositions attempt to dismantle or at least push back against the gains made through the activism and sacrifices of communities of color during the peak era of the Civil

Rights movement (1950s-1970s). While that period offered progress in terms of desegregating schools, addressing voting rights, and providing a general sense that the United States was shifting toward social and political policies that were aimed at more significant equity instead of perpetuating institutionalized discrimination, there were still strong undercurrents of social tension and undeniable institutionalized racism. The gains of the Civil Rights era were met with an opposition that only grew more intense with each passing year. The resistance to change persisted in many forms ranging from anti-bilingual education laws to Supreme Court cases that dismantled the Voting Rights Act to a current attempt to ban the teaching of Critical Race Theory in schools across the country.

The assault on the Civil Rights movement hit a peak in 2013 in the form of *Shelby v. Holder*. In this case, the Supreme Court was asked to determine the constitutionality of two provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965: Section 5, which requires certain states and local governments to obtain federal preclearance before implementing any changes to their voting laws or practices; and Section 4 (b), which contains the coverage formula that determines which jurisdictions are subject to preclearance based on their histories of discrimination in voting. On June 25, 2013, the Court ruled by a 5 to 4 vote that Section 4 (b) was unconstitutional because the coverage formula was based on data over 40 years old, making it no longer responsive to current needs and therefore an impermissible burden on the constitutional principles of federalism and equal sovereignty of the states. The Court did not strike down Section 5. Still, without Section 4(b), no jurisdiction will be subject to Section 5 preclearance unless Congress enacts a new coverage formula (*Shelby County v. Holder*, 570 U.S. 529 (2013)).

The cumulative effect of this decision has been catastrophic for voting rights across the country, with many states pursuing policies that make it significantly more difficult for ethnic

minority voters to vote. Eliza Sweren-Becker, a voting rights and elections counsel at the Brennan Center, called the new wave of voting laws “an unprecedented assault on voting rights” as well as “a voter suppression effort we haven't seen since the likes of Jim Crow.” In 2021 alone, 17 states have passed over two dozen new laws that made voting and voter registration more difficult. (Alas, 2021). These latest attempts to undermine equality at the polls are merely scratching the surface as several other states have similar laws queued and ready to pass. The Texas State Legislature was prepared to push through one such law in July 2021. It took Democratic legislators leaving the state to prevent the ability of the legislature to call the quorum necessary to vote (Ura & Pollock, 2021). The maneuvering of the democrats is merely a procedural stall tactic, though. Actual congressional intervention in the form of new voting rights protections is the only long-term remedy.

Regarding Critical Race Theory, numerous states have recently passed or have begun to consider passing laws that restrict racism, bias, the contributions of specific racial or ethnic groups to U.S. history, or related topics. As of July 2021, 28 states have moved forward with such laws. They range from Michigan SB 460, which bans the use of the ‘1619 Project’ in public schools to Texas SB 3, which prohibits elements of critical race theory in the classroom. This particular legislation could also prohibit classroom simulations and community service projects. One section of the measure states that schools and teachers cannot make a part of the class coursework “political activism, lobbying, or efforts to persuade members of the legislative or executive branch at the federal, state, or local level to take specific actions by direct communication.” Teachers also cannot require “participation in any internship, practicum, or similar activity involving social or public policy advocacy.” A revised version of that legislation, which passed the Texas Senate on July 16, removes the mandate to teach pivotal civil rights

documents, such as the speeches of Martin Luther King Jr. and Dolores Huerta. (Texas SB 3, July 2021). These types of laws along with the efforts to dismantle voting rights continue to maintain their potency thanks in large part to the ability of conservative policymakers to perpetuate and adapt the effective racist and xenophobic narratives of the past.

With Proposition 227, Ron Unz argued that his work was about protecting the welfare and future of the children of California. However, the window of retrospection of the past two decades has shown that both Unz and his policy are not as what they were billed to be. In recent years, Unz has aligned himself more directly with white nationalist ideologies and the programs created by Proposition 227 failed to consider the diverse needs of non-native English-speaking families. More appallingly, the narratives Unz created were used to specifically attack, divide, and call into question the very ability of immigrant families to experience a sense of belonging in the United States.

In the proposition system, opponents of equitable laws and social justice found a means through which they can continue to challenge the rights of minority groups by introducing a myriad of individual policies to the public. Such an approach has been highly effective as it has kept the debate around these topics ongoing and in a patchwork manner perpetuated institutionalized racism. The case of Proposition 227 shows the racial tensions that still can be exploited in American society. Such tensions can lead a largely white electorate to pass laws that adversely impact minority communities. The right policy actors in the right setting can embolden those that openly seek to strip away the rights of others and manipulate otherwise well-meaning voters to act in fundamentally bigoted ways by covering the racist roots of the policies.

Implications

_____The findings of this study have implications across a number of settings and groups. Concerning the core elements of this study, the following section focuses mainly on how researchers, policymakers, and individual members of society can engage with policy narratives and their potential outcomes. Future studies should explore the role and responsibilities of journalists and the media at large. Their position in disseminating and creating policy narratives is particularly crucial in the current era. The following implications are in no way exhaustive or comprehensive for researchers, policymakers, and individuals. Nevertheless, it provides some significant themes that can lead to the next steps in scholarly studies, healthier and more inclusive policies, and more informed communities of voters and activists.

This study provides a roadmap for using the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) in qualitative research for researchers. It is crucial to keep expanding this theoretical field, as it offers another tool for breaking down and understanding key components of policy work. This study addresses stated gaps that exist in the Narrative Policy framework itself. As mentioned previously, Weible and Schlager (2014) state that the base iteration of NPF is insufficient for explaining deeply complex policy issues. They suggest that the frame can be improved by incorporating other schools of thought and other tools for analysis. The work in this study deviated from the basic quantitative approach of the original NPF by using time tested and well-known qualitative tools such as historical methods. Narrative studies have been carried out in numerous disciplines for generations, but they are still relatively new in the realm of policy studies. Thus, this project is a case study for using emerging methods to greater effect in understanding public policies. Expanding the theoretical and methodological scope of policy research should ideally improve the policies being produced as well. The contributions of

scholars and researchers might ultimately be one of the primary strategies for dismantling policies and politicians that undermine the public good and the democratic institutions of the country.

It might be cliché to say that “those that don’t understand history are doomed to repeat it.” Nonetheless, there are truths that do radiate from that well-worn phrase. Engaging with the past is essential for making sense of the current socio-cultural state of the country. History is likewise a means by which we can identify the root causes of issues and improve the conditions in which we live. This study follows the long tradition of historical analysis and historiography that is commonplace in other disciplines. Adding these time-tested and proven methods to the ever-evolving and emergent policy field will solidify the field as an essential area of study.

Regarding policymakers, this study highlights the power of policy language and narratives in shaping public opinion and implementing policies themselves. While the example of Proposition 227 is primarily a cautionary tale for how policy narratives can be weaponized, there are numerous policies and policy actors that have used policy narratives to heal and unify. The main point is that policy actors carry tremendous responsibilities and the stories they tell to achieve their goals have the potential to empower, demoralize, unite, or divide. Policy narratives have the potential to wound or to heal. They can perpetuate and entrench discrimination or move society to greater equity and social justice. From a very practical point of view, policy narratives are necessary tools to carry out an agenda. As such, policy narratives must be carefully and thoughtfully constructed. If we are to deliver on the hope and promise of the Civil Rights movement, policy narratives must continue to evolve into edifying, educating, and constructive tools for solving problems and bringing communities together.

For individuals and communities, this study demonstrates that policies and policy actors must be thoroughly questioned, vetted, and held accountable for the narratives they produce. This process seems to have become muddled and more difficult with the proliferation of social media and neverending news cycles. Information is constantly changing and the relationships between policy actors and some news organizations have become blurred. Such conditions might seem hopeless for individuals and even more concerning for marginalized communities. Yet, there are methods that can be used to combat harmful, unfactual, or discriminatory narratives.

One of the many lessons learned from an examination of Proposition 227 is the importance of well-crafted and informative counternarratives. There does not need to be one universal narrative that answers all the issues raised by propaganda or divisive policies. However, there must be resistance in the form of theoretically grounded, empirically based, and accessible policy responses. At the same time, there needs to be serious efforts to educate and inspire the electorate. Knowledge and information resources must be accessible and comprehensive for voters to make the best possible decisions.

It can be argued that a significant portion of the responsibility to learn and decipher narratives falls on the individual. That is too reductive of the issue and fails to consider significant and longstanding inequalities for many communities. Many individuals are shaped and restricted by the environments created by previous policies. The negative forces and consequences of systemic racism run deep and shape communities in countless ways that limit access, resources, and platforms necessary to counteract the institutionalized racism in place. Likewise, it is highly problematic to put the responsibility of dismantling longstanding systems of oppression entirely on marginalized communities. This is why it is incumbent upon activists, organizations, and policy actors to build alliances, craft better narratives, and make available

resources that unify communities. Building and empowering coalitions in communities of color and other marginalized groups is one way to respond to standard practices employed by policy actors seeking to limit and eliminate rights.

Finally, the governing institutions and political bodies in the United States must continue to become more and more reflective and representative of the country's population. A prime way to make sure that voices are heard within the system is by electing those voices. It is honestly the only way that many narratives can be most accurately and authentically shared. In recent years, the number of women, people of color, and members of the LGBTQIA+ community in office has increased across the country. Hopefully, this foreshadows massive changes that will dismantle the old ways and systems of oppression that have troubled the country for too long.

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