

Has The SAT Change Actually Helped the SAT?

A Review

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Date:





How did the SAT change? And why did it?

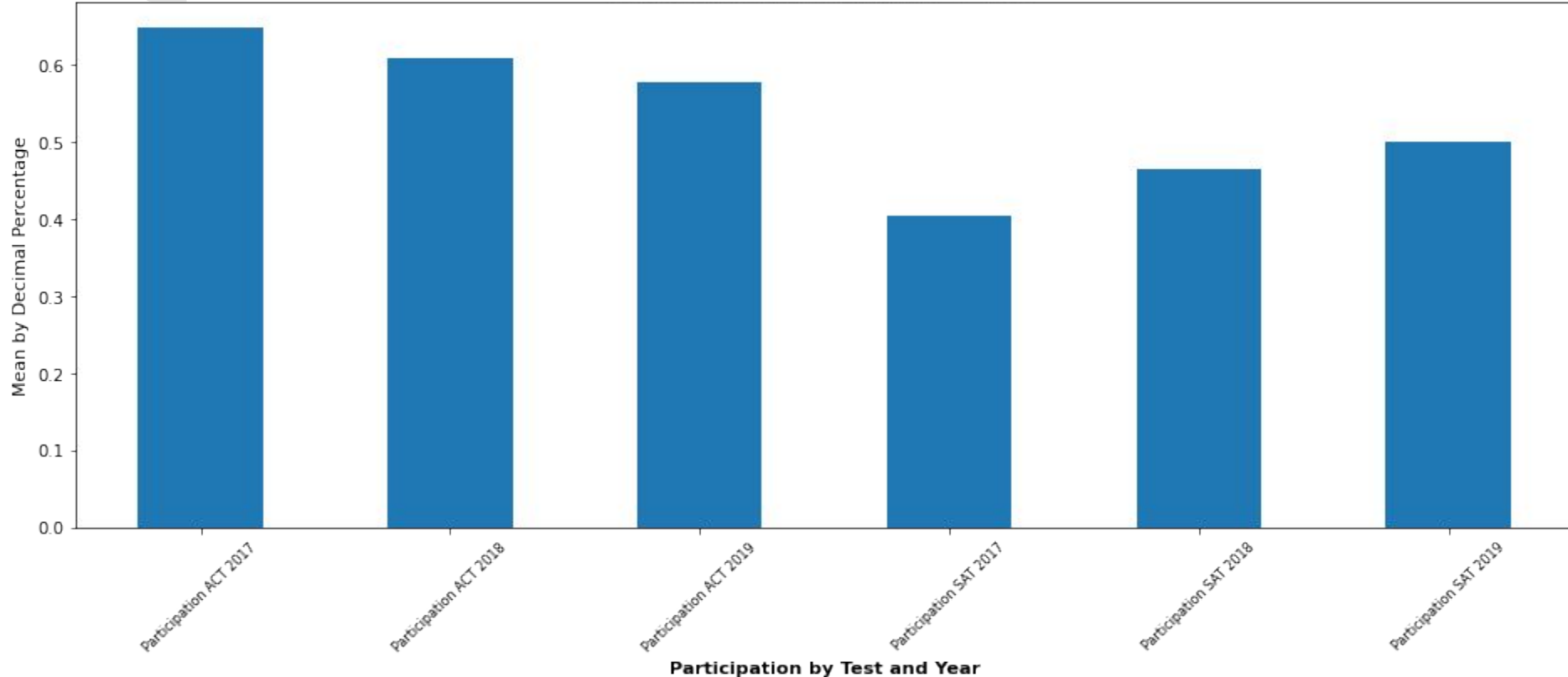
- The SAT administered in spring 2016, changed the entire format of the test
- The test shifted from a scale of 2400 to 1600 with a separate score for the essay section
- The essay section was made optional
- The math portion of the test has sections that exclude the use of calculators
- The reading and writing sections now ask students to cite evidence for their answer choices
- The test takes approximately 3 hours with an additional 50 minutes allotted to those who choose to take the essay

But why did it change?

- The ACT became more popular than the SAT in 2012 and that was primarily due to the SAT changes in 2005
- The SAT was considered a test that was too “class-biased” due to the tough vocabulary questions and irregular format of math questions. It favored those who had the resources to prepare better and those who were geographically located in richer areas.

So have Participation Numbers Actually Improved?

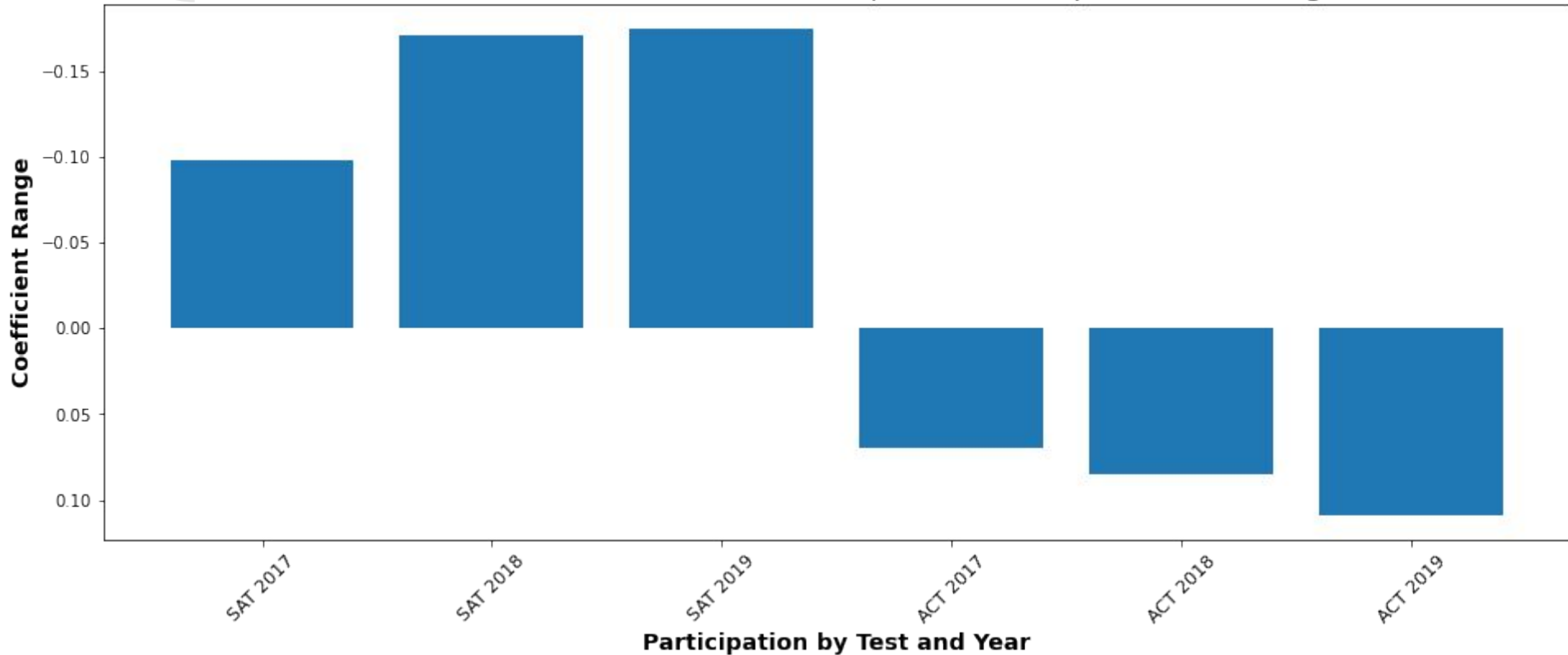
Participation Means, ACT Vs SAT



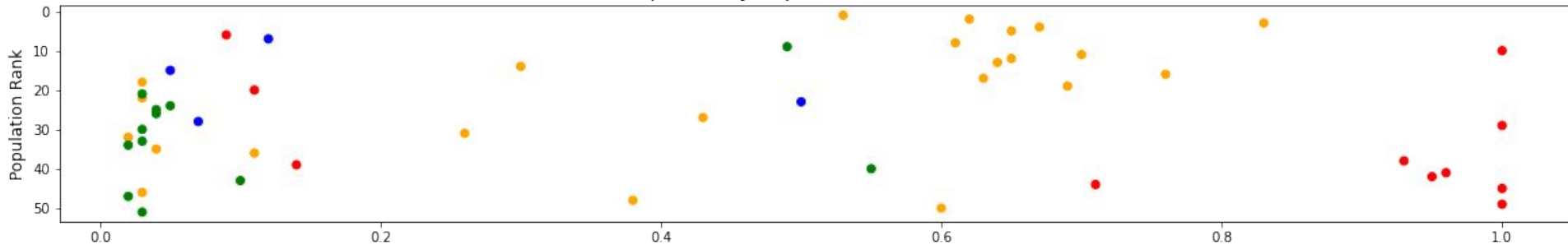


But wait! It gets better.

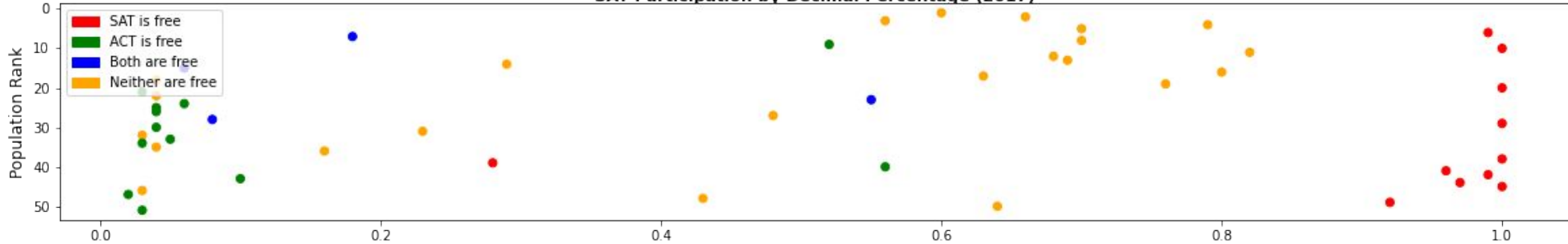
The Correlation Between Test Participation and Population Rankings



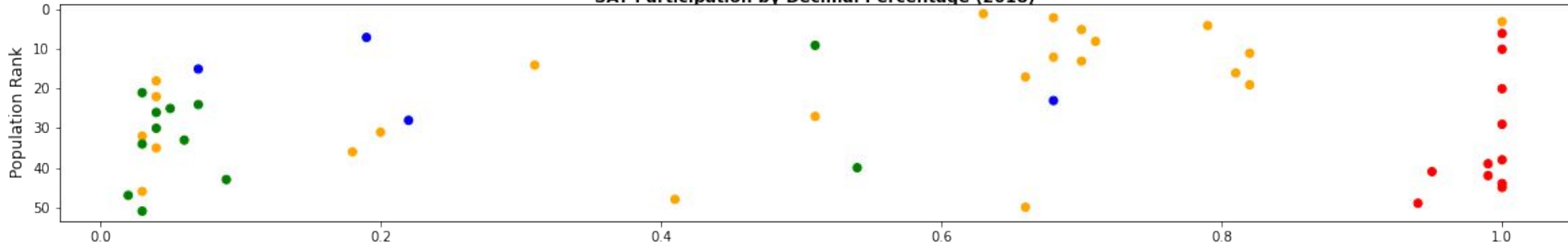
Participation by Population Rank Each Year



SAT Participation by Decimal Percentage (2017)



SAT Participation by Decimal Percentage (2018)

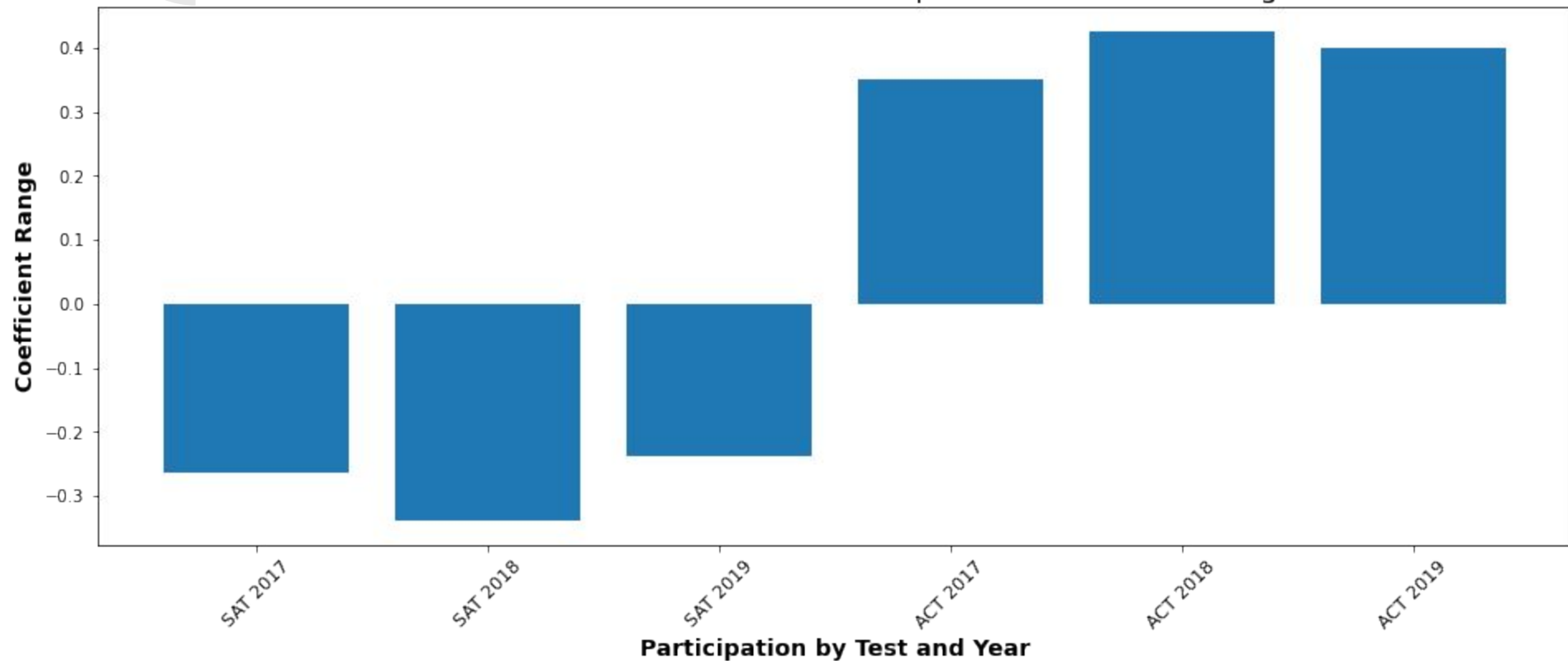


SAT Participation by Decimal Percentage (2019)



About That Perception Problem ...

The Correlation Between Test Participation and GDP Rankings





In Conclusion.

- The SAT's format change has been a success in bridging the gap between the ACT's participation numbers and the SAT's participation numbers
- The SAT has become more popular among states with higher populations specifically the coastal states while the ACT remains popular in states with lower populations specifically in the midwest and regions in the south.
- The SAT despite its efforts, remains unpopular in poorer states compared to the ACT and still has the reputation of being a class-biased test, this is further magnified by high-profile schools (eg; University of California system) not requiring standardized testing.
- The SAT needs further change to rectify the class-bias problem and create a more equitable test or create a better pathway for students of a lower-income state to participate.



Sources

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