

Racialized Accountability Threat: Diversification and Participation in Accountability Test Boycotts in New York*

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Standards-based accountability policies have become a fundamental part of public schooling over the past twenty years. While always subject to controversy and debate, they face renewed opposition in the form of mobilized boycotts of the annual administration of accountability tests. Why, over a decade after the national codification of accountability through *No Child Left Behind*, have widespread boycotts emerged? Drawing on a framework synthesizing literature of the role of threat in social movements, the racialization of school quality, and the effects of accountability, I propose that increasing racial diversification promoted participation in boycotts, particularly among white families in non-urban schools. I argue that the implementation of more challenging Common Core-aligned assessments and growing racial diversification increased the salience of accountability pressure in these school, promoting oppositional collective action. Using data from New York State from 2009-2016 and a difference-in-differences analytic framework, I show that schools experiencing increases in their share of Black and Latinx students after the initial administration of Common Core-aligned tests had a seven-percentage-point greater boycott rate among white students compared to schools without such an increase. These findings have implications for policies that challenge the administrative tradition of local control over public schools and for the role of collective action in maintaining that control.

* I offer my thanks and gratitude to Simone Ispa-Landa, Cynthia Coburn, Jim Spillane, Brayden King, Ofer Malamud, and Jon Guryan for their critical feedback on earlier drafts of this manuscript, and to Jenni Higgs for insightful conversations that lead to the development of this paper. I also thank the participants of the Social Movements and Enterprise workshop at the Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University, for insightful comments and engaging conversation. Earlier versions of this paper were presented at 2019 meetings of the Sociology of Education Association, Association for Education Finance and Policy, American Educational Research Association, and the American Sociological Association. I thank the participants for their excellent feedback. All errors are mine and mine alone.

One of the most significant and enduring educational reforms of the past century was the nationwide adoption of standards-based accountability. Central to this reform was the use of standardized tests to evaluate schools, teachers, and students. Accountability dramatically expanded the role of federal and state governments in K-12 education by redefining their regulatory role in an historically decentralized system that has privileged local community control over resources and decisions (Cohen & Moffitt, 2009). Scholars of accountability policies have explored the impact of these policies on both student outcomes (Dee & Jacob, 2011; Jacob, 2005) and school practices (Booher-Jennings, 2005; Dee et al., 2013; Figlio & Winicki, 2005; Heilig & Darling-Hammond, 2008; Neal & Schanzenbach, 2010), finding mixed results on student achievement, but notable influence on schools and classroom practices in schools facing accountability pressure.

In response to problems with the implementation of accountability under NCLB—such as wide variation in definitions of proficiency and in the quality of standards adopted by states (Fuller et al., 2007)—the Obama administration promoted the adoption of a shared set of standards and aligned assessments that sought to increase the rigor of standards-based accountability (Cobb & Jackson, 2011; Cohen & Moffitt, 2009; McDonnell & Weatherford, 2013). The development and subsequent adoption of the Common Core State Standards represented the first time in U.S. history that a majority of states adopted a common set of educational standards. Some considered this the first instance of a national curriculum (Porter, McMaken, Hwang, & Yang, 2011)—despite the fact that the Common Core consisted of a set of standards and made no mention of curriculum or pedagogy.

At the same time, the use of standardized tests for accountability purposes has faced increasing opposition from a coalition of parents and educators, who encourage the boycotting

of annual accountability tests (Alicias, 2016; Pizmony-Levy & Green Saraisky, 2016; Supovitz et al., 2016; Wang, 2017). Such collective action threatened to undermine the viability of accountability policies by challenging the primary instrument coupling school practices to educational outputs: data from the annual administration of standardized tests. Despite the growth of the movement and its implications for the future of accountability policies, we have a limited understanding of the factors that have motivated parents to join the movement.

In this study, I present evidence that a process that I call “racialized accountability threat” promoted participation in the test boycotts among white students. Synthesizing insights from general threat theory in social movement theory and racial threat theory, I propose that changes to the structure of accountability policy in New York in 2013 created a general accountability threat to schools across the state, which increased perceptions of threats to local control over educational resources and decisions (Trujillo, 2013). This threat was experienced as racialized because (1) accountability policies have primarily targeted and impacted schools that serve students of color and (2) parents, particularly middle-class white parents, have racialized perceptions of schools, judging school quality primarily on its racial composition (Abdulkadiroglu, Pathak, Schellenberg, & Walters, 2017; Holme, 2002). Increases in the share of students of color in predominately white suburban schools triggers concern about accountability sanctions (Holme et al., 2013; Turner, 2015). Under the conditions of a generalized accountability threat, prompted by changes to accountability tests, demographic changes may amplify that threat, creating anxieties in parents and school staff who perceive that such changes could increase the likelihood of a school receiving sanctions.

To test this idea, I used a panel of school-level accountability data from New York, covering the period before and after the adoption of Common Core-aligned state

accountability tests. I show first that schools experiencing a generalized threat from accountability sanctions had a larger percentage of students boycotting annual accountability tests compared to schools where accountability pressure was more muted. I then show that schools that experienced a net increase in their share of Black or Latinx students during the onset of Common Core-aligned testing had a test boycott rate for white students that was eight-percentage points greater than schools without such an increase. This finding is robust to several specifications and placebo tests. I further present evidence for racialized accountability threat by showing that the result held for predominately white schools in affluent suburban areas with little previous experience with accountability pressures. They did not hold for urban schools, those with lower shares of white students, and those with previous experience with accountability pressures. These findings support the hypothesis that racialized accountability threat increased participation in test boycotts among white families.

This study has important implications for educational policy and research on social movements. First, it uncovers an important consequence of the design of accountability policies: collective opposition from parents. While most accountability research has focused on how educators respond to accountability pressures (Diamond, 2007; Hallett, 2010; Spillane et al., 2011), this study shows that parents participate in the implementation processes as well through collective action. Second, it helps to explain participation in the opt out movement, uncovering racial processes that survey-based approaches (such as Pizmony-Levy and Green Saraisky (2016)) may miss, due to social desirability bias (Krysan, 1998). While white parents may not express racialized motivations for participating in test boycotts, this study suggests that racial status anxieties may underlie such decisions. This study also contributes to the literature on the role of racial threat in promoting collective action by demonstrating that

racial threat can manifest indirectly, acting as a moderator that increases the salience of a more generalized threat. While previous studies of the role of racial threat in social movements focus on direct competition between racial and ethnic groups over political and economic resources, I show an alternative pathway through which racial threat may contribute to collective action.

Conceptual framework

To motivate the concept of racialized accountability threat, I draw from research on the role of threat in social movements and accountability. First, I draw on research documenting the role of threat in motivating collective action (Snow et al., 1998; Van Dyke & Soule, 2002). I distinguish between generalized threats, which emanate from changes to the social structure of government regulation (Snow et al., 1998), and racial threats, which emanate from perceptions of changes to the relative social position of dominant groups vis-a-vis non-dominant groups (Blalock, 1967; Oliver, 2010). I hypothesize that racial threat can amplify a generalized threat when policies and regulatory structures have a racialized construction, such that dominant groups view the policy are primarily targeting non-dominant groups. Second, I draw from research on accountability to show that accountability pressures and sanctions can shape the policies and practices of local schools. Third, I draw on research on how middle-class, white parents construct their perceptions of school quality, which has a strongly racial dimension. Taken together, I propose that the onset of Common Core-aligned testing in New York created a generalized accountability threat, exposing communities with little previous experience with accountability to new pressures that threatened their local control over educational resources and decisions. Increases in the share of Black or Latinx students, who parents in middle-class

communities construct as less academically able and associate with accountability sanctions, serves to amplify this threat, increasing participation in collective action.

Threats to local control and reactive mobilization

Threat as a mobilizing factor in social movements

People join social movements and participate in collective action for a variety of reasons, based in ideology (Snow & Benford, 2000; Zald, 2000), identity (Simon & Klandermans, 2001), potential in-group rewards (Willer, 2009), and the availability of resources and organizations supporting mobilization (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Due to seminal empirical and theoretical work showing the importance of formal organizations for supporting and sustaining social movements (McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Morris, 1981; Taylor, 1989), researchers have tended to downplay the role of threat and grievances in catalyzing mobilization (Snow et al., 1998). “Strain” theories argue that collective action emerges as individuals lash out against economic or political privations, social isolation, or psychological distress (Useem, 1998). But these conditions fail to explain mobilization in some of the most prominent and successful movements—like the Civil Rights, peace, environmental, and women’s rights movements. Instead, scholars argue that the ebb and flow of resources, formal organizing, the intention construction of an infrastructure of support provide better explanations for movement development, growth, sustainability, and mobilization (Andrews, 2001; Jenkins, 1983; Morris, 1981; Soule & King, 2008; Taylor, 1989)

Yet, studies of reactive social movements—those that oppose changes in society by seeking to defend or reestablish a political, cultural, or economic status quo—continue to find that threat plays a key role in movement development and mobilization. Participants in these

reactive movements mobilize in response to real or perceived threats emanating from structural changes in society—whether political, economic, or demographic (Snow et al., 1998; Useem, 1980; Van Dyke & Soule, 2002). These changes threaten dominant groups' control over political and economic resources. Threat continues to provide analytic and empirical utility for understanding the emergence of reactive social movements, particularly militia or white supremacist movements (Cunningham & Phillips, 2007; McVeigh, 1999; Van Dyke & Soule, 2002), as well as the adoption of discriminatory political attitudes and behaviors (Andrews & Seguin, 2015; Enos, 2015; Quillian, 1996; Reny & Newman, 2018). Threats to the perceived control over social goods can mobilize reactive collective action that seeks to reestablish that control.

Snow and colleagues (1998) theorize that changes that disrupt everyday life and daily routines, which can occur due to increased governmental regulation of local community affairs, can motivate collective action to preserve the status quo. They argue that individuals maintain a socially constructed sphere of privacy, extending to one's community, with the expectation of inviolability to intrusions by government or corporate entities. Given the historically decentralized educational system in the U.S., such efforts, stemming from state or federal policy, can potentially threaten or violate the protected sphere of privacy, prompting action to repel the threat (Snow et al., 1998). Accountability policies, with regulatory sanctions emanating from state and federal departments of education, can be perceived as a potential threat to local control.

Accountability pressures as a threat to local control

Repeatedly failing to meet “Annual Yearly Progress” (AYP) exposes a school to a suite of federally defined sanctions, removing control over many key decisions from local actors, such as funding and budgets, staffing, and even the closure of schools (Cohen & Moffitt, 2009; Mintrop & Trujillo, 2005). Such sanctions have primarily impacted schools in urban districts, where local control has been a fraught issue at the heart of debates over centralized versus decentralized approaches to district management (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010; Cohen & Moffitt, 2009; Fuller & Koon, 2013; Perlstein, 2002). Suburban districts have evaded such debates, enjoying control over educational decisions through local school boards and employing the rhetoric of local control to resist policies that may undermine that control (Siegel-Hawley et al., 2018). Local control, even in the era of accountability, represents the status quo for most school district, particularly those that have not experienced accountability pressures or sanctions. Historically, attempts to centralize resource distribution or decision making have met with resistance from communities, as seen in anti-busing protests in Boston (Useem, 1980) or in efforts to resist district consolidation (Siegel-Hawley et al., 2018).

Research on accountability suggests two ways that it may violate the “zone of privacy” described by Snow and colleagues (1998), which can lead to collective action to reestablish the sanctity of that zone. and generate threats to the control of educational resources and decisions. First, federally defined sanctions can undermine local control of over decisions around budgets, staffing, and may even lead to school closures (Mintrop & Sunderman, 2009; Mintrop & Trujillo, 2005; Trujillo, 2013). Second, accountability pressures can influence school-level practices, as school staff engage in efforts to avoid sanctions. In schools facing

pressures to increase performance on standardized tests, educators may focus attention and resources on students at the threshold of proficiency cutoffs (Booher-Jennings, 2005; Neal & Schanzenbach, 2010). Low-performing and high-performing students receive less attention and fewer resources. School staff may also focus instruction on tested subjects—mathematics and reading—and take time away from other subjects to boost test scores (Au, 2007; Dee et al., 2013; Ladd & Zelli, 2002). Teachers may also adopt didactic instructional practices and increase test preparation, particularly for low-income students and students of color (Diamond, 2007; Diamond & Spillane, 2004). Such changes in school policies and practices toward an emphasis on test preparation match the concerns expressed by parents involved in the Opt-Out movement (Pizmony-Levy & Green Saraisky, 2016). Affluent parents in suburban areas often express entitlement to certain educational goods, since local property taxes provide significant amount of school funding (Labaree, 1997).

Schools in relatively affluent, non-urban areas have had little previous experience with accountability policies. The adoption of more rigorous Common Core-aligned assessments in 2013 in New York altered the manifestation of accountability in the state by exposing nearly all schools to accountability pressures. This may have raised the prospect of accountability sanctions and changes in school practices toward test-focused instruction in schools that were previously free from such pressures.

Racial threat amplifies perceptions of threats to local control

In the United States, threat often manifests along racial lines, due to the pervasive role of race in the formation of social hierarchies (Bonilla-Silva, 1997). Local control confers benefits to dominant groups, enabling them to hoard resources and opportunities (Lareau &

Horvat, 1999; Siegel-Hawley et al., 2018). Demographic changes can threaten that control and inspire “racial threat.” Racial threat occurs when members of socially dominant racial groups, who control political and economic resources, believe that their group position is challenged by members of non-dominant groups (Blalock, 1967; Bobo, 1999; Bobo & Hutchings, 1996; Oliver, 2010). Threat can occur due to highly symbolic events, such as the election of the first African-American president, or due to, real or perceived, demographic changes that increase the presence of members of non-dominant groups (Blalock, 1967; Blumer, 1958; O’Brien, 2017; Quillian, 1995; Wetts & Willer, 2018). Importantly, members of non-dominant groups do not need to directly challenge the position of dominant groups. Rather, it is the *perception* of a threat among members of dominant groups that matters. Members of dominant groups (e.g., whites) may not adopt or express explicitly racist attitudes, but may mobilize and support policies that will allow them to control and hoard economic and political resources (Abascal, 2015; Andrews & Seguin, 2015; Blalock, 1967; O’Brien, 2017).

Racial threat can shape the attitudes and behavior of members of dominant groups. For example, Quillian (1996) showed that white Americans developed increased prejudice toward black Americans in regions with increasing black populations. Racial threat extends beyond attitudes and prejudice to policy support and collective action. Group threat stemming from increased foreign populations motivated native-born whites to join the prohibition movement and support prohibitions ordinances (Andrews & Seguin, 2015). Jurisdictions adjacent to areas with rapidly increasing populations of immigrants were more likely to pass prohibition laws. Using the demolition of public housing as a source of exogenous variation in racial composition, Enos (2015) found that whites living near housing projects vote more often and for more conservative candidates before the demolition of public housing and outmigration of

the residents, who were predominately black. White voters in areas of California that experience rapid growth in the black population were more supportive of a state proposition that protected racial discrimination in housing laws (Reny & Newman, 2018). States experiencing increases in the Latinx population adopted less distributive tax systems (O'Brien, 2017).

Racialized accountability threat

The research discussed above establishes two points. First, accountability policies threaten local control over educational resources and decisions, through pressures that lead schools to adopt test-oriented instructional practices and through sanctions that remove control from local actors. Second, while sanctions have historically targeted schools serving low income students or students of color in urban areas (Trujillo, 2013), when predominately white schools in suburban areas experience increases in these populations, school staff grow concerned about accountability sanctions and adopt practices to avoid them (Holme et al., 2013; Turner, 2015; Welton et al., 2013). In 2013, New York State implemented Common Core-aligned tests and state officials acknowledged that they expected at least two-thirds of the students in the state to fail to meet proficiency benchmarks, a prediction that proved accurate (Hernández & Baker, 2013; Hernández & Gebeloff, 2013). Previously, only a fifth of students failed to meet proficiency benchmarks. This increase in student failure dramatically expanded the set of schools exposed to accountability pressures, from mostly urban schools in low income areas to schools in affluent suburbs and towns. This may have created conditions of general accountability pressure, which may, in turn, have been exacerbated in districts that experienced influxes of students of color as it created a racial group threat in which white

parents perceive a potential loss over the control of educational goods. This can increase anxiety over the content and method of instruction, the narrowing of curriculum, the adoption of test preparation practices, and the focus of educational resources toward students at proficiency thresholds—all practices associated with schools facing accountability sanctions. I propose two hypotheses:

- Hypothesis 1: *Schools that experience an influx of black and Latinx students in the period after the administration of Common Core-aligned accountability tests will have greater rates of boycotts on accountability tests among white students than schools without such an influx.*
- Hypothesis 2: *The relationship between racial threat and test boycotts will hold for schools with little previous experience with accountability pressure, but not for schools with previous experience with accountability pressure. Therefore I expect that schools (1) that are majority white, (2) in low poverty districts, (3) in non-urban areas, and (4) with no previous accountability pressure will demonstrate a relationship between increases in the share of black and Latinx students and the test boycott rate of white students, while minority white, high poverty, urban, or schools with previous accountability pressure will not.*

Data

To analyze the role of racial threat in test boycotts, I compiled school-level data from New York State from four sources. My primary data source was school accountability and demographic data provided by the New York State Department of Education through School

Report Cards. These data contain school-level information on performance on accountability tests, disaggregated by racial/ethnic subgroups and by grade, student demographics, and school staff characteristics. Critically for this study, this dataset reports the number of students enrolled during the testing period and the number of students who participated—again, disaggregated by grade and subgroup.

I supplemented these data with additional school-level demographic data available in the Common Core of Data (CCD) provided by the National Center for Education Statistics and data on district characteristics from the American Communities Survey (ACS) and Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) from the U.S. Census Bureau. From the CCD, I obtained data on school enrollment by grade and racial/ethnic group. From the ACS and SAIPE, I obtained district data on the percent of school-age children in poverty and the percent of adults with a bachelor's degree or above for each school district in New York.

Analytic sample

My main sample covers academic years from 2009-2010 to 2016-2017 school years and includes all public schools that contain at least one tested grade (third through eighth grades). I specified this time frame because it covers four years prior to (and including) the administration of the Common Core-aligned exams and four years after. I excluded secondary grades, since the nature of standardized testing changes in these grades. For example, New York requires students to pass the Regents exam to receive a diploma. The differences in the structure of testing in secondary grades may mean that the dynamics of test boycotts are quite different. Therefore, I focused on the primary grades. I also excluded charter schools, since testing may manifest differently in charter schools compared to traditional public schools—they

may, for example, rely on test scores to maintain their charter. Finally, I excluded schools which have no data for the percent of white students participating in annual testing, typically because these schools have six or fewer white students. New York State accountability reports do not include data for student populations less than six. The resulting sample includes 18,673 observations nested within 2,325 schools.

Measures

Dependent variable: Rate of boycott of annual accountability tests. I measured participation in test boycotts by the percent of eligible white students *not participating* in annual standardized testing for mathematics. New York state reports the number and percent of students participating in annual assessments, overall and for federally-mandated accountability subgroups. I constructed the boycott variable by subtracting the report percent from 100, converting the variable from the rate of participation to the rate of non-participation.

As noted in the introduction to this dissertation (Figure 1.1), prior to the 2012-2013 school year nearly all white students in the state participated in annual testing. Beginning in 2013, the opt-out movement grew and became much more visible. Therefore, I feel confident that the percent of students not participating in annual testing captured my outcome of interest—test boycotts.

Independent variable: Percent black and Latinx. I operationalized racial threat by finding within-school changes in the share of black or Latinx students. I followed previous studies on racial/ethnic threat in schools, such as Welch and Payne (2010). At the school-level, I constructed an indicator of racial threat for whether a school had a net increase in its share of

black or Latinx students between 2013 and 2015. I considered the 2012-2013 school year as the onset of test boycotts and the years after 2013 to comprise the boycott period. I chose the 2013-2015 period as the “treatment” time frame for two reasons: (1) it coincided with the onset of Common Core-aligned testing in 2013 and (2) incorporated the years immediately following to capture an ongoing trend in the growth of black and Latinx populations in a school. The onset of Common Core-aligned assessments increased the salience of accountability sanctions across the state. I, therefore, considered the 2013 to 2015 period to comprise a “sensitive” period where the hypothesized effects of racialized accountability threat should occur.

However, I also considered other windows in the analysis.

Figure 1 shows the unadjusted trend lines in the test boycott rate for white students for schools that had an increase in the share of black and Latinx students and those that did not. The difference grew from three percentage points in 2013 to 11 percentage points in 2017.

Control variables. I included a set of control variables that captured characteristics of schools that may be associated with test boycotts. First, I included variables that captured important school demographic characteristics, including the percent of students who qualify for free or reduced price lunch and who have limited English proficiency. Previous studies find that the opt-out movement primarily consists of white and affluent parents (Pizmony-Levy & Green Saraisky, 2016; Supovitz et al., 2016; Wang, 2017), schools with higher percentages of students qualifying for school lunch programs or English language learners may have lower rates of test boycotts. Second, I included two controls for the prior year’s academic performance by including a variable for the lagged non-proficiency rate on the mathematics accountability test for all students and for white students specifically. Increases in the non-proficiency rate of students in a school may lead parents to question the legitimacy of the tests

and participate in test boycotts. Finally, I included controls that captured aspects of school quality. These were the percent of novice teachers in a school (defined as those with fewer than three years of experience) and the percent of teachers with a Masters degree or higher. Parents with students in schools with more experienced teachers may feel more secure in participating in test boycotts, since teachers have greater job security and may feel less pressure to encourage students to participate in testing.

Analytic strategy: Difference-in-differences design

To assess whether racial threat contributed to test boycotts, I used a difference-in-differences approach. According to my hypothesis, demographic changes that occur when accountability pressures first become salient are critical for decisions to join test boycotts. To create the difference-in-differences estimator, I interact the indicator for a net increase in the share of black or Latinx students with an indicator for the years after the administration of the first Common Core-aligned assessments in 2013. I implemented the difference-in-differences strategy with by estimating:

$$Y_{it} = \beta_1 T_i * D_t + \beta_2 X_{it} + \alpha_i + \gamma_t + \epsilon_{it}$$

The main outcome of interest, Y_{it} , is the percent of white students boycotting annual accountability tests in mathematics in school i for year t . The main independent variable is the difference-in-differences estimator—the interaction between the indicator for years greater than 2013, D_t , and the indicator for schools that had a net increase in the share of black or Latinx students between 2013 and 2015, T_i . The coefficient β_1 captures the difference in the change in test boycott rates between schools with an increase in black or Latinx students and those without. The terms α_i and γ_t represent school and year fixed effects. By employing school and

year fixed-effects, I am effectively capturing any account fixed unobserved differences between schools and unobserved year-to-year differences that impact all schools.

This model captured that average difference between the change pre-2013 to post-2013 for schools that had an increase in black or Latinx students compared to those that did not. The difference-in-differences approach addresses the fact that schools were not randomly assigned to receive increases in the share of black or Latinx students. However, this approach relies on a key assumption: that trend in the outcome of interest were parallel between the two groups in the absence of treatment. In other words, the rate of change in test boycott rates between the two groups would be the same if the “treated” schools did not have an increase in the share of black or Latinx students. If schools demonstrated similar trajectories in the absence of treatment, then any unobserved characteristics of those schools were irrelevant to the outcome. Typically, this is assessed by showing parallel trends in the pre-period, before treatment occurs. In this case, schools should show the same trajectory in test boycott rates before 2013. However, test boycotts prior to 2013 were extremely rare, as shown in Figure 1.1. Therefore, the pre-2013 trend lines in the test boycott rate were not helpful for assessing the assumption of parallel trends.

It is therefore plausible that there were important unobserved characteristics of schools associated with both increases in the share of black or Latinx students and with the rate of test boycotts in a school. In these circumstances, the difference-in-differences estimator would be biased. I addressed this issue in three ways. First, in absence of the ability to compare directly the trend in the test boycott rates, I assessed trends between schools with an increase in their share of black or Latinx students in the 2013-2015 window and those without for a number of

key variables. This assessment provided evidence that schools with increases and those without between 2013 and 2015 were not changing in substantial ways.

Second, I tested a series of “placebo” indicators to rule out the possibility that other, unobserved characteristics of schools were driving the results. I used three placebo indicators for schools that had a net increase in the share of black or Latinx students in periods other than 2013-2015. The key placebo was an indicator for schools that saw an increase in the share of black or Latinx students between 2016 and 2017, but not between 2013 and 2015. The logic of these tests was that if schools with increases in the share of black or Latinx students had unobserved changes that make them more likely to see such increases and were related to test boycotts for white students, then the placebo indicator should identify such unobserved changes by finding an association between future changes and the test boycott rate. In other words, a 2015-2017 indicator should not predict test boycott rates between 2013 and 2015, unless there are unobserved school-level changes that are associated with increases in test boycotts and increases in the share of black or Latinx students. I discuss this more below.

Third, I tested the association between increases in the share of black and Latinx students that outcomes that we might expect to occur due to these changes. I replaced the outcome in the model above with (1) percent of students suspended and (2) the rate of absences. We might expect that schools with increasing shares of black and Latinx students were changing in other ways that may lead white families to participate in test boycotts. Increases in suspensions or absences may indicate a changing school environment.

Finally, I tested the association between increases in the share of Asian students in a school with its test boycott rate for white students. Unlike black and Latinx students, white parents do not construct Asian students as academic liabilities. Therefore, we should not

expect to find that schools with an increase in their share of Asian students had a greater test boycott rate for white students compared to those schools without such an increase.

Descriptive analysis of analytic sample

Tables 1 and 2 present descriptive statistics of the key variables in the sample for schools that experienced a net increase in the share of black or Latinx student between 2013 and 2015 and those that did not, separately presented for all schools and for majority white schools and for before and after the administration of Common Core-aligned assessments. Overall, schools that experienced an increase in share of black or Latinx students between 2013 and 2015 overall tended to be slightly more advantaged than those that did not. These schools had fewer students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch and were located in districts with fewer 5 to 17 year-olds in poverty. This is true for the full analytic sample and for a subsample of majority white schools, as well as for the pre-Common Core years and the Common Core years.

While this descriptive analysis suggests systematic differences between the schools that experienced increases in the share of black or Latinx students and those that did not, the difference-in-differences approach accounts for such differential selection if the assumption of parallel trends is met. As noted above, key to the difference-in-differences approach is the assumption of parallel trends in the outcome of interest between the treatment and comparison groups in the pre-treatment period. The assumption of parallel trends is important because it demonstrates that unobserved differences between the two groups are not correlated with the outcome variable. In this case, the pre-2013 trends in test non-participation rates between the two groups are indeed parallel—since the rates for both groups were effective

zero until 2013. The assessment of pre-2013 trends offers little information to determine any meaningful differences between the groups that might bias the difference-in-differences estimator. Therefore, I assess the trends for several key variables in the study to see if the parallel trends assumption holds. Differences in pre-2013 trends between the two groups for any of these variables could indicate a selection bias—that schools with an increase in the share of black or Latinx students were trending differently in along other dimensions.

I show the trends for several variables of interest for the two groups for both all schools and for majority white schools only (Figures 2 and 3). The percent of students with limited English proficiency or qualifying for free or reduced price lunch, the percent of teachers with Masters degrees or above, and the rate of non-proficiency on English and Math assessments show parallel trends. The percent of teachers with fewer than three years of experience show slightly different trends. Schools that experienced increases in the share of black or Latinx students between 2013 and 2015 had a downward trend from 2010 until 2012 and then began to increase again. Schools without an increase saw the share of teachers with fewer than three years of experience decrease from 2010 to 2011, before beginning to increase again. Schools without increases in the share of students of color had a sharper increase in the share of novice teachers. However, when I limit the sample to include only schools that are majority white, the trends in the share of novice teachers are parallel. The differences in trends, therefore, is likely concentrated in schools with fewer white students. In each model, I control for the share of novice teachers in the school.

Results

First, I present the results of an OLS regression of the test boycott rate on the percent of black or Latinx students, with and without school and year fixed effects (Table 3). For the full pooled analytic sample, there is a negative overall relationship between the share of black or Latinx students and the test boycott rate for white students. This is not surprising, given that prior research suggests the movement is concentrated in affluent, white areas (Pizmony-Levy & Green Saraisky, 2016). For elementary grades, there is a small positive relationship, while for middle grades the relationship is negative.

The inclusion of school and year fixed effects accounts for the possibility that unobserved differences between schools or unobserved year-to-year changes may correlate with test boycott rates. With the inclusion of fixed effects, the relationship between the share of black and Latinx students and the test boycott rate becomes positive and quite strong, across each specification in Table 3 (Models 2, 4, and 6). For each percentage point increase in the share of black or Latinx students in a school, there is a 0.8 to 1 percentage point increase in the test boycott rate among white students. To put this in context, if a school saw a 7.5 percentage point increase in its share of black or Latinx students, it saw an average increase of 6 percentage points in the test boycott rate among white students. This is a large enough for the school to fail to meet the 95% participation requirement. Thus, while overall, schools with larger populations of black or Latinx students have fewer white students boycotting the tests, schools with increases in the share of black or Latinx students over time have larger increases in the test boycott rate for white students.

Also notable across the models in Table 3 is the relationship between the lagged non-proficiency rate in mathematics and the test boycott rates among white students. This variable

captures the potential role of accountability pressures on test boycott rates. Increases in the non-proficiency rate expose a school to potential accountability sanctions. Across the pooled OLS models (Table 3, Models 1, 3, and 5), the relationship is positive and stronger than that of the share of black or Latinx students—for the full sample and for elementary and middle grades separately. There is about a 0.3 to 0.4 percentage point increases in the test boycott rate for each one percentage point increase in the non-proficiency rate. Overall, therefore, schools with higher non-proficiency rates have higher rates of test boycotts.

Again, these estimates are subject to potential bias from unobserved school-level differences. With the inclusion of fixed effects to account for between school differences, the coefficient is reduced by a quarter. It remains positive, but is only a seventh of the magnitude of the coefficient on the percent of black or Latinx students. Controlled for between-school confounds, I find that a within-school increase in the share of black or Latinx students is much more strongly associated with test boycotts than lagged non-proficiency rates. The non-proficiency rate on the previous year's test matters, but much less than increases in the share of black or Latinx students.

Difference-in-differences strategy

I tested my first hypothesis using the difference-in-differences estimator described above. While the estimates from the fixed effects models above provide strong evidence that increases in the share of black and Latinx students contributed to participation in test boycotts among white students, the difference-in-differences approach allowed me to directly compare schools with an increase in the share of black or Latinx students in the period after the implementation of Common Core-aligned assessments in 2013. I can more directly test first

hypothesis by isolating those schools that had an increase in its population of black or Latinx students between 2013 and 2015 from those that did not. In the parlance of the difference-in-differences framework, the schools with a net increase in the share of black or Latinx students between 2013 and 2015 form the “treatment” group, while those without form the “comparison” group.

Based on the difference-in-differences strategy, I found strong evidence that racialized accountability threat increased participation in test boycotts among white students. Compared to schools with no increase in the share of black or Latinx students between 2013 and 2015, schools that experienced increases had about seven to eight percentage points more students participating in boycotts (Table 4). The estimates are similar for the full analytic sample (Table 4, Models 1 and 2) and for the subsample of elementary grades (Table 4, Models 3 and 4) and middle grades (Table 4, Models 5 and 6). The inclusion of school and year fixed effects reduces the estimate by one percentage point, but again, it is stable across specification.

According to my second hypothesis, racialized accountability threat should impact more affluent, white, suburban schools, since these schools have historically not faced accountability pressures. With the implementation of Common Core-aligned assessments in 2013, the possibility of accountability sanctions became more salient in these communities. Therefore, I should detect an association between increases in the share of black or Latinx students and the rate of test boycotts among white students only for schools that are majority white and located in affluent and non-urban areas. I re-estimated the main specification to compare four types of relevant subgroups: (1) majority white and minority white schools; (2) schools in low poverty district and those in high poverty districts; (3) schools in non-urban areas and urban areas; and (4) schools with no pre-2013 experience with accountability

pressures for white students and those with previous experiences with accountability pressures. According to the theory of racialized accountability threat, increases in the share of black or Latinx students should create group threat for schools the salience of accountability sanctions was historically low. The first of each pair just listed should experience racialized accountability threat, but not the second.

Table 5 presents the results of the difference-in-differences strategy comparing these subgroups. In keeping with the second hypothesis, schools with a net increase in the share of black or Latinx students had higher rates of test boycotts in majority white schools, but not in schools with a majority of black or Latinx students (Table 5, Panel A, Models 1 and 2); in schools in more affluent areas, but not in less affluent ones (Table 5, Panel A, Models 3 and 4); in non-urban areas, but not in urban ones (Table 5, Panel A, Models 5 and 6); and in schools with no previous accountability pressure, but not in schools with previous accountability pressure. The point estimate for the difference-in-differences estimator remained stable across these different subgroups, showing about a seven to eight percentage-point difference between the two groups of schools.

The stability of the estimate across subgroups is not entirely surprising, given that schools affluent, non-urban areas are predominately white. In Table 5, Panel B, I show estimates that compared subgroups comprised of only majority white schools. The estimates remain stable. Affluent majority white school and non-urban majority white schools with increases in the share of black or Latinx students had about five percentage points more white students boycotting the test compared to poorer and urban majority white schools. Most notably, for majority white schools that had no previous accountability experience, those that had a net increase in the share of black or Latinx students between 2013 and 2015 had nine

percentage-points greater participation in test boycotts for white students (Table 5, Panel B, Model 7). For majority white schools with previous accountability pressure, I found no difference in the test boycott rate for white students.

The results of this analysis provided support for both hypotheses that I derived from the research on accountability and threat. Schools with an increase in their share of black and Latinx students between 2013 and 2015 had approximately a six to seven percentage-point greater white test boycott rate compared to schools without an increase. These results held schools in which I hypothesized racialized accountability threat to occur: white, affluent schools in non-urban areas with no previous accountability pressure.

Robustness checks: Alternative specifications for “treatment” and comparison groups

In the difference-in-differences framework, the criteria used to construct the treatment and comparison groups are often potentially exogenous, determined by factors like changes in public policy. In this case, however, I created “treatment” and comparison” groups using a criterion that reflected the conceptual framework motivating the study. A school was considered a “treatment” school if it had a net increase in the share of black or Latinx students between 2013 and 2015. The school may or may not have experienced increases at other times in the 2009 to 2017 timeframe that captures the scope of the dataset. Comparison schools are those that experience no increase in the 2013 to 2015 period, but may have experienced increases at other times. This setup reflected my hypothesis that racial threat should occur during changes in the structure of accountability policies in New York. However, there are other plausible criteria that I could have used to determine “treatment” and comparison schools.

To determine how stable the estimates in the analysis above were to other treatment and comparison criteria, I re-estimated my main specification replacing the treatment indicator with the set of indicators described in Table 6, Panel A. For each treatment indicator, I re-estimated the model for each potential comparison group as described in Table 6, Panel B. I first estimated the model where “treatment” was determined by the criterion in Table 6, Panel A, row 1 and comparison was determined by the criterion in Table 6, Panel B, row 1. Then, using the same treatment indicator, I repeated the analysis for Table 6, Panel B, row 1. I repeated this for each permutation of treatment and comparison, giving 16 possible estimates.

I display the results of this analysis in Figure 4. Each point represents the point estimate of the difference-in-differences estimator. Vertical lines show the 95% confidence interval. The dashed horizontal line is the median of the estimates and the solid line shows zero. All of the estimates were substantially similar to the estimates in the main analysis. The median estimate is about ten percentage points, slightly greater, but substantially similar to the seven to eight percentage point difference in the main analysis above. The estimates ranged from a seven percentage point difference to a 14 percentage point difference. Taken together, the alternative specifications produce substantially similar results to the main analysis above.

Placebo tests

While the analysis thus far confirmed the hypotheses of racialized accountability threat, there remained a key threat to the validity of these findings. Neither the fixed-effects or difference-in-differences approaches can fully account for unobserved within-school changes that may be associated with increases in the share of black or Latinx students, particularly given the inability to assess trends in the pre-treatment period for the outcome variable. As I

noted, since the outcome variable was effectively zero for both groups prior to 2013, it provided no information for assessing parallel trends between the two groups of schools. Therefore, I could not determine if the two groups were changing differentially in ways that were consequential for the rate of test boycotts. There may be some unobserved within-school changes that are associated with a school seeing an influx of black or Latinx students *and* with the likelihood that the school will experience more test boycotts among white students. For example, black and Latinx parents may enroll their children in schools prioritize test preparation, adopting practices like teaching to the test or narrow curricula to tested subjects. Prior research on the opt-out Movement suggests that concern over such changes practices has led parents to join the movement (Pizmony-Levy & Green Saraisky, 2016). Thus, if these changes were associated with both future increases in the share of black and Latinx students in a school and in test boycotts among white students, then the results presented above were biased due to omitted variables. Parents participating in boycotts were reacting to changes in curricula or instructional practices, rather than changes in demographics.

To address this possibility, I conducted three placebo tests. First, I tested a series of placebo “treatment” indicators for schools that experienced an increase in their share of black or Latinx students outside of the hypothesized 2013-2015 window. I created treatment indicators for schools that experienced an increase in the share of black or Latinx students prior to the implementation of Common Core-aligned tests. If it is the case that increased shares of students of color exacerbated the perception of accountability threat for parents, as I hypothesized, then I should not detect an effect for schools that experienced pre-2013 increases. For example, if a school experience an influx of students of color between 2008 and 2010, the school staff and parents have had time to adjust to these changes prior to the 2013

implementation of the more rigorous Common Core-aligned assessments. They should not experience racialized accountability threat, since the changes occur outside of the condition of increased accountability pressure. Therefore, I created a placebo indicator for schools that had a net increase between 2008 to 2010 and between 2010 to 2012, but not between 2013 and 2015.

I also should not detect an effect for an indicator for schools that had an increase in their share of black or Latinx *after* the occurrence of test boycotts. So, I created a placebo indicator capturing increases between 2016 and 2017 and restricted the analysis to include only the years prior to 2016. If I detected an effect for this analysis, this would indicate that there may exist omitted variables that are leading indicators of test boycotts. If parents of black and Latinx students select into schools that increase their focus on testing by adopting test preparation strategies, and these practices drive white parents to participate in test boycotts, then I should detect an effect of *future* increase on *past* participation.

As shown in Table 7, I detected either no, or negative, effects for each of the placebo indicators, for the full sample and for elementary and middle grades separately. Schools that saw increases in the share of black or Latinx students outside the 2013-2015 window did not see an increase in the test boycott rate among white students compared to schools that did not see such an increase.

For the second placebo tests, I tested the difference in the white boycott rate between schools with a net increase in the share of Asian students only to those without such an increase. While most of the literature on racial threat focuses on group dynamics between white populations and black populations, or between white populations and Latinx populations, racial threat can occur among any of the socially defined racial groups, when the

socially dominant group perceives threats to economic or political power from the minority group (Oliver, 2010). According to my hypotheses, racial threat occurs due to the interaction between a general accountability threat and increases of populations of students that parents and teachers associated with accountability sanctions. Because white parents do not associate Asian students with poor academic performance and accountability sanctions, schools that experience increases in the share of Asian students should not have a greater share of white students boycotting the test compared to schools with no such increase.

In Table 8, I replicate the models of Table 6, replacing the indicator for a net increase in the share of black or Latinx students with an indicator for a net increase in the share of Asian students. In each model, there is either no difference between schools with a net increase of Asian students and those without, or school with an increase in Asian students had *fewer* white students participating in test boycotts. This provides further evidence that specifically black and Latinx students spark concerns over accountability threats among white parents.

Finally, I tested the difference in suspension and absence rates between schools with a net increase in the share of black and Latinx and those without. If I were to find that schools with an increase in the share of black or Latinx students had greater rates of suspensions or absences, that may suggest other school-level changes which may contribute to the participation in test boycotts for white students. As shown in Table 9, I find no difference for either of these outcomes between the treatment and comparison schools.

Alternative explanation: Political orientation of parents

Thus far, I have presented evidence consistent with the hypotheses of racialized accountability threat. However, this evidence is also consistent with another explanation.

Existing research suggests that parents who participate in the Opt-Out Movement are politically liberal, but not exclusively so, and many participants consider themselves political “independents” (Pizmony-Levy & Green Saraisky, 2016). Therefore, a potential alternate explanation is schools with more politically liberal parents may attract more Black and Latinx students and may have more participation in test boycotts among white students—due to the ideological orientation of the parents and not due to the influx of black and Latinx students. In this case, the above analysis is biased due to the omitted variable of the “progressiveness” of parents. The indicator for an increase in the share of black or Latinx students captures not just the increase in shares of those students, but also schools that have parents who are more “progressive” in their attitude toward accountability testing.

The difference-in-differences framework potentially accounts for such omitted variables, provided that the assumption of parallel trends in the outcome variable is satisfied. In this case, I cannot directly satisfy this assumption. I have presented indirect evidence based on parallel trends along other key variables and on the placebo tests above. If parental “progressiveness” attracts black and Latinx students, it should do so for periods other than 2013 to 2015. But perhaps for the 2013-2015 period alone, the “progressive” orientation of parents is associated with increases in the share of black and Latinx students. If this explanation is plausible then two assertions should hold: (1) that the political liberalness of parents should predict whether a school sees an increase in the share of black or Latinx students in the 2013 to 2015 time frame; and (2) that the effect of an increase in the share of black or Latinx students should not hold in schools with more politically liberal parents. In other words, I should not find a difference in among schools in more liberal areas between those with an increase in the share of black or Latinx students and those without. If I do detect

an effect consistent with those of the main analysis, then the hypothesis of racialized accountability threat holds even among parents in more liberal areas.

To assess this explanation, I use precinct-level voting data from the 2010 election in New York, available from the Harvard Dataverse (Ansolabehere & Rodden, 2011). These data have vote counts for almost all census-define voting districts in the state. Using the latitude and longitude of schools, I determine in which voting district each school was located in 2010 and assign voting data to that school. Voting districts do not necessarily overlap with a school's catchment area, so it is an imperfect measure of the voting patterns of a school's location.

First, I predicted, using a simple linear probability model, whether the total vote share for liberal candidates in a school's voting district in 2010 predicts whether that school will have a net increase in the share of black or Latinx students between 2013 and 2015 (Table 10). I estimate this model for the total vote share of third party liberal candidates and for the total vote share for all liberal candidates. I define third party liberal votes as those going to candidates in the Green or Working Families lines. In many cases, the Working Families Party endorses the Democratic candidate and has that candidate on their voting line. I define all liberal votes as those going to all Democratic, Green, and Working Families candidates. I include votes for federal offices (Senate and House of Representatives) and state offices (Governor, State Senate, and State Assembly). I estimate these models separately for all schools and for majority white schools only.

As shown in Table 10, the share of votes going to either third-party liberal candidates or all liberal candidates is not associated, or negatively associated, with whether a school saw a net increase in the share of black or Latinx students between 2013 and 2015. For voting districts that had more votes for third-party party liberal candidates, schools were significantly

less likely to see a net increase in the share of black or Latinx students between 2013 and 2015. This suggests that schools in more liberal areas did not experience increases in the share of black or Latinx students, as this explanation predicts.

Second, I estimated the difference-in-differences model separately for areas whose share of votes going to liberal candidates was greater than the median and for those whose share was less than the median, for the full analytic sample and for majority white schools only (Table 11). The difference-in-differences estimator for each model falls within the range of the main analysis above for school in both liberal and conservative areas. The impact of a net increase in the share of black or Latinx students appears stronger in areas that had a greater share of votes going to conservative candidates compared to areas with a greater share of votes going to liberal candidates.

Taken together, this analysis provides evidence against the alternate explanation that schools in politically more liberal areas were more likely to see increases in the share of black or Latinx students between 2013 and 2015 and to have higher rates of test boycotts for white students, which would suggest a potentially spurious relationship between racial group threat and participation in test boycotts. Whether schools were in a politically liberal or politically conservative area, those with increase in the share of black and Latinx students had a higher rate of test boycotts for white students than those without such an increase. The effect, however, was larger in schools located in more conservative voting areas, suggesting that white parents in these areas are more sensitive to racialized accountability threat. This may be in keeping with conservative political ideology, which is more suspicious of government intervention in schools. Yet, the effect is still substantial in more liberal areas, suggesting the impact of racial threat in an accountability context transcended political affiliation.

Discussion

This study provides strong evidence that changes in the racial composition of a school contributed to participation in test boycotts among white students, consistent with the hypotheses of racial threat under conditions of accountability pressure. I found that schools with an increase in the share of black or Latinx students between 2013 and 2015 had approximately a six to seven percentage point greater rate of test boycotts for white students boycotting compared to schools without such an increase. Previous research on the opt-out movement has overlooked the potential role of race in the movement. This research suggests that participants in the movement are primarily white, suburban, and relatively affluent (Pizmony-Levy & Green Saraisky, 2016; Supovitz et al., 2016). It has used surveys and interviews to identify reasons why parents joined the movement (Pizmony-Levy & Green Saraisky, 2016), finding that parents express concerns over changes to curriculum and instruction, the loss of local control, and ideological opposition to the use of standardized tests. Such parents may be reluctant to express racialized motivations or may not even view their motivations as racialized. By drawing on school-level accountability data, I was able to analyze the entire population K-8 schools in New York, and not just those parents how select into a survey study. I uncovered the critical role of demographic changes in mobilizing boycotts.

While the findings from the main analysis provided evidence that racial group threat contributed to the participation in test boycotts among white students, the findings from the comparative analysis of subgroups offered even more striking evidence. The effect of a net increase in the share of black or Latinx students between 2013 and 2015 on the test boycott rate of white students held only for schools in areas with little previous experience with accountability pressures, including majority white schools, schools in low poverty districts,

those in suburbs or rural areas, and those schools that had always previously met AYP in math and ELA. The onset of Common Core-aligned testing increased the salience of potential accountability sanctions in school previously sheltered from such concerns, but the increase in the share of black or Latinx students appeared to heighten that concern.

These findings extend research on racialized perceptions on school quality. Previous research finds that white parents perceive schools that serve low-income students or students of color as lower in academic quality than those that serve middle class or white students (Cucchiara, 2013; Holme, 2002; Roda & Wells, 2013). I provided evidence that school-level increases in the share of Black or Latinx promote oppositional action against standardized accountability tests among white parents. This is consistent with qualitative findings that staff in suburban schools and districts experiencing growth in the share of non-white students develop anxieties about accountability pressures in response (Holme et al., 2013), but extends these findings to show that racialized forms of threat in accountability contexts can spur participation in forms of protest. The expansion of accountability pressure to predominately white and suburban schools that had previously been sheltered from such concerns does not mean that the policy sheds its racialized construction.

This study extends research on the responses to accountability policies. While previous research has focused on how school staff have responded to accountability pressures, as well as how accountability policies affect issues of school governance, I focus on how accountability policies have created a constituency that has mobilized in opposition. Parents are key stakeholders in the education policy process, but their role in their process has not often been highlighted. Yet, as I show here, they respond to policy changes and may take collective action that can shape how policies unfold. Collective action by parents can also shape the landscape of

educational opportunity if that action seeks to maintain exclusive control over educational goods, hoard opportunities, and reinforce racial hierarchies through the maintenance of the status quo. While previous, the threats to local control over educational resources and decisions occurred mainly in urban settings (Trujillo, 2013), changes to the structure of accountability in New York State in 2013 dramatically expanded the scope of that threat.

This expansion of threat provided the opportunity to analyze the interaction between racial threat and general threat. Research in social movements has shown that threat can catalyze support for and participation in reactive social movements that seek to maintain a beneficial status quo (McVeigh, 1999; Van Dyke & Soule, 2002). This research has shown that perceptions of threat stemming from structure changes in society contributes to support for and participation in social movements. I extend this research in two ways. First, I show that sources of threat interact in an amplifying fashion. Exposure to an additional source of threat under conditions of a general threat increased participation in boycotts of annual accountability tests. Demographic changes enhance the threat stemming from changes in the structure of accountability.

Second, I show that threat can motivate participation in specific acts of protest. While an old line of research on social movements argued grievances, frustration, or deprivation compelled people to engage in acts of protests (Spilerman, 1970; Useem, 1998), scholars have critiqued this approach for overlooking the critical role of resources, formal organizations, and political opportunities and failing to explain conditions leading to collective action (Olzak & Shanahan, 1996). Indeed, resources and the creation of mobilizing structures were key for the opt-out movement (as discussed in Study 1). However, recent research suggests that the perception of threat to social and political power can shape political behavior (Enos, 2015;

Reny & Newman, 2018), social attitudes (Quillian, 1996; Wetts & Willer, 2018), or spur recruitment into social movements (Andrews & Seguin, 2015; McVeigh, 1999; Van Dyke & Soule, 2002). I add to this by showing that racial threat can contribute to participation in routine forms of social protest—in this case, boycotts. These findings suggest that threat may serve as an additional motivation for protesting in the context of resource mobilization and political opportunity.

While this study provides evidence that racialized accountability threat contributed to participation in the opt-out Movement, it is important to acknowledge that motivations for joining social movements are multifaceted. In this study, many schools that did not experience increases in the share of black or Latinx students had high rates of test boycotts for white students. Movement participation is frequently driven by ideology (Oliver & Johnston, 1999; Snow et al., 1986; Zald, 2000), and these findings are consistent with the possibility that some participants in test boycotts are driven by ideological concerns, while others may react to racial threat. While further research is needed to disentangle the role of ideology in the movement, these findings suggest that successful movement mobilization can extend beyond ideological commitments and may incorporate a wide range of motivations.

While I have argued that these results are consistent with the theory of racialized accountability threat, there are several key limitations to the inferences that I can draw. First, the mechanisms driving the relationship between racial group threat and participation test boycotts are unclear. According to the group threat theory, the mere perception of a threat to a dominant group's control over political and economic resources is enough to trigger changes in attitudes and behavior. Wetts and Willer (2018) experimentally manipulated the salience of Barack Obama's race and the magnitude of trends in demographic changes and found a

negative effect on whites' attitude toward welfare programs. However, other mechanisms are possible. Studies have documented how school staff adopted practices focused on maintaining accountability status when their school experienced influxes of students of color, immigrant students, or English language learners (Evans, 2007; Holme et al., 2013; Turner, 2015; Welton et al., 2013). Parents of white students may react to the adoption of practices like teaching to the test, narrowing curricula to tested subjects, and eliminating extracurricular activities in favor of test preparation that may result from demographic changes. Indeed, this mechanism is consistent with previous survey research on the avowed reasons parents joined the Opt-Out Movement (Pizmony-Levy & Green Saraisky, 2016). The findings presented here are consistent with either process, but future research may investigate in-depth the mechanisms that drive parents to participate in collective action to protect educational goods.

Another potential limitation is the extent to which these findings are generalizable to other contexts. A unique aspect of the case of New York is the confluence of three factors: (1) an aggressive implementation of Common Core State Standards and aligned tests with more rigorous proficiency cutoffs; (2) a pre-existing network of advocacy groups opposed to the use of standardized tests for high-stakes accountability purposes; and (3) changes in racial demographics. While the majority of states have adopted the Common Core, not all approached testing in the same way as New York. While the opt-out Movement has a national presence and activists promote test boycotts in all states, not all states had the robust movement infrastructure to support collective action as observed in New York. These factors make New York a non-representative case, which is a problem that social movement research often faces (McAdam, 1996). Therefore, it is necessary to test the theory of racialized accountability threat in other contexts, both for participation in test boycotts and for other

relevant outcomes as well. For example, racialized accountability threat may motivate well-resourced white families to exit the public school system altogether and enroll in private schools or take on homeschooling.

These findings have important implications for the future of accountability policies and the design of policies that seek to improve educational opportunities for non-dominant groups. The findings of this study extend those of other studies that document action taken by affluent white parents to maintain local control over educational decisions and resources, such as anti-busing demonstrations (Useem, 1980) and opposition to desegregation plans (Siegel-Hawley et al., 2018). There is a long tradition of opposition to state and federal attempts to expand educational opportunities for students of color when those efforts challenge the local control over schools. Standardized tests are a cornerstone of accountability policies. Under the most felicitous interpretation of their use, they expose the education debt owed to students of color, traditionally underserved by local schools (Ladson-Billings, 2006). These findings suggest that policies that seek to redress the education debt may face challenges when they threaten, in reality or in perception, the control over educational resources exerted by parents in predominately white communities.

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*Tables**Table 1 - Descriptive statistics by group for all years, for 2009, and for 2013*

	Increase in %Black and Latinx, 2013-2015		No increase in %Black and Latinx, 2013-2015		Increase - No increase difference	
	All Schools Mean (SD)	Majority White Schools Mean (SD)	All Schools Mean (SD)	Majority White Schools Mean (SD)	All Schools Diff.	Majority White Schools Diff.
<i>Panel A. 2009-2012</i>						
Boycotting tests - all students	0.37 (0.82)	0.38 (0.86)	0.39 (0.91)	0.39 (0.94)	-0.02	-0.01
Boycotting tests - white students	0.47 (1.18)	0.47 (1.25)	0.46 (1.41)	0.46 (1.39)	0.01	0.01
Non-proficiency rate - mathematics	32.04 (22.51)	29.46 (21.03)	33.39 (22.7)	31.68 (21.71)	-1.35	-2.22
Black/Latinx	20.74 (20.28)	10.9 (8.57)	19.55 (21.63)	8.72 (7.63)	1.19	2.18
White	71.12 (23.2)	83.33 (10.55)	71.57 (26.17)	86.04 (10.17)	-0.45	-2.71
Novice teachers	3.87 (4.44)	3.64 (4.24)	4.45 (5.18)	3.91 (4.45)	-0.58	-0.27
Teachers with MA or above	40.4 (27.16)	37.39 (27.92)	29.67 (24.59)	24.57 (23.62)	10.73	12.82
Free/reduced price lunch	32.2 (24.55)	23.78 (18.67)	38.77 (24.91)	30.5 (19.92)	-6.57	-6.72
Limited English proficiency	4.62 (6.68)	2 (2.74)	3.97 (6.69)	1.39 (2.43)	0.65	0.61
Total enrollment	558.35 (254.73)	521.27 (226.83)	529.98 (285.16)	467.03 (221.13)	28.37	54.24

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District %Poverty	11.99 (9.13)	10.09 (7.22)	14.82 (9.19)	13.12 (7.43)	-2.83	-3.03
<hr/> <i>Panel B. 2013-2017</i>						
Boycotting tests - all students	18.61 (18.71)	21.47 (19.27)	14.83 (15.93)	17.37 (16.25)	3.78	4.1
Boycotting tests - white students	26.23 (23.44)	29.24 (23.49)	19.84 (19.16)	22.52 (19.25)	6.39	6.72
Non-proficiency rate - mathematics	53.75 (18.06)	50.3 (16.17)	53.86 (18.67)	52.82 (17.02)	-0.11	-2.52
Black/Latinx	24.83 (21.21)	14.65 (10.19)	18.46 (20.28)	8.51 (7.37)	6.37	6.14
White	65.32 (23.92)	77.8 (12.36)	70.07 (25.96)	84.26 (11.24)	-4.75	-6.46
Novice teachers	3.79 (4.79)	3.22 (4.27)	4.74 (5.51)	3.78 (4.51)	-0.95	-0.56
Teachers with MA or above	43.17 (28.35)	40.16 (29.56)	31.46 (25.78)	25.79 (24.95)	11.71	14.37
Free/reduced price lunch	36.49 (23.3)	28.34 (18.8)	40.1 (22.78)	33.99 (19.89)	-3.61	-5.65
Limited English proficiency	5.03 (6.83)	2.37 (3.15)	3.88 (6.55)	1.4 (2.53)	1.15	0.97
Total enrollment	559.24 (255.91)	509.87 (221.77)	547.3 (288.22)	472.89 (211.97)	11.94	36.98
District %Poverty	12.7 (9.32)	10.6 (7.38)	14.8 (9.23)	13.1 (7.34)	-2.1	-2.5

Table 2 - Descriptive statistics by group for majority white schools for all years

	Increase in %Black and Latinx, 2013-2015	No increase in %Black and Latinx, 2013-2015
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Boycotting tests - white students	0.11 (0.2)	0.08 (0.16)
Boycotting tests - all students	0.08 (0.16)	0.06 (0.13)
District %Poverty	0.1 (0.07)	0.13 (0.07)
Non-proficiency rate - mathematics	0.37 (0.22)	0.39 (0.23)
Teachers with MA or above	0.38 (0.29)	0.25 (0.24)
Black/Latinx	0.12 (0.09)	0.09 (0.08)
Limited English proficiency	0.02 (0.03)	0.01 (0.02)
Novice teachers	0.03 (0.04)	0.04 (0.04)
Free/reduced price lunch	0.25 (0.19)	0.32 (0.2)
White	0.81 (0.12)	0.85 (0.11)

Table 3 - OLS and School and Year Fixed Effects Estimates of Effects of Increases in the percent of black or Latinx students on Rate of Test Boycotts Among White Students

	All grades (3-8)		Elementary grades (3-5)		Middle grades (6-8)	
	1	2	3	4	5	6
%Black or Latinx	-0.038 *** (0.011)	0.61 *** (0.067)	0.037 * (0.016)	0.609 *** (0.096)	-0.048 * (0.024)	0.891 *** (0.139)
Lagged math non-proficiency rate - all students	0.312 *** (0.03)	0.128 *** (0.029)	0.252 *** (0.044)	0.109 ** (0.039)	0.23 ** (0.07)	0.084 (0.05)
School Fixed Effects	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Year Fixed Effects	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Observations	12768	12768	6819	6819	2647	2647
R2	0.198	0.735	0.183	0.725	0.274	0.81
Adj. R2	0.197	0.691	0.182	0.675	0.272	0.776

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05.

Note. Includes controls for the lagged non-proficiency rate in mathematics for all students and for white students, the percent of teachers with less than 3 years of experience, percent of teachers with MAs or above, the percent of English Language Learners, the percent of students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch, and the natural log of total school enrollment. Heteroscedastic-robust standard errors clustered at the school level are in parentheses.

Table 4 - Difference-in-differences Estimates of Effects of Increases in the Percent of Black or Latinx students on Rate of Test Boycotts Among White Students

	Panel A: All grades (3-8)		Panel B: Elementary grades (3-5)		Panel C: Middle grades (6-8)	
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Increase %Black or Latinx, 2013-2015 X post-2013	0.064 *** (0.008)	0.059 *** (0.008)	0.074 *** (0.011)	0.064 *** (0.012)	0.083 *** (0.017)	0.078 *** (0.018)
School Fixed Effects	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Year Fixed Effects	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y
Observations	12768	12768	6819	6819	2647	2647
R2	0.452	0.734	0.439	0.724	0.54	0.81
Adj. R2	0.451	0.69	0.439	0.674	0.538	0.776

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05.

Note. Includes controls for the lagged non-proficiency rate in mathematics for all students and for white students, percent of teachers with less than 3 years of experience, percent of teachers with MAs or above, the percent of English Language Learners, the percent of students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch, and the natural log of total school enrollment. Heteroscedastic-robust standard errors clustered at the school level are in parentheses.

Table 5 - Difference-in-differences Estimates of Effects of Increases in the Percent of Black or Latinx students on Rate of Test Boycotts Among White Students by Relevant Subgroups

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Majority White in 2012	Majority Black/Latin x in 2012	District %Poverty < Median	District %Poverty > Median	Non-urban	Urban	Always Met AYP, 2009- 2013	Did Not Always Met AYP, 2009- 2013
<i>Panel A. All schools</i>								
Increase %Black or Latinx, 2013-2015 X post-2013	0.071 *** (0.009)	0.009 (0.023)	0.081 *** (0.013)	0.013 (0.011)	0.068 *** (0.009)	-0.011 (0.012)	0.072 *** (0.011)	0.016 (0.013)
School Fixed Effects	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year Fixed Effects	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Observations	9784	1447	5670	5324	10051	2716	8476	3748
R2	0.774	0.641	0.829	0.785	0.798	0.513	0.743	0.739
Adj. R2	0.737	0.578	0.796	0.739	0.763	0.424	0.703	0.694
<i>Panel B. Majority white schools only</i>								
Increase %Black or Latinx, 2013-2015 X post-2013			0.082 *** (0.013)	0.006 (0.012)	0.069 *** (0.009)	0.030 (0.019)	0.084 *** (0.011)	0.022 (0.015)
School Fixed Effects			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year Fixed Effects			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Observations			5372	4034	8999	957	6822	2852
R2			0.828	0.798	0.799	0.574	0.778	0.776
Adj. R2			0.796	0.754	0.765	0.493	0.743	0.737

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05.

Note. AYP = Adequate Yearly Progress. Schools considered always meeting AYP met AYP in ELA and mathematics in each year between 2009 and 2013. Schools considered not always meeting AYP did not meet AYP in either ELA or mathematics at least one time. All models include controls for the lagged non-proficiency rate in mathematics for all students and for white students, the percent of teachers with less than 3 years of experience, the percent of teachers with MAs or above, the percent of English Language Learners, the percent of students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch, and the natural log of total school enrollment. Heteroscedastic-robust standard errors clustered at the school level are in parentheses.

Table 6 - Alternative Criteria for Inclusion in Treatment or Control Groups for Difference-in-differences Framework

Panel A. Alternative criteria for inclusion in treatment condition

- 1 Increase in %Black or Latinx every year between 2013 and 2017
 - 2 Net increase in the %Black or Latinx between 2013-2017
 - 3 Increase in %Black or Latinx every year between 2013 and 2015
 - 4 Net increase in the %Black or Latinx between 2013 and 2015
-

Panel B. Alternative criteria for inclusion in control condition

- 1 Never an increase in %Black or Latinx in any year between 2009 and 2017
- 2 No net increase in the %Black or Latinx between 2009 and 2017
- 3 Never an increase in %Black or Latinx in any year after 2013
- 4 No net increase in the %Black or Latinx after 2013
- 5 Never an increase in %Black or Latinx between 2013 and 2015
- 6 No net increase in the %Black or Latinx between 2013 and 2015

Table 7 - Difference-in-differences Estimates for the Effect of Placebo Indicators on Rate of Test Boycotts Among White Students

	1	2	3
	All grades (3-8)	Elementary grades (3-5)	Middle grades (6-8)
Increase %Black or Latinx, 2016-2017	0.027 (0.017)	0.033 (0.026)	-0.003 (0.035)
Increase %Black or Latinx, 2008-2010	-0.052 *** (0.01)	-0.066 *** (0.013)	-0.06 ** (0.02)
Increase %Black or Latinx, 2010-2012	-0.049 *** (0.009)	-0.066 *** (0.012)	-0.038 * (0.018)

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

Note. All models include controls for the lagged non-proficiency rate in mathematics for all students and for white students, the percent of teachers with less than 3 years of experience, percent of teachers with MAs or above, the percent of English Language Learners, the percent of students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch, and the natural log of total school enrollment. Models in row 1 were run on data subset to include only years before 2016. Heteroscedastic-robust standard errors clustered at the school level are in parentheses.

Table 8 - Difference-in-differences models of the effect of a net increase in the share of Asian students on the test boycott rate of white students

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Majority White in 2012	Majority Black/Latinx in 2012	District %Poverty < Median	District %Poverty > Median	Non-urban	Urban	Always Met AYP, 2009- 2013	Did Not Always Met AYP, 2009- 2013
<i>Panel A. All schools</i>								
Increase %Asian, 2013-2015 X post-2013	-0.129 *** (0.024)	0.044 (0.041)	-0.080 * (0.037)	-0.029 (0.021)	-0.085 *** (0.023)	0.010 (0.030)	-0.201 *** (0.029)	-0.046 (0.027)
School Fixed Effects	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year Fixed Effects	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Observations	9784	1447	5670	5280	10008	2684	8476	3748
R2	0.774	0.643	0.822	0.786	0.797	0.514	0.741	0.743
Adj. R2	0.737	0.579	0.788	0.740	0.763	0.427	0.700	0.699
<i>Panel B. Majority white schools only</i>								
Increase %Asian, 2013-2015 X post-2013			-0.019 (0.014)	-0.012 (0.018)	0.006 (0.012)	0.011 (0.023)	-0.009 (0.013)	-0.001 (0.025)
School Fixed Effects			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Year Fixed Effects			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Observations			5372	4020	8985	950	6822	2852
R2			0.826	0.799	0.799	0.583	0.775	0.780
Adj. R2			0.793	0.755	0.765	0.503	0.739	0.742

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05.

Note. AYP = Adequate Yearly Progress. Schools considered always meeting AYP met AYP in ELA and mathematics in each year between 2009 and 2013. Schools considered not always meeting AYP did not meet AYP in either ELA or mathematics at least one time. All models include controls for the lagged non-proficiency rate in mathematics for all students and for white students, the percent of teachers with less than 3 years of experience, the percent of teachers with MAs or above, the percent of English Language Learners, the percent of students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch, and the natural log of total school enrollment. Heteroscedastic-robust standard errors clustered at the school level are in parentheses.

Table 9 - Difference-in-differences models of the effect of a net increase in the share of black or Latinx students on rate of suspensions and absences

	1	2	3	4
	Suspension Rate	Suspension Rate	Attendance Rate	Attendance Rate
Increase %Black/Latinx, 2013-2015 X post-2013	0.000 (0.002)	0.000 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.002)	-0.002 (0.003)
School Fixed Effects	N	Y	N	Y
Year Fixed Effects	N	Y	N	Y
Observations	11039	11039	11642	11642
R2	0.152	0.668	0.023	0.233
Adj. R2	0.151	0.609	0.022	0.105

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05.

Note. AYP = Adequate Yearly Progress. Schools considered always meeting AYP met AYP in ELA and mathematics in each year between 2.01e+03 and 2.01e+03. Schools considered not always meeting AYP did not meet AYP in either ELA or mathematics at least one time. All models include controls for the lagged non-proficiency rate in mathematics for all students and for white students, the percent of teachers with less than 3 years of experience, the percent of teachers with MAs or above, the percent of English Language Learners, the percent of students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch, and the natural log of total school enrollment. Heteroscedastic-robust standard errors clustered at the school level are in parentheses.

Table 10 - Linear probability model of association between liberal vote share in a voting district and a net increase in the share of black or Latinx students in a school

	All Schools	Majority White Schools	All Schools	Majority White Schools
%Votes for 3rd party liberal candidates	-2.884 *** (0.671)	-0.440 (1.093)		
%Votes for all liberal candidates			-0.273 ** (0.104)	0.186 (0.171)
Observations	1423	1038	1423	1038
R2	0.013	0.000	0.005	0.001

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05.

3rd party liberal candidates include candidates running on Green Party or Working Families party line. All liberal candidates include candidates running on the Democratic, Green, or Working Families party line.

Table 11 - Difference-in-differences model of the effect of a net increase in the share of black and Latinx students on the test boycott rate of white students, by share of votes for liberal candidates and share of white students in schools

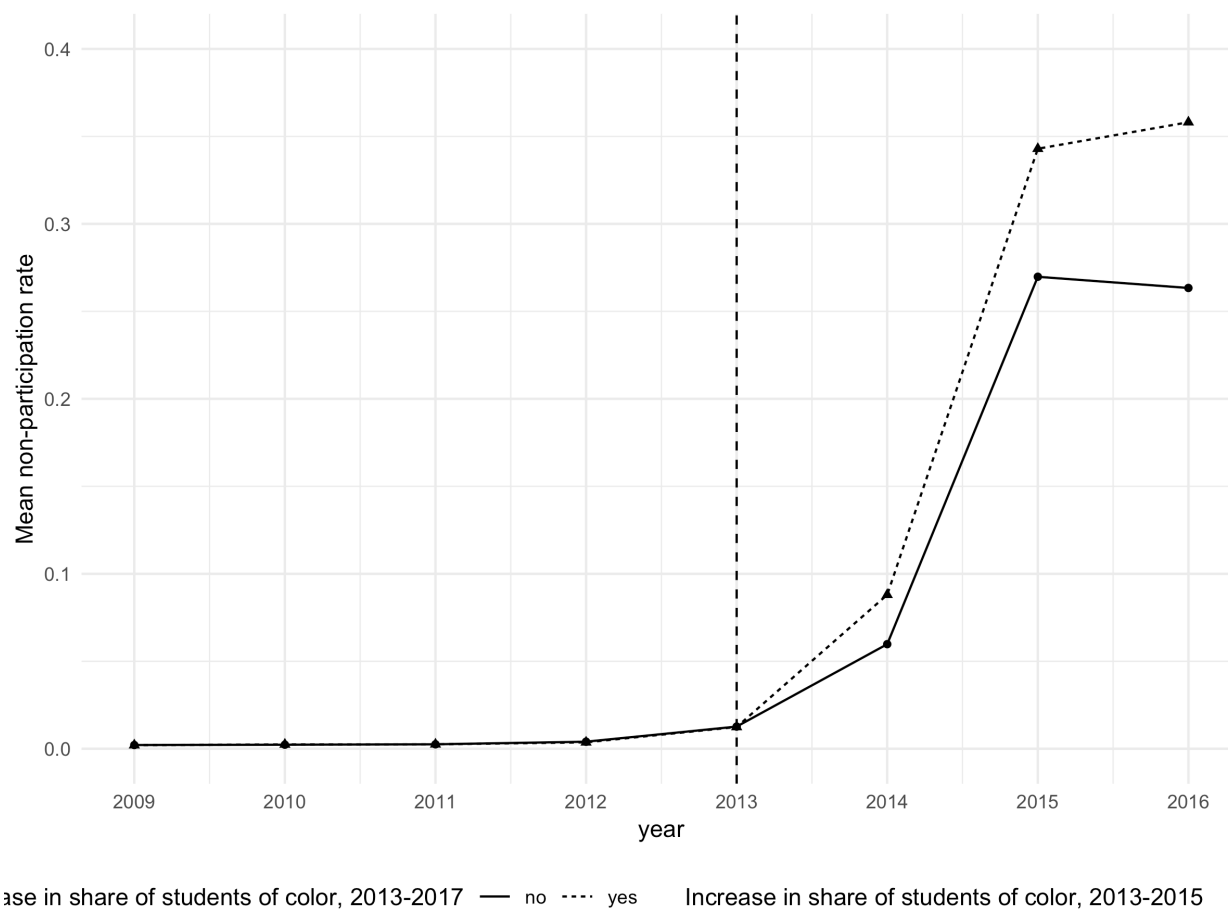
	All Schools, > Median Liberal Vote Share	All Schools, ≤ Median Liberal Vote Share	Majority White Schools, > Median Liberal Vote Share	Majority White Schools, ≤ Median Liberal Vote Share
Increase %Black or Latinx, 2013-2015 X post-2013	0.040 *** (0.012)	0.060 *** (0.013)	0.046 ** (0.015)	0.063 *** (0.013)
Observations	5447	5011	2766	4676
R2	0.675	0.770	0.766	0.781
Adj. R2	0.622	0.731	0.729	0.743

*** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05.

Note. Majority white schools defined as those with mean enrollment of white students greater than 60%. All models include school and year fixed effects, and controls for the lagged non-proficiency rate in mathematics for all students and for white students, the percent of teachers with less than 3 years of experience, the percent of teachers with MAs or above, the percent of English Language Learners, the percent of students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch, and the natural log of total school enrollment. Heteroscedastic-robust standard errors clustered at the school level are in parentheses.

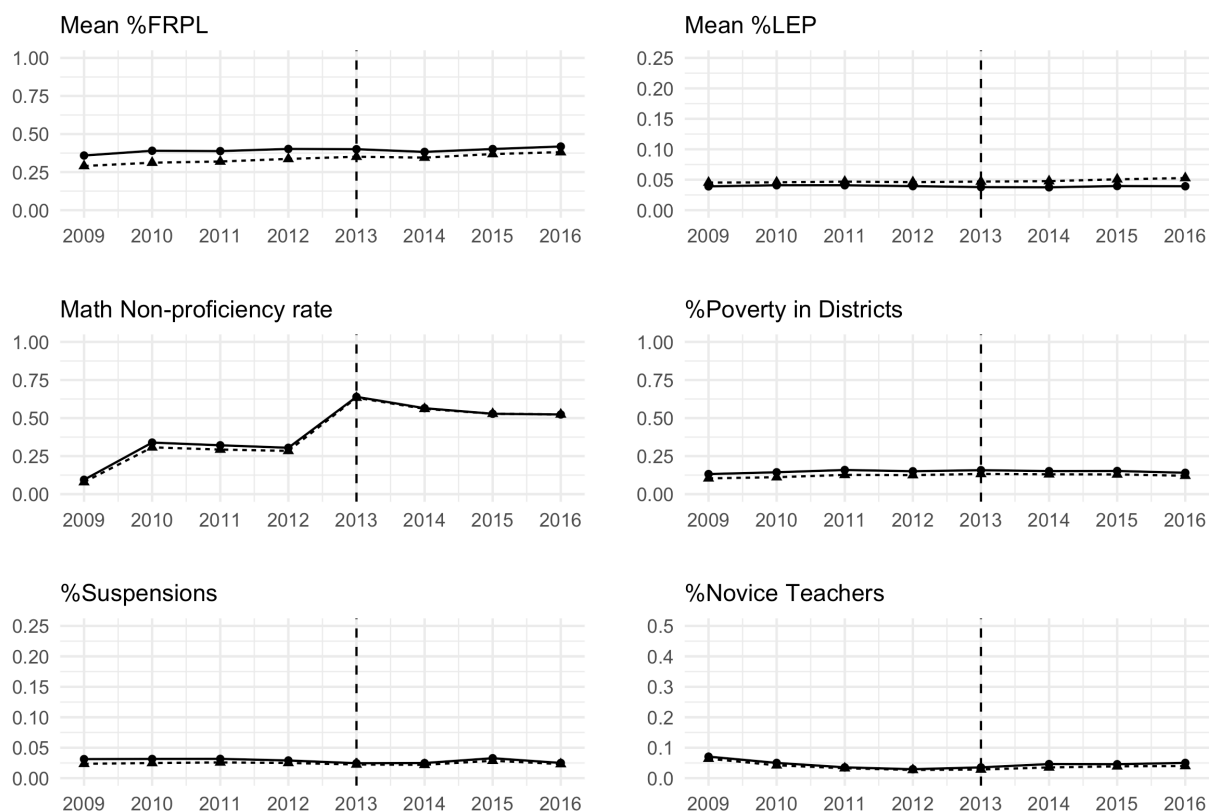
Figures - Study 3

Figure 1 - Trend of non-participation for mathematics accountability assessments for white students for schools with a net increase in the share of black or Latinx students and those without, 2009-2016



Note. Vertical line in 2013 indicates the administration of Common Core-aligned assessments.

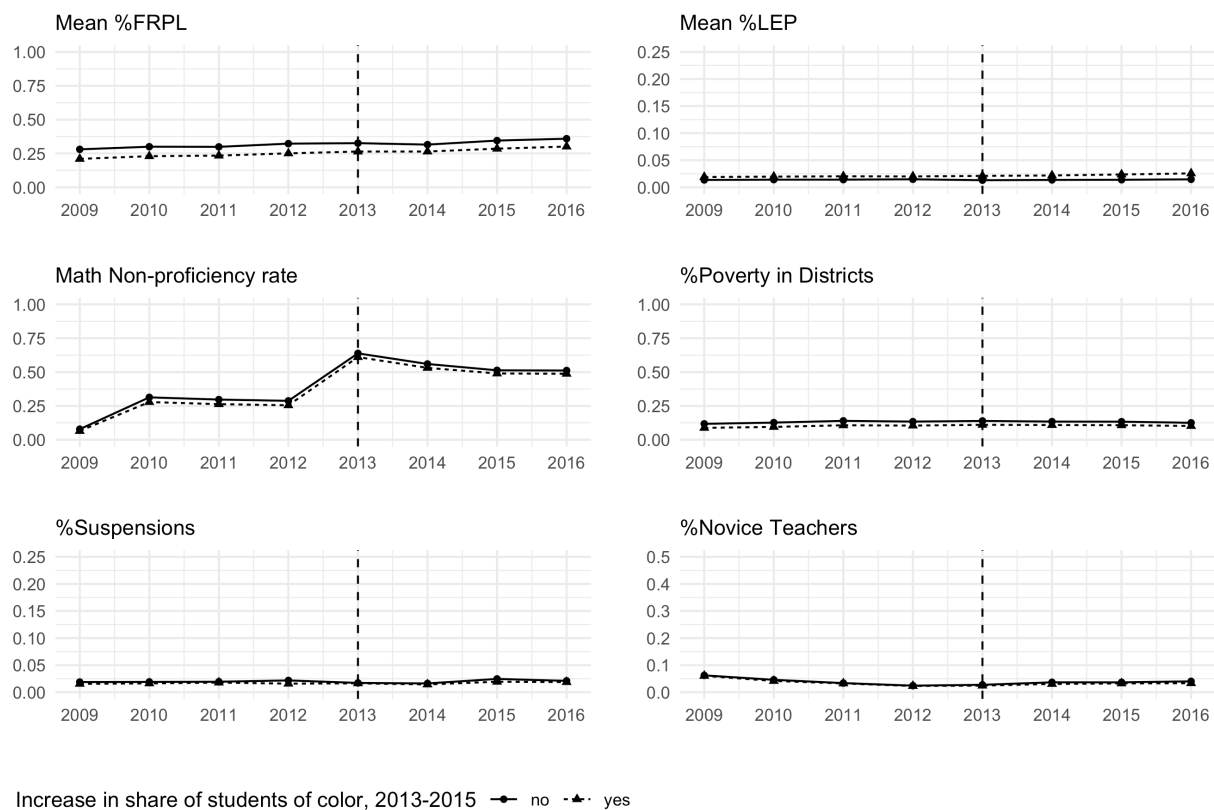
Figure 2 - Comparing trends of key variables for schools with a net increase in the share of black or Latinx students and those without, 2009-2016



Increase in share of students of color, 2013-2015 —●— no —▲— yes

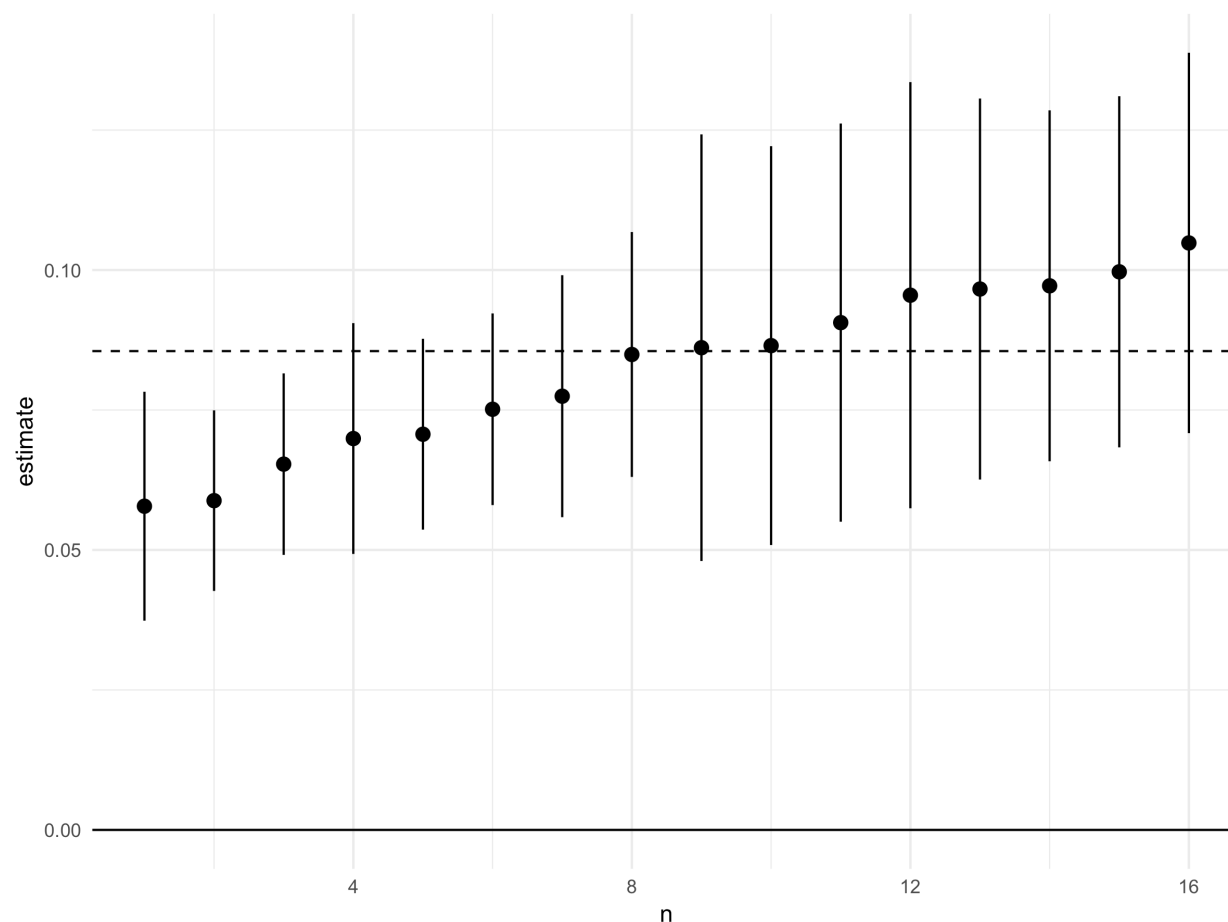
Notes. FRPL = free or reduced price lunch; LEP = limited English proficiency. Novice teachers are defined as those with fewer than three years of experience. Vertical line indicates the administration of Common Core-aligned assessments.

Figure 3 - Comparing trends of key variables for majority white schools only, 2009-2016



Notes. FRPL = free or reduced price lunch; LEP = limited English proficiency. Novice teachers are defined as those with fewer than three years of experience. Vertical line indicates the administration of Common Core-aligned assessments.

Figure 4 - Estimates and confidence intervals for difference-in-differences estimator under various criteria for inclusion in treatment



Notes. Difference-in-differences estimator is the interaction between treatment variable and an indicator for years after 2013. All models include controls for the lagged non-proficiency rate in mathematics for all students and for white students, the percent of teachers with less than 3 years of experience, the percent of teachers with MAs or above, the percent of English Language Learners, the percent of students qualifying for free or reduced price lunch, the natural log of total school enrollment, and school and year fixed effects. Heteroscedastic-robust standard errors clustered at the school level are in parentheses.