State Intervention and Racialized Policy Aversion in Michigan's Black School Districts

Antonia Gordon
Michigan State University

For the past thirty years, Michigan has used Emergency Management (EM) and receiverships to solve city and school finance issues. The impact of these state intervention policies has been highly publicized and has led to institutional distrust among black citizens in urban communities —with the Flint water crisis standing out as the most infamous and high-profile example. A possible outcome of local distrust of state leadership is stakeholder resistance to state intervention across policy sectors and among policies that are perceived as beneficial and less contentious. This paper examines the Michigan Partnership Model (PM) – a state intervention policy that uses partnerships to turnaround the state's lowest performing schools – to examine how adverse policy experiences shape school accountability aversion in Urban Cities. Under the PM, some school districts that previously experienced Emergency Management can work collaboratively with the state to improve education performance. This paper examines how policy visibility and prior, negative policy experiences (e.g., emergency financial management) shape perceptions of new policy. First, I used an analysis of local news media to compare the visibility and discourse of the EM and PM policies. Second, I use interviews with stakeholders in Michigan schools with and without historical accounts of state intervention to gauge whether past experiences with EM policy impacts stakeholder's trust in partnership agreements. I find that stakeholders with EM experiences have more negative views of the state – not the PM itself. However, I do find that visibility plays a role in stakeholders' knowledge and subsequent aversion toward the PM policy.

State Intervention and Racialized Policy Aversion in Michigan's Black School Districts

Gordon, Antonia

Doctoral Candidate | Michigan State University

State Intervention and Racialized Policy Aversion in Michigan's Black School Districts

Abstract

For the past thirty years, Michigan has used Emergency Management (EM) and other state interventions to solve city and school finance issues. The impact of these interventionist policies has been highly publicized and has led to institutional distrust among Black citizens in urban communities —with the Flint water crisis standing out as the most infamous and high-profile example. A possible outcome of local distrust of state leadership is stakeholder resistance to state interference across policy sectors and among policies that are usually perceived as beneficial and less contentious. This paper examines the Michigan Partnership Model (PM) – an education intervention policy that uses partnerships to turnaround the state's lowest performing schools – to understand how adverse policy experiences shape school accountability aversion in predominantly Black cities. Under the PM, some school districts that previously experienced the highly visible and controversial Emergency Management policy work collaboratively with the state to improve education performance. This paper explores how policy visibility and prior, negative policy experiences (e.g., emergency financial management) shape perceptions of new policy. I use interviews with stakeholders in Michigan schools with and without historical accounts of state intervention to gauge whether past experiences with EM policy impact stakeholder's trust in partnership agreements. I find that stakeholders with EM experiences have more negative views of the state – not the PM itself. However, visibility plays a role in stakeholders' knowledge and subsequent aversion towards the partnership policy.

State Intervention and Racialized Policy Aversion in Michigan's Black School Districts

Introduction

A state takeover, or state intervention, occurs when a state government seizes control of an institution that is normally managed at the local level. Taking over a local institution typically involves removing elected leadership and replacing them with state appointed officials. The goal of a takeover is for the higher functioning government to intervene when local units experience severe performance problems. In the past, state intervention was used as a solution to local finance insolvency in cities and schools (Erickson 2021). Now, state intervention is being used to solve academic issues such as low graduation rates and low achievement on state standardized tests (Strunk et al. 2016). Financial takeovers have disproportionately impacted racial minorities in urban communities while all schools, regardless of race, are subject to academic interventions (Stanley 2016; Vang 2017). Research that has examined the impact of takeovers has found state interference triggered by budget deficits to be a precursor for contentious local and state relations (Rogers 2012) while responses to state intervention caused by academic failure include varying degrees of defiance, apathy, and support (Schueler 2019; Welsh and Williams 2018). Scholars have developed frameworks to explain how racialized and authoritarian policies (like state takeovers) could motivate future aversion toward government. These theories often use high visibility policy outcomes that do not explain inconsistent responses to other policies like academic interventions, which usually go undetected and often benefit stakeholders (Redding and Nguyen 2020). Plausible explanations for mixed responses to school takeovers can be found when examining the histories and racial composition of communities that comply and resist state interference in academic matters.

State Intervention and Racialized Policy Aversion in Michigan's Black School Districts

Using Michigan – a state that exercised the country's most aggressive forms of state intervention – this research finds that the racialized nature of state takeovers could inform the lens through which select individuals view government as well as other policies. For example, Michigan cities and schools are subject to a financial state takeover under its Emergency Management policy (EM). Eleven of the thirteen communities that have experienced a state takeover under EM are comprised of the state's highest concentrations of African American citizens. The policy outcomes that have resulted from EM have been highly publicized and have led to institutional distrust among Black citizens in urban communities —with the Flint water crisis standing out as the most infamous and high-profile example (Nickels 2019). Communities tapped for Emergency Management due to finance problems also experience deficits in school budgets that could impact student achievement – making emergency managed and Black communities frequent targets of academic interventions and school takeovers (Arsen, Luca, and Yongmei 2015).

Michigan's more recently adopted school improvement policy, the Partnership Model (PM), is a less intrusive interventionist policy that allows the state to operate as a partner with officials in low-performing public schools. The PM policy is less contentious than the EM legislation but has faced similar forms of resistance (Barret 2017). Municipal finance and school performance monitoring are legislative processes that are managed under different policy spheres and use different approaches to remedying performance problems; however, these policies often impact similar, and sometimes the same, communities in Michigan. There have been few scholarly attempts to examine how negative and racialized policy experiences (EM) can lead to aversion towards other interventions (PM) that typically go unnoticed. I introduce Racialized

Policy Aversion theory to explain how historical, negative and racialized policy experiences can shape perceptions of other, unrelated policies. I use grounded theory to explain why some stakeholders develop aversion toward low stakes policies, and the varying attitudes and behaviors that develop in response to state oversight in schools.

I answer the following research questions: How do prior, negative policy experiences with the highly visible Emergency Management policy shape perceptions of Michigan's partnership policy? What role does policy visibility play in aversion toward the PM policy? I answer these questions with a comparative examination of one school district that has experienced EM (financial accountability) and PM (school accountability), and a school district that has experienced PM, but does not have a history of Emergency Management. I conduct stakeholder interviews to determine whether past experiences with the EM policy impacts trust in school partnerships. An analysis of local news articles was conducted to determine the visibility of the EM and partnership policies separately and collectively, and if visibility contributes to Racialized Policy Aversion. I found stakeholders with EM experiences to have more negative views of state government – not the PM policy. The findings from the media analysis suggest that visibility impacts stakeholders' knowledge of the PM legislation and informs racialized aversion toward the policy.

With education gaining salience on state and national agendas, the success of school improvement in urban, Black communities – which traditionally include the nation's lowest performing schools and often depend on stakeholder support for sustainable reform (Ishimaru 2018; Trujillo and Renée 2013) – is a critical topic for education progress and for supporting

equity in urban communities. The next paragraph(s) provide an overview of Emergency

Management and Michigan's Partnership Model. The following section discusses the theoretical

framework used to explain the potential outcomes of EM and PM overlap (policy aversion). The

final sections outline this study's data and methodology, findings, and policy implications.

Emergency Management

EM is a form of state intervention that was first introduced in 1988 as "Emergency

Financial Management." During its initial stages, EM was Michigan's singular solution for

remedying financial deficits in cities. In later years, the policy was updated to include the state

oversight of school districts in fiscal crisis. Local financial insolvency (inability to pay debt,

missed payroll, or unpaid pensions) triggers a fiscal review by the Michigan Treasury

Department. If a review finds an institution to be in financial trouble, the Governor can appoint

an emergency manager to oversee the municipal government's or school district's finances. The

initial legislation was permissible under Public Act 72 of 1990 and gave state appointed

emergency financial managers control over municipal budgets. After a series of policy revisions

(Public Act 4 of 2011 and Public Act 436 of 2012), the policy was renamed "Emergency

Management," and the powers of emergency managers were expanded to include absolute

control of local government. The current policy grants emergency managers the authority to

eliminate elected boards and councils, hire and fire staff, and dissolve government contracts and

departments. Although Emergency Management has successfully helped local institutions

reorganize debt, the policy has resulted in increased administrative and governance burdens for

local officials (Reckhow and Mason 2016; Rogers 2012), while also removing the most basic

civil right belonging to communities: electoral democracy (Hawthorne 2017; Seamster 2018). EM's antidemocratic strategies have made it widely unpopular among most Michiganders.

In 2012, the American Civil Liberties Union collected double of the required signatures needed to have the EM legislation appealed by ballot vote. Michiganders voted to strike down the policy in the same year (ACLU 2016); However, in 2013, Governor Rick Snyder signed the EM policy back into law with provisions that would bar voters from future referendums to rescind it. A survey fielded by the Center for Michigan revealed that eighty-one percent of the population (approximately 2,750 residents) had "low" or "very low" trust in the EM policy (Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy 2022; Roelofs 2024). Additional research found Black communities to have stronger, more negative interpretations of the policy (Gordon 2023). The aversion and racialized attitudes towards EM could be motivated by the policy's negative reputation and its disparate impact on Black citizens in urban communities.

Emergency Management as a Racialized Policy

In a study focused on Michigan's emergency manager policy in cities alone, Rosebrook and Scott (2016) discovered that cities with Black mayors with strong mayoral powers were more likely to be subject to an emergency manager takeover – even when controlling for financial deficits that trigger state oversight. Researchers at New York University and the University of Michigan (Lee et al. 2016) found racial identity and economic status of residents to be strong predictors for state oversight and the takeovers of local institutions. In state intervention cases where local elected officials were predominantly Black, research shows that emergency managers exercised their power to eliminate the democratic process of electing

members or diminished the authority of the elected board/council (Morel 2018). In regard to the Emergency Management of schools, although less than twelve percent of Michigan's youth population was Black in 2012, more than half of the state's African American students had attended a school or lived in a community led by a state-appointed emergency manager (Kang 2020; Zubrzycki 2013). Black schools that have undergone Emergency Management have experienced higher rates of school closings, or conversions to charter operated entities. EM has not been used since 2018 after the release of Highland Park Public Schools' emergency manager; however, the legislation is still enforceable under Michigan law. The next paragraph discusses Michigan's current school improvement efforts and how interpretive evaluations (how people come to understand a policy and what it does) of the EM policy can be used to predict Black stakeholder responses to school interventions.

The Partnership Model

The Partnership Model is Michigan's adaptation of the federally mandated Every Student Succeeds Act. Its policy prescriptions for turning around underperforming schools are state law and are the primary tool for school improvement. Schools and districts identified for partnership are required to comply with the policy as a condition for receiving state and federal funds (Michigan Department of Education 2020). At its core, the PM relies on contracts between MDE and local schools. Before drafting an agreement, partnership schools are notified of their status and assigned a Partnership Liaison (PAL). PALs are state employees who serve as the point-of-contact for communication from the district to MDE (Office of Partnership Districts 2019). Once a PAL is assigned, MDE hosts a series of meetings where its members and school administrators

develop a consensus on a specific plan for school improvement. Once a plan is drafted and signed, the PAL assigned to the district works closely with school leaders to secure additional funding and resources from the state. Schools are given eighteen-, twenty-four-, and thirty-six-month benchmarks to demonstrate improvement. Section 22 of the State School Code - Public Act 265 of June 28, 2018, requires partnership schools that do not make satisfactory progress before the thirty-sixth month benchmark to make significant changes to instructional and noninstructional programming.

Leaders are expected to replace at least 25% of school faculty and staff or replace the principal of the school if partnership schools do not improve (Representative Kelly 2018; The Council of Chief State School Officers, & Partners 2017). School closures and reconstitution (conversion to a charter operated school) are imposed if staffing changes fail to produce adequate improvement. The local entity remains in control of its schools with support from MDE and other community partners throughout the process. Research that examined early responses to the PM policy found that the initial threat of accountability for continued low performance improved leadership quality in partnership schools (Burns et al. 2023). Even though leadership quality improved, most partnership district leaders symbolically adopted policy demands without implementing new strategies in their improvement efforts (Torres, Frost Waldron, and Burns 2024). These findings suggest that stakeholders subscribed to the PM by mandate, but did not truly buy into the policy's goals.

Behavioral assumptions of policy design suggest that symbolic or hortatory tools can be used to motivate stakeholder support for the new policy (Schneider and Ingram 1990). Other

research asserts that building civic capacity through stakeholder partnerships is an essential component of positive policy change in urban schools, and policy must create conditions for opposing groups to form alliances to support sustainable school reform (Schueler, Goodman, and Deming 2017; Stone 2001). Although partnership agreements are state mandated for low-performing schools, the policy's namesake (partnership) and alignment with public policy theories for effective education reform could invoke positive interpretations among education stakeholders. The PM's use of capacity building strategies (i.e., additional aid and increased local autonomy in drafting school improvement plans) that separate it from contentious state interventions (i.e., Emergency Management) could also motivate stakeholders in Michigan to adopt the policy's goals. It is equally possible that because of the partnership policy's resemblance to Emergency Management and its disproportionate impact on Black communities, stakeholders with EM experiences will not support the PM's goals.

Policy Overlap

Unlike the EM policy, the Partnership Model has reduced emphasis on financial oversight, increased resources that support the local district's improvement efforts, and the recognition of elected boards and communities that were once excluded from the education decision-making process. However, like the emergency manager model, the partnership policy exercises punitive measures for schools that fail to meet state standards within 36 months. State mandated school reconstitution, building closures, and staff termination are cost cutting approaches used by emergency managers and are highly visible, negative policy outcomes (Atteberry, Loeb, and Wyckoff 2017; Losen et al. 2016; Nuamah 2021). Additional similarities

between EM and the Partnership Model include the policies disproportionate impact on impoverished minority schools. In its first three years of implementation, 89.9% of students under the Partnership Model were African American. Ninety percent of these students were eligible for free or reduced lunch (The Education Policy Innovation Collaborative 2019). These demographics mirror those seen among emergency managed communities.

Table 1 illustrates the overlap between the PM and EM policies. The table includes emergency manager implementation in both cities and local schools to build on the proposed theory that racialized policy experiences are not isolated to one institution of local government or one type of state policy. The most significant relationship is the association between city racial composition and multiple instances of state intervention. Three-quarters of EM impacted communities have also been impacted by Michigan's school improvement policy. All dually impacted communities (communities that have experienced EM and PM) are in Black cities. I expect stakeholders with Emergency Management experiences to have general, heightened distrust in government that creates hypervigilance and negative views of state managed policies that impact majority Black communities. The next paragraph outlines the theory for cross-pollinating racialized policy perceptions.

Racialized Policy Aversion

Racialized Policy Aversion occurs when stakeholders use negative and racial policy experiences to develop aversion towards other policies. Using the heightened visibility created by an adverse policy experience, stakeholders draw connections between a policy and distrusted processes, institutions, and officials. This theory explains initial responses to policies that arouse

strong feelings of dislike that result in stakeholder disinclination, resistance, or attempts to deter policy goals. I combine tenants of Brighenti's theory of Visibility for the social sciences, Collective Participatory Debt, and Racialized Policy Feedback to inform Racialized Policy Aversion.

Brighenti's theory uses the term "visibility" as a metaphor for the knowledge and social processes individuals learn through institutional engagement and policy experiences (Brighenti 2007). I expand on the theory of visibility by specifying how the concept could inform responses across state intervention policies. I argue that visibility increases when stakeholder's institutional engagement is changed by an intervention outcome or notable policy event. Stakeholder responses (resistance/ support/ inaction) are driven by whether the policy's outcomes are viewed as negative, positive, or absent. In Michigan, the policy outcomes that have resulted from academic interventions have been nuanced, allowing school accountability to go uncontested. The notable events that have resulted from financial state intervention have negatively altered stakeholder's institutional engagement (i.e., parents seeking new schools after a building closure, or community members directing questions to a state manager instead of an elected schoolboard). Given that these events have resulted in adverse outcomes that burden stakeholders with the task of identifying new actors and rules, stakeholders with financial intervention policy experiences could have greater awareness of the negatives that accompany state control. Scholar Sally Nuamah provides an example of how heightened, negative visibility forms and its political consequences.

State Intervention and Racialized Policy Aversion in Michigan's Black School Districts

Closed for Democracy, (Nuamah 2022) describes the historical, negative community effects that resulted from school closures in Chicago's Black neighborhoods. Throughout the book, African American citizens' repeated protests to school closures were ignored. Black Chicago Public Schools (CPS) stakeholders developed aversion towards school leaders in response. African American voter support for Chicago's Mayor Rahm Emanuel also declined after he supported additional school closings. In these events, Chicagoans facing a school closure were able to identify the policy outcome (schools closing), the nature of the outcome (negative/adversarial), and the political actor(s) responsible (school district leaders and Mayor Emmanuel). Nuamah also discovers a form of participation apathy that she describes as Collective Participatory Debt (CPD). CPD holds that stakeholders are less inclined to participate in future democratic processes after multiple, negative policy events. These individuals also develop distrust in institutions and affiliated actors. CPD theory provides consequential examples for how visibility informs distrust for political actors and future civic engagement. However, CPD overlooks an important outcome of heightened visibility and distrust – the possibility of cross segment policy aversion. Policy aversion formed in education politics intersected political arenas when distrust for Emanuel was voiced through electoral vote in a mayoral race. If policy aversion can cross political domes, then it is possible that policy aversion can also affect other policies. I introduce Racialized Policy Aversion to complement the literature on visibility and answer the questions unaddressed in Collective Participatory Debt theory. I argue that visibility, informed by a negative policy experience, leads to pre-existing distrust while CPD is a manifestation of distrust across institutions and perpetrators. Racialized Policy Feedback

explains how distrust becomes concentrated among racial and ethnic communities, and the possible group responses (policy aversion), like those observed in CPS, which develop.

Michener's theory on racialized policies asserts that negative policy experiences, and heightened policy visibility, can become concentrated among groups of individuals when a policy excludes or negatively impacts one racial group. To engage in Racialized Policy Feedback, stakeholders use what they learn in the policy feedback process (disproportionate racial distribution of policy along with resource and interpretive evaluations[1]) to create new political behavior and dynamics. This account on the relationship between visibility, behavior, and future policy aversion builds on the Racialized Policy Feedback approach to understand how policy experiences and race shape politics across policy spheres. Combined, visibility, CPD, and Racial Policy feedback theories suggest that policy characteristics create resource and interpretive effects among racial groups to form political attitudes and responses to policy (McDonnell 2013). Racialized Policy Aversion closes the policy feedback loop to explain behavior responses across policy sectors. Race is a key, mildly discussed element in this study. I do not argue that racial identity is a motivator for policy resistance. Instead, I am suggesting that it is the racialized nature of policies (disproportionate targeting and distribution of policy) that is the driving force behind mass behavior responses among racial groups.

Figure 1 provides a conceptual model for the relationship between visibility, racialized policy experiences, and Racialized Policy Aversion. The model conveys the significance of past policy experiences in stakeholders' resistance to future policies that are similar to other negative

---

[1] Resource effects refer to the tangible benefits or resources that are provided or taken away by a policy (like money or access to services), while interpretive effects relate to how a policy shapes people's understanding of their place in society and their perceptions of government.

and racial policies, or policies that are managed by distrusted actors/agencies. In my discussion

of the EM policy, I provided evidence indicating that state takeovers in the U.S. have been at the

peril of Black communities and Black political empowerment. Having unique and contentious

experiences with state takeovers could create an overlooked behavior response that includes a

stronger inclination to resist state intervention among Black communities. Because school

accountability is carried out at the local level and has resulted in fewer, immediate adverse

events, these policies are less visible and do not raise feelings of threat until distrusted processes,

people, or events become apparent. Simply put, education stakeholders with adverse, racialized

policy experiences are more likely to be Black and are more likely to resist state oversight in

their schools when distrusted entities are involved. Stakeholders without adverse, racialized

policy experiences are less resistant to state oversight in their schools. These theories provide

explanations for the mixed responses observed in school takeovers.

Drawing from visibility, CPD, and policy feedback frameworks, I propose that there are

three possible feedback outcomes from the partnership policy. (1) The PM policy has the

potential to produce positive resource and interpretive effects by adding support and empowering

local education stakeholders to self-govern while drafting their own plans for school

improvement. (2) Because the partnership policy targets similar populations as the EM policy

and models some of its policy outcomes, it has the potential to replicate the EM's negative

resource and interpretive effects among partnership stakeholders who are Black and have

experienced state intervention in their local government/school. (3) Given that the visibility of

the partnership policy is lower than EM with less notable policy events, it could produce little to

no apparent resource or interpretive effects. I conduct a qualitative comparative case study that

examines partnership school districts with and without EM experiences to assess if prior, negative experiences with Emergency Management shape perceptions of Michigan's partnership policy. I also assess the role of policy visibility in aversion toward the PM policy. From May 2022 through December 2023, I conducted twenty-seven one-on-one interviews with education and community stakeholders in two Michigan school districts.

Case Study Selections

To determine if embedded distrust from adverse, racialized policy experiences fuels resistance to other policies, I selected school districts that have different policy experiences, but similar academic outcomes (that mandates state partnership). I selected one school district that is currently under school partnership and has experience with emergency management. I also examined a school district that is currently under state partnership but has not experienced EM. Because of Emergency Management's disparate impact on Black schools, the school districts that have experience EM and PM are de facto Black. The school districts used in this research are referenced using pseudonyms. The first case study, District A, is a school district in a predominantly Black city in West, MI. District A, was selected based on its history with state oversight under emergency management, and current state intervention in its schools as a result of the partnership policy. The district has been in fiscal crisis since the early 2000's after running a deficit and facing budget problems. As enrollment fell in the mid-2000's, the school district began spending more money than it brought in while simultaneously experiencing declines in student performance. School A accumulated a debt of more than $12 million while its students

ranked in the bottom 25th percentile on state tests. The district was under Emergency

Management by 2012.

The emergency manager for District A converted the district to a charter operated system

in 2013. Demographically, the community mirrors other EM impacted cities. According to the

most recent American Community Survey (ACS), the racial composition of the city surrounding

District A is 76.54% Black or African American. In 2023, 92.6% of students in its school district

were also Black, and 83.2% of the school population was eligible for free or reduced lunch in

that same year. 2021 MISchool[2] data reports that only 3% of District A's elementary students

test at or above the proficient level for reading, and only 3% test at or above that level for math.

District A's partnership agreement was drafted in March of 2017 during the first round of

partnership selections.

The other case study district, District B, is in central Michigan. District B has no

historical encounters with state interference. District B became a partnership district in 2022 after

years of declining student performance. The start of the 2023 academic year marked the district's

first year in partnership. District B's city population is majority white while 77.5% of the school

district's population is comprised of students from minoritized groups (39.2% Black, 20.4

Hispanic/Latin). While the district does not have historical experiences with state interventions

in its schools, it has experienced similar financial and performance problems seen in EM-led

schools such as District A. In fact, the school system was under the threat of Emergency

---

[2] MI School Data is the State of Michigan's official public portal for education data. The site offers multiple levels and views for statewide, intermediate school district, district, school, and college level performance information.

Management in 2011. *Table 2* compares city demographics and school achievement metrics for both districts.

The districts perform similarly on most benchmarks. The major differences are in the total number of African American citizens and students. In practice, District B's budget deficit and academic performance over time warranted Emergency Management and school accountability. However, based on prior research demonstrating the role of race in state takeovers, we can infer that the racial identity of city residents may have allowed District B to avoid aggressive forms of state oversight – and the takeover of the local education institution. I argue that the community's lack of experience with adversarial forms of state intervention – and the lower visibility that is created by the absence of these experiences – has left District B stakeholders with more positive views of state government and the partnership policy. I expect District A stakeholders to perceive the partnership policy as more visible than District B stakeholders. I also expect District A stakeholders to have more negative views of the partnership policy than District B stakeholders. The remaining sections discuss the data, methods, and findings I used to investigate these hypotheses.

Selecting Research Participants

Research has determined that purposive sampling can offer specific insights into processes and policy experiences (Tansey 2009). I intentionally sought out community members who took up stake in education governance and policy. I drafted a list of interviewees who were employed in the schools under the EM and PM. Additional participants were selected based on their involvement in schoolboard politics. For example, stakeholders who spoke during the

public comment period of schoolboard meetings were targeted for interviewing. District A

research participants included: two teachers employed while under Emergency Management, two

teachers employed under the partnership policy, two school administrators employed under the

EM policy, two school administrators employed under the PM policy, two schoolboard members

from District A's emergency manager appointed board, three schoolboard members from the

current, elected school board, two authorized representatives of an organization listed as a

partner in the school's partnership agreement, and four community members. District B

participants included: two teachers employed under the partnership policy, two school

administrators employed under the PM policy, two schoolboard members from the current,

elected school board, two authorized representatives of an organization listed as a partner in the

school's partnership agreement, and four community members. I used $25 Amazon gift cards to

incentivize stakeholder participation.

Interview Structure

I used a deductive research approach and phenomenology to understand how an

individual policy experience can shape perceptions of other policies/political actors. Establishing

theory before data collection helped me develop protocols that were aligned with the feedback

outcomes I proposed earlier. I focused on three lines of phenomenological questioning about the

PM and EM policies – visibility, aversion/ favor, and cross policy aversion/ favor. In-depth,

open-ended interviewing, as opposed to other qualitative methods, allowed research participants

to engage in narrative sharing so that I could deeply explore and describe each policy experience.

Interviews were one-on-one and fifty-five minutes long. I allowed research participants to

choose the meeting location that worked best for them. I met most interviewees at their place of employment. Other interviews took place at coffee shops, restaurants, or via Zoom.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed using NVivo. Once transcribed, I stored both audio and texts files on a secure drive. I hid stakeholder identities by categorizing respondents into groups based on their policy experience and title. I used the grouping and group names listed in the previous paragraph. The roles and experiences of District A interviewees frequently overlapped (i.e., a current schoolboard member in District A (under the partnership policy) is also a long-standing community member and was also a teacher during Emergency Management). In cases where there was a great amount of overlap in a participant's school and community involvement, I allowed the stakeholder to select the group they identified with most.

Coding for Visibility

I used direct questioning and answers to measure policy visibility. The explicit questions were: "How much do you know about [insert policy name][3]", and "who is responsible for implementing the policy?" Policies were labeled as either "Highly Visible", "Slightly Visible, or "Not Visible" among individual stakeholders. A highly visible policy included an accurate assessment of a policy's goals, strategies, and outcomes, and the person/entity responsible. A policy was slightly visible when respondents failed to provide an accurate response for one of the

---

[3] I avoid mentioning or asking about the EM policy before finishing the line of questioning associated with the partnership policy. I do so to minimize the effect the EM's potential resource and interpretive evaluations might have on participant's responses about the partnership model. While I aim to demonstrate that one policy has an influence over the perceptions of the other, this finding should be observed organically without leading or guiding.

two questions. A policy was labeled "not visible" when respondents could not identify its goals, outcomes, or actors.

When asked about Emergency Management, one participant stated that "[it] removes elected officials, has resulted in some housing issues in Detroit, and negatively impacts schools." When asked who is responsible for implementing EM, the participant stated, "The Governor." This response demonstrates knowledge about the EM's processes and outcomes, and the political actors responsible for policy implementation. Emergency Management would be considered a highly visible policy for this stakeholder. When asked about school accountability policy, a District B stakeholder said the following: "I'm aware that [District B] has partnership schools . . ." and ". . . I'm not really sure who is responsible for implementing the policy maybe MDE or [the] state?" This respondent was aware of the PM's existence and its affiliated actors, but was unable to identify the policy's processes, outcomes, or implementors – making the policy only slightly visible to this stakeholder.

Coding Experiences and Future Policy Resistance

I used both a narrative and thematic analysis to determine if past, negative policy experiences drive stakeholder's resistance to adopt future policy. Interviewees were asked to describe their feelings towards each policy and the rationale they use to justify their approval or opposition. The explicit questions were "Do you support the [insert policy name] policy? Why or why not? Can you describe any negative or positive changes in your district since [insert policy name] was implemented?" Asking these lines of questioning allowed participants to identify and describe their interpretive evaluations of each policy. I categorized responses as either

"Supportive" or "Opposing." I used an inductive thematic analysis of responses to determine what common narratives exist among policy supporters and opposers, and what experiences or incidents motivated their beliefs. There were no common themes generated from questions about the partnership policy. There was only a single shared narrative about Emergency Management. (see Appendix A for additional interview questions).

Interview Findings

First, I found that stakeholders who have experienced Emergency Management have more negative views of the EM policy and state managed programs. Next, I discovered that stakeholder resistance to the partnership policy is fueled by distrust in state officials for decisions made under EM, not the PM's similarities to Emergency Management. I also found that stakeholders did not know enough about the partnership policy to negatively or positively interpret it, but when provided with details about the partnership legislation, stakeholders expressed aversion towards it. Meaning, prior, negative policy experiences with Emergency Management did lead to aversion towards the actors in charge of implementing the Partnership Model; however, visibility is needed to shape perceptions of the PM policy itself. The differences in visibility can be explained by the events that occurred under each policy.

Emergency Management and Partnership Model Visibility

Because more notable, adverse outcomes resulted from the EM policy, it was infamous among all but one research participant. District A stakeholders were especially sensitive to the

topic of EM and shared strong feelings of aversion towards it. A stakeholder stated the following

about the EM policy: "The impact on us was devastating. I had worked for [District A] for 17

years, and it's the place I thought I would retire from." Another teacher in District A described

EM's impact on her physical health:

> "It [the state takeover] negatively affected my health, mental stability and, you know, anxiety because everything that you know and what you're used to and your livelihood and financial aspects at home were all going to be affected by this decision that, you know, I feel was. Poorly made."

A social worker employed in District A during Emergency Management discussed the policy's

impact on student mental health, school violence, and community stability.

> "I think it was even more devastating to the students. I think for the most part, it ripped out stability for the students. It was the one place that they could come to, that's for sure. They would have their needs met. You know, the one thing I can say about [District A] when it was a regular school was it was a village. And we got along well. We had wraparound services. And I think it functioned well. I just saw so many kids and crying and kind of violence just peak afterwards. I think it was really devastating for students as it was for, you know, employees as well. But the long-lasting effects on the community, like the increase in crime, the students felt deserted. Everything that they knew, you know, had been changed in a heartbeat." **– District A Employee**

Although District B did not experience Emergency Management, its stakeholders used adjectives

such as overreach, unconstitutional, and disenfranchisement to describe the policy. A District B

schoolboard member offered the following about EM: "[Emergency Management] is limiting

because it takes the focus off the mission of education and places it on money and in lots of

ways, this harms the students." EM is negatively situated in the minds of stakeholders in District

A and B but invokes much stronger aversion in District A stakeholders who have first-hand

experiences with the policy. While the PM policy had a lower visibility among stakeholders

across districts, District B participants expressed some interest in state partnership; and District

A stakeholders were inclined to resist state collaboration. The next paragraph provides additional context to explain these differences. The general finding on Michigan's partnership policy is that its visibility was too low to generate interpretive effects – good or bad. Stakeholders provided the following statements about the PM policy.

> "Like, I was on the board personally, and I was around when the partnership agreement came up. And I think from what I know, I don't know how much that will help here." – **District A Schoolboard Member**

> ". . . So to my knowledge, [the] partnership is in high school. Right? I [only] know what's going on in elementary and middle school." – **District A Teacher**

> "I don't know a lot about [the partnership] - that policy is meant to be a good thing?" – **District B Schoolboard Member**

Racialized Policy Aversion

Despite the lower visibility of the Partnership Model, experiences with Emergency Management did fuel skepticism of the PM's managing entity – the Michigan Department of Education. When asked to explain their hesitations with state collaboration, District A stakeholders named distrust in state government and the MDE staff's lack of local context as motivators.

> They [MDE] see reports, they see information. They don't see the day-to-day activities that are happening. Um, I think, uh, data that is presented isn't presented properly to the MDE to make decisions about the work that's being done around tools and strategies. – **District A School Partner**

> And so if [MDE] is the person with power and controlling the situation, I think it's really looking at, let's not focus on test scores because we're worried we already understand where we're at with test scores, right? Let's not go to that and let's figure out basic needs and then we can start teaching because also we're looking at people who are making decisions and just don't get it. – **District A Teacher and Current School Partner**

When asked to describe the origins of their distrust in MDE, stakeholders with EM experiences

stated the following:

> "Every time we let them [state government] in it's the same thing. They come in and they
> destroy our communities and they take off and leave us with a mess to clean up."

> ". . . you know we [Black people] always get the short of the stick."

District B stakeholders also recognized the disproportionate impact of the EM policy.

> "It would be unfair to say that the communities that have had emergency managers
> deserve it. There are plenty of White schools that have the same problems but go under
> the radar. – **District B schoolboard Member**

The statements above support my theory on Racialized Policy Aversion. After multiple instances

of adverse and state interventions, stakeholders in predominantly Black District A were

unwilling to work with the higher government and used heightened and embedded distrust to

justify their disdain for MDE. District B stakeholders recognized the racialized nature of the EM

policy but still considered the MDE and state government/officials trusted entities. Dismayed by

the stakeholder's lack of knowledge about the Partnership Model, I conducted a second

deductive visibility test where I provided each interviewee with MDE's supplemental documents

on the Partnership legislation. The one-page document included an overview of the PM policy

written by Michigan Department of Education staff. The District A research participants that

received the information intervention said the following about the policy:

> "No, I don't support it. We've been here before." – **District A Retired Teacher**

> "The partnership sounds like a front to me" . . . "We're serious about maintaining local
> control . . . Our district deserves that. Our parents deserve that." – **District A
> Superintendent**

The former of the two statements depicts the individual's apprehension to buy-in to the policy due to the harm that was caused by EM. The latter statement communicates the need to maintain local control of schools – a power communities lost under Emergency Management. This statement also suggests that there are concerns with the PM policy that are informed by EM experiences. In both statements, stakeholders can detect the similarities between EM and the Partnership Model and use these similarities to develop aversion toward the PM.

The stakeholder interviews did not find any initial evidence to suggest that impressions of EM fueled aversion toward school partnerships. The resistance that was observed was directed at distrusted policy implementors instead of the PM policy. Yet, using MDE's own marketing materials, I was able to demonstrate that visibility is a contributing factor for cross sector policy aversion. Conceptually, these findings support my take on Brighenti's theory on visibility and its impact on Racialized Policy Aversion. I argue that the lower number of notable events that can be linked to the PM policy has allowed the legislation to go uncontested by most communities. However, when visibility is present, aversion toward the partnership policy forms due to its similarities to EM. To support my theory on visibility, I conduct an analysis of media that covered the notable events that have resulted from EM and school partnerships.

Measuring Policy Visibility in the Media

The qualitative data supported my earlier hypothesis – given that the visibility of the partnership policy is lower than EM with less notable policy events, it could produce little to no apparent resource and interpretive effects. The information intervention found another proposed hypothesis to be credible – because the partnership policy targets similar populations as the EM

policy and models some of its policy outcomes, it has the potential to replicate the EM's negative

resource and interpretive effects among partnership stakeholders who are Black and have

experienced state intervention in their local government/school. This section further expounds

upon the role of visibility in influencing Racialized Policy Aversion by using news media to

track the number of notable policy events under EM and PM, and the discourse about each event.

Because the EM policy gained national attention after the Flint water crisis, I narrow my

media sources to local newspapers. These platforms, as opposed to social media or television

news, provide the most reflective accounts of what's occurring and what information local

stakeholders are receiving about policy events over time. I rely on *The Muskegon Chronicle* and

Lansing State Journal for my media analysis. These newspapers have the largest audience with

consistent coverage during each policy's tenure. To maintain data validity, I exclude articles

related to environmental and safety emergency management. I also discard partnership articles

not related to school improvement. I use each policy's term as a starting point for my search

(Emergency Management: 2011 – Present, Partnership Model: 2017 – Present). I use the

following search terms to gather information about each policy: "Emergency Management,"

Emergency Financial Management," Emergency Manager," "Partnership Policy," Partnership

School," "Partnership Agreement," and "Partnership Model." I track and tally the number of

times each policy is mentioned each year. I also conduct a second media analysis using the same

parameters but with a focus on articles that discuss these policies in relation to District B and

District A. This analysis aims to demonstrate that length and frequency of policy news coverage

are influenced by the notable events caused by the policy, and these notable events are the

driving force behind increases in policy visibility.

Measuring Policy Discourse in the Media

Because most journalists approach policy writing with neutral attitudes, I used direct quotes from stakeholders to assess community discourse about policy events. I collected the adjectives used to describe policy or the verbs commentators used to describe what the policy is doing. I coded statements as either Favorable, Unfavorable, or Ambivalent based on the tone of the words that were used. If the tone of the word demonstrated a positive view or support for a policy event, I coded it as "favorable." If the tone of the words used communicated a negative view or opposition to a policy event, I coded it as "unfavorable." Most ambivalent statements did not include descriptive wording. A **Favorable** comment might state ". . . [Emergency Management] is designed to be an objective measure of the financial health of a municipality or school district." The word "objective" is the adjective being used to describe Emergency Management. By definition and its use in this sentence, it is showing support for the policy. An **Unfavorable** statement uses phrases like "[Emergency Management] is an [attack] on Democracy." The verb being used in this sentence – attack – means to take an aggressive and violent action against a person or place. In this case, the statement is communicating negative views of the policy. **Ambivalent** discourse might mirror the following statement: "I think the community should give [Emergency Management] a shot." The statement does not include descriptors to communicate support or opposition; therefore, it is considered neither favorable nor unfavorable. Because Emergency Management was highly visible among district A and B stakeholders, I expect it to be mentioned frequently and more negatively in the news. Because the Partnership model was not visible to district stakeholders, I expect it to be mentioned less.

Policy Visibility

Graph 1 provides a visual comparison of the EM and PM policy's visibility in District A and District B. The analysis finds that the EM policy received more news coverage than the Partnership Model with EM being mentioned in local news well after the policy's tenure. News coverage about PM declines after its first year of implementation. Notable (forced institutional engagement shifts) or visible policy outcomes occurred in the years when there was increased news coverage about each of the policies. *Table 4* provides an overview of years with heightened visibility and the events that caused increased coverage. *Tables 5 & 6* examine the discourse used to describe these events. In the local context, the Emergency Management policy is mentioned more frequently and more negatively than the PM Policy, confirming the presence of multiple and adverse events. News/attitudes about the Partnership Model are neutral. This finding suggests that the partnership has resulted in no significant policy experiences and has a lower visibility as a result.

The discourse analysis of public quotes about the policies reveals contentious views of EM. When asked about the EM policy, stakeholders used the following terms to describe their experience: "Devastated, Hoodwinked, Bamboozled, Concerned, Scared, Panicking, Frustrated, Unacceptable." Stakeholders also offered the following comments about the EM policy:

> "An African- American community in the state of Michigan that is not under emergency financial management. That is a story that goes untold for this state."

The statement above supports this paper's assertion of the racialized nature of Emergency

Management's and its disproportionate impact on Black communities. Other evidence of policy

aversion to EM was found in the following statements:

> It scares me because what's next after that change?" he said. "That's a huge, drastic change. It's going to affect a lot of people in [District A].

> [District A Schools] as a local institution was so key to the financial stability of the community because they employed so many community members.

The quotes above are comments from District A residents after the district was converted to a

charter network. The statements are depictions of citizen fears caused by the EM policy and the

perceived harm they expected to come after the removal of local control. Apart from 2011 (when

[District B's] budget problems could have necessitated an emergency manager) news coverage

of EM in District B was not discussed in a local context. The years with heightened visibility for

the EM policy in District B often covered the events in Flint, MI. The discourse in these years

was negative. The media discourse analysis confirms that the visibility of the EM policy is

significantly greater than the visibility of the Partnership Model due to its higher number of

notable policy events.

Discussion of Findings

The most common response to state intervention in municipal government has been

resistance (Hughes, Dick, and Kopec 2021) while responses to other forms of intervention such

as school takeovers have included both stakeholder support and opposition (Schueler 2019;

Welsh et al. 2019). An overlooked explanation for varying responses to state interference in local

academic matters can be found in the racial demographics and policy experiences of the

communities that respond with aversion. Research has determined that predominantly Black cities have been the targets of state takeovers (Erickson 2021; Morel 2018), and that state control is often accompanied by negative local outcomes (Nickels 2019; Seamster 2021). Based on these findings, I argue that attitudes developed as a result of an adverse, racial policy experience are used to interpret other, unrelated policies like school accountability. I investigated this theory using two Michigan school districts as case studies.

Michigan's Black communities have experienced state oversight in their cities under the state's emergency management policy. Communities that experience a takeover of municipal government are also subject to state intervention in their schools through education accountability policies like Michigan's Partnership Model. I used the racialized nature of Michigan's EM policy to investigate if attitudes developed as a result of that highly contentious policy experience are used to interpret other low visibility policy (school partnerships). I also inquired about the relationship between policy visibility and policy buy-in/resistance. I introduced Racialized Policy Aversion theory to explain how Emergency Management experiences could deter school Partnership goals.

Racialized Policy Aversion occurs when stakeholders use the heightened visibility that is created by a negative, racial policy experience to draw connections between a new policy and distrusted processes, institutions, and officials. Using interviews with stakeholders in a district with EM and PM experiences (A) and a district that is currently under state partnership, but has not experienced EM (B), I found the following: District A stakeholders expressed heightened and harsher criticism of government with past injustices driving aversion toward collaboration

efforts. Although District B stakeholders had negative impressions of Emergency Management, they were still willing to collaborate with state officials under the partnership policy. Meaning, stakeholders who have negative experiences under EM used agent/agency distrust as a motivator for their opposition towards the PM policy and will resist future local and state partnerships. Communities that have not experienced a state takeover have more positive views of state government and are less inclined to fight state oversight. These findings explain why some communities do and do not oppose state intervention in their schools.

The interviews and data presented were collected in the early stages of the Partnership Model's implementation. The policy's outcomes and visibility were impacted by both the newness of the legislation and the COVID-19 pandemic. However, even when controlling for disparities in policy outcomes and experiences, most stakeholders were not aware that the PM policy existed. I suspected that the partnership policy was less visible due to its lower number of policy events. To support my theory on visibility, I conducted an additional examination of media that discussed the policy outcomes that resulted from Emergency Management and the Partnership Model. The media analysis found that more notable policy events took place under EM. These events were adversarial and impacted Black communities in Michigan. The partnership policy had very few events that took place during its tenure. The findings from the media analysis suggest that increased visibility is associated with higher numbers of adverse policy events. Although the partnership policy lacks visibility, it impacts the same local schools that EM once affected; and if distrust is a consequence for implementors of EM and future policies that impact similar communities and institutions, then stakeholders are likely to approach school partnerships with Aversion.

In summary, the policy histories and the racial composition of communities provide plausible explanations for why some communities comply with school takeovers while others resist. This research leaves readers with the following takeaways: (1) past, negative experiences with racialized policies are a mechanism for cross institutional policy aversion, and could drive refusal to accept other, beneficial policies. The findings from this research suggest that stakeholders developed institutional perceptions through policy experiences. These perceptions have lasting effects for host institutions (MDE/the state). While the PM policy's intent is to support and provide resources to schools, receipt of these benefits is tied to practices that bare some resemblance to governance under Emergency Management. It is important that the PM policy is distinguishable from controversial policies like EM. For the sake of future policy support, it is equally important that MDE and state leadership rebrand themselves as trusted entities. (2) Visibility matters for policy aversion and policy support. If stakeholder support is critical for minorities and urban school reform (Stone 2001), then it is imperative that impacted communities be fully informed about policy and policy processes. As this paper proves, the absence of resistance does not equate to policy support. Even though there were no negative attitudes about the PM policy, there were negative dispositions toward state governance in local schools. These attitudes fueled resistance to the Partnership Model.

References

ACLU. 2016. "Emergency Manager Law | ACLU of Michigan."
https://www.aclumich.org/en/cases/emergency-manager-law (May 27, 2023).

Arsen, David, Thomas A. Luca, and Ni Yongmei. 2015. "WP51-Which-Districts-Get-Into-Financial-Trouble-Arsen.Pdf." https://www.fundmischools.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/WP51-Which-Districts-Get-Into-Financial-Trouble-Arsen.pdf (September 20, 2020).

Atteberry, Allison, Susanna Loeb, and James Wyckoff. 2017. "Teacher Churning: Reassignment Rates and Implications for Student Achievement." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 39(1): 3–30. doi:10.3102/0162373716659929.

Barret, Malachi. 2017. "Kalamazoo Approves Settlement in Lawsuit over Michigan School Closures." *mlive*.
https://www.mlive.com/news/kalamazoo/2017/08/kalamazoo_approves_settlement.html (October 28, 2023).

Burns, Jason, Erica Harbatkin, Katharine O. Strunk, Chris Torres, Aliyah Mcilwain, and Sandy Frost Waldron. 2023. "The Efficacy and Implementation of Michigan's Partnership Model of School and District Turnaround: Mixed-Methods Evidence From the First 2 Years of Reform Implementation." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 45(4): 622–54.
doi:10.3102/01623737221141415.

Erickson, Jim. 2021. "Municipal Takeover in Michigan: A Rational, Apolitical Response to Financial Distress, or Something Else?" *University of Michigan News*.
https://news.umich.edu/municipal-takeover-in-michigan-a-rational-apolitical-response-to-financial-distress-or-something-else/ (October 27, 2023).

Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy. 2022. "MPPS Finds Localities Support Emergency Manager Reforms." *University of Michigan Ford School News*.
https://fordschool.umich.edu/news/2017/michigan-news-release-mpps-finds-localities-support-emergency-manager-reforms (January 13, 2025).

Hawthorne, Sydney L. 2017. "DO DESPERATE TIMES CALL FOR DESPERATE MEASURES IN THE CONTEXT OF DEMOCRACY? MICHIGAN'S EMERGENCY MANAGER LAW & THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT." *N.Y.U. Review of Law & Social Change* 41: 181–283.

Hughes, Sara, Andrew Dick, and Anna Kopec. 2021. "Municipal Takeovers: Examining State Discretion and Local Impacts in Michigan." *State and Local Government Review* 53(3): 223–47.
doi:10.1177/0160323X211038862.

Ishimaru, Ann M. 2018. "Re-Imagining Turnaround: Families and Communities Leading Educational Justice." *Journal of Educational Administration* 56(5): 546–61. doi:10.1108/JEA-01-2018-0013.

Kang, L. 2020. *Dismantled: The Breakup of an Urban School System: Detroit, 1980–2016*. Teachers College Press.

Lee, Shawna J., Amy Krings, Sara Rose, Krista Dover, Jessica Ayoub, and Fatima Salman. 2016. "Racial Inequality and the Implementation of Emergency Management Laws in Economically Distressed Urban Areas." *Children and Youth Services Review* 70: 1–7. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2016.08.016.

Losen, Daniel J, Keith Michael, Cheri Hodson, and Tia Martinez. 2016. *Charter Schools, Civil Rights and School Discipline: A Comprehensive Review*. The Civil Rights Project at UCLA. https://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/resources/projects/center-for-civil-rights-remedies/school-to-prison-folder/federal-reports/charter-schools-civil-rights-and-school-discipline-a-comprehensive-review (April 23, 2024).

Michigan Department of Education. 2020. *Building A Partnership Model to Improve Schools*. Education. https://www.michigan.gov/mde/-/media/Project/Websites/mde/Year/2020/09/10/Building_A_Partnership_Model_to_Improve_Schools.pdf?rev=ce80d782b36d4edbaf1f35d8a9a1811c&hash=BD2BE24DADC486995F26E791C69B30A2.

Morel, Domingo. 2018. *Takeover: Race, Education, and American Democracy*. Oxford University Press. doi:10.1093/oso/9780190678975.001.0001.

Nickels, A.E. 2019. *Power, Participation, and Protest in Flint, Michigan: Unpacking the Policy Paradox of Municipal Takeovers*. Temple University Press. https://books.google.com/books?id=VfuwDwAAQBAJ.

Nuamah, Sally A. 2021. "'Every Year They Ignore Us': Public School Closures and Public Trust." *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 9(2): 239–57. doi:10.1080/21565503.2020.1748063.

Nuamah, Sally A. 2022. *Closed for Democracy: How Mass School Closure Undermines the Citizenship of Black Americans*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/9781009247436.

Office of Partnership Districts. 2019. *COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE FOR PARTNERSHIP DISTRICTS*. https://www.michigan.gov/mde/-/media/Project/Websites/mde/OPD/Final-OPD-Comprehensive-Guide20190502.pdf?rev=24ec0cd9b06a41f19eecfada1b4f3652&hash=2887158E9BAE02D9603CF9EABB310998.

Reckhow, Sarah, and Mary Mason. 2016. "Who Governs Now? Takeovers, Portfolios, and School District Governance." https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED574681.pdf (September 7, 2020).

Redding, Christopher, and Tuan D. Nguyen. 2020. "The Relationship Between School Turnaround and Student Outcomes: A Meta-Analysis." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 42(4): 493–519. doi:10.3102/0162373720949513.

Representative Kelly. 2018. "Michigan Public Act 265." https://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2017-2018/publicact/pdf/2018-PA-0265.pdf (February 26, 2024).

Rice, Aj. 2024. "Closed for Democracy: How Mass School Closure Undermines the Citizenship of Black Americans. By Sally A. Nuamah. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2022. 240p. $90.00 Cloth, $29.99 Paper." *Perspectives on Politics*: 1–2. doi:10.1017/S1537592723002724.

Roelofs, Ted. 2024. "Michiganders Say Emergency Managers Wield Too Much Power." *Bridge Michigan*. https://www.bridgemi.com/michigan-government/michiganders-say-emergency-managers-wield-too-much-power (March 21, 2017).

Rogers, Rebecca. 2012. "In the Aftermath of a State Takeover of a School District: A Case Study in Public Consultative Discourse Analysis." *Urban Education* 47(5): 910–38. doi:10.1177/0042085912436847.

Rosebrook, Erika, and Jamil Scott. 2016. "State Level Responses to Distressed Cities: Does Race Matter?" In Chicago, Il, 21. https://www.dropbox.com/s/u7t5dlg55c32boc/Scott%20%26%20Rosebrook%20MPSA2016.pdf ?dl=0 (December 4, 2023).

Schneider, Anne, and Helen Ingram. 1990. "Behavioral Assumptions of Policy Tools." *The Journal of Politics* 52(2): 510–29. doi:10.2307/2131904.

Schueler, Beth E. 2019. "A Third Way: The Politics of School District Takeover and Turnaround in Lawrence, Massachusetts." *Educational Administration Quarterly* 55(1): 116–53. doi:10.1177/0013161X18785873.

Schueler, Beth E., Joshua S. Goodman, and David J. Deming. 2017. "Can States Take Over and Turn Around School Districts? Evidence From Lawrence, Massachusetts." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 39(2): 311–32. doi:10.3102/0162373716685824.

Seamster, Louise. 2018. "WHEN DEMOCRACY DISAPPEARS: Emergency Management in Benton Harbor." *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 15(2): 295–322. doi:10.1017/S1742058X18000255.

Seamster, Louise. 2021. "Power, Participation, and Protest in Flint, Michigan: Unpacking the Policy Paradox of Municipal Takeovers." *Political Science Quarterly* 136(1): 201–2. doi:10.1002/polq.13158.

Stanley, Jason. 2016. "The Emergency Manager: Strategic Racism, Technocracy, and the Poisoning of Flint's Children." *The Good Society* 25(1): 1–45. doi:10.5325/goodsociety.25.1.0001.

Stone, Clearance. 2001. *Building Civic Capacity: The Politics of Reforming Urban Schools*. University Press of Kansas. https://books.google.com/books?id=ZoNoQgAACAAJ.

Strunk, Katharine O., Julie A. Marsh, Ayesha K. Hashim, and Susan Bush-Mecenas. 2016. "Innovation and a Return to the Status Quo: A Mixed-Methods Study of School Reconstitution." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 38(3): 549–77. doi:10.3102/0162373716642517.

Tansey, Oisín. 2009. "Process Tracing and Elite Interviewing: A Case for Non-Probability Sampling." In *Methoden Der Vergleichenden Politik- Und Sozialwissenschaft: Neue Entwicklungen Und Anwendungen*, eds. Susanne Pickel, Gert Pickel, Hans-Joachim Lauth, and Detlef Jahn. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 481–96. doi:10.1007/978-3-531-91826-6_24.

The Council of Chief State School Officers, & Partners. 2017. "A Handbook for LEA and School Leaders." *MEANINGFUL LOCAL ENGAGEMENT UNDER ESSA A Handbook for LEA and School Leaders*. https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/esea/pdf/lea-and-sl-engagementhandbook_8.10.17.pdf (February 26, 2024).

The Education Policy Innovation Collaborative. 2019. *Partnership Turnaround: Year Three Report*. Policy Brief. https://epicedpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Yr3_PtrRpt_10.27.21.pdf (July 28, 2023).

Torres, A. Chris, Sandy Frost Waldron, and Jason Burns. 2024. "Compliance, Chaos, or Coherence? How Superintendents, Districts, and Schools Craft Coherence From School Turnaround Policy." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 46(1): 133–59. doi:10.3102/01623737231161363.

Trujillo, Tina, and Michelle Renée. 2013. "Democratic School Turnarounds: Pursuing Equity and Learning from Evidence." *Annenberg Institute for School Reform*.

Vang, Maiyoua. 2017. "Racial Composition of School District on School Leaders′ Responses to State Takeover: A Field Experiment on the Application of Michigan's Emergency Manager Law." *Journal of Educational and Social Research* 7(2): 31–41. doi:10.5901/jesr.2017.v7n2p31.

Welsh, Richard O., Sheneka Williams, Shafiqua Little, and Jerome Graham. 2019. "Right Cause, Wrong Method? Examining the Politics of State Takeover in Georgia." *Urban Affairs Review* 55(3): 703–42. doi:10.1177/1078087417714061.

Welsh, Richard O., and Sheneka M. Williams. 2018. "Incentivizing Improvement or Imposition? An Examination of the Response to Gubernatorial School Takeover and Statewide Turnaround Districts." *Education Policy Analysis Archives* 26: 124–124. doi:10.14507/epaa.26.3679.

Zubrzycki, Jaclyn. 2013. "Detroit's Emergency Manager Law Challenged—Again." *Education Week*. https://www.edweek.org/education/detroits-emergency-manager-law-challenged-again/2013/05 (February 26, 2024).

Appendix A

Research Protocols

MDE/State of Michigan -

- Describe the relationship between the school/district and the MDE/state?

- What is your opinion about the Michigan Department of Education? Why?

- What is your opinion about the State of Michigan? Why?

- Do you believe that the state and MDE or one in the same? Why?

- In your opinion, do school accountability policies (such as annual testing, school rankings, etc.) help support schools in your district to improve?

- Do school accountability policies have negative consequences? Please explain.

School Partnerships

- How much do you know about Michigan's school partnerships (I.e., partnership model, partnership districts)?

- Who is responsible for implementing the partnership policy?

- Can you describe any negative or positive changes in your district since the partnership was created?

- Have you had any direct experiences working on the partnership in your district? If so, what type of work were you involved with?

- Do you support school partnerships? Why or why not?

- What three words do you think describe the partnership policy best?

Emergency Management

- How much do you know about Michigan's Emergency Management Law?

- Who is responsible for implementing the Emergency Management law?

- Can you describe any negative or positive changes created by the emergency management policy?

- Do you support Emergency Management? Why or why not?

- What three words do you think describe the Emergency Management policy best?

Figure.1: Informing Racialized Policy Aversion

Resistance

Racialized Policy

Adverse Policy outcome

Heightened Visibility

Negative Policy Perception

Similar/Affliliated Policies

Racialized Policy Aversion

Table 1: Emergency Management and Partnership Model Overlap

Black Population During Intervention	Years Under Policy	Schools/Districts Under the Partnership Model	Cities/Districts Under Emergency Management	Years Under Policy	Black Population During Intervention
			City of Allen Park	2012-2014	4.40%
94.1 %	2016 - 2018	Benton Harbor Area Schools	City of Benton Harbor	2010-2014	87.30%
99.1%	2017 - Present	Mildred C. Wells Preparatory Academy			
N/a	2018 - Present	*Southwest Detroit Community School	City of Detroit	2013-2014	77.90%
98.50%	2017 - Present	University Preparatory Academy Art and Design (formerly Henry Ford Academy)			
N/a	2018 - Present	*Detroit Delta Preparatory Academy for Social Justice			
92.60%	2018 - Present	Detroit Leadership Academy			
98.50%	2018 - Present	Detroit Public Safety Academy			
98.6%	2018 - Present	Joy Preparatory Academy			
81.60%	2018 - Present	*+Detroit Public Schools Community District	*+Detroit Public Schools	2009-2016	
80.1%	2018 - Present	Ecorse Public Schools	City of Ecorse	2009-2013	43.30%
74.3%	2018 - Present	*Flint Community Schools	City of Flint	2002-2015	56.70%
90.7%	2018 - Present	*Genesee STEM Academy			
79.5%	2018 - Present	*GEE Edmonson Academy	***Hamtramck City	2000-2007; 2013-2014	9.90%
			*+City of Highland Park	2000-2005; 2009	85.20%
			Highland Park Schools	2012-2018	
			City of Lincoln Park	2014-2015	9.80%
93.2%	2016 - Present	*+Muskegon Heights Public Schools Academy System	*+Muskegon Heights Public Schools	2012-2016	93.20%
51.2%	2016 - Present	Pontiac Public Schools	City of Pontiac	2010-2013	47.70%
81.6%	2018 - Present	Great Lakes Academy			
73.4%	2018 - Present	Oakland County Academy of Media & Technology			

State Intervention and Racialized Policy Aversion in Michigan's Black School Districts

	Three Oaks Village	2008-2009	N/a

Note. This table shows the overlap between Michigan's school accountability (PM) and financial accountability (EM) policies.
Data on Partnership Model collected by the Education Policy Innovation Center (2019) at Michigan State University. Emergency Management data via American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU 2016)
*School Closure
+Charter Conversion
***Non-Black minority population

Table 2: District A & B Comparison 2022-2023

	% Of City African American Population	*Persons In Poverty*	*% Of School African American Population*	*Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch*	*Students Proficient in Math and English (GRADES 3-8) **	*Students Proficient On M-STEP 11th Grade (In All Subjects) **	*Dropout Rate*
District A	74.7%	33.7%	92.6%	83.2%	1.2%	3.0%	22.22%
District B	24.2%	21.8%	39.2%	91.7%	9.9%	4.0%	17.04%
STATEWIDE	4.1%	13.4%	18%	68.0%	40.9%	-	8.19%

Note. This table compares academic performance and city and school demographics in District A and B.
Data from Michigan Department of Education (www.mischooldata.org/); U.S. Census Bureau (www.data.census.gov/profile/michigan)
*Data reporting cycle is biannually. Counts are from previous year.

Table 3: Stakeholder Groups

STAKEHOLDER GROUPS	
1	Staff and school leaders under PM
2	Staff and school leaders under EM
3	Traditional elected and appointed schoolboard members
4	School partners
5	Community members and parents.

Note. This table lists the stakeholder categories used to identify District A and B research participants.

State Intervention and Racialized Policy Aversion in Michigan's Black School Districts

Graph 1: Policy in Local News
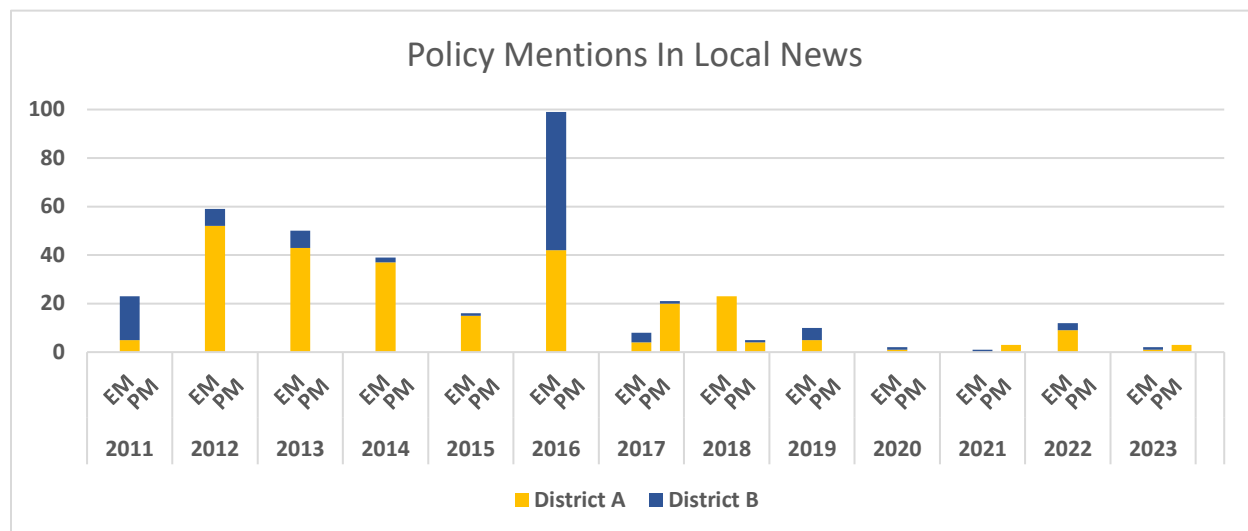
Note. This graph shows the number of times Emergency Management, and the Partnership Model are mentioned in the local news over time.
Data sources from *Muskegon Chronicle* and *Lansing State Journal* via NewsBank.com archives

Table 4: Notable Policy Events

Notable Policy Events	
Year	Policy Event
2011	District B Public Schools is threatened with EM legislation
2012	Emergency Manager appointed to run District A
2013	State appointed Emergency Manager contracts District A operations to charter manager.
2014	Chapter network operating District A departs
2015	Second charter operator is contracted to run District A
2016	Flint water crisis gains infamy
2017	Partnership Model is implemented
2018	First year of Partnership implementation
2023	District B became a partnership school.

Note. This table lists the events that caused increased new coverage about Emergency Management and the Partnership Model
Data sources from *Muskegon Chronicle* and *Lansing State Journal* via NewsBank.com archives

State Intervention and Racialized Policy Aversion in Michigan's Black School Districts

Table 5: Local Discourse on Emergency Management and the Partnership Model

Local Discourse on EM Policy														
Discourse	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Favorably	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	-	0	-	-	3
Unfavorably	1	22	24	21	0	2	1	0	0	-	1	-	-	72
Neutral	0	10	5	3	7	1	1	13	4	-	0	-	-	44

Note. This chart shows the number of times Emergency Management is mentioned in local context (regarding events that occurred in District A or B); and the number of times the policy is discussed using favorably, unfavorably, or neutral tones.
 Data sources from *Muskegon Chronicle* and *Lansing State Journal* via NewsBank.com archives

Table 6: Local Discourse on the Partnership Model

Local Discourse on PM Policy									
Discourse	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Favorable	-	5	-	-	-	0	-	0	5
Unfavorable	-	0	-	-	-	0	-	1	1
Neutral	-	5	-	-	-	3	-	1	9

Note. This chart shows the number of times the partnership policy is mentioned in local context (regarding events that occurred in District A or B); and the number of times the policy is discussed using favorably, unfavorably, or neutral tones.
 Data sources from *Muskegon Chronicle* and *Lansing State Journal* via NewsBank.com archives