

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: FALLING IN LOVE, OR FALLING IN LINE?
TRUMP, CLINTON, AND MOBILIZATION
IN THE 2016 ELECTION IN FLORIDA

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The 2016 presidential election was a contentious period that exposed some of America's deepest, most acrimonious divides. In few places was the contest more hard-fought than in Florida, a perennial swing state whose voters often play a decisive role in who occupies the White House. Previous scholarship explores questions of who becomes involved in social movements and why, but the literature is inconclusive as to whether individuals with opposing political views will likewise express different motivations for mobilizing in campaigns. Other scholars have also theorized the potential differences in strategy employed by movements with divergent aims; this body of work is also inconclusive. In a novel treatment, this project examines candidates' campaigns as social movement organizations (SMOs), providing empirical insight (via in-depth, semi-structured interviews with campaign volunteers and staff) into the question of whether and how individuals and movements differ in motivation and strategy, as they do in beliefs. The results

indicate that, while their political preferences are dramatically different, campaign volunteers are quite similar in their reasons for becoming involved, their propensity for idealism or pragmatism, and their animosity toward the other side. By contrast, the two major parties' campaigns differed in strategy to a dramatic degree, employing different tactics, running campaign events differently, and approaching persuasion in distinct ways. To add context to the interview findings, the project also uses survey and observation data from campaign rallies to illustrate differences in the two candidates' bases of support and their campaigns' workings.

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MOBILIZATION IN THE 2016 ELECTION IN FLORIDA

by

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Chapter 1: Introduction & Theory

Throughout the 2016 campaign season, polling graphics for Florida called to mind a Disney World roller coaster. Month to month, week to week, Hillary Clinton's and Donald Trump's numbers dipped and peaked in a mirror image of each other. Despite the wild ride, over the roughly four-month course of the general election campaign, the conventional wisdom was that Clinton would win the state. Florida's large Hispanic population, the thinking went, would give her the boost she needed to eke out a victory. When the sun rose on Election Day, November 8th, most pollsters from across the political spectrum were expecting Hillary Clinton to be named President-Elect by day's end, with the Sunshine State's 29 electoral votes playing a crucial role in her success.

Now, of course, the whole world knows how wrong those predictions were. Shortly before 11:00pm East Coast time, and not long after he had been declared the winner in Ohio, media networks called Florida for Trump. As liberal hearts sank and conservative hearts swelled across an anxious and bitterly polarized country, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Wisconsin, and others moved into Donald Trump's column. At around 2:30am, Secretary Clinton called the man whose lavish wedding she had attended eleven years earlier, and conceded the race. As with so many historic episodes, it now seems inevitable and preordained. In the moment, though, it flummoxed most of the experts, if not the entire country and world. As Vonnegut might say, "So it goes."

Pundits, politicians, and intellectuals began parsing the results immediately to decipher how so many smart people could have been so wrong, and they haven't

stopped since. Enough ink has been spilled on the topic to fill Trump Tower many times over, and there is no reason to believe that the flow will stop. Was the Clinton campaign apparatus to blame? Was there an enthusiasm among Trump supporters that polls simply failed to capture? What about voters who were too embarrassed to openly support Trump because of the taint of his statements about women and racial minorities, but chose him in the safe anonymity of the voting booth? Or those who lied and told pollsters that they would support Clinton to avoid appearing sexist; was the Bradley effect big enough to explain the election's result (Payne 2010)?

I wish to make clear at the outset that this study does not set out to answer the question of why Clinton lost. Rather, it probes the differences in mobilization strategies and volunteers' motivations between the Clinton and Trump campaigns in Florida. The reader is welcome to use the findings herein to extrapolate what caused the election's outcome, but delivering that answer is not the aim of this particular project. That being said, there is an inchoate literature exploring the singular appeal of Donald Trump (see Hahl *et al.* 2018; Hochschild 2016). The data collected for this project, applied to different questions, may add to that body of scholarship. The concluding chapter of this dissertation explores some potential avenues for future research.

This chapter introduces the theory that underpins the dissertation, drawing on literature from sociology and political science. It also introduces the research question and hypotheses. Chapters Two and Three offer findings from in-depth, semi-structured interviews of campaign volunteers and staffers, respectively. Chapter Four presents the results of survey data and field observations collected at campaign

rallies. (I present the methods for each research component in the body of its corresponding substantive chapter, rather than including a chapter devoted solely to methods.) Finally, Chapter Five, the conclusion, discusses what the findings tell us about the political landscape, and about how mobilization works within it. Further, as mentioned above, it discusses the implications for sociology and suggests future research possibilities. Drawing from the data, this project offers insights into the polarization in contemporary American politics, and how the results of this study fit into it. Ultimately, it makes a contribution to sociology's understanding of political mobilization writ large, and of American politics in the current moment. It includes conservatism—an understudied movement in our discipline—in its analysis.

Research Question

The most effective means of understanding mobilization in the 2016 election, and what it can tell us about political polarization, is a comparative study of the two major-party candidates' campaigns. Such comparison can be made among any number of facets: funding, staffing, spending, messaging, and on and on. As a sociological endeavor, this project treats presidential campaigns as social movement organizations (SMOs), and compares them at the levels of both organizational and individual mobilization (see Zald and Ash 1966). If the elements of mobilization in the two campaigns differ, that may help us to understand why and how American society today finds itself so divided politically. If, however, they exhibit similar characteristics with regard to mobilization, we must look elsewhere to understand our present condition.

Thus, the research question undertaken in this dissertation is: *To what extent do volunteers for the Democratic and Republican presidential campaigns differ in their motivations for getting involved, and are there differences in the mobilization strategies of the two campaigns?*

Below, I present the literature that informs this project. I have organized its presentation in a way that separates reasons one might expect similarities between the Trump and Clinton campaigns from reasons one might expect differences because, as mentioned above, the question of whether volunteer motivations and campaign strategies mimic the political division between the two parties is of particular interest. After reviewing the literature, I present the hypotheses for the project.

Theory

As mentioned above, in order to discover what sociology can tell us about mobilization in the 2016 election, the most effective route is comparative. At the same time, however, sociology in general has not been apt to study American conservatism, and this lacuna in the discipline is worth remedying. Thus, the literature review that follows justifies the undertaking of sociological investigation of conservatism, but also presents the larger theoretical foundations concerning mobilization on which this project rests.

The theoretical understanding that forms the basis of this project is sociological, but also draws from our colleagues in political science. Much of their work is useful in describing what we know about mobilization within political campaigns, which, as I argue, sociologists should view as SMOs worthy of our

attention. Moreover, political scientists' work illuminates the culture within political parties in a way that has, thus far, largely eluded the sociological spotlight. Culture is a major part of what sociology studies and seeks to understand, and a presidential campaign presents the opportunity to contribute to what sociology knows of political culture while putting us in dialogue with political scientists. The literature below exhibits what a fortuitous marriage the two disciplines have with regard to the subject of this project.

To be clear: this project is not *about* conservatism, but by virtue of its study of the Trump campaign's mobilization efforts and supporters, one of its byproducts is a deeper sociological insight into contemporary American conservatism. Therefore, for context, I will briefly review the literature on the conservative movement before delving into the scholarship that is more directly tied to the research question, and that separates anticipated differences from anticipated similarities.

American Conservatism

Who are the men and women who make up the contemporary American conservative movement? How do conservative organizations recruit and mobilize sympathizers? What motivates individuals to become involved in the conservative movement? How do organizations and individuals view their role within the conservative movement? All of these are questions that sociologists have asked of myriad social movements, but relatively few scholars have asked them with regard to American conservatism (there are, of course, important exceptions, and those are discussed below). Among sociologists who do study the right wing, a common postulation is that the discipline

tends to ignore conservatism because, frankly, sociologists do not like it. Gross *et al.* state that many sociologists harbor a tendency to buy into “simplistic depictions of conservatism as a conspiracy of the powerful or a confederacy of dunces...[there is] a disinclination on the part of sociologists to study individuals and groups toward whom they are not personally sympathetic” (2011:345).

As such, the impressive corpus of sociological scholarship on mobilization deals mostly with movements associated with the political left: nuclear disarmament (Benford 1993), climate action (Saunders *et al.* 2012; Fisher and Boekkooi 2010), Vietnam War draft resisters (Hagan and Hansford-Bowles 2005), peace and anti-war movements (Heaney and Rojas 2011; Klandermans and Oegema 1987), unwanted land uses (Mannarini *et al.* 2009), LGBT rights (McClendon 2014; Taylor *et al.* 2009), environmentalism (Dunlap and Mertig 2013; Wojcieszak 2009), civil rights (Andrews 2001; McAdam 1986), the women’s movement (Staggenborg and Taylor 2005; Ferree and Mueller 2004), and the pro-choice movement (Staggenborg 1991). To be sure, there does exist sociological work on right-wing activism, though it is more limited and rarely focuses on electoral politics.

Researchers have examined conservatism through a cultural lens (see Perrin *et al.* 2014), they have studied it with regard to specific issues, such as abortion (see Munson 2008; Kaysen and Stake 2001; Luker 1985), or they have analyzed particular slices of American conservatism, from the fringe of neo-Nazism to the more mainstream space of evangelical Christianity (Blee and Creasap 2010; Wojcieszak 2009; Wilcox 2000). In short, there is ample space for sociology to expand upon existing work and render a richer theoretical understanding of social movement

dynamics within electoral politics by examining the specific case of American conservatism.

To shine a specific light on what sociologists have written about mobilization in a conservative context: McVeigh states that conservative organizations may capitalize on a “sudden devaluation in the economic and political ‘purchasing power’ of [potential] recruits” (1999:1461). In other words, organizations may play to the economic, political, social, or cultural insecurities of their target audience, and individuals in that audience may, in turn, be motivated to join the organization (see Van Dyke and Soule 2002). Gross (2011) points to the potential that an acute issue, such as forced desegregation in the wake of *Brown v. Board*, can have for aiding conservative mobilization. This example is in line with the sociological emphasis on political opportunity structure as a factor in mobilization (see McAdam *et al.* 1996).

Cunningham and Phillips (2007) expand upon the importance of opportunity by showing that the mobilization potential represented by a shared grievance or sense of threat is spatially bound. Munson (2010) broadens the discussion of space in conservative mobilization by pointing to specific places—such as college campuses—as strategic sites for organizations to recruit and mobilize (see also Crossley 2008). More recently, Skocpol and Williamson (2012) explore the role of conservative media outlets in mobilizing sympathizers. The contribution of this project is to build on these scholars’ findings, expanding sociology’s purview to a specific type of movement organization—a presidential campaign—and the individuals that it mobilizes.

It is worth stating up front that the literature relevant to the research question of this project is mixed. Some empirical work indicates that the two presidential campaigns will differ markedly in their mobilization strategies and volunteers' motivations; other work points to the conclusion that, despite obvious differences in ideology and policy preferences, the two campaigns will exhibit party-blind characteristics *vis-à-vis* mobilization. Below, I review the literature on mobilization at both of those levels, the organizational and the individual, and delineate the similarities and differences we might expect between the two campaigns.

Mobilization

In the realm of electoral politics, there is an adage: "Democrats fall in love, Republicans fall in line." This saying implies that the two parties' presidential campaigns will target different audiences, appeal to voters differently, and that their supporters will mobilize for different reasons. Clearly, there are policy differences between the two parties; the aim of this project is to contribute empirical insight into whether those differences extend to the strategies of their campaigns and the motivations of their active supporters.

Social movement scholars are preoccupied enough with questions of activist mobilization that it is the title of the flagship journal of the American Sociological Association's Section on Collective Behavior and Social Movements, *Mobilization: An International Journal*. As Klandermans explains, "Mobilization is the marketing mechanism of the social movement domain, and thus the study of mobilization concerns such matters as the effectiveness of (persuasive) communication, the

influence of social networks, and the perceived costs and benefits of participation” (2004:361). The existing literature covers numerous facets of mobilization, and part of the aim of this project is to probe whether the Democratic and Republican sides differ in some of those facets, as they differ in policy preferences.

Mobilization at the Organizational Level

Any shortcomings in sociology’s understanding of political culture may be addressed partially by studying whether the two presidential campaigns “mobilize different resources, react to different political opportunities, and pursue different political strategies,” as this project aims to do (Grossman 2006:108). Zald and Ash explain that social movement organizations (SMOs) “have goals aimed at changing the society and its members...[and] are characterized by an incentive structure in which purposive incentives dominate” (1966:329). In other words, SMOs depend upon solid commitment from their members.

While a great deal of sociological literature explores multiple facets of SMOs—tactics (Somma 2010; McAdam 1996), framing (Heaney and Rojas 2006; Benford 1993; Snow *et al.* 1986), leadership (Reger and Staggenborg 2006), etc.—there is a tendency to rely on individuals within SMOs as the ultimate unit of analysis. In his study of mobilization in the anti-choice movement, for example, Munson (2008) culls findings from interviews with individual activists to learn their personal histories and motivations for joining the movement. Similarly, Rochford (1982) examines the recruitment strategies of the Hare Krishna movement with survey data from individual devotees revealing how they became involved. This

dissertation employs interviews of campaign staffers in order to ascertain the strategies of their organizations. I address the individual level of mobilization differently (see below).

When scholars do use the organization as the unit of analysis, the inquiry is somewhat different from that in this project. For one, I could find no sociological work on the recruitment strategies of campaigns for political office. I submit that campaign organizations qualify as SMOs, and thus ought to command the attention of our discipline. As Zald and Ash explain, “A social movement is a purposive and collective attempt of a number of people to change individuals or societal institutions and structures;” a campaign to get someone elected to office fulfills these criteria (1966:329). Campaigns for public office are what Zald and Ash call “melioristic political organizations...movement organizations by our definition” (*ibid.*).

Secondly, beyond examining a type of SMO that is overlooked by sociologists, this project focuses specifically on recruitment strategies of the organization, which adds to what sociology already knows about SMOs. It complements the work of scholars such as McCarthy and Wolfson, whose work on organizational mobilization asks respondents to “provid[e] information about their own background and efforts on behalf of the group, the backgrounds and efforts of the other officers, the composition and involvement of the membership, and the activities and structure of the group itself” (1996:1075). By plumbing these aspects of presidential campaigns, this dissertation rounds out our understanding of how SMOs work. The following two sections present the similarities and differences that the literature leads us to anticipate at the organizational level of mobilization.

I. Anticipated Similarities

Undoubtedly, there is plenty that we know about what brings individuals into the organizational fold. The literature speaks with one voice regarding the importance of networks in mobilization, for example. Though “self-starters” and “strangers” are not unheard of in social movement activity, they are the exception and not the rule (Fisher and McInerney 2012; Fisher and Boekkooi 2010). Far more often than not, social ties—both informal and via voluntary organizations—promote participation (Bunnage 2014; Jicha *et al.* 2011; Somma 2010; Opp and Kittel 2009; Quintelier 2008; Kitts 2000). The role of significant others in bringing an individual into the movement, and keeping her there, is powerful. As Kitts states, “Actors join movement organizations because of whom they know,” but may not remain if they are tied strongly to others who drop out of the movement (2000:243). In short, the role of strong ties to others with similar ideological, social, or political grievances cannot be overstated as concerns activist recruitment.

Klandermans and Oegema (1987) explore the notion of recruitment to great effect by first explaining the concept of mobilization potential. This term “refers to the people in a society who could be mobilized by a social movement...The mobilization potential is the reservoir the movement can draw from” (519). Vast mobilization potential, as desirable as it is for a social movement, is of little consequence if effective recruitment mechanisms are absent. The authors explain that recruitment may take many forms, including mass media and direct mail. The effectiveness of those methods, however, pales in comparison to the importance of ties with organizations and friendship ties.

The literature does not lead us to expect that the role or importance of social ties will differ by political party. Moreover, there is exemplary work on the dynamic role of the Internet in activating social ties and recruiting participants. As mentioned above, this extant work tends to focus on the political left, but it stands to reason that the role of the Internet may obtain across party lines (see Fisher and Boekkooi 2010; Fisher *et al.* 2005; see also Earl and Kimport 2011).

Where organizational mobilization is concerned, a strategic choice that a campaign must make is whether to aim for mobilization among core supporters (i.e., partisan voters who can be depended upon), or to reach out to new voters and others who may have been less active previously. Research indicates that the former option is more effective for mobilizing voters to turn up and turn out (Holbrook and McClurg 2005). Huddy *et al.* describe “the power of partisan identity to generate action-oriented emotions that drive campaign activity” (2015:1).

Furthermore, Abramson and Claggett explain that “recruitment of all types is shaped by past participation” (2001:905). Based on these findings, one might expect that presidential campaigns, regardless of political party, would strategize so as to mobilize their “good soldiers” rather than to persuade undecided voters and political novices (see Nickerson *et al.* 2006). Other studies at the organizational level point to other ways in which both parties might behave similarly. Abramson and Claggett (2001), for example, find that campaigns that recruit actively—i.e., ask targets directly to take part—can expand turnout, participation, and contributions; this finding comes from 1992 election data that do not specify tactical differences between the two parties.

Likewise, Gerber and Green note that, regardless of party, political campaigns rely increasingly on “professional campaign consultants, direct mail vendors, and commercial phone banks, all of which have gradually replaced [face-to-face] work performed by party activists” (2000:653). Bennion (2005) corroborates this by showing that get-out-the-vote strategies were similar on both sides of a competitive House race in Indiana; both used door-to-door, direct mail, and phone efforts, and both benefited from extensive spending by outside interest groups. Finally, Nickerson *et al.* find that partisan appeals are effective in a Democratic sample and state that “there is little reason to believe that Republican voters and candidates would behave differently, but verifying this supposition would be useful” (2006:94).

With regard to framing and rhetoric, the findings that imply a preference for a threat narrative among conservative campaigns are countered in other work. Gerber and Green (2000), for example, find that identity-based appeals to solidarity (among other factors) do not have an effect on increasing participation (with respect to ethnic identity, see also Trivedi 2005). In a direct counter to the assertion that Republican campaigns rely more on threat as a motivator than do left-wing campaigns, Miller and Krosnick (2004) find that policy change threat drives campaign contributions to NARAL. Thus, perhaps both presidential campaigns in 2016 would choose a threat frame in their mobilization efforts.

As concerns recruitment, there is evidence that, more than threat, potential recruits are motivated by relational desires—the desire to be liked by others—in choosing to comply with a canvasser’s requests for participation (Han 2009). As such, it is plausible that both campaigns will target recruits with get-on-the-bandwagon

messages rather than the threat of undesirable outcomes or out-group dominance. In later work, Han (2014) also notes that organizations across the political spectrum can and do benefit from the mobilizing opportunity presented when specific issues, such as a natural disaster or a school shooting, may boost recruitment. Taken together, the above literature is inconclusive on the question of whether Democratic and Republican political campaigns exhibit strong differences in mobilization strategies.

II. Anticipated Differences

At the organizational level, a number of studies find differences regarding campaign mobilization. For example, Freeman (1986) outlines how the Democratic Party and the Republican Party differ in myriad ways: organizational style, tolerance for dissent and disloyalty, and cohesion and commitment. In terms of recruitment strategies, a key focus of this project, she states, “The Democratic and Republican parties have different recruiting styles. The Democratic party has always co-opted groups...Republicans seek to recruit new people on a one-to-one basis, rather than through groups, and primarily by the force of ideas, rather than by supporting programs with specific benefits” (354-355). Freeman’s findings are intriguing and, as they are now decades old, ripe for reexamination.

In more recent work, Fisher explains party differences in the 2004 election:

While much of the grassroots outreach and mobilization on the left was outsourced to groups that hired paid canvassers, the Right mobilized what they purported to be an army of local volunteers to raise funds, run phone banks, and canvass...In contrast to the Republicans’ cultivation of preexisting grassroots networks, the Democrats took shortcuts, laying sod at the local level to make up for their lack of political infrastructure and true grassroots (2006:87-88).

Thus, in terms of organizational mobilization, the 2004 election exhibits clear strategic differences between the Republicans and the Democrats. This finding is in line with Hardisty (1999), who argues that the right organized and successfully maintained a robust grassroots apparatus, beginning in the Reagan era, whose comprehensiveness and sophistication outpaces what exists on the left.

In addition to describing the well-oiled movement machine on the right, Hardisty explains the right's practice of "mobilizing resentment" by describing its messaging strategy: "The right has captured citizen anger and mobilized it to express intolerance against individuals and groups... The right uses three specific forms of intolerance—stereotyping, scapegoating, and demonizing—to mobilize and organize recruits" (1999:51; see also Kimmel 2013). With specific regard to racial politics, Hughey and Parks (2014) also argue that the way that the right frames and delivers its messaging plays to resentment and stereotypes. For a number of scholars, this mobilization strategy is evident in the workings of the Tea Party (see Skocpol and Williamson 2012; Tam Cho *et al.* 2012). Taken together, the above work on organizational mobilization leads one to hypothesize that the Republican and Democratic 2016 presidential campaigns will differ considerably in their strategies and framing of issues.

In summary, the literature regarding mobilization at the organizational level implies that the Trump and Clinton campaigns will be similar in their dependence on social ties to recruit volunteers; their appeals to partisan identity; their dependence on veteran volunteers; professionalization; and the propensity to use both threat narratives and relational desire to spur recruitment. There is conflicting evidence,

however, that suggests that the right is more apt to use threat narratives to play to voters' resentments. Further, the right may be more likely to employ stereotypes and scapegoating in its messaging. Other anticipated differences concern evidence that the right has been better able to mobilize grassroots support, and to recruit using one-to-one appeals rather than group-based appeals.

Clearly, the literature is mixed, and does not offer an unequivocal answer to whether the Trump and Clinton campaigns might differ in their recruitment strategies. The hope is that the research presented here contributes to the project of understanding partisan dynamics. Moreover, it may add something to sociology's understanding by giving attention to American conservatism, and by treating political campaigns as SMOs. Having reviewed the literature on mobilization at the organizational level, I turn now to mobilization at the individual level.

Mobilization at the Individual Level

There is a rich literature that probes the dynamics of individual mobilization, asking questions about who activists are, what motivates them, how they are recruited and retained (or not), what effect they have on the movements of which they are a part, what the predictors of participation are, etc.

Preferred modes of activism are a central aspect of research on individual mobilization. Somma points to "four dimensions of involvement—time and money contributions, participation in activities, psychological attachment, and embeddedness in interpersonal communication networks" (2010:384). It is worth knowing which of these categories the supporters of Clinton and Trump favored, to see if they are

similar or dissimilar to each other. By studying campaign volunteers and attendees at campaign events, this project probes the degree of involvement among those men and women.

Beyond Somma's four dimensions, social movement scholars also make a distinction between conventional and unconventional activism. DiGrazia defines these terms, and also identifies the types of activists most likely to belong in either category:

Participation in conventional forms of protest activities that are relatively undemanding, socially legitimate, and low risk, tend to follow patterns that are consistent with participation in institutional politics. That is, participants in this form of activism tend to be socially privileged and ideologically moderate. Participants in unconventional protest, those that are highly demanding, socially illegitimate, or carry substantial risks, tend to be more ideologically extreme, socially disadvantaged, and more alienated from the conventional political system (2013:112).

Again, it is worth finding out whether volunteers with different preferences for type of involvement exhibit correspondingly different characteristics, or political preferences, as people. Sociology has a fond and abiding interest in the questions of who mobilizes, how they mobilize, and why. By comparing campaign volunteers and attendees at presidential campaign events in 2016, this dissertation carves out a place for itself in that dialogue. As the literature below shows, much as was the case with organizational mobilization, there is no decisive verdict as to whether Clinton and Trump volunteers will cite different reasons for involvement.

I. Anticipated Similarities

With regard to the question of who activists are, the concept of biographical availability comes up in the literature. This term refers to the “absence of personal constraints that may increase the costs and risks of movement participation, such as full-time employment, marriage and family responsibilities” (McAdam 1986:70). McAdam’s work points to biographical availability as a positive predictor of an individual’s participation in a movement (see also Viterna 2006). As Saunders *et al.* (2012) caution, though, McAdam’s conclusion applies to high-risk activism, whereas the findings on biographical availability as a predictor of mobilization and commitment are more mixed with regard to lower-risk movement activity (see also Fisher and McInerney 2012). In other words, being single and/or unemployed may render one more likely to participate in sit-ins, squatting, and other forms of civil disobedience, whereas having a family and a job might make low-risk activities (attending a rally, signing a petition, etc.) more appealing (see DiGrazia 2013). Ultimately, there is no indication that the impact of work and family constraints differs by party affiliation.

Beyond the role of biographical availability in explaining who activists are, engagement is another potential predictor of movement involvement. As Saunders *et al.* explain, availability alone will not motivate someone to join in a cause; he or she must feel aggrieved in some way by the status quo, and must have “some level of political interest and political information” (2012:267). Mannarini *et al.* (2009) also allude to the likelihood that activists are engaged individuals by explaining that community involvement, group identification, and sense of injustice are predictors of

mobilization. While the scholars mentioned above have given much to sociological theory in their articulation of the role of availability and engagement in mobilization, replicating their work in an application to American conservatism and electoral politics holds the promise of deepening our understanding of both concepts; as it stands, the evidence does not predict a difference based on party.

The question of what motivates activists occupies social movement scholars as much as the question of who activists are. Klandermans and Oegema define motivation as “a function of the perceived costs and benefits of participation” (1987:520). The perception of benefits is augmented when an individual feels emotional ties to the group (Thomas *et al.* 2009; Goodwin *et al.* 2004). Just as biographical availability is a necessary but not sufficient condition for mobilization, though, emotional attachment and shared identity in and of themselves are unlikely to spur an individual to become a true participant. A sense of efficacy is also needed for mobilization.

Efficacy is one of the four “vocabularies of motive” elaborated by Benford (1993). As he explains, vocabularies of motive “provide participants with ‘good reasons’ for identifying with the goals and values of the movement and for taking action on its behalf” (200). Efficacy refers to the belief among activists “that collective action will produce the changes desired” (204). No matter the political, emotional, or identity-driven attachment an individual feels to a cause, it is unlikely that he will give of his time, money, and effort as an activist if he doubts that there will be a payoff. Indeed, Benford saw the efficacy frame emerge repeatedly in the vocabularies of motive expressed by nuclear disarmament activists. Saunders *et al.*

(2012) and Mannarini *et al.* (2009) also find evidence for efficacy as an important motivator in the left-wing movements that they study. It has yet to be examined whether this—and Benford’s (1993) other frames of severity, urgency, and propriety—are employed by conservatives and electoral campaign volunteers when they discuss their motivations for involvement.

Other research implies that, regardless of party, campaign activists will express similar reasons for joining the cause. Huddy *et al.* (2015) find that individuals’ partisan identification is a more powerful motivator of campaign involvement than concern over a specific policy issue, and this holds for respondents of all political stripes; the implication here is that volunteers for both presidential campaigns will point to strong partisan identity as a motivator for action. Moreover, Schlozman *et al.* find that, without regard to identity, activists cite “civic gratifications and the desire to achieve collective goals” as their motivation (1995:1). Looking at these scholars’ findings, one might posit that both Democratic and Republican volunteers will be party loyalists who cite similar reasons—though separate policy goals—for getting involved.

II. Anticipated Differences

At the level of individual motivations for campaign involvement, the literature points to the possibility that there may, indeed, be substantive differences between Democrats and Republicans. Divergent motivations may be the result of divergent values; the literature reviewed above discusses some of the values underlying conservative ideology. Here, I would add the argument of Lupton *et al.*, who explain

that values “describe desirable end states [and] provide a motivation for, and evaluation of, behavior” (2015:400). As the two parties have different expressed values and desired end states, it is conceivable that their supporters would offer different motivations for involvement.

Further, based on Freeman’s work, there is reason to believe that Democratic volunteers will be motivated by group-based appeals, whereas Republican volunteers will point to “the force of ideas” as the spark for their involvement—philosophies of limited government and market deregulation, for example (1986:355; see also Grossman and Hopkins 2016). Conversely, though, recent work suggests that those on the right will be motivated by in-group/out-group rhetoric (see Klinkner 2016; Hughey and Parks 2014; Kimmel 2013; Hardisty 1999). Specifically, this literature posits the effectiveness of race-based arguments that whites—white men, in particular—are on precarious ground in a new America that is hostile to them.

As far as partisan identification and party loyalty go, as the previous section mentions, a good deal of literature points to the notion that volunteers across party lines will be motivated by party affiliation. If Democrats fall in love and Republicans fall in line, though, we would expect party loyalty to be a greater influence on the involvement of Trump volunteers. In addition, we might expect a higher degree of enthusiasm among Democratic volunteers than Republicans; by all accounts, that was certainly the case in 2008 and 2012.

The literature points to a number of other potential motivators for activism: the promise of social esteem (McClendon 2014), perception of threat (Heaney and Rojas 2011), and social pressure (Vala and O’Brien 2007; Kitts 2000). Though

organizational ties and social networks are generally important in spurring activism, even outsiders may be motivated to mobilize by “moral shocks,” social or political realities that outrage them (Jasper and Poulsen 1995; see also Fisher and McInerney 2012). As the literature reviewed here shows, there is a rich body of scholarship on motivation that creates an inviting space to examine the motivations of the men and women who became involved in the 2016 presidential race, and whether they differed by political affiliation. And, as this review also shows, that literature is inconclusive.

Hypotheses

A large and growing number of scholars is exploring political polarization in contemporary America (see Abramowitz and Webster 2018; Hahl *et al.* 2018).

Though the literature relevant to the research question of this project presents a mixed picture of mobilization strategies and individual motivations, because of the empirical evidence pointing to dramatic polarization, this project puts forward the hypotheses that the two campaigns will differ considerably in their mobilization strategies, and that their volunteers will cite different reasons for participating.

H₁: Democratic campaign volunteers and Republican campaign volunteers express dissimilar motivations for their involvement.

H₂: The Democratic and Republican presidential campaigns differ considerably in their mobilization strategies.

In short, I begin with the assumption underlying “Democrats fall in love, Republicans fall in line,” namely, that there are demonstrable differences in the character of both the parties and their supporters. This assumption, corroborated by the work of

Freeman (1986), Fisher (2006), and other scholars mentioned above, also fits into today's prevailing media narrative about deeply entrenched differences between Democrats and Republicans (see Skocpol and Williamson 2012).

If there is anything that the mix of literature above indicates, though, it is that the 2016 presidential campaign represents fertile ground for testing whether these assertions about movement mobilization hold in the highest-stakes political contest of all. Perhaps the two sides do differ considerably in how and why they mobilize; perhaps they actually do not. Either way, examining the campaign in Florida in 2016 expands our understanding of mobilization, and, by extension, of our political culture.

Chapter 2: Volunteer Interviews

Given the ill will between Trump and Clinton supporters during the election, it is perhaps counterintuitive to think of the two groups in a similar light. Indeed, given the wide and craggy ideological canyon between conservatives and liberals in general, one's instinct is to see them as quite different types of people altogether. Accordingly, this project hypothesizes that Clinton and Trump volunteers would exhibit different reasons for mobilizing. The results, however, point to more similarity than difference, at least as far as their motivations are concerned. Three prominent themes emerged regarding motivation in interviews with volunteers: concern for the future, pragmatism versus idealism, and antipathy towards the opposing side. In all three respects, Trump and Clinton volunteers were surprisingly similar.

In interviews with volunteers for the two campaigns, four distinct similarities emerged from coding. First, whether they identified as conservative or liberal, volunteers were more likely to cite a concern for the future than to name some specific issue that mattered to them when asked why they chose to get involved. This concern encompassed both the macro level of the country's future and, in many cases, a micro focus on individuals' personal or family futures. Of course, the full picture is more nuanced, and it would be folly to think, just because Trump and Clinton volunteers share what we might call a "future orientation," that their entrenched policy differences (and, in many cases, their different versions of reality) can easily be swept aside to build comity. As far as the question of this project goes, though, the

data show that volunteers for the two campaigns do not differ much in their reasons for getting involved.

Beyond that similarity, there are others. Second, whereas the old trope would have us believe that “Democrats fall in love; Republicans fall in line,” the data here suggest that, regardless of political stripe, both parties are equally apt to fall in love or fall in line, depending on the circumstances. For example, many of the Clinton supporters I met with had fallen in love with Barack Obama in 2008, and were now falling in line for Hillary Clinton. Conversely, a number of Trump supporters I met had fallen in line for John McCain and Mitt Romney, but now swooned for Trump.

A third similarity, unfortunately, is the generally low opinion we hold of those who do not share our politics. As eager as volunteers might be to tell me why they supported their chosen candidate, they were often at least as enthusiastic to complain about the other other’s supporters. In our current politics, another person’s different policy position is not an opinion to be disputed in good faith; it is a character flaw to be derided. This is not a Democratic problem or a Republican problem—it is a problem for our democratic republic, and all sides share responsibility. It is to be hoped that, despite the present divide, an apprehension of the aforementioned similarities—our shared desire for a prosperous future, our equal proclivity to be practical or idealistic in our politics—might encourage us to see our political adversaries in a different, kinder light.

A fourth and, for the purposes of this analysis, final similarity among the respondents in this study lies in demographics. Despite the differences in their bases of support (see Chapter 4 on the candidates’ rallies, where demographic differences

were more pronounced), there were some aspects, such as race, in which their volunteers were notably alike. And, indeed, issues of identity arose again and again in these interviews. It is important to note that there is, of course, nuance here—there were, for example, more young Clinton volunteers than young Trump volunteers, and I will discuss some of this nuance below—but overall, a volunteer for either campaign was most likely to be an older white woman. Thus, a concern for the future, pragmatic/idealistic capacity, and closed-mindedness were largely shared features among volunteers who looked similar in some ways. After presenting the findings from the in-depth, semi-structured interviews with volunteers, I will discuss their implications for the field.

Data & Methods

Volunteer Recruitment

The primary means of identifying volunteers to interview was attending campaign rallies (see Chapter 4). There, I had two methods of finding potential respondents: 1) approaching those volunteering at the events themselves, and 2) referring back to completed surveys to find respondents who indicated both that they volunteered for the campaign and were willing to be interviewed (see Appendices A and B for the survey instruments). If approaching the volunteers in person, I introduced myself using an adapted phone recruitment script approved by the University of Maryland Institutional Review Board. If they indicated a willingness to participate, I gathered their contact information and got in touch with them following the rally to schedule an interview.

When examining surveys, I flagged respondents who answered the question, “Are you participating in the presidential campaign in any other way?” by indicating that they were canvassing or phonebanking for the campaign. Among respondents who indicated that they were “participat[ing] in some other way,” I decided on a case-by-case basis whether these qualified truly as volunteer activities. For example, among Trump volunteers, a very common response to this question on surveys was some variation of “I post about Trump on social media.” I struggled with whether or not to include these respondents in my sample, as one could argue that posting political opinions online counts as activism (albeit low-risk; see Chapter 1). There is, in fact, robust growth in the body of literature considering the role of “clicktivism” and “slacktivism” in modern social movements (Halupka 2017; Wright 2015). Ultimately, however, I chose to exclude these respondents from the interview sample. Only men and women whose activities required engagement with the formal campaign apparatus were included, as the campaigns are the SMOs under consideration in this project. So, for example, the woman who picked up yard signs from field offices and distributed them to her friends was included; the gentleman who “talk[ed] to everyone I meet” about supporting Trump—his coworkers, his mechanic, the lady behind him in line at the grocery store—was not.

A final means of volunteer recruitment was using the snowball method to find interviewees. At each interview, I asked the respondent whether he or she could put me in touch with other volunteers. I also asked staffers I interviewed (see Chapter 3) if they could connect me with any of their volunteers. With all of the names I gathered via all three methods—in-person approach, survey contacts, and snowball—

I reached out to each person via phone, e-mail, or both. If I did not receive a reply, I reached out two more times. Ultimately, I was able to complete interviews with 21 Clinton volunteers and 20 Trump volunteers. The demographic information I was able to collect is presented in Table 1, further below in the section entitled “Demographic Profile.”

Conducting Interviews

In scheduling interviews, wherever possible, I conducted them in person. Where this was not possible, they were conducted over the phone. In-person interviews were usually conducted in the respondent’s home; the rest were conducted in coffee shops. Interviews were semi-structured and open-ended. I used the interview protocol (see Appendix C), asking probing follow-ups to get more information. The interviews ranged in length from 27 minutes to 72 minutes. After securing the respondent’s consent, I recorded interviews digitally; the audio files were then uploaded and stored on a password-protected hard drive.

Coding & Analysis

I transcribed the audio files and analyzed the transcriptions using qualitative data analysis software (QSR NVivo 11). Initially, I employed open coding to identify emergent themes. To those, I added prominent themes gleaned from the literature, such as biographical availability, modes of activism, and others (see Chapter 1). In the following discussion, I will present findings particularly germane to the question of whether and how the two groups of volunteers differed in their motivations for

mobilizing¹. Ultimately, four coding areas emerged that came up repeatedly as pertains to the research question: concern for the future, idealism vs. pragmatism, antipathy, and demographics. I will explain these codes in more detail in the Results section. In addition, I will discuss results from coding that are particularly surprising or ripe for further research. To conclude the chapter, I will identify, in brief, some of those research possibilities.

Results

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the interview data indicate that, in large measure, Trump and Clinton volunteers are similar in some important ways. They are motivated by the desire for a better future; they are equally apt to behave idealistically or pragmatically, depending on the candidate; and they are both prejudiced against “the other side.” Moreover, they display some demographic similarities that mirror what the literature says about who is likely to get involved: namely, those with privileged statuses—not having to work full-time, having broad social networks and access to information, for example—that that give them access to the time and resources necessary to engage (see Chapter 1). This may explain why whites, women, students, and older (likely semi- or fully retired) people are overrepresented among the volunteers in this study. Certainly, the pool of Clinton volunteers is a slightly more mixed bag, but the general pattern of who gets involved obtains in both groups.

¹ Where I quote respondents, I have edited their responses for clarity, removing phrases such as “like,” “um,” and “kind of” if they are not meaningful. I have anonymized all of the interview data to ensure participants’ privacy. Thus, I have removed all identifying information, and use pseudonyms to protect the participants. The same goes for staff interviews in Chapter 3.

In addition to those four similarities, a number of intriguing themes emerged from coding. The first relates to what the right often refers to, disapprovingly, as “identity politics:” the role that factors such as race, gender, sexual orientation, etc. play in individuals’ political beliefs and behaviors. Though conservatives are wont to accuse progressives of “playing the race card,” for example, the data here suggest that both sides frame their views through such lenses and, if anything, Trump supporters may be even more likely to do so. This finding echoes some other recent research on the topic (Mason and Wronski 2018; Grossman and Hopkins 2016). Though Trump’s victory cannot be attributed to any one factor, racial resentment was, empirically, a major predictor of his support (see Klinkner 2016). I will provide some analysis on this point below, after discussing the broad similarities discovered.

Concern for the Future

As I began the coding process, I generally expected that conservatives would be more likely to cite specific issues—immigration, for example, or tax reform—as motivators for getting involved in the campaign, whereas liberals would be driven by less concrete or less clearly defined concerns: creating a brighter future, standing up for the marginalized, etc. This expectation was rooted in the literature on the parties (see Chapter 1), and also in the conception that liberals are the idealists and conservatives are the pragmatists. The idea of the future came up quite a bit, however, in interviews with both groups. The code that emerged, “Concern for the future,” was applied to any statement wherein a volunteer expressed any thought about the impact of politics

and elections on what is to come, whether they were referring to the country's future or to their own and their loved ones'.

To be sure, both groups of volunteers were motivated by specific issues, to an extent. For example, immigration was top-of-mind for many of the people I spoke to in both camps. Among Clinton supporters, climate change came up frequently; among Trump supporters, Obamacare was a recurring topic. That said, when asked why they got involved in the campaign, most volunteers framed their mobilization as something less concrete than issue-oriented activism. For these men and women, the desire to affect the future guided them. Even when discussing specific issues, concern for the future was often the lens through which they expressed their concerns. With climate change, for example, those who expressed it as a motivation viewed it as an existential threat: quite literally, there would *be* no future if elected officials failed to regulate greenhouse gas emissions.

When I asked Robin, a white Clinton volunteer in her sixties, why she got involved in the campaign, she explained that she was “an old-school feminist” and was eager to elect a woman as president. That said, she explained that, had Bernie Sanders won the Democratic nomination, she would not have hesitated to mobilize for him:

The reason I support Democrats is because I believe it's important to take care of people, and so I would volunteer even if it wasn't a woman. The idea that we all, every single one of us, deserve a fair chance and that we have to take care of people that haven't been given the same opportunities that we have. Because this crap about “everybody has equal opportunity,” it's crap. It's not true. I get upset when people say that they'll just work hard. They can work hard all their lives and it's not going to change. You know, I really feel we are responsible for helping people that can't get

help. Because right now we're going in the wrong direction, there's worse inequality, and that has to change. Otherwise, we've got a bad road ahead.

In other words, the desire to create a better future—in her definition, a future where people had more opportunity and received more assistance—guided Robin.

One of the Trump volunteers I interviewed, Cynthia, also a white woman in her sixties, was a retired flight attendant and, now, a small business owner with her husband. After explaining that they had had to fire some employees because of the negative impact of regulations on their bottom line, she pivoted to explaining her specific reasons for volunteering. Interestingly, unlike most of the Trump volunteers I met, Cynthia had not supported Donald Trump initially. Her first choice was Dr. Ben Carson because, as she viewed it, his Christian values represented the best path forward for the country:

At first, I worked on Dr. Carson's campaign. You know, I'm a Christian. And it makes me sad that the country has veered from that, from those values. And, yes, I say the Democrat Party has a lot to do with that, that the left wants to divide the country. You're seeing the future dissolving before your eyes. And the other thing, too, is I saw the apathy. I hear my husband complaining, not doing anything. You know, I hear my friends complain but not do anything. I want to have a legacy.

Cynthia was motivated to shape a future in which “Christian values” regained currency in American life.

Another point to highlight about Cynthia: in many ways, she defied the stereotype that many of the Clinton supporters I met believed of conservatives. For example, when discussing Ben Carson, she explained that she also favored him—and, in 2012, had supported Herman Cain—because the Republican Party needed to embrace racial diversity. Moreover, when discussing her beliefs, she brought up the Pulse Nightclub shooting. She became quite emotional and, through tears, explained

how important it was to her that the gay community feel embraced and “included in America.” Granted, during the interview, she also expressed the belief that Barack Obama “doesn’t love America” and that Hillary Clinton murdered Vince Foster in the 1990s. What her case illustrates, though, is that when progressives caricature their political opponents, they may close off opportunities for dialogue and discovery of common ground.

Among younger volunteers, the same fixation on the future applied. Michael, a 19-year-old college student volunteering for Trump, explained that he didn’t agree with Trump on every issue, and was even pro-choice and worried that conservative Supreme Court appointments under Trump could jeopardize that. Even so, he supported Trump:

After I graduate, I’m probably going to have to move back in with my parents. That’s what my older sister had to do. And, you know, that’s not great. It’s supposed to be that if you go to college, you can get a job, you can make a living. All I see is that I’m going to have debt and a hard time getting a good job, most likely. And I just think that Trump’s economic policies are better for addressing that situation. I’m actually afraid for my future. And so I just want to support the person who will do something about that.

On the opposite side was Will, one of the college students volunteering for Clinton, a young, openly gay man in his twenties, who explained his support for the Democrat:

You know what? I’m scared. It just feels like under Obama I have rights, and if Trump gets elected, they’ll get taken away. It sounds dramatic, but it feels like I’m fighting for my life. And if I didn’t get involved, I would feel guilty. If [Trump] wins and things get worse, then I don’t want to say I didn’t do anything to prevent it.

As Will began to cry, I found myself wishing that I could introduce him to Cynthia, the Trump volunteer who spoke to me about the Pulse shooting.

Certainly, volunteers had different ideas about what a better future might look like. For some, it had to do with economic concerns. For others, it was about what is often termed “social justice:” civil rights for minority groups, equal opportunity, etc. No matter how they defined it, though, a brighter vision of the future was an animating force for both Trump and Clinton volunteers.

Idealism vs. Pragmatism: Who Falls in Love, and Who Falls in Line?

This project considers the old political adage that “Democrats fall in love, Republicans fall in line.” The saying reflects a long-standing belief that Democrats—wide-eyed idealist liberals that they are—when given the choice between a pragmatic, well-known candidate and an inspirational upstart, will choose the latter. (If one looks only at elections like the 2008 Democratic primaries and ignores those like the 2004 Democratic primaries, the idea makes perfect sense.) Republicans, the thinking goes, are more apt to give the nomination to the candidate whose “turn” it is, such as John McCain in 2008 and Mitt Romney in 2012. Both of those men were also-rans in earlier cycles (McCain in 2000, Romney in 2008) who had waited patiently for the next go-round.

In 2016, though, this maxim was turned on its head. Donald Trump, a man with exactly zero prior experience in government and a message entirely at odds with the inclusive rhetoric the Republican Party called for in its post-mortem on the 2012 race, led most national polls in the primaries from the moment he entered the race until the moment he won the nomination. Meanwhile, Hillary Clinton, though certainly loved and admired by many, had been in politics for decades and had waited

patiently for her turn after losing the 2008 primary to then-Senator Obama. In 2016, an impressive number of liberals fell in love with Bernie Sanders before eventually falling in line for Clinton.

Perhaps, then, there is no real difference between Republicans and Democrats in terms of susceptibility to a charismatic politician; rather, all of us are prone to fall in love with a certain candidate, given a certain set of conditions, regardless of political party. In 2008, for example, the public's disapproval of the Bush Administration, war fatigue, economic crisis under a Republican president, demographic changes occasioned by a surge of newly eligible, diverse young voters, and other factors left an opening for Barack Obama to steal people's hearts. In 2016, myriad factors—sexism, xenophobia, anger toward far-off “elites,” racist backlash against eight years of a Black family in the White House, among others—left an opening for Donald Trump to steal people's hearts. Why that backlash was not strong enough after four years to carry Mitt Romney to victory in 2012 is an open question; certainly, Romney did not run a campaign that played to white resentment and Islamophobia as unabashedly as Trump's, and that likely had something to do with it.

The code that emerged relevant to these results is “Feelings about the candidate,” which, as the coding process continued, morphed into “Idealism vs. pragmatism.” This code applied to any statement where the volunteer discussed the candidate him or herself; the volunteers' reactions to the candidates' personality, statements, policies, etc. In my interviews with volunteers, there was palpable passion for the candidate among Trump supporters that Clinton's did not match. Certainly, not every single Trump volunteer had supported him from the beginning, or agreed

with all of his positions (see the two Trump volunteers quoted in the previous section, for example). Even so, most of his volunteers said that they had been with him since he entered the race, and felt that they truly had a candidate who spoke for them. Clinton's volunteers, for the most part, admired their candidate, but spoke less about her than they did about the larger Democratic platform and how they felt it represented their values.

One of Trump's volunteers, Sally, a nurse in her fifties who had also volunteered for John McCain and Mitt Romney, explained her view of Trump:

I volunteered before in 2008 and 2012, but there it was more really against Obama than it was for McCain or Romney. I didn't want Obama to win. But now, with Trump, I really feel like he will shake things up and change Washington. Like we say, "Drain the swamp." It's like, he's not about Democrat or Republican. He's just not a politician, and we need that. I think people have finally found their voice.

Similarly, John, a retired law enforcement officer in his sixties, spoke about how Trump transcended party labels:

These Republicans, McConnell and those guys, they don't represent me. They don't fight the abortionists and the liberals. They're for themselves and not the people that elected them. I like the idea of a non-politician. There's no effort to stop these illegal immigrants from coming in, this invasion of illegals. Trump, he seemed genuine, and I liked what he said. It looked like he was in it to win it, for all the right reasons, not because of ego.

By contrast, Don, a Clinton volunteer in his sixties, took a different tone about his chosen candidate:

I'm not the world's biggest Hillary fan. I mean, she's a flawed candidate. I hope it's true what people say, her presidency will be like when she was secretary of state: people like her better when she's actually in office. She's not a great candidate, she's great when she's in office. I've not been impressed with her campaigns generally. Not in comparison to Obama's. But I support anyone whose last name isn't Trump.

Worth noting is that Don was not only volunteering for the Clinton campaign; he had paid to rent out a storefront for the campaign to use as a field office for several months. He may not have been “the world’s biggest Hillary fan,” but he was certainly motivated to see that she defeated Trump.

Another Clinton volunteer, Marion, a Black woman in her seventies who had been involved in the civil rights movement, explained her involvement in similar terms:

I’m a die-hard Democrat. The prospect of Donald Trump being in the White House, it scares not only African-Americans. It should scare everybody. So, am I here to tell you that Hillary’s the ideal candidate and that she’s done everything correct? No. But I think her heart is in the right place.

In general, volunteers’ discussions about the candidates followed this pattern. Trump volunteers were *pro*-Trump first, *anti*-Clinton second; Clinton volunteers were *anti*-Trump first, *pro*-Clinton second. Relatedly, Trump staffers also noted the boundless enthusiasm of their volunteers (see Chapter 3). A caveat here is that both sides, *including* Trump’s, were deeply antipathetic to the other side, and the coding relevant to that finding is discussed in the next section, on political tribalism.

Ultimately, regardless of where they get their information, both Democrats and Republicans demonstrate an aptitude for idealism or pragmatism, depending on the candidate. In 2008 and 2012, Republicans were pragmatists: they fell in line, while liberals fell for Barack Obama. In 2016, Donald Trump swept many conservatives off their feet, while Democrats fell in line behind Hillary Clinton. In that respect, as with their motivation to affect a better future, the two groups are similar.

The Reality of Political Tribalism and “Identity Politics”

Perhaps the most disheartening finding from interview coding was how deeply entrenched today’s partisanship is. Among Clinton volunteers, seldom was a kind word spoken about Republicans, and vice versa. Very early on in the coding process, I identified statements denigrating the opposing party or candidate as one of the most frequent topics; I labeled such statements under the code “Party/candidate antipathy.” These statements were often coupled with disapproving musings on what “the other side” prioritizes or what tactics it uses to curry support. Though I labeled these statements separately, under the code “Perceptions and assumptions of the opponent,” they were linked so often with the antipathy code that the two blended together to paint a picture of today’s tribal political culture—one colored by liberals’ view of conservatives as ignorant dupes eager to rend the country according to race, gender, and other categories, and conservatives’ view of liberals as ignorant dupes eager to rend the country according to race, gender, and other categories.

Even among the Trump volunteers who said they appreciated Trump because he seemed to transcend partisan politics (see above), there was antipathy toward Democrats. For example, Sally, the aforementioned Trump volunteer who liked that Trump was “not about Democrat or Republican,” also said she was attracted to Trump from the beginning of the primaries “because liberals don’t like him.” Likewise, James, another Trump volunteer, told me, “I just love that Donald pisses off the left.”

Lest one labor under the misconception that Clinton supporters were above writing off the opposition in this way, consider the words of Sarah, a white college student volunteering for Hillary:

Maybe I'm being harsh, but I just don't see how anyone can vote Republican. It's the party of racism, it's hateful. I have a lot of gay friends, and Republicans don't want them to have rights. I have a uterus, and Republicans want to control it. If somebody tells me they're a Republican, I just can't even talk to them.

Again, I would have liked to introduced Sarah to Cynthia, or to Mary, an openly gay Trump volunteer in her fifties who supported Trump because of his "business sense." I also wonder how progressives who feel this way would respond to a conservative telling them "I just don't see how anyone can vote Democrat. I just can't even talk to you."

Another Clinton volunteer, Olivia, a white woman in her forties and a military wife, told me this:

"I grew up in rural North Carolina. You wouldn't believe the stuff my grandparents said, and even my parents. The n-word, all the time, like it was nothing. And you hear people say, 'Oh, it was a different time, it was a different generation,' but that's still the way people think in those places. I *know* these people. My family still lives there. My cousins, aunts, uncles—they're all racist as can be, and of course they're all voting for Trump. I saw Bill Clinton on TV the other day, and he was saying something like, 'They say Make America Great Again; I'm from the South. If you're from the South, you *know* what Make America Great Again means.' And that's so true."

For Sarah and Olivia, the problem wasn't just Trump himself, though they certainly thought he was awful. The problem was Trump's *supporters*; in Sarah and Olivia's appraisal, men and women animated by little more than racism, misogyny, and homophobia.

Further illustrating the partisan divide, every volunteer, to a person, said they would be volunteering for the candidate of their party, regardless of who the opponent was. Trump volunteers indicated that they would have volunteered for a Jeb Bush or a Ted Cruz, if less full-heartedly. Clinton volunteers said they would have done the same for Bernie Sanders. Thus, the literature's suggestion that partisan loyalty would underlie the motivation of both Trump and Clinton volunteers seems to hold (see Chapter 1). Moreover, it would be wrong to suggest that anti-Clinton animus was not strong among Trump volunteers, even though their pro-Trump passion was notable (see previous section). Many of them expressed opinions similar to that of Gerri, a woman I met at one of Trump's Orlando-area field offices:

I remember the nineties. I never liked Bill Clinton, and Hillary only stayed with him after the Lewinsky thing because she wanted to run for office, too². And the more I learn about her, the less I like her. The e-mails, Benghazi, all of that, I just don't trust her. And I hear she has a dirty mouth.³

Much like Don, the Clinton volunteer in the previous section who noted that, despite not being truly enthused about her, he would vote for "anyone whose last name isn't Trump," a Trump volunteer named Thomas—a "lifelong, loyal, Republican"—whom I met at an Orlando-area field office explained:

"Look, I'm not a huge Trump guy, okay? I'm not crazy about the way he talks and all that. But I've always donated and volunteered for the Republican candidate, and I'm talking about decades here, okay? And Hillary is a nightmare. When I put Donald Trump as my option up against four or eight years of Hillary getting to name justices, to do like Obama and apologize for America to other countries, that's an easy choice for me."

² One of the most popular items for sale at Trump rallies was a t-shirt reading "Hillary sucks...but not like Monica!"

³ Not wishing to antagonize this volunteer, I did not ask her about Mr. Trump's penchant for salty language.

While Gerri's objections to Hillary Clinton were personal, Thomas cited policy concerns—judicial appointments, foreign affairs—as the source of his antipathy. In both cases, though, a dislike of the opponent was a clear motivation for the volunteer. Another Trump volunteer, Maria, a Latina immigrant in her early twenties, told me:

As a globalist, [Hillary] believes in open borders. I believe that a country without borders ceases to be a country. I also believe that she is part of a secret society. Possibly. I believe that she is. She has a high level in that secret society. I know it sounds a little strange, but I do believe that she's involved in it and that she has a partnership with Satan and I've even heard about her reaching such a high level that they call her the bride of Satan.

Of course, this statement is an extreme example of anti-Clinton sentiment. And, among the volunteers I interviewed, this was as extreme as it got. I include it here, though, because I did hear similar beliefs from men and women I spoke to at Trump rallies.

I often asked rally attendees where they got their news and information, and the most frequently cited sources among Trump supporters were Fox News, Breitbart, and Infowars. As such, it was not uncommon to hear conspiracy theories about the Clintons. Among Clinton supporters, the most common news sources were CNN, MSNBC, and NPR. An interesting observation, though, and a potential bright spot, is that both Clinton and Trump volunteers were likely to also cite their local papers (the *Orlando Sentinel*, for example). If people across the political spectrum read the local paper in print or online, those institutions represent a possible venue for sowing mutual understanding and respect among those with different views.

At Trump rallies, a number of attendees complained that the left “wants to make everything about race.” Certainly, in my volunteer interviews, many Clinton

volunteers mentioned that they were proud that the Democratic Party gave America its first Black president, and believed that Clinton would do more to protect people of color (and women) than any Republican would. As Tricia, a Black woman in her forties who hosted phonebanks in her home and sounded a lot like a sociologist, told me:

“All of my Republican friends are always like, ‘Tricia, how can you be a Democrat?! Lincoln was a Republican, you know!’ As if, number one, Abraham Lincoln is the only reason slavery ended and, number two, we’re still in the 1800s. I’m like, get with it. The Republican Party ain’t what it used to be. The Republicans say that Black people vote Democrat because of ‘identity politics’ or whatever. Um, no, it’s because Democrats are the ones with the policies that won’t kill us! [laughs] Black people aren’t dumb, you know.”

The interview with Tricia delved explicitly into race more than most Clinton interviews. Detailed commentary on race was more likely to come from Trump volunteers. When Trump volunteers discussed the topic, they were often expressing resentment about perceived double standards in the public discourse on race. For example, Jenny, a real estate broker in her fifties who had been a delegate at the Republican National Convention in Cleveland in 2016, said:

I was in Cleveland and I was walking to the convention center, and I saw a Black lady on the sidewalk with a big Obama hat and Obama pins all over her. I started talking to her and she was talking all about how Republicans don’t care about minorities, and Trump is a racist and this and that. And I’m just thinking, if she’s allowed to talk about other races, why can’t I, you know? I mean I’m not saying that there’s no such thing as racism, but it’s like, they can complain and we’re supposed to just be quiet. You know, everybody’s a victim and I’m a little bit tired of it.

Likewise, Tina, a hairdresser in her fifties and a Trump volunteer, said gingerly:

I’ll talk about race a little bit. Especially the things that have just happened in Orlando recently. The violence and the murder rate in the Black communities is a problem. And I think it stems from economics. And I think it stems from generation after generation

of work ethic. And, well, I don't mean all that. The sad thing is that just like any group, you know, the bad apples taint the whole barrel.

Though she qualified her statement at the end to soften the racial angle, the fact that she brought up the topic at all—without my prompting—is telling.

As with race, the topic of sexism came up frequently. Given that the race was between the first woman nominee of a major party and a man with a history of misogyny, this is hardly surprising. Many, though not all, Clinton volunteers alluded to her gender as a draw. One of them, Preetha, talked about what the Clinton campaign meant to her daughter, an 11-year-old who liked phonebanking for the candidate:

“I’ve always been a Democrat, but I never volunteered or anything like that. That was totally [my daughter]. She saw Hillary on TV and just said, ‘Mom, how can we help Hillary get elected?’ I’m grateful that she’s old enough to be conscious of Obama, and to see a person of color leading the country, but I just see how excited she gets about the idea of a woman president. It would be a game-changer for her, to see that.”

Again, though, issues of gender were more common in Trump volunteer interviews.

Trump supporters often criticized Clinton supporters for engaging in “identity politics,” I found Trump volunteers to be more loquacious on the topic of gender.

Though many of the women volunteering for Clinton identified themselves as feminists and were particularly motivated to back Clinton because of her gender, they did not spend as much time on the topic, generally speaking, as their counterparts on the Trump side.

Gender became a topic more markedly in October, after the infamous *Access Hollywood* tape surfaced. I interviewed Veronica, a Trump volunteer in her fifties, just a few days after the story broke, and she brought it up early on in the interview:

Honestly, it doesn't bother me. That's just how men talk, it's locker room talk. Donald Trump has a lot of women working in his businesses, and on his campaign, but you won't hear the media talking about that. I was at the rally in Tampa, you know, and there were all these "Women for Trump" signs. It's like, I'm supposed to support Hillary just because she's a woman? No! I vote with my brain. And whatever is on some tape doesn't bother me because it's just talk. And besides, he wasn't talking about *me*.

Of course, I wanted to follow up by asking Veronica whether she would have been so sanguine had Barack Obama been caught on tape bragging about grabbing women by their genitals, but, as a researcher, I did not consider it appropriate to get into a debate with her.

The evidence of entrenched partisan identity in these interviews echoes the findings in recent scholarship on the topic of polarization (Abramowitz and Webster 2018; Mason and Wronski 2018; Grossman and Hopkins 2016; Huddy *et al.* 2015; Iyengar and Westwood 2015). Clinton supporters often dismissed Trump voters as "racist rednecks;" Trump supporters often told me that liberals are really the racist ones because they enforce "political correctness" and keep minorities dependent on welfare. The unfortunate truth is that both sides are intolerant—of each other.

Demographic Profile

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the volunteers for the two campaigns exhibited certain demographic similarities that were perhaps unexpected, given some rather glaring demographic differences among attendees at rallies (see Chapter 4). Below is the demographic information for the sample of volunteers.

Table 1. Volunteers' Demographic Information

VARIABLE	CLINTON	TRUMP
<i>Age*</i>		
18-30	4	2
31-45	4	1
46-59	6	7
60+	7	6
<i>Gender</i>		
Man	5	4
Woman	16	16
<i>Race*</i>		
Black/African-American	4	0
White/Caucasian	12	19
Hispanic/Latino	1	1
Asian/Pacific Islander	2	0
<i>Openly LGBT*</i>		
Yes	2	1
<i>Education*</i>		
High School Diploma	-	2
Current Student	4	2
College Degree	8	5
Advanced/Prof. Degree	1	-

*Variables with an asterisk indicate that I do not have the data for every volunteer for that variable. For example, though *N* of Clinton volunteers = 21, there are two respondents who did not provide information about their racial identity. *N* of Trump volunteers = 20, but only 9 provided me with their educational background.

As is clear from these data, the two groups are not identical. Perhaps most glaringly, only one Trump volunteer out of twenty identified as non-white, while seven of the twenty-one Clinton volunteers identified as such. Likewise, Clinton had eight volunteers under the ages of 45, whereas Trump had only three. Even so, comfortable majorities of both groups were white and over the age of 45.

With regard to gender, the breakdown is nearly identical: the only difference is that Clinton had five male volunteers to Trump's four. All of these data align with what the literature would have us expect: women, white people, and older (i.e., likely semi- or fully-retired) are most likely to have the biographical availability to

volunteer (see Chapter 1). It would be wrong to suggest that there was no variation in the groups demographically, and there is much more to say about the differences in the two candidates' larger bases of support (see Chapter 4). That said, it is true that if you were talking to a campaign volunteer *for either major-party candidate* in 2016 in Florida, you were most likely talking to a white woman over the age of 45.

Discussion and Implications

If there is one silver lining to be found in all of the acrimony in American politics today, it is that, despite deep differences over policy—and, disturbingly, disagreement about what is and is not a basic fact—the same motivation guides most of the people who volunteer on campaigns: they want a better future. Certainly, “a better future” is a vague concept, but the unifying idea is that elections matter, and that giving one's time and energy to ensure a more prosperous future for the country is worthwhile.

The heady vortex of polarization brought about by innumerable factors—the rise of cable news, social media algorithms that wall us off into echo chambers, and a lack of civics education among them—cleaves the body politic today, and leads many of us to forget that even those who differ with us on the issues love our home and respect the Constitution just as much as we do.

We are alike in that we join campaigns because we think that doing so will lead to a better future. We are alike in that our proclivity to fall in love or fall in line, politically speaking, is not dictated by our party affiliation. We are alike in the way we approach speaking about those who disagree with us. And, if we volunteer for campaigns, we are generally demographically similar. My interviews with Trump and

Clinton volunteers reinforced what is probably common sense: rare is the individual who seeks out, ponders, and integrates into her worldview new information that is at odds with her existing beliefs. After all, each of us is largely convinced that we already have “the facts,” that we have interpreted the facts wisely and correctly, and that the opinions we have formed based on them are unimpeachable. If we were not, we would not hold those opinions in the first place. This resistance to ideological challenge is not unique to the left or right. All of us, regardless of political stripe, are quite confident that we have the right answers.

As an illustration of the universality of political self-assuredness, I could usually count on the men and women I interviewed to tell me why the other side was wrong, rather than why *they* were right. They felt less need to explain or defend what they believe because, like most of us, for them it goes without saying that their views are a proper and correct appraisal of the way things are; catharsis comes from denigrating those who do not share them. To the extent that the literature suggests that conservatives are more motivated by out-group animus, the data here support a different conclusion.

In terms of implications, then, the findings discussed here indicate that those who study mobilization may operate from an assumption that differences in political beliefs will not necessarily be accompanied by differences in political behavior. These findings do not support the hypothesis that volunteers for warring campaigns will differ markedly in their reasons for mobilizing. As I completed this research, one of the most intriguing questions for future research that came to mind was, “How do supporters of one candidate *think* that the other’s supporters view them?” Based on

my conversations with Trump and Clinton volunteers, I think they might be surprised to learn that they view each other very similarly: in large measure, each side thinks that the other is naïve, misguided, and prejudiced. Would learning this information make political adversaries any more empathetic towards each other?

Chapter 3: Staff Interviews

Of all the many surprising aspects of the 2016 presidential election, one of the most confounding is that the candidate with the less organized campaign apparatus, the less sophisticated volunteer operation, the fewer donor contributions, the leaner campaign spending, and the sparer use of tried-and-true campaign tactics emerged victorious. In just about every respect, Donald Trump's campaign was unconventional. The candidate himself ignored the norms of civility that guided past presidential candidates, and the campaign to elect him dispensed with nearly all of the elements that politicians have long thought essential to electoral success.

Hillary Clinton's campaign was designed to mirror the fastidiously well-defined structure of Barack Obama's successful runs in 2008 and 2012. Even the Republican operatives I spoke to acknowledged that Obama's operations were "genius," "legendary," the "gold standard." Clinton staffers in Florida described a campaign with a clear hierarchy, where field organizers were given ambitious goals—for voter registration, for phonebanking, for door-knocking, for volunteer shifts scheduled—and sophisticated tools to track their progress. Staffers told me of the campaign's focus on voter data, a near-obsession with zeroing in on which people to target and which messages to use for each target.

The Trump campaign in Florida, by contrast, was largely informal in nature. In conversations with staffers, it was clear that part of the reason for this was the long, protracted Republican primary. A number of veteran state-level operatives backed candidates other than Donald Trump in the primary, and the wait-and-see atmosphere that preceded his eventual nomination left many campaign hands playing catch-up to

put a cohesive apparatus in place by summer's end. While it is true that Bernie Sanders had a larger impact on the Democratic primary process than many expected, Hillary Clinton nevertheless had the essential pieces of a well-oiled machine in place well before Trump locked up the GOP nomination, giving her something of a head start.

In addition, Trump campaign operations were often somewhat stand-alone; strategy and tactics were not standardized across counties, or even among field offices within the same county. A field organizer in Winter Park might have his volunteers go wave Trump/Pence signs at a major intersection, while one in downtown Orlando might have his answering the phone at the campaign office and handing out yard signs to people stopping in. Whereas the Democratic coordinated campaign depended at every level and in every “turf” on its in-house NGP VAN software to organize voter data, track voter contact, and drive strategy from the national level all the way down to individual streets, Trump's operation could differ markedly from place to place. The findings from Florida contrast rather sharply with previous research on differences between political organization on the right versus the left (see Chapter 1). Again, if all of the conventional wisdom about what makes for a winning campaign were infallible, we would all be constituents of President Hillary Clinton today.

As Chapter 2 concludes, volunteers were similar in their motivations, regardless of chosen candidate. The campaigns themselves, however, differed markedly in character. The findings in this chapter are drawn from semi-structured, open-ended interviews with Trump and Clinton staffers in Florida—four from each

campaign. Findings in this chapter are also drawn from observation at campaign rallies and field offices for both candidates. After reviewing the methods, which are similar to those employed for volunteer interviews, I will present findings.

Data & Methods

Staffer Recruitment

Most recruitment of staffers occurred at the campaign rallies (see Chapter 4). At some events, staff were wearing lanyards with tags that identified them as staff, and I approached them, introduced myself, and asked whether they might be willing to schedule an interview. In cases where staffers at events were not easily identifiable (more common at Trump rallies than at Clinton rallies), I approached whomever was managing the entrance at the front of the line to get into the venue. In most cases, this was a staffer; in cases where this person was a volunteer, I would ask him or her if they knew of any staffers around to whom I might speak (I also, of course, asked the volunteer for an interview).

Another means of recruiting staffers was via snowball method: during volunteer interviews, I ended interviews by asking if the person had the contact information for any campaign staffers under whom he or she worked. I also asked the staffers I interviewed if they could put me in touch with any of their colleagues. Ultimately, I was able to secure interviews with four staffers from each campaign. All four Trump staffers were white men over the age of 40. Of the Clinton staffers, two were men and two were women. All four were white. One of the men was over the age of 40; the other three were in their early 20s.

Conducting Interviews

While I was able to conduct some volunteer interviews in person, all but one of the staff interviews were conducted via phone. I found staffers to be generally wary of speaking with me (more on this below), and when they were willing to be interviewed, they were uncomfortable meeting with me in person. Campaigns generally have strict rules about staffers speaking with journalists, and while I made it very clear that I was not one, there was still nervousness about being seen with an outsider, discussing campaign strategy in public. Indeed, the one staff interview that was conducted in person was done so in the privacy of the subject's home.

Thus, few staffers were willing to speak with me, even though I made clear the protocol for ensuring confidentiality. Many of the men and women who work on campaigns hope to build—or already have—reputations as tireless and loyal hands, and they do not wish to jeopardize that for the next election cycle by divulging the campaign's inner workings to unknown outsiders. All but two of these interviews were conducted after the election had already taken place, as most staffers were unwilling to discuss the campaign until all was said and done.

In short, a limitation of the results herein is that my sample cannot be said to be representative of all staffers in the state, let alone across the country. Even so, the staffers here were spread around different parts of the state, meaning that it was possible to gain knowledge of whether strategy was coordinated statewide, or different from place to place. Moreover, these men and women gave candid assessments of the strengths and shortcomings of their campaigns, and those insights are valuable to answering the research question in spite of the small sample size.

Finally, the staff interviews were illuminating in that they largely corroborated what I learned from volunteers about the campaigns' strategies and tactics, and how they differed. More on this is in the results section, below.

As with volunteer interviews, staff interviews were semi-structured and open-ended. I used the interview protocol (see Appendix D), asking probing follow-ups to get more information. The interviews ranged in length from 21 minutes to 94 minutes. After securing the respondent's consent, I recorded interviews digitally; the audio files were then uploaded and stored on a password-protected hard drive.

Coding & Analysis

The coding process for staffers' interviews was identical to that for volunteers. I transcribed the audio files and analyzed the transcriptions using QSR NVivo 11. Initially, I employed open coding to identify emergent themes. To those, I added prominent themes gleaned from the literature, such as mobilization potential, network activation, and others (see Chapter 1). In the following discussion, I will present findings particularly germane to the question of whether and how the two campaigns differed in their mobilization strategies. In addition, I will discuss results from coding that are particularly surprising or ripe for further research.

Results

Staffers' recounting of the campaign matched what I learned from volunteers in many respects. For example, Trump volunteers spoke of the centrality of sign-waving and rallies to their role, and staffers' accounts confirmed that these activities were

common. Clinton volunteers talked about voter registration and phonebanking being major pieces of their work, and staff said the same thing. Chapter 2 asked to what extent the campaigns' volunteers differed in their motivations for involvement, and the answer, ultimately, was: not much (see Chapter 2). This chapter asks to what extent the campaigns' strategies differed, and there the answer is a resounding: quite a lot. During coding, four themes emerged that led to this result: *tactics*, *events*, *staff appraisal of volunteers*, and *role of persuasion*. After discussing the findings from coding for each of these themes, I will conclude the chapter by discussing their implications for political sociology and social movements.

Tactics: The Role of Canvassing and Phonebanking

Politicians going door to door asking for votes is a time-honored tactic in campaigns at every level of government. As the technology developed, of course, reaching voters via phone was added to the candidate's toolkit. Over the past several decades, campaigns have grown remarkably sophisticated in tracking voters' habits, identifying unregistered people and getting them on the voter rolls, learning how to frame their messages to appeal to specific segments of the electorate, etc. Campaigns today can give staffers and volunteers "turf" packets with maps and addresses of likely voters, and pages upon pages of phone lists; they are given scripts to use, with specific questions to ask and follow-ups for a variety of potential responses.

A strong, well-organized campaign will begin canvassing and phonebanking quite early on, so as to identify which voters are committed to vote for their candidate, which are leaning their way, which are undecided, and which are unlikely

or certain not to vote for their candidate. Then, over the course of months and weeks, the campaign will repeatedly “touch” those voters who are certain or likely to favor their candidate, persuade undecideds and waverers, make sure that supporters know where and when to vote, and ask them to volunteer for the campaign. During the GOTV period—the “get out the vote” push that usually encompasses the final two to three weeks of the campaign—they will contact them again to make certain that they actually get to the polls. Software makes the job somewhat easier, but a successful operation requires attention to detail and, most importantly, a legion of volunteers with comfortable walking shoes, tolerance for whatever the weather might bring, and a willingness to have doors slammed in their faces. Phonebankers must be willing to endure verbal assault and abrupt hang-ups. Repeatedly.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, many volunteers are not keen on canvassing and phonebanking. Some refuse to do it outright. Those who do pound the pavement or hit the phones do so because the conventional wisdom—based on past elections—is that the best organized, most dogged campaign with the most voter contact will win. In Florida in 2016, that was not the case. While the Republican Party used data from previous campaigns to perform outreach to likely voters for its coordinated efforts to elect Trump, Rubio, and House candidates, the Trump campaign specifically had virtually no formal, unified canvassing or phonebanking operation. What’s more, according to staffers, there was little to no coordination among Republican Party organizers and Trump’s staff. As Joe, a Trump staffer on the Gulf Coast, told me: “I can’t say for sure what it was like in other areas of the state, but I know at least in my turf, there wasn’t a lot of overlap with the larger Party.” This is entirely the opposite

of the Democratic side, where the effort to elect Democrats up and down the ballot was seamlessly integrated, with campaign literature and canvassing scripts giving voters the names of all Democrats for whom they should vote, from Hillary Clinton on down. As Dory, a young staffer in Central Florida, told me, “Oh, God, the scripts. Scripts, scripts, scripts. Most of my volunteers and I had that shit memorized within a couple of days. We were like robots. ‘Vote for Hillary! Vote for Murphy! Vote for Soto!’”⁴

Given that Mitt Romney had a relatively robust operation in 2012, it struck me as strange that the Trump campaign had not, at the very least, simply adopted what had been used by the Republican Party before. While it is possible that it did so in other places, in Florida, at least, it appears that staffers were working from scratch. (Although local Republican Party chapters *did* use data to target and register voters, the Trump campaign itself operated independently of that process and, from what staffers told me, did not effectively coordinate efforts. Clinton’s campaign and the larger Democratic operation, on the other hand, were virtually inseparable.) The Trump staffers I spoke to alluded to the division in their party that Trump’s candidacy revealed; in at least some counties, Republican Party chapter leaders were disappointed in the outcome of the primaries and, therefore, did not make a pronounced effort on Trump’s behalf.⁵ In these places, Trump supporters often went to field offices in neighboring counties to get yard signs and other Trump/Pence “swag.”

⁴ Patrick Murphy, the Democrat challenging Marco Rubio in the Senate race; Darren Soto, the Democrat running in Florida’s 9th U.S. House District.

⁵ In other words, these Republican Party chapters did not fall in line.

In short, there was a fundamental dynamic at play in Florida in 2016 that underlay the strategy and tactics of both campaigns. As mentioned above, campaign operatives on both sides were reticent when it came to discussing their organizations in much detail. Even so, I was able to glean important differences. A picture emerges of a Clinton campaign governed by clear, well-understood hierarchy and close collaboration among all Democratic candidates, versus a Trump campaign “silo” that, to a large degree, sat apart from Republican Party efforts as a whole. When we discuss “Donald Trump’s campaign,” it is an organization separate from the Republican coordinated campaign. There was little coordination or overlap in strategy and tactics between the two, at least in Florida. When we discuss “Hillary Clinton’s campaign,” though, it is essentially a synonym for the Democratic coordinated campaign. The strategy, tactics, and resources used in the service of the one were also applied in service of the other. Staffers had a cohesive, unified strategy, and standardized methods for measuring progress. Trump staffers often came off as either evasive or confused about how to define themselves: were they Republican Party operatives, or Trump operatives? On the Democratic side, there was no such confusion.

When it comes to canvassing and phonebanking as tactics, this lack of coordination on the GOP side resulted in a less focused operation. Where Clinton staff used data to home in on areas where Democratic support and likelihood of voting were high, Trump staff described outreach across vast swaths of turf, where data may or may not have supported expending resources. As Frank, a Clinton staffer who focused on outreach to senior citizens, told me:

I've worked on lots of Democratic campaigns in my time, and the past three cycles have just been insane with the level of targeting. Seriously, my volunteers get tired of knocking the same doors and calling the same numbers, but we know that this is the way to get results. Sometimes they think the voter is getting turned off by all the contact, but if you touch them enough times, you make sure they have a voting plan, you make sure they have a way to get to the polls—that can make the difference. And, of course, we know how close elections in Florida can be. The smallest thing can make a difference.

Compare that to information from Joe, the Trump staffer on the Gulf Coast quoted above:

We weren't necessarily targeting Republicans. I mean, we were trying to reregister individuals who had previously been registered Republican but were no longer. And you have to remember, the primaries dragged on for so long and a lot of our previous volunteers weren't happy with the result. So our main job at first blush was just to iron over the divisions within our own party and make sure we weren't losing the individuals that are hardcore volunteers and would give their time. They're already engaged enough to come and attend meetings; these are the people that we need to be talking to first because they have their own spheres of influence. So it was kind of like a pyramid action, getting to the individuals who have maintained their spheres of influence within their community, making sure that they would stay in the fold.

The campaign, for the most part, was more focused on shoring up the party faithful—the “good soldier” mobilization that the literature speaks to—than on identifying potential supporters and ensuring repeated contact with those individuals. Joe's comment reinforces what I learned from volunteers: many of Trump's volunteers were “self-starters” who went to field offices to get involved.

While the staffers were not comfortable going into much more detail about internal operations, it was clear that the effort to elect Trump did not involve the sophisticated targeting, fastidious data entry, and repeated voter contact to get out the

vote that characterized the Clinton campaign. Again, past experience would predict a Clinton victory based on these factors. That is not what transpired in 2016 in Florida.

Campaign Events

While staffers for either campaign did not discuss rallies at length during interviews, the topic did come up often, and my observations in the field shed light on differences in strategy and tactics involving events. The crowd for rallies would invariably begin to line up hours before the event was scheduled to start. At Clinton events, staffers and volunteers were always swarming up and down the line handing out postcards for attendees to fill out, which asked for name and contact information. I asked staffers what was done with these cards, and they explained that all of the information was added into a database used to contact those attendees and ask them to volunteer for the campaign. Towards the end of the campaign, the cards handed out at events actually asked the attendees to sign up for a specific volunteer shift right then and there; the staff told me that this was based on research showing that people are more likely to actually show up to volunteer if you get them to commit, in person, to a date and time.

Tangentially, but relevantly, the same principle guided GOTV efforts for the Clinton campaign: the campaign encouraged people to vote early, an option in Florida, and had them talk through exactly when they would go, how they would get there, how they would arrange for coverage at work or childcare if needed, etc. The campaign called this a “voting plan” (see Frank’s comments, above). In the two or so weeks leading up to Election Day, the campaign reached out to all of the supporters it

had identified to make sure that each had such a plan in place, and arranged rides to the polls for those who needed them. Again, staffers explained, research and experience in prior campaigns showed that this kind of micro-focus was the best way to ensure that supporters actually followed through and cast a ballot. Trump staffers described no such extensive effort to get their supporters to the polls, but Trump won Florida anyway (Rubio, too, was reelected).

Returning to the rallies: at Trump events, staff and volunteers were relatively thin on the ground. At only one event did I see anything being handed out. It was a piece of standard campaign literature, and it seemed strange to me that it would be handed out to people who, based on where they were in that moment, were probably already on the “Trump Train.” I asked a staffer about it, and he said that he wasn’t aware of the campaign doing that, so it must have just been some supporter who had taken it upon him or herself to grab a bunch of literature at a field office and hand it out at a rally. Despite the disorganization, though, the size of the crowds at Trump rallies was impressive, and the enthusiasm was palpable. Paul, a veteran Republican organizer in southwest Florida, told me, “The way the crowd goes wild for [Trump], it’s like nothing I’ve ever seen. I mean, it’s Reagan levels of love for this guy.”

Conventional wisdom holds that you can’t predict an election’s outcome based on crowd size at events, because showing up is not a guarantee that someone will actually vote; the campaign has to have ways of identifying and reaching out to attendees to follow up and make sure that they do, indeed, cast ballots. Again, in the case of Florida in 2016, conventional wisdom fell short.

Staff Appraisal of Volunteers: Differing Enthusiasm for the Candidate

As Chapter 2 posits, the enthusiasm gap between Clinton and Trump volunteers in Florida explains part (though certainly not all) of why Trump managed to win the state. There are two dimensions to the way staff talked about enthusiasm: in terms of their own, and in terms of their volunteers'. In my conversations with staffers, they were not as given to discuss their own personal levels of enthusiasm as volunteers were, but interesting information emerged. I will discuss these findings briefly, and then focus on the staffers' appraisal of their volunteers.

Of the four Trump staffers, only one identified himself as a true fan of Trump; he got involved in the campaign because of his personal affinity for the candidate. The other three, however, framed their participation in the campaign as a professional responsibility; they were longtime Republican Party operatives, they had always worked to elect Republicans, and they weren't going to sit this one out. One of them did say that his original choice had been Marco Rubio (this man, interestingly, was highly critical of Trump); the other two did not disclose that information. All three stressed that they were not just focused on getting Trump elected, but also on reelecting Rubio and Republicans in the state's congressional delegation.

Of Clinton's staffers, only one had worked for Bernie Sanders in the primary, and she "did not hesitate at all" to move to Hillary's campaign once Sanders left the race. The other two who were in their early twenties did not work in the primary, and joined Clinton's campaign after she secured the nomination. The final Clinton staffer, a man in his forties, was a seasoned Democratic operative who had worked on numerous campaigns, and supported Clinton from the beginning. As compared to

Trump staffers—one of whom passionately supported the candidate, one of whom was openly critical of Trump and two of whom painted themselves as mere “good soldiers”—Clinton staffers were more uniformly comfortable with the person they were working to put in the White House.

Beyond their own sentiments, staffers spoke more at length about their volunteers’ enthusiasm, and the distinctions were striking. Where Trump staff just about marveled at their volunteers’ passion for Donald Trump, Clinton staff were more likely to talk about their volunteers’ fear of a Trump victory than their actual devotion to Hillary Clinton as a candidate. For example, Henry, a college student who took a semester off to work for the Clinton campaign, told me:

All of my volunteers of course had Democratic ideology, but the biggest motivator was not Clinton, it was Trump. At least in my field office. They volunteered with a lot more vim and vigor this time around not necessarily because they loved Hillary Clinton so much, but because they were so opposed to Donald Trump. And we spent twice as much money per vote trying to get Hillary Clinton elected as Donald Trump’s campaign spent. I think it tells you something.

Of course, as discussed in Chapter 2, many Clinton volunteers were proud of their candidate and quick to praise her, not just to criticize Trump. Likewise, most Trump volunteers were plenty eager to talk about their antipathy toward Clinton, and not just their devotion to Trump. Even so, responses like Henry’s in interviews described a higher level of enthusiasm and personal fealty to candidate for Trump volunteers than for Clinton volunteers.

As further illustration of Trump supporters’ enthusiasm, consider comments from Carl, a Trump organizer in Orange County:

Sure, there was the media narrative about the tweeting and all of that. But Trump supporters never wavered, right? It didn’t go away, no matter what he said or how he

acted. I think it's just because he built this base way back in 2015 when he started saying all the things we all agreed with. So it's like a friend that you're loyal to, you know?

As discussed in Chapter 2, this is not to say that there wasn't virulent anti-Clinton sentiment among Trump supporters. There most certainly was. At least as far as mobilization strategy goes, though, the Trump campaign had more devotion to their candidate to lean on than the Clinton campaign had. This is a difference between the two, but a difference we might not expect: if Democrats are the ones who fall in love, we would expect the Republican campaign to have a harder time firing up its supporters.

The Role of Persuasion

The final theme that emerged from coding that I will discuss in this chapter regards persuasion as a campaign tactic. As discussed in Chapter 1, movements (in our case, political campaigns as SMOs) may employ various messages to try and persuade people to mobilize. These may be appeals to group identity (e.g., Latinos should vote for candidates with liberal positions on immigration), issue-based threat messaging (e.g., If the Democrat wins, we'll never be able to make abortion illegal), or appeals to social ties (e.g., 100 people in your region have signed up to help, won't you join?). No matter the angle, the goal is persuasion.

In Florida in 2016, according to the Clinton staffers I spoke with, persuasion played very little role in the campaign's strategy. Canvassing and phonebanking scripts gave follow-up prompts in the event of encountering a potential voter who had reservations about Hillary Clinton, but the thrust of the strategy was to focus on the

people who could be depended upon to show up and vote, given the appropriate push.

When I asked about persuasion as a tactic, Dory, the young staffer quoted above, replied:

Yeah, this part really bothered me. I mean, I'm not an expert in campaigns, but my instincts were telling me that we could have flipped some votes if we'd tried harder. I spoke to so many voters who were undecided. They would say things like, "Well, I don't know about Hillary. She seems like too much of a politician," or, you know, "What about her e-mails." But they would also say that they thought that Trump was terrible and they couldn't believe the things that came out of his mouth, so they were really conflicted. If I could have really taken time with these people and had a good conversation where we talked about the issues and why Hillary was the better choice, it might have done something, who knows? But the way the campaign operated was to maybe have a quick conversation, but then move on and hit other targets. It was all about, how many doors did you knock today? How many calls did you make? I actually brought it up with my field director, and she didn't say it exactly this way, but the basic message was: shut up and do as you're told.

Henry, the young Clinton volunteer quoted earlier, expressed a similar frustration and said, "I think the powers that be were worried that field staff and volunteers would veer off message if they were given too much opportunity to talk to undecideds. And I think that was a mistake."

By contrast, Trump staffers knew that they had a pool of dedicated, enthusiastic volunteers who could reach out to their networks and persuade friends and family to vote for Trump. They were also happy to wear Trump stickers and buttons wherever they went—church, school pick-up, the grocery store. As an example of how this visibility functioned to the campaign's benefit, two of the Trump volunteers I interviewed said they got involved when they saw someone wearing a Trump sticker at the grocery store, and approached them to ask how they could help the cause.

Moreover, I got insight into the persuasive benefits of visibility from Daniel, another Gulf Coast staffer:

My volunteers would organize themselves to go out and hold signs at the big intersections; I didn't even have to ask. And the reason that was helpful was, look: a lot of folks were embarrassed to admit they liked Trump. They didn't want to talk about it to the people around them because they thought people would jump down their throats about this or that thing he said. But when they saw friends and neighbors out in the streets, jumping and shouting about Trump, they would know they weren't alone, there were plenty of people out there. It kind of took away any misgivings they might have and convinced them to vote.

Whether a greater focus on voter persuasion by the Clinton campaign would have made a difference in the eventual outcome of the election, we will never know. What the data here show, at least, is that the role of persuasion was a considerable point of difference between the Trump and Clinton campaigns' approaches to mobilization in Florida. The implications of the findings presented in this section are discussed below.

Discussion and Implications

This project hypothesizes, based on the literature, that the Clinton and Trump campaigns would differ to a large extent in their strategies for mobilizing supporters, and that was, indeed, the case. The Clinton campaign followed the Obama template, in the hope of getting similar results. While that seems reasonable, the formula that worked in 2008 and 2012 simply could not outdo the tremendous enthusiasm that many Floridians had for Donald Trump. While it is not the goal of this dissertation to explain that enthusiasm, it appears that a less organized, less funded, and less focused campaign can overcome its deficits if its candidate inspires sufficient passion—and,

perhaps, if that campaign employs persuasion tactics more readily. Those findings have major implications for sociology's understanding of political mobilization.

The literature on mobilization tells us that by tapping into networks, by playing to potential recruits' anxieties, and by using social media to activate supporters, organizations may have success in mobilizing. Both Clinton's and Trump's campaigns encouraged supporters to get their friends and loved ones involved, both online and offline. And when it comes to exploiting anxieties, volunteer interviews reveal that supporters on both sides were horrified at the thought of the opposing candidate sitting in the Oval Office. True, Clinton's campaign had far more resources and a much more sophisticated operation, but that was not enough to make up for the fire-in-the-belly loyalty of Trump's supporters.

In fact, the operations of the Trump campaign in Florida were, in large part, volunteer-driven; groups of supporters organized *themselves* to go wave signs at major intersections, or to recruit their friends and loved ones to volunteer. On the Clinton side, activities were much more driven by the professional organizers carrying out the campaign's strategy. This difference is perhaps further testament to the enthusiasm gap between Trump and Clinton supporters. After all, it requires a considerable amount of passion to take the initiative to make or order signs, call up a bunch of friends, and go stand in the street in the hot Florida sun for a couple of hours waving at people driving by. Most of us would rather spend our after-work hours or our weekends doing other things, and it is particularly remarkable that Trump volunteers got out there anyway, absent a pesky field organizer calling them up and pressuring them to do it.

Thus, an implication of the findings described above is that social movements and political sociology scholars must continue to probe a factor beyond traditional campaign strategy and tactics when they speak about mobilization: charismatic figureheads. Research on leadership in social movements, while it exists, is an area ripe for further theorizing and research (see Morris and Staggengborg 2004). There are numerous promising avenues for further research: what are the elements of a charismatic persona that can make up for inferior organization or more nebulous strategy? Can its effects be measured? Moreover, how do certain figures become impervious to the limitations of framing that govern most movements? For example, how is it that Donald Trump was able to build support by attacking his opponents and alluding to the size of his penis during a debate, when similar forays by Marco Rubio into the politics of personal insult and puerile schoolboy innuendo precipitated his demise in the race? From a social psychological standpoint, this could be fascinating research.

Chapter 4: Campaign Rallies: Surveys and Observations

“You know, Florida’s not really a state. It’s five different countries in one state.” After a Trump rally in Kissimmee, the conservative organizer sitting across from me at the coffee shop echoed a trope I’d heard from a number of Floridians. Miami is its own country, and the rest of southeast Florida another. Then you have the sprawl of Central Florida. The Gulf Coast from Tampa/St. Petersburg down to Ft. Myers and Naples is its own entity. Finally, there’s the Panhandle, which they’ll tell you is just an extension of its Deep South neighbors. Each of these is its own “country” because it has its own unique culture, topography, demographic profile, and political bent. In that sense, Florida is not only large and populous; it is also a microcosm of the United States as a whole. No wonder politics here is so high-stakes.

As discussed in previous chapters, given its importance to national politics, Florida is an ideal place to study mobilization. Questions of who engages in campaign activity, how, and why are better answered where campaign activity is intense and robust (see Lipsitz 2008; Wolak 2006; Holbrook and McClurg 2005). From August 2016 through Election Day, I traveled to Clinton and Trump campaign rallies around the state, distributing survey questionnaires, conversing with attendees, and compiling field notes. This chapter presents findings from that endeavor. What are included here are descriptive statistics, meant to add context to the previous substantive chapters on volunteer and staff interviews. Additionally, and importantly, the rallies and surveys were my primary method of identifying campaign volunteers and staff who might be willing to be interviewed. While the interview data speak directly to the research

questions of this project⁶, questionnaire data from rally attendees flesh out the story: Who were the people motivated to stand for hours on end in the scorching Florida heat for a chance to see Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump in person? Had they done anything like this before? How, if at all, did the campaigns keep track of these folks and attempt to mobilize them further?

By surveying the men and women who take time and expend resources to attend campaign rallies, we may shed light on questions of who becomes involved in the political process. Moreover, these surveys may indicate whether the stark differences in political beliefs between conservatives and liberals are mirrored in various characteristics and behaviors of those attending Trump and Clinton rallies. To that end, the question addressed in this chapter is, *In what ways do attendees at Trump and Clinton rallies differ?* Of course, in examining this question, we may also uncover ways in which these men and women are similar. There is growing political polarization in the United States (Abramowitz and Webster 2018; Abramowitz and Webster 2015). Inasmuch as that cleavage is detrimental to our political culture and the vigor of our democratic system, ascertaining whether we are, in fact, united in unexpected ways is a worthy goal.

Data & Methods

To reiterate, the data here are meant to answer the question, *In what ways do attendees at Trump and Clinton rallies differ?* The unit of analysis is, therefore, the

⁶ *To what extent do volunteers for the Democratic and Republican presidential campaigns differ in their motivations for getting involved, and are there differences in the mobilization strategies of the two campaigns?*

individual. In order to learn of campaign events in Florida, I signed up on the websites of both the Clinton and Trump campaigns, providing my zip code (34747 in Celebration, Florida) so that I would automatically receive e-mails informing me of events in my area. In addition, I checked the candidates' websites every day to see if new events had been scheduled anywhere in the state. I attended as many events as possible within a 4-hour drive of my home between August 2016 and Election Day. In total, I attended fourteen rallies, seven for each candidate. One of Trump's rallies was headlined by a surrogate; two Clinton rallies were.

Rallies attended:

- ☐ Donald Trump: Kissimmee, Miami, Ocala, Sanford, Tampa, Orlando
- ☐ Mike Pence: Maitland
- ☐ Hillary Clinton: Kissimmee, Orlando, Tampa (twice), Sanford
- ☐ Barack Obama: Kissimmee, Orlando

Once at the campaign events, survey participants were sampled using a field approximation of random selection consistent with the methodology employed by other researchers (Fisher and Boekkooi 2010; Fisher *et al.* 2005; Bédoyan *et al.* 2004). This method calls for the researcher to “count off” [attendees] standing in a formal or informal line, selecting every third [attendee] to participate” (Fisher and Boekkooi 2010:198). In accordance with IRB protocol, where it was not obvious, respondents were asked to confirm that they were 18 or older before participating. Below is a table showing response rates.

Table 2. Survey Response Rates

EVENT	SURVEYS COMPLETED	REFUSALS	RESPONSE RATE
Trump Kissimmee	48	10	83%
Trump Miami	53	2	96%
Trump Ocala	12	4	75%
Trump Sanford	88	13	87%
Trump Tampa	28	7	80%
Trump Orlando	70	8	90%
Pence Maitland	30	3	91%
Clinton Kissimmee	48	7	87%
Clinton Orlando	12	5	71%
Clinton Tampa 1	49	10	83%
Clinton Tampa 2	39	6	87%
Clinton Sanford	100	4	96%
Obama Kissimmee	38	2	95%
Obama Orlando	100	5	95%
		Overall Trump	87.5%
		Overall Clinton	91%

*There was a handful of cases (<10) where the individual sampled according to the method was younger than 18. These instances are not included in the calculation of response rates.

These response rates are striking for a number of reasons. Firstly, they are high. There are a number of possible explanations for this, including: 1) People are more likely to acquiesce to a survey in person than via phone or internet, as it is harder to say no to someone face-to-face than virtually; 2) As attendees at political rallies, the men and women sampled for this project are, at least in theory, political beings who are confident in their positions and willing to be open about them; 3) A social desirability/peer pressure effect may have been in play, whereby respondents were surrounded by peers, some of whom had gladly taken the survey, and did not wish to appear uncooperative or rude by declining.

Another notable result is the relatively similar response rates between Trump attendees and Clinton attendees. I anticipated that there would be a dramatically higher refusal rate among Trump attendees. It is no secret that today's conservative rank-and-file are suspicious of academia. They assume—not unjustifiably—that American colleges and universities are populated and run by progressives who disdain “red” America (see Gross *et al.* 2011). As a matter of course (and of IRB protocol), I approached each sampled individual and identified myself as a graduate student from the University of Maryland. In cases where I got refusals, that alone was all that was needed for the individual to say no; only twice did someone look at the survey and *then* decide not to participate. That said, the fact remains that the vast majority of individuals approached took the survey. As with some of the findings in the volunteer interviews (see Chapter 2), this is a similarity one might not expect, given the different views of the two groups *vis-à-vis* the academy.

Ultimately, I was unsurprised by the large overall response rates, and should not have been too surprised at the willingness of Trump supporters to participate. In my experience as a researcher, people are generally willing to share of themselves, even if they are a bit suspicious. After all, each of us wants to be seen as interesting. When a friendly stranger approaches and says, essentially, “I’m interested in you and I want to know more,” it is easy to say yes. I have studied various aspects of the conservative movement over my graduate career, and even though many of my subjects have suspected that I do not share their political views, the vast majority have been willing to sit down and chat (see Blee 1998).

Perhaps as a means of ascertaining my motives, on several occasions—I lost count—Trump attendees asked me who I was supporting in the election. I always avoided this question by saying that, as a researcher, it would be unethical for me to share my own views. Reactions to this response ranged from approbation (“Good for you, we need objective people” from a man in Sanford), to dubious smirks or eye-rolls (nearly ubiquitous), to hostility (“So that probably means you’re for Hillary. You better wise up, girl” scoffed a woman in Miami). Nowhere in my recollection or my field notes was I asked about my own views at a Clinton rally, and this is probably because a lot of Democrats assume that a sociologist is one of them. Again, though, there was not much difference between the two groups as far as their ultimate willingness to participate was concerned.

I had three clipboards with me at each event, so that three people could be filling out the survey at any one time; this approach meant I could maximize my completed surveys without losing track of any clipboards. As Figure 1 shows, there is considerable variation in the number of surveys completed at each venue. Several factors contributed to this variation. Most obviously, some events were better attended than others. More influential, though, was a host of other factors, such as the security situation at certain venues and whether I would be allowed in with my clipboards and multitude of ballpoint pens; the layout of the crowd and how easy it was to employ the sampling method (e.g., Were people in an orderly line, or were they scattered around in unruly clumps?); how difficult it was to find parking and get to the line before attendees were allowed to enter the venue; etc.

Those surveyed were asked how they heard about the event, how they got there, whether they were attending alone or with others, and why they came. Additionally, the survey instrument asked if the respondent had attended such an event before, and whether he/she was involved in other activities benefiting the campaign. The survey also included space for the respondent to provide his/her name, phone number, and e-mail address if he/she was willing to be contacted for a follow-up interview. Please see Appendices A and B for the survey instruments.

The survey data were entered into Microsoft Excel for the purposes of rendering descriptive statistics. The results shared in this chapter are the product of that analysis. As mentioned, the purpose of this chapter is to complement and round out the story told by the interview data, which get to the heart of this project's question.

Findings

The social realities of our time—income inequality, racial tension, gender politics, etc.—focused an intense spotlight on the two candidates' bases of support. Hillary Clinton was believed to have the lion's share of support of young people, people of color, and women; Donald Trump's base was seen as white men. The Clinton campaign, by all accounts, was a well-oiled, organized machine with a solid ground game. Donald Trump, on the other hand, seemed to have little in the way of coordination, organization, and boots on the ground. As explained in the preceding chapters, there were not dramatic differences in the demographics of the two groups of volunteers, but there were notable differences in how the two campaigns

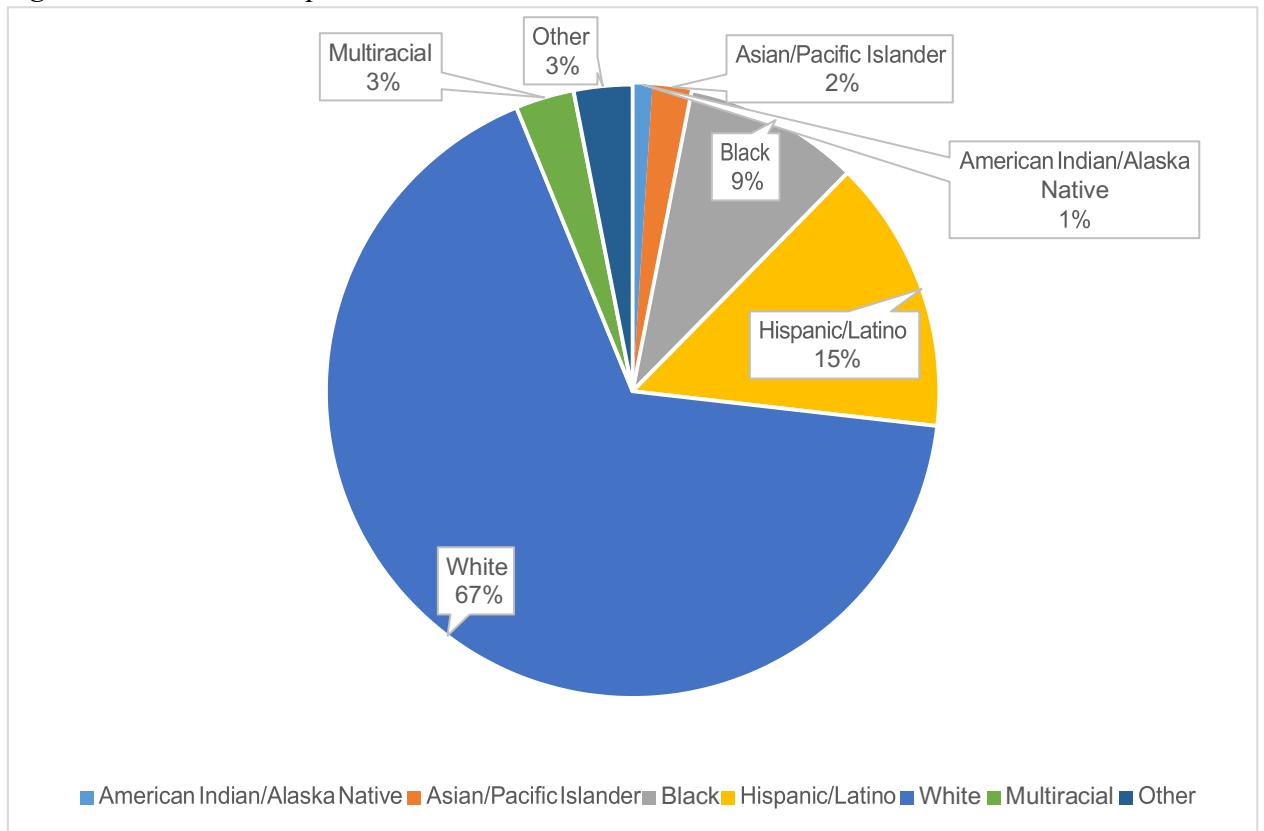
mobilized. Thus, the common conceptions about demographics and campaign workings are borne out in some ways, less so in others. Attending rallies in Florida and surveying attendees was an added way of testing these widely believed, media- and pundit-driven narratives; the demographic data from rallies do offer a somewhat different view of who supported the two candidates than the profile of their volunteers does. Below are the findings on a number of variables; discussion follows after all results are presented.

Note: for all analyses, *N* of Clinton surveys = 386 and *N* of Trump surveys = 329.

Race

The data here provide ample empirical support to the notion that the two candidates' supporters differed in their racial makeup. Overall, the data show that a majority of people who attend rallies are white, lending support to what the literature tells us: that members of the privileged group may be more likely to engage in low-risk activism (DiGrazia 2013; see Chapter 1). Below is a graphical representation of the findings.

Figure 1. Racial Makeup – All Rallies



Once the data are separated by candidate, however, a different picture emerges. 55% of all Clinton rally attendees identified as white and no other race. For Donald Trump, that figure was 79%. Below are charts representing racial makeup at rallies for each candidate.

Figure 2. Racial Makeup – Clinton Rallies

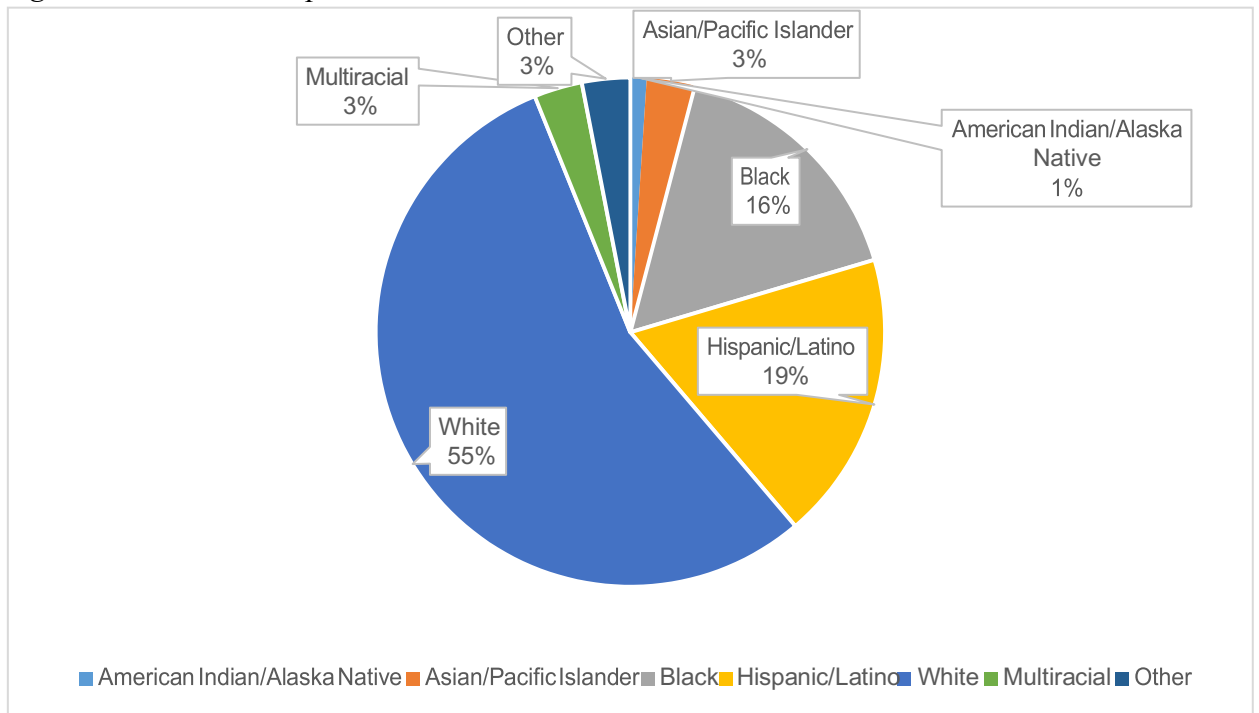
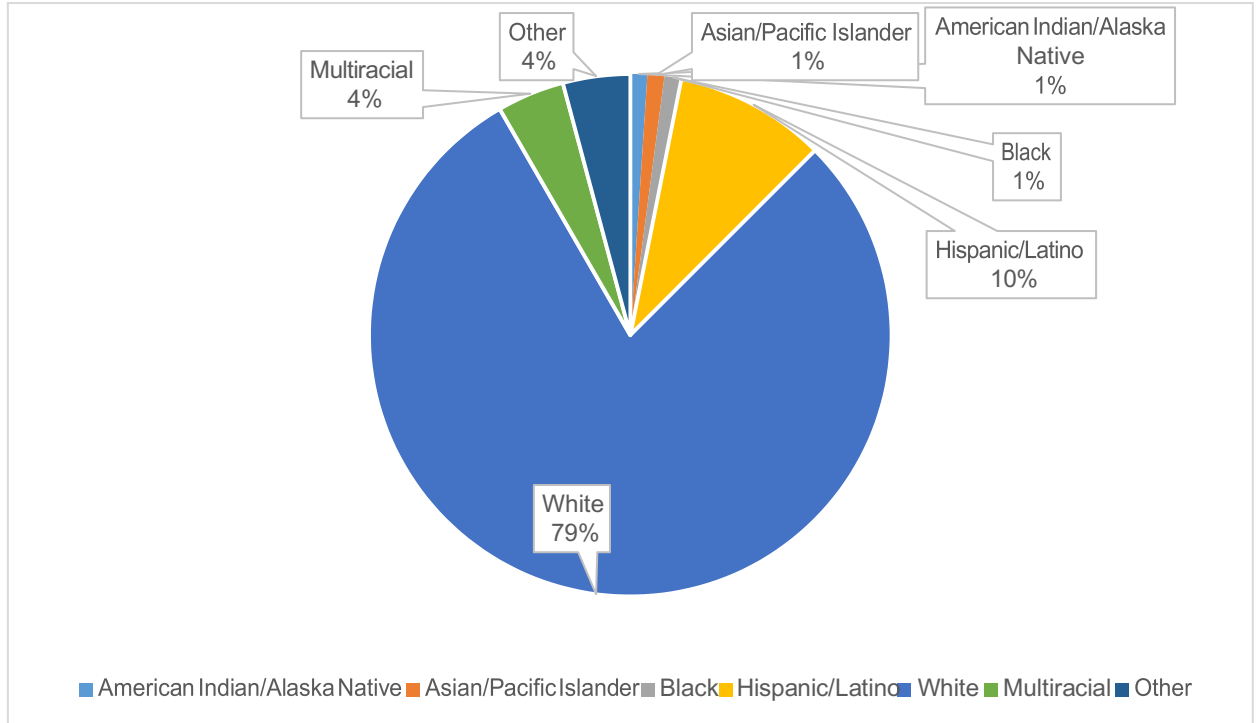


Figure 3. Racial Makeup – Trump Rallies



Worth noting here is that the percentage of Hispanic/Latino attendees at Trump rallies was driven up considerably by the rally in Miami, where fully 30% of attendees identified as Hispanic/Latino. This result is not surprising, as there is a sizable community of Cuban-American voters in the Miami area who are loyal to the Republican Party (see Girard *et al.* 2012). Elsewhere in the state, however—as in the rest of the country—Hispanic and Latino voters are more likely to support Democrats (Krogstad 2016). By way of illustration, the average Hispanic/Latino attendance at all other Trump rallies in this study was just 5%. And, indeed, Cubans in Florida ended up about twice as likely to have voted for Trump as non-Cuban Latinos in the state, according to exit polls (Krogstad and Flores 2016).

Interestingly, a number of men and women approached me at the Miami rally and asked to take the survey, explaining that they were Cuban-American and wanted to be counted as Latinos for Trump. As in any situation where an individual approached me asking to take the survey—which did happen from time to time as folks standing around talked about who I was and what I was doing there, fostering curiosity among the throngs bored of waiting in line—I explained that I was selecting participants randomly and could not give them the survey. (On the rare occasion that someone was persistent in asking to take the survey, I allowed them to do so, but then discreetly folded the survey and excluded it from my data). That said, I usually spent time talking to these men and women to ask a bit about their views. For many of the Cuban-Americans who spoke with me in Miami, a sense of party loyalty guided them to support Trump, as well as a belief that he would be tougher on the Castro regime

than would Hillary Clinton. More such findings from the field are discussed later in this chapter.

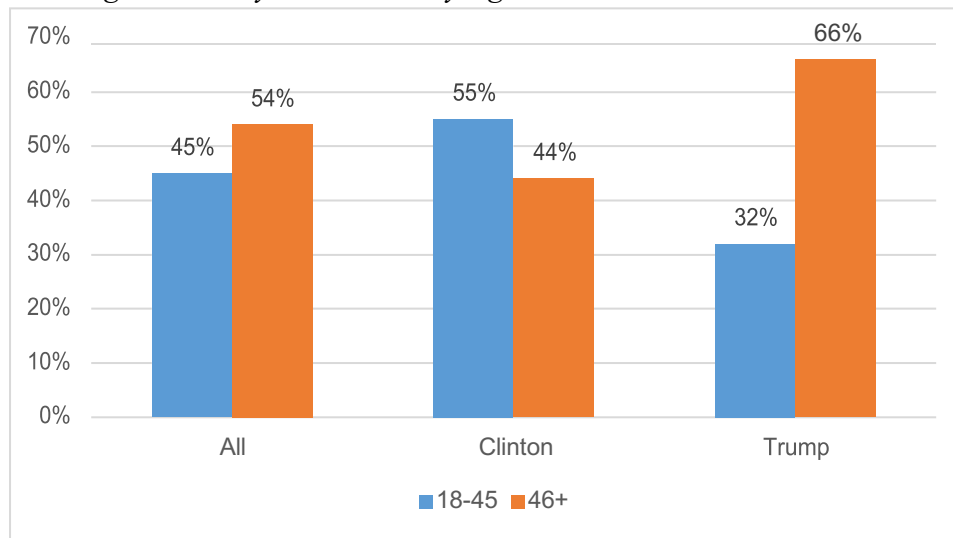
In short, then, while relative demographic similarity characterized the Clinton and Trump volunteers, the same cannot be said of the broader group of supporters who showed up to rallies. This finding is not a surprising difference; it is one we might expect given what exit polls tell us about Trump's voters. To wit: In Florida, 64% of white voters chose Trump. 84% of Blacks and 62% of Latinos chose Clinton (CNN 2016).

Moreover, in questions relevant to racial attitudes, 69% of voters who named immigration as their priority issue supported Trump. Of voters who believed that undocumented immigrants should be deported to their country of origin, 92% supported Trump. Of those who answered that immigrants hurt the U.S., 87% supported Trump. When asked "how things work in the U.S. today," 80% of those who believe whites are favored voted for Clinton, while 86% of those who believe that minorities are favored voted for Trump. Only a quarter of Trump voters agreed that Blacks are treated unfairly in the criminal justice system (*ibid.*).

Age

Aside from conventional wisdom about race and partisanship, there is also the general belief that older voters tend to favor the Republican Party, while younger voters prefer Democrats. From a descriptive standpoint, the rally data bear this out:

Figure 4. Rally Attendance by Age



While these results reflect what we know about political beliefs by age, it is also important to note that two Clinton events—one at University of South Florida in Tampa, and an Obama rally at University of Central Florida in Orlando—were held on college campuses, which means a large number of the attendees were students. That could skew the age results for this study. That said, it was probably no accident that the Clinton campaign was more likely to schedule events on campuses than the Trump campaign; college kids were not Trump’s target demographic. Much like Latinos at Trump’s Miami rally, though, young people at Trump rallies seemed eager to speak with me, to make it known that not all Millennials are Democrats. As one young man at Trump’s Sanford rally told me: “All of my professors are liberals and it sucks to be the only conservative in my class. I guess I’m more a libertarian. Y’know, just because I’m young doesn’t mean I’m a brainwashed liberal.”

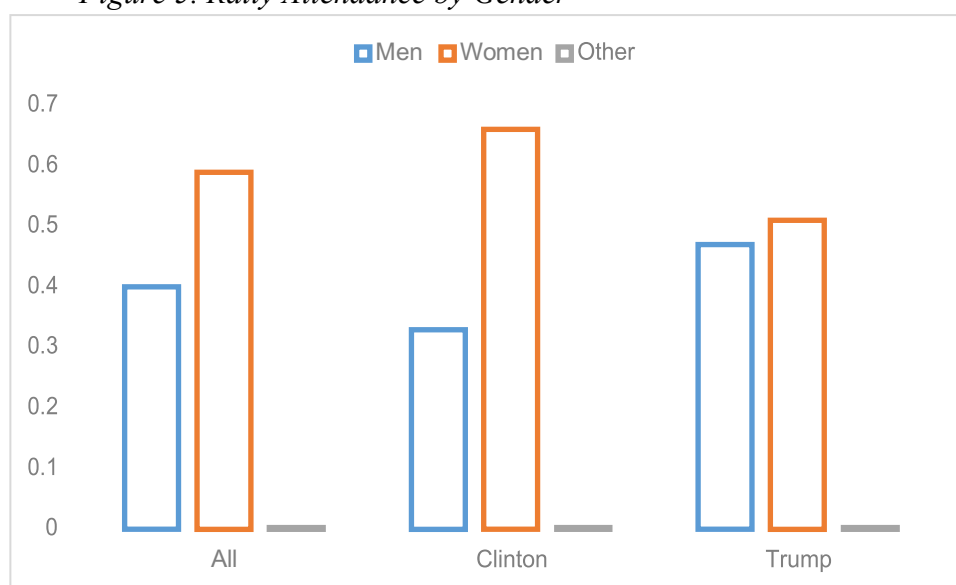
Again, as with race, the rally data do not represent a surprising difference with regard to age. Exit polls from Florida show that 54% of voters under the age of 45 voted for Clinton; 56% of those over 45 voted for Trump (CNN 2016). Whereas age

and race findings from the rallies are not particularly surprising, the results pertaining to gender are different. They are presented below.

Gender

As mentioned above, the Democratic Party is seen as the natural home of women, given its policy positions on pay equity, family leave, reproductive rights, etc. The rally data hint at bearing this out, but it is also true that the majority of attendees at Trump's rallies were women. Moreover, as we learned from exit polls, women overall favored Clinton, but white women broke for Trump; this was true nationally, and even more true in Florida (CNN 2016). The results from rallies are below.

Figure 5. Rally Attendance by Gender



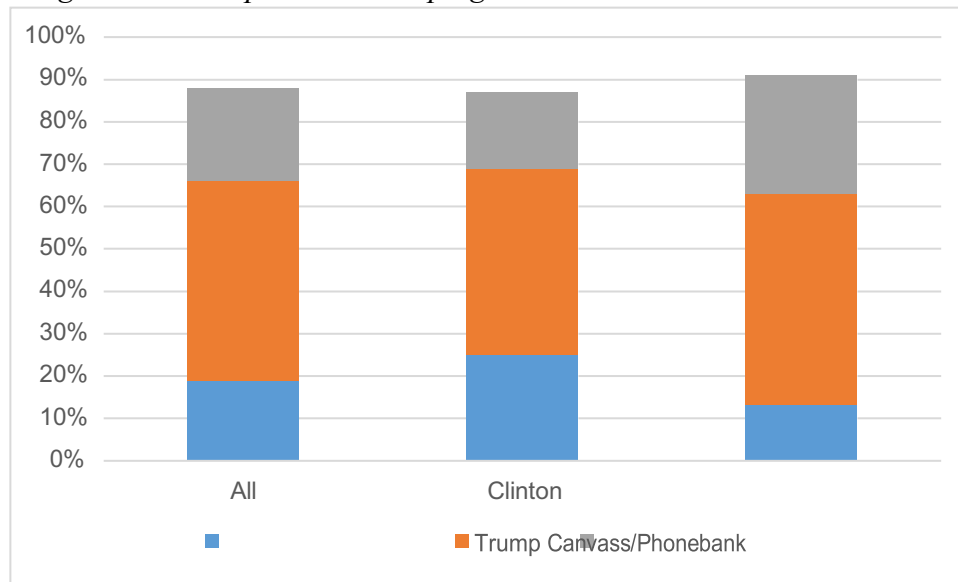
When it comes to understanding why women outnumbered men even at Trump rallies, a number of factors may be at play. Most obviously, the overwhelming majority of Trump attendees were white and, as mentioned above, we now know that

Trump won among white women voters despite Democrats' considerable advantage among women overall. Other factors include the concept of biographical availability (see Chapter 1): women's workforce participation in Florida is lower than men's, meaning that women may have more time than men to attend events (see Sandoval 2016). Ultimately, the relatively similar gender breakdown at Trump and Clinton rallies is, like the findings from volunteer interviews, a result that one might not expect.

Engagement

The final variable addressed in this chapter is engagement, a measure of how involved respondents were in the campaign beyond rally attendance. Respondents were asked whether they canvassed or phonebanked for the campaign, donated to the campaign, or were involved in some other way. Of interest here is the typical belief that Clinton had a stronger ground game than Trump. While Clinton's supporters in the sample were more likely than Trump's to engage in traditional activities like canvassing and phonebanking, Trump's supporters were more likely to donate and to be involved in other ways (posting on social media, for example). Overall, a modestly higher percentage of Trump supporters than Clinton supporters claimed *some type of involvement* in the campaign, but the central finding is that differences in engagement between the two groups are, in truth, negligible. Again, we see similarity where the prevailing narrative surrounding ground game would lead us to expect difference. The data are shown graphically below.

Figure 6. Participation in Campaign Activities



The question of enthusiasm, discussed at length in the chapters on volunteer interviews, is related to engagement. An enthusiastic supporter, after all, is more likely to be motivated to get involved in the campaign. Thus, while Clinton may have had a more robust operation to engage supporters in the traditional sense, Trump's campaign reached similar levels of engagement from an often rabidly enthusiastic base.

My field notes make multiple mentions of the enthusiasm gap I observed between Clinton and Trump rally attendees. First of all, Trump rallies were often better attended; my ability to estimate crowd size based on what I see is by no means perfect, but the difference in crowd size at Clinton events and Trump events was often undeniable to the naked eye. Telling exceptions were the two events headlined by Obama, which drew immense crowds compared to those featuring the candidate herself. Likewise, the event with Mike Pence was sparsely attended compared to the events with Trump.

In a second sign of the enthusiasm gap, the men and women I spoke to at Trump rallies were more effusive on two important counts: in general, they were more personally attached to their own candidate, and more zealously fixated on defeating the opponent. Hillary Clinton's supporters were, for the most part, horrified at the thought of a President Donald Trump, and many of her volunteers expressed that idea as a major motivation for their involvement (see Chapter 2, and Chapter 3 for corroboration from staffers).

That said, the personal antipathy of many Trump supporters toward Hillary Clinton was visceral and intense in a way that anti-Trump sentiment was not. As compared to rally attendees, Trump volunteers were more liable to speak about their devotion to Trump than their distaste for Clinton; this dynamic was different among rally attendees, and that is a point of divergence between the two. In my field work, the feeling that most Trump supporters expressed to me towards Clinton can only be described as deep and abiding hatred. And hate, it turns out, is a potent motivator.

In the final analysis, though, both groups of volunteers and rally attendees were firm and passionate in their opposition to the other side's candidate. That impression is borne out by Florida exit polls showing that 80% of Clinton voters held an unfavorable view of Trump, while 90% of Trump voters held a unfavorable view of Clinton (CNN 2016). So, as discussed in Chapter 2, the two groups are similar in the steadfastness of their negative view of each other—or, at least, they are similar in how much they are defined not just by what or whom they are for, but by what or whom they are against.

The survey instrument asked attendees how far they'd traveled to come to the rally, the idea being that this could give a sense of enthusiasm and motivation. As it turned out, yet again, there was very little difference between the two groups: in both groups, fully two-thirds traveled fewer than 30 miles. So, by that measure, enthusiasm did not differ markedly. Moreover, the two groups were very similar in terms of whether they had ever attended a political rally before. In both groups, more than half of respondents had attended a rally before in their lives. Thus, by the measures of distance traveled and previous rally attendance, there was not a marked enthusiasm gap; it was in actual conversations in the field and in interviews that this gap revealed itself.

Discussion and Implications

The data presented here point to a number of interesting findings. With regard to race, there is a clear difference in the population of people motivated to attend a Trump rally and those motivated to attend a Clinton rally. The data suggest similar confirmation of the dominant narrative with regard to age, but the picture is less clear when it comes to sex and levels of active engagement.

We now know what none of the survey respondents could at the time: Donald Trump won the election. Whether that outcome brings one joy or despair, in the interests of moving forward productively, all members of the American body politic ought to share an interest in understanding where we differ and where we are similar. Profound political differences based on age may subside with time, as older, pre-Millennial generations expire. Cleavages based on race, however, may be more

difficult to salve. Other components of this project—field observations and interviews with volunteers—point to two realities: 1) a profound sense of racial grievance among white Trump supporters, and 2) a lack of appetite among respondents of all races, for both candidates, to engage in honest, open dialogue with those who do not share their views. A good deal of this analysis is recounted in Chapter 2, on volunteer interviews, but I will relate some notes from the field below.

As far as race goes, I would not have been able to conduct this research were I not white. While I never saw any of the physical violence or verbal attacks on people of color that were reported at some Trump rallies, attendees often felt surprisingly comfortable offering me candid opinions on race—candor that I somehow doubt they would have showed to a researcher of color. Quite frequently, Trump attendees asked me to compare their crowd sizes to Clinton's. When I replied honestly that Trump rallies were usually better attended (though not nearly as well attended as the two Obama events I attended; I did not mention that detail), they said they knew that and that the media never reported it.

I asked these folks why they thought Trump rallies were better attended and, interestingly, they usually didn't proffer that Trump had more support than Clinton, which would seem the most logical explanation; rather, they framed the cause as a fault among Clinton supporters. In my field notes from Trump's Sanford rally, I noted one woman's response: "I hate to say it because I know it's not 'politically correct,' but a lot of her people are, you know, they're lazy. They're not going to come out and show support because they're lazy and a lot of them take welfare." Similarly, my field notes from Trump's Orlando rally note a man's assessment that, "Let's be real, it's

the Blacks and the Hispanics and they're just expecting the government to do everything for them and, you know, Hillary's their gal." The possibility that many people—including many people of color—did not attend rallies because they could not take the time off work did not seem to enter into this woman's and this man's thinking.

Racism reared its head, also, in Trump attendees' discussion of immigration. For many of these men and women, a big part of Trump's appeal was his hard line on immigration. I cannot count the number of times that Trump attendees cited for me the claim that "illegals" do not pay taxes, and that they take free healthcare and tuition that ought rightfully to go to native-born Americans. When it came to discussions of Trump's promise to build a wall, there was roughly a 50/50 split between those who took him literally, and those who thought he was just posturing but appreciated that he was "taking a stand" and "not being politically correct."

Despite their suspicion of me as someone affiliated with academia, Trump supporters at rallies were, in general, just as happy to speak with me about their views as were Clinton supporters. If anything, Trump supporters were even more talkative with me at rallies than Clinton supporters. Perhaps Trump voters assumed I was a liberal who needed to be shown the light, while Clinton voters figured I was on their side anyway. Whatever the reason, it was illuminating to speak with so many men and women who were relatively open about their beliefs on race, and their feelings of racial disempowerment.

When Trump supporters decried "political correctness," what they were manifesting was a resentment of new norms. As the political scientist Sam Goldman

explains, “What Trump and others seem to mean by political correctness is an extremely dramatic and rapidly changing set of discursive and social laws that, virtually overnight, people are expected to understand, to which they are expected to adhere” (Beauchamp 2016). For the men and women I interviewed and spoke with, those dramatic changes included shifting demographics that are rendering a more diverse America; the breathtakingly rapid advance of LGBT rights over the last decade, including marriage equality, the repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” and the increased visibility of the transgender community; changing expectations of gender roles in both in the workplace and the home; civil unrest sparked by police mistreatment of Black and brown bodies; a reenergized women’s movement shining a spotlight on the epidemic of sexual violence on college campuses; the presence of a Black man named Barack Hussein Obama and his family in the White House; the list goes on. In many ways, for the Trump supporters I met, “Make America Great Again” was a thinly veiled and very resonant “*Make it stop.*”

The findings I collected via interviews and field work fit into the larger context of what we now know about Florida, based on the exit polls cited above. Further, these findings bespeak a deep polarization in the United States that has few antecedents in our history (Abramowitz and Webster 2018). Not only are we divided; we are increasingly shunting ourselves into online and real-world echo chambers where we needn’t engage with those whose politics we do not share. The men and women who attended rallies in Florida differed markedly by race and age, and those divides may or may not be bridgeable in the near future, and not without dramatic changes in our political culture. That being said, the data here do have bright spots. If

willingness to engage in the political process is distributed relatively evenly across the spectrum—as my data suggest it is—that may make real movement obtainable on issues that enjoy bipartisan support. Of course, achieving that end will require the expertise of activists and organizers, but at least the seed of motivation exists; apathy may not be the obstacle that many believe it to be.

Donald Trump's victory was a surprise to many, not least a good number of his supporters. While social scientists are likely to spend months and years speculating, hypothesizing, and parsing all of the available data to answer the question of how and why it happened—and while those questions are important and worthwhile—it behooves us to turn our attention to where we go from here. By understanding the men and women who went to the trouble of getting involved in the 2016 campaign, we may gain valuable insight into the potential for political activism in campaigns and elections to come.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Directions for Future Research

It is a cliché, but it is true, at least as far as our motives for political action are concerned: there is more that unites us than divides us. People who volunteer for presidential campaigns do so for a number of reasons, but the most salient, regardless of party, is a rather amorphous commitment to a better future. This reasoning obtains across the political spectrum; people who see eye-to-eye on virtually nothing where policy is concerned are of very like mind when it comes to why campaigns matter. Based on what the literature tells us about the different cultures within the Democratic and Republican parties, and the different approaches taken by movements of the left and right, such similarities between Trump and Clinton volunteers are surprising. Indeed, many of the findings of this project defy the many expectations of difference that we might have of the two groups.

While a single study, with a relatively small sample, is not enough to permanently dispel the notion that Democrats fall in love while Republicans fall in line, the results here point emphatically to the importance not of party identification, but of enthusiasm for a particular candidate (or, perhaps, a specific message) in dictating which party will be pragmatic and which will be idealistic in a given election year. Enthusiasm gives campaigns momentum—“the Big Mo,” as many operatives call it—and, as 2008 and 2016 indicate, it may be pivotal in dictating outcomes. But enthusiasm is difficult to operationalize and measure.

Antipathy, too, is not the easiest variable to operationalize and measure, but it also plays a role in campaigns, as the data here show. If mobilization is a coin, perhaps antipathy and enthusiasm are its two sides. Clinton’s volunteers may not have

been particularly passionate about her, but their disgust at the thought of Donald Trump in the White House got them motivated. Conversely, Trump volunteers certainly had no love for Hillary Clinton, but they were markedly enthusiastic about Donald Trump. Overall, antipathy toward “the other side” flowed like a river in the hearts and minds of both sets of supporters, both the volunteers and the rally attendees.

A Trump rally attendee told me that he had placed a Trump bumper sticker on his car, and one morning he went into his driveway to find the sticker ripped off and a rather nasty note tucked under his windshield wiper. A Clinton volunteer in Brevard County told me that she had a “Nurses for Hillary” bumper sticker on her car. One day, at an intersection, the man in the car to her left at a red light made his right hand into the shape of a gun, pointed it at her, and pulled the imaginary trigger.

What does this bilious impasse bode for the future? What avenues for future research might give us better ways of understanding and addressing it? Some of the potential roads for this research have been mentioned throughout this dissertation; I will review and add to them here. While this is by no means an exhaustive rendering of the opportunities, it highlights some that I find most interesting.

Directions for Future Research

Framing and Messaging

Chapter 1 presents the work of scholars who address the question of how movements frame themselves (e.g., Hughey and Parks 2014; Kimmel 2013; Hardisty 1999; Benford 1993). Framing is vital to a movement’s success; without messages

presented in a way that speaks to the interests and concerns of its target recruits, it will never reach its mobilization potential (Klandermans and Oegema 1987). While interview and field data presented here give some insight into the frames the campaign employed and how they were received by supporters, other methods could more effectively address questions of framing in the 2016 election.

As part of my research, I signed up for the mailing lists of both campaigns. I have in my e-mail archives, therefore, thousands of automated messages from the two campaigns, the two parties, and even some affiliated interest groups, such as NARAL. These e-mails span the period from July 2016 through the present. Detailed content analysis of these documents is a promising avenue for research into the framing aspect of mobilization in the 2016 campaign.

Gender and Mobilization

As the demographic data from volunteer interviews and rally surveys show, the truth about women and politics is more nuanced—especially as regards gender’s intersection with race—than the dominant narrative would lead us to expect. A great deal of scholarly work exists that plumbs the question of how participation may differ between men and women. Generally, it is believed that men are more likely to engage in public or confrontational action, such as rallies, whereas women’s participation is more likely to take private forms (e.g., voting). That said, findings are mixed, and the dynamics of racial and generational differences add another layer of inquiry (see, for example, Taft 2014, Cicognani *et al.* 2012, Coffé and Bolzendahl 2010, Hooghe and

Stolle 2004). Thus, future work with the data for this project may focus on this area of inquiry.

Who is an Activist?

As mentioned earlier in this dissertation, volunteer interviews included the question of how respondents defined activism, and whether or not they considered themselves activists. I was surprised to find that, on the whole, both groups of volunteers had relatively similar definitions of the word. Trump volunteers, however, were somewhat more likely to consider themselves activists. Because activism more commonly calls to mind social movements of the left (see Chapter 1), I anticipated that Clinton supporters would adopt the label more readily. As far as future research is concerned, these data may contribute to the body of literature on efficacy, modes of activism, and activist identity.

The Role of Social Media

It is noteworthy that, as mentioned in Chapter 4, a considerable number of Trump survey-takers considered their social media activity as coterminous with campaign activity. Such was not the case with Clinton survey-takers. Thus, the question of how Clinton and Trump supporters differ in their engagement requires consideration of how they define modes of activism (Somma 2010; see Chapter 1). Without a doubt, there is a deep well of questions, ripe for inquiry, concerning the role of Facebook and Twitter in the 2016 election, especially given the ever-unfolding story of how Russia conspired to sow division online. As I write this, news of Robert Mueller's

indictment of thirteen Russians on charges related to this activity is splashed across front pages. While the topic of social media engagement in the election is beyond the scope of the current project, it is a potential avenue of further research using the volunteer interview data.

Shifting Political Norms

A great deal of political analysis in the wake of Trump's victory has focused on how his singularly vulgar self-presentation, propensity to lie casually and prolifically, and nonchalant flouting of the rules of decorum and common decency might be affecting political norms both within the United States and globally. Some scholarship is beginning to probe the case of Trump (e.g., Hahl *et al.* 2018), and the data collected for this dissertation could contribute to that larger empirical project. Ultimately, the question of whether Trump is an outlier or the harbinger of a new style in politics will require time to answer.

As the 2018 midterms approach and, eventually, the 2020 election and beyond, it will be instructive to see whether candidates who align themselves with Trump and mimic his style will succeed or fail. If they succeed, research may shed light on what about this new style is so effective in mobilizing support. If they fail, the inevitable question will be "What made him so special?"

A Final Word

I mentioned at the beginning of this dissertation that my purpose is not to explain Donald Trump's surprising victory. I designed this project long before he was elected,

and my data do not speak directly to the “Why him?” question. That said, the conversations I had with his supporters—often long, deeply personal and emotional discussions of their beliefs and sentiments—bespeak the charismatic hold he had, and maintains, over so many. The men and women who volunteered for his campaign overlooked any number of indecencies—gleeful mockery of a disabled reporter, off-the-cuff suggestion that “2nd Amendment people” could assassinate his opponent, tiresome self-congratulation of his own intelligence, the exposure of a history of sexual assault; the list goes on and on *ad nauseam*—that would be immediately disqualifying for a Barack Obama, a John McCain, a Hillary Clinton, a Mitt Romney, a Newt Gingrich, a Jeb Bush, a Bernie Sanders. When it comes to Donald Trump, the willful suspension of moral compass exhibited by these supporters can only be described as blind allegiance.

I stress that objection to the sins of Candidate Trump (and, now, President Trump) has nothing to do with policy or party identification. After all, much of Trump’s professed vision—huge expenditures on a border wall, the banning of Muslim visitors and immigrants, expanded military spending, a ban on transgender servicemembers, etc.—is anything but conservative, smacking instead of a strong-arm executive and prolific government spending. Thus, his supporters’ claims that they back him because of Republican or conservative values do not wash. Likewise, professing support because the country needs “a successful businessman” at the helm is at odds with the facts of Trump businesses’ multiple bankruptcies and documented fraudulent practices.

Even if liberals get their wish and see Trump brought low by indictment, impeachment, or ignominious resignation (none of these by any means a guaranteed outcome), the men and women who blindly follow a charlatan with no interest in, respect for, or fealty to our Constitution, our democratic institutions, or our republican form of government will remain—and, presumably, vote—even after he is gone. Ultimately, Trump is not the real threat to the Republic; the fact that he had and continues to have so much support attests to a lack of civic education, critical thinking, and constitutional literacy among the public at large that is the real harbinger of danger.

The academy has a role to play in righting the ship. Social scientists can offer empirical recounting and analysis of where the American Experiment has succeeded, where it has failed, where the jury is still out, and why. Scholars are well-positioned to inform new school curricula that emphasize critical thinking, critical media consumption, and civic knowledge and skills. Some, both within and without the academy, argue that if social scientists would stop taking a “liberal-activist stance,” the trend of conservative mistrust of scientists would reverse (Cofnas *et al.* 2018). There is not sufficient evidence to back that claim. Without meaning to be glib, I highly doubt that reading social science scholarship is what the average conservative—or anyone—is doing in his or her spare time.

More importantly, though, the argument for social science backing out of politics ignores the fact that conservative intellectuals and academics, many of whom have observed in bewilderment and dismay the death spiral of their movement in the age of Trump, are key to the endeavor of combatting discord with empirical solutions.

In a time when college campuses have become ground zero in debates over free speech, shying away from the political sphere is not the answer, tempting though it may be. This is by no means an original thought, but it bears repeating in polarized times.

There is another similarity among the men and women I met and spoke with for this project that I have not discussed: a certain shared sadness, an implacable sense that the country faces an uphill climb. Certainly, many had hope; they probably would not have taken the time to volunteer or show up to rallies if they did not. Even so, everyone seems acutely aware that there are myriad social problems confronting the United States. Without social scientific research, we would not have a reliable understanding of the contours of these problems, of inequality in all its forms. And, of course, without understanding the roots of an issue, there is little hope of addressing it. Political polarization is one such social problem, and it begs understanding and remedy.

In 2016, some Americans fell in love with a con man, and some fell in line behind a candidate many did not find particularly inspiring. The con man won. At the risk of being saccharine, candidates come and go, party platforms are fluid—but the rule of law and the institutions that make American democracy exceptional are worth both love and loyalty. If research can help us see each other more fully and appreciate our similarities, despite our political differences, we may make progress toward that end.

Appendix A. Clinton Rally Survey

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this anonymous survey. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may terminate your participation at any time. **PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS SURVEY IS DOUBLE-SIDED.** Thank you!

1. With whom did you come here today?

- ☐ I came alone.
- ☐ I came with a family member/members.
- ☐ I came with a friend/friends.
- ☐ I came with both family and friends.

2. How far is your home from this event?

- ☐ 10 miles or less
- ☐ 11-30 miles
- ☐ 31-50 miles
- ☐ 51+ miles

3. Why did you come here today? (check all that apply)

- ☐ I support Hillary Clinton and want to show my support for her.
 - ☐ I am trying to learn about where the candidate stands.
 - ☐ I came here because a friend/family member wanted me to.
 - ☐ Other (please specify)
-

4. Is this your first time attending a political campaign event?

YES

NO

5. Are you participating in the presidential campaign in any other way? (check all that apply)

- ☐ Yes, I canvass (knocking on doors and/or phonebanking) for my chosen candidate.
 - ☐ Yes, I have donated money to my chosen candidate.
 - ☐ Yes, I participate in some other way (please specify)
-
- ☐ No, I do not participate in any other way.

PLEASE COMPLETE OTHER SIDE →

6. What is your age?

- ☐ 18-30
- ☐ 31-45
- ☐ 46-64
- ☐ 65+

7. What is your sex?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

8. What is your race/ethnicity? (check all that apply)

- ☐ American Indian/Alaska Native
- ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander
- ☐ Black/African-American
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ White/Caucasian
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

9. How would you describe yourself politically?

- ☐ Very conservative
- ☐ Somewhat conservative
- ☐ Moderate
- ☐ Somewhat liberal
- ☐ Very liberal
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

9. If you are willing to be contacted by the researcher for a follow-up interview, please provide your name, phone number, and e-mail address below.

NAME: _____

PHONE #: _____

E-MAIL: _____

Thank you for your participation!

Ann Horwitz, Ph.D. Candidate in Sociology
University of Maryland, College Park
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Appendix B. Trump Rally Survey

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this anonymous survey. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may terminate your participation at any time. **PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS SURVEY IS DOUBLE-SIDED.** Thank you!

1. With whom did you come here today?

- ☐ I came alone.
- ☐ I came with a family member/members.
- ☐ I came with a friend/friends.
- ☐ I came with both family and friends.

2. How far is your home from this event?

- ☐ 10 miles or less
- ☐ 11-30 miles
- ☐ 31-50 miles
- ☐ 51+ miles

3. Why did you come here today? (check all that apply)

- ☐ I support Mr. Trump and want to show my support for him.
 - ☐ I am trying to learn about where the candidate stands.
 - ☐ I came here because a friend/family member wanted me to.
 - ☐ Other (please specify)
-

4. Is this your first time attending a political campaign event?

YES

NO

5. Are you participating in the presidential campaign in any other way? (check all that apply)

- ☐ Yes, I canvass (knocking on doors and/or phonebanking) for my chosen candidate.
- ☐ Yes, I have donated money to my chosen candidate.
- ☐ Yes, I participate in some other way (please specify)

☐ No, I do not participate in any other way.

PLEASE COMPLETE OTHER SIDE →

6. What is your age?

☐ 18-30

☐ 31-45

☐ 46-64

☐ 65+

7. What is your sex?

☐ Male

☐ Female

8. What is your race/ethnicity? (check all that apply)

☐ American Indian/Alaska Native

☐ Asian/Pacific Islander

☐ Black/African-American

☐ Hispanic or Latino

☐ White/Caucasian

☐ Other (please specify): _____

9. How would you describe yourself politically?

☐ Very conservative

☐ Somewhat conservative

☐ Moderate

☐ Somewhat liberal

☐ Very liberal

☐ Other (please specify) _____

9. If you are willing to be contacted by the researcher for a follow-up interview, please provide your name, phone number, and e-mail address below.

NAME: _____

PHONE #: _____

E-MAIL: _____

Thank you for your participation!

Ann Horwitz, Ph.D. Candidate in Sociology
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Appendix C. Volunteer Interview Protocol

1. Please tell me a little bit about your personal history, such as where you are from and what you do for a living.
2. What is your role in the [CANDIDATE] campaign?
3. How did you become involved in the [CANDIDATE] campaign?
4. Why did you become involved in the [CANDIDATE] campaign?
5. Have you been involved in politics before? In what ways?
6. Do you consider yourself an activist? Why or why not?
7. Is there anything else that you would like me to know? Do you have other friends or family involved in the campaign with whom I should speak?

Appendix D. Staff Interview Protocol

1. Please state for the record your name, your title, and the campaign that you represent.
2. For what reason or reasons did you become involved with this campaign?
3. Who is the campaign's constituency? In other words, who are the people you're targeting?
 - a. Follow-up: Are you focusing mostly on people who have been involved in campaigns before, or on political novices?
4. Why is the campaign targeting those individuals?
5. How is the campaign reaching out to its targets?
6. In what ways is the campaign trying to get targets involved?
7. Is there anything else you would like me to know about the campaign? Do you have any other colleagues in the campaign with whom I should speak?

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