Threat-Motivated Mobilization of Collegiate Social Movement Organizations:
The 2016 Presidential Election

by

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Abstract

The social movement process, a key component of the democratic political system, has been studied in countless permutations. Threat, such as a controversial new President, powerfully motivates activists to mobilize in defense of their privileges and resources, yet this relationship is seldom considered. An impact over time, threat is best observed through a longitudinal study, which reveals patterns of movement mobilization. An event history was created from the issues of 20 student newspapers between 2016-2017, resulting in 332 social movement events. Analysis through Cox regression identified predictive factors of event occurrence. Event issue was the most predictive factor for both liberal and conservative groups, although conservative events seldom occurred. This informed how threat directs liberals to triage activism, when activists operate under the stipulations of prioritizing the most threatened cause, mediated by their individual perspective. For conservative activists, sparse data suggested alternative social change pathways and tactical adaptation.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

By making a troubling condition plaguing isolated individuals public and symptomatic of a larger social problem, activists become political claimsmakers (Best 2007). In response to the social and political upheaval of the 1960s and 1970s, rallies and marches have become socially accepted and legally regulated ways of making claims by activists of all types (Oliver and Meyer 1999), while increased formalization and professionalization of movement organizations have created a professional activist cadre (Messner et al. 2015; Naples 1997). Considering these twin developments, social movements are intrinsically linked to elections and the political process, whether they choose to directly acknowledge this link or not (Blee and Currier 2006; Tilly 1988). Considering one part of the link, social movement organizations frequently take overt political stands or encourage their membership to vote a certain way (Andrews 1997; Blee and Currier 2006; Earl and Schussman 2004; Meyer 2003). On the opposite side of the link, electoral politics have an inspirational effect on social movement organizations, pushing them to mobilize and make their voices heard. By examining frequency of mobilization on college campuses in the two years surrounding the most recent presidential election, this research investigates this social political link: how social movements are conceived in response to electoral politics.

The Problem

Social movements are complicated and vital engines of democracy, reflecting the collective agency of all its members directed toward a singular goal. Internally, the

1

individual choices of rational actors determine the direction of the group (Jasper 2004), while the organization's resultant structure determines which leaders, members, ideas, and methods are acceptable and which are subject to change (Blee 2014; Edwards 1994; Naples 1997; Kretschmer and Barber 2016). Externally, movements operate within the state-moderated social movement landscape, using what methods the state is structured to accept (Kurzman 1996; Oliver and Meyer 1999; Tarrow 1998), framing issues in ways to seek connection to potential allies (Best 2007; Bridges 2010; Kretschmer and Barber 2016) and operating at times when their efforts are most likely successful (Meyer 2003; Meyer and Minkoff 2004) or when their cause is most threatened (Staggenborg 1986; McCammon & Campbell 2002; Van Dyke and Soule 2002).

These last options are especially significant. Some research identifies political opportunities as determining the timing of mobilization (Meyer 2003), while other research emphasizes the static nature of the state, when mobilization has been successful despite seemingly lacking political opportunity (Kurzman 1996). Meanwhile, some researchers look at political mobilization as it relates to political threat, where mobilization increases when opposition is strongest (Hathaway and Meyer 1993; Van Dyke and Soule 2002).

Predictably, less research has been directed at "exceptional events," such as elections, and their impact on the social movement mobilization outcome (Blee and Currier 2006). By nature of their definition, exceptional events are rare occasions that create circumstances which frequently subvert established theory. Their scarcity makes them harder to study, particularly in any systematic way, but their exceptional nature means that the data has additional value. Few studies have addressed the circumstances

surrounding an exceptional event, creating a gap in the literature. Those that have included such analysis typically only include left-wing groups, believing that the effects of elections on the mobilization of right-wing groups would be motivated by different circumstances (van Dyke 2003). However, it is accepted that movements frequently spawn countermovements that organize around the same time to oppose their initiatives (Best 2007). By assuming that their motivations are different, the literature has a gap, as right-leaning groups tend to be omitted when the comparison with left-leaning groups could be vital.

The exceptional event at the center of this analysis is a quintessential comparison of the interactions between politically disparate groups. The 2016 presidential election was the most divisive election in at least recent memory, characterized primarily by "mud-slinging" (Pew Research 2016a) and dominated by rampant negativity on both sides (Wallace 2016). In fact, Pew Research (2016a) indicates that 2016 was by far the most focused on mud-slinging in the last thirty years, while Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton took first and second place, respectively, in "strongly unfavorable" percentage of their approval polls for candidates since 1980, most notably surpassing even Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke's 1992 Presidential campaign (Enten 2016b). This reflected a large and growing political and cultural divide in the United States, as liberals and conservatives increasingly found little to unite them. As two candidates perceived to have deep personal flaws battled each other directly, the issues frequently were little more than a distraction. Although this created an election more akin to the 1800s than the 2000s, this is less surprising when one considers the candidates themselves.

The Democratic nomination was supposed to be straightforward. Coming off two

terms of Barack Obama, the presumptive nominee was Hillary Clinton, former lawyer,

First Lady, Senator from New York, Secretary of State (under Obama), and primary

candidate in 2008 (defeated by Obama). Her only credible challenger was 75-year-old

Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT), a self-described socialist and new member of the party.

While Senator Sanders fought his battle against Democratic party elites, gaining

surprising support through strong social media engagement, branding (FeeltheBERN),

and popularity among young and disaffected voters, Clinton continued her seemingly

inexorable march towards the Presidency as the Party choice and "establishment"

candidate (Byers 2015). By the time Sanders began to cut back his campaign in April

after multiple primary losses (Alcindor 2016), the nomination was everything but sealed

for Clinton (Beckman 2016). Despite a Sanders endorsement of Clinton at the National

Convention, his supporters saw it as a betrayal of his ideals after the hard fight, (Enten

2016a), providing a complicating factor for the general election.

The Republican nomination was much more complex. The early front-runner was

Jeb Bush, brother and son of former presidents and former Florida governor, but he was a

weak front-runner (Enten 2015). Though he raised enormous sums of money, he received

few political endorsements and did not poll well before ultimately suspending his

campaign after only three primaries. Instead, 2016 became the year of the outsider, as a

wide-open field of Republican candidates (12 at the beginning of the primaries) brawled

over the nomination. The close race persisted until March 15, when one candidate surged

to the nomination. This created widespread surprise, leading to numerous retrospectives

as political analysts and poll experts sought to identify their mistakes (Bernstein 2016;

Byler 2016; Cohn 2016; Silver 2016b). At this stage, they could be forgiven for their lack of foresight, as this candidate was somewhat unique. Though he was probably easily the most famous person running for nomination, Donald Trump was not what you usually expect from a candidate. He had no experience with public office, but he was worth $3.7 billion in 2016 (Adamczyk 2016), had hosted 14 seasons of NBC's *The Apprentice* (Lawrence 2016), and owned an abundance of real estate, a for-profit university, and a defunct professional football team (Tollinn 2010). In scoring a victory over the "establishment" candidates, Trump blazed new trails, not only upsetting the established order with his positions and background but also setting new standards for candidate behavior as he regularly insulted groups or individuals (Kopan 2015; Quealy 2017). Always proficient in self-marketing, he branded himself as the answer to the problems ailing America; whether it was foreign, such as the trade deficit (Hill Staff 2016), international agreements (Drury and Matza 2017), and immigration (BBC 2017; Pérez-Peña 2017), or domestic, such as taxes (Jacobsen 2018), Obamacare (Koronowski 2017), and racial inequality (Epstein and Bender 2016). This positioned him firmly as the man who could challenge the establishment.

These two candidates campaigned as polar opposites, with the lifelong political operator competing against the shrewd businessman outsider. The general election that followed seems less surprising because of the groundwork afforded by hindsight. The debates were the perfect microcosm of the overall path of the election. In each, the analysis was largely the same. Clinton won all three debates in every nationwide scientific poll (Fox News 2016, Gallup 2016, Kertscher 2016, Saad 2016a, 2016b; Silver 2016a), but still came off looking entitled and waiting for her inevitable victory, fueling

the preexistent dissatisfaction (Healy 2016; Silver 2017a). Meanwhile, her continued inability to get past scandals (Demirijian 2016) from her time as Secretary of State hurt her reputation and marred her political record, helped along by her political missteps, including calling Trump supporters a "basket of deplorables" (Holan 2016). Contrarily, despite poor debate performance, past scandals about his business practices (Bradner and Merica 2016), and repeated new controversies over his comments and behavior (Arrowood 2016), Trump's campaign steadily chugged forward. Although continually narrowing the margin, Trump consistently lagged behind Clinton in the polls to such an extent that he personally expected, as late as election day, to lose the general election (Jacobs and House 2016). Disregarding personal doubts, he threatened to not accept the results if he lost (Hasan 2016), citing rampant voter fraud (Koerth-Baker 2017), including illegal immigrants voting (Richman, Chattha, and Earnest 2014). Shocking the nation, along with every media source covering the campaign (Cohn 2017; Katz 2016; Rutenberg 2016; Skibba 2016; Silver 2016c, 2017b; Trende 2016), he won the electoral college 304-227, although he lost the popular vote by 2.8 million votes, the largest popular vote loss for an electoral winner in history (Azhar 2016). This loss, coupled with his general unpopularity, galvanized his opposition as he took office.

The first year of Trump's presidency was challenging by any estimation and unique by most. Most presidents get a high approval rating initially just for being elected (FiveThirtyEight 2018; Pew Research 2009), with every President since Truman in 1945 having above 50% at inauguration, but most new presidents also get to make key legislative impacts, particularly with a friendly Congress. President Trump began his term with 45% approval and 41% disapproval and has steadily floated around 41%/52%

approval/disapproval for over a year and a half, defying yet more presidential precedent (FiveThirtyEight 2018). Consistency is aberrant, as approval ratings typical ebb and flow with changing events. However, the constant string of controversies, tweets, investigations, and firings have made the atypical presidential scenario mundane by 2018 (Watkins and Tseng 2018). As precedent after precedent falls and reality becomes ever stranger than fiction, the event at the center of this analysis ossifies as a dramatic moment that shifted politics and social behavior in grand and still unexamined ways. To study this change in social behavior, American college movements prove the ideal medium, critical to the movements of the last two years, yet the modern incarnation of an age-old tradition.

This research seeks to examine this exceptional event through analysis of college campus social movement organizations (SMOs) and their mobilization in response to national political conflict. The university as the locus of study for modern social movements is an intentional and well-considered choice. Students have been involved in social movements from the beginnings of organized education.

The long history of higher education is simultaneously a history of collective organization of students and their involvement in the public sphere. Classically the first to innovate, Chinese students organized in protest of an execution in the first century B.C.E. (Wassermann 1991). Over a thousand years later, student protests in 1126, while leading to some executions, did extract some reforms from the emperor (Gwynne-Thomas 1981). Half a world away, the existence of the European university provided a fertile ground for organization and unrest for longer than they have had their own ground at all. Early European universities, or *universitas* (Boren 2001, 8), had no connection to any physical

location or land whatsoever, being only a group of collected students from the surrounding area. As these early universities had no specific attachment to the town in which they existed, they could relocate if their demands were not met, taking their money with them. These early altercations, such as Paris in 1200 and Bologna in 1217, led to the development of a different legal standard for the students involved than for the regular citizens of the town, which naturally created unrest and began what we know as "town and gown" disputes (Boren 2001, DeConde 1971, Rudy 1984). These early movements were primarily local, over food and lodging, but scope would increase with the growth of the university.

By the Renaissance, universities had developed from this early stage into a university resembling the modern one, "with buildings, endowments, rules, regulations, and most importantly, social and political power" (Boren 2001, 19). Now universities were tied to their location and were increasingly concerned with the political situation surrounding them. During the Protestant Reformation, the conflicts were fought on battlefields both physical and intellectual, putting students of the era at the forefront in either condition. To facilitate the Reformation, Martin Luther utilized students to undertake the conversion and education of people, spur demonstrations in support of him and even participate in his own physical defense (with battle-axes) (Bainton 1970) during at least one theological debate. The Reformation developed the framework for what we know as modern student resistance, as schools and professors gained power and increased their involvement in political affairs while those issues made their way into the university and provided grist for the mill of academic debate (Rudy 1984). Simultaneously, these universities provided relative safe havens for dissent, as their growing political power and

ostensibly educational objective created some defense against the political upheaval of the age, which has generally remained a valuable tool for students.

In subsequent centuries, the spread of European imperialism and their attempted supplantation of local culture brought the European college model to the rest of the world. This model merged with local cultural models of education, strengthening student power and undermining the intended aspect of social control (Boren 2001). Late nineteenth century revolts in China, India, and Turkey reflected the European influences, taking the forms of student strikes and organizations to make political changes. Back in Europe, the strength of student organizations had grown to such a point that during the 1848 revolutions Bavaria and Austria-Hungary experienced student revolts strong enough to persist even against military intervention (Boren 2001, Jarausch 1974). The strength demonstrated by these uprisings inspired actions across Europe for decades, although they were frequently, and violently, put down. A series of brutal ends to uprisings radicalized the students coming through Russian universities, creating ever newer classes of activists and hastening the end of the czarist government.

The last century has seen a worldwide explosion of student activism, involving in revolutions (Boren 2001, Horne 2006), uprisings (Wasserstrom 1992), and even the start of a world war (Roider 2005). In the modern era, governments have increasingly allowed relative freedom of demonstration and ideas on the university campus, even in more restrictive regimes, though they always had limits. Popular unrest against regimes came to a head when students began to demonstrate in force in Turkey and South Korea in 1960, precipitating the downfall of these governments (Boren 2001). Most notably, in both of these instances, the resultant government outlawed student organization, fearful

that the wheel may turn, marking them as the next target. In limiting the power of students to organize, these governments demonstrated their knowledge, and fear, of students inciting social change. As late as 1968, French troops were mobilized to prevent an alliance of students with workers, fearful that the alliance could spell the end of the Fifth Republic. In turn, the fear displayed by governments legitimizes student action as a viable course of action for social change around the world. The United States has been no exception to this global pattern, though the growth of student power has happened much later.

Like many younger nations, the United States was built out of a social movement. A history of activism predated the nation itself. Additionally, as former British colonies, the university system is built upon a European model, with all the student power those structures allow. In 1768, Harvard students organized in one of the biggest student movements of the day, as they sought more freedoms from an administration that treated them (in their eyes) as children, in an interesting parallel to the contemporary relationship between the British government and American colonists (Boren 2001, Cohen 1974). As the nation grew and universities were founded and expanded, student movements grew accordingly, contesting issues as provincial and relatable today as on-campus food quality to timely issues that gripped the nation such as abolition and westward expansion. These student movements, as today, grew, shrank, and changed emphasis with the flavor of the times. However, these old student organizations remained relatively small through the nineteenth century, in sharp contrast to the rest of the world.

The National Student Federation was the impetus that linked student activists across the United States for the first time. Founded in 1926, the NSF was an umbrella

organization that joined student governments to share information, concerns, and ideas, as well as form a national representative for student ideas (Cohen 1987, 1993). National organization enabled a new level of student action, and students wasted little time, as student organizations gained strength, emboldened by their newfound common cause. In 1934, an hour-long student boycott was able to attract 20,000 participants. By 1936, the American Student Union, formed out of a coalition of the Communist-aligned National Student League and the social Student League for Industrial Democracy, was able to mobilize 300,000 students in the protest (Cohen 1993). While these organizations and others were derailed by World War II, as movements for peace and any political dissent lost popularity, this showed the amount of enthusiasm and turnout student activists could mobilize (Brax 1981, Petersen 1971). The organizations that mobilized in the Depression, while they dwindled away to nothing in intervening years, laid crucial groundwork for the student activities of the coming decades.

After the 1930s, the '40s and '50s had negligible student resistance, as McCarthyism and the Cold War maintained the "us and them" attitude of the war. Concurrently, the GI Bill swelled college rolls with returning servicemen who had little interest in protesting the system which they had fought to protect, especially when that system was paying for their education. Localized movements, such as individual integration fights or for Puerto Rican rights, would crop up, but they were contained to their stated aim, disappearing as quickly as the issue was addressed (Boren 2001). This changed with the growth of the Civil Rights Movement, the most famous social movement in US history, in the late '50s and early '60s. It included its own student component, most well known in the form of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating

Committee (SNCC). SNCC trained thousands of students in nonviolent methods, providing crucial organization and numbers in the battle for civil rights, including many of the later founders of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). In the foundation of this organization in 1962, SDS issued the Port Huron Statement, asserting the primacy of students in making social change, eschewing the previous class-based approach of the old left (Cohen 1987). In 1964, a series of protests of university policies on free-speech at California-Berkeley led to an explosion of student activism across the US and Europe while centering the university as protest location of choice. What limited the movements of the '60s was an inability to link the strength of individual issues into a larger coalition (Van Dyne 2003), though they succeeded in defining the opposition, the "establishment" (Boren 2001). This movement structure persists today, as modern student organizations can assemble large numbers around a singular issue, but regularly cannot turn this enthusiasm into broader activism.

The roots of the social movements seen today stretch back to the 1960s if not further. If this summary is any indication, they stretch past the foundation of the United States to the establishment of formalized collegiate education. Most concisely, hindsight of such distance proves the inevitability of studying the collegiate organization in the study of social movements. The collegiate experience is so inexplicably tied to social and political activism as to make it a prime location for study.

To demonstrate the theoretical foundation for this research, I will examine the development of social movement theory from its early stages to its present-day status. I follow this with a brief discussion of the concept of threat as it relates to mobilization of social movements. Representing the circumstances these theories intend to explain is

crucial to developing a framework to understand why organizations in this study differentially mobilize. In conclusion, this framework will be tied together by the depiction of the central focus of research, college organizations and elections. This framework enables theory through investigation of the research questions: How do nationally divisive electoral campaigns influence the relative activity of different social movement organizations? How might mobilization result from different circumstances for organizations that differ in ideologies or topics of interest?

Research Objectives:

The objectives for this study are:

1. To understand the effects of divisive electoral campaigns on the perception of threat and therefore activity of social movement organizations.

2. To identify a potential differential of mobilization rationale between groups that espouse different ideologies.

3. To refine social movement theory to better account for the shifts in the movement landscape that electoral politics can signal.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Toward Political Opportunities

The theoretical perspective of the role of social movements in society has continuously evolved since being inaugurated in post-war sociology. Social movement theory effectively begins in the 1950s, with theorists seeking an explanation for the populist right-wing Nazi and fascist movements of the 1930s and '40s. From this narrow point of view, contemporary theorists defined movements as "dysfunctional, irrational, and inherently undesirable" (Meyer 2004:126) and saw individuals who participated in them as disassociated from a functional role in modern society and experiencing strain (Kornhauser 1959; Merton 1938; Van Dyke and Soule 2002). This "strain theory" grew out of the Durkheimian idea of society, which is composed of abstract forces struggling to integrate and disintegrate people (Durkheim 1912; Tilly 1978). In this structure, collective action is a force that creates shared belief in the norms of that culture, integrating society, or reduces that belief, sowing division in society. As citizens became unable to meet their socially expected goals, they experienced role strain and eventually anomie, or normlessness (Durkheim 1897). To theorists, this represents a failure of the nation to enable successful goal achievement for their citizens. As a result, citizens became activists and sought change to their government outside of the political process. They asserted that public demonstration for political change would not occur in a stable democracy which gave people access to the political process. Huntingdon's (1968) elaboration on the Durkheimian foundation ultimately expressed this view, believing that

revolution was the ultimate display of disorder, while slow orderly change would suffice in well-ordered, integrated societies. The postwar political climate made this a particularly attractive theory, as it assumed the fascist and communist states to be inferior, failed nations in comparison to Western democracy. In addition, the minimal collective action of the time, itself restricted by the political climate, enhanced the illusion in the short-term that this problem did not occur in the US.

The problem was simple: social movements also occurred in rational, healthy democracies. Most notably, socialist movements in the "healthy" nations ran parallel to the fascist and socialist movements in Germany and Italy throughout the Great Depression. Socialist movements were partially a result of the Depression and the seeming failure of capitalism. The threat represented by these movements encouraged the passage of welfare reforms to combat the Depression. Activism reflects the underlying uncertainty of the time, as economic hardship caused political upheaval then. Social theory would not respond to this challenge quickly, or even directly, until the theoretical disconnect became too large to ignore.

The mass movements of the 1960s presented this crisis to contemporary theorists. Prior to the 1960s, studies focused on right-wing movements that were responding to broad economic and social changes while the movements of the 1960s were predominantly left-wing. These new movements wanted civil rights, gay rights, women's rights, and peace across the world; vastly different causes from the economic focus during the Depression. In addition, most of these movements were predominantly white, middle-class college students, individuals neither lacking in resources nor experiencing role strain. The explanatory power of anomie and deviant subcultures became defunct

once empirical studies examined these new movements (Keniston 1968; Piven and Cloward 1977). These studies found that contrary to theory, activists were usually well-adjusted (Keniston 1968), mobilization tended to follow increased economic resources (McCarthy and Zald 1977), and mass social action did not occur in the same fashion everywhere (Eisenger 1973). Other studies found that the actions of social movements could lead governments to concede some issues, readily seen in the socialist movements of the Great Depression, genuinely making actors' behavior rational, particularly if they were disconnected from the power in the political process already (Meyer 2004; Piven and Cloward 1977). These findings led to the development of resource mobilization theory, which argues that increases in resources needed for collective activism lead to the increase in emergence of new movements (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; Van Dyke 2003; Van Dyke and Soule 2002). As a result, in any given social activist marketplace, the number of available donors, sympathizers, members, meeting locations, or any other necessary resource directly correlates with the frequency of movement formation, mobilization, and scale of operations. While resource mobilization theory explained some social movement activism, there remained movements which developed in absence of new and increased resources. To account for this, most research examined the most abstract formulation of resource mobilization, political opportunity theory.

Political opportunity theory grew in the 1970s, as theorists sought to account for the mass movements of the 1960s. Einsenger's (1973) was the first attempt to explain collective social behavior through use of what was later refined and called the political opportunity framework (Meyer and Minkoff 2004). This framework dramatically departs from preceding movement theory as it defines the actions of social movements as rational

16

actions in response to a lack of traditional power in the political structure. Einsenger

(1973) found that cities would preempt protest if they had more "openness" to

claimsmaking by citizens. Other cities would ignore or try to quiet concerns, leading to

protests. In effect, this means that activists are responding to their lack of voice in

traditional means by using alternative means, making those means part of the political

process. Later research would formalize political opportunity as a theoretical orientation

(e.g. Tilly 1978) and undergo longitudinal studies that focus on the political opportunity

that a movement took (Kurzman 1996; McAdams 1982; Soule et al. 1999). McAdam's

(1982) work on the civil rights movement is a key formulation of political opportunity, as

it illustrated protest as the "structure of political opportunities" (40) that only mattered

insofar as the "cognitive liberation" (49) of a group. Put another way, it is the intersection

of when collective action could be organized and when their claims would have the

potential to be heard by the government (Meyer and Minkoff 2004). As a result, many

theorists envision political opportunity as an interaction between structure and agency,

where actors exercise collective agency as far as the state allows them.

Other theorists raise numerous issues with this estimation. The definition of

political opportunity has been quite vague theoretically, allowing theorists to use loose

definitions of their own creation without regards to others' research. Meyer (2004) notes

that theorists tend to define political opportunity as mutable when doing a longitudinal

study and constant when doing a comparative study. Complicating matters further,

political opportunity theory is neither always predictive nor necessary to explain a

situation (Meyer 2004). Indeed, when Kurzman (1996) tried to apply political

opportunity theory to a successful revolution (Iran in 1979-80), he could not find an

opportunity, eventually concluding that it was perceived weakness in the opposition

forces that led to revolution, not an opportunity in the state. This demonstrates the

importance of movement actors' perceptions, crucial to defining their reality and

subsequent response (McAdams 1982; Meyer and Minkoff 2004; Van Dyke and Soule

2002). Instead, researchers should focus on concrete relationships between variables to

define a political opportunity. Therefore, patterns can be identified and a strong and

adaptable theoretical definition can be created. Despite the expanded explanatory power

of political opportunity theory, the inconsistencies inherent in its formulation make it

inadequate for explaining social movement motivation.

The Threat of Change

As most research has focused primarily on resource mobilization and political

opportunity, some researchers have sought to discover the relationships between social

movement mobilization and threat. Threat is a concept that refers to the perceived loss of

power (e.g. the ability to achieve one's goals or perceived best interests) by a previously

advantaged group (Beck 2000). They may actually lose some measure of social power,

but this is not necessary to be empirically true as the subjective perceptions of the

movement actors form their social reality (Berger and Luckman 1967; Van Dyke and

Soule 2002). Due to their perceived loss of power, this group feels that they may not be

able to realize the goals or lifestyle they previously could. In its formulation, threat is the

inverse to resource mobilization and political opportunity. As one group gains a political

opportunity or new resources, this may threaten the power or resources of another,

particularly in a social and political arena with finite power and resources. Therefore, as

members of some group identify what they see as a threat to their interests, they react by

18

mobilizing in defense of what "belongs to them." Useem (1973) notes that this is a taxing process, requiring people of like political mind who must then unify around a definition of the problem and a proposed solution. Individual determinations of threat are vital, as each potential activist must prioritize political action, at that time, in support of that specific issue. As a result, large shifts in threat have the potential to create corresponding collective action as individuals each see the situation as uniquely vital to address. Alternatively, a large change in threat may galvanize only token opposition if only a few individuals identify the threat as extant and worth acting against.

Clearly, as a subjective assessment of the dangers of external factors, threat cannot be divorced from the individual experience of their own privilege, or entitlement. Sherman (2018) describes entitlement as the feeling not of your own privilege, but of the moral right to be privileged. By attaching a feeling of moral self-worth and relative superiority to social privilege, one creates a sense of moral justice in the defense of one's privileges against threats (Lamont 1992). In the United States, citizens primarily understand society in terms of opportunity, or the idea that everyone has an equal chance to be successful. This also means that Americans most strongly react to threats to individual opportunity, while passively justifying inequality through that same ideal. Consequently, activism in the United States may not be especially strong for redistribution of power or resources, so long as opportunity seems to be equitably distributed.

Most pertinent to this research, threat guides the progression of affairs in a presidential election. Political candidates, needing the most votes possible, tailor their self-presentation and statements to appeal to a diverse electorate. Most crucially,

candidates make campaign promises while on the trail, indicating how they will address the concerns of their supporters once they take office. Contrary to popular perception, elected presidents keep these promises to a high degree (Hill 2016). Some promises are abandoned, whether because of the shifting sands of politics or conflicts with other priorities, but overall, these positions do structure the agenda of a presidency. For opponents, this indicates the dangers of a post-election world before the election takes place. Once an election occurs, activists are aware of the risks the new administration poses, experiencing threat as a result. While an oppositional president symbolically represents a threat to your interests, the actions of presidents create genuine structural change. Activists seeking to avoid this change mobilize in proportion to the threat they experience, forming reactive social movements.

It is important to here distinguish what exactly makes a reactive social movement. It is easy to associate reactive social movements with reactionary politics, which seek a return to an older social order. As a result, reactionary politics represent the opposite of progressive politics, much as conservative and liberal are opposing, though broadly written, terms. Reactive movements mobilize in response to a structural change in the containing society, whether it is political, economic, or demographic (Van Dyke and Soule 2002). Reactive movements can be politically conservative, such as the Men's Movement or militia movement (Schwalbe 1996; Van Dyke and Soule 2002), but they can just as easily be politically liberal, such as the "nuclear freeze" (Meyer 1990) or politically agnostic if they organize in response to economic or other threats. Despite this diversity, reactive movements are still typically associated with conservatism, as leaving

things as they currently are benefits those currently powerful. In short, for the purposes of this research, the terms reactive and conservative will not be treated as synonymous.

As this research examines SMO perception of threat originating from presidential structural changes, political opportunity and resource mobilization theory are insufficient. Political opportunity theory seeks to explain behavior related to a group's situationally increased access to political power, while resource mobilization centers on the increase in mobilization that typically corresponds to an increase in mobilization resources. What neither theory explains is what happens when a group experiences a negative potentiality as a result of structural change (Van Dyke and Soule 2002). In these situations, individuals experience threat differently, which sparks their differential activism. As a natural instigator of action, threat is well studied through examining the reactions it causes, especially in a setting well suited for reactive movement politics.

Campus Organizations and Exceptional Events

The college campus is fertile ground for social movement activity. Since the 1960s, most major social movements have had an influential and sometimes critical presence on college campuses, making study of college activism key to understand the movement landscape. Van Dyke goes so far as to call the college campus "an almost ideal laboratory to study the influence of external factors" (2003, 233). Campuses are idyllic for study partially due to the biographical availability, or "absence of personal constraints that may increase the costs and risk of movement participation" (McAdam 1986, 70), of college students. College students typically are unmarried and childless, and most do not have full-time employment. These factors make them uniquely suited for social activism because of the comparatively low personal risks attached to their

involvement. In addition, college students enrolled in higher education and have access to university (and oftentimes parental) resources to enable their activities. In addition, their increased independence from their parents enables the development of political opinions of their own. By rotating members on a rolling basis every few years, college organizations do not typically develop the experienced social movement actors who typically dominate organizations (Blee 2012), and if they do, they do not remain for long. Constant steady turnover creates continuous opportunities for internal advancement while enabling consistent evolution as new members with new concerns join and progress. In addition, colleges tend to have relatively homogenous populations, which aid the formation and persistence of groups (Blee 2012; Bayazit and Mannix 2003). All of these factors contribute to a relatively static organizational marketplace over time, enabling the study of group reactions to external events.

In American politics, we oscillate governance between two dichotomous parties, so there exists no greater macro-level event as the election of a new president. Presidents make structural changes through their policies promised in the campaign. This most potent of changes can transform the national conversation overnight and threaten the established or recently gained power and influence of a group. Because of this potential for change, elections are a key focus for activism. To movement theorists, elections are what they call "exceptional events," events that seldom happen and therefore invite study simply for their rarity (Blee and Currier 2006). By selecting the college campus during the scope of an exceptional event, I will observe the creation of threat on the most ideal environment for study in the social movement landscape.

Hypotheses

1. Organizations that politically oppose the incumbent will demonstrate increased activism pre-election, but will experience a decline afterward, as they will experience less threat from the new administration. This effect will be reversed for their political opponents.
2. Universities with student bodies that are politically charged will experience more events politically aligned with the student body.
3. In accordance with resource mobilization theory, universities with greater resources in the form of money and students will enable more prevalent activism.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Research Design

This research compares the incidence of social movement events to the political threat they experience surrounding a presidential election. As a longitudinal study of collegiate social movement events, this research emulates and builds upon the design of van Dyke (2003). Van Dyke's research was conducted on a much larger scale, collecting events from collegiate newspapers from 1930-1990. By greatly reducing the period of study, this study focuses on the more specific trends surrounding an exceptional event and enables a broader study through inclusion of more universities. Van Dyke's research also provides insights into data collection, variable selection, and statistical analysis for longitudinal event history studies that would not otherwise be available.

Sample

To examine the differential impact of external threats on college social movement organizations, we must know when the organizations mobilized. As a result, the first step is to craft an event history from collegiate campus newspapers. The sampling frame was constructed from 60 randomly selected United States colleges and universities and 40 pre-selected by the researcher. The pre-selected universities include the 20 listed on the 2016 Princeton Review Conservative Student Bodies Report (2016a) and the 20 on the Princeton Review Liberal Student Bodies Report (2016b). These colleges are included to ensure an ideological spread across the data by having some particularly liberal and some particularly conservative student bodies in the sample. The specific accuracy of the

Princeton Review Top 20 materials is unknown and cannot be determined without an in-depth study of their methodology. Their relative accuracy, on the other hand, is vital to the research, so an assumption is being made. This assumption is that the Princeton Review may not have the hypothetical most conservative (or liberal) universities completely correct, or even at all, however; the Princeton Review, as a professional company that deals exclusively in information for and about college-bound students, has it in their best interest to be at least relatively correct in their analysis of student body politics.

Once the frame was constructed, the student newspapers were acquired digitally from the student newspaper website or when available, issuu.com. Those that were available made up the final sampling frame. From the remaining institutions, 20 institutions were selected for their diversity on characteristics, including geographic location, student body population total, and public or private status, that prior research has shown to influence students in protest activities (Lipset 1972; van Dyke 1998; van Dyke 2003). This number was chosen to enable diversity within the sample and to enable a broad sample, as similar research has utilized nine colleges in a much longer longitudinal study (van Dyke 2003). Local newspapers are an ideal source of data for this research, as local papers are biased to cover stories of local interest (Oliver and Myers 1999). As a physical medium, newspapers have a limited amount of space to fill with stories. This space, newshole, consequentially constrains the number of happenings that can be reported at any one time. For papers that cover larger areas, more events happen within their coverage area, so a larger percentage of reportable events are excluded because of space restrictions. Collegiate papers are specifically selected, as opposed to

local city papers, because of the focus on college students, the target demographic, and the associated higher likelihood of reporting on college student social movement events.

Data Collection

The research questions that guide this study require the identification of articles that mention student protest events. To locate these, each issue of each student newspaper from January 2016 to December 2017 inclusive was searched, a period of 24 months. The beginning of this period of analysis has been chosen to successfully capture the year before the 2016 United States presidential election, which research has found to be the wide viewing angle for newspaper reporting on movements (Oliver and Meyer 1999). The end of this period was chosen to coincide with the end of the first calendar year of Donald Trump's presidency. The 2016 election is the centralizing event of this research because of its especially divisive nature, which increases the probability of mobilization by social movement actors (Blee and Currier 2006).

Once an article mentioning a social movement event was found, it was copied, collected, and coded using the coding sheet included in Appendix A. To define a protest, I used van Dyke's criteria, which she based on the work of Charles Tilly (1978) and Douglas McAdam (McAdam and Su 2002). By her criteria, "a protest event is any action that collectively expressed a grievance, was public, and had a goal of causing or preventing social change" (van Dyke 2003). The strength of this criteria is its recognizance of collective agency as central to social movement work while maintaining the breadth of definition that allows for the coding of diverse types of social action. It is important to note that the resultant data set, by necessity, does not include events held in

26

private, regardless of circumstances. Newspapers are an unreliable data source for private events, precluding the collection of reliable and consistent data.

Dependent Variables

This research seeks links between nationwide events and local activism. As previously stated, threat is experienced differently by organizations depending on their interests. Therefore, I identified an organization's interests on two levels: the general political alignment of their interests and a more specific area of their activism. For the first, I coded each event broadly on the ideological spectrum as either liberal or conservative. For the second, I coded each event as related to an overall social cause based on the organization name and the context of the newspaper article.

Coding an organization on their political alignment is difficult to do systematically. As such, I determined the political alignment of an event through examination of the context in the article to determine the issue at hand. A conservative social movement was defined as one that champions traditional values or maintenance of the status quo, for example, men's rights, nativist, supremacist, pro-business, pro-life, Christian fundamentalist, 2nd Amendment rights or open carry, anti-Obamacare (Affordable Care Act), election campaigning for a Republican candidate, or any campaign that is directly counter to a liberal issue or Democratic politician. A liberal social movement was defined as one that champions progressive causes, such as women's or LGBT+ rights, care for the environment, pro-choice, gun control, expansion of healthcare (pro-Obamacare, ACA), poverty relief, foreign aid, election campaigning for a Democratic candidate, or any campaign that is directly a counter to a conservative issue or Republican politician. These categories are informed by and indeed an adapted

version of the political alignment coding from Amenta, Caren, and Stobaugh (2012). The resultant variable, "eventpol," contains a neutral category for events that do not explicitly conform to one of the political extremes. Neutral events do not take a readily discernable political side, or they express issues which are primarily apolitical. These issues could include demonstrations about a unique local concern or organization to influence international politics. Additionally, if I was unable to make a determination of a political side, I placed that event in the neutral category. By deciding to add an event to the neutral category, I protect the integrity of my data set from undue influence at the risk of excluding some events that would appropriately fit into one of the existing categories.

Each located event was considered from the perspective of this criteria. For instance, Take Back the Night is an international event series which takes the form of nighttime marches and rallies with the mission of ending "sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual abuse and all other forms of sexual violence" (Take Back the Night n.d.). One example of a Take Back the Night event from the dataset was held at California-Irvine in April 2016. The politics of the event were coded as liberal, as the event focused on gender rights. For its specific issue, it was coded into the gender category.

Later, this gender event was one of several similar events that were recoded as sexual violence, after the accumulation of sexual violence specific events justified a separate category. This event was relatively straightforward, owing to the international reputation of Take Back the Night, but smaller organizations were more intimately tied to the context of the campus, so local newspaper articles covering them were sufficiently descriptive of their aims. Local newspapers conform to the same realities as anywhere

else, and the basic standard of quality reporting would require them to give some description of the event goal, especially if the organization is not already well known.

Independent Variables

State Victor (2016)

This analysis attempts to understand a complex relationship between an American electoral season and collective choices to mobilize as a social movement. As a result, I include multiple independent variables informed by threat and political opportunity theory. While this research seeks to compare national level politics to movement activist trends, this does not account for the variable political climates of the localized area of the college. This is important because the establishment of an environment hostile to one side is expected to spur social action. To account for this, I include a dummy variable of Republican, which reflects whether that state was won by the Republican Party in 2016. Because of the typically binary nature of American politics, a dummy variable is sufficient to reflect the electoral possibilities. The research will treat a Republican won state as more conservative, and a Democratic won state as more liberal. This is in accordance with prior research, which finds that Republicans in the positions of power may trigger protest activity by the left (Soule et al. 1999; van Dyke 2003) and that Democrats have been consistent allies of the left since 1896 (Key 1964, van Dyke 2003).

State Victor (2012)

The 2016 election was Republican won, but multiple states flipped parties from the 2012 election, which was Democrat won. This variable is identical to *State Victor (2016)* but for the year the coding is based around. The idea is that states that flipped

between 2012 and 2016 have the most potential to flip back, so this variable accounts for the potentially different effects of a different status quo.

County Victor (2016)

This variable is similar to the *statevictor2016* variable, as it is coded for the direction voting went in the county containing the university. A county won by a candidate could be expected to impact the events that occur within it due to the political makeup of the residents. This is especially true as cities are predominantly Democratic voting and rural areas are predominantly Republican voting, while colleges tend to be in more urbanized areas.

College Revenue

Resource mobilization theory suggests that organizations exist and mobilize in relation to the carrying capacity of their environment. An environment with more resources available to organizations would enable more mobilization. On a college campus, the resources available to student organizations are directly related to the revenue of their university, as higher revenue universities can have more money in their student affairs budgets. This data was collected from a college guidebook for each university in the sample and then divided by enrollment to obtain revenue per student.

University Enrollment

I recorded the total enrollment number for 2016 as a separate variable, divided by a thousand to normalize, as a university with larger enrollment would be expected to have more social movement events, based on critical mass of individuals (van Dyke 1998, 2003).

Tuition

The tuition of each university was included as it is a central concern of college life, so it may affect rates of engagement with protest activity. In addition, research mobilization theory suggests that great availability of resources is predictive of increased social movement activity. As college students are commonly still supported by their parents' resources, average tuition may indicate the level of parental resources available to the average student. This was computed by finding the annual undergraduate tuition of the university for private universities on each school's website. For public universities, who charge different fees depending on in-state or out-state residency status, the cost of out of state tuition was also taken from the school website. These numbers were combined to create a mean tuition per student using the percentage of in-state students in the student body as a weighing factor.

Coalition Formation

Resource mobilization theory indicates that greater resources or threats increase the likelihood of organizations working in conjunction. Coalition formation is indicative of large perceived threats in the environment as multiple organizations seek to lend their weight to an issue. I created a dummy variable to note if more than one organization was present in alliance at an event.

Countermovements

Social movements frequently mobilize in response to existing social movements. This variable is a dummy that indicates if an event involved a competing organization. Conflict of this type is indicative of strong feelings existing in opposition.

Event Date

As activism may increase or decrease across the timeframe, depending on the political ideology of an organization, I recorded the date of each event. Also, I kept a dummy variable that is coded one if the event takes place after the 2016 election. As 2016 marked a transition from a Democratic presidency to a Republican Presidency and complete control of Congress, the dynamics of threat shift completely.

Modifications to the Original Research Design

In the course of the analysis, an additional variable was defined. This variable was in the original design, but data collected through the study enabled the definition of its parameters.

Event Area

The variable *area* existed as part of the initial research design, but its exact definition had to be determined during the analysis. After collecting the full list of specific events and seeing what issues they commonly involved, the area category was shuffled around until it had 13 categories. These are as follows: abortion, education, environment, foreign policy, gender, immigration, labor, personality, race, sexual violence, economy, healthcare and other. Most of the contents of these categories can be surmised from their titles with a couple of notes of clarification. Personality exists by the discretion of the researcher, so it necessitates the most specific explanation. Observation of numerous events directed in protest of an individual person's actions proved the need for this category. As a protest of a person, rather than an impersonal issue, the title of personality fit the category most appropriately. Of the other categories, the gender and sexual violence categories were originally one category, but the volume of explicitly

sexually violence events suggested that better representation would come from an individual category. Additionally, when abortion was an issue combined with other issues in an event, this was coded as gender. The abortion category contains only events expressly about the issue of abortion.

Analytical Strategy

Existing research into longitudinal data of social movement occurrences has utilized event history models (van Dyke 2003). Event history models are desirable for the nature of the data because the data corresponds with dates, so variable factors can be compared against timing of events. In turn, this is ideal for the study for threat, because the date of the introduction of threat can be compared to the timing of relevant mobilization.

Specifically, usage of proportional hazards regression (or Cox regression from here on) utilizes multiple covariates to predict the likelihood of an event happening at a given time, reported as the "hazard ratio" (Allison 1995; Bian 2015:38; van Dyke 2003). The hazard ratio is composed as the ratio of two hazard rates and is "the probability that if the event in question has not already occurred, it will occur in the next time interval, divided by the length of the interval. (Spruance et al. 2004). As the interval approaches zero, a hazard ratio becomes an instantaneous rate for the entire time period. This statistical method assigns coefficients to the covariates, or predictor variables, to reflect their relative effect on the event likelihood. In effect, Cox regression simply indicates how likely an event is to occur at any given moment based on the values of the individual predictor variables.

Van Dyke uses Fixed Effects Partial Likelihood Analysis, a specific variant of Cox regression, in order to control for the "location or any unmeasured quality of the location" (2003:239). These "other unmeasured qualities" are what is known as unobserved heterogeneities, which will cause statistical bias without controlling for them. While the analysis does not address student culture, collegiate environment, or intellectual quality at any of the schools, these are accounted for by the statistical model (van Dyke 2003). Combining fixed effects with Cox regression allows the fixed effects to vary with time, which according to Allison (2005) enables each individual, a university in this case, to have its own hazard function. Allison (1995) suggests running a statistical model for each individual possibility of a dependent variable, therefore I ran the model once for predictive factors of conservative mobilization and once for liberal mobilization. Additionally, I ran separate models for events before and after the election for each, resulting in four more models to examine the effects of the election itself. Potential further models could result from examining events in a specific issue category, provided numerous events. Then, different independent variables could be identified as being of greater impact to activist mobilization in specific relation to that event's focus.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Collegiate newspaper reports of social movement activity were identified and coded by their relevant data, including objective, location, and date. Each subset of data was analyzed for patterns, seeking to answer the research questions.

University Selection

As explained in detail earlier, the sampling frame consisted of 100 US colleges and universities. Once this sampling frame was collected, five of the 100 were immediately replaced as four of the randomly selected universities duplicated universities from the Princeton Review lists, while one was Auburn University, location of the present research. The full listing of the final 20 selected for the study is in Table 1.

Creating the most representative sample possible required consideration of each university along several competing factors. Oftentimes, selection for one factor would directly influence other choices. For instance, six of the seven selected politically polarized campuses were private universities, the exception being Kansas State. This was a function of the fact that only seven of the 40 Princeton Review politicized campuses were publicly funded institutions, of which all seven were on the conservative list. This has some potential consequences for the representativeness of the sample, as none of the explicitly liberal student bodies are at public universities. In addition, such a high proportion of private universities necessitated the selection of predominantly public institutions among the ostensibly neutral remainder.

Table 1: University Data

University	Campus Politics	Tax Status	Enrollment	Revenue (per Student)	Tuition
Boston University	Liberal	Private	32,695	$55,054	$52,082
Brown	Liberal	Private	34,420	$27,629	$53,419
BYU	Conservative	Private	9,781	$141,908	$5,460
Carleton	Neutral	Private	2,105	$53,183	$52,782
Florida Atlantic	Neutral	Public	30,541	$24,903	$8,995
Georgia State	Neutral	Public	32,464	$15,228	$13,458
Hillsdale	Conservative	Private	1,526	$113,227	$26,742
Howard	Neutral	Private	8,966	$87,338	$25,697
Idaho State	Neutral	Public	13,629	$10,404	$9,769
Indiana	Neutral	Public	49,695	$45,401	$20,987
Kansas State	Conservative	Public	23,779	$35,115	$13,003
Louisiana Tech	Neutral	Public	12,672	$8,501	$11,040
Northwestern	Neutral	Private	21,208	$103,781	$52,678
Pittsburgh	Neutral	Public	27,229	$77,373	$23,127
Portland State	Neutral	Public	10,394	$34,347	$12,437
TCU	Conservative	Private	11,489	$41,923	$44,760
Tufts	Liberal	Private	32,754	$26,073	$54,318
UC Irvine	Neutral	Public	24,346	$122,569	$22,800
UC Santa Barbara	Neutral	Public	28,664	$36,806	$18,331
UT Dallas	Neutral	Public	26,793	$14,151	$13,452

Two other main constraints on university selection were the geographic location
and enrollment of the prospective university. For geographic location, a rough spread
across the continental United States was the target, with the seven preselected universities
placed on the map first and universities added as they were selected. To guide this
selection, I used a map from the Brookings Institute (Akers and Soliz 2015) which gave a
population density of universities in the United States (Appendix B). The two pairs of
institutions closest to each other also operated in two of the densest concentrations of

universities in the nation, so their geographic proximity was accepted. A map showing

the geographic distribution of the selected universities is also included in Appendix B.

The enrollment statistics for universities were the other differentiating factor for

selection, and large enrollment sizes were intentionally selected in some cases to provide

variability from the small (<5,000 students) and medium (<15,000) universities which

largely made up the initial group of included universities. This led to a mean enrollment

of ~25,000 for the final set, with a range of 48,500 from Hillsdale College, the smallest

(~1,500 students) to Indiana-Bloomington, the largest (~50,000 students).

Table 2: University Newspapers			
University	Newspaper Name	Publishing Schedule	Location
Boston University	The Daily Free Press	Weekly	Boston, MA
Brown	Brown Daily Herald	Daily (Weekdays)	Providence, RI
BYU	The Universe	Weekly	Provo, UT
Carleton	The Carletonian	Weekly	Northfield, MN
Florida Atlantic	University Press	Monthly	Boca Raton, FL
Georgia State	The Signal	Weekly	Atlanta, GA
Hillsdale	Hillsdale Collegian	Weekly	Hillsdale, MI
Howard	The Hilltop	Weekly	Washington, D.C.
Idaho State	Bengal	Digital Articles	Pocatello, ID
Indiana	Indiana Daily Student	Twice Weekly	Bloomington, IA
Kansas State	The Collegian	Thrice Weekly	Manhattan, KS
Louisiana Tech	The Tech Talk	Weekly	Ruston, LA
Northwestern	Daily Northwestern	Daily (Weekdays)	Evanston, IL
Pittsburgh	The Pitt News	Daily (Weekdays)	Pittsburgh, PA
Portland State	Portland State Vanguard	Weekly	Portland, OR
TCU	Daily Skiff	Weekly	Fort Worth, TX
Tufts	Tufts Daily	Daily (Weekdays)	Medford, MA
UC Irvine	New University	Digital Articles	Irvine, CA
UC Santa Barbara	Daily Nexus	Weekly	Santa Barbara, CA
UT Dallas	The Mercury	Biweekly	Richardson, TX

The final factor affecting inclusion of a university was the availability of a campus newspaper. While most of the selected universities had regularly available digital back issues, this was not the case for Idaho State and UC Irvine. These two universities utilized a publication format similar to online-exclusive news publications. In other words, their articles were published individually on their website, rather than collected into a daily or weekly issue. This was accepted in the dataset, though it did require a minor adaptation in data collection. Grove City College was removed from selected consideration from the partisan student bodies because of its irregular publishing schedule and its formatting as a social magazine, which severely restricted the potential for event reporting. Other universities were removed from selection because their student newspaper had ceased operations or their publication was irregular. Without regular publication, there can be no certainty of reporting, so these papers needed to be excluded from consideration. Detailed information on the final 20 newspapers is included in Table 2. The selection of these final 20, through the methods outlined above, allowed the beginning of event data collection.

Data

To create an event history of protest events throughout 2016 and 2017, I manually searched each issue of the student papers for reporting of protest events. Once a potential protest event was located, the containing article was examined to determine if it was eligible for inclusion in the data set. Dozens of events were excluded because they occurred temporally outside the study period but were reported within, did not involve students from a university in question, or did not fit the definition of a protest event.

In defining a "protest event," I previously stipulated that it needed to be public, collective, and express a grievance with a goal to cause or prevent social change (van Dyke 2003). The breadth of this definition meant that protest events varied greatly in form, function, and frequency, with some events inspiring follow-up events and some heavily concentrated around certain dates. On the other hand, the multi-step nature of this four-part definition meant that oftentimes events were excluded though they met multiple criteria. For instance, the data collection found numerous examples of student organization meetings reported in the examined papers. These events were systematically not collected, for they entailed a private event, which is not reliably reported in newspapers. Strict adherence to the individual elements of the established definition of "protest event" enabled consistency in the reporting of events. As a tradeoff, it limited the size of the data set, which could have doubled in size with the inclusion of events that only met some of the criteria. This was a worthy trade to make, though it left some niche cases up to the discretion of the investigator. These niche cases were most commonly vigils for victims of violent acts. While these events met the criteria, they were not included because their focus was primarily on the memorial, with social change as a secondary objective. Inclusion or exclusion of other niche cases was decided on a situational basis using the context of the surrounding article. At the end of this stage, I had developed a sample of 332 social movement events. Then, the various aspects of the event were coded.

The first primary data point for each located event is the data of occurrence. These dates are summarized as a monthly frequency distribution in Figure 1. The highest monthly density of events was the 41 of January 2017, which contained the most active

single day in January 21, 2017 and its 14 events. Conversely, the lowest density was in July of 2017 with 0 events, while numerous individual days had 0 events across the data set. The protest events were highly clustered in certain months, with April 2016, November 2016, and January 2017, the three highest volume months, comprising 112 summed events, 33.7% of the total. Meanwhile, the period from May 2016 to August 2016, the longest stretch of low event totals, had only 13 events, 3.9% of the total. This was largely a factor of the collegiate schedule and summer vacation. The dates were also coded as occurring before or after the 2016 Presidential Election on November 8, 2016, with 37.3% occurring beforehand. This date is only 43% of the way through the study period, though by nature of the calendar and American politics, it is roughly bisecting.


Figure 1: Protest Events per Month
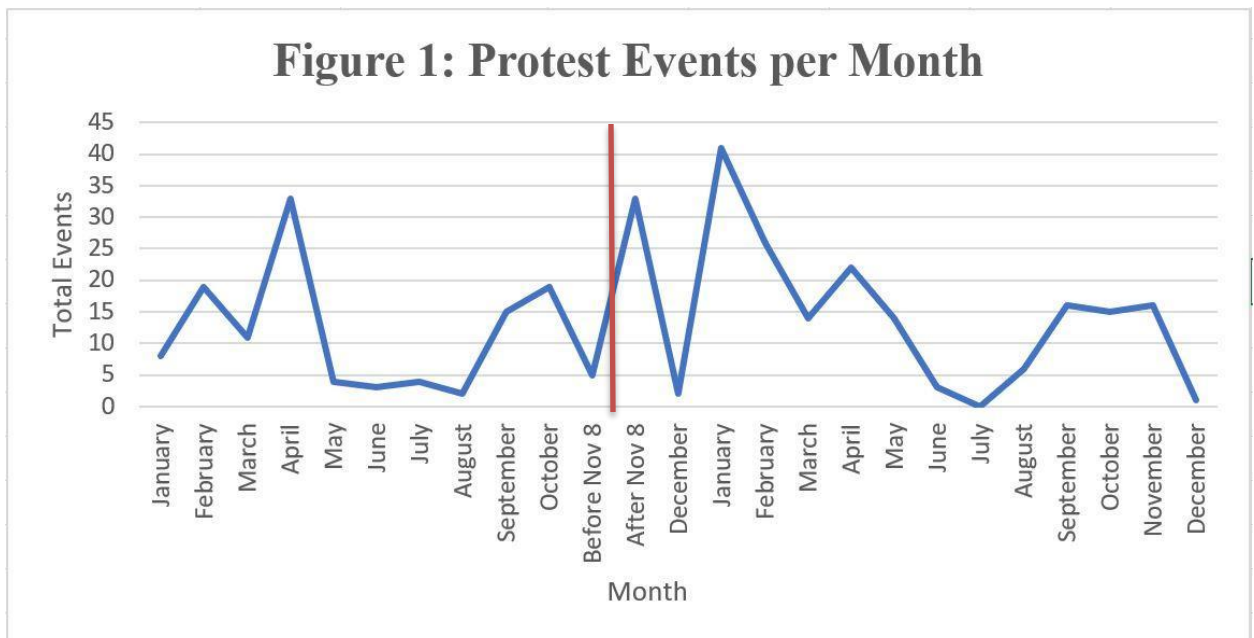
The second primary data point for each located event was the political alignment of the event. As previously established, coding was conducted using a modified version of the political alignment coding from Amenta et al. (2012). This coding was found in practice to be lacking in multiple respects. First, and perhaps predictably, some events are

primarily apolitical. These events are contained in the "neutral" category and include protesting tuition hikes, a concern for every student regardless of political opinion, and protests that dealt with unique local issues, such as proposed amendments to BYU's Mormon honor code. Second, this definition did not explicitly account for some issues, such as union labor organizing or protests for returns of Native American tribal lands. Both of these example event types were eventually coded as liberal, as they dealt with labor organizing or the racial recognition of Native Americans. While most newspaper articles did not make or relay overt political statements in support of a candidate, most events had a political lean that could be inferred from the context of the article.

Events were then placed into one of three categories, conservative, liberal, and neutral. Of the total of 332 events, 267 (80.4%) events were categorized as liberal, with 44 (13.2%) other and 21 (6.3%) conservative. This dramatic disparity persisted in the liberal (18.4% of total events, 82.1% of which coded liberal) and neutral (74.4%, 81.3% of which coded liberal). In the conservative student bodies, the percentage of total events was comparatively small (7.2%), but did have a decreased percentage of liberal events, albeit still 67% of total. In a more surprising development, the conservative student bodies tied for most conservative events with the liberal group (3 each) and had the highest percentage of neutral events of any group.

Each of these events, beyond its political alignment, was directly organized in relation to some issue in society. This was collected as an independent variable that grouped events into specific "areas" of activism. These areas were developed after data collection in order to most efficiently and thoroughly account for the events that did happen within the data set. Some events, such as seeking to change the aforementioned

41

BYU Mormon honor code, dealt with relatively localized issues that did not fit a larger pattern, so they were placed in an "other" category. The final categories can be seen along with their frequency in Figure 2. The four most common categories (beyond other) were immigration and personality (13% each), gender (10.8%), and race (10.8%), a predictable group of categories for activism surrounding the 2016 election. It should be noted again that the personality category was an approximate category created within the research, once I discovered a need for protests directed against specific people for their words or actions. Additionally, gender originally composed 20.1% of event topics, but it was split into a sexual violence category (9.8%) because it obscured the individual popularity of those specific events to include them within gender.

Figure 2: Movement Events by Area
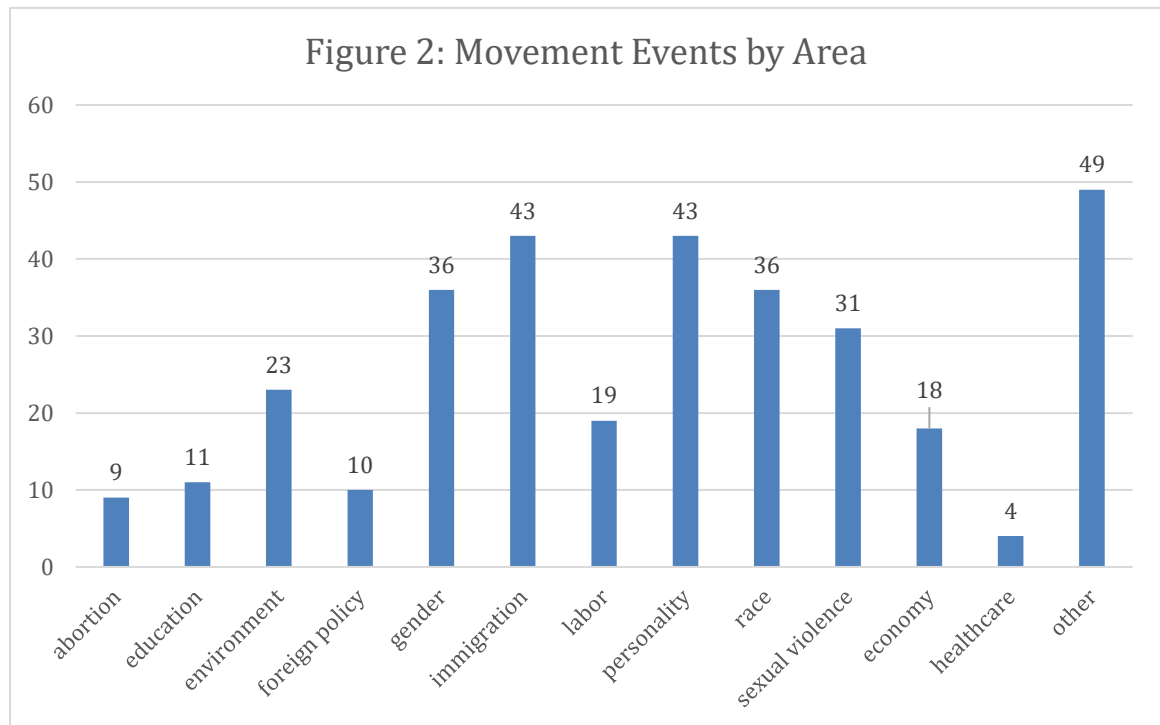
Some events involved organizations acting in coalition to combine their strength. 19% (63) of the 332 events involved multiple allied organizations as shown in Table 3. 52 (19.5%) of these events were coded as liberal compared to three (14.2%) and eight

(18%) events coded conservative or other, respectively. These numbers are largely

similar among event politics, though the percentage trends upward with greater event

totals. Comparison among other factors created results within a couple of percentage

points of the overall 19% number, including grouping of the university by political

alignment of the student body, size of university, and number of coded events on the

campus. The frequency of coalition events was relatively consistent overall, a couple of

individual universities had high percentages in isolation, most notably Northwestern, with

44%. The approximately one-fifth of events in coalition could be underrepresented in the

data, as the coding of coalitions requires heavily on newspapers reporting enough data to

be conclusive, and the data represents an assumption of no coalition if not definitively

present.

Table 3: Coalitions and Countermovements

	Event Politics			
	Conservative	Liberal	Neutral	Total
Coalition Events	3	52	8	63
Total Events	21	267	44	332
Percentage	14.29%	19.48%	18.18%	18.98%
Countered Events	10	5	0	15
Total Events	21	267	44	332
Percentage	47.62%	1.87%	0.00%	4.52%

A few events garnered enough opposition that they spawned counter-protesting events of their own, depicted in Table 3. 4.5% (15) of the total events had these counterdemonstrators. While 15 of 332 is not a large proportion, among the conservative events, 10 of 21 had counterdemonstrators, about 47.6%. For comparison, five of 267 (1.9%) of liberal events had counter protestors and 0 of the neutral events inspired immediate opposition. A need to inspire opposition may be key, as the number of countermovement events on the conservative and liberal campuses were the same (3), with the other 15 being on the neutral campuses. While conservative events having a higher proportion of counter protested events is not especially surprising, as the sheer weight of liberal organizing seemingly ensures greater opposition to these events, these events did have double the number of counter-protests against a vastly lower overall sample size. Anecdotal experience suggests that this proportion did not occur due to lack of reporting, as in the process of data collection; the coded countermovements were typically quite apparent, receiving photos of their own or making it into the title, the conflict becoming the story.

Analysis

This study seeks to understand differential motivating factors between political ideologies, so the analysis compared each group to one another. All models included all the independent variables, and each was run independently. As 267 of the 332 events were coded as liberal, I began analysis with those events as the object of study. First, I assembled a Cox regression whereby the liberal results in *eventpol* were coded as the marker of an event happening. Among the covariates, I included all the independent variables for the analysis, with the resulting hazard ratios contained in Table 4, Model 1.

44

Significance was set at $p < .05$. Resulting hazard ratios reflect the relative impact of the indicator variable on the likelihood of something happening. For each unit increase in the independent variable, the hazard ratio indicates the increase in the odds that an event will happen. Hazard ratios are multiplicative by definition, so a value less than one is a negative effect and a value greater than one is a positive effect. Additionally, for categorical variables, Cox regression requires designation of a reference case, set as the "neutral" campus for university politics and as the "other" case for event focus. This reference case creates the scale by which each other potential value for the categorical variable is compared. Therefore, the hazard for each potential value of the categorical variable results from this comparison, defining them relative to the control case on a scale consistent with one another.

I found that for liberal events, the specific issue of demonstration most often increased the risk of organization. Most of the movement issues increased the risk by two to three times, and almost all of them were statistically significant ($p < .05$). Activism about the economy and abortion were exceptions, as they have a reduced risk, and only economy is significant ($p < .05$). Notably, there is an minorly increased hazard for liberal campuses and decreased for conservative, though neither is significant. The most strongly significant relationships are for gender and personality ($p < .001$), which also have the largest hazard ratios at 3.103 and 2.749, respectively. This indicates a tripled and nearly tripled likelihood that these events will occur at any given time, relative to the neutral category. Besides these movement issues, most variables had only minor impacts on the likelihood of liberal events across the full data set, with only a 10% increase or decrease in the hazard ratio, and most are not significant. The lone exception is counter-

45

movements, which is statistically significant and depressive of the hazard ratio, with

approximately a 60% reduction in likelihood of mobilization for the presence of one.

Though the small sample of five in 267 suggests caution in interpretation, this implies a

potential significant impact of the presence of a countermovements on the decision to

mobilize.

Table 4: Liberal Events			
	Model 1 Full Lib Events	**Model 2 Pre-Election Lib Events**	**Model 3 Post-Election Lib Events**
Conservative Student Body	0.577	0.405	0.712
Liberal Student Body	1.159	1.494	1.216
University public/private status	1.550	3.004*	1.843
Party won the state (2016)	0.787	0.703	0.899
Party won the state (2012)	0.959	0.539	1.148
Party won the county (2016)	0.920	1.098	0.696
Revenue per student (millions)	0.997	1.002	0.995
Enrollment divided by 1000	1.005	1.005	1.013
Annual undergrad tuition	1.000	1.000	1.000
Coalition	1.170	1.512	1.193
Counter movement	0.379*	2.684	0.790
Issues:			
Abortion	0.160	0.543	0.342
Education	0.738	2.285	1.287
Environment	2.045*	2.513*	0.893
Foreign Policy	0.986	4.12*	8.885*
Gender	3.103***	1.885	2.403**
Immigration	1.727*	0.296	1.427
Labor	2.293**	4.709**	0.914
Personality	2.749***	1.840	2.596**
Race	2.121**	2.728*	0.792
Sexual Violence	2.254**	3.042**	0.963
Economy	0.201*	1.714	0.095**
Healthcare	2.028	1.348	1.448

$*p < .05$ $**p < .01$ $***p < .0001$ one-tailed test

Next, I ran the Cox regression twice more, but including only the liberal political events, and using *eventdate* (before or after election) as the dependent variable. Therefore, one model is all the data preceding the election (Table 4, Model 2) and the other is all the data after the point of the election (Table 4, Model 3). As previously stated, there were fewer liberal events preceding the election than following (95 vs 172), similar to conservative events (6 vs 15) and the overall data (124 vs 208). As such, this pair of regression models compares the data before and after the election for evidence of changed trends in activism by liberal groups. This regression continues one trend seen in the overall liberal data, as specific issues of mobilization are the largest hazards. The particular issues have changed, however; gender and personality are still exhibiting an increased likelihood, but neither is significant. Before the election, hazard ratios are highest for labor and sexual violence, and both are statistically significant on a $p < .01$ level. Notably, the public or private status of the university is significant ($p < .05$), but it is not in the overall data. The positive relationship indicates a tripled hazard at private universities relative to public, regardless of student body political alignment. While the data does suggest a reduced hazard at conservative universities and increased at liberal, it is not statistically significant on any level. None of the hazard ratios indicated to reduce hazard of a liberal event before the election are statistically significant, though immigration is the largest negative effect and $p < .1$.

Post-election, the hazard ratio for foreign policy is by far the highest, with over an eightfold increase in hazard with significance. The least likely topic of activism concerns the economy, as a ratio of .095 is not only the most strongly significant ($p < .01$) ratio, but the lowest of any by a margin. Economy-focused events clustered tightly around the

Trump tax plan proposal late in the studied period, as its unpopularity among all sides particularly pushed liberals to action, as they had no political allegiance to the president or Congress who wrote it (White 2017). Countermovements, despite significance in the full data, was not significant in either half. While in pre-election data it was barely nonsignificant, both sides were heavily influenced by the small sample size (3 and 2 events each side, respectively), and their occurrence towards the extremes of the time period. Therefore, this outcome can be safely determined as inconclusive. Gender and personality have hazard ratios of around 2.5 and are significant at a $p < .01$ level, which aligns with the analytical trends of the overall data. In comparison to the pre-election data, there is only one variable that is significant in both, foreign policy, which is not significant in the overall liberal analysis. This occurs because foreign policy makes up two of the 267 liberal events, one on each side of the election. With most foreign policy events being coded as "neutral," a comparison among solely liberal events creates an outsize influence of those two events, which is rectified in an analysis of the full data set.

Among the remaining variables, there are some notable changes in hazard ratios, as the public or private status of the university halves in effect, while the environment and sexual violence are cut to a third. Each of these results demonstrates a greatly reduced likelihood of any of these events occurring at any given time after the election. Additionally, while it barely remains nonsignificant, immigration goes from a hazard ratio of .296 to 1.427. This large change in likelihood highlights an issue which exploded in popularity after the election, with 40 of the 43 liberal immigration events occurring post-election. Taken collectively, this change in variables indicates a change in

48

organization patterns as activism shifts from one set of issues to new topics, centered around the new politic status quo.

An objective of this research is to compare the organization patterns of liberal and conservative movement events. Therefore, I ran a Cox regression, identical to the liberal event analysis, but on the conservative events. The results of this regression are contained in Table 5, Model 1. The conservative data, with its 21-event sample size, proved the limitations of such a small set of events. Naturally, it also produced some notable results. These included huge hazard ratios for liberal student bodies, public/private status, abortion, and countermovements, all of which are significant. Simultaneously, we see hazard ratios of zero for multiple variables. The sample size of the conservative events plays a part in each of these results. Addressing these systematically, for the liberal student bodies, all the conservative events (3) occurred early in the data, whereas 15 of them were at neutral campuses. The comparison between these cases saw liberal campuses as being a major factor in event occurrence, largely because of small sample size. The public/private status of the university could also be experiencing inflation due to the liberal universities being unanimously private and the events there previously mentioned to be near the temporal beginnings of the data set. The exponential degree of the hazard ratio does suggest compounded undue influence of sample size.

Interestingly, abortion and countermovements comprise near half of the total conservative events, eight and 10 of 21, respectively. As a result, the hazard ratio may be inflated due to sample size, but the underlying data does indicate that these variables are strongly associated with conservative events. For clarification, the variables with zero for a hazard ratio are event focuses which had no occurrences for conservative events in the

49

sample, therefore, they have no risk of occurring in the sample-based analysis. As a side

note, two other variables have hazard ratios of above 1000, whether the party won the

county and if the student body was conservative. These variables may be codependent, as

campuses with conservative student bodies likely had conservative voter turnout in the

county. Whatever the reason, both variables have p > .9, so they are likely spurious

relations. Finally, the student tuition is shown to have no effect on the likelihood of event

mobilization, though the model considers it to be significantly unremarkable.

Table 5: Cross-Political Comparison			
	Model 1 Cons Events	Model 2 Lib Events	Model 3 All Events
Conservative Student Body	1167.197	0.577	0.629
Liberal Student Body	43.142*	1.159	1.305
University public/private status	42.116*	1.55	2.066*
Party won the state (2016)	0.387	0.787	0.701
Party won the state (2012)	2.621	0.959	0.808
Party won the county (2016)	1901.383	0.92	1.014
Revenue per student (millions)	1.007	0.997	0.999
Enrollment (1000s)	1.049	1.005	1.002
Tuition	1*	1	1
Counter movement	15.716***	0.379*	0.898
Coalition	3.328	1.17	1.242
Issues:			
Abortion	20.397***	0.16	0.902
Education	0	0.738	2.964**
Environment	0	2.045*	1.454
Foreign Policy	0	0.986	3.605**
Gender	0	3.103***	1.989**
Immigration	0	1.727*	1.096
Labor	2.125	2.293**	1.647
Personality	3.947	2.749***	1.899**
Race	0.737	2.121**	1.347
Sexual Violence	0	2.254**	1.53
Economy	0	0.201*	0.619
Healthcare	0	2.028	1.393

*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .0001 one-tailed test

With the liberal events, two Cox regressions were undertaken to compare between pre-election and post-election data. For conservative events, despite the sample size, this was attempted, and resulted in meaningless data not reported here. To give some measure of context to the conservative results, Table 5 includes a reprint of the liberal data as Model 2, and a Cox regression of the full data set as Model 3. Comparing across the three models, the similarities between the liberal data set and the full data set are both unmistakable and inevitable, due to the percentage it makes up of the data set. One notable takeaway of the full comparison is the stagnant hazard ratio of tuition, implying a spurious nature, aided by its significance in the conservative data. This relationship to tuition is mirrored in the other university categories, as revenue and enrollment seem to have little to no effect and lack significance of any level. This could be indicative of a codependent relationship unconsidered in the research design. The major differences in hazard ratio for abortion organizing does indicate a significant difference in organization strategy by political alignment. It is strongly significant ($p < .0001$) for conservative events and narrowly misses the set threshold for significance for liberal events. Alternatively, the difference could be rhetorical, as liberal events that included protest around the issue of abortion were coded as gender because of their broader focus on gender rights. In either case, we see that the strongest influence in conservative movement activism is anti-abortion.

The full data has a couple of interesting effects worthy of individual consideration. First, the foreign policy and education issue categories have significance and positive hazard ratios, though they lack both in conservative and liberal categories. This largely has to do with the group of events centered around Israel and Palestine and

51

tuition increases. While tuition protesting has been mentioned before in the coding, the Israel and Palestine events, though they likely have political leaning, could not be established systematically to a degree that it felt appropriate to divide them into the political categories. Admittedly, this could have hurt the already small sample size of the conservative data, but I believe it is a worthy sacrifice for accuracy. Second, and more interestingly, the full data lacks significance, though the liberal and conservative data are each significant in this respect. Looking back, all the countermovements were against conservative or liberal events, so the addition of the neutral data neutralizes the hazard ratio and removes significance for the whole set. For the liberal data, this comparison predominantly shows a slight shift towards the direction of the conservative data in the full data, unsurprising with respect to the count of liberal events.

This study sought to compose an event history of 20 universities over two years in order to examine the patterns of social movement mobilization by students. The universities were selected according to multiple criteria designed to achieve the most representative sample. These desired after events occurred in abundance, with 332 social movement events across the time period; however, they were primarily liberal. Although this was an unintended effect of the data collection, it did provide an alternative dynamic to the data. The abundance of liberal events allowed more detailed statistical analysis, which the low conservative event population restricted. Using Cox regression analysis, the events were found to be minimally impacted by factors of resources, subverting expectations of resource-driven activism. Most other independent variables were not predictive of the data, although their impact could not be definitively ruled out. On the contrary, event area was the most predictive factor on the occurrence of social movement

events. Comparison of alternate regression models demonstrated significant shifts in the predictive variables of the data. Examination of the liberal events utilized the large data set to compare alternate sides of the election, whereas conservative events were best compared against the liberal events and full data, owing to their relative scarcity. These comparisons revealed particular trends in the liberal data across the timeframe, while highlighting factors unique to the conservative data, although its few events remain an issue.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

In undertaking this study, I sought to examine the connection between social movement organization and political affiliation during the year radial of the 2016 Presidential election. At the outset, I established three hypotheses:

1. Organizations that politically oppose the incumbent will demonstrate increased activism pre-election, but will experience a decline afterward, as they will experience less threat from the new administration. This effect will be reversed for their political opponents.

The data of this research determined this hypothesis to be, as it is stated, unsupported. The data indicated an increase of social movement activity from 124 events before the election to 208 after. Each of the liberal, conservative, and neutral categories increased post-election. This directly conflicts with the hypothesis, which proposes that this result would only take place among liberal events, while conservative events would experience the opposite effect. What is harder to establish is a cause and effect structure for these events, as the threat hypothesis rests on the assumption that people mobilize in opposition to the potential of negative changes more than they mobilize in support of positive changes, from their point of view. While this data indicates that all events increased, the sharp increase in liberal events could be a provocative factor which begets the conservative events, especially considering the relatively small number of

54

conservative events and that the most popular universities for conservative events were also the most popular for liberal events. This relation is broadly consistent on either side of the election, though the limited sample of conservative events makes it an uncertain proposition, at best.

2. Universities with student bodies that are politically charged will experience more events politically aligned with the student body.

This hypothesis proved unsupported in multiple aspects. An approximately even number (~82%) of liberal events happened on the liberal and neutral campuses. The conservative student bodies did have fewer liberal events (67%), but they had the same number of conservative events (3) as the liberal student bodies. This indicates that the politics of the university student body is not predictive of the number of politically aligned events.

The universities that were in the neutral category experienced three out of every four events, while making up 65% of universities. As most events occurred on neutral campuses, lack of data may be the limiting factor in achieving statistical significance in this result. Regression analysis indicates that the political nature of a campus has some predictive effect, but it is at approximately 10% for the liberal events, potentially unreliable for the conservative events, and not statistically significant in most comparisons. This may indicate an underlying flaw in the effects of the "neutral campus" in this study. The ostensibly neutral campuses may not be neutral at all. By assuming that they are neutral, this study may have, by design, obscured the effects of politicization on

activism across the political spectrum. This is impossible to verify without some form of alignment scale to more scientifically and individually grade each potential university.

3. In accordance with resource mobilization theory, universities with greater resources in the form of money and students will predict more activism.

This hypothesis was also unsupported by the data, as the university variables of revenue, enrollment, and tuition all produced little to no effect in each model. Van Dyke's (2003) research found an effect of the resources available at a university, but this study did not. This potentially reflects a variable with an effect that cannot be seen on the scale of this study but would be better suited to a longer time period. It also could reflect a variation in student funding between the samples, or the possibility that student organizations have grown to be less reliant on university funds for their activities. This could potentially have occurred because of over-defining one potential variable as two or three. Whatever the reason, this indicates that the resource mobilization model does not properly explain this data, and more abstract differences in universities lead to differential activism. That said, there exists sufficient uncertainty as to the interaction of the theory and this data that it remains likely that it did have an effect, and future research should account for the effects of resources. Among the sample of 20 universities outlined here, resources, as they were defined, did not have any predictive effect on the occurrence of protest events.

Threat and Triage Activism

Threat, as a concept, refers to the "perception that one's resources or privileges will be decreased in the future." This definition is inherently reactionary, relying on actors to perceive a force opposing their interests before acting against it. Broken down into composite parts, this consists of a change in the status quo, perception of that change, and definition of that change as favorable or unfavorable, as non-threatening or threatening. Constructed around this definition, Hypothesis One relies on the assumption that an unfavorable change would result in increased activism by a group, while a favorable change would have the opposite effect. To study a change in threat, as this hypothesis requires, one needs a change in status quo notable enough to be perceived, both by subject and researcher, along with a clear change in the status quo. Van Dyke (2003) notes that Republican control of the White House caused a 42 percent increase in coalition work among college student organizations in her research. This mirrors the increase in social movement work after 2016 presidential election, reflecting a well-chosen centralizing event. The change in government to an opposing party would mark a dramatic change in threat, while the scale of a national election ensures perception, both by activists and the researcher.

While the overall portrait of the data collected indicates lack of support for this hypothesis, the hypothesis was supported in the first of the two component parts. The liberal events did experience an increase in event total post-election from pre-election. Simultaneously, the movement landscape shifted dramatically around the chosen pivot point of the election. Experience from data collection indicates that the pivot point was an appropriate choice, as large proportion of events which took place after the election were in directly linked to the election, either in objective or scale. These included directly

57

protesting the election or inauguration, as well as the Women's Marches of January 2017. These events are the most visible representatives of events after the election, which were broadly characterized by an increase in direct links between politics and action.

Events that had occurred before the election were most commonly indirect in their relation to politics, such as events which raised awareness about sexual violence in campus communities. Occurring on 14 of the 20 campuses in the study, these events were primarily political in their assertions, framing the issue as power dynamics and disparities of privilege. Alternatively, the same issues may inspire more direct action, as many campuses had sexual violence events that demanded better investigation and Title IX compliance from their university. After the election, events were more commonly framed in these direct political terms, demanding action on the part of their campus administration to become a sanctuary campus or divest from fossil fuels. In addition, these events more commonly got the front page of the campus paper or involved larger groups of people, indicated through published event photographs. By systematically not recording an attendance figure, I ensured consistency against an infrequently reported and dubiously accurate number. This action was intentional, but unintentionally eliminated an important angle of analysis, as the change in an event's attendance would be a key marker of threat motivating individuals. If individual actors are going to more events or more unique individuals attend events, the number of events can remain unchanged and obscure a major shift in the social movement landscape. Mobilizing new social movement actors can lead to ripple effects later, as the increase in experience can lead to involvement at other events or for other issues.

Just as threat may influence the attendance of events, it may transform the events themselves, as activists' interests change. Examining the pre and post-election liberal event regressions, the most hazardous event focuses change from labor, sexual violence, race, and environment to personality and gender most strongly, followed by healthcare and immigration. This change reflects the tone and objective of these events changing, seen on a deeper look at the newspaper articles. As events became more political and direct throughout the study, primarily anti-sexual violence events such as Take Back the Night and Slutwalk became less common, as more broadly focused gender events took their place, most notably the Women's Marches. In addition, most labor events dealt with a local goal, such as unionization of a university workforce. These events, and environmental organization, were less common, though environmental organization became more direct when they organized. Overall, this indicates a standard change in the movement landscape, as topics fall out of favor, replaced by more prevalent ones. Most significantly, which issues that became popular directly indicate the effects of threat on activism.

The issues popular before and after the election demonstrate the impact the election had on the country. Holding movement events about the environment, race, or sexual violence comes as close to what you would predict from an activist event in the United States in the last several years. Controversial, hard to solve, and grand in scale, these events capture the hearts of activists through their sweeping impact and personal tragedies. The post-election events center around three issues that directly respond to the results of the election. President Trump, as a candidate, was strongly condemned for his comments about women (Arrowood 2016; Kelly 2016) and immigrants (Pérez-Peña

2017), and his election understandably provoked higher threat amongst his opponents in these particular categories. The individual events accumulated into these categories frequently directly relate to his actions, as 40% of the immigration events were directly related to the versions of the "travel ban" (Smith 2017), while nearly all the immigration, gender, and personality protests mention his words or his actions as a cause of mobilization. Just as with Reagan in 1980, protests greeted his election (van Dyke 2003).

The shift in activism undertaken after the election clearly reveals the threat felt by the participant activists. For the research canon, this clarifies the significance of threat as a motivator for activism, revealing the myriad of effects it can have on activism beyond simply predicting more activism. A longitudinal study of the topic would potentially reveal similar shifts each time the more conservative party takes office, as their actions and campaign promises inspire fervent opposition in the liberal activist cadre. Contrary to reputation, campaign promises are commonly kept by all elected presidents (Hill 2016), suggesting that a promise in the campaign should be sufficient to create threat. Indeed, existing research is limited, but does suggest a link between Presidential Elections and activism frequency (van Dyke 2003). As the status quo changes, and new threats emerge, activism shifts to meet these threats. As seen in this study, old causes do not necessarily disappear, but are deprioritized in favor of the most threatening concerns of the day, as a form of "triage activism." In a medical triage, doctors prioritize patient treatment and use of resources by their degree of danger. Activists behave in a similar fashion, as each individual's biographical availability limits them to a certain degree of involvement in activism, so they gravitate towards the most threatening concern in their estimation. Although decisions are made on an individual level about what organizations to join and

events to attend, these decisions are moderated by the sociopolitical circumstances to determine the priority of an individual's action. Each issue maintains some degree of importance, but that concern diminishes relatively as other concerns increase. The scale of activism on an issue becomes a product of the degree of threat felt by individuals and the number of individuals, mediated by each individual threshold for involvement. Once threat changes again, the activist marketplace shifts accordingly.

To this point, I have dealt primarily with increases in threat. Threat, for practical purposes, consists of a degree of danger and an immediacy that it may occur. An event which poses great risk but seems unlikely to happen will not be threatening, and it will not inspire movement against it. Therefore, as time passes from an increase in threat, threat gradually diminishes, as the immediacy of the danger recedes, enthusiasm evaporates. This can be seen in the data as protests against Trump himself diminished as the first year of his Presidency went on, replaced by other, more immediate specific threats. The impact of time on threat also presents a potential explanation for the liberal-conservative event disparity in the data, as the preceding eight years of a Democratic presidency gave liberals significantly more to lose than conservatives. People expected Clinton to largely continue Obama's policies, so the increase in threat, from a conservative perspective, was not as high. The incentive to win the election did not change, but this required a different form of organization, unaddressed by this study.

Conservative Activists and Tactics

In this study, I sought to compare the patterns of organization for conservative and liberal events. I hoped that events of either type would be common, enabling broad comparisons between the two patterns of occurrence. The resultant sample of 21 total

61

conservative events averages to just over one for each university in the sample across two years. Such a small sample size makes it almost inevitable that this data is biased in some fashion. This particularly presents a dilemma due to the 267 liberal events which occurred over the same time period. While an unexpected result, this encourages an analysis of a different kind, as this disparity must have a root cause, potentially systematically or methodologically. A gap of this size could be a factor of multiple variables. The remainder of this section will examine multiple possible scenarios and their respective outcomes.

The first potential explanation is that conservatives become activists less frequently than liberal actors. This is unlikely, but the comparable number of conservative events on the liberal and conservative campuses implies that a greater number of local conservative people does not create more activism. If it were an issue of conservative activist population, one would predict a greater number of events on conservative campuses, as the number of possible activists will counteract the lower rates of activism. Indeed, the conservative events that did occur frequently had good turnout, if newspaper photos are any indication. This suggests that the issue has little to do with a low overall conservative population.

Another explanation could involve the increasing overall liberal trend of young people in general, and college students more specifically (Mayhew 2018, Pew Research 2016b). This suggests that definition of a neutral student bodies in this study was improper, as even the "neutral" student bodies in this study are predominantly liberal. This is supported by the liberal and neutral categories having similar numbers of liberal events. Taken further, the conservative student bodies may be slightly conservative in an

overall sense but relatively strongly conservative when compared to the liberal and neutral campuses. This option, like the first, seems unlikely to be the primary explanation for the lack of events, as one would predict greater numbers of events on conservative campuses, if still relatively few.

The experience of this study supports the possibility that conservative activists utilize different methodology to work towards their goals. Obscured in the data, but visible in the process of data collection, substantially more activities would have been coded conservative if they met the criteria of an "event" established in the research design. These events often consisted of talks organized by a club or club meetings reported in the newspaper. Some involved meetings with university officials. A comparable number of events would be marked liberal, but the insufficiency of conservative events would have been solved. The four criteria established to define an "event" excluded these events, most frequently because they were not public. These criteria, obtained from Van Dyke's research (2003), were originally designed to locate liberal student protest events. By attempting to use them to locate conservative events, the resultant failure points to a key difference in how political action occurs.

From the limited observational data, conservative activities occur with more of a private focus than public. This pattern and logical lack of information about private actions implies that much of the conservative political action on campuses occurs in more personal or smaller-scale organization. However, this is conjecture based on anecdotal evidence, and cannot be verified in the data. This may also be a function of inertia, suggested by previous research as a factor in making social change, reducing the need for conservative action (Best 2007). With the natural advantage of inertia in resisting

political and social change, conservative activists may find themselves requiring less dramatic action to achieve their goals, at least for most issues. This suggests a toolkit that includes public demonstration as an option, with activists choosing not to use that path because of lack of need. These tactics remain available for cases that require them, such as the need to change opinions for anti-abortion activists. For many conservative issues, the maintenance of the status quo takes primacy, while the pro-life movement actively seeks change from the current state of society.

Inertia and scarcity of demonstration may in turn have an effect on conservative political organization by impacting "tactical legitimacy," or the subjective appropriateness of using certain tactics to achieve goals. An individual who thinks public demonstration tactics are appropriate to make claims may be more successfully convinced by claims made through public demonstration. The inverse logically follows. For conservatives, the relative absence of issues worthy of public demonstration may limit the effectiveness of these types of claims. Although it has achieved overall public acceptance as a form of claimsmaking (Oliver and Meyer 1999), public demonstration may experience an engagement gap as subset of the population will not accept the cause for the tactics. They may prefer more sedate methods of organization or even solutions undertaken on an individual level as opposed to societal fixes. As a result of these attitudes, this effect occurs cyclically. The demonstration disparity occurs naturally as liberals are continuously more likely to choose public action and be convinced by it while conservatives are correspondingly less likely. A tactical change has already begun, as liberal movements have shifted from marches toward the more serene vigil (Ross and Lowery 2017). This reflects a growing understanding of the potential of a minor tactical

shift to facilitate increased legitimacy and subsequent success. While previously noted that antiabortion is the one exception among conservatives, no clear exception exists for liberal events. I propose that this results from the natural difficulty of observing what is missing versus what did happen. An endless number of issues never achieve or seldom achieve public demonstration among liberals, while scarcely any achieve public demonstration among conservatives.

Of the conservative events that did occur in public, they were often organized around the issue of abortion (38%), and they had high rates of countermovement activity (47%). Unlike many conservative positions, which are predominantly concerned with preserving the status quo, anti-abortion is a change issue, requiring constant action to convert opponents and especially any neutrals. This is in stark contrast to most conservative issues, which can be addressed more calmly because of a more defensive stance. For conservatives, this issue is probably most similar in function to liberal issues, lending itself well to the form of public activism seen in abundance in the liberal events of this study. Furthermore, the anti-abortion movement has prioritized the involvement of college students (Munson 2010). This could affect the prevalence of anti-abortion demonstration in the sample. The high percentage of counter demonstration against the conservative events likely has significant impact on conservative events compared to the liberal events at the same locations. Sheer disparity of population increases the number of potential counter-demonstrators to mobilize on short notice to respond. On top of this, 75% of rallies in support of Donald Trump featured counter-protesters, with his unpopularity among liberals becoming a lightning rod. Between the framing of issues, preference of tactics, and consistent presence of countermovements, conservative

activists could be expected to choose the path of least resistance, maintaining relationships with policymakers and working through private channels to achieve the result they desire.

Conclusion

The study unpacked in the preceding pages sought to examine the effects of an exceptional event on social movements of the day, specifically localized to college campuses. In so doing, the study did not achieve the anticipated result, but it did produce valuable data and observations, forming a data point for further research. Existing research lacked proper attention to the effects of macro-level forces on growth of social movement organizations and their subsequent events. The data supports the conceptualization of threat as a motivator for social movement activity, specifically as a factor in the decision to mobilize in support of one issue over another. This study also challenges multiple conventions within the discipline, namely the particular effectiveness of the resource mobilization model and primary focus on liberal events. The resource mobilization model, being as it focuses on sufficient resources, may not be well suited to the college environment, where relative disparities in tangible resources may still be above a minimum level for organization. While van Dyke (2003) found that resources impacted coalition behavior, that does not directly correlate to overall frequency of movement. Additionally, the existing research focus on liberal organizations has given them extensive coverage, yet they understudy conservative organizations, with the caveat that they are potentially more challenging to study.

The results of this study inform potential future research in two key ways. First, the shifts in liberal activism post-election indicates the need for further study of both

exceptional events and how threat influences the priorities of individuals. By nature of exceptionality, the effects of this exceptional event are unique unto themselves without study of further events and the potential discovery of similarities. Nevertheless, the effects observed in this study illuminates an element of the decision-making process of potential activists, who must prioritize issues by their relative threat. With the addition of a threat to multiple concerns, activists engage in triage activism and divulge, by necessity, what holds significance to them. Directly examining these choices as an example of alternative pathways may shed light onto the repercussions of the introduction of threat to a stable system. Second, there exists no doubt of the existence and sincerity of conservative political action, yet this study found few events to support its prevalence. Conservative organization must take some form, potentially focusing on private actions and personal influencers, which research should account for systematically. The chosen form of these actions should be observed as representative of the reduced need to mobilize enabled by the defense of the status quo. Furthermore, the tactics chosen reflect underlying assumptions about appropriate public behavior and political claimsmaking. If public movement demonstrations lack tactical legitimacy to individuals, then those individuals are likely to remain unconvinced by the claims, preferring a more understated or decorous method of addressing an issue. By studying organizational choices, sociologists may gain insight into the essential world-view of conservative activists. This will make significant progress towards filling the extant research gap.

Designing research around an exceptional event comes fraught with uncertainty. By definition, each event defies expectations, confounds predictions, and delineates periods of study. Few events could be said to be as exceptional as the 2016 Presidential

Election, at least in the United States. This research captures that singularity, although not in the planned fashion. By not supporting any of its the hypotheses, this study proved the unpredictability of exceptional events, while laying the groundwork for future research on social movements, politics, and exceptional events.

Limitations

The conduction of this study revealed multiple limitations that should be controlled for or overcome in future studies. The first, and most significant limitation was the lack of conservative events found in the data. This study sought conservative events but found them scarce and concerned with a narrow group of issues. While this was theoretically interesting, this could be built upon through studies which seek out conservative political action through theoretically informed and specific means. The second limitation was the short timeframe of the study, which obscured some trends in the data as it revealed the context of an exceptional event. The design of this study underestimated the trends that suggested a greater impact of new developing threats. A longer timeframe would enable analysis of long-term trends with regards to threat. A third limitation involved the inclusion of Israel/Palestine events. These events were placed in the foreign policy category because of an inability to reliably code them as liberal or conservative. In turn, this caused the outsize hazard for the foreign policy liberal event variable, although that variable likely had too few events to draw conclusions in any case.

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APPENDIX A: Coding Sheet Template

This sheet is to be used for each social movement event located. A social movement will be defined as a protest event as any action that collectively expressed a grievance, was public, and had a goal of causing or preventing social change" (Van Dyke 2003). Fill in the blank or box with the requisite information for each question. At the end, make a copy of the newspaper article.

1.   Which University paper was the event mentioned in?
       _____

2.   What is the listed revenue of this University?
       _____

3.   What was the date of the event (MM/DD/YY)?
       _____

4.   Was this event before the 2016 election?

No (Before or on November 8, 2016)	Yes (after November 8, 2016)

5.   Who won (in 2016) the state of this University?

Democratic Party (0)	Republican Party (1)

6.   Were there multiple organizations involved (cooperatively) in this event?

No (0)	Yes (1)

7.   Was there a counter-movement/demonstration involved in this event?

No (0)	Yes (1)

8.   What was the social alignment of the event?
     a. For the purposes of this study, the terms *conservative* and *liberal* will be defined as follows:
          i. A *conservative social movement* is one which champions traditional values or maintenance of the status quo, such as men's rights, pro-business, Christian fundamentalist, 2nd Amendment rights or open carry, anti-Obamacare (Affordable Care Act), election campaigning for a Republican candidate, or any campaign that is directly counter to a liberal issue or Democratic politician.
          ii. A *liberal social movement* is one which champions progressive causes, such as women's or LGBT+ rights, care for the environment, pro-choice, gun control, expansion of healthcare (pro-Obamacare, ACA), poverty relief, foreign aid, election campaigning for a Democratic candidate, or any campaign that is directly a counter to a conservative issue or Republican politician.
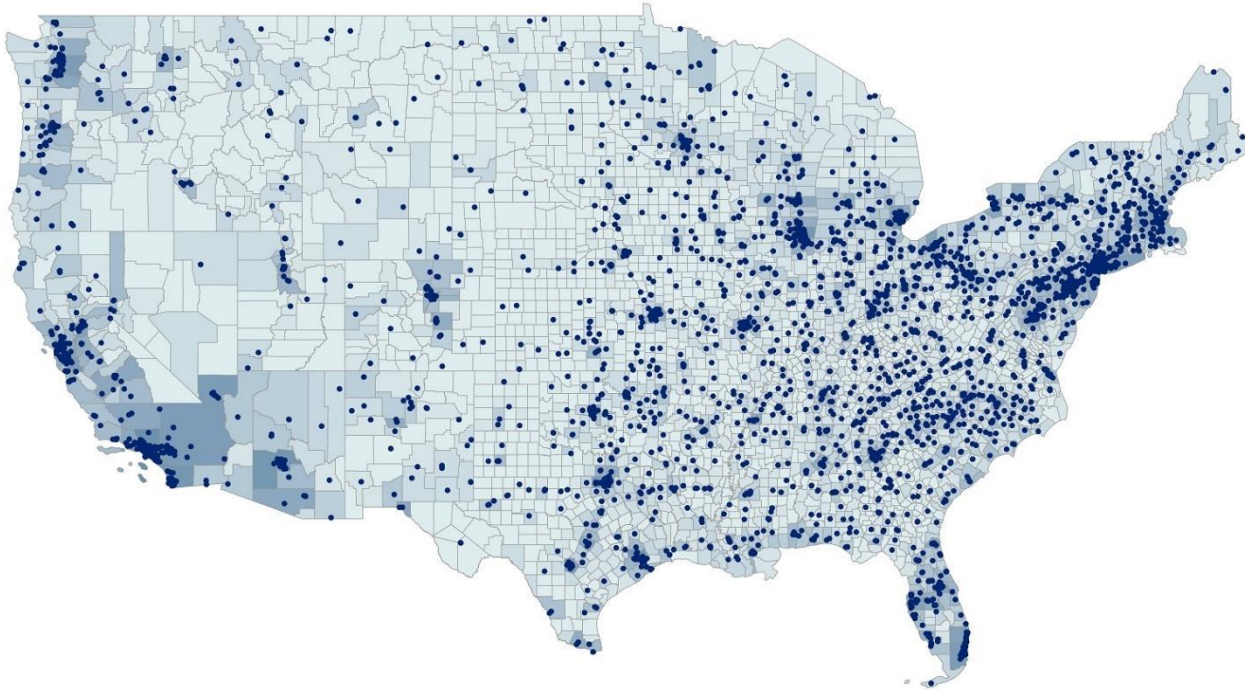
Conservative (0)	Liberal (1)

9.   What was the specific issue of the event (as best you can determine)?

_____

Be sure to make a copy of the newspaper article for further analysis.

APPENDIX B: Maps

Map of American Colleges and Universities (Akers and Soliz 2015)

Table C1: Events by Politics per Campus				
University	**Conservative**	**Liberal**	**Other**	**Total Events**	**Percent of Total**
Boston Univ	1	20	2	23	6.9%
Brown	3	25	4	32	9.6%
BYU	1	2	1	4	1.2%
Carleton	0	7	0	7	2.1%
Florida Atlantic	1	5	1	7	2.1%
Georgia State	2	13	4	19	5.7%
Hillsdale	2	2	0	4	1.2%
Howard	0	11	1	12	3.6%
Idaho State	0	5	0	5	1.5%
Indiana	4	33	4	41	12.3%
K-State	0	7	3	10	3.0%
LA Tech	0	2	2	4	1.2%
Northwestern	1	21	5	27	8.1%
Pittsburgh	3	32	4	39	11.7%
Portland State	3	18	3	24	7.2%
TCU	0	5	1	6	1.8%
Tufts	0	25	4	29	8.7%
UC Irvine	0	12	5	17	5.1%
UC Santa Barbara	0	13	0	13	3.9%
UT Dallas	0	9	0	9	2.7%
Total	21	267	44	332	100

Figure C1: Event Politics by Event Area