Evaluating the Effectiveness of Relational Organizing

The Buttigieg 2020 Campaign in New Hampshire

Senior Thesis, Political Science
Harrison J. Leighninger
Advisor: Dr. Steve McGovern
April 27, 2020
Haverford College
I’d like to make a few acknowledgements for all the help I received for this project. Thank you to Steve, my advisor, for your support and wisdom, and to all my friends at Haverford College. Thank you to my family, especially my aunt and uncle for their wonderful hospitality in Nashua; my grandparents for their love, good food, and air conditioning on those hot summer weekends; and my own immediate family, for tolerating me as I struggled through this project from home after the coronavirus shuttered campus. Thank you to all the staff of the Pete Buttigieg campaign, especially Zoë Meeken, Noah Dion, Greta Carnes, and all the Pete for NH organizers. Not only did you offer kind words and welcome advice, but this project would have simply been impossible without the insight and testimony you provided.
Table of Contents

Introduction ..................................................................................................................... 5

Literature Review ........................................................................................................... 7

School of Thought 1: Today’s Campaigns Don’t Need Organizing ................................. 7

School of Thought 2: Campaign Organizing Matters .................................................... 10
   Sub-School 1: Campaign Organizing, and Canvassing in Particular, Matters Because It
   Gets Out The Vote ........................................................................................................ 10
   Sub-School 2: Campaign Organizing Matters Because It Persuades Voters ...................... 14

The Debate over How Innovation Occurs Between Presidential Campaigns .................... 17

School of Thought 3: Campaign Organizing Somewhat Matters, But Has Much To Learn ..... 20

Research Design .......................................................................................................... 24
   I. Tentative Answer to Research Question ..................................................................... 24
   II. Hypothesis Formulation .............................................................................................. 27
   III. Definition of Concepts ............................................................................................... 27
   IV. Case Selection ............................................................................................................. 30
   V. Measurement of Variables .......................................................................................... 32
   VI. Data Collection and Analysis .................................................................................... 33

Background on the American Primary System .................................................................. 34

Case Study: The Pete for America Campaign in New Hampshire ..................................... 39
   Buttigieg’s Background .................................................................................................... 39
   Why Buttigieg Ran ........................................................................................................... 39
   Entrance into the Presidential Race, and Initial Prospects ............................................. 40
   The 2020 Democratic Primary Race, in Brief .................................................................. 41
   Organizing, Pre-2008 until Today .................................................................................... 43
   Organizing in 2020: Why Buttigieg Embraced Relational Organizing ......................... 45
   The Buttigieg Campaign’s Relational Organizing in Practice ........................................ 47
   The Buttigieg Relational Organizing Tool ...................................................................... 48
   Relational Organizing at the Micro Level: The Roles of Buttigieg’s Organizers ............... 53

Assessing Relational Organizing’s Effects on Voter Persuasion: Organizing Turf 1G, 
Southern Carroll County ................................................................................................. 54
   Values and Policy .......................................................................................................... 55
   Role of Professional Staff ............................................................................................... 59
   Emphasis on Existing Relationships .............................................................................. 61
   Campaign Technology .................................................................................................... 64

Organizing Turf 7E (Hudson, Pelham) as a Control Case to Assess Persuasion .................. 65

Assessing Relational Organizing’s Effects on Voter Turnout: Organizing Turf 7B, Nashua. 67
Introduction

In the 2020 Democratic Primaries, candidates in a crowded field sought to get an edge by embracing innovative new campaign strategies. Barack Obama, the most recent Democrat to win the White House, had tapped into new technologies and embraced organizing tactics previously more common in social movement organizing to win an underdog victory 12 years earlier. In 2020, many Democrats sought to do the same. In particular, Mayor Pete Buttigieg’s campaign embraced relational organizing in the early states. Relational organizing is a practice used by social movement activists. In this tactic, campaign staff perform a mentoring role, training campaign supporters to reach out to their own social circles. These conversations are centered around values and storytelling, rather than policy debates, and can be tracked through new technologies. The Buttigieg campaign sought to deploy this organizing strategy in the first primary states of Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada, and South Carolina.

This thesis asks if the relational organizing tactic was effective at persuading voters to support Buttigieg, and at improving turnout among supporters. To answer this question, an analysis was undertaken of the Buttigieg campaign’s efforts in the early primary state of New Hampshire.

This project will open with a review of the literature around campaign organizing. This will be followed by a research design section describing why New Hampshire was selected as a case study. This section will also highlight how this project approaches qualitative analysis, as well as which organizing turfs will be focused on and why. This will be followed by a background section describing the history of the presidential primary process. Part two will focus on the specific of the Buttigieg case. First, Buttigieg’s campaign itself: who he is, his reasons for running, his prospects it will describe how the 2020 Democratic primaries unfolded, and why the
Buttigieg campaign chose to embrace a relational organizing strategy. Secondly, it will examine the effectiveness of the relational organizing tactic at persuading voters to support Buttigieg. This will be done by examining interviews of a conservative organizing turf where much effort was placed on relational organizing, a comparison with a similar turf where relational organizing was not heavily focused on, and a qualitative analysis of the whole state to see if relational volunteers in a precinct correlates with Buttigieg’s vote share.

The coronavirus pandemic of 2020, where the United States and much of the world exists under a state of quarantine, has exposed the need for new forms of campaign organizing that go beyond traditional door to door canvassing. However, in addition to these short-term problems, there exists a broader need for campaigns to improve the way they engage voters.

The 2016 election was decided by an extremely narrow margin, less than eighty thousand votes across three states. This is the second presidential election since the turn of the century where the winner of the popular vote did not carry the electoral college; this has only happened five times in the nation’s entire history. These results suggests that even small differences in turnout or persuasion would have been enough to completely shift the result of a national election. This project will investigate whether relational organizing represents a new tactic that can produce these shifts.
Literature Review

In a clearly divided America, campaigns need to achieve two objectives in order to win: they must mobilize voters who otherwise would not vote, and also persuade voters, who otherwise would not, to support their candidate. Debate rages amongst academics and practitioners about how presidential campaigns can best achieve these two outcomes.

School of Thought 1: Today’s Campaigns Don’t Need Organizing

Some scholars and political practitioners argue that the increasing professionalization of presidential campaigns and the advent of mass media and technology to reach voters has rendered traditional campaign organizing obsolete.

It was the campaigns of the 1970s and 1980s, with the beginnings of mass media and the increasing professionalization of the political apparatus that first led some scholars to dismiss campaign organizing as a thing of the past. Political scientists, such as Robert Entmen, argue that political machines were replaced by small teams of consultants as key to the success in presidential electoral campaigns. Entmen even went so far as to declare that American politics had decayed to a point that the nation had entered an era of “democracy without citizens”.

He argued that the role of mass media in American society in recent decades had taken over where grassroots campaigns had existed before thanks to the advent of the 24 hour cable news cycle and online social media. Entmen posits that these changes have not made voters more informed or held government more accountable, but instead they have allowed politicians, their campaigns, and their media allies to craft powerful narratives that proved to be the deciding factor in the nation’s political outcomes. In particular, he uses the differing reactions to President Carter’s Middle East policies and President Reagan’s Iran-Contra scandal to illustrate this point. While Carter’s policies had been sharply critiqued, as well as remembered poorly by the public
in the years since, Reagan’s communications team deftly handled the media during the Iran-Contra scandal, allowing the president to emerge with his reputation intact.

This period also saw the beginning of a trend toward increased professionalization of campaigns and political staff – a trend that scholars insist has continued right up to today. Adam Sheingate, in his 2016 book on the American political profession, wrote “whereas parties and candidates used to rely on a network of local operatives to rally the party faithful and manage the practical aspects of winning a race, most of the key decisions in contemporary campaigns are now in the hands of consultants who sell a variety of products and services.”

Though he is critical of their role, Sheingate goes on to argue that consultants have a stranglehold on American politics, and that they have maligned field organizing in the contemporary campaign. Other scholars, such as Dennis Johnson in *No Place for Amateurs*, offer variations of this argument that the key to electoral success lies not in the realm of volunteerism and grassroots organizing, but in the campaign headquarters and the realm of pricey political consultants. In Johnson’s words, “Despite the growth of citizen activism sparked by mobile technology, social networking, and online communications, professional consultants are still the ones who call the shots in U.S. elections”. This narrative also appears in much of America’s popular culture surrounding presidential campaigns. Films like D.A. Pennebaker’s 1993 documentary *The War Room*, which follows James Carville and George Stephanopoulos as they coordinated the strategy for the 1992 Bill Clinton campaign, cemented the preeminent role that strategists and consultants play in the mind of the public. In fictional literature, Joe Klein’s best-selling novel *Primary Colours* (subsequently brought to the screen with John Travolta in the lead role) or Aaron Sorkin’s *The West Wing* also popularized this view of campaigns among the
American public. Most recently, the award-winning series *Veep* has used biting satire to poke fun at this world.

Some scholars argue that technology has long played a role in replacing voter organizing in presidential campaign strategy. This trend has paralleled the professionalization of campaigns as candidates look for experts and innovators, who will manage the implementation of new technologies. For example, long before the advent of social media and the internet, practitioners like Hal Malchow were pioneering the practice of “micro targeting,” using direct mail to mobilize specific constituencies of voters en masse. Malchow, and his novel micro targeting strategy, was credited with the victory of Ron Wyden in the 1996 special election that made him the first Democratic senator from Oregon since 1968. Daniel Kreiss describes in *Prototype Politics* how George Bush’s 2004 reelection campaign adopted its own micro targeting strategies to great effect in order to mobilize voters.

Social media’s newfound popularity represents a major step in the eyes of Victoria Farrar-Myers and Justin Vaughn, editors of *Controlling the Message: New Media in American Political Campaigns*. They point to the advent of social media for its ability to get a campaign’s message directly from headquarters to the newsfeeds of voters as another reason that presidential campaigns need to rely less and less on grassroots organizing. Some have argued that given social media’s low cost, it could allow grassroots organizations or other individuals to contribute to campaigns by performing surrogacy roles or otherwise supporting the campaign online. However, the studies in *Controlling the Message* demonstrate that as of 2015 outside groups had shown little interest in performing a “campaign surrogacy” role. With the exception of some conservative groups, few have been willing to compete with political campaigns.
In sum, this school of thought emphasizes three aspects of successful campaigns in the contemporary period: effective use of new technologies to target voters, a reliance on mass media to create a narrative and brand for the candidate, and the hiring of elite professionals to coordinate these messages. Scholars in this school of thought tend to dismiss “field” or grassroots organizing as a key ingredient for a successful presidential campaign.

School of Thought 2: Campaign Organizing Matters

Another school of thought has lately been surging amongst both campaign practitioners and political scientists. It returns to the concept of campaign organizing as a central ingredient for victory. By campaign organizing, I am referring to the tactics of peer to peer outreach made by a campaign, usually consisting of door-to-door canvassing or phone calls. These campaign practices can also be generalized as “field organizing”, “community organizing”, or simply “field”, and usually involve volunteers. What follows are the different perspectives on why campaign organizing matters and how it contributes to electoral success.

Sub-School 1: Campaign Organizing, and Canvassing in Particular, Matters Because It Gets Out The Vote

Both political scientists and campaign practitioners in this school place a high premium on campaign organizing, because it encourages voters leaning towards their candidate to actually go to the polls. Daniel J. Galvin argues that this is particularly important for Democratic campaigns because Democratic presidents have been particularly poor “party builders”. Republican presidents, faced for decades with seemingly permanent Democratic majorities in Congress, invested resources in building a strong party apparatus at the local level that could reliably turn out Republican voters. Democratic presidents made no such efforts, and often even spurned their party to run as outsiders (Clinton and Carter). Because of this, recent Democrats
have had to build their field organizations from scratch, rather than rely on party institutions, to
turn out voters. This has been especially true given (1) the collapse of other institutions upon
which Democrats have tended to rely, such as unions, and (2) Democratic candidates
increasingly depend on younger voters, who turn out less consistently than the older voters
Republicans attract.\textsuperscript{10}

Although sometimes difficult, scholars subscribing to this school of thought argue that
running a campaign focused on personally engaging voters through organizing is usually the best
way to have a measurable effect on voter turnout. In any discussion about how campaigns best
mobilize voters, Donald Green and Alan Gerber’s \textit{Get Out the Vote: How to Increase Voter
Turnout} looms large. Originally published in 2004 and now in its third edition by the Brookings
Institute, this reference text applies a scientific lens to the tactics of getting voters to the polls.
Examining dozens of get-out-the-vote (GOTV) tactics, the authors compiled randomized field
experiments testing tactics ranging from direct mail to canvassing. Green and Gerber conclude
“that the more personal the interaction between the campaign and the potential voter, the more it
raises a person’s chances of voting”.\textsuperscript{11} They argue that door to door canvassing is thus the “gold
standard” of tactics, though this strategy can be difficult to reproduce at scale and might not
always be right for every campaign. In particular, they criticize the poor turnout results of the
most ‘top-down’ tactics, such as ads in mass media and direct mail. Green and Gerber also
examine the turnout effects of mass media (i.e. television, radio, and newspapers) as a tool to
mobilize voter turnout. They highlight studies asking whether greater volumes of political ads
successfully remind voters to go to the polls, if positive ads excite voters to vote, and if negative
ads depress turnout, because voters become less excited to vote. Their results are quite clear:
“Regardless of their tone, campaign ads have little effect on turnout”.\textsuperscript{12} Even nonpartisan ads,
either appealing to citizens’ sense of patriotism while encouraging them to vote, or implying negative consequences if they do not, had results that were barely statistically significant. Green and Gerber are also critical of the turnout effectiveness of direct-mail. Their studies conclude that nonpartisan mailings have only a small effect on voter turnout, while mail advocating for a particular candidate has no discernible effect on whether a voter casts a ballot. The fact that campaigns spend .50$ a piece on a mass mailing with no statistically significant effect, they conclude, is “concerning”. 

If more personal tactics like canvassing are demonstrably better, why do all campaigns not employ them? Green and Gerber acknowledge that theirs cannot be a one-size-fits-all recommendation, simply because these proven campaign tactics take an extremely large amount of work to implement at almost any scale. For example, though a nonpartisan GOTV mailing is less effective than door-to-door canvassing, canvassing is far more people intensive, whether paid or volunteer. Different campaigns, with different kinds of resources, must employ different strategies to maximize their get out the vote efforts.

Lastly, Green and Gerber’s fourth edition of Get out the Vote! How to Increase Voter Turnout, published in 2019, includes a brief discussion of a pair of studies focusing on “friend-to-friend” GOTV efforts over social media. The first study was a randomized experiment on undergraduates at a large university who were friended on Facebook, and exposed to multiple posts encouraging voting. The result was that student turnout increased by 8.22 percent. The second study also revolved around participants tagging members of their networks in Facebook posts, and the findings also suggest that friend-to-friend outreach increased voter turnout. Though these studies are limited to online interactions only, and have yet to be replicated by further studies around the question of online relational organizing, Green and Gerber conclude
that friend-to-friend organizing like this holds significant promise as an effective get out the vote tool.

If \textit{Get Out the Vote} takes an aerial view of these debates within campaigns, Rasmus Neilson’s \textit{Ground Wars} examines campaigning under a microscope. Neilson follows a pair of 2008 congressional races for an extended ethnographic study, and while he generally highlights the power of canvassers, he also recognizes the challenges inherent in this kind of strategy. In fact he cites the eye-popping figure early in his book that national campaigns in 2008 would contact 100 million people, requiring about 33 million hours of work.\(^{18}\) He goes on to document the many hours of effort and struggle the organizers undergo during the two congressional races he is following. As a participant-observer in his study, Neilson recounts episodes of his own volunteerism in which he makes dozens of calls picked up by answering machines or irate residents, and knocks doors for hours in the heat with minimal success.\(^{19}\) Though these tactics may produce the best results, they are also slow, inefficient, and can be emotionally draining for the volunteers involved.

Becky Bond and Zack Exley are two prominent practitioners who belong to the pro-canvassing school of thought, and argue that despite the challenges of employing a personal campaign approach, it is still the best way to increase voter turnout. They both were key operatives on Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders’ 2016 insurgent primary campaign against Democratic frontrunner Hillary Clinton. Bond and Exley argue that despite their campaign’s initial lack of fundraising, name recognition, or media attention, they benefitted from a large number of enthusiastic volunteers across the country. In their how-to guide for progressive campaigns, published following the Sanders campaign, Bond and Exley argue that media strategies driven by consultants and high fundraising were not as effective as simply getting as
many volunteers calling as many early state voters as possible. Despite the difficulty of coordinating disparate volunteers from across the nation, Bond and Exley argue that mobilizing these grassroots built an operation that “had the capacity to contact every single voter in key states like Nevada nearly on a daily basis.” This kind of capacity allowed the campaign to personally appeal to thousands of voters, driving up the turnout of voters sympathetic to Sanders in key early states. The senator’s near win in Iowa and resounding success in New Hampshire shocked the political establishment and propelled his campaign to victories across the primary map.

This sub-school of thought upholds the power of personal appeals, like canvassing and phone calls, to mobilize voters. Both statistical studies and experienced practitioners make this argument, and though it can be more difficult to implement than tactics like direct mail or mass media ads, contemporary campaigns clearly believe in this school of thought because they are putting in the massive effort to organize major operations around these tactics.

Sub-School 2: Campaign Organizing Matters Because it Persuades Voters

This sub-school argues that voters of the opposing party and other unlikely supporters are not out of reach, but instead can be persuaded through sustained outreach from a grassroots campaign organizing effort. This point is made in Samuel Popkin’s seminal work, *The Reasoning Voter: Communication and Persuasion in Presidential Campaigns*. Popkin disagrees with the assertion that American voters cannot be reasoned with. Instead, he argues that they make rational choices based on the limited political information that they possess. In addition to what little information they have about issues leading into the election season, Popkin argues that voters make decisions on the information that comes as a ‘by-product’ of daily life,
interpersonal communication amongst social networks and with the media, and political party identification. He maintains that political campaigns can be effective at voter persuasion by increasing the salience of a particular issue. Popkin does concede that voters use a certain number of “mental shortcuts” to make decisions, however he explains this by arguing that these voters are making decisions based on different kinds of experiences from their daily lives.

This school of thought, that voters make rational choices based on limited information, is in line with other works such as Robert S. Erikson and Christopher Wlezien’s The Timeline of Presidential Elections: How Campaigns Do (and Do Not) Matter. Wlezien and Erikson argue that campaigns do matter because they can educate voters on particular issues, rather than effectively changing the minds of citizens on everything. Furthermore, they point out that voters are rarely swayed by individual events such as a presidential debate, but that campaigns can be successful in shifting voter preferences by educating voters over a sustained period of time through tactics ranging from advertising to a candidate’s speeches. The mechanism of how this education occurs is expanded on by D. Sunshine Hillygus and Todd Sheilds in their analysis of wedge issues in presidential campaigns, as depicted in The Persuadable Voter. They make three key points about voter persuasion. First, they argue that voters most likely to change their vote based on new information may be partisans, but usually care deeply about a particular issue (where they might not align with their party). Second, candidates can attract these voters by emphasizing these “wedge” issues. Third, advances in campaign technology and tactics can allow campaigns to appeal directly to these voters and inform them about their stance on the wedge issue. Hillygus and Sheilds go on to cite internal studies conducted by labor unions of the 1997 New Jersey gubernatorial race that showed an 8 percentage point increase in support for
the labor-backed candidate among voters contacted through “ground war” tactics such as telephone calls and personal canvassing.26

These are not the only practitioners to demonstrate that the best way to persuade voters is to use campaign organizing tactics to inform them on the wedge issues that they value. In The Victory Lab: The Secret Science of Winning Campaigns, Sasha Issenberg describes how Republican campaigns, including Mitt Romney’s 2002 gubernatorial race in Massachusetts and the Bush reelection campaign two years later, extensively used micro targeting to identify voters they thought could be persuaded (As discussed in Prototype Politics above).27 In this case, Issenberg explains that the Republicans targeted religious Democrats in suburbs, hoping to energize them over the issue of abortion rights. However, the important point that Issenberg makes was that once persuadable voters were identified, these Republican candidates tapped into local volunteer infrastructures, often in the same neighborhoods as targeted voters, to canvass them.28 Issenberg argues that it was not just the message itself, but that it was being delivered by a local volunteer, that contributed significantly to the strategy’s success.

This school of thought posits that American voters are not so divided by political polarization or worldview as some would suggest. Scholars and practitioners emphasize that the way voters are contacted greatly influences the effectiveness of persuasion effort, with targeted and personal outreach from local volunteers being far more effective than mass media advertising or other forms of voter persuasion.

One final note on persuasion: it is important to acknowledge that there is far from a consensus on the degree to which campaign organizing is effective at persuading voters. Though this section has described the research that organizing can help to persuade voters, there is also research supporting the idea that organizing, and campaigns in general, do very little to
effectively persuade voters. One example of this scholarship is a 2017 analysis covering 49 field experiments conducted in the United States. It finds: “The best estimate for the persuasive effects of campaign contact and advertising—such as mail, phone calls, and canvassing—on Americans’ candidate choices in general elections is zero. Our best guess for online and television advertising is also zero, but there is less evidence on these modes.”

The authors go on to explain several caveats in their study, such as that their research “does not speak to the effects of candidates’ qualities, positions, or overall campaign ‘message.’ It does not indicate the optimal allocation of campaign spending across voter registration, get-out-the-vote, and persuasion efforts. It also remains possible that campaigns could develop more effective persuasive messages.”

In addition to campaign advertising, this study focused only on traditional organizing methods such as phone calls and canvassing.

The Debate over How Innovation Occurs Between Presidential Campaigns

A consistent theme throughout this literature is a discussion of how campaigns innovate. For example, Green and Gerber criticize American campaigns by arguing that the so-called “best practices” employed by campaigns are not always supported by empirical research. The dubious best practices are upheld by increasingly professionalized staff, whose expert opinions are more rooted in their past experience campaigning than in experimentation. In Organizing Genius: The Secrets of Creative Collaboration, Warren Bennis and Patricia Biederman include an analysis of the 1992 Bill Clinton campaign’s decision making. They describe this phenomenon up close: a hyper professionalized and insular team of core staffers, attempting to perfect existing techniques. Though Bennis and Biederman do describe some experimentation, it is mostly around focus groups testing different messages, rather than field testing new strategies and
tactics. This example fits the larger trend amongst presidential campaigns described by eminent political scientist Pippa Norris. Norris tracks the development of electoral campaigns, mainly in Europe but also in the US. She lays out a theoretical understanding of the development of 20th century campaigning and claims that we have entered into a “Post Modern” period. Beginning in 1990, this period is characterized by an increased reliance on professionalization (especially in the U.S.), and a permanent campaign mentality typified in part by “customer first” poll testing. She argues that this has maligned traditional grassroots volunteers and left the electorate (especially young people) feeling cynical.\textsuperscript{32} In addition to Norris’ analysis, the sources discussed in the first school of thought also describe this over-professionalization.\textsuperscript{33}

However, this increasing reliance on professional political operatives doesn’t seem to be stifling all campaign innovation, since campaign technology continues to improve. Daniel Kreiss in \textit{Prototype Politics: Technology-Intensive Campaigning and the Data of Democracy} concedes that recent campaigns have suffered from over-professionalization, and specifically critiques the establishment of a class of career political professionals. In his eyes, these “experts” may be masters of the techniques already in use but are rarely innovative. However, he disagrees with the assessment that contemporary campaigns have become completely stagnant in their tactics, and points to the major changes in campaign technology as an example of a new way of thinking about innovation in the world of presidential campaign politics. He argues that though campaigns have become more professionalized, “particular campaigns are transformed through [post-election reflection] into ‘prototypes’ for some actors, a model for future campaign practice, and a set of claims about the world that are actionable for practitioners,”\textsuperscript{34} He cites the Obama campaigns of 2008 and 2012 as important prototype campaigns because they brought
“newcomers to the political field,” who in turn changed the way the campaigns practiced politics by bringing new practices and technologies from the private and non-profit sectors. \(^{35}\)

Finally, both Daniel Kreiss, and Daniel Galvin in *Presidential Party Building*, make the argument that Democratic campaigns have innovated by necessity, especially in the last several decades. With dominance of Republicans in presidential politics since the 1980s, Democrats suddenly found themselves playing catch up against campaigns with both more advanced technology and a more sophisticated local party apparatus. \(^{36}\) Galvin explains at the conclusion of his book that President Clinton began to invest in party infrastructure late in his term, and Democratic National Committee Chairmen continued his efforts after he left office. By the time Barack Obama began his general election campaign, he was greeted by the new infrastructure the DNC had put in place: “The DNC boasted a fully functional national voter file, over 200 trained field operatives in all fifty states, grassroots training programs in each state, new cutting-edge technologies, user-friendly canvassing tools for volunteers, and multiple online campaign resources”. \(^{37}\) The Obama operation quickly incorporated these resources into their own operation. Below, some of the innovations present in Obama’s organizing model are described. However, any model would have been challenging to implement without the help of party infrastructure, including a party voter file containing the names and addresses of Democratic voters across the country.
This school of thought argues that campaign organizing needs to move towards new tactics that increase the involvement of volunteers and give voters new ways to participate in the electoral process. Scholars and practitioners subscribing to this opinion posit that campaigns should look to both of Barack Obama’s two national campaigns, which served as prototypes for new tactics and technology, as well as attempt to learn new lessons from social movement organizers.

In *Groundbreakers: How Obama’s 2.2 Million Volunteers Transformed Campaigning in America*, Elizabeth McKenna and Hahrie Han describe the organizing efforts of the Obama 2008 and 2012 campaigns. In particular, they point to the unprecedented role played by volunteers, who were engaged through the campaigns’ leadership training, willingness to share data, and camaraderie building “neighborhood team” model. This model was key to the campaign’s successful organizing efforts, because it solved three key problems for the Obama campaign: (1) how to keep volunteers motivated; (2) how to enable volunteers to take on the genuine leadership roles the campaign needed them to play; and (3) how to avoid overburdening volunteers. The structure itself was fairly simple. These small “neighborhood teams” were built around a professional field organizer who had been hired and trained by the campaign. This staffer would recruit, test, and train neighborhood team leaders, who in turn would recruit, test, and train their own core team members. With this structure, volunteers would motivate and be accountable to each other rather than just to a distant candidate (learning the lesson from the 2004 Dean campaign’s ‘Deaniacs’ that enthusiasm has limits). Furthermore, by giving specific responsibilities to each team member in a transparent hierarchy, the campaign enabled volunteers to play structured, meaningful roles. These included tasks like canvass captains who would
coordinate door knocking teams, phone bank captain, and volunteers specifically tasked with conducting outreach to local youth or even neighborhood barbershops. Notably, one of the volunteer positions McKenna and Han describe is a data captain, responsible for entering the team’s canvass and outreach results into the Obama campaign’s cutting-edge voter database. Giving people who were not paid staffers access to a voter database demonstrated an unprecedented level of trust, and one that volunteers strove to sustain. Finally, by dividing up responsibilities within the team, and holding each member accountable to the group, the structure ensured that no single volunteer became overburdened. When presented with genuine opportunities to contribute, volunteers flocked to the campaign and built an unprecedented grassroots organization of some 2.2 million volunteers. Although this sort of structure has been widely adopted by Democratic campaigns as the best practice for field organizing, it requires high levels of volunteer commitment, and resources like field organizers.

This innovative structure was primarily the product of Marshall Ganz, a prominent social movement activist and scholar. Much of Ganz’s scholarship originates with his work with Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers (UFW) union in California during the 1960s. In his book Why David Sometimes Wins: Leadership, Organization, and Strategy in the California Farm Worker Movement, Ganz describes how Chavez and the UFW defeated the “Goliath” of the California grape industry. He cites “the diversity of their community ties, information, and skills” as one of the key reasons the UFW triumphed. In particular, Ganz details how organizers mobilized “biographical sources” of strategic capacity through storytelling, especially personal and identity-based storytelling, as a key organizing tool. Furthermore, he emphasizes deliberative decision making as a key tool for both encouraging strategic innovation and engaging those who otherwise might have been too cynical or felt too powerless to get involved.
During the Obama campaign, Ganz would design training events, known as Camp Obama, to teach volunteers to set up campaign structures like the neighborhood team model. However, the other piece involved teaching volunteers to connect with voters by telling their ‘story of self, a story of us, and a story of now’. This use of storytelling to connect people had its roots in the UFW’s biographical focus in the 1960s, and was innovative because it was a direct departure from the kind of policy-based arguments that traditional campaign consultants had thought appealed to voters. Scholars and practitioners in this school of thought point to the adoption of Marshall Ganz’s social movement organizing tactics and structures as key assets that assisted the Obama campaign’s successful field operation.

Another major social movement scholar in this school of thought is Mark R. Warren. His book *Dry Bones Rattling* describes the successes of social movement organizing from Saul Alinsky to the 1990s. In particular, he argues that relational organizing is one of the key advances first pioneered by the Texas Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) in order to directly engage citizens in a social movement, rather than focusing on the leaders of existing community institutions as Alinsky had. Warren describes relational organizing as a bottom-up method for building community power. Rather than begin a campaign with predetermined issues, the IAF would bring residents together to talk about the values that mattered to them, and from there decide on issues to pursue. Rather than turn to existing institutions, the IAF would look to contact laypeople, and engage citizens through relationships such as networks of friends and families. These networks of citizens would be constructed by the establishment of shared values through storytelling.

This sort of organizational model has since been taken up by many other social movements, and even some campaigns. Scholars Michael T. Heaney and Fabio Rojas studied
this strategy’s effectiveness at organizing across partisan divides. For their field experiment, Heaney and Rojas describe the development of the contemporary anti-war movement in the lead up to the Iraq War, and examine the interactions between anti-war activists and electoral politics. They dub social movement activists, who also consider themselves partisans, as the “party in the streets”. The authors demonstrate that the activists’ organizing can have electoral ramifications, as networks formed around antiwar values can be mobilized to elect antiwar candidates. Importantly, they find that even when citizens disagree over various policy platforms, they could come together over shared values and work together to oppose the war. That is not to say that partisanship did not play a role in these anti-war organizations. Rojas and Heaney found partisanship is also a constraint on social movement activism, because partisans displayed less tactical innovation and instead relied on institutionalized strategies like lobbying and voting. This article highlights again that campaign innovations often comes from outside professional political circles, and that a relational organizing model based on values (in this case anti-interventionism and pacifism) can even bring people together across America’s partisan divide.

Hahrie Han’s second book, *How Organizations Develop Activists: Civic Associations & Leadership in the 21st Century*, also deals with many of these same issues. Han studies a pair of civic organizations in order to understand how organizations develop activists. She finds that organizations embracing an interpersonal, community-based strategy are more effective at reaching and engaging citizens. Importantly, Han also demonstrates that conservative social movement organizations, such as the TEA Party, have also done this very effectively. Dispelling the myth that only liberal groups are effective at this type of relational organizing, Han highlights how conservatives activists have embraced the blending of organizing and mobilizing, so that large numbers of people feel like they contribute actively to the success of
these organizations, and will reliably show up to vote for the group’s interests. Furthermore, Han highlights how these organizations are embracing relationship building around a shared sense of community.

Political scientists and practitioners belonging to this school of thought argue that the next generation of political campaigns must do more than double down on direct contact tactics like making phone calls and knocking on doors. First, they should follow the example of the Obama campaigns by giving volunteers the opportunity to recruit, train, and manage other volunteers. In contemporary politics, especially Democratic politics, volunteers are indispensable and should be trusted with leadership roles and with access to the data that enables them to live up to their full potential as campaign agents. Second, campaigns should continue to learn lessons from social movement activists, about engaging people through shared values and storytelling rather than policy issues. Furthermore, electoral campaigns should continue to embrace relational organizing as a way to reach untouched voters, and to blend mobilization and organization so that everyone feels they have a genuine stake in the campaign.

Research Design

I. Tentative Answer to Research Question

This author’s first exposure to politics was as a volunteer knocking doors in a local city council campaign. There I witnessed first hand the effectiveness of a personal connection between a volunteer and a voter at both persuading a voter to support a candidate and turn out to vote at all. This country’s electorate is characterized by low voter turnout and by increasing partisan division. Any successful campaign must implement a strategy that overcomes these two barriers if it hopes to achieve success at the national level.
Green and Gerber’s studies on campaign organizing clearly lay out how the empirical evidence aligns with my anecdotal experience. They demonstrate that field organizing matters (compared to other campaign tactics, such as paid advertising or direct mail) because the more personal the outreach from a campaign is, the more effective it is at both persuading voters and turning out voters. Though their work was mostly limited to testing the effectiveness of more traditional organizing strategies such as door-to-door canvassing or paid mailings, this golden rule has been convincingly taken up by practitioners and social movement scholars. Barack Obama’s 2008 and 2012 campaigns effectively embraced the social movement tactics practiced by Marshall Ganz, to great effect.

In *Prototype Politics*, Daniel Kreiss described how, although campaigns generally have become more set in their ways through an emphasis of professionalization, occasionally “prototype” campaigns emerge in part by enlisting professionals with backgrounds outside traditional campaign work, and so can develop a major tactical innovation which is then adopted by practitioners across the country.

Obama’s campaign did this with Ganz’ insights, and if Buttigieg’s can successfully implement a relational organizing model, it could represent another leap forward for campaigns across the country.

Relational organizing is a difficult concept to define, given that it only recently has begun to be focused on by electoral campaign practitioners. Joe Fuld, one Democratic strategist, offers the simple definition: “Relational organizing is the process by which campaigns, groups, or individuals harness their personal relationships to effect community change.” ACRONYM, a Democratic campaign consulting firm which employed Greta Carnes before she became the
National Field Director for the Buttigieg campaign, described the theory behind relational organizing in layperson’s terms:

*The theory is simple: a volunteer reaching out to someone they already know is more effective than a volunteer reaching out to strangers. If you got a call from a campaign organizer asking you to vote, it would be easier for you to ignore it (assuming you even pick up the phone from an unknown number) than if your best friend texted you and asked you to vote.*

Mark Warren, and other scholars from the third school of literature, describe how social movements turned to relational organizing to achieve a more ground up strategy. Volunteers would feel they had a greater stake in the organization because they’d included others they knew in the organizing effort.

Relational organizing’s reliance on volunteers’ personal networks presents the possibility to reach new voters who may not be in the databases of campaigns or political parties, and therefore are never called or canvassed through traditional organizing. These groups can include young people living on college campuses where they are difficult for traditional organizing strategies to track, or minority communities who have been traditionally disenfranchised. Relational strategies may also have better contact rates, given that voters are more likely to pick up the phone or answer the door for someone they recognize. Another potential benefit of relational programs is that relational volunteers are less likely to encourage non-supporters to vote, and contacts are unlikely to “opt-out” of an existing relationships.

Given that existing literature has shown that the more personal an appeal is, the more likely voters are to turn out or to vote a certain way, then it follows a voters’ own friends and family will be the best messengers a campaign could have. If campaign’s like Buttigieg’s are effective at formalizing a strategy focused on the conversations of supporters, then it could represent a new best practice in the same way that Obama’s campaign did.
II. Hypothesis Formulation

The independent variable in this study is the implementation of a specific organizing tactic, in this case the relational organizing model as implemented by the Buttigieg campaign. The dependent variables in this study are 1. the support for Buttigieg among voters who do not normally vote, and 2. the support for Buttigieg among voters who had not originally intended to vote for him.

This researcher hypothesize that the Buttigieg campaign’s relational organizing model will prove effective at improving electoral results among voters in these two target groups. I predict there will be a causal relationship between my independent and dependent variables. Precincts where more resources were expended on the implementation of relational organizing, will see an increase in the electoral results for Buttigieg from these two groups.

Fig.1

III. Definition of Concepts

Persuadable voters are those who might support a particular candidate, given the right kind of outreach from a campaign. Alienated voters are those who do not regularly vote, and generally feel disenfranchised by the political process. There is significant evidence that both of these types of voters exist. Voter turnout is much lower in the United States than it is in most developed countries, indicating that there are many people nationally who are alienated from the
formal political process. Furthermore, analyses of the 2016 presidential election indicate that it was not an outlier, but rather the latest in a long line of increasingly polarized elections.

Scholars like Lilliana Mason concede this presence of increasing polarization, but argue that this is not so much a reflection of policy disagreements amongst American voters but rather a division caused by other characteristics such as racial, socio-economic, or cultural identity. Recent surveys, such as those of the Hidden Common Ground Initiative, reinforce the idea that most Americans agree on policy solutions to even issues that seem polarized at the national level. This may suggest that campaign practitioners should look for persuasion tactics beyond trying to win policy debates. Relational organizing could be one such tactic.

Mark Warren, in Dry Bones Rattling: Community Building to Revitalize American Democracy, defines the components of the “relational organizing” tactics of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF). He highlights that this was one strategy the IAF employed to build power amongst groups of people looking to effect change, in the face of the same challenges of polarization and alienation that seen today. He points out several factors that defined the IAF strategy.

First was a focus on bring people together to discuss the needs of their community, find common ground on issues, and brainstorm how act on these goals. Warren explains: “Rather than starting from the top with the "most important" issues, IAF organizations build their political capacity over time, through patient base building rooted in the issues as they have meaning in the lives of participants and their families.” Though relational organizing in the electoral campaign environment has been less deliberative, with candidates typically launching campaigns with their policy plans already defined, this emphasis on voters sharing about what matters to them is replicable in the electoral campaign environment.
Secondly, Warren describes how the IAF relational organizers tapped into existing community networks. Rather than exclusively focus on community leaders, IAF organizers target community members and their own circles of friends and family members. “In developing issue campaigns, IAF leaders hold discussions in church committees, converse with their neighbors, and organize house meetings… This kind of organizing directly attempts to strengthen the social fabric and institutions of frayed communities, that is, to build bonding social capital.”62 Not only does this allow the campaign to reach deeper into communities, but by asking community members directly for their help and their own social capital, community members feel a greater stake in the campaign and contribute more.

Finally, Warren is also very specific about the role of paid IAF staff in their relational organizing campaigns. He emphasizes that organizers are not supposed to manage issue campaigns themselves, explaining that staff embraced a mentoring role: “Following what it calls the iron rule, ‘never do for others what they can do for themselves,’ IAF leaders have the main responsibility to pursue all aspects of political action. IAF organizers, ideally at least, are meant to remain focused on recruiting new leaders and training them in relational organizing.”63

These three distinctive features, an emphasis on values rather than policy issues, a focus on building organizational power through preexisting relationships, and professional staff used to train and augment volunteer participants, are the same core tenets embraced by the Buttigieg model.64 One significant addition is the development of an “online organizing portal” where volunteers record the information of people they have talked to about the campaign, and how those conversations went, in order for the campaign to track the effectiveness of their outreach.

In the Buttigieg relational organizing model, organizing resources can include the number and quality of campaign organizers, who are tasked with overseeing the networks of
relationships being developed by their volunteers. The presence of a field office in a community, from which organizers are based, generally indicates a community where significant resources are being deployed. The geographic areas that communities are in are called precincts or organizing “turfs”.

IV. Case Selection

Pete for America’s relational organizing strategy in the 2020 New Hampshire primary will serve as the case study for this research. Firstly, my previous experience there as an intern during July and August of 2019, and New Hampshire’s relative geographic proximity make it a good candidate for data collection.65 Second, New Hampshire is geographically and politically diverse. It is considered a swing state in the 2020 general election after Hillary Clinton won by less than 1% there in 2016, and has a popular Republican Governor. Third, of all the primary states, New Hampshire is a politically important state where a number of campaigns competed hard against Buttigieg. Studies have shown that the winner in the New Hampshire primary more than any other single primary who will go on to become their party’s nominee.66 New Hampshire’s primary is even more predictive of final placement of candidates than the Iowa Caucuses, the first caucuses in the nation held a week earlier.67 Furthermore, New Hampshire’s open-primary system allows Independents to vote, which research has also shown provides for a more representative electorate than other early states where citizens must be affiliated with a specific party to vote in the primary.68 If Buttigieg’s strategy is effective there, perhaps it can also be effective in other swing states.

In order to accurately test the effectiveness of the Buttigieg campaign’s model at turning out alienated voters, I will select two organizing turfs to study with generally low voter turnout
rates in past elections. One where significant emphasis has been placed on the campaign’s relational organizing efforts, and one where less emphasis has been placed. Interviews with the campaign’s statewide staff indicated that relational organizing was not evenly emphasized throughout the state - some organizers made it a central part of their efforts in their organizing turf, while in other areas either organizers made little use of it, or the campaign simply did not have an organizer assigned to that area for very long. Thus, this research will rely upon input from interviews with campaign staff to determine turfs where much effort was put into using relational organizing, as well as taking into account the numbers of relational contacts logged in the campaign's online relational organizing tool.

Two precincts will also be chosen in which to study the effect of the Buttigieg model at persuading voters to support Buttigieg. They will be conservative precincts because (1) thanks to New Hampshire’s semi-open primary system, independents are eligible to vote in the Democratic primary, and (2) there is a more conservative option in the race in the form of Vice President Joe Biden. The ability of the Buttigieg campaign’s organizing model to persuade conservative independents and Biden voters to switch their support to his campaign will be assessed. This will be done by comparing a conservative organizing turf where significant emphasis was placed on relational organizing effort with a conservative turf where little emphasis has been placed on relational organizing. These turfs will be selected based on their vote share for President Trump, the Republican president elected in the previous election, as well as the presence of typically conservative traits, namely rural and exurban areas.

By comparing turfs where high emphasis was placed on relational organizing, with those where low emphasis was placed on relational organizing, a comparative case study is established that can control for other explanatory variables. These precincts are as follows.
V. Measurement of Variables

To measure the effectiveness of the relational organizing strategy at reaching out to alienated voters, interviews will be undertaken of Buttigieg volunteers to assess their success at reaching out to these voters. These cases have been selected from typically low turnout areas, as to be indicative of areas where voters are more alienated from politics. In itself, level of previous political involvement among volunteers, and how they were recruited into the campaign, will shed some light onto the effectiveness of relational organizing. Furthermore, if available, turnout data will be studied to see if there is a correlation between increased turnout in an organizing turf and the number of relational organizing contacts recorded by the campaign in that turf.

To measure the effectiveness of the campaign’s relational organizing at persuasion, interviews will be undertaken of Buttigieg volunteers to assess their success at reaching out to conservative voters. These cases will be from typically conservative areas. Furthermore, a statistical analysis will be undertaken to determine if there is a correlation between number of relational contacts recorded in a given turf and the share of the vote for Buttigieg.

These measures are reliable because they rely on a combination of empirical and qualitative data collection methods. Their validity is more difficult to establish, given that the New Hampshire Primary does not perfectly mirror general election conditions in a larger swing
state. Furthermore, primary elections are inherently different scenarios because they lack partisan identifiers, which could pose a barrier in general election environments. However, given that the results of the 2016 hinged on only 78,000 votes across a small number of counties, effective outreach in small states could be an effective blueprint for success even in a slightly different setting.

VI. Data Collection and Analysis

As discussed above, this research seeks to understand the impact of the Buttigieg campaign’s relational organizing tactic on voter turnout and voter persuasion. For quantitative analysis of the impacts on voter turnout, this research relied on exit polls, turnout data reported by the New Hampshire government on primary day, and the number of relational volunteers in each organizing turf as tracked by the Buttigieg campaign’s online relational organizing tool. For qualitative analysis of the effects on turnout, interviews were conducted with Buttigieg volunteers, which sought to capture by the previous levels of political engagement (i.e. voting, volunteering for a campaign, giving money, talking about politics with others) amongst Buttigieg volunteers and those whom they organized relationally. Interviews included questions about their previous involvement in politics, how they became involved in this campaign, and about the level of political involvement about those they attempted to recruit for the Buttigieg campaign.

To measure the effects of this strategy on voter persuasion, this research also compared the campaign’s data from their online tracking tool with the vote share for Buttigieg in the final results. Qualitatively, this paper also relied on interviews with volunteers to determine the effect of relational organizing at persuading voters to support Buttigieg. Volunteers were asked about how their conversations with Republicans and conservatives have gone, and if they feel their
ability to reach out to these voters has been impacted by the Buttigieg organizing model. Interview questions included “to what extent has your involvement with this organizing program changed the way you talk to Republicans you know?”, or “when you talk to your neighbours who may not share your exact policy positions, how do those conservations go?”.

One way the relational organizing model was implemented was to assist volunteers in hosting a “house meeting”, where volunteers invited to members of their social circles to a meeting to discuss the Buttigieg campaign. Asking about the previous political involvement or the party leanings of those who attended was another concrete indicator about how effectively the relational strategy was reaching alienated or persuadable voters.

Background on the American Primary System

The modern era of the presidential nominating process begins in 1968. Prior to that, the major American political parties had essentially decided who should receive their party’s nomination through internal discussion by party insiders. These political operatives and party insiders would convene at national conventions during election years to choose their nominee, a practice that dated back to 1831. The first convention of the nascent Democratic Party was held the following year and nominated President Andrew Jackson for reelection. Previous presidential nominations had been carried out by caucus votes amongst Members of Congress. Democratic Party members instituted the convention because they wanted to remove sitting Vice President John C. Calhoun from the ticket, and needed to circumvent his significant support among members of Congress. Under the Jacksonian convention system, party supporters would elect delegates to the convention, who in turn would vote for whomever they deemed most fit. There were no rules or laws dictating whom they must support beyond the concern for what those who had elected them might say. To this day, party officials and convention delegates
still play a powerful role in the selection of the presidential nominees, as articulated in Marty Cohen’s 2008 book *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations Before and After Reform.*\(^{75}\) However, major steps have been taken to further democratize the process.

At the turn of the century and then throughout the Progressive Era, a whole slew of different mechanisms for deciding who would receive party nominations for local and state offices were explored. Certain localities opened up local conventions to all citizens. Others instituted caucus votes among party supporters, rather than Members of Congress or the state legislature, to elect delegates bound to support specific candidates. Still more used complicated systems where each voting district had a single delegate, who would report at the county convention the number of votes received in that district, and whichever candidate received the most votes would be nominated at the convention. Finally, some used a direct primary system where party supporters would vote their preference for nomination with no convention necessary. These systems were each unique, but the general trend demonstrated a move towards the nomination being given to candidates with the most support from voters.\(^{76}\)

Direct primary legislation enacted for state-level races directly encouraged democratization at the presidential level. Florida was the first state to pass a law allowing parties to elect delegates to their national conventions, followed by Wisconsin and Pennsylvania. However it was only in 1910 that Oregon instituted a presidential preference primary that actually bound the delegates elected to support the primary’s winner at the convention. The number of states using these primaries fluctuated over this period, peaking in 1920 and stabilizing at roughly thirteen or fourteen until the 1968 reforms.\(^{77}\) These primaries played a fairly limited role in determining who the actual nominee of each political party was, compared
to the convention, but they could serve as a vehicle for campaigns to demonstrate to convention delegates which candidates deserved consideration.

The first presidential primary held in New Hampshire occurred on March 14, 1916. The following presidential election cycle, after Indiana had moved back its primary and the Minnesota primary was eliminated, New Hampshire’s became the first primary in the nation. However, the ballot listed only the names of delegates to the national convention until a 1948 law change that allowed citizens to vote directly for presidential candidates. At this point, though nominees were still decided upon almost entirely at the convention, New Hampshire’s early primary began to act as an important proving ground for campaigns. For example, embattled President Truman was trounced there in the Democratic primary of 1952, and although having not formally declared his campaign, Dwight Eisenhower won on the Republican side thanks to a successful write-in campaign. The effects: Truman decided not to run for a second full term, and Eisenhower’s unorthodox defeat of party favorite Sen. Robert A. Taft, “Mr. Republican,” powered the “I Like Ike” campaign to the White House. The primary contest in New Hampshire would take on an even more unique position in the nominating process after the reforms of 1968.

1968 was a year of chaos and reform in the Democratic party. Incumbent President Lyndon Johnson, plagued by an unpopular war abroad and growing social unrest at home, performed poorly in the New Hampshire Primary and subsequently withdrew from the presidential race. The primary campaign descended into a battle between Sen. Eugene McCarthy and Sen. Robert F. Kennedy. Vice President Hubert Humphrey entered the race in April but skipped campaigning in state primaries in favor of courting delegates to the convention. Though Sen. Kennedy would be tragically assassinated before the convention, the mandate for an antiwar
candidate seemed clear. Despite this, with his strong establishment support, it was Vice President Humphrey who entered the convention in Chicago as the prohibitive favorite. The convention itself descended into chaos and violence, as thousands of antiwar protesters clashed with Chicago Police, and the Democratic ticket went on to lose in November. In order to prevent such a disaster from repeating itself, a commission headed by Senator George McGovern of South Dakota and Representative Donald Fraser of Minnesota, was convened in 1969 to reform the nominating process.

The commission advised two major reforms. First, it demanded that the remaining caucuses, meetings of party insiders that had determined who would be state delegates to the national convention, be transformed into an event that much more closely resembled a primary election. Meetings were to be open to anyone “who wished to be known as a Democrat,” they had to all occur on the same day, and delegates had to declare which presidential candidate they were supporting. Secondly, the commission advised the expansion of the number of states holding binding presidential primaries.

The effects of these reforms were swift and immediate. Richard Pilers, an election law specialist at New York University described the results of these reforms, writing “Within two election cycles, the United States had a populist-dominated selection process virtually unlike anywhere else in the world. By 1976, the system had changed completely. More than 30 states were using presidential primaries, with a majority of delegates chosen, in effect, through these primaries (today, more than 40 states use primaries).”

The increase in the number of primaries meant that candidates had to focus their attention on the earlier, smaller states in order to generate momentum that could carry them through the larger, more difficult contests later in the calendar. Though New Hampshire and the other early
voting states wound up in those positions through what was mostly a fluke of history, they have worked to protect their coveted early status. New Hampshire state law has mandated it have the first primary in the nation since 1979. Secretary of State Bill Gardner, first elected in 1976 and currently the nation’s longest continually serving secretary of state, has made it his mission to continue the tradition. Advocates for the current calendar point out that New Hampshire and other early states, given their smaller size, allow a greater emphasis on “retail politics” - the practice of candidates meeting voters in person. Studies have shown that this sort of campaigning returns dividends for candidates, who have traditionally favored this calendar weighted towards small states. A 1996 study demonstrated what political operatives had long felt to be true: that “candidate contact influences voters' abilities to rate candidates, as well as their information about and favorability toward candidates.” However, the researchers qualify their findings, highlighting that “Voters like and know more about the candidates whom they meet, but they also are more likely to experience contact with candidates whom they are predisposed to like.”

Critics have consistently pointed to the homogeneity and lack of diversity among Iowa and New Hampshire residents to argue that they are not representative of the nation’s electorate. During the 2020 campaign, Julian Castro made headlines for arguing that the Democratic Party should rearrange the calendar to privilege more diverse states. Though as of this writing the primary calendar remains the same, he is correct to highlight that these states have an outsized position in determining the party’s nominee. As demonstrated in the Research Design Section, the primary in New Hampshire is a particularly strong indicator of which presidential candidate will become the party’s nominee.
Case Study: The Pete for America Campaign in New Hampshire

Buttigieg’s Background

Pete Buttigieg was the two term mayor of South Bend, Indiana, from 2012 to 2019. At the time he entered the race for the presidency, he was 38 years old, which would have made him the youngest ever to assume the office had he won. He would also have been first openly gay chief executive, having come out during his first term as mayor in an op-ed published in 2015. His only previous foray into elected politics before his mayoral run was a 2010 bid for Indiana State Treasurer, which he had lost by double digits. However, in the lead up to the 2020 race, he had received praise from national newspapers for his unique background. On the campaign trail, he touted his education as a Harvard alumnus and Rhodes Scholar, his time in the Navy as an intelligence officer deployed to Afghanistan in 2014, and his status as a midwestern Democrat from Republican Vice President Pence’s home state. Pete’s husband, Chasten, had grown up in Michigan to become a high school theatre teacher, and proved to be a charismatic, down to earth surrogate on the campaign trail. As Buttigieg’s exploratory committee got underway, Chasten began to build a significant online presence, and Buttigieg’s personal attributes, such as knowledge of eight languages and ability to play several instruments had helped him to stand out in the crowded field. However, he also earned criticism from some progressive activists for his record in South Bend, particularly around race relations. His time at corporate consultancy McKinsey and Company, his firing of South Bend’s first black police chief, and his Wall Street fundraisers, all drew criticism from the leftward flank of his own party.

Why Buttigieg Ran

In the aftermath of the 2016 election, Buttigieg penned an essay entitled “A letter from flyover country”, outlining his political philosophy and what, in his view, Democrats needed to
do to offer a clearer contrast to Donald Trump in states beyond the coasts. He argued that Democrats needed to reintroduce the values that made them Democrats in the first place, offer a realistic vision for the future, and genuinely engage voters who’d supported Trump in 2016.

In 2017, Buttigieg ran for chair of the Democratic National Committee on the basis of the ideas he’d articulated in 2016: that the party should embrace a young face from outside the Democrats’ coastal strongholds, free of the intraparty debates of 2016, and ready to connect realistic policy to voters’ lives. He tried to cast himself as a third option between the center-left Tom Perez, and more progressive Keith Ellison, but ultimately pulled out as he was slated to finish in a close third place. Perez and Ellison were cast as stand-ins for the progressive and for the 2016 Democratic Presidential primary candidates.

In the lead up to his official entrance to the race in April, Buttigieg’s campaign had made some progress in the polls. In a March CNN townhall, the mayor created a viral moment when asked about Vice President and former Indiana Governor Mike Pence. Following the CNN townhall, and as the campaign launched in earnest in April, the mayor’s team embarked on an expansive media campaign. An April 29th profile of Lis Smith, the campaign’s senior communications advisor, opened with the quote “I want him on everything” - an apt description of the mayor’s media strategy. The strategy of “saying yes” to media opportunities helped the mayor get attention, and begin to outperform his initially low name recognition as voters began to get to know him.

Entrance into the Presidential Race, and Initial Prospects

Pete Buttigieg formed an exploratory committee to run for the 2020 Democratic Nomination for President on January 23rd, 2019, and officially entered the race on April 14th. Buttigieg had launched his exploratory committee with little fanfare, as few thought his was a
viable campaign in a field of dozens of candidates including several sitting U.S. senators, governors, and a former Vice President.

After all, no sitting mayor has ever been elected directly to the White House. Many have tried, typically from the nation’s larger cities, and had frequently failed. Buttigieg, by contrast, was only the top official in the fourth largest city in Indiana. Not only did he have the smallest name recognition, he had not run statewide in nearly a decade, and lacked the national platform that comes with being a sitting member of Congress.

In addition to having little national profile, Buttigieg seemed to be at a fundraising disadvantage. Others had large email lists which they could tap for small donations, networks of high dollar donors who’d they tapped in the past, or even funds that could be transferred from previous campaigns. Senator Elizabeth Warren, for example, was able to transfer 10 million dollars from her 2018 reelection campaign.

The 2020 Democratic Primary Race, in Brief

After Buttigieg officially entered the race in April of 2019, he continued to build on the aggressive communications strategy he’d embarked on during the exploratory phase, close the fundraising gap between himself and his competitors, and begin to construct an organizing program in the first four states to hold elections in the primary process: Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada and South Carolina. By the time these contests began, of the historically large field, only 11 candidates remained. Buttigieg would go on to narrowly win the Iowa Caucuses, place second in New Hampshire, but finish a distant third in Nevada and a devastating fourth in South Carolina. Though Buttigieg had been successful in the first two states, both of which were overwhelmingly white, he struggled to succeed in the more diverse states of Nevada and South Carolina.
Bernie Sanders, the independent senator from Vermont who was significantly to the left of Buttigieg, had also been successful in the early states. He had finished a narrow second to Buttigieg in Iowa, claimed victory in New Hampshire and Nevada, and seemed poised for substantial victories on Super Tuesday after finishing a strong second to former Vice President Biden in South Carolina.

The former VP had performed sluggishly in the first two early states, finishing fourth in Iowa and fifth in New Hampshire. His second place finish in Nevada, separated from Sen. Sanders by nearly 20 percentage points, did little inspire confidence. Although Biden’s campaign seemed to be collapsing, his campaign had consistently polled extremely well with African American voters and looked to the primary in South Carolina as a so-called “firewall”. Two factors really changed the fortunes for the Biden campaign. First, the former VP did win the South Carolina primary, and by an overwhelming margin, while other ideologically moderate candidates like Buttigieg and Minnesota Senator Amy Klobuchar faired poorly. Second, Buttigieg and Klobuchar, faced with the prospect of dividing the moderate wing of the party, suspended their campaigns and endorsed Vice President Biden in the days before Super Tuesday. Though Buttigieg had performed strongly in the Iowa and New Hampshire contests, the persistent criticism that Buttigieg failed to appeal to nonwhite voters proved true in the Nevada and South Carolina contests. Both he and Klobuchar, who’d suffered similar problems, seemed to have little path forward while concern mounted that Sen. Bernie Sanders, significantly to the left, might build an insurmountable lead on Super Tuesday.

Joe Biden, bolstered by these new endorsements, mounted a massive comeback on Super Tuesday, just days after his South Carolina victory. He won ten states, and amassed 648
delegates, beginning a commanding lead over Sen. Sanders. In subsequent contests throughout March and into the beginning of February, Biden continued to expand his lead.\textsuperscript{112}

On January 21st, the first cases of a novel coronavirus (COVID-19) were confirmed in the United States.\textsuperscript{113} By March, with America was engulfed in the global pandemic, various states were postponing primary elections, and campaigning had moved almost entirely online.\textsuperscript{114} In the face of a widening delegate gap between himself and Joe Biden, and with most traditional campaign activities precluded because of the virus, Bernie Sanders dropped out of the race on April 8\textsuperscript{th}.\textsuperscript{115} This left only former Vice President Joseph R. Biden the presumptive nominee to face incumbent President Donald Trump in the November general election.

Organizing, Pre-2008 until Today

Elizabeth McKenna and Hahrie Han describe the development of traditional campaign organizing before the Obama era. They lay out how in the 1998 midterm elections, studies showing the effectiveness of in-person canvassing and phone banking revived interest in “ground game”, formally known as field organizing.\textsuperscript{116} Previously, a long trend of increasingly advertising-heavy, and technology-and-consultant driven campaigns peaked in the 1990s, with volunteers playing almost no role beyond that of a few party loyalists calling supporters in the days leading up to an election.\textsuperscript{117} However, the return of field organizing in the late 1990s and early 2000s manifested itself in the form of “underpaid college kids to knock on doors”.\textsuperscript{118} Today when traditional organizing is discussed, this is generally what is meant: low-trained organizers, usually paid a small sum, to canvass as part of get out the vote (GOTV) efforts in the lead up to the election. Persuasion efforts are mostly left to advertising and direct mail, with little attention made to swinging persuadable voters through canvassing, whose only goal is making sure that supporters are getting to the ballot box.
The Obama campaign reinvented this concept for Democratic campaigns with the “neighborhood-team model”. The 2004 Dean campaign attempted to capitalize on field organizing, but after bussing hundreds of volunteers and out-of-state staffers into early primary states with poor reception from voters, turned toward a “house meeting” model.\textsuperscript{119} Voters responded more positively to being invited to a house meeting, where they could talk with others interested in the candidate, and with the local organizer, for a far more meaningful dialogue than a few minutes at their front doors. With this lesson in mind, the Obama campaign set out to build a ‘neighborhood team model’, which further engaged volunteers by forming them into teams with volunteers managing other volunteers.\textsuperscript{120} This helped cultivate volunteer motivation by holding them accountable to others, gave them real responsibility which allowed them to make genuine contributions to the campaign efforts, and avoid overburdening volunteers by building a robust structure that leaves no one volunteer isolated.\textsuperscript{121} This helped the Obama campaign to organize the unprecedented 3 million volunteers in his 2008 campaign, and 2.2 million in his subsequent reelection campaign.\textsuperscript{122}

Though the Obama campaign’s mobilized millions of volunteers as part of their organizing efforts, their main goals were still to connect with voters almost exclusively through making phone calls and knocking on doors. Technological advancements like texting and other forms of digital communications, orchestrated from a centralized headquarters would be the main innovation in the years between 2012 and 2019.\textsuperscript{123} By the beginnings of the 2020 election cycle, practitioners were looking for new ways to recruit volunteers and to connect with voters.
In April of 2019, as Buttigieg officially entered the race for the 2020 Democratic nomination, his campaign connected with Greta Carnes. Carnes had been involved in Democratic campaign organizing since the Obama campaigns, had created texting and emailing programs for Hillary Clinton’s campaign in 2016, and would serve as the National Organizing Director for Buttigieg’s campaign. However, she recounted feeling frustrating with the general state of Democratic organizing, especially surrounding the relationships between organizers and volunteers: “We have all these people [in headquarters] get really good at sending emails and asking people to volunteer. Why don’t we just have organizers email people and ask them to volunteer, and they’ll meet that person in person”. Informed by her experience on the Clinton campaign, Carnes wanted organizers to look beyond just knocking doors and making phone calls – a vision that Buttigieg’s advisors shared. She recalls “[Buttigieg’s staff] were really excited that I wanted to kill digital departments because they also did – truly a match made in heaven”.

With dozens of other candidates in the race, it was abundantly clear that Carnes and her team would need to set about devising a strategy to help their campaign set itself apart from the crowded field. “I think this cycle especially, knowing that there were going to be so many [competing campaigns] in Iowa, and we needed to find a different way to cut through the noise… I think it was a good excuse to be forced to try something new”. For example, the New York Times reported in July: “The Warren campaign declined to divulge the exact number of staff members it has in Iowa and New Hampshire, except to say that there are more than 300 people, with 60 percent of those hires based in the first four states,” as well as praising Cory
Booker’s large investment in organizers on the ground. It continued by describing Buttigieg and fellow candidate Sen. Kamala Harris as “slower to expand their teams in Iowa and New Hampshire than rivals like Ms. Warren and Mr. Booker.”

Carnes recounts that given that the pool of Democratic voters is limited in the early states that mattered most, “we didn’t want to be the fifth or sixth or the tenth person to knock on somebody’s door… so we wanted to cut through the noise, but in a different way”.

Beyond just standing out, there were two other reasons that the Buttigieg campaign felt pressure to adopt a relational organizing strategy. First, Carnes acknowledged that most candidates would have moments of excitement during the course of the race, even a mayor from Indiana without a national profile. However, excitement wouldn’t necessarily translate to votes on election day if people felt that the candidate they liked had no chance of winning. Encouraging supporters to talk, tweet, email, and post about Pete as a central part of their strategy, the campaign could “give people permission to vote for Pete” by presenting his campaign as a winning one.

Secondly, the campaign predicted that with so many candidates, many voters would wait as long as possible before making up their minds on who to support. The campaign wanted to effectively sustain persuasion efforts all the way to election day, and to do that the Buttigieg campaign sought out relationships that voters couldn’t “opt out of”. Carnes explains: “If you get called by somebody you don’t know, and they want to talk to you about a candidate, you’re likely to say ‘oh my god, go away, I’m not making up my mind. It’s August, I have a long time’. But if your little sister won’t stop talking about Pete… you’re never going to opt out of that. Your sister can talk to you forever.” In addition to the evidence that a relational strategy would
improve voter persuasion and turnout, these were the specific reasons that the Buttigieg leadership felt they needed to embrace this innovative model.

The Buttigieg Campaign’s Relational Organizing in Practice

Carnes and her team envisioned voters, who had become passionate about Pete from watching him in one of the many television appearances, using techniques and support provided by the campaign to reach out to their own networks of friends and family to sway their support to Buttigieg. In one section of an October 1st, 2019 post on the online publishing platform Medium, Carnes detailed this strategy was actually playing out on the ground.

We’re investing in relationship-focused organizing. We’ve said this before and we’ll say it again: We aren’t just trying to win an election; we’re trying to win an era. And one of the ways we win the era is by building real infrastructure on the ground and having authentic, personal discussions about the issues that affect us and our communities. That’s why we’re investing in an organizing strategy that empowers supporters to organize their own friends, family, coworkers, and networks. We know that YOU calling your best friend and talking about Pete — why you chose Pete, why Pete gives you hope, why you need your mom to not only vote in the primary but also volunteer — will be more effective than me calling your best friend. (Your best friend probably won’t even pick up the phone if I call her).

She went on to describe how the campaign’s organizers were embedding themselves in communities, “meeting people where they are.” She cited examples of organizers attending farmers markets, organizing meetings with voters over board games, setting up bowling outings, and even having entered “a cast iron cook-off and won (and recruited volunteers while broiling!).”

This kind of organizing made waves amongst the press coverage of the campaign as well. The July Times piece cited above mentioned that:

Some of his supporters have embraced the term “Pete-up,” — a reference to meet-ups — where attendees are urged to brainstorm about friends and family members who might be interested in learning about Mr. Buttigieg, and to plan ways to connect their networks to the campaign. The Buttigieg team is also looking for unconventional and even fun ways to build relationships with voters and potential volunteers: There was a bowling event last month in Manchester with his
New Hampshire state director (“Feeling in the gutter about the primary? Put a pin in your worries,” the invitation said) and there is now discussion of a poetry event.\textsuperscript{135}

September saw the Associated Press report on a campaign event where “people like Julie DeMicco, a local middle school teacher, worked their smartphones in what Buttigieg’s 2020 presidential campaign calls a ‘relational phone bank,’ calling and texting. DeMicco hoped to catch some of her teacher friends to test their interest.”\textsuperscript{136} In December, \textit{Mother Jones} reported on the mayor’s surge in Iowa polling: “if Buttigieg is going to pull off a historic upset in Iowa, it’ll have less to do with one big speech and more to do with the movement his campaign is building behind the scenes, at house parties and small meetups and in one-on-one conversations initiated by a highly energized corps of volunteers.”\textsuperscript{137} Bloomberg reported a similar story in January, under the headline “Buttigieg Bets on Friends-and-Family Tactic to Win Iowa Caucuses,” with the summary stating “Relational organizing takes the stranger out of door-knocking; Buttigieg campaign takes personal campaigning to new level.”\textsuperscript{138}

Noah Dion, the campaign’s New Hampshire Organizing Director, reported that as the campaign progressed into the spring of 2019, two fundamental changes affected the organizing model. First, competitors began to drop out of the race. This meant that there were fewer large organizing efforts to compete with in the early states, reducing the need to rely on this new strategy. Second, the campaign began to raise much larger sums of money. This enabled the campaign to devote resources to a more traditional organizing approach, investing funds in hiring more organizers and opening more offices than they had previously planned. Though the focus was no longer on relational organizing as a necessity, it remained a key “tool in the toolbox.”\textsuperscript{139}

\textbf{The Buttigieg Relational Organizing Tool}

All modern campaigns rely heavily on data, and the Buttigieg campaign was no different. Staffers collected a number of different metrics of information, and used it to coordinate and
deploy various types of campaign resources. For this thesis, the campaign was gracious enough to grant access to the internal data produced by its online relational organizing tool. This tool consisted of two main parts. First, it provided supporters with resources designed to assist them in holding conversation about the candidate and the issues that motivated them, such as those seen here:

Fig. 3.1
Secondly, it allowed supporters to log who they had talked to, how that person felt about Pete, and what next-steps they planned to undertake with that person. When the campaign had first begun to implement its relational strategy, volunteer were asked to record this information.
on physical sheets of paper, as depicted below in a picture featured in an Associated Press story carried by ABC news.\textsuperscript{140}

Fig 4.

![Image](image.png)

The more sophisticated website, which came online in August, recorded much of the same information, and allowed the campaign’s technology team to track where conversations were occurring. It was this geographical information that the campaign generously contributed to this research project. However, tracking the conversations between individuals proved a much more difficult task than traditional metrics such number of doors knocked or phone calls made, for two reasons

First, New Hampshire Organizing Director Noah Dion describes the website as having many glitches when it first rolled out in August.\textsuperscript{1} According to Dion many organizers grew

\textsuperscript{1} Noah Dion, Pete for America New Hampshire Organizing Director, interview by author, Manchester, NH, January 9, 2020.
frustrated with it because it couldn’t be relied upon to properly record data. Dion even admits that he and his team at the statewide level stopped emphasizing its importance to the organizers. In fact, Dion describes the website’s early performance as poor enough that when the Buttigieg campaign first rolled out its relational organizing strategy in Iowa, the nation’s first caucus state, they found the paper tracking sheets they were using to be more effective than the online version (picture in Fig. 4). Reportedly, the early versions online tool would make users reenter data, freeze, and would not accurately report data to the campaign.

Second, in the interviews and quantitative analysis conducted for this project, it becomes quickly clear that many volunteers simply ignored the online tracking tool. Some were never introduced to it by their organizer, while others simply did not like it and so never bothered to use it. A few volunteers interviewed for this project even described beginning to use it, but after growing frustrated, abandoned its use entirely.

Given these shortcomings with the data, it is important for this thesis to conduct a qualitative analysis of how effective relational organizing is at turning out and persuading voters.
Relational Organizing at the Micro Level: The Roles of Buttigieg’s Organizers

As described in the Research Design section of this paper, the Buttigieg campaign adopted four key aspects of relational organizing practice: a focus on values rather than policy; professional staff acting as mentors and friends to volunteers; tapping into existing networks and communities; and implementing new technologies.

As the campaign sought to implement these strategies, their staff had to form relationships between organizers and volunteers, train volunteers to connect with their networks about the campaign, and construct technical aids to help this process. Though to some, organizers may seem to be the foot soldiers of campaign, they played important roles which ultimately represented the implementation of the relational strategy.

First, organizers were still tasked with traditional campaign activities like running a field office, organizing canvassing shifts, and leading phonebanks. However, as they arrived in their assigned communities, they were also instructed to build relationships through community-building events, and to train volunteers to set up their own neighborhood teams as the Get Out The Vote (GOTV) phase approached. This neighborhood team design harkens back to the organizing advancements made by the Obama 2008 campaign. Zoë Meekan, Deputy Organizing Director in New Hampshire, remarked from her days organizing for Hillary Clinton in the state: “Volunteers come for the candidate, but they stay for you,” referring to the local organizer.

Second, as organizers recruited volunteers through community organizations and reaching out to locals who had connected with the campaign, they sought to support these newfound supporters in talking to their own networks about the candidate. These volunteers were in turn trained on how to emphasize values, rather than specific policy, in order to connect with
both voters who are not typically Democrats, and those who do not normally get involved in political activism.

Third, as this organizing program was rolled out on the ground, the technology team back at headquarters sought to build an online tool to help volunteers and organizers track the conversations happening about the candidate. This happened slowly, with the site rolling out over the summer. As it arrived, the campaign prided itself on a system that would absorb people’s contact information, but instead offered them information on how to structure conversations and a system to track who they had talked to.

These three aspects were the core of the system the campaign originally set out to implement in New Hampshire and the early states. However, this plan would change and adapt as it came in contact with the realities of the campaign trail. The following will seek to understand how effective this strategy was at connecting with independents and nonvoters in the Granite State.

Assessing Relational Organizing’s Effects on Voter Persuasion: Organizing Turf 1G, Southern Carroll County

Both the Pete for New Hampshire Organizing Director and Deputy Organizing Director independently singled out Turf 1G, in Southern Carroll County, as embodying the vision of what a relational strategy should look like. 1G had the highest number of relational contacts recorded, with 623 contacts logged in the relational organizing digital tracking site. The next highest was 1F, with 486 contacts logged. Furthermore, Carroll County was won by President Trump by 5.5 percent in the 2016 general election. In the 2016 Democratic primary it was won by Bernie Sanders, who carried it by 27.1 percent. Clearly this is an area that does not seem like it would have been necessarily a good fit for a Democratic moderate with little money or name
recognition like Buttigieg. Tanner, the local organizer, was principally based in the town of Wolfeboro. The nearest Buttigieg field office was nearly an hour away.

**Values and Policy**

Each interviewee generally provided one of two answers when asked what they emphasized in successful conversations about the campaign among doubtful voters. Firstly, they mentioned that talking about the values of the candidate and his campaign, rather than emphasizing policy details, was generally effective. It is clear that from the outset of the campaign, Buttigieg and his advisors had sought to make values a focal point of the organization. Buttigieg had published a set of ten values as guiding “Rules of the Road” in May of 2019. These values made up an important part of the campaign’s public image through the primary race. In an article entitled “What Pete Buttigieg Understood” in *The Atlantic*, Peter Wehner praised the campaign’s values, writing: “During his campaign, Buttigieg spoke about what he called ‘rules of the road,’ values that he wanted to make hallmarks of his candidacy and that included respect, responsibility, discipline, excellence, joy, and truth… That is the kind of language and ethos that once would have appealed to Republicans.” Despite the fact that Wehner seemed to have been primarily focusing on the candidate himself, it was interesting to hear the volunteers reflect this same sort of message as an important piece of the puzzle for persuading doubtful voters to support Pete. Easily discounted as platitudes, these values represented a reoccurring theme in conversations about how best to bring new people into the movement.

Perhaps it is less surprising that volunteers discussed values with their contact, because they also typically brought up values as being central to the conversations that had first won them over. A woman named Nancy mentioned that she first got involved through her brother, who had agreed to host an event for the campaign in his barn. When describing Pete to her, the
brother had emphasized the value of “unity” – in her words, the way “[Pete] wants to bring the country together.” For volunteer Kelli, it was “respect” that really drew her to the campaign. “Respect really is the heart of [Buttigieg’s] campaign,” she mentioned. She specifically described an admiration for the “Rules of the Road.” Carolyn, another volunteer, also said she placed the most emphasis on values when looking to persuade others to vote for Buttigieg. “Very often I would talk about the Rules of the Road, because I thought that was very important in this campaign,” she said, continuing “[Buttigieg] based [the campaign] on bringing people together, and being nice to one another.”

Values also came up in the second kind of answer about what volunteers emphasized when talking about the campaign: the importance of modelling these values by listening and empathizing with people even when they don’t share one’s views. Volunteers frequently brought up that an important strategy for persuasion was to ask others what they looked for in a nominee, or look for common ground in shared values.

Many of the volunteers from this organizing turf, when asked how the campaign had changed the way they talked about politics with people they know, remarked that the most important change was a newfound emphasis on attempting to empathize and understand those they were talking to. Whether knocking on doors in her own neighborhood, or talking to people she knew, Jan emphasized the importance of “listening, being authentic, but listening to what people say and then finding something within that which you can relate to and say ‘I hear you, I actually had some similar concerns but here is what changed my thinking on that’. I found that really helpful.” When answering the same question about how the campaign changed the way she approached conversations about politics, Kelli emphasized “most importantly, listening to what people have to say and then trying to fill in those blanks if there were questions about how
Pete could align with the things they feel are missing…and that respect and that ability to communicate effectively is the heart of his campaign.” She credits the campaign with “absolutely” changing the way she talks about politics, making her “better informed, maybe not necessarily on all the nuances from a policy standpoint, but from speaking to people about what [Buttigieg] stands for… people were so hopeful.”

This is not to say that these volunteers never brought up policy when they were reaching out to undecided or conservative voters. Ginny recounted “asking people what issues are important to them, and then using Pete’s values to reflect that he is the best candidate to address that issue.” Volunteers emphasized that even when describing issues of public policy, the most effective way to communicate to voters who might not normally side with Democrats on these policies, was to couch the conversation in values and in how the voter’s values could align with Pete’s values.

Of course, convincing voters that they shared values with Pete was not always possible. Bob, another volunteer, mentioned that although he was a fiscally conservative Independent, he had not seen this sort of strategy work successfully with any of the more conservative, Trump-supporting Republicans he knew. Bob brought up the point that oftentimes people he was close to would actively avoid talking to him about politics because they knew they disagreed with him. Furthermore, in terms of reaching actual Trump supporters, Bob also noted that the chasm between himself and some friends when it came to the acceptance of certain facts was too deep to overcome. He cited one instance where “A lifelong friend…a dear friend, smart guy… he’d come out with things and I’d say ‘oh my god.’ I’d say ‘Steve, why do you keep watching Fox News. You’re wrong about some things, factually.’” Without a basic level of shared
understanding of the questions at hand, conversations could not progress to a discussion of the values needed to arrive at the best solution.

Another difficulty of a values-based approach to conversations appeared as the campaign set out to organize house parties. The concept behind this strategy was that volunteers who had been talking to people about Pete in their networks and in their communities would invite the people they knew to a small event in their home, to further discuss the candidate and try to recruit attendees to become volunteers. From the campaign’s perspective, events like this were to serve as a bridge between abstract conversations and concrete actions. A number of the volunteers interviewed for this project hosted these house parties. Although these were typically positive experiences, such as the event hosted by Jan and described later in this case study, Nancy felt that some of her guests were disappointed with the lack of policy details. “The house meeting was hard, and I’m not sure how effective it was. The house meeting wasn’t about Pete and his policy ideas. It was really about getting more people involved… People referred to [the house meetings] as too touchy-feely, too much about values and not enough about policy.”

The volunteers in this case study observed that when looking to persuade voters, talking about values was generally more successful in one-on-one settings. None mentioned debates around policy as a successful strategy, but several did remark that policy discussion could be effective if properly couched in shared values. However, once conversations left the one-on-one setting and voters invested the time to come to an actual event, they expected policy substance in return. Furthermore, some volunteers remarked that even with this strategy and even when talking to people they were personally close to, such as in Bob’s example, talking to active supporters of President Trump was most often a bridge too far.
Role of Professional Staff

The field organizer for Turf 1G was a recent college graduate named Tanner. His initial goal was to embed himself within the community to meet people and recruit potential volunteers. Subsequently, he was tasked with building strong relationships with these volunteers and helping them organize their own networks and community.

Tanner emphasized that he focused heavily on relational organizing when he first arrived in the turf towards the end of the summer. In his own words, his first mission was to “find Pete supporters.” He joined a local Episcopal church, in part because Pete was Episcopalian and had talked publicly about his faith. Tanner also attended a Thursday community dinner and other public events. He made an effort to appear apolitical as he made his first forays into the community, and allowed conversations to spring up naturally. As a new, young face in an older community, he recounted that these conversations came relatively naturally and frequently as people inquired about who he was.

Tanner organized local events and sought to tap into existing networks to meet Pete supporters. For example, Carolyn got involved after a friend of hers attended a meet and greet Tanner had organized at a local pub, and the friend subsequently organized a house party. “Tanner had a meet and greet… and a friend of mine went to it. And she decided that she would support Pete at that point. And then she had a meeting at her house, and a few of us showed up. It was just informational, it wasn’t the organizing part yet. We just talked about what drew us to Pete.” It was Carolyn’s first time being involved to this degree, and according to Tanner about half of his core volunteers had never been involved before politically. For Bob, it was a friend he walked his dog with who connected him to Tanner. Jan had a similar experience: she had bumped into a dog walker who had a Buttigieg button, asked him about it, and he had connected her to Tanner. Of course, not every volunteer could be recruited by word of mouth: Ginny gave
the campaign her email address when she signed up for a Buttigieg town hall event, and then received an email inviting her to Tanner’s weekly meeting in Wolfeboro. But connecting with people through word of mouth and community networks helped Tanner meet some of the people who would form the core of his volunteer team. Many of these people had never before been involved in a campaign, and might have never become involved otherwise. Tanner even described one volunteer who passed out Buttigieg stickers at the yoga studio they owned. One day they struck up a conversation with one of their patrons about Pete, invited them to an organizing meeting, and the patron went on to become a committed volunteer too. Tanner recounted that the two became good friends and came together to his weekly meetings.

Secondly, Tanner sought to help his volunteers improve their own organizing skills. He did this by implementing concrete training and strong habits, and by building personal trust and respect between himself and the volunteers within his team. Jan described how Tanner would open every meeting by reviewing the Rules of the Road, bring updates from the campaign, and run practice scenarios. Ginny recounted that the meetings concluded with a portion specifically focused on reaching out to one’s network about the campaign. She explained: “We used [the relational organizing site] always at our meetings. The last part of the meeting, we would stay there and do relational phone calls and texts or whatever.” Tanner’s success at implementing a strong relational organizing program seems to have come in part by making relational organizing not only a focus of his meetings, but a habitual action for his volunteers.

Tanner credited the investment from his volunteers in this program in part to the strong relationships he built with each of them. Each of the interviewees described him not only as a skilled leader, but as someone they felt close to personally. For example, Ginny shared a story about a misunderstanding with the local police that occurred while she was canvassing. She had
left campaign literature in someone’s enclosed porch after getting no answer when she knocked on the door. A few hours later she got a call from Tanner, who had been contacted by the police. The resident had contacted the police and was threatening to press charges. Tanner travelled to Boston to meet with “higher ups,” the ACLU was involved, and the matter was quickly resolved. However, Ginny was understandably shaken, and said to Tanner that she didn’t think she could canvas anymore. He advised her to relax, to come to that week’s debate watch party if she wanted to, and added, in Ginny’s words: “I want you to know that I’m not sharing this with anyone. It’ll just be between you and me.” She continued “So then I felt comfortable going to the debate party… he put me at ease.” When asked if this experience had helped her build a trusting relationship with Tanner, she responded simply with “absolutely.”

Tanner was successful as an organizer not only because he embedded himself in his turf’s community, but because he built a strong relationship with many of his volunteers. This was not a cynical campaign strategy or transactional exchange, but a genuine human connection. Many of the volunteers had met his family when they’d driven up from Boston to volunteer for the campaign. The trust and sense of camaraderie he built motivated volunteers to invest their time in the campaign.

**Emphasis on Existing Relationships**

In southern Carroll County, in addition to word of mouth conversations, the Buttigieg campaign tapped into social networks to reach persuadable voters in three important ways. First, Tanner tapped into existing community institutions. Second, he worked to broaden those networks by relying on institution members to reach out to their own circles. Third, the campaign organized house parties as a low-barrier method of bringing persuadable voters into conversations with those who were already Buttigieg supporters.
Tanner emphasized connecting with existing communities as a key to his success connecting with persuadable voters. He describes how he began to look for connections to the local community by joining local faith organizations: “A couple of my earliest volunteers were members of the Episcopal church, and though I am not Episcopalian, I attended religious services there on a bi-weekly basis. I got to know the pastor and other members of the congregation and frequently joined them at the Sunday coffee hour after services.”

Connecting with the local faith organizations also provided resources, such as meeting rooms in which events could be hosted. Tanner recounts: “At one point, a couple members of the church and I hosted one of our ‘house meetings’ in one of the church’s meeting rooms.”

Connecting with these established community organizations provided connections to community members, some of whom would become crucial early supporters, as well as resources to help Tanner’s organizing efforts.

Second, Tanner worked to expand his connections beyond the churches. He explained how participating in other community events the church was involved in helped to reach beyond the congregation:

The Episcopal church’s charity efforts included an affiliated thrift clothing store (“Lord and Tailor” - ha) that a couple of my volunteers helped run. In the fall, the thrift store hosted a charity “fashion show” that raised funds for the local transitory housing association. I was asked to help participate as one of the black-tie “models” in the fashion show, and I gladly wore my Pete pin as I was paraded through a room of 100+ local attendees. The Episcopal church’s basement and kitchen facilities were also used by the town to host “Community Dinners” every Thursday. I made it a priority to attend whenever I was able. While many attendees were also members of the congregation, the dinner was open to the general public and included many new faces.

As described above, the campaign benefitted from an emphasis on word of mouth conversations to recruit volunteers. In addition to conversations between individuals, the campaign sought to transition people from abstract conversations to more concrete actions.
through attending house parties. For volunteers looking to transition their contacts into volunteers, this strategy met with mixed results. Jan felt her party was a very successful one for a couple of reasons: (1) the party gave her a chance to have a political discussion with people she felt she never would have otherwise, and (2) roughly five or six of the attendees went on to volunteer in at least some capacity. She explains: “I have friends with whom we’ve never had these kind of discussions. One woman, she’s my dog groomer… she said, ‘you know, I’m so happy that you invited me… I’m a working class person, I never ever felt like I could have this kind of a conversation.’” She went on to note that she still sees many of these people today, and felt that through this sort of event she had more closely bonded with the other attendees. She continued: “Of the people I met there, because not everyone there I know very well, I still see today, I still feel as though, on a community level, if we had to pull together for something locally, these are the people I would go to first.” This speaks to the fact that shared involvement in the campaign, regardless of previous party affiliation, strengthened local personal bonds and built organizational capacity.

This is not to say that this was necessarily everyone’s experience when trying to reach out to their personal networks. For example, none of the interviewees had known any other members of the core volunteer team before the campaign began. Furthermore, others said that they struggled to use relational organizing, because their networks were too limited or were not local. For example, Ginny mentioned that she’d moved from Iowa five years before. She recounted that although she spoke to many people in Iowa, that didn’t necessarily help them in building connections to voters in New Hampshire. Carolyn recounted that about half of her own network was in New York, California, or Vermont. The campaign focused on house meetings as the main vehicle for turning relational organizing into more concrete action. House
meetings require resources, such as personal effort and an appropriate space, which are not always available to every volunteer. Jan was able to solve the problem of her own house being renovated by hosting it at a friend’s home. But Ginny’s apartment was too small for such an event, and she couldn’t find someone who was willing to open their own home.

**Campaign Technology**

The volunteers in this turf had mixed feelings on the degree to which technology assisted their relational organizing to reach conservative voters. Generally, they described two types of technology in their answers: social media, and the campaign’s online relational organizing tool.

Several of the volunteers used social media as a part of their relational organizing outreach to conservative voters. First, several said they felt a sense of community when they joined online groups. For example, Carolyn explained that although she doubted it helped their local organizing, she enjoyed joining groups online because it gave her the feeling of being part of a national movement. In her own words: “I joined Baby Boomers for Pete, which is a very active group. They post a lot of good stuff, that I share constantly. It’s nice to see people who are like-minded, who are just as passionate as you are about Pete, and sharing information that otherwise would not see about what is happening in the other states.”

This feeling of larger community likely helps keep morale high, and reduce the sense of isolation that might come while organizing for a Democrat in a conservative part of the state. Secondly, the volunteers used social media as a way to directly reach out to their own networks. Though some of the volunteers were reluctant to share their own political leanings just on their social media feeds, they would post information about events or directly message their friends with information. Ginny explained “we did use social media a lot when we would text people, friends that we knew or whatever, to talk about Pete or just say that Pete’s going to be in Rochester at such and such a
time, contacting people that way. Part of the advantage of relational organizing seems to be that people could reach out their own friends through whatever medium felt most natural for them – this often meant face to face conversations, but it also meant sharing articles, video clips, or event invites over Facebook and other social media.

The campaign also made use of a relational organizing tool to help volunteers keep track of who they had contacted about Pete, as well as reminding them to follow up and offering different possible actions one could take with your friend. Here again, Tanner played a role in instilling in his volunteers the habit of logging their conversations with their networks on the site at the end of every meeting. Furthermore, he also helped coach the volunteers, who are generally older, through any technical hurdles they may encounter when using either social media or the campaign’s relation tool. However, outside of meetings, it does not seem as though the tool was as habitually utilized. Carolyn said the tool was helpful, but that she was never particularly good at going back and updating it. “We used it, but I did not use it that much to go back and track who I talked to. It was a list of people who I would contact every once in a while and let them know what was going on, but I wasn’t good at going back and updating it.” The fact that the tool required constant diligence seems to have made it successful in a situation like this where an organizer can hold volunteers accountable, but likely less successful in situations where organizers were less diligent or in grassroots organizations in states that did not have a staff presence.

Organizing Turf 7E (Hudson, Pelham) as a Control Case to Assess Persuasion

This turf is also located in a deeply conservative part of the state. The towns of Hudson and Pelham immediately to the west of Nashua but are significantly more conservative. Although
both President Trump and Hillary Clinton received roughly 47 percent of the vote during the 2016 general election in Hillsborough county where these towns are found, President Trump won Hudson by 14 percent, and was victorious in the town of Pelham by nearly 25 percent. In addition to its conservatism, the reason this turf makes a good control case for this study is that this turf did not have an organizer assigned to it until the final months of the campaign. This resulting lack of relational organizing makes this turf an ideal control case for evaluating the effects of relational organizing on persuading voters.

The volunteers in this turf did not focus on common values when appealing to conservative voters to the same degree as those in 1G. For example, when volunteers David and Parvin, were asked what they emphasized when talking about Buttigieg’s campaign, they reported having described the candidate’s personal qualities or policy positions. “Basically, how smart he is, how articulate he is, and I particularly liked his military background. He’s more of a moderate than the fist-waving Bernie Sanders type”.\(^{162}\) This is an important distinction from values like the importance of national unity or honest government. Kim Masse, another volunteer, also mentioned the candidate’s personal qualities, explaining: “I stuck to the basic idea of I’m not going to lecture you on his politics, you can go read about his policies elsewhere. I’m just going to talk to you about the person I know him to be – the authenticity of how he grew up, he’s not a trust fund kid, he’s very normal, kind of like you or I”\(^{163}\). Kim’s perspective was unusual, because she is originally from South Bend and was a high school classmate of Buttigieg’s (See Appendix 1). Although her potential as a character witness does seem to have been effective with some Republicans, she seemed to be alone in emphasizing values in this turf.

Given Turf 7E’s conservative lean, it ranked low on the campaign’s list of priorities. The campaign only assigned an organizer there in December, just two months before the February
primary. Chloe Hunt, the organizer in this turf, had hoped to emphasize relational organizing techniques, but given the accelerated timeline was forced to rely exclusively on more traditional organizing strategies like canvassing and phone banking. These activities were hampered, however, due to the limited size of the Democratic voter file in this area and the distance to the nearest campaign office, which was across the Merrimack river in Nashua. Chloe had little time to try and tap into existing communities and local institutions and relied on her volunteers to talk to their friends’ own networks about Buttigieg.

Despite the overall low numbers of volunteers in Turf 7E, volunteers like Parvin and David were excited to try and persuade their conservative neighbors to vote for Buttigieg. Given that they’d received little training themselves on hosting, Parvin and David turned the meeting over to campaign staff. While they reported a favorable reception from the meeting, it is unclear if a better outcome could have been achieved had the volunteer hosts led the discussion.

Finally, none of the volunteers in this turf used technology like social media or the campaign’s online organizing tool, beyond showing a few videos during the house meeting.

Assessing Relational Organizing’s Effects on Voter Turnout: Organizing Turf 7B, Nashua

Nashua was selected as the second major case study because it has long been a city that has been known for relatively low levels of political involvement. On primary day in 2020, the city received praise for its unusually high voter turnout, yet still clocked in at only 40% of registered voters – 3% behind the statewide average. In 2019, the city clerk predicted the municipal elections would be conducted with only a 17% turnout, as the mayor’s office and several other city council seats remained uncontested. The final turnout would manage to reach 17.7%.
Buttigieg campaign staff pointed Nashua out as another example where much attention had given to relational organizing tactics. Zoë Meekan, the New Hampshire campaign’s deputy organizing director highlighted the Nashua organizers in interviews with the author. Nashua had 484 relational contacts recorded by the campaign’s online tool, representing the number of people contacted by relational organizing (as tracked by the tracker, which is not perfect).

Values and Policy

In the interviews conducted in Nashua, it was clear that an emphasis on values was critical to connecting with people who had not been previously involved before. For example, Josh and Andrea Lindsay, though consistent voters, had never volunteered on a campaign, or even donated to a political campaign before Pete’s. “We just really clicked with the message of unity… I found [Pete’s] approach to unity very refreshing, and something that this country needed a lot more of and so that as one of the main reasons why we were so eager to support Pete, especially early on”, Josh recalled. When asked how Josh approached talking to others about Pete, he referenced the importance of a “story of self”, a campaign term for the elevator-pitch-version of an experience from one’s own life that motivated one to get involved. He emphasized that this sort of storytelling and focus on values had been very effective in connecting with one particular kind of alienated voter: those who had never been involved in political volunteerism until the 2016 election. Describing supporter meetings, he recounts: “There were a lot of people in these meetings who seemed like they weren’t that into politics prior to 2016 and then since the Trump election became very into politics and very interested in volunteering their time and donating and talking to others because they shared … a personal story about how the 2016 election impacted their lives”.

68
Fred Mayer, another Nashua volunteer and registered independent, spoke from personal experience on this matter: “I had not been politically active [previously] but I had resolved after 2016 to become politically active. Somebody said ‘support the candidate who reflects your values’, and that immediately struck a chord with me. I said this Pete Buttigieg guy, he’s really speaking to what I want people to say”. However, he too emphasized that a values argument was the best way to sway newly engaged voters, even when confronted by those looking to debate electability. “It was useful to me to find out what [people not previously involved] believed, what they cared about… I would talk about Pete and how he reflected my values, and might frankly be less engaged in ‘I think he’s the guy who can win’ sort of arguments”.

In addition to connecting with alienated voters awakened by the 2016 election, the relational strategy helped the Buttigieg campaign connect with another group not typically disengaged from political activism: Highschool students. Abby Grendon, a Nashua highschool student and Buttigieg campaign volunteer who would vote for the mayor in her very first New Hampshire primary. Though she acknowledged that organizing young people was an uphill battle in the face of the higher name recognition of other candidates or the influence of parents, she argued that personally resonating with a candidate as important as any one policy stance. She pointed out the Tom Steyer campaign as an example of this: “every time my friends heard his name, they would go ‘oh my god’, not even based on his policy but the fact they found him annoying because he was always [advertising] on social media”. How to encourage this resonance? She points out that while high school students may not have been focused on policy issues, they connected with values like “hope”, especially for the future – even going as to look for merchandise that was featured the word. “A lot of people said they wanted to make Pete
merchandise, that had hope on it or was hope branded, because that was a word we resonated with a lot.”

This is not to say that making values a major campaign theme was a flawless strategy for increasing voter turnout in Nashua. Reports point to poverty and confusing information on elections as being some of the barriers to higher electoral turnout in the city. It is not evident in this research that focusing on broad values rather than emphasizing specific facts about issues like anti-poverty programs or electoral reform, did much to overcome these barriers. Furthermore, Abby also stressed that just because young voters look for a candidate who speaks to their values does not mean that young voters do not also have policy positions that were important to them.

However, a focus on values did prove to be an asset in engaging new voters in the political process. Especially for previously alienated voters who felt their morals threatened by the 2016 election, a focus on common values attracted them towards getting involved politically with Pete’s campaign. Focusing on values also seemed to be effective at reaching younger voters getting involved for the first time. Though these voters may not be policy experts, values like hope for the future were easy to identify with, and were also easy to communicate in peer-to-peer conversations. While bombarding young people with ads seemed to do little to engage them, young people seemed to respond well when talked to by their peers about values they cared about.

Role of Professional Staff

Especially for those getting involved for the first time, a strong relationship between the volunteer and the organizers increased the willingness of volunteers to engage in campaign activities. Josh noted that he and Andrea met Nashua organizer Sarah early on in their
experience, and quickly connected with her. He recalled that Andrea was on an email list that Sarah had received early on, and the two met for coffee as Sarah worked to make connections in Nashua. At the meeting, Sarah invited the Lindseys to Buttigieg’s upcoming rally in Nashua, which they attended. Summing up the recruitment, Josh recalled: “Andrea] met Sarah, one of the organizers for Nashua, and really hit it off – and really sort of clicked with Pete’s message – and then we started volunteering from that point until he dropped out”. Both the candidate’s message and the personal connection with a local organizer were important factors in engaging Josh and Andrea in Buttigieg’s organization.

Though Abby’s first exposure to the campaign came at the Nashua Pride Parade, she was quickly connected with Anabel, another organizer stationed in Nashua at the time. She met Anabel at the Nashua field office, and later said she was the “first staff member I had a really strong connection with”. This bond was strong enough that when Anabel was reassigned to the Manchester office, Abby recounted feeling apprehensive about her role on the campaign: “[Anabel] was moved to the Manchester office, so at first I was like ‘oh my gosh, all the staff is changing, what is going on?’ And so I was kind of worried I wouldn’t like [the other Nashua staff] as much. But once I met all of them, they’re all like incredible people”. Despite this initial apprehension, Abby described her tight relationship with the other Buttigieg organizers, and in part through their mentorship, saw herself taking a larger role in the campaign and developing new leadership skills. Describing how she felt she’d changed during the campaign, she said: “It completely changed my life… I pushed myself to do things I never would have done… I’m terrified of talking to people I don’t know, … , and I had to do that all the time… I started leading volunteer training after I’d volunteered for a while. That was kind of wild”.

71
Volunteers assuming leadership positions in local teams has been a staple of electoral organizing, since the Obama campaign successfully implemented a neighborhood team model in 2008. However, one advantage of relational organizing is that it encourages organizers to form strong partnerships with all kinds of volunteers long before election day. Greta Carnes, the Buttigieg national organizing director, critiqued her own experience on the Obama campaigns for being too focused on getting volunteers out of the office and knocking on doors as quickly as possible. She recounted: “if somebody was trying to volunteer in 2012 with me, and they didn’t want to knock doors, I’d be like ‘bye, I can’t even spend one more minute talking to you, you have to knock doors’”. On the Buttigieg campaign, organizers were encouraged to invest the time to mentor newcomers to political organizing, like Abby and Josh, so they could develop the skills to lead volunteers and talk to strangers. Josh explained how working closely with the organizers helped hone his skills despite his relative inexperience. He said: “There was some more specific training that the organizers would provide… on just getting people comfortable… talking to strangers about politics, because that can be very nerve-racking… also when you go out there, like, you’re representing Pete so remember to model these rules of the road and be respectful and try to be unifying”. Josh’s comments demonstrate that volunteers grew personally through their work with organizers, and felt a personal obligation to represent the campaign well because they were also representing people to whom they felt close.

**Emphasis on Existing Relationships**

Tapping into existing communities and social networks proved to be an asset for the Buttigieg campaign in Nashua as it sought to engage alienated voters. For example, Abby’s first exposure to the Pete campaign was at the Nashua Pride Parade. She described her very first interaction with the campaign: “In the summer of 2019, I went to the Nashua Pride Parade, like
our local one. There was a girl there with her dad, and she had this clipboard, and she said ‘we’re looking for volunteers for this candidate.’” Besides having a presence at local community events to meet potential voters, Buttigieg’s delegations typically had more volunteers and fewer staff than other campaigns. The author of this study attended the Merrimack Memorial Day parade, not far from Nashua, and helped organize the Buttigieg campaign’s presence as part of his duties as a campaign intern. The campaign team worked diligently to recruit volunteers to attend the events; while other candidates had large contingents almost completely comprised of their organizers and other paid staff, the Buttigieg contingent was almost entirely made up of volunteers (See Appendix 2 for more details).

Relying on volunteers instead of paid staff is useful for several reasons in the quest to reach alienated voters. First, volunteers, like the ones Abby spoke to, can connect with their neighbors and explain why they’re supporting a given candidate. Second, for a previously uninvolved individual, representing Buttigieg at a well-known community event was an easy first step in becoming more involved with the campaign. Events like annual parades had low barriers to participation because they were one-time commitments. The first-time volunteers felt they were making a difference because they were campaigning in a very public venue, but they were put at ease by participating in events they already knew well and had attended previously. Third, in the process of attending these low-risk events, first-time volunteers met other Buttigieg supporters as well as campaign staff, and began to build personal connections to the campaign. Case-in-point: by July, Fred Mayer had resolved to get involved for Buttigieg, but was still confused about how he could contribute. But then, he explains: “I went online and found out that there was going to be a Team Pete contingent at the Merrimack Fourth of July Parade. I said ‘yeah, I should do this’, and so I did… and Liz was there that day, probably Adam was there,
definitely Liz, and Carina was there too”.186 Fred met several members of the campaign staff at the parade, including local Nashua organizers like Carina. Carina followed up with Fred in the days following to set up a meeting: “Carina contacted me, when she at that time had authority for Hudson, which is where I lived and so we met at Martha’s Exchange in Nashua, and I tried to tell her what I knew about Nashua”.187 Taking the time to draw on the insight of local voters helped newcomers to political activism feel valued. It was also advantageous to the campaign because it connected organizers to harder to reach groups, such as Abby’s high school friends, who are generally not included in existing Democratic voter files.

Nashua organizer Sarah Silverstein emphasized the importance of events with low barriers to participation for attracting voters getting involved for the first time. In addition to tapping into pre-existing community events, she also pointed out that the campaign set about making campaign gatherings as casual as possible. She explained: “We had low barrier to entry events weekly, whether they be ‘Pints for Pete’ or weekly strategy meetings that would then allow the people to interact with fellow Pete supporters already involved, building a community.”188 She also stressed the importance of “being present in the community and having our volunteers be present in the community, and speak about Pete when they could, helped spread the word and get people involved.”189 Sarah emphasized that the campaign effectively reached out to those getting involved for the first time by holding welcoming events of its own, and centering volunteer voices in their outreach to the Nashua community.

**Campaign Technology**

The organizing in this turf demonstrates the importance of technology in reaching alienated voters. First and foremost, the campaign’s website is often the first place alienated voters turn to when they’re first thinking of getting involved. Fred found connected with the
Buttigieg contingent at the Merrimack parade because he found the event posted on the campaign’s website. Centralized event boards made it easy for anyone in the state to find events near them, whether large public events like the parades or more social gatherings like the “pints for pete” events.

Beyond the campaign website, alienated voters beginning to look into the campaign could connect with other Buttigieg supporters getting engaged for the first time through social media. Abby noted that she though she only posted “a couple things” herself, she felt that online organizing offered a sense of community that is really valuable to newly minted supporters. “I think if the candidate has a strong online presence, then you feel, I don’t know, connected to that presence.” Furthermore, these online communities fell in love with a “design tool kit” the campaign had posted, with customizable fonts, colors and Buttigieg-themed graphics. Josh Lindsey recounted how his wife Andrea set about designing sweaters, featuring the “Boot” in “Boot Edge Edge” as a ski boot (Pictured below in Figure 5).

Fig 5.
Lindsey describes that the Nashua team bonded over sharing this design with the other Nashua volunteers. He remembered happily “it was funny to see all the volunteers [at Buttigieg’s Nashua events] wearing the Boot Edge Edge sweaters. We never talked to each other before, [to say] everyone wear the sweater, but all of the volunteers would just show up with the sweaters.”191 Josh pointed out that allowing supporters to design their own accessories made them feel as if they owned a small stake in the campaign.

Sarah and the other organizers also valued the digital tools entrusted to them by the campaign. For example, Sarah valued being given access to the lists of people who’d bought merch from the campaign, and those who’d contributed money. This allowed her to reach out to people who might be interested in the candidate to pitch in a few dollars, and invite them to an event or to a one on one meeting. She recalled that this allowed her to see “Pete fans in our turfs and then reach out to them for [personal meetings], and having that personal connection with them was really helpful [in bringing in new people to the organization].”192

However, broadcasting one’s support for Pete online was not always an easy option. Josh recounts that he always held back from posting about his newfound political activism on his own personal social media. “I also have a lot of family members, like my parents and close family members, who are very aggressive Trump supporters. So I don’t really post much on social media because I was nervous that it would make things weird between my parents [and I].”193

Clearly technology was not an asset for reaching alienated voters in every scenario. However, social media and the campaign website offered new supporters a sense of community, as well as a place to share ideas and find out information on opportunities to get involved.
Organizing Turf 3G (Auburn, Chester, Brentwood) as a Control Case to Assess Turnout

Though this is a largely rural area, the turf has similarly low voter turnout rate – on Primary day only 26% of registered voters would cast ballots. This turf also represents another case where less emphasis was placed on relational organizing. When David Kunin, the local organizer, was asked to what extent he emphasized existing relationships, he did not describe the same kind of tapping into established community institutions that the organizers in Nashua and Southern Carroll county had implemented. Instead, he focused on asking volunteers to bring friends to more traditional campaign activities like phonebanks or canvasses. He reported: “Phone banking was the primary way of initially getting in touch with volunteers. After that I would ask volunteers if they knew anyone who would be interested in taking action”.¹⁹⁴ This did prove effective, with Kunin estimating that as many of a quarter of his volunteers came from these sorts of referrals.

However interviews with the volunteers themselves revealed relatively little “buy-in” from those they’d brought with them. Melissa Carolan, when asked about trying to engage friends who are not normally involved in politics, recalled: “I had some friends who did the bare minimum, but for them I think that was already a big leap. They [only] came to a house party at my house, or one of them, I went canvassing, and she drove me around. But she would not get out of the car”.¹⁹⁵ It is not totally clear why the organization here struggled to bring new people into the fold – though other volunteers reported feeling unsure how best to communicate with disengaged voters. Volunteer Edward recalled that his training on how to have conversations came fairly late during the course of the election: “I thought it was kind of late in the campaign that we would be talking about… the issues we want to get across. It felt like earlier on, when you had people doing your initial door knocking, that those people should [have received]
talking points.”\textsuperscript{196} This demonstrates that there was little strategy for how to approach engaging alienated voters.

The use of technology was also disorganized, and certainly did not seem to show volunteers embracing a habit of tracking their conversations using the online tool. When asked about whether she used the online tool, one volunteer replied: “No sadly, I did not. I’m not much of a logger, I have to say… It was a great idea, but for the most part I never even thought to do that.”\textsuperscript{197} This certainly does not show the same level of discipline present in Nashua or Carroll County, in terms of tracking their relational organizing.

In sum, though the campaign was somewhat effective at mobilizing volunteers through personal connections in this turf, it is clear that this is a strong control study where relational organizing was not implemented to a large degree. The campaign did not build up habits of using technology to organize and track peer-to-peer conversations; it did little to tap into local communities and institutions; and outreach to new volunteers was not typically successful, nor did it focus on common values rather than policy talking points.

\textbf{Passing Judgement on the Buttigieg Campaign’s Experience with Relational Organizing}

\textbf{The Contrast between Qualitative Evidence and the Election Results in the Case Studies}

It is difficult to assess the impact the Buttigieg campaign’s relational organizing had on the outcomes of the election. The qualitative evidence seemed to paint the picture that embracing relational organizing’s tenets proved to be an asset in the New Hampshire turfs where it was heavily utilized. In Southern Carroll County, Tanner’s strong connections with local institutions helped him reach conservative voters even in a small rural town. He formed strong personal
relationships with his volunteers, and the trust that grew out of these relationships allowed Tanner to ask more of his volunteers, as in the case of Jan. He also trained his volunteers to emphasize the values they shared with their neighbors, which seemed to help them avoid the pitfalls of difficult policy debates. Finally, his work to encourage even older volunteers to habitually track their relational contacts demonstrated that this sort of organizing strategy could produce reliable data, if painstakingly.

Meanwhile, in the towns of Hudson and Pelham, an organizer was not even assigned to the area until just a few months before the primary. The organizing effort taking place here seemed like an accelerated version of the Obama get out the vote tactics, which was ultimately very different from the painstaking networking and community building that occurred in southern Carroll County. Yet when the votes were tallied, Buttigieg earned 28 percent of the vote in Hudson and Pelham, compared to the 25 percent he earned in Carroll County. These results make it difficult to conclude that the relational work in Carroll County was a complete success.

A similar trend can be seen in the case studies examining outreach to alienated voters. The qualitative evidence from the Nashua organizing turf indicate that relational organizing tactics were effective in reaching out to alienated voters. A focus on finding common values seemed to be particularly useful for attracting voters shocked by the 2016 election and looking to get involved for the first time. Focusing on shared values also seemed to attract younger voters, who may still be forming their own policy preferences, but can identify with values like “hope for the future”. The organizers in Nashua also focused on connecting with established community events, and organizing events that seemed low-risk to those getting involved for the first time. This appears to have been effective, as volunteers like Fred and Abby highlighted how they’d felt connected to a broader community of Buttigieg supporters after public events they
attended. The Nashua volunteers also highlighted strong connections to Buttigieg campaign staff, and insisted that their own organizing abilities had increased through their partnerships with the paid staff. Technology like social media groups and an online design toolkit release by the campaign offered new ways for those engaging for the first time to feel like a part of a larger movement.

By contrast, in a similar turf, covering Auburn, Chester and Brentwood, efforts to tap into existing social networks focused on hoping that volunteers might be able to convince people they knew to join them for canvassing or phonebanks. Though this strategy did seem effective at getting volunteers in the door, the outreach to keep them involved was less effective. Perhaps this was because communication strategies appeared disorganized and lacking a central theme like the shared values approach implemented elsewhere. Yet on election night, Buttigieg only received 24 percent of the vote in Nashua, while his total in Auburn, Chester, and Brentwood was nearly 6 percent higher at 30 percent.

**Trends in Statewide Data**

In the face of these findings, it is important to acknowledge larger statewide trends. First, David Wasserman, NBC News contributor and an editor of the nonpartisan Cook Political Report, calculated that turnout increased 26.5% in towns won by Buttigieg, 25.2% won by moderate Minnesota Senator Amy Klobuchar, and only 12.6% in towns won by progressive Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders. Rather than attribute these gains to the campaigns’ efforts to reach alienated voters who may not normally participate in elections, Wasserman concluded that these results reflected the success Buttigieg and Klobuchar enjoyed in their attempts to entice conservative Independents. He writes: “most of Dems' turnout increase was attributable to Kasich/Rubio types crossing over from '16 GOP primary”.[198] Clearly the Buttigieg campaign
was successful at persuading conservative voters to cast their ballots for him, and relational organizing may have played a big part in that.

Secondly, Buttigieg staff undertook their own internal analysis that showed voters who had been contacted by someone they knew about Pete were significantly more likely to turn out to vote, based on results from the contests in Iowa, New Hampshire, and Nevada. Taylor Erwin, the Buttigieg Campaign’s Deputy Data Director described her analysis:

The purpose of the analysis was to see the conversation rates for people signing a commit to vote card based on different characteristics of how they were introduced to the campaign. There were two different groups: 1. People who had been added into the NH MyCampaign (VAN) [the Buttigieg campaign’s voter database] as a result of being mapped on the relational site (meaning someone logged that they had a conversation with them about Pete) 2. People who were added into NH MyCampaign not as a result of being mapped on the relational site. I first calculated the list size for both of the two groups, and then narrowed both lists to just the people who had signed a commit to vote card. What I found was that for people who were added to the campaign through the relational site, they had an 11% conversion rate to commit to vote. For those who were added not through the relational site, they had a 2% conversion rate to commit to vote. That is a 400% improvement!

Third, the data presented below in Figure 6 demonstrates that there was a positive correlation between the turfs where the Buttigieg campaign invested the most effort in relational organizing, and the turfs where the mayor earned the most votes. Though internal voter files were not available for this thesis, the campaign did provide the internal data from their online relational organizing tool. This data showed the number of relational contacts (the number of people contacted by someone they know to talk about the campaign), and roughly in which turfs these people resided. This data can be found in Appendix 3. The graph below (Fig. 6) shows the number of relational contacts in each turf per thousand people plotted against the share of the primary vote for Buttigieg. Relational contacts were calculated as a per capita share of the population so as to control for the difference in population levels between the different turfs, some of which had to be combined to successfully match the election results published by the
The graph shows a slight positive correlation between number of relational contacts and the percentage of the primary vote for Buttigieg in each turf.

**Fig 6.**

Figure 6 indicates that throughout the state, the campaign performed better in areas where significant efforts were made in relational organizing. Though this correlation does not speak directly to the degree to which relational organizing persuaded conservative voters to vote for Buttigieg, or if it was responsible for increased turnout. That being said, it does seem that the employing the tactic helped Buttigieg’s campaign.

**Concluding Thoughts**
Pete Buttigieg was a unique candidate – few before have risen in the national discourse as quickly as the South Bend mayor who became a top tier presidential candidate. However, his campaign clearly represents a prototype for political practitioners nation-wide. The relational organizing tactics presented here show great promise, and can serve as an example for future electoral races.

No single campaign tactic will ever be a failsafe against losing elections. The results of the four case studies presented there clearly show that – Buttigieg was more successful in the turf where his campaign had done less organizing. After Pete Buttigieg’s strong finishes in the Iowa Caucuses and New Hampshire Primary, he went on to lose the 2020 race for the Democratic Presidential Nomination. Furthermore no single campaign strategy will ever completely heal national division, or single handedly engage every voter who feels alienated from the electoral process.

However, this study does show that relational organizing can perhaps help to increase voter turnout and improve voter persuasion. This thesis also shows that voters respond positively when given a greater personal stake in a campaign. The volunteers interviewed here seemed to appreciate talking with one another to share stories and find commonalities, rather than argue over policy positions handed down from a distant headquarters office. Volunteers developed new skills when organizers were presented not as bosses but as mentors, looking to work with them to advance a shared goal. When the campaign imbedded itself in authentic ways into local communities, strong community organizing infrastructure was built – as seen in Jan’s comment that her fellow Buttigieg volunteers were the ones she would turn to if ever she needed to confront a public challenge in the future. Finally, this study shows how novel technology
presents new challenges but also new opportunities to reach more voters in a more organized and strategic way.

Future research should investigate these concepts further. Researchers should look to understand some aspects of relational organizing conspicuously absent from this study. First and foremost, political scientists should examine whether relational organizing can help overcome existing barriers to participation in the political process, such as poverty or racial inequality. Future researchers should also seek new metrics to track the reach of relational organizing. Finally, future practitioners should do more to acknowledge the roots of relational organizing: As Mark Warren describes, its pioneers sought to bring communities together to deliberate shared values and shared policy goals. Future practitioners should consider how they can give live up to this original vision by giving voters an even greater stake in campaigns, by offering them a genuine role in crafting the policies they want to see candidates implement in their communities.
Appendices

Appendix 1: Pictures from Kim Masse’s high school yearbook of Buttigieg.

Masse is in bottom row, second from the left in the blue sweater. Buttigieg is leaning out on the left with the checkered overshirt.
Appendix 2: Merrimack Fourth of July Parade

A largely volunteer contingent representing Buttigieg at the Merrimack Fourth of July parade, many with signs they’d decorated at a “sign making party” the night before.
### Appendix 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizing Turf (Regions 1-3)</th>
<th>Number of Relational Contacts</th>
<th>Buttigieg Share of Vote</th>
<th>Organizing Turf (Regions 4-6)</th>
<th>Number of Relational Contacts</th>
<th>Buttigieg Share of Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1A</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>4A</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1B</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>4B</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1C</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>4C</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1D</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>4D</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1E</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>4E</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1F + 1G</td>
<td>486 + 623</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>4F</td>
<td>486</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1G</td>
<td>623</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>5A + 5G</td>
<td>623 + 303</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1H</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>5B</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2A</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>5C</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2B</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>5D</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2C</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>5F</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2D</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>5G</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2E</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>6D</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2F</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>6E</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2G + 2H</td>
<td>201 + 83</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>6F</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2H</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>7A</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3A</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>7B + 7C + 7D</td>
<td>194 + 380 + 202</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3B</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>7C</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3C</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>7D</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3D</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>7E</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3E + 3H</td>
<td>124 + 185</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>7F</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3F</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>8A + 8B + 8C + 4B</td>
<td>234 + 242 + 185 + 203</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3G</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>8B</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

87
Organizing Turf (Regions 1-3) | Number of Relational Contacts | Buttigieg Share of Vote | Organizing Turf (Regions 4-6) | Number of Relational Contacts | Buttigieg Share of Vote
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
3H | 185 | X | 8C | 185 | X

Appendix 3, above, describes the relationship between the number of relational contacts (as tracked by the campaign’s online organizing tool), and the share of the primary vote for Buttigieg in each turf. Several adjustments have been made to account for the above problems. The table indicates the adjustments made to the data with small “+”s to indicate that data from two separate turfs were combined in order to align with the results published by the New Hampshire Secretary of State, as well as “X”s to indicate where township data did not exist.

Several of these adjustments were made in order to construct a dataset that could accurately be used for statistical analysis.

- The number of relational contacts in Turfs 1F (Northern Carroll County) and 1G (Southern Carroll County) were combined to represent one turf, 1F + 1G, covering all of Carroll County.
- Turf 1H (Dartmouth) was compared to dependant value of the election results from the town of Hanover, where its campus is located. Since no other organizer was assigned to Hanover, one can assume that this turf included the town as well.
- The relational contacts of turf 2H (UNH) was combined with those of turf 2G (Durham, Lee, Madbury). UNH did not have its own voting results published by the secretary of state, but its vote total is presumably included in that of Durham, where its campus is located.
• To avoid counting Londonderry twice, the relational contacts of 3H(Londonderry) have been included in 3E(Londonderry and Wyndham).

• Turf 5A, listed as Keene, Chesterfield, Hinsdale, Fitzwilliam, Winchester, Troy, Swanzey, and Rindge, has been limited to Keene and combined with the relational contacts from 5G (Keene State). Chesterfield, Hinsdale, Fitzwilliam, Winchester, Troy, Swanzey, and Rindge are represented in Turf 5B (Chesterfield, Fitzwilliam, Hinsdale, Richmond, Rindge, Swanzey, Troy, Winchester).

• Because it is unclear which wards pertain to which organizing Turfs, Turf 7B (Nashua) has been combined with the two other Nashua Turfs, 7C and 7D, to represent the entirety of the city.

• Also because it is unclear which wards pertain to which organizing turfs, Turf 8A (Manchester) has been combined with the two other Manchester Turfs, 8B and 8C, to represent the entirety of the city. Furthermore, 8A has also been combined with 4B (Manchester), an early designation for Manchester that was divided up as the campaign added more organizers.

• Only one turf must be excluded outright from statistical analysis. This is 3C (Southern Rockingham County), because it is unclear which specific townships are included in this turf. Furthermore, unlike the case of Carroll County which was divided into two turfs that could easily be combined, Rockingham is divided into several turfs within the Western Rockingham region. This makes it impossible to combine turfs into a clearly identifiable area.
For an explanation of which turfs represented which communities, see below:

Organizing Turf Locations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turf</th>
<th>Geographic Area</th>
<th>Turf</th>
<th>Geographic Area</th>
<th>Turf</th>
<th>Geographic Area</th>
<th>Turf</th>
<th>Geographic Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Region 1</td>
<td>Grafton, Carroll, Coos Counties</td>
<td>Region 2</td>
<td>Strafford County and Eastern Rockingham (Seacoast)</td>
<td>Region 3</td>
<td>Western Rockingham County</td>
<td>Region 4</td>
<td>Merrimack, Belknap Counties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1A</td>
<td>Berlin/Gorham/Coos County</td>
<td>2A</td>
<td>Portsmouth</td>
<td>3A</td>
<td>Derry</td>
<td>4A</td>
<td>Concord</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1B</td>
<td>Lancaster/Littleton/Lincoln</td>
<td>2B</td>
<td>Greenland, New Castle, Newington, North Hampton, Rye, Newmarket</td>
<td>3B</td>
<td>Stratham, Exeter, Newfields</td>
<td>4B</td>
<td>Manchester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1C</td>
<td>Lebanon/Enfield/Canaan</td>
<td>2C</td>
<td>Hampton, Hampton Falls, Seabrook</td>
<td>3C</td>
<td>Southern Rockingham County</td>
<td>4C</td>
<td>Allenstown, Chichester, Epsom, Hooksett, Pembroke, Pittsfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1D</td>
<td>Grafton County</td>
<td>2D</td>
<td>Dover</td>
<td>3D</td>
<td>Salem</td>
<td>4D</td>
<td>Center Harbor, Laconia, Meredith, New Hampton, Sanbornton, Tilton, Bristol, Bridgewater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1E</td>
<td>Plymouth area</td>
<td>2E</td>
<td>Rochester, Rollinsford, and Somersworth</td>
<td>3E</td>
<td>Londonderry, Windham</td>
<td>4E</td>
<td>Concord, Loudon, Canterbury, Northfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1F</td>
<td>Northern Carroll County</td>
<td>2F</td>
<td>Farmington, Middleton, Milton, New Durham, Barrington, Strafford</td>
<td>3F</td>
<td>Epping, Candia, Deerfield, Raymond, Northwood, Nottingham</td>
<td>4F</td>
<td>Bow, Bradford, Dunbarton, Henniker, Hopkinton, Warner, Webster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1G</td>
<td>Southern Carroll County</td>
<td>2G</td>
<td>Durham, Lee, Madbury</td>
<td>3G</td>
<td>Auburn, Chester, Brentwood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Organizing Turf Locations (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turf</th>
<th>Geographic Area</th>
<th>Turf</th>
<th>Geographic Area</th>
<th>Turf</th>
<th>Geographic Area</th>
<th>Turf</th>
<th>Geographic Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5A</td>
<td>Cheshire, Sullivan, Merrimack Counties</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Northern Hillsborough</td>
<td>7A</td>
<td>Southern Hillsborough</td>
<td>8A</td>
<td>Manchester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5B</td>
<td>Chesterfield, Fitzwilliam, Hinsdale, Richmond, Rindge, Swanzey, Troy, Winchester</td>
<td>6E</td>
<td>Bedford, Amherst, Milford</td>
<td>7B</td>
<td>Nashua</td>
<td>8B</td>
<td>Manchester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5C</td>
<td>Walpole, Sunapee, Grantham, Charlestown, Jaffrey, and Newport</td>
<td>6F</td>
<td>Peterborough, Hillsborough, New Ipswich, Mont Vernon, Antrim, Hancock, Deering, Greenfield, Lyndeborough, Franecestown, Bennington, Temple, Sharon, Windsor</td>
<td>7C</td>
<td>Nashua</td>
<td>8C</td>
<td>Manchester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5D</td>
<td>Acworth, Charlestown, Claremont, Cornish, Croydon, Goshen, Grantham, Langdon, Lempster, Newport, Springfield, Unity, Washington</td>
<td>7D</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nashua</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turf</td>
<td>Geographic Area</td>
<td>Turf</td>
<td>Geographic Area</td>
<td>Turf</td>
<td>Geographic Area</td>
<td>Turf</td>
<td>Geographic Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5F</td>
<td>Sunapee, Andover, Boscawen, Danbury, Franklin, Hill, New London, Newbury, Salisbury, Sutton, Wilmot</td>
<td>7E</td>
<td>Pelham, Hudson</td>
<td>7F</td>
<td>Litchfield and Merrimack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5G</td>
<td>Keene State</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 ibid
5 ibid
13 ibid, 139.
14 ibid, 66
15 Ibid, 158
19 ibid 64
21 ibid 62.
Some scholars argue that a large segment of the American population, perhaps even a majority, are so-called ‘intuitionalists’ - making decisions based on feelings and emotions rather than rational facts. These scholars argue that intuitionalists are almost impossible to persuade, with which Popkin would disagree. See J. Eric Oliver and Thomas John Wood, *Enchanted America: How Intuition and Reason Divide Our Politics* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2018).


54 Ibid
55 Ibid.
60 Ibid, 15.
65 My role on the campaign was as an organizing intern based out of the NH campaign’s Manchester headquarters. This position allowed me to build relationships with the campaign’s organizing staff in the Granite State, many of whom would later prove useful for my research. Furthermore, I had opportunity to observe some of the early stages of the organizing first hand.


This data was generously provided by the Buttigieg campaign, and this author is extremely grateful.


Ibid, 10-11


Ibid


Ibid


Ibid

Super Tuesday, March 3rd 2020, was the first date where multiple states would hold their primary contests. 14 states held their primaries, and 1,357 delegates were allocated representing roughly a third of the total delegates available. For more information, see


Elizabeth McKenna and Hahrie Han, *Groundbreakers: How Obama’s 2.2 Million Volunteers Transformed Campaigning in America* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2014). 33

Ibid

Ibid, 36

Ibid, 37

Ibid, 133

Ibid

Ibid

Greta Carnes, National Organizing Director, Pete for America, Phone interview by author, April 14, 2020.

Greta Carnes, National Organizing Director, Pete for America, Phone interview by author, April 14, 2020.

Ibid

Noah Dion, Pete for America New Hampshire Organizing Director, interview by author, Manchester, NH, January 9, 2020.

Greta Carnes, National Organizing Director, Pete for America, Phone interview by author, April 14, 2020.


Greta Carnes, National Organizing Director, Pete for America, Phone interview by author, April 14, 2020.

Ibid

Ibid

Greta Carnes, Pete for America National Field Director, “We’re building a movement to elect Mayor Pete. Here’s how.” *Medium*, October 1, 2019, Accessed at https://medium.com/the-moment-by-pete-for-america/were-building-a-movement-to-elect-mayor-pete-here-s-how-28ae978b457d
Greta Carnes, Pete for America National Field Director, “We’re building a movement to elect Mayor Pete. Here’s how.” *Medium*, October 1, 2019, Accessed at https://medium.com/the-moment-by-pete-for-america/were-building-a-movement-to-elect-mayor-pete-here-s-how-28ae978b457d

Ibid


Noah Dion, Pete for America New Hampshire Organizing Director, interview by author, Manchester, NH, January 9, 2020.


Zoë Meekan, Pete for America New Hampshire Deputy Organizing Director, Phone Interview by Author, December 21st

Noah Dion, Pete for America New Hampshire Organizing Director, interview by author, Manchester, NH, January 9, 2020.


Tanner Gildea, Pete for America Southern Carol County Organizer, Phone interview by Author, April 26, 2020

Ibid

Jan Ledbetter, Volunteer, Phone Interview with Author, March 3, 2020.

Ibid

Ginny Sonnes, Volunteer, Phone Interview with Author, February 28, 2020.


Jan Ledbetter, Volunteer, Phone Interview with Author, March 3, 2020.

Ginny Sonnes, Volunteer, Phone Interview with Author, February 28, 2020.


Ginny Sonnes, Volunteer, Phone Interview with Author, February 28, 2020.

Jan Ledbetter, Volunteer, Phone Interview with Author, March 3, 2020.

162 Parvin Bramlage, Volunteer, Phone Interview with Author, February 25, 2020.
163 Kim Masse, Volunteer, Phone Interview with Author, March 24, 2020.
164 Chloe Hunt, Pete For America Hudson and Pelham Organizer, Interview by Author,
Parvin Bramlage, Volunteer, Phone Interview with Author, February 25, 2020
165 Ibid
166 Rick Ganley and Michael Brindly, “Amid Primary Hype, N.H.’s Low-Income Voters Feel
167 Dean Shaloup, “Nashua turnout at 40%”, Nashua Telegraph, February 12, 2020, Accessed at
168 Kimberly Houghton, “Nashua school board race expected to bring voters to the polls”, New Hampshire
school-board-race-expected-to-bring-voters-to-the/article_c8184ca3-96f8-5583-a4ae-13ff5d4ec03f.html.
169 “November 5, 2019 Municipal Election Results”, Nashua Municipal Government, November 5, 2019,
170 Josh Lindsey, Volunteer, Phone Interview with Author, March 21, 2020.
171 Ibid.
172 Fred Mayer, Volunteer, Phone Interview with Author, March 25, 2020.
173 Ibid.
174 Abby Gendron, Volunteer, Phone Interview with Author, March 25, 2020.
175 Ibid.
176 Rick Ganley and Michael Brindly, “Amid Primary Hype, N.H.’s Low-Income Voters Feel
177 Abby Gendron, Volunteer, Phone Interview with Author, March 25, 2020.
178 Josh Lindsey, Volunteer, Phone Interview with Author, March 21, 2020.
179 Abby Gendron, Volunteer, Phone Interview with Author, March 25, 2020.
180 Ibid.
181 Ibid.
182 Ibid.
183 Greta Carnes, National Organizing Director, Pete for America, Phone interview by author, April 14,
2020.
184 Josh Lindsey, Volunteer, Phone Interview with Author, March 21, 2020.
185 Abby Gendron, Volunteer, Phone Interview with Author, March 25, 2020.
186 Fred Mayer, Volunteer, Phone Interview with Author, March 25, 2020.
187 Ibid.
188 Sarah Silverstein, Pete for America Nashua Organizer, Phone interview by Author, April 26, 2020.
189 Ibid.
190 Abby Gendron, Volunteer, Phone Interview with Author, March 25, 2020.
191 Josh Lindsey, Volunteer, Phone Interview with Author, March 21, 2020.
192 Sarah Silverstein, Pete for America Nashua Organizer, Phone interview by Author, April 26, 2020.
193 Josh Lindsey, Volunteer, Phone Interview with Author, March 21, 2020.
194 David Kunin, Pete for America Auburn, Chester, Brentwood Organizer, Phone interview by Author,
195 Melissa Carolan, Volunteer, Phone Interview with Author, March 29, 2020.
196 Edward, Volunteer, Phone Interview with Author, March 25, 2020.
198 Dave Wasserman tweet in Adam K. Raymond, “New Hampshire Democratic Primary Turnout Sets
https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2020/02/new-hampshire-democratic-primary-turnout-sets-new-
record.html

99
The results of this analysis were publicized on Twitter shortly before this conversation took place.


Bibliography


**Interviews, Staff**


Erwin, Taylor. Pete for America Deputy Data Director. Text exchange with Author. February 28, 2020. The results of this analysis were publicized on Twitter shortly before this conversation took place.


Kunin, David. Pete for America Auburn, Chester, Brentwood Organizer, Phone interview by Author, April 25, 2020.


Interviews, Volunteers

Bramlage, Parvin. Volunteer. Phone Interview with Author. February 25, 2020


