BEYOND THE BALLOT: AN EXAMINATION OF THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION PROCESS OF MILLENNIALS

by

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ABSTRACT

Millennials currently make up the largest and most diverse generation in the history of the United States and they outnumber baby boomers when it comes to registered voters. In 2008 and 2012 increased engagement with politics online translated to increased civic engagement among youth voters during the presidential election. Youth voters not only turned out to the polls in record numbers, but they also engaged in other forms of civic engagement including protests, demonstrations, boycotting, and buycotting.

Not only has the internet and social media influenced the political socialization of millennials, it has also led to a liberal generation who organizes themselves online around social and political issues to motivate real-life activism. They have been able to harness Jürgen Habermas's concepts of deliberative democracy and the public sphere through online discussion and they use social media as a tool to translate online action to real-world civic engagement and political participation.

Social media has only been around long enough to study two presidential elections and generalizations based on that data may not be fair. This thesis will examine the role of social media in the 2016 presidential election through in-person interviews and survey data to determine the link between social media and the political participation and political socialization of millennials. It will add to this limited amount of research and literature contribute to the

understanding of what role social media plays in politics, civic engagement, and the political socialization process of millennials (COMIRB Protocol Number 16-1894).

The form and content of this abstract are approved. I recommend its publication.

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CHAPTER I

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In 2008 U.S. Senator Barack Obama was elected president and coined "The First Internet President" (Greengard, 2009, p. 16). The moniker captured the Obama campaign's ability to leverage mass emails, social networking sites, and YouTube videos to spread Obama's message and motivate a previously marginalized group--youth voters. Many scholars hypothesize a link between social media presence to civic engagement. These online communities mimic offline social networks and help nurture current events and the spread and interchange of ideas, particularly during presidential elections. These sites are places where not only can candidates communicate their political platforms and ideas, but they can also receive and respond to direct feedback from their potential voter base and adjust their strategy accordingly. These social media platforms reach millions of Americans who also use them as their primary source of news consumption, so it is reasonable to assume that they also have the power to influence political behavior.

Currently, the millennial generation officially outnumbers baby boomers and their choices and actions are beginning to transform the social and political landscape of the United States (Greenberg & Weber, 2008, p. 20). In 2008, U.S. Senator Barack Obama was able to win the presidential election by using web 2.0 tools and social media to appeal to 60 percent of the youth vote (Greengard, 2009, p. 16). Roughly 12,000 Americans turn 18 every day which means they will soon outnumber all generations when it comes to the electoral populace (Rock The Vote, 2016). In fact, in the 2016 U.S. presidential election "they will constitute roughly one-third

of those who turn out" to vote, with 30 percent of them being comprised of African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians, compared to 20 percent in 2008 (Beinart, 2016, p. 68).

The millennial generation is the biggest generation since the baby boomers which means as the baby boomers age out of the political system, the millennials will replace them in terms of votes and service. It is important for political communication scholars to understand the significance of the role they will play in changing the power dynamics of the U.S. political system; as well as what issues they will deem critical for their generation to solve. This can only be examined by studying the political socialization process of millennials. Therefore, the questions guiding this literature view are as follows: 1) How did social media impact youth voter turnout or political participation during the 2008 and 2012 political election? 2) How does social media impact the political socialization process of millennials? 3) How do millennials participate in U.S. political parties?

To answer these questions, I used the Academic Premier (EBSCOhost), JSTOR, and Google Scholar databases and focused on a combination of the following research terms: social media; new media; civic engagement; political participation; voter turnout; e-democracy; presidential campaign; youth; millennials; political identity; political affiliation; political socialization; voting behavior; social media; political parties; and emerging adulthood. I used the limiting phrase "United States" to eliminate anything relating to different countries and the phrases "2008 United States presidential election" and "2012 presidential election" to narrow my search to answer the first question. However, while there is plenty of information on social media and political participation and on how millennials identify in terms of political parties, there is a limited amount of information about how millennials experience political socialization and how the generation who does not know what life was like before the internet, has been

socialized differently than previous generations. I mainly relied on peer-reviewed scholarly journal articles and published studies versus books on the subject, and I focused on material from communications, technology, politics, and public affairs journals.

Definitions

For the purposes of this paper, a "millennial" is someone born between 1982 and 2000 (Jackson, Dorton, & Heindl, 2010, p. 43). Additionally, I define a "youth voter" as someone between the ages of 18 and 29 years of age. This is based on a synthesis of the average college-aged students represented in the various studies examined in this literature review.

Findings

Three main themes emerged from my review of the literature surrounding the first research question: Social media levels the playing field, social media increases political participation among youth voters, and social media spurs increases in other forms of political participation.

The first theme that appeared during my research was that social networking sites (SNS) are tools that provide the potential to level the playing field in terms of gender, race, and socioeconomic status in order to motivate even further marginalized voters. The second is that the past two presidential elections have seen an uptick in youth voter turnout and political participation because of SNS. The third is that while the youth vote was not quite as high during the 2012 presidential election as the 2008 presidential election, other acts of political participation, including large-scale protests, were higher, therefore redefining the dynamic of political participation among millennials and mimicking social movements of the 1960s.

I found in response to my second and third question that not only did the internet and social media impact the political participation and political socialization of millennials, it also led

to the liberalization of a generation who organizes themselves online around social and political issues to motivate real-life activism. They have been able to harness and revive Jürgen Habermas's concepts of deliberative democracy and the public sphere through online discussion and translate it to civic engagement and political participation.

Social Media Levels the Playing Field

Many scholars suggest that social media levels the playing field in terms of socioeconomic boundaries that typically keep individuals from participating in politics. Millennials are not only the largest generation in America but also the most racially and ethnically diverse (Greenberg & Weber, 2008, p. 20). For a long time, scholars have talked about the "digital divide" (McGrath, 2011, p. 41), a gap based on racial and socioeconomic status that leaves many without access to the internet and its vast network of resources. However, the research examined in this section suggests that this gap is closing among millennials.

One study, Carlisle and Patton (2013), surveyed 1,014 University of California students and monitored the Facebook accounts of 460 of them who maintained public profiles during the 2008 primary election and 326 of them who maintained public profiles for the 2008 general election. They found that "the results demonstrate that by and large many of the variables considered usual suspects and likely to contribute to political participation do not carry the same relationship to political activity in a Facebook environment" (p. 390). This was in the context of socioeconomic status, suggesting that previously marginalized groups demonstrated greater voter turnout during the 2008 presidential election because Facebook allows greater access to political information. Furthermore, the research "reveals that some of the traditional predictors that create differentials in political engagement, most notably parental income, sex, and race/ethnicity, do

not appear relevant in the Facebook context" (p. 392). This study suggests that Facebook was able to effectively motivate even further marginalized individuals to vote.

Similar findings regarding the use of the internet to eliminate socioeconomic barriers to political participation were found in a 2013 study. Copeland and Bimber (2013) analyzed American National Election Studies (ANES) data from 1996 to 2012. They concluded "seeing political information online in 2012 served to reduce participation gaps between those higher and lower in interest" (p. 82). Political interest levels also being historically defined by gender, race, and socioeconomic status. Specifically, they "found that for those who are low in political interest, seeing political information online was associated with an increase in the likelihood of voting by roughly 14 percentage points" (p. 82). This is a substantial quantification of marginalized voter turnout as a result of SNS that cannot be ignored in today's political atmosphere.

In addition, Mcvicker (2014) examined a study done by the MacArthur Research Network on Youth and Participatory Politics and declares "one of the most important findings notes that young people's online participatory political behavior tends to cross ethnic lines and minimizes class differences" (p. 86), thus closing the divide. Also, according to Kahne and Middaugh (2012) the "digital divide is no longer an issue "when it comes to practicing participatory politics, the differences in engagement between those with the highest rate of activity (whites at 43 %) and the lowest rate of activity (Asian-Americans at 36%) is only 7%" (p. 54). McGrath (2011) found that for political participation among ethnic groups besides whites during the 2008 election, "the highest percentage was among African Americans, about 36 percent, which also happened to be the largest group of youthful voters" (p. 41). This suggests

that the concept of the "digital divide" could soon be outdated and inapplicable to millennial voters.

However, one study suggests that the elimination of the digital divide through internet access and usage should be a treated as a trend that could not be permanent and, therefore, should be viewed cautiously. An analysis of youth voting habits and political participation theories by Loader, Vromen, and Xenos (2014) suggests to "be cautiously optimistic concerning the overall influence of this popular new form of social networking on longstanding patterns of political inequality" (p. 146), as they believe these inequalities are still deeply entrenched in the American political system. Therefore, for the most part, scholars believe that social media provides a tool through which society is able to effectively close the "digital divide" and traditional racial and socioeconomic gaps in the political participation of millennials by allowing for increased access to information among all groups to enable them to make informed choices as citizens of the United States. However, as previously noted, it is important to remain cautious yet optimistic about this trend since inequalities do not disappear overnight.

Social Media Increases Political Participation among Youth Voters

Many scholars suggest that social media helps increase political participation among millennials by providing them with increased access to information. Most millennials rely on the internet as their primary source of news consumption and are connected at such higher rates than other generations that it is suggested SNS are an extension of a millennial's core identity (Mihailidis, 2014). Therefore, it is not difficult to imagine that participation in online communities translates to offline participation, including the highest youth voter turnout in 2008 since the 1980s and largest protests since the 1960s (McGrath, 2011, p. 41). Similarly, Copeland and Bimber (2013) observed for the 2008 presidential election that "seeing political information

online was associated with more political acts than in any other election year. These acts included: donating money, persuading others [to vote], working on campaigns, and attending political meetings or events" (p.76). Note that not all of these variables are indicative of actual voter turnout but are measures of political participation. However, their sustained analysis "found that seeing political information online increased the likelihood of voting in the 2012 presidential election... people who saw political information online were eight percentage points more likely to vote than people who did not see information online" (p. 84). This creates a strong case for the link between social media and political participation.

In addition, Bode (2012) found similar results that social media increases political participation for the 2008 presidential. This assumption was based on a 133-question survey of 542 political science students at a Midwestern University which concluded "that intensely engaging with one's Facebook community facilitates behaviors and activities that spur political participation of all kinds" including voter turnout" (p. 365). The key term here is "intensely" in terms of engaging with a social network. It does not simply mean "liking" posts, but reposting, commenting, and participating in a discussion with online peers about political issues and a politician. However, this data might be skewed because political science students might be naturally more engaged in politics than their peers.

Also, many scholars think that following a campaign results in higher participation rates. In a study done by Housholder and LaMarre (2014) they performed in-depth interviews and analyzed "Pew data to examine the goals and effects of social media engagement" they also found that "engaging with a campaign through social media increased the likelihood of voting three times when compared to those who did not engage with campaigns through social media" (p. 139). Again, this implies an intense level of engagement versus a superficial level because

"youth media practitioners… realize the power of the internet to share stories [as the] key to mobilize youth" voters (Shabazz, 2008, p. 239). Following a campaign online also creates a vested interest in the success of a campaign among individuals who are involved in all stages of the process.

Furthermore, scholars propose that there is a strong link between social media use and political participation among youth voters. Loader, Vromen, and Xenos (2014) also found "a strong, positive relationship between social media use and political engagement among young people" (p. 146). Many scholars believe that not only can social media help predict voter turnout among millennials, but it can also help determine who gets elected. In a study of Twitter activity among candidates for the United States House of Representatives "findings indicate that the amount of attention received by a candidate on Twitter, relative to his or her opponent, is a statistically significant indicator of vote share in 795 elections during two full election cycles" (DiGrazia, McKelvey, Bollen, & Rojas, 2015, p. 4). While this study is limited in the fact that it only examines activity on Twitter and it looks at congressional campaigns instead of presidential campaigns, it matches findings about the Obama 2008 presidential campaign that the use of Web 2.0 tools and social media tools not only helped the campaign motivate grassroots campaign donations and organize spheres of public influence but the use of these tools translated to more votes on Election Day (Cogburn and Espinoza-Vasquez, 2011, p. 200).

Finally, in a nationwide survey of 873 college students, 71 of whom were randomly selected for focus groups, Mihailidis (2014) found:

> Forty-four percent of the sample reported social media as the primary way they communicated about politics. Over 55% of the sample claimed to use social media to 'actively' voice political opinions. Thirty-four percent belonged to at least one political or

civic advocacy group on Facebook...Nearly half (48%) of the students agreed that social media had made them more aware of politics (p. 1064).

During the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections, scholars suggest that there was a clear demonstrated link between social media and youth voter turnout. The internet, and specifically SNS, is a place where young citizens can express their political opinions, engage in dialogue over important issues with their networks, and gather information to make them more informed voters.

Social Media Spurs Increases in Other Forms of Political Participation

Many scholars conclude that millennials use social media as a means to participate in politics in other ways including protests, demonstrations, and boycotts. Political participation can be defined in many ways, however, there is a trend among millennials to protest the two-party system in the United States by not voting, but rather to participate in social movements and political protests on a scale that has not been seen since the 1960s (Loader, Vromen, & Xenos, 2014; Mcvicker, 2014). For example, in 2008 not only was the Obama campaign successful in mobilizing the youth vote through text messages and social media, but the campaign victory gathering in Grant Park (Chicago) was one of the largest impromptu celebratory gatherings in the United States since Woodstock 1969--250,000 participants found their way to the celebration via posts on social media and text messages (Jackson, Dorton, & Heindl, 2010). Furthermore, the celebration at "Grant Park itself reflects the spirit the millennial generation brought to the campaign: openness and freedom, with few limits to social action" (p. 49).

While SNS may not be linked in all cases to increased voter turnout, scholars suggest it can be linked to other increased forms of political participation, including protests and social movements. In their research, Loader, Vromen, and Xenos (2014) note "the growing

estrangement between young citizens and mainstream political parties, politicians and electoral engagement" (p. 148). However, this decline in voter turnout has led to the recognition of the "the role that social media has played in the development of protest movements" where networked "young citizens have mobilized through mass demonstrations such as… the Occupy movement voicing [their] anger against what they see as the social inequality arising from global capitalism" (p. 148). This creates a more "participatory culture" of civic engagement that is heavily dependent on political action over voting (p. 146). In this culture, the refusal to vote is valued as a form of protest against the candidates and the limited two-party system that is uniquely characteristic of American politics. It can also be accounted for by an increasing number of millennials voting for third-party candidates in an effort to try to reform the political system (p. 144).

Also, the authors of another study suggest that online activity directly translates to in-person political participation. In a slight shift from methodologies examined in previous studies, Cogburn and Espinoza-Vasquez (2011) studied the use of Web 2.0 tools and social networking sites such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and Myspace to understand what forms of online activity translated to "on-the-ground activism" during the 2008 Obama presidential campaign (p. 189). They found that the combination of these tools "motivated 3.1 million individuals . . . to contribute significant amounts of money and to mobilize a grassroots movement of more than 5 million volunteers" (p. 205). The Obama campaign continued the revolution in campaign funding started by the Howard Dean campaign in 2004 and also spurred a grassroots political and social movement. The authors argue that social media should be considered a part of the political process because by "viewing Web 2.0 tools and social media from a 'Habermas' public sphere perspective, we can regard them as facilitators of a deliberation space where people can

exchange ideas freely" (p. 194). In their eyes, the traditional model of democracy is being extended to the internet as a tool for social organization.

Scholars continue to propose that the internet serves as an extension of Habermas' idea of the public sphere. Millennials are using the internet specifically to organize themselves around political and social causes such as climate change, women's rights, LGBTQ issues, SOPA/PIPA, and the Occupy Wall Street movement (Mcvicker, 2014). This implies that they care about organizing themselves around issues they deem relevant, not necessarily partisan politics. They engage in "more personally expressive cause-oriented politics based on lifestyle concerns such as consumer behaviors and the emergence of direct action protests networks" (Bennett, Wells, & Freelon, 2012, p. 850). In fact, SNSs allow for "discussions, debates, and grassroots mobilizations that young voters care about" (Fernandes et al., 2010, p. 656). This suggests that youth can frame issues through their own narratives to engage their peers online (Kahne & Middaugh, 2012). Millennials also "engage more in political discussion and report they are more willing to take action in the form of boycotting or buycotting" (Wicks et al., 2015, p. 634). Therefore, SNSs are becoming "spaces that allow for dynamic expression and activism" which suggests millennials are participating in politics in a variety of different ways and their political identity is less rooted in the traditional democratic ideals of citizenship which are limited to voting, military duty, and paying taxes (Mihailidis, 2014).

The shift back to a more "revolutionary" way of defining citizenship through action is what draws parallels between social movements of the 1960s and the values and activism that millennials demonstrate (Mcvicker, 2014). Scholars believe that along with higher voter turnout, through activism, millennials are trying to reform the American political system from the inside and from the outside to achieve their desired social outcomes.

The Political Socialization of Millennials

The traditional model of political socialization is linear, but many scholars think that the internet and social media are increasingly influencing this process for millennials. According to the theory of emerging adulthood (EA), "the years from 18 to 29 are a distinct period with an increased tendency toward (1) identity exploration, (2) experimentation and possibilities, (3) negativity or instability, (4) self-focus, and (5) feeling in between adolescence and adulthood" (Walker & Iverson, 2015, p. 2). This is the time when most millennials develop their political ideals, which also happens to correspond with the time when many of them are in college or entering the workforce. These scholars modify the traditional model of political socialization that asserts a more linear model starting with families, teachers, and peers at a young age by suggesting that the individual is not able to fully examine their political values and beliefs and express them until they move away from home or expand their worldview by entering the adult world.

The consumption of news primarily via the internet is what many scholars believe alters the traditional model of political socialization of millennials. In an era of instant gratification through the internet, an analysis of a two-wave survey of 1,325 youth voters in wave one and 1,255 youth voters in wave two discovered "findings underscore the potential of digital media, to mobilize young people in more active engagement with civic and political life . . . [and] consumption of online information, in general, tends to exert a stronger influence on civic engagement than does traditional news use" (Lee et al., 2012, p. 687). This suggests that the internet and social media not only have an impact on the political socialization of millennials, but they also impact civic engagement levels. Loader, Vromen, and Xenos (2014) also found "a

strong, positive relationship between social media use and political engagement among young people" (p. 146).

The greatest accomplishment of the internet is that citizens can seek out information on social and political issues and find countless resources leading to a more informed populace. In fact, "by facilitating access to political information and by providing tools and avenues for political expression and mobilization, many believe digital media affords new possibilities for civic and political activism among young people" (Lee et al., 2012, p. 670). A more informed populace generally means a more civically engaged and politically active populace, especially as traditional news outlets are being replaced by online news, and even Facebook and Twitter feeds.

The internet and social media are helping shape the political belief system of millennials. In a two-panel study of correlation and causation of the impact of new media on models of citizenship, civic engagement, and socialization, findings supported that "the new media environment, with growing opportunities to become informed and engaged through online news, social connection, and networking, enables a reinvigoration of political participation particularly among younger generations" which leads to the "development of new norms of citizenship" (Shehata et al., 2015, p. 2). Therefore, millennials are dispelling the old myth of youth voters being apathetic and uninvolved citizens as they are actively seeking out political information to shape their beliefs and help them participate in the political process. To put it simply, the internet and social media are rapidly becoming "an intrinsic part of people's everyday life – especially among younger generations of citizens" (Shehata et al., 2015, p. 18). This suggests that social media and its influence on millennials is not going to change anytime soon.

Most millennials rely on the internet as their primary source of news consumption and are connected at such higher rates than other generations. Due to their increased connectivity, the

internet and social networking sites are viewed as an extension of a millennial's core identity (Mihailidis, 2014). Therefore, it is not difficult to imagine that participation in online communities translates to offline participation, including the highest youth voter turnout in 2008 since the 1980s and largest social protests since the 1960s (McGrath, 2011, p. 41). Again, many scholars conclude that online participation is translating to real-world participation.

The Liberalization of a Generation

Many scholars propose that because of their political socialization process, millennials are a liberal generation. Most millennials were raised by baby boomers, who are previously identified as the most politically active generation in terms of protests and voting. Baby boomers were also historically defined as liberal, so it is no surprise that their children would grow up to be also be described as liberal--"Generational differences in political orientation indicate [millennials] are more liberal than are previous generations" (Walker & Iverson, 2015, p. 3). It is hypothesized that "they are liberal because their formative political experiences were the Iraq War and the Great Recession, and because they make up the most secular, most racially diverse, least nationalistic generation in American history" (Beinart, 2016, p. 68). This makes sense in comparison to baby boomers who came of age during the Vietnam War, the Civil Rights movement, and an economic slump.

As briefly mentioned before, millennials also care more about social issues than partisan politics (Third Party, 2013), which accounts for the Occupy Wall Street movement in 2011 and 2012 and the Black Lives Matter movement which helped define the landscape of the 2016 presidential election cycle. This means while approximately 43 percent of millennials align themselves with the Democratic party, "fully 34 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds describe themselves as independent, compared to just 11 percent of voters 30 years and older" (Gillespie

& Ekins, 2014). These numbers represent a shift in the political ideals of millennials. Because millennials are so focused on economic and social issues, it would appear as though America may be experiencing a shift away from partisan politics. The 2016 election cycle could not be more reflective of this shift as two Democrats--one a socialist promising student loan debt relief, and the other a leftist feminist promising the expansion of family paid leave and mandatory early childcare--were able to battle it out until Senator Bernie Sanders endorsed former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton during the Democratic National Convention last July.

While millennials may not stick to party lines when voting, they will vote for someone who can sympathize with their political socialization process which has made them so liberal:

> Millennials' cultural memory begins with the nightmare of the 9/11 attacks, and their entire politically aware lives have been marked by constant war and economic stagnation. The long-term, slow-moving failures of nation-building in Afghanistan and Iraq and of massive stimulus spending (first under Bush in 2008, then Obama in 2009 and 2010) cast a long shadow over the efficacy of broad-based government intervention into foreign and domestic affairs. Millennials' job prospects have been smothered first by the financial crisis and then by the painfully, historically slow rebound from the Great Recession. All this at a time when student loan debt has skyrocketed (Gillespie & Ekins, 2014).

The implications of the pile up of all these social and economic issues, along with the current Black Lives Matter movement, means that perhaps both parties are not adequately equipped to appeal to their traditional baby boomer and generation X voters and still appeal to the liberal concerns of millennials. Thus, “a third party would be what the independent-minded millennials need to break into politics and stand a chance against the Democrats and the Republicans” (Third Party, 2013). Imagining the emergence of a powerful third party or even

multiple parties after the 2016 U.S. presidential election is not difficult as it tested the extremes of the political spectrum and the cohesiveness of the two traditional political parties. This could create a more inclusive democracy where millennials feel like their concerns and values are adequately represented.

The Re-emergence of the Public Sphere

As suggested by some scholars earlier, Habermas' idea of the public sphere may also be reflected through the actions of millennials on social media. German Philosopher Jürgen Habermas (2006) argues that the "public sphere" is a community space where members can organize and "deliberate" on democracy and policy issues in an attempt to explore the information made available to them and discuss and make informed and equitable. He also argues that mass media killed the public sphere because it is not free from state and political influence. However, many scholars argue that there is a resurgence of the public sphere on social media. Although conversation can be asynchronous, it provides a place for individuals to discuss politics, and even discuss broadcasted political events in real-time. In fact, "the 2012 presidential election cycle may be remembered for being the first in which social media combined with TV to create a 'second-screen' engagement experience between the potential voters and the candidates" (Nee, 2013, p. 172). Social network sites (SNS), most commonly Facebook and Twitter, served as "venues for viewers to interact with each other, journalists, and candidates on a wide scale while simultaneously watching live convention coverage and candidate debates on TV" and 22% of millennials engaged in this multiscreen use (p. 172). This means that individuals can interact with friends and family across the country and the world and discuss presidential debates, rallies, and conventions while they occur.

German political theorist Hannah Arendt supported the idea of the public sphere as she placed "great emphasis on political action in the public realm" (Hinchman & Hinchman, 1994, p. 179). Her version of the public realm was one where people gather together to consider the common affairs of the world . . . on this common stage they can take action" (p. 181). This can be applied to social media in an even easier manner as it is a stage and arena where people can discuss politics, current events, and plan and take action. Social media also provides a virtual stage that is highly accessible to all members of a society, making it an easy public sphere or public realm to enter and through which to gain knowledge and participate.

Scholars contend that "our definitions of civic participation have not kept up with modern communications technology" (Baggott, 2009, p. 30). To millennials, social networks are "possibility spaces, open to a near-infinite range of experimentation" and discourse (Johnson, 2012, p. 114). If the goal of the public sphere is to promote discourse among community members to make them more informed and engaged citizens, then many scholars conclude that social media is doing just that. Through "communication socialization--young people can explore ideas, process information, and reflect about public affairs, and also by endowing them with the ability and the motivation to form arguments, express opinions, manage disagreements, and form complex issue understandings" (Lee et al., 2012, p. 672). Therefore, scholars claim that social media is a public sphere for information dissemination and discourse.

The world and nation have grown so large that it may no longer be possible to organize conventional community meetings according to the traditional ideas of Habermas, but the interconnectivity of the internet provides that opportunity on a different scale—one that reaches outside of communities and across physical boundaries. "With the rise of viral communication, publics and stakeholders are now able to enter and partake in the conversation, not just with the

organizations producing the messages but also with each other" (Botha & Reyneke, 2013, p. 160). A test model of how this would work in terms of civic engagement among millennials, called Democracy 2.0, was highly successful--"Party for the Presidency began with a return to the Democracy 2.0 Declaration after nearly three months of online discussion and input. . . [participants] could identify the issues most important to the generation, share best organizing practices, learn new tools and techniques in deliberative dialogue and organizing, and then apply these lessons in real time" (Gagnier, 2008, p. 34).

Moreover, a test group is not really needed to demonstrate that millennials are using the internet specifically to organize themselves around political and social causes such as climate change, women's rights, LGBTQ issues, SOPA/PIPA, and the Occupy Wall Street movement (Mcvicker, 2014, pp. 80-81). In particular, the Occupy Wall Street movement and the Black Lives Matter movement were both born online, they disseminated information through hashtags on social media, and they organized protests on social media which translated to successful on-the-ground activism.

However, not all examinations of online political discussion are quick to generalize it as an equivocation of Habermas' public sphere. In a more cautious examination of the internet as an extension of the public sphere, Papacharissi (2002) declares "the internet and related technologies have managed to create new public space for political discussion. This public space facilitates, but does not ensure, the rejuvenation of a culturally drained public sphere" (p. 22). The key term is "facilitates," which implies that face-to-face interaction is still a very important aspect of deliberation in the public sphere.

Conclusion

While there is a limited amount of published academic research on the role of social media in engaging the youth vote in presidential elections in the United States, scholars do effectively point toward certain emerging trends. First of all, it appears as though gender, race, and socioeconomic status are not as large of a factor in determining political participation in online networks as in offline networks. This is a positive outcome for the youth vote as it means social media is essentially leveling the playing field for democratic political participation by making it easier for formerly marginalized communities of individuals to get informed and stay connected by eliminating the "digital divide."

In addition, many scholars conclude that social media does not only improve voter turnout but it also improves other forms of political participation including campaign work, online discourse of issues and politicians, persuading others to vote, donating to campaigns, and attending political events. This is great news for politicians who are able to effectively communicate their platforms online to mobilize the youth vote.

Moreover, while the youth vote was not as high in 2012 as it was in 2008, other instances of political engagement were. These were instances of political and economic unrest in the form of protests and social movements. The Occupy movement is the biggest example in between those election cycles and one that mimics a different type of participatory culture that encompasses the Habermasian value of the public sphere and is reflective of social movements of the 1960s. This will also be essential to future evaluations of the 2016 presidential election with the Supreme Court ruling on behalf of gay marriage, the continual struggle for women's rights, the ongoing climate change debate and environmental negotiations, and the growth of the Black Lives Matter movement since the 2012 election.

Finally, millennials are the most politically active generation since the baby boomers and that may be because the internet and social media has played a large role in their political socialization, their liberal views on social and economic issues, and has served as a virtual replacement of the physical public sphere which enables them to engage in meaningful discourse, formulate informed opinions, and mobilize them to action. Online discussion of politics not only shapes the political identity of millennials in terms of political socialization theory, but it also sparks political and social movements as it serves as a hub for those movements. It is evident that the current two-party system has been inadequate at addressing the concerns of millennials and the issues these social movements are highlighting, which begs the question -- are we headed to a third party or a multi-party political system?

Limits of the Literature

As previously mentioned, there is limited grounded research regarding the political socialization of millennials. There is also not much research about the potential collapse of the two-party political system in America. Furthermore, social media has only been around long enough to adequately study its impact on two presidential election cycles, so a longitudinal study or longitudinal data analysis comparing the 2008, 2012, and 2016 presidential elections would provide the best link to its impact on civic engagement. However, this could be seen as an opportunity for further research to be done to identify trends in social media use, political identity, and civic engagement among millennials in the United States.

In addition, the research presented in this literature review only discusses Facebook, Twitter, and there is one mention of YouTube. Further research examining a variety of social media platforms, including Instagram which is averaging more daily users than Twitter, would

be beneficial to providing a more complete picture of the social media use habits of millennials that impact civic engagement (Kharpal, 2015).

Finally, future research should take into account different social media platforms and the narratives of how millennials identify themselves as citizens and the types of democratic actions they consider the most important to modern citizenship. This means not just limiting examinations of political participation to voter turnout, but also taking into account other forms of political participation as a means of determining how millennials choose to define citizenship and organize themselves around social and political issues.

CHAPTER II

THE SOCIAL NETWORKED YOUTH VOTER—A STUDY OF UNDERGRADUATE MILLENNIALS

Context for Research

To further expand upon the research regarding the links between social media and civic engagement and social media and political socialization/identity I will explore the following research questions: 1) How did social media influence millennial political participation and socialization during the 2016 United States' presidential election? And, 2) what role did social media play in terms of Habermas' public sphere and the deliberation among millennials during the 2016 United States' presidential election? I recruited undergraduates at a local Denver University in communication classes by allowing their instructors to offer extra credit for their participation and I provided Starbucks coffee for the interviewees. Names have been changed to protect participant identities.

Method

Because this study is unique to millennials, individuals between the ages of 18 to 34 years of age who are registered to vote were studied (born beginning in 1982). I conducted the interviews in the Spring of 2016 and the survey in the Spring of 2017, following the Presidential Inauguration and kept the survey open through the beginning of April in order to collect a sufficient amount of responses. To answer my research questions, I conducted five interviews and a 40-question online survey of undergraduates based on a convenience sample of individuals enrolled in freshman and sophomore level courses in the University of Colorado Denver's Department of Communication. The incentive for both was extra credit at the instructor's discretion. Combined, the courses are required for almost every major on campus; therefore, for

the survey, I expected the sample would be highly representative of the general student body population at the University. The ideal sample size is between 100 and 250 undergraduate students and survey data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel's data analysis tools and I created frequency tables and I used correlation and crosstabulation tools and I performed bivariate analysis using chi-squared tests to triangulate findings. I hypothesize that: 1) High levels of engagement with politics on social media will lead to increased levels of civic engagement, and 2) high levels of engagement with political news on social media will influence the political beliefs and behavior of an individual.

Interviewees and Interview Sites

Altogether, I interviewed five individuals in a four-day span. I transcribed the interviews and coded them using thematic analysis. My first interview was around 2:30 pm in my office on a Monday with a 26-year-old male Navy veteran and undergraduate named Kyle. My office is in a new building on the university and is narrow with cream/yellow walls and 2 large bookshelves followed by two small metal desks with light birch tops on the left side of the entrance and four small metal desks with light birch wood tops on the right side of the office. Only four people currently occupy the office meant for six people, but I was the only one in the office at the time. We had coffee and he sat in the chair at the empty desk next to mine. I explained that the interview audio would be recorded and would only ever be heard by my professors or me. However, I did not take into consideration how awful of a location my office is to record an interview. My office is located on the opposite side of the wall from the new media lab that houses a variety of innovative technology, so most of the interview wound up indecipherable due to static interference. The interview lasted about 32 minutes.

The second interview was with a 20-year-old undergraduate named Anna at 2:30 pm on a Wednesday at the Starbucks in the student center of the university. We sat outside as it was 70-degree weather and the noise level inside was fairly loud. The background audio of the interview was a little loud as it was at the hub of campus activity at a fairly busy part of the day, but it was much better than the first interview. There were about a dozen metal tables with umbrellas outside on the west side of the building. The interview lasted a little over 35 minutes.

The third interview was on the same day as the second interview and in the same location. It was at 5:15 pm with a 31-year-old male undergraduate named Caleb who is pursuing his second bachelor's degree. We sat outside at a table adjacent to where I did the other interview earlier in the day, but the campus was a lot quieter as it appeared that there was a mass exodus from campus around 5:00 pm when most late-afternoon classes were dismissed. While I did get some good insight from this interview, it was very short, clocking in at only a little over 19 minutes, and the interviewee giving very short and somewhat terse answers. I will go into more depth about this later in the paper.

The fourth interview was at 2:30 pm on a Thursday in a classroom on campus. The classroom is deep inside the school building and has no windows, bright overhead fluorescent lights, white walls, and off-white linoleum floors. The interview subject was an 18-year-old female named Lynn who is active in many campus organizations. She sat at a desk across from me and we drank Starbucks coffee during the interview. There was some background noise coming from the surrounding rooms and the hallway. The interview lasted about 35 minutes and was probably the smoothest one by that point. The participant talked a lot about her experiences and covered a lot of information I would have asked in other questions.

The fifth interview was immediately after the fourth interview in the same room. The interview subject was an 18-year-old female named Spencer. She is also very involved with many campus organizations. This time we sat at opposite sides of the teacher's desk at the front of the classroom in plain sight of the door and in front of the chalkboard. There was still background noise from the hallway and other rooms. This interview went so fast I was surprised it was over in only 22 minutes, however, I felt like all of my questions were adequately answered. Upon playback of the audio recording of the interview, I realized she talks at a very rapid pace, so she did provide a great amount of useful information in a small amount of time.

I recruited participants through the communication department by asking graduate teaching assistants and instructors to offer extra credit to individuals who wanted to participate. However, due to the timing of the interviews being around spring midterms there were not many responses to my call for participants. Originally, I established the selection criteria that interview subjects should be registered Republicans or Democrats who participated in their county caucuses. This yielded limited results because I was unable to find a single Republican who caucused and I realized I wanted to know how independent voters felt about not being able to participate in the candidate selection process. Kyle, Anna, and Spencer are all registered Democrats who caucused. I reached out to Lynn, who is a Republican, for information as to why she did not want to caucus and I reached out to Caleb, who is an unaffiliated voter, to understand his reasoning to avoid a party affiliation and how he felt about having to pick from a slate of candidates chosen for him by others during the general elections in November.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS

Demographics

Out of the 77 respondents of the survey, a total of 93.5 percent identified in age categories consistent with the millennial generation, with the largest category—75.32 percent--being 18 to 24 years of age. The breakdown of sex was 50.65 percent male and 49.35 female. The breakdown of racial and ethnic background was 54.55 percent Non-Hispanic White, 25.97 percent Latino or Hispanic, 7.79 percent East Asian or Asian American, 5.19 percent Black or Afro-Caribbean or Afro-American, 1.3 percent South Asian or Indian American, 1.3 percent Middle Eastern or Arab American, and 3.9 percent "other." Out of all of the respondents, 94.81 percent identified as American citizens and 5.19 percent did not (see Appendix C for a summary of the results).

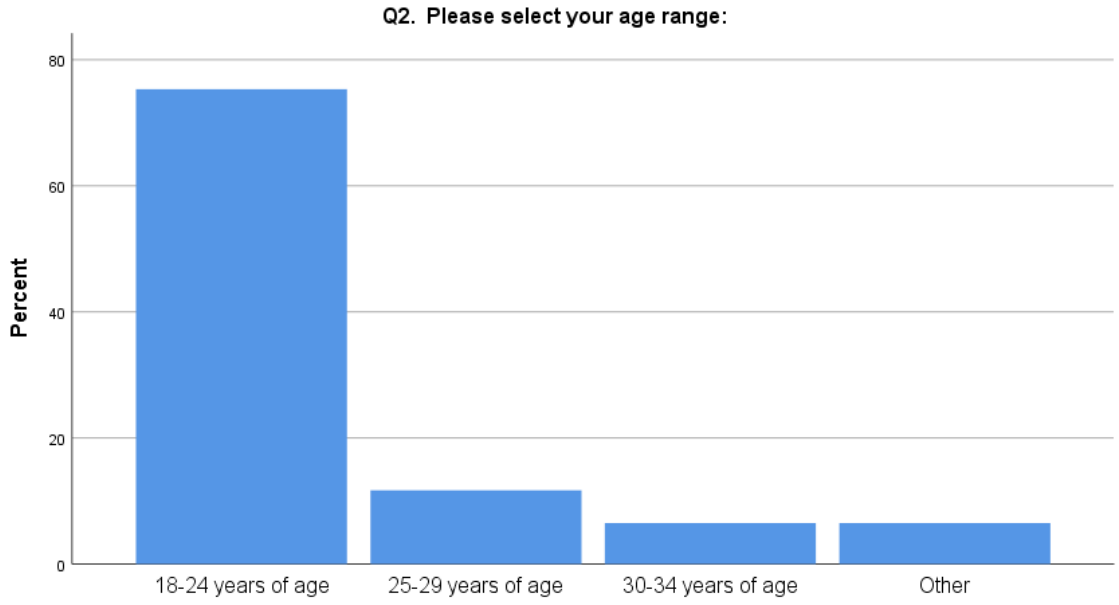

Table 1: Age reporting of respondents

Political Affiliation and Participation

The majority of the respondents affiliated with the two major political parties—41.56 percent identified as Democrats and 22.08 identified as Republicans. Additionally, 18.18 percent identified as independents, 3.9 percent identified as Libertarians, 2.6 percent identified as "other," and 11.69 percent identified as "not applicable." These numbers align with the number of individuals who identified as registered to vote—85.71 percent of respondents are registered to vote and 14.29 percent are not—the latter can be accounted for with the total of individuals who identified as "other" or "not applicable" for party affiliation.

In terms of participation, 40.26 percent of the respondents reported that they participated in the primary elections by either voting or caucusing. This number jumps substantially when taking into account those who voted in the 2016 general election—77.92 percent. This is a staggeringly high number in comparison to national millennial voter turnout rates, as The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) estimated that approximately 50 percent of eligible millennial voters actually cast ballots in the 2016 general election (CIRCLE, 2016). Furthermore, 29.87 percent of the survey respondents declared that they participated in a political or social protest or rally in the past year.

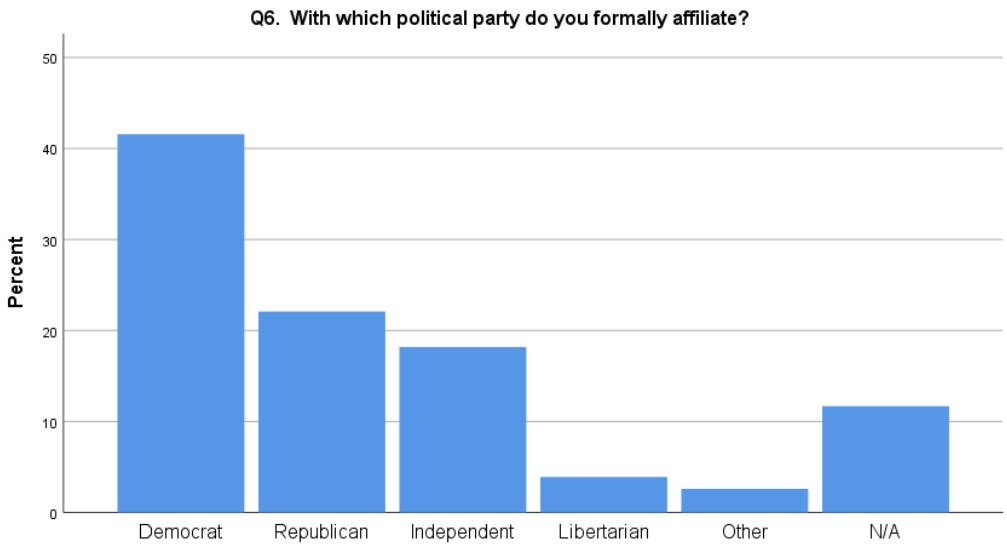

Table 2: Political party affiliation of respondents

Social Media Use

While this survey was designed to study platforms other than Facebook, 89.61 percent of respondents declared they have a Facebook account while only 35.06 percent reported they have a Twitter account, and 67.53 percent declared they have an Instagram account. In terms of the social media platforms that are relevant to millennials, Facebook is still the clear winner with Instagram as a close second. Twitter does not seem to be a space that influences millennials, so I will only discuss the findings relevant to Facebook and Instagram.

In terms of Facebook use, during the 2016 election cycle 29.87 percent of respondents declared they followed a presidential candidate on the platform, 44.16 percent said they followed political or social causes, 42.86 percent said they posted about political or social causes, 59.74 percent said they "liked' or "shared" a post related to political or social issues, and 37.66 percent declared they engaged in online dialogue with friends and family on the platform. I will discuss how these findings relate to political deliberation and a theoretical extension of the public sphere later.

In terms of Instagram use, only 7.79 percent of respondents declared they followed a presidential candidate on the platform during the 2016 general election cycle, only 11.84 percent declared they followed political or social causes, 23.38 percent declared they "liked" or "regrammed" posts about political or social issues, and only 6.49 percent declared they engaged in online dialogue with their followers about political or social issues. This means that while Instagram comes in second place as the social media platform preferred by millennials, the discussion of politics and engagement with politics is not considered a norm of the image-sharing platform.

Political Socialization

According to the survey respondents, the largest influences on their political beliefs are as follows: family with 31.17 percent, news media with 27.27 percent, friends with 14.29 percent, teachers with 10.39 percent, social media with 9.09 percent, and religion with 7.79 percent. This means that while family is still the biggest indicator of political socialization and beliefs, news media comes in as a close second, and disrupts the traditional linear model of family, teachers, and friends as the ordinal influencers of political socialization. Also, while social media did not play as big of a role as I anticipated, the response of 9.09 percent is difficult to ignore, especially since it is not far behind the influence of teachers. However, there is a flaw in this question—there is no way to determine if these are sources of positive or negative influence on the political socialization process and beliefs of millennials.

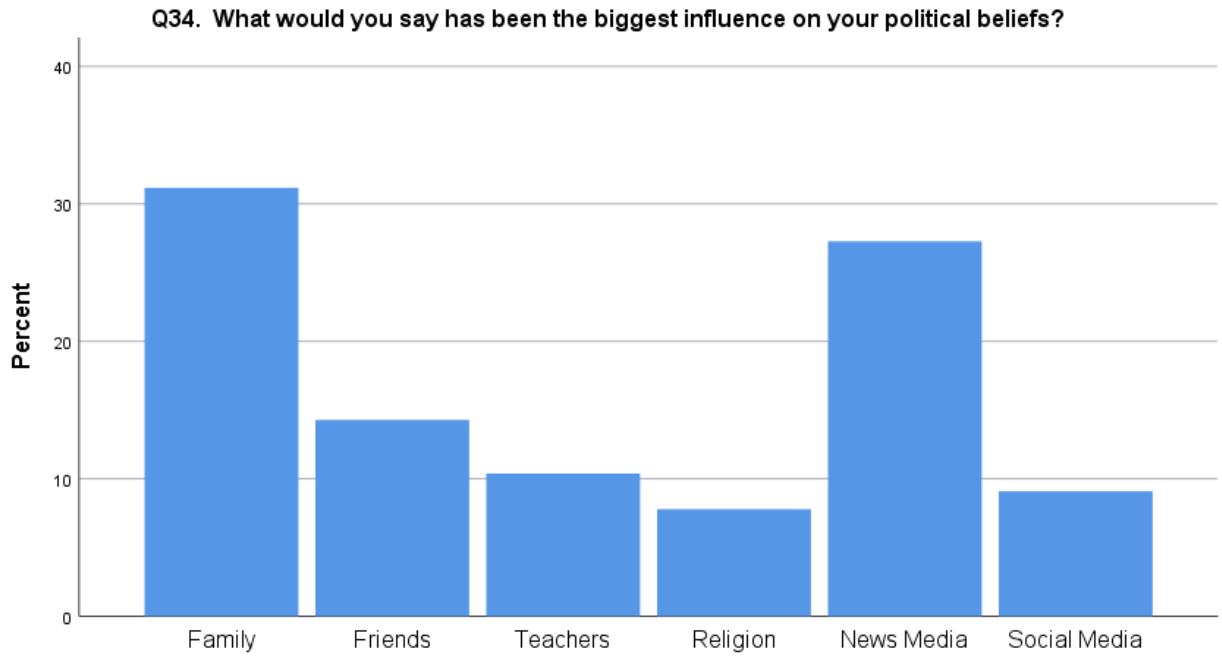

Table 3: Political socialization sources for respondents

Stop Focusing on Partisan Politics

When asked about the effectiveness of different models of democracy, the millennials surveyed were clear in their disillusionment with the current two-party system in America. Only 16.89 percent declared they "agree" or "strongly" agree that the two-party system of democracy is effective versus 53.25 percent who either "strongly disagree" or "disagree" that it is effective. This is startling, especially considering a total of 63.64 percent of respondents identified as being affiliated with the two major parties. When asked if they think a third-party system of democracy is effective, a total of 22.08 percent of respondents reported they either "strongly disagree" or "disagree," 50.65 percent "neither agree nor disagree," and 27.28 percent either "agree" or "strongly agree." Finally, when asked if they believe a multi-party system of democracy is effective, only 15.58 percent of respondents reported they "strongly disagree" or "disagree," 38.96 percent "neither agree nor disagree," and 45.45 percent either "agree" or "strongly agree."

These findings represent discontentment and perhaps distrust in the two-party system of democracy in the United States by millennials.

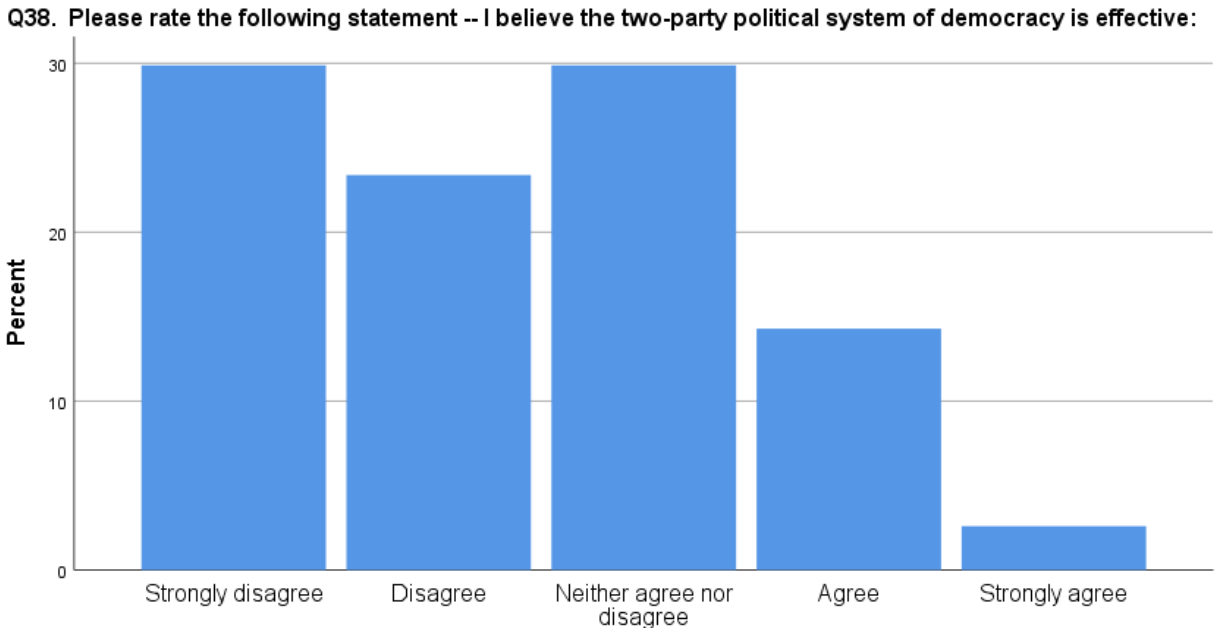

Table 4: Confidence in the two-party system of democracy

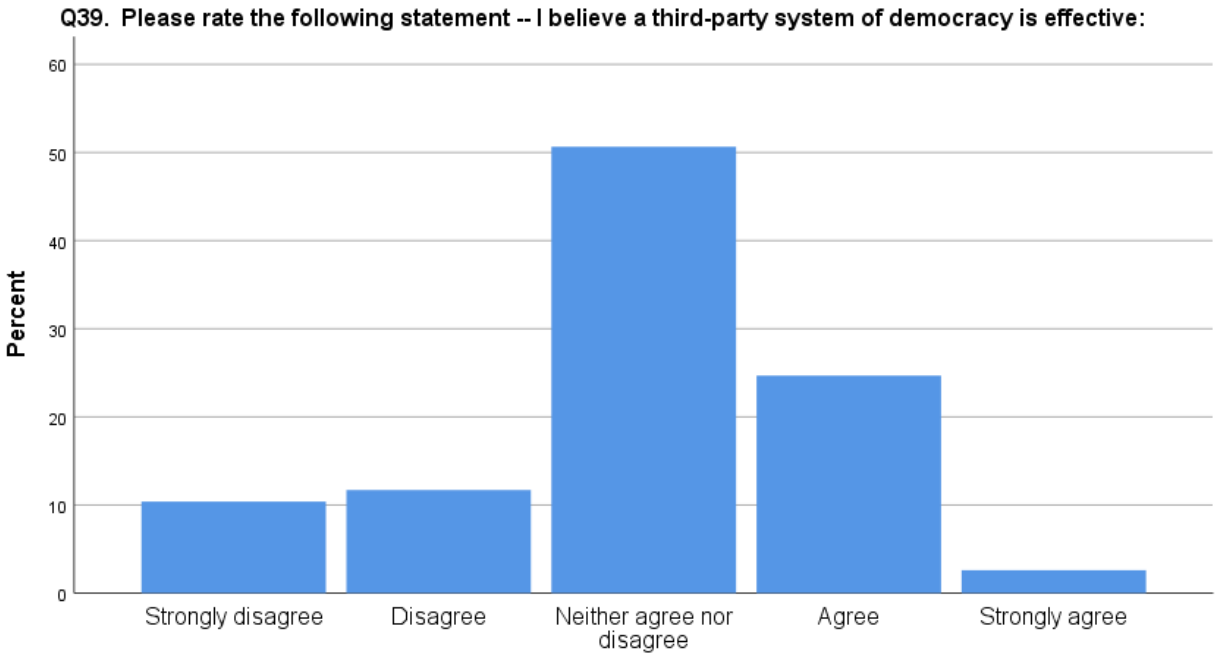

Table 5: Confidence in a third-party system of democracy

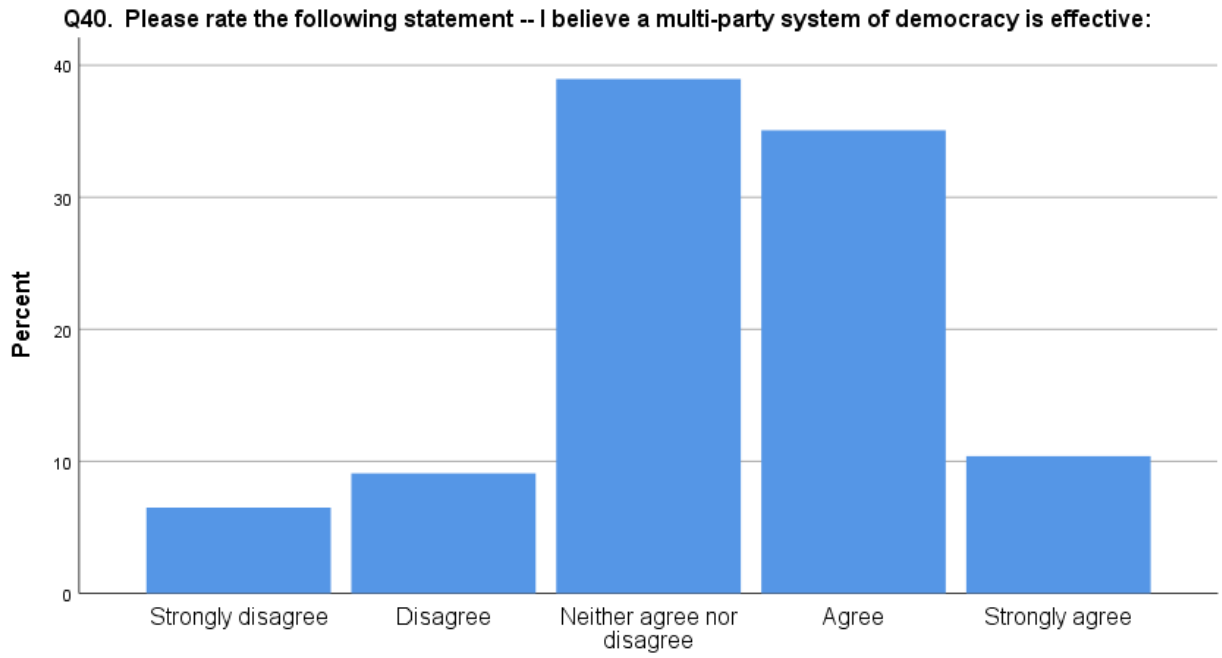

Table 6: Confidence in a multi-party system of democracy

The results of the survey and interviews suggest that discontentment with the two-party structure of the American political system is a commonality among millennials. The interviewees expressed frustration and even disgust with the current state of affairs.

Question # 13: What do you think is the future of American Politics?

> "Um, I think we'll probably have a lot of changes to the Republican party and I think that if those changes happen to the Republican party, like if more moderate Republicans and more conservative Republicans start to separate then I think a similar thing would probably happen to the Democratic party and other parties will be willing and able to participate in the political process on a larger scale." – Caleb
>
> "[We need to] make it more like accessible and available for people to know about and then also instead of it just being like 'we're just going to sit around and argue about parties', like Republican versus Democrat, I think it would be way more beneficial and

more interesting for people to say like 'oh let's talk about this issue and let's talk about you know like what could we do for this'." – Anna

"I don't really agree with the bi-party system. I don't really think that's the way that politics are supposed to work, and I think it's irritating that Americans are so set in their ways that that has to be how it's done because you have other nations where there's like 10 or 12 parties or there's just no parties and they function great." – Lynn

"I think it would be fun to watch if say Trump gets the Republican nomination and if the establishment Republicans try to run Mitt Romney or Rubio as like a third party. I don't know I think we're in the middle of the political shift for sure where the Republicans are going to have to redefine some of their party stances. Especially because if you look at the Electoral College which like there's certain states that you know a certain group is going to take them, and there are really only a few that are in contention. So, I think if the Republicans are ever going to have a president again they have to re-evaluate and change their stance on a few issues." – Spencer

Furthermore, the majority of the interviewees brought up that, for the large part, social problems are the biggest issues in America and partisan politics need to be put aside so we can find immediate and sustained long-term solutions for these problems.

Question #12: What are the most important issues you believe Americans and politicians should be focusing on?

"Now that health care has been made more accessible, I think making higher education more accessible and more affordable." -- Kyle

"I suppose civil rights or civil liberties, environmental issues, ultimately I think mostly it could boil down to issues of ethical issues, but really civil rights." – Caleb

"I think this election, it's been a very social issue election more than an economic issue election, at least like one thing I know that is super important for kids my age is a college education… you know is that going to be an option for people to go and to be able to get a college education for free or at least for a few years? And how is the government going to intervene in that aspect?" – Spencer

"Looking at the debt and the deficit and all that stuff, to me that's an appalling number. That's the future that I have to inherit. and whether it's entitlements like Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid and all that kind of stuff, like the fact that I'm paying into Social Security and the chances that I will never see that money again are terrifying to me… like kind of more social ideas… gay rights or like abortion or anything like that I think that becomes more important to millennials." – Lynn

Analysis

The Role of Registered Voters

Out of the survey respondents, 81.8 percent of individuals who posted about political or social issues on Facebook voted in the general election. Also, 84.8 percent of individuals who liked or shared posts about political or social issues on Facebook voted in the general election. Out of the individuals who engaged in online dialogue with their Facebook friends about political or social issues, 82.8 percent voted in the general election. Out of those who participated in a political or social protest or rally over the past year, 87 percent voted in the 2016 general election. Moreover, out of those who participated in a political or social protest or rally over the past year, 87 percent are registered voters. All of this suggests that registered voters were more involved in actively discussing politics on Facebook as well as voting on election day and participating in political and social protests or rallies (see Appendix C).

The Role of Females

Out of the individuals who reported they participated in a political or social protest or rally in the past year, 65.21 percent were females. Also, 60.6 percent of those who posted about political or social issues on Facebook the 2016 general election were females. Females comprised 56.5 percent of individuals who "liked" or "shared" a post about political or social issues on Facebook. Finally, 51.7 percent of individuals who reported they engaged in online dialogue with their Facebook friends about political or social issues were female. This suggests that females were more involved in political and social protests and rallies and were more involved in actively following and engaging in political discourse on Facebook (see Appendix C).

The Role of Democrats

When it comes to Facebook activity, 45.5 percent of the individuals who reported they posted about political and social issues were Democrats, compared to 18.2 percent who were republicans and 18.2 percent who identified as independents. Also, out of the respondents who reported they "liked" or "shared" a post about political or social issues over the past year, 45.7 percent of them were Democrats compared to 21.7 percent who identify as Republicans and 17.4 percent who identify as independents. Moreover, out of the individuals who reported they engaged in dialogue about political or social issues on Facebook, 44.8 percent were Democrats compared to 20.7 percent who were Republicans and 17.2 percent who were independents. Furthermore, out of the respondents who reported they participated in a political protest or rally in the past year, 65.2 percent were Democrats compared to 8.7 percent who were Republicans and 17.4 percent who were independents. This suggests that by all measures, Democrats posted more political content and engaged with more political content on Facebook than any other

political party and they also made up a staggering majority of the individuals who participated in political or social protests and rallies during the 2016 campaign cycle (see Appendix C).

Discussion as a Means of Civic Engagement

All of the interviewees were registered to vote, sixty percent were female, and sixty percent were registered Democrats. The interviewees not only agreed that the two-party system is broken, but they also expressed that the seeds of change and civic engagement start at the local discussion level; however, they did not specifically mention social media as playing a role in this process.

Question #14: What is the most important role of millennials in politics?

> "Critical thinking and group discussions to figure out something that we can do and then having that be meaningful because I think a lot of times we're just thinking we're just having a discussion so like where is this going? So, we need to have those ideas that are discussed and that room to be taken somewhere like taken to the state government or something and then that continuing to be taken elsewhere like further down the line so people know that their voices are being heard and it's just not a small discussion in a room and it's not just going to stay there." – Anna
>
> "I would say the most important role of millennials is probably to change what politics look like. Like I think that you have gen x and baby boomers still in office and they're so focused on the wrong thing but politics isn't working the way it's supposed to. We have to talk about what it should look like and fix it. So, I feel the millennials role is to kind of clean slate like start over." – Lynn

"Educating ourselves, having a real and honest conversation with each other about a completely broken political system, and actually getting involved. I mean, if we can fix the mess we've been handed then why not restructure the whole damn system?" – Kyle

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

First of all, I am happy that I did reach outside of the parameters of my original interview recruitment criteria as it helped me see a trend of disapproval of the limited two-party system in America among millennials and it helped me understand that millennials want to shift the focus from partisan politics to finding real and sustained solutions for current and future issues. Furthermore, to millennials voting is not the end all of political participation in their eyes, but having the ability to discuss the issues in a nonpartisan nature and strive for solutions is what they consider to be the fundamentals to rebuilding and redefining the American political system so that it is a more efficient and effective representative democracy.

While a considerable number of my interview questions were focused on trying to see if there was some sort of link between social media and civic engagement, as implied by the literature surrounding the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections, I was not able to replicate any of those findings in my interviews. However, I found some exciting and fascinating trends in the responses to the last three questions of the survey (see Appendix A). Most of all there is an obvious amount of discontentment among the millennials I interviewed with the current political process, particularly with the gridlock between the polarized two-party system. This system, in its current state, is ignoring the issues millennials find important, which are mostly social in nature. Therefore, millennials find themselves participating in politics by discussing issues outside of the confines of the party system. However, the interviews suggest that millennials do not believe in the two-party system, and perhaps do not want this system to continue to dominate the political and election structure in the United States. Only time will tell if this level of disapproval of the two-party system will lead to it collapsing altogether and the millennials

seeking to implement a multi-party system that is more representative of their beliefs and the way they feel a representative democracy should work.

In terms of the survey, due to a six-month IRB approval process, the implementation of the survey, which was originally planned for right after the election then delayed to after the presidential inauguration, was further delayed until March 2017. I left the survey open for a month and shared it with graduate teaching assistants in the Communication Department. I received confirmation from most of them that they had shared the survey link with their students; however, some of them outline in their syllabi that they explicitly do not offer extra credit, therefore, I had to rely on responses from the three who did decide to offer a small amount of extra credit for the completion of the survey. This meant I received 91 responses, however, 14 of them were incomplete, so I wound up with 77 complete responses. This fell significantly short of my goal of a minimum of 100 responses; however, for the purposes of finishing the research in a timely manner, I could not keep the survey open any longer. I could also not expand the reach of the survey by sharing the link with other departments as my IRB application only specified the sampling of undergraduates in the communication department. Because of such a small sample size, I cannot conclude that the data is representative of all undergraduates at the University of Colorado Denver and certainly not of all millennial voters.

Moreover, even though I designed the survey to not collect IP addresses in an attempt to keep the data as anonymous as possible, there is always the question of the reliability of self-reporting. In this case, the political tension and divisions in the United States are still the focus of daily news, and it is possible some of the respondents did not want to appear uninvolved in the political process. Examples of how this are demonstrated in the data analysis--registered voters and individuals who reported they voted in the 2016 general election participated in the

discussion or sharing of political information on Facebook and in political or social protests or rallies at higher levels than those who are not registered to vote or did not. Also, females and Democrats engaged in the aforementioned activities at higher rates than males or individuals who identify as members of other political parties. However, despite these correlations, bivariate analysis using chi-squared tests generated P-values (a test for correlation strength, with strong correlations being represented by P-values that are less than 0.05) that were not strong enough to assume that the correlations would remain consistent when data is extrapolated in an attempt to generalize results from a hypothetically larger sample. Therefore, these results cannot statistically be applied to the millennial population as a whole.

While I cannot conclude with 100 percent certainty that the online engagement with politics, particularly on Facebook, is an extension of the public sphere arguments of Jürgen Habermas and Hannah Arendt, I do not think I can completely ignore the results either. Most important of which is the high rate of which individuals "liked" or "shared' posts relevant to political or social causes—a rate that is higher than the national voter turnout average for millennials and may be more representative of how millennials choose to deliberate about political and social issues than simply voting. However, the small sample size does not mean that these findings can be generalized to the political communication preferences of all millennials.

Limitations

First of all, while the interviews ended up providing more depth to my survey findings, interviewing five individuals is not a representative sample of all millennials, especially since every single one of them was registered to vote. Also, during my survey data analysis, it became blatantly obvious that there was not a question regarding how often respondents discussed politics with friends and family face-to-face during the 2016 election cycle. Because this factor is

missing, I cannot truly compare online discussion of politics to discussion of politics in the real world and, therefore, cannot comprehensively apply theories of deliberation in the public sphere to social media. While 37.66 percent of respondents reported that they engaged in dialogue with friends and family over Facebook about political and social issues and 42.86 percent reported that they had posted about political or social issues over the past year, there is no marker for comparison in terms of talking about these issues with friends. Also, while 59.74 percent of those individuals also reported that they "liked" or "shared" posts about political or social issues, which is not the same as engaging in dialogue. Also, I now realize there is an inherent problem with the wording of that question and questions like it regarding other social media platforms—followers and friends cannot necessarily see when an individual likes a post unless they like it too, but they can see when that individual shares a post, which might be a more passive way of sharing ideas and dialogue about political and social issues on Facebook versus an individual formulating a specific and personal post. However, the sharing feature on Facebook also allows a user to provide their own commentary on the post versus a pre-written caption, so that could also be a way in which an individual is able to customize the post to their own ideas.

Also, because of the delay in IRB approval and, subsequently, survey implementation and data collection, I cannot help but wonder if the data regarding how many individuals participated in social protests or rallies was skewed to higher percentages than immediately following the election. While there were many protests across the country following the election, the Women's March is credited as one of the largest demonstrations--if not the largest demonstration with approximately over four million participants--in the history of the United States, and it and other related marches followed the inauguration (Chenoweth & Pressman,

2017). This would be difficult to measure unless I implemented the survey right after the election and again after the inauguration, then compared the results.

Overall, I believe many improvements could be made to a similar survey in the future—including, but not limited to: questions comparing face-to-face political deliberation and communication with online discussion and idea sharing; survey implementation and data collection immediately following the general election which can be compared to survey implementation and data collection immediately following the presidential inauguration; and additional questions that define sources of political socialization as either being positive or negative influences on individual beliefs. Furthermore, a longitudinal study regarding these processes and assumptions comparing results of midterm elections to general election might yield more rich data that could provide more insight into the political deliberation, socialization, and participation process of millennials.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Through the in-person interviews and the survey, I was able to triangulate some of the findings and themes from the literature review. This includes the following: social media participation based on political and social issues is related to higher levels of political participation among millennials and a decreased confidence among millennials in the two-party system that dominates the American electoral system. While there are a plethora of other themes included in these categories, I have already reviewed most of them and I will just summarize the findings I think are the most important from the literature and the studies contained within this paper.

First of all, throughout the literature review and all stages of the research, it is clear that social media increases political participation among millennials who do use it as a tool to follow political candidates and political and social causes so that they can stay informed of current events and upcoming opportunities for civic engagement. Social media and the content that politicians, organizers, and friends and family share on it help millennials craft their worldview and it helps them examine and share information, engage in dialogue about important issues, and decide if and how they will act on the issues they care about. Social media enables them to participate in voting and in large-scale demonstrations and protests to exercise their First Amendment rights. They are more politically active in terms of voter turnout rates and the other ways in which they participate in politics—including protesting a political system that they see as broken and not representative of their interests. However, I was only able to replicate these findings from the literature review through a millennial population that is already involved in politics.

In addition, through the literature review, the interviews, and the survey data, it is also clear that millennials do not trust the traditional two-party system of American politics, even if they continue to engage in it. They favor a system that includes multiple parties with different viewpoints, less polarization, more opportunities to work toward lasting solutions, and parties that will better address the issues they care about the most. Millennials do not care about partisan politics—they care about pressing social issues and how to solve those issues. They care that the United States' political system is deeply divided and they care about being able to work with others to find comprehensive solutions for current and future problems. They care about the longevity of the American system of democracy and if it can evolve, change, and adapt to their wants and needs without compromising their freedom. This suggests that despite traditional means of political socialization, there are other factors (that do not include social media), that contribute to their distrust of the system.

Finally, I was not able to find a link between Habermas' idea of the public sphere and its extension to social media. The survey data simply confirmed that individuals who are already engaged in politics discuss it online. Despite the survey results of the high rates at which millennial voters who use Facebook post, like, and share posts about political or social issues and the high rates at which they engage in dialogue about political or social issues on the platform, it unclear that there is a link between Habermas's idea of the public sphere and its extension and interpretation to include social media. This link seems to still be growing as society adapts to the norms of each platform of social media and as millennials rely on it as a tool for disseminating information and organizing political action, including protests and rallies. I think it is important to keep in mind that it is a tool—a tool for communication and a tool for the gathering of

information and resources. This falls more in line with Papacharissi's evaluation of the internet as a public space that only facilitates face-to-face interaction in the public sphere.

Therefore, the findings of the literature and my own findings do not speak to the experience of the disenfranchised millennial citizen who is not convinced that voting, protesting, or engaging in politics in other ways is worth their time or effort. An individual simply spouting their political opinion on social media does nothing to convince others to engage with their dialogue or to participate in the political process, especially if their argument is seen by individuals who do not care about the political system or do not believe that they can have an impact on it. So, if researchers and politicians want to treat millennials, who are also labeled as digital natives, like the only way they can reach them is through social media, then they may be wrong in their assumptions.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Questions

Background:

1. How old are you?
2. What is your year in school?
3. What is your political affiliation?

Civic Engagement/ Political Participation:

4. How would you describe your caucus experience?
5. How would you define political participation or civic engagement?
6. In what other ways have you participated in politics other than the caucus?
    a. Please describe.
    b. How politically involved would you say you are?
7. Why do you think civic engagement/ political participation is important?
8. What sparked your participation and interest in politics?
    a. At what age did you start participating in politics?

Information and Debate:

9. What would you say are your primary sources of political news?
10. How do you talk about politics with friends or family?
    a. Please describe the difference in person and online.
11. How do you talk about politics with strangers?
    a. Please describe the difference in person and online.
12. What are the most important issues you believe Americans and politicians should be focusing on?

13. What do you see as the future of American politics or where it is heading?

14. What do you think is the most important role of millennials in the political process?

APPENDIX B

Survey Questions

1. *Are you a citizen of the United States?*
    a. *Yes*
    b. *No*
2. *Please select your age range:*
    a. *18-24 years of age*
    b. *25-29 years of age*
    c. *30-34 years of age*
    d. *Other*
3. *What is your sex?*
    a. *Male*
    b. *Female*
    c. *Other*
4. *Which of the following best represents your racial or ethnic background?*
    a. *Non-Hispanic White or Euro-American*
    b. *Black, Afro-Caribbean, or African American*
    c. *Latino or Hispanic American*
    d. *East Asian or Asian American*
    e. *South Asian or Indian American*
    f. *Middle Eastern or Arab American*
    g. *Native American or Alaskan Native*
    h. *Other*

5. *Are you registered to vote?*
    a. *Yes*
    b. *No*
6. *With which political party do you formally affiliate?*
    a. *Democrat*
    b. *Republicans*
    c. *Green*
    d. *Independent*
    e. *Libertarian*
    f. *Other*
    g. *N/A*
7. *Did you vote or caucus in the 2016 primary election?*
    a. *Yes*
    b. *No*
8. *Did you vote in the 2016 general election?*
    a. *Yes*
    b. *No*
9. *In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally?*
    a. *Yes*
    b. *No*
10. *Do you have a Facebook account?*
    a. *Yes*
    b. *No*

11. How often do you use Facebook?

a. *Rarely*
b. *Once a month*
c. *Once every 2 weeks*
d. *Once a week*
e. *2 to 3 times a week*
f. *Daily*
g. *N/A*

12. Did you follow any of the 2016 presidential candidates on Facebook?

a. *Yes*
b. *No*
c. *N/A*

13. During the 2016 general election, did you follow any political or social causes on Facebook?

a. *Yes*
b. *No*
c. *N/A*

14. In the past year, have you posted about any political or social issues on Facebook?

a. *Yes*
b. *No*
c. *N/A*

15. In the past year, have you "liked" or "shared" a post about any political or social issues on Facebook?

a. *Yes*

b. *No*

c. *N/A*

16. *In the past year, have you engaged in online dialogue with your Facebook friends about political or social issues?*

a. *Yes*

b. *No*

c. *N/A*

17. *How frequently do you post, like, or share posts about political or social issues on Facebook?*

a. *Never*

b. *Once every few months*

c. *Monthly*

d. *Weekly*

e. *Daily*

f. *N/A*

18. *Do you have a Twitter account?*

a. *Yes*

b. *No*

19. *How often do you use Twitter?*

a. *Rarely*

b. *Once a month*

c. *Once every 2 weeks*

d. *Once a week*

e. *2 to 3 times a week*

f. *Daily*

g. *N/A*

20. *Did you follow any of the 2016 presidential candidates on Twitter?*

a. *Yes*

b. *No*

c. *N/A*

21. *During the 2016 general election, did you follow any political or social causes on Twitter?*

a. *Yes*

b. *No*

c. *N/A*

22. *In the past year, have you "liked" or "retweeted" a post about any political or social issues on Twitter?*

a. *Yes*

b. *No*

c. *N/A*

23. *In the past year, have you engaged in online dialogue with your Twitter followers about political or social issues?*

a. *Yes*

b. *No*

c. *N/A*

24. How frequently do you post, like, or retweet posts about political or social issues on Twitter?

a. *Never*
b. *Once every few months*
c. *Monthly*
d. *Weekly*
e. *Daily*

25. Do you have an Instagram account?

a. *Yes*
b. *No*

26. How often do you use Instagram?

a. *Rarely*
b. *Once a month*
c. *Once every 2 weeks*
d. *Once a week*
e. *2 to 3 times a week*
f. *Daily*
g. *N/A*

27. Did you follow any of the 2016 presidential candidates on Instagram?

a. *Yes*
b. *No*
c. *N/A*

28. *During the 2016 general election, did you follow any political or social causes on Instagram?*
    a. *Yes*
    b. *No*
    c. *N/A*
29. *In the past year, have you "liked" or "regrammed" a post about any political or social issues on Instagram?*
    a. *Yes*
    b. *No*
    c. *N/A*
30. *In the past year, have you engaged in online dialogue with your Instagram followers about political or social issues?*
    a. *Yes*
    b. *No*
    c. *N/A*
31. *How frequently do you post, like, or regram posts about political or social issues on Instagram?*
    a. *Never*
    b. *Once every few months*
    c. *Monthly*
    d. *Weekly*
    e. *Daily*

32. In the past year, have you used social media to organize or participate in-person at a political or social protest or rally?

- *a. Yes*
- *b. No*

33. What source do you rely on the most for news?

- *a. Broadcast news channels or programs*
- *b. Traditional news websites or apps*
- *c. Facebook*
- *d. Twitter*
- *e. Instagram*
- *f. YouTube*
- *g. Other*

34. What would you say has been the biggest influence on your political beliefs?

- *a. Family*
- *b. Friends*
- *c. Teachers*
- *d. Religion*
- *e. News Media*
- *f. Social Media*

35. Please rate the following statement – seeing political news online influences my political opinions:

- *a. Strongly disagree*
- *b. Disagree*

c. *Neither agree or disagree*

d. *Agree*

e. *Strongly Agree*

36. Please rate the following statement – seeing political posts on social media by friends influences my political opinions:

a. *Strongly disagree*

b. *Disagree*

c. *Neither agree or disagree*

d. *Agree*

e. *Strongly Agree*

37. Please rate the following statement – seeing political posts on social media by family members influences my political opinions:

a. *Strongly disagree*

b. *Disagree*

c. *Neither agree or disagree*

d. *Agree*

e. *Strongly Agree*

38. Please rate the following statement -- I believe the two-party political system of democracy is effective:

a. *Strongly disagree*

b. *Disagree*

c. *Neither agree or disagree*

d. *Agree*

e. *Strongly Agree*

39. *Please rate the following statement -- I believe a third-party system of democracy is effective:*

a. *Strongly disagree*

b. *Disagree*

c. *Neither agree or disagree*

d. *Agree*

e. *Strongly Agree*

40. *Please rate the following statement -- I believe a multi-party system of democracy is effective:*

a. *Strongly disagree*

b. *Disagree*

c. *Neither agree or disagree*

d. *Agree*

e. *Strongly Agree*

APPENDIX C

Summary of Survey Results

Social Media and Political Participation Survey -- Summary of Results

1. Are you a citizen of the United States?

		Response Percent	Response Count
1	a.	Yes	94.81% 73
2	b.	No	5.19% 4
	skipped :	0	
	answered :	77	

2. Please select your age range:

		Response Percent	Response Count
1	a.	18-24 years of age	75.32% 58
2	b.	25-29 years of age	11.69% 9
3	c.	30-34 years of age	6.49% 5
4	d.	Other	6.49% 5
	skipped :	0	
	answered :	77	

3. What is your sex?

		Response Percent	Response Count
1	a.	Male	50.65% 39
2	b.	Female	49.35% 38
3	c.	Other	0% 0
	skipped :	0	
	answered :	77	

4. Which of the following best represents your racial or ethnic background?

		Response Percent	Response Count
1	a.	Non-Hispanic White or Euro-American	54.55% 42
2	b.	Black, Afro-Caribbean, or African American	5.19% 4
3	c.	Latino or Hispanic American	25.97% 20
4	d.	East Asian or Asian American	7.79% 6
5	e.	South Asian or Indian American	1.30% 1
6	f.	Middle Eastern or Arab American	1.30% 1
7	g.	Native American or Alaskan Native	0% 0
8	h.	Other	3.90% 3
	skipped :	0	
	answered :	77	

5. Are you registered to vote?

		Response Percent	Response Count
1	a.	Yes	85.71% 66
2	b.	No	14.29% 11
	skipped :	0	
	answered :	77	

6. With which political party do you formally affiliate?

		Response Percent	Response Count
1	a.	Democrat	41.56% 32
2	b.	Republican	22.08% 17
3	c.	Green	0% 0
4	d.	Independent	18.18% 14

5	e.	Libertarian	3.90%	3
6	f.	Other	2.60%	2
7	g.	N/A	11.69%	9
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

7. Did you vote or caucus in the 2016 primary election?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Yes	40.26%	31
2	b.	No	59.74%	46
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

8. Did you vote in the 2016 general election?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Yes	77.92%	60
2	b.	No	22.08%	17
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

9. In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Yes	29.87%	23
2	b.	No	70.13%	54
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

10. Do you have a Facebook account?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Yes	89.61%	69
2	b.	No	10.39%	8
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

11. How often do you use Facebook?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Rarely	11.69%	9
2	b.	Once a month	6.49%	5
3	c.	Once every 2 weeks	1.30%	1
4	d.	Once a week	2.60%	2
5	e.	2 to 3 times a week	11.69%	9
6	f.	Daily	55.84%	43
7	g.	N/A	10.39%	8
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

12. Did you follow any of the 2016 presidential candidates on Facebook?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Yes	29.87%	23
2	b.	No	62.34%	48
3	c.	N/A	7.79%	6
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

13. During the 2016 general election, did you follow any political or social causes on Facebook?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Yes	44.16%	34
2	b.	No	45.45%	35
3	c.	N/A	10.39%	8
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

14. In the past year, have you posted about any political or social issues on Facebook?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Yes	42.86%	33
2	b.	No	48.05%	37
3	c.	N/A	9.09%	7
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

15. In the past year, have you "liked" or "shared" a post about any political or social issues on Facebook?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Yes	59.74%	46
2	b.	No	31.17%	24
3	c.	N/A	9.09%	7
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

16. In the past year, have you engaged in online dialogue with your Facebook friends about political or social issues

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Yes	37.66%	29
2	b.	No	53.25%	41
3	c.	N/A	9.09%	7
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

17. How frequently do you post, like, or share posts about political or social issues on Facebook?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Never	32.47%	25
2	b.	Once every few months	20.78%	16
3	c.	Monthly	12.99%	10
4	d.	Weekly	14.29%	11
5	e.	Daily	7.79%	6
6	f.	N/A	11.69%	9
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

18. Do you have a Twitter account?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Yes	35.06%	27
2	b.	No	64.94%	50
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

19. How often do you use Twitter?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Rarely	19.48%	15

2	b.	Once a month	2.60%	2
3	c.	Once every 2 weeks	1.30%	1
4	d.	Once a week	0%	0
5	e.	2 to 3 times a week	3.90%	3
6	f.	Daily	9.09%	7
7	g.	N/A	63.64%	49
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

20. Did you follow any of the 2016 presidential candidates on Twitter?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Yes	11.69%	9
2	b.	No	35.06%	27
3	c.	N/A	53.25%	41
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

21. During the 2016 general election, did you follow any political or social causes on Twitter?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Yes	11.69%	9
2	b.	No	35.06%	27
3	c.	N/A	53.25%	41
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

22. In the past year, have you "liked" or "retweeted" a post about any political or social issues on Twitter?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Yes	11.69%	9
2	b.	No	32.47%	25
3	c.	N/A	55.84%	43
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

23. In the past year, have you engaged in online dialogue with your Twitter followers about political or social issues?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Yes	3.90%	3
2	b.	No	41.56%	32
3	c.	N/A	54.55%	42
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

24. How frequently do you post, like, or retweet posts about political or social issues on Twitter?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Never	87.01%	67
2	b.	Once every few months	6.49%	5
3	c.	Monthly	0%	0
4	d.	Weekly	3.90%	3
5	e.	Daily	2.60%	2
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

25. Do you have an Instagram account?

Response Percent	Response Count

1	a.	Yes	67.53%	52
2	b.	No	32.47%	25
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

26. How often do you use Instagram?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Rarely	12.99%	10
2	b.	Once a month	1.30%	1
3	c.	Once every 2 weeks	2.60%	2
4	d.	Once a week	5.19%	4
5	e.	2 to 3 times a week	9.09%	7
6	f.	Daily	37.66%	29
7	g.	N/A	31.17%	24
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

27. Did you follow any of the 2016 presidential candidates on Instagram?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Yes	7.79%	6
2	b.	No	64.94%	50
3	c.	N/A	27.27%	21
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

28. During the 2016 general election, did you follow any political or social causes on Instagram?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Yes	11.84%	9
2	b.	No	59.21%	45
3	c.	N/A	28.95%	22
	skipped :		1	
	answered :		76	

29. In the past year, have you "liked" or "regrammed" a post about any political or social issues on Instagram?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Yes	23.38%	18
2	b.	No	46.75%	36
3	c.	N/A	29.87%	23
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

30. In the past year, have you engaged in online dialogue with your Instagram followers about political or social issues?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Yes	6.49%	5
2	b.	No	63.64%	49
3	c.	N/A	29.87%	23
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

31. How frequently do you post, like, or regram posts about political or social issues on Instagram?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Never	72.73%	56
2	b.	Once every few months	12.99%	10

3	c.	Monthly	6.49%	5
4	d.	Weekly	2.60%	2
5	e.	Daily	5.19%	4
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

32. In the past year, have you used social media to organize or participate in-person at a political or social protest or rally?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Yes	19.48%	15
2	b.	No	80.52%	62
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

33. What source do you rely on the most for news?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Broadcast news channels or programs	27.27%	21
2	b.	Traditional news websites or apps	42.86%	33
3	c.	Facebook	12.99%	10
4	d.	Twitter	1.30%	1
5	e.	Instagram	1.30%	1
6	f.	YouTube	3.90%	3
7	g.	Other	10.39%	8
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

34. What would you say has been the biggest influence on your political beliefs?

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Family	31.17%	24
2	b.	Friends	14.29%	11
3	c.	Teachers	10.39%	8
4	d.	Religion	7.79%	6
5	e.	News Media	27.27%	21
6	f.	Social Media	9.09%	7
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

35. Please rate the following statement – seeing political news online influences my political opinions:

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Strongly disagree	11.69%	9
2	b.	Disagree	16.88%	13
3	c.	Neither agree nor disagree	37.66%	29
4	d.	Agree	32.47%	25
5	e.	Strongly Agree	1.30%	1
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

36. Please rate the following statement – seeing political posts on social media by friends influences my political opinions:

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Strongly disagree	20.78%	16
2	b.	Disagree	31.17%	24
3	c.	Neither agree nor disagree	25.97%	20
4	d.	Agree	18.18%	14

5	e.	Strongly Agree	3.90%	3
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

37. Please rate the following statement – seeing political posts on social media by family members influences my politi opinions:

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Strongly disagree	19.48%	15
2	b.	Disagree	36.36%	28
3	c.	Neither agree nor disagree	24.68%	19
4	d.	Agree	19.48%	15
5	e.	Strongly Agree	0%	0
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

38. Please rate the following statement -- I believe the two-party political system of democracy is effective:

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Strongly disagree	29.87%	23
2	b.	Disagree	23.38%	18
3	c.	Neither agree nor disagree	29.87%	23
4	d.	Agree	14.29%	11
5	e.	Strongly Agree	2.60%	2
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

39. Please rate the following statement -- I believe a third-party system of democracy is effective:

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Strongly disagree	10.39%	8
2	b.	Disagree	11.69%	9
3	c.	Neither agree nor disagree	50.65%	39
4	d.	Agree	24.68%	19
5	e.	Strongly Agree	2.60%	2
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

40. Please rate the following statement -- I believe a multi-party system of democracy is effective:

		Response Percent	Response Count	
1	a.	Strongly disagree	6.49%	5
2	b.	Disagree	9.09%	7
3	c.	Neither agree nor disagree	38.96%	30
4	d.	Agree	35.06%	27
5	e.	Strongly Agree	10.39%	8
	skipped :		0	
	answered :		77	

APPENDIX D

Crosstabulation/Correlation Tests

1. Analysis of registered voters

Q8. Did you vote in the 2016 general election? * Q14. In the past year, have you posted about any political or social issues on Facebook? Crosstabulation

			Q14. In the past year, have you posted about any political or social issues on Facebook?		
			No	Yes	Total
Q8. Did you vote in the 2016 general election?	No	Count	11	6	17
		% within Q14. In the past year, have you posted about any political or social issues on Facebook?	25.0%	18.2%	22.1%
	Yes	Count	33	27	60
		% within Q14. In the past year, have you posted about any political or social issues on Facebook?	75.0%	81.8%	77.9%
Total		Count	44	33	77
		% within Q14. In the past year, have you posted about any political or social issues on Facebook?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Correlation between 2016 general election voters and political Facebook posts

Q8. Did you vote in the 2016 general election? * Q15. In the past year, have you "liked" or "shared" a post about any political or social issues on Facebook? Crosstabulation

			Q15. In the past year, have you "liked" or "shared" a post about any political or social issues on Facebook?		
			No	Yes	Total
	No	Count	10	7	17

Q8. Did you vote in the 2016 general election?		% within Q15. In the past year, have you "liked" or "shared" a post about any political or social issues on Facebook?	32.3%	15.2%	22.1%
	Yes	Count	21	39	60
		% within Q15. In the past year, have you "liked" or "shared" a post about any political or social issues on Facebook?	67.7%	84.8%	77.9%
Total		Count	31	46	77
		% within Q15. In the past year, have you "liked" or "shared" a post about any political or social issues on Facebook?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Correlation between 2016 general election voters and liking or sharing political Facebook

Q8. Did you vote in the 2016 general election? * Q16. In the past year, have you engaged in online dialogue with your Facebook friends about political or social issues? Crosstabulation

			Q16. In the past year, have you engaged in online dialogue with your Facebook friends about political or social issues?		
			No	Yes	Total
Q8. Did you vote in the 2016 general election?	No	Count	12	5	17
		% within Q16. In the past year, have you engaged in online dialogue with your Facebook friends about political or social issues?	25.0%	17.2%	22.1%
	Yes	Count	36	24	60
		% within Q16. In the past year, have you engaged in online dialogue with your Facebook friends about political or social issues?	75.0%	82.8%	77.9%

Total	Count	48	29	77
	% within Q16. In the past year, have you engaged in online dialogue with your Facebook friends about political or social issues?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Correlation between 2016 general election voters and political Facebook dialogue

Q8. Did you vote in the 2016 general election? * Q9. In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally? Crosstabulation

			Q9. In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally?		
			No	Yes	Total
Q8. Did you vote in the 2016 general election?	No	Count	14	3	17
		% within Q9. In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally?	25.9%	13.0%	22.1%
	Yes	Count	40	20	60
		% within Q9. In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally?	74.1%	87.0%	77.9%
Total		Count	54	23	77
		% within Q9. In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Correlation between 2016 general election voters and political and social protests and rallies

Q5. Are you registered to vote? * Q9. In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally? Crosstabulation

	Q9. In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally?		
	No	Yes	Total

Q5. Are you registered to vote?	No	Count	8	3	11	
		% within Q9. In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally?	14.8%	13.0%	14.3%	
	Yes	Count	46	20	66	
		% within Q9. In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally?	85.2%	87.0%	85.7%	
Total		Count	54	23	77	
		% within Q9. In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Correlation between registered voters and political and social protests and rallies

2. Analysis of females

Q3. What is your sex? * Q9. In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally? Crosstabulation

			Q9. In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally?		
			No	Yes	Total
Q3. What is your sex?	Male	Count	31	8	39
		% within Q9. In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally?	57.4%	34.8%	50.6%
	Female	Count	23	15	38
		% within Q9. In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally?	42.6%	65.2%	49.4%

Total	Count	54	23	77
	% within Q9. In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Correlation of females and political and social protests and rallies

Q3. What is your sex? * Q14. In the past year, have you posted about any political or social issues on Facebook? Crosstabulation

			Q14. In the past year, have you posted about any political or social issues on Facebook?		
			No	Yes	Total
Q3. What is your sex?	Male	Count	26	13	39
		% within Q14. In the past year, have you posted about any political or social issues on Facebook?	59.1%	39.4%	50.6%
	Female	Count	18	20	38
		% within Q14. In the past year, have you posted about any political or social issues on Facebook?	40.9%	60.6%	49.4%
Total		Count	44	33	77
		% within Q14. In the past year, have you posted about any political or social issues on Facebook?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Correlation between females and political Facebook posts

Q3. What is your sex? * Q15. In the past year, have you "liked" or "shared" a post about any political or social issues on Facebook? Crosstabulation

			Q15. In the past year, have you "liked" or "shared" a post about any political or social issues on Facebook?		
			No	Yes	Total
Q3. What is your sex?	Male	Count	19	20	39
		% within Q15. In the past year, have you "liked" or "shared" a post about any political or social issues on Facebook?	61.3%	43.5%	50.6%
	Female	Count	12	26	38

	% within Q15. In the past year, have you "liked" or "shared" a post about any political or social issues on Facebook?	38.7%	56.5%	49.4%
Total	Count	31	46	77
	% within Q15. In the past year, have you "liked" or "shared" a post about any political or social issues on Facebook?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Correlation between females and liking or sharing political Facebook posts

Q3. What is your sex? * Q16. In the past year, have you engaged in online dialogue with your Facebook friends about political or social issues? Crosstabulation

			Q16. In the past year, have you engaged in online dialogue with your Facebook friends about political or social issues?		
			No	Yes	Total
Q3. What is your sex?	Male	Count	25	14	39
		% within Q16. In the past year, have you engaged in online dialogue with your Facebook friends about political or social issues?	52.1%	48.3%	50.6%
	Female	Count	23	15	38
		% within Q16. In the past year, have you engaged in online dialogue with your Facebook friends about political or social issues?	47.9%	51.7%	49.4%
Total		Count	48	29	77
		% within Q16. In the past year, have you engaged in online dialogue with your Facebook friends about political or social issues?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Correlation between females and political Facebook dialogue

3. Analysis of political party affiliation

Q6. With which political party do you formally affiliate? * Q14. In the past year, have you posted about any political or social issues on Facebook? Crosstabulation

		Q14. In the past year, have you posted about any political or social issues on Facebook?		
		No	Yes	Total
Democrat	Count	17	15	32

Q6. With which political party do you formally affiliate?		% within Q14. In the past year, have you posted about any political or social issues on Facebook?	38.6%	45.5%	41.6%
	Republicans	Count	11	6	17
		% within Q14. In the past year, have you posted about any political or social issues on Facebook?	25.0%	18.2%	22.1%
	Independent	Count	8	6	14
		% within Q14. In the past year, have you posted about any political or social issues on Facebook?	18.2%	18.2%	18.2%
	Libertarian	Count	0	3	3
		% within Q14. In the past year, have you posted about any political or social issues on Facebook?	0.0%	9.1%	3.9%
	Other	Count	2	0	2
		% within Q14. In the past year, have you posted about any political or social issues on Facebook?	4.5%	0.0%	2.6%
	N/A	Count	6	3	9
		% within Q14. In the past year, have you posted about any political or social issues on Facebook?	13.6%	9.1%	11.7%
Total		Count	44	33	77
		% within Q14. In the past year, have you posted about any political or social issues on Facebook?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Correlation between party affiliation and political Facebook posts

Q6. With which political party do you formally affiliate? * Q15. In the past year, have you "liked" or "shared" a post about any political or social issues on Facebook? Crosstabulation

			Q15. In the past year, have you "liked" or "shared" a post about any political or social issues on Facebook?		
			No	Yes	Total
Q6. With which political party do you formally affiliate?	Democrat	Count	11	21	32
		% within Q15. In the past year, have you "liked" or "shared" a post about any political or social issues on Facebook?	35.5%	45.7%	41.6%
	Republicans	Count	7	10	17
		% within Q15. In the past year, have you "liked" or "shared" a post about any political or social issues on Facebook?	22.6%	21.7%	22.1%
	Independent	Count	6	8	14
		% within Q15. In the past year, have you "liked" or "shared" a post about any political or social issues on Facebook?	19.4%	17.4%	18.2%
	Libertarian	Count	0	3	3
		% within Q15. In the past year, have you "liked" or "shared" a post about any political or social issues on Facebook?	0.0%	6.5%	3.9%
	Other	Count	1	1	2
		% within Q15. In the past year, have you "liked" or "shared" a post about any political or social issues on Facebook?	3.2%	2.2%	2.6%
	N/A	Count	6	3	9

	% within Q15. In the past year, have you "liked" or "shared" a post about any political or social issues on Facebook?	19.4%	6.5%	11.7%
Total	Count	31	46	77
	% within Q15. In the past year, have you "liked" or "shared" a post about any political or social issues on Facebook?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Correlation between political party affiliation and liking or sharing political Facebook posts

Q6. With which political party do you formally affiliate? * Q16. In the past year, have you engaged in online dialogue with your Facebook friends about political or social issues? Crosstabulation

			Q16. In the past year, have you engaged in online dialogue with your Facebook friends about political or social issues?		
			No	Yes	Total
Q6. With which political party do you formally affiliate?	Democrat	Count	19	13	32
		% within Q16. In the past year, have you engaged in online dialogue with your Facebook friends about political or social issues?	39.6%	44.8%	41.6%
	Republicans	Count	11	6	17
		% within Q16. In the past year, have you engaged in online dialogue with your Facebook friends about political or social issues?	22.9%	20.7%	22.1%
	Independent	Count	9	5	14

		% within Q16. In the past year, have you engaged in online dialogue with your Facebook friends about political or social issues?	18.8%	17.2%	18.2%
	Libertarian	Count	1	2	3
		% within Q16. In the past year, have you engaged in online dialogue with your Facebook friends about political or social issues?	2.1%	6.9%	3.9%
	Other	Count	1	1	2
		% within Q16. In the past year, have you engaged in online dialogue with your Facebook friends about political or social issues?	2.1%	3.4%	2.6%
	N/A	Count	7	2	9
		% within Q16. In the past year, have you engaged in online dialogue with your Facebook friends about political or social issues?	14.6%	6.9%	11.7%
Total		Count	48	29	77
		% within Q16. In the past year, have you engaged in online dialogue with your Facebook friends about political or social issues?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Correlation between party affiliation and engaging in political dialogue on Facebook

Q6. With which political party do you formally affiliate? * Q9. In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally? Crosstabulation

			Q9. In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally?		
			No	Yes	Total
Q6. With which political party do you formally affiliate?	Democrat	Count	17	15	32
		% within Q9. In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally?	31.5%	65.2%	41.6%
	Republicans	Count	15	2	17
		% within Q9. In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally?	27.8%	8.7%	22.1%
	Independent	Count	10	4	14
		% within Q9. In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally?	18.5%	17.4%	18.2%
	Libertarian	Count	3	0	3
		% within Q9. In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally?	5.6%	0.0%	3.9%
	Other	Count	2	0	2
		% within Q9. In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally?	3.7%	0.0%	2.6%
	N/A	Count	7	2	9

	% within Q9. In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally?	13.0%	8.7%	11.7%
Total	Count	54	23	77
	% within Q9. In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Correlation between party affiliation and political or social protests or rallies

APPENDIX E

Chi-Squared Tests

1. Correlations based on respondents who voted in the 2016 general election:

Correlations

		Q8. Did you vote in the 2016 general election?	Q9. In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally?
Q8. Did you vote in the 2016 general election?	Pearson Correlation	1	.142
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.217
	N	77	77
Q9. In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally?	Pearson Correlation	.142	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.217	
	N	77	77

Correlations

		Q8. Did you vote in the 2016 general election?	Q14. In the past year, have you posted about any political or social issues on Facebook?
Q8. Did you vote in the 2016 general election?	Pearson Correlation	1	.081
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.482
	N	77	77
Q14. In the past year, have you posted about any political or social issues on Facebook?	Pearson Correlation	.081	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.482	
	N	77	77

Correlations

		Q8. Did you vote in the 2016 general election?	Q15. In the past year, have you "liked" or "shared" a post about any political or social issues on Facebook?
Q8. Did you vote in the 2016 general election?	Pearson Correlation	1	.201
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.079
	N	77	77
Q15. In the past year, have you "liked" or "shared" a post about any political or social issues on Facebook?	Pearson Correlation	.201	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.079	
	N	77	77

Correlations

		Q8. Did you vote in the 2016 general election?	Q16. In the past year, have you engaged in online dialogue with your Facebook friends about political or social issues?
Q8. Did you vote in the 2016 general election?	Pearson Correlation	1	.091
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.433
	N	77	77
Q16. In the past year, have you engaged in online dialogue with your Facebook friends about political or social issues?	Pearson Correlation	.091	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.433	
	N	77	77

2. Correlations based on sex:

Correlations

		Q3. What is your sex?	Q9. In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally?
Q3. What is your sex?	Pearson Correlation	1	.207
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.071
	N	77	77
Q9. In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally?	Pearson Correlation	.207	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.071	
	N	77	77

Correlations

		Q3. What is your sex?	Q14. In the past year, have you posted about any political or social issues on Facebook?
Q3. What is your sex?	Pearson Correlation	1	.195
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.089
Q14. In the past year, have you posted about any political or social issues on Facebook?	Pearson Correlation	.195	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.089	

Correlations

		Q3. What is your sex?	Q15. In the past year, have you “liked” or “shared” a post about any political or social issues on Facebook?
Q3. What is your sex?	Pearson Correlation	1	.175

	Sig. (2-tailed)		.129
	N	77	77
Q15. In the past year, have you "liked" or "shared" a post about any political or social issues on Facebook?	Pearson Correlation	.175	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.129	
	N	77	77

3. Correlations based on party affiliation:

Correlations

		Q6. With which political party do you formally affiliate?	Q9. In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally?
Q6. With which political party do you formally affiliate?	Pearson Correlation	1	-.197
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.086
	N	77	77
Q9. In the past year, have participated in a political or social protest or rally?	Pearson Correlation	-.197	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.086	
	N	77	77

Correlations

		Q6. With which political party do you formally affiliate?	Q14. In the past year, have you posted about any political or social issues on Facebook?
Q6. With which political party do you formally affiliate?	Pearson Correlation	1	-.049
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.672
	N	77	77
Q14. In the past year, have you posted about any political or social issues on Facebook?	Pearson Correlation	-.049	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.672	
	N	77	77

Correlations

		Q6. With which political party do you formally affiliate?	Q15. In the past year, have you "liked" or "shared" a post about any political or social issues on Facebook?
Q6. With which political party do you formally affiliate?	Pearson Correlation	1	-.149
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.195
	N	77	77
Q15. In the past year, have you "liked" or "shared" a post about any political or social issues on Facebook?	Pearson Correlation	-.149	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.195	
	N	77	77

Correlations

		Q6. With which political party do you formally affiliate?	Q16. In the past year, have you engaged in online dialogue with your Facebook friends about political or social issues?
Q6. With which political party do you formally affiliate?	Pearson Correlation	1	-.063
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.587
	N	77	77
Q16. In the past year, have you engaged in online dialogue with your Facebook friends about political or social issues?	Pearson Correlation	-.063	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.587	
	N	77	77