All Together Now:

Assessing the Effectiveness of Coordinated Campaigns

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Abstract:
This paper examines the effectiveness of the "coordinated campaigns" between American political parties and their nominees in presidential elections using an original dataset on field office placement from the 2008, 2012, and 2016 elections. In recent elections, campaigns increasingly relied upon field offices to conduct voter contact activities such as canvassing, phone calls, and local get out the vote events, with positive effects on their candidate's vote share in that region. These offices generally do not advocate only on behalf of the presidential candidates, however: they are often funded as a joint venture with a candidate's party, with the expectation that the staff and volunteers in the office will get out the vote for down-ballot candidates as well. Presidential campaigns benefit from relying upon their party's infrastructure, and the party benefits from the excitement and interest generated by presidential candidates. I assess the impact of a local field office on split-ticket voting and ballot roll-off (the act of leaving down-ballot contests blank while voting for more prominent races, and vice versa) in concurrent Senate, and Governor elections. This study aims to illuminate the mutual benefits of this coordinated campaign, the source of many of the face-to-face interactions with campaign staff and volunteers experienced by Americans during elections.

Presidential campaigns are a team effort: candidates rely upon their party for logistical, financial, and local support, while parties exploit increased enthusiasm to raise money and support for downballot candidates. Parties and candidates often team up to conduct voter mobilization activities such as in-person contact (Gerber & Green, 2000). Presidential candidates wish to target voters in areas that will help them win 270 electoral votes, and their parties want to maximize the value of those contacts (Shaw, 2006). The impact of this presidential mobilization down the ballot, however, is far from clear.

Does the mobilization inspired by presidential candidates (and carried out in collaboration with local parties) help co-partisans down the ballot? Examining downballot outcomes of mobilization activities may shed light on whether broad-based, candidate-led partisans mobilization is good for participatory democracy and good for parties. When presidential campaigns choose to invest in a state, they manipulate the salience of the presidential election in ways that may interact with the salience of downballot races, thereby distorting voters' propensity to turn out and participate in other elections. Split-ticket voting remains common, despite waning in recent elections, and the focus on presidential elections may lead to ballot rolloff as voters leave those races blank. Get-out-the-vote efforts, targeted to voters whose support campaigns consider winnable, may widen turnout disparities by mobilizing voters who are already more likely to participate in elections (Enos et al., 2014).

In this article, I use an original dataset of candidate field presence in the 2008, 2012, and 2016 elections to assess the impact of presidential competition and the local coordinated campaign on presidential, senatorial, and gubernatorial turnout, partisan vote share, ballot rolloff, and split-ticketing, at the county level. I find that the presence of a coordinated campaign office in a county is associated with higher partisan vote share for the presidential election, but the

impact on senatorial and gubernatorial contests is inconsistent and moderated by presidential competition. In battleground states, a coordinated campaign office does not increase or decrease split-ticketing or rolloff in downballot races, but increases the partisan vote share for President and Senate and decreases partisan vote share for Governor. In these highly contested battleground states, there is less split-ticket voting for both Senate and Governor than in other states—a sizable association which is not moderated by local coordinated campaign presence.

These results reveal that most of the gains from presidential-year mobilization go to the presidential candidate, not their downballot copartisans. The strategic effectiveness of coordinated campaigns is also moderated by the inconsistent coincidence of presidential and Senate elections, and the fact that only a small subset of American states hold their gubernatorial elections during presidential election years. The increased mobilization associated with presidential elections exacerbates participatory disparities, and sharpens the differences between battleground states and uncontested states (Enos et al., 2014; Gimpel et al., 2007; Lipsitz, 2009). The performance of coordinated campaigns depends upon the downballot elections that coincide with presidential elections, limiting their effectiveness and making them potentially risky investments for parties.

Organization and Mobilization

Voter mobilization was revitalized in recent presidential elections, after a turn towards mediated communication in the later years of the twentieth century (Aldrich, 1995; Panagopoulos & Wielhouwer, 2008; Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993). Strategic resource allocation no longer means only advertising buys and candidate visits: campaigns choose to establish semi-permanent offices to organize the communities that assist their efforts to win the election

(Bartels, 1985; Shaw, 2006; Masket, Sides, & Vavreck, 2016). Experimental evidence of the effectiveness of in-person mobilization, combined with the ease of organizing local volunteers online for offline action, reinvigorated field organizing as a worthwhile expenditure for parties and campaigns (Gerber & Green, 2000; Kreiss, 2012; Sinclair et al., 2013). Organizing activities such as canvassing homes, phone calls, distributing yard signs, and visibility at strategic locations require coordination, and field offices coordinate those activities locally (Darr & Levendusky, 2014).

Improvements in the data available to (and used by) campaigns makes this sort of mobilization efficient by enabling better targeting (Hersh, 2015; Hillygus & Shields, 2008). The advantages of mobilization are diminished if campaigns activate non-supporters: misguided persuasion attempts may have a backlash effect, cancelling out gains with supporters (Arceneaux & Nickerson, 2009; Bailey et al., 2016; Nicholson, 2012). Campaigns can draw on databases to categorize voters according to their propensities to turn out and vote for their candidate, and target their appeals accordingly (Issenberg, 2012; Nickerson & Rogers, 2014). The major parties, particularly Democrats, have begun to centralize these databases within the party to assist downballot candidates, but for the most part data-driven and experimental methods are used in presidential contexts (Kreiss, 2016).

Mobilizing activities are deployed by staffers working in field offices, but these offices rarely (if ever) advocate for the top of the ballot only. In the recent elections marked by resurgent mobilization, candidates teamed up with state parties to open “coordinated campaign” offices.. This strategy allows state parties to sink resources into field organizing in their communities, while allowing presidential campaigns to benefit legally from the experience of state and local party leaders. Since the offices are not technically run by the presidential campaign, the

coordinated campaign operates under a different name which varies by candidate and election. Barack Obama's 2008 offices were organized as "Campaign for Change." In 2012, these offices operated under the Organizing for America moniker as an extension of the President's PAC. In 2016, Hillary Clinton's offices incorporated her slogan, "Stronger Together," into their names: "Ohio Together," "New Hampshire Together," and so on. Republican offices tend to use the name "Victory" for their coordinated campaign in every election. The deliberate branding of these organizations sets them apart from the presidential campaign for legal purposes, but clearly puts presidential messaging first, reflecting slogans and themes from that candidate across a variety of statewide organizations and their downballot candidates.

Organizing as a coordinated campaign should be more efficient for parties and candidates: presidential candidates can defray the monetary costs of regional organizing and rely upon local party officials' familiarity with the area, while local parties can capitalize upon the excitement and resources associated with presidential campaigns to help other candidates. As described above, however, mobilization is not that simple: voter motivations are a function of the salience of contests, which is partially influenced by mobilization.

The effectiveness of mobilization depends upon the voters contacted and the salience of the elections at stake—factors which are often influenced by campaigns themselves. Attempts to translate data-driven methods to downballot races are complicated by the distorting effects of mobilization on the composition of the electorate. Mobilization based on data targeting will tend to locate and activate core partisans, widening pre-existing turnout disparities by helping those already more likely to participate and be represented (Enos et al., 2014). In presidential election years, the presidential election commands the bulk of news coverage and voter attention (Cohen, 2010; Sellers & Schaffner, 2007). Even as parties have more resources for their downballot

contests in presidential years, those elections drop in relative salience to the presidential election. Campaigns are less likely to successfully contact low-propensity voters, and these differential contact rates limit the effectiveness of mobilization—particularly in low-salience elections (Arceneaux & Nickerson, 2009; Enos et al., 2014). There is a ceiling effect for high-propensity voters in high-salience elections where mobilization becomes less effective, but only these high-propensity voters respond to canvassing efforts in low-salience elections (Arceneaux & Nickerson, 2009). Coordinated campaigns encourage voting in the highest salience election and lower-salience elections, with unclear consequences for turnout and vote choice down the ballot.

Research Question 1: Do coordinated campaigns lead to higher turnout at all levels, or does the differential salience of the elections moderate mobilization effects?

Since mobilization is less effective with low-propensity voters in low-salience elections, it is also unclear whether coordinated campaigns can attract support downballot beyond what presidential canvassing alone could accomplish. Split-ticket voting, though on the decline, remains common in American politics and poses a danger to coordinated campaigns (Bump, 2016). If coordinated campaigns encourage split-ticketing downballot, or if voters leave downballot races blank, coordinated campaigns would seem like a waste of resources.

Research Question 2: Do coordinated campaigns help their party perform better in presidential and downballot races?

Coordinated campaigns manipulate the salience of races, which compete for voter attention and over space in the information environment. It is difficult for state and local campaigns to be heard over the din of a presidential election, particularly since even local media are inclined to cover presidential politics (Cohen, 2010; Eshbaugh-Soha, 2010). If coordinated

campaigns mobilize support for downballot candidates as a presidential election rages, that success (or failure) should be apparent in vote returns.

Rolloff, Split Tickets, and Coattails

In every presidential election, candidates also compete in elections at the state and local levels. A subset of states always holds a gubernatorial election during presidential years, while six-year terms for senators ensure that they will face elections concurrent with the presidential election every other term. Another source of variation—presidential candidates' decisions to concentrate their attention and resources in "battleground states"—also changes the contours of American elections from cycle to cycle. Inconsistent downballot elections and presidential campaign attention place varying strains upon voters' awareness, while also providing them with uneven amounts of contact and information.

Voters must make their choices across these offices on the same ballot, using different cues and information in each case. Since neither completed ballots nor party ballots are compulsory, voters may leave certain contests blank or choose different partisans for different offices. Leaving elections blank, known as ballot rolloff, is common in American voting, and information about candidates and the salience of those elections are crucial contributors to ballot rolloff (Wattenberg et al., 2000). If ballot rolloff is high in areas where coordinated campaigns invest, it would show that coordinated campaigns fail to mobilize voters downballot and cannot overcome the increased information and salience that presidential campaigns convey to voters.

Rolloff increases as exposure to information about a race decreases (Wattenberg et al., 2000). Lower socioeconomic status voters and African-American voters are more prone to rolloff (Bullock & Dunn, 1996; Kimball & Kropf, 2005)—precisely the types of voters that

Democrats sought to mobilize in recent elections (Hersh, 2015). Voter fatigue—whether from reading all the way to the bottom of the ballot, or from hearing about many concurrent elections—also generates rolloff (Bullock & Dunn, 1996). Salience to specific groups is another predictor: for example, African-American voters are less likely to leave racially polarizing propositions or contests with African-American candidates blank (Feig, 2007; Vanderleeuw & Engstrom, 1987; Vanderleeuw & Utter, 1993). In low-salience races, low-propensity voters may either fail to respond to mobilization or, if they get to the polls, leave some downballot races blank. Reduced rolloff for their side would be a positive outcome for parties investing in coordinated campaigns.

Despite the increasing strength of partisan identity in America's polarizing politics, many Americans continue to split their votes between Democrats and Republicans on the same ballot. Voters may feel pressure from affinity for individual candidates or their stance on a specific issue, leading them to cast a split ticket (Campbell & Miller, 1957; Hillygus & Shields, 2008). Partisan vote decisions on a ballot can sorted into four categories: motivated or indifferent voting for a straight or split ticket (Campbell & Miller, 1957). Motivated straight ticket voters are strong partisans whose partisan identities drive their vote choices, while indifferent straight ticket voters are uninterested citizens who vote for one party out of convenience. Indifferent split ticket voting is also based in simplicity, as less-partisan voters may choose candidates from multiple parties because they saw an advertisement or heard about them from a friend (Campbell & Miller, 1957). Motivated split ticket voters may vote based on a (soft) preference for divided government (Garand & Lichtl, 2000, though others dispute this: see Beck et al., 1992; Sigelman et al., 1997; Burden & Kimball, 1998), or possess high enough levels of information on individual candidates to develop opinions contrary to their partisan leaning.

Partisan strength and candidate visibility, factors that predict split-ticket and straight-ticket voting, also predict targeting and contact. Strength of partisan identity is the most powerful predictor of straight-ticket voting, though many of these voters split their votes between different parties as well (Beck et al., 1992). Voters who are ambivalent between the parties, or whose partisan identities are poorly sorted to match their ideological preferences, are more likely to split their tickets (Mulligan, 2011; Davis & Mason, 2016). Candidate-driven factors such as incumbency, spending, constituency service, and personal contact strongly predict split-ticket voting as well (Burden & Kimball, 1998; Roscoe, 2003). Campaigns seek to target stronger partisans based on their past voting in party primaries or party registration, but even these voters are not completely reliable down the ballot (Hersh, 2015).

These contributing factors to split-ticketing interact with mobilization incentives for parties in concerning ways. Presidential candidates at the top of the ballot may want to target strong partisans for mobilization, while downballot candidates may benefit from distancing themselves from the top of the ticket and cultivating personal loyalties with potential ticket-splitters on the other side. In states where coordinated campaigns are most likely to be located, the presidential race is, by definition, a close contest. Downballot politicians may not benefit from collaboration in the coordinated campaign if they wish to emphasize the candidate-specific factors that lead to beneficial split-ticketing, but may be forced into that arrangement by a state party eager for an influx of national cash.

There are plenty of potential pitfalls in the coordinated campaign for parties and candidates, but these arrangements are nonetheless quite common. There are gains from efficiency from using national resources for local candidates though their conflicting incentives may be poorly aligned. Given the use of coordinated campaigns in presidential elections, as well

as the conflicting evidence on the interaction of mobilization strategies and downballot voter behavior, I assess hypotheses suggesting that parties are correct in their assumptions and strategic behavior, and that coordinated campaigns spur turnout and lower downballot risks.

H1. Turnout is higher in areas contested by coordinated campaigns in presidential and downballot elections.

H2. Partisan vote share is higher in areas contested by coordinated campaigns in presidential and downballot elections.

H3. Ballot rolloff is lower in areas contested by coordinated campaigns in presidential and downballot elections.

H4. Split-ticket voting is lower in areas contested by coordinated campaigns in presidential and downballot elections.

Data and Methods

Addressing these hypotheses requires data on presidential, senatorial, and gubernatorial elections in several subsequent elections, matched with data on the location of coordinated campaign presence, at a sensible geographic aggregation. Any analysis strategy is complicated by the fact that campaigns do not invest in communities randomly, but rather locate offices in areas where parties need to stimulate partisan turnout (Darr & Levendusky, 2014).

I use field office locations in the 2008, 2012, and 2016 elections to represent coordinated campaign presence, since these semi-permanent spaces serve as sites of coordination for campaign activities such as phone calls and door knocking in a community (Darr & Levendusky,

2014; Masket et al., 2015).[1] Data on field office locations are collected from primary and secondary sources, depending upon the election. Data on the 2008 election is taken from *Democracy in Action*, a site maintained by Eric Appleman and hosted by George Washington University. Field office locations in 2012 were scraped from campaign websites by the author on Election Day 2012, and 2016 data were coded from campaign websites over the week before Election Day 2016.[2] Given the lack of useful data on Republican offices in 2008 (see Darr & Levendusky, 2014, for a discussion), I assess the impact of Democratic field offices. Figure 1, below, contains maps of the Democratic field office locations in the elections studied.

[Insert Figure 1 here]

The independent variables are constructed from county-level vote shares in presidential, senatorial, and gubernatorial elections in 2008, 2012, and 2016. These results were collected from Dave Leip's Election Atlas and the CQ Voting and Elections Collection.[3] Turnout and Democratic vote share were not transformed, but rolloff and split-ticketing variables were created at the county level. Rolloff between presidential and senate voting and presidential and gubernatorial voting was created by subtracting senatorial turnout from presidential turnout, and dividing that total by presidential turnout. The split-ticketing variable was created by subtracting the total votes for the Democratic Senate candidate from the total votes for the Democratic presidential candidate, and dividing that total by presidential turnout.[4] The rolloff and split-

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[1] I plan to incorporate results from 2004 in future versions of this paper, but lacked access to senatorial and gubernatorial data from that year at the time of writing.
[2] Hillary Clinton's website hosted a "Find your closest field office" tool, which produced nearby field offices when users entered a ZIP code. A research assistant, Kirill Bryanov, obtained these addresses for the author by using this tool.
[3] Lauren Guillot assisted with this data collection process.
[4] Though most studies of split-ticket voting use survey data, those analyses do not contain enough cases for proper analysis at the state or local level and may suffer from the ecological fallacy and other survey response biases; see Burden & Kimball, 1998, for a detailed discussion

ticketing variables were only calculated in races with opponents from both parties, to avoid introducing biased results from the rare (but not unheard of) cases where senatorial or gubernatorial races went uncontested.

The areas likely to have the most coordinated campaign activities are the areas of highest presidential competition: battleground states. Campaign activity is much more intense in states that are not "safe" for either candidate, particularly those that help presidential candidates get to 270 electoral votes and victory (Gimpel et al., 2007; Lipsitz, 2009; Shaw, 2006). Battleground status is another factor that diversifies the electorate over time, through the additional advertising, news coverage, and personal engagement that campaigns inspire in the areas they contest (Shaw, 2006). This competition also makes the presidential campaign much more salient in the minds of voters and increases political engagement among lower socioeconomic status voters (Gimpel et al., 2007).

Given that field offices are not randomly distributed, identifying a consistently estimated effect will require methods that can account for county-level differences that may contribute to placement decisions. I use two types of fixed effects to remove unobserved heterogeneity: county-level fixed effects control for county-level characteristics such as race and partisan vote, while state-year fixed effects account for common shocks across counties within states (Darr & Levendusky, 2014). These fixed effects account for targeting individual states and for other races within these states. Since these fixed effects account for sources of variation between counties, I do not include standard control variables in the model, given in Equation 1 below.

$$y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Field_{it} + \alpha_i + \delta_{s(i),t} + \varepsilon_{it} \qquad (1)$$

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of the benefits of using vote returns to address split-ticket voting, and Wattenberg et al., 2000, for the benefits of using vote returns to examine rolloff.

In equation 1, y_{it} represents several categories independent variables: turnout or Democratic vote percentage (presidential, senatorial, and gubernatorial, represented in Tables 1 and 2); presidential-senatorial or presidential-gubernatorial rolloff (Table 3); and presidential-senatorial or presidential-gubernatorial split-ticketing. $Field_{it}$ represents whether a county i contains one or more field office(s) in election t; α_i represents county-level fixed effects; $\delta_{s(i),t}$ represents a set of state-year fixed effects, *s(i)* representing a state in which a county is located; and ε_{it} represents a stochastic disturbance term clustered at the county-year levels. β_1 indicates the effect of having field office(s) in a county, and is the primary parameter of interest. For analyses of battleground state effects, I also include an interaction term for battleground status by election in those specifications below.

This analysis is limited by the availability and nature of the data, but these limitations may make it more difficult to detect coordinated campaign effects. I do not have exact targeting "turfs" used by campaigns, and therefore must use county as a rough approximation. As such, field office activities likely spill over into some neighboring counties or even states: for instance, Obama organization in Utah in 2008 was used to organize road trips into Colorado.[5] It is also impossible to know whether senatorial and gubernatorial candidates canvassed to different lists of voters than presidential lists, though this would seem to defeat the purpose of coordinating campaign operations. Without data on specific targets, it should be more difficult to detect field office effects, making these estimates more likely to err on the conservative side. More troublesome, I do not know if certain candidates excluded themselves from coordinated

[5] For an example of cross-state mobilization messaging, see the Democracy in Action archive: http://p2008.org/obama/obamagenut.html.

campaign activities. I assume for the purposes of this analysis that when downballot candidates could take advantage of their party's coordinated campaign offices, they did so.

Results

If the coordinated campaign is a worthwhile investment for parties, we should observe increased turnout and partisan vote share, along with decreased rolloff and split-ticketing. Coordinated messaging and voter contact should, if effective, encourage voters to associate that party's presidential nominee and downballot candidates with each other and vote accordingly. I will examine turnout, partisan vote share, rolloff, and split-ticketing in order.

Turnout. Does turnout increase for presidential and downballot candidates in contested areas, as predicted by H1? Table 1 gives the results.

[Insert Table 1 here]

There is no increase in turnout in areas with a field office in presidential, senatorial, or gubernatorial elections in the 2008, 2012, or 2016 elections (Columns 1, 3, and 5). For presidential elections, this result conflicts with previous findings in the 2004, 2008, and 2012 elections, which showed a significant effect on turnout in areas with a field office (Darr & Levendusky, 2014).[6] In Senate elections, there is actually a significant decrease in turnout—0.3 percent—in areas with a campaign presence. It is possible that presidential attention distracts from Senate races in these areas, and in the cases of busing volunteers to nearby states or conducting phone banks, may actively distract from senatorial efforts within that state.

[6] In models containing all four elections – 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016 – there is a statistically significant and positive effect of field office presence on overall turnout (0.3%) and there is an additional positive effect of 0.3% on battleground state turnout. See the Appendix for these results. I was not able to access Senate and Gubernatorial results from 2004, and so limit these analyses to 2008-2016, though this is an important next step in this project.

In battleground states, where all of the action is likely to be contained within the state, turnout is significantly higher—but there is no additional impact of a field office. Presidential election turnout is 4.0% higher in the presidential election, 4.4% higher in the senatorial election, and 1.8% higher in the gubernatorial election. The combination of factors that go into battleground states—advertisements, candidate and surrogate visits, and increased local news coverage—seem to have a positive effect on turnout to which field offices from the coordinated campaign do not contribute (Cebula et al., 2012). Unsurprisingly, when additional Americans vote in these states because of presidential campaign attention, they also cast more votes for races down the ballot. If these new voters are not turning out for their candidates, however, political parties may wish to reconsider their coordinated campaign efforts.

Partisan vote share. Coordinated campaigns orchestrated by political parties want to increase turnout for their side, not necessarily overall turnout. Does the presence of a coordinated campaign office increase partisan vote share, as predicted by H2? Table 2 gives the results.

[Insert Table 2 here]

Field offices do not account for much increase in Democratic vote share: in fact, their effect is significantly negative in gubernatorial elections ($p < 0.05$, Column 5) and weakly negative in presidential elections ($p < 0.1$, Column 1).[7] Once again, the more interesting results are in battleground states, where field offices are more active within their community. Democrats seem to do better in battleground states, indicating perhaps more counties from uncontested, right-leaning states in the dataset. Democratic vote share is 10.6% higher in battleground states in the

[7] In models containing 2004, the effect of field presence on Democratic vote share is significant and positive (0.8%, $p < 0.05$). These results are also found in the Appendix.

presidential election, 11.0% higher in senatorial elections, and 19.7% higher in gubernatorial elections ($p < 0.05$, Columns 2, 4, and 6).

Results from battleground states are more encouraging for parties hoping to gain from their coordinated campaign: opening a coordinated campaign field office in a county in a battleground state is associated with a 0.7% increase in Democratic vote share for president ($p < 0.05$) and a 1.2% increase in Democratic vote share for Senate candidates ($p < 0.1$). Surprisingly, in gubernatorial elections, a Democratic coordinated campaign office decreases Democratic vote share by 2.0% ($p < 0.1$, Column 6). While the two national races for president and senator trend together, the state-level race goes in the other direction. Coordinated campaign attention on marginal voters may have a price: though they are willing to cast a vote for president, they may balance that vote out in their gubernatorial decision.

Rolloff. Alternatively, voters activated by presidential campaign attention may simply leave their ballots blank after they fill in the top of the ticket. If this is the case, as predicted by H3, we should expect to see higher rolloff in battleground states and in areas equipped to conduct local mobilization. Table 3 contains these results.

[Insert Table 3 here]

Coordinated campaign attention has no effect on presidential-senatorial rolloff, but significantly increases rolloff in gubernatorial elections by 0.2% ($p < 0.05$, Column 3). Despite nominally advocating for a party's candidates at multiple levels, there seems to be a disconnect (at least for Democrats) between presidential and gubernatorial performance. Combined with the negative impact of a field office on Democratic gubernatorial vote share, the increased rolloff observed here suggests that voters consider gubernatorial and presidential elections quite differently.

Once battleground state status is considered, the impact of coordinated campaign field presence disappears but the difference between senatorial and gubernatorial elections endures. In battleground states, voters are 0.5% less likely to commit ballot rolloff in Senate races ($p < 0.05$, Column 2), but are 2.9 percent more likely to leave governor blank on their ballot ($p < 0.05$, Column 4). Investing in the coordinated campaign may only help offices that are associated with national politics: if different processes are influencing state political opinions, national campaigns may benefit from leaving them out of their appeals.

Split-ticketing. The worst outcome for coordinated campaigns would be if their efforts actively encouraged split-ticket voting, where their presidential candidate attracted voters who strayed from the party downballot. This would not only be inefficient, but actively detrimental. These results are presented in Table 4, below.

[Insert Table 4 here]

The presence of a Democratic coordinated campaign office has no significant effect on split-ticket voting in Senate races, but has a significant and positive effect in gubernatorial races. This is the opposite of what coordinated campaigns should want: in areas with a Democratic coordinated presence, voters are 1.1% more likely to vote for a Democrat for president and a Republican for governor ($p < 0.05$, Column 3).

In battleground states, however, split-ticketing is significantly less likely for both senatorial and gubernatorial elections, and field offices have no moderating effect. There is 8.3% less split-ticket voting in senatorial elections ($p < 0.05$, Column 2) and 5.0% less split-ticket voting in gubernatorial elections in battleground states ($p < 0.05$, Column 4). In these competitive contexts, where presidential advertising and activity dominates the news and airwaves, split-ticket voting is decreased. Presidential attention does seem to reduce split-

ticketing, increasing party-line voting for these major offices. The coordinated campaign offices alone, however, do not seem to explain this effect: the heightened presidential competition in battleground states has a greater impact on split-ticketing than the personal contact with voters enabled by a local coordinated campaign office.

Discussion

Presidential competition in a state has a mixed impact on downballot races. In senate elections, presidential competition increases party performance by significantly more than it does in gubernatorial races. Voters in battleground states show less propensity to split their tickets, implying a partisan strengthening resulting from national attention. In areas where coordinated campaigns set up shop, Democratic gubernatorial candidates actually perform worse, while Senate candidates perform better. The more local of the two downballot offices, governor, demonstrates fewer positive outcomes from coordinated campaign activity.

These conclusions are limited by the data upon which they are based, and there are many potential directions for pursuit by future research. The subset of states with contested Senate races changes in each sample, and it is possible that my timeframe is not long enough to capture within-state variation on this count. Incumbency advantage, which is particularly important in the split-ticketing literature, is not accounted for, though the methodological approach removes much of the variation between regions and offices. These restrictions are partially caused by recent history and political happenstance, however: 2004 marked the beginnings of the resurgence of field mobilization, making it difficult to assess these effects over many elections. Interviews with field staffers and state party officials could clarify which offices were used to advocate for which candidates.

There is value in approaching the study of mobilization from a practical perspective, and from the vantage point of resource-poor parties and campaigns deploying resources to the best of their ability. The first wave of studying mobilization in modern political science, using field experiments, demonstrated the value of identifying effective tactics and passing that knowledge to practitioners (Green and Gerber, 2015). The application of these tactics in the context of real elections, campaign finance law, and the sprawling network of candidates that depend on parties—presidential candidates included—is far more complicated. The assumptions that guide parties to make these resource allocation decisions should be challenged and questioned, since they may distort the composition of the electorate and heighten participatory disparities.

In 2008, when Barack Obama won the presidency with 365 electoral votes, Democrats picked up one governorship (Missouri). In 2012, when he successfully ran for reelection, no new Democratic governors rode his coattails. In each election, however, Democrats either won new majorities or maintained majorities in the Senate. In 2016, for the first time in American history, there were no split outcomes for president and Senate: every state with a Senate race voted the same party for Senate as President (Bump, 2016). At the same time, five states elected governors from the opposite party of their presidential choice.[8] Given that Republicans now control 33 governorships, compared to Democrats' 16 (excluding independent Bill Walker of Alaska), mobilization in state-level politics is one of the most pressing questions facing Democrats today. These results provide a possible explanation for these trends: it is difficult for Democrats to translate their success at organizing on the national level, winning five of the past six national popular votes (though only three electoral colleges), into victories in governor's offices.

[8] Steve Bullock (D-MT); Chris Sununu (R-NH); Roy Cooper (D-NC); Phil Scott (R-VT); and Jim Justice (D-WV; switched to Republican in August 2017).

Field organizing can benefit those figures at the top of the ticket, as the results in Tables 1 and 2 demonstrate, but it is unclear if this approach translates in subnational politics. In 2018, it will be crucial to see if state-level candidates embrace a field-organizing approach tailored to their candidate and campaign, absent a presidential candidate atop the ticket and dominating the airwaves. If the technological innovations that enabled mobilization on the presidential level have trickled down to be useful for gubernatorial (and state legislature) candidates, it will be imperative for scholars of mobilization to study those outcomes. The future of campaign mobilization may not be a coordinated campaign, but rather a series of well-equipped campaign organizations, operating under an umbrella of shared data, simultaneously and separately mobilizing the voters they need to win their respective races. Simultaneous elections hold pitfalls for candidates that coordinated mobilization may not solve.

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Tables

Table 1. Effects of Democratic field offices on Presidential, Senate, and Gubernatorial turnout, 2008-2016.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Pres. turnout		Sen. turnout		Gov. turnout	
Field office in county	-0.001	0.000	-0.003**	-0.004	0.000	0.006
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.005)
Battleground state		0.040**		0.044**		0.018**
		(0.005)		(0.005)		(0.008)
Field X Battleground		0.000		0.000		-0.008
		(0.002)		(0.003)		(0.005)
Constant	0.446	0.436	0.435	0.425	0.456	0.453
	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)
Observations	9,227	9,227	6,109	6,109	1,733	1,733
Number of counties	3,111	3,111	3,111	3,111	602	602
R-squared	0.277	0.277	0.327	0.327	0.337	0.339

Robust standard errors in parentheses. ** p<0.05, * p<0.1.

Table 2. Effects of Democratic field offices on Democratic vote share in Presidential, Senate, and Gubernatorial elections, 2008-2016.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Pres. Dem. %		Sen. Dem. %		Gov. Dem. %	
Field office in county	-0.003*	-0.008**	-0.003	-0.010*	-0.019**	-0.004
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.010)
Battleground state		0.106**		0.110**		0.197**
		(0.006)		(0.009)		(0.009)
Field X Battleground		0.007**		0.012*		-0.020*
		(0.003)		(0.006)		(0.012)
Constant	0.319	0.291	0.365	0.339	0.375	0.338
	(0.000)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)
Observations	9,227	9,227	6,095	6,095	1,733	1,733
Number of counties	3,111	3,111	3,111	3,111	602	602
R-squared	0.846	0.846	0.916	0.916	0.808	0.809

Robust standard errors in parentheses. ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 3. Effects of Democratic field offices on ballot rolloff in Presidential, Senate, and Gubernatorial elections, 2008-2016.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Pres.-Sen. Rolloff		Pres.-Gov. Rolloff	
Field office in county	0.001	0.002	0.002**	-0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.003)
Battleground state		-0.005**		0.029**
		(0.001)		(0.001)
Field X Battleground		-0.002		0.005
		(0.001)		(0.003)
Constant	0.020	0.021	0.002	-0.004
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Observations	5,962	5,962	1,719	1,719
Number of counties	3,111	3,111	602	602
R-squared	0.637	0.637	0.513	0.515

Robust standard errors in parentheses. ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 4. Effects of Democratic field offices on split-ticket voting in Presidential, Senate, and Gubernatorial elections, 2008-2016.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Pres.-Senate Split		Pres.-Governor Split	
Field office in county	0.002	0.002	0.011**	-0.009
	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.009)
Battleground state		-0.083**		-0.050**
		(0.010)		(0.008)
Field X Battleground		0.000		0.005
		(0.005)		(0.003)
Constant	-0.014	0.006	-0.084	-0.074
	(0.000)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)
Observations	5,962	5,962	1,719	1,719
Number of counties	3,111	3,111	602	602
R-squared	0.849	0.849	0.733	0.735

Robust standard errors in parentheses. ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Figure

Figure 1. Democratic field office locations in 2008, 2012, and 2016.