

# Who Made the Women's March?

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## Introduction: The Women's March in Context

In part because of women's historical marginalization in institutionalized politics, women's activism and organizing have often happened in the streets, outside of formal political spaces (Ferree 2006; King and Codur 2015; Molyneux 1998; Principe 2017). Women have featured prominently in movements mobilized around broader issues, including civil rights, labor rights, prison reform, land reform, peace, security, community safety, and food security. For instance, in 1905, Russian women organized marches against the price of bread, which launched the first Russian Revolution. In the decades since, women have marched on Pretoria during Apartheid in South Africa, against the disappearance of loved ones in La Plaza de Mayo during the "Dirty War" in Argentina, and, most recently, to insist resolutely that Black Lives Matter and to defend indigenous land and resources in Standing Rock. Beyond their participation in broader movements for social change, women have also mobilized around claims specifically related to women's rights, such as women's suffrage, reproductive rights, campaigns against women's sexual exploitation, and campaigns against female genital mutilation (King and Codur 2015; Principe 2017: 4). From the abolitionist movement to the labor movement that preceded the suffragist parades in the United States and Britain in the early 20th century, to recent mass protests in Poland against abortion restrictions, such women-led and women-centered movements have been instrumental in advancing human rights and women's rights in particular.

The Women's March of January 2017 built on this legacy of women's organizing. The loss by Hillary Clinton, the first female candidate for president of a major political party, to Donald Trump, a man widely accused of misogyny and sexual harassment, generated shock and dismay among many in the United States and across the world. This mammoth event had its unlikely origins in a

conversation in the pro-Hillary Clinton group *Pantsuit Nation* on Facebook, where member Teresa Shook posted that she thought the election of Donald Trump on November 8, 2017, necessitated a women's march in Washington. When other *Pantsuit Nation* members responded to her post favorably, Shook, who is from Maui, Hawaii, created an event on Facebook that called for a prowomen march in Washington, DC, the day after the inauguration. Overnight, the originally billed "Million Women March" had 10,000 RSVPs, even though Shook initially shared it only with friends (Stein 2017). Several other New York-based organizers started similar Facebook event pages. Within the first few days after the election, hundreds of thousands of people—mostly white, cis-gender, and upper-middle-class women—purchased tickets to fly, train, or bus to Washington, DC, with the aim of protesting Trump's inauguration. These efforts were eventually consolidated into the Women's March on Washington and co-organized by National Cochairs Bob Bland, Tamika Mallory, Carmen Perez, and Linda Sarsour (Kearney 2016). The resulting Women's March on Washington of January 21, 2017, was probably the largest single-day demonstration in contemporary US history (Broomfield 2017).

This chapter examines how and why the Women's March evolved from a mostly white, elite liberal feminist movement to a broader-based, intersectional march through various framing techniques and a process of coalition-building. We explore how this ability to draw in various organizations and interest groups under a single coalition expanded the participation of the Women's March and potential for its staying power as a broader movement with considerably more political leverage than recent social movements in the United States, such as Occupy Wall Street. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the tactical and strategic effects of the Women's March so far, as well as its position in the overall landscape of social movements in the United States.

## Organizational Tributaries

How did anti-Trump sentiment in the American polity channel itself into a massive, coordinated, nationwide event in just 9 weeks' time? We argue that the collective action of the Women's March did not emerge suddenly out of nothing; instead, the convergence of these preexisting organizational tributaries greatly facilitated collective action. We identify six major organizational tributaries, although of course there is overlap across them.

The first organizational tributary involved progressive organizations and political action committees who had been focused on electing Hillary Clinton during the 2016 presidential election. Although such groups represented both centrist and progressive wings of the Democratic Party, they were quick to back

Hillary Clinton after she gained the Democratic Party's nomination for president in July 2016. These organizations were largely engaged in electoral politics and institutional actions—especially those whose work had largely centered around get-out-the-vote campaigns among women and minority voters, like MoveOn.org, the League of Women Voters, and Black Youth Vote!—rather than community organizing and noninstitutional or extra-institutional action, *per se*.

The second organizational tributary involved the various feminist organizations that have been active in the United States for decades. Such organizations include groups like Planned Parenthood, CODEPINK, UltraViolet, Emily's List, and the National Organization for Women, all of whom have actively fought for women's equality in political, economic, social, and cultural life. It is certainly the case that such groups were poised for action in the wake of Trump's election, both because of their decades-long work in promoting women's equality, but also because of the fact that many of them actively mobilized against Trump's candidacy—particularly once women began claiming that Trump had sexually assaulted them and an "Access Hollywood" video was released that caught Trump bragging to host Billy Bush about his sexually assaulting women.

A third and related tributary that developed during the election campaign was a digital one. In particular, the establishment of the secret<sup>1</sup> Facebook group Pantsuit Nation on October 20, 2016, was an important precursor to the Women's March. Libby Chamberlain of Brooklin, Maine, initially started the page after the third presidential debate between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump as a way to encourage her women Facebook friends to wear pantsuits to the polls on November 8 in support of and solidarity with Hillary Clinton. The page quickly went viral; by November 8, it had nearly three million members who shared stories, photos, encouragement, and resources. It was in the Pantsuit Nation group that Theresa Shook posted on November 9 the idea of holding a Women's March on Washington—an idea that immediately elicited thousands of affirmative responses in a way that would be difficult to imagine outside of the context of digital activism. The quickly assembled website, [www.womensmarch.com](http://www.womensmarch.com), became a clearinghouse for information, news, sister march registration and guidance, messaging and protest art, and other announcements. The Women's March's social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram facilitated the diffusion of information coming from the national hub (see also Karpf, Chapter 7 in this volume).

The fourth organizational tributary involved different progressive organizations that had supported Bernie Sanders as the Democratic nominee during the primary process and were frustrated at the Democratic National Convention, which their members saw as sidelining leftists and radicals in the party and elevating Hillary Clinton, a centrist candidate. These groups included various labor organizations, like the National Union of Healthcare Workers and the

Vermont and South Carolina divisions of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), as well as social movement organizations like Occupy Wall Street, all of which had formally endorsed Sanders. It is important to distinguish this organizational tributary from those supporting Clinton as well as established advocacy organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), because of their prioritization of economic inequality, corruption and climate change as the key issues animating their mobilization. Sanders's populist platform was more appealing to such groups, who were seeking transformative reforms for economic justice, fairness and accountability, and debt relief—three areas for which Hillary Clinton's establishment record failed to inspire their support. Yet most Sanders's supporters, who represented more radical elements on the Left, were not attracted to Trump's brand of populism either, leaving many of them ready to recommit to their core policy agendas rather than to a particular party or elected candidate. Democracy Spring was one such group; it emerged from a group of former Occupy Wall Street activists whose primary goal was to overturn the Supreme Court's decision on *Citizens United* and get money out of politics as a way to begin to address economic inequality.

The fifth organizational tributary involved less-institutionalized, grassroots groups whose members had been organizing campaigns for social justice over the past few years. Certainly since Occupy Wall Street in 2011, the United States has seen a higher level of mobilization and activism across many different issue areas. But most grassroots community organizing since 2012 has involved black-led mobilization demanding transformational reforms triggered by police killings of unarmed black people (e.g., Black Lives Matter, Freedom Side, and the Movement for Black Lives), immigrant justice campaigns (e.g., United We Dream), labor and wage rights (e.g., Fight for \$15), indigenous rights (e.g., the Standing Rock Sioux), and climate action (e.g., Greenpeace). A growing consciousness has emerged that these struggles are interrelated; that racial justice is related to economic justice and climate justice, for instance. Indeed, the national cochairs of the Women's March cut their teeth in community organizing in related campaigns, bringing with them decades of collective experience in forming coalitions and solidarity networks across their organizational affiliations, from the National Action Network (a national civil rights group), the Arab American Association of New York, and the Gathering for Justice, a criminal justice reform network. In the end, it was this tributary that provided the national leadership of the March, whereas the other five tributaries provided the mass participation and, for many of the sister marchers, the local-level organizational work.

Sixth, the United States has long featured a broad-based web of existing legal and civic advocacy organizations, like the ACLU, Human Rights Campaign (HRC), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

(NAACP), the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), and others. Upon Trump's election on November 8, such organizations, though ostensibly non-partisan, were poised to mobilize their members and capital resources to resist many of Trump's stated policy proposals. Many women sitting on local civic organizations, associations, and governing boards—such as school boards, chambers of commerce, and neighborhood associations—also provided organizing capacity and experience that would prove crucial in organizing sister marches in the coming weeks.

Because many gender-inclusive progressive groups threw their weight behind the March, the event was able to elicit the participation of many men and broaden its focus to more general political and social issues. Interestingly, this may be a case of “general” social and political issue interest groups throwing their weight behind a “women's” cause, rather than the historical trend of women providing often-invisible political and organizing labor for broad-based causes—an essential task in coalition-building.

The fact that these tributaries combined to form into a larger umbrella structure speaks to several important literatures in social movement theory. First, the early recruitment of veteran organizers and activists into the leadership of the March provided the ability to recruit other experienced activists and organizers on a nationwide level. This formal recruitment capacity is consistent with the findings of McAdam and Paulson (1993), Passy (2003), and Saunders et al. (2012), who argue that experienced activists tend to be recruited through organizational channels. Second, the incredibly active social media environment during the 2016 presidential election allowed for more informal and nonhierarchical recruitment from first-time activists, consistent with Klandermans et al.'s (2014) finding that inexperienced activists tend to mobilize by means of friendship networks, mass media, and social media channels. Third, the intersectional and intergenerational nature of the organizational and participant base meant that the frames and mobilization tactics available to the March were likewise incredibly diverse (see Fisher's and Whittier's contributions [Chapters 5 and 10, respectively]), providing the movement with considerable organizational resources. Thus the character of the emergent movement was one in which the coalition had access to both national and local-level organizational capacities without necessarily requiring a hierarchical, formalized structure that might have infused heightened conflict into the organization prior to the March itself. Fourth, we can see that the six tributaries were able to overcome collective action problems—at least temporarily—by organizing around a singular focal point (although there were many frames expressed related to this claim). This ability to overcome collective action problems may be explained by (1) the fact that this swift mobilization occurred at the beginning of a new protest cycle, when intramovement tensions and conflicts are not always visible or operative

(Tarrow 2011); and (2) a mutual sense of emergency, which allowed the various organizations to temporarily set aside their parochial interests in favor of a shared claim in the short term.<sup>2</sup>

## From Election Day to Inauguration Day

Evidence of the confluence and convergence of these organizational tributaries was clear in the aftermath of November 8. In the days following the election, many of these groups—and the voters they had mobilized—participated in quickly organized “Not My President!” protests around the country.<sup>3</sup> Formal efforts emerged to contest the election outcome through the mobilization or support of recount efforts in Michigan and Wisconsin, the claim that there was voter suppression in key swing states, and claims of direct Russian interference and collusion with the Trump campaign. Online petitions at Change.org and MoveOn.org (Warner 2016) obtained millions of signatures to demand that the electoral college break with its standard practice and install Hillary Clinton into the presidency on January 21. As it became obvious that such efforts would amount to nothing except dashed hopes among Clinton supporters, such groups turned to calls for collective action to express that Trump did not represent the majority of American voters.

As the call for a women’s march on Washington began to spread, so too did criticisms of the proposed event. The initial, viral Facebook invite had taken the name of the “Million Women March.” A 1997 march of the same name was organized by and for black women in solidarity with the 1995 “Million Man March,” organized by black men to protest the discrimination and marginalization of black communities. When the predominantly white organizers of the 2017 March were confronted about their appropriation of this name, they changed the name to the “Women’s March on Washington”—the name of the historic civil rights march led by Martin Luther King, Jr. This did not sit well with many activists from communities of color, who began to write blog and social media posts objecting to the overwhelming whiteness of the organizing committee and the fact that white women had little authority to lead such a movement given that 53% of white women voted to elect Trump (Malone 2016).

Other critiques emerged around the framing of the March as exclusive to women. With many men, and especially men from historically marginalized communities, also opposed to Trump’s election and values, some felt excluded from the protest’s organization. Further, organizers were criticized for focusing on gender difference and not including the many different identity groups that Trump and his administration had attacked—from queer communities to Muslims and communities of color. In general, many questioned what the



March's primary goal was and whether its organizers had a long-term plan for sustaining momentum and catalyzing progressive social change.

In reaction to this criticism, a more formal structure of the March emerged. Vanessa Wruble, cofounder of the online media platform OkayAfrica, was appointed to serve as head of campaign operations. Committed to ensuring that the March was inclusive, diverse, and centered around the leadership of women of color, she brought in four cochairs of the March: Bob Bland, a fashion designer who had been among the first organizers; Carmen Perez, executive director of Gathering for Justice; Linda Sarsour, executive director of the Arab American Association of New York; and Tamika Mallory, a political organizer and former executive director of the National Action Network. Perez, Sarsour, and Mallory had collaborated before in organizing marches against police brutality and were widely known in activist circles (Felsenthal 2017). The four national cochairs were supported by a team of other creative directors and honorary cochairs, including Gloria Steinem and Harry Belafonte, in addition to a national (and, before long, global) network of local organizing teams.

A third set of critiques related to failure to articulate goals that could galvanize alternatives to Trump and Trumpism. On the one hand, during the Civil Rights movement, for example, Martin Luther King's famed "I Have a Dream Speech" came during the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. The Women's March, on the other hand, was billed simply as the Women's March on Washington. Some argued that organizers missed an opportunity to express what the Women's March was *for* rather than just signaling frustration and resistance to Trump's presence in the White House.<sup>4</sup>

Although people broadly debated whether the goal of the March was to protest Clinton's loss, Trump's election, or commence to focus on a different set of goals all together, among the national organizing structure that emerged, the goal was more clear: to galvanize women to resist the surge and visibility of hate, racism, and misogyny in the country as a whole, which Trump's campaign fed and helped reveal. Intersectionality, and women's intersectional oppression, became the central frame of the March, alongside the need for disciplined nonviolent approaches to social change. The March organizers were insistent that the March was about more than protesting Clinton's election loss; indeed, Clinton's name was conspicuously omitted from the list of 28 women who had inspired American feminists, and she did not attend the March herself (Cooney 2017). Thus the March aimed to bring progressive people together around a shared inclusive vision for the country.

With about 9 weeks to organize and plan the March, the organizers moved quickly to placate critics and bring together many of the organizational tributaries previously mentioned. National organizing committees in charge of sponsorship, logistics, the program, and so forth emerged, which, given the

tight timeframe, oftentimes comprised people with direct ties to the national organizers. Beyond the four national cochairs, it is remarkable how few members of the national organizing committee actually had ties to organized activism before. Many of them had personal connections or came from within networks of people in more central leadership positions. For instance, OkayAfrica, a media platform for “New African music, culture, fashion, art, and politics” that was not particularly well known among national organizing circles, sent several of its senior executives to coordinate social media and production for the event (Cusumano 2017). As momentum grew and communities planned “sister marches” outside of Washington, DC, the national march organizers relied heavily on a nonhierarchical organizational structure with rotating and fluid coalitions in charge of particular parts of the event. Compared with Occupy Wall Street, which was nonhierarchical by design, the Women’s March was nonhierarchical by necessity, although several key organizers also possessed ideological attachments to nonhierarchical, horizontal, and cooperative decision structures (Felsenthal 2017).

This fluid structure, combined with the tight timeframe, often resulted in conflicting messaging between the national and local organizers. As cities announced local solidarity marches, there was a resurgence of concerns about the degree of inclusive and intersectional messaging coming from march organizers. This was particularly the case in cities where white women took on leadership roles, often without organizing experience or networks among local activists. As women of color became the central organizers of the national March, local chapters faced internal battles over leadership and messaging; debates emerged about whether to elevate seasoned activists—who were often from communities of color—to leadership positions or whether to remain reliant on the predominantly white women who had taken the initial lead.

At the national level, the organizers were committed to employing intersectionality as the dominant frame of the March (see Benford and Snow 2000 on the importance of framing). Intersectional approaches explore how race, class, gender, ability, sexual orientation, and other forms of difference combine to produce different situations of advantage or disadvantage (Fisher et al. 2017). For example, women who have children but who wish to engage in political activism may require childcare in order to participate fully, but childcare may be more accessible to women with sufficient financial resources compared with women who live paycheck to paycheck. Here the intersection between childcare responsibilities and class produces a possible cleavage within the movement, particularly if organizers are tone deaf to such differences and the needs they produce for participants. Although such “intersections” can allow for mobilization and organization within particular groups (silos), they can also be a framework for bringing people together. Because people are also



likely to participate in marches and movements that speak to particular forms of their identities, the organizers faced the risk of fracturing women and others interested in coming by alienating one group and privileging another. Some Jewish groups, for instance, felt that the March was hostile toward Israel (Fox-Bevilacqua 2017); likewise, some black women declined to participate because they felt the March demanded a sense of sisterhood with white women when they felt none (Lemieux 2017).

Nevertheless, the use of intersectionality as the dominant frame of the March had a particular resonance for many people—even for those not previously familiar with intersectionality as a concept or frame—because of Trump’s dismissal of multiple groups, from women to Latino communities to Muslims. The March organizers, drawing from Audre Lorde’s work, explicitly emphasized that the liberation of one group is bound up with the liberation of all oppressed groups. This framing set the stage for a march and movement that explicitly (and unapologetically) centered the experiences and knowledge and leadership of people of color, queer people, differently abled, immigrants, undocumented, and those with any other marginalized identity. The March also clearly situated itself as committed to nonviolent principles of social change, emphasizing the importance of pursuing King’s legacy of “the Beloved Community.”

The Women’s March organizers also distinguished themselves among many national-level coalitions by explicitly and forthrightly committing to nonviolent action as the path the March would follow. Carmen Perez, one of the national codirectors, suggested that she adhered to “Kingian nonviolence” as her primary guide for action, both morally and strategically, because nonviolent action held the constructive potential to transform existing structures and create new and just outcomes rather than simply destroying and antagonizing existing structures (Perez 2017).

The organizers then secured the partnership of over 400 organizations to join the March in solidarity as sponsors of the broader movement.<sup>5</sup> These included smaller, regionally based organizations like the YWCA from Central Maine or the Virginia Democratic Women’s Caucus, together with larger, national or international organizations like Democracy Spring, Occupy Wall Street, the ACLU, the AFL-CIO, the SPLC, the NAACP, the National Resources Defense Council (NRDC), and American Jewish World Service. In this way the centralized March became an umbrella movement, drawing together the organizational tributaries previously identified. By determining which organizations and platforms could be included as official “partners” of the March and which excluded, the national organizing team shaped the movement’s platform.

About a week prior to Inauguration Day, the organizers released a staunchly progressive, feminist platform of “unity principles” that affirmed the values of the March. This list of unity principles was expansive, ranging from broad statements

that women's rights are human rights and that gender justice is economic justice is racial justice, to more concrete policy values like the right to paid family leave and clean water.<sup>6</sup> The principles moreover situated the March in a history of women's organizing, citing movements from the suffragists to Black Lives Matter as those that have paved the way for the current movement. Although many progressive feminists embraced this platform, there were rumblings of discontent and public disagreements that broke out, often in online forums and on social media.

The exclusion of prolife women's groups—and the inclusion of statements supporting sex-workers' rights—were particularly contentious. Prolife women's groups, some of which had supported Hillary Clinton's candidacy and found Trump's comments toward women particularly egregious, initially intended to attend the March. A prolife group from Texas, *New Wave Feminists*, was briefly listed alongside hundreds of other organizations as a partner to the march. After Planned Parenthood became a core sponsor of the March and a prochoice stance was included in the platform, the *New Wave Feminists* group was unlisted as a sponsor, setting off a round of criticism about the "intolerance" of liberal feminists (Riddell 2017). With abortion rights and access centrally included in the platform, some prolife women's groups announced they would withdraw their plans to attend the March.

Moreover, the unity principles affirmed that the March stood "in full solidarity with the sex workers' rights movement." After this statement generated a flood of protest, the statement was briefly deleted before being reinstated (Breiner 2017). The conflicted signaling of including and excluding particular tenets of the platform revealed the evolving and fluid nature of the movement's priorities during the short timeframe between its conception and Inauguration weekend.

The decision to remove prolife groups from the umbrella coalition—and the inclusion of a radical, intersectional, and progressive agenda—eventually mollified some of the March's early critics, although it is not clear whether this act motivated others to join the March. Black feminists concerned about the initial dominance of white women within the organizing structure were relieved (Ruiz-Grossman 2016) when the cochairs were announced and when prominent Black intellectuals like Angela Davis became officially involved. Some still disagreed, arguing that white people needed to take responsibility for Trump and the white supremacy that pervades American society, and that attending the March as a person of color and feigning an inauthentic sisterhood with white women would be exhausting. At the same time, some white women lamented what they felt to be their silencing within the movement: They did not appreciate being told to check their privilege and lashed out when others within the movement emphasized the need to foreground race over gender. Debates testing

the usefulness and resonance of intersectionality as the dominant movement frame continued throughout the run-up to the March, although it was unclear the degree to which such conversation affected the ultimate level of participation.

The broader-based resistance to Trump's impending presidency manifested as various coordinated protests leading up to and including Inauguration Day on January 20. Thousands of protesters descended on the National Mall in Washington to demonstrate against and disrupt inaugural events. Black Lives Matter activists formed human barricades around Inauguration celebration entry points. Democracy Spring protesters audibly interrupted the presidential oath of office from the stands, as did CODEPINK activists at various remote viewing locations. An anarchist collective, J20, also engaged in various actions including protests, human blockades, and some vandalism resulting in injuries and arrests. Several of these groups—such as Democracy Spring and CODEPINK—were listed as partner organizations with the Women's March. And although these Inauguration Day efforts were not directly connected to the Women's March, many of those who participated in these events stayed on for the Women's March the next day.

## January 21, 2017

The following morning, after merely 9 weeks of organizing, an estimated 4.5 million people gathered in a mass demonstration across the world. In Washington, DC, the primary site of the March, between 750,000 people and 1 million people turned out. Los Angeles turned out an enormous crowd as well, with perhaps 750,000 marchers. Marches occurred in 654 cities within the United States, and another 261 locations globally, in locations as far flung as Antarctica and Utqiagvik (formerly Barrow), Alaska. After the number of marchers was tallied, observers speculated that the Women's Marches of January 21, 2017, constituted the largest single-day protest in US history. Incredibly, there were no reported injuries or arrests among marchers.

Participants in the Women's Marches in the United States were disproportionately white, middle aged, highly educated, and female (Shulevitz 2017). Their median age ranged from 37 to 42, although this varied substantially across the different marches. At the March in Washington, 53% had graduate or professional degrees (Fisher, Chapter 5 in this volume). Although most marchers associated themselves with the Democratic Party, others were independents or Republicans who opposed Trump's agenda. A staggering proportion were first-time protesters: According to a crowd study by Dana Fisher, one-third of the participants reported never participating in a protest before (Shulevitz 2017). According to Michael Heaney's (2017) research, 5% of protesters admitted to

having previously participated in pro-life rallies, suggesting that, despite the platform offered by the March organizers, many still participated without aligning fully with the March's agenda.

### From March to Movement?

As Tarrow argues in this volume, the Women's March is, in some ways, best understood as a countermovement to Trumpism. Certainly it is easier to mobilize against a target than to mobilize for an alternative political project. This may explain why many unlikely bedfellows—including pro-Hillary groups, established progressive advocacy organizations, grassroots social justice groups, anticapitalist groups like Occupy, and first-time activists—were able to unify under the banner of the Women's March in January 2017.

But has the Women's March turned a single-day demonstration into a larger movement for social justice? As Tarrow suggests in his chapter, three organizational tasks are required for a major protest to transition into a broader cycle of mobilization: amplification, scale shift, and spillover.

The Women's March performed exceedingly well on all three counts. First, with regard to amplification, the Women's March national cochairs drew on their own organizational resources and experiences to establish a cross-cutting, broad-based coalition. This has resulted in support among establishment politicians, progressive grassroots groups, and more radical groups as well. A key technique in securing and maintaining such support has been mobilizing on behalf of such groups when asked. For example, Women's March organizers and staff have participated in and endorsed many other events organized by their partners. These include actions in solidarity with Muslim immigrants, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) individuals, indigenous rights related to the KeystoneXL pipeline's proposed project in Standing Rock, LGBTQIA Pride (LGBTQIA indicates Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersexual, Asexual), and racial justice in the wake of white supremacist mobilization in Charlottesville, Virginia, in August 2017. Women's March organizers have also visibly supported the A Day Without an Immigrant on February 21, 2017, a Day Without a Woman on March 8, 2017, the Tax Day protests of April 15, 2017, and the Science March on April 22, 2017, among others. On January 20, 2018—the 1-year anniversary of Trump's inauguration—Women's Marches once again mobilized impressive numbers of people into the streets, with between 1.8 and 2.6 million people marching in 407 locations in the United States alone (Chenoweth and Pressman 2018).

Second, with regard to scale shift, the Women's March on Washington developed a number of connections with local organizers in the United States

and abroad who organized sister marches for local participants. This translated into hundreds of distinct march locations in the United States, ranging from a single participant in a Colorado mountain town to a million participants in Washington, DC (Chenoweth and Pressman 2017). Because of the extensive donor base available to them from these various organizational tributaries, they had considerable resources to devote to online communication, which also assisted in achieving international scale. In an attempt to maintain stamina and engagement, the Women's March has rolled out several programs, including a call for women to take 10 actions in Trump's first 100 days in office, as well as a call for women to hold "huddles" (i.e., small gatherings in which they could continue discussions on local levels about their struggles, solutions, and strategies). Women's March organizers say that over 5,600 huddles have taken place since January 2017. They also released a resource toolkit to support their Daring Discussions initiative, which encourages women to break their silence and engage in difficult discussions with family members and friends regarding progressive values.

Third, the March has also seen some spillover. After the Women's March in January 2017, many marchers wondered how they could continue to remain engaged and have visible impacts on the polity. The Women's March national organization did not anticipate such mass participation and did not have a well-developed strategy for maintaining mass engagement after the March. As a result, many Women's March participants found their way into Indivisible, a progressive organization developed by former congressional staffers that provided a tactical manual about how best to pester and influence elected officials. By early February 2017, over 3,800 local chapters of Indivisible had sprung up, largely collecting the hundreds of thousands of newly activated people in the United States whom grassroots groups had limited capacity to organize.

Nevertheless, this transference of supporters to other local-level political organizations has not diminished the awakenings that many women experienced on January 21, 2017. For example, some credit the Women's March with increased awareness of gender-based grievances, such as women's relative exclusion from public office, sexual harassment, wage gaps, and workplace discrimination. The #MeToo campaign, for instance, which emerged on the heels of a number of high-profile sexual harassment and sexual assault cases later in 2017, is emblematic of the sense of widespread outrage about the status of women in the United States. It also reflects a renewed and widespread sense of solidarity among women, which has encouraged women to speak out against such injustices and crimes at unprecedented levels. Such responses are wholly consistent with the concept of cognitive liberation—a collective recognition of an injustice along with an enduring commitment to engage in action to set it right

(McAdam 1983). As such, we should expect considerable engagement to continue, even as it transforms into other forms of advocacy.

## Conclusion

The 2017 Women's March was likely the largest single-day demonstration in US history. Yet, some skeptics suggest that staging a massive march is easier now than in the past because of social media's ability to facilitate short-term coalition-building and broad-based mobilization. Large participant numbers do not necessarily reflect high levels of organizational strength and durability that previous events of this size required. For instance, Tufekci (2017) suggests it is easier to stage a march—a short-term event—than to build a movement, particularly one representing diverse communities with varied interests and diverging approaches to formal and informal advocacy. However, what the Women's March demonstrates is the ability of an organization to mobilize for a political protest event that has the potential to catalyze a durable coalition-based movement. Moreover, the size of the 2018 Women's Marches suggest a certain durability and continued momentum to the movement.

Indeed, the question of what comes next for those who marched on January 21, 2017, remains a topic of ongoing discussion among national-level organizers and participants alike. More important, the "what's next" debate has maintained active electronic and social media communication channels. It has been the linchpin for whether the event of the March can become a durable movement, and as a result has generated various opportunities for mobilization that continue to draw in many of the Women's March leaders and participants. Ten months after the initial march, for example, the Women's March held a National Convention in Detroit from October 27 to October 29, 2017, which gathered about 4,000 women to rally around local organizing in preparation for the 2018 midterm elections (Davey 2017). And excitement around the 2018 Women's March, particularly in locations like Los Angeles, Seattle, New York, Chicago, and Denver, suggests the possibility of a major annual event going forward.

This focus on running women candidates and contesting the 2018 elections speaks to a broader trend in the anti-Trump resistance: that of turning away from extra-institutional grassroots mobilization and toward institutionalized electoral politics. This partly reflects a third example of spillover as leading organizers seek to turn event-based mobilization into a long-term movement and coalition strategy. Their emphasis on formal politics also illustrates an important tactical and ideological tension in social movement organizing. On the one hand, organizers seek a foothold through the inside game, in which they aim to work for change within existing institutions, systems, and structures to achieve their



goals. And, on the other hand, they aim to play an outside game, maintaining a credible mobilization and disruption capacity, and putting popular pressure on institutionalized elites and officials (see, for instance, Raeburn 2004). The channeling of many participants of different Sister Marches into Indivisible chapters while national cochairs of the March continue to issue calls for solidarity mobilization is emblematic of this embrace of a dual-track approach.

These are common processes in social movement coalitions, and they can often produce coalitional instability, particularly among those whose interests and preferences are not identical to those of the core leadership. This can be evident in the changing composition of the coalition over time. For instance, whereas at the outset, Planned Parenthood and the ACLU were anchors for the coalition, the ACLU quietly reduced its centrality over time, likely because its interests were gender inclusive and included broader civil rights issues as opposed to women's issues alone. At times, coalition dynamics tend to produce continual challenges in their members' ability to agree upon proximate and ultimate goals, methods and tactics, and framing.

That said, to a large extent, Trump and Trumpism continue to function as powerful unifying and mobilizing factors since the Women's March. For example, many link Trump's sexual abuses to the vitality of the #MeToo social media campaign, the speed and resonance of which builds on the mobilization capacity and solidarity evident on January 21 (Redden and Siddiqui 2017). And, although the Women's March has spawned and evolved into several new—and renewed—campaigns linked to broader issues, its intersectional approach to progressive politics continues to provide a powerful reference point for organizers. Intersectional frames and organizing structures or principles can make movements more resilient and adept at addressing both tensions and mutual concerns (Crenshaw 1991).

Ultimately, several features of the Women's March may hold the key to its long-term coalitional prospects, compared with other contemporary major social movement organizations. Its umbrella structure as both an organization and coalition, its intersectional approach, its unmatched mobilization capacity, and the persistent sense of urgency felt among millions of feminists in the United States continue to resonate and provide both latent and active political power. What remains to be seen is whether the coalition will be able to consolidate local gains and capitalize on unprecedented levels of engagement to translate the momentum from the streets into substantive policy and electoral change.

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